Even villains occasionally indulge in visits to support item specialists and tailors. When the number one villain catches wind of the quality of your work and swings by your lab, things get a bit... heated. Set in a Villain AU with Villian All Might.
You didn’t consider yourself a bad person.

You recycled. You’ve never *personally* killed or hurt anyone. You worried about sea turtles. You didn’t steal. You didn’t lie.

Okay, maybe a little white lie occasionally to protect yourself or other people’s feelings.

But you weren’t *bad*.

It’s just… you happened to be involved with bad people.

Whereas public heroes had a plethora of hero costume and support labs they could rely on for services, the underbelly of society lacked such public institutions.

That’s where you came in.

Your shop was a located in a grungy office building hidden away in the armpit of the Kamino ward of Yokohama. It was the type of dull grey structure that was overlooked by everyone passing by, blending with the other soulless facades that surrounded it. The entire upper floor of the building was dedicated to your pursuit of all things tech; a hodgepodge of materials, finished projects, works-in-progress and forgotten prototypes.

Despite the backlog of work nipping at your anxiety, your lab was unusually quiet. You couldn’t get your mind to properly align itself so that you could make progress on things that actually needed to be worked on. Namely, things with distressingly close deadlines. Fear and nerves had kept you glued to your stool, watching the clock on the wall broach ever closer to 9 p.m.

You had a new client visiting you. A new client who was interested in your newly offered costume work. It was an area you'd only explored in passing -- you wouldn't call yourself a master tailor or
seamstress, but you could hold your own. Support items and suits often went hand-in-hand. They played off of each other, routinely in more ways than just aesthetics.

You weren't sure how your name reached him but it wasn't a total surprise. Word-of-mouth was how you got most of your business. Villains and, in some instances vigilantes, were chatty when it came to talking gear. The new guy didn’t contact you through your usual means, which you didn't particularly care for. He hadn't reached out through a message -- no, he met with you personally.

By cornering you on a walk home several nights earlier.

‘I heard you made costumes,’ he had said, appearing in a fury of power and towering over you. The eyes of his mask were casting a dull illuminating glow that made his already intimidating presence even worse in the darkened street. ‘I want you to make me one.’

You knew who he was. The whole world knew who he was.

You gave him an address and he gave you the day and a time.

Just like with his arrival, he disappeared in a sudden whirlwind of energy that made you recoil. When the wind died, you found yourself alone.

The agreed meeting time came and went, which made your unease worsen. Ten minutes passed. Then fifteen.

Maybe… he wasn’t coming?

Relief? You reached for your phone to check your encrypted channels for any possible messages from him, but there was nothing. The restless, heart-in-throat feeling that had been plaguing you started to dissipate. Sure, he would have been a good client to have in your pocket. But there would have been a tremendous amount of risk in working with him, not to mention general discomfort at having someone so--

“Your security is lousy.”

His voice was a low, rolling thunder that sliced through the silence of the room. You jumped, swirling around in your stool, searching for the man who had been the root of your disquiet for the past several days.

He had been only a few feet away from you, standing with his arms crossed, his signature mask obscuring his face. There were no long shadows to cloak him -- the bright lights of your lab revealed him in all his infernal glory. You swallowed, standing up from your seat while attempting to seize the nonchalance you had hoped to portray. He wasn’t the first villain you’ve dealt with.

But this was All Might.

“How long have you been there?” you ventured to ask, unnerved but very much curious. The front door of your lab was in your line of sight -- he had not entered there. Your eyes settled on the windows lining the walls behind him. They were large enough for him to squeeze through, but the building was old. They were prone to sticking and nosily complaining whenever they were opened or closed.

All Might shifted his weight from one foot to the other, as if debating whether to answer you. Finally, he spoke up.

“We agreed 9 o’clock.”
No. There’s no way he had been standing behind you for fifteen minutes. You couldn’t be that obtuse and someone as large as him could not be that stealthy. Don’t humans have some sort of primordial sixth-sense about people watching them? Yours should have kicked in.

“It’s very rude to keep your clients waiting.”

His snark interrupted your internal dialogue. With a steadying breath, you quickly pieced your self-composure back together. These people, these villains, were like sharks. If they smelled blood in the water, they’d go into a frenzy. In your lab, it wasn’t so much blood that would feed their mania, more like any visible weaknesses.

“Well… I guess it is time to update my security system,” you joked hollowly after swallowing the lump in your throat.

Things were in motion, you could no longer cling to the hope of being forgotten. Just get the meeting over with so you can get him out of your lab. Although he would be your first true big-name client, he had a bit of reputation for being... unpredictable. And powerful. You found the best way to deal with customers like that was to keep your encounters brief and strictly business.

He made a sound, a cross between a snort and a chuckle, uncrossing his arms to approach you.

“So, costume work,” you said, grabbing your small notebook and flipping it open. “That shouldn’t be an issue. What were you thinking? Turn around time is usually three weeks, depending on what you want. Maybe something with a cape?”

The last part was supposed to be a joke and you peered up at him with a crooked smile. You could hear his even breathing through the filters of his mask as the seconds ticked by without a reaction from him.

“Okay,” you muttered to yourself, writing the date in the notebook just to do something with your attention. “No cape then.”

“I want this,” he grumbled, using one hand to gesture to his clothing. “But more… resistant.”

You eyed his costume -- well, truthfully it wasn’t much of a costume. It was really just a pair of cargo pants and a black shirt with some embellishments: a utility belt, spiked shoulder pads and a chest strap.

And, of course, the mask. What would All Might be without his mask? It definitely added to the apocalyptic image he must have wanted to portray.

“May I?” you asked with your hand out, fingers grasping air as you gestured to his clothing. He tilted his head before nodding.

Ignoring the sick thrill of being so close to the greatest villain of all time, you tentatively stroked the side of his pant leg, rubbing the fabric between your fingers. A frown appeared on your face, one that deepened when you stroked the fabric of his shirt.

“This is just clothing,” you said out loud to yourself. The material was cheap, it was nothing more than clothing sold at some major chain store. “This isn’t a costume.”

“Which is why I came to you,” he grumbled with what sounded like irritation. You caught yourself, reeling back your passion.

“So when you say resistant... you mean, what? Like tear, fire and fluid resistant?”
He nodded and you reached once more for your notebook, possible fabric types already popping into your mind. So he wanted to keep the same look but upgrade the quality. You didn't want to call it easy work, but you were glad that you wouldn't have to try and come up with design ideas. His look was already locked in, you just needed to replicate it.

“The shirt won’t be a problem,” you said as you tapped your pen against your bottom lip in thought, gaze focused on his body. “It’s simple and it’s black. But the pants might prove slightly troublesome, only because of the color. If they ended up more khaki than green, would that be an issue?”

All Might’s hidden eyes were fixated on the pen that rubbed across your lip.

“Khaki is fine,” was all he said.

“And what about these, the shoulder pads,” you gestured to his upper body. There was no way they offered him any decent protection. In fact, they probably proved a hindrance to his mobility. You were certain they were a design choice made by All Might, something to further cement his look of terror. “Are they part of the costume?”

“Yes.”

“And the mask?”

“Yes.”

A man of few words, you thought as you scribbled down more ideas involving materials and what suppliers you should contact for what.

“Well, all I need to grab from you tonight are some reference pictures and measurements and we should be good to go. I think a three-week timeframe will work for this.”

He stood uninterestedly as you snapped several example pictures of varying angles on your phone. When you brought out your fabric tape measure, he perked up a bit.

By then work had consumed your thoughts and any apprehension you had about his presence had mostly faded away.

All Might was tall, you marveled as you pulled up your stool closer to him with your foot. He watched you stand on it, paying no mind to the way the way it creaked, tilted and shifted under your weight -- this wasn’t the first time you’ve used your crappy stool as a ladder.

“Just gonna take some measurements,” you muttered. “Can you lift your arms?”

It was entertaining, to him, the way you slipped into your role of costume-maker so easily. Your hands were gliding and pressing the tape measure against his body, your face scrunched in concentration. At one point you even asked for his assistance in marking a spot on his chest using his finger, as your tape measure was not long enough to fully wrap around him. The unease had vanished.

You popped off your stool, numbers dancing around your head as you recorded them in your notebook. You did your best not to ogle at the sheer size of the man in front of you. But your movements did betray your surprise at how unyielding his body was. Whether you realized it or not, your fingers were pushing into his skin with varying degrees of pressure testing to see how much give his flesh had. But there was none. He was just solid.

You kicked your stool out of the way as you moved to his lower body, finally hesitating.
“I’m going to take your pant measurements,” you said. If you were going to be rummaging around down there, you figured you should at least warn him. The last thing you wanted was to get an appalled knee to the head when you went for the inseam. “So don’t get too excited,” you added, another dull joke.

He made no acknowledgment.

‘Be professional,’ you chanted to yourself as you moved around his lower body, hands brushing his hips and thighs, the dreaded inseam approaching. It shouldn’t be a big deal -- you’d taken dozens of inseam measurements for all sort of clientele. But being around All Might’s groin was a little… intimidating.

He was still silently watching you, noting the way you bit your lower lip as you wrote down numbers, eyes flickering over to his crotch.

His jaw set as you brought the tape against the inside of his left leg, a sudden desire awakening at seeing you bent in toward him. It didn’t help that you were pressing against something that had been tucked away into his pant leg.

There was a minuscule bit of skin movement under your hand. It wasn’t a thigh muscle twitching to life.

You pulled back with a jerk, the gears clicking in your head as you realized what was happening. What you had unknowingly touched. But you had gotten the number and you turned to your notebook, horrified and actively trying to ignore what had just occurred. Don’t call attention to it. Be professional.

“R-right,” you said, a slight hitch in your voice. You cleared your throat to rid yourself of it, going back to your calm, conversational demeanor. “That was all I needed. So like I said earlier, three weeks. As for the cost…”

You reached for your phone, pulling up some of the price lists you had saved. You were doing your best to create a rough calculation of materials, time and labor while preventing a blush from staining your cheeks. It wasn’t going to be an expensive job, you realized with disappointment, tacking on an additional couple thousand yen since this was All Might and chances were he had some money saved away. Might as well make it worth your while.

Turning, you planned on sharing the number you had drummed up but froze.

He was there, standing right behind you, his gargantuan figure looming over you.

Your mouth went dry, fear melding with something else at his proximity. You weren’t an idiot -- this wasn’t him not understanding personal space. He was doing it on purpose. He was trying to be intimidating. Though, with him, there was no need to try. Just his reputation was enough to have put you immediately on edge. His persona just compounded the feelings.

There was a tension.

“So, for cost…” You tried to back up, to reclaim a comfortable buffer of space between you, but you only succeeded in pressing your back against the large table in the center of your lab. “I’m gonna knock off some yen off since you’re doing an entire outfit through me, though the final number may change since the cost of materials can change. You’re looking at--”

“What’s your name?” he asked abruptly, interrupting your almost-preprogramed price spiel.
His question caught you by surprise and you blinked. Your name? Why would he want to know your name? Well, you assumed he had known it considering he reached out to you. You hadn't thought to introduce yourself.

“I go by Artisan,” you said.

“Your real name,” he growled, somehow finding the room to get closer to you. Another painfully dry swallow. Christ, the man had a presence. One of his thighs was about as wide as your body. And his hands... Conflicting thoughts sparked in your mind as you quickly took in the sight of them, hanging by his side.

But your name… you didn’t give that up to any of your clients. That was yours.

“Artisan.”

He laughed -- it was a low, deep-chested sound that made your skin tingle. He was genuinely amused by how you carried yourself. A gloved hand reached out and grasped your chin, turning your face side by side as he inspected you. Your eyes were wide, floored by his actions.

His hands. They were massive.

But strangers weren't supposed to reach out and touch you. It was disrespectful, demeaning. But how were you supposed to react? What could you do to All Might of all people?

There was agitation in your face, he noted as he further scrutinized you, but that was about all he saw. If you were afraid, you were doing a surprisingly good job at keeping it buried. Was it pathetic that he was impressed that you hadn’t devolved into a sniveling mess at his presence? Even when he had cornered you a few nights back, at the mention of business you became surprisingly lucid.

“I could kill you, you know,” he found himself pointing out.

A reminder.

Your brows shot up, caught off guard that he would point out such an obvious thing. It had come flying out of left field, this mention of your possible death. Your heart squeezed painfully as you worked to decipher his angle. Why would he say that? Randomly, right out of the blue?

He released your chin and you rubbed at your skin nervously.

“Well, of course,” you said. “You’re All Might.”

There was no point in trying to be tough -- you had no idea what thoughts were swirling through that head of his and the last thing you wanted to do was spark his ire. Perhaps he was already angling for a price decrease? Or maybe he wanted his suit for free?

All Might was laughing again. Despite it all, your body still reacted to his behavior.

That’s when it struck you, what kind of tension you were feeling. What his actions were leading to.

No, this wasn’t a shakedown.

You grimaced, releasing a quick breath as your eyes boldly flickered to his crotch before traveling up to his face. Well, his mask.

All Might had been watching you, a boil starting to bubble in his blood as he took where your attention had landed. And to your slightly parted lips.
Now there was nervousness in your eyes. Fear? He wasn't sure yet.

He stooped down abruptly, grabbing the back of your legs and pulling them out from underneath you. A strangled yell bursted from you at the unexpected movement, your back slapping against the table behind you, throat drying instantly when you realized your legs had been pinned to All Might’s sides.

“H-hey!” you said, startled at his speed and sat up. “No thank you!”

You attempted to struggle away, to roll backward and out of his grasp, but there was no chance of escape. His grip was ironclad -- hell, one of his fingers probably had enough strength to hold you down.

So you used your quirk.

All Might blinked, a serious case of déjà vu striking him as he stood in front of you. He had planned on tossing you onto the table but you were already gone, taking advantage of his confusion by slipping off to the side and to freedom.

“Right, like I was saying,.” you said, forcing yourself to remain calm and collected. This wasn’t the first time a villain had gotten handsy. They could be… impulsive. You found it was best to be cool and non-reactive as that usually killed the mood.

And keep a distance.

“Price can change depending on the cost of materials," you continued, voice strong despite the frantic beating of your heart. "So think of this as a rough estimate. I can finalize the cost once I get ahold of everything."

All Might looked up at you, the vision of him standing between your legs too vivid in his mind to be an idle fantasy.

“You have a time quirk,” he said, going with what his gut was telling him. He was no fool to the tricks of others. You paused, furrowing your brows, trying to play coy without insulting him by outright lying.

“I’d really like to keep things professional,” you say in what you hope was a placating manner, still working to diffuse the situation. All you wanted to do was get him out so you could go home and go to bed. Alone.

A gust of wind exploded around you sending some light-weight objects barreling across the room. One second you were standing, preparing to segue into payment options. The next, your back was hitting the steel table again with a hollow thud.

He was fast.

“Use your quirk,” All Might demanded as you gazed up at him, nervousness starting to really break through your persona. You couldn’t see his face, but he didn’t strike you as someone who could be talked out of an idea. So you did as commanded, ignoring the slight twitch in your gut from using your quirk again, so soon.

All Might was staring as you stood a few feet off to the side of him, clear memories of events that hadn't occurred striking him again.

You let out a worried gasp, recognizing the blur of his movement just as he grabbed ahold of you to
slam you back on the table for the third time. Your head was complaining and the world seemed to be uncomfortably saturated. He was still between your legs, restraining them against his hips to prevent you from kicking away to freedom. Not that it would have worked. A groan escaped as you sat up, making an effort to meet his eye. But it was a struggle to focus and your stomach was wound in queasy knots.

“How many times can you use your quirk?”

He seemed curious and you debated how to answer. If to answer. It was bad taste to ask about the shortcomings of another person’s quirk; it was something they either offered up to you or you figured out on your own. You didn’t just ask. Especially a stranger. He must have sensed your thoughts -- his fingers squeezed into the flesh of your legs and you bit back a hiss. He was going to leave marks.

“Or I can run your quirk out,” he threatened as visions of you repeatedly being tossed onto the table flashed in both of your minds. His stamina, you realized coldly, far surpassed yours.

“If I use it too much I get sick,” you admitted to him, the truth uncomfortably leaving you. “Bad migraines and stomach aches. So maybe a couple times a day, rarely back-to-back.”

“How far back can you go?”

“Five seconds, eight or nine if I really push but it’s not easy.”

“How many people can you impact?”

“Only my immediate radius. Never more than three.”

He was silently staring down at you and all you could do was return his gaze, unsure what was going to happen next. Oh god, what if he kidnapped you and tried to make you his little time controlling pet? Was that a thing? You didn’t know.

His hand rested on your stomach.

Your gut clenched, eyes darting between his hand and his face.

“Artisan,” he said in a soft, gruff voice as if testing the way it sounded.

Oh no. Oh no. This was not good. You had to kill his mood. ‘Gotta humanize yourself,’ you strategized as he paused at your response. Humanize yourself and pray he won’t snap your neck. Or progress to anything more. You weren’t ready for that. You couldn’t do that. With him, of all people.

God, you just wanted to go to bed.

His hand pressed harder against your stomach before he began to move it, fingers rubbing circles as he watched your face. Searching for a hint, a glimmer of something more. You inhaled but did nothing, just stared at his hand and how it’s large size compared to your torso.

Things were escalating, weren’t they?

“Please don’t.”

He stopped his movements at hearing the smallness of your voice, your facade finally crumbling
away. You were looking up at him, such a pleading look in your eyes. There it was. *Fear.* He shifted, disguising the thrum that reverberated through his body at your recognition and acceptance of frailty. His hand pulled away, only to slip underneath your shirt and press against the soft skin of your stomach.

No muscles, he felt as his jaw clenched. Such a small, weak thing.

The pain was sudden, tearing through All Might’s left side and forcing him to convulse, his body aflame. He retracted his hand quickly, breathing loud and audibly through his mask. You pulled yourself deeper onto the table, away from him, unaware of the discomfort plaguing him. The harsh breathing, you thought with panic, was from his excitement. You'd have to make a run for it if he came at you again.

But his moment had passed. Playtime was over, he realized with loathing, swallowing the hidden blood in his mouth.

“Three weeks,” he snapped as he drew away from you and the table altogether.

You sat up, hands shaking. *W-was he leaving?*

Relief.

“Three weeks,” you repeated after clearing your throat preventatively to hide the tremor of your nerves. Thankfully, it sounded firm.

He stopped, casting one last look at you. You could feel the heat radiating off him, his featureless face somehow expressing his hunger. A hunger you had *just barely* avoided. Then he was gone, leaving out a corner window that had been left ajar. That, you assumed, was how he had got into the building without you noticing.

You slid off the table, eyes fixated on the window, waiting. Catching your breath. Breaking away at your tenseness. A minute passed. Then five. Ten.

He didn’t come back.

Before you left that night, you made sure each of the windows and doors of your lab were locked.

*Three weeks.*
The Third Week

Chapter Notes

Ah, here's the smut my darlings.

You were caught between a rock and a hard place with All Might’s order. Despite your uncomfortable consultation with him, you had to complete his costume. There was no such thing as canceling in your line of work. You were dealing with thieves, cutthroats and killers — they didn’t take kindly to people changing their minds or breaking deals.

Aggressive personalities were part of the job.

With not much of an option, you had to suck it up and finish the outfit you had been commissioned to create. You were painfully aware that, in three weeks time, the great Symbol of Discord was going to return to your doorstep. And, if things unfolded similarly to how they did during the previous meeting, you would have to spend another night trying to weasel your way out of getting bedded by him.

The last thing you wanted was to get tangled up with a client, especially a villain.

All Might?

No, nothing good could come of it.

'Maybe it was just a one-time thing,' you thought, pulling back and wiping the sweat from your brow as you examined your overdue welding job. He was only human, perhaps he had been in a particularly amorous mood that night? Granted, you hadn't done anything remotely flirtatious when interacting with him, other than innocent touching. But it was because you had to take measurements. It wasn't like you were groping him indiscriminately. You were doing something that was required.

Still, there was that little incident with your hand pressing against something while taking his inseam--

You placed the blowtorch back on the table, heart thumping in your chest with embarrassment. Trying to view the situation as a natural bodily reaction did nothing to ease your feelings. No, welding was a bad choice. You needed to continue a project that required a little more... concentration.

By the second week, your thoughts started to pervert. Whenever you found yourself drifting off into daydreams, whether it was while lying in bed or working on some monotonous task, you would find yourself on your back again, staring up at the mountain that was All Might. His massive hand was still pressed against the flesh of your stomach, fingers circling before drifting to other places. Higher up your shirt... perhaps under the waistband of your pants--

There was a sizzle as a circuit in the boots you were working on shorted, sending a cascade of sparks across your hands and into your face. You cursed, painfully aware what your mistake just cost you.

You were also painfully aware of how red your face was.
It was a bad idea. Such a bad idea.

Don’t be an idiot.

By the start of the third week, you were a bundle of frazzled nerves. The daydreams were steady by then, all variations of rough rendezvous with All Might -- of large hands pawing at your body and all the pleasurable pain he could inflict upon you.

‘This isn’t normal,’ you tried to reason with yourself, a last-ditch effort to lasso your hormones and, well, delusions, so you could wrestle them into submission. ‘Fantasy is one thing, real life is another.’

But... it would only be one night. Could one night really make that much of a difference in your personal and professional life? He obviously wanted you and that knowledge was exhilarating. Knowing that such a brute had the hots for you...

Surely there was worse you could do, right? He was the number one villain. If anything, it would be a feather to put in your cap. People hook up with one-night stands from bars and clubs all the time. It just so happened your first one-night stand would, possibly, be the greatest villain who ever walked the earth.

You paused while putting on your mascara, staring at your reflection in the mirror.

You weren’t a bad person.

Does... wanting him make you bad? Would sleeping with him make you bad?

More importantly, above the dilemma you faced on the morality of lusting after a villain, one fear underlined every fantasy you had about him.

You were afraid that it wouldn’t be satisfying.

You were afraid it would hurt.

But desire overpowered your trepidation and you found yourself caving to lust. Logic and reason had failed you. If All Might made a move, your libido told you that you would accept it.

Every night during that third week, you made sure to go to your lab looking your best, as you were unaware what day All Might pick up his order. Frequently, while toiling and working away, you would pause to glance around your lab, near certain that you would catch him standing in the corner watching you. But days passed and there was nothing. No appearances, no emails, no encrypted communications, no ambushes walking home from work -- just silence.

By Sunday night, you were certain All Might had forgotten or changed his mind. You hadn’t requested the money from him upfront, so he was under no real obligation to pick up his order.

Your hands ran over the coarse material of his new pants, which were folded nicely alongside the rest of the ensemble on the table, waiting for him. It was a shame -- the pieces turned out beautifully.

Yes, that’s what you were upset about. The fact he was abandoning such quality work.

Smothering a yawn, you called it a night just as Sunday turned into Monday morning, certain that All
Might was a no-show. You grabbed your bag, rolling your shoulders as you started flipping off lights. You cursed when you misremembered where you placed a newly purchased worktable, roughly bumping into it and knocking over the conducting gauntlet you had precariously perched on a couple of boxes. It fell to the ground with a great clatter and your stomach dropped, praying nothing had been knocked out of alignment. You reached for your phone and turned on the flashlight, searching for where it could have landed.

You found it, rolled underneath the--

_There was a presence behind you._

The hairs on the back of your neck rose, that sixth-sense of yours finally kicking in.

Swallowing slowly, and faced with reality, you stood. The gauntlet laid forgotten on the floor.

Of course he would come to you in the dark.

“You haven’t improved your security,” All Might admonished.

“That’s not true,” you countered, ignoring the sick feeling in your gut as you turned to face him. You could see the inky blackness of his figure in the dark, but you were surprised the eyes of his mask were not lit. “I locked my windows.”

He snorted. As if a simple window latch could stop him.

“Oh, your outfit is some quality work,” you started immediately, heading toward the closest light switch and flicking it back on, trying to keep everything business related. Faced with the actual man, all those desires that had been swirling around you fell apart. It was better to just ignore everything. It was safer. Half of your lab was flooded with flickering fluorescent light.

“I tried to find the green of your pants, but I had to settle for a dark khaki. If you manage to tear any of these things it’ll be--”

The words fell away when you looked over your shoulder. No wonder you couldn’t see the eyes of his mask, he wasn’t wearing his mask. In fact, he wasn’t wearing any of his normal embellishments.

You weren’t sure what you thought was hiding under All Might’s disguise. For some reason, you always assumed he had squat, pig-like features. Maybe it was because the roundness of the mask filters reminded you of a pig nose? He definitely did not have a pig nose.

‘Fuck’, you thought, shaking your head when you realized you had been staring.

He was good looking.

All Might was wearing a cocky grin as he approached you, eyes obscured by dark shadows on his face. But you could almost feel them boring into you.

Sinister.

That was a good word to describe him.

“Want to see your costume?” you asked, sidestepping away from him and starting your dance of evasion. Yes, you were a chicken. There was no way you could go through with you had hoped. You were walking toward the table, still trying to make it appear as if you were at ease in his presence even though you wanted to curl up and hide in a cabinet.
He didn’t immediately throw you on the table as you half expected and you weren’t sure if that was a good sign. Could you have been right for once? Had All Might just been horny and hungry that night?

_Maybe everything would work out. Maybe... he wouldn’t come after you._

“Now, let’s start with the pants,” you said as you unraveled the bit of clothing over the table. “Like I said, check out the color. I figured you’d prefer the darker shade of khaki and I think it really makes the--”

You shivered when you felt two hands press against your body, stroking up and down your sides.

“I felt that,” he said above you, that laughter still in his voice. “Your little… chill.”

“You move too quietly!” you said nervously with a too-loud laugh, trying to lighten the mood while simultaneously attempting to shy away from his touch. Oh god, everything was a mistake. You weren’t ready for any of... _this_. Upon feeling you shift toward escaping, the stroking stopped and his hands gripped your sides, keeping you in place in front of him.

So soft and small.

“It’ll be hard to tear or stain these,” you continued, gritting your teeth at being trapped. “But I do repairs, so if that happens just bring them back and I’ll patch them up. Your shirt is made out a similar material but the texture is a lot smoother. As for your shoulder pads--”

“I’ve thought about you,” he said, his voice low. You felt the back of your neck grow hot.

“I do have the tendency to leave an impression,” you joked, unable to look up at him. You could feel the way he was standing over you, looking down at the top of your head. “Now, do you want to try on your pieces?

He was quiet, but his hands had started stroking your sides again. It was unnerving how... _nonaggressive_ he was being. You’ve heard stories and seen videos of All Might and what he could do, the destruction he could leave in his wake. He was a calamity, an unstoppable force of disorder that struck whenever the mood hit him.

He was the kind of person that took what he wanted... right?

You were being turned, your jaw setting, stomach clenching while a sickening thrill flared to life in your gut. You kept your eyes on his chest, listening to his steady breathing as he lifted you and seated you on the edge of your table. Your legs were spread wide as his large body nestled between them, knees pressing against his sides.

You felt... sick. But it wasn’t disgust that was turning your stomach -- it was nerves.

All Might's hands moved to your hips, fingers digging into the fleshiness of your body.

“Have you thought about me?”

You clenched and unclenched your jaw.

“Of course,” you said. “I’ve been working on your costume. It would be impossible not to think about you.”

He chuckled and his hands moved inward from your hips, resting alongside your inner thighs. At
that, you sat up a bit straighter, body going rigid at the line he had crossed. The ball was rolling. Oh god, did you want to stop it or let it keep going?

“No other times?” he asked, his voice growing softer as he leaned down, closer to you. Another shiver rocketed through you and your throat felt a bit tighter. ‘Yes,’ a voice inside your head whispered but you held your tongue. “Because I’ve thought about you… a lot.”

Bullshit. There was no way in hell All Might gave you more than a cursory thought. Who were you compared to someone like him?

“No other times?” you spat.

He was caught off guard by your outburst. Hell, you even surprised yourself, your innermost thoughts spilling out as you found yourself figuratively backed against the wall, insulted that he would underestimate your intelligence by feeding you such stupid lies. You closed your eyes, a strange serenity washing over you as you prepared for a possible blow thanks to your mouth.

Laughter.

Furrowing your brows, you opened your eyes and watched his chest shake, thumbs pressing circles against your legs.

“Not many talk to me that way,” he said, removing a hand so he could tilt your head up toward his. Your eyes met the shadows that hid his. “It’s precious.”

Your face contorted at how demeaning that word sounded but you were effectively silenced when his mouth suddenly mashed against yours.

Your eyes went wide, a soft cry caught in your throat at how hastily he acted. The kiss was unexpectedly soft at first, his lips barely grazing yours as you inhaled sharply through your nose. Your mind was reeling as it desperately attempted to process what was happening. His hand snaked into your hair, roughly burying into it before he tugged your head back and up, angling you more toward him.

You hissed, reacting to the dull pain of his hair pulling. That slight opening of your mouth was all he needed to conquer it. All Might's tongue darted forward, its sheer size forcing your teeth apart and further opening you up to his invasion. He squeezed at your scalp again, fingers tangling in your hair as his tongue explored the inside of your mouth. It was sliding across your teeth, stroking and prodding the inside of your cheeks before wriggling along your tongue, bullying it into interacting.

A warmth flooded across your chest and up your neck as you remained passive to his ministrations. You could hear your heartbeat in your ears, but it wasn’t deafening enough to block out the slick sounds of wet mouths mixing with each other. Or hide the slight rasp that underlined his breathing.

The foreign invader momentarily retreated from the inside of your mouth and you quickly inhaled again, desperate for fresh air. He wasn’t done with you, however. He flicked his tongue over your deliciously plump bottom lip before his teeth gnashed down on it.

That was painful. He felt your face go taut and you tried to pull back, an impossible task thanks to his hold on your head.

“Ah!” you hissed, squinting through your eyelashes up at him.

All Might made a low sound that you felt more than heard. He tugged at your hair again before sucking on your bruised lip, as if apologizing for how rough he had been. The tip of his tongue
lightly brushed across it before burrowing back into your mouth.

Oh god, looking back you weren’t sure what was running through your mind. The longer he worked your mouth, the more... you wanted his attention. If you weren't so naive, you'd think he was purposefully trying to get a rise out of you.

And it worked.

An audible breath escaped him and the sound spurred something in you. And the kiss, even with the pain, was so... appetizing. So when his tongue touched yours again...

You responded.

You wrestled with his tongue, your body shifting slightly as you rested a hand on the forearm still holding down your leg. He finally realized you were actively participating in the kiss when you squeezed his arm and made a soft huff when he returned to licking and sucking your lips.

Your bumping tongues, he assumed, had been his doing.

He stopped then, standing straight with a raised brow as he took in the sight of your parted lips and red face. A menacing smile unfurled when he met your eyes and recognized the lust clouding them.

He yanked your head back again by your hair, exposing your neck, which he set upon. His mouth was pressed firmly against your windpipe, leaving hard open-mouthed kisses before he moved to licks and nips.

“Oh,” you gasped out, immediately kicking yourself that a sound like that had left you. To your mixture of horror and excitement, you felt a rumble rise from him. His grip went a little tighter and you felt pressure as he sucked at your skin.

Did he... like that?

Progressively, his love nips became harder, morphing into bites the further down your neck he traveled. Along your collarbone he really dug in and you cried out each time he latched onto you, afraid he was removing bits of flesh. One bite in particular, to the left of your neck, made you gnash your teeth and flinch away as pain shot through you.

“All Might,” you groaned, your hand nestling by one of his upright bangs, fingers lightly digging into his scalp. He went rigid at your touch, his face still buried against your skin.

Strange fear flared up at his reaction. Had you broken some unspoken ‘no touching’ rule? You waited to see what he would do next, unaware that he could feel the pulse of your neck thudding against his face. He stood up straight, his hands falling on your hips. He was breathing deeply, eyes scanning his red and, in some instances, bleeding handiwork before falling on your face.

Bright eyes, red cheeks, the way your chest heaved…

“I-I have to tell you something,” you said, your voice sounding hoarse and loud in the near-silent lab, though it couldn’t have been more than a whisper.

He stared expectantly as you swallowed and shifted uncomfortably, your cheeks growing brighter.

“I’ve never… I haven’t…”

As you nervously attempted to reveal your virginity to him, and it slowly dawned on him what you
were trying to say, his usual ominous bravado fell away and was replaced with slightly slack-jawed surprise.

“A virgin,” he said, void of any growl or snarl.

“... Yes.”

A beat passed.

“A virgin,” he almost whined, low and husky, as he pushed you back onto the table with his upper body. He was crushing you, his chin resting on your shoulder while his hot breath tickled at your ear. “Oh my dear, the things I want to do to you now.”

You let out a whimper as his last couple of words came across more like a groan. A jolt ran through you, one that bubbled up from the deepest part of your belly that faded away somewhere near the back of your neck. The feeling of him flattening you was so much better than you had imagined. He was so large. So heavy.

At hearing your weak sound, he had to taste you again. His mouth muffled yours -- the kiss was sloppy and heated. A delicious mixture of tongue, teeth and lips that had your stomach further twisting into knots.

Oh god. You did want it.

There was tugging at the waistband of your jeans. His hands were there, snaked between your two bodies as he worked to unbutton and unzip you. Your hips shifted underneath him, desire and anxiety pooling together and compelling you to adjust your body as if any movement could offer you relief.

All Might went to stand again, to lift his upper body off of you so he could move to the next step of your dance, but you didn’t want that just yet. Immediately your arms wrapped around his neck, throwing your weight into trying to keep him flush against you. You didn’t want the kiss to stop, though his tongue had already retracted back to his mouth. You took initiative and started sucking and nipping at his lips, frantically trying to make him stay on top of you and prolong the moment. You didn't want his body off you yet. You wanted to savor the feeling for just a bit longer.

His hand pressed against your chest, pushing with enough force to break your contact and pin you back on the table. Your breath was ragged as you looked up at him, the absence of his weight already a foreign feeling.

He was laughing at you, shaking his head at how needy you had become in the course of minutes.

“Now, now,” he said, a purr to his words as his hand trailed to nestle between your breasts. You cooed, licking your bottom lip in hopes that maybe he’d touch them at length. You could vividly imagine how it would feel to have his large hands maul your body.

Yes, you wanted it.

His eyes followed the path of your tongue before it disappeared back into your mouth, his countenance shifting to become a little darker.

“You’re very lucky I have self-control.”

He rolled and tugged your jeans off your waist, leaving them bunched around your knees. Hands traced up your naked thighs, brushing across the lace inset of your underwear. You were borderline
panting, tongue caught between your teeth as eyes silently begged him to do something. You didn’t want any breaks or waiting. You wanted him to keep going.

The night could go a variety of ways, All Might mused as he continued his fleeting touches that made your skin dance. There were so many roads laid in front of him, so many different things he could inflict upon you, and he debated which path to take. It had been such a long time since he toyed with someone so inexperienced. And the way you were looking at him.

The heat radiating off of him could have put even Endeavor to shame.

His original plan had been to simply get into your pants. He was only a man after all. A man that could level city blocks with a quick jab, sure, but a man nonetheless. He had recognized an underlying attraction when he first cornered you, but it was the way you attempted to disguise and hide your fluster that really drew him in. Coupled with cursory glimmers of desire your eyes had betrayed…

Though All Might preferred willing and eager partners, he did thoroughly enjoy a good chase from time to time. And the thought of being your first…

As he rubbed a finger over your clothed crotch to test the dampness there, he decidedly pivoted his goals, shifting you from just a potential fling to a full-fledged pet project.

You were shamelessly, hopelessly wet. For him.

“So eager,” he purred and you felt your face grow redder. You didn’t dare open your mouth to say something -- he was still teasingly touching your sex and you had a feeling words wouldn’t be the only thing to escape your lips.

You swallowed, trying to rid yourself of a dry patch that sprouted up in the back of your throat. His touch was excruciatingly soft, borderline ticklish. He was only using two of his sizable fingers to dance up and down your slit. It was stimulating enough that you felt your body respond -- your insides already starting to clench and throb around emptiness, your panties growing damper. You wanted him to add pressure to his touch, to pay attention to your pulsating clit and sink those delicious fingers of his deep into your core. But he made no moves to give you any appeasement.

“Mmph,” you tried to stop your soft whimper before it could escape fully, but the sound was still there. His smile grew wider, teeth clenching tighter.

“I’m feeling… generous tonight,” he said. You weren’t sure what he meant by his declaration -- not that you had the nerve to ask considering the circumstances.

The stroking ended, replaced by a large thumb angling up and digging into the top of your clothed cunt, pressing against your clit. The jerk of your hips was involuntary and, although you were good about keeping the groan buried in your throat, your loud, sharp inhale couldn’t be hidden.

A deep-throated chuckle spilled out of him, his thumb jerkily shifting up and down. He was unhurried in his actions, pausing each time his thumb shifted position. A sudden flush of pleasure from the stimulation would flare in your gut only to die away as a result of the inaction. But the pressure remained.

Your teeth clenched tighter, hands balling into fists. It felt too good. And you wanted more.

Your hips started swaying side-to-side as you attempted to grind your greedy clit against him. If he wouldn’t give you a steady pace then you would force it.
“Sweetheart—” You flinched in indignation at the condescending way he spoke what should have been an endearing pet name. “— Are you really that needy?”

You snorted and turned your head away from him… but kept your hips moving, the back of your neck prickling at how turned on you were by the situation. Yes, you were needy. God, you wanted him so fucking much.

He pulled his thumb away, as you suspected he would. He was going to make you work for your pleasure, wasn’t he? You let out a sigh of disappointment, watching him out of the corner of your eye as he tutted.

“Patience is a virtue,” he said, punctuating it with a sneer. It was strange to hear him say such a cliche statement. “Why don’t you tell me what you want?”

Ah, now this was something you had been hoping to avoid. The steady blush that had enveloped most of your face went a bit brighter as your eyes flickered and settled on a wall of cabinets off to the side.

The muscles in your thighs vibrated under his hands.

“I want you to touch me,” you muttered. He had gotten you worked up enough that you didn’t want to play coy.

His smile only increased in size at how readily you answered.

“Touch you where?”

“Under my knee,” you said with a roll of your eyes, before faltering on your own. He caught your change of expression and held his tongue, watching as you shyly glanced at him before looking away. “You know where I want to be touched.”

“Ah, so you’re bashful now.”

Before you could respond he dropped to his knees and your head whipped around to stare at him, anxiety blossoming in your gut at what his change of positioning meant. His face was inching toward your arousal and you were already arching your back off the table, heart hammering at what he was miming to do next.

His nose brushed against your crotch and he inhaled deep and loud so that you could hear him, breathing in your heady scent. Your mouth opened, swallowing air like a guppy out of water, eyes wide and craving. Letting out a growl of approval at your aroma, he inhaled audibly again and you felt it -- the slight scrape of his nose against your underwear.

Consequences and pride be damned, you would do anything to have him touch you.

“Yes please,” you said, pushing your shoulders up so you could see his smirking face unobscured.

“Tell me what you want.”

“Taste me,” you said without hesitation, his proximity to your pussy too motivating.

“Beg for it.”

“Please taste me, please.”

He made no moves to fulfill your whine.
“Please taste me,” he mimicked. “I didn’t know you were a poet on top of being a costume-maker.”

“All Might,” you crooned, shifting your body. One of his fingers skimmed up your panties again and you inhaled sharply. “Please, please. I need your mouth on my cunt.”

“Cunt!! Now that’s awfully vulgar, costume-maker.”

“Pussssy,” you droned when his thumb traced up your slit to reclaim its place buried against your clit, tracing soft circles against it. “I need you to eat my pussy.”

The phrasing earned another laugh from him and you grumbled deep in your chest.

“Take these off,” he commanded, pulling away from you. You closed your eyes for a second to gather yourself before doing as you were told, sitting up on the table and pulling off your indoor slippers so you could tug your jeans off. When you tossed your soaking underwear to the side, you looked up at him.

“Spread your legs.”

You opened your legs to him, biting your bottom lip at how aroused you were by your own mortification. His hands were there, grabbing your bent knees and pushing your legs wider, fully exposing you to him.

“Please,” you breathed, soft and low. He held your gaze, fingers gripping your flesh tighter.

“I’m sure you’re not entirely innocent,” his voice was a near-hum that mirrored your low tone and made your hips shudder upward. “Show me how you touch yourself.”

Fuck.

Shyly your hands trailed over your abdomen, hesitantly heading toward the dripping heat between your legs. He watched your first coy stroke up your slit -- one finger barely intruding. The muscles in your ass clenched and you went a little deeper during your next stoke, sucking on your lip at feeling the way your body eagerly coated your finger.

“Are you normally this modest?”

You groaned when you heard the husky state of his voice -- he was turned on by your show, wasn’t he? Dipping your head back slightly, you turned your attention to your pleading clit, sandwiching it between two fingers as you moved your hand up and down. You let out a satisfied mewl, licking your lip as you picked up speed as your body urged you to chase after your much-needed orgasm.

“Do you want me to fuck you?”

“Yesss.” In the heated moment of your sex-crazed mind, your entire world revolved around your throbbing cunt.

“Do you want to cum?” he asked and you nodded enthusiastically, your hand motions changing to a frantic rubbing as the sound of slickness echoed in the room. Your eyes were closed, head lolling backward as you ignored the complaints of the tired arm that had kept your upper body propped up.

Your hand was torn away from your body.

Your eyes flew open, aghast you’d be denied so cruelly. But that was the only reaction you had before All Might’s face was buried in your cunt. His thick tongue wiggled between your lips,
nestling as deep as it could reach before it started flicking out in a mixture of directions, prodding you into jelly.

“H-hng! Oh, fuck,” you cried out, sitting up and burying your hands in All Might’s hair, palms pressing eagerly against his skull, pulling him closer into you. The wet, writhing muscle entombed in your pussy was unlike any vibrator you had experimented with. It was hot and it’s movements--

“...A-all--!” you were curling toward him. God it was good. More than you had hoped for. Affection bubbled out -- you were running your hands up the sides of his face, settling on the top of his head so you could stroke his hair, cooing at him. “Oh baby, please. Please keep going.”

All Might retreated momentarily to change positions, moving upward to attack your clit. One arm wrapped up and across your thigh, pulling you closer to his face. The other, pressed down on your lower pelvis, adding additional pressure that seemed to amplify his attentions.

His mouth was merciless -- he felt no need to ease you toward what you hoped would be your first of many climaxes of the night. You could feel the dam within you waning under the constant flood, creeping closer to its breaking point at each passing second he worshiped your sex. You were afraid to acknowledge how close you were getting. What if he felt the need to torture you so more and deny you again?

“I-I’m--”

Your mouth worked to saturate itself as you attempted to piece together a cohesive statement.

“I’m gonna-- a-ah!”

Your bottom lip was caught between your teeth as you body rolled closer to its tipping point. Weak, pleading cries were caught in your throat, tacking themselves onto the end of every gaspy breath that escaped from you. Fingers dug deeper into All Might’s scalp, palms pressing against his forehead as your thighs began to quake in earnest.

It hit you suddenly, the denotation of pleasure. You cried out, upper body falling back onto the table as your hips jerked through the pulsations that cascaded over you. Your hands left his head so you could clutch your own hair, a slight daze overcoming you.

But All Might didn’t slow his ministrations. Suddenly, everything seemed too intense and you tried to flee away from his mouth, to give yourself time to breathe and recover.

There was no escape from him.

“P-please!” You were full-on begging. “Aahh -- it’s too much!”

It was agonizing; too much good, a sensory overload that was rotting your brain. All Might didn’t care that you were too sensitive for him. You had wanted him to touch you. This was what you had to deal with.

His left hand replaced the one holding your pelvis down so that he could reach out to grasp your jaw. For a brief second his released your clit and, in the shadows of his eyes, you saw one stunning blue iris shining up at your and meeting your gaze.

“So--” he instructed, two fingers prodding your bottom lip.

Then his mouth was back on your overworked bud.
Tentatively you sat back up, head drooping at the slight lightheadedness that went along with your shifting, grasping his wrist. He closed his hand into a fist, only his pointer and index fingers left out and pressed together, guiding you to which digits needed your attention.

You ran your tongue up his fingers, relishing in the saltiness of his skin. He tasted like sun-soaked concrete -- warm and earthy. You gave a slight nibble on the tops of each digit, kissing them before moving toward the actual mouthing. He timed it so when your lips finally enclosed around the first joint his fingers, he unleashed a particularly hard suck on your clit that had you moaning around them.

“Good girl,” came his soft purr.

His hands were significantly larger than yours and the size difference logically extended to his fingers. You bobbed your head along them, gasping and groaning as the frayed rope in your belly tied itself into another knot thanks to his attentive mouth. Your hand, still clutching his wrist, massaged the underside of his palm.

Apparently you were taking too long to wet his fingers, even though he had been the one to preach about the importance of patience. When you went to bob your head down again, he forced them down your throat. Your eyes opened in a minor panic, gag reflex immediately kicking in, leaving you sputtering at the intrusion.

He retracted his fingers from your throat when you tugged desperately at his wrist, giving you a chance to catch your breath and calm your body. You sniffed, nose already running as reactionary tears pooled in your eyes. When the danger of heaving ebbed away, his fingers were back and tapping at your lips, ready to be buried again in your mouth. With a quiet mewl you obeyed, opening your mouth to give him unrestricted access to your throat.

He grunted when he heard the siren’s call of your gagging start up once more, adjusting the hand on your pelvis so he could flick your clit with his thumb while he fucked you with his tongue. You were a beautiful sight -- your body doing its best to grind against his mouth while you choked on his fingers. Drool was traveling down your chin, tears pricking your eyes.

All Might's cock had already sprung to life and hung, thick and heavy, in his pants. You were close, he could tell by the way your grinding stopped in favor of rigidly pushing up and toward his mouth.

He was watching your face when you came, your voice muffled by his fingers, leaving spit to travel across his hand and down his wrist. He suppressed a grunt, removing his hand while you mindlessly panted and twitched in aftershocks.

One of his soaked fingers pressed against your opening, sliding in slowly. You were so slick that there was no resistance to his intrusion.

His lips returned to your nub.

“Stop! A-All Might, no! ” Your voice was thick with emotion, eyes wild as you tried to push his head back to get him off your sex. It was too much. Way too much. Your body was trembling, his onslaught had gone without any kind of break.

He continued to push in deeper and you cried out, begging him to give you a breather. But his finger felt divine, something big and rigid your insides could finally grip onto with enthusiasm. He continued to push, way past where his tongue had bottomed out. You fell back onto the table with an unceremonious thud, body flapping at the continued assault, his digit prodding.
Then it went still. He was giving you the time needed to adjust to the feeling of it.

Was it pathetic you were so thankful?

Quietly you worked on steadying your breath as you clenched your walls around his digit, trying to visualize how deep he was without looking. At feeling the constriction, All Might began moving again, pushing and turning as he adjusted the angle of his hand.

You worked to hide your whimpers when he pulled his finger out, only to start thrusting it into you roughly. Having someone else in control was a new experience for you. It was not unpleasant, what you were feeling, but it was strange.

When he started flicking your clit, that's when the planets started to align. You cocked your head to the side, eyes closing as your body tensed up. You were broaching the top of that wonderful rollercoaster again. And you wanted nothing more than to reach the climax of the ride.

But then everything stopped.

For one brief second, you seriously wondered if you transcended time and space because you felt nothing -- his presence had disappeared from your cunt entirely. Hell, you weren't sure if time still existed.

Reality crashed around you, time hadn't stopped. All he had done remove himself from your cunt.

You leaned up to gaze at him -- a red-faced, drooling, breathless mess. It looked like he was glaring at you, mouth and chin still glistening.

“Tell me what you want,” he growled and your eyelids fluttered at the raw, hoarseness of his voice.

Anger wasn’t what was causing his glare.

“Fuck me,” you answered, your voice just as harsh as his.

He didn’t tease you by making you ask again.

You were filled suddenly by two of his fingers, a quick sob ripping through you. He was pumping his hand in and out, giving you no chance to adjust to the additional girth of his second finger. On top of that, his thumb was roughly jabbing and rubbing against your clit.

“A-ah!”

You were wailing out disgusting, full-bodied sounds at how full and wonderful you felt. You met his actions with your own thrusting, eagerly fucking yourself against his fingers.

All Might’s free hand gripped your chin and you felt his weight lean against the table, listening to it creak under your combined bodies as his mouth met yours. He was smearing your essence against your face, his tongue melding around yours. Your mind was reeling, body vibrating with bliss as you listened to the combination of squelching from his hand and wet clicking from your kiss. If you could even call it a kiss -- you were essentially just gasping and moaning into his mouth.

Your climax struck suddenly, eyes squeezing shut as your wailed out ‘All Might,’ your body convulsing around his hand. He groaned at hearing his name on your lips called out in such a distressed way, burying his face into your neck as he felt his cock twitch and beg for attention.

“I c-can’t!” you were desperate. He continued to pump into you, making your eyes roll up into your
head and hips jerk at the clenching in your gut. “Too much! Too much! T-too much!”

Your chanting only compelled him on. He shifted so he was half-perched on the table, pulling you onto his lap.

His hand never stopped.

You were slack, face contorted into a flushed grimace. Something hard was pressing against your backside, a remaining fragment of your consciousness informed you. Feebly your hand groped in its direction, coming into contact with the strained mass contained within All Might’s pants. He hissed and squeezed the back of your neck when he felt the pressure of your hand against his tented khakis, adding an additional level of fervor to your sloppy kiss.

Unconsciously he jerked his cock harder against your hand. But, as soon as it happened, awareness returned to him and he lifted you higher against his chest, away from the danger lurking below.

“I want to -- ngh -- feel you,” you whimpered, unfocused eyes searching for his as your arms wrapped around his approaching neck. Christ did you want to feel him. You wanted his cock in your hands. You wanted to drive him crazy. Tit for tat.

“No,” he rumbled in your ear.

He calmed his finger fucking, leaving them embedded in you while he thumbed a lazy circle around your clit. You groaned, appreciating the sudden ease that had taken over, giving you a chance to catch your breath.

But his answer was so unsatisfying.

“I can handle it.”

That elicited a chuckle from him. He drew out his hand out from your pussy, leaving your thighs and ass shuddering at how raw you felt.

But then he was pressing into you again -- this time, with a third finger. You groaned, one of your hands weaseling to grip at the hair at the back of his head while you buried your face in his neck. You felt like you were being spread wide, he was having trouble pushing into you.

Ultimately he retracted the third digit. Relief, combined with disappointed, settled across you.

“You can’t handle it,” he grunted before adding a purred, “Not yet.”

He fucked you softly with two digits until he felt you were stretched enough for him to pick up the pace once again. You were dotting his throat with gasping kisses because, hell in the moment the man was like a god to you.

You honestly thought you’d never be able to muster the strength to cum again -- of course, he proved you wrong within minutes. The dangerously frayed knot inside you was twisting again and growing tighter. You were too exhausted to cry out feverishly like you did before, you could only let out meek, guttural whimpers.

“All Might,” you groaned, nuzzling under his chin in case he couldn’t hear you. You couldn’t tell how loud your voice was.

“Last one,” he said in a strangely placating manner. You nodded meekly. “Tell me when you’re close.”
Oh god, how close were you? It was hard to measure.

But then you felt it, the instinctive locking of your legs, the clenching of your ass. He felt the subtle changes too, rotating and curling his fingers in search of that one spot…

It was as if you experienced some kind of sudden, chemical reaction. His finger connected with something inside you that made the stars dance in behind your eyes. Suddenly, you were barreling toward the edge.

“I-I’m-” you truly were trying to get out the warning between the cries, a second wind spurring unknown energy back into your body.

All Might prodded your sweet spot and flicked your clit until you were sucked into oblivion, oceans crashing in your ears as everything within you exploded all at once, the strongest orgasm of the night crashing into you and destroying your ego and superego, leaving just your writhing id. You were only a shell of a human.

“Use your quirk,” his breath fanned against your ear as your eyes rolled. You weren’t sure if it was his voice was echoing in your head or he was just repeating his command in your ear, but you obeyed. Reaching out you grasped the dial of time and rewound back several seconds.

It was a hurricane. A volcano. A tsunami. Everything you had previously felt compounded and all you could do was cry out one final time before exhaustion truly claimed you. It was all too much.

The world shut down.

You went limp, your battery completely drained.

And that was that.

All Might blinked.

The body in his arms had gone completely slack, face still nestled against his chest. He waited for a few curious seconds, wondering what you were doing. But you didn't shift or make any satisfied noises at having just cummed again.

Well, there was one noise you eventually made -- a soft snore.

You… had fallen asleep?

He pulled his soaked hand from you, laying your limp body across the table. Maybe you only fainted? He nudged you and waited, but you didn't stir. Furrowing his brows, he repeated the action albeit harder.

Still, nothing.

All Might glanced down at his hand, still slick with your juices. He indulged in one final taste before wiping it clean on his pants, adjusting the irritating bunching around his still-hard cock. He lightly smacked your cheeks, trying to force consciousness to return to you. To get you awake so he could tease you a bit more. He still had another hour or so of time left and he had hoped to make good use of it.

“Artisan,” he said loudly, one final check that you were out for good. When you didn’t rouse, he
looked around your lab, unsure what to do with you.

He thought about leaving you there, half-naked and sleeping in a puddle of your own essence. But he was feeling a bit more… attached than he expected.

Fine. He’d take care of you.

He haphazardly wiggled your jeans back on your body, shoving your dirtied underwear into one of its front pockets. He didn't want you to lose those.

At least your modesty was covered, he thought as he adjusted his pants again, growing more aware of the slight slickness that coated his leg.

It looked like he would have to take care of his own pleasure.

Well, he put your pants back on. Was that good enough? Would you be alright sleeping in your lab?

You looked so… helpless, he noted with a snort to himself, annoyed that he was almost fretting. He kicked over your stool and waited -- the sound of it striking the floor was considerable; an initial loud bang followed by a clatter as it rolled back and forth along its side before settling.

You didn't so much as twitch.

If someone entered your lab while you were in such a state...

He rubbed his face, working to convince himself that helping you would only work for his benefit in the long run. You'd be more likely to spread your legs to him if you knew he had taken the time to care for you. It was a sound, practical decision.

After some snooping he found an old plastic shopping bag he could shove his new costume in; he wasn't going to leave that behind, it was the reason he approached you after all. And he didn't have the time.

Your discarded purse also caught his attention -- women relied on their purses, right? Figuring he should bring it, he tied it around your waist.

Draping your unconscious form over his shoulder, he made his way to what had apparently become his window. He idly wondered how long it would take for you to discover that, although it latched, the window didn’t lock and could be easily opened from the outside.

Once most of All Might’s body was hanging unobscured outside the building, and he was sure you were secure and at no risk of tumbling away, he launched himself up and into the darkened sky. He would leave you securely within your house. Of course he knew where you lived -- so far he had followed you home twice since your initial meeting, observing through unblinded windows as you went through the motions of your oblivious life.

Simple curiosity had been his motivation.

All Might found a set of keys inside the purse, the crisis of breaking into your home averted before he could truly consider smashing a window or knocking down your front door. After some trial and error, he was able to get your previously-dented door unlocked.

In a few quick strides, you were tossed safely into your bed.

You stirred a bit at that. Opening your eyes, you twisted your head around in half-dazed
confusion. All Might loomed and leered at the end of your bed, prepared to slip into his villainous bravado to ridicule you on your dreadfully lewd behavior. But you weren’t lucid and didn’t register anything your eyes may have seen, quickly falling back on your stomach and drifting off to sleep again.

There was not much left for All Might to do after that. Before leaving, he performed what he considered an additional kindness by removing your clothing, tossing everything onto the floor and settling your body under the blankets. His eyes trailed over your nakedness and, for a brief second, he felt a twang of pining spring up in his gut. There had been a time in his life where he wouldn't have been forced to leave. Where he could have had you in his clutches for days.

He lingered for a bit, glancing at the photographs scattered around your living room and at the book you had nestled in the cushion of your couch. He would have dug around a bit deeper to find out more about you but, truthfully, he was hungry and tired.

Next time.

With his self-appointed obligation fulfilled, the front door of your world clicked shut behind All Might as he left to slink back into the shadows that composed his.
Asshole

Chapter Notes

Surprise, surprise, this is shifting away from being just a straight smut fic. I really enjoy exploring what kind of villain All Might would be and how he would navigate having someone he's attached (ha) to.

I should warn thirsty readers there's no sex in this chapter. But I pinky promise to make it up to you soon.

And I want to wholeheartedly thank everyone who took the time to review, leave kudos or shoot me a message about this fic. It warms my heart to see people enjoying the jumbled mess of words I've strung together. I mean it when I say I love you all.

It’s such a gut-wrenching fear that envelops a person when they find themselves waking up in a place they have no knowledge of traveling to.

Even if that place is their own bedroom.

Though you were surrounded by the soft familiarity of your bed, you couldn’t quite get your spiked heart rate to settle until you compartmentalized your memories of the night before. There was All Might. There was a kiss. There was his head between your legs.

After that, there was nothing.

Unease settled over you as you went through the motions of your morning, grasping routine for comfort as your lapse of memory hung over you. Was it possible to get drunk off of passion? In a delirious state, could you have directed All Might to your house? Waking up nude was a bit off-putting too… Maybe you just tore off your clothes and headed to bed while incoherent? You’ve done similar actions while drunk before.

But you had been completely sober.

After a long, reflective shower to clear off the residual slickness that coated your thighs, you concluded that it wasn’t alarm that nagged at you. And, surprisingly, it wasn’t anxiety either.

You just wanted answers. You needed to find those missing pieces and complete the jumbled puzzle of your mind. Maybe then you’d be granted some peace.

After indulging in a quick breakfast, you decided to head to work. There were projects you needed to work on, clients you needed to contact.

Most of all, you required distraction.

Otherwise, you’d think in circles and drive yourself crazy.
Hours shifted to days.

Despite staying late nearly every night at work, All Might never made an appearance.

He also never paid for his suit.

It felt like a rejection, plain and simple. He had his fun and he was done with you. You had been brushed aside and was left looking like an overeager idiot who easily gave into his mediocre advances. It was a stinging humiliation. A lesson learned.

All for a free costume.

Perhaps one day you could laugh about it. Attend some secret villain support convention or something and, over drinks, coyly tell new friends how All Might once ate you out in exchange for a suit.

But for now, you just worked. Time heals all wounds, right? Eventually your pride would be repaired.

Asshole.

A little more than a month after your fling, his sneering face was plastered across every news station in Japan. The infamous All Might had gotten into a tiff with a hero based out of Osaka. Bits of the battle were captured on video by a news chopper and played on repeat several times a day for the next week. Not much could be observed -- there were gusts of wind, exploding building facades, flying fists, a rainstorm.

The hero was a newcomer and, surprisingly, held his own against the great villain. He survived, carted away from the battle with only a dozen broken bones and a serious concussion.

All Might disappeared altogether, evading capture.

He was wearing your suit, you noticed coldly, as a handful of enhanced-but-grainy still frames were displayed on the nightly news -- they were the only clear shots they had of the fighters. You noticed flaps of fabric fluttering around his body as he crouched, frozen in time.

His first major fight and he goes and tears up your hard work.

You tried to push him out of your thoughts, instead focusing on your latest project -- hiking boots.

It was a design commissioned by a vigilante who could command earth and rock, so long as he could touch it. After going barefoot for years he reached out, hoping you could design something that would finally protect the bottoms of his feet without impeding his quirk.

Apparently he was unaware you did work for villains too, and you weren’t about to tell him.

You rested your head against your hand as you doodled a boot in your design book. The idea was to create a sole that shielded but didn’t act like a barrier. So far your inspiration had been winter gloves that could interact with the touchscreen of a smartphone. But that was about as far as you got.

This was going to be a project full of trial and error, you noted with a sigh as the front of your skull throbbed, warning you of a lurking stress headache. Thankfully, the timeline was flexible and the guy seemed reasonable enough. It would just be the technical stuff that would bog you down.
You sat up straighter in your stool, squeezing your shoulders back as you stretched your hands up toward the ceiling, an attempt to alleviate some the stiffness that plagued your body. The room was filled with the symphony of cracking joints as you twisted, releasing your best old man groan as relief spread down your back.

But it wasn’t your back that was the real problem area.

Hanging your head, you slowly rocked it back and forth, trying to focus on the constant tightness that had long settled at the nape of your neck. It was an area that no stretching or self-massage had been able to soothe.

Your chin was tucked into your chest, eyes closed in minor relaxation when something reached out and pressed against the problem area.

A full-fledged scream wasn’t able to form fast enough to be expelled from your throat -- instead, you released a gaspy yip and instantly activated your quirk.

You rewound the clock back a few precious seconds, putting distance between yourself and your assailant. When the world ceased its rocking, you grabbed your pencil and, wielding it like a knife, turned to impale it in the intruder before they had a chance to lay a hand on you.

The point of the pencil broke easily when it struck All Might’s forearm -- not the slightest scratch or imprint marked his granite-like skin. Mouth agape, you stopped, looking up at his face.

"Really?"

He looked annoyed as he plucked the pencil out of your limp hand and tossed it aside. You heard it scatter across the linoleum.

All those biting monologues you had rehearsed in the shower escaped you.

"All Might," was all you said.

"First you think window locks will keep me out," he grumbled, stepping away from you and placing a timeworn rucksack on the table. "Now you think a pencil can hurt me? I don't know if it's naivety I'm dealing with or stupidity."

‘He’s insulting you,’ your brain chided as the frozen gears of your mind began to turn. You balled your hands into fists and glared at his back.

"You have a lot of nerve showing up here," you sputtered, the anger you felt running down your spine. In fact, embarrassing rage-fueled tears threatened to fall and it took every ounce of composure to keep them from making an appearance. The last thing you needed to do was to start crying in front of him.

He glanced over his shoulder in your direction, brow raised at your tone.

"Turning into a scorned lover already?" he asked dryly.

"More like a scorned craftsman," you retorted, skin flushing. "You commission work from me but don't pay for it. Then you go and get into a fight and tear it all to shreds."

You paused, realization settling.

"...Don't tell me... are you really here for repairs? You'd steal from me and then expect me to fix
what you took!?

All Might had long since turned his head back to his bag, unpacking the balled-up and shredded clothing you had spent weeks toiling over, tossing them onto the table. You resisted the impulse to examine your creations, keeping your eyes trained on his back. He gave you no response, just continued to dig and retrieve broken bits and pieces.

"I'm not going to fix something you stole from me, asshole!" you said loudly, flustered and offended. His body went rigid, hand suspended over the table.

You had raised your voice at him.

The helmet All Might had been handling fell to the surface with a rocking thud. He was twisting toward you, bringing himself to full height as his shadowed face glowered down at you. You lifted your chin in defiance of his intimidation, though your brows had furrowed in distress.

You swallowed. You were a rodent staring down an enraged bull elephant. But you'd be damned if you would back down so easily.

"Remember who I am," he said. His voice was steady and the lack of emotion buzzed with danger. It was hazardous territory -- your heart thundered in your chest and that 'fight or flight' voice in your head was roaring at you to flee.

And you listened.

You backed down, losing your bluster under his gaze.

"Yeah, I know who you are," you groused under your breath with a petulant roll of your eyes, looking away. "You're a no-good thief."

Of course you said something. You just had to have the last word. You couldn't stomach being a total pushover.

You were poised to walk toward the worktable to check on the damage of the clothing, but you caught an odd movement out of the corner of your eye. Your attention flickered back to him.

All Might's face had contorted. He looked... infuriated. Clearly he was in no mood for games. He pulled back a fist and you steeled yourself.

His body pivoted away from you as he followed through with a jab. A burst of energy erupted from his fist, sending a funnel of wind tearing across your lab. The noise was horrendous -- the clash and clattering of a million different things being sent flying, the thumping of ceiling tiles and lights as they buckled and fell to the ground. Two windows were blown out, shards of glass bursting out and falling to the concrete outside.

Reverberations of his destruction filled your ears. Papers were everywhere. Some projects that had taken years to complete were ruined. It was all information that you were able to immediately gather in a painful cursory glance.

All Might looked at his fist.

Suddenly, standing seemed like such an effort. You plopped backward onto your ass, no longer concerned with how you looked to him.

Silence.
Somewhere, a hanging fluorescent tube fell, loudly exploding upon contact with the floor.

All because you opened your mouth?

"I'll be back tomorrow night," All Might said, grabbing his bag and letting it hang by his side. You were staring at the floor, refusing to look up at him. His boots walked out of your peripheral vision. Though you could no longer see him, you could hear him leaving -- fragments of your lab crunched under his shoes as he walked. There was a 'whoosh,' a breeze cutting across your cheeks when he left the building for good.

Burying your face into your knees, you let a few shaky breaths, wondering if you were going to break down into tears. You could feel them brewing, but you were stuck in an uncomfortable limbo while you worked through the embarrassment, rage and hurt that wrecked you.

A few stray teardrops escaped but the waterworks never truly unleashed. Sniffling loudly, you wiped the residual wetness from your burning cheeks and stood. Your eyes landed on the tattered clothing of All Might.

You couldn't stomach touching them just yet.

Did you really deserve that?

Instead, you made your way over to where your broom and other cleaning supplies were stashed.

_He's a villain._

---

You were on edge when dusk settled over Kamino, knowing HE would be back soon. You attempted to still the shaking of your hands, embracing the soothing thoughts that you repeated. It will be over soon -- he'll get his costume and leave. If he ever comes back, you know it's best just to keep your mouth shut and do the work.

Grumbling about being stiffed ended up costing you thousands upon thousands of yen in damage. That was just on the destruction to your building -- you were also going to have to eat the cost of the repairs to the commissioned work that had been caught in the blast.

You did not deserve that destruction. Nothing you did the previous night deserved that much... rage.

All Might arrived earlier than you expected -- for once, you knew when he had entered. You had taped cheap sheets of plastic over the broken windows; when they began flapping randomly, you knew another presence had infiltrated your sanctum.

"I'm almost done."

Your voice was dull, the thudding in your chest alternating between emotional numbness and dread. All you had to do was replace the cracked lens of his mask and reattach the missing spikes from his shoulder pads. Then you'd be finished.

Silence.

You questioned if it had been a stray breeze that had ruffled the plastic, but you didn't dare to look up and check. Then you felt it, the shivering of your nerves -- your intuition warned that you were being
watched.

Something crinkled behind you. A paper bag was dropped, centimeters from your working hands. Without moving your head, you glanced at it before your eyes returned to the circuitry of the mask’s shattered eye lens.

"I'm no thief."

Ah, so he decided to pay you after his hissy fit. You didn't acknowledge the bag, his words or ask where he had gotten the money. Apparently, your muteness didn't sit well with him. The normally silent giant began pacing behind you -- he was being audible on purpose, you assumed. When you didn't turn to engage with him, he moved to examine the piles of debris you had swept up. You could see his figure brooding in your peripheral vision.

The LED light of the mask’s eye automatically illuminated when you lowered it to the darkness under the worktable. All Might looked up at your movement, but you refused to acknowledge him any further. After resealing the orange mask lens, you reached for the box of various metal spike adornments you had set aside.

A few seconds later, his calloused hand stretched beside you, taking the mask off the table. You continued comparing spikes, trying to find the proper-sized ones buried within the box. Returning the mask, he seized his shirt next.

There would be no trace of the damage, you intoned silently as you envisioned him examining the clothing. With the material you used, the repairs you needed to perform were done at a near-microscopic level. Each missing section of thread had been meticulously replaced and reattached, returning the shirt to its original level of integrity.

"You do... good work."

No, you do masterful work. But you weren’t going to correct him.

You held up the shoulder pad, verifying uniformity. Not seeing any irregularities in terms of spike height, you started screwing everything back together.

You felt pain radiating across your shoulders, a result of the hunched over pose you continuously found yourself working in. The strain had grown in severity, to the point where you couldn't brush it off any longer. You had to reposition but you didn't want to. Remaining hunched meant you had an excuse not to look up at your visitor.

A spasm shot across your back and you hid a grunt, your body winning out over your spirit. You sat up properly, inhaling softly at the instant relief.

"Has your back been bothering you?"

You bit down a harsh laugh, gritting your teeth instead over the question. If you didn't know any better, you'd think he was actually concerned about your wellbeing. But someone who was worried about you wouldn't lay waste to your belongings.

"Is this how it's going to be? Acting like a child?"

You tensed up -- there was that red impatience in his voice again. Danger, Will Robinson. Danger. Danger. Danger.

All Might seized your shoulder, forcibly turning you and your stool so you were facing him.
"Don't ignore me!" he snapped with an unusual level of intensity.

You cracked.

"Please, just let me finish and you can go," you said, voice hollow and tired. "I'm almost done. Just... let me finish."

That... was not what he was expecting.

He lost his thunder. After a few anxious seconds of no further reaction, you quietly turned around. All Might ran a hand through his hair, eyes focused on the back of your head.

_Shit._

They roamed over to the damaged section of your lab, to all the piles of trash that had been created, then to the made-up blanket bed on the floor.

_Shit._

"Think you can play the part of a doctor on top of being a costume maker?"

What?

'Don't look,' your mind told you. 'Stay strong.'

But it was such an... odd question.

At that, you glanced back at him. He was smirking, reaching to unbuckle his pants, watching to see if you would grow flustered by his undressing. You kept the same apathetic expression as he dropped his trousers, which bothered him more than he cared to admit.

A large, bloodied bandage encircling most of his upper right thigh captured your attention.

"I need stitches," was all he offered. You blinked. Slowly your eyes flickered up to his face, brows furrowed in confusion.

"You need to see a doctor then," you said. There was a spark of life back in your voice -- bafflement that he thought you could perform medical services for him. Internally, he perked up. Outwardly, he waved his hand.

"Surprisingly I can't walk into a hospital when I get hurt," he snapped, though he made sure there was no bite behind his tone. "I usually take care of my own injuries but this one... can you sew it closed?"

"S-sew it...?" you sputtered, looking at him as if he sprouted a second head. "I can't do that! You need medical supplies for that."

He snorted.

"I'm sure needle and thread will work."

No, normal thread wouldn't work! He was unwrapping his bandages and your mind was babbling all the things you wanted to say to him. Everything needed to be sterile and regular thread was porous and would collect bacteria, that was just common sense! He would run the risk of infection--

"You need stitches," you said when the oozing red gash on his leg was revealed to you. He snorted,
tossing the wrappings to the ground.

"No shit," he growled. "I've tried keeping it clean but it hasn't gotten any better. I think it needs to be closed."

"Did you get it from the fight in Osaka?"

"No," he answered after a brief silence. "This was from something else."

That was somewhat relieving -- the wound hadn't been stewing for quite as long.

"You really need to see some kind of doctor," you said again. "Some back-alley specialist or something. This is way out of my area of expertise."

His mouth snapped shut, unsure exactly what to say. He wanted to say something insulting but he... didn't like seeing you in your current state.

Declaring yourself a weak-willed cretin, you felt your lingering distress at his presence start recede. You held no affection for All Might, you told yourself, and were certain he would turn on you. He was a wild animal, after all.

But he was an injured wild animal.

You let out an audible sigh, rubbing your eyes. Then you trailed your hands down your face so they were covering your cheeks. You shook your head at the pantsless villain standing in front of you. If you didn't hate him, you would have laughed at such a ridiculous scene.

"Let me... Google this..."

You typed away in the browser of your phone, searching for ways to treat wounds at home and how to administer stitches. Every search told you the obvious -- 'Hey, don't do this, go to a doctor.' But that was not an option so you would have to make do.

"I do have fishing wire," you mumbled to yourself, glancing up at the shelving unit where it would be kept. Sewing needles were no problem -- you had an assortment of varying sizes and lengths. As for treating such a deep wound... you had a first aid kit.

"This isn't a good idea," you said pointedly, standing to collect everything you would need. "You're going to go septic and they're going to end up cutting off your leg--"

"Just do the stitches."

The needles had to be sterilized, so you boiled water in your lab's kettle and placed them in a clean coffee mug. While they sat, you popped open your first aid kit.

It was barely used, only broken into occasionally for band-aids and Neosporin. Setting up a temporary medical workstation, you motioned All Might to come closer to you so you could get to work.

With his pants around his knees, he obeyed.

You worked diligently and silently while All Might shot fleetingly looks down at the top of your head. He was stoic as you cleaned and pressed at his gaping wound, refusing to acknowledge any sort of pain, though it had been bothering him for days.

He cleared his throat but didn't speak right away.
"I overreacted."

Your movements betrayed your hesitancy -- he felt your ointment-doused fingers linger a bit too long on his leg as you processed what he said. Soon your actions skipped back into an even tempo.

You kept quiet.

"Is the damage bad?"

You pulled away from his thigh, turning to wipe your hands clean.

"Yes."

"The money there is for your work," he said. "I was kind enough to include extra for... my outburst."

You weren't looking at him -- you were scrolling through your phone, reading over the horrendously illustrated wikiHow on at-home stitches. "There's commissioned work I'll have to redo and a deadline I pray I don't miss. You have no idea what you've done to me."

"I... was in a bad mood."

Silence.

"I overreacted."

"Yes, you said that already."

Silence.

"You were being disrespectful."

You looked at him, really looked at his face. He was frowning, falling somewhere between pouting and glaring. Catching your eyes, he bristled, regressing back to his usual villainous aura.

"You had forgotten who I was," he said. "You were growing too comfortable."

"Growing too comfortable," you echoed hollowly. "That was, what, our fourth meeting? The third real one where we spoke at length? This was also after you--" reflexively you swallowed, cutting your sentence short. You ignored the involuntary action, retaining eye contact. "After you--"

"Fingered you," he said with a sneer that simultaneously made your blood boil and lip quiver. You looked away.

There was a loud, drawn-out sigh behind you.

"I should have expected this was going to happen," he grumbled to himself. "That a virgin would end up getting too attached--"

"That's not it!" You were horrified and the words erupted from you before you caught them. With a breath, you continued but kept your response steady. "That's not it at all. It's just you didn't have the decency to... You didn't..."

A light went off in his head. All Might's sneer increased in ferocity and, ignoring the pain in his leg, he shuffled closer to you.

"Say it," he demanded, leaning onto the worktable to get an unobscured look at your face.
Well, after *that* reaction you didn't want to admit to it. You bit your tongue, focusing on your phone.

His large hand reached out and he curled a finger around your chin, forcing you to look up at him. His brow was raised and he was staring expectantly.

"What were you going to say?" he cooed in that fakely sweet voice that he used when he wanted to be degrading.

"There's no point," you snapped, jerking your head out of his clutches. You went back rereading the same six steps wikiHow for what felt like the hundredth time.

"Because it's never going to happen again?"

He was still poking fun at you. You glared at nothing.

"Yes. After yesterday's stunt I can swear to you I will never sleep with you. Ever."

You rolled up the sleeves of your shirt, putting on a pair of latex gloves that had been included in your first-aid kit. After fishing the needles out of the still-hot water with tweezers, you attempted to thread fishing line.

Though it was thicker and easier to handle, pushing the line through the eye of the needle proved difficult. You chewed your bottom lip, growing more fidgety at each failure.

"How did I get home that night," you asked abruptly, refusing to shift your gaze. "I woke up in my bed. Naked. I assume that was your doing."

"You fell asleep after you came," All Might hummed. The back of your neck grew hot but you ignored it, carefully reaching out to tug through the small bit of line that had pushed through the needle eye. "So I brought you home to put you to bed."

"Did I tell you where I lived?"

It was the big question. All Might tilted his head before reaching out, letting a few strands of your hair run across his fingertips.

You shuddered and pulled away -- an action that resulted in a low chortle from him.

"You woke up just enough to tell me where you lived."

You released the breath you had been holding, shoulders relaxing as you held up the threaded needle -- your Excalibur. Eying his injury, your stomach churned as your mentally prepared yourself for what sewing flesh was going to feel like.

"Do you want... Advil or something?" you asked. You hated him but he was still a person. And you were about to cause him pain. The offer was more for your conscience.

All Might smiled -- a cruel, shadowy smile that looked almost shark-like. Ah, so you were concerned about his comfort? Excalibur drooped slightly and he chuckled through closed teeth.

"I'll barely feel this."

And you believed him.

Inhaling deeply through your nose, you steeled your nerves and clenched your jaw. The needle inched closer toward skin, your trepidation increasing as the gap grew shorter. You were sewing a
person, not a piece of cloth. A living, breathing person who was probably going to bleed.

"Urgh," your pathetic Excalibur lost its luster as your hand wavered. "I don't know if I can do this--"

"Just do it. Unless..." Hidden eyes flashed, "You like seeing me with my pants down?"

It took a fair bit of pressure to pierce his skin, to the point where you worried you would end up bending the needle. You ordered him to hold the wound closed, leaving your hands free to forcefully sew. Each stitch was a labor and fishing line proved difficult to knot, especially in gloves.

When you finished, you sat back and found yourself admiring your human embroidery. Sure, the stitches weren't as uniform as a medical professional's. And the knots were bulky and clumsily tied. But the gash was closed and you had to give All Might credit -- he didn't so much as flinch while you had worked.

Maybe if a career as a villain support specialist didn't pan out, you could become a nurse.

"It says we-- you can remove them in seven to ten days," you said as you glanced at your phone, ripping off your gloves. "And if it starts to look infected... well, go see someone about it."

"Aren't you going to bandage it?"

"Bandages are right here," you said, pushing the first-aid kit closer to him. "I think you can handle it."

"Hmm, but I like feeling your hands on my thighs."

Cursing internally at yourself, you felt your cheeks go red and you forcefully continued to look at your phone. He wasn't blind -- of course he saw the color rise on your face.

While he dug through the first-aid kit, you returned to his shoulder pads, quickly piecing them together and binding new leather on the underside to hide the bolts that held everything in place. You refused to look up at All Might, but assumed he was wrapping his leg.

Just as the thought crossed your mind, you heard a sharp inhale.

You ignored him.

Then there was a second one.

Pushing the completed job aside, you swiveled in your stool. He was gingerly wrapping a clean, flesh-colored bandage around his thigh, purposely releasing a pained breath every time the cloth brushed against his wound.

"You're full of shit," you said, standing. All Might wore a mocking, hurt expression on his face.

"My hands are too rough," he said. "You have a soft touch. Why don't you come over and help me out? It would be… beneficial to the both of us if you come and wrap your hands around me."

"Well, I didn't want half my lab destroyed by an unstable villain. I guess we all have to handle our own problems, don't we? Pity."

"You're being disrespectful again."

Your heart dropped and you hesitated. The emotion that welled up wasn't because he was threatening you again -- he wasn't. In fact, he had taken on a teasing tone. But the fact he would joke
about something that obviously hurt you...

"Your things are finished. You can leave at any time."

You left the vicinity of your work table, stepping over piles of swept up broken bits to look at the collection of busted projects you had laid out. Clothing had been spared in the wind vortex All Might had created, as did armor and other sturdy support items (some just needed cracked adornments replaced or dents hammered out).

It was only three deceitfully ordinary items that needed repairs: a music box, a watch and a pair of glasses.

All of which belonged to a single client.

"Are your feelings hurt again?" All Might asked with a huff, standing behind you to see what knickknacks could be more important than him.

"Please leave."

"If I didn't want that cherry of yours, this would be tiring," he said before smirking. "And I'm not just pop your cherry... I'll ruin your cherry, split your cherry wide open. Destroy your cherry."

You pulled away when he touched you, incredulous. He had that predatory look again and, although he had bandaged his leg, he hadn't pulled up his pants.

In fact, he had taken them off completely -- just wearing socks, his boxer briefs and black polo shirt.

"Stop it," you snapped. "Just go away. I don't want you. What we did was a mistake."

He laughed, his head tilting up and hands resting on his waist as his chest shook from the vibrations.

In a rush of wind, he grabbed at you.

What resulted was a tug-of-war of wills that you knew you couldn't win, but you be damned if you weren't going to try. You used your quirk, kicking back time a handful of seconds.

Aware of your power, he simply charged after each time shift, wrapping you in his arms. This repeated four times. On your last attempt, you couldn't even muster visualizing the dial. Your head felt like it was seconds from bursting, stomach-churning dangerously. All Might's enclosing arms weren't pinning you to his chest anymore -- they were keeping you upright.

"You really are stupid," he grumbled, seating you on a counter as your eyes fluttered. You tried reaching out to your quirk again in a desperate attempt to prove him wrong and turn the tide of your encounter. But you couldn't. And your failure disgusted you.

"You gonna force yourself on me now?" you gurgled bitterly, swallowing to keep the bile from rising past your throat.

"No, I'd prefer to have you begging for me. Even if I have to put up with your... feelings."

"Why'd you have to ruin it," you said with a shake of your head, your ill body goading you to speak up. "I could deal with you ignoring me. I think I expected it. But to get violent with me... I--"

You were afraid, All Might noted silently, rolling his eyes more at his actions and looking away. You were like a goddamn doe, skittish to a fault. Of course you'd flee at the first scent of actual danger. He should have known better.
But what did you expect?

With a huff, he jammed his lips against yours. You annoyed him, your emotional neediness was irritating and he made all his thoughts known in the motions of your kiss. But he didn't pull your hair or bite at your lips. He didn’t bruise you or inflict pain. He just overpowered you. His tongue caressed and rolled around yours, his lips clicked every time he shifted to reposition his mouth. He cupped the back of your head, pressing your mouth harder against his.

You didn't push him away, but you didn't respond either. You just accepted his attentions with closed eyes.

He pulled away in irritation.

"I won't destroy your lab again," he grunted, searching for something to bring you around to him. You looked up into the shadows of his eyes, your face still impassive. "And if anyone bothers you about deadlines, tell me and I'll give them something to complain about."

Still nothing. He clenched his fists.

"What else do you want from me?" he asked, anger sparking. "Do you want me to fingerfuck you again to oblivion? Will that make you happy? Do you want more money? You seemed happy enough stitching me up, want me to get bloodied from another fight? I'll go knock around some unlucky sonofabitch if you want."

You wanted an apology, you both knew that. But he was never going to give you one and you weren't foolish enough to think that was going to happen.

Instead you stared, in a twisted way goading him into working himself into another tizzy.

His restraint being pulled taught.

A hand wrapped around your waist to pull you into him, the other hand wrapped itself in your hair. He forced his mouth against yours again, his blood on fire, trying to ignite yours.

His tongue prodded your lower lip before his teeth bit down. But he wasn't rough -- only applying a reminding pressure. Last time he did that, you had moaned into him. But there was nothing. He sucked your lower lip, massaging away any lingering discomfort before moving to your upper lip to even out the sensation.

His hands moved, each massive palm resting on the sides of your face, fingers combing into your unbrushed hair.

It was morphing into another kind of kiss entirely. One that should have made butterflies in your stomach take flight. Should have.

He needed something from you. Some sort of sound, some acknowledgment, some response. His tongue pressed against yours, curling around it, trying to goad it into dancing with his again. Like you did before.

But you didn't do anything. You just leaned back and accepted everything he threw at you. Neither participating nor pushing away.

"What do you want?" he snarled when he broke the kiss. Sure, contempt decorated every syllable but it wasn’t anger that was driving his efforts. You opened your eyes again, looking into his face.
"I want you to leave. I have work I need to do."

His mouth shut, teeth clenching as he inwardly and outwardly raged at your denial. His breath was coming out in erratic puffs, shadows trained on your face. He waited, expecting something more. *Needing* something more. Waiting for your cadence to break and for you to dissolve into an impassioned mess.

Nothing.

All Might roughly pushed himself away from the counter, stomping toward his belongings.

You stayed seated as he pulled on his pants, observing his sharp movements when he buckled his belt and shoved his boots back on. He held no air of reverence regarding his fixed costume either, everything was swept into a pile and shoved into the rucksack he had brought. The paper bag of money caught his eye and, turning to you, he waved it in the air before slamming it back onto the table with enough force that the metal keened.

Still nothing.

There was a window opened in the corner that he walked toward, rucksack slung over his shoulder. He was leaving. Just like you wanted. Just like you told him.

Before climbing out it, he paused.

Should he leave you with an ultimatum? A threat? Your next meeting date?

He didn't know what to do.

So he left without a word or a parting glance.

You didn't linger or replay events in your head, as you often did after your interactions with All Might. Instead, you slipped off the counter, stretched, and went back to the trinkets that needed repair.

You had work to do. And work took priority.

*Asshole.*
Snapshots

Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who took the time to comment/kudos this dumpster fire. You guys are way too good for me. Every time I get an email from here or notification on Tumblr I get all giddy because I fucking love yous.

Slight spoiler warning: If you're not relatively up-to-date with the manga, a certain avian-based hero may make an appearance in the future. Other than his existence, I'm not going to touch on anything else happening manga storywise on him.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

All Might's frown deepened as he watched you from across the cafe.

You were with someone. Another bright-eyed girl in similar casual wear. A friend. A good friend, as there was an obvious comfortability you had with each other. With matching smiles and shared laughter, you both were leaned over the food-laden table, chattering to one another about something being displayed on the cell phone sitting between you.

Eventually, you sat back in your chair, tucking your hair behind your ear while reaching for your glass. Your mouth was moving rapidly -- whatever you were saying caused your companion to erupt into giggles that grew louder as you continued to speak. While her body heaved with laughter, a sly half-smile tugged at your lips.

All Might hadn’t gone out that afternoon with the intention of following you. In fact, neither of you were even in Kamino -- he hadn’t been out trying to tempt fate. Lean and unassuming, the great villain had taken the train ride to the Kiyashi Shopping Mall falling into the role of an ordinary citizen, out to buy packages of socks and some body wash.

Yes. Even All Might needed to buy socks.

You had passed him on the upper level of the mall. With bags dangling at your side, you didn’t so much as glance his way and he didn’t stare or slow his pace. Just two strangers passing one another caught in the singularity of their own lives.

Well, one stranger.

A few paces later, his footsteps slowed while yours continued on. You were walking toward the escalator. He was left standing in front of some sweet shop, waving away the bowing attendant offering samples.

It had been what, a week and a half since he last saw you?

You had let him leave with such… apathy.

That lack of reaction had been gnawing on his mind.

Snapshots of your first night together no longer appeared when he thought of you. Gone was the faint sensation of you nuzzling against his neck or singing his praises. No, they had been replaced.
Overshadowed by blank looks and dull-eyed kisses.

He watched the back of your head disappear. The bags in his hands felt heavy. He had planned on buying another button-down shirt at the menswear store a few paces away -- something that actually fit him.

But you had such a strong a magnetic pull. One he found difficult to ignore.

A cafe waitress drifted by his table, heading to yours without so much of a glance his way. He pressed his teacup to his mouth.

Plates were being condensed and handed off. Your friend was glancing at the menu, ordering another drink. You copied. The waitress said something. All three of you laughed.

Long fingers broke off a bit of his biscuit, idly crumbling it between them.

All Might didn’t consider himself some stalker. He was self-aware. He didn’t steal your things. There was no shrine to you in his home. There were no photographs of you covering his walls. Aside from the fantasy, there were no plans to kidnap you, bind you and lock you away for his pleasure.

He was compelled by curiosity. An uncomfortable desire to learn more about you without having to ask the questions. Aside from your initial business meeting on the street, he didn’t go out of his way to go by your house or work. But if he was in Kamino, sometimes he would… swing by. To see you with your guard down. To see interactions of yours that weren’t poisoned by trepidation.

All Might would never admit to following you. To his visits. To lying about how he discovered where you lived.

No one in their right mind would.

“Are you all finished, sir?”

The waitress had snuck up on All Might, his hand jostling as the piercingly-cute voice sliced through the droning of his thoughts. He glanced down at his empty cup and the pulverized-yet-uneaten biscuit on its small plate. He nodded his head curtly.

You were laughing when he left.

The rain started on Thursday morning. By the afternoon, the sky had greyed considerably and your phone’s emergency alert system buzzed, warning you of potential flash floods and landslides in the surrounding area. It didn’t cause concern -- you lived in the city and were shielded from such natural disasters. You just didn’t appreciate the shrill shrieking of your phone cutting through your silence, making you nearly fall off your ladder.

You took a break from replacing ceiling tiles around that time, watching large, globular raindrops rapidly splatter and trail down your windows in the heavy downpour. Placid thunder rumbled, a reverberating bass to the treble of the rain.

Below, you could see a flood of water already surging down the street. One poor soul, who had forgotten an umbrella despite it being the rainy season, was running for cover. His t-shirt clung to his
body, flip-flops kicking up water behind him as he ran.

A solid summer rainstorm, the first heavy one of the season.

The weather didn’t lose its power as the day progressed. Having finished replacing ceiling tiles around dinner time, you had moved to tearing apart your lab in search of an umbrella.

Not that it would help much. The rain was falling with such ferocity that it was bouncing up from the ground. No matter what, you were going to get soaked when you left your shelter. But an umbrella was better than nothing and, despite having silently berated the man running down the street earlier, you found yourself in a similar predicament.

You had a collection of umbrellas sitting in a basket by the front door of your apartment, you could visualize them. But you never bothered to leave any of them at your lab.

Correction -- you never bothered to return any of the umbrellas you took from your lab, leaving you high and dry.

Figuratively.

Well, trash bag poncho it was.

You left for home well before dark. Layers of white, scented trash bags covered your torso and arms. You also twisted and tied one to create a bonnet to protect your hair.

Your legs, unfortunately, were casualties of the war with water. Within minutes of starting your journey, your leggings were drenched and glued to your skin while your booties made an uncomfortable squelching sound at each step.

You looked miserable. You felt miserable. But the discomfort was only temporary, you reminded yourself. As soon as you got home you could peel off your wet clothes, take a nice warm shower, put on some dry socks and just sit on your couch.

The streets were empty -- most people had the sense to avoid walking in such a storm. You hung a right, cutting through an alleyway that would save you a couple blocks worth of walking. Passing by the back of a restaurant, you could smell the heavy aroma of fried food that was made even more appetizing by the rain. Tempura was what you needed at that moment. Or something with a nice, thick broth.

Up ahead you could see the hunched over figure of a man, back pressed against a building wall, having found an oasis of dryness underneath a protruding roof. You straightened your back as you continued forward, trying to retain an air of nonchalance though the situation made you wary. It was Kamino after all. And even in the daylight walking in an alley could--

It was All Might.

Upon seeing you, the figure shifted, stepping out from beneath his cover revealing his height and two upright, yet considerably droopy, bangs.

“Why didn’t you take a taxi home?” he asked, unbothered by the rain as he walked closer to you.

You hesitated, a million different things running through your mind, trying to piece together a response.

“What are you doing here?”
You weren’t an idiot. There’s no way in hell it was a coincidence that he just happened to be standing in that alley. If he attempted to play that card…

“I had… business with you. Saw you leaving your lab,” All Might said, scowling. “I can’t go and stop you on the street, I had to wait until you got somewhere less public. You’re a slow walker.”

“What do you want?” You were wet, tired and quite aware you were wearing trash bags. “I’m off the clock. Unless you need things stitched up? If that’s it, I guess I can just take them now and—”

“It doesn’t involve my clothes,” he snapped.

“Then come by tomorrow. There’s nothing I can do now and I’m not going back to my lab.”

“I don’t want to wait. They’ve been… irritating me.”

"They?"

“The stitches.”

Your eyes were half-lidded at that point, the simple act of having a conversation with him was draining.

“You can cut them out yourself, you don’t need me to take them out. Just… grab some scissors and avoid the skin. Now, please, I just want to go home.”

With that you bypassed him, sloshing away.

“My…” he exhaled a long growl, hands clenching at his sides. He wasn’t thrilled about the next bit. “My… hands are too big to use scissors.”

_His hands were... too big?_

Turning your head, your eyes fell on his hanging fists.

_His hands were too big to use scissors._

His jaw was set and he held your gaze -- his scowl had darkened considerably. He was waiting to see how you would respond.

How _were_ you going to respond?

You ignored the dark voice suggesting you laugh at him. It was the same voice that randomly told you to push people into traffic, kick over bicyclists or jump off overpasses. You weren’t compelled to listen to it at all, but it was still _there_.

But talk about a problem to have.

Well, what to do? He was standing unprotected in the rain -- you’d call him a sad puppy but there was no way in hell he was a puppy. More like a sad… crocodile. You could imagine what he would look like. Large and gnarled by years of fighting, a prehistoric behemoth with crooked teeth and an aura of death.

Though, he honestly didn’t look sad either.

A grumpy crocodile in the rain.
You had been walking for a solid ten minutes and were arguably halfway home. Taking stitches out would take only a minute or two…

Should you bring him home? Did you want him to know--

Well, he knew where you lived. You had told him. He had brought you there.

At least he stopped you on the street instead of knocking on your front door. Or on one of your windows.

The concrete in your heart cracked. If it wasn’t for the other unsavory aspects of your life, you argued that you’d make a good candidate for sainthood. Saint Artisan, helping the sinners of the world with arms wide open.

“…Fine, come on then,” you said, shoulders sagging. You pushed your soggy trash bag bonnet out of your face, mouth pulled in a tight line. “I guess I’ll meet you at my house.”

All Might stood quietly for a moment. Then he was gone, leaping out of sight.

You didn’t bother to follow his movements.

It was time to get out of the rain.

He stayed out of sight but you knew he was there. Fifteen minutes later, when you arrived at your apartment door, he appeared behind you in a flash of energy that rustled your trash bags and numbed your legs.

You kicked off your boots in your entryway, cringing at the amount of water that had permeated the insoles and soaked your socks, which you also pulled off. The trash bags were left in a pile on the floor -- you’d deal with them later.

All Might glanced at the collection of shoes by the doorway before looking down at his own boots. You were genuinely surprised when he knelt down, working to untie his laces. Unlike yours, his shoes appeared waterproof -- he stepped out in dry white socks and looked to you for direction.

“Scissors are in the kitchen,” you mumbled, leading the way through your living room, assuming he would follow.

He did.

All Might had to bend slightly when he walked through the doorway of your kitchen -- his wet, barely-upright bangs still managed to sweep across the archway. You had already started digging through drawers, the sound of clinking of kitchenware ringing out while he looked around in interest.

Scissors... Where did you put your scissors?

“You should change.”

He was staring at a photo booth picture strip you had hanging on your refrigerator, not bothering to look at you.

“Worried about me?” you asked with a bitter laugh. He exhaled loudly through his nose but the sound was not quite a snort. It was softer than that.

“Fine, get pneumonia.”
After checking your junk drawer once more, you closed it empty-handed. Your eyes swept over your countertops while you rubbed your knuckles together in thought.

*Where the hell were your scissors?*

You mumbled something to yourself, All Might catching the word ‘bathroom’ as you left him standing in your kitchen, gazing at the electric kettle sitting on your countertop.

Tea.

“I’ll use my eyebrow ones,” you announced, reappearing seconds later, just as he started contemplating making himself at home and filling the kettle. “Let’s get this over with.”

You ran a hand through your stringy, wet hair, watching as he unbuckled and dropped-trou. You expected him to look up at you and smirk or make a comment about his damp underwear, but he didn’t. The corner of your mouth twitched when you heard his pants hit the floor -- they were soaked.

His socks, you noticed when he stepped closer to you, were no longer dry.

Ignoring the slickness of his skin and how his underwear hugged every bit of him, you kept your eyes trained on the no-longer-gaping wound. You weren’t a doctor, but the gash was healing up nicely. There was no redness, no pus and a thick scab had formed over the closed gap.

“Does it hurt?” you asked, grabbing and dragging over a kitchen chair so you could sit. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other.

“N... *itches*.”

Ah, so that was what motivated him to come and seek you out.

Gingerly you pried the bottom scissor under the first stitch, watching his face for any kind of discomfort. When you placed your hand against his leg for leverage, you hesitated. He was cold. Considerably cold.

The first four stitches were cut without any issue. At your request he held out a cupped hand, holding each slightly-scabbed bit of fishing line. His hands were cold too.

You held your tongue and kept working.

All Might wasn’t too worried about his body temperature -- he was watching your face. You were relaxed, too focused on the work in front of you to think about much else or catch his staring. You had worn the same focused look when you took his measurements, however many weeks ago that was. His eyes shifted to the sight of your hand gingerly resting against his thigh.

You had a delicate touch.

*Sparkless eyes. Lifeless kisses.*

His arms twitched involuntarily, momentarily worrying you.

“Are you okay?”

Your tone came from a place of surprise -- it was easy to forget All Might was human and not some unholy demon. But he misheard irritation and the muscles of his neck went taut, lip twitching upward in an annoyed snarl.
He didn’t answer your question, choosing instead to look away and stare off into space.

All Might was cold. Shivering. Stuck in wet clothing.

You ran your tongue over your teeth, still cutting, already berating yourself over the weakness of your thoughts.

The rain was still pounding away outside.

You… felt bad.

He was an *asshole*. A villain. Violent. Unstable. He deserved no feelings of sympathy from you.

Thing is… that saying ‘time heals all wounds’ rung true for you. That intense *anger* and hurt and disappointment and fear…

All those feelings had dulled. They were still there, but the fire you had been stoking had died down -- the intensity was gone, leaving only smoldering coals of distrust. Fool me once.

'Don't', your mind commanded you. 'Don't be weak. Finish and send him away. The sympathy will die. Out of sight, out of mind.'

You knew that wasn’t true.

“*I have a dryer.*”

You wouldn’t look up at him, but you felt him move as he inclined his head toward your voice.

“*I don’t really use it since I like hanging my clothes to dry. But if you want, I can put your pants and shirt in. Get you warmed up a bit before you leave.*”

There was no answer and, as you dropped the last stitch in his open hand, you peeked up at him.

Eyebrows were raised and his face had gone slightly slack with bewilderment. Nothing you had done leading up to the question hinted that you held anything but contempt for him. Yet there you were, inviting him to linger.

All Might didn’t know what to say. Mostly, he didn’t know how to respond without sounding like some kind of weak-kneed fool. But he didn’t want to slam shut the door you had barely opened.

So he smirked, overblown and arrogant, leaving one brow raised and relaxing the other.

You rolled your eyes, trying to predict what corny pickup line or sexual innuendo he was going to use. Something about you being wet?

“Ahh,” he rumbled, passing off the stitches to your outstretched hand so you could dispose of them in the trash. “Looking for rainy night company, my dear?”

At least you were partly right about him getting inspiration from the rain. The ‘my dear’ was new.

“I don’t want to feel mildly responsible for All Might getting sick and dying.” You paused. “Japan might give me a medal, though. You know, for killing you.”

“*Do you want to?*”

He dropped his voice low. Cautiously you reached to fill your kettle, unsure where his mind was at.
“Want to what?”

“Kill me?”

Releasing a barking laugh, you shook your head at the ridiculousness of the question. When the kettle was filled with enough water for multiple cups of tea, you placed it back on its base and flipped it on, turning to face him fully.

“I’m not a killer,” you said.

“You’re no killer…” he nodded his head. “And I’m no thief.”

You openly sucked your teeth at him, unable to hide your irked smile. He had some gall to openly tease you about that night.

“Do you want your clothes dry or not?”

All Might chuckled, raspy and deep. He was reaching for his pants, fully prepared to accept your invitation to stay for a bit more when he stopped.

*Step Five: Pull Back.*

“No,” he said. He still went to pick up his pants but dragged them on instead of handing them off to you. “It’s still raining. It’s stupid.”

There was another secret that All Might harbored that he would never reveal to you or anyone else.

Like a pathetic, lovelorn teenager, he had searched on the Internet ways he could get you to like him again. It was a much better option than purchasing some book about the emotions of women, he had argued to himself. Buried beneath layers of disgustingly spineless articles for men pining for women who had denied them, All Might had found bits of advice that held some promise. One suggestion -- keep a distance.

“I have to go,” he said, belt buckle clicking into place.

“I was just about to make tea…” you said, looking at the not-even-lukewarm-yet kettle. He made no moves to speak, apparently set on leaving without any delay. Maybe he had places to be, lives to destroy? “Well, I’d hate to be accused of keeping All Might from his business…”

You went to walk him out, casting curious glances his way. But his face was impassive -- he only looked bored. Whatever was going on in his mind, if anything, was hidden from you.

All Might maintained his icy exterior, inwardly grumbling at the unpleasant sensation of stuffing his damp feet back into his dry boots.

Visions of what could have been flooded his mind as he worked his laces.

Striped to just his underwear, you would have given him some kind of blanket so he could keep warm. But you wouldn’t have been able to keep from checking out at his semi-nakedness, marveling over his body--

Well, most of his body.

Rushing through the details of build-up, he imagined you finally coming to your senses. It would have been a sudden blaze, you reaching for him and pressing yourself against him. His hands would be in your hair, you’d be sighing his name--
“Here.”

All Might looked up from his boots, coming face-to-face with the curved wooden handle of an umbrella.

“I travel by jumping,” he said, giving you a look that plainly doubted your intelligence. “What good will that do me?”

“This isn’t for when you’re jumping,” you said with a frown, still holding the umbrella out. “It’s for when you land, Mary Poppins. I don’t know, it’s something. It’s a golf umbrella so it should be regular size for you.” When he made no moves for it, you prodded his arm lightly with it. “Just take it, will you?”

He tugged the umbrella out of your grasp. Compared to his hand, the handle was still laughably small.

“So you do care, sweetheart,” he said with a chuckle that made your teeth clench. You scoffed, ignoring his accusing face.

“Don’t mistake my kindness for anything other than what it is.”

He gave you a toothy grin and a weed of self-hatred sprouted in your gut over the thoughts crossing your mind. Wanting to move everything along, and give him a hint, you opened the front door for him.

The rain was still coming down in buckets.

“It’ll be awhile before I see you next,” All Might said thoughtfully, pausing just before ducking through the doorway. His back was to you and that plant of self-hatred grew taller when you caught yourself absentmindedly looking him over.

“Well…” you shrugged. “What can you do?”

He chuckled, a rumble that made his shoulders heave slightly. His face turned so he was looking toward you.

“Do you want me to stop and visit? You know I’m good late-night company.”

“I’ll pass. Business only, thank you.”

“I don’t think that’s true,” he crooned. “What if I left you with a little reminder--”

“Look,” your hand chopped through the air, stopping his thought. “I’m not interested. Thought I made it painfully clear to you.”

“I liked you better when you were a meek little thing.”

“Well, I liked you better before you went ahead and acted like a total prick.”

He grumbled, back flexing as he turned to face you more.

“How long are you going to hold that over my head?”

“As long as we have a business relationship, probably. It’s not something you can easily forgive and forget.”
“Did I not leave you enough money?”

You swallowed, holding your tongue.

Truthfully… you had made money off of All Might. The cash he left easily paid for his clothing and all the materials and repairs needed for your lab, plus some. You assumed the oaf was clueless to the cost of things and had just given you a wad of cash, hoping for the best.

You didn’t feel guilty about keeping the surplus. All the extra money went toward… emotional damages.

“There was enough,” you said. “But you know that’s not the issue.”

“I… was in a bad mood that night,” he grumbled for the umpteenth time. Obviously, he was still caught in his loop of non-apology.

“Yeah, I know.”

His lip twitched and he found himself holding your gaze.

“I had gotten into a… fight with someone,” he said after several seconds of silence. His voice was slow and rough, each word sounding strained. He did not like sharing but felt compelled to give you something. Forcing himself to build some sort of bridge. “And… I wasn’t… happy with the outcome.”

“I know about the fight, it was all over the news.”

“That wasn’t it,” he said quickly and with a loud ‘tch.’ “That little shit in Osaka is lucky I didn’t cave his skull in. And he knows it -- he hasn’t done any interviews about me, has he?”

He looked at you with a smug smile that wavered before crumbling away completely. It was replaced with a loathsome frown.

“No, it was… a few days after that. With someone else… Gave me the gash. I…” he growled, revolted at sharing. Just do it and get it over with. “I shouldn’t… have let my anger out… on you.”

As he spoke, his voice got progressively quieter and harsher.

You chewed on your voice got progressively quieter and harsher.

That… sounded like an actual apology.

Void of the words ‘sorry’ and ‘apologize,’ of course.

“Well,” you started -- All Might’s out of character behavior was making you uncomfortable. “You didn’t lose your leg or get too beaten up. So, I wouldn’t be too hard on yourself. Just get them next time, I guess.”

You... were trying to make him feel better?

‘She's skittish,’ he internally repeated to himself, pummeling down the overwhelmingly powerful impulse to pull you into his chest and devour you. A sudden thirst had spiked his blood. He just wanted to feel you--

No, he had to be smooth. Keep an even head.
Hungry eyes searched your averted face, tracing your jawline and how it fed into your neck. He imagined pressing his face there, inhaling--

*PATIENCE!*

The hand holding the umbrella clenched tighter and he felt the crack of splitting wood hidden in his fist. *Shit.* His palm did enough to muffle the sound -- you didn’t appear to notice. Hoping you weren’t too attached to the umbrella, he carefully adjusted his grip to hide the now-shattered handle, acting as if it was still perfectly fine and in one piece.

You coughed. This had gone on long enough.

“Well… good luck out there,” you said, ready to end the drawn-out goodbye.

Seeing he was being ushered out, he bowed through the door and ventured back out into the storm. Before launching himself up and away, he left you with one last self-satisfied grin.

“I’ll see you around, *sweetheart.*”

Would you eat all the cherries or would half of them be left to rot?  

You stood in the produce section, deep in debate as you stared down bags of cherries. You were in the mood for something sweet and a handful of cherries was a snack that didn’t leave you feeling guilty like chocolate did. But could you faithfully eat an *entire* bag?

A nearby section of plump strawberries stole part of your attention. An alternative?

It was such a chore to go food shopping.

Food was good. Food was great! And if it wasn’t so cost prohibitive, and generally unhealthy, you’d probably order takeout every night. But sometimes you just needed something that wasn’t frozen or ramen. A real, home-cooked meal.

And sometimes there just wasn’t any food left in your fridge.

Somewhere in the grocery store there was a child wailing at the top of its lungs, screaming something incomprehensible. You could just imagine the horror the mother felt at causing such a ruckus out in polite Japanese society.

You grabbed a bag of cherries and threw them into your basket, eager to check-out and eat. Besides, if you brought the cherries to the lab with you and just left them out, you’d probably graze on them...

Lettuce became your next big battle. So engrossed in your dialogue of ‘*Will I eat this before it rots,*’ you didn’t acknowledge the figure who had come to stand beside you.

“Do you know how to tell if a melon is ripe?”

You sighed, recognizing the voice, gripping your handbasket tighter.
“I’m ashamed to admit I don’t know,” the person continued. “Doesn’t it involve knocking on them? Or was it smelling them...?”

“Didn’t know you shopped here, Hawks.”

The dirty-blond was pursing his lips as he continued to regard the melons he held in each hand, vibrant red wings closed and pulled tight against his back.

“I don’t want to buy one just to find out it’s not ripe.”

“I’m not familiar with melon shopping either, so I’m not the best person to ask…”

You watched him, weighing one over the other before sighing and placing them both back on the display behind you two.

“Truthfully I’m not a melon fan,” he said, eyes bright with what you assumed was banter. “I’m not here for food shopping either. Just wanted to stop by and say hello.”

A couple passed by with their shopping cart, giving you and Hawks the briefest of looks. They probably assumed he was just some unknown hero taking a break while on patrol. Only you knew the truth.

“You know I always appreciate a visit from you,” you muttered dryly and received a smile in return.

“I know! But I am here on behalf of someone. You know. The purple guy.”

“Giving me work in a grocery store isn’t the best--“

“Now, you know I hate interrupting, but I’m gonna have to stop you there. This is about your last batch of work with him…” he narrowed his eyes slightly. “Don't you watch the news?”

Your stomach lurched, nerves vibrating.

“What happened?”

“You should really watch the news. You can’t stay an informed member of society with your head in the sand!”

“Haw--“

“He had an issue with quality control this time around. Something didn’t go off properly and it’s left him with a bit of mess on his hands. And he’s not happy about it.”

“What ha--“

“Now, he wanted to go all out on you for your oversight,” Hawks said with a pained shake of his head. “He’s a one-and-done kind of guy, mistake-wise, you know? Probably why he doesn’t have any friends. But I like ‘ya, so I put my neck out on the line for you. Worked some of my magic and came to an agreement.”

“I don’t like this.”

He gave you a sympathetic look.

“You shouldn’t. But hey, what can you do? Mistakes happen. Anyway, the deal he cooked up is simple enough: If his target lives... well, it’s not going to be good for you. If the target dies, this is
just a wake-up call about checking your stuff before handoff! I’d hate to leave a bad Yelp review but this whole situation really puts a damper on our relationship, you know? But you live and learn… hopefully.”

Oh. No.

This wasn’t happening.

“Fuck,” you said, leaning slightly on the produce wall for support while your hand traveled to hold your forehead. You were stringing obscenities together under your breath while Hawks gave you a few solid pats on the shoulder.

In a grocery store? Of all places?

“This is nothing personal,” he said with a frown and a shrug. “But Purps has a reputation he’s gotta to be mindful of. Hopefully everything works out, but if it doesn’t…” he sighed. “I guess my next visit won’t be a happy one.”

“What if--”

“Nope, no ‘what if’s’ or ‘maybe’s.’ His mind is made. Take the next couple days to pull yourself together, alright? I’ll have to get back to you about a deadline, but I assume it’s a week. It’s always a week with him,” he said with a laugh.

You looked at the Grim Reaper beside you. He had come to read your last rites and was laughing while doing so. Bile bubbled into your throat.

“Just one piece of advice,” Hawks said, taking in your pale face and guessing the thoughts that were starting to appear. “Keep your dignity. You knew what you were getting into when you started working with us. Don’t go running off and hiding. You know how good I am at catching vermin. I’ve got eyes… like a hawk.”

He laughed again heartedly at his bad pun, shattering his briefly serious persona and clapping you on the back.

“Well, it was good to see you, Artisan. I wish it was on better terms! I’m rooting for you though, so maybe next time I’ll be the bearer of good news!”

He waved his goodbyes, walking away casually as if he had just been a friend shooting the shit with you. Not tearing your world apart. Not a hitman politely informing you of his intent to kill.

By then you were leaning fully against the produce display, afraid to stand in case your knees buckled beneath you.

You were going to die, weren’t you?

Death.

Your life. It was going to end.


You sat like that for several minutes, facing your own mortality, trying to drum up some scenario in which you could escape. But Hawks was ruthlessly thorough and the man he worked for knew no barriers. If they were coming for you, they were coming for you.
A failure after handoff never happened to you. Artisan was thorough. She was precise. Her work rivaled that of any support lab.

Yet there she stood, facing failure.

You left your handbasket buried in the bags of lettuce, appetite forever leaving you, as you stumbled out of the store in the direction of home.

You had no future.

Was it going to hurt?

When you got home and saw the hour, you recognized that you had already missed the news--

You were going to die.

--so you grabbed for your laptop instead, searching for the top stories of Japan to get an idea of --

‘Two killed, one injured in--’

You clicked on the link, watching as a video at the top of the screen began playing. A solemn news anchor was staring you down.

“Two members of the Yoshida banking family were killed and another critically injured in what police believe was a nerve agent attack that took place within the family’s estate. The three men were found--”

They were big-name targets.

You flew up, tripping over the side of your couch in a frenzy to get to your bathroom, unleashing the contents of your stomach in loud, forceful lurches into your toilet. What could have failed? You had been meticulous in the creation and subsequent repairs.

Was it the music box? That had been, by far, the most intricate with three chambers instead of two.

Death.

Eventually, the heaving stopped, leaving you a shuddering mess gripping the sides of your toilet, staring into the liquid mess. The smell and presence of vomit didn’t bother you at that moment. The only thing you could comprehend was the terror that was drowning you. Suffocating you.

You were going to die, weren’t you?

What have you done?

Why? Why’d you have to go and work with villains? Why couldn’t you have just played it safe? Had the money truly been worth it?

You weren’t without flaw.

Was it going to hurt?

You didn’t want to die.

For the first time in your life, you seriously wished death upon another person. Actual, physical death. You hoped and prayed that the Yoshida man would fall victim to the poison and die. Quickly
or slow and painfully, it didn't matter. He just needed to kick the bucket. He needed to die.

Because you didn’t want to die.

Chapter End Notes

Anyone else get real nervous when they go to post a chapter?

Anyway, sometimes you need some ~emotional development~ before the fucking can happen! Good news is, I'll probably get the next chapter out early. Like this weekend early!

Check me out at damnit-samnit.tumblr.com if you want. I like reblogging smut, All Might pictures and interacting with anons.
Thank You

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

By day two, you had gotten a grip over the situation.

You were not just going to roll over and die.

You were going to do something.

At least go down swinging.

So, plans were dreamt up, incubated and hatched. You’d have to go rogue, be the Jason Bourne of your own story and take down the Yoshida who held your fate. You had pulled out all the weapons you still had on hand; they were creations that you kept for some reason or another, hiding them away in hidden caches and compartments.

You also mulled over the plans of past devices that held potential and could be replicated within such a tight time frame.

Somewhere a man was lying half-dead in a hospital bed.

All you had to do was nudge him along.

You took a break from your criminal conspiracies at some point -- other than the general idea of what the day was, the exact hour was meaningless. You rubbed blurred eyes while refreshing the news site on your phone, as you had been doing religiously. Each second that ticked past contained a silent hope for a breaking news update telling you the Yoshida had died.

But every article you combed through told you the same thing -- he was alive but in critical condition or, if the reporter was feeling particularly poetic, ‘clinging to life.’

Panic was your main motivator and it rarely allowed your more than a few minutes of idle time. Soon you were back hunched over plans, trying to piece together something.

The rising sun told you that you had crossed over into the third day.

Four days.

Four days.

The plan was laughably simple.

You’d find out what hospital room he was at.

And you’d shoot a rocket through the window.

You ran your hands through your hair, scratching at your scalp. You felt grody, it had been days
since you showered or brushed your teeth. But this was more important. If you got this right, you’d have a whole lifetime to do those things. What were a few days compared to that?

Now all you had to do was find out what hospital he had been taken to. Find a way to get that room number. You knew a guy who knew a guy that could get you a missile, you’d need to outfit some kind of gun to shoot it. You’d also need to find a hidden place to launch the rocket -- somewhere that preferably looked down into his room. And you needed to figure out a way to disguise yourself from any and all cameras leading to and from the hospital. And disposing of the gu--

A sob ripped through you, followed by the sound of the table’s contents hitting the floor as you lashed out in frustration.

No. No.

A missile? A missile?

After days of toiling THAT was the best you could come up with?

It didn’t even make SENSE.

You buried your face into your arms, labored breathing and tears racking through your body as the chilled hands of despair wrapped around your neck.

No hope, no hope, no hope, it whispered to you. No hope, no hope, no hope, no hope.

Your planning was moot. The bells of death were tolling for you.

Would Hawks kill you outright or would he stage something? Would your friends and family find out why you died? They all thought you worked as an assistant at a start-up support lab. Would they discover the truth, that it had all been a lie? That greed drove you down the path you had taken, the call of untaxed yen too sweet to ignore?

Stupid.

You felt sick again, though it wasn’t due to fear. Lack of sleep was starting to erode away everything about you. Any form of rest came thanks to a couple melatonin pills that couldn’t keep you asleep. It had been exhausting and your internal wiring was on the fritz.

You just wanted it to end.

There was a cat outside.

You could hear it yowling. A loud, forlorn call that started out low only to build in intensity. Then there was a shrill scream -- beneath it, another yowl could be heard starting.

There were two cats outside.

It was dark out.

What if you ran away? Got out of Japan?
You’d always wanted to see India.

Maybe go to the States?

Anywhere.

No hope. No hope.

You shifted, rolling your forehead against the tabletop. You were so hungry you felt full and sick. Everything ached. But you couldn’t muster any kind of energy to take care of yourself.

Pitiful.

And you thought you were strong enough to play in the same league as villains.

How quickly your personal strength failed.

You didn’t hear him.

You had spilled an entire tumbler of coffee and were too busy cleaning it to take notice of anything else.

The milky brown liquid was expanding over the table, staining all the scattered papers and books as it traveled. No matter how many rags you threw down to soak it, the puddle never seemed to get any smaller.

The towels were no longer crisp white. They matched the creamy color of the coffee, heavy with saturation.

The cicadas were out in droves in the trees outside, the melody of their summer song echoing in your empty lab.

It was an ocean by that point. The smell of sweetened coffee filled your nose.

The water was rising.

Getting colder and darker.

That’s when you realized you weren’t swimming in water. Your head was underneath it.

Eyes wide with terror, you were grasping at the arms holding you down. Trying to pry them away. Trying to escape.

Hawks was wearing his usual goofy smile, wings flicking as he worked to drown you. He was saying something to you, statements punctuated with laughter that you couldn’t hear.

You inhaled great globs of air, the water swirling around you and filling your lungs.

You could breathe but you were still suffocating.
Hawks released a hand to check his watch, but the force didn’t shift. You still couldn’t free yourself.

Your limbs were caught in the kelp surrounding you. Hawks had left, allowing you to be captured by something else.

Seaweed was--

“Sleeping at work is bad practice, my dear.”

A gasp tore through you and you jumped away.

But you had been sitting on your stool, head resting on the table. Your feet became tangled, your knee striking the table leg forcefully as you crashed onto the ground. The sound of twanging steel rang out as your stool went down with you.

“Don’t!” you roared, full of shrieky panic as you scampered back, ignoring the pain of your lower limbs.

The chuckling grew fainter, dying away in the throat of All Might who had been the one to rip you from your nightmare. You were staring at him, something was off about you. It wasn’t just because he scared you awake.

“You were the one they got?” you bemoaned as you remained seated on the floor.

He lost his teasing expression, lip curling up when he noticed your grubby appearance and heavily-lidded, dark eyes.

“What is going on with you?” he asked, the disgust apparent. “You’ve stopped cleaning yourself?”

“What can I do? What can I do?” you chanted, looking up at him with such despair that he was certain you were experiencing some kind of psychotic break. “Please don’t kill me.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Hawks is going to kill me,” you sighed, an empty choke punctuating the statement. “Because my work didn’t work. And it looks like they picked you to do it.”

“Kill you? I didn’t come here to kill you, stupid girl.”

“Doesn’t matter anymore.” You were rubbing your eyes, wiping away tears that hadn’t fallen in days. “If not you then him. All because Yoshida didn’t die. It was him or me. Now it’s me.”

Silence fell over the two of you.

“Hawks…” All Might was racking his brain, trying to associate a face with the name but coming up blank. “You work with him?”

“He has a boss who gets work. From me. The work that didn’t work.”

“Work that didn’t work,” he repeated to himself, patience wearing thin as he tried to comprehend what the fuck was going on. “Something didn’t work… and now he’s going to kill you? Did he tell you this--”

“At the grocery store. If Yoshida didn’t die, they’d come for me. I don’t know what day it is. It’s close. I’m dead.”
Things were falling into place in All Might’s mind. You had done work for someone… who was planning on killing another person… who didn’t die? And now they were coming back to kill you for the failure. And some man named Hawks was involved.

So you were acting crazy… because you were afraid to die.

All Might started laughing.

It was a sound that originated deep in his gut, his head falling back as hands settling on his waist. Then he was looking at you, shaking his head.

“No one is going to kill you, stupid girl.”

He said it with such certainty.

Inside you, something stirred.

“Wha--”

“No one will kill you,” he repeated, waving your entire downward spiral away dismissively. “Because I’m here.”

He would… save you?

All Might was watching your face. Life was returning to your eyes, your confusion shifting to something else -- he wasn’t quite sure what. But anything blooming disappeared in favor of a wobbly lower lip and ugly grimace.

He frowned when you started to cry in earnest, blubbering at him incoherently.

“Stop it,” he grumbled. “I didn’t know you were so-- “

“Will you really?” you asked, broken voice thick with something honeyed. “… I won’t die?”

“You will if you keep up this feeble-minded nonsense, it’s depressing. But otherwise… no, you won’t die.”

‘Stop crying,’ you scolded yourself as hope flooded your veins. You gave another deep inhale, pushing up off the ground. You felt heavy. Like something that had been soaking too long. Waterlogged.

“I think…” you looked around, at the chaos that had been your cage, before eyes landed back on All Might. “I think I’d like to take a shower.”

Everything about you was on empty. Hygiene levels. Hunger. Stamina. You felt like a cardboard cutout. A mannequin. But as you stood, surrounded by the warm embrace of steam in your shower, you started to feel human again.

It was… oddly comforting knowing that the greatest villain in Japan (and possibly the world) had
told you he would protect you. His words *meant* something.

Even though he had acted disgusted at the state you were in, All Might didn’t put up a fuss when it came to getting you home. In fact, he had been the one to suggest a quick jumping trip as opposed to a walk home, which you accepted too eagerly. You didn’t want to be out in the open and you didn’t want to walk. Wordlessly he held you against his chest before flinging himself up and away.

You’d dozed off almost immediately, only to be shaken awake what seemed like seconds later when All Might demanded your keys.

The man was a villain. But damn, if you didn’t feel… *safe*.

The shower you took was obscenely long. You wanted the soap and water to permeate your very core and wash away all the gunk that had been bottled up inside. At one point a series of bangs at the bathroom door almost made you vomit your heart. But then All Might’s voice thundered out, checking to see if you were still alive.

He didn’t answer when you called back.

You found him sitting on your couch watching television when you returned to the living room, dressed in your pajamas with your wet hair brushed back. He raised a brow, glancing you over.

“Well, you don’t smell anymore,” he remarked, lazily turning back to watch TV.

You coughed, fidgeting.

“I was… a little crazy back at my lab.”

“I noticed.”

“Sometimes the pressure gets to me.”

“I noticed.”

“Thank you.”

It was a heartfelt sentiment, the words drawn-out just enough so he could hear the sincerity behind each movement of your mouth.

A weight had been lifted off your shoulders. You originally wanted to beat the odds and prove that this self-image you had of being tenacious villain-wrangler was true…

But he was a person who knew what to do. The peace of mind he symbolized was astounding. So what if you were weak in this situation, wasn’t it acceptable? Wasn’t it okay? All Might could fight well and you could comprehend complex circuitry. Different strengths. Different weaknesses.

All Might snorted but a self-satisfied smirk played on his lips.

“Warming up to me again?” he rumbled and you caught a spark of blue peeking over at you.

You rolled your eyes but granted him an actual smile -- bits of your personality were already returning from their hiatus.

“Maybe a little bit. Depends on the outcome, though.”

“Go to bed,” he said with a jerk of his head in of the direction of your bedroom; he chose to forgo
suggesting that you join him on the couch.

You shifted again, brows furrowing. Bed sounded wonderful but…

“What about you?”

“I’ll wait around for a bit,” he said casually, reaching for the remote. With some difficulty he changed the channel, accidentally bringing up a random menu in the process thanks to the surface area of his thumb.

“A bit,” you repeated, a white-hot horror squeezing your gut at the implication he’d leave you alone at some point. He heard the tension in your voice.

“I’m not going to just sit here,” he grumbled. You didn’t ease up and he found himself exhaling, shoulders adjusting. “Just go to bed.”

You still hesitated.

“Let me handle it.”

There was finality in what he said.


*Please don’t ruin that trust*, you wanted to continue, but you couldn’t form the sentence. You felt it hang in the air.

Sharp teeth and a too-large smile greeted you when you glanced back at his face.

“Sweetheart,” he said in his drawn-out way, brow flicking up. “That’s the smartest decision you’ve made yet.”

Exhaustion smothered you like an avalanche, overtaking you completely once your head hit your pillow.

There were no dreams, no interruptions. Just pure oblivion.

But then your state of nonexistence started to fade and consciousness returned. You were stirring, eyes opening to find a too-bright and too-warm room. Immediately you kicked your covers away, trying to find some sort of breathability.

Aches had settled deep in your bones as if your body had physically manifested the stress you had been under. It felt like you had been running for too long or had been lifting too-heavy weights.

The clock on your phone told you it was almost 4 o’clock in the evening.

You had no idea what time you had gone to bed.

All Might was not in the living room when you tiptoed out of your room. The television was off. He
wasn’t in your apartment -- you glanced through the rooms. Everything felt too quiet.

You turned the TV back on.

He had been watching a cooking channel.

The hunger pang struck once you visualized food. You were cleaned, you were rested. Now, you needed nourishment.

But there was none.

With a groan you walked into your kitchen, opening the refrigerator you already knew was empty. You never finished your food shopping, too strung-out by Hawks’ appearance to do anything else but run and hide.

Leaving to pick something up wasn’t an option for you, despite the voice telling you that you’d be out in public and would have herd protection. The confinement of your apartment exuded safety. It was your rabbit hole.

But you couldn’t not eat.

So you ordered out.

While you waited for your delivery, you continued the uphill battle of reclaiming your humanity. You kicked things off by thoroughly brushing your teeth in hopes a proper cleaning would make up for all the neglect. Then you moved to opening windows and turning on fans to get the heated summer air circulating. It was a hot day, so you swapped your pajamas for running shorts and a t-shirt.

The knock on the door came while you were layering lotion onto the dry patches of skin. With a minor skip in your step, you headed to greet the pizza man, your new savior.

“Delivery!” Hawks sang when you opened the door, pizza box and paper bag in hand. The soda hung from his wrist, held by a plastic bag.

Everything inside you shattered.

“But…?”

“What kind did you get?” he asked, bypassing your petrified form, putting the collection of food on your coffee table. He tsked when he peeled open the box. “Just a regular cheese? Boring.”

He peeked in the paper bag, perking up.

“Oh, but you got fries.”

You literally pinched yourself. Pain. This was no dream.

“So,” Hawks was readily devouring your fries when he stood up to face you. “You know why I’m here…”

Before you could form a thought, a movement in your bedroom doorway caught your eye.

“Ah, you’re Hawks.”

Elevation. You felt pure elation at hearing the rich baritone of All Might’s voice slicing through the
terror of your soul. Even Hawks was surprised, poking his head out to try and catch a glimpse of the man who was walking down your short hallway. He didn’t recognize the voice but he sure as hell recognized the person.

It was the first time you had seen Hawks tongue-tied, even if it only lasted a second.

“All Might!” A wide smile split his face, eyes dancing between the two of you. “I didn’t know All Might was going to be here! Talk about having a famous friend!”

“I’ve decided to take care of her vermin problem,” All Might said. With a bored breath he crossed his arms, looking the younger man over. At the word ‘vermin,’ Hawks pointed to himself, mouthing ‘me?’

“I’ve got no problems with you,” Hawks said, placing down the bag of fries and dusting off his hands before raising them. “I’ve just got a job to do, you know? Nothing personal.”

“Thing is, I use her services. So you’re interfering with my business.”

“Oof, then we’re at a bit of an impasse, aren’t we?”

“No.” All Might was scowling, a predatory gleam sparking across his face. “This little threat you have against her is going to end. Otherwise, I’ll get involved. There’s no stalemate here.”

“Now, All Might—”

“Run along, little bird,” he continued, cutting Hawks off. “Go back to whoever you need to. Otherwise, I’ll drop my diplomatic schtick. The fact we’re even having a conversation is a kindness.”

“With—”

“Don’t try my patience.”

Hawks let out a loud sigh, dropping his hands to his sides.

“This is going to give me a headache…”

“You seem like a smart bird. Handle it.”

Hawks looked at the beast that was All Might, holding a brief staring contest before shrugging, disengaging completely from a potential territorial bout.

“All right, all right. Consider this a gift from a superfan, All Might. I’ll handle this…”

“Smart.”

“Man, if I knew I was going to be meeting All Might today…” Hawks shook his head, staring down at his casual attire. “I would have put a little effort in.”

“Before you…” All Might waved his hand, “…‘fly off’ -- I’ll level this entire city to find you if I feel slighted.”

“I get it! Jeez. But you gotta check your work, okay?” Hawks was looking at you, shaking his head. “This is not going to go down easy. He’s gonna leave a three-star review about your work, at least.”

Hawks didn’t linger, muttering to himself before turning on the charm again. He left with an enthusiastic goodbye to All Might and a wink to you. Your front door closed softly behind him.
… And that was it.

The battle of all battles didn’t happen in your living room, as you had expected. Nothing was broken or smashed. No one lost any limbs. You still had your life. The only casualties were a handful of fries. It was all rather… anticlimactic.

Not that you were about to complain.

You waited but Hawks didn’t return.

“That’s who you were scared of?” All Might snorted. “What was he, a teenager? You should have just put a bug zapper up to deal with him.”

All Might.

He really did handle it.

You had trusted him.

And he kept his word.

“--Or complained to his high school. This was a disappointment.”

All Might watched as you launched into sudden, quick strides across the room toward him. The irritation he felt at the laughable threat dissolved when you threw your arms around his torso.

You were safe.

You felt his body vibrating against your face, a deep chuckle rocking him at your saved damsel reaction.

He fell quiet.

He could feel you breathing against him.

He could smell the floral perfume of your recently-applied lotion.

You had only planned for a hug, but All Might had been denied your touch a little too long.

And he couldn’t hold off any longer.

He darted down, arms wrapping around you to bring you closer into his chest.

You were being bent back, he was leaning down considerably.

It was cause for a backache for the both of you. But it didn’t matter.

Your mouths collided, a firestorm of pent-up tension and apprehension immediately unleashing despite the laughably minor contact. There was no gradual progression of intensity; neither of you acknowledged the heated knocking of your teeth or the striking of your noses as your faces pressed into one another’s.

All Might couldn’t help himself -- he was squeezing your body tighter, hot tongue parting your soft lips so he could finally savor you. Again.

You tasted like mint.
He was pushing you further backward, crushing you against his body. *Demanding* you to be closer to him.

There was a faint touch against his cheeks -- your hands were gliding across his skin, settling on the sides of his head, capturing his earlobes between your fingers and tugging on them. A breath hitched in your nostrils.

Compared to the fire of his skin, your hands felt frigid.

You were also attempting to pull him closer, desperately working to keep up with the movements of his tongue. It caressed the plushness of your mouth before striking out to grapple with yours. Apparently, he had only been using the tip of his tongue for exploration; when he felt a soft vibration dance across your mouth -- a strangled sigh -- his tongue pushed deeper, hungry for more, growing impossibly wider and thicker. Your mouth was *full* of him. Hot, slick and strong.

You broke first, pulling away with a pop and a gasp. You needed a few steadying breaths before jumping back into the fray, though you didn’t go back to his mouth. Instead, you nipped at his lower lip. His hot and heavy huffs struck at your face, your insides curling with a desire for friction.

All Might’s fingers were squeezing, digging into whatever flesh of yours they were touching as you moved to sucking his mouth, your tongue tracing the dips and crests of his lips before returning to bites and licks.

You were emboldened by his lack of domination.

So you moved away from his mouth, peppering kisses across his chin and cheeks, working down to his thick neck. Your hands moved, fingertips stroking tense muscles, eventually resting against his chest.

His heartbeat was loud and strong against your touch.

All Might unwrapped his arms unhurriedly -- you felt every bit him slide across your body as he adjusted. You felt him grab all of your ass, sides and portions of your upper thighs. His hands were *so* big.

“I…” you went quiet, your own heartbeat thundering not from touch, but from nerves.

Aroused by his temperature and closeness, a fantasy of yours had weaseled to the forefront of your mind. You continued to leave light, open-mouthed kisses against his neck before nuzzling your face against the juncture of his jaw and throat.

“I… I want to thank you… for helping me.”

It was sudden. You knew you should have given it some time. Waited a bit.

Hawks had *just* left. What if he came back? But he wouldn't. The wrath of All Might was too big of a threat to just ignore. Even you knew that.

So there you were.

Everything about you felt *alive* because you were *alive*.

You heard and felt him swallow, his skin contracting and shifting against your face. He tilted his head down closer to yours, his chin pressing against the top of your head.
“Oh?”

Even if he was feeling the effects of your affection, his voice didn’t betray anything. The tone was still firm and full of teasing richness. You sighed at the way his chest rumbled when he spoke.

“I can’t read minds, kitten,” he said after a few seconds of silence and inaction. He felt your body flutter at the nickname -- he made note of your reaction immediately. “How do you want to thank me?”

You pulled away from him (well, as far away as you could -- he wasn’t letting go of your ass) and rolled your shoulders, hiding your red-tinted face. You were wearing a humored-but-embarrassed smile when you finally looked back to him.

“You got me off with your mouth last time,” you said quietly. Having to speak your thoughts still made you uncomfortable. But your eyes flashed as they bore into the shadows of his face. “So I’d like to return the favor.”

There was the slightest twitch across his cheek. Everything about him went a bit tighter and you wondered if he was attempting to keep himself under control. You had to admit -- the idea that just a statement from you could get All Might hot and heavy was intoxicating.

He won the battle of his libido, a toothy smirk spreading across his face as he relaxed, the danger passing. He released his hold on your ass, standing at full height and taking your chin in his hand.

“How could I say no to that?”

Well. You offered and he accepted. Now it was no longer a fantasy. It was… actually going to happen.

You cleared your throat, your bravery failing as you realized logistics.

“I’m… inexperienced in this area,” you said with your best professional demeanor, trying not to look like a fool. “So guidance would be appreciated--”

His hands were at your backside, scooping you up into his arms. He gave you a hard kiss, loudly sucking on your lower lip, only to pull back when you went to invite him into your mouth. It wasn’t more kissing he was interested in.

You were being walked somewhere.

His focus turned to that beautiful neck of yours. He was breathing against you when he fell back, plopping onto your couch with enough force that the entire piece of furniture groaned and sagged underneath him.

Neither of you paid any mind -- he was gripping the back of your neck, running the flat of his tongue up the base of your throat to your jaw.

“Can you -- ah -- go a little easier, this time?” you asked when you felt his lips press down, sucking at your skin. “The biting was a little harsh.”

In response, he took a bit of flesh between his teeth. You braced yourself for the stinging pain -- which did appear -- though it was much weaker than what you were expecting. You hummed, petting his bang in thanks that he wasn’t tearing flesh from you.

He seemed enthusiastic about paying attention to your neck but you wanted to get the show on the
road. You tugged at his upright bang as he continued kissing, sucking and biting, trying to get his attention as you felt his tongue trace over a recently divvied love bite.

Eventually, he got the hint and, with an irritated breath, pulled away from your throat and loosened his grip on your backside.

Relatively free, you scooted down, landing squarely on his crotch.

Suddenly, everything in him tensed up.

“Careful, kitten,” he said, a tightness in his voice coaxing a smile from you.

You ran your hands across his chest, languishly rolling your hips against him. He clenched his jaw, hands dropping to settle on your thighs.

“How much have you done?” he asked, curiosity getting the better of him. “You didn’t bleed when I fingered you. And you should have.”

For good measure, he held up two fingers, allowing you to see their length and width. They had been inside you. You took a deep breath, trying to remain stoic as you heart thrummed. Your hands drifted lower.

“Not everyone bleeds,” you said. “And I’ve been… experimenting.”

“But you’ve never sucked a cock?”

At the vulgarity you flinched, your passivity falling apart.

Your movements slowed.

All Might pounced.

“Ah, nervous?” he purred, changing tactics. Suddenly he was moving his hips underneath you, grinding his crotch against your backside.

You felt it. The lumbering beast waking.

“No need for fear.” The way he spoke hinted otherwise. “We’ll take it nice and slow. But…” He leaned down, his breath fanning across the top of your head. “If you stay sitting on me like that, I might get the wrong idea.”

That… that was something you wanted to work up to.

Ignoring the rocking of his hips, your eyes flickered to his face and the arrogant look affixed to it. Worrying your lower lip between your teeth you shifted, pushing his hands off your thighs so you could slide off his lap and onto the floor.

You settled on your knees, watching his legs almost instinctively open, inviting you to pull yourself closer to him -- which you did.

Now or never.

Gingerly, you reached your hand out, pressing it against the heat in his pants. A first step.

He chuckled, a reaction that made you look up at him with minor alarm.
“I’m wearing thick pants, kitten. I can’t feel your touch.”

That… was true.

With a deep breath, you reached for his belt buckle, working to unclasp it. When it fell open, deft fingers moved to his pant buttons and zipper.

“Good girl.”

Everything about him exuded heat, a fact made more apparent when you slipped your hand into the space between his khakis and his underwear. You heard him inhale at the contact, but your attention was too focused on the twitching hardness beneath your palm to glance up at him.

There wasn’t much you could do in such a confined space, other than rub him, so that’s what you did. With equal parts curiosity and arousal, you started your investigation; at first pushing your hand as deep and wide as you could go before searching for definition, your fingers digging, determined to feel the width of his cock.

Judging from his breathing, and the increasing hardness beneath your hand, you were doing a decent job palming him. It was hard to visualize his member, though. It felt imposing.

You came across a damp spot in his underwear and smirked, assuming you found the head of Goliath. So you pressed down, digits dancing around the bulbous shape.

His legs moved and he attempted to hide his soft grunt with a chuckle.

“That’s it, darling,” he said, voice thick. “Keep pressing right there.”

So you did. Taking a page from erotica and porn, you rubbed your thumb against the very top of his cock, looking up at his face just in time to see his jaw go taut. You grinned up at him, a strange surge of power resting in your gut, as your hand gripped shaft and tugged down.

You moved to light jerking, feeling his skin slide, your fingers always returning to rub and prod the head before journeying deeper down his length.

He continued to grow heavier and thicker.

Eventually All Might’s hand settled on top of yours, silently removing your hand from his pants. He was shifting, pulling his khakis further down his thighs in order to expose more of the front of his underwear.

His arms returned to the armrest and across the back of the couch.

You could see it then, the bulge that had been further freed from the confines of his pants. It was tenting, a mountain of fabric your eyes traced. A mountain you were looking to summit.

“What are you planning on doing next?”

You bit down the urge to comment on the state of his voice, humming and hawing instead as you reached out and rested your hand against his clothed hardness.

“I’m torn,” you cooed, brushing the head of his cock, inwardly smiling when his length twitched. “Should I keep using my hand… or should I move to my mouth?”

You met his gaze, another bout of courage flooding your veins. He snorted a chuckle, pointed teeth appearing.
“I don’t know if I like this newfound cockiness,” he said thickly. “Especially in a supposed first-timer.”

You matched his chuckle before acquiescing under his gaze.

“This is a thank you,” you admitted. Fine, you’d play the part. Biting your lower lip, your gaze flickered between his cock and his face. “Why delay?”

You pushed your hair out of the way, leaning forward to press a chaste kiss against his cock. Followed by another. Then another.

It took everything in All Might to remain stoic, though an occasional grunting breath escaped. It was quite the sight, seeing you on your knees between his legs. You were mouthing by that point -- two hands gripping him hesitantly while your tongue reached out to flick against his cockhead.

He clenched his teeth when he felt pleasure ripple down his cock and up through his gut.

“That’s it,” he purred, hands fisting as a prickling sensation rolled across the back of his neck. His thigh shuddered when you hummed in response to his praise, the vibrations dancing across his shaft.

Your hands were groping, jerking and tugging as your beautiful tongue and mouth worked across him, twisting his gut tighter. There was no rhythm to your motions -- he’d correct that when you moved to direct touch. But there was enthusiasm. You were trying different things, using your tongue then switching to mouthing before sucking down against him.

“Right there--”

Unable to hold it back, he released a low growl when your mouth made its way back to the head of his cock, tongue prodding the tip as lips enclosed around it to suck.

The sound was music to your ears and you found yourself releasing your own small moan at hearing him enjoy your ministrations.

“Should I move on?” you asked. “I want to see you.”

“You’re an eager little thing,” he rumbled, shifting deeper in the couch. “What is it you want to see?”

You blushed and shook your head, lowering your hand to rub at his leg, still unsure if you hated or loved the games he played.

“Your cock,” you said, voice soft and lips barely moving.

“Ah, you want to see my cock,” he grinned. “Why?”

You cringed at him, hiding your chin under the neckline of your shirt to hide your uncomfortable and stupid smile.

“Tell me what you want,” he said.

“I want to suck your cock, All Might.” Bright eyes and pink cheeks searched his face. He relaxed his brows.

“By all means, sweetheart.”

You gripped the band of his boxer briefs, nervous energy bubbling in your gut as you pulled the elastic down. Slowly it was unveiled -- the thick, large cock of the great villain All Might.
“Keep going;” he instructed and you continued to pull the elastic down, revealing the heavy balls at the base. When his entirety was out in the open, All Might assisted in securing his underwear under his hips.

You swallowed the lump in your throat as you took a minute to regard him.

He wasn’t as big as you originally feared. With his stature, you thought he may have had a baseball bat tucked away in his pants. It was still large but it was… proportionate to him. Though it wasn’t the length that struck you, it was his thickness. There was no way you could fit his cock in your mouth without him scraping across your teeth or dislocating your jaw. But to imagine pushing that inside of you… it would be so filling. A nice, stretching girth, you envisioned. Though the adjustment period would probably be dotted with pain.

You were admiring his other attributes -- prominent veins, bulbous red head, heavy balls -- when his hand came into view to openly stroke himself in front of you.

“What’s going on in that head of yours?” he murmured.

Ah, he was looking for an ego boost.

Well, it was a thank you.

“You’re so big…” you said softly, watching the lewd show he was putting on. A chortle.

“What else are you thinking?”

Assuming his arousal was spurring his motions, you met his eyes. You softly touched his wrist, watching with delight when he stopped his hand. After a slight tug, he pulled away.

Your hand his replaced his.

His thighs flexed as you stroked up and down his length, adding a slight twist to your motions.

“I was thinking how big you are,” you repeated with a hum, keeping your movements slow. “I was wondering what your balls would feel like in my hands--” He was shifting. “--What it would be like to have something like this inside of me--” A grunt. “--And what you taste like.”

All Might kept his mouth closed, his teasing dying in his chest.

You took a steadying breath before leaning forward, flicking your tongue out to catch the head of his cock. It was an unfamiliar sensation but you continued on, acting as if it was just one of his massive fingers you were sucking.

“Keep going.”

It was a deep-throated command and you obeyed, growing a little bolder and dragging your tongue across his tip. You could suck at it, enclose your lips around it, but you couldn’t take it any deeper.

You kissed down the underside of his shaft, catching the change in his breathing as you pressed the flat of your tongue against him.

“Keep that tongue out,” All Might said.

Again, you obeyed, tracing patterns as you worked to paint every bit of his dick with saliva. You even made a detour down to his balls, licking and sucking as you rolled them in your hands. Judging from his face and shifting, All Might liked that.
But it was his cock that needed your attention and you soon found your way back.

Your hands kept busy while you worked. One was attempting to pump his considerable width, the other had drifted down so you could roll each ball in your palm.

If he had planned on giving you direction, All Might was failing. His mouth was pulled closed in a slight grimace, eyes trained on the sloppy worship you had devolved into. Kissing, licking, sucking - there was no inch of him your mouth wasn’t at.

“Put--” he clenched his teeth, growling when you traced your tongue along the underside of his cock. “Put your mouth… on the head… and pump.”

You were spitting quietly along the tip of his dick, forcing great globs of saliva to trail down his length, adding lubricant. He was oozing precum consistently, a salty substance that you still needed to get used to. Licking your lips, you enclosed them around his cockhead, both hands coming together to pump his shaft while you sucked.

