You can't be a hero, they said
you're useless, they said
when one is pushed down all their life, the logical course of action would be to give up. And
Izuku was so god damn close to doing so. But he didn't. For better or worse (worse, a lot
might say, and Izuku might even agree, thought he could never quite bring himself to regret
it) his life changed.
So, Izuku looked back to all the people who told him he was useless, to the fate that seemed

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**Sucker Punch**

by MidnightLightHowlite

**Summary**

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Izuku was so god damn close to doing so. But he didn't. For better or worse (worse, a lot
might say, and Izuku might even agree, thought he could never quite bring himself to regret
it) his life changed.
So, Izuku looked back to all the people who told him he was useless, to the fate that seemed
to agree that he would never be a hero.
He showed fate the middle finger and did it anyway
The red and blue lights were reflecting on the pavement and on Izuku’s slime covered shoes from where he was sitting on the ambulance. Paramedics were moving left and right, checking whoever else was caught in the incident, having already deemed him not hurt enough to warrant carting off to the hospital; mostly they just threw him glances once in a while to make sure he wouldn’t kick it on their watch.

Izuku sighted and looked to his right. The explosive blond was very pissed, obviously trying not to lash out at the low ranked hero who offered him a sidekick position. Brat, Izuku thought bitterly. All he had ever gotten was praise for his Quirk, his smarts, his bravery. He had the luxury to be picky. He glared at the boy, remembering his earlier words.

*If you really want a Quirk that bad, take a swan dive off the roof and hope you’ll get one in your next life.*

*And what would have happened if I did, Kacchan? You’d be dead and you’d have to spend the rest of eternity with me. Who knows, maybe we’d’ve gone to hell together.*

As if sensing his glare, the blond turned and faced him, anger still visible on his face. Izuku looked away. He didn’t want to look in the eyes of his classmate, his once-childhood-friend and see nothing but hatred and disgust. He’d had enough of that today.

All Might had vanished, running away from the media. He threw Izuku a look for a few long, tense seconds before he vanished. *To hide his weakness, probably,* Izuku mused before turning to look at the crime scene.

*I’m sorry, but, without a Quirk, I don’t think you can be a hero.*

Five heroes. *Five.* Five trained professionals, who most likely went through countless hours of drilling and countless exams, yet couldn’t do a god damn thing. They just sat there, waiting for someone with the right Quirk to come in and save *them.* What a joke; he, the meek, Quirkless kid with a backpack had done more than those so called pros.

*My backpack!* It suddenly hit him and he looked around, finally spotting the yellow bundle with his school supplies strewn out of it. He shrugged off the shock blanket and ran towards the scene. He gathered his pencil case (which had somehow managed to stay closed), his water bottle and his still soggy hero notebook and stuffed them back in the backpack. He got up and turned to leave when he slammed face to chest into the huge hero Death arms. He and Kamui Woods had their arms crossed, and their best disappointed-annoyed expressions on.

“What you did was incredibly reckless! You could’ve died- there was absolutely no need to put yourself in danger like that!” they scolded.

A few hours ago, Izuku would’ve cowered and cried and apologised. Part of him still wanted to do that; wanted to curl up and pretend this never happened. But there was something about having not *one* but *two* a near death experiences, that made it hard to be properly awed and scared of the two pro-heroes in front of him. Later, he’d name stress and the shitty day he’d had so far as the
culprits for shutting down his brain-to-mouth filter.

“And what did you do?” he hissed, trying to keep his boiling anger in check. The men seemed surprised and they didn’t immediately retaliate. “What. Did. You. Do? Because, from where I was standing it looked like you just did a whole lot of nothing!”

“Our Quirks weren’t suited to fight him—” Kamui started.

“And my nonexistent one was?!” he yelled, which effectively shut them up. “Did you think that maybe, just maybe, there was a different solution to the problem? Have any of you even though to aim for the eyes; you know, the most vulnerable part of the human body? Have any of you even tried to think of a solution that didn’t exclusively rely on your Quirks?” they didn’t respond, looking down at him with their mouths open. Izuku took a deep breath. “No, I didn’t think so. You just stood there and waited for him to die, and then you have the absolute gall to scold me—who actually did something to help for doing so.”

Kamui finally seemed to get over the fact that he was being scolded by a middle-schooler and started

“Hey, you didn’t do anything significant either.”

_Noo, I just gave him a few more precious seconds of air as I waited for the right hero to appear._ He thought

“No” he said out loud. “But I did _something_,”

He promptly stomped away then, too pissed to give a fuck anymore. They didn’t try to stop him. Why would they? He was a no one, a good-for-nothing Deku who grew some guts for the first time in his life and trash talked them—the heroes. It might not mean anything to them, but, to Izuku, it was the venting he needed after that long, shitty day. It felt...awesome.

His stomps slowly turned into dragging, as the adrenaline rush melted from his system leaving him exhausted. Good thing it was Friday. This way, he had time to cry, collect himself and go back to school on Monday, pretending everything was ok, like so many times before.

Right now Izuku only wanted to get home, take a shower and forget this day had ever happened. Unfortunately, fate decided to fuck with him a little more, which he realized when he heard steps behind him and turned around to see Kacchan running towards him. His clothes were covered in slime and a layer of sweat glistening on his skin, a sign that he had probably run from the scene to this place. Izuku looked him up and down. He knew he should say something, he knew that he should do something to appease the blond that was visibly pissed. But, by this point, he honestly didn’t have the energy to anything. And, besides, a punch to knock him out and _end_ this day already actually sounded pretty good.

The blond panted and Izuku waited for him to gather his breath. “I never asked you to save me!” he yelled. “If I wanted, I could’ve taken him down myself! How _dare_ a Quirkless loser like you take pity on me?! Are you trying to win me over!? Don’t you dare mock me!” and, with that, he turned around and stomped away.

Izuku knew he should’ve kept his mouth shut. Kacchan was just venting, letting out his emotions; this was the stress talking. But Kacchan had never held back, never stopped, never apologised. So why should Izuku?

“Ok, Bakugou,” Izuku didn’t said, loud enough to echo through the empty street. “Next
time I’ll just let you die.”

The blond stopped. It was as if time itself froze in that moment, trapping the two boys in the light of the spring sun. The sun was nearing the horizon and Izuku watched his childhood friend for a reaction.

With almost painful slowness, Bakugou turned around and stared at the teen, wide eyes filled with an emotion he couldn’t quite place. “What. Did you just say?”

Izuku turned around and started walking away. “You heard me,”

The sun was setting, the final rays of light crawling on the pavement. The shadows were darker than usual, but Izuku knew the road by heart. The greenette kept an ear focused on any sound the blond might make. With the next sigh, he stepped fully into the shadows and headed home.

The blond didn’t follow.

~O~

His home was dark and empty. Mom had a few more hours until she returned from work, and Izuku was fine with that. He loved his mother, but he honestly didn’t have the energy to conceal his anger to put on his care-free mask on right now. So he didn’t.

He took off his shoes and entered the bathroom and washed that disgusting slime off of him. He watched what was left of the muddy fucker wash down the drain and allowed himself to smile. Then clean, relaxed, muscles soothed by boiling water, he made his way to his room.

All Might watched him from every corner, every nook. Izuku gulped.

*I’m sorry, but, without a Quirk, I don’t think you can be a hero.*

Izuku looked through his clothes. All Might, All Might, All might. He threw T-shirts on the ground until he found one that didn’t wasn’t any kind of hero merchandise and put it on. It was old, but it still fit.

He still admired All Might, of course. All Might was still the best hero, the No.1 hero. But every time he saw his smiling face, he could only remember the skinny man telling him he couldn’t do it or the slime coating his nostrils, the fear, the realization of just how near death was. Yes, he loved All Might, but the thought of him alone made Izuku sick.

He wanted to rip the posters, to throw them away, to scream his frustrations. He wanted to go all out, to punch something until it broke. But he couldn’t. He couldn’t bring himself to mess up the posters or any of the merchandise. No matter how much he tried, no matter how much he wanted to, he still loved heroes too much.

So he didn’t. He didn’t rip the posters; he took them off the wall, carefully folding them along the lines. He didn’t throw his action figures at the wall, he placed them in the same box as the posters. He didn’t shred or cut the T-shirts, he folded them and laid them in the same boxes, which he then pushed as far back as he could into his closet.

After all that his room looked depressingly empty. The light blue walls bore dust marks where the posters had been, his desk looked empty and lacked the personality it had before, when All Might was smiling from it. Izuku now knew that that said smile was completely fake, not seeing it was better. He hated being lied to.
I'm sorry, but, without a Quirk, I don't think you can be a hero.

His eyes burned and Izuku didn’t hold back the tears. He let them fall, let them pool at his chin, let them pour down his face. His knees gave up and he collapsed at the foot of his bed, head hitting the mattress as he wailed. Sobs were escaping his throat, but he didn’t care. He just cried his feelings away.

When mom came home that night, she found him asleep on the floor. She wrestled him on the bed and covered him with the blanket before giving him a good night kiss. If she noticed the lack of merchandise, she said nothing.

~O~

The streets were surprisingly dirty in this part of town. It was Saturday morning and Izuku was wandering everywhere but the well off places. He couldn’t stand to see heroes right now. He had purposefully avoided the news all day, finally getting out of the house when he’d felt a few steps away from suffocation. He had to buy a new notebook anyway, but after that was done he didn’t feel like taking the usual road home, so, here he was, walking aimlessly down the streets, doing his best to ignore various shady characters, looking positively like a drug-dealer himself, dressed in a black hoodie (his only clean and non-merchandise hoodie) that hid his curls and eyes. He didn’t mean to fit in—he really didn’t, but right now that was turning out to be an unexpected side-benefit as it kept him from being noticed by the vast majority of people here.

He took another left. What can I do if I can’t be a hero? He thought. I can’t be a police man. He didn’t have the skill, and he doubted he could be promoted as detective fast enough. He could do any other job that didn’t require a Quirk, but none of those would be fulfilling. Izuku dreaded the idea of being caught in a nine-to-five job for the next forty years, and was becoming increasingly terrified to realize how big of a possibility that was. He felt like crying, but stopped himself. Crying wouldn’t help. It had never helped him before, he saw no reason why it would help him now. He sighed and cleared his head. Useless. Stupid. Good for nothing.

Stop it.

Suddenly, he heard something. Out of habit he automatically started walking towards the commotion; the commotion which turned out to be a fight. It wasn’t like a hero fight, not like anything he’d seen on TV or in person. It wasn’t flashy or glamourous. It was violent. Even gruesome.

There were two men. One of them seemed to have blades sticking out of his skin, while the other threw blue fire at the other. Their blows were vicious and desperate dealt with no mercy. They aimed for the eyes, the crotch, the kidneys and Izuku found himself staring in morbid fascination at the two, calculating speed and trajectory. It lacked the grace, the steadiness, the glances thrown at the audience Izuku had been so used to from the hero fights. It was cruel and cold and real.

After a particularly vicious hit man with the blue flames collapsed and the one with the blades lifted an arm, ready to impale him. In that moment, Izuku didn’t think; honestly, he could barely remember moving, but, in hindsight, this would be one of the moments that changed his life; for the better or worse, he couldn’t tell.

He just knew that, one second he was watching from a distance and the next he had a broken crate in his hands and the villain was staggering forward, a rain of splinters falling off of him. He righted himself and, like a bear, turned around, feral rage filling his eyes. Izuku gulped and staggered back, the broken remains of the crate hanging limply from his hands.
The villain stepped forward, a huge, hulking figure, blades ripping what was left of his clothes. He pulled his fist into a punch and swung forward. Only Izuku’s reflexes, honed by years of bullying and running away from fire, allowed the boy to evade the blades aiming to cut him in half. His cheek stung, but he didn’t have time to ponder on it, because the man swung again, this time ripping a hole in his hoodie. Then a, thankfully non-bladed, punch sent him sprawling to the ground.

Izuku watched in horror as the man lifted his hand one more time, to land the final strike.

*I’m gonna die, I’m gonna die, I’m gonna die…*

Except—he didn’t.

Before the man had the chance to finish him off, two hands clamped around his head and a cloud of blue fire engulfed him. An unearthly wail left the man’s lips, but it died quickly as his head turned to ashes. Izuku gulped and looked up, at the previously fallen man who was now standing where the other had stood. He was tall, almost freakishly so, with black hair and had huge patches of burnt skin under his (disconcertingly blue) eyes and mouth; the scars seemed to stretch over his arms all the way to his fingers. He wore baggy clothes, with pants too short to reach past his ankles. Still, he seemed...young; Izuku doubted he was much older than twenty, maybe twenty one. He looked Izuku up and down before grinding out a “Thanks” and turning to leave.

“What?” Izuku said before he could leave. The man turned around, and Izuku realized he should have probably thought this through but now here he was and the guy was expecting a follow up so Izuku continued “I-I have a first aid kit; you look like you could, uhh... could use some first aid,”

It was true. Other than the patches, the man had all sorts of cuts he was limping. The walking voodoo doll seemed to ponder before shrugging and saying. He stepped over the burned corpse, or not so much, since it started moving and dragging itself away. The man with the patches didn’t seem to mind his attacker escaping, so Izuku returned to staring at him. After a few more seconds in which the man studied him, he spoke.

“What have you got?”

Izuku opened his backpack, pulling out the small box of necessities he’d started carrying a when he realised that treating himself before he got home was preferable to the E.R and the pain in his mother’s eyes when he told her it was just an accident. She didn’t believe him, but she never managed to convince him to tell her what happened. It rarely got worse than cuts and bruises and minor burns or a sprained wrist at the very worst, but better safe than sorry. Most of the wounds were also pretty easy to camouflage since the bullies almost never aimed for the head or face- too visible, too liable to get them in actual trouble.

Izuku pulled out a maxi tic-tac box, with tweezers taped to the size, filled with cotton pads soaked in rubbing alcohol and handed it to the man, who started disinfecting his wounds. Meanwhile Izuku busied himself by taking out the gauze, band-aids and medical tape. They worked in silence and, in a short while, the man was... not ok by any standards but looked less likely to fall apart at a strong breeze-so at least better. Izuku sat down next to him and started cleaning his own wounds.

“You wouldn’t happen to have some painkillers in there, would you?”

Izuku pulled out a chocolate bar. Voodoo doll lifted an eyebrow, but took it and started munching on it nonetheless.

“That’s a cool Quirk!” Izuku started, not being able to keep it in any further. The man eyed
him suspiciously, but kept eating his chocolate. “Are your flames really hot enough to cremate, or is your fire normal temperature, but blue. Or-do you have control over the temperature? What about the fire itself- can you control it, or can you only start it?”

“You talk a lot, you know that?” the man said, though he didn’t seem particularly bothered by the fact so Izuku forged on.

“Can you create fire from every part of your body, or only your hands? Where’d you learn how to fight like that?”

“Streets,” he said, crumbling the wrapper.

“What did you and him fight over?” Izuku was distantly aware that he should be more disturbed by the trail of blood only a few feet away, but it was a bit hard to feel pity for his would be murderer.

“Old business,”

“How are you so good at fighting? I’ve never seen any style similar to that.”

The man sighed. “You watch hero fights?” Izuku nodded. “Well, those are... let’s go with *staged*,”

“Staged? Like...heroes hiring villains to beat?” Izuku tilted his head. The man shook his head.

“No, like, the fights bring publicity, right?” Izuku nodded. “Well, the flashier the battle, the bigger the advertisement, more fans, more funds, more money. So, heroes don’t always finish the fight as quickly as they could, but instead, drag it out to make sure they get media coverage. Do you get me?” the man looked at him. Izuku nodded viciously, fingers desperately grabbing for his notebook, but he didn’t pull it out, for fear of losing the man’s interest. “Well, here, there’s no media. There’s no backup, no money, no one to have your back. You can’t afford to drag it out- it’s really just do or die.”

Izuku nodded vigorously. “So, how well do you actually know how to fight?”

“Pretty well. Why’d you ask?”

Izuku knew it was a stupid idea, he knew that it could get him killed. He didn’t know the man, he had no reason to trust the man or to think that this was a good idea. But, in the end, what did he have to lose?

“Train me,”

The man stared at him for a few seconds before he spoke. “No.” he got up and walked away.

~O~

What Dabi couldn’t have known was that Midoriya Izuku didn’t really take kindly to people telling him ‘no’. He hadn’t given up on a goal for more than ten years, he wasn’t going to give up on another.-no matter how rushed or suicidal- it was.

So, that night, he had gotten home, sewed his hoodie and cleaned the blood and noted in his new notebook everything he could remember-the man’s Quirk, his explanation on heroism, everything he
could get his hands on. Old habits die hard, after all, and Izuku wasn’t particularly determined to kill this one. So, he made notes and checked again and again, until he was sure.

On Sunday, he returned on that part of the town and started asking around. He went to corner shops, the convenience stores, the dingy newspaper booths. People walked, changed places, but stores stayed in the same place and the people who worked there were most likely notice someone new. Runaways may not go to the center, but even villains needed their cigarettes and water bottles.

Of course Izuku also knew better than to ask about one specific man. Not only would that be suspicious it could also clue the man in on the fact that Izuku was trying to find him; besides if people knew he needed that information, they might either lie or tax him for it—if they knew what you wanted, they’d increase the price.

Lastly, he became a regular. He passed through there every day after school, having developed a fear for the tunnel and the other road. He passed through the shop and bought himself a pack of gum, a bottle of water some other little knickknack. He talked to the old woman behind the counter and sometimes with her grand kid. He asked her about how things were going, he helped her when she needed to grab something off a shelf too high for her to reach. He was doing it mostly to cure his conscious for the fact that he was low key stalking a guy he had only met once. And, on the other hand, it was fun.

In less than a week, he was up to date with the gossip, the drug dealers, and the most prominent figures in the district. Which was when the hard, dangerous part started; he went to the dealers, ignoring the part of him that yelled how big of an idiot he actually was and started asking them too. As long as they thought you were interested in buying and pretended to have money, they were surprisingly talkative. He had no idea how he had managed to jungle school and stalkery, but he did it. In less than a week, he had gotten the man’s name-Dabi (obviously fake, but whatever) his general pattern of when and where he went and something close to his address.

So, on a Tuesday afternoon, he went in one of the places he had noted and waited for the man to show up. It had taken him an hour, but, eventually, Dabi appeared. He was alone, walking a steady pace through the neighborhood. Izuku counted till three and popped up in front of him.

Dabi stopped. His eyes widened in confusion, though there was a spark of recognition in his gaze. Good, he remembers me.

“Train me!”

“What part of no, don’t you understand, brat?”

“Please, train me!”

“Fuck off!”

“Ple-” he started and jumped behind a garbage can when the wall of flames came rushing in his direction. He stood there and waited for the steps to fade. Izuku giggled. He knew it wouldn’t work from the first time. He needed more persuasion, more reasons to make the other accept. He needed to be determined, something that Izuku had in spades.

So he continued. His mom saw him more upbeat, more driven and didn’t say anything. He kept stalking the man, only rarely popping up and being rejected with various degrees of rage and anger directed at him. He had learned to be quiet and stealthy as a necessity long time ago and it was the first time it came in handy as something else other than running away from bullies. It took a few
days to find out after where the man lived, and a whole week later when he made his final move.

~O~

Dabi sighed and opened the door of his ratty apartment, banging the it on the wall when that rusty old lock finally moved. He had lived in this apartment for a few months, since he moved in this part of the city. The old hag taxed him next to nothing, the only condition was, apparently, to ignore the illicit things going on in the rest of the building. It was at the first floor of the building, and that was partly the reason Dabi didn’t know whether to cry or scream when, in the dim light of his one lightbulb, he saw the green haired fucker perched on his windowsill.

This brat, who was barely entering puberty, had stalked him for the past month. He suspected for more, because there was more time required to fully get one’s schedule. And half of it was literally randomised for god’s sake! Must be his Quirk, Dabi thought. The other problem was how fucking persistent the brat was. He just didn’t give up and Dabi was no longer pissed as he was starting to get worried. Lastly, there was something very eerie about the smile on his face, something that gave the fire user the creeps. The boy reminded him of a doll, or a demonic baby from a horror movie.

So, when he found the little ninja in his home, his first words were “How are you doing this?!”

The brat smiled. “Look, I’ll stop if you hear me out”

“No. now get out.” He said lifting his hand and preparing to aim. Before, he had never intended to hurt the boy for real, but now he was seriously considering the idea. A notebook magically materialized in the brat’s hands.

“I think you’d want to read this.”

Dabi knew he should push the brat off the window, but curiosity got the better of him. He took the notebook. As he looked through it, he felt his blood run cold. The notebook was filled with sketches of him, analysis on his Quirk, strengths, to weaknesses, to methods of defeat. There was also a detailed summary of his schedule, people he met, people he fought, places he visited. Addresses. Why did people romanticized this stuff in movies? It was fucking creepy!

“There’s more” the kid spoke, still leaning on the windowsill. “Back home. If I don’t make it back, the police would find this and a lot of everything else and that will drive them right here.”

Dabi glared at the kid. “What do you want?”

“I told you. I want you to train me?”

“I’m not a teacher.”

The kid smiled way too sweetly for what was essentially blackmail. “You don’t have to. Just teach me the basics of how not to die. If you want, I might help you with your Quirk. I’m pretty good at analyzing them, so it’s a win win.”

Dabi sighed. “And, let me guess: I say no and you take this to the police?”

He tilted his head and looked up. “Or the drug dealers I saw you fight the other day if the police is not interested.”

Dabi took a deep breath. What was the worst thing that could happen?
He looked the kid in the eye, trying to put all the death intent he could muster in his glare and said:

“Fine.”

Chapter End Notes

you know, i would like to say that this came after long hours of planning and thinking of the best outcome....
but no
it was this discussion between me and my beta
her: you'll have to make an OC
me: but i don't wanna...
her:then who's gonna train him
me: Either Dabi or Stain
her:....
me:....
her:....
me:....
brain: well, shit, this might actually work
Izuku took a deep breath as he entered the building that wasn’t really a gym. It was more like a bunch of gyms, all stuffed together in one big building that must’ve served another purpose long time ago. There were a lot of stairs and his legs were still slightly sore from the morning’s jog so Izuku tried to distract himself as he thinking over his conversation with Dabi the other day.

“Fine” the man said, glaring daggers at the kid. “First order of business- start a sport.”

“Why?” Izuku tilted his head.

“Because you need to build up endurance, stamina, and muscle all of which are generally agreed upon to be the result of sustained physical exercise.” He rolled his eyes. “It can be ballet for all I care.” Well, it made sense- ballet helped you with balance and reflexes, though Izuku had a feeling he was a little too old to start. “Second: download a diet plan or something. Third, meet me in a week in the Mirai park, near the big statue. Also, no more stalking me.”

“How?”

“Gee, I wonder” the man rolled his eyes “But that’s the deal breaker. If you keep stalking me or looking into my stuff, we’re done. No questions asked.”

“Alright” Izuku nodded.

“Cool. Now get out of my house”

Izuku smiled and let himself fall off the window, sliding down the rope he had tucked there when he came in. Him? Showing off? More likely than most people would think.

Izuku did feel a little bit bad for stalking the man. Usually, he wouldn’t invade someone’s privacy, but he had been desperate. He also bluff most of their conversation, knowing that if he showed how anxious he was Dabi would turn him down again and also probably push him out of the window.

He had followed his advice and even went overkill by running the whole neighbourhood that morning. He panted and felt like collapsing after ten minutes, yet he pulled through in time to take a shower and prepare for school. But running would only develop his legs, so he had to find something that would help his whole body and also help him achieve his goal.

His mother had been happy when she he mentioned a sport and her enthusiasm had only slightly dampened when he’d decided on parkour. None the less she’s fully supported him, probably just glad that he was finally thinking of something else other than hero-ing. Izuku felt bad for the lie of omission but if his mother had been quietly against heroism she would probably downright ground him for life for even thinking of vigilantism, never mind that it was, hopefully, temporary.

But that was, as Izuku had come to realize, his best shot at helping people in the way he wanted.
He’d spent his entire life studying heroes and Quirks; he could name off the top of his head all the heroes that were functionally Quirkless, like Eraserhead. Through some very shady search history, he managed to find a few clips of the hero. His Quirk was Erasure, which basically meant, he had the power to make other people Quirless. He mostly used hand to hand combat, so why couldn’t Izuku learn to do that too?

Or Midnight. Her Quirk was emanating a sleeping gas. She had no control over which directions the gas took, so it was basically the same as normal sleeping gas.

There were, as Izuku had learnt, a lot of Quirks that could be replaced by modern support items, yet people seemed to have forgotten that weapons existed outside of Quirks.

Through the internet equitant of dumpster-diving he’d managed to hunt down and watch some pre-Quirk era movies and martial arts tutorials and he was pretty sure some of the people could take some pros down on their own.

So, as much as he hated lying to his mom, he was going to become a hero. Either he would enter through the exam, or he would go to Gen Ed and transfer later. That also meant that he would have to keep up academically, which would be a pain, but he would manage.

He entered the gym. Everywhere there were bungee mattresses, and a construction that reminded him of the monkey bars on the playground. He walked past the guy at the reception who gave him the ticket and instructions and walked towards the only person resembling an adult there.

“Hiyaku-san?” he asked, forcing his voice not to tremble. The woman turned towards him and gave him a big smile. She was tall, somewhere in her twenties, with long, brown hair tied in a ponytail and a lose tank top that revealed her toned arm muscles.

“Who’s asking?” she said stretching her hand.

“Midoriya.” He shook it. “I was wondering if I could start here.”

“Sure, kiddo, change and we can start.” He put on his gym shoes and went to the teacher, who told him to do his warm-up. which he managed with socially acceptable amounts of groaning and sweating under the amused look on the woman’s face. After that, then promptly collapsed on the mattress. Hiyaku laughed and showed him the main moves before she told him to do them. He did and, when she saw he wasn’t doing it wrong, she left him to practice on his own while she talked to the other teenagers. Izuku warmed up and started jumping.

~O~

Izuku walked towards the statue on Sunday morning. Dabi was leaning on a tree, scrolling bored through his phone. He looked up and spotted the teen. Letting out a long-suffering sigh, he righted his crooked spine and cracked his neck.

“I hoped you’d given up.”

“Good morning to you too!” Izuku said cheerfully. Dabi sighed again and started walking away, Izuku hot on his tail.

“Have you done what I asked?” he said, not turning around.

“Yes.”

“So what’d you settle on?”
“Parkour” that made the man turn around and raise an eyebrow. They reached a clearing. It was still in the park, but it was well shielded, so people walking on the sidewalk wouldn’t see them.

“One question before we start. Why did you want to train with me?”

“Because I saw you fight. It seemed pretty efficient.”

The man shook his head. “But why me, specifically? You could go to a dojo, the same way you go to parkour. So, why did you chose me?”

“I told you, I saw you fight” Izuku placed his bag on the ground and looked at the taller man. “Most martial arts have rules for things like ‘honor’ and ‘no killer hold and hits’. But that’s not the real world. In the real world, people die and get hurt. I don’t have time for acrobatics and flashiness. I need to learn how to defend myself and others, and how to finish my enemy off in the smallest number of moves possible. That doesn’t really happen in dojos, and you were the most familiar person on the street.”

Dabi stared at him for a few seconds. “That’s a bullshit reasoning, but whatever.” He stretched, popping his joints. “Did your warm ups already?” Izuku nodded and looked at the man.

Dabi showed him how to make the fist as not to break his thumb, then showed him how to dodge. Then they started sparring, which, as Izuku soon realized, was basically just Dabi getting his revenge for the previous month of intense stalking. Izuku was pretty good at dodging, but the other was wickedly fast and hard to predict, and also well and truly savage, both with his words and with his blows; so it was that, by the end of it all, Izuku could proudly boast a brand-new collection of bruises and, probably, at least half a kilo of dirt ingested.

“Up! Get up you... well, I’d call you a noodle, but even those are looking tougher than you right now,” he said amusement clear in his voice and on his face as Izuku picked himself off the ground. His back hurt, but Dabi seemed to be enjoying himself and didn’t look like he had any intention of stopping any time soon. He insulted Izuku at his every misstep, cursed him and was just an all around dick but Izuku had lived with Bakugou so he was basically immune to verbal trashing.

Physical… not so much.

They stopped after about an hour but it felt more like a month, both panting and sweaty. Izuku was grinning like fool and Dabi looking like he was trying not to. The man straightened himself and rolled his shoulders. “Ok, that’s it, see you in two days, same place.”

“What hour?”

Dabi looked at him for a few seconds before it dawned on him. “Oh, you have school” he nodded to himself. “Then, three o’clock, at the statue.”

“Alright,” he waved as the man walked away, hands deep in his pockets. Izuku yawned and headed home to do his homework.

From that point, life entered a routine. Get up, go to school, come home, change, train with Dabi every other day, do your homework, parkour every other day that wasn’t training with Dabi, sleep. It was pretty boring and Izuku had more bruises than before, but these ones felt good. They felt earned. Even if his back ached from jumping wrong, and his arms and body hurt from fighting, he went home with a smile on his face.

Things changed at school too. People didn’t really approach him as much as before and,
when they did, Izuku managed to look them in the eye and tell them to cut it out. If they tried to beat him, he would just break into a mad sprint and, most of the time, they would be too surprised or too slow to give chase.

Soon enough he discovered that he could fight for longer, didn’t lose his breath that easily as before. He liked it. Hiyaku gave him a nod of approval when he managed his first front flip and Dabi wasn’t outright impressed, but he wasn’t as disappointed or savage as before. Scratch that, he was still savage, but now it felt neutral instead of pissed. It was a progress.

It was during one of his morning jogs, a few months into his training when he encountered Bakugou. Being neighbours, they shared the same road to school, but, somehow, despite starting at the same hour, the two managed to avoid each other. At least until now.

As he ran, cold air coming in and out of his mouth, he spotted a very familiar explosive hairstyle. He stopped for a second and waited for the other teen to spot him too. Bakugou slowed down and stopped. They stared at each other for a few seconds, neither quite ready to strike a conversation. Finally, Bakugou, like always, was the one who spoke.

“What are you doing here, stupid Deku?”

Izuku shrugged and buried his hands in his pockets, a gesture he uncouciously picked from Dabi. The man didn’t realise this, but it was a gesture of peace. By putting his hands in his pockets, he signalled that he wasn’t going to use his Quirk, or his hands which, when taking into account how dangerous they both were, was pretty good of a warning. The greenette looked up and meet the blond’s eyes, for the first time not looking down immediately after.

“Jogging. Training. What I assume you are doing too at this ungodly hour of the morning.” Bakugou tsk-ed and glared harder.

“Why?”

Izuku stretched his limbs and looked up. “I realised that I have no chance of getting in UA unless I get my shit together and get in shape. I’ve been slacking off these last few years, so, I have to do anything possible to get in shape.”

Izuku expected the other to jeer and taunt, to laugh and tell him that he’ll never amount to anything. But he didn’t. As Izuku looked at the other teen, he seemed conflicted and, when the blond saw Izuku look at him, the tsk-ed again, grumbling “Fucking nerd” and stomped away. Izuku rose an eyebrow, but shrugged and kept jogging.

His training also translated into less problems at P.E. He could do the warm ups and his class had a few shocks when he actually started winning the games he played. Not to mention Bakugou silently fuming in the background. Of course, he had to pay attention in the locker room, because the blond would surely notice bruises that didn’t come from him.

Another thing he started doing was taking apart heroes’ fighting strategies and styles. He was disgusted to realise how much of it was actually just flashy choreography instead of efficiency. If there was one thing Izuku had learned while going through the unsavoury parts of town, it was that a villain wouldn’t fight fair but here were the pro-heroes, acting like fighting was some kind of complicated ballet routine.

Time flew by when one was not paying attention to the routine, but it was surely standing still as the boy was trying to spit the dirt from the last round.
“Is your Quirk pain tolerance or something?” Dabi asked after he had just stepped on Izuku’s stomach and the boy’s only reaction was grunt and bolting up to his feet no problem. Well, not really stepped, but pressed just soft enough not to break something. By Izuku’s standards. Even if he didn’t feel it, Izuku knew that the older was holding back on exactly how much force he put in punches. Izuku stretched.

“Nope!” he answered popping the p.


“My Quirk isn’t relevant,” Izuku said, looking away.

The next moment, Dabi was near him, looming over the teen with the thirty centimetres he had over him in height. Izuku wanted to step, back, but he hit a tree. “What. Is. Your. Quirk?”

Izuku gulped and looked into the electric blue eyes from above him. He looked down. “I’m Quirkless.”

“What?” the menacing tone from earlier had all but vanished, leaving a very confused and still pretty scared Izuku behind.

“I’m Quirkless.” he said forcing the word around the tightness in his throat, waiting for the man to laugh at him. Dabi cocked his head.

“Those still exist? I thought they had all died out the last generation?”

Izuku glared at him and crossed his arms. “You didn’t care if I had one when you agreed to train me.”

Dabi sighed and shook his head. “In case that big bushy head of yours has already forgotten, you blackmailed me into this. But now I really have to ask-why do you want to become a hero?”

Izuku looked away. In the few months they had spent together, Dabi had realised that Izuku wanted to become a hero. The boy never quite spelled it out, but older one caught nonetheless. The greenette shrugged. “I want to help people?”

Dabi Quirked an eyebrow. “That’s it?”

“Yes!” Izuku cried in frustration. “I know that most heroes are in for the money and fame, but I really want to help people.” He looked down. “I just... I just want to help people.”

Dabi seemed to ponder this revelation over. “Well, that’s nice and dandy, but how are you going to do that? The exam is pretty hard for Quirked people, how are you going to pass it?”

Izuku looked up. “By giving it my all!” the look the burned teen threw him was the perfect fusion of are you kidding me and oh really. Izuku sighed and let his fist fall. “I’m planning on applying to Gen Ed and transferring to heroics later.” Dabi nodded as if it made sense.

“Well, then, good work and good luck, I guess.” He seemed somehow awkward, like encouraging and giving pep talks was out of his area of expertise.

“Thank you.” Izuku said as he got up and started picking up his things.

Dabi stretched and waved as he walked away. “Still getting blackmailed here” but Izuku
could hear the smile in his voice.

~O~

Izuku landed badly and his feet bounced on the mattress. He looked to the right where Hyiaku was doubled over laughing. She righted herself, tears still in her eyes. “Ok, that was literally the worst way you could ever land, you can’t possibly fuck it up more.”

“Gee, thanks!” izuku grumbled as he got up and rubbed his neck. He was still bouncing on the mattress and was preparing for another jump when she spoke.

“No, go to the bars.”

She was talking about the monkey bars on the other side of the gym. First, she made him climb a very high wall from a jump, which he failed because, for some reason, his elbow kept bending when he tried to climb. You see, when you had to climb over a wall, you had to keep your arm in a right degree angle to the surface, in order to be able to push yourself, while, with your feet, you had to push in whatever wall you were climbing. For some reason, coordination was one of his weak points, and his arms were betraying him, because they kept falling and bending. Hyiaku had then tested the strength in his arms, which was close to none, because she could hang from her hands for about five minutes, while he barely managed thirty seconds in one go. His jumps from object to object were one of his strong points though, so there’s that.

He had learned that what he did wasn’t really parkour, but a fusion of parkour and free running. The difference between the two was that parkour was very practical while free running was more acrobatic. He liked them both either way, so he had no reason to complain.

In the months he had spent in that gym, he had managed to develop more stamina. His muscles had improved, if only slightly. They still looked like noodles, and only showed when he tried, but he guessed that was just his body type, so he let it go.

One day, after he left the gym covered in the grime and sweat of the day and heading home to shower and watch some hero news, he bumped into someone.

“Sorry!” he said as he got up and helped the girl up. Her skin was neon pink and small horns were poking out of her curly hair.

“No problem!” she said as she got up and dusted her violet gym bag. She looked at him, black sclera making a good chromatic contrast on her face. “I haven’t seen you here before.”

“I do parkour” he said. The girl lit up at his words.

“I used to do it too!” she said, or more like happily cried. “Now I’m doing break dance. You could try to, it’s very good for balance and helps the body.”

“I’ll think about it.”

She thrusted her hand forward. “I’m Mina Ashido.”

“Izuku Midoriya” he shook it. They left the gym and walked the road together, Izuku content to only listen to her as she talked about the different teens there. They parted at the train station and Izuku waved her as she entered the well-lit train.

He waited until the train left before he turned around and started heading home. As he was walking under the eerie orange glow of the night lights, he looked up as he heard a rustling of
something. Because of the chromatic difference, he didn’t see the red scarves or the bloodied katana hanging lowly on the man’s back, neither did he hear the metallic click of boots as the steel toes hit the concrete.

*Must be a bird*, he thought as he kept walking home.

Chapter End Notes

i know this is kinda filler and kinda short and a little bit disappointing, at least on my part, but it was necessary. don't worry, chapter three will arrive fairly quickly, so we can get back to the good stuff about that scene with Katsuki, it was one of my beliefs that ONE of the reasons Katsuki didn't like Izuku was the fact that Izuku didn't really do anything to try and be a hero. like, he talked about it, but he never trained or did any kind of cardio to help his physical state. like, dud, how did you want to be a hero?

anyway, thanks for the kudos and comments and stick till next time

tumblr
discord
I wasn’t actively planning for it, but, when life gives you lemons…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Izuku didn’t plan on becoming a vigilante. Before that one incident, he wouldn’t have even considered the idea, the occupation being too close to that of a villain and much too stigmatised for comfort. Well, that was a lie, he had entertained the idea a little, but gave up after a little thought, because it didn’t seem plausible. Silly him. Later, under the harsh white light of an interrogation room, when asked about it, he would say “It just kinda…happened, you know? . As cheesy, vague and fake as it sounded it was (mostly) true it was one of the only truths he didn’t have to hide since it didn’t really have a bearing on anything and would endanger no one. Well, no one but him, but his wellbeing wasn’t really of utmost importance at that point.

The incident went something like this.

Izuku had been walking down the street, on his way to Dabi’s. He hadn’t been officially invited, but the man had stopped yelling at him and only told him that, if he was going to drop off, to at least bring some beer and make sure to lock the window while he waited. Izuku was starting to get the vague feeling that Dabi was starting to enjoy their time together. Which he would, of course, never admit, so he couldn’t really be sure but Izuku chose to interpret the occasional snorts and the lack of yelling as the tentative beginning of something that might one day become some sort of friendship. Just the thought put him in a good mood. Which was why, when he heard the tell-tale noises of a fight, his first thoughts had been: Are you shitting me right now?

The closer he got, the better he saw. I was a two-to-one fight. Fights here weren’t really uncommon, but Izuku had never seen one first hand, so he never actually had the chance to think of what he would do if he stumbled upon one.

Later, he wouldn’t know whether to chastise himself for his stupidity or bless his younger self, for his recklessness.

Izuku stood frozen for almost half a minute caught between his fight and flight instincts but then the bat one of the guys was carrying connected with his opponent’s ribs with a resounding crunch and a tearing sound and he stumbled leaving himself open for three punches from the other assailant; at that point Izuku’s save first ask questions later instincts overwrote everything else and he jumped into the fray. He only had half a year of getting his ass kicked thrice a week, but he also had the element of surprise and the beginnings of a plan in his mind.

Making sure his hood was pulled on his face (getting recognised was not the best way to survive around these parts) he jumped in the fight and kicked Bag-guy’s knee out from under him, grabbing the fallen bat (which, he noticed had some barbed wire wrapped around it), he swung it the other, wincing when he heard his shoulder pop. But he didn’t have time to dwell on that since, from the corner of his eye, he saw the Bag-guy recover and swing his fist; ducking, Izuku turned and him hard in the kidneys with the bat, praying that the barbs hadn’t punctured anything too vital. He swiped the ground, grabbing the fallen knife in the process, and held it to the second man who seemed to still be recovering from getting his shoulder dislocated. Izuku jabbed the knife at him than at the exit of the alley, the message run clear.

They both glared at him but, thankfully didn’t need to be told twice as the second thug
helped his friend up and got out of that alley as fast as possible. Izuku kept his eyes on them as they disappeared before turning towards the other man who was leaning heavily on the wall, silver hair falling in greasy locks out of his hood, a shaking hand clutching his ribs, his breaths sounding heavy and slightly wet.

“Shit,” Izuku said dropping the knife “Shit that looks bad!” the teen said as he pulled out his phone, preparing to dial the emergency number.

Except the man realized what he was going to do and quickly shook his head.

“No hospitals!” he rasped, souring like he was talking around broken glass.

“You’re injured!” Izuku insisted, not wanting the man to die on his watch.

“No. Hospitals,” there was something final about the words that brokered no room for argument and promised hell should the greenette not obey so he sighed and pocketed his phone.

“Will you at lease let me have a look at it?” the man looked at Izuku like he’d grown a second head so he added “Please?”

The other pinned him down with an intense glare for another few seconds, which the boy was proud he had managed to hold before nodding. The teen wasted no time helping him out of the hoodie. The wound wasn’t that bad but it was still nasty so, opening his backpack, Izuku grabbed his first-aid kit (which had grown in size and utility since he had met a certain raisin) and started cleaning the wound.

“It’s not lethal” he said tying to reassure himself more than anything “But I suggest you have someone look at it. I think you’ll need stitches.”

The man looked at him from his place where he was leaning on the wall. “Does this happen to you so often you can tell on spot?”

Izuku barely looked up as he pulled out a roll of bandages and started dressing the wound. “You’d be surprised.”

There was silence between them for a few moments before the familiar rustling of pages accompanied the raspy voice. “You know, these are pretty good.”

Izuku looked up in time to see the man look through his notebook. (Revised no.13, not the Dabi one.) Feeling heat rise to his cheeks, he grabbed the notebook and stuffed it in his backpack along with the first aid kit. The man was chuckling, probably at how flustered Izuku was which was when he realised that his hood had fallen off and hastily pulled it back. “So” he said after he deemed the silence has started on enough “who can I call to pick you up?”

The man pulled out a phone and, after two failed attempts at typing in his password with one hand (and for some reason, his pinkie raised) jabbed it to the boy, one hand pressing on his bleeding ribs “Kurogiri,”

Izuku nodded and, after passing through a worrying amount of gaming apps scrolled through the grand total of four contacts before he pressed call. The phone rang twice before someone answered.

“Yes?”

“Is this Kurogiri?”
He could feel whoever was at the other end of the phone tense.

“Who is this?”

Izuku took a deep breath doing his best to mask his voice “I found the owner of this phone stabbed in an alley. He told me to call you.”

Silence.

Then a long suffering sigh “I see. Please could you send me the location, then?”

“Yes.” Izuku said as he did just that.

“Thank you,” was said before a dark cloud of smoke appeared close by. Making sure he had his hood pulled over his features, Izuku watched as a smoke-filled bartender suit walked into the alley helping the other get off the ground and turned towards him.

“Thank you, again,” he said, making a small bow in his direction. Izuku gave him a curt nod of acknowledgement before watching them disappear into the smoke.

~O~

“So...now, you’re a vigilante?” Dabi asked as he slurped the noodles out of the can. He was sitting on a ratty bean bag, with a can of soda near him because Izuku was petty.

“Ughhh...No? I don’t think so,” Izuku responded as he wrestled the noodles into his mouth. “You see, the legal definition of vigilantism is ‘an unlicensed person using their Quirk administer justice while having no jurisdiction or legal authority over the matter.’ I’m Quirkless, so, technically, fighting Quirked people isn’t illegal on my part; since I’m not using any Quirk I’m not technically breaking the law.”

“Wait- so you can get away with killing people just because you’re Quirkless?!”

Izuku recoiled. “No. No of course not. I wouldn’t go that far. But, as long as I don’t start the fight, I don’t kill my opponent and I don’t use a Quirk...they can’t really do much about it.”

Dabi looked at him for a few seconds before he chuckled. “Using a natural disadvantage to loophole your way out of the law? Colour me impressed,” he said, while still smiling. Izuku blushed a little and looked away. Unfortunately, the elder’s flat was starting to develop its own ecosystem, and Izuku wasn’t all that interested in the subject while he was eating.

“You’d be surprised how few laws actually apply to the Quirkless population. It’s like we don’t even exist; like they’re trying to erase us.” He looked down, mindlessly stirring the spiced water.

An empty can of soda hit him in the head and Izuku looked up. “Stop being so gloomy” Dabi said as he leaned back in his bean bag. “You beat the system while using their own arrogance against them. To me it seems good enough reason to be smug.” He looked up before talking. “But you still didn’t answer my question. Why did you do it?”

“Well, someone has to” Izuku said, punching some old blankets to make them more comfortable. “Heroes don’t really come around here.” It was true. No one really cared about petty crimes in a forgotten district. There wasn’t much publicity in stopping your average Saturday robbery, or helping old people not die from cold.
“The police hardly care,” It was easier to ignore it and pretend that everything was fine. Let the gangs sort out their own justice and gather up the bodies a week later. “You’re strong. You can take care of yourself. But there are people who can’t. There are people too weak, or sick, or inexperienced to do anything but lie low and hope to live another day.” He sighed and shook his head.

“I’ve been there. Waiting for heroes to come and save me, waited for the world to give me justice,” He closed his eyes and slurped the last of his ramen. “Those expectations didn’t really pan out. I doubt— they ever will, at least not for people like us. But now, I am strong. Now, I can do something, now I can fight back.” He looked up as he pinned the older teen with a green, determined stare. “I know how it is to wait for someone to save you. If a hero won’t do the job, then I guess I’m the next best thing.”

Dabi shrugged and looked up. They fell into a comfortable silence as they sat with their bellies full and the air a little too hot to be comfy. Against all odds, Izuku enjoyed spending time with the scarred teen; he didn’t really understand why. Their spars were cool and interesting, but, for some reason, they’d began hanging out. It wasn’t much, it started with them actually exchanging phone numbers, because there were times when one couldn’t make it to the spar and they didn’t want to keep the other waiting. Then, after a few unfortunate events, Dabi agreed to Izuku popping out every once in a while at his apartment as long as the boy called at least a few hours beforehand.

Things had gotten...easy, somehow, after that. Izuku would magically materialised himself on the windowsill from time to time just to hang out, and Dabi never asked him to leave, so they did just talk and roast each other for a few hours in his shitty flat.

*Kinda sad that my only friend is someone I more or less blackmailed.* Izuku through idly.

Right now, his mom was out of town for a case and she’d given her son food and money for the few days she would be gone. The boy didn’t want to spend his Friday night alone, so he asked Dabi if he could drop by his apartment to hang out for the night. The man had said something along the lines of “Meh, bring some beer” to which Izuku responded by bringing two cups of instant ramen, partly because he was bored, and partly because he was sure Dabi would starve himself out of negligence. But, the scarred teen had survived that long on spite alone, so what did he know?

“I hate heroes” Dabi finally said. Izuku looked at him with his eyebrows raised “Not all of them; just most of them.” He sighed and shook his head.

“Why?” Izuku asked looking up.

“Because any horrible person can take a position of power, and everyone will turn a blind eye to it as long as they present themselves right” he groaned, rubbing his temples and looking up. “Like you said- unless you’re a person of importance, people don’t give a shit about you. The people who matter don’t care and the people who care don’t matter.” He finally looked the teen in the eye. “I guess that the difference between you and me is that you haven’t given up yet.” He shook his head and stared the boy in the eye. “You will.”

Izuku, shrugged uncomfortably and looked away.

Dabi got up and stretched his lanky limbs. “It’s getting a little bit late. You might want to head home.” Izuku nodded and got up. “By the way, come over tomorrow morning somewhere around ten.”

“Why?”

“I wanna show you something you might find useful. Bring your gym clothes too.”
Izuku blinked, then nodded and, after a quick goodbye, he left.

The next morning he found himself in front of the same flat, gym bag in hand and giving the courtesy of actually knocking at the door. He usually used the window because it was easier and somewhat safer than the rotten and nearly collapsed stairs, but this morning he took a risk and presented himself in front of the flat in the way any civilised person was supposed to.

He rapped at the door for about five seconds before it opened and he was met with the sight of the fried fucker in the doorway, looking very groggy with his hair in each and every direction. “Is it ten already?

Izuku nodded. The man cursed and opened the door to let him in. Izuku followed and closed the door as the man stripped away his sleeping shirt and threw on one that was only slightly less wrinkled. Izuku noticed that his scars spread along his chest and over his arms, stitched together pretty badly. The boy wondered, not for the first time, what could have caused those marks. Dabi slipped on his jacket and turned towards the greenette. He walked out, Izuku followed and the raisin closed the door. As they started to walk out, Izuku pulled out a bottle of yogurt and an energy bar and handed them to him. The elder looked at him a little bit skeptically, but started munching on the improvised breakfast nonetheless.

“So,” Izuku said. “Where’re we going?”

“You’ll see” he said as he threw the litter away. Izuku sighed and memorized the road to wherever the man was taking him. To his surprise, they were headed towards the (slightly) better part of the district, the place where people started being decent and drug deals were made behind closed doors instead of the street. Izuku looked at his friend(?) sceptically, but followed nonetheless.

They reached a middle sized building and Dabi, honest to god, knocked and Izuku felt like his eyebrows would fly off his face.

What the hell is going on here?!

The lobby was stylish, in that ‘this furniture was picked because it hides trapdoors and weapons well’ kind of way. But, he didn’t have time to properly admire the aesthetics, because the taller teen walked to the reception. He leaned in and talked to the girl in a hushed tone before she gestured towards a door staff only written on it. Dabi nodded and gestured for Izuku to follow.

Instead of going forward, they climbed down a flight of stairs to what seemed to be the basement. They walked in the dark for a few moments before Dabi opened a door and entered a room filled with light.

It was a gym; and a huge one at that. It had mattresses all over the floor and stalls with weapons leaned on the opposite wall. But, the difference between this and other gyms was the complete lack of exercise machines. In the middle of the room, Izuku could see a tall lady, very muscley, looking like she could bench press a man twice her size. She had long, black hair braided in dreads and tied in a loose tail at the base of her neck. She turned towards them.

“So that’s the brat?”

“Yuup!” Dabi said. Izuku looked confused.

“Excuse me, but what is happening?”

It was the woman who spoke. “Dabi called me and told me he has a brat that would need some specialised training. I specialise in weapons, mixed martial arts and things you wouldn’t want
to get caught with.” She said winking.

“I figured that if you were serious about this whole thing, you might want to get a real teacher, maybe learn to use a weapon or something. Who knows, maybe like this you’ll finally leave me alone,"

Izuku mouth fell open as he looked between woman and at his friend. “My name is Iho” the woman spoke. “We’ll do it like this: the first week is for free, starting with the second you have to pay. I’ll see what you can do, what you can improve and we’ll start from there. Sound good?”

Izuku beamed. She gestured towards the tatami while Dabi took a few steps back and leaned on the wall.

“Attack me!” she said. Not hesitating and knowing he would end up on the ground anyway, he went all out. He found himself pinned to the mattress a second later with Dabi snorting in the background. “Not horrible.” Iho said, helping him up. “You’re on the skinny side, so I won’t be expecting to see any muscles.”

Izuku looked down sheepishly. “I started doing parkour, but I can’t seem to build any.”

The woman grabbed his hand and held it to eye level. She pressed on his bicep. “The muscle is here, alright -you just weren’t build for it. You’re on the leaner side, much like Dabi.” She sighed. “What a lot of people don’t understand is that there is no one-size-fits-all way to get abs or visible muscles. It’s all about how you were built. The muscular tissue is there, it just doesn’t show much.” Izuku nodded and focused on the woman. “Don’t believe the fitness commercials- huge muscle mass slows you down. In a battle, force is important, but speed just as useful. It doesn’t really matter how hard you hit it your opponent if he has a knife in your gut by the point you look up. Thankfully, you were built for speed, so we only have to make sure you know how to transform your natural assets in usable skills.”

They kept sparring for a few minutes, which went a lot better than when he was fighting Dabi. Iho was cool and she taught him things. “Remember, you don’t have to hit very hard as long as you hit certain points. The eyes and nose are very painful points. But remember, don’t punch to the head.”

“But you just said…”

“I know what I said, but those were very specific points. Outside of those, your skull is a big, bony cage made for the sole purpose of keeping your thinker intact. If fist meets skull, nine times out of ten fists breaks first, got it?”

Izuku nodded and attacked again. They went at it for about half an hour, in which Dabi dozed off, probably to regain the stolen hours of precious rest he didn’t manage to get in his run down flat. By the end of it, Izuku was tired and sweaty, barely keeping his breath. Still, he looked up.

“Could you teach me how to use weapons too?”

Iho seemed to ponder. “Sure.” She shrugged. “What’d you have in mind?”

“No idea, honestly,”

“A gun” she deadpanned. “But, unfortunately, the legislation doesn’t really allow us to freely carry them, and illegal smuggling is surprisingly hard. Not to mention that they’re not the most inconspicuous weapon out there. So, I think you could try the Bo staff...maybe? To give you some
distance since you’re so short. But you should definitely learn how to use a knife efficiently.” She shook her head. “You have no idea how many people stab themselves in accident.” She thought for a second. “Also, we have a very efficient doctor here, so, if you get hurt and you have the money/favours, you can come here.”

“Favours?”

“Yes” said Dabi, who had appeared to have woken up from the power nap he took while Izuku was getting his ass kicked “If you get something done for them, you can skip a pay, a training or a medical visit. How do you think I managed to get you in here?”

“Ah, yeah, I almost forgot you’re broke” Izuku said and Dabi flipped him off. Izuku ignored him and turned towards the woman. “But, what exactly is this place?”

“It’s one of the few neutral grounds of the underground.” She lifted her chin in pride. “We basically get you what you need and don’t ask questions for the right price. No one really attacks us, because we are an essential part of the district and its functioning. There’s like a truce between gangs, that they don’t attack this place.”

“So like... underground Switzerland?”

“Yup!” she threw him something. Izuku caught it and saw that it was a blunt knife. When he looked up, Iho was smiling. “Let’s see what you’re made of.”

~O~

Izuku followed the man in the alley. The man hadn’t spotted him, too focused on his target. The boy had initially headed home, but, on the way to the subway, he had spotted a man following a young lady rather close behind. The girl had spotted him and had tried to lose his trail, but the man had been very persistent and, honestly, obvious in his intent from a mile away. Izuku had looked around to see if any policeman or security noticed, but they either didn’t or couldn’t care less. The greenette had huffed in annoyance and pulled on his hood, taking the time to slip on his sky goggles and bandanna too, successfully covering the entirety of his face.

He had noticed that, despite what flashy costumes heroes chose to wear, they were very impractical. On look in the real ninja archives and documentaries showed that they were wearing lose clothes, easy to move in. so, Izuku was wearing lose jeans, a dark hoodie, ski goggles and bandanna to cover his face. Initially, he wanted to wear a mask or something, but the goggles protected his eyes while not endangering his peripheral vision, and the bandanna was great at hiding them when they hung loosely around his neck.

So, as the boy finally entered the alley, he saw the woman whacking the man over the head with her purse. The man grabbed her arms, and that was the moment Izuku decided to attack. He jumped and kicked the man hard in the back. When he turned around, the smaller boy pulled his shoulders and slammed his knee into his stomach, head-butting immediately afterwards.

The man staggered back and the woman ran away. Izuku dived in for one more kick in the jewels before jumping on an emergency stair and scaling the building to the roof. He followed the woman with his eyes until she reached the officer in the street and told him what happened.

But it didn’t matter. The man had already ran away. Izuku sighed and shook his head. At least he had saved someone. Too bad the man was free enough to repeat it. It had been a week since Izuku had started doing real vigilantism. He wasn’t actively looking for trouble, but he took the long way home through Dabi’s district, so he was bound to stumble onto something. He flicked the knife
in his pocket over and over.

It was a nice one, he had taken it from one man who had been too dunk one night and went all out on some people as he started throwing water all around, at a pressure so high it skinned a guy’s arm. Izuku still shuddered when he remembered the screams. He had jumped in and taken the guy down. He could only shoot it from his eyes, so he stuffed his head in a garbage bin and waited for the water to end. Or, that had been the plan, but the police came, so Izuku simply grabbed the shiny thing off the ground and ran off. It was a nice knife, and the man tried to kill someone with it. Izuku didn’t have his own one yet, so he took two birds with one stone.

He knew it was impossible, but he tried to save as many people as he could. He had already stopped three muggings and, possibly a murder (though he wasn’t sure about that last one), the police was bound to find out sooner or later. And then the hunt would start.

He wasn’t the first vigilante in Tokyo, far from it. Actually, now that he thought about it, there had been a lot of vigilantes in the last decade. Some had been caught, some disappeared, none got the recognition they deserved. Not that Izuku expected any, he was content with simply making sure he stopped harm when he could, but he was aware that, soon enough, his part time job will become even more dangerous than it was already.

“You should’ve finished him off.” Came a low and raspy voice from behind him. Izuku jumped and was met with the sight of a man sporting an unholy amount of blades on his person. “After all, what good are you if you can’t stop the cause of the problem?” there was something dark in his voice and Izuku did what any sane person would in this kind of situation: he broke into a sprint and jumped a meter to the roof of the next house. He ran and kept running, yet he could feel the other man behind him. He climbed down an emergency stair, jumped on a windowsill and scaled a statue to the roof.

Panting, he looked around. No sign of the man. His heart rate was still up when he heard the unmistakable sound of someone landing on concrete behind him. “You might be good at running, but you’re still a rookie.”

Izuku whirled around and found himself at the wrong end of a blade. His attacker was keeping it at his neck and silently pushed him down until Izuku found himself sitting down with the sword pressing his throat. The blade traveled up and the boy tried not to move too much, for fear of getting stabbed. The sword rested on his goggles before more pressure was applied. Izuku screwed his eyes shut, but the man only pushed them up. His bandanna fell and the man stared at him for a few seconds.

“What’s a child doing here?”

Izuku opened his eyes. “Why do you care?” the man jabbed his sword closer, cold steel landing on his throat.

“Answer.” He growled. “Why is a child chasing criminals in this part of town?”

“Because the child is done waiting for the heroes to swoop in and save the day.” He glared before looking down. “I can help. Why shouldn’t I?”

“Do you wanna be a hero, kid?”

“I do,” Izuku gulped.

“Then you’re worthy to keep alive” the man grinned and suddenly vanished, leaving a
very confused teen wondering how to climb down from the roof.

Chapter End Notes

well, yeah, that happened
tumblr
i have a discord
I hold the hope that next time it will be better

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was Wednesday and Izuku knew he’d have to head home soon if he wanted to make it in time for dinner and some good ol’ last minute cramming for the test tomorrow. But, considering he was, alternatively, the best and second best in his class, he allowed himself to stay out a little longer, to make sure everything was ok before he left.

He walked at a leisure pace in the shadows, not actively looking for trouble but keeping an eye out for it. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on how one looked at it, it only took him some fifteen minutes to stumble upon a brawl between four, very obviously drunk, people.

“Hey!” he yelled, in a gruff voice he was used to making whenever he was in costume. “Cut it out!”

“Fuck off, midget!” one of them growled before getting himself decked and jumping back into the fray.

Izuku was prepared to intervene but then one of them started yelling and pulled out something that looked like a syringe and, before Izuku could react, he proceed to stab himself in the tight. Suddenly mineral erupted out of his skin and he went on to absolutely demolish the other three fighters in a matter of seconds; the problem was that he didn’t seem to have any intention of stopping with those three as he immediately went after the first person to exit a bar.

Some kind of Quirk enhancer; most likely liquid form, immediate action, possibly hysteria reducing. Izuku thought as he moved away from the newly erupted fight and into a better attack position. Aggressor’s Quirk is clearly some kind of hardening, most likely only affects the skin, the space between the minerals and the eyes are the most likely weak points worth checking out. He was almost to the other end of the alley effectively placing himself behind the man. Aggressor is inebriated, dizzy, with limited freedom of movement and most likely hysteric.

Izuku skidded to halt and looked around, noticing a bottle which he grabbed. He shifted to get as clear of an opening as possible, then lunged. In one move, he climbed the man and smashed the bottle on in his back. The bottle shattered, but the man didn’t seem very affected. So, blunt force is useless, huh? Before he could get back down, the man grabbed him and slammed him into the ground.

Something cracked and a jolt of pain surged through his limbs. Izuku groaned as he got off the pavement and rubbed a sore spot before turning towards the fight. Suddenly, the man stopped- or well, not so much stopped as deflated. Something white rolled around him, some of the rocks falling off, some just shrinking back into his skin. Before anyone could grasp what was happening, a person dressed in black jumped into the fight, efficiently knocking out of restraining most of the thugs. Izuku felt his hears skip a beat when he saw the yellow goggles.

Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god, it's Eraserhead.

One of his favourite heroes was here!

While you're committing vigilantism, idiot! Izuku froze. He should go. He really, really
should be going now. Eraserhead obviously had it handled and he was an actual hero. There was really no need for Izuku to stick around. From the corner of his eye, he spotted a man pulling out a knife and turning towards the hero. The black haired man was too busy fighting some of the earlier thug’s friends to notice the man coming at him. Izuku’s legs moved before he had the chance to notice, and he slammed into the man. That alone wouldn’t have been very impressive, since he didn’t really have a lot of muscle mass to properly pack the punch, but the man was drunk, so his attack worked well enough. As the man collapsed, the knife cluttered to the ground and Izuku kicked it away. Not that he really needed to. The man was passed out.

“So, you’re the new troublemaker.” Came a bored yet menacing voce from behind him. Izuku froze and slowly turned around.

Eraserhead was sitting in the middle of a pile of unconscious bodies, his hair and scarves floating as if submerged in water.

So. Cool.

Focus, goddamnit!

They stared at each other for a few seconds before Izuku threw the remnants of the broken bottle at him and charged for the wall. He ran on it for as long as his momentum carried him and grabbed on a windowsill, successfully launching himself on the roof. His back protested as he rolled, his ribs aching all the way, but he ignored the pain and charged to the next roof. What he loved about this area was that the little available space made the buildings be very close together, the roofs almost touching. Unfortunately, that made it easy for his pursuer to follow him as well. He had reached two stories high when he saw from the corner of his eye how a scarf being thrown in his direction. He rolled to dodge and found himself with a fist three inches from his face.

He pulled back, but Eraserhead grabbed his hoodie and slammed his knee into the kid. Izuku yelped and the man hesitated a little before he tried to get him once again. Izuku pulled the man’s scarves and slammed his forehead into his nose. His head didn’t hurt as much as he could, the goggles protecting most of his face, but the man’s grunt of pain made it all worth it. Izuku staggered back and made a run for it before one of that god-awful murder toilet paper wrapped itself around his arms. He was pulled back with a lot of force and, as he tried to struggle, something caught his forearm and he found himself flung over the edge of the roof.

There were a few seconds of free falling before the mummy bandages caught him, holding him suspended half-way down the wall.

Shit!

He cursed as the capture weapon started pulling him up. Izuku grunted in pain and looked down. There was a two story fall, but there was also a small balcony and a window he could use from the way down. He looked up at the hero. Eraserhead seemed conflicted, but Izuku wasted no time searching for his knife. His fingers clenched around the handle and he wrestled it from beneath the trap.

Desperately, he started cutting the scarves, but he was getting closer and closer to the man that could arrest him. He almost reached the edge when the man noticed his struggling was actually cutting and by that point Izuku was hanging by only half the weapon. Staring Eraserhead in the eye, he cut way the last part and fell into the darkness.

~O~
Izuku took off his shoes as he opened the door. He was an hour later than he was supposed to, but he had messaged his mom earlier that he would be late, so he didn’t really worry. “I’m home!” he yelled as he made his way to his room. He needed to change before he got to dinner and had to think up a good excuse for his limping.

After escaping the hero, Izuku had went to the gym/underground whatever and asked for Iho. He had landed badly on his way down and also cut himself in something, bad enough to know that he would need stitches. This time he was lucky and didn’t need to pay because, apparently, one man he had caught a few days ago was one Iho’s sister had had some bad business with so the trainer was willing to give him a month worth of free assistance.

As far as treatment went the good news was that he didn’t break anything. His ribs were bruised and his foot was not so worse off. The bad news was that yeah, he did need stitches, and he was advised not to do much vigilante-ing the next few days, so he wouldn’t tear the stitches keeping his guts in place. Izuku had thanked the women, and Iho’s sister, Warui, had given him a lollipop which would’ve been patronising if the lollipop wasn’t delicious.

After all that he retrieved a pack he’d stashed with some emergency supplies, including a change of clothes so that he wouldn’t be recognized and headed home.

Now, with his side aching and a rainbow of bruises on his skin, Izuku changed into comfier clothes and searched his hoodie for any more tears that would need fixing. The poor thing was looking more and more like a voodoo doll, but Izuku wasn’t going to give it up as long as he could still fix it.

He pulled out his notebook and started scrawling what he had found about his fight.

**Eraserhead**

*Quirk: erasure. (It allows him to cancel or ‘erase’ other people’s Quirks.)*

*He seems proficient in hand to hand combat, acrobatic skills; he has good stamina and accuracy.* Here, he tapped his pen to his chin before adding, in small letters, *scarfbending* as the best way to explain the man’s ability to use his capture device. *His hair rises and falls at certain intervals- cause unknown, possibly Quirk related.*

*Equipment: goggles- eye protection, possibly related to his Quirk(?)Capture device- scarf shaped, sturdy, flexible and lightweight*

*Fighting style: effective, economical- fights dirty, fights to win.*

*Moral code:*

Here, Izuku stopped again. He had thrown him off a building, but he also caught him, was it an accident, or a deliberate action with the intent to hurt him? Did he catch him to arrest him, or to actually save his life? In the end he just left the space blank.

*Weaknesses: physically stronger people, heavier people/objects in general.* Izuku had seen the man. He was strong, but also lithe and slender, and he could be easily incapacitated by someone who was heavier and more or less sat on him. His non-combative Quirk wouldn’t do much good against that.

*Speed: Very high, do not engage in pursuit if at all possible.*

He sighed and shook his head, it was less information than he would’ve liked, but he did it nonetheless. It could come in useful later. He threw the notebook on the desk, packed his schoolbag for tomorrow morning and stretched, cursing his sore muscles as he laid on the bed. He breathed
deeply for a few moments before he made his way to the living.

His mom was just setting the plates when he entered and hugged her from behind

“How was your walk?” she asked in that tone of hers she used when she knew there was something more to something and she was trying to get him to make a mistake. Izuku took the plates and set them gingerly on the table.

“There was an old man in the park who’d lost his dog.” He said with his back at her as he set the plates. Lies were getting easier and easier, slipping almost effortlessly out of his mouth. That didn’t mean he enjoyed lying, but it had become a skill he couldn’t deny the use of. “Had to help him find it. He bought me a chocolate bar as thanks but I missed the bus so that’s why I’m so late.” He said chocolate bar, because saying that he got a lollipop from an old man would probably have had unfortunate implications. His mom smiled and ruffled his hair before they both sat down. They ate and his mom told him about the different cases she had to battle and how stupid some people could actually be. Izuku laughed. That’s what you get for working in the system.

~O~

School had become somewhat more bearable in the last year. He didn’t know exactly what changed, but every time someone laughed at him and told him that he couldn’t be a hero, he could only remember how he defeated Quirked people and saved civilians, and smile ominously at them.

Apparently, his smiles could be pretty creepy when he meant them, or maybe he had spent too much time with Dabi and his stitched mouth that looked like it would split his face open whenever he smiled because people just… walked away. It wasn’t really a visible change, but it was there.

Bakugou had, miraculously stopped, harassing him and, with him most people had more or less given up as well. It could also possibly be related to the fact that being near Dabi had somehow forced him to become snappier and snarkier and savage, and most people just weren’t used to him actually fighting back, so that was probably a factor as well.

His alternate persona was finally making a guest appearance in the news and, apparently, one of the people he had taken down was a very famous criminal, so he was now pretty famous. Well, this wasn’t the only thing. An idol had gotten too drunk one night and attacked a girl and Izuku had stopped him. The man, living in a bubble of fame, had tweeted to rant about it which, of course, got a lot off responses from the victims and people who took their sides. Soon, the fans of the idol and the people who were against him were having an online war, and Izuku was the one who had started it all. The forums were discussing him and the boy tried to stay as impartial as possible, which was hard with all the speculation and theories going on. Some people took his side and said that he was a hero, while others accused him of being nothing more than a villain. Different names were going around the internet, but everyone was waiting for the police to give the official one.

He had to become very careful in the lockers after gym class. While he had become actually proficient in most games and people actually wanted him on the team. The bruises and scars covering his back were more than enough for even the most out of your business people to get suspicious. So he usually just wasted time until everyone left to properly change out of his sweaty attire. Gym was the last class of the day anyway, so it wasn’t like he was missing something or going anywhere.

That’s why, on a Friday, when he was preparing to head home and was changing out of his clothes, the sound of the door closing sent chills and unwanted signals down his spine. Turning around, holding his shirt in front of his chest to cover his most recent stab wound, his eyes meet the burning crimson of his once childhood friend.

“Deku” Bakugou growled as he stepped forward. Izuku tried to hold his ground, but the taller teen
basically caged him in, back pressed to the cold metal of the locker.

“Bakugou.” Izuku said and didn’t miss the way the boy’s eyebrow twitched at the name.

“What the fuck’s been happening with you?!” he growled, leaning a little bit too much into the other’s personal space. Izuku gulped but held his ground.

“Why do you care?” he bit, staring the taller in the eye. Bakugou gritted his teeth.

“Because” Bakugo said, poking him in the chest “Those wounds weren’t made by me.”

“Mad that someone else’s using your punching bag?” Izuku hissed as he tried to push the other away. Katsuki held strong, teeth a few inches from Izuku’s eyes, like a rabid dog ready to bite. Izuku gritted his teeth. “I’ll be willing to answer your questions if you would stop kabe-donning me.” He deadpanned. Bakugou, seemingly only now realising what position they were actually in, pulled back a few steps, enough for Izuku to slip on a clean shirt and stuff the other in his backpack. He turned to face the blond, a hand on the bag strap, ready to flee. If there was one thing he had earned from his extracurricular activities, it was that you always had to be ready to run.

Katsuki glared. “So. What the hell have you been up to?”

Izuku held his stare. “Why. Do. You. Care?” he stressed every word, challenging the taller. Katsuki always said that he was nothing but a pebble, a bug to be squished. Yet, right now, he was questioning him regarding his sudden lack of attention towards the blond. So, the question was more than a question. It was a challenge for the blond to either keep up his façade and back off, or to go back on his word and prove the others that he actually cared. Izuku was very interested in the outcome.

Katsuki, apparently, decided to choose route C, which was slamming Izuku into the locker and getting closer.

“When I ask you a question, you fucking answer you Quirkless Deku!”

Izuku was smart enough to know he couldn’t win a fight in this close quarters, so he looked away as he shrugged. “I told you, I started training. It’s bound to end in cuts and bruises if I ever want to get somewhere. “ he hoped that looking submissive would appease the blond. When they didn’t have the intent to purely hurt, people tended to go easier on the ones that looked like they wouldn’t fight.

Katsuki pulled back half of an inch. “Then what’s with the stitches? And the limping? And the scars? That’s not the kind of shit you get from training,”

“Maybe not your kind” he bit back, hand tightening on the bag’s strap. With the right kind of momentum….

Katsuki punched the locker over his head. “Stop screwing around! There’s something more than mere training going on, and it pisses me off!”

Izuku took a deep breath, straightened his back…

And punched Katsuki in the guts.

The blond doubled over and Izuku took his chance and ran. He dashed for the door and rushed outside in the hot afternoon air. Katsuki’s two cronies were waiting, looking a little bit surprised to see him in one piece. Izuku wasted no time and sprinted over the sidewalk, the sounds of angry explosions strong in his ears. The greenete dashed for hidden alleys running from his pursuers. He
took a wrong right and stopped in a dead end. He whipped around as his three tormentors blocked the exit.

Katsuki was fuming, explosions cackling in his palms as the other two brought the rear. Izuku looked around. There was a garbage bin near the wall and an emergency stair above the blond that led to the roofs. Something clicked as the nuke strolled forward. “You will pay for this, Deku. Answer my fucking question and maybe I’ll let you walk back home.”

No, you won’t.

Izuku landed in a fighting stance and dashed forward. Katsuki pulled back a bit, clearly not expecting an attack, and the smaller boy took the chance to jump on the trash bin. The metal creaked, but it held the boy as he jumped and grabbed the stair. With practiced ease, he rushed up, ignoring the strangled what the fucks coming from the cronies below. He reached the roof and truly realised how fucked he was. Because, in the market and the middle of the city, no matter how high, the roofs were close to each other. They had to be in order to preserve space. But this was the residential area. And the next roof was at least twenty feet away.

Explosions alerted him that the blond had finally reached the roof. He whipped around and saw Bakugou coming at him. “Nowhere to run, you stupid Deku” he growled as he got closer. Behind him, Izuku saw the two minions making their way on the roof the old fashioned way. The greenette looked back. Still, twenty feet till his next escape.

You’re not gonna make it.

“Oi! Don’t ignore me, you fucker!”

Izuku looked back at his arch-nemesis. “Come on, now, Bakugou, that’s a little too much, even for you.”

The name seemed to be what ticked him off. Katsuki yelled and ran towards him. Throwing caution to the wind, Izuku turned around and dashed for the edge.

With enough momentum…

You’re still not gonna make it.

The explosions stopped somewhere behind him. He was two stories high. Best case scenario, broken bones, maybe broken spine. His feet didn’t stop, he didn’t even try to. He just ran until the edge came, too fast for him to be fully prepared.

He jumped.

The momentum launched him to the other roof, but Izuku knew from the second his feet left the concrete that he wouldn’t make it. Still, he stretched his hands and his body slammed violently into the wall. Air left his lungs and his stitched screamed as the edge bit into his ribs.

He let out a yelp as his hands started to slip, feet scraping uselessly at the concrete. You couldn’t climb the wall in class, how do you expect to do it now? He stretched his arm and tried to push himself up. Use your legs too, idiot. His arm bent and he slipped once again. His stiches burned. Izuku pushed his feet up, kicking the wall as his arms were begging him to give up and fall.

Finally, he managed to push his torso over the edge. The concrete stabbed into his ribcage, but he crawled onto the roof and collapsed onto the ground. He panted, chest rising as he looked at the infinite blue sky above.
I did it. I made it. I’m alive. The adrenaline still rushing through his system gave him the strength to throw his fist up and let out a relieved cry. Something wet stained his cheeks, and Izuku took a few seconds to breathe before he sat up.

On the other roof, Bakugou frozen, staring at the greenette, his expression a mix of feelings he didn’t have the energy to try to untangle. But he couldn’t wait. He didn’t know how long the blond will stay shocked, but he didn’t want to risk it.

So, he got up, grabbed his backpack (did I have it on me all this time) and strolled to the other edge.

~O~

Izuku was keeping a light jog towards Dabi’s flat. Mom wasn’t home, having left a few hours ago and returning tomorrow morning. Izuku would have to make sure he would return earlier than that. Thankfully, tomorrow was Saturday, so he could sleep in tomorrow.

The district was dark, and Izuku was glad for it. He didn’t have the same outfit as the other nights, a different hoodie and sunglasses instead of his usual ski goggles, but the message from Dabi had been quite clear: something you won’t be recognised in.

He was glad he got to sleep that day. After the adrenaline wore off, the exhaustion from the gym class and his run on the roofs had worn him off and he barely managed to get home. From the stair, he had entered an open window and accidentally broke into someone’s house? They were in the shower and Izuku just slipped out the door without a trace, so it couldn’t have been that bad.

He reached the building and scaled the wall until he reached the usual window. He slipped inside, and Dabi turned around when he heard him. Looking him up and down, the certified raisin got closer. “Did you bring everything?”

“Disguise, weapon and a notebook.” Izuku said.

“Good” Dabi turned around and put on his jacket. “Believe me, you don’t want to be recognised.”

Izuku leaned on the wall, not trusting the ratty bed. “I don’t see you wearing any disguises.”

The man smirked. “I don’t need to hide.”

“When are you going to tell me exactly where we are going?”

The man smiled ominously, an occurrence that was getting more and more often and signalled to the door. Izuku walked there, but stopped when Dabi grabbed his shoulders and stared into his eyes. He seemed like he searched his face before he took the glasses and set them better on his face. Then, he pulled the bandanna and set the hood right.

“I didn’t think you’d go this far” the man said as he pulled off the hood. Izuku was now wearing a dark purple wig that covered his right eye when left unattended, hair even wilder and longer than usual. He wore contacts, one blue and one purple. He had found the outfit in his mom’s closet, buried under some other clothes he was absolutely not going to question.

“You said inconspicuous” Izuku shrugged. Dabi sketched one of his rare smiles and put his hood and glasses on once again, lingering a little longer than strictly necessary. Seemingly pleased with his new look, the man shut off the lights and walked out.

No matter how many times he jumped from terrifying heights, Izuku would never be truly prepared for the gates to hell that were Dabi’s stairs. The man seemed pretty amused at his antics.
They walked outside, and the scarred one took a route Izuku had seen him take in the beginning, but never managed to follow that far. He kept close to him, nothing but a shadow near the scarecrow that was his friend, his dark clothes concealing him well in the night. After about half an hour of walking, Dabi entered what seemed like a basement. Izuku followed and found himself in front of a huge pair of doors. Two bouncers were sitting in front of them, taller than even Dabi. He pulled a card of some sort and they stared the glorified Molotov down, taking in his scarred features before looking at Izuku. The boy froze as one of them pointed at him.

“He’s with you?”

“Yup!” Dabi nodded.

One of them grabbed him and pulled his hood down. Izuku was glad his disguise was good enough for them not to tell the difference. “He needs to register.”

Dabi groaned but signalled him to follow. Izuku did and they forced him to write his name and signature on a paper. The greenette swiftly switched the pen from right to left when it came to the signature and they let him go.

The bouncers glared down at the younger as if to force him to turn tail and take him back, but Dabi held his ground and, eventually, they let them in.

“Akatani Mikumo, huh?”

“Well, sorry that my fake name feels more real than yours, Dabi.”

The man rolled his eyes. “Suit yourself, Yamikumo” he smirked.

“Why do you have to ruin it?!” Izuku wined “It’s a good name.”

“Well, I’m right, aren’t I?”

“Fine. Did you know that Dabi means ‘dearly loved’ in Hebrew?”

The man glared and Izuku smiled behind the mask.

The moment they stepped inside, it felt like an entire world changed. There were a ton of people, screaming and yelling, pumping their fists. The air was filled with the scent of sweat and blood. Izuku followed the man until they reached the end of an arena.

“This” Dabi said, leaning in to be properly heard over the yells of the crowd. “Is an Quirk fighting ring.” Izuku nodded, knowing that his voice wouldn’t get over the crowd. “Most people who want to use and train their Quirks, and don’t have a licence come here. Of course, you need to know the right people to get in. you can either watch or fight. People make bets and, depending on your wins, you can get really rich.”

“So I guess you lose a lot then” Izuku couldn’t control himself. Dabi glared and flicked him painfully in the nose.

“I didn’t get a lot of time to fight recently” Dabi shook his head. “But I brought you here for a reason. You can’t really discover much from fights on the street, especially when you are in them. Here, you can see Quirk fights outside of heroes and villains. Here, you can see some of the real deal, where the purpose is to win, not to get a great pose.” He grumbled. Izuku nodded. “Also, no electronic device works here. You can’t record anything, there’s a Quirk that stops you from it. But, a lot of people come here to scout help for whatever, so, the notebook won’t be too out of place.”
“So” Izuku said as he rubbed his chin. “Should I bet for or against you?”

Dabi gave him a thin smile. “Don’t gamble before you learn how to play,” He looked around. “I’ll go and make the arrangements. I’ve got a match later. We can go after that or we could stay a little longer if you really want to see more.”

Izuku nodded as he pulled out his notebook and stared at the arena where a new opponent was just entering. “Don’t get too hurt, I can’t carry you.”

Dabi flipped him off and disappeared into the crowd.

Chapter End Notes

ok, so, i looked around and, apprently, Dabi means 'pent up' in hindi. it also means chuckle, so there's that
i will confess i didn't look up the prototypes until i was really deep into this fic (i have a pretty big buffer) but, the moment i did, i cursed myself it mans reckless
hori, how could you how could you keep this away from us?
anyway, here are some more meanings if you are interested

[link] [link]
One of the things Aizawa hated, no, absolutely despised, was paperwork. Paperwork and giving reports to the police. It was a waste of time, but he knew it was necessary. Still, that didn't stop him from hating them with a burring passion.

It might see, ironic for him to hate the red tape yet still chose it as his teaching subject. But it made sense. Well, at least to him it did. Truth was, what he enjoyed was threading through the loopholes and laws that prevented him from doing certain stuff, beating the system with its own wretched laws. There was something truly satisfying about that. And about proving entitled brats that their flashy Quirks weren't the key to being a hero. Yes, he really enjoyed that.

But no matter, he was seated in one of those uncomfortable chairs, waiting for a police officer to appear. He hoped it was Tsukakuchi. He was the most tolerable of the bunch. Aizawa shook his head. He really, really needed to sleep. Double shifts were a bitch, and he needed to recharge his batteries for the new school year that was to come. Another year, another set of brats. He vaguely wondered how many he could expel this time. There wasn't any limit per se, and Nedzu had always been pretty lenient when it came to him and his expulsions. The other teachers were too soft. If someone didn't have potential, they were going to die pretty fast once in the business. And, no matter what they said, Aizawa wasn't going to have another dead child on his conscience.

Fate seemed to smile upon him for the first time in a month. Tsukakuchi entered and Aizawa relaxed, if even a little. This was going to be shorter than it could've been. Aizawa liked Tsukakuci for the fact that he knew when to stop and when to ask the right questions, not the useless ones.

"Good evening, Eraserhead" the man sat down. Aizawa pulled off his goggles in a sign of curtesy.

"Evening." He stiffened a yawn.

"Ok, then, let's start. What can you tell me."

"Found another Trigger cell" the hero said. The detective pulled out a few pages and started scrawling. "Pretty weak, small fry. You have them in your custody."

"I'll keep you updated."

Aizawa nodded. God, he thought he had solved with Trigger all those years ago, but nope, here they were, like the fucked up fungus between the toes of society. He shook his head. "Though, I met the newest menace in the district."

Tsukakuchi stopped. He looked up. "Please tell me they used a Quirk."

Aizawa shook his head. "Not that I could tell. Why?"
The man sighed. "We have no legal base to arrest them. Every time they're in a fight, the witnesses say that they were either provoked, or the fight was already started when they arrived. The victims are now blaming us for not noticing sooner and not coming to save them, and the media is at our throats because, apparently, an unlicensed vigilante is doing our job better than us!" the man threw his hands in the air in frustration. Aizawa remained silent, letting the usually calm detective vent. "Look, I know being a police officer brings no merits. I'm ok with it. I'm not a hero, I don't expect recognition. But to go through how many years of school and public service and to be accused that a hooded criminal is doing my job better than me?" he groaned and put his head in his hands. Aizawa smiled. Yes, he knew.

"Anyway" Tsukakuchi gathered himself. "What can you tell me about them?"

"A child. Your vigilante is a child."

Tsukakuchi blanched. "Why do you say that?"

"They were light. Too light for their height. I punched them once and they yelped. Their voice was too high for a grown male. So it was either a teenager or a woman. Or a teenage girl." He shook his head. "But there was something in their behaviour they were too reckless to be a full grown adult."

Tsukakuchi let a long suffering groan. "Great, we have a child criminal now. If the media finds out, we're really deep in hot water. People suck to these things like sharks to blood. If words get out, we will have people on our doorstep yelling how could we fuck up so bad that a child had to step in and do our jobs." He shook his head. "Why can't people understand that there's more to police work than just catching criminals?"

Aizawa quirked an eyebrow. Out of the system, policeman had it the worst. They had to handle the villains, to get them to jail, to put up with public uproar and to deal with the random vigilantes that popped up every once in a while. The plain mad looked up. "What else can you tell me?"

"Pretty strong moral code. When they saw me appear, they looked like they wanted to flee, but they still pushed an attacker out of the way when they tried to kill me. Talented, but untrained. They had decent balance and skill, but their jumping around was ungraceful. So, they had proper training, but not enough experience to do it flawlessly. They also tried to talk the minions out of the fight before they jumped in. so, it wasn't really attack." The man smiled. "You're right, it really seems like you have no real base to arrest them."

"I know. You see, I would really appreciate the help, we don't really get to send many people in that area of the district, but they are technically doing illegal work, so I have to do something about it."

"You know that a good lawyer could disassemble your case, right?"

"I know." He breathed. "And now that they're a child, it gets even worse. We have to pull all the social workers and legal guardians, and is it really considered a crime if they didn't use a Quirk?" eh sighed and leaned back in the chair. "Anything else?"

Aizawa's smile died on his lips. " Yes. It's about their tools."

Tsukakuchi raised an eyebrow. "What about them?"

"Their knife cut through my capture tape."

"And?"

"My capture tape. It's a support item created especially for restraining people with violent and
destructive Quirks. You can't cut through that with any knife, you need a special kind of blade and, let me tell you, you can't find that everywhere." Tsukakuchi nodded, gesturing for him to go on. Aizawa shook his head. "So, that blade was either created with the help of a Quirk, case in which we could hire them in support, b) he stole it from someone, which might be of help if we know how to play it, or c) they have a sponsor/someone who provides them with tools, which means unlicensed support items. If the last one is true, then we could have a whole lot of overpowered villains on our hands."

The detective released a long suffering sigh. "I see what you mean. Thank you, we will make sure to keep you updated regarding this whole ordeal." He got up and Aizawa followed. They entered the main room where a small man, an intern came running.

"Sorry to interrupt you, sir –hello Eraser- but we've got another sighting of the vigilante. The witness says they saved his life from a robbery. But this time, get this, they weren't alone. There seemed to be another man with them. He couldn't yet be identified, but we have a rough description of his height and body type."

The detective sighed.

"Is this about the vigilante?" some other intern asked. "How do they manage to vanish so fast? Witnesses say that he just climbs out of the situation. Like, how?"

"Don't know, man," said a detective from the other end. "Are we sure it's not just wallflower messing with us again?"

"Nah, de doesn't seem like his style." The first one shook his head.

"What about Kuroko? He was pretty adamant"

"Didn't we catch that guy?" a tired man said from behind a computer screen.

"Did we, though?" a petite woman said from the coffee machine.

"Wait, weren't there two of them?" another one woke up at that moment. Aizawa looked at the man beside him, who seemed as done with the conversation as he was.

"No matter, " the woman spoke. "We need a name of them. We have no proof they are one and the same person, so we might as well give them a new name."

"The Vanishing act" the man behind the screen spoke. "That's like the one consistent thing about them."

"The Vanisher!" the woman stated, as if that settled it.

"Welp!" Tsukakuchi said. "I'll keep you updated on the "Vanisher""

Aizawa nodded and headed home where he would take a nap and pretend Hizashi wouldn't be pestering him too much.

~O~

Izuku was madly typing at the project he had for tomorrow, a few last sentences away from the desired word count. Mom had gone to make some last minute errand at the agency and Izuku was desperate to finish for the night so he could get some shut eye. The UA entrance exam was in a week and he had to up his training to make sure he would get in.
Suddenly, the mortifying ring of their bell straight out of hell filled their small apartment. Izuku jumped and whirled around in his seat. Who could be at this hour. He wasn't expecting anyone, and mom would have told him if anything was awry. Suspiciously, he got up from the seat and walked towards the door. The bell kept going, but, this time, the person behind it started to yell.

"Oi, brat, open up before I start shouting!"

Izuku wrenched the door open and glared at the glorified Molotov cocktail in the doorway. "Dabi?! What the fuck are you doing here?!"

The man pushed him out of the way and entered the house. "Well, you crash at my place all the time, I thought that it was about time I saw where you live. " he looked around, taking in the clean rugs and paintings on the walls. "And, honestly, dick move. You come to my place all the time when we could be meeting here."

"Dabi, again, what the actual fuck are you doing here?!"

The man finally threw him a look. "I told you, I decided to visit."

"What if my mom had been here?!" Izuku asked, exasperated.

"Then I would've said hi and introduced myself as your drug dealer." Izuku facepalmed and fell on the couch. The man wasn't going to move until he said what he wanted, so Izuku just waited for him to get bored and fuck off. "Got any beer?"

"In the fridge" he said. He looked as the man bent and pulled out a bottle, which he opened with another bottle and took a big gulp. He let out a relieved sigh before he looked at the ceiling.

"You know, you should get your dad to fix the plaster. It's starting to fall and I doubt you want that in the kitchen."

Izuku groaned as he let himself sink on the couch. "I'll make sure to mention it if I ever met the guy."

"Oh" Dabi said looking at the bottle.

"Hey, just because my mom is a woman, that doesn't mean she's not allowed to drink!"

Dabi raised his hands in surrender. "Still, I'm sorry about your dad."

Izuku glared at the ceiling. "The asshole married mom and fucked off shortly after I was born. He's no dad to me, barely a sperm donor." Dabi didn't say anything to that. Sighing, Izuku got up and headed for his room.

"Where are you going?"

"To finish what I was doing before you decided to crash into my mom's bad day stash!" he yelled over the hall and threw himself in the chair, trying to remember what the fuck he was writing. He heard the man walk into the room and look around.

"What did you take off the walls?"

Izuku sighed. "I used to have a lot of hero merchandise." He said as he finished his conclusion and saved the document. "I had a run in with one after which I had a middle life crisis in my teenage years and took them off" he sighed. "It never felt right to put them back on."

Dabi hummed and started looking through his bookshelves. He grabbed one of his notebooks. "So
these are your stalker notebooks" then, in the closest voice the brooding man could get to shocked. "Holy, shit, there are thirteen of them?!

Izuku turned around and tried to grab the notebook, but the man was taller and held it above his head. The greenette kicked him in the shins. Dabi dodged and placed a hand on his forehead and pushed him onto the bed. The boy growled and threw a pillow at him. It smacked him in the face, but the man didn't seem particularly bothered as he kept looking through his journals.

"You know, if you wrote one of these on villains and took it to the police, they'd probably give you a job on the spot." He flipped a few more pages as he collapsed in his desk chair before his expression turned thoughtful. "You know what, forget the police, sell one of these to a big time villain and you've set yourself for life."

Izuku got up only to glare at the other before he got off the bed.

"All joking aside, Yami, don't let anyone else see these."

The greenette got up and looked at the man questioningly. Dabi sighed. "Here you have deep analyses on heroes, including weaknesses and habits. You don't understand, but people would kill over the chance of having the upper hand in a fight or getting revenge on an old enemy. If anyone knew what you're capable of, they might hurt you or someone you love to make sure you either help them or don't become a threat." He held the notebook in sight before throwing it back in the pile.

"Ok" Izuku nodded in a meek voice.

They sat in silence for a few moments before Dabi spotted his UA application on the desk. "You're still applying to UA?"

"Yeah, why wouldn't I?"

"Well" Dabi said as he propped his elbows on his knees. "You said you wanted to become a hero to help people. And, from what I gather, mister Vanisher" he used the air quotes, "You're already pretty famous and helping a lot of people. Why do you still want to go pro?"

"Well, except for the proffesional training, the different Quirks and the chance to meet and learn the business" he said as he sat up and stretched his limbs. "This society is far from perfect. If I'm a pro, I could get to change it."

Dabi quirked an eyebrow. "Please explain, I'm not sure I follow."

"Easy. You know how all those heroes tell on TV that your Quirk doesn't matter and that you can become a hero anyway?"

"Yes."

"Well, you realise like halfway through middleschool that that is a big pile of bullshit. In this society, your genes dictate your job. If you have a powerful Quirk, you're automatically suited to be a hero, and, if you don't, too bad, you're useless." He sighed. "Heroes may say that you're Quirk doesn't matter all they want, but it holds little to no meaning when it comes from a person blessed with an awesome Quirk. Because people will only see it as platitudes." He shook his head. "And it's really a shame, since there are a lot of heroes functionally Quirkless, yet society doesn't realise this."

"What heroes are you talking about?" Dabi seemed really interested right now, leaning in the chair and listening intently.
"Eraserhead, his power is to turn any fight Quirkless. Midnight. She can achieve the same thing with sleeping gas. From what I've seen she can't control the direction and spare civilians, so it wouldn't be that much of a difference. Fourth kind. His Quirk is literally having four arms. He isn't much good against someone with a long range Quirk."

"Ok, and your point? You started talking about how you'll change the world if you become a licensed hero."

"I was getting to it!" he yells in frustration. Dabi let out a chuckle. The jerk. "Anyway, if I become the first Quirkless hero, people wouldn't have anything to say against me. Kids with useless Quirks would be able to dream of becoming heroes, because, hey, a Quirkless person did it, and I actually have a Quirk, so it's not impossible! Not to mention how much influence heroes have. If you say something as a normal civilian, you have to fight to get people's attention. And they may not follow or believe you. If you're a hero, you already have the audience, the fans, the media coverage. You have the attention and your words have weight in the eyes of the public."

"You do realise this will take a lot of time."

Izuku smiled sadly. "Yes, I do. Change takes time and, by the time I achieve it, there will no doubts still be bigotry against the people with weak Quirks, evil Quirks or no Quirks at all. But I'm still young" eh laughed. "I'm only fifteen. Maybe I'll live long enough to see this come true."

"You want to be a hero." Dabi cut in. "I really doubt that would happen."

Izuku's smile died as he looked at his friend. Dabi had a grim expression on his face and Izuku wanted to say something, but he heard the front door open.

"Izuku, I'm home!"

The boy gulped and Dabi got up. He opened the window and crouched on the sill. He turned towards the younger. "Stay safe." He stretched his hand, which hovered for a few seconds near his hair before it fell on his shoulder and gave it a light squeeze. Dabi gave him one of his rare, genuine smiles and jumped off the window.

~O~

Izuku took a deep breath as he spotted the nice girl who stopped him from meeting the ground earlier. *Just go there and say good luck.* She probably didn't need it, but Izuku could distract himself from the utter panic plaguing his system. The Bo staff he had borrowed from Iho was hanging loosely in his hand. He had learned how to use it, but had yet to do so on the street, so there was no chance someone could recognise that and make the connection. He was safe. For now.

Bakugou's threat in the begging was expected, but they managed to stay somewhat civil towards one another when the task was presented. This was good. He had to fight robots. This was bad, he couldn't strong arm the robots. His best bet was finding weaknesses and exploiting them, things like chinks in the armour and small points. Even so, eh knew it was a farfetched to expect to win. *You did good at the writing test. Worst case scenario, you enter the Gen Ed. You still have a chance at the Sports Festival.*

*Yeah, against people who already had a semester of training.*

He inhaled deeply and stepped towards the girl before a literal mountain of beefy muscle stepped in his way. He looked up. It was the same guy who called him out in the presentation. Izuku felt his blood start to boil. What the fuck was his problem? He looked somewhat familiar, but Izuku couldn't
point him out at the moment.

"That girl is doing some kind of meditation. Do you intend to disrupt her or something?"

_Oh, It's on._ "Why do you assume I want to distract her? Maybe I wanted to help her, to tell her that she has her shoe laces open and she might trip and hurt herself. But no, you assume you know everything, condemn me for my personal method of coping with stress and stop me from helping a fellow student!" he didn't really yell, but he said it with enough bite to leave the boy speechless. True, he was more violent than he was supposed to, but he was stressed and he could only take his frustrations out on someone who actually wronged him. The boy seemed sheepish and a little bit shocked, but the next moment a very obnoxious voice of Present Mic came through the microphone.

"Begin!"

The others seemed confused but Izuku was already starting. If there was one thing you learned in a fight it was that you couldn't allow yourself to hesitate. The others seemed to catch up.

An unholy abomination of metal, crashed into his view. Izuu grabbed his staff and dashed, but the robot exploded in a million pieces. He turned around and saw a guy with a silver belt winking at him before running away. Izuku gritted his teeth. _Jerk._ Another explosion resounded in the arena and Izuku turned to see a huge robot collapsing over a kid in it's path. Izuku's feet moved on their own as the boy ran and tackled the other teen out of the range of the robot.

They rolled for about a meter before Izuku checked if it was really safe to get up. The reckless student who had almost killed them was nowhere in sight. Izuku looked at the other boy.

"You Ok?"

The dishevelled teen had a mop of crazy purple hair and huge bags under his eyes. He blinked. "I think so."

"Can you move?" he pondered for a second before nodding. Izuku smiled and helped him up before yelling "Good luck!" and darting off. He saw another student caught under the rubble and he helped her get out. She didn't thank him, but he didn't expect her to.

Present Mic's obnoxious voice rang and told them they only had a few minute left. _Fuck, I have to destroy some robots!_ Time was ticking and the prospect of actually having any chance in heroics was getting smaller and smaller.

Suddenly, a huge robot popped into view and started smashing everything in its path. Everyone started to run, to yell, to flee. Izuku would have done the same hell. He was ready to do so….. had it not been for the girl trapped under the huge piece of concrete.

_It would be a bad omen if you would trip._

Everyone was running away, but for Izuku time had frozen. When his legs started to move, it wasn't even a choice anymore. It was an instinct. He didn't think, he didn't stop to realise that no one was actually in danger. Because of the habit engrained in his muscles, of all the times people's lives had actually been in danger. He dashed and fought through the crowd of retreating students until he got to the girl. She seemed sic. The robot was getting closer.

Izuku pushed the piece of concrete off of her. She didn't get up. The robot was closer.

He grabbed her hand and laced it over his shoulder. She was heavy and he was never strong when it came to brute force. The robot's foot was above them.
Giving up, Izuku dropped her on the ground and covered her body with his. He waited for the huge, metallic shoe to drop.

"And that's it, dear listeners, you will get your letters in a week or less."

It took the boy a few moments for the words to sink in, but when they did Izuku breathed in relief. He looked at the robotic foot a few inches from his head. Of course they wouldn't let students die. He crawled from under the robot and dragged the girl with him. She was semi conscious and Izuku made sure to place her on her side in case she threw up. He looked at the small woman trotting towards them.

Recovery Girl! He wanted to fanboy and ask for her autograph, but his knowledge that he wouldn't get into the hero course with absolutely no points whatsoever dampened his excitement. Recovery Girl kissed the unconscious girl and Izuku turned towards the man cladded in black who was having a leisure pace in their direction.

"The exam is over. You will know whether you passed or not during the following week!" he yelled in the most bored tone ever. Even without the goggles, Izuku still recognised Eraserhead. He looked away. Even if he had worn a disguise, he didn't want to risk the attention of the underground hero.

Said attention fell on him a second later. "I think you dropped this "he lifted he staff. Fuck, when did I drop it? He took it and examined it. Iho was going to kill him if it was damaged. Thankfully, it wasn't and Izuku allowed himself to breathe in relief.

"Thanks." He made a curt bow clasped the staff.

"You know how to use it?" the man asked.

"Well, it would be pretty unfortunate if I didn't." because even his stressed, no brain to mouth filter knew not to say no, I carried this useless stick for shits and giggles to a pro hero. The man didn't smile, but something in his expression softened, so he guessed it was the next best thing. "Have a good day." He said and walked away before he could start crying.

~O~

It wasn't quick and maybe, in retrospect, that was what made him not see it till the last possible moment. The change hadn't been over night, but gradual and invisible. Even so, Katsuki still cursed himself for not noticing earlier.

It first started with a lack of the usual annoyance in his peripheral vision. He didn't know why, but he felt more relaxed and more at ease without the constant stalking in the back of his neck. That had been good. The nerd's words of Next time I'll let you die had unsettled him on a deep level, and he wanted to figure out before he made another move. They ignored each other and it was okay. Until it had gotten weird.

Because, when you live your whole life a certain way, if something disrupts the natural flow of things, the set in pattern you have ingrained in your brain, you notice. And Katsuki did notice. Once he started looking for the nerd, everything got even weirder. Because there was something very weird and unsettling with this new Deku.

Because Deku had changed. Not in any obvious way, like dying his hair or a complete change in personality. No, the change had been subtle and that had most likely been the layer of fucked up everyone could feel under the façade.

He started walking straighter, head up, shoulders pulled back. He looked forward and didn't walk out
of the way first, forcing the others to wither hit him or walk past. It was amazing how much hitting a walking toothpick could hurt. Deku still flinched, was still wary, but it didn't feel the same as before. He no longer looked sheepish and apologised excessively. When he flinched, it felt somewhat calculated and yet wrong. He looked at you afterwards and smiled and started talking, but, to Katsuki, it felt somewhat too fake. Because there was something else in his look, something that pulled away from the prey and turned him to predator.

The time they had met in the park had been weird. Because, this time, mocking him felt wrong. He wanted to yell, to scream his frustration. You sit on your ass ten fucking years and now you decide to work for it?! But he couldn't. A part of him was glad the nerd finally did something instead of simply wishful thinking. If there was one thing he respected, it was hard work. Though he was never going to admit that.

So Katsuki started to pay even better attention. They still had the same road home, but Izuku was no longer trailing behind them. On occasions when he looked at the window, he could see the other boy walking in front of his house. Sometimes their eyes met, and Izuku would slow for a bit before he kept walking. For some reason, Katsuki hated it.

He also noticed sometimes how the boy limped or winced in pain, how he always waited till the end of the gym class to change, how he wore long sleeved shirts and how sometimes bruises decorated his face and neck. Yet he seemed happy. His smiles were no longer nervous. They were still fake as fuck, a conditioned response he had gotten over the years, but they weren't as strained as before. They weren't so forced, they were more genuine, as if there was no pain behind them. Katsuki remembered how Deku smiled before he had found out that he was Quirkless. no one could probably tell the difference, but Katsuki had seen nothing but those smiles for the first years of his life and he could tell when they had changed. And now, his smiles were the closest thing to what they were he had seen in a decade.

Suffice to say, something was fishy. There were too many signs, too many things the blond didn't know. And Katsuki hated not knowing.

At first, he didn't intend for the fight to go the way it did. Honestly, he just wanted to question the boy and get rid of the unsettling feeling in his stomach. It was worry, but he didn't want to accept it. So, that Friday, after classes, he had waited for the locker to empty to properly ambush his childhood friend.

And then he saw the scars.

There were a lot. Not only scars, but cuts and bruises. He had a new stitch on his side and a lot of old ones littering his back and arms. There was something wrong about them. Yes, Katsuki had been violent, and he did burn the other sometimes. But he always knew when to stop. He always knew when it was too much, when it would be too late to be fixed. And those wounds were anything but.

They were made to hurt, to maim, with the clear intent of kill behind them.

"Deku." Katsuki had growled. The sight of those wounds irked him. Deku had turned around and yup, his front looked like his back. Littered with wounds and scars. He had walked forward and forced the teen into the locker to make sure he had nowhere to run.

Deku held his ground. "Bakugou." He said. There was something very wrong with how his name sounded when it came out of his mouth. Years of childish Kacchan had made the new name feel foreign. Katuki didn't like it.

"What the fuck is happening to you?" he had leaned closer and used his most intimidating tone. Yet, like he did a lot lately, Izuku held his ground.
"Why do you care?"

Why did he care, indeed? He didn't have an answer. But, like a lot of times before, he got mad and started threatening the rat. He didn't expect the rat to fight back.

That punch had been a low blow but he recovered quickly. He and his minions had chased the nerd on a fucking roof of all places (when the fuck did he became a ninja?!) and that's when all things went awry.

Because he never expected the boy to jump.

As Izuku took another step forward and Katsuki slowed his, he could only think: where the hell are you going? There's no place left to hide. He almost couldn't believe the moment his feet left the roof, and it took him a few moments to realise the nerd hadn't been made a splatter on the ground.

There was a sickening crunch when the other smashed into the wall, and centuries of stalled silence when the other tried to climb back up. His ears weren't getting anything but his own blood in his veins, a skip when his foot slipped.

If you really want a Quirk that bad, take a swan dive off the roof and maybe you'll get one in your next life.

You never...

His foot caught a hold

Actually considered...

His arms gathered enough strength to push himself up.

Jumping.

The greenette collapsed on the other roof. He was okay, he was breathing, he would be fine.

Did you?

Katsuki had released a breath he didn't know he had been holding and stared at the boy. Izuku got up on wobbly legs. He looked at him and their eyes locked for a second. Katsuki had no idea what had been in them, but it wasn't fear. Deku had then walked to the other side of the roof. He looked around, examined something then grabbed it and disappeared from the view.

That was the moment the world started moving again.

"Wow, dude, I can't believe he actually jumped." Extra no.1 said. Katsuki shook his head and stood up.

"Yeah man, let's get down from here. If he fell, we could be trailed for murder."

"It's called involuntary manslaughter, you dimwit."

"Doesn't matter we still could get in trouble." That extra looked at Katsuki again. "Come on man, let's go. If they found out you pushed another kid to suicide, they'll never let you into UA!"

Katsuki had nodded and climbed down the roof. The other two ran away as quickly as possible. The blond went to the other side of the block, and sighed in relief when he saw no small nerd splattered on the pavement. He entertained the idea of waiting and questioning him later...
He jumped off a fucking roof to get away from you. Let him be for once in your life.

So Katsuki walked home. The next few days had been full of nightmares. He kept imagining the nerd falling, he even had dreams in which he was the one who pushed him over the edge. All the while he kept hearing his own voice telling him to jump and the almost childish voice on the background of Next time I'll let you die.

Katsuki didn’t really sleep that week.

The UA exam came and went. He had gotten first place, of course and he had celebrated by going on a jog to burn out the energy.

The blond had reached the park they had been playing in when they were kids. He heard some cries. Pulling his earbuds out of his ears, he had walked towards the sound. Izuku was leaning on a tree, forehead pressed to the bark. His face was covered in tears and his knuckles were bloodied, probably from punching the tree. In his fingers, there was a crumbled piece of paper. Katsuki knew that had to be the UA letter. And, by the looks of it, the nerd hadn't gotten in.

A few months ago, Katsuki would have gloated. He would have bragged and insulted the teen. But now it wasn't a few months ago. Tormenting the smaller boy felt somehow wrong now. So, without a sound, Katsuki turned heel and left. For the first time in forever, he let the boy cry in peace.

Chapter End Notes

thanks everyone for kudos and comments. i read them all, even if i don't respond to all of them
discord
Huh, a ragtag team of would be heroes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku tried to be excited for the first day at UA. He really did. After all, it was UA, one of the hardest schools to get in, one of the best schools for heroics- even if he hadn’t been admitted in that department. He tried to cheer himself up by reminding himself that he could always move to Heroics if he did well enough in the Sports Festival.

But that didn’t really work because it wasn’t so much the fact that he’d gotten into General Ed. instead of Heroics that bothered him. After all, he’d started the exam thinking he wouldn’t get any points. But he had rescue points and 40 of them at that. Ten for the two people he had rescued first and thirty for the girl. What made him angry enough to see red was the fact that the minimum score for the Heroics department was 45 points.

Five points. Five measly points separated him from his lifetime dream. So, he was understandably pissed.

The girl he had saved, Uraraka, had contacted him after the exam to thank him and they’d ended up talking about everything and anything; Izuku would even go so far as to call her a friend.

Izuku liked Uraraka, which was why, when he hadn’t gotten into heroics, he called her to rant and about it. After he had calmed down, she told him, rather shyly, that she’d tried to share some points with him, but the school-board wouldn’t let her. After that, Izuku politely ended the call and screamed in a pillow for about an hour before jogging to Dabi’s place and bitching to him about it too.

The man seemed, simultaneously, sad and amused as he sat next to Izuku and listened as his rant dissolved into, increasingly incoherent, babbling and, finally, tears. He’d hardly said anything mostly just sat near the teen as he cried his frustrations, occasionally patting his shoulder. For some reason his decreased body heat (which went the kid in a confused state. Weren’t fire related Quirks supposed to, you know, heat? No matter, it wasn’t important right now) helped. It must’ve been because of his Quirk, but Izuku was going to let it slide for now.

After all that was done, Izuku felt a little bit better, and the way Dabi handed him a lollipop when he’d finally calmed down even managed to get a watery laugh out of him.

When the big day finally rolled around Izuku had been awake for almost an hour by the time his alarm clock rang. He got up, got dressed, went down and greeted his mom, ate his breakfast but it all felt strangely hollow, the excitement present, yet muted inside of him. His mom seemed enthusiastic at least, and Izuku did his best to smile and not let her know that anything was wrong. He was pretty sure he succeeded, years of practice paying off, but he couldn’t keep his frustrations completely in check.

Because part of the reason she was so happy was because he didn’t get into Heroics; because Gen Ed was the far safer option out of the two. Which was ironic considering Izuku had been confronting actual, if small time, villains on a regular basis for months now, yet the irony was more bitter than amusing.

On his way to U.A he did his best to ignore Bakugou on the other side of the train car. Bakugou, in a rare moment of either kindness or denseness, ignored him too.
He reached the school twenty minutes early and spent at least ten of them looking for his classroom. Once he did, he took a moment to steel himself, before quietly opening it, only to be immediately assaulted by the force of teenage chatter.

Izuku blinked for a few seconds before he stepped in. His new classmates didn’t turn to see him, keeping to their talk. He walked towards the last empty spot, near the window, right behind a guy with a mane of purple hair. He shrugged his backpack off before taking off his coat.

First day of school, try to make some friends. He didn’t intend to get attached, but the U.A was a fresh start and it felt wrong to waste that. Plus, even if he moved to Heroics he could still be friends with whoever he was here. Baby steps Izuku, he thought to himself. First try talking to someone who’s not talking to anyone. And, lo and behold, the guy in front of him was alone.

He tapped his shoulder. “Hey” the boy turned around. He as the same guy he had saved at the entrance exam. Izuku put on his best smile. “I’m Izuku Midoriya!”

The other eyed his hand suspiciously before shaking it. “Hitoshi Shinsou” they shook hands and Izuku did his best not to stare at the huge bags under his late-night-slash-early-morning. His hair looked like he’d just rolled out of the bed, and the greenette wondered if he even tried to comb it. Not that he was any better, but in his defence, his comb tended to break if he wasn’t careful, and he couldn’t afford to buy a new one every week. “I see you didn’t make it either.” Izuku cocked his head. “Into the Heroics department, I mean. I saw you at the entrance exam.”

Izuku scratched his neck sheepishly. “Oh, you remember that.” Shinsou raised an amused eyebrow. The smaller teen shrugged. “I’ll just have to do my best at the Sports Festival.”

“Same” Shinsou said. Izuku smiled and want to say more but stopped once the voice hero barged in.

“Hellooo, little listeners!” Present Mic spoke in what was a nearly a scream to normal ears, but was probably his normal voice. “You all might know me as Present Mic, but my name is actually Hizashi Yamada and I’ll be your homeroom teacher on your stay here. Now, let’s start…”

He then started to vividly rant about the school and the subjects they would have. He asked them to come close and say their names and what they liked and they didn’t. Izuku tried to remember all of his classmates, but no one could really beat Shinsou’s resting bitch face when he said in a totally neutral tone that he liked to sleep. When his turn came, he said he like to analyse things. Thankfully, Present Mic didn’t ask them to tell their Quirks, which was good. He would like to know his classmates before they started treating him like dirt. Who knows, maybe he could get some blackmail material on them. Who knows, it might be useful and it did work on Dabi, so….

The first day of school, was thankfully only half of a normal day. Izuku gladly went home, got on with his daily vigilante business and came back to cook some dinner before mom returned from work.

The next day started on the wrong foot, as he took another route near the support course and almost got decapitated by a door blown off its hinges.

As he got up he heard an exasperated voice. “A destroyed door on the second day. Must be some kind of record.” He looked around as he cleansed his clothed and spotted hero Powerloader and a girl with pin hair and goggles.
“It’s not that bad!” the girl insisted and Izuku had the distinct feeling the teacher was rolling his eyes. “If I could just find a way to increase fuel quantity without increasing the size of the canister by much, then it wouldn’t collapse. The explosion is just a minor, fixable mistake- it’s why we call the prototypes,” She said.

Izuku piped in despite his best judgement “And if that fails you could always turn it into a trap, I bet the villains wouldn’t see that coming.” He grumbled.

“What did you say?!”

He looked up and saw the girl literally in his face, a hungry look in her eyes. “Don’t mind me” he said “I was just joking.”

“No, no, no I wanna to hear what you have to say.” She seemed very eager, and Izuku got the certain impression that she was ready to shake the answers out of him. He cleared his throat.

“Well, if that thing blows when it runs out of fuel, and assuming you can calculate the time it takes to runs out, you could put a targeting and aiming system on it, disguise it as a rocket launcher. People would look in the direction it is supposed to hit, they wouldn’t expect it to suddenly crash and explode over their heads.” He shook his head “But that was- I mean...I wasn’t... It was just a joke, don’t take me seriously,”

She rubbed her chin “This is actually a pretty good idea. A bit rough around the edges, but interesting. And new.” An insane smile spread over her features. “You know what? I like it!” Izuku nodded numbly and took a few steps away from the girl.

“Hey, don’t you have classes?” the teacher asked. Izuku’s eyes widened.

“Oh, shit, you’re right! Thank you and good morning!” he yelled as he sprinted towards his class. He reached it and, oh fuck, it was quiet. Hoping it wasn’t a teacher too harsh, he rapped his knuckles on the door and opened it.

Eraserhead was sitting behind the desk.

Just my luck.

He bowed deeply and said. “I’m sorry I was late, it won’t happen again.” The man didn’t seem impressed.

“Class started five minutes ago, Midoriya. Is there any particular reason why you weren’t around?”

Izuku gulped and stared into the unforgiving eyes of his teacher and no.2 favourite hero. “I was heading here on the east corridor, passed the support class and got hit with a flying door.” Yeah, that basically sums it up.

There were a few snickers, but Eraserhead was as serious as ever. “Can you prove that?”

“Powerloader sensei was there. He can confirm it.”

The man sighed and shook his head, like students getting blown up by the support course was a normal if irritating occurrence. “Alright then, go to your seat. And next time leave earlier to account for these kinds of things,”

Izuku bowed once again and trotted behind Shinsou, who looked like he was trying very hard not to
laugh his ass off. The teacher got up and walked in front of the class.

“My name is Shouta Aizawa. I’ll be your Quirk and hero law teacher. While in this day and age the basic laws and rules around Quirks are pretty much set in stone, new clauses and fine prints appear almost monthly, and keeping track of that is an important skill to have. How to distinguish between breaking a law and slightly bending it to achieve your goal is also a valuable thing to know.

“I’ll also be aiming to teach you at least some basic critical thinking and analysis skills as well as some PR studies if we have the time- the world isn’t black and white only and the people who fail to realize that will always be at a disadvantage everywhere. I will also have you know that laziness will not be tolerated, so you’d better keep up. I don’t take kindly to slackers.”

What was perhaps the most perplexing thing was that he spoke his speech with a completely blank face and bored tone. He then proceeded to give them a page to summary before he wrapped himself in a sleeping bag and promptly fell asleep.

The next few classes were more or less the same as they were in middle school, with the exception that they were taught by heroes. Izuku tried to keep his fanboying to a minimum, opting instead to write whatever he could grasp about his teachers in his notebook. He had gotten a new one especially for the purpose of writing about his classmates and teachers.

Lunch came fast enough and Izuku waited for Shinsou to come. The boy seemed perplexed, but unless Izuku would get specific instructions to leave him alone, he would befriend the fuck out of that guy. They walked towards the cafeteria, carrying a light conversation before Izuku got conveniently tackled by a pink fluffy cloud.

“Midoriya-kun!”

Izuku blinked a few seconds before he returned the hug. “Hey Ashido!” she then pushed him at arm level and introduced him to her friends.

“So- this is Kirishima. Kiri meet the guy who I never thought I’ll see outside the gym.” Izuku waved awkwardly and noticed that Shinsou had left.

“Nice to meet you, dude” the spiky haired guy –Kirishima? said. “I just want to tell you that I saw you at the entrance exam, and that you were so manly! You jumped right after Uraraka,” he looked down. “I’m ashamed to say I ran away. That wasn’t manly at all.”

“Don’t worry” Izuku smiled and placed a hand on his shoulder since it seemed like the right thing to do. “You have better survival skills than me- I wasn’t really thinking straight at the time,”

“Still. It proves better that you are manly enough to be a hero.” Kirishima said with a smile. Izuku’s own died down.

“I didn’t get into heroics.” The cheery expressions paled a little, so he hurried to finish. “D-don’t worry, I’ll so my best to transfer after the Sports Festival. Who knows, we may actually be classmates in the future.” They smiled and Izuku waved awkwardly before running to look for his own classmate.

Shinsou was sitting alone at a table, eating from his bento. Izuku pulled out his own as he sat down. The purple haired boy looked at him questionably. “I thought you were sitting with your friends.”

“Oh, Ashido? Yeah, I guess we get along, but we aren’t exactly friends. Plus, she already seems to have her own and I didn’t want to barge in.”
“Oh” was all Shinsou said. Izuku waited a few seconds, but it didn’t seem like he was going to continue. Deciding to break the ice, he went for his favourite topic.

“So, what’s your Quirk?”

The boy pressed his lips together and suddenly became very interested in his food. Izuku realized that he’d probably, somehow, hit a sore but right as he was preparing to take it back, Shinsou spoke. “It’s brainwashing,” He said. Izuku waited for a few seconds to see if he was interested in elaborating before he started.

“Really?! That’s awesome. God, can you imagine how useful that would be? Like, if there’s a hostage situation and you just convince the villains to give up. Or if you’re outnumbered you could just force the villains to turn on each other. Or you could talk people out of suicide. Or-” he descended into exciting muttering, not really seeing Shinsou’s shocked and slightly scared expression. He then looked up. “What’s wrong?”

“Don’t you think it’s... you know... kinda... wrong? Villainous?”

Izuku blinked before he snorted. “I see why some people might consider it that way, but I don’t think an awesome Quirk has nothing to do with being an awesome person. Like- I literally saw someone with a healing quirk beat a guy to a bloody pulp with a chair and...ok it was kind of awesome but still! It stands to reason that a ‘villainous’ Quirk has nothing to do with being a bad one.

“Hell there’s plenty of heroes whose Quirks could wreak havoc, if used poorly. Thirteen creates black holes that could tear people apart. I’m pretty sure if All Might, as cool as he is, used the full strength of his Quirk on someone they’d be dead in like- seconds. Your Quirk maybe be, from a certain point of view, a little amoral, but you didn’t chose it.” He said jabbing his chopsticks at Shinsou to emphasize his point before shovelling some rice in his mouth.

“Then you’d better keep your Quirk a secret.”
“I was planning to. But then you pulled the puppy eyes on me.” He grumbled, but there was no ill intent behind it.

Suddenly, a tray of food smashed to their table and someone threw themselves on the seat near Izuku. Said green haired boy looked up and saw the same girl who exploded him this morning.

“Powerloader Sensei forbid me from the lab for a whole day! He said that I need to eat. I could eat there very well, thank you very much. Who’s going to work on my babies while I waste time here!?” she cried and started to eat her steak miserably. Shinsou looked at him.

“Do you know her?”

“She’s the one who almost blew me up today.” He said, trying not to sound too offending.

“Too bad she didn’t blow you” Shinsou muttered and Izuku could feel heat rising from his neck to his ears. He threw a napkin at his classmate who sniggered. Thankfully, the girl didn’t seem to notice, as she kept ranting.

“Not that we don’t appreciate the company” Izuku cut her off “But who exactly are you?”

“Oh” she stopped, as if she had only now remembered she had an audience. “I’m Mei Hatsume.”

“Izuku Midoriya.”

“Hitoshi Shinsou” he said. “Now, what are you doing here? Don’t you have your own classmates?”

“My classmates are morons” she puffed. “All their ideas are about either fixing something or salvaging the parts. Or, if they are really creative, to make more weapons and shit. Like, they are smart and good at it, but they lack… vision! No one thinks about how you could repurpose something without damaging the initial design. And their original ideas are average at best. So, I decided that if I had to leave my babies alone for such a long time, I might as well spend it with the only person that proved interesting so far!” she said it like it was set in stone. Izuku looked at his classmate, who shrugged.

Suddenly, a stray idea hit Izuku. He turned towards the girl. “Hey, Hatsume, what exactly is that you enjoy making?”

She looked at him. “Almost anything as long as it’s worth it.”

“Well I had this project in mind about a weapon I really wanted to have, but I’m worried it’s a little too ambitious.”

Hatsume’s golden eyes lit with excitement and she said. “If I like it, I might just make it. But what’s in it for me?”

Izuku tapped his chin. “Testing them?”

“Woah, is this allowed? You need some kind of licence to get support items.”

“Technically” Izuku bit his lip. “UA has a policy to support kids in developing their Quirks, even if they are not in heroics. And, at the Sports Festival, Support students are allowed to bring their own equipment, on the condition that they built it themselves. But…it is never said that students from departments other than heroics aren’t allowed to do so too. And collaboration is never forbidden,
which, I would say, gives us the leeway we need—since we are specifically trying to transfer to heroics, and they will have a few months of training at that point.” Izuku looked up, trying to remember if there were any more rules that he was bending. “So, technically, it’s not against the rules.”

“Just because someone didn’t think to write them this way” Shinsou clarified, using his chopsticks as a pointer “And wow, someone’s taking Aizawa-sensei’s class to heart,”

“You!”

“I like it!” Hatsume said. “You!” she pointed at Izuku “Come by after class to my lab and I’ll see if I like your idea or not.”

Izuku nodded and prepared to speak when someone hugged him from behind. “Mido-kun!”

Izuku jumped and turned around as Uraraka plopped herself on the other side of him. The guy who scolded him in the exam was also there, a little bit awkward.

“Uraraka, I don’t think we are supposed to intrude” he moved his hands in a chop like motion. Izuku looked at Shinsou who had an oh, really expression on his face. The eggplant spoke.

“Midoriya, it’s the second day, how many people do you know?”

“We actually know each other from the exam.” Uraraka said in a bubbly tone. “He dragged me from under the zero pointer.”

Shinsou’s eyes widened marginally and Izuku could something akin to respect in them.

“I must say that I’m sorry Midoriya” the other boy bowed deeply. “I judged you before I knew facts, when you obviously grasped the true meaning of the exam.”

“No worries!” Izuku tried to get the attention off of him.

“I’m Tenya Iida” he said and something clicked.

“From the Iida family? Are you related to Ingenium? No wonder you looked familiar,”

The boy seemed at the same time embarrassed and proud as he stared to talk about his brother. Shinsou seemed pretty fed up with it, so Izuku cut him up in the most polite way possible.

“So, who do you have for homeroom?”

“Aizawa” Uraraka responded.

“Harsh” Shinsou said. “I heard he expelled 154 students since he started.

“He’s only works here for- what? Five years?” Izuku exclaimed as he let some noodles fall out of his mouth. “That’s like” he did a quick calculation. “A class and a half a year!”

“How do you know when he started?” Shinsou asked.

“How do you know how many students he expelled?” Izuku retaliated. Shinsou looked at his food.

“Older students.”
“Same” truth was, Izuku had found out after he searched Eraserhead and saw that the videos of fights and comments on forums about him had halved in the past five years. When he saw him at the entrance exam, something clicked. Willing to stir the conversation away, he said. “But still, that many? What does he do, put all the pictures on a dart board and charged his like- dart machine gun and started to shoot?”

“Ha! I can see a dart landing like, literally on the edge of a photo” Shinsou said, then, in a gruff voice “You’re on fucking thin ice!”

They all giggled, except for Iida, who said something about not mocking their teachers and cursing.

“I wish to say it was a joke” Uraraka said, “But, he did expel someone yesterday.”

“Both Izuku and Shinsou looked at her. “Who?”

“I don’t know, a guy with purple balls on his head.”

Izuku wanted to say something more, but the bell rang and they had to go back to classes.

~O~

Izuku entered the lab and barely missed something that might have been a missile passing near his head. He looked and- yup there was saw Hatsume. Getting yelled at by Powerloader-sensei. Again. She spotted him and not so subtly jumped in his direction.

“Midoriya, great timing, I need to see what ideas you have to properly determine if you are worth my time!”

Izuku rose an eyebrow, but sat his backpack on a chair. Shinsou said he couldn’t come, but he promised he’ll swing by next time. Izuku suspected it was too mush interaction for the somewhat asocial boy, but was willing to let it slide. He wasn’t any better before he grew his guts either, so he wasn’t one to judge.

Powerloader Sensei said something and left and the tentacle haired girl focused her golden gaze solely on him.

“So, what did you come up with?”

“First of all do you know what Bo staff is?”she nodded so he went on “Well- I was thinking something like that? But with gadgets. Like- could you somehow install a device that gives small electroshocks, oh, what about a hidden reservoir with gas or something flammable, to make explosions?”

Her eyes glimmered and she pulled out a notepad and started to scribble. “Go on…”

“You’d have to do something about the weight and balance. If we mount a canister for of liquid it’ll become lighter on one side- throwing off my balance and sticking power. It might not be much, but it could tilt the wrong way. We also have to find a way to prevent the electricity from getting to it. We could try to put the battery for the shocks in the middle or along the inner walls, to leave an empty space for the liquid. Or- I guess gas is an option too.

“We should also, we should find a method to control how big an explosion gets. Which- I guess seaways into the fact that you’d need to mount an igniter. Maybe a button of some kind that triggers a spark? And...Well I guess if it has openings for explosions on both ends you’d either need separate
buttons or a way to control which side gets ignited.

“And- speaking of buttons; they should have some kind of markings tactile marks on them. Like-line, circle, cross, easy to read with your fingers stuff. At least until I learn how to use them exactly.” He was muttering now, but the girl seemed to have no problem keeping up.

They spent the next hour in the lab until Powerloader-sensei kicked them out and told them to go and do their homework. They talked on the way to the station and Izuku then went to eat and kick some ass later in the evening.

~O~

The sun was setting over the city when All Might finally made it home. He sighed and threw his jacket on a chair as he deflated. Today had been…. Something. Young Bakugou had blown up a building and, as the only villain in his team, decided that the best way to stop the heroes from taking the nuke was to blow it up and kamikaze himself and his enemy. A sound strategy for a villain, no complaint, but they were training to be heroes. Maybe he shouldn’t have called the training heroes and villains. Oh, well.

He sat down on the couch and stared at the ceiling. His colleagues were… good. He wasn’t acquainted enough with them, and they held that kind of respect for the No.1 hero that always felt cold. Aizawa didn’t feel like hiding his animosity, and Toshinori was wondering what did he do to anger the man.

The search for a successor wasn’t going as well as he expected. Sure, there were kids who seemed fit, but no one really clicked with him. No one felt right. He had spoken with young Toogata less than a year ago. While the kid would’ve been very fit to be the next Symbol of peace, he had refused.

No offence, All Might, but I already have a really good Quirk I can save lots of people with. I mean- don’t get me wrong. I’m flattered! But I think you should have a list of other possible candidates before you consider giving it to me. This is an important decision, and you don’t want to be rash when making it. Plus, there might me someone who deserves it more, and I don’t want you to find the perfect successor later and regret giving it to me.

(Unbeknownst to him, the young boy felt a little bit offended. He had worked hard to make his Quirk work and the offer, while flattering felt a little bit patronising. He didn’t need another Quirk, didn’t have time to train one more. Call it pride, but it didn’t sit well with him, so he didn’t take it.)

Nighteye looked like he had been slapped, but Toshiori had laughed it off and told the boy he would do just that. He then took his former sidekick to a coffee and they talked and somehow mended their broken relationship. It wasn’t perfect, but looking at the man’s contact in his phone no longer gave him chills of regret or nausea.

He remembered another boy he had considered for the role of One for All. He had been very surprised to see him at the exam, and pretty impressed with the way he gathered his points. He remembered the same kid running once again into danger to save his friend, how he yelled at the other heroes for not doing their job. While All Might agreed, there was something too visceral in his words when he said it.

Maybe…

He’s Quirkless- he’s die much too soon.
Hypocritical of you to say that, considering your own predicament.

Toshinori sighed. He would have to keep an eye on the boy. He wished he would’ve gotten a few more points and get into heroics, monitoring him would’ve been easier.

Maybe you should’ve considered him back then.

Well I am now.

The man shook his head. The villain world was too rough and dangerous for a child with no Quirk to protect themselves. Maybe in a few years, if he proves worthy. He can stay safe and learn until then. Toshinori nodded. Yes, this was a good idea. Giving him One for All too early would’ve put him in a lot of unnecessary danger. At least like this he’s safe.

At the same time, moving silently on a dark roof in the process of tailing a criminal, the hooded silhouette sneezed.

Chapter End Notes

i searched for like half an hour and couldn't, for teh life of me, find out what the fuck does Aizawa teach
discord
tumblr, for what it's worth
The next day started ok, to say the least. Izuku managed to wake up before his alarm clock, so he had the immense pleasure of not starting the morning with an inconvenient heart attack. He went down and cooked himself and his mom breakfast before going to his early jog. Mom was working very hard these last weeks, a lot of cases piling up and Izuku could only make breakfast and dinner whenever he happened to get to the kitchen before her. He passed the Bakugou house and saw the blond boy glaring at him through the window. Izuku pretended he didn’t see that and passed forward.

He came back home and went to change his sweaty clothes. He slipped on his uniform and went down.

“Izuku!” his mom called him

“Yes mom?” he popped his head into the kitchen. She was wearing her suit and hastily packing her suitcase.

“Have you eaten?”

“Yup!”

“ Took lunch money?”

“Yup”

“Your keys?”

“Yes mom!” he said. She took his head in her palms and placed a gentle kiss on his forehead.

“Take care” she said, eyes filled with worry. Izuku gave her a reassuring smile, a fake one, since he knew he couldn’t really keep that promise, kissed her on the cheek and yelled his goodbyes as he dashed out the door. He caught the train with enough time to spare as not to be late and made it to the class. Unfortunately, fate had other plans, as the gate was filled with reporters trying to get some last minute pics of All Might. Izuku pushed and waved his way through the crowd the same way a broke college student would on Black Friday and managed to get inside crowned in the curses and complaints of the reporters.

He wasn’t sorry. Usually, he would’ve been, but they were taking this way too far, and he was late to Present Mic’s class. Thankfully, the man seemed to be on a pretty good mood, since he didn’t chastise him too much, but, considering that half the class was probably still in the media trap outside, the teacher probably had steeled his patience especially for this occasion.

Izuku sat down and waited for his other classmates to come. This far, he’s managed to keep his Quirkless status somewhat a secret, and he wanted it to stay that way. Shinsou had been
cool with it, but that might have been his sympathy for someone put in a similar situation of torment. Uraraka kinda owed him for saving her life, and he doubted Hatsume knew that, or cared about what his Quirk could be. Dabi had been more or less blackmailed stuck with him at that moment, so it wasn’t like he did have a choice. But he didn’t want to risk it. He would wait a few months before telling his friends that he was Quirkless.

Present Mic told them they had to choose a president, and, because this was literally the third day of school and no one knew each other, they voted. A nice girl with a healing Quirk became the class representative and that was that. Their classes went like normal and they met all three not from the hero course at lunch. Uraraka waived him from the other table she sat at, but ultimately, left them alone. Shinsou seemed a little relieved by that, probably not too keen on social interactions.

“So” Izuku started “How exactly does your Quirk work?”

“Why would I tell you? We’ll be enemies in the Sports Festival”

“Because I might help you?” Izuku said gesturing with his chopsticks. “I’m pretty good with analysis.” He swallowed. “Plus, we have to make it to the third stage to be considered. Of course, if we put a good show before that, we would be able to transfer even if we don’t make it to the last stage. The thing is, we need to have an advantage over them. We keep our Quirks unknown, but someone might hear yours and spread the rumour. That’s why you need an ace up your sleeve.”

Shinsou pondered for a moment before saying. “And what exactly makes you that ace?”

Izuku smiled sweetly, dropping a little hint of weird in it. It was enough to pursue the eggplant to talk. “My Quirk works by people answering to me. If I ask them a question and they answer, they are under my control.” Izuku nodded, making his mental list to put in his notebook when he got home.

“How detailed can your orders be?” Shinsou shook his head. “Does it have a time limit, or a way to pull someone out of it?”

“I don’t know about the time limit, but if you touch someone or make physical contact, a little stronger, they get pulled out.”

Izuku nodded as he rubbed his chin. “How detailed can your orders be?”

“I can’t make someone do any task that requires actual thinking. Like, I can tell you to copy a name if you see it, but I can’t ask you to write down someone’s name from memory.”

“So, like a literal puppet.”

“Pretty much” the taller teen sighed.

“Well, I think prime strategy would be the ability to piss the fuck out of people before they get to use an actual attack on you.”

“I’m pretty proficient at that.”

Izuku blinked as an idea came to him. “You know, we could start spreading some rumours about your Quirk. Like say for example that it’s totally something else, so people will prepare for that instead. And, at the festival, you can make a remark or a compliment and brainwash them!” he said excitedly.

Shinsou eyed him warily. “You’re way too enthusiastic about this” Izuku smiled and started
writing messily on a tissue paper.

“Ok, we need a Quirk that seems believable, but it doesn’t require any flashy mark or method to use. We could also spread different rumours, to drive people insane with all the possibilities. How about we…”

“HELLO, fellow associates!” Hatsume said as she slammed her food tray on their table. Both boys jumped and looked at the girl as she sat down and started to chatter. “Remember the ideas you came up with yesterday? Well, I already have some blueprints for most of them. Also, I looked over your staff. I couldn’t yet find a way to balance the fuel, but I made a generator out of a broken toaster and I need you to come later to test the balance or whatever bullshit you were spewing the other day.” She said in one go before she started munching on her chicken.

Izuku and Shinsou shared a look before Izuku turned fully toward the girl. “Have you been up all night?” she nodded so hard her goggles giggled on her forehead. “Didn’t you sleep at all?”

“Rest is for the weak!” she said as she inhaled a cup of water with a trembling hand that gave the boys all the evidence that she was running on caffeine at this point. Izuku sighed and shook his head.

“Fine. I’ll come after class and help you test the balance if you promise me you go to sleep after. You need a rested mind, and you know that the best ideas come in the shower.” He knew the last part wouldn’t really make sense for outsiders, but in the short hour he had spent with Hatsume, he found out that she quoted completely randomly and spewed facts that roughly fitted the situations. The pink haired girl considered it for a moment before nodding and shaking his hand. He turned towards Shinsou. “You coming too?” he looked like he wanted to refuse out of habit, but then shrugged as if he was saying why not.

Suddenly, an alarm blurred out, red sirens popping from the ceiling. Izuku looked around and heard: SECURITY LEVEL 3 HAS BEEN BREACHED. ALL STUDENTS MUST EXIT THE PREMISE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION.

Which, of course, resulted in mass hysteria.

“What’s level 3?” Hatsume asked.

“That means someone had infiltrated the building!” a student yelled. Shinsou got up but Izuku motioned for him to stay. He climbed on the table and looked outside. The door gates had been destroyed somehow and reporters were flooding inside. “It’s just the media!” the teen yelled to his friends. Shinsou checked for himself and breathed in relief when he saw that it was true while Hatsume just sat down and finished her lunch. Izuku was looking for a way to calm everyone down when Iida decided he needed to cosplay the exit sign and announced everyone on how things were actually going. Once the panic stopped, Izuku sat down. He was relieved this had been solved quickly. He remembered from his hero fights that every time the crowd panicked, people could die under the feet of the crowd. The boy breathed in relief and looked after Hatsume who had finished and left with a curt goodbye.

Huh. An improvement.

~O~

After their classes ended, Izuku went to the lab, followed by Shinsou. Once there, it was becoming clear that the boy was going to be Powerloader’s favourite, for the simple fact that he had the power to stop the other two teens when they were getting too enthusiastic with the things not
recommended to the little children they apparently were. Sadly, he had to leave after only half an hour, but he seemed to be enjoying himself in the short period of time he had been there, so Izuku was happy.

“What about now?” Hatsume asked as she threw the staff to him. Izuku caught it and twirled it a little.

He looked up and smiled. “Perfect” finally. They had been working for a few hours, and, for the first time, the staff had the right weight and balance for Izuku to use it properly. “Can I keep it?”

“I don’t know, I think you have to file a request for a support item. I don’t really need it, I already have the blueprints, and the materials were mostly for freshman training, so they weren’t particularly expensive.”

“Do you have a request I can complete right now?”

She didn’t, but Powerloader had and was happy to sign it as long as they were both long gone afterwards. Izuku was ecstatic and Hatsume needed to sleep, so they agreed. Apparently, the girl was a true prodigy, because the staff had a hatch that bent it in two and allowed him to put it in his backpack.

They walked towards the station, Izuku showering the girl in praise and thanks. He then went home, cooked dinner for Mom, who was still working overtime, showered and went to sleep. He had been planning to talk to Dabi this night, but he didn’t have the energy. Maybe tomorrow.

When he woke up the following morning, the foreboding feeling in his gut should’ve been all the clue he needed to determine that this would be a shitty day. But, apparently, an entire year of risking his life wasn’t enough to make him trust his fucking instincts, so he got up, jogged and made breakfast like every other day.

Although, in hindsight, Izuku knew he wouldn’t have been able to forgive himself had he done otherwise.

As the boy was walking to school, an unnaturally cold air surrounded him before it stirred and morphed and warped into an inky mass of smoke. An inky mass of familiar smoke. A warp gate. From said warp gate, a sentient suit walked out, two glowing eyes in the mass of black.

“Greetings, student. Would you care to follow me?”

Ok, this is the weirdest kidnaping attempt ever. He thought. He recognised the man- Kurogiri- from that time he found that man stabbed in an alley. Still, he unconsciously fell into a battle pose and looked the man in the eye. “No”

The mist man sighed. “What a pity.”

Suddenly, he felt hands grabbing at his clothes and he was pulled backwards as he fell into another warp gate.

Izuku blinked as a pair of skinny yet strong arms wrapped themselves around him. “Nice seeing you again” a raspy voice said and Izuku didn’t know how, but that was the moment he realised that he was screwed. The man continued, drumming his fingers on the boy’s collarbone. “Really now, I never got to properly thank you for saving my life back then.”

“You’ve got a really weird way of showing it.” Izuku mumbled before he could stop
himself. *Shit, he’s gonna kill you!* The man chuckled.

“Oh, but I’m doing you a favour. You’ll be the one to see the fall of the No.1 hero, All Might” he spit the name with disgust “from the side-lines. You will be witness to something unique, to the shake and fall of society.” He seemed very enthusiastic as he leaned and whispered sweetly in his ear. “So, stay put, be a nice hostage and you’ll make it back home.”

Izuku gulped but nodded. He was way too outmatched here, he couldn’t be rash. The man unwrapped himself from around him and gently nudged him forward. *Kill All Might? That’s not possible!* He blinked as the poisoned seed of doubt etched its way into his head. *But what if they can.* *I have to stop them!* He didn’t really like thinking about the hero or looking at him when he saw him on campus, but he couldn’t forget a whole life of worship, and, even if he didn’t want to admit it, in his heart, All Might was still his favourite hero.

*How could you stop them? You’re nothing but a Quirkless brat playing hero. Stay still and you’ll get to leave another day.*

*Are you even worth that much?*

Izuku knew he wasn’t going to listen, but the guest appearance of his common sense was a nice touch.

He was pushed into a large room filled to the brim with villains. They weren’t any big names, mere thugs, like those he fought on the streets. They were glaring at him, looking like they wanted to rip him apart and Izuku was suddenly very grateful he was wearing a disguise in his vigilante hours, because otherwise, he would’ve been ripped to shreds by now. The boy looked at the man. He was wearing a disembodied hand over his face and multiple over his body. Another pair was cupped around his neck. For some reason, the outfit reminded Izuku of a duck, but he sure as hell wasn’t going to tell him that.

His kidnapper slung a hand over his shoulder, pulling him closer, and Izuku got the message clearly. *The only reason you are alive is because you are under my protection.* The fingers drumming on his neck did nothing but set that threat in.

*Got it, don’t move too much, be nice and quiet.*

*Yeah, you had ten years of experience letting people walk all over you. What’s once more?*

The man- whose name was apparently Shigaraki- started talking and Izuku did his best to assist the situation, to ignore the way too rapid beating in his chest. Most of them weren’t big names in the villain world. He had seen a few of them around and they didn’t stir any waters. What worried him was the huge monstrosity sitting patently near Shigaraki. It wasn’t moving. And not like a sleeping person won’t move, more like a puppet kind of motionless. Izuku looked up. The eyes of the creature held no life in them. No mind, nothing but dead glass that had somehow been given the spark of artificial life, going through the motions already established. Izuku shuddered, and Kurogiri opened a warp gate.

The teen was pushed by Shigaraki through it and found himself in a huge, dome like building with a lot of areas in there. There was a mountain, a waterfall, a zone with storms, all made artificially. He looked up near the gates and saw more people. He couldn’t make much from there, but he recognised the Space hero 13, and the dark cladded silhouette could be no one but Eraserhead.

He and 13 talked for a few moments before Eraserhead jumped in, scarves flying. Some small thugs were cocky and found themselves breathless on the ground. Shigaraki unslung his hand from over his shoulder to talk and Izuku very inconspicuously inched away.
“He’s proficient in hand to hand combat” the pale haired man said as he scratched his neck. “And those goggles stop us from seeing where he’s looking.” He spit. “That’s why I hate pro heroes small time villains don’t stand a chance.”

Kurogiri then left to attack the students and Izuku saw how a lot of them got thrown in different parts of the place. USJ, they called it.

Eraser seems to be doing well here. If I’m a hostage, I’ll only be in the way. They locked eyes for a second and, even if he couldn’t see his, he understood. He had to run. I can’t go to the door, Kurogiri’s guarding it. Maybe I can go and look for the kids who might need help. He wasn’t cocky as to think he could take them all down, but he might be able to save some.

He ran away, eyes permanently on Shigaraki. The other villains seemed a little bit preoccupied at the moment, and the walking corpse didn’t look terribly interested in him. So, Izuku did the one sane thing and broke into a sprint as soon as he was at enough distance to do so.

The closest to him was the lake with a ship in it. More villains were jeering and yelling at the student on the ship. All had their backs turned on him. Izuku took off his backpack and pulled out the Bo staff. He unfolded it and signalled the student to stay put.

Then, pressing the button he was sure would work, he jammed the stick into the water.

The voltage wasn’t enough to kill, but it was enough to stun. He had been pretty lucky to find the right button on the first try, and, if the screams of pain coming from the villains were enough proof, he had managed to do so. The boy kept it there till no one moved and then gave the thumbs up to the student in the boat.

They jumped and swam to the shore and Izuku saw that it was a girl with a green suit and somewhat frog-like features. “Who are you?” she asked looking at him in disbelief. Izuku lifted his arms and waved.

“I’m from the General Department. The villains picked me up on my way to school and took me here as a hostage. I managed to escape and now I’m looking for a way out.”

The girl glared at him a little longer, enough for Izuku to feel uncomfortable before she apparently decided to trust him. “What do we do now?”

Izuku pointed at the wall. “You go there and stay out of sight. Circle the walls and you might find a secondary exit.”

“ Aren’t you coming?”

Izuku shook his head. “They took me as a hostage, they might want me back. They don’t know about you or whether you made it, so we’d better split. In case they come after me, at least you’ll get to make it out.”

She seemed like she wanted to protest, but thought better of it and nodded. They parted ways and Izuku looked around. He spotted a few villains surrounding a fallen student, and Izuku didn’t think twice before he ran in that direction.

There were three. With one hand, he slipped the backpack off his shoulder and threw it at one of them. With the other, he jammed it into another, successfully knocking him out. The other two turned towards him, snarling and cussing. Izuku fell into a fighting pose and charged first. They seemed to be a little taken aback, surely not expecting the meek hostage to be a threat. Well, too fucking bad he thought as he kneed one of them in the guts, slammed his fist in the other’s throat. He
fell to the ground, heaving and Izuku took the opportunity to zap the first. He zapped the second too and turned towards the fallen student. The spiky red hair was familiar. *Kirishima!* Izuku ran to search him for injuries.

He didn’t get too far though. Before he could properly think, a wave of ice assaulted him and he found himself caged in a huge block of ice. “What are you planning, villains?” a dark and cold voice said. Izuku looked up and saw a teen half covered in ice strolling towards him.

“You’ve got it wrong, I’m not a villain!” he yelled, then mentally slapped himself, because that’s just a villain would say.

“Then who are you?” by his expression, Izuku knew the boy was set on not believing him.

Izuku inhaled. “I’m a Gen Ed student. They rook me hostage, but I managed to escape. I’m looking for a way out, but I saw Kirishima getting attacked and I jumped in.”

The white haired boy looked like he wanted to retaliate when the obnoxious voice of his childhood friend chimed in. “Deku?!” Bakugou strolled forward looking like a gun’s collector wet dream. “What the fuck are you doing here?!”

“Oh, you know, walking to school, getting kidnapped, almost getting murdered three times since breakfast, how are you?!” his tone may have started nice, but it ended in a bite. Bakugou leaned a little bit backwards.

“You know him?” Todoroki asked.

Bakugou tsk-ed. “Yeah. We went to middle school together.”

“Is he a villain?”

Bakugou opened his mouth but a groan came from behind them. “Well, he beat up the other villains, so I don’t think so.” They all (well, the two of them) turned to face Kirishima, who was getting up with obvious side pains.

“Since we got my current status of on your side settled, can you please unfreeze me? My extremities are starting to get numb.” Eh said because he didn’t yet have the guts to say that his balls were freezing. The white haired teen placed his left hand on the ice and it sizzled and started to melt. By the time it Izuku was out, he was wet, so he took off his jacket and put it in his backpack. He would dry it later. He had his vigilante outfit with him, but putting it on would be a bad idea, and he didn’t think this was the perfect situation to change. So, he remained in the wet pants and wet uniform shirt.

“The exit should be that way.” He pointed towards the place he knew it was.

“We’re not leaving, loser” Bakugou snarled. “We’re taking out the mist fucker. That way, they will have no place to retreat and we’ll capture them”

Izuku rubbed his chin. It was a sound plan, yes, but he doubted it will be that simple. “Kurogiri is one of the three strong villains here, the others are just small fry. Even so, going and butting out heads directly is a poor strategy, they have us by numbers. The best way would be to bring Kurogiri in Aizawa’s line of sight and knock him out” he muttered.

“A good plan” the ice guy said. “But that still leaves the problem of the other villains.”

“Yes, but first, we need to get to Aiz…” his voice died as he looked after his teacher. The
big villain seemed to have finally moved and was now pinning the Erasure Hero to the ground. They all looked there and a look of understanding passed between them.

But, before they had the chance to do anything, a warp gate opened and a hand came and dragged Izuku through.

~O~

When Aizawa had watched the Entrance Exam, he was pretty impressed (though he would never admit it) by the Quirkless kid. He kinda stood out, the only one going there with a weapon, the only one without a Quirk. So Aizawa watched him closely. He saw how he saved the other two. He saw how he saved Uraraka from under the zero pointer when everyone ran away. But it wasn’t only that. After all, jumping in to save someone was heroic, but not particularly smart. No, after Aizawa had re-watched the tape, he could see the remnants of a plan. He had looked over the written exam too, and the logical application of certain subject was definitely different from the others and quite ingenious.

Izuku Midoriya. There was something very familiar about him, yet he couldn’t point it out. The boy had gotten 40 rescue points. Since they were rescue points, the hero knew Nedzu would have added some more to put him into heroics. If he were, Aizawa would have insisted he be moved to his class. The fact that the mouse didn’t showed that he had a plan for later, and, no matter how much Aizawa dreaded to know what passed through the mouse’s head, he let it slide.

But, the last thing he expected was to see the boy as a hostage to the people who took over the USJ. He had known that he was at a disadvantage, he wasn’t suited for combat in large groups. Yet he did it anyway, knowing his students needed to stay strong. The thugs had been fine. They were weak, small fry. But then the pale haired man –Shigaraki they called him- entered the fight and fucked up his elbow. Then the monster behind him came in and Aizawa was crushed.

The man was in the middle of monologuing when he suddenly stopped and looked around. “Hey, where’s my hostage?”

Fuck.

The mist villain-Kurogiri- looked ahead before his yellow eyes suddenly settled on something. A warp gate opened near Shigaraki and he stretched his hand into the smoke. A few seconds after he dragged a very dishevelled (and wet) Gen Ed student out of it.

“I thought I told you to stay put!” he told the teen, but his tone seemed more like he was scolding a misbehaving cat than anything else. Midoriya gulped and the villain swung a hand over his chest and pulled him closer, almost as if using him as a shield. “Anyway, I’m afraid we’ll have to leave soon. Fucking All Might, not even showing to the boss battle. Well then, we should probably leave a few corpses behind to make sure he gets the message.”

“I’m curious” the boy said and all eyes focused on him. “What was your plan?”

What is he…. Then Aizawa looked at his hands. It wasn’t obvious, but he was shaking. The villain regarded him with a perplexed look. “What do you mean…oh, yeah, you weren’t here” he nodded to himself. “Well, we’re here to kill All Might. We got the final boss and everything. But the asshole plainly refused to show up.”

“That part I got” the boy said, causing the villain to let go of him a little just so he could face him fully. “What I don’t understand is why you brought the small fry.”
“We needed fire power to keep you brats busy.” The man said like it was the most logical thing ever. The boy rubbed his chin and nodded, as if he was thinking, but Aizawa could see the gulp. The boy was scared. And he was doing a good damn job at hiding it.

“Seems legit. The thing is, they are more of a liability.” The villain cocked his head. “You see, they may be more, but they are inexperienced. They can’t really work in a team. You said it yourself, Eraserhead is no good in group battles, but it was necessary for you, the ones on a higher level to step in and balance the situation.” The man seemed to consider this for a few seconds, looking critically at the other villains. Midoriya rushed to continue. “Ambush is good as a strategy, but, no matter how many men you have, if they’re weak as fuck, they’re nothing but cannon fodder.”

The man’s face lit up at the realisation. “You’re right”

That was the moment the blond ape finally decided to come. He crashed through the gates with a powerful yet full of rage “I AM HERE!”

The Noumu let go of him and Midoriya seized the opportunity and ran towards him. Aizawa grunted as his broken arms were jostled, but the boy hoisted him on his shoulders and dragged him out of here. The sounds were a jumbled mess in the hero’s ears, but he could vaguely make out the words *I’m sorry, I’m sorry* over and over again. Aizawa groaned and closed his eyes.

More hands came to his aid and, in no time, the man was laid on his back on hard concrete, looking at the dome’s ceiling. He heard sniffles and looked to his right. Midoriya was on his knees, heaving, with wet trails staining his cheeks. He hiccupped and shivered in his wet clothes. He looked at him and green met black. The boy smiled in relief and swallowed his tears.

Aizawa passed out.

Chapter End Notes

really Shigaraki, Really? this is how you do?!
thanks everyone for teh kudos adn the comments. please tell me what you think, i’d love to hear it
follow me on tumblr
join my discord
Izuku woke up to his phone’s new message notification tone. He blinked the sleepiness away and reached for his phone. He unlocked it and opened the conversation with Dabi.

~ Illegals~

Dabi

I saw the news

And that really explained everything.

Izuku rubbed his eyes and typed back

Me

Yeah, I was there

Dabi

Can you talk?

And that was weird since Dabi rarely wanted to talk. Most of the times he seemed content with simple messages. But Izuku could and did send an affirmative. A few seconds after, the phone lit and Izuku answered.

“Yeah?” eh said in a groggy voice. It must’ve been somewhere around four in the morning.

“What happened?” came from the other side. Izuku yawned.

“I was walking to school and I was kidnapped. They took me as a hostage, but they were all amateurs and I managed to take down a few of them before the heroes arrived” he remembered how, after Shigaraki and Kurogiri vanished, Present Mic came to them. After Aizawa was taken to the hospital, the voice hero sat near him and made sure he was Ok. He even drove him home afterwards. Izuku liked his homeroom teacher.

On the other end, Dabi seemed to ponder. After a few seconds though, he said. “Are you alright?”

“Sure,” he said as he rubbed his head before the words really sunk in. “Wait, do mine ears deceive me? The great emo Dabi actually cares?”

A huff came from the other end. “Yeah right, I only wanted to know if I finally got rid of you or if I had to put up with your bullshit any longer.” he said dryly, but Izuku could hear some amusement in his voice. “Anyway, what happened after?”

“Well, the heroes came and questioned me, then sent me home. I have the days off till Monday.” Explaining why he had support items on him would’ve been hard, but Powerloader jumped in his
defence, explaining that he had supervised the paperwork and the police let it go.

“Ok, brat, now rest.”

“Bold of you to tell me to rest when you call me at this hour.”

“Like you were sleeping.”

“Fuck you too” he said, though he was laughing. The call ended and Izuku fell back to sleep.

~O~

The next day was alright. Mom took a few days off from work to stay with him and make sure he was all right. They had spent the day in bed or on the couch, watching movies and hero fights. At some point, Izuku retreated to his room and mom started working on the computer.

Around lunch, Present Mic showed up. Izuku had almost fallen into his fanboy fever, and Mom would have too, had the teacher not been in his civilian outfit. The hero looked really weird with his hair down as he sat uncomfortably at their table and shared a tea.

“And, what brings you here today, Mr Yamada?” Mom asked. She had fallen into her lawyer persona, having a very pleasant conversation with his homeroom teacher.

“I wanted to make sure that your son was all right.”

Izuku lifted his hands and waved them violently in front of his face. “It’s ok, Yamada-sensei. I wasn’t even hurt” he gave a sheepish smile. “How’s Aizawa-sensei?”

The man sighed. “He’s alive. Pretty extensive injury, but he’s expected to make a full recovery”

“That’s great!” Izuku smiled. “Do you know who’s gonna teach us in the meantime?”

“I think he will do it,”

Izuku frowned. “But... you just said…”

“I said he’s injured, and he is expected to rest, but the man is such a workaholic, he’s most likely going to come to school in bandages” the man threw his hands at the sky in exasperation. “I swear to god, he will be the death of me.”

His mom laughed and they carried on with the small talk for about an hour. When he left, Present Mic left them his phone number and told them that, if there was any problems or he couldn’t make it, to call him. They agreed and parted ways. Izuku used the remaining of the evening to write his homework and make analysis on Shinsou’s Quirk and the different Quirks he had spotted at the USJ.

Shigaraki disintegrated Aizawa’s elbow once he touched him. But he touched me too, so he must have some control over it. Maybe it depends on the position of the fingers? Or the number of fingers on the skin? He left the page filled with question marks. Too little data to make an assumption.

Shigaraki Tomura….

Shigaraki Tomura…

Shigaraki Tomura…

He pulled his computer and typed the name in the search engine. The only result he got besides the
recent headlines was a pottery studio. So a fake name, then. What was with all the fake names? *Dabi, Kurogiri, Shigaraki... they know your face now, why hide your name?*

Then it hit him. No one at the USJ saw his face. None of the villains saw his face. The only one who saw his face in full was Izuku all those months back when he had saved his life.

*Fuck.*

He rubbed his temples when it hit him.

*Wait a second... Dabi’s fire can cremate. Kurogiri means black mist. But Shigaraki Tomura means nothing...* he tapped his chin with the pen. *Some kind of reference? Or an anagram, maybe?*

He took his notebook and spread the kanji on the paper. Taking each kanji, he wrote the possible reading and possible combinations. It took the better part of an hour and a syllabus, but, in the end, he got about twenty possibilities.

Gateki Shiraga
Shiraki Garato
Tengara Shitoki
Shimura Tenko
Murato Shiten

Aaaaaaand, the list went on.

Cracking his knuckles and looking at the beautiful afternoon, Izuku started googling. It had been tedious and boring. He typed in every possibility. Some people existed. Some didn’t. He was eternally grateful for Facebook and Instagram, because most times he could see how these people looked like and that made the search easier. Still, there were a lot of people, and a lot of companies and private businesses, and it was almost impossible to point out something specific. That was the moment Izuku decided that, if he ever took a fake name, he will take the name of a company, because finding anything else under their ads was next to impossible.

It was almost two hours of combing through the internet before he got to typing in the name Shimura.

His eyes went to one of the hero forums he frequented and looked at a very old post about heroes who didn’t get to work for long. Around number five on the list, there was the name: Nana Shimura.

With renewed fervour, he typed the name in the engine and found more posts about her and her Wikipedia page. She had been a hero for less than five years ultimately killed in the line of duty. The villain was never caught. What caught his eye was the fact that she was married, but her husband had also died in the line of duty.

Quick, he returned to the main page and typed once again Tenko Shimura. He scrolled past the forums and everything related to Nana and landed on a very old news article.

It was at least thirteen years old, about a villain attack. It had been pretty gruesome, over five families wiped out. The name Shimura was through them.

Cracking his knuckles, he returned to Facebook and typed the mother’s name in the engine. A lot of
accounts popped up and Izuku searched for the one that hasn’t been used in more than a decade. The woman didn’t look much like Nana, but there was something similar in her jawline, and, even though he couldn’t tell from the lighting, Izuku was sure her hair had a pretty high chance of being silver. Or blonde. Or red. Damn those Instagram filters!

He clicked her husband’s profile, and yup. The man reminded Izuku a lot more of the hero. He looked for a front face photo and put it near the picture of Nana. Same hair, same jaw line, same mole above the lip. Crossing his fingers, he looked through the photos. Yes, they seemed to have a silver haired child. The oldest he ever was in the pictures was five years old. Sighing, he pulled out all the photos available and started scrolling through them. *Fuck,* he couldn’t get a frontal photo.

Sighing, he went back to the mom’s profile and looked through her photos. After about half an hour in which he felt like his eyes would pop out of his head, he managed to find a picture. It was the mother holding the child in her lap. The boy –Tenko– was smiling and holding an All Might Plushie. He had shaggy silver hair and a big, toothy smile.

Izuku made the photo bigger and bigger until he was staring at a very pixeled face of a five year old. The core features were the same, but he couldn’t make out any details with the crappy resolution.

*What do I do now? I found the maybe identity of Shigaraki. What do I do with it?*

*Tell your teachers. They work with the police, they have better technology than you, and you wash your hands of the trouble.* Izuku sighed and closed his laptop. It was night already. He had eaten dinner, and his mom was expecting him to go to sleep any moment.

*I’ll go to Dabi. I need a distraction.*

Having set his mind, he sent the man a quick text, threw on a dark hoodie and pants, yelled good night to Mom and climbed down the window.

He walked through the district when he saw a woman in a whacking a drunk man over the head with a crate. Izuku hid behind the wall and watched, but the man had already fallen and the woman was still beating the hell out of him.

“Stop that!” he said in a gruff voice as he left the safety of the shadows. The woman turned towards him, glared and started attacking him with the crate too. Izuku, on his part, didn’t expect that and barely dodged the piece of wood coming full force at his head. He ducked, caught the woman’s arm and pulled her forward. She tripped and the boy took the opportunity to tear the crate out of her hands. She punched him in the nose and, while Izuku was reeling in pain, she stabbed something though his tight.

He groaned and fell to the ground and the woman ran away.

He was starting to feel dizzy. He looked at his tight. It was a dart, not a knife, so he pulled it out and slipped it in his pocket. His vision was doubling and his head was pounding in his skull.

*Fuck, shit, what did she drugged me with?* He staggered on his feet, like he was after a particularly bad hangover and walked aimlessly. He couldn’t stay in one spot, if he did, he wasn’t sure he would get to wake up in the morning, drug or not. He didn’t know how long it was when he felt someone grab his shoulders. His hood fell and he met the scarred visage of the super emo teen.

“What happened?” he asked as he lowered the boy to the ground.

“Some crazy chick stabbed me with this” he pulled out the dart. Dabi took it and used the flashlight on his phone to look at it both sides. He sniffed the dart before licking it. He then spit in the
pavement and faced the boy.

“You’ll live” he said as he stretched and looked around. The street was empty. Izuku looked at the blurry figure and emitted a noise that was supposed to be a full fledged question. The man sighed.

“There’s this drug circling around lately. It’s made out of some guy’s Quirk. Basically, you are shot and fall asleep immediately. You feel like shit the next morning. They are packed in darts like these.” He twirled it in his fingers. “Though I think that whoever got you had a shitty batch, because you’re still conscious.”

The drug decided to agree with Dabi, because Izuku yawned. Dabi kneeled near him and pulled his hands over his shoulders. Then, rotating the teen a little, the man caught his legs.

“What are you doing?” izuku groaned.

“Taking you home. You won’t get there on your own legs, and my place isn’t really an option, because, you know, your mom. You won’t be able to move tomorrow the first hours after you wake up, so, taking you home now will be less of a hassle than taking you tomorrow.”

Izuku nuzzles the surprisingly soft hair. “You don’t want to admit that you care.”

The man snorted and Izuku did his best to stay awake. They reached his apartment complex and the raisin was heading for the entrance. “Wait” Izuku groaned and the man stopped.

“What”

“We can’t go through the front door. My mom doesn’t know I left, and, if she sees you, she’ll ask questions.”

The man tsk-ed and looked up. “You left your window open” Izuku nodded. “Do you think you could hold on your own for a few minutes?” Izuku nodded and crossed his legs over the man’s torso. It was hard to keep them together, especially when he was drugged, but he managed. Apparently, Dabi wasn’t only good at climbing, but he was good at climbing with teenagers limp on his back.

At one point, they finally reached his window and Dabi slipped in. izuku hit his head lightly on the upper windowsill, and groaned when the pain intensified.

He squinted when Dabi turned on the light and sighed when he was dropped unceremoniously on the bed. He was lifted in sitting position and felt his hoodie slide off his shoulders. He kicked his shoes off before he laid again. Someone pulled a blanket over him and the lights shut, finally having mercy on his eyes. Izuku vaguely heard the window shutting before he fell asleep for good.

~O~

Izuku really did feel like shit the day after. Thankfully, his mom went to work early, and the boy got the time to recover.

He insisted to go to school on Monday, even if his mother told him to stay put. He still had to go to class if he ever hoped to keep up with his peers and he had important information to share. Well, maybe not that important, but it was better to tell it and it be worth nothing than him not saying anything and that little piece to be something very important.

Bakugou glared at him on his way to school. Izuku didn’t know why and, by this point, he didn’t care. His mere existence seemed to be offending to the blond, and he had given up any attempts at friendship too long ago.
He didn’t anticipate exactly how his class would react to him after the USJ. He never expected anything to change, but, apparently, someone somehow leaked the fact that Izuku had taken down a lot of villains, escaped a hostage situation (though they failed to mention he had gotten captured again) and stalled the villains until All Might arrived. There were variants of the story in which he rescued Aizawa, versions in which the battle ended when All Might came.

He heard them all when he was assaulted by his classmates when he first entered the class. They were crowding in on him, speaking too loud and fast, and Izuku felt caged. He had to fight his fight or flight instinct and not kick and punch his classmates. Thankfully, Shinsou came to the rescue and took him out of the mob.

He went to his seat and sat down as he sighed in relief. “Thank you, I was a few steps from a full fledged panic attack.”

“No problem” Shinsou tried his best to give a reassuring smile, but that expression didn’t really look good on his face. Probably from lack of practice. “If you don’t mind me asking, what actually happened?”

Izuku sighed. He knew this would be coming. “They took me on the way to school. They wanted me as a hostage. When we got there, I managed to distract him long enough to take my stuff and leave the place.”

The eggplant nodded. “What about the villains? You know, the fifty they say you took out.”

“Ok, so first, there were twenty at most” he lifted one finger. “Second, they were all in the water. I just jammed my electroshock in it and let physics take care of them. Third there were three other who were attacking another student and I took them by surprise.”

Shinsou nodded. “So, you took down more villains than the herolings?”

*I’d already taken down more villains before the year started* he wanted to say, but that was more or less a state secret, so he gave a tired nod. Present Mic then entered and made the announcement for the Sports Festival. The class went through different stages of scepticism to enthusiast to *why do you still keep it, the villain attack was like three days ago?* But, of course, UA had its reputation to keep, so here comes the tournament.

At the end of the period, Izuku went to Present Mic. “Hey there, little listener, how can I help you?” his tone was a little peppier than usual, and Izuku could see that it was even a little bit fake.

*Come on, what you did is in no way related to your other occupation.* He took a deep breath. “I think I have some information on Shigaraki” he said timidly.

His teacher frowned. “You sure?”

Suddenly, Izuku was filled with anxiety. “No...you know what, maybe I shouldn’t, I think I might be wrong.”

*When were you ever right?*

“No, no, no!” the man said in a soothing yet alert tone as he caught his shoulders and looked at him, “Even if it’s just a hunch, we will be glad to hear it. You don’t have to be worried if you are wrong, we will take everything, even if it’s useless. Ok?”

Izuku nodded. The man smiled. “Great. I’ll talk to Nedzu and send a student to pick you up later. The boy nodded again and the teacher left.
It was during the next middle of the next period when a student knocked at the door and opened it. He had gelled blond hair and very cartoonish eyes. He looked at Midnight. “Sorry to interrupt, miss, but can I take Midoriya for a moment? Principal Nedzu requested his presence.”

The R rated hero let him go and Izuku had to pass through a mass of students looking at him curiously. He went into the hallway when a hand was promptly shoved into his face. “Mirio Toogata, nice to meet you.” The greenette was dazed for a second before he took it.

“Izuku Midoriya. Nice to meet you, senpai.”

Toogata smiled and walked forward. On the way he kept chatting, leaving him time to answer, but not really expecting one, which let the boy time to try and relax at the prospect of talking with the principal. They reached the door and the third year waited patiently for him to go inside.

The room was big, with two huge cushions and a mini kitchenette. Inside, his homeroom teacher and a mix between a mouse, a bear and a dog were sharing a cup of tea. “Oh, Midoriya, we’ve been waiting for you.” The furry- Principal Nedzu- said. No matter how chippy the tone, the sentence still sounded ominous as fuck. “We heard you may have some information regarding the USJ. Please sit and tell us what you discovered.”

The boy sat down and accepted the cup of tea. He wasn’t really feeling like it, but he had the distinct impression he wasn’t allowed to deny the tea. He held the cup in his hand, even if he had no intention of actually drinking it. He took a deep breath. “I was thinking the other day, about Shigaraki. And I googled him and found nothing of importance. Then, I started thinking that this was a fake name and thought, hey, what if it’s a play upon Kanji? So, “he looked at the principal, but the mouse seemed eager to know more. Yamada gave him an encouraging smile, so he continued. “I started rearranging the Kanji in his name on every way I could think of. I searched every alternative, most of them said nothing, but I found one that was interesting. Tenko Shimura.” He saw the mouse blink at the name, which was the biggest reaction he would probably get from the him. “I know it’s farfetched, but he might be related with the hero Nana Shimura?” god, it sounded stupid when he said it out loud. “Actually, I searched other accounts of Shimura, and I found a family killed in a villain attack that matched the name. So, I looked for them through Facebook and found the oldest account used. I scrolled through their photos and found something interesting. May I?” he pointed at the laptop opened on the desk.

“Suit yourself.”

Izuku got at the computer and quickly typed in the name in the Facebook search engine. He found the profiles and the photos in question and put them big on the screen. “I know it’s not very well, but looking at the parent’s photos, they looked a lot like both Nana and Shigaraki. I’m no expert, but I think they might be a match.”

“But wait, no one saw how Shigaraki looked” Present Mic said.

Izuku scratched his neck. “Actually…”

The blond gulped. “You saw his face.”

Izuku nodded. “When he kidnapped me, he didn’t have his maa-hand on, I managed to see his face. I didn’t get a very good look at it, but, from the pictures here” he pointed at the computer,” I think we can make a pretty good guess at how he looks like now.” He fidgeted until he heard the mouse’s voice.

“Thank you, Midoriya. We will look into it. Please, don’t reveal any of this to his classmates or other
teachers, at least not until we have this sorted out.”

Recognising a dismissal when he saw one, the boy got up, thanked for the tea, and left the office. It was close to lunch, so he was heading for the cafeteria. As he was walking, he passed class 1A and found a huge crowd in front of the classroom. Looking over their heads, he spotted the purple head of his classmate over the crowd.

“It’s true, we came to take a look, but you sure are modest.” His static yet loud voice rang over the crowd, enabling every person to properly shut up. “Are all kids in the hero course like this one? Because I gotta say, it’s not very impressive.” Shinsou, what the fuck are you doing? “Those of us who didn’t make it to the hero course got stuck in Gen Ed. The kid in my class who was taken with you was one of them. And, apparently, he did a better job.”

That was the moment Izuku stepped in. “Shinsou, what the fuck?!” all eyes turned on him, but Izuku was caught in a state of semi shock, looking at his friend. The purple Einstein regarded him with a look before he turned towards the rest. “If we act exceptionally at the Sports Festival, we might be moved to the hero course. So, consider this a declaration of war.”

Izuku was still in shock when Bakugou started speaking. “Move aside, cannon fodder” he pushed through them and headed straight towards Izuku. The greenette stood his ground, but then the blond opened his mouth. “And you, you useless fucker, you stay out of my way before I crush you” he entered with his shoulder in the smaller teen and, had he not been prepared, Izuku would have fallen. But, like this, he barely shook.

Are you kidding me? We almost died and you care about some stupid rivalry?! He gulped as his blood started to boil. I did a good fucking job at the USJ, why do you still treat me like nothing? he clenched his fists as he looked after the blond.

“Oh, it’s on!”

Chapter End Notes

shorter than usual, i know, i’m sorry
comments and kudos are very appreciated. they give me life!
hope you enjoyed it, see ya next time

Tumblr
discord
Izuku was scrawling madly on a piece of paper, listening Cementoss with only half an ear. He would ask Shinsou later for the full lesson, maybe when he was done stewing. After the declaration of war, he had gone to lunch and munched furiously on his bento. The taller teen seemed to sense his lack of enthusiasm and let him think his battle plan. Hatsume had seated herself at some point and Shinsou had (probably, maybe) filled her in. They could’ve been talking porn for all he listened. He had been too busy thinking.

His plan wasn’t exactly fool proof, but it was pretty close to something that might actually work. He just needed the a few more people in on it for it to do so; and not just his friends, the other departments too. The support department was the backbone, but the others were important as well. It would be hard, and Izuku had to prepare a speech that could sway the others in his favour. The department he was most worried about was Management since, unlike the other two he had no contacts within it. Still their participation would boost the chance of success exponentially so Izuku was confident it was worth it.

His train of thought came to a screeching halt when the door to the classroom opened and a mummy dragged itself in through the door. The shaggy hair surrounding the bandages was enough to identify the true owner of the body, which would be the Erasure-should-be-now-in-a-hospital-bed-hero, Eraserhead. He looked at the sentient block of cement at the desk and cleared his throat. “Sorry for the interruption, but I have to take Midoriya Izuku with me.” He didn’t say why, and the other teacher didn’t ask. They all just turned towards him and Izuku quickly got up, stuffed his notebook in his jacket pocket and followed his teacher out.

Aizawa was moving pretty fast for someone who had all his limbs in bandages, but, then again, the Noumu probably didn’t do anything to his legs. Izuku walked at a steady pace behind him until they reached the same office Izuku had stepped in earlier that morning. Aizawa pushed the door and the boy followed close behind, making sure to close it after. Inside the room, there were already four people. Nedzu and Present Mic, both smiling, the detective who interrogated him after the incident-Naomasa- and a woman with short blue hair and a folder.

“Izumiya” the detective stood up and offered his hand, which Izuku took and shook. “It’s great to see you again. Let’s sit.” So they did and Izuku ended up boxed in between Aizawa and Present Mic as Nedzu placed a cup of tea in front of him.

Izuku felt like he was interrogated, he didn’t like it. Which was a bit silly considering he hadn’t (to his knowledge) done anything forbidden but the paranoia ingrained in him by months of vigilantism was strong and humming to life in his gut.

After a few seconds the detective started.

“We have been informed that you discovered something about Shigaraki. Nedzu sent us the data and the pictures and we think we can make a pretty educated guess at how Shigaraki may look in the present. Since you are the only one who saw his face, we need you to make sure we have the right person.” Izuku nodded and the woman opened the folder. She pulled out a couple of paper sheets and laid them on the table. Izuku looked over them.
Most drawings were startlingly accurate. None of them were an exact match, through some
were closer than others, but anyone with working eyes would be able to recognize it was the same
person. Izuku picked the one that was closest to reality and studied it closely. “The cheekbones aren’t
that high. His chin is a little pointier. He also has horrible skin and bags under his eyes.”

The woman nodded and took the pictures, making a few changes until Izuku considered it
accurate enough.

Then, Tsukakuchi spoke again “I think it goes without saying that you shouldn’t mention your
involvement in this to anyone, right?” Izuku nodded and the man smiled brightly. He and the woman
got up and walked out and Izuku found himself very uncomfortable between his teachers.

“Am I... dismissed?” he asked, ready to leave and meet with his friends.

“No” Aizawa said as he stood up. Izuku looked at him, gulped, but got up and followed.

~O~

Aizawa knew he was supposed to be in bed, but he just couldn’t bring himself to follow
the simplest orders. Hizashi insisted he remain at home, but, after fifteen year of friendship and
twelve of cohabitation, they both knew it was more for show than anything else. In truth, the the lack
of anything to do was driving him up the walls.

Plus, Aizawa didn’t want to admit it, but he enjoyed the shocked expressions on his students’ faces
when he made his way to class wrapped in bandages. As a hero, he knew how to identify a real
wound and when someone was faking, and a lot of people tended to complain from nothing. So, the
next time one of his brats complained that it was too hard, he could just remind them that he came to
teach their ungrateful asses with two broken hands.

Another thing was that he’d been meaning to talk to the Midoriya kid sooner or later.
There had been something at the USJ that made him want to discuss with the teen. The same things
he’d seen during the entrance exam. Plus the boy had applied in advance for transfer to heroics, and
he wanted to see if the kid was worth it. So, when he heard in the teacher’s lounge Hizashi casually
mention to Nemuri that Oh, Midoriya might have discovered Shigaraki’s real identity, he almost spit
out his coffee.

After that Aizawa had moved his discussion with Midoriya from somewhere in the next
few weeks to right the fuck now.

Even though he’d been having his head repeatedly bashed into the concrete Aizawa had
managed to glimpse what was happening and he wasn’t sure whether to hug the kid or whack him
over the head. The tactic was good, but there had been something truly unsettling about those
screams.

So, the glorified mummy walked to Nedzu’s office and asked in his most elevated way what the fuck
was actually going on. Apparently, the student had used his free day to dig through decades old
cases and find out the potential identity of the ringleader, which the rodent had been suspiciously
giddy about. Aizawa was seriously starting to fear whatever the mouse had planned for the boy since
it was obvious that Midoriya was currently on the man’s radar.

So, he studied the student when he went to pick him up. He had been nervous on the way
and while looking at the pictures. But it wasn’t the normal kind of fear, it wasn’t low a festering, like
when people found out that they might be in danger. No, it was immediate, like his wellbeing was in
peril at that very moment. But, who knows, maybe he was reading too much into this.
They reached the office and Midoriya obediently stepped in. Aizawa followed and closed the door. He didn’t lock it. Once, there was no reason to, and two, he didn’t want to scare the kid even more. The boy fidgeted in the doorway and the man pointed him towards the couch. He sat down and looked expectantly at him. His stance was relaxed, but, much like the USJ, his right foot was slightly shaking, sign that he was nervous.

“So, sir, what did you want to talk about?” he asked, and, had he not been experienced, Aizawa wouldn’t have caught the slight tremor in it.

“The USJ” he said. Midoriya nodded and looked him in the eye (or tried, it was really hard to correctly point out through the bandages). Aizawa sat on an armchair in front of the couch. “You did surprisingly well.”

The boy blinked, as if praise was the last thing he was expecting. He pondered a little and Aizawa let him muse before answering. “Well, I originally applied for heroics.” Then, in a hushed grumbled tone. “Not that martial arts really work against robots”

Aizawa was grateful for the bandages covering his face, because he wouldn’t have been able to hide his half smile otherwise. What he said though was in a serious voice. “I’ve been trying to convince Nedzu to change it for years. Kinda hypocritical, he wouldn’t be able to pass it either” he said under his breath, and Midoriya chuckled. “But, anyway” his tone turned serious. “You dealt surprisingly well with being kidnapped.” He was fully aware it sounded like and accusation. He didn’t mean it like that, but he wanted to see his reaction. Midoriya paled before he shook his head.

“I was actually terrified” he rubbed his neck sheepishly. “The only reason I was able to keep up was because I knew that, if I screwed up, both you, me and possibly the others were going to die.”

“Then you hold up pretty well under pressure”. Aizawa didn’t miss the quiet “I’ve had experience” but pretended he did, only to see a minor sigh of relief a few seconds after. Yup, the boy definitely had something to hide. “Anyway, your deduction wasn’t bad” it was the closest he dared come to a compliment. The boy blushed and looked away. “I saw you want to transfer to heroics. Did the USJ change your mind?”

Midoriya shook his head. “I knew I would have to face villains sooner or later. It just happened to be sooner.” He said in a relaxed tone, and it was the first thing that was 100% true. Ok, now Aizawa was interested. He would have to keep a close eye on the kid, if only to find out what exactly irked him so much.

“Very well, then. Train hard for the Sports Festival, it won’t be easy”

The boy smiled, thanked and left the office.

As he was walking down the hall, he texted Hatsume quickly before he started gathering his things. The day had ended and Shinsou had remained to wait for him. He grabbed the other teen by the arm and dragged him to the lab. Once there, eh closed the door before turning towards his friends.

“Ok, I have a plan”

“A plan for what?”