All Might pushed against the back of your couch, knees bumping into you.

“Fuck,” he growled, a harsh sound almost hidden under his loud, uneven breathing. You looked up at him, taken in by the spark of blue peering back at you.

It was a beautiful sight, seeing your mouth so stretched around him. He swallowed loudly, tension bubbling in his gut. His eyes flicked up to the living room window he was facing. You hadn’t closed the blinds, not that there were any other buildings around.

Warmth rippled up his back.

Maybe that stupid birdbrain was out there, watching--

All Might hissed, thoughts failing when the churning within him started reaching a fever pitch.

“Keep sucking,” he demanded. “Keep sucking just like that, kitten. I’m close now.”

You continued and one of his hands stroked the side of your face. Then it was entangled in your hair, pressing and pulling at your scalp.

“Swallow every last drop,” he said as a throaty growl ripped through him. “First man to cum down your throat.”

That last bit was probably more for him, you recognized. You increased your speed, tongue flicking out and tracing patterns before prodding his slit.

He pulled his hand quickly from your hair, returning it safely to the back of the couch so he could grip without fear of injuring you. His breathing was ragged -- a redness had bloomed across his face and neck. Teeth were being displayed in a heated grimace.

“Fuck,” he hissed, pulling his body tighter, ass and legs clenching. He was pushing his dick up into your mouth, still somehow displaying a level of self-control to prevent himself from thrusting into you.

You groaned around him, his mannerisms and expressions some of the hottest things you’d seen.

*And you were doing that to him.*

The only warning you got that he was cumming was a final, thunderous ‘*fuck.*’ Then, he was
erupting, oozing out large wads of cum into your mouth, coating your palate completely. You panicked slightly -- the speed was in slow, languid bursts but the amount was considerable. He gripped the couch, lower body jerking as you worked to swallow everything. It was a chore -- the taste and texture were unfamiliar and your immediate reaction was to pull back and spit out everything.

But he had said nothing was to be spilled.

Plus you had a final trick up your sleeve you’d been eager to try out. He opened his eyes and looked down at you just in time to see a spark of mischievousness alight in yours.

Time to return some favors.

You reached out with your quirk, spinning time back a few seconds.

It felt like he had just cum, though he knew he didn’t. But it was knee-shaking feeling when he suddenly felt himself erupting into your mouth again. For the first time.

He let out a loud growl, snarling down at you and the trick you were playing on him, body trembling. Your throat was bobbing as you worked to swallow his large load, though the faint taste of cum lingered in your mouth.

All Might caught your eye again.

Another look.

“Don’t--!”

It was too late.

He nearly howled, fingers tearing into the fabric of your couch at the intensity, hips thrusting up and forcing you to follow. The redness across his face had grown a bit deeper and included the tips of his ears.

Faithfully you swallowed his technically first and final load, stroking him in with a slow, even rhythm while he came down.

His chest was heaving as if breathing was difficult for him. When his erupting cock had settled, you pulled your mouth away with an audible pop, curious to see how he would react to you.

Three times was enough -- for you and him.

That last time he almost seemed… angry.

You got your answer when his hand whipped out, fingers grasping around your throat and pulling you against him.

For a brief second, you thought he was going to snap your neck.

But he was forcing you into a messy kiss, unconcerned that some of his seed still lingered in the recesses of your mouth. His tongue lapped any trace up, basking in the mixed taste of you and him.

All Might groused against you, brutally sucking at your tongue and biting your somewhat-tender lips. You winced and, at feeling that movement against his face, he settled down.

“Did I do good?” you murmured against his mouth when he pulled back.
He exhaled, gripping your hair and pulling your head back so he could hide his face against your neck, drinking in your smell.

“That stunt… deserves some punishment…” he wheezed.

For a brief second you were… elated.

You had left All Might a gasping, twitching mess.

All Might.

All Might.

You chuckled.

“I may have gotten a little carried away.”

You liked the feeling of basking in the afterglow. You felt and heard his breathing normalizing and his fingers were combing through your hair quite nicely. Affectionately.

But the coughing started.

A wet sound racked through All Might’s body and he pulled away, pushing you off of him onto the couch. Something was wrong. He was coughing into his fist and frowning, turning away from you as he quickly worked to put his lower half back in order.

“Is--”

“I have to go,” he grumbled, wiping his hand on his pants as he worked to zip himself and re-fasten his belt buckle.

“Are--”

Your brows furrowed as you watched him head toward the front door -- you scrambled off the couch after him.

“Lock your bedroom window,” was all he said before disappearing in a gust of wind out of your front door.

There were no goodbyes exchanged or promises of another rendezvous.

Your shoulders sagged.

The first time you had fallen asleep.

The second time he had literally run out on you.

You locked the door when you were certain he wasn’t going to come back, mind reeling over what could have happened.

What… what a strange night.

As scenes replayed in your head of escaping death and sucking cock, you found yourself mindlessly gnawing at the nearly-forgotten pizza. All Might had seemed pleased with you. It looked like he enjoyed everything you had done. He engaged in some aftercare. But the coughing… maybe he was running a fever? Feeling vomity?
That would explain the need for a sudden departure--if he didn’t want to throw-up in front of a girl who just gave him a blowjob.

On the third slice, it struck you that Hawks could have poisoned your food.

Panic squeezed your heart and your appetite was effectively curbed. Though you stood with your phone ready, in case you needed to call for help, you didn’t drop dead or fall into convulsions.

Okay, looked like he didn’t.

You indulged in a fourth slice of pizza before packing the box up and throwing away the half-eaten french fries that Hawks had ruined with his sullied fingers.

Showered. Rested. And finally fed.

The threat of death? Gone.

You examined the newly-formed tears on your couch, poking the stuffing back in. You should have a sewing kit in your bedroom.

Despite its oddities, it had been a good day.

*Though you wished he would have stayed.*

**Chapter End Notes**

I like exploring personal and relationship dynamics that pop up in sex! There's a level of intimacy and bonding that gets established and strengthened between people. At least that my excuse for why I have an affinity for smut.

I also wanted to give a MAJOR shout out to all the crazy talented artists on Tumblr who have drawn villain All Mights and tagged me in them. Guys, when I say I literally get all weird giddy-laughy when I see them... I'm not lying. I've been looking at all of them repeatedly, every day. Yous are all way too talented for the likes of me. Seriously. I have so much respect for artists and...

Ugh, I'm not gonna get all weird gushy in an author's note. Just know that I appreciate, respect and love all of you.
Mini update to whet your appetite. Hopefully I’ll have the next real chapter done by tomorrow night!

I also wanted to drop a note about my villain AU -- it's not a true mirror universe/opposite world. If All Might had gained his infamy by being the biggest villain there was, how would that shift and shape things? I still think certain characters would have continued on to become heroes, but I also think others would have taken twisted inspiration from V!Might.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“In other news -- officials confirm that the youngest Yoshida son, who was hospitalized after a suspected nerve agent attack last week, has died. Yoshida Ikki was twenty-nine years old when t--”

Hawks sighed as he slid his half-empty beer bottle across the bartop, batting it between his hands. His chin rested on the highly-polished wood, eyes watching the reflection of the bottle in the sheen as it passed.

“There’s no reason for you to be so… blue. You made the right decision.”

Hawks ignored the voice and sighed again, considerably louder.

He heard the clinking of cleaned glasses being returned to their shelves, but the bartender didn’t engage in any additional conversation, which was not what Hawks wanted.

Another, louder sigh--

“If you’re going to--”

“I wished our meeting had been cooler,” he griped, sitting up and settling the bottle directly in front of him. “It was All Might, All Might!, and all we did was talk about the support lab girl. I wanted to see flying fists! A freaking tornado or something. But he just stood there and... “

He let out a disgusted ‘tch.’

The bartender draped the drying rag over his shoulder and stopped his cleaning.

Fine. He’d play the part of the sympathetic ear.

“I expected more… fire and fury. Not…” Hawks frowned, tilting the bottle back and forth. “Whatever that was. A five-minute talk.”

“He didn’t think you were a threat,” the bartender said simply. The winged villain shot him a dirty look but said nothing. “No one knows who you are, Hawks. Not yet. He probably thought you were some street punk. Which you are, and will be, until you make a name for yourself.”

“I hate working cleanup,” Hawks said, eyes flashing to the television. A moment of silence passed.
“My debut has to be awesome. I want people to know I’m here to stay.” His face darkened. “And that I’ll be an even bigger thorn in their side than All Might ever could be. Ever was.”

“And we’re working on that. Rome wasn’t built in a day, was it? It’ll take time to get the pieces into place.”

“And then I’ll swoop in and expose all those bullshit heroes and even bigger bullshit villains for who they really are.”

“Phonies? Fakes?” The bartender chuckled, shaking his head. “You’re starting to sound suspiciously like Stain.”

Hawks bristled, casting an irritated look to the doorway. He half-expected to see the noseless freak standing there, rambling about the state of the corrupt world to fatigued ears. But it was early and he was likely still asleep upstairs.

“Your time in the sun will come,” the bartender continued, watching as Hawks drained the last of his beer. He plucked the empty bottle off the counter, giving the Hawks-smudged surface a few cursory wipes with his cloth. “Don’t rush what we’re creating. Besides, that talk of yours wasn’t a waste of time, was it? You didn’t walk away empty-handed. You got information. And that’s important. It’s required.”

“Alright, alright. I get it.”

Hawks pushed himself away from the bar, rolling his shoulders as his wings stretched out behind him. His demeanor shifted away from angry melancholy and he grinned, watching as his companion carefully disposed of the bottle in the recycling can behind the counter.

“You know what, in another life you could have been a therapist or something. I always feel better after talking to you.”

The bartender chuckled dryly -- it was an observation he had been told before.

“Perhaps that’s why I became a bartender. To listen.”

“Yeah a bartender, that’s what you are.”

The younger man frowned, checking the time on his cell phone. It was late afternoon -- he had hours to kill.

“I guess I’ll go… walk around or something? Maybe go to the movies…? I should really find a hobby. A guy like me shouldn’t just spend his days wasting time. Anyway, let me know if anything pops up. I won’t be far.”

Hawks gave a small salute as he stood in the doorway.

“Good talk, boss.”

Chapter End Notes

Just wanted to give continued thanks to everyone who has been so supportive with this story. Yous are all too good to me and every time I see a comment or a Tumblr ask I get
stupid happy. It’s too nice. I always try and reply back to comments on here as a thank-you, but I’m falling behind! I wanted to let you know that I do read what you throw down and appreciate everything!
You jiggled the metal container of newly-purchased mints in your hand, staring at the modern-style building that was a stone’s throw away from where you stood. An unexpected tartness attacked your taste buds, though it was intertwined with a strange hint of mint.

*Ah. So that’s what it meant by ‘Arctic Strawberry.’*

An older woman wearing hot-pink pants was approaching the building from the opposite direction. She caught your eye and smiled, giving a small wave. An action that you returned.

She disappeared inside.

You popped another mint into your mouth.

It was a routine you had fallen into after weathering your first krav maga class -- standing outside the building and giving yourself a pep talk that you needed to suck it up and follow-through with your decision.

Even if the class left everything about you sore.

Having been put at risk of being killed, you had taken a good look at your life and lifestyle choices. It was stupidly naive of you to think you’d be safe doing work for villains. That you ran no risks other than being apprehended in an undercover sting by law enforcement. You had always assumed you could offer refunds or exchanges in the case of product failure. Or you could get by with some ‘connections.’

Hell, you’d throw in some free repairs!

Then Hawks appeared to let you know that there was another viable option for an unsatisfied customer.

They could always just *murder* you.

That was a full stop kind of realization.

After the pumping adrenaline faded, and you had batted away red-faced regret at some of the *other* actions you engaged in while in the passionate throes of your sudden lust for life, you started planning.

You wanted to undergo a little bit of a self-revitalization to prepare yourself for the future. Your bubble of safety had been burst. You weren’t as protected as you thought.

You weren’t untouchable.

The first step was investing in a security system overhaul for your lab by *actually* installing security that wasn’t just a bunch of locks. Then there was the self-improvement. After mulling around different ideas, you bit the bullet and signed up for krav maga classes in the city center. Other than panicked eye-gouging and biting, the only other protection you had worth noting was your quirk. But it only worked in bursts of seconds; you could reset someone back a few motions. However, if they were intent on coming at you, it was doubtful that would do much good.

At least if you took a couple of classes you would learn some skills. It was much better than *nothing,*
plus the Wikipedia articles mentioned how it stressed real-world applications. That was good, right? That seemed like it could be useful.

Your thoughts were silenced when you watched your instructor step toward the building’s large, front window to stare at you. Two classes ago he caught onto your before-class ritual and now made it a point to make eye contact with you.

He was a nice guy who was personally invested in the training of all his students but, my god, if he wasn’t the most infuriating person on the planet. Maybe you wanted to quit without someone making you feel so guilty about it.

Hoisting your gym bag higher on your shoulder, you swallowed the dread in your throat and mentally prepared for the beating that the other women in the class were about to unleash on you.

The train ride home was quiet.

The bars that dotted your walk home were alive with salarymen and women happily drinking with one another, cheering to the end of another workday, though it had been hours since the after-work crowd had left for ‘home.’ At each establishment, you slowed your steps to prolong your passing glances inside. The night was warm with a refreshing breeze -- doors and windows were flung wide open, voices blending into an enticing hum that further mixed with music and the sweet scent of cooking food.

How long had it been since you’d gone out drinking with your friends? A real night out?

Too long.

By the time you reached the front door of your apartment, dusk had settled. You eyed the buzzing insects around your front light, carefully keeping any from entering when the door opened.

Your apartment was dark and silent, as expected.

There was no life within its walls when you weren’t home.

Exhaustion had settled deep in your bones. Any plans about heading to your lab for some evening hours were quickly thrown out the window when you got a good look at your thighs in your bedroom mirror. You had added another bruise to your growing collection.

No, you needed a chance to recuperate. Three classes a week were brutal on your plush body.

You were drawing a much-needed bath when a loud knock on your front door barreled through your hushed existence. Plopping the bag of Epsom salts on the floor, you peeked out the doorway toward the living room, nerves traveling along your spine as you wondered who the unplanned visitor could be.

Another, louder knock.

The peephole only showed a moving mass of blackness. With trepidation, you unlocked the door and opened it just enough for you to get a look at who was there.

Surprised silence settled as All Might’s smug form greeted you.
Oh.

Several seconds passed without any movement or acknowledgment on your part.

“Someone’s going to call the police if they see me standing here,” he finally said, his voice knocking some sense back into you. With a nod you stepped aside, ushering him in.

“What are you doing here?” you asked. It wasn’t a snippy question -- his visit was truly unexpected.

“Why are you acting like that?” he answered.

“Like what?”

“Nervous to see me.” His lip curled as he turned toward the sound of running water. “You don’t have someone here, do you?”

“What? No, I was just about to take a bath,” you said. “And I’m not nervous. Usually there are a few weeks between our meetings, so I wasn’t expecting to see you so… soon.”

“Drawing a bath?”

You sighed, looking him over before nodding.

“Yeah I’ve been a little sore so I was going to soak. Speaking of which…”

You bypassed him, afraid of how high the water might have gotten while you weren’t paying attention.

“Sore?” He was following you down the hallway and you calmed when you saw that the tub hadn’t started overflowing in the brief time you were away. “Why are you sore?”

“I started taking self-defense classes,” you said, pouring more salt into the still-filling tub, inhaling the fragrant scent of lavender. “And it’s… intense.”

You paused to direct his gaze to your leg -- a bruise the size of an plum was already turning a prominent shade of purple. Even when you turned back to pouring salt, he remained fixated on it.

“Why are you learning self-defense?”

“Call it inspiration after dealing with Hawks. I need to be able to defend myself better if another ‘disgruntled customer’ comes after me. But the women in my class… they’re like gorillas. Even the small ones.”

All Might kept quiet, lost in thought while you turned off the water valves. You looked back at him, chewing at the inside of your cheek. Should you bring it up now? Or wait?

*Just rip the band-aid off. You know that’s why he’s here.*

“I’ve been thinking…”

He shifted, crossing his arms.

“About what, sweetheart?” he said. His voice was flat, cautiously uninterested in what you going to say.

“You might have the wrong idea about me.”
“Oh?” The disinterest was gone, replaced with humor. You glared.

“I’m not going to become your personal… whore, if that’s what you were planning.”

He erupted into boisterous laughter, head falling back with his mouth opened wide as his body heaved.

“I’m serious! I hope you don’t think you can just drop in whenever and assume you’re going to get something from me.”

He was still in the throes of his hearty laugh and showed no signs of easing up.

“I’m very thankful for what you did for me with Hawks, sticking up for me. But I regret how I thanked you.” You groaned, dropping the salt bag back on the ground. “I get down on my knees and suck you off like I’m in some kind of fucking porno. As a thank you. Almost immediately. Like that’s acceptable. What kind of person am I?”

His laughter had died away but the dumb smile was still there. You were rubbing your face by that point.

*God, you hated him.*

“I hate myself. How I acted. How I continue to act. I don’t behave like that. I don’t want to behave like that. And I feel like I’ve dug myself into a hole because that’s obviously what you expect.”

“Now, now—”

“Why are you here, All Might?” You were looking at him, holding his gaze. The smile fell away. “I doubt you came to say hello. No, I think you assumed I’d be willing and able—”

“This flip-flopping of yours is going to wear thin *real soon.*”

“Be honest then, why are—”

“I came here because I’ve been thinking about your sweet little mouth wrapped around my cock,” he said, a declaration that made your face go a vivid shade of red.

You deflated hearing him prove your point. So he did think of you as some sort of sex toy. He caught on enough to know the words stung.

“You were *so* happy to see me last time.” He pinched the bridge of his nose. “You’re giving me a headache. And I was in such a good mood too.”

“I’m not a whore.”

The statement lacked certainty, he noticed, though that was the tone you were attempting to apply; maybe that’s how it sounded in your head. But to an outsider, there was more… emotion in your words. It held a breath of resentment that All Might didn’t think was being directed at him.

“I never said you were,” he grumbled.

You stood unsure of your next move. The conversation had not flowed as you expected and your thoughts were already stumbling. To your horror, you felt a wave of embarrassment brewing that made your throat clench up. *Oh Jesus god, why did you even open your mouth? You shouldn’t have said anything.*
Why couldn’t you act like a normal goddamn person?

A snuffle-laced breath weaseled out and your head whipped to the side as you blinked back tears of self-hatred and shame. Do not cry in front of him. Do not. Do not. Do not.

“Now you’re crying,” All Might said, shaking his head with riled disbelief. “What is wrong with you, girl? You’re not right in the head.”

She’s insane. Plagued with mood swings.

“Are you on drugs?” he added as a serious follow-up question. You let out a disgusted sound, shaking your head.

“No! No, ok? God, just go. Let me take my bath.”

You were trying to usher him out of your bathroom and away from your home but he was unmoving.

“Are you mentally disturbed?”

Your hands found their way to your face, sliding down your cheeks. You wanted to crawl into a hole at that point.

“No!”

“Why do you act so crazy then?”

“Because apparently I can’t stop making myself look like an ass in front of you,” you said through gritted teeth, going so far as to place open palms on his hip to push him out. Of course, it was like attempting to move a mountain. Even a week and a half worth of krav maga lessons weren’t enough to give you that kind of strength.

“You only look like an ass when you do this,” he said, gesturing to you. “Get all screwy.”

Seeing you weren’t giving up on your impossible task, he gripped your upper arms to pin them by your sides to settle you down. You winced when hands settled against sensitive flesh.

He caught your reaction.

“What are you doing in your classes?” he asked -- the bruises along your arms were hidden under a long-sleeve shirt. He held you away from him at arm's length, eyes roaming over the visible ones along your legs. Some were minor and had already begun fading to yellow, but there were other prominent ones that he missed.

“Does it matter?” you mumbled, glowering. He huffed and, although you couldn’t see, rolled his eyes.

“Get in the tub.”

“I’m not going to have sex with you in my bathtub. My bones hurt.”

He growled and pushed you away, in the direction of the tub.

“I can’t fit in your tub, stupid girl,” he snapped. His statement was correct -- you eyed his hulking stature and compared it to the narrow, white bathroom fixture.
“Well, aren’t you going to leave? I’m not doing anything after --”

“Just get in the tub. I want nothing from you tonight.”

“I’m not going to bathe with you in here,” you said as if the thought was ludicrous. His scowling face bore into yours.

“Now you have modesty?” he said after quick silence fell between you. You grew flustered that he called out your indecency but, before you could react, he turned so his back was facing you.

That was his idea of privacy?

“I don’t want to take a bath in front of you at all,” you stressed. The muscles across his back danced as his hands and arms flexed. He didn’t turn his head fully, but he shifted it slightly toward his shoulder.

“I’m already here, girl. Just get in your bath.” He paused before adding, in a slightly lower tone. “The water has to be warm for the salts.”

“This isn’t a discussion. This is literally my house and I’m… I’m telling you to leave.”

He exhaled loudly, facing you once more while shaking his head.

“I’m going to be nice to you tonight, girl. I’m going to help you with your muscle fatigue. Get in your bath and soak.” His frown deepened. “I’ll wait for you outside.”

“I don’t--”

A fist clenched and unclenched and he took a steadying breath.

“Soak in your bath.”

He left, shutting the bathroom door behind him. You swallowed, standing uncomfortably on top of your soft bath mat and waited. He was still there. You could feel him.

Eventually you heard his heavy footsteps leave the vicinity of the door.

Should you chase after him to further confront him or, well, bathe? Defeated, you clicked the lock on your doorknob and worked to undress, casting quick looks at the door. You expected that, at any moment, he would come bursting in with greedy eyes.

But he didn’t.

You settled beneath the water, using your hands to churn up the undissolved salt that had sunk to the bottom of the tub. Eyes were still warily glued to the door.

Minutes passed and you didn’t hear him walk by. You sunk a bit deeper, your knees breaching the surface as your back lowered. It was so warm. The lavender so appealing. Your internal springs were unwinding and you leaned your head back, eyes drifting closed.

A loud sound coming from beyond the door made you jump -- it wasn’t a crash, more like a heavy ‘thump.’ You strained your ears, waiting for some kind of follow-up action but heard nothing.

Hesitantly you lowered your upper body back under the water.

How could All Might honestly expect you to relax? You basically gave him free reign of your house.
Unsupervised reign. What if he ripped off a kitchen cabinet?

As quickly as the visual entered your mind, it was brushed away.

No. You didn’t think he’d go and ruin anything of yours after his stunt at your lab.

Right?

It was hard to predict him though. He was a bit of an enigma.

Absentmindedly your hand smacked at the surface of the water, ripples skimming across the murky liquid at each contact. Television shows were usually interrupted when he was on a rampage, showing shaky footage of destroyed buildings and chaos in the streets. His laughing visage had become a bad omen for the people of Japan.

Yet, no one had ever arrested him. No one had ever defeated him. Straining your mind, you couldn’t recall any news reports mentioning an All Might fight as close; there were close calls sure, but that phrase was only ever used to describe heroes who had beaten back death after a bout with him.

The water splashed as you adjusted so you were sitting cross-legged, your knees singing with thanks as they were hugged by warmth. A satisfied chill crept down your spine. You leaned back again, working to keep your hair from getting too wet.

All Might was a villain, his actions and presence made it obvious, but he didn’t come off as evil.

Hell, basic interactions with you proved that.

Evil men take what they want. All Might was an asshole, but he was… considerate. To a point.

‘Oh god,’ you groaned, squeezing your eyes shut. Your emotions were continuing to be the bane of your existence. If you didn’t know any better, you were starting to feel guilty and there was absolutely no reason for you to.

Maybe he was onto something with his mentally disturbed question.

A small laugh escaped you and you shook your head.

If only your quirk could rewind more than a couple of seconds. There was so much you wished you could change.

Eventually, the bath water grew cold and it was no longer pleasurable to lounge in. Standing was an ordeal, as you felt considerably heavier. Draining the tub, you quickly hosed off before wrapping yourself in towels. You stared at the door.

Should you risk going back to your room dressed in towels? What if he was waiting in there?

No, it wasn’t even a question.

You pulled your gym clothes back on.

It was the right choice -- you found him in your bedroom, examining some of the belongings you had sitting on top of your dresser. You cleared your throat but he didn’t look up. Apparently, he wasn’t embarrassed to be caught snooping.

“Can you uh, get out? I have to change.”
One of your necklaces was laid out in his hands and he carefully placed it back where it had been hanging before looking at you. Rather than say something smart, he snorted and lumbered by you, heading to the hallway.

He turned before closing the door, making it a point to let you know he was going to be waiting just on the other side.

You dressed quickly: sweatpants and an oversized t-shirt. And, of course, undergarments.

As expected, he was standing right there when you checked.

“What... do you want?”

“We’re gonna stretch you out.” Your eyes widened and mouth flew open, but before you could say anything he growled and spoke first. “Your muscles. To help with the soreness, thick-skull. It’ll be good for that back of yours too.”

Your mouth closed.

All Might’s gaze flickered around the floor of the room. The open expanse next to your bed would have to do.

“You idiot instructor has you stretch before you fight, right?” he asked, gesturing for you to sit on the floor.

You were to sit with the soles of your feet touching. He knelt behind after you did as he commanded.

Your back went rigid when his two hands settled on each knee.

“He’s not an idiot,” you muttered after he told you what to do -- press up against the light pressure he held against your legs. “He’s very smart. And we don’t fight. We do a bunch of different things.”

At his word you stopped pushing, allowing him to settle your knees flush with the floor. You could definitely feel the stretch then.

“And we do stretch,” you added, realizing you hadn’t answered his question. He made a sound -- you weren’t sure if it was a snort, a growl or a chuckle.

Not that it mattered. They could all be used interchangeably when it came to him. They were his default reactions.

“Push,” he said, allowing you to raise your knees to press against his hands again.

“Why the interest in my self-defense?”

He didn’t answer.

After a couple more sets of pushing and stretching, he moved on to the next exercise. All Might had you extend your legs in front of you; he pressed at your back as you bent forward ‘with your hips.’ You would stretch for several seconds, rest for a couple more, then go back to stretching.

“You’re going to Korea?”

The question was surprising — you looked over your shoulder at him, brows knitted.
“How did you know?”

“You left your mail sitting on your kitchen counter. I saw the invitation.”

“I didn’t realize you were walking around being nosey. I didn’t hear you pass by the bathroom.”

“I can be quiet when I want to be.”

He released your back and you sat straight again.

You were moving. The next position was a bit more… intimate. You averted your face as you laid on your back, All Might leaning over you with your leg propped against his chest, pressing it in toward you. Thankfully he seemed unbothered by the position and was acting almost clinical.

“Yes, I’m going to Korea,” you said to break the silence and give yourself something to focus on. “There’s a support conference in Seoul next month. So I’m going.”

“For how long?”

You winced when he switched legs, your left one had been stiffer. You had a feeling he knew -- it seemed he was paying more attention to the stretches.

“A week. Leaving on a Sunday, coming back on a Monday.”

Another unidentifiable sound. You let a hushed whine when he pressed down at your leg again, the tightness in your upper thigh not getting any better. You looked up in time to watch his mouth shift before finally deciding on a scowl.

You finished the next repetitions in silence.

Thankfully he had you sit up, returning behind you.

The ground trembled and your furniture jittered when he sank on his backside, his back against the wall. His legs were settled on either side of you.

You swallowed, hands twitching when he pulled you back into him, settling you deep in the V-shape of his legs.

His hands were at your neck. One on your shoulder, the other pushing the side of your head to one side.

You stared ahead at the potted plant you had across the room.

Silence.

“You…” his voice died away. “Why do you have the same flower all over your apartment?”

He moved to the other side of your head and you gazed off in confusion at his question.

“What do you mean?” you asked, racking your brain. You had potted plants but you didn’t have any flowers.

He grunted and held his tongue.

You wondered what was going on in his head, wishing he’d further expand.
“You have… pictures of the same flower on your walls. It’s on your phone case. And you have a necklace with it. Why obsess over one kind of flower?”

Oh!

Realization struck and you shifted, a grin playing at your lips. He reprimanded you sharply and you fixed the positioning of your head so that your chin was elevated once more. You felt… oddly giddy that he picked up on something about you.

“I like peonies,” you said. “Collected a couple of things with them on it. Now, it’s an easy gift whenever a friend gets me a present. I like what they stand for.”

“Stand for?”

“Flowers have meanings,” you said.

He waited but you didn’t offer any more explanation. Having fallen so low as to have asked about the flower, All Might was adamant in not exploring the topic any further.

Your head returned to its resting position and you waited to hear what he wanted you to do next.

His hands were resting on your shoulders and you pictured him reaching up and just snapping your neck.

A villainous response to all your lamenting.

Instead of moving or pushing, his fingers pressed down, thumbs digging into your flesh.

Oh god, maybe he really was going to--

He was squeezing and rolling the flesh of your shoulders -- a massage, you recognized instantly. It was an uncomfortable gesture and the immediate reaction was to tense up and wiggle away.

Until he connected with something near the base of your neck that made your shoulders droop toward the floor and your head fall forward.

“You neck is a mess,” he snapped, bearing down with additional pressure for good measure. But you didn’t react as it actually felt pretty damn good and was not a punishment like he had hoped.

He eased up.

“Hm,” was your reaction.

The sound was a poorly disguised groan. Knowing you couldn’t see him, the corner of his mouth pulled up in a small smirk.

That’s what he wanted to hear from you — those little whimpers of pleasure.

“You’re going to end up an old woman who can’t stand straight,” he continued. He moved his attentions closer to the back of your neck and you inhaled deeply at the magic he was working.

“I know,” you sighed, voice thick with ease. “You told me already.”

He didn’t say anything else after that and your giddy energy grew. He was being… downright likable in the moment. Being helpful while not being overly belittling. There was still unease that he had an ulterior motive, but you weren’t so opposed to his presence anymore.
He hit another knot in your back and you sunk further down and into him, eyes fluttering closed.

“Why do you know all this?” you murmured.

“Know all what?”

“The stretching and… you’re *very* good at massages.”

You were honest in your praise and you heard him indulge in a deep-chest chuckle at your words, his ego growing.

But he fell quiet and didn’t answer right away. Believing he just didn’t want to entertain the inquiry with a response, your mind drifted off -- teetering on a wonderful level of blissful blankness -- when his voice rolled across your mind.

“They’re techniques I learned from my master.”

You were pulled back to reality, eyes opening.

He was still massaging your neck and shoulders, unaware the admittance of such a normal fact had floored you. You rolled your tongue in your mouth.

He had a *master*?

He wasn’t an unnaturally born catastrophe?

Hell, All Might being *born* was an odd thought.

He was someone’s child.

“You had a master?” you asked, attempting to retain slow easiness.

All Might made a low grumble of acknowledgment and you wondered if he himself had been lulled into a state of relaxation.

You wanted to ask him questions, to pry and start to see him more as a *person*. But it was *such* a nice moment and selfishly you didn’t want it to end. And you knew prodding him for information would likely sour his mood.

Was it so wrong that you liked him being so nice to you? Gentle. Without dropping demeaning demands or teasing names?

Was it wrong you enjoyed feeling... *good*?

You buried the questions about his past, deciding not to risk sullying what was happening.

The enraged bull had been soothed.

The great villain All Might, the symbol of discord, was at ease.

... Maybe... *maybe* you didn’t hate him as much as you thought.

“You know, if you throw in a massage every time you come around I might be excited to see you.”

His hands hesitated at your joke and you waited to see if it landed.

A rumbling, rolling laugh. All Might angled closer to the top of your head and you could *feel* his grin...
without even seeing it.

“I’d have to touch you, though. And I have a feeling next time I see you, you’ll be a red-faced blabbering mess, bitching about your mistakes.”

You blushed and shifted your hand to rub at your nose.

“Not with stuff like this,” you mumbled, your voice barely above a shamed whisper. “Anything more… that’s when there are regrets.”

“You always seem to like it in the moment. Believe me kitten, I know you’ve enjoyed yourself.”

You were worried about the topic -- his voice had taken on that teasing tone that you had come to associate as an almost-bedroom voice. You heart twisted and you seriously hoped he wasn’t going to try and pivot down that route.

“Well… I always thought I’d being doing stuff like that with someone…” You already hated how you sounded but still managed to tack on the word ‘special’ as you groaned at your lameness.

All Might’s movements eased and you felt him pull back from the top of your head, settling his back against the wall once more.

But he didn’t stop his hands completely.

“Special…” he repeated to himself, letting it roll across his tongue. “Were you saving yourself, girl?”

You sighed.

“No, it wasn’t like that. I don’t know. It’s more like… I don’t know.”

You worked to articulate what you’ve thought about many times before. The subject was an uncomfortable one but part of you wanted him to know. Maybe then he’d understand.

“I’ve dated, but nothing ever went further than touching. I don’t… really have an answer for why not. It just hasn’t happened.”

He was still digesting your words when you spoke up again.

“And then you showed up.”

“I never took anything from you,” he said almost warningly, unsure how to take your words. You shrugged, his hands following the movements of your shoulders.

“I didn’t say you did. Maybe I just had a thing for bad boys I didn’t know about--” he gave a soft snort of laughter at that “-- but that’s why I’m so...“

You didn’t have a word to use, so you flipped your palms up and down.

“So it is shame,” he said. You screwed your mouth up but didn’t say anything -- it was true.

The conversation fell into a lull. You noticed you were leaning back more against him, almost touching his chest. His hands weren’t really gripping and massaging anymore.

It was more of a rubbing motion.
Only the warm yellow light of a lamp kept your bedroom illuminated. The sky was solidly dark, you noted as your glanced out the window. There were no stars visible, the light pollution of the city too great.

The moon was out a view.

There was a forgotten sock under your bed, you noticed, gaze traveling the room.

Another question was nipping at your mind.

“Why do you keep coming around?” you finally asked, throwing caution to the wind.

All Might kept quiet.

“I do act crazy around you. You get to see all my mood swings. Hell, you even saw what I look like when I don’t shower for a couple of days. The great All Might would put up with all that mess just so he could bang a virgin?”

“Partially,” he said without as much hesitation as you had hoped. The quickness of the response hurt, but his word choice was curious, so you waited before getting too heartbroken. “You do have your… moments.”

“Oh?”

You perked up, eager to hear what they were. It was intoxicating, being complimented.

All Might pushed you forward, rubbing hands turning to fists as he pressed and dug into your back. You winced but apparently you had knots there too -- you acquiesced to his hands as he continued to unravel you, returning you to limpness.

He didn’t expand on his thoughts about you.

“There is one thing that really bothers me,” you said and All Might snorted, growing bored with the conversation. You stopped your sentence but you were fairly certain you were having as much of a heart-to-heart as you could with someone like him. It was the best time to bring it up. “You always leave so… suddenly.”

“I’m a busy man.”

You pursed your lips. The answer was knee-jerk.

“I’m going to end up with a complex,” you complained, a pout to your voice.

He breathed a quick laugh through his nose.

“It’s almost certain you already have a couple.”

“Asshole.”

“You call me an asshole a lot,” he remarked, a slight pain radiating in your back as pushed a little harder. You assumed it was on purpose. “Are you fixated on my asshole, sweetheart? If you want to see it, just say the word.”

You grumbled and went to pull away, annoyed at his crude joke, but he was laughing. His hands returned to your shoulders to keep you in place.
“You fishing for spooning after screwing?” You hated that line even more. “Well I was planning on sticking around last time but you threw a wrench in those plans.”

“I did?”

“With that little trick you pulled with your quirk. Which reminds me, there will be some… retribution for that. When the time comes.”

“You told me to do it the first time!” you retorted, going so far as to cross your arms. He leaned down.

“That’s right, sweetheart, I told you to do it that first time. You took matters into your own hands after that.”

“Oh, so what, you're going to give me commands? That's your game?”

“You can do whatever you want,” he was borderline purring. “But some of your actions will have consequences. I do like doling out justice — it’s my chance to act the hero.”

You gave a loud, bitter breath and tilted your back to catch a glimpse of his face. He looked smug.

It had been so… peaceful moments ago. You turned back, staring at your wiggling toes.

Seriously, if only your quirk could rewind time a bit more.

So you could relive the good bits in life.

All Might’s arms snaked around your shoulders, carefully intertwining and pulling your back against his chest. His head was against the wall -- he was staring at the bundle of dried flowers you had hanging by your bed.

“You said a lot of things tonight,” His voice was echoing in his chest, you could feel the vibrations. “Bitched a lot too. But you never said you wanted me to stop coming around.”

That wasn’t… untrue.

It was your turn to remain silent, refusing to acknowledge the statement and trying to ignore the stupid happiness you felt at being held close to someone.

You hadn’t been held like that before.

All Might snorted a laugh, reminding you that he had poised a question. To him, your lack of response was an answer enough.

“What, I’m the special person?”

You groaned loudly, grumbling and wiggling as his laughter deepened.

Enticing reverberations. He noticed you draw a little closer to him. In response, he tightened his hold.

“You could have picked worse,” he teased. “You should feel… honored that I’m putting in the time. A lot of men and women clamor after me, you know. I can show you the websites.”

You sucked at your teeth, unwilling to admit you had seen the websites he was undoubtedly referencing.
His movements stilled as he drifted off into quiet thought.

His thumb started lightly stroking your skin.

It was such an affectionate gesture that you froze, afraid he would somehow pick up on what he was doing and would snatch it away from you.

“You need to stop acting crazy, though.” There was a sternness to his tone that, for some very odd reason, made your throat clench up. As if you were being scolded by an authority figure for doing wrong. But you hadn’t done wrong! “You’re the only one throwing around the word whore, kitten.”

It wasn’t a true compliment but the meaning was clear. He didn’t think you were a whore.

A smile weaseled out that you attempted to hide by chewing your bottom lip -- not that it mattered, All Might couldn’t see it. With a sigh you thumped your head against him, a warm smugness in your chest, and you gazed up with a raised brow. He was still looking off into the distance but his usual grin was tugging at his mouth.

He was still watching you.

“I’ll work on it,” you said after some thought. “Tonight was… enlightening. It’s cleared up some things for me. Like, I need to control my impulses a little bit better.”

Well, that wasn’t what he wanted to hear.

Shadowed eyes met yours and he frowned. He wanted the opposite.

“No more thank you blowjobs,” you said. “And I’ll have to politely decline strangers who want to give me oral right after meeting me.”

His frown deepened and you reached up, genially tapping his cheek.

“I think this was a very good talk,” you added, teasingly sweet. Your voice said you were joking but he wasn’t sure if that was true, not after your episode earlier. “And tonight you learned that you can’t run out on a woman. A little… affection can go a long way.”

Before he could do or say anything else, you were tugging at his arms, trying to get him to release you. Eventually he relented, watching as you crawled away and stood. You rolled your neck, genuinely smiling at the looseness you felt under your skin.

“Tea?” you asked, eyes dancing with delight. A second passed before a small smirk appeared on his lips. He gave a slight nod, standing and following you out of the room.

After casting one look at the flimsy wooden chairs in your kitchen, All Might opted to stand as you went through the motions of brewing tea for your guest, like a proper hostess. All you had to offer was green tea. And the only tea snack you had on hand was a half-eaten bag of cookies, which he firmly declined.

The sight struck you as odd, seeing All Might gripping such a small cup of tea when you handed it off to him.

You could picture him guzzling alcohol with ease. Hell, even a can of oil.

But tea?

It was just another bullet to add to the list of things that made you see the villain in a new light. It was
a list you had only started curating a little more than an hour ago, when he first appeared on your doorstep.

Speaking of which--

“Why’d you knock on my door?” you asked him, watching as he gingerly blew at his drink. He looked at you over the steam. “Normally you just appear. I assume by climbing through a window.”

“Your windows were locked.”

“Oh, so you tried the windows before you went to the door?”

He glowered.

At least he didn’t break in while you were naked in the tub.

The night would have probably gone a lot differently.

Placing your cup down, you shimmied up to sit on the kitchen counter, wincing at the residual soreness that still plagued your arms. All Might was still watching you. You gave him an odd look.

“What?”

His jaw was moving, you could see the way it made his neck writhe. You stopped reaching for your cup -- you had already learned what that response meant. He was working to refrain from doing something.

Was the fact he was holding back a good or bad thing? Impulses and libido told you that was a bad thing -- hell, one normal conversation to talk about your feelings? Apparently you were ready to go after that.

But your mind said otherwise.

With sick curiosity, you silently waited to see what he would do.

The first thing he did was down his tea like a shot -- that was a worrying as the liquid had to have been too hot to do that. You could almost feel the scalding of his tongue and throat.

“I’ll be in the area in a few days,” he said, setting the cup back on the table with a little too much force. “Maybe I’ll swing by if I have the time.”

“I might be at my lab,” you said, retaining an a faux air of nonchalance. “I’ve been commissioned by another client and will start working on his project soon. I’ll be working late nights again.”

Though he was only half-listening, All Might was nodding along.

“Do those stretches we did after your classes. And soak if you end up with more bruises.”

“Yes, sir.”

He glared at your response. And, like all those times before, you didn’t think the look was based in anger. With a gruff sound, he turned to leave your kitchen.

If you didn’t know any better, you’d think he was being purposefully respectful.

He was actually taking what you said to heart.
For one brief moment, the desires of your emotions and mind aligned. Rather than trail after him like the puppy you felt you’d been reduced to, you called forth your quirk and watched as he stood, giving you a gruff sound before turning to--

He stopped, looking up at you accusingly.

“‘You playing tricks again?’” he growled.

You smiled.

It was radiant enough that his frown fell off his face and he stared back with tempted suspicion.

“I respond surprisingly well to niceness,” you said. “And you were very nice tonight. That deserves a small amount of recognition.”

You stressed the word small, hoping he’d catch on.

Of course he did.

So you were back to wanting him?

He didn’t launch himself at you. It was a slow almost-saunter toward where you sat, a devilish smirk unfurling as he drew closer to your shaking head.

A hand rested on your thigh, he was gripping and rolling the fat of it in his palm. You closed your eyes, lifting your head, waiting for his mouth to crash into yours—

There was a pressure on your forehead.

“Don’t get too confident, kitten.” His hot breath puffed against your ear. “Remember who I am.”

Despite yourself, your body shivered.

His back was to you when you opened your eyes, already walking away and ending the encounter on his terms. Like always.

As he ducked and turned out of the doorway, a flash of a wonderfully blue iris caught your eye.

As did his arrogant smile.

A second later, a closing door.

You laughed through your nose, placing your hands on your glowing cheeks before smacking them lightly. It was high school, the way you felt. Reaching for your cup, you gazed like a buffoon at the empty doorway.

You had to give him credit -- All Might knew how to leave an impression.
Night Out

Chapter Notes

Thanks again for your continued support, everyone!! You are my reason for the season and I love you.
I want to mention that I've been going through and cleaning up the earlier chapters through revisions and minor rewriting (and expanding in some areas). I still view this as a work-in-progress and will probably continue to edit it as such. I've only gotten up to the second chapter so far, so don’t get too excited.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Let’s hang out!”

One simple text sent your group chat into a frenzy.

You were in your lab, forehead pressed against your worktable as you attempted to think through a creative block, when you heard the rhythmic vibrations of your cell phone. You didn’t think much of it until it exploded with notifications less than a minute later.

Your heart soared after you checked it, joining in on the variations of excited yeses.

It had been too long since you had a proper night out with friends. Too long since you communicated in ways other than texting and social media. All it felt like you had time for were quick sit-downs with individuals, not a group gathering.

People were busy, they had lives and jobs and responsibilities. It was also harder to meet up with friends as an adult: some worked odd hours, some had moved, others were just so run down that, by the time the weekend hit, all they wanted to do was sit with their feet up and take a mental break. Making the commitment to go out was hard. Interacting with people was harder.

You watched chat bubbles shift from strings of emojis to attempting to select a night that worked with everyone’s schedule.

Something happens when you enter the world of adulthood. Life simultaneously slows down and speeds up. It’s easy to fall into a habit of waking up, going to work, coming home, decompressing, going to bed and then starting the process over in the morning. Days drag by.

Then, one day, you check your calendar only to discover half a year had somehow passed.

If only you could go back to the simplicity of being a teenager. When life just revolved around school, part-time work and friends.

After a serious back and forth between the two over-planners of the group, the day was selected. You went so far as to add it to your calendar, though there was no way you were going to forget it.

You had something to look forward to!

The big night was not the only thing on your mind as the days passed. The face of a certain blond hell demon was there as well, a lingering shadow in almost every thought.
… It wasn’t a _bad_ shadow.

He liked you, that much was easy to surmise. If he didn’t, he wouldn’t visit you -- that was the simple truth of it. But the depth of his feelings were tripping you up. Was this just a schoolyard crush? An inflamed passion that would fizzle with time? Lust? Anything beyond that you were too afraid to consider.

And you heeded his ‘suggestion’ of not falling into another emotional well. Or at least tried to. There were still times you’d catch a glimpse of your life from a distance, as an outsider looking in, and want to throttle some sense back into you. But those episodes were becoming less frequent. What eased your mind was knowing only two people had knowledge of your degeneracy -- you and a villain who disappeared off the face of the earth between meetings.

You wondered if he’d even consider a normal interval between visits as opposed to the infrequent drop-ins he had taken a shining to. It would make your life considerably easier knowing the next time All Might planned on showing himself.

“You’re thinking about something.”

You winced at your friend’s accusation while you watched her walk to the mirror. She didn’t press the subject -- her outfit selection was her primary concern. It was not a slamdunk dress, you could tell by her face. Her hand pressed against her stomach.

“I like the color,” you offered. “And the fit.”

She hemmed.

“The other dress was better,” she said, looking at her selection from the side before facing you for final thoughts.

“Ah, the black one,” you said with a laugh. “We’re going to go out looking like we just came from a funeral. You know most of us are just going to be wearing black.”

“No, Minori will wear something bright.” She stepped back to the dressing room, leaving you alone on the bench staring at the clothing you had hung over your arms. “So what are you thinking about, anyway?” she called from behind the closed door. You glanced around the room -- you were the only ones inside.

“Hm?” you called back, hoping she’d believe her voice was muffled and hard to hear.

“Your face is all screwed up, something is bothering you. It isn’t work, is it?”

You held your tongue.

Yume was the only one of your friends to seriously doubt your claim that you worked at a support lab startup created by an unknown scientist. Partly because she was in the industry and knew all the ins and outs of it. Startups just _don’t_ spring up. Only established names branched out to create their own labs, as they were the only ones who could secure the capital needed. They usually brought their teams with them. But at some point, she had stopped prying and had quietly let you continue on with your lie.

Your best friend was essentially who you had _dreamed_ about being -- a successful scientist working with all the top hero agencies, meeting the greats on a daily basis. It wasn’t uncommon for her to casually drop that she was jetting off to Korea, or the UK, or the United States for business trips. Her social media accounts were filled with smiling press photos standing next to the top minds, and
heroes, of the world.

She was the golden child.

“No, work is going good. We’re in a bit of a slow-down now,” you called back. “Nothing too bad. It’s nice to take a breather.”

“And you’re all set for Korea?”

“Yep, company is paying for it and everything—” That was a lie, you were fronting the cost. “—Can’t wait. It’ll be a mini-vacation!”

“Full of boring lectures,” Yume groaned as she opened the door, relinquishing the dressing room to you. You eagerly snapped the door closed behind you, blanketed in comforting isolation.

Well, partial isolation

“They still have you working weird hours?”

You watched your face react to the question in the mirror as you undressed.

“What can I say, our team is a bunch of night owls. Once we go public we’ll probably move to regular hours.”

“Have you signed any major heroes yet?”

“Nope, still just focusing on research.”

“For two years?” Yume said, the disbelief evident. You frowned, shaking away the negativity from your face and body before opening the door and shrugging nonchalantly.

“Different labs do different things, Yum. I believe in the stuff we’re doing so I’m going to stick around.”

“There’s just something fishy about it.” She was concerned but carefully avoided coming off as overly matronly. “Maybe you should look into a job at a more established place?”

You ignored her suggestion and stood in the mirror, frowning at the jumpsuit you had picked out. It did not look as good as you had hoped.

“I thought you said only models look good in jumpsuits?” Yume said with a sardonic smile. You sighed.

“A girl can dream, can’t she?”

When the dressing room door closed behind you again, you hoped it would clean the slate of your conversation. You were not that lucky.

“You know, I’ve been thinking…” a voice drifted from the other side of the door after a bit of a reprieve. You rolled your eyes at yourself in the mirror as you hung up the jumpsuit before reaching for the next contender.

“Should I be worried?”
“The opposite, maybe. You know I got promoted a few months back to a team lead, right?” she paused. “Well my old team has an opening—”

You froze.

“--And I was thinking about floating your name into consideration.”

Your heart flew into your chest as you stared down at your socks, eyes wide.

“It’s nothing set in stone. It’s all at the discretion of their lead. But it doesn’t hurt to try!”

You opened the door. Yume met your gaze.

“Really?” you asked, voice full of muted excitement. She was smiling but playing coy.

“Like I said, don’t go getting your hopes up. Their lead is… difficult. But you’ll get to work in an actual lab again and not some shady operation.”

An actual lab. Again! With a salary, benefits, vacation days, paid time off…

“I don’t know.”

Truthfully, you were worried about how you would disguise your current working ‘situation’ in a resume without being caught. You’d have to call in some favors to create a believable lie. You would also have to kiss your freedom goodbye -- you’d be confined to working regular hours once more instead of the night owl lifestyle you had embraced.

Not to mention you weren’t sure if you wanted to shutter the undertaking you had diligently developed.

“You’re smart,” she said, interrupting your thoughts. “The stuff you come up with is exceptional. I wouldn’t bring it up if I didn’t believe in you.”

Yume was your best friend. A close connection you had clung to since elementary school. You had been through the ringer together: weathered annoying teenage fights, outlasted each of the ‘love of my life’ relationships you both had, danced through the best times and trudged through the worst. When she rocketed ahead in life, leaving you in perceived stagnation, you cheered her on as earnestly and enthusiastically as only a friend could -- while harboring resentment.

“Just think about it,” she was saying, sitting deeper in the bench. “I think you’re selling yourself short where you’re at, that’s all.”

You momentarily questioned her mild savior attitude but she was beaming, gesturing for you to spin.

“Niice,” she sang while you sashayed to the mirror. It was just a black skater dress -- no embellishments other than it being long-sleeved with a bit of an extended neckline. But it fit nicely. And it wasn’t expensive.

Ah, what the hell.

You both walked out of the store twenty minutes later with purchases in hand. It was still summer and warm but the days were getting shorter. Yume hid a yawn behind her hand as she checked the time on her phone.

“Well, I better go before I miss the train.” She paused, squinting at you. You didn't like the look and fidgeted with the bag around your wrist. “Think about what I said, okay? Put a resume together.
Send me some work examples. You gotta start thinking more long term. I want you to blossom, my flower child.”

“I’ll think about it,” you responded.

That wasn’t the end of the conversation. She playful smacked your shoulder but her eyes and face were full of seriousness.

“There’s nothing to think about.”

You were going to Roppongi. As most of your friends had moved to the Tokyo metro area, the district choice was accepted readily -- it was known for its busy nightlife. But it would be a bit of a train ride for you, at least an hour. It felt as if you only had two options: leave early so that you would get back to Kamino safely and before the trains stopped, or not go and send your regrets.

Before you could explain your predicament, you received a separate text from your bright-eyed friend Minori who offered you a couch to sleep on. It warmed your heart knowing the girl thought of you and, after she replied to your tentative rejection with a series of heart-filled insistences, you acquiesced.

That Saturday, just after dinner, you arrived at Minori’s apartment, overnight bag in hand. As expected, the girl was running late. She opened the door with hurried delight, hair still pinned back and face blank with foundation. You swelled with immodest delight when she clapped her hands and cooed how good you looked -- hell, you felt good. You had paired the dress with black tights, wedge booties and your signature peony necklace. It was an outfit worthy of a night out.

“I’m running late!” Minori called as she ran back to her bedroom, leaving you to carefully step over the mess of shoes she had been piled by her door, so you could remove your own.

“I can tell!”

Minori was good-natured, positive, kind, an airhead and a mess -- which is why you got along with her so well. She was a kindred spirit, someone else who was stumbling through life just as you were. Sure, her constant lateness was infuriating, but she meant well. She was one of those people who, when they admitted they lost track of time, you knew weren’t creating an excuse. She honestly did lose track of time.

An hour after you were supposed to meet the rest of your friends, you and Minori were on your way, chatting and catching up with your lives. She worked as an executive assistant (you honestly didn’t know how she could perform such a job and not be fired) and was full of workday stories you found endearing. She was also eager to show off her newest purchase -- a phone case that was also a Polaroid printer.

“You take a picture on your phone and it’ll print out little copies of it!” she explained with such enthusiasm that you didn’t have the heart to tell her you already knew all about them.

Muffling a yawn (No! It was too early to be tired!), you glanced around the train while your traveling companion answered continued messages from your group wondering where you were. At least she was taking full responsibility for the lateness.

It was during your brief scan of the traincar that your eyes met a stranger’s -- you kept your gaze traveling so not to make it seem like you were staring at him. His appearance was almost ghastly and,
now that you were introduced to his existence, you also became aware that he also staring. At you.

Eventually, out of the corner of your eye, you watched him shift his head sharply away, as if he realized what he had been doing. You took the opportunity to get another glimpse of him -- his actions (and appearance) were giving you the heebie jeebies and you were concerned he was some train groper sussing out his next target. You’d want to be able to give a description if he tried anything… funny.

He was… strange. A patchwork of physical flaws that had combined together to create a person. His tallness struck you first, simply because he was sitting beside an average-looking man. He was a towering figure, with knobby knees spread out slightly as he sat, hands nestled between them.

He was also skinny. It was hard to tell from his body, the clothes he was wearing were several times too big, but you could see it in his face with the sharp jawline and hollow cheekbones. It was as if someone had stretched him out, pulling his body to make him taller without adding any girth to his form.

*Blue eyes.*

You internally cursed and it was your turn to snap your head away -- you'd been caught. After that, he was back to gawking at you with a vengeance.

You reached for your phone, pretending he was not on your mind, mentally thumbing through the ameatur krav maga moves you had added to your arsenal, trying to figure out how you’d handle the man if he came at you with wandering hands.

To your delight, as the train slowed in arrival at the next station, Minori stood and gestured for you to follow.

“This is our stop!” she chirped.

Delight quickly turned to dismay, however, when she passed by the potential groper to wait for the doors to open. You followed, eyes fixed on the back of her head. A collection of people had formed at the doors, a sizable amount of the train car's passengers leaving. The stranger stayed seated but you were standing adjacent to where he was.

Nothing happened.

You stood as unassuming as you could, staring ahead and, seconds later, the door opened to release the mob. You relaxed when you stepped onto the platform, following after a slightly-jogging Minori, thankful you were just overacting. Poor guy was probably a normal dude just trying to get home and you were judging him.

The man was banished from your mind entirely the moment you stepped out onto the sidewalk and your heart squeezed with minor excitement. It felt like a night out. A quick walk later you were entering the bar, waving as a table in the back erupted into cheers.

“Fashionably late,” someone snapped playfully as Minori started her apologies. You were beyond caring about that -- you were grinning like a fool and acting like the prime minister as you greeted everyone. There were six already seated at the table, including Yume, who you playfully elbowed.

You ended up stealing a seat beside a blonde woman who was already nursing a pretty healthy glow from her drinks.

“I didn’t think heroes took days off,” you teased, watching Tsuchikawa roll her eyes.
“Please. I need a break otherwise I’ll get stress wrinkles,” she passed a light hand over her cheek as if she was acting out some sort of beauty commercial. “How you’ve been, slacker?”

“Slacker!?” you put an offended hand over your heart. “I’ll have you know I’ve been working diligently and paying my bills relatively on time!” You eased, nodding your head in thanks when a menu was thrust your way. “I’ve been really good actually. Aside from… um, normal work stress, things have been nice. What about you? How are the pussycats treating you?”

Tsuchikawa, who also went by the moniker Pixie-Bob, had taken on a similar face of contentment.

“Nice. We rescued a hiker last weekend after she slipped off an overhang and broke a few bones. Missing for fourteen hours, we found her in three!”

“Just another day for Pussycat Rescue Heroes!” another friend, Reina, declared from her seat at the end of the table.

“Wild, Wild Pussycats,” Tsuchikawa corrected. “It took way us too long to agree on the name not to use it!”

When your cocktail was finally placed in front of you, the night began in earnest.

There were some who didn’t drink and sat back, watching the group get progressively rowdier as the empty glasses collected on the table. You would just have to add excessive drinking to your list of recent bad behavior -- you were excited and you were overeager! You liked being sociable. Especially when you were drinking.

Tsuchikawa, your new best friend for the evening, was watching you attentively as you acted out a chokehold move you had learned in your krav maga class. Sure she was a hero, but you had been taking the class for a few weeks now and your drunk-self was very confident in your abilities to not only disarm an opponent but potentially kill them.

You held a new power in your hands.

Then, like only a drunken conversation could progress, you were patting a dejected Tsuchikawa who was lamenting about her love life and lack of a husband.

“I’m no longer a young maiden,” she sighed, staring at the palm of her hand as she held it in front of her. “I’ve entered the winter of my life.”

“That’s not true,” you were staring at her, desperately trying to convey all the love and support you had for her. “You’re young and so pretty. You’ll get married to a hot guy and have sixteen children.”

“I should go to a shrine,” she said, sitting up. “Write it out. Get a charm.”

“That’s it,” you grabbed for your drink. “You gotta, you gotta, put what you want into the universe to make it happen. You know. The idea…” you furrowed your brows. “You know when you like wish for something by shouting it and then the universe makes it happen?”

“Projection,” came a helpful voice.

“That’s it!” you snapped your fingers excitedly in the direction of your eavesdropper. “Project it. All that magic mumbo jumbo.”

“Yeah, that’s what Tomoko said too. But I don’t want to wait. It’d be nice if it just happened already. Have a nice husband drop in my lap.”
“Hey,” Minori was leaning over. “Men suck.”

You erupted into loud laughter at the seriousness of her face and voice. That seemed to snap Tsuchikawa out of her depressive tailspin -- she sat up and was fixing you with a wolfish look.

“What about you? Seeing anyone?”

“Not really,” you said airly, grabbing for your drink again. You knew the question was bound to come up at some point. Save for two friends, none of you were in serious or committed relationships. It was a frequent conversation topic. So you practiced trying to be unassuming. Tsuchikawa pouted and accepted the answer while Minori fixed you with a penetrating stare.

“Are you dating someone?” she asked, stoically watching your face. You furrowed your brows and pushed away from her.

“No!” you said. Her eyes narrowed.

“You’re lying.”

“I’m not lying!” you said too-loud. “What? Did you become some kind of lie detector or something?”

“Actually,” she instantly eased up, sitting back and returning to her smiling self. “There’s this new show I’ve been watching about a guy who solves crimes because he can tell when people are lying. He talks about what all the signs are, so I’ve been trying it out!”

Tsuchikawa eagerly scooted forward, asking for the details on what to look for, while you let out a breath of relief that you were no longer in the hot seat.

Besides, it wasn’t a lie. You weren’t dating anyone.

The gathering was starting to really pick up when a few of your crew stood to call it a night. They had places to be, plans for the morning or were just sick of hanging out with a bunch of drunks. You stood and hugged everyone, letting them know they were appreciated.

Most gave you a pat or two on the back.

“So, what’s the plan,” Tsuchikawa was saying, eyeing you and Minori as you were the only ones who were on the same wavelength as her. “You aren’t ready to leave, right?”

You wanted to say no, but looked to Minori for confirmation as it was her house you were staying at.

“No!” she scoffed and you echoed her look.

“The night is still young. We’re still young,” you said, placing a hand on Tsuchikawa’s shoulder.

She let out a deep sigh before meeting your eyes and nodding her head, face full of heroic determination.

“What are you guys planning?” Yume asked, sliding down the empty seats to further condense the group. You looked around -- it hadn’t been just a few who had called it a night. You four were the only ones left.

“Another bar…?” Minori said, unsure and looking around as she spoke to see if the idea would land. It did -- Tsuchikawa nodded her head enthusiastically.
“Yes, another bar!”

After the final bill was tallied up and paid, your group headed out into the night. It was alive -- Roppongi held up to its reputation as the nightlife district of Tokyo. The sidewalks were mobbed, thumping beats from unknown clubs filled the air, promoters were out in force trying to drum up attention to their bars. You accepted a flyer from a girl either dressed as a mouse or had a mouse quirk, you couldn’t tell -- it was for a burlesque show.

“I know a place we can go to,” Minori declared. You believed her.

Taking her role as troop leader seriously, she directed you down a series of streets, all while flipping through pictures of the night, trying to determine which ones were worth printing out. At some point, the crowded sidewalk seemed to become more populated than expected but Minori still pushed through. Once you shoved your way through the crowd, you understood why everyone was on that street.

“Endeavor!”

The number one hero ignored the fanatical cry from the unknown man, more interested in the conversation he was having with the police officer in front of him.

“Oh, Endeavor is here,” Yume said when she popped out of the crowd behind you. Tsuchikawa scoffed.

Though he was the undisputed number one hero, he was very polarizing. Just as readily as he radiated heat, he gave off power. Not many stood in the same league as him, though there was no shortage of heroes who tried. Some even wanted to topple him.

He exuded greatness but that came at a price -- the man was untouchable in the public sense too. There was no fan service with him, no scenes that would give you the (figurative) warm fuzzies. He had a job to do and was going to do it. That was that. He was a hero but he wasn’t very... heroic.

“Endeavor!”

With a sigh the flame hero turned toward the crowd as the officer he had been dealing with walked away.

Then he was lumbering toward those gathered.

“Aww,” Minori muttered, facing the group, unaware of the approaching hero behind her. “It looks like they blocked off this street. We might have to take the long way--”

“You guys want a picture with Endeavor?” Yume asked. Tsuchikawa was aghast and Minori looked to where he had been standing, only noticing then he was a stone's throw away from her. She froze.

“Oh no,” she said, losing her bubbly charm. “Oh no, I wouldn’t ask him for a picture. He’ll take my head off.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Yume said, waving away the fear. “The man is the number one hero because he has fans. He has to do fan service if he wants to stay on top. Here, I’ll bring him over--”

In amazement you watched Yume step forward, completely at ease and confident in only a way she could pull off effortlessly. Endeavor turned toward the woman who was waving him over and Minori froze, watching mouth agape as the flaming man stood amongst them.
“Can we get a picture, Endeavor?” Yume was asking, holding up her phone. He looked over the collection of red-faced women -- *drunks* -- before nodding.

It wasn’t a big to-do, Yume’s phone was handed to a bystander who took a couple of group shots of you standing with the number one hero before handing the device back. Still your spokesman, Yume thanked him with respectful bows and a few words of praise before he waded off to deal with more fans. She grinned when the encounter ended, flipping through the pictures and showing them off.

“And we look *good* too,” she said. “No eyes closed or anything. I’m gonna post it.”

“Send it to me!” Minori squealed, life returning to her. “I’ll print us all out copies!”

“Can we please go to the bar?” Tsuchikawa grumbled. You looked at her before giving her a slight nudge.

“Not a fan?” you murmured. She rolled her eyes.

“I like heroes who aren’t assholes.”

You peeked to where Endeavor stood, slightly worried he would be able to hear Tsuchikawa’s comment. He didn’t react, he was staring down a man who had held out his arm for an autograph.

“Alright, alright,” Yume said. “Let’s go!”

It took a bit of time to retrace your footsteps away from the mass of people. Although alcohol had warmed your system, by then an uncomfortable burning sensation was rising from the soles of your feet. You were walking with a slight limp and there was an undeniable blister forming at your heel.

“Here’s your copy!” A small, rectangular image was thrust into your chest by Minori, who had printed out her first photos of the night. “That’s one for the refrigerator!”

A chuckled escaped as you looked it over, even Tsuchikawa had forced a smile (she was a hero after all and they were conscious of keeping appearances). You tucked it away safely in your purse, sandwiching it in a pocket so it wouldn’t be bent or scuffed.

“So this bar I’m taking us to...” Minori had started up again, chattering about how their destination used dry ice in some of the drinks or set fire to them to ‘enhance the flavors.’ You caught Yume’s eye -- it seemed more like a gimmick. But you both kept quiet, nodding and smiling as she excitedly brought up pictures from the last time she went.

“They have this tequila shot they put inside a carved-out lime,” she was saying, slowing her pace as she swiped to find the drink she knew she had captured. "That way you don’t have to--"

You heard the blast before you felt it.

It was a hard sound to describe: a sonic boom, maybe. Or like a dozen airplanes taking off at the same time.

But then the sound was gone and you saw *it*, trailing after.

*The wind.*

It was as if you had driven right into a wall. A solid force struck your body sending you flying backward, limbs and body whipping around as you were tossed through through the air like a ragdoll, caught in the vortex of energy. You couldn’t see much, other than a spinning world, and the
only sound you heard was the rushing of air around your ears.

Eventually the wind continued down the street. It released the hold it had on you, leaving you limp and bruised in its wake, curled around a lamppost. There were other people hurt around you -- sounds other than wind were starting to break through.

*Screams.*

You groaned, moving a battered body that yelled with resistance. But you couldn’t stay where you were. It wasn’t *safe*.

You opened your eyes then, pushing away from the metal pole, realizing you were trying to catch the breath that had been knocked out of you. Tentatively you moved body parts as you looked around -- it was if a bomb had gone off. Cars were scattered around you, broken glass from hundreds of shattered windows painted the ground.

*And the people.*

Dozens. Hundreds? Just like you, in a stupor looking around, trying to understand, *comprehend*, how and why their world had been knocked askew.

You tried standing, groaning again when legs protested, but you managed to right yourself. You were on your feet at least--

*Blood.*

You noticed the crimson leaking from the dozens of scrapes and cuts littering your body. Your stockings were in tatters, the skin of your legs angry with road rash. Afraid, you touched your face, but everything seemed to be in one piece.

You didn’t know *what* to do. There were so many people around you. So many hurt.

Laughing had started. You looked around, suddenly lucid, ready to berate whatever fool had decided the moment was funny. People were hurt! But the sound was echoing from the broken buildings, capturing everyone in an embrace of dread.

Wait.

*You knew that laugh.*

Of course.

You looked, but you couldn’t see him.

His laugh was still circling around you, though. Your eyes were scanning the building tops and sky--

“*Are you okay!?*”

Hands grasped your shoulders, shaking your body wildly and pulling you out of your daze. You were blinking, blue eyes staring into yours. A hand to the face further cleared your head.

“*Are you okay!*” Tsuchikawa repeated and you blinked, nodding as you fully welcomed reality.

“Yeah. Yeah,” you pushed back, looking her over. “*How about you?*”

It wasn’t the time for playing catch-up, however. Her eyes were darting between the injured that
littered the street. She was on edge. You both jumped when you heard an explosion, turning to see a stream of fire shoot into the air. Tsuchikawa grit her teeth.

“Those two are going to go at it here?” she hissed. “I’ve got to go help the injured. Just... get away. I already found Minori and she’s leaving. I’ll look for Yume but it’s not safe here.”

Another burst of fire accentuated her point. You nodded. You were not going to stick around and witness a fight between All Might and Endeavor.

“You were not going to stick around and witness a fight between All Might and Endeavor."

“Be careful,” you said but she was already bounding off, the changed energy of the night seemingly sweeping away both of your intoxications. Adrenaline was keeping the pain at bay as you hobbled away from where Endeavor and All Might were undoubtedly clashing.

Though self-preservation was at the forefront of your mind, it did not completely blind you to the suffering of others. When the girl in front of you tripped and fell in her heels, you stopped to help her stand. When two people were trying to right a car that had pinned another beneath it, you joined a collection who ran to assist.

The further away you got from where you had been, the more reaction time had been processed since the initial burst had struck that area. The streets were clearing out -- the evacuation of buildings, businesses and apartments were already in motion. The first signs of a real police presence were sprouting up.

Along the way of escape, you had seen people stop to crouch and take a breather. You paid them no mind, assuming they were ultimately alright. But a sobbing figure ahead of you broke your pace, your gaze settled on a familiar black dress and purple bag.

“Yume?” you called, too uncomfortable to jog, but you picked up your slow pace. At hearing her name her crying broke and, upon seeing it was you, she was reaching out.

“You’re okay!”

“I’m fine. What about you?” you asked, though you took notice of the forearm she hugged gently against her chest. She sniffed, standing.

“I lost track of everyone,” she said, voice brittle and soft. “I just ran I-I--"

“Tsuchikawa has gone full Pixie-Bob. She found me, said she sent Minori ahead to safety. Everyone is fine. We have to keep moving, okay?”

Yume looked at you and nodded. Thankfully, a police officer was waving and jogging over to you, having caught sight of the both of you. You returned his waves. They’d be able to direct you to safety. Hopefully, it was only a broken arm that Yume would--

With horror, you looked in the direction you had come from.

The sound.

There was no time to think, just to move.

Grabbing Yume, and ignoring her desperate gasp of pain, you darted toward the alley directly beside you.

You made it just as the wall passed by. The cyclone of wind further pushed you away from the street
and into the alley. If only your quirk was stronger. You might have been able to do something more, but you couldn’t turn back time in its entirety to stop that vortex from hitting you. Had you used it, all you would have done was rewind Yume and your motions back a few seconds while the world continued to explode around you.

Speaking of Yume--

She groaned and you were beside her, tutting and apologizing for your rough grip. She wasn’t answering, her mind and body too rattled with pain at the moment. You gasped, dropping low when a wall of fire passed the entrance of the alley you had taken refuge in.

*Their fight had moved.*

“Yume,” you were grabbing her arm. “Yume, we’ve gotta go. We can’t stay here.”

Though she didn’t answer, she was listening. Now that the main street was a battlefield, the only other solution you had was to follow the alley down and away.

“Come on,” you were chanting, fear and survival tugging at your brain. You escaped death once already. You were *not* about to put yourself in that position again. If she wasn’t going to move, hell you would try carrying Yume.

But she was listening, she was moving and hobbling forward, just as desperate as you to get out of the--

A heavy thud.

Dropping from the sky was a figure with glowing eyes, his landing creating a crater of broken concrete, asphalt and earth. Yume froze in front of you but All Might’s attention wasn’t on the alley, he was looking to the sky. Waiting.

Maybe you could sneak away? Hide? This wasn’t the place to have a reunion with him, especially with Yume in your company. Quietly you reached out, trying to gently tug your friend back. But she gasped and instantly All Might locked onto her.

Though he was hoping to ambush an increasingly irate Endeavor, he wasn’t going to let an opportunity to strike fear in some unfortunate citizens pass. A sinister laugh erupted from him as he stepped forward, shadow draping over Yume.

“*I’m here,*” he crooned.

The scientist, wide-eyed at seeing destruction personified in front of her, stepped back. All Might watched her, acknowledging that there was a second huddled figure behind her.

“*My, my little doves. You got yourselves trapped in a--*”

His voice trailed off. His attention had drifted from the first scared girl to the one behind her. *The one with a familiar face.*

Silence engulfed the alley.

Actually, both faces were familiar. It was *you.* And the other one -- the girl from the coffee shop.

Whether it was intentional or not, he was giving you an opening. You hissed and grabbed Yume again, breaking the paralyzing fear.
“Run!” you snarled, pushing her.

With death so close, pain was no longer a valid excuse for restricted movements. Like a hare freed from a snare, she was gone, darting out in the openness of the street and leaving you alone with All Might in the alley.

He was still standing silently, you assumed he was surprised to see you in Tokyo. But it was no time to talk. You turned to take your leave before faltering and looking over your shoulder.

“Be careful,” you murmured. Then you were gone, trailing after Yume, unaware if your voice had even been loud enough to be heard.

It had been. All Might had been… caught off guard at seeing you. Especially in such a state -- judging from your torn and bloodied appearance, you had been caught in one of his blasts. But he shoved those personal thoughts away, instead leaping back to the sky, no longer interested in playing a game of hide and seek. He didn’t have to scour the horizon very hard to see a fuming, flaming Endeavor still searching for him. Seeing you had been a minor and momentary setback, but you were gone. Out of sight, out of mind.

Besides, he had been waiting too long to have a little fun with the number one hero and he was not going to let the opportunity pass.

He released a jab in Endeavor’s direction -- the flame hero recognized the attack before it struck him. But the intent was not to hit him, it was to engage his attention once more. With a booming laugh, All Might gave a small wave, darting away as a spiral of fire rocketed toward him.

Some part of you must have been on All Might’s conscious. Though everything in him was dedicated to the fight, he did make certain to lead the hero in the opposite direction he had seen you fleeing in.

That would at least put some buffer between you.

Meanwhile, you were forced to endure another trek through destruction thanks to All Might’s second attack on the area. But the war zone did end and eventually comforting hands were grasping for you, leading you to a makeshift medical area surrounded by on-edge heroes. It would take some time to load ambulances to send the hurt the area's hospitals.

You could see Yume already being treated as you were led away to be sequestered with the rest of people with non-threatening injuries. Even Tsuchikawa was there, still in full Pixie-Bob persona, following the directions of those who had been put in charge. She was sporting a sizable gouge across her cheek but didn’t seem to be any worse for wear.

Before you were released to wait with the others, a medical quirk owner came to do a quick check to make sure there were no underlying, hidden injuries. The last thing they wanted was to release you from the scene only for you to have internal bleeding that was missed. But you were fine, aside from your minor injuries.

As you waited in relative safety to be released to the trains, you watched the people around you. Some were crying, others nervously laughing that they had made it through unscathed -- all the truly injured had been tucked away, the priority on them. There were two people beside you, one was muttering while the other stroked his hair, whispering soothing words.

Somewhere, an anguished wail rose above the quiet mutterings of the mildly shell-shocked people.

It drifted away.
All Might had caused the destruction you had been caught in.

You had been caught and hurt in the blast. Your friends had been injured. Hell, there may even be a death toll that some unfortunate soul was being forced to address and tallying.

There was no way to mince words. All Might was a villain. There could be no road to redemption for someone like him, someone who could cause so much pain without batting an eye. Besides, he would have to want to change for that storyline to even be considered.

You wondered if, weeks ago, this knowledge would have sent you into another emotional tailspin. You weren’t a bad person.

You’ve told yourself that a thousand times.

You recycled. You’ve never personally killed or hurt anyone. You worried about sea turtles. You didn’t steal. You didn’t lie.

You weren’t bad.

You were just involved with bad people.

Like All Might.

As you sat among the scared and injured, for once understanding and witnessing what he could inflict on the innocent first-hand, you recognized something about yourself.

You didn’t feel the slightest bit of guilt.

Chapter End Notes

Could it be!? S-Smut, is that you!? Smut, are you on the horizon!? My friend, it’s been too long!
A Weakness

There were those whose had built careers analyzing villain/hero encounters. News stations would clamor to book them in the aftermath of major brawls, eager to get filler from an 'expert' opinion on what had occurred. It was padding, really, to help fill multiple hours of coverage. They never said anything groundbreaking -- just reiterated facts interlaced with ‘professional opinion.’

You sat on the edge of the waiting room chair, wiggling your body in an attempt to ease the discomfort in your back and butt from having sat stationary for so long. Whatever news channel the hospital had selected was playing their third analyst interview. The bespeckled woman simply repeated what the others before her had also concluded -- though All Might’s presence in Roppongi had caused significant damage to a small section of the district, it did not have the hallmarks of a true All Might rampage. Civilian casualties and building destruction had been relatively tame. Since he had immediately engaged Endeavor in a fight upon his arrival, the logical conclusion was that he had been All Might’s true target.

The death toll only amounted to two. Serious injuries barely hit the teens. Minor and non-critical injuries were higher.

Your cell phone had died hours ago. You looked at the time displayed on the television screen.

*Nine hours. You had been in the hospital for nearly nine hours.*

It took a bit a time for phone service in the area to finally clear up. When it did, your phone had exploded, finally getting all the messages that had been sent from concerned friends. They were all desperately trying to do a headcount of those who had stayed behind to continue their night out.

Minori was fine -- like you, she had only gotten superficial injuries and had managed to return to her apartment during one of the first waves of scene dismissals. Tsuchikawa was assisting as an off-duty hero but had nothing to serious report, just a cut to the face.

Yume had broken her arm in two places and needed a cast, which required hospital admittance. Before you left the scene you had went to check on her, finding her amongst the injured.

She was hurting, she was scared, she was upset.

And she was ecstatic to see you were alive and well, reaching for your hand as you walked up, apologizing for having left you in the alley. You did her best to ease her fears, grabbing and rubbing her hand while downplaying all that happened. You were a tough girl, you were fine. You were just happy everyone was alive and well.

That was about the time you offered to go to the hospital with her. Medics were already warning of considerable wait-times, you’d figure you could get through the misery together.

*Nine hours, though?*

At least she been taken to the back to be treated, which meant the end was in sight. You were looking forward to getting back to Minori’s place, taking a shower and going to sleep.

Exhaustion gripped you, but you didn’t have the personal ability to fall asleep in the waiting room. So you had dissolved into slow-eyed blinks and full-face yawns that brought tears to the corners of your eyes.
“Hey!”

The sudden voice next to you ripped through the air like a gunshot, making you jump. You had been so wrapped up in your inner monologue that you had failed to pay any attention to your surroundings. A black-casted Yume was standing beside you, a collection of papers rolled in her hand.

“I’m all set, you ready to leave?”

“You have no idea how ready I am,” you mumbled, stretching and trailing after your oddly bright-eyed friend. When she exited the automatic doors of the hospital, she turned and caught you in a one-handed hug that you had not been expecting. You stood dumbly, trying to process what was happening.

“Thanks for staying,” she said. “Thanks for everything. You were... wow. Talk about being calm under pressure.”

“Hey, don’t worry about it,” you said with a half-grin, flicking a thumbs up when she released you. “You would have done the same for me. Besides, what are friends for?”

You weren’t home.

The familiar corner apartment was dark.

He sidestepped away from his street-level lookout, an unpleasant and foreign sensation springing up in his gut.

Your lab was dark too.

Pressing and peering into windows, he could see that everything looked relatively neat and orderly. It hadn’t been forgotten. It hadn’t been ransacked.

You just weren’t there.

Just like you weren’t at your apartment.

It had been three days since Roppongi.

You weren’t leaving for Korea until Sunday.

He did not like it.

“Do you need anything?”

You laughed at the question -- Minori had asked it at least a dozen times in the hour it took you to finally peel yourself off the couch to head home.

“I promise you I don’t,” you stressed, hiking your backpack up higher over your shoulder. “This was exactly what I needed.”
Minori had been given a small reprieve from work to recover, a gift from a too-worried boss as a show of gratitude for invaluable service. After lying and saying you’d also been given time off, she invited you to stay with her for a little bit longer under the pretense of recovering together.

And, for almost half the week, you got to be lazy with a friend. You were at ease with each other; all you did was order food, watch TV and laugh. You felt like a close roommate rather than a guest crashing on her couch. It was fun. Mindless.

How you wished your life was.

On Thursday, you recognized the mini-holiday you had indulged in had to come to an end. Your flight to Korea was only a few days away and you needed to prep and pack for it. You would have to say goodbye.

“It was nice to have a roommate again,” Minori said with a sigh, her fingers trailing up and down the door of her apartment. Your smile lost its zeal, instantly recognizing a feeling you had grown all too familiar with.

Loneliness.

“I’ll come around again!” you promised, sincerely looking into her eyes. “Maybe it won’t take us another six months to see each other again.”

“I hope so,” she said, further deflating, believing your words to be hollow. “I really hope so.”

He checked again on Friday.

When he turned the corner onto your street, he recognized the corner apartment was filled with light. But he needed additional confirmation.

Approaching, he waited.

The street was empty.

Confirmation.

That’s all he needed.

You walked by a window.

He left.

Pathetic.

Weak.

Pathetic.

Weak.

But that unpleasant feeling was easing.
Your flight was due to leave early morning Sunday. You’d land, get checked into your hotel and have a chance to get out and see Seoul prior to the start of the conference -- Yume had visited previously and promised to take you sightseeing.

You wanted to be good and headed to bed early Saturday night. Snuggling under your covers, the tension fell away from your body and you waited for sleep to take you.

But your body didn’t want to listen.

Instead, you ended up spending most of the night tiredly staring at your phone screen, silently begging to lose consciousness. At every change in the hour, you’d count how many hours of sleep you’d be getting if you fell asleep at that moment.

*Eight hours. Seven. Six. Five.*

At some point, the world did go dark and your mind went blank.

*Only for you to awaken with a start.*

You body jolted as you regained sudden conscious, blinking rapidly. How long had you been out? What--

There was a series of taps.

Too confused to be afraid, you sat up.

Tapping.

You squinted, looking over to see a darken silhouette blocking the view of one of your bedroom windows. Not entirely convinced what you were experiencing wasn’t some sort of lucid dream, you slid out of bed and approached the hulking figure, only realizing when it was too late that it probably wasn’t the best idea.

You immediately recognized the shape of two upright bangs pointing from the top of the beast’s head. You pressed your face against the glass, staring at a frowning All Might who was gripping a portion of the building facade.

With a groan you pushed back, shuffling to the front door to assumedly let him in.

He was there, waiting when you opened it.

“What are you doing here now? At this time? This is not a good time!” you informed him with a hissing groan, though all he did was brush pass you to enter, unconcerned that he was unwanted. “I’ve got to be up a few hours to catch a plane. To Seoul. I can’t be awake right now.”

“Hm,” he hummed nonchalantly, looking around the room before turning to face you.

“What do you want?”

He didn’t answer and your glare lost some of its ice. All Might’s expression was... unusual, though you couldn’t quite put your finger on why. His arrogance wasn’t as encompassing as it usually was and he didn’t look angry or even lustful.

He was just… looking at you. Normally.
That was unsettling.

“Are you okay?” you asked, tilting your head as if another angle could help you understand his state of mind better. Was something wrong? Perhaps that’s why he was at your place at such an odd hour…

The question, however, shook him out of whatever mood he had been in. Suddenly a large grin burst through his passive facade, brilliant white teeth bared almost threateningly as you cursed your poor judgment.

“Do you worry about me, sweetheart?” he asked, voice full of spiked honey. There it was. Your head fell back as you sighed, aware you had fallen into another one of his teasing spells.

“Now really isn’t the time—”

“‘Be careful.’” He was closer now, looking down at you accusingly. “That’s what you said before you scampered off after your friend. In Roppongi. ‘Be careful.’ Were you worried about me? Are you worried about me? Afraid I’ll get hurt?”

Go to bed.

“I just… didn’t want Endeavor to… well, blast your head off,” you countered, far too worn out to even attempt to put up with his dynamism.

“My dear, as if he could.”

You rolled your eyes, holding your hands up in concession -- yes All Might, of course, you are all powerful. With another sigh you looked over toward the cable box, wincing at the time displayed in red. In four hours you’d have to be awake.

“I have to go to bed,” you said, imploring. You were one step away from clasping your hands together and begging for him to leave you alone, though you were certain it would be unwise to resort to such a tactic. He would undoubtedly relish it. “Leave or stay -- I don’t care. But I have to sleep.”

It wasn’t the reaction he wanted. He figured you’d be more… pleased to see him in one piece. With a scowl, he watched as you left him standing in the living to return to your bedroom. You didn’t even bother to turn your head to see what his response was going to be.

Pathetic.

Weak.

He followed in a huff.

You were crawling under the covers as he hovered almost in the doorway, blocking the dim light of the living room. You were facing away from him initially, but his unmoving presence in the threshold of your bedroom was spooky. You felt like you were in a horror movie. The killer was watching you, waiting for the time to strike.

You rolled over to confront him.

“You can’t stay there,” you said, his silhouetted features barely distinguishable in the darkness. “You’re making me nervous.”
He snorted and ducked into the room, standing over your bedside.

That was worse.

Patience wearing thin, you lifted an arm, exposing your body beneath the covers.

“What do you want to get into bed with me?”

It looked like he was hesitating, surely the offer to join you in bed was tempting enough to him. You slid over more — though it was a queen size bed, it was still going to be a tight fit. You hid a yawn behind your blanket as you waited.

**Such an opportunity.**

He was moving, untying and kicking off the boots he had rudely worn into your home. You watched him unbuckled his pants, letting them drop to the floor in a great heap before he stepped out of them.

Still, he did not get in the bed.

“Your bed won’t hold me,” he was grumbling. It took a few milliseconds for his words to sink into your fuzzy brain. When they did, you shook your head.

“I’ve had sleepovers in this bed. If it can hold five people and a pizza, it will support you.”

“Not the bed frame.”

“Come to bed, All Might.”

His body thrummed pleasantly at the phrasing you used, the *familiarity* it held. He ignored gnashing teeth in his head, carefully placing a knee on the edge of the bed. Slowly, he added more weight to it.

You assumed he was moving slowly on purpose to further annoy you and were quickly reaching the point where you were just going to reach up and pull him down—

At the addition of his second knee, your world suddenly tilted.

You let out a surprised gasp when the bottom of your bed crashed to the floor. With a loud ‘thump,’ your heart squeezing painfully in your chest, your sleep-deprived mind had not been ready to receive such a scare. All Might was standing, cursing under his breath.

Another loud breath escaped when he lifted the end of the bed with ease, doing something that put everything right again. You were sitting up at that point, open-mouthed and alarmed.

“What happened?” you squawked, rolling out of bed to check on whatever the villain had done. You flipped up the covers to examine what ailed your most precious piece of furniture while he snorted above you.

“You have a cheap bed frame. The legs buckled.”

Even in the dark, you could make out that the legs of the metal frame were bent and warped where they joined with the main body. You gingerly touched the jaggedness.

“Well, I can’t sleep on this now,” you said as you stood. “The whole thing could collapse again while I sleep!”

“It’ll be fine. Obviously, it held your weight,” All Might dismissed.
“How much do you weigh? Now I have to order a new frame and--”

Wait.

Sleepiness was being pushed aside as the logical, building section of your mind shook itself conscious. The weight distribution didn’t make sense -- why would the two bottom legs buckle? All Might had been leaning on the side of the bed…

‘Obviously, it held your weight.’

You turned to him.

“Did you do this?”

All Might was not happy, but his silence was answer enough. You wracked your brain, thinking when he had been in your bedroom to have caused the damage, but you were coming up blank. He hadn’t been in--

No, that wasn’t true. He had been in your room. The last time he had visited. You had left him alone at one point.

*The sound you heard while you were bathing.*

“You broke my bed!” you hissed, pointing at him. All Might flared up -- you would use such a tone with him?

“You bought a cheap frame!” he snarled back.

“You broke my bed and tried to hide it!” You were defeated, shoulders slumped. “Why did you have to pick tonight?”

You knew how your body reacted when you didn’t get enough sleep. A sick feeling would settle in your gut that would plague you the entire day. You’d be run-down and lethargic. Frustration strangled your being.

You started rubbing your eyes, mostly because you didn’t know what else to do and everything in you just wanted you to curl up and sleep. But All Might took your reaction as an emotional one and believed you were on the verge of tears.

He released some kind of rough, fed-up sound before pushing you aside to lean down by your bed. Wrapped in stunned silence, you watched as he went to each corner to tear the legs off of the frame, starting with the ones he had ‘fixed’ and wrenching off the ones that were untouched. He flung the accursed objects out of the way, ignoring the clattering that rung out as they struck the wall and fell to the ground.

He didn’t care, he was gesturing to the bed and staring at you.

It sat flush on the ground. There was no chance of it buckling now. He had solved the problem.

“How much do you weigh? Now I have to order a new frame and--”

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“How much do you weigh? Now I have to order a new frame and--”

Wait.
of you had the patience to deal with one another. You grunted when you landed on the bed after being dumped unceremoniously onto it and went to berate him, but fell quiet when you felt the mattress sag around you.

All Might was poised over you.

The room was quiet, the silence only broken by low-but-audible humming coming from appliances tucked away in the kitchen. Somewhere outside in the distance, an ambulance wailed. He had fallen into another staring spell and you could think to do was return his gaze.

You broke first, shaking your head without lifting it from the pillow.

“You really are an asshole.”

Slowly, a Cheshire grin unfurled.

You were raising your arms to wrap around his neck, intent on bringing him down to you. It didn’t matter if you could reach him or not -- at seeing what you wanted, he was eager to follow through.

You closed your eyes, hands coming to a rest on either side of his neck as his face drifted ever closer to yours. You felt his breath ghost across your mouth and you laughed, prompting him to complete his action with a sudden lurch.

It was nice, kissing someone in bed in the dark.

It was an easy, mellow joining of the mouths at first. Soft clicking echoing in the room as your lips moved and shifted over each other’s. But, ever the glutton, All Might could not be satisfied with just that.

He wanted more.

You were content and compliant with his silent demands, acceding to a deeper kiss without a fuss. The familiar texture and taste of his tongue slipped into your mouth. He was shifting around you, sliding his large forearm under your neck while another arm settled down by your side.

With that, he allowed more of his weight to rest against you.

You melted under the additional pressure, savoring the odd comfort it gave you. He was like one of those weighted blankets. A simple cure for anxiety.

He momentarily broke the kiss to further adjust himself over you. His breathing, you noticed, was just as slow and deep as yours. Relaxed. Before he could seize your mouth again, you ran your fingers lightly across the underside of his jaw.

You could have sworn the ticklish touch made him ever-so-slightly flinch away.

“I’ll admit it,” you muttered, hand still moving. “I’m glad Endeavor didn’t kill you.”

At that, he caught your mouth once more, though the movements of his tongue had slowed considerably.

“Don’t you want to go to bed?” he asked against your mouth. Your hands had found themselves near his collarbone and were dipping under the neckline of his shirt. He felt you exhale forcibly but you said nothing, instead you pressed your nose against his, roping him back into kissing you.

Much to your dismay, he ended the liplock too soon.
He was following the curve of your jaw with his mouth and, at the junction where it fed into your
neck, he pressed his tongue against it. You lifted your chin, exposing more of your throat to him as
he switched to mild sucking.

Then he stopped.

“No, you should sleep,” he sneered, pushing your face away as he sat up. “You’re tired.”

“Yes, you’re right.” you said, wrapping your covers around you and rolling away from him.
‘Goodbye.’

But that’s not what you did.

You were grumbling complaints under your breath as you hugged his arm. Though he had been
planning to leave the bed, your touch did make him pause. He looked at you ‘confused’ -- his brows
were knitted but the obvious smirk on his face ruined his performance.

“Not so tired after all?” he taunted. You went to open your mouth but retracted your head in surprise
when he shoved a finger inside of it. “Go ahead,” he said, returning to his position over you. His
finger had hooked your cheek and you suddenly felt like a trout caught on a fishing line. “Call me a
name.”

You bit down on his finger which only made him laugh as he dragged it out of your mouth. Your
head was pushed back onto the pillow.

Then he was on you, trailing heated kisses down your neck to your chest. He braced his weight
against a forearm by your head while his free hand landed on your chest and began aggressively
groping your breast through your shirt.

That anxious feeling was growing in your gut as things shifted from kissing to something more…
carnal.

*Was it sad that you would have been perfectly happy with just kissing?*

You sucked air through your teeth when you felt him clamp down on the soft skin of your shoulder.
Immediately you tried pushing him away, though the effort was moot.

“You’re going to leave a mark,” you seethed.

“That’s the point,” came his growling reply and to further accentuate his objective, you felt another
burst of pain as his teeth sunk into you once more, this time closer to your neck.

At each bite or suck you grew more irritated, steadily increasing the effort you put into pushing him
off of you. You pressed your knees into his gut, only for him to force them apart and press them
down so he could settle his stomach between your legs. At feeling his weight pressed against your
crotch, you went rigid. He gave another deep-throated chuckle, then his tongue was gliding over the
blemishes he had left.

He was sliding down after that -- you felt the pinching of your left nipple by his fingers while he
moved over your right breast, mouthing you over your shirt. You clenched your teeth battering down
the breathy little gasp that had almost fluttered out of you.

You weren’t feeling tired anymore.

All Might’s bangs were dancing across your face as he pestered your chest with wicked affection.
Annoyed by the brushing of his hair, you tugged at them, only to let out a small gasp when fingers and teeth clamped down on both nipples.

Though was it really surprising?

“You’re so soft,” he said, a rasp in his voice as he moved his hand under your shirt to press and grab at the flesh of your side, relishing in the way it molded easily around his hand as he dug his fingers into you. And you were small compared to him. So much of your body could fit inside the length of his palm.

Tugging your shirt up, he was pressing his face against your stomach. Sharp open-mouthed kisses turned to sucking latches that morphed into nipping which caused you to make sounds of protest. Those noises did nothing more than compel him on and he was soon at your exposed breasts, your shirt bunched above them. You were looking down, watching his tongue slither out of his mouth to encircle and flick a nipple before teeth were clenched around it.

At your whimper he made a sound -- you felt the vibrations around your skin as his teeth released their hold, though suction from his mouth kept your nipple trapped by his lips, tongue drawing shapes and wetting the skin in unhurried patterns.

And for several agonizing minutes, he tortured you with pleasure.

Sure what he was doing felt good, even the sharp bits of hurt had driven you to a point where you uncaringly became louder with your gasps and groans. What was driving you crazy was the want for more. He was building you up to something, but he was long overdue in moving to the next step.

He was switching breasts for what had to be the fourth time, dragging bared teeth across a hard and too-sensitive nipple when your resolve crumbled.

You wondered if he’d ever get bored with the begging game.

“Please.”

All Might continued his actions but tilted his head toward your face. You could feel his tongue attacking your hidden nipple before he raised his head up, your breast held by his mouth until the tension became too great and it pulled away with an audible pop.

“But you’re tired,” he purred, baring his teeth and gnashing down on the underside of your breast. You gasped, raising a hand to strike out as a reflex.

It was immediately pinned to the bed.

He tsked.

“Sweetheart,” he chided in that low voice. “Violence doesn’t suit you.”

You didn’t know what to do. Equal parts of you wanted to end the encounter and/or push his head down between your legs.

What you settled on doing was bristling up in annoyed rage, glaring as he languidly rolled his face across your stomach, continuingly planting heavy-handed kisses that half-heartedly disguised the intent of marking you up.

“Angry?” he asked, mouth landing just by your belly button. He was playing with the waistline of your pajama pants, finger dipping below the fabric to touch the elastic of your underwear. “Should I
stop?"

No.

“No.”

He gave you a satisfied look, rising to his knees while moving the waistband of your pants with him. Your legs rose in the air, settling against his chest as he flung your pajama bottoms away. Tracing a hand down your leg, he was--

Scabs.

*Standing in ripped stockings.*

Shadowed eyes glanced to your face -- you were staring up toward the ceiling, breathing deeply as you prepared yourself for him to drift lower. Knowing you were not watching him directly, he repositioned your leg, moving to stroke your inner thigh while eyes examined the marks that decorated the other side.

All Might was not opposed to seeing bruises and blemishes on your body. In fact, he reveled in each possessive mark he created. But these injuries were different. He didn’t get a thrill of excitement at seeing them.

*Pathetic.*

*Weak.*

He adjusted, moving to lay his upper body down on the bed and bring his face closer to your crotch. Your breathing hitched when you felt him place his mouth against your inner thigh, eyes shuttering closed as heart squeezed remember the feeling of last time he… well, ate you out.

*Well, he had a good chance of putting you to sleep.*

He was halfway hanging off the broken bed, most of his lower laying across the floor of your bedroom. He was forcing you to raise and bend your knees so he could better mouth at the flesh of your thighs -- you shuddered each time his lips pressed against the soft skin. But with him, you knew better to expect the kisses to last. At the passing of each second, you felt your body grow tighter, mentally preparing yourself for incoming pain. All Might could feel the tension in your body and grinned against you.

“Worried?” he hummed.

You rolled your eyes and kept your focus on the ceiling.

“I *know* you’re going to end up--”

The pain shot up your leg, a gasp escaping from you in the middle of your sentence. You glowered down at him, gritting your teeth when he met your eye and bit down on another section of fatty tissue.

“*Stop doing that!*” you said sharply, swiping at him. He caught your hand by the wrist just as your fingers brushed against his hair.

He forced your hand down by your crotch, fingers pressing beneath the fabric of your underwear and pulling it aside. Though he released your hand, you kept it there, watching as he flattened his
You shivered immediately, letting out a whimper as you bent your legs further apart, body instinctively inviting him deeper. Seeing that he brushed his face against you and inhaled loudly, breathing your scent in as he partook in another, wide-tongue taste.

“I love the way you taste,” he crooned. “... Like yesterday’s catch.”

You yelped at the insult, knees snapping closed around his head as you sat up. You were pulling away, his barb had stung too sharply. You didn’t joke about that. That was cruel! The moment had been killed. But he was laughing, heavy breaths striking your pussy as he gripped your thighs to keep you against him.

After that, he rolled your panties off, tossing them away.

And then All Might was kissing you, tongue burying into your cunt as his lips pressed and tugged at your folds, acting as if it had been your mouth. You let out another breathy sound, though it came from deep in your gut and followed a more pleasure-derived melody.

“That was mean,” you grumbled and he flicked his tongue, dancing around the soft skin of your vulva. Other than minor reactionary clenching, you didn’t acknowledge his touch, still glaring.

“It’s perfect, kitten.”

It was different this time, the experience of All Might worshipping your cunt. The first time, in your lab, you had been motivated by dumb lust, a foolish fantasy come alive. Apprehension and fear had blended together at the idea of someone much larger and stronger than you taking control.

Though many of the puzzle pieces were the same, complete with All Might re-solidifying himself as an asshole, unease had all but disappeared. If he had acted more gentlemanly, you would have been singing such nice things to him. You wondered if he realized that.

Instead, you were keeping quiet in protest. You’d let him finish but you weren’t going to be affectionate with him.

Even though warm, melted pressure was radiating from your core and making your stomach clench and mouth fall open, no sound escaped your lips. You did notice All Might’s glances at your face were becoming more frequent – he had recognized your silence and that his increased motions and speed hadn’t teased one moan from you.

“Holding it in?” he asked, curling his tongue around the top of his forefinger before pressing it against you, brushing your slit. “Shame. You make such sweet sounds.”

You could feel his finger entering you, purposefully slow to further drive you wild. Clenching your
jaw, you refused to break eye contact, even as he started to caress and prod your insides. It felt good, you could feel your body flushing. He brushed against your sweet body and you clenched up visibly, jaw growing taut. He grinned with lust-filled victory, knowing where to press to unravel you.

“Don’t you want to cry for me, sweetheart?” he hummed, hanging his tongue out of his mouth as he lowered his head to return to your clit, licking and sucking it as your mind went to goo. You were breathing loudly through your nose by that point, hips starting to rock upward, seeking to press harder against his face.

An idea suddenly entered his mind.

“Give me your phone.”

“What?” you asked, though the question came out alongside a deep gasp. Bleary-eyed, you looked down at him.

“Give me your phone. I want you to leave with a… memento.”

“I don’t want those types of pictures on my--” you gasped and jerked against his mouth. “Phone.”

“Give me your phone,” was all he said. “Or I’ll take the pictures on mine.”

That seemed more… dangerous. You reached over to your nightstand, unplugging the device that also acted as your alarm clock. After unlocking it and setting it to the camera, you handed it down to him.

Your voice of reason was screeching in your ear.

Though the man supposedly couldn’t wield scissors, he could maneuver the smartphone deftly between large fingers.

“Don’t get my face in it,” you mumbled, leaning your head back and using your arms as a shield. You could hear the sound of a ‘shutter’ clicking each time he took a picture and could feel him move from spread-lip poses to action shots. You held a groan in your mouth and closed your eyes, pelvis returning to its rocking as his tongue continued its work.

The quick clicks of typing keys rang out, followed by the unmistakable sound of a message being sent. Horror struck as you sat up, your phone striking you in the chest softly as All Might tossed it back to you.

“Who did you send that to?” you cried, terrified that your sexual encounter had been shared with another person. All Might chuckled as you unlocked your phone, fearfully seeing that several close-up shots of your… womanhood had been sent to an unknown number.

“Me,” was the answer you received.

Oh.

You glanced at the number.

All Might’s cell phone number.

You whined when you felt an additional pressure at your entrance -- he was working a second finger inside you.
All Might gave you his cell phone number. He didn’t send the pictures and then delete the message — no, he gave your phone back with the number left. On purpose. He wanted you to have his cell phone number.

It was his way of giving it to you.

“I’m only leaving for a week,” you gasped out, dropping your phone on the bed so you could grip his hair. He made an unapproving sound against you. You laughed, his actions caught in a new light. He was being annoying, yes. But only because he was going to miss you. “Worried I’ll forget about you?”

“As if you could,” came the self-satisfied grunt as he attacked you with renewed vigor.

“Oh honey,” you hummed, soft and gaspy, the edges of your mouth curled upward. He glanced up to you, a strange look on his face that you missed — you had closed your eyes to better focus on the building tingling in your gut.

“When you get back, we should do something more,” he growled. “Don’t you want more, kitten?”

Yes.

His fingers were still moving, pumping and scissoring as he bestowed loud kisses across your thighs.

“Don’t you want me, kitten?”

Yes.

Your hands were tangled in and tugging at his hair.

“Deflowered by the great villain All Might. Is that what you want?”

Yes.

“Say it, sweetheart. Do you want me?”

“Yes,” you breathed out, low and long as he went back to tonguing your nub. He sucked appreciatively, hand grasping and squeezing the fat of your ass as he pulled you closer to his face.

It was building. You gasped, head thumping back on the mattress as your knees spread themselves further apart — he could sense the end was in sight. The sensation was too much, you could feel the start of your climax as pressure built up in your ears, driving you toward—

“Punishment,” he purred against you.

Then he pulled away.

No, he didn’t just pull away. This wasn’t him bringing you to the edge to tease you.

All Might disengaged entirely.

You cried at to him, sitting up in disbelief as he pushed himself up to a standing position. He stretched before shooting you a cold look.

“Enjoy your trip.”

“No, you can’t do that,” you argued, watching as he grabbed for his pants. You pointed at the minor
tenting of his underwear -- he had obviously been feeling it! But he didn’t respond and you felt your frustration growing as he worked his buckle. “You can’t,” you were miming for him to come back, that beautiful wave of good fading away. “Please, don’t leave. Come back to bed.”

The cold look had been short-lived, he had changed to grinning like a lunatic at your continued attempts, shoving his feet into his boots, not bothering to tie the laces. It just so happened your discarded underwear was laying on the floor close to his belongings, he picked them up and displayed them at you before shoving them into his pocket.

“Punishment,” he repeated simply.

Punishment?

You didn’t understand, he could see that much in your face. So you had forgotten his warning already?

All Might was walking back toward you. Relief spread as you sat up on your knees at the edge of your floor-bound bed, stretching your head up toward him. He crouched, settling on one knee as his hand gripped the back of your neck, directing your face toward his.

He stopped before kissing you.

“Don’t use your quirk on me.”

That’s what this was about!?

“Are you kidding me?” you sputtered as he pushed your face away from him. He scratched the inside of his ear and shrugged at you.

“You have to pay the price for your transgressions,” he said and you wondered if that sentence had been directed at him in the past. The frustration you had felt earlier at his annoying habits was back, with a vengeance.

“I don’t believe this. You’d be so petty?”

He laughed.

Part of you still didn’t believe he’d go through actually leaving you so flustered -- maybe he was just waiting for you to say that one thing that would reel him back. But instead of falling in line and placating him, you swelled up in indignation.

“Fine go,” you said, putting on fake haughty airs. Your shirt had mostly fallen back down to cover you by that point, but you tugged it further down anyway and adjusted it properly. “Maybe when I’m in Korea I’ll find some nice, normal guy to fuck.”

You expected such a territorial man would come at you in a rage, warning that he’d rip off their heads if someone else laid their hands on you. Instead he scoffed.

“Go ahead,” he said wearing a cruel grin. “Go out and get fucked every night. But the moment another person touches you…” He paused but his grin never left. “I won’t come around again, sweetheart.”

The idea of him ending things threw you for a loop. But you pushed those thoughts away -- you didn’t like thinking about the future.
You wanted to curse at him for introducing that thought into your mind. A small tidbit of information you had purposely been ignoring. The knowledge that your fucked-up fairytale would end without a happy ending. Because there was no future with him. You weren’t dumb enough to even hope for that.

Clenching your teeth to hold back the emotional twang at remembering the cold hard truth of things, you grabbed your pillow and flung it at him in anger. He snatched it in the air, bringing it to his face to inhale before brandishing it at you.

“Now I’m gonna fuck your pillow,” his said, face wild with an unhinged smile. Horror crept into your soul when you realized the massive mistake.

“No!”

He was expecting you to be insulted. Angry. Disgusted. But the sound that came out of you was almost like a wail and you were holding your hands out to him desperately, trying to calm him. Still clutching the pillow, his hand fell to his side as he looked at you curiously.

“Please don’t. That pillow… that’s my good pillow. Please don’t ruin it.”

You were worried… about a pillow. He looked down at the object that garnered such a reaction from you.

He had that unhinged look in his face again as he clutched the pillow tighter against him, leaving your bedroom.

“All Might!” you were shouting after him, stumbling off your bed, pulling your shirt down to hide your nakedness. “All Might, don’t ruin my pillow!”

He ripped your front door open, letting it hit the wall with a loud bang.

And then he was gone. No final thoughts, no threats. Just a blast of air and he was gone.

With your pillow.

You really did hate the man.

“What happened?”

Yume didn’t even look happy to see you at the gate in the Kansai airport -- she looked worried. You were acting as if you were hungover or fighting a cold, wearing an oversized hoodie in too-hot weather with bags under your eyes. You grumbled about a lack of sleep.

A half-truth but a truth nonetheless.

You conveniently left out the bits involving All Might. And the livid shower you took to clean his presence off your body. The look in the mirror after your shower had been particularly haunting, having gotten a good look at the villain’s handiwork. He had marked you up alright and you had to panic and scramble for ways and clothing that would hide your neck and shoulders. Which meant you’d be wearing scarves, high-necked shirts and your lone turtleneck... in the middle of summer.

It was a horribly embarrassing situation to be in, especially since it involved your career. Who knew what kind of people you would be rubbing elbows with during the support convention. Your
professional attire had been thrown on its head because a middle-aged man was obsessed with giving you hickeys like a horny high school teenager.

*Which you let him do.*

That thought was immediately suffocated.

It was just under two hours, the flight from Japan to Korea. By early afternoon, you were unlocking your hotel room, falling onto the crisp white sheets of the bed with a satisfying grunt. Your body wanted to melt into the mattress and you felt your eyes growing heavy. But you and Yume had a full day planned and only stopped by the hotel to drop off your luggage.

A series of knocks at your door startled you.

*You had fallen asleep!*

“Sorry!” you cried slightly delirious as you opened the door, finding a worried friend standing at the threshold. “I guess I took a cat nap. I’m ready, are you?”

“Are you sure you want to wear a sweater? It’s supposed to be really hot today…”

“Don’t worry!” you were still smiling. “I’ll be fine! I’ve been feeling chilly, actually!”

You were not fine. It was humid. And Yume insisted on walking *everywhere.*

At one point, as you stood at an intersection in the Gangnam District, you briefly thought you were going to pass out from heatstroke. Your brain was begging you to just tell Yume the truth and walk around proudly without the hoodie, bruises and all.

But what you did in private was just that, *private.*

And you didn’t want to open yourself up to questions.

By early evening you couldn’t take it anymore. You had stopped for drinks in a bar that was too stuffy. Wiping the sweat from your weary brow, you told your friend that you weren’t feeling well and wanted to sleep away any illness to prepare yourself for the rest of the week.

“I knew you were sick,” she said, pressing the back of her palm against your forehead in a motherly sort of way. “Let’s close the tab and head back to the hotel.”

“I’m sorry you couldn’t get to see more of the city,” you grumbled, fully aware you were being the wet blanket. She shook her head and waved off your apology.

“Please. Like I’d be upset over spending the rest of the day in bed.”

“Youme!”

An unknown voice was calling out, an older man approaching your table. Yume was smiling, standing up to greet the newcomer. You remained seated, unsure what to do with yourself.

Eventually, attention turned to you. Yume handled the introductions -- he was Dr. Kravit.

“He’s one of the doctors at my lab!” she explained, eyes flashing as she turned her head away from him and toward you. Hey brows were raised high, it was a silent warning -- *this was someone you needed to impress.*
“Sorry for my appearance!” you chattered loudly, gesturing to yourself in a mild panic. “Feeling a little bit under the weather.”

“Flights will do that to you,” Kravit said with a knowing nod. “Nasty. Breeding ground for bacteria. I always eat oranges the morning before I know I’m flying. Get the Vitamin C in me.”

“We were just going to head back to the hotel,” Yume explained. “Get her to bed so she can rest up in time for the conference.”

“Ah, are you in the support field too?” he asked. You nodded.

“I work at a startup in Kamino,” you intoned, having grown used to your lie. It almost felt like a truth at that point. “I’ve switched focus to costume-support enhancements.”

“Startup in Kamino…” Kravitz repeated, brows furrowing. He was going to start asking questions.

“It’s nothing like what you guys are doing,” you said quickly with a complimentary smile. “You guys are the best, we just deal with research. Did Yume tell you about the unfortunate run-in we had in Roppongi? We saw Endeavor there, don’t you guys have a hand in designing his costume? How do you get it so fire resistant?”

Your deflection had worked. The doctor stood straighter, a good-natured glint settling over his face.

“That’s a trade secret,” he said.

So much for you leaving.

Kravitz took a seat at your table and the conversation settled comfortably on work topics. Yume quickly revealed that you were interested in jumping ship to their company. The doctor was interested in your experience -- you brushed over past jobs, instead focusing on what you had created.

You were explaining the electricity conducting gauntlets you had designed and crafted, reaching for your purse to show off pictures on your phone.

Thankfully you unlocked it while it was pointed away from your companions.

Inhaling sharply in surprise, you flipped your phone away from you, glancing sheepishly at the two across the table. They hadn’t noticed, too busy wrapped up in their own conversation.

It was an actual dick picture. He had sent you a dick pic.

You knew it was All Might. His… genitalia was distinct.

Plus your underwear was wrapped around… it.

“Looks like I don’t have the pictures on my phone,” you said, returning the device to the safety of your purse. You could not risk the notification of additional pictures popping up while someone else was in possession of it. Especially not a potential employer.

“That’s not a problem,” Kravit said, reaching into his pocket to produce a wallet. From it he pulled a business card, using both hands to present it to you, proper Japanese style though he was obviously European. You took the card just as carefully, nodding in thanks as you placed it on the table.

It would have been rude to put away immediately.
“My contact information is on that -- please, send me some examples of your work,” he said. “If you’re looking into our company and interested in costume-support design…”

“She does amazing work,” Yume said, jumping in and gushing for you.

“Thank you, Doctor Kravitz,” you said, earnest and honest. “That really means a lot.”

“Well I haven’t done anything for you,” the older man said with a laugh. “But I don’t mind taking a look at what you have done. We’re always eager to recruit talented individuals.”

Kravitz didn’t linger much longer after that. When he was safely out of earshot, you gaped at Yume who was squeezing her fists in excitement.

“And that’s a team you want to get onto,” she stressed. You nodded eagerly.

You had recognized the name Kravitz.

He was a legend in the field.

No, you couldn’t let an opportunity like this escape you.
Want to give a shout-out to Twitter. I don't have one so I can't interact with you guys, but I do see your tweets about Attachment and I fucking LOVE you all. Of course, I also love my Tumblr stans too. Especially everyone who asks me questions about the story and V!Might. This is a labor of love and I do this all for you. So please, enjoy yourselves!!

It was a lecture on stealth augmentations for hero costumes.

The main speaker was the head of the South African team that designed what they were about to show off -- ‘a possible revolution for stealth-based heroics across the globe.’ You were eager to see what they had in store for the packed auditorium as a costumed hero walked on stage. She was unfamiliar to you and, though she was smiling, she wore a blush as if she was embarrassed to be the center of attention.

“Now Perdu is going to demonstrate for us the capabilities of this Verdwyn fabric. Perdu?”

The hero took center stage, shuffling her feet slightly apart before looking at the crowd.

And then she was gone.

Completely, gone.

Vanished.

Muted mutterings erupted from the crowd as the importance of what they just witnessed settled. Perdu had been fully clothed at the time of her disappearance meaning--

“Our labs have designed a fabric that amalgamates with the wearers who have quirks related to invisibility, allowing them to disappear entirely,” the doctor said. “We made what was long considered impossible, possible.”

_The impossible, possible._

It wasn’t just the fabric that had sent spectators into a twitter. It was the proof that it could be accomplished -- that science could create something that could turn invisible. The existence of the fabric didn’t just open the door to creating something similar but armored, it also meant that full cloaking could be within reach.

The head scientist was attempting to tempering expectations -- they were _years_ , if not decades, away from having completed enough research for the material to go onto the market. Even then, you thought, the price would be astronomical.

You were glad you had picked that demonstration to attend, leaving Yume to go off and attend her lecture on jet propulsions that was scheduled for the same time. Though it was only Wednesday, you both had already spent an ample amount of time away from each other -- you had different career focuses and, rather than trying to force alignment for comfortability, you spent most of your days
apart to pursue your own interests.

When the hero Perdu reappeared, the team of scientists launched into a question-and-answer session. It wasn’t just the South African team that had contributed to the research of this Verdwyn fabric — it was done in partnership with a university in America and a hero support lab located in Japan.

A familiar, European doctor was standing on stage behind the lead scientist, beaming as his colleagues launched into jargon-heavy explanations.

You really needed to get an in with Kravitz.

That afternoon, you reconvened with Yume over lunch, each eager to spill details on what you had both absorbed. Since your inner-nerd could not contain herself, you went into probably too-much detail explaining the bit with Verdwyn you had seen during your morning. With a borderline dreamy sigh, you settled deeper into the booth, stirring your kal-guksu.

“Now that’s support design,” you said. “Of course Kravitz was there. His team had a hand in the research.”

“Oh?” Yume said, feigning ignorance. It had been a poorly kept secret amongst the other scientists in the lab what he had been working on. She indulged in a mouthful of whatever she had ordered (some chicken dish), covering her mouth while she chewed. “Have you emailed him yet?”

“No yet. I didn’t want to bother him during the conference.”

“Email him!” she exclaimed, eyes flashing. “It’s like emailing a thank-you after a job interview! You’re not supposed to wait too long!”

“You think?” you said with a wince. “I don’t want to come off annoying …”

“No, you won’t be. He probably has an out-of-office up for work emails anyway. It’ll be waiting for him when he gets back to the lab.” You still visibly hesitated, prompting Yume to direct a threatening finger in your direction. “Do it.”

“Fine,” you said with a sigh, the worry about making a bad impression waking your nerves. “I’ll do it today. Before we leave for dinner.”

“Before we leave for dinner,” she echoed in agreement.

Though you had spent the day sitting and had been without any stress, you still groaned as you dropped onto the bed of your hotel room. If you didn’t have dinner obligations, and weren’t so hungry, you might have been tempted to go to bed.

What you did need was a shower.

Away from outside eyes, you were safe to unwrap your bulky scarf off from your body, freeing your neck and shoulders from its strangling hold. Suddenly, it felt ten degrees cooler. The lecture halls and rooms ran cold, so you didn’t get that many stares over your near-winter attire. But the walk to and from the university campus that held the conference was getting to be brutal. Though it only had to be ten minutes, Yume kept a brisk pace. Your face was still red from the journey, sweat prickling at your hairline and lower back. You needed a shower.
The bruises along your body were fading, you noted with relief. The purple was starting to lessen and settle into a gross green/yellow combination. Sure it wasn’t pleasant to look at, but it was much better than what it had been originally. Once the visible marks were gone, you could dress a little more comfortably.

Unsurprisingly, your thoughts drifted to the man who made them. Aside from his one… text he had sent nothing more to you and you never responded. You didn’t delete the picture. Or any of previous pictures he had sent to himself on your phone.

Rather, you turned message preview off. That way if he did decide to send you another surprise, he wouldn’t taint your lock screen with his… endowment.

You did save his number, listing his contact information under ‘Asshole’ as it felt like the most fitting name for him.

Dinner wasn’t for another two hours, which left you a considerable amount of time to waste. You took your shower, did your hair, and spent the remainder of the wait watching Korean television and writing your golden email to send to Kravitz.

Both Yume and the good doctor worked at the Odaiba Research Center -- a semi-public laboratory centered around quirk-related specialties. It was a massive operation (construction of its new campus forced additional land to be added to Odaiba) that focused on the creation of various heroic support items and costume design.

All of its imagery touted the partnership the lab had with heroes. Its website was sleek, clean and crisp with borderline stock photos of smiling scientists standing beside the top heroes they outfitted.

“Be a paragon of society with us.”

And you wanted in.

The email to Kravitz was rewritten at least a dozen times as you worked to get the wording correct. You needed to be demure, but personally, you needed to gush about how inspiring his work was to you. He had been the first scientist to really master the creation of material that could not only withstand high temperatures, but also wouldn’t fray or weaken when it came into direct contact with open flames for an extended period of time. Most importantly, it wasn’t clunky or space-aged looking -- it was flexible. Modern. Form-fitting.

Hence Endeavor’s interest in having the doctor as his designer.

You included attachments of your work -- photos and basic design concepts you had saved on your laptop of your favored conducting gauntlet, gravity boots you’d made in the past and training restraints.

When everything seemed good and the included files were all correct, you sent it with an anxious breath.

That was that, you noted as you shut your laptop with a quick snap, eager to do a quick nervous lap around the room.

All that was left to do after that was wait.

Unfortunately, waiting was terrible.

Luck was on your side -- Yume texted you not long after sending the email, curious if you were
ready. Rather than sit around in wait in your rooms, perhaps you two could go out and get drinks?

You blinked at the message. Why not just change your reservation time? But distraction was what you needed, so you agreed.

Ten minutes later, you both were in an elevator.

“I think I’m ready to go home,” Yume said with a yawn, stretching her shoulders.

“It’s only Wednesday,” you reminded her, battling down a brewing response yawn.

“I know. But I miss my bed and there’s only so many lectures I can take in a day. And some of the speakers have no life in them.”

“Tell me about it,” you groaned, recalling your last talk of the day. The speaker was about as interesting as a rock and had the same personality to boot.

Rather than go somewhere for drinks, you both settled at the hotel bar -- the Italian restaurant you planned on dining at was just down the street. It was just easier to stick close by.

“Still going for midwinter chic?” Yume asked, nodding to your turtleneck. You shrugged.

“I’m cold.”

“That’s a lie.”

“It’s not a lie!”

“I wasn’t born yesterday,” Yume said, thanking the bartender when her drink was placed in front of her. She cast a sidelong look at you. “Turtlenecks and scarves? In the middle of summer? Sounds to me like someone is trying to hide their neck.”

You bristled, laughing nervously as you shook your head. She sipped her cocktail.

“Though I don’t think it’s smart to get hickies when you’re going to a work-related conference…”

“Oh stop it,” you said, your voice trying to take on an airy tone but falling flat. “Don’t be gross.”

She took another sip of her drink before fixing you with a very pointed look. You met her gaze, ignoring the chattering voice in your head. Sensing you weren’t going to give her anything, she shook her head and went back to staring at her drink.

“You’d tell me if you were seeing someone… serious, right?” she asked.

“Well yeah, of course!” Your drink was placed before you. “You’re my best friend!”

At hearing that reaffirmation she relaxed.

“Good,” was all she said before she checked the time on her phone. You did the same.

“We have what, an hour until dinner?” you asked.

“Yep. But someone should be meeting us at the bar…”

“Who?”

She flashed a smile at you and your gut vibrated. No, had she snagged you more time with…?
Not even ten minutes later you received your answer.

“I’m on a redeye tonight,” Kravitz groaned after greetings, plopping himself onto a stool beside you. “I thought I’d say goodbye before I leave for the airport.”

“I didn’t know you were staying at this hotel!” you exclaimed. Kravitz shrugged and Yume gave you a look.

“We work at the same lab,” she said and you flushed beneath your turtleneck at how green you sounded.

*Of course the lab would put all their employees in the same hotel.*

“Don’t want to stick around?” Yume asked.

“I was really only here for the Verdwyn demonstration,” he said. His bright eyes settled on you, peeking from behind frameless glasses. “I saw you in the crowd.”

Beaming, you hoped your pleased blush hadn’t risen to your face to further make you look like a fool. So he had noticed you!

“What did you think?” he continued. You took a sip of your drink, mind desperately working to put together a response that wasn’t some strange gurgle filled with compliments.

“It was great,” you said. “Surprising, even. It’s a wonder your… breakthrough hadn’t leaked.”

“Oh, it’s been leaked,” he said with a dismissive shrug. You inwardly flinched. “But not to the correct people. Right now it’s only big news within the development community. As it is now, Verdwyn is not cost effective to produce and that one suit our model wore was five years in the making.”

“But it’s the accomplishment that’s important,” you said eagerly. When he nodded his head in agreement, you felt as if you had been commended.

You looked so… earnest. Yume rolled her eyes but smiled at your enthusiasm.

“I’m glad I got to see you before I went back to stick my nose to the grind.” He was talking to you, pulling out his cellphone and unlocking it. “Good thing I checked my email -- I was glad you did send over some of your designs. This conducting glove…”

*Oh my god, he looked at your stuff!*  

You were intoning those thoughts in your head, blankly watching as he brought up your email with your creations.

“-- feeds into the glove?”

*Fuck.*

What did he say?

*You hadn’t been listening.*

“You had a design like that in high school but you hadn’t reached that point, right? You still relied on an internal power source?” Yume’s voice sliced through your panic and you resisted the urge to turn and kiss her in thanks for saving you.
“R-right,” you said carefully, still fearful you didn’t have a proper grasp on the conversation. “The first generation had an internal generator that needed to be charged before each use. Which was… tedious, even if the user had an electric quirk to charge it as needed. So I ditched that and instead wired it so that it could be powered by using the wearer as an energy source.”

“Hence the conducting part,” Kravitz interjected.

“It was my big breakthrough and, well, also an introduction to the design elements of costumes that also assisted from a support standpoint.”

“Have you started drafting a newer generation of this? Some of the technology you use is quite dated and your design prints have last year listed.”

It was an honest observation that slapped you in the face.

“Well, I operate a few years behind the curve, I have to work within the material and resources I can access. Which means the cutting edge stuff is a little out of my reach,” you explained.

“But you’re working at a research lab...?” He scratched at his chin and you froze, realizing your honest explanation didn’t align with the lie of your job. “Tell me, what are you working on now?”

What were you working on?

Boots.

“There is a man with a quirk I’m trying to design boots for,” you started, tracing patterns into the condensation of your cocktail glass. Your focus was directed to the rubber mats on the floor behind the bar as you concentrated on a sufficient, and clear, description. “He has an earth-molding quirk, but he has to physically touch the earth for it to work. I need to design a decent pair of boots that have a solid sole but will also allow him to use his quirk without having to take them off. He’s been working barefoot.”

“You should have asked Pixie-Bob what she uses for the gloves of her costume,” Yume pointed out.

The realization that you had a friend with a similar quirk you could have spoken to about pierced your heart. You looked up, mouth slightly agape at your own blindness.

“But I don’t know how her quirk works!” she backtracked quickly, seeing your face and the actual emotion in it. “I don’t think she has to touch the ground to use it!”

“Sounds to me you need a special kind of rubber for that sole,” Kravitz said. “What kind, I don’t know off the top of my head, but when I get back to the lab I’ll ask around.”

“Oh you don’t have to--”

“It would be a pleasure,” he interrupted, bringing up the calendar on his phone. “Why don’t I set up a meeting in two weeks or so, assuming I find a solution for you? You can come by the lab, I’ll take you on a tour, have you meet some of the team…”

“We can grab lunch together,” Yume added.

“Now that sounds the perfect day. What do you say?”

There was only one answer.

“Yes!”
With Kravitz gone, your desire to impress those around you plummeted considerably. In fact, the enthusiastic wave you had been riding about your future career and the convention in general disappeared when he departed Korea, leaving you exhausted from the amount of effort you had put in the almost half-week so far.

Yume caught onto your drop in energy, also falling into a little bit of a lazy hole herself. By Friday you were both skipping planned lectures, choosing instead to leave the university early for some fun, food and shopping.

There was a Saturday happy hour hosted by the conference that turned into a drinking bonanza that lasted most of the night. Both you and Yume were swept up in it, chatting and befriending other scientists, having a good time and traveling with them in search of McDonald’s. You didn’t stay out too late -- you were in your hotel bed by 11 pm, a box of half-eaten chicken nuggets stashed away in your mini fridge as a planned breakfast treat.

Then, your phone started to ring.

You stirred from you half-entered slumber, foggily reaching for your phone at your bedside to check who could be calling you at… 11:15 pm on a Saturday.
‘Asshole.

Oh.

Inhaling deeply to keep the drowsiness at bay, you answered, mumbling a hello into your phone receiver.

Nothing.

“Hello?” you groaned again, kicking off the covers to peel off your socks.

Still, nothing.

You were about to hang up but you heard a shuffle on the other end of the line, followed by a sigh.

“What do you want, All Might?” you asked, taking his phone call as a sign that the universe wanted you to wake up and change into your pajamas instead of falling asleep in your clothes.

“When do you come back?” his deep voice finally said, drifting lazily through the phone.

“I told you Monday,” you said. You flipped on the lights, scanning the floor of days worth of discarded clothing to find your sleep shorts.

“What time do you land?”

Ah, found them.

“I don’t know, around dinnertime.”

Silence.

You put the phone on speaker, placing it on your bed as you changed into your sleep clothes. He didn’t say anything else and you wondered if maybe he hung up.
“... What are you wearing?”

You erupted into laughter at the question -- full, gut bobbing laughter. He gave a loud, disgruntled snort, but you spoke before he could.

“Don’t tell me you’re trying that,” you said, grabbing your phone and taking it off speaker so you could put it against your ear. “That’s the corniest line to use too! ‘What are you wearing?’”

But your laughter stopped and instead you were looking off, staring out the hotel room window that overlooked a small section of the cityscape.

“You miss me,” you teased. “Did you call to hear my voice, hm? Are you thinking about me?”

There was no answer -- the silence was definitive. You looked at your phone, seeing it was on the home screen. The call had been ended.

So he had hung up.

A strange, pleasing sensation washed over you as you crawled back to bed. Though your slightly drunk brain was goading you into texting him to continue your teasing, self-respect told you to drop it. Act nonchalant.

You did change his contact name though. A sign of goodwill.

As for All Might, he had hung up when you asked if he missed you, having realized his terrible error. He never participated in phone sex before and was curious enough to try it. A craving had settled into his bones, he thought attempting it might ease it.

The blunder of an old man.

He returned to his bed, bony body settling beneath the sheets as he stared up at the dark ceiling, his self-loathing scorching. Rolling over on his side, he was met by a wafting, mollifying smell. He tossed the object he blamed for fanning his feeble whims from his bed.

A pillow.

“So, what did you think?”

You stretched in the uncomfortable airport seat, watching the planes taxiing around concrete lanes from behind large windows.

A small sparrow, in a panic, was flying across the terminal. A desperate search for freedom.

You hoped they would save the bird.

“The conference or Korea?” you asked, swinging your head sluggishly at Yume.

“Either one.”

“Conference was worth it,” you said. “For obvious reasons. Korea was nice too. We should come back at some point.”

“Get a little work done?” Yume joked, pulling the skin of her cheeks taut to remove any wrinkles.
You shrugged.

“Maybe. I wouldn’t mind looking young forever.”

Your plane was due to board within minutes and you were ready to go home. Sleep in your bed. It felt like you had been working long hours and relief was in sight. Truthfully, however, you had been stress-free, eating plentifully and going to sleep at a normal hour almost every night. There was no reason for you to feel so… drained, but you did. Enough so, that you decided not to head to your lab until Wednesday.

A little vacation from your vacation.

You ran into no issues during your flight back to Japan -- no delays, you had the window seat, your luggage was waiting for you in the baggage claim.

No, the only minor setback was during your taxi ride home from the airport, when you phone buzzed with a breaking news alert.

All Might Spotted in Kamino. Engaging with hero Edgeshot.

You kept the news to yourself, casting a guilty gaze up the oblivious taxi driver. You weren’t sure where in Kamino All Might was fighting but you desperately wanted to get home to your apartment. Keeping the driver in the dark seemed best -- you didn’t want him to get antsy or refuse to drive into an All Might zone.

According to social media, the fight had only started about ten minutes prior.

Was he in Kamino for you?

The taximan, still completely unaware of the possible terror raging nearby, remained pleasant. He talked about his son in university and his upcoming trip to Hawaii. When you finally arrived in front of your apartment building, he removed your suitcase from the trunk and offered to carry it up the stairs for you. You declined, thanking him profusely for his kindness and tipping him well.

Though it had been annoying in the moment, you were glad you cleaned your apartment before you left for your trip. The smell of lemon greeted you when you opened the door, flipping the lights on. The neat and orderly aura of your home immediately putting you at ease. Kicking off your shoes and discarding your scarf, you wheeled your suitcase directly to your bedroom, only remembering then that your bed frame had been broken and was sitting pathetically against the floor.

All Might.

Twitter said the fight only lasted about twenty minutes. You were scrolling through your feed, attempting to reach an unreachable itch on your back. Edgeshot was knocked unconscious into a skyscraper and was taken to the hospital, his condition unknown.

He was only doing his job.

A flash of movement by your bedroom window caught your eye, startling you. But when you went to look, nothing was there.

Then came the loud knocking at your front door.

It only lasted a second -- you jumped when you heard the heavy raps in quick succession, peeking your head from your bedroom.
No. Surely…

WHAM.

The door flew open, part of the handle skittering across the floor of your living room as All Might’s mammoth body ducked through the entryway. The gasp of fear at the suddenness of everything had been lost in the sound of the door exploding open but your surprised face remained.

Very quickly, however, you regained your senses and that surprise morphed to horror and rage.

“Are you kidding me!?” you seethed as All Might approached. He was discarding articles of his costume as he moved -- the mask landed somewhere in your living room, his shoulder pads fell in the hallway, the gloves didn’t make it past the doorway of your bedroom.

His face was almost feral, snarling grin pulled large and wide as he reached for you. He had a still-bleeding cut across his chin.

No, he wouldn’t have come straight to--

“Sweetheart,” he hummed, grin growing more vicious as he grabbed the back of your legs and lifted, bringing you up to rest against his chest, arms wrapped firmly around your waist and backside. “You’re back already!”

He seemed… jittery. Like he had one too many coffees. If he did just come from a fight, maybe he was riding high on adrenaline, blood still pumping after clashing with a hero. Sensing his state of mind, apprehension dawned. It would not turn out well for you if he stayed in… like that.

“No.” You were wriggling, attempting to break the hold he had on you. But it was an impossible feat and your sad tries of escape only made him squeeze tighter. “No, I just got in. Let me down.”

Ignoring you, he hoisted you further up to allow him better access to your neck. He settled his face into the crook of it, almost nuzzling against it before inhaling.

But it wasn’t right.

He pulled away with a jerk.

“You smell… ‘Not yourself,’ were his thoughts. Instead, he frowned. “Cheap.”

“Cheap!?” You were offended, face contorting unhappily at his ‘observation.’

“Like public bathroom… soap.”

“I used the hotel shampoo and conditioner,” you snapped. “They weren’t cheap. It was a nice hotel!”

“Like a budget whore,” he said with a disappointed shake of his head. You were livid. “Go on then, go take a shower.”

He was going to set you down so you could rectify the issue, but you were jabbing a finger into his chest. He rose a brow.

“You can’t come into my house, break down my door and then act like a jackass and think that I’ll--”

With a huff he placed a hand at the back of your neck, forcing your head forward and into a kiss. It was more to shut you up, his mouth covered yours entirely, his tongue lightly passing over your lips before he groaned and released you. The frenzy was reawakening.
“I fought Edgeshot,” he murmured, face still close to yours. He was grinning again, proud and eager to talk about his bout with a hero.

“I saw,” you replied, your focus more on your broken front door and the fear of a neighbor walking by and seeing him standing in your apartment. Holding you like he was. Kissing you.

“I won,” he said, bringing you into another kiss, his grip on your neck tightening. You pulled away when you felt an opening, when his lips shifted over yours to coax you deeper.

“My door!” you said, drawing your head back as far as you could.

“Don’t worry about it,” he growled, unbothered about a potential audience. Like they could do anything to him. He was All Might. He was unstoppable. Unbeatable.

“No, All Might—” you were bobbing and weaving your head, trying to avoid him. “I can’t, not with the door open!”

“Let them see. Then they’ll know who you belong to.”

“I don’t belong to anyone,” you said sharply, jerking away from his mouth again. “I’m an adult. No one owns me.”

All Might’s chasing mouth stopped.

You were being lowered back to the ground. Your eyes had been trained in the direction of the door, but when you went to look at him, he had had already turned his body away from you and was heading out of your room. Curious that maybe you had finally gotten through to him, you followed, hovering in the hallway.

He stopped at the front door but didn’t go through it. He didn’t leave. Instead, he pressed a large hand against it, pushing it closed. Since the door handle had been knocked off entirely, the metal door wouldn’t stay shut. Instead, it lazily drifted open every time he took his hand away.

You prayed none of your neighbors would walk by at that moment. He was unobscured.

Though the door had already been dented when you first moved in, All Might had left a new mark on it -- an even larger crater-like indentation right in the center of it, where his ham fist had pummeled it open.

Could that even be fixed?

_Say goodbye security deposit._

All Might eventually ‘solved’ the issue of the broken door by shoving one of your end tables against it. When he was confident it wouldn’t somehow blow open and send you into another tizzy, he looked back to you.

_Oh no._

It was almost a saunter, the way he slunk toward you. Like a leopard stalking some poor, unfortunate antelope it planned on eating. You were in the eyes of a predator and had no means of escape.

“Now then,” he said when he reached you, yellow bangs tickling your ceiling as he towered before you. “Tonight I’ll show you who you belong to.”

Something inside you responded to his declaration, but you were shaking your head.
“You can’t do this,” you said, looking at him square in the eye. “I can’t have you coming over her and breaking *everything*. Constantly! My lab, my bed, the door. Not to mention the pillow! My good pillow!”

An arm slipped around your waist and you were pinned to his side.

Then, you were moving.

At first he brought you back into your bedroom but stopped when he saw the broken bed. Its height was not ideal. So, he backtracked to the living room.

“I’m serious All Might,” you said, ignoring the thrill shimmying down your spine that settled in a pool at the base of it. “This is ridiculous!”

Back of the couch? It was a possibility, he thought as he eyed the furniture. But he needed something with a little more surface area--

*The kitchen table.*

Ah, now that would work.

He moved out of your living room and you huffed in frustration, launching into your wiggling again.

“You cost me so much money--”

He seated you gently on the edge of the table, only to send you barreling backward onto it when his upper body crashed into yours. At the impact, you let out a breathless ‘oof,’ that was captured in All Might’s mouth when he slammed his against yours.

“All you do is bitch,” he breathed against you momentarily. He was pulling your hands from out underneath him, pinning them to the table above your head.

You swallowed.

“Did you show everyone your marks, kitten?” he asked, dragging you further up the table while he bent and settled his face back into your neck. “They’re already starting to fade away--”

“*Don’t!*” you said, impassioned enough that he stopped from sinking his teeth down into your flesh. “Don’t. I can’t keep wearing scarves.”

“Then don’t,” was his solution.

“You can do them!” you blurted when you felt his teeth again. “You can do them. Just… just not where they can be seen.”

You were red-faced by your unneeded concession and you felt All Might’s eyes on you, though yours were pointed at the ceiling.

“The point is for them to be showed *off,*” he chastised. “Not hidden.”

“I have a life, All Might,” you groaned. It wasn’t in arousal. “I *can’t* keep covering myself up! I have clients and I’m going to a possible job interview--”

“Job interview?” The teasing was gone from his voice.

“At a lab in Odaiba.”
He released your hands and stood straight. You propped yourself up on the table with your elbows.

A job interview?

He… didn’t like it.

But he didn’t know why.

So he stared, trying to put together a proper All Might response to what you had revealed.

Fortunately for him, you were compelled to break the silence.

“I mean, it’s not certain,” you said. “I have a lot of things to consider, especially when it comes to my work now. It’s a hero lab so—”

“Hero lab?” he repeated slowly.

“Odaiba Research. You must have heard of it. A lot of the top heroes are signed to it. Endeavor is one.”

It was just a truth, a simple fact of the matter. There was no point in trying to hide what the lab did.

All Might… definitely did not like it.

“Ho-oh! Making a switch?” he asked. His grin had returned but there was a snarl in his face and voice. “Is that it? Chasing after heroes now?”

“You know that’s not—”

He was tugging your shirt up off your body, tossing it aside.

“I beat heroes, darling,” he said, hooking a finger beneath the small bit of fabric holding together the cups of your bra. With a flick of his wrist it tore, your bra spilling open. He placed his hands on your breasts, simultaneously pushing you back down onto your back.

You grit your teeth, stomach already clenching in anticipation.

“It’s not that big of a deal,” you said, watching his hands maul your breasts before guiding your nipples between too-large fingers. “What impact would it make to you, if I changed jobs?”

A sharp inhale tore through you as he rolled them between the pads thumb and pointer finger, pinching and pulling them up.

“Someone has seen the error of her ways,” he said, shaking his head with a ‘tsk.’ “Wants to go off and be a hero fucking now.”

“I work in a lab!” You didn’t like what his was implying and you suppressed a whimper as he continued working your nipples into sweet, harden peaks. “And I haven’t fucked anyone.”

All Might paused.

Then he grinned.

He was leaning over your face, bestowing a soft, closed-mouth kiss against your lips.

“That’s right,” he purred. “You haven’t.”
His face was gone then, moving to hover over your breast while hands worked to roll down your leggings. You weren’t sure what he had in mind-- well, that wasn’t true. All signs were pointing down an obvious route that made fear grip your brain and warmth pool between your legs. A confusing contradiction.

Your legs were freed from their pin against the edge of the table when he peeled your pants off your body, tossing them out of the way. Rough hands trailed up and down your legs and thighs -- his attention was focused on the crotch of your underwear.

“Wet yet?” he asked and you flushed at the lewd question. Assuming you wouldn’t answer, he teased one finger beneath the fabric to trace your slit, dipping in slightly. When he pulled his hand away, his shook his head in disappointment. “Not nearly enough.”

Limply, you allowed him to move your body, watching as he positioned your now-bent legs on the table as he settled his body between your knees. He was so wide, enough so that you felt a bit of a stretch at your hips.

Instead of attacking your cunt, as you expected, he leaned back over you, returning to your exposed breasts. You could feel his breath striking your right nipple before he blew at it -- you shifted at the blast and returned to staring at the ceiling.

Gently, he began rolling the tip of his tongue over it but, before he enclosed his lips around it, his turned his head to lick the pads of his right thumb and forefinger. When his lips clasped around one nipple, his fingers mimicked the action on the other.

You ran your tongue over your teeth, thighs clenching at the sensation. Unfortunately for you, he was settled between your legs and could feel your reaction. He was laughing -- you could hear it and feel it in the way his body shook. When he turned to biting one nipple, his fingers turned to pinch the other.

The clamping of teeth wouldn’t last long, quick bursts of pressure following by suckling lips joined with the teasing of his tongue. Your body was responding, pelvis adjusting slightly while you moved to chewing on your bottom lip. Eventually a gasp escaped you, which seemed to please him. He released his hold on your breasts, only so he could switch his mouth to the other one. He ran a hand across your stomach.

“I beat heroes,” he said gruffly.

You knew.

All Might drew out his attentions to your breasts, so much so that you found yourself closing your eyes to better focus on the little shocks of pleasure that were sparking from your chest. Small whimpers were emerging from you more frequently and your thighs were dancing -- muscles contracting in arousal. There was a ticklish touch by your thigh that finally forced your eyes open; you looked down to find All Might had been observing your face. He grinned, clapping your nipple between white teeth and pulling up, drawing your breast taut. You felt then a pressure by your crotch.

His fingers were there.

“Oh,” he cooed, releasing your breast from his mouth. “You’re soaked, sweetheart. Much better.”

And then he was pressing into you, not bothering to remove your panties, just pushing the fabric aside. You shivered at the familiarity of his hands, eyes rolling up the slightest bit. Your reaction sent
a tremor across his body.

“I make you feel good, don’t I?” he teased, rolling his finger as he pushed deeper into your cunt.

“Sometimes.”

You had actually responded. Sure, it wasn’t the answer he had been looking for, but the fact you said something compelled him on.

“Sometimes is right,” he acknowledged. “Not so much last time, huh?”

“You left a-ah --” A sharp inhale interrupted you, his finger fluttering across your G-spot. Pleased to have found it so quickly, he stationed his digit against it, massaging the pocket of nerves. You audibly groaned at that, head lulling at the deep-body bliss you felt.

“That’s it,” All Might sang. “You learned your lesson, right? You know not to use your quirk on me again.”

“Yesss,” came the hissing reply.

“There’s no need for a repeat of last time?”

“N-no.”

“Good.”

He removed his hand from your cunt. You didn’t complain -- you didn’t think he would leave you empty for too long. Thankfully you were correct, he was pulling your underwear off your body.

“Hands or mouth, my dear? I’ll let you pick.”

“Mouth,” you said quickly. The man was skilled, you knew that. He seemed pleased by your choice and rapid response. He grunted, rolling his shoulders before slowly lowering his lumbering body down to his knees. Hooking his arms beneath your legs, you were pulled across the table, your ass pressed against the edge of it.

All Might placed loud, wet kiss against one thigh, thumb rubbing a slightly sore spot nearby -- undoubtedly the remnants of one of his love nips. He repeated the kiss on the other leg, tongue rubbing a line across the ample flesh.

“Not where anyone can see?” you heard him mumbled to you. Your body seized up, preparing for pain.

Of course it came, he felt obliged to leave such marks. It was a shame you wanted them hidden, though he was somewhat pleased when he realized they would be found in places where only he could go. He was careful when he left each little nip -- not with the intensity of the biting, no he was still as rough as before as he wanted each bruise to linger. But he was sure not to catch any sensitive or sore skin between his teeth.

Each of your cries was a gauge to him: low moan and groans signified arousal, less breathy sounds meant you were becoming more aware on the pain. When that began to happen, he considered his art project complete.

His mouth brushed against your cunt.

Anticipation.
“So sweet,” he murmured, fat tongue running up your slit. Your entire body shifted with it.

All Might didn’t say anything else before launching into one of his favorite activities -- making your writhe around him. His tongue pushed deeper into your pussy, grazing against your shuddering walls. Drawn like a magnet, your hands were in his hair and he quietly groaned at the contact, the sound coming across more like normal breath than a sign of pleasure. You didn’t catch it and he was relieved it went unnoticed.