“A plan to do very well at the festival and to simultaneously crush the heroics department”

Shinsou blinked while Hatsume was impatiently waiting for the green light on grenades. “How exactly?”
“First” he turned towards the eggplant “I’m still mad at you for speaking in my name, but I kinda want to help you transfer too, so I’ll let it slide.” Shinsou scratched his neck sheepishly before nodding. Taking it as proof enough, Izuku turned towards Hatsume. “How many of your classmates would be willing to collaborate with us for the sake of publicity?”

The girl took a second to ponder before starting. “No idea. I don’t really mingle with the others.” Izuku sighted.

“Well, can you please find out? I don’t doubt your skills, but we’re going to need a lot more manpower to pull this off.”

“I’ll try,”

“Great!” he smiled.

“What exactly are you planning?” Shinsou asked. Izuku gave him a sickly sweet smile.

The next day, somewhere around second period, Izuku found himself near the classes in the Management department. He was looking around, doing reconnaissance, when a tall kid with electric blue hair approached him. “What brings you here?” he said, sounding less like a welcoming student and more like an annoyed receptionist. Izuku lifted his arms, showing that he had no weapons. (Of course, the gesture could be considered violent depending on the Quirk, but Izuku hoped it wouldn’t be perceived that way)

“I just wanna talk to someone who’s word may have a little more weight around here.”

The kid quirked an eyebrow. “Why?”

“You guys don’t participate per se in the Sports Festival, do you?” the boy frowned but nodded. “But you do practice your analysis and marketing skills for later, right?” he nodded again. “Well, what would you say if I gave you the opportunity to have access to a different branch of business, other than Hero Class kids?”

The boy leaned in. “I’d point out that all others departments participate actively in the Festival.”

Izuku smiled. “The support department do it with the sole intention of marketing their products. But not all of them are as skilled at publicity as they are at making stuff, not to mention there are a lot of more skilled students who steal the spotlight.”

“Quit stalling and get to the point.” The boy said.

“So, I’m here to propose a collaboration. I already have a few students willing to work with you. You get new sponsors and ties in the business other than marketing hero students, who already have all the attention due to the Sports Festival and the USJ, and they get someone who actually knows their trade to make connections and possible alliances by the time they get their licences.”

The kid straightened his back. “What do you have to gain from this? You’re Gen Ed, not support.” Izuku blinked. The kid pointed at the pads on his shoulders “The buttons.” He lifted his cuff. “The stripes. They are different for every department.”

“Oh” Izuku said. He was right. He looked back up. “As for what I have to gain, come to this class at the end of school. Bring as many people with as much influence with you as you can. Make sure you’re not suspicious through.”
The boy cocked his head, pondered for a bit then nodded. “Alright,”

Izuku smiled and walked away. He hadn’t lied, exactly. Hatsume really did ask the others, and almost half of the department agreed to help them. He was halfway through convincing his class to join, and Shinsou had managed to convince some people from the other classes as well. They weren’t many, but Izuku hoped they would be enough. The end of the day came quickly and the three friends found themselves in Hatsume’s lab. Technically, it wasn’t her lab, but most support students already decided it was safer to go to other labs than have a limb blown off by her newest invention.

Izuku, of course, had no such qualms.

It took fifteen minutes for everyone to gather. There were three kids from Support, representing every class (Hatsume didn’t count), two from the Gen Ed, their class rep, Iyashi and the class rep from 1D, Kinzoku, and two kids from management: Kami (the blue haired boy he talked with that morning) and Jikan, his class rep.

Izuku plastered on a smile and stepped in front of them. “Thank you for coming, I have a proposition and I would like to ensure our collaboration.”

“Get to the point” one kid from Support said. Izuku sighed and turned towards that kid.

“You, students of the Support department, only participate to sell your goods. But, apart from a very few of them, I doubt you’re all stellar at marketing, never mind, finding clients. On the other hand, the management course doesn’t participate, but you try to find and market the kids in the hero course. But, with all the Sports Festival hype, a lot of agencies don’t really need you to market them. So, I have a solution. You work with the Support department, get them clients, find new investors and possibly make some alliances for after graduation.”

“Which just brings us back to what the hell do you have to gain?”

Izuku smiled excitedly. “Well, you see, we, the General Education Department will kinda pull a smaller string here. Those of us who couldn’t get into heroics are already behind. So, we made a plan: we get weapons from the Support Department and market them during the festival. In return, we have a lot of people with Quirks you might find useful. Kinzoku can combine any materials together, so, basically, he’s able to create the strongest alloys or materials for your projects. Iyashi has a healing Quirk, not as strong as Recovery Girls, but still. We, from the Gen Ed are willing to lend our Quirks and expertise to you, in exchange for your cooperation.”

“A shaky argument, at best,” Jikan said. Izuku would’ve faltered, had he not been expecting that.

“Actually” he pulled a piece of paper “I think you’ll be interested in this” the girl took it and started to read it. Her face paled and she looked up.

“H-How did you…?”

“I have my sources. See, thing is, I’m pretty good at analysis. Other that what’s already on the table, I do that for any of you, in order to improve the use of your Quirks and such. Oh, and, before you say anything, I have the same type on strength/weakness analysis on most kids from 1A.”

They all looked up. Izuku handed a similar piece to one of the Support students and watched. He had spent all night working on those for the sole purpose of impressing them. It hadn’t
been hard to find out who would come to the meeting, and, as such, he managed to get the upper hand.

“Alright now, we’re interested.” Jikan said. “Are there any other terms of the deal we might need to know about?”

“We would like the kids from management to keep tabs on the kids in heroics and report to us. Things like Quirks, personality, anything that could be considered important.”

“If you did this” Kami lifted the paper “Why do you still need us?”

“I’m only one person. Plus, after Shinsou’s little war declaration stunt, me and him can’t really get close anymore. If one of us pops up and starts asking Questions, they’ll be suspicious. The Support course has no reason to be there. But the management” he smiled, his expression turning giddy “You can say you are scouting possible clients, getting to the bone of the business.”

They nodded. “Alright” one of the Support Students said. “But this whole plan of yours has a small problem: you can’t use support items. The only kids allowed to do that are the Support course, and provided we created the item. And, even if you could manage to do so, getting all the paperwork done, the payment, the licences will take months. You only have a few weeks.”

“Actually” Izuku turned around and faced them. “The only ones forbid from using support items are the hero course. You can’t legally sell support items without a licence. You can give them away or gift them as long as you’re not making monetary gain from them. Additionally, yes, the support students can only use their own weapons, but no rule forbids cooperation between departments. So, if you give us the weapons in a gesture of good will, we don’t have to go through any paperwork, since they are more or less prototypes you weren’t intending to sell in the first place.”

They all looked thoughtful. Shinsou had a shit eating grin on his face, and Izuku knew he was probably fighting a fit of laughter. Hatsume was ecstatic at the thought of having an excuse of making more weapons of mass destruction and Izuku just hoped this whole plan would work. One by one, they all nodded.

“Great! Talk to your classmates and tell us what they think. If we manage to gather enough people, we could completely surpass the Hero class at the Sports Festival, and you get to sell your business. It’s a win-win!”

“One question” the blue haired kid said. “Is your Quirk analysis or something?”

Izuku gulped. If he revealed it, they might not want to continue, but if he didn’t, they wouldn’t trust him. Crap, what do I do?

Thankfully, Shinsou was a god send and answered for him. “Obviously. Do you have ah hearing problem or something?” they all seemed to agree and Izuku sent his friend a thankful look. Shinsou smiled before returning to his stoic expression and facing the others. “Is that agreeable?”

Jikan nodded. “We’ll talk to the rest. Anything else we should know?”

Izuku suddenly remembered. Of course, how could he forget?! “Don’t let anyone from heroics find out about this. If they do, they might get in our way or somehow prepare. More than this, one of the kids there was with me in middle school. He’s already suspicious from the other day. If my name happens to pop up, he’ll realise something is fishy and mess with our plans.”

They all agreed to keep silent.
The next day, at lunch, Izuku was already making some plans for some of his classmates who agreed to join. He smiled under his breath as Hatsume and Shinsou entered an argument about the morality of the villain in Black Panther. Suddenly, Shinsou stopped and growled. Izuku looked up and saw Kirishima approaching them. He shut his notebook as inconspicuously as he could while the redhead came near their table.

“Hey Midoriya” he scratched his neck in a very awkward movement.

“Hey Kirishima” Izuku gave his most reassuring smile and the other visibly relaxed. Not completely, it was pretty hard to be relaxed while Shinsou was glaring at you, but he managed.

“Look, I don’t know what kind of bad blood there is between you and Bakugou, but I wanted to thank you for the USJ. I know it has already been a week, but you saved me from those villains and I really wanted to thank you.”

Izuku allowed himself to smile for real this time. “No problem, I’m glad you are Ok”

“But I’m very sorry I couldn’t return the favour!” he suddenly said. Izuku rose an eyebrow and the other continued. “When they grabbed you, I was like five feet away. I could’ve jumped after you or dragged you out of the way. But I didn’t. you could’ve died and I couldn’t do a damn thing” eh clenched his fists.

Izuku was at loss of words. It was the first time someone blamed themselves for not helping him. He smiled and placed a hand on the hardened skin. “Don’t worry. I never even thought to blame you, but, if you insist, I forgive you for not rescuing me. And also, thank you!”

“For what?”

“I don’t really have a lot of people wanting to rescue me.”

There was a pregnant silence in which everyone was very awkward. Even Hatsume had stopped complaining, and that was a huge feat for the girl. Izuku smiled and managed to ward the other off.

At the meeting that night though, they found three other students, all three years along with everyone else. “My name is Rida” one of them said. “We heard that you want to start a business here. This is kinda our spot” she said s she jammed her finger into her chest.” We already have a pretty big marked going around, we’d be interested in a collaboration.”

Izuku leaned on the wall. “What exactly?”

“Well, we, the Management students already have an underground market for things such as snacks, instant coffee, different things you can’t really get in this district.”

“When did this start?” Izuku said, tilting his head. This was getting interesting.

“We don’t really know. It was here when we came. Every Business course generation teaches the trade to the next. Usually, kids from other departments aren’t introduced to this until at least the second year, when we are sure they won’t rat us out. It’s not exactly against the rules, but I doubt it’s perfectly legal.” Eh shook his head. “Anyway, we want you to join us. You’re still young and inexperienced, and, if the teachers catch you, there’s a pretty good chance they will catch us too. The chance of someone ratting us out is pretty damn high. Plus, we have a common client: UA students. There are a lot of kids looking for support items, and, in return, you can turn the first years originally with you towards us. It’s a mutual win.”
Izuku nodded and rubbed his chin. “Something’s fishy though: why didn’t you try to buy the business? That way, you could keep it in the Management department and not risk more than necessary.”

One other kid groaned. “We tried. We wanted to, but no one in support was willing to go against you.”

Izuku hid a smile. He had predicted that they would try to steal his business, and Bribed everyone in Support ahead. They might want publicity, but they appreciated Quirk analyses more, and he and Shinsou were the only ones who managed to keep Hatsume outside of the nuke making affairs, and no one was willing to give up that. He had successfully made himself an essential part of the operation.

“Well, then I’m interested, let’s talk details’’

~O~

“So, let me get this straight” Dabi said as he leaned on the mattress he was using as a bed. “You started a weapon’s trafficking ring in one of the most secure locations in Japan… out of spite?”

Izuku scratched his neck, mindful of the plethora of bruised decorating his skin. “Technically?” he sighed. “It’s more like I found a common ground between the departments and created an organised movement to help us all.”

Dabi looked at him with a deadpan expression. Then, he got up, went to the fridge and pulled out two beers. He threw one to the younger boy and opened the other. Izuku pressed the bottle to his eye, hoping to alleviate the pain and the bruising.

“So” the man sat back down. “You managed to convince all the First years?”

“Not all. Half at most. Maybe a third. But the others agreed to keep quiet out of everyone’s mutual dislike for the Hero course.”

“And everyone’s going to you for this because….”

“I’m the only one they actually trust” Izuku shrugged. “In truth, the Support doesn’t trust the Management to play fair and no one in Gen Ed really wants to deal with the others on their own. If the Support doesn’t like something, there’s a big chance that one of their prototypes will ‘accidentally’ ‘he air quoted’ explode, and no one really trusts the management. So, I’m technically the safest, easiest to access way to get something here.”

“So you basically run the mafia by yourself”

Izuku shook his head. “No. The older Management students teach me some of the business to make sure I don’t mess up too bad. Some of them are taking advantage of this and get gadgets for smaller favours. But, basically, yeah, I’m the one that runs the weapon’s branch.”

Dabi stared at him for a few seconds. “You know, sometimes, you actually scare me.” He shook his head and took a swing. “Come on, now, how hadn’t your partners already realise that you’re actually evil.”

Izuku smiled sweetly and tilted his head “There are certain advantages to being considered meek, helpless and cute”

Dabi shuddered.
Izuku smiled and moved the bottle to another spot. There was one week left till the Sports Festival and the past few had been hell. He was spending most of his time with Hatsume, designing weapons and different gadgets. He was tutored by the business students and, at the same time, he kept the records for the exchanges and checked the rulebook from three to three minutes to make sure he didn’t break any rules that might get him expelled. He was also hard-core training with Iho and Dabi, to make sure his martial skills weren’t lacking. You never knew when a device might malfunction.

The stress was a lot and Izuku had a suspicion that his mom put light sleeping pills in his meals just to make sure he was getting enough sleep. As a coping mechanism, he went vigilante-ing after he was finished to release some pent up energy and stay at least a little bit consistent. If he suddenly stopped before the Sports Festival, the people might catch up that the newest vigilante, the Vanisher, was a UA student. He could only go for half an hour a day, but petty crimes were pretty easy to find and at least he went to sleep happy.

Izuku looked around. Near the small fridge, he saw a crate with something slightly familiar in it. “What’s that?”

The man lifted his head slightly to peer at it. “Oh. Remember the darts that knocked you out that one time?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, I managed to get my hands on a crate full of those. The fuckers knew what was best for them. These are a higher quality, they should work better.” He stretched and grabbed a handful of them. “Here. If you even find yourself against an opponent too strong, stab them with these. It will be enough for you to make a run for it.” He said before he threw himself once again on the mattress. Izuku smiled and pocketed them.

“Thanks” the man waved it off and yawned.

Right now, Dabi was pleasantly tipsy, which, to him, it meant that he was the double amount of a twenty something asshole he usually was. He was laid down on the mattress, looking at the cracks in the ceiling. “Me thinks you should go. S’ getting late and your mom’ll be getting worried. Izuku pulled his tongue out, but sat up and rolled back his shoulders.

“Fine!” he groaned as he stood up and put on his jacket. He dropped the bottle on Dabi’s stomach, not hard enough to make him throw up, but enough to be uncomfortable. The man groaned and hit him with a pillow. “Good night!” he said as he opened the window.

“Sleep tight!” the scarred one said as he rolled on the other side. Izuku giggled and left the apartment.

~O~

It was pretty late, almost sunset, as Katsuki made his way home, because he had spent his afternoon at the gym venting his frustrations. The Sports Festival was a few days away and he sure as hell wasn’t going to be slacking off on the last mile.

Something was fishy at UA. His classmates hadn’t noticed it, but he did. Everyone seemed convinced that he didn’t care about other people as opponents, but he did. He always kept an eye on everyone, because no matter how weak they were, they would always be able to pull something out of their asses and flip the tables. Katsuki hated those people; they were nothing but know-nothings and low-life cheaters.
First, there were a lot of business students lurking around their class. There had been students before, scouting the competition, but now they gave away a different kind of vibe. This time, they looked at him and switched their attention when he noticed them. It was obvious that there was more to it. He just didn’t know what.

He also started looking after Deku. In middle school, it had been easier. They were in the same class and the nerd used to sit in his desk during breaks, constantly writing in his notebook. It was easy to angle himself and keep an eye on him without too much effort. Now, it was (much) harder.

He looked for him at lunch. He was still writing in his notebook, but he also talked to the two creeps at his table. A lot of students visited him during lunch break, and Deku would stop, talk for a little before writing something in his notebook. The green haired menace was up to something, and not knowing pissed Katsuki up.

He also saw him in the halls, near the Management and Support department. When their eyes met, Deku would hold his gaze for a few seconds before looking away.

It was getting harder and harder to find Deku these days.

Of course he avoids you. He jumped off a fucking roof to get away from you. Katsuki growled and did his best to silence that thought. He didn’t like that memory. He didn’t like it at all. Because, no matter how much he wanted to deny it, he still remembered the fear he felt as the other jumped. He didn’t care about the nerd, god dammit! Why did he have to worry about him?!

There was also that, that incident seemed to have triggered a part in him he was slowly starting to hate. Nightmares, most of them variations on the same tune.

Deku dying.

He didn’t care about the nerd. He didn’t. But almost every nightmare had him jumping off of something. At first, it had been him walking to school and finding his corpse near the coy pond. Limbs cold and unmoving, a huge bloodstain beneath him. In the water, a scorched notebook floating, showing in perfect ink the faded number 13.

Other times he saw him fall. He saw him hit the ground, he heard the crunch of broken bones.

A crack as the skull broke on the asphalt. Brains splattered like a Pollock painting on the ground, heaves and a small teenager choking on his own blood.

Recently, Katsuki was on the roof when Izuku jumped. He heard his own words as he told him to take a swan dive. He saw him crying as he took a step over the edge. He was only jeering on the side.

Those were the nights he woke up in cold sweat, heaving and panting in a room too small, too hot room. He was having a very hard time going back to sleep after. That was partly the reason he was in such a bad mood these days.

He shook his head and warded the thought away. He was going to eat, watch TV and go to sleep so he could train better tomorrow. He was going to win the Sports Festival. He was.

That’s why, when he saw the hooded figure walk out of the shadows, he stopped. While there weren’t any photos, the witness descriptions were pretty accurate: he wears a dark hoodie, sky
The Vanisher.

Currently across the street from him.

Katsuki blinked. The vigilante stopped and looked at him. They stared at each other for a few seconds before the man turned around and calmly walked back into the shadows. Something clicked in place.

“Oi, stop right there, you motherfucker!” he started running to catch up. The news about the vigilante was plaguing the media. Not only the news, but also a lot of people on social media debating and theorizing everything from potential Quirk to potential motivations. It was pissing Katsuki off, so this seemed like the perfect occasion to let off some steam while doing some good for the community.

So, he sprinted after him. The villain was fast and nimble, but Katsuki was strong and was using his Quirk to catch up (since no one would see him all the way up there anyway). The dark figure sprinted and jumped, throwing different things in his way, hiding behind cars, but the blond was determined. At one point, he climbed an emergency stair and ended up on the rooftops. He was sprinting to the other side, and Katsuki realised that he was ready to jump. The streets below were too dark and tangled for the blond to follow someone who knew the place there.

No, you don’t!

The blond grabbed the back of his hood and pulled him backwards. The other yelped and staggered back, giving Katsuki enough time to grab his bandanna and pull. Unfortunately for Katsuki (and fortunately for the criminal) the piece of material wasn’t tied all that well, so it just fell off. The no longer hooded silhouette staggered for a little bit, time in which Katsuki punched him in the face, knocking out his goggles.

The figure fell down and Katsuki froze.

Because, when he got up, the face was familiar. Looking into the very familiar pair of green eyes, Katsuki gulped as he saw the other grab the goggles. They stared at each other for a few seconds before a shit eating grin spread over the other’s features.

Wiping the blood from his face, Izuku grinned and said “No one’ll ever believe you” before he turned around and vanished in the dark below.
I’m better prepared for this than you

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“What?”

His voice was quiet, almost trembling, so very different from the one he used in public to go with his persona. It was weaker even than it normally was in this form but Toshinori felt like he was talking around a cotton-wrapped golf-ball. He swallowed as he looked at his friend.

“Are you sure?”

Tsukacuchi sighed and nodded. “Pretty sure. We dug up a lot of buried archives, old paperwork, hell, we even went to the place to try and see if anyone remembered anything. I’m sorry to say this, but Shigaraki Tomura, born Shimura Tenko, is the grandson of Nana Shimura.”

Toshinori swallowed again and sat down. The detective continued. “They died in a villain related incident along with four other families about thirteen years ago. Until recently they were all presumed dead but, apparently, the little boy survived and somehow became a villain.” The plain man pulled out a folder and laid some pictures on the table - robot portraits made going off of his childhood photos. “We had one witness identify him and apparently, yes, this is how he looks like now.”

Toshinori was at loss of words. He looked at the pictures, trying to remember how Nana looked like and find something of her in the photos before him. He tried to say something, tried to speak, but it was useless. He gulped. “How did you find this out?”

Tsukakuchi sighed and rubbed his temples. “We didn’t.”

The tall blond blinked. “What?”

“A student-Midoriya, I’m sure you know of him since he was the one who was held hostage at the USJ incident-saw Shigaraki without the mask and was able to identify him,” he sighed. “Also I hope I don’t have to remind you but this isn’t the kind of thing to be shouted from the rooftops. Tell as few people as possible- ideally tell no one.”

“Poor child…” Toshinori said, unsure if he was referring to Midoriya or Tenko

“That’s not all” the detective scratched his head as he let out a sigh “Midoriya’s the one who discovered the connection in the first place,”

The hero blinked. “How did he-?”

“Apparently, he somehow managed to deduce that Shigaraki is actually a fake name and then made the unsettlingly accurate logical leap that it’s an anagram and than just… ran all the possibilities through the system until he stumbled on the right one. Wipe that look off your face- I don’t one hundred percent believe it either but whatever he did it worked. He ended up finding some very old photos and it was all smooth sailing from there.”

Toshinori was at a loss about how exactly he was supposed to react.
“Well” Toshinori tried “That’s...quite impressive.” He scratched his head. The other man sighed.

“There’s more.” He looked up. “The villain that almost did you at the USJ? We did some tests on...it. It has four types of DNA and four Quirks. It doesn’t respond and has about the same amount of brain activity as a comatose patient. That thing is only alive by the dictionary definition.” He shook his head and pulled out a piece of paper. “Now, let’s revise: we have a creature created by someone who can put multiple Quirks into another individual, and who is in an alliance with and very likely had a hand in whatever drove the grandson of your previous teacher to villainy...”

All Might blanched. “You don’t think….”

“That All for One’s back?” the man shook his head in a tired motion. “I wish- I dearly hope- that’s not the case and that I’m just being paranoid, but, by this point? I don’t think we can afford to assume he’s still dead any longer. Who knows what Quirks he’s got up his sleeves?” All Might was starting to feel lightheaded and Tsukakuchi sighed. “I know it’s painful, and I know you’ll probably need some time. I’ll drive you home and leave you to that. Maybe you can take a break from teaching the next few days, so you can properly come to terms with it.”

Toshinori nodded and let his friend drive him home. Once inside he crashed on the couch and looked at the ceiling. He didn’t know what to do. In one go, he had found out that Nana’s grandson was a villain, and that his biggest nemesis, whom he thought he had died, was actually alive and kicking, creating villains left and right. Honestly he…. Didn’t know what to say.

I have to tell Sorahiko. He realised. The retired hero had been his master’s friend and his sensei. He deserved to know. Needed to know. But Toshinori didn’t know how he himself was supposed to get over it, he had no idea how to cope and really just wanted only to curl up and not wake up for days. But he also wanted to talk about it. I’ll tell him later. He shouldn’t have to process this with me whining in the background as well. But who else could he call? No one was supposed to know about this, and there were very little people who already knew the situation beforehand. Well, there is...

Toshinori stared at the screen. He and Osamu had gotten over their fight back then, but it wasn’t the same between them anymore. It was still somehow strained. But, at the same time, his old sidekick was the only one who might be able to help him.

Fuck it! He thought pressing the call button.

With every ring, he almost wished that his old friend wouldn’t pick up. But, nonetheless, after three dials, the stern voice of the underground hero came through the phone.

“Hello?”

“It’s me” he said before he felt like slapping himself. He sighed and tried again. “Am I interrupting?”

“Not really. What is it?”

Toshinori sighed and started. He told Nighteye about Shigaraki, about All for One (possibly) being alive. He told him of how betrayed he felt, of how fucked up everything was. At some point, his voice cracked and he started sobbing.

His old sidekick didn’t stop or rush him, only hummed every once in a while to show that
he was listening. After about half an hour, when All Might had finished his story with only minimal mental breakdowns, the wound in his side throbbing with phantom pain, the other spoke.

“First, I am very sorry. I never knew Nana, but you obviously cared a lot about her. I’m sorry that excuse of a human being put you through all of this. But what you need to understand is that that man is Shigaraki. Not Shimura. Whatever love and respect you held for her, there’s nothing in him to deserve the same thing. Don’t make the mistake of seeing him like that and trying to bring him to our side. From the reports, he’s too far gone for this.”

Toshinori remained silent, sniffling every once in a while. Osamu sighed. “How did they find out? And why did it take them so long to do so?”

All Might took a deep breath and told him about his student. The former sidekick was silent for a few moments after the No.1 hero was done before he spoke. “So you mean to tell me that a fifteen year old managed to find something crucial to the case when the police didn’t, with only a trusty laptop and internet access?”

The blond scratched his head. “Yes?” there was a beat of silence. “Young Midoriya is very brave and very resourceful. He was five points away from getting into heroics.”

“All Might, we’ve worked together for six years,” his tone turned serious. “I have to say, though, colour me intrigued. I’ll pay attention to the Sports Festival this year and give you my opinion” he sighed “Mirio was perfect, but he was also right, you need a potential list, more possible candidates. I’ll see if this Quirkless kid is worth the try”

All Might wanted to say something more, but the words stuck in his throat. He tried a few more times, but he didn’t know what to say. So, he settled on a good night and ended the call.

~O~

The air was thick with the scent of blood and sweat, the noise filling the available space like a plague. Izuku pulled his bandanna closer to his face, partly because of that and partly to keep the mumbling to a minimum.

Pro tip for life, when going to an underground fighting ring, make sure to have a disguise on. Other than the bandanna and the glasses, Izuku also had the wig on, which was pretty annoying since he couldn’t keep his hair out of his face. But whatever, he couldn’t get recognised. He planned on going big in the Sports Festival and getting killed on his way home would be inconvenient.

The fighters were pretty good. His notebook (a different one here, he wouldn’t risk his classmates or teachers) was already half filled with fighters, starting from two weeks ago when Dabi first brought him there. The raisin was yet to have made his way on the ring, and Izuku was waiting eagerly for this to be over so he could finally sleep. Tomorrow would be the weekend, but he didn’t feel like wasting his morning.
“Hey kid” someone said. Izuku barely tilted his head in the man’s direction. He was tall, sleazy with a golden tooth and shiny glasses. *Giran.* Izuku realised.

While he had never met the man, he sure as hell heard of him, and the reputation was something he wasn’t willing to cross just yet.

“What?” he said in a crooked voice, not aggressive, but not quite neutral either.

“Saw you hand with Dabi lately.” He tilted his head. “You seem new.”

“I am” was all he said, not revealing anything more. The man clicked his tongue.

“What exactly are your intentions?”

“Not going to meddle anyone’s business, if that’s what you’re asking.” He said as he turned back to the fight where a cat lady was beating the shit out of a guy twice her size.

“Smart” the man let out a mirthless chuckle “Though I’m not really sure how long this neutrality would last.”

“If you’re going to make me an offer, you might as well get to the point.”

The man’s face darkened as he tilted his head. “You might want to keep that mouth in check. It can get you in a lot of trouble.”

“It already did” Izuku said. Giran looked like he wanted to say something but the winner was announced and Dabi finally entered the ring. He was relaxed, hands hanging limply at his sides. Izuku chuckled. That meant a threat.

There were more types of bets one could put in place, most of them making themselves heard as the other contestant walked in. A tall guy, with purple skin and strange markings on its surface. But the ones Izuku had heard of were: bet on winner: one of the low high stakes yet still tricky in case of newbies. Because here, there were no rules, other than, possibly, don’t kill your opponent. Izuku wasn’t sure, he never saw anyone die. There was, bet on move and number of moves, which was one of the relatively easier ones to win, but that only if you were an Izuku level fanboy, because it required a lot of knowledge on both contestants. There was also the time bet. You bet on how long you thought the match would go. The closest to the actual time won, but you also had to say who would win.

Izuku knew both fighters, so he more or less expected the outcome. The clock started and the purple one attacked. Dabi stood in his place, held his ground until the last moment. The purple guy seemed to have some strength enhancing Quirk, or speed, of something like that. Dabi had cremation.

The moment the man got too close, the glorified Molotov stepped aside and caught his arm. Not his fist, which would have been impossible, but his arm. Blue flames covered the attacker’s sleeve and izuku could swear that Dabi was smiling when he dragged the man closer and jammed his knee into his stomach. The other collapsed and Dabi stepped on his throat.

The boy couldn’t really see from that angle, but the man was struggling to breathe. He tried to grab Dabi, but the slimmer one jammed his foot harder onto his throat. The other fell unconscious.

There were a few seconds of silence before the people started to cheer. In a normal tournament, there would have been boos, but Izuku had seen enough people get their balls blown to tell that the only ones that would me mad would be the ones to lose.
Izuku turned back towards Giran and tilted his head. “It was a pleasure” he said before melting into the crowd. He made his way down some stairs and slipped into a room when the bouncer wasn’t looking. Dabi was there, getting some cash from the manager, a very fat man in a red shirt that somehow made him even bigger. The scarred one pocketed them before he looked at the teen.

“Kinda anticlimactic to waste two hours for thirty seconds of action” Izuku said as he leaned on the door. Dabi jammed his hands into his pockets.

He tilted his head and smirked “Because you know all about action, don’t you?”

The boy was glad for his face being covered, he didn’t want the other to see him blush. Dabi shook his head and walked out. izuku followed on the flight of stairs and into the night.

“So” Dabi asked “What did you think?”

“Well, I kinda already expected you to win, so…” he shrugged “But the other matches were interesting.”

“Did you write them in your stalker notebook?”

“Yeah”

“Did you write about me?”

“It’s not like I had the time!” Izuku whined. Dabi turned to face him.

“Well, don’t. Ever.” He stressed the last word with a glare. Izuku took a step back.

“Yeah, geez, I get it, I’m not a four lever friend yet.”

“Who ever said we were friends?”

Ouch.

They walked in silence for a bit before izuku broke the silence “So, do you know Giran?”

Dabi tensed before throwing him a look. “Yeah, why? Did you meet him?”

“Yeah. He approached me and asked me what my plans were.”

“Fuck” Dabi cursed under his breath. “Change of plans, you’re coming to my place.”

“Why?” Izuku tilted his head.

“Because if he showed interest, he more than likely has his eyes on you, and by eyes I mean spy.” The man looked down at the boy “You don’t want them to know where you live, do you?”

“Point” Izuku grumbled and followed the other to his house. Flat. No.1 place to lead to his demise probably. Izuku staggered on the stairs and almost broke his neck, had it not been for the other to haul him up. Once in the flat, Izuku threw himself on the ratty mattress.

“Now what?”

“You don’t have school tomorrow, do you?”

“Nope!”
“Your mom?” Izuku shook his head. “Well, then” the man shrugged “I guess you can stay here for as long as it takes him to leave.”

“And how long will that take?” the man shrugged and drowned a beer can. Izuku pouted.

Dabi threw himself on the other side of the mattress and pulled out his phone. He typed something before the Game of Thrones theme song started. Izuku perked up and crawled towards the man before turning the scarred one into a very very cold pillow. Dabi growled and pushed him a little, but Izuku didn’t budge and buried his shoulder in the other’s guts. Burning blue eyes slitted before he was bumped painfully in the nose and the episode unpaved.

It took three episodes before Dabi realised that the heavy weight on his shoulder had started to breathe evenly and he turned to a very small very fluffy bundle of sleeping teenager. “Oi” he said, bumping the kid with his finger. “I’m not a pillow.”

The brat released a sound similar to the sleepy alternative of shut the fuck up and snuggled him a little closer. Dabi tried to push him off again, but the greenette wrapped himself around his arm like a Koala, sending the primal signals every animal used to transmit back off my pillow. Resigning himself to his fate as a human comforter, Dabi closed his eyes and fell asleep.

~O~

Izuku woke up tired. It was one of those days. He knew, even before he managed to pry his eyes open that he was going to hate this day with the burning passion of Bakugou when left without his pepper. Or, he wanted to. But he didn’t have enough energy for that now.

Do I have to wake up? Do I really have to wake up? He took in a few deep breaths, but still, the mere thought of getting up and doing anything slightly productive drained him. Izuku tried to return to sleep, but it wasn’t like his fucked up internal clock would ever allow him to.

He threaded the dark lakes of unconsciousness until he noticed something. There was someone next to him.

His lids pried open in a flash and he was met with the sight of a wrinkled T-shirt spread along a wide back, purple scars peeking from beneath. As fast as his pulse had risen, it fell back. Oh, it’s only Dabi. With the relief returned the tiredness and the existential dread. On one hand, he really didn’t feel like moving. On the other, the moment Dabi would wake up would be weird and awkward as fuck.

I also have homework. He suddenly remembered and thought about ending himself right then and there if only to avoid school.

Get up, you limp noodle. You can wallow in self-pity at home.

Groaning, Izuku hoisted himself up. The boy got off the bed and walked to take his backpack. He looked around. He’d like to let the man know he left, but waking him up was out of discussion and he didn’t want to bother him if Dabi really didn’t feel like being next to him.

Suddenly, Izuku was hit by his way out. He looked into the mini fridge and scribbled hastily on a piece of paper you’re out of milk before he climbed the ceiling. Dabi was breathing evenly, and, for a second, the tiredness caught up to him and he considered just letting go, before he shook his head and climbing down.

~O~
The Sports Festival was finally here and Izuku was pacing the prep room too stressed to sit and kind of annoyed that he couldn’t climb on the ceiling.

The day had come a lot faster than he had expected and he had woken up the night before with *Oh, fuck it’s the Sports Festival* playing over and over in his head. Mom had made him a fulfilling breakfast, which he’d practically inhaled before he made his way to school full of jitters. Dabi had sent him a good luck text, which was equivalent to a pep rally when it came to the scarred one. Izuku smiled and sent him back an unholy amount of emoji’s, to which he only responded with a middle finger. Not the emoji, a picture of his deep fried hand flipping him off.

Right now, he was with the rest of his class, pacing and constantly clenching and unclenching his fist around the staff Hatsume had given him when they met. His gym jacket was making the air too hot for him, but he couldn’t take it off. Not yet at least. If everything worked well, he wouldn’t have to at all.

A hand grabbed his shoulder and Izuku looked up. Shinsou was keeping him steady and Izuku managed to bring his breath to normal levels.

“Keep calm” the eggplant said “You’re prepared, I’m prepared, we will show everyone that we can” he caught both his shoulders and stared him in the eye. “We’re gonna make it!”

Izuku tried to smile and enter the mood. “Wow, Shinsou. You? Being encouraging? I’m surprised? What happened, were you kidnapped and replaced by an alien?”

The other puffed and rolled his eyes. “If I were to get kidnapped, I’d probably l ask them why the hell did they brought me back?”

Izuku giggled and looked up as the obnoxious voice of their homeroom teacher came through the speakers. Shinsou gave his shoulder one little squeeze before they left for the arena. Izuku felt a little betrayed when Present Mic used this opportunity to advertise class 1A. Like they needed any more publicity.

After that, Bakugou went on stage and declared war on everyone and everything, which, of course, earned them a lot of hate from the other classes and Izuku could see his classmates tighten their hands on the weapons they held. He and Shinsou were the only ones who’d applied to transfer, at least from his class,(there were some in the parallel class) but everyone else was just spiteful as fuck on the heroics. He knew that most of his classmates and the others from the parallel classes weren’t intending to win. They knew they would go down and wanted to make sure they took as many herolings with them as they could.

The first stage was announced and Izuku took a deep breath as he headed for the start line.

~O~

Hitoshi had once thought it as a joke, but now he was 90% sure that Izuku Midoriya was not human. That was the only plausible explanation for what had just transpired.

Because, how the actual fuck did someone get the first place in s race by blowing themselves up?

Hitoshi had gotten a decent place and was now looking at the other boy panting and getting scolded by Hatsune about how he should’ve probably used her bombs to do that and that he was insensitive for taking the bragging rights away from her. Hitoshi didn’t hear them and usually, a
friend would scold you for being reckless, but both boys had spent enough time with the pink haired
girl to know things that didn’t have a mechanical system she could take apart rarely interested her. The
crowd of students was getting bigger and bigger, and, despite his height, it was pretty hard for the
teen to make his way through.

Though he would never say it to the other’s face, Hitoshi had initially underestimated the
greenette. Had he known he was Quirkless beforehand, he probably wouldn’t have even chatted him
up. He didn’t have anything against Quirkless people, but caring for someone with a handicap was a
huge disadvantage as a hero. But, at the same time, Midoriya did save him at the entrance exam
and actually got some points (something he was still a little bitter about), and Hitoshi wasn’t that big
of a dick as to completely ignore him after, so, yeah, he spent some time with the nerd.

When he saw the other people coming to him, he had been sure it was the last time he saw
his classmate outside off class. After all, if you already had friends, why hang out with someone you
barely met? But the boy came back and started hanging out, and, before he knew it, Hitoshi actually
enjoyed the other’s company. Hatsume was OK, and there was something really relaxing about her
being self-centred. It was like a constant reminder that he shouldn’t get attached to her, that everyone
could betray him every moment, and, for the first time, he didn’t feel that bad for being paranoid.

Midoriya was just so genuine, Hitoshi suspected that was actually his Quirk.

When the other told him about his Quirklessness, Hitoshi felt, for the first time, something
he could relate to. Bullying was still bullying, no matter the reason, and knowing that someone could
actually understand what he felt was surely a relief. So, he kept hanging out with the boy.

There was also that relaxation he had around him. Midoriya never expressed any disgust or
contempt regarding his Quirk, and, even if it didn’t show, his words really did help. Though that in
itself raised the question of who the greenette knew that could do those things in the first place.

Then the trafficking ring started and Hitoshi was like: why the hell not?

It was almost fun on a certain level to see how much influence Izuku had gained over
night. If he wouldn’t have been hell bent on heroics, Hitoshi was sure he could’ve gone to
management. When he had said that Izuku’s Quirk was actually hyper analysis, he had only been
partly joking. He was actually fifty percent sure that the boy actually did have a Quirk, but no one
realised it. No matter the toe joint, there had been cases when people who had it actually developed
Quirks later in life. The other half of him was sure the greenette just plain wasn’t human.

He had spent the last weeks before the exam doing intense physical training. He didn’t tell
his friends. He had helped them, but Midoriya already knew his Quirk and every possible
application. They were friends, but here, they were also rivals. There was only one transfer spot in
every class, and, like it or not, it was likely that they would have to fight sooner or later. And it
wasn’t as if he would he would be fighting Hatsune, who would yell about her ‘babies’ then forfeit.
No, if it ever came to them, one of them would have to lose, and Shinsou wasn’t going to give up the
spot in Heroics for friendship. He knew it was cruel, but he knew Izuku would do the same.

So, he trained. He didn’t train in any particular weapon. He had neither the time not the
skill for it. He trained in hand to hand and pressure points. Self defence. It wasn’t anything
spectacular but it would take the enemy by surprise. He had managed to convince Hatsune to give
him a little Taser and not tell Izuku about it. He was already good with fucking up with your Quirk,
he didn’t need to know his other parts. While he was at the lab, he tried to peek at what Hatsune was
designing for their common friend. And promptly gave up after three seconds because anything
present on that sheet was literally bullshit.
In the end, he managed to get to the now jittery teen. He placed a hand on his shoulder and, after the initial flinch, he felt the tense muscles relax, if only a little. They all turned towards Midnight, who was preparing to announce the second task.

~O~

Toshinori was in equal parts worried and proud. Young Midoriya had passed the first task with the first place. Granted, it was reckless and was already loosing brownie points when it came to Osamu, but it was good nonetheless.

The hero knew he shouldn’t be subjective, that having favourites was bad and that the boy wasn’t even in his class to begin with, but he had read the papers and sincerely hoped that he would pass. At first, he had been a little mad that it was this boy who found out about the Shigaraki/Shimura business, but, after a lot of thinking, he was glad he knew. It was painful, yes, but at least he had time to get used to it. If All for One really was back, that meant that they would have to fight at some point in the future. He neither hoped nor wished for his successor to fight him. But he knew that, if the man had the chance, he would’ve probably sprung the news on him to make sure he landed the killing blow. At least like this, he had time to prepare.

The blond looked at the teen again. He seemed to be having a mini panic attack, constantly wiping the tears on his cheeks and a friend of his was scolding him, probably for his recklessness. Toshinori sighed. Recklessness had been the reason he didn’t give him his Quirk in the first place. He had – foolishly- thought that the lack of Quirk would stop him from getting into danger and, who knows, for a year, it probably did. But now, he was in UA, an environment that presented a lot of opportunities for getting in danger and, at this point, All Might was willing to give him One for All simply to give him the possibility to better protect himself.

Toshinori had tried, he really did, to look for other successors. He did. But, even if there was a pretty heavy waiting list, no one really clicked the right way. He was still thinking, still looking, but he couldn’t fool himself: even if he looked for other successors, his heart was set on this one.

Of course, he was thinking of giving him in his third year in the least. To let the boy build his own platform, his own fanbase, his own connection without the influence of having a Quirk similar to All Might. He also wanted to give him time to grow and build muscle on his own. Shoving hell training in one year was not healthy, and he also had to count for his built. He had muscles, but he was lean, built for speed. Trying to put muscle mass on him wouldn’t work, so he had to thread carefully.

As he was thinking, he suddenly heard voices from behind him.

“So, what do you think?” one of the Management students said

“Doubtless, Midoriya’s stock is about to rise. I see that he has kept his final move secret. That’s a good strategy. If he revealed everything from the beginning, he would only get sponsors in a single wave. If he reveals his assets on the way and, preferably, near the end, there’s a higher chance that he would be remembered. Some will be sceptic that he didn’t show his Quirk, but it’s not like such a Quirk can be shown.” The other said.

Wait, what Quirk?

“Yes, but once revealed, it would be pretty marketable. If he proves proficient in the next stage and makes it to the third, once we reveal his Quirk he will be in the spot. We only have to watch out for those with flashy Quirks that might rival his own.”
So, for some reason, the Business course was very interested and actively rooting for Midoriya. Huh, that was new. Most of the times they only rooted for those who were very marketable.

“What about his costume?” a new voice asked. “The jersey seems to be hiding the accessories pretty well, but we will need to make it remarkable! We need people to remember it!”

“Didn’t he say he wanted to be an underground hero?”

The first puffed. “We will talk him out of it. And, if we don’t, he more or less owes us some contracts until at least graduation.”

Now, Toshinori was both intrigued and increasingly worried.

“Do you think that his weapons will get enough marketing?”

“They will after I’m done with them. Just let me near the sponsors, they’ll be begging us for the manufacturing and marketing rights!” the one who seemed to be the leader said. “As for the costume, we have to think the design. I have a feeling Midoriya, with his underground idea, will go with something like Aizawa or something. If he manages to go to heroics, he’ll have to place an order for a costume. Since Hatsume will probably send the forms regarding the mechanical map, we need to convince her to mess with the design.”

“Wow, aren’t you mischievous?” the second joked.

“I’m doing business!” the first sounded flustered. “If it doesn’t work, Midoriya’s pretty cute, a little plain, but fixable. We need to find a way to keep his face open. Do you have any idea how a face like that sells?”

Toshinori giggled a little and focused on the R rated hero as she was preparing to reveal the second task.

~O~

Izuku was looking at Midnight as she pointed at the huge board behind her.

“For those of you who passed, we have the next stage. There will be a game, similar to capture the flag, but the thing is, you fight for yourselves and you carry your own flag!”

Everyone was positively confused to hell about this.

“Let me clarify” she cleared her throat. “Each one of you will have a score based on your place in the race. Your score will be on a headband over your head.” Some drones passed each and every one a headband while on the screen behind her appeared the scores everyone had. “The point of this is for you to steal other headbands from other players. The sixteen with the biggest scores will pass onto the next stage.” Izuku suddenly felt the eyes of everyone in the crowd on him. Fuck. “But here’s the catch: you will be in a labyrinth!”

Suddenly, from the ground columns started to raise and huge walls surrounded them. Flying drones with little blinking cameras surrounded them and, in the air, Midnight’s chippy voice rang all over the place. “The battle will be of thirty minutes. Everything is allowed, except for murder of seriously injuring another student. Now, begin!”

Izuku looked around. Somehow, he ended up alone. But it won’t matter, I’m a target, I have to run. He looked around. He had 1 million points. If he managed to stay hidden long enough,
he could just wait the game out. But he knew that wouldn’t be possible. After all, he was sure that Bakugou would come after him, and basically everyone would come after him.

And, considering some of them could fly and Todoroki could more or less burry him in ice, he had to move and make sure he wouldn’t be spotted.

The walls weren’t perfectly flat. No, they had irregularities, nooks and crannies, and they couldn’t be more than three meters high. I fell from higher.

There are no rules.

No one said I had to stay on the ground.

He checked his jacket quickly, yup, he had everything he needed. Taking a few steps back, he ran and, in one go, he pushed himself over the edge. It might seem like a bad idea to put yourself in a tight spot, but, if anyone saw him, he could just jump back. He had a pretty good visibility on the walls and, he knew that from experience, people didn’t really look up when you ran above them unless you were especially loud.

The walls were pretty wide, about half a meter, definitely enough for him to jog on them comfortably. He stood up. On the other side of the maze, Hatsume had taken the guidelines with a grain of salt and, taking her trusty explosives, went fully by the question: what are walls?

The explosion was enough to get everyone’s attention, and she made sure to show all her babies to the flying cameras in full view.

Shinsou, somewhere around the west side of the task, was walking at a leisure pace. He already had three scarves around his neck, and he had literally went hunting. This was perfect. Chances of meeting more than one student at a time were slim and, the only one knowing about his Quirk was Midoriya, which had a very small chance of an actual fight. He knew the greenette would try to avoid the fights, and, even if he didn’t, they wouldn’t attack each other this soon. His advantage was that, if he used his Quirk, no one in the contest will catch on, but the sponsors surely will. He smiled and strolled forward.

Getting back to the protagonist, he was quite literally strolling down the maze. The fights were all but silent, and he could see Bakugou throwing a fit and chasing after a blond guy from class B. suddenly, there was a shadow behind him and Izuku only had enough time to jump before a huge, dark bird crashed in the place he was supposed to be. The boy looked at the yellow eyes, cogs spinning.

Tokoyami Fumikage. Quirk: dark Shadow, controls a monster coming from his stomach. Wears a black, opaque cloak. Possible strength: darkness. Does that mean that he’s weak to light?

He didn’t really have much time to ponder because the bird attacked again. Izuku jumped, kicked the shadow? And slid down the neck and kicking the hero student in the beak. He jumped to the ground and ran to the wall. He was in an enclosed, well shadowed place, he was at a disadvantage. He could feel the shadow from behind him, so, he took a great momentum and jumped-climbed the wall in a run, only to slide and roll once on the ground. Tokoyami didn’t seem to be following him and Izuku turned only to find himself in a trench with Bakugou and Jirou. Izuku put his hand behind his back, wrapping his fingers around the small projectile.

In the same moment Bakugou yelled “Die!” Izuku pulled the pin and threw the grenade in the middle. Smoke filled the air and Izuku dashed through it. He would have about thirty seconds before it cleared and the greenette had to get out of the girl’s range. He took a few more turns and
ended in an alleyway with a kid from his class. She stretched her hand and activated the glove on her arm.

Izuku smiled. He knew that weapon. Huge firepower, not much aim. He jumped a few feet to the right only to sprint towards her, grab her headband and climb the next wall. It would take her fifteen seconds to reload. He put a few more paces between them before he tied the scarf around his neck. While he didn’t need the points per se, it was better to have some kind of backup.

He spent the reminder of the match avoiding people and more or less chilling on the walls, turning to wave the crowd every once in a while. Apparently, Present Mic had been commenting on them, but Izuku couldn’t really hear him until now. When the bell rang, he climbed down and walked through the gate, hiding the slight limp from when he landed badly.

Chapter End Notes

um... toshi, that's all nice and dandy, but you might want to ask the kid first
discord
tumblr
You fucking entitled brat!

Chapter Notes

hey, out favourite it's your power moment is here

See the end of the chapter for more notes

In the end a fair number of them passed onto the third round, Izuku, Shinsou and Hatsume, as well as the other three kids from Gen Ed among them. Izuku was happy about that; they might have not been friends, but they deserved to make their mark here.

Izuku, who had managed to keep his headband had kept his big score (Shinsou not far behind), was ready to greet them when Midnight yelled.

“Congratulations, to those of you who passed onto the next round! Now, if you will please look here and see your opponents!”

The flickered for a second before revealing the names:

Kishira Miyako-Hanta Sero

Izuku Midoriya-Fumikage Tokoyami

Tenshi Akuma-Kirishima Eijiro

Shouto Todoroki-Yuuga Aoyoma

Ochako Uraraka-Karata Makomori

Katsuki Bakugou-Momo Yaoyorozu

Tenyia Iida-Mei Hatsume

Hitoshi Shinsou-Neito Monoma

Huh, he thought as he looked at the bird head. It won’t be easy. But I'll manage.

Monoma had a copy Quirk. It wouldn’t do him much good when it came to Shinsou, since Izuku had made sure no one actually knew what his Quirk was, and, even if he did, Shinsou wouldn’t fall for his own tricks.

Hatsume against Iida was something he was really looking forward to, mainly because he knew she had no intention to actually win, and her advertising her babies was bound to be at least slightly hilarious.

He really hoped that Uraraka would pass since, she really deserved a chance to win, even if he would have to battle her at some point. Makomori was pretty strong and had, objectively, more chances than the other, since she carried a poison dart gun and her Quirk could move anything
within three inches. Izuku knew that would be a good Quirk for disarming bombs and breaking locks, and the gun was decent. But Izuku had talked to Uraraka and managed to sneak some videos of the hero training (Hatsume was a godsend) and he knew that she was strong and resourceful.

As for Bakugou, Izuku was almost sure he would pass (Yayorozu’s quirk was amazing but not exactly combat oriented and, according to what videos of hero training he’d managed to get his hands on, her hand-to-hand skills weren’t the best either) and he wasn’t sure whether to feel annoyed or pumped at the prospect of fighting him.

After Tokoyami, if he won- when, when he won- he would have to battle either Sero or Miyako. The latter’s Quirk was small time reversal (up to one hour for any object which she was training with Recovery Girl to perfect its healing applications) and her weapon of choice was a crossbow. Sero had tape out of his elbows, but Izuku already had half a strategy formed already.

Todoroki also had a very good chance of ending up as his opponent since he was obviously both experienced and focused. One thing that bothered Izuku however was that he only used his ice, which could be problematic as Izuku had no idea what range or intensity his flames had to that made him uneasy.

He took a deep breath, shaking himself out of the reverie, and went to lunch. It was the break before the third event, and Izuku could feel looks on him. The ones from heroics were assessing him, while the ones from the other departments (who weren’t the competition themselves) were rooting for him. The ones from Management were hoping that he would get as far as possible in the Tournament, since their deal was that they could use Izuku as a poster-boy.

He had lost some of his initial advantage with the USJ, since some kids from Heroics knew that he wasn’t as helpless, but he hoped they would still underestimate him, if only a little; not out of any ill will per se but prejudice against the Quirkless was strong and Izuku was counting on that to work in his advantage for once.

He looked around. Apparently, Mineta, a student from class 1D, the other gen ed class, had somehow tricked the girls into wearing cheerleader outfits. If Izuku hadn’t spent a year running around as a vigilante in one of the worst parts of the city maybe the prank would’ve been funny. But after reading through his reports, which included occasional mentions of the many, many complaints girls from all over the school had filed and now seeing it first-hand Izuku decided that, after the Tournament, that boy would be dealt with, somehow.

Besides that the highlight of the break was scrolling through the Sports Festival tag on several social media platforms. It was funny how fast people could make memes and theories. Surprisingly, there were things about him too, not only class 1A. Somehow, the drones caught a picture of him on one of the walls while Hatsume was blowing up a wall and someone had added the capitation “Just chilling”. The same picture had also been branded with a “This is fine.” Someone had even put the titan picture from Attack on Titan, which had honestly gotten a laugh out of him. There were very few compared to the steady approaching triple digits Bakugou had, but he was flattered nonetheless.

The prep hour passed way quicker than he would’ve liked and, in no time, he found himself ready to go to the arena and battle the bird head. Shinsou had given him a pat on the back, Hatsume had told him to use as many of her babies as possible, and, with trembling feet, he entered the arena. In the earlier game, Sero had managed to wrap his opponent in tape and render her immobile. At last I know who I’ll battle next.

He knew the bets were made. Everyone expected him to lose. Even his friends. And, against someone like Tokoyami, it wouldn’t have even be a shame. The smartest thing to do
would’ve been to simply walk out.

*Quirkless, useless, weak.*

But he was not going to do that. He was going to win this.

*You’ll never last a day in heroics.*

*Fucking watch me.*

He looked at his opponent. Tokoyami was sitting with his arms crossed while Dark Shadow was giving him a thumbs up. Izuku couldn’t tell if it was patronising or not. He waited a few seconds until his homeroom teacher yelled “Fight!”

Tokoyami didn’t waste a second, the moment the start was said, the demon came rushing his way. Izuku was anticipating it and managed to dodge. *He’s probably trying to send me over the edge,* he thought. The next second, the greenette sprinted towards his opponent. He saw the shadow approaching from the corner of his eye, and, in the last second, he pulled out a flashbang and threw it at him, he closed his eyes but kept his momentum. Months of fighting in the dark had honed his memory and ability to remember the place of people in a fight. He heard a shriek and he opened his eyes at the exact right time to plant his shoulder into the shorter teen.

Fuck, he wasn’t out of bounds yet. Before the other had the chance to get up, Izuku grabbed his hands and started dragging him towards the line. He felt the Dark Shadow approaching, and threw another flash grenade, but wasn’t prepared for the fist to the face that came only seconds later. He stumbled back, and noticed that he was a few feet away from the line. *Fuck!* Tokoyami got up and he looked very pissed. Dark Shadow rose once again and, at the same time, both boy and Quirk attacked. Izuku acted on instinct:

He lowered himself to the ground and threw himself in the other’s legs. Tokoyami tripped and fell forward, and Izuku took that moment to get up and flip him over. Tokoyami fell flat on his back. He got up, but that was the second Midnight yelled:

“Midoriya wins! Tokoami is out of bounds!”

It was true, the raven head had stepped over the white line. The two contestants looked at each other. Tokoyami was a little sour, but he bowed and left the arena. Izuku walked out too and went back to the stands.

He sat down where his classmates congratulated him. Izuku smiled and tried to calm his pounding heart. It was ok, it was ok, it was ok. He didn’t show any particular physical skills in this fight, but that was ok. That meant they wouldn’t see it coming when he did. He pulled out his notebook as Kirishima and Akuma walked into the arena.

Their fight would’ve been funny, had it not been a little bit sad. Akuma’s quirk was that she could create a pocket dimension that could only house 359 pounds on the dot. No more, no less. They have given her a mini tank, some bombs and filled the rest with firecrackers, which made the redhead run around covered in sparkles, chased by a tank while his classmate laughed maniacally. They ended up in a stalemate where both of them were knocked out, because Kirishima had bulldozed into her, along with the tank. It was….. unexpected. He looked at Shinsou and absentmindedly stole some popcorn from his bag. The boy gave a half hearted glare before tilting it so the other had better access.

The next fight was Aoyoma versus Todoroki, which was a tragedy that didn’t lasted more
than a minute. And that was only because Todoroki still refused to use his fire.

Uraraka versus Makomori was...a spectacle, was really the only description that could do it justice. Makomori’s tols were, objectively more powerful, but Uraraka was more determined. She had floated herself and, when the other girl shot at her, she had dropped right above the Gen Ed student. She still had momentum and kicked the other in the face. Makomori passed out from the impact and Uraraka went onto the next round.

Izuku was madly scribbling in his notebook while Shinsou whistled. “Wow, Midoriya, that friend of yours really is strong.”

“Of course she is!” he said not looking up “Haven’t you seen her fight?” when the answer didn’t come, he turned and looked at the other teen. Shinsou’s eyebrows were almost reaching his hairline.

“You know that not all of us have been stalking the heroics department.”

Izuku was ready to apologise and stutter, but he had spent too much time near Dabi constantly calling him a stalker, so he more or less had a built in response at this point. “Well, you probably should’ve too. Knowing your enemies is a great advantage.”

Bakugou against Yaoyorozu had been tragic, and the less said about that, the better. The girl was strong, sure, but she had none of Bakugou’s prowess in battle, or his fiery determination. Izuku heard Aizawa say that his Quirk was too strong. It wasn’t true and the greenette shook his head at the idea. Strong, maybe, but no Quirk was too strong or infallible. If someone found a way to cover his hands or spread flammable gas in the air or any other number of options would render Bakugo effectively quirkless, because he may be rash, but he wasn’t so impulsive as to set himself on fire. He was proficient in hand-to-hand as well but not the best. Izuku shook his head as he crossed another possibility off the list. He could only ever hope Shinsou would get rid of the blond for him, but he knew that was wishful thinking.

Iida against Hatsume had been hilarious and almost too predictable. Iida was a strong, worthy opponent and all that, but there was only so much one might do against the gadgets the pink haired mad scientist would provide. Poor Iida. Well, at least he’d make it in the next round.

The moment Hatsume stepped out of bounds, Izuku got up and walked down, determined to have at least a few minutes in the prep room.

Shinsou’s match had been ridiculously short because Monoma had opened his mouth on his own accord in the first five seconds. Even on the screen, Shinsou’s disbelieving expression was captured to a t, and Izuku couldn’t help but laugh at the way the other’s look just blanked as he walked out. Shinsou had obviously tried so hard not to look smug as he was leaving the arena.

As he entered the ring, the boy looked around. Sero was at the other end of the platform, stretching his arms, no doubt making sure his tape was still running.

Hanta Sero. Quirk: tape, he can shoot it out of his elbows. Izuku remembered the videos. He seems to tire after about five minutes if he keeps it constant. He must have a limit. Quirks are physical abilities after all. He patted and opened his staff. Let’s hope that he was ready.

The other male smiled at him from the other end of the pit. Izuku couldn’t help but feel that it was a little bit condescending. He shook his head. He would show them how it’s done.

“Aaaaand START!” Present Mic screamed through the speaker. Izuku was half sure that,
at this point, Aizawa was all but deaf.

Sero sent his tape towards him. “No hard feelings, OK?” he yelled. Izuku dodges and rolled on the ground. Once up, he dashed towards the other. Sero sent another piece of tape his way. The grenette threw himself to the right, before he got up and felt another piece wrap around his arm. Sero grinned and pulled him forward, and Izuku almost lost his footing.

Almost.

He decided to roll and throw himself on the ground. He kept his taped arm above him, so he wouldn’t wrap himself in and, with the other, he stabbed the staff into the other’s midriff.

Sero screamed.

And fell.

There were a few moments of silence before he heard: “Midoriya wins!”

The stadium went ballistic. Well, not all of them, but a good half yelled in triumph, while the other clapped warily. Izuku got up and staggered towards the prep rooms, tired and in dire need of some quiet. He would return to his class later, but, right now, he needed to collapse on the chairs. From the corner of his eye, he saw Sero being carried away and felt a pang of guilt surge through him. He shook his head. No, he couldn’t focus on that. He needed to win. He could apologise later, when he apologised to Tokoami too.

He sat in the prep room and watched how Todoroki beat Kirishima. Kirishima did put up a good show, but, in the end, you couldn’t really do much from beneath a huge mountain of ice.

This is the guy I’ll have to battle next Izuku realised as chills ran down his spine. Shit.

Well, I know he uses ice and can use fire. Will he use fire though? I have no idea how good his is in hand to hand, but he seems to be a long range fighter, so I might as well try to get into his space.

He walked out of the room, and here it is, the devil himself: Izuku stared at the heterochromatic teen for a few seconds before he turned around and hoped that he wouldn’t be spotted.

“Midoriya!” he said in a commanding voice and Izuku stopped and cursed his luck. He turned around and waved awkwardly.

“Todoroki”

The other stared him down and, had Izuku nor been stared down by people much more likely to kill him, he would’ve trembled. “You’re strong, I’ll give you that. And we will fight in the next round”

“It looks like it…” Izuku started.

“However, I will beat you!” he interrupted. Izuku froze for a second before he let his mouth take over.

“That’s what everyone says and yet here I am. Unless of course you’re planning on finally using your fire for a change?”
His face suddenly darkened. He glared at the younger teen, but Izuku had too much practice not to be affected. “I will never use my fire in a fight.”

Izuku cocked an eyebrow in a way he knew it was very condescending before shrugging. “Suit yourself. I just through you’d like the extra edge in order to win.”

Todoroki frowned and outright growled. “I will win. I will defeat you.”

Izuku smiled wryly. “So you say. I say you’re going to need more than just a block of ice to defeat me. And here I thought you wouldn’t be as prideful as your father”

The next moment the walls were covered in ice and there was a small unfrozen ring around his feet. Izuku realised he might just have pressed a wrong button there when he turned around and saw that Todoroki was, literally, fuming.

“I. Am not. My father.” he growled. “My father is nothing but a bastard and I refuse to be in any way like him!” he gritted his teeth. “He couldn’t be happy with the second place, he never was. But he could never defeat All Might himself, so he came up with another plan. Tell me, Midoriya, are you familiar with the concept of Quirk marriages?”

Izuku, feeling uncomfortably like he was about to hear something he would much rather not, shook his head.

“They started becoming a problem during the second and third generation of Quirk users. Strong individuals would choose a partner and force them into marriage for the sole purpose of passing down a strengthened version of their Quirk.” The taller teen clenched his fists “Those earlier generations lacked in ethics. With his wealth and fame, that bastard persuaded my mother’s family to agree to the marriage, all to get his hands on her Quirk.” He spit in disgust “Raising me as a hero only to succeed All Might, only to fulfil his own ambitions. I hate it! I hate being a tool in his plans, I hate him for hurting my mother!” he covered his scar “In my memories, she’s always crying. She said she couldn’t stand my left side, right before she threw scalding water in it.” Izuku gulped. “in short, not using my father’s side is my revenge against him. Never using his rotten Quirk, no, rising to the top without it… by that, I’d have denied him everything.”

The boy was still panting, his expression still as hard as before. Izuku clenched his fists as he felt his blood boil.

“You…” he growled “You entitled brat!” he spat, his chest unnaturally hot. Todoroki stopped for a second, shocked in place. “You think that one tragic backstory allows you to half ass it? News flash, buddy, everyone has bad experiences. I’m sorry for your mom, but if you think that your scar allows you to fucking waltz in here and claim to be the best while not even using the full extent of your Quirk, boy, you are in for a surprise!”

Todoroki glared as he sneered. “I don’t see you using a Quirk either”

“I don’t have one!”

The other froze for a few moments in shock. Izuku took a step forward, getting into his personal space. “Do you have any idea how hard I had to work to get here?! Do you? I had to work my ass off, I had to create a fucking mafia, I had to almost die several times and you come here to tell me you won’t use your Quirk because of a fucking grudge?! Do you have any idea what I would’ve done for a tenth of your power? I would’ve sold my soul for a fraction of the chance you were handed on a silver platter!”
He panted and Todoroki opened his mouth, but Izuku left him no time to respond.

“My teachers, my parents, even All Might told me I couldn’t be a hero, everybody told me that I should give up, because genetics dealt me a bad hand. Everyone told me I was a useless waste of space, yet I am here, to prove them wrong!” he panted and took a step forward.

“I know you have no idea what it’s like, being the chosen one and all that, but people who have the misfortune of being born with the wrong kind of Quirk or, God forbid, no quirk at all are treated like dirt, like they’ll never amount to anything. I’ve had my things destroyed daily, my so called friends beat me and insulted me every day, I have literally been told to go and kill myself because I was such a waste of space

“And no one, no hero, no teacher ever did anything never mind that the suicide rate of Quirkless people is almost 70%! So, listen here and listen closely Todoroki Shouto, I will win this. I will become a hero, and I will prove that I deserve the place you were oh so graciously offered because of your connections!”

“You don’t understand. I’ve been literally bred to-“

“Oh, how tragic for you to be a person of utmost importance!” he spit. “How horrible must it be to have people support your dreams and tell you that you can become something in life. Truly, I can imagine no greater horror.”

The heterochromatic teen clenched his jaw and looked down. Izuku swallowed. “I have my reasons to win and you have yours, but as long as you’re only using half if your power to do it, you don’t deserve this win or this power.” he spit. He walked past him and into the next hall. “I will win this, weather you want it or not, so you’d better put some effort into it. But go off, cripple yourself for all I care!” As he looked for the way to his side of the stadium, he saw Bakugou, hurt and singed, with an unreadable expression.

He probably heard it all. Izuku realized. He glared and took the other corridor.

At the other end, near the entrance to the arena, a human skeleton was leaning on the wall, looking in the distance. A single tear had rolled down his cheek as he thought about what he just heard. He knew that being Quirkless was bad, but he never expected… he shook his head and left the area. He forgot what he wanted to say, what he was doing there. He just went to his seat in silence.

~O~

Izuku had missed Uraraka’s match. He was really looking forward to it, but, it had finished while he was having his verbal duel with Todoroki. But, from what he recalled, it had been pretty metal. Apparently, Uraraka was pretty good but got crushed by Bakugou and some pro heroes started to yell at him for being too rough with such a little girl. Izuku felt like spitting. Uraraka wasn’t fragile and this was a competition. If she were weak, she wouldn’t have made it all the way to this match. And besides, she was a hero-in-training whose purpose was ultimately to fight villains; and villains would never go easy on her so it would’ve been stupid to do so now.

Yes, Bakugou was brutal, and there were no doubts that he would put up a great challenge. But he had came out bruised himself, so Uraraka was definitely strong. Izuku had come just in time to see Iida walk out of the arena. He sighed and shook his head. Back there he went, it was his fight with the candy cane. He grabbed a snicker on his way out and munched on it as he thought of a strategy. He patted himself. Bo staff, check, additional weapons, check. Good.
He entered the arena with Todoroki at the other end, glaring at him. Izuku clenched his teeth and caught his staff in his hands. The bell rang and, not later than that, a huge wave of ice came his way. Izuku leaned back for a second before he dashed forward and scaled it, sliding down and aiming a kick at the other. Todoroki dodged and sent another wave of ice, but Izuku pulled out a grenade and threw it in his direction. He ducked as the ball exploded.

“As you can see, those are high shock grenades, built by Mei Hatsume” the girl’s obnoxious voice came from the speakers. “They are made to send a powerful shock wave without any actual heat, making it perfect for situations where fire may not be the best option.”

So she did manage to get into the booth after all Izuku smirked as he saw the ice shatter.

Todoroki looked positively murderous, his feet a few inches from the line. He dashed forwards, preparing to send another wave of ice his way. Izuku waited another few seconds before he rolled and threw two other grenades. One was for shock, and one was a normal, explosive one. He sent the shock one towards his opponent, and the other towards the ice.

“We have normal grenades too, they are easy to manoeuvre and not sensitive to movement, so there’s no risk of accidentally detonating them in a fight.”

Izuku could swear he could hear Aizawa sigh.

He turned towards Todoroki. “Use your fire, asshole!” that, of course, earned him a wave of ice. Izuku was prepared though and jumped to the side, getting up a second after. “Is that the best you’ve got!?” he yelled after noticing that Todoroki was shivering.

“I don’t see you making any progress!” he yelled back.

Izuku grinned.

“You’ve seen nothing yet!” he yelled before dashing full force towards the other. Todoroki wasn’t prepared for a frontal attack, and did his best to dodge, but Izuku was expecting it. He feinted a punch to the face, but he actually caught his shoulders and kneed him in the stomach. He had originally aimed for the balls, but it was only a small miscalculation. As Todoroki staggered back, Izuku came again in full force and swiped his staff at him. “Use your full Quirk, got dammit! What will you do in a situation where your ice isn’t enough, huh?! Will you go to a crying mother and tell her ‘Sorry, ma’am, I couldn’t save your child because of my daddy issues?!’ ”

That seemed to cut it for the other, because Todoroki got up and attacked Izuku full force. Izuku pressed the red button and waited a few seconds before he released the spark. The gas previously placed in the Bo staff ignited and threw the other back. Sadly, he constructed a wall before he could be thrown out of the barrier. A pity,

“As you can see, the staff also has the ability to contain several very flammable gasses that can, on command, explode and create huge amounts of fire.”

That’s why the exam is so flawed” it was Aizawa this time “Midoriya is in the same boat as several other students who don’t have a Quirk suited for smashing robots, and he could only get his support items once he got into the UA.”

Izuku liked that the man implied that he actually had a Quirk. He allowed himself a second to smile before the other came out of the smoke, an enraged expression on his face. “Use your
fucking fire already!” he yelled.

Todoroki growled and dashed towards him. “I’ll never use his Quirk!” he yelled.

“It’s your Quirk, goddammit!” he screamed as he dodged and caught Todoroki’s right arm, twisting it behind his back and swiping his feet from under him. The boy crashed on the ground, but rolled and kicked the Izuku down too. He tried to get over him, but Izuku clench a flash grenade and detonated it between them. Even with his eyes closed, he still felt the heat and his vision had small multi coloured holes when he opened his eyes. “It’s your Quirk! Yours, not his! How the fuck do you expect to ‘deny’ him if you’re still letting him control you, even now?!”

“You know…” Todoroki panted as he got up, a shit eating grin on his face. “I was going to go easy on you, once I found out you were Quirkless”

Izuku saw red.

Before he even knew that he was moving, he dashed forward and swiped a hit at his head. Todoroki sent him back with another wave of ice, and Izuku managed to get out of the way before he was pushed out of bounds altogether.

His jacket was in tatters. With a movement, he shrugged it off and revealed what he had hidden underneath.

There was silence for a few minutes.

“Hizashi, what the fuck are you teaching those kids?!” Aizawa said, probably more as revenge for earlier comments on 1A than actual surprise.

“Don’t look at me, that one came like that!” his homeroom teacher responded.

The thing they were all marvelling at was the fact that, all over his abdomen, hanging from straps and such, was an arsenal of everything from grenades, to knives to a teaser. Izuku had a pepper spray tied to his wrist for good measure. Even Todoroki seemed to falter for a few seconds. The crowds were cheering, but Izuku didn’t know for who.

Without further ado, he took a grenade and threw it at the other. This one was a smoke bomb that covered the area in smoke. Remembering where Todoroki had been before he sprinted in that direction. The smoke cleared enough to see. Izuku swiped another hit to the head, but was pushed away by the heat that erupted from the other’s left side. The greenette staggered back a few steps, then looked at the other, a huge, shit earing grin on his face.

“You’re crazy, Midoriya, did you know?!”

“I’ve been told before!” he yelled, but couldn’t conceal the smile on his face. The ice around him was starting to melt in huge puddles and Izuku looked around, a new plan forming in his mind. As Todoroki sent a jet of flames Izuku rolled out of the way before dashing straight into his personal space. He was a long range fighter and probably pretty proficient in close quarters, but he knew from experience there wasn’t really a lot of time to think when someone was swiping violently at your head.

He punched him in the nose and felt the familiar crunch when something cracked. The candy cane staggered back, tried to attack, but Izuku jumped at him again, aiming a kick to his chest. The other caught it and pulled him forwards, using his momentum to throw him near the edge. Izuku rolled for a little bit before he stopped, only a few inches away from the line.
As he turned on his back, he looked at Todoroki, strolling towards him with his left side on fire. His shoes were splashing the water as he stepped and Izuku did the one thing that could work at the moment.

He jammed the staff in the puddle and pressed the power button. Electricity danced through the water as Todoroki screamed. Being near the border, Izuku was on dry land, but he didn’t stop until the heterochromatic teen fell face first on the ground.

There was silence for a few moments before he heard Midnight say. “Todoroki’s unconscious, Midoriya wins!”

A roar went through the crowd and Izuku allowed himself to collapse in exhaustion.

Chapter End Notes

i've been waiting for this for so long.....
commants and kudos give me life and power to write
join my discord
it's wild
Tumblr
In which I feel awesome, than I feel bad, then it’s kinda lukewarm, I think

Chapter Notes

merry christmas for all of you who celebrate it. if not, happy whatever holiday you celebrate, have a good time and a nice life
i know a lot of people wanted a fight between the broccoli and the pomaranian, and i promise it's coming..... but not for a few more chapters
anyway, enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shoto wakes up in the nurse office feeling like he’d slept for either ten years or ten minutes. Recovery Girl was walking around and the TV on the wall showed the commercials during the Sports Festival. He grunted and tried to sit up, but pain surged through him and he fell back.

The woman tsk-ed. “Don’t do that. You’re not even supposed to be awake yet since that boy zapped you well and good. If you want to go home tonight, I suggest that you rest.” Shouto was tempted to ask what he was supposed to do if he didn’t want to go home but common sense won out in the end and he kept his thoughts to himself. But it was true- finishing, basically, in third place would earn him, in the best case, the cold shoulder for weeks to come or, more likely, some nasty training sessions from the bastard.

“What happened?” his voice was hoarse and he felt like he was speaking around sandpaper.

The woman sighed. “Midoriya zapped you and you fell unconscious,”

Oh, right, he remembered that part.

“He’s currently in the other room, waiting to be treated. They gave a half an hour break to repair the arena enough for the next match.” She looked at him as she handed him a few gummy bears.

“You’re lucky to be awake, with no permanent damage. Electrocutation can be very dangerous and the scars are rarely pretty.” She shook her head “God dammit, Hizashi, why did you let him have all those weapons?”

Shouto looked at the ceiling. “How else was he supposed to win?”

The woman sighed. “You kids, and your single minded focus on winning by doing as much damage as possible,” She shook her head “Your purpose as heroes is, first and foremost, to save people, not beat your opponent into the ground. How are you supposed to do that if the first thing you think about is the best way to inflict as much damage as possible?” she shook her head again and heaved a weary sigh before returning to her stuff. Shouto looked up.

He did kinda try to help you. A voice in Shouto’s head sighed.

Helping wasn’t exactly how he’d usually describe being called names, getting electrocuted and losing, but he supposed it was true after a fashion. After all, what other explanation was there? It
would’ve been enough for the other to throw his shock grenades to push him out of bounds; or melt his ice faster than he did and zap him sooner; or distract him with a flash grenade from the start and zap him then. But he didn’t. He kept forcing him to use his god damn Quirk, until, eventually, he’d caved in.

Shouto would have liked to say that he’d hated it. That the fire had clawed its way out against his will but... the truth was that it had been refreshing. To not think about that bastard, even for a little while. To not have to focus on his opinion, to not have his cold instructions to succeed, to be better than All Might in his head for once.

He hadn’t used his Quirk at full power in a while. He hated to admit it, but it had felt very, very good. For a very long time, he had taken refuge in the calming breeze of his mother’s ice. But, back there, even for just a moment, his father’s Quirk didn’t disgust or repulse him. His Quirk filled him with warmth and passion. He tried to summon his flames now.

The familiar, uncomfortable feeling of warmth and acid on the back of his throat returned, but not quite as strong as before. He knew it would be a long time before he could fully accept his other side. Starting to try would be a good beginning.

*It’s your Quirk!*

Shouto thought about Midoriya. *Quirkless*. He remembered that his father once told him about them. He didn’t say much, just the word, with such disgust, as if it were a disease. There was a time, when he was little, when he had wished that he was Quirkless. That his father wouldn’t have any interest in him, that he could have lived a normal life. Eventually he’d reached the conclusion that it just wasn’t worth it. Better a trophy than disabled.

Then he had met Midoriya.

He didn’t think much of him at first. Sure, he’d been proficient, even impressively so, at the USJ and Shouto had heard from some management students that he had an analysis Quirk. He’d been mildly intrigued but not astonished by any means. Then the other yelled at him that he was Quirkless and everything changed.

It was the first time Shoto had shared something like that with anyone. And the first time someone had shared something like that with him. Truly, he hadn’t considered the other’s reason for participating, for wanting to win. He had assumed it was the same as everyone else’s. But then he found out that the greenette had something to prove. It wasn’t like Bakugou, or his father, who wanted to win just to prove that they were the best.

No.

Midoriya did it to prove anyone that he had a place in the world. That he deserved to be there. Shouto did it to prove that he wasn’t his father, that he didn’t need his father. In a way, they both wanted to show the world that it was wrong when it had distributed their roles, and...well...Shouto could relate.

The heterochromatic teen was slightly ashamed to admit that, after hearing that the other was Quirkless, he’d considered the match already won. True, he saw Midoriya win with his other gadgets, but he assumed that was just luck. After all, the kid was Quirkless. It would’ve been like racing against a person in a wheelchair; it had taken some five seconds of actually fighting him to realize that Midoriya’s metaphorical wheelchair had rocket launchers and nitro-boosters attached and that it may have not been his brightest idea to antagonise the kid with semi-automated guns.
This had been just another proof that his father was a piece of shit, and he should take anything he said with a grain of salt. Because he knew that, had he known that Midoriya was Quirkless, little could have changed his mind about the boy. But Shoto saw that the student was fucking strong, and that was enough to earn his respect.

The boy shook his head and looked at the screen. The commercials were at the end. He would see who Midoriya would battle next. The most logical explanation was Bakugou, but there was something about the other kid in Gen Ed that unsettled him. The chances were fifty-fifty.

*It’s your Quirk!* Midoriya’s voice rang again. The teen lifted his left hand and stared at it.

He wondered, and not for the first time, what would have happened if he only had one Quirk, if he had a younger sibling prodigy, if he would’ve been left to his own devices. Shouto didn’t fool himself that mom would’ve stayed. She was bound to crack after all the shit that bastard put her through. The only difference would have been that he would’ve been older, that he would have probably visited his mother. *I should do that after this.* He missed her. Shouto was a little scared, but he knew he would have to. He just needed to sleep a little on it, to build up the courage. The boy thought what would have happened to him if he wasn’t the Chosen One, as Midoriya had called him. Would he have stayed, like Natsuo or Fuyumi? Or would he have left, like Touya?

He barely remembered his older brother. He had blue fire, and blue eyes. He remembered that fire, it had seemed so cold, so different than Endeavor’s. Shouto had tried many times to heat it to that shade but never really managed.

He didn’t really spend much time with Touya, not after turning four. Before, all of his siblings had been pretty close, they played games. True, Natsuo and Touya were dragged every once in a while to train, his father’s preferred word for torture, but they always came back. During those times, mom would show Fuyumi how to control ice and Shouto would watch them in quiet awe. He always wished for his mother’s Quirk. It was pretty and nice and good, and healed the sore muscles of his older brothers’ when they returned from training.

Unfortunately, that Quirk had come in a package with his other cursed half.

*It’s your Quirk!* Was it, really?

*Do you have any idea what I would’ve done for a tenth of your power?* No, he didn’t know, but from the desperation in his voice he guessed that there wasn’t a lot we wouldn’t have done. He also had a certain type of fighting style. Shouto had observed him during his other matches. He punched well, but he fought dirty. He dodged, but not in the usual manner or in the one his classmates did. People who had learned from a teacher tended to practice moves until they were perfection, until they could do it out of instinct. But Midoriya didn’t dodge like he was taught. He dodged like someone who knew that your opponent wouldn’t stop once you were down. Like someone who knew you couldn’t afford to fall. It was practice born of too many punches hitting the target, of the desperation of not being hit.

Shouto was intrigued. He wanted to know more, needed to know more. He remembered what the purple haired boy had said. If someone from Gen Ed did well enough, they would be transferred to Heroics. Midoriya would either score first or second, more than enough to move him to one of the Heroics classes. So, there was a fifty fifty chance he would end up in the same class as him. He needed to do more research on it. There was something about the boy that made him suspicious. He would find out. He looked at his hand again.

*It’s your Quirk!*

*Not yet… he clenched his fist…but maybe one day…*
Izuku chewed numbly on the gummy bears as he waited for the commercials to stop. The next match was Shinsou’s and Bakugou’s, and the green haired teen really really hoped the purple head would win. He was no longer weak, and he had gotten far enough to manage the transfer to heroics, but he didn’t really want to battle the blond. He still had more experience, more ruthlessness, and, no matter how much training he had, the scars that marked his skin would never really fade.

On one hand, Bakugou wasn’t stupid. He had probably noticed that something was wrong the moment the contestants started to speak and would probably try not to fall into the other’s trap. On the other, it was Bakugou he was thinking about. Shinsou was very skilled at pushing people’s buttons, so, in the end, whether he would win or not was a toss-up between Bakugo’s temper and his intelligence.

He absently swallowed another gummy as he waited for the healing to fall into place. He had a shitload of cuts and bruises, bruised ribs and a pretty deep cut that needed stitches when he slid onto a glacier. He hadn’t noticed it until he reached the infirmary.

Izuku knew that, no matter how many gummies he ate, he would be too exhausted to put up a decent fight. If he were against Bakugou, he would throw everything in his arsenal but chances were that he’d leave on a stretcher. The blond was a beast and there would be no shame in losing to him. Well, no shame in the collective thought of the audience, his friends and his classmates; Izuku would probably beat himself up over it, but it would pass. If he were against Shinsou, Izuku would probably be able to throw him out with a grenade and be done with it. If not, he could say he had been brainwashed and end this. Either way, he had gotten on the second place without a Quirk and that should have been enough to both make him proud and get him into Heroics.

Everyone else seemed to think the same. Mom had sent him a lot of encouraging messages and messages from other people telling him how good it was and how proud they all were of him. He knew most of her co-workers were only saying this out of courtesy. After all, all his life, every time he went to the office, he kept hearing people whispering about him behind their backs. They loved to gossip, whether it was about his absent father, or his Quirkless status, they always talked about him and not in a good way either. They were always a few steps behind, as if his lack of Quirk made him deaf too. In short, their congratulations meant shit to him. The other messages though….

His class congratulated him. On the class chat there was a storm of good luck’s and hollers of the fact that the Gen Ed finally had someone in the finals. They were yelling good luck at him and at Shinsou. Kids from the other departments were messaging him too, congratulating him, some kids from management pleased that he gave them something to market. The forums were filled with commentaries he would read in the next few days, because, right now, they appeared at speeds to high to properly read them, but they were a vast array of What the fuck, and Awesome, and I can’t believe, all in big, bright caps.

Even Dabi had sent him an encouragement-slash-praise, that was summed up in something like: You? With a shot at first place? It’s more likely than I thought! Izuku had laughed at that one before the words sunk in.

He thought of Todoroki.

On a second, less enraged, thought he realised he might’ve been a little bit cruel. But he wasn’t going to take it back. He’d meant every word he said, and it’s not like the other pulled any punches. But he had been just so…. mad.

The heterochromatic teen had everything that had always been denied to him. A Quirk,
respect, being treated like a decent human being. When he heard that the other was holding back because of a mere grudge…

*Would you trade Mom for Endeavour?*

*Never.*

Izuku sighed. He should probably have to talk to Todoroki later and maybe apologize or, at least explain himself more calmly. That didn’t mean he was actually going to do it. He sighed and looked at the screen. The commercials just ended and the TV showed how both Shinsou and Bakugou were entering the arena. They stared at each other while Present Mic commented on them. Izuku shook his head as he watched the two kids walk into the ring. It was probably more interesting for him than it was for other people, because he intimately knew each of the contestants, and the battle between them wasn’t one for mere eyes alone.

The match started and Bakugou jumped in full-force. Shinsou barely managed to dodge and roll out of the way before he was viciously attacked by the blond once again. He dodged and rolled and took a few painful punches before he yelled something. The blond raged and yelled something back and, as his red eyes blanked, a wide smirk suddenly grew on the greenette’s features.

Shinsou smiled at the camera, which was a little eerie, either from the smile itself or the camera angle before turning back towards Bakugou. The camera focused on his lips and Izuku could *just* make out “Walk out of bounds” before the blond turned around. He was filled with morbid satisfaction as his feet carried over the edge.

The crowd didn’t cheer as loud as it did before. They had gotten used to his Quirk already.

On wobbly feet, Izuku got up and pulled on his new gym jacket, supplied by the school after his other one had vanished/been stolen by the crowd. He didn’t know, but it wouldn’t be the weirdest thing that had been stolen during one of these events. He was browsing the internet a few years before and found someone selling Mirio Toogata’s underwear from that year. There was a surprising amount of people bidding a ridiculous amount for them.

The boy put on his utility belt and walked out. He didn’t wait for Recovery girl, she must still be busy with Todoroki. His torso ached as he walked and bandages were covering his limbs and a good chunk of his chest he knew was visible through his tank top. He didn’t know the state of his face, but he knew it must’ve been tragic. But he pushed forward. He had something to prove. Sooner or later, it would get out that he was Quirkless, and he didn’t want to give anyone else more reason to pity him or call him fragile and breakable. If he was going to lose, he would do so with his head up and glaring his opponent in the eye as he landed the final blow. Even if that blow was a well-crafted insult, he would not back down.

His bandaged fingers tightened around the staff.

Now or never.

~O~

Hitoshi knew, on a purely rational level, that Midoriya was strong. It was only logical. He wouldn’t know so much about balance and weapons if he didn’t use those at least once, and he wasn’t the type to order the over complicated shit he did if he didn’t know how to use it. really now, it was only logical. Hitoshi expected on some level for the Quirkless kid to be a challenge.

He hadn’t expect this.
Because there was a certain line between “Pretty badass” and “What the actual fuck?!” Midoriya’s not a human, he had concluded after exactly one minute of watching the two students fight. Because sure, the smaller teen had his weapons and he had defeated the other two. But the way he jumped, the way he fought… they were different.

The purple head had watched a lot of students fight, and he always got a certain vibe from them. Most were strong, powerful, skilled. They gave the vibe that they could beat you without a problem. Izuku gave the vibe that he was permanently holding back from landing a fatal blow.

Practice makes perfect, and there’s something disturbing about seeing a kid, barely a teen, try to maim you and suddenly remembering that he wasn’t supposed to know how to do that. There were also his weapons to take into account. Hitoshi wouldn’t stand a chance against one of those grenades, never mind that insane Bo staff. He couldn’t expect the other to answer his questions either. They had spent a lot of time together, and Midoriya had seen and analysed his Quirk. He wouldn’t fall for anything, especially if he knew it was a ruse. Even if he tried to take advantage of the weaknesses he knew he wouldn’t forgive himself for after, it would take too much time for the other to respond.

He entered the arena. Midoriya was on the other side, watching him with intense eyes. His face had several band aids and bandages and Shinsou could see the gauze coming out from under his wrist. He had bags under his eyes. But he still looked like he would fight to the death.

The crowd was watching. Waiting. Which would be pretty boring, considering that the last two contestants were both, as far as flashy quirks went, effectively Quirkless. Fuck the crowd! They had beaten the Heroics department. You’ll make the transfer anyway. He had reached the finals. That had to be enough, right?

The people wanted a show, the always did. They always stood by while villains attacked, while he was beaten for his Quirk. They wanted to see kids maim themselves for glory, if the previous matches were enough of a proof. Bread and circus, they said. They wanted a show. Shinsou didn’t owe them one.

His side throbbed in pain, the burn wound still stinging. He was tired and hungry and wanted it to be over. Present Mic was giving the start. The moment the bell rang, Shinsou smirked. He looked at Izuku, then at the camera, before he turned around and walked out of the ring.

~O~

The award ceremony had been a little awkward and that was putting it mildly. Izuku was sitting on the tallest podium, with Shinsou to his right, throwing him knowing smirks and giggling at the crowd. Said crowd was cheering, though they were a little put off by the end, which had been a little anticlimactic. Izuku didn’t know if SHinsou did it out of pure reason, or just the uncanny desire to fuck with people. Either way, Izuku was smiling. On his left, Todoroki was staring at the ground, apparently musing on something and throwing him weird glances every once in a while. Izuku didn’t know what to think of that. His bruises were still throbbing, his ribs aching, but he could do nothing to stop the huge, shit eating grin on his face. He was so proud of himself, he felt like he was going to burst. It was like the first time he saved someone’s life, and he couldn’t help but look at everyone, at the cameras, silently challenging his middle school teachers, classmates, every person that told him he couldn’t make it. I won the motherfucking Sports Festival, losers! What do you think of me now?!

Bakugou was on the third place stall, glaring, fuming and looking seconds away from needing to be restrained. Even though he didn’t want to, Izuku felt a little bad about his former friend. He knew he worked hard to get here in the first place and seeing him lose twisted some memories inside of him. He forced them down. The blond needed to be knocked off his high horse,
and indirectly losing to someone he considered a mere bug was oddly satisfying. He looked at the blond. Katsuki glared at him with more than the usual amount of malice. There was a threat in his gaze and Izuku knew it was the kind he had to fear. But he didn’t, though, and that was probably his mistake.