He had plans for you tonight, he thought as he envisioned them, his thumb tracing circles around your clit as he pumped his tongue in and out of you. To feel your sweet cunt gripping his cock--

It was pressing hotly against his leg, his cock. It was suffocating, begging to be free. But he would wait.

You were starting to hold your breath -- something he noticed you did when you were getting close to cumming. He removed his hand from your clit so his mouth could take over the attack. The introduction to sucking made your hips buck up and you released a strangled cry. He hummed at your reaction and the flush that stained your face and chest. Your lips were parted, eyes squeezed closed as he increased the speed of his ministrations. The energy was building, your pelvis was forcing itself off the table, pushing and pressing deeper against his mouth.

A burst of white.

Your body rocked when your orgasm struck, hips and legs jerking through the waves of bliss that traveled from your cunt.

He removed his mouth -- a surprise, you figured he was going to tease you with overstimulation.

No, he was standing, pushing your legs apart as he reached into the utility belt of his costume, retrieving a small white bottle. He placed it on the table as he worked to unbuckle his pants.

Lubrication, the bottle declared in plain text, the picture of a raindrop hanging above it.

Your first thought was amusement. All Might had fought a hero with a bottle of lube in his belt.

But the amusement died when he dropped his cargo pants, dragging his underwear down along with them.

His cock bobbed free, thick and already oozing a considerable amount of precum. He was fisting it, coaxing it to full staff now that it was finally free. His eyes, you noticed, were trained on your sex.

So this was how it was going to happen.

This was how your virginity was going to be lost.

‘At least he brought lube,’ a voice offered as you frowned. You weren’t exactly thrilled with what was happening but you weren’t upset either. In your mind, you figured there would be a lot more… affection during your first time.

What a stupid thought.

The lube was cold -- he had drizzled a considerable amount on your cunt, hand dipping and smearing it around your arousal. He did the same to his cock, pumping his fist up and down the shaft to further spread the slickness.
You swallowed when you felt him tease the head of his cock against you. He was breathing loud and deep, also drawn into anticipation.

Well, Here goes nothing.

You rested your head against the table, staring at the ceiling, waiting for the inevitable pressure of him sticking something far too large inside of you. Would there be pain? You assumed so. Would it even fit? That, you didn’t know.

There was a slight pressure as your pussylips parted, his cock beginning the first slow push inside. He didn’t get very far -- a quick glance up to your face made him stop.

You weren’t looking to the ceiling anymore, you were looking to the side, fists clenched and mouth drawn taut. As if you were steeling yourself, waiting for it all to be over with.

That’s not what he wanted. He wanted you begging for him, lust-filled eyes trained on him as he took you again. And again. And again.

He removed his cockhead from your entrance, returning to teasing your slit.

“What’s the matter, sweetheart?” he bluffed. “Worried? No, I have other plans for you tonight.”

Confused, you turned your face toward him, watching as he lifted and pressed your legs together, crushing his cock between your thighs. The heels of your feet were pressed against his chest.

He was rolling his hips back and forth and you watched his cock thrust between your legs. So he wasn’t going to…?

“One day you’ll be crying for my cock,” he said, moving his hands from your calves to your hips for better leverage. His body was beating against the back of your legs, large balls slapping against your ass. Your mouth opened in a silent gasp as you felt him angle his cock further down against you -- he was sliding between your lips, barely grazing your clit.

The image and feel of it was intoxicating.

What was it he was doing, thigh-fucking? You propped yourself up on your elbows, breathing heavily as you watched his red cock saw between your flesh. If you angled your hips just right--

There!

You felt the grazing on your clit intensify and you brought your chin down to your chest. You were bouncing, the sound of slapping skin reverberating across your kitchen.

“Soon, kitten,” All Might warned with clenched teeth. “I’ll get to a point where I won’t be able to control myself around you.”

You licked your hand, reaching out to tap and rub at the head of his cock whenever it reappeared from between the fat of your thighs. At your touch he grunted, increasing his speed. His balls were so heavy, you could feel their weight at each smack, slight shockwaves rippling across your asscheeks.

All Might’s grip on your thighs tightened.

He pounded against you for a considerable amount of time, droplets of sweat forming across his chest and forehead while he clenched his teeth. You were on the brink of a climax -- it was
frustrating, honestly. There was stimulation and friction, sure, but there wasn’t enough to tease a solid orgasm from you. Tilting your hips no longer was helping, you needed a direct touch.

When you went to touch yourself, All Might jerked your hips back, pulling your arms out from beneath you and forcing your back on the table.

“No,” he hissed, leaning against you. It was almost difficult to breathe with his weight pressed against your legs. He was thrusting even harder by that point, the table was jerking with you, the edge of it slamming against the wall it had sat against.

Then you felt it. Ever the angel, All Might had snuck a hand down by your cunt, rapidly working your clit. You cried out in relief, barreling toward a much-needed, solid orgasm.

“That’s it,” he was grunting above you, his own release on the horizon. “Let me hear that voice of yours, sweetheart.”

A tightened in your gut, you were pressing your legs tighter against him and he snorted, his cock going wild at the additional compression.

“I’m--”

There was no reason to warn him, but you felt an urgency to let him know you were on the brink of cumming. His cock was weeping, poised and ready to erupt. But he wanted to wait, he wanted to see your face--

And then it happened, you flung your head back and let out a strangled gasp as everything in you snapped. You were bucking against his still, sawing cock, cunt pulsating around the object it desperately wanted buried inside it.

With that, All Might’s fists landed on either side of your waist, the power of his thrusting increasing dramatically. Had you not been in a post-orgasmic fog, you would have been concerned about possible bruising. But all you did was watch with muted interest as sweat fell from his body, which had tensed up in an effort to keep from losing control.

You were going to coo at him those sweet words he always seemed pleased to hear, but you didn’t get a chance. After two solid strikes of his pelvis, which sent the table banging loudly into the wall, he erupted, large globs of cum spilling from a glistening cockhead.

It coated your lower body and thighs.

He stood for a few seconds, bangs drooping as he worked on just breathing. When he pulled away, you let your thighs part.

You could feel his cum dripping down your cunt, pooling on your kitchen table.

A stillness settled over the room.

That… was an experience.

Eventually you scooted back to the edge of the table, ignoring the mess that had been made of your clean kitchen and floor. They would need to be scrubbed. Going forward, you wondered if you’d ever get the image of All Might’s cock and cum out of your mind whenever you ate at your table.

“I’m going to go… clean up,” you said, voice breaking the silence. You looked to All Might who had mostly settled down. His cock, however, still looked as angry and as red as ever. When he
looked up and caught where your attention was, he chuckled.

“I can go for rounds, kitten,” he warned before shaking his head. “Go clean up.”

Alone in the bathroom, you turned on the shower, sitting on your toilet as you waited for the water to heat up.

You had honestly expected him to… *fuck you*. He had been poised for it, he had even lightly entered you. But apparently that was not his plan.

Were you really just delaying the inevitable? By that point, it was a pretty safe assumption that All Might was going to be your first true lay.

But he was big.

And you didn’t want to face that kind of pain.

Your shower was quick, just enough to wash the cum off of you and clean up your nether regions a bit. Then you thought about his earlier comment about your smell -- did he realize that you bought the cheap shampoo? Your usual smell *was* cheap.

Wrapped in a towel, you paused in your bathroom, listening.

You didn’t hear him.

Ah, he left.

It made sense really, you thought to yourself as you shuffled to your bedroom. He never stuck around after--

He was laying in your bed.

He had pulled his boxers on, back against the wall as he scrolled through his phone. He didn’t bother looking up at your entrance. Though you had been stunned still by his presence, you quickly recovered, working to find clothing you could pull on.

“Did you delete my number?”

You looked at him, brows furrowed while you pulled on a shirt. What did he mean…?

*Your phone.*

It was your phone was in his hands, not his.

“Hey!” you exclaimed, ignoring the rest of your clothing to instead focus on getting back your personal property. You could see it had been unlocked. “How did you--!?”

In one controlled motion, he grabbed your incoming frame, settling your body next to his in the bed. You were caught off guard -- though you knew he was strong, his small shows of his power still surprised you. It was laughable how easily he could maneuver you if he so wanted. You noticed your shirt had ridden up, exposing your naked body underneath. Embarrassed, you pulled it down while he rolled his eyes.

“So modest,” he sneered as he continued to thumb through your phone.

“All Might, *no!*” you said, still swiping at the device. He batted your hands away, holding it out of
"You've unlocked your phone in front of me plenty of times before, kitten," he admonished. "Passcode is 4-9-9-2." You grimaced, it was right. "Maybe make it a little more difficult next time? Or be a little more conscious of who's around if you don't want them seeing."

"I have important things on there," you groaned, nervous that he would do something unpleasant. But all he was doing was scrolling through your messages.

"You deleted my number," he said with an unhappy grunt, glaring at you. "I didn't."

"It's not listed in your messages and I don't see it under All Might."

"You're not under All Might."

"I don't see 'asshole' either," he snapped and you chuckled. So that was his next guess? Apparently he did know you well enough.

"You're not under asshole either." You leaned against his arm, motioning for him to scroll further down your contact list. With a curious brow, he listened.

"There," you said almost right away and he stopped. "That's you. Under 'Buttercup.'"

He should have been offended by such a weak name.

"Buttercup," he repeated, tossing your phone back to you.

But he didn’t say anything else. You left the phone where it had landed on your bed, choosing instead to remain nuzzled against his arm. It appeared he was poised to cuddle and you were not going to let the opportunity pass.

"I have to admit, I was surprised," you murmured, tracing patterns on the tight fabric of his shirt. "I thought you had… other plans tonight."

"You thought wrong."

Quiet settled between you both.

"How long are you going to wait, anyway?" he asked, staring out your bedroom window.

He didn’t have to clarify, you knew what he was inquiring about. You swallowed, unsure if you wanted to voice your true thoughts or not.

"I don't know," you said, settling on that. "It's… I don't know. It's hard to explain."

"Try," he said dryly.

"Part of me wanted you to just… fuck me," you said. He glanced over at you. "But I wanted the moment to be a little nicer than that."

"You fuck yourself with toys," he said, gesturing to your nightstand. Heat settled across your chest in mortification -- he knew where you kept them? It was an obvious admission that he had snooped through your belongings and you racked your brain, trying to think if there was anything else personal he could have seen. But you were having a conversation and the panic you felt settled.
“Once you hit a certain age,” you groaned, rubbing your face. “It gets embarrassing, still being a virgin. And then I don’t want to lose it so easily because, I don’t know, there’s something important attached to it…”

All Might grunted, you figured he was annoyed. But then he was lifting an arm, drawing you better into his chest. Everything in you thrummed with adoration.

“What a stupid thing to put worth in,” he grumbled. You perked up, looking at him curiously. “Who and how many you sleep with doesn’t change who you are.”

It was as if you had been struck by a bus. Such a… kind statement uttered by such an unkind man. Your brain was desperately trying to comprehend it.

“Really?”

He rolled his eyes but didn’t say much else.

You retreated into your thoughts, resting your head against him. You wondered if he realized what he said, if he had truly been attempting to alleviate your fears. It seemed… so out of character for someone like him. To care.

Why did he care? Why hadn’t he just forced you to submit? Surely the opportunity presented itself earlier. He had been poised to enter you, lubed up and ready. You weren’t going to put up any fuss - - hell, you expected it.

What was that he said?

Soon I won’t be able to control myself around you.

Had he…

Had he changed his mind?

No… he wouldn’t have cared about your personal feelings, right? He couldn’t sense the thoughts that had been racing through your had as you tried to prepare yourself.

Soon I won’t be able to control myself around you.

He cared. He cared, didn’t he? In some sense of the word, in some way, he felt something for you. Enough to keep coming back to you, enough to protect you from Hawks, enough to send you lewd pictures and call you when you were on his mind.

Enough to have patience not to take what you weren’t willing to give up just yet. Even if he went against his nature.

You were crawling over him, settling in his lap. He pulled his head back in surprise when you wrapped your arms around him, bringing yourself more to a kneeling position so you could reach his face. But his surprise was short-lived and he smirked.

“Ready for round--?”

You didn’t let him finish before pressing your mouth against his. You were the one to go after his lips, for once acting as the aggressor. He stayed curiously passive, allowing you to nibble and tug at his lips without a response. It was also you who added more passion to the liplock, mewling when
the loud sounds of clashing mouthes drifted to your ears. Then, your tongue darted out, desperately seeking his.

Two thick arms wrapped tightly around your middle.

You rested your forehead against his when you broke the kiss, breathing deeply, hands settled on either side of his face.

“Ki--”

No, it wasn't his time to speak. Your mouth returned; a messy, wild kiss composed of biting, licking and the clashing of teeth. You could feel him responding already, his cock pressing against your leg. You shifted against it and he huffed into your mouth.

“Eager,” he finally said when you pulled away. It was so you could peel off the only article of clothing you managed to put on. His attire caught your attention, a realization dawning that he had never fully undressed before you.

“Take your shirt off,” you said.

It was shocking that he hesitated at your request. You furrowed your brows. He was staring at you, an unreadable expression on his face as he obviously debated something.

“I have a scar,” he said, rough and low as if he didn't want to admit such a fact. You waited for more explanation -- he was embarrassed by a scar? Surely All Might, of all people, wouldn’t be concerned about a scar. He was a villain and a fighter. The weapons he used were his fists. You softly traced the new cut on his chin.

“I don’t mind.”

“It’s… ugly.”

_He was self-conscious!?_

You had to actively work to keep your expression from changing, the entire interaction throwing you for a loop. How could someone like him, this… Adonis, a prime example of a muscle-overloaded fighter, be worried about such a minor thing? A scar?

“All Might, I don’t mind,” you were rubbing his chest, eyes trained on his face. He was still frowning. “Please? I want to see you. I want to touch you.”

He wavered at that, clenching and unclenching his jaw. Finally, he shifted.

You sat back slightly, pressing yourself unintentionally harder against his crotch while peeled his shirt off. He placed it on the bed beside him and immediately your eyes went to trace over every bare muscle.

Oh.

_The scar._

It was large, taking up most of the left side of his torso. And it looked… _angry_. Much less like an old mark and more like a disfigurement. In fact, it concaved into his chest -- a crater with arms of puckered skin rippling out.

_It was unsightly._
He saw the way your eyes were glued to it and the look on your face at seeing such a...

With a growl he grabbed your chin to force you into a kiss to prevent you from continuing to ogle at his body. He was mean with his mouth, you realized, taking the anger he had about himself out on you. You were grunting, trying to push away too-hard teeth, but he wouldn’t budge.

No, he had seen the look you had when you saw his body.

How could he assume you would look at him with anything other than disgust?

But then a hand was there, grazing. You wanted him to know you didn’t mean--

All Might pulled back.

“Don’t touch it,” he snapped, ripping your hand away and glaring.

“All Might, how--”

“All Might, how--”

“Stop.”

It was an order. You floundered under such a dark look, visions of the villainous side of All Might poking through. Drawing your hand back, you held it against your chest and gave a curt nod.

Fine. You wouldn’t pry.

“I’m sorry,” you said, slowly reaching toward his chin instead. The plans you had of loving and rubbing his body had been ruined. He didn’t lean into your touch or toward your kiss, he kept his head steady. It wasn't what you wanted. The moment was going awry. “I’m sorry,” you repeated again, earnestly, before guiding him into another soft liplock. You hadn’t meant anything bad by what you did. It had just been a surprise, that was all.

He was settling, his eruption of anger cooling but hardening. Remaining. He wouldn't forget the blow you had left, but he'd let it slide. You were appealing to him, so tender in your touches. Fine. You were relieved when his hands returned to your waist.

Seeing everything hadn't been ruined, you were drawing his head down, directing him to lean forward so you could better press your crotch against his.

You knew what you wanted to do.

And at that contact, it finally clicked for him.

Beneath you he was shifting, rolling down his boxer briefs and freeing his cock once more, still messy with lube and cum. He hadn't bothered cleaning himself, he would do that later. His time was always limited with you and it seemed like a non-priority. Like before, his hands were prodding your sex, dipping in to test the wetness.

Apparently satisfied, he gripped your thighs.

“It’s going to hurt,” he rumbled against you, deepening the kiss that followed. He was being more attentive, realizing where your mind was at. The leap you were taking. You nodded against him, heart racing in a sickening sense of nerves and fear. “But the pain won’t last,” he added.

You nodded again, throat dry.

He sat straighter, pressing more of his back against the wall, wrapping an arm around your waist to
lift and guide you up.

Your hands were on his chest.

His other hand was on his cock.

“Don’t clench,” he warned, knocking against your face with his nose to guide you into a kiss. It was a form of distraction; when he nestled the tip of his cock against your entrance, he slipped his tongue into your mouth. When he started to press upward, he lightly nipped at your top and bottom lips.

You could feel it, too big and too thick, not even in you fully and it was already stretching--

“Don’t clench,” he repeated, grabbing your thigh. You actively tried to listen, but the tenseness was instinctual. It was far too difficult for you to break it.

And then he was pressing in, beyond just your entrance. Sure you had his fingers in you in the past but even they didn’t compare to… this. You groaned, shaking your head and already regretting your choices. But his mouth was back at yours again, and he was rubbing your thigh while the arm around your waist stroked your stomach.

“You’re doing so good,” he said and you let out a sharp laugh at his praise, biting your lip as a considerable pressure settled in your gut. All Might’s cadence broke slightly as he continued to push -- he pressed his face against your cheek. “You’re so tight, kitten,” he hissed.

“You’re so… big,” you gasped.

He liked that.

With a groan he bent down for another kiss, ignoring the slight pain in his lower back -- what his front half was experiencing was far more important.

You were breathing, gritting your teeth as the pressure continued to grow. No pain yet but no fullness either. Just a feeling of something forcing you apart.

Then, the thrusting began.

It wasn’t forceful at first. He simply lifted your body off of his cock slightly before guiding you back down, hips rolling up to meet you.

That was a sensation. You cried out, gripping his upper arms as you seesawed between pain and pressure.


“Fuck,” you heard All Might swear, his teeth clenching as he lifted his chin. He was sweating heavily, you could feel it beneath your hands. You understood his reaction wasn’t from exertion.

No, he was working on keeping his urges in check. Resisting the impulse to lunge up and bury himself in you completely. No, that would have ruined everything.

But the thought of a feral All Might rutting into you unhindered sparked a new feeling in your gut. You wondered what you must look like, being split open by such a large cock.

And his cum, would he…
You rolled your hips against him, moaning as he entered you again, always pushing deeper. Forever pushing deeper. There was no end to him, was there?

Stupid girl. You hadn’t told him to put on a condom. The thought hadn’t even crossed your mind, your concentration had been focused on going through with having sex, on the guaranteed pain that you were yielding to. You were thankful though there had been some level of protection, as unintended as it had been. You were on birth control and had been since high school, a way to keep your acne under control.

“A-All--” you tried to sing his name when he tilted you down more into his chest. With that, his dick was pressing against something far too nice to comprehend. You shivered as he continued to rub against the spot, still somehow burrowing deeper into you.

“That’s it,” he purred. “It feels good, doesn’t it?”

You weren’t riding high on the waves of pleasure, it was still mostly uncomfortable, but you were getting somewhere.

At the change of your demeanor, All Might loosened his control a bit.

The thrusting was getting faster. You cried and whimpered, clawing at his body.

“Good girl,” he was saying to you, hips jerking upward. You hissed out in pain that quickly disappeared. “Good girl, look at you. So good. So tight.”

A thumb was tracing your clit. That feeling, combined with the rubbing of his cock against your sweet spot, was driving you insane. You didn’t know how to feel. You weren’t sure if what you were experiencing was pleasurable or uncomfortable.

Then, you came.

You weren’t expecting it, there was no building up to it. One second you were sliding back down on his cock, the next your body was rocking, cunt grasping the large intruder desperately while you panted, head falling back as waves of warmth traveled across your person.

At your distraction, you were pulled down sharply. A cry ripped through you at the burst of hurt in your gut.

Too full. Too full.

“Look at this, sweetheart,” All Might was saying with shallow breaths, swallowing loudly. “Your first time and you took all of me.”

He laughed, rolling his hips so you could better feel your fullness.

“You like that, don’t you?”

And then, you were being lifted again. Lowered. Lifted. Lowered. Up. Down. Up. Down. Your chest and body were bouncing, you were being fucked.

All Might was grunting in front of you, digging against your clit to give you some sort of pleasure while he chased after his.

“Too big,” you whimpered. Too big! Too big too big too big--

He was nursing your bottom lip between his, leaning down to reach it, his breaths coming out in
snorts from his nose.

“So good,” he replied. “Too good.”

You shook your head, eyes closed in pain. You weren’t sure if you were close to another orgasm, but it was clear All Might was. That was fine -- you wanted him to finish. Needed him to finish so you could take a breather.

Minutes later, he growled a warning to you.

“I’m getting close, kitten.”

He waited to hear what you would say, what you would direct him to do.

But you didn’t say anything.

“Where do you want me to finish, kitten?” he went so far as to ask. Not to tease anything out of you -- he wanted to know what you wanted.

You swallowed, leaning your head against his body.

“I-inside,” you murmured.

He shuddered at your preference -- he hadn’t been expecting that.

At seeing the end was near, you felt a second wind pass through you. You were rubbing his pecs, hand dancing over his left breast where you had noticed he was missing a nipple.

He shuddered again.

“You feel so good,” you half-lied (he felt… there). Your hand was trailing lower, grazing his scar. He huffed but was too focused on his release to be angry over your wandering hands. “Oh honey, you’re perfect.”

Fuck.

“Who do you belong to?”

It was a cheesy line from a man too wrapped up in lust. But in the moment, as a girl stuffed with too much cock, you were spurred on by his words.

“You.”

“A name,” he snarled.

He was getting faster.

“All Might,” you cooed.

He grunted, indulging in three quick, shallow thrusts before he impaled you entirely. You could feel his body twitch as he erupted, coating everything in you with him. You were panting, warmth spreading.

Warm.

_So that’s what it felt like. Warm._
As he kept going, his orgasm continuing in heavy bursts, you thought of your next move. Obviously another shower was in your future and, when All Might inevitably pulled out, you had a feeling you’d have to change your sheets too.

Not to mention the mess in the kitchen.

But that wasn’t your immediate concern. Instead you were watching All Might’s face. A sheen coated his body, his neck shifted at every swallow. Breaths coming out in heavy huffs. You were touching him again, hands moving across his torso, even touching his scar in curiosity. *That* brought him out of his mild daze and he looked at you warningly.

You removed your hand.

He stared at you for a bit, interested in see how you were handling everything. You didn’t seem to worse for wear, a little red in the face and sweaty, but there were no tears or groans of regret. Part of him had been expecting that, another emotional outburst from you. You shook your head slightly, a smile tugging on your lips.

He grinned. A large, self-satisfied, smug smile that took up most of his face. Arms encircled your body and his nose brushed yours.

“Told you I would show you who you belong to.”
A Tour

Chapter Notes

An early chapter drop!
Just a heads up -- the first week of October I'll be doing a special ~spooky~ Halloween one-shot chapter! I'm a dork when it comes to holiday specials, so expect them from me. Anyway, I figured it be fitting to have it at Chapter 13 as it is the spookiest of chapter numbers.
What is it about? It doesn't have to do with the story persay, but it does involve Artisan, V!Might, a cat costume and, maybe, a dash of sex pollen :-D
Spooky spooky!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

There was a man beside you on the train who wouldn’t stop sneezing.

Politely, you blessed him the first time. The third time you shared a smile with him as he widened his eyes jokingly before launching into a fourth sneeze. By the sixth you were staring at the floor, wondering if he had some quirk side effect. A normal human shouldn’t sneeze that loudly, si- seven times in a row.

*Would this be your new life?*

You slowly surveyed the train car, gaze trailing over the collection of workers, shoppers and university students that surrounded you. Would you have to take the train every morning from Kamino to Odaiba? It was only an hour either way, hopefully the earlier morning trains wouldn’t be too busy--

*Nope.*

You were getting ahead of yourself, you scolded, reeling in your thoughts. It was only a tour, at most a job interview in disguise, and it was foolish to get your hopes up.

As planned two weeks ago in Korea, you were heading to Odaiba to meet with Doctor Kravitz for a tour of the Odaiba Research Center. After consulting with Yume, you had even sent him a reminder email two days prior -- was the meeting happening as planned?

Kravitz had emailed you back in less than an hour. Yes, you were still on.

“*Can’t wait to see you!*”

Can’t wait to see you!

Can’t wait to see you...

Surely it was just a friendly sign-off, the meaning misconstrued as written words often were. He wasn’t really *excited* about your meeting with him. He was just being nice. He was a busy man after all, a world-renowned scientist working on world renowned projects. You were nothing compared to him. Hell, you were nothing compared to his *interns*. Maybe the saying was something Europeans used in their emails?
It had to just be a friendly sign off.

... Right?

The man started sneezing again and you pulled out your phone as a distraction — the loud trumpeting was getting irritating. You had texted Yume twenty minutes earlier, when you had first boarded the train, confirming you were on your way. She had been fretting, asking what you planned on wearing and reminding you to bring an ID as it would be required for a visitor’s pass. She wanted you to text her the moment your train arrived in Odaiba too, to give her peace of mind that you made it okay. Kravitz worked on a different team in a separate wing of the building, you weren’t going to see her until lunch.

Another text message caught your attention when you backed out your exchange with Yume. A text that had been sent from a contact with the name ‘Buttercup’ the night before.

“I’ll be over tomorrow.”

Yume’s messages had calmed you but Buttercup’s made your skin tingle. It was the first time he had given you notice of his intent on stopping by your apartment. You had mentioned to him your upcoming visit to Odaiba and what it could mean for your career. At the time All Might had appeared disinterested — it made sense considering you were laying on his stomach naked during your conversation — but you wondered if he had made a mental note of the date.

You would probably be in a good mood later when you got home.

Perhaps even eager to indulge him.

You hadn’t responded to the text as he seemed like the type of person who wouldn’t need an answer. Who didn’t want one.

Running your tongue across your slightly-chapped lips, the image of his grinning face filled your mind. The night you flew in from Korea was the last time you had seen him. When he had been hopped up on adrenaline after winning his ‘fight’ with Edgeshot, obviously keen to see you after your agonizingly long trip.

The next day you learned his spat with Edgeshot hadn’t been as… intense as he made it seem. It was only a tussle that ended almost as quickly as it began. The hero was already out of the hospital and back to patrolling the streets, not looking any worse for wear.

You fucked.

Internally you groaned at your giddiness, scratching at your chin as your mind replayed the events of that night for what had to have been the millionth time. The feeling of his hands, his thrusting knocking into your body, sweat on his chest, scar, the ease you had settled into when the moment ended. For someone who had been fucked for the first time by a villain, you didn’t feel any different. Even the initial soreness was gone.

You were the same person. Nothing had changed.

Well, maybe All Might was more on your mind than usual. After he finished, he had stroked your back for a bit, leaving you settled against his chest as he murmured some unexpectedly soft praises. You did well, you surprised him, you were tight.

The only harsh words he had was for your lack of thought on protection.
“You don’t let someone finish inside you, stupid girl,” he snapped, hand journeying up your spine to settle at the back of your neck, scratching lightly before gripping. “Unless you’re looking to raise someone’s little rat.”

“I’m on birth control,” you muttered back, nuzzling against him, fully prepared to fall asleep. He was warm, the rising and falling of his chest hypnotizing. He grumbled beneath you. His hand remained.

“I know,” he said sharply. “I found where you keep it.”

“Then why didn’t you say anything, hm? You could have spoken up. You could have put on a condom.”

With a deep sigh, he pushed you off of him, forcing you back on the bed as he got up to clean himself. You frowned, gesturing for him to return to you when he looked over his shoulder.

“I didn’t want to.”

He left after that, which is the only thing from that night that broke your heart. You had tried to goad him into coming back to your bed and to fall asleep with you.

He said he had plans, that he couldn’t.

God, you had started fantasizing about sleeping next to him.

How pathetic was that?

Well if he was showing up again later, you were going to drag him into a conversation about your concerns. Bring up his constant leaving -- the first bullet point in a laundry list of other topics you wanted to discuss. Other subjects included the damage he kept leaving in his wake, the bruises from the bites he subjected you to.

His name.

It was time, you thought to yourself as the train slowed, approaching the midway stop. It was time for him to know your name. Was it odd that both of you just went by ‘professional’ monikers? Not really. The pseudonyms you used were just as good as a regular name -- a social acceptance inspired by hero culture.

It seemed like a small, personal sign of goodwill you could extend to him. Giving him your name. It was yours, sure. But maybe he could borrow it. Use it. Treasure it.

And maybe, he’d respond in kind. Share with you such a personal thing.

By the end of the night, you might have something new to call All Might, besides Buttercup and Asshole.

The giddiness was back.

You unlocked your phone, staring at All Might’s message.

“I’ll be over tomorrow.”

You were going to have sex again, weren’t you?

You itched at your nose with your shoulder.
It was a failed attempt to hide the smile that threatened to spill out.

Odaiba Research’s building was quite the sight. It was in the shape of a great horseshoe, about five stories high, and seemed to be made entirely from glass. A symbolic design, maybe, as if the lab was trying to tell the world they had nothing to hide. That they valued transparency.

Large television screens in the lobby were tuned to various 24-hour news stations in Japanese and English. Two secretaries manned the large, curved front desk, both smiling when you approached. After informing them who you were and the reason for your visit -- a meeting with Doctor Kravitz -- you handed over your ID and watched as they keyed your information into their computer. Seconds later, a visitor badge on a lanyard was handed over.

Take a seat, you were told. Doctor Kravitz would be up shortly.

It wasn’t really ‘shortly.’ You sat on a massive sectional, boredly watching the ‘ongoing’ breaking news story about considerable flooding in Northern Japan for about twenty minutes before you heard your name being called out.

Kravitz was walking toward you, looking like a scientist straight from a stock photo. His white lab coat billowing behind him, glasses glinting in the overhead lights -- he shook your hand when he approached before faltering and giving a few cursory bows.

“Sorry,” he apologized. “I’m still getting used to Japanese etiquette.”

“No, no, no!” You gushed, waving away his concern with too-powerful hand movements. “You’re doing fine!”

He smiled at that, extending an arm to guide you out of the lobby and through the turnstiles. The next bit of security you passed was an elevator that required a badge scan to use.

“I hope the ride in wasn’t too bad,” Kravitz said as polite chitchat, waiting for the elevator to arrive. “Did you drive or take the train…?”

“Train,” you said with a shrug. “And it wasn’t bad at all.”

The fourth floor was where you were headed -- you watched him scan his badge before jabbing at the number, rocking on your heels slightly as you waited for the doors to close. When they did, he visibly relaxed.

“I’m really glad you were able to make it in,” he said. “I have a whole tour planned out for you -- the works. We’ll start in the research and design department before we’ll head down to the innovation lab. Then I’ll show you where the real magic happens…” His eyes flashed behind his glasses as he leaned in. “We have a subterranean floor dedicated to testing. We’ll break for lunch and then when you get back, I’ll show you my team.”

“That all sounds amazing!” you chirped.

“You haven’t been here before, have you?” he asked.

“No, this is my first time here.”

“You’re in luck!” He pointed at his chest. “I’m the best tour guide this place has!”

And so, your tour began.
Awkwardly you shuffled behind the good doctor as he prattled on facts and figures that you didn’t really care about. The board had spent such-and-such amount of money to haul in the land to extend Odaiba’s manmade island in order to build the lab. It had such-and-such square meters of space -- five floors combined with two subterranean levels. Sixteen quirk-related accolades had been awarded to various teams within the past year, they had two Nobel Quirk Prize recipients on staff.

They were a support juggernaut. Only three others labs were in direct competition with them -- one was in Palo Alto, California in the United States, another in London and a third in Moscow.

“Everyone else is just too small,” he explained, before pausing in the hallway, staring at a large door. “You know, why don’t we do the innovation lab first…”

He scanned his badge again and held the glass door open for you to enter first. Immediately you were struck by a wall of chaotic noise that been dampened considerably -- the open hallway had been serenely quiet compared to… this.

It was an open floor plan, the room you had entered. Well, room was an understatement -- it was about as large as a banquet hall, with no dividers. Just a massive, open space. Desks and small cubicles were clumped in the center of the room, with wheeling whiteboards stationed at various points. Most were decorated with scribbles and the smeared remnants of previous work. You noticed design plans and mock-ups were taped everywhere -- on the walls, on cubicle walls, on windows, on the backs of the whiteboards.

A mechanical something whizzed by you, a buzzing uncomfortably close to your ear. You flinched and ducked down, turning your head to see a strange-looking bird fluttering around the room.

That was no living creature.

But the noise originated from the dozens of people who worked in the room. Some were banded together, huddled around whiteboards as they babbled ideas at one another. Others were on the phone, either pacing the room or at their desk, fingers stuffed in their ears as they concentrated on listening to the voice on the other end.

Finally, there were the roamers -- people talking as they walked the perimeter of the room in hordes, as if they were passing time in some kind of prison yard.

One man near you had his feet on up his desk, strumming along to an invisible guitar as he listened to music. During a particularly passionate rift, he froze before pushing himself away from his desk with all his might, rolling his chair over to a whiteboard and scribbling away furiously.

“This is the innovation lab,” Kravitz said, leading you deeper into the pandemonium. “These are the minds that are dreaming up the support technology of tomorrow.”

Not even your high school support labs had dissolved into such a state -- perhaps it was because you had instructors overseeing everything. Their presence and guidance prevented a full ‘Lord of the Flies’ situation from happening.

You desperately tried to hide the curl of your lip as you watched a man dump an entire pot of coffee into a small office trash can.

“I know,” he said, lowering his voice after catching the look that flashed across your face. You hadn’t hid it very well. “I know what it can… look like to an outsider. It’s mayhem but it’s a controlled mayhem. There are about nine different teams working concurrently on ideas in here, sharing information. It was in this room that Verdwyn was dreamt up before it was brought to the
You weren’t the most organized person in the world but the state of Odaiba’s innovation lab was making your skin crawl with anxiety. You hoped Kravitz had just wanted to stop in for a peek but those dreams were dashed when he waved over a slim brunette man.

He name was Hartwig. He was from Germany and worked at Odaiba as part of the international scientist exchange program.

“He specialty is rubbers,” Kravitz explained while you nodded politely. He waited but, when it became obvious you weren’t grasping why he brought Hartwig over, the doctor coughed. “I spoke to Hartwig at length about your… shoe project.”

The boots!

Your eyes widened and suddenly you were very interested in the German standing in front of you.

“You are earth shoe girl?” Hartwig asked, his accent thick and his Japanese broken. “I told Kravitz answer, did I?”

Your eyes flickered to your companion who was nodding along.

“That’s right, Hartwig did have a wonderful suggestion. Did you happen to print out… ?”

The German nodded, disappearing back to his desk before returning with several sheets of paper. You were surprised to see an email exchange where several things had been redacted with a thick, black marker.

One word was circled in red -- you furrowed your brows when you saw it. Your brain couldn’t comprehend a way to say it.

Erdbewegung?

“This,” Kravitz explained, finger jabbing at the paper, “Is a German creation that Hartwig here knew of. A geokinetic elastomer that would be perfect for the boots you are working on. Mold this as a sole and the wearer will have no problem moving earth.”

You smiled tightly, thanking Hartwig for his assistance, but you felt no excitement.

A type of rubber you had never heard of? You knew it was going to be either hard to come by or very expensive -- your gut told you it would be both. And if it was too pricey, there was no way you could keep your work at a reasonable commission price.

Still, Kravitz had gone out of his way to help you. The gesture meant a lot and you continued with your thanks.

“Do not worry,” Hartwig said, solemn and serious. “It was a pleasure to assist.”

The conversation didn’t last long after that -- Hartwig roughly explained the basic mechanics of the rubber before Kravitz looked at his watch and sighed.

“We have to get a move on and check out research and development,” he explained as Hartwig nodded. “How long do you have left with us, Hartwig? For your exchange?”

“Three months,” he said with a rigid nod of his head.
“Excited to go back to Germany?” Kravitz asked, his grin getting larger. “Return to German efficiency?”

At that question, the man deflated and looked to have aged about five years. He was shaking his head wearily as he closed his eyes.

“You have no idea.”

The research and design department was much more relaxed and controlled. They also sat in a large room, but cubicles took up most of the space. Kravitz explained they were the department who took the foundation the innovation lab dreamt up and built on it.

“I should explain -- the minds of the innovation lab don’t just pick an idea out of thin air,” Kravitz said as you both walked between cubicles, miming plucking something from above his head. “The projects they create have a strong basis. They’ll list basic ways the… idea can be accomplished. The workers here reaffirm those ideas and refine them. Or, they dismiss them.”

Surprisingly, you didn’t spend much time in that department. In fact, he didn’t bring you around to talk with anyone else on the upper floors. You didn’t particularly mind, being corralled into conversations was awkward as you mostly stood off to the side, waiting to be spoken to.

There were other doors and openings you passed on the journey you were being led on. Sometimes he would point out who worked where -- that room was for design, that door led to software development.

“Each floor has a specific purpose,” he explained. “The top two floors or for the what’s, the next two floors are the who’s and the ground floor is administration, mostly.”

“The who’s?” you repeated as a question.

“In order to work with quirks, we have to understand how quirks operate. So we study them -- which does lend itself to support. Human tissue is sometimes used in the development of fabrics and other items.”

Ah. That made sense.

Elevators located on the other side of the building were apparently your destination. As you waited again, Kravitz continued babbling his encyclopedic knowledge of the lab. It was semi-public, it had a board of directors but the government had some say in certain areas of the company.

The financials weren't that interesting -- you nodded along blindly, mind humming with boredom and eventually relief when the elevator arrived.

“We have a cafeteria on-site,” the doctor said. “But I believe your friend Yume wanted to take you out to eat? VenusFort is quite the tourist draw to Odaiba -- I’m sure there’s a nice waterfront restaurant that will have some seats open for you.”

“She already made a reservation,” you confirmed. “A sushi place…” You glanced at him out of the corner of your eye, he was typing away on his phone. “Are you not joining us?”

“Oh, I don’t have the time to take lunch,” he said dismissively. You winced, looking away, afraid on how taking a meal made you look to him. “But I’ll be available when you get back. Just have Yume bring you to my office. She knows where it is.”
A man behind a security desk was there when the elevator doors opened. He appeared to know Kravitz, giving him a small nod of acknowledgment. But his focus settled on you. While Kravitz explained your visit to the security officer, you were forced to fill out an arrival log.

“Cell phone use, photography and/or video recording equipment is prohibited,” the man droned when you handed back the filled out papers. “Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll keep an eye on her,” Kravitz affirmed with a friendly wink. The man didn’t appear concerned and buzzed you through a large metal door.

“Wow.”

It was something straight out of a comic book, your eyes opened in professional wonder as you took in what appeared to be a large indoor training area. You were in some kind of seating platform, like bleachers overlooking a pool. There were steps to your left that led down somewhere but Kravitz was walking toward the railing.

The observation area you were in overlooked a somewhat large expanse dotted with what looked like stacks of concrete blocks. A woman was on the field, standing in the center and kicking her legs out for a quick stretch-- it took you a second to realize that one of her legs was not like the other. She was wearing a prosthetic.

“This is where we do our testing,” Kravitz explained. “Well, initial testing. We have outdoor areas much larger than this where we can have battle bots and flight testing. But here we can bring a hero for a quick try-out to make sure everything is functioning properly.”

“Alright, whenever you’re ready!” a hidden voice called out. You noticed a crowd of scientists standing at the edge of the ‘field,’ looking on as the woman nodded. She ran a few steps forward before raising her prosthetic and slamming it down on the first pillar of concrete.

It shattered and crumbled on impact, falling away completely as her leg continued its downward trajectory. She repeated the same move for the remaining stacks of blocks -- a running approach followed by a strong kick down. And, like before, each tower would be reduced to rubble.

“Well, how does it feel?” a man asked, his team approaching the woman when everything they had set up had been destroyed. She was kicking her leg back and forth, a slight grimace on her face.

“It pinches,” she said. “Especially during the upward motion.”

The man nodded, muttering something to a colleague who was writing down something on a clipboard. You assumed it was feedback.

“But other than the discomfort,” the woman continued. “It feels good. It’s light -- much lighter than the one I have now.”

“That’s Ami,” Kravitz explained, his voice shaking you from your obvious staring. “Hero name Punt. She lost her leg years ago and has been using prosthetics we’ve designed for her. She’s due for an upgrade I believe -- I worked with her when I first transferred here. Before I moved to costume and support development.”

“How long have you been here?” you asked.

“Ten years, I believe. Might be longer, I have a congratulatory pin somewhere on my desk,” he said.
with a laugh.

“And before that?”

“I’m from England if you couldn’t tell. But I worked at a lab in Dublin.” His eyes flashed to yours. “A… start-up lab.”

Start-up…

There was something off about the way he dropped that personal little nugget of information about himself. You stared at him questioningly but he had changed the subject and was detailing the strength of the testing area, how sturdy and safe it was. There was no danger of collapse.

Before you left to meet with Yume in the lobby for lunch, Kravitz took you back upstairs to a small employee lounge where coffee machines were set up.

“There are some… things I want to talk about,” he said, as you both watched the dark liquid sputter into a paper cup. You glanced over at him but he didn’t move his gaze from the coffee machine. “Things that would be best discussed in private.”

You swallowed.

Whether Doctor Kravitz meant to come off as ominous as he sounded was up for debate, but the… warning, if that’s what you wanted to call it, did hang over you. The thought of returning to Odaiba almost filled you with dread. What could he want to talk to you about?

You hadn’t done anything.

Unless…

Yume was chattering away excitedly, trying to pick and pry about all the things you had seen already. You did your best to swallow your worries and instead play the part of the excited visitor. But she sensed your downward swinging mood because she was Yume and had been sent to Earth to be your second mother.

“Don’t worry,” she tried to console. “You’re doing great! There’s no reason to be nervous, I’m sure you’re making a good impression.”

Ah, it seemed she had misunderstood what the cause of your concern was. You sighed, deciding to play into it.

“I just think… I don’t know, I don’t think I’m smart enough for him.”

“If you weren’t smart enough, he wouldn’t have asked you to visit,” she said. “So don’t dwell on it and eat your food.”

Kravitz was correct in saying Yume knew where his office was. When you arrived back at the lab after lunch, she led you there.

It was sequestered away from everything, on the fourth floor at the far end of the building. When you entered, you got the sense that Kravitz was important. Sure, you already knew that, but his office just solidified that thought. It was a corner one, windows composing two walls. His workspace was modern but still radiated the thick sturdiness of authority.

Most strikingly of all, it was neat. Like, minimalism-level neat.
Yume had walked with you, stopping in for a quick chat with the doctor about how nice lunch had been and to get his take on how the tour had gone. You stood silently, the movements of your mouth feeling too loud as you looked between your friend and your idol.

When she started walking off, waving and talking about the work she had to get to, you wanted to pull her back to your side. To keep her there as a comfort. But the door closed loudly behind her and you were left alone.

“Take a seat!” Kravitz said, gesturing to the small, plain chairs across from him.

You did as you were told.

“So,” he said, hands patting his desk. “What do you think?”

“You answered truthfully, looking over your shoulder as if you could see all the work going on behind you. “I’ve never seen anything like it. This is… whew. The best.”

“I’ve asked about you.”

You eyed Kravitz, watching him lean back in his chair and look off in thought.

“I talked to Yume to get an idea of your background, to see what you can do. Those plans you sent me during the Korean conference were original. I know because I checked. And I also checked online to see what press releases I could find where you name was mentioned. To see any lab announcements you were included in. You know what I found?”

Your throat was dry.

You wanted to leave.

“Not. One. Thing.”

To drive home the point, he punctuated each word by tapping his finger on his desk.

You had been found out.

“I found it strange that you and your good friend could work in the same field, yet she wasn’t able to tell me the name of the lab you worked at. So I went out and looked for anything I could find about a Kamino support lab start-up. But I didn’t find anything. Nothing.”

Why? Why was he putting in so much effort? Why not just write you off as a liar and be done with it. Why twist the knife?

Humiliation.

‘Speak up,’ you mind roared. ‘Stop him. Stick up for yourself. He’s not your boss. You don’t owe him anything.’

True.

But he could also out you.
Not just to Yume.

The authorities were a very real threat.

“I found all this out last week,” he said, holding your deer-in-headlights stare. “And I still brought you in. Do you know why?”

He waited for you to shake your head or speak up -- to do something.

You just sat there.

He sighed.

“When I was a much younger man, I got my scientific start assisting a man who made support items for…” he shifted his jaw in thought. “Non-heroes.”

You blinked.

“That man was arrested and I barely got away.” He was looking at you squarely. “But am I wrong in my belief? What you do, what you’ve been doing, it’s work outside a proper lab, correct?”

Common sense told you not to admit to anything. You didn’t know the guy, you weren’t sure of his motivations.

But you found yourself slowly nodding. Affirming without doing it vocally. He sighed deeply.

“I want to help you.”

You blinked.

“You’re smart. I know you’re wasting your talent. And I want to help you. I see a little bit of myself in you, I suppose.” He was smiling in a disarming kind of way. At least, he tried to be disarming. Your body was still wound tightly, too nervous to be put at ease by something as frivolous as a smile.

He lost the smile.

“I can’t offer you a job,” he admitted and something in you crumbled. Although you had told yourself to be realistic -- a job at a lab like this wasn’t in your future -- hearing the truth still stung and the hidden hope you had stashed away, broke. “But I can offer you an apprenticeship.”

Apprenticeship?

“Not quite an intern but not quite an employee,” he admitted. “You’ll get salary and benefits but it’s on a fixed time period -- two years. Assuming you continue to drive such great ideas, a job should be waiting for you. But for now… for now, it’s the best I can do.”

You scratched your forehead, proper thought returning to you.

An apprenticeship was his offer? Not that it was a bad offer, it’s just--

“I don’t know,” you said, finally speaking up. You looked at him warily, concerned police officers were going to bust down the door and arrest you. That it was all a sting. “I’d have to give up… just for an apprenticeship.”

“It’s a way out,” he said plainly. “I’m giving you -- gifting you -- a path to a more… honorable
career. Putting legitimacy back in your name. Providing you access to tools and materials you can’t get on your own. Speaking of which…”

He leaned over on his chair, reaching for a banker’s box he had sitting on the floor, plopping it on the desk. He slid it toward you.

“A gift of goodwill.”

A block of something was inside.

Rubber.

Your tongue trailed over your bottom lip as you remained standing, still peering into the cardboard box.

“I can’t--”

“Don’t insult me,” he said, lightly knocking the box closer to you.

It worried you that he was just going to… give it to you, this undoubtedly expensive material. A power imbalance was springing but you didn’t want to recognize it. What you wanted to see was someone much older and wiser than you helping you out because you had something special.

You were special.

“I…” you swallowed. “I have to think about it, Doctor Kravitz. There’s a lot of things I would need to take care of. Work I would have to finish. People I would have to contact.”

You sounded as lame as you felt but Kravitz didn’t seem to mind. The fact you hadn’t outright rejected the offer was a good sign.

“Take a week, mull it over.” Bright eyes were on yours after you placed the lid back on the box, returning to the seat. “You need to start thinking about the long-term, though. Is… this what you plan on doing the rest of your life? Not living up to your potential? You have to realize that, the more time that passes, the bigger the hole you dug yourself into gets. When the orders stop, then what are you going to do? What work could you show for it?”

Long-term plans.

Didn’t Kravitz understand you feared making long-term plans?

No, you kept yourself firmly in the present.

The offer weighed on you long after you left his office to meet his team, standing dumbly as people you wouldn’t recall rattled off names you wouldn’t remember. He showed you more pieces of his magic invisible-making fabric, as well as a preview of Endeavor’s upcoming costume.

Your thoughts were too convoluted to think properly. You just followed along, smiling and nodded with unfocused eyes.

In a perfect world, you would have had someone to bounce ideas off of. Someone you could talk to express your fears and concerns. But the people you knew didn’t know the ‘secret’ life you led or -- in the case of one particular gentleman -- probably wouldn’t care.

No, you were alone in your war of thoughts.
It wasn’t a man sneezing on the train ride home that grated on your nerves. It was too-loud music coming from the headphones of the teenager sitting beside you. What you wanted was silence. What you got was noise.

You looked down at the box with the hunk of rubber in it, tracing the crisp perimeter of it with your eyes.

An apprenticeship.

It’s what you deserved, truthfully. Realistically. You would have all the benefits of a full-time employee without the… acknowledgment that went along with it.

*But what did you have now?*

You had an apartment. A lab space you rented.

And that was about it. Your savings was laughable and was beginning to shrink as you had hit a lull in your commissions. Soon the panic of no money would set in, further compounding the daily stress you faced by just *existing*.

‘*Oh no,*’ you thought with a groan, leaning your head back on the train window behind you. Your were being pulled into that whirlpool of self-doubt again. Strangely enough, you could envision All Might standing above your huddled body, rolling his eyes at your incoming pathetic emotional outburst.

He’d call you crazy. Just hours ago you were doing backflips over the idea of being offered a job. And you *had* been offered one. Why couldn’t you just accept it? Obviously, it’s what you wanted.

Ah, that’s right, All Might was due to come over that night. He would witness another breakdown firsthand. Of course, you’d ruin what was supposed to be a nice night. That was something you did.

But maybe he’d take care of you again. Squeeze your shoulders. Rub your back.

It was amazing that such destructive hands could have such a nice touch.

*You know the answer already.*

The thought made you pause.

You knew the answer?

*You have no commissions on the horizon and your money is running low. What’s really holding you back? Nothing.*

That’s not true! Personal freedom, setting your own hours, a sense of--

*Nothing. Nothing was holding you back.*

Nothing.

Nothing was holding you back.

These… barriers were minor. Molehills you were transforming into mountains because it suited your narrative. It would be idiotic for you to turn down a decent job at an amazing lab where you would earn decent money and gain experience.
You were pulling out your cellphone, opening your email to find a message that had been received two days ago.

As you suspected, an office number was listed on Kravitz’s email signature. It only took a click for your phone to start ringing in your ear.

The call went to voicemail. Closing your eyes, you inhaled deeply as you listened to Kravitz’s recorded voice rattle off his greeting. A beep sounded.

A hello, a quick clarification who was calling, what day it was, what time it was.


“I was thinking about our conversation earlier today,” you said. “And I think you’re right -- I need to make better long-term plans. If the offer still stands, I’d like to accept that apprenticeship.”

You told him you’d send a follow-up email. You thanked him for his offer and time.

The voicemail was only a few seconds long. When you hung up, you tugged down the hem of your skirt, biting the inside of your cheek. The nerves were still there, but they had been joined by another feeling. One of relief.

You had a job.

Chapter End Notes

Again, thank you for all that you do! Know that I love you and I hope you've been sleeping and eating well.
Forever sending ~good vibes~ your way.
Apparently, you had developed a temporary fix for your broken door--

A bungee cord.

All Might strummed the cord, watching it tightly thrum and jingle against the metal of the dented door. You had looped it through the hole where your doorknob should have rested -- one end was hooked around the outdoor light adjacent to your door. The other end, he assumed, was hooked on something inside of your house.

There was nothing stacked against your door when he unhooked the bungee cord, as he expected. Instead, the door lazily swung open, as if inviting him to plunder your house.

You had been sitting on the couch, eyes wide with fear when you realized the door was opening. But your face calmed after seeing who had been the one to breach your sanctum.

“You haven’t gotten it fixed?” All Might growled, walking inside. With a sigh you stood, assuming the villain wouldn’t know how to close the door properly with your setup.

“I have to put in a maintenance request,” you mumbled, shooting him an unhappy glance. “And the maintenance around here is slow.”

“Your door doesn’t close.”

“I’m aware,” you answered. “If only someone hadn’t kicked it down.”

It wasn’t an ideal start to his visit, the conversation.

“We really need to talk about you breaking my things.”

No, this was not ideal at all.

“You’re going to give me a headache,” All Might complained, loosening the laces of his boots before kicking them off. You watched him lumber over to your couch, plopping himself on it, the cheap furniture complaining and sagging beneath him.

“The door, my bed frame, clothes -- All Might, this stuff adds up! I’m not rich, every time you break something of mine, you’re just screwing me over!”

Immediately you regretted your choice of words. His head snapped toward you, smile ravenous.

“What’s this about screwing you?”

“I mean it,” Your body was slumped, the defeat obvious. “You’re starting to become a financial burden!”

“Fine,” All Might said with a snort and a wave. “I’ll take care of it.”

“What does that mean--”
“I’ll. Handle. It.”

The statement was made with finality but you weren’t done.

“And my pillow--”

All Might watched you circle from behind the couch to stand in front of him, blocking his vision to the television. The pillow. Your pillow. The one you had thrown at him. The one he took.

He liked that pillow.

It was where it belonged, on his bed, perfectly unharmed.

But you didn’t know that.

“Your pillow is gone,” he said dismissively. “I threw it away.”

“You better not have thrown my pillow away.”

“I told you I was going to fuck it. I did. And I threw it in the trash.”

You looked momentarily horrified but you caught yourself, eyeing him suspiciously. You would have expected him to have a more… devious reaction to your question, if he really had ruined it in such a way. That he would have a sense of excitement as he regaled all the dirty details. You had no qualms stressing the importance the inanimate object had to you...

You didn’t believe him.

“No, I need my pillow back--”

All Might squeezed the bridge of his nose before he lunged at you, grasping your hips and pulling you toward him as he fell back on the couch. Again the furniture groaned at his sudden weight while you settled on his lap.

“Is that your plan for the night, to bitch? You should have told me, I wouldn’t have come.”

“I’m actually in a very good mood,” you retorted, indignant. “You were the one who came in and ruined everything.”

“Oh? Why are you in such a good mood?”

A smirk made its way to his lips as he dug your hips harder against his crotch. He expected you to say something about him visiting, maybe mentioning your… appreciation over the fact he had texted you beforehand.

You were smiling down at him.

“Well…” you shifted. “I was offered a job today.”

Job?

A job.


The smile fell off your face. You assumed he had remembered about your lab trip, why else had he
said chosen *this* particular night to visit?

“I was in Tokyo today,” you said slowly, hoping to jog his memory. You had told him about the lab tour, hadn’t you? “Meeting with the doctor I met in South Korea about possible support lab work. The lab that works with Endeavor…?”

You trailed off and could have sworn something did spark in his face, but it quickly disappeared.

“You’re working… at a hero lab.”

He stood, callously unconcerned when you fell off his lap, nearly landing in a heap on the floor. Luckily, you caught yourself at the last second, glaring at your inconsiderate houseguest while he made his way into the kitchen.

“Hero lab,” he grumbled to himself, grabbing your kettle, apparently making himself at home and brewing some tea.

“Yes, a hero lab,” you reaffirmed, having followed him. “An actual job. I was offered an apprenticeship and I accepted it.”

“What, do you want to go running after heroes now?” he snapped over his shoulder.

“No, I’m running after a *job*. A *job* that will pay me a decent salary so that I don’t have to go dip into my savings to replace all the things of mine that have been broken!”

He slammed the water-filled kettle back on the counter, turning the power on as he turned to face you.

But he didn’t say anything.

Silence.

“It’s a good lab,” you said, speaking up, looking at him earnestly. “It’s stable. Good money doing work I like. It has nothing to do with heroes.”

*It has nothing to do with you.*

He wanted to say something but he wasn’t quite sure what to say.

So he stood and glared, listening to the kettle as it bubbled to a boil behind him.

There was an obvious reason he didn’t want you working at a hero lab, one he refused to admit to.

But you had an idea of what it was.

Your ire toward him faded.

“What’s wrong?” you asked with a sigh, eyeing his prominent frown.

He refused to answer you, uttering a soft ‘tch’ as he turned his head, his irritation clearly in danger of being exacerbated by your prying.

He was upset, you realized, battering down a dangerous smile. Slowly but surely, you were becoming more aware of his little… quirks, for lack of a better term. Small cracks in his personality that revealed his true thoughts.
Like *this* -- his scowl and obvious annoyance. Those emotions were a result of something, not just because he was All Might and that’s what his behavior defaulted to. No, he was annoyed because you were going to be working with heroes. What you weren’t quite sure of was if that annoyance stemmed from jealousy -- was he *jealous* that you’d be spending most of your days working with his perceived ‘enemies’?

For any other person, you would have believed your suspicions rang true.

But All Might was not a normal person.

Rather than unintentionally dig a hole you might not be able to get out of, in case you were completely wrong, you decided it was best to calm him down, to diffuse rather than goad.

You knew from experience he had short fuse when he was in a poor mood. And you didn’t want to risk it on what should be a good night.

*Stroke his ego.*

“You don’t think I’ll start liking heroes more than you, do you?” A smile was playing on your face and walking toward him, slight saunter, voice soft though you couldn’t prevent humor from dancing in it. “Like they could really hold a candle to *you*. To All Might?”

Surprised, his head turned back in your direction, frown loosening. You stopped just short of touching him -- gaze trailing over the great expanse of his chest before returning to his face.

You had All Might’s attention.

“You shouldn’t worry so much!” you said brightly, dropping your bedroom persona as you placed your hands on his torso, tapping the rigid muscles there. He was still staring. “Who cares if I start working at a real lab? It won’t impact you in the slightest! In fact, it’ll probably be beneficial to you!”

You moved to smooth the nonexistent wrinkles of his too-tight shirt.

“I’ll be much happier,” you said. “I won’t be worrying about money so much. My nights will still be free -- though there’s some *outside* work I will still have to finish. Besides, it’s not like you visit me during the day, anyway. I’ll still be *around*.”

You were raising your hands up, gesturing him to lean down toward you.

To your genuine surprise, he did as you asked almost immediately. Though his face was still impassive, his frown was almost entirely gone.

That was a good sign, right?

You flattened his hair, stroking his forehead as you pushed back a couple odd flyaways from the frame of his face. Eventually, your hands came to a rest on either side of his head, thumbs smoothing down bristled brows.

You shifted your jaw. A thought was on your mind but you weren’t sure if you were brave enough to speak it.

*Just say it.*

“You know…” you paused, unsure how he’d take your oncoming admission -- your nerves were screaming at you to pump the brakes, *not* to own up to anything. What if you ruined everything? But
the moment was right and the confession was pushing against your senses, hurtling toward becoming a borderline compulsion.

“You know I’d never do… I’d never do anything to hurt you, right?” you finally blurted out, the avalanche starting.

He went still.

You swallowed, wanting desperately to tear yourself away from him and laugh off your emotional openness. But a part of you wanted to reaffirm to the villain that, well… you liked him. Despite all the frustration and aggravation he lodged at you constantly, there was just something about him that you had grown attached to.

And it wasn’t anything carnal.

“I know the lab works with Endeavor…” You lowered your hands so your thumbs were stroking his cheeks instead of his brows, hands cupping his face “And a bunch of other heroes. But I would never sell you out or mention you. I just want you to know that, okay?”

He didn’t answer and you weren’t sure how to take his lack of response. Was he pissed? Disgusted? Were you coming off as too much? It was your turn to frown and your gaze flickered focus between the shadows of eyes, silently asking him to give you something.

Nothing.

Fuck it.

You threw your arms around his neck.

“Don’t assume the worst of me!” you murmured, nuzzling against the side of his head, hot breath striking his ear. “I like you too much, honey bunny.”

It was undeniable. You felt his body vibrate as he released shaky, unexpected exhale.

He had shuddered.

No...

There was no way.

All Might--

You were pulling away, confused, looking for some kind of explanation to his reaction. Surely the great All Might, Japan’s demon of discord, hadn’t just shuddered at your sweet-talk.

“Did you--”

You stopped your question at seeing his face. His jaw was visibly clenching, nostrils flaring, as glared at you.

Now that reaction, that made sense -- that was what you expected from All Might.

He knew he had been caught.

“Shut up,” he snarled, pushing in toward you, thick arm bracing your backside when you stumbled backward. He was lifting you off the ground and you were laughing.
Clearly, this was how All Might handled embarrassment — by falling into a rage. Common sense told you laughter would only worsen the situation, but you couldn’t help it.

He was pressing you against your kitchen wall, his teeth bared inches away from your face. He expected you to shy away from him and his anger, not reach out to run your fingers along the curve of his chin.

“What was it?” you cooed at him, drunk off his chagrin. “What did you like?”

A hand was placed at your throat but there was no pressure, its only purpose was to tilt your face up toward his and prevent your head from moving.

“That I like you?” you continued, eyes dancing as he leaned in closer.

He bit your lips, tugging at them as he applied the *slightest* pressure to your throat. He released his teeth so he could properly align his mouth with yours, to start an actual kiss—

But he didn’t do it fast enough.

“Was it… *honey bunny*?”

Hesitation.

You pulled away from his hand so you could throw your head back to properly handle the raucous laughter rocking your body.

*Honey bunny.*

No. No there was no way.

Honey bunny!

Not All Might. It was…

No.

*Impossible.*

But it was possible. Clearly, it was possible. In fact, he essentially confirmed it when he released a loud growl and attacked your mouth, trying to get you to shut up.

So it wasn’t ‘Master’ or ‘Sir’ that sparked a fire in the villain’s gut — something that seemed almost a guarantee for a baddie with such an ego. Nothing that implied his power or was demeaning for you to utter.

No.

It was honey bunny.

Or a combination of *everything.*

“If you don’t stop…” He was snarling a warning at you, incensed by your cheek. But the moment was too good. You’d gladly face the consequences in order to keep the memory.

“You don’t like it?” you asked, holding his face in your hands before pressing a series of quick kisses against his lips and chin.
Your actions were snagging and slowing the thoughts in his already addled brain -- you could almost see the turning of the gears as he tried to determine an appropriate response.

There was no doubt by that point.

_Honey bunny!_

But then it was over. Your influence was lost, your snag undone. Realization, coupled with recognition, returned to All Might. The dumbfound fell away, a cruel smile taking its place as he easily slid back into his usual bluster.

He would not backtrack, he would not try and play off his bewilderment.

He’d push forward.

All Might tilted his head to the side, peering down at you like a Tyrannosaur eyeing something worth eating.

An electric blue eye had you in its sight.

“Darling,” he purred, voice dangerous molasses. “That was a mistake.”

And then, you were tossed over his shoulder.

Your laughter ebbed away into giddy apprehension, a feeling that only grew when you were tossed down onto your still-broken bed -- All Might’s figure ever imposing as he loomed above you. Again, you reached up toward him but he smacked your hands away, done with falling into your little… _tricks_.

“Will you take your shirt off?”

_God dammit._

“Stop talking,” he growled, kneeling and leaning over you.

“Please?”

He snorted a sharp laugh, glaring at your face as he dug an arm under your back, hoisting your body against his chest. The other braced against the mattress.

“I really want--”

You were silenced by his mouth.

As you suspected, it was a bruising kind of kiss -- lips and teeth clamped against you, leaving you to wince and instinctively flinch away from the hurt. But he had you pressed tightly against him in a grip that you weren’t getting out of.

He was displeased with you and was making it known.

Though obviously, he wasn’t mad enough to _leave._

Large fingers began fumbling with the buttons of your blouse and you tried to pull away, afraid of what he could do to your nice shirt. He released your mouth -- your lips already felt heavy and swollen -- as your hands brushed against his to take their place.
Pleased, he lowered you on the bed, sitting back on his knees as he watched your fingers work to unfasten each button, blouse falling more open the lower you traveled on your torso. Unfortunately, he was not rewarded with a peek of flesh or your bra -- beneath your blouse was another shirt, a camisole you had worn due to the lightness of the fabric. Impatience nipped at the back of his neck; he had to smother the urge just to tear everything of you.

Once your blouse was safely removed from your body and tossed aside, he jumped in to assist, quickly tugging your cami off. Finally, he mashed his hands against your contained chest, face glinting with approval as he took in the sight of the black lace bra you had worn beneath your layers.

You were going to mention his shirt again but he was pushing you back, his hand trailing up your stocking leg.

“I do like the outfit, sweetheart,” he said. Black bra, black skirt and black stockings -- solid choices. His hand stopped beneath your skirt, settling against your hip. “You don’t look so... homeless.”

“Do I usually look homeless?” you asked, brows raising. Sure most of your go-to outfits weren’t business casual, but they were at least casual --

Instead of responding, he pressed you against his chest and rolled over on his back so you were laying across him. A hand on the back of your head pressed your face down to his -- hard lips mashing into yours as your hair brushed against his face. It was a much softer kiss than before, immediately you relaxed, hands returning to cup his cheeks while his arms wrapped around your body, squeezing and crushing.

Something flipped up the back of your skirt -- a rough hand was burrowing beneath the waistline of your stockings, carefully slithering under the delicate fabric to grab a handful of ass.

A possessive touch.

You enjoyed it.

He was changing the kiss, increasing the intensity. Captured lips, searching tongue. Knocking teeth, soft clicking. Nipping and biting. A soft gasp.

The gasp was what he wanted. He chuckled, nuzzling his nose against yours when he broke the liplock.

“Be a good girl and take off my pants,” he said, stretching the fabric of your stockings so he could raise his hand and deliver a quick slap to your ass. You inhaled sharply at the contact, but he was unwrapping himself from you, pushing you to sit up on his torso.

“Only if you take your shirt off.”

“I don’t think you should be making demands tonight,” he said, keeping the same self-satisfied face, though his tone was considerably harsher. You returned his gaze, disappointed... but accepting.

Fine.

It seemed cruel to push.

You ended up scooting down to sit on his thighs, ignoring his leering face as he watched you. A strange lump of anxiety swelled in your throat as you gazed down at his crotch, aware of what lurked beneath the fabric. Inwardly you wanted to shake yourself -- you were treating his dick like it was
some kind of anaconda ready to strike. You shouldn’t feel the way you did but…

*It was big.*

You removed his belt first, listening as it landed with a metallic thud on the hardwood floor of your bedroom. You hadn’t been watching where you tossed it -- your eyes were on the top buttons of his cargo pants. They weren’t *your* pants, you saw, hand brushing against his thick thigh to feel the cheap material. You felt his body momentarily tense under your touch.

**Why were you so nervous?**

His inferior pants were heavy, you noted after you unbuttoned and unzipped him, doing your best to tug them off his hips. He offered some assistance by slowly raising his lower body off the bed, giving you enough room to roll his bottoms down to his knees.

“All the way off,” he commanded, one arm behind his head, the other resting across his belly. *Lounging.* You rolled your eyes at him but did as you were told -- pulling and rolling the pants entirely off his body. You pushed and shoved them out of the way, watching as they fell pathetically a couple of inches to the floor.

“So, sweetheart, are you going to take all of me again, tonight?” he asked, brow raising in a teasing smirk.

But your uneasy face wasn’t particularly appealing. He had expected something a little more... bashful.

He was frowning again.

“It was kind of… a tight fit… last time,” you muttered.

*That was what it was,* you realized with a sense of relief, your voice somehow combing through your thoughts faster than your brain could. It wasn’t particularly… pleasurable for you, the first time. And toughing through another bout of uncomfortableness for the chance at reaching one comparatively weak orgasm didn’t seem particularly worth it.

Everything else about the sex part was kind of nice, though. The closeness. Being with him.

“Well, you jumped on me last time,” All Might said with a snort. “Straddled me before I had the chance to get you ready.”

“Get me ready?”

“You have to be prepped to accept men like me,” All Might crooned, his grin returning. His explanation did nothing to change your expression and he sat up, hands resting on your straddling legs. “I’ll have you singing tonight, darling. Promise.”

“A villain’s promise probably isn’t worth much,” you mumbled back. “And didn’t you just threaten me? *You made a mistake,*” you repeated in your best All Might impression. He seemed nonplussed -- probably because his pants were off and you were sitting in close proximity to his crotch.

“I’m in a forgiving mood.”

“Oh? So I can call you honey bunny?” you teased, expecting him to return to dourness. His grin increased in ferocity, teeth taking on a more pointed appearance.
“You can call me whatever you want,” he replied, reaching out to take your hand and place it on his mostly-soft crotch. “As long as I get to fuck you.”

Of course.

“I’m putting a lot of trust in you,” you said softly.

Inwardly, however, a scheme was brewing in your mind. You’d push through your hesitancy, so long as you could make his push through his.

“Have I steered you wrong before?” He was inching closer, pleased at feeling like the strong one. Put your trust in him, as you said. Let him take control. He wouldn’t steer you wrong.

“Can I ask a favor though?”

“Hm…?”

“Take off your shirt.”

He scoffed and was prepared to say something rough, but you had started rubbing him through the fabric of his blue underwear. He kept silent. At the touch, a prickling of pleasure appeared in his body as your hand went to work coaxing his member awake.

“Please?”

“You ruined it last time,” he grumbled, almost petulantly.

Two hands then.

“I was surprised, that’s all,” you said, rubbing his growing bulge before rolling down the front of his boxer-briefs. There was no point in teasing him, you wanted something so you quickly moved to touching him directly. Holding his gaze, you spat on your hands, handling his cock as if it were some kind of roaming snake -- one hand caressing his length while the other followed closely behind.

“Please?”

“I don’t like being gawked at,” he snarled.

You repositioned yourself further down his legs so you could lay over his body, face coming to a rest next to his cock. His jaw clenched.

“I want to see you,” you said softly, placing a kiss against his hardening shaft. “You have such a beautiful body. Please let me see it.”

His jaw shifted.

All Might honestly expected the worst from you. You had already burned him once before, though it had been unintentional. Still, driven by his libido, he did what he was asked -- he pulled his shirt off, setting it beside him on the bed. He was confrontational when his eyes returned to you. But you made no acknowledgment of his undressing, you simply continued to lick and kiss his cock, working it to hardness.

The most you did place a hand just above his groin, caressing his skin.

“Much better,” you hummed against him, his shaft twitching in your hands at the vibrations.
It was hard for him to stay on edge about his bare chest with you stroking and loving his cock. Eventually, his body relaxed and he lowered himself back on the mattress, staring at the ceiling while you continued to work.

“You’re letting your hair grow out,” you mused, lightly scratching at the stubble of his balls.

“I’ve been… busy,” came the rumbled response. You looked up to his face but his eyes were still trained on the ceiling.

Taking a chance, you looked over his scar.

“I like the hair,” you said, noticing the almost flower-like pattern his deformity held.

He chuckled.

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

You shot an unseen smile up at him, moving to mouth and cup his sizable balls, enjoying the way they felt so heavy and warm in your hands. As you littered them with suckling kisses, you watched All Might snake a hand down, gingerly resting it in your hair.

So, you were on your second All Might blowjob. You returned to stroking him, one hand pumping after the other as your mouth remained on his testicles. The hand in your hair gripped tighter and you made a mental note to ask how the first compared.

“Spit,” he commanded, propping himself up on his free arm to finally look down at you. “You need more spit.”

You did as he said, returning to his shaft and doing your best to coat his considerable endowment with saliva.

“More,” he demanded.

*There’s only so much spit a person can make!*

Eventually, you got his cock to an acceptable level of slickness -- your hands were gliding across his shaft, tongue messily swirling around the tip.

“Have your hands do the same motion.” He had taken on the role of instructor. You obeyed, gripping as much of his shaft as you could, pumping up and down uniformly. He wasn’t finished though. “Right under the head…” You pressed your tongue on the underside the head of his cock -- a curled lip flashed across his face. “Right there, kitten. Pay attention *right* there.”

He was watching you, breathing heavily through his mouth as you tongued and kissed the junction where his cockhead and shaft met. Apparently it was a major erogenous zone; it didn’t take long before his breathing was getting harsher and his legs were clenching around you. You paused to lick at the steady beading of precum before slowly spitting it out, watching it trail down his shaft.

“Now, suck the--”

He didn’t have to finish. Recalling what you did last time, you engulfed the head of his cock in your mouth, tongue drawing shapes as you pumped his shaft steadily.

“That’s it,” he grumbled, pushing down instinctively on your head only to catch himself. That was about how much cock you could take in your mouth -- a downside to his girth.
His reactions were growing much more noticeable. You picked up the speed of your hands and adding sucking to the actions to your tonguing. So he was planning on finishing in your mouth? You assumed there would be *more* as he was always quick to point out he could go for ‘rounds’--

“*Fuck, kitten,*” he hissed before your world shifted. In some freakishly quick movements that you *barely* registered, he picked you up and flipped you on your back while he straddled you, knees on either side of your shoulders.

That was a sight -- the enormity of a naked All Might, kneeling above you, furiously stroking his dick, blue eyes piercing yours. Sure it made your gut squeeze in the best way seeing him working himself into a frenzy but it was also nerve-wracking. He was massive. Everything about him was massive -- hands, forearms, thighs, cock, balls. Everything swinging over or resting on your body. If he *sat* on you, he could kill you.

The sight had been burned into you brain. It was probably one of your most arousing experiences to date.

*Wait, was he going to…*

“*Fuck,*” he hissed again, vein bulging in his neck as he continued his rapid pumping. “Take it--”

The first heap of cum struck your chin and you flinched, only for the rest to come oozing out of his cock, coating your face and chest with thick white. He was biting his lip as he unloaded on you, greedily watching his seed decorate your face.

Eventually the slow, but copious, stream ended and you were left frowning up at him.

“Darling, you’ve never looked prettier,” All Might said with a slight strain, tapping the side of your face. “Coated in my cum? What a beautiful sight.”

“A warning would have been nice,” you said dryly.

“Oh, were you looking forward to swallowing my cum? You *were* eager to do it last time. Here…” With one hand he forced your jaw open, using his thumb to scoop a sizable amount of jizz into your mouth. Not prepared, you grimaced and gagged, but a low warning from him compelled you to swallow the warm saltiness.

“Want more?” he asked. You went to glare up at him but fell short of his face; your eyes were taking in the sight of his chest.

You couldn’t help it, your eyes landed on his scar. He knew where you were looking. With an irritated snort, he was gone from overtop of you, standing next to the bed.

“Where are you going?”

You didn’t mean to sound so panicked, but you were worried he had been insulted again, that he was going to leave. You hadn’t meant to look so brazenly, his scar was just hard to ignore. Upon hearing the state of your voice he looked down at you questioningly.

“To get you a *towel,* sweetheart,” he said, dryly. “Unless you want to have my cum dripping everywhere. I wouldn’t mind but it is your bed. You’ll have to sleep in it.”

*Well… okay.*

“Grab one of the white ones,” you muttered, ignoring the humored expression that brewed thanks to
your outburst. Could you really be blamed, though? The man was prone to running off after finishing anything sexual with you.

He did return minutes later, blue towel in one hand and bottle of lube in the other.

Lube.

You had tossed it on your bathroom shelf after cleaning your kitchen after his last visit. Apparently, he had done some snooping.

“I said a white towel,” you groaned as he tossed the blue one on your face.

*And it touched cum.*

“You’re still on the pill, right sweetheart?” he asked, rolling his shoulders, acting as if he was preparing to lift weights at the gym. You glared at him and what you assumed was his showboating.

“... Yes.”

He made an approving sound, snatching the towel out of your hands when you had gotten most of his cum off your body -- he didn’t want you cleaned off entirely. That would have defeated the purpose of finishing on your face. The mattress complained when he sank back onto it, laying so that he was on his back again and you were on his chest.

For someone who craved being dominant, he was eager about having you on top of him.

“You’ll like this,” he said, bearing his teeth slightly in a calculating smile, telling you to sit up on your knees. With heavy hands, you were being pulled over his head--

*Oh god, he wanted you to sit on his face.*

“Weight on your knees,” he commanded. Your mouth felt dry, excitement burying itself in your gut. You’ve never... *sat* on someone’s face before but it had always been something you daydreamed about. Having someone as big and strong as All Might feasting on you, holding you against him...

You looked down to take in the sight of his face between your legs, but most of it was hidden by your skirt, which you needed to take off--

“You should wear stockings more often,” All Might crooned, rubbing his hidden cheek against your inner thigh, savoring the way the fabric felt against his skin. “They look good on you.”

With All Might, you knew good things didn’t last very long. You frowned down at him.

“You’re going to ruin them, aren’t you?”

Though he couldn’t see your expression, the defeated tone of your voice made his face light up. It was... enjoyable how much power you freely handed over to him, whether you realized it or not. You *could* have put up a fight to save your tights, but you didn’t -- you had already accepted that he was going to ruin them. Just like the pillow. Had you truly wanted your pillow back, if it was really *so* important to you, would you not have fought for it?

His hand brushed against your leg.

“I’ll be ruining a lot of things tonight,” he growled.

You wanted to groan at his lame line, but the sound of tearing distracted you. You felt *nothing* by
your crotch -- he had made a sizable hole in your tights, ruining them in one quick swipe.

You felt his mouth landing on a bare portion of thigh. His arms wrapped around your legs, locking you in place.

Like a roller coaster.

All Might surprised you by promptly nosing the damp seat of your panties, a break from his usual procedure. Your body attempted to jump away from the unexpected contact but you were unable to move.

“Looks like sucking my cock got you wet,” he crooned. You met his eyes as he peeked up at you, shifting your skirt partly out of the way. You swallowed, unwilling to say anything.

Not that it mattered, he didn’t require a response from you.

As he normally did, he inhaled loud enough that you were sure to hear him, body rumbling in approval at the scent of your sex. Lightly, you chewed on your bottom lip, stomach already clenching preemptively, eagerly looking forward to the pleasure that was going to strike you.

And then you felt it -- his thick tongue pressing against your underwear, digging into your covered slit.

It was your turn to shudder, heading lolling as you tried to ground against him. You were being greedy, you wanted him to dive right in and get to the good part.

But this was All Might.

His tongue traced the edge of your panties, slipping beneath the damp fabric, grazing your slit directly.

Maybe he would indulge you…

He was pushing it in deeper, parting you slightly, the tip of his tongue teasing your folds--

All Might pulled away, laughing when he heard your disgruntled cry ring out above him. No, he couldn’t move to the main course without paying the best part of your body any mind. He placed a consolatory kiss on your crotch before turning his head, returning his attention to your inner thighs. Though he couldn’t see them properly thanks to your skirt blocking out most of the light, he assumed his previous marks still lingered and blemished your skin.

But it had been what, two weeks since his last visit?

The fading ones needed replacement.

It was a strange sensation, knowing All Might was between your legs but not being able to see what he was doing. You knew his head was turned -- the bangs poking out from beneath your skirt gave away the position of his face, plus you could feel his breath against your skin, so you weren’t too surprised when you felt a wet tongue pressing against you.

A roaming tongue. Soft kisses. Open-mouthed kisses. Sucking kisses. All leading toward--

Teeth.

You inhaled sharply when you felt his first nip, rolling your hips to try and get away and, maybe, guide his attention back to your cunt. Like a shark’s fin slicing through the water, you watched his
bangs flip from facing one thigh to the other, giving you time to prepare before the next bite landed.

“Next time I’m going to bite your thighs,” you groaned as his tongue stroked sore skin. "See how you like it."

“I’d pay to see that,” came the muffled reply. You weren’t quite sure what he meant and didn’t bother asking – he was back nosing your crotch again. “Be a doll,” he purred against your sex. “Come hold this aside.”

‘This’ being your panties.

Of course you did what he asked, reaching beneath your skirt to bare yourself to him, illuminating everything that had been covered.

And revealing his eyes.

“Good girl.”

It wasn’t long before you were mewling and straining above him, his expert tongue unraveling you. His gaze was fixated on you, watching as you twisted and turned your head from side-to-side, eyes squeezed closed.

*You were so reactive.*

“Look at me,” he rumbled when you leaned forward, your first orgasm broaching your horizon. Through half-lidded eyes, you returned his gaze, mouth falling open when he picked that moment to vigorously rub his tongue against your clit.

You released a loud, shuddering breath when the train struck and your climax was reached, hips jerking while All Might continued his assault against your too-sensitive nub. You tried to get away, an almost-pained expression gracing your face, but you were trapped.

“Stop!” you cried out, resting your hands in his hair as you leaned closer down to him, ignoring the difficulty in breathing at having your body at such a hard angle.

He did stop -- when your forehead pressed against the top of his head, he titled his face up to catch you in a kiss.

“You’re an asshole,” you groaned against him, tasting yourself on his lips. He smiled.

“Back to the old names?”

“Maybe.”

When breathing became too uncomfortably labored, you sat straight once more. Having given you one orgasm with just his mouth, he introduced his fingers next, as you expected, slurping on them loudly for your pleasure before pressing the first digit into you. Long and thick. Perfect.

The grip his arms had on your legs never wavered.

As soon as the finger buried itself in you, he was stroking and prodding your walls, searching for the spot that would make you sing for him. You whined at how quickly he was moving -- he should ease into things like that! Not plow forward! Unfortunately for you, he found it almost immediately and you jerked against his touch.

*Had he remembered?*
“Ah!” the whimper escaped you as you felt your gut twist. “Please, stop! Stop! No. Right there. Please.”

He had been placing kisses along your leg but stopped at hearing you, grin appearing.

“Well, what is it?” he asked, faux-sweetly. “Should I stop? Or...?”

“Don’t stop,” you hissed, glaring at him before your face contorted -- another finger was being added. Another perfectly large and rough digit splitting you. Resting your palms over your eyes, your hips worked to meet the steady pumping of his hand.

*What a beautiful sight.*

“Still worried about taking my cock?” he asked. You nodded your head, eyes still covered, and he ‘tsked’ at your quitting attitude. “Don’t worry, darling. It’s going to slide right in tonight.”

You nodded your head for him, signaling you were at least willing to try, your whimpering growing louder when he started curling and scissoring his fingers in and out of your slick cunt.

And then a *third.*

“Ah, *fuck!***” you groaned, teeth clenching as your brows furrowed in a pleased grimace. Had he used three fingers on you before? Scissoring, pumping and curling -- he was pure *magic* when it came to pleasing you. He knew exactly what to do in order to leave you a panting mess. And he took pride in it.

“That’s it,” he growled, taking a sizable chunk of your thigh between his teeth, though he did not bite down. He just liked the *feel* of it. You did too. At feeling his rough hold, you leaned down again, peppering kisses against his forehead.

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“Too good. You’re too fucking good.”

He grunted at your praise, releasing your leg in order to rope you into another kiss, though it was hard for you to reciprocate. The twisting of your gut had been pulled too tautly and your nerves had reached a fever pitch. All you could do was bleat and gasp against his demanding, hungry mouth.

You were holding your breath, he noticed.

So he increased his ministrations.

When you climax struck you again, he could feel it *everywhere* -- the clenching of your cunt around his fingers, the spasming and bucking of your hips, the gasping grimace of your face against his.

It had been strong, you could have sworn you saw stars dancing behind your eyes. Aftershocks were darting across your body, the muscles in your stomach and legs randomly vibrating. What you needed was time to breathe. But All Might wasn’t going to give you the time you desired after such a climax -- he was hard again and you were *ready.*

“Want me now, beautiful?” he asked, voice rough, guiding you onto your back.

*Beautiful?*

*Beautiful.*

Actually, you could probably go another round.
A smile split your face and you laughed, reaching up toward him. He seized your hand, kissing the knuckles, eyes watching you.

“I always want you.”

Your tattered stockings were tossed aside, as was your underwear and skirt. You heard the squirming of what you assumed to be lube, your suspicions confirmed when thick, slickened fingers stroked your already wet sex. You were rubbing your face as you waited; your state of bliss left your limbs and mind feeling almost fuzzy.

Your lower body was being lifted off the bed as All Might worked to align himself with your entrance, rubbing the round, fat head of his cock up and down your waiting cunt. You mewled as you curled your toes, bracing yourself for the uncomfortableness--

“Stop tensing,” he growled as he continued to rub his member against you. You smiled sadly up at him.

“I can’t help it.”

“It’ll be… better. This time,” he said, squeezing your hip reassuringly as he started his push in. Like before, he was methodical when it came to easing you to accept him -- shallow thrusts in and out to start with. You felt his head pop inside you, pushing deeper before being pulled back to the entrance.

In and out. In and out.

He was right -- it was better. There was a stretch, yes. There was no denying the stretch. But it was… a sensation. Not pleasure but not pain either. Just a different kind of feeling.

“That’s it,” he said, sinking ever deeper. You made a sound, he was starting to hit a point that hadn’t been reached by his fingers. “That’s it, good girl. That's it.”

You wanted to remind him you weren’t some kind of spooked horse that needed soft reassurance but then he pressed in deeper and your mouth fell open in a quiet cry.

The pressure was back.

You didn’t like the pressure.

All Might must have been keeping an eye on your reactions; immediately he pulled back and the uncomfortable feeling eased.

“Look how much you’ve taken,” he purred, working to distract you. You looked up -- your hips were above your head thanks to his angle -- and marveled how something so large could fit inside you. You weren’t taking all of him, sure, but you were damn close.

"How did you get so big?" you groaned up at him. He laughed, lowering himself over you in a missionary position, careful not to break your joining. You pressed your forehead against his chest.

And then the thrusting started in earnest.

You gasped, jerking beneath him each time he drove himself inside you, stopping just short of entering you completely. It was better than before and you were thankful for that -- with no uncomfortableness or pain sullying the experience, you allowed the apprehension in your body to melt away.
Actual enjoyment.

Your touch was roaming, hands caressing All Might's body before a curious palm was pressing against his scar.

His rhythm faltered slightly and he grabbed for your hand.

“Don’t,” he hissed but you had yanked it away before he could grab hold of it.

“No,” you said resolutely, kissing his chest, tasting the salt of his sweat. “I need to touch it. If you’re going to fuck me, you’re going to have to let me touch it.”

He stopped, mid-thrust.

“If you don’t stop,” he said, voice oddly calm. “I will.”

You pressed a hand against the ruined flesh in defiance, face nuzzling against him.

“I adore everything about you, including this. Please.”

No one had ever pushed it that far with him. Ever since receiving his injury, All Might's sexual encounters had been few and far between -- a shadow of what he once was like. Most times, he opted to keep his shirt on and chest covered as it was simply easier. If he did end up removing his shirt, his partners were always smart enough not to bring attention to the grotesque wound or push their luck when he told them to leave it alone.

But then there was you.

You.

You had a nice touch.

Slowly, his thrusting resumed and he allowed your hand to remain pressed against his ruined side. His bad side.

“Thank you.”

He heard your soft murmur and clenched a fist in your sheets, doing his best to ignore the sickly warm feeling creeping up his spine.

No.

Sex.

Focus on the sex.

All Might’s pace veered a little rougher as he tried to mentally realign himself. You gasped -- you felt like you were literally being fucked into the mattress. Your bed was jittering across the floor, edge of the frame slamming against your wall. Could your neighbors hear? What a mess you were. The upstairs neighbor up all hours of the night, with your busted front door, being plowed by a villain.

Not just any villain.

All Might.

Your head fell back on the bed. Your hand was following the ragged curves of his scar, feeling the
uneven and crumbled skin. Truthfully, you really wanted to examine it in earnest. You wanted to trace each line, ask about the story behind it.

A rough lurch into you made you cry out. It was followed by another. Then another.

Unbeknownst to you, it had been your touch that had further worked the man about you into a frenzy. He felt you remove your hand from his side, though it was only so you could work your clit.

A familiar buildup was starting in your core again.

“Ah--!” you shifted beneath him, tongue suddenly feeling too big and heavy. “All M-Might--!”

Pride bubbled in his chest, pleased at the way you were cawing his name. He could feel your hand rubbing wildly down by your joining, bringing yourself closer to the edge. He pushed back off the bed, wrapping his arms under your legs as he sat on his knees, your hips hoisted up with him.

That’s when you felt it -- your body clenched when his cock suddenly stroking against that one, good spot.

“Oh fuck. Right there, baby, right there,” you said, clenching a sheet in your free hand as your other continued to work your clit.

“Yeah, you like that?” he snarled down at you, lust panting his face wild. You couldn’t look at him, your head was digging deeper into the bed, body seizing and toes curling as you desperately raced for the finish line.

“Oh god, please,” you babbled and All Might listened. He tilted your hips down a bit more, so the continuing pressure and stroking against your sweet spot only increased.

And that’s exactly what you needed to cum.

You gasped, attempting to curl into yourself as you felt what must have been your soul convulsing. While you were distracted with pleasure, writhing and mewling beneath him, All Might took the opportunity to embed himself fully into you, grunting as he felt your walls clench and massage his cock, trying to milk him.

With a ragged swallow, he powered through your waves, fucking you as he worked to keep the pressure in his gut from getting too out of hand.

But he was close.

You were panting and whining but had yet to acknowledge any sort of discomfort at taking his entire length.

“Fuck, you feel good,” he grunted, slamming into you, watching your body shudder and jiggle at each impact, hearing and feeling his balls swinging and slapping against the crest of your ass.

“You’re… god, you're just so… sexy,” you mumbled back.

His grin increased in size as he caught your almost-dreamy expression -- you were watching his body flex and shine while he fucked you.

Such a perfect body.

While you were mostly mellowing out, he was working himself to his peak, and cracks were beginning to show.
“Like getting fucked by All Might?” he asked, red starting to stain his neck. You nodded in affirmation and his grin turned to a snarl, face going sharp. “When you go to work with those heroes...” he swallowed, a tightness appearing in his gut. “I want you to remember my cum all over your face, remember me filling you up.”

“I will,” you promised.

“They have no idea… All Might’s girl… working right under their noses.”

_All Might’s girl._

“No idea,” you repeated, stroking the arm he had braced beside your body on the bed as his thrusts began to fall out of rhythm. His face was screwed up in concentration, sweat beading across his chest as he resisted the urge to lose control and shatter everything in you.

_All Might’s girl._

You were All Might’s girl.

With a strangled growl he impaled himself in you, hips jerking against your body as he unloaded inside. You watched his heavy, open-mouth pants as he worked through each of his waves, feeling the warmth pooling in your gut. He was filling you entirely -- so much so that excess was starting to push out from around his cock, having nowhere else to go but out.

He stayed buried in you, relishing in the vice grip your cunt had, while he caught his breath. When he did pull out, he did it slowly, making sure your hips were still tilted up to prevent any spillage.

He wanted you to keep his seed for a little bit longer.

Unfortunately, you both couldn't lie like that forever. Your back began to complain of the angle and All Might wanted to feel you against him, pleased with how well your showing had been. When your hips were finally lowered back to the mattress, you were glad to have a towel handy so that the steady stream of All Might's cum leaking from your opening was not collecting and staining on your sheets.

Speaking of All Might --

The man was laid out beside you, lazily scratching at his chin, a self-satisfied smirk on his face.

“Good?” he asked, catching your eye, though he already knew the answer. You looked up to the ceiling, tilting your head in consideration.

“It wasn’t _bad,_” you teased, only to try and escape when All Might grabbed for you. “No my sheets, I don’t want to get my sheets dirty!”

You managed to evade his selfish grasp, carefully holding the already-dirty towel beneath you as you shuffled to the bathroom to clean up, stopping at your drawers along the way to grab some clothing.

All Might eyed the black shirt waiting for him on your bed. One he had kept nearby on purpose.

_She ‘adores’ everything about you._

He shifted his jaw in consideration.

When you returned a couple minutes later, you felt tremendously cleaner and had thrown on an oversized shirt and new underwear. You wasted no time in returning to bed, straddling All Might’s
still-nude body as your hands stroked and rubbed his sculpted, perfect chest.

“Be careful,” he warned with smug satisfaction, your appreciative touch equalling pacifying and
provoking him. Ignoring his gluttony, you tangled your fingers in his hair as you leaned down to kiss
him.

“You were good,” you murmured against his mouth, feeling them twitch upward. The kiss was slow,
just soft lip grasping that ended when you leaned your forehead against his, taking a moment to
enjoy his presence. He didn’t respond or grab you, but when you rolled off of him, his arm wrapped
around your shoulder to press you into his chest.

No, he wanted you to stay for a bit.

So you did.

You both laid quietly next to one another, All Might staring up at the ceiling while you traced the
curves and bumps of muscles that you didn’t even know the names of.

Then, you muttered a name.

All Might shifted and grunted -- tilting his head toward you, signifying he hadn’t been paying
attention to what you said. You repeated the name.

“What about them?”

You rolled your eyes.

“It’s me,” you said. You could tell he still didn’t understand and you sighed, poking him lightly.
“That’s my name.”

*Your name.*

You had told him your name.

All Might had not been expecting that.

He knew your name. He shifted, thoughts jumbling.

“You have an ugly name. I see why you go by Artisan.”

You groaned, unhappy with his retort to what had been something *big* you had been building up to.
But you were unable to push away from him as he had you locked by his side.

*No, he didn’t want you to leave let.*

Silence.

He knew your name.

He *liked* your name.

Meanwhile, all you felt was a wall.

*Nothing?*

Was he... really not going to share?
“Are you going to tell me your name?” you went so far as to ask. He shifted and grumbled, feigning irritation that you weren’t going to let the subject drop. He thought he made it clear he had no intention of giving you that.

“You already know my name.”

That was a poor response. You know he didn’t come out of the womb with a name like All Might.

“So your driver’s license says All Might on it?” you asked dryly.

“What makes you think I have a driver’s license?”

Well, he got you there. You fell quiet, frowning as you looked off into space. At some point in his life, All Might had a name. He had been a normal boy. He had a mother. A family. Was it crazy that you were so… disappointed? You wanted something as equally important from him. An actual name. His true name.

All Might’s girl.

But at least you had a designation, the disappointment falling away as quickly as it appeared.

All Might’s girl.

All Might’s girl and Artisan’s man.

What a dynamic duo.

“I’m going away next week. Won’t be back for a couple weeks.” His steady voice sliced through your thoughts, tone flat as if the information he was sharing was not a big deal. It wasn’t. But your face fell and you shifted to look up at him.

“Couple of weeks?” you reiterated, more surprised than you should have been.

“Doing a loop through southern Japan, before the fall hits. I’ll be back by the end of the month.”

Considering your relationship was filled gaps of inactivity, his announcement of a trip shouldn’t have made you as unhappy as it did. But it felt… worse, this time.

“Well…” you swallowed, doing your best to beat down your emotional response. “Bring me back a souvenir.”

All Might was staring at you, reading your face. When it became clear you planned on saying nothing more, he scratched his chin.

“We’ll see.”

You sighed against him, closing your eyes when you felt too-large fingers gently comb and pull at your hair. Someone was shouting outside -- their voice carried on the crisp breeze that floated in through your open windows. Autumn was coming. You looked forward to the cooler weather.

“I want you to stay,” you found yourself admitting to All Might. You didn’t bother clarifying what you meant by staying -- whether it was the night or refraining from going on such a long trip. It didn’t matter, both were true.

And All Might found himself snorting softly at your declaration.
“I know.”
“But you won’t.”
“I won’t.”

The man outside was still shouting, though his words were being jumbled by the echoes bouncing from tightly-packed buildings. *And the crickets.* Your brain moved beyond the shouting, recognizing the trilling soundtrack that was playing in the background. The summer sounds of hundreds of crickets crying their songs into the night. Songs that would disappear as the weeks wore on.

“One day I won’t come back.”

Your heart jumped into your throat, poetic thoughts about crickets crushed beneath the foot of All Might’s reality. He was looking over toward the window, as if he had been following along with your thoughts, the hand in your hair coming to a rest against your scalp.

“Remember that, kitten. I'll leave one day. So don’t get--”

“Stop.” You were sitting up, holding a hand up to silence him. No. Not tonight. “Stop. No. No future talk. Let’s just… One day at a time, okay? Just… one day at a time.”

No.

You weren’t ready to address the understanding that cast a shadow over every interaction you had with All Might. The silent truth.

That everything you had with him, everything you had built up -- it was all temporary.

There was no future with All Might.

Why would he bring *that* up!? Of all moments, why *now*!?

He was already forcing you to settle back down on the bed. He was turning and settling himself against your side, arm draped over your torso while you stared up at the cracking white paint of your ceiling. You felt the breath of his nose by your ear as buried his face into the crook of your neck, drinking your familiar smell. The scent he *liked*.

*It was all temporary.*

“I’ll take care of the door, sweetheart. And the bed.”

Was he apologizing for ruining your night? You weren’t sure.

You rested a hand on top of his, your fingers sliding between his large ones.

*One day at a time.*

**Chapter End Notes**

Oof, sorry about getting this out so late, I had to handle some pretty annoying stuff. I'm not entirely thrilled with how this turned out -- I'm gonna sleep on it and handle
changes in the morning.
Thank you all for being wonderful and supportive!!!
The invite came a good month before Halloween. A longtime acquaintance of yours was throwing a Halloween bash at a dance club in Roppongi and you were invited. Most of your friends were going, which made accepting the party invite a lot easier. There would be drinks, dancing and of course, costumes.

There was no getting around the costume -- it was required to attend. It actually said so plainly on the back and orange invite.

The topic of the party came up a few weeks later while you were talking to Yume on the phone. It was a weekly tradition between you two, calling each other and watching new episodes of the ‘Real Housewives of Tokyo’ together -- a terrible reality show that had ensnared the both of you with its overblown personal plotlines and hints of glamor.

“What are you going as?” you asked her during a commercial break, holding your cell phone against your shoulder while you attempted to scratch an itch on your ankle. You heard shuffling followed by a sigh.

“I haven’t decided yet. Maybe a scientist or something.”

“Aw come on, you can’t be a scientist! That’s a cop out!”

“No, it’s smart. I own everything already,” she said, a laugh buried in her voice. “It’ll be easy. Maybe I’ll make it sexy.”

“A sexy scientist?

“Yes, proper Halloween style. What about you?”

“I was thinking… a pumpkin.”

Yume’s laughter erupted at that -- you could hear her phone chafing against the side of her face as she shook.

“A pumpkin,” he said. “A sexy pumpkin or--?”

“Nope, just a regular pumpkin. Like one of the foam ones that kids wear. I saw an adult one and I might get it.”

Again, laughter.

“A sexy scientist and a pumpkin,” she was calming down; the commercials were over, the show was
back. “What a duo we’ll be.”

“We can be like Frankenstein and his monster!” you added with your own laugh, a backstory already forming in your head.

Her giggles started up again.

Twenty minutes after the show finished airing, you finally hung up with Yume after all your friend-drama talking points had been exhausted. After washing your face and finishing all the other little habits that composed your bedtime routine, you settled under the sheets and boredly began browsing through your phone.

You ended up on a costume website, looking through their options, trying to find something that spoke to you. They did have a pumpkin outfit, which you added to your cart immediately, but nothing else really sparked your interest.

Well. One thing did.

The name of the costume caught your attention, everything else just sort of fell into place.

It was... too good to pass up.

You ended up ordering both costumes.

The night before the party, All Might texted you.

‘I’m coming over tomorrow,’ he had written.

‘No you’re not,’ you replied.

Although part of you wanted to leave the conversation like that, you ended up wimping out and sending a follow-up text on why he couldn’t visit. You were going to Roppongi for the night.

You were surprised when you, very quickly, received another response from him asking what you planned on doing there. You told him the name of the club where the party was at and set your phone down, figuring that was that.

Immediately, it went off again.

‘What time were you going there?’

You told him.

You watched a grey chat bubble appear on the screen of your conversation. He was typing.

‘What train were you taking?’

You told him.

‘Ok,’ was the last thing he wrote before the conversation stopped. You frowned, concerned over how the conversation had flowed. He was asking such specific details, surely he wasn’t...

No. No, he wouldn’t do that. He probably wants to come after.

You heard nothing more from All Might that night nor the next day. Faced with a decision,
you opted to save the pumpkin costume for another year as you had the strangest feeling you were going to get a visitor later in the night. And your other costume, you loathed to admit, was kind of for him.

A couple hours later, you arrived at the Roppongi station, glad to see you weren’t the only one traveling out and about fully-decked out in Halloween attire. Your outfit was something simple, nothing compared the expensive toil that other people had created or purchased. You watched a woman in an intricate mecha suit walk around you, typing away furiously on a cellphone. But a low-effort bedsight ghost also passed and suddenly you didn’t feel so bad about yourself anymore.

The location of the party was quite a few blocks walk from the station. You were on your phone, checking for the latest updates on arrivals of the people you really cared about: Yume was still getting ready and wouldn’t get there until later, as was Minori, but that was unsurprising. With your two close friends running late, you were in no real rush to head over.

Fashionably late and all, right?

You were texting Minori when you bumped into a large person who stepped out in front of you. Looking up, you were ready to apologize for your--

No.

“Hey there, sweetheart.”

There he was standing at the bottom of the stairs out of the station in all his infernal glory.

All Might.

It was undeniable -- the roughness of his voice and the way he said his nickname for you -- this was no imposter. He was dressed in his villain outfit, complete with his signature gasmask. It had been a while since you had seen it in person; you noticed a slight crack in the left eye socket that was pushing the entire orange LED panel out of alignment--

NO.

“All Might!” You physically hunkered down, acting as if snipers were trained on your location and taking aim. “All Might!”

“Calm down would you,” he said. "It's fine." It was then he noticed a few gawkers off to the side, talking amongst each other as they attempted to sneak a picture of him. Horrified, you watch him lift and flex one of his massive arms, putting on a show for his 'fans.' Having been caught, they fell into an embarrassed, but thankful, chitter.

“Stop it!” you grabbed his hand, trying to pull him away from such a crowded place, his showboating making your blood run cold. “Come on, someone will catch you!”

“Catch me?” he laughed, shaking his head but otherwise allowing you to lead him away. He gave a small, finger-wiggling goodbye wave to his fans. “Like anyone could.”

You stopped about a block away from train station, eyeing the steady stream of people passing by the street you had ducked down.

No, you didn’t like it. You didn’t like it one bit.

“Why are you here? This is dangerous!” There was obvious worry on your face that he took such
delight in. The dangerous bit he wasn't thrilled about, however. He was unstoppable, why were you so concerned about him getting apprehended. It was out of the realm of possibility.

“It’s Halloween,” he said flippantly. “I’ve done this for years.”

“What if you get into a fight or--”

“Hm, so you picked a cat?” he said, pointedly ignoring your annoying worried chatter. He was glancing over your costume, thick fingers shifting your headband.

Black cat ears, a black outfit and a black tail composed the entirety of your look. You had also painted whiskers and a small nose on your face with black eyeliner. At his acknowledgment you became suddenly bashful, looking off to the side and refusing to meet his face.

“Well, not a cat...” you said quietly. You had grabbed for your long tail, fingers fidgeting with the tip of it, working to strangle a blush as a thrill of excitement worked its way up your spine. “No, I'm a... a kitten.”

Kitten?

You couldn’t see his face but you swore you could feel the shift in his body’s energy.

“A kitten?” He chuckled low and deep, reaching out to follow the curve of your hip and waist with his hand. “Now why’d you go and pick a kitten?”

“Take a wild guess,” you said, back of your neck growing hot.

“Oh, but I want to hear you say it.”

“I’ve been… referred to, as kitten, by some people,” you groaned, desperate to rub your face but knowing you couldn’t. You had put way too much time in perfecting your whiskers to smear them over a wave of voluntary embarrassment.

“That’s not satisfying at all!” All Might chided, humored. “Come on now, why don’t you tell the truth?”

You brought it up. You wanted him to know.

“Because you call me kitten,” you mumbled to him with a glare. The hand on your waist drew you in closer toward him.

“You'll have to speak up, old men like me have bad hearing.”


“That’s right,” he said, toothy grin hidden. “I do call you kitten, don’t I? Whose kitten are you?”

“Nope,” you shook your head at him, cheeks painfully red and mildly concerned there were people lurking nearby who could hear you be so... spineless. “I have to go to a party. Maybe I’ll see you later.”

“Kitten,” he called, slipping a finger in the waist of leggings as you attempted to walked away, dragging you back toward him. You hand flew back to try and prevent him from catching a peek of what was hidden beneath your clothing.

Red. You had picked something red.
“Don’t walk off in a huff,” he continued, readjusting your ear headband so it sat straighter. “It’s a good night! But… why don’t you skip your party and we can go have our own fun? Grab a hotel room? I know a nearby love hotel that has rooms designed for… size differences.” A gloved finger traced the side of your face and your eyes flickered up to his orange ones. “We can strap you into a swing at just the right height. Or, we could take a bath together, kitten. Don’t you want to take a bath with me?”

Yes.

“I’ve been looking forward to this party,” you said, slowly wiggling out of his hold. His offer was arousing but ultimately not tempting enough for you to break your plans. “Besides, it’s not so fun when you leave after an hour.”

“Two hours,” he rebutted coldly. You rolled your eyes, waving in concession. *Fine. Two hours.*

“Maybe another time?” you asked, your turn to tease. “Because right now I have plans that will last the entire night.”

It was a dig at him that he recognized. His hand, which had been lingering toward you, dropped by his side, clenching into a fist.

“See you around All Might,” you called over your shoulder, shooting him a playful smile that both vexed and inflamed him.

He…

He followed after you.

Very quickly he was at your side again, his large stride slow in order to match your speed. The earlier confidence you had displayed in semi-private melted away when the crowds returned -- it wasn’t like All Might could blend in with the faceless masses. In fact, you could see most eyes settle on him as you both traveled by.

He was noticable.

“This isn’t a good idea!” you stressed to him in a harsh hiss, utterly uncomfortable with having *the* All Might walking openly beside you. In Roppongi of all places! Only weeks before he had attacked the city section, now he was basically strutting through it.

All Might gazed down at you, raising his mask so you could see the confidence on his face.

“Oh, there’s no need to fret, sweetheart.”

You frowned, eyes darting about, not believing him in the slightest. Dark had settled over Tokyo and other costumed party-goers were out in force, already buzzing with expected good time jitters. It was a rare treat for Halloween to fall on a weekend -- most wanted to take advantage of it.

“Are you not coming out with me, are you? To the club?” you asked, already shaking your head as if leading him to answer with a ‘no.’ “None of my friends know about you, I don’t know how to explain you to them!”

“Maybe I’ll just be a stranger that comes up and grinds with you,” he said, placing a hand on your back.

*Grind with you? His crotch was at your mid-back.*
All Might lowered his mask when you crossed over to an even busier street, though you caught a glimpse of another smile just before it was covered. “We need to celebrate that outfit somehow,” he continued. “Since you did wear it for me. Maybe we can sneak off into a bathroom...?”

“There are bathroom attendants there,” you said. “There’s no way we’re sneaking into a stall.”

*Besides, he was a giant. He would probably tower over the stall walls.*

“Fine, the back room,” he said dismissively.

“There is no ‘back room.’”

“What kind of club are you going to?” he scoffed -- how terribly boring it sounded. You rolled your eyes, wondering if the villain had even been inside a club before.

But, at the same time, you were also trying to hide the smile that threatened to show itself.

Out in public with All Might.

He seemed *happy*. So were you.

*What a strange feeling.*

All Might didn’t say anything more, leaving you to consider your thoughts silently as you both walked on. His size and… presence made most of the other people on the sidewalk give you both wide berth, which unnerved you and made him puff out his chest.

“No, I’m not going out with you,” he said after a bit.

*Thank god.*

You were waiting to cross the street -- he had attempted to ignore the heavy traffic and just *go*, but you had tugged him back by his hand, much to his chagrin. The last thing you needed was for him to start a scene or punch a car into the stratosphere in a burst of anger. “But you’re to let me know when you’re leaving.”

“So you can make sure I get home safe?” you asked lightly, the pedestrian light turning green. You heard him indulge in a sharp laugh.

“Yeah sweetheart, that’s it.”

“We’ll see how I feel,” you said, rolling your neck. “The train ride is a long one. Maybe I’ll just crash--”

He pulled you closer to him. You felt a pressure on your backside as you walked -- his hand had cupped and slid up your ass before settling at the base of your costume’s tail, swinging it side-to-side.

“I’ll get you home.”

“We’ll see,” you repeated, internally beaming at the thickness of his voice.

*He liked you.*

It was when you were several blocks away from the train station, moving along a busy corridor of bars and clubs, that two girls blocked the path in front of you and All Might.
They were staring.

You stared back.

All Might simply waited.

“Your costume is amazing,” the scarecrow finally gushed. Her friend was nodding her head along furiously.

“It’s perfect!” she, a bloodied nurse, added.

You glanced up at All Might -- they sure as hell weren’t talking about your cat costume. You heard him chuckle, standing a little prouder at their praise. Actually... your brows furrowed slightly. He was flexing! For them! You could see the tensing and releasing of his muscles of his arms and chest as he basked in their heavy attention.

“Please, can we get a picture?”

All Might glanced at the phone in the nurse’s hand.

“Ladies... of course,” he purred. Irritated, you watched the two girls eagerly move to either side of him, thanking him and paying him more compliments. But they immediately began struggling to fit his tall frame into the shot once they went for the picture.

Eyes fell on you, the girls recognizing that you were with him.

“Do-- do you mind?” one of the girls asked sweetly, holding her phone out toward you.

What could you do?

With a polite smile, you took the device and stepped back until most of everyone was in the frame. Though the girls stayed frozen in smiling poses with victory signs, All Might switched up his gesturing after each shot: first he had his hands on the girl’s shoulders, then moved to devil horns before flashing the shocker.

You quickly gave the phone back after that.

The girls were appreciative of the kindness and left chattering giddily with one another -- you weren’t sure if they were talking about All Might or not. Truthfully, you had become too wrapped up in the sudden crowd of people that had circled All Might, emboldened by the success of the ‘sacrificial lambs.’ The girls had walked away unscathed from the scary man and had been in good spirits, thus opening the floodgates to anyone else nearby who wanted a picture with such a fantastic costume.

So good that many believed him to be some sort of professional cosplayer.

All Might was laughing, hands on his waist and head was thrown back as he greedily accepted each picture request, posing and hamming it up to his heart’s content. Normally he made it a point to wear his mask whenever he was out ‘working’ but Halloween... it was the one time of year he could leave his house without any hero headaches. To the blind masses around him, he was just a giant man with a really good costume.

You could feel your phone in your purse vibrating, undoubtedly people were arriving at the party and checking to see when others would be too. For a few more minutes you tried to catch All Might’s eye, to gesture for him to wrap it up, but you were the furthest thing from his mind -- a man
in an Endeavor costume was laughing as All Might pretended to crush his head.

You could just picture his face under the mask.

*That* made you worried.

Finally, you hit your wall.

When the crowd grew larger and a cackling All Might hoisted a squealing girl onto his shoulder, you left. You had places to go, people to see, and you didn’t want to stand around to watch strangers bask in the glory of All Might. You wanted to go have your own fun.

You weren’t sure if he noticed you leaving -- you assumed he didn’t. And you weren’t going to send him a text either.

A line was already forming at the front entrance of the club when you turned the corner and saw the enormous Halloween spectacular that had been set up. Inflatable pumpkins and ghosts lined the entrance and ghoulish-looking people were mingling with the line. You heard high-pitched screeches -- a masked man with an unchained chainsaw was running after a group of fairies, reeving his harmless weapon at them threateningly.

Thankfully you walked up at the same time as a familiar face, someone you knew was part of the guest list.

“Minori!” you shouted, voice traveling surprisingly well over the haunted house soundtrack that was being blasted over the outdoor speaker system. Your bubbly friend was dressed as some sort of female Mad Hatter, going so far as to put crazed-looking contact lenses in.

You waved at her in your cat outfit.

“You look so cute!” she cooed at you, giggling as she tugged on your tail. You pawed at your face, smiling.

“You’re looking *purrfect* tonight,” you shot back, giddy with elation. She seemed to appreciate your cat pun, laughing and knocking into you before reaching for her phone.

“Is everyone inside already?”

You shrugged, checking yours to see if any other updates had been sent to you from Yume. *Nothing.*

Minori did all the talking to the bouncer, informing him that you both were part of a group while you hung back, snapping a few pictures of the controlled mayhem. After some back and forth, you both were waved inside, following after some sort of hostess who led you down crowded stairs to the dance floor and the tables circling it.

Oh no.

‘*Table service...*’ you realized, slightly horrified, as you were pulled into friendly hugs of welcome. You greeted everyone with a tight smile before quickly grabbing your phone and transferring money between your checking and savings accounts to properly cover you for the night.

*Looks like you were spending money.*

The upside to going to a party at a club was that there was no need to hold a conversation -- the music was bumping and drowning anything that wasn’t being shouted directly in your ear. Sure you
and Minori ‘talked,’ but it wasn’t about anything of substances. Mostly, you both pointed out other costumes you liked or flashed thumbs up at one another while you swayed (and drank) to the beat.

By the time you were finished your second cocktail, a hand tapped you on the shoulder. You turned, falling into heaving laughter when you saw the sexy scientist standing behind you. Yume really had done it; she wore one of her lab coats with a skin-tight dress underneath it. Though she couldn’t hear it, she saw your wolf whistle as you exaggeratedly looked her up and down. She smacked away your lecherous eyes, grinning, while you waved over a nearby shot girl.

It was time for the party to really start.

The mood inside the club became more frenzied as time passed and the true Halloween party spirit was felt. The DJ, a loud blond-hair man that Minori told you the name of several times, began intertwining Halloween song remixes into his playlist.

At one point a mask across the club caught your eye.

No…

It was someone dressed as All Might. The man lacked the true villain's height and frequently pulled off his mask in order to sip at his beer, further proving that it wasn't your Might, but you were still enthralled. Tugging on Yume’s sleeve, you shouted for the girl to come with you while you asked for a picture. She looked at you confused -- why an All Might costume? But you pretended not to see her face and she never verbalized her question.

The fake All Might was pleasant enough and eagerly stood beside you while Yume snapped some shots. But you went beyond a simple side-by-side pose -- you placed a hand squarely on his chest and leaned into him, beaming at the camera. He had no problems with the sudden closeness and immediately pushed back against you, arm around the waist while he raised his middle finger, falling into the role of a baddie.

Giggling to yourself, you swiped through the pictures when you arrived back at your table, selecting one to send to a certain blond hell demon that you had ditched. After several minutes of consideration, all while Yume peered over your shoulder, you sent the image without any kind of caption or follow-up text.

You felt your phone go-off, a response already received, as you shoved it back in your bag. You bit down the urge to check it.

No, you had to let it marinate.

That's what he gets.

While you and your friends were having a great night out, another girl in the club was experiencing what she considered was the worst night of her life. Gripping an empty shot glass, Jessica Alloway from Toronto was watching her new crush Rick dance with another girl from their travel group. Two days earlier, Rick had danced with Jessica and had taken her out to lunch the next day.

But apparently, Jessica did not matter to him anymore.

“Jess,” Regina said, tugging her friend’s onesie to break her out of her livid glare. “Jess, just forget about it. You’ve only known him for like a week. Just let it go.”

“No!” Jess screeched in slurred rage, ripping her arm out of her friend’s tired grasp. “No! This is
bullshit. He’s an asshole. He’s a fucking asshole.”

“Jess…” the other girl rubbed her face, aware of how her friend could get when she was drunk.
“Jess, calm down. Remember what they said about Japan. It’s quiet here. Don’t go off the handle.”

“It’s not fucking fair for him to come in and do this shit!”

Jess had been nothing but kind to Rick. She laughed at all his jokes, complimented him and even spotted him a couple yen when he wanted to get a coffee from some vending machine. She had been the perfect companion and what did that get her? Nothing. She had been tossed aside like trash.

No, it wasn’t fair.

It wasn’t fair at all.

Regina noticed the small particles drifting off the flowers in her friend’s hair. With wide eyes, she grabbed her roughly by the shoulder.

“Don’t!” she hissed. “You can’t use your quirk here.”

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Jess shot back. “He wants to be in love with that girl? I’ll make him fall in love!”

“Love!? Jess, it’s been a fucking week, just ignore him and let’s go! It’s illegal to use your quirk in public in Japan and you can’t do it in here!”

But it was too late.

As you declined the Jello shot being offered to you, Minori was gesturing up to the pink confetti that was lazing drifting down from the ceiling to cover the dancefloor.

“It’s not very Halloween-ish!” she said with a giggle, waving her hand as the material settled over your table. You laughed with her in agreement, reaching to grasp one of the small papers from the air.

It wasn’t paper.

Furrowing your brows, you held your hand up to your face in the dim lighting, trying to determine what material the club was pumping out. Was it foam? As you rubbed it between your fingers, you saw it was powdery and left a visible glowing residue on your hands.

“What is this?” a guy at your table asked, attempting to rub the pink off of his suit.

“It looks like… pollen?” Yume said, looking to you with a shrug. You echoed it.

By now, most of the lower level of the club was hazed by the unknown residue -- it was clinging to people and covering the floor with an unnatural pink, enough so that many dancers had stopped what they were doing in mild concern.

“‘Eyyy, listeners, looks like there’s been a bit of a quirk misfire!’ the DJ chattered into his microphone, loud voice cutting through the music.

‘Quirk misfire?’ You thought, watching some of the pink that had settled on your clothes fade to nothing.

The smell was the first thing to creep in and consume your senses. Something… earthy. So strong
and pungent that you could taste it -- feel it even, as it left a thin film in your mouth. It was more
potent than the scent of cut grass or freshly cut flowers.

No, it was like someone had squeezed the essence of an entire rain-soaked forest into a single burst
that had been aimed at your face.

Once it took root in your mind, the earthiness morphed into something different, some more… sweet.
You could feel the change in your body during the shift, a great wave inside you receding in a quick
pull that made you go lightheaded and lose your balance.

You stumbled against the table next to you, elbows catching on it before you tumbled all the way
down to the floor. Through glazed eyes you looked up, recognizing that other fuzzed blobs around
you were dropping and swaying.

*Something was wrong.*

The sweetness was strong. Bitterly strong. Tartly strong. Your head was swimming, the piercing
sugar making your stomach churn and clench in ache. You were sweating.

And the feeling. The feeling only worsened. Each second that passed, you felt your body losing all
sense of self. All you could smell and taste was the sweet. All you could hear was the beating of
your heart.

Your body?

*Oh, the clenching…*

The clenching wasn’t in your stomach anymore.

Whatever it was that hit you… it had found the most intimate corners of your mind and lodged itself
there. It had *rushed* there.

You squeezed your legs together, breath rough and rapid.

“Oh god,” you gasped.

You were afraid.

Because you weren’t in control of your body.

You tried to take in the scene around you. Some of the club patrons were in a panic, quickly trying to
leave the area. The DJ was babbling something that was incomprehensible to your ears. Your own
friends were trying to tug you along in their rush out and you stumbled after. Panic was only a
secondary sensation. The most prominent you felt was… *fire.* You were on *fire.*

Had this--

You groaned, a sudden, violent spasm shaking your lower body and making your legs wobble. You
were empty. God, you were so *empty.* Gritting your teeth and squeezing your hands into fists, you
tried to ignore where the spasm had--

*Again.*

You cried out louder, the hairs on your body rising with an incredible sense of need. Oh god, you
needed *it.* Oh god, you needed something.
A moan caught your attention and you watched two people fall on each other, bodies pulling together as if they were magnets, wild hands digging at one another.

Oh no.

You needed to get out of there.

A small bit of consciousness had you grab your purse before you stumbled as fast as you could to the exit. If you got--

Spasm.

Your legs bowed and you fell to your knees.

Someone had placed a warm hand against your stomach and back, to help you up. To help you stand.

But their touch was lingering.

A mouth was by your ear, lips desperately pressing against the sticky sweat of your neck. Your eyes rolled and you felt yourself falling toward the stranger, aware they could give you--

NO!

With a jerk, you pulled away. Stumbled away. More panic in your movements as your quickened your pace. You needed to--

Spasm.

--get to out of there.

To your horror, stepping out into the night did nothing to elevate the mold in your mind. In fact, it only made things worse. The fresh air was mixing with whatever poison was in your body, making it expand and cling to your consciousness harder.

You wanted to cry. You were crying.

A couple was mangled on the sidewalk beside you, desperately clawing at one another, clothes and costumes falling away. You stopped and stared, hypnotized, heart and soul telling you to join them.

Spasm.

They weren’t the only ones going at it, not the only ones to fall into the haze of the poison. All around you, people were dropping and clinging together. Traffic had stopped, wide-eyed drivers were watching in stunned confusion as a makeshift orgy suddenly exploded out in the public sphere. Desperately you wanted to try and tell someone what was going on. You could hear shrill voices screeching out warnings and cries for help but, to you, no one was doing anything. What could they do?


When the clenching subsided, you realized you had fallen to your knees, gripping your stomach.

No.
You needed to go.

Your feet were moving before your brain recognized it, dragging you away from the mindless debauchery into the relative stillness of an alley. The safety of an alley. No one was around.

But no one was around.

You whimpered, disgusted at yourself and your desperate body. You felt…

Well, you know how you felt.

And the feeling was only getting worse.

You needed someone.

With shaking hands you reached for your cell phone, staring at it. You wanted… help. You needed help. You wanted the feelings in you to die.

Help.

Who should you call? The police? Request an ambulance?

One New Message.

Glazed eyes stared at the message, your reptilian mind imagining the man who had sent it. Imagining everything about the man who had sent it. Oh, he could give you help. He could give you such sweet help to ease the ache.

With trembling fingers, you typed out a text.

All Might was watching a movie on his phone when a notification of a message dropped down from the top of his screen. He looked at the time before swiping to read what you said. Had you finally responded to his remark at the imposter you were cozying up to?

‘Help’

He stared at the word.

‘What do you mean, help?’ he wrote back, staring and waiting for your answer. He didn’t want to overreact but…

Nothing.

When you didn’t answer in seconds, he stood, immediately inflating to his larger form.

Something wasn’t right.

He looked around the cityscape from the rooftop he had hidden away to. Whereabouts in the district was he? Dark eyes fell on one familiar landmark and then another, helping him mark where he was in relation to your club.

Once he could picture visualize the map, he was off.

It only took him seconds to reach the street where you were supposed to be. Not that it was hard to spot -- during his approach he could see the flashing lights of emergency vehicles littering the road.
And heroes.

“What happened?” he growled, grabbing a gawker by the shoulder and spinning them around. The initial anger at being so roughly handled by a stranger fell away once they got a look at the creepily perfect All Might costume.

“There was… a, uh, quirk situation,” the faux-police officer said. “In the nightclub.”

“ Heard it was pollen,” a dog-quirk girl dressed as a cat said, ears twitching with morbid delight. “You know… sex pollen.”

“No, that only happens in the movies,” the officer retorted and the dog-cat shrugged.

All Might had no patience for their idiocy, his eyes were fixated on the quarantined building. Rage was clawing and gnashing at his chest as he carefully took out his phone, hands shaking as he actively worked to keep himself from snapping everything and everyone around him in half. ’Where are you?’ he asked. When you didn’t respond in seconds, he dropped any sort of pretense and called you.

It rang once.

Twice.

Three times.

By the sixth ring, it had gone to voicemail. He took another steadying breath, ignoring the red vignette that clouded his vision. He redialed your number.

It rang once.

Twice.

“All Might?”

The voice on the other end was soft and slurred.

“Where are you?” he demanded immediately. He heard a soft whimper and his arms tensed, infuriated by not knowing what, or who, was causing you to make such a meek sound.

“In… an alley,” you slurred out. So you weren’t inside? His eyes moved off the building, trying to locate where you could have gone off to.

“Send me your location.”

“I-I can’t.”

“Stupid girl, send me your location now.”

He could hear shuffling as you worked to fulfill his 'request' -- how could simply tapping a button in your message screen be hard?

“Come on,” he growled, impatient. His phone vibrated and he glanced at the small map that popped up in your text message chain.

“I sent--”
He didn’t hear the rest, he exploded away in a show of power that made bystanders glance at one another in horror.

The alley was only a few yards away from the front entrance of the club -- apparently none of the officers or heroes had done any sort of sweep of the surrounding area yet. They hadn’t found you.

You were huddled beside a dumpster, arms wrapped around knees that were pulled tightly to your chest. Your phone sat discarded on the ground.

You were alone.

He watched you look up at when he approached, clouded eyes taking in the sight of orange glowing in the dark. Any sensible person would have been terrified at such a sight -- cornered in a dark alleyway with All Might. But your sensibility had been failing you for several months.

The relief you felt wasn’t powerful enough to make it through the horrible sludge of arousal that had possessed you. So you stared up at him, whimpering and whining like some sort of injured, stray dog begging for help. But something conscious in your remained; your arms pulled your legs closer together. No, you needed to keep control.

“Something wrong?” All Might asked, humor replacing rage at having finally found you untouched and safe. Waiting for him.

Your lip wavered as you looked away, staring at the dirt of the alley. His voice…

Your legs wanted to fall open for him.

Instead, you hunkered down, squeezing your entire body closed. You were basically wrestling for control... but it was hard. And each second that passed the struggle got harder.

“Are you… okay, kitten?”

You heard it then, the slight rumble of concern in his words at seeing you so... unlike yourself. It was an unfamiliar tone that lodged the first attack at your walls. A layer of your defenses fell and your head whipped toward him -- your cheeks a vivid red.

No, you weren’t okay.

“You got a dose of the pollen?” he asked. You weren't in a state of mind to question how he had known about the pollen. Instead, you swallowed the excess saliva that had been pooling in your mouth, nodding.

Voices carried up from the alley entrance, joined with the raspy chatter of radio talk.

_Ah, so they were going to do sweeps._

“We have to go,” All Might said, manually switching off the lights of his mask and plunging your little corner into darkness. “Unless you want to get carted away to some hospital?”

A hospital sounded perfectly fine, you thought. In fact, the police officers sounded perfectly fine too. Nothing could go wrong if they discovered you -- they just wanted to help. Maybe they could give you some sort of medication to rid yourself of the poison. To clear your head. To give you back control.

You wanted to convey these thoughts to All Might, to let him know you were okay. He could go
somewhere safe.

When you opened your mouth, you let out a loud, desperate whimper.

“Let’s go then,” he said, breaking your hold on yourself so he could bring you against his body.

Contact.

Every brick of defense you had carefully laid down instantly crumbled at his touch. His smell, like a train, struck your senses and you felt as if you had been walloped upside the head. In fact, you physically recoiled, but quickly were pressed back into his chest by force when he shot up into the sky, cool air whipping around your too-hot body.

Relief.

Physical relief.

That’s what you wanted.

All Might felt your hand travel up his body while he looked for a suitable place to land. Fingers were pressing against the visible sliver of skin between the high collar of his shirt and his mask.

Then lips were there.

“Please,” he heard you mutter against his neck, decorating the small expanse of flesh with kisses. “Please, All Might. Please.”

You sounded as desperate as you looked and he could only imagine what you were feeling. The arousal he felt earlier at seeing you dressed as his kitten paled in comparison to the thunderous avalanche that echoed in his mind at feeling you cling to his body, hands clawing at him, legs wrapping around the trunk of him. Desperate for him. Wanting him.

All the while you kept repeating ‘please.’

Please. Please. Please.

The roof of the building he landed on was dark and it towered over surrounding structures -- not that any of that mattered to you. But his landing meant the wind and pressure wasn't whipping and smacking into your anymore, which made pulling off his mask a lot easier for you.

Your hands and arms were still clinging so tightly, encircling his neck and burying roughly into his hair. You were trying to pull him better into you, but no amount of contact you forced was good enough.

A crazed mouth struck his face. You had missed his mouth entirely, landing by his nose before you corrected yourself. It was not a good kiss -- your teeth knocked against his lips as your tongue sloppily groped for his. Not to mention the drool. You were drooling. Drooling, moaning, whimpering and crying. And grinding weakly, though you weren’t getting much friction against his too-wide chest.

You were a mess. An absolutely, unthinking, lust-crazed mess.

And All Might was in heaven.

He answered your desperation with his own irrational, lustful intensity. He grabbed at your head, forcing your messy mouth harder against his, relishing in the saliva-slicked connection of your faces.
As for the grinding -- a hand bumped your tail out of the way as he cupped your ass, fingers digging down and forcefully pressing against your crotch.

All Might grunted into you when he discovered what was waiting there. Wetness. An intense wetness that had soaked through every article of clothing you were wearing, absolutely *drenching* his fingers. You gasped loudly when you felt him press harder against you there, brain automatically shutting down now that you had found someone to rut with.

“I need you,” you cried to him, gasps falling from your mouth as he fingers continued to dig and prod at your sex through your pants. “I can’t. I can’t. I can’t. Please. Please.”

He made another deepthroated sound at hearing your earnest begging, breaking away from your mouth to look around the roof. You cried out at the loss of contact, clawing at his face to turn it back to you. But he wouldn’t listen, so you resorted to biting and licking the underside of his chin while he searched for *something* to set you against. Something with leverage.

*An air conditioning unit.*

Good enough.

He was walking somewhere, face returning to yours but he didn't bless you with another kiss, though you were hysterically begging and scrabbling for it. Instead, his nose was in your hair and he was breathing loudly, looking for a quick hit of your scent. With you unabashedly humping him, he was more open in indulging in the little things he enjoyed, as you weren’t in the right mind to recognize them. He inhaled again, the sweat of your scalp amplifying the smells of you trapped in your hair.

On another deep inhale, he realized something was amiss when a strange taste settled on the tip of his tongue. An earthy flavor that quickly shifted sweet. His eyes rolled slightly, body flaring to life at the hit of trapped pollen he had inadvertently taken. It wasn't enough to send him into a sex-crazed, mind-melting frenzy, but he felt his already eager cock lurch and grow somehow harder.

It was a good thing he hadn’t been at the club, he thought as he mauled your mouth, fingers digging into your body. The second kiss was just as heated and messy as the first -- All Might grabbed at your scalp and twisted your hair in his hand; you cried out and he rumbled and cooed against your sounds of distress.

Had he been hit by a dosage of sex pollen… he would have shattered every bone in your body.

The air conditioning unit was the ideal height, thanking whatever good fortune was smiling down on him. Your crotch was level with his and, as if you sensed the perfection, your legs immediately straddled his waist so you could properly ground your lower body against his groin in earnest.

There was a leaking hardness in his pants and you shamelessly moaned at the feeling of it pressing against your sex, your body already trembling in anticipation of the beautiful relief it would provide for you. All Might watched with heated eyes as you writhed and rutted against his body, no sense of shame bogging you down. And you were making such loud, frequent cries so *easily*. As a test he placed his hand on your thigh, watching a shudder roll across you at the contact.

*Heaven.*

“I need it,” you groaned, head lolling as your fogged eyes met his. Blundering, trembling hands were reaching out, trying to undo the trappings of his pants.

He stepped back, away from your fingers, with a strained chuckled. “Now, now--”
“Not tonight!” you wailed up at him, assuming he wanted to tease. To torture. “I can’t-- not tonight-- Please. Help me.”

He decided then to forego his theatrics for the night. You wouldn’t have appreciated them anyway. And his eager cock didn’t want them.

With heavy hands he grabbed the waist of your leggings, ripping and tugging them down off your body. Even in the dark, he could see the wetness clinging to your underwear and thighs, glinting seductively in the weak moonlight. You were crying out his name, wriggling and shifting your hips, imploring for more. Demanding more. Begging for more. He released a heavy breath, eyes flicking between your dripping cunt and salivating, bright-red, face.

Beautiful.

He dropped to his knees in an unceremonious rush, using both hands to tear your underwear off your body before burying his face against your sex. Like a man starved, he attacked your cunt, large tongue immediately burying up to the hilt, wriggling and searching. Prodding and poking. All so he could better taste you and drive you wild.

Your body bucked and squirmed beneath him, so much so that he had to grab your legs to keep you in place against his mouth. Every flick of his tongue had you crying out his name. You were jerking against him, hands rubbing his face and hair, constantly moving but otherwise keeping in contact with him. It wasn’t just your hands that were roaming -- you were just moving. Continuously shifting side-to-side, rocking your hips, rolling your body.

He grunted and snorted as he lapped at you enthusiastically, dissolving into a more feral creature thanks to the minor hit of sex pollen that had stained his brain. His pants… he needed to take off his pants soon. They were too tight. And you weren’t helping the matter -- your pussy was beyond dripping or soaking; it was a never-ending torrent of you that coated his mouth, tongue and chin. All Might was getting drunk off it, his nails digging into your flesh while you continued to howl his name.

To his own dismay, his conscious whispered to him to move on -- as good as you tasted, you were in lust-fueled agony and deserved relief. Slowly he shifted his tongue up to play with your clit, a rough finger slipping inside you to offer your cunt something large to grip on.

“That’s it,” he muttered against you, voice rough and thick. “You keep calling my name.”

For someone as wet and wild as you, he assumed you would be cumming left and right thanks to his tongue. A tongue that had gotten to know you quite well. But that wasn’t the case. As he traced circles against your rock-hard nub, eventually adding a second and even third finger, he noticed you becoming more and more frazzled. Yet, you didn’t seem to heading toward your climax.

The lack of alleviation was starting to fray at whatever loose bindings were holding you together. Frustrated, weepy eyes met his and your mouth opened and closed in harsh, urgent huffs. As if you suspected he was somehow denying you, though his attention had been unwavering.

“A-ah,” you gripped your hair, tears breaching your lashes to traveling down your face. His gut flipped -- he was unsure how he felt about the crying in the moment. “Please. Please let me cum. Please.”

“I’m not stopping you!” All Might snapped back, as if he was being made physically uncomfortable by your lack of orgasm as well.
“Why!??” your head dropped back onto the metal unit and you rubbed your face, smearing your nose and whiskers.

All Might wasn’t sure why either.

Unless…

Unless you couldn’t get off by his mouth.

You were flipped on your stomach, whimpering and looking over your shoulder as you heard the telltale sounds of a belt being unbuckled and pants being unzipped. He didn’t bother dropping his pants really -- he just freed his weeping cock from the suffocation of his clothing and aligned it with your opening, rubbing the oozing tip up and down along your glistened lower lips.

His hand rested on your lower back as you curled your body up, eyes rolling when you felt something hot, heavy and thick finally starting to cram itself inside you. Where it belonged.

“Yesss...!” you hissed, brain letting you know that, finally, you had solved the puzzle. But he was going too slow, forcing himself to try and work at muscles that were already loose and open, waiting for him.

“Harder!” you cried and he wavered at hearing that.

Against his better judgment, and spurred on by his own need for roughness, he listened. All Might pushed deeper inside of you, skipping past several minute of foreplay to start pumping in and out of you with abandon.

But it wasn’t enough.

“More!” you sang out. He listened. Oh, did he listen. Deeper he pushed, retracting lightly only to plunge more of himself into you in sharp, deep thrusts. When you repeated ‘more’ a second time, he discarded any remaining caution he had and just buried himself into your sex completely, his groin pressing firmly against your ass.

You should have been uncomfortable, but you weren’t. You felt full. Wonderfully, magically, satisfyingly full. But your contented silence made him pause -- had he hurt you…?

You mumbled something up at him, jerking your hips against toward him.

“What?” he grunted, swallowing loudly.

You turned your head to the side, cheek resting against dirty metal, so he could hear you better.

“Fuck me.”

Talk about magic words.

He did.

One of his hands remained firmly on your back while the other pressed into your hair, pulling your head back as he fucked you, as you had commanded.

Commanded? You wanted to command him?

Each time his hips slapped against your ass, you gasped out for him. And each gasp only further inflamed his already drunken passions. Your loudness and expressiveness was so unlike you and All...
Might reveled in it. Every little movement of his would set off a chain reaction of sighs and
whimpers in you that would only spur him on more.

None of the sounds you made were quiet -- everything that erupted from your mouth had power
behind it. Passion behind it.

“Like a bitch in heat,” he grunted to himself, moving both his hands to your waist to better yank you
back harder against his cock.

“Yessss,” you cooed back to him. He hadn’t expected you to answer, but the response did elicit a
large, clenching grin from him.

“Glad I found you?” he asked. You moaned when he shifted your body slightly, his cock re-angling
inside you in the process. When you answered affirmatively he chuckled. “Didn’t want anyone else,
did you?”

“N-no,” you grunted before gasping when he bucked against you harder, pleased by your answer.
“Only you… only want you.”

That. That was the perfect answer.

Slap.

Pain rocketed across your backside as one of his heavy hands struck an asscheek, making your body
careen toward the side.

“Tell me who you want.”

You shivered, the pain of the slap only stoking your fervor.

“You!”

Another slap across the opposite cheek. You whimpered and looked back at him again, apparently
unaware of the drool spilling out of the corner of your mouth.

All Might saw it.

Another slap, followed by another -- his hand switched cheeks at each strike, leaving you
shuddering and cawing beneath him. He watched your skin turn a beautiful shade of red, the stinging
only making everything better. Could he get you to be this depraved every night? There must be a
way to get doses of pollen. He needed you to be mindless again.

The smacking stopped when he felt a slight buzzing feeling in his palm, which meant your backside
must have been burning.

Then, he was all gentle touches -- softly, though with still-rough hands, he brushed and
caressed ringing, blazing skin. His easy contact didn't settle the pain down but it was still
wonderful and you were mewling out to him.

“That’s it, beautiful,” he said thickly, hand trailing up your ass and across your back before returning
to your waist. “You did so well tonight.”

Calloused fingers slid underneath your body, shifting and burying against clit as All Might picked up
the pace of his fucking. This time, he’d make you cum.

You tried your best to sit up, resting on your elbows as you felt your body repeatedly slam into
metal. But you had no sense of pain, all you could focus on was the pleasure building in your loins.

“That’s it,” he told you again, voice and mouth thick with spit, fingers digging into your flesh as felt his lip start to curl. “Let All Might help you.”

You didn’t answer him -- all you did was pant and groan, pushing up and back against his hand and cock.

*God, he was perfect. Everything about him was divine. So strong. So wonderful. And he belonged to you. No one else deserved him. Only you. He was only yours.*

“Is that so?”

You heard his rough, humored voice by your head -- he was leaning over you, resting on a forearm while his other hand continued to work your clit to oblivion. Apparently, your thoughts hadn’t been trapped in the safety of your mind, you had been whispering them out loud to yourself. And All Might had caught you.

“Only yours,” he grunted, a wicked smile curling across his face, one that you couldn't see. He fell into a loud silence that was only disturbed by his harsh, irregular breathing. That was until he muttered out something to himself that you didn't catch, “…Only yours.”

Finally, you felt a familiar pressure at the base of your skull. A twisting, warm feeling that was mirrored in your gut.

Your hand reached for his tightly-clenched fist positioned slightly above your head. He was approaching his own release, focusing on the bubbling in his gut and the way your cunt clung to his shaft at each thrust. When he felt the tapping of your fingers, he loosened his fist, allowing your hand to slip over his, grasping his large thumb as your body started to go rigid, actively pushing against All Might’s body.

At the first burst of pleasure, your body slackened and you fell against the air conditioning unit, bucking and crying as each wave of warmth worked itself up and down your body, cascading out to each limb before returning to ball itself in your gut. Whimpering, you felt All Might continue to thrust through your orgasm, though he was becoming more erratic with his movements. The way your body grasped and clutched at him had furthered chipped away at his resilience.

He ignored your lurching shift to gaspy wails upon realizing he wasn’t going to end his fingering of your clit, making your body shudder and flail from the overstimulation. Not that you could do anything -- he was pressing more of his body weight on top of yours.

You had been pinned, all you could do was wait for him to finish.

But you didn’t have to wait very long.

“Oh kitten, you’re gonna make me cum,” he warned in loud huffs.

You nodded at him, reaching for his thumb again, lightly patting it. After a series of increasing harder thrusts that had you crying out again in finally recognized pain, you heard him grunt loudly above you, hips snapping against yours and remaining there as an excessive amount of warmth flooded your core.

*Relief.*

It wasn’t instant, but you felt the cobwebs that had muddled and covered your mind begin to
disappear, your thoughts freeing themselves from the barriers they had been trapped behind. But it was a short-lived feeling of relief. What followed next was a sudden, encompassing wave of fatigue that had your head falling forward against metal.

Your eyes had grown tremendously heavy.

All Might was saying something to you -- petting your back before letting out a weak chuckle. When you didn’t respond, he nudged you before turning you over, examining your face. You slowly blinked at him.

“...s’tired,” you slurred at him, closing your eyes for several seconds before opening them to look back at his face.

“Again?” you heard him say with an irritated sigh. “... habit, darling.”

You knew what he was saying without hearing it -- but you didn’t care. Your body had worked itself into a frenzy and, now that it was satisfied, it was shutting down to replenish all the energy it had lost.

“... God dammit.”

It was a bit of an ordeal to get you home. After putting your pants back on and backtracking to find where he dropped his helmet, All Might realized he had to travel via jumping to get you back to your apartment in Kamino. The trains were done running for the night, a taxi would take too long...

By the time he crossed a distance that was normally an hour by train, his stamina was dangerously depleted. He clenched his teeth as he carried you through the threshold of your home, ignoring the sweat trailing down his neck and the blood collecting at the back of his throat. He had managed to toss you onto your bed before his strength failed him completely; he was racked by a series of wet coughs, tendrils of steam rising from his body as he lost mass.

Standing in too-large clothes, Yagi continued to cough into his hand, unconcerned by the spattering of blood that coated his palm, which he cleaned off by wiping it on his pants.

It was... uncomfortable to be his true form in your presence, even if you weren’t conscious to gawk at it. He had hoped to have enough energy to at least get you into a shower to hose you off, but that clearly wasn’t in the cards for you. You’d just have to sleep in your soiled and soaked leggings with his load leaking out of you until you could clean yourself in the morning.

Well, he didn’t dislike the image of his seed leaking out of you...

Tired eyes settled on your sleeping face. On the smeared makeup that coated it.

A thrum.

A kitten. His kitten.

He grinned, shaking his head at you. First, you show up as a kitten for him. Then, you attempted to tease him with a picture of some pathetic All Might impersonator you had clung to at your party. Obviously, he was on your mind -- you were doing a terrible job at hiding it.

Were you trying to hide it?
“Stay,” you groaned to him, shifting in your bed, bleary eyes looking up at him.

His blood ran cold, eyes widening.

*You were looking at him.*

But you didn’t see Yagi Toshinori standing in your bedroom. In your fogged state of mind, you only saw two electric blue eyes gazing down at you in the dark. Eyes that were usually hidden by shadows, now shining so bright for you, drawing you in completely.

That’s what you fixated on. Nothing else.

With a grunt you sat up, oblivious to the sagging and soaking in the crotch of your pants. You weren’t entirely cohesive, Yagi realized, but his conclusion did nothing to ease the discomfort that plagued him.

You reached for him slowly, grasping a too-small wrist and tugging the too-thin man closer to the edge of your bed.

No, you weren’t focusing on anything else. Just two beautiful eyes and a familiar, comforting presence.

“*Stay,*” you repeated, draping your arms around lanky shoulders before burying your face against a too-thin neck. Yagi’s eyes were still wide, his Adam’s apple bobbing sharply as he swallowed.

He allowed you to pull his sharp face down toward you and when your mouth brushed against too-thin lips…

Groaning, Yagi fell into you, surprisingly strong arms wrapping around your body, mouth hungry and desperate for yours. Bumping teeth and sharp breaths eventually settled into the soft clicking of familiar mouths grasping one another.

To you, it was nothing out of the ordinary. Just you and your All Might sharing a rare tender kiss in the dark.

For Yagi… how long had it been since he had any kind of physical affection in *this* form?