Then All Might appeared and the crowd lost it. They were screaming, yelling, cheering and all that. A speech about the winners was held, to which Izuku couldn’t really pay attention to because of all the butterflies in his stomach, and the No.1 hero finally pulled out the medals.

He lingered a little on Todoroki, whispering something to him, to which the teen responded by nodding stiffly, but he seemed relieved nonetheless. Bakugou didn’t accept his medal and All Might was forced to stuff it over his head then into his mouth, the other fuming all the time. When he got to Shinsou, Izuku had the pleasure of seeing his usually, cold, composed friend flustered. He smirked. No one could really get over their childhood fanboy crush on All Might.

Then, it was his turn. Part of Izuku wanted to look down and stare at the same time; wanted to fiddle with his hands and scruff his feet against the podium. After all this time, there was still a part of him that couldn’t believe he deserved to be near his childhood hero. But he still remembered that day, on the roof, when he was told that he couldn’t be a hero. So he shoved all those thoughts down, raised his chin and looked the man in the eye.

“Still too weak to be a hero?” he said, too low for anyone to hear. The man froze for a few seconds.

_What do you think of me now, All Might?_

“Congratulations, Young Midoriya” he said and smiled after he got back, obviously sincere but somehow also unbelievably sad. Izuku tried to smile back, but he knew it was about as fake as it could get. He bowed his head and the man’s huge hand lingered on his shoulder for a second longer, in a comforting gesture. Izuku didn’t know what to think of it. He hesitated for a few seconds before he said: “You did good” and left.

~O~

Katsuki was furiously pacing the corridors. It was pretty late, the people were already leaving, but he had a job to do. He was angry, no, fuming, but he needed to do this. It was necessary.

His classmates had already left, but he was still waiting for his homeroom teacher to leave the room.

That, that fucker had pulled it again. Even though he hated it, he had to admit that the loser was impressive. He had seen him jump and run around, but it was the first time he had seen him fight. He would never admit it, not even to himself, but, in a Quirkless fight, they would probably be evenly matched. Katsuki had always focused on improving his Quirk and different hits to make it as strong and reliable as possible. He could throw a punch, he could take people down with punches alone, but he was never interested in all the areas of hand to hand combat. So, when he watched the nerd, he studied his moves carefully. After managing not to blow the stands up because of the fucking copy-cat (grenades? _grenades_?!), he followed his moves. He might have not been overly strong, but he really did hit in vital points, and could evade most long range attacks. That must be related to his night job.

That fucking night job. The vigilante business. Katsuki had been shocked. Then livid. Then he had been angry. How dare this Quirkless little fuck try to raise above him, above his level. How dare he give him cheek?
Katsuki wanted to report him, he really did. But it took him the exact amount of five minutes to realise that it was laughable. Who would even believe him? Izuku was Quirkless, useless. He had always been. That’s why he had failed the heroics in the first place. Not that he could have gotten in anyway. Robots weren’t people. But Katsuki couldn’t tell anyone. He had a reputation, a title to maintain, and he couldn’t risk them on the off chance that someone might believe him. Because no one would. If the word got out that he was scared of the little Quirkledd twig, he would end up the laugh of the school. He couldn’t risk it.

No one had ever taken the nerd seriously, and, especially at UA where Quirks were the focus, no one would. Not without proof.

But now…. Now there was a chance. Izuku had beaten Todoroki. Endeavour’s kid. On live TV. People saw that he was strong the there was a chance that he would be believed. There was a chance that the nerd would finally learn to stay in his designated place and stop being a menace to those around him.

*You are worried that he might be a threat.*

*Shut up! all that nerd was ever good for was being a punching bag.*

There was also something concerning about the amount of damage he could take. Katsuki had seen the gash in his side and had flinched when the nerd hit the glacier. He knew how painful those could be. But no, the loser was still standing, still walking, like he was made out of fucking steel. It was almost frightening the amount of pain he could pull through. *In how big of a proportion are you responsible for this?*

*Shut up!*

Suddenly, the doors opened. Katsuki’s head whipped around and he saw his bandaged teacher leave the room. With a strong step, he marched towards the two heroes and stopped in front of them.

“Aizawa-sensei?” he asked, trying his most neutral voice. The teacher stopped and watched him.

“Bakugou? What is it?”

“Can I speak with you in private?”

The two heroes looked at each other before the bandaged one nodded and left. Aizawa motioned towards his office and invited the other in. he sat behind the desk and Katsuki took the seat across from him.

“What is it?”

Katsuki took a deep breath. “Izuku...Izuku’s the Vannisher.”

Aizawa blinked under his wraps before leaning a little bit forward. “Elaborate,”

The kid fumbled. “He is. I found him once and followed him. I managed to unmask him, but he more or less flipped me off and jumped off a roof.” Bakugou took a deep breath and shook his head. “Look, I know it’s a grave accusation and that I should have some proof before I come in accusing him of vigilantism, but you have to believe me! I know what saw, it was him, I know it
“Bakugou!” Aizawa said and the teen shut up. “Why didn’t you say anything earlier?”

The kid took a deep breath. “He said that no one would believe me. And he’s right- I wouldn’t have believed me either. How could little, weak, *Quirkless* Deku be one of the most talked about vigilante’s on the forums,” there was something in the way he said it, like he wasn’t quite believing it himself, but he was forcing himself to.

Aizawa sighed. He thought about his previous encounter with the vigilante. As he looked at Midoriya, there was something familiar about him, though he couldn’t really point it out. He thought back to the fight. The physiques aligned all right, and the fighting style was quite similar. He remembered Knuckleduster and realised that this was pretty plausible. Plus, Bakugou wasn’t one to lie. He prepared to say something but the teen continued. “Look, I know it might be hard to believe, but I’m not lying, please, I need you to…”

“Bakugou!” he said and the teen shut up. He looked up and Aizawa said “I believe you.”

Chapter End Notes

before you people start yelling, i’m fully aware of how static this chapter feels. but i had all the tournament planned and, i’m sorry, there was not all that big of a fight to put there, so, introspection time it is

even so, please let me know what you thought in the comments, they give me life and push me to keep writing

anyway, happy holidays
discord
tumblr
In which things get progressively worse

Chapter Notes

wow, i really didn't expect all those comments the last time and you have no idea how happy they made me

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku would have liked to say that he’d celebrated the other day after the festival, but, honestly, he’d gotten home, gotten scolded, took a shower and got into bed.

And that was it.

He was too tired to do anything else so he just went to sleep without even eating dinner.

The last night had been rough, his only saving being his still human body that needed recharging. Because last night it was when the weight of the day finally hit him. You just told a person suffering from abuse that he should get over it. he fucked up with Todoroki, he fucked up real bad. He slapped his face with his pillow and closed his eyes. I may have been right, but I had no right to fuck with his emotions like that. He shook his head. He will have to talk to him. Izuku knew he would never take those words back, there was too much truth, too much pain in them to do so. He knew it was too late to lessen whatever blow he landed because of his lack of tact. But simply doing nothing after he had been so insensitive didn’t sit right either. He had went to bed with the promise to make it better, with the promise of not being like Bakugou who stepped over people’s hopes and dreams because he didn’t agree with them. He wouldn’t be like Bakugou.

Now he was awake, still tired, only wanting to stay in bed all day because fate was a cruel mistress and took any and all ounces of energy away from him, and, with a few hours before he would be hungry, he decided to face the music and look up the news.

He wasn’t disappointed.

Over the course of the night, it seemed like every person in Japan and outside had seen the Sports Festival and had a very vocal opinion about it. First, there were the memes. A lot of memes. Other than the ones he’d seen the other day, there was now at least ten times the amount about him only. There were a lot of photos of him the moment he took his jacket off, from the underline “Watch me bitch!” to the “Who needs a Quirk when you have grenades!” which, honest to god, got a giggle out of him. There was also the one where someone slapped his face over a the guy holding the bear that said “I don’t always win the Sports Festival, but when I do, I’m not even using a Quirk!” the memes regarding the other contestants were funny as well, a lot of people comparing Bakugou to an angry Pomeranian and there were just too many things that matched Todoroki’s poker face. There was also that one last scene with Shisou turning heels and the huge capitation of “NOPE!” on the screen.

Just for shits and giggles, he typed his name in the search engine.
Immediately, a lot of sites filled with wild speculations and theories popped up. The most popular topic of discussion seemed to be what his Quirk actually was. The way Aizawa had phrased it the other day, made it seem like he did have a Quirk, just not one suited for battle. There was a theory that his Quirk was analysis, which Izuku suspected had actually been leaked from one of his business partners from school - never mind that they were supposed to be sworn to secrecy. Another one was that he actually had charisma, while others said that he’d pain tolerance.

Then there was the bad feedback that was bound to crop up after any major event.

Firstly, a lot of people were mad Shinsou pulled out, saying that that defied the purpose of the festival. They called him a coward and gave him a lot of shit for it. Others said that he shouldn’t have won, because the purpose of the Sports Festival was to show off the children’s Quirks, and, if he didn’t use his, that was as good as cheating. He found a thread where someone who must’ve been from his middle school (WhackyEyes69? Seriously?) said that he was actually Quirkless, but that theory got dismissed on the base of: Surely the U.A wouldn’t allow someone who was Quirkless attend- much less take part in the Sports Festival!

Izuku felt a pang of bitterness at that one. They will never believe in you. You will never be good enough so you might as well just give up. what’s one win when you’ll lose for the rest of your life?

He shut his phone and went downstairs. Mom was up, making breakfast. “Mom, why are you up already?” he said in a sleepy voice “Isn’t it Saturday? You should sleep in,”

“Oh, honey” she smiled as she flipped eggs and bacon in the pan “It’s a special day. You won the Sports Festival and Present Mic called me to tell me that Recovery Girl said that you should rest and eat well to help with your recovery. Plus, we didn’t have time for something like this in a very long while. With the new job…” she looked away and the meat sizzled in the pan “I miss spending time with you.” She took a deep breath “I also want to apologise” she put the eggs on the plate. Izuku opened his mouth, but she went on.

“When we found that you were Quirkless, you asked me if you could be a hero. I said no, but you still tried and tried, and finally managed to become one!” she turned towards him, her eyes wet with tears, but she was smiling “You won the Sports Festival. You’re so close to becoming a hero. I’m so” she hiccupped “So proud of you” she wiped away her tears. “After all this time, you marched forward, you never gave up. I’m just…. I’m just sorry I did,”

Izuku made no effort to stop the tears as he got up and walked towards her, he wrapped his arms around her frame and sobbed into her shirt. They both cried, but shared no words, because none were needed.

But I didn’t march towards my goal. He didn’t. He’d trained, yes, but there were times when he wanted to give up. There were plenty of times he feared that he would fail. No, he didn’t walk proudly towards his goal, with his head up and looking forward. There was nothing glorious about his way. He’d crawled through the mud of the back streets and the blood of criminals, fought and tricked to get the upper hand, lied and put people in positions they had to agree with him. No, there had been nothing noble about his path.

But you made it. You may have suffered, but you dragged no one down with you.

And, for once, that was enough.

They moved from that spot an indefinite time after. They ate and prepared for the next few hours. The Sports Festival for the second years would start around noon and the one for the third
years the next day. Most people took time off in these events to properly watch the hero Olympics. The Midoriya’s were no exception. Izuku smiled as he washed the dishes while his mom did some last minute assignments. It was true, he really missed the meals shared with his mom before. They had different schedules, arriving at different hours and some nights mom not even making it home from work or whatever business trip she was at. Breakfast had been cut in two by his morning run. He made breakfast for him and mom and ate in a rush before going jogging. When he got home, he found a bento and a good luck napkin his mom made before going to work.

He never realised how little time he spent with mom nowadays, but he really wanted to take advantage of the time he’d now.

The rest of the day passed more or less in a blur. He got a lot of messages from friends, classmates, future classmates congratulating him on winning. His Facebook account got spammed with messages too, most of them good. Shinsou sent him a lot of the memes he found, Hatsume was celebrating the shit tone of contracts she’d managed to bind with different agencies. Uraraka, Ashido and Kirishima had also sent him a lot of very nice messages. Izuku was a little taken aback by Kirishima, since they had two conversations at most, and one of them was in the middle of the battle, but he’d saved his life and, from the reports he’d gotten on the other, he seemed like a very nice and upbeat guy.

They watched the second years, recognising some and madly scribbling in his notebook all the time. It didn’t give him the usual joy, doing it more out of habit than anything else, but it was relieving and allowed him to disconnect from his usual thoughts. He and mom ate an unholy amount of popcorn and, after it was over, Izuku said that he went for a jog. It was still a little too early to say he was going to sleep, and at this festival, no one actually destroyed the arena, so they didn’t need the pauses to fix it. The sun was up, so, he put on a dark hoodie (a different one this time) careful to tuck the bandanna and sky glasses under it and headed for Dabi’s. He didn’t intend to do any vigilante business tonight, but one can never truly be too prepared.

The people ignored him. With his hood up and slouchy step, he looked like the average drug addict, and his height deemed him young enough not to be of any interest. The most some would do would be to throw him a weird glance and move forward. He made his way to the run down building and started climbing.

It was really some kind of hilarious to more or less break into someone’s house in the middle of the day and no one to as much as blink. He may have not been fully visible, but he found it funny nonetheless. There was a pang of regret as he remembered that the people who mainly took care of things around here were the vigilantes.

He was by no means the only one, but he was the most famous, which was kind of ironic since he was the one with the least flashy costume. He’d met some others, but only twice. Once when he was running away from a gang, and once when he was ready to jump in and save someone. The first time he met a girl in a cat suit with a mask over her eyes. They looked at each other for a few seconds before giving an understanding nod and going their way. The second time, the obvious middle schooler was in way over his head. Izuku had jumped in, chocked the guy unconscious and dragged the kid away. He gave him a scolding about *picking your fucking battles*, and *you’re not a hero, wearing a shining All Might hoodie is very detrimental to your health around here!* The kid listened and nodded and Izuku left on the nearest rooftop. He knew that there were others, but he never got to meet them personally. Well, there was the sword guy too, but he didn’t really count. Izuku got the vibe that he wasn’t really a vigilante.

Izuku, or, at least the Vanisher, was popular mostly because a lot of the people he’d saved
had social media accounts and a lot of grudges against police and pro heroes. So, when a vigilante popped up and did a half decent job, everyone jumped and either took his defence and blamed the actual authority figures or made fun of them by giving him publicity. There was also a very bitter cop who insulted him on his social media, calling him the lowest of the scum and such things, which only boosted his popularity.

What was that saying again? No publicity is bad publicity?

After only a day on the internet, Izuku had decided that he wanted to be an underground hero. The lesser the media, the better. Plus, it’s not like he’d a flashy Quirk, so he wouldn’t get too much advertisement compared to people like Bakugou and Todoroki. Yes, being an underground hero was for the best.

He shook his head and balanced himself on the window sill. He pushed the window open and stepped in. Dabi only slightly turned around to check and make sure that it was actually his friend and not a robber. During the last few months, the taller teen had gotten over his first instinct of burning everyone who came through the window super crispy. Now, he only rose an eyebrow before returning to whatever he was cooking. And, seriously, how the fuck he managed to work a small stove here? Izuku had no idea, but was only grateful as he crashed on the surprisingly clean portion that was the man’s bed.

“Spring cleaning? What happened, got a girlfriend to impress?” the man threw him a deadpan look before he took a piece of pizza that was slowly starting to gain sentience and threw it at him. Izuku barely dodged Quirk by parasitic infestation, as he was naming it after watching too many western superhero movies and pulled out his tongue at the other boy. Dabi glared, but it lacked any real intensity.

“Congratulations.” He deadpanned before turning to face him. He then returned to whatever he was cooking and opened a huge can of tomato sauce.

“You saw it?”

“I’m pretty sure everyone did,” he said as he mixed something else. “Really now, even the crackheads around here knew about the little suicide bomber at the Festival”

“I wasn’t- I did not…” he said as he felt his cheeks redden.

“You looked like a fucking suicide bomber. It was so fucking ironic, like they put almost half the heroes as a guard, and they let you in!” he gestured with a huge, red coated spoon, splattering some tomato sauce over the broken plaster. He placed a hand over his heart in a mocking gesture “Truly, a moment to cherish, for years to come!”

Izuku pouted and threw a potato chip from an abandoned bag nearby with surprising accuracy. It cracked against the brunette’s skull, but the man only let out a chuckle. He then turned around and strolled towards the other. He placed a can of something in his hands before settling comfortably at the other end of the bed. Izuku looked down. It was a plastic can of instant noodles, but inside there were actually pasta and tomato sauce inside. The other threw the greenette a pair of sealed chopsticks too before he opened his own and started eating. Izuku rose his eyebrows, questioningly.

“Some neighbour of mine got jumped by the fuckers he was working with and I raided his apartment while I had the chance. He had some pretty neat stuff, including this food, so I decided, why the hell not?”
Izuku took a bite. They were surprisingly good. “Oh, my, Dabi, pasta and instant ramen? You must be quite the catch,” the man threw him an unamused look before a sly smirk spread across his scarred lips.

“Speaking of catches- I must say the way you and Shoto were gazing deeply into each other’s eyes right before blowing the other up,” he said as he slurped on the pasta in a very obscene way. “Mmmm…”

“Stop it!” Izuku knew that his face matched the sauce and he tried to hide, but he really couldn’t when every inch of his face was bloody red. The other continued mercilessly.

“Well now, that was one of the most aggressive forms of foreplay I’ve seen, but no judging here…” he was interrupted when a flying pillow came his way.

“Izuku grumbled and looked away before returning to stabbing his pasta and violently shoving it into his mouth. Dabi grinned and got up as he slurped the last of his dinner. “Oh, I remembered, I got you something.”

Izuku looked up and placed his finished meal on a surface of indeterminate origins. “Yeah” the man continued as he pulled out an overly stuffed backpack, that was way too good to be his in the first place. “A guy that owed me something was very ready to get out of that debt, so he took me to a warehouse of one of his bosses and let me take as many things as I could stuff into this backpack” he lifted the object in question. And pulled out something black, which he threw at him. Izuku caught it and unwrapped the plastic. “It’s a bulletproof vest. I got one myself. I’ve no idea why they’d have one in your midget size, but the material is pretty thick, and I’m pretty sure it can absorb any hits and cuts that might come-”

He didn’t get to finish, for the teen let out a happy squeak and jumped on him. Izuku wrapped his hands around his middle and buried his head into his torso. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

Dabi was honestly super confused and at a loss for what to do, but he quickly recovered. His hand hovered awkwardly over his shoulder before his fingers buried themselves into the untameable mess of green hair.

They stood like this for a few moments before Izuku pulled away and started gushing and mumbling over the gift. Dabi chuckled and shook his head. “Still got the darts I gave you?”

Izuku stopped for a second before nodding. He placed the vest down as he pulled one dart out of his pocket. He carried one with him at all times, one in his hoodie and one in his uniform, if it ever happened to be attacked on his way home. He asked the Support course if they had anything similar, but they came out blank.

“Still, thank you for the vest.”
The man shrugged. “You get injured often so I guessed you could use some protection.”

Izuku rose an eyebrow as he looked at his scars, stitches and general state of being. “Yeah, because you know all about protection.” He realised his fatal mistake the moment the man’s smirk stretched across his lips.

“Well, if you ever need someone to show you how to put on a condom…” Dabi barely dodged the shoe sent flying his way as he cackled. Izuku tried to attack him, but the man caught his wrists, spun him around and threw him on his bed. The wires creaked and Izuku tried to get up and continue his attack, but was smacked by the same pillow that had became his arch nemesis and collapsed back on the mattress.

Dabi cackled until there were yells and hits on the corridor. They both froze.

The man listened to the voices and cursed when he seemed to recognise one. “Trouble. Get out of here,” he said, playful tone gone.

“Don’t you want me to….?”

The scarred one threw him a look that left no room for refusal. “Get. Out.”

Izuku gulped and dashed out the window.

~O~

It was getting dark and Izuku still didn’t leave the district. He knew he should be going home, but, at the same time, he didn’t want to be too far. If Dabi was in danger, he would’ve liked to help him. It didn’t matter that Dabi was stronger than him and had a long range Quirk, and, if he were to be taken down, Izuku would have no chance of taking them down. It still didn’t sit well with him to run away.

He pulled out his phone and opened the chat. His hands hovered over the buttons, stretching his mind over a message that would ask him if he was Ok without revealing his involvement to possible attackers. It had already been an hour, Dabi was either dead, captured, or managed to get away.

~Illegals~

Me:

Where are you?

Good enough. It left room for interpretation. If Dabi was captured, they would assume that he was meeting someone. If not, he knew whether he’d to run away or managed to chase the others off.

Dabi:

Chill brat, Im fine

Izuku sighed in relief.

Me:

What’d they want?
Dabi:

Don’t worry about it.

This meant that he shouldn’t question it, and, by the seriousness the man had before he left, Izuku got the impression that there wasn’t anyone left to cause trouble. He didn’t get to dwell on it though, because a message came a second after.

Dabi:

You forgot your shit here

Shit.

Me:

I’ll pick it up tomorrow

Dabi

K

And he was offline. Izuku pocketed his phone and looked around when a familiar voice sent shivers through his spine.

“Shouldn’t you be at home, Midoriya?”

Aizawa.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

What do I do?

Aizawa was there. Aizawa had seen him. Calm down, you’re not wearing the mask, you’re just walking around, act natural. He took a deep breath and turned around, the most confused expression he could manage on his face.

“Sensei?”

The underground hero was leaning on the wall, looking at him with a blank stare. The bandages he’d had the previous days were now gone, a small scar under his right eye. Izuku felt his muscles size up, but fought to keep calm.

“It’s getting late, Midoriya. Why are you here?”

“Oh,” he said, looking around, as if he was only now realising where he was. “I was walking home. Must’ve taken the long way on accident.”

“This isn’t really a place for kids to wander off to,” he said as he stood up and walked towards him. Izuku contained the impulse to run away. You’d only expose yourself, idiot! And, even then, you can’t outrun him. “Come with me, I’ll drive you home,” he said as he started walking forward.

Izuku stopped the impulse of yelling Stranger Danger, because his teacher gave off really weird and
creepy vibes right now. “A-actually sir, I don’t think that’s a good idea. You must be on patrol and I really don’t- I mean, I wouldn’t want to inconvenience you. Really my apartment’s not that far, see you on Monday!” he quickly as he turned around and tried to dash away.

A hand clamped almost painfully on his shoulder as the older man leaned in. “I have some questions about your extra-curricular activities. Would you like to discuss them here, or someone more private?”

He knows, he knows, he knows.

Izuku clamped his teeth shut before grind an answer out.

“Somewhere more private would be great,”

The hero turned him around and pushed him forward. Izuku started to walk, fully aware of the man less than two feet behind him. They walked out of the district and into the streets. In the road, there was a car. A police car, though the lights were off. In the driver’s seat sat Tsukakuchi, giving him a placating smile. “Long time no see, Midoriya”

Izuku knew he was trying to be calm and soothing and relaxing, but that only raised the teen’s blood pressure even more. Aizawa opened the door and Izuku looked at him. One glare from his teacher made him get in. The ride was silent, which only helped in letting Izuku boil in his own juices. I can’t run, they know where I live. He couldn’t do anything. Sending a silent prayer to whatever gods there were above that it would end well. They reached the station and Izuku tried to use this time to escape. Aizawa’s hand clamped around his arm and dragged him in.

Tsukakuci was surprisingly amicable, saluting the other officers, while Aizawa was looming behind the teen pushing him forward. Everyone seemed pretty used to the underground hero and Izuku was struck for a second by exactly how fucked up his situation was. He was patted for weapons and they revealed the sky goggles, the bandanna and the switchblade. Izuku gulped. He was in deep. But they didn’t find the darts. Must’ve forgotten them at Dabi’s he thought and breathed in relief.

They entered an interrogation room and Izuku was pushed on a chair. The other two sat in front of him on the other side of the table.

“Sir?” he said in a meek and scared voice. “Why am I here?”

Aizawa looked thoroughly unamused. “Cut the crap Midoriya, we know.”

Izuku blinked, trying to look as confused as possible. “You know what, sir?”

“That you are the Vanisher” the boy blinked before raising his hands and shaking them violently in front of his face.

“What?! No! No, no, no sir. You can’t be serious! I’m not- How could I be-”

“We know it’s you, so drop the pretence” the hero said. The boy clamped his mouth shut. “We have witness accounts that say that it was you. I fought that vigilante. You have the same height, weight and fighting style.”

The boy’s face darkened. “I can point out right now a lot of other people who have the same physique as me. From what I gather, the vigilante is wearing a mask of some sort. Even if it was me, you can’t prove it.”

“Actually, we can.” Aizawa said. The boy stood still, his face not betraying any emotion. Near him,
Tsukakuchi pulled out his phone and read a message. He excused himself and walked out. Aizawa didn’t take his eyes off the teen. “We have an eye witness that swears he saw you being the vigilante.” The man looked in the other’s eyes. “I’m sure you’re quite familiar with Bakugou”

Silence.

The kid blinked, his expression becoming blank before his face morphed through a series of emotions too fast for the hero to catch them all. He opened his mouth, but no sound came out, then gritted his teeth in despair. Finally, he managed.

“You can’t possibly believe him! He hates me!”

Aizawa kept a schooled blank expression as he said. “I’m aware you went to the same middle school together, and that there is some animosity between you since after the USJ…”

“You don’t understand!” the other yelled. “He hates me! He wants me dead. He told me to kill myself for fuck’s sake!”

Aizawa froze.

The kid went on, tears brimming at the edges of his eyes. “He hated me for all of our childhood. I don’t know why, I don’t know what I did to make him hate me, but he bullied me and he broke my stuff and he said that I was a useless waste of space and that he would crush me like a bug…. ” He cut himself off as he realised that he was rambling. He sniffled. “He always thought that I was challenging him in some way…” Midoriya grabbed the roots of his hair and pulled before letting his forehead rest on the table. “Why does he keep ruining my life? Learn to lose, you asshole!” the last part was mumbled and Aizawa was pretty sure it wasn’t meant for him. He was still trying to come to terms with what he heard.

The boy’s pain was real. Even if he was lying about the vigilante stuff, right now, he was pouring his heart on a plate for the hero to see, and that heart was genuine. Tsukakuchi had yet to send him any text. Aizawa knew the man was behind the one way window, watching, keeping his Quirk up to spot any trace of a lie. Midoriya was telling the truth. At loss of what to say to that, the man continued. “If what you say is true, why did no teacher do anything about it?”

The kid left the confines of his arms to look at the teacher. “Seriously, sensei? No one cared!” he cried, wiping his tears. “No one cares about the useless, Quirkless little kid who’ll never amount to anything, anyway. They were just happy they weren’t the ones who had to tell me that becoming a hero was pointless and that I should settle for a mediocre life and a death that wouldn’t inconvenience anyone.” He sniffled and looked away.

“I saved him, you know? The sludge incident? I admit, I didn’t do much, but I let him breathe a little longer. The heroes on site praised me, just up until the point they found that I was Quirkless.” he spit the word and looked away. “They were doing nothing. Nothing. Just sitting there and waiting for someone more qualified to do the job.” He wiped his nose with his already dirty sleeve. “Even All Might told me I wasn’t worth the time of day.”

Aizawa frowned. “When was that?”

“Before the sludge. The villain had already attacked me, but All Might came to the rescue. I... I asked him if I could be a hero. I only ever wanted to be a hero….” he blinked and a few more tears rolled off his face. “He told me that I couldn’t be one, not without a Quirk. He tried to sugar-coat it, sure, but…. ” He shook his head. “Anyway, is there anything else that you need, or can I go home?”
Aizawa sighed. He waited till the kid calmed and wiped his tears, a few full minutes for him to return to some semblance of normality. “I will look into this later” he said. He pulled out a folder. “Now, even if Bakugou decided to lie to get back at you for scoring higher in the festival, we still have your stuff. The goggles and bandanna match the Vanisher’s.”

“They’re from the dollar store!” he jumped in. “I was going to try and fix the ceiling so I bought some protective gear. The bandanna is just a bandanna. I didn’t see anyone giving you shit about the scarves!” he said in a flustered tone. Aizawa rose an almost amused eyebrow. Even if the tear tracks were still visible on his face, the teen seemed in a hurry to direct the attention away from his earlier outburst.

“What about the switchblade?”

“There’s no laws against carrying a normal one. I don’t have a Quirk to defend myself, and carrying the Bo staff draws too much attention.”

“That’s no usual switchblade” the man said. Midoriya froze. “The material is very peculiar to a certain type of people found under an investigation. That knife ties you to that criminal activity” the boy gulped and looked down. “So” Aizawa said as he knew he was close to winning. “Are you ready to admit that you are the Vanisher?”

It took a few moments but, in the end, the kid gulped and nodded. He took a few deep breaths and evened his breathing before looking at his teacher. Aizawa was surprised to see a new fire burning angry in his eyes. “Even if I am, which I am not implying or admitting to in any way, you can’t arrest me. I haven’t broken any laws.”

Aizawa opened his mouth but the brat cut him off. “There are no laws against Quirkless people, I looked. It’s written, black on white in the Law Code “It is illegal for unlicensed people to use their Quirks in any and all public areas, for any purposes, including but not limited to, personal convenience, transport and administration of criminal justice (unless done with a permit or express permission form a person in a position of authority)”. I don’t have a Quirk! I haven’t broken the law! And even then I always make sure I fight only in self defence, so you can’t charge me with assault, either!”

Aizawa was silent for a moment before he barely refrained from smirking. This kid was good, but he’d a lot to learn before he reached a level where he could compete with an underground hero.

“That may be true, but we can still accuse you of complicity. The knife mentioned earlier? It’s enough of a proof to tie you to the investigation.”

“But it’s not mine! I found it on the street!” still no message. Aizawa looked at the teen that looked more and more dishevelled.

“How can you prove that?” the boy remained silent. “The mafia you started in UA won’t help your case either.” Izuku’s jaw hit the ground. “What?” Aizawa rose an eyebrow. “You thought we didn’t know? Pro tip for next time-the bigger the number of members, the higher the risk.”

The boy looked down. “So, now what?” he shook his head. “You called me here to tell me all this, what will you do now?”

Aizawa opened his mouth, but there was a slight knock from the other side. He looked at the mirror, but, of course, he saw nothing. He sighed and sat up. “I will think about it. Stay here, don’t make any ruckus and maybe I’ll be able to work something out for you.” With that, he left the room and locked it twice behind him.
He moved to the other room, and entered. Inside, there were Tsukakuchi and All Might in his small form, staring blankly at the boy behind the glass, who had his head buried in his arms.

“This is my fault…” the man stared out the window.

Aizawa sighed. “Well, you do have the tendency to not really think before speaking, but…”

“No, you don’t understand. I wanted to help him.” Aizawa stopped. All Might continued, staring blankly at the kid. “When I saw his spirit, his heroic potential, I wanted to help him, to give him some pointers, but… I thought that would be too dangerous.” Aizawa remained silent as the No.1 hero rubbed his eyes, though no tears came out. “All this time, every time I saw him at UA, when I was feeling guilty, I soothed myself with the knowledge that, at the very least, he was safe.”

“Idiot,” Aizawa sighed. The man didn’t contest it. “From what I gather, you treated him the same way he hated to be treated, no matter how good your intentions. While I doubt your meeting was the sole reason he started doing all this, I’m pretty sure it was a factor.” The man nodded numbly. The underground hero took a deep breath. “I’ll keep interrogating him. You pay attention, but don’t interfere. Is there anything else I might need to know?”

“He knows about my injury”

“Of course he does,” he shook his head. He turned to leave, but Tsukakuchi stopped him.

“You might want to look over these” he said as he handed him a notebook titled “Hero analysis for the future no.14” the man opened it with the sole intention of skimming before he stared into it the more information he was getting. He snapped the notebook and stuffed it in his pocket. He turned around, schooling his neutral expression, entering the room and closing the door a tad bit harder than necessary.

Midoriya looked up as the teacher sat down. “You asked what we’re planning to with you. Answer me some questions and I’ll do anything in my power to help you.” The kid didn’t seem convinced, but nodded nonetheless. “First, when and why did you start doing this?”

The kid sighed. “I started about six months ago. It wasn’t anything planned, I was just walking down the streets, saw someone get assaulted and stepped in. They got away and I went on my merry way. The thing is, there are a lot of crimes there. Do you know why?”

“Why?”

“Because no one cares” he stressed the last word. “You’re one of the three heroes I even saw around here. All underground, all when there was some big scale shady business going around. I saw no, and I repeat no hero or cop or anything stepping in to stop a mugging, or an attack. There’s no fame or glory to be had here so the cops there are more likely to go to a hooker for her services than to take her witness statement.” He finished darkly.

Aizawa tapped his pen on the notepad but said nothing.

“So, to answer your question, I do this because someone had to. I’ve always wanted to be a hero, I’ve always wanted to save people. Everyone told me I couldn’t. Then, suddenly, I could. Suddenly, I had something none of the other Quirked people had, I was actually good at something; I was actually helping someone when none of you people would step in!”

Aizawa knew better than to be offended.
“I could help people, I could be a hero. Then-than he had to step in and ruin everything like he always does!” he clenched his fists and glared at the table before switching his focus on the man.

“Why are you people even mad?! That district is out of your area, while I’m there, I’m actually doing something. I’m not in your way, I’m not breaking the law. I’m actually making it easier on you because there’s less paperwork to deal with, so why do you get pissed at me when you’re not doing anything in the first place?!” he looked down and tears brimmed at the corners of his eyes.

“For the first time, I was useful. I could help people, I could be a hero, I was happy!” he looked at his teachers with fearful eyes, fat tears streaming down his cheeks. “What’s so wrong with that?” at the last part, his voice was quiet, almost dying. Aizawa felt his heart twist. There was something very, very wrong in seeing a kid so young saying that he was happy risking his life, that battling villains was the only thing giving him some sense of worth.

The man had been teaching for almost half a decade, and he’d seen kids that were overly proud or overly ambitious cracking at the thought of not being good heroes. But it was the first time he’d seen a kid so overly dependent on their hero training, simply because they lacked acknowledgement from any other areas.

*There’s a lot of work to be done here* he realised.

“Midoriya, I want you to listen to me: I will help you get over this. I will make sure you can make something of yourself, if you only let me do so. I’ve seen that you are a hard worker, you have potential, but I can’t help you if you don’t trust me.”

The boy looked up. He seemed pained. “Why would you do that? Why would you help me, you get nothing from it.”

*Oh my god, this kid.*

“Because I care about my students, Midoriya and I usually don’t want to see them wasting themselves.”

The grenette looked at him blankly. “Sir, please. You’re one of my favourite heroes and one of my favourite teachers. So, please, I’m begging you, don’t say something like when unless you mean it.”

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**Chapter End Notes**

i solemnly swear that i did not intend for Aizawa to come off this creepy. i did not. but it happened
i also want to make it as clear as possible, that at no point in here will there be anything romantic or sexual between Izuku and Dabi. their relationship it purely platonic and it will forever stay that way
[join my discord](https://discord.gg/8jxZ6) it's wild
[tumblr](https://aizawa- lei.tumblr.com)
Aizawa waited until the kid had calmed down to continue. When he was sure that Izuku wouldn’t break down again, he spoke again.

“There’s something else we need to discuss” the boy looked at him questioning to which the man pulled out an inconspicuous notebook with the number 14 written on the cover. The teen blanched.

“My notebook,” he said
It wasn’t a question.

“Your notebook,” he deadpanned “Or rather, its contents have been troubling me” Izuku gulped. Aizawa went on. “Tell me, Midoriya, why is there enough information in this to take down the most of the heroics department, teachers included?”

The teen fumbled obviously reaching for an answer that wouldn’t dig him deeper into the grave. “Well- um, you see I’ve- I’ve always, um, enjoyed analysing heroes and their Quirks. I even used to run head first into fights on the streets to make sure I got enough information to classify and codify every hero I encountered. When I got into UA... well, it seemed like a good habit to keep.”

“Uh-huh,” the man grunted unimpressed. “But this here isn’t just Quirk analysis. There’s also information about your classmates and even about kids from other departments- including some information which is supposed to be secret for reasons that don’t concern you.” There was nothing about All Might’s small form, thank every god, but that wasn’t the only point of interest.

“Sensei, with all due respect, if it’s supposed to be secret maybe try to hide it better? It really wasn’t that hard to get to it when I started paying attention. As for my classmates and some other kids...Everyone reveals something about themselves, sooner or later, whether they realize it or not.”

He looked away.

“When we started the... support initiative, we, as the Gen Ed department had to come up with something to give. Since I was so good at analysis, I offered to help them improve their Quirks as payment. Then the Management students added “information about the students of the heroics department” in too, so that everyone would have a fair shot at the festival.”

Aizawa rose an eyebrow. “A fair shot?”

Izuku shrugged “Well, the kids from heroics already had an advantage over us, what with their combat training. We just evened the ground.”
“The reason I bring this up is that this information could be very, very dangerous, should it fall in the wrong hands. Right now, you have two options, and I suggest you chose carefully: first, we accuse you of vigilantism, accomplice to foul business and ill intent towards fellow students” he said lifting the notebook. “Best case scenario, we expel you. Worst case scenario, you go to juvie,”

Izuku’s face blanched.

“Or, we can move you in my class so I can supervise you and keep you in check. We keep his night off the records, but you’ll, essentially, be on probation under my watch.”

The kid sighed. “You’re not really giving me much of a choice here. Any other conditions?”

“Yes. You will give me any and all information you have on heroes and their Quirks, so I can make sure it’s not used for nefarious purposes. If you make any new analysis, you will give that to me, as well. We were going to put you in heroics anyway, but this way you’ll be in my care, specifically. Meaning that, whatever internship offers you will get, you will spend it with me. Besides simple surveillance I also need to make sure you are up to date with any requirements necessary for heroics. Furthermore, you will cease all Vigilante activity at once. I don’t care that you’re not technically breaking the law; you’re still a child going up against villains. Lastly, you will have a tracker on you at all times, so I can know where you are.”

The kid was white. The sentence was something short of house arrest. “Is this...” he gulped “is all of this really necessary?”

“Midoriya, you are a danger to hero society. It’s either that or juvie or permanent obligatly residence at the UA”

Izuku nodded and looked down. “Ok, but I have only one condition.”

Aizawa rose an eyebrow. “You’re not really in a position to make demands.”

“You’re not really in a position to make demands.”

“Aizawa.”

Aizawa man sighed. I’m getting soft.

“What is it?”

“Don’t tell my mom.”

The man blinked, then rose his eyebrows.

”Please! She thinks I’m safe. All this time she thought I was safe. If she finds out what I’ve been up to in the past year, she’ll pull me out of school, for sure. Please, please don’t tell her.”

“You do realise that, as a minor, we have the legal obligation to inform your guardian.”

“Yes, but what you said was basically prison parole.” The kid said as he was obviously making it up as he went “That makes you my guardian in this situation. She is a civilian, and this case is meant to be kept under wraps. Plus, since this is off the records and there will be no paperwork on it, there’s no legal reason to do so.”

“There is a moral reason to do so, Midoriya,” Aizawa said unamused. The kid looked at
him with big, pleading eyes, but the hero didn’t budge. Midoriya held his head in his hands and Aizawa almost felt bad enough to sugar coat it when a knock came from the other side of the window. The underground hero sat up and left the room.

In the other room, Aizawa was met with the head of Police, Tsuragame. “Sir?”

“Hello, Eraser, good to see you. Tsukakuchi texted me about the situation in hand and I came here to see the famous Vanisher for myself” he sighed and shook his head. “As much as I hate to admit it, he is right, we can’t inform his mother.” Behind him, the no 1 hero gasped.

The underground hero felt anger boil in his veins, but fought to keep it down. “Sir, he’s a minor. We have to inform his parents.”

The dog headed man sighed. “True, we should inform his parents. But think about the situation we’re in, Eraser. If it gets out that a Quirkless kid is the famous Vanisher, one of the most beloved vigilantes, there will be an uproar. It’ll be only a matter of time until they find out that he didn’t technicallly commit any crimes. That knife, while compelling, is not enough evidence to convict him, so, when he gets away scot free, people will understand that it is ok to break the law as long as they’re not using a Quirk. Not to mention, if the news that UA was willing to cover it up get out on top of all that... Just think about it; out whole society is centred on Quirks. You may have not seen the Quirkless haters, but I did. News like this will make a huge split in opinions, and, with the tensions already placed upon heroes with the news of the League of Villains, you don’t want to see the outcome of that. So, it might be unfair, but we will have to keep this secret.”

“All this is based on the assumption that people will find out. I’m sure that Miss Midoriya will keep it secret.”

Tsuragame shook his head. “Then you’ve clearly never met Ms Midoriya. At least not in court. She’s vicious and you have no idea how many cases we lost because of some small kinks in the law she had managed to exploit. She is a beast when it comes to strangers. I don’t want to see her when she fights for her son.”

Aizawa tsk-ed. “With all due respect, sir, I still think that we should tell her that her son is a bloody vigilante!”

“I understand your opinion, Eraser, but I have to disagree. My decision is final. That woman won’t find about this, unless it’s from her son’s mouth, with no ties to the heroes or to the police. Have a good day.” With that, he turned heal and left the room. Aizawa remained seething after him, while All Might looked very confused. Tsukakuchi looked pretty pissed, but, at the same time resigned to it.

Aizawa clenched his fists and took a few deep breaths to properly school himself for it. on the other side of the glass, Izuku had his face buried in his arms as he laid on the table. The underground hero took another deep breath and walked back in. the boy lifted his head as the man fell tiredly on the chair.

“Congra-tu-lations, Midoriya, your mom won’t find out that you try to kill yourself on a daily basis!”

The kid blinked. “Not that I’m complaining, but what made you change your mind?”

“Long story short, the police is too scared of her and the media to move a finger so they’re taking the easiest way out it and just pretend it never happened. The only way she’ll find out about your criminal record is if you yourself tell her about them.”
Izuku pondered on those words for a few minutes before he looked up. “So, I can go home now?”

“I’m driving you there.” He said as he stood up and the kid followed. “We will go home and you will give me all your notebooks and information you have.” Midoriya nodded and they went to his car.

“Can I get my notebook back?”

“No”

The boy sighed but didn’t protest.

Aizawa and Hizashi shared the car, like they did the apartment. It was cheaper, easier, and, even if the underground hero didn’t use it on a daily basis, he did every once in a while. This was one of these situations.

They drove in silence. The kid was staring off the window while Aizawa was tossing and turning their earlier discussions on every side. Discriminative behaviour towards students based on Quirk or lack of one was highly illegal. Or, at least, it was supposed to be. If what his student said was true, Aizawa needed to investigate it. he didn’t like the idea of teachers being the main reason for fucked up students.

The road was empty. Outside, the night had fallen, leaving yellow stripes on the pavement under the lights. Aizawa glanced at the kid at every red light. Midoriya seemed to have calmed down, but was still a little bit fidgety.

They eventually reached the apartment building. The teacher followed the teen inside and watched the grenette as he unlocked the door.

“Izuku?” came from somewhere and both males froze.

“Yeah?” he said in a calm voice that didn’t match his panicked face. From where he assumed was the kitchen, a small, plump woman came and jumped a little when she saw them. “This is Aizawa-sensei, or Eraserhead, from UA” he said quickly.

“Oh? What brings you here?”

The teen seemed a little bit troubled, so the man had mercy on him. “We decided to transfer Izuku to 1-A, which happens to be the class I homeroom. I met him while I was walking outside and decided to give him a ride home since it had already gotten dark.” He lied smoothly.

Years of dealing with media did that to a person. “While I’m here, I would like to check his schoolbooks and notebooks to make sure he’s up to date with his future classmates.”

The teen threw him a weird glance while the woman smiled in relief. “Thank you for making sure he is safe. He has the habit of diving head first into trouble.”

Don’t I know it? Aizawa thought and was careful not to let it sour the small smile he had plastered on.

“Alright then. Please, show me your notebooks!” the kid threw his mom a reassuring smile, that was a tad too practiced for comfort and headed for a room. Inside, the underground hero felt like something had died. The walls were bare, but still bore the signs of dust and light, like there had been something on them, but it was removed. Probably posters, judging by the shapes.
The bed was made in a haste, the desk was an ordinated chaos that would’ve made Hizashi proud and the shelves were in a perpetual state of disarray. Not really unusual for a teenager. Said teenager seemed a little embarrassed to have his teacher in his room. Aizawa looked at the shelves. On one, thirteen notebooks were neatly arranged. He pulled one randomly and scanned through it. Yup, the same type of stuff, maybe not as detailed but still as dangerous. “Give me a bag,”

Izuku pulled out an All Might backpack and handed it to him. The teacher started stuffing the notebooks inside, one by one, careful not to bend them in any way. Once done, he looked at the boy who sat awkwardly on the chair.

“You saved them on your computer, didn’t you?”

Midoriya looked like he wanted to deny for a second before his shoulders slumped and he opened the laptop. He typed quickly and Aizawa arrived in time to see a file open to a lot of documents.

The man pulled out a stick and quickly transferred the folder before deleting it. The boy looked betrayed. “If you ever need it, it will be here, but it’s too easy to hack from your personal computer.” The boy looked away.

“Did you save it on any kind of cloud or external device?” he continued

Izuku actually made a face at that one but opened a drawer and pulled out a second stick

“Only numbers 7 through 12 are here,” he said handing Aizawa the device.

Aizawa nodded, noticing how Midoriya’s eyes tracked the sticks every movement and remained focused on the pocket he’d put it in before looking up when he spoke again.

“Now, your phone”

The look of sheer terror on the teen’s face would’ve been enough to make him laugh. “I'm not going to smash it or anything. I just have to put the tracking program in.”

Izuku gritted his teeth but handed over the device. Aizawa quickly downloaded the app before tossing the phone back. “I’ll talk with your mother a little. We still need to iron out the finer points of your transfer. My advice would be to use this weekend to rest, Midoriya. Monday will be hellish, what with all the paperwork that needs to be filled in, and you’re already on thin ice” the boy nodded but didn’t turn to face him. The teacher waited a few more moments before opening the door. “Oh, and Midoriya? Congratulations on the first place.” He said as he shut it, not staying to see the effect his last sentence would probably have on the boy.

He walked to the kitchen and looked at Ms Midoriya. The woman turned towards him.

“Oh, sir. Would you like some tea?”

“No thank you,” he lifted a hand. “I don’t intend to trouble you any longer. I just want to ask you a few questions.” She is a beast when it comes to strangers. I don’t want to see her when she fights for her son. That’s what Tsuragame said. “I think I found out something and I wanted to ask you. Did Izuku happen to be bullied?

~O~

Izuku waited until the entrance door closed and even ten minutes after he could properly relax. This had been a disaster. This had been a hellishly long day. He shook his head. So this is the way I finally get into heroics- as a prisoner. Good job, me!
He shook his head and rested it on his desk. He had managed to erase any information he had on Dabi before Aizawa could transfer it.

Selling out some petty criminals? That was ok.

But selling out his friend? That didn’t sit right with him.

The notebook on Dabi had been under safe keeping for the exact reason if anyone came after him, so at least it could’ve been worse. Izuku had memorized most of the information anyway. Still, if Aizawa found out about Dabi, they were both screwed.

He sighed and opened the window. Cold air swished in and Izuku took a deep breath to calm himself. Then he noticed something: on the windowsill, there was something like a package. He opened it. Inside, there was the vest Dabi had given him earlier, together with five darts.

Izuku pondered for a few seconds before he stuffed it in the back of his closet. Then, taking the notebook, he ran for the kitchen.

Mom must’ve went to sleep. Making sure there was no light coming from anywhere, including the hallway, Izuku pulled out the box of matches and threw the notebook in the sink.

It took a few tries before the notebook caught fire and, when it did, it burned bright enough to blind and hot enough to dry his cheeks.

~O~

Aizawa was musing over the huge stash of documents that included more detailed confessions of different teachers. He had spent the whole weekend questioning primary and middle school teachers, but the terrified looks on their faces was almost worth it. He remembered the talk he had with Ms Midoriya the other say.

“Did Izuku happen to be bullied?”

The woman sighed as she poured a cup of tea he had not asked for but gladly accepted. “Yes. Why do you ask?”

“On the way here, I talked to him about his previous school. From what I gathered, he seemed to have a pretty strained relationship with the other students and teachers alike.”

She sighed and sat down. “I tried to stop it, I really did. I talked to the teachers, to the parents to the principals, to anyone who might have any kind of power over it. Nothing.” She looked up. “You know, the moment it came that he was Quirkless, it was like everyone did a 180. There were even some neighbours who harassed him for a while. We managed to get them to move away, but nothing else was proof enough for the police to do anything. I don’t know what they did at school, and Izuku wouldn’t tell me, but I know there were several teachers who did nothing to stop the bullying.” She shook her head.

“I’ve been trying to sue them for a long time, but was too busy with the other cases. Plus, that school was the only one in the prefecture and I couldn’t risk them treating Izuku even worse.” She looked at him, the sad look being replaced by one glaring at him with such intensity it was almost frightening. “I hope that UA is not like that. With the whole USJ scandal, if the media found out that they harass the winner of the Sports Festival, I don’t see anything possible for you in the future.

Tsuragame was right to be scared. There was something pretty terrifying about the woman.
Aizawa shook his head. “Not at all. Actually, this was one of the reasons I wanted to talk with you. I get that Izuku and Bakugou were in the same class, am I right? What was their relationship?”

The woman looked at the ceiling. “they used to be friends when they were kids. From a certain point, Katsuki stopped coming over. Izuku insisted that they were friends, but I think he was at least in part lying.” She shrugged. “I really wish that they were still friends. Izuku was so happy when they were little.”

Geez, kid, you really tell her nothing. Aizawa cleared his throat. “You see, I really hate these kind of things, and so does UA. From what I gathered tonight, I am willing to ask Nedzu if he would like to support you in suing the school. Would you like to help us?”

A sickly sweet smile spread over the woman’s features. It was a little bit terrifying.

“With pleasure.”

Convincing Nedzu had been easy enough. The mammal had had some pretty nasty experiences with humans and held a soft spot for kids. He guessed that getting experimented on could have that kind of effect on you. Not to mention that a trial of this scale would considerably shift attention from UA to Orudera middle school. Yes, it hadn’t been a matter of if but one of how soon? Yes, Aizawa was pretty glad to finally work on something actually interesting.

This was the day Midoriya would be transferred to his class. The trouble maker had been pretty quiet for the weekend, but he was still keeping his eyes on him. After meeting his mother he wouldn’t let his guard down. He looked at the clock. There were twenty more minutes till the classes officially started when a knock disturbed the relative peace of his office. “Come in” he called and the door opened, revealing an explosive blond with an attitude to match. Aizawa frowned. He had more bones to pick with that kid, but those were for later to discuss. He gestured towards the seat in front of him.

Bakugou walked and sat down, looking a little bit calm for the first time in his life.

“Did you expel him?”

Seriously? The man outright glared. “You should be grateful I didn’t expel you.”

“Huh?!” he seemed shocked.

“You heard me. While the information you provided is useful he also told us something about you too. Tell me, Bakugou, are you aware that the people with a history of bullying are not allowed to be in UA?”

The kid blanched. “It… it wasn’t anything serious! It was just a little joking!” he said, though he seemed a little bit distressed.

“I’m pretty sure instigation to suicide is nothing to joke about.” He said coldly, and a look of pain crossed the teen’s face. “From what I gathered from your past teachers, who were very eager to throw each other under the buss, you were outright harassing him. You have shown bigoted behaviour and left wounds big enough to require hospitalisation.” He placed his hands under his chin and eyed the teen who was obviously trying to fuse with his chair “ Let me put this in perspective, Katsuki: had all of this been on your record, you wouldn’t have been allowed to take the test!”

The kid looked like he wanted to be angry, but fear was seeping from behind his façade.
Aizawa went on. “The only reason I’m not expelling you right now is that Nedzu sees something worthy in you. I’d move you to Gen Ed, but then I won’t be able to supervise you. But that doesn’t mean that you get away scot free. You will be taking anger management classes, and I will be updated to your progress. Moreover, if you show any more uncalled for hostile behaviour towards Midoriya, there will be more drastic consequences. Am I clear?”

The kid gritted his teeth. “Why does he get away? He’s the one who is breaking the law!”

“Your future classmate is kept under supervision by us. He is also a very important witness in a case we are currently running. But he is not getting away. None of you are. Now, I will repeat myself only this once. Am. I. Clear?”

“Yes, Sensei” Bakugou growled and all but stormed out of the office.

~O~

The next day found Izuku anxious. He was going to the Hero Course! He was going to be a hero and be taught by All Might and…. He deflated a little at the thought. People were going to know that he was Quirkless. They were going to attack him and bully him and ….

No! This isn’t middle school, teachers here actually care. They wouldn’t let anything happen.

Isn’t that what they all say?

Well, this time I can defend myself.

He breathed deeply and took his backpack. Mom had already left and Izuku was still coming to terms with his transfer. Shinsou had called him to tell him he had been moved to class B and, for the first time, the teen seemed to be seriously smiling.

He ate a quick breakfast and dashed for the train station. He just hoped that his new classmates wouldn’t be too bigoted. He knew that the only reason Uraraka and Shinsou had been nice to him was because he had saved their life. He could say that he had the analysis Quirk, like Shinsou said, but he didn’t get his hopes up. Bakugou would probably yell it the moment he stepped in.

He reached the gates and took the road to class 1A like he did that day when he accepted Bakugou’s decoration of war. The sound from behind the door was muffled and quiet, sign that the teacher had already arrived. Taking a deep breath, he knocked on the door and entered.

The moment he stepped in, all eyes turned in his direction. His breath hitched for a second before he turned towards Aizawa, who was looking like he wanted nothing more than to be in his bed. Nonetheless, the teacher stood up and motioned for him to get closer. As Izuku approached he desk, the teacher started. “This is Izuku Midoriya. He had just transferred from Gen Ed and will be joining you from now on. You can take the free seat.” He said before he plopped himself back on the table and started sucking longingly from an energy juice box. Said free desk was the one behind Bakugou, and Izuku sat down, waiting for the other to react.

Bakugou glared at him and, since they were in full view of the teacher, Izuku winked in the most rude and patronising way he knew would make the blond explode.

The blond didn’t explode.

Instead, someone from behind him tapped his shoulder. He refrained from jumping and
turned around to see the spiky haired boy look at him with a bright smile. “Glad to see you here!” he said brightly. Izuku smiled and wanted to say something before he was interrupted.

“Pretty good for someone Quirkless”

Izuku froze. Slowly, he turned towards the raven headed student to his right. “How did you…?”

“Uraraka told us,” Kirishima said, looking a bit sheepish.

“Sorry, Mido” the girl scratched her neck and smiled a little bit awkward. “We were talking about you and I only said it was impressive for someone Quirkless to get so far.”

*Quirkless.*

They didn’t say it like an insult or a disease the way people in middle school did but there was still an undercurrent of something Izuku didn’t like.

But they were obviously trying to be nice and Izuku was about to thank them when their teacher spoke again.

“Midoriya’s Quirk is none of your business” Aizawa said from the front of the class. “He won the Sports Festival fair and square, and you have no reason to treat him any different than you would treat any other student.” Izuku was glad for the man’s intervention, he didn’t feel like dealing with them right now. Aizawa lifted his hand and pointed at the table. A list of names and scores appeared “These are the nominations made by agencies after the Sports Festival. You will chose one to help you here, but don’t think about fame when you make the choice. Think what will work best for you and help you forward. For those of you who didn’t get any nominations, you will be handed a list of heroes who take interns.” He let them look at the list.

Izuku was happy, but, at the same time, a little disappointed. He had gotten about a hundred nominations, but Bakugou and Todoroki had gotten a lot, lot more. *They didn’t see a flashy Quirk* he thought bitterly.

“Now, you will do something I’m sure most of you were thinking about from the moment you became heroes. Your hero names.” Excited voices rang around the room before Midnight slammed the door into the wall and entered, swirling the whip in her hand and smiling seductively at them.

“And this is where I come in. even though you might not keep these as your hero names, that doesn’t mean you should take them any less seriously. They might stick with you for the rest of your careers, so chose them wisely.”

In the meantime, Aizawa approached his desk. “You will think of your hero costume. After this class, both you and Shinsou will go to the support to ask that. You should be able to get in easily with your connections.” He looked like he wanted to step away, but thought better of it and leaned forward. “And be careful with the name, will you?”The slight tilt of the lip the man gave was enough for the young hero to know it was but a harmless joke and focus on the new notebook he had gotten.

A costume, huh?

Izuku eyed Iida, who was very deflated. Of course he is, his brother got attacked by stain! Izuku shook his head. He might try talking to him later, but, at the same time, they weren’t really friends. Still, doing nothing felt…. Wrong.
It didn’t take all that long for kids to start trailing and presenting their names. Izuku glared at his paper, where the details of his costume were slowly coming into play. He had chosen his hero name. or, more accurate, he had decoded on his hero name very easily, almost too fast. But all the names he had imagined as a child felt…. Too childish, they were all inspired by All Might, and they all left a sour taste in his mouth.

Yes, choosing a hero name wasn’t as hard when he thought about what actually mattered. So, when the time came and he was called at the desk, Izuku smiled as proudly as he dared when he showed the white board.

Midnight looked at the name. “Well, you surely are self-aware” she said.

Izuku giggled and stared at the kanji that made the name “Yamikumo”. “Well” he said “it was actually a friend’s idea” he chuckled.

True, while Dabi rarely addressed him by his name, the titles of brat and other similar adjectives much more approved, when he did, he only called him Yamikumo or other type of derivate. He didn’t know why, but it was nice to have a nickname not tied to his social disability.

“He…. “ he trailed off “He was the first person who didn’t tell me that my dreams were useless and…. Yeah, he might use it just to tease me but still…” he took a few deep breaths to allow his voice to settle “It meant a lot and I know for sure I wouldn’t have gotten this far without his help, so…. Yeah” he said before he shuffled to his seat. His classmates threw him sympathetic glances. Izuku ignored them. He didn’t regret the decision in the slightest. Thought he might not tell Dabi about it.

~O~

Aizawa was relaxing on the godsend of a couch in his office when whoever was on the other side of the ringing phone decided to ruin his fleeting moments of rest. Letting out a mighty groan, he pulled out the offending device and squinted at the screen. With a tired sigh, he accepted it.

“Nighteye”

“Eraserhead” the other responded. Aizawa wasn’t really friends with him, but, as underground heroes, they had worked multiple times together in the past and were on pretty good terms.

“Why do you call?”

“What is up with this Midoriya student?”

Aizawa blinked. “Why do you want to know?”

“I was going to send him an offer, but then I noticed that your notice that, as a transfer student, he has to train with you. We both know that’s bullshit, so tell me, what’s the real reason you’re hogging him like that?”

Aizawa sighed. He knew he couldn’t refuse. If there was one thing his student and his colleague had in common, it was the talent for getting information, no matter how unwilling the person at the other end was. The man didn’t want to think of what the kid would manage under the supervision of All Might’s previous sidekick. He thought of refusing, but he really didn’t want to deal with the other’s harassment until he got his info.
“Then you tell me the real reason you want to know. You don’t usually take interns, not in the first year. And if he simply refused, you wouldn’t have cared. So, why do you now?”

There was a slight chuckle from the other end. “All Might has his eyes on the kid. I wanted to test him and see for myself.”

“Well then, I suppose you’d better ask All Might about it. He was in the room when the decision was made.”

“I’d like to hear your... mmm...unbiased opinion.”

A small smile tugged at his lips as he started. He told his old acquaintance about the kid and his Vigilante status. After the explanation, all the other hero could say was.

“How detailed were those notebooks?”

“Detailed enough to take those heroes down. There wasn’t only info about their Quirk, but also things about their fighting style and even some things on their personal life.”

“He’s the same one who discovered Shigaraki’s real identity, didn’t he?”

“Yes”

“Now I really want to meet this kid.”

~O~

Izuku met Shinsou halfway to Hatsume’s. it was about half an hour before lunch, and they went in early to make sure they still had time to eat after.

“How’s class B?” he asked.

Shinsou looked at him and a small smile graced his lips. “They’re ok. The class prez, Kendo, she told me that if I needed anything or if any other kid gave me shit to tell her. It’s... nice.”

“We all know that anyone who’s not from heroics wouldn’t dare give you shit” izuku said as he sniggered.

“Yeah, we scared them all away with the mafia.”

“It’s not a mafia. It’s a small trafficking ring at most. The management department runs the mafia.” He rubbed his chin. “I think they’re hoping that one of Hatsume’s babies will kill us, eventually.”

“If only” Shinsou said, looking like he would’ve liked a dramatic whiff of air to move his hair right now.

“Stop being so pessimistic!” izuku punched him lightly.

“And abandon my one true purpose on this earth?”

They giggled as they reached the lab. A moment later, the door of said lab was thrown backwards and Izuku pulled Shinsou out of the way not a second too soon.

He eyed the taller teen. “You just had to jinx it”
Inside, Hatsume was tinkering with something. She looked up and materialised in front of them. “They told me you had to come to get your costumes. What can I make you next? A crossbow? A sword? Some very obscure explosive stuff for my babies?!”

Izuku took a little step back and shook his head. “Forget those. Hatsume, give me a gun!”

~O~

They had spent about half an hour in the lab, arguing with Powerloader Sensei who kept claiming that, *No, I’m not gonna give kids real guns!* Which was unfair, because a gun was relatively safe compared to some of the Quirks the kids here had.

The discussion between him and the pink haired Tony Stark was along the lines of:

“Hatsume, give me a gun!”

After a few seconds of blinking, a somewhat offended look crossed her face. “Only a gun? Do you really thing that lowly of me?”

“No” he shook his head “Give me the most efficient, non-lethal long range device and make it light!”

A manic grin crossed her features and Izuku took a little bit of pleasure in the somewhat terrified expressions the other students in the lab hosted.

He and Hatsume had eventually managed to convince their very reluctant teacher to let them make Taser guns and tranquiliser guns, which was a decent compromise. All this time, Shinsou had laughed silently in a corner. After that, they had both presented their ideas for their actual costumes, Izuku used his talents, the same ones that stopped him from being offed by the management department to convince Hatsume that, *No, we don’t have space for rocket launchers. At least not that big. If you can make them pocket sized, it would be perfect.* Which earned him a disappointed look from Powerloader and a slap over the head from Shinsou. Nonetheless, by the grin on Hatsume’s face, it was already too late.

Powerloader kicked them out eventually, because they needed to eat and because he was tired of the two crazed people scaring his other students. The three chattered vividly as they walked before the No.1 hero popped into view, successfully giving them a jumpscare worthy of Five nights at Freddies.

“Hello, Students. Young Midoriya, would you like to share lunch with me?”

Izuku blinked, and hesitated, which was apparently reason for Shinsou to push him forward. The greenette yelped and turned around to glare at the purple Einstein, who was starting to regret his life choices as Hatsume dragged him towards the cafeteria. The teen followed his future teacher, securing his bento tightly to his chest.

They entered his office and the man gestured towards one of the couches. Izuku sat looked at his bento.

“What does he want from me?”

Izuku blinked, and hesitated, which was apparently reason for Shinsou to push him forward. The greenette yelped and turned around to glare at the purple Einstein, who was starting to regret his life choices as Hatsume dragged him towards the cafeteria. The teen followed his future teacher, securing his bento tightly to his chest.

They entered his office and the man gestured towards one of the couches. Izuku sat looked at his bento. *What does he want from me?*

“You can start eating if you’re hungry” he said as he deflated. Izuku stared for a few seconds, before remembering that it was rude and starting to eat, if only to keep his hands occupied. Even if he was in the know, he didn’t know if he could ever get used to seeing his childhood hero in his skinny form. All Might placed a pot of water on the small stove. He sighed as he sat down. The hero fidgeted with his hands, and Izuku was surprised. It was the first time the man seemed… awkward. “You’re probably wondering why I called you here?”
“I won’t deny that I’m curious” he muttered.

The man sighed. “I wanted to apologise” Izuku blinked. He opened his mouth, but the man continued. “One year ago, you asked me if you could be a hero, and I told you that you couldn’t. Now, you won the Sports Festival and found out important information about the League of Villains. All without our help. I underestimated you and, for that, I am sorry.”

Izuku sat down his now empty bento. “Really now, you have nothing to apologise for. You are not the first one to tell me that my dream is a waste of time, but you were one of the kindest in doing so.” He smiled a little bit sadly.

All Might looked a little bit pained. “Young Midoriya, if you don’t mind me asking, why did you become a vigilante?”

Izuku froze. With, wide, fearful eyes, he looked at his childhood hero, at the skinny, gaunt features that looked at him in pain. “How…?” his throat was dry.

The man sighed. “Nedzu told us of your situation yesterday. He wanted to make sure that all the teachers were informed and understood your predicament.”

Izuku swallowed. “That means….”

“Don’t worry, no one holds anything against you. On a surface level, they understood, and, even if they didn’t, the anti-discrimination laws apply here too. So, if any classmate or teacher says or does anything against you outside practice, please don’t hesitate to come to either me or Aizawa. Am I clear?”

Izuku nodded and looked down. The man didn’t relax, not really, but his shoulders lost some of their stiffness. “Now please, my boy, would you tell me why did you become the Vanisher?”

Izuku looked away. “Believe it or not, it wasn’t really a conscious decision, more like a series of events that led me there. I saw people getting hurt, with no hero or police to save them.” He shook his head. “At first, I only stopped fights. Then, I started wearing a mask, since I didn’t want to be recognised.” He scratched his neck. “Then... I started looking for fights, but I didn’t step in until I was sure they were going to escalate.”

“But why?”

Izuku looked the man in the eye and Toshnori almost flinched. They were so intense. “Because someone had to. Someone had to make sure people wouldn’t die, and no police or hero deemed it noticeable enough to be worthy of their attention.”

Toshinori sighed and looked down. He opened his mouth to say something more, but the kid interrupted him. “Thank you, All Might, I mean it. I really do.”

His voice hitched in his throat. “Why?” he finally managed.

Midoriya smiled, playing absentmindedly with the last pieces of rice in his bento. “You’re not the first person to tell me I couldn’t be a hero, but you were the first one to apologise.” He smiled and Toshinori saw his eyes shine slightly before he blinked. “You have no idea how much it means to me.” He looked down, wiping at his eyes. “You were my favourite hero as a child. The fact that you cared enough to apologise…” he didn’t finish as he sniffled. Toshinori got up and placed a hand on his shoulder before handing him a napkin. The boy blew his nose and the man took the opportunity to hand him a cup of steaming hot tea.
“My boy. I don’t know what you’ve been told before, but now I can tell you with all my heart that you can and you will be a formidable hero. I’m sorry if I have been insensitive before, but please, trust me one this. I know it.”

The boy smiled. All Might didn’t know what his other smiled looked like, but he was sure this was the first genuine one he has seen in the boy. It was so bright and full of hope, the man only wished he would have gotten to see it more often. His heart stung with pain as he realised how fake the others usually were.

“Tell me” he said as he sat down. “Do you know of Sir Nighteye?”

The kid stopped drinking only for his face to brighten in excitement. “Yes! I mean... it’s pretty hard to get any information on him, since he is underground and all that, but it always inspired me that he was an informant, yet he could still kick ass. His Quirk doesn’t appear to be anything physical, so he must have achieved that through hard work alone. I wish I could ask him some questions. By the way, how did he manage to convince you to take him as your sidekick? You had never taken before, so what changed your mind?”

The kid suddenly slapped his mouth as he realised his verbal assault on the poor teacher. “I’m sorry” he mumbled, his whole face tomato red. Toshinori giggled.

“No worries, my boy. You might actually get to ask him all those questions yourself. He was interested in taking you up for an intern, but Aizawa got to you first. But, if you’d like, I could talk to him and arrange a meeting.”

The boy beamed.

They kept chatting for a little while, and Midoriya got more and more relaxed, and he started laughing and smiling more than Toshinsori had seen him on his whole stay at UA. His company was enjoyable and the hero regretted he had judged him so soon. But, at the same time, there were still things that hung on his mind that didn’t seat right by him. The way the kid didn’t smile genuinely on a daily basis. The way he seemed to have almost no regard for himself in his days as a vigilante.

There was also the guilt hanging on the heroes’ shoulders. He wanted to give the boy One for All. He was certain right now. His decision had wavered when he found about his vigilante job, but now, after hearing the explanation, he was surer than ever. But he would have to wait. Training while in UA would mentally destroy the kid. He had to wait until after graduation, to give the body time to grow naturally. Yes, that would work. He would also ask Osamu for help. The man had more or less taken domain over his diet and over exerting his time limit. Surely, he already came up with a plan for the kids training.

*Shouldn’t you ask him first?*

Oh yeah, he should do that.

He looked at the clock. “As much as I enjoyed our meeting, Aizawa would chew me alive if you missed classes because of me.”

The boy smiled, settled the empty cup on the counter and got up. he greeted his teacher and headed for the exit. “My boy!” he called as the greenette touched the handle. The teen turned around and All Might licked his lips. “If you could have a Quirk, one very powerful, which would help you become the next Symbol of Peace, would you take it?”
The kid’s look suddenly turned sad. He sighed and looked away. “What kid doesn’t dream of being the next Symbol of peace? I did once too. But” he sighed and shook his head, “I used to want a Quirk so much….. I preyed for it but…..” he sighed “I gave up on that idea too long ago.” He looked at the hero and gave him a smile, one of the fake ones and Toshinori felt his heart in pain. The boy then left without another word.

Chapter End Notes

so, yeah, i know it doesn't really seem all that plausible, but let's not forget that the Police kept Stain from Inko in canon, so i don't have the greatest expectations when it comes to them

also, due to some stuff happening irl, i won't be able to post anything for the rest of the week. srry

discord
tumblr
They still had to go to school next week, on top of thinking about what heroes they should intern with. Izuku knew there was no real reason for him to even consider any of his offers since his choice was already made for him, but there was a sense of accomplishment in seeing what heroes would have chosen him.

If he had gotten a choice he would’ve liked to intern with Nighteye. He admired the hero, since he was one of the best information based heroes out there. There were a few others he would have probably seriously considered through, including Aizawa (if he hadn’t already been forced into it.)

As far as the hero course went, homework wasn’t that bad; which was to say it was barely different from the Gen Ed homework. He only had two lessons to catch up to which made sense since All Might wasn’t exactly the type of teacher to put a huge workload on his students. Well, not on paper at least, but Izuku had heard rumours and had even managed to obtain some (admittedly bad) footage of his training exercises.

The next day he was in classroom, trying to relax and forget how he almost got smashed by a rocket on his way to class. He really needed to talk to Hatsume about the hours designated to blowing shit up. Preferably after school.

Now he was just leaning on his desk, soaking up the permanent chatter of the class when Aizawa fell from the ceiling on the floor before rolling towards the teacher’s desk and plopping himself on the seat. The teen blinked and looked around, but the others didn’t really seem shocked, so he guessed that it was usual.

“Class” he said in the most bored tone someone could have. “You have one more week to decide what heroes you want to intern with. Remember- do. Your. Research. Don’t choose someone based only on popularity. Their area of expertise, Quirk, references and way of training should all factor into your choice. So, to help you understand what you’re supposed to do, I’ll give you a hero profile to analyse. You have until tomorrow to turn it in.”

A groan rippled through the class

“I want everything you can get me on them, from Quirk applications, to number of rescues to recent and older reviews, everything that might help someone unknowledgeable understand that hero. You must also be as impartial as possible. Here,” Aizawa said pausing to grab something from a desk drawer “You have some very well known facts already written there. You can start now” he lifted a stack of papers and passed every desk to throw a few pages in front of the terrified students before passing forward.

Izuku waited for the teacher to reach his desk, but Aizawa just walked past him like it was nobody’s business. Izuku turned to look at him and opened his mouth, but one glare from his teacher silenced him.

The teen waited until his homeroom teacher distributed all the papers before he went to the
Aizawa looked up before he pulled another stack of papers from under the desk and placed them in front of him. “These are the Quirks of the students who will apply for recommendation next year. I want you to analyse them.” To Izuku’s confused expression, the teacher sighed and looked at the teen. “I can’t give you the same assignment, I have fourteen notebooks to study for it.” Izuku grumbled something and looked away. “But they did give me an idea. A lot of students fuck up when they choose who to intern with, so, this exercise might force some of them to think better of it. You, however, have a different job. Nedzu has been thinking of...expanding your skills, and for that you need a different level of difficulty.” He pointed at the papers. “Here, aside from Quirks, there are a few exercises typical for first year heroics. There are instructions on the papers, but you will have to get the most uses out of every Quirk, ways to improve them with support items, what combinations would work the best together when it comes to certain exercises and how to use Quirks when randomly placed together.”

“Isn’t this... a bit too much for one person?”

A sadistic smirk graced his handler’s lips. “Come on, Midoriya. I’ve seen your journals and I’ve seen you’re mafia, surely you can deal with the heroics course just fine.”

Izuku tsk-ed but grabbed the folder and trotted to his desk anyway. He sat down and looked through the papers.

Eight people. He flipped the page. There was a brief description of the exercise and his thoughts of the most well suited teams for it. Then, there were the random pairs, over which Izuku skimmed in a beat.

He looked around. Some were staring blankly at their papers while some were brave enough to dare the notebook. Izuku sighed and pulled out his own notebook. He’d probably need more than that to organise all the information in such a way so that Aizawa wouldn’t subtract any points, but he could manage.

He guessed.

He hoped.

Izuku stared at the kids who would most likely make it to hero course, curtesy of the very cool Quirks they had. Izuku tsk-ed and tried his best to remain impartial. He knew that being bitter wouldn’t work but it was very tempting and very easy to slip into that.

The world’s never fair he remembered Dabi once saying. They were sitting in the park, both covered in sweat, Izuku covered in dirt and pressing a cold can of soda to his face. You don’t get to choose your life or your Quirk or your family” the last part was said in a slightly bitter tone that Izuku had already learned not to question. “People like us, people to who life’s dealt a bad hand just because it could- we don’t have the luxury of a fair fighting ground. We don’t have a guaranteed happy ending.” he looked at him as he opened the soda and gulped it down. “That’s why you have to fight and to win to make sure you make something of yourself before you’re too spent to have that chance.”

“You talk like an old man” Dabi glared and took another gulp. “What do you do when other people’s happy ending stands in the way of yours?”

Dabi shrugged “You do what you gotta go. Life’s too short to spend it caring for people
who never cared about you.”

Izuku shook his head and looked at his assignment. *I should probably start if I want to sleep tonight at all.*

The hairs on the back of his neck stood up and Izuku turned to look at the heterochromatic teen who was staring at him with such intensity that would have probably made a mountain move out of his way.

Izuku shuddered and tried to do his homework.

The class passed fairly quickly, with Izuku submerging himself into his task and needing Uraraka to physically shake him awake in order to invite him to the cafeteria. Izuku followed Uraraka and Iida, more than content to simply listening to them talk. Uraraka was as bubbly as she had been during the break and Iida’s robot like motions were very funny to watch. They settled in a more secluded place and Izuku munched on his bento when Hitoshi all but slammed his tray on the table.

“Don’t do that” Iida yelled after both he and Uraraka flinched. Izuku, for his part, was way too accustomed to Hatsume doing the same thing daily to properly care. “You might dent or damage the tables people have worked very hard to make!” Izuku was happy that he was talking after his brother’s hospitalisation. Though there was something about him that sent clear signals that he was faking.

Shinsou spared him exactly one raised eyebrow before he turned his attention towards the greenette. “I leave you alone for one day and you already betray us,” he shook his head and exhaled dramatically. “Who can you even trust, anymore?”

Izuku tried to send an *oh really* look, but collapsed into a fit of giggles anyway. “How’s 1B?” he asked after he calmed down. Shinsou shrugged. “Ok, I guess. Kendo’s nice. There’s this guy, Monoma, who, for some reason tried to get me in the war against 1A” he said as he ate his vegetables. “Other than that, it’s pretty cool. What did you guys do?”

He was interrupted by Kirishima and Ashido sitting down at their table too. “Hello guys, how are you so far?” the latter started. Shinsou already seemed annoyed, his maximum of people to entertain per day reaching the limit at a speeding race. Izuku chimed in.

“Pretty well, actually. The lessons I have to get up to speed are not that hard”

“Oh yeah” Kirishima said. “You have to make sure you’re on the same level as the rest of us” the redhead may not have meant it offensive, but it sure as hell came out that way. “With what assignments Aizawa gave us, I can’t help but pity whatever you got.”

“It’s not that hard,” Izuku said. “It’s time consuming, yeah, but not particularly difficult.”

“Oh, yeah” Uraraka said. “He gave you a different stack of papers.”

“Man, I almost wish I’d get that. We have to analyse heroes in new and weird ways. Most of them had already been made!” Ashido cried as she slumped in her seat.

“This behaviour is most inappropriate for a hero in training!” Iida chopped the air. “We should be grateful for such a learning opportunity!”

“Wait, wait, wait!” Shinsou chopped the air. “What exactly is happening here?”
“Aizawa gave us an assignment to make an analysis on a random hero” Kirishima munches on his schnitzel. “Mido got a different stack of papers, since he’s new!”

Before Izuku got the chance to clarify, Shinsou turned towards him with the most disbelieving look ever conceived by man. “You. Having trouble. With analysis.”

“No!” Izuku yelled, a little bit louder than necessary. He turned towards Kirishima. “He didn’t- It’s not, it’s not easier. It’s different- actually harder when you get down to it.”

Both Kirishima and Ashido looked a little bit confused.

“Why would he do that, when you’re... um... you know, when you’ve just transferred” Kirishima asked. Izuku was tempted to ask what he was going to say before he corrected himself but he knew that he was probably just being paranoid.

“Judge for yourself,” he said, pulling the stack of papers and his half-finished homework out of his backpack and handing it to them. The other five leaned in, mouths agape as Izuku slurped on his noodles.

“That’s… very advanced” Iida started.

“Holy shit, Mido, what is this?”

“My homework” he deadpanned.

“But that’s like…some third year level,” Kirishima sat there, mouth agape. Shinsou giggled.

“Not really. As I said it’s actually pretty easy, just time consuming” he sighed and played with his food. His classmates were still staring over his chicken scratch, and Shinsou turned towards him.

“How did he know to give you this?” At Izuku’s onomatopoeic answer the taller teen clarified. “If he gave you this, he must’ve known that simple analysis was below your level. So, how did he find out about it?”

Izuku froze for a second before he plastered on a bored face and started playing with his food. “He...may have... at some point, found one of my notebooks, looked through it proceeded to call me a danger to hero society then... he confiscated them all.”

Shinsou looked at him for a second before he burst into a fit of laughter. On the other end, his classmates looked at him with a different array of the same What the fuck expression.

“Mido-chan, are you for real?”

Izuku groaned. “You have no idea how much I wish I was joking.”

Their discussion was interrupted, once again, by someone slamming their trails on their table. Izuku looked up, chopstick halfway from plate to mouth and met the smiling face of the class 1B president.

“I want in on the mafia.”

Izuku blinked before he patiently set his chopsticks back on the plate and looked at Shinsou. The eggplant shook his head. “I did not tell her.”
“He didn’t.” She confirmed “I overheard some Support students talking about it. It seems interesting and faster than constantly sending the costumes back for improvements. So, I want in.” she smiled way too sweetly. He sighed before he turned in his chair and called at a table a few feet away.

“Shishi!”

“What mafia?” Iida asked, looking around a little bit more than simply confused.

A girl with fish fins for her ears perked up and looked at him. He beckoned her to come closer. The president of 1H approached them with a little bored look. “What?”

“There are, apparently, some snitches in the support department and most honoured class president Kendo wants in as well now. Would you terribly mind doing the introductions?”

The management girl glared at the redhead hero student before shaking her head in defeat. “Fine! But the melon from Support…”

“Kitashi?”

“Whatever his name is” she continued, rubbing the bags from under her eyes. “He’s been pestering me all day about tentacle hair because he can’t find you. So, do us all a favour and go and talk to her.”

“Alright” he said. “What about you?”

She groaned. “Midnight is an awesome teacher, but definitely older than she says she is. There’s no way a normal person who remembers highschool would give us that much work.”

“I feel you. Aizawa gave us this hell long assignment” Shishi grabbed the papers and skimmed over them before whacking Izuku over the head with it. “Stop complaining, this is fucking easy! Try making a three page essay about the evolution of corsets and then come at me to complain!” Izuku couldn’t help but giggle. The girl looked at Kendo again and jerked her head towards a third year table. “This way, meat.”

Shinsou was hardly controlling his laughter. Izuku looked at the rest of his classmates, mouths agape. “You can go to listen in, if you want a good explanation.” He said. In a moment, all the other four heroics students, save for the two transferees, ran after the two with different degrees of decency.

Kirisima, Uraraka and Ashido scrambled in a tangled mass while Iida marched forward, questioning the legality of their actions.

Izuku and Shinsou shared a smirk before returning to their meals.

~O~

Technically they had a whole hour for lunch, but no more than twenty minutes had been spent eating, so that Izuku would have time to speak with the scientist about her babies. Uraraka and Kirishima had decided to tag along, seemingly entranced by the small weapon’s trafficking ring. Ashido would have followed, but suddenly remembered she had forgotten to do her homework, and Iida followed her to make sure she wouldn’t copy it.

Oh, Iida, how pure of you to think you have a say in it. Izuku had thought to himself. He just knew that the girl would find a way to get her equations, with or without his permission.
They reached the hall, and only Izuku’s and Shinsou’s ingrained instincts when it came to the girl helped them avoid the metal door blowing off its hinges for what had to be the third time that week alone.

“What the hell was that?” Uraraka asked from Izuku had pulled her out of the way. Shinsou had done the same for Kirishima, who was visibly shaken and hard.

Before the kids got the chance to answer, though, a boy with feathered hair and an extra pair of limbs marched out of the lab. He looked around, saw Izuku and a mix of fury and relief passed his face. “There you are!” he grabbed his shoulders, not minding his soot-covered gloves and shook his shoulders violently. “I’ve been looking for you all day. We pay you to tame the beast, so we expect you to do your job!”

Izuku wiped something off his cheek and nodded. “Understood. Out of the way.” The boy stepped aside and Izuku took a deep breath before yelling. “Hatsume!” and power walking inside the lab.

Good thing he had made his underclothes fireproof.

Shouto tapped the desk lightly as he waited for the teacher to come. He had made his report and stacked it neatly on the desk, on top of everyone else’s. Not the easiest thing they could’ve gotten, but it wasn’t really that hard. Shouto had gotten the normal hero: Manual, and had made a pretty good analysis on him. He had finished it in a matter of hours with the help of google, but pretended he didn’t to get his father off his back.

Despite his resolve to try and use his fire more, Shouto found that he couldn’t. Not with the man. Those walls had been built too long and too strong to be properly torn down with a few hours and a pep talk. He had forgotten how wielding his fire on his own accord, at his body’s whims felt like.

It was exhilarating.

So, he tried to use it more often, but, without a convenient adrenaline boost like at the Sports Festival he found that his body almost automatically suppressed any warmth he tried to bring forth. So he didn’t use his fire with his father. Enji’s presence didn’t help at all, his attacks were too fast and too vivid for him to properly come to terms with his curse. He waited for when the hero wasn’t home to go to the training room and goad his flames out. He waited until he was alone to release the spark, to try and mould it into simple things like spheres or shapeless serpents.

Sometimes, doing those shapes reminded him of certain days when he was a kid and, Endeavour left to another prefecture on business and all the kids had simultaneously a day off. Usually that meant piling on a couch and watching cartoons all day.

Shouto vividly remembered one time when, after watching an older movie that involved winter and a talking snowman (and, according to Natsuo, a heart attack in the beginning) Fuyumi and Touya had gotten into a completion to see who could make a sentient creature out of their element. Shouto had yet to have his Quirk, so he had only watched how his siblings tried to create shapes in the air, while Natsuo was content to just make fireballs and talk about honour in varying levels of, increasingly ridiculous, baritone.

Fuyumi did actually manage to create a snowman which had started a pillow-snowball fight in the living room, which had almost given their mother a heart attack when she returned home. They had bickered all the way through cleaning and got no dessert that night, but it was still one of his fondest memories. One of his only fond memories if he really thought about it.
So, yeah, let his father think that he was still rebelling. He was using his Quirk for himself, that bastard had no right to claim over how he used it. If he wanted to make shadow puppets, so be it!

Shouto was still bitter of the bastard. As he was thinking about it, he remembered how his internship offers started to drop, one by one. Touya went through the same thing in his first year, the same year both Shouto’s Quirks popped up. Natsuo and Fuyumi had taken him to their rooms and put very loud music, but Shouto could still hear the yelling down stairs, and, no matter the amount of makeup, he could see the bruises peeking from beneath his brother’s shirt.

Touya never started his second year at UA.

Aizawa rolled into the classroom and plopped himself on the chair. He started the roll call and, when he got to M, Midoriya opened the door and entered the classroom.

“Sorry to be late, Sensei. Support Class” he said, as if this was answer enough. And, apparently, it was, because Aizawa only nodded and didn’t say anything. His hair had pink and orange paint splatters in it, same as his cheek and upper part of his face. His uniform seemed to have escaped, at the obvious cost of his jacket, that hung limply off his arm.

“Did you do the assignment?”

Midoriya pulled his backpack of his shoulder and opened it. Then, he grabbed a folder two inches thick and shoved it in the hero’s face before stomping to his seat and plopping himself onto the chair.

The underground hero didn’t seem surprised of the outburst, only took his folder and placed it in a different stack than the one of the rest of the class. He then cleared his voice, shed his protective shell of warmth and comfort and looked at his students.

“This was only the first part of the assignment. I will read them and pair you up with whoever I deem necessary. You have two days to complete the assignment together. I don’t want one person to do all the work, I want to know exactly who did what, and I will know if you are trying to lie.” He looked at them, at their half terrified faces and smiled. “You will get your answers at the end of the day.” He then proceeded to write on the black board the page number and assignment they would have to do while he checked them.

Todoroki sighed and got to work, not before eyeing the no longer fully green haired teen.

Chapter End Notes

yeah, i know that this chapter is super short compared to the usual. it was initially a pretty big chap which i split in two for the sake of something. the next chap[ter will be longer

anyway, i want to thank you all who commented and left kudos. they really mean a lot, and, even if i don't answer to every one, they still make my day

this is my tumblr and discord

don't forget to check them out
Midoriya. He had been paired with Midoriya.

Shouto sighed as he made his way, looking for the green haired menace to inform him and try to work out something. Iida had gotten the pairings and put them on the class chat, and Todoroki had sent a message to his partner, but it wasn’t even read, and the heterochromatic teen wasn’t going to sit on his ass and wait for the other to notice him.

He had asked the others where Midoriya was, and even though they couldn’t point exactly, Uraraka said that the Support class laboratory would be a good place to start. So, he marched towards the lab and entered in force.

Only lifelong reflexes could have prepared him for dodging the projectile coming full force at his face. He looked behind him, where the small ball smashed into the wall, releasing a vomit green goo all over the wall.

“For the last time, Hatsume, I don’t care how much better nitro-glycerine makes the composition, that shit is too flammable to work. Do you have any idea how many flame based heroes are out there?”

“Then they should learn to pay attention instead. Why do we have to decrease the quality just because some pussies can’t keep their fire to themselves?!”

Well, surely, this was a way to start the evening.

Todoroki got up and looked around. Midoriya and the Pink haired girl-Hatsume?- were looking like they were having a fight. Midoriya was no longer in his uniform, but had a loose pair of pants and a tank top, while the girl had a baggy jumpsuit tied around her waist. They were both covered from head to toe in a rainbow of clashing colours.

Todoroki dusted himself and cleared his throat. Midoriya looked at him so fast he could have gotten a whiplash, then at the wall, than back at him. “Todoroki-kun! I’m so sorry, you could have been hurt.”

“I’m fine” he said. He opened his mouth, but the smallest teen turned towards the girl. “Todoroki-kun! I’m so sorry, you could have been hurt.”

“I’m fine” he said. He opened his mouth, but the smallest teen turned towards the girl. “See, I told you they are too dangerous to test here. We have a testing room for a reason!”

“He’s fine, the force wasn’t big enough for anything serious anyway. Plus, the testing ground is too far away.”

“What are you doing here?” someone suddenly asked. Todoroki looked to his right and saw a tall-very tall-teen, leaning on the wall, behind a glass panel out of the reach of a possible explosion. His uniform was dry, but the glass already bore the marks of the battlefield.

“I came to talk to Midoriya” Todoroki returned his glare with his own brand of a cold look.

“What do you need?” Midoriya said as he cleaned his hands on an already stained rag.
“Did you check your phone?” Shouto responded. The Quirkless teen stretched towards a table and pulled a yellow rucksack from under it. He checked his phone, then looked at Todoroki.

“So, it appears we are partners and thus have to work together. Do you have any ideas?”

“I was thinking that we could meet and work the details over one of these days.”