The answer was too long.

And he *wanted* it.

He nuzzled his nose against yours when you broke away with a satisfied hum, fully prepared to lead you into another kiss. Something stronger to satisfy the empty he felt in a lost stomach. But you inhaled deeply, sleepily, and moved away from him.

He was disappointed, silently placing a hand on your arm, too shamed by his own weakness to say anything or demand more. But you caught on that he wanted *something*. He was All Might after all, it was never easy with him. You shared a warm smile before running your hands up the side of his neck and face, holding eye contact with his gorgeous blues, nails lightly scratching and massaging his scalp before you pulled away for real.

Your body and mind were too waterlogged and heavy for you to stay up any longer after that. Settling under the covers, you mumbled something incomprehensible to him before taking another deep breath and dozing off.
Satisfied.

He stayed at your bedside a little longer, gazing at your sleeping form, lulled by a strange sense of... something.

Until his inner All Might materialized to pummel sense back into him.

He was acting like some lovelorn teenager. He was acting like a fool.

*Pathetic. Weak.*

And he needed to get a hold of himself.

Sparing you one last glance, he left your bedroom. An understandable sense of deja vu settled over him as he looked over the pictures and belongings scattered across your living room. It was a scene that echoed the first night he had... *ensnared* you.

It ended the same way too.

With not much else he could do, he left. You were left snuggled away safely in your apartment while Yagi Toshinori started the long, quiet journey back to his.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed the nsfw Halloween special! I had put it to a vote a few weeks back on what people wanted to see -- a 'submissive' All Might or sex-pollen Aristan and the pollen won by a pretty decent margin. So, I hope you enjoyed it! Who knows, maybe the other option will end up in the Christmas chapter!

Anyway, just wanted to give you all a heads up that I'm taking a break from posting next week, so there will be no new chapter on Saturday. And the following Saturday (the 20th) I'm going to post a mini-one. That will give me a nice break to catch up with my workload and ongoing writing projects!

After that, everything will be back to normal!
“Poindexter said she found something.”

Naomasa looked up and sighed, shaking his head at the younger detective standing next to his desk.

The room was quiet, save for a few muttering phone calls and the familiar clicking of computer keyboards. But the quiet meant their conversation was going to carry. They had about fifteen eavesdroppers.

And Kuryuu went and called the most popular forensic technician they had a name.

The man did not know how to leave a good impression on his peers.

“Don’t call her that. It’s mean.”

“Oh, I don’t mean anything by it,” Kuryuu said with a laugh, oblivious. “It’s just a joke!”

Joke or not, Naomasa still didn’t find much humor in it. But he had a laundry list of reports and tasks that he needed to get done before the end of the day and just didn’t have the time for a dressing down of the rookie.

“Did Yuasa mention what she found? What it’s in regards to?” He asked, returning to his nearly completed report, pointedly saying the technician’s name to further drive the need for respect into the new guy’s head.

‘Found something…’

If it was something small, maybe he could swing down to the lab later to thank her and check in on it. On his way to lunch, maybe.

If he had the time to take a lunch, that is.

“It’s about that assassination plot a while back. You know, the nerve one. With that family—”

“Yoshida!” Naomasa was looking at the rookie, eyes wide with surprise. “She found something on that case? What? What is it?”

“Well, she hung up before the conversation made it that far…”

Chewing on the inside of his cheek, Naomasa quickly saved his work before lurching away from his desk, his dress shoes clicking loudly against the linoleum floor as he briskly walked away. Kuryuu was startled by the suddenness of his work buddy’s movements and quickly jogged after him, unaware of the dry looks he was receiving from the surrounding officers and detectives.

A silent elevator ride later, the two had entered a small room stuffed with overflowing filing cabinets and several ashtrays filled with coins. Having heard someone enter her sanctuary, an orange-skinned woman peered out from an adjacent room. She smiled widely upon seeing Naomasa but the brightness dulled considerably upon seeing a beaming Kuryuu behind him.

“Good afternoon, Yuasa,” Naomasa said brightly. “Heard you had something for us!”
“For you, Nao,” she said sweetly, a strange echo punctuating the end of each word. “But you didn’t answer your phone so I had to call the other one.”

“I have a name you know!” Kuryuu piped up, trying and failing to hide the smile on his face. The glare Yuasa shot at him was withering, but he didn’t seem bothered by it.

“I’m sorry,” Naomasa said, sidestepping slightly to better block Kuryuu from her view. “It’s just a busy time of year for me. But Kuryuu did tell me what you found had to do with the Yoshida case…”

At his placating tone, Yuasa nodded and waved him inside her office -- the space was just as cramped and messy as the first room. Papers, folders and files were stacked everywhere. A floor fan was on, facing the corner of a room, blowing the hanging vines of a thriving spider plant.

“I found…” she paused for dramatic effect as she leaned down to her computer. After a few clicks, she turned her monitor to her guests. “A serial number.”

Naomasa tried to hide the disappointment from his face while Kuryuu peeked from behind him, squinting his eyes toward the monitor. A small mixture of letters and numbers were displayed on the screen, etched into some type of metal.

“… Oh!” Naomasa said with what he hoped sounded like enthusiasm. Yuasa waited a beat, smile still frozen in place, until she recognized neither of the detectives understood what she had just uncovered.

She sighed, deflating.

“It’s a serial number pulled off of the music box used in the attack,” she explained. “All of the other objects had any identifying markings and numbers scrubbed, but whoever did the attack missed one.” She gestured her head to the screen. “This was located on one of the gears of the music box.”

Nothing.

“We lucked out,” she stressed. “We can trace who purchased it.”

At that, she finally saw lights of excitement blaze in her colleague’s eyes.

“Wait, wait, wait…” Kuryuu spoke up before Naomasa could. “How is this possible? Are you saying I can go out and buy a candy bar and it can be linked back to me?”

Yuasa stared at him.

“And you graduated the academy?” she asked. Kuryuu bristled while Naomasa held up his hands, desperately trying to keep everyone calm. “The music box is a collector’s item,” she snapped before anyone else could interject. “You can either buy it directly from the company or a handful of resellers. Using this serial number--” the screen of her monitor flickered when she jabbed her finger onto it. “-- I can find out when it was purchased and where. There aren’t a lot of these particular music boxes floating around, so the data pool we’ll be working in will be relatively small.”

“But what if it was sold on eBay? A garage sale?”

Her excitement dimmed at Naomasa’s question.

“Then we have to try and work with the sale records of an individual instead of a company. We can get a username from the seller of the buyer on eBay or any other online marketplace. But a garage
“sale…” She frowned. “That’s when we start to get into dead-end territory.”

The detectives shared a glance and Yuasa waved her hands, sensing she was losing her audience.

“But this is a good thing!” she stressed. “This is much, much better than nothing.”

That was true. The case had been at a stalemate for weeks and it was the first break they had gotten about who the supplier of the tainted merchandise could have been.

“You did good work, Yuasa,” Naomasa said. The orange girl immediately turned a bright shade of pink, which caused Kuryuu to erupt into raucous laughter.

“Real smooth,” he teased. At being called out, mortification gripped her and immediately the pink darkened and brightened, turning red as anger replaced the emotions in the girl’s body. She was glaring at the younger man again, her fury palpable.

Naomasa stepped in to try and save the poor technician from any more embarrassment, shoo-ing Kuryuu to wait outside of her office while she put together the company to contact and the serial number information they could use to start tracing the journey of the music box.

“He just has a rude sense of humor,” he tried to explain, watching the girl’s skin shift between red and pink. The sudden, swirling changes were starting to make him go dizzy, so he forced himself to stare at the desk while her fingers flew across her keyboard.

“Yeah, well…” she trailed off, unsure how to finish the sentence, but slammed her thumbs down on the spacebar as she typed. “Wait until he goes off on his own. No one is going to want to work with him. Most the other techs hate him too.”

“I’m working on it,” Naomasa said with a sigh. “Getting him to act more professional. I just have a lot on my plate and--”

“Oh, Naomasa, I don’t blame you,” she cooed and he silently kicked himself for using her feelings to his advantage. But the churning of her skin had stopped and she was settling back into her default orange. “I know you try and you’re always just so nice--”

Moments later, Kuryuu watched an exhausted Naomasa leave the room, closing the office door behind him.

“You’re not making many friends here,” Naomasa stated simply as the duo left the tech room, heading back to the elevator, a manilla folder in hand.

“I was joking--”

“That’s a poor excuse.”

Kuryuu sighed at the curt tone and nodded his head.

“I know, I know. I have to learn how to control my mouth. But I didn’t mean anything by it, you know? Just a couple little jokes to lighten the mood.”

“You can’t do that right off the bat in Japan,” Naomasa said. “You have to build up those kinds of friendships then start teasing.”

“That’s the one thing I miss about America,” Kuryuu said, finger absentmindedly following the wood grain in the elevator paneling. “I miss the friendliness. You all are polite here, yeah. But it’s
Naomasa looked at his partner out of the corner of his eye.

“They’ll warm up to you,” he found himself saying. “Trust me. But you just have to tone it down. Be a little more considerate. Be just as polite.”

“I’ll try.”

“And the first thing you can do is formally apologize to Yuasa. The last thing you want is for forensics to dislike you. Upset one and you’ll upset the entire team. That’s how evidence testing ends up getting delayed.”

“Yeah, I’ll apologize to her alright,” Kuryuu said under his breath and a twinge rocketed up Naomasa’s gut.

“You’re lying,” he stated matter-of-factly, receiving a groan in response.

“Alright, I promise to apologize to her.”

To the senior detective’s relief, his body didn’t react to the man’s words. He was being truthful.

“Good. Now here--” he pushed the manilla folder into his colleague’s chest. “I’ll leave calling to you. Just tell the manufacturer that we have a serial number of one of their music boxes that was used in a possible homicide and that you want to know if they have records of who purchased it.”

“I get it, I’m not a total greenhorn,” Kuryuu said. “I won’t bumble it up. I never do.”

That… was true, Naomasa noted silently. Though Kuryuu was racking up his share of personnel problems, professionally he worked beautifully. His reports were concise and always on time, he was never late to work and if was assigned to a task, he would see it through to completion. Even the victims they worked with sung his praises.

It was just his colleagues that bore the dislike for him.

The elevator ride went quiet, both sets of eyes watching the floor numbers increase.

“Why’d you have to point out the fact she changed colors,” Naomasa groaned, rubbing his forehead.

“It was just a bit of teasing, Naomasa. Nothing hurtful meant by it.”

“If you don’t like her, why just keep things curt and polite?” he suggested. “She’s really the best, Yuu. I don’t want to get on her bad side.”

“Don’t like her?” Kuryuu looked at his partner, brows furrowed in surprise. “I thought it was obvious. I kind of have a thing for her!”

Naomasa blinked, caught off guard by the declaration.

Even more surprising -- his body registered Kuryuu’s admission as truthful.
Next week we return to our regularly scheduled programming, my friends. Just a little more groundwork I had to set.

Thanks so much for all your love and support. You all are the best! <3

And I'm behind on answering comments, so please forgive me.
Sugar Daddy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘Are you nervous?’

Irritated, your thumbs hovered over the keyboard of your phone. What kind of question was that!? Of course you were nervous! Your foot was shaking wildly, a knot was pulled taut in your heart and the train ride was getting unbearably long.

‘I’ve been better,’ you wrote, hoping Yume would get the hint. She did. After sending a series of gifs related to hugging, she sent one final message before your train pulled into your stop.

‘It’s only first day jitters. You’ll be fine!’

Odaiba Research moved fast with their onboarding process. Frighteningly fast. The day after you accepted the apprenticeship position from Doctor Kravitz, you were emailed a bundled of paperwork you had to fill out, in addition to consenting to various background checks for the clearance levels you would need to possess.

You figured it would be a solid month, maybe longer, before your first day.

Not two weeks later.

How could a lab move that fast? Especially a lab of such pedigree? Wouldn’t they want to take their time vetting new hires thoroughly? They were dealing with sensitive quirk and support research relating to heroes -- they couldn’t afford to hire just anyone.

Unless they had a sizable amount of resources dedicated to investigating applicants.

You swallowed at that thought, your nerves getting worse.

The lab’s campus was just as beautiful and imposing as you remembered and you felt like a fish out of water as you shuffled inside, doing your best to look at ease. The receptionists behind the large desk in the lobby were the same ones who had greeted you during your tour. Of course, they had no recollection of you.

“New hire?” the woman behind the counter repeated after you explained what you were there for. She looked to the other receptionist beside her, silently asking if they could provide some kind of explanation. All they offered was a confused stare. “We usually bring people in quarterly,” she said gently. “Have them go through orientation workshops all on the same day. Could you have gotten your start date confused?”

Clumsy fingers pulled up your email as you silently cursed at how long it was taking your phone to load. Despite being a hub of activity, the lab was in a bit of dead zone service-wise.

“Yes!” You displayed your screen to the receptionist. “Doctor Kravitz said to come in today.”

After the receptionists had a bit of back and forth, they finally got Kravitz on the phone who did confirm that you were starting today, to your immense relief. At that point, you were beginning to worry that everything had somehow been a massive mistake -- that you weren’t hired after all and even believing you had what it took to work in such an organization had all been a pipedream.
You told as much to Kravitz when he appeared after a considerable wait, prompting a laugh from the much older man. He considered you for a second, smile still plastered on his face.

“Oh no, it’s no mistake,” he said. “The entire team has been waiting for you!”

You thrummed at the acknowledgment, ego doubling in size.

*People were waiting for you!*

After exchanging a couple more pleasantries, the scientist was leading you deeper into the building, taking you to the security office to get your badge printed and biometrics done.

“You’re a special case, you know,” Kravitz said, glancing over his shoulder. “I had to go a little higher up the food chain to get permission to bring you on during a between period. But you’re such a rare case of talent that the lab couldn’t afford to miss the opportunity!”

You face went red and you laughed loudly, waving your hands at his back.

“I wouldn’t say that! I’m not *that* good!” you chuffed.

“Now, my assistant Emily will help you out after lunch,” Kravitz said, ignoring your half-hearted show of humility. “She’ll explain the small picture stuff about benefits and how to use the intranet. A crash course orientation, if you will.”

He ushered you into a small room where a jackalope-like person, dressed in a navy blue security outfit, was sitting behind a desk. Kravitz, who apparently knew the guard on a first-name basis, explained who you were and what you needed.

“Rika here will get you all sorted,” he said, placing a hand on your shoulder and squeezing once the conversation ended. “I have to go meet with a colleague upstairs. When you’re done here, take the elevator down the hall to the basement. Our lab is the third door down.”

He left you then with Rika -- she went over basic security rules as your hand and fingers were scanned, most of which involved refraining from holding doors open for people. And then she took your picture.

As you waited for your badge to print, you were texting a non-responding Yume about what Kravitz had said about you.

*They had been waiting for you.*

*You!*

Twenty minutes later, you were standing in mayhem.

About a dozen people were flittering around the lab Kravitz had told you to meet him in, ignoring you as they bounced from desk to desk. It didn’t take you long to surmise they were searching for something and that their hunt took precedence over acknowledging you.

So you stood out of the way, painfully aware that every second that passed only made you look more awkward.

“Oh!” You glanced in the direction of a shout. A girl was looking *at* you. “You must be the new apprentice!”

Gliding past increasingly panicking coworkers, the girl bowed and introduced herself as Emily,
Kravitz’s personal assistant.

“You’ve come at a bit of an odd time,” she said after your quick introductions. She was gesturing to the chaos of the room. “We have Endeavor coming in later this afternoon and someone,” she sighed, glaring at a red-head boy who was crawling on his hands and knees beneath desks. “Lost a hard drive with old designs on it.”

“I told you three fucking weeks ago to save everything to the OneDrive, Soh!” A dark-haired woman shouted at the flinching red-head. “A hard drive!? A hard drive is our backup!?”

“I was going to back it up on the cloud!” Soh whined. “But I...” he trailed off and you could have sworn he mumbled forgot.

“Oh, you better pray we find that hard drive before Kravitz gets back.” The woman said, shaking her head. “Otherwise you have to tell him you lost all his files.”

“I just...” A man in a lab coat had a hand on his forehead. “I don’t get how you didn’t save it to the OneDrive, Soh. It probably would have been faster and easier than copying everything over to a hard drive. I can’t wrap my head around your decision making.”

“We have bits and pieces saved to our team’s OneDrive,” Emily explained, turning her head toward you. “But the older stuff has been taken off of different computers over the years. It contained probably close to fifteen years worth of designs and concepts. Including past Endeavor stuff, which is why we wanted to have it.” She frowned. “But now everyone is in panic mode since we can’t find it.”

“There is no we.” The earlier woman snapped toward you and Emily. “Soh here was responsible for it. He volunteered to back-up all the data and he didn’t. Why volunteer for something if you don’t have the time to do it!?”

“It was a low priority!”

“What’s going on?”

You watched as the lab assistant and scientists froze, turning to look at who had just walked in the front door.

Kravitz.

He was glaring at the mess but his gaze immediately softened when he caught sight of you.

“Soh lost your hard drive.”

Several eyes landed on a blonde girl who had been standing quietly in the corner, surprised at how quickly she had snitched. Soh looked like he wanted to melt into the floor.


“The design one.”

He repeated the words silently before everything clicked and his eyes widened.

They fell on Soh.

“I thought you were going to upload everything to the OneDrive,” he said quietly. Before he had a chance to respond, Kravitz was glaring around the room. “What are you all standing around for!?”
This isn't a team meeting! Keep looking!"

You swallowed, sneaking a glance at Emily out of the corner of your eye, unsure of how you should take such a stressful moment. She seemed tired and looked to be… pitying Soh.

Was this normal?

Your heart sank.

Kravitz had moved and was talking quietly to Soh but, judging by both of their faces, it was not a conversation you wanted any part of. Emily turned to you, partially obscuring the dressing down Soh was receiving.

“It’s just stress,” she muttered under her breath, offering you a tight smile. “He gets this way whenever we get close to a deadline. Or a big-name hero or board member is coming in. He’s got a lot riding on his shoulders right now.”

“Oh,” was all you thought to say.

“Found it!”

A short woman with the features of a rodent held up something triumphantly in her hands.

A hard drive.

“Oh thank god,” Soh actually said, deflating in relief that he didn’t lose 15 years of work. Kravitz didn’t seem as relieved -- he was gesturing for the woman to bring him the hardware that had been causing them all such a headache.

“I want this place cleaned before Endeavor gets here,” he ordered. “It looks like a bomb went off and we need to--”

During the search, a floor fan had been moved -- its power cord pulled tautly.

Collectively, you all watched the woman overlook the long black wire that was stretched in front of her. Her left foot caught on the cord and she stumbled forward, trying to catch herself from falling but ultimately failing.

She landed on the floor with a hard thud.

The hard drive, which had weaseled free from her hands during her freefall, landed on the tile floor with a smack.

Horror.

“Mikki!”

But you were stepping forward, hand slightly raised, time too short to explain what you were doing.

The hard drive!

Triangle filled Mikki as she-- She stopped, standing in front of the desk she had been rummaging around in, the hard drive raised in her hand.

Why did it feel like…
Looking around the room, she realized all eyes had fixated on the newcomer who had been standing next to Emily. She was rubbing the back of her head.

“Sorry to just use my quirk on you without asking!” you said. “I only had a couple of seconds to react.”

“What was that?” The earlier dark-haired woman asked. “Mikki just went… backward.”

You winced. There was something profoundly personal about sharing your quirk with a room full of strangers.

’But they’re not strangers, they’re co-workers now.’

“I have a time quirk,” you said. "I can manipulate things and people and reverse them. Rewind them. Not far -- only a couple of seconds. But you have no idea how many times its saved me from messing up cutting fabric.”

You laughed lightly. Emily was the only one to crack a smile.

“Mikki!” Kravitz said after a deep breath. “The hard drive. And please, watch your step.”

She nodded, carefully moving across the lab, still slightly confused over what had transpired.

“Did I… did I go back in time?” she asked Sho quietly after handing off the drive to Kravitz.

You weren’t sure what the response was -- Kravitz had taken a deep breath before moving to stand in front of you, a large smile on his face. He was nodding his head ever-so-slightly.

“I knew you belonged here,” he said, voice firm before turning to introduce you to the team at large as the new apprentice. “I know she’ll be quite a valuable addition to our team. She’s quite the talent, you’ll see.”

You blushed.

You didn’t get a chance to meet Endeavor with everyone else that afternoon, though you weren’t quite sure whether you more relieved or disappointed. In fact, you didn’t even see Kravitz the rest of your first week either, spending most of your time with his assistant Emily. She was the one who got you set up with a laptop and all its security peripherals. She was also the one who showed you how to sign on to the network and use the intranet before taking you around to personally introduce you to the team.

With the stress of losing something so important gone, your new colleagues all seemed friendly enough. Most afternoons everyone ate together in the cafeteria and, apparently, on Fridays everyone wore jeans.

The second week was when Kravitz reappeared. He took you aside and after listening intently about how your week had gone, he dropped your first assignment on you.

“Endeavor is preparing to enter another ‘age’ of hero work and wants to mark the occasion with a new suit. I want you to be part of the team that works on it.”

“E-Endeavor’s suit!” you repeated, bewildered. You barely understood the process of submitting fabric and material requests through Odaiba’s system and he wanted you to help work on the number
one hero’s costume?

“Connect with Mikki sometime in the week,” he said, ignoring your hesitancy. “She’s the lead on the design. Anything she needs I expect you to help her with.” He stopped before he left, turning to look at you, as if he forgot something. “I have complete faith in you! This should be nothing for someone of your talents!”

Your ego didn’t swell with that compliment. Instead, you forced an uneasy smile.

Mikki had been in the meeting with Endeavor and quickly explained what was going on.

“Oh we’re not making anything yet,” she said to your immense relief. “Normally we draft up a dozen or so design ideas for him to consider. Last week’s meeting was to get a sense of what he was looking for. The next meeting will be our examples that will be whittled down from there.”

“I’m so used to designing something based off the initial meeting,” you said with a groan that Mikki giggled at.

“No, no, we’re much more thorough here. So let’s see, right now it’s just me and you working on concept ideas and Endeavor is due in on Tuesday. I’ll take care of nine if you want to do the rest? We’ll settle on fourteen, what do you think?”

*Five designs in less than a week!*?

You had to keep your jaw from falling to the ground as Mikki listed off all the things to keep in mind and other aesthetics Endeavor wanted to include before showing you examples of her past work.

Your heart sank even more. They were *technical*. Details were blown up on the sides, fabric types were suggested.

No, these weren’t sketches you could potentially drum up in a few hours.

*Shit.*

But somehow, whether it was a combination of motivation and stress (complimented by a few late nights), by the time Saturday rolled around you had four designs ready and a fifth near completion.

Which meant you had a chance to enjoy the quality friend time you had scheduled with Yume.

To celebrate your first two weeks at Odaiba, you decided to have a throwback night. An ode to days long past where you would have a sleepover, sit around, talk, eat junk food and watch soap operas. They had started in middle school and extended into college but had grown increasingly rare once you and all your friends reached drinking age.

But it seemed like a perfect, stress-free weekend idea. It would give you a chance to decompress and swap stories.

Maybe her first real work week was just as horrifying as yours.

Besides, the timing was right. All Might was out *somewhere* relatively far away, which meant the odds of him showing up unannounced at your door had fallen considerably.

You idly wondered what he was up to. You hadn’t communicated with him since his last visit and there had been no All Might sightings broadcasted on the news.

Oddly, you had the strongest urge to text him. Just to say hello. Maybe to check in on him. Pride
stopped you though -- you didn’t want to be the one to crack and break the silence. You should have been used to it by that point anyway, the lack of communication.

*Why was time making it harder?*

Mid-afternoon, a knock on the door roused you from your couch. Yume was *early* but you didn’t mind -- you had a lot to get off your chest and she was the perfect ear.

But Yume wasn’t waiting at the door for you.

It was two large men.

“Are you…” A round-nose man squinted at a clipboard. “Art-san?”

“Art-san?” you repeated, brows furrowing.

Art-san.

*Artisan.*

They were looking for Artisan.

“... What’s this in regards to?” you asked, hand gripping your door tightly in case you needed to slam it shut.

Not that it would have done you much good. Thanks to the worst building maintenance man in all of existence, it was still broken.

“I’ve got a delivery for an Art-san by a Mr. Might. Is this you?”

*Might!?*

... *All Might?*

“Uh yes,” you said slowly, debating whether to accept it or not. “I’m… Art. It’s for me.”

“Alright, we got a bed for you. Wanna show us where you want it?”

... *A bed?*

“Wait…” You held your hands up. “What do you mean a bed?”

The man’s eyes flickered over to his companion before he turned the clipboard to you, showing the listing he had.

One large-quirk bedframe. One large-quirk boxframe. One large-quirk mattress.

Large-quirk?

“Are you accepting or rejecting this delivery, miss?” the man asked, weariness straining his voice.

*All Might bought you a bed?*

“I’ll accept it,” you said. “Uh, follow me. My bedroom is back here.”

You grabbed for your phone as you passed the couch, showing the two burly men where they could put the bed. They looked around the room, muttering to one another while you fired off a rare text to
All Might.

‘Did you buy me a bed!?’

“Do you mind if we move things to get it to fit?” the other man asked.

Did you have money to tip them?

“Uh yeah, sure,” you said. “Do whatever you need to do.”

“And this old mattress, can we take it?”

You stopped at that question, looking down at one of your more prized pieces of furniture.

What if you hated the bed he bought?

“N-no,” you said with a level of uncertainty. “You can leave it against the wall or something. I want to keep it.”

The men look at each other and you could have sworn one sighed.

“Alright,” the other said. “Sounds good.”

To your surprise, a third man was waiting for you at your front door when you left your bedroom.

Actually, waiting wasn’t really the right term -- he was busy looking at your lack of door handle. The two delivery man bypassed him completely, leaving you gripping your phone as you stared at the newest intruder.

“Can I help you?” you asked, mentally steeling yourself to chase out a possible bandit from your home. But the man was elderly and he smiled warmly before standing and greeting you politely.

“I’m here to fix your door,” he said. “On behalf of a Mister Mighty.”

Mighty.

What was he playing at?

“O-oh.” Was that allowed by your building? You weren’t sure but it had been weeks since you had been able to lock your door properly. Sure Japan was a safe country but even you were starting to get worried about the liability an unlockable door had. “Okay. Uh, just do whatever you need to do.”

And, like clockwork, Yume peeked her head into your house.

“What’s going on here?” she asked, returning a smile and wave to the very nice handyman. You coughed.

“Just getting some work around the house done, that’s all. And my new bed is being delivered.”

“You didn’t tell me about any of this!”

To your relief, she didn’t look suspicious. Instead, she dropped her overnight bag on your couch and handed over a plastic bag.

Inside, two large sweet potatoes.

“I forgot,” you lied. “Work stress and all that.”
“You have to tell me all about work!”

You glanced over the handyman, who was humming pleasantly while he took measurements of the doorway.

“Uh, how about in a bit?”

The small talk you and Yume launched into while waiting for privacy changed course once pieces of the bed were carried through your living room. She shot an amused grin at you upon seeing two box springs pass by. The mattress itself must have been some sort of memory foam -- it was vacuumed sealed in plastic and drug by, it's size undeterminable.

“What size is it?” she asked and you faltered.

“Uh…” You couldn’t lie, she was going to be sleeping in the bed. “Well, I decided to upgrade to uh, large-quirk?”

“Large-quirk?” Yume repeated, confused. “Is that a size?”

“It was an impulse buy.”

“I assume it was made for people with large physical quirks…” she looked you up and down. “Sweetie, I think you would have been fine with a king.”

While one of the delivery men carried away your broken frame, the other returned with a piece of paper you needed to sign.

“Mister Might took care of the cost,” the man said. “Just sign here and we’re set.”

“Mister Might?”

You kept your face steady as you signed and thanked the delivery man with a handful of yen that you had stashed away in your purse.

“Who is Mister Might?” she continued, aware of your lack of acknowledgment.

Looking back, there were a million things you could have probably said. Your favorite -- a pseudonym you created to use a coupon or something. Or a family member who gifted you the bed as a very late birthday present. Or Mister Might was just the brand of the mattress!

None of those came to mind. You were put on the spot and, as you floundered for an explanation, you kept quiet.

It was probably the most damning thing you could have done.

“So, that’s who you’re seeing. Mister Might,” she snorted. “It sounds like a wrestler name.”

“Let’s not talk about this tonight,” you groaned, looking at your friend. She shook her head.

“I think tonight is the perfect night to talk about it!”

Yume was kind enough to keep from broaching the subject until after the handyman left. He was so nice and explained that, although he put on a new handle on your front door, you should look at getting the entire thing replaced. It was old and looked like it had been through a war with the number of dents and scars it bore.
Then, he mentioned Mister Mighty.

“He already covered the cost,” the man explained. “So we are all set here. Have a nice night!”

You accompanied him to the newly fixed door, trying your best not to seem bothered by the eyes burning a hole in your back.

Once it was closed (the first time in weeks) and locked (the first time in weeks), you turned to face your reckoning.

“So is it Might or Mighty?” Yume asked, leaning on the back of your couch.

“It's nothing worth telling you,” you said. “It’s not even that serious!”

“Well obviously it's serious enough that he would buy you a bed. And what’s with the door? What happened to it and why did he fix it?” Her eyes narrowed. “Did he break down your door?”

Yes.

“No!” you exclaimed. “No! It’s just…” Think. “He has a strength quirk and accidentally breaks things sometimes. He broke the door handle and… felt bad. So he fixed it for me.”

“What about the bed? Why’d he buy you a new bed? Did he break that too?”

Honestly, you were surprised she connected the dots so quickly and you gaped at her. A normal person would have thought it was some weird sex thing and brushed it under the rug. Not Yume. She liked to pick things apart.

Apparently, you were friends with Nancy fucking Drew.

“He’s a big guy,” you groaned. “It wasn’t on purpose.”

“So you lied to me. He bought the bed. He picked out the size of it. It makes sense now, a big guy would want a big bed. A large-quirk bed.”

“Yum--”

“It has to be serious enough that he would want to shell out the money to buy you a bed,” she said as she stood. “A fling isn’t going to just drop money like that. Unless he was rich.” She raised an accusing finger at you. “You have a sugar daddy.”

“If you ever say that again, I’ll jump out of a window,” you groaned. “I do not have a sugar daddy.”

“I call it like I see it. A rich man buying you things, a secret romance? What is he, some kind of politician? A businessman?”

Mortification melted away.

Unintentionally she was giving you an out.

“Yes, okay,” you said with a sigh. “He’s a pretty public businessman who dates on the side. That’s why everything has to be so secretive around him. That’s why I don’t like talking about him.”

“What, did you sign some kind of contract?” she asked.

“Well, let’s not get too outlandish here--”
“An NDA agreement? Is he some kind of closet masochist who wants you to be his little submissive pet?”

You blinked at her.

“What are you--?” It struck you. “No! Yume!” You were stuttering. “I-I’m not doing some weird 50 Shades of Grey thing!”

“Oh okay. Mister Might? Sounds vaguely similar to Mister Grey. What’s his first name?”

All.

“Alright, let’s drop the topic,” you said loudly. “Because I hate it and it’s not true. He’s just a rich guy who likes privacy, that’s it.”

“If I saw him, would I know him?”

You stared at her. With the mask? Absolutely. Without his mask? You had to think, but you weren’t sure if the public at large knew what All Might looked like without his mask. The first time you had seen him without it, you had been surprised.

“Yes,” you said. “You would probably recognize him. Now… can I tell you about my job? Or is my love life the only important thing about me?”

A beat of silence passed between you.

“Yes,” she said with a nod. “Let’s talk work.”

An uneasy truce fell between you as mid-afternoon shifted to evening. Although the sour of secrecy had left a bad taste in both of your mouths, a comfortable familiarity was settling. Instead of a soap opera, you had chosen a reality show. The sweet potatoes Yume had provided as snacks were in the oven baking and she was listening intently as you moved from your job responsibilities and team to explaining your fears over your new position.

“It’s a lot of pressure,” you said, fiddling with your fingernails. “He keeps telling me that I’m special or something and I’d hate to mess it up.”

“You’re not going to mess it up,” she stressed. “He just wants you to feel like a member of the team. It’s normal to kind of, build-up the new guy.”

“My worry is…” you trailed off, trying to think of the best way to explain your thoughts. “What he’s saying doesn’t align with what I’ve provided. The way he talks about me, you’d like I’d won the Nobel Quirk Prize. But my stuff is pretty average.”

“You’re being too hard on yourself!” Yume said. “Accept the praise! He’s one of the lab’s more notable figures, so having someone like him interested in your work is an honor! Don’t worry about it so much.”

“I really don’t want to mess this up. This is my big chance. And you know what happened last time…” you trailed off. “I don’t want to get fired again. I don’t think I can take it.”

“You were young and dumb! Everyone makes mistakes and you’ve learned from yours. Just keeping working and you’ll be rewarded. You’ll see.”

Simultaneously both of your phones went off.
“Uh-oh,” Yume said, reaching for hers first. “Looks like All Might is at it again.” She paused before looking at you. “Might? He’s not your secret sugar daddy, right?”

Your heart and stomach both exploded.

You were dying.

Oh god, you were dying.

“I’m kidding,” she said with a roll of her eyes when she saw your face, mistaking your expression to be one of disgust, not one of absolute terror. “It looks like he’s down attacking the Americans in Okinawa.”

With a shaking hand, you reached for your phone, heart still palpitating.

*Calm down. Calm down. Even she didn’t believe it was true.*

*Nancy Drew.*

Yume was correct -- reports were starting to filter out to the media that All Might had attacked an American military base down south. It was obvious the details were still emerging -- the news alert itself was only a sentence long. You frowned.

He had gone after the military?

*American* military?

“Those poor people,” Yume muttered, tossing her phone away. “You’d think they would have put him away in Tartarus by now. Or, you know, killed him.”

You kept your mouth shut.

… You hoped he was okay.

“But, going back to what I was saying, I think you’re experiencing imposter’s syndrome.”

“Imposter’s syndrome?” you repeated tightly after another brief silence, keeping your phone directly by your side. But you were glad the subject had changed.

“We have these Women in STEM virtual workshops like every month. You’ll see, you’ll start getting the emails soon. One recent one we had was mental blocks people can get that keep them from applying for jobs or doing their best in the current positions. One of them was called imposter’s syndrome. Basically, a person will think they’re not good enough to be in the role that they’re in. Like they’re a fraud.” She took a sip from the glass of wine she had sitting on the living room table. “I’m pretty sure that’s what you’re experiencing.”

“I’ll have to look into it.”

“Don’t hang onto this… inadequacy. You get that way a lot. Take the compliments Kravitz is giving you and just keep working. You’re looking too much into it.”

You sighed, itching your jaw.

“Okay.”

To drive home the point, Yume quickly leaned in and flicked your forehead. You jerked in surprise,
pulling away in case she was preparing for another physical attack.

“Stop getting in your head so much. Look at things rationally, okay? If you didn’t deserve it, you wouldn’t have gotten it.”

The show you were watching revolved around a bunch of twenty-somethings living quietly in a townhouse in Tokyo. It was background noise mostly, something mindless you could watch between breaks of the conversation. You didn’t know any of the ‘storylines’ but that didn’t seem to matter much. Mostly you and your guest commented on people’s outfits or lamented about how much you wanted to eat the food they were preparing.

“Ooh,” you said, stumbling off the couch. “I have to go check on the potatoes!”

They had another half-hour or so to go and looked to be cooking fine. Having already stood up, you took the opportunity to go to the bathroom.

When you were finished, you decided to take another side trip and peek at your new bed.

Upon seeing it, you wanted to kill All Might.

The thing was massive. Far bigger and wider than any king size bed you had ever seen, bordering on matching the length of your small bedroom. Your night table had been pushed out of the way entirely, a small mirror you had near your old mattress was in the center of the room. Speaking of your old mattress -- it was flipped over, resting against and covering your drawers and blocking your closet.

But the size of the bed still boggled your mind. A giant could sleep comfortably in it. It was much taller and much wider than All Might.

You could kill him.

You should have declined the delivery.

“Yume!” you shouted. “Come here and check out this bed.”

“It’s big, isn’t it?” she asked when she started down the hall at your beckon. “Large-quirk must be huge. I mean, if it needs two box springs that’s a big-- are you joking?”

She stood gaping beside you, taking in your newest piece of furniture. With a wide-eyed blink, she turned toward you.

“Send it back,” she said and you laughed.

“I didn’t even know they made beds this big.”

“It legitimately takes up half your room.” She was shaking her head. “You have to send it back, you can’t keep it.”

“This is the bedroom. It’s fitting because now I can’t fit anything else in here but the bed.”

“Was he trying to be funny? Is this some rich guy joke or is he really this big?”

“You can sleep in the bed with me if you want,” you said, avoiding her question. “I mean, it’s gonna be a little bit of a squeeze but I think I can find the room.”

“Well…” Yume sighed, looking over your old mattress, chewing on her lip. “I guess I should let you
know *he’s* been calling your phone.”

You looked at her.

“Wait, what?”

“When you went to go check on the potatoes your phone started ringing and hasn’t stopped since. A honeypot emoji and a rabbit? I assume that’s him.”

You left the room, glancing at the time on your microwave as you passed the kitchen.

Seven o’clock.

_Eight missed calls--_

A ninth was starting up and you rejected it. Yume had trailed back into the living room behind you, watching you struggle to send a text message that you couldn’t talk at the moment. But after each call reject, he was calling back. Ten. Eleven. Twelve.

Just before call thirteen started, you managed to send him a single message, ‘*Friend over, can’t talk.*’ After you rejected that call, your finger hovered over where the red phone button would be in case he went for call number fourteen.

It didn’t ring.

“Well,” Yume cleared her throat. “That was stalkerish.”

“He’s just…” you trailed off when your phone vibrated.

He had sent you a picture of pants.

You quickly shut off the screen, flipping it around and pressing the glass against your thigh. Although you didn’t look long enough to see details, you had an idea what he had just sent you and the last thing you needed was Yume to accidentally catch a glimpse.

“Let’s not start into this again,” you groaned, hand still on your phone. “Can’t we talk about your personal life now? Tell me Yum, seeing anyone?”

“Nope!” she said brightly. “And if I was, you’d be the first to know! Hell, you know when I go on a Tinder date!”

“You just more open about this stuff then I am.”

She made a face that clearly said, ‘you and I both know that’s not true.’ You drew your mouth into a tight line, gripping your phone when you felt it go off again.

*This man was going to be the death of you.*

Yume’s eyes flickered from your face to your phone before landing back on your face. She deflated, the hands on her hips falling to her sides.

“Listen, I respect you and your choices. I trust you. But I’m concerned about how this guy is treating you.”

“Oh come one,” you said, rubbing your face. “Don’t get all self-righteous on me.”
“Self-righteous!” Yume rolled her eyes. “I’m worried. This guy he just… he doesn’t seem right.”

“You don’t even know him!”

“Exactly! I’ve been your friend for how many years? This is the first guy you ever dated that you haven’t brought around!”

You had a snappy retort lined up but at the word ‘date’ you lost your thunder.

“I wouldn’t exactly call it dating…” you muttered and Yume gestured wildly at you.

“Sugar daddy or not, red flag!”

You scoffed, tossing a couch pillow at her. “Get out of here with your sugar daddy stuff.”

“There’s something off about the whole situation you’re in.” She was walking back around the couch, taking a seat on the other end and reaching for her phone, her brows furrowed. “You don’t bring ‘the man’ around, he’s breaking stuff in your house, he keeps calling you. This is the same guy who gave you all those hickies a few weeks back, right? When we went to the Korean conference?”

‘Ah shit,’ you winced and the reaction made her swell up in triumph. ‘She remembered.’

“All I’m seeing is red flags. How long have you been seeing him?” Yume threw up air quotes as she spoke the last two words and you shifted your jaw.

Truth or lie? Truth or lie?

“A couple weeks,” you said, splitting the difference.

She pointed at you.

“You’re lying.”

“Fine, don’t believe me.” You were bristling up, appalled she didn’t believe your half-lie. “I don’t have to prove anything to you anyway.”

“When did you get so…” she paused, screwing her face up as she searched for the proper word. “Antagonistic?”

“Antagonistic!? You snorted. “I got antagonistic the moment you started up with your holier-than-thou attitude! Last time I checked, I’m an adult capable of making my own decisions. I’m not an idiot and I don’t need you coming around hounding me about things you don’t even know about!”

“I’m your best friend!” she said, voice rising slightly as passion was interjected into your conversation. “It hurts that you don’t want to share this with me! What, do you think I’m going to judge you or something?”

“You clearly are judging me!” Your voice was also getting higher and louder, matching hers. “Literally, rewind the clock back fifteen seconds!”

“Honey, you’re confusing--”

“Now you’re getting condescending!”

“-- concern with judgment!”
“Yum, come on, I think I can handle myself--”

“Humor me. Please, humor me for like five minutes. I just want to ask you some questions about your relationship--”

“This is--”

“-- Please. I’m begging you. If our friendship means anything to you, just answer these questions. Please.”

The levity in her voice made the argument in you die. Her hands were pressed together, face twisted into a pleading frown. You inhaled deeply and loudly, before closing your eyes.

“What kind of questions?”

“Just answer them truthfully. Yes or no. You don’t need to give details, just honesty.”

“What kind of questions, Yum? What is it, a Buzzfeed quiz?”

She was tapping away on her phone and you reached for your water bottle that had been left forgotten on the table, uneasily shifting your gaze between her and the television. A new episode of the show you had been watching already begun to autoplay -- you had no idea what was happening anymore. There were new faces.

“Ready?” Yume asked and you glared and shrugged in response, not sure about the direction she was heading in. “Now, these are questions about him, okay? First one -- does he admit to his mistakes? Does he accept responsibility for his behavior?”

“What is this?” you asked. “What, do you think I’m getting abused or something? Yume, just drop it, okay? I’m fine. If I wasn’t fine I would end things.”

“Just answer them. That’s all I ask. Does he accept responsibility for his behavior?”

“Yum--”

“Does he accept responsibility for his behavior?”

No.

Well, sometimes. He seemed… apologetic enough with the whole lab incident. That’s admitting a mistake, right?

“Yes,” you lied after an exaggerated sigh, signaling how done you were with the whole situation. You gripped your water bottle tighter, trying to keep the same apathetic face.

Your phone went off.

Yume pursed her lips but continued.

“Does he accept your word? Give you the benefit of the doubt?”

I mean, there was the whole hero f**ker comment. But you told him you only had eyes for him. He trusts you…

Right?
“Yes…” you answered, though there was some uncertainty in your tone. Catching yourself, you nodded firmly at Yume, an attempt to make it seem as if the wording of the question had tripped you up, not what it was asking.

“Does he ask, not expect? Is he willing to comprise? Does he accept change?”

... Yes? Well, no. But also yes.

_Mostly no._

“Yes,” you said after a tight swallow. “Honestly, we haven’t been seeing each other for very long, so it’s hard to answer these types of questions--”

“Does he refuse to intimidate or manipulate? Does he respect physical space and express himself non-violently?”

_That’s a hard no._

“Yes,” you responded. Yume lowered her phone, looking at you tiredly. You flared up. “Yes! Listen, if you’re not going to believe me--”

“Does he communicate openly and truthfully?”

_Maybe? Well, he basically refused to tell you his name…_

“Most of the time, yes.”

She didn’t like that answer. Her frown grew in size.

“Last question -- does he value your opinions? Does he listen non-judgmentally? Is he understanding?”

_Is he understanding?_ You had to keep yourself from releasing a sharp laugh. No, you wouldn’t call All Might particularly understanding.

“Yes!” you answered. “Yes, yes, yes! What is this? What are you trying to get at?”

“Basic questions to determine if your relationship is healthy.” She turned her phone toward you so you could see the chart she had been reading from. “Any ‘no’ is a red flag. But according to you… your relationship is fine.” She narrowed her eyes. “Assuming you weren’t lying.”

You were rubbing your face again, mussing your eyebrows as your hands traveled over your eyes. There was a pinching inside your skull -- you weren’t sure if it was a headache brewing or the side-effect of the adrenaline from your disagreement.

“You always do this,” you snapped, glaring at her when you removed your palms from your eyes. “You always come in and make me feel like shit about my life.”

Yume looked dumbstruck, caught off-guard by the venom in your voice.

“I never want to make you feel like bad--!”

“That’s bullshit.” You could feel anger and nerves pricking the back of your neck, making your hands shake and heart pound. “I get it Yume. Honestly, I do. You’re the golden child. The one who has her life together.”
“I think we’re getting off topic here,” Yume said, holding up her hands to try and settle you down. “I just want you to be happy and safe!”

But you couldn’t. She had opened the Pandora’s Box of your emotions and all your stress over the past couple of weeks manifested itself into anger.

Anger at her.

“I’m the fuck-up of the group.” Your lip was curling slightly as your hold on your water tightened.

“The girl who got fired from her first good job. Who went and worked at her shitty lab while everyone else went on to live their awesome lives. You always have to swoop in to save me, don’t ya Yum? First in school, now in the real world.”

An awkwardness was settling over the room. You were ready to unleash while Yume was simply taken aback. In the entirety of your friendship, she had only seen you get mad only a few times over minor stuff. This… this was something more.

“Hey--”

“You’re not my mother. I didn’t need you to coddle me. Rescue me. I didn’t need the Odaiba Lab job. I was doing just fine on my own.”

But as quickly as your rage and flared up, it was fading. You felt drained -- you didn’t have the personality or motivation to go after your best friend.

A tense silence blanketed your living room but neither one of you wanted to be the first to break it.

A minute passed. Then two.

You didn’t like it. You weren’t one to snap out in anger.

You were so stressed.

“I was doing fine,” you reiterated, but it was less toward Yume. How many personal storms had you weathered? How many times did you think your life was on the brink of capsizing, only for the clouds to break and the rain to stop? “I’ve always been fine. I always made it work.”

You’ll be fine.

A beeping started going off from the kitchen. Yume eyes flickered in the direction it was coming from before falling back on you.

It was okay.

It always ended up okay.

“I don’t know what I have with him,” you grumbled, ignoring the loud and repetitive sound. You had fixated on a pillow. You were talking at the pillow. “He has his issues. And it might not be the picture of something healthy. But I like him. And I think…” you shrugged at the pillow. “I think I can handle him.”

“But long-term?” You heard a sigh. “I… I don’t want you to cling to someone because you don’t want to be alone.”

Don’t want to be alone.
“What are these, the best years of our lives?” She continued with a wry smile you didn’t see. “Don’t waste time on someone who doesn’t deserve you! You’re worth more than that. That’s all I’m going to say.”

You still wouldn’t look up, the beeping was continuing and Yume cleared her throat.

“I know you can handle yourself,” she added and you flinched, already regretting your outburst. “I only step in because I want you to be at your best. I want you to be happy. I’d offer to stop but… I don’t think I could if I wanted to.”

You cracked a smile at that. At least she was being honest.


“The potatoes are done,” you mumbled, standing. “I’ll get ‘em.”

“Well, we unpacked a lot of emotional baggage tonight didn’t we?” Yume called from her seat on the couch as you stopped the shrill beeping and removed the golden sweet potatoes from the oven. The smell was divine. “And we didn’t even finish the wine yet! Can you imagine what we’re going to be talking about in an hour?”

“It’s your fault,” you called back. “I would have been just fine keeping everything inside.”

“Please. You and I both know that’s a lie.”

You were groaning, rubbing at your eyes. But the reaction wasn’t because of Yume -- you had checked your messages to see what All Might had said.

He hadn’t said anything.

He was showing you how he was feeling. And judging from the photos of tenting pants and underwear, he was in a good mood.

What do you say to something like that?

You debated sending him something sultry to spur him on. Granted, you wouldn't be opposed to getting such lecherous pictures at the moment. They would help take your mind off things.

But you were sitting next to you nosey best friend on a couch.

You sent him an crocodile emoji.

To your surprise, a grey typing bubble popped up almost immediately, though the last picture he had sent was several minutes ago.

‘What does that mean?’

You read his question before putting your phone into the pocket of your sweatpants, choosing not to answer it.

“I’m sorry,” you said with a sigh a short time later, handing off a plate with a potato to Yume when you returned to the living room. “I didn’t mean to get nasty with you.”

“Already forgotten,” she said with a soft smile.

Ah, the good ol’ Yume non-apology.
“So, we spent most of tonight talking about me so far…” you blew at the forkful of potato guts while Yume changed the television show to something a little more interesting. “What’s going on in your life?”

“Not much, really. Oh! Speaking of Endeavor, he has a new hero at his agency that our team is looking to support. From what I understand, he has feathers that can act independently of his body.”

You furrowed your brows.

“What, like they have a mind of their own?”

“No, I think he can control them but I don’t know the specifics yet. I don’t remember his name either, we just got word of him like two days ago. He just broke onto the scene very recently. Young too – in his early twenties, I believe. We’re meeting with him next week to see what’s going on.”

“That’s awesome,” you said, stirring up the contents of your potato as a sitcom started up. “Talk about a cool quirk.”

———

A frozen nose.

That was the first sensation that you recognized as you slowly woke from your slumber.

With a groan you shifted beneath chilly covers, a deep sense of cold having take residency in your core. You leaned over to check the time on your phone, recognizing in the dull light from the screen that you could see your breath. It was two in the morning.

Looks like you didn’t layer enough.

Carefully you removed yourself from the bed as to not wake Yume, plodding out of your bedroom and closing the door behind you before heading into the considerably warmer living room.

Yume could manipulate the temperatures of people, objects and locations. When she slept, the control she usually had over her quirk relaxed and she would plunge most rooms into a near-frozen tundra. Unlike some of your other friends, you never minded sharing a room or bed with Yume. If you layered up enough, you were usually fine. Most times you slept through the night peacefully, other nights you’d wake up and need to take a break to warm up.

Thankfully she slept cold. You could not imagine how terrible it would be if she slept warm.

Being boiled alive entered your thoughts.

You stretched out on the couch, your body already nagging you for a bathroom break. But you didn’t want to get up again so soon, your senses still dulled by sleep.

Unlocking your phone, you scrolled boredly through Instagram before finding your way onto a news website. The major story was still about All Might -- the main picture was a large crater. After staring at it for a couple of seconds, your sleep-addled mind informed you that an entire building had been erased by All Might. One of several, according to the cutline.

You didn’t click on the story, an uncomfortable sensation was in your stomach. Instead, you opened up your earlier conversation with him.

Close to seven hours had passed since he asked what your emoji had meant.
You cracked.

‘I’m glad you’re okay,’ you wrote, sending it before you had a chance to hesitate. Of course, almost immediately you regretted it. You scrolled up again, looking at the images of his clothed arousal.

You felt kind of bad that you didn’t indulge in his obvious sexting hopes but…

You leaned your head on the back of your couch, tossing your phone beside you.

It stung a bit knowing he associated you mostly with sex.

Idiot.

What else did you expect?

A soft buzzing sound caught you by surprise and you glanced down. It wasn’t just a text -- your phone was ringing. A honeypot and a rabbit. Casting a quick glance in the direction of your bedroom, you answered the call, shifting to keep your bedroom door in your sights before muttering a soft ‘hello?’

There was a long, heavy yawn in process on the other end.

“Late night worrying?” All Might eventually asked, voice thick and raspy with fatigue. You exhaled a quiet laugh.

“I couldn’t sleep for other reasons,” you offered. Judging from the sound he made, you assumed he liked that.

“What kind of reasons?” He had a teasing tone, undoubtedly hoping you’d admit to something frisky in such a late hour. You shook your head though he couldn't see it.

“Reasons that don’t involve you.”

“Don’t involve me? Ahh, so you’re missing me already.”

“Okay, it sounds like you’re fine. I’m gonna hang up and go back to bed. Goodnight.”

“So you wanted to check up on me...” he said, smug but also mildly surprised.

Why was it a surprise to him?

“You went after an military base. That was a little concerning.”

It was his turn to laugh. But it wasn’t his usual, boisterous laughter. It was weaker. Breathier.

Was he feeling okay?

You were about to ask but froze, another explanation for his faint voice creeping into your mind.

Maybe he had someone with him?

The thought stung considerably.

“When will you be back?” you asked before he had a chance to respond to your earlier comment about his target. His laughter died, replaced with a low growling sound of contentment.

“Three weeks.”
You stared at your feet in surprise. That was a week longer than you expected. Longer then he told you originally.

“Oh,” you said. The disappointment was obvious. “Okay.”

You heard shifting on the other line that was joined with the rustling of covers and squeaking of a mattress. Instinctively your ears strained, listening for evidence that another person was in bed with him -- a sigh from being disturbed or a voice asking what he was doing.

But there was nothing.

He was groaning into the phone as he stretched, a loud exhale making the speaker crackle when he was finished.

“So the bed was delivered?”

*The bed!*

It had completely slipped your mind and a new surge of energy swept through you.

“What kind of bed did you get me?” you hissed quietly and you could already hear him chuckling. “It’s huge, All Might. It takes up half my bedroom!”

“And the door, that’s fixed too?”

“Yeah, but can we get back to the bed--”

“Good. I’m looking forward to trying it out when I get back.”

You snorted at his crassness, earlier thoughts weaseling back into your mind. Of course he’s was going to turn your conversation to something sexual. “Yeah, okay. We’ll see.”

“Oh?”

“I don’t like being told what *I’m* going to be doing. I’m not a piece of meat, you know.”

He sighed and you heard him mutter, "Not this again."

“Maybe *I* don’t want to have sex with you next time you visit,” you whispered. “Maybe *I* want to just sit on the couch with you. Maybe *I* just want to cuddle with you.”

Silence.

And then, laughter.

Deep, throaty laughter that would have surely awaken anyone that was laying beside him. Eventually he settled down, falling into a series of dry coughs before humming into the phone in amusement.

“Allright sweetheart,” he said, his humor clear as day. “If you’re still so adamant about it when I get back, I’ll coddle you--”

*No. Cuddle.*

“But I’ll expect a favor in return.”
“A favor?” One of Yume’s red flags raised in your head. “What kind of favor?”

“I haven’t decided yet,” he groaned, breathing loudly as he stretched again.

“All Might—”

“I’m a busy man, not a school girl, I’m not staying up all night to gab with you. Goodbye. Oh—” He stopped short of hanging up, bringing the phone back to his ear. “I won’t forget that you ignored the gifts I sent you earlier.”

“The bed?” you asked, confused. You could feel him roll his eyes.

“The pictures.”

Crotch shots.

“Gifts?” You repeated with a low laugh. “I think they were more for you than for me.”

“Next time, I expect a better response. Not a lizard.”

“Crocodile,” you corrected. “I sent you a crocodile.”

“Kitten...” he warned which only made you chuckle, the distance and time between your next meeting making you bolder. “With a reaction like that, don’t ask things from me.”

“Fine,” you said, a slight whine though you were grinning. “I’ll be more… receptive next time. So long as I’m able.”

“I don’t like that answer.”

“I’m a busy girl, hon. I’ve got a job and a life.”

He grumbled.

“But I’ll try, ok? Deal?”

“You sure you want to make a deal with the devil?” All Might asked, voice perking up with delight. You scoffed at his corniness.

_How could such a scary villain say such lame things?_

“Goodnight, honey,” you answered, ignoring what he said and purposely sweetening the last word.

You heard him chuckle before the line was disconnected.

Chapter End Notes

_Sorry for the delay in getting this chapter out and I apologize for slacking on responding to comments -- I promise I read everything you write but sometimes I get distracted. I'll work on replying to them this week._

_I hope you all have a wonderful Halloween!_
Work.

That was your life.

Work.

You’d wake up. You’d go to work. You’d stay late. After work, you’d go out with your coworkers, who also stayed late. You’d come home. You’d go to bed.

And the next morning, it was all repeated.

The upside was that you became friendly with your coworkers fairly quickly, especially Mikki as she was the one you had been working with the most.

The downside was that you had no ‘off’ time. When you were awake, you were thinking about work. When you were working, you were thinking about work. While you were out with everyone to ‘decompress’ after work, you were talking about work. You had even started having work-related dreams.

And weekends -- that was just some extra time where you could finish the work that you hadn’t gotten around to.

The worst part?

*You were only a couple weeks into your job.*

Hiding a yawn, you and Yume snuck out of the office one afternoon to take a walk around Odaiba’s campus. In an attempt to ease the concerns of upper management and the board, walking ‘trails’ had been installed around the lab’s buildings some years back to help push the notion that Odaiba was all about a proper work-life-health balance.

Most employees didn’t use them, however, for fear of being labeled as a workday slacker.

“Don’t worry,” Yume stressed as you lamented about your loss of brain cells. “That’s how it is here, at first. Newcomers have a hard time matching the pace. Give it some time and you’ll settle into the role.”

“I’m worried about it though,” you grumbled, bracing yourself against a cold breeze rolling across the harbor. “You know all those designs I worked on for Endeavor? They didn’t even use them. I was working on them for days, Yum. Mikki told me Kravitz said we had too many options and he whittled them down to four of her designs.”

You sighed. Yume frowned, glancing at you out of the corner of her eye.

“She’s worked with Endeavor for years,” she offered. “She knows what he likes.”

“I had hoped that at least one of mine designs would have been included. I don’t want them to think I’m… amateurish.”

“You gotta grow a thicker skin. No one is thinking about your feelings -- they’re focused on what the client wants. Frankly, you don’t matter.”
“I know that,” you said with a slight bristle. “I just don’t want Kravitz to think I’m useless or something.”

“I guess the upside to you being an apprentice is that you’re supposed to be learning.” Yume shrugged. “It gives you an out.”

But you didn’t want an out.

You wanted to excel.

Kravitz was not a hands-on boss. He was a rare sight in the lab having to attend to more important, visible, business. His assistant Emily acted as his eyes and ears, checking in and handling any questions or concerns that arose from any of his underlings.

Mikki had… warned you about her during one of your nights out. You had admitted to the mouse-woman that you thought Emily was very personable. And she was! If you had a question, she was quick to answer. She always said hello and stopped by your desk to see how you were doing and to make sure you were acclimating well.

“You just need to be careful what you say to her and what you do in front of her,” Mikki said, flushed from her third glass of wine by that point.

You were taken aback by her words and actually asked what she meant. You wanted her to elaborate -- she had dropped a potential bombshell. The woman shifted, eyes darting to look over to your other coworkers. They all seemed to be in deep discussions about a new project involving a super-stretch hero who needed a costume.

“Her loyalty is with Doctor Kravitz,” she said carefully. “Just remember that.”

The message felt ominous but, when you relayed it to Yume a few days later, she waved it off.

“Please,” she said with a roll of her eyes. “All assistants are like that. They’re all brown-nosers.”

It... made sense.

Kravitz came to you that same afternoon during a Skype meeting you had with another team of support scientists -- the Black Hole hero Thirteen was shopping around for a new suit. It was far more complicated than stitching some special fabric together, it needed to act as a container for the hero’s body.

There was a reason Thirteen’s costume looked like something an astronaut would wear.

But, as an apprentice, you weren’t supposed to give any kind of feedback. So, you just listened, mind wandering as fatigue started to dull your nerves.

You were just starting the slight head bobbing motion when there was a tap on your shoulder.

You jumped.

“Can I steal you for a few minutes?” Kravitz asked when you lifted an ear of your headset. You nodded, a sinking sensation in your stomach, as you closed out of the meeting and followed him to an unused conference room.

The sinking only got worse.

You were going to get fired, weren’t you?
“I wanted to check in and see how you were doing!” Kravitz said, taking a seat at a long conference table, gesturing for you to do the same.

“Oh I’m doing great!” you said, praying you sounded nonchalant and not squeaky. The dread will still there -- you felt it mostly behind your nose. It almost felt like it was going to start gushing blood at any moment. “Getting into the swing of things.”

“I’ve been hearing good things about you. Everyone values your work,” Kravitz said. At the praise, your guard weakened. Maybe... you weren't going to get in trouble. “It’s all, ‘She’s so good at this,’ or ‘She’s so responsive about that.’ You’re doing excellent work!”

A nervous laugh escaped you, one tinged with relief.

This was not a firing conversation.

“That’s really good to hear,” you admitted. “I get worried about stuff like that.”

Kravitz grinned.

“Well, you shouldn’t. You’re something rare and I’d be remiss if I didn’t try and polish up that potential you have. You’ve got the makings of a world-class support scientist, no lie. In fact...” He leaned in, eyes flashing. "I want to personally pull you into two projects I’m working on.”

Excitement.

“Endeavor has given us the go-ahead with one of the designs Mikki drafted. I want you working on that with her. But, there’s something else I want your help with. Because you are just perfect for it.”

Your heart soared.

“Okay!”

“I’m going to be starting item testing in a few weeks for a few devices that we’ve been tinkering with that contain explosive material. The issue we have is that these devices, if they’re improperly designed, can... detonate.”

To drive home the point, Kravitz, mimicked an explosion with his hands. You nodded along.

“Whenever we lose a device, we don’t just lose weeks of work, we also destroy some pretty expensive materials. And too much waste and destruction reflects poorly on me and my teams. Basically, we’re at risk of getting our budgets cut if the board sees repeated failures under my watch. Which is not fair to the people who work under me. We need all the money we can get. In fact, I spend most days campaigning for more money!”

You continued to nod along.

“But you can really help out the team with that quirk of yours. You can rewind time, correct?”

“More or less,” you said with a shrug, tips of your ears burning. “Only a couple of seconds a couple times a day. Nothing too crazy.”

“That’s a wonderful quirk,” he stressed and you hovered between flattered and… patronized. It was the way he had been talking. Slowly. Like you needed things explained to you.

Stop being a bitch and just accept the compliment!
“Thank you!” you said, brushing aside your thoughts.

"It's nothing technical, truthfully. I need you on standby when we do testing. So, if something was to happen and a device was destroyed, you could be there to bring it back to us. You can be our second chance. Does that sound like something you'd be interested in?"

“Oh yeah, totally. I'd be happy to help."

“That wouldn’t be a problem, correct? We don’t have to worry about any unpleasant side effects if we use your quirk?” He paused before adding quickly, "I want you at tip-top shape! If it causes you pain, it's not worth it. So please, be truthful."

“Oh no, there’s no worries there,” you said, waving away his concern with a laugh. “The worst of it is headaches and nausea, but that’s only if I really push myself.”

“How far back can you go?” He asked, rubbing his chin. "And how many times?"

“The max I ever got was just over nine seconds. But I can’t launch my quirk right after I push myself like that otherwise I will puk-- er, vomit. Generally, if I keep it between four or five seconds, I can use it twice in a row as long as I have a couple seconds to breathe. It's really not impressive. There’s not much you can change in four seconds. If my quirk lasted longer and went further back, I probably would have become a hero!”

You laughed, though Kravitz only cracked a polite smile.

*It wasn't that funny.*

You settled down.

“And your quirk works on people too? We all saw what you did with Mikki, I can’t imagine being able to control more than one person--”

“Two is usually my max. Things get shaky but I can sometimes do three.”

Kravitz whistled, shaking his head in perceived amazement. Pink dusted your cheeks.

“Amazing. Truly, amazing. I’m surprised they don’t have you situated away in some hospital! You’d be an excellent assistant during surgeries. Could you imagine? A slip-up with a medical tool and you could be there to save the day. To save a life…” He tilted his head. "Could you? Could you heal injuries? Surely that’s too much to ask…""

“I mean, once when I was a kid I got a pretty nasty cut on my finger that I was able to fix. I never really thought about it though -- I don’t do well with… medical things. Insides. I want to stick to my fabrics and metal.”

“Oh, of course!” Kravitz said. “But it’s comforting to know if there’s ever an emergency here we have someone with a quirk like yours. I have to say, I’m ecstatic we found out about your quirk when we did. I lucked out with you, didn’t I? Hire you to help with design and, lo and behold, you have a gamechanger of a quirk. You could save a life!”

“I don’t know about that!” you said with another laugh, your pink cheeks having made the jump to vivid red. “I’d only have a couple seconds. I can maybe heal injuries but I don’t about saving lives!”

Kravitz smiled.
That Friday, you declined to join your colleagues for yet another after-work get-together.

You had plans.

Important plans.

A little over four weeks. A month. That was the last time you had seen All Might.

The only time you had heard his voice was when he had called the night Yume had visited.

It was… strange. After that conversation, you had been expecting more interaction from him. Especially since he implied he was going to be sending you a steady stream of lewd texts and photos.

Instead, he went radio silent.

It shouldn’t have bothered you. It was just par for the course with him, after all. Your relationship was built on large spans of inactivity. Four weeks was nothing, really. You had gone multiple months before. The worst part was that he didn’t seem to be busy. There was the attack on the military base, sure, but that was the only big thing he did. Otherwise, it had just been random sightings in a bunch of different towns and cities. Well… he did sink a couple of fishing boats off the coast. And caused a mudslide.

He also made it thunderstorm somehow.

All Might’s silence shouldn’t have bothered you.

But--

It did bother you.

You missed him.

It was dumb and stupid and you wanted to be stronger than that but fuck if you didn’t get hopeful every time your phone went off because, maybe, it was him.

You even thought about texting him on more than one occasion. Thankfully that was an urge you were able to smother. You didn’t want to appear too… eager.

Still, when there was a knock on your door later that night, you couldn’t prevent the giddy smile that split your face. It only grew in size and intensity when you saw who was waiting for you on the other side.

Your smiling face did momentarily surprise him -- All Might had expected something a little more subtle from you. But very quickly his own grin appeared. Too slowly he hunched down, doing his best to lean nonchalantly against your doorframe.

“Surprise, sweetheart.”

You were shaking your head at him, laughing at his ridiculousness. His arrival had been anything but a surprise. Once the door was closed and locked, you were holding your hands up to him, beckoning him down to you.

Your arms twisted around his neck when he wordlessly did what you asked.

Kisses peppered his face.
“I missed you,” you sighed to him, lips traveling across his cheeks, nose and forehead. All Might exhaled loudly, shoulders dropping as he wrapped you in a near-bone-crushing embrace. “You didn’t—”

Before you could finish your sentence, he had captured your mouth.

You prepared yourself for the impending onslaught of teeth and tongue.

It never happened.

His kiss deepened, he grunted against you, lifting you along when he stood straight. But the kiss never went beyond his lips crushing, sliding and pulling against yours. It simply see-sawed between modest pecks and more intense lip movements, the sound of soft clicking filling the air. You were blessed with another grunt when you cupped his face. You were doing your best to ignore the fact that it was getting harder to breathe in to his embrace.

Eventually, you broke apart.

You rubbed and tugged his earlobes while he rested his face against yours.

“Don’t go away for so long next time,” you muttered to him, shifting and breaking the silence. It wasn’t just the silence you voice broke -- the spell of your reunion had been lifted. You were being lowered back to the ground, All Might’s thick arms sliding across your back as he released you from his hold.

He didn’t respond, focusing on kicking off his boots before launching into a large, full body stretch that made him groan as his joints cracked and popped. When his hands fell back to his sides, you were grabbing for one of them.

“Come see the bed,” you said, tugging at his fingers.

He quirked a brow, watching you attempt to lead him back to the bedroom. His eyes fell to watch the sway of your hips.

“Not tonight.”

You stopped, looking at him in a stunned sort of surprise while he forced down the smugness that threatened to expose itself. He tried to look tired when he scowled back at you. “I remember you bitching to me about coddling when I got back. So here, sweetheart. I’m going to give you exactly what you want.”

Shit.

He was moving out of your entryway, heading toward your couch while you stood and stared.

… Shit.

Truth be told, an ache had formed in your gut several days ago. An ache that had been getting worse.

An ache he could get rid of so easily.

Did you want to cuddle? More than anything.

But four weeks without him? And feeling his solidness wrapped around you just seconds prior…

You shuddered as you followed him, mind buzzing as your drummed up ways to get him in your
bed without resorting to just *asking* him.

That would be the last resort.

Because there was a *very* good chance that you’d never hear the end of it.

All Might was fiddling with the remote when you sat down stiffly beside him, bypassing regular television to put on Netflix. Undoubtedly, he was going to find something American to watch.

You were right. He eventually settled on some sort of police drama before grunting and groaning again, propping his feet up on your table as the theme song started playing.

He looked over to you before lifting his right arm slightly, opening his side up to you.

His move did coax a laugh out of you and, pushing your libido to the side, you shifted closer to him, humming when the weight of his arm settled around you. You nuzzled tighter against his body, cheek pressed against him while your fingers danced circles across his shirt.

*He smelled wonderful.*

The two of you sat in silence -- All Might stared at the television while you basically laid against him, eyes fluttering as you listened to the sound of him breathing.

“How was your trip?” you finally asked, trying to start some sort of dialogue with him. You missed his voice.

Shifting slightly beneath you, he exhaled loudly through his nose as his hand fell slightly, curling to settle in your lap. “Good,” he answered dryly.

You shifted your head upward to look at his face.

Was he… mad?

No, he was probably just tired.

*He was perfectly fine a couple minutes ago!*

After it became clear he wasn’t going to ask about how you had been for the past several weeks, you moved to playing with his hand. It relaxed under your touch, allowing you to bend and move his fingers. Several of yours could fit on one of his.

*His hands were so big.*

“No injuries, right?”

He grunted.

“That’s not an answer.”

He grunted again.

You sighed.

When you turned your attention back to his hand, he peered down at you out of the corner of his eye.

The cops were talking. A woman had been murdered. A banging gavel changed the scene to a
All Might's gaze returned to the TV when you looked up to speak again.

You opened your mouth. Closed it. Shifted your jaw. Ran your tongue over your teeth. Opened your mouth again.

People were talking on the show. What about? You had no idea.

Television was the last thing on your mind.

“I like cuddling,” you said with a sigh, restorting to your last restort so quickly. “I really do. And I really want to cuddle with you more. But…”

He had to hide his smirk when he heard that beautiful word ‘but.’

Without removing his eyes from his show, he leaned his head down toward you to signify he was listening. Goading you to continue.

“Four weeks is a long time…” you trailed off as you lightly began tracing the length of his pointer finger with your fingertips. He opened his hand more to you, doing his best not to jolt under the ticklish touch. Under your breath, you repeated ‘a long time.’

“Is that right, kitten?” he said, a thickness beginning to coat his words. You shook your head, bringing his hand to your mouth.

“I really missed you,” you murmured before kissing each of his knuckles. His grin finally showed itself once more at hearing those words from you. When your lips landed on the knuckle of his pinky, you looked up at him through your eyelashes, cheek resting against his hand. “You sure you don’t want to see the bed?”

He started to laugh.

You took that as a go-ahead and stood, trying to guide him up and off the couch. But as soon as your feet were on the floor, he was tugging you into his lap.

“One more time,” he growled, making it so that you were straddling him. His hands were on your waist, thumbs digging into you plushness and rubbing circles. He was leaning down. “Say it one more time.”

“Mister ego!” He caught your laugh in his mouth, tongue tracing along your upper lip before he was tugging at it. When he momentarily released your mouth, you pulled back. “I missed you, All Might,” you admitted, resting your hands on his chest, working to keep yourself from rolling your eyes at him. "You were on my mind. Every. Single. Day.”

To drive home the point, you lightly jabbed your finger into his chest at the end of each word.

A hand landed on the back of your neck as he brought your face back to him. A suck on your bottom lip was followed by the light nipping of teeth. Then, he was on you. Tongue burying in your familiar mouth, smothering and bullying yours. There was no point in trying to battle him for control of the kiss -- he would win. His tongue usually filled up the entirety of your mouth.

So, you did your best to follow along with him. Sharing a breath when he eventually pulled away, having gotten his fill of your taste. He was standing, bringing you up with him.
“Let’s go see that bed,” he said hoarsely against your mouth before pressing his face into your neck.

_You really did miss him._

“I watched the news every night,” you sighed, feeling him bump against the couch and table on his way out of the living room. You shivered when you felt his hot tongue glide across your throat. “I was worried. I wanted to make sure you were okay.”

His arm brushed against a picture in the hallway, knocking it crooked.

_You’d fix that later._

Besides, you had more important matters to tend to: like getting All Might all hot and heavy by simply admitting that you were concerned over his wellbeing while he was away.

_Were all villains secretly like this?_

_Horny for basic affection?_

“I wanted to text you every day,” you continued, turning your head slightly so you could make sure Goliath wasn’t going to plow through the closed door of your bedroom.

“So needy,” he said, voice husky and dripping. You were glad he was still too busy licking and sucking your neck to catch -- he didn't catch you rolling your eyes at him.

Yeah, _you_ were the needy one.

His toes bumped into the bedroom door before his body did, much to your relief. Blindly he reached out, smacking the wall then the door, looking for the doorknob. You flinched when he found it, the door flying open and smacking into the wall.

All Might didn’t react to your bed right away, choosing to gently nibble along your jaw and chin instead. When he did finally glance off to the side, to look in the direction of where the bed should be, you felt him vibrate beneath you.

He was laughing.

“I _told_ you it was too big,” you grumbled as he set you down in favor of examining the bed. It had finally been outfitted with proper-sized sheets (which cost a _fortune_ since only certain websites carried the size 'large-quirk'). You watched him stand on his knees on the edge of the mattress, jumping slightly, listening for any cracking sounds.

Nothing. No groaning of a cheap frame or squeaking springs, like your old mattress (which you had finally junked two days before).

Just wonderful silence.

He turned to you, sitting on the edge of the bed. There was a hungry look on face. He beckoned you toward him with a curl of his pointer finger.

“Where are your manners, girl?” he growled, a cruel smile appearing. “You should thank me for giving you such a nice gift.”

“Thank you!?” you sputtered, pulling back, indignant but flushing all the same. All Might scowled. “You _owed_ me a bed! Let’s not get too carried away here now—”
In a flash his palm was pressed against your face, hand gripping your head.

“Your tone,” he snapped, having crossed the distance with mind-boggling speed. In retaliation, you licked his palm, which only made him snort out a laugh. “Oh, I can find better uses for that tongue, my dear.”

You were being pulled by your face toward the bed, only released when All Might dropped back down to sit on it. “Now... show me how thankful you are.”

Aroused excitement pooled in your gut but you did your best to look unbothered. You raised your chin and tried to look defiant, even as you sank to your knees between his. Pleased, the corner of his mouth drifted upward, knees spreading slightly for you as your hands rested on his thighs.

You kept your eyes on his face as you trailed your hands up his legs to his crotch, gingerly working the button and zipper before stopping and looking at him.

“What can you help me out?” You asked, voice soft and imploring. ”Could you take off your pants yourself?”

He scratched at his chin -- he would have much rather you taken them off. But he was feeling generous.

You slid backward when he stood, smiling sweetly as he dropped his heavy pants to the floor, kicking them off to the side.

It took a lot of self-restraint to keep from trailing over the hunk of flesh straining his underwear. And the new patch of hair that journeyed down his navel.

You went back to touching his legs when he returned to his seat on the bed, using just your fingertips to dance across exposed skin. The light, ticklish touch made him tense up, especially when you moved to his inner thighs. When a curious finger brushed against the head of his still-covered cock, a tremor thrummed through him.

“That’s it,” he purred, leaning back on his elbows, ready to enjoy the attention.

You became more brazen with your touching, an idea forming. Keeping your innocent smile, you ran your hand over his member only to then turn your attention to another part of his body, bathing it with strokes and gropes. You could see a lovely wet spot forming against his nice blue underwear and pressed against it before immediately relocating your hand down to his knee.

He expected you to start to touch him at length, to release some of the pressure he was starting to feel, but you kept pulling your hand away to place it elsewhere. The minutes ticked by with no relief and he started to shift in place, trying to corral your touch to his hotspot.

Brush against his arousal, move your hand. Brush against him, move your hand.

At each fleeting touch, All Might grew more agitated.

Finally, when he felt you start to tease him again, his hand flew out and covered yours, holding it against his cock and keeping it there.

“No more,” he snapped, squeezing your hand (and himself).

To drive the point home, he started rubbing his cock with your hand, forcing you to slowly palm
him. You chuckled, lightly pushing back against his palm, wanting your freedom back. He rose a brow, a clear warning to you, before eased some of the pressure, allowing you to move and adjust your hand on your own.

You gripped a good portion of his shaft through his underwear, slowly stroking it. He grunted in satisfaction at the touch.

But then your mouth was there, licking and sucking on the head of his cock, tongue probing the still-growing wet spot. You were attacking him with abandon, your mouth moving up and down his clothed cock as you casually jerked him off.

All Might's jaw tensed, ass clenching. His hovering hand stroked the top of your head before he moved it to his navel, his fingers dancing behind the waistband of his boxer briefs, a hint to move to a direct touch.

You smacked at his hand and he pulled it back in surprise, rage flashing across his features that you would be so--

Your tongue was back at the head of his dick, retaining your eye contact. His wet spot had grown exponentially and you could taste the precum oozing through the fabric. You pulled your head back and slid your hands up his legs and under his underwear, rubbing the bare thigh beneath, fingers tracing the definition of each muscle. When your hands continued upward, eventually brushing against his leaking cock, you temporarily gripped it.

Though it was only to move it out of the way.

He shook his head at that.

"More."

You didn’t listen -- his balls were your target.

“You didn’t shave!” you said, eyes brightening as you felt much more than stubble waiting for you. You massaged the ample testicles in your hands, pleased when you watched his mouth draw itself into a tight line. "Too busy to trim, All Might?"

He was still scowling at you. “Suck my cock, kitten. You’re taking too long.”

You sat up a bit on your knees, your tongue flicking out and licking as close to his belly button as you could get, brushing against the coarse hair gathered there.

“I’m a sucker for this,” you murmured into his happy trail, ignoring his command. “Now this was a good surprise to bring home to me.”

Home to me.

All Might swallowed and adjusted.

You placed a kiss against him before dragging your tongue down his navel, your chin pushing against the waistband of his underwear. Your hands snaked out from against his legs, grasping at and pulling the waistband of his underwear, tugging the garment down.

Your mouth continued to lick and kiss down his body, your tongue stopping when it reached the base of his cock.
He grunted.

Precum was oozing out the top of his newly-exposed dick -- it already left a glistening mess against his leg that made your mouth water. You blew at his cock, watching in delight as it twitched at the sudden rush of air, your nails scratching at his new mess pubic hair.

All Might shifted his hips.

Carefully, you avoided touching his shaft, instead go for and grasping his balls again in your hands and bringing your mouth against them. You did your best to take as much as you could in your mouth, sucking and licking one while fondling the other.

All Might’s hand rested on the top of your head. You acknowledged his touch by moving away from his balls, turning to lick and kiss his legs.

He had such thick thighs. So tough and solid.

You sucked against the skin, doing your best to leave a mark before opening your mouth and--

*A bite!*

All Might pulled you up and away from his legs by your hair, glaring that *you* would be bold enough to try and bite *him*.

At the same time, his cock twitched at your attempt.

It was in no way painful but still…

He directed your head back to his groin, going so far as to rest his engorged cock against the side of your face, growing even harder at the lewd sight. You laughed, resting your hand on his cock and nuzzling against it -- he released a breathy grunt.

“*I’ll remember that,*” he warned. You leaned back, straightening out his throbbing member and resting its head against your chin.

“*Have some trust in me, honey bunny. I’ll make you feel real good,*” you said with a wink before taking his cockhead in your mouth.

Tension dissipated as he felt immediate relief.

*That's it. That's what he wanted.*

You released his head with a wet pop before interlacing your fingers and spitting on your palms. You returned your mouth to his cock, slurping sucking and licking as your joined hands pumped his shaft with vigor.

“That's it, beautiful,” he groaned, rolling his head slightly. “That’s it. Good girl.”

He was rocking his hips, trying to match the tempo of your hands while releasing grunting, pleased breaths.

A new kind of tension had taken over his body.

The minutes ticked by as you continued your cycle of pumping, licking and sucking. Your jaw was beginning to ache, your actions getting less defined and more jumbled. All Might, sensing your growing discomfort, was brandishing a tight smile.
You had no idea how long he could draw out his stamina. He was All Might!

But, you were working so diligently on the throbbing thickness between his legs and he found himself approaching his end far quicker than he expected.

“Keep going,” he ordered, voice thick. A warning.

In response, you increased your ministrations.

He clenched his teeth, careful to keep his hand from unintentionally tugging or pulling your head harder onto him. You had added a twisting motion to your pumping and your tongue felt like it was everywhere.

God did he miss you.

All Might’s body tensed and snorted before hoarsely letting out an, “I’m--”

The hands and mouth were gone.

It was a little shocking actually, how abruptly his building passion stopped. He looked down, releasing a jittery exhale and was greeted by your cheeky grin.

So this was your plan.

“I will kill you,” he snarled, sweat forming at his brow, face alive with fury. But the thought of you denying him pleasure was... somewhat appealing. You ran your hands up and down his torso, waiting for him to cool off. When his breathing was no longer so labored, you started stroking his cock again.

“Honey,” you cooed softly, kissing along his shaft, voice and eyes so warm and sweet. “Let me take care of you.”

He wavered.

All Might attempted to keep himself from getting too excited by your hands and mouth, but you were relentless. Before he knew it, he had started thrusting again, his hand back to squeezing your scalp.

And, secretly, he was a glutton for punishment.

“There,” he found himself saying and, as expected, you retracted your touch. He tried to wet his dry tongue as his body continued to twist itself tighter at each denial. He rubbed his temple, ignoring the obscene way his cock was bobbing and glistening.

When you went to deny him again, he grabbed you by your jaw.

The look he gave you was exhilarating, a strained but furious glower.

“You’re going to regret all this,” he warned, serious. But it was all an act, a way for him to keep face. You rested your hand against his.

“You’re a good sport,” you said with minor strain. When he loosened his grip, you kissed at his hand.

It didn’t take long for him to barrel back toward the edge. You were back on his cock, tonguing and sucking its head while pumping his length rapidly. His hand was painfully knotted in your hair, silently telling you that he was done letting you play your games. There was no way he was going to
let you move away for a third time.

All Might didn’t speak, choosing instead to let out heavy, pleased grunts and snorts. He kept his hips from bucking upward into your mouth, but his legs were clenching as he drew closer to popping.

A loud hiss and hair pulling was your warning that he was going to cum. That’s when you created a seal with your lips, pumping his shaft enthusiastically.

His body tensed.

He released a strangled grunt.

And then, his release was oozing up and out, painting and coating your tongue with white.

You exhaled sharply through your nose, trying your best to keep up with the sheer size of his load, swallowing repeatedly and beating down the urge to pull away and drool out all his cum. It was just too much.

And the first time you had given him a blowjob, you had swallowed three of his loads!?

Looking back, you had no idea how. Adrenaline, maybe? Fear?

His hips were still jerking but the amount of cum in your mouth was decreasing. You kept swallowing, trying not to look as overwhelmed as you felt.

He sighed, wiping away the spittle from off of his jaw.

Tentatively, you released your mouth from his dick.

“Don’t you ever do that again,” he warned, an attempt to threaten you for your edging. But it came out as a strained groan that was hard to take seriously.

“It looks like it might have been worth it,” you teased, dragging yourself up onto the bed to lounge beside him. Immediately he turned into you, burying his face into your hair.

“Never. Again.” He hissed, hand falling on your throat, squeezing only slightly. “Never. Again.”

In response, you patted his hand.

You… weren’t going to commit to that.

Apparently, he wasn’t too worried about your lack of acknowledgment either. He kept silent and stayed silent.

One minute turned to five.

He wasn’t moving.

Was... he going to fall asleep?

You waited to see what All Might's next move was -- he was laying beside you, breathing deeply, hand still resting on your neck. Although you were wet and ready for him, having him asleep next to you was worth much more than any reunion sex.

But then he shifted beside you, grumbling under his breath as he sat up. You tried to bury your disappointment in your gut.
He was changing positions, pinning you to the bed momentarily as he shifted and rolled to his knees. He hooked his arms around your legs and dragged you down toward him, shoving his face into the crook of your neck when you were close.

Breathing quickly turning to frenzied kissing, however, his mouth journeying up your neck to land on yours. You were rendered a bit helpless as hunger exploded in his chest for you once more, his hips moving unabashedly to grind and jerk his still too-sensitive cock against your body, his hands tugging at fistfuls of your hair in an attempt to pull your face closer to his.

He was back in control, devouring your mouth, biting down on your lips hard enough that you were mewling into him.

Then he was going back to that beautiful neck of yours, pressing teeth and tongue against your windpipe in a hotheaded haze to remind you that he was **power**.

“All Might.” Your voice was soft and breathless, your hand petting the bit of neck just under his ear. His ferocity tempered slightly, your humanity returning to him. His arms wrapped around you, digging into the space between your back and the mattress. You braced yourself, half expecting him to toss you across the bed or room. But... he didn't move.

*It was a hug!*

Something inside you broke.

You were glad All Might couldn’t see your face.

*A hug!*

*Pull yourself together!*

You slid your arms under his, curling them up toward his shoulders, returning the affection.

“I'm glad you’re back,” you said into him, squeezing him. Trying to let him know what you were feeling with actually saying it.

You wondered if he understood. He didn't say anything. He just laughed before moving to help you peel off your shirt. His face lit up when he took in the sight of the red lace of your bra, approving the choice.

But, it didn’t stay on for long.

His face moved to your breast when it was exposed, his hands pulling away so he could rest his weight on his forearms. When his mouth enclosed around your comparatively tiny nipple, you jerked at the contact, a loud inhale catching his attention. Enraptured by your reaction, he sucked a bit harder. Your body twisted, the quietest groan escaping.

He laughed at you, watching as you rubbed your eyes and forehead in shame.

“They’re sensitive, okay?” you hissed.

He responded by switching attention to your other nipple, rolling the one he left between massive fingers. You were biting at your hand as he mauled your body, doing your best to prevent your cries from escaping. In the silence of the room, your commotion was not hidden.

His hand enclosed around your wrist as he pulled your hand out of your mouth, his bright eyes
leering at you in the darkness.

“I want to hear you."

“Ugh,” you snorted, your body flushing with embarrassment. You were not one to happily make those loud mewling and gaspy sounds. But he was still tugging, nipping and licking your nipples. You could feel his eyes boring into your face.

Your teeth were clenched, still stubbornly refusing to acquiesce to his demand.

He skewed a bit rougher, grasping a nipple between his teeth and pulling it upward.

You moaned, your back lifting at the pleasurable pain he was inflicting before you gnashed your teeth together in shame. You felt his grumble of appreciation at hearing you, continuing, his motions turned to pulling and pinching.

You could feel it, the whimpers and whines bubbling in your throat. Your body was trembling and reacting to his mouth. Your hand was pulling at his hair. There was rumbling, he was laughing as you finally cracked and released a breathy gasp followed by a low ‘god.’ Then another moan.

Perfect.

You felt him leave your breasts.

He brushed the hair from out of your face, admiring how wildly it was spread around you.

Then, he leaned his forehead against yours.

When your lips eventually touched, your kiss was long and deep, both of you dissolving into each other.

“Sweetheart,” he murmured, cupping and stroking your face. You were such a sight at that moment, a gorgeous creature grinning up at him. You shook your head, red-faced, glancing away before looking back up at him.

And then he was moving, sitting up to better pull your jeans and panties off. Aside from a pleased hum at seeing the matching red underwear, he didn’t acknowledge your choice of attire. Not that you minded. You were chewing on your bottom lip, waiting.

His large thumb traced up and down your slit and you twitched in response at the touch of an outside hand. Then he was pressing inward to find your clit. When the pad of his thumb came across that magic little button, he pressed slow circles against it. You brought your knuckle back to your mouth as you felt the beginning waves of pleasure.

As he kept on going, your hips slowly began to follow his motions.

All Might quickened the speed of his thumb and dipped one large finger in you, curling it to brush and press against her inner walls. You sighed as your hips rocked at his entry. Just one was enough to get you off.

But you wanted more.

And he was more than happy to indulge you.

You were a sight to behold, writhing in front of him. Because of him. He swallowed, forcing himself
to continue his preparations by adding a second finger.

All he wanted to do was pin you down and fuck you into the floorboards. But he couldn’t.

At least not yet.

Just a little bit more…

He was scissoring the digits in and out of you when he shifted down to his belly, hungry tongue flicking out to taste your sex.

You groaned and blindly reached above you for a pillow. When your fingers brushed against one, you grabbed it and threw it over your face, pressing down to keep yourself quiet.

*He needed more.*

All Might pulled his fingers away to allow his mouth to take over your pleasure, treating your pussy as if it was another mouth. You could feel his lips melding and pulling against your sex, tongue burrowing to brush and prod your insides. The sound of wet kissing and slurping filled the room.

*He was so big. His face was so big. He was just… big! And the sounds!*

You shuddered and whined at hearing his pleased huffs.

You pressed harder against his mouth, cursing his name.

Swirling and dancing, his tongue landed on your clit, his two fingers reburying themselves back into you, pumping and scissoring.

“A-Ah--!”

The friction on your clit was stinging in the most rousing of ways. You involuntarily groaned and pulled the pillow down harder, almost willing to suffocate yourself. Your pelvis was starting to grow tight, your lower body rising up to further push yourself against All Might’s hands and mouth.

When he looked up to watch your face and saw the pillow, he grabbed it, flinging it across the room behind him. You didn’t register it disappearing -- his mouth leaving your clit caused you to cry out in frustration and lean up. With ragged breaths, you gave him a combative glare.

*That look!*  

His thumb found your nub again and he was grounding against it, flicking it with such ferocity that the hair on the back of your neck was standing up, your final countdown beginning.

“Oh!” you whimpered into your knuckles, unable to hold his gaze. His eyes were still trained on you, watching your face contort in pleasure. Your head lolled backward and you grabbed at the comforter. You could feel the springs inside you being twisted, growing tighter as each second passed.

“Please,” you growled, bearing her teeth slightly as your jaw clenched and your toes curled. “Harder. *Harder!*”

He kept the speed the same but pushed his thumb forcefully against you, his blood on fire.

Your breathing had reached a crescendo. One ragged breath. Another an octave higher and louder. And then one great inhale…
You bucked and shuddered when you came, you breathing coming out in ragged gasps. You were twitching and turning, trying to mumble out something about his still-pumping hand. *A break!* To your *immense* relief, he removed it from your sex without much fuss.

You were thankful, so thankful, as your body vibrated and twitched with aftershocks.

But he was hard again.

You felt some large situated itself at your entrance as he maneuvered himself over you. Your eyes flew open, coming face-to-face with his chest.

“P-please!” You needed a bit more time than that--

He was pushing in.

You cried out, eyes rolling slightly as you felt his thickness already start to split you in two. *Lube!* You needed *lube!*

“All right!” you yelled at him, beating his chest with a fist. “Lube!”

*Oh.*

*You were right.*

All Might's cock pulled away. He was shifting and moving across you. The sound of a drawer opening rang out, followed by the sounds of its contents being shuffled around.

When he returned back over you, a bottle was in his hands.

You relaxed when you felt something cold and wet drip across your sex before being swept across it and pushed inside. More squelching -- he was coating his cock.

*Much better.*

Having been properly prepared, his member was back at your entrance, pushing into it and stretching you wide.

Your eyes were closed as you felt his hips roll above you, your focus centered on the slow and steady rhythm of his thrusting. He was too big. A woman-ruiner. How could anyone else ever compare? But you *craved* him. Though your penetrative sex life was still young, your mind had already started to covet his length and thickness. He was too big and that was *perfect*. He was perfect.

You opted to tell him as much.

“You’re perfect,” you said, reaching and pulling at the bottom of his shirt, signaling you wanted it off. He exhaled in annoyance (he had hoped that maybe you wouldn't notice) but didn’t put up a fuss. Without breaking his momentum he pulled his shirt off his body, leaving you face-to-face with the bare skin of his torso.

He jerked his cock in deeper to you, a tremor running through him at the weak little sound you made. *He could crush you.*

Things were stretching out, All Might recognized. It didn’t feel like he was bumping against a wall anymore. He grunted, allowing himself to openly start enjoying the sensations of your body. The
The way you were rippling around him, how tight you were, how enclosed he felt.

Then he heard it, the tinkle of your laughter. You had recognized he was relaxing, your own body following suit.

But laughter wasn't what he wanted to hear from you at the moment.

He responded by slamming into you harder.

You let out a strangled yelp as the pain flashed.

He did it again. Again. Again. Again. Again.

*Oh, he missed you.*

As he sped up, he put more force into his movements, growling in pleasure as he listened to your gasps and cries.

“All Might,” you whimpered, surprised at how quickly he had moved to more brutish behavior. You needed more time to adjust to him as there was still pain.

But he was fucking you, pushing relentlessly into you, something primal awakening within him at how much he missed the feeling of everything. He was All Might, the physical manifestation of power. The bed and frame were silent, but they were still shifting at each thrust. You were still mewling underneath him.

His grunting grew louder.

“Oh, I like your sounds,” you sighed into him, eyes fluttering, forcing yourself to speak up.

You rubbed his torso, kissing and licking any bit of skin near you. Soreness had replaced the pain. You felt full. You felt your insides being brushed and stretched. You felt good and it was thrilling to see, hear and feel a carnal All Might using you.

Inhibitions were long gone and you felt no shame when you started whispering his name, trying to get his blood going.

“So good,” you groaned with a smile, your hand roaming down to rub and press against his pelvis before moving to his scar. Tracing the curves of the puffed skin, envisioning the shape and size of each branch of his disfigurement. “I need more. *Harder. Fuck me. Fuck me, All Might.*”

Without warning or acknowledgment he rolled himself over, hand gripping your waist to keep you attached to him as he flopped onto his back on the bed.

He shifted, planting his feet on the mattress as his hands dug into your hips, satisfied that he could thrust more comfortably.

Your head fell back at the change of position and the slight headrush that went along with it.

*God did it feel good.*

All Might’s face was wild -- he was wearing a snarl as the veins in his neck bulged. His eyes were fixated on your joining, watching as his slick cock repeatedly disappeared into your tiny body. He was getting close, he recognized with disappointment.

Far too quick.
“Mmmm,” you hummed, your hands resting on top of his as you jolted up and down. “Such a strong man. So big and hard. I won’t be able to walk right when you’re done with me.”

You bit your lip to prevent your laughter -- he let out a deep groan. Apparently, it was doing it for him.

“Get nice and deep,” you sighed, rolling your hips out of sync for some fun. At least you tried to, he wouldn’t allow it. He dug his fingers painfully into your flesh as he forced you to bounce properly on his cock.

He tilted his head, a vivid blue eye meeting and boring into yours. It was a warning, you recognized. A sultry, crazed smile split your face and you attempted again to spark his ire.

When he plunged you down on him, you clenched up and grabbed the sides of his waist, your legs clamping against his thighs. He inhaled at feeling your insides grow tighter but he hadn’t been expecting your resistance. His hands slipped up your body when he went to thrust you up -- your body staying firmly put.

All Might jerked up roughly, his hips bucking off the bed, easily breaking your grip on him.

“Fuck!” you cried out, for once loud and clear, head falling forward as he easily punched through your defenses. The power shuddered up your spine and rattled your brain with a sudden hot haze.

You folded, you were out of the game. You wanted him to be in control.

“Oh, wow.”

In his lust-fueled fog, your words and apparent surrender were maddening. He gripped you tighter.

“Say… my… name,” he rumbled, his speed increasing to an absurd tempo.

“All M-Might!” you cried out, voice rattling as your body rapidly lurched up and down. You were rubbing his lower stomach, trying to grind your hips against his whenever they connected. Your own orgasm had suddenly appeared on the horizon.

He had taken over completely, his lower body leaving the bed every time he smashed up into you. His breaths were coming out in ragged huffs, his one lung working overtime, fingers digging into your body. He was losing it, you saw. Desperately reaching his end.

God, he was a sight.

“Come in me, honey,” you pleaded, meeting his eyes. You weren’t wearing some cocky grin -- you looked meek. You looked desperate. Your mouth was agape, eyes fluttering as you jerked and bounced on his dick.

It was no mutual lovemaking, you were being fucked. All Might was using you.

You tossed your head back, gritting your teeth as you came, body shifting and jerking as he fucked you through your waves.

All Might broke in that moment. He thumped his head back onto the bed as a loud choke erupted from him. He buried himself into you completely, gasping and straining as he unloaded into your depths, his cock and balls squeezing and twitching as he pumped everything he had inside of you.
Filling you.

He was breathing harshly, squeezing your hips as he jerked, coming down from his high. You watched his almost-pained face relax as his body’s reverberations died down. You were panting, stroking his fingers and hands gently, waiting for him to settle his lower body back on to the bed.

You gave him some time to breathe -- there had been something slightly off about him. As you watched him try and recover, it struck you that he was probably exhausted. Weeks of travel was wearing on him.

So, you waited. Watched his laboring breathing normalize. You felt his hand stroke and grasp at your thigh. You poked his belly with your pointer finger, his softened cock still buried inside you. He moved to look down at you.

“You have to help me get off the bed without getting cum on the sheets,” you said, patting the hand he had left on your thigh.

It wasn’t particularly hard, he shifted his body so that, when you finally pulled yourself off of him, the mess of your joining dripped and pooled on the hardwood floor of your bedroom instead of your expensive sheets.

*Your legs felt like jelly.*

All Might was still laying on your bed when you came back from cleaning yourself off in the bathroom, paper towels and a sponge were in your hands.

A loud snore tore through him, jolting him awake. The last thing he needed was to fall asleep at your place -- he wouldn’t be able to retain his proper All Might form if he fell asleep.

That was not the way he wanted you to learn about his smaller form.

*If* he wanted you to learn about.

But… it had been more on his mind as of late.

*How nice would it--*

He silenced his thoughts, ignoring you as he stood and collected his clothes, leaving the room.

You were dressed in your pajamas when he returned from his bathroom trip and, to your utter disappointment, he was dressed as well.

He was going to leave.

“I need to go rest,” he said, forcing back a yawn.

“Of course,” you mumbled, tossing the used paper towels into your bedroom trashcan.

Every visit of his ended the same -- him leaving and you spending the night alone. It had been that way for months and showed no sign of changing.

Yet, like a fool, every single time a part of you hoped that, maybe, *this* time would be different. That he would turn and pull you into bed with him. That’d you wake up trapped in his arms or crushed under his weight. Two uncomfortable scenarios that sounded like heaven to you.

Silence settled over the room.
You glanced over to see what All Might was doing, why he was being so quiet. You expected him to be on his phone or something.

Not staring at you.

Your brows furrowed. “What?”

His jaw clenched and unclenched, his hand resting against his pocket as he continued to look you over.

You looked down, bracing yourself in case there was some kind of bug or creature traveling up your clothing. But you didn’t see anything.

“Here.”

A small black box suddenly struck your chest and you floundered, attempting to catch it, caught off guard by the sudden toss. It was small and rectangular. It was jewelry. You gaped up at All Might, who was scowling, his arms crossed.

“What is this?” you asked.

“Don’t ask me stupid questions.”

Did he get you a present!?

An actual gift!?

Something he picked out, specifically, for you? For no other reason than to make you happy?

Not to replace something he broke or ruined.

You sat back on your bed, face lighting up with joy as you looked up to him.

*Your eyes were crinkling with your smile.*

Carefully, as if the object could scamper away if startled, you lifted the top of the box to reveal what was contained inside.

It was… a necklace.

A yellow gold necklace.

A yellow gold necklace with an American flag pendant.

You gazed down at his gift for you.

The American flag was covered with small red, white and blue Swarovski Crystals.

A present he had picked out for you.

It was probably one of the tackiest things you had *ever* seen.

You were in Japan.

Why was…

An *American* flag…?
You didn’t like it -- All Might caught as much. He was striding over, hand out, ready to snatch back what he foolishly gave you.

He shouldn’t have done it. He should have kept that stupid fucking necklace in his pocket and--

“It’s beautiful,” you said, looking up at his approaching form. You were pushing aside personal style and questions over his taste, instead clinging to the fact that All Might had bought you a present.

His pace slowed and he glared.

“You’re lying.”

You were shaking your head, taking the necklace out of the box fully.

God, it was so ugly. Out of all the things he came across, this was what he picked to give you?

“An American flag because you love and lived in America?” you guessed, internally praying that was the reason for his choice -- the fact that he was a dork for the United States. When he didn’t answer, you knew that you had guessed right.

“If you don’t like it, give it back,” he snapped. But his anger was tempering.

Maybe... maybe you did like it.

“It’s...” Oh god. Say something good about it.

“This is utterly you, All Might. It’s perfect. I love it.”

Love.

He was backing off.

“Are you going to get me a present every time you leave?” you teased, trying to shift away from the tacky necklace. “I know I said I missed you but if you’re going to bring me back stuff...”

“Don’t hold your breath,” he grumbled.

Utterly him.

Love it.

Love.

Stop.

All Might glanced at his phone, checking the time.

He was tired. He turned to leave, still regretting giving you the gift, but stopped himself. He glanced at you, watching you expertly clasp the necklace around your own neck.

When you looked up, he appeared to be annoyed and was gesturing you over to him.

“Howdy, girl. I want to leave. Come and kiss me goodbye.”

That... was a first.

You beamed at his demand for affection.

Dork.
Fractures

Routine.
That’s what your life fell further into.
Routine.
It didn’t get better.
Yume had been wrong in her assessment.
You never caught up with the flow of everyone else. You were running but nothing was getting any easier.
In fact, more work was being piled on.
One month passed. Then two.
You’d finish a project only to pick-up two more.
Stress relief workshops at your lab suggested that you find a hobby to help get your mind off of work. Though it had been years since you’d made anything for fun, you started knitting and crocheting again, hoping it would help settle your brain.
It didn’t help.
You lasted a few weeks. Finished a couple of hats and scarves. Eventually stopped.
No, hobbies didn’t help.
Only sleep helped.

The meeting had been sent to you from Emily on behalf of Doctor Kravitz. A fifteen-minute one-on-one during your usual lunch hour.

While everyone on your team went off to grab lunch together, you made your way to Kravtiz’s office.

He gave you a tight smile when you entered.
“I wanted to check in with you,” he said while you worked to steady your nerves. “See how everything is going.”

Check-up meetings with him weren’t anything new -- everyone under Kravitz had a bi-weekly, if not monthly, chat with him to go over their work.

You quickly ran through the projects you were working on and how they were fairing. Endeavor’s suit was still your primary focus -- the final design had been chosen, you and Mikki had just started
the construction of the ensemble. Then there were wristlets for the hero Gunhead you were assisting the munitions team with testing.

Word had also traveled across departments about your quirk. Random emails and meeting requests were being directed to you, asking if you could spare some time to be on standby to potentially save devices and weapons from destruction during their testing.

Kravitz had also entrusted you with gathering financial data from the team regarding last year’s budget to be included in some high-level reports.

You were busy, you admitted with a self-satisfied sigh.

But Kravitz didn’t look enthused.

“My concern is that you’re…” he paused, taking off his glasses and rubbing his eyes. “Frankly, I don’t think you’re pulling your weight on these team projects.”

Your insides withered immediately.

You looked at him wide-eyed.

He was staring back at you, face void of any kind of… emotion.

“The team is what matters,” he said. “We succeed as a team and we fail as a team. Yes, you’re helping Mikki out but are you taking any kind of initiative? Or are you waiting for her to give you instruction? Her job isn’t to babysit. And those financial numbers should have been sent to me at the start of the week -- my whole presentation is now waiting on you. As for all that testing, that is something you can do in your free time when the team doesn’t need you -- not now. We’re obviously all very busy. It’s disappointing to see where your priorities are.”

“I...I--”

You didn’t know what to say. It was Mikki’s project, you were only assisting. You didn’t have the authority to take initiative. He had only asked you on Wednesday for those numbers, he wanted them by Monday!? The testing -- most emails you received specifically stated Kravitz had suggested they reach out to you.

Excuses.

Seeing your gaping mouth, Kravitz sighed.

“Work on it. Realign your priorities. You’re brilliant and I still see such potential in you. Don’t let your ego blind you, that’s all!”

The conversation turned to lighter topics and discussions about future collaborations. He was all smiles. Your voice was tight, your responses short and forced. Your sour smile returned his when you were eventually dismissed to go to lunch.

You weren’t hungry after that.

Ego? It wasn’t ego that motivated you, it was a desire to prove yourself.

All you wanted was to seem helpful. Useful. Worth it.

Your appetite was gone.
Instead, you spent the remainder of your lunch hour crying in the bathroom.

You fired off a text to Yume, giving her a run-down of what had just occurred. The perceived blindside.

Minutes later, you received her response.

‘Hey, it’s okay! It just sounds like he wanted to realign your goals, that’s all! Take what he said in stride and roll with it. Don’t beat yourself up, we all lose track of the finish line sometimes. I promise you it wasn’t a bad thing!’

When everyone returned from lunch, no one commented on your puffy eyes.

Your phone was ringing.

With a jolt you pulled away from All Might’s lips, turning in the direction of your nightstand. You could see the name clear as day -- Mikki.

*What time was it?*

*It didn’t matter.*

“Don’t you dare,” All Might growled, grabbing your wrist.

“I have to take it,” you said, squirreling away from him, reaching with your other hand. “I can’t--”

You were yanked back onto his body. His patience had been worn thin long ago. Now, it was fraying. Unraveling entirely.

*He couldn’t hold your attention.*

“If you answer that, I’m won’t be here when you hang up,” he told you evenly. “I’m not going to sit here twiddling my thumbs *waiting* for you.”

He said that last time, you noted with a tired sigh, but he hadn’t followed through.

“I have to take it. Stop being dramatic.”

By the time you freed yourself from All Might’s aggravated grip, the phone had stopped ringing. Without a glance back, you shuffled out of your bedroom into the privacy of your kitchen.

When you returned her call, Mikki informed you of the issue -- the dark fabric for Endeavor’s costume hadn’t been part of the latest materials delivery. You glanced at the clock on your microwave, blinking at the time.

*Why was she still in the office?*

“Yeah, I have the purchase order number,” you said, leaving your kitchen to go fish your work laptop out of your bag in the living room. “Give me a second to pull it up.”

As your computer booted, you rubbed your eyes and heard a yawn on the other line.

“You should go home soon,” you told Mikki who giggled dryly.

“I will as soon as I log in the new delivery dates for everything. I just finished his gauntlets, they’ll be
ready for tomorrow’s testing.”

She had stopped apologizing for calling you so late. It had become routine.

It was always someone.

Sometimes it was you calling your coworkers, trying to finish project segments or paperwork or reports that you were afraid to put off another day. That you couldn’t put off another day.

It was normal.

You forwarded the PO number to her from your email. She thanked you. You hung up.

The bed was empty when you returned.

You checked -- his boots were no longer by the door.

He really did leave.

Kravitz pulled you off of Gunhead’s project. You weren't pulling your weight. He wanted you to share your Outlook schedule with him. He wanted to see what you were doing at any given point in the day.

He said it was to help strengthen you.

“You’ve got so much talent!” he had said. “I’m just trying to help you!”

You were a failure.

You couldn’t hide and cry in the bathroom forever. The last thing you wanted was for your coworkers to think you were some weepy, emotionally unstable woman who couldn’t handle a bit of pressure.

No. You had to be stronger than that.

You had to prove them wrong.

After cleaning your face as best as you could, you headed back to your desk. You just needed a breather, that was all. You were in a funk -- Yume had suggested it all had to do with the season. The bitterness of winter mixed with the lack of daylight. Dark and cold.

Once spring hit, things would be better. Everything would be okay. The stress would fall away.

When you returned to your desk, you found a fresh cup of coffee waiting for you.

It was a simple kindness that made your heart shatter.

It was a Saturday night. You had told him you were off from work.

“Get up.”

All Might’s voice sliced through the stillness of your bedroom. You stirred from beneath the covers, exposing your face and squinting up at him.

It was dark.
When did that happen?

“Hey,” you said with a tired smile, sitting up and reaching out to him. “I’m glad to see you.”

He didn’t react to your words or arms.

He had fixed you with a glare.

‘Have you left your bed today?’ The question was on the tip of his tongue but there was no point in asking it. He already knew the answer.

Apathy did not suit you.

“Get up,” he repeated.

Where was the fire for him?

You stretched before flipping up the covers, tapping the bed beside you.

“Come lay in bed with me for a bit,” you said. “Just for a few more minutes.”

He was still glaring.

No.

He didn’t want to.

Your long-dormant group text lit up with life. It was a single message broadcasted to the five or so people in it -- ‘We need to hang out!’

The responses were immediate. It was time for fun again.

You were excited. A date was picked -- the following Saturday. It was short notice, yes, but no one seemed to mind. A bar was thrown out in Tokyo. There was even talk of dancing.

It would be perfect. An amazing distraction and you could see friends outside of Yume! You informed All Might that you wouldn’t be home for him, you were going out. Quickly he was fishing for details -- where you were going and at what time, heavily implying that he would drop by the area. For you.

Finally.

Life was back in you.

You bought a new dress and purse, cleaning out your old one. It felt good trashing the accumulated receipts and finally hanging up the group shot on your fridge. From your girls night that took place however many months ago.

Yes. You were due for a big night out.

That week, when asked, you told your coworkers you had plans that didn’t involve catching up on much-needed sleep. You were going dancing It was going to be great!

Until Saturday hit.

The eagerness fizzled when you opened your eyes that morning.
Instead of taking a shower, you sat in bed on your phone. An hour ticked by. Motivation was escaping you.

Not only did you have to shower, you also had to do your hair and makeup.

And walk to the train. Oh, that was such an exhausting thought. Sitting on the train for an hour or so, all the way to Tokyo. And you wouldn’t have the benefit of sleeping in your own bed -- you were crashing at a friend’s apartment.

Which meant Sunday you would be forced to take the train back and spend the day nursing a hangover.

A little after lunch, you informed your friends you wouldn’t be able to make it out after all. You had a sore throat and mild fever. You had hoped it would pass but it hadn’t. You didn’t want to infect them.

You stressed how upset you were to be missing out on the fun.

No one seemed bothered by your flakiness. Everyone wished for you to get better soon.

The only one to express disappointment was All Might. You told him you weren’t going out after all and were going to spend the night in.

And, for once, he asked why.

You thought about lying, saying you were sick. But you wanted him to come to you.

So you told him the truth. You just didn’t feel like it.

He did visit your apartment that night.

It felt… stale.

Endeavor’s suit was magnificent. It exceeded expectations. Months of toil paid off.

It was the big day -- the final fitting. If the number one hero gave the okay, it would be delivered to his office later in the week. He would be free to unveil it whenever he was ready. The new age of Endeavor.

Everyone was in good spirits, a couple bottles of sparkling wine had been brought in and stashed under desks, ready to be popped. The team had plans on ending the day early. Going out to dinner. Celebrating.

Work hard, play harder.

Everything was going to be okay.

Mikki told you she had planned on saying a few words at dinner. Kravitz was expected to be in attendance, she wanted to let him know how integral you had been, how much of a help you were.

“Oh, Mik, you don’t have to,” you said, though your face said otherwise. The mousey woman waved away your half-hearted attempts at changing her mind.

“No, you put in the work. You deserve it!”
You did deserve it.

As expected, you didn’t get to meet Endeavor when he showed up at the lab, ushered into a nice private conference room upstairs with Kravitz and Mikki while you and the others were hidden away in your windowless basement lab.

No one was working. No one was in the right mindset to work.

What they were waiting on was the party and that could only happen once Endeavor left.

It was during that waiting period that the attack came.

“Damn,” Richard said, wincing as the lights flickered and the rumbling of an explosion shook the walls your lab. “Someone miscalculated.”

“Great. Now we’re going to have to sit through another safety seminar if someone blew themselves-”

An alarm sounded.

Confusion settled.

“Is… is it a test?”

Another rumble answered the question.

As the support lab in Japan for heroes, Odaiba Research Center had seen its fair share of villain attacks over the years and had a variety of safety precautions in place to counter them and ensure safety. There was an emergency alarm system, panic rooms, ample security -- both heroic and robotic. Not to mention, on any given day, the odds were good that some high-level hero was in the vicinity of the compound.

Safety drills happened quarterly. Reminders over protocols were sent out frequently. New hires had to sit through seminars on what to do in case of an actual villain emergency.

But something happens when a real emergency situation occurs -- people forget all those protocols and directions. In times of panic, they don’t calmly assess situations. They don’t recall what the employee handbook stated they should do.

No, they run.

You were climbing steps two at a time, joining a swarm of other basement lab assistant and scientists who were all fleeing from the building. The alarm was still blaring, your ears were crackling.

And then you were upstairs.

Chaos.

Great sections of lobby's glass walls had been destroyed, covering the floor with glass shards of varying sizes that snapped and crunched under your panicked footsteps. Fires had started. Structural supports for the building were bent and snapped.

The ceiling was caving in.

You kept running, just one person in the great sea of people escaping.
Safety in numbers, right? That’s what you told yourself. You had no idea who was attacking the building or how many there were. Hell, you weren’t even sure where you were going. It was herd mentality, really. Enough people were running in one direction that everyone else followed.

Until a beast fell from the sky and landed beside the mob, screeching and swiping at the defenseless.

Another one followed suit.

Soon there were four of them, charging and ripping into the crowd. The screams. They weren’t like the screams of fright that you had heard the night you witnessed All Might’s attack. They were similar, yes, but these were more blood-curdling.

Screams of pain.

You didn’t know what to do. You didn’t know what was happening.

Everything was fast.

So, you started running again.

Heading in the opposite direction of the villains.

Back toward the building.

Odaiba was an island -- the only way on and off, besides the train, was the Rainbow Bridge. Or swimming. But it was early February and trying to swim across the bay seemed risky.

Well, dying seemed risky too--

As clear as day, you heard your name.

You were behind the building by that point, running along the perimeter, planning on heading toward the bridge in a different direction than everyone else. Away from the villains. At hearing your name a second time, you slowed, looking around.

Yume--?

No.

Mikki.

You could see her. Huddled beneath ruins.

“Mikki!”

You were running to her, flabbergasted why she wasn't running. Why she was trying to hide in the wreckage?

That’s when you saw her arm, sandwich beneath some kind of metal from the building.

She was crying, jittery.

You were… terrified.

“Oh god,” you muttered repeatedly, pressing your hands against the possible steel beam that had her pinned. Her arm was… basically flattened. Trapped beneath such a massive amount of weight.
You couldn’t help her.

“Can you pull it out?” you asked, voice breaking. Mikki shook her head.

The pain hadn’t hit her yet.

The terror of being trapped was far too strong.

Another rumble. Hearing metal wailing, you looked up.

_A beam was hanging. Swinging above you._

With wide-eyes, you looked back at Mikki. She mirrored your face.

“Please help me,” she said. _Begged._ With her innocent face and flicking ears.

And there you stood. With a choice.

Leave your friend to die alone. Or stay and possibly die along with her.

_“Mikki,”_ you cried, face crumpling, _pleading_ with her to make the decision for you. To make it easy. You wanted her to scream for you to go and save yourself. Or to go find help. To give you an excuse to leave.

But she didn’t. She was crying again. This woman, who had a husband and children, who had dreams and a _life_ -- a beautiful, wonderful life -- she didn’t want to die.

And you didn’t have the strength to turn your back on her.

It wasn’t because you _wanted_ to save her.

No.

You were certain that, if you left, you’d never get her voice or face out of your head.

So, you pushed. With all the strength you could muster, you struggled against the metal beam holding her down, praying for _more._ Praying for _help._

Help.

You reached for your phone with blind hope, dialing All Might.

He could help. He could save you all. Villain or not, he would save _you._

The cell phone signal was lost. Too much saturation.

Your call didn’t go through.

He would not be rescuing you.

Mikki’s loud cry tore you away from your despair. You looked at her, expecting to see writhing pain. What you discovered was horror.

You looked over your shoulder in the direction she was staring at.

_A monster._
It was a giant lumbering to you. A massive brawny beast with off-colored skin and tattered clothing. Its eyes were large and unblinking. Two white saucers that stared at you both. Empty. Void of any kind of life.

Part of its skull was missing.

The soft pink tissue of its brain was exposed.

You froze.

You were destined to die, weren’t you?

It’s breathing was loud and labored, its body moved with jolts and unnecessary twitches. And it continued walking toward you.

Mikki was… trapped.

If you ran…

You were turning your body, eyes darting around you, trying to determine what direction to run in. If you had the strength to do it.

Mikki was trapped.

If you ran… she could buy you time.

Could you sacrifice her?

She was crying. You were hesitating.

Do it. Do it.

Run.

Your hesitation cost you.

With a shocking amount of speed, the monster closed the distance. It was snarling, opening its massive, hanging jaw wide. You screamed. Mikki screamed.

Death--

A flash of red.

Another.

The creature was pushed back when several other strands of red appeared suddenly, embedding themselves in its purple flesh. It was making some kind of sound -- a screeching, animalistic cry as it clawed at itself.

“Found another one!” someone called out.

“What did I tell you about getting in my way?” a voice snarled back.

“Ohh, look. We’ve got some people here too!”

Your jaw dropped when you took in the smiling face of Hawks who landed delicately on the ground
before you, tucking his wings carefully behind him. Following him, and striking the ground with a resounding thud, was Endeavor.

“You better call back those feathers if you don’t want them burnt,” the hero snapped over his shoulder to Hawks who paused before nodding. The flashes of red had been feathers. You watched as they were summoned from the skin of the beast, slicing through the air to return to Hawks’ wings.

“All good!” the feathered hero said brightly before Endeavor raised a hand.

A vortex of fire erupted from his palm, boiling the air around you as it barreled toward his enemy. It was screaming when the fire struck it, flailing and running in an attempt to escape Endeavor’s flames.

“Don’t go too overboard,” Hawks warned. Endeavor glared at him from over his shoulder.

“You’re useless.”

“I’m helping them now, jeez!”

He knew who you were. You knew who he was. It was a look that lasted a millisecond. A warning he shared as he looked between Mikki and you.

*Keep your mouth shut.*

You both had secrets, didn’t you?

“Stuck, huh?” Hawks said to Mikki, looking at the beam. He gave it an experimental lift. It shifted. He sighed. “I’m going to need your help with this one, buddy,” he called to Endeavor. “I need the big guns for this one. It’s heavy—”

There was no sound of tearing metal. No warning. Just a… *feeling* you had to get out of the way. A tingle in your gut that made you flinch. You jumped back, Hawks following suit as if he had felt the same primal warning.

The beam that had been hanging precariously above you had broken.

Falling to earth.

Landing where you and Hawks had been standing.

Landing where Mikki was trapped.

Where Mikki was trapped.

Mikki had been trapped.

*The beam.*

Hawks was looking on in horror. Endeavor had also seen what had occurred, his eyes wide as well.

Mikki.

Mikki was dead.

*No.*
Endeavor broke away from his attack on the burnt creature, propelling himself over to where an innocent person had been crushed under his watch.

A fatality they could have prevented.

Entirely preventable.

You were scrambling up, clawing and stumbling toward the beam, hands out.

Endeavor was ready to pull you back -- he didn't want to lose two of you. Wiring was sparking above you all. The building was not stable. He was reaching--

*The beam was lifting.*

The beam was lifting.

It was a struggle, using your quirk on something that heavy. You were pushing against a boulder, knowing that the struggle was eating away at time. There wasn’t a lot of wiggle room. But you were hopped up on adrenaline, clawing to the idea that you could save Mikki.

You had wanted to leave her.

You had wanted to save yourself.

You were prepared to let her die.

But now you could make up for your failures. You could save her!

Your eyes were squeezed shut, teeth chattering and clenching as you struggled, growing weaker. Your ears were ringing. You had no idea how far back you had turned--

It was too much.

Your concentration slipped. The beam was out of your grasp. It fell. You opened your eyes with a gasp.

Your stomach sank.

You failed.

“Wow.”

Hawks was nodding his head impressed, crouched beside a body. Feathers were nestling back into his wings. It was then you noticed Endeavor dropping the joist he had been lifting.

The joist that had been pinching Mikki’s arm.

The body was Mikki.

“Is she--?”

“She’s alive,” Hawks said, looking her over before furrowing his brows and looking at Endeavor. “Good thing too, this is your seamstress!”

You met Endeavor’s curious eyes, holding his gaze until your nerves gave in and you fell back to the ground with a shuddering sigh, palms seated against your eyes.
Odaiba Research Center had been destroyed.

A long company email was sent out two days after the attack, signed by the lab’s president and board of directors.

The lab had seen a lot over its long history. Fire, explosions, earthquakes, tsunamis, previous villain attacks--

But it all paled in comparison to the devastation that six beasts were able to bestow about the building and its people.

The email talked about the unbreakable human spirit and how, for the time being, employees were on standby while the board figured out what they were going to do. Until then, a company remembrance was scheduled for the following week to honor the sixteen people who had died in the attack and the dozens more who were injured.

Everyone from your team had escaped unharmed.

“Don’t go,” All Might told you after you showed him the email.

He called your cell phone twenty times after learning of the attack. At each call that went unanswered, he had grown more certain that you had been either killed or seriously maimed. Your voicemail had been filled with his growling voice.

Upon hearing your voice and that, yes, you were alive and well, he cornered you in your apartment, checking for himself that you were unharmed. All Might’s initial fire and fury over the attack had faded for the most part, especially after hearing the creatures who participated had all been killed.

Still, he had been at your apartment nearly every night since.

“I have to,” you said. “It’s my team.”

He snorted, tossing your phone across the room.

“You don’t owe those people anything.”

The next day, you received a call from a number you didn’t recognize. A woman was on the other line, introducing herself as the secretary for Odaiba Research Center’s president.

“We heard of your heroism--”

Heroism?

Oh no

Someone had leaked your story to the media -- that you had saved a colleague from dying by using your quirk. A story that had been confirmed in its entirety by Endeavor’s office. Somehow, the media had gotten your name and had contacted the office of the president looking for a statement.

It was spreading -- a feel-good story discovered within such a terrible crisis. One of several that the company wanted to highlight during the remembrance ceremony. You and several others were going to be honored as embodiments of Odaiba’s never-give-up spirit. Your attendance was required.
Politely, you informed the secretary that you did not want any kind of honors. You didn’t want any kind of attention. You were no hero. The sentiment was appreciated but not accepted.

*You had too many skeletons in your closet.*

Though she had been instructed not to take ‘no’ for an answer, your continuous rejections eventually wore her down, hanging up almost thirty minutes later under the impression that you had won.

Until the president himself called you an hour later and, in no uncertain terms, told you the acceptance was mandatory.

“The company and its employees… our family, are struggling right now.” he said into your nervous ear. “Your heroism is exactly the type of thing we want to highlight in this time of need. In this dark period. Tell me you’ll reconsider.”

You weren’t dumb. You could read between the lines.

*The company is struggling, we need good press. You’re being honored and you’re going to be happy about it.*

You thanked him for his time. Yes, you’d be happy to accept the honor.

After very brief consideration, you decided not to inform All Might of what was going on.

You hadn’t told him about your… ‘heroism.’

You hadn’t been sleeping well.

Most nights you stared at the ceiling as you laid in bed, revisiting the time you watched Mikki die.

Over and over you could see that beam falling, squashing her body down into the earth. Killing her. You could see her arm pinched and flat, caught between two large chunks of metal.

*You thought about how you were fully prepared to leave her to die.*

You hadn’t talked to or heard from Mikki since that day. In fact, you hadn’t talked to anyone on your team. Everyone had been quiet.

The only person you had spoken to was Yume.

On the day of the remembrance gathering, you had hoped to find someone familiar in the crowd to sit with, if not your entire team. You could already see people gathering at the entrance of the stadium, grouping up with coworkers, all checking in to see if everyone was okay.

You would not be one of them. You wouldn’t get a chance to sit with your team. Instead, you were pulled aside when you checked in -- the honorees were all sitting in a special section together near the stage.

Two members of the board had approached you all, introducing themselves and pointing out what section of seating was press.

“So you know who to avoid,” they said with smiles that were politely returned.

The *human spirit* was the theme of the gathering. It was unbreakable. It was unparalleled. Odaiba Research Center would rebuild.
But, at that moment, it was mourning. Friends, family and loved ones had been lost in the senseless villain attack. Innocent people. Their faces flashed on a large screen behind the stage. A mother with four children. A man on a mountain bike. A man on a horse. A man playing golf.

Those Odaiba lost would never be forgotten. The lab would be forever grateful to the dedication and hard work of all sixteen people. The lab's hearts were with their families in such a trying time. They would do everything in their power to make sure their memories lived on.

And then came the honors.

Paraded up on stage, you joined five others who had shown bravery during the villain attack. You tried to look as inconspicuous as possible, praying you could just blend in with the material of the stage and be overlooked. You knew your team was out there, staring at you. That Yume was watching.

You hadn’t told anyone what you had done.

Because you hadn’t been a hero.

You were fully prepared to leave Mikki to die. It hadn’t been honor or empathy that stopped you from leaving her.

It had been guilt.

Your time in the spotlight was sandwiched between a man who held a door open for escaping people and a woman who ran into a burning office to save a scientist who had been trapped.

Thanks to your ‘quick thinking,’ you were able to prevent the death of your colleague, rewinding time and assisting the great hero Endeavor in saving her life. Bringing her back from the dead, like you were some voodoo priestess.

The entire event ended with Endeavor. It had been happenstance he had been at Odaiba but, as soon as the attack happened, he and the newest addition to his agency had sprung into action. They were heroes through and through. Odaiba was forever in their debt.

Endeavor accepted the honors with a grunt and a raised fist in victory. He had planned on leaving for home directly after his part was over. Unfortunately, he had made the mistake of bringing Hawks along to the event and the young man was all about media attention. They were both caught in a press swarm, pressed for interviews that Hawks was more than happy to indulge in.

Endeavor gave a few words, mostly about the creatures and how the police were still investigating who, or what, was behind the attack and what their motive was.

An excited chatter rose up in the crowd or reporters, distracting Endeavor who was in the middle of answering a question about the attack being an isolated incident. Someone was moving through the crowd -- rather, being pulled through the collection of reporters -- and was pushed within Endeavor and Hawks’ tight circle.

You blinked up at the real and faux heroes, horrified that you had been snatched as you were leaving.

Endeavor stared down at you in annoyance. Hawks grinned.

You wanted to tell them that this hadn’t been your idea -- you just wanted to go home. But the questions started and you were peppered by reporters asking you to detail what you had been doing.
during the day of the attack. How did you feel during the attack? Were you frightened?

The wanted you to explain your quirk, talk them through how you saved Mikki. Have you talked to her? Is she doing well?

Then they were turning back to Endeavor and Hawks, asking them to give their perspective on what had happened.

Back to you -- What did you think about being honored? What did you think about Odaiba?

What did you think about the new hero Hawks?

What did you think about Endeavor?

You could see, in a break of the crowd, Yume. She had found you and was waving for you to come to her. Embolden by her presence, you were pushing through, thanking the reporters but informing them you had to go. Most let you leave -- they had gotten enough content from you and were more interested in the heroes. Some followed after you but Yume was quick to guilt them into leaving you both alone.

“Why didn't you tell me!?” she cried as you walked away from the stadium. You had no destination in mind, you were just letting your feet do the walking. At that point, you didn’t care where you ended up. You just needed to get out of there.

“I didn’t think it was a big deal,” you muttered. “I did one thing.”

“You saved a life--”

“I really don’t want to talk about it,” you interjected. Yume looked at you in surprise. “I saved her, yeah. Okay. I did. But I also watched her die, Yum. I watched a person die in front of me. Saved her or not, it’s not an image that goes away… I’d rather not think about it.”

Your throat felt tight.

You were late coming home that night and you were worried you’d find an irritated All Might waiting for you.

Ever since the attack, he had been consistent with his visiting -- he’d arrive shortly after dinner and leave before you went to bed. Usually, he’d linger for about an hour and a half, maybe two.

Not this time.

You were getting ready for bed, assuming he wasn’t coming, when you heard a light rap on the door. At first, you thought it was a journalist who tracked you down but a peek through the peephole quickly revealed who was there.

“Hey!” you said with an eager smile, stepping aside to let All Might through. You waited for him to turn around and demand a proper hello from you.

He didn’t say anything.

In fact, he didn’t acknowledge you at all. He slipped by and headed directly into your living room without bothering to remove his boots. You closed and locked your front door, watching in confusion as he turned on your TV.
“All Might,” you called. “Hey, is something wrong?”

“You tell me, sweetheart.”

He was turning on the news.

Your stomach dropped.

“Guess who I saw on the news today?” he asked almost matter-of-factly, turning to look you over.

“All Might, listen--”

“You, sweetheart. I saw you on the news getting a reward for the hero work you did with Endeavor.”

“All Might--” you held your hands up. “It’s not like that at all--”

He had timed his visit on purpose, having stewed over his discovery for hours. You were cut off by your own voice coming from the TV. There you were in downtown Tokyo sandwiched between Endeavor and Hawks.

“Oh, he’s an amazing hero,” you watched yourself say, gesturing to a frowning Endeavor. “We were lucky he was there. I don’t know what I would have done if he hadn’t been there to save us.”

All Might was staring at you, raising a finger to point at the visage of Hawks. You shrugged.

“I don’t know what he’s doing either--!”

You were babbling at him, recounting how you saved Mikki and how Hawks and Endeavor had been there purely by luck. You didn’t work with them and you had no idea what Hawks was doing there.

You weren’t entirely sure what All Might was implying but you didn’t like it.

If he was questioning your loyalty, there was no need. You only had eyes for him. Hadn’t you proved that? It had been months since you first started ‘seeing’ each other.

The L-word was on the tip of your tongue, a word you had been waiting to drop. Although you wanted to let him know how deep your affection for him was, it was the wrong moment. It would feel… cheap. Like you were using it to get out of trouble instead of a heartfelt moment of vulnerability. So you continued your explanations, jumping between his possible insinuations and attempting to diffuse them, stressing his importance to you.

But you weren’t sure if you were getting through to the villain. His face, for once, was impassive. He was calm.

You would have much rather he be angry.

Truth was, he was questioning your loyalty. You tell him a villain is out to kill you, you end up standing behind the supposed ‘villain’ who is now a hero. You swear to him your job at the hero lab means nothing, you end up working on Endeavor’s suit. You tell him you have no desire to be a hero, you end up being a hero.

What coincidences were you playing at?

“I haven’t even met Endeavor before the lab attack!” you said. “I’m an apprentice, hon. I don’t get invited into the meetings with him.”
You were tugging at his hand, rubbing his fingers, looking up at him. Pleading.

“I promise you that all of this is nothing. I wouldn't hurt you like that. I like you too much!”

All Might looked away.

You were getting to him.

“Besides, it doesn't matter anymore,” you said with a sigh. “The lab is gone. There’s a good chance I’m out of a job now. I’ll have to go back to my… other work.”

*That* coaxed a smirk out of All Might. The idea of you spending long nights alone in your lab across town. A lab you hadn’t been to in weeks.

The idea that things will all go back to normal.

They’ll go back to how it was at the beginning.

“Don’t tease me, kitten,” All Might warned, though there was no bite in his tone. You grinned up at him.

“Of course you’d like that,” you said before frowning. “I’ll miss the benefits though. The salary. And I’ll have to drum up commissions again--”

“Stop,” he grunted, tugging you closer to him. “I don’t want to hear your work prattle.”

You were smiling up at him, tired but otherwise glad for his visit.

It was when he started pulling you to the bedroom that you slipped out of his grip. You’d meet him in bed -- you wanted to wash your face first.

All Might watched you disappear into the bathroom but he didn’t head into the bedroom right away. He backtracked slightly, going into your kitchen instead, grabbing for one of the water bottles that he demanded you had on hand for his visits.

Kamino’s tap water was… unpleasant.

Something was different.

He stared at the door of your closed refrigerator, certain something was *off* about it.

*Ah, you had moved things around.*

The magnets you collected had been shifted, the pictures reordered and moved--

Pictures.

His eyes fixated on a new addition to the appliance.

At least, one he hadn’t noticed before.

You were in it, surrounded by other women. One of the girls he *knew* was a good friend of yours.

That didn’t matter to him though.

No, his eyes were frozen on the man standing behind your group.
The flaming hero.

A picture of you with Endeavor.

“I haven’t even met Endeavor before the lab attack!”

That… was a lie.

You had met Endeavor.

You had lied to All Might’s face.

Every late night call--

The distance--

Working with Endeavor--

A snake.

You were a snake.

Carefully, calloused fingers pulled the picture from the fridge.


The tips of his fingers were turning white from the pressure.

Your face, smiling.

Endeavor in the background.

… You had played him.

No.

You were playing him.
Valentine’s Day was a few weeks away and you had already gotten All Might his present.

It was hidden in a partly-crushed Amazon box underneath your bed. A large American flag chocolate bar that you wrapped in a pair of American flag boxer shorts.

You had stumbled upon the items during your Christmas shopping for him and ordered them in January, right after the holidays. Small American things for him that would go along with the necklace he got you.

The two of you would match.

You still needed to get the wrapping for it. You hadn’t decided whether you wanted to put it in a bag with tissue paper or put it in a box and wrap it.

You were even going to make chocolates for him. For Valentine’s Day. Like a proper girlfriend did in all those sappy love movies and soap operas you watched on TV. Already bookmarked on your phone was a recipe for homemade chocolate truffles that seemed simple enough to do.

You wanted to do these things for him. You were excited to do these things for him.

You were his girl after all.

And you loved him.

You loved him.

There was no real rhyme or reason why you loved him.

You just… did.

He was mean. He was crude. He was tacky. He was an oaf. He was a dork. He was a villain.

And you loved him.

Even as he stood in front of you, drawn up to his full height, meeting your confused face with a glare, you loved him.

But, you were concerned. You had only been in the bathroom for a handful of minutes and honestly didn’t know what could have happened in such a short timeframe to bring such a change of attitude.

You received your answer when he whipped something in your direction. It spun as it cut through the air, lightly striking you in the chest before fluttering down to the floor.

It was… a polaroid picture.

You, Yume, your friend Minori and acquaintance Pixie-Bob stood surrounding Endeavor, smiling. The flame hero was frowning. You had taken it months ago during that ill-fated night out you had in Roppongi. Moments before All Might landed to tease Endeavor into sparring with him. Weeks before you started your job.
Was it jealousy?

You looked back up, withering slightly under the spite on his face.

“What’s going on?” you asked, furrowing your brows as you looked between him and the picture.

“Pick it up.”

He was all fire but his voice was cold and sharp. You looked at him incredulously.

“All Might, what--?”

“Pick it up.”

You wouldn’t. You were staring at him like the wide-eyed doe he first met but the jitteriness was gone. The fear was gone.

That further inflamed him.

“What is wrong with you?” you asked, his terseness giving no indication of what was causing his latest hissy fit.

Rather than instruct you a third time to pick up the evidence, he did it for you. In almost one stride he had crossed the room, closing the distance between you two. Next thing you knew, the picture was literally being pressed into your face.

_Rubbing your nose in it._

You jerked your head away, indignation coming to life that he would treat you in such a way. Shoving something in your face like you were a dog he was reprimanding. The concern was fading, replaced by annoyance. By anger.

“Snake,” he growled, waving the photograph around, going to shove it in your face again. “A _snake._”

“Are you calling me a _snake_?” You were floored. “All Might, what are you talking about?”

“You _lied_.” His coldness momentarily cracked as he snarled those words, revealing the hot magma churning beneath his surface. The intensity of his tone, coupled with the look on his face, awakened a long-dormant feeling in your gut.

Instinctively you took a step back.

He took a step forward.

“Lied?” you repeated, staring at the photo he was holding up.

“Never met Endeavor, _sweetheart_?”

The missing jigsaw piece fell into place.

Naively you relaxed, relieved it was just a misunderstanding and that his imagination was just going wild.

“That was the night in Roppongi,” you said. “I was _drunk_ and I didn’t even talk to him. I wouldn’t consider it much of a meeting.”

*It's nothing, honey.*

All Might didn’t take your smile as disarming.

He clenched his teeth.

“What was your plan?” he hissed. “To restrain me one night? *Arrest* me? Bring me to your heroes?”

“All Might--”

“*Snake,*” he snarled, stepping forward again, face wild. He hunched down to close the distance between you, though he still towered over you. Again, that *feeling* was there. A primal warning alarm was raised in your mind of his predatory stance. He was going to pounce.

*He was not going to pounce.*

He was going to attack.

*He was not going to attack!*

“I’m not a snake!” You were almost pleading with him. “All Might, whatever you’re thinking it’s not true. I promise--”

“*Whatever I'm thinking,*” he interrupted with a scoff. “You’ve been caught, girl. You’ve shown your colors. I just don’t know if you want to be some kind of hero or you’re simply a hero *fucker.*”

You had assumed that’s what he was alluding to with his snake comments -- you rolled your eyes. It wasn’t the first time he had accused you some inevitable betrayal that never came. That would never come. *Because you loved him.*

Apparently, he still didn’t trust you.

Your shoulders drooped.

He still didn’t trust you.

You had done nothing to him.

“Please tell me you’re joking right now,” you said tiredly. His face gave you his answer. “All Might, it’s a *job.* That’s all it is -- a *job.*”

He snorted. “It’s more than that, *sweetheart.* You’re still lying.”

“Wh--”

“Don’t play stupid, girl.”

To All Might, things were starting to make sense. Every late night you spent at your lab was for your heroes. Every phone call you just couldn’t miss was for your heroes. You were worming away from him, growing colder, undoubtedly building up the courage to finally spring whatever trap you were planning. *For your heroes.*

That’s it. That’s what it all had been leading up to.
You’d have your chance at glory. At fame. At *money*. The snake that finally caught All Might.

Betrayal.

The fire was growing hotter in him. Fury.

You!

You.

… You.

*You would do that to him?*

You were worse than a snake.

A *rat*.

His self-mantra echoed in his ears, joined with a new insult for himself.

Weak. Pathetic. *Fool*.

He clenched a fist, inhaling deeply, resisting every urge in his body to lash out. That’s all he wanted to do. Smash and pummel. To teach you a lesson.

*You.*

You made him look like a fool.

He wanted you to fear him again.

It would be so easy to do. One strike, that’s all it would take.

You’d fear him then.

*He didn’t want you to fear him.*

“You’re seeing things that aren’t there, All Might,” you said, rubbing fatigue from your eyes. “I’m not cheating on you with some hero. I don’t have the *time*. I’m not going to sell you out. I have no plans on doing either of those things—”

“I’ve caught you in one lie already,” he snapped.

“What lie!” you asked before gesturing to the picture. “All Might, I’ve *never* spoken to Endeavor before! We’re not even *touching* in that picture!” You paused, shaking your head. "Jealously doesn’t suit you."

*Jealously!*?

Things were erupting.

Did you--

Did you really just insinuate he was jealous of *Endeavor*?

The picture crumbled in his hand, fists forming again. You took another step back, something weak flashing across your face at seeing his reaction.
Jealous of Endeavor!? 

But then, a smile.

A smile that held no warmth or affection.

“Stupid girl,” he said, voice losing its coldness but it was thick with something else. Something darker. “Me jealous of a hero? Please. All your heroes are frauds.”

You sighed. “Come on--”

“I am their truth. I am their balance. Without me, they’d have no check.”

“Oh?” you answered with your own scoff. “That’s some awfully noble talk for a villain.”

He didn’t like that phrasing. Initial surprise at your choice of words immediately disappeared as his smile grew wider, teeth appearing sharper.

Like a shark. Like a crocodile.

Something heartless and dangerous.

“You even sound like them,” he said, shadowed eyes growing wider with a sick delight at your perceived slip-up. “Did you think I wouldn’t catch you, girl? That I wouldn’t find out?”

“There is nothing to catch!” Your tone was rising, his continued accusations finally striking something raw. You loved him and he didn’t even trust you! “Hero fucking? Please. How many times have we fucked, All Might? Don’t you think that would reflect poorly on me, at this point? Being a villain fucking?”

He laughed a deep belly laugh, throwing his head back before shaking it and looking back down at you.

“Sweetheart,” he said, humored. You expected he was going to break down and reveal it was all just a cruel joke of his. And you had just fallen for it. “It’s not hard to get between your legs. Your heroes are probably well aware of that. I’m sure they’ve all been there.”

That hurt.

You laughed, throat tight.

“What are you saying?” you asked, internally recoiling at his words.

“You’re a whore, girl.”

You laughed again, putting your hands on your hips as you walked in a small circle around your bedroom. Your chin wobbled while your back was to him and you bit your lip, refusing to allow your tears to spill.

When you had called yourself a whore months earlier, in a haze of self-loathing and embarrassment at having sucked him off as a thank you, he had rebuffed you. Besides, it had only been him you had eyes for.

Now he was throwing that word back in your face.

A whore.
You were walking in another circle, your face twitching getting worse. You were trying to hide it from him.

Fuck it, don’t cry.

Don’t cry.

He must have known the wound was deep. He looked smug. Glad to have caused you pain. Glad his jab landed.

“What have I done to you?” you asked, careful to keep your voice from cracking. The L-word was still on the tip of your tongue -- All Might, I love you. Don't you understand? I LOVE you -- but you refused to use it.

No, not in this context.

It was supposed to be a special moment.

“You tried to play me,” he said with another laugh, interjecting in the silence, perceived to have you on the run. “Me! And you got caught, girl.”

“What have I done to give you that idea?” you asked, voice breaking. You took no joy in catching his faltering grin at hearing the state of you, secret doubt suddenly bubbling within him. “All I do is at my lab, All Might. The only hero I know, personally, is Pixie-Bob. I sit in a basement and work all day. And then I come home and sleep.”

The man you loved thought you were a whore.

You were laughing again in disbelief, though your face was more of a grimace. Your eyes were shining.

The man you loved thought you were a whore.

God, he knew exactly where to wound you.

And you knew where to hurt him.

“Maybe I am a whore,” you said sharply, fire behind your wet eyes.

He wanted to hurt you?

Well, you could hurt him back. You could bite just as hard.

“You’re right, All Might,” you said. "Maybe I am a secret hero fucker. I’m not actually working when I’m at work. I’m just fucking heroes!”

He wasn’t smiling anymore.

“You know what else?” You were grinning at him, having stolen the cruel smile he had worn earlier. “You’re right about Endeavor. He is my favorite hero! I don’t even charge him for work, you know. Anything he needs, I’m there for him!”

All Might was shifting his jaw, a vein appearing in his neck.

His hands were still clenched by his sides.
“He’s an amazing hero!” you babbled, wild. “The number one hero, if you didn’t know! Costume work? I’m there for him. Repairs? I’m there for him. Fuck it, I’ll suck him off no problem if he needs it! Because I’m just such a whore!”

“Careful—” he went to warn but you cut him off.

“Careful!? Your eyes and face lit up as you shouted the word back at him in hurt surprise. “Be careful about what, All Might? The truth!? Because it’s the truth, isn’t it? I’m not busting my ass off at work because I want to make something of my life. No, it’s only because I’m a whore. And you know a whore like me can’t control myself!”

The man you loved thought you were a whore.

You hadn't been with anyone else but him.

You wanted to strangle him. Let him know how much pressure you found yourself under on a daily basis. Not only that, there was a good chance you would be out of work now that your lab was gone. That’d you have no job.

And the prospect of being out of work was a relief.

“Go run to Endeavor,” All Might snapped, crossing his arms. “Run to your hero. In between the beatings, I’m sure he’ll be pumping you full of children.”

He dropped a sly nugget of information about the famed hero, expecting you to pull back in surprise. But you ignored and glossed over it because you had a final move in your pocket you were dying to use.

The man you loved thought you were a whore.

He had hurt you.

And you were going to hurt him back.

“Maybe I will,” you said, throwing your hands up, eyes flashing. “He’ll protect me, he’ll save me! He’s a great hero, you know. Your opposite in every way -- everyone loves him. The world loves him. Who wouldn’t love him? He’s got the perfect record, perfect life, perfect smile, perfect body.”

It rolled off your tongue and you watched it hit.

All Might picked up on your insult right away, brows shooting up.

Stunned.

You had gone there.

He hurt you and you hurt him back.

The man you loved thought you were a whore.

And, in response, you called out his weakness.

His disfigurement.

His scar.
It didn’t surprise you when he was holding you up by the throat less than a second later, your feet swinging in the air. Adrenaline was already roaring through your body at having had the gall to go after him -- you weren’t really registering if he was cutting off your airflow.

“Nothing,” he hissed, hoovering between ice and magma, face ablaze with hate. “You are nothing and you will always be nothing. Just a warm wet hole someone like me can stick their cock in.” A sick smile was back. “I could take you now, couldn’t I? Throw you do and fuck you raw and you’d probably thank me.”

You waited but he made no moves to follow through on his threat. Instead, his sharp teeth parted as a dry laugh escaped him.

“You’re not even worth killing, girl. That would be too easy. Why end your misery when it’ll just get worse? You’re going to fail at your job, girl. You will make nothing of your life.”

He released his hand, watching you hurtle back toward the ground, unexpectedly landing on your feet before losing your balance and crumbling back onto the floor. With his hand gone, the air was flowing freely again.

So he had been cutting off your air supply.

How could you love someone like him?

Your heart was breaking.

You loved him.

You love him.

But he didn’t deserve it.

“All I’ve done is give,” you spat at him, tears of hurt and anger spilling. You hated yourself. You were weak for crying in front of him. “I have done nothing but give to you. And you’ve done nothing but take from me.”

All Might snorted.

“Take?” He shook his head. “Girl, you have nothing worth taking.”

This wasn’t love.

Fight or not, this wasn’t love.

Your will to fight was gone. You had thrown in your finishing move and he was still standing.

And you couldn’t take it back.

You wanted to.

Were you weak for wanting to use your quirk to turn back time? To take back your dig? Maybe you could have pandered to him and talked him through his paranoia instead of sticking up for yourself.

No, this wasn’t love.

You loved him but clearly, it was all one-sided.
You were an idiot.

“Well,” All Might said, stretching and frowning, bored by your current state. “It’s been fun, girl, but this has gone on for far too long.”

He had written you off already.

You were looking at him, waiting for him to say something to take it all back.

Apologize and move on.

No…

It wouldn’t happen.

He was far too proud.

He was leaving.

Don’t let him walk away the winner.

“Bye then,” you said, cold and numb, as you stood. He quirked a brow at you, watching as you picked up the crumpled picture on the ground, smoothing it out.

“What?” he said, erupting in a grin. “No goodbye kiss this time?”

Your heart squeezed and you laughed through your nose, humored by how cruel he could be. To you.

“You were a mistake,” you grumbled, hoping that would make him pause.

It didn’t.

Instead, he matched your snorting laugh.

“Sweetheart,” he said in a sickly-sweet tone reminiscent of the time you had first met. You looked up at him. “You’re not even worth being called a mistake.”

Your gaze shot down to your feet, refusing to engage with him any longer. Having sensed a victory, he turned heel and left your room without another word. You steeled yourself as you heard his heavy footsteps trail down your hallway to your front door, expecting him to suddenly lash out and destroy your home.

He didn’t.

He had done enough damage.

All Might left without a word.

A minute passed. Then ten.

No knock on the door. No phone call.

What world did you live in? Expecting him to come back to you.

He was gone.
He was gone.

You sat on the edge of your bed. His bed. The bed he had given you, staring down at a simple photograph that had kicked off what you believed to be one of the worst nights of your life.

Internally, your world was falling to pieces.

You felt sick. You wondered if vomiting would make you feel better. A hot, heavy ball of something had rolled from the base of your throat and had settled in your soul.

Maybe… he’d call you in a few days. After he calmed down…

You brushed at your eyes.

If he did, he’d turn it around on you. He wouldn’t apologize. The fight would be your fault.

Like when he destroyed your lab, it had been because you provoked him.

All Might didn’t trust you. He belittled you. He intimidated you. Red flags were sprouting in your memories. He had put his hands on you.

You gave him love. What did he give you?

A sob tore through you.

The picture was on the floor.

You hated your life.

You had wasted your energy and love on a monster.

You had given him so much.

You hated your friends.

Their support and advice had been useless and true.

You hated your job.

It was the job you had dreamed of for years, one you always wished you had.

Well, you had it and you hated it.

With every fiber of your being, you hated it.

You were a failure.

All Might was right, you were nothing.

The sobs were getting louder. You were curled up on your bed. Everything was too hard.

You were doomed to fail.

He didn't deserve you.

You didn't want him back.
Yagi Toshinori lost his bluster on the train ride home, having decided not to travel by jumping back to Tokyo. It was still early -- he had been in your apartment for less than half an hour, but he didn’t have the energy to spare.

He did his best not to think, gangly legs spread wide as he sat in the near-empty train car, scowling and staring at the shoe-scuffed floor.

All he could do was think.

He was flip-flopping between his sudden and fierce disdain for you and an oozing feeling that he had forgotten something.

*Perfect body.*

Yagi could still see his hand wrapped around your neck. You were tiny compared to him. A flex of his fingers and he could have ended it all right then and there.

But the feeling wasn’t there.

There was no denying he hated you. But there was no bloodlust clouding his mind, which surprised him. He had been preparing himself to go on a rampage when he left your apartment, to go make his displeasure known to the world. To let loose some of the boiling energy that had been created due to your... verbal altercation.

As soon as your front door closed behind him, the magma had cooled. The volcano within him had gone quiet.

Now he just wanted to go to bed.

*He really was an old man.*

The light-headedness struck when he went to stand at his stop, making him sway slightly on his feet as the train slowed. He gripped a hanging handle for support, dry mouth working to create enough saliva to swallow down and wet his equally dry throat.

*Perfect body.*

His blood boiled.

*Whore.*

He exhaled softly, fatigue settling over his body again.

Vending machines were located on the sidewalk outside of the empty station, lit by a hazy yellow streetlamp. A crushed coffee can marred the otherwise pristine area. He was staring at the offerings of pre-packaged food in machine and drinks in its companion, unable to collect his thoughts on what he was doing.

You were a snake. A rat. Some subhuman creature who craved importance and wealth. A sellout. Judas.

*Whore. Nothing.*

A wet cough erupted and he caught it in his palm before the blood could splatter and ruin the relatively clean glass of the vending machine. Without looking, he wiped his hand against his pants.
Pants you had made him.

A package of fresh, precut apples caught his attention.

You did a poor job at hiding your true allegiance. Telling him you worked at a hero lab. Admitting you were working on Endeavor’s suit. Hanging the picture of the hero on your refrigerator, where All Might could find it. Doing an interview with Endeavor and his new feathered lackey hovering behind you.

Complimenting him.


The apples didn’t have a taste. The texture was more of a crisp mush. He gnawed on two slices before wrapping the snack back up and shoving it into one of the cargo pockets of his pants.

You were a poor excuse for a double agent. It had been easy to identify you. You hadn’t hid anything.


He had caught you in your lies.

Right?

Lies.

He knew they were lies.

Right?

No.

He pulled off his boots when he arrived home, tossing the apples in the trash when he went to his kitchen to get a glass of water.

What he needed was a shower. To clear his head. To set his thoughts.

His weak thoughts.


You had been smiling when he first arrived at your apartment. With a tired smile, you were happy to see him.

Stop it.

He grit his teeth, staring at his bed, eyes focused on an innocuous pillow settled in the center of mussed blankets.

“I wouldn't hurt you like that. I like you too much!”

That was not the first time you had said something like that to him, not the first time you had declared your loyalty. You had always done it so freely.
"I have done nothing but give to you. And you've done nothing but take from me."

Your pillow didn’t smell like you anymore.

It was in his hands, soft pillowcase and plushness lost on calloused fingers. It had lost you a few weeks back. He had been thinking up ways to give it back to you for a refresh of you. Or maybe he could do a swap -- give it back to you and take another from your bed.

He liked having a bit of you near him.

It settled him.

There would be no more you.


Hand on your throat.

The pillow landed on the floor on the other side of his bed.

That feeling, he felt earlier on the train, that he had forgotten something at your place--

It wasn’t forgetfulness.

No.

It was regret.

Every word. Every face. Every insult. Every accusation.

Tit for tat you had gone after each other, driving in the knife.

And for what reason?

No reason.

All Might was finality. He did not change his mind, he did not go back on his decisions. He had said he was done with you and that was that.


Yagi Toshinori sat on his bed, pinching the bridge of his nose, eyes squeezed closed, brows furrowed, other hand fisted on his loose pants.

...Shit.

Chapter End Notes

I was going to take a week off for badness after this chapter but, because I have a long weekend coming up due to the holiday, I'll be updating normally!

I hope all my American friends have a wonderful Thanksgiving and, for my non-American friends out there, just know I am super thankful for you and that you'll be in
my thoughts during my celebration. Seriously, writing Attachment is so much fun and talking with you all is such a highlight.

Sorry, I'm a mushy dork.

And I guess it's safe to say this marks the end of the first 'arc'!

Thanks for sticking around as long as you have hahahaah!
He was late.

Considerably late.

Inconsiderately late.

Naomasa’s eyes flickered between the clock on the cell phone and the red pedestrian light glaring at him from across the street. The crowd of people standing around him were all quiet and calm as they waited for the light to switch green -- he was the only one shifting on his feet.

The light was green.

He was leading the charge across the road.

An hour. He was an hour late. Jacket in hand, Naomasa had been just about to head to the elevators when Kuryuu jumped up from his desk gesturing wildly at his phone. At the end of the call, he shared the news -- they had a name.

A name?

A name for buyer of the music box.

Of course they had to look up the individual immediately. This was it -- their golden goose. Finally a decent lead.

A female with no prior record tied to two addresses in Kamino.

He had texted his friend to let him know he was going to be delayed but, in his professional giddiness, he had lost track of time.

Two more blocks.

Should he text him again?

One more block.

His breathing was heavy when he crossed the last street and beelined right for the oblivious man standing outside the diner. The man was scowling down at the ground, hands stuffed into the pockets of his heavy winter jacket that was pulled tightly around him.

Naomasa was already apologizing before his companion even realized he was there.

“--held up at work. I’m sorry,” Naomasa huffed, coming to a stop, calves already burning. Startled at the sudden appearance and breathless declaration, the man jumped, shooting the detective a withering glare before realizing who he was. His look quickly changed to one of concern.

“Is everything okay?” he asked, pulling out a hand and holding it out to his friend. “It looks like you were running a marathon!”

“I walked fast to try and make up some time,” Naomasa answered, using the back of his hand to wipe away the sweat from his brow. He took one large breath to try and settle his heart rate before revealing a red-faced smile. “It’s good to see you, Yagi.”
Yagi Toshinori replied with his own tired smile.

“It’s been awhile, Naomasa.”

It was a simple lunch date, something the men did every couple of weeks when Naomasa could find a block of time.

The diner was something Yagi had chosen -- simple meals made quickly with beer on tap for his companion.

“I’ve gotten a partner since I last saw you,” Naomasa said with a sigh once the waitress stepped away from taking their drink and food orders. He was circling the rim of his water glass with his finger, brows already knitting together at the mention of his colleague.

Yagi hummed in interest, signaling for him to continue, wringing his hands for warmth. Though it was the end of March, spring had been late to arrive -- a cold spell had settled over Japan. Most public places had already shut off their heat for the season, assuming the warmer weather was on the horizon. For Yagi, he had had been living in a perpetual state of cold for several months, the horizon was not getting any closer and he was growing tired of it.

He still stuffed hand warmers in the pockets of his coat.

“He’s… something,” Naomasa warned before launching into a monologue about the enigma that was Officer Kuryuu.

Yagi did his best to actively listen -- his eyes were trained on the detective’s face and he was nodding along -- but his words weren’t embedding themselves in Yagi’s mind. He wasn’t comprehending.

It was difficult to... care about people he didn’t know.

*Did he care about Naomasa?*

His mind started to wander, eyes glazing over slightly as his attention turned to his own thoughts.

It had been, what, three years since he met Naomasa? Two strangers sitting in the waiting room of a pulmonologist, both watching television in a comfortable, steady silence. Yagi had been attending another follow-up appointment to measure the capacity of his remaining lung, Naomasa had been struck by a villain quirk that resulted in spores embedding themselves in the walls of his.

Naomasa was the one to speak first, commenting on something that was being shown on the small TV.

Yagi had grunted in response.

He kept piping up, though. Another comment about the television show followed by a joke about waiting.

Yagi had prayed that the man would just shut up.

Eventually, the two men were having a conversation. Well, *Naomasa* was having a conversation. Yagi was stuck sitting in the uncomfortable chair, sullen that he had been trapped into interacting with another person.

He was chatty though. And nice. The longer they waited, the more he spoke and Yagi found himself actually responding -- especially once Naomasa revealed why he was at the doctor’s and that he was
a police detective.

The poor detective had no idea who he was talking so affably to.

Yagi was called to the back first and he believed that was that; when he returned to the waiting room after his appointment, Naomasa was gone. A simple interaction lost to the annals of time.

Until the accident.

A bus Yagi had been riding in struck a dump truck one afternoon several weeks after his appointment. Naomasa had been one of the law enforcement officers that responded to the scene and recognized the tall scowling blond nursing a lump on his forehead.

Which led to the men striking up another conversation.

Which led to the men getting coffee.

Initially, Yagi had been humored by the burgeoning relationship. It bore elements of a Greek tragedy -- a policeman unknowingly becoming friends with the great All Might. His enemy. The enemy of the people.

All Might had an 'in' to the police department, a set of unknowing eyes that would share seemingly innocuous information with him. Whenever Naomasa brought up his caseload, Yagi would listen so sympathetically. He’d innocently ask about the other policemen in his office or inquire after the heroes he worked with and how they behaved. If by the off chance Naomasa mentioned All Might, the villain would positively glow with satisfaction.

And in return, Yagi would share some inane information about his life. Naomasa believed he was some sort of retired salaryman who was plagued by a variety of illnesses that left him unable to work. Most of the stories Yagi shared revolved around television or shopping.

It was a relationship he built for knowledge, Yagi argued. For personal amusement.

He held no loyalty to Naomasa.

Until Naomasa canceled a planned get-together one afternoon, apologizing profusely and citing an emergency situation he had to respond to.

It had…. bothered Yagi far more than he cared to admit.

The blond cleared his throat.

“Well, what are you working on now?” he asked when Naomasa had moved away from rattling on about his partner to talk about the state of his office’s computers. By then the food had been placed in front of them and Yagi was stirring the contents of his hotpot.

Naomasa fidgeted in his seat as he tried to piece together what he could talk about without inadvertently spilling private case information.

It wasn’t that he didn’t trust Yagi but…

“I’m still working a triple murder that happened last year,” Naomasa said. “It was a… pretty high-profile case.”

“Oh?” Yagi said, brows lifting. “Triple murder? Was it that… what was it, the business family--?”
Naomasa’s face gave him the answer.

“Big case,” he said, slightly awed. Naomasa flushed.

“Yeah. Well… we finally got a lead. We’ve been following up with a specialty company for months hoping they had a bill of sale stashed away and they just came back with a name.”

“Yakuza?”

Naomasa laughed, shaking his head.

“No. At least, we don’t think so. The person of interest doesn’t have a criminal record. We’re getting all our ducks in a row before bringing her in for questioning.”

“*She*? A mistress getting her revenge, maybe?” Yagi offered, bright blue eyes flashing.

“You have to stop watching those cop shows, Yagi,” Naomasa responded with faux-fatigue. “Reality isn’t so… dramatic.”

Yagi chuckled, shaking his head before revealing a lopsided grin.
It had to rank as one of the worst days of Midoriya Izuku’s life.

Seconds earlier, he had been facing down death. Suffocating. Thinking about the sobbing face of his mother as she was forced to bury her only child. But fate was on his side -- he had been saved. A gust of wind had shattered the monster that had risen up to kill him, splattering the walls of the underpass with portions of his oozing body.

Air!

Bleary-eyed, the teen was hacking and coughing, trying to clear his lungs. Through fuzzed vision he could see the person -- his savior -- walking toward his crouched form. Though he hadn’t been beset by close-call jitters yet, the relief that flooded his body at being alive was immeasurable. Tears were already forming.

He was alive.

He was going to see his mom again.

All he could make out was the silhouette of his hero that grew ever closer. Midoriya attempted to call out his gratitude at being rescued but his throat still felt hoarse and clogged.

“So it had a kid.”

It was a man’s voice, Midoriya recognized. A man that grew even wider and taller the closer he got to him. By then he could see his savior’s face -- he was frowning at the teenager, thick eyebrows furrowing at catching Midoriya’s gaze.

“Thank you,” Midoriya rasped as he internally started thumbing through the hero Rolodex of his mind.

The stranger had to be a hero -- he just KO’d a villain with one attack and was built.

His distinct hairstyle immediately eliminated all unmasked heroes Midoriya could think of but his height and stature eliminated just as many masked heroes as well.

Midoriya was drawing a blank.

Maybe he wasn’t a hero?

The man was shifting his jaw as he stared down at the boy as if debating something.

“Run home, kid,” the man finally said. “Consider this your lucky day.”

“Are you a hero?” Midoriya found himself asking before launching into a series of hacking coughs. He gagged and winced when a glob of sludge unlodged from his airway, spattering onto the ground.

That’s part of a person.

“I didn’t kill the blob,” the man growled. “It’ll probably pull itself together when it comes to. Unless
you want it to strangle you. In that case, stick around.”

The stranger was leaving, stepping around Midoriya and continuing down the tunnel, his thudding footsteps loud in the otherwise silent underpass. Midoriya’s jaw slackened as he watched him leave, mind racing.

Was he not a hero? Middle-age or not he was seriously missing out -- heroism was his calling!

What was his quirk? Something wind-based, that was for sure. It felt like a hurricane, sans the rain, had launched itself down the--

A name popped into his head at the thought of such a powerful burst of energy.

A man who had a quirk similar to what he was thinking of.

His eyes widened.

… No. There’s no way.

Midoriya Izuku prided himself on his hero knowledge. He had notebooks upon notebooks of hero notes he had collected and written over the years. Enough that they could be used as character evidence if his passion was ever challenged.

But he knew of some villains too. Sometimes he’d dedicate a page or two to the adversaries his heroes faced.

He had dedicated two pages in his notebook to the number one villain.

Number one villain.

His insides curled up as he visualized the wind attack the man had used to save him. A flash of energy that sliced through the sludge monster like warm butter.

Had that man released a wind attack--

Or a wind punch?

Yeah, there was only one person who had that kind of quirk.

All Might.

With a shaking hand, he quietly raised his palm to blot out the back of the man’s head.

Cargo pants. A black shirt. It was easy to imagine a harness strapped to his torso and spiked shoulder pads.

He clapped a hand over his mouth to hide his squeak.

Was he even trying?

Relief was gone. The fear was back.

Unsteadily he was rising to his feet, grabbing his backpack.

‘Run the other way,’ his mind yelled.

But why then, why did he find himself trailing behind, following the villain?
Because Midoriya Izuku wanted to be a hero. And gathering intelligence to help the heroes apprehend the greatest villain of all time would cement his dreams, quirkless or not.

You didn’t need a quirk to be a hero.

It was all about heart.

...

*Right?*

---

**The Previous Day…**

Musutafu.

It had been quite a while since Yagi had stepped foot in Musutafu, a city where he had spent a good portion of his teenage years.

Walking from the train station to his hotel, he found himself slipping back into visions of another life.

It looked the same.

It *felt* the same.

The pharmacy where he bought all his bandages was still there, right next to the shop where he would sometimes stop to get imagawayaki on the way to the train. The arcade he used to frequent was gone though, replaced by a shoe store. The family-run corner store that had the best teriyaki bento had suffered a similar fate -- it had been replaced by a store chain.

He could still hear the owner’s wife chittering around him, scolding him over his black eyes or busted lip. A grandmother he never had fretting over a boy she didn’t even know the name of.

*“That school is pushing you too hard! Tch, look at your beautiful face!”*

The owner and his wife must have both been long dead. They had been old when he was a teenager. Apparently, a family member hadn’t taken the store over.

Yagi watched the sliding doors part to allow a young woman to pass through. She met his eyes before quickly glancing away. He turned his head, facing forward as he crossed the street, leaving the vision of the old store behind him.

The hero Wash had been seen, with increasing frequency, in the Musutafu area. A sighting here, a villain apprehension there. It was a pattern that many had taken notice of and had been posting about online, curious as to why a rising star had been stationed in the mostly-residential city.

Yagi had been watching with mild interest.

It had been quite some time since All Might had engaged with a top-ranking hero. He could feel it in his bones, a steady twang that informed him he was due for an appearance. It had started a few weeks back but he hadn’t been in the proper… *mood* to answer the calling.

At that thought, the door of his mind started to open. Things threatened to spill out, visions of her --
How many weeks had it been?

With a heavy fist, he beat the door closed, forcing himself to keep those thoughts at bay.

No.

Not today.

His jaw tightened, he focused on the sound of his shoes striking the pavement.

… Not today.

It was coming up, the turn he would take every morning on his way to school.

Yes, focus on that. The lesser of two evils.

The bookstore on the corner was still there -- a ‘closed’ sign written in chalk hung on the entrance. At the street corner, he looked to his left, eyes following the slightly curving road as it inclined up, leading away from the heart of the city.

A twenty-minute walk. Or ten minutes if he was running, the fear of being of late motivating him to hurry.

He was tempted to follow the street. Walk his old path. Go to school.

To what? Stand in front of the big barrier? Reminisce?

He scoffed at himself, jerking his head away to pull out his phone, checking the cross streets of his hotel once more.

It appeared he was getting sentimental in his old age.

And it was starting to infuriate him.

The hotel he booked was nothing spectacular but it offered him much more facelessness than staying at some smaller establishment. Not that anyone would know who he was in either form -- he had always been careful about wearing his mask while acting as All Might.

But there was only so much protection a mask could offer.

After checking in, he left his suitcase in the room and had gone back to purchase dinner from the chain convenience store he had passed earlier. A lazy attempt at avoiding another walk down memory lane.

It was always easier to act as if his life before All Might was something… else. Like a movie or television show he had watched. That it wasn’t him he was remembering but a character.

Sometimes that worked.

Sometimes.

He regretted his choice of dinner immensely afterward, having been forced to grit his teeth and sweat through several hours of sharp intestinal pains and cramps. He did manage to grab a few hours of sleep though he didn’t feel quite… right, when he awoke the next morning.

He took note of the slight tremor in his hands as he brushed his teeth and dressed. His blood sugar
was getting low. He needed to eat.

And convenience food wasn’t going to cut it.

Yagi got his breakfast and spent the following hours drafting up a game plan. The shopping district was where he focused his attention, as it was one of the main arteries of Musutafu. If he wanted to be seen and make a statement, that was where he needed to be.

He’d draw out Wash, if the hero was in the area.

In fact, with Yuuei overlooking the city, there was a good chance he’d have quite the crowd of heroes looking to take him down.

It was going to be a good afternoon.

He was on his way back to the hotel to grab the other parts of his villain getup when he watched a mugging happen beneath an overpass in a quiet neighborhood. He saw the tail-end of it: some sort of blob creature -- he assumed a person with a quirk as blobs weren’t usually sentient -- had engulfed the person that had been walking several yards in front of him.

Yagi slowed his pace as he watched the mild struggle.

The voice that would have suggested he intervene had long since died.

No, the only thing he felt as he watched the criminal act was annoyance.

He was on a schedule and he wasn’t one to backtrack for fear of getting in the way -- no, they were in his way.

A quick glance over his shoulder told him he was alone. He swelled up, pulling his fist back to administer a quick jab that would clear out the tunnel. Someone low-level enough to resort to mugging was not worth a millisecond of his time. They were gnats compared to him. They fluttered around garbage.

He was a king.

No muss, no fuss. He struck before anyone realized he was there, walking as he watched his harnessed wind current travel down the length of the underpass.

The was no resistance when it struck the blob. It was near-instant eradication -- his mass was strewn across the walls and ground of the tunnel. As he drew closer, he noted the person it had attacked was not yet dead. In fact, he wasn’t even unconscious -- he was sputtering and coughing, staring up at him with a wide-eyed wonder.

Oh.

“So it had a kid,” he grumbled to himself as he leered over the boy.

What to do with him?

It would be such an easy thing, to kill a defenseless kid. A single kick could do it.

Knock his head clean off.

Easy and demeaning.
He was All Might. A god. A reckoning. People died by his hand en masse -- lowering himself to kill individuals would shift the public perception of him. He wouldn’t be a natural disaster, he’d be a killer.

That’s it.

A killer.

No, he was above that.

“Run home, kid,” the man finally said. “Consider this your lucky day.”

All Might would let him scamper home to his family, probably telling everyone about the man who rescued him with a single punch. Blissfully unaware of how dangerous his situation had truly been.

“Are you a hero?”

He had to prevent the grin that threatened to spill at hearing such a question. Well, obviously he was this kid’s hero. A slight movement out of the corner of his eye caught his attention.

A witness hiding in the shadows?

No. It was a bit of the blob quivering, small particles rolling into each other. It was repairing itself.

Ah. So it survived his attack.

“I didn’t kill the blob,” he informed the kid. “It’ll probably pull itself together when it comes to.”

The teen was still staring with that same wide-eyed look but made no move to stand.

“Unless you want him to strangle you. In that case, stick around.”

There, he had done far more than he intended (and far more than he wanted to). All Might was leaving, continuing his walk to the hotel without so much as a glance back. When he felt he was alone, he dropped his muscular form, coughing into his fist as he shuffled on as Yagi Toshinori.

The dufflebag with the rest of his villain attire was waiting for him on his bed, packed and ready to go. After a quick trip to the bathroom and a pick-me-up snack, he was heading back out the door.

Almost.

Adrenaline was rolling through his veins, his spirit flaring to life when he dipped into an alley near the hotel to don his villain attire. This was the feeling he lived for -- the thrill of going to work.

He was a counterbalance. He was a truth. He was power. He was All Might.

And it was showtime.

One for All, in all it’s tainted and twisted glory, roared to life. He was swelling up to his comfortable form, rolling his shoulders as a familiar tautness pushed against him. An ever-present reminder that though it was comfortable it was not his true form.

No, this was his true form.

Lifeless eyes glared up at him as he reached for his mask, smoothing his hair back with one hand as he slipped the mask on with the other.
The timer had started.

He looked up to the sky, mentally checking where he was in relation to where he wanted to go.

And then he was gone.

The jump to the shopping district took only seconds. There was no warning of his impending approach, no whistling of a projectile falling from the sky. Just a sudden buckling and cracking of asphalt where he landed on the road.

He could hear gasps and cries of startled surprise as dust rose from his impact site, clouding the air and blocking him from view. A car that had been going too fast to stop from plowing through the sudden cloud, driving into obscurity--

All Might stopped it with an outstretched hand, the driver's head slamming against the steering wheel and knocking his world topsy-turvy.

The air was still too thick with brown -- he could hear hidden people around him murmuring in concern about what could have happened and if the authorities had been called.

Their inane chatterings didn't matter. His eyes were peering at the driver of the car that nearly hit him.

He was waiting.

The debris was settling. Bystanders could start to make out the rough outline of his figure but were still gripped by a worried curiosity. The driver was blinking, rubbing his head, trying to figure out what he hit. He would be the first to see who had caused the sudden obstacle in the road.

The driver was looking.

All Might watched the expression of the driver shift. From furrowed brows and squinting eyes to a slackened jaw and terror.

A low rumbling laughter escaped him. That's what he wanted to see.

Fear.

The air was cleared by then.

Recognition.

Shouts were ringing out, he had been identified. Bystanders who had so stupidly crowded around the assumed accident were falling and flailing as they tried to stumble away from All Might. His name was ringing out.

All Might! All Might is here!

What a wonderful soundtrack.

Yagi Toshinori didn't exist.

He was All Might.

A closed fist to the hood of the car crumbled it forward and, in the same movement, he frisbee'd the vehicle into a nearby building. The large glass window of shop exploded inward while All Might
rolled his shoulders, looking around.

He was hoping for an immediate response from a hero but apparently, he wasn't going to be that lucky.

*It was time to rattle the bars. To get attention.*

The area had been mostly vacated by those fleeing, save for a couple of stragglers. Others, fearing that remaining in the street would leave them exposed, had holed themselves up the surrounding buildings.

Like that could help them.

He raised a foot and, like a dog chained, One for All was barking and biting to be unleashed in full. *Level the city.* But he held it back, preventing the steady flames from becoming a full-fledged inferno. He contracted the muscles of his body as he brought his foot down in quick, heavy stomp.

His power released when his boot connected with the asphalt -- a shockwave erupted forth, further cracking and kicking up fragments of the road as it traveled outward. It was an unyielding force that would not be slowed by structures. A deafening commotion rang out as buildings around him crumbled and fell.

They could handle earthquakes just fine but One for All was something else entirely.

All Might had started strolling, illuminated eyes kicking on as the air became clouded with debris and dirt once more, but on a much larger scale.

The screams had started up again. They were trapped, they were scared, they were lost.

It took almost ten minutes for the first heroes to show up on the scene. What they found was a massive circle of destruction -- buildings were *gone*, vehicles were flattened, people were crying and yelling for help.

It was a disaster.

And the cause of the disaster paced in the center of his ring, arms outstretched.

“What took you so long!?” All Might called when he caught sight of the men in costumes.

Death Arms faltered, casting a worried look to Kamui Woods, who cursed under his breath. They had been told of a villain-caused car accident -- they weren’t expecting this. Weren’t expecting *him*.

“Hey assholes, thanks for leaving me behind!”

Neither hero turned around to acknowledge the approach of Mountain Lady, who elbowed herself between them.

“You guys are rude, ditching me like that. I’ll have you know I’m a media *darling* now. And car accident!? It looks like a bomb went off--” her voice trailed off, eyes settling on the masked villain who was approaching them. “... *Oh no. *”

“Think you can immobilize him?” Death Arms asked Kamui, who responded with a wide side-eye.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Mount Lady hissed, cutting in, looking in bewilderment between the two heroes. “You’re kidding right? We can’t fight *All Might.*”
“Death Arms and I will keep him busy,” Kamui said. “You start helping anyone trapped. More heroes should be arriving soon.”

“You guys are going to get yourselves killed! Not even Endeavor can defeat All Might! Don’t be stupid!”

“Still talking?” All Might shouted, shaking his head. He was beckoning them to him. “Come now, don’t tell me you’re afraid.”

“We have to engage,” Kamui muttered to his companions. “We’re the first on the scene.”

“Just focus on the civilians, we’ll keep him occupied,” Death Arms added to the newest addition to the hero scene.

“We’re going to die, aren’t we?” Mount Lady muttered. She watched the other heroes intentionally barrel into the eye of the storm. But they were right -- they were first on the scene, they had to engage.

And she had to help those who were in trouble.

“I don’t think I know you two,” All Might said, tilting his head as the challengers entered his ring. Behind them a young woman suddenly grew in size -- ah, a giantess -- before she started carefully combing through bits of broken building, looking for innocents who had been trapped.

Death Arms grinned, thumbing his nose while ignoring the nervous sweat that coated the back of his neck. “You’ll remember us after today, that’s for sure.”

“You’ve got confidence,” All Might said with a chuckle. “I’ll give you that. It almost hurts me to think of you both as a warm-up. You haven’t seen Wash around, have you? Hero. Looks like a washing machine?”

“Enough, scum,” Kamui said, crouching down and readying himself.

“Scum!” All Might repeated, humored. “What threatening heroes you are! But who am I to deny a fight? No point in telling me your names now.” All Might cracked his neck. “I won’t remember.”

Without discussion, the two heroes defaulted to their usual apprehension tactic. Death Arms would engage in a front attack, physically overpowering his foe while Kamui would flank and entrap them. Nine times out of ten, it worked.

But this was All Might.

Death Arms had charged at All Might’s form while Kamui had seemingly jumped out of the fray. He was trying to be on edge but All Might hadn’t even shifted to a defensive stance. He was just standing there. Death Arms pulled his arm back, preparing himself for the satisfying thud of his fist connecting with All Might’s face--

Nothing.

He stumbled, unprepared for the empty air that awaited his attack.

Where--?

There was a ‘tsking’ sound behind him. His eyes went wide.

“Slow,” All Might admonished. “Far too slow.”
A quick jab to the back sent Death Arms flying, cartwheeling and rolling across the debris field before he stopped by slamming into a crushed car. Kamui had no time to react -- he had already started his portion of the double-whammy and if he--

Like a specter, All Might appeared before him, grabbing hold of his already-forming branches before launching him straight into the ground.

“This isn’t even a warm-up,” All Might grumbled. “That’s all you can offer me? Zygotes, bring me someone worth my time! Where is Wash? Come on, show me an actual hero!”

“Don’t count us--” The air escaped Kamui’s lungs when a knee connected with his stomach, cutting his heroic declaration short.

He was sent flying away as well with a kick.

All Might released a loud, disappointed sigh--

He felt sudden tug around his ankle before his foot was pulled out from beneath him. He fell to his other knee, casting a curious look back to see what had gotten hold of him.

Kamui had. As he was careening away, his branches had grabbed ahold of All Might in hope that he’d be pulled to the earth.

The villain erupted into laughter, grabbing the wooden appendage wrapped around his ankle and splintering it in his hand. “Oh, so you’re not entirely useless after all!”

By then Death Arms was back on his feet, charging toward All Might once more. Seeing that he hadn’t learned his lesson, All Might sidestepped his incoming attack, grabbing hold of his wrist and arm before flinging him in the direction of the still-sprouting Kamui.

The two ended up tangled in a heap, Kamui’s own attack immobilizing them both.

“Quickly, quickly,” Mount Lady was murmuring to the people she had freed from a concrete sarcophagus. She could only see bits and pieces of Kamui and Death Arm’s fight from her vantage point but rescue was her main priority.

They’d be okay.

There had to be about thirty buildings in her immediate area that needed to be checked for people. She could hear whirring above her, her heart dropping. It had to be a press helicopter that arrived to hover over their battleground.

Now the world was going to see them and she had only just started on the scene and--

“I hope you don’t think I didn’t see you, pretty girl,” a voice purred behind her.

Mount Lady went rigid.

Oh no.

She looked over her shoulder -- All Might was standing on an outcropping of a ruined building, staring up at her. She flinched away, nearly dropping the slab of roof she had been holding up to free a handful of trapped office workers.

“Though, it’s a bit hard to miss you, isn’t it? Tell me, swee… princess, is growing big your quirk or can you get smaller too?”
Don’t be scared. You’re a hero.

And the cameras are on you.

She grinned.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” she snapped, slamming her fist down on All Might.

Pain.

Mount Lady hissed, pulling back her hand as a searing, white-hot fire traveled up her arm. All Might was still standing, perfectly unharmed on his ledge, but her pinkie, she noticed with a mixture of fear and anger, was mangled. She tried not to let her discomfort show but her furrowed, sweat-sheen brows betrayed her.

“No that wasn’t smart, was it?”

She didn’t respond to him but he noticed the slight flicker of her eyes as she looked behind him.

Ah.

He leaped from his perch, turning in time to see branches tangle themselves around the outcropping but ultimately missing him. The wooden hero was there again, watching All Might lazily travel through the air.

Was he supposed to be impressed with his tenacity? Did the heroes really believe they were putting up a fight?

He was playing with them.

He wasn’t lying when he called them a warm-up.

But maybe, he’d have to make an example out of the wooden one. His determination could go so far as to inspire hope.

It would be best to crush that.

He would break both his arms, All Might determined, launching himself toward Kamui. Or should he just kill him? He wasn’t a top-ranked hero but he had heard about a hero with a wood-based quirk before. This must be that hero. So, he was probably a rising star.

No, if he was an up-and-coming hero, killing him would be a waste.

Paralyzing him would be so much better.

A hero that had such a promising career ahead of him -- a career that would come to a broken end thanks to a single punch to the back.

He watched Kamui’s eyes widen at seeing All Might shooting toward him, fist cocked back.

Drop and roll. He needed to drop and roll out of the way!

“Villain filth! You’ve been a stain on society for far too long! Prepared to be cleansed!”

All Might’s pose suddenly lost its sharpness as he immediately stopped his attack, overshooting Kamui and landing on a partially-broken wall.
There was only one hero who would spout out that many cleaning puns...

Wash.

The borderline-sentient washing machine was standing beside a bruised and battered Death Arms, pointing threateningly at All Might.

Perfect.

Beneath his mask, an enormous grin split his face as zeroed in on his newest challenger. He could hear the helicopter still circling above him, aware that he was being broadcasted to thousands.

“Wash,” All Might cooed. With an almost flamboyant air, he jumped down off his wall, slowly strolling toward his opponent, hands raised in welcome. “It’s been far too long. What, two years? Three?”

“Stop your chatting, scum,” Wash was vibrating, stepping in front of Death Arms. A ploy of protection for the cameras, All Might mused. “Today is the day you are scrubbed from history.”

“This is the second time I’ve been called scum today,” All Might said, placing a hand over his heart. “You heroes are fond of calling people names, aren’t you?” He paused. “I think you’re on spin cycle though, Wash. Are you okay to fight or should I wait until your load is finished?”

A wave of sudsy water was his answer.

All Might cackled, launching into the air as he watched the water crash below him, churning and spinning as it worked itself into a gnashing soapy vortex that rose and followed him.

Now, this was a hero fight.

He turned midair and wound up, feeling the power of his quirk thunder through him. The energy of his punch twisted the wind around him, breaking it and forcing it to take the shape of a cyclone. Wash’s water was being sucked up, creating a waterspout that rose higher and higher into the sky before disappearing from the field altogether.

The clouds were darkening.

Shit.

Beneath his mask, All Might frowned.

Rain was not something he wanted around Wash.

“Stop your running, dirtbag.” Wash chattered, another wave of water pooling and roaring up to where All Might lazily fell in the sky.

“I can’t wait to pry that soft little body out of that shell of yours,” All Might called back, a laugh in his voice. He was going to launch into a threat about breaking every bone in the washing machine’s body when he felt a twang in his gut.

He jerked forward, clenching his teeth as he felt a cramping feeling grip his intestines.

NO!

He was in a panic, flailing out of the way of an errant wave.
No, there was no way.

He was nowhere near his limit!

… Yet, his gut said otherwise.

No. No. NO!

All Might released his frustration in the form of a cross-chop that created a strong enough gust to blow away Wash’s second mass of water.

His breathing had grown heavy, a sweat was forming. His muscles were twitching.

He hadn’t even experienced any warning tremors.

Why? What was happening--

Anger and disbelief had distracted All Might enough that he didn’t notice Kamui’s Lacquered Chains Prison until it surrounded him entirely, forcing him out of the air and down onto broken earth.

Rage bubbled as his wooden prison continued to grow and twist around him. Water was squeezing through the still-shifting branches, soaking his boots and the bottoms of his pants.

His forearm was visibly shifting, losing mass as he momentarily lost a handle on his posturing.

Shit.

Could he still be feeling the effects of the previous night’s dinner?

He clenched his fists, fighting back the urge to explode.

He’ll level this whole fucking--

No.

All Might forced his hands to relax, ignoring that the soapy water had climbed to his waist. Internally everything in him was strained and curled up, ready to lash out at the slightest provocation.

Outwardly, he had to convey a cool confidence.

He was All Might.

He was All Might.

The media could not catch him losing his composure.

Nothing could phase him.

Oh the anger was still hot and fresh and it burned his insides but All Might wasn’t an idiot.

He would have to cut his fight short.

But it would end on his terms.

The ligneous prison that held All Might was almost entirely submerged in Wash’s churning eddy. Kamui Woods glanced to the top-tier hero, curious about what his goals were. Submerging All Might in water would lead to drowning, would it not? Was that his plan?
“Ten more seconds,” Wash declared, jerking violently enough that the top-loading lid of his getup closed, bubbles spilling out.

One. Two. Three. Four.

Death Arms grunted, certain several of his ribs were battered, if not broken.

Five. Six. Seven.

Mount Lady was back to civilian duty, gingerly tilting her hand to avoid bumping her broken little finger.

Eight. Nine.

Police had arrived on scene moments earlier, having already unloaded a series of quirk-canceling entrapments just in case. It was better to have them ready in case the window to catch a down villain was small. But jitters were tittering around the gathered law enforcement officers--

Had All Might been bested?

Ten.

The water was settling -- Wash was lifting whatever control he had on it, allowing it to flow away, revealing the large nutlike vault. Death Arms grumbled at the sight of it, the aura already ominous.

“He s-s-s-should be unc-c-onscious-s-s,” Wash said, voice vibrating as the shaking of his body worsened considerably.

Water was trickling back out of the wooden ball. Kamui nodded to the older hero, loosening the tightly wound branches. They were creaking as they slid over one another, returning to his body.

The movement was what he had been waiting for.

The prison shattered in a fury that sent shards of the construction outward, pelting the heroes with debris before the sound caught up with the action.

Death Arms was the first taken down by the laughing fury -- an uppercut that sent him straight into the sky, his jaw splintering and teeth cracking as All Might’s fist connected with his head.

His next target was Kamui Woods, who was only just comprehending the fact Death Arms had been rocketed toward space before All Might was on him. A large hand rested on his left forearm before wrapping around it and squeezing, crushing the bones. Kamui’s entire perspective shifted as he was whipped and flung directly into the back of Mount Lady, who was looking over her shoulder to see what had caused the loud blast.

Which left only Wash.

The cleaning hero had better perception than his allies -- he was trying to swirl and launch another water-based attack at All Might before the villain had a chance to strike.

But All Might was no longer in a mood for games.

Here. See how much of a joke your hero rankings are.

A single kick. All Might bypassed at the grand pageantry of Wash’s swirling water to deliver a single kick right in the washing machine’s body. A massive dent formed on the white, metal exterior and
the hero was sent careening much farther and faster than the other heroes All Might had dealt with.

*These were your heroes.*

All Might stood in the wreckage, having just knocked three, possibly four, heroes out of commission in a matter of seconds. In the helicopter, the reporter felt a ball of dread settle deep in her stomach. Beside her, the cameraman was muttering to himself.

After a bit, she realized he was praying.

The pilot was saying something to her but his words were being drowned out. And then he was yelling and the helicopter lurched to the side sending everyone falling sideways. The reporter, who had been crouched by the open chopper door, was certain she was going to fly -- she should have tumbled right out to her doom.

Instead, she hit something solid.

Laughter filled the cramped quarters, the solid shaking along with it.

Because it was coming from the solid.

The solid was alive.

The reporter opened her eyes, meeting the fabric of a shirt.

A gas mask was staring down at her.

“Now’s not the time for affection, sweet cheeks.”

The reporter pushed away from the devil but he was no longer interested in her -- he was grabbing for the lens of the camera.

Bless his heart, her cameraman was still rolling.

All Might wasn’t crushing the lens or destroying the camera. Instead, he was angling it up, pointing it at his upper body and head.

“That was embarrassing,” he rumbled. “Your heroes are jokes. Those rankings? Useless. I can’t be defeated. You have no hope. I hope you understand by now…” His mask was shifting. He was rising it slightly, revealing a large perfect smile to the camera. “I’ll be here forever.”

Musutafu was deserted.

With All Might on the loose in the city, outside seemed dangerous.

Yagi coughed into his hand as he returned portions of his villain attire to the dufflebag that had been left untouched in the alley.

His intestines were rumbling and crackling, unhappy about something he had eaten. He just wasn’t sure what. Was it his breakfast? But he hadn’t experienced any usual dumping syndrome symptoms.

He hated himself.

*A sound.*
Yagi paused his packing, listening.

Vibrating.

*From a phone.*

He could feel it then. A prickling on the back of his neck, sixth sense telling him he was not alone in the alley.

But *where?*

He started up his packing again, shifting the items in his dufflebag as he tried to work out where the sound had originated. He was looking in his peripheral vision -- the only place nearby that could obscure a *person* was a dumpster located to his right.

*Had they seen him transform?*

Behind the dumpster, Midoriya was hunkered down, hands panickedly covering his phone as he tried to silently breathe through his nose, *praying* his phone’s vibrations hadn’t been as loud as he felt.

He should have left when he had the chance.

*Why? Why did he have to play private investigator?*

He should have gone straight to the police with his information. He’d seen where All Might had dropped his bag before jumping away. He had gone so far as to snoop through it, though he didn’t find anything particularly dastardly -- just protein bars and a pair of socks.

Midoriya *knew* All Might had done damage to a section of the city -- his phone had been beset with breaking news alerts once the carnage started and the sighting was confirmed. Not only that--

*His mother had not stopped calling him.*

All Might was leaving. With his bag zippered, he coughed into his fist and was walking away, most likely to the go back to the hotel he had seen him enter.

Midoriya had been following him for hours by that point. Ever since he saw him change from a hulking beast to a tall, slender man.

*Was that part of his quirk?*

It was something of a comic book. A villain (hell, even a *hero*) with the ability to switch forms. It also explained why police had never caught All Might -- because there were *two of them.* If he can just snap a video of the actual transformation and bring that to police…

Midoriya peeked out from his hiding place, unable to quantify the amount of relief he felt that he had not been caught by All Might.

He very much wanted to live a long, productive life.

Shoving his phone back in his pocket, Midoriya grabbed for his school bag and headed in the direction he had seen All Might walking, concerned he might lose the villain. If that were to happen… well, Midoriya would have to camp-out near the hotel and *wait,* hoping he hadn’t left the city or check out.
Otherwise, All Might would just disappear back into the world.

No, this was his only chance.

This was the heroes’ only chance.

“Why are you sneaking around, young man?”

The voice behind him was low and rough. Midoriya felt his soul leave his body as he froze, facing forward, mind unable to work his appendages.

Something heavy dropped to the ground. Then there were footsteps.

All Might was getting closer to him.

_Run!_

Oh, like that would do anything.

All Might would catch him.

_There was no escape._

“Green hair… _That_ uniform…” Yagi came into Midoriya’s line of sight, shadowed blue eyes narrowing as recognition flashed across his face. “From earlier. The kid in the tunnel…”

He hadn’t flared up to All Might’s real size. Did he still have his quirk power when he looked like _that_?

Midoriya did not want to find out.

But Yagi was shaking his head, glaring at the teen. A feel of foreboding washed over Midoriya to the point where he was in danger of drowning from it.

“Stupid brat,” the man grumbled. “You have no idea what you’ve walked into.”

“I didn’t--”

“Who am I?” Yagi asked, leaning down slightly, burning eyes piercing Midoriya’s. When he didn’t get an answer right away, his lip curled momentarily before settling back into a toothy scowl. “Don’t play dumb. Who am I, boy?”

“All Might,” Midoriya squeaked.

It had been a bluff. Truthfully, Yagi wasn’t sure how much the boy saw or what the boy knew. By dropping that name, the teenager had sealed his fate.

_What an absolutely irritating day._

“So what was your goal?” Yagi asked dryly. “Attack me with your quirk? Lead the police to me?”

Midoriya flinched at the last suggestion and Yagi took notice of his body’s reaction, blinking slowly at the boy.

“And you thought that would work? Idiot boy, you wasted your life.”

“I just…” Midoriya was blinking rapidly. He wasn’t going to… beg for his life. He wouldn’t stoop
that low. *He wanted to.* Oh, he desperately wanted to. *A hero wouldn’t beg.* “What are you going to do?”

“You’re going to die,” Yagi said with a roll of his eyes and a wave of his hand. “No need to beat around the bush. But before I crack your skull like an egg, I want you to know whatever little plan you cooked up was doomed to fail. You understand that, right boy? That you risked your life for nothing and accomplished nothing? Hell, your *life* means nothing at this point.”

Midoriya felt his chin tremble.

“That’s not true,” he mumbled. Yagi’s face lit up, a lopsided smile growing.

“Oh?”

“That’s not true. My life is important. Cause I’m going to become a hero.”

“Can’t be a hero when you’re dead but continue.”

“A hero that can defeat villains like you. Villains that kill. That break-up families. That enjoy hurting people and ruining their lives.”

“A hero’s monologue!” The lopsided smile turned cruel. He ordered Midoriya to continue his thoughts. “Go on then, monologue. Put me in my place. Make me regret my life. I’ll give you that.”

“I’m going to be a great hero,” Midoriya said, chin rising in defiance as he met the man’s snarling smile, ignoring the fear that still paralyzed his body. “A quirkless hero that will show the world *anyone* can be a hero. A symbol!”

Midoriya expected laughter from the villain. For his dreams to be torn apart and for his quirklessness to be ridiculed. Instead, Yagi’s face darkened considerably. Though the smile remained, his eyes had grown eerily sharp. There was an emotion seething just under the surface and Midoriya couldn’t quite explain what it was.

“Who are you, boy?” Yagi hissed. “Who told you to say those things?”

“No one. It’s my dream. Even if I die, it’ll just carry on to another person. A great hero will come along that can defeat you. And every other villain that shows up. They’ll bring peace. You’ll see.”

“It won’t happen,” Yagi snapped, interrupting Midoriya who had opened his mouth to spout more of his ideology. “Their ideals will be corrupted. If your golden hero does show up one day -- if they do arrive on scene and *finally* defeat me, this era of peace they create will be short-lived.”

“That’s not true.”

“It *is* true. This world is tainted, boy. The system is flawed. You *need* villains like me in the world. I am the counterbalance to your heroes. I keep them honest. I bring truth. The peace you talk about is fake -- a mask that hides the corruption and evil hiding beneath the surface. When people grow complicit, they get lazy. They don’t *care*. Darkness and shadows pop up beneath their noses and they allow it. Or they don’t realize it. A cycle of extremes, young man. A cycle I prevent.”

“You’re not a hero--”

“I’m not a hero. I’m not a villain either. *I’m a force of nature.*”

“You’re wrong,” Midoriya clenched his fists. “About it all. You’re wrong.”
“Am I?” Yagi shook his head. “I have a purpose in life, boy. A calling. I’m truth. And you… you’re just a quirkless embryo I let talk for far too long.”

Yagi was bulking up, swelling into All Might as Midoriya squeezed his eyes closed, waiting for death. “It’ll happen to you one day too,” he muttered, waiting for the final blow. Mom. “You’ll die too. And everything you said will happen and you’ll be a nothing too. Like me.”

A deep, rumbling chuckle.

“I was like you, once,” All Might mused, watching Midoriya crack an eye open at him. “Idealogic. Firm… Quirkless. And I had a master that played into all my dreams. Who gave me a quirk. That let me talk about peace and symbols. I was groomed to be a hero, boy. And if that had happened, you know I would have been unstoppable.”

Midoriya’s eyes were open as he stared at All Might incredulously.

“Y-You’re lying!”

“Yeah,” All Might said dryly. “I’m lying. Because you’re worth lying to.”

“Quirks can’t transfer!” Midoriya spoke a sudden flare of angry passion that surprised All Might. He slung his backpack off his shoulder so he could dig through the contents, pulling out a well-worn notebook. He flipped through the pages in front of All Might -- the hero caught glimpses of the writing contained within, of diagrams and careful drawings. “I study quirks. I watch heroes. Quirks can’t be… given. You’re either born with it or you’re not.”

“Kid…” All Might shook his head. “You don’t know shit about this world.”

Midoriya fell silent. The villain didn’t say anything -- he was looking at Midoriya, as if he was waiting for him to talk more. Or to ask a specific question.

“Why?” he asked and All Might’s smile grew three-sizes, glad he had asked the right question. “Why didn’t you become a hero?”

“Because I realized the truth,” All Might said. “I saw what gets created when heroes grow complicit. The blind eye that gets turned to the shadows because of fear. How naive and stupid people are. Why play into a system that can’t be changed? That values heroes being public puppets? That pits them against each other? My master died believing in a lie. She died and I saw truth.”

Midoriya was staring at the ground, thoughts a jumbled mess. He did not believe a word of All Might’s ramblings but something…

No.

No, Midoriya Izuku was born to be a hero. He was born to bring change into the world. Quirkless or not, that was his calling.

“You kill people,” he muttered.

“Yes.”

“And you… don’t feel bad?”

“I stopped caring about that pretty quickly.”

Silence engulfed the two males -- All Might was watching Midoriya curiously. Earlier anger toward
him had faded away. He was waited, genuinely interested in what the boy planned on saying or doing next.

But there was nothing left that Midoriya wanted to address. So he stood, staring at his shoes before squeezing his fists.

Mom.

“Are you going to kill me?”

All Might tilted his head, ready for the voice in him to shout ‘yes.’

The voice didn’t speak up, though. His mind was oddly silent as he mulled the single question.

You see yourself in him, don’t you?

The voice that finally broke the silence of his soul wasn’t his voice.

It was a woman’s voice.

One he could barely recall that somehow thundered in his mind so loudly, making his ears ring.

“No,” All Might said, releasing the tight posture and sliding into his smaller form, a series of closed-mouth coughs racking his body. Midoriya was gazing at him, mouth agape. “I’m not going to kill you. I’m going to keep you alive so you can see that I’m right.”

The conversation was over after that. Yagi picked up his dufflebag and continued on his way back to the hotel, ignoring the flustered Midoriya who had avoided death yet again. The villain’s mood had been thrown for a loop -- disappointment over his fight was put on the backburner as he dwelled on the green-haired teenager he met in the alley. A boy who knew both of his forms and what hotel he was staying at. A boy he should have splattered but didn’t.

Why…

Why didn’t he?

A very-much-alive Midoriya returned home to find his frazzled, puffy-eyed mother standing and fretting by the front door, certain she had lost her son to the villain attack. After promising her repeatedly that he was fine and that he wasn’t in the mood for dinner, Midoriya spent the rest of his night searching online for quirks that allowed permanent quirk transfers.

Sure, plenty of people had ideas for that kind of quirk and how it would play out, but an actual real-world example from an authentic source alluded him.

Until he discovered some kind of… a form that mentioned a man who could give and take quirks as he pleased decades ago.

But a forum could hardly be considered a reliable source.

All Might was on Midoriya’s mind for several days. Sightings of him were everywhere on social media and the news -- his classmates could not stop talking about the danger that lurked around them (and the fact classes were continuing normally).

Midoriya’s trigger came in the form of an in-class discussion about high school entrance exams. The students were all eagerly babbling about their dream schools and Midoriya, as he expected, was called out for his desire to apply to Yuuei.
A quirkless kid at Yuuei?

It was a ridiculous notion that seemed to amuse the entire class save for two people -- Midoriya and his childhood friend, Bakugou Katsuki.

It wasn’t that he didn’t laugh because he felt for Midoriya’s plight.

No, he didn’t laugh because Midoriya’s dreams insulted him.

Bakugou burned the notebook of heroes Midoriya had spent so much time carefully creating. He snapped at his ‘friend’ for his expressed hopes and his dreams. Finally, he punctuated the interaction with one final statement -- he told Midoriya to just kill himself. Take a leap of the school’s roof. End his misery once and for all.

Normally, Midoriya could brush off Kaachan’s aggressions as a personality trait.

Not that time.

No, their conversation (if it could even be called that) lingered in Midoriya’s mind.

Kaachan wanted to be a hero just as badly as Midoriya. Both were gunning for Yuuei. He was basically a shoo-in while Midoriya’s application was nothing more than a joke.

Kaachan would become a hero.

A kid who was full of spite and bitters.

He would become a hero.

And Midoriya would end up a nobody.

A nothing.

He didn’t hate Kaachan. On the contrary, he still thought of him as a close friend. But Midoriya found himself hanging around the front of a downtown hotel after school that day for several hours, waiting. Several times he caught himself, scolding his mind for what it wanted to do but ultimately staying.

Eventually, he caught him leaving the building. The tall, lanky blond man that had been gunning to kill him only a few days prior.

“... Sir!”

Yagi stopped, glaring over his shoulder, curious to see who had been shouting for him and why.

To his absolute surprise, it was the green-haired teenager.

A fanboy?

The boy was on thin ice. Not killing him had morphed into a regret of Yagi’s and he was in no mood to babysit some child that got a rush from chatting to a villain of his caliber.

“Do you think... can you tell me more about what you do?” Midoriya asked, arms pressed tightly to his sides, head tilted slightly down to combat the sick feeling in his gut. “I thought about what you said and... I want to hear more.”
Yagi blinked, rendered speechless by the boy’s request.

Tell him more? What else was there to tell!?

*Send him away.*

*Kill him.*

*Get rid of him.*

Yagi didn’t need some ankle-biter following him around. The teen had no use to the older man, other than causing him a headache.

He was persistent though.

*You see yourself in him, don’t you?*

Yagi sighed before the corners of his mouth twitched ever-so-slightly upward in a dark smile.

“Come along then, young man.”

Chapter End Notes

Apologies that it took so long to get this chapter out... it was difficult. But I did it.

Almost 4 am my time and my laptop is about to die. I'll fix in the morning after some sleep.

Thank you for all that you do and for sticking around!!
He was trying to play it cool.

Hawks glanced up from the television, gaze settling on the closed door that Kurogiri had walked through moments earlier with another man.

A man Hawks had never seen before.

A man Kurogiri had been speaking to with such familiarity.

There was no reason for him to feel so… agitated, if that was the correct way to describe the uncomfortable tensing in his body. It wasn’t fear or worry that was bothering Hawks. More like… unease. A nagging feeling in the back of his mind that he had not experienced before.

Something was up.

It all started when he shared a look with the unknown man as he passed by, ushered into a back room reserved only for Kurogiri. There was something buried beneath the stranger’s apathetic exterior that made Hawks’ feathers ruffle.

Sharpness and confidence.

Boredom.

Seeing a bunch of unknowns in their modest hideout was no longer a surprise. They had been steadily ramping up their operation for several months, after since the Yoshida patriarchs had been dispatched at Kurogiri’s request. Though the assassination had not gone over as smoothly as they planned, the desired outcome was reached -- the men were dead and ‘phase two’ could commence.


The now-hero had been Kurogiri’s number two for years. He had met with everyone Kurogiri had brought into their little ‘family.’

Gripping the remote, Hawks flipped through the channels -- an attempt to distract from the questions plaguing his mind.

Why had he never met that stranger before?

Why did they need to kill those businessmen?

Why did he feel like he was missing something?

“Put on the news.”
Hawks rolled his eyes at the gruff demand, watching as a nose-less figure stumbled heavily down the stairs into the bar. With an unceremonious thud, the man dropped to an empty stool, massaging his temple.

"Fun night?" Hawks sang. For once, he was glad for Stain's presence. "What time did you stumble in here, four? Five?"

"The news," Stain ordered again.

Stain had been one of the first... personalities that Kurogiri had worked to enlist in their operation. He was crude and stubborn but had built a dedicated following with his antics under the moniker 'hero-killer.' Hawks disliked the man and it was apparent the feeling was mutual, but Kurogiri had managed to curry the villain's favor and he had become a staple in their hideout.

Though Hawks suspected it was because he no longer had another residence to return to.

He changed the television to the morning news before Stain could launch into another grumbling fit. As much of an annoyance the man was, Hawks hadn't put up a fight when Kurogiri introduced him officially as 'part of the team.' He was rough, crass and entirely unstable, but his ideals were... aligned with theirs.

Though the rants and raves he dissolved into when he'd been drinking were unnecessarily long.

In fact, they were just plain unnecessary. Hawks did not need to be convinced that most heroes had their heads shoved up their asses and the world needed a reckoning.

The first few stories of the morning held no excitement: a late-night house fire with no injuries, a robbery was thwarted by a hero named Fatgum, Wash made his first public appearance since his injury.

"Sell-out," Stain muttered under his breath, leaning over the bar to fill up a pint glass with water.

The next story was on the ongoing construction in Odaiba. The ruined lab that had been located there was slowly, but surely, rebuilding. Some important man was talking about donating money to the families of the dead during a press conference and announcing wings of the new building would be named in their honor. Archived footage of the lab's destruction was played on screen -- the corner of Hawks' mouth twitched as blurred footage of one of the beasts was shown.

Ah, yes.

The beasts.

When he arrived on scene with Endeavor, he initially believed they were quirk-users under the influence of Trigger and that side-effects from the drug had caused them to look so grotesque. But Endeavor had never seen anything like it... like them. Though none survived the run-in with him, their bodies had been collected by the authorities to be examined. Hawks had overseen the corpses as they were loaded into coroner vans.

There was something almost... sub-human about them.

A recollection slithered into Hawks head, one that reared its head whenever his mind brought up the beasts.

*Kurogiri standing behind the bar on a cell phone. Hawks at the top of the stairs.*
"Yes," he said. "The nomu behaved perfectly. There were no survivors, Endeavor killed them all."

Nomu.

Though Odaiba had not been mentioned, Hawks very much believed the beasts were what purple had been referencing.

*Things were being kept from him.*

"Ah," Hawks said, pointing to the TV to try and muffle his mind. "There I am!"

A smiling Hawks was waving and hamming it up for the eager reporters. The flame hero Endeavor was standing him, arms crossed and frowning. A stark contrast. Between them stood a person he had not seen in quite awhile.

"I wonder how our little Artisan is doing," Hawk hummed, stretching his wings. "Especially after her moment of heroic glory."

Stain grunted.

"Be nice, she was the one who sharpened that sword for you."

"Take it back to her then, the blade has gotten dull."

"I would but she's gone MIA. Kurogiri wanted to extend an olive branch but her lab is empty. Moved out of her apartment too. I think she's gone clean now that she works with heroes."

Stain grunted again.

"Hell, maybe she ran off with All Might," Hawks said with a shrug. "Sucks we're out of a support specialist now. We've used her services so much we should have gotten one of those loyalty cards. The ones she could hole-punch, you know what I'm talking about? After five orders, get one free?"

*Ran off with All Might,* Stain mumbled under his breath. "Stop your squawking, you're making my headache worse."

"I'm serious," Hawks said, feathers bristling that Stain would brush him off. "That was the girl who had All Might in her house when I went to go 'take care of' her."

Stain looked up in surprise.

"What?"

"Artisan is who we got the shoddy assassin knick-knacks from. The nerve agent attack on the Yoshida's? *You* were the one who picked up the nerve agent from--"

"No," Stain snapped. "*All Might* was with her?"

"Yeah," Hawks said, nodding along slowly, eyes narrowing in suspicion. He had an idea where the man's mind was headed, judging from his sudden vitriol.

"So this... support girl Art is--"

"Artisan, but sure."

"-- Doing work for heroes, has worked with villains and is also working with All Might?"
"No, she's with All Might. Believe me, it's not strictly business between them. I promise that."

"Disgusting," Stain spat, lunging and grabbing for the remote to rewind the television, pausing the image on 'Artisan,' Hawks and Endeavor. "They're parading her around like a hero!?"

"She saved someone's life," Hawks said, squinting slightly as if he wasn't entirely sure his memory was correct. "So they gave her a medal or something."

"She's not a hero!" Stain hissed. "She's a blemish on this world. Allowing herself to be labeled a savior though she's profiting by playing both sides. Taking the mantle of goodness when she's... fucking All Might!"

Hawks pursed his lips, falling quiet as he watched Stain tense on his stool, sharp eyes fixated on the faker.

Now he was certain where this was all headed.

Goodbye Artisan.

"That girl is what is wrong with our world," Stain continued, rambling to himself in his state of hyper-fixation, anger seemingly turning his peripheral vision red. Faker. Faker. Faker. "Associates with All Might and basks in the company of heroes. Accepts the praises of society though she does nothing to help. She's worse than those false heroes. She's a liar. No dignity. No shame. Disgusting."

He pushed his stool away from the bar, casting one last look of the girl on the screen to save the image in his mind before stomping away disappearing back up the stairs.

Though she wasn't technically a professional hero, being labeled as one with her background was enough to draw Stain's ire. Hawks watched him go before leaning over and reclaiming the remote. He didn't want to continue watching the news -- instead, he settled on some fishing show.

Save for the low music of the television set, the never-open bar was bathed in stillness. In the quiet, he could hear barely-audible voices traveling from Kurogiri’s backroom. He glanced back at the door.

Something was going on.

Carefully, to avoid making any noticeable noise, he moved to his feet. Aided by his large wingspan, he made his way to the door with soft steps, pressing his ear against the stained wood.

The two were talking quietly, their voices low murmurs -- he had to concentrate to distinguish words in their hums.


And then--

A third voice.

Hawks' feathers rustled as the deep, dark sound cut through the murmurings of the other two.

"Do what needs to be done."

Shigaraki scratched absentmindedly at his neck, eyes glaring at the door behind them as Kurogiri and Father spoke about unnecessary precautions. When the phone call ended, Kurogiri turned to address the younger man. To... reiterate the instructions he had been given.
"You heard what he said, we have to--"

Kurogiri's sentence died when Shigaraki took off across the room with quick steps, ripping open the door to reveal the traitor who had been leaning against it.

No one was there.

From where he sat, seemingly unmoved at the bar, Hawks' head snapped up from his phone. He gave Shigaraki a look, raising a brow at the way he had entered the room.

"Problem, bud?" He asked, wings shifting behind him.

Shigaraki glared.

"Hawks," Kurogiri called, almost materializing behind the man. "There's someone I'd like you to meet. Shigaraki here will be working with us going forward."

"Shigaraki," Hawks repeated. He grinned. "Welcome to the team, Shigaraki."

From his back pocket, Hawks watched as the newest member of their group produced an extra hand that he promptly adhered to his face. Without a word, he turned and returned to the shadows of the backroom, stepping around Kurogiri.

Hawks looked to the bartender in disbelief, curious to see what he would say. What excuses he would drop. What he would share.

"Please use a coaster," Kurogiri said, gesturing to the empty pint glass a few seats down from Hawks. "We don't want rings left on the wood."

Hawks nodded, flashing an 'okay' sign. Kurogiri did not station himself at his usual position behind the bar -- instead, he turned and followed after Shigaraki, closing the door behind him with a click.

Alone, Hawks let his nonchalant facade drop, standing to place the empty glass into the sink behind the bar.

So, it was true then.

There were secrets being kept.

Chapter End Notes

And with that, my friends, the last piece of groundwork has finally been laid!

Now comes the building :)
A Smiteful Holiday

Chapter Notes

I promise you I'm not dead!

For those of you who don't know, I was unhappy with the original version of this chapter. It didn't feel... special. So I took it down to rework it and combine Christmas and New Years. Here it is in all of its 50-page glory. I hope you enjoy it because I have toiled over this lmao!

Chapter takes place before the events of Detachment and the Nomu attack.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“So…” Yume said, peering over to you from behind pink-tinted sunglasses, coffee in hand. “Are you doing anything for Christmas?”

You rolled your eyes at her, hitching your purse higher up your shoulder, thankful she had timed the question right as your train was pulling up. A free Saturday for you had become quite the rarity and you wanted to take advantage of it. So, you had agreed to head into Tokyo for some shopping followed by eating out and drinking your fill with your best friend by your side. A perfect, lowkey, no-stress kind of day.

Several responses to her probing question were on the tip of your tongue -- “Oh god no!”, “Please don’t...”, “What do you think?”, “Stop it.”

None of which, you knew, would satisfy her.

Rather than stick her with a non-response that would undoubtedly fan her suspicions, you chose to ignore the question. Of course, with her, no response was just as guilty as any of your other options. And she wasn’t about to let the subject drop.

As you boarded the train, Yume had a follow-up question ready to go, eager to try and trip you up into admitting something to her. Your relationship with your mystery suitor had been going on for at least a few months by her estimation, if not longer. Though you claimed it was nothing serious, your answer to the holiday question would be quite revealing to her.

A Christmas together? The most romantic holiday of the year spent side-by-side with him?

That was a clear indication that something deeper was at play between you and ‘your man.’ You just don’t spend a holiday like Christmas with someone you only had a passing interest in.

Thankfully, there was a stranger in his underwear pacing the train car you had both entered, singing shrill Christmas songs while strumming an out-of-tune guitar. His unusual behavior and unexpected appearance surprised Yume enough that her inner-inquisitor was immediately killed. While you chuckled at the strangeness of the sight you had both walked into, she was leading you to safety behind a group of cackling teenagers who had their phones out, filming the performer.
She watched the man’s solo act out the corner of her eye, sipping on her coffee in silent judgment. You were pretending to look through the emails on your phone.

The singer didn’t make you uncomfortable--

Yume sure did, though.

But she raised a solid question. In fact, it was the same question you had been asking yourself once the month turned to December -- were you planning to spend Christmas, a total couple’s holiday, with All Might?

You wanted to. In fact, picturing the two of you strolling beneath the winter illuminations of the city made butterflies inside your stomach flutter and your cheeks heat up with a very specific kind of longing.

It was too bad the cynic in you knew All Might would never agree to it.

But god did you want him to.

You just wanted to feel… affection from him.

*Ack, you’re being stupid.*

Still…

Christmas was Christmas. It was on another level compared to Valentine’s Day and even White Day. Maybe it was just the romantic in you overreacting, but it felt like it was important to get All Might something. Even if you weren’t going to spend the holiday together.

But it was what to get him that had been tripping you up.

What the hell could you give the great villain for Christmas? Socks and underwear seemed ridiculous. Something like a watch was strange to consider. A machine gun, in all honesty, seemed more suitable. A grenade, maybe.

There was one… laughable gift you had been steadily working on for a few weeks. To try and help combat your mounting work-related stress, you had picked up some old hobbies that had helped you settle your mind in the past. One of them was knitting.

In your free time, you had been making All Might a scarf.

Yes, a scarf.

A deep maroon scarf.

Simultaneously you were proud and mortified of your creation. You wondered if you would even be able to muster up enough gall to hand it over to him when it was finished -- which it almost was.

That wasn’t enough, though. No, you needed to give him more to really reiterate that you liked him.

Another gift idea you had dreamed up had been making you giddy.

The last time he had come to your place, All Might had brought a gift along with him. Almost immediately you realized that it wasn’t a gift for you at all -- it was for him to use whenever he visited.
He had purchased (or possibly stolen, you couldn’t be entirely sure) a small streaming device that had been jailbroken with a variety of programs, one of which allowed him to stream live American TV.

You found yourself using the streaming stick more often (mostly while you were knitting), interested in having something different to watch that wasn’t hidden behind a region lock. Thanks to your time in school, you had a solid grasp of English and could understand the shows will little to no problem. But you had to wonder if All Might had even considered your English abilities when he brought it with him. He never asked if you understood what was happening. He just picked a show he wanted to watch and left it at that.

Asshole.

American networks had been steadily streaming Christmas movies and TV specials that had you enamored. Sure you loved the lights and the romance surrounding the holiday in Japan but there was something… warm about the traditions the rest of the world had. Big dinners with family, loads of presents, Santa Claus, decorations everywhere…

Why not bring that to Japan?

As the guitar-slinging Christmas man split himself down the middle, creating a double of himself to better harmonize with, you had brought up a sparse text conversation between yourself and a contact listed under the emojis of a honeypot and a rabbit.

It would be perfect. You thought about the small golden American flag hanging around your neck, safely hidden beneath your scarf and turtleneck. An American Christmas for the America-obsessed villain?

There was no way he wouldn’t love it.

Before you could consciously commit to it, and make all the purchases you had saved in your Amazon cart, you needed to confirm he would even want to see you.

Why put in all the effort for nothing?

‘What are you doing for Christmas?’ you wrote out.

But you didn’t send it.

“It’s too cold to be walking around in your underwear,” Yume said with a frown, watching as the man was confronted by an appalled elderly fellow who was gesturing his cane wildly at the performer’s lack of clothing.

Both versions of the performer were holding their hands up, trying to explain to the unhappy gentleman that the act was all for a video. The explanation, however, was nowhere near good enough.

The entire train car was watching the altercation.

Your thumb was still hovering over the ‘Send’ button on your phone.

“Yeah, I know,” you muttered though you were still very much distracted by your phone.

“Did you just want to eat or were you looking to drink tonight?” Yume asked, glancing over to you before flickering her eyes down to your phone, catching that you were texting someone. Before she
could question who, you sent the message and shoved your phone into your pocket, anxiety over a possible (and probable) rejection pricking at the back of your neck.

“Let’s drink,” you muttered, gripping the overhead handle and pointedly not looking at her. “... Let’s drink.”

You felt your phone vibrate an hour later as you stood looking at handbags with Yume at the department store -- the first stop of many that you both had been planned out. It wasn’t until you were standing inside the dressing room at the same store, trying on a pair of black work pants, that you mustered enough courage to finally check your phone.

It was, indeed a text from All Might.

‘I’m coming over tonight.’

Well, it wasn’t a straight rejection.

‘I’m in Tokyo tonight,’ you sent back, reigning him in. He sent a response seconds later.

‘I’m picking you up.’

Was it decisiveness or control he was exhibiting? Either way, it struck you wrong.

‘We’ll see.’

You didn’t answer any his follow-up messages.

The drinks had caught up to you.

It was broaching midnight when you slipped off the barstool, swaying slightly as you made your way to the bathroom at the back of the bar. You fully comprehended your drunkenness when you started making eyes at yourself in the bathroom mirror, admiring how your eyeliner had remained unsmudged and how good you looked in the lowlight.

It was the same diner/bar you and Yume had grabbed dinner at. The intent was to eat, have a drink or two and move on to another place to really let loose. But one after dinner drink turned to two, then Yume brought up the design of a whip to be used be a man with an ice quirk that another member of her team had been working on.

Next thing you knew, five hours had passed and you were... intoxicated.

Yeah, definitely intoxicated.

“Hey,” a girl sidled up beside you in the bathroom. “Do you have some lipstick I can borrow?”

“Oh yeah,” you slurred slightly, cracking what you hoped was a friendly smile as you dug into your purse. “I definitely do.”

“Sorry, I dropped mine on the floor and now there’s all this hair in it so I threw it away.”

You nodded in sad understanding, as if dropping an open tube of lipstick on a bar floor was a normal issue a person had to face.

“You know what, it’s Christmas,” you declared, pulling out the black tube and holding it out to her.
“I want you to have this.”

The stranger in the bathroom must have been in a similar state of… mind as you. Beautiful opalescent eyes went wide and her chitin wings, which were folded tightly against her body, vibrated happily at the kindness.

“Really?” she squeaked. You nodded firmly.

“Absolutely. Please, take it. It’s Christmas!”

“Oh my god, thank you,” she gushed, taking the offering from you, taking the top off. “The color is amazing too. Merry Christmas!”

“Merry Christmas!” you sang back, waving goodbye to your new friend as you threw your entire body against the bathroom door to open it, absolutely beaming at the Christmas miracle you had just performed.

Essentially, you had saved Christmas.

“I gave a person in the bathroom my lipstick for Christmas,” you said to Yume. She had seen you approaching and, having noticed she was watching, you had fallen into a shimmy, side-stepping dance as you walked closer.

“Christmas?” she said loudly, laughing. “That’s like… most of the month away!”

“I gave her my lipstick and I saved Christmas. She looked like a moth. Oh man Yume, you should have seen her eyes. They sparkled.”

“Uh huh, sounds great. Now can you watch the bags? I have to go to the bathroom.”

“I saved her Christmas,” you stressed to her as she walked away. Yume made a face at you.

Alone, you took a few deep drags from the straw of your nearly full drink before reaching for your coat that hung on a hook beneath the bar top.

Your cell phone was waiting in your pocket.

Six messages and a missed call from All Might. Scoffing, you unlocked your phone and blearily skimmed over his texts -- where were you planning on going? What time would you be ready?

You were a queen, you were done with his… demands. What he needed to do was show you deference. Respect.

You were accomplished! You were a woman with a career!

‘I’m a queen,’ you wrote back, not bothering to read the handful of other messages he had sent because, frankly, you were too good for them. ‘I’m the best thing to ever happen to you.’

There. Now he would realize your importance to him.

Satisfied and oblivious to any of your typing errors, you quickly sucked up the rest of your drink and, when you caught the bartender’s eye, you gestured for another.

Where was Yu--

Your phone was vibrating.
All Might was calling you.

Jonesing for a chance to possibly irritate him, you picked up with a grin already plastered on your face.

“You’ve been drinking?” his voice hummed in your ear and you chuckled back at him, glancing toward where the bathrooms were, keeping an eye out for your missing friend.

“I’m not off many days, so I’m out having fun.”

“I can make your night better,” he said, voice low and deep.

You cackled.

“Doubt it!” you declared before hanging up, patting yourself on the back. The bartender looked over at you, brow slightly raised at hearing your side of the conversation. You smiled back at him innocently.

Your phone was soon dancing in your hand again. All Might was calling you.

So you answered again.

“Hello~” you sang sweetly, your smile only increasing in size when you heard his irritated huff.

“What bar are you at?” He demanded, his earlier pretense of seduction falling away in his fit of annoyance.

“I don’t even remember,” you laughed. You were being completely honest with him -- nothing mattered anymore. You glanced back at the bathroom again, expecting to see Yume heading your way.

Nope. Nothing.

How long had it been?

“Share your location with me.”

“Why do you want that, stalker?” You placed your hand over your phone, thanking the bartender profusely when he slipped another drink in front of you.

He didn’t answer.

Yume was finally returning. You could see her exiting the bathroom, talking with the girl you had saved earlier with your lipstick. Instead of disengaging from her conversation and returning to you, Yume stood aside with the stranger, leaning in to speak directly into her ear over the low roar of the voices and music in the crowded bar.

Whatever Yume said prompted the other woman to start laughing, antenna waving as her chest shook. She was placing a hand on Yume’s shoulder, tilting her head to say something back.

The touch lingered when she pulled away.

Oh.

“-- girl,” you heard a bored voice cut through the heavy fog of your thoughts, realizing then All Might was still on the line and had been saying something to you. “I’m--”
“I’ll send you my location,” you interrupted, suddenly feeling very much like a third wheel and… rather envious of contact. You were met by another bout of silence at your abrupt change of tone but, rather than wait to see if he would question it (he wouldn’t), you hung up.

You grabbed the specials menu and sent him a picture of the bar name located at the top of it, as well as your phone’s location. There. He could put those two giant pieces of information together to determine where you were as you did not have the patience to do it yourself.

“Sorry about that,” Yume said with a bright smile when she returned to her seat next to you nearly ten minutes later. Your bout of envy had mostly passed and you were wiggling your eyebrows in her direction. She rolled her eyes.

“Was it love at first bathroom trip?” you asked.

“Stop it,” she grumbled, though her smile stayed put.

“You were in there an awfully long time…”

“I just… complimented her on her lipstick color, that’s all.”

“Yume you sly dog,” you chided with shining, yet narrowed, eyes. “Look at you acting like a player!”

It was a nice change of pace -- for once, she was the one sputtering excuses as you poked and prodded about what the two of them could have been talking about for so long.

“Did you at least get her number?” you asked, amused by your friend’s continued deflections. Yume turned back to her drink, a self-satisfied smirk on her face.

“Maybe.”

“You could always hang out with her more…”

“Oh no, I can’t do that,” she said, waving that option off the table. “You’re here and you’re spending the night at my place--”

“Yeah… about that…” you interrupted, grimacing. She caught your look.

“Don’t tell me--”

“Go enjoy some time with your new friend,” you sang through your wince. “Stay out with her. She can come take my spot!”

“Oh no, it’s too--”

“Kobayashi Yume, you pick up your phone right now and text her. It’s Christmas. Love is in the air!”

You were pointing at her, brows raised, waiting for her to agree to your drunken instruction. She was looking at you in disbelief.

“Christmas is weeks away!”

You were standing, putting on your coat. Passion was in your veins.

“You know what…” you said, swaying slightly on your feet. “I’ll go find her and bring her over...
“Don’t you dare—” Yume said in a rush, reaching for your arm to prevent you from embarrassing her. As soon as you felt her hand touch your wrist, you both were hurtling back a few precious seconds.

You were putting on your coat, nonplussed by the second go-around while she was looking at you in disbelief—

“Hey!” the bartender raised a finger, pointing at you having caught what had happened. “No quirks at the bar!”

“Sorry!” you squeaked, shrinking under his annoyed gaze. You looked back to Yume. She blinked at you, the realization of what had just happened settling.

“Stay here,” you said. “I’ll go grab the love of your life.”

And you did.

Ignoring Yume’s horrified hisses and pleas to return, you made your way through the bar, stopping at almost every table you passed, smiling at the random faces staring back at you as you tried to find the amazing moth woman who had obviously stolen your best friend’s heart.

Eventually, you came across her, seated at the end of a table with a small collection of her friends. While they watched with humored faces as she identified you as ‘lipstick girl,’ you explained your reason for the visit -- you were heading out but Yume was staying, if she was interested in spending more time with her.

Spurred on by chants of “Bring her over!”, you returned to your seat to find Yume sitting with her head buried in her hands. She wanted no part of joining a table of strangers, but the moth girl had trailed behind you to better convince her to join them for the rest of the night.

“I hate you,” Yume whispered in your ear as you paid the tab and collected your bags. “I hate you so fucking much.”

With a sigh you set your bags back on the ground and gripped your friend’s face in your hands, placing a kiss on each cheek.

“You’re a brother to me,” you said, holding her stunned gaze.

And then you were gone, waving your goodbyes and blowing kisses to a floored Yume and an excitable moth. Before exiting the building completely, you mouthed one final ‘I love you,’ bracing yourself for the cold that waited for you outside.

Though the liquor in your blood helped a bit to keep your body warm, your nose and cheeks immediately went red thanks to the nip in the air. You opened your mouth and released a deep breath, watching a cloud water vapor form and float into nothingness.

*It was Christmas.*

You shoved one of your hands into your pocket, reaching for your phone--

“Let’s go,” a deep voice behind you snapped, impatient. He didn’t give you a chance to react -- you were being turned and lifted, unceremoniously thrown over his shoulder.
“All Might,” you complained, nearly losing the bags that were looped around your wrists. You squeaked when you received a sharp strike on your bottom.

“Careful now,” he tutted, launching into a brisk walk down the sidewalk. “Don’t go dropping that name.”

“Oh, put me down,” you groaned, squeezing your eyes shut as you felt them roll around in your head, the change in altitude making your brain slosh in your skull. When he didn’t answer, you lightly slapped at his back to get his attention.

Again, all you received was a smack on the ass.

“Where are we going?” you asked before catching the scent of something delicious on the wind. “Oh All Might, please, can we stop for dumplings or something?”

No answer.

You grumbled to yourself, stomach gurgling pathetically over the thought of some comfort food filling it. But All Might was a man on a mission -- city block after city block he walked, occasionally looking down at his phone as if checking on something.

At some point, you passed familiar golden arches.

Food!

“All Mig--“

Smack.

“No! Wait! All Mi--”

Smack.

“Kidnapped!” you shouted into the air, wiggling in his grip. “I’m being kidnapped!”

Your sudden burst of impassioned yelling caught him by surprise and he slowed his hulking steps, sharp eyes glancing around to the handful of other people on the same street as you two. If your shouting had caught anyone’s attention, they did a good job of hiding it. You both were being ignored.

Good.

The last thing he needed was attention or questions.

Or police.

“What are you doing!” he snarled, grabbing a fistful of thigh just below your asscheek and shifting you down his chest, crushing you against him.

His grip on the fat of your leg grew tighter at seeing you giggling.

“I want McDonald’s,” you said to him, an unfamiliar childish pout in your voice. He quirked a brow but you had begun to pet his slicked back hair, the bags around your wrist knocking into his shoulders and back. “Please? It would make me so happy."

“Girl--”
“Please, All Might?” You weren’t an idiot. You placed a placating kiss on the corner of his mouth, internally gloating when you felt the muscles of his face twitch. “McDonald’s?”

His body expanded beneath you in one massive, aggravated breath.

“You’re a pain in the ass,” he growled. But you were drunk and felt no sense of fear or apprehension -- you just smiled at him, placing a kiss on his forehead.

“My hero,” you hummed.

Though he retained his pissed off demeanor, the corner of his mouth twitched upward.

Then your world shifted again.

The raucous laughter of the McDonald drunks stilled when All Might and his captive entered the building. The quick change of atmosphere didn’t register to the already tired employees -- the man behind the counter looked up from the touchscreen of his register when All Might approached, doing a double take when he saw the severity in All Might’s features.

Oh.

... There was a person draped over the giant man’s shoulder.

“What do you want?” All Might demanded, glowering down at the cashier, the shadows of his face accentuating his sinister aura.

The cashier swallowed, eyes darting to the other employee by his side who was inching away, afraid... something was going to happen.

Something terrible.

Was he talking to him?

“Um…”

“Turn me,” you ordered from behind his back. “I can’t see the menu.”

All Might kept his glare with the cashier as he shifted, turning his body slightly and revealing the face of the girl over his shoulder. You squinted at the menu above the counter, chewing your bottom lip as you debated what to get.

“Hurry up,” All Might snapped. “You have ten seconds.”

“McNuggets,” you declared. “A McNugget meal with a coke. And a chocolate milkshake.”

“You don’t need a milkshake.”

“I want it.”

“Uh, how many, erm, nuggets…?” the cashier stuttered out.

“Six!”

“You don’t need nuggets, fries, a soda and a milkshake.”

“I want it.”
“You’re worse than a fucking child,” All Might snarled under his breath as the cashier’s life flashed before his eyes. The venom in the man’s voice making his hair stand on end.

He didn’t want to, but he had to ask the follow-up question—

“Anything else?” he said after an anxious breath.

“Nope!” you said.

“An apple pie,” All Might grumbled.

“Apple pie?” you asked, eyes dancing though no one could see “For me?”

“Shut up,” All Might ordered, paying the man and standing off to the side, eyes sweeping over the hushed restaurant, satisfied no one dared look in your direction.

“So where we going?” you asked, drawing patterns against his back. You could feel his body tense and roll beneath your touch, shoulder cracking, but he didn’t answer. You kept on, tracing circles and squares against the tight black shirt before moving to a large Christmas tree.

Silently he stood, soaking in your affections.

Not that you had to wait long to get your food -- next thing you knew, the cashier was squeaking out an order number and All Might was moving back toward the counter.

“Don’t forget my soda,” you said, nudging his chest with your knee, realizing he hadn’t been holding it while you were waiting.

He growled at you, handing you back the brown paper bag containing your meal. You cackled to yourself, clumsily reaching inside for some fries, your shopping bags knocking against you, the food, and All Might’s back.

They tasted like victory.

You waved goodbye to the staff as he turned to leave, your clouded mind not registering their nervous faces watching you go.

“Merry Christm--”

You squealed when a particularly heavy hand struck your ass, cutting your holiday declaration short. Turning, you glared at the back of All Might’s head as the door slid closed.

“You ruined my moment!” you groused, a stinging pain warming your asscheek. He gingerly sipped at your soda that was in his hand, your journey to somewhere starting up again.

“All--”

Smack.

You sighed loudly, your mood threatening to turn sour. You would put a kebash to the whole night if he pushed you far enough.

“Fine then… mister, where are we going?”

He didn’t answer.
“Can we stop to eat at least? I don’t want it to get-- oh my god, we forgot the milkshake.”

“We’re not going back.”

“But All--”

Smack.

“I hate you,” you seethed, no longer finding any humor in his mannerisms. You felt actually demeaned at that point. “I hate you.”

He chuckled, big hand languidly resting and stroking your ass as if to quell you.

In your state of mind, having left behind a milkshake was devastating. So you silently fumed, arms dangling helplessly as you watched the heels of All Might’s boots slightly shift into view at the end of each stride.

“Can you at least tell me where we’re going? Otherwise, I’m gonna start screaming again.”

Smack.

“You know that wouldn’t be smart,” he hummed as the sharp pain radiated across your already-sore and undoubtedly red asscheeks. You landed an open-palm smack on his back as hard as you could but he didn’t bat an eye at the strike. “We’re here now anyway.”

You lifted your upper body, craning your head to look over your shoulder. His bangs perfectly framed the neon light of the sign located over the entrance of the building he was heading to.

Spring of Love.

“You brought me to a love hotel,” you said dryly.

You felt the rumble of his quiet laugh in his chest.

The lobby was warm and your fingers and face were immediately thankful for the heat, though the drastic change of temperature left you with a slight burning sensation traveling across your appendages. Rather than a staff member waiting behind a desk to check-in guests, three touch-screen kiosks stood waiting to assist customers.

One of which was in use by another couple.

Curious eyes fixated on you and All Might as he purposely made his way to the kiosk directly next to them. You must have been a sight to see -- a giant blond beast of a man with a woman holding shopping (and a McDonald’s) bags draped over his shoulder.

A regular ol’ King Kong with his prize.

They didn’t turn away like all the others at seeing you, though. In fact, it looked like they were about to question your state but a very stern side glance from All Might immediately silenced them.

Their do-gooder swell withered to nothing. Rapidly, they finished their booking and, once a cardkey was in hand, they scampered away, leaving All Might to jab through the choices on the screen.

“Yeah, thanks for nothing,” you grumbled under your breath, watching them leave you to your fate.

“Here I am being kidnapped--”
“Shut up,” All Might snapped. “You better pray the room I want isn’t booked.” A few seconds of silence passed before he released a pleased breath through his nose. “Looks like you’re lucky…”

“Please,” you said with a roll of your eyes. “Like it would have been my fault.”

He grunted, reaching into his pocket for his wallet. Once the room was selected and paid for, he hiked you up higher on his shoulder before heading to the elevator. He pressed the silver button and, somewhere in the distance, you heard a ding.

You adjusted the bags in your hands.

“You’re not very romantic, you know,” you said.

“You’re a pain in the ass.”

It was your ass that was in pain.

“Taking me to a love hotel… Whatever you’re thinking… It’s not gonna happen. How long did you rent this room, anyway? Please tell me I don’t have to text--”

“You’ll have the room as long as you want,” he said, shifting on the heels of his feet.

“That’s not how it--”

“You’ll have the room as long as you want.”

You huffed, though you were pleased by his answer. At least you wouldn’t be haggardly stumbling out the door early tomorrow. Or shelling out your own money to find other accommodations for the night.

As long as you wanted.

He wasn’t going to stay.

Was that really surprising?

“What did you buy?” All Might asked as the elevator arrived, surprising you. He ducked slightly to enter it and, as he did so, you looked for the weight limit sign before he turned around, worried that maybe he would be too heavy--

No, the weight limit was high. It was a borderline freight elevator, having been made with heavy quirks in mind. You would be fine.

“Just work clothes,” you said, looking at the bags in your hands. You could hear the displeasure in his breathing at your mention of work -- it was no secret he had grown to hate your job, its constant interruptions, and the hours you kept. “… and some Christmas presents.”

“Christmas presents, hm?” He grinned. “Anything for me?”

“Actually…”

That caught him off guard. He was moving, shifting and turning his head to try and get a look at your face and, more importantly, your purchases.

“What did you get me?” he asked. You refused to look at him, sticking to your new floppy fish act across his shoulder.
“I’m not telling you,” you grumbled, making faces at the carpeted floor of the elevator. “Maybe I’ll just return them because you don’t deserve shi--”

“That?” There was amusement in All Might’s voice when he interrupted. He started stroking your leg before settling and squeezing at the meat of it, rolling the fat in his palm. “Them.”

The hallway of your floor was terribly plain and eerily silent. Not even mass-produced abstract art was on the walls, leaving the entire beige world devoid of any kind of personality. You expected twin girls with empty eyes to be waiting for you at the end of the hall, asking you to come play with them.

Calm down.

Like All Might would let anything bad happen to you.

Once the door to your hotel room clicked shut, and you were bathed in comfortable privacy, All Might finally settled you back down on your feet.

“Oh wow,” you said, blinking your eyes open wide, the headrush of your blood rerouting in your body clashing with your general level of intoxication. You dropped your bags to the ground. “Ok... I’m okay. I’m fine. Where--” You were being lifted in the air again. “Hey--!”

Whatever you were going to say was lost in All Might’s too-eager mouth. A hand was resting on the back of your neck, the other holding your leg, both working to pull you flush against him completely.

Maybe you were too much of a sap, but earlier complaints you had about his roughness faded away. Your palms rested on his chest -- you could feel his heartbeat roaring in his chest and yours was working to match the tempo. Each time he separated from you to reangle his lips, you let out a soft grumble at the disengagement which only spurred him on.

“Stop,” you groused, though the smile on your face was undeniable. You found yourself tossed on your back on the bed. Rough fingers were already threading through your hair -- All Might was leaning over you, lightly crushing your being beneath the denseness of his upper body.

He was too swept up in your presence to register you had spoken. Calloused palms were pressed against your forehead, soft grunts were being carried into your mouth. Instead of wrapping your arms around his neck, as he hoped and expected, you kept them extended out beside you.

“You’re gonna like this room,” he said when he finally broke the connection, his voice thick as he brushed his lips across your jaw and chin. He was trying to goad you for more interaction. You sighed through your nose.

You pressed your cheek against his, an airy giggle falling from you that made his skin go warm. He felt your breath near his ear -- you were going to whisper something to him and he was dying to hear what sweetness it could be.

“I have to go to the bathroom,” you murmured.

He pulled back with a frown that only deepened once he saw the combative grin on your face that you were, very poorly, trying to disguise as an innocent smile.

So you planned on being an ass...

Stupid girl.
He would always win.

All Might disengaged from you entirely, pushing himself off the bed with a grunt that hinted at stiff joints. You rolled onto your stomach to better watch him move around the room, eyes ablaze with enjoyment.

It was the first chance you had gotten to get a good look at the room--

It wasn’t tackily themed, to your disappointment. No mermaids painted on the walls or stuffed toys piled everywhere. It looked like a plain hotel room, save for the large TV mounted on the wall in front of the bed and the lack of windows.

Actually, the more you looked, the more you recognized other oddities. Like the contraption hanging from the ceiling in the corner of the room.

All Might had made a beeline straight for it.

“What is that thing?” you ventured to ask.

He was pulling apart the slack black straps, his smile growing in size and intensity as the apparatus swung lazily through the air, the entirety of it held up by a single silver chain.

“This, dollface, is a swing,” All Might said matter-of-factly, glancing over to you.

That hungry look was on his face. You were his full-course meal for the night.

“That’s not a swing,” you were sitting up, aware some kind of… anticipation was slowly settling. “I know what swings look like.”

He laughed.

While he worked to understand the swing (without bothering to look for directions that were surely provided), you continued the detective-level survey of your surroundings. There were cushioned platforms of varying heights built against the wall, akin to a giant cat tower of sorts. Then there was the general massiveness of the bed you were sitting on -- it was similar to the one you had back home. Strange fabric wedges were settled across from you on the floor underneath the television.

When you eventually stood to use the bathroom, a large jacuzzi tub greeted you. In fact, you weren’t entirely sure it was a tub at first -- you thought that maybe the room had an private indoor onsen built into it.

The holes for the water jets gave it away though.

You stared in the mirror after using the facilities, the harshness of the bathroom light revealing the raccoon smudges of eyeliner beneath your eyes that the dimly lit bathroom of the bar had politely hidden. Clearing them away with tissues, you wondered if he had even booked a special room.

He had implied in the lobby that he had a certain room in mind, so obviously there was something special about it. Was it just the swing?

Your mind drifted to the other times he had hinted about spending a night at a love hotel. Then there was the night of your Halloween party when he--

It struck you then.

“A size room,” you said accusingly from the bathroom doorway. “This is a size room, isn’t it?”
All Might regarded you for a second -- he wasn’t standing by the swing anymore, he had been reading a pamphlet by the bed. Instead of acknowledging your question, he held up a small device in his hand.

The bed lurched then started to rise, a mechanical whirring sound filling the room. When his thumb shifted, the bed switched directions, lowering itself closer to the floor.

You laughed, shaking your head at the villain. So he had finally done it. He had gotten you into a love hotel room that had been created with size differences in mind.

“You’re not that big,” you said, standing your ground despite the predator that was slinking in closer. “I think this is intended to be used by giants. Not someone whose only a head or two taller than the average man.”

“Oh,” All Might tilted his head the slightest bit, clicking his tongue as if he had felt some minor twinge of pain at even being compared to someone ‘average.’

He was towering over you by that point, his face trained on your mouth. He bore a full-face grin that crinkled the corners of his eyes. You wanted to touch the wrinkles but, blowing air out your cheeks, you held up your hands to try and keep him calm -- you could practically feel the energy crackling off of him. His hands, which hung heavy at his sides, were being repeatedly balled into fists before relaxing.

He was more than ready to get the show started.

“My nuggets!” you argued weakly, debating if you wanted to try and make the jump up to his mouth. You had a feeling he would happily catch you and lift your the rest of the way. “… The apple pie.”

“I want you in that swing.”

You wanted to be in that swing too.

But what fun was it to just… give in? It was good to make him work for your love.

It kept him levelheaded.

“… Let’s make a deal then,” you said, a nonsensical plan forming into your head, drunk mind repeatedly returning to Christmas and your need for an answer on what his plans were. Looking off to the side, you folded your arms and did your best to act annoyed. “I’ll do what you want if you do what I want.”

All Might didn’t have to act.

“I bought you food.”

It was a good point. You chewed on the inside of your cheek, looking at him out of the corner of your eye.

“I’ll go in that swing…” you said, ignoring his warning rumble. “Only if you stop by my place. On Christmas Eve.”

God, it sounded stupid.

He regarded you unhappily, mulling over your idiotic ultimatum. In your chest you could feel your
heart squeezing uncomfortably. Maybe he would think of you as too clingy? Were you really hounding him on the Christmas thing? You thought you were being jokey but maybe it was coming off as annoying? Maybe he’d get frustrated and leave you again…

“Fine,” he grumbled, mirroring your crossed arms.

You blinked.

You had not expected him to agree so quickly, especially without any guilt-tripping or arm-twisting on your end.

Had… had you done it?

Convinced him that you were important enough for Christmas?

You truly were a Christmas angel.

Shock was melting away though, a giddy smile taking its place.

You had been placated.

All Might rolled his eyes at your inebriated bliss, reaching for your waist. Before he could lift you once again and claim you for himself, you were holding up your hands stop him once more. At that, another interruption, he growled at you. Actually growled. Like a dog whose bone you were attempting to snatch.

“Just one nugget,” you said, pressing your palms into his solidity.

All Might momentarily held your gaze before flicking his hand sharply away, gesturing for you to leave his sight. You discarded your coat and shoes as you returned to where you had dropped your bags by the door, digging for the bag of cold McDonald’s.

While you were shoving what little fries you had left into your mouth, he was flicking through the television. Apparently it wasn’t just a TV -- there was a whole ordering system connected to it. From the privacy of your room, he could scroll through menus of food, music, game rentals, video rentals-- Cosplay.

Though they were cold, those nuggets definitely ranked as some of the best in your life. You popped two back-to-back in your mouth, opting to bring the whole cardboard container with you as you peeked into some closed cabinets. There was a vending machine, about the size of a mini fridge, that had you cackling. Sure there were some snacks in there--

As was lube, condoms, what looked to be small vibrators…

All Might, who was deeply interested in the half-clothed girls that were popping up on screen, didn’t look up when he heard you laughing or even when you eventually sidled up beside him, nibbling on a nugget in order to properly savor it. You didn’t have a chance to ask what he was doing -- he was attempting to shove his thick fingers into the relatively tiny cardboard box in your hands.

“Give me one.”

“There’s only three left!”

Your complaints did nothing to stop him from taking a precious from you, which you grumbled
about under your breath before returning your attention to the TV screen. For a brief second, you wondered if he was attempting to order another girl for your night together.

But the girls weren’t the ones up for rental -- it was the clothes they were displaying that he was looking at.

“Don’t get an outfit,” you groaned, shoving another nugget in your mouth. “I won’t wear it.”

“They have heroes and villains,” he mused, his good humor back as he continued to scroll. “No one specific though.”

“You were looking for yourself, weren’t you?”

He exhaled a terse laugh which gave you your answer.

“So what, you would want me to dress like you? Then you could… fuck yourself?” You were laughing again though this time it was at him, your expression bright and careless -- which All Might zeroed in on. “That’s weird.”

The nearly-empty container of McNuggets was knocked out of your hands when he went to grab for you. Large hands found themselves squeezing your waist and you were being lifted and pulled into his chest, legs automatically spreading to better accommodate the wide trunk of his torso between them.

“The last one!” You brows were furrowed in distress when you looked to see the last nugget touching the carpeted floor, dooming it to the trash.

“I’ll buy you more--” Hot breath tickled the skin just below your ear. A chill ran down your spine, alarm bells ringing in your head on having All Might so close to your neck. Though instinct was warning of danger, you exposed more of your throat to him, eyes fluttering closed when you felt him latch onto you.

Perfect.

“Wait until you see your presents,” you sighed as keen lips traveled across your neck to your windpipe. “You’re going to love them.”

“Santa Claus, hm?” he jeered with a playful snarl. He felt another smile explode across your face and pulled away to better drink it up.

“Santa Claus exactly!”

You threw your arms around his neck, showering his face with quick kisses. He adjusted his hands, moving them from your waist to hold you beneath your thighs.

This… was what you enjoyed the most. He was lifting his chin to better receive your affections, the corners of his mouth curling slightly in a lazy, content smile. It was moments like this, when he displayed a certain softness, that you almost forgot he was a villain--

A sharp pain exploded across your entire ass and you yelped, finding a wolfish grin had tore across his face, destroying that lil bit of Eden you had been falling into. He had latched onto both asschecks and was kneading and squeezing them together with relentless hands.

Yep, sometimes you almost forgot.
“Why don’t you give daddy a show, hm?” he asked, tilting his head and nosing your jaw. “An early Christmas present?”

A beat of silence passed.

Things were registering.

*Daddy.*

“*Daddy!?!*” you nearly roared, throwing your head back as your body heaved with a rowdy bout of laughter. “*Daddy!!* Oh honey, don’t you try throwing that word around.”

All Might delivered another open-palmed strike to your poor, abused backside but he wasn’t angrily sulking at your mirth like you were expecting. He was grinning back up at you, watching. You swept your thumbs across his cheekbones, your laughter easing but the humor still illuminating your face and making you glow.

“What kind of show?” you bothered to ask when he made no moves to speak. Already sensing he had won, he walked you both over to the bed, allowing himself to fall back onto it, bringing you with him.

You were straddling him.

“You’ve got an imagination,” he said, looking up at you. “Use it.”

“Mmm, my imagination right now is telling me to get under the covers and go to bed.”

Your shirt was being pushed up -- his hand was snaking up beneath layers to stroke the bareskin of your back.

“You’re not sleeping anytime soon, girl.”

“Oh come on, what could be sexier than crawling into bed and sleeping for a full eight hours?”

Though his eyes were hidden in shadows, judging by the look on his face he was rolling them at you. He removed his hand from beneath your shirts and, unceremoniously started pushing you off him and the bed.

When you were standing, he propped himself up by his elbows, leaving his legs splayed out and open for you. He watched your as your eyes roamed down his face and body--

When they reached his crotch, they lingered.

He was so wide and inviting.

*The perfect saddle.*

“Fine, I’ll give you a show…” you muttered, turning around to better ignore his smugness at having seen your obvious ogling. “You’ll get the best show. A Christmas show you’ll never forget.”

You shook your hands. In your mind, you were on stage. A private show for one. Without the aid of music, you started swaying your hips, immediately hypnotizing All Might when you glanced over your shoulder to him. A pleased breath passed through his body at having finally been humored, greediness taking over as you turned, pulling your turtleneck off your body as you did so.

No skin though. You wore another shirt beneath it -- a camisole.
He could work with that though.

The internal music of your mind, which initially had been a bass-heavy club thumper perfect for the drops and pops you were preparing to do, unintentionally shifted to something slower when a note you imagined segued into a Frank Sinatra song.

*Shit.*

You tried to keep with your moves but you couldn’t reclaim your previous track. You search for more pep settled on ‘*Jingle Bells*’ and then ‘*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.*’

The sexiness ended there. Your nightclub girl swagger morphed into grandpa at the retirement home. You weren’t dropping and twerking it -- you were sidestepping and snapping your fingers.

All Might first looked confused, wondering if this was just a new dance style of a younger generation that would evolve into something better. Then he was disgusted when it became apparent it was just you.

“What are you *doing*?”

“I don’t know!” you said, exasperatedly stopping. You rubbed your eyes, a strange bout of lightheadedness striking you before disappearing as quickly as it arrived. “I’ve got no rhythm! It’s hard to dance without music. Put some music on or something!”

All Might’s frown deepened -- you had smeared your eyeliner and looked to be *pouting* at him.

You were pathetic. Helpless. An absolute mess of a person.

He curled a finger, beckoning you back to him. Your sex appeal was lacking tonight so it was up to him to keep everything on track. He sat on the edge of the bed, pulling you onto his lap so you were facing him.

“You’re useless.”

“You’re an asshole.”

Then *you* kissed *him*, a peck full of supple lips and punctuated with a content hum that reminded him you were the morning to his evening. You were perfect. All the warmth and humor he was without. His grip on the constant hurricane of power churning within him slipped -- when you went to grasp his bottom lip between yours, he sprang forward and ripped control from you with a grunt.

*And you let him.*

Eventually his tongue retreated from stuffing your mouth, the tendrils of spittle that were connected to it were pressed down against your skin when he started moving along your face. He had caught one of your breasts his hand, thumb digging and trying to stir the nipple that was hidden away beneath the layers of your shirt and bra.

When he was at the underside of your jaw, he noticed it then -- a glint of gold around your neck. All Might hesitated. He released his grasp on your breast, catching the tiny flag between his fingers.

“So you actually wore it.” he said. He sounded… baffled, in addition to amused. You caught his eye, wearing a similar confused expression.

“Of course I did,” you said, knocking into him playfully. “I always do.”
There was a rumble caught deep in his chest -- you felt it more than you heard it.

He stood, bringing you up with him while he squeezed your body tighter as he buried his face in the curve of your neck. Though your bones were starting to complain about the pressure of his arms, you reveled in it. There was something absolutely perfect about the strength of his embrace.

All Might's tongue traced your collarbone before his lips were rising, journeying up your neck and back across your face, teeth lashing out when he met your lips, catching you off guard.

“I’ve wanted to do this for a while,” he grunted into your mouth, biting down and tugging on your bottom lip. You were nodding at him, tugging at his hair -- you had no idea why. You just wanted him to keep kissing you. So, yeah, you were gonna agree that he had wanted to do whatever for a while.

It didn’t take long to discard the rest of your clothing -- All Might was all too eager to strip you down to your underwear and, when they were removed, goosebumps erupted across your skin at your complete nakedness.

He, of course, was entirely clothed.

“It’s cold,” you complained but All Might didn’t respond.

With one hand on the small of your back, the other was reaching for one of the hanging cuffs of the swing he had walked you over to. You let him restrain one of your hands, a thrill rising in your gut, followed by the other. A strap around your buttocks helped support you, as did the cuffs around each of your ankles.

When you were properly subdued, All Might stepped back to admire his handiwork while you blushed and shifted beneath his observing eye. You didn’t know you would be so… spread. And you really were restrained -- trying to close your legs proved impossible, you only ended up swaying helplessly after several valiant attempts.

“You’re dripping,” All Might teased, quirking a brow as he settled his hands on your knees, tilting his head as he peered down at your displayed sex. “I can see it from here.”

A brighter burst of crimson burst across your face and chest. You wanted to curl up and laugh off his heated gaze.

“Can you push me?” you asked, pretending your heart wasn’t threatening to beat out of your chest. Humor would help the situation. “I want to swing .”

All Might sank to his knees.

Your brows twitched, knitting together, watching his hands reach out to stroke legs.

Why did you feel so nervous?

“Such a pretty pussy,” he breathed. You clenched your teeth, balling your hands into fists. He was positioning himself between your legs, nipping the sides of your knees. His eyes fell on the collection of faded bruises that dotted your inner thighs. “Such pretty marks too.”

“Can we split that apple pie?”

All Might rolled his eyes, angling his head to hide the humored smile at your… ridiculousness.
The tip of his tongue drew swirls across your legs, dancing over fading bruises before careful teeth caught at your skin.

Above him, he heard your breath hitch.

You cursed at your mistake almost immediately, catching a smirking face snapping up to look toward yours. But you had already moved on to gazing at the ceiling, doing your best to avoid him.

“What’s wrong, sweetheart?” he asked, leaning forward and resting his chin at the top of your sex. “Need something?”

“What if… you didn’t tease?” you asked the ceiling, eyes examining the bolts of the swing. “You were nice and--”

“Sounds boring.”

You sighed.

“It would be nice,” you groused, feeling his mouth return to the sensitive skin of your inner legs. Your toes curled as you felt his tongue flick ever closer to the plushness of your sex. “It is Christmas after all--”

“Christmas is a few weeks away,” All Might said, voice vibrating against your thighs as he rested his lips against flesh. You snorted lightly, shaking your head.

“It’s December! It’s the Christmas season-- ooh!”

The lips of your pussy were pulled taut, All Might’s tongue parting your folds further as it traveling up your slit.

“This what you wanted?” he asked, a grin playing on his face as he repeated the action. You bit back a whine in your throat, legs shifting helplessly. He waited to see if you would answer, half expecting some stupid retort involving food. But you didn’t say a word -- you just continued shifting beneath his talented tongue.

A jolt traveled across your body when it connected with your clit, a cry escaping from you before you could properly smother it.

All Might responded with his own gruff sound.

His tongue dug deeper against your clit, rolling and flicking at the nub. Your eyes fluttered closed as a satisfying warmth began to pool in your gut. The strokes were short and sweet at first, the quick succession of his motions pulling more soft sounds from you.

Then his movements became longer and more probing. Between slurping and sucking at your clit, his tongue was burying itself deeper inside of you, pressing against the warm, shifting walls of your cunt.

It was around that time you started to strain against the restraints, frustrated you weren’t able to curl your limbs better around the man worshiping your sex.

“More,” you gasped out, a pulse shooting across your cunt when your clit was touched, hips jerking up into his mouth.

Something solid was pressing against your opening, teasing your slit apart to better coat itself with
your dampness. You cooed in appreciation as it continued its push into you, hooking and stroking the twitching flesh surrounding it before it was buried completely.

Then it was moving.

“God damn,” you sighed. The desire to bury your hands in All Might’s hair, or rub them across your own face, getting worse. Being restrained was torturous. “Oh, All Might…”

The grunts and growls caught in his throat grew a fraction louder at hearing you sigh his name so sweetly.

His pants had grown awfully tight.

The pumping finger momentarily disappeared, along with the hand kneading your ass, so he could release the suffocating pressure of his pants. Though All Might’s ravenous mouth was still connected to your clit, your cunt felt painfully empty.

He grunted when his cock sprung free from the confines of his boxers and unbuttoned pants. Precum was steadily beading at the engorged tip; a calloused thumb swiped across it as he started to pump his length.

With one hand still steadily working himself, the other returned to your pussy. In one steady push, a finger was returned to your aching depths.

“Thank you…” you sighed, breath hitching again, glad you had something to properly grip and thrust against once more. “Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

All Might was noisily tonguing your clit, stroking his cock as he watched your legs and ass clench and shift under his attentions. Gaspy, breathless cries were tumbling out of you, teeth clenching and jaw shifting as you felt the rapid build-up leading to your orgasm.

Mindful of his lack of time thanks to your games, All Might didn’t bother to tease out your climax. He increased his ministrations, grunting against your cunt when he watched an open-mouthed grimace grace your features.

“Ah--!” you warned, the liquor in your body making your reactions more open and fluid. “I’m--! Ngh!”

You managed to slur out ‘Might!’ before your body started to twist and roll in the swing, flashes of light exploding behind your eyes as your orgasm rocked you. Eagerly All Might kept his mouth connected to your sex, lapping at your release while working a second finger into the glistening mess of your depths.

It didn’t take much for him to pull a second orgasm from you.

The third one made your legs quake, his name falling from your lips in heavy, wild-eyed pants.

Seeing you in such a state, chest heaving and sweat coating your body, the man couldn’t hold off any longer. His cock was weeping openly by then. He had been almost edging himself as he watched you cum around his mouth and hands.

He couldn’t hold back any longer.

The swing was perfect. There was no need to bend down or layer pillows beneath your body to raise your hips up -- when he stood, your crotch was at the same height as his. He kicked his pants off
entirely before indulging in a languid stroke of his cock. Then he leaned across you, rough tongue twirling around a nipple before it was seized by his teeth. He pinched the other between a mean thumb and forefinger.

“Easy!” you snapped, attempting to shrink away from the pain. But he didn’t stop. He couldn’t.

Eventually, he released your breast with a pop, flicking a nipple and ignoring your squawk that came from it.

*Oh no. You were his for the night to do whatever he wanted.*

Gripping his heavy, eager cock in one hand, he rubbed it against your slit. He watched your mouth contort into a pleading frown, stray strands of hair sticking to your flushed face. Any previous gripes you had with him vanished, the prospect of your coupling too sweet.

“You want it?” he growled, popping just the head into your cunt before pulling it back out to rub it against you.

Though you may have hated the restraints at the moment, All Might was absolutely enamored with them. You were spread open, perfect and appetizing, completely ready for him and entirely at his mercy.

If he wanted to, he could leave you hanging in the hotel room for _hours_.

What could you do?

*Nothing.*

Just hang helplessly, hoping and praying he would return to _save_ you.

“All Might!” Your hands waved limply in the cuffs. It was obvious you were frustrated.

_You wanted him._

He caught you by surprise when he gripped your head and shared a heated kiss with you. Before you could respond in proper, he had pulled away and was headed to the bedside where a collection of complimentary items had been arranged on the night table: condoms, lotion, tissues—

All Might ignored it all save for single, miniscule bottle of lube. You could see his frown from where you… swung.

“There’s more in the vending machine,” you said, gathering what he was thinking from his reaction. He looked at you, recognizing you were gesturing with your chin and limply pointing to the cabinets he had ignored.

When he opened them, he saw what you meant by vending machine.

*Dammit, where was his wallet…*

“Hurry up.” You were swinging your body, gaining enough momentum to lazily sway side-to-side. “You should have had this ready.”

“I should have gotten a _gag_.”

“Oh, but don’t you want to hear me say your name, babe?” you asked watching him dig around his pants. He seemed uninterested in what you had to say. “*All Might,*” you sang, smiling at him. “*Allllll
Might.”

When he returned with a full-size bottle of newly-acquired lube in hand, he delivered a sharp, open-palm smack directly on your sex that silenced your goading with a jolt. Haphazardly, the cold lube was drooled over your cunt. Stroking, curling fingers worked to better spread the glob of liquid, one of which repeatedly dipped inside of you.

Your hips rolled up to greet it which earned a snort of laughter from All Might.

“Greedy,” he remarked, dropping the bottle to the ground once he was prepped as well. He teased his cock against your slit again.

Up and down the swollen red cockhead traveled, dipping between the all-to-eager lips of your pussy. Like a magnet, it was continuously drawn to your clit where it would dance and grind against the throbbing nub.

His eyes were fixated on your face when he finally pushed himself into you, watching the way your chin lifted and lips parted when you were split apart by such a hefty organ. Meanwhile, a satisfied twitch rocked his dick as it was slowly engulfed by your welcoming velvetness.

A groan bubbled in All Might’s throat as he flexed his shoulders (and your own), hands gripping and wrapping around your restrained thighs. It was probably one of his favorite sights -- watching your body stretch to swallow such a... generous intruder.

“Still so tight,” All Might grunted. You swallowed the ‘thank you’ that had sprouted in your mouth.

No! Don’t thank him for saying that!

He was pushing in deeper and you were starting to feel that initial aching stretch. That wonderful aching stretch. The point where you body flip-flopped between wanting to coax him deeper or push him away.

He began short, shallow thrusts, working to bottom out. It was then he moved to staring at your face, watching each twitch of an expression wobble across your features. You inhaled sharply, hiding a whine as your feet flexed and rolled in their restraints.

“That’s my girl…” All Might murmured when his pelvis touched yours.

He held himself there, fully sheathed, savoring the way your cunt spasmed around him.

You were mildly distracted by the sounds your tongue made as it shifted around your mouth.

Then the thrusting started up again.

As did the speed.

The sound of slickened slapping skin quickly filled the room, a symphony that was punctuated by your breathy moans and his pleased grunts.

Having already pulled several climaxes from you without his own release, All Might was impatiently off to chase his own. He had given you a kindness by allowing you to adjust to his girth but there was no gradual build-up of intensity on his end. His pace quickened considerably and, quite helplessly, you swung along with each heavy slap of his hips.

“Shit,” you heard him hiss under his breath. He was getting erratic.
That had you surprised. Was he… close to finishing?

It looked like it. His face was screwed in concentration, focused on watching his cock saw in and out of you, sweat beading across his face.

You wished he had taken off his shirt.

Pity.

But you could help him along. It would be fun.

“That’s it,” you mewled, voice wavering -- it felt like he was rearranging your insides. “All Might, honey, that’s it. Right there.”

He chuckled, fingers digging harder against the fat of your legs.

“You like that?” All Might asked, though it was a borderline snarl. You bit your bottom lip, nodding your head at him, doing your best to look demure. Considering your current situation -- bound and hanging from the ceiling, getting plowed by a borderline giant, it wasn’t really that hard.

He took your expression as a good sign, unaware you had done it to keep from laughing.

“Yes,” you sighed when you were sure your bout of giggles had passed, choosing to play up your breathlessness. “God you have such a fat cock. A beautiful cock.” What else? Shit. Big. Say big. “A big cock.”

Your words were working. He had started snapping into your harder and faster, each of his raspy breaths ending with a grunt.

“You like this big cock?”

Don’t laugh. Don’t laugh.

“Honey bear…” He looked up in time to catch the slight twitch of your eyebrows as he passed across a hidden bundle of nerves within you, lidded eyes admiring everything about him. “I love your big cock.”

Without warning or fanfare, he mashed his hips against yours and growled through gnashed teeth, tossing his head back as warmth exploded out of him and splattered against the walls of your cunt. You released your own soft breaths as you watched him wheeze, his grip on you near ironclad. To test it, you attempted to shift your hips and adjust yourself in your straps.

At feeling you move, fingers latched against you harder.

“Don’t you fucking dare.”

You didn’t try again.

Eventually, his jerking calmed and he moved to leisurely sawing it in and out of you, enjoying each squelch and gurgle your joining made. You were full of him.

He hadn’t calmed down quite yet by that point: his chest was still rising and falling rapidly and he was taking quick, shallow breaths. You wanted to reach out and smooth his hair and instruct him to take deeper, more purposeful breaths.

But you were still very much immobilized and by the time you realized speaking was an option, he
had started thrusting into you once more.

“Really?” you asked -- though you had no idea why you were so surprised he was ready to go again almost immediately.

A lopsided smile and a brow raise was your answer.

All Might’s cum acted as additional lube you really didn’t need. At each thrust he was pulling part of his load out with him, spatters of it flicking across your splayed legs and widely parted kitty. The rest drooled down your ass, sticking to the blond hairs of his slapping balls before dripping on the carpeted floor. [lmao]

Poor room cleaners, carpet seemed like a bad choice.

Was this something they had to deal with regularly? Cleaning cum off the floor?

Something grazed at your clit and stole you away from your thoughts -- it was his thumb.

He was looking at you.

“Do you think I’m stupid, girl?” All Might asked slowly, the rough grooves of his finger the right amount of friction to coax a bodily reaction. The confused look you gave him was earnest. “You don’t think I can tell when you’re acting?”

Busted.

“Oh, All--”

You squealed when his hand collided with your ass -- or, rather, the side of your asscheek. You were starting to get a bit raw from his sudden ass fixation and the curses that fell from your mouth alerted him to your displeasure.

“Such a dirty mouth on you,” he tsked. “Very unladylike.”

“Fuck you.”

Though you were prepared that time for his hand, it didn’t take away any of the sting when it collided against your backside.

“We both know you like getting your ass smacked, sweetheart.”

“You’re getting mean about it, though.”

“You’d know if I was being mean,” To further his point, he jiggled your rump in his palm before petting it. “You’d know, sweetheart.”

You went to grumble some more about the rough handling but his attention was back on your clit and he was applying just the right amount of pressure that your words crumbled to nothing. Open-mouthed, you let your head fall and hang back, watching the ceiling sway before closing your eyes.

Arousal had crept back into and clawed onto your mind and was controlling your thoughts once more. Everything he was doing was perfect: the care shown to your clit, the girth of his cock, every vein, wrinkle and seam sculpted onto it...

Sure, it still felt like your guts were shifting around his length, but now that feeling was divine.
“You don’t talk,” he grunted at you.

_You don’t talk._ For a second you thought it was a command -- _don’t talk_. But the tone wasn’t right. It wasn’t an order -- it was an _observation_, and you didn’t quite understand what he meant. _You don’t talk...?_ Was something else supposed to be tacked onto the end of his statement?

You let the question drop almost as quickly as it popped up -- it didn’t matter. You didn’t _care_.

Minutes ticked by as he continued to thrust into you. Your inner legs and hips were starting to feel a bit uncomfortable and strained, particularly when he started rutting harder. That’s when your throaty, _good_ sounds started up again which drew out his.

The precursors to your orgasm were clenching fists and babbling pleads and whimpers. Your legs were moving, blindly attempting to clasp around his waist to bring him closer and deeper into you but, obviously, you were unable to.

It was frustrating and your feelings were apparent in your movements.

When you finally came, his name was on your lips. He stopped his thrusting, fully embedding himself in you to feel the contractions of your cunt as it gripped and massaged his cock. He murmured something to you, some sort of praise that you were a little too light headed to acknowledge.

Once the aftershocks of your climaxed stilled, a heavy hand settled on your stomach, kneading it.

_“Say something nice,”_ you sighed when All Might didn’t pay you another, more audible, compliment.

_“... Good girl.”_

_“Good girl!??”_

All Might gave a bark laugh as he went to remove his cock from you. You shuddered as he did so, feeling it pass against your over-sensitive walls. When he proceeded to snap it back into you, a soft cry fell from your lips.

He thought about saying more...

But didn’t.

Instead, he moved his hands to hold your waist to better leverage himself against you.

Again and again he battered into you, chasing his high once more. And, again, his breathing became more uneven, turning into pants, the closer he got.

You didn’t tease him with words -- fatigue, soreness and cramping had already set in, so you opted to keep quiet and let him finish on his own.

Mumbled curses spilled from him. Veins were bulging in his arms, neck and face. _He was red._

_“You’re so handsome.”_

He didn’t respond and you figured he didn’t hear you, that he was too far gone. That was all but confirmed seconds later when he pulled out of you, pumping his piston rapidly. You could hear repeated _fucks_ and _shits_ under his huffing before the first rope of cum coated your torso. Followed by another. Then another.
It had only been, what, the second time you had seen him finish outside your body -- the first had been when he coated your face however many months ago that had been.

A lifetime ago really.

Back when his visits had been flavored by a tinge of fear.

Deep, deep down there was still a sense of foreboding when it came to him. You teased, bickered, pushed back against his obscene demands whenever the opportunity presented itself but you weren’t an idiot. You knew the man could break you completely if he wanted to.

Actually, maybe you were an idiot.

Because you trusted the man completely.

He was staring down at the pool of cum coating your belly, watching rivers of him trail across your torso and down your sides, falling to the oblivion that was the carpet below. You suspected he would try and aim for a third or fourth round with you, to really take advantage of the room, but he didn’t. Instead, he coughed into his fist, wiping what you assumed was spittle on his shirt as he worked on settling his breath.

You just… hung.

“All Might…” you shifted your wrists, wincing at the slight numbness caused by the cuffs. He was looking at you. “Do you… Do you want to take a bath?”

His expression didn’t change -- he was still staring, only stopping when another cough tore through his body. Taking two fingers, he passed it across your belly, gathering some of his seed between them before holding them out toward your mouth.

Without complaint you opened, swirling your tongue around his digits before it disappeared back behind your lips, swallowing his offering.

“Yeah,” he groaned, giving a single, curt nod.

Feeling returned to your appendages rather quickly after All Might released you from your hanging prison. Any attempts at cleaning yourself were quickly abandoned -- All Might was no help and you were unable to prevent… spillage. While he sat on the edge of the bed picking at the cold apple pie he had ordered from McDonald’s, you left to go wipe off and fill the tub.

It was almost a pool. Lavish. Something you would find tucked away at a 5-star resort or spa. Not in the bathroom of some Tokyo love hotel.

The complementary ‘sensual’ oils sitting beside the tub were typical of a love hotel, however. After passing each of the small bottles under your nose, you settled for some lavender concoction, fatigue growing heavier when the relaxing scent filled the room.

“Bath’s ready,” you called to him, cutting the water. He walked in as you were looking down at yourself. “I should probably shower…”

“Don’t.”

You cast a worried glance at him -- he seemed… run down. He was taking off his shirt, tossing it aside. Greedily, you eyes traveled up and down his exposed torso. Catching you, he glared.
“I… uh, I don’t think sitting in filth--”

All Might didn’t acknowledge the smell or comment on the temperature of the water as he stepped into it, lowering into the tub with deep-chested groan. You thanked him quietly when he held a hand out to you, helping you step into the water and find a seat between his legs.

You did your best to ignore the fact that his flaccid penis was pressed against your back.

You are an adult.

“This place isn’t so bad…” you said, leaning back against his stomach fully. You could feel him make a sound deep in his chest, his large arms resting along the rim of the bathtub. “We should come back here.”

A breath expanded his chest and he rocked beneath you.

“Hm.”

Neither of you spoke after that, choosing instead to enjoy the warm water and silence as the hour grew later… or earlier, technically. You hadn’t realized you were teetering on the edge of sleep until All Might rested a hand on your chest, brushing his fingernails slowly across the base of your throat.

“Did you fall asleep?” his voice rumbled beneath you. You shifted and inhaled, trying to banish sleep from your body but, by that stage, the task was impossible. “Stand up, the water is getting cold--”

“I’m excited about Christmas,” you said, tilting your head back to look up at him.

He was looking down at you.

“The water’s getting cold…” he said again. You drew your mouth into a tight line, nodding in an almost circular motion. Resting a hand on the edge of the tub, you slowly forced your waterlogged body to stand, shivering when your unprotected nakedness met the cold air of the bathroom.

All Might’s hand stopped you from stepping out of the tub.

Cold fingers brushed against your body, pushing away the damped ends of your hair so he could place an uncharacteristically tender kiss on your lips. You smiled at him when he pulled away, resting a soft hand against his jaw.

“I like when you’re like this,” you said, earnest.

He regarded you for a second.

“Hurry up, the water’s cold,” All Might answered, delivering a sharp, quick smack to your ass to get you moving.

You expected him to dress and leave, as he had done countless times before. But after checking on the time, drying off and redressing, he slid into bed next to you, trapping you against his chest with his arm.

“Are you staying?” you asked, too tired to bother hiding the pitch of excitement in your voice.

“No.”
He did stay, though.

Well, long enough.

His arm was wrapped around you when you eventually drifted off, gripping it as you would a stuffed animal.

It was still pressed against you when a phone alarm sounded at some unknown hour, startling you out of your light doze. When you went to ask All Might what was going on, a pillow was tossed on over your head.

“Go back to sleep,” he instructed. From beneath the pillow, you could hear him donning his heavy pants and boots, his slightly wheezing breathing lulling you back to sleep.

“Come back to bed,” you whined.

“Go back to sleep.”

You did. Grumbling you removed the pillow, watching in the dark as the door of the hotel room opened and closed, disappointed.

You awoke finally in the late afternoon, your mouth incredibly dry and wrists radiating with a slight soreness.

All Might wasn’t there.

He had left.

You dropped a couple of yen on a water from the vending machine and stopped to get breakfast at the McDonald’s the two of you had stopped at the night before. The shifts had switched over -- none of the people behind the counter knew of you, which suited you just fine. You were haggard, makeup smeared, hair a mess.

By the time you got home, the hour was broaching dinnertime and your hangover had finally caught up with you. The throbbing in your head goaded you into going back to bed, joined by the depressing knowledge that you had work the following day.

Still, the rest of your Sunday wasn’t a total waste.

In the comfortable darkness beneath your blankets, you started firing off various Amazon orders.

It looked like your Christmas surprise was a go.

You had spent more money than you should have.

Using photos you found online, you splurged on various decorations in the days leading up to Christmas. In fact, you had grown used to coming home from work and finding packages of varying sizes stacked neatly next to the front door of your apartment.

It was overkill.

But damn if your apartment did not look amazing.
Your halls were decked with strands of plastic garland and your large artificial evergreen tree was dressed to the nines, complete with a shining star on top. Mistletoe, snowflakes, stockings, snowmen, Santa Claus--

The place really did feel warmer. More homey. A true winter wonderland like in all those holiday movies you had been binge watching, wrapped up in the Christmas spirit. You had no idea what you were going to do with the boxes of decorations that you would undoubtedly have once the holiday was over but, for the time being, you were… excited.

Your job was both a blessing and a curse during that time. Although it afforded you enough disposal income to go wild and spend so much money on what had essentially become a giant gift for All Might, it also was responsible for eating up a majority of your ‘free’ time. You didn’t have to worry about All Might stopping by and ruining the surprise early -- he had learned to ask before visiting as the chance was always high that you were either in your office on an off day or working late.

End of year or not, there were projects that needed to be completed, budgets that needed to be kept to and deadlines that had to be met. New work was on hold until temporary work assignments could be given out. Old work? The big-wigs wanted everything completed before the start of the new year.

You were working on Christmas Eve.

All Might was planning on coming over that night.

Desperately you had tried weaseling yourself out of it, sending out emails implying you were feeling sick, hoping someone would speak up and give the validation you wanted to take the day off without any guilt. But your team members were in the same boat as you, working a day no one wanted to.

At least you were working from home, your kitchen table acting as your work desk.

Which worked out fine -- it allowed you to keep an eye on the small turkey you had cooking in the countertop oven you owned.

You weren’t going to stop at just Christmas decorations. No, All Might was getting a proper meal too. There was the turkey, the mashed potatoes, dressing (or stuffing, from what you could tell they were practically the same thing), a vegetable medley...

What was the saying, the easiest way to a man’s heart was through his stomach?

Well, you were really going to put it to the test.

You had sent a text to All Might earlier in the week telling him not to worry about dinner -- you had it handled. Fried chicken was the meal of choice for Christmas in Japan and you didn’t want him worrying about putting in an order ahead of time as the lines could get excessive. Not that you were expecting him to show up at your door with a bucket of KFC in hand -- that would be a true Christmas miracle.

No, all you told him to worry about was the desert. That was one Christmas custom you didn’t have the heart to forgo -- a strawberry shortcake to share with someone you loved on the most romantic day of the year.
He had to bring that, right?

No, there’s no way he would skip out on giving you a cake.

Your portable oven dinged, breaking your worried thoughts.

It was time to baste the turkey again.

At 5 p.m. on the dot, you logged out of your work computer, declaring you were done for the holiday. It didn’t matter if you caught flak for your… ‘lack’ of ambition the next working day -- you gave the company a lot of your time and energy. You deserved a nice Christmas.

It took a couple of hours to put the finishing touches on everything before All Might’s arrival. Your work materials had been hidden away, the sides to your dinner had been finished, the table had been set, you took your shower and you applied your makeup.

All that was left was to… wait.

Uneasily, you perched on your couch, inspecting all of your hard work on last time, double checking that not even a single Christmas ball out of place. Your gaze eventually landed on three wrapped presents sitting beneath your tree -- they were the only presents beneath your tree.

The largest of the collection contained another pair of villain pants and a shirt for All Might, replications of the outfit he had ordered from you when you had first met. Now they were a quality gift, something you had been working on for quite some time outside the realm of Christmas. It had only taken you three weeks to complete his ensemble before, back when you could dedicate all your time to working on them. This time, however, the total project completion time was closer to four months.

Cologne was in the second gift. A clean, woody scent you had found and fallen in love with at the last department store you had visited in Tokyo.

Yume had not been with you that time. Buying men’s cologne? The girl’s head would have spun around. You wouldn’t have been able to hide it and you couldn’t buy cologne without smelling it. No, you had to make sure it was something you liked. A way for you to enact a little control.

The third gift?

Well, that was homemade.

Clothes, cologne and--

There was a heavy-fisted strike at your front door.

All Might had arrived.

The knock made you jump and you had to consciously take a breath to keep yourself from running to the door and ripping it open in a fit of excitement.

Calm and collected. You could do that. Pretend everything that you had just done wasn’t a big deal.

It was a big deal.

You had made it a big deal.

Too much of a big deal.
Oh god, you had gone overboard.

Oh fuck.

Oh shit.

No, no, no, you had gone overboard.

It was too late, though. You couldn’t rip everything down and he was there. Waving your hands, you paced nervously, heart verging on splitting at the seams, torn between nerves and fear. When a second, more irritated bang at the door rang out, you knew you couldn’t put off the inevitable any longer.

You just had to rip the band-aid off.

“About time girl, it’s cold,” All Might snapped when you finally opened the door, pushing past you. “Left me standing out there like a--”

His voice died away.

He didn’t have the pleased, shocked reaction you had secretly hoped for when he entered your home, pausing in the entryway to take off his long, heavy coat and boots. While you were practically vibrating with… energy, his expression was unreadable as he surveyed all that you had done.

You trailed behind him as he stepped deeper into your living room, lumbering footsteps making the hardwood floor of your apartment creak and complain under his feet. Though you couldn’t see his eyes, you watched him glance at the hanging garland, tracing its path.

Then, he was looking at the tree.

“Do you like it?”

The question fell from you in a rush, the excitement too strong to retain an air of… casualness. Coupled with your enthusiastic demeanor, your question also revealed that he was partly the reason for the state of your home.

All Might didn’t respond.

Instead, he looked at you.

There.

Right then and there, you knew it had all been a mistake.

Still, there was a nugget of hope that maybe, maybe, he would come around. That the initial shock of seeing so much Christmas had just been too much for the villain and he defaulted to his usual, abrasive persona. So you buried your feelings and gave him a grimacing smile.

“It’s Christmas!” you said, voice strained though you were going for airy.

Expression was finally gracing All Might’s features--

He was appalled.

“... What?”
Your entire body slumped at hearing the state of his voice, the incredulous venom in his words. That hope inside of you was dying fast.

“I wanted to…” you gestured around you. “Give you an… American Christmas…”

Your words didn’t appear to help -- his expression hadn’t changed but his attention was switching between the decorations in the room and you, as if he was still trying to wrap his head around what he was seeing.

Then it snapped.

“You…” He scoffed loudly. “Why would I want this? You…?”

Well, you had apparently rendered him speechless.

You shrugged, moving further away from everything, wanting him to very much leave as he had ruined your Christmas. Completely.

“You like America so much, I wanted to do something special,” you mumbled, the explanation only making you feel worse. “A Christmas present.”

“So this all,” he was circling his finger in the air, gesturing to everything. “So this all was for… what, for me? You went and did this all for one holiday?”

“You know what…” What could you do? What could you say? “I’m sorry I tried to do something nice for you. I’m sorry I gave you a present.”

“You put decorations up? Who would want that?”

“A normal fucking person, All Might.”

All Might shook his head again, only to finally catch sight of the wrapped gifts under the tree as he did so.

He gave you a clear, ‘you better be joking’ glare as he made his way over to the plastic evergreen. Three bundles were innocently waiting there and he grabbed the one closest to him, looking over the Rudolph-themed wrapping paper. It had no structure when he bounced it in his hand -- it was fabric.

Holding it up, he turned to you.

“They’re yours,” you confirmed for him, looking at the ground. “There’s food in the kitchen too. A whole turkey dinner.”

“You’re joking. ”

You were not.

You wish you were.

The gift was dropped on the middle of the living room floor as he went to peek into your kitchen, finding the buffet of home-cooked feast food waiting there. American food he noticed almost immediately.

The amount of time and effort…

All Might was squeezing the bridge of his nose when he turned to you, as if, collectively your work
had given him a headache.

“Why?”

How could you answer a question like that? If his goal was to make you feel like a fool, he had achieved that. In fact, in an amazing feat of heartlessness, he had pushed you beyond being embarrassed and horrified at your painfully over-the-top behavior. You had entered melancholy.

It was then it clicked that his hands were empty.

“Did…” you released a breath, already knowing the answer but needing to ask the question anyway. “Did you get me anything?”

When he didn’t answer you looked at him. He was staring back, scowling and vicious as ever.

It was Christmas.

He hadn’t gotten you anything.

Not even a cake to share.

Not even the cake.

The one thing you had heavily implied he should bring.

Not even the cake.

You were staring at the wall, open-mouthed, tongue running along the backs of your teeth, fully comprehending how little you meant to him.

“I didn’t ask you for any of this,” he grumbled. “I didn’t want this.”

“What did you want?”

He chuffed at that, fixing you when an unfriendly smile.

“Don’t play coy.”

“So we were going to fuck and what, watch TV?” You hoped he could see the… hurt in your face. Understand what you were going through. “It’s Christmas, All Might. Christmas.”

“You’re putting too much value in this stupid holiday, sweetheart.”

“I worked from home, I cooked all day--”

“You chose it,” All Might snapped.

“It was a present for you!” you said. Argued. “I don’t get a lot of free time anymore and I spent it--”

He held up a silencing finger, anger pricked off of him.

“Do not.”

Do not!?

Oh, you were.
“It was for you!”

There was a blatant eye roll, another scoff.

*This was not how he wanted you to spend your free time. Your time could have been spent on something much more tangible than decorations.*

*It could have been spent with him.*

But he couldn’t speak his thoughts -- ego wouldn’t allow it. So he bristled and stood straight, scowling at what you had wasted your energy on.

“Merry Christmas, sweetheart,” he snarled.

You folded your arms, chin jutting out as he grabbed for his coat. He stopped though, reaching down to snatch one of the presents off the ground. The one he had grabbed earlier.

“Can’t forget this, can we?”

It was a mean jab that forced you to jerk your head away, watery eyes glaring at the wall instead.

When the door closed, and you were alone once more, you sat on your couch, shaking your head at everything you had done. What had you *really* been expecting? A joyful smile? Ecstatic clapping? To him to be happy with you?

No. All Might was a miserable sonofabitch--

Your phone was ringing. Beating down the hiccuping sniffle, you stood and checked it.

It wasn’t All Might.

You ignored your ringing cell phone, placing it back down on the table while you headed to the kitchen to start cleaning. The turkey, the sides -- none of it was appetizing.

So you trashed it all.

*All* of it.

Merry Christmas indeed.

Putting away the decorations was not cathartic in the slightest bit but, by doing it under the guise of *susuharai* -- it was just preparation for the New Year. You weren’t just getting rid of the dirt and dust with a good, thorough cleaning, you were dumping all that negative energy too.

You were still reeling over his reaction to the surprise you had spent weeks planning but you had moved onto that self-blaming phase. Your inner voice had been reprimanding you on your behavior. You had come on *far* too strong and it made sense that All Might would kick you away like some over-eager fan.

You suspected you would never see him again, that you had chased him away.

Looking back you wanted to throttle yourself as it was just a precursor to things that were fated to come. The first fissures hinting at the volcanic activity happening below the surface.

At that moment, however, you were just someone who had gotten their feelings hurt.
Would a cake really have been so hard?

Although Christmas was a nice couples holiday, New Years was the big country-wide celebration that was quickly approaching. Your New Year’s cards had been mailed to friends and family, you had already planned where you would hang yours once they started rolling in.

You didn’t make specific plans though. Most of your friends were heading back to their hometowns for the big celebrations to stay with their parents and you… just didn’t want to. So you bought some buckwheat noodles to make soba and would leave it at that. Maybe you’d put on TV and watch some fireworks.

*God, what a lonely existence you wallowed in.*

The morning of December 31st, as you prepared a packet of ramen for breakfast, you received a text message.

You saw it was from All Might but didn’t unlock your screen right away to see the message, that wriggling feeling in your stomach too strong. You knew what it was going to be -- a message telling you that he was not interested in seeing you again.

It wasn’t until after you washed your facing and completed your usual morning routine that you gathered enough… *umph* to read his message.

To your surprise, it was not some multi-line novel.

‘Where are you spending New Years?’

You stared at your phone screen, zoning out at times as you attempted to wrestle with your own thoughts. The thoughts that shifted between blaming *you* for the Christmas disaster and blaming *him* for being an asshole and not accepting a kindhearted present.

‘Home.’

There. A one-word answer with a period. It was as terse as you felt. No questioning his motives, no elaboration. *He* would have to explain himself to you, not the other way around.

He didn’t though.

You waited for some follow-up text. After the one-hour mark, you started checking your phone, wondering if you had put it on silent.

But you suspected he was going to… *show up* that night. He knew where you were going to be -- he *asked* where you were going to be. Eventually dusk settled over Japan and, from your apartment, the echoes of city-wide celebrations could be heard. Although you went about your motions for the night, there was an air of… anticipation hanging over you. As if, at any second, a knock on your door could ring out.

You made your soba dinner, which you ate in silence as you watched the news. You binged on the episodes American reality show about young restaurant servers you had become addicted to before shutting the television off once the clock struck midnight.

Though you were near no bars, you could hear cheers ring out in the streets, collections of people *somewhere* ringing in the New Year under the lights of erupting fireworks. While everyone was out celebrating, you were crawling into bed.
Don’t wallow, your mind scolded.

But you were. You were wallowing in your loneliness and unhappiness, staring up at the dark ceiling, regretting that you hadn’t returned to your family home for the festivities. The celebration.

Sometimes happiness didn’t just… fall on your lap.

Sometimes, you had to chase after it.

*It just sucked when you didn’t have the energy to.*

You awoke with a start, panic flooding your veins.

Wide-eyed and partly delirious from sleep, you looked around you, trying to figure out what was happening, *why* you were so on edge.

A sharp rapping sound caught your attention.

You pushed up from your sleeping position on your stomach, looking over to the glass of your window. A black *void* was there, hovering on the other side.

Normally, a person would screech at catching an unknown figure hanging outside their apartment window. But you already knew who the mass was -- this was not the first time he had awoken you in the middle of the night to be let in.

It had just been awhile.

Like a well-rehearsed dance, you made your way to the front door without acknowledging his presence, aware he would be there waiting for you when you opened it.

He was.

Quietly you stepped aside, allowing All Might to trudge into your house, a cold gust of wind entering alongside him. The bare flesh of your legs erupted in goosebumps at the chill and you were quick to shut the door behind your… *visitor*.