The boy rubbed his chin, smearing the paint even further. “Are you free today? We could go to my place to study. I have” he stopped and frowned a little as he remembered something “Had a lot of research on heroes and, while I no longer have the physical evidence, we can still work it out. I have food too, in case we are hungry.”

Todoroki rose an eyebrow. “I don’t think that would be such a good idea.”

“Would you like us to go to your place then?” the tone was innocent, But Todotoki could feel the unspoken challenge. Would you like to go and meet your father? Todoroki tsk-ed.

“We’ll go to your place.” He could feel Shinsou’s stare on the back of his head.

Midoriya perked up and his face brightened under the colours. “Great. Just let me change and we can go.” He turned towards the girl “We’ll finish the Capture balls tomorrow. Till then, please, please don’t do anything without me. If you insist on testing something, do it in the designated area.”

“Nothing can stay in the way of me and my babies!” She half scoffed half released a war cry. Midoriya sighed and shook his head.

“At least wait for me.” Before he dashed onto a door and disappeared behind it.

Shouto spent the next five minutes in a pretty awkward not quite silence, as Hatsume hummed as she cleaned the work tables and Shinsou assessed him up and down and sideways with narrow eyes and pinched lips. Shouto glared, but the guy was obviously either used to such glares of fearless, because he didn’t even flinch.

Midoriya came back a few minutes after, dressed in jeans and an All Might hoodie, face clean but hair still stained. She waved goodbye to his friends and walked out, Shouto following close behind.

“So” the greenette started as they walked out of the school grounds and onto the street. “What are the exact terms of the assignment?”

“We have to take a big hero fight from some time ago and analyse it. Say what it worked, what it didn’t. Why certain heroes made those decisions, what could have gone better. What heroes were better suited for certain villains, who worked well together with who. You know, the usual.”

“Huh. That’s usually second to third year and mostly management” Midoriya said in a low voice. “Aizawa must really think these are important for us now. That, or he enjoys tormenting us.” Shouto wasn’t sure if he was supposed to listen to what he said, but he did it nonetheless. “I’ll have to talk to Shinshi to see if they got anything similar.” He shook his head and kept mumbling in a low voice.

“Midrioia” he said. Shouto didn’t even said it that loud, yet the other teen still flinched. He looked at him and smiled sheepishly.

“Sorry. Old habits die hard. I was thinking of what fights we could inspect. We could try Best Jeanist against Skullcrusher. That might work, but wait, no, that wasn’t popular enough. The Ketaro district fight? That might work. We could try All Might’s fight with Toxic Chainsaw…” he stopped, pondering for a second before shaking his head. “No... maybe not that”
He continued to list different big names Shouto vaguely remembered but didn’t know the details of. They walked towards the station and the heterochromatic teen let himself relax in the muttering and think about what the other had said. The Toxic Chainsaw fight wasn’t popular, and by that, Shouto meant that he wasn’t supposed to know about it. It hadn’t been really that big of a secret, but the information wasn’t meant to be released to the public. Shouto knew about it because he had read it in his father’s reports while he was in hospital, recovering. For someone like Midoriya to know about it...

Someone up high must have told him about it. that meant the greenette either had connections or had somehow gotten his hands on top secret information. Shouto would have to look more into it.

The train reached the station and Shouto re-entered the conversation. They got on, and the heterochromatic teen didn’t really need to chime in too often, the greenette seemed to be prepared. He talked about what structure they could use and whatnot, constantly asking him if he had anything to add.

Endeavour did something similar from time to time. He would ask Shouto to tell him how to improve something, to test his attention or his skills. Shouto used to be filled with anxiety whenever he was asked, and, no matter how hard he tried, he could never quite erase that spark of fear in his chest.

But this was different. Midoriya constantly asked for his input, but there was something in his eyes, a little bit of fear whenever he answered, as if he was scared of what Shouto might do. Despite his reluctance, the taller teen found himself giving approval to the other’s ideas, and was grateful, and a little bit disturbed by the relieved light that filled the other’s eyes in those moments.

“Hey” Izuku said as they were walking down the street. “I meant to apologise for some of my behaviour at the Sports Festival.”

Shouto blinked before lifting an eyebrow. “You take that back?”

“No, I meant every word” Midoriya said without missing a beat. He clamped his mouth shut and looked away after, redness approaching his ears “It’s just…. “ He took a deep breath “There was a better and less rude way to deliver that message” he scratched his head before promptly shoving his hands into his pockets “And I ….” He inhaled deeply “I’m sorry. I didn’t really think of how my words might affect you and I’m sorry if I somehow offended you.”

Shouto watched as the teen waited anxiously before he shook his head and looked ahead “You are forgiven”

“Thanks!” a relieved smile broke the boy’s façade, as if worries had just been lifted off his chest.

They reached his apartment complex and, after climbing a blasphemyc amount of stairs, they reached the shorter teen’s home.

“Make yourself comfortable” Midoriya said as he hung his jacket.” We will work at the kitchen table since it’s bigger than the one in my room. Let me change and bring my laptop” he said before vanishing down the hall. Shouto took off his coat and backpack, placed them near the couch sat down. Midoriya appeared a second after, barefoot and in an All Might T-shirt that revealed a huge amount of cuts, in various stages of healing, bruises and scars all over his arms. Shouto could have bet that the scars extended under the T-shirt as well.

Midoriya must’ve noticed his staring as he opened the laptop that had way too many All Might stickers on it, for he smiled sheepishly and incredibly fake and said. “Oh, I- I mean I’d started training before UA and kept at it during the last few months to make sure I had a chance in the
Sports Festival.”

“Yeah, I’ve been meaning to ask, who did you train with?”

“Oh” he said and seemed alarmed for a few seconds, which was enough confirmation for Shouto that there was something fishy. “A small Dojo, really back of the ally kind of stuff, you wouldn’t know it.”

“That’s not it” the heterochromatic teen continued. “Your reflexes are much too refined for only a year of training. I saw it at the USJ too. You’re used to fighting for real. You’re used to fights in which people won’t stop.” Shouto was like that, and he could recognise someone in a different predicament.

Midoriya scratched his neck and shook his head. “Umm...let’s just say that some bigots don’t really stick to words only and leave it at that.” It wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t the whole truth either. Shouto decided to leave it alone for the moment. If he pushed too much now, the other teen would close himself up. no, the youngest Todoroki would wait to find out what he wanted.

“I say we start looking into the casualties and heroes that went in the Ketaro district. Then, we can see what heroes were at the place and their method of tackling the problem. After we saw what was done well and what wasn’t, we can speculate.”

“Sounds good” Midoriya said.

They started and, three hours later, Shouto was, now surer than ever that he would never, under any circumstances, want to meet with Midoriya alone on anything other than friendly terms. There was something unsettling in hearing someone mumble in a low voice about weaknesses and ways to maim and incapacitate someone’s Quirk with their own support items. After about half an hour Shouto stopped interrupting him and just waited for him to either finish or wake up, realise what he was doing and stutter and blush. Shouto waved it off, but there was something quite amusing in seeing the same kid who yelled and defeated him in the Sports Festival turn into an apologetic mess without his intervention.

There was also the fact that Midoriya was very smart. He could make quick connections and almost read Shouto’s mind from time to time. Such a pity though that he had been born Quirkless. Prejudice had always existed and chances of being taken by a good agency were slim if you didn’t have an impressive Quirk.

It was pretty late when the front door opened and a small, plump woman entered. “Oh, Izuku! You didn’t tell me you had visitors” her eyes silted as she took in his features. “Isn’t this…?”

“My classmate, yeah” the boy said quickly. “We have to write a project together.”

The woman didn’t seem convinced, but she just shook her head. “It’s late, would you like some dinner.”

“I’m afraid I can’t keep imposing” he said as he sat up. It was obvious that he wasn’t the woman’s favourite person after the Sports Festival, and he wasn’t going to try to change her mind right now. By the bags under her eyes and the slightly crumpled suit, she had come from work and was probably not in the mood to deal with him. She had a bag of what smelled like pastries, and she probably didn’t want to share them with him.

“If you’re sure” Midoriya said, typing something more in the document. “I’ll make some more edits, then sent it to you to see if you want to change anything. We can discuss tomorrow, is that Ok?”
“Quite” he said, and it was the first time he tried not to be cold. He grabbed his coat and headed for the exit. Midoriya’s mad typing echoed in the kitchen and Midoriya-san came to open the door. As he walked out, he felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Take care on your way home” the woman said and handed him a very warm piece of pastry wrapped in a napkin. She smiled, if a little bit sadly and closed the door, leaving the teen in the door with the baked good.

It had blueberry filling.

~O~

The next day Izuku actually managed to get in time to class, because he had made the wise decision of taking the long way around and completely avoiding the support department. He entered the class and shared a nod with Todoroki as he sat on his chair. He had sent the e-mail around midnight and got the ok this morning. They only had to print it before they handed it in. Uraraka waved at him from the other end of the class. Izuku smiled and waved back before someone tapped his shoulder. Turning around, he saw the smiling visage of Kirishima.

“Hey, Mido. This is the day you have your first lesson with All Might. Are you excited?”

Izuku smiled and opened his mouth, but that was the moment Aizawa stepped in like an actual normal person and looked at them. “Get your costumes and get on the training ground. You have fifteen minutes”

They all scrambled to their suitcases and dashed for the lockers.

Izuku liked his costume. The top was a more-or-less bulletproof jacket with a lot of pockets for anything he might need. And by a lot, he meant a lot; they were everywhere, and they were meant to hold a lot of things, from weapons to medical supplies. Granted, he couldn’t carry too much, because that would make it too heavy for him to have proper mobility, but it was good nonetheless. His pants were basically the same and his steel toe boots had a layer the isolated electricity and rough soles for increased friction, perfect for climbing. Both the jacket and the pants were dark, green-gray, perfect for melting in the shadows. Beneath the jacket, he wore a belt strapped over his chest, on which he held his Bo staff. Hatsume had made some changes for it to be telescopic, but it was still pretty big, in order to contain the necessary chemicals and devices. In small form, it didn’t mess with his mobility. The goggles were another feature, their design was similar to that of sky goggles, with a special coating in case of flash bangs and hermetically strapped to his face in case of tear-gas. He also had a mouth guard, which extended from his nose to his neck. Slamming chin first into a concrete wall was not fun, kids. He’d wanted to put an oxygen filter inside, but that would’ve taken too long, and was in the same place as his gun, which meant a shitload of paperwork to slog through before it could reach his hands.

Yes, his costume was ninety percent made against his own weapons. Sue him.

He placed his goggles better on his head but turned around to see Bakugou glaring at him. The blond only tsk-ed, turned heel and left. He turned around and saw Sero, Ojiro and Satou talking. “I can’t believe they would use such an attack” the taped boy said. “I mean, come on, now, it doesn’t matter how much firepower you have, you can’t use such a big scale attack in an urban area.”

“Are you talking about the villain attack in Ikebukuro this last night?” Izuku chimed in as he walked towards them.

Sero seemed taken by surprise while Ojiro gave him an encouraging smile. “Yes, we were. What do
"Well, the hero was definitely reckless. He could’ve killed a lot of people had he collapsed an electricity pole."

"Yeah, probably. By the way, what did you guys think of the lasagne served yesterday? I’m pretty sure we will get pasta today, what would you guys like?"

Ok, this change of subject was so bad it was literally shameful to be near the others. Izuku was ready to call them out on it, but they were called on the training ground.

Seeing everyone’s costume was…overwhelming. Izuku almost pulled out his most recent notebook, but he felt Aizawa’s eyes on him so he didn’t. He took in everyone’s and tried not to linger too much on Yaoyorozu’s.

“Ok, kids!” All Might boomed and Izuku couldn’t stop the smile on his face as he saw his childhood hero.

It hit him like a cargo train.

He was at UA.

In the heroics course.

And he was going to be taught by All Might himself. The young hero in training was glad for his covered face, because he didn’t want to give his classmates more reasons to look down on him by smiling like an idiot. “Today’s exercise will be like this: you will be split into teams of five. Each team will get a flag and be put on the field. Every team has to capture the other team’s flag. The catch: the flag has to stay on a person. The teams will be picked randomly and you have five minutes to make a strategy. Here are the teams:"

On a holographic screen appeared their names.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match 1</th>
<th>Match 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team A</td>
<td>Team B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fumikage Tokoyami</td>
<td>Katsuki Bakugou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izuku Midoriya</td>
<td>Hanta Sero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momo Yaoyorozu</td>
<td>Ochako Uraraka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouto Todoroki</td>
<td>Mezo Shoji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooru Hagakure</td>
<td>Yuuga Aoyoma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Izuku stared at the teams.

Fuck.

All Might turned towards them. “The flags have to be visible at all times. The time limit is of half an hour. If no one gets the flag by the end, it will be a tie. Team A, Team B. you have ten minutes to plan.”
A few moments later, the five kids were hiding behind a wall, holding the flag in their hands. “We need to split into offensive and defensive teams,” Todoroki said.

“Yes. The person who holds the flag needs to be protected. The others will have to make sure they either get the flag first or make sure they don’t lose their own.” Yaoyorozu said.

“We will have to divide ourselves in a somewhat equal ratio. Both long and short range attacks on the defending and offending side. Moreover, we will have to make sure our matches are a good one for Bakugou’s team” Izuku said, rubbing his mouth guard.

“So, if we put Midoriya as the flag, how do we divide the rest of the team to have the most chances to win?” Tokoyami said.

Izuku frowned. “Why make me the flag?”

“You know” the sentient pair of gloves said “Because you’re...easiest to defend” she said at the last moment, though they all knew that she wanted to say Quirkless.

“That would be a bad idea” he said. “We haven’t worked together enough for you guys to predict my moves. And I won’t be a sitting duck.”

“He’s right” Todoroki intervened. “He’s fast and he has a lot of firepower in his arsenal. If you make him sit still, there’s a high chance that we will shoot each other trying to protect him, because he’s unpredictable.” He said in a stoic tone. Izuku threw him a grateful look, though he doubted it was visible from under his goggles.

“Our best bet would be Tokoyami” he said. Everyone looked at him surprised, except for Todoroki, who kept an unreadable poker face.

“I don’t need to be protected.”

“We’re not talking about protection; I’m talking about who’s the easiest to defend. That means that they would be able to defend themselves. You have a great control over Dark Shadow, enough that, if any of us get in the way, you could stop from harming us. Moreover, by the shape I’ve seen in the Sports Festival, you’d be great for defence, and long ranged enough for offence without putting you in danger.” He pointed towards one of the mock buildings. “We could find a room without lights or means to cover the windows and maximise your power.”

The raven nodded his bird like head while Dark Shadow gave them a happy thumbs up. “Alright. But what do we do with the attack team?”

“We need someone fast and stealthy” Hagakure said. “But we also need someone with great firepower. You and Todoroki are the tanks when it comes to raw power.”

“So I’ll have to be on the attack team.” The heterochromatic teen said.

“You can also be the distraction. Hagakure, they’ll be expecting you. Your skills are used the best there. That’s why I’ll come with you. They know next to nothing about me. The only one who might be able to counteract my moves is Bakugou.”

“But what will I do?” the visible girl asked. Izuku turned towards her.

“You can be on the defensive team. We can make traps near Tokoyami and place them to mess with their sense of direction.” He pulled his field notebook and started scribbling. He had spent too much time with Hatsume not to know, at least very briefly, how to make a bomb. And, while they didn’t
have time for anything complicated right now, Izuku had a vague idea of how to make artisanal ones. He held out the chemical formula to her eyes. “Could you make that?”

The girl nodded before looking at Todoroki. “What do you think?”

Izuku felt his heart break a little. They didn’t trust him enough to take his words for real. But the Todoroki heir responded. “It’s a good plan.”

~O~

Katsuki tsk-ed as he waited for the other extras to get off their asses and come the fuck already. When the others finally got their shit together and appeared, the blond explosion looked like he was a few seconds from detonation.

“So” Sero said. “What’s the plan?”

“We need to keep whoever carries the flag out of reach. There will be one, two people max to guard it and the rest will go for the attack. Round Face, you will be the flag.”

The girl flustered. “Why? Why would I need to be protected?”

“It’s not for protection, you idiot, it’s for mobility!” he yelled. The girl opened her mouth, but Katsuki grinded his teeth. “If they come to close, you can just float yourself. Not to mention that, with all the crap in here, you could pull a Sports Festival and cover them in dust.” The girl clamped her mouth shut. Katsuki turned towards the rest of his team. “Tentacles, you and Sparky will come with me for attack. You are good for detecting where the others might be” he said as he pointed towards the masked teen. “And you are too big of a danger of collapsing the building. We can’t afford that.” The other blond huffed and looked away, but didn’t complain. “Soy Sauce, you can grab Uraraka out of the way if they get too close and you can swing on walls.”

“Ok, great idea. But how will we apprehend them. We know that the flag will be Midoroya, but who will guard him?”

“What the fuck makes you think that Deku will be the flag?!”

Sero seemed surprised. “Well, you know, isn’t he the weakest?”

Katsuki tsk-ed. “Even if he were, making him the flag a huge waste. He is fast, he’s good and unpredictable. They wouldn’t be able to protect him. And, even if they tried, Deku won’t just sit put. He is physically incapable to follow orders.”

They didn’t seem very convinced, but, at this point, no one really wanted to argue with him. The bell rang and they all looked up.

Game on.

~O~

Izuku walked alongside the walls, trying to make as little sound as possible. Hagakure had taken the other side, while Todoroki coated the whole warehouse in ice, like Uraraka told him he did during their first match. Todoroki was their main attack. He and Hagakure were the plan B.

In the distance, near their own warehouse, a huge explosion and a huge string of obscenities let the boy know that his arch nemesis had stumbled on his bombs. Izuku chuckled and looked again at the entrance. It was quiet. Too quiet. Suddenly, the wind swished behind him and the boy jumped right
before the tape got the chance to catch him.

“Hey, Midoriya” Sero smiled, a little too nice to be fully genuine. Izuku didn’t know it he was mocking him or trying to imitate a cliché villain, but he wouldn’t sit still to find out. “Time to get back at you for the Sports Festival” Normally, Izuku would have retorted, but he wasn’t really used to talking while wearing a costume. Habit. “What?” The other said patronisingly “Cat got your tongue?” Izuku tsk-ed as he moved his eyes around, careful not to move his head. They were in a hallway. It was a small one, with limited space to dodge. The other seemed to realise that too, for he grinned and sent his tape forward.

Izuku ducked under it and ran full force towards the other. With one hand he opened a pocket and got a good grasp on the metal. Sero lifted his arm to shoot, but, at the last moment, the greenette ducked and caught his limb, stretching it painfully behind his back. Sero yelped and leaned forward, which gave Izuku enough time to grab his other arm and bring them both in the perfect position.

The handcuffs clicked around his elbows and Izuku let the boy go with a sigh. “Sorry, Sero” he panted. “I really want to win”

The taller teen pulled at the handcuffs, but they were well restrained behind his back, the elbows tied together and making him essentially Quirkless. “Midoriya, what the fuck?”

Izuku shrugged sheepishly before turning and trying to make his way towards the main room. He had learned how much of a nuisance were villains who couldn’t be restrained. But, alas, the stars weren’t in the right position for the only way to be blocked by a wall of ice. “Really now, Todoroki?! Really?!” he yelled at the ice. But, unfortunately, he didn’t have the iconic powers of the Disney princess on the other side, so the wall remained silent.

Izuku tsk-ed and turned heel. Sero rose an eyebrow at him, and the boy would have pulled his tongue out, had it not been covered by the mouth guard. He left the building only to hear an enraged screech once he got in the sunlight. Looking up, he saw Tokoyami flying in the sky like an angel of death, followed by a glittery ray of sunshine from heavens. Izuku stopped. And blinked. Then shook his head and started looking for another way in. the raven head was taking care of himself just fine.

He started running before his spidey-sense that he had developed not long after he had been diagnosed Quirkless activated and he dodged the explosion coming for his head.

“Deku” Bakugou growled, a sound too animal for the teen’s throat. “How. The fuck. Did you cheat your way in?”

“I assure you, Bakugou” the other flinched at the name. “I got in fair and square.”

“Bullshit!” the blond spat. “How did you convince Aizawa to let you stay when you are a vigilante?!”

Izuku knew that he should’ve told him, maybe tried to stall him. After all, it was only a matter of very, very little time until Todoroki managed to catch Uraraka and the match would be stopped. It was the wisest choice and, really now, Izuku would have been a fool not to take it.

Useless, Quirkless Deku.

People turning their back on him, coddling him, treating him like glass.

You have to make sure you’re on the same level as the rest of us

Sorry Izuku, you can’t play with us, you’re Quirkless.
Ok, so if we put Midoriya as the flag.....

Izuku clenched his teeth and said, “That, is none of your business”

Bakugou raged. He threw a punch as a warning, but Izuku dodged and kneeed him in the stomach. The blond looked like he would double over, but he righted himself at the last moment and slammed the gauntlet in the other’s back. The smaller teen yelped and Bakugou took it as an opportunity to turn him around and slam him in the wall.

His goggles cracked and he was suddenly even more grateful for them since they kept his nose from being smashed. Izuku groaned as the taller one leaned and whispered in his ear.

“If you keep this shit up someone could get seriously hurt.”

Izuku jerked his head backwards and slammed it into the other’s face.

He heard a pained cry and, as he turned around, he saw the blond holding his nose, looking positively murderous. There was no going back now.

Good.

His goggles fell off in pieces and he felt his mouth guard lowered a little. He didn’t know exactly what happened, but he had a pretty good guess that the strap holding it had loosened. Bakugou attacked again with a war cry.

Izuku took a flash grenade and threw it in his face. But the other seemed to be expecting it, since he didn’t stop and the greenette barely rolled out of the way in time.

*His gauntlets. They’re full of explosive sweat.*

Izuku knew Bakugou’s costume inside and out, thanks to his dear Support Students. He had an idea he knew he would probably regret later. As the other charged again from the left, Izuku pulled off his jacket, wrapped it around the glove and pulled it upwards.

The shock was enough to throw them both away. Izuku felt pins and needles in his face and a muted pain in his shoulder, but he got up. Bakugou was leaning on the wall. His left hand wasn’t burned but, much like his face and body, had small cuts and gashes all over his skin. His gauntlets must really have some divine fire protection. Izuku was glad all his grenades were strapped to his chest, and not in the now shredded jacket. That would have been tragic. He pulled out the Bo staff and opened it, entering a fighting stance.

Bakugou yelled in fury and lounged at the smaller boy. He was fast. Before Izuku got the chance to step back the blond grabbed his mouth guard and pulled him forward, using his other hand to detonate an explosion to his face.

Izuku fell backwards. His left ear was ringing, there was *pain, pain, pain.* But, as the grenette lay on the cold, hard concrete, he realised something. He’d never taken an explosion to the face before but, from the various ones he had endured on his body and from watching Bakugo practice for years, he knew something for sure- this one had been tame.

He growled as he got to his feet. Bakugou was about ten feet away, Izuku’s mouth guard lose in his hand and he looked at him with an expression Izuku had never seen before. One he could almost call fear.

“You bastard” he said, voice low, sounds gurgling from the back of his throat. He felt something
wet trailing off his hand, but he didn’t pay any attention. “All your life, all our childhood you never held back. You never gave anything but your best,” his hands tightened around the staff “Why’s this the fucking time you decide to go easy on me?!”

Bakugou’s eyes widened in disbelief. Somewhere in the background, there was a bell, but Izuku couldn’t have cared less about it if he tried.

Before the blond got the chance to fall back into place, Izuku charged forward, a war cry on his lips and lifted his staff. With an amount of force too big for what he would have used normally, he slammed his staff onto the other boy’s shoulder.

Katsuki let out a cry, a pained one this time, and the greenette felt his shoulder crack through the staff. The blond staggered, but didn’t fall. He righted himself and glared at the other before lifting his good hand and charging once again.

Izuku fell into stance and prepared to attack.

A big muscly form wrapped around him while a bunch of bandages restrained Bakugou.

“Let me go!” Izuku screamed, trashing and biting in his quest to get out.

“Let me at him!” Bakugou yelled, clawing at the capture weapon, but to no avail.

“Stop” All Might’s baritone voice made them both freeze. Izuku fell limp and his vision started to blur. The hands unwrapped themselves and placed him gently on the ground. “You need to stop.” He said more gently this time.

“But, but…” he looked from one teacher to another, voice already starting to crack.

Aizawa looked unforgiving, and Bakugou was nursing his deformed shoulder on the ground.

“This has gone too far” their homeroom teacher said.

“But…”

“Midoriya, you’re bleeding.”

Izuku clamped his mouth shut. Of course he was bleeding, he’d seen his cuts. But, as he looked down, he realised that his teacher wasn’t talking about the cuts.

All his right side was covered in blood. A lot of blood. There was too much blood. It was pooling around his legs, trailing behind the no.1 hero where it was spread in swipes and footprints.

Izuku felt lightheaded. His vision started to blur. He groaned as he leaned back. People were calling his name, but All Might’s side was very comfy. The darkness fell over him like a blanket.

Chapter End Notes

yeah yeah, i know, a cliffanger, what a dick move from me
well, fuck you, i'm used to it, as my dear old beta tends to remind me and they are used
sparingly here so, yeah
anyway, thank you for all those comments, and the kudos, they are literally the fuel that pushes me to write, and keep writing, so keep doing it
anyway, here's my discord and my tumblr
anyway, till next time ;)}
Izuku woke up slowly, consciousness struggling to arise through the haze of painkillers. He blinked and looked around. He was in the infirmary.

He tried to sit up, but he was stopped short when something yanked his wrists back. He looked down to see two metallic circles around his hands; through the haze of painkillers it took him a few seconds to identify them as handcuffs. Izuku blinked and collapsed back on the bed.

**Why am I tied up?**

Looking around as much as he could, revealed Bakugou in a similar predicament, though his hands were restrained by normal bed restraints.

Izuku shook his head and regretted it one second later when the world swirled like a buffering video.

*I fought Bakugou...*

He looked at the blond's arm, wrapped in a cast, at the cuts and scrapes on the surface of his skin.

*I...hurt Bakugo. We hurt each other.*

He tried to look closer, but the side of his face tugged at him and he gave up. That was when he realised that his left eye was wrapped on gauze too. A spike of panic shot through him, only somewhat dulled by the anaesthetics.

*I didn’t lose my eye...did I?*

*Of course, you probably did. Now, instead of a normal useless person, you’re a crippled one.*

He tried to remember if, after he got up he could see through both eyes, but the memories were blurry at best. Cold sweat started trickling down his spine and he tried to move once again, but, the cuffs were still there. He tried to distract himself from the mess of his mind.

*I should start carrying bobby pins.*

Dabi had taught him a few months ago how to pick a lock with a bobby pin. It was mostly just jiggling the metal until you hit the jackpot, but you had to learn to find the jackpot in the first place. The older male also taught him how to hotwire a car, though neither of them knew how to drive. Still, Izuku supposed it was a useful skill.

On his right, the other male stirred awake and blinked as he looked around. He tried to sit up too, but, much like his wiser counterpart, found himself tied to the bed. It took him a few moments to go through the same process Izuku went through before he cursed.

“Fuck!”

“Wise words” Izuku rasped and drew the attention of the blond towards him.
“Why the fuck are we in here?”

“I don’t know, Bakugou, maybe because each of our respective attempted murders failed?”

The blond gritted his teeth and sneered. “I wasn’t trying to kill you. I just want some God damn answers! You make no sense!” he looked away. “First Aizawa lets you stay after you broke the law for months and then he’s suddenly on my case for shit that happened months ago!”

“Except, technically, I didn’t” he said. Bakugou looked scandalised. Izuku didn’t even try to stop the satisfied smirk that spread along his features. “There’s no law saying that you can’t fuck shit up without a Quirk. Apparently, everyone considered Quirkless people so helpless that they deemed it impossible to commit crimes without a Quirk.” The edge in his voice could’ve cut through steel. Bakugou looked at him warily before he let himself collapse on the pillows.

They stood in silence for a few moments before the blond spoke. “You’re not shit,”

Izuku blinked. “Excuse me?”

“You’re not as big of a piece of shit as you used to be” the blond grumbled. “I’m also gonna hold you responsible for my gauntlet, especially if it comes malfunctioning because your friends in Support did something to it.”

Izuku stare at him for a few seconds before he burst into laughter. “Really, Bakugou? Really? As much as I would love for your gauntlets to throw confetti next time you pull that pin, I’m not enough of an ass to put your life in danger in a serious confrontation.”

“Unlike this last exercise;” The blond grumbled.

“I was only giving it my all! Treating you like a proper rival.” he said. His expression soured. “A courtesy you obviously couldn’t return.” He grumbled.

“The fuck do you mean by that?!” he yelled and tried to jump, but he was unfortunately still tied to the bed, so he couldn’t do much.

“Oh, I don’t know, the fact that, after ten years in which you held nothing back you suddenly decide that I’m too fucking fragile and only go halfway through!”

“Who the fuck said you were fragile?!” he looked scandalised at the mere notion of holding back. “And I wasn’t go easy on you! But, as your stupid ass should have known, head wounds are dangerous and kinda irreparable, and I didn’t feel like filling the paperwork for killing you!” then, he grumbled on a lower voice “Still have no idea how you got up.”

Izuku blinked before he looked away, a slight blush on his cheeks. “Oh” was all he said.

“Oh? OH?” the blond yelled. The other didn’t really flinch like he would’ve, but he didn’t stayed exactly still as the other yelled “Is that, seriously, all you have to say?!”

“Well, it’s not like you haven’t tried before!”

Kastuki blinked. You really thought I was going all out before? Something nasty settled in his chest as he tsk-ed and looked away. He didn’t like the idea that the boy seriously feared for his life. A year ago, he might have, but, after the USJ, when he saw the Noumu knock Aizawa left and right, he was hit, for the second time, with the realisation that he might really die. It was the first time he had actively feared for his life, and he didn’t like it. The prospect that Izuku might have felt that all
those years felt bad and nasty.

“Not even properly up and already at each other’s throats?” came the gruff voice that made both of them turn towards their homeroom teacher.

“Aizawa-sensei!” Izuku said. The man was not amused.

“Give me one, one good reason as to why I shouldn’t expel the both of you right now?”

They both looked down. The man sighed. “I wanted to, you know? But then I suddenly remembered” here, he sneered “That I legally cannot expel Midoriya and it would be unfair to only expel one of you.” the boys were silent. “But that doesn’t meant that it makes it ok. Even in a fight with a villain, you’re not allowed to go all out unless it is the last possible option. You both had options to pull back, to be smart, but, what did you do? You went at each other like mindless bulls and end up almost killing each other.” He shook his head.

“Sensei” Izuku started, “It wasn’t that bad”

Apparently, that was the wrong thing for the nerd to say, because Aizawa glared. “Recovery girl” he said and the small woman popped up from behind her chair. How long had she been there?! “Can you please show them what kind of damage they inflicted on each other?”

“Sure” the brought a board and stretched it in front of them. “Do you see this” she showed an X-ray “You, Midoriya, dislocated Bakugou’s shoulder and quite literally broke his collarbone, all in one fell swoop. It would take a few days of healing and resting before you, young man” he pointed at the blond “Will be even remotely close to using your Quirk. I’m warning you- rest or risk permanently damaging your tendons,” She told him sternly.

“And you, Midoria, are lucky that we were able to save your eye and ear. Not to mention that that explosion was dangerously close and nipped an artery. Had the fight not been stopped when it did, you could’ve died.” She cleaned her glasses “It will definitely scar.”

Izuku gulped and looked down.

It’s the second time I almost killed him.

Their homeroom teacher sighed. “While it was reckless and incredibly stupid, I will admit that both of you probably needed it to vent. It was not a quite so good decision on my part to let things go this far and I will take responsibility for that.” He shook his head” You will not get detention this time, but mark my words: you are never allowed to do that again.” He looked at the greenette “With you I will settle the importance of holding back in the internship” he turned towards the blond “And I will talk to whoever you intern with to make sure they try to drill it into your head properly from the beginning. If you really want to take it out, come to either me or All Might and we will let you spar in a free room. If I ever catch you doing that shit again, you will both suffer the full consequences. Am I clear?”

“Yes, Sensei!” they said at the same time.

The man didn’t seem 100% convinced, but he let it slide. “It’s late and you kids are too tired after all the healing to walk home. Plus, I don’t trust you not to try anything with the fact that you share said road home. Get dressed, I’ll drive you” and, with that, he turned on his heel and walked out. Both boys looked at each other before the woman undid their restraints and handed them their clothes. While Izuku changed, Katsuki sneaked a look. He had more scars than last time.

That car ride home had been long and uncomfortable with both boys actively ignoring
each other. But, in the end, when they both went to sleep that night, they felt satisfied for no reason they could point out.

~O~

Izuku didn’t know what the next day would bring, and, in retrospect, it was probably for the best. After all, the set of motions was muscle memory at this point, and a few months of peace weren’t going to change that. If he knew that, the next morning he would reach class 1A only to find Quirkless written in spray paint all over the class door, he would have felt bad, no matter how well he prepared. At least like that, he only felt a few fleeting moments of betrayal before he went to hunt for the janitor.

That was how most of his classmates found him. Looking very sour while he scrubbed the paint off of the door. The reason he had gotten here earlier than usual was because he had an immense stroke of luck and caught the trains in the station. But now, he would’ve preferred to be late, because then he wouldn’t have to go again and again thought the humiliation that was his classmate’s pitying looks. When Iida had gotten there, he looked scandalised, but Izuku was honestly glad that he was focusing on something else other than his brother. He said something about writing a letter to the commission before he walked in.

“Mido-chan?” He heard Uraraka say. He didn’t turn around, preferring to keep trying this rocket-level paint out of the door.

“Yes?” he said and couldn’t quite conceal the bite in his voice. He saw the girl flinch and, had he not been in a very shitty mood with bandages covering half of his face and making most of his moves uncomfortable, he would have apologised.

“Who… Who did this?”

Izuku shrugged, a motion which he regretted since his neck still hurt a little. “Does it matter?”

“How can you say that?!” she looked shocked. “I’ll find Aizawa” she said before turning heel and leaving.

“You don’t have to….” He started to mumble, but she was long gone. The rest of his classmates threw him pitying looks but said nothing as they entered the classroom. He didn’t need the next one to speak to recognise the very familiar speech pattern coming to a halt. “Came to gloat?” he said, not looking at the explosive blond.

Said explosive blond chose not to answer, instead, he said. “Jesus, what is this? Primary school?”

“Well, apparently, assholes can be found over all ages and environments” he pinned the blond with his gaze “Who would’ve thought?”

The blond growled, but didn’t burst. He just shook his head and entered the class.

There next students who arrived varied from ignoring him to patting his back, to looking very uncomfortable. Izuku let it slide, after all, why wouldn’t he?

The last to arrive was Kirishima. Izuku sighed. He really liked the guy, but he wasn’t in the mood for undying optimism right now. The redhead stared at the door for a full minute, a very hurt expression on his face. Izuku was prepared to shoo him in class when the other spoke.
“Here” he said as he lowered his bag to the ground and rolled his sleeves. “Let me help you.” He wasn’t smiling, looking shaken. Izuku stared at his hand.

“You don’t have to.”

“I want to” he said and took a rag for himself before he started scrubbing like the door offended him on a personal level. Izuku allowed himself a small smile, before returning to what he was doing. The boy may not know how to do this, but he was trying to be nice so Izuku just couldn’t really be mad at him.

He didn’t know how long it was before Aizawa came marching towards them, Uraraka jogging to keep up. The man looked at the door, at the two teens scrubbing it, and, even if he had a perfect poker face, Izuku could see the silent wrath inside him, the pressure of a volcano before he erupted.

“Get inside” was all he said, and the two teens complied. Izuku didn’t know exactly what it was, since his voice had the same tone and volume as ever, but there was something cold and sharp in it that promised death at the slightest sign of disobedience. Izuku was relieved that this man was, at least temporarily, on his side.

Izuku and Kirishima scurried inside. It was about five minutes before class officially started and the boys were left standing in the middle of the class, classmates staring but obviously trying not to. Izuku shook his head and headed for his desk.

“Mido-chan?” Uraraka said. Izuku stopped and turned around. “Aren’t you going to do anything?”

Izuku sighed, shoulders falling. He was tired. “What is there to do? I lived with this all my life. They won’t stop the teachers don’t care.” He shrugged and scratched his head. “If I don’t find any dead animals in my locker by the end of the day, I’ll count myself lucky.”

Uraraka and Kirishima and a few others honestly looked like they wanted to say something, but they were interrupted by the resident Canadian flag strolling in with a somewhat conflicted look on his face, which, on the stoic teen, was the equivalent of a shocked expression and a dramatic feint. “What’s that?” asked, voice even.

Izuku shrugged. “Bigots” before he threw his bag on the desk and started writing on an assignment he had finished three days before. Todoroki opened his mouth to say something more, but was interrupted by Aizawa coming in, looking absolutely murderous. For him. Which was a standard pissed off expression for normal mortals, with the added menacing presence of impending death looming over his shoulder.

Everyone scrambled to their seats as he stood in front of his desk. He made sure to pin each and every one of them under his murderous gaze before he spoke.

“Whoever did that, whether they’re from your class or another, will face consequences. Understand, once and for all, that any form of bigotry or discrimination will not be tolerated here. If any of you think about doing something like that know that any such behaviour will get you a warning. Three warnings mean expulsion with no chance of return.”

Aizawa paused to let his words sink in and to take a deep breath before continuing.

“You are here to become heroes. And being a hero is, above all, about helping people. These things may seem like harmless pranks to some of you but they have the potential to develop into serious
issues down the road. If you show discriminative behaviour towards a classmate, how can you confidently say that you won’t let a civilian die because they don’t fit with your perception of ‘acceptable’ or ‘normal’?”

The silence that hung over the class was heavy and so thick it seemed like a physical thing pressing down on the students.

“We haven’t gotten to crime statistics yet but let me give you a small head-start by telling you that almost seventy percent of all criminals cite unemployment and harassment as the prime factors that made them turn to crime. Of those, ninety percent say that some form of Quirk discrimination, like having a deadly or mutant quirk or no quirk at all, was the prime factor to that harassment and unemployment. So next time you see a prank like this remember that the road to hell is paved with harmless pranks.”

And, with that, he turned around and started writing the assessment on the board.

~O~

Izuku sat at the table and idly played with his food. His bandage was itching and Izuku couldn’t wait to take it off. He thought about what Aizawa had said. Even if the man was totally right, Izuku couldn’t help but notice the slight undertone and was wondering if the others had gotten it too.

Sensei, I know and understand what you meant, but... did you just imply that I might become a villain?

Well, you’re already a vigilante.

Izuku gritted his teeth and bit on the rice. He was listening to Uraraka speak vividly to Iida, who was barely responding. The greenette would have liked to chime in and lend a hand, but, at the same time, he had too much on his mind to properly carry a conversation. He shook his head as he finished his lunch and stood up. He was going to take his bandages off today. Bakugou was going to take off his cast and Izuku hoped they wouldn’t meet on the way. What were the chances that they would go at the same time.

Someone shouldered him and it was strong enough to have thrown him backwards, had he not been through too much before.

“Sorry, Midoriya” a slimy voice slurred and Izuku instantly knew that there was going to be trouble. “Didn’t want to injure, 1-A’s charity case.”

Izuku stopped. Keep going, keep going, keep going. He forced his feet to move.

“Running away?”

“More like leaving a conversation I want no part in.”

The straw blonde student plopped himself in front of him. He was about an inch or so taller than him and Izuku felt like kicking him for only breathing in his general direction. “Oh, I’m sorry did I strike a chord, there?”

Izuku twitched his eyebrow. He was so not in the mood for this. He took a deep breath. “ I got in fair and square and if you think otherwise I suggest you take it up with the school board. I don’t know why you hate 1A with a burning passion, but I have no interest in your feud. So, I suggest you shut the fuck up before I have to report my second act of discrimination for the day.” He
felt how other kids had stopped and were watching them, and he only wanted to get the fuck out of there.

The boy tsk-ed. He looked like he wanted to say more, but Izuku only glared at him and walked past.

He marched without looking back all the way to Recovery Girl’s office and knocked.

“Come in!” said the preppy voice and Izuku entered. The woman motioned for him to sit on a chair and Izuku complied. The bandages came off pretty fast and, after the woman gave him some ointments for the scarring, he placed him in front of a mirror.

It... was better than it could have been but still pretty nasty. The scarring didn’t reach his eye, but it descended from his hairline to his jaw and on his neck, on his shoulder and finally stopping at the same time as his clavicle. It was more than a simple discoloration, the skin being slightly wrinkled and a light pink. His ear wasn’t the same shape as before either. It was curved around the shell, like a plastic held too close to fire. All in all it wasn’t all that obvious, but it was visible.

Izuku tsk-ed. It would take some getting used to.

*Please, think of Dabi and Todoroki before you talk.*

*Fair point.* He sighed and shook his head. “Thank you, Recovery girl.”

“No problem, sweetie, just make sure it doesn’t happen again. And don’t forget to take these ointments. The scar won’t disappear, but it might decrease and in any case they’ll prevent the itching or any hypersensitivity.”

“Oh, thank you” he smiled and made his way out. He was going to leave the room when he ran head first into Bakugou.

“Look where you’re going, loser!” he yelled before he saw who it was. Bakugou stared at his scar for a few good seconds before forcefully dragging his gaze away.

“Hope your hand is doing better than my face” he said before he walked out, not waiting for the other to answer. He could hear Bakugou's flustered gasp and he couldn’t keep in a giggle.

“Are you laughing at me, asshole?” the blond yelled.

Izuku didn’t respond, only dashed away before the other could think of chasing him.

~O~

He had to follow Aizawa to the train station, which wasn’t really something bad, because he got to say goodbye to his friends. Uraraka had chosen Gunhead, a very good hero, who had pretty good reviews. Bakugou had chosen Best Jeanist, which wasn’t the best choice regarding the explosive blond, but Izuku rather fancied his limbs so he said nothing. Iida was still looking gloomy, and Izuku had a very bad feeling regarding Hosu, but he said nothing. He wasn’t at that level of friendship with the boy, but Uraraka tried to talk to him. Izuku offered his support anyway, but the taller teen brushed them off, and the greenette didn’t know how much he would regret letting it slide later.

Izuku headed towards Todoroki. They weren’t quite friends, but there was this unspoken truth between them. “Hey, Todoroki!” he called. The heterochromatic teen turned towards him.
“Who are you interning with?”

“Endeavour.” Izuku rose an eyebrow, a little bit concerned. “He might be a piece of trash, but he is the No.2 hero.” He shook his head and looked away. “I still have things to learn from him” he felt like he was disgusted to even talk about it.

Izuku looked at him, making sure to catch his eyes. “You basically live with him. Can’t you use this opportunity to learn something new?” the boy shrugged and Izuku looked around before he said. “If it ever gets too much, you can talk to me. If I can’t answer, I’ll make sure to read your texts.”

The boy looked, not really uncomfortable, but a little bit confused. “You don’t have to do this.”

“I want to.”

“Why?” he was sceptical.

Izuku sighed. “For a very long time I had no one to talk to. Then, at some point, this friend of mine appeared and, suddenly, I did.” He shook his head and looked at the teen. “I just know that having someone to vent to can be really helpful, and, I want to help you if I can.”

Todoroki seemed to consider his offer. “I don’t think Aizawa will leave you enough time to text.” Izuku puffed and burst into a fit of giggles.

“Todoroki, you don’t know the capacities of the human body until you have to write twenty pages of paperwork over one night. Which I did. And he made me. Believe me, I will be able to, at some point, answer whatever texts you have, so chill.”

The teen looked amused before giving a little wave and turning heel. Izuku trotted towards his homeroom teacher and watched until all of his classmates disappeared. The man turned around and walked towards the car.

“So” Izuku said once in. “What will we do this week?”

“Wait till we get back, I don’t want to explain it twice.”

“Who else is interning with you?”

“Shinsou. What I told you might have been a lie then, but not anymore. Nedzu thought it was a brilliant idea, since we need a way to evaluate transfer students, and working with an outside agency gives us no insight as to how or what are we supposed to integrate them in the new environment. Plus, Shinsou chose me anyway.”

“Ok” Izuku hummed as he let his back hit the chair. There was an awkward silence until the man started talking.

“I know there’s a lot of bad blood between you and Bakugou and I’m not gonna ask you to be friends. But you do have to get over whatever feelings you have.”

Izuku looked at him. “I’m over it!”

“No, you’re not. The fight from last week is proof of that. You are smart, Izuku, in know that, had it been anyone else, you would have run. You could have run, you should have run. But you didn’t, you stayed and fought and almost lost an eye because of it. That fight might have been
necessary for the both of you but, had it been real, you could have both died. So, no. I’m not asking
you to be friends, I’m asking you to deal with your feelings before they explode.”

Izuku clamped his mouth shut and they both spent the ride in silence. They got to UA and
Izuku trailed behind his teacher like a lost puppy until they reached one of the gyms. Shinsou was
waiting for them, still in uniform, backpack in hand. Aizawa positioned himself in front of them.

“Here’s what we will do. First of all you’ll sleep at my place. The first part of this day will
be given to whatever training I see fit for the both of you. The rest of the week we will train
whatever skills you need to improve, but we will also go on patrols. You both want to be
underground heroes from what I gather?” they nodded. “Ok, then. You, Shinsou, need improvement
in your hand to hand. You are tall and have the advantage in weight, but you lack proper technique.
You, Midoriya, can still improve in your hand to hand, but I was going to teach you stealth first,
since you are a total disaster” Izuku blushed and Shinsou sniggered. “Also, the request for your gun
came in. you will be able to use on that only aims, but you will have to train with Snipe when he
comes here. We will see how we can combine them. Any questions?” they shook their heads.
“Good. Change in your gym clothes and we will see you here.”

“Sensei?” Izuku lifted his hand. “Shouldn’t we be training in our costumes?”

The man shook his head. “You first need to learn the basics, and I can guarantee you,
Midoriya, that if you try to learn intricate movements in your heavy costume, you will fail. You will
learn the how to move in something light, and, maybe, we will talk about how to lighten the load of
your costume. The extra weight will slow you down. Now, change.”

They both dashed to the lockers. They came back a few minutes later, both in gym shirts,
ready for whatever hell the man was ready to provide.

Or so they thought.

“Midoriya. You go to those mattresses. Shinsou, you go to those and start warming up. I’ll
explain the exercise to Midoriya and then come to see you training. Get moving.”

Both boys went to their designated places and Izuku started stretching. He had already
warmed up that morning on his jog, but he wanted to make sure he didn’t give his muscles any more
reason to break under the hell his teacher was sure to put him through.

Aizawa came after a few minutes of watching them. “I’ll tell it as it is. You suck at stealth.
When we first met I had been watching for a few minutes before you arrived and the only reason the
others didn’t notice was because they were too drunk to care. You’re good at escaping, a useful skill
nonetheless, but, as an underground hero, you will most likely have to gather some info before you
attack, a feat you will probably fail at.” Izuku nodded, not saying anything. “First, you will learn
how to step. You should put your toes down first while lowering your centre of gravity. After that,
you slowly lower your heel and switch to the other foot. Do it slowly.” He lifted a small device and
showed it to the boy. “The Support course made this. It’s a device you put on the ground to detect if
anyone is walking on that floor. It detects the vibrations and this one is modified so it beeps. I
lowered the level, so it should only beep when you step too hard and a normal floor is suppose to
creak.”

“So you want me to walk all day.” Izuku deadpanned.

“Precisely,” the man replied, placing the device on the floor and went to help the other

teen.
In the end, Izuku did only walk for four hours straight. That device was hella sensitive and it beeped almost every second. Izuku groaned and tried again and again, and he could almost make it to the end of the line before he sneezed and had to start again. His muscles ached, because, keeping them tense for long periods of time hurt, but, hey, he also made them stronger. The sounds of Shinsou getting smashed left and right on the background surely made it more bearable.

It wasn’t long before it was lunch and both teens collapsed tired near a wall. “Why are you tired for?” Shinsou panted. “You were literally just walking around.”

“Excuse you, I was creeping around,” he pointed a finger at the boy. The purple petunia regarded him with an unamused look and they almost would have fallen into a staring contest, had the reason for their torment not walk in right then.

“Get up” he said “You have to eat lunch”

They got up and staggered after their teacher. The cafeteria was not empty, but it surely looked like that. There were a few students who trained on campus, so there was a reason for the cafeteria to continue. Both boys took their lunches and went to their usual table while their teacher fucked off somewhere, prolyl to his office to nap.

“So” Izuku said after he looked around to make sure that Aizawa was out of hearing range “Was there any other hero you would have liked to inter with?”

Shinsou played with his food. “No, not really. I wanted to be an underground hero from the beginning. If my Quirk was well known, villains would be able to avoid it easily.” He shrugged. “He is one of the best out there, so I said, why not?” he munched on his rice “What about you? Did you want to intern with anyone else?”

Izuku scratched his head. “Not really? I mean, I didn’t really get the chance to think about it. on the first day after the Sports Festival, he told me that I would have to intern with him” he rubbed his chin “Though, now that I think about it, he is one of the best suited for me. I don’t know the others all that well” at this, Shinsou rose an eyebrow. “Hey! Most underground heroes have some kind of Quirk not suited for flashiness, but Quirk nonetheless. They are either split into information heroes or action heroes. But Aizawa’s Quirk: he literally turns every fight Quirkless. His fighting style is the closest thing to mine and he can help me improve. Plus, he’s also kinda halfway information hero, so he might help in that aspect too.”

Shinsou nodded and looked into his plate. “It annoys me that I’m so far behind in physical training. Like, it’s already pretty hard to get people to talk and, if they are smart, they usually land a few solid hits before I get to control them.” He sighed as he mingled with his food.

Izuku smiled at him and patted his back. “Chill, it took me ten months to get where I am now, and the first few were made of one guy beating the crap out of me until I learned not to get the crap kicked out of me” he scratched his chin with his chopsticks “He did show me a lot of moves, but he was mainly taking his anger out on me.”

“Was there a solid reason for him to be mad at you?”

“Yes” Izuku deadpanned. Shinsou sighed.

“One day, Midoriya, one day, I will find out your tragic backstory. All of it.”

“Never!” Izuku said in a Smeagle voice as he slurped on his soba.

They giggled until Aizawa trotted their way and took them to a classroom. They were both
too tired to do anything else at the moment. They sat at different desks and the man stood in front of
them. “One important part of being a hero is communication. There will be many situations where
you will have to work and share information with other heroes while you have to be silent. For these
situations, there is the military sign language. It’s not, by far, as comprehensive as JSL, but you can
care simple messages with it. Sign Language is a course for the third years, but you will take it now. I
expect you to learn it by the end of this week, am I clear?”

“Yes, Sensei.”

“You better.” He sneered before he started showing them.

Sign language was, for the most part, pretty understandable, at least for the main verbs and
pronouns. Kanji were hell to learn, but they sometimes did have to fingerspell. They did this for four
hours before they returned to the gym, where they changed places. Shinsou was the one who had to
learn how to walk this time while Izuku got to be thrown around for another four hours.

Training with Aizawa was a lot similar to training with Dabi. The man explained the
moves, explained what he did wrong, what he did right, and showed him the moves in detail...
before proceeding to use him as a human mop. Well, at least this time it was a mattress.

No matter, at the end of the day, they were both sore and barely trotted to the man’s car.
Izuku barely kept from falling asleep in the car while Shinsou dozed off. At some point, the purple
petunia leaned on his shoulder and Izuku was too tired to move him.

They reached the apartment complex. Aizawa woke them up by punching the honk then
telling them to move their asses inside. When the half dead teens finally made it to the apartment,
they were met with the sight of Present Mic, with his hair down, chatting vividly to a girl from class
B.

“Shirichi?” Izuku asked.

“Midoriya” she said and smirked before turning back to Present Mic.

“Little listeners!” he piques in at a level higher than advisable. “I hope Shouta doesn’t kill
you too much.”

“No, sensei, it’s the bearable amount of deadness” Shinsou said and Izuku giggled. He
stopped when a heavy hand landed on his shoulder.

“The guest room is that way, the bathroom is the second door down the hallway. I suggest
you go to sleep, we wake up early tomorrow.” Izuku yawned, shoulder his backpack and went to
the room. He took his things, took a short shower and collapsed on the futon. He vaguely heard
Shinsou doing the same, but, at that point, was too far to care.

Chapter End Notes

ok, for one, i am fully aware of the number of people who wanted me to murder
bakugou. and i really did want to. but, in the context of the fight, it didn't work. you see,
when bakugou vented after the licence exam, izuku repeatedly tried to defuse the situation, to get the other to stop and see reason, and only fought when he would otherwise get his face smashed in. here, it was
1-an exercise
2-both kids were at fault for not stopping
as for Aizawa telling Izuku to deal with his feelings, h doesn't know quite yet about his self destructive tendencies or how bad they are, and it will be relevant later

ok, as for the training, this is what the internet sais ninjas used, so yeah

anyway, thanks for a comments and kudos

[link to tumblr]
[link to discord]
He should’ve expected it, but Aizawa sprinkling cold water in their faces at five o’clock in the morning still came as a surprise.

“Get up. We’ve got things to do.”

“Sensei,” Izuku whined as he wiped his face and looked at the vaguely humanoid shape in the door.

The man gave away an amused huff. “Get dressed” before he left the room.

Izuku stretched his muscles and comforted Shinsou, who seemed to be mourning his lost sleep. As he pulled his pants on, he felt something long and thin in his pocket. Slowly, without attracting attention, he pulled it out and stared at the three darts.

*Oh, right. I forgot that Dabi gave me more.*

He nodded to himself and put them back, glad that he hadn’t lost them. They ate a Spartan breakfast before going back to UA. It was a lot like the other day, except that today, after about an hour of learning to walk, Aizawa made him go through an obstacle course that was most likely copyrighted by Ninja Warrior. After a few hours him and Shinsou were given half an hour of recovery and a juice pouch each before the man stepped in front of them.

“Time to spar, kids,”

“What?!” they both yelled.

“You’ll fight each other,” the man said, a sly smirk playing on his lips. “Until I deem it necessary stop. You are allowed to use your Quirks, but you can’t have weapons” which basically meant that they had to fight Quirkless.

The two boys got up, threw each other resigned looks and walked to opposing ends of the mattresses. When the man gave the signal, Izuku ran at Shinsou. The taller boy didn’t have the chance to do dodge and Izuku swiped his feet from under him and slammed him on the mattress before turning him on his belly and placing his knee on his spine. Shinsou panted on the ground.

Aizawa blinked once and then just said “Again”

The next three matches were a bit harder, but Izuku still won. Shinsou wasn’t doing bad per se, he managed to land a few pretty good hits, but Izuku always managed to push him out of bounds or slam him into the ground, and the grenette knew that no amount of apologies made the purple petunia any less mad.

“Shinsou” Aizawa sighed as he got closer. “Midoriya is smaller and faster, but you’re taller and heavier. Use that advantage.”

They started once again. Izuku circled Shinsou who looked at him with wide, untrusting
eyes. Suddenly, he dashed, but he must have had some giveaway, because the taller teen side-stepped and caught his arm. Izuku wrenched himself out before he could be thrown into the ground, but the fingerprints burned into his skin. He panted and eyed the other boy warily; Shinsou looked determined and ready to fight.

Then he jumped to attack. Caught by surprise, Izuku took a step back, dodged, but the taller teen locked his foot and pulled. Izuku lost his balance for a few seconds, which was more than enough time for Shinsou to push him out of bounds. Before Izuku realised what was happening, he was face first on the ground, something big and heavy resting on his back.

Aizawa approached them. He wasn’t smiling, but his eyes were twinkling with sadistic joy. Izuku glared at the man but that, of course, got him nothing. “Midoriya” he said “Can you get up?” Izuku tried to move. He usually would have been able to wiggle out of a normal restraint, but this time, the weight was too big. He suddenly realised that Shinsou was literally sitting on him.

“No” he huffed in defeat. He heard Shinsou chuckle.

“Alright, then. Both of you, get up and go to lunch. We’re busy”

They trotted to the showers before they fell at their table. They wished that Hatsume was there, but she was interning at an agency at the moment.

“I wonder how many things she will break and, or blow up by Monday?” Izuku asked as he munched on his lunch.

“I don’t know, but she’ll probably put the fear of god in the poor bastards. She explodes half the lab three times a week when we’re there. And we’re 90% of her impulse control.”

Izuku almost choked on his food as he laughed and Shinsou, always the hero, saw it fit to more or less punch him in the back as hard as he could. Izuku coughed and thanked him before he inhaled the water in front of him.

After they finished their lunch, they walked towards the same classroom as the other day.

“Do you remember what we studied yesterday?”

“Yes” they showed him and the man gave a gruff approval, like he was expecting them to fail and they just robbed him of the pleasure of looking disappointed. They kept learning new codes and emergencies as well as certain rules they could bend if they were to be caught. After two hours, Aizawa told them to pack.

“Sensei?” Izuku asked.

“We will go on patrol tonight, so we’ll go home and try to get some shut eye. You’d better sleep, because you won’t last the whole night if you are exhausted.” He said as he eyed them and sent the silent threat of letting them fall if they were stupid enough to go there without any kind of rest.

“Ok” they said. Now that it was day, Izuku got to see where exactly the man lived. It was fairly close to UA, and this time, they made it on foot.

*He must’ve taken the car yesterday because he knew we would be dead on our feet.*

They made it to the apartment. Present Mic wasn’t there, but Izuku saw a very fat, orange cat lounging on the sofa. Very very fat.
“Can I?” Shinsou half asked and half squealed.

“No.”

The boy looked very disappointed but, even with the pout, he somehow managed to make it to the guest room. Izuku fell asleep fairly quickly, even though the sleep was all but restful. When he did manage to get up later, he felt exhausted. Not now, you dumb fuck of a body. Get up. In the end, he managed to bully his body into looking out the window. It was dark outside. Shinsou was snoring lightly beside him, and Izuku didn’t want to wake him up. He doubted that the teen got enough sleep. The greenette pulled out his phone.

10 PM. Huh. Aizawa would probably come and wake them up soon. The boy would have wanted to go back to sleep, but he knew it would take too much time and that his teacher would wake him up anyway. So Izuku just laid back on this futon and read the news he didn’t get the other day, trying to get his body into a half functioning state. He wasn’t going to mess this up. he wasn’t. the news didn’t help his mood, since they were all but good.

The Hero Killer was wreaking havoc in Hosu. Two heroes down, one dead, one injured. Izuku thought of Iida. He was in Hosu, interning with Manual. Please, please Iida, don’t do anything stupid.

Eventually Aizawa came, but he let Izuku be the one to wake Shinsou up. The boy looked positively murderous, but what can you do? The greenette was sure that the way he shoved him awake was probably kinder than any way their teacher would have chosen. Now they had to get ready for the patrol. Their costumes were at Aizawa’s place, so they didn’t have to go back to UA to get them.

Izuku was beginning to realise that his was pretty heavy, but he was lucky that it was mostly centred on his torso. It would take some time to get used to it, but he would manage. Shinsou’s costume was dark purple, which went really well with his hair. Around his mouth there was something akin to a mouth guard, except it looked more like a speaker. He had a pair of goggles shoved his head and a few pouches at his belt. They nodded at one another, silently accepting not to judge the other’s costume and followed the man out the door.

Izuku’s costume was a little bit changed too. Now, his goggles were bulletproof and he wore a helmet, that wasn’t tied to mouth-guard.

“Sensei, where are we going?” Izuku asked.

“To a denser district; the bigger the population, the more villains there are. That’s why most hero agencies are in big cities. I need to see how Shinsou reacts in dangerous situations and Midoriya needs to find a different way of handling opponents other that bashing them over the head with a really heavy object.”

“It’s worked before,” Izuku grumbled, not particularly because he disagreed, but because he didn’t like he constant attacks to his person. Shinsou sniggered behind him, but Aizawa made no comment or even addressed it. The man kept walking and Izuku looked for any potential villains. They entered the more confined areas of the city, dark shadows stretching over walls and pavement, all three people letting them fall and engulf them as they moved.

“Do you know what is one of the main differences between normal heroes and underground heroes?”

Both Izuku and Shinsou shook their heads. “Normal heroes patrol, not necessarily to catch villains,
but more to scare them off from committing crimes in the first place and assure the citizens. That’s part of the reason so many of them are so flashy. But no prevention system is 100% effective—so that’s where we come in. Because of that underground heroes can’t afford to be flashy; for us that’s more of a disadvantage. Take villains by surprise, and don’t be afraid to fight dirty. Honour means nothing when you’re dead.”

He didn’t say anything else and Izuku got the feeling that there was more to that story, but didn’t press. It took them an hour to reach the crowds, but they didn’t join them. Aizawa kept moving at a steady yet fast pace, melting into the shadows that took him as one of their own. Tokoyami would be jealous.

Suddenly, they heard voices. Aizawa rested on the wall and the two teens followed. Izuku blinked as he listened to what they were saying.

“Look here, newbie, in know you think you are big shit, but you’re not. The boss wants his protection fee and you might want to pay.” One very gruff voice said. A slithered, almost reptilian voice was that one that responded.

“I’m here on my own and I won’t pay any protection fee to some brutes like you.” The other hissed.

“Choose your words wisely, or we might bring you to him in pieces.”

“And who’s this boss of yours, huh? That bird masked bastard? Give me a break”

The words meant nothing to Izuku, but the boy could see a slight frown in his teacher’s lips. This bird masked bastard is important. He looked at Shinsou who nodded. He understood.

Izuku looked at his teacher and, hoping that he wouldn’t mess this up, he signed.

Do we attack? Well, it wasn’t that articulate, more like attack? But his teacher understood that and shook his head. He then jerked it and tapped his ear.

Not yet, keep listening.

It wasn’t really standard, but it worked.

And they did. The first man started to growl. “Look here, you purple haired prick, you will show some respect to the boss before I bring him your guts as garlands. You have no right to talk like that about him, especially when you are killing on our turf!”

The next moment, there were some screams and Aizawa nodded once before he entered the scene. The purple haired fucker was a guy with a reptilian mutation Quirk and a huge mane of purple hair. He held a long knife stained with blood. There were six others here, two of which were writhing on the ground. The reptilian villain threw them a caged look before he turned around and dashed madly on an alleyway.

“I’m going after him!” Izuku yelled and didn’t wait for his teacher to respond before he broke into a mad sprint after the lizard. Izuku wasn’t all that familiar with this district but, from what he gathered, neither was the villain. The boy heard steps behind him and turned around to see one of the other villains swinging madly at his head.

He ducked and jumped to the side before climbing on an emergency stair. This was a closed area and he had no idea what Quirk the other had. Bricks exploded near his head, so he hauled himself over the edge. He laid down, breathing through his mouth until he heard the man furiously strolling away.
Izuku got up and watched the man go. He laid low and kept to the shadows as he followed the him. He made sure that his handcuffs were in place before lowering himself and following. The roofs had became his area of expertise and Izuku was more than comfortable with observing from there. The buff villain ran and ran until he met the lizard into a dead end. The lizard held up his knife, but the buff guy opened his arm, a purple flame igniting into his palm. The next moment, a brick near the villains head exploded.

*Some kind of telekinetic explosion? A power ball with late detonation?*

The reptile man got hit in the shoulder and fell with a cry.

*No time for that!*

Izuku jumped and landed on the man. Or, that had been the plan but, unfortunately, he missed and landed near him. The villain grabbed his jacket and slammed him into the wall. Izuku winced before he surrendered the jacket and rolled away from the villain, landing near the lizard. The villain yelled and pulled out a gun.

Izuku didn’t have the time to dodge. The only thing he registered was the deaf pain in his arm.

“What!” the villain yelled “I erased your Quirk, hero ling! What are you going to do now?”

Izuku blinked under the goggles. This situation probably warranted some kind of reaction. Or, at least something better than his lack of brain to mouth filter could conjure. “Yes, you definitely destroyed my Quirk.” He deadpanned. “My Quirk, 100% gone now. *Oh, how I’m going to miss it.*”

Both villains seemed pretty confused by his words and Izuku would have revelled in that a little longer, had it not been for the very familiar and welcome voice behind the man.

“Really now, is that the best you can do?” all the attention turned toward the purple haired hero strolling leisurely down the alleyway.

“You wanna die too, brat?!” the villain said before his gaze locked and he relaxed.

“Good” Shinsou said as he got closer. Izuku felt like smiling, but didn’t get to, because, the next second, a blade was pressed to his neck and a reptilian vice whispered in his ear.

“Not one step, purple, or I gut your friend.” Both teens froze and Izuku didn’t dare look at the attacker. He felt his head moving left and right before a hand slithered to his belt and grabbed a smoke bomb. The pin came loose and the greenette found himself coughing on the ground.”

“Izuku!” Shinsou yelled as he kneeled near his friend. Izuku coughed but gave him the thumbs up, looking after the villain. The villain was gone. The other villain was still frozen. Steps echoed in the distance and the boy looked up to see his homeroom teacher dash into the alleyway. Even with his eyes covered, the greenette knew that he was glaring at them.

*We are so dead.*

~O~

They weren’t as dead as they had expected, but deader than they would have preferred. Aizawa restrained the villain, took him back and seated him near the others, and, after checking that they were all right, he proceeded to growl at them about how irresponsible they were, that they always have to check in with the others and that they were only children who should sit fucking still.
The speech was mostly directed at Izuku, since Shinsou had been half allowed to go as backup.

After that, the police came to take their report on the mission. Tsukakuchi probably tried to be reassuring, but Izuku could only feel the pit in his stomach growing. The report had been brief, Aizawa had been there all the time and glared particularly viciously at the teen. After a while, around three AM o’clock they were allowed to leave. They walked in a tense silence towards the apartment and Izuku wrung his hands for the bashing he knew would come. Shinou threw him apologetic looks all the way. Izuku smiled awkwardly and mentally said his prayers. He hoped he would make it till the morning. They reached the apartment and Aizawa locked the door.

“Shower and bed” he said. The boys scrambled to the guest room, but Izuku didn’t get to make more than a few steps when a voice colder that arctic winter stopped them both. “Not you, Midoriya.” Shinsou threw him a look that was probably meant to be encouraging but only really conveyed I’ll make sure to say nice things at your funeral and ran away.

Izuku turned around and faced his teacher. Then, he took a deep breath and fell into a deep bow. “I’m sorry for being reckless, Sensei. I understand your concern, and I’ll try my best to respect your wished in the future.”

The man sighed. “Get up, Midoriya.” Izuku straightened himself and looked at the man. He looked tired and, even if the fire wasn’t burning as bright as before, the ambers were still glowing, ready to spark at the slightest hint of disobedience. Izuku realised that it will take a lot more than an apology to get the man to forgive him. “I understand you, but I don’t think you understand me. In know that old habits die hard, but you need to learn to rely on people. Do you know what could have happened?”

“Well…”

“You could have both died, Midoriya. You’re not heroes yet, far from it, and you have no experience, you’ve had luck, so far, no matter how good you think you are, you only took on street thugs. Those were part of a bigger, more dangerous organisation, on par, maybe even higher than the League”

Izuku gulped.

“You could have been killed. You could have gotten Shinsou killed. What am I supposed to tell your mother when you return in a coffin?” Izuku winced at that, but didn’t look up. “What you should have done was wait for me to finish them and then we could go in a team. But you were too stubborn, too reckless and I’m honestly not sure how you’re still alive!”

“I’m sorry, sensei.” Izuku said, but it sounded hollow, even to his own ears.

“Don’t say it if you don’t mean it” he growled and Izuku gulped. “Listen to me and listen well. I know that in some situations you have to act to save someone’s life and I won’t reprimand you if you truly have no choice. But if you ever have the choice to take the smarter way out, and you ignore it, I will make sure you can never become a hero again.”

“What?!” Izuku looked up, eyes wide in horror.

“A reckless hero is a liability and a risk for those around them. If you can’t prove me that you can do more good than harm to you or your peers, then you are not fit to become a hero. Am I clear?”

Izuku felt his eyes water, but he only bowed his head deeply and nodded. “Yes sensei.”
“Good. Take off your shirt and come into the kitchen. You’ve been favouring that arm since we entered the station; I want to make sure it’s not something serious.”

Izuku nodded and followed into the kitchen. He took off his shirt, remaining in a tank top and looked at the ugly bruise that was already starting to form. The man looked at it before pressing an ice wrapping on it. “Keep it there for a few minutes.” he got up and took a small container. “Rub this on it after you shower. It should stop the swelling.” He said before getting up and going to his room.

Izuku looked down and stared at the fat cat before he shook his head and went into the shower. The hot water managed to wear him enough to properly feel all the bruises he had gotten. Five minutes after, he collapsed onto the futon next to Shinsou. “Still alive?”

Izuku sighed and covered his face with an arm “Unfortunately”

“What’s with the arm?”

“Bruise.”

Shinsou looked him up and down. “He really gave you a thrashing, didn’t he?”

Izuku sighed. “He threatened to ban me from ever becoming a hero again.”

“That’s rough buddy.”

Izuku lifted his hand and was about to ask if that was what he thought it was before Shinsou bolted up.

“Stay here!” he said, as she exited. He returned a few seconds later and dumped a heavy mass of hair on his belly.

“Didn’t Aizawa say not to touch his cat?”

“He won’t mind”

Izuku glared. “I’m not going to lose my place here because of a cat!”

“Have you ever had a cat?” Izuku shook his head. “Well, let me tell you this—if they don’t want you near, they leave. You have no control over where a cat might or might not sit. So, try to relax and get some sleep. Fluffy here should help.”

“I seriously doubt that Aizawa named his cat Fluffy!” Izuku grumbled but turned laid back and closed his eyes. The cat was purring on his chest.

~O~

The next day Aizawa let them sleep up until 10 AM before he dragged their asses back to UA. They trained in hand to hand and stealth the first part of the day while Shinsou learned how to climb. Aizawa was a little rougher than usual, but, at this point, Izuku didn’t expect anything else. He was still sore by the time they had lunch. The after classes were pretty normal, with Aizawa teaching them through sign language and about the laws and some such nonsense.

It was interrupted though when a phone rang in a very obnoxious melody that was Present Mic singing a very cheesy song at least 10 years old. Aizawa answered and listened, frowning and groaning after the first minute. He ended the call not long after.
“Change of plans, there is an emergency I need to be part of. Today’s lessons are finished, you have independent studies.” He was frowning, slightly glaring at the device like it had personally insulted his cat.

“With all due respect, Sensei, you seem to be running low on milk and coffee.” And some things such as antidepressants and sleeping pills if you asked Izuku “ Would you mind if we go do the groceries?”

The man pondered for a few seconds. “Fine. You go do the groceries. You, Midoriya, I need you to go pick up something from Hosu. That idiot broke his speaker again neither of us had time to go pick the spare part. There’s a store that manufactures exactly what we need and we have a contract with them. Can you do it?”

Both boys nodded and, not thirty minutes after, Izuku found himself on a train, waiting for his stop to arrive. He scrolled through his phone and sent Iida a message that he would be there. Iida left him on read. Rude.

Izuku shrugged and read the news.

Suddenly, a hero crashed through the wall and Izuku, along with the rest of the train screamed. Izuku panted as he looked at the Noumu entering crawling in the cabin.

_Crap, crap, crap._

A man with a wind Quirk kicked the Noumu out of the train and Izuku looked out the train.

The city was in chaos. There were fires everywhere and a lot of Noumus seemed to be flying around. Iida. Izuku took a deep breath and lounged out of the train car, landing on the concrete and running aimlessly until he reached the middle of the chaos.

*I have to find Iida. I have to make sure he’s ok.*

*Wait, remember what Aizawa said. You can’t run in aimlessly or you’ll get killed. You need to take at least a hero with you.*

*But what if I’m wrong?*

*But what if you’re right?*

Setting his mind, Izuku started running. “Sir, please, can you come with me?”

“Run away, brat”

“Miss, I’m afraid the hero killer might be nearby”

“I’m a little busy!”

It went like that, everyone was just too busy with what they were doing to pay attention to him. Izuku felt like pulling his hair out. He kept running until he heard. “Midoriya?!?”

The greenette turned around to face the heterochromatic teen. “Todoroki!” he almost cried in relief. Behind him, Endeavour was burning a Noumu, his flame turning a very familiar blue.

He shook his head. No time for that now. He looked at his classmate. “Help me. I’m afraid that Iida went after the Hero killer and, if I’m right, he won’t stand a chance.”
“Then what are you waiting for?” Endeavour walked towards them. “If you are right, you’re wasting precious time. Go there and, if you’re right, stall him until someone more capable comes along” the man growled and walked towards a different Noumu.

Izuku, who didn’t need any more prompting, ran away yelling. “All right, Todoroki, I’ll send you the location!” he said as he ran away.

*The hero killer’s victims have always been isolated and alone. That means places with little to no witnesses.*

Thankfully, Izuku was, by now, an expert when it came to such things and he found his friend soon enough. Iida was laid on his back, motionless, bleeding heavily. Izuku watched the hero killer’s blade raise and didn’t waste any time.

He broke into a run, took off his backpack and slammed him into the man before stepping in front of his friend. While the villain was still gathering his bearings, Izuku quickly sent his location to everyone in his contact list.

The hero killer righted himself then looked him over. “Oh” he said “It’s you again.”

Izuks tsk-ed. *He might be allied with the League of Villains.* “Iida!” he yelled. “Can you move?”

“No. he cut me and …. Now I can’t move”

*So he needs to cut you to paralyse you.* It made sense. That was the only way the Hero Killer could have cornered so many heroes. He then noticed the pro hero Native.

*Well, it was a good life, while it lasted.*

“Can you not kill my friend?!” izuku yelled.

“Midoriya, this has *nothing* to do with you.”

“Go away, brat; I have no intention of killing you tonight.”

“Please, Midoriya, you have to leave!”

“Like hell I have to!” he yelled back, studying the villain.

*Fuck, fuck, fuck.*

“If you think that I’ll let you die just because it is convenient, then you clearly have *not* been paying attention to my saving-people policy, Iida!”

“Brave words, brat. But I have to kill these two. If it ends up in a fight between you and me, the weaker will be killed. Are you ready for it?”

Izuku gulped and tried another strategy. “*But why?*”

“What?” he squinted his eyes and his blade lowered a few inches.

“You say it is your duty to kill them, but why do you have to?”

“You said it yourself, all those months ago. There are no true heroes, so it remains to the power of people like us to cleanse the world of them.”
Izuku blinked.

“So...let me get this straight; you plan to set an example for people to follow, to raise awareness and prompt better heroes...with murder?” Izuku blinked and stared at the killer.

The man growled. “I tried talking to them, again and again. They didn’t listen and it was all in vain. No one listened. I tried and tried, but no one changed and society continued to work. But now, people are seeing my point. And they will. They will see the truth of this rotten society, even if I have to carve it in the flesh of those fakes”

Izuku blinked “Are you kidding me?!” he cried, a little more dramatic than strictly necessary “How is this going to help? How did you exactly send your message to the people?! What makes you think they even know what you want?” he shook his head, faintly realising how he probably sounded and hoping both him and Iida would make it for the greenette to explain “You have no plan. Do you think going around and murdering heroes would send a message?! It doesn’t, people are just scared!” he shook his head, grabbing the roots of his hair “Did you even think this through other than the murdering part?!”

I’ve been spending too much time with the Management course if I ended up lecturing a villain on how to correctly market murder.

The man growled as he lifted his sword once again. “I have made my point, and I won’t explain myself to you. So I repeat myself, brat. Move away before you share their fate.”

“If I have to run away when my friends are in danger, knowing for a fact that they will die, how in the world would I be able to call myself a hero?!”

The man smirked. “Huh. Looks like you are worth keeping alive. Piece of advice, kid, if you make it out, stay away from Shigaraki. He had his eyes on you.”

“What?!” he blanched and the Hero Killer took the opportunity to attack. And Izuku would have been slashed, had it not been for the wall of ice coming at full force at the villain. Stain jumped in the air and landed on an emergency stair.

The wall crumbled. “Next time” Todoroki said as he walked into the alley. “Wait for backup.”

“Todoroki!” Izuku cried in happiness. The hero killed tsk-ed and landed on the shards.

“Another brat. I assume you won’t run away either.”

Todoroki responded with a wave of flame. The man jumped on the wall and launched himself at Todoroki. Izuku seized the moment and grabbed a stray bottle from the ground, smashing it into the man’s back. The villain didn’t fall, only stabbed a knife into the boy’s arm. Izuku cried and took a step back. The man licked his fingers and, in a moment, Izuku’s limbs locked. He was paralysed.

Stain walked past him and attacked Todoroki. Izuku was turned away from it, so he only felt the heat and the cold and Iida’s desperate yells for them to stop. It felt like an eternity until he could move again, but, when he did, he turned to see Todoroki freeze on the spot.

“You brats are a pain in the ass” the man growled as he walked a steady pace towards Iida.

I have to do something. Izuku internally cried, but his hand hit a long, pen like shape in his pocket. His blood stopped for a second and the tendrils of hope he didn’t dare let bloom made their
way into his heart. *Well, this might work.* So, right before the man lifted his sword, in a desperate attempt to finally make it out, Izuku dashed at him.

Stain turned around to par him, but Izuku jammed his dart into the naked biceps. For a few seconds, nothing happened.

*It didn’t work, it didn’t work, it didn’t work. Crap, we’re dead.*

But then, the man’s eyes rolled in his sockets and he collapsed like a sack to potatoes.

Izuku panted for a few seconds before his knees gave in and he collapsed too.

~O~

After a few more minutes, Iida, Todoroki and Native got up and helped him up. Izuku was exhausted and he needed more than a little help to stand.

“Let’s get you to a hospital” Todoroki said. “You have that stuck in your arm?”

“I do?” he looked at the dagger popping out of his arm. The thing stood proud and erect, as if gloating of the damage Izuku would no doubt feel after the adrenaline wore off. “I’ve had worse” not really a lie. He’s been stabbed before. All the other three threw him weird looks as they exited the alley, dragging the hero killer by the rope Todoroki managed to find in the trash. How? Izuku was too tired to ask.

Iida stepped in front of them and bowed deeply “I must apologise. Both of you were injured because of me. I was blind and lost everything.” He started tearing up.

“While you were an idiot” izuku said, “You were also grieving. That doesn’t make it ok, and it is partially my fault for not stepping in when I had the chance, but I can at least understand you” he sighed and shook his head. “I’d yell a little bit more, but I’m too tired. I’ll yell at you later.”

Suddenly, the heroes arrived. Izuku watched them blankly as they came. *Well, now you show up!*

They started asking if that was the hero killed, but, at this point, Izuku just tuned them out. He was too tired. This is why he probably didn’t hear the female yell “Get down!” and found himself clutched into the claws of something, getting farther and farther from the ground with every second.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for all those wonderful comments
i don't really have anything else to add so

* tumblr
 discord*
where I have some very uncomfortable conversations

Chapter Notes

i want to thank everyone who commented and kudo-ed (is this even a word?)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It took Izuku ten whole seconds to realise that he was flying; or, better said, that the thing carrying him was flying. He blinked and started struggling in the grip. But then he saw exactly how high he was. He looked back. His friends and a few heroes were screaming. Endeavour was the only one who actually did something thought that didn’t really mean much when the thing carrying him seemed to avoid the fire ball with ease.

Izuku wasn’t sure if he was disappointed it had missed or happy that he wasn’t being served extra crispy on the pavement right now.

Wings were flapping and Izuku looked up. the thing had a beak with teeth and two long arms stretching below. Noumu.

Fuck.

Before Izuku even had the time to properly panic, the thing let go of him and Izuku landed on a hard surface. Something in his fool twisted and the boy let out a yelp of pain.

“Well...” said a familiar voice and Izuku looked up only to see the face that had been haunting his daylight look at him with a tilted head. “I’ve heard about cats bring dead rats back...but that’s not a cat, and you seem pretty alive…”

Izuku tried to get up, to step back to do anything other stand sitting there like a dumbass but his foot gave out under him and he fell back down with a yelp.

Yes, and I’d like to stay that way!

Shigaraki turned towards the Noumu slowly disappearing into the dark hole. He blinked a little as he seemed to think the situation over before he shrugged and turned towards his captive.

“Hello, Midoriya, we were just talking about you.”

Piece of advice, kid, if you make it out, stay away from Shigaraki. He had his eyes on you.

Izuku took a few deep breaths and tried to stand up once again, only for his foot to twinge again. He seemed to be on a roof-a very tall roof at that- so he didn’t think he could jump. Still, he dragged himself a little further away from the man, who was still looking wistfully at the burning city. “Look, I know you had to be a hero and all” he spat the word “But couldn’t you just kill the guy? That would’ve spared us so much trouble.”

Izuku gulped and looked at the villain who was clearly waiting for a response. “Didn’t really have the chance”

Shigaraki turned to him, seeming to be keeping a smile in “So... you would have if you’d gotten the chance,”
“That’s not what I meant!” Izuku said quickly as he used a water tank to lift himself on two feet. He couldn’t really run, but he didn’t want to look weaker than he already was. Shigaraki smiled under his hand. “Wait... aren’t you... I mean, isn’t he you ally?”

The villain soured. “That bastard is not with the league. Fucking... *self assured asshole*” he started to scratch his neck “Him and his bullshit philosophy.” He crossed his arms and glared in the distance, looking a lot like he was refraining from stomping his foot. “Should’ve killed him when I had the chance. Now he’s in custody, then in prison, and I just know he’ll piss me off from there too somehow.”

Izuku stayed very still hoping against all hope that maybe Shigaraki would be annoyed enough with Stain to forget he was there.

No such luck, of course.

Shigaraki shook his head. “The problem now” he said slowly turning towards him “Is what am I going to do with you?” he said stalking forward. Izuku gulped and scratched his head.

“You might try and let me go?”

Shigaraki only snorted, now less than a meter away. He had stopped, studying him, obviously waiting for a good answer as to why the fuck he would spare him. Izuku gulped and opened his mouth, but the man didn’t let him start. “Tell me, Mido-tan,” he leaned in “Where are your heroes?”

“I-” He started. The man slammed his hand on the wall, caging the teen.

“Where. Are your heroes” his other hand moved to his throat and Izuku didn’t have enough time to move away before four fingers wrapped themselves around his neck. “Who’s gonna stop me from putting all my fingers down? Who’s gonna stop me from killing you, from kidnapping you, from feeding you to the Noumus, *mmmm*?”

Izuku swallowed, knowing full well that the man could feel his pulse racing. He tried to take a deep breath but that only made the hold on his throat seem tighter “No one.” He finally said, a bit hoarse. The man seemed satisfied, but didn’t take his fingers off his neck.

“Right. There’s no one here to help you. But if they’re not here, where are they?”

“In the city” he breathed once, mindful of the finger hovering above his skin.

Shigaraki nodded. “*Mhm,*” he slowly took his fingers off his neck and walked towards the edge of the roof. “Look at them. So preoccupied with the visible problem they forget the ones right under their noses”

It would be so easy to push you right now. But you’d hear me run.

“Tell me, Mido-taana” he said, dragging the last syllable out patronizingly “If they had to chose between you and Stain, what do you think they’d do? A student or the Hero Killer.” He turned towards him. “Which one’s more valuable?”

Izuku gulped and looked down. The wrinkles under Shigaraki’s eyes turned into a frown. “Answer me” he growled. Izuku gulped.

“The Hero Killer” he whispered finally
“Do you see my point now? How broken this society is? How fucked up the heroes are?”

“Bold of you to assume I didn’t before,” he said before slapping his mouth.

_Fuck, fuck, fuck! I just sassed Shigaraki! I’m dead._

But Shigaraki didn’t kill him on the spot. Instead, he started chuckling, which turned into full-fledged laughter. Izuku just stood there awkwardly, trying to hold his weight on his aching leg. Shigaraki took off his hand to wipe a tear before putting it back on. “God, it’s been a while since I heard that meme,” He placed the hand back on his face and turned towards the teen. “You are an interesting item. Wonder how much you’re worth.”

That sentence felt very uncomfortable

Shigaraki faced him fully, wind blowing from behind him, moving his silver hair. He looked like he wanted to say something before something was launched towards him from behind the water tank. “What now?”

_Aizawa was not having a good day. First, the kid he was going to start calling Problem Child fucked up teamwork, then, he’d been called to a meeting regarding the Yakuza because, guess what, the people captured were snitches, but not _well informed_ snitches, which landed him in a nasty situation where him and Nighteye had to convince the other heroes of one course of action that seemed to be the most logical course of action, but, apparently wasn’t for everyone else in the room._

Aizawa didn’t like these new villains, mostly because they had almost no information on them. It wasn’t like the League of Villains, they were new and most of the villains captured had only been recruited recently. No, the Yakuza and, more importantly, Overhaul were there for a very long time and had managed to stay off the radar until recently. And, of course, Aizawa just had to be the one assigned to the case. Not like he didn’t have enough on his head already.

He was just exiting the meeting when he had gotten a notification. What he saw had made his blood freeze:

Noumus. The hero killer. But the one thing that turned almost stopped his heart was.

_Hosu._

_Midoriya is in Hosu._

He cursed under his breath and tried to contact the problem child. He didn’t answer.

Aizawa took the emergency train, keeping in contact on the NTRK.

NTRK, short for Network, was a platform on which every Pro hero was registered and it was solely for emergencies. It was supposed to work in every situation, on the smallest shred of signal, and it was to inform Pro Heroes of where help was needed. There were constantly sidekicks and analysts on to keep them updated and such, and Aizawa was hoping there will never be something about a green haired child.

Just when he was about to get down, he finally got a message from Midoriya. It was his location and nothing else.

Cursing under his breath, he turned on the GPS and started following the signal. Good thing teens these days didn’t go anywhere without their phones. It was about ten minutes after when
the signal suddenly skipped a few miles in one go.

And then it stopped.

Somewhere high up.

Aizawa looked up. Noumus could fly.

Fuck.

Thankfully, he was closer to this location than he had been to the previous, said tower being in sight, so the man sprinted his way to the target. He sent an emergency message on NTRK, but he doubted that, with all the chaos currently on, they were able to come to his aid.

It didn’t take him long to make his way to the roof, but he left the building at the last level and climbed, since he didn’t want to go through the door. When he reached the edge he felt dread pool like lead in his stomach.

“You’re an interesting item. I wonder how much you’re worth.”

The underground hero peeked over the edge and saw Shigaraki’s back as the villain was talking to his terrified student. Midoriya was barely standing up while the man took a step forward. Aizawa attacked.

He sent his scarves towards the villain, who dodged. “What now?” Shigaraki growled. Aizawa didn’t answer, instead he sent his scarves towards Izuku, wrapped them tight and threw the boy over the edge to get him out of the way. Midoriya let out an undignified yelp, but nothing over that. He turned his attention towards Shigaraki, who was scratching his neck nervously, glaring at the older man. “Eraserhead” he spit “Why do you always ruin my fun?”

Aizawa responded by sending another wave of scarves his way. The villain hisses and jumped into a warp gate. The hero stared for a few seconds at the place Shigaraki used to stand, but, no, it didn’t look like he was coming back. He took a few deep breaths and looked over the edge. Izuku was hanging there, in a slight balance, still tied up tight, wiggling a little bit and trying to get leverage on the wall. Aizawa huffed. For some reason he had assumed that the boy would be out of bounds already.

Escaping capture. Another thing to put on the list of what to teach them this week.

“How many times will I have to throw you off a roof?” he growled as he pulled the boy up.

Izuku looked up. “Technically, the first time I jumped, so…” he said, but yelped when he touched the concrete. Well, sass and sense of humour were still in place, so he wasn’t that bad.

Aizawa kneeled and started untying him. He noticed the knife in his arm and the awkward way he held his foot. “Can you walk?” he asked as he looked for some other injuries. The boy’s side was drenched in blood, but he didn’t seem to notice. Izuku shook his head. Aizawa sighed before he turned around and gathered the kid on his back. The kid yelped and almost strangled him before he relaxes and rested his head in his shoulder. The hero took the stairs down.

“Can you explain to me how exactly did you manage to get taken hostage by Shigaraki on the roof?”

Midoriya breathed heavily and let out a small whimper before he spoke. “A Noumu picked
me up from the street. It dropped me there. Shigaraki seemed surprised, but then he started to
monologue.”

Aizawa sighed. “Alright. Just so you know, tomorrow, you’ll have to give an official
statement.” The boy nodded and remained silent while Aizawa called an ambulance. Izuku was
breathing heavily, the adrenaline finally wearing off and the pain coming in full force. Aizawa
wished he had some painkillers. Being stabbed was not fun, even for the kid with a pain tolerance a
little too high for normal teenage standards. If he didn’t pass out yet, chances were he wouldn’t. He
reached the last floor and left the building, only to be assaulted by medical staff. They took him in the
ambulance and Aizawa watched until the teen was laid on the gurney before he sat down and
messaged Hizashi, to make sure that Shinsou had actually gotten home.

~O~

Izuku woke up the next day with the sun just ruining his mood. What an asshole. He sat up
and blinked owlishly as he looked around. He was in a hospital room. There were two other beds in
there, and he could peak Todoroki’s red and white hair on a pillow. He looked at the other bed.
That must be Iida.

He yawned and rubbed his eyes. Why are we in a hospital? Suddenly, like a torrent, all his
memories returned.

*Stain. Noumus. Shigaraki...*

*Aizawa.*

He collapsed back on the bed, clutching his head as he tried to make sense of whatever the
fuck was going on in his head. He had fought the hero killer. He had fought the hero killer. Oh, boy.
He had been taken by Noumu, threatened by SHigaraki and rescued by Aizawa. *You just had to get
kidnapped, didn’t you? You just had to be a burden for him, couldn’t you have paid more attention
to the Noumus who were, I don’t know, assaulting the city.* A second thought that hit him as he was
trying to get rid of his current thoughts was.

*He’s gonna be pissed that I got into a villain fight on my way to groceries.*

The boy breathed in deeply and let himself rest on the pillow. Truly, he needed to relax
and try to forget. Or remember. Or make up what to yell at Iida for his stupidity. Yeah, that sounded
like a plan. *Phantom fingers clutched around his neck. How breath from chapped lips on his ear.*
Izuku slapped himself. *No, that was fine, you are fine.*

He opened his eyes and grabbed his phone. The attack had yet to properly be covered, as
the news were making speculations regarding the Noumu. Izuku sighed and shook his head.

*Oh, crap, I have to tell everything that happened!*

Izuku looked at his bandaged arm. They must’ve stitched it. It was weird to wake up in a
hospital after being injured. Usually, it was only Dabi dragging his bleeding body back to Iho and
her sister and then reaping the pain in the morning. After a while, he had started taking cases they
wanted just so he could afford medical support later. They seemed to know his moral code, because
they never gave him anyone who didn’t at least deserve a little beating.

He sighed and opened his phone once again.

~Illegals~
Me
[heya]
[how’ya’doin’?]

Dabi
[what now]

Me
[did you see the news?]  

Dabi
[please tell me you weren’t somehow involved]

Me

Dabi

[you know]
[I’m pretty sure you’re actually cursed]
[and you cursed me by proxy]
[you’re a horrible person]

Me
[but you love me]

Dabi

[I hate you]
[I hate your guts]
[never speak to me in public, I don’t know you]

Me
[oooooh]
[I love you too, you nasty raisin]

Dabi

[so]
[what happened?]

Me

[wel, you know those big, brainy thingies ?]

Dabi

[yeah?]

Me

[wellill]

[I... may or may have not gotten grabbed by one and almost dropped to my death]

[fun times]

Dabi

[ok]

[you are cursed]

[can you drop by at the end of your internship]

[?]

Me

[why]

[do you miss me]

Dabi

[I miss the feeling of my fist connecting with your face]

Me

[you hurt me D:]

Dabi

[that was the point]

[so when are you dropping by?]

Me

[sure, if I’m still alive]
[you almost get killed three times a week]

Me

[that means I'll make it]

[don’t you see]

[I’m ~immortal~]

Dabi

[cool theory, wanna test it]

[or are you that one guy not down for murder?]

Me

[fuck you]

Dabi

[sorry, you’re not my type]

[and you couldn’t keep up either]

[you’d break]

[so small and fragile]

[your sorry ass won’t last a minute]

Izuku stared at the screen, cheeks burning, trying in vain to think of a good comeback.

Dabi

[I made you uncomfortable, didn’t I?]

Me

[no]

Dabi

[liar]

[you’re blushing]

Izuku looked away from the phone, trying to calm his skin tone.

Dabi

[you’re looking away, aren’t you]

[?]
Izuku buried his phone under his pillow and covered his face with his hands. He got a few more messages, but didn’t check on them right away.

“You’re blushing” came from the other bed. Izuku looked there to see Todoroki sitting up in his bed, looking at him. The greenette looked down. “Is it Uraraka?”

“No!” he cried, more from shock than anything else. Shouto nodded.

“Is it anyone I know?”

“I highly doubt it.”

The texts had stopped and Izuku pulled out his phone to look at the rest of that conversation.

Dabi

[make me]

Dabi. Izuku thought about his blue flames. Then he thought about Endeavour’s blue flames. Izuku looked at his classmate that was still awake. The jaw was pretty similar, the face structure…

“Todoroki?” Izuku asked. The teen looked at him. “If you don’t mind me asking, and it’s totally cool if you do, how many siblings do you have?”

The heterochromatic teen looked out the window. “I think three.”

“And, where are they?”

The boy shrugged. “Fuyumi lives at home. Natsuo is in college. Touya...I don’t know” he shrugged. “Probably dead.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Well, he was smart and ran away after this” he pointed at his scar.

“Oh” Izuku looked away.
“Yeah” that was the moment Iida woke up.

“Morning” he said groggily. Izuku looked at him, keeping his face blank.

“Iida. Are you all right?”

“Yes” he seemed a little bit confused.

“Does anything hurt or require any immediate attention?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Good” Izuku took a deep breath before he started yelling. “What the fuck were you thinking?!” both Iida and Todoroki pulled back at the outburst. “Look, I get it that you were grieving and in pain and all that, but for fucks sake, you are class president! You are supposed to be one of the smartest in class! So, please enlighten me, how in the ever loving fuck did going after The Hero Killer seem like a good idea?!”

He panted. He looked at Iida who was looking down. “Please, please, please, I’ve seen people die because they attacked on rage and emotion. I did that two weeks ago and got this in case you don’t remember” he jammed his finger at his own scar “And I was lucky. Why we were lucky now? I don’t know; guess that guy really didn’t really feel like killing kids tonight,”

He looked away, takin in a deep breath. “But the thing about luck is that it runs out fast, Iida. Don’t get drunk on it and mistake it for skill.” He surely wasn’t making that mistake twice, the scar across his back proof enough for his teenage stupidity. Really, he couldn’t thank Dabi enough for taking him out of that gang fight.

Iida took a deep breath and bowed in his bed, as much as his arms allowed it. “I understand, Midoriya. I’m sorry. I was selfish and rash, but I will take this opportunity to learn from my mistakes and fix them before I have to repeat them. Thank you both again for coming to save me, I could never repay you.”

“You don’t have to” Todoroki said. “We are heroes, this is our job description.”

“But still…”

“Iida” izuku interrupted before the boy had the chance to fall into a pit of self depreciation and despair “If you really want to make up for your mistakes, then make sure you don’t repeat them. If you can, right here and now, promise me, promise us that you will never rush into a potentially deadly situation without thinking first, then, from me, everything is forgiven.”

*Kinda hypocritical of you, don’t you think?*

Todoroki nodded as if he agreed with his internal monologue.

“All right” Iida bowed again. “I promise that I will be a respectable and dependable hero and that I will never put my life of someone else’s in danger when it is in my power to save it.”

Izuku opened his mouth to say something, but the door opened right then.

“Well, well, well, looks like the troublemakers are awake.” Aizawa said completly not amused. Two other people came from behind him: the pro hero Manual and a man with a dog head, which Izuku knew was the chief of police, Tsuragame.
“Sensei!” both Iida and Todoroki said, the first one bowing once again.

“I’ll chew all of you out later. Right now, this is the chief of police, Kenji Tsuragame.

“Please stay where you are. So you’re the UA students who put a stop to the Hero killer, woof.”

Then the man proceeded to tell them about how Quirks aren’t supposed to be used as weapons and all that Quirk regulation bullshit. At that point though, Todoroki stood up and started talking over them. Izuku agreed with the points he was making though he would have preferred for the information to be delivered other way.

“Todoroki!” Izuku finally yelled over the heterochromatic teen.

“What?!” the boy whirled around, a few seconds from catching on fire.

“Wait” was all Izuku said before he turned towards the chief of police. “You say that we couldn’t have done it without jurisdiction. Thing is, in case of a villain attack or disaster, a hero has the right to delegate a civilian to use their Quirk in the name of the law. And, both me and Todoroki had express order from Endeavour to stall the Hero killer.” Todoroki looked at him, eyes wide as he remembered the events from the previous night.

“I see...” Aizawa said in the tone most might have considered disinterested, but Izuku had seen enough of to know it hid rage.

“Yes!” Izuku nodded vividly. “I realised that Iida might be in danger, and started asking for heroes to come and help me. They were all too busy, so Endeavour told me to go and stall him until the heroes might arrive. So I did.”

“That’s true” Todoroki chimed in quickly. “I was there. I even told Midoriya to contact us when he found him, but Endeavour was too busy, so he sent me.”

“There’s one more thing I’ve been wondering about” the dog headed man said. “The Hero Killer was knocked unconscious by a paralytic dart. Which one of you got a hold of it and how?”

Izuku blinked and tried to keep his face impassive. “I found it” he said. “I was grabbing madly at the ground and stabbed him with the one thing remotely sharp.”

He could feel both Todoroki’s and Aizawa’s gazes on him, but he kept looking at the policeman , putting on his most innocent face, even through his heart was hammering.

_He knows about your past. He knows what you are._

_He’s never gonna believe this._

_There is no way this’ll stand up._

The chief rubbed his chin. “We’ll talk with Endeavour. If your story holds, there won’t be any need for legal measures against you. But there’s also another problem” he pulled out his phone.

The next minutes they watched a clip of different security cameras where the hero killed was caught right before he murdered heroes. His speeches were different each time and the one who edited the videos was skilled enough to make him look just and the heroes begging for their lives pathetic. Despite the singular angle, it was pretty well made. Heck, it got even a part of his speech when he was trying to talk with the Hero killer. It also had his backstory and philosophy.
Izuku felt sick.

“Yes. We had taken it down multiple times since it appeared, but it keeps being reposted. There’s nothing we can do.” The man shook his head. “Anyway, please take care. We don’t know how the people might react, so it’s better to just be vigilant” he said and Izuku could swear he winked at him.

The rest of the day was pretty well. Shinsou had assaulted him with messages of “How?” and “Why?” and a lot of pictures of Aizawa’s cat (Her name was Garfield). His classmates had plagued the group chat with questions and punctuation marks and he had gotten a lot of calls from his classmates to ask them if they were all right.

Mom had come and, after crying for half an hour and yelling at him about his recklessness, she shared cookies with them. Which was nice. Todoroki seemed like he was a few steps from Heaven when he bit into one.

Right now, it was close to night. Him and Todoroki would be released next day, since their wounds weren’t that bad while Iida would have to stay and take care of his arms. Izuku stared at his phone.

What are the chances that Dabi is Touya?

He couldn’t really ask the heterochromatic teen, the boy would become suspicious. Hmm, Dabi is twenty four-twenty five. If he left when Shouto was six, that means about nine years ago. He would’ve been..fifteen-ish at the time.

His fingers hovered above the screen. Should he really do that? The man seemed to be really sensitive about his past.

Don’t look into my past. Ever.

I’m not looking into his past, I’m looking into Todoroki’s.

With that moral conundrum out of the way, Izuku started skimming through his phone, pages and media articles about the No.2 hero. Not much info there.

Wait. Dabi is pretty well trained. Could...could he have gone to UA?

It wasn’t too farfetched. Even if Shouto was the perfect child, it wasn’t a bad idea to have backups.

He looked photo albums from the year Touya would have been a first year. Not very much. Then, he went to the Sports Festival. There he had more luck. Even if he didn’t make it to the Tournament, there was a pretty good shot of him in a capture the flag game.

Touya had red hair and blue eyes. Izuku zoomed on the picture. Yes, the facial structure seemed to match. He pasted it into paint and roughly drew the scars Dabi sported with so much pride and changed his hair to black.

The picture was incredibly crude, but it was obvious that the kid there and the man that had trained him for the past year were one and the same person.

Izuku blinked.

Dabi is a Todoroki.
He had no idea what to do with that information.

Chapter End Notes

ok, so, i'm pretty sure that 99.99% of you are actually familiar with Japanese honorifics, but i didn't find out about the last one until a few weeks before i had written this chapter, so here it is
'san' - the polite way to address someone, a superior or someone you just met, also a form of respect for the elderly
'kun' - used mainly for males as a term of endearment, or when you become more than acquaintances, all the way to friends
'chan' - used for girls and small kids in general. attaching it to a male name is the equivalent of a guy named Alexander called 'Little Allie'
'tan' - the one i actually didn't know about, is a very cutesy form of 'chan'. quoting my Japanese speaking friend : 'a small fragile kitten wrapped in rainbows'
why is this important, you may ask? bcs shiggy attaching 'tan' to izuku's name is his way of saying that izuku's small, meek and basically vulnerable towards him.
sorry for the long-ass lesson, i just wish i knew all of that when i started reading fanfic and i hope it helped at least some of you
don't forget to comment

[Links to Tumblr and Discord]
The rest of the internship went on pretty smoothly. Or, as smoothly as it could go with a pretty pissed off underground hero for a teacher and two teen interns who were both a different flavour of fucked up.

Izuku got his gun too, so that was a plus. He’d spent a few hours with Snipe trying to learn how to aim and how to deal with kickback and how to use a gun in general. True, the gun didn’t use bullets, only tranquilisers, so that was a small loophole in the law Aizawa didn’t comment on, which meant that he was probably proud of. Even so, Izuku was, by no means, actually good at it. like sure, he could hit the ten meter target, but that was about it. He had no sense of aim whatsoever, and Shinsou made sure to constantly remind him of that.

But he was getting better.

Aizawa was still teaching them logistics, and had recently added rope escaping to the curriculum. He’d also asked the boy, with all the bluntness of a sledgehammer, if he could pick a lock or some cuffs. Izuku admitted that yes, he could, and they had spent another hour doing just that. It was pretty good, and Shinsou had a certain dexterity the teen would have appreciated a lot back when he was just starting to learn and Dabi got mad at him for looking too much into his past and locked him in a broom closet (which his shitty flat had for some reason), telling him to get out. Izuku had given up after a few hours and promised not to stalk Dabi anymore, which the man accepted with scepticism.

Now Izuku was feeling bad for looking and finding his friend’s real identity. Dabi had always been secretive about his past, and, the revelation that he was related to the burning trashcan made the greenette understand why. All those mentions about a shitty father made a lot more sense now.

I won’t tell him. He doesn’t have to know that I know. He deserves to have his secrets.

Izuku woke from his reverie when Aizawa called him to the mattress. The stealth lessons had moved from walking to climbing and running without a sound, to the point where he learned exactly how to breathe. The man had also had him pickpocket a jacket with bells on it and itchy powder on the inside pockets to make sure he wasn’t distracted by discomfort. When the boys had complained, the man told them that some criminals taught their disciples to do so by putting razors inside, which has shut them up pretty fast.

The man was still pretty mad at him and it showed. He wasn’t yelling or outright glaring at him, but there was this air of annoyance and rage coming off of him when he glared. And it wasn’t for no reason either.

The news were pretty bad. Like, not all that bad, because people were praising him and his friends for taking down the hero killer – well, they were praising the winner of the Sports Festival more – but they were also blaming the teachers. After all, what was he doing in Hosu in civilian clothes when he was supposed to have an internship? Groceries wasn’t going to cut it. so, a lot of the bad attention was centred on the teachers. Aizawa had managed to keep his teaching licence, but the media wasn’t all that good to him either, if the internet had anything to say about that.
Of course he’s mad. It’s your fault after all, you just went against orders and put him in a bad spotlight. What if he had to quit, huh? What if he had lost his licence because you couldn’t do the one thing you were told to? What if he gets mad and decides to take you to the police anyway?

The boy gritted his teeth and looked at his teacher. That was right, he had messed up badly. He would have to make up for it, for sure.

Izuku made his way to the mattress, distantly glaring at the device that beeped in his wake. He passed a tired Aizawa and collapsed near and already collapsed Shinsou, both boys covered sweat and grime. Their teacher wasn’t wearing his normal outfit, having a loose tank top and his hair in a bun instead. “You’re both decent at hand to hand, but that’s not the only thing you have to worry about. Most assailants, if they don’t have Quirks, they have weapons, though not that many” he grumbled. “Do you know what to do if someone comes at you with a knife?”

“You run” Izuku said at the same time Shinsou replied “You fight”

They stared at each other and Izuku shook his head. “Shinsou, I don’t care what you see on TV or online. If someone comes at you with the intention to off you and they have a knife, you run away.”

“But we are heroes, aren’t we supposed to fight?”

“There’s only a small chance that you, as someone unarmed and with the experience we have to stand against an opponent.”

“And how would you know that?”

Izuku clamped his mouth shut and looked at his teacher. Aizawa rose an eyebrow as if to ask for himself that’s right, how would you know that, Midoriya? Izuku sighed and shook his head.

“Well, first, any fighter worth their salt won’t show their weapon. They’ll just come at you, jab you in your kidney or something and bam, you’re dead!”

That had almost happened once, but Izuku had managed to dodge it out of habit more than anything. He still remembered how he had asked Iho a similar question once and the woman had just relentlessly attacked him with a training knife until he got the idea. While it was true that you could technically win if someone attacked you with a knife, you were unlikely to do so with usual training techniques. “Not to mention, a knife’s a short range weapon. It’s not like a sword where you need room to swing. If you get too close they can hit immediately and if you get too far they can just throw it.”

“And what if they corner you and you have to fight?”

Izuku rose an eyebrow “You can’t get cornered. Have you ever seen someone that wants to get out with all their being?” the other shook his head and Izuku barely bit back a well I did.” If it is only one assailant, you can bite, you can punch, you can give up your jacket to fuck off. But only if you are one hundred percent focused on escaping; if you focus fifty percent on fighting and fifty on escaping- that’s when you get cornered. Plus do you have any idea how long it would take to build the reflexes necessary to be able to react in time to someone throwing a knife at you?”

From the corner of his eye, he saw Aizawa swing for his head. He ducked and slid away before he fully realised what was happening. His teacher remained in the air, with his hand a few inches from where his head used to be.

“Apparently about ten months worth” he said and Izuku glared.
Aizawa turned towards the both of them. Shinsou didn’t look all that convinced. “Both of you have good points, why don’t we test it?” he pulled out two markers and threw them at the boys. Shinsou got the yellow one and Izuku got the pink one. He looked at his teacher. “Most knives are pretty small and easy to hide. I want to see the two of you attack each other with these and I want the both of you to prove the point you’re trying to make.”

“But I’m not all that experienced in parrying a knife.” Shinsou exclaimed.

“Well, then I guess you’re lucky that these aren’t real.” Aizawa said and Izuku could see the amusement in his eyes. He sighed, shook his head and took his pink marked with him. They walked to opposite ends of the mattress and faced each other. Izuku didn’t wait for thecher to give the go ahead, before he dived in. He feinted a stab in the gut with his right, but punched Shinsou with his left before he trailed a pink line down his cheek. Shinsou staggered back, but then regained his balance and came for him. The taller managed to land a hit on his arm, but Izuku head butted him. As Shinsou cupped his nose, Izuku pulled him forward and kicked behind his knees, tracing a line at the base of his spine as he fell to the ground.

“Dead” he said as he staggered back.

“Again” Aizawa said.

They went like this for ten more minutes. Shinsou had most of his face, neck, arms and clothed covered in pink streaks while Izuku had a few hits on his arms and legs, some overlapping the scars already there.

“Fine, fine” Shinsou panted.

“Yeah” Izuku said as he panted near him. Aizawa threw them some juice pouches and let them rest for another ten minutes before said.

“Now that we’ve proved that let’s try something else” Izuku didn’t like the look in his eyes, “Midoriya, I want you to try and attack me.”

“What?!” Izuku yelped and didn’t have to look to know that Shinsou was smirking.

“You heard me. You get the knife, I won’t have a weapon. I want you to try to attack me.”

“Sensei” Izuku pleaded. Aizawa remained unmoved. Mentally saying goodbye to his limbs, Izuku stepped on the mattress. Shinsou was grinning from the side-lines. The greenette took a deep breath and lounged for his teacher. Aizawa waited for when he was close to step out of the way and flip him on the ground. The man bent his arm behind his back painfully, forcing him to release the marker.

“As you can see, I avoided the problem altogether.”

“What?” Izuku whined from where his face was pressed into the mattress. Aizawa dug his knee into his back even more.

“More so” said the man ignored him. “I put him in a position where he can’t get up” Izuku tried to kick his feet upwards but to no avail, he didn’t have a good enough range. His teacher eventually let him go. “But Midoriya was mostly right, you kids don’t have the necessary training to properly fight someone with a knife yet. Or with a weapon in general. One thing you need to remember is: if you are in a fight, bring it on your level.”

He looked straight at Izuku who, in the meantime, had dragged his ass near Shinsou.
“Midoriya did that at the Sports Festival. He didn’t have a Quirk to defeat them so he used support items to replicate multiple Quirks in your advantage. You also used their weaknesses and Quirks against them, and kept the element of surprise.

“In a fight, you won’t have that luxury. But there are something you can do to even the playing field. If someone has a weapon and you don’t, one of the first things you should try is to make them lose that weapon, to make you equal, or you can try and steal that weapon to get above.”

He took a deep breath.

“If you ever find yourself in a position where you are attacked by someone with a knife, you do like Midoriya and you run. But, if you have to fight, the best way would be to try to immobilise them.”

~O~

It was Sunday morning when Izuku was making his way into the district. It had been a really long time since he had last been here, with all the surveillance and the business he had to run, not to mention that Aizawa didn’t let them have the slightest break in their training. Izuku wasn’t stellar at shooting, but now he could hit the body, so that was a plus. Snipe had told him that, while aiming was important, shooting was the only sport where you were allowed to go for the hard.

_Forget what you see in movies about shooting the leg and stuff like that. The reason you are allowed to shoot for the head is that, wherever you hit there’s a chance you kill them. The body is full with blood vessels and, if you shoot the leg, the chance that they die from blood loss is pretty high. Not to mention, a lot of people die from shock. You don’t use bullets, so I would advise that you shoot for the torso, since it’s the biggest area._

He was also pretty good in hand to hand, after Aizawa had cleared some mistakes.

Now, he was heading towards Dabi’s. He’d let his smartphone at home, choosing to take on of the phones his mom had received from various companies instead. Izuku had both her number and Aizawa’s memorised just in case something happened. Though, he knew that if something really happened and he called Aizawa, the man might make good on his threat and actually throw him in juvie.

He pulled the hood over his eyes and made his way to the building. Looking around for potential witnesses, he climbed and entered through the window. Dabi was laid on the ratty mattress, scrolling through his phone. He looked at him from the corner of his eye. “Sup’ brat?”

“Not much” Izuku said as he threw himself on the mattress too, staring at the dents on the ceiling.

“Heard that you survived your internship.”

“Yeah” Izuku groaned and covered his eyes with his arm. “Sensei gave us one day to recover.” he sighed “Joy.”

Dabi chuckled and got up. He walked towards the fridge and pulled a soda out. he threw it to the boy, who, not looking, got the can in the stomach. “Auch!” he yelped and sat up. Dabi chuckled and got himself some beer. Izuku sighed and started drinking too

“So” the glorified Molotov cocktail said. “How was the fight with the Hero Killer?”
Izuku groaned. “Do you have any idea how much of it I tried to forget about that?!” it was kind of hard. He had gotten back the night before, and, right before bed, he made the mistake of looking on popular hero forums. The response to the hero killer was very similar to what is had been the Sports Festival. A lot of people praised him and he had even gotten gifts via police station.

A lot of people were accusing him of complicity, theories varying wildly from mildly amusing to downright gruesome. Had it not been about him, Izuku would have enjoyed reading them, but, like this, the moment he saw the word “Vigilante” he felt sick. The boy was trying to forget the hate mail and Dabi wasn’t helping.

“Still, there are so many things online and that video, I’d like to hear it from the horse’s mouth.” Dabi said. Izuku sighed.

“I stumbled upon my classmate, who was in the process of getting speared by Stain and did something to stop it. I tried to stall him as long as I could, and it kinda worked, but I still got stabbed.”

“You’ve been stabbed before” Dabi pointed out. Izuku groaned. “Tell me, what was he like? Stain I mean.”

“Huuh” the kid tubbed his temples. “Honestly? Terrifying. He really looked like he was ready to kill us.”

“But your unrivalled charisma stopped him from doing so?”
Izuku chuckled. “Something like that”

“What about his reasons?”

“He killed people that he didn’t consider worthy to be heroes. Which is, mind you, anyone unwilling to die out of the goodness of their hearts.”

“Well, you think that too.” Dabi pointed out.

“I do not!” Izuku sat up. “Heroes are shitty but that doesn’t excuse murder!”

“Nothing’s ever changed through peace alone” Dabi muttered. Izuku decided to let it slide, not in the mood to argue with his friend on morality. “You said I you were waiting for backup. Why?”

“Well, I was supposed to have backup!” Izuku threw his hands in the air. “But the burning trashcan didn’t come?”

Dabi spit his beer. “Endeavour?” he choked.

“Yes!” Izuku yelled. “Damn, I hate that guy. The one time, I decide to follow the rules and what does he do?” Izuku deepened his voice, obviously mocking the hero

“Yes brat, I understand there’s a hero killed on the loose, why don’t I send you, a fifteen year old, to deal with him?” Izuku grabbed his hair and pulled. “I get that he was fighting the Noumu, but it would it have killed him to send one of the ten-something sidekicks he had around to help us?” Izuku collapsed back on the mattress. It took him five seconds to calm down and realise that Dabi was laughing and choking on his beer. “Oh my god, Dabi, you ok?”

“Yes” he coughed a few times before he righted himself. “I am” he took a deep breath and
turned towards the teen. “Still, you could’ve died. Are you sure you want to be a hero?”

“Of course” Izuku said. “Stain might be right in one area though: the world is in dire need of better heroes and better laws. Laws that don’t stop people from protecting themselves and let criminals loose. Laws that won’t save that fucking trashcan because of his fame and money alone.”

“First, what makes you think that you alone can change the society?”

Izuku looked at the man who was leaning on the wall. “Someone has to try.”

“What makes you sure you’ll make that far before dying in a ditch?”

“I made it this far, haven’t I?”

“Fair point” Dabi shrugged. “Why do you hate the man so much?”

“I met him” Izuku deadpanned. “Really, a delight to have that man near you” Izuku heaved a monumental sigh. “You’re dad’s an asshole”

It took him a second to realize what he said and another second for his stomach to hit the soles of his shoes. He drew a breath to say something—though he wasn’t sure what but Dabi cut him off before he even began.

“What”

All amusement was suddenly gone from his voice and Izuku looked up. The man was looking coldly at the teen, brows twisted in something between a frown and a glare. Izuku gulped.

Fuck

He tried to keep a relaxed visage. “I said he’s a real asshole.” Dabi started outright glaring now.

“How did you find out?” his voice held the threat of something Izuku didn’t want to steer. He contemplated lying for a moment before he realised that it would do no good.

“His fire has the same colour as yours if heated hard enough.” He said but didn’t look at him.

“What else?”

“Nothing else.” Izuku tried.

Dabi slammed his hand on the counter.

“What. Else.”

Izuku gulped and looked at the man who seemed enraged. “I...” he took a deep breath “I asked Todoroki. I asked him if he had any siblings. He said that he had three and one had ran away. I thought that Endeavour might have sent his other kids to UA too, do I looked up the Sports Festival from when you would have been about my age. I found one Touya Todoroki with the same Quirk and facial structure and body type as you.”

“Fuck” Dabi punched the wall and Izuku flinched. He wanted to say something, but his voice was stuck in his throat. Smoke was coming out of Dabi’s scars. The man panted and stood up, staring at the wall. “You just can’t mind your own damn business, can you?” he panted. He then
turned around and knocked a bottle that fell and rolled on the ground.

“Fuck” he whispered and then more empathically “Fuck” He groaned and punched the wall once more. “I told you not to look into my past!”

“I didn’t look into yours, I looked into Shouto’s!” Izuku tried to defend himself.

Dabi let out a mirthless laugh. “God, you don’t even realise you have a problem, do you?” he looked at him and took a step forward. “It’s not about that, it’s about me specifically asking you not to try and find out more about me and you setting out to do just that!” he panted. “I knew you had no idea of the concept of people not agreeing with you but this-! Society, heroes, people telling you no, you can’t you just have to get it your way.” He threw hands, smoke filling the small apartment “You can’t take no for an answer, no matter how much people suffer from it!”

He let out a rage filled growl.

“Why don’t you hold hands with Shigaraki, on that one, huh? He seems to have a similar problem. Or better yet, why not Endeavour?!”

Izuku let out a strangled cry as he stood up.

“How can you say that?!” izuku cried, because they both knew that, if there was any instance where he held Endeavour’s arm, it would be to break it.

They both panted until the rest of the sentence hit the boy like a bulldozer and he felt all blood drain from his face.

“How do you know Shigaraki?”

Dabi heaved and clenched his hand into a fist. “Leave” he said.

“How do you know Shigaraki?”

Izuku gulped and dashed out the door. As he climbed down the stairs, some of the steps cracked and the boy stumbled and rolled towards the bottom. The sound echoed in the building, but no one came. Izuku pulled his hood over his head and dashed back home, blinking to get the wetness out of his eyes.

~O~

Izuku shook his head and leaned it on the desk. The week with Aizawa was taking its toll and he was still trying to get back into the schedule he used to have before. Everyone was talking about their internships and all that and the greenette listened intently with his eyes closed. It had been a few days since the fallout with Dabi and the guilt was eating him away. He asked you one thing, one thing. Your first and only friend, the one person that gave a shit about you when he didn’t have to, he asked you one thing and you fucked it up.

Yeah, sleeping was hard when he kept replaying that same scene over and over again, and the continuous chatter wasn’t helping.
“….now, if you want to talk about the most traumatic transformative experience, it’d be the one you three had” Kaminari said as they turned towards them. Izuku lifted his head and glared at the boy. Oh, the hero Killer. Yeah, that happened.

“I was so worried”

“I’m glad you are still alive”

“Good luck that the heroes came.”

“Actually” Todoroki said and there was a certain coldness in his voice. “Midoriya was the one who knocked him out. The heroes only came while we were dragging him out of the alley.”

Izuku sighed and buried his head in his arms as all the questions were directed his way. The police had wanted to put a gag order on them, but one: they were showed clearly in the video dragging the hero Killer out of the alley, and two, there was no need. Endeavour admitted to sending fifteen year olds to their potential deaths, so there was no fault on them. But still, he would have taken the gag order if it meant he didn’t have to deal with the constant pestering. Oh, well.

“I saw on TV” Ojiro said. “Is it true that the hero killer is connected to the League of Villains?”

“No” Izuku grumbled from beneath his hands.

“How do you know?”

Izuku finally deemed his classmates interesting enough to lift his head from his self-proclaimed hangover and glare at them. “Because I had their leader tell me to my face how much he hates the guy.”

There was silence for a few moments before the storm arrived and Izuku found himself assaulted with all the questions he had hoped he wouldn’t have to endure.

_Me and my stupid mouth. Stupid Shigaraki, stupid Stain._

Thankfully, Aizawa chose that moment to forfeit his sadistic tendencies and spare him the trouble.

“The Hero Killer incident is classified. Your classmates are not allowed to talk about it. so, stop harassing them and gather your things, we’ve got hero training.” Before he walked out of the classroom. Izuku dashed to the locker room and pulled his costume on before most of his classmates even made it inside. He then went to the training ground and waited for the teachers to arrive.

“I AM HERE!” All Might fell into the scene. Izuku looked at him and blinked while his classmates started commenting on the lack of glamour his landing turned out to have. The man cleared his throat. “Today, we will be making teams. While you had worked in groups before, you never worked in a large one. There will be a total of two teams. Each team will have a hostage to protect while the other team has to capture them. The first person to retrieve the hostage wins.”

“But that’s not all” Aizawa said as he entered the scene. Like a ninja. “You’re allowed to capture any enemies you wish to capture. Thing is, only the hostage has any value. The hostage is the one who wears a golden bandanna. Your bands should be hidden, but, once captured, you have to show yours. The captured ones will be placed in that cage” he pointed towards a cage that looked way too cheerful for the situation, with Nezdu’s smile plastered all over it.
“The lots will be drawn randomly” All Might said as he pulled a box.

_Not this again_ Izuku internally groaned.

The teams were made.

**Team A**

Todoroki Shouto
Yaotorozu Momo
Tokoyami Fumikage
Uraraka ochako
Iida Tenyia
Sero Hanta
Shoji Mezo
Aoyoma Yuuga
Kirishima Eijirou
Jirou Kiouka

**Team B**

Midoriya Izuku
Asui Tsuyu
Bakugou Katsuki
Ashido mina
Kaminari Denki
Hagakure Tooru
Ojiro Mashiaro
Koda Koji
Sato Rikidou

_Great, I'm in the same team as Bakugou. Joy._

Izuku mentally complained but let on emotion show under his mask. He sighed and shook his head.
Nothing to do about it, it’s not like he wanted him as an enemy, he just knew that collaboration would be near impossible with the blonde. They were given the bands and the location of their base and shooed on the field.

“Who’s the hostage?” Izuku asked the moment they were in their base.

“I am” Kaminari said as he pulled out the gold bandanna before placing it back beneath his shirt.

“We need a strategy. Maybe a decoy” Izuku started to mutter.

“A decoy is way too obvious” Bakuogu growled. “We need to figure out who their hostage is.”

“Having a decoy might work” said Tsu. “We just need to give them enough clues to point in that direction but not too much that it seems suspicious.”

“We also need to have a clear path toward the cage” Ashido said.

“We need to go in groups” Izuku muttered. “Less chance of being taken by surprise more chances of capturing people. Depending on the combo of Quirks that will come our way, we might have more or less chances of success.”

“Ok, so, that’s settled: we split into teams and go after the others. Question is, who’s the decoy?” Tsu asked.

“Deku” Bakugou responded and Izuku almost got a backlash by how fast he spun in his direction.

“Why?”

“Because they’re expecting it, asshat!” the taller growled. “They’ve been underestimating you since day one and you being the hostage feels natural. If they think that you’re the hostage, they will pay no attention to dunce face over there!”

Izuku gritted his teeth. He couldn’t undermine the truth of his strategy. “Who will make my team?”

“Each team needs someone long range and short range. There should be three teams.” Tsu said. “Mido, you can classify as short range, so you would need some distance heavy hitters. Kaminari is the one to be protected for real, and, since he is only good with short range, he will need someone good at distance. I propose me and Sato as his teammates. I’m good both long and short range, Sato is a heavy hitter and he also can carry Kaminari if he overuses his Quirk.”

“Makes sense” Izuku rubbed his chin.

“I suggest we put Ashido and Ojiro and Koda in the same team” Hagakure intervened. “Koda can be classified as long range, Ojiro is very skilled in combat and Ashido can keep people at a distance and also trap them. They could be a pretty good strike team if Ashido distracts them, Ojiro can fall from above in a surprise attack and Koda can control animals from out of sight.”

“That’s pretty good” Izuku nodded before he made some mental math and realised who exactly will be in his team.”

“No!” both boys said at the same time.
“Well, strategically speaking, it makes the most sense” Ojiro started.

“NO!” both teens in question repeated. Hagakure sighed. “Look, Bakugou is one of the most powerful people in this class, quirk wise. I am invisible and can classify as a short range hitter. You want Midoriya to take all the attention, right? What would draw more attention than the two of you, who obviously hate the other’s guts, on the same team?”

“It also works with your personalities” Tsu commented idly “Bakugou is arrogant enough to look down on Mido and be in the same team to make sure he doesn’t lose. And, seeing you two work together will take the attention off Hagakure.”

“I don’t like it” Bakugou said. Izuku gritted his teeth as he pondered over the plan, trying to find something wrong with it. Well, outside the fucked up match of their colliding personalities, which wasn’t a big enough obstacle to pass over, apparently. He couldn’t.

“Fine!” they both growled.

~O~

Aizawa and All Might were watching from the control room, ready to jump in if anyone got too close to getting seriously hurt.

“So” All Might said from his skeletal form. “How is young Midoriya?”

“You seem awfully interested in him lately” Aiawa said not looking away from the screens.

“Well” All Might rubbed his neck “You see, with his extracurricular activities and Nighteye’s interest in him, I’d like to see what came off young Midoriya.”

“You mean that you still feel guilty for breaking his dreams that one time and want to see if he’s still as bitter as when we caught him.”

All Might coughed in his palm. “Not really….”

“He can’t work in a team” Aizawa cut him off. “He can’t trust people, he can’t follow orders. He may be skilled with his gadgets and all that, but he lacks the abilities to work properly with others. True, there are few in this class who can work fluidly in a team, but both Midoriya and Bakugou seem strangers to the concept of accepting help. That’s not good.”

“Oh” All Might said.

“I am surprised that they decided to work together” the man said. “But I get the feeling that it won’t end well.”

Fate, as always a cruel mistress, chose that exact moment to prove him right when a portion of a building collapsed. Aizawa gritted his teeth and stomped out of the surveillance room.

~O~

Izuku dragged Todoroki’s unconscious body to the cage and dumped him inside. Who knew that the heterochromatic powerhouse was the hostage? Granted, Izuku will probably pay for the stunt he just pulled but, eh, what can you do?

Initially, their decoy scheme worked, they managed to capture Yaomomo, but then
Todooki’s team appeared. They had lured them into a building, where it would be harder to use much ice, at the risk of covering himself too in it. After that, Izuku had seen that Todoroki was the hostage and had the brilliant idea of pulling him into a different room when the others weren’t paying attention. From there it went on smoothly. That meant that him and Todoroki had fought in the dark until Izuku caught the taller teen into a chokehold and managed to knock him unconscious. The heterochromatic teen was already weakened, not used to using his fire, so it wasn’t really all that hard.

One of his grenades had slipped and collapsed the ceiling of the building they had been in, skilfully cutting Izuku’s contact with the rest of his team. Bakugou must be livid. Izuku thought as he closed the gate and rang the bell to signal that they had won. As if summoned by the magical deity that was Izuku’s crappy luck, the explosive blond stomped off to him, grabbed his jacket and slammed him in the cage.

“What the fuck was that, you fucker?”

“Well, I ….”

“Abandoned us and went on your own!”

“Like you wouldn’t have done the same!” Izuku growled.

“You could’ve died you idiot!” Bakugou yelled.

“And why do you care?!” Izuku finally snapped. The blond stopped. The grenette went on. “Really now, why do you pretend to care?! If it was after you, I’d be a splatter on the pavement right now and you wouldn’t have a Quirkless loser to deal with!”

Bakugou let him go and took a step back. Izuku continued. “You’ve never pretended, Bakugou” he flinched at the name “Don’t start now.”

The explosive hero in training looked livid, but didn’t get the chance to retaliate before the man also known as their teacher stomped towards them with murder in his eyes.

~O~

Aizawa sat in the meeting room, staring at the files of his students as he was ready to make them suffer through his exam. The atmosphere was pretty tense, three teams having already been decided.

“Next it’s Midoriya and Bakugou” everyone stopped and stared at him like he was crazy. He ignored them. “I’m teaming them up against you, All Might.”

Yamada cleared his throat. “Is… is this really a good idea?”

Aizawa stared each and every one of them down.

“Yeah, they don’t really get along” Midnight chimed in. Aizawa sighed.

“Their bad relationship is exactly the reason I’m putting them in the same team.” He evened the papers. “Bakugou is very strong, but also very hostile against Midoriya. Midoriya is also hostile towards him. Though I have told them a lot of times to get over it, they constantly refuse to even try to make better and it’s starting to affect their training. You have seen how they almost maimed each other that one time. Both Bakugou and Midoriya suffer from complete incapacity of accepting help from others, and, again, none of them made an actual effort to fix it. But, they are both
smart and they will soon realise that they can’t overpower All Might. There is only one way out of this scenario: working together. While I’m 100% sure Bakugou won’t want to cooperate, I’m pretty convinced that Midoriya will at least try so he doesn’t fail.”

“So let me get this straight,” Hizashi said. “The whole success of this mission rests on Midoriya’s capacity to convince Bakugou to work with him?”

“Yes” Aizawa deadpanned.

“It doesn’t really seem fair” Cementoss said.

“This exam isn’t meant to be fair” Aizawa said. “It’s meant to put them in a position similar to what they will encounter in real life. In real life you don’t have the luxury of choosing your partners. You have to work with what you get and make sure to find the way out. this exam has exactly one way out. it’s up to the kids to make sure they pass.”

“Still” Snipe said. “Don’t you think that Bakgou will hurt Midoriya?”

Aizawa sighed and rubbed his temples. “Midoriya is capable enough to stand his own against Bakugou, and his gadgets are enough to make up for the Quirk.” Still, they seemed sceptic. “He won the Sports Festival for Christ’s sake, give him some credit!”

Chapter End Notes

well, yeah, i know pairing them up in canon was a pretty shit idea, but this time, both sides are pretty big parts of the problem, so, yeah
don’t forget to comment

discord
tumblr
There are better, easier ways to transmit a message

Chapter Notes

yeah, sorry for the short chapter this time around

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The weeks leading to the final exams could be summed in just a few words.

Study.

Train.

Repeat.

The exams were no joke, but, thankfully, the whole weapon’s trafficking business was in the good hands of blood thirsty vultures, so, Izuku didn’t have to worry about that on top of everything else. Honestly he wouldn’t have minded letting go of the business up completely, given that he had achieved his purpose, but the co-dependency relationship he’d created was too strong; the Support Course wouldn’t trust Management just because he told them to. Also, they were also pretty much indebted to him and Shinsou for stopping Hatsume from blowing up the lab more than she already did. So, yeah, Izuku would keep going and see where that went.

It was also a good way to keep on good terms with the Management Course. Most kids didn’t know (he didn’t either until he had asked Dabi, who was, surprisingly knowledgeable on the subject), but their team would have a huge influence over their appearances in the media and their publicity. The reason most costumes were too revealing or tight was because it was more marketable, more appealing to the public. And, even though Izuku was planning on being an underground hero, he’d rather avoid future fights with anyone in the Business department. For the sake of his sanity if nothing else.

So, while his trusted backstabbers were handling his weapon’s business, Izuku managed to gather a small group of classmates for sparring. Todoroki, Uraraka, Kirishima, Shinsou and Tsuyu met after school and made sure that they were in good shape, both Quirk and in hand to hand.

When it came to more academical concerns, everyone had their way. Kirishima studied with Bakugou, Yaomomo held a study group and, all in all, everyone did their best. It was the day of the exam when they were in the cafeteria and Monoma decided to take him as a target, because why the hell not?

“Sorry, didn’t see you there” he chuckled and are you serious. Izuku glared as he rubbed his sore spot.

“Yeah, that cheap ass vodka must’ve clouded your vision” he spit as he eyed the glass. “Tell me, already so hopeless that you drink so you don’t remember the loss?”

Was that mean? Sure. But right now, he didn’t care. Monoma had decided to throw the hatchet and hell would freeze over before Izuku just stood and took it without a fight.

Never again.
He felt his classmates eyeing him warily, but he didn’t budge. Monoma clicked his tongue.

“I hear you guys ran into the Hero Killer” his gaze darkened “I guess the Sports Festival just wasn’t enough of an attention-grab for you, huh? You just had to pull another stunt-” he looked like he would’ve continued, but, thankfully, Kendo was there to whack him over the head.

“That’s not funny! Didn’t you hear what happened to Iida?” she collected his unconscious body off the floor and turned towards the rest of the table. “I heard that you’re worried about the practical exam. Between you and me, it’ll be robots, like the entrance exam.”

Izuku frowned. “Really?” that didn’t seem right.

“How do you know?” Uraraka asked.

“I’m friends with an older student!” she winked and walked away.

“Robots? That doesn’t…” he started.

“Match with our info,” Shinsou finished.

“What do you mean?” Iida asked.

Izuku looked at his friends. “Hatsume said the teachers requested the Support Department to make something to restrain the teachers” Izuku said.

“But that makes no sense if we’re fighting robots” Shinsou rubbed his chin. Izuku thought for a few moments before he slapped his forehead.

“Bet you fifty yen that it’s a logical ruse”

Shinsou blinked. “It’s Aizawa. I’m not taking that,” he deadpanned.

“What do you mean?”

The two former gen ed students eyed the heroes in training. “I don’t think it’ll be robots. That’d be too easy; plus, I don’t see how mindless destruction would prove that we learned something.” He rubbed his temples. “Moreover, they wouldn’t have asked for those things from the Support Course.”

“So...?”

“It’s a trap” Shinsou spoke. “Aizawa wants to draw us into a false sense of security to make sure we can’t prepare for the test.”

“Why would our teachers deceive us like that?!” Iida chopped the air. Izuku blinked and looked at him deadpan before both him and the purple petunia said at the same time.

“It’s Aizawa!”

That seemed to shut him up. Izuku sighed. “Shinsou, make sure to warn your class that it might be a trap.”

The taller teen leaned in his chair. “That seems awfully charitable of you.”

Izuku blinked. “I only went against the hero course when I wanted to defeat them! And, no matter how much I don’t like Monoma, I’m not gonna let a whole class suffer because of him.”
Shinsou groaned. “Yeah, he’s becoming a pretty big problem.”

“You should really pay attention to him” Uraraka said.

“I don’t really have the time” Shinsou gestured with his chopsticks. “I have to study too, you know?”

The metaphorical light bulb lit above Izuku’s head. “I might be have something” he pulled out his phone and waited till the other person responded.

[What now?]

“Hey” he put on his most cheerful voice. “Can I ask you a favour?”

[You’re kind of our boss, soo….]

“Great” he smiled. “Your class is marketing class 1-B after the Sports Festival right now, right?”

[How do you know our schedule?]

“Not relevant. Anyway, can you keep me updated regarding one Neito Monoma? He’s a little too antagonistic, I don’t want him to become a problem.”

[And you say we’re not a mafia] came the tired voice from the other end.

Izuku frowned. “We’re not.”

[Whatever you say, boss] he said, and Izuku could hear the smirk in his voice. [But you have to come tomorrow after class so I can argue with Tanaka. That colour scheme on the flamethrower is horrendous and I can’t make him change his mind!]

“Will do!” he chuckled and closed the call. Only to turn and face his classmates, who were looking at him with their jaws brushing the ground. “What?” he asked innocently.

“You sounded like you were ordering a hit” Shinsou said dryly.

“That was awesome!” Kirishima jumped in. Uraraka was laughing.

“I don’t condone whatever you just did!” iida chopped the air. Izuku blinked.

“I just asked a friend to keep an eye on Monoma”

The bell rang and Shinsou stood up chuckling. “Never change, Midoriya” he shook his head. And, with that, he melted in the sea of students.

The rest of the day went by quickly, though the lack of a death threat from Bakugou was pretty suspicious. Izuku shrugged it off and returned to his own studies. The next week passed fairly quickly, the written exams were hard but manageable and, in no time, the students found themselves in their costumes, waiting for their teachers to arrive and give everyone their assignments.

“Let’s begin your practical exam” Aizawa said with the same air the Reaper would probably have after thousands of years of taking people who stuck things too far up their asses and bled to death when they couldn’t pull them out. “Of course, it’s perfectly possible that you will fail the exam. If you want to attend the training camp, then you’d better not mess this up.”
Izuku nodded and clenched his fist while counting the teachers. They sure were a lot. Almost all of the ones from their year now that he thought about it.

“Knowing you, you probably asked around” Thirteen started “And you may think you have a vague idea of how this will go…”

“It’s a robot rumble, like the entrance exam!” Kaminari yelled.

“Fireworks! Curry! Truth or dare!” Ashido continued.

Fools.

Now they’ll probably change it now just to spite us Izuku mentally cursed his classmates.

“Actually!” Nedzu popped out of Aizawa’s scarf like the little demon he was, furtherly confirming that the black cladded man was actually an agent of the other world. More evidence was necessary.

“Various circumstances had demanded a revision to the exam format!” the mouse-bear-whatever-the-fuck-I-gave-up-too-long-ago said. “Well, you see” he said as he climbed down the human pillar of negative light, “Since we were worried about the villains, we will now focus on making the training as close to reality as possible. That means, flesh and blood opponents. As such, you students will be pairing up and fighting one of the teachers present here.”

Great.

“Your pairings and assigned teachers have already been decided. Your battles, your moves, your friendships with one another… all these factors and more were considered, so, without further ado….”

“Todoroki and Yaoyorozu will be against me” Aizawa said, plastering on his sadistic smile. Yeesh. Great it’s not me eh thought but cursed himself a second later when the unforgiving gaze turned towards him. “Midoriya is with Bakugou,”

What?

“Against All Might.”

The world stopped spinning. Everything froze. Then, too fast it started once again, his feet being swiped from beneath his legs, he blinked, steadied himself and made sure he heard that right.

On a second thought, I’ll take Death’s successor.

He turned towards the reason for his soon to be future demise and asked. “How have I wronged you?!” he cried. A few months ago, he wouldn’t have allowed himself to do that, but now he didn’t care. Death would be swifter.

The man wasn’t impressed. “Think about our whole internship.”

“I wasn’t that much of a brat!”

“Yes, you were” Aizawa deadpanned before turning and naming the other teams. Izuku slumped his shoulders and tried to ignore the muffled chuckles coming from his teachers. And some of the students.

They got in the bus and Bakugou strolled as far away as possible from the greenette. Izuku
shrugged and sat on another seat, thinking about what route he might take to even convince the blond to work with him.

That’s why Aizawa put us together. We can’t work in teams so, what does he do?

Let’s put the two people who want to kill each other in one group and force to collaborate!

Brilliant!!

He shook his head.

There’s nothing left to do now. I can only hope that I can convince him not to blast me on the spot and actually listen.

A shiver went through him at the thought of confronting the explosive blond. He hated himself for it. Fingers clenched against the cool handle of his Bo staff.

He won’t push me around. Not this time.

All Might, tried to break the ice, an attempt duly noted but fully ignored by both parties in question. The teacher sighed but returned to driving. They got off at a certain point in time, both students avoiding each other intently.

“Ok, so this is how it’ll go” All Might said.

“Fight?” Izuku said blinking at the man. “You can’t expect us to win.” Bakugou growled. Izuku managed to keep in a shiver. “No matter what we do that would be impossible.”

“Pessimistic and impatient, I see. Please, let me explain” he pulled out a pair of cuffs and started explaining the 30 minutes limit and how they had two ways of escaping.

“So” Izuku said after they were done “It’s either fight to win or run to win.”

“Precisely!” All Might said. “Your decision making abilities are being tested. But given the rules and circumstances, you’re probably thinking that running away is the only option. Which is why we had the Support Course make these” he pulled out what looked like a bracelet. “Ultra compressed weights. They weigh me down to up to 50% of my body weight” he said putting them on. The hero seemed to destabilise for a short moment, but he returned full force, bright smile in place.

“Trying to bring the fight down to our level?” Bakugou spit. “That’s insulting.”

The man kept smiling, but something minute in it became sharper as he gave them a five minute head start. Bakugou, of course, started strolling forward, leaving Izuku in the dust. Izuku, not being one to hold back anymore, ran after him. “Bakugou, we can’t fight him. We have to run!”

“Leave me alone, you coward!” he yelled as he stomped forward. Izuku wanted to facepalm and walk away, but he knew he had no chance to win on his own, and he wanted to leave letting Bakugou be the decoy as a last resort.

“How are you going to beat him then, huh?” he yelled.

“We toy with him until the very end, and then, we land the final blow”.

That was... actually a pretty good plan. If it were anyone but All Might. “What guarantees that you won’t be exhausted too?!” Bakugou couldn’t know about the time limit, he couldn’t. The
blond only growled and stomped forward. Izuku sighed and kept following. He was tired of following him around and had honestly thought that he was done with it, but, oh, look at that, he couldn’t escape it.

The explosive hero in training growled and didn’t look back. Izuku groaned. “Ok, have it your way, we try to beat him. You can’t do it alone!”

“I don’t need your help!” he yelled.

“Then take it from someone who fought and actually defeated more _actual villains_ than you that you _do_!” he yelled back. Bakugou stopped and turned around, looking livid. He pulled his fist back to punch him, but Izuku ducked, whipped his Bo staff and shoved it at the other. The blond caught it and dodged it. In the end, Izuku was staring at the green gauntlet while Bakugou was glaring at the staff inches away from his face. They shared a look before they both lowered the weapons and stepped back.

“Are you suggesting I can’t win?” he growled and took a step forward.

Izuku glared him in the eye, not backing down. “I’ll _make sure_ you won’t.” Bakugou stopped. The green haired boy took a step forward. “Maybe I can’t win on my own, but I can sure as hell keep you from winning.”

“You’d really sabotage me?” It sounded like a threat, but Izuku could pick the underlying tone of uneasiness.

“You’ve been sabotaging me all your life, Kacchan” eh said and took a step forward. “You’ve looked down on me, attacked me, _destroyed_ me. But I’m willing to be civil. So, we either work together and win this as a team, or you do as you always do and I’ll cash in ten years of karma right now. I can’t win this on my own, but I can sure as hell lose and drag you with me.”

It was cruel and, had it been literally anyone else, he would’ve probably went his way and walk out the gate himself. But there was something very satisfying in holding something over Bakugou and seeing him forced to throw away his pride to work together. Izuku wanted to smirk at the blond’s inner turmoil, but he decided to keep his face steady.

“Fine!” Bakugou spat, “What do you suggest?!”

“Well, I’m Quirkless and we’re fighting All Might. We’re clearly not supposed to overpower him” he looked at the cuffs. “Tiring him out won’t work either. You’ve seen the Noumu, not even the biggest blast from your gauntlets would take him down.” He rubbed his chin. “We weren’t put together to take him down with brute force, but to outsmart him. In this case, if you really want to fight, we will have to slip the handcuffs on him when he doesn’t notice it.”

“What, you don’t have a plan for not running away?” the blond smirked.

Izuku ignored the taunt. “Actually, I do. It’s risky, dangerous and I’m 100% Aizawa will kill me for it” he looked up, staring his former friend in the eye. “But he sure as hell won’t see it coming.”

~O~

All Might was confused. He had given the boys ten minutes to plan, but now he was inside the terrain, looking for them and coming out blank. There were fifteen more minutes till the time up, and he could see either of them. Could have Young Midoriya really made Bakugou retreat? He didn’t think it likely, but, if he had managed, he would’ve been pretty proud. Truly, if he had
managed to work with the other after all the time together, then the next successor of One for All was truly going to be great.

His fantasy was broken the moment he saw Young Bakugou leaned on the wall, glaring daggers at him. He wasn’t really relaxed, but he wasn’t in a fight stance.

“Attacking me alone, Hero? Quite foolish of you.”

A smirk spread along the teen’s features as he righted himself. “I don’t need Useless Deku’s help to defeat you” he crossed his arms and took a cocky stance. “And, after all, I really doubt that he could help me, seeing the state that he was in.”

Toshinori’s smile faded for a second as he took in the words and the lack of one gauntlet.

“What do you mean?”

“The petty fucker couldn’t leave me alone. He kept babbling about how I couldn’t defeat you and all that” his smirk grew malicious as he looked the hero in the eye “So, I made sure to keep him out of my way”

The images from their previous match flashed through the heroes’ mind. The small, green haired boy covered in blood, wanting to keep fighting. The middle schooler almost choked to death by the slime villain. He clenched his teeth and tried to remind himself that this was a test and that Bakugou wasn’t a villain.

“Don’t worry,” he gave out a laugh that sounded too off-key to be anything but off-putting “I’m sure Recovery Girl will be able to fix whatever’s left of him.”

Toshinori stood tall and, in that moment, the amused expression fell of the teen’s face. That was all the warning he got before a small yet fast student fell from one of the buildings and detonated a grenade right into his face. The hero managed to block it with his arm, only for the second boy to come at him. Young Bakugou jumped and grabbed his face, letting out an explosion. The hero managed to grab him and throw him away, but didn’t expect the smaller student to latch onto his arm with the pair of handcuffs.

A trap?!

All Might grabbed Young Midoriya by the middle, but the dark dressed hero pulled the pin to the gauntlet right in his face. Toshinori let him go and, when the smoke cleared, he was left to see his two students running in opposite directions, the echo of Bakugou’s “Your plan sucks!” in the air.

Toshinori shook his head.

And here I hoped they might actually work together.

He squared his shoulders and went after Young Midoriya. No weapon in his arsenal had enough firepower to take him down, not when he still had three hours to go.

The boy entered a pretty run down building and All Might followed him at a slow pace. He wasn’t hurrying. He walked in and looked at the teen. Young Midoriya was pressed to the wall, heaving. He couldn’t see his face, but he knew that he was stressed. “No way to go, hero!” He boomed. “Surrender now and I may spare your teammate.”

The boy only stood straighter. All Might shook his head and, in a second, the man was pinning the boy to the wall by the throat. Izuku kicked and screamed, but Toshinori didn’t let down. He was a little bit disappointed.
“Oi, fucker!”

The man turned around and faced a very angry explosive blond.

“Here to finish me off, hero? Aren’t you worried that you might hurt your partner?”

“That’s what I’m counting on!” he yelled and fired the gauntlet, a bigger explosion than any he had before. But he didn’t aim it at the teacher. No, he aimed it at the ceiling.

Bakugo’s explosions were pretty powerful on their own, but this one was something else. The ceiling cracked and toppled over them. Crack by crack, a mass of debris left collapsed as the roof was destroyed. All Might didn’t think. He punched the concrete and blew the potential weapons away from his students. The sky cleared, the wind roared and, only when it all settled down could the man hear the sirens.

He looked down. Young Midoriya had a handcuff around both their wrists and, even with the mask on, All Might felt the proud smile underneath.

~O~

Izuku was nursing his many bruises in the infirmary while All Might apologised intensely. Surprisingly, it wasn’t him who got the biggest wounds, but Bakugou, who had seriously messed up his arm. Izuku shook his head and stretched his back, which was still aching from getting slammed into the wall.

“Though, even if you won, that doesn’t excuse the fact that what you did was very dangerous” the man crossed his arms and glared at the boys, a frown on his face. “That move could’ve killed you both if it were from someone else than me. Plus, villain won’t save their life next time.”

“No” Izuku rasped, “but they’ll save their own” All Might lifted an eyebrow and Izuku shook his head. “Both you and I were in the way of the debris. Had it been anyone else, they would’ve gotten hurt too.”

There was something almost sad in the heroes expression. He shook his head and looked like he wanted to say something, but refrained when the little lady ushered him out with her huge syringe. Izuku chuckled until the hairs in his neck lifted and he turned around. Bakugou was glaring daggers at him and the boy barely kept from flinching out of habit.

“That was a crazy stunt you pulled there, Deku”

“If I remember correctly, you went along with the plan” he said back. The blond gritted his teeth.

“I only did that because you gave me no choice and I had no time to battle both you and All Might. But what if he didn’t stop that in time? What if you died?”

Izuku looked away.

Useless, Quirkless, Deku.

Why don’t you take a swan dive and hope to have a Quirk in the next life?

Izuku shrugged. “Then you would’ve had enough time to take him down.”
A mess of emotions passed the blond’s face before he growled, got up and walked away. Izuku sighed and turned his face towards the screen to watch what shenanigans his friends will pull to pass.

~O~

The next day, when they all returned to school and kindly pretended that they weren’t sore for the most part, Izuku tried his best to comfort the five who failed. “Come on, now, it can’t be that bad. There may be a twist to this!” he got a finger in his eye for the effort and a chorus of whines from the toddlers.

He sighed and prepared to try some more, while also nursing his injury, when Aizawa slammed the door in a manner that would’ve better suited All Might.

“That’s the bell. Be seated.” He ordered.

“That’s so extra,” Izuku thought as he sat down. The man drawled to the middle of the room and planted himself at the desk, with the slowness of someone who was balking in the fear and despair and was dragging it up for a long as possible before his vampiric ass was forced to surrender and give the students new hopes.

“Morning. About the final exams…” the five in question looked steps away from tears. “We had some failures and, as such…” he looked up, face breaking into that manic smile that send villains shivering back to their mommies. “You can all go to summer camp.”

“Called it” Izuku whispered as his classmates yelled and cheered.

“Everyone cleared the written tests, but in the practical, Kirishima, Ashido, Sero, Kaminari and Satou failed. As the villains in this test, we, the teachers came up with exercises especially suited for you. Ones that would give you chances to devise winning strategies. If we hadn’t, none of you would have stood a chance.

“So, when you said you were really going to crush us…”

“It was only to push you. This is the Training camp, after all. More than anyone else, those who failed are in dire need of this.” His gaze trailed over the class until it landed on the two kids near the window. His look soured. “Midoriya, Bakugou, sit up.” they did. The man glared at them. “I was this close” he held his thumb and index finger to what could be third of an inch at most “From failing you.”

“What?!"

“That’s right” he said as he looked the two shocked teens in the eye.

“Why?!” Izuku asked, though he had a pretty good idea as to why.

“Because, Izuku, suicide is not a viable method to take down the villains” Izuku looked down and scratched his neck.

He could hear someone say “I need context for this.”

Aizawa looked at the class. “Remember, just because something works, doesn’t meant that it’s the best course of action. Especially if it gets one of you killed or too injured.” He eyed the teens again.
“This is the last time I’ll let it slide, let me be clear about it. If you ever pull something like this again, you both know the consequences. Don’t make me punish you, I guarantee that you won’t like it.”

Izuku sat down, but didn’t really get to do much, because, the next second, something was coming for his head. Eh flinched back as fast as he could, only to see that Bakugou was holding a pencil case a few inches from his hair. The blond glared and growled and let the thing fall onto his head. As pens and pencils hit the ground, the taller still fumed in the front seat. Izuku rubbed his hair, more to check for stray writing instruments than to rub off the pain before he started gathering the pencils.

This was going to be a long day.

Oh, how right he was.

Chapter End Notes

thank everyone for all the comments! there have been a lot of speculation and i hope that you liked what happened
i know this was short, but i really didn't know what to put without adding filler, so i can only promise something exciting next time around

tumblr
discord
I know we have to, but really now, really?

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

If Izuku would’ve known the absolute hell the next few weeks would be, he wouldn’t have even bothered to get out of bed. It was the end of the year anyway, they had nothing left to learn, so, really, it wasn’t like he’d have missed anything important. But, unfortunately, clairvoyance wasn’t his Quirk so Izuku strolled into the future with no idea of what was going to happen.

He slammed his tray on the table and looked at the purple petunia, who’d spent enough time around him by this point not to flinch.

“So, how many from class B passed?” Izuku asked as he unpacked his lunch.

“Everyone but Monoma,” Shinsou munched on his lasagne. Izuku nodded as Hatsume took her rightful place by their sides and started chattering. “So, do you guys wanna celebrate or something?”

“I don’t have the time” Hatsume said, thought she didn’t seem terribly sorry.

“I wish, but my class is going to Kayashi mall this weekend and I have to do groceries today, so I can’t really go out.”

“Where do you do your groceries?” Shinsou asked. “I have to pick up a few things as well. Hell, maybe we can even grab a bite on the way.”

“Sure why now? I’m going to Mirai district.” Izuku said and they spent the rest of the lunch in amiable silence, periodically broken by small talk or jokes.

After classes ended, the two boys made their way to the shopping district and started cutting off things on the lists. They both had the more or less standard things to buy, but Shinsou’s were in larger quantity, since shopping involved a wasting time you could spend sleeping, and the purple boy wasn’t ready to lose that. Izuku did this kind of thing once a week. Mom couldn’t and, even if she never specifically asked him to do this, he could see how grateful she was when she got home after work and could rest instead of cooking or doing other chores. She used to do them a lot when he was young, but then Izuku noticed how well she looked when she didn’t have to so he did his best to cover for her.

“Where’s your dad?” Shinsou asked suddenly “You never talk about him.”

Izuku didn’t look up from inspecting a suspicious bag of rice. “Never met him,”

“Oh”

Izuku shrugged “It’s part of the reason I do so many things around the house. Mom works full time and she doesn’t the time nor energy to do chores at the end of the day.” He shook his head. “It would be easier if there was someone else.”

There was a brief pause before Sinsou spoke again “Do you want to talk about it?”

Izuku shrugged again and took a packet of biscuits off a shelf. “It would be much easier if there was someone else. Not just like, income wise, but also, you know, emotionally. She just seems
so lonely sometimes.”

Shinsou seemed embarrassed or, better said, a bit awkward not knowing what to say. Even so, he still spoke. “You, um... you can keep going, if you want,”

Izuku chuckled and shook his head before slipping a bottle of milk into the cart. “I’d like for her to have a partner, or someone close to her, cause I’m worried, you know? I don’t want her to feel lonely. But most of her friends are pretty far away or have different schedules, not to mention their own problems and besides people can get pretty gossipy sometimes,”

Izuku took a deep breath and trying to forget the whispers that came to mind, the voices just loud enough for the small boy to hear. Even if, as a kid, he didn’t understand what those words meant, he didn’t like how people talked about him, about his mother, about the empty chair that people said was his father. It only got worse when he realised he could do nothing against it. “Not to mention the stigma that comes with having a Quirkless child.”

A sudden hand on his shoulder and Izuku flinched before he realised it was his friend. Shinsou looked like he wanted to take back his arm, but the boy didn’t pull away, so he didn’t. “You know it’s not your fault, right?”

“Yeah” he said with a voice that lacked any kind of conviction and left for the stall that held the bathroom products. Shinsou walked after him, but said nothing for a few minutes. But one thing Izuku had forgotten, in his years of doing groceries alone, how embarrassed some teenage boys seemed when it came to a particular feminine subject.

“What are you doing with those?”

Izuku looked away from the box to blink at his friend who looked almost ready to faint “Trying to find the best balance between price and quality?”

“But, why are you buying them?”

Izuku rose an eyebrow. “Because my mom ran out?” Shinsou looked away and it suddenly clicked. The greenette let a sly smirk slip on his face. “Shinsou, don’t tell me you are scared of tampons.”

“I’m not-” he said, though his ears were turning a bit pink. “I just, don’t see why you have to buy them?”

“Because I was doing this anyway and I might as well pick them up.” the purple petunia looked away, suddenly very interested in a bottle of shampoo.

Izuku was flabbergasted. “Don’t you have a mother? A sister? A classmate who happens to be female and goes through this too?”

“What will the clerk say?”

“Well, unless they’re blind or something I’ll assume that they’ll know it’s not for you!” Izuku threw the box in the cart. “And, besides, if they didn’t bat an eye at me and Hatsume buying a fridge’s worth of bananas, a machete and three backpacks I don’t think they’ll draw the line at tampons,”

Shinsou seemed torn between turning even redder and asking why the hell did they would buy so many bananas. He settled on shaking his head and taking the bottle of shampoo he had been using as a shield for the past few minutes. Feeling mischievous and wanting at least a little bit of
revenge from the internship, Izuku grabbed a small box and threw it at the taller teen.

Shinsou, dodged. The purple haired boy turned towards the greenette, who was laughing his ass off by the way, and looked like he would’ve retaliate, when, fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on the perspective) the war was stopped by someone banging the door on a wall and yelling:

“ROBBERY!”

The first thing Izuku thought after the boys threw themselves behind a shelf was

_Seriously? You’re robbing a store and that’s what you open with?!_ 

He looked at Shinsou and they shared a look that Izuku hoped was the standard for

_We’ll do something, right?_

He then pulled out his phone and sent Aizawa his location because if the man found out he could have called for help and didn’t, he would have his skin on a stick.

A shot rang and someone screamed. Izuku gulped instincts suddenly kicking in over the semi-hysterical amusement.

After making sure the minimum curtsey necessary to prevent decapitation was made, Izuku turned around and looked at Shinsou, who was using his phone as a mirror to spy on the attackers. Izuku tapped him on the shoulder.

_How many?_ He signed.

_One_ Shinsou responded. Izuku nodded and rubbed his chin. With a bit of luck they would be able to do this. He peered over the shelf. Other customers were hiding behind other shelves, some of them trembling near walls. Even if it was only one, he seemed to have grown guns into his skin and shooting in every direction the sound came from. Izuku turned around and accidentally knocked his elbow into a shelf.

Before the bottle got the chance to clatter to the floor and alert the robber, Shinsou threw himself forward and caught it. After an Aizawa worthy glare and a sheepish rub of the neck, Izuku stretched his hand. The purple petunia eyes him warily before handing him the thing.

Izuku looked around. There must be something here we can use. On the next aisle, there were cosmetics. Something caught his eye and Izuku couldn’t stop the tentative smirk that spread along his features as a plan was starting to form. Shinsou, who knew better, just shook his head.

The smaller boy peeked around the shelf. The man was still ranting, so the reckless loser took the opportunity and rolled to the next aisle.

Shinsou was livid. He started signing vividly, and Izuku was pretty sure it was mostly _Aaaargh_, since they didn’t know that many words yet. He just signed back.

_Cover me._ The taller teen’s eyes widened at the phrase.

_Stop._

_I’ve got a plan._
The next words weren’t anything they’d learned, but Izuku didn’t need a translation to decipher the strangling motion that would’ve probably fitted better around his neck. The smaller teen waved him off. *Cover me.*

Shinsou slitted his eyes but nodded, although his glare promised retribution for his stupidity. Izuku looked once again and Shinsou took a bottle of skin lotion and threw it away, to an area that didn’t hold any people. The man whipped around and started shouting obscenities and Izuku took the chance to roll and hide behind the hair products. He grabbed what he came for and started circling the stall in order to get to a more open area behind the man. Unfortunately, Fate hated him, so his foot hit a bottle that had fallen on the ground earlier.

*Fuck.*

“Who’s there?!” came the yelled response and the steps of someone approaching his direction. *Crap,* he didn’t have enough time.

“Oi, I know you’re ugly, but I assure you that no cosmetics can fix that face!” came his friend’s response. Izuku took the opportunity to rip the lid and peer behind the stall. Shinsou was standing straight, though the slight tremble in his limbs was enough a clue. The man growled and lifted his arm to fire, when Izuku yelled.

“Oi, fuckface!”

The man turned and was assaulted by a wave of fire that left him yelling. Holding the hairspray, Izuku hoped the borrowed lighter would have enough gas if needed. He circled the stall and waited for the man to come at him. If his bullets weren’t remotely controlled, he would have to circle. The pants and grunts were enough of a clue that his reckless plan had worked, and he only got a glimpse of the man’s face when he pushed the shelf on him.

The villain screamed as a lot of big bottles and containers of water fell on him, as well as everything on the next two shelves that was caught in the domino effect. Izuku was ready to knock him out, but the groceries had already done it for him.

As his heart stopped racing, the sounds around him started to make sense, and he only got the energy to slide down the fridges, as people were calling for the heroes and Shinsou came to check up on him.

Aizawa arrived a few minutes after, took one look around, sighed and came to the two teenagers, who were eating jellies nicely provided by the cashier for their effort. The man stopped in front of the teens. “Are you guys OK”.

Izuku nodded. “No physical damage” Shinsou said.

“Ok, then, I have to ask…. How?!” he gestured towards the tied up villain, just as the police arrived. Tsukakuchi saw them and him and Sansa approached.

“Hey there children” the man smiled and the kids nodded. “What happened here?"

“There was an attack” Shinsou started.

"We made a plan and Shinsou distracted him"

“Then Izuku roasted the guy before throwing an aisle on him” the purple guy finished.

The cat headed officer blinked, notepad in hand. “Can you run that by me again?”

“Like… insulted him?”

“No, like burn and literal fire and a flamethrower.”

“I didn’t use a Quirk!” Izuku said quickly. “No one did.”

“Then how did you roast him?”

Aizawa sighed, as if to say wait for it and Izuku grabbed the hair spray. He held it for the men to see. “They write ‘flammable’ on these things for a reason.”

Aizawa just shook his head. “If you’re fine, get up. we will take this to the station and then I will drive you home, since it’s obvious you two can’t stay five seconds out of trouble.” Izuku grinned sheepishly, while Shinsou owned their victory with pride as they strolled to the car and got in.

The interrogation was quick, with all the details on the table, and, after that, Aizawa looked like he wanted to yell at them, but he couldn’t. Because they didn’t break any rules and the man couldn’t really blame them for happening to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The person who had been shot had thankfully only been grazed, so they were OK.

Aizawa dropped him first, so he bypassed the awkward silence and left the purple petunia to deal with the angry caterpillar on his own. Serves him right.

Mom had been very troubled and worried, and had cried over him all the way while also bowing to his teacher. Aizawa looked, in one word, awkward, so he did his best to extract himself from the scene as soon as possible.

The rest of the week went pretty normal, which meant that things just had to go to hell. It was the law of the universe after all.

Because soon arrived Saturday, and with it, the trip at the mall. It should’ve gone well, it really should’ve. The vendors were all right, if a little bit overwhelming. Neither Todoroki nor Bakugou came, and that was a loss, because it would’ve been perfect if all of them were present. Izuku was chatting with Uraraka when he was patted on the shoulder. Eh turned around to see three girls, around his age, one of them smiling shyly.

“You’re the one who won the Sports Festival, right?”

“Yeah” Izuku nodded.

“And took down Stain?” she was eager. He nodded and she squealed. “Can you take a selfie with us?!”

A little flabbergasted, Izuku barely whispered a meek “Yes?” before he was dragged into the frame, one girl swinging an arm around his shoulder. He was red and the fact that his classmates had decided to make faces behind him wasn’t helping. After the photo was done, Izuku was sure he looked super awkward in it, but the girls only giggled and walked away. The green haired boy had to stand the jeers and chuckles of his classmates. It was fun though, so he didn’t complain.

The incident with the camera repeated a few more times, one girl even kissing Izuku on the cheek before running and the boy was completely incapable of controlling the redness in his cheeks. Thing is, during that time, his classmates split and Izuku found himself alone in the crowd.
Well, so much for socialising, he sighed as he pulled out his phone and started checking
the list of things he needed for the camp.

“Fancy seeing you here, Mido-taan,” said a voice way too familiar for Izuku to afford to
forget as an arm slung around his shoulder. Shigaraki poked his stomach while with the other hand
he plucked the phone out of his hand. “Wouldn’t want that to get in the way.”

“Shigaraki” Izuku gulped, barely looking at the man near him. A huge smirk spread along
the villain’s chapped lips as the hand left his stomach and trailed higher. Izuku shivered.

“Well, why do we sit here? Let’s get some tea and chat, Mido-tan.”

Izuku gulped and looked down. The hand had reached his neck and four fingers were now
loosely wrapped around it, ready to squeeze at the slightest inconvenience. “You’re gonna act like
we’re old pals. Don’t make a scene, breath naturally, I just want to talk, that’s all, so don’t try
anything funny.” The man looked at the phone and pocketed it. “You know the drill, five fingers,
pain and suffering, death, etcetera.”

“If you try anything in a crowd like this the heroes will show up and arrest you.”

“No doubt” the man chuckled as he pulled him closer and showed him the people. “But
take a look at them. It’s not crazy to imagine someone committing and atrocity at any given moment.
So why do they smile and mingle like this? Because they’re convinced that no one would ever do
that. In the time it would take for the heroes to catch me, I could take twenty- no, thirty of them
down.” Now, he leaned in, breath hot on his ear. “That’d be a sight to see, wouldn’t it?”

“What do you want to talk about?” Izuku asked, voice calm, but knowing full well that the
man could feel the mad pulse beneath his fingers.

“That’s more like it” the man smirked. “Here, let’s sit” he dragged the teen onto the bench,
one hand still around his neck while the other was tapping his phone. “Open it”

Izuku tapped in the password and the man scoffed at the wallpaper. “All Might” he
sneered. He quickly entered the notes and Izuku froze as he remembered that there was his most
recent analysis. Since Aizawa had taken his notebooks and forbid him from writing any other than
school related, Izuku had written his passing thoughts in his phone. Notes that were currently
skimmed by the silver haired villain. “These are really cool” the man said, and for the first time Izuku
really wished that praise to his analysis hadn’t been delivered as a genuine compliment.

Shigaraki finished with his notes and then skipped through the messages. Thankfully he
didn’t have anything crucial in the ones with Aizawa, mainly a lot of locations. His chats with his
classmates were mainly memes and homework, so nothing important there.

Then the man stopped, finger hovering over a contact, before tapping the conversation.
The chat opened and Izuku froze.

Dabi.

Why don’t you hold hands with Shigaraki

Please don’t tell me

Wait, how do you know Shigaraki?

The villain clicked his tongue and handed him back the phone. Izuku didn’t have time to send
Aizawa a message, since the villain was watching him like a hawk. “I pretty much hate everyone and everything” the man said. “I hate All Might, the hero Killer, these people.” The kid gave a small grunt of acknowledgement, trying not to piss off the man. “It’s his fault you know? He’s the reason all these people are walking around with smiles on their faces, like there’s no one he couldn’t save” Shigaraki spit. “Bet I could kill you right now, and no one would realise. Your throat would turn to dust before you had the time to scream.” He chuckled. “You’d be found in the morning by the cleaning lady.” Izuku blinked and looked away, not liking the picture suddenly forming in his mind. “And why is that? Why are they so relaxed? All Might’s not here.” he pointed out waving a hand to indicate the general area “He only shows up when there are villains, when there’s a danger to uncover. So, naturally, if he’s not here, it must be safe.”

Izuku thought, his gears spinning too fast for him to keep up. He turned the man’s words upside down until his mouth decided to speak without his consent. “You’re right.”

Shigaraki turned so fast Izuku got dizzy just watching “I am?!” Suddenly, he realised that the man was expecting a follow up to that, so he cleared his throat.

“Yes.” He looked around, desperately wanting for someone to appear and get him out. “Especially since ever since All Might became the Symbol of peace, he’s become the pillar society spins around. People depend on him, psychologically. But the trouble with having only one pillar is that when that collapses the whole structure goes tumbling down as well.”

Shigaraki tsk-ed and Izuku suddenly remembered where he was. “That wasn’t the point I was trying to make” the man said in a low tone, giving the boy a warning squeeze. “Even now, you are focusing on him, not me. The society is focusing on the Hero Killer. Why is no one focusing on me?” he pulled the kid closer and Izuku found himself pressed to the man’s side. “Our attack in UA. The Noumus in Hosu. It’s all been overshadowed by him. Why? He can grandstand all he wants, but, in the end, he’s only breaking things he doesn’t like. What makes us so different?”

Izuku realised that the man expected an answer. He took a deep breath and looked up. “I think it’s the reasons.”

“What do you mean?”

“Look at today’s society.” Izuku said, a speech already forming on his tongue, his mind turning even as common sense that was yelling at him to shut up. “Have you ever seen a villain fight in the streets?”

“Well, duh.”

“Have you seen how people react?” the man didn’t say anything so Izuku continued. “They don’t run. They pull out their phones and start filming. They could be killed in a second, yet they are not scared.” He sighed, “I used to be like that too. Know why?”

Shigaraki shook his head, fully focused on the teen now. Izuku looked around desperately, but no one was looking their way “Because we’ve got desensitised to it. Villains are everywhere these days and every single one of them wants something. The media focuses on the ones that bring them as many ratings as possible. The media are a civilian’s main source of research, of getting any type of news. It’s the same as hero rankings if you think about it.” he looked at the man, but Shigaraki was still very focused on him. Izuku gulped, cursing the very second he started hanging out with the kids in Management and went on. “There’s always a villain and every villain has a story to tell. The public focused on what’s more interesting. Now, tell me, what’s the difference between you and Stain’s reasons?”
“There isn’t. We both destroy things we hate.”

“There’s not. I only destroy things that I hate.” Izuku said, hoping to soothe the man into releasing even a bit of his hold. His heart was still rabid, but the villain made no move to take it off. “The people will know something else and that’s what matters. Now, remember, there are a lot of villains out there. Most of them want to destroy the things they hate. But what does the hero killer want? He wants a world with only good heroes. A noble purpose, so to speak.” He leaned a little bit back, testing the limits, but the man still held him close. “What do you want? No one knows. And that’s the problem. In a world of Quirks, a lot of power is not that surprising, even common if you take it like that. That’s why you gotta stand out in a way different from other villains. Destruction for the sake of destruction makes for poor storytelling.”

“I see.” The man looked up. “If what the people think it’s important, then I’ve got to make sure that they see what I want them to.” A vicious smirk took over his features.

“Right now, they see me and Stain working together. So I’ll use his publicity against him.” He let out a chuckle and his fingers started to tighten around Izuku’s throat. “Ironic, don’t you think? We’re polar opposites, but I get to make use of his ideals and convictions. They’re all nothing but stepping stones.” His attention suddenly shifted onto him and Izuku froze as there was something predatory in the man’s gaze. “Thank you for this chat.” He promptly stood up and dragged him to his feet too. “Come along, we’ve got plans to sort out.”

“Wai-What?” Izuku said, trying to pull away. “Where are you taking me?”

“Mido-chan?” came a voice out of the blue.

Both men turned and Izuku froze at the sight of Uraraka, standing there, a few feet from the villain.” Oh, I didn’t realise you came with friends” Shigaraki suddenly said as he pulled him closer. “This isn’t over, Mido-tan” he whispered before pushing him forward with much more force than necessary.

Izuku stumbled and collapsed, Uraraka there in a second to catch him. “You know what happens if you try to follow” the man said and vanished into the crowd.

Chapter End Notes

i swear, the tampon scene actually happened and i witnessed it. but the kid that got hit with the box looked so horrified i almost felt pity for him

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The moment Aizawa had gotten a call from Tsukakuchi on Saturday at noon, he just knew, before he even picked up, that it was somehow, in some way or form, related to the problem child. From the beginning of the year, since he made the terrible mistake of taking on class 1A for his homeroom, he had developed a natural instinct of knowing, without a shred of doubt or hesitation when one of his students was doing something stupid. And, as per usual, his late morning had been plagued by a sense of foreboding doom approaching from the horizon. But, he decided to trust fate for once and try to take advantage of the last few days of peace before he would be thrown into the summer camp with forty teens and Quirks and those epilepsy inducing hero costumes.

But Lady Luck wasn’t on his side (when was she ever) so, around one o’clock, he had gotten that call from his old friend telling him that, his problem child almost got kidnapped by Shigaraki. Again.

After making sure that the boy was safe, he drowned a mug that contained so much caffeine it would’ve made his doctor faint and took started at a leisure pace towards the station, to properly prepare himself for not murdering his student.

Who wasn’t Quirkless. Who, most definitely, could not be Quirkless. There was no way that much bad luck to be naturally stored in one person, especially not in the five feet of condensed spite that were the making of his student.

He reached the station about an hour after the initial call and was directed to the interrogation room. Izuku was inside, sitting uncomfortably on a chair, thought without handcuffs this time, a cup of hot chocolate cooling in front of him. The boy looked up.

“Hello, Aizawa-sensei.” He said.

His voice was devoid of life, the sound equivalent of a limp. He didn’t smile. Not a relieved smile, not a sheepish smile, not a sad smile. No smile at all. Aizawa put the scolding he had prepared on the backburner because, as much as he wanted to ask the boy what the fuck was happening, he wouldn’t stoop so low as to kick an already beaten puppy.

“Hey, there, Problem Child” he said as he sat down. Midoriya allowed himself a twitch of the lips, but that was all there was.

“Great, now that we’re all here, we can start” said Tsukakushi, way too chippy for the dark air in the room. Izuku took a deep breath and told them what happened.

He talked for what seems to be a hour, before he finally stopped. Aizawa would have stopped him a few more times, the kid fluctuating from almost tears to a poker, detached expression.

“You said he looked into your phone.” Aizawa pointed out. Izuku nodded, fear crossing his features. The teacher frowned. “What did he see?”

The boy then fell into a stuttering mess of apologies. “Sensei, I know you told me not to and I’m so, so sorry, but I- I just couldn’t stop, I do that almost unconsciously and…”
“Midoriya” his voice was cold and Izuku froze for a solid second. “What did he see?”

The boy’s lip wobbled as he pulled out his phone and tapped the password with trembling fingers before handing him the device. Aizawa looked, and felt blood cool down a few degrees.

It was analysis. That alone wouldn’t have been too bad, but it was Midoriya Analysis; it was cold and calculated, strengths and weaknesses laid bare for the world to see in comic sans.

It wasn’t on any major heroes, thank God. It was on some newbies Aizawa had had the misfortune of stumbling on during the boy’s internship. But still. Midoriya had been forbidden from doing anything similar for this exact purpose and look where it got them. He looked at the boy.

Izuku was looking down, stifling his tears, as if waiting for the verdict. Or the death penalty. “I know I wasn’t supposed to, sensei, but…” He sniffled before shaking his head. “No. I really have no excuse.” He said that last part on an almost defeated tone.

Aizawa sighed and reminded himself not to mess up the already traumatised kid. “You’re lucky these aren’t particularly well known heroes. They’re so new I doubt Shigaraki has even heard of them. But, the fact remains that you were forbidden from writing these, and you still did.”

“I know” he said, not meeting his eyes. Aizawa pondered for a second before he sighed.

“Go on, we don’t have all night.” The boy blinked but returned to telling the story. Another major risk of a breakdown came when he reached the part where he explained how he stalled Shigaraki.

“I swear, I swear, I didn’t mean to help him. I just didn’t want to die and my mouth ran on its own, and…..”

“Kiddo” Tsukakushi said as he took his hand. “It’s alright, no one’s blaming you. At least now, we have an idea of what will happen from now on.” Izuku nodded but looked at Aizawa.

He’s waiting for you to tell him he didn’t screw up.

Aizawa sighed. “Look, Izuku, as morally bankrupt as your argument might have been, you did what you had to do to make sure neither you or the other people there died. In a way you saved them.” He tried to sound supportive, despite his inner turmoil. Shigaraki tried to kidnap him. He’s had his eyes on him since Hosu, and now, he decided to act. He sighed.

“I just,” the boy swallowed “I just wish I could’ve done something to stop him, to end it right there.”

“You kept calm while he was threatening you and other civilians.” Tsukakuchi smiled. “Most people would’ve panicked, but you didn’t. It’s thanks to your cool head that no one got hurt.”

The boy didn’t seem convinced. “I can’t help but think that, if I had a Quirk, I might’ve been able to do something more.”

This kid Aizawa stood straight and activated his Quirk. Though it had no effect on the boy, it was enough to keep him still. “Midoriya, we may be the best school in Japan, but we’re not absurd. We don’t expect first years, not even the ones with downright godly Quirks to take down villains or to defuse a hostage situation.

“You are kids and you are students, you are here to learn, and, despite what some people may say, out method is not ‘put them through a meat grinder and see who makes it out’. We want to help you,
but we can’t do that if you won’t accept it. You went above and beyond what was expected of a normal student, and you did it while Quirkless. Keeping a cool head in that situation isn’t a virtue many could boost. Do I make myself clear?”

Izuku gulped but nodded.

“Good. Your mom will be here any moment and I’m gonna drive you home. Come.”

“We’re going home?”

“Well, not straight away, I’ll take you to the hospital first, because I’m sure you have some calamity Quirk or something.” He said as he picked his stuff up. Izuku let out a laugh that felt somehow hollow.

„You’ll come out empty handed” he shook his head “After my diagnosis, mom took me to every paediatrician she could think of” he looked up “Two toe-joints.”

Aizawa didn’t say anything after that.

The man waited for the teen to get up before he walked out of the room. As the teen strolled next to him, the greenette said.

“I’m sorry.”

Aizawa barely kept himself from groaning. “Kid, I told you, you didn’t …”

“It’s not that” he said quickly. “I’m sorry for being such a nuisance.” Aizawa stopped. The boy stopped but didn’t take his eyes off the, apparently fascinating, floor.

“Kid, you’re not…”

“How many times did you have to come because I had run into a villain? How many times did you have to rescue me? More than any other student, I’d bet,” The boy finally looked up, and there was something like a mix between helplessness and determination in his eyes. “I know you stood by my side, and I really appreciate that, it’s more than anything anyone has ever done before so…” he then bowed deeply “I apologise that you have to go through all this because of me.”

Aizawa took in a deep breath and shook his head. He placed a hand on the green curls and beckoned the teen to sit straight. Then he pulled the boy to his chest.

It wasn’t a hug. Aizawa didn’t wrap his arms around the boy and the greenette didn’t do that either. But he did lean in, resting his head on his chest. “It’s my job, both as a hero and as your teacher. And, even if you might be a little bit of a nuisance sometimes, it’s not your fault that you are a villain magnet.” That got a giggle out of him. “So, could you stop beating yourself up? If you constantly look to knock yourself down, you’ll never make it to graduation.”

Midoriya looked up and his eyes held a little bit more shine in them this time. “I’ll try.”

~O~

The next started day out alright. After the mandatory: ‘are you Ok?’ ‘what happened’ and ‘I’m so glad you’re alive’ his classmates had more or less left him alone to talk with Iida and Uraraka. Izuku could feel Bakugou looking at him, but, whenever he turned around, he never managed to catch him in the act. Huh, weird. No, actually, the weird part was that it wasn’t the usual murderous glare, neither the spiteful stare. No, it was just a look that became a tad too uncomfortable
for someone with his past.