“Get dressed,” All Might mumbled.

You were unimpressed, ready to criticize his behavior and choice of time--

*What time was it?*

Your scarf was around his neck, the one you had knitted him for Christmas. The only gift he had taken from your house when he left in his condescending huff. There was no way you could have missed it -- your eyes fell on it immediately, his big coat pulled tight around him. You had doubled the length of a normal scarf and the monstrosity you created looked to be *just* big enough.

“Hurry up…” He looked at his phone. “We’re going to miss it. Go put on pants and a coat.”

“Where are we--”

“Just do it.”
You bristled at his command, his behavior coaxing the needle of your Blame-O-Meter closer and closer to him.

All of this... was his fault.

“Just go home, All Might,” you said with a sigh. “Let me go back to bed. I don’t want to start off my New Year dealing with you.”

Surprised, he looked up from his phone, as if he couldn’t believe you could say something so mean. What could he say to that? Anger flashed across his face and you let out a hefty breath, rubbing the sleep from your eyes as you prepared for another verbal altercation.

But sharp words didn’t tumble out of him. He bit his tongue, shoulders shifting as if silently agreeing that, yeah, he deserved that.

Well, at least that’s what you thought.

“I have... a surprise for you.” His voice was still low, muffled partly by the giant scarf and his own uncomfortableness at what he was doing. You shook your head at him, walking to check the time on your cable box -- 5:00 a.m.!

You had looked forward to sleeping in and he had ruined it for you.

“All Might,” you groaned. “Please.”

All he had to do was apologize. Admit that he had been an ass on Christmas. But he couldn’t. In fact, being in your home made his skin crawl at his obvious weakness. Matching your own fatigued demeanor, he exhaled deeply before muttering a name -- your name. Not sweetheart, not kitten, not his usual endearments -- it was your actual first name.

“Go get dressed,” he finished.

It was a startling move, him using your actual name. Caught by surprise, you gaped at him before he growled, waving his hand, gesturing for you to go.

You did. Fuck it, if he was going to drop your name you were at least going to hear the guy out. As quickly as you could (as he had snapped ‘hurry up’ at least half a dozen times), you swapped out your sleeping shorts and shirt for sweatpants and a sweater.

“Wear something warm,” All Might called just as you were leaving your bedroom. Upon hearing that, you slinked back to swap out your socks for a thicker pair you owned. Were you... going to be outside?

When you felt you were properly bundled up, a hand on your back guided you out your front door into the frigidness of early morning.

“Where are we--?”

Your question was lost on the wind when you were suddenly swept off your felt and, well, catapulted into the air. At least, you believed you were thrown, the speed of his movements seemingly faster than your half-awake thoughts.

No, he hadn’t thrown you. He had simply crushed you against his chest bridal-style and jumped. Where to? You weren’t sure -- it’s not like you could have asked him -- the wind was roaring in your ears and cutting into the unprotected skin of your face and neck. You couldn’t even look to see
where you were heading, the rush was making it impossible to keep your eyes open.

Left with few options, you buried your chin against your chest and huddled against the scratchy fabric of All Might’s coat.

It was hard to gauge the amount of time you spent… jumping. In fact, you weren't even aware you landed until the villain holding you shifted, lifting you higher against his chest.

“You dead?”

His voice cut through the echoing thunder in your ears and you blinked your stinging eyes opening to look at him questioningly. Pleased to see you did not, in fact, die on the ‘ride’ over, he moved to set you down on your feet, giving you the chance to finally see where he had taken you.

To the top of some building.

“We’re still in Kamino,” All Might said, guessing your question. "This is the highest flat-topped building here.”

“We’re on a roof,” you responded, though you had only done so to weasel clarification from him -- like, why you were on a roof New Year’s Day.

“Smart girl,” he said dryly before seemingly catching his attitude. He frowned, shifting on his feet before coughing into his fist. “The view is good.”

“The view?”

“Hatsuhinode.”

The first sunrise of the year.

Slack-jawed, you stared at All Might, unsure how to… wrap your head around what he was implying.

He had stolen you away… to watch the first sunrise of the year with him.

It was… strange. Not unpleasant, more surprising. After his most recent showing, you would have thought something so warm as sharing a sunrise was beyond his realm of comprehension yet there he was, standing in front of you, sour face and fidgeting like he had a stomach-ache.

“ Took you long enough to get ready,” he grumbled, digging his hands into his pockets and squaring his shoulders, his breath coming out in heavy fogs. “The sky is already lightening up.”

It was true -- dark shades of purple were cutting through the navy-blue of night. Somewhere in the unseen depths below, cheers and laughter bounced between the buildings.

The first sunrise... with him.

The coast or mountaintops were usually the more sought-after locations to ring in the first dawn of the New Year but, for some reason, standing on a freezing rooftop with a grumbling All Might felt perfect.

When the sky continued to lighten and pastel pinks joined with the increasing variations of purple, All Might nudged you.

“Here.”
From his large, deep coat pocket he produced a slightly-crushed cardboard box, tied neatly with a white ribbon. Incredulously, you took it from him.

The integrity of the box had already been compromised by its unusual in-pocket transportation, so it didn’t take long for you to peel away the ribbon holding it together, opening it.

Two slightly-squashed pastries were hidden away inside. A berry tart of some kind and--

“Strawberry shortcake,” you said with a sharp laugh, shaking your head in disbelief. Beside you, All Might shifted, suddenly very interested in how the sky looked.

You didn’t thank him for the snacks and he didn’t ask for your gratitude -- you both knew he didn’t deserve it. But when the first golden rays of the sun cascaded across the sky, you held the mini-tart out to him.

“Here.”

Without a word he took it.

He had expected you to offer it to him. Planned for it. That’s why he had gotten two pastries -- the strawberry cake you had wanted and something for him.

What he didn’t expect was for you to hold up your cake immediately afterward. Confused, he looked between it and your face, unsure what you were doing.

“Kanpai,” you said simply. He quirked a brow but lightly tapped his treat against yours, as he would a glass.

“Kanpai,” he answered.

It was fresh, the cake. And airy. By the time the sun had mostly risen from her slumber behind the horizon, both your desserts were long gone.

The first sunrise...

It was supposed to feel special. The dawn of a brand-new year. A clean slate.

And for once, it did. It was the first sunrise you watched that had feeling attached to it. No family dragging you out to the cold, forcing you to admire it. No groups of friends playing up the importance and romanticism of it. It was special in its own way. Important.

At that moment, you were willing to leave your wounded feelings toward All Might in the past. He was terribly flawed but there was something about him you loved. So, you would overlook your hurt.

At least for the day.

You reached for his arm, pulling it around you so you could rest the side of your head against his torso, smiling at the pleased chortle that vibrated across his body at your close contact.

Relief that you still liked him despite it all.

“Happy New Year, All Might.”

All Might glanced down, taking in the top of your head, the name ‘Toshi’ on his tongue.
But he didn't share his token with you.

He returned his gaze back to the view, observing the thin purple clouds that disrupted the soft, golden hues of the sunrise. Had he been a religious man, he may have even seen traces of Amaterasu painted across the early-morning heavens. But there was something more divine sheltered beneath his arm, a corporeal being that deserved much more reverence than any figure hidden away in the sky. The deserved much more reverence than he could ever offer.

But he was a selfish man.

A selfish, selfish man.

A calloused hand rubbed against your arm, squeezing hard enough that, even through the thickness of your coat and sweater, you could feel the curl of his fingers against you wholly.

“Happy New Year, sweetheart.”

Chapter End Notes

I'll try and comb through the chapter after I sleep for spelling errors -- my spellcheck stopped working like halfway through this because of the length and my laptop is a total clunker.

Anyway, I hope you all had a wonderful and restful holiday season. With all of it out of the way, I hope to get back into the swing of things with chapter updates in Attachment. We're broaching a couple... tricky chapters that I want to take my time with, so please excuse any lateness when it comes to posting.

Also, I SUPER apologize for not answering comments. I did a bad thing... I didn't keep up with them for a couple of chapters and now I'm broaching like 200 and I've been prioritizing writing over answering them and asks. Please know I read EVERY comment that's left and they all make my heart sing. Your continued support/readership is amazing and you make me feel like the luckiest girl in the world.
Early February…

*A month after the 'Detachment' fight*

Hospitals had a very distinct smell to them.

It was hard to describe -- a strange mixture of sterileness, flesh, dankness and cleanliness that settled not just in your nose but at the back of your tongue too, adding an unpleasant level of taste to it. The combination of notes was very specific, an aroma not easily replicated. Strangely enough, it wasn’t particularly permeating either. Once you left the building, the smell would dissipate quickly enough.

But boy was it memorable. If you were ever on a game show and needed to ‘Guess That Smell,’ it would easy to pick out the stench of hospital among those presented.

*You didn’t want to be there.*

The large elevator you were standing in was slowing its already snail-like pace, carefully settling itself flush against the third floor.

You were headed to the fifth.

Two medical personnel in well-worn green scrubs were chatting to one another as the elevator doors opened. Though they caught sight of you waiting inside, they didn’t cease their conversation on medication dosage or change the decibel of their voices as they entered. They just pretended you weren’t there, which suited you just fine.

You gripped the stuffed bear in your hands tighter, staring at the elevator buttons, drawing imaginary shapes and lines in the grid-like assembly. Part of you wanted to mash ‘door close’ but you refrained, afraid your new companions would think your impatience was a slight against them.

The newcomers hadn’t selected another floor.

You were all headed to the same place.

It was hard not to listen in on what your the elevator’s newest occupants were talking about. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy resulting in complications. Bile leakage. Fever of 39 Celsius. Suggestion? A handful of milligrams of some kind of multi-syllable medication that mentally made your tongue twist yet they said so effortlessly.

The elevator was crawling to a stop again. The fifth floor. When the doors eventually opened, the two hospital personnel burst out with quick, purposefully strides. A stark contrast to your meek, hesitating form. They knew where they were going.

You did not.

Arrows pointing to clusters of room numbers were fixed on the wall in peeling black stickers. You were looking for room 523, which was to the right.

So, that’s the direction you headed in.
As you walked, you peeked into the rooms you passed. Nurses tending to patients in beds, green privacy curtains drawn, family visits in progress...

But mostly, you saw loneliness. Boredom.

517… 519… 521…

The door to Room 523, you could see, was propped open.

You stopped just shy of it.

Anxiety.

*Just do it. Just do it. Just do it.*

It was a hospital visit you had been putting off.

But you couldn’t put it off any longer.

You stepped into the doorway, rapping lightly on the heavy wooden door, not quite crossing the threshold into the room. The mousey woman seated on the bed looked up, breaking out into a smile when she caught sight of you. Gently she called your name, gesturing with her head for you to enter.

“Hey Mikki,” you said, the ghost of a tired smile appearing on your face, worms still wriggling in your belly. *What to say? What to say? “How you feelin’?”*

It was a dumb question and immediately you thought about using your quirk for a possible redo, but Mikki was giving you a one-shoulder shrug.

“Hanging in there,” she said with a smile still affixed to her face. “I’m glad you came! It’s been so slow today.”

You nodded as you tried not to look at the arm settled limply in her lap. She wasn’t a fool, she could obviously see and feel your uncomfortableness.

“You don’t you pull up a chair?” she suggested, pointing at the empty seat in the corner. “My husband went to go pick up the kids from school, so he won’t be back until after dinner.”

“Yeah, sure… Oh! Here, I, uh, got you this…”

You held the stuffed bear out to her before faltering, afraid that maybe having her reach for something wasn’t the best decision, but Mikki was already taking it from you with her good hand.

“Thank you,” she said brightly, settling the creature on the bed beside her. “It’s cute. I love him.”

After dragging the chair to her bedside, you fell into an awkward lull, unsure where to start. Maybe ask her how she was? How her kids were? How her husband was? What was it like to have a wonky arm? Drag her into a conversation about yourself? You didn’t want to immediately start talking about your issues as she was obviously the one going through major trauma but damn if you didn’t have a lot you wanted to get off your chest. You weren’t sure you even should address the feelings that had been plaguing you since Odaiba Research’s destruction.

It wasn’t that you weren’t close with Mikki but it was a work friendship. She was your co-worker. Your relationship was not like one you had with your real friends -- they had been a choice, she hadn’t been. There was an obvious wall there -- a general niceness that wasn’t so much forced as it was required, as she was someone you had to work with.
It was just lucky that you did genuinely like her.

Kids seemed like a safe topic, so you cleared your throat, prepared to ask about them when she beat you to the punch.

“I want to thank you,” Mikki said after a quiet inhale. “For saving me.”

That was the last thing you wanted to hear. It was like an arrow straight into the whirling eye of contempt you had for yourself, striking your heart and cracking the callouses you had been hopelessly working to build.

Your shoulders slumped, distressed creases forming on your forehead. Everything in you was untying all at once and you just wanted her to take what she just said back.

“Mikki…” you voice sounded strangled and you swallowed but that squeeze of emotion hadn’t released its grip on your throat. “Please…”

“If you hadn’t been there, I would have died.”

“Mikki…” Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it. “Please don’t thank me. You don’t understand, I don’t deserve--”

“Stop it. You know--”

Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it.

Don’t admit it. Don’t admit it.

Don’t--

“I wanted to leave you,” you blurted out in a great rush, the need to get the truth off your chest too great to ignore. If you didn’t, it would have suffocated you. She looked taken aback by your outburst but you didn’t give her a chance to interject. “Don’t think I was some real hero. Please. I was looking for a way out the entire time. I wanted to leave you, Mikki.”

Quiet filled the room again. You could hear voices in the hallway perfectly. Nurses talking about what they were planning on making for dinner.

It would be a short visit, wouldn’t it?

That truth had been the reason you had avoided visiting her ever since her injury. You were ashamed that you had taken on the title of hero when, in truth, you were very far from it. Instead of owning up to your failings as a human being, you kept quiet.

Sure, you weren’t boasting about the misappropriated praise -- in fact, every meeting and photo op made your stomach churn. Still, you didn’t fess up to the truth. You kept silent.

You were guilty of being a coward.

“But you didn’t,” she murmured. You paused before lifting heavy hands, showing her your palms, still very much defeated.

“Only because I was afraid of the guilt.”

“You didn’t,” she repeated with more force. “You didn’t leave.”
“I--”

“You stayed. You could have just ignored me but you didn’t. You stayed and when I--” she cleared her throat. “When I was… smushed. You… saved me. You brought me back.”

And then she was crying, great globs spilling from bright brown eyes. Your throat went even tighter and you felt yourself inch toward the brink of tears as well.

“I died,” she said, her crying turning into sobs. You were getting more and more distressed, your empathy on overdrive for once. “But you saved me. You could have left but you didn’t and you saved me. I still have my family.”

What could you say? Nothing seemed… worthy of saying at the moment.

You weren’t worthy.

God, you weren’t worthy.

So you sat quietly, staring at your hands, waiting until Mikki settled down into body-rocking sniffles.

“I don’t want to be labeled a hero,” you mumbled, picking at perpetually raw cuticles. “That’s the last thing I want.”

“You’re a hero to me.”

“Please don’t tell me that. Please.”

You weren’t a hero. You were far from it. You knew your true heart but the world at large didn’t. They just thought you were a citizen-turned-do-gooder, someone who risked their life to partake in a selfless act in a moment of crisis.

Not someone who gave villains the tools they needed to cause chaos. Not someone who inadvertently gave bad guys the means to hurt, maim and take lives. To rob and destroy.

For money.

Not someone who’s been sleeping with All Might for months--

Had been.

Had been.

“So it’s official that you’re leaving, then?” you said, forcing the conversation in a new direction to silence your thoughts and kill another episode before it could start up. Mikki wiped her nose on the front of her hospital gown before nodding.

She had been in the hospital for weeks and you hadn’t worked up the courage to face her. Or steeled your stomach enough to pretend you were the hero the big-wigs had been making you out to be. When she finally got access to her cell phone, you had sent a few polite messages to each other -- you always doubling-down on the promise that you were going to visit soon.

In the last real message she sent you, she revealed she was being discharged.

And would promptly be relocating to Denmark.

That had been the push you needed to commit to your first, and what would probably be only, visit.
Mikki nodded, a large sigh expanding her chest.

“There’s a doctor there who has a quirk that might let me use my arm again. But the waitlist to see her is quite long. My husband was able to get a transfer to his company office there and has been working on getting our visas together.”

“How long will you be there?”

“I don’t know.”

You nodded, shifting your jaw, realizing this was already morphing into a possible goodbye conversation. Sheepishly you looked up to her arm, eyes darting away when you saw your glance had been noticed by her. She gave you a lopsided smile that didn’t quite match her usual matronly appearance.

“They were able to bring in a specialist with a bone and tissue regeneration quirk,” she said, looking down at her unmoving limb. “But they couldn’t fix the nerve damage. They said the doctor in Denmark might be able to but the more time that passes, the lower the odds become. That’s why we’re on a bit of a time crunch leaving.”

“You can feel anything?” you finally asked, compelled by morbid curiosity. She shook her head.

“No. I can’t move it and I can’t feel anything there. It’s strange, I sometimes think I can still feel it. I usually wear it in a sling but…” she trailed off. “For now, it looks like my costume designing days are over.”

“Mikki—” you said, brows furrowing.

“Who knows, maybe not for good. But it’s hard to sew with one hand. And sketch. We’ll see what the future holds.”

Despite the levity of the discussion, you found yourself grinning at the floor.

“I’m gonna miss you, Mikki,” you said, momentarily squeezing your eyes closed. “I really am. You were the best thing to come out of my time at Odaiba. I’m glad to have met you.”

“Don’t act like we’re never going to see each other again, kiddo!” she said face lighting up that the mood of the room was shifting. “You’ll see. I’ll bet my good arm I’ll be back here in two years time, maybe three!”

“Once you get all patched up, open up your own business and let me come work for you.”

“Deal,” she said with enough conviction that something airy bloomed in your chest. “Have you gotten a temporary work assignment yet? Some of the others have been emailing me. Looks like everyone on our team is getting split up.”

The airy feeling was already gone.

“Yeah,” you groaned, body growing heavy. “I’m being assigned to assist on the Endeavor Agency team with Doctor Kravitz as an assistant. I start in a week, I think. The first day I’m due in at 5 a.m.”

“Very prestigious,” Mikki commented. You shrugged, playing with the cuffs of your hooded sweater and she narrowed her eyes slightly. “Something is bothering you.”

“I’m just tired,” you said almost immediately, so used to using the excuse that it was second-nature to
default to it. “It’s been… a trying couple of weeks.”

It was a gross understatement but you weren’t about to delve into the deep fissures that had cracked and ruined you. You didn’t have that type of relationship with her and, frankly, you didn’t want to talk about it.

Some people had the ability to cry and share their feelings with others.

It didn’t come so easily for you.

“You can tell me,” she said so soothingly, having caught the shadow of expression on your face. You cracked a smile, blinking rapidly as you looked at the grating, cheap blankets on her hospital bed.

No, you would never talk about All Might to her.

There was, however, something else you could admit to her. A kernel of a thought that had appeared in your mind and had grown larger and more encompassing at each passing second. Hell, you were a failure already. A nobody as a certain someone so eloquently barked at you.

Why not prove them right again?

“I think…” you inhaled loudly before clearing your throat, finally meeting her eyes. “I think I’m gonna quit.” You paused before shaking your head. “Actually… no, this is not a think -- I am gonna quit the lab. Officially. I’m just… I’m not cut out for it.”

Looking back at the sheets of her bed, you waited for Mikki to scoff at your idea.

You were miserable.

God… you were miserable.

You shouldn’t be miserable. You had gotten something you had always wanted. As a child, how many times did you daydream about being in your current position, working for a company like Odaiba? Creating… things for the best? Living and working with a finger on the pulse of hero society? Being someone important? Being someone worth knowing?

Along the way you had lost yourself. You didn’t grow up wanting to work with villains and vigilantes, skirting the law with the constant fear of going to jail hanging over your head. You weren’t that kind of person.

But sometimes reality destroyed ideologies. Reality ruined dreams.

You didn’t want to go back to your dingy lab in Kamino living commission to commission but you were starting to daydream about flinging yourself off a building and--

You just…

You wanted to go back to before.

When you had been fine and everything had been fine.

You weren’t happy but you weren’t sad either.

You were fine.
You wanted to return to the familiarity of your old life.

“Why?”

It could be such a loaded word. Why? Why? But Mikki’s question didn’t seem judgemental. It was simply curious. Worried. You shrugged, trying to muster an answer.

“I’m not happy.”

“Why are you not happy?”

“... I’m just… not.”

Mikki pursed her lips as you did your best to avoid looking at her. You were feeling weepy again.

“Do you feel like your not being challenged enough?” she asked gently. “Is it the hours? The work? You’ve only been on the job a couple of months, hon. I don’t want you to give up too early.”

“I’m not cut out for it,” you repeated.

“You are,” she stressed. “I’ve seen your work. Not only that, I’ve worked with you. I know you can handle it.”

“I’m not happy.” You sounded like a broken record but you wished that statement was enough. Not just for her -- for anyone. It never was though. It wasn’t enough for Yume and you could already see Mikki preparing to ask for more.

Happiness was apparently worthless when it came to measuring… life.

Seeing that, her inability to understand, your walls started to fail. You needed her to understand.

You needed someone to understand.

“It’s everything ,” you said, a little too shrill for your liking. You cleared your throat. “The hours. The stress. I thought I wanted this but I don’t. Really. I don’t. I’m not built for stress like this. I don’t like going to bed every night dreading waking up. Then… stewing on that same dread every single day. I don’t know what to do.” You slapped your hands down in your thighs, rubbing them while shrugging and looking at the door. “Do I stay and keep hating my life, hoping things will get better? Do I go back to my old job and stress over money and finding work? Do I finally just… give up and go work at a… a coffee shop or something? I mean, I’ll still stress about about money but it’ll be…”

You looked at Mikki, shaking your head.

It was starting to really show. Your unhappiness. Your… desperation.

“I… I wish my quirk was better," you mumbled. "I wish I could really go back. Not just a couple of seconds, back to when it really mattered. Back to college. Back to high school. Go back a couple of weeks and just…” You laughed a dry hack, still unwilling to touch that raw wound. “I’m so… unhappy. It’s not getting any better. Sometimes it did but now it’s just… constant. Everyone says I just ‘need to get used to it’ and that it will all calm down but it hasn’t. This is my life now. And I don’t want it to be my life.”

Mikki stared.

You shifted.
Fuck.

“I didn’t mean to unload on you,” you said quickly with a forced laugh, backpedaling as best at you could, waving your hands. “It was just some verbal… vomit and I didn’t mean to come in here—”

“I think you should quit,” she said, speaking over you. Your attempts at saving face ceased immediately and it was your turn to stare, watching the mousey woman nod her head as your words continued to marinate in her mind. “It sounds like you’ve been putting thought into this. If this isn’t where you feel you belong than move on. You’re still young. Do what makes you happy.”

You opened your mouth to speak but all that came out was a weak gurgle-like whine. Mikki shifted in her bed, sitting up more.

“What’s stopping you from quitting!? You’re not… tied to the position. Quit!”

Someone had just told you what you had wanted to hear.

You didn’t know what to do.

Say something!

“Quit…?” you repeated, thrown for a complete loop having not expected her to entertain your idea. “You think I should quit?”

“I think you should do what you want to do,” she said. “If you’re seriously that unhappy, I agree. I think you should move on. With me out of the picture and Doctor Kravitz bringing you to the Endeavor Agency… you’re going to be busy. You’re going to be stressed. And it sounds like you’re going to hate it. And the good doctor is... blind to what others go through. So yes, I think you should quit.”

Why did it feel like she was calling your bluff?

You weren’t bluffing...

Your blank look didn’t change. Mikki rolled her eyes.

“Listen, you are in charge of your own life. You are the person you’re going to have to answer to.”

“Right.”

“So, if you hate your position you should…” she trailed off, raising her good hand toward you, gesturing for you to finish the thought.

“Find a new job.”

“There you go,” she said with a sigh and a nod. “You can’t expect people to tell you what to do and how to feel for your entire life. If the trash at your house is overflowing, and you live alone, eventually you have to take out the trash.”

“Right.”

“And maybe…” Mikki scratched at the tip of her nose. “Maybe you should talk to someone. About what you’re feeling.”

“Right.”
“I believe in you,” she said earnestly, curling her finger so you were looking at her. “I do. You’re a sweet person--” You frowned. “-- and you’re smart. But it seems like you’re in a spiral. A downward spiral. You need to get out of that. But I can’t do that for you. And to be frank, I have my own problems. Everyone has their own problems. I’ll help when I can but, sweetheart, you have to do this yourself.”

Your jaw clenched.

You looked down at your hands.

“Right.”

“I’ll be checking on you,” Mikki said with a soft smile. “Just put your nose down and keep working.”

“Right,” you said with a nod. “Right.”

Her talk was inspirational, sure. As you left the hospital room some twenty minutes later, there was a second wind of motivation churning in your soul. On the train, you found yourself scrolling through job listings, finding nothing that really suited your interests but hey, you would keep trying.

You were in the driver’s seat.

Deep down, you wished your were rich.

That you could quit your job without fear. Find something else that allowed you to be happy. Whoever said money couldn’t bring happiness was a fool -- money would solve all your problems and bring you happiness.

But you weren’t rich.

You were just… you.

The email came during what you considered a lunch break -- a ten-minute breather you had in an empty stairwell in the basement where you could finish off your can of coffee in peace.

You had been in Endeavor’s Agency for a little more than two weeks and, as expected, every day was torture. Kravitz had brought on another experienced costumer to replace Mikki. They didn’t know what to make of you yet, considering you bore the title of ‘apprentice.’ So, you had been subjected to more grunt work than usual.

Disenfranchised and, for once beautifully underutilized, you kept your mouth shut and your head down. Thankfully you were smart enough to know that the relative calm was only passing -- that something would happen to drag you into the unnecessary chaos. That your existence had only momentarily slipped the doctor’s mind.

You could imagine him waking up in the middle of the night, glaring into the darkness of his bedroom and whispering your name, finally remembering you existed and that he hadn’t made you miserable.

That image was why you were checking your personal email in the staircase of the agency that day -- having popped off a couple CV’s to some smaller agencies and design teams, you were optimistic that maybe one had reached back to you for a follow-up.
They hadn't.

But Mikki did.

The email from her was short and oddly choppy, sounding more like a series of text messages or a curt response rather than a letter. Maybe it was written in a rush? While she was distracted?

*Hope all is well with you. I wanted to thank you for your visit. Have been released from hospital. We leave for Europe early next week -- I've gone south to say goodbye to my family, unfortunately won't be able to meet up before I fly out. Sad. Keep your head on straight and remember what we talked about.*

*Spoke to an old colleague to say goodbye, mentioned he had an opening on his team. Luck? No promises, but I mentioned your name. See attached for his contact.*

*I'll email you when set up. Maybe visit me??*

*Best wishes,*

Mikki, you finished with a deep inhale.

So much for being in the driver seat of your own destiny -- first Yume comes in with a job lead followed by Mikki. Maybe all your college professors that spoke about the importance of networking weren’t completely full of shit after all. Maybe it did boil down to who you know.

What a beautiful, albeit strange, mouse woman.

The contact attached was literally just a contact for your phone -- she had sent no kind of explanation on who the person was or what they were looking for. Just a name, an email and a phone number.

Maijima Higari.

It wasn’t until later, while you were eating dinner, that you googled the name.

Maijima Higari.

Predominantly known by his *hero* name--

Power Loader.

Deep breath.

Deep breath.

*What in the fuck were you doing?*

You stood outside the simple stone gate gripping your padfolio, watching the intercom you had just buzzed blink red as it rang.

And rang.

And rang.

*“Who is it? What do you want?”* a slightly distorted voice asked on the twelfth or so ring, when you had begun to panic that you had been forgotten about.
“Uh.. ah, yes,” you leaned in closer to the device, afraid your voice would get drowned out by the absolute silence of the empty street. “I have an interview here with a Mister Maijima Higari. Erm, Mister Power Loader. My name is--”

You jumped when the large steel gate clicked and shifted open, your name melting away as it parted to grant you entry.

“Yeah, yeah, come in, Power Loader’s been waiting for you,” the voice said as you awkwardly hesitated between the intercom and the now-open barrier. You called out a thank-you, though you were sure the line had already been cut, before making your way inside the… compound? Estate?

Though the surrounding neighborhood was mostly composed of small houses and apartment buildings, that particular address didn’t really stand out as anything special. It was a large house, sure, and had a collection of bushy trees that shielded most of the first-floor windows from prying eyes (if they weren’t already obstructed by the fence). But nothing about it seemed… lab-like.

After removing your shoes and leaving them by the literal pile of footwear in the entryway, you uneasily entered the main room of the house.

Despite the warm, family vibes the exterior of the house gave off, the interior of the residence was more…

Well, it still didn’t look like a proper support laboratory. In fact, it looked like someone's home. From what you could observe, the furniture was a mish-mash of old, worn pieces covered by a clutter of loose papers, educational books and various spare parts.

Strangely enough, seeing that did put you more at ease. An uncomfortable amount of mess surrounded by a sea of loose junk? It was definitely the home of an inventor. At least you knew you were in the right place.

You flitted around the living room, waiting, for almost twenty minutes before you finally decided to go looking for someone. A surprisingly orderly kitchen the only oasis among the anxiety-producing mess of a dining room, study and porch you discovered. Eventually, you found yourself staring up at the second floor of the home from the bottom of the staircase.

Maybe the lab was upstairs? Uncertainty had awakened from its momentary hibernation, visions of murderers in hiding entered your mind. It would be harder to escape from the house if your potential killers were hiding in wait upstairs, purposely pulling you deeper into their lair--

The house rocked.

The internals of the home groaned as they settled back into their original placements after a jolt traveled through the building, shifting it. With brows knitted, you waited for tremors that you expected would follow. But it wasn’t an earthquake -- whatever that… jump had been, it hadn’t been caused by something natural.

A bang rang out as an unseen door flew open, thudding into a wall.

“Water, water, water--”

Upon finally hearing another person, you lurched toward the sound of the urgent voice, easily pinpointing the room when it became mixed with the clang of dishware. A person had appeared in the kitchen, standing by the sink filling up a large pan of water.

A teenager with slightly singed salmon-colored hair.
Her clothing, you realized, was also covered with a heavy layer of soot.

She jumped when she turned around saw you there with her, wide-eyed But the girl’s surprise was short-lived.

“Come on, come on, grab water,” she ordered, gesturing to the cabinet that had been left open with her chin. “Don’t just stand there! Come on!”

Well, what could you do? You tossed your padfolio onto the kitchen counter, reaching for another large pot to place under the still-running tap.

“When it’s filled, bring it down,” the girl said before disappearing through an open door in the kitchen, leaving you gaping after her. At least you had the presence of mind to turn off the sink when your pot was filled, following after the stranger.

You were surprised to find a stairwell waiting for you which led down to a basement, a rarity in most homes in Japan. Smelling the distinct odor of something burning, you pushed aside fears of being murdered, concerned there was a fire brewing beneath your feet. And, as soon as you could see the expanse of the room below, you understood where the boom had come from.

And where the lab was.

In stark contrast to the living space upstairs, the lab was in order. It was a clean, crisp room full of sharp angles, clean steel and bright tile. It reminded you of the labs you worked in back in college -- high tech enough to give pause with all the machines and tools sprinkled throughout but nowhere near as jaw-droppingly impressive as big setups like Odaiba.

More pressing to your attention, however, were the flames dancing up from a table near the edge of the lab’s perimeter. That had been where the teenager had scuttled off too -- having already dumped her first pot of water, she was beelining straight for the stairs, already heading back for a second trip.

“It’s the box on the table!” she snapped after muttering for you to hurry. “Don’t touch it, the wires are still probably live.”

Wires?

Oh no, you shouldn’t be using water for an electrical fire.

You had no idea what the object on the table was, but if it was still connected to a power source, using water was not a particularly wise decision. Before dumping your water load on the sparky, flaming mess, you did a quick glance around the room for some sort of fire extinguisher. In a lab so apparently organized, it would be a surprise not to see one sitting around.

With another overflowing pot of water in hand, the teenager rushed back to the basement lab...

Only to find you standing beside a foaming mess. You looked up from reading the body of the fire extinguisher, following her shocked gaze to the ruined, but no longer on fire, object.

“We have one of those?” she asked, setting the pot on an empty space of counter. You winced as you watched water slosh over the edge, splattering on the surface and slowly inching closer to a collection of very expensive looking instruments.

“Yeah, over on the wall,” you said, pointing to the empty extinguisher bracket by a surprisingly unfinished section of the lab. “Rated for everything, including electrical fires.”
The adult in you sighed and shook her head, goading you into adding, “You shouldn’t use water for an electrical fire, you know.”

“I know!” the girl chirped breezily, approaching to take stock of the damage of her device. Your warnings fell on deaf ears as she poked and prodded through the foam, uncovering a steel box. “I didn’t think we had fire extinguishers though. I wonder what else he’s got stashed around here…” She stopped suddenly, blinking and looking up as if struck by a sudden realization. "Maybe he did have eyewash after all…”

The fire extinguisher hung loosely by your side.

“I’m looking for… uh, Power Loader,” you said when the girl didn’t ask who you were or what you were doing in the lab unaccompanied.

“I know, I know, I was the one who let you in,” she said, though it was clear she was distracted. She had popped open some sort of door on her steel object to peek inside, blowing away pockets of foam that had squeezed between unsealed seams. “He should be back soon. He got called away for some sort of hero… thing.”

“Oh…” You looked around. “Okay. Should I wait upstairs or…?”

“Don’t care!” the girl exclaimed with a smile. Then, without so much as an acknowledging glance to you, the girl jogged over to a messy workspace on the other side of the room leaving you standing alone beside a scorched, and slightly charred, table.

A stool caught your eye and, not seeing much else to do, you sat on it.

When it became clear you weren’t going to be interacted with, you brought out your phone. You weren’t really looking at the screen though -- you didn’t want to seem nosy, so you refrained from poking around the lab, but your eyes were scanning everything as you waited. From your seat, you caught sight of robotic looking limbs, painted a bright yellow, clumped in a pile on the ground. There was a chest piece drying at an obvious airbrushing station. Several guns were openly sitting on a counter, joined by a quill of odd-looking arrows.

You didn’t see any bows laying around.

Time ticked by. You got up and stretched your legs when your ass went to fuzz and the uncomfortable creases of the stool began to bother you. By the time the one-hour mark officially hit, you were growing more antsy by the minute. You figured you would be done your interview by then, heading away from the slowness of Musutafu back to the familiarity of Kamino.

Yet, there you were, waiting around for an interview that hadn’t even started yet.

A scratching sound started up and you looked over to the teenager, trying to see what she was doing to cause such a strange racket. But the sound was coming from the opposite side of the room -- where the unfinished section of lab sat.

“Finally,” the girl called as packed earth and dirt started to shake and rise.

Uh.

You watched as a bubble formed beneath relatively loose dirt -- a water main break?

No.
It was Power Loader, wasn’t it?

He was digging, wasn’t he?

A yellow exoskeleton eventually burst from the thin layer of earth, showering the surrounding area in a cascade of dirt and rocks. Quickly, it pulled itself out of the newly formed hole, growing bigger and bulkier.

It wasn’t a creature. It was, most definitely, the hero you had been googling nonstop for the past week.

“What is that smell?” Power Loader asked, large head looking in your direction when he was free from earth. You could see the slender, short man clearly seated in the center of his… mecha? Costume? Exoskeleton? Most of his face was obscured a large helmet -- the skull of some prehistoric beast crossed with the bucket of an excavator.

You could also clearly see that his actual hero costume was nothing more than a pair of torn jeans.

Heroes.

“Ran into a minor problem with the Zap Box,” the teenager said, looking over her shoulder. “It zapped itself on fire and… well, that’s it, actually. It caught on fire. I’m working on Zap Box 2.0 now.”

Power Loader stared, waiting.

“Are we just going to ignore the third person standing in the room?” He asked when it became clear no introductions were going to be offered on your behalf.

The girl looked at him confusedly before catching sight of you. She grinned happily.

“Oh, I completely forgot about you.”

You snapped your gaping mouth shut and looked back to your supposed interviewer. His back was to you -- he was lifting his feet and, with powerful thrusts, slamming the bottom legs of his suit into the bare ground.

The hole he had created disappeared -- the ground caving in on itself, settling into a pile of loose dirt.

“There,” Power Loader said, turning back to you. "Sorry my assistant is useless, can I help ya?"

“Power Loader?” you asked, brain still working to register the odd situation you were in.

“Yeah, that’s me,” the man grunted, working to disengage from the suit. The hissing of hydraulics quieted as the hero stepped down, brushing away loose dirt from his skin as he did so. You did your best to make eye contact but his face was mostly hidden beneath his mask and its eye sockets were only inky black--

Who were you kidding, you were used to it.

It took a couple of seconds for you to realize that was his introduction to you. You rigidly stood to face him, falling into a series of what you hoped were respectful bows as you introduced yourself.

“I’m only partially Japanese,” he said, waving away what he considered grossly unnecessary deference. “Don’t worry about the bowing. What can I do for you? Here to put in a request? Pick up something?” He paused. "Don't tell me you're here for Fatgum's stuff. I told him I couldn’t finish it
“No,” you said slowly, giving him time to remember his own calendar. “I’m the one sent by Mikki? We spoke on the phone two days ago…?”

“Oh shit,” he said before erupting into laughter. “The support apprentice, right? You’re the one that brought Mikki back from the dead!”

You let out an uncomfortable groan at your claim to fame that the hero didn’t acknowledge.

“We were supposed to meet today, weren’t we?” he asked. “What time is it?”

He directed the question to his assistant but she didn’t respond. The spacey girl was too consumed by what she was doing to hear her employer. So you stepped in, giving him the time before bashfully pointing out that you had been scheduled to meet more than an hour earlier.

“Don’t be so soft-spoken!” Power Loader cried, shaking his head at you. “I would be pissed if I were ya. But…” he tilted his head. “I did get called away for hero work. Helped put a car chase to a stop! So I see why you would be so understanding even though I was late.”

Understanding? You weren’t understanding -- you just didn’t want to give a negative first impression to your interviewer. You absolutely were pissed at his lateness and the expletive-laced messages to your friends proved it.

But he didn’t know that.

“It happens,” you said with a shrug.

“So…” he headed in your direction, his large hands almost brushing against the ground as he walked. “I heard you want a job.”

You opened your mouth, ready to spout some sort of buzzword-laced nonsense about taking the next step in your career, but that pittered to nothing. Shoulders loosening, you nodded.

“… Yeah,” you said. “I want a job.”

“Mikki spoke highly of ya,” he continued as he walked passed you, waving for you to follow him. He was leading you back up the stairs to the first floor. “Really talked you up. Working Odaiba right now? Shame what happened to it. Where are they putting everyone?”

“Temporary work assignments,” you explained, trailing behind. “Some people are working different labs. I was put on an ongoing team project. We work out of the Endeavor Agency now.”

“Endeavor?” Beneath his mask, Power Loader whistled. “Talk about prestigious. Why the switch then? I can tell you now, we aren’t working with that level of… importance.”

Shit.

**What had you practiced?**

“Looking for a change of pace,” you said, already wincing internally at what your brain was suggesting. You were back in the kitchen now -- Power Loader was pouring out a glass of _orange juice_. Without asking, he set aside a cup for you as well. “I’m in an apprenticeship at Odaiba but it’s not the environment I feel like I excel in. It’s a little too big for me. I need something more…” You chewed the inside of your cheek, trying to work up the best word. “**Personal.**”
You could sense the interview gods curling in on themselves in pain -- talk about a weak introduction to yourself.

With a taut smile, you took the cup he offered to you, thanking him. Power Loader’s empty eyes bore into you as your words settled.

“It’s cold,” he said abruptly, rubbing his exposed arms. “If that brat left the windows open again, I’ll throttle her.”

“She’s your… assistant?” you asked, thinking of the nameless girl in the basement. You assumed that was the ‘brat’ he was referring to.

“Hatsume Mei,” the hero said with a sigh. “A middle school student and support genius. The girl can build anything. But she’s a thorn in my side. Been with me about a year now. Showed up one day and kept coming back, even after I kicked her out. I somehow ended up her mentor.”

“Somehow became her mentor?” you asked, incredulously.

“Well, I tried locking the doors but she kept finding her way in. Once she tried to climb through one of my tunnels and almost got crushed when I collapsed it behind me. Like I said though, she’s a prodigy. The level of technicality she possesses as a middle schooler is…” he trailed off with a impressed scoff. “She’s going places.”

You weren’t able to ask a follow-up question about his protege, even though you had close to a dozen ready to go. Instead, he held up a finger to silence you, grabbing for his drink.

“But we’re not talking about Hatsume,” he said plainly. “We’re talking about you.”

Power Loader finally took a seat at the kitchen table. You made eye contact with the only visible part of his face -- his mouth.

“Mikki tells me you’re a costumer, that true?”

You nodded your head, mildly agreeing with the statement.

“Those have been the projects I’ve been working on lately, yes. My original focus was on quirk-charged support items and weapons but I’ve become more interested in support-augmented costumes. That’s what brought me to Doctor Kravitz team and Odaiba in the first place.”

“And you’re good,” he said.

“Yes,” you said, years of selling yourself masking any turmoil you were feeling about your abilities. “I was brought on to work for the number one hero’s suit, after all. If I wasn’t any good, I wouldn’t have been asked to assist.”

“The reference I got about ya was glowing,” Power Loader said and your heart squeezed, thrilled at hearing that. “I mean, glowing. But--” he shrugged. “Gotta say, part of me is worried that Mikki feels some sort of life debt or something, which is why she was pushing for ya so hard.”

What could you say to that?

That’s kind of what you thought too.

Your silence only lasted a few painful seconds before you remembered what you had brought, turning in your chair to look back at the kitchen counter where your padfolio remained untouched.
“Well,” you said, popping up to retrieve it, pulling out papers and arranging them on the table. “My work also speaks for itself. I brought along some of the original costume designs I had drafted for Endeavor before we settled on the final one.”

Large fingers carefully picked up some of your sheets -- Power Loader was bringing them close to his chest, obviously peering down from inside his helmet to get a better look.

“Some elements for the designs were used in the final project, though I can’t say exactly what,” you explained. “I also have a couple of prototypes I’ve been working on for another hero, Pixie-Bob. Unfortunately, we were only in basic discussions about costume ideas and then the lab was destroyed, so this project was shelved indefinitely.”

You took a seat back in your chair, slipping a copy of your CV across the table before hugging your padfolio against your chest. You had already sent Power Loader a copy, but it didn’t hurt for him to familiarize himself with it. He indulged you by giving it a passing glance.

“I was a full-time support developer before I went to Odaiba,” you stressed. “And my apprenticeship is due to end in about two months, but I’m willing to walk away earlier if the right opportunity comes around.”

_I want to leave that hellhole immediately, please._

Unhidden, you could see Power Loader’s jaw shift.

“Let me tell you a little more about the position,” he eventually said, leaning in a bit more. You took that as a good sign. “We’re a small support lab here. Before Hatsume rolled up, it was mostly me and two or three support students from Yuuei helping me out during their internships. The only real other employee was a costume designer, who went off on his own. Basically, I’m looking to replace him. I’m looking for someone with design experience.”

_Okay, so far so good._

“We’re small scale,” he continued and you winced having incorrectly labeled the size of his operation -- another job interview demerit. “I’ve got my own hero work on the side that keeps me busy, so most of our clients are mid-risers to new-on-the-scene. This is not a lab you’re going to find fame. Sometimes, we even make some of the Yuuei hero outfits.”

“Right,” you said with a nod in your head.

.getActive listening."

“I handle more support item requests, with help from Hatsume, since she’s absolute shit at design and listening and adhering to what people are requesting. So a majority of design work is going to fall on the new hire’s shoulders. I mean, I’ll help when I can but…”

He trailed off and gestured to his body. The message was surprisingly clear -- _I’m not good at it._

“Like I said, I’ll try and grab a couple students to help out for internships but, for the most part, the newbie will be working alone. Though, I guess I should be honest, most of the work will probably just be costume repair. _Maybe_ the odd costume redesign if someone is getting bumped up in the rankings or wants a change. We’re getting more requests for seasonal costumes too--”

“Seasonal?” you asked picturing some hero dashing after a villain while dressed in some sort of Santa-themed attire.
“Winter and summer costumes,” he said. “It finally clicked in some genius’ head that heroes can put on coats when it gets cold outside. It’s gaining more traction.”

“I see you’re following the trend,” you said, eyebrows twitching upward. To your immense relief, Power Loader chuckled at your joke and you felt your body relax another degree.

Compared to your one at Odaiba, this interview was like night and day. Sure, you were nervous, but it wasn’t fear nerves that tickled your spine -- you weren’t in awe of Power Loader. They were… coveting. Maybe it was just a personality trait of yours to fixate and idealize on things but, god dammit, what you wouldn’t do to be offered a position at his lab.

A curse that had been cast upon you -- the inability to be satisfied with where you were in life. The constant need for more. Well, that wasn’t really true because there you sat at that kitchen table dreaming about less.

Perhaps your real curse was the inability to know contentment.

“Yeah, well, I’m used to the cold. It’s always a few degrees chillier in the underground,” he said. “And damp. Who knows though, maybe I’ll design a coat for my next costume change-up. I’m due for one soon.”

“Try small steps,” you suggested, spurred on by the success of your earlier joke. “Maybe start with, I don’t know, a shirt.”

He laughed again.

Power Loader was not one for interviews. Over the years, most of his former employees and partners just… fell into their roles, without any real official process other than eventually signing employment forms for the government. So, being the one forced to ask those, ‘Tell me about your dreams’ questions in a ‘business’ setting was a foreign experience for him.

He wasn’t any good at interviewing either, judging by your face when he started peppering you with questions he openly pulled up on his phone from a job website. The only off-the-cuff thing he asked was for you to talk about a time you experienced ‘critical failure.’

You told him about the accidental mustard gas you made during a group lab back in high school.

Eventually, he ran out of questions and you were getting openly antsy. When he returned to his subterranean lab after parting ways with you, he found Hatsume unmoved -- though her ‘zap box’ was in pieces across a worktable. She didn’t acknowledge her mentor, already too wrapped up in working at the device’s predecessor, Zap Box 2.0.

He made his way over to his forgotten desk, sinking into the leatherback chair. A layer of shop dust had settled on the rarely used surface which he did his best to brush away. Only then Power Loader noticed a long-dead plant perched on top a stack of textbooks.

He had a plant?

“Hatsume!” he barked. The student didn’t so much as flinch at the sudden, booming voice, her hunched-over back still facing him.

“Yes?” she called back, not bothering to look up.

“Didn’t I tell you to water my plants!?”
“Nope.”

He grumbled under his breath over the fact she hadn’t fallen into his bluff (he wasn’t really sure if plant watering was one of the basic duties he had assigned to her. He knocked the bone-dry corpse into a small trash can before booting up the rarely-used desktop, quietly reflecting on the CV he had been carrying around.

You were the third person he had interviewed about the opening, with at least two more scheduled for later in the week. To his irritation, no one had knocked him off his feet yet, saving him from any more forced conversations. Hatsume had suggested, earlier, that no one would be able to as he, ‘lacked the capacity to experience that type of excitement.’

Which was a crock of shit.

“Hatsume,” he barked again, though it was a lighter, more conversational tone.

“Yes?”

He rolled his eyes at the obvious replay.

“What did you think about that interviewee?” he asked.

“Who?”

“The lady who was just here.”

“I don’t know who you’re talking about.”

“The lady you just spent an hour with, you nitwit,” Power Loader snapped, looking from behind computer monitor. Finally, something stirred within the middle school student. She looked up, staring at the wall she was facing, blinking blankly.

‘Lady,’ she mouthed, trying to bypass the visions of inventions dancing in her mind to recall what had happened in the world around her.

Fire.

“Oh!” She swirled around, a crazed smile on her face as her spell of work had been broken. “That one! She put out the fire!”

“She put out the fire?”

“Well, I didn’t know we had fire extinguishers, so I was using water. But she found one!”

Had a mask not been covering most of his face, Power Loader would have rubbed at his eyes. Interacting with Hatsume was exhausting.

“Yeah,” he said, tiredly. “Yeah, Hatsume, we have fire extinguishers.”

Obviously, he would have to show them to her…

Again.

“She seems bearable,” she said causing the hero to tilt his head, mildly interested.
“What’s that supposed to mean? Why, what did you talk about?”

“Oh, we didn’t talk,” she declared, rigidly turning back to her work.

A book sailed through the air in her direction but Hatsume took no notice of it -- the trajectory was off and it skidded across the floor several feet away from her.

_Nitwit._

The email was written with leaden, hesitating fingers -- _do you have time for a quick chat later?_  

You thought that would be the first hint that something was off. Come on, requesting a ‘quick chat’ with your boss was abnormal. What possibly could a ‘quick chat’ lead to if not a resignation?

His assistant responded to your email an hour later and fifteen minutes was set aside after lunch for a meet-up in his office.

After that you were forced to wait, thrilled and terrified, drumming up the steel you would need to look Kravitz in the eye and say those magic words -- _I quit._

There was no air of confidence swirling around you when you walked into his allocated office space during your scheduled time -- a small room in the Endeavor Agency by a heavily-used elevator. Irritation was plainly on his face when you entered and he mentioned something about a lingering stench thanks to a quirk misfire. Honestly though, smell wasn’t really registering in your head at that moment. You were more focused on keeping your heartbeat steady.

You perched at the edge of the chair he beckoned you to sit at, a tired smile gracing his features when he asked what was on your mind.

The sentence of resignation didn’t come out sudden and strong as you had practiced. It meandered out, following after a forced laugh and a series of apologies prefacing the news. You were giving your notice to leave, you eventually admitted, watching a surprised expression wash over the doctor’s face at your announcement. Strangely enough, simply speaking the words settled much of the turmoil in your mind.

It really did feel like a weight had been lifted off your shoulders.

You adjusted in the chair, settling against the back of it as you moved into thanking him for the time he had put in to teaching you, for the acceptance you felt as a team member. You were unaware that all your various gratitudes were falling on deaf ears.

“You’re leaving?” he blurted out, perplexed.

You looked at him, equally confused.

_Obviously. What else had you been talking about for the last several minutes?_

“Well,” you shifted in your seat, a sinking feeling suddenly sprouting in your gut. “My apprenticeship is up in only a couple more weeks and--”

“That can be extended,” he interrupted. “Hell, I’ve _started_ the process to extend you.”

“I was also offered a job at a different lab that I’m--”

“Another job?” he scoffed, leaning far enough back in his chair that it complained at the stress.
“You’re at the best lab in the country. Why would you look anywhere else for work?”

There was a ball of dread in your stomach when you met his eyes. You shifted again, uncrossing your ankles only to recross them, anxiety making your spine go hot.

“Look at what you’re doing here,” he exclaimed suddenly, eagerly leaning forward. “This is career-making work. I’m going to be frank with you -- I’ve been considering bringing you full-time to help replace our dear Mikki. It would be a huge opportunity for you. Think about your career!”

Kravitz’ ill-humor had momentarily abated and you felt the stranglehold your emotions had on your body loosen.

“Think about it,” he said, tapping his fingers on his desk. “You’ve been such an asset to me. To the team. We can’t afford to lose another member in such a short time. And you’ve only been here a few months!”

“I’m sorry, Doctor Kravitz but this is not a good environment for me,” you said, surprisingly firm. He blinked at you. “It’s not a good environment for me at all.”

His eyes narrowed slightly as he regarded you.

“Not a good environment?” he repeated. You swallowed before nodding.

*Had you said something wrong?*

*Why was he acting like you insulted his mother?*

“Um, yes,” you said. “My time here was wonderful, don’t get me wrong. But… for my own sanity, I don’t think I can work in a large lab like this. I tried and… it’s not a good fit.”

“So you’re running away? You’re giving up?”

You blanched. Though your mouth hung open slightly, ready to respond, nothing came out. You stared at him while he regarded you and, when it became clear you were too tongue-tied to answer, he continued to watch.

“This isn’t…”

You swallowed again.

*Quitting should not be this hard.*

*He was calling you out.*

*What were you doing?*

*Failure.*

*What if your other job was terrible too?*

*Mistake.*

“It’s best that I…”

*What could you say?*
Kravtiz’ body expanded as a heavy sigh passed through him. Slowly he leaned onto his desk, pinching the bridge of his nose.

“It’s a shame,” he finally said, the head shaking starting up. Like he was some disappointed father. “A waste of talent. But I can’t force you to stay.”

A flag raised in your head, something vaguely ominous brushing the way he said ‘force.’

Fear bloomed then. What had he said all those months ago when you first interviewed? That he had been in a similar situation that you were in, working illegally?

Had you said something to him? Admitted to anything?

A slow smile appeared, putting you more on-edge. What was his goal? To threaten you into staying and working for him? Did that make sense? What did he have on you? Did he have anything on you?

“Sir...?” you started, wide-eyed, unsure how to respond, the entire situation unfamiliar and odd.

“You’re a smart kid,” he interrupted. “As I said before, I see potential in you. But, if this wasn’t where you were destined to be, I respect that.”

It was like a rollercoaster, he was smiling at you, a resigned expression that left your thoughts reeling and mind dizzy. Hot and cold, off and on. Were you so wrapped up in your fears and worries that you were projecting them onto other people?

“I’m sad to see you go,” he said, opening his desk drawer. “You’re still young. Still trying to find your place in life. I get that. And you’ve given our lab a lot in the very short amount of time that you’ve been here. For that I am grateful. Do I think you’re giving up too easily? Yes. But if you don’t want to be here, you don’t want to be here.”

You kept quiet.

He frowned at that.

“Well,” he stood and, without hesitating, you followed suit. “It’s been an honor having you as an apprentice. You do wonderful work.”

“Thank you, sir,” you mumbled, shaking the hand offered to you.

“Send a list of what you’ve been working on to my assistant, try to wrap up any loose ends before the two weeks are up.”

“Yes, sir.”

“One more thing…”

You watched him reach into his desk, bringing out a business card that he scribbled a number onto.

When he held it out, you took it.

“I’m sure our paths will cross again,” he said with a toothy smile. “But, if you ever run into any problems, give me a call. Like I said, I was once in your shoes, I'll always be willing to help you out.”

“Thank you, sir.”
You didn’t look back when you left his office.

The air in the hallway was light, the weight that had been bogging you down finally cut loose. You fell into a brisk walk back as you journeyed back to the little room your team called home.

You still didn’t notice any of the reported strange smells.

Chapter End Notes

Man oh man, it seems like it's been eons since I wrote a chapter! But here, in all its late glory, is the real start of the new 'arch.' The honeymoon phase is over. The world no longer revolves around two people too focused on their insular worlds. What do I see on the horizon? Boundaries? Familiar faces? The real world? I'm excited lmao

On another note, I also want to bring up the chapter post schedule. I think, for the time being, I'm going to push chapter drops bi-weekly instead of weekly. It'll give me a little bit more room to breathe and release more polished chapters.

For those of you who have left kudos, comments and have interacted with me -- you the best and I love you.
“You know, I thought you would eventually move to Tokyo…” A squealing sound rang out as packaging tape was pulled off of its roll. “Come be around everyone else. Musutafu’s closer but…”

You looked up from the dishes you had been carefully stacking and wrapping in towels.

“Exactly -- Musutafu is a bit closer to Tokyo,” you said, catching Yume’s eye as she reached for a marker. “I’m excited. It’ll be nice to get out of Kamino. New job. New city. A clean slate.”

“You had a new job and Tokyo could have been a new city--”

“This will be good for me,” you continued airily, once again interjecting before she could work herself into another tangent deriding your judgment. You’d been working on dodging them all day. “You’ll see. My gut is telling me this is the right decision.”

Catching on that you were purposely cutting her off, Yume grumbled under her breath and you did your best to ignore it, assuming she was still a bit bitter over your departure from your relatively short stint at Odaiba Research.

When you had finally broken down and given her the news a handful of days back, that you had decided to leave your position, she reacted pretty much how you expected -- angrily. Disappointedly. It was obvious the feelings she had weren’t derived from someplace dark or hurtful, she just thought you were making a dumb decision.

Maybe you were.

But ultimately it was your decision to make.

She had spent a good portion of your dinner that night trying to reason with you, to goad you into reconsidering: How could you leave Odaiba!? Working there was a dream for so many. To be given such an amazing opportunity and then toss aside so easily…

Not only that, Yume had gone to bat for you -- she had talked you up, talked up your skill set. How would your departure reflect on her?

Eventually, you revealed your ‘good’ news -- that you had already accepted a position elsewhere and had already given notice to Doctor Kravitz and the team that you were leaving as soon as possible.

It was done.

You were just telling her as a courtesy.

For about of week after that less-than-friendly dinner, you ignored one another other, each stewing over the actions of the other. You were far too impulsive. She was far too close-minded.

Yume broke first, though, texting you.

Then, like a remorseful father, she took you out for ice cream.

Moving, however, hadn’t been a thought-out decision. You received notice that the lease for your lab
space was coming up for renewal, with a slight increase in the rent price. It had been months since you had been there, having lost all desire to invent on your free time and having no open commissions to work on.

It was the idealist in you that ultimately convinced you to, finally, give up your lab. Nothing was quite the same after your almost-brush with death over a… ‘disagreement’ regarding the quality of your work. Although you always knew death and/or injury was a possibility while working with villains, it wasn’t until you were actually burned that it clicked in your mind that yes, you could actually die. It was a very real peril. Your, ‘come on, what are the odds?’ reasoning could no longer be used as the odds were, apparently, pretty good.

*Luck* had gotten you out of that situation with your life -- an ace in the hole had fallen into your lap and you had played it, walking away unscathed but shaken.

However, that ace could no longer be played.

It was a long time coming, anyway. You hadn’t been yourself since and the past several months had been alluding to the fact. You had turned down commissions -- any desire to cash in on under the table money had fled. You wanted a normal life void of any secrets or skeletons. Go to work, work, go home.

It was funny how appealing being another cog in the machine had become.

Quite suddenly after reaching the decision of shutting down shop for good and going on the straight and narrow, the same vein of thought also goaded you into moving altogether. Don’t just close the lab -- break the lease on your apartment early. Get out of Kamino. Start over. You would lose your deposit and have to pay a fee, sure, but you would also be *free*.

After Power Loader promised that, *yes*, you still had a job and he wasn’t going renegade on the offer, you found a nice little rental house in Musutafu in a neighborhood geared toward families. All things considered, you *were* making more money at Power Loader’s lab as you had only been an apprentice at Odaiba (though, had you been brought on fulltime as was always teased, you would have made *bank* … and you didn’t quite want to think about that).

It seemed like a good, responsible decision.

You didn’t have a lot of time -- once you signed the lease on your new humble abode, and you broke the lease on your Kamino apartment, you only had two weeks to pack up years worth of junk and *move*, which made you regret your decisions immensely as moving was the absolute *worst*.

Then, entirely all too soon, two weeks was up.

You had been working down to the wire -- the last day you were allowed in your apartment was the day the movers showed up to lug all your boxes and furniture away. Before you went to go hand your keys over to the building manager for good, you stood in the living room surveying the skeletal remains of your *home*.

The apartment in all its mediocrity -- blemishes to the drywall, the bubbling paint along the creases of the ceiling, the creaky doors, the drafty windows, the water stained spots -- was your *home*. Half-hearted fantasies about moving somewhere nicer had come true but you hadn’t been prepared for the strange lament that had settled in your heart during your goodbye.

*It was an apartment.*

You ignored the whispers of recollections moving around the empty. Of scarffing down take-out on
the floor with Yume when you first moved in and had no furniture. Of burning curtains and scorch
thanks to misfired inventions prior to signing for your lab space. Of sleepovers and pizzas and laying
on the couch sick and late-night visitors and movie nights and broken furniture and broken doors
and--

It was the comforting presence of your apartment that you were sad to see go. You were a hermit
 crab exchanging a shell -- leaving felt weird only because you weren’t used to the new place. But
you would be. It’ll be just as much of a home.

You sighed when the door clicked behind you for the last time, staring at the front door.

It felt like the end of an era.

You were moving into your silver age.

“So… last time we talked you had just moved into your new apartment. Tell me about that, how do
you like it so far?”

You shifted on the couch so you could sit on your hands, eyes flickering between your knees and the
large-eyed man in front of you.

“It’s good,” you said with an uncomfortable grin, trying to convince yourself to not be so… closed
up. It was what, your third session with your shrink? You had decided to sign up for therapy by your
own volition, you had been the one to schedule the sessions, so why were you so… guarded when it
came to talking with him? You were basically throwing money away if you weren’t going to use the
time.

“You’ve got to give me a little more than just good,” he said, knowing eyes peering from behind
even-larger glasses.

“It’s nice,” you tried again. “Leagues better than my old apartment but it’s still a little drafty. One of
my neighbors has a little boy and he told me the other day that my house is haunted.”

“Oh!” Your therapist’s eyes crinkled with humor while you rolled yours.

“Wasn’t thrilled about that conversation.”

“But otherwise, your neighbors, you get along with them?”

“More or less. I live on the corner and I’ve only said hello to the family next to me in passing.
There’s a pretty big fence separating our houses.”

“And the job is treating you well?” At that question, you cracked an actual smile. “Well, that’s a
good reaction. Your whole aura completely changed.” He sat back, glancing up to the ceiling,
rubbing his tongue across the roof of his mouth. “Tastes… like apple juice? Reassuring. So you’re
comfortable there?”

“I think so,” you said, the smile still there. “It’s only been, what, a month? But I really like it there.
It’s very… calm.”

“Calm?”

“Calm.”

“And you like the calm?”
“I think I do, yeah.”

“You think you do?”

“Well…” you shifted your jaw. “I don’t think I’m good under pressure. I used to think I was but… I don’t think I am. But I kept throwing myself into situations and jobs where there was a lot of pressure on my shoulders thinking my unhappiness was just normal, you know? This is a good change of pace.”

“I like what you just said there,” your shrink said, circling a finger at you. “That bit of self-reflection at the end. Expand on that.”

You chuckled awkwardly, freeing a hand to rub at your knee.

“Sour. Tart,” the therapist observed, frowning, tongue clicking. “Lemons. Why the change? What makes you uncomfortable? The subject or talking about yourself?”

“A little bit of both. I guess I’m a little disappointed in myself for giving up and… accepting defeat?”

“Defeat?” He shook his head. “Don’t think of this as a win and lose situation. Life’s not a fight. Instead, look at it as playing on your strengths and weaknesses. You weren’t happy but now you are.”

“For now--” you ventured to say, earning a snort of disgust from the man sitting across from you.

“Don’t assume everything is fleeting. Accept and appreciate now. You’re happy now. You live in a house in a nice neighborhood.” He raised his thumb. “You have a job that mentally stimulates you and brings you joy.” He raised his pointer finger. “You’re in a good headspace -- your aura was bright when you walked in. Nothing was bogging you down.” His middle finger joined the others. “Name something else that’s been giving you joy?”

“My friends threw me a housewarming party last weekend?”

“Friends are taking time to celebrate your achievements,” he said with a nod, lifting another finger in the air. “You know what, let’s go for five. Give me one more positive. Did you start up your kung fu lessons again?”


He frowned at you -- last session, you had admitted to your short ‘personal betterment’ stint with Krav Maga lessons after a situation with a villain. When you refused to elaborate on the villain portion of your story (you weren’t about to cop to any… misdeeds you may have done in the past), he instead started pushing you on why you had dropped Krav Maga -- why did you eventually just stop? Why don’t you start up again?

He was adamant you develop some sort of hobby.

“I started knitting again?” You offered a half-truth. You had purchased yarn online the day prior but hadn’t made anything. In fact, your knitting supplies were still packed away in one of the boxes you had yet to go through.

The large-eyed man openly smacked his lips, unamused.

“Overripe,” he said.
You sighed.

“Okay -- I’m going to. I bought yarn, I just have to unpack the stuff.”

“I’d prefer if you did something physical though,” he grumbled. “Yoga? Running? Tai Chi? Something to get you moving. It’s not just about taking care of the mind, the body is just as important too. And exercise will help balance your mind.”

You drew your mouth into a tight line.

“Fine.”

“Fine?”

“Fine.”

“I’m gonna ask about it next session,” he warned teasingly and you revealed a small, humored, smile. “Now, give me one more positive…”

“One more…” You really had to think, which your therapist noted. “One more…”

Nothing came to you. Come on, one more positive…

When it became clear you were tapped out of ideas, he jotted something down.

“Fine, I’ll accept four today. But next time we meet, I want you to come with five positives of the week ready to go, alright?”

“Alright.”

He regarded the topmost section of the notebook, where notes from your last meeting were written neatly.

*Metal. Salted Earth.*

A taste that sometimes lingered in the back of his throat during the answers and stories you shared with him, accompanied by a dehydrating sensation that usually had him reaching for water. It had exploded across his senses when you had danced around the specifics of your villain altercation, an obvious connection, but otherwise it had been muted.

He wanted to know what it meant.

But, he decided not to ask about what, or who, the taste represented. Your relationship was not as… forthright as it would probably need to be to delve into such a topic. You weren’t comfortable enough with him yet.

“Okay,” he said, breathing in deeply through his nose, tapping his pencil on his knee. “Why don’t we talk about something outside of work. What have you done in Mustafa? It’s new to you -- have you explored the city?”

“Well…” You scratched at your nose. “My boss took me and his… assistant to dinner the other day. That was something.”

“Bubblegum!” Your therapist said, lighting up. “You had a good time! Tell me a little about that!
The train ride home wasn’t crowded. At your station, you swung into a nearby corner store to pick up a couple of bananas -- you were craving them now thanks to your therapist’s ‘overripe’ comment.

*Banana bread would be divine right now.*

The store didn’t have any bananas or banana bread, so you grabbed a couple of little cartoons of banana milk hoping it would be enough to sate you.

It was… *nice* how unhurried and relaxed you felt as you walked home that afternoon. Spring was on the horizon but had not quite arrived – a crispness beckoned you to wear a coat and maybe not walk as leisurely as you would have had it been a proper spring, or even summer, day.

There was no *dread* hanging over you about missed calls and avalanching emails, even though it was one of your days off. Your default state of mind was no longer stressed. There was no unknown fear lurked in the back of your head, warning you about nothing.

The lingering anxiety in your gut had finally abated a few weeks back -- you felt *lighter*.

God, it felt good.

*You felt good.*

The little neighbor boy who told you that your house was haunted was out on the street when you rounded the corner, sliding a red car back and forth against the sidewalk-less asphalt in front of your house.

He stopped his playing as your approached, standing up. The knees of his khaki pants were already filthy.

“Hello, miss,” he greeted solemnly, bowing.

“Hello, little Sato,” you said, stopping and giving him the same respectful greeting, though you were much more humored by his business-like air. You glanced down at the object in his hand. “I like your car.”

“Thank you, my *baa-baa* gave it to me.”

You nodded, giving the boy a brief, friendly smile before turning toward your house, prepared to leave him to his playing. Besides, you had some banana milk to shotgun while listening to some of your neglected podcasts. Maybe you’d put on a hair mask and a sheet mask. At-home spa day.

“You had visitors come to your door, but you weren’t home,” Sato said, following you. You quirked a brow at him.

“Hm? Really?”

*Visitors? Was it your landlord?*

“Policemen!”

You stopped turning the key in the lock of your front door.

You glanced back down at the boy.

“Policemen?” you repeated. Sato’s face lit up and he eagerly nodded, an obvious excitement rolling across his body.
“Yes! I told them you weren’t home! Well, first they asked if I knew what your name was and I told them I did because we’re neighbors and I say ‘hi’ to you a lot. I told them you weren’t home because I saw you leave this morning, remember? And then my dad came out and they asked him about you too!”

“Your dad…” You swallowed, heart squeezing. “They asked your dad about me?” You forced a smile. “Did you happen to hear… what kind of questions? What the policemen asked your dad?”

“Well…” He scrunched up his face, thinking back. “One policeman asked if you made things for heroes and my dad said you did because you work with the hero Power Loader!” For added effect, he punched the air beside him, body twisting and following his arm. “Remember? You told us when you moved in! Is that where you went today? To help him?”

“Did they ask him anything else?” You asked, ignoring the innocent nosiness of a child.

Sato stopped his full-body punching, choosing to purse his lips as he stared up at you. You stared back, uneasily.

_Come on, think kid._

“When you moved in,” he said, squinting his eyes. “My dad said you were nice. Oh! If you have a lot of friends visiting you! If you make things in your home. Dad said he didn’t think so.”

_Shit._

_Shit._

“So!”

A female voice drifted from the hidden front yard next door and the boy’s head whipped in the direction of his house.

“Sorry miss, I gotta go get my lunch.”

“No, no, no, it’s fine Sato.” You waved the boy off -- you had other things on your mind thanks to your neighbor’s report. He walked a few steps before stopping and grinning. “Oh, they also said they’re coming back, miss. So don’t worry about missing them!”

Only when you were safely inside the privacy of your entryway did you allow yourself to openly panic.

You _knew_ their visit had to be related to your under-the-table work. Someone must have been arrested and blabbed about where they had gotten their gear. And the police had found you! Though, it’s not like you were living off the grid -- you probably weren’t hard to track down.

_Shit._

What were you going to do?

You dropped your plastic bag of banana milk by your shoe rack, hands combing through your hair.

Oh no. Oh no, no, no.

You were going to go to jail.

Undoubtedly, you were going to lose your license.
You had just moved. You had a new job. You were going to lose all of that.

You were fucked.

You were royally fucked.

Who could it have been, though? Who could have been arrested? You pulled out your phone, staring at the darkened screen as your jittery brain tried to piece together cohesive thoughts. Your fingers were shaking.

If you knew who it was, who had gotten arrested, you could work on an alibi. At the very least drum up a reason why you didn’t know them.

But no familiar names came up on the hero news sites under recent apprehensions. Could it have been someone small time, whose arrest would be buried? An off-handed mention, if that, buried beneath more newsworthy information?

Eventually, you paced your way deeper into your living room, running your hand along the back of your couch as you moved back and forth, still consumed by fear.

Fate had marked you. If villains weren’t going to get you, the law was going to get you. Destiny told you that you were going to fail.

And you were trying to be good!

Desperately, you were trying!

That wasn’t going to matter though, your attempt at goodness. Authorities weren’t going to sit back and let you have this one because hey, ‘she was working on being a better person’

Logically speaking, what was going to happen the next time they showed up at your door? All the crime tv shows and movies you had been binging over the past couple of months told you that the police would show up at either your home or work and would want to ‘ask you some questions.’ You couldn’t hide from them and you did not have the capital or skill to go live the rest of your life on the run.

Think.

You needed… a lawyer, right? The smart bad guys always wanted their lawyers and requesting one usually stumped the cops -- they would leave the interrogation room in a huff mentioning that their perp had ‘lawyered up.’

Don’t talk without an attorney was the first checkbox. That was doable -- you’d get a lawyer. What kind of lawyer, though? Criminal you assumed.

It would help to know what charges you were facing.

Assuming you were going to be arrested.

How much was this going to cost you?

You were staring at your phone again, trying to think of what you could search to help walk you through the process. You had never gotten in trouble like this before. Nothing of this magnitude.

Jail.
Oh no, you would not fare well in jail.

You were more of a free bird, not a jailbird.

In your panic, you pulled up your contacts, very tempted to call and talk to someone.

Yume? Your family?

Just... anyone who could help walk you through this possibly life-altering moment. Life-ending moment. Another one.

It was then a naive idea came to mind -- a name scrolled passed your screen, stilling your thumb.

You didn’t... have to be alone in dealing with this. There was one person who... knew what to do.

He’d said he experienced it before.

There was hesitation though. It wasn’t pride that was holding you back, more like a desire to save face joined with a pathetic hope to keep the past in the past.

But the weight of the world had settled back on your shoulders with this new self-induced emergency and it was heavy.

Too heavy.

Making the decision for you, your thumb tapped his phone number and waited, listening to the rings as they started up.

He could help you out of this, right?

At least, you hoped he could.

“Kravitz speaking.”

You weren’t expecting him to pick up so quickly and bark out his... greeting? without so much as a pause. His voice threw you for a loop and it suddenly became very real what you had just done.

Say something.

“Hey... Doctor Kravitz...” You swallowed, torn between fear of your current predicament and anxiety at having called the employer you had recently just walked away from. Truthfully, you were unsure if he had even bothered checking the name that popped on his phone (and afraid he may have already deleted your number), so you clarified who it was that had called him.

There was silence on the other end of the line when your name was spoken -- surprise or irritation? You weren’t sure.

He repeated your name before clearing his throat, mumbling something to someone on his side of existence. You heard a series of sounds before he cleared his throat again, this time much softer.

“Well, this is unexpected,” he eventually said. You laughed.

It sounded sad and pathetic.

Which is what you were, weren’t you?
“I know this is weird,” you said with a sigh, leaning forward and resting your upper body against the back of your couch. “I know I just quit. But…” You shifted your jaw. “I ran into a problem. A big problem. And I didn’t know who to talk to. You’re the only one I know that could help me out. Guide me.”

“Hm. Well then, what’s this ‘big’ problem.”

“The police want to question me and--”

“Say no more.” You blinked, started at the sharpness of his voice as he cut you off. It was followed by a chuckle. “I’m always willing to help out young inventors like yourself when it comes to dealing with liabilities!”

“Liability?” You stood straight, nervous hand stroking the fabric of your couch. “Well, Doctor Kravitz, sir. I don’t think my--”

“You know, we should catch up!” he interrupted again with another chuckle. “A little mentor/mentee dinner, don’t you think? Tonight is open for me, are you in the Tokyo area?”

“Well, I moved to Musutafu--”

“Ah, that’s perfect! So close! Why don’t you just send me over your address and I’ll have someone pick you up? There’s a little family udon restaurant in Musutafu that I used to frequent. How does 7 tonight sound? I’ll send a car to your address so you don’t have to worry about trains or walking. It’ll be all taken care of.”

This was… strange.

“Oh Doctor Kravitz, I don’t--”

“It’s settled. I’ll be more than happy to talk about your inventions over dinner! Remember -- send me that address.”

You were staggered when you hung up your phone after the curt goodbyes, not exactly sure what had just occurred. Did he think you were angling for your old job back or something?

Plus there was unease over the idea of seeing Kravitz, which you attributed to a possible uncomfortable conversation about work and how you had no intention of going back to him. You were happy at Power Loader’s lab. You didn’t want to leave.

Unless he would make you come back for your help.

The idea was ludicrous, absolutely ludicrous. You weren’t a support prodigy, nor were you some integral part of the team -- you had been an apprentice. One step up from an intern.

Maybe he wanted to get in your pants?

You scratched at your chin, reflecting on your time working under him--

Figuratively.

At no point did anything even remotely resembling flirtation escape from him. And there had been plenty of opportunities with your work schedules and assignments.
The whole situation was weird but goddamnit if your life hadn’t been weird lately. You’d take whatever help he could offer you.

After you texted him your address, you went to go take a stress shower. Although it still felt like your stomach was hot and heavy with molten lead--

At least you had some semblance of hope.

You didn’t want to go to jail.

Just before 7 p.m., a black car pulled up outside your house.

You had been ready about a half hour by that point and had taken to pacing and peeking out the front window as time ticked by and your nerves continued to build. Seeing the car’s arrival just made everything feel more real and, after grabbing your purse and slipping on your shoes, you headed outside.

No turning back now.

The car looked expensive enough -- even in the dark you could see the way the streetlights gleamed off the exterior of the vehicle. The thing was polished. As you approached, the driver slipped out of the car, walking to pop open the door to the backseat. You thanked him with a tight smile that was reciprocated with a nod but ultimately hesitated before getting in.

There was someone already sitting back there.

And it wasn’t Kravitz.

The car’s unexpected occupant tilted down to look at you.

Oh god, was this a kidnapping?

The stranger muttered your name before the sides of his mouth twitched up in a barely-there smile.

“Judging from your reaction, it seems Doctor Kravitz didn’t tell you he already had a dinner guest tonight. Sorry for surprising you.”

“Oh!” You said a little too loudly with a forced laugh, eyes flickering to the impassive driver. You pulled your purse tighter against your body and shrugged. “Yeah, I didn’t know, I’m sorry. I hope I’m not intruding on anything private. Should I just reschedule or…?”

The man in the car shook his head and beckoned you in.

“No,” he said, sitting straighter to give you more room to take your seat. “Don’t be silly.”

He was waiting for you. The driver was still standing beside you. Since there was really no reason for you to be so on edge (right?), you got into the car.

You shared another tight smile with the stranger as you clicked in your seatbelt, using the opportunity to catch a cursory glance of him. He was a pretty boy -- angular and soft at the same time with an oddly-styled mess of light-colored hair. Lidded eyes momentarily met yours before you twisted your head away, a knee-jerk reaction to having been caught staring.

Once the driver was back behind the wheel, you were off.
You hoped the car ride wouldn’t be too long -- you were sitting in complete silence which just made the urge to say *something* even worse.

_Not even the radio?_

Despite it being a weekday night, not many people were out and about in the city. Clouds had rolled in during the late afternoon, the night sky an ominous shade of deep purple. They hadn’t called for rain but maybe you were in for a surprise shower.

“So, you were a colleague of the doctor?” the stranger asked several minutes into the what was probably a one-sidedly tense car ride. You were stopped at a red light -- all your attention had been focused on the world outside. Nodding, you glanced back at him, eyes falling on and following the strange angles of his hair.

_Was it natural or did he style it that way?_

“Yes!” You said before tugging at the sleeves of your coat, trying to pull the further down your wrists. “I actually… recently left his team to pursue other work.”

“He’s spoken of you. Highly.”

You lifted a brow at that but your companion didn’t elaborate on his statement. He just continued to lazily stare ahead, arms folded.

But now, _you_ were curious.

_Why had he talked about you?_

“How do you know Doctor Kravitz?” you asked, hoping the question came off as conversational instead of you digging for information.

“How through a mutual friend,” the man offered after a slight pause, shooting you a slow side-eye. “He’ll be the one securing that lawyer for you, but we can talk about it more over dinner.”

You were thunderstruck.

_This man knew what was going on in your life!?_

You slowly returned to staring at your window, no longer interested in engaging the unknown in conversation, choosing instead to busy yourself with your thoughts and worries.

No one spoke for the remainder of the drive, which *dragged* on, leaving you more apprehensive about what was happening. It didn’t help that you were moving further away from the city and, when the woods on either side of the empty road started to thicken, you seriously started planning on ways you could escape from your two captors if you were, in all actuality, being kidnapped.

But then, there was a backlit sign up the road that advertised noodles and the mess of ‘*oh no’s*’ plaguing you started to abate.

It was a noodle restaurant.

_You were going to dinner._

_You were being ridiculous._

_Skittish._
You’ve watched too many thrillers.

You weren’t being kidnapped for some inane reason, you were being brought to dinner by an old boss and his friend.

The restaurant was not the type of place you would stop in on your own, even with a group of friends. It looked a little run-down and slow, as if it catered mostly to local regulars rather than an ever-shifting dinner crowd like its brethren in the city proper.

While the driver materialized by your door to open it for you, the man beside you got out of the car by his own accord. He did wait for you, but judging from the abrupt pause halfway through the door of the restaurant, it had been an afterthought.

The interior was just as dated at the exterior. There was enka playing softly over bulky wooden speakers that hung in the corners of the various red-hued room. An older man and woman called out hello’s from behind the counter separating the dining area from the kitchen -- the stranger didn’t greet them back, but you did. He had beelined right toward the only other patron in the establishment.

Kravitz was all smiles when you approached, thanking you for agreeing to dinner on such short notice. You smiled back, taking a seat at the head of the table while the two men faced one another. It felt like a scene from an old style yakuza movie -- both Kravitz and your new friend had the door in the line of sight while you uncaringly had your back to it.

“I trust you were introduced in the car,” he said, sipping on one of the glasses of water that already decorated the table. You reached for yours, keeping your focus on the familiar face.

“It was a quiet ride,” you admitted with a soft grin, clinging to humor and the new minor ease you felt. The stranger exhaled a snort through his nose but didn’t bother to offer any kind of excuse. Kravitz looked to him momentarily before opting to change the subject completely.

“How do you like your new job?” he asked, surprisingly pleasantly. Perhaps he didn’t take your departure as personally as you thought, perhaps he did just view the move as a business decision. Your fingers and thumb traced sweeping patterns into the condensation of your glass.

“It’s going really well! I’ve been mostly focusing on costume alterations and repairs while Power Loader and his assistant focus on item work. It’s much slower-paced compared to Odaiba but so far I think it’s a very good fit for me.”

“That’s important,” Kravitz noted with a muted nod and you wondered if this was the same man who had been so unwilling to let you go a few weeks back. “A proper work-life balance is important.”

You raised a brow but didn’t call him out on his obvious double standards.

The talk stayed light -- you asked about your old team members and his work with Endeavor, Kravitz listened to you reiterate how happy you were. The stranger at the table stared off into space, plainly bored. You wondered when the waitress was going to return so you all could order food -- it was dinner and you were hungry. But when she reappeared, she had food already in hand. It took two trips for her to get all the dishes to the table and it wasn’t until Kravitz gestured for you to help yourself to the buffet did it sink in that dinner had already been ordered well before your arrival.

“I know it’s bad taste to talk business during dinner,” the doctor said, seeping his noodles, “but we probably should get the unpleasantness out of the way, don’t you think?”
Your other dinner companion was picking at a couple of tempura-fried vegetables and looked up, finally interested in the conversation.

“You should be careful about what you say on the phone,” Kravitz said, sharp eyes meeting yours, implying something. You blinked.

Then realization struck you and you blushed slightly, horrified at your naivety. Could your phone have been bugged? Was that a possibility?

You’d think someone so blase about turning to crime would be more... thoughtful about it.

You could punch yourself.

“But tell us,” Kravitz cleared his throat. “What kind of trouble are you in?”

You shrugged and sighed.

“I’m not sure. My neighbor just told me today that the police were asking about me. He’s a little boy, but he mentioned they asked his dad if there’s been a lot of foot traffic in and out of my house. I assume they have something on me, that maybe someone was arrested and mentioned my name.”

The doctor looked to the other man who sighed, pressing his back against his chair, stretching it.

“You’ve gotten yourself into some big trouble, little Artisan,” he said through a grunt, narrow eyes resting on you.

Your appetite disappeared. You could only stare back at him.

“You know what’s going on with me?” You didn’t bother to address the fact he knew your pseudonym -- the fear in your soul was too focused on what the ‘big trouble’ was.

Kravitz helped himself to another portion of noodles.

“Last year, you designed items that were used in a botched assassination attempt,” the man said and your entire world fractured. You let out a shaky breath as your stomach lurched, bringing a taste of fuzz with it.

Again? Again that one job was coming back to bite you?

It must have been obvious you were horrendously distressed, but both of your dinner companions appeared unbothered. Maybe they were unaware of basic human emotion but, looking back on the moment, you wondered if it was empathy they were lacking.

Empathy.

“Well, one of those devices has been linked back to you,” the man continued before slender shoulders lifted in a shrug. “That was all the information we managed to scrape from our source -- the men on the case are very tight-lipped about what leads they have. It just so happened one of them let that name of yours slip.”

“Artisan,” Kravitz said. “I like that.”

“Your situation is insignificant. However ...” The man rested a hand on his chin, considering you. “We’re interested in what you can do for us, if we were to help you out.”

“What do you mean?” Your eyes flickered back and forth between the two men. “Do you need me
to design something or--?"

“Your support skills are irrelevant,” the man interrupted.

“That’s not true,” Kravitz said, pausing his eating.

“You’ve got an interesting quirk, I’ve heard. A time quirk.”

Before you could offer any sort of acknowledgment, Kravitz shifted in his seat and the other man snapped his eyes away. The two locked gazes briefly before the man exhaled through his nose.

“We’re willing to help you,” he said, the slightest bite of irritation glazing his words. “We can provide a lawyer for you who, barring any screw-ups on your end, will help you.”

“Really?” you breathed, though your question went unacknowledged by the rest of your party.

“We don’t do things for free, though. If you accept our help, we will consider this a debt in our name.”

“How much--”

“They’re not asking for money,” Kravitz interjected with a slight roll of his eyes that he tried to suppress last minute. Catching himself, he gave you a tight smile. “I’ve been helping them, working on a special project with them. Outside of work. We’ve passed some pretty important milestones recently and looking to expand operations. Not now but… soon enough. When that happens, I’ll need some assistance from someone competent. Someone whose loyalty I can trust. It’s very much a, ‘you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours,’ situation… Artisan.”

“What kind of work are you doing?” the rational part of your brain was smart enough to ask.

“You know I can’t tell you that,” the doctor offered with another smile. “But I can promise you it’s nothing violent or dangerous. It’s more… medical.”

“Listen,” you gripped the edge of the table, tapping your fingers softly. “I can’t just… say yes to something like this--”

“Then the conversation is done and you’re on your own,” the other man said, standing. You were taken aback, watching as he pulled his phone from his pocket. “What a disappointment.”

“Think,” Kravitz said, leaning in toward you. His face and body language screamed of urgency and that stomach-dropping feeling from earlier was compounded. “We’re giving you resources and help in exchange for your knowledge.”

“We’ve already given far too much effort into this,” the man said, pushing his phone back into his pocket. “This meeting was a gift.”

“Nothing violent,” you said, the stress, terror, anxiety reaching enough of a mass to snap whatever resolve had been holding it up. Everything in your was twisted and ruined. Your fingers were twitching, the turmoil inside of you forcing a physical reaction. “Right? I’ll just be working in a lab?”

“You’ll just be working in a lab,” Kravitz repeated, placing a reassuring hand on yours. His palm was clammy and the sudden touch felt like it scorched your skin but you resisted the urge to pull your it away, too focused on devil’s deal you were about to sign.

“How long will I be working on the project?” At the doctor’s shrug, you furrowed your brows. “I
mean, I have a job now and if I’m looking at a life of indentured servitude—”

“Oh nothing like that,” Kravitz said with a wave of his hand, removing it from yours. “You’ll be able to work at your job just fine, don’t you worry. Trust me, have I steered you wrong before?”

“Okay.”

You didn’t mean for the affirmation to taken as an agreement to the deal--

But it was.

The smile on Kravitz’s face grew until it was unnaturally large and wide. He clapped his hands together, looking to his compatriot.

“Okay!” he repeated while you fell into a panicked look. He nodded toward the other man. “Okay, Kurono?”

No, that’s not what you meant!

Okay, as in your understood what he said.

You needed more time to think!

“It seems we made a deal, then,” Kurono said, tilting his head. “The boss will be pleased to hear we’ve added another time quirk to our little family.”

“There’s still so much that I’ve got to finish up before I bring you onboard,” Kravitz said, excited even though you looked stunned by your own spinelessness. “The lab we’ve gotten--”

“We will help you,” Kurono said, interrupting Kravitz. “As was promised. I’ll send this lawyer over to your house tomorrow morning. You are not to breathe a word to anyone about us. Do not call the doctor. When you’re needed, we will come for you.”

“Don’t...” Kravitz paused, searching for the best phrasing. “Don’t take his warning lightly... Artisan. We’re doing good work but--”

“Keep your mouth shut and you’ll be perfectly fine.”

You knew then you were screwed. No matter what choice you made, it was the bad one. And, like so many times before, you wished you could turn back time and just start over. In general. Go back and decline that first job you accepted. Never get yourself into such a mess in the first place.

“... Right,” you mumbled out, clenching your teeth almost painfully, ashamed How quick you were to rely on others to save you. That you needed saving.

There was a time you thought you were resilient. Street smart. Savvy.

How fast that image of you crumbled when actually put to the test.

You were disgusted with yourself.

The dinner ended then. It couldn’t have been any longer than thirty minutes. You would be driven back home. Alone. Which suited you just fine. Kravitz opened the door to the car for you, happily going on about how excited he was to work with you once more. Though, he noted with a laugh, it had only been a few weeks since you had quit.
“Guess you just can’t get away from me!”

The other guy was nowhere to be seen.

The driver didn’t talk to you and, like before, didn’t put on the radio leaving you both in silence. Although the feeling of dread had released you from its chokehold, you still couldn’t shake the feeling that you had just done something incredibly stupid.

Actually, feeling wasn’t quite right -- you knew you had done something incredibly stupid.

How much would a lawyer have cost you on your own? A good one?

But it wasn’t the cost of trying to piece together your own legal team that you were so worried about -- it was the unknown. What was going to happen? How could they come after you almost a year after the fact? What if everything fell apart and you got in trouble? What could you be charged with? Three people died because of the things you created.

You had killed three people, intentionally or not. You may not have filled the items with whatever had been put in there to kill them, but you had provided them. You were partly responsible.

You were spiraling again. Locked in your ‘woe is me’ mindset, painfully aware every hardship you faced was your own doing. Everything was your fault. Don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

Were you hopeful?

Not really.

You weren’t sure if you just made your situation better or worse.

The lawyer came for you the next morning.

And on Friday, at work, just after lunch, two police detectives showed up to ask you questions.

Their arrival wasn’t met with any kind of surprise -- Power Loader was off doing hero work, Hatsume simply didn’t care. You had been the one to answer the door, your heart plummeting through the hardwood and splattering across the clean floor of the underground laboratory.

Out front, the officers declared why they were there -- they were investigating a triple homicide that had occurred several months back. Three members of the Yoshida family had been killed. Your name had come up as the former owner of a music box that had been found in possession of one of the men who had died.

They had questions.

But you couldn’t talk at the moment -- you were at work, helping Hatsume piece together a gun that would fire off restraints. Could they come back or…?

Surprisingly, the officers -- detectives -- were very accommodating. They didn’t drag you out in handcuffs, as you had envisioned, they gave you a business card and asked that you stop by their offices on Monday. It was a token of goodwill, “please don’t make us come searching for you,” they had warned. “Otherwise, it will reflect pretty poorly on you.”

And they would come searching for you.

You promised you’d be there.
And, first thing Monday morning, you were there -- at the police station, the lawyer so generously gifted to you standing at your side.

When you had first met him, your lawyer Shuu, you had expected someone different. Someone slimy. Not the boisterous, affable fellow who ended every sentence with a laugh. He exuded a slow kind of charm that put you at ease. He was likable, albeit a bit strange.

He didn't want to hear any explanations from you about your roll in everything. He wouldn't let you talk about any aspects of your life. You just answered his questions and kept him supplied with a steady helping of tea. Shuu had warned you to let him do all the talking--

"Detective Naomasa!" Shuu said as you were approached by the two officers from the other day. Apparently, he knew the name of one, who greeted him with strained pleasantness. "Hope you've been well, it's been some time, hasn't it?"

"Mister Shuu. This is a… surprise."

"Private citizens requesting legal council shouldn't be a surprise to you!" your lawyer said with one of his goodnatured laughs tacked on. "It's a right! A basic tenant of the legal system!"

"It’s not that…" Naomasa frowned at you. "We haven’t spoken to her yet... This is very much jumping the gun, don’t you think?"

"Nonsense, this is called being prepared! No slight against you Naomasa, my friend, but it’s the police’s job to solve crimes and it’s my job to keep people protected!" After another chuckle, Shuu coughed into his fist. "Now, we’re not going to stand out here and rip on a poor girl for bringing legal representation, are we? Didn’t you tell her you were investigating a murder case? That’s no small charge, Naomasa. Can you really fault her for being worried?"

"Right…” Naomasa looked to his partner before beckoning you both to follow him. You were being led away from the front vestibule of the police station, passed groupings of dated desks and loitering officers. The journey ended in a simple white room down a quiet hallway, a cheap-looking metal desk in the center of it.

It took a few minutes to get everything set up -- another chair had to be collected and brought into the room, the offer of tea and water was accepted by your lawyer, two separate individuals poked their heads in looking to speak with Naomasa privately. It was definitely not the high-stress event television usually made it out to be.

Eventually, the preparations ended and both of your parties were left seated at the table, waiting. You were gingerly sipping at your tea, Shuu was texting away on his phone.

"So…” Naomasa cleared his throat, offering a friendly smile. “I just want to ask some basic questions, alright? Procedure.”

With shaking hands you hid beneath the table, you nodded.

The detective started with some pretty basic inquiries: what was your name? Spell it, please. What was your birthdate? Where do you currently live?

“Do you know why we brought you here?”

You hesitated, looking to your lawyer for some kind of guidance. He placed his phone down on the table, meeting your eyes with confusion, gesturing for you to answer. ‘Don’t look at me, dumbass!'
“You came by last week,” you said slowly, as if the whole thing was a potential trap. “You asked me to come in to talk with you. Answer some questions.”

“In regards to what?”

“... A murder?”

Naomasa nodded, folding his hands on the table.

“Are you familiar with the Yoshida family?”

You didn’t want to look at the man beside you but you hesitated again, seeing if he would speak up to guide you. Should you answer it? When he didn’t give you any kind of signal, you shrugged.

“I mean, yes. They’ve been in the news before. The grandmother injured that kid two years back, didn’t she? The hit and run?”

“Have you, personally, met any members of the Yoshida family?”

While Naomasa was asking the question, you felt a minor pressure on the edge of your shoe -- someone had inadvertently placed their foot on yours. When you went to slide it out of their way, the foot pressed down harder.

“No,” you found yourself answering, jolting in your chair.

“Are… Are you okay?” a concerned Naomasa asked. He wasn’t the only one looking at your strangely -- everyone was. Your tremor had made your chair scrape across the floor. It looked like you had been shocked.

“Do you need a break?” Shuu asked, his hand coming to rest reassuringly on your shoulder.

That hadn’t been you.

The answer hadn’t been you.

“No, no, I’m sorry!” You laughed, rubbing your arms through your thin black shirt. It was the first action that had popped into your head. “That was weird, wasn’t it?”

“Seems like a form of torture to me, Naomasa, making the room so frigid!” Shuu chastised jokingly, taking the rubbing of your arms to mean you were cold. “Gonna waterboard her next?”

“Do you need more tea? I wish I could turn the heat up but--”

“No, it’s fine!” You were pulling your coat back on, grimacing. “Sorry. Didn't mean to make a scene.”

“No apology needed. But a break, did you need one…?”

You shook your head and tugged your jacket tighter around you, though it was more for emotional comfort.

The pressure was back on your foot -- someone was touching you again. But you were almost expecting it and didn’t give off another dramatic reaction when Naomasa repeated his earlier question: had you personally met a member of the Yoshida family?

Your puppet mouth replied, ‘no.’
Someone was controlling you.

Or they were, at least, controlling your voice.

“I’m going to show you a picture…” the detective reached into a manila envelope that was in front of his partner, pulling out a large print-out of a music box. “Does this item look familiar to you?”

“Yes,” you answered. Though it was the truth, it hadn’t been you who answered.

“Do you know what it is?”

“A music box.”

“Have you ever owned this music box?”

“Define owned,” the stranger asked, using you as a mouthpiece. Naomasa’s face twitched, brows furrowing slightly.

“What do you mean by that?”

“I purchased this music box as a gift,” you heard yourself say. “From an online reseller. Shuu has the receipt.”

“Oh!” Your lawyer perked up at being referenced, reaching down for his messenger bag which sat forgotten on the floor. You followed his movements--

It was his foot that was on yours.

“Here you are…” He thumbed through a large collection of papers, shuffling them before finally pulling out the print-out of some kind of receipt.

“I never ended up giving my friend their gift--” Was he using you as a puppet? “-- And it was collecting dust in my house. So I decided to cut my losses and sell it on Amazon. The username of the buyer and the shipping address is listed there.”

“Did you do any kind of modifications to the box? Any repairs? Repaints?”

“None whatsoever! I kept it in the box for weeks. I think I even used the same box when I mailed it out to the new buyer.”

“Do you mind if we make a copy of this print-out?”

“Keep it. I mean, I have access to the account whenever.”

Naomasa looked up, considering you before pulling out two more photographs from the folder. A watch and a pair of glasses.

“Have you seen either of these two items before?”

“These are pretty common items… but I don’t think so,” you puppeted. Playing along, you looked between the pictures. “They don’t strike me as familiar.”

“So you were never contracted, or hired, to modify these items?”

“Absolutely not,” your puppeteer answered for you, a bald-faced lie.
Kuryuu looked to Naomasa out of the corner of his eye but didn’t see any kind of hint of what his partner was thinking.

“You work as a support scientist, correct?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What kind of work do you do?”

“Gonna have to step in, Naomasa,” Shuu said. “My client is under some pretty strict NDAs regarding what she works on. She can't talk about specifics.”

“Were you employed at Odaiba Research Labs last year?”

“For a few months,” you said, control of your vocal cords given back to you.

“Prior to that?”

“I worked at a smaller laboratory.”

Naomasa tilted his head, squinting slightly.

“Did you? What was the name of this lab?”

The foot was back, pressed a little harder against you.

“Well, I should clarify. I did a lot of research with a scientist based out of the University of Tokyo. It was a lab position but mostly helped with research.”

Naomasa’s brow furrowed.

“So you didn’t work at a lab?”

“I did but... it’s hard to explain if you’re not in the field.” Your voice laughed but it didn’t quite connect with your body -- it sounded hollow and forced. It quickly ended. “It was a research fellowship. I’ve just gotten used to telling everyone I worked in a lab It's just easier to say and it's basically true.”

“What was the name of the researcher you worked with?”

“Brought his contact information!” Shuu said brightly, passing along a photocopy of a business card. “Can’t talk about what she worked on, though.”

“That’s very helpful,” Naomasa said, sliding the paper over to his partner.

“It’s a murder investigation, my friend. I’m not about to let my client walk in here unprepared!”

It was a cat and mouse game, the questioning. Naomasa would ask a question. Sometimes you were free to answer it on your own, other times Shuu literally stepped in. You wondered what kind of quirk he had. It must have been some puppeteering power but why hadn’t he warned you that he was going to answer questions for you? Why did he feel the need to step in? Was he worried you were going to dig yourself into a hole?

Document after document he managed to provide, all of which you had never seen before. Answer after answer he had prepared. The lab space you rented in Kamino? Done on behalf of your former boss in Tokyo. Current position? You were allowed to answer that -- you worked with Power
Loader helping with costume augmentation and design.

The meeting was exhausting. It was extensive. Unbeknownst to you, Naomasa and Kuryuu were following their only lead and wanted to be thorough. But, barring any inconsistencies with the information and documentation you provided… you looked to be a dead-end.

Though they did have the sales receipt you had provided. Of who you had sold the music box to. An address in Akita City.

They would have to check on it.

Discussions eventually turned to you -- it was Shuu who dropped the fact that you were a bit of a small-time hero. You were there at the Odiaba attack and had saved a coworker, gaining some recognition for it. Your face burned red, you were looking at your empty teacup when you felt two sets of eyes on you.

“That’s right,” the other detective, who had barely spoken, whistled. “I remember seeing you next to Endeavor on the news!”

“She’s been pretty wrapped up in the hero world lately,” Shuu said, boasting like a proud father. “She’s quite a pillar in the community, you know.”

“I guess we’ll be seeing you in the rankings soon,” Naomasa said. It was a friendly joke -- he had a smile on his face. You returned it as best as you could and shrugged.

“Doubt it. Though, I don’t see myself as a hero.”

He detected no falsehoods.

About an hour and a half after you entered the police station, you left.

It had been completely draining. A heavy pressure had rested on your shoulders and the possible consequences that you faced if your interview didn’t hold up made everything much, much worse. You had left your contact information with the detectives -- you were available to speak by phone if they have any more questions.

One last inquiry, on your way out, did catch you off guard. Naomasa had paused to hold the door of the interrogation room open for you. Shuu was in the hallway rowdily speaking with Kuyruu about spring training.

“One last thing, if you don’t mind,” he asked. "Did anyone… mention to you, what my quirk is?"

You blinked at him.

“No,” you said, honestly. “I don’t know.”

Naomasa rubbed the back of his head bashfully, ignoring your suspicious look, having detected no falsehoods on your part.

“Don’t worry about it, then. It won’t affect you at all!”

You relayed the last-minute exchange to Shuu in the parking lot after you exited the station. There was a car waiting for you both -- it would drop you off at home and take the lawyer to wherever place he was headed next. It wasn’t until you were safely tucked away inside the vehicle, away from any possible eavesdroppers, that he acknowledged what you had said with a chuckle.
That same, easy chuckle was the answer to all of the questions that tumbled out of you now that you were alone. Had been controlling you? What was his quirk, exactly? Why hadn’t he warned you that he was going to control you? Why? Why did he do that?

Eventually, he silenced you with a raise of his hand.

“Have you ever seen the American show *Seinfeld*?” he asked, scratching at his perfectly chiseled jawline. The name rung a bell and, when you thought about it, you could picture the possible logo of the show in your mind. It was on your television screen, though it passed by quickly as All Might scrolled for something a little bit more interesting to watch. You shifted your head side-to-side, miming a mixture of ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ “You should watch it, it’s a good show. In one of the episodes, a character gives some good advice to a friend who’s going to go take a lie detector test: *It’s not a lie if you believe it.*”

He looked at you. You stared blankly back.

What?

Shuu walked you to your door when you arrived home, double checking that you still had his contact information tucked away. He left you with simple instructions -- you could answer questions over the phone but to keep in mind the ‘facts’ that were dropped today during the interview. If police officers showed up at your door, requesting an in-person meeting, you were to turn them away and call for him.

Under no circumstances were you to answer questions in person without him present.

Then, with a strong handshake, he left.

It wasn’t even early afternoon and, although you had taken a personal day to handle your legal woes, you ended up at work. A distraction was needed. You arrived just in time too -- Hatsume had somehow, for some reason, set off fireworks in the lab.

The police didn’t come back to bother you. They didn’t call you either. No one did -- not your lawyer, not Kravitz. It was frightening how quickly everything just... went away. About a month later, you came across a story on the news -- an arrest was made in connection to the Yoshida murder. A man from Akita City had been taken into custody. Details were still emerging.

You turned the TV off after hearing that, your nerves jittering. You were ashamed and horrified with how relieved you felt, even though an innocent man may have just been framed.

It was best not to think about it.

After that... life went on. You weren’t aware of the black-haired man who had been tasked with keeping an eye on you in the days following your questioning. Who followed you to and from work, watched as you completed daily errands, confirming you were as up-and-up as you claimed to be. His assignment ended when the Akita City arrest was made.

You were just focused on yourself. On your life. And, for almost a year, you lived your life quietly. No villains. No lies. No deceit.

For the first time in years, were just a normal, contributing member of society. Your skeletons, you hoped, were buried.

That was until one morning in May, when you decided to go out for a jog.
I hope you enjoy the chapter! Sorry it was delayed -- my laptop has been dead for a couple weeks now and I've been writing chapters on my phone. Which is kind of hard, especially if each of your chapters is about as long as a goddamn epic poem. But, I have a new laptop now and my fingers are so happy.

Anyway, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your support! I’ve got about 400 comments that I have responded to and I let pile up like a hoarder -- I think I’m going to cut my losses and clean out my inbox and try to start fresh with replying to comments going forward. There’s no way in hell I can manage responding to them. I’m a barely functioning person.

Just a quick note: there will be a chapter this Saturday but there won't be one next weekend. My friends are throwing me an early birthday bash and I will definitely not be in the right mindset to write lmao. Thanks again for reading, my friends!
July

July was the month your worries started to abate.

No phone calls. No visitors. No emails. No police.

Silence.

Beautiful silence.

August

“You smell that?”

You furrowed your brows, lifting your nose in the air, inhaling deeply. You expected to smell burning. Fire. Gas. Something alarming. Instead, all you caught was a slight whiff of cleaner and the musk from an unwashed man.

“I don’t smell anything,” you said, looking over to where Power Loader was working on his exoskeleton. He had paused, a grease rag in hand. Though you couldn’t see his face, you knew he was grinning at you.

He was going to make a lame joke.

“Smells like fall. You know what that means?”

“You’ll put on a shirt?”

“School,” he said with a dreamy sigh. “Summer break will be over, classes will start up again and Hatsume will go back to only working nights and weekends. Hours. I’ll be free from her for hours.”

You rolled your eyes at his dramatics, sheathing your needle into the suit you were crouched over before cracking your fatigued fingers.

It was a good enough opportunity for a break.

“Stop acting like you don’t want her around,” you chided, standing and launching into a full body stretch that made you groan with satisfaction. “All you talk about is Hatsume. ‘Hatsume this, Hatsume that. She’s so annoying, she drives me up the wall, she’s a genius, look at this cool box she made.’ You were doing a poor impression of him and he was waving your attempt away with a
‘bah.’ “You can’t hide it -- she’s your little star.”

“Saying something like that is grounds for termination.”

You smiled sweetly at him.

---

**October**

*Right.*

*Physical exercise.*

You were standing beside a little section of the park by your house that was a dedicated playground. Young families had swarmed it, out to enjoy the nice fall day with their little ones. It had been raining off and on for the past several weeks and had finally stopped long enough for the mud puddles to dry up.

A gaggle of children rocketed by you playing some kind of keep away game that incorporated their quirks.

It was a nice day out.

It was also the day you had decided to *finally* heed your therapist’s advice and start an activity that got you moving.

Well, that wasn’t entirely true. There was a yoga studio in your neighborhood run by an excitable cloud person. You attended classes regularly enough that the teacher could greet you by name but you weren’t able to swing your legs behind your ears or pose on your head.

But it was helping stretch out your back.

Unfortunately for you, your therapist decided yoga wasn’t *enough*. You needed something more active to help pass the stress out of your body. All of your emotions, he declared, had a bad aftertaste with them. Usually, he associated that with long-standing concerns. Something was bothering you and you were lying when you told him you didn’t know what it could be.

You shook your arms, bouncing from one foot to the other, mentally preparing yourself.

A grey-skinned individual passed you, jogging by so effortlessly. You doubted your jogging form would hold even an iota of their grace.

At some point though, you just had to start, otherwise you’d probably start getting weird looks from the nearby parents.

*Breath in your nose, out your mouth.*

And then you were off.

---

**December**
There was a gift on your desk when you arrived at work, three days before Christmas. It was nicely wrapped -- a red package with green ribbon. There was no tag declaring who it was from but it could only be one of two people--

*Well, unless one of your clients had decided to give you a Christmas present.*

The sound of rumbling earth around lunchtime signaled that Power Loader had finally decided to visit the office. It was the first time you had seen him all day -- you had spent most of the morning working on a simple repair job for a hero by the name of Fatgum. The hero’s suit was specially made to expand and contract with his shifting body mass and the hooded sweatshirt he usually wore had gotten a fairly large tear down the back of it.

You were patching it up.

Out of the corner of your eye, you watched as the digging hero collapsed the tunnels that decorated the dirt floor of the purposely unfinished portion of his lab. And, with a grumble, he disengaged from his exoskeleton.

“Did you get me a Christmas present?” you asked him, unable to hide the genuine smile on your face.

“You sure as hell know Hatsume didn’t get you one,” he grumbled, poking at a burn he had gotten on the exposed flesh of his arm. The present caught his attention as he passed by your workstation. “You haven’t opened it yet?”

“I wanted to wait for you!” you said brightly, before pausing and letting out an awkward chuckle. “And I wanted to, uh, inquire about the… motivations behind the present--”

“Open the damn present,” he barked. “I don’t date employees and I sure as hell wouldn’t want to date you.”

“Your gruffness hides you true feelings, *senpai*,” you cooed back to him though you were relieved by his response. You liked your job too much to get caught up in some weird workplace romance. And your boss just… wasn’t your type.

He dug out the first-aid kit shoved inside an over-cluttered cabinet, watching out of the corner of his eye as you set aside your tools to finally go over and tug off the ribbon of the gift. Carefully you removed the paper, setting it aside before opening the flimsy cardboard box.

He hadn’t gotten you anything special. Just a candle and a package of business cards -- things that the internet told him was a good gift for an employee.

He had gotten Hatsume an American football helmet.

You shouted your thanks at him, sniffing the cookie-scented candle before finding out the smaller box was full of business cards. You were chuckling to yourself, looking them over and he was pleased with how good of a boss he was.

What he wasn’t expecting, however, was the crying that suddenly popped up.

“Wait…” he smeared the rest of the ointment onto his burn in a panic before gingerly approaching your midly heaving form. “What…? Did I… Why are you crying? *Stop it*!”

You were shaking your head, trying to wave him off, mortified that you were crying so openly. You were fine, you said with a ugly laugh.
“This is just… so sweet,” you managed to get out, wiping beneath your eyes with your thumbs, laughing harder at your strangeness and his uncomfortableness.

“Do you need me to get you toilet paper? I don’t think we have tissues--”

“Thank you,” you said earnestly, a sob tumbling out of you. "Thank you."

He rubbed his arm, unsure what to say to you.

“Uh… y’welcome?”

---

January

It was a strange job.

You looked over at the almost dozen suits that were spread across the largest worktable in the lab, poking your fingers through the various holes and tears that decorated them.

It was a strange job because these weren’t hero costumes -- these were just suits. Expensive suits, yes, but they weren’t traditional hero garb. There was nothing cutting edge or scientific about their make. Hell, they weren’t even flashy.

“So you… just want me to repair the holes?” you asked, baffled, turning to stare at the multi-arm man who had brought in his collection.

Fourth Kind sighed, leaving two of his arm crossed while the other two unfolded into a slight shrug.

“My tailor has been visiting his family in Thailand for months. I was going to wait until he got back but… I’m running low on outfits that don’t have holes in them.”

“These are nice suits,” you said to him, trying to be as diplomatic as you could even though your inner support scientist was bitching in protest. “Don’t get me wrong. They feel very expensive--”

“They were.”

“But…” You chewed on the inside of your cheek. “I mean this in the most respectful way -- it’s not worth my time to fix these.”

The man scowled but you didn’t waver under his gaze, meeting his eye as you continued to explain your reasoning.

“For me to do these repairs is… Let’s just say it would be better for your wallet if you go out and find a nice tailor to fix the ones that are salvageable. In all honesty, though, I would just go out and buy new suits. I don’t think many of these can be saved without leaving behind some super obvious stitching.”

“One of the heroes in my agency came here to get his suit repaired -- Steelbrow --” Your ears perked up in recognition. “He said you might be able to help me, which is why I came by in the first place.”

“Ah, but Steel has unique suits,” you said, face lighting up.

“How so?” he asked, unaware he had made a terrible mistake -- he had asked an inventor to explain something of theirs.
You then proceeded to fall into an almost forty minute monologue about intricacies of the costume that belonged to the relatively unknown hero. Fourth Kind watched, mesmerized, as your behavior increased in animation and glee as you amped yourself up before finally disappearing to grab him the fabric swatches you had ordered of the various patterns that were offered.

“Though, I’m sure you could get something special ordered,” you said with a scoff, looking at the man leaning over the table beside you, treating him as if he was a colleague you had been shooting the shit with.

It was then you noticed his wide-eyes and slightly slackened jaw.

You were awfully close to him.

“Ah, sorry about that,” you said, scratching at your nose, jerking away to get out of his space. “I get overexcited about these things. Why… Why did I start talking about fabric with you…?”

“Steelbrow--”

“Oh! Right! Steelbrow! Anyway, that’s why I take a special interest in his suits. They were made by me using some pretty special fabric. It’s like comparing a luxury car to a…” You gestured to the Fourth Kind’s clothing, “…. sedan, basically.”

You insulted him.

When you realized what you just said, you immediately attempted to backtrack, waving your hands and apologizing profusely. You didn’t mean to call his expensive suits lowtier! Surely they were luxury items in the world of regular business attire!

But the man just smirked at you, laughing under his breath at your antics.

“Alright,” he declared loudly, the two arms that weren’t folded settling on his hips. “You’ve convinced me. What would it cost to get some of these special suits of yours made?”

“Well… eh, I mean, I can whip up an estimate, if you want. But I really hope I didn’t guilt you--”

“Yeah, give me an estimate,” he said. And then he paused. “And would you be the one I would be working with, then? You’d be making them?”

“Yes, sir!” You said with what you hoped was an easy smile. “I do most of the costuming stuff around here, so I’ll be the one doing the fitting and the repairs. You know, all that good stuff”

“That’s… good to hear.”

February

He could hear it as he approached -- a rhythmic thudding. A struggling grunt.

All Might wasn’t sure what he expected when he stood at the lip of the quarry, gazing down into the large unnatural pit. The sun had just begun to rise but it was light enough that he could make out most of the landscape below.

His brows knitted together as he watched as a familiar green-haired teen struggle up the dirt road that followed the perimeter of the quarry, gradually leading out of its depths. Carried on his back was a
large slab of limestone--

Immediately darkened eyes turned to where the massive pile of stone had been left forgotten in the pit. It had been several stories high when All Might had brought his potential protege to the quarry almost a year ago. It was then he declared that this would be the teenager’s main project -- one by one, Midoriya would carry each slab of limestone up the winding dirt road, out of the quarry and create a new pile up at ground level.

There was no purpose to the instruction, no one was going to come and collect the slabs. It was just something heavily physical the boy could do away from the general populace.

It was purposefully back-breaking labor.

There was a general softness to the boy that All Might suspected would snuff out his desire for a quirk. The limestone was heavy, the dirt road was an uneven incline and All Might was not a kind master. He had the boy working in the rain, in the snow, in the heat and in the cold. A stumble? All Might would send both the slab and Midoriya careening back in the pit to start over.

The villain’s words were sharp, the praise almost nonexistent, fists and boots were quick to lash out at him.

But there he was, Midoriya. The last slab of stone on his back. He had done the unthinkable--

He had finished it.

The quarry was cleared out.

All Might’s orders were completed.

The symbol of discord had been proven wrong.

Truly, All Might had not expected success from the quirkless boy.

Midoriya breached groundlevel, starting the final leg of his journey. It looked like his knees were about to buckle beneath him -- how long had he been there?

Hours, by the look of it.

The deadline to his training was today. In about three hours time, the teenager was scheduled to attend the entrance exams at Yuuei. Had he not finished, it would have been over. All Might had told him he would move on, leave Midoriya to return to his quirkless existence as a failure.

But… he had done it.

A strange feeling welled in All Might’s chest -- pride?

Pride.

In the privacy of his mind, All Might could admit that he admired the teenager.

But another realization quickly took hold of him--

Now, Midoriya expected him to hold up his end of the deal.

For All Might to transfer One for All.
The villain’s body flushed warm as he stared back down into the quarry.

… *Give up One for All...*

He had always expected that the story of One of All would end with him. Never had he considered integrating himself into the chain that had been weaved by the succession of each master and the rise of a pupil -- All Might believed he had effectively severed everything. Early in his life, he had come to the conclusion he was never going to pass on his quirk. He had already disrupted its existence by the choices he had made.

It would be his forever and when he died, it would die with him.

*He had promised.*

There was also… a powerful grief welling in the deepest depths of his existence. A *powerful* grief.

If he relinquished his ownership of One for All--

What would happen to him?

*Who was he without All Might?*

A heavy thud clapped and echoed across the quarry. Midoriya had made it, collapsing on his hands and knees before his great pile, gasping and grunting at the ground.

*He had promised.*

*But was it a promise worth keeping?*

All Might didn’t want to let it go.

It was dying in his hands, growing more useless as each day passed but *goddammit* he didn’t want to lose it. Everything he *was* resided within One for All.

*Don’t let it go.*

But then there was a whisper in his ear. A comforting voice, long forgotten, murmuring truths to him...

A sharp nudge brought Midoriya back to consciousness.

He blinked awake, realizing then he was laying on the ground. With a groan, he went to push his upper body up, only for his arms to give out and send him crashing back down to the earth.

With a steadying breath, he tried again, whimpering at the burning sensation that flared across his upper body and limbs as he pushed himself up to a kneeling position.

All Might was towering over him, face obscured by shadows, massive arms crossed against his chest.

The teenager… waited, painfully aware it was the moment of truth.

*He had done what All Might had asked.*

“You know, kid, I really didn’t expect you to finish,” All Might grunted, casting an unreadable gaze at the mountain of stone he was standing beside. “I *really* didn’t expect you to finish.”
Midoriya made fists.

*He did all this quirkless?*

*Imagine what he could do if he had power.*

“A deal’s a deal.”

Part of Midoriya expected All Might to renege on his promise. That his training had all been some strange, cruel joke orchestrated by the villain. When the man plucked a single blond hair from his head, the teenager thought his fears had been confirmed. All Might was poking fun at him.

But an unnervingly serious All Might explained *how* One for All was transferred. The ingesting of DNA.

And, Midoriya believed him.

There was no pomp and circumstance surrounding the passing of his quirk. In fact, the imposing man ended up shoving the strand of hair into his successor’s mouth before, literally, kicking his ass -- snapping at him to get moving as Midoriya only had a small window of time to get home, showered and up to Yuuei for the exam.

Nothing... felt different about him and All Might wondered if the transfer had really taken place. If it had even worked.

But that wasn’t entirely true.

He *did* feel something.

Deep within his heart of hearts, All Might felt a tremendous sense of loss.

It cut deeper than the death of his master, stung much worse than any hardship he ever faced and instilled such an alien sense of *fear* within him.

Those thoughts were his and his alone, never to be shared with another living soul. Hell, *he* didn’t even want to acknowledge them.

But, there were there.

And they haunted him for days.

For Yagi Toshinori, he considered that quiet morning in February, under the hazy orange sun of winter, the day the All Might of yore died.

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**March**

The taste was all but gone.

You were sitting in your therapist’s office, pulling at the fringe of the pillow on the couch beside you, describing the relationships you had with your friends. During the past weekend, you informed him, you had gone out to celebrate a friend’s birthday and had a great time.
Whatever stress that had gotten ahold of you was easing.

The taste of spring greens was on his tongue -- you were talking about your most responsible friend -- when he gently stopped you.

“How do you see yourself?” he asked.

“What do you mean?”

“You have all of the people in your life categorized. The free spirits, the responsible ones, the troublemakers. How do you see yourself?”

That’s when he tasted it -- the flavor that represented you.

In your mind, at least.

It was dry and sweet. Crisp with a bite to it, almost like wine.

A hard cider?

While you gathered your thoughts, struggling to answer, he looked back on the notes of your previous meetings. Apple juice was your taste of comfort, he read, so cider made sense.

Fermentation? That was a chemical breakdown from outside forces. You saw yourself as having reactionary behavior. Alcohol was also an interesting taste to identify with. Enjoyed responsibly, it represented freedom and fun. A good time. But it was also a major depressant. Too much led to stupor, drunkenness… a breakdown of the body…

Cider was an odd choice too. Wine, beer and even sake were the more prominent alcoholic flavors that people inadvertently thought represented them. Why cider?

“I’m... smart,” you informed him. “... I think I’m pretty nice. I’m a good friend.”

“Keep going. Give me more.”


“You know yourself best, keep going.”

“I’m thoughtful,” you said, eyes falling to the floor. “I’m… affectionate?”

“One more.”

“I’m loyal.”

That taste was back.

“Now negative character traits.” he said. “You gave me a couple of good ones, give me five aspects of your personality that you could work on.”

“I can be dishonest,” you said with a sigh. “Irresponsible. Stupid. Impatient. And… I can be too emotional.”

Salted earth.

“You told me about the relationships you had with your friends,” he said breezily, slowly writing
down his thoughts in his notepad. Of the delicate impairment you believed you represented, the destructive behavior that lurked if you had too much. Of the fruit-tainted dryness that surprisingly complimented the metal and earth on his tongue. “Why don’t you tell me about your other relationships.”

“With who, like my parents?”

“Well… what about a significant other? Have anyone important in your life?”

You winced.

Dark molasses coated his tongue.

"No."

---

April

“So…”

The four-armed hero, Fourth Kind, stood at the gate of Power Loader’s building, several plain black garment bags draped over both sets of arms. You were beside him, holding a box containing some bright-colored ties that you had gifted him as a thank-you for his extensive order. For the past several weeks, working on his job had taken up a lot of your time and energy.

And now, everything was finished.

A black SUV was waiting for him out front of the building, his driver was walking toward you both, ready to start loading up the hero’s haul.

“This is everything!” you said brightly. “Call me if you notice any damage and I’ll fix it. Though, please don’t wait until you have no outfits left. That puts me under lot of stress trying to rush and finish my work so that you have, you know, clothes.”

He cracked an unsure smile before standing straighter, depositing one armload of bags into his driver’s hands.

Then, he coughed into a freed fist.

For the past month, he had become an almost-regular visitor. First, it was to participate in fittings, then it morphed into an almost weekly drop-in to see how everything was coming along. Honestly, you had only asked him to come once so you could grab measurements -- the other visits had be requested by him.

You assumed he was just… particular. Besides, he was always nice and complimentary, so you weren’t that bothered by his unnecessary appearances.

“You’ve been very… good.” the hero said, the metal frame surrounding the lower portion of his face clicking slightly as he shifted his jaw. “Very helpful.”

“It’s part of the job! Oh, don’t forget these…” You handed him the box of ties, shoving your hands into the pockets of your cardigan when they were empty. “There’s nothing special about those ties, sorry. Other than being a pop of color for you.”
“I really appreciate your kindness,” he stressed and you dismissed his thanks. By then the driver was back for another armful of goods.

When he disappeared, Fourth Kind cleared his throat, adjusting his tie.

“You know… there’s an Italian Restaurant in the shopping district that just opened up. I’ve heard some really good things about it.”

Your eyebrows shot up.

What is he doing?

“Oh?”

“I’d like to take you there, for dinner, if you’d like. My treat. A thanks for all the effort you put in. And because you’re…” He momentarily looked off to the side. “Good company.”

“Are you asking me out on a date?” you asked, the skin of your chest and neck tingling.

“Of course I am,” he said gruffly, arms falling to his sides as he bowed. “You’re a delight.”

The words didn’t quite match up to the macho personality in front of you. Laughing, you rubbed at your chin before sliding your hand down to stroke the back of your neck. He was still in his bow, staring at your calves.

“It’s… not a good idea to date clients,” you muttered. Even though he was facing possible rejection, his face didn’t change.

One date.

He was nice enough.

Plus he did just drop a boatload of money…

“Alright,” you said, with a shrug. “One date.”

He looked relieved when he stood straight, releasing a sigh. You had already exchanged phone numbers a couple of weeks back at his behest (though now you knew why he had wanted your number). Thursday night you were free -- he would check his schedule and call you with a possible time.

Thankfully, he didn't try to hug you or fish for any kind of physical affection. He just gave you another bow and headed to his car.

“Hey…”

He was about halfway into the backseat when he heard your call out to him and froze. You had been swinging the gate closed when you had stopped to point at him warningly.

“Don’t forget, you’re the chivalrous hero... hero.”

No funny business.

“Nothing but the utmost respect,” he said, thumping his chest.

You beamed back at him.
The smile fell off your face, though, when you were back inside the house.

*It was just a date.*

You shook away the lingering doubts, heading toward the staircase that would lead you back down into the lab.

*Stop it.*

*A date would be good for you.*

Chapter End Notes

Just a lil something, something!

Another chapter should be finished by tomorrow or Sunday at the latest.

Also, eagle eyes may notice that the chapter titles of the last two chapters changed. I did a little adjusting to what lyrics were used for what. Nothing too crazy.
May

It was unnervingly quiet.

You were hunkered beneath a table, ears straining as you listened to the silence, trying to determine where your hunter was in relation to your hiding place. Before you had taken cover, you had grabbed one of the thick textbooks that had been sitting on the desk for protection. It was something you could use as a weapon.

Clicking.

You swallowed, steeling yourself.

The whirring grew louder as it drew closer. You tightened your hold on the book. If you timed it right, you could probably smash it right out of the air and, hopefully, stun it if not outright destroy it.

A harsh buzz rang out; a single red-eyed orb drifted into your line of sight under the desk, hovering right in front of you, staring at you. Before you could react, it vomited a torrent of foam over your crouched form that immediately began expanding--

You groaned, spots dancing behind your eyes as time curled back onto itself.

The beast was gone, as was the foam. But you knew it was coming. So with a steadying breath--

You ran.

It was not at all smooth, the way you shimmied across the floor before pushing yourself back to your feet. You could hear the orb complain as you fled from it, its whirring right on your tail, eye undoubtedly fixated on your back. You were leading it away from the room you had taken refuge in, back to the main expanse of the laboratory where it’s creator had been moments earlier.

“Hatsume!” you bellowed, looking over your shoulder to determine how far away your attacker was. “Hatsume! Get this fucking thing!”

A dollop of foam landed on your ankle. You got maybe half a step in before it ballooned and stuck to the floor, sending you stumbling forward. Again, you tapped into your quirk, sending you, the foam and Hatsume’s cursed creation back a few precious seconds.

“Hatsume!” you called again, too aware that you were just delaying the inevitable. You changed directions, dodging workbenches and machines in a jagged serpentine pattern. “Hat--!”

Something struck your back with a wet ‘thunk.’

You rewound time, though not as far back as you had hoped. The spots behind your eyes were burning brighter. Your stomach was complaining. The ground was starting to wobble -- vertigo was setting in.

“Goddammit, Hatsume!”
Foam struck your upper thigh. You were still moving, still fleeing, but the mass eventually snared your other leg. Panicked, you rewound time again, but it didn’t go back far enough. The foam was still on your leg, it was still spreading.

Your gait was hobbled. You were struggling to walk -- it was like your lower body had been caught in a suctioning pit of mud -- there was a powerful resistance you had to fight against to take a single step forward. Of course, you were easy prey then. A constant spout of foam coated your extremities, growing ever thicker, ever larger. It was consuming your body, constricting your abdomen. It was getting harder to breathe.

“Hatsume!” Your shout was shrill and desperate. The foam was climbing up your neck, broaching the edge of your face. Soon, it would cover your nose and mouth. “Hatsume!”

And then, you couldn’t breathe.

You were holding your breath though the pounding of your heart and the fear made it impossible to keep calm. The foam was pushing against you too, still expanding, burying itself up into your nostrils and trying to breach your tightly closed mouth.

You couldn’t move.

This was how you were going to die.

Claustrophobia was acting up. You wanted to twist and wiggle away but you couldn’t.

You were being buried alive.

This was how you were going to die.

Your life didn’t flash before your eyes. You didn’t think about any loved ones. You were mostly afraid, sad that this was how it was going to end for you -- being killed by a foam accident at work.

Your need to breathe was growing more desperate. Already you could imagine what it was going to feel like when you eventually caved to bodily impulse, the nothing that you wouldn’t be able to inhale.

When it finally did happen, when aching lungs forced you to breathe, it was even worse than you thought.

Nothing.

The foam forced its way into your mouth, prying your jaw open while instinct commanded you to struggle for freedom. But you couldn’t struggle. You couldn’t move.

There was a flash of heat followed by a rush of air. Limbs had quickly been freed -- you felt your knees strike the linoleum floor and reached up to claw at your head. But there was no need. Whatever had eradicated the foam from your body had quickly traveled up and destroyed the mass smothering you.

Beautiful air.

Beautiful air.

Gasping, you crumpled down to the ground, forehead pressed against the floor, breathing. But no amount of oxygen felt enough to satisfy you. And your body was shaking.
“Well, that didn’t work,” Hatsume muttered, the blood rushing through your ears muffling her voice. You rolled your head to the side so you could see her, strained tears pricking at the corner of her eyes. Some kind of gun-like device was in her hand and her child was by her feet, sparking wildly. “Good thing I kept the capture foam fire soluble! I have to adjust the amount of foam my baby releases, though. It was only supposed to trap your limbs, not kill you…”

“Hatsume…” The rage you felt toward the teenager was indescribable. “Hatsume… get away from me.”

The warning went unheeded -- she was too caught up in talking to herself about readjustments to pay you much mind, even though you had almost been killed by her creation.

In fact, she didn’t seem worried about you at all.

Power Loader walked down the staircase just as you started to seriously consider strangling some sense into her. He had only been gone for about ten minutes or so to make some lunch in the kitchen upstairs -- his homemade bento was still in hand when he came upon your ragged state on the floor, heaving, while Hatsume was kicking some kind of steel ball back to her corner of the lab.

The room stunk like burnt hair.

Hours later, Hatsume was nursing a lump on her head that had been administered by one of Power Loader’s massive hands. It was only after he physically intervened that he managed to extract a distracted apology from her over almost killing you.

Actually, calling it an apology was an overstatement. It was more of an… acknowledgment that her design had been… off.

But, by that point, you were over the situation anyway. You had grown familiar enough with Hatsume’s self-centeredness and mindlessness. You knew her ‘babies’ outranked human life in her mental ladder of ‘important things.’

And this girl had gotten into a hero school.

Yuuei of all places!

“Dinner tonight?” your boss asked, soldering gun in hand. It was broaching quitting time and you had started to pack away your tools, eager to get home and shower the stench of burnt off of you. “Ramen place? My treat.”

“Ok!” Hatsume’s voice echoed across the room but she was nowhere to be seen.

You both ignored her.

“Ramen isn’t going to stop me from suing you,” you grumbled, slamming closed a drawer. Power Loader wagged a finger at you.

“Ha, don’t forget about the releases you signed when you took the job!”

You shot him a challenging look that he reciprocated before you broke, chuckling and shaking your head.

“Can’t tonight. I have plans.”

Niceness from All Might was an absolute rarity. Midoriya could count on one hand the number of
times his mentor paid him an actual compliment or showed him anything that could be considered a kindness. He was mostly made of piss and vinegar, from what he could tell. Barking, grumbling or laughing over something that a normal person wouldn't consider funny.

So it was a surprise when the older man, after a particularly grueling day of training, suggested they go grab something to eat. Midoriya accepted, figuring they would just stop by the closest convenience store.

He was staggered when All Might led him to a small okonomiyaki place instead.

“Get whatever you want,” he had grunted. “Make sure you hit your protein targets for today.”

The teen seriously hoped All Might wasn’t planning on sticking him with the bill. He had only a couple hundred yen in his wallet and needed to stop and buy cabbage for his mom. But, he did what he was told -- he ordered a platter of meat and vegetables geared toward feeding a party of four while All Might stuck with a handful of basics. While All Might's entire meal was brought out all at once, Midoriya's was due to come in waves.

Eventually, All Might exhaled loudly through his nose, sick of the silence, and fixed his dining companion with a bored stare.

“How are your classes?”

It was such a normal question and immediately Midoriya perked up. He was always happy to talk about heroes and, recently, Yuuei had become a favorite conversation topic of his, especially once he learned that All Might was an alumnus of the famed school.

All Might! A villain!

“It's great,” he gushed. “This afternoon we worked on conditioning with our homeroom teacher. It was mostly just running but the last the couple of laps we had to use our quirks to get over barriers that would pop up.”

“Did you break anything?”

“Well…” he shifted uncomfortably. “A couple fingers. But the school nurse patched me up!”

“We've got to work on your bone breaking...” All Might grumbled, racking his mind on how they would do that. Midoriya nodded along and the table fell back into silence before All Might asked, with a huff, what else he had been up to.

The excitable boy then proceeded to launch into a deeper explanation of how his life at Yuuei had been going. His traditional classes weren’t anything of note but the hero courses--

All Might sighed, resting his cheek on his fist as his protege chattered on, forcing himself to stop and take the occasional breath.

The boy had been a student at Yuuei for close to a month, which meant he been in possession of One For All for close to three.

Three months.

It hadn't taken... well to its new host. Whereas All Might had an almost masterful understanding of the quirk when he first inherited it, Midoriya was struggling.
By day, Midoriya attended his hero school but, in the evenings, he would train under All Might’s tutelage. Which meant that, on more than one occasion, the boy would show up bruised and bandaged forcing All Might to change training plans and go easy on the kid. He kept busting up his limbs, breaking bones and tearing muscle. Whenever One for All was used, the quirk nearly destroyed the kid’s body and All Might, for the life of him, couldn't understand why.

He assumed it was because Midoriya didn't understand the control that was necessary to wield it. It was like driving a car -- you couldn't slam on the brakes or the gas, you had to do it gradually. That's what their training had been focusing on -- how to release his newfound power in controllable bursts that wouldn't blow his arms off.

It was a strange and alien situation to be in, having to really take into account the state of another person.

Even stranger, All Might wasn’t that bothered by it anymore.

Mostly because Midoriya hadn’t complained once. He was doing double the work of his classmates, workshopping a quirk that wasn’t aligning with him. Yet, he took everything in stride.

Because all this was all he ever wanted.

“Is that little prick still in your class?” All Might grunted, interrupting the tangent the boy had fallen on about his teacher, Eraserman or something. “Bakagoat?”

Midoriya's brows furrowed before relaxing with recognition.

“Oh, Kacchan…” He nodded slowly, unsure where the conversation was headed. “Yeah, he’s in my class.”

“Did you break his arms yet?”

“What!? No! Why would--” he trailed off, floundering under the intense glare aimed at him. Oh right. Villain. “No… not yet.”

All Might snorted but before he could respond properly, the waitress was back at their table with another wave of food for Midoriya.

It was weird sitting in a restaurant across from the number one villain of Japan. Sure, the man had deflated into his smaller form but his general aura was the same.

Well, maybe he was a bit crankier.

“You need to stop this… pussyfooting,” All Might growled when they were alone again, plopping pieces of beef onto the charcoal grill between them. “This fear you have about stepping into --”

As he spoke, All Might had instinctively glanced up to look at the two people who were walking by their booth. A waitress was leading someone over to an unclaimed table toward the back of the restaurant.

His words died and he fell into a double take.

It was… you.

You!

In Musutafu!
What the hell were you doing in Musutafa?

Silently Midoriya watched as All Might continue to stare past him, surprise evident on his face.

“Erm… All Might?”

The man didn’t react.

You looked… the same.

Actually, that wasn’t true, there was something slightly different about you that he couldn’t quite put his finger on.

Was it your hair? Maybe your hair had gotten longer.

Ignore her.

Oh, but he didn’t want to.

Seeing you there was like a junkie falling off the wagon and getting his first high out of rehab. Warning bells were going off in his head, his inner voice snarling in protest but it was just too good.

How long had it been? A year?

No, longer than that.

God, he couldn’t stand the sight of you.

But he couldn’t look away.

Memories were there, drawing him deeper into you.

What would you do if he went into the bathroom and bulked up? Took a seat at your table? Flashed you one of his smiles?

Ignore her.

The surprised nostalgia was abating, your sweetness drowned by his sourness.

He was done with you.

“Break that kid’s fucking arms,” All Might snarled suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, slamming a fist on the table.

Midoriya jolted in his seat, blinking before nodding rapidly. He was using that tone -- it was better just to placate him. The last time Midoriya had seen All Might in a similar bad mood, they had been training at a beach full of junk on the other side of the city. For some reason, All Might was in a fury and decided to lash out by going and sinking a container ship that had been chugging along, oblivious, across the horizon.

All Might had sank a ship.

That was out in open water.

He had gotten to it in a single jump.

This was after he had given Midoriya his quirk.
Yeah, it was better to just indulge him.

“Yes Al--” he withered under the look All Might gave him. “Mister Yagi.”

Right. When he was smaller, he was Mister Yagi in public.

All Might was absolutely prepared to ignore your existence for the rest of his dinner. In fact, he was looking forward to leaving. Then you would be forgotten about and he could go back to his version of peace and quiet.

That was until your dining companion showed up.

A bulky guy in a suit passed his table and All Might paid him no mind. He wasn’t even looking at you. But in his peripheral vision, he noticed the man was drawing closer to where you sat and he couldn’t help himself -- ocean eyes flickered up just in time to watch you stand and greet the man.

_A kiss on the cheek._

Red exploded, drowning his vision. His ears were ringing.

_Who was he!?_

The bastard had a hand on your back, guiding you back to your chair before helping you push it in. Then _he_ was sitting with you. You were laughing. Talking--

“... Mister Yagi?”

“What?” he hissed, wild eyes falling on Midoriya. The teenager winced, carefully gesturing to the shattered wooden chopsticks in All Might’s hands. Unbothered, he dropped the shards to the ground and Midoriya glanced around, hoping no one had witnessed the mess his master had just openly created.

Thankfully, it seemed no one was paying their table any mind.

“Who _is_ that?” he heard All Might literally growl. With a slight tremor (as he was certain the villain was about to implode in the restaurant), Midoriya glanced over his shoulder. It took him a couple of seconds to gather what table All Might was staring at. There was a woman sitting with a man who looked familiar…

Oh! He was familiar!

“The man in the suit? With four arms?”

He didn’t mean to sound so… light about All Might’s potential target. His fanboy fervor had overruled common sense and suddenly bright blue eyes were back on him. He shrank under their intensity, sheepishly tapping his two pointer fingers together. “That’s… Fourth Kind.”

“Fourth Kind?” All Might repeated before realization dawned across his sharp features. Midoriya watched as the man’s face fell, slowly relaxing even though… _anger_ was still radiating off of him. He inhaled a quiet, steadying breath. “A hero?”

Midoriya found himself nodding slowly.

All Might nodded back.

_“I’ll kill him.”_
“All--” Midoriya reached over to stop the skinny man from standing and doing something brash. He shouldn’t have said anything. Now he was going to be an accessory to murder. “Mister Yagi, please. What’s going--”

“I’ll show you how to break someone’s arms, Young Midoriya!” All Might said, the rage in his face flashing over to an unnervingly intense smile. “This is perfect!”

“All Might, what are you…?”

“Fourth Kind…” His phone was in his hand, knobby fingers clumsily typing on it. “Fourth Kind. Chivalrous Hero, hm? What a noble moniker. Based in Hiroshima… ah, a government employee! An upstanding hero, it seems!”

“All Might… Mister Yagi, sir, why….” That time around, when All Might fixated the teenager with his sharp gaze, Midoriya didn’t falter. “Why are you going after Fourth Kind?”

Sure, it was... the circle of life -- villains go after heroes and heroes go after villains. But the hostility All Might was exhibiting had popped up so suddenly and Midoriya wanted know why. Why was he so viciously interested in attacking Fourth Kind. From what the boy could tell, all the hero had done was walk in and sit down for dinner. All Might hadn't even known his name five minutes ago!

Meanwhile, All Might was seething.

Why did he want to go after Fourth Kind?

Why?

Why!??

His immediate response was because you were his.

But you weren’t.

Calm down.

Get ahold of yourself.

All Might placed his phone back on the table, squeezing the bridge of his nose.

He needed to get a grip.

He, of all people, should not be acting in such a way over some... fling.

You were dead and gone to him. Buried. Now just another face in the crowd. You didn’t deserve an iota of his attention.

Although he was tempted to get up and walk away, he couldn’t. He had lost his temper in front of his brat and would not run off, seemingly away from his problems. From the things that bothered him.

The meat that he had thrown on the grill was burnt but he paid it no mind, dropping the charred husks onto his plate before throwing a few slices of beef tongue on to cook. He retrieved a new set of chopsticks out of the cube containing them at the edge of the table, filled a little dish up with some kind of soy sauce mixture.
And he ate.

“You better eat all that,” he snapped to Midoriya after several seconds passed and the teenager made no move to add any more food to the grill or eat the pieces he had already cooked.

“I will,” Midoriya responded, pretending along with All Might that nothing was wrong. He couldn’t help himself, though -- his eyes would flicker between his food and his master, curious to what had just happened. The ire within the older man had cooled. He wore an impassive face as he ate, taking great care in chewing his ruined food.

Midoriya finished everything he ordered.

All Might didn’t even make a dent in his.

To the younger man’s relief, All Might did pay for the meal. When the check was taken care of, they left, loitering outside the restaurant as All Might instructed the teen what exercises he expected him to do the following day and for how long.

“Tomorrow,” All Might said with a tired grunt. “You’ll climb.”

Inwardly, Midoriya deflated.

He hated climbing.

Fate had one last trick up its sleeve, however. It was not finished with Yagi Toshinori just yet.

It just so happened that you and Fourth Kind left the restaurant while Midoriya and All Might were still standing outside it. The four-armed hero was apologizing for having to cut another evening together short but you didn’t mind, you were tired.

After bestowing another peck on your cheek, the hero disappeared into his usual car, speeding off to respond to the robbery scene he had been called to.

When you turned around, you saw him -- a blond scarecrow of a man who was scowling at you and what you assumed was his son standing behind him. The man... was familiar, you could have sworn you had seen him around before but you weren’t sure where.

Maybe he worked at Odaiba? It’s not like you were mistaking him for someone else -- he had a very distinct appearance.

One of a kind, absolutely.

You realized you had kept your attention on him a little too long as you tried to recall why he seemed familiar to you.

He was staring at you staring at him.

So, you smiled -- a tight-lipped, friendly gesture that you would have shared with any stranger on the street you had made eye contact with.

All Might watched as you walked away, heading down the street away from the nearest train station. His gaze followed you for a few seconds before returning to his phone, seemingly unbothered by your quick interaction (if it could be called that) on the street.

Midoriya, who expected All Might to maybe lash out and rip off your arms, sighed in relief when he didn’t attack the unknown woman who had been sitting with Fourth Kind. When All Might
dismissed him, Midoriya headed to the nearest produce store to grab the cabbage that his mother expected, eager to get home.

All Might headed toward the train station.

Well...

He got about a block in the direction of the train station before his pace slowed to a stop.

He was staring at the ground.


The chapter of his life where he had made a brief appearance was over. You were only a cameo, that was it. Nothing more. It was done. Your fling was over. You said unforgivable things. He had… gotten physical. Now, you were on the verge of becoming a nuisance.

A younger All Might wouldn’t even have had an internal dialogue over thinking about you. In fact, he would have probably grinned at waved at you at the restaurant. Introduced himself to your hero boyfriend while you stared on in horror. Referenced things that shouldn't be openly talked about in public.

Though, a younger All Might would have also laughed off the insults you had thrown at him. Not reacted so... intensely.

A younger All Might wouldn't have looked twice at Midoriya, either. The kid's body would probably still be rotting in a ditch somewhere. Maybe in a storm drain.

He could still feel the presence of his younger self in his mind, commanding him to keep walking and stop being such a…

What?

Weakling?

But that was the reality of Yagi Toshinori, wasn’t it?

It didn’t take long for him to catch up with you. He could have tracked you down quicker in his muscle form but, for some reason, he didn’t transform. Ignoring the burning of his sole lung, he found you just as you were crossing a major intersection and kept you in his line of sight, staying several paces behind you as you continued to walk further away from the restaurant. If you had turned around at any point, you would have seen the slender stranger essentially stalking you.

You were completely oblivious, though. \\n
You led him right to your house.

Yagi didn’t linger for long once he realized that the building you entered was your home. He was surprised to see that you had moved, he had just assumed you would live in your run-down apartment in Kamino forever.

Waiting for him to show up.

As if your existence was tied to his presence.

But that wasn't true.
Previous seemingly unnatural appearances in his universe should have proved him wrong.

You had your own world, apparently. Just as he had his.

Though... they were at a better risk of colliding.

Now that you both were, more or less, living in the same city.

It wasn’t hard to be invisible.