The previous night had ended on a surprisingly positive note. After Aizawa finished his pep talk All Might had come. It was jarring, not because he was unused to the man in his skinny form, (well, ok, he was) but because the man had come for him. Aizawa, made sense, since he was his teacher, mentor and parole officer all rolled into one. But the No.1 hero didn’t.

Izuku’d just assumed that he was still feeling guilty. The man seemed very prone to taking it on himself when things didn’t end up the right way, so he must still feel guilt over that one thing said on the roof. That, or maybe he somehow he liked him, considering how he sometimes invited him to share lunch.

The lunches were good and the hero seemed to enjoy talking to him. Izuku sometimes fell back into his fanboy behaviour, but All Might didn’t seem all that bothered. But still, showing up at that hour? It wasn’t all that usual. His mom had arrived and cried a lot, and Izuku mentally slapped himself for making her worry. What a son he was, the poor woman didn’t need any more stress than she already had.

After Aizawa had managed to pry them away from All Might’s worried hovering, he drove them home. Izuku fell asleep halfway through, but he remembered them talking about a certain case.

The boy didn’t wait for his mom to make the dinner, he simply collapsed in the bed and woke up at fuck o’clock next morning starving worse than a wolf.

The class was buzzing and Izuku’s pen was hovering over the paper like an UFO looking for the perfect cow when Aizawa slammed the door to the wall and walked in. wow, he really liked giving them heart attacks first hour in the morning, didn’t he?

“So” the man said as he entered and posted himself at the desk “Given what happened, we’re on the lookout for these villains.” He took some papers and dramatically ripped them in half “We’ve cancelled out usual accommodations at the last minute and won’t reveal the actual destination until the day we depart.”

Some people complained, other responded, but Izuku was honestly kinda expecting it, so he only kept scribbling in his notebook. Aizawa finished his rant and went on with the class. It was all just rehearsing, and Izuku was already good at this subject, so it wasn’t really such a problem. No, the problem arose the moment the bell rang and he wanted to go and talk to Hatsume about some possible new attachments to his costume. The moment he made it in the hallway, he felt the hard gaze of his teacher fall on his back, along with the cold voice that just had to come in tandem.

“Midoriya, a word, if you will,” Izuku turned around and tried not to gulp. Despite the previous talk, Izuku had grown near enough people being constantly disappointed in him to know when there would be a talk. But he just nodded and followed the teacher outside the range of his classroom. They stopped near a window, and Izuku would have loved to stare at it, had it not been for the man looming above. “About your analysis….”

“I’m sorry!” he said. He opened his mouth, but Aizawa held a hand, already sighing and shaking his head. He took a deep breath.

“I’m not here to scold you, so stop acting like it.” Izuku clamped his mouth shut. “Let’s say that, on a certain level, I understand your problem. So, if you ever write something, send it to me and erase the evidence on you. If it’s on a phone, send it and delete it and if it’s handwritten, take a photo and destroy the paper. Not throw away, destroy. Am I clear?”
Izuku let out a relieved sigh and nodded, flashing his teacher a bright smile. “Yes, Sensei. Very clear. Thank you.”

“Also, until the trip” he rubbed his temples “Can you at least try to not get in trouble?”

“It’s not like I’m actively looking for it.”

“You might not be looking for it, but you seem to find it very often. So, until the trip, try not to spend too much time alone outside of UA or your house, alright?”

Izuku nodded brightly and, after making sure his teacher was finished, he dashed towards the lab. Aizawa looked after the Problem Child and quietly shook his head before making his way to the teacher’s lounge to get some shut eye and coffee to properly cope with existence.

~O~

At lunch Todoroki decided to join them. Shinsou eyed him warily, because, apparently, earning the Purple Petunia’s trust was harder than breaking into Fort Knox. Thankfully, the heterochromatic teen was used to bullshit, and managed to ignore the other. Hatsume had come and was talking vividly, and it would’ve been cool, had she not reached the point where she said.

“And tiny time bomb here keeps asking me for more babies!”

Izuku choked on water and heaved for a few seconds while Iida petted his back and Shinsou laughed his ass off. “Can” he looked at the girl “You. Think better about the phrasing?”

“What, why? It’s true.”

“Context, Hatsume, context!” Izuku face-palmed and Shinsou toppled off his chair, thankfully caught by Todoroki. After the girl finally brought the other topics and Izuku managed to clear his red cheeks, they started talking about the camp.

“I’m sooo excited!” Uraraka said, clapping her hands. “I can’t believe we all get to go.”

“Yeah. I for one, am glad we will have so many heroes around. Maybe then, Midoriya’s curse will get under control.”

Izuku stopped his cutlery halfway to his mouth. “My what?”

“Curse might be a little too much said,” Shinsou rubbed his chin “Maybe you do have a Quirk.”

“And what would that be?”

“You’re a villain magnet.”

There was a beat of silence. “Am not!”

“Are too!” Shisou lifted his chopsticks and pointed them in his direction, careful not to drop any rice. “Every single time you go unsupervised for more than five minutes, you somehow end up in a villain attack!”

“I do not!”

“The USJ” Shinsou said. “You were walking down the street and suddenly got kidnapped.”
“Yeah, because they needed a hostage and I was the most convenient one available.”

“The Hero Killer fight! You were doing groceries!”

“I was in Hosu!” Izuku tried to defend himself.

“And yet managed to find Iida and Stain surprisingly quickly,”

“I had a general idea of where he was!”

“Hosu is a pretty big city” Iida said. Shinsou pointed at the teen with a ‘see, see’ motion, but Izuku didn’t back down.

“Exactly! The same night, you got picked up by Shigaraki. Not to mention last week. We were, again, doing groceries and what happens? Bam! Robbery.” Izuku rolled his eyes. “And you just had to roast the guy into arrest.”

“Wait, roast like talk him down?” Uraraka chimed in

“No, like DIY-ing a flamethrower” Shinsou said and Izuku glared. Sometimes, he really hated his friend.

“Wait, what?” the whole table looked at him. Izuku swatted them off, trying to make an argument to defeat Shinsou’s.

“Moreover” the boy didn’t let him defend himself “Let’s not forget what happened literally yesterday.”

“Would you give me a break? Shigaraki was specifically looking for me.”

“Doesn’t matter! In conclusion, you have a hidden Quirk that is actually a villain magnet.”

“Or a curse” Uraraka chimed in.

“Technically” Todoroki started “If we were to take it like this, Midoriya is most likely to have a pain tolerance Quirk.”

“Todoroki, not you too!” Izuku whined.

“What made you reach that conclusion?” Tsuyu, who had just sat down, said.

“Well” the boy lifted a hand “The Sports Festival. The hero Killer incident. Literally every physical exercise we had since you transferred.”

“You fools!” Came from behind them and they turned to see the president of the management course looking down at them. “If Midoriya actually has a Quirk, then it is the power of Deus ex Machina. Also known as pulling some bullshit out of your ass to salvage the situation.” She looked at the heads of the student mafia. “Tell me more about that flamethrower.”

“Well, Midroiya had the brilliant idea to…”

“They write ‘flammable’ on those things for a reason!” Izuku tried to defend himself.

“I’m pretty sure that is not their intended purpose.”

“How did you get into our conversation?!” Iida asked, hand preparing a chopping motion.
The girl raised an eyebrow. “You do realise that you are loud, don’t you?”

Izuku looked around and saw like half of the cafeteria looking at them and giggling. His face started to burn, so he laid his head on his hands and tried to get over his friend’s laughter.

~O~

The next few weeks up to the camp training passed in a blur and, in no time, all the heroics course found themselves in front of two busses that were meant to transport them to the oh so very secret location. Monoma was trying to make fun of them for having people that actually failed the exam, and was promptly karate chopped by Kendo, who then dragged him away. The kids in 1B were actually nice, and Izuku had that info from a lot of different sources, so it must have been true. Shinsou actually seemed happy, so that was definitely a plus. He waved at them as Iida ushered him inside the bus.

The ride was pretty fun, the same way the little trips he had taken in primary and middle school. The difference was that, this time, he knew that his friends wouldn’t try to leave him behind. This time he had people to talk to, people to have his back. It was nice.

Which, of course, meant that Aizawa had to ruin it. They stopped for a bathroom break, and the moment Izuku saw that one: 1-A were alone there, two: no class B and that there was no shed or anything meant for a rest stop and three, the pussycats were there, he just knew that he would have to prepare if he wanted any kind of upper hand over the sadist.

He allowed himself to nerd over the heroes, while at the same time inching closer to his homeroom teacher, because the area around him must’ve been safe, right? Aizawa eyed him warily but remained silent. The Pussycats presented themselves, gave them the time limit and Pixi-Bob clapped maniacally and exploded the dirt beneath their feet. Izuku, ever the careful (fuck you Shinsou) was expecting it, and jumped back and hid behind Aizawa, remaining the only student not thrown violently off the cliff.

Aizawa glared at him before he pushed him off anyway.

And Izuku would have become one of the poor souls underneath, had he not caught one of the scarves and hung onto it.

The teacher staggered forward a little bit, not expecting the new weight, and the two dark haired males glared at each other for about a minute. The thin material bit into his skin and he was sure he would get some kind of rope burn, but he didn’t yield. And neither did the man.

“Give him a break, Eraser, he predicted your ruse, I think he deserves not to be a part of it” Mandalay giggled. Aizawa huffed and pulled him back on the cliff.

“Well” he said turning towards the other heroes. “I guess that’s it. Let’s get to the camp to make sure they don’t die when they get there.” And, with that, he stomped towards the bus. Izuku shrugged and followed, getting a hair ruffling from Pixie-Bob and a pat on the back. Looking down at his classmates who were currently being chased by earth beasts he couldn’t even feel guilty for making the right choice.

As he got onto the bus, Izuku looked at the little kid who was glaring at everything in a manner way too similar to Bakugou’s. “Hey there. I’m Midoriya, from class 1A” he said and held a hand. The boy only glared and let all mighty force fall on his crotch. Izuku gasped and let his head collapse on the front seat.
Fucking... fucking brat.... He internally cursed the kid who stomped away. He was fairly certain he could hear Aizawa huff in amusement from the next seat.

“Sorry for my nephew” Mandaly laughed, like the maiming of his jewels was a matter to laugh at. “He doesn’t really like heroes”

Izuku grumbled and remained silent for the next half an hour it took him to get to the camp. Once there, he got his things and managed to unpack in peace.

“Oi, Mido-chan!” he looked at Ragdoll, who was motioning him forward. “Since you skipped the training, you have to help us cook!”

Well, that was fair.

By 5 PM when his classmates had finally gotten there, he had helped with dinner and climbed a part of the mountain because Aizawa was still bitter that he’d predicted his “logical ruse”. Which was, once again, fair. After all, how dare the student skip the mandatory gut wrenching exercise? It was just rude.

So, when his classmates finally arrived, he was sweaty and his feet and hands hurt, but he was still a lot better than the rest of them.

“Three hours my ass!” Sero panted. Mandalay giggled.

“Sorry, what I meant was that that’s how long it would’ve taken us.”

*Really?* Izuku looked at the hero before Kirishima grabbed him by the collar.

“You traitor! We sweated and worked our asses and you left us alone” the redhead rested his spiky head on his chest as he panted. “Whyyyy?

“One” Izuku held out a hand as he helped the boy stand straight “It was obvious he was going to do something like this. And two” he lifted the second finger “I cooked you dinner.”

Kaminari punched him lightly in the shoulder. “That better be God’s food if you want us to forgive you!”

Izuku laughed and shrugged at Todoroki’s disappointed glare. Iida made the same mistake he had done earlier and got, predictably, sucker punched in the nuts. As the others winced and Izuku went to help him the little fucker decided to speak. “I can’t abide jerks who wanna be heroes.” He spit and stomped away. Izuku rose an eyebrow and looked after the boy for a second longer than necessary, and Todoroki only took a moment before he spoke.

“No.”

Izuku threw him an innocent look, fluttering eyelashes and everything, but the Heterochromatic teen wouldn’t be fooled. From the other side of the facility, the members of class B made their way to the centre. The blond rat looked like he was ready to throw a fit when he saw that class A had gotten there before them. Izuku made his way to the purple petunia and smiled sweetly.

Shinsou looked at him, took in the lack of scrapes, dirt and wish to die on the spot and took a step back as if contemplating his life. Then, in a swift motion, he grabbed the teen’s shoulders and shook him. “Hoooow?”

Uraraka went towards them and slung an arm over his shoulder, using him as a crutch.
“This bastard right here knew that we were going to fall and jumped out of the way without warning us first!” she slapped him on the back.

“Hey, Aizawa actually tried to throw me off that cliff and I got punched in the balls on the way here, so my trip wasn’t all rainbows and sunshine either!”

“Go leave your things and then head for the mess hall. After that, bath and bedtime. The real training starts tomorrow” Aizawa grunted as he stomped off.

The food was really good (The Pussycats were good and Izuku had been cooking for most of his life) and, after a bite, Kirishima, Sero and Kamnari gave him as nod of ‘you’re forgiven’.

After that, they headed for the hot springs, which they were sharing with class B. Izuku was blaming the months he’d spent with class 1-A for making him forget what his body looked like; his classmates saw him when he changed in the lockers, and they didn’t ask, and, because of that, Izuku had forgotten how gruesome scars on his skin could look to some.

“Oh, Midoriya, looked like you have a hard time making it in heroics” Monoma said and Izuku gritted his teeth. “Only the first semester and you’re already covered in scars!”

Honehuki, bless his soul, pushed him under the water. But Monoma had brought the attention onto his body, and now everyone was looking. Izuku hugged himself and sunk in the hot water, hoping to make his problems as well as the looks of pity and morbid curiosity disappear. It worked for a few minutes, and the greenette was a few seconds from falling asleep when something drew his attention.

Kouta, who was on the on the huge wall between them and the girls for some reason, fell. Izuku’s body moved in its own. He dashed forward, jumped on the wall and caught the kid mid air. He curled around the boy and they both fell in the hot water.

Izuku, who was expecting the impact, got up immediately, but thankfully, Kouta didn’t seem to have swallowed anything. Which was the good news. The bad news was that he was unconscious.

“He seems to be fine!” he said. “I’m taking him to Mandalay”

When the lack of a response came, Izuku turned around to see the other boys staring inconspicuously at his back. Or at least they tried to.

Oh, that, Izuku thought bitterly. He placed the child on the shore and grabbed a robe to cover his scarred body.

Truth be told, it wasn’t like they didn’t have a reason to worry. The wound had been pretty gruesome and the scar held well to the memory to the point where every time he changed in the lockers he sat with his back to the wall to make sure the others didn’t see it. Most of his other scars could be justified through clumsiness, or training but not this one. And it wasn’t like he could tell the truth either.

Said scar stretched diagonally along his back, from left shoulder to right hip. He had gotten it before Dabi introduced him to Iho and her sister (or maybe after but he didn’t have the money, eh couldn’t quite remember), in a fight with a guy with a blade Quirk, and was one of the only times he’d taken damage significant enough to be called near-death. Thankfully, Dabi had been there and had roasted the guy.

That night Izuku had gotten, for the first time, as Dabi likes to put it, black-out drunk. He couldn’t go to the hospital, because they would ask questions and tell his mom, and, since Dabi
didn’t have enough painkillers, he went with the good old way of adding ‘potential alcohol poisoning’ to his problems. Thankfully, the scarred man knew a thing or two about stitches and had a few spare packets of clean staples (the guy needed something to keep his face in place after all).

Izuku had spent the night there and had woken up the next morning with a killer hangover and a headache that rivalled the wound on his back. His mom had been gone for a week and that was the time Izuku had stayed away from school, until could walk straight again. The scar itself was, for all his efforts still obviously unprofessionally closed and pretty raised. Hell, you could probably see it through a semi-transparent shirt. So, yeah, he didn’t really want questions about it.

He took Kouta to Mandalay and the woman quickly changes his clothes and put him to bed. Izuku fidgeted for a few seconds before he spoke. “Kouta seems to be pretty opposed to heroes, isn’t he?”

“Huh?”

“Well” Izuku looked away. “All my life I have been surrounded by people who wanted to be heroes. I want to be one too. Isn’t it unusual for a kid like him to be like this?”

The woman shook her head and sighed. Then, she started to speak. The story was sad, not only in the death and the pain, but in the lack of surprise it held for the student. After all, for a hero, dying was just another occupational hazard.

Izuku returned to finish his bath and, since most of his classmates had already gone to sleep, he was alone and could actually bathe in peace. The greenette sighed as he let his sore muscles finally relax. Izuku felt so sorry for the poor boy who got his parents snatched away by villains. But, he knew it was inevitable. He had known it from the moment he had decided to cover his face and be his own type of hero.

Truth be told, no matter how much Dabi joked about it, there was a lot of truth in his words. Most heroes didn’t make it to retirement. There was a reason heroes had their own graveyards, separated for the common people, with a staff of undertakers permanently on the job. Being a hero was more dangerous than people thought, and Izuku was a little sad to see how little of his classmates realised it.

From the beginning, he had doubted that all of his class will graduate. Now he was low key terrified they would be dead not dropouts.

_Why do you think of this? This is camp, you’re supposed to have fun. Aizawa will murder you all anyway tomorrow._

Izuku chuckled and got up before his skin got the chance to turn pruney. He stretched his limbs and headed for the boy’s room. But of course, the night couldn’t be peaceful, no, why would it be? Because, leaning on the wall of the building, Bakugou had his arms crossed and an unreadable expression.

The blond looked up; he’d been waiting for him.

~O~

Bakugou didn’t care about Izuku. He didn’t. he hated the fucker. Sure, that hate was slowly morphing into begrudging respect, but Katsuki would eat his gauntlet before he admitted it. He. Didn’t. Care.
So why the fuck couldn’t his brain just accept it?

He kept having nightmares. They weren’t often, actually they were pretty rare if he thought about it. But that was one of the things. He had sound sleep for a few weeks and then Bam! A night terror to send him heaving. He woke up in the middle of the night and couldn’t return to sleep, which seriously messed up his day. He didn’t wake up crying. No what fool woke up crying? It was just sweat on his face. Yes, it must’ve been sweat.

And the nightmares were so diverse. It had ascended from simple scenes and words to vivid imagery. This time, Izuku didn’t just sit on the edge. Sometimes he jumped and became a splatter of blood and bones on the ground. Sometimes Katsuki would just be walking and see the half rotter corpse on the ground, with worms and maggots crawling over it.

Sometimes Katsuki was the one to push him.

And the fucked up part was… this wasn’t the worst.

The worse nightmare he had had was, coincidentally the only one that repeated. The only one that left him heaving in cold sweat. The only one that managed to seriously rattle him.

It was back to that day with the sludge villain. He was suffocating while that slimy texture crawled under his skin, over his eyes into his nose and mouth. He couldn’t move, his Quirk wasn’t working and he didn’t even have a voice to scream. There were heroes there, but they weren’t looking at him, why weren’t they looking at him? The one time he was willing to accept help, and they were doing nothing, chatting and not even seeing that he was there.

But Izuku was there. He was literally five feet away, looking at him with a bored expression. He was the only one who could see him, the only one who had the power to do so. He could step forward and pull him back. He could call the heroes. But he didn’t.

He just sat there and stared with a bored expression. In the background, he could hear a high pitched voice of a four year old saying ‘Next time I’ll let you die’. That was it, no remorse, no emotion. Not even a cruel one, to signal that it was revenge. Because it wasn’t. he wasn’t doing it out of hate or spite, or any other emotion Katsuki could understand. No, Dream Deku was just sitting there, not doing anything, not feeling anything. It would have probably been easier if he was doing it out of revenge. Because payback meant feelings. Boredom meant he didn’t care.

Because Deku, stupid, selfless Deku, who had probably saved villains from death, didn’t care. That the kid who used to trail behind him thought of him worse than a villain. The boy who would die for strangers, didn’t care about him enough to land a hand.

And that realisation had no right to hurt as much as it did.

But Katsuki didn’t care either. Why would he? The nerd had final grew some balls and got his shit together. And, as much as he wanted to insult him and call him useless, the scar on his shoulder form when his collarbone cracked was proof enough that he wasn’t.

And he wasn’t worried. No, he wasn’t. It was just that, his mind having been set on believing that the fucking nerd wasn’t worth a damn, Katsuki had come to the shocking realisation that he didn’t want the nerd dead. He saw him die enough in his nightmares to know that he couldn’t stand the sight to be real. Because from nightmares you could wake up.

So, in conclusion, for the sake of his sanity, Katsuki didn’t want the nerd dead.

Which was becoming impossibly difficult with how many times the boy ran into villains.
Really, who does that?! If he didn’t know for sure, he would be certain that he was doing it for attention. But ten years of seeing people treat Izuku with baby gloves, of teachers explaining things to him like he was four, of bullies (himself included) thinking he was made of glass and pushing to see when he would break, convinced him that the green haired pest would never want to be looked at as the victim. The refusal to ask and accept help was proof enough of that.

After the mall attack, Katsuki was inclined to believe that theory that Izuku did have the hidden Quirk of attracting villains, which was a useless ass Quirk and the nerd had been better off Quirkless.

Which brought the present problem. Katsuki knew Izuku had scars. Hell, he was responsible for most of the old ones, and he refused to acknowledge that little worm in his heart that felt a little bit bad for it. He had seen them that one day that started all this soul searching nonsense that didn’t let him sleep in peace.

But then he had seen the big one. It was deep and ugly and covered most of his back. A few years ago, in middle school, they had this one classmate who had an ugly scar on his arm. It was from wrist to elbow, and he had gotten it when his skin got caught in a ride at an amusement park. Or that’s what he said. That scar looked like some five year old had glued yarn on a paper for a school project.

And Deku’s scar looked the same. But bigger. Which begged the question: when did it happen? That wound looked like it could’ve killed him, but he wasn’t hospitalised. True, there had been days when he missed school, but he never brought a doctor’s seal.

So, no, Katsuki wasn’t worried. He just wanted to know when it happened and why hadn’t he caught on to it. If the nerd had such a big disability and he didn’t notice, then that was a problem Katsuki needed to fix. He wouldn’t get high in the ranks if he missed such a big clue right under his eyes.

So, after all the other fuckers went to bed, he posted himself and waited for the nerd to return. It didn’t take long to see the greenette coming from the bathhouse. When Izuku spotted him, he stopped, tensing for a second then relaxing, in that forced way you do to show you’re not scared.

“Bakugou” he said. The sentence held no bite, only a guarded curiosity and the readiness to spring at an attack.

“Chill, nerd, I won’t attack you” he said, keeping as much hostility out of his voice as he managed. He did not want for this to end in a fight because he was sure Aizawa would skin him if he interrupted his sleep. Or the semi-dead state the vampire was using during normal sleeping hours.

Deku didn’t relax, but his guarded expression became curious.

“What’s with the scar?”

The greenette frowned. “None of your business.”

“Come on, now, Deku. The others are gonna ask. We both know you didn’t get it while doing anything legal. Tell me what happened and I won’t break whatever lie you’ll be selling them.”

Izuku gritted his teeth at having the blackmail turned against him, and, even if he didn’t let it show in his face, Katsuki smirked internally. *Two can play this game, motherfucker!*

Izuku sighed and shook his head. “Remember that one time in December I missed school a whole week?” katsuki did remember, his teachers made him sent him his homework because they
lived so close to each other. Izuku had told them he had fallen with fever, and he seemed pretty tired when he opened the door. Katsuki now wished he had paid attention instead of throwing the materials on the step and stomping away. “Well, that weekend I got into a nasty fight with a guy with a blade Quirk and got my back shredded. A friend of mine patched me up, so I’m fine now.” He then turned fully towards his once friend and rose a sarcastic eyebrow. “And you don’t have to worry, Bakugou, I don’t do that anymore since Aizawa keeps constant tabs on me.”

Katsuki ignored the jab, but the name still felt so fucking wrong in the other’s voice. He instead, tilted his head “Weren’t you supposed to go to a hospital?”

Izuku shrugged and scratched his head. “Hospitals ask questions. Plus, my friend was very good in putting staples on me so, the only downside was that I missed school and had to pause for a month or so, so it fully closed.” That… sounded way too fast for that type of recovery, but he wasn’t going to question whatever Quirks that little shit had gotten his hands on. Bakugou opened his mouth but Izuku beat him to it. “Look, Bakugou, it’s late, I’m tired, it’s cold. If you have any questions, can we please do this tomorrow?”

Bakugou clicked his tongue but said nothing. Izuku sighed and walked past him and into the room. Katsuki remained outside for a few more minutes to think and, when he returned, there didn’t seem to be any soul left awake.

~O~

Dabi was starting to really question his choices right now. He’d spent a few weeks with the so called League of Villains, watching it gather more and more members and had reached a conclusion. Whoever was at the other end of the TV screen was either clinically insane or bored beyond belief and was looking to alleviate said boredom by conducting some kind of social experiment that entailed handing nigh-unlimited resources to a petulant man-child and sitting back to watch the world burn. Or maybe he was both.

There was no other explanation. The man obviously had enough money for whatever schemes they’d been planning. He had the means and Dabi was willing to bet he had the personnel too, and was wasting all of it in Shigaraki. Was it really any wonder that things ended up as fucked up as they did? No there wasn’t.

The level of undying loyalty the silver haired man had for the sentient computer was a bit disconcerting at times and Dabi was not 100% sure some brainwashing quirk wasn’t involved yet… His mental state was underdeveloped. It was one thing to kill someone on the spot because you needed to assert dominance (Dabi) were fucking feeling like it (Toga) or they didn’t fit your ideals (Spinner) and there was a completely different thing to kill someone because you had no control over your temper. It’d take the shrubbery brat less than five minutes before he’d try to manipulate him.

Other than that Shigaraki was what Dabi would generously call: street smart, life stupid. He was... not really naïve, but had the maturity and attention span of a five year old on a sugar high who’s favourite show had just been cancelled. If you managed to look beyond the pettiness and the, frankly exhausting, video game references, his strategies weren’t half-bad, but had no self-control. After only a few hours in the bar the scarred man had decided that Kurogiri wasn’t there just as a taxi, but also as a babysitter and to ensure that the fucker didn’t get them caught. Which was, again, valid enough.

So, Dabi could say, with a 10% space for error, that this whole ‘League’ was actually the Skype man’s attempt of recreating Quirked Hunger Games because whatever trafficking he was doing wherever he was wasn’t satisfying enough.
So why did the pierced man stay? Easy, they had the means to achieve his purposes; Dabi’s reason was the reason he had to constantly replace staples to make sure his face didn’t fall off. Because, as immature as Shiggaraki was, he was a decent leader. He had money and firepower and a lot of influence over the media and such. No matter how much Dabi hated it here, teaming with the League was the fastest and surest way to get what he wanted. It didn’t mean he had to like it.

And, after the run in with the brat, Shigaraki’d gotten some brilliant ideas he was going to share with them tonight. *Hoo-fucking-ray.*

Dabi sighed and shook his head. The other League members were their own brand of crazy. That didn’t say much about him, did it? Toga seemed to be in for the blood and murder. Spinner was obsessed with Stain to the point where Dabi was willing to quit just to stop hearing him. Twice was okay, as weird as that was, and Magne and Compress were the sanest there. And he wasn’t starting to talk about Muscular. Why he hadn’t roasted that guy yet? No clue, but he didn’t want to be tempted. That man’s reasons were much like Toga’s so, why they weren’t BFFs was to remain a question.

Shigaraki entered the room, a smug smile on his face and Dabi was already preparing himself for not punching the bastard. “So” Magne said. “What’s our next move?”

“We will shatter the public’s trust in heroes and get a new asset at the same time. We will strike in their lair and take their advantage and support.”

“How, *exactly*?” Dabi leaned on the wall. Shigaraki smirked and there was something cruel in his look when he looked at scarred villain. The dark haired man didn’t like it.

“We will attack UA’s training camp and take a kid with us. With a little persuasion, I’m confident that we will convince him to join us, that being the final nail in their coffin.”

“What’s your problem with UA?” Spinner asked as he took a step forward.

“It’s a good strategic move” the man waved them off. “Think about it, if we manage to bring down a camp with pro heroes and herolings, we will prove that pros are useless. People will be scared for their children and of course, they will take them away from the school that can’t keep them safe. We also have a kill list you are supposed to complete.”

“You said something about a hostage” Compress said.

“Yes. I’ve found that there is a certain student who has the potential of joining us. Sure, he will resist at first, but no he will eventually cave in with the tight amount of persuasion.” There was a wicked glint in his eyes. “If one of them joins us, society will finally see how corrupt heroes are and their descent will slowly begin.”

Dabi frowned. There was only one student who Shigaraki had spent marginally enough time with. *Oh, no, please don’t tell me….*

Shigaraki lifted a photo and Dabi was a few seconds away from banging his head on the nearest wall when his eyes met the nest of green hair and freckles on the picture. “Izuku Midoriya. He is our target and is to be acquired with minimum damage.”

*Fuck, fuck, fuck.*

Was Dabi mad on the brat? Sure, that breach of privacy was a little too much, but not as much as to warrant the pain he would be put through because of Shigaraki. Dabi clenched his teeth as to try to formulate an argument that wouldn’t reveal too much. He took a deep breath and looked their leader
“Are you sure it’s a good idea? The kid seems pretty set on heroics, and, by what I’ve seen, I think he’d be more of a nuisance than anything else.”

The pale haired man’s face lit like a Christmas tree and Dabi realised too late that he had fallen into a trap. “Why, Dabi, do you happen know him?”

The man’s mind raced at illegal speeds looking for a way out. Dabi could lie and say no, but Shigaraki knew the truth. Or some of it, at least. Somehow, the chapped bastard had found their connection and wanted to catch him in flagrant. The man had no way of knowing how much the other villain knew, but he realised that, if he outright lied and told them he didn’t, Shigaraki would make the big reveal and Dabi would be doomed. He also couldn’t tell the truth. If there villains found out they had a connection that passed drug deals, one could be used against the other.

So, Dabi chose the vaguest version of the story he thought he could get away with “We’ve been acquainted before” he made sure to spit the word, as if their previous interactions were not all that pleasant. He didn’t say anything more and Shigaraki was obviously displeased, but didn’t lash out, to the surprise of everyone involved. He just kept talking about the plan and how they will execute it, but Dabi was only half paying attention, the other half focused on how not to kill the brat.

It was set, Izuku would be kidnapped. The scarred villain knew that any other intervention will draw too much attention on himself. There was no other way for this to go. He would have to participate actively, if only to make sure he didn’t get too hurt.

Chapter End Notes

hey there, guys, a little announcement
for those of you who came here from Stolen Chances, yeah, my hiatus on that is over, and i will start posting it on fryday, but, due to me not being an ass to my beta and all, that means i'll only be able to update sucker punch once a week too
so, yeah, i guess that's it
anyway, i absolutely love your comments, so please, tell me what you think

tumblr
discord
The next day started, as usual, with a rather violent wake up call. But, since Aizawa didn’t have a way of splashing them all evenly with water at five in the morning, he simply banged on a gong once loudly. Really, the fact that he’d hauled a gong out here was almost impressive enough to overpower the annoyance.

Almost.

Then Aizawa told them about how they should improve their Quirks through that was basically the same way Dabi had taught him combat: get your ass kicked until you stop getting your ass kicked.

Since he doesn’t have a Quirk (regardless of what sleep deprived Shinsou insisted) Aizawa had retorted to making him try and learn different weapons and fighting styles. Though Izuku had no plans to lug around a sword.

Then he was put to fight the kids with Quirks without a weapon, since Aizawa insisted that weapons weren’t always available. Izuku, unwilling to be made to do even more laps, swallowed a retort about broken bottles and got to work. Still, getting elbowed by Kirishima was painful and he tapped out after the third time he had been slammed into the ground. He fought Ojirou once and that had been pretty okay, since the other student could still feel pain.

All in all, he was sure that his teacher was doing this out of a sadistic need to punish him for bending the rules, and physical beat down was way easier than threat to prison. And much more fun.

After the first batch of training, his homeroom teacher gave him a brand new notebook and ten blurry videos to analyse in an hour. Izuku was beginning to understand that this would basically be a more gruesome internship with witnesses.

Oh, how horribly right he was.

After that, he had to fight both students from 1A and 1B. Since he knew all of their Quirks anyway, Aizawa couldn’t pull a fast one here, so stripping him of his weapons was his way of putting him as a disadvantage. Weirdly enough, Izuku couldn’t mind it.

All his life he had been treated with either kiddie gloves, making sure he wouldn’t get hurt or anything. That rarely worked. It only made him be even more ostracised and jeered on, looked at like he was stupid or something. Or, the second type, when he would be intentionally be given harder tasks, to give everyone a reason to exclude the Quirkless kid from the other normal kids. Suffice to say, it didn’t always work, because one- teachers seemed to truly believe he was physically, not only socially disabled. And two- Izuku rarely gave up while still conscious. So, most of the people there were actually surprised when he was halfway decent at normal stuff.

But Aizawa wasn’t like that. He gave him harder tasks because he knew that he could do it. He was the first adult who didn’t want to see him fail, who didn’t want him out of the way because it was convenient. Who didn’t look at him with pity or with spite for existing in a world different than him. And Izuku didn’t know how to thank him for that.
It was also different than with Bakugou. Because Bakugou didn’t go harder on him because he saw him as an equal. He went harder on him than he would go with anyone else because he saw the greenette as a pest and wouldn’t want to have him in the way. But, like any pest, like rats and bugs and other things that had always plagued mankind, Izuku just kept coming back. Again and again and again no matter how much it annoyed the blond.

In the beginning, it had been a just a matter of survival; now it was more something like spite that kept him going, the wish to show the blond up, by being better. Even thought they hadn’t been on such hostile terms as they had been on before, Izuku couldn’t truly forgive. He doubted he ever will be able to truly forgive the explosive teen, when every time he had stretched his hand before he only got bitten. But Izuku had teeth too, and, if they were chipped, well that only made them sharper.

When he was young, Izuku had had a dream in which the blond was a tiger that continued to chase him. He never quite caught up, but he was always at a hairs breath, enough to leave bites and scratches, but not enough to maim. Now, Izuku was the human who had been given a gun.

After he finished the analysis, Aizawa made him do some ninja training again, because why the hell not? And then, made him battle Monoma.

Thing was, Monoma’s training was trying to take multiple Quirks at once and extend the time limit. And that worked as well as someone would expect. So, the purpose of this exercise was to put the guy who could copy Quirks against the guy with no Quirk for him to copy, to see how Monoma would fight while incapacitated. And Izuku would have appreciated it and actually tried to help him get better.

But here was the problem.

Izuku was pissed. And tired. And, honestly, didn’t feel like fighting anymore. Still, he would’ve tried to be nice, had Monoma not been Monoma and started insulting him. And here was the thing people didn’t really get from movies and some other types of books. Annoying and insulting your opponent only works when said opponent has a poor reaction to being insulted. In theory, that thing works because they suddenly become so focused on offing you, that they don’t notice the diversion or they destroy their own thing in the process. And that worked on villains like Shigaraki.

But Izuku wasn’t like Shigaraki. He had been through too much to fall for something so obvious, had listened to too many bigotry and people calling his mom names to lash out at any kind of verbal trashing. Bakugou was an exception. So, when Monoma opened his mouth, Izuku, who was already tired and pissed off, ended it quickly and kind of dickishly.

He powerwalked towards the blond with his hands in his pockets, not having a care in the world. The blond fell in a fighting stance. Izuku didn’t. Because this wasn’t going to be a fight.

He kept walking and he saw that Monoma was getting nervous. Good. He let a small smirk slip on his lips and got closer. The blond expected a blow, but Izuku just kept walking, like he was going to pass him by. Then, in the last second, he slammed his knee, hard, in the boy’s crotch. Monoma cried and doubled over, time in which Izuku punched him in the throat. The teen fell backwards and Izuku slammed his foot into his stomach before walking away. From the corner of his eye he could see Vlad King with his jaw to the ground and Aizawa shaking his head like a disappointed parent. From behind someone whistled.

Izuku didn’t turn back, only went to the area with the tables and plopped himself there
until his classmates would be done. It was almost over anyway, but Bakugou, like the overachiever he was, still mutilated his hands to get stronger explosions. *Newsflash, Idiot, if you destroy your hands you won’t be able to use your Quirk anymore.*

~O~

On the cliff, about a mile from the forest, Dabi sat and watched the sun going down, knowing that, a day from that moment, they would raid the camp. He was starting to cook up a plan as to capture the brat as fast as possible. Because here was the thing.

If he didn’t know the boy, or, hell, even if he knew him but back then, he would think that the kidnapping would work. From the outside, he really looked like a wild card, and hell, even from close range, the Quirkless kid was still a calamity in human form. Even his ideals could in some way align with Shigaraki’s if you squinted. *Hard.*

But, at the same time, the green haired menace would, most likely, respond to Shigaraki’s offer with something like ‘cool motive, still murder’. Because, even if they both wanted to change society, the sliver hared villain had a much more hands-on approach that would mean that the boy give up his morals, something that Dabi knew had little to no chance of happening.

The scarred villain didn’t want to kidnap the brat. Not because he was against hurting children, but because he was against hurting *this* particular child. And he knew better than to think Shigaraki was above torture. Ideally, Yami would be near a teacher, preferably EraserHead, and not be in any way of the fire. The hero was halfway decent, and Dabi knew that he would protect his students, if his memories were any proof.

But when would things ever go ideally?

Chances were, Yamikumo would meet with a villain, fight until unconsciousness and then be dragged off to the base.

Either way, there was a high chance that the boy would get captured. As immature as Shigaraki was, he was pretty alright at planning. And he wanted the kid. Dabi was pretty sure that, if this didn’t work, he would just warp in the boy’s home. Which brought the question of why didn’t he do that in the first place.

*Public hero bashing, most likely* he thought in a huff.

There was also the matter of the other teen Dabi didn’t want dead. Even though it was almost eight years since he had last seen Shouto, the scarred man still cared, for a given definition of ‘care’, about the members of his family that weren’t flaming pieces of sentient trash. Which was why he had no plans to bring him into this. The greenette had already figured out his identity, he didn’t need the whole criminal underworld to know that Endeavour’s spawn was roaming the grounds. People tried to kill him for less. But Shouto was strong, if the Sports Festival was any proof and, more importantly, he wasn’t on any list, the kidnapping or kill one. And that was fine.

Regardless, the kid would get likely busted. And, if he met any other villain, he was likely to lose a limb. Dabi sighed and rubbed the darts in his pocket. If it was his way, he would make it painless.

The bastards behind him suddenly started talking.

“T’im itching to go” Muscular said in his gruff voice that made Dabi wonder if he also ate his victims. “Let’s hurry up and move.”
Dabi held back a sigh. Typical. Why did he have to be stuck with two trigger happy murderers?

“It’s too soon” The other brat-Mustard-that the hell kind of name was Mustard? Hey, Dabi had a meaning and a relation to his Quirk. What the hell did this kid go through, chocked on his sandwich topping? On, no, he was starting to sound like his other brat. “And, I have already told you, we don’t need to do anything flashy.”

“Yeah” Dabi said as he kept eyeing the dark woods “But who died and made you boss?” he lifted his chin in a challenge to the heroes they were going to make pay. “This will be a signal fire” Brat or no brat, they were still on a mission, and he would sure as hell accomplish most of it “We’ll fill those heroes full of holes and put them in their place, all for a brighter future.”

Behind him there was now silence.

~O~

The others soon finished and came to the tables. Some pet him on the back for offing Monoma, and Izuku smiled as he waited for his friends. The pussycats came and told them they had to make their own food and Iida, poor, trusting Iida, said:

“But of course, in times of disaster and evacuations, someone needs to fill the bellies and soothe the fatigued bellies of the citizens.”

Izuku facepalmed and shook his head before leaning towards Todoroki “I, for one, would love to see Endeavour cooking for scared citizens.”

The heterochromatic teen could only do so much not to choke on a laugh.

But they cooked. Izuku was minding the rice and, from the corner of his eyes, he saw his friend using his left side to light a fire and felt so happy at the small smile on his face. Todoroki was finally accepting that part of himself and Izuku couldn’t be happier. The boy had been born with a wonderful Quirk. Why let it go to waste?

After it was all finally done, they dug in. Izuku never realised how starved he was until he felt the taste of curry on his tongue, and thoroughly devoured the meal. It wasn’t anything spectacular, and he had made better before, but, right now, it was a godsend. After finishing, he let himself lean on the table and close his eyes for one precious second before his classmates started to talk.

“You sure can store a lot, Momo!”

“My Quirk converts the food into a variety of atoms. So, the more I eat, the more I can produce.” Izuku snapped up at the mention of Quirks and he was sure he could hear Shinsou sigh on the other side of the table.

“So, could you technically make a gun?”

On the seat in front of him, Shinsou facepalmed and Izuku could feel a certain dichromatic teen glaring silently at him. _Jokes on you, Todotoki, your brother’s better at this._ He thought, not taking his eyes off the girl.

The recommendation student shook her head. “Unfortunately, I don’t know the physical make-up of a gun.” Izuku mused as he rubbed his chin.
“What about grenades? I know you made a bomb that one time, but they are a little different, with the triggering system and all. I know the basic compounds and blueprints though.”

He really did. After all, he had been building a lot of them for about a semester. “I guess” Yaoyorozu shrugged. Shinsou sighed once more, took his plate and planted himself near Yaoyorozu.

“We might as well do this right.”

Izuku grinned and pulled out his notebook, ignoring the looks his friends threw at the number of pages already written. He opened on a new page and started to scribble the making of a grenade. His classmates leaned in to see.

After he was done, Shinsou pulled the notebook from under his hands and stole his pen before starting to scribble. He changed a few things then handed the girl the rough blueprints. She stared for a few seconds, reading the writing and asking for clearing a few times before she opened her palm. Her skin started to shine and, after a few seconds, a very small grenade rested in her palm.

“Awesome! Do you realise what you could do?! I don’t only mean weapons, I also mean technology and stuff!” he started to ramble before it suddenly hit him. “If you can make any non-living thing, could you technically make transplant organs?” he blinked and almost vibrated in his seat “What is even the definition of living? Electrons? A heartbeat?”

The girl blinked and scratched her head. “I’ve... I’ve never thought about it, to be honest,”

“Well, if it’s true, just imagine how many lives you could save by doing that! Especially if the person’s Quirk affects their body and they can’t use anything from regular donors! Someone could tell you how their Quirk could affect their organ and you could make it like that!” his eyes glimmered as he was filled with restless energy and bouncing in his seat.

“I never…” Yaoyorozu said. Then, she looked up and smiled at the greenette “You know what? I’ll ask Aizawa tomorrow. It can’t hurt.”

The smile on Izuku’s face could’ve cracked it. But, from the corner of his eyes, he saw the little boy, Kouta, glaring at them before stomping away. He sighed and shook his head. He would have to do something. Or at least try.

Izuku folded the piece of paper on the table and placed it in his pocket. Shi fingers it something long and lean and Izuku suddenly realised that he had the darts there.

I had almost forgotten about them. I should really keep better track of those before I lose them.

The boy stretched and got up. He grabbed a plate of curry and headed after the boy.

“Where are you going?” Kirishima asked.

“After Kouta. I doubt he had any dinner” he said before heading into the forest. Izuku followed the glaringly obvious footsteps until he reached the cliff. The view was beautiful. A very mad five year-old glared at it from under the stone. “I bet you’re hungry” he said as he stepped into the light. “I brought a plate for you.”

“How did you find me?!” Kouta yelled.

“I followed your footprints.” He said as he set the late to the ground. “Thought you might want some food.”
“Well I don’t!” he yelled as he fully turned to face him “I don’t feel like fraternizing with you people. So get away from my secret base!” he turned around and crossed his arms. “Training your Quirks, flaunting them around, it’s all gross….”

“I don’t have one” Izuku said.

Kouta stopped and turned to face him. “You don’t have a what?”

“A Quirk. I don’t have one.” Izuku looked at him.

The boy blinked. “Then why the hell are you here?”

Izuku looked up. “Because, when I was a kid, I needed a hero. When I was little, I needed someone to tell me that I could be one, needed someone to save me, but there was no one.” Izuku took a step towards the boy, his gaze softening. “I wanna make sure there’s no one left waiting for their heroes.”

“You’ll only die!” Kouta spit. “You will die because you fools keep calling each other heroes and villains and killing yourselves over it!”

“I know” that seemed to stop Kouta so Izuku continued. “The society is broken and has been broken for far longer than I’ve been around. There are too many villains and not enough heroes.” He looked away “Not enough good ones anyway.” Here, Izuku took a deep breath and looked the small boy in the eye. “I won’t pretend that I understand what you’ve been through. My experience and yours are totally different. But I will tell you this- if you keep hating on society, on something you have no control over, it will only hurt so much more when it comes down to it. Don’t let your feelings fester. That makes them blow.”

The boy growled. “If you hate this so much, why the hell did you become a hero?!”

“Because I want to change it and the best way is from the inside.” He shook his head and shrugged, turning to leave. “Just remember, you may have your own reason for hating heroes, but there are people out there who need them. There are people there who need to be saved, and you shouldn’t look down on them for something you can’t agree on.”

“But what will you do if you die. Huh?!” Kouta yelled.

Izuku turned around and graced him with a rare, true, bitter smile. “Then I can say I died trying.” Before disappearing into the shadows.

~O~

The next day was as gruesome as the first two, but Izuku had already been expecting it, so he wasn’t so fucked over by the training. He was made to fight three other people now, simultaneously, and the boy had a feeling that, by the end of the week, Aizawa will make him fight the whole class at once for the sole purpose of having him prepared for an USJ part two situation. Izuku felt like he was jinxing it but, as Shinsou pointed out, with his record, it was more than likely.

And, of course, the purple petunia was right. Again.

Anyway, the day passed fairly quickly, they had to make their own meals again and, as sun set, it was time for the courage test. The five who had failed were dragged away by their homeroom teacher, and Izuku was never gladder that he did manage to pass. Even if the activity
wouldn’t have been interesting, it was still better than any supplementary training Aizawa could come up with. “Right” Pixie-bob started “Class B will be on the offensive first. Class A will head into the forest in teams of two, one team every three minutes. You’ll find name cards halfway point. Grab your own and come back here.” She turned towards them and smiled. “The scarers aren’t allowed to make direct contact. They’ll just be using their Quirks to startle you best they can.

“So get creative!” Ragdoll popped out from behind the others and jumped in the air. “Whichever class makes the other wet their pants more wins!”

Bet Shinsou could just order them to do that and be done with it Izuku thought with a chuckle.

“I see” Iida said “It’s an opportunity to work out ingenuity through competition, as well as a chance for us to broaden the utility of our Quirks!”

They drew lots and Izuku looked at his number: “Who’s number three?” he yelled.

“Here!” Yaoyorozu said as she stepped forward. Izuku breathed relieved, there were a lot of ways this could have gone wrong. To his right, Bakugou was trying to bribe (threaten) Ojirō into switching partners. It didn’t work, and Ragdoll forbid them from even trying.

They waited their turn and, when it came, Izuku and Yaoyorozu entered the forest. The boy scratched his head. “Well, since I don’t really have a Quirk to use, we might try using yours?” he asked, feeling a little bit weird.

The girl chuckled. “Don’t sell yourself short. You’re pretty good at climbing from what I’ve seen. You could try jumping from tree to tree, you know, making sounds like in horror movies?” she took a step back and eyed him critically “Yeah, with some dark clothes and makeup, it could work.” Izuku chuckled until he felt smoke. Looking around, he saw faint purple tendrils raising.

“It’s something on fire?” the girl asked.

“No” Izuku shook his head. “That type of smoke smells differently.” He sniffled, catching a faint sweet smell “This feels more like Midnight’s” his eyes widened as he realised. “Shit! Cover your mouth!”

“EVERYONE!” suddenly filled his head “WE’RE UNDER ATTACK FROM TWO VILLAINS AND THERE MIGHT BE MORE OUT THERE! ALL THOSE WHO CAN SHOULD RETURN TO THE CAMP AT ONCE! IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN ENEMY, DON’T ENGAGE, JUST RETREAT!”

Izuku looked at Yaomomo villains? Here? How? He shook his head.

Kouta.

“We have to get back” the girl said, already lifting her shirt to make two gas masks.

“Go!” Izuku said. “I have to find Kouta,” He said as he slipped the mask on.

“You can’t go alone!” Momo said as she caught his wrist. “You’re…”

Quirkless.

Izuku shook his head when a thought popped into his mind. “Remember the grenade form yesterday? Can you make a few more?”
She looked like she wanted to refuse, but she knew him well enough that it wouldn’t work. He handed her the piece of paper from earlier and she sighed as she made him some three grenades and a small gas mask. “Take care.” Was all she said as before he gave her a small smile and vanished into the woods.

~O~

Dabi was waiting outside the small building, the blue fire raising in the air behind him.

*Hope he’s not in there.* The villain had to find out if the target, aka the green haired menace, was inside. Current problem was that there were also pros inside, so he couldn’t really go in guns blazing. Not by himself anyway.

“*EVERYONE!* WE’RE UNDER ATTACK FROM TWO VILLAINS AND THERE MIGHT BE MORE OUT THERE! ALL THOSE WHO CAN SHOULD RETURN TO THE CAMP AT ONCE! IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN ENEMY, DON’T ENGAGE, JUST RETREAT!”

Well then, problem solved he supposed. Someone was bound to come outside. Almost as if on some kind of cue, the door banged open and EraserHead walked out.

“Always worrying about others, huh, senpai?” he grinned before he releasing a wave of fire on the man. “You pros stay out of our way. You’re not the ones we’re after.”

After about three seconds, he stopped, to make sure his scars wouldn’t catch fire. They had that nasty habit. He looked up. “Well” he said as he eyed the teacher hanging on the wall like a ninja “Guess that’s a pro for ya’.”

He rose his arm again, but his fire didn’t work. *Typical* he thought as the hero wrapped his scarves around him. Eraser kneed him in the jaw and slammed him into the ground. *Shit, that hurt* he thought as dirt entered his mouth. *Maybe I should actually try.*

“Your objectives, numbers and positions. Spill it.” the man said as he dug his knee into his back. Dabi groaned.

“Why would I do that?”

His left arm cracked viciously and he barely stopped a cry from escaping his throat. “Because of this” he said calmly, which was somehow more terrifying than if he yelled. “Your right one’s next. If it gets to breaking your legs, it will be bothersome for the officers to arrest you.”

“What crawled up your ass and died?” he asked as he prepared for his other arm to break. But it didn’t. A large explosion went off in the distance and the man looked up. *Your mistake* Dabi thought as he rolled and flipped the man off of him. *Well,* he thought as he sat up, scarves still wrapped around him. *With this much damage I’m done for.* “Quite worthy of being an instructor here, aren’t you, hero?” he spit the word. He cocked his head mockingly as his flesh started to melt. “Is it because your students are so precious?”

He got the satisfaction of the man’s shocked expression before he died.

On the other side of the forest, the true fire user and the discount Deadpool listened to the screams.

“Aaah, you’re no good Dabi, darn you!” Twice said. “You got done in, so weak, you’re just fodder!”
Dabi rose an eyebrow before giving a *huh* and shrugging as he returned to setting the forest on fire. He didn’t really get any mention of the target in the coms, so that meant that he was alright.

“Don’t be silly! And don’t jump to conclusions! You’re strong! We just gotta assume that the pros are gonna be monsters.”

“Send out another” Dabi yawned. “We need to pin these pros down.”

“Send more fodder and you’ll get the same result. Count on me!” the masked one said as more goop was pouring out of him and taking form of the scarred villain.

~O~

*Fuck!* Katsuki internally cursed as he dodged a falling tree and followed half-n-half. How did the villains find them?! And, more importantly, why did they have to attack now?! Why couldn’t they attack when he was with anyone else *but* half-n-half? Well, *almost* anyone else; he wasn’t sure he could keep from decking Deku if it happened for them to be in the same pot, but God. Dammit. *Why*?!

“We need to return” the candy cane said. Katsuki gritted his teeth. As much as he hated to agree with him, he was right. They had to go back to gain strength in numbers. As split as they were, they were sitting ducks.

“So you know the way?” he yelled.

The other frowned and looked around, at the blue flames as if trying to figure out a puzzle he couldn’t quite remember. Sounds of running came from their right and they both turned to see Uraraka and Froggy enter the clearing. The girls got near them and fell into a fight stance, just as a villain got out of the woods.

“Oh, boys, finally!” she said on a giddy tone. Katsuki frowned. Her voice was too high and she was wearing a school uniform. What is a kid our age doing here?! “Tell me, do you know where Midoriya Izuku is?”

They all froze for a second before Katsuki spoke. “What the fuck do you want with Deku?”

Her face, or, at least the thing visible from underneath the mask she was wearing seemed to light up. “Deku? Is that your nickname for him? How cute!” she giggled. “But sorry, you can’t have him. Already dibbed.”

“What. Do you want with him?” half and half said but Katsuki could feel the hint of anger beneath his words.

“To recruit him, of course” she giggled. “Shigaraki is quite fond of him, you see?”

Something froze inside of Katsuki at the words, tough *what* exactly he couldn’t quite place. The girl giggled once more before she attacked. The blond barely missed the knife, and that only because Froggy pulled him out of the way. Half and half and Uraraka attacked at the same time while Katsuki got to his feet. He eyed the woods, looking for another attacker, and was lucky to do so, because a wave of blue fire came his way. He dodged it and jumped at the lanky guy leaving the woods.
“Really now, where’s the brat?” he asked, completely ignoring his ally fighting in his line of sight. Froggy jumped and almost managed to kick him, but the fucker dodged like it was nobody’s business. Katsuki acted.

Igniting an at least incapacitating explosion, he jumped at the man, who seemed quite surprised by the hand buried in his gut. He started to turn to goo around the blonds hand, and, as the teen looked horrified at his stomach, the villain let out a laugh and leaned in.

“You’re Kacchan, aren’t you?”

Katsuki froze as the villain completely melted before his eyes until Tsuyu came and shook him out of it. The blond blinked and looked around. They were alone in the clearing, Todotoki looking worse for wear with a lot of gashed across his skin and Uraraka had a bruise blooming on her cheek, but was otherwise fine.

“They’re after Mido-chan!” Tsuyu panted. Half and half nodded as he straightened himself.

“We have to tell the teachers.”

“We have to find the fucker!” Katsuki growled.

~O~

Izuku dashed through the woods, glad for the oxygen mask. The air seemed thicker and the blue flames didn’t really help the situation. He gulped.

No.

No, he’s not, he can’t be…

He wouldn’t

The boy patted his pocket, mentally checking all he had. Even though he had grenades, they were small, smaller than what he usually used. They wouldn’t pack much of a punch, unless they were used in close quarters. Izuku hoped it wouldn’t get to that. In his other pocket, he had the two leftover darts from Dabi. It would only be two villains, if he got it right. He shook his head as he jumped over a fallen tree. He got into a clearing and saw a huge, cloaked man preparing to land a hit on the small boy.

Izuku jumped, caught the kid and rolled out of the way before the fist landed.

The greenette got up and looked at the trembling child in front of him before he eyed the villain. He was tall and bulky, almost the same height as All Might. Flesh was ripping out of his skin, wrapping around his bones. The one eyed man rose an eyebrow. “Now, you were on the list. Midroiya, right?”

“What do you want?!?” he yelled as he pushed the kid behind him and handed him the oxygen mask.

“I? I would like to rip you both in half. Unfortunately, the big boss wants you alive, so that’s off the table.” Here, the villain cocked his head and looked at him. “In how many pieces tho, he didn’t specify.”

Izuku gulped.
Crap.

Crap, shit fuck.

He kept his eyes on the villain, but spoke in a low, non threatening tone. “Kouta” he said and he felt the boy yelp behind him. “Run.”

“Wha…. What?”

“Run.” He repeated, not taking his eyes off the man. He couldn’t feel his phone in his pocket, so it wasn’t like he could call for backup and Aizawa wouldn’t be able to find him later.

“Oh, you want to save the kid, how cute” the man mocked.

Izuku paid him no mind. “But, but…” the kid stuttered.

“Don’t worry”, Izuku said and tried to smile, thought there was no light in it “I’ll be right behind you.”

He heard the kid gulp and run away before he returned to the villain, who had watched them in mock curiosity all this time. “You think you saved him? He will die anyway by the end of this night.” He said before he attacked.

Izuku didn’t have time to dodge and found himself pinned to the rock behind him. “Is that all you’ve got? Really man, make it interesting!”

The teen gritted his teeth before he pulled out a grenade and blew it in his face. The man let out a cry of pain and took a few steps back, time in which Izuku jumped and dashed for the woods. He couldn’t though dodge the hand that bitch-slapped him into the rock.

“Well, that was unexpected” the man chuckled as he took a step forward. “Thank you, now I actually have a reason to rip off those arms.”

The boy growled and coughed as he stood up, watching the villain. The man focused his mechanical eye on him before he smirked and grabbed him by the collar, slamming him into the ground. Izuku felt something strain, but ignored the pain.

Grabbing a dart, he slammed it into the man’s shoulder before kicking him in the nose and diving away. Unfortunately, the villain was blocking the entrance, so Izuku was trapped. “That was a lucky shot” the man chuckled, clutching his bleeding nose. He plucked the dart out of his hand and looked at it. “Nice try, but my muscles are too big for this petty thing to work.” A cruel smirk spread across his lips. “Fun’s over, kid, prey that you pass out quickly.”

Shit, if his muscles are too thick, then I’m screwed Izuku gulped as he took a step back from the man, eyeing the cliff beneath his feet. Wait... does he enhance all muscles, or only muscular ones? He let him go, not because of the darts, but because of the broken nose. The nose was a cartilage, but no muscle on his face was puffed. Does he not have control over them? Or is he not used to augmenting them? A plan, a cruel, reckless, but undeniably efficient plan started to form and Izuku gulped at the thought of what he would have to do. Please, make it work.

Clenching his fingers against the one last dart and praying that he would make it to use it again, he charged for the man. The villain pulled his fist back to strike, but Izuku didn’t go for it. the smaller boy latched on the man and pulled himself up to his face. The kid stabbed the dart into his one working eye.
Muscular screamed.

Izuku felt his hands rising, but they fell as the man collapsed under the effect of the serum. The teen sat there, his heart pounding so hard he could barely hear the rest.

He didn’t know how long he sat there, on the man’s body. It had to have been a while, because, when he came back to, his heart was back to a somehow normal rhythm.

Izuku also didn’t know why he did that, but, more out of instinct than anything else, he pulled the dart out.

The eye came with it.

Izuku stared at the bleeding organ and his stomach lurched before he doubled over to puke. He heaved and coughed before he tried to wipe his mouth and promptly remembered that his hands were covered in blood. Oh, and he was still holding the eye. He forced his hands to unclench from around the dart before he checked his pockets for his remaining grenade.

Yup, still there.

Izuku wiped the blood on his pants and started walking. *I should return to the camp*, he thought as he took a step forward, *if they are looking for me, then they might manage to ambush me. Though, if they did, they would have accomplished their mission and leave the others in peace. He shook his head. No, there’s no guarantee that they are coming only after me.*

Suddenly, Mandalay’s Quirk rang through his head once again.

**ATTENTION! ONE OF THE VILLAIN’S TARGETS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED! THE STUDENT KNOWN AS DEKU! DEKU NEEDS TO AVOID BATTLE AND MAKE NO MOVE ALONE. EVERYONE GET THAT? DEKU?**

Izuku blinked. *Deku.* That must mean… There was only one person in UA who ever called him that. Izuku sighed. *Well, I guess then that I have to return.*

An explosion went off in the distance. *The student known as Deku! Deku needs to avoid battle and make no move alone.*

*Fuck that!* Izuku thought as he dashed in that direction.

Chapter End Notes

hey there, not really much ado this time other than thank you for the kudos and comments
tumblr
discord
where I wish that things would go according to plan..... don’t I always?

Chapter Notes

warning for gore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki was running through the woods, trying to find a more open space to fight the overgrown lizard on his heels. The blue fire was already bad enough, he didn’t feel like adding to it. He had run to the teachers and delivered the message, before the one in a tight suit appeared and made at least three copies of the two villains to chase them, you know, to have given them even more fuckery to deal with.

*I have to end this quick and get to Deku,* he thought

Even if he no doubt got the message, it was a fat chance for the teen to choose self preservation for once, so Katsuki had to be there to drag him to the safe point. He also had to find the other extras because, with the villain’s almost unlimited numbers, ganging up on them would be easy. And Katsuki was good, but they were pretty good too, and the blond was smart enough to count his chances.

The lizard was a few feet behind him, and it seemed to be alone. If the other clone was enough of a template, Katsuki waited for proximity before he turned around and slammed his hand into the man’s face, detonating a big explosion at the same time. The villain melted and Katsuki looked disgusted at the slime on his hand, getting flashbacks from a year ago.

*Huh* he thought as he looked at what was left of the clone. *That was surprisingly easy.*

And, in any case, the fact that it was a clone and not a real human really helped his morals. The blond shook his head. “Gotta find others” he said before he looked up at a scream to see the villain with the big lips was floating away. “Guess Round Face’s ok, huh,” He shrugged before he dashed in her direction. He didn’t know the road back to the camp from here anyway.

The smoke was getting thicker and it was harder and harder to breathe. Katsuki covered his mouth and coughed something. This was definitely not good.

It didn’t take him long to find the girl. She was waiting near a tree, her right shoulder in an awkward position. She tensed and looked like she wanted to attack, but relaxed when she saw that it was him. Well, *that* never happened before.

“Can you walk?” he asked as he crouched near her, studying her shoulder. It was only dislocated. She winced and nodded. Without warning, Katsuki caught her shoulder and popped it back.

“What the hell?” she cried. The girl glared at him. “A warning would’ve been nice.”

“If I warned you, you would’ve tensed.”

She glared some more before grabbing his hand and pulling herself up, almost toppling him in the process. Katsuki grumbled, but didn’t have time to get mad. “So” she asked as he wiped
the blood on her cheek “Any idea why they want Mido-chan? Or where he is?”

“Fuck if I know, but if I find him in any other direction other than the camp, I’mma pound him.”

She rose an eyebrow. “And if you find him in the direction of the camp?”

The blond shrugged. “I’mma pound him anyway for managing to make himself a target.”

The girl giggled before she looked around. “Which way?”

Katsuki started strolling forward, not looking back to see her following him. “Where are the other two?”

“I don’t know” she said. “We split.”

Katsuki sighed and ran into another clone of the same lizard man. He was getting tired of the lizard man. The one with the big lips was there too, but there was only one clone of him. “Hey, there, little heroes” he said as he pulled out the blade abomination Katsuki had already seen three times so far, from three different angles. And he was tired of seeing anymore.

“Are you seriously gonna say this every single time I see one of you?!” he yelled, already too tired of this bullshit. This wasn’t like the USJ. These people weren’t weak, and that, combined with the whole cloning bullshit was already taking its toll both on his patience and his body.

He heard Uraraka gritting her teeth. They looked at each other, nodded, before they both jumped on the villains. They both took one lizard, because the other would need the both of them. The purple haired villain swung the thing at him and the boy dodged, rolling under his attack. He feinted a right hook before he elbowed him in the nose (muzzle?)

The villain staggered back and Katsuki grabbed his stupid scarf and pulled him into his explosion. Like all the other clones before him, he melted.

The blond panted as he stood straight, but didn’t really get a break as he was pulled backwards at top speeds. He hit something hard and groaned as both him and the unknown body crashed into the ground. He looked up and saw the villain lifting the huge club, ready to smash his skull, when something suddenly fell on them.

The villain let out a scream and melted into a pile of goo.

Both Kasuki and Uraraka got up to see the brainwasher kicking the goo, a blade in his hand. “You guys Ok?” he asked s he coughed.

“Yeah, are you, Shinsou?”

The other nodded. Katsuki frowned. “Were did you get that?” he pointed at the knife.

“Oh” the purple Einstein said as he looked at the blade in his hand. “It was stuck in a tree.”

Katsuki sighed and shook his head, the tiredness already picking at his skin. “Please tell me that the ‘Deku’ they mentioned isn’t Midoriya.” He said with the air of a man who had long ago stopped hoping. Uraraka shook her head. Shinsou cursed. “Ok, then” he said as he rubbed his temples. “Let’s try to find him and drag him back to the camp.”

“Are you guys Ok?” came a very familiar and tired voice and all eyes snapped in that direction. And, lo and behold, the subject of the current talk was there.
With singed and ripped clothes, hands absolutely covered in blood, traces of red on his shirt and pants as if he had tried wiped it away on them, Deku stood there with the biggest smile on his face.

~O~

Aizawa ran through the woods, through the fire, trying so hard not to suffocate. He had left the children with Vlad back at the camp and was now looking for that goddamned kid.

Of course. Of course it’s the problem child they’re after. When is it not about the problem child? He thought as the smoke got thicker.

His other students were in danger too and he had to make sure he managed to save them all. A hard goal, but he had to try, he had to.


“Iida. Who was with you? Where are the others?”

“They are fine, heading for the camp” the kid panted, so he must’ve been running for a while “I stayed behind to drive them off. Too many clones.” He shook his head. “Anyway, I was looking for Midoriya. Please tell me he’s at the camp?” he leaded and Aizawa sighed as he shook his head.

“No, he’s not. I’m currently looking for your classmates. Do you have any idea where they might be?”

Iida opened his mouth when the sound of a cry came from the distance. Their heads whipped around to face the small child running and crying his way.

“Kouta!” Aizawa said. The boy stopped and looked at them with big, wide eyes, face covered in grime and snot. He sniffled as the hero came and kneeled before him before he broke into tears once again. “Kouta” Aizawa tried, this time softer. “Kouta, please, what happened, are you hurt?”

The kid shook his head, not looking up. “No, no….no, I’m not” he hiccupped “But he is. He is and it’s my fault, because he stayed behind to save me and I ran and he died just like them and…. And…” he sniffled before he started crying harder into his scarves. Aizawa sighed and left him a few moments before he questioned him again. He knew that he was cruel, but he was pressed by time.

“What. Happened?”

Kouta sniffled some more and looked at him. “Midoriya. Muscular found me and tried to kill me, then Midoriya came and told me to run, and I ran, but now he’s dead and it’s my fault…” he managed before he broke down once again. Aizawa sighed and handed him to iida.

“Take him to the camp. I’m going after Midoriya.”

“Yes!” Iida said as he picked the small child and sped up into the woods. Aizawa gritted his teeth and prayed that the boy was alive before he dashed to the direction Kouta came from. The bushes footprints were clear and the small feet were very visible. It took too long and no time at all to each the cliff and, when he got there, he was both relieved and horrified.
Midoriya wasn’t there. Dead nor alive. He wasn’t there, which meant he was (most likely) still alive. The one who was there, however was Muscular.

Laying in a puddle of his blood, mouth agape, his face a horrible mess of meat, with the empty socket of his normal eye sticking out.

Aizawa approached. If the villain was still alive, he would have to handcuff him, and he didn’t think he had time for that. The man kneeled near the body and took the pulse.

Nothing.

Tried the arm.

Still nothing.

He’s dead. He sighed as he stood up. Midoriya killed him.

He wished that would surprise him more. But it didn’t. The kid could be vicious when his back was put against a wall so murdering someone in self defence didn’t sound out of the realm of possibility when it came to him.

Which meant one of two things.

He knew and was having a panic attack somewhere, or the villain died after the kid left, and the boy didn’t know that he now officially had blood on his hands; probably literally from the looks of things.

Aizawa shook his head. I’ll have to find him and get the full story. Because the eye had been gouged out. And a human wouldn’t die from that, not immediately. That meant that, whatever the teen used, it reached his brain for it to be like this. The man gritted his teeth. This had just gone form bad, to worse to a full on Midoriya crisis.

Something glimmered on the ground. The man picked it up and looked at the crack spreading from one point to the other. He opened it. the phone seemed to be working. With a sigh, he pocketed the device.

Standing up, he stepped over the corpse and kept running. His children were still in danger. And he would save them.

He always did.

~O~

“DEKU, WHAT THE FUCK?!” Katsuki yelled as he grabbed the greenette by the collar and lifted him to his eye level. “How did you manage to become a target?! And why the fuck aren’t you back to the camp?!”

The smaller boy blinked then became lax in his hold. “No idea.” He shrugged, but his half hearted joke fell on deaf ears. The words steered something unpleasant in Katsuki’s guts, but he ignored it in favour of yelling some more.

“Why aren’t you back at the camp?”

“Bakugou, let him go!” round face said as she pried his hands away from the boy. The
greenette sighed and shook his head.

“This is your fault” Shisou said as he karate chopped the smaller boy on the head. “You are a goddamn villain magnet!”

“Am not,”

“Are too!” Uraraka said. Izuku looked at her with betrayal on his face before he turned towards Katsuki, the one person not accusing him for the thing that was clearly his fault.

“I was heading there when I heard you scream. Thing is, I have no idea of the direction, do you?”

“Yes” Katsuki grumbled. Of course the useless fuck would get lost. The blond had recognised some of the terrain he saw the previous day, and he had a rough idea of how to get back.

He grabbed his arm and pushed him forward. “Move”

Izuku looked like he wanted to say something, but his shoulders sagged as he gave up, probably realising it was not worth the effort. Round face and purple Einstein took the left the right as they walked. They did so in silence, trying to hear for any possible villains or allies and Katsuki ignoring the big stain of blood on the boy’s pockets. And the blood in general.

He wanted to hope that the lack of visible wounds meant that he was fine, but the nerd was known for not really having pain receptors. And, if he was and that only raised the question: whose blood was it?

That question was put on the backburner until an indeterminate amount of time later, because, right now, at this certain moment in time, a huge demon beats was raging through the woods after a lot of small squealing blond girls, like some kind of Samhain ritual. Katsuki blinked before the nerd dashed through the woods and jumped into the bushes.

“What happened?” he asked as the blond and three others made their way there. Many limbs was hiding behind a tree as the demon thingie wreaked havoc.

“It was a surprise attack” he said as he dragged them out of the way of a falling tree. “That villain ambushed us and managed to chop off one of my limbs. I took the attack, but that managed to somehow trigger his Quirk. If we wanna pass, we gotta go through there.”

Katsuki’s mind sparked with an idea just as the nerd spoke. “His weakness is light, isn’t it?”

“Yes”

The two childhood friends shared a look and Katsuki nodded as he jumped at the beast. True, one explosion wouldn’t be enough, the only one big enough to do something would attract attention. But if he aimed it right….

“DIE!!” he yelled as eh jumped at the monster and exploded in his face. The head was a weak point. The thing screamed and collapsed and Katsuki kept a small stream of explosions until the Quirk retracted once more.

Birdhead was left panting on the ground and Katsuki watched the blond buns vanish into the woods with a giggle.

Meanwhile, what’s his face was trying to get up. “Thank you” he said as he managed to
hold himself upright, “I’m saved.” He looked up. “I’m sorry, I was trying to hold back, but my spirit is lacking. When I saw your hand fly away…” he glared at the ground “I gave into the rage and released Dark shadow. It was the deep darkness of the night along with my anger that combined to spur him into a frenzy. But then he grew out of my control and wound up injuring Shoji.”

“I’m all right” the tall teen said. “They’ll grow back anyway. Right now, we have to return to the camp and make sure that the villains don’t get Midoriya.”

“Ummmm” the green haired menace raised a hand “While I appreciate the sentiment” he said it like he was pissed and trying to hold back “I don’t need to be protected.”

Katsuki felt his eyelid twitch. “Are. You. Fucking. Shitting me?!” he grabbed him by the collar and brought him to his eye level. “This isn’t the time to prove your shitty self! Those villains want to off you, and you will sit still and go back to the camp without killing yourself in the process, got it?!”

Deku blinked and gulped a little before brushing him off and letting himself be surrounded by the others, but Katsuki didn’t miss how he flinched, or how his eyes widened in fear for a moment, before he forced himself to relax. The blond ignored the small twitch of guilt before he followed.

They walked for about an hour before the next fuckup scheduled for that day happened.

“Fuck off!” suddenly sounded from the woods and Katsuki watched as a huge wall of ice rose above the trees.

_Huh, there’s icy hot._

Of course, Izuku just had to be the hero so he ran towards the spot. The others followed and Katsuki got there just as the heterochromatic teen was spearing a clone that turned into goo. Similar goo was everywhere around them, splattered across the grass and the dual bender yelled.

“How the fuck are they all clones?!”

“Would you prefer to kill them for real?” Izuku asked. Todoroki whipped around towards them, and an expression of relief spread across his features as he approached them. He stopped about a meter from the greenette.

“Why are you covered in blood?”

“Don’t worry about that,” Izuku shook his hands as he suddenly must’ve realised how he looked. “It’s not mine.”

“Then whose is it?”

“A villain’s,” He sighed and hugged himself. “I knocked him out and ran away.”

Todoroki seemed to consider. “Are you hurt?”

“No”

“Then why is that patch on your pants growing?”

Deku blinked and put his hand through his pocket, only to pull out an eye.

A honest to God, _fucking eye_. Speared on something like a metal pen.
“Deku, what the fuck?!”

Izuku stared at the eye in horror, as if he didn’t expect it either. Then the stupid kid dropped the offending item on the ground.

Purple Einstein grabbed the smaller by the collar and shook him. “Why do you have an eye in your pocket?!” he whined in an exasperated way.

“I don’t know!” he one in question moved his arms vividly as he pushed him away, smearing more blood on the other’s clothes “I must’ve placed it there out of habit!”

“Why do you have the habit of placing eyeballs in your pockets?!”

“I don’t!” his voice was reaching pitch perfect levels.

“Quiet!” Katsuki yelled and they all turned towards him. “We’ll solve Deku’s weird fetishes later” at this, the greenette reddened “Right now, we’ve got villains to worry about!”

As if on que, a rough voice saying “Meat…. Blood….. eat….” Reached them before blade like things slashed the trees near them.

You just had to jinx it, didn’t you, Katsuki?

This time, the villain was some…. Thing, in a straight jacket, with the blades pocking out of its mouth.

“Can’t we go around?” he heard the nerd ask, and even if he wouldn’t admit it out loud, he wanted to agree. But, that plan was quickly destroyed by the man noticing them and sending his teeth their way.

Katsuki dodged and jumped, while icy-hot sent a wave of ice his way. The man just shattered it with his teeth. Birdhead managed to land a few hits, and multi arms pulled him out before the blades got the chance to strike.

“Blood…. Flesh…. Good, tasty flesh….”

He took a few steps back. Neither him not icy-hot could risk any big fires, lest they make the blue ones stronger. Katsuki stepped back just as round face attacked. Unfortunately, the villain was pretty well dug into the ground, and that didn’t really make a difference. Birdhead jumped again, but got, his shadow big and menacing, but there were too many blades at the same time, and one of them nicked his arm.

The student collapsed with a cry and Todoroki dragged him out of the path of the villain before he got to impale him for good. The blond staggered back as he pulled the round face out of the way of an attack. He looked at the reason for all this bullshit.

Deku was staring at the villain with the same look he had at the Sports Festival before confronting Todoroki.

“Take cover!” he yelled before he dashed forward. Shinsou pulled him and Round Face behind a tree so fast it must’ve been an ingrained instinct and Katsuki watched as the Quirkless kid jumped at the man.

What the fuck are you doing, idiot!?
Izuku dodged the teeth coming his way before he jumped off a tree. He landed on the man near his mouth and forcefully shoved something down his throat. Katsuki didn’t see what he did, but he guessed, by the jerked motion of his arm and how he retreated what happened.

Izuku jumped back and ran towards the tree.

The next second something boomed and trails flew through the air. Izuku collapsed on the ground, heaving.

Katsuki didn’t know how long it was, but suddenly, the tree wasn’t in front of his face anymore. Izuku was on his knees near him heaving and panting, and the villain was... he wanted to say out cold. But it was much worse than that.

He wasn’t moving. His teeth were broken and charred, smoke and burned flesh coming from the man’s head. His feet took him to the villain and he looked down.

Dead. Most definitely dead.

There was no other way that he could be alive. His head was mashed and splattered and, white pieces of bone and mushy things spread everywhere. On the grass, on the trees, on the back of Izuku’s shirt.

Katsuki threw up.

No way. No way, noway nowayno -

“I-I k- Ikill--I killed a guy. I. Killed. A guy....” Came the muted whimpers.

Katsuki stood on his knees and looked at his classmate.

Izuku had a hand pressed to his forehead and another to his mouth making his voice come out muted and broken. Candy cane looked a little green himself, leaning on a tree while the Purple Einstein was sitting down near the greenette. Uraraka was bandaging Tokoyami’s arm, but the vacant look on her face gave away that she wasn’t all there either.

None of them were looking at Izuku.

Katsuki took three deep breaths and then squished his nausea, terror and disgust all with one decisive mental stomp.

Crying later. Survival now.

He stood up. “We gotta move” he said. They all turned to look at him.

“This place is too open, we’re sitting ducks out here. We need to either get back to camp or find a place we can hide in and easily defend if we have to.” He sighed and shook his head “We are all tired, and hurt but we can’t rest here. All of us have been fighting and training and it’s getting to us-making us sloppy. Let’s find a place and hope we make the night. The camp is too far right now, we need a place to rest and we’ll get back in the morning.”

“The... the cave...” Birdhead said. They all looked at him. He rose his head and looked at Katsuki, pointedly ignoring the greenette “The one I train dark with Dark Shadow in. We might be able to hide in it.”

“Good enough” he said. “Objections?” none “Then get up.”
They did. With different degrees of speed, they all eventually got up and headed after Tokoyami. Except for Izuku.

Katsuki made his way to the boy and gently kicked him in the shoulder. “Get up, nerd, we’ll throw the pity party some other time,”

“Go without me.” He said. Katsuki gritted his teeth.

“What?”

“You heard me” the boy still didn’t look at him. “The villains are after me. Me splitting form you is the best option.” He shook his head “I’ll get up in a moment and take a different path. You guys can make it, I won’t take away that chance.”

Ok, Katsuki had officially reached the point where he had no tolerance for bullshit. He grabbed the smaller teen by the collar (Which was starting to get worn at this point) and glared at him. “Look at me, fucker. Look into my fucking eyes. I do not have time for whatever, guilt-tripping, self-sacrificing, martyrdom complex crap you’re trying to pull. So, listen and listen well when I say that you are going to get off your ass and do what you’re told. I’m not leaving you behind, so stop being such a nuisance and fucking go!”

The Izuku of the last few months would’ve yelled, or tolled his eyes, or anything really. But he didn’t. He looked down and nodded meekly before going after the others. He didn’t fight back. Just like he didn’t fight back a year ago and years before that. He just followed.

Shinsou slowed down a little to get in line with him, and Katsuki shook his head as he made sure no one could attack them from behind. It didn’t take long, five minutes at most, but it were five minutes too long for Katsuki’s liking. He gritted his teeth as he glared at the woods, expecting something to just pop up. It wasn’t long before the others started talking, and Katsuki didn’t have the energy to tell them to shut up. Because they didn’t make it to the cave.

It was very depressing that they hoped they would in the first place.

~O~

Dabi sighed and cursed the skies for what must’ve been the tenth time that night. Why did the brat have to be so unlucky? And why did he have to care about the brat. Truly, feelings were nothing but a nuisance. He must’ve gotten every last drop his father ever head, because there was something very tragic in the fact that he had more empathy than the hero.

But that was only one of the reasons his night was just so goddamn shitty. Because he just had to meet Toga. Really now, he didn’t care about Toga. He would’ve loved to keep wondering all night looking for the brat and come back in the end and say tough luck. But nooo, the bitch just had to stick to him and rant about blood and the cute girls she had seen before. Dabi really, really didn’t want to know.

Spinner found them a few minutes later, with, having split up with Magne, but still looking for the target and other unworthy students. This was really such a drag.

They had met clones on the way, and, every one, every single one of Togas started a fight to the death with the original. Every. Single. One. After the third, Dabi got tired and just burned the next one that popped into view, because it was taking so goddamn long. He did so with every clone he met afterwards and almost fried Compress. The man was not amused. Well, whatever.

They stopped their search when they heard voices.
“Are you sure?” came the voice of someone who didn’t really know how to whisper. Dabi held a hand and stopped to listen. He peered from behind the bushes saw the merry gang of kids walking around, apparently with an aim and talking. The target was in the middle of the group, yet everyone was keeping away from him. He was covered in blood and something Dabi could only hope it didn’t belong to him.

**Izuku is far away enough from the others.** He thought as he eyed his colleagues. They were with him, so he couldn’t pretend to ignore the kid. The best course of action was to actually try and hope that the hero-lings could hold their own against the villains. *We could split them up and Compress could grab him*....

He didn’t get to finish that thought because, with a war cry, Spinner jumped into the fight. The looks on their faces were, honestly hilarious.

The lizard villain held up his blade abomination and Izuku spared a second to look at Shinsou who nodded. Yup, definitely the same guy. Why did he keep saving villain lives? It always came back to bite him. The villain pointed the thing at him. “Come quietly and your friends get to live!”

Izuku rolled his eyes as a wave of ice from his friend attacked the villain. Said villain jumped and fell near him. The boy rolled out of the way of the blade swiping for his neck, only to be nicked by another one. He whipped around, looking at the girl who purred.

“Midoriya, ain’t it? you’re cute!” she smiled before she swiped the blade at him once again. An explosion went off behind him, but Izuku couldn’t turn around. The huge hulking figure of his classmate tried to tackle her, but she was like Quicksilver. Hard to get, impossible to stand. Izuku gritted his teeth and took a few steps back. From the corner of his eyes, he saw someone behind him and rolled out of the touch, just as a man in a mask tried to touch him.

*What the actual fuck?* Three villains? Izuku doubted they were clones. He stepped away and turned back. Bakugou seemed to be hit in the shoulder, his arm hanging limply and covered in blood. The purple haired villain lifted his thing and prepared to strike.

Izuku didn’t think. Just like he didn’t think most things before, he didn’t calculate. He just grabbed the closest thing (a charred piece of wood) and jumped in front of the blond.

The wood didn’t make much of a shield. It cracked under the first blow, and Izuku’s shoulder screamed in pain as the weapon fell. The villain lifted the thing, seemingly troubled on weather to strike again when he was unceremoniously whacked over the head. Shinsou stood behind him, panting, with a sword in hand and an unconscious villain at his feet.

“What the fuck, Deku?” bakugou yelled as he grabbed his collar.

“I guess that, in the end, I can’t just let you die.” He panted and looked around as he shrugged and eyed the other villains, not seeing how the blond’s eyes widened at the words.

“Where are….” He asked as he looked at the space. His friends were gone. The only ones was the blond girl, now brainwashed, the knocked out villain and one who was juggling something small. Said villain looked at something behind them. Izuku turned around and froze.

*No, it couldn’t, it wasn’t possible, it couldn’t be*....

“Dabi….” He rasped in disbelief as the man he considered his friend walked out of the woods.
“Hey there” he said as he dashed forward.

On a normal day, Izuku would have been able to dodge. Hardly, but it would’ve been possible. But not now. Not while exhausted and in shock. Not while it was Dabi he was fighting.

Izuku didn’t even have time to see before a knee buried itself into his gut and something prickled at his neck. He became dizzy with not enough coherence to feel betrayed.

~O~

Dabi caught the kid gently before he hit the ground. Out cold. Good.

“Well, that’s surely something. Kid must be really shocked to see you, he didn’t even try to fight back” Compress said as he made his way to the scarred man. Dabi gritted his teeth and heard the other two teens running away. Of course they would.

“Whatever” he said just as the other one touched the kid lightly, only for him to turn into a marble. Dabi took the small ball that was handed to him and looked at it a little before placing it in his pocket with much more care than he would with anything else.

“What do I do with the rest?” Compress said, holding up a handful of balls. Dabi eyed them critically. They had attained their mission. Usually, he would probably say something like take them prisoners. But out of the two teens he didn’t want in danger, one was already captured. So he shrugged.

“Let them here. You said they break if you want them to? Release them when we’re back at the base.”

The magician shrugged and tossed the kids before waking up Toga and marbling Spinner. Dabi sent the go ahead signal and strolled towards the randez-vous place.

The others made their way there in no time. A warp gate opened and, as they were ready to step through it, Dabi dodger an explosion aimed for his face.

The angry Pomeranian was trying to fight him, a killer glare staining his features.

Dabi smirked as he rose and eyebrow and sent a wave of flame before stepping into the gate.

Chapter End Notes

yeah, that was surely a ride
he finally got kidnapped
yay
come yell at me on
tumblr
discord
Consciousness returned to him not as a whole but as disparate pieces, each sliding sluggishly into place. It took moments, minutes, hours for enough of the puzzle to assemble. Katsuki would have rather it hadn’t.

Because the moment that one piece slid into place the last(?) night came rushing back. A cocktail of rage and hopelessness threatened to choke him even through the drugs. They’d been so close. He’d been so close. He’d been right there.

And it hadn’t made a goddamn difference.

Vlad King had, apparently, managed to get a hold of the police who had finally shown up fifteen minutes after the villains were gone.

They’d found both Katsuki and Shinsou in the same spot. The purple head sobbing with his forehead pressed to a tree and a knee to his chest. Katsuki couldn’t recall anything beyond the feeling of damp earth beneath his knees and the strange feeling of dew gathering on his skin and hair; he couldn’t remember if the moisture on his face had been dew or tears. In the end it didn’t matter, really. What mattered was that Izuku was gone. Gone. Probably dead (and he wanted to punch himself for even thinking that).

He didn’t want Izuku to die.

_The old swings were squeaking in the almost empty park. Only two kids were still there. One was sitting on a swing, dark bruises littering his skin, light burns around them. His face was a mess, tear tracks and puffy eyes evidence that he’d been crying for a while._

_Katsuki walked to the boy, holding the ball. “Come on, stupid Deku. Mom said we had to go home together and I don’t want to miss lunch.”_

_Deki didn’t look at him. He looked at his hands, twiddled his fingers and sat in silence. Katsuki tsk-ed and threw the ball at him. It hit him lightly and bounced off._

_“Kacchan?” he asked and there was something too complex in his voice for two four year olds to identify._

_“What?”_

_“Why…” he sniffled and looked up. “Why won’t you let me play the hero?”_

_Katsuiki clicked his tongue. “Because I’m the one whose gonna be a hero,” he pointed smugly at himself “So I have to practice. You won’t be a hero so you don’t have to practice.” he pointed out_

_Izuuki wiped his eyes, even though the tears had already stopped. He stood up. “I will be a hero Kacchan!” he stomped thee ground as if that somehow made it more real. Katsuiki’s smile died as the frown he will get known for took its place._

_“You’re Quirkless!”_
Izuku hadn’t yet learned to flinch at the word. Yet.

“You wouldn’t last a day in the hero world.”

Izuku stood up and came in his face. “You’re wrong, Kacchan!” he said his face becoming redder, either from a new bout of tears on anger “You’re wrong! I will become a hero! I’ become a hero even better than you!” he yelled.

That must’ve been the moment everything changed. That was the moment Katsuki felt for the first time insurmountable rage and the first time he said the words he would get to regret years later.

“Fine then, you idiot, go die already!” he yelled as he hit him with the ball hard in the chest before storming off.

If he’ll die, he’ll learn his lesson, he had thought, because, of course, that made sense at the time.

Katsuki never got to take them back.

For a long time, he didn’t feel like he needed to.

He remembered everything. Not that he wanted to. He didn’t want to remember how Deku had disappeared inside the small ball, or how Shinsou had dragged him away after that.

Looks like you lasted more than a day.

The boy blinked and looked out the window. He remembered the previous night and the decent plan that, in the end, still had no chance of actually doing something.

We can’t attack them right now, he had said we have to make a plan and take them by surprise, if we want to save Midoriya. And he tried. He tried and tried but couldn’t do anything. He sat up and his the metal bed, the pain grounding him for a moment. How am I supposed to be the best if I can’t do a thing to save that fucker? How am I supposed to be the number one if I have to get saved every time there’s a villain attack, and I can’t do anything when he’s five feet away from me?

Because he didn’t know what would happen. And that was terrifying.

The villains said they wanted to recruit him. To make him a villain. A year ago, Katsuki would have laughed. There wasn’t a competent bone in his entire body, never mind an evil one. And, a year ago, that would’ve been true. The Izuku from a year ago would’ve cowered at his voice, would’ve apologised and would’ve held back.

The Izuku now wasn’t the same wide eyed kid who hoped beyond hope. Wasn’t the same kid who only wanted to save, wasn’t the same kid who used to worship the ground Katsuki walked on.

But then again. Katsuki wasn’t quite the same either. Learning that the nerd could actually hold his own in a fight had been a pill hard to swallow (if not a bitter one) but ultimately it had been a useful.

Easier to accept than the fact that he saved you life, at least.