Akaguro was quite aware of that.

How many days had he stood on the corners of streets trying to warn the people of the blemish that was hero society?

Crusaders of justice and peace?

That was all a lie.

Heroes were nothing more than gluttons for fame -- they didn’t battle crime to make the world a better place, they did it for the attention it garnered them. And like fools, the public ate it up. Eagerly they accepted the concept of ranking their heroes, indulging in their protectors’ need for validation and airtame. They purchased merchandise happily, lining the pockets of their ’servants of society.’ Sponsorships and partnerships between corporations and heroes were easily accepted by the people.

Heroism had turned into a capitalist popularity contest.

These realities are what Akaguro had spouted day in and day out at some of the most trafficked intersections of Japan. He was calling on the people to hold their heroes accountable, to not idolize those who expected to be paid to save lives.

It was common sense.

It was for the good of society.

And he was ignored. By hundreds. By thousands.

His warnings would fall on deaf ears. A vast majority of citizens didn’t even acknowledge his presence though he stood only a stone’s throw away from them.

Yes, Akaguro knew how to be invisible--

Until he wanted to be seen.

Musutafu was a breeding ground for the false heroes he so despised, all because of its most famous landmark.

Although it overlooked the city from high atop its golden mountain, Yuuei High School had become a hive for the undeserving.

The school claimed that it prepared its students for a life of heroism but it didn’t do enough. Greed still ran rampant in its halls, students vied for popularity and attention. Those who ran the institution even made a spectacle of its internal rat-race, broadcasting its so-called ‘sports festival’ to the masses, showing off their fattening pigs to hero agencies that were all too eager to cash in on potential up-and-comers.
The idea had struck Akaguro so suddenly.

If he wanted to bring about change--

He had to deal with corruption when it first started to bloom.

It was sobering, the idea of attacking kids. Until Akaguro realized that he was looking at it wrong. He was going after the already tainted -- wannabe heroes who already had greed in their eyes.

Cut the cancer down before it could metastasize and infect.

It was dirty work, but that’s why he had on the moniker Stain. He was willing to sully his hands, sacrifice his soul for the innocent, in order to usher in a new era of purity. By his hand, the undeserving would be struck down. Eyes would begin to open.

The blind would finally see.

He had spent a good portion of that Wednesday studying the perimeter of Yuuei. A great steel barrier protected the school from intruders and, from what he could knew, additional securities were in place inside. It was a vault that couldn't so easily be pried open.

Even with his skill set, it would be difficult, if not outright impossible, to get inside.

He was on edge as he walked further away from the school, mind buzzing as it tried to solve the challenges he was facing. He was frustrated. Things were never easy.

He wasn’t in his hero killer getup -- he was just Akaguro.

It was just after dinner. The streets were empty. He was in a residential neighborhood. He passed houses filled with families, all living their lives under the assumption that out there, somewhere, they were being protected by individuals in costumes who were working for the greater good. For peace.

There was a jogger heading toward him and, being conscientious, he moved to the side to give them more space to pass. She didn’t pay him any mind -- she had earbuds in and was staring straight ahead. Being ignored no longer bothered him but he did glance at her face as she passed--

Akaguro didn’t forget a face.

He knew who she was.

He stopped, glancing over his shoulder, watching as her huffing and puffing form slowly moved further away from him.

In his mind he could see her on the television, standing between Endeavor and the liar Hawks. The winged hero was beside him on the street, whispering in his ear, reminding him that she profited off of heroes and villains. She profited off bloodshed.

She was part of the problem.

It was good Akaguro was not in his hero killer costume. Because the girl who was jogging away from him was no hero.

She was worse.
She was a blight.

And Akaguro would handle her.

Chapter End Notes

Oh man, three days, three chapters. I feel like I've ran a marathon! I guess this is an 'I'm sorry' for falling off the wagon with regular, promised updates.

I hope you enjoy!
Something's Wrong

Chapter Notes

Haven't gone through and edited this properly or fixed the weird thing that happens with italics and extra spaces. But it's late and I wanted to post the chapter -- I'll clean it up tomorrow when I'm able to.

I'm gonna make some tweaks to the last bit of the chapter too since it's basically a first draft and I'm not entirely happy with it.

Work had been going slow, a tedious daily ode to boredom.

You were between projects, which meant you had nothing pressing to occupy your time. So, you spent your hours surfing the web or tinkering, which was hard when you had no inspiration for things to create.

So, you made circuit boards.

It wasn’t as if you could hover around Power Loader and offer help with his work either -- a series of landslides had rocked a couple towns up north over the weekend and the digging hero had left to help. In fact, he wasn’t expected back for another few days --

Which meant Hatsume was barred from entering the lab.

It was done in consideration of you, your time and your sanity. You weren’t privy to the email or text that Power Loader had sent to the teenager, but you could only assume she was rocked by the sudden, weeklong ban. You tried to get him to reverse his decision -- you didn’t mind her hanging around, she was usually entertaining and her excitement gave you a contact high and got you fired up about your own work. But his reply was simple -- she has to focus on school, anyway. The break would be good for her and you could work in peace.

But you had no work.

Surprisingly, by Wednesday, she still hadn’t tried to pry her way into the office, leaving you to wallow in your boring, lonely existence.

“Are you free tonight?”

You were sitting at your station, turning back and forth on your stool, staring at the ceiling as your phone was pressed to your ear. There was a muffled, barking command on the other line before you heard the clearing of a throat.

“I’m sorry, what was that?”

“How do you want to go out tonight?”

“... Oh.”

You furrowed your brows slightly at hearing the uncertainty in Fourth Kind’s voice before falling
into laughter. He was already trying to backtrack when you spoke up.

“I mean, we don’t have to!” you said, shifting your body so you were leaning your forehead against the edge of the table, eyes tracing the speck pattern designed into the flooring. “Especially with a reaction like that.”

“It’s not that!” his gruff voice was slightly pitched. “I want to! Of course I do. If you want to. Go out, that is. I would obviously really like that.” Silence. “Uh… Do… you want to dinner? I promise not to leave early this time.”

Your chuckles softened, heart squeezing at the simple act of his consideration.

“Dinner sounds nice,” you said. “You pick the place this time.”

“Well… I got no ideas,” he laughed. “But I’ll think about it. I’ll call you when I’m off work.”

“Sounds good, handyman.”

You heard a guffaw.

“Ok, meatball.”

An endearing nickname.

An endearing man.

Your relationship with Fourth Kind had been progressing… properly. You were doing everything right this time, everything you were supposed to. Going on real dates, getting to know him, listening to his work stories -- all of which were good and positive. A proper adult relationship.

One particular jackass had unlocked something in you.

You were still working on banishing him from your thoughts but it was hard. He had clawed himself a home there for so long and was not keen on being evicted. Every thought you had about Fourth Kind was tainted by him. The first time you properly kissed, you found yourself awash with some strange sense of panic. When you moved to heavy petting at the end of your third date, you had to suddenly stop things because the doubts were just too loud.

It wasn’t doubts about Fourth Kind -- he was… great. Really. Truly. So considerate, so kind, so… chivalrous. He seemed more than happy to go at your pace.

No, it was doubts about you.

You knew you weren’t a whore. Sure, you may have jumped the gun with a certain someone but, looking back, you had been strictly monogamous the entire time. You were loyal. You knew in your heart of hearts you would never budge from that, no matter the person.

Still… the insult had poisoned your self-worth and suddenly you doubted everything.

You attempted to combat the negativity by reading up on female empowerment -- how equality for both sexes extended to the bedroom. You know, that whole, ‘you go girl!’ attitude. You wanna fuck that dude you just met in line for coffee? Honey, go on and ride him into the sunset. Want to get spit-roasted like a pig at a luau? Good on you, go for it!
You followed it up with generic searches about when you should move to the next step in a newly forged relationship, what the proper timeline was for intimacy. A vast majority of the results were the same: three-four-five date variations that always ended with a, ‘or whenever you’re ready!’

Whenever you’re ready.

You thought you had been ready during your last date, date number four--

Which ended in a spectacularly awkward fashion that still had you curling in on yourself in mortification. It surprised you that Fourth Kind have even taken your call (and explained why he might have been a little… hesitant on the phone).

Nothing like straddling someone, getting hot and heavy, only to start crying.

You hoped he wouldn’t notice; they weren’t big, crocodile tears. Just small droplets that gathered in the corners of your eyes -- and not the sexy kind either.

Of course he noticed them, especially when a few started to fall down your cheeks.

And bless his soul, Fourth was so sweet about it. You had attempted to salvage your makeout session by explaining that you, in all honesty, had no idea why you were crying. It was the truth too - - they popped up suddenly from an inky, general sadness as opposed to a specific reason.

The mood had been utterly ruined, though. He retracted his hands from up your shirt and stiffly adjusted your body in his lap--

But he didn’t leave.

He didn’t leave.

Instead, he simply sat with you on your couch watching a documentary on whales. When he did go to leave, he pulled you into one of the most satisfying hugs you had ever experienced before telling you he had a very nice time.

And then when the door closed and you were safely alone, the crocodile tears started.

Because that man was far too good for you.

This time would be different, you told yourself as you drummed your fingers on your desk. You’d apologize for being a mess and try to move on. You hoped he didn’t think of you as some wounded little bird -- you weren’t. It was just… a freak crying attack, that’s all. You were totally fine.

Totally normal.

By the time you headed home for the day, Hatsume still hadn’t carved her way into the lab as you half-expected. Dinner would be in about three hours, so you could force yourself to go for a jog and indulge in a quick shower before you needed to leave for your date.

How beautifully responsible you were being.

The fat white cat was sitting on his usual wall on your route home and you tried again to get his attention as you passed, clicking your tongue and rubbing your thumb across the tips of your fingers. Two large, yellow eyes momentarily blinked open before closing, tail sharply snapping out behind him.

When you reached your front door, you found a glove and mitt sitting on the small, single step up to
your house. Without much thought, you picked them up and placed them by the red car and soccer ball that had also been left behind by your neighbor’s son. The boy had a... different sense of boundaries and obviously thought of your property as another one of his playgrounds.

It honestly didn’t bother you though, it was just a kid being a kid -- having fun and playing outside. As long as he didn’t smash any windows, he could dribble a ball in front of your house or play with his car. Besides, he had firmly won your affections by giving you a carp flag and a rice cake in honor of Children’s Day.

Yes. He, the child, gave you, an adult, presents on Children’s Day.

He was a good kid.

You kicked off your shoes, slipped on your slippers and had the TV playing softly in your living room as you headed upstairs to dig out a pair of shorts and a long-sleeve shirt. It was still daytime programming -- a drama was playing when you returned downstairs in your running clothes. You paused to watch as a man screeched and yelled at an impassive woman before going to graze for a bit in your kitchen.

The seduction of the leftovers in your refrigerator wasn’t strong enough to tempt you to eat something heavy before your jog, so you stuck with a banana to sate some of your immediate after-work cravings.

Your phone buzzed with a text message -- Fourth Kind had written to suggest a sushi place that you hadn’t heard of before. A quick Google search told you that the place was, thankfully, not overly pretentious or fancy.

You shot back a message that you were game, grabbed the elastic armband that held your phone off your kitchen counter and, after a ten-minute search, unearthed your headphones from between the cushions of your couch.

And then you were off.

Your music was loud and had a heavy beat -- it gave you something to keep pace with and drowned out the slapping of your feet against asphalt and the natural, ambient sound of the city. You weren’t going particularly fast but it didn’t take long for your breath to turn harsh and your calves to burn.

A runner’s high? You hadn’t experienced it yet.

Mostly, you just felt tired and out-of-shape.

You stuck to the sidewalks, passing people heading home or walking their dogs.

Sushi was on your mind.

Date night was on your mind.

A shower was on your mind.

The strike came sudden.

Well, you didn’t know it was a strike.

All you knew was that you were jogging along, completely in your own world, when a sudden force to your back sent you flying forward.
Your first thought?
You had been hit by a car or struck by a bicyclist. *Something* strong and heavy had sent you airborne.

Because, suddenly, you were looking up on the sky.

It took a couple of literal seconds for the frozen gears in your brain to start up again.

*You had just been hit.*

The pain had also started up.

With a groan, you went to move, to sit up and see what the *hell* had just happened.

That’s when the face came into view.

A person was standing over you, looking down into your face. A bystander, you believed. Someone who saw the accident and was checking on you. They would probably ask if you were okay. Were you? Did you need an ambulance? You flexed your hands and wiggled your toes -- everything was moving. But the pain focused at your back was radiating its way across the very tips of your limbs and you groaned again, head snapping back down to the asphalt.

Yeah, you wanted an ambulance.

The bystander crouched down and you saw then he was a man --

A man with an… unusual face.

He didn’t ask if you were okay. In fact, he didn’t seem *worried* about you. He was staring into your face with a peculiar expression. He was… studying you, tilting his head back and forth as he stared into your eyes and you stared back.

*Something’s wrong.*

When you realized that he wasn’t concerned for you, that’s when the fear kicked in.

*Something’s wrong.*

Adrenaline was drowning out pain as your gut warned you that this… *man* wasn’t right. When you went to sit up for real, a hand reached out to settle on your chest, keeping you down.

“No… no… no…” he said to you, soft and low, the tilting of his head shifting to shaking. “No… No, you don’t get to do that.”

*Something’s wrong.*

Still, there was something weirdly naive in you that thought, maybe, he was just telling you to stay on the ground. Not to move until the ambulance arrived.

“So you’re Artisan?”

That shattered your hope. By the time you *finally* went to start screaming, a fist was raised above your head.

Then--
Nothing.

“Phonies.”

You were grunting and groaning before you even opened your eyes, mind painfully foggy.

What time was it? Had you fallen asleep?

SHIT.

DINNER!

Your eyes snapped open, panic rising in your throat--

No.

The panic receded for a second as you took in unfamiliar, dark surroundings.

It was night.

You weren’t at home.

You were outside somewhere -- judging from the dumpster in front of you, in an alley.

Alley?

You furrowed your brows, blinking, trying to remember… Where were you? Alleys like this weren’t by your house, it looked like you were somewhere deeper in the city. How did you… ? Did you go out to dinner? Did something happen? Was Fourth okay?

You couldn’t move...

You couldn’t move.

You couldn’t move.

“Awake already, huh?”

There was someone there in that place with you, just out of your line of sight. You couldn’t even turn your head in the direction of the voice, you were forced to stare at the dirty dumpster across the way. There was the sound of fabric rustling, followed by heavy footsteps. You could hear him breathing, the man who was with you. It was loud -- panting, almost. He was standing beside you, just out of your peripheral vision.

More rustling. The breathing was closer to the general atmosphere of your head.

Something’s wrong.

The memory of looking up at the sky came back first. When you tried to think of before the sky, you could recall taking off your shoes and putting on your slippers when you got home from work.

What time was it?

Your head was being turned. A sharp face came into view. A man with wild black hair was staring at you. He didn’t have a nose.
His face.

You were staring up at the sky. A face came into view.

His face.

You had gone running.

You were screaming by then, the rush of realization manifesting itself in a physical reaction. It was a shrill scream, a desperate call that movie shrieks to shame. It was anguished. It was pitched. It was terrified.

And the man just started shaking his head, like before, fixing you will callous eyes as he did so.

“What is it you want?” he asked, voice far too calm.

Were you going to die?

Why can’t you move?

Still, you kept screaming, shifting from a long, high-pitched wail to shrill, repeating, ‘Help! Help me!’ Your voice was turning raw, your already fogged mind shifting lightheaded thanks to your lack of good, deep breaths.

“No one’s coming.”

He spoke with such a strong, annoyed confidence that stunned and, frankly, broke you. He didn’t try and shut you up -- he didn’t need to. There was no one around. You were alone.

An ugly sound escaped you. A choked gasp that, despite its intensity, didn’t break into a sob like it implied. It just died in your throat as fear cleared and burned your nostrils.

“Who did you want to help?” the man asked quietly. Cold, red eyes were still burning into you. The seconds ticked by -- you didn’t answer. You couldn’t answer. You could barely wrap your head around what was happening. “Hm?”

You gaped at him but that wasn’t enough. He sighed, irritated at your lack of conversation. He was reaching for something -- a knife. Anguish flashed across your face as you fixated on the blade and it’s jagged, serrated form.

Knife.

He was going to stab you.

“You can’t move because of my quirk... “ he said, tapping the blade beneath your chin. You went to raise it, to pull it away from the cold steel, but you couldn’t. “But you can talk, Artisan.”

Something must have registered in your face at his use of your pseudonym because your attacker grinned at you.

“Oh, I know your name. I know all about you and your falsehoods.”

Falsehoods?

The blade passed across your shoulder, the serrated edges slicing through your shirt and easily gliding into your flesh. You felt pain but it had been dulled considerably thanks to the terror and
adrenaline roaring through your veins. So you whimpered and grit your teeth, teary eyes watching as your attacker brought the bloodied blade to his mouth.

A rough tongue rolled out, lapping at the dripping crimson. The grin at the edges of his open mouth lost its luster and, as he lowered his dagger, it fell from his face completely. He was glaring at you.

“Shameless, aren’t you? Looking for rescue when you don’t deserve it.” He adjusted his crotch, elbows resting on his thighs. “How happy would you be if a hero fell to your rescue, hm?”

Ecstatic. Thankful.

“Relieved? Thankful?” he said, reading your mind. Knowing he was right in guessing your feelings, he spat at the ground with a snort. “Of course you want a hero to step in and save you, even though you actively give villains the tools to commit their evils.”

“That’s not true!”

Finally, finally, you spoke up, though your captor did not appear pleased by what you had to say.

“I never forget a face,” he informed you, coldly. “I know who you are. I know how you’ve worked for. By day you worked with heroes and the lot and at night you betrayed their trust and ran your little lab in Kamino.”

“I don’t do that anymore,” you pleaded. You considered denying his accusations but obviously he knew you. You couldn’t deny your sins but you could at least highlight your penance. “I’ve… changed. I know what I did was wrong--”

Your explanation was weak. Akaguro was not moved.

Changed? Recognition for your misdeeds?

He was no priest -- he was not going to absolve you of past transgressions.

He was going to dole out the proper punishment. Rid the world of another blight.

“Hero society is infected with false idols,” he said, eyes flashing. You found no comfort in his face or words.

“Listen, I know, I know what I did was--”

“False idols who have polluted what a hero represents.”

“Please, please--”

“They chase after fame and fortune. Rankings and popularity. Selfishness rules their decisions. They’re not heroes. They’re a disease. They’re not worthy of holding the title of hero.”

He was crazy.

This was a crazy man.

“And you--” The lack of emotion in his face chilled you. No anger, no pleasure, no sickness -- he was blank. “You’re even worse. Why do you work for villains?”

“Please--”
He didn’t cut across your shoulder when he raised the dagger again--

He plunged it in.

Your eyes blew wide, a wet cry erupting from you. He inhaled at the sound, shoulders twitching in what could be seen as sick satisfaction. Reflect had you reaching for your quirk. In your mind, you could see the dial you used when you envisioned your flow of time but when you went to reach out and activate your quirk, to *turn* it, you were met with resistance.

The whole thing was stone.

You couldn't move it.

*You couldn't use your quirk.*

“Answer me truthfully, Artisan,” he commanded. “Why do you work for villains?”

“I don’t know,” was your addled response.

Of course, that was the wrong answer. He tsked and with a sudden jerking motion plunged the knife into your other shoulder.

By then, the pain was like a wildfire, burning through the barriers that adrenaline had erected across your senses. You could feel the wetness of blood against your skin, your shirt sticking to it. You could feel the knife bump against something solid in your body as it was pulled out -- bone. Everything was… *vibrating.*

“Why do you work for villains?” The man tried for the third time.


Satisfied, your captor nodded his head. Yours felt lightheaded -- you weren’t sure if you were losing that much blood or if your body was just… preemptively shutting down due to the situation you were in.

“A rat that plays both sides. Greed has corrupted you, Artisan. Atonement is wasted on people like you. You supply to the heroes, you supply to the villains, and in the chaos and violence, your wallet grows fatter.”

*He’s crazy.*

“And it’s my duty to purge the filth: false heroes, villains... and those who take advantage of the chaos.”

*Here it comes.*

“Like you.”

He spoke with finality. You closed your eyes, expecting… well, the *end.*

Death.

Blankness.

Nothing.
The period at the end of the run-on sentence that was your life.

Not the wall of wind.

It hit you like a truck. It was nothing like what you experienced earlier when you were incapacitated (or tackled) by the crazy man -- this was a force. It sent you tumbling, rolling and flopping down a good portion of the alley, your still immobilized body crashing into dumpsters, trashcans, trashbags and outcroppings of walls.

When you finally came to a stop you were settled on your side, facing the direction you had come from. Facing the direction of the wind.

Words couldn’t describe the agony your body was in.

“What’s this?” It was your captor's voice echoing from somewhere above you. Although you both had been struck by the attack, he had obviously righted himself at some point and broke away while you had been tossed around like a doll.

You were straining your eyes in the dark toward the dark spots of the alley, waiting.

Wind?

You’ve experienced the same wall of wind before.

How?

How could he have known?

Then--

Laughter.

Deep, rumbling laughter.

Familiar laughter.

You could feel the faint tremble of muscle along the back of your neck -- the ghostly feeling of hair rising though it was unable to.

“So a new challenger has entered the ring,” your hidden attacker said, amusement in his voice.

“New challenger?” You couldn’t see him either, but you could hear All Might scoff. “Only challenger, more like it. Though, that’s giving a worm like you far too much credit -- you’re not much of an opponent.”

Orange eyes flared up in the darkness of the alley, the rhythmic breathing of a mask starting up. The two orbs were bobbing slightly in the air as they grew closer.

Though… closer was not particularly close enough for your sanity. He was still a great distance away and, even though you despised the man, you also didn’t want to die. How much protection could he offer that far away?

“Alright then, oh great All Might, why grace a worm like me with your presence?”

“Come out of the rafters if you want to chat,” Your… ‘hero’ said with a huff of annoyance. “Where are your manners?”
“Someone like you hardly deserves any level of manners.”

“Oh ho!” A chuckle. “That had some bite to it, didn’t it? What have I done to wrong you, worm? Don’t tell me you’re not a fan of my methods. Not while you’re out roughhousing with girls in alleyways.”

“Suddenly acting a hero? Disgusting.”

“Hero?” Another chuckle. “You caught me. I’ve decided to change my ways, renounce my villany. And, of course, help myself to a damsel in distress.”

The light suddenly caught in the flash of something careening down from above. Your attacker had launched himself at All Might -- you saw the illuminated eyesockets of his mask shift, undoubtedly dodging the attack, but, it was too dark for you to see the details of what had occurred.

“You’ve got some speed on you, don’t you?” All Might mused, still standing. The mask had turned - - he was looking up toward the rooftop. “The dagger leaves a lot to desire, though.”

“What luck today has brought me,” your attacker said, ignoring All Might. "First, an Aristan now you, All Might, the greatest symbol of societal decay.”

You couldn’t really see the wind, but you caught the sudden bob of All Might’s eyes as heard the crack of air as it snapped up toward where your attacker must have been perched. Judging from the way All Might’s head moved, his target had dodged his jab.

“A villain who throws his power around for the sake of it. No honor. Who eagerly sows discord. Who leads of life without conviction.”

Another crack of wind. Another bob of the head, glowing eyes following after a fleeing figure.

“You deserve death,” your attacker taunted.

Death.

All Might looked in your direction, seemingly at you--

Which was when your attacker struck.

He was fast--

But All Might was All Might -- experience and power encapsulated in one vessel. You heard the sound of a thud and it wasn’t until a body rolled under a light, gripping his stomach, that you realized All Might’s fist had connected with the torso of the lunatic.

Much to your horror, the man rose to his knees and retched up a good amount of blood before wiping his mouth with his forearm. From what you could tell, his short weapon wasn’t in his hand.

“You were stupid to think you could hold your own against me.” All Might’s voice was deeper. Measured. Dangerous. He was walking toward the man, body seemingly growing larger with each step he took.

“Had I brought my proper tools with me…” The man coughed, wiping his mouth again. “Now I know for next time.”

“Next time?” The laugh you heard next was something truly dark -- a tone that you had never heard from All Might before. Although the aura you attacker gave off in his lunacy was frightening, it was
nothing compared to the presence All Might wielded.

A fist landed on empty asphalt -- All Might had seemingly materialized out of thin air, slamming his hand to where the injured attacker had laid. But the crazy man was already gone and, even before All Might had finished his motion, the orange eyes were already chasing after him.

He disappeared in another frenzy of power, launching up to follow the man. Your eyes strained upward -- against the backdrop of a moonlit sky you could see your attacker's figure retreating and All Might’s hulk following after.

Unseen thunderclaps echoed in the world above you.

You discovered you could wiggle your fingertips.

Had he gotten him?

An eerie silence fell across your existence.

With your cheek to the ground, you continued to move your fingers, hoping, praying, that your body would start to awaken from the spell of sleep that it had been put under. You didn’t know where your cellphone was, it didn’t feel like it was in your armband.

You needed medical attention.

A rustle of fabric. The thud of someone landing behind you. Heavy footsteps were heading in your direction and your heart caught in your throat as you tried to determine the body type of who was making them. Were they heavy like the attacker or heavy like--

All Might.

He had turned you over onto your back, orange eyes glowing down at you.

You could hear his heavy breathing.

You blinked up at him.

What should you say?

“You should have run you stupid fuck,” he growled, rough hand turning your cheek from side-to-side.

“I can’t move.”

Then he stood, grabbing the back of your bloodied shirt and lifting you, carrying you like a duffel bag by his side. You were facing in the opposite direction he was walking it, his pace slow and steady. You wondered if he understood the gravity of the situation -- how injured you were. How the way he was holding you was not helping the bleeding.

You could move your head and neck.

Something caught your attention -- a dagger lay forgotten on the ground as you passed. You kept your eyes trained on it as you walked, an unease strangling you. That one tool had inflicted a great deal of pain on you.

“I have to go to the hospital,” you said to the alley.
All Might didn’t answer you.

His breathing sounded labored and you heard what you believed was him pulling off his mask -- your suspicions were confirmed when you saw it held in his other hand.

You focused your attention back down the alley you had come from, eyes tracing the shapes of the shadows. You... wanted to say something more, to thank him for what he had done. You also wanted to keep quiet and maybe question him on what he was doing in the alley. How had he known where you were? That you were in trouble?

Sure, you believed in fate to an extent...

*Why did you have a feeling something more insidious was at play?*

*Did he have a tracker on you?*

*Was he following--*

Eyes flashed wide when you finally realized that the shadows of the night weren’t playing tricks with your mind -- there was someone there.

*Your attacker was back.*

Even from your distance, you could tell that, physically, he looked worse for wear. He was standing with a hunch, shoulders heaving. His arm was moving and you thought, maybe, that he was taking aim with a gun. But his hand was still rising up toward his face, toward his mouth....

You didn’t really yell a word or a warning -- you just *yelled*. But All Might understood you had raised an alarm, his head whipping around just in time to catch the lunatic lick at the blade in his hand.

All Might’s body went stiff--

You were falling. *He* was falling.

*If All Might was immobilized...*

Your hand was back on the dial of time and in that split-second of opportunity, you forced the contraption to turn, breaking through the stoned resistance you had felt earlier. The crazy man was being sent back, you and All Might were being sent back.

You couldn’t muster enough energy to make much of a difference, your world shifting and teetering dangerously as black voids appeared across your vision. But it was enough for All Might. Having experienced your quirk before, he retained enough of his wits to know what had occurred and managed to get off a particularly savage chop down the alleyway. Your attacker, having no knowledge of your quirk, didn't keep the same presence of mind. The blade was on his tongue when All Might's sudden attack struck him, the blade cutting deep into the muscle.

Blood.

The only blood he could taste was his own.

Too many blows had been dealt to Akaguro that night. Though he was far from death at the moment, continuing the spat with All Might felt like an unwise decision.

Only a worthy hero could kill him. He wouldn’t let his life be ended by a villain.
Another day he would deal with All Might.

Another day he would deal with you.

Gripping the dagger in his hand and dazed by the steady pooling of own blood across his tastebuds, Akaguro retreated, certain All Might would give chase again.

All Might didn’t.

He couldn’t.

Sure, he had landed a strike against the crazed attacker. But, the bit of All Might’s blood that Akaguro had managed to nick in their scuffle had touched his tongue before it had been masked by his own. Had he looked behind him before fleeing, he would have seen All Might fall.

But Akaguro hadn’t.

Though he struggled, All Might couldn’t overpower the other man’s quirk. With teeth clenched and the veins of his neck bulging, he dropped down to his hands and knees, you falling to his side.

“Shit,” You heard him hiss under his breath, all venom and rage, certain he had been backed into a corner. “Shit.”

Though you were teetering on the edge of losing consciousness, the use of your quirk had further sped along you reclaiming your mobility. That, joined with the fear of another attack, spurred you to your knees. You were yanking on All Might’s upper arm, trying to drag him along.

“We have to go,” you were babbling, eyes darting around the alley and along the rooftops, expecting the killing blow to land any second.

All Might just cursed and snapped, still savagely fighting against the prison of his body.

You couldn’t drag the beast that was All Might. The effort itself on your already weakened body was absolutely draining. You stumbled, falling back onto your ass, head lolling.

Death didn’t come, though.

Seconds turned to minutes. Even in your hazed state, you realized time was passing. Too much time. Had your attacker left? Squinting in the dark, you couldn’t see him anymore but the feeling of being watched hadn’t yet abated.

“Son of a bitch,” You heard All Might snap. “Fuck.”

He sounded almost... distressed, which was unnerving to hear in his voice.

“It’s his quirk,” you groaned, pressing your palms against heavy eyesockets. “He can immobilize people. It wears off, though. I can move now.”

“Then go,” All Might snarled. “Leave.”

“I can’t just--”

“Get out of here,” he demanded, blue eyes flaring to life and looking at you wildly. “Now.”

It made sense, for you to leave. Obviously, you were in dire need of help while All Might, despite his immobility, was otherwise fine. It’s not like you could do much in terms of protection, if your
attacker decided to return.

*Why did it feel wrong to leave him?*

Common sense eventually won out, though and, after a couple of tries, you managed to stand on shaky legs.

“Go,” All Might spat, a crazed look still painted on his face.

You looked at him, in disbelief over everything that had just occurred, unsure what to say or do. Thank him? Ask him to let you know later he’s okay? Spit on him while he’s down?

The disbelief only grew when tendrils of… *something* started to whisp off his body. They floated and curled in the air, like smoke from a candle that had been recently extinguished. You didn’t know what they were though -- was that a side-effect of the other villain’s quirk?

The look on All Might’s face said otherwise.

*Panic?*

No.

He was coughing, the smoke coming off his body growing thicker.

Was this man about to spontaneously combust?

“All Might?” Your voice was slightly shrill -- you were afraid. You didn’t know what was going on, you were already in poor form and barely registering most of the stimuli of the world. And the man’s coughing was getting louder, more ragged and--

*He was hurt, wasn’t he?*

The smoke was being carried away by the wind, clearing off of his body.

There was always something not quite human about All Might but you could never quite put your finger on why you felt that way, what it was about him that inspired that belief. He had this general aura, a *presence*, that was intoxicating and frightening and *bombastic* and… *amazing*. It felt like he was *bigger* than a normal person, that he actually was a force of nature.

Something that always was and always will be.

So…

You…

You didn’t understand what you were seeing.

What you had witnessed.

All Might.

*All Might.*

*Your* All Might--

Wasn’t there anymore.
The man coughing and cursing on his hands and knees was no All Might--

But--

*You knew him.*

Your knees gave out.

Your world was tilting.

Surprise? Shock? Blood loss?

The man.

The man from the restaurant.

The tall one. The slender one. With the wild blond hair.

*What was happening?*

Was this some kind of… quirk?

Had this man stolen the facade of All Might?

“Who…?” The question was soft, uncertain. Your brain was not functioning at the capacity needed to understand *what was happening.*

The coughing had subsided and you could see darken patches on the ground below him -- *blood.*

The rivers of dark coarsing down the corners of his mouth -- *blood.*

A breath traveled through him.

It was deep, encompassing--

*Resigning.*

He was looking at you out of the corner of his eye.

*Glaring* seemed apter.

Two ocean eyes meeting yours.

A realization was taking root in your mind but *still,* you just couldn’t come to grips with what you had witnessed, what you were witnessing.

No.

No, this wasn’t your--

“All Might?”

It couldn’t be.

There was just no possible way.

A snort fell from him. He was rolling his eyes.
“Surprise, sweetheart.”
All Might was sitting across the room, arms crossed, glaring at the floor.

You were sitting in bed, fuming.

It had been an hour or two since you had awoken in a haze, shocked to find yourself alone in a hospital room. By the time a passing nurse had discovered your newly conscious state, you had already remembered exactly what had led up to your hospital visit.

The crazy man.

The knife.

All Might.

The nurses had gossiped with you about the man who heroically found your injured body in an alley in Musutafu. How, bleeding, he had supposedly chased away your attacker before calling for an ambulance.

At some point, before All Might had regained use of his limbs, you had passed out.

“Oh wow.” Your teeth were clenched, the pain racking your body exhausting. “I really want to meet him and share my thanks.”

You didn’t have to wait long.

He wasn’t his big villainous self when he walked into the room, guided by a peppy nurse. You were feeling a bit better by then, having been administered medication to help kill the pain, though it left you slightly… woozy. The nurse stood guard in the doorway, as a precaution, while you stared at the bandaged newcomer as he dropped his lanky frame into a chair.

Pointedly, he stared back.

*It still didn’t feel like All Might.*

“I’m a lucky girl,” you said dryly, well aware of the third-party eavesdropping. “To have a hero so close in my time of need.”

He didn’t respond.

“You’ve got to tell me your name,” you continued. “I just *have* to know the name of my protector.”

All Might clicked his tongue as he cast his eyes toward the door.
The nurse was still there.

She was looking toward you both.

“Yagi,” he said when he finally spoke, voice gruff. “Yagi Toshinori.”

“Well, Mister Yagi…” You lowered your head in the best bow you could muster, ignoring the sloshing feeling of your brain. “I owe you my deepest thanks. You saved my life, didn’t you?”

He clicked his tongue again, refusing to look away.

Someone in the hallway called out--

There was a movement by the door--

_{The nurse was gone._}

“What, you stalk me?” you hissed, lashing out in the privacy. “Follow me!?”

He looked over to confirm you were, indeed, alone.

The look he gave you was almost *bored*.

“Yes, sweetheart,” he said. “That’s it.”

“All Might, I swear to god if you try and tell me it was a coincidence…”

“You’re *lucky* I was passing by. Though, with thanks like this, I should have left you.”

“I’ve *seen* you more than once, All Might! Cut the shit.”

He glared.

“Watch your tone with me, girl. You forget your manners.”

You ran your tongue along the front of your teeth, debating on where to jab him. That’s what you wanted to do -- hurt him. Make him mad. Ruin his mood. Maybe you could insult his new appearance? Point out the fact the ‘best villain’ had been out-maneuvered by a nobody? Had it not been for you and your quirk, he would have been rendered useless...

_{Of course, you would have probably died._}

Instead of getting into a spat with the now-stranger in the hospital room, you chose to focus your attention on where an IV was taped into your arm. A million different thoughts were swirling around your head, none of them entirely vivid -- how bad were your injuries? What time it was? _What the fuck was wrong with All Might…?_ 

_Yagi._

“Any explanation for…” you gestured at him with your chin. “This.”

“What…” He cracked a smile. “You don’t like it?”

“It explains a lot.”

The smile was already gone.
He didn’t like that.
He didn’t respond.

You didn’t respond.

Some machine connected to you beeped softly in slow, steady intervals. The sky outside your window was dark. Your toes were cold. He was still staring at you. There were people talking in the hallway. Your brain felt like fuzz.

“Couldn’t quite quit the business, hm?” All Might had finally spoken up. “Who was that, an unhappy customer?”

“I’ve never dealt with him before in my life,” you said, choosing to turn your gaze back to the window. The glare from the lights was strong, giving a more mirror-like quality to the glass. You could see yourself--

_Bandages._

_There was blood in your hair._

“He knew your name,” Yagi pointed out.

You kept your eyes on your reflection.

“I would remember if I’ve met him,” you snapped. Then, you exhaled through your nose, making eye contact with yourself. Your attacker’s face was there in your head, sharp and clear despite the fog surrounding it. “... But he _did_ know me.”

Yagi shifted in his seat.

“Looking to suck cock this time around too?”

Eyebrows shot up as your head whipped toward him, eyes bobbing around your skull from the sudden movement.

You were _certain_ you had misheard him.

Cerulean eyes were dancing as another smile played on his thin face. It was an All Might look, definitely, but it didn’t fit. It didn’t ooze the same… assurance.

_But it was an All Might look._

“Last time I ‘saved’ you, I didn’t even have to fight anyone,” he said. “I wonder how you’ll show your gratitude this time around? Offer me something _more_? Should I go lock the door, kitten?”

Your face burned. It was the reaction he had wanted to see. Satisfied, he leaned back into the chair, rolling his head back and forth to stretch out some of the stiffness in his long neck.

“Don’t look so flustered, girl. I don’t _want_ you.”

_You hated him._

“Fuck _off_, asshole. You don’t need to be here,” you spat. “You… You don’t need to be here.”

_Smooth._
“Unfortunately, I do, sweet one. Yagi has to give a statement to the police about the little incident he came across.”

“So that’s your real name. Yagi Toshinobu?”

“Toshinori …” He corrected. “And wouldn’t you like to know?”

A strange feeling settled somewhere high in your nose but you ignored it, shrugging.

“Nowadays, not so much.”

His smile didn’t change.

No doctor, nurse or police officer had stopped into the room to check on either of you. It seemed very… unsafe, to leave you alone with a stranger who had found your bloodied body in a street. Were the nurses just naive or was the hospital unconcerned with patient safety? What if he had been your attacker?

“So, what brought you here, to Musutafu? Other than luck?” You were back to trying and unravel his claim of coincidence -- you knew it wasn’t true. The odds were just too laughable. How had he found you? You had moved. You had a new job. How long had he been following you?

He was a creep. A psychopath who was stalking you.

And he was playing innocent.

“Yoroi Musha.”

You blinked, mind working on a bit of a delay at the familiar name.

“The hero?”

That didn’t deserve an answer.

“So you… what, picked a fight with Yoroi Musha and just so happened to pass by the right place at the right time?”

“Such gratitude you have. Screams are easy to follow when you’re used to hearing them,” he said, settling his elbows on the arms of the chair and stretching his long legs out. He had All Might’s height. “Check the news if you don’t believe me, stupid girl. I smelled blood in the water and when I went to investigate, I found you.”

No…

It couldn’t be coincidence…

After it became apparent he wasn’t going to expand any further, another bout of silence lapsed.

Silence and staring, that’s all your reunion was.

If he was following you…

If you were still… an interest of his, wouldn’t he have stepped in sooner? Before you got taken away? Before you had gotten hurt?

It couldn’t be coincidence…
Your skull was throbbing and you rubbed at your eyes with the palms of your hands, trying to relieve the pressure.

“Why’d you get involved?” you asked, hoarsely.

Yagi regarded you with a tilted head, scratching under his chin.

_He had hoped you wouldn’t ask that question._

And he didn’t get a chance to reuse his damsel line from earlier -- you had spoken up once more before he could.

“We didn’t last see each other under good terms. You said some things. I said some things.” Your eyes were burning into his. _“You choked me.”_

The flinch was almost unnoticeable. The very slight turn of his chin. The blink. The frown.

That grew.

And continued to grow.

Soon he was back to glaring, his anger coming off in waves at having been caught tongue-tied and foolishly allowing the silence to fester. You didn’t press him further.

You didn’t need to.

His reaction had been telling.

_Yagi Toshinori..._

You were shaking your head, connections forming as you reflected on the time you had spent with him. The timer that hung over every interaction you had, his continuous refusal to stay the night, the inability to open up...

Having two forms must be his quirk.

And you had a feeling you knew which version was the _real_ him.

“I really didn’t know anything about you, did I?” You said it with a laugh but nothing in you was humored.

“Yagi?”

Before he could respond with something mean-spirited, a familiar face had popped his head into the room. The man blinked, brows furrowed, as he took in the sight of the wild-haired blond man.

Yagi seemed just as surprised.

“Naomasa?”

You felt the blood in your body shift.

It took a few seconds, but the detective eventually recognized _you_ as well. He might not have remembered your name but how could he have forgotten _you_. What could you do other than share a tight smile with him, acknowledging the strangeness of the situation?
What a Greek comedy this was turning out to be.

“Ah, Naomasa, excuse my manners…”

Baffled, you watched Yagi stand and gesture toward you, introducing you to the police detective who had questioned you in a murder. Then, he was doing the same for you--

“This is Detective Naomasa Tsukauchi. An upstanding member of the police force and a dear friend.”

Dear friend.
The statement struck you upside the head.

Dear friend.
You were dazed.
Legitimately dazed.
The world wasn't right anymore.

All Might had a friend.

“We’ve… met,” Naomasa said delicately, shooting you a concerned look. The sudden paleness in your face was discerning. Were you going to slip into some kind of medical episode? Mentally, he was preparing himself to call for a nurse.

“Really?” Yagi looked between the two of you, intrigued.

“Yes… I, ah, questioned her during an earlier investigation.”

“Really?”

It was obvious by his tone he wanted to know the details and Naomasa was torn between courtesy for your privacy and protectiveness over a friend. Lucky for you, he was a professional first and foremost. He waved his hand signaling that, later, he would fill the other man in.

Yagi frowned. The denial did not sit well with him.

“But you two know each other?” Naomasa asked.

Careful.

Yagi looked to you, nodding, disguising the frenzy of his thoughts. He had to be careful on how to answer -- the last thing he needed was to trip Naomasa’s quirk and it was obvious the detective was already on edge.

“I’ve done business with her before,” Yagi said and you closed your eyes, rubbing at them, praying it would look like you were suffering from fatigue and not internally dying.

Business.

Of all the answers, that was probably the worst he could have given.

He was already suspicious of your business dealings.
Naomasa, of course, pounced.

“What kind of business?”

“Clothes,” Yagi said before you could even react. “I have an... unusual body type...” He laughed and your blood went cold. It was a normal laugh. It wasn’t right. “Sometimes I have to get things special made.”

“I thought you worked as a support scientist…” Naomasa was squinting his eyes at you, trying to think back to the specifics of your career.

“I am,” you murmured, almost numbly. “But my specialization is costume integration and design.”

“And apparently shirts and pants,” Yagi added for you.

And then he smiled.

It didn’t hold any sharpness or cruelty. It wasn’t meant to provoke or demean.

It was friendly.

You knew it wasn’t genuine. You knew what he was like.

But the fact he could even make a face like that…

“I’m sure you’re not here to steal the secrets of my wardrobe, Naomasa…”

“You’d be right about that,” the detective said with a chuckle, sated for the time being. “I’m here to collect your statements about the attack. Obviously, we want to catch the guy who did this to you both. From what I understand, you--” He had taken out a notebook and was pointing at you with a pen. “Were attacked and you--” The pen moved to Yagi. “Found her.”

“That’s the gist of it, yes.”

“Lead me up to the attack,” Naomasa said, approaching your bedside. Where were the doctors telling him you needed rest? To come back later? Apparently, you weren’t getting that kind of treatment. Not even a ‘how are you feeling?’ “Step-by-step. What were you doing? What brought you to that part of town--”

“I wasn’t in that part of town,” you said sharply, catching the hidden insinuation -- why were you in the alley? What sketching dealings were you part of? “I got home from work and went jogging. He got me out while I was out. I wasn’t in that part of town, wherever it was. I was only a couple of blocks from my house.”

“What time was this around?”

“Four?”

“So you were out jogging…”

“And he came at me from behind. Ran into me or something -- I thought I had gotten hit by a car. He said stuff to me. I was on the ground, I…” You fiddled with the thin sheet on your bed. “I don’t remember exactly what he said. Next thing I knew, I was waking up in an alley and it was dark and I couldn’t move.”

Naomasa was writing. Then he was looking at you expectantly.
"I couldn’t move because of his quirk. He… licked my blood. I couldn’t move. And he was cutting into me saying crazy stuff--"

"Crazy stuff?"

A look had passed across Naomasa face that Yagi had caught.

"Stuff about heroes. Calling them fakes. Crazy stuff."

Naomasa was hesitating.

Yagi frowned.

"You know something," he observed. The detective froze--

Then sighed.

"There’s… a new villain who recently started up. Has been going by the name Stain. The reports we’ve gotten from survivors match the description that you’re giving. He’s got a quirk related to blood ingestion and he’s been attacking heroes specifically… Er, what did he look like?"

"He had no nose," you said immediately and Naomasa nodded once -- that was damning. "I don’t remember what he was wearing. Normal clothes. He had dark hair?"

"No mask or anything? No getup? Just street clothes?"

"Yeah, nothing special. A grey hoodie, and like, dark sweatpants. The no nose thing was kind of distracting."

"What did he do to you?"

You looked at him tiredly.

"Cut me. Repeatedly. Stabbed me."

"How many times?"

"I don’t know. Three? Maybe more? I wasn’t exactly counting."

"What happened after that?"

"All Might showed up."

Two sets of eyes locked onto you, thunderstruck. You weren’t looking at Yagi but you could sense his developing reaction -- boiling infuriation that you would mention that name, bring him onto the scene...

Could you have omitted his involvement? Probably.

But you wanted to make Yagi squirm. You wanted to give him trouble.

It was the least you could do.

"All Might!?” Naomasa repeated, eyes blown wide.
“All Might.”

“... All Might? The villain, All Might?”

“How many All Mights are there?” you asked Naomasa before glancing over to Yagi on purpose.

The look he was giving you.

*He was absolutely going to strangle you.*

“Wait…” Naomasa ran his hand through his hair. “You’re saying that, while you were under attack by this noseless man, *All Might* came by?”

“The coincidence is just crazy, isn’t it?”

You weren’t *lying*. Naomasa felt no twinges in his gut -- your words were truthful.

*All Might.*

All Might had been there.

“So you’re under attack…”

“By the crazy man. He keeps saying weird stuff about heroes and *All Might*… *shows up*. And then *they* get into it--”

“So... two villains are on scene now -- the noseless man and *All Might* -- and then *they* start fighting?”

“Yes. The crazy guy didn’t seem like a big fan of *All Might*. They got into it, I still can’t move. They move out of sight, fighting each other or something. I’m left alone. Then Mister Yagi *appears.*”

“She was bloody and on the ground when I found her…” Yagi said roughly, interjecting himself before you could make the situation worse for him. “Figured I couldn’t just… stand by. I picked her up, started to carry her out of there…”

“He came back though, the guy with the knife,” you blurted, eyes falling on Yagi’s bandages. “*Mister Yagi* got cut--”

“The… *man* ran away a second time--” Yagi grunted.

“Uh, how many times?” Naomasa interrupted, holding up a hand to stop your back and forth. “How many times were you hit, Yagi?”

Yagi paused and his eyes flickered past Naomasa.

“Doctor says I have nine wounds from a blade.”

*That* many?

You looked on, aghast, but he was still staring at the wall. Naomasa frowned.

“What happened after that?”

*She passed out,* Yagi said, speaking before you could. “I called an ambulance. Now we’re here.”

“Yeah…” You shrugged. “Here we are.”
The conversation ran on longer -- you mostly repeated portions of your story while Naomasa prodded and searched for any additional details that could be a benefit to his investigation. Though it was far too soon to say, the detective heavily implied that Stain was behind the attack, but you threw off his usual M.O.

A doctor stopped by your room when the questions returned to the appearance of All Might, shooing your ‘guests’ away while he spoke with you one-on-one about the injuries you sustained and the, ultimately, positive prognosis. Meanwhile, Yagi stood in the hallway with Naomasa, speaking in hushed voices about what would happen next.

“We try and apprehend him,” the detective offered, much to the older man’s annoyance. “Unfortunately, most villains don’t just turn themselves in. We’ll send out an updated warning to hero agencies, telling them to be on the lookout for him but… it’s an ongoing process, Yagi. I want to get him just as badly as you want to.”

Yagi Toshinori doubted that very much.

All Might doubted that very much.

He wanted to crack and splinter every bone in that rat’s body. Rip him in half. Hang his skin somewhere public. Send pictures of his ugly death to the news outlets. Something terrible and over-the-top that would properly broadcast the depth of his anger.

He had been following you. Like hell he would ever admit to it because he understood how… unhinged it appeared. He had been truthful when he said he had gotten into a spat with Yoroi Musha earlier, he had… tweaked the timeline a bit.

Stain had gotten one hit on him--

The rest of his injuries had been from equipment hero, a fast old bastard. A particularly deep gash to his leg had left him nostalgic…

Ten seconds he had looked away to text Midoriya. Ten seconds. You were gone. The blood. It had taken him a couple of hours to find you again. The screaming had helped.

He cracked his knuckles, Naomasa was still talking.

Stain would be dead if you hadn’t been frozen there, helpless.

You distracted him.

Your injuries distracted him.

He knew you weren’t going to die. The knife the rat was wielding was short and the stabs to your shoulders hadn’t been deep. It was the head injury he had been most concerned about -- you had looked at him with such blank eyes. Your reactions had been so dull. You had been slurring your words.

He was going to skin that rat.

There was so much he had to unpack in his head.

A burning sensation flared up across his back.

You knew what he looked like.
He had gotten careless with his visits. How many times had you seen him? Were there times he didn’t know about? Glimpses of him that you had barely caught?

*You knew what he looked like.*

Him like *this* was something you were never supposed to see.

*You knew what he looked like.*

*You knew what he looked like.*

*You knew what-*

“I have to go to the bathroom,” Yagi said abruptly, turning heel and leaving Naomasa mid-sentence. He fisted and relaxed his hands as he walked the hospital corridors, looking for a restroom.

When he found one, he started washing his hands.

The minutes ticked by as he stood over the sink and focused on coating every inch of his calloused hands with soap. Between each of his fingers, over cracked knuckles, the rough skin of his palms…

That… feeling was back.

The same feeling that had pestered him when he had seen you on the street after dinner.

The feeling that--

He grumbled to himself and rubbed his hands together with more force.

*Leave it.*

The debate was starting up again.

The debate he *shouldn’t* be having.

The debate that made his blood curdle and nerves pop.

He was supposed to be done with you.

But he wasn’t.

But he was *supposed* to be done with you.

*But he wasn’t.*

The wringing was getting harder.

He was trying to reign back control of *him.*

All Might doesn’t get attached.

For *decades* he had been fine.

Decades.

*Decades.*
He was All Might.

He was *All Might*.

That’s it. That was the only thought he needed to focus on.

Who he was.

That’s it.

Who he was.

That’s it.

Just…

Focus on being *All Might*.

He inhaled and exhaled, feeling the churning starting to abate. By then the soap had dried and he had rubbed his cold hands almost raw. The rush of warm water was satisfying. Placating. He stared at his reflection as he washed away the residue. Wild hair. Blood on his chin. Bright, sunken eyes.

*Your reaction.*

Yagi attempted to bat away the thought with a heavy hand. No. He had *just* been through this. He needed to go fuck a whore or something to get his head back on straight and drop this possessiveness he had of you.

You weren’t--

Stop it.

*Your reaction wasn’t*--

He was pacing the bathroom.

He needed to get ahold of himself, this was ridiculous.

*Your reaction hadn’t been as… ending as he had always thought.*

Long legs slowed.

You had been surprised. He had seen that much on your face. Which was understandable, though he was loath to admit it. It was a jarring comparison, seeing his two forms back-to-back, especially if you weren’t prepared.

But in the hospital room...

It hadn’t been--

A man walked into the bathroom.

Yagi walked out.

Naomasa wasn’t where Yagi had left him but the door to your room was open once more. Assuming that’s where he had gone, Yagi entered.
It was *not* where he had gone.

“Listen, it’s okay…” A new man was sitting on your bed, a four-armed hero the villain had grown quite familiar with. Yagi’s presence in the door hadn’t been noticed by either of you. Fourth Kind was stroking your head. You were staring at the bed. “You’re fine now. It’s alright, alright?”

You started crying fat, heavy, sobs.

“It’s so stupid,” you laughed as you tried to hide your face from a person who didn’t want you to.

“It ain’t stupid,” Fourth was saying, dragging your arms away so he could see you better. “You got attacked by a villain, meatball. You got *hurt*. It definitely ain’t stupid. You must have been scared.”

Your cries stuttered and you nodded your head furiously, still attempting to hide in the tangle of your hands and arms, afraid to speak in case your voice came across as broken as you felt. He was shushing you, repeatedly telling you that you were fine and that everything was okay. And you cried harder because it’s exactly what you needed to hear.

“They’re gonna catch the guy, alright? He ain’t gonna hurt you again. He’s gonna get caught and he’s gonna answer for what he did.”

You could only nod. He brought your head into his chest. You buried your face deeper into the soft, clean smell of his suit.

“It’s gonna be okay. I promise. It’s all gonna be okay. Ain’t nothing more gonna happen to you.”

Yagi was standing in the hallway, scrolling through his phone when Naomasa returned with a can of coffee and a styrofoam cup, which he passed off to his friend.

“Got you some tea,” the detective offered as an explanation.

Wordlessly, Yagi took it.

“Did the doctor leave?” Naomasa asked quietly, more to himself than to Yagi, sidestepping to peek back into your room. Yagi blew at the liquid in his cup, watching the steam dance, ignoring the soft, ‘*oi!*’ of surprise at seeing an unexpected addition to their party.

From what Yagi could hear, Naomasa and Fourth Kind were familiar enough to one another -- Fourth Kind more so thanks to his status in the community.

They were talking about the rat. They were talking about you. They were talking about him--

“Yagi…” Naomasa was back. “Come in. You’re to be showered in more thanks.”

He clicked his tongue.

You had stopped crying and were sitting red-eyed, blinking slowly down at your hands that had been folded in your lap.

Fourth stood as he entered, looking severe even as he bowed and thanked Yagi for stepping in. For his heroic actions.

The blond’s eyes flickered over to you as he stoically received the commendations. You were looking back at him.

The fire you had earlier was gone. You *looked* like you belonged in a hospital. You looked…
breakable.

You were breakable.

“Looks like you got roughed up too…” Fourth was gesturing to Yagi’s body and he nodded along. “You’ve got mettle, ain’t no denying that.”

*I could snap you into pieces.*

Yagi bowed his head.

“You flatter me,” he grumbled.

“Any word on when they’re releasing you?” Naomasa asked you while Yagi stared off into space, no longer interested in the company he was surrounded by.

“I have to stay the night but I’m free to leave tomorrow if everything seems okay.”

“Ten stitches and a concussion,” Fourth Kind said, with a shake of his head. “You’ll send the perp’s description to my office?”

Yagi’s eyebrow quirked upward, his attention falling to the shorter hero.

Naomasa nodded.

“Thinking about going after him?” Yagi found himself asking. The smirk was evident in his voice and he quickly put on a mask of… interest. As if, ‘ah, so a hero is on the case.’ Fourth crossed both sets of arms, cocking his head.

He had the air of a fighter.

*That infuriated Yagi.*

“If he’s a threat to the public, I’m not just gonna sit on my hands and do nothin’.”

“I know the case might be personal for you…” Naomasa, ever the voice of reason, was stepping in. “But please—”

“I know, I know,” Fourth Kind said, tossing a look toward where you continued to sit in exhausted silence. “I know.”

Rather than click his tongue openly, Yagi opted to grit his teeth instead.

*He couldn’t comprehend the hero’s priorities.*

“You tired, meatball?”

All Might hated that name, head jerking the slightest bit as you inhaled loudly and smiled up at the hero standing beside you.

He hated that look.

“It’s starting to hit me now.”

“The adrenaline is probably wearing off. You’ll sleep well tonight,” Naomasa said. "But you’ve been cleared to leave already, right, Yagi?”
"I have."

"I'll walk out with you, then."

Naomasa left you with a respectful goodbye and a heartfelt promise that the police would do everything in their power to catch the man who had attacked you. And, if necessary, he might reach out to you for more information on the events of the night. While Naomasa made his professional declarations, your gaze wandered to the still-stranger standing just behind him.

He was scowling right at you, eyes on fire.

Yagi expected you to say something, maybe throw in an insinuation that only he would catch. There had been a spark of fight in you earlier when you two had been alone.

You didn’t say anything.

The spark had died.

His goodbye was mostly under his breath.

It was terribly unsatisfying, this conclusion to your reunion. A goodbye made worse by the fact that, although All Might was leaving, the hero was staying behind to steal more time from you.

"You said earlier that you knew her…" Yagi finally broke his silence in the elevator. "That you questioned her during a case."

"Ah…" Naomasa rubbed the back of his neck. "About that… I didn’t realize you two knew each other."

"Only in passing."

Naomasa’s gut vibrated. He shook his head, looking to his friend, signaling what he had felt and Yagi’s frowned deepened.

"Naomasa… talk."

The detective sighed.

"She was questioned in a, uh, murder case. We thought that, maybe, she made some devices that killed three members—"

"Ah. That case."

"She’s since been cleared -- information she provided actually helped us nab a suspect that has been charged. But…" Naomasa sighed. "The coincidence… With her being a support scientist…"

Coincidence.

Yagi cracked his thumbs.

The elevator doors opened.

What was that American saying--

"Maybe this is just bad luck. I'm hoping it’s just bad luck. But if she does have criminal ties and she was attacked in an alley by a villain…"
Where there's smoke, there's fire.

“But she was cleared?”

“... Yes,” Naomasa said after a few seconds of hesitation. They were standing outside the hospital by that point, loitering around the large sliding glass doors of the main entrance. An ambulance, with sirens blaring, passed them on the way to the pull-up for the ER. "She was cleared.... Ah, maybe I am looking at it with a pessimistic attitude."

You sitting in bed. ‘But he did know me.’

“I’m glad you made it out in one piece,” the detective said, changing the subject more toward goodbye as he looked his friend up and down. “Kept all your limbs. Though, if you had lost some height...”

“This was my last good shirt,” Yagi grumbled, looking at the black article of clothing riddled with deep tears.

“When we catch this guy, I’ll be sure to fight for reparations for your clothing.”

Yagi didn’t join in with Naomasa’s laughter.

The older man was tired and didn’t want to risk missing the last train by minutes, so he just called a cab to take him home. Naomasa, who had use of a police car, offered to drive him but Yagi was not interested and feigned over-consideration. Still, ever the good friend, Naomasa waited obliviously with a seething Yagi and waved goodbye when the cab arrived, and very quickly, departed.

A short time later--

He pulled up at your house.

It was well after 1 a.m. No one was out and, with you tucked away at the hospital, he didn’t have to worry so much about being caught creeping. The taxi driver didn’t bother to wait for him to enter his ‘home’ -- which didn’t bother Yagi the slightest bit.

He had no intentions of going inside.

Children’s toys were still piles beside your front doorstep. The thriving leafy-green plant that hung above your doorbell swung lazily in the night breeze.

Embedded right in the center of your front door was a knife.

Suspicions confirmed, Yagi retrieved the dagger, looking over the dirtied steel of the blade.

So, the rat was one of those villains.

You’d been marked. Gotten off the hook a little too easily. He would come back for you.

How unlucky you were, little Artisan. You had caught the eye of a villain, you had been involved with a murder, you had been threatened, you had been attacked by beasts while at work, investigated by police, attacked again by a knife-wielding stranger ...

Yagi thought of the movie series Final Destination -- the moral being that, if the universe wanted you dead, you would end up dead. One way or another, you would ultimately die.

Clearly, the universe was conspiring against you.
Or you had terrible luck.

Old man Toshinori was rearing his head, calming the rumblings of All Might over his fondness of you. Though the villain’s... disapproval wasn’t as... loud as before.

Yagi didn’t want to call another cab. The trains weren’t running at that hour. The walk home from your house to his rental would take hours -- you essentially lived on opposite sides of the city.

But he wanted to walk.

So he walked.

And walked.

And walked.

And as he walked, his mind worked to untwist itself.

By the time he got home, his legs burned and, although it was still dark, the birds were waking and singing.

No world-expanding epiphanies happened during his journey. No sudden changes in his character or important self-realizations.

He had simply realized that he needed more clothing. And a new helmet.

Surely, you were indebted to him.

Saving you? Again?

Chasing away your potential murderer?

That was grounds for a favor.

Then there was the boy. *He* would need to be outfitted soon -- Yagi had plans on involving him in real-world practice in the coming weeks. *He* needed clothing. An identity. Perhaps someone of your background could even whip up something that would prevent him from ruining his body every five minutes.

Yagi plopped onto his couch, stretching out fatigued legs.

There was a hole in his sock. He could see one of his toes peeking through.

*You owed him.*

All Might didn’t do things for free.

It was as simple as that.

*You owed him.*

He would demand repayment.

Simple as that.
Accidentally put this in Roses at first, lmao. Anyway, hope you all are okay with a chapter this week!
Don't get your hopes up for next week though 😊

Smite's thoughts: *exist*
Artisan:

![It's Free Real Estate](image-url)
Handyman

Chapter Notes

Mild warning: There's smut in this chapter with good ol' Fourthie. So if you don't want Art to experience a carnal relationship outside of All Might, you can probably skip this. It's mostly some character growth shit and plot stuff doesn't happen until like... the last couple paragraphs.

Shout-out to EAVanGeek who I based my Fourth Kind off of. Check out their Fourth Kind smut, it's some grade A beef.

Also, excuse the probable errors. I'll go through it better in the morning -- it's already late and I just wanted to get the chapter uploaded.

“Whadda think?”

You clicked your tongue as you looked at your phone, not quite… happy with what you were seeing.

“Move it just… a smidge to the right…”

The video feed was obscured as a palm came into view, shifting the world. When it pulled back, you could see a close-up view of Fourth Kind’s face before his head turned to look at where you were standing, just off-screen in your front entryway.

The step up to the front door of your house was completely in-frame.

That was what you were looking for.

“Perfect,” you said.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

The hero descended from the ladder, admiring his handiwork with one set of arms crossed, the other resting on his hips. The camera was small and barely noticeable but, once you saw it, there was no denying what it was.

“Alright. What else?”

What else?

You shook your head, flipping through the views on your device: your backdoor, the left side of your house, the right side of your house, the front door, the roof -- everything was accounted for. Coupled with the internal home security system you had rigged up…

“I think we're done,” you declared while Fourth furrowed his brows, doing his own checklist of each location in his head.
“Ya sure you don’t want any set up inside ?”

“That’s a little too 1984 for me, even if I’m my own Big Brother.” You laughed at your own joke and Fourth cracked a smile, though the reference was slightly lost on him. “Plus my landlord doesn’t want me to do anything too extensive on a rental. No, I think this is alright. I think I’m all set.”

“You sure? I mean, I can go ask the guys back at the office--”

“Fourth, I’m a scientist. Yeah, I make suits but I can whip up some security. Trust me, I’m golden. And you were such a big help--”

“Ah, knock it off, all I did was climb a ladder...”

“You went up on the roof? You’re such a... handyman!” You slipped your phone back into your pocket, gazing up at the hero who was sheepishly rubbing at the back of his head. If you didn’t know any better, you’d say there was a slight tint to his face. Probably at how fitting your nickname for him was at that particular moment. “Do you have to go back to the office right now? Can’t you come in for one cup of tea?”

A sound caught in Fourth’s throat as he considered your offer, gaze lingering on the ladder before shifting to look just beyond you, into your house. His ‘lunch break’ had already gone over by close to thirty minutes, there were reports he was supposed to send off by that afternoon, one-on-one meetings he had with his subordinates scheduled, a community self-defense class he was running that night...

But...

“Ah, one cup won’t kill me.” He started to unroll the sleeves of the dress shirt, trying to smooth out the wrinkles that had formed in the crisp white as he did so. You internally frowned. He wasn’t wearing your shirts, the ones that wouldn’t have been left wrinkled. “You even got tea in there? I thought you were a coffee drinker.”

“I’m a proper hostess!” you retorted in faux indignation. “I’ve got tea... and coffee, if you need a better pick-me-up.”

“Alright, alright. One cup.”

It was broaching the one week anniversary of your ambush. Your head was no longer throbbing, the wounds on your shoulders were healing up nicely and you lived under the almost-certainty that you were being watched and followed at all times, in all places.

That Stain guy, if he was your attacker, had gotten away. He was still out there. Half-assed Krav Maga lessons? What a help they had been -- you hadn’t even considered physically defending yourself, not you could have with your attacker’s quirk. Besides, you’d be up against someone who had even kept All Might on his toes. There was no hope for someone like you.

So, you were manufacturing hope.

“Alright, pick your poison.” You were opening a cabinet, gesturing to the boxes on the shelf like a game show host’s eye-candy assistant. “Green tea? Black tea? Coffee? I think I’ve got some Jasmine tea bags from the Chinese takeout place...”

“Green’s fine.” Fourth said as he settled onto one of your kitchen chairs with a grunt. “Just plain. No honey or nothing.”
You joined him sitting at the table as the water for his tea boiled and the coffee pot, with your drink of choice, gurgled.

“I still think ya should come tonight,” he said before you could start up with your small talk, fixing you with a stern look that you found yourself beaming back at. The smell of coffee grounds hung in the air, already making you salivate. You were happy.

“Hey--”

“Lemme teach you some real tricks,” he interjected. You quirked a brow and the playfulness on your face deepened. “I’ve got three guys from the office to help out with the class. It’ll be good for you. And it’ll give me some peace of mind.”

“Fourth--”

“I’ll make sure you get home safe after. No walking. No trains. From the office dojo right home.”

Your eyes flickered down to the table, hand coming up to rub at your throat and chin awkwardly. Apparently, your lingering nervousness was obvious, despite your attempts to come off calm, cool and collected. Your therapist said, during your little emergency session earlier in the week, that the fear would fade with time, especially once your attacker was arrested.

You were trying to be normal, trying not to let paranoia hang over you, and at the very least trying to pretend you weren’t afraid. But it was hard to not worry that the person who had just passed you on the street was suddenly going to turn around and bum rush you. Your solo grocery store trip three days ago had been a stressful endeavor, filled with frequent over the shoulder glances and heart-in-throat moments whenever someone walked up behind you to pass you.

No.

Just… try and be normal.

You didn’t want to be some… broken little girl.

“Hey…” A hand landed on yours, bringing you out of your thoughts. The toughness had melted away. He was looking… soft.

You laughed and pulled from his lift grip as you stood.

“I’m fine,” you said dismissively which only made his frown deepen. “I’m a tough cookie, alright? Doctor says I have to rest, anyway -- what good would I be with these?” You shifted each of your shoulders up, an obvious gesture to your injuries.

That quieted him -- your excuse made sense. He sat, staring off, while you prepped his teacup, really working on exuding an air of nonchalance.

Fake it till you make it.

“So, what’s up with you, hands? Anything interesting going on at work? Have you gotten into any back-alley brawls?”

A smirk of pride. You placed his drink in front of him before moving to fix your own, casting expectant glances over your shoulder as you worked, waiting for the story that prompted that look/

“Well… I may have gotten into a little… something with a purse snatcher. Then there was a
“What, in the past four days?”

“It’s the warm weather. Everyone gets a little stir-crazy. Plus crime has been on the rise in general... Ah, it’s no big deal though. My office is solid, we’ve got a good crew.” He waved a hand.

“Actually, we’ll be getting an intern soon to help out.”

You whistled, leaning against the counter, blowing away the steam of your milky coffee concoction.

“Intern? From college?”

“Nah, younger -- Yuuei’ll be having their sports festival in a few weeks. Agencies put in offers based on that -- what am I talking about, you should know all about it. Doesn’t your boss work for the school? Aren’t you making the kids’ costumes?”

You grimaced when the too-hot liquid lightly scalded your tongue.

“He said he was offered a full-time job a few months back but he turned it down. Said he wouldn’t be able to swing it and hero -- he’s been complaining about the crime spike too. Shit, I had to take over some of his projects he’s been so busy.” You exhaled. “Probably shouldn’t have taken this week off... But yeah, we’re one of the agencies the school contracted to design hero uniforms. Didn’t know about the sports festival though. Well, I mean, I know of it...”

“It’s an event, I’ll tell ya that. Each year is different and they got different festivals for the grades. I’m sticking with First-Years this year, though. I like to get ‘em young, try and keep them from getting their heads too big.”

“Look at you being Daddy Fourth to the kids!”

The man had been sipping at his tea when you had dropped that line. You laughed when he sputtered into the cup, the tips of his ears going red as he tried not to appear bothered by the word. You had just caught him off-guard, that was all, and very quickly he reclaimed his cool.

“I designed a couple of first-year hero costumes,” you added, deciding not to tease him about his reaction. “See if you can guess whose I had a hand in. You might be able to catch my mark if you look hard enough.”

“You wanna come?”

It was your turn to sputter into your drink in mild surprise. He seemed so earnest as he looked at you, waiting for the invitation to register.

“What do you mean?”

“It’s like a whole big affair,” he said with a wave of a free hand. “They got stands outside the stadium, the entire crowd is heroes, you got events -- it ain’t your typical high school festival. I was gonna send two other guys down to scout for an intern but hey, if you wanna go...”

“I’ve got work. Power Loader is already going and Hatsume is participating, so I’ll be the only one-...”

“Ah come on, it’s just one day. The city goes wild for it. We’ll make a day out of it!”

Inwardly you were puffing up, delighted that he had even made the offer. A whole-day date? Your smile was infectious, you felt lighter.
“You serious?”

“If I wasn’t serious, I wouldn’t have asked, meatball.”

“Alright then…” You were still smiling, the corners of your eyes crinkling. “If Power Loader doesn’t see an issue and I don’t get swamped for work… Yeah, okay. Let’s make it a date.”

“Wait till you see it…” he hummed. You were walking over to him and he placed his cup back down on the table, playfully resting his hands on your hips as you bumped up against his knees. “They got fireworks, food stands, games… Afterward we can… I dunno, go to dinner or somethin’ if you don’t stuff yourself there.”

“I am a lady,” you said, playfully scoffing at his smiling insinuation. “I don’t stuff myself.”

“Ah, don’t forget I watched you scarf down that steak that was as big as my face, girlie.” He held up a hand to cover the front of his face. “I don’t think you stopped to breathe.”

“I was hungry! I told you I hadn’t eaten that day!”

He was chuckling quietly, grinning at you in his gruff way, one set of hands still hanging onto your hips. When you placed your cup down on the table next to his, he lifted his chin slightly, expecting a kiss.

You didn’t kiss him.

He pulled his other set of arms away from his lap just as you shimmied closer and slowly dropped yourself to straddle him, arms resting on either shoulder. The move had been unexpected. His grin was replaced by surprise, which was you had been hoping for.

“What’s wrong, hands?” you asked sweetly, though you made no moves to hide your large smile. “Why so quiet?”

He didn’t answer, just stared dumbfounded as you tilted your head back and forth, running your hands over his Iron Jaw, your eyes scanning the steel device that shielded a good portion of his lower face.

“You know, I don’t think I’ve seen you without this on…” you said to yourself, looking for some kind of latch to… well, remove it. You could hear Fourth’s tongue move around his mouth before he swallowed.

“Got a glass jaw now thanks to a couple good pops to the face. So I wear it to… uh, protect me.”

“How do you take it off?”

Another audible swallow. He cleared his throat with his mouth tightly closed, trying to reclaim his usual stoic demeanor.

“How do you take it off?” he asked, hoping maybe he was misreading your queues.

The coy smile you shared told him that he was, in fact, not misreading your queues.

“Well, there’s some latches in the back…” he said after some hesitation. Immediately your hands moved to trace along a tight seam that followed his spine. The reaching also left you in a great position to lean up to him for a kiss. Slight uncertainty quickly melted away the moment your lips brushed against his. He was leaning more into you, a hand settling on the small of your back,
deepening the affection that you had offered. Your hands passed across some raised bits, undoubtedly the latches he had been talking about, and blindly you pressed around them trying to find a place where you could wedge your fingertip in and--

Fourth made a rough sound before pulling his face back and away from yours, multiple hands reaching back to brush yours off his neck. “We shouldn't do this.”

He didn’t expect you to flinch away, hurt and worry touching your features.

“Sorry… I just thought… that you would want to…”

Strong hands kept you from physically backing off him, though, and Fourth gave a strained laugh. That time he had misunderstood what was the cause of your reaction, figuring you had just gotten overexcited. He breathed deeply, shifting beneath you, looking away as he raised his chin.

“Ah, don’t get me wrong… I want to…” Eyes flicked back at you before looking to trace the outline of your kitchen cabinets. “But… I’m already late getting back to work. And…” he trailed off.

“And what?”

Another muffled sound that fell out of his nose. “We’d have to be quick and, I dunno, I’d want to… well, take our time and… enjoy it.”

Something bright sparked in your chest. The earlier fear disappeared.

“So I wasn’t moving too fast?” you asked, needing to hear it from him. Baffled, he finally looked back at you.

“Too fast!?” He grimaced. “Ah… definitely not. At least not for me. If you’re ready then I’m ready, you know? If you’re not I can… ah… wait. I know this mug isn’t one that gets the ladies all worked up--”

“Oh shut up,” you rolled your eyes, playfully thumping the back of your hand against his chest. He grinned. But then you stilled, looking him over seriously. “Why don’t you come over later, then? After your defense class?”

Dull excitement flared in his gut and he did his damnest to ignore it, which meant he was looking at your almost… sourly.

“Whadda mean?”

You both knew he was playing stupid but neither of you knew why.

*Maybe he just wanted to hear you say it?*

Excitement flared in your gut at that.

You sat up straighter, wiggling slightly in his lap as you reached up to brush away pretend dust from his shoulders.

“I just thought it’s about time I show you how much I like you, that’s all.”

He stared at you with that same sour face for a couple of seconds.

“... Yeah, okay.”
“Yeah, okay?” You began to laugh and Fourth frowned, aware he hadn’t come off as smooth as he had hoped. He pinched the bridge of his nose in irritation at himself.

“You’ve got me all jumbled up,” he muttered under his breath as an excuse which only delighted you further. “Yeah, I’ll stop by tonight. I’d really like that... I’d really like that.”

You graced him with a light kiss, pulling away and detangling yourself from his arms before he could ask for something a bit more.

“Oh right.” You were reclaiming your coffee cup, swaying your way back to the bit of counter you had been leaning against earlier. You caught his eyes as they shot up back to your face when you turned around. “It’s settled then. You go and finish work and I’ll wait for you to be done.”

He left shortly after that, downing his tea like a shot and repeatedly checking his watch as he mumbled how late he was at getting back to work. The kiss goodbye was quick and almost detached in his distractedness.

It wasn’t until he was in his car, looking at his schedule for the rest of the day, that he realized what he had done to himself.

Now… he just had to get through *almost seven more hours of work* knowing something carnal was waiting for him at the end of his day.

He groaned, rubbing at his eyes.

Meanwhile, you were experiencing your own jitteriness, internally patting yourself on the back over how alluring you had played it and how you had tapped into those normally unflexed feminine wiles. You had behaved almost perfectly -- now, you would be in the back of his mind all day.

*Oh god.*

*You would be on his mind all day.*

Around dinnertime, his phone buzzed.

It was… a picture.

Of you.

An over-the-shoulder shot of your back in a long mirror.

Your back was bare.

You were in a pair of lacy pink underwear.

A young hero that went by the name Adder was walking through the door of his office just as Fourth placed his phone back on his desk, inhaling through his nose loudly. As calmly as he could, he laced one set of fingers together as he listened to the up-and-coming hero’s bi-weekly community report.

All the while, he was thinking of exactly what to send back to you.
An hour later, you got his response.

‘Looking good.’

You snorted, shaking your head with a strange level of glee at his impassivity.

A little after 10 p.m., Fourth was back at your house. He was rubbing his hand through his buzz cut, standing in your living room, while you were loading up your dishwasher, trying not to think about the worms that squirmed and twisted in the pit of your being.

“You sure you don’t want me to help?” Fourth asked, appearing in the doorway just as you were closing the appliance and turning it on.

You both felt tight. The atmosphere was… tight.

“How was the class?” you asked. He shrugged with all four arms.

“A’ight. Turn out was better than we expected. We might have to add a second class for the overflow if the numbers keep up.”

“That’s good!”

“Yeah…” He frowned. “Well, it’s also because people are scared, meatball. That’s the part that ain’t so good.”

You didn’t know how to respond to that. So, you kept quiet, lightly rubbing at your stomach as you nodded along to his observation, mildly distracted by the turbulence still occurring within you. It had all popped up so suddenly. The giddiness replaced by something else. The issue -- you didn’t know what it was. Apprehension? Nerves over intimacy? Fear that you would disappoint or be disappointed?

Fourth cracked his knuckles absent-minded, momentarily bringing you out of your internal panic.

“You uh… looked real pretty in that picture you sent me… Haven’t stopped thinking about it.”

Your shoulders relaxed as you looked at your sweet lug, who was twisting and examining the rings on the fingers. It had been a big debate, whether to send that picture or not. Apparently, it had left its desired effect on him.

“Really?” You grinned. “My ass wasn’t too flat?”

He grinned back.

“Nah, you got a nice ass.”

Good answer.

“Hands…” You breathed loudly, rolling your shoulders before beckoning Fourth closer with a quick wiggle of a finger. “Come here.”

Like you’d have to tell him twice.

You stood on the tips of your toes as he beelined for you, quickly wrapping his lower set of arms
around your waist. His free hands found themselves on either side of your head, further tilting your head up toward him. It was surprising how hard his kiss was -- you expected maybe a gentle meeting of the lips to start things off with, not a sudden, crashing joining. It was then you realized that maybe he wasn’t as… calm as you originally believed.

A planned fuck had been on his mind most of the day...

To further confirm your suspicion, you quickly found your legs swept out from beneath you and you were being not just lifted but carried away. He wouldn’t let you pull away to see where you were heading -- when you encircled your arms around his neck to steady yourself against the motion of his movement (not that you needed to with all his arms), he groaned into your mouth, tugging at your bottom lip with his teeth.

“This is all I’ve been thinking about,” he sighed. “And the picture? You can’t do that to a man, angel face.”

“--Next door,” you managed to get out when he went to turn into your upstairs bathroom. He listened to your breathy instruction, turning away from the room, squeezing your ass as he did so. “You should have sent me a picture back,” you hummed to him, pressing your nose against his. “I would have loved to seen how hard the struggle was.”

He groaned again at your double entendre, pulling you into another sucking kiss. You didn’t realize you were in your bedroom until his knees collided with something and you both fell forward onto the plushness of your comically oversized bed.

The hands that had cradled your head were beside you then, fisting the sheets. He wasn’t against you anymore though--

So you wrapped your legs back around his waist, locking your ankles together, firmly rubbing your groin up against his. The hands holding your thighs gripped tighter and he jerked back against you.

“You sure you want this?” he asked, guttural and heavy, breaking away from your mouth.

“... Take your jaw off, Fourth.”

He did as you asked, pulling away after a series of lingering kisses, to reach back and work the clasps that held his support contraption together. He placed it on the beside somewhat beside you…

After he was done taking off each of his gold rings and undoing the buttons of his shirt, he looked up, finding you on your knees, intently looking at the internal structuring of both halves of his Iron Jaw. They were sturdy and heavy, with padding all along the inside to keep his head and neck positioned properly. You wondered about what it looked like beneath the padding... You tried lightly pulling one of the edges of the cushioning, finding that it was glued on securely as opposed to some kind of velcro--

“Hey, hey, hey!” You were being pulled back to the edge of the bed by your ankle, a flushed Fourth in heavily tinted green-plaid boxers waiting for you. “You can’t go looking at my jaw, especially as another support scientist. Trade secrets and all that.”

You snorted. “Baby, if you think something as simple as a trademark, or copyright, or secret is going to stop me from taking a look and grabbing so ideas -- well, then you don’t know me very well.”

A good smack to your ass would have been perfect there, a little voice in your head whispered as your hero laid next to you in the bed, rolling you on your side so he could better coil his arms around
you. His touch was nice enough though and when you pressed your fingertips into his scalp and mewled into his mouth, he rolled on top of you.

Weight.

You melted, the feeling of heaviness above you coaxing a wave of satisfaction to seep out and fuzz your brain.

Fourth’s tongue passed across yours and you felt a brush of roughness against the waistline of your leggings -- fingertips were carefully edging beneath, testing the waters. When you continued to kiss him and made no acknowledgment of their presence, his hand pushed deeper.

As he had hoped, he felt the tell-tale texture of lace against the pads of his fingers.

“You good?” he asked.

“More.”

“More?”

“More.”

“More,” he chuckled, momentarily sitting up to help pull off your leggings. While he did that, you pulled your top off and tossed it blindly away. “I can do more.”

Your bra was a mismatched grey one but it didn’t register to Fourth, who was back on top of you, one hand hooking beneath your knee and hiking it up for better access, another burrowing beneath those pretty pink panties that had been burned into his head.

“You’re one beautiful girl, you know that?” he said, brushing your hair out of your head, watching your face twitch as fingers lightly danced along your slit. You stuck out your tongue at him but giggled when he buried his face against your neck, placing light kisses on your eager skin.

A soft moan -- one of his fingers had pressed into you, curling closer and closer against your clit. He answered with his own deep-throated sound and you tilted your chin, expecting him to latch onto you, hunger worsening at hearing some mild sound of satisfaction from you.

Instead, he kept his mouth pleasant, tongue passing over quickly warming flesh before lightly sucking. Enough that you could hear the sound of his lips but not enough to mark--

Stop it.

“That’s nice,” you said abruptly before tacking on a weak, breathy laugh. “That’s nice.”

He took your voice as a queue for more. As one finger continued to curl against your clit, another carefully joined. The addition had your pelvis rising to meet his movements.

You closed your eyes and breathed, focusing on his fingers working away inside you and the mouth trailing lower, moving from your neck to your collarbone to the tops of your breasts.

“Teeth,” you grunted, your thoughts dimming as your brain worked to comprehend that two sets of arms meant you could, in fact, have your breasts squeezed while your leg was held up and you were fingered. You knew it was all one person but your body was finding it difficult to register that fact.

There was a pinch against your breast -- careful teeth sinking into you. The hand you had placed at the crown of his head squeezed and scratched at his scalp. Yes, that was good. Spurred on by your
touch, he did it again. Not enough to leave any sort of bruise but *something* to give you that flash of sting to enhance the pleasuring pooling in your nether region.

A slight squelching sound rang out as his fingering shifted from focusing on your clit to scissoring in and out of you. The removal of direct pleasure made your legs shift as your lower body instinctively tried to grind up against something.

“You’re so wet.”

You heard Fourth’s heavy voice and opened your eyes just as cooler air struck stiff nipples -- he had pushed your bra up, freeing your breasts, and had already trapped one between eager lips. Your hips jerked up, the stimulation wonderfully, and unexpectedly, maddening.

“More.” You demanded yet again and when he quickened the speed of his hand and the intensity of his sucking on your nipple, you huffed in annoyance, too caught up in getting off for sweetness. “No, another *finger*. Please, baby. Stick in another one.”

He groaned and you answered when you felt his teeth press down softly on the hard bud trapped between them.

“Dirty,” he groaned before swallowing, twisting fingertips replacing his mouth at your breasts. He wanted to give you a deep kiss -- in his overeagerness, he stuck his tongue out prematurely, which allowed you to suck on it before it could be pushed into your mouth.

You felt it, though -- an additional digit prodding its way into you. Three fingers pumping into you, curling against you, brushing against that golden spot inside you while a clumsy thumb rubbed in the general area of your clit.

“Right there.” Your voice was fractured, eyes squeezing shut as Fourth grunted into your mouth, sharing your breath. Your hands were moving everywhere -- his head, his back, your head, squeezing into fists.

You heard him curse under this breath, sighing your name. There was an ache growing in his forearm from the have kept his hand clawed for so long but he was not about to stop, especially with you being so close.

Knees were trying to spread wider and wider. You were openly humping his hand. He pressed the side of his head against yours, gingerly rubbing the bulge in his underwear against an unaware leg.

When your climax struck, you cried out and attempted to snap your knees together, to trap his hand inside of you. But his hold on your knee prevented, leaving you to helpless buck against a hand that had buried deeper inside of you, its owner grunted as he felt soft insides squeeze and shudder around slowing digits.

Your breath was uneven, eyes slightly glazed as you stared up at the ceiling, happily in bliss. Slowly he removed his fingers -- the sudden emptiness pulled you from your daze and you *whined*.

“Goddamnit,” you heard him mutter to himself, looking at the mess coating his hands. “... *Goddamnit*.”

You wanted him to lick every bit of you off his fingers. Hell, *you* would have eagerly lapped it up. As you were reaching out to grab at his wrist, he was looking at you with a… desperate kind of look.

“Where’re your condoms, beautiful? Shit, I probably should have grabbed ’em on my way over, I don’t mean to put you--”
You hesitated while he apologized for not providing his own contraceptives.

*Right. Condoms.*

*Being responsible.*

“In the drawer,” you said, propping your upper body up and wetting your tongue. “Uh, right in there.”

You could see the noticeable tent in his boxers as he pulled away, following your direction to dig in the nightstand next to your bed. He opened the drawer in a hurry but paused when he looked inside it.

And then, he was shooting you a goofy smile.

“What, was lube on sale or somethin’?”

You brought your hands to your face as you flopped back on your bed, cheeks burning. He was laughing and simultaneously apologizing. *It’s good you’re so prepared,* you heard him say as he bit open the plastic wrapping of the previously untouched box of condoms

“Hey...” His grin increased tenfold. “I ever tell you I was a boy scout?”

“You look like a boy scout,” you retorted, shaking your head at him and peeking from between fingers. He glanced at you before his gaze shifted down to himself. A small square of foil was in his hand.

He looked back at you.

You pulled your hands away from your face.

Your eyes flickered from his unsure features down to the strain in his underwear.

And *you waited.*

Having an audience was partially exhilarating and partially nerve-wracking. He struggled a bit, tugging down his underwear and kicking them away, pointedly not looking in your direction as he pumped himself a few times, dick happy at be freed.

It was… *him.*

That was your first thought as you took in the sight of his member, watching as he tore open the unwrapped condom and rolled it across his length. His cock suited him -- it wasn’t necessarily long but it was thick, uncut and his balls were clean-shaven.

What else could you expect from a man who rocked a buzzcut?

*You were going to have sex with another man.*

“You… uh, good?” he asked, once he was properly sheathed. You were nodding before you even registered his question and when it did click what he had asked, you were reaching out, beckoning him toward you.

“You sure you don’t want any head?” you asked. He shuddered at your directness as he kneeled between your spreading legs, cock bobbing at the thought of your warm mouth enclosed around it.
“Honestly…” He winced. “You did that…? I wouldn’t last. At all. You got me all sorts of worked up, angel face. God you’re…” He turned his hands, struggling to find the word to sum up how enthralled he was by you and the gorgeous glow you were wearing. “Shit. Beautiful.”

He was a good guy.

He inhaled, his lower set of arms positioning your lower body while a free hand rested on his cock, guiding it toward your entrance.

“Lemme know if you need me to slow down,” he murmured to you. Adoration bloomed in your chest over his consideration and you nodded, watching as he shifted his gaze from his cock to your face repeatedly as he pressed inward.

You felt it. A satisfying pressure as an outside force parted you and began to nestle inside you.

“Shit…”

A smile pulled on your lips, your head falling back, eyes closing.

Tell me how tight I am.

Tell me I’m perfect.

Say something sweet to me.

You heard Fourth pant, his cock pulling back out of you before pushing in deeper. You clenched around him as he moved, eager for him to already start the thrusting. To push deeper and to spread you wider--

And he was spreading you. His thickness was adding to the pressure that had shifted from a slight pulling sensation to just… good. He felt good.

You heard him mumble something and you reopened your eyes, tilting your chin down, watching as his dick buried into you completely.

A thought you were ashamed of flashed in your head and you reached up, grabbing for his shoulders, silently telling him that you wanted him on top of you. Thankfully he listened, thrusting his already buried cock up into you as you squealed into his mouth, your cunt fluttering happily at his forcefulness.

“Like that,” you cooed and he sighed.

“Dirty.”

It took him a few thrusts to find his pace -- a satisfying symphony of slapping skin filled the room and you just wanted to be lost in it. Your arms were wound tightly around his neck, you were eagerly kissing his panting mouth, coaxing him on with unobstructed ’ah’s’ and other soft whines.

He was trying to keep up with your mouth but very quickly a sweat had formed on his brow and lidded eyes were blearily meeting yours.

“That’s it, baby,” you cooed into his ear. He groaned, the hand tangled in your hair growing tighter.

“Such a big man. Such a good man. Fill me up.”

“Fuck.”
You smiled at hearing and feeling his grunting sigh -- apparently the thought of busting inside you very appealing.

The smile fell, however, when he suddenly jerked your hips down and up. The slight change of positioning had him passing against a spot that was starting to make your toes curl.

Apparently, you had made some sort of sweet sound at the change. A free hand was guiding your chin so you were back to looking at him.

“There we go…” Unfocused, he gave you a lopsided grin. “That’s better.”

*God, he really was a good guy.*

You focused on your endearment for him as you sighed against his mouth, reaching down to start circling your clit, certain you could coax another orgasm before he finished.

You were correct.

He saw you grimacing, your heavy breaths flashing across his face. Seeing you approaching another climax, he did his best to help you out, the iron grip on your legs loosening while he adjusted to butt up against your sweet spot better. Coupled with your rapid rubbing at your clit, very quickly you were growing tighter beneath him, the vice grip your cunt had on his cock near maddening.

“That’s it,” he cooed into your ear -- a pitched mewling sound gurgled in your throat. “That’s it. Cum.”

Hearing him say ‘cum’ was all you needed. You moaned as your body convulsed beneath and, more importantly, *around* him. Through your climax, he continued his fucking, which only drew more candied sounds from you.

He held on for several more minutes though. By the time his pace quickened and grew erratic, your heart rate had mostly returned to normal. You were meeting his thrust, rubbing his scalp, telling him how good he felt. How good he *was*.

“Ah, fuck…” His face was back in your neck, the slapping of your bodies out of rhythm as he moved faster and faster.

“Go as hard as you want, baby,” you continued in his ear. “Nice and hard. I want to be sore tomorrow.”

You felt teeth grazing your skin but they didn’t clamp down. The fingers pressing into your thighs, however, had a chance of leaving bruises, which suited you just fine.

“I’m gonna--”

He shuddered.

“Fill me up, baby. Let me feel you.”

With a body-rocking groan, he snapped into you and unloaded into the condom, your eyes fluttered as you tried to picture the beautiful warmth that would have coated your insides had he been bare.

Very quickly, you pushed that thought away.

*Respect.*
You hummed as he shuddered, hips jerking as waves of release passed across him. You were stroking his back, complimenting him on a job well done. How satisfying he was. How satisfying the entire coupling had been.

He did good.

You knew you had done good, too, when the first word that fell out of Fourth’s mouth was, “Wow.”

Wow.

“That was... “ He was lifting himself off you slowly, post-orgasm fatigue having struck him hard. “Worth the wait.”

You were beaming at him, brows knitting slightly as you felt him pull his softened cock out of you.

No mess.

While he rolled over onto his back, rubbing his face, trying to keep the lightheadedness at bay, you were amazed at how oddly... clean you felt. Penetration that didn’t end with a steady flow of your partner’s seed leaking out of you...

It was weird that you felt weird.

“So...” You turned to see Fourth looking over at you impassively. “What did you think?”

Your rolled your eyes and leaned over, holding his face between your hands as you gave him a series of loud lip smacks against his mouth.

“Yeah...” You grinned. “It was worth it.”

He stayed over that night. After taking a break to get yourselves back in order, Fourth joined you in bed wearing his slightly soiled boxers. In the quiet, with you nuzzled up against him, he told you more about his day while you traced scars along his neck, jaw, chest and arms you had not seen before.

Next time, you would ask about them, you told yourself.

You wanted to hear about each one.

Eventually, his blinking slowed and grew longer. You were also on the cusp of sleep, your own eyelids growing heavy. When you felt him shift, your fogged mind assumed he was pulling himself out of bed to pack up. To head out.

He didn’t leave though.

Instead, he pulled you into his chest, carefully positioning each of his arms so that they wouldn’t crowd you.

“God, you’re perfect,” you heard him murmur before he nuzzled better against you, his breathing deepening quickly after that.

Perfect.

Your eyes blinked opened.

And, you found yourself staring off into the darkness of your bedroom.
It was Saturday morning when Yagi Toshinori found himself standing at your front gate.

The toys of some random child were still in your yard -- did you not care? Were you ever going to have them clean up their belongings? He rolled his eyes, stepping over a baseball bat as he made his way to your front door. As he walked, he scanned the front of your home.

Everything looked to be in order. He didn’t get any feeling of… unease. There was no blood or broken glass from a smashed window, from what he could see. The stench of death and decay didn’t hang in the air.

There was still the noticeable gash in your door, he noted as he stepped up to it. Had you even noticed it? Had you even questioned it?

Satisfied that nothing appeared out of place. He rolled his shoulders and stood straighter.

The plan was simple…

He expanded in a rush of smoke into his larger form.

You were going to open your front door. All Might was going to get inside. You were going to accept his new commissions and… well, that would be that. His clothing would be repaired and the boy would have his own villain attire, which meant All Might could really start showing the kid the ropes when it came to being the symbol of discord.

The dawn of a new era, right?

With a nice dose of familiarity.

His fist was raised, poised to start banging on your front door, when he happened to catch something out of the corner of his eye. A quick glance turned into a double take--

A camera.

His fist lowered as he stared at the small black device that hung unobscured in the corner.

Shit.

He looked around the perimeter of your wooden front door.

He could cave it in with ease, if he wanted to…

That’s when an annoying voice spoke up in his mind, warning him that you would not be happy if he broke your front door.

Familiarity.

Shit.

Already a wrench had been thrown in his plans. If you weren’t already watching him on camera, chances are if you saw him waiting, you wouldn’t open the door. If you heard a knock and saw no one, you wouldn’t answer the door. If he knocked and blocked the camera, you probably wouldn’t answer the door.

You and your paranoia were irritating.
He was not happy that he had to pull back from your house while he planned his new approach, standing with crossed arms across the street, glaring at your door.

All thoughts pointed to either breaking open a door or breaking open and crawling through a window if he couldn’t find an unlocked--

A figure appeared in the gate of the house directly next door to yours.

A little boy in a red baseball cap.

Baseball.

He was staring at All Might.

All Might was staring back.

Then… an idea.

You were in the middle of a YouTube yoga video when you heard a series of knocks against your front door. Ignoring the slight spike in your heartbeat over an unexpected visitor, you dropped out of downward facing dog, settling on your knees as you stopped your phone from casting to your TV, exiting out of the video to check your camera feed instead.

To your relief, a familiar face was standing at the threshold of your home, baseball bat in hand.

Sato knocked again.

“Coming!” you called, though you were sure the boy couldn’t hear you.

With a stiff grunt, you stood up from your pale green yoga mat, wiping your hands on your pants as you did so. You were trying to guess what had prompted a visit from your neighbor -- was he looking for sweets? Did he hit a ball on your roof again? Was he bored and lonely and simply wanted to talk your ear off about whatever thought he had in his head?

Last time he had gone on and on about the hero Best Jeanist and the quirk he had.

You hoped he was just looking for candy.

Another knock.

“Give me a second.” you muttered under your breath as you undid the lock, pulling your door open. “Hey Sato, what’s--”

You were staring at a chest.

A chest.

Eyes flickered up.

Large smile.

Dark eyes.

Blond hair.

An arm snaked in to rest against your door frame as he loomed over you, grin growing at seeing your
“Miss lady…”

Your wide eyes flickered down. Another familiar face was standing beside All Might’s leg, baseball bat resting on his shoulder.

A face who had been alone only seconds ago.

Sato was smiling up at you in his innocent excitement, completely unaware of who was standing beside him.

“You have a visitor!”
An Ace

Chapter Notes

Thirty chapters and more than 200,000 words...
Holy fucking shit.
Thank you, guys. You rock.

I finally got around to rewriting bits of this chapter and creating something a little more cohesive than what it was. So, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Are you a hero?”

“All is a hero?”

All Might let out a slow laugh, leaning down low against the kitchen counter, shifting his weight between his still-booted feet. The runt was sitting at the table with a glass of orange juice held between his grubby little hands, gazing up with owlish, naive eyes.

The kid’s question had been earnest -- was All Might some kind of hero?

The large man didn’t answer right away, making as if he was considering the inquiry. But that was only for show and he knew it, which only incited him more. He was drawing out the encounter on purpose to get under your skin and, unfortunately, your actions were backfiring. By trying not to give him anything to play off of, you were giving him something. And he was absolutely basking in being the center of all your attention.

At that moment, you were wearing an unattractive grimace as you stood behind the boy, gripping the back of his chair, hovering over him.

What, were you going to yank him away or something if All Might lunged?

Did you THINK he was going to lunge?

His smile widened.

“What do you think, kid?” All Might asked, clear voice cutting through the obviously unhappy silence that was felt by all but one. He cocked his head, eyes trained on your face as he continued his non-answer. “Think I look like a hero?”

The cup of juice paused against the boy’s lips. Then, without having drunk from it, he placed it back down on the table.

“You’ve got big muscles,” Sato pointed out with a thoughtful and serious tone. “Some heroes have big muscles.”

“Big muscles!” The villain’s delight was obvious. “I do have big muscles, don’t I?” He shifted his gaze back up to look at you, nose crinkling as he lifted his upper lip in a teeth-baring smile. “Don’t I?”
Your face darkened and you stubbornly shifted your jaw, remaining quiet.

All Might’s appearance had caught you off-guard, judging from the deer-in-headlights look you had given him when you flung open your door. You had expected to see the bothersome child alone at your doorstep but, instead, found yourself face-to-chest with him.

There was an embarrassing delay on your end.

Then, the synapses of your brain started firing again.

It looked like you were prepared to tell him off and hunker down in whatever little bunker you had possibly set up in your house with your cameras. But using the neighbor boy as leverage had apparently been the right move -- all All Might had to do was place a friendly hand on the kid’s back and suddenly you were a lot more… malleable. Docile.

Soft for a kid that wasn’t even yours...

The boy seemed completely oblivious to All Might’s humor and your palpable animosity. He had pushed his way inside your home, babbling about your ‘visitor’ and the baseball game his father had taken him to the previous day while All Might followed along, brushing past you, silently taking in all he could about your new refuge as Sato headed directly to the kitchen to help himself to the things in your refrigerator.

Completely at home in your… home.

“Finish up your juice and then you have to go.”

Finally you had spoken up and All Might pushed off the counter to stand straight, assuming things were finally coming to a head. He caught sight of a passing glare you tossed his way but most of your focus was on the young houseguest before you -- he had titled his head, already prepared to bargain to stay longer.

“But I didn’t even tell you about the fire I saw!” Sato said, exasperated. “Yesterday. It was a car and I saw it when I was on the bus--”

“It’s not a good day today,” you interrupted.

That’s no fun.

“I’ll listen to your story, runt,” All Might cooed. He rolled his hand, gesturing for him to keep going. Sato perked up.

“It was on the way back from baseball! My dad said--”

“Sato--” Your tone was sharp. You had no interest in playing his game. “It’s time to go home.”

“Don’t listen to her, spit it out. So you saw a bus on fire…”

“No, it was a car and I was on the bus with my dad--”

“Stop it.”

The command came out firm but there was something… desperate about it. Shrill. Nothing overt, you hadn’t dissolved into hysteric's or screeched. But it was a momentary break that revealed obvious inner-turbulence.
Took you long enough.

All Might wasn’t sure how to describe your demeanor. You weren’t necessarily putting on an act but you were keeping your reactions and movements subdued. It was no secret he was unwanted in your home but you hadn’t been as confrontational as he was expecting. For whatever inane reason, you were holding your tongue around the kid and he couldn’t quite understand… why.

Apparently, though, you were creeping toward your breaking point.

“I don’t want you here.” It was statement directed at him. “You need to go and not come back.”

When you raised your hand and pointed in the direction in of the front of the house, he traced the invisible line connected to the tip of your finger before looking back at you boredly.

It was going to take more than that to get him away.

“We just got here, darling,” he said sweetly, dividing his response with a ‘tsk.’ “It’s very, very, rude to kick out visitors so soon.”

He watched as you returned your hands to the back of the kid’s chair though, instead of gripping it, you had fisted your hands and rested them against the carved wood of the back. You inhaled once, deeply. Then repeated the motion.

You had captured him in another glare.

“How do you know where I live?”

Sato may have been a child but he wasn’t stupid. Hearing the harshness in your voice and hearing what you had said, his head whipped up to look at you, face crumpling.

It was then he understood that this stranger was… not wanted by you.

It wasn’t that he was afraid or upset he had brought around someone you didn’t want to see--

He didn’t want to get in trouble.

“He said he was your friend.” The boy’s voice warbled in a slight panic, fully aware he may have escorted an unwanted guest right to your front door.

“Stranger danger, Sato,” you stressed, shaking your head at him and his stupidity, clearly very upset. “Haven’t your parents told you not to talk to strangers? He could have really hurt you. He could have taken you away--”

“Why would I want the headache?” All Might said with a roll of his eyes, sweeping a hand out and away from him, clearly miming that the idea was ridiculous.

He had one louse already vying for his attention, he didn’t need another.

But the idiot boy was growing increasingly more agitated. His parents had talked to him about strangers, which meant you were right, which meant he didn’t have a good excuse to stave off punishment and the fact you were mad at him…

Large fat tears welled in his eyes.

Frustrated, you rubbed at your face.
“You should know better,” you said, further cementing the disappointment you felt for Sato’s actions.

It was like a knife in the young boy’s heart. He never expected to be reprimanded by you. The tears were falling by then, the boy’s sobs filling the room.

He hadn’t meant to do bad.

He didn’t want to get in trouble.

Between heaving breaths, he managed to sputter out, “Please don’t tell my dad.”

Irritation flooded All Might. He could feel a headache nipping at the base of his skull.

“Run along home, boy.” the villain said as he shifted and crossed his arms. His earlier humor had fallen away and had been replaced by something stony. He had grown bored with the teasing and was ready to move the entire exchange along. The kid had served his purpose and had been rendered useless. He could go. “I have business with her.”

Your chin jutted out.

“You don’t have shit with me.”

“Little girl…” His smile was back but it wasn’t nice. “I do.”

Your eyes were darting between the sniveling child and All Might. Judging from your face, you understood he had purposely caught you in an unpleasant spot, especially at having found his way inside your house.

You couldn’t shut him out. You couldn’t ignore him.

When you cleared our throat and gestured for the runt to stand and leave, All Might was reminded again of your… softness.

He had used a neighborhood child as a weapon to get inside your home, knowing that you weren’t so cold-hearted as to risk him getting hurt.

Would he have hurt the kid?

He leaned toward no, as there was no sport in stepping on a hatchling.

And there you were, trying to quiet down the half-pint’s blubbering and guide him out of your house to perceived safety. All Might assumed it was because you didn’t want to talk shop in front of him, which was smart since the kid seemed like a moron and would probably open his trap during dinner with his parents and spill everything.

Hell, maybe you didn’t even like the brat. His entire existence was just a thorn in your side.

But there was another thought creeping around the back of his mind. He had given you a large opening to get the kid away and you had immediately sprung to take advantage of it. A voice quietly wondered if your motivation hadn’t been because of annoyance or want of privacy.

That, maybe, your motivation had come from a place of worry.

Of fear.

Maybe you didn’t want to risk the kid getting hurt.
And, if you worried about the child being hurt, then you must believed there was a chance that All Might would turn violent during the course of your conversation--

And *that you ran the risk of being injured.*

All Might’s turned his head to the side as Sato stood from his chair, broken bits of an apology breaking through his tears.

There was nothing of note within your kitchen, nothing that immediately grabbed the focus of the man’s roving eyes. A stovetop. Dirty dishes. A counter-top oven. Hanging oven mitts in the shape of flamingos.

You were saying something to the brat, leading him through the doorway of the kitchen and All Might busied himself with looking inside the cabinets.

Mismatched plates and bowls that had obviously been collected over years.

*He heard the front door open and, after a few seconds, close.*

Next to it were cups of varying sizes of materials -- coffee cups, short and tall plastic cups, pint glasses--

A soft, tired sigh rippled behind him.

“What are you playing at?”

*Hm, so you hadn’t made an escape attempt.*

All Might shut the cabinet and moved to the next one: *snacks.* He thumbed at what you had. All junk. All already opened. There was nothing good-- well, that wasn’t true. A bag of some rice tteokbokki snack caught his eye.

Nothing he wanted to *risk* eating.

“You know…” He heard you release a dry, barking laugh. As he continued to stare into your cabinet, he waited for you to finish your thought… but you didn’t.

He closed the cabinet and boredly moved to the next one. It looked to be filled with jars and cans and packets of ramen.

“Now... you know where I live.”

He didn’t answer.

In what must have been a fit of frustration, you pushed Sato’s chair back in toward the table with a shove. He heard the scratching squeak of the chair as it skittered across the floor, following by the thump and a clanging rush of liquid. At that he finally glanced over his shoulder -- juice was spilled across the table from an upturned cup and had already begun to steadily drop onto the tiled floor.

“Messy,” he said, clicking his tongue.

You pulled your hand back and he looked on, amused, as the orange juice reappeared right-side up, the dripping puddle disappearing.

Silence filled the kitchen.
You were shaking your head, the unhappy shaking of your leg causing your whole body to bob along with it. You weren’t looking at him, you were staring off at the other side of the kitchen, mouth pulled in a taut line. He wondered if you were going to cry. He had seen similar looks on you before--

Well, one moment in particular stood out. When you had been pacing, shaking your head at accusations--

No, you weren’t going to cry. But All Might would have given a considerable amount of money to have had been able to peek inside your head at that moment, even though he had a pretty good feeling of what he would find waiting for him.

*Remember when you used to be happy to see him?*

He wasn’t going to be the first to speak, though. You were waiting to jump down his throat and he knew that, so he just observed. Waiting. Noting each second that ticked by and collected into a lump of minutes further frayed at your nerves.

Your look off into space was dissolving and more than once he caught your eyes flickering over to glance at him.

“I don’t want to *see* you,” you started, breaking the stalemate. “I don’t want to *talk* to you. I don’t want *anything* to do with--”

All Might snorted, interrupting before you with a raised hand before you could launch into some sort of self-righteous monologue about what you wanted from him.

*Which was nothing.*

“I have work for you,” he said indifferently. “Quit your bitching.”

Unsurprisingly, that declaration didn’t sit well with you. You looked at him, aghast that he would even *say* such a ridiculous thing to you.

Work?

*Work!?*

“I don’t want to do business with you!” You said, snapping your head back in visible disgust.

All Might wasn’t listening.

He was digging his phone out from his pocket, unlocking it with a swipe of his large thumb and bringing up pictures of his costume he had taken the time to save. There were photographs news stations had taken at the scenes of chaos he had created. All different angles. All snapshots of his glory.

He was certain you hadn’t forgotten what his attire looked like but...

A little visual aid couldn’t hurt.

“I need suits,” he started, approaching your tightening form. He dropped his phone down on the table -- a frontal shot of him standing on the wreckage of a car was on the screen. You were looking at it. “Two of them. Pants and shirts. Another pair of boots. Another helmet. I want repairs done on the shit I have now--”
You scoffed. “No. I don’t want to do anything with you. I’m not taking on your work.”

He ignored your interruption and kept on as if you hadn’t spoken up at all.

“-- I’ll bring the repairs to you in two days. I want them finished in two weeks. I also have another little project for you--”

“Like hell, All Might. You’re not getting--”

It took a step for the villain to suddenly be standing directly in front of you, the fabric of his shirt almost scratching the tip of your nose. He expected maybe a jump at the quickness of his movement. He had intended it to be just enough of a jolt to get you to shut up--

You recoiled back violently.

The smug power he wanted to display, to better coax your compliance, gradually sizzled out inside him leaving an uneasy placidity in its wake.

Almost immediately you were attempting to reaffix the obstinacy you had taken to wielding in your interactions with him, pretending you hadn’t just revealed your true colors. He fully realized then that your bullheadedness had been nothing more than a front. A mask to hide what you really experienced when you interacted with him--

Fear.

You were afraid of him.

“Come now...” He chuckled, speaking softly but the jagged smile he flaunted held no solace. “Did you expect me to take your work somewhere else? Have another egghead whip me up something?” He tsked, leaning down slightly, watching you bristle. “That would be bad taste, sweetheart. I can’t do that. I’ll get turned away.”

It was a general rule of thumb that you didn’t jump between support scientists or designers. A relationship forms between a hero and the ones they get services from. A mutual respect. Whenever a hero’s costume or gear gets damaged, they return to the person who created it for repairs.

Any scientist, designer or lab that had an ounce of integrity would never work on the creation of someone else. If a hero’s suit was damaged and they didn’t want to return to their original costumer to have it fixed, then they would most likely have to commission an entirely new suit. It extended to support items as well.

Even in the underground, more or less the same pact was kept (though there were also better odds of it being broken).

You assumed he was making fun of you but you had lost much of your thunder. Rather than snap at him, you kept quiet. Even as you raised your chin up to meet his eyes, there was an unpleasant tension he could see that was still coiling around your body.

Fear.

He rolled his shoulders and swept his tongue along the tops of his molars.

“You and I...” You cleared your throat, jaw shifting as you tilted your head, still trying to silently gather yourself. “You and I both know someone else would work on your gear if you asked them to.”
“Asked…” A chuckle. “You’re right, that’s what I’d do. I’d ask.”

All Might stood up straighter, considering you for a few tense seconds, smile never leaving his face.

You crossed your arms.

“I don’t do… outside work anymore,” you said, taking advantage of his silence. “I don’t have a lab. I don’t have supplies. Not only do I not want to do your commission, I can’t do it. ”

“Oh? Can’t put in some late-night hours as your new job? You’re working with that mole man, aren’t you? The one that wears that metal suit?”

Visibly he watched a jolt travel across your upper body, eyes momentarily blowing wide.

Then, your shoulders dropped considerably.

“Why?” It looked like all the air had left your body. Not only did he know where you lived, he knew where you worked too. “Why?”

“Why, what? Use your words.”

“Why can’t you leave me alone? All I want is to be left alone.”

Ignoring the whispers in the back of his head, he looked around the room in mock bewilderment before leaning down to get as close to your eye level as he comfortably could.

“Didn’t you tell me all those nights ago…” His voice was low. Low and rough and smooth, all rolled together. “… In that little lab you had in Kamino, that you did masterful work? Quality work?”

You were looking away when he ran his tongue along the front of his teeth.

“You were an eager little thing, weren’t you?”

Your face didn’t lit up red as he hoped.

You didn’t swell up in indignation.

Instead, you appeared to deflate even more.

Give him something.

But you didn’t give him anything.

He ignored the feeling in his gut and pulled away.


You didn’t look thrilled.

You looked the opposite of thrilled.

“All Might, what aren’t you getting? I can’t do the work—”

“You can do the work and you will,” he interrupted with a harsh finality that shut you up.

Really, what could you do?
For as much bluster as you sometimes had with him, you knew what he was capable of. What he could--

_Another realization struck him then._

He had expected more of a fight from you. Where was the spark? The fire?

You must have been concerned that continuous refusals were going to culminate in him just _strong-arming_ your cooperation…

_It all came back to fear._

The unhappy grunt that escaped him hadn’t been intentional but he was able to play it off as a part of a small stretch.

“I’m an honorable man--” he said, reaching into his pocket to retrieve his secret weapon. “So I’ll sweeten the deal for you. Make sure you’re well taken care of…”

“Believe me,” you said under your breath with a scoff. “I want nothing you could offer.”

A minor glimmer of sass that immediately perked up his mood.

“I know one of the ways to your heart, girl…” he said before placing what he brought onto the table--

_Money._

The indifference you had at the first stack dissolved as he continued to root through the pockets of his cargo pants, adding more and more and more and--

It was like Christmas for him, watching as your face shifted from disinterest, to surprise to wide-eyed _greed_ as the money continued to pile up. When you reached out to take a stack, finger thumbing across the paper--

“How’d you even _make_ your money?” you asked. He was ready to wave off your question and talk _business_ but you added softly, “I _really_ didn’t know a thing about you.”

_You had said the same thing at the hospital._

“That’s not what I’m here for,” All Might snapped. Something flashed across your face and you were looking at him oddly -- suddenly, _he_ was the one being serious. He loosened the fist by his side. “Keep your head in the business of our meeting, girl. I want my gear.”

You exhaled through your nose as you looked at the money on the table.

_The money._

You ran rubbed your fingers of one hand across the knuckles of the other, considering the offer. All Might was silently abuzz.

_That’s it. Think money, sweetheart._

“Fine.”

A wave of delight physically rolled across All Might and you did your best to ignore his wild-eyed grin.
“Two new outfits and repairs,” you said, cutting your hand through the air. “And that’s it. I mean it, All Might. I do this and it’s done. Done.”

He looked at you, affronted.

“Of course.”

You were already moving the money across the table, closer to you, like you thought All Might was going to renegade and take back his offer. He rolled his eyes at the ridiculousness.

“Now. About the other thing…”

You froze and looked up at him, jerking your hands away from the money as if he was trying to catch you in some sort of trap.

“What ‘other thing’…?” you demanded.

All Might waited to see if you were being obtuse on purpose -- he had said, minutes ago, that he needed something outside of his costumes. Had you not been listening? When it became clear this wasn’t some sort of act, he bristled.

“Should have been paying attention…” All Might snapped, clearly annoyed. “I need another costume.”

“What, three--?”

“Not for me. I need another costume for an… associate.”

Associate.

You were staring at him blankly. Surely… No. But he looked serious.

He was serious.

“Associate?” you echoed. He snatched his forgotten phone off the table and slipped it back into his pockets.

_How much to tell you?_

“I’ve found myself an apprentice,” he decided to admit, announcing the nugget of information offhandedly, as if it was nothing of note. “And he needs to look the part.”

Apprentice.

It took a bit to sink in, the ringing silence in your ears momentarily growing louder.

“Apprentice…?”

“I don’t think I stuttered, girl. What do you want from him to make him clothing?” he asked, attempting to keep the conversation about the boy short. “I’ll give you his shirt and pant sizes when I come back. The most important thing will be the mask. It’ll need to cover his face--”

Your laughter was only mildly unexpected. Your emotions could be… rocky and the conversation between the two of you had been going awfully smooth. He had expected some sort of breakdown from you at some point -- though, it had been up in the air whether it would be tears or anger.
Now, in the midst of everything, he expected tears.

Apparently, you were just going to crack.

“An apprentice.” You grinned at him but you looked hurt. Tired. He swelled up in indignation. “What else, All Might? What other bomb are you going to drop on me? You have an apprentice. You have friends. You have a name. You have another form—”

All Might was not happy when he spoke up with a harsh, “Quit your melodrama, girl.”

“You know what? I don’t care.” You shrugged at him, a sad-but-blase smile carved onto your face that made his absent-stomach curdle. “I don’t need to know. I don’t want to know. I don’t care to know. Truly, I can say the less your in my life, the better it is.”

His mood soured tremendously.

His patience was done.

“Get me the measurements of your apprentice. Get me a design idea to work with. Get me your repairs. I’ll work on your new commissions. It’s fine. I’ll do it all. I’ll do anything if it means you’ll be out of my life completely. Just like you don’t want me, *I don’t want you.*”

You watched as All Might’s demeanor shift and coil into something vicious. You quietly prepared yourself for some sort of barb -- an insult, maybe. A threat.

*A straight-up attack you.*

It didn’t come, however, his ire.

Instead of festering, the sharpness stopped then… *dulled*.

Soon he was back to his earlier aloofness and uneven smile.

“Better be careful,” he said, face flashing. “You might hurt my feelings!”

He glanced over at the time on your microwave before double checking the hour on his phone. He was due to meet Midoriya in an hour, which was fine -- he was finished with your meeting.

“Two days,” he said before holding up two fingers. “I’ll be back. I’m not sending you a costume design for the boy, you draw up something and have it ready for me when I come back.”

He paused.

There had been other… *things* he had wanted to broach on. Namely, the dagger he had wrapped up in an old shirt in the pocket of his cargo pants. Originally, he had planned on dropping it beside the money. *Money and protection* had been the plan, right?

No…

*He was going to keep that ace for a little while longer*

“Fine.” Your voice interrupted his thoughts and it took him a beat to realize what you were replying to -- his request for a design. “Two days I’ll have something drawn up. Don’t expect any sort of detail. And *measurements.* Don’t just give me shirt and pant sizes. You *know* what I need.”

*You know what I need.*
Life flared in his life and he had to resist the urge to reach out and play with your hair.

*He knew what you needed.*

“I expect a tour next time,” he said, looking around the room before heading out of the kitchen, you hot on his tail. “Now that you've upgraded from a shithole to something a little more… livable.”

You didn’t answer him.

“This is a bit like old times…” he looked over his shoulder at you. Unamused, you met his face. “Isn’t it? I promise my next visit will be a little later. How are the locks on your windows?”

“This is nothing like before.” Your voice was clear and firm. His playfulness hadn’t awakened anything in you. He lost a degree of his smile.

All Might was reaching for the handle of the front door when he stopped, delaying your chance at some peace. You needed to sit down and *comprehend* everything. Think it all through. You understood you were going to be walloped by regret at soon as he left *even with the money.*

Was a large amount of money worth the headache and heartache of dealing with All Might?

*You ignored the greed in your mind that sang a clear ‘yes.’*

With him lingering by the door, you expected some sort of a… *quip* from him. The need to get one final word in--

“How are your injuries?”

*How are your injuries?*

The question hung in deafening stillness.

You were staring at his back, unsure if you heard him correctly. Certain you had *not* heard him correctly.

*How were your injuries?*

His face was obscured, still pointed at the door. Only when it tilted slightly back over his shoulder, in your direction, did you determine that yes, he had, in fact, asked you *that.*

You snorted, clenching your jaw, an empty feeling settling in the pit of your stomach.

“Please.” Your voice was sharp and hollow. “You didn’t care when I first got them, don’t pretend you’re suddenly worried about them now.”

You heard him snort but he didn’t say anything else to you.

Instead, he left.

Closing the door behind him.

Not looking back as he made his way down your stone pathway.

Or when he turned down your street.

You hung by your door, staring at the wood, expecting *something* to happen but experiencing
nothing.

How were your injuries?

You turned the bolt lock, listening as it clicked into place before turning to return to the kitchen and the money, hoping the sight of currency would help drown out the bubbling sickness.

It wasn’t until later, much later, as you were laying in bed, that a thought struck you.

The camera feeds of your house were accessed via an app on your phone. You were able to pull up that day’s feed of the camera that was at your front door, rewinding back to about the time All Might arrived with Sato.

You were watching in reverse: the two of them entering your house, you answering the door, All Might walking up, Sato standing alone, All Might and Sato walking up…

Then, you let the video play properly. Once. Twice.

But then…

You went back further. You continued to scrub through the feed, watching nothing a seemingly still picture but knowing time was moving thanks to the swinging movement of your plant by your door, the dancing shadows and the decreasing time stamp.

Minutes passed. And then your intuition was rewarded--

All Might.

He was standing alone at your front door, looking at it. First in his large body and, as you continued to rewind back, dissolving in a rush into his smaller form.

You lifted your finger off the screen, watching the transformation play out in real time: small exploding into big.

You rewound it.

Small exploding into big.

You rewound it.

Small exploding into big.

What you had, in your hands, was an extraordinarily powerful piece of evidence.

The transformation of All Might caught on tape.

Although All Might wore a mask when he worked as a villain, if you were able to unmask him, to show the world All Might’s face…

And then you had this to further shine a light on his identity…

What you had in your hands was power.

You watched him transform again.

You rewound.
You watched as he stared directly at the camera.

Stared directly at you.

He once had accused you of treachery when there was none.

But now, now, you had something on him. A smoking gun.

*All Might’s identity.*

You watched the transformation a handful of times before, without hesitation, your finger drifted up to the top of the screen and you deleted the captured footage.

Deleted it all.

*Everything.*

Double checking your phone was charging and your alarm was set, you placed the phone on your nightstand and stared up at the ceiling of your room.

And then, you rolled over--

And eventually drifted to sleep.

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**Chapter End Notes**

I hope you've all been good and that you've finished up all your finals and thesis-es and graduations. These last couple weeks have been a butt-kicker for a lot of you and I hope you're all ready to taste the sweet, sweet nectar of summer! You all deserve it!

I also wanted to thank you for your patience when it comes to Attachment. I had a bit of a creative breakdown a couple of weeks back. Like usual 😔 You know, basically convinced myself that I'm a fraud, that this story is trash, that I'm trash, that I can't write worth shit, that everyone who comments does it out of pity and friends I've made who have obviously stopped reading did so not because they've simply drifted out of the fandom but because this is hot steaming pile of garbage and that everyone hates me.

Then I took a break and realized I was acting like a crazy person and I needed to take several chill pill lmao 😈

I just needed to get my head back on straight. Realign myself and remind myself that, ultimately, this is all done for fun. When it comes to stuff like this, I always debate whether I want to acknowledge my highs and lows or just brush it aside because who caaaares. But, I also think that it's sometimes nice to share shit like this because it reminds other people that a lot of us go through the same things. I mean, I *HATED* this chapter when I first posted it. To the point where I had to delete it the next day because I was SO embarrassed by it.

And then I took my couple-week breather, went back, reread it and realized it was not as horrible as a thought. There were things that needed to be fixed, sure, and I decided I didn't like Aristan’s original tone and that I wanted to expand on a couple of lines of dialogue. But the chapter does what it's supposed to: it sets up some groundwork for
future things and mentions things that will be expanded on in deeper conversations.

Anyway, I don't want to make this into some long tirade because who caaaares. Just know that I'm quasi-back on my game, that I love you all, that you shouldn't make mountains out of molehills and that you have a life outside of the internet. And that I'm always up to shoot the shit✌️
Hey. What's up? How you doing? Did you have a nice weekend?

**Anyway, it's late and I'm tired, so please excuse a lack of editing. I'll try and read through tomorrow and clean it up.**

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, uh, Maijima…”

*Maijima?*

A hidden brow lifted at hearing his actual name.

… **Weird.**

Power Loaded glanced up to where your desk was situated across the room -- you had been the one to call him... *that*. You were doing your best to look obviously nonchalant, half seated on the surface of your station, thumb scrolling mindlessly through your phone even though you weren’t looking at it.

You were looking at him.

*You wanted something.*

He frowned and raised a hand before you could speak any further.

“No,” he said firmly. “No raises. You haven’t been here long enough.”

A blink of confusion was followed by a slow grin. When you started to laugh, his eyes narrowed. *Were you still trying to play him?*

He watched as you pushed yourself to stand fully and tossed your phone back into your work tote, meandering over to him with your hands clasped behind your head. You were shifting and lifting your bent arms, grunting quietly as you heard the joints of your wrists, shoulders and back pop and crack.

“I’m not looking for money, boss,” you said sweetly. “I just… have a question for you.”

*He didn’t like questions.*

Power Loader sighed and returned to what he had been carefully working on before your interruption.

He wasn’t in the best of moods to start with. A little to his left, collapsed in a mangled heap of crushed steel and broken bits, was all that remained of his once beautiful exoskeleton.

An arm had been snapped off entirely. A leg was barely attached, hanging on desperately via an emptied hydraulic fluid line. The cage had been split open and then violently crushed inward--
It was the end result of him stumbling across a villain with a metal-bending quirk. Obviously, he had gotten away without grievous bodily injury but it took a few other heroes stepping in to even give him a chance to cheat death.

*And they didn’t even catch the guy…*

“Well, what do you want, then?” he snapped.

You cleared your throat.

“I have hero friends that I’ve always done work for… A personal favor kind of deal, you know? Designs and repairs, nothing *too* big.” You picked up a small piece of scrap he had discarded, toying with it. “Back at my old place I had a nice little setup that I could use for my work but…”

“You want to use *my* lab for your personal projects,” Power Loader interrupted with a grunt, slashing a red mark on a metal pipe of where he would need to cut.

You chewed on your lip, glad he wasn’t looking at you.

“... Well... and your suppliers…”

At that addition, you were quick to speak up, especially when you saw the full-body scowl start to take hold of your employer. “I’ll keep track of what I buy and will completely reimburse you, of course. You won’t pay a dime, promise. But... if I can use the space and maybe some of your machines and your ordering accounts… I can pay you too! I don’t want you to think I’m a freeloader!”

“What about your work now? You gonna tell me you’re going to work on your stuff during business hours?”

“I wouldn’t even *touch* them until after hours,” you said. “Hell, I’d probably go home and come back later. There would be a clear divide…”

Hesitation.

“It’s not a lot, either, the work.” You weren’t looking at him anymore. “Just… one… uh, hero. Suit.” You winced, recalling the full scale of the order. “Well, an order for *one* person.”

A silence hung over the lab while Power Loader continued to mark up his work. Then, he tilted his mask toward you.

“You do understand that under the table support work is…” He clicked his tongue. “*Frowned upon*.”

You were still turning the bit of metal around in your hands, thumb running along the sharpened edges.

... *You had been hoping he wouldn’t draw attention to that.*

“Everyone does it,” you grumbled.

“Yeah, alright. And if everyone goes and throws themselves into an incinerator, does that mean you’re going to as well?”

“No *dad* …” you scoffed. “And that’s not how the phrase goes *at all*. You’re supposed to say jump off a bridge or something.”
“Too many people survive when it comes to jumping off bridges. An incinerator is a lot more permanent.” He placed his marker on the table, resting his chin on his palm. “And I’m not your dad… I’m not that much older than you.”

“Hatsume told me you were in your forties?”

“What!? No! No, I’m not in my forties… I am forty.”

“That’s still a pretty fatherly age.”

He looked like he was going to snap at you but caught himself.

“Stop trying to distract me. We’re talking about you squatting at my lab.”

“Only for one friend’s order, that’s all… For now,” you added under your breath as a just-in-case acknowledgment.

Power Loader snorted and leaned back on his chair, looking up to the ceiling. You honestly didn’t know what direction he was leading toward and that was making your nervous. Had his words been playful banter or was he actually annoyed by your request? Were you overstepping boundaries? Had the roles been reversed, you would have gladly let him use your lab… At least, that’s what you were telling yourself.

“You’re not doing anything illegal, right?” He asked. You really had to keep yourself from looking too guilty. Carefully you raised your chin and smirked at him, brows dancing upward.

“Why, you want in on it, boss?”

“I just don’t want the police banging down my door in some kind of string. Or for my license to get revoked. As an employee, you’re a reflection of me, dumbass.”

“Does that apply to Hatsume too? She a reflection of you?”

Power Loader groaned and fussed with the tufts of ginger hair peeking out from beneath his mask. He was… torn on how he felt about the teenage prodigy representing him.

On one hand, she was a genius…

On the other hand…

“No one has a nuclear quirk, no one’s radioactive,” you said. “I’m not splitting atoms or creating containment fixtures -- I’m not doing anything that’s dangerous. Honestly? I just need to sew up a couple of pairs of shirts and pants. And little… knick-knacks that go on his suit.”

The hero sighed.

It was long.

It was deep.

He wanted you to understand how… bothersome your request was.

Then he cracked his knuckles and nodded.

You released your own softer breath.
“Don’t screw me,” he said, lifting a finger as he looked at you sternly. Well, as sternly as he could with half his face obscured by a goofy helmet. “I take on some liability having you use my space and equipment.”

“You’re such a kind-hearted hero, boss. I promise you I’m going to write to a hero committee and nominate you for some kind of kindness award… They give out awards at the Hero Gala, don’t they?”

“Doubt I’d get a kindness one. A support one, maybe…”

“You’d have to weld yourself a new helmet because I can see your head growing at least fifteen times bigger at just the thought of an award.”

Power Loader grinned and turned in his seat, pointing to the wall directly across from him. “That’ll be my award wall.”

You squinted at it, tilting your head.

“It’s gonna look awfully sad with your one certificate.”

“You have no idea that junk I have stored upstairs. I got more than a certificate, I can tell you that. I could fill that wall.”

“Ah, I appreciate the fact that you’re humble.”

He gave you a sardonic smile that you returned. Several beats of silence passed before you sighed.

“Thanks again. For letting me use your lab.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. I let Hatsume use it already,” he said, waving away your thanks. “And you’re a lot more responsible than she is.”

He didn’t catch the tightness that overtook your smile -- he had already disengaged from the conversation, eager to return to the job that had taken his attention before your interruption.

That suit of his needed to be repaired -- it was an extension of him. Something special. He didn’t have time to dilly-dally with you and chat.

You didn’t say anything more after that, returning quietly to your desk.

- - -

‘Your stuff will be ready on Saturday. Bring the measurements for the other order.’

All Might slipped his phone back into his pocket, hiding his grin as he returned his focus to overseeing Midoriya. It was early evening, the teenager had just gotten out of school and had met his mentor at the mouth of the mountain trail they usually trained on.

The villain was in a good mood.

A great mood.

As such, perks would be extended to his young protege.

“Midoriya, my boy,” All Might cooed. “Why don’t we have some fun today?”
Though the words seemed innocent enough, they were completely foreign coming from All Might’s mouth. *Fun* and *All Might*? Those were two things that did not go together. Midoriya was looking on, rightly concerned -- *he wasn’t going to have him kill someone... right?*

The lanky man exploded into his muscular form, inhaling the scent of the air loudly and placing his hands on his hips.

“The sun is out, the weather is nice…” A grin appeared that made Midoriya’s stomach curdle. “I have an idea that I think you’re going to like.”

*He was going to make him kill someone, wasn’t he?*

“All Might, sir,” Midoriya said, holding up his hands worriedly. None of what was happening was *right*. “Please don’t… Training is fine for today.”

“You want to smash rocks?” All Might drawled, good mood momentarily abating due to Midoriya’s seemingly stick-in-the-mud attitude. The boy winced, adding a slight waving motion to his extended hands.

“No, no, it’s not that!” he said with a forced laugh. “I’m fine with what you had planned originally--”

“Quit your nonsense, boy. I’ve got an idea you’ll like *and* I have a surprise for you.”

Midoriya’s stomach sank further as All Might took out his phone. He steeled himself, praying he wasn’t about to see pictures of Kaachan beaten and tied up somewhere or another classmate of his in some kind of mortal danger.

“Saturday…” All Might said, grin reappearing. “We’re going to get you a *suit*.”

*Suit.*

... *Wait.*

*A suit?*

“A suit?” Midoriya repeated, echoing the simplicity of his thoughts. All Might nodded, though he was half-listening. He had taken to muttering to himself with furrowed brows as he waited for his Google Maps search to load.

Apparently, cell phone coverage was poor in the woods.

“I… already have a suit,” Midoriya said carefully.

All Might blinked before casting his focus on the teenager.

“Already *have* one?”

“At Yuuei…” Midoriya continued slowly. Though All Might was an alumnus, perhaps they didn’t do costumes back when he was a student. “Part of the hero course, we design our costumes and I had already--”

“Idiot boy,” All Might snapped, interrupting the explanation. Midoriya recoiled at the sudden *rage* sparking off the man. “Do you think it’s smart to use your school hero costume when you’re out acting the part of a villain? What, are you prepared to end your current life already?”

“Acting the villain…?”
“That’s your surprise today, zygote.” His phone still hadn’t loaded the map. Self-control kept him from crushing the useless object with an easy flex of his hand. With a rumble, he looked back at Midoriya. “It’s time for you to graduate.”

Midoriya did not like that.

“Graduate?” he repeated, voice raising an octave.

The smile All Might unleashed with toothy -- almost crocodilian.

No, he did not like this at all.

“Let’s see how you do robbing a bank.”

---

All Might considered himself above petty crimes like robbery. Any villain could go into a bank or a jewelry store and demand goods--

But not every villain could fall from the sky and brew a monsoon with the clap of their hands.

Still, even a near-god like him had to start somewhere, which Midoriya learned during the drive to whatever location All Might had decided to head to next. The villain had deflated back into his skeletal body and ushered Midoriya into the forgettable tan truck he had taken to driving to save time getting to their training site.

“I went to America when I was younger,” All Might said in a rare moment of sharing. He had an arm hanging out the truck window, his already wild blond hair whipping around him as they drove back to civilization.

Apparently, his good mood had returned to him -- he had a ghost of a smile.

“There was a time I worked for someone.”

That little factoid surprised Midoriya -- he couldn’t imagine All Might taking orders from a superior.

He couldn’t imagine All Might being anything less than he was now.

“Yuuei teaches you to fight villains,” he said. “It doesn’t teach you how to fight like a villain.”

“Well…” Almost immediately Midoriya regretted opening his mouth but All Might didn’t appear perturbed by his desire to join in the conversation. The older man was looking at him out of the corner of his eye, listening. “We have exercises where we have hero and villain teams…”

All Might snorted.

“That’s all pretend,” he dismissed. “When push comes to shove, you’re all wannabes. You’re all holding back.”

Midoriya grimaced as he thought of run-ins he had with Kaachan during those simulations.

It never felt like his classmate was holding back.

“One for All is near limitless,” All Might said, holding his hand up and snapping it into a fist. But then he exhaled, hand dropping back down as he looked over at the green-haired boy beside him, clearly unimpressed. “But you’re not.”
He knew what he was referencing. Despite being weeks into the school year, Midoriya still had an issue when it came to controlling his relatively new quirk. Each time he used it, he walked away with some terrible injury on his body. It didn’t feel like he was building up a resistance either -- he still felt as breakable as ever.

And All Might couldn’t comprehend not knowing how to control the quirk.

He had mastered it within days.

“You’re going to start out on the bottom,” the villain continued, slowing to a stop at a red light. “Just like I did. But you’ll have something I didn’t have when I first started out on this path.”

“What’s that?” Midoriya found himself asking.

“Me.”

All Might parked the truck in a permit-only parking lot located on the edge of Musutafu proper. Back in the land of cellphone service, he was able to pull up a listing of banks near a pin he had dropped near the city’s downtown district, right in the heart of the action.

It would require a bit of finesse escaping from such a condense location.

Midoriya, however, will still amazed that All Might had a permit sticker on the truck that allowed him to park in the lot he had picked.

So it wasn’t some stolen or unlisted vehicle? It was registered somewhere!?

After grabbing a backpack out from behind his seat, All Might instructed Midoriya to follow and, like a proper puppy, he did. He followed the tall man out of the lot and down the street to a nearby train station. He followed the man onto the express train. And, twenty minutes later, he followed the man off the train at a stop that was familiar to Midoriya.

The arcade was nearby, as was the movie theater and the store that sold the hotcakes his mom loved.

“Keep up, boy,” All Might snapped over his shoulder, hands shoved into his pockets as he did his best to blend into the crowd. Midoriya, who had inadvertently been lagging behind, picked up the pace.

Their journey came to an end at a bench located in a small pocket of greenery amidst the concrete towers of the city. When the coast was clear of dog walkers and joggers, All Might held up his phone directly in front of his protege’s face.

“Three blocks west of here is a New Tokyo Bank branch,” All Might began while Midoriya leaned his head back, trying to blink the too-close image into focus. “Today, you’re going to rob it.”

Even though he knew that was the plan, and followed after All Might willingly, actually committing the crime was sending all sorts of tremors to his already-queasy stomach. He couldn’t rob a bank. Most of the time the villains got caught and he wasn’t ready to throw his entire life away and he was going to get kicked out of school and his mom, oh man, his mom was going to be so sad that he broke the law and he was going to go to jail and All Might was going to hate him--

“Quit your muttering, kid,” All Might snarled, giving Midoriya a swift knock upside the head. “You sound like a lunatic.”

With the help of All Might’s fist, Midoriya quickly snapped out of the spell he had spiraled into,
mumbling his apologies -- he didn’t realize he had been talking out loud.

*Sounding like a lunatic, that was rich coming from All Might.*

“You’re not going to get caught, you’re not going to go to jail,” All Might said, irritated. “I won’t let that happen.” He paused, eyes narrowing. “Unless you pull some real stupid shit, kid. Then, all bets are off.”

“You’re… *going to be there?*” Midoriya asked.

He spoke with such… *awe* that All Might stood a little straighter, puffing out his chest as much as he could, all while chuckling as he nodded his head.

“You’re learning from the best. Though, I won’t be *All Might*…”

From within the confines of the backpack he had brought along, All Might produced two balaclavas that he held up triumphantly before tossing one to Midoriya. The teenager caught it, whipping his head from side-to-side, afraid someone passing by would catch sight of the suspicious scene.

All Might, however, was nonplussed.

“I’ll be incognito,” he said, a sick delight on his face. “A nobody. Don’t get things twisted, though. This is *your* game. *You’re* the one who will be doing the talking… I’m just the muscle.”

Midoriya found himself slowly nodding.

All Might was going to be there?

Suddenly, things didn’t feel so… *dire.*

*He didn’t want to break the law, though.*

*He was a good kid.*

*He wanted to be a hero.*

He winced, figuratively batting away the thoughts plaguing him.

“What do we do *after* the robbery?” he asked quickly and loudly.

All Might shrugged.

“You tell me. This is all on your shoulders now, kid. You’re running this.”

Immediately the dire feeling was back.

They were *both* going to end up in jail.

“Oh no,” Midoriya groaned, resting his forearms on his knees. “Oh no, this is bad. We shouldn’t do this, All Might. This is a bad idea.”

Above him, he heard All Might make a sound of disgust.

“You better be joking,” the villain snarled, pulling Midoriya up by the hair so he was back to sitting straight. The anger radiating off of him was palpable. “You and I had an agreement. You *knew* what you were signing up for when you accepted my quirk. And you *know* what I will do if I find out
you’re too weak to carry it.”

The conditions had been implicit when Midoriya made his deal with the devil, as was the penalty of his failure. If the boy tried to back out, tried to run from All Might, his entire world would be eradicated. The school, his home, friends, family -- everything would be gone.

“I know,” Midoriya muttered under his breath, pulling out of All Might’s grasp and scratching at the dull pain thudding at the top of his head. “I know.”

All Might was still staring at him, irises burning like blue flames within the shadows of his skull.

“I don’t like doubt,” he said evenly, working to bottle up the rage brewing in his core. A little doubt was natural. He was still new to everything. “I don’t want to see it again. Do you understand me, young Midoriya?”

“I get it All Might… sir,” he added with a steadying breath, meeting his gaze. “I understand.”

He surveyed him for several seconds before grunting, seemingly accepting the teenager’s reaffirmation.

“You know how to ruin a mood,” the blond grumbled -- thankfully, he missed the look of incredulity that flashed on Midoriya’s face. With another loud sigh, he rubbed at his face before regaining a bit of his wind. “Alright, let me hear your plan, boy. Tell me how we’re going to do this.”

Midoriya swallowed, tugging at the strands hair by his ears as he thought about news stories of hero-thwarted robberies, as well as scenes from heist movies he had seen. If he was a villain, how would he rob a bank?

“Well…” Green eyes flickered up, momentarily growing brighter. “There was a robbery that Endeavor interrupted once…. And I think the overall plan of it might work if you’re there…”

All Might leaned in, listening intently.

- - -

Midoriya took his sixth steadying breath in a row, fixated on the oblivious building that was across the street. Behind him, he could hear All Might shuffling from foot to foot, waiting for the signal to start.

Only a few short minutes earlier, after they finalized their plan, the duo had moved from the park to an alleyway located directly across the street from the New Tokyo Bank branch in their crosshairs. From where he stood, partly obscured by a dumpster, Midoriya could see clearly through the large glass front windows of the building. It didn’t seem busy, which he was secretly thankful for, but there was a line formed in front of the single teller.

He glanced down at his watch.

The bank was due to close in an hour.

They’d have to be fast.

A bank robbery was probably something that required days if not weeks of planning. ‘Scoping the joint,’ picking a good escape route, gathering intel--

“We don’t have all day.”
With yet another breath, Midoriya pulled the mask seated on top of his head down to cover his face.

_He wasn’t Midoriya anymore._

_He was someone else._

_This was all just a simulation._

_A game._

_No one was going to get hurt._

_He would make sure no one got hurt._

“Okay,” Midoriya grunted, standing from his crouched position, looking over his shoulder at the bulky man who hadn’t bothered hunkering down. “I’m ready.”

The look All Might wore was chilling -- a toothy jack-o-lantern wearing a carved sneer.

“Are you ready?”

_As ready as I’ll ever be._

“Yes.” Midoriya gave a resolute nod that was more for his benefit than for All Might's. “Yeah, I’m ready.”

“Well then, boy…” All Might tugged his mask over his head and Midroyia grimaced when he caught sight of the pristine white teeth that were clearly visible behind the mouth cutout. “Let’s get to work!”

To Midoriya’s relief, as terrible as that sounded, All Might was more than happy to lend a hand during the job. When Midoriya suggested All Might kicked things off with a punch aimed at the front of the building, he expected pushback from the man -- _no, this is your assignment. I’m just here for support._

That wasn’t the case, however.

Most of the people in the bank had their backs to the busy street the building was located on. They weren't looking at the windows that separated them from the outside world. Even the teller, who was facing that direction, had her head down as she counted money.

Had _someone_ been looking, they may have caught sight of the two masked individuals making their way across the street, in broad daylight, and raised an alarm -- especially when the larger of the two stopped in the middle of the street and started to roll his right arm.

_Their world exploded._

The sound of shattering glass and whipping wind was horrendous. The attack had been so unexpected, the bank occupants so unprepared, that no one retained enough sense to scream when they were sent tumbling through the air. Most struck the front teller counter, congealing into a groaning heap of limbs while the bank teller, who had been left mostly protected by the barrier, only received relatively minor whiplash. She had stumbled back in a daze.

At first, no one could comprehend what had happened.
The sound of crunching glass underfoot could be heard.

“Nobody do anything stupid!” a shrill voice called out. “This is a stick-up!”

All Might swallowed his groan and shot Midoriya a look that clearly showed he was unhappy with not only how stiff the boy sounded, but how lame his choice of wording had been.

*That could be discussed later.*

“Quickly,” All Might grunted under his breath, focusing on the collection of newly acquired hostages he was in charge of.

Midoriya shot forward toward the teller who had been slowly crawling back to the counter. The underside held their lifeline -- a red button that sent a silent alarm out to the authorities and a couple of local hero agencies.

*Help.*

More crashing rang out.

Then, red shoes appeared in her line of sight.

“Please don’t do that,” a voice said, soft and firm at the same time. The teller looked up. Though a mask obscured the face of the robber standing above her, he *felt* young. And, although he was putting on a stern face, it didn’t quite reach the depths of his green eyes.

He looked worried.

Which made *her* worried.

“We want money,” Midoryia said, dropping All Might’s empty backpack in front of the teller. “Fill it up, or people will start getting hurt.”

Basic work training had taught her that, if she was ever robbed, to not put up a fight. Quietly, she took the bag and slowly stood, returning to her station and opening the cash drawer while Midoriya lingered at her side and observed.

Everything was going smoothly--

And far, *far,* too slowly.

It was only a matter of minutes before the first wave of police and heroes showed up -- their attack on the bank had been blatant and there was no doubt dozens of people on the street had called the police after fleeing to safety. Not only that, but All Might doubted that there was only *one* person working at the bank that evening. Someone on the inside was probably already speaking to police.

Things were going to come to head *very* quickly.

*Time to kick things into gear.*

“Girl!” he called, surprising both the teller and Midoriya. He reached down for an older man who had been looking at him a little too defiantly, easily fitting his head in his hand like he was palming a basketball. “Pick up the pace or I’ll start crushing skulls.”

At the increasing pressure against his head, the man’s resolve cracked and he cried out in pain. Midoriya heard the teller make a desperate sound at the threat of others being injured and her
movements became a lot more sloppy as she rushed to empty the drawer contents into the bag.

Then, All Might locked eyes with Midoriya.

“Find the vault,” All Might commanded. “And keep an eye out for whoever else is hiding in the back.”

_Hiding in the back._

Midoriya gave a sharp nod at the unexpected direction, barreling through the locked wooden door that was to the right of him.

The back of the bank was nothing special though, in his frenzy, it felt like a maze of empty offices and storage rooms. He tried not to think about the people who worked there, who sat in those offices, who had come to work thinking it was just another Thursday. They didn’t matter. All that mattered was what was happening on those precious minutes he spent jogging around.

And, in his search for the vault, he came across to two other bank employees who huddled together in a locked office.

*All Might had been right. There were more.*

One had a cellphone in their hand.

That’s when the time crunch truly hit Midoriya.

*How long had he and Al Might been at the bank?*

He made a distressed sound as he backed out of the room, leaving the confused bank employees to their own devices.

*Vault vault vault vault--*

It was obvious when he finally stumbled across it -- a large, reinforced steel door. His mission had been successful. But the issue then became, _what was he supposed to do after he found the bank vault?_ All Might instructions hadn't touched on what to do then. In fact, Midoriya's original plan, the one he had concocted at the park, hadn’t even involved finding the vault -- they were just supposed to rob the tellers!

Course, he also figured there would be more people working...

“What the fuck are you doing, boy?” All Might snarled, suddenly appearing and pushing a panicking Midoriya out of the way. The teenager was stunned by the man’s arrival, he was supposed to be watching the customers out front--

*No, they had bigger problems.*

“I think the employees called the police,’’ he said quickly, expecting All Might to curse at their bad luck.

“They’re already here,” All Might grunted. He didn't seem worried about _that_, he just looked annoyed. He grabbed at Midoryia and pulled the teenager in toward him, thrusting the partially-filled backpack into his chest before pushing him toward the steel door. “Get in there before the heroes decide to sneak in.’’

*Use your quirk.*
Right.

Right, he could do this.

He fastened his middle finger behind his thumb, prepping the flicking motion he had taken to using when it came to summoning the power of One for All. His other arm held and braced his wrist--

“You take Far. Too. Long.”

Feeling the pressure, Midoriya held his breath and flicked his finger out, gritting his teeth when he felt the digit’s bones crack and muscles snap from the blast of power that propelled forward. The funnel of wind of force struck the door and--

Nothing happened.

Midoriya was… dumbfounded as he watched the dust and wind settle. He stared at the untarnished door, it stood as strong and imposing as ever.

There wasn’t even a dent--

Voices.

Someone was inside the building--

“Get out of the way,” All Might growled, stepping forward.

So much for this being the kid’s job.

Unlike Midorirya, All Might’s quick punch of air had an effect on the steel. It punctured the hull like a hole puncher, the metal curling and bending inward to reveal a room stacked fat with cash.

“You there--!”

“Get the money,” All Might snarled, kicking Midoriya forward and sending a clap of power down the hall in one fluid motion. The hero who had been dumb enough to announce his presence disappeared through the drywall behind him.

Midoriya felt sick. If it hadn’t been for the fear, he probably would have taken a quick break to empty out the contents of his stomach all over the blue-and-grey checkered floor. But knowing that heroes were in the building with them, that All Might had engaged with them and that there were who knows how many police outside…

Wads of bills were indiscriminately being stuffed into the backpack. When the main compartment was filled to the point that it was difficult to zipper, Midoriya moved to filling the front and side pockets. When that was done, he crawled out of the vault, horrified to find that All Might was no longer in the hallway. Torn between running and sneaking in search for his mentor, he backtracked as best as he could, keeping his eyes and ears peeled for where the masked blond could have gone off too.

It’s not like someone could miss him.

“You send another hero in here, I’ll snap their spine.”

Found him.

All Might had ended up back in the lobby of the bank. It had been emptied out from the earlier
hostages -- undoubtedly they had made a break for freedom when All Might had disappeared in the
back after Midoriya, giving them a calculated opening. But, apparently, the villain had discovered the
two other bank employees that had been hiding in the back. One was sitting by his feet while he held
another up by the arm, shaking them as he roared his threats.

The twisting the person's arm was doing…

“A--” Midoriya caught himself just as he opened his mouth, swallowing the name he was about to
call out. “I got the money.”

All Might barely tilted his head in the teenager’s direction, acknowledging the statement. Most of his
focus was on the sea of flashing lights in the street before him.

The scale of everything…

Midoriya's head was spinning, caught off guard by how blinding the outside was. He couldn't even
see the asphalt of the street, the flashing lights making his head spin. It was more than just a couple of
police cars, there was practically an army out there!

“You took too long,” All Might hummed, gripping the chin of the person he was holding and forcing
them to look at him. Though he was speaking to Midoriya, he was talking at them. “Should have
been an in and out robbery. We have half of Musutafu’s police force out there by now and who
knows how many heroes. Hell, there are probably a few sneaking in through the back as we speak…”

Oh no. Oh no, oh no, oh no. They were done for.

His mom… his mom was going to…

Her heart was going to break. Her world was going to fall apart.

What had he done?

“Stop your fretting,” All Might said with a sigh -- he didn’t have to look at Midoriya to know what
was going through the boy’s head. “This is a teaching moment. A lesson. A taste. So… what did
you learn today?”

What!?

Midoriya’s eyes flickered down to the employee at All Might's feet. They were just as thunderstruck
by the conversation as Midoriya was.

What did he learn?

When Midoriya didn’t answer right away, All Might shook his head and looked back to his main
hostage, the one he was holding up.

“What do you think?” he asked, tilting and shifting his head so he was maintaining eye contact with
the wiggling person whose arm had been nearly twisted backward. Their face was red with pain,
eyes darting around without focus.

“Please…”

“It’s his first time,” All Might explained, matter-of-factly, jerking his head in Midoriya’s direction.
“He needs feedback. Tell him, what was his biggest mistake?”

Again, no real answer, just garbled pleas of mercy.
All Might released a loud breath, opening his hand and allowing the useless individual to drop to the floor with an undignified thump. His attention then turned to the octopod-person at his feet, the one who still appeared to have their wits about them. They flinched when he dropped to a squat, visibly smiling at them from behind his black ski mask.

“We need to leave,” Midoriya hissed desperately, inching toward All Might while looking at the police. They were shouting garbled commands at them through a loudspeaker. Time was running out.

What if there were sharpshooters on the roof, trained on them?

Could a bullet take down All Might?

Midoriya hoped from one foot to the next.

It didn’t matter--

A bullet could take him down.

“What do you think?” All Might asked, laying on his fake sweetness that made the other hostage’s skin crawl. “Where did he go wrong?”

A tentacle twitched across the floor and they recalled what the man had said earlier.

“Ti-Time,” they stuttered out.

All Might's smile grew.

“Time,” he echoed with a nod, chuckling. “Smart answer.”

The melody of his gruff laughter sent off a spark of recollection in the hostage’s inhuman eyes. Something about it was so familiar... Something about the mountain of the main in front of them was so familiar... They blinked once before a new wave of fear passed across their face as mental connections were made.

“... All Might,” they realized out loud before whipping a tentacle-hand up to cover their mouth.

Recognition.

A shudder traveled across All Might’s back and he laughed louder, rolling up his mask just enough so that the lower portion of his face was visible.

Then, he blew a kiss.

In a flash, the villain had disappeared from his spot and had moved to stand behind Midoriya. He pulled his the mask back down, properly covering his face once more, and gripped the boy by the back of his shirt.

“Now,” he muttered into his protege’s ear. “Watch this.”

Midoriya was being dragged to the front window. The combination of different colors of flashing lights from different emergency vehicles was maddening and the sounds he heard were a cacophony of yelling, sirens, crackling loudspeakers, a helicopter--

All Might was winding up his arm like a pitcher, his movements getting faster at each rotation. Someone in a costume was running toward them, a hero--
His arm flew forward in a sharp uppercut and Midoryia watched, amazed, as a tornado formed out from All Might’s fist, furiously growing in size and intensity. Soon, everything was getting picked up in the spinning vortex: cars, people, trash, lampposts.

A squat--

And then they were airborne.

A gasp caught in Midoriya’s throat as they left the earth, traveling up and out in a rapid arc.

Twice, when they started to lose altitude, All Might would touch down on a rooftop to launch himself back up in a different direction, cracking the surface at each landing location. They were moving quickly -- if anyone had looked up, they would have simply seen a dark spot cruising across the sky. Blink, and they would have missed them.

Mere minutes after rocketing away from the front of the bank, All Might eventually landed for good in a collection of trees. Where?, Midoriya had no idea. It didn’t matter though, the green-haired boy was simultaneously trying to stop the swimming motion he was feeling in his head while listening for the expected wails of chasing sirens.

All Might gave the kid a few seconds to compose himself, scratching the underside of his chin while Midoriya was keeled over, muttering nonsense.

“How do you think you did?” All Might asked. The rich tone of his voice seemed too loud in the peaceful stillness of the woods. Midoriya looked up at him, blinking blankly.

He was being asked a question.

The teenager groaned, limply rocking backward to fall onto his ass, rubbing his face.

“Terrible,” he admitted, hands still shaking from the adrenaline. He caught sight of his bloated middle finger, remembering that it had been injured. The pain hadn't hit him yet. How was he going to explain that?

“This was supposed to be your job, kid,” All Might said, pulling off his mask before crossing his arms.

“I know,” Midoriya groaned. “I know. And I didn’t do anything…” He dug his heels into the soft dirt, glaring at his shoes. “And I couldn’t even break down a door…”

“You were far too meek, moved too slow, way too weak…” He heard All Might mutter. Then, there was a deep, rumbling sigh. “You know better for next time.”

Midoriya waited for the strike upside the head--

Know better for next time.

The teenager couldn’t believe what he had heard, face snapping up in stunned silence to look to All Might, still expecting some kind of backhanded remark or physical punishment. But the man’s arms were still safely folded and, although he looked unhappy, he didn’t look mad.

“... Really?”

All Might scoffed at Midoriya’s sudden bout of mild elation, rubbing his tongue across the upper portion of his mouth as if he had tasted something foul.
“You were a disappointment today, boy, make no mistake,” All Might said, causing Midoriya to lose some luster. But then he made a groaning sound, looking away. “In terms of first times… You didn’t die and you weren’t arrested.”

“If you hadn’t been there…”

“If I hadn’t been there’ is right,” All Might drawled.

Midoriya returned to looking at his shoes.

He would have been...

It would not have gone well for him.

“This is the only time I’ll be kind and forgiving,” All Might declared, approaching Midoriya and grabbing the forgotten backpack beside him. “I was far too involved today. Next time…” He held Midoriya’s gaze. “I’ll leave you… Do you understand?”

Midoriya slowly started to nod before picking up speed.

“Yes sir,” he said.

All Might eyed him before deciding that he did understand. He unzipped the bag, double checking that there was, in fact, money inside of it. With a quiet groan he deflated, coughing into his fist as a cloud of vapor rose around him. Midoriya waited politely for the man's coughing fit to end, busying himself with standing and dusting the dirt off from his basketball shorts.

“Here.” Midoriya looked up in time to catch a wad of money that had been tossed in his direction. He looked down at it in surprise before looking back up to his mentor. All Might was scowling at him. “You don’t deserve that,” he growled, zipping the bag back up and slinging it over his shoulder. “But I’m a nice teacher.”

Midoriya knew better than to respond to that statement.

“We’ll meet tomorrow afternoon to train,” All Might grumbled, pulling out his phone and checking the time. It was just after seven -- the sky was just starting to grow dark. “Up your protein and carb macros -- we need to build up your muscle mass.”

“Yes, sir.”

“On Saturday, I want you to meet me at the Danto train station at noon,” All Might said. “And we’ll get you fitted for your suit.”

Suit!

The earlier conversation suddenly returned Midoriya -- that’s right, he was getting a suit!

A villain suit!

“Do I need to… uh, bring anything?” he asked as calm as he could despite a twang of excitement rising in his gut.

“Like what?”

He tried to keep his giddy energy under control -- All Might’s gaze was unforgiving -- but costumes always got him excited. How many had he drafted for himself growing up, head spinning with hero
fantasies?

“I dunno,” he said, fiddling with the money in his hands. “Design ideas, sketches, colors--?”

“If you have an idea, bring it,” All Might said with an uncaring shrug, ignoring the excited buzz that traveled over Midoriya’s body at the response. “Don’t embarrass me with your choices, though, boy.”

His excitement was tempered.

“Right.”

“Get that finger of yours healed up. The fact that you couldn’t break the vault door…” He tsked. “Pathetic. We’re going to fix that.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And get rid of those clothes. I have no doubt they’ll be broadcasting images of us on the news for the next few days. People might notice if you're wearing the same clothes of one of the robbers on TV.”

The news!

“Do you think…” Midoriya swallowed. “Are we going to…”?

“Get caught?” All Might said dryly, finishing the obvious thought for him. “Be arrested?” He went to roll his eyes but stopped himself.

Instead, he flashed wide grin at Midoriya and shrugged. “Guess we’ll see, won’t we? I'd be careful walking home wearing that, Young Midoriya. You never know who will see you. Who will remember you.”

Laughing to himself, All Might headed into the underbrush, leaving his worried protege to find his own way home from the city outskirts.

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully there are people who still read this, lmao.
To all those who have stuck around... I love you and I owe you my life.
Also, I read all your comments, I just haven't drummed up enough mental energy to go through and answer all of them. I'm going to try and do better with responding but I wanted you to know that every comment is a treasure and I appreciate you all <3
Artisan

Chapter Notes

Please excuse errors, I wanted to get this out tonight. I’ll try and fix them a little later after sleep.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

You weren’t sure what Maijima’s security set-up was like at his lab. It never was brought up in conversation and…

Well…

It wasn’t that you didn’t think to ask… you just didn’t want to conjure up any unnecessary suspicion. There had been times in the past while, sitting in your desk or eating lunch with him, you thought about bringing it up. Part of you didn’t think there was anything wrong with inquiring about security -- you made stuff in his lab too, you had a right to have some idea of what he had going on under the surface. You had something to lose if something was to happen.

But then… doubt would creep in. Visualizations of possible conversations gone awry. Why do you want to know? Couldn’t you just accept the general idea that he had something? He had millions upon millions upon millions of yen invested in supplies, equipment and finished jobs, plus he was a hero -- obviously, there was security. Why would you ask him such a stupid question?

Unless you were fishing for information.

You knew, at the very least, there had to be cameras. From time to time you would casually scan the ceiling of the lab, trying to find some sort of visual hint. Unfortunately, there were no black bulbous fixtures hanging down or traditional security cameras blinking away above a cabinet or in a corner, fixated on certain angles and areas of the lab.

You had to work under the assumption that you were being watched at all times from all angles.

And the last thing you wanted was to hold up an article of clothing that was very… All Might and be caught in an awkward situation if Maijima decided to peruse through the security footage.

Sorry Power, I was making a… villain outfit for the next hero con!

… Using very expensive materials.

… And lying about it being a favor for a hero friend.

So, you went through great pains to disguise what you were working on. Fabrics were ordered in relative bulk -- All Might’s signature outfit colors were hidden amongst a collection of other drab hues. Internal wiring and individual components were crafted within the lab and brought to your home to be assembled on your kitchen table--

Which was not the ideal work environment.

Your back and neck were starting to act up again and complain from hunkering over for hours at a
time (Who would have thought an ergonomic chair and desk would eliminate pain from bad posture?). Additionally, you were starting to experience headaches and a generally sour mood from your lack of sleep.

You regretted taking the job.

The money wasn’t worth it.

But…

Also…

Money!

Money was very worth it!

Though there was some crunch time toward the end, you finished All Might’s order within the agreed upon timeframe. When you had bolted on the last metal spike onto his right pauldron, you dropped it onto the table of your kitchen with a satisfying thump and a heavy sigh, basking in the lightness of completeness.

That’s it. You’re done.

Until it hit you like a truck that you weren’t done.

You still had that… other part of his order.

For his… lackey.

The idea of meeting a mini-Might was absolutely horrifying but you figured it was better to get the whole kit and kaboodle over with and walk into the sunset with money.

The next evening after work, you treated yourself to a long shower, put on a face mask, heated up some leftover tonkatsu--

And you unblocked his number.

Reinstating All Might’s place in your contacts list was such a… strange feeling. A week after your… spat, you had blocked his phone number and swore you were done with him forever. You didn’t want to hear from him. You never wanted to hear from him again.

Even during nights out with friends, when you drank far more than you should have, you stayed strong. You never reached out to him. Never had a moment of weakness where you unblocked it in case he was trying to reach out to you.

Sure, you looked at his place on your blocked list.

Envisioned a drunken angry conversation.

And a possible rendezvous with him…

But once you got serious enough with Fourthie those thoughts dropped off entirely.

You were many things but you weren’t that type of person. You couldn’t betray someone’s trust like that.
It was a shame All Might hadn’t believed that.

He never responded to your text message. Although you hadn’t changed your number, you weren’t sure if somewhere along the line he had changed his. You didn’t think much of it, though. The pick-up date had been agreed on beforehand so a lack of an answer didn’t really matter.

And, when D-Day finally arrived, you had the first half of his order folded nicely on your coffee table, waiting to be taken away quickly.

Pick up the clothes, drop off the measurements and design ideas and he could be on his way.

In and out.

There was no need to linger.

---

“Keep your mouth shut, runt,” All Might said over his shoulder as they turned the corner onto the quiet residential street. “Don’t speak unless you have to …” He paused. “Even then, don’t speak.”

“Right,” Midoriya said with a firm nod, staring at the muscular back of his mentor.

“If you breathe a word about this place to anyone…”

“I won’t.”

“… Don’t say anything about your quir-”

“I won--”

All Might stopped abruptly, turning his head and fixing one sharp eye on the teenager trailing behind him.

“All not interrupt me, young Midoriya.”

Although he was eerily calm, his tightly constricted pupil and its vividness spoke volumes of what was going on beneath the surface.

_He was wound up…?_

Midoriya wavered under the look and lowered his eyes toward the asphalt.

“Sorry, All Might.”

He heard a grunt and, in his peripheral vision, watched as the bulky blond turned around and started up walking again.

He followed.

But his demureness following the scolding was short-lived. Almost immediately, he perked up and went back to openly studying his surroundings. There was a bubble of excitement in his chest that he was doing his best to hide but it was difficult.

He was getting a _costume._

A costume with _All Might._
What surprised Midoriya was the location where this supposed “costume maker” was. He expected some sort of seedy warehouse down by the waterfront or the docks. The kind of building that looked… *bad*. Broken windows. General grime. Maybe a henchman or two. The type of place where the two of them would enter under cover of darkness with a briefcase stuffed with money.

Maybe the entire deal would end with a fist-fight.

But no, they were out in the bright sunshine passing a park full of children. His eyes locked onto a small bundle sleeping soundly in a pram, the mother chatting pleasantly to an older woman who sat down beside them on the bench.

This was… where families lived.

God, he had a million different questions swirling around his head and he literally had to bite the inside of his cheek to keep from accidentally blurting some of them out.

Maybe… the Costume Maker had some sort of front…?

A laundromat? All Might would enter, nod to the elderly woman stationed at the front of the shop and lead him to the back. That’s where all the men would be sitting around, counting their money and diamonds or making their forgeries.

… *Wait, costumes not forgeries.*

They strayed further away from the little commercial area of the district, however, making a store visit unlikely. There was nothing but homes around them the deeper they traveled. Despite the maze of similar looking streets, however, All Might clearly knew where they were going which fascinated Midoriya even more. Was he a regular to this Costume Maker’s shop?

There was a boy on the street in front of him, bright white helmet strapped to his head as he wobbled on his blue bike that had training wheels bolted to the back. He glanced up at All Might’s approach, doing a double take once his brain registered the recognizable figure.

“Mister Hero!”

*Mister Hero!*!

It felt like Midoriya’s eyes were bugging out of his skull when he watched the kid carefully swing his leg over and dismount his bike, running to meet All Might.

The *villain* didn’t so much as slow his pace.

“Get lost,” All Might grumbled, barely giving a side-glance to *the annoyance* before breezing past him. The kid didn’t seem to mind though, he was half-running, half-jogging, trying to keep up with All Might’s expansive pace. Midoriya trailed further behind, wide-eyes watching the foreign scene in front of him.

“Are you going to see Miss Lady?” the kid asked.

*Miss Lady!*?

“Go home,” All Might answered.

“Are you two really friends? She seemed sad last time.” The kid was frowning, head tilted back as he tried to catch All Might’s face. “I got in trouble with her.”
"Friends!?

"Leave."

Midoriya was reaching out toward the child, prepared to tear him away from the visibly irritated man.

He understood then why some kids eat detergent pods despite the taste or shove their heads between the bars of fences and get stuck -- clearly, they didn’t think about consequences. They simply followed whatever whims entered their minds.

Take, for example, the very moment Midoriya was witnessing.

The kid was happily jabbing at a growling alligator, seconds away from having his hand snapped off or his head crushed like a watermelon.

All Might was going to eat him.

And Midoriya couldn’t just stand by and watch.

“Hey, mister, what’s your hero name? I’ve been looking for you on TV--”

Midoriya pulled the kid back to safety just as All Might reached down to swat away the gnat. The still-oblivious kid blinked, surprised by the action, before turning to the green-haired teen he hadn’t even noticed.

“Who are you?” he asked, interested by the new player.

Rather than answer, Midoriya was looking for All Might for some sort of guidance.

“Drop him and let’s go,” All Might snapped--

Before turning and entering the yard of a house surrounded by bushes.

With an open-mouth gape, Midoriya switched his attention from the house to the boy in his hands back to the house before releasing his hold on the kid’s shirt and scrambling after All Might. He could hear the kid yelling something behind him, unaware that the younger boy had taken chase as well.

The residence wasn’t as nice as the other homes on the block but some care had gone into its outward appearance. There were what looked to be freshly planted tulips along the front as well as a wooden wind chime clanking pleasantly by the door.

On the step, still planted in a no-longer hanging pot, was the browned remains of a clearly-dead plant.

There was also a camera.

Midoriya noticed it right away, glancing over to his master. If All Might knew about it, he made no acknowledgment of being watched or recorded. He raised a large fist and banged twice on the wooden door, ignoring the clatter and groaning the doorframe released from the heavy force.

Would All Might break the door down?

Maybe the relationship between him and the Costume Maker wasn’t as friendly as Midoriya envisioned?
Maybe there was some--

_The door was opening._

And then…

There was you.

---

You expected All Might to arrive _much_ later that day.

Mid-afternoon didn’t seem his style. He was more of ‘the stroke of midnight’ kind of guy; materializing in some random shadowed corner, glaring, barking at you and naturally finding the best way to make both your life and your job _so much more_ difficult.

_Yeah… that was his style._

When you heard the knock at your front door, All Might didn’t immediately come to mind as the possible visitor.

Yet, when you opened it, you weren’t the least bit surprised to see his girth blocking most of your front step.

He had the tendency to ambush you, so showing up in broad daylight still fit the mold.

Though you were wrong about the time, you were right about the glaring bit -- he was already _seething_ and you felt a pinching headache start bloom behind your eyes as you wondered what _possibly_ you could have done to put him in such a bad mood considering you hadn’t spoken or seen him in weeks.

Then you caught sight of the little entourage he was sporting behind him.

An unfamiliar face was staring at you, clearly startled by something. Was it _you_?

And, despite yourself, you were looking back just as… surprised.

_It was kid._

A bright-eyed boy with a mess of wild green hair and face that made your heart sink.

Well, maybe it was dismissive to call him a kid considering he looked to be about high school age or something but still, he was _young_ --

Your thoughts were interrupted when All Might shifted his mass, momentarily blocking your view of the world behind him. Without so much as a greeting, he pushed past you and entered your home.

You sighed, shoulders slumping as a fatigue settled over you before looking expectantly at the unknown.

_The teenager._

Whether it was an act or not… he seemed uncertain how to proceed, still looking a bit dazed. It appeared like he was about to say something, face going lax as his mouth popped open--

He snapped it shut before jerking into an awkward bow.
Your brow quirked upward.

Then, he was jogging after All Might.

As he passed up your steps and through the door, you could hear under his breath a whispered string of thanks and apologies. You did your best to ignore the gnawing doubt in your soul as you looked toward the last piece of All Might’s annoyance puzzle.

Sato.

He was frozen in your yard, unsure if he was about to get another scolding for being involved with your friend-not-friend, the hero.

You cleared your throat.

“Make sure you grab your glove,” you said, nodding where, slightly obstructed beneath one of your perimeter bushes, a baseball mitt sat forgotten. Sato looked over his shoulder, spying his belonging. “You left it here a couple days ago.”

It was a moment where Sato resented his age. By the time he turned his head back, you were already heading back into your house and closing the door behind you, effectively shutting him out of experiencing whatever… coolness was going on inside.

Meanwhile, you were standing crossed-armed in your living room, still looking over the young stranger while All Might greedily examined the clothing he had spied laid out on the table.

By following after All Might, it was obvious the two were connected.

But… he couldn’t be All Might’s sidekick. The kid in front of you… the first impression was that he was not villain material.

You had seen different sorts over your active years working in “the black market,” if what you did constituted as that (and it did). Villains and vigilantes had a hardness to their faces, especially their eyes, that that kid lacked.

But experience also kept your guard up. It wasn’t wise to make assumptions on first impressions. The baby-face in front of you could simply be wearing a mask that was good enough to fool you.

That thought sobered you up.

You shifted your head back to observing a pleased All Might.

Pristine shirts and pants free from holes and tears. An undented replica of his mask. Pauldrons that weren’t cracked, bent or broken.

*It was perfect.*

“I got access to a better stock,” you said as evenly as you could, surprisingly humored that the green-haired boy was inching toward the table, clearly interested in the gear as well. Though you wanted to remain disinterested in the entire affair, pride in your work was coaxing you to speak up despite the lack of conversation. “You thought your last stuff was durable? These are going to put those old rags to shame.”

The villain glanced up toward you, catching the not-so-hidden life in your voice.

*An opening.*
His face exploded into a grin.

“Should I try them on for you?” he asked, standing back up straight to better disguise the slight pulling of his shoulders to bring out his chest more. His smile was enormous, his nose crinkling slightly when he spoke next. “You want to check? See if everything fits me right?”

His tongue slowly ran across his bottoms of upper teeth while he waited for your answer.

You scoffed. Midoriya blushed horrendously.

No thanks.

But since you were now talking...

“So, you going to tell me what his deal is?” you asked, ignoring All Might’s offer. There was no need to talk in specifics, he knew exactly who you were talking about.

All Might’s face lost its playfulness as he gave Midoriya a bored look.

“He’s getting an outfit,” he grumbled.

“Is he your sidekick now?” you continued, pressing your luck and moving to guessing as you joined him in staring at the clearly uncomfortable teenager. “A goon? Bringing your son into the family business?”

All Might’s face grew more stormy at your last insinuation and two voices, with very different speaking tones, rang out.

“He’s not mine.”

“All Might’s not my dad!”

Despite yourself, the ghost of a smile flickered on your face as your two guests quickly shot down the possible relation -- All Might’s rejection was a snarl while the kid’s was a panicked squeak complete with wild hand movements.

The blond man shot a dark look at his charge. You watched the teen recoil slightly, drawing his mouth into a tight line.

Your smile disappeared.

He could be a hidden psychopath...

Or...

“An outfit, huh?” You spoke up, catching the teenager’s eye. Earlier mental warnings be damned, there was something soft about him that was making you soft in turn.

Stupidly.

Give the kid a break, he has to deal with All Might of all people.

Like you.

“That I can do.” You paused and exhaled, smile returning. “Come on, let’s get you situated. Sound good?”
All Might caught your change in demeanor -- the change to warmth -- and fixated on the hand you extended toward Midoriya, watching a finger curl as you beckoned the kid to follow...

He jerked his head away, folding his arms with a scowl, refusing to watch as you led your guest to the kitchen.

He was completely indifferent to the entire interaction.

He didn’t care.

Instead, he chose to trace the boxy outline of the staircase as it was far more interesting than you.

Stairs that...

Led upstairs…

To your second floor...

You waited for All Might to lumber after, to brood and oversee the two of you while you worked. Judging from the reaction a few seconds earlier, his charge was being kept on some kind of leash which only added to your concern.

Was he hiding something?

To your relief, you weren’t followed. And, after a couple seconds of buffer to make sure All Might wasn’t operating on some of delay, you turned to the teen.

With the hanging knowledge that you were going to have a visitor that day, you had gone on a bit of a cleaning streak which left your kitchen unusually clean -- though, there were some oddities you hadn’t put away. Like the large sewing machine in the middle of your kitchen table or the mannequin you had stashed in a corner that was made very muscular by layer after layer of foam.

Your bit back the desire to blurt out and ask if he was okay. Partly because he could be playing you, but also because you were worried you were an unknowing witness to some kind of forced servitude. Granted, you didn’t have the skills to sneak the kid away to safety if he wasn’t okay (and chances are nowhere would really be safe from All Might), but you couldn’t not ask.

Truthfully, you didn’t have much of a plan outside of settling your conscience.

You rubbed at your knuckles, trying to think of the best way to word your question.

Please don’t be kidnapped.

“... Are you, uh, okay?” you asked, drawing a complete blank as to what to say and just going with what was rolling around in your head.

The boy looked confused.

Then worried.

He was looking at the doorway of the kitchen…

And back to you.

And the doorway.
Back to you.

Door--

*You asked him a direct question, he had to answer!*

“I’m doing well… thank you?” he said before pausing, waiting for unholy retribution to rain down upon him for breaking a *very* specific rule. When All Might didn’t come tearing into the room or through a wall, he coughed lightly in his fist. “How are you?”

“That’s not what I *meant,*” you said with a loud sigh and a roll of your eyes. “I’m asking if you’re *okay!* You’re not kidnapped or anything, are you?”

Wide eyes.

“What? No!”

“Not being held against your will?”

“No!”

“He’s not threatening you so you help him or something?”

“No!”

He was being very reactive and that only further confused you.

“So you’re with All Might… *willingly?*” you clarified with a squint, watching as your newest customer nodded vigorously. “... You *want* to be with him?”

He was looking at you like you were an idiot.

“Yes,” he said firmly.

“Why?”

“He’s my mentor!”

“But you’re so… *young!*”

“I’m not *that* young…”

“Are you an orphan? Bad home life?”

“No!”

“Why are you running around with All Might, then?”

“He’s my *mentors,*” he repeated, adding more emphasis to try and get the point across your dense-ness. Your brows furrowed.

“You want to be a villain?”

That earlier observation you had about him lacking a certain callousness was creeping back into your head. All Might you could picture breaking someone’s arm without a blink. *With a smile, even.*

The green-haired teen in front of you looked like he might throw up if commanded to do the same.
“Yes,” he said.

You had to give him credit -- it sounded sincere enough.

But you caught his eyes darting to the doorway and the twitch of his mouth before he answered which cast his answer into doubt.

Maybe you were projecting. Later, when you recalled the conversation in the shower, you realized he also could have also been worried about All Might walking in and interrupting your little talk. But, at the moment, your mind was telling you his body language was implying something else.

Which didn’t make much sense -- if he didn’t want to be a bad guy, and wasn’t forced to stay by All Might’s side, why stick around?

He coughed before fixing you a wobbly smile, eyebrows knitted together.

“I have some design ideas,” he said, scratching at his cheek. “About my costume.”

Costume.

He hoped that by speaking up, he could guide the conversation off of him and his motivations as it was incredibly uncomfortable. It also wasn’t why he was there -- you were a stranger to him, why were you peppering him with incessant questioning?

And he may have been a little bit worried All Might would walk into the room and smell his voice on the air and know he had spoken up.

Right, costume.

You weren’t the teenager’s mom. You weren’t the morality police. In fact, you had a laundry list of reasons why you, of all people, shouldn’t stick your nose in someone else’s business.

Especially when it involved All Might.

So, you didn’t.

You ignored the voice of ethics in your head, banishing it back to it’s hole in your subconscious, and sighed. In fact, a large part of you was relieved that you weren’t burdened with knowledge that you wish you didn’t have -- like, if the kid was being forced to be All Might’s lackey.

“Design idea, huh?” You pulled out a chair at your table, dropping into it with a thud. “Tell me.”

Midoriya followed your lead, grabbing his own chair. You watched him lean to the left slightly, digging into the pocket of his jeans, carefully unfolding and smoothing a piece of notebook paper over the wooden tabletop.

“This is just an… uh, idea,” he said sheepishly, peeking up at you. He couldn’t disguise the pink of his cheeks.

This boy.

It was really going to mess with your head if he ended up being a crazy person.

To further endear you to him, the teen’s design was terrible. You clenched your jaw to keep from laughing at the mish-mash of clashing elements he was trying to incorporate into one unified piece. Black scribbles signifying a cape (a cape!), camouflage, what you hoped weren’t orange boots,
some kind of skull mask--

It looked like a teenage boy decided to try his hand designing his own villain costume by incorporating every bad-guy element he could think of.

Well…

You leaned back into your chair, pursing your lips.

“What… do you want to convey with your appearance?” you asked. “When someone looks at you, what do you want them to see?”

Midoriya, who didn't know what kind of game you were playing, when back to his default state of confusion.

“A villain.”

_No shit, Sherlock._

You were proud that you didn’t roll your eyes but you did sigh.

“Listen, you could be dressed up like a-- a-- banana, but if you’re robbing a bank and kicking children, _obviously_ the public is going to view you as a villain regardless of what you’re wearing. Villainy is defined by actions, not by looks.” You tilted your head. “So, what do you want people to see when they look at you?”

Midoriya had winced and turned to playing with the edges of his paper once you dropped the bank robbery example. Unfortunately, your Nancy Drew body language skills hadn’t picked up on that. Ignoring the guilt nipping at his skull, he tugged the paper closer to him, further shielding it from your professional eye.

_What did he want people to see?_

“Well… I want people to see that I’m strong.”

“Okay, stron--”

“That I’m the best. I’m _going_ to be the best.”

“Wel--”

“And that I’m, um, bold?”

You paused but he appeared to have finished listing off his ideal attributes. ‘Strong, best and bold’ -- you could feel yourself smiling and you tried to hide it as you mimed itching your nose.

Maybe he wasn’t so different from All Might after all.

“I like the enthusiasm,” you said with a wise nod. “Let me see that paper again…”

Sitting on the table was the tablet you often used to draft design ideas. Midoriya watched as you flipped opened the cover and pulled off the stylus that was magnetically attached to it in one motion. With a murky vision in mind, you could look past the clumsiness of his idea and see what he was trying to achieve.

And the unlikely person he was indirectly paying homage to.
The end product you showed him minutes later wasn’t any better drawn then his idea (in your defense, it was a rough sketch).

“Alright, let’s break this down,” you grumbled, tilting the tablet up, starting your villainous consultation. “You’re not wearing orange boots, first of all—”

“Oh no, I meant them to bed red. I just… um, couldn’t find my red marker.”

You stared at him before purposely, and openly, shifting to stare at his noticeable bright red sneakers before looking back at him.

“Try not to have tells, kid.” You said, prepared to return to your presentation.

“Tells?”

“Ask All Might about it,” you said dismissively. “I’m no villain and if he’s the one training you, or mentoring you, or whatever you two are calling it, he should be teaching you about anonymity. Now, no orange or red boots. That’s gonna clash. We’re going to stick with classic black. I liked your camouflage idea but we’re not extending it past your waist -- we’re limiting it to pants -- and we’re ditching the cape because that’s a terrible idea. Top it off with a fitted black shirt and I think you got a classic, good, outfit!”

You thought you did good. You took the gist of his idea and ran with it. But he didn’t light up with happiness when you sat back in your chair, waiting for his thank-you’s.

He furrowed his brows, jaw working.

Don’t hold it against him.

“Spit it out,” you said, exhaling, familiar with that look. “It doesn’t help me if you keep your thoughts to yourself. Do you not like it?”

“No!” Midoriya said quickly, throwing a hand up. “I like it! I really do! It’s…” He swallowed, eyes flickering away, embarrassed to speak his thoughts and sound ungrateful. “I thought there’d be more.”

“More?”

“Well, look at All Might’s outfit! He’s got a strap here --” He waved a hand across his chest. “And those big shoulderpads and a big belt--”

“All Might’s outfit is tacky and horrible.”

The look he gave you… you would have thought you had shouted something terribly offensive out on a public street. Of course, Midoriya was certain All Might could sense his name and fashion choices being used in vain and once more, the teenager expected a furious appearance from the older man.

“But don’t you make his clothes?” Midoriya asked in a flabbergasted hush, still watching the doorway.

You scoffed.

“I made his clothes but I didn’t design his look. Please, he looks like he robbed a biker on the way to a military surplus store -- his look is all him.” You hesitated. “Or designed by someone… tasteless.
So yeah, odds are it was probably him.”

This meeting was definitely not what Midoriya expected.

“But you…” You waved your finger at him, eyes lighting up. “I can work with you. Designing is the hardest bit but also so fulfilling…” Your chair squeaked as you leaned forward. “This is just the bare bones, anyway. We haven’t even gotten into the support side of the outfit!” You fixed him with a large smile. “So, what’s your quirk?”

The blood drained from Midoriya’s face and he propelled himself backwards in his chair, nearly toppling it over.

Excitement morphed to concern -- that was not a normal reaction.

“I can’t talk about my quirk,” he said.

Quirk secrecy? Well, that wasn’t uncommon.

Acting like you were electrocuted when asked about your quirk was.

“You don’t have to give me specifics,” you said gently, as if goading a spooked animal to calm down. “This is all to help you.”

“I can’t talk about my quirk,” he reiterated, quickly and firmly.

“... Okay. We won’t talk about your quirk, then...” You chewed your bottom lip. “Can you think of any support items that might be beneficial?”

When he didn’t answer right away, you moved to examples.

He was new to all this, after all.

“I worked with a client who had a fire quirk,” you said carefully, starting to aimlessly draw loops in the corner of the page open on your tablet. “So I had to design a suit to withstand fire and high temperatures. Plus, there were some very strict design elements that I like, had to keep. Anyway, I didn’t know the specifics of his quirk-- Well, that’s not entirely true . We did have a pretty big file on him and he’s a pretty public figure... All Might! I don’t know All Might’s quirk beside the whole air thing he does and the muscles. He also... doesn’t use support items. All he has is his clothes. Which are tear and stain resistant, by the way. That’ll extend to your clothing, considering you’re... uh, together. Hm. Oh, another client of mine could turn his limbs into stone! That’s a good one. See, he had made his own suit when he first started out doing vigilante work and finally realized, at some point, that support items could help him. So, we kept most of his original design idea but I also created these like, compression bands that would wrap around his arms and legs and they would react every time he activated his quirk. Stone is actually, like, very brittle, you know? And chunks would break off depending on what he was doing. So, the bands helped strength everything and keep him together. It was tricky problem to try and figure out, you know? Someone comes to you and says their stone arms crack, what do you do? But I had gotten an idea from the metal rods that construction guys stick in concrete. Rebar, right? Granted, I couldn’t go and shove metal rods into his arms but it made me think of tension control to strengthen. Rock and concrete are kind of the same thing except concrete is malleable. Well, you know what I mean, you pour it places and can control its shape. Stone is stone, though. Speaking of stone, there was also the boot problem I solved a while back -- that was tricky too. I had to find material for the bottoms of shoes that would allow someone to still ‘communicate’ with dirt. Oh, sorry, the guy could control dirt, that was his quirk. Anyway, rubber was too thick, he needed something that would act more like a protective second
skin since he would need to--"

You glanced back up at Midoriya, in the throes of your explanation, noticing then that he was staring at you oddly.

You had curled your hands into claws and were leaning over the table, envisioning the boot floating between your hands as if you were looking and controlling a holographic schematic. In fact, your entire tangent had been filled with hand movements as you mimed holding rocks or wrapping compression bands around your arms, the speed of your words quickening in your fervor.

*So much for being the professional.*

Intensity had embarrassed you. Quickly, you balled your hands into fists and pulled them to you, hiding them in your lap.

“Like I was saying,” you said after a calming breath to realign yourself. “A general idea is all I need-”

“Was it Stonefist?” Midoriya asked, interrupting you. “The vigilante you said you worked with, was it Stonefist?”

Typically, you weren’t one to blab about their details -- privacy was very important in your line of work. It’s why your clients returned and one way you kept yourself safe.

Loose lips sink ships and all that.

Which is why a horrible sense of regret flooded your veins, even if the boy was looking at you with genuine interest.

“Don’t ask about my clients,” you said, rubbing at your forehead, purposely avoiding your eyes to avoid smudging your eyeliner. “It was stupid of me to bring them up. Please, don’t mention what I said to anyone.” You hesitated. “Including All Might.”

Before Midoriya could interject, you were standing and heading to your coffeemaker.

You needed a heavy dose of caffeine.

And to scrub the air of your rookie mistake.

“How do you take tea?”

“Oh!” Midoriya shifted in his chair, nodding when he caught you glance over your shoulder at him. “Sure, thank you.”

*At least he was polite.*

After a few terse minutes of silence, the slow gurgle of the coffeemaker filled the room.

You were staring at your opaque white kettle, focusing on the hum of electricity as it started to heat up.

“I, uh…” *Oh boy, he was going to regret this.* “I have a quirk like All Might’s but… I have problems with it.”

You turned to look at him.
His eyes were glued to his hands that were fidgeting on the tabletop.

“Whenever I use my quirk, I always hurt myself. I break bones. Tear muscle. I always have to go to the infirmary.”

Infirmary?

“It feels like my… like my quirk is too strong for my body.” You saw him release a sad smile at his hands. “If you can help with that…”

“Having too strong a quirk is not too surprising,” you said with a shrug, softening when you caught his stunned look. “Every generation, quirks get a bit stronger. Thing is, people aren’t evolving fast enough to keep up with them. Quirk or not, humans are still human. And we might hit a point where a human body won’t be able to sustain the quirk they’re blessed with. Or cursed with. Evolution takes what, thousands if not millions of years? I’m no scientists in that regard, but I pay attention since it falls back to people like me. There might come a point where everyone ends up relying on some kind of support because their body can’t naturally house their ability.” You grinned. “Isn’t nature weird?”

“So you could help me not get hurt?”

“Your injuries, what are they like? What kind of broken bones? Like, snapping completely or more stress fractures? And what do you mean by muscle tearing? How bad is the damage?”

Midoriya tugged at his hair.

“Well, it hurts.”

“I’m sure.”

“But I haven’t… uh, asked how bad my injuries are.”

“I need to know how bad they are,” you stressed, reaching for cups when you heard the kettle rumble with a boil before clicking off. “If I don’t know the problems, I can’t think of a solution. Think you can get an idea and let me know next time you come?”

Next time he came?

It didn’t strike Midoriya that there would be a next time until you said it.

“I can try.”

“Great! Well, don’t get too beat up,” you said with a wink, passing him a cup of green tea while you held onto your mug of coffee.

To your delight, Midoriya sat a little straighter and blushed into the clear yellow liquid.

“Let’s take a tea break and then we’ll get those measurements together, alright?”

The teenager nodded and you blew into your coffee cup, tongue preparing itself for the inevitable mild scalding.

“So, what do you go by?” you asked. You had spent a good chunk of time with the teen, you should at least get some kind of name off of him.

“Oh, uh, I’m Midoriya. Midoriya Izuku.”
“Midoriya,” you said with a nod.

Midoriya Izuku.

Several seconds of peaceful silence passed--

“Wait,” you said, looking at him in alarm. “Wait, that’s a name. Did you just give me your name? Your actual name?”

Midoriya realized his mistake as well.

You swore not to reveal to All Might that you had been freely given Midoriya’s identity but it was knowledge you wish you didn’t have. In your line of business, you didn’t want to know names. You didn’t was anything that connected to real life.

When Midoriya finally calmed down from his borderline nervous breakdown, you hissed that he needed to find some sort of moniker to go by before introducing yourself as Artisan.

It was an innocent mistake though, made by an innocent kid (or a really good liar). Either way, you found yourself laughing at him, brandishing your measuring tape as he stood with his arms outstretched.

The wannabe villain who dropped his actual name.

You couldn’t make stuff like that up.

After the measurements had been recorded, and Midoriya downed the cold remnants of his tea, your twosome headed back to the living room to put an end to the visit.

You had to give All Might some credit. The man who often preached patience at you, while being incredibly impatient himself, had done good. Not once had he interrupted your consultation with Midoriya. He had stayed out of the way.

As it would have been hard to work with his... distraction.

If you didn’t hate his guts, you might have considered thanking him.

That idea went out the window when you walked into an empty living room.

No wonder he hadn’t bothered you.

He’d gone missing.

Your first thought was that he might have left. But the clothes on the table, and his general treatment of Midoriya, told you otherwise. Plus, you would have heard the beeping of the alarm system alerting you to a door opening and closing.

Even though your home was far from a mansion, the idea that he was lurking in it somewhere…

“Sit down,” you snapped to Midoriya, pointing to the couch. “And don’t move.”

You didn’t linger long enough to see if he listened -- you were on the hunt.

There weren’t many places that All Might could hide. He wasn’t in the living room and you knew he
hadn’t walked into the kitchen. Both downstairs closets were empty and he wasn’t standing on your yard when you glanced out one of your front windows.

Your eyes fell on your stairs.

Dread filled you as you ascended each step, growing increasingly worried about what you might find. Your entire upstairs could be destroyed.

Or, he could be lounging in your bed doing something unsavory.

The door to your bedroom was open but, when you burst in, All Might wasn’t anywhere to be found. A quick scan of the room didn’t reveal anything broken or out of place.

The empty guest bedroom was similarly left alone -- none of the still-stacked boxes had been disturbed.

The bathroom door was closed, so you knocked --

Your knuckles had barely grazed the wood before the door was thrown open and you were, once again, face to stomach with a black shirt.

“Can’t piss in your house?” He snapped, pushing past you and pulling the door closed behind him.

Actually, pulling was an understatement -- the crack was ringing in your ears but you could still make out the crash of something falling to the ground within your bathroom. You had a feeling it was the painting of lilacs you had hanging up.

Dazed, and with a sinking feeling growing in your stomach, you watched as he trudged down the hallway.

Into your bedroom.

Go downstairs, a voice of self-preservation commanded.

Instead, you found yourself following behind him, trying to swallow the lump of nerves and reclaim the annoyance and anger you had felt just minutes earlier.

He was standing at your bedside, scowling down at the piece of furniture before turning his frosty gaze on you once you entered and took your place across the room.

“This is mine.” He snarled, wild face and grabbing at the side of your mattress. Despite its immense size, the half he grabbed rose easily so it was almost perpendicular to the frame.

You swallowed before shaking your head.

“No,” you said firmly, ignoring the flash of fury that passed across his countenance. “No, that’s my bed.”

“You fuck other men in my bed?”

Suddenly, your anxiety was fleeing, being replaced by a new, stronger feeling. Indignation.

“That’s my bed,” you snapped, the glare coming out in full force at his gall. His audacity. Him to say such things to you. “And what I do with my bed is none of your business.”
“Don’t you remember how you got that bed, kitten?”

Though it was phrased like a question, judging from the slightly bared teeth, it was supposed to be more of a warning.

A warning you didn’t heed.

“That’s my bed,” you repeated, stepping forward -- an action that had him raising his brow. “Don’t you dare try and act like it isn’t. You have no claim over my bed.”

You expected him to say something mean. It looked like he was about to, that he had some insult on the tip of his tongue, probably going to call you a whore or something that wouldn’t cut as deep as it would have before.

You had gotten better at understanding your self worth.

To your immense surprise, however, he didn’t snarl out a name. He made a sound of displeasure and shoved the mattress away from him. It was crooked -- a corner leaning against the floor but, for the most part, it remained on the bed frame.

You eyed it before returning your gaze to All Might.

He had picked something up off your nightstand was mindlessly rolling it between his large fingers.

You knew what he had found.

A single golden ring you had put there the previous day. A straggler that had been left behind after Fourth’s last visit a few nights prior. One of his rings had fallen off the nightstand and you had found it under the bed while cleaning.

Apparently All Might had found it as well and had gathered who it belonged to.

You have a feeling the bathroom wasn’t the only place he had visited before you found him.

“I think it’s time you leave,” you said, folding your arms, reverting to your earlier tired demeanor.

The act he hated.

Hated.

“Come on, kitten,” he said, hiding the ring between his fingers as he held out his arms, burying the anger he had that you would defile his bed with someone else.

It was just furniture, right?

“You used to be so happy to see me,” he continued with what you felt was a greasy grin. “Holding grudges isn’t good for your health.”

Grudge?

You buried you scoff and, instead, smiled back at him.

“All Might,” you said with a soft little pout that had him freezing suddenly, eyes going wide. “Do you not remember strangling me? Or, hell, swinging me around like a piece of luggage after I had been stabbed? Honey bunny, what I hold against you is way worse than a grudge.”
In an instant, All Might was glowering directly in front of you, your chin caught between his thumb and pointer finger, forcing you to look up at his face.

The fear was back.

The fear was back with a vengeance.

*You had wanted to twist the knife and it looked like it worked.*

He was furious.

Which was what you wanted.

Though, you still found yourself regretting goading it out of him.

A light squeezing started up between his fingers as he pinched your chin, leaning down slightly so you could see the blues of his eyes.

You clearly foresaw him just tugging your head off. Spine still partly connected. A Mortal Kombat fatality that would be the punctuation mark ending the messy story of your life.

"You--"

He was speaking through his teeth. His grip felt too tight. You squeezed your eyes closed--

*You squeezed your eyes closed.*

The stroke fury that was compelling his actions wavered before slowly collapsing in on itself, leaving the echo of the feeling but none of the passion. He was irritated by your choice of words, the perceived *low* you sank to.

However, the *fear*.

Again with the *fear*.

He didn’t understand his aversion to seeing *you* afraid. Typically, terror and fright -- those were emotions he craved. The looks that would send a tingle of satisfaction up his spine whenever he caught them.

There was no satisfaction with you though.

Just a… disquiet.

*Oh, he did not like that feeling.*

He released your chin with a jerky motion, sprawling his fingers as he pulled his hand away before slowly curling them into a fist, which he tapped against his leg. The need to defend his pride was clashing terribly with his newfound disquiet… which left a sour feeling in his gut.

Maybe stomach problems were causing his mood swings?

“Those stab wounds were nothing, girl.” He grumbled, examining the ring that he still had in his other hand. “Paper-cuts. It was your *head* that worried me.”
Eyes blinked open, focusing on his cool, and seemingly disinterested, form.

“I passed out from them,” you found yourself mumbling back. “You swung me around.”

He didn’t have an excuse for the swinging around part -- that had been a purposeful action on his end to seem... uncaring.

Which apparently worked.

Yet, he didn’t feel the relief over his plans success.

Not like he had imagined.

“Blood loss isn’t what got you. It was shock, stupid girl. You scared yourself unconscious.”

With a flex of his fingers, the gold ring shattered, the broken bits of it scattering across the room.

Now that was satisfying.

Coldly, he looked down his nose at you, waiting for your reaction.

He expected a weak flex of anger... but you hadn’t so much as blinked at his miniscule display of destruction.

Which made his body hum with delight.

*That was a good sign, right?*

“And I didn’t *strangle* you.” Though he made his declaration with a huff, he was still *so* fixated on your face. “All I did was *hold* you up by the--”

“What am I, All Might?”

Your abrupt question was unexpected and you watched his brows knit as he attempted to quickly figure out your angle.

“What?” Was the response he finally settled on, lip curling in annoyance.

“I’m a scientist. A *scientist*, All Might. I work in a lab. I *make* things. I’m not a hero or a villain. I *make things*.”

You squinted at him, curious if he understood what you were saying. But he still looked angry and it struck you that no, not only did he not understand what you were trying to explain, there was a very solid chance he would *never* understand. He was incapable of putting himself in someone else’s shoes.

So, you started shaking your head at him.

Immediately, a similar scene flooded his memory. You shaking your head, pacing, affronted by accusations he was leveling.

A wave of *something* passed up his body and across his limbs.

He was very tempted to still your head between his hands just to get you to *stop*.

*He didn’t like the parallels.*
“Fighting isn’t what I do. I work in a lab,” you stressed.

You had a whole big speech brewing in your head. The two of you weren’t made from the same cloth. You were two different people with two very different skill sets. The injuries -- your injuries -- were still debilitating to you. It didn’t matter if they, to him, were a step above a busted lip.

Hell, even a busted lip would upset you.

Instead of launching into a speech regarding the differing natures of peoples, you sighed.

No, that would only extend a conversation you didn’t want to have.

So, you just summed up the entirety of your feelings into one succinct statement that expanded beyond the topic you were on:

“You know,” you eyed him with a smile he didn’t like. “What each of us gave was never equal.” An exhaled laugh through the nose. “And it keeps getting more and more obvious.”

*Oh, he didn’t like that.*

The back of his neck felt warm and his scowl darkened.

*He didn’t like that you recognized that too.*

Locked eyes lingered for a moment longer before you broke with a slow blink, turning your head toward the doorway of your bedroom.

“I got what I needed. Bring him back next weekend and we’ll do a final check-in. My workload is light this week. I should have everything finished.”

While you thought about the upcoming sports festival date, as that was truly the only thing on your plate the upcoming week, All Might was deep in his own thoughts.

It probably would have been a good time to force a continued conversation about personal history -- your mood was strange but he felt you could be receptive. He *still* was hanging on to your lack of anger over him breaking that four-armed idiot’s ring.

Surely that meant *something?*

But your last statement, before the mention of Midoriya, was… not digesting well, which only made All Might’s mood worse.

Words were useless.

Who *cares*?

*Who cares?*

He made a grumbling sound, tightening his shoulders and rolling his neck, exhaling when he felt some of the stiffness melt away with a couple cracks.

“You’re no fun anymore, princess,” he grunted, changing tactics and frowning at you. “Got a stick up your ass.”

The frown exploded into a smile.
An enormous smile.

“I could take it out for you,” he offered. “Swap it for something I know you’d like.”

You pinched the bridge of your nose.

It didn’t take long to finally corral All Might and Midoriya out the door. His good humor (if you could call it that) stuck until the end.

Well, up until you closed and locked the door.

The smile dropped off his face the moment All Might and his protege left your yard. Midoriya had been tasked with being the pack mule, carrying shopping bags and boxes hiding the large villain’s newly purchased gear.

Already he was dreading the train ride home.

Except, All Might didn’t walk to the train station. The duo made it to the end of the block where, after a quick look around, the blond man exhaled and dissolved into his lankier form. Without a word to Midoriya, he pulled out his cellphone and, judging from the terse conversation, called a cab.

Relief.

Midoriya desperately wanted to debrief with All Might about the entire experience. Both of their orders, the next visit, the excitement --

“Boy,” All Might grumbled, breaking Midoriya’s train of thought.

The tall man was standing with his hands in his pockets, staring down the road on the lookout for the cab.

If that even was the direction it would come from.

“Did the girl, Artisan, mention me?”

He was pretending to ask the question nonchalantly but there was nothing nonchalant about the subject at all.

Midoriya prided himself on his strong observational skills -- he did have stacks upon stacks of notebooks in his room filled with information about heroes and villains he had stumbled upon or noticed himself.

It wasn’t hard to catch wind of something simmering below the surface. The flirting, coupled with the looks Midoriya caught All Might giving and the man’s reactions and shifting demeanor...

And now that question.

Had everything not been so... connected, Midoriya may have written the actions off as All Might being All Might.

But combining everything together...

No, there was nothing nonchalant about that question at all.

It was weird.
It was so weird.

That All Might of all people...

Did he understand how obvious he was being?

That was the first question he was going to ask?

Midoriya shifted the boxes in his arms to a neat stack on the ground, humming and leaning lightly on them as he looked up to the sky as if thinking back on your interaction with him.

As if he was completely, wonderfully, beautifully oblivious.

He wished he was oblivious.

“Nope!” he chirped.

He wasn’t about to mention the tacky comment she had made or the things she had said about his lack of taste.

Whether Midoriya was over-analyzing things or not (which he prayed he was)...

He didn’t want to hurt All Might’s feelings.

Chapter End Notes

You’re wonderful
It struck you at work the next afternoon.

You hadn’t been lying when you told All Might that work was going to be slow. You were in a spring lull coupled with the fact that both you and Power Loader had an event in two days that you would be attending for differing reasons -- the Yuuei Sports Festival.

During after-work drinks a few weeks prior, Power Loader the Lush had admitted to you (after you had sworn yourself to secrecy) that he had been contracted by the illustrious high school to put together a few obstacle courses that would “be the stars” (his words) of the school event. Scouting for interns wasn’t the only reason he was attending the festival, he was also going to bask in the glory of his work!

Oh, and supporting Hatsume.

She was competing too.

As for you, fun and Fourth were the reasons for your attendance. It would be a well-deserved day off. A little midweek break to raise your spirits.

Which meant your entire week was basically shot.

Start a new project? You were operating on a shorter work week, you couldn’t possibly begin something new.

Finish a project? The week was so much shorter, you didn’t have enough time to tie up all your loose ends.

And you weren’t the only one feeling the effects of an anticipated midweek break hanging over you. From your vantage point, you could see Power Loader leaning on his desk, cheek on his fist, watching what you swore was a Godzilla movie.

His supposed pride and joy, his exoskeleton, was still in freshly-painted pieces that just needed to be reassembled.

Freshly-painted?

Sorry, you meant to say the paint job was more than a week old.

Maybe it wasn’t just the sports festival curbing the lab’s productivity. Maybe you both were in the midst of a spring funk.

You weren’t going to complain.

It was nice to give your brain a break.

Just before lunch, you had moved off of reading your horoscopes and had turned to browsing a listicle that claimed to have links to flattering and sexy bathing suits that would work with a variety of body types.
Though it was still early spring, summer weather was just around the corner.

And summer meant beach trips.

Wandering thoughts were still replaying scenes from that previous weekend in the theater of your conscious -- Midoriya sitting in your kitchen, Friday’s dinner, All Might standing in front of you, hearing the rumble of his breathing, Midoriya telling you his name, the weather, wondering if you had cleaned your coffeemaker out, All Might standing in your bedroom, the cat fight you heard the night before.

A jumble of inane thoughts that suddenly settled on one thing:

_I wasn’t worried about your stab wounds. I was worried about your head._

You couldn’t remember the exact phrasing he used but that was what he had more or less said to you, that your stab wounds hadn’t been worth worrying about. And that was what you had fixated on: you had been stabbed and he was being dismissive about your injuries because they weren’t “bad” enough for him.

Unfocused eyes glanced up from your desk, staring at nothing as you replayed everything in your mind’s eye, unsure if your memory was true but also knowing it was.

Your head was what worried him.

_Worried_ him.

An admission you had completely glazed over.

He had been _worried_ about you.

Worried.

And he had said it.

The word “worried” came out of his mouth -- you weren’t making that up.

He had spoken those words.

His voice said _that_ word.

He had been _worried_.

_‘I was worried.’_

Worried!

Suddenly, you couldn’t sit still.

You stood, stuffing you phone into your pocket before starting the walk to the bathroom, the movement helping quell some of the unrest that was settling over you.

All Might had admitted to having been worried about you.

Worried.

You kept repeating that single word in your head because he had _said_ it. He had told you, himself,
that he had been worried.

All Might.

Worried.

Worried the night he saved you.

That’s what he did, really. He stepped in and saved you.

You were being attacked and he had materialized in the darkness to protect you and chase that freak away.

Stain.

Things were starting to wobble, assumptions you had made beginning to crack. A new light had been turned on, forcing you to acknowledge things you didn’t want to.

Stalking? Or a villain’s attempt to keep you safe from afar?

Flirting with no follow through.

Flares of intimidation that would fizzle out--

As if he was curbing himself.

Oh no.

Oh no, no, no.

Why did you allow your brain to think?

Maybe you were overthinking things?

That was it, you told yourself as you sat your clothed ass on the toilet seat, bringing out your phone to distract you from thoughts you couldn’t be distracted from.

You were focusing on the wrong things, framing things with a perspective you had clearly just made up. A perspective that made sense to a normal person but not to All Might.

If he cared, why’d be mean?

He was still himself.

His same, selfish self.

And none of that mattered.

You pulled up your most recent text exchange -- it was only about an hour old. Fourth had sent you a picture of an obvious-hero whose feet, and only his feet, were giant. Judging from the man’s panicked look, they weren’t supposed to be such a large size but the image was funny.

You had sent back a series of laughing emojis seconds later but hadn’t heard anything else yet. Your hero was probably busy cleaning up whatever mess he had been part of. You knew he would call you later, when he was on his way home.

He always did.
You scrolled up past the picture, skimming over dozens of old texts, snapshots of the hundreds, if not thousands, you had sent each. Musings about the day, making plans, simple conversations, little ‘I miss you’s.’

This.

This is what mattered.

Not some selfish villain.

Chapter End Notes

I was going to drop this later in the week but I couldn’t control myself, I’m sorry
Depending on where you stood in the city, it was easy to pick out Yuuei High School. Situated on the horizon opposite of the bay, it sat peacefully atop its grassy perch, gazing protectively across all that was Musutafu.

With perfectly manicured lawns and a flawless, glass-clad exterior that glistened in the sun, it had the air of a modern-day Olympus. Though, instead of the golden Greek gods of yore fraternizing with one another in drunken divine bliss, its halls were saturated with scores of hormonal teenagers battling acne, changing bodies and literal backbreaking classwork.

Despite being a school, the institution still carried a special kind of clout that had your nerves buzzing as you climbed out of the chauffeured black SUV on that bright and beautiful spring day. A makeshift valet/drop-off zone had been set up just outside of the school’s main gates, aiding in the creation of organized pandemonium. Cars and cabs were depositing event attendees who blended in with crowds that were making their way up from further down the hill.

Fourth was having a quick chat with the driver who was hanging out the window, glancing at his wristwatch. When their conversation was over, the hero gave the hood a good-natured pat before making his way to where you stood.

You proceeded to watch as the car attempted to squeeze through the endless tide of uncaring people.

“‘It’s busy,’” you said to him, pulling your sunglasses off from where they sat on the top of your head and taking a moment to fluff out your hair before putting them on. Your date shrugged absentmindedly, raising his chin in an attempt to look above the heads that surrounded you.

Unfortunately, he wasn’t *that* tall.

“‘It’s a big event,’” he said before ultimately deciding to blend into the crowd.

You followed along.

Excitement was clearly the theme of the day. All around, Sports Festival attendees were talking about what they expected from this year’s event, how amazing the previous events had been, recollections of their most favorite moments they had either witnessed in person or had seen clips of online.

Your high school was internationally known too, but it was purposely sequestered away from the general populace. Meanwhile, Yuuei was right smack in the middle of a major Japanese city.

Talk about two ends of the spectrum.

It was the first time you had been to Yuuei’s campus, too. As you passed through the threshold of the main gate, critical eyes scanned the imposing steel fixture that surrounded the perimeter. At the start of its life, the great Yuuei Barrier had been a simple fence that had been erected alongside the school. But, as times changed, so did the institution's fortifications.

To have the resources to be on par with the security of a highly classified military facility *and* have no leaks about what it entailed…. 
Oh, if only you had the brass to go and poke around the barrier publically. Who knew what secrets were hidden *just* out of--

“Look!”

Fourth’s voice broke your train of thought and you glanced up at him, realizing he was pointing at something in the distance.

“They got skewers!”

As you walked upstream with the rest of the biomass, you found that a festival had been erected in the shadow of Yyuuei’s stadium complex. Rows of clownish colored tents and stands funneled the crowd into a maze of avenues, advertising a variety of food and entertainment -- carnival games, desserts and an enticing aroma of all that was good and fried traveled through the air...

It really put the *festival* in sport’s *festival*.

The best part of the whole shebang for you? A vast majority of attendees were *heroes*. Sure, there were a handful of kids running around underfoot and an odd person here or there that was dressed in civvies (like you), but the sports festival was a *closed* event. It was the place where heroes and hero agencies could scout upcoming talent at Japan’s biggest hero school. Fun as it was, it was *supposed* to be used for networking. A business event.

Your eyes passed over three costumed heroes standing side-by-side, each shooting water from a mounted gun into the gaping mouth of a clown. Another, dressed in loud green spandex, was clutching a massive anteater, goading them on.

Your attention drifted off to the side of them, your mind subconsciously picking up on something and diverting your focus to it. It was then you recognized a familiar face, albeit made of plastic, peering out at you.

“Oh!” Your eyes lit up when you spied what was situated next to the water gun stand. You grabbed Fourth’s hand, tugging at it to guide him in another direction, toward the stand. “They have Captain Celebrity merch!”

---

Thanks to a combination of stairway congestion and collections of people who stood aimlessly and blocked major walkways for no clear reason, it took you nearly half an hour to make your way up to your seats perched in the upper levels.

From the exterior, Yyuuei’s stadium looked like every other stadium you had ever been to or had seen in passing. Large, plenty of steel bits to look imposing and modern, big lights -- you know, the whole “sporty” vibe. The interior followed a similar trend of modern steelism but it was… *off*. Each floor had was a massive loop where you would expect to see stands or enclosed spaces for merchandise and food and beer. What they had at baseball and soccer stadiums.

But there was nothing but tables and shoddily made booths, not unlike what was going on outside--

Except everything was run by *teenagers*.

Many were hawking all kinds of street food, some had Yyuuei merchandise, others were offering things like tea and mini-yoga sessions and a meditation corner…

“Hey,” you bumped into the suited man’s arm, bringing his attention to what you were looking at.
Thankfully, you didn’t need to explain your mildly confused face, he was able to put two-and-two together quickly enough that he cracked a slight smile at you.

“Business kids,” he said, nudging you with an elbow and nodding in the direction of a sign that you had glaringly missed.

*All Proceeds Benefit the Yuuei Business Course!*

“So they’ve got heroes, support, business…” You listed off each of the curriculums Yuuei offered, counting them on your fingers as you spoke. Fourth was nodding along to your beat and interjected when you didn’t name the last one.

“And general.”

“General?”

“General Studies.”

“Ah,” you said with a knowing nod despite truthfully not knowing Yuuei had a general studies offering.

“S’Where I got my start,” Fourth said, dipping away from you to avoid two heroes who were walking and talking at a much slower pace than your duo.

“At Yuuei?” Your brows rose at his possible educational accomplishment but he laughed and shook his head.

“Nah, ‘nother school down South. Got moved to the hero course my junior year once I learned how to fight.” His lower set of arms flexed up and down like he was pumping weights. “I was a gawky kid until I bulked up. Next thing you know, I was the best brawler in class. Got moved that same year.”

“Oh, I’m sure you got *real* popular after that,” you said, drawing out ‘real’ with a waggle of your brows.

When Fourth didn’t deny or clarify, just chuckled to himself and rubbed the back of his head, you laughed and elbowed him.

“Don’t know if I should call you Fourth Kind or Cassanova,” you said, still tickled about the little factoid you had learned about your other half.

“It’s the four hands,” he retorted. “Everybody likes the four hands, meatball.”

The ticket and seating system of the festival was not typical. Although a level and section were listed in the slips of paper in Fourth’s hand, there were no seat numbers. It wasn’t until you headed outside that you realized there weren’t actual *seats*. Instead, there were rows of what looked like concrete benches. Almost like bleachers but substituting the flimsy infrastructure for something built-in.

You managed to convince Fourth to sit at the end of a row instead of sandwiching yourselves somewhere near the middle. You wanted end seats. As you got yourself comfortable on the cement, and Fourth typed away on your phone, you took in the view. The air within the structure was vibrating with the dull thunder of thousands of voices speaking all at once. For a bit you watched as crowds filtered and filled the various sections. Despite sitting in the highest level, the green of the field didn’t seem so far away from you. In fact, you didn’t get that wave of vertigo that sometimes hit you if you and friends headed to a baseball game in the nosebleeds. Besides, there were multiple
massive screens stationed along the top of the oval stadium -- there was no way you could miss the action, assuming they were going to show close-ups.

Though, at that moment, the screens were a navy blue that had a pixelated hourglass rotating each time digital sand filled the lower portion.

“Hey! If it isn’t Fourth Kind!”

A young man was walking up the steps of the section, grinning when he caught sight of who you were sitting beside. Immediately Fourth stood, leaning over you to take hold of the man’s extended hand.

“So you actually made the trip out of Tokyo to slum it in Musutafu, huh?”

The man made a show of scoffing loudly, hands settling on his hips as he took in the surroundings.

“ Heard the food was going to be good so I figured it was worth the trip.” He shrugged. “Besides, gotta help the kids out, right?”

“Whadda mean, help? Don’t tell me you’re really gonna take an intern after last year’s fiasco?” Fourth asked.

You had no idea what the supposed ‘last year’s fiasco’ was, but it was evident Fourth found it funny, judging by the smile on his face.

His conversation partner rolled his eyes.

“Don’t remind me. Fitnesshead fucking Frank claims his migraines are all from that kid’s mustard gas.”

Mustard gas?

You caught Fourth’s eye, looking at him pointedly. It took a second but realization eventually found him and his lower set of arms gestured to you.

“Ah shit, sorry. This here’s my date--“

“You brought a date to the Yuuei Sports Festival?” the man asked, clearly unimpressed. Ignoring Fourth’s, “Well no,” he shook his head apologetically at you.

“Sorry, numbnuts here is more brawn than brain. Anyway, I’m Mister Brave.” He pointed to himself with his thumb, grinning at you. “Owner of the best head of hair in all of Tokyo.”

With a claim like that, your eyes immediately drifted upward to take in the state of his hair.

It was very full, you quietly admitted with a conceding face to him -- it rose in flowing tufts from behind a clunky piece of headgear that mildly disguised the hero’s face while simultaneously showing off his heavily-pierced ears through slotted ear coverings.

You wouldn’t necessarily call it the best hair in all of Tokyo but…

Before you could introduce yourself properly in turn, Fourth belted out, “Rock Lock!” and Brave looked over his shoulder, catching sight of the frowning man scaling the section’s staircase with his hands shoved into his pockets.

“Got ourselves a meeting of the minds,” Rock Lock drawled, lifting a brow at the two heroes facing
him.

He barely glanced at you.

“It’s been a while, Rock,” Fourth was leaning over you again, reaching out for another handshake. Unlike Brave’s, Rock Lock’s was punctuated with an additional hand that rested on the other man’s forearm. “Thought you’d taken some paternal leave!”

“Ah,” he shrugged. “Baby’s a couple months old now--”

“Don’t bullshit,” Brave snorted, interrupting. “You were back out on the streets a week after the birth.”

“How’s the little guy doing?” It was Fourth’s turn to interrupt. “And the misses?”

Rock Lock held Brave’s gaze before slowly turning his head toward Fourth, swallowing whatever retort he had been prepared to drop.

“Happy and healthy,” he said in a deadpan sort of way. “Her mother comes over too much, though. It’s always--”

“Aw yeah, listeners!”

You jumped as a screeching voice exploded out across the stadium, vibrating the steel railings that ran along the center of all of the staircases. An odd popping static somewhere deep in your ears had you twitching your head down to your shoulder, wincing.

An overly-eager blond man had appeared on every television screen in the stadium, gripping a mic and pointing directly into the camera.

“Looks like we got ourselves a packed stadium! Get to your seats, listeners, because we’re about to start up this sold-out show soon and I can guarantee there’ll be no encores!”

The announcer disappeared in a ‘zzzpp’ of black, replaced by a timer that was counting down from five minutes.

“Present Mic still works here?” Brave asked the crew. You were certain there was a hint of distaste in his voice.

“Apparently,” Rock Lock grumbled, gesturing to the screen with his chin. “There ain’t denying who that was.”

“Come sit!” Fourth blurted and, thankfully, the other heroes in your row slid down to make room for two additional people. You carefully slid around Fourth, swapping spots so that you were now sandwiched between him and a stranger, allowing him to sit with his friends.

Brave had ended up with your coveted end-of-row seat.

You tried not to dwell on it as it wasn’t worth being annoyed about.

Easier said than done.

You could hear the three heroes chatting away and you felt unintentionally discluded from their threesome, mostly due to where you sat, being blocked out by Fourth’s broadness and all. Could you have forced participation in the conversation? Probably. But you didn’t want to make the effort, so
you busied yourself with your thoughts, watching the minutes disappear on the timer and wasting
time on your phone.

You were still able to hear the boys, though, if you concentrated enough over the buzz of a million
other conversations. Brave and Fourth were actively looking for interns while Rock Lock, with a
sigh, admitted he just needed a day to himself that didn’t involve work, running after baddies or
parenthood.

“I don’t know how she does it, man,” he said with a groan, rubbing his face. “Stay at home and take
care of the kid all day. An hour of playtime and I’m about ready to check out.”

“Maternal instincts,” Fourth said with a knowing nod. “She’s a mom.”

You snapped your head in his direction, making an unhappy face, silently daring him to continue
with his train of thought. Surely, he wasn’t that old fashioned to think women automatically fell into
the mommy role once they popped out a kid.

Rock Lock winced.

“Maybe,” he said carefully, and you wondered if he knew his wife would have displayed a similar
indignation. “But… she also cried into her salad two nights ago. I think she just has better patience
than me.”

“Babies,” Brave said, screwing up his face. “No thanks.”

Rock Lock rolled his eyes, crossing his arms and stretching out his legs, careful not to kick anyone in
the row in front of him.

“Yeah, that’s probably for the best,” he sighed, grunting lightly as he pointed his toes deeper toward
the field and brought his shoulders back. “Can’t imagine you on dad duty. Besides, no one wants to
start a family with a guy who blows all his money at the host clubs every night.” He flickered his
gaze to Brave. “Among blowing other things.”

You turned, shaking with quiet laughter at the insult. Thankfully, Fourth’s openly heaving frame
blocked yours entirely and no one caught onto your eavesdropping.

Brave made a face.

“I hope your kid ruins your sex life,” he grumbled, leaning forward and resting his elbow on his leg
and chin on his palm in defeat. Seconds later though, a smile broke through and he quietly conceded
that the roast had been good.

“Jeez,” Fourth said once his laughter stopped, exhaling and shaking his head. “And you two are
heroes.”

Before either of the two men could rag on whatever inadequacies they knew Fourth Kind possessed,
the lights of the stadium clicked off.

“Listeners... it’s a good day for some schoolyard fun, don’t you think?”

Booms rang out -- fireworks were being shot into the sky from the highest points of the structure,
bathing the bright blue world above you in a kaleidoscope of vivid colors of differing patterns. Your
hands flew to your phone and, like thousands of your neighbors, you watched the spectacle through
the screen of your device.
Meanwhile, cheering echoed all around you, growing louder when it became clear that the event had finally started.

Mic fizzled back on the giant screens, peeking at the camera from behind his sunglasses, grinning mischievously as he listened to the cheers and screams from wherever he was stationed. Your focus drifted off the world framed by your phone -- he looked to be in some sort of booth.

You scanned the other sections, trying to determine where the booth could be located.

“Another year, another freshman class, another Yuuei Sports Festival!” Mic paused for another round of cheering, but cut it off short. “I think you’ve all been waiting long enough, right? So let’s get this show started!”

The fireworks popped off their last couple of rockets and the lights calmed down, as did the screaming. Mic was leaning back into his chair -- ah, you found his little commentator’s box at the same level as the rest of the special boxes -- kicking his legs up at the little desk/counter he was sitting at.

“We got a whole new setlist set up for you tonight, listeners. Expect high octane drama with enough heat to sizzle and fry your eyeballs! Expect your hearts to plummet, beat and leap out of your chests as wannabe heroes, young teenagers in their freshman year of school, risk life and limb all in a frenzied, desperate attempt to make a--”

Mic had launched into Shakespearean-level soliloquy, fisting his hands as he looked to the heavens, imagining bloodied students clawing their ways to uncertain victory on the field.

The key-word being “had,” though.

At some point during his emotive acting, a black-garbed arm had snaked onto the screen and knocked the DJ off-balance, sending him, and the chair he had been rocking in, crashing down off-camera.

The view shifted as the feed was manually turned to face a second person who had also been sitting inside the box -- a man with ratty black hair and lidded eyes who looked close to passing out, not announcing a supposed, “high octane drama”-filled event.

“Oi,” he mumbled to his lively counterpart who was still somewhere on the floor. The other microphone picked up a sad, faint, ‘Eraserrrr’ but the dark-haired man appeared unmoved. “You’re taking too long.”

He then fixated the camera with a bored look that was so emotionally distant it almost felt like he was looking at you, through you, and dismissing your very existence.

“The Yuuei Sports Festival will be divided into three events,” he intoned, apparently taking over for his livelier companion. “The general studies, heroism and support courses will all be participating with one overall freshman student declared the winner at the end.” He fell into an extended pause and, when he realized nothing was happening, his exhaustion grew more pronounced. “Bring the students out.”

Apparently, that phrase was the open sesame the event had been waiting for. Somewhere down below, a door shifted open, spurring Present Mic to launch himself upright, wheeling his chair beside (and roughly bumping into) his co-host.

“Don’t forget to introduce the voices of today’s games, Eraser! Most of you know me as the cool
cat golden voice hero rocking your airwaves morning, noon and night. I’m the one, the only, hero and superstar English teacher, Present Mic!” He struck a quick pose before immediately gesturing to his other half. “And don’t fear, beside me is no walking corpse, listeners! With a personality almost as dry as his eyes, this hero of the night moonlights as the homeroom teacher for the stellar Class 1A hero students! You know him, you want him, you love him: erasing hero, Eraserhead!”

Eraserhead slowly blinked his eyes closed, as if praying to a higher power for increased patience, but most of the crowd’s attention had turned toward the herd of students gradually making their way out of whatever room they had been hiding in.

The door was beneath your section, meaning you only saw the backs of the students as they filed out (unless their heads were swiveling around trying to take in the enormity of the event and that was the case for many of them). Some of the screens above the stadium switched feeds to close-ups of the students and you couldn’t help but fixate on how young they all looked.

Young… and pumped full of excitement, fire and nerves.

The destination of the competitors was a flimsy stage that had been erected in the center of the green. There was nothing on it save for a single microphone stand.

“**We won’t be the only Yuuei teachers capturing your hearts today!**” You and a thousand others jumped at the suddenness of Mic’s voice splitting your eardrums. “**Listeners, please be sure to give a standing ovation to the emcee of today’s gig--**”

A crack rang out and your eyes flickered down back to the stage. A woman had appeared behind the microphone…

And…

No.

What looked like a flogger was swinging lazily by her side.

“**Midnight!**”

You knew who she was -- the R-rated femme fatale hero Midnight, with her sleeping quirk and obvious affinity for bondage. If you had to rank your favorite heroes, she ranked fairly high (though not above of Captain Celebrity, of course). You remembered the news the hero gossip sites had posted when she had taken a role at Yuuei as some kind of teacher a few years back. The snark that someone like her would be a teacher.

You always figured she toned herself down, working at a school and all. Not that she wore anything too provocative anymore. You had seen pictures of Midnight’s costume when she first started out -- pre-bodysuit. In fact, she was one of the reasons modesty standards had been put in place by the Hero Association.

Apparently, Yuuei didn’t feel the need to curb Midnight’s apparel any further.

You respected that.

“Allright kiddos,” she almost sang into the microphone, her flogger flicking and turning at her side in a way that resembled the movements of a cat’s tail. “Let’s kick off these games the right way, hm?”

It was a pregame ceremony, you quickly realized and were eventually flat-out told, where the
students would pledge to do their best and swear to honor the most basic tenant of the entire affair -- they would conduct themselves they way heroes would.

Midnight called up an angry-looking blond kid to the stage who had claimed the number one rank in the heroics course. He was the one who would be reciting the pledge on behalf of his classmates -- a Bakugou Katsuki.

Well, he was *supposed* to recite the pledge.

Around you, a mixture of grumbling and laughter rang out amongst the heroes in the stands as the cocky freshman perverted the oath by announcing he planned on taking home the title of winner.

That was his pledge.

To be number one.

The reactions of his classmates at his audacity leaned much more toward exasperation. Midnight appeared unbothered, as if his actions weren’t entirely unexpected.

*Such modesty.*

“Arrogant little shit, don’t you think?” Brave muttered, sharing your thoughts, but he was mostly amused. Judging from both Fourth’s and Rock Lock’s snorts, they didn’t find the teenager quite as endearing, which Brave caught onto. “Ah come on, you gotta have some brass to stand out from the crowd. Why else do you think Endeavor’s so popular?”

“Endeavor earned the right to be cocky,” Rock Lock said. “This kid’s a pipsqueak.”

“Ah, but personality is important. How else you gonna attract advertisers and sponsors your way? He’s the first seat, isn’t he? I have a feeling he can put his money where his mouth is.”

“He’s not acting like a hero,” Fourth interjected, unmoved. Brave shrugged.

“What’s the definition of a hero, anyway?” he asked. “So what if he’s an asshole? If he’s saving people then he’s still a hero, isn’t he?”

“You talking about the kid or Endeavor?” Rock Lock asked.

“I’m talking about 85% of the pro hero payroll.”

Fourth made an unhappy sound but neither he nor Rock Lock spoke up to dispute what was being said.

“Hands,” you said, knocking into him, genuinely curious after hearing that little exchange. He answered with a, “hm?” while blinking down at you. “What kind of intern are you looking for?”

“Old school. Good values,” he said without hesitation, as if he had been reflecting on the attributes beforehand. “We’ve gotta reputation we gotta uphold, meatball. My agency. An image. Anyone I bring into my agency is a reflection of me. Anyone I associate with is a reflection of me...” He frowned, watching Bakugou trudge off the stage to rejoin his classmates, remaining perfectly obstinate.

You nodded, catching his drift.

Made sense.
Despite the grandiose start moments earlier, the first event of the day was quickly announced by Midnight without any sort of exaggerated fanfare-- only to be hyped up by an overly-animated Present Mic, who returned to the screens with wild hand motions, bouncing in his seat beside the stoic Eraserhead.

The students, he chattered, would be participating in a race.

A foot race seemed positively ordinary; an event that would be held at any middle-or-high school sports festival. Which wouldn’t be an issue… if you hadn’t gone to Yuuei thinking their whole event was going to blow your mind.

It was in a stadium after all. A stadium the school had built.

You glanced at the faces of those around you, trying to measure their response to the race, which would give you a better idea to react. If they seemed indignant at the mediocrity, you would have known to be disappointed.

But there was no uniform expression aside from merriment. Footrace or not, everyone’s spirits were still high. There was still a general buzz surrounding the stands.

You really wished you had watched a video of a previous year’s sports festival just so you could have had some baseline of comparison.

Shifting in your concrete seat to try and return feeling to your ass and alleviate the pinching of your lower back, you watched the mass of students collect at the starting line. They were facing down a long tunnel that had been carved into one of the stadium’s walls -- were they going to leave the stadium?

You received your answer seconds later when Midnight lifted her hand in the air and fired off a loud pop from a starting pistol she had been given. The elbowing that had been going on at the front of the mass stopped once as the teens took off, running down the hallway--

The massive screens had shifted over to show off what was happening inside the tunnel and the bottleneck that had occurred. Present Mic declared happily that camera bots had been engaged to show those in the stands every thrilling second of the race.

Apparently, thrilling was watching the kids restart their elbowing as they tried to force their way to freedom. Some toward the back of the crowd had opted to climb over their brethren, scuttling along infuriated heads. But then a single student managed to break away from the pack and throw up a wall of ice at the tunnel end just as he escaped through it, effectively trapping his competition inside.

“And it looks like Todoroki Shouto has stepped out into the lead--”

As soon as the name left Present Mic’s lips, voices were murmuring around you.

“Speaking of Endeavor…” you heard Rock Lock say under his breath.

You knew that name, Todoroki. You had grown up hearing it and, professionally, seen it scribbled and typed out in contracts you had read in what felt like a lifetime ago. The eager eyes of thousands were on the white-and-red haired boy who was blank-faced running along the dirt path, a pulsating #1 imposed in the corner of his shot.

The son of the number one hero was currently number one in the race.

“Know anything about him? Anyone?” Brave asked, only to receive shrugs.
“Kid can use ice,” Fourth said, gesturing to the screen and apologizing when one of his arms knocked into you. You waved him off, having grown increasingly disconnected from him and his friends.

The ice barrier Todoroki had created only held up for a few precious seconds before a series of explosions ripped through it, sending shards of pulverized and melted ice out across the course. It had been Bakugou who had destroyed the creation in what you determined was a fit of rage. A fit that grew into a continued state as he, literally, propelled himself off the ground and forward using detonations that were bursting out from his palms.

“And Bakugou is quick to demonstrate why he's ranked first in the hero course! That wall is no match and neither is Todoroki's follow-up ice trap!”

Upon realizing that his bottleneck plug had been knocked down, Todoroki had shot an ice sheet out across the track behind him, either freezing his competitors in place or slowing them down as they attempted not to--

Your entire world shifted.

It had been only a flash -- the camera panning over the students that were struggling -- but there was no doubt who you had seen.

Green hair.

Freckles.

It was a twist you had not been expecting, a revelation you weren’t prepared for. All Might’s supposed young protege wasn’t some kid that he had kidnapped in order to tempt him into a lifestyle of debauchery.

The kid was a student at Yuuei.

The kid was attending a hero school.

Midoriya was a Yuuei student.

You felt a pressure deep in your ears.

There was a voice questioning why you were so… reactive to the unexpected news as you felt your heartbeat clearly in the tips of your fingers. What did it matter if Midoriya was a Yuuei student? What did it change?

Nothing.

It had nothing to do with you, his and All Might’s relationship. You were disconnected from the entire thing. It didn’t matter who he was, you were just the person hired to make his villainous attire. That’s all you were to either of them.

Then, a part of you was hoping that maybe you were just projecting on another green-haired student. That maybe it wasn’t Midoriya and your brain had twisted a stranger’s features into something recognizable during the short glimpse you had gotten.

Your reaction to the massive warbots that appeared on screen, the first major obstacle, wasn’t as visceral as the rest of the crowd’s. In fact, you didn’t even register Fourth’s minor pump of excitement when one of the students victoriously burst through a fallen robot, having nearly been
crushed. You weren’t paying attention to anyone else, really -- just staring intensely at each of the differing feeds, looking for another hint of green-hair in the young faces.

You didn’t catch sight of him until well into the race, when the heavy middle grouping of students had finally reached some sort of canyon crossing obstacle. For most, the racing slowed down significantly as the students couldn’t just run across the jagged wounds of empty earth. Swaying ropes were there only means of progression for those who couldn’t take to the skies.

A camera bot caught sight of him midway through his journey along a long stretch of rope and followed him for several seconds.

Midoriya was carefully inching his way forward carrying what looked to be a piece of scrap metal on his back. He looked nervous, you could see the beads of sweat gathered along his hairline, his body swinging with his back facing down into the canyon as he maneuvered. But he also was incredibly, sharply focused. His brows were knitted, face fixated forward in the direction he was dragging himself to.

Having been forced to come to terms with reality -- it was Midoriya out there -- your attempts to reason with yourself grew more pronounced. You were shifting in your seat, anxious and unhappy, trying to avoid the screens while simultaneously being unable to keep your eyes off of them.

You had only met him once.

But knowing he was some kind of hero student…

And you hadn't talked to All Might in like a year.

It would be different if Midoriya was just a regular kid. Was he purposely corrupting a student? Did he send Midoriya into Yuuei to be some kind of spy? He was a teenager. What about his classmates? Was he living some kind of pretend life?

You were shouldering a nonexistent burden.

The knowledge made you feel… dirty.

Apparently, out of all the things you did in your life that were morally questionable, bearing witness to the possible corruption of a minor was what really unearthed your broken empathy.

It was because you spoke with him and saw the innocent he possessed, wasn’t it?

You sucked air through your teeth, nodding at nothing, cursing your therapist for teaching you ways to think through your emotions.

God, couldn’t you go back to not caring about anyone?

More feeds flipped over to a large plot of dirt. Bakugou was creeping closer to Endeavor's kid but their leads were shrinking. More faces were appearing on the dirt and--

BOOM.

You felt and heard the blast before you saw it, the entire stadium rattling from some unknown force. Your instincts were telling you that the explosion wasn’t planned and, at once, about thirty heroes around you stood, tense, as if waiting for some kind of call to action. Even Fourth had leaned forward, both sets of hands on each knee and his lap, listening and waiting.
The eruption had originated on the last leg of the course -- the minefield -- and, working on a delay of several seconds, was finally felt on the screens. The camera bots jiggled, the feeds bouncing along, as their mechanical minds worked to not only comprehend what had happened but to also determine the outcome of the explosion. One of the feeds was darting around, having not decided to fixate on the stunned and dazed reactions of those on the ground.

Eventually, that little bot caught sight of something flying through the air, barreling toward the two leading students who were locked in an intense battle, each trying to overpower the other.

“Wha-- AH! I can’t believe it! Eraserheard, look at your kid!”

The something the bot was following wasn’t a thing, it was a student. A plucky, green-haired student who was cutting through the air like a bullet on a sheet of scrap metal -- where the fuck did he even pick that up?

“Midoriya Izuku, listeners, has exploded into third place and is quickly gaining on the two hotheads in the lead. Eraser, what are you feeding your class!?”

Eraserhead rolled his eyes but didn’t seem so… out-of-touch. Quietly, he was looking down, off-camera, undoubtedly watching intently what was happening between his students.

Neither Todoroki nor Bakugou had been expecting someone to catch up so suddenly, and they both looked over their shoulders and watched Midoriya's rapid approach in a stunned sort of way. The delay, unfortunately, worked against them. By the time Bakugou lifted a palm to swat away his descending classmate, Midoryia had performed in-air acrobatics and managed to slam the metal he was riding on into the ground, triggering another flurry of explosions that propelled him forward even further.

Without so much as a stumble, the teenager rolled and touched the ground, having claimed first place, locked in a sprint toward the tunnel the lead to the finish line back within the stadium.

That’s about the time your heart leaped into your throat and you were quite literally sitting on the edge of your seat, hands squeezed into fists as you found it increasingly hard to breathe. “Listeners!” Mic’s voice screeched, as your hands lifted, fingers digging into your scalp as you found it increasingly hard to breathe. “Clap those hands together and give a big round of applause to our first winner of today’s event…”

Confetti exploded out everywhere and the rain of little paper pellets made it almost difficult to see who ran onto the field at the exact same moment.

Almost.

“Midoriya Izuku!”

You were out of your seat, letting out a yell as you lifted up two fists in victory, ignoring the amused faces looking your way.

He had done it.

The kid had done it.
Midoriya placed in the Yuuei Sports Festival.

The best hero school in Japan, if not one of the best in the world, with the best of the best as its students and he had just placed, beating out Endeavor’s son. Beating out a legacy. The little twerp who was terrified of All Might and over-shared was now ranked as one of the best.

“Jeez,” Brave said, grinning widely at a confused Fourth Kind. “Lively one, ain’t she?”

Fourth silently shrugged at him, obviously baffled as to where your sudden bolt of excitement came from.

The rankings graphic took over one of the screens and remained static as more students filed back into the stadium. Midoriya, Todoroki and Bakugou took the top spots, respectively, and new names zoomed across the board each time a student finished.

The top 42 finishers would move on to the yet-to-be-announced second event, but there was a delay as the school waited for all the students to finish (or were collected off the course if otherwise unable to).

So, when it became clear some waiting was going to have to happen, a bored, chatty hum blanketed the stands as the teenagers caught their breath down below.

Midoriya, you watched as your heart continued to beat rapidly, was eagerly speaking with a group of peers that gradually grew larger as more of his classmates finished. As you observed their interactions, you realized they were acting familiar around him and each other as they offered continued congratulations. Friendly.

They were his friends.

... He had friends.

Struck by a wave of restlessness, you glanced back up to the feeds. A good chunk of students were still making their way across the canyon. More were tip-toe across the minefield. A rush to finish hadn’t been felt yet, which meant the second event was still a little ways away.

You had time to waste. A quick walk would help you work out the twists in your body.

“I’m going to go to the bathroom,” you announced to Fourth as you stood, patting his shoulder. “Watch my bag.”

He looked at the purse you were wearing across your body, but you weren’t talking about that bag -- you pointed to the plastic one beneath his legs.

The Captain Celebrity merchandise you had bought earlier.

“Yeah,” he said with an added nod. You gave his two friends a tight-lipped smile as you scooted past them, thanking Brave who had stood and moved out of the way instead of just shifting his legs.

And then you were free, breathing in a deep, cleansing breath as you left the stands to return to the loop of shops in the stadium’s interior. The crowds inside were growing larger -- it appeared many of the other heroic attendees had the same thought as you. Maybe even the same need to move after such a banging conclusion.

There were bathrooms in your section but… you opted to bypass them and, instead, take a little walk. You’d been nursing a slight craving for boba tea the past few days and, as it was the latest fad,
some business kid booth must be selling them, you argued. Hell, you’d make do with an iced coffee with plenty of cream.

You ended up strolling behind a group of business students who were all carrying tablets. Clearly, you could see them swiping through what looked to be school photos.

Todoroki’s face filled the screen.

“Bankable.”

“Definitely bankable.”

“Oh yeah.”

“Without a doubt.”

“What angle would you go? Easiest would be the family line—”

“He’s the son of the number one hero, of course you play up family! Endeavor has some of the best deals around.”

“Harp on their relationship early. Like… now. Get them out and in the streets together, publicize their bond. Get the media and the tabloids talking about them and posting their pictures.”

“Endeavor did an estate walk through a few years back, didn’t he? Architectural Digest? Get the magazine to do a follow-up now that his son is in the hero business.”

“Yeah. Negotiate some kind of father-son deal. Merchandise, advertising, campaigns -- it doesn’t matter. I’m sure Endeavor’s guys would think the same thing. Talk about the number one hero being a family man. Good all around”

“I thought Todoroki didn’t like his dad? That’s what I heard some Class A kids say to the B’s at lunch last week.”

Three of the group members turned to look at the fourth, who had been the one to speak up. Eventually, one of them shrugged.

“Does it really matter? We’re talking about some pictures, not a documentary.”

The last kid made a face that said, ‘fair enough.’ Then, collectively they all swept left and focused on a student who was covered in a thick layer of hair. Or fur. They were silent as they walked along and you watched one kid open his mouth, lifting a finger, before dropping it and furrowing his brows in second thought.

“Oh!” one kid exclaimed, having pulled up some sort of text document. “Genius IQ.”

“Play up the brains,” one kid said with a snap of his fingers. “Wild man hero in the streets, genius in the sheets.”

“Ugh, I don’t think that labeling will pass the first round go-over.”

“But that’s the right angle. ‘He isn’t just all hair, ladies and gentleman. This hero’s got smarts.’”

“Have him doing interviews, clip ’em and let them circulate online. Get people knowing that he’s intelligent.”
“Partner up with nonprofits that deal with science or curing cancer or something. Make him feel worldly--”

“Business class.” A breath tickled your ear. “They spend the festival making up pitches. for the wannabes”

You squeaked at the sudden voice and presence that had invaded your personal space, goosebumps erupting over your skin as you side-stepped with a horrified face at the…

All Might.

All Might was bent over, smiling at you with a lop-sided grin, humored by your breathy and shy reaction.

All Might.

He wasn’t himself, though. He was… thinner, wearing a form that was still virtually unknown to you.

Your surprise to his appearance was evident. As sweet as startling you was, he expected some sort of angry response for having snuck up on you and he waited for it to take form in your face. But your surprise lasted much longer than it was supposed to. His sharp amusement faded.

Then, he was scowling.

“Quit gawking, girl,” he snapped, standing upright and straightening his tie. He looked away, settling on a nearby television screen, as your brain jolted out of its fuzz.

Tie.

He was wearing a suit, you realized as your eyes drifted down to take everything in. Dark grey suit with a black tie and a white button-down--

When he looked back over, and found you eyeing his body, he realized approaching you had been an error.

With a roll of his eyes, he was walking away.

And, for some god awful reason, you were quickly walking after him, trying to catch up with his long, focused stride.

“You can’t blame me,” you said when you, steadily, fell in line with him. “It’s weird seeing you like this.”

His features darkened considerably and he glared at you out of the corner of his eye. You sighed, aware he was misconstruing your meaning as something mean.

“I’ve only seen you wear this… *look,* once,” you said with a gentle huff, gesturing to him with a flick of your wrist. Then you paused. “Frankly, I kind of forgot about it.”

It was a lie and he knew that. You knew he knew that. You hadn’t forgotten about his leaner form -- it had been an unforgettable revelation. You had simply… pretended you hadn’t seen it. Like, it was all some sort of messed up memory that you had deliriously made up. Sure, you knew you were right mind when you had been at the hospital. And you knew it was real because you could recall everything so vividly.
But... maybe it WAS all made up...

“Yagi,” you said suddenly and intense blue eyes were glued to you. You were earnestly looking at him with a friendly kind of face, glad his name came to you. “That’s it, right? Yagi. Yagi... To... Tona...”

He stopped abruptly while you kept on forward for a step-and-a-half, caught off guard by his move.

“I wanted a little scare,” he said, tilting his head, his face the picture of a growing disinterest. “I got what I wanted. Now, go away.”

Rather than touch on what his real motivations were for dismissing you (and you had a sad idea of what they were), you opted to ignore it. To overlook how your interaction started entirely.

You inhaled deeply, feeling your shoulders as they lifted while your chest expanded. And, after an equally as deep exhale, you looked back at him.

“Midoriya?” you asked.

At hearing the boy’s name, Yagi’s eyes instinctively drifted around your general area, curious to see if there were any eavesdroppers that would tie the boy’s name to his.

Until he caught himself.

He was an unknown.

Habits were hard to break.

Your feelings were perfectly encapsulated in your tone, he recognized, the ‘why him?’ you were asking. He had wondered when it was that you realized the boy was participating in the festival. At some point, after he caught sight of you in the stands, he watched from his seat as your general disinterest shifted over to riveted concern. He just wasn’t sure when the change had happened. And, though he was too caught up in the boy’s win to glance your way in the moment, eventually he had. Though the distance between the two of you had been sizable enough that he couldn’t read your face as well as he would have liked, he caught on to your general mood. The buzzing smile you had been sporting as you watched the field, clearly looking in the direction of the boy.

The corners of his small frown tilted upward. What was coming out of him was pride. All the emotions he had kept to himself during the race as he watched Midoriya stand-out in a memorable moment, came out. He had someone to share them with.

“He won,” Yagi said, baring his teeth the more his wicked smile grew, blue eyes on fire.

Without thinking, your body released a soft laugh on its own accord, drawn in by his radiating triumph. You were shaking your head, staring off to the side, unable to keep your own amazed smile from breaking through. The kid had beaten odds that you didn’t even know were against him.

“Yeah,” you said with an exhale, meeting and holding the villain's gaze. “That... was something else, wasn’t it?”

Chapter End Notes
Part one of sports festival, baby. Big things will be happening soon and the sports festival is just the segue in. It'll most likely end next chapter and be a two-parter as opposed to a three but sometimes I ignore my outline and just... do my own thing.

Wait until Yagi gets a load of Bakugou fighting though 😅

Thank you for being wonderful people who STILL read this fic despite how different it's become since I first started writing it. I owe you my life and I hope you still find it interesting lmao. I can promise you something, though: *way* more Yagi/Art interactions going forward!
Although he didn’t extend any kind of invitation, you ended up following Yagi to what you quickly realized was an open-faced private box sandwiched between the middle and upper levels.

He didn’t bother to hold the door for you as he walked inside but he also didn’t express any irritation at you having tagged along, which you took as a good sign. All Might, Yagi, whatever he wanted to call himself, wasn’t one to just… pretend to be nice if he didn’t want or need to be.

Well, pretend to be nice around you, at least.

A sobering compliment, perhaps?

… You quickly closed the door behind you.

There were two short rows of empty seats (actual seats, not the concrete benches given to the masses) that appeared untouched and that Yagi ignored, heading toward the front of the box. It was obvious from the pristineness of the surroundings that he was the sole occupant, which only added to the list of questions you had about his life outside of what you knew.

*How did he get a box at a hero school event?*

You took a seat someways down from him as there was trash from a half-eaten bento on the chair beside him. Still, he didn’t so much as glance your way.

It was… a strange situation to be in.

His thin features were as sharp as you remembered, slyly stealing a glance out of the corner of your eye as you pretended to stare off out of the box. In your memories, you could see him glaring at you from the other side of the hospital room. Yes, that was *All Might* that night.

You hadn’t made anything up.

Anger and a general unhappiness weren’t radiating off of him, as they had been during your first meeting, though. He seemed much more neutral as he surveyed all the life happening outside your little world.

Well, he was scowling in a loose-lipped frown that revealed a bit of teeth, but his face looked… relaxed. There was no pull to his cheeks or chin -- he wasn’t making that face on purpose.

You grew a little more emboldened with your staring, eyes trailing down his long throat to his comically-oversized dark suit.

He was… an absolute stranger in his lean form. Burnt remnants of what was once a blazing fire. The only thing you recognized was that, if he didn’t sit with such a hunch, he would have All Might’s height.

Everything else was different. Completely, totally, utterly different.

The silence between you was heavy and noticeable. Too many things hung in the air, both past and present, that ruined silence and the longer no words were exchanged, the more apparent those
feelings became. Obviously, you were the one to follow him but... you didn’t want to be the one to speak first.

Mostly because you didn’t know what to say.

What could you say?

The chit-chat the two of you shared by the food stalls moments earlier hadn’t been much of a conversation but it had been the first time the two of you had spoken. No insults, no threats, no innuendos, no terms of work, no reminders of stormier weather. Only simple words and earnest reactions that had been genuine enough to move you into a calmer state of mind.

The awkwardness wasn’t being forced on you, however. You had chosen to sit with him by your own volition and your brain was working overtime to come up with a decent explanation as to why you were staying. Surely, following him wasn’t a good look on you and your supposed hatred of the man--

*He had been worried about you.*

… You could spare a couple of more minutes with him, right? His little sidekick had just erupted into the sports festival’s lead -- it was exciting. You wanted to feel that connection. You wanted to be part of the moment, not just an outsider observing it.

Midoriya was on the tip of your tongue but you felt your mouth shut once your ego sent out a reminder that you didn’t want to be the one to break the silence.

Right.

You relaxed the hands you had unconsciously balled, inhaled softly and shifted to sit cross-legged, rubbing your thighs absentmindedly, opting to put on your own mask of nonchalance. It was quieter in the box, you noticed, as your eyes traveled across the sections of stands you could see and the honeybees buzzing within them. Nothing in your vision was obscured -- a short wall was all that separated your seat from a several-foot drop down to the level beneath you.

Directly ahead of you, on the same level, was the commentator's box. Even from your distance, you could see the distinct silhouette of Present Mic moving within it as he spoke to a darker, hunched mass -- that Eraserhead hero, you assumed.

Knowing where the box was, you attempted to use it as a landmark to triangulate where yours and Fourth’s seats were, scanning the ends of the rows of the upper levels, trying to find familiar heroes, if not your hero.

The blond beside you cast you a disinterested look.

“I didn’t give you an invitation to bother me.”

He was right. You felt a distinct warmth traveling up the back of your neck -- a wave of soft embarrassment at his seemingly unintentional call-out.

Down below, on the field, is where you firmly kept your gaze focused. You knew that the redness you felt would spread to your face if you made the mistake of looking at him.

Facilities men were taking apart Midnight’s stage. The feeds of the race had cut to black and some sort of cartoon white mouse-creature, dressed in business attire, was dancing below a block of bold text that said, 'Be Right Back!'
The students were still on the field though, and it wasn’t hard to pick Midoriya out now that you had the knowledge to look for him. He was surrounded by a grouping of classmates who had broken up into smaller sub-factions. Midoriya’s group wasn’t the largest but it was one of them. In fact, he and his friends were all turned and shouting happily to a spiky red-haired kid who was laughing and answering back.

“How’d you find him?” you asked, overcome by a strange wave of something you couldn’t quite put your finger on. It wasn’t sadness that hung heavy over your soul but it was definitely related. A cousin, perhaps. Lost potential. “A hero student, All Might? Really?”

He stared at you before he answered with a frown. “Yagi.”

His voice was low and firm as he not-so-subtly instructed you the proper way of addressing him. You glanced over to him, meeting his gaze.

*The blue of his eyes was really something.*

It was also your first connection to a piece of distracting familiarity.

You clicked your tongue. “Yagi,” you repeated, for him. “Yagi.”

Intense eyes remained on you for several more seconds before his frown increased its pull and he crossed his arms, slouching back in his chair, returning to watching the activity below.

After several more minutes of silence, you came to the conclusion that he was not going to give you the satisfaction of an answer… but it wasn’t a subject you were prepared to drop. The truth was, Midoriya was about the only subject you felt comfortable talking about. The only subject the two of you could talk about, apparently.

Plus… that feeling was still there, eating away at you.

“He has friends, you know,” you pointed out softly. A round-faced brunette was pumping her fists in the air as a bashful Midoriya glanced away, hiding behind his hands. Even someone like Yagi must be able to see the boy had developed bonds in the few short weeks following the start of the school year.

“That’s *his* mistake,” was grunted at you and you rolled your eyes.

“What’s the plan you guys have, hm?” You tilted your head in his direction. “Are you going to make him turn around and screw over all of his--”

“I am not *making* him do any of this,” Yagi snapped with an unhappy curl of his lip. “*He* made this decision all on his own.”

“So, what did you do? Bring out a contract and have him sign loyalty to you in blood? Did he promise to live a life busting heads in the future in exchange for… *dark knowledge*?”

In his smaller form, there was something a bit more sinister to All Might’s appearance. You blamed his elongated, skinny frame and the gauntness of his face -- he looked like a walking skeleton, a Grim Reaper, a baggily-dressed Lucifer lurking in the shadows ready to cut deals and sign away souls.

But you also knew from experience being suave wasn’t All Might’s forte. Deep down, he was still that oversized bull in a china shop with a lack of tack--
So his little look at your sarcasm had your brows dipping questioningly.

“That’s not too far off,” he chuckled, leaning in toward you and flashing a toothy smile that grew larger when your look of disbelief grew more pronounced. “You better relax the muscles in your face, sweetheart. You’re going to give yourself some ugly wrinkles.”

“Besides,” he added, looking away from you and surveying the crowds of the stadium after a beat. “What’s it matter to you?”

“He’s a kid, All— Yagi,” you stressed. A voice of reason to the villain. The voice of reason. “He’s making a big decision at an age he shouldn’t be. He has his whole life ahead of him.”

“Well, aren’t you a pillar of morality.”

You winced at the venom in his voice and pointedly glanced to the other side of the room when you sensed his face burning back in your direction. He crossed a leg, resting his ankle on his knee and letting his foot bob aggressively.

“I’m not,” you admitted after a thick swallow, forcing yourself to look back at him. “But, let’s be honest here, at least I was old enough to drink when I made the choices that I did.” You scoffed, looking back down at your thighs. Rubbing them. “Didn’t live with my parents either,” you added under your breath.

Yagi rested an arm behind his chair as he considered you coolly.

And then--

He was laughing.

Immediately you thought he was making fun of you, laughing at you, and whatever cordiality you had built up with the man crumbled. You went to stand, to leave--

“I like when you talk back,” he cooed, tapering off into a low chuckle to himself, unaware your ass was hovering about a half-inch off the cushion of your chair. “I’ve missed you having a personality.”

There was silence after that.

He was oblivious to how close you had been to leaving, still grinning lopsidedly to himself as he stared off into space.

You...

Settled back into your chair.

It wasn’t… nice, what he said, you thought as you sat in a stunned kind of silence. Regardless, you felt your face grow hot all the same because, although it wasn’t nice, there was some kind of affection there behind his words that made you terribly uncomfortable but also rooted your feet to the ground.

He had been worried about you.

You cursed your thoughts.

“Well…”
You… didn’t actually have something to say, for some reason your felt compelled to speak away whatever was dancing in the air around you. And only you, as he looked otherwise nonplussed.

“Can’t blame me for acting the way I do around you …” you ended up grumbling, watching in your peripheral vision for his reaction. Waiting for his reaction.

The bobbing of his leg stopped.

He was back to frowning out into the world, the echoes of laughter on his face having been chased away by your insinuation.

Then he moved to rolling his ankle, brows furrowing and grim face set. You heard the appendage begin to click after several rotations.

If Yagi was going to say something to you, the opportunity was cut short when a small blond mustache suddenly appeared on the screens of the stadium, causing much of the dull murmuring to peter out. Heavy breathing reverberated from an army of hidden speakers.

“There,” Mic screeched triumphantly, dropping back down on his chair and staring directly into the camera. “The quality should be much better. Mucho mejor!” He smiled dumbly for a bit, whistling and thumbing through the papers in front of him, before perking up. “Oi, Eraser, beers after this?”

Laughter rose from the stands as it became clear it was a ‘hot mic’ situation -- he didn’t know the feeds had been turned back on.

Aizawa was peering out of the box and it looked like his eyes were looking up.

“Midnight drinks like a fish so she’ll come,” Mic said, adding a head bob to a beat only he could hear. “Think Vlad will come? You still got Joke’s number, right? He’ll come if you invite--”

“It’s recording, you know,” Eraserhead droned with a sigh. When he caught Mic’s confused look, he rubbed at his eyes. “The camera. It’s on.”

Mic blinked back to staring into the lens of the device in front of him.

“Oh yeah, listeners! Are you ready for part two of this killer show!?”

The sudden loudness of his voice made you, and countless others, jump. There was no transition or moment of surprise -- he immediately fell back into his role as an announcer, grabbing for the microphone and pointing into the camera.

“Forty brave wannabies have pulled themselves away from the pack and will move on to the second round of our famed Yuuei Sports Festival. These stars-in-the-making have much more to prove to you, though -- and they’re going to NEED that fire. You thought the first round was tough? No amount of rehearsal could have prepared them for what this show has in store. But don’t just take my word for it, listeners. Yuuei’s drinking queen will update your playlist with the latest track!”

You checked your phone -- aside from a flurry of notifications regarding the likes the pictures you posted had received, there was nothing else waiting for you. No texts asking where you were, no phone calls--

“Won’t you be missed?”

Yagi’s voice was like velvet as he cooed the question at you, obviously sensing your lack of urgency
when it came to leaving. A heavy dollop of guilt landed on your shoulders at his acknowledgment though, and you sighed, nodding and placing your phone back into your pocket.

“Yeah, I should head back.”

You didn’t see the smugness plummet off his face at your concession.

He hadn’t expected you to agree.

Or stand up.

Or head to the back of the box, toward the door.

He uncrossed his leg, turning in his seat as he watched you go. You would have assumed his glower was directed at you but that would have been partially incorrect -- it had been brought on by his misreading of… you and he could have kicked himself for having pointed out your choice of company.

His bluff had been called.

He didn’t like the fact that he had even bluffed to begin with.

At the same time, he couldn’t help it, the compulsion he had to direct your attention to… choosing him.

Goddammit.

Could he… force you to… sit back down?

“Midoriya Izuku, who placed first in the qualifier, is worth ten million points!”

Suddenly you were very unimportant.

The man’s thin face whipped back to the field and he leaned onto the wall in front of his seat, craning his neck forward to double-check that he had heard everything correctly.

He had.

Midoriya had found himself in possession of a ten million point band.

“What!”

You were back at the front of the box, also leaned against the barrier as you looked at the updated rankings to show the default point values the students had been given. Bakagou, who had been in third, possessed 200 points. Todoroki, in second, had 205.

And first place Midoryia had ten million.

Ten million.

“Second place has 205!” You cried at Yagi, jabbing a hand out toward the field as if the point distribution had been his doing. The older man pinched the bridge of his nose. “That doesn’t even make sense! Ten million!”

“They want to make him a target,” he grumbled, watching as the students were given fifteen minutes to create their teams.
Both of your eyes settled on Midoriya who suddenly was very alone. The peers he had been speaking with moments earlier had all but abandoned him.

He was a social leper.

“This is... bullshit,” you snapped, throwing yourself back in your chair and crossing your arms in a huff. “Ten million points to 205? Everyone is going to be going after him!”

“Probably,” All Might agreed as he watched over Midoryia’s... drafting skills. A guardian angel in the stands.

Course, he was nowhere close to being one.

“This will be good for him,” Yagi said, voicing his thoughts as his eyes narrowed, plans and possibilities forming. “He’ll be on the defense. Teams will all be coming after him.”

“So he can run!” You offered, perking up.

Don’t go for any other headbands, just work on keeping what he had. How long was the match?

You looked around to see if a timer had been shown.

Your suggestion, however, wasn’t received kindly -- All Might made a disgusted face.

“He’s not going to run, he can’t run,” he snapped. If you didn’t know any better, you would have said he was a little offended. “He’s going to need to outmaneuver.”

Outmaneuver.

Did... he... comprehend... synonyms?

“Sounds an awful lot like running to me,” you said.

All Might cast a quick glare your way but didn’t say anything more.

The round-faced girl from earlier was apparently Midoriya’s first teammate -- all others he had approached had completely shunned him but the girl had actively sought him out. You thought it was sweet and All Might made a grumbly sort of sound, as if he was wary of the boy’s first pick.

Once Midoriya’s tears started up, however, you both recoiled.

“All Might,” you groused, perturbed again about Modriya’s... softness. He was crying. Crying! And he was supposed to be a villain!? Trained by mister big bad? There’s no crying in villainy! He was out of his league. “All Might! All Might, he’s a kid! A kid! He needs to be a normal teenager!”

“The name, girl,” the man snarled back. “What did I say about my name?”

The last thing on your mind was hiding All Might’s alter-ego. You dropped your shoulders and gave him a distressed look, frustrated and distraught over the fact that the use of his moniker was what pulled a reaction from him, not your concerns over protecting a kid’s innocence.

Sensing what you were feeling, his face slackened into a gaunt, black glower.

“He came to me, sweetheart,” he drawled. “Young Midoriya approached me. You need to get it out of your head that I stole him out of his bed or something. The boy you’re so keen on protecting was the one who started our little deal.”
The nihility of his triangular, shadowed face made his eyes seem scorching in comparison. Yagi didn’t snarl or yell or speak in any sort of angry way--

He was telling you **facts**.

You shifted your jaw back and forth, pulling your face away to the twosome on the field who worked to grow their numbers.

All Might was many things... but he wasn’t much of a liar.

“You could have... said no,” you told the stadium.

You heard shifting coming from his direction.

“I could have,” he conceded after several seconds.

So there was something in Midoriya that interested the villain as well. Drew him in enough that he would take the kid on as a student.

“And you could still let him go.”

Another moment of silence passed between you before the villain released a deep, raspy breath.

“No.” He said.

There was obvious finality of his words. The ‘no’ had been inflexible. Unyielding. A no, period.

A mixture of thoughts flooded your mind, the biggest being the final understanding that you were an outsider in their relationship. It’s not like you knew either of the parties well, anyway. Midoriya was a stranger and All Might...

You cast a quick look over to where he stood, impassively staring down onto the green.

*Tall and thin.*

*A ghoul.*

He was a stranger too, wasn’t he?

If you saw him in the street, there would be no doubt that you would sneak looks at him, appalled and interested in how a living human could look so... *dead.*

And you had clearly pegged the teenager wrong, hadn’t you? Jumped the gun too quickly on a person you had just met. The feelings of innocence and naivety bundled within you regarding Midoriya were being overpowered by a new feeling.

“How long have you been working with Midoriya?” you bothered to ask. All Might considered your question, his tongue passing across the backs of his teeth as he debated whether or not to answer.

“A year,” he estimated.

“Before or after...” *You broke my heart.* “... we parted ways?”

You could feel him looking at you. *“After.”*

You nodded.
An entire year.

An entire year of chances the kid had to escape.

Midoriya…

Midoriya was probably an idiot.

Speaking of which…

A familiar figure was speaking with the twosome – someone you had been expecting to see but hadn’t caught a glimpse of yet. Apparently, the teenager was prone to making bad deals with bad people.

You groaned, slinking down in your chair as All Might watched on curiously.

“He’s… he’s picked Hatsume,” you said, looking to the heavens before reaching for your phone so you could contact your boss.

Supposedly, Power Loader was out there in the crowd too.

“Who’s the girl?” Yagi asked, leaning forward in his seat to get a better view of what was occurring. The cavalry match was in full swing and the teams of students had amalgamated into carriers of ‘riders.’ Most of the abominations of limbs were chasing after Midoriya’s team, who had been doing a very good job of ‘outmaneuvering.’

A weak vibration reached your ears and you caught sight of the screen of your phone lighting up with a notification of another text message – six were waiting for you in total, undoubtedly all from Power Loader.

The tinkerer was blowing your phone up, giving you a play-by-play of his thoughts as the match progressed. It had gotten to the point where you had cast your phone aside, onto an empty seat, just to take a little break.

It wasn’t that you were averse to texting him, you just didn’t know you were going to open a Pandora’s Box with your innocent, “Hatsume’s on the number one’s team, huh?” message.

Also, you watched to watch the game.

“Hatsume,” you said, assuming he was talking about the pink-haired girl. She was the only one you knew on the ‘Dream Team’ other than the green-haired hero of the hour. “Worked in our office over the summer. Smart but…”

You trailed off, not quite sure what word would be correct enough to describe the complexity that was Hatsume.

“She’s an inventor?”

“Yeah. Has a mind like a diamond. If she doesn’t go full mad scientist she’ll probably be one of the best in the world.” You hesitated, memories of her entering your mind. “…Probably.”

Midoriya’s crew had launched themselves up into the air, evading a series of attacks, and were floating lazily toward the other end of the field as their attackers quarreled beneath them.

How they were floating had yet to be addressed but obviously some quirk was at play.
“Still surrounding yourself with heroes, it seems,” he said after a few minutes of silence.

Goddamn, he couldn’t keep it in, could he?

Fury sparked up in your soul over his stupid comment.

Of course you were -- you worked with heroes. He knew that. And sure, he spoke matter-of-factly about your working situation as if he were neutral about it, but one listless remark didn't erase the bad blood you had regarding that topic.

Why was he so fixated on that aspect of your life?

Still so jealous?

“Yep,” you said loud and clear, popping your lips on the ‘p.’ “Dating one too.”

The last part of your sentence had been a little dig you had tacked on there, assuming the worst of him. A reminder of what he already knew. He didn’t look at you but you watched as his Adam’s apple bobbed and his jaw tightened.

He peeked at you out of the corner of his eye.

He was absolutely planning on striking back, little witch. All he did was make an observation as part of a conversation, to goad you into talking more, and you were the one with… sass.

You were tense, though, appearing upset even though he hadn’t said a damn thing to upset you.

Oh… the need to win the conversation was there…

He exhaled through his nose a surprisingly long breath, flexing his hands.

“I’ve noticed, kitten,” he said thickly, forcing his voice out through clenched teeth before beaming your way.

You found yourself recoiling back at the unhinged look he was giving you. He looked so… nefarious with his gauntness, wild hair and sharp eyes as he smiled at you. Upon seeing your startled reaction, his smile dropped off his face in a sudden, relaxing motion. He looked on tiredly for a moment longer before sitting straight and returning his attention to the match.

You…

Followed suit.

Crazy man.

Although Midoriya supposedly was the one who Yagi was solely interested in, the boy refused to do anything… well, interesting. So far his game tactic was to avoid any sort of conflict by floating away to safety whenever he was attacked, which wasn’t a stupid idea…

But he looked more like a fearful shrew than a shrewd competitor.

And the longer the match dragged on, the more Yagi felt his already-simmering irritation pick up its intensity.

The deafening silence of the box didn’t help matters, either.
The boy could blow away half the field into the stands in a display of power if he wanted to! Make himself known. Leave a mark on his competition. What had you suggested, he was going to use a ‘run-away’ tactic?

You had been right, that was exactly what the boy was doing: running away.

There was a difference between out-maneuvering and running away. Overmanuvering suggested someone was engaged in a fray, ducking and dodging instead of outright laying into their opponent. Playing, All Might always considered it.

He could win right away or... he could drag his victory out a little longer. Give a show to the news crews that always flocked to the scene. Something for them to loop repeatedly on the evening news, embarrassing the hero he was facing.

Honestly, there were a handful of heroes out in the world that could cause damage if he ever let his guard slip. The biggest being, of course, Endeavor...

His eyes flickered to where he had seen the flaming hero in the crowd earlier in the day. He was partially obscured in the middle section, brooding toward the back, the flames of his costume and beard casting a dull orange glow that even Yagi could see from his distance. A costume you had helped design. When he had first made an appearance, at the start of the first match, the crowd surrounding him had been interested in the supposed ‘greatness’ that stood behind them.

Interest had apparently waned.

Or no one wanted to approach the lemon-faced fire crotch.

One of the hero’s misplaced loads was running around the field -- the boy with the fucked-up face. Ever the ‘family man,’ the hero must have wanted to make an appearance.

Yagi scratched at his chin, looking for the telltale two-colored mess of hair that marked Endeavor’s son. It just so happened that a camera was pointed at the runt, giving Yagi a clear view of what he wanted to see -- the telltale scarring of scalded flesh...

Unconcerned with whatever other domestic skeletons were hidden beneath the floorboards of the Endeavor household, he returned to observing the flame-hero from a distance.

The villain could wipe the floor with Endeavor, he thought, decidedly firm in his assessment. There was zero doubt of his superiority in everything.

Everything.

But, in more recent years, there had been... less-than-ideal circumstances where he occasionally couldn’t fight the hero as directly as he wanted.

The fistfights that would bring down buildings had become less frequent. In fact, he noted with a sinking feeling of dissatisfaction, there had been nothing recent. Only cat-and-mouse games designed to drive the hero up a wall and remind him who was lurking out in the wide world, waiting.

He never ran away though. Even if he was holding back hacks of blood, or extending his form past his limit, he never ran away. He outmaneuvered. He engaged and toyed with the number one hero enough to make the fire of his suit go white with rage and driving him to the point where his attacks became harsher and more frenzied.

And then he would disappear.
He was a fox outwitting a farmer’s dog.

_That was out-maneuvering._

He had no equals, that god-mentality was reminding him, and All Might felt a familiar swell grow in his chest as he basked in the bestowed title of the Symbol of Discord. In fact, he had to actually taper the feelings he was experiencing, otherwise he ran the risk of accidentally bursting into his larger half.

_He was the best._

But a very specific memory was bothering him. A dose of reality he didn’t want to acknowledge but had a tendency to materialize in his thoughts anyway. If he was truly the best… he wouldn’t have needed you to interfere in the situation in the alley.

It had been what, _weeks_? For all intents and purposes, he had outwardly moved on…

But that was far from the truth.

There were conflicting feelings rattling around in his empty gut on how that night played out. The self-described stench of failure that clung to him. Had the attack occurred _years_ ago, he would have murdered that blood-obsessed mosquito easily.

_It wasn’t years ago, though._

_*A show of power to you turned into a clear display of weakness instead._*

Eyes fixated on Midoriya.

He was _surrounded_ by weakness.

“I want you to know something, sweetheart,” Yagi hummed, tar-like pride compelling him to speak up. He ignored your quizzical look, hooking his ankle back over his knee, glaring at where Endeavor stood. Where the _number one hero_ stood. “That freak with the knife… I could have _killed_ him if I wanted to.”

His eyes narrowed, the tar seemingly leaving a taste in his mouth.

“I could have torn him in half. Crushed him into the ground like the bug he was.” Hard blue eyes met yours. “That’s why I ‘didn’t care,’” he sneered. “There was nothing _worth_ caring about.”

_Liar._

You were clearly confused, having no insight into why the man suddenly spouted that at you or what he was talking about.

_Liar_, that voice in his head crooned louder.

_Weakness, embarrassment, anger…_  

_There were a variety of reasons he seemingly acted the callous way he did, wasn’t there?_  

He tried to silence _that_ voice.

_His little plan at appearing disinterested in you had backfired, hadn’t it?_
A blanket of electricity that danced across a good portion of the field jolted him from the hold his conscious had on his thoughts.

No.

*He was the best there was. The best there is.* And as he looked at Midoriya, scampering away from another chance at showing greatness, he realized once more that, *he was the best there ever will be.*

Just like that, Yagi’s mood plummeted.

And he was forced to reckon with the fact that his protege was a weak-spined failure and that everything he had built would die with him.

Midoriya was a mistake.

Meanwhile, you were working to wrap your head around his weird little outburst. You had finally caught on to what he was going off about: the run-in with Stain. It wasn’t that you thought the two of you had moved beyond it -- hardly, his failures still hung heavy in your mind -- but the middle of the sports festival was not where you expected to have the Talk.

Well, you didn’t expect to have the conversation anywhere, if you were going to be honest.

“You don’t make sense,” you grumbled, ignoring the temperature change of the room as he fell into obvious sulking.

What he was sulking about? You had no idea.

Was it because you didn’t like him anymore?

“First you swing me around like a gym bag even though I am, literally, bleeding out,” you said, looking at your hands as you aired, and counted, your grievances on your fingers. “Then you act like I wasn’t in any danger. Then you tell me you only cared about my busted head. **Now** you’re back to saying you didn’t care.” You snorted. “Do you have a Jekyll and Hyde kind of quirk or something? Are you two people in one?”

He made a face.

“It would explain your mood swings,” you added when he didn’t otherwise speak up.

And then, you saw an opportunity to take a chance for the sake of knowledge.

“What is your deal, anyway? This… look.” You found yourself pausing to swallow, something in your conscious still aware of the shaky ground you were on. “Does it… have to do with… you know, your… scar?”

You flinched away as soon as you spoke the words.

What were you expecting him to do? Flip his lid? Stand and erupt? Snap at you? Lash out?

You expected *something* from him.

Anger wasn’t what he held onto though. Tiredly he fixed you with a cold look before exhaling a long breath through his nose, appearing to lose whatever bluster he had been holding onto.

“Yeah,” he grumbled after a bit, quiet enough. “It *does.*”
The answer... caught you by surprise even though you had expected as much. Things in your 'relationship,' if it could be called that, were being reframed. Personality quirks of his were suddenly making much more sense. Why he acted the way he did.

To shift from someone so strong to...

His confirmation didn’t excuse anything that he did but...

A strange sensation traveled down along your spine making you physically shift in your seat.

... For some reason, you felt vulnerable for him.

And a little worm that had been buried in your heart woke up.

Without warning, a wall of fire erupted from somewhere below, passing the exterior face of your box before dissipating into nothing in the blue of the bright sky. The blond hell-demon from earlier was in the middle of what could be described as a borderline-nuclear reaction. Someone, somewhere, had sparked his ire and suddenly loud, guttural shouting was diverting attention --

A series of explosions rattled off again, some passing near your seats in an updraft, bringing with a wall of heat that made your hair flutter.

“Looks like some members of Class B’s hero course have cornered Class A’s Bakugou! Think he can get out of this mess, Eraser?!”

“Don’t ask me.”

Mic looked at his cohost unhappily, displeased by the lack of banter.

Eraserhead was unmoved.

Bakugou, it appeared, had lost his point headband, plunging his team toward the bottom of the rankings screen. They tied four other teams for last place. For those focused on the particular struggles of his team, however, there was no moment of heartbreak for the teenagers’ loss.

A thick air of spite was swirling around Bakugou. It was quite clear from the close-up camera feeds that the boy was shaking -- and it wasn’t because he was upset.

He was enraged.

Fury. Violence. Anger. Hatred. Strong emotions were coming from the teen as he propelled himself off of his teammates' shoulders and rocketed toward the poor sap that had stolen his point headband.

The idea of meeting the Class A hero in a clash was abandoned once the B’s caught sight of his mania. Running was the option they chose, ignoring the irritated cries of their supposed ‘captain’ who they carried on their shoulders. Bakugou’s team trailed behind, desperate to catch their classmate before he touched the ground and pushed them into the realm of disqualification.

You switched your attention back to Midoriya, who had fallen into his own pickle as the clock counted down and the teams became more desperate to secure their places in the final round. Something had happened when you weren’t paying attention -- the floating had stopped. They were
running haphazardly away from a stampede of their competition.

After the fifteenth time Mic screeched ‘Bakugou,’ recognition flashed in Yagi’s mind on who the teenager was.

Bakugou.

Baka-goat.

He dragged his hands up and down his face before he watched the second-placer with new eyes. That was the boy who Midoriya had taken on as an unintended rival. The kid who Yagi had consistently attempted to goad Midoriya into physically harming.

The comparisons between the two were disgustingly stark.

Bakugou had the temperament All Might wished Midoriya possessed. The kid’s earlier spectacle came to mind -- at the start of the games when he made his pledge to be the best. Midoriya had stolen that crown away from him, hadn’t he? During the first round. Ruined the opportunity for the kid to completely blow away his competition and walk away with a home run.

With that chance at a perfect score broken, Bakugou was not about to be outdone.

Especially if his… dislike of Midoriya ran as deeply as his protege believed.

Yagi watched the blond deliver a swift kick to the face of the Class B idiot, reclaiming his team’s point band in the process and stealing away the thief’s as well.

“He won’t win,” Yagi declared to you. The fired-up Bakugou had set his sights on Midoriya, who was in the middle of a confrontation with Endeavor’s son.

He saw a trait burning in Bakugou that put his successor to shame -- viciousness.

If the two were to face one another, he had no doubt who would walk away victorious.

“Who won’t win?” you quacked, watching Midoriya’s team bypass another wall of ice. “Midoriya? All Might, the kid is doing great so far!”

You caught the name slip-up and cast a quick look at him but he hadn’t reacted -- apparently your gaffe hadn’t registered. But Midoriya had found a burst of energy in the last minutes of the competition. He was fired up and the close-ups of his face were revealing that same intentness as earlier.

“All he has to do is hold onto that headband for… " You checked the clock, heart squeezing when you saw what little time remained. "One more minute! All Might, he can do it!”

A minute was nothing!

You had an optimism All Might didn’t possess. He didn’t react when Midoriya launched an actual counter-attack: a torpedo of energy that obliterated a wall of ice--

But you did.

It was the first time you had seen a demonstration of what Midoriya’s quirk was.

The display had your jaw on the floor.
Midoriya had described his quirk to you, yes, when you had started designs of his costume but the visualizations you had came nowhere close to reality. You expected something more... natural. But the punch through the air was like the snapback from hydraulics failing; the crack of a steel cable splitting apart.

Too much power from a finger.

It wasn't natural.

No wonder he said his body fell apart when he used his quirk: how could someone be designed to contain something like that?

The adjustments you were making in your head about the design disappeared just as you reached for your phone to write them down. In that same handful of seconds, the point headband was gone.

It had been snatched away from a mind-numbingly quick dash from Todoroki’s entourage. Horrified and stunned, you watched mid-action the ranking board. Midoryia’s team plummeted to the bottom and, as it did so, the ten million points disappeared in a blur of decreasing digits.

“Mistake,” Yagi spat.

You weren’t sure if he was saying Midoriya made a mistake or was a mistake and you didn’t get a chance to ask -- you tore your gaze away from the field for a split-second to catch Yagi standing to, assumedly, leave.

“Where are you going?” you asked, confounded. “There’s still time!”

It felt like an overstatement, though. The match had entered the last seconds and it didn’t seem possible that there could be an actual reaction in such a small window of time. Hell, could someone even think that quickly in such a high-pressured situation?

It didn’t help matters that the boy from earlier, the mean-looking one, was flying in Midoriya’s direction.

But All Might’s successor was planning on something. Ablaze on his face was something forceful. The same look he wore when he had propelled himself into first place during the race. That… drive. Had All Might not been by the door, he may have caught it shining on the screens.

He also could have witnessed Midroyia’s last-minute triumph firsthand.

Honestly, you don’t know where the kid found the time to turn, charge and reclaim the headband. As someone who worked with twisting time, you expected a quirk like yours was at play. Somehow, someway, a student had extended the seconds for Midoriya. Unfortunately, the world had limits and bending time for an entire stadium of people was beyond a possibility for a normal human.

Course, you didn’t give two shits about reality. Once Midoriya had ripped back his points from Team Todoroki, you were out of your chair. Some type of strangled yell escaped you -- that sound, plus Mic's screaming and the general roar that arose from the audience at the move, drew a surprised All Might back inside the box.

You hadn’t realized he had actually left.

“He got it!” You were repeating to the villain, over and over, as you gestured to the field. Anxiety and excitement were twisting into a disgusting feeling that had your insides trembling.
It was chaos down below as the competitors attempted to comprehend the harsh ending to the game. No one, it seems, had heard Present Mic's warnings for time so his sudden "GAME OVER!" had more than one time stumbling to the grass. Midoriya and his... crew, stunned and sweating, were shakily disassembling and were trying to catch their breaths. Todoroki seemed stunned.

Bakugou, Yagi noticed, had thrown himself into a tantrum.

He drew his mouth into a thin line

It wasn’t that he was about to renounce his naysaying ways, but something akin to rekindled potential started up once more. Midoriya always found a way to surprise All Might, was this just another one of those situations?

The… warming up feeling was quickly dashed, however, when it became clear that Midoryia hadn’t stolen back the ten million or so point band.

The point band he clutched so tightly in his hands was only worth seventy points, the camera revealed.

He had failed.

The kid looked absolutely stricken at the turn of events.

“Idiot,” All Might seethed while all the gusto you had built up so suddenly left your body in one great wave, leaving you feeling rather deflated.

You fell back into your seat while the man beside you swore under his breath, shaking his head.

… Until it was revealed that the man-bird with the ghost had stolen his own points during the fray: Team Todoroki’s original six hundred and fifteen.

What a turn of events!

“They made it!” You breathed, a lightness traveling over you that made you dizzy. Hot, cold, hot -- you're body was built for the rollercoaster of stress you were facing. To your surprise, All Might didn’t seem the least bit relieved that Midoriya had managed to drag himself into the final round by the skin of his teeth.

“He failed. The bird is what saved him.”

“It was a team effort, All Might. He couldn’t have won alone.”

All Might was unmoved -- he still looked as if he had sucked on an entire bag’s worth of lemons. You glanced at him once. Twice. And by the third time you were annoyed.

Did he not see what he had?

“You’re blind,” you said, frustrated and annoyed at his negativity. His team won and he wasn't happy because Midoriya hadn't done it singlehandedly. An impossible action considering how the game was set up.

“What?” he snapped at you.

“This kid… did you not see him during the matches?” you asked, casting All Might a bewildered look. How could he be so obtuse? “He gets this look and BAM,” you chopped the air. “First place in
the race. Or steals a headband when there are only seconds left. Seconds!" You exhaled a laugh through your nose, becoming increasingly aware of the buzzing of your long-forgotten phone. “This kid is something special, honey bun. I don’t know about the whole villain plot you’ve got going on, but he’d make a damn fine hero…”

You trailed off, your attention shifting entirely to focus on something new.

Fourth was calling you.

“Shit,” you said, snatching the device up and standing. You didn’t catch All Might’s gaze as you answered the phone, stepping outside the box to take the call in the privacy of the crowds.

“Meatball!” You heard Fourth cry and you plugged your free ear to try and hear him over the people swarming the interior. “Where’d you go?”

Guilt swept through you.

Not so much over your choice of company... it was more that you had been missed.

“I ran into a friend and ended up watching the match with him,” you said. “I’m heading back now--”

“Nah, don’t bother, I actually gotta run--”

“What?”

You heard Fourth sigh. The phone crackled and you heard his muffled voice say something to someone else. Another shuffle and he was back.

“There’s a situation -- some bad guy action downtown. Rock Lock got the call and me and Brave were gonna go help him out since heroes are a little shorthanded today. Sorry, but I gotta go.”

You couldn’t blame him for leaving to handle an emergency, he was a hero after all. It wasn’t the first time an outing or a date had been cut short because he had to run off somewhere to help. That’s just the kind of person he was: a helper. But, as you looked at the swarm of happy, relaxed heroes walking by you, there was a part of you that was jealous that Fourth couldn’t be a little more… selfish.

Did they really need three heroes at the scene?

“I don’t think I’ll be back before the end of the festival,” you heard him say, retroactively realizing he had smothered the receiver once more to talk to someone else before speaking. “You okay to stay? Or to leave?”

“Yeah, that’s fine,” you sighed, leaning against the wall beside you, staring at the gouges within the concrete. “You can go. I’ll probably hang out… for another round or whatever. It’s gotten really exciting.”

“Okay good, I may have already stepped out…” He gave an awkward laugh before sighing himself. “Sorry meatball, I wanted today to be fun.”

“It was,” you said hollowly.

“... I’ll call you later, alright?”

“Yeah, sounds good.”
It didn’t help that your mind and your heart were quarreling as you continued to stand, taking the time to read through the messages from Power Loader you had ignored. You couldn’t logically fault Fourth for running off to play hero but damn if you did.

There was a debate on whether you wanted to return to All Might or not. For some reason, you felt defeated and you didn’t doubt that the man would somehow be able to smell it on you...

Well, you couldn't dip out entirely -- your purse was still inside the box.

When you opened the door, you found yourself face-to-chest with the villain. The situation shouldn’t have caught you by surprise -- it seemed to be a running theme. Yet, it did. You staggered back, startled by his unexpected appearance.

All Might snorted at your jump of fright.

“I’m not some yokai,” he spat.

It took you a second to catch on to what he was implying.

“I didn’t expect you to be standing at the door!” You explained, offended that he would think you were scared by his appearance and not his creep-level. You lifted your nose indignantly. “Trying to eavesdrop?”

“Yeah,” he said, unamused. “That’s what I was doing, stupid girl.”

You rolled your eyes at his sarcasm, rubbing your arms as if you were cold despite the fact it was a fairly warm spring day. All Might just stood, acting as if he was waiting for something.

“Did they announce the next game?” you asked, squeezing around him when he didn’t move, to return to your seat. You were surprised to the field was in disarray -- giant balls were being rolled out from the pits of the stadium by workers and student helpers, as were other game components like pinnies and flags.

“It’s the sports part of the sports festival, sweetheart,” All Might called, seeing your obvious confusion. “The matches won’t start up until they’re done.”

“Oh.”

You stood awkwardly, not quite sure what you wanted to do with yourself. How long were the games supposed to be? There was a difference between a headliner and an opener, did you want to sit around wasting time?

“Are you leaving?” you felt compelled to ask, gesturing to Yagi’s proximity to the door.

Immediately, you regretted the question; you sagged your shoulders at the grin that cut across his face.

“Kitten,” he crooned, looking entirely too self-satisfied. “What’s wrong? You don’t want me go?”

Rather than blush or get pissy at him, as expected, you deflated.

“Forget I asked.”

He watched you snatch up your purse from off an empty seat, slinging it over your head and across your shoulder. You popped your phone inside it.
“Finally going to go back to your hero?” he asked, still full of smirks and smugness though curiosity was also there.

You waited until you had maneuvered around him and back out the door, casting a cold look over your shoulder as he trailed behind you.

“He left me, actually,” you said. “To go respond to an emergency. I’m… I’m just gonna go home.”

There, the decision had been made. Without so much as a goodbye, you left. There was no used in you standing around, feeling like you were backpacking onto an event that wasn’t yours. It was supposed to be a fun date between you and Fourth but it felt more like a work mixer for him and that wasn’t your scene.

If you hurried, you could probably make it home before the last round started. It wasn’t just for the fun of it anymore -- you genuinely wanted to see more of Midoriya’s quirk in action. So much of your work would have to be scrapped but perhaps--

Your arm was grabbed.

You knew who it was when you stopped and turned. All Might appeared annoyed and you echoed the sentiment.

*Why was he irked? You were the one who was leaving.*

“How would you quit being so…” He made a growling sound in his throat, glaring. “*Sensitive.*”

“You’re the one being a dick,” you retorted, yanking your arm out of his grasp.

It looked like he was going to say something as he shifted his jaw. Then he was standing straight, unintentionally looming over you, looking across the heads of the hundreds of spectators that swirled around you. It was one of those moments where, despite being in such a heavily populated area, you felt privacy. There were so many people that no one would notice the two of you.

Actually, that wasn’t true -- you caught sight of a group that passed by look over their shoulders at Yagi before whispering to one another.

And then he was *squeezing* at the bridge of his nose, face scrunching up as if he was suddenly experiencing a migraine.

“All Might, if you’re going to--”

“*Stay.*” He finally hurled at you.

Stay.

You fell quiet, blinking up at him.

He looked like he was going to pop a blood vessel. *All* of his blood vessels.

He wanted you to stay.

He was *asking* you to stay.

‘*Say, “What?”*’ Your mind commanded, eager to force him to repeat himself.

*He had been worried about you.*
“Okay,” was what you said, instead.

You watched as your concession loosened the tightness in his face. Instead of angry, he was back to looking drained.

You simply… watched him.

“When does everything start back up?” You asked, the first to speak. He grumbled under his breath, adjusting his tie.

“An hour.”

You nodded, first to him and then to yourself as you broke eye contact to look at the world around you.

… **You didn’t know what to do.**

Thankfully, All Might did.

“Come on,” he grumbled, bumping into you as he suddenly started walking forward. “I’m hungry.”

You let him good several steps, brain still lagging, before you decided that **yes, you were going to stay after all.**

You jogged to catch up with his long stride.

“There was a karaage stand outside that looked good,” you suggested, receiving a grunt in response. You frowned at the floor.

You didn’t speak again until you were standing side-by-side in a crowded elevator.

“Did they say what the last match was?” You asked, wondering if you had missed the announcement when you had left your seat. Yagi perked up instantly, looking down at you in what could be called genuine excitement.

**“Fighting,”** he said, delighted.

Chapter End Notes

There was a reason he specifically said "stay"
If you can even remember how many chapters back that scene was lmao

Anyway, I hope you've all been manifesting greatness and that, for you in college, things aren't too crazy yet.

Things in the story have more or less been following canon but they may or may not change during the fighting portion. The villain attack didn't happen and All Might's not a hero that some people can associate Midoriya with. So relationships and, as a result, outcomes may change because of that.

The earlier matches, the outcomes were all Midoriya-driven, you know?

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shout stupid shit into the void and get excited when someone throws me a pity like 😐

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