The explosive hero in training gritted his teeth. That fact was still as bitter as the day he’d realized it. That nerd jumping in front of the fire, like he was immortal (like he was a hero).
Or like he didn’t care about his life

Katsuki shook the thought off as soon as it arrived. The nerd was stupid, not suicidal.

I didn’t need saving. I didn’t.

But, regardless of what he did or didn’t need, he had been saved.

He wasn’t sure why that revelation of all possible ones was what gave him a push he never knew he needed.

He justified it to himself as it being a change in routine. A change he need to adapt to he needed to adapt. It was about becoming better. Becoming the best. It was most defiantly not about the speck of respect blooming in his chest.

Fuck, I guess I have to make it even, then, huh?

Yeah, yeah, that was right. Katsuki couldn’t remain indebted to that nerd of all people.

He needed to find him and he needed to save him and maybe then things would finally, finally sort themselves out.

Neither of them were who they used to be. And because of that there weren’t many things, good or bad, that he could say with certainty about the grenette anymore.

Including the fact that, given the chance, he wouldn’t turn.

Katsuki gritted his teeth as he stood up. His arm hurt like hell and his stomach didn’t hold back either. Last night, the doctors had to sedate him to make sure they could stitch him and that he would stay asleep. The lizard had landed a pretty nasty hit on him, and he had to get stitches. Not to mention the burns made by the scarred villain.

That fucker.

Kacchan, he’d called him.

There was only one person who had the (implicit, dubious, self-given) permission to utter that nickname to his face and not get sent home with a sprained wrist and a broken nose; mostly because Izuku’s beatings stemmed from different perceived insults. He was the only one who ever called him that.

Or, used to, anyway.

Another interesting (worrying) thing was the fact that they knew each other. If the shocked expression on the grenette’s face was anything to go by, at least. A worrying, but ultimately unsurprising revelation. Izuku had probably run into him during his time as a vigilante. That was the beginning of the puzzle. The barest frame work; from there dozens of questions spiralled outward, frustratingly unanswerable.

Katsuki blinked and finally settled taking a deep breath. Focus. That was what he needed right now. His focus, his ability to tell the relevant from the irrelevant, was one of his points of pride. He shook his head and looked at his side, eyeing the bowl of fruits left on his desk. There was a note next to it in his dad’s writing. Figures, his hag wouldn’t bother with a note. Or with fruit. At best she’d
probably send him a vase of twigs. The thought, bitter as it was, made a smile twitch at the corner of
his mouth. The boy stretched his spine and regretted it a second after when jolts of pain spread all
over his body. What he assumed were the stitches pulled painfully at his skin.

The door suddenly opened. “Bakubro, you’re awake!” Kirishima said as he entered the room
without invitation, followed closely by the rest of his class and the class B stray. Katsuki grunted, but
didn’t feel like yelling at them to get away.

“So did you see what’s on TV? The media is all over the news, much more than spring” dunce face
said as the pervy midget held out a melon like a sacrifice or something.

“We caused so much trouble” Shoji balled his fists.

“Doesn’t matter” Katsuki managed to say, although his voice was harsh from lack of use.

“Of course it does!” Kirishima said as she stepped forward. “We were there. We were all there and
they still took him” she looked down. “We couldn’t do a god damn thing, they still took him!”

Katsuki didn’t look at him, he didn’t look at anyone, instead looked out the window at the grey
landscape outside. It was depressing.

Glasses stepped forward. “Jirou and Hagakure are still unconscious from the gas. Yaoyorozu barely
managed to wake up. uraraka is still sedated from when they stitched her last night”

“All sixteen of us came” Kaminari said deflated.

“And, of course” Todoroki started “Midoriya’s not here.”

Katsuki fisted the sheets and looked away. He wanted not to care. He really did. But he couldn’t. the
boy hated lying, and, right now, he couldn’t lie to himself. Still, he remained silent.

Kirishima stepped forward.

“Look, Bakugou” he took a deep breath “I know that you and Midoriya weren’t on the best of
terms…” He drawled and Katsuki felt like laughing. Understatement of the century, much? “But I
know how much you hate to lose, so I thought you might want to know about our plan to get him
back.”

Silence fell over the room and the blond almost got a whiplash from how fast he looked at the spiky
haired boy.

“What?” he wanted to yell, but all that got out was a breathless gasp.

“Yes” Kirishima said as he stepped forward. “Todoroki and I came here yesterday” the candy cane
stepped forward “And we heard Yaoyorozu talking to the teachers. Apparently, she made a tracker
for the Noumu and she can make the tracking device per se. she already made one for the heroes, but
I bet we can convince her to make one for us too!”

The eggplant stepped forward. “We’re gonna go anyway, we were wondering if you wanted to
come.”

“But we can’t!” Iida stepped forward. “It’s just as All Might said, we have to leave this to the pros.
It’s not out place to intervene, you fool!”

“I know that!” Kirishima yelled back. “But I can’t just... not do anything!” he looked down
“Midoriya might have not been with us for long, but he helped us.” He looked up and took a step forward “He saved us at the USJ. He saved you in Hosu!” he panted and looked at the rest of his classmates “He’s one of us! When I heard that they were after him I …” one lone tear rolled down his cheek “I couldn’t do anything. Anything at all!” he blinked and more tears rolled down his cheeks as his shoulder shook under pressure “I could only sit there as they attacked us.” When he looked up this time, his eyes were burning with determination and unbridled rage “If I don’t act now, forget being a hero, I can’t really call myself a man!”

“You” Iida stepped forward clenching his fists “You’ve gotta be joking!”

“Calm down” Shoji said. “While I regret not being able to do anything, we can’t let our emotions get in the way right now.”

“Let’s just leave it to All Might” Aoyama said. “Plus, we’re not allowed to fight anymore, have you forgotten that?”

“We’re still in shock over the attack” Froggy said “I know that having Midoriya get kidnapped right in front of you must’ve been traumatising, but we can’t allow ourselves to be driven by our feelings. If we go behind the heroes back and break the law, we are no better than villains.”

“Shut up…” Katsuki finally growled and all attention turned back towards him. “You say to leave it to the heroes. Well, let me tell you something: you have not guarantee those fuckers will get the job done” he turned towards the three students who already said they would participate “Count me in.”

“All right!” Kirishima punched the air.

“Bakugou, you can’t possibly mean that!” Iida stepped forward “They are heroes, it’s their job to do so.”

“Well, your heroes left me for dead once because they couldn’t get their heads out of their asses for more than five seconds and look for a different solution!” he yelled and everyone stepped back at the volume. Good, he was pissed. He looked all of them in the eye. “If you fuckers are too scared to do so, fine, but don’t think for a second that I’ll hold back!”

“Do we…. Do we really have to save him?” came a low voice from the back. A pin could’ve dropped on the other side of Japan and it would’ve rang louder than a gong. They all turned towards the bird headed student.

“Tokoyami” Kirishima stepped forward. “You can’t possibly mean that.”

The raven looked up, his expression unreadable. “Think about it. The villains wanted to recruit him. That means he’s most likely not in any immediate danger, right? And besides don’t you think it’s suspicious of how certain they seemed to be that he’d join them?”

“Tokoyami!” Ashido exclaimed.

“That is a grave accusation!” Iida chopped the air, but the possessed student was undeterred.

“What do we know about Midoriay? He’s smart, strong and Quirkless. He has no regard for rules. Or lives, apparently,”

“That’s taking it a bit too far…” Todoroki started.

“He shoved a grenade down that villain’s throat and pulled the pin,” Tokoyami pointed out coolly. They all fell silent “When we met up, he was covered in blood and considering the fact that he could
still move and the fact that he was apparently carrying an eye, I really doubt it was his. What a coincidence. I was looking back though the reports a bit and found that there was, indeed, someone missing an eye.”

“So you say…” Shinsou took a step forward “that the reason he is a villain is…. Because of excessive violence?”

“I…” Tokoyami started.

“That’s a bold statement to make considering you have Bakugou here” he pointed at the blond.

“Hey!”

“And by that logic I guess there really are no heroes considering Endeavour’s probably torched a wood’s worth of parks by this point. Or that All Might can, and has, destroyed entire buildings!” he took a step forward. “You really thought you’ll get to be heroes without staining your hands?” the fight died as he sighed and shook his head. “Look, I’ve been with him in the internship. I’ve seen him fight, I’ve seen him get shot. He has a very fucked up reaction to stress, ok? His fight or flight instinct is stuck on the ‘get them before they get me’ mindset.” He let himself collapse into a chair. “He’s not evil, just...unconventional; and foreign to you.”

A lot of them weren’t convinced. Katsuki growled. “Look here, extras, I’ve had to put up with this idiot since before I was born. He’s annoying. He’s a hypocrite. He’s petty. But, more than anything, he’s someone who wants to save other people, no matter what it takes. He wouldn’t join someone like the League of Villains on his own accord or without a fight.”

Ojiro stepped forward. “We’re not saying that he’s a villain. But you have to look at the facts, ok? He is nice, but nice doesn’t mean good. Bad people can be plenty nice when it suits them. Do I have to remind you of how he runs the U.A’s extended inter-department trading program? You’ve seen the notes he has on everyone.” He looked down “I’m not saying he’s already plotting out messy deaths, I’m just saying that he might be in a few days.”

Katsuki gritted his teeth but it was the eggplant who spoke this time. “Let’s assume that all of you are right, that, despite all the evidence presented to far, Midoriya will turn villain.” He stood up, taking full advantage of his height that was like a head over most of them and a lot of hair above Iida. He looked them all in the eyes as he said “Do you really want him as your enemy?”

They fell silent. No one said a word, some too shocked, some contemplating. Katsuki looked at them, not knowing what to say.

The door opened and in walked a doctor. “Visiting hours are over, I need to check on him.”

They all agreed with various degrees of onomatopoeias, as they filtered out. Kirishima leaned near him and whispered “I’ll text you the details.” And, with that, he left too.

~O~

Consciousness returned to him in bits and pieces and with a killer headache to boot. It took Izuku a few minutes to properly open his eyes without his head spinning, or without feeling like someone was trying to scoop his brain out though his eyes and even then he felt like puking. He felt a little, distantly and incoherently, sorry for Stain, since the villain must have went through all of this when he handed him to the police.

But then, the situation at hand actually sunk in and he looked around; and promptly wished that he remained unconscious. Why? Because Shigaraki had just noticed him and was coming closer. “Good
morning, Mido-tan. Let’s get down to business, shall we?” he stopped in front of him a few feet away which was still a little bit too close for comfort “Why won’t you join us?”

Izuku blinked, his drugged mind still trying to process things “I’m... What?” he said as he tried to rub his eyes awake. He noticed that he couldn’t, a pair cuffs secured around his wrists.

“Shigaraki” the man with the mask said from the corner. “I don’t think he’s fully awake yet. The dose seemed to be pretty strong.”

“Hmmm” Shigaraki rubbed his chin. “Fair point I guess.” He turned around and plopped himself on a chair, turning on the TV.

Izuku squinted against the sudden light and sound but then realized that what he was watching was his teachers talk at a press conference. His mind was slowly clearing and he could understand what was happening. And what was happening was wrong. His teachers were apologising, why were they apologising?

“Why are they criticizing heroes, huh?” Shigaraki spread his hands wide as if trying to cover all the possible perspectives. “Their only crime was being a little late to the party wasn’t it? It’s their job to protect people, but they’re just as human as everyone else. They’re allowed to screw up every once in a while, right? Why are people expecting them to be perfect? Heroes today sure have it rough, am I right, Mido-tan? All those Quirks, all those expectations to be perfect, to do the right thing…” he waved his hand “And when you don’t have a Quirk it’s ten times harder, isn’t that right?” Izuku gritted his teeth, but didn’t take the bait.

The lizard a.k.a The Most Ungrateful Asshole Ever said form the corner “The moment saving people started coming with a pay check, heroes stopped being heroes.”

Izuku would’ve said something if he wasn’t so impressed that Shigaraki hadn’t cracked under the Stain propaganda.

“Save someone and you get money. You get fame. Sounds weird to me. And in this society where the precious rules are everything, the people aren’t cheering for the losers, telling them to fight another day. They are blaming them.” He spread his arms once again, making a big picture “Our war is based on a few simple questions: what is a hero? What is justice? Is this how society is supposed to be like? Once we get people thinking about this stuff, that’s when we know we’ve won.” The man got closer “And you have been thinking about this, haven’t you, Mido-tan? After all, that’s the reason you became the Vanisher, isn’t it?”

The few gasps from around the room confirmed that most of the villains didn’t have this information beforehand. Izuku gulped and looked around. He needed to find a diversion. His eyes landed on someone who had remained surprisingly silent all the way. His heart stopped for a moment before he said.

“Dabi, what the fuck!?”

“Hey brat” he said like many times before, but this time, it didn’t hold any warmth. Dabi is a villain, he slowly realised and his breath quickened.

Shigaraki giggled. “ Well I guess that’s one less person to introduce.”

Izuku was still staring at the man he considered a friend for a very long time, mouth agape and thoughts swirling through his head. He gulped but the man didn’t say anything.

“Anyway” Shiraraki placed his hands on his hips and turned to face the kid “What do you say? Will
you join us?"

“No.” Izuku said it with the same tone one might use to refuse a yogurt offered to him for breakfast. He was still a little bit shocked by the reveal. That might’ve been the reason Shigaraki chose to continue discussing instead of jumping straight to the murdering.

“No? And why is that? You’d fit right in with the rest of us,”

Izuku took a deep breath and pulled at his cuffs. Still not budging. He would have to entertain the villain a little longer. He knew Shigaraki wouldn’t be convinced, and he might be forced to fake it. He had to make it believable. Dabi knew him and he didn’t want to risk him calling the bluff. So he made sure to only look at Shigaraki as he spoke.

“I don’t want to be a villain.”

“Hero, villain, vigilante, what’s the difference?” he got closer. “It’s not like you yourself have any high horses to climb on anymore, do you?” he tilted his head and smirked mockingly “After all, you already killed someone.” Izuku gulped and looked away. Shigaraki grabbed his chin and forced him to look at him “Not only one, but two villains. Not even out of high school and you’ve already got a body count” he tilted his head. Izuku couldn’t see his face behind the hand, but his eyes spoke of mirth. “I wonder how your friends would react to that. Would they even want to save you?”

“Shut up” Izuku growled, constantly reminding himself to keep his emotions in check. The wrinkles around Shigaraki’s eyes stretched once again in a grin.

“What, am I wrong? You’ve also put a lot of people in hospital, from what I’ve gathered,” Izuku didn’t respond, but he felt cold and clammy before the villain pulled away.

“You’re Quirkless” for the first time, the word wasn’t said as an insult and for the first time he wished it had. It would’ve given him a reason to feel antipathic towards the man. Well, more than he already had. “Tell me, how many people ever gave you a chance? How many people ever considered you above dirt?” the boy bit his tongue and glared at the villain. Shigaraki continued. “You say you wanna be a hero, but how many heroes ever came to save you? Unless I’m wrong, most people gave up on you the moment they found you Quirkless.” Izuku’s head whipped around at that and the tilt of the man’s head was enough to showcase his satisfaction.

“How did you….”

“Police and hospital records, kid” Shigaraki shrugged. “They aren’t as guarded as one might think. It’s surprising how the powers that be lose interest the moment the word Quirkless appears.”

“And you’re gonna fix that?” he asked, if only to keep him talking. Knowing the plans would be important if when he got out.

“If you join us you could fix that yourself. People would be forced to acknowledge that you are strong. This society centred around Quirks and heroes is flawed. It’s broken. It does more damage than good. Everyone not labelled a model citizen gets called a villain. Does a guy selling drugs seem on the same level as a mass murderer? I think not.”

“You case seems flawed when you are the mass murderer.” Izuku said before he could bite it out. Shigaraki chuckled.

“You might be right, but, by that point, you are one too. After all, you killed two people.”

“In self defence!” Izuku retorted.
“That excuse didn’t really work the last time. We both know that, if Endeavour wasn’t a horrible hero who thought that sending children to carry his battles, you would’ve gone anyway. And both you and your three little friends would’ve gotten arrested and expelled. And why? You were only trying not to die” the man sat up. “But this society treasured rules over the benefit of the citizens, to keep the fragile resemble of order they currently have. And that” he straightened his back, making full use of his height “Is what we are trying to change.”

Izuku clenched his fists. Why did he always end in arguments with villains? Why this specific villain too?

“That’s all fine and dandy, but Quirklessness based bigotry is a social construct. The same reason people who break the smallest laws are called villains. There’s no rule telling that they have to be dicks, yet they are because they can. How are you going to change that? Hell, how is me joining your ranks going to change anything in the view itself?”

The leader tilted his head, as if he was expecting this question.

“Well, first things first, they will see that you are capable and dangerous. Though that’s probably already a thing considering how you dealt with Muscular, Moonfish and Stain. They can’t possibly keep thinking you’re weak. The doubt is already in their mind. As for the second point, how will it look when someone Quirkless joined the villains because of the society? Think about it this way,” he took a few steps back and sat on a stool.

“This law system, this hero industry is what brought you here. They forced you to prove yourself, to prove that you’re worthy to walk among them, a right everyone else is already born with. And, even after you did, they still shunned you for a birth defect you had no control over. This society basically forced you into villainy, like it did with many before you. So you really think all the people at the USJ were murderers and serial killers? No, most of them were either poor or born with something that prevented them from being normal citizens. They became villains because of the same social construct that forced you to become a vigilante.” Once again, he gestured widely “Why don’t you show them how wrong they are? Why don’t you help us fix this?”

Izuku lowered his head and pretended to be thinking. No matter how sweet his words were, they were still razors coated in honey. Shigaraki was still a villain and Izuku wanted to change the world from inside. He didn’t want to break the law and do the unthinkable to manage that. So, he looked the leader straight in the eyes.

“That’s a nice speech you got there, but do you really think I worked so hard to get here only to throw it all away because of your nice words?”

Shigaraki sighed and shook his head as if telling the air that he tried. He then looked at the fucking traitor and Dabi had the decency to look a little bit uncomfortable as he stepped forward.

“We both know your plan won’t work” the man spoke and Izuku felt his guts liquefy at the cold tone in the man’s voice. Izuku looked away. Dabi advanced. “You plan to lead by example, but we both know no change occurs if you don’t take serious action against the problem itself. You’re just one kid against a whole world.” Izuku gritted his teeth. Dabi kept going. “People don’t change, Izuku, they don’t and they never will. They will stay the same as long as you don’t force them to change. If your problem is not theirs, they won’t support you, and, by how all of this is going, it’s not very likely.”

“You’re wrong!” Izuku said, trying to keep his anger in check, lashing out in the middle of the villains would be bad, very very bad.
“Am I?” he tilted his head. “No one supported you before because you didn’t have a Quirk. Why would they do it now after all you’ve already done? They won’t. Why? Because, in their mind, you’re the exception, not the rule. You are and you have always been the odd one out and no amount of training and peaceful actions will ever change that.”

It hurt. It hurt a lot, hearing Dabi say those things when it took Izuku a few months to trust him to share. Tears were at the edges of his eyes and Izuku knew that he wouldn’t be able to keep them in for long.

Dabi rested his hands on the armrests and leaned in until his lips brushed his ear. The man whispered in a voice too low for any of the others to hear. “Don’t lash out and you might be able to make it out in one piece.”

Izuku couldn’t hold it in anymore. Big, pitiful tears rolled down his cheeks and he closed his eyes in an attempt to stop the tears and clenched his teeth to stop the whimpers from escaping. He didn’t have anywhere to hide his face, and he barely heard Shigaraki’s order before the now familiar dart sunk into his neck and the darkness returned once more.

Chapter End Notes

so, yeah, a lot of talking this chapter

discord
tumblr
Dabi watched as Izuku’s head fell to his chest and allowed himself a second to brush his hand through the green locks.

*Man, I really fucked up this time.*

He sighed and shook his head as he turned back to the rest of the villains, climbed on a stool and drowned the glass Kurogiri handed him. It was good. Chances were, he would’ve joined the league for the booze alone.

“‘Well’ Shigaraki said ‘That went better than expected.’

“I still don’t know why you wanna recruit him. He’s good, I’ll give him that, but not *that* good,” Dabi lied.

“Is he really the Vanisher?” Spinner asked and was rightfully ignored by the hot shits around there. Dabi eyed and crusty one through his lids while trying to filter the pointless conversation behind him. The fact that he now knew how Toga liked to kill her victims showed that he sucked at it.

“That he is,” the man chuckled turning to Dabi “I’m surprised that *you,* of all people, didn’t know given your... mmm... relationship.”

Dabi let out a bone-weary sigh and looked at his not-really-but-still-have-to-obey-boss. “It’s complicated,” he said lamely, because he didn’t know how much the other knew and this was the only thing vague enough to cover all his bases.

“If you say so,” the other nodded as he sipped his own drink, “You must’ve been busy” he mumbled before he looked up.

“Well, to put you into theme, most, of not *all,* I’ve said earlier is true. He might not be really all that strong physically speaking but look at the social impact he’s made; he won the Sports Festival. He took down Stain,” his lips curled at the name and Dabi filed that information away for possible later use “Never mind the stunts he pulled as the Vanisher and as “the kid who stopped a robbery with a DIY flamethrower,” He shook the drink and drowned the liquid sugar

“Honestly with all the vines, ads for support items and theory boards for his Quirk I’m surprised he isn’t being hounded by the paparazzi 24/7” He leaned back in his chair “My point is, people know about him. He might not know it, but the thing he, maybe unwillingly maybe not, represents is the underdog archetype. It appeals to a lot of people; the people with weak or useless Quirks. He went and won the Sports Festival without one, and, like it or not, these things stuck,” he looked at his colleague “So what would happen if this so called golden boy became a villain?”

“People would wonder why.” Dabi said.
“Precisely. And that’s what we want. People won’t rebel overnight. Not when they’ve been raised like this. Not when they can’t see the corruption from their comfortable little perches. But I can. You can,” he pointed at the unconscious teen “He can. And it won’t take long for people to want to try and see for themselves of only for curiosity’s sake.” He chuckled “Believe me, nothing makes people rebel like the feeling that something is being kept from them.”

“That might be true” Dabi poured himself some more beer “But that still leaves two big question. How do you know that everyone’s gonna share your specific point of view? And how are you gonna force a kid who holds onto his personal morals like he’s welded to them to help you whose morals directly clash with his? At least from his point of view,”

“I can be pretty persuasive when I try to,” the man chuckled “Besides, Sensei said that he agrees with my plan and that, if I can’t see it though, he’d lend a hand,”

Dabi felt chills dance down his spine. ‘Sensei’ had only ever appeared as a voice coming out of a black screen. And yet he still managed to make Dabi feel like he was in the middle of a horror movie. In short he didn’t like the man and didn’t want the kid within a hundred miles radius of him. He gulped and looked at his drink, feeling suddenly nauseous. He looked at the kid “I really hope it won’t come to that either.”

Behind him, Shigaraki huffed “Don’t worry, you two will get a room as soon as he joins us.”

Dabi actually felt something pop in his neck from how fast he turned from how hard he looked at HandJob the moment the words truly sunk in. “Dude what the fuck? It’s nothing like that!”

Shigaraki blinked from behind the hand. Then he squinted “If you say so” he said, not even trying to hide the fact that he didn’t believe him. Dabi huffed and pulled out his phone, not risking leaving the room and the brat to the mercy of the others.

~O~

Izuku was seriously, honest to god starting to hate that drug. It made him dizzy and very vulnerable, which he didn’t like. At all. He shook his head and tried to lift his hands. Yup, still chained. Or was it handcuffed? He no longer knew. He blinked the fog away and looked up. The bar was much more empty than it had been the last time; which was to say that there was only Kurogiri there, seemingly cooking something. Izuku’s mouth watered. He didn’t know how long it had been since the last time he had a meal, but he sure as hell wanted one now.

“Good evening” the man said and Izuku took notice of the potential time. If the man was telling the truth and not only being polite or just flat out lying to him, he had been here for at least a day.

“Good evening,” he responded and looked around, blinking owlishly. “Where am I?”

“I’m not allowed to disclose that information” the man didn’t look up from what he was doing.

“What day is it?” Izuku tried again.

“Ask Shigaraki,i” the mist user said in the same tone parents used in movies for ‘ask your mother’. Izuku kept from clicking his tongue.

Too direct questions won’t work. I have to take try something more roundabout.
Thankfully, his stomach decided to pull the most synchronised action in the history of television and let out an Earth shattering growl. Izuku looked at the man, putting on the most innocent expression he could muster (which was pretty good, since most people didn’t throw him a second glance).

“Can I get some food?”

The man looked at him for a few seconds. Good news, his puppy eyes didn’t let him down. Bad news, the villain placed a juice pouch to his lips, the likes Aizawa used as gasoline for the mortal body he possessed. Izuku looked at the plastic thing, cursing its next generations of fruit flavoured poison before he took the muzzle.

Kurogiri chuckled. “I won’t risk releasing you. Don’t worry, if you join us, you will get to eat something decent.”

Izuku rolled his eyes at the simple blackmail. He sighed and sucked from the pouch, staring at the ceiling. What can I do? He looked at his restrains.

*These seem to be normal handcuffs. If I could get my hands on something to pick them with...*

And now he knew for certain that he could. He might’ve learned before from YouTube, but Aizawa was a through teacher who was very adamant in the fact that, since it didn’t require any grand movements, they could train it while not on the training field. He felt like giggling at the memory when, after he had gotten too pissed at them, the teacher locked the door to the kitchen and told them that the food was inside. Izuku had been tempted to unscrew the lock itself out of spite, but decided against it.

But, even with his skill, the problem remained the same it had been with becoming a vigilante and winning the Sports Festival. He still had no tools for it. he couldn’t pick the locks bare handed so he had to find some kind of tool.

*Relax, Izuku, you can’t panic. You’ll find a way out and live long enough for mom to yell at you and Aizawa to threaten prison once again. Wow, the fact that this was the most logical outcome was really sad, wasn’t it?*

Suddenly, the screen on the counter lit up and Kurogiri abandoned his sacrifice to spices to turn all his attention to the device. The screen was dark blue and the words ‘sound only’ were glowing on the surface.

“Sensei,” Kurogiri said in a polite voice and Izuku, for some reason, felt a chill run down his spine.

“Kurogiri” the man responded “I take it that Shigaraki is out?”

“Yes”

“Then bring me our guest, please. We have yet to be properly introduced.” Izuku barely had time for a deep breath before the purple smoke surrounded him and he woke up somewhere else.

The lighting was dim in the room. There were a lot of medical devices and computers in the room, most of them tied to the person in the wheelchair. The man looked pretty frail, yet there was this aura of doom around him that made Izuku want to run to the nearest airport and buy himself a ticket to the farthest place from wherever this was. The upper half of his face was melted, but his mouth showed a vast array of teeth and a smirk much better suited on a shark. He placed his hands in his lap and stared at the boy.
“Izuku Midoriya, right? I don’t think we had the pleasure of properly meeting. My name is All for One, happy to make your acquaintance.”

Izuku gulped “Good evening,” was all he managed to say. He knew he couldn’t allow himself to be rash, but, at the same time, he couldn’t really bring himself to lie and say that he was glad to see the man too. He was shaking in his boots and didn’t know his stance on lying. The man chuckled.

“Playing it safe, I see. Already doing better than most, then,” Even without eyes Izuku could feel the man looking into his soul, stretching it and thinning it until there was nothing left to hide. “I suppose you know why I wanted to talk to you, no?”

“To rehash Shigaraki’s arguments?” Izuku felt his voice raise up at the end making what was supposed to be statement into a question

“Partly. I’m afraid that Shigaraki still has plenty of room to improve and you don’t seem like the kind of person to be swayed by words alone. Am I wrong?”

“What gave you that idea?”

“I may have to reconsider my statement about you being smarter than most if you continue to test me, young Midoriya. Though, to be honest, I’m surprised you didn’t pull something similar on Shigaraki. But, then again, it’s not your job to test my student.” the man waved it off with a smile and Izuku was sure that, before the man became a villain, he must’ve been a politician or something. That, or he had a charisma Quirk. He remained silent.

“Regardless. It seems to me that, what Shigaraki failed to do in your last conversation was to tell you not just how your participation would affect the League but also how it would affect you. And that’s exactly what I’m about to inform you of so you might want to listen and listen closely.”

“Ok” Izuku agreed because he doubted the man would see him nod.

“One of the things you seem to purposefully ignore is that you’d fit better as a villain than you ever would as a hero. You’re halfway there already.”

Logically speaking, Izuku knew it was better to pretend to be on their side and try to escape later. Thing was, they weren’t stupid and Dabi knew him well enough to know if he was lying. Not to mention, if he did give in, they might test him and Izuku didn’t want to get there. So, the boy would refuse until it was no longer safe to.

“Am not” Izuku said before thinking and let out a small sigh of relief when the man didn’t seem bothered by it “I’ve been working up to this point to become a hero, I won’t give up now.”

The man kept smiling “Do you know what the difference between heroes and villains is? The law. Being a hero is a job, a means to an end. Whether that end is money, fame or, in your case, a way of satisfying your morals and your desire to save people is only relevant to a point. But that is it. A means to an end. Villains are much the same, though I like to think with slightly less pretence and of course, the difference in which side of the law they stand on. You might train to be a hero, but you still do bend and even break the law to suit your own needs.” Izuku gritted his teeth, but didn’t say anything.

“Silent, are we?” the man chuckled “Well, truthfully, I would’ve been disappointed if you’d given in so easily. Let me also bring to your attention that your talents are wasted in heroics.”

“What do you mean” he said before he could bite his tongue.
“Well, for starters, you did kill two villains.”

“In self-defence” Izuku growled.

“Be that as it may, the fact remains. You killed them because they stood in the way of your escape. You may have done it in a panicked act of primal fear, but what does it say about you that your first instinct is to go for the kill?” Izuku didn’t want to let the man get into his head but... he wasn’t wrong.

_I thought that Monfish was a clone._

_He’s still dead, ain’t he?_

Thought he could see how this was all bullshit. He killed because he had to, and he _did_ very much, regret it. Through probably still not as much as he should. If he wanted to guilt trip him, the villain would have to step up his game. Of course, the teen wouldn’t let him know that.

“I’ve been keeping an eye on you, Izuku Midoriya. And I must say, I’m... almost impressed.” That sent spiders crawling under his skin “You’ve managed, in a few short months, to make a pathetic attempt at a semi-secret trade flourish into a network of supplies and connections almost resembling what I would dare call a mafia that is highly dependent on you and your close associates. It takes talent to pull something like that off on the first try. Of course it’s mediocre, but you _are_ in high school, so I’d be getting ahead of myself if I’d expect it to be much more.”

“That- that’s all circumstantial” Izuku said, trying to keep his voice at bay. _Don’t react, don’t react, that’s what he wants._ “I did all I did because it was the best way to go. I may share some traits with villains, but that’s because we are humans, not cardboard comic characters.”

“So you blame your past on a something out of your control, lifting whatever blame could be placed on you.”

This time, Izuku couldn’t keep it in “Are you seriously trying to convince me to join you by using cliché villain character traits?”

This time the man, honest to god, laughed. Izuku blinked.

_This is all a game to him. You mean nothing. You never meant anything. He’s toying with you._

Usually, Izuku would’ve been glad that he was underestimated by an enemy. Underestimation gave him a way out. But this time, he didn’t have a way out. He couldn’t fight the man who could destroy him with a thought and they both knew it. Potentially Izuku was an ally. _Presently_ he was a plaything. And that, for whatever reason, hurt.

A lot.

Kind of like realizing he was a five year old being indulged by a nuclear physicist.

“I must admit, it’s been a while since I had to manipulate anyone other than Tomura. I must be rusty. Even so, you, child, are smart. You are determined and ambitious and, even more so, you can’t follow rules. You can’t follow orders. What makes you think you are fit to serve the military?”

“What do you mean?”

“Please, don’t pretend that you don’t know. If you didn’t, I’d be disappointed.” Izuku
remained silent and the man clicked his tongue “I suppose that, for someone gaslighted into it, it might be hard to comprehend. So let me give it to you straight; you are child soldiers. Brainwashed through propaganda your entire lives into believing that killing yourself in the name of the state is as good as it gets. You made to take this choice young, acting without all the information. There’s also the matter of choice and use of Quirk. You can’t use it in public and we both know that if Endeavour wasn’t the big nuisance he is, you would’ve been punished for saving both your lives and catching that serial killer. Now tell me, Izuku Midoriya, do you really think you are fit to serve a system that goes against your beliefs.”

“Just because I work for the state, doesn’t mean that I agree with it.”

“Oh, yes, I’ve heard. You plan to change it, don’t you? Well, allow me to impart a bit of my experience,” the man leaned forward and said with a placating smile “Words work only when your opponent is open to listening. It does no good to speak your arguments at someone who’s been deafened by the sound of gun they’re firing.”

Izuku gulped but didn’t look up. The man leaned back in his seat. “Ignoring me will get you nowhere, child.”

“I’m thinking,” Izuku managed

The man nodded. “Well, while you’re on that, let me make one final argument. I can give you a Quirk.”

Izuku froze. He slowly looked up. “Ah, yes, how could I forget? All the pain, all the sorrow, all the bigotry, all the beatings, all the... well everything, I suppose. And it all comes back to a birth defect you had no control over.” Izuku gulped. Cold sweat was rolling down his spine and his tongue was made of parchment paper. “I can get you one. One that you’d like, one that would work for you. I can make people respect you for what you are instead of what they see at first glance.”

Izuku balled his fists. How long he had wanted one, how long had he begged for one? Too long. Memories flashed before his eyes, cruel laughs and taunts all throughout his childhood; destroyed property ans pain and bruises.

*I’m sorry, you can’t be our friend, you are Quirkless.*

*Don’t play too hard, Izuku is Quirkless, you don’t want to harm him.*

*Quirkless, useless Deku.*

*Just give up, you’ll never amount to anything.*

Izuku balled his fists. Then, he let out a breath and looked at the blind man. “No.”

The man looked, for the first time that night, surprised. “No?”

“Do you think I don’t know what you’re doing? I may be young, but I know how this works. If you give me a Quirk, I’ll be forced to remain here. This isn’t the kind of debt that’s repayable. And I worked too hard to be a hero on my own, and I have long gotten used to my predicament.” He gritted his teeth “I won’t sign this deal. I don’t want you to give me a Quirk.”

The man was quiet for a few seconds before speaking again. “Oh you must’ve mistaken me. You think this is a choice?”

Izuku blanched.
“What?”

“What if I do it anyway? There’s nothing you could do to stop me. There are many wonderful quirks but there are also plenty of deadly painful ones as well. What if I give you a Quirk that destroys you? Did you know that increased regeneration could lead to too many cells regenerating too fast and, eventually, cancer. You’d have to constantly break yourself to make it to adulthood. What if I gave you a Quirk that hurt you when you breathe or one that kills everyone that you look at?” Izuku was frozen, he couldn’t move, he couldn’t do a thing, he could only stare at the blind man as he continued talking. All for One leaned forward “What if I give you a Quirk so painful, so utterly horrible, that you come begging at me to take it back?”

Izuku remained in silent horror as the man smirked and leaned back in his seat. “Think about it. You really are in no position to refuse and this window of opportunity for you to make it in one piece is closing. Fast.” Now, the villain smiled almost sweetly “And don’t worry, if that somehow ends up not working out. Quirkless people are increasingly rare. I’m sure I can find a good use for you,”

The room smelled funny. Izuku’s fear tinted gaze was covered in smoke and the boy woke up back in the bar, tied to a chair and no way out.

~O~

Aizawa took a few deep breaths as he looked over the plans and the evidence on the table. After years in the system, he had perfected the art of not letting personal attachments stray him from his work and god damn, did it come in handy now. The others in the room were arguing, different opinions flying left and right.

The erasure hero was still low key mad that he wasn’t allowed to go and save his student, but he was one of the few who could handle the media without exploding and also a teacher on the camp, so he was more or less legally bound to appear. That didn’t mean he liked it.

All Might was surprisingly angry. For the first time, he wasn’t smiling and Aizawa was grateful for it. one of the things he hated about the symbol was how fake he was when pretending to be optimistic all the time, and seeing some raw emotion for the first time gave him a sense of conviction. While letting your emotions run you was very detrimental in a mission, at least it was guaranteed that he would give it his all. He couldn’t say the same about the others, especially when the other heroes had doubts about the teen.

From the outside, it didn’t look good. At all.

Especially after the accounts he had gotten from the two kids who were conscious when Izuku got spirited away. Apparently, he knew one of the villains. Intimately. Shinsou said that he froze and called his name, while said villain knocked him unconscious. For someone who’s reaction was running and jumping when scared, complete petrification meant that Midoriya had really been scared. Or shocked. And that didn’t really sit well with the man.

Dabi, he’d called him. It was the same villain, or, better said, clone of the same villain who had attacked and almost roasted him at the camp. There was something very familiar about him. He had called him senpai. Not sensei, as many had reason to call. He couldn’t really point out his age, but he didn’t think he was a student. Too old for him to have caught him at all.

As a hero, a lot of people called him sensei, students or whatnot. Hell, even other younger heroes called him sensei since he had caught their class and didn’t expel them. It was a habit not really anyone could shake and pretty annoying on the field. But the man had called him senpai.
It was mocking, yes, but that implied that they had met before that. The man shook his head, as the memories were jumbling and mashing in his head. He could swear that he had seen the flames before that the man was familiar.

**Blue fire. Blue fire, where have I seen it?**

How old was he gain? Early to mid-twenties? It was hard to tell with the facial scarring, but the man didn’t seem that old. He would’ve been a student about five or six years ago. Right before he started teaching. Where was I before I started teaching? Oh, yeah, he was working for Fourth Kind. Not his brightest spot in career, but he’d had worse honestly.

Maybe an intern.

He blinked. It was a possibility. Fourth Kind was known for taking UA students in. now, who had blue fire….

Aizawa’s eyes widened. His eyes darted towards the No.2 hero. No, it can’t be.

“Endeavour” he called, keeping his voice as neutral as possible. the other looked up, but no one else did, as he didn’t yell it.

“What” the man sneered.

“Your eldest son. What happened to him?”

If possible, his expression soured even more. “How is this relevant?”

Aizawa looked him in the eye. “It struck me that he should be a hero around now. And I was wondering why wasn’t he called here. He had a pretty strong Quirk from what I remember.”

The taller man clicked his tongue and looked away “Touya ran away.” There was anger in his voice, but also something else he couldn’t quite place. “He wouldn’t have been much help anyway. Too distracted, that boy. Never focusing on what really matters” his fire moustache flamed even more and Aizawa nodded as he walked away.

Touya Todoroki. Yeah, he remembered the kid. Quiet, yet snarky when the situation allowed it. almost no respect for any figures of authority. The brunette remembered being very mad at him. The boy had a lot of potential, but no ambition or will to make anything of it. at some point, he was sure he was causing trouble on purpose. The man shook his head.

By the way his father had acted. It seemed like there had been no love lost between the two Todoroki. Come to think of it, Shouto didn’t seem to like his father much either. Yes, the hero would have to look deeply into this when they got Midoriya back. And ask how exactly he became acquainted with Touya Todoroki. But first, he had to let Nedzu know. There was a new variable to be taken into account.

~O~

When Izuku woke up this time (not quite as drugged as before ) he seemed to be, yet again, only guarded by two people. Toga and Twice. The man looked like he wanted to have a normal conversation with her, but was letting the girl talk about her passions- blood for that matter- and he was very enthusiastic about it.

Izuku looked around and stared at his handcuffs. Still held in tight, but this time he noticed the pattern. It was something pretty basic, like most police officers had used before. The same Type
Aizawa used. He looked at the two villains. Toga was with her back at him, but he could see the glint of the keys in her pocket. He looked at her, from her feel to her blond buns and he was suddenly struck by an idea.

“Ummm” he tried, successfully drawing both villain’s attention upon himself. “What, what time is it?”

“You’re up!” the girl giggled and Izuku gulped for a second before she was up in his face. “I’ve been wanting to talk to you for a while, you were so cute as you came out of those woods all covered in blood” she chipped something on his cheek and Izuku suddenly realised that he was still covered in blood, the dried fluid sticking the clothes to his body “It might not be fresh, but it still suits you so well.”

Ok, this was one of the weirdest compliments he had ever gotten.

“Yeah” he tried “thanks?” he said and she giggled. Then was when he noticed that something was wrong. The voice didn’t fit. He looked at her and was shocked to see….. himself. *Shape shifting Quirk* was the second thing that came so mind, but he would never admit, to himself or someone else that his first was *I have no right to look that good in a skirt.*

“You’re so cute!” she said as she straddled him and smiled sweetly, with too many teeth for her intention to be genuine. It was jarring seeing someone so young be so bloodthirsty, but it wasn’t like he could do all that much. Scratch that, the jarring part was how frigging weird it looked on his face! “Now, tell me, Midori-chan” she leaned in and cupped his face “How much blood did you draw from those?”

Izuku froze, suddenly remembering that he had killed those villains. His mind brought the unwanted memories of Muscular’s screams to his mind and now he was very conscious of what was left of Moonfish poking into his back through his T-shirt.

“Umm” he gulped and she giggled.

“Oh, you’re still shy about it.” she leaned in and licked something off his ear. “Don’t worry, by the time I’m done with you, you’ll love blood as much as I do.”

Izuku clenched his teeth to make sure his mouth wouldn’t open right before the girl slapped him. “Tsk, tsk, tsk” she said, grabbing the keys from his clenched hands “And to think I was trying to be nice” she twirled the keys and dangled them in front of his eyes before she grabbed and pulled at the handcuffs. Goosebumps ran across his skin where they touched and it was all Izuku could do not to pull away. “I like these” she pulled painfully at his arm and Izuku clenched his teeth when the metal bit into his wrists. The blonde smiled sweetly “Maybe I’ll use them later”

And, with one last peck on the nose, she got off and strolled out of the room, not before dragging Twice with her.

The greenette tried not to gag.

He waited a few minutes until he was sure they weren’t returning and then, he leaned forward and spit the bobby pin into his hand. Well, that had been unpleasant. And creepy. Izuku shuddered and decoded that he had to leave before the girl got to make true of her promise. That was a prospect he really *really* didn’t want to entertain.

Handling a bobby pin with one hand and a mouth was no easy job, but somehow Izuku managed to open it. He put it in a lock and tried to use his mouth to pull at the handcuff where his
other hand couldn’t. He was really grateful Aizawa had insisted they know how to escape in as
many ways as possible, and, when he returned, he was sure to thank the teacher and solemnly swore
that he wouldn’t be a problem.

*I am already a problem as it is. Can you really ever make up to him?* He gritted his teeth
as the handcuff popped off his wrist. He moved the bobby pin to his other wrist. *I’ll try to be less of a
nuisance.*

Yeah, like that would ever work. *For you of all people.*

The next handcuff popped faster this time, probably because of the dual use of his hands
and the kid quickly shook them off. Right. *Now, for the exit.*

He got off and looked at the door they had already used. Izuku dashed through it and
looked around. No villains in sight.

There was a long corridor, split into multiple parts. The boy started walking, only stopping
when he heard a sound steps made their way from one side and Izuku didn’t think twice before he
ran the other way. A stupid plan, but the only one available.

He didn’t really notice when wood turned into tile, but he did notice that it was unpleasant.
Gulping, he tried to open a door. Locked.

He tried to do so with every one he found, and he honestly didn’t expect that one to open,
which was probably why he fell when it did.

Getting up, the teen looked around. And promptly froze.

The room seemed to be a hospital one. Pretty standard, save for the winged Noumu in the
middle. The boy froze and tried to walk back, but that only attracted that things attention, for the
monster looked up.

The next moments would be forever ingrained in his memory, because, when the monster
opened his mouth, out of the throat not meant for human speech came this voice.

“De….ku?” it croaked.

Izuku gulped as he stepped back, the thing getting on strong legs and advancing towards
him.

*It knows me, it knows me, how does it know me?*

The wings sprouting from its back were assaulting his mind. *Your Quirk is so cool,
Tsubasa-kun. Do you have any trouble taking turns? What’s the highest you can get?*

Why am I remembering this now?!

The thing got to its full height and was staring at him, led than five feet away. Izuku
remembered those strong claws on his back, he was sure he had a scar or something right now, but
still he could only step back….

Until he hit something.

“Mido-taaaan” the villain said as cold hands wrapped around his torso. Dried and chapped
lips brushed his ear “You should’ve stayed in your room.”
Then the darkness hit.

Chapter End Notes

yeah Izuku, you done fucked up
for those wondering, yes, shiggy honest to god believed that Izuku and dabi were
sleeping together
discord
tumblr
did we make it in time?

Chapter Notes

thanks all of you for the kudos and the wonderful comments

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was pretty late when Katsuki made it out of the hospital. He growled as he clenched his fists and stared at the dark sky. The doctor had told him to avoid using his Quirk for a while to allow his arms to heal. The only problem with that was that the blond was sure that would take a shit ton of time; that he didn’t have.

Though, if everything went according to plan, he wouldn’t have to. As much as the he loved to fight and use his Quirk, he was smart enough to know when stealth over strength was needed. The best case scenario would be not to fight at all. And, as much as he didn’t like the greenette, the kid had always jumped in front of the bullet to save him. Even if it all ended well, Katsuki knew he couldn’t be able to live with himself if he stood with his hands in his pockets and waited for the heroes to do their job.

The memory of slime crawling down his throat would forever remain proof of how they sucked at that.

Shitty hair and candy cane were waiting in the front, bandages peeking from beneath the heterochromatic teen’s shirt. Despite the heat, Katsuki wore his jacket on, since his arms were bandaged, and he didn’t want people to ask questions.

“Oi, fuckers!” he yelled, getting their attention on him. “Who else is coming?”

“Yaomomo said that she would think about it” Kirishima said.

“Yes, no matter how pumped up we are, we can’t make the slightest move without her help.”

“She’s here” Kirishima suddenly said and all boys turned towards the girl as she was walking out.

“So?” Katsuki said, keeping his voice as neutral as possible. He knew that intimidation wouldn’t work here.

“I …” she started.

“Wait!” they all turned towards Glasses as he power walked towards them. Katsuki clicked his tongue. This fucker again. “Todoroki” he looked the tall teen straight in the eye “Of all people, you should know better not to do such thing…” he got closer, completely ignoring everyone else “Especially when it is you who criticised my rash actions. Why do you indulge in the same mistakes I’ve already made?” he looked do “Don’t you think we have to take responsibility for our actions?”

“Iida…” Todoroki started, but was stopped by a punch to the face. Even Katsuki stepped back while the class president grabbed the other’s collar.
“I’m worried too!” he yelled “He’s not only my classmate, he’s my friend. But…” he gulped “when you returned, you were all so injured. It reminded me of Tensei,” he looked back up “We might’ve lost Midoriya, we can’t afford to lose you too. What happens when your vigilante act goes too far, huh? What happens when you pick the wrong fight? When you can’t recover? What will you guys do then?!”

He looked at all of them” Don’t you guys care?”

A voice came out of nowhere at the moment “You didn’t seriously thought we would go in guns blazing, did you?” they all turned to eye purple hair walking out of the hospital himself.

“Yeah” Todoroki said as he unglued Glasses’ hand from his shirt “This is a stealth mission.”

“We’re gonna get him back without fighting,” shitty hairs said “On the right side of the law.”

Purple hair turned towards Katsuki. “I’m surprised you’d want to come.”

The blond gritted his teeth.

“That nerd didn’t have to take that hit. But he did and I sure as hell won’t owe him one.” The other didn’t seem convinced, but didn’t comment.

“I trust you Todorok,” everyone turned towards the one female in the group “But if worse comes to worse, I should be there as backup. Which is why I am coming too.”

“Yaoyorozu!?” both Glasses and Shitty hair yelled for entirely different reasons.

“I might not get it but…. The thought that we might be able to do something…. I won’t be able to sit still as long as that’s true.”

“Since there’s no swaying you” the tallest sighed “I’m joining you, if only to make sure you don’t break the rules”

“Sweet!” Kirishima punched the air.

“Stop wasting time and let’s get on with it already!” Katsuki grunted.

After one train ride, one discussion and, apparently, a shopping trip later, the gang found themselves in the centre of the city. Katsuki understood the importance of not getting recognised, since they were more of less famous at this point. What he didn’t understand was why they all had to look so. Fucking. Weird.

Purple hair looked like a drug dealer, thought that might’ve been just his usual look accentuated by the “disguise”. Katsuki wasn’t sure what he looked like, but he was wearing a spiked jacket and his hair had been slicked back, dark glasses covering his eyes. He felt so fucking weird, but he soothed himself with the thought that he could stab someone with his accessories. Shitty hair had given up the gel and was sporting some horns, while candy cane still managed to look like a doll.

“Oi, UA!” Katsuki whipped around ready to yell, but then he noticed that the people weren’t staring at him, but at the huge screen above them. He looked up and froze, the same as the rest of his group. On the screen, Aizawa and Vlad King, in their civilian attires, were talking to the media.
Aizawa sighed as he pulled at the tie. He hated the media, but, unfortunately, it was part of his job to deal with it. Kind of ironic, but just because you’re good at something, it doesn’t mean you have to like it. That was why he taught kids how to deal with it and with the laws so they could protect themselves. He had seen careers destroyed by one day of bad press. The first years learned the laws so, by their third year, most of them had some kind of competence in dealing with the entertainer part of their job.

But still, this is why, right now, he was in the position of having to talk to the press and apologise for losing his student. He should be out there at the rescue, but he couldn’t. Because of fucking appearances, that’s why.

He also had the earlier conversation still hanging heavily on his mind.

Aizawa walked into Nedzu’s office. “There’s something you might want... need to know” he said.

The mammal looked up from his plans, but motioned for him to close the door. Aizawa entered and closed it. “I have reasons to believe that one of the villains is Touya Todoroki.”

Nedzu froze. Then he looked up “Touya, huh. That’s... that’s quite a grave accusation, Eraser, what’s your proof?”

“I interned with the kid a few years ago. Their Quirks aren’t just similar- they’re downright identical and he seems familiar. I don’t have any proof beyond that, but I have a hunch.” The teacher said as he waited for the mammal to come to a decision. As unlikely as it was, Aizawa had learned not to ignore his hunches and the rat knew just as well. There was a reason he trusted him in the first place.

“Well” Nedzu scratched his chin, his whiskers bouncing in the light “Tell me, how exactly did he seem familiar?”

“Mannerisms, mostly” he said as he tried to remember the short encounter with the villain “I only spent a few weeks with the brat, but there’s that ... arrogance and sassiness you can’t really forget” he rubbed his chin “I guess that the voice was somehow familiar too. The body type seemed to match and, of course, the identical Quirk.” he blinked and looked at the principal, who was staring at him intently “ he seemed to be the age Touya would be right now.” He sighed “This information might not help us at the moment, but I thought you might want to know.”

“Thank you, you are right-this is important” Nedzu looked up “It would be very unfortunate if it got out. Just imagine, the son of the No.2 hero in cahoots with the League of Villains? The media would have a field day” he shook his head “Even if just a hunch, if this gets out or someone has the same train of thought, we are done for. We’ll have to make a few changes to the plan.”

“What kind of changes?”

“Well first” the mouse looked up as he hopped off the table and ran to another “We can’t let Endeavour meet this man. Chances are that he’ll either recognise him and give some sign, which could prompt an investigation and subsequently turn into scandal. We have no idea how Enji could react, and we can’t risk this mission on the chance that he’ll hold back. And, even if he doesn’t
recognise him, the villains might reveal it, which would be just as bad. This could be a very bold move. So, no, we can’t let Enji and no one else know about this possibility. Once we get Midoriya back, we can investigate, but right now, we don’t have the time.”

“So what do we do?”

The principal leaned over some papers and studied them with a pensive look “I’ll move Enji from front attack to a backup position. That way, he won’t be on site when we attack, and the chances of him and this mystery villain meeting are minimal.” The mouse sighed and looked up “I’ll notify you once I’ve figured out the rest”

Aizawa nodded and left the room.

Now, the Erasure hero pulled at his tie in hope of stopping the impending feeling of suffocation taking domain over his neck. He took a deep breath and looked at the reporters, at the cameras, at the thousands of people he knew were watching and started.

“I regret to inform that our unpreparedness was the reason harm came to 27 of our first year students” he said in a monotonous voice, because he knew that, if he allowed the slightest emotion to breach, it would be anger “Though ours is an institution for heroes in training, we were nonetheless negligent in our defences against villains, and we understand that this has made many of you uneasy. We apologise deeply and sincerely. There is absolutely no excuse for what has occurred.”

A reporter rose from the crowd and looked him in the eye. The teacher steeled himself for the massacre. “Question from NHA. This makes it the fourth time this year that UA students had been attacked by villains. Given that some were actually injured this time, what explanation did you give to their understandably concerned families? Furthermore, please explain in detail the measures you took to make sure that this kind of incidents will not repeat in the future.”

Thankfully, it was Nedzu who spoke this time “We’ve increased surveillance in the surrounding areas and revamped our school’s security system. And we’ve explained to the parents that our strong stand against villains will keep the students safe” which was complete bullshit, but it was the best they could do right now.

“Mr Eraserhead” one of them spoke and Aizawa returned to the limelight “You claim it’s for the student’s safety, but, in the middle of it all, you urged the students themselves to fight” aizawa focused on the reporter and tried to glare her into shutting up. It didn’t work. “What were your intentions at that point?”

“Since we had no way of grasping the full nature of the situation, I made that decision in order to avoid the worst case scenario.”

“Worst case scenario? How else would you describe a situation in which 26 students were injured and one kidnapped?”

“At that moment, the worst case I could imagine was the deaths of my students” the teacher deadpanned.

“It became clear that the gas responsible for most of the harm” Nedzu came in for the save “Was a villain’s Quirk with a sporadic effect. Kendo’s and Tetsutetsu’s quick thinking was responsible for minimising the damage. The students have all received psychological evaluation and none of them seem to have suffered emotional trauma.”
“Is that meant to be a silver lining?”

“We believe that the worst has been avoided as long as the kids still have their futures.”

“Is that so?” the reporter rose an eyebrow “Can you say the same about Midoriya?” the woman looked them in the eye “He won your Sports festival, struggled against powerful villains in the sludge incident. He was all but invisible before UA but now he is surely becoming quite popular. But his display at the Sports Festival wasn’t the best, to the point where he scared a classmate into walking out of the ring. Sources have confirmed that he was targeted with the sole purpose of joining the League. Not to mention, he has met with the leader, Tomura Shigaraki multiple times. Are we really sure that this was a kidnapping and not a retrieval. What makes you think that he won’t turn to their side?”

Aizawa took a deep breath before he allowed himself to do something stupid. Everyone knew how much he hated the media and he didn’t plan on falling into their traps. He stared the reporter deep in their eyes…. And bowed.

“Any lapse in his behaviour is my failing. The behaviour he showed in the Sports Festival was his attempt at accommodating the lack of a combative Quirk against his much better prepared peers. But still, the fact that he pushed forward despite his impediment only proves his conviction in being a hero even more.”

“So you say.” Another one said “Then, can you please explain why he is the one who killed two villains?” the man pulled out a paper. “Witnesses say that he came out of the woods covered in blood. Muscular’s autopsy shows that he eye was pulled out of his socket while other students admit to him killing Moonfish, a very dangerous villain. Care to explain how this behaviour is suitable for a hero?”

Aizawa gritted his teeth. Oh, fuck this shit “Have you ever been in a life or death situation?”

The man blinked “I’m sorry what does have to-”

“Midoriya was hunted by more villains, had almost been killed multiple times that night and had his both his own and his friends’ survival in mind. Could you honestly say that, in a similar situation, you wouldn’t do whatever it took to survive as well?”

“That’s not…”

“If you can’t do that, how do you expect a child who has barely entered high school to do so?” he straightened his back and looked into the cameras “Midoriya is still young. We will get him back and we will make sure that he knows how to properly handle a villain. But I, who had spent enough time as he teacher and trainer, can say that he is going to be a hero, and that he won’t be joining the villains any time soon.

Not willingly at least.

~O~

Katsuki stared at the screen until he couldn’t. he growled, turned heel and dragged the others after him. What Aizawa was saying was true, but he couldn’t stand the fucking reporters and the people who were commenting. What did they know? The most contact with villain they ever was watching from the side-lines. They didn’t know how it was to be scared, they didn’t. Katsuki would’ve blown them all off, had it not been for the rules in place and the fact that they would lose
their disguise.

“Oi, ponytail!” he yelled at the girl “Where are we going?”

She pulled out a device and stared at it. “The tracker points in this location!” Katsuki stared at it. It seemed pretty run down, in the middle of nowhere. Blocks surrounded it from every side, but Katsuki couldn’t stop the ominous feeling everywhere around them.

“Yeah, I think this is it.”

“We can’t be sure” the girl pushed her glasses up her nose “But the villains haven’t moved from here all day.

“Just because the villains are here” Todoroki said “That doesn’t mean that Midoriya is too.” He looked them all in the eye as if to make sure they got the message “I need you all to realise that we’re here based in very limited information.”

“None of us is suited for this type of stealth like jirou or hagakure” Glasses said “That’s why, at the first sin of danger, I’m pulling you out. Because you are my friends”

Katsuki rolled his eyes while purple hair spoke. “Well, Izuku is my friend and I’m not leaving him behind.”

They waited for a bit until some assholes tried harassing Yaoyorozu, to which point they decided that it was better to just hide. They climbed a wall to get a better view inside, and Shitty hair oh so conveniently, had a pair of goggles on him. It all went well until he looked inside the building.

“Crap” eh said as he almost fell off his shoulders.

“What!?” Katsuki whisper yelled while the other panted.

“Noumu.” He gulped and Katsuki felt the blood drain from his face.

“You are not…” Shinsou started.

“Yes, I fucking am!” he took a few deep breaths to calm himself and looked at his classmates. “They are there, just sitting in huge tanks.” They helped him down and Katsuki leaned on the wall. This wasn’t good.

~O~

The man rested on the counter nursing his drink. He gritted his teeth, the only emotion he allowed himself to show on the outside. It had been two days since Yami had tried his second escape attempt and it wasn’t good. This wasn’t what was supposed to happen. He took another sip and drowned the glass. Yeah, he didn’t feel any better. He should really cut down the alcohol, if only for the reason that he had gotten too good at tolerating it, which really did defeat its purpose.

“Still brooding?” Shigaraki said as he leaned on the counter. Dabi glared as he sipped from his now empty glass. “Don’t worry, the kid has enough HP to hold till the time we’ll need him. He won’t die just yet.” The scarred man glared a little bit more from under his eyelids.

His so called boss was immature and quite annoying, and the villain was glad he had enough of that to keep from starting a fight right away. But he guessed that this was as good as he was going to get regarding the brat’s state, so he let it slide. For now. He was in too deep to risk it.
“So” he started as he pushed the bottle away. He still needed to be somewhat able to avoid any information and the white haired menace was surprisingly good at reading people. “What now?”

“Now we wait for our message to be sent across.”

“And after that, what? What do we do then?” Shigaraki tilted his head. Dabi groaned “What do we do after we put the fear in people? In case you didn’t know, conspiracy theories had been going on for years. A lot of people know more or less about how this society works and all that. What you did, the constant attacks on UA? Publicity stunts. You got their attention” he pointed with the beer bottle in his direction “What next? They might be a little bit uneasy, but if you don’t give them something worse to fear, then this will eventually blow over and people will calm.” Turquoise pierced crimson “So, I ask once again, what is your plan?”

The hand covered villain rubbed his chin, “I do have some ideas, but I’ll have to talk to Sensei about them. But don’t you worry, I’ll make sure to let you know the moment I do for sure. It won’t take all that long, after all.”

There was something that didn’t sit well with the scarred villain, but Dabi did shut up. He didn’t want to provoke the man any more than he already did. No matter how childish Shigaraki was, the league had power. It had resources, from this weird Sensei person and the man wasn’t going to throw away his chance just yet. Dabi would stick around for as long as he had to, because the league had something he didn’t and really doubted he could get on his own: influence. A part which he learned the hard way that was way too important to overcome.

There was a slight knock on the door that made everyone in the room freeze. The villains shared a look and Spinner nodded to Magne before they both went for their weapons. “Kamino Pizza!” came a cheery voice from outside and that was all the warning they got before the door was smashed into pieces. Dabi used the commotion to take cover behind the bar, ducking, and, apparently, just in time as the next thing he heard was the No.1-reason-for-his-conception speaking in a voice not made for inside.

“WE ARE HERE!”

Overkill, Dabi though as he eyed the escape and a possible route out. Someone yelled “PREEMPTIVE BINDING LAWQUERED CHAIN PRISON” and, the next second, Shigaraki was sputtering nervously. Kamui woods, huh, well, he was surely a pest.

“Kurogiri!” his ‘boss’ yelled. “Warp us out!”

“I can’t” came the grave voice. Not good. If Kurogiri’s out, we don’t have that many ways to escape. The man looked at the ceiling. Still made out of wood. The building was larger, but this room will have to do.

“It’s All Might” he heard Compress rasp.

“Yes” a new voice said before the door opened and steps filled the small space available. Dabi frowned as he clenched his fists, heating whatever was left in his body to make for a Quick escape.

“Where is Young Midoriya?!” All Might thundered. Dabi focused on the steps that were getting closer. The timing had to be perfect.

“After all out scheming and plotting” Shigaraki rasped “The final boss shows up on our doorstep?”
The steps got closer. Dabi got ready. The moment a head peeked from the other side of the table….

A wave of blue fire engulfed them along with the ceiling. There were screams and the man pressed his smoking palms on the wood. Kamui screamed as his branch charred and, as the fire took over the construction, Dabi dragged the villain leader out of the other door.

It took Shigaraki five seconds to wake up and wrench himself free. “Let me go!”

“Where are the Noumu?” he asked, ignoring the other.

“What?!”

“The Noumu. The big lot might be with your boss, but you must have some left around here, don’t you?”

“Yes?”

Dabi gritted his teeth. “Release. Them. All. Kurogiri is out, the Noumus might be enough of a distraction for us to get out.”

Shigaraki glared at being given orders, but nodded. “Fine. Go collect the brat.”

The scent of charred wood was getting stronger. Dabi nodded and the two men split ways.

~O~

Katsuki was frozen as he watched Mount Lady take down the building. It had been entertaining, right up until the point where that suit clad villain came out and destroyed everything in his path. A wave of almost tangible fear came over the kids as they watched that man take down, systematically, every hero on site, starting with Best Jeanist.

Katsuki might have not liked the man, but that didn’t mean he enjoyed watching him bleed from a gash on his stomach.

Everyone was frozen in fear; even him, as much as he hated to admit it. There was something purely, deeply, intrinsically wrong about that man, even if he couldn’t put his finger on what that was. Katsuki didn’t think he really understood the term eldritch horror until this exact moment. Suddenly, a warp gate opened a few meters from them. Katsuki pressed his hand to his mouth as he watched the mist fucker walk out. “Sensei,” Kurogiri spoke and the blond couldn’t help but feel something so tired in his voice.

“Kurogiri” the abomination said somewhat surprised. “Where are the others?”

“The heroes…” he coughed “All Might. They found us. I can’t find young Shigaraki or the rest of the League.”

“Mmm” he said, sounding in equal parts displeased and thoughtful “Unfortunate” the man rubbed his chin. “Where are the heroes?”

“I managed to warp them in different places, but the base is on fire. I doubt any of it is salvageable.”

More thoughtful displeased sounds before the man nodded.

“All right then” he said as he turned to watch a spot in the air get closer and closer by the
minute “Go back and make sure to get everyone of importance before going to the settle base.”

“Yes, Sensei” the villain bowed and opened another warp gate.

In that moment, Katsuki didn’t think, because if he had, that would’ve probably stopped him from the stupid thing he did anyway. The moment the villain stepped in, the boy followed. Katsuki ran and used his momentum to pass at the last possible second. Kurogiri seemed surprised to see him there, which played into his plan. The villain collapsed unconscious, soot on his bartender outfit and the boy clenched and unclenched his fingers. He wasn’t supposed to use his Quirk, but oh well, what can you do?

Deku, where the fuck are you? He thought as he covered his face with his hand. The smoke was thick and the air was hot. He ran along the hallway, banging each door open. Usually, he might have showed caution, but now was not the time, not when both of them could die of asphyxiation.

For once in a very long while, luck was on his side, because the fifth door he opened happened to contain the greenette. But the relief was short lived when the blond saw the state he was in.

Izuku was pale and unconscious, laid on a hospital bed. He was wearing white garments, but his hands were covered in bandages. An oxygen mask was on his face and different tubes were coming out of his skin. He was unconscious. Katsuki gulped before he got closer. He took the mask of his face and took a quick sniff. Too sweet, probably some kind of drug. He let the mask fall as he unscrewed the IV caps (he wasn’t so stupid as to rip them open) and tried waking him up, but to no avail.

“Fuck!” he cursed, feeling the smell of burn assaulting his nose. Deku wasn’t waking up anyway. Grunting, the blond hoisted the other over his shoulder and ran for it.

That was the moment Katsuki realised, he had absolutely no idea of where the exit was. He ran around, coughing and panting, until he ran into a villain.

It was the same scarred fucker from the camp. He seemed to be carrying something. The two fire users stopped. *Fuck, I can’t fight him at the same time*, Katsuki thought, getting a better grip on the heavy kid on his shoulder.

But the villain didn’t attack. He looked at them, blinked and turned to another corridor. “Oh no” he said, in a deadpan voice as he jerked his head towards a door “They are running so fast. The smoke- I can’t see them anymore”

Katsuki stopped in surprise, but remained in position. The villain didn’t come back. With cautious steps, the kid opened the door the villain pointed at. Better than nothing.

As he ran, the floors turned to gravel and the lights of a firefighter car glimmered around the corner.

Chapter End Notes
Don’t forget the last of light

Chapter Notes

Someone on the Conversations discord said that here was where Dabi used to live, and, since I can’t unsee it, consider it canon.

Also, I changed the tags, so please please read them, I really don’t want any of you to be uncomfortable with this.

Also, read the notes. There have been questionable decisions made in the outline and I want to clarify some things before.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Despite the hours since the incident, the hospital was still swarming with injured people, policemen and a veritable army of worried friends and family. Toshinori gulped as he looked at the people trying to find their loved ones, frantic doctors, and staff that was barely standing by this point.

The skinny blond had his hand wrapped in a cast and kept, as much as possible, to the sidelines. Now that his true form had been broadcasted for the whole world to see, he didn’t want to distract anyone from doing their job. He sighed. He’d have to get used to it, eventually, he knew—but that didn’t mean he was looking forward to it.

The soon-to-be-retired No.1 hero was, he knew, supposed to be in bed. He knew he should have stayed in bed and he had every intention of returning. Just not yet. Not right now. He had something to do—before it was too late. He would have liked to wait a little longer, but he didn’t want his chances gone because he doubted himself. After all, he was in this predicament because he had decided, for once in his life, that his gut was talking nonsense. He couldn’t mess a second time.

Because he knew there wouldn’t be a third.

The blond walked some of the back stairs. They took longer and the route was more convoluted—which was probably why he hardly encountered anyone on his way to his destination—but they let him move around while avoiding people so he’d take it. It was better. Toshinari didn’t want to explain himself to more people than strictly necessary.

His sore bones creaked with every step and his lung hitched a breath with the same pain one would take for their last.

You really did it this time, Toshinori. There’s no coming back after this one, huh?

He smiled sadly as he wiped blood from his lips. At least All for One was in prison. Tartarus was one of the most secure places on earth—he wouldn’t be getting out anytime soon, if ever.

How can you be sure? A small voice whispered inside. How many of his Quirks do you know of? How many you will never know? What if he’s not even really in there—what if it’s all just one grand illusion? And if he is—who knows how long he’ll stay put. He could get out any day and
Fortunately he’d become quite adept at shutting that voice up over his years of fighting All for One.

Not that it didn’t have some good points. As much as he had hated it, Toshinori was glad he had the heads up and didn’t have to find out about Nana’s grandson from All for One. The man seemed slightly surprised and the blond could only be grateful that he had gotten the warning and didn’t let himself be too shaken by the reveal. He had to thank the kid later.

*You’ll have to tell him a lot of things later.*

The man sighed and stopped in front of the door. The name was clear, the kanji bolded and easy to read.

*Izuku Midoriya.*

Toshinori gulped before he took a deep breath. It needed to be done. Like a lot of unpleasant things, he needed to do this, and before his painkillers washed away and he would collapse in pain. He didn’t want to explain *that* to the staff, much less his mother.

The door opened without much protest. It wasn’t locked- a mistake they would have to fix. The villains had a warp gate for fucks sake. He closed it with a click and found himself in the dim lit room.

It was a nice room. No too big, not too small. The windows had a nice view of the courtyard. On the small table nearby there were some flowers. Toshinory slowly moved his attention on the sleeping form on the bed. Well, “sleeping”. From what he had heard from Naomasa, the kid was in a drug induced coma, and the doctors were currently walking a fine line between making sure none of them were essential to keeping him alive and purging them out of his system.

Toshinori clenched his teeth at the thought. All for One had had the kid for five days. And he came back like this. The man could see the bandages on his arms and the white material was peeking through the lose collar of his hospital shirt.

The boy himself was pale and slightly skinnier than the last time he’d seen him, but that was to be expected. Izuku was breathing evenly, the monitors keeping time with a beat the hero had came to understand the importance of only after it stopped in his arms.

True, losing a civilian was painful, and the man was glad he never had to lose a student. He wasn’t sure he could ever actually take it.

But that wasn’t important right now. No, what was important was him completing what he was there to do and return before anyone got wind of it.

Because One for All was fading. It had been weak before but now it was just a whole new level of bad. The Quirk was barely hanging by a thread, one last spark with no kindle. No hearth, no strength to carry itself since the candle was slowly dying.

Toshinori sighed. He didn’t want to do this, it was too fast, but One for All needed another wielder. Needed a new host and All Might needed a successor. And, so far, there was only a person suited for it.

*Can I be a hero without a Quirk?*
The man sighed as he looked at the sleeping boy on the bed.

*I don’t know, Young Midoriya.*

He remembered the broken expression, the pain in his face when he told him that. He remembered the pain he saw every time someone took him for lesser than what he was in class.

*You certainly have the heart of one,* he had wanted to say, but it sounded too cliché and patronising, a bad apology for a birth defect no one had control over.

Unscrewing the cap of the syringe was tricky with one hand in a cast, but he managed. The needle glinted in the morning sun. Keeping the needle in his broken hand, he pressed his left pointer to the tip. The man hissed as the red bead of blood bloomed on his finger.

He didn’t want to do this. Not like this. Not without a proper explanation. But waiting this long had nearly cost him everything- better to get it over with

*I promise you, you will be a hero.*

And, with that, he let the blood drop past the child’s lips, successfully sealing both their fates.

~O~

Consciousness returned to him like a hesitant cat. A *drunk* hesitant cat, was actually, probably more accurate. If the haze of the drugs in his system and the numbness everywhere else was anything to go by he’d been missing from the waking world for quite a bit.

Blinking, Izuku managed to finally take in the scenery, after what felt like a few hours of bumbling in the white fog, looking for a way out. he was in a hospital.

It was a nice hospital, nicer than anywhere he had been before. Nicer than what his mom was able to afford anyway. *Mom…. Mom,* there was something about mom…

“Mom!” he yelled as he sat up before collapsing back in a cry of pain. His stomach and abdominal region was killing him. Burning. It was burning even though the painkillers Izuku knew they must have shoved in him. He wasn’t sure he wanted to know what happened, but he was grateful for not being able to feel the full extent of his wounds.

*When did I get them?* He asked himself before the door opened and a nurse walked in. she smiled sweetly, the kind of smile reserved for when you had very bad news and you either prepared the patient for it or you tired to hide it away.

“You’re awake. That’s good” she said. Izuku narrowed his eyes.

“You knew I was awake. He eyed the heart monitor. *Yup, you definitely knew.*

“Where am I?” he asked in a rasped voice as he looked at her. His throat and mouth were dry and the nurse hurried to hand him a glass of water.

“The hospital” she said before she looked at him and smiled again. There was definitely something she was hiding. “The heroes managed to save you. Your teacher will come back in a few minutes to talk to you, but don’t strain yourself, Ok?”
“Why happened to my stomach?” he asked and he saw her smile falter for a few seconds before it came back up a second later, the same way All Might’s did.

“No, now would be fine.”

She seemed a little bit worried at that “Are you sure?”

“Yeah” he nodded. He looked at the cup on the table and then at the stinging pain in his torso and limbs. “Actually... there is something that I might need.”

“What?”

“I don’t think I can hold a normal one just yet” he said. As humiliating as that might be, he would rather have that than call for someone every time he needed to drink. The nurse’s features relaxed before she smiled and got out of the room.

The nurse returned a few minutes after with an All Might Sippy cup. Izuku almost smiled at the irony before he thanked her and brought the plastic to his lips. It was a few minutes before Aizawa walked in. years of hero work might have steeled his nerves, but he couldn’t quite contain the relieved sigh when he saw that his student was all right.

“You’re going to kill me some day, brat, you know that?” the man sighed but ruffled his hair. Izuku couldn’t stop the slight shiver of shame that coursed through him at the words.

“I’m sorry,” he said as he looked away.

“What for?” the man’s gaze went a few shades darker as he took in the kid.

“Everything I guess. They wouldn’t have come if it wasn’t for me. Now UA is in hot water because I got kidnapped,”

“I know this is probably not the best time, but do you feel comfortable answering some questions? You are totally free to refuse, but we do need the answers fast if we want to get to the gist of it.”

“Iza still wasn’t able to keep the guilt from taking over his guts. His teacher sighed. “I know this is probably not the best time, but do you feel comfortable answering some questions? You are totally free to refuse, but we do need the answers fast if we want to get to the gist of it.”

Izuku blinked “You might want to call in whatever officer you have on hand, I don’t know if I can answer it twice.”

The man nodded and walked to the door. Next inside was detective Tsukakuchi. He gave him a placating smile before he closed the door and sat on a chair.
“Hello, Mister Vanisher.”

Izuku blinked, but the man only laughed at his expression. That’s right, I was a vigilante till about a month ago. Huh, small world out there.

“Please remember” the detective said as he pulled out a clipboard “You are allowed to stop any time you might feel uncomfortable, we can always return later. But also keep in mind that it’s important to get all the information. Tell us what you remember and if you have any guesses, ok?”

“Yes” Izuku managed to say and didn’t rasp this time.

“Why don’t you start with what you remember?”

So Izuku did. He told them how he went after Kouta, how he knocked Muscular unconscious, everything up until the point where he was kidnapped. His voice wavered when he mentioned Moonfish and he outright choked when he reached Dabi. The detective wrote and only occasionally interrupted him for clarification. Izuku felt Aizawa’s gaze in him, but he didn’t turn for fear of looking even more suspicious than he already did. A big part of him felt ashamed when he remembered what he had done and was trying so hard to forget it.

“Wait” Tsukakuchi stopped him “You say you don’t remember anything after the Noumu?”

“Tsubasa” he said in a meek voice.

“What?”

“It- his... His name was” he gulped as he remembered the kid who chased him around back when he still had people he could call friends “His name was Tsubasa.”

Azawa leaned forward “How do you…”

“He recognised me” he closed his eyes as he remembered the pain, the dead eyes and the crooked voice saying De-ku. “And so did I.” He hiccupped, suddenly, not enough air in his lungs “We- we used to play together as kids, sometimes,” he said, looking at the white walls and remembering the tiled and the hulking figure with wings out of his back. Ice raced through his veins instead of blood. “I’m not sure when he disappeared but- I... at some point I just assumed he died. I wish he had.” he dug his fingers into his arms and the pain managed to ground him for only a second. That second wasn’t by far enough. “I tried to fight, I did” his heart was so so loud, why? “I tried, but I couldn’t….” his words chocked in his throat, “I couldn’t, I couldn’t, I couldn’t…..” he knew that his fingers were digging deeper than they should, but he couldn’t bring himself to care “I couldn’t, I couldn’t, I couldn’t…..”

“Izuku!” Aizawa said and the boy looked at his teacher. The underground her had leaned in very close, yet still gave him space to pull back. Izuku didn’t “Izuku look at me. Do you hear me?” Izuku nodded “Good. Please tell me five things you can touch.”

“The bed” he said staring at the ceiling. “The sheets. The table” he laid his hand on the desk “The cup” he grabbed the cup “the vase.” He stretched his hand and grabbed his teacher’s jacket “you”

“Good, very well” the man said “Tell me four students with blond hair.”

“Aoyoma” he breathed more evenly “Kacchan” he gulped “kaminari. Monoma. Togata.”

“Very well. Now please list five European capitals.”
“Tokyo” he said as he gulped. His teacher keep staring at him “Beijing” Aizawa nodded. Izuku took a few deep breaths “Seoul” he hiccupped “Bangkok, Pyongyang ...” a small smile made it’s way onto his face “Baku”

“Alright good.” the man ruffled his hair. Izuku leaned into the touch. Aizawa turned towards the detective “I think that’s enough for now”

“I agree” Tsucakuchii stood up and Izuku followed him with his eyes until he was out of sight “A pleasure, Midoriya.” He tipped his hat and walked out.

Izuku took a few more deep breaths before he turned towards his teacher who had kept his hand in his hair. Aizawa looked at him and ruffled the green mess before he took it off.

“Are you Ok?” he asked.

“I’m fine,” Izuku said out of reflex. The man eyed him before he let him go. “Did anyone find my phone?”

Aizawa blinked before he nodded and pulled out the small device. There was a huge crack over the screen, but it seemed to be working “We took it for evidence, but they didn’t find anything incriminating” eh tilted his head “Well, not more incriminating than what we already knew.”

“Thank you” Izuku hugged the small device.

They sat in silence for a few more minutes until Izuku felt like he could breathe again. He took a few more gulps of water. The man looked at him, eyed the monitor from time to time. Izuku leaned back on his pillows and massaged his head to get the tension out of his skull.

“But that raises the question” Izuku looked at the steel gaze of the erasure hero “How exactly did you meet Touya Todoroki?”

“What?” his eyes widened.

“You heard me. How did you meet Touya Todoroki?” Izuku gulped as he opened his mouth before closing it again. The window suddenly became the most interesting thing in the room and Aizawa was glad for the patience he had not to yell at the kid. “The man with the scars. He is Touya Todoroki and he knew you. By your reaction I can deduce that you already knew that, so, I ask you again, how did you meet him?”

The boy sighed and shook his head. “This stays between us, right?” the man nodded. Izuku shrugged in a way that was way too tired for someone who just woke up. “I didn’t know who he was when I met him. I only asked him to help me. I only found out recently, and I didn’t know he was a villain until the camp.”

Aizawa nodded as he pondered. “What did you need his help with?”

“Well, before I started being a… you know, vigilante” he tripped on that last word “I needed someone to train me so I had a chance in heroics. I met him on the street, liked his style and asked him to help me.”

“And he just agreed?” Aizawa was sceptical.

An unbelievably sad look passed his face. “No. Not really,” Izuku looked on the window. He took a few deep breaths and glared at the glass. “I should’ve expected this, really.” his voice cracked at the last word and Aizawa pretended not to see the wet spots at the boy’s eyes.
The man had realised that, when Izuku trusted, when Izuku cared, he did so with all his heart. He put all his trust into someone. When one did that, being betrayed hurt all the more. Aizawa had managed to gain the boy’s trust. Apparently, so did the villain.

The man prepared to speak when the boy started. “How long was it?”

Aizawa leaned in his chair. “About a week.” Izuku sighed.

“For me it was only two days.” He looked at his wrists and then at the man. “Why am I bandaged? Why does my chest hurt?”

“What’s the last thing you remember?”

Izuku pouted at the diversion but spoke when he realised he wasn’t going to win this game. “I remember trying to escape.” He looked at the ceiling “I managed to steal a bobby pin and get out of my cuffs, but then I met Tsubasa….” His eyes blanked for a moment before he blinked a couple of times, as if trying to erase the images and looked away. “I’m pretty sure Shigaraki knocked me out after that, and the next thing I know, I’m here.”

The hero looked at the kid “Are you positive that’s all you remember?”

“Yes” the kid nodded “Can you answer my questions?”

Aizawa sighed “Bakugou says he found you in a lab room. You had a lot of IVs. We did a few blood tests and the results didn’t come in yet, but you have a lot of puncture marks everywhere.” The man pulled out a clipboard and skimmed through it. “There’s also the problem of your torso. It seems you were somehow wounded. The cuts were pretty deep and they will scar, but none of your internal organs have been damaged.”

Izuku gulped. He looked at his arms “But what did they…” he looked at his teacher, his eyes wide with shock and fear “Why would they?”

“We don’t know. You were captured and drugged for multiple days. You need to rest.” Aizawa rested his hand on his shoulder and Izuku flinched. The man pulled it back.

“I tried to escape, didn’t I?” he took a few deep breaths and stared at the man, pleading for an answer “I must’ve tried to escape.” Now he was mumbling to himself, caught in the maze of his own mind. Aizawa snapped his fingers in front of his face and the boy jumped.

“I’m sure you did. The marks on your arms show that you fought restraints.” He placed his hand on his shoulder, slower this time, and Izuku didn’t pull back “You have nothing to be ashamed of. You were kidnapped by villains.” He sighed and looked away, his fingers feeling the rabid pulse through the thin shirt “I know this year has been hard, I know that everything has been hard for you, with all the attacks and everything.” He took a deep breath and gave a tentative squeeze “But you did your best. And no one can blame you for that, Problem child.”

“But I didn’t make it out” his voice cracked as he blinked away the tears “I couldn’t make it out. I was useless”

Aizawa sighed. He got up and ruffled his hair again “You’re many annoying things problem child but useless isn’t one of them. Try to relax, I have some things to do, but I will return. Don’t sweat it and don’t think about it too much.” He straightened and let his soft voice he only reserved for special occasions resurface “you might have not made it out, but you tried.”

The words echoed in the empty space and the boy took a few moments to let them sink in.
Izuku gulped and nodded and Aizawa walked out of the room. He closed the door before he allowed himself to breathe properly. He walked till the waiting room before he collapsed on a chair. There were a lot of things that didn’t make much sense, and a lot of things he should have told the kid, but he couldn’t. He only let out the minimum necessity.

Because, the truth was, the wound on his torso weren’t cuts. They were *claw marks*. Deep and possibly fatal, if the medical care wouldn’t have been put there in time. Recovery Girl was on her way to heal his Problem Child, but that didn’t deter from the severity of his wounds. They were made by something big and vicious and they cracked a few of his ribs. Bakugou jostling him on their way out surely didn’t help.

Also, from the blonde’s account, apparently, Touya Todoroki really was on pretty good terms with Izuku if he let them leave. They had run a check on one of Touya’s old photos and placed the scars over. Aizawa had confirmed that yes, that was the fucker. This was now another problem to be covered, along with all the clusterfuck that was what was left of Kamino. The man cursed under his breath. This wasn’t good, it wasn’t good at all.

Aizawa also feared the outcome of Muscular and Moonfish. The media was eating up the death of villains with such high body counts, but it also brought into question, if a kid did that, was it really safe to keep him free? There was a reason people with too dangerous Quirks were sent to facilities if they fucked up, and Aizawa suspected that the excuse of being Quirkless wouldn’t work this time around. So he was worried. Very worried. Especially since a big part of the class was wary at the perspective of meeting the teen once again.

The underground hero sighed. well, it’s not like he could do anything about it now. He still had a shitload of red tape to deal with. He would return to talk to the kid later. Aizawa hated the situation but knew there was nothing there to fix it.

~O~

Izuku knew he should’ve tried to sleep. He knew he should’ve rested, knew that not doing so was a bad idea. But he didn’t. Because that would mean focusing on the mess of things inside his head, on the storm of memories and worries and that didn’t really work the best. So he tried to distract himself.

Bad idea. Because the moment the bright screen opened, he was assaulted by all the news apps he didn’t get to check in the past week. And he didn’t like what he saw.

Kamino scared him. No, it terrified him. Because there was one thig too have someone in a wheelchair threaten you and completely something else to see said someone throwing your childhood hero left and tight.

Because, no matter how much he still spited All Might, he was still his hero. All Might was still the person who gave him the motivation to be a hero, still the man who pushed him, even if negatively, on this path. Izuku knew that, if it wasn’t for the man, he wouldn’t be where he was today.

And that’s why it hurt all the more to see him fall. That’s why it hurt so much to see his weak state revealed for all world to see, that’s why Izuku couldn’t stop the constant stream of *It’s my fault.*

*Quirkless, useless, a waste of space.*

*The swing in the summer light. An empty playground. A small blond with hands full of*
"You wanna be a hero? You wouldn’t last a day!"

Looks like I lasted longer.

Izuku gulped and switched the news to what was before Kamino. But he didn’t like that either. Because those were the news of his kidnapping. Those were the news reporting the death of Muscular and Moonfish, the leaks that said that he did it.

The greenette swallowed as he looked at the comments. While a lot of people were relieved that those villains were dead, there was an almost equal amount of people who asked if he was safe to be around. If he was mentally stable enough to be allowed to roam free. They seemed to have all forgotten his weak status the moment his deeds became of major interest.

A lot of articles debated how the fall of the No.1 hero would affect the future. But Izuku already knew. He had known this from the moment he had detected society’s flaws, from the moment the owner of killer hands started to speak.

Ever since All Might became the Symbol of peace, he had become the pillar society spins around. People depend on him, both physically and psychologically. But here’s the problem. If there is only one pillar, when it falls, the whole structure collapses.

He had spoken those words but didn’t know he would live to see the outcome. He didn’t want to see the outcome. He didn’t want to see what would become of this society. Because now that the Symbol of Peace was gone, the safety was gone.

Not physically, for there were still heroes around, but mentally. A lot of younger heroes depended on the image of All Might. The crime rate was so low because no one wanted to risk running into the No.1 hero. The people themselves used the hero as a security blanket, because, most of the times, All Might really did come to save them.

Only those who matter.

But now, it was all gone. Villains would be getting bolder. People will be getting scared. And Izuku knew all too well how people acted when scared. He had seen it with his own eyes in person and he dreaded what a society of scared super powered individuals was capable of at global scale.

People were scared. People will act, villains will act and a lot of civilians will die.

All because he was too weak to escape.

Too useless to do a god damn thing.

Izuku wiped the tears out of his eyes as he looked at the news. The poor boy’s heart stopped when he saw the body count, the wreckage, the victims, and all he could think of was….

How many people were because of me? Because he was too weak to escape, too fake and too malicious to not be taken for a villain. How many people did I kill?

Too many.

And that wasn’t the worst thing. UA was in deep hot water. Everyone was looking for a scapegoat, and apparently, the fallen No.1 hero and the hero school he belonged to were taking the
blame.

*It’s my fault.*

There were a lot of people who wanted him arrested, a lot of people calling him a villain. He watched the press conference, he watched how his teacher stood up for him in front of everyone, how he bared his neck for the world to see. And, as much as it warmed his heart to know that someone cared, he couldn’t stop the guilt gnawing at his stomach when he saw how his teacher was trashed and critiqued. How his school was blamed for everything.

*It’s my fault.*

The class group chat was another Pandora’s box. Apparently, not all of his classmates had been eager to go after him. He skimmed through the messages that sent him to tears. There was a heated debate still going on up until last night, with people yelling at the squad that went to rescue him. The news of his rescue brought a lot of get well messages, as well as heartfelt letters of worry, but that only made him realise how much they worried about him.

What would mom think?

Izuku clenched his teeth. She must’ve cried. A lot. She would have been so worried and Izuku hated that he made her feel that way. Hated that she had to feel that way because he was just that useless.

Flashes of people walking away, of kids not wanting to play, of women gossiping around the corner, always loud enough for both of them to hear.

*Quirkless, weak, bastard, whore.*

She could have been happy if she didn’t have such a weak kid to take care of. She was sacrificing so much, and only asked for one thing in return. For him to stay safe, to not make her worry.

*I can’t even respect that one wish.* He thought bitterly. His mom would’ve been better without him. Everyone would be better without him. The kid thought of his teacher. He may be called Problem Child with fondness, but the nickname held some truth. He was a problem. He had been a problem from the moment he gained enough agency not to be a nuisance.

His thoughts went to Dabi. He blinked, gritted his teeth, but couldn’t stop the tears. Dabi had been his friend. *His friend.* The first one in almost a decade. He had been the first one Izuku could trust. And that was true. He didn’t fake it. the man had no reason to fake it, wouldn’t have had to. Dabi had actually cared.

*And then I turned him away because it was too stubborn to respect one simple wish.*

What the fuck was wrong with him?! He grabbed the roots of his hair and pulled, as hard as he could, but this time, the pain didn’t go away. *Why did I have to do that?! Why, why, why?*

Izuku sniffled and blinked, one tear staining the cloth. *If it wasn’t for me, the camp wouldn’t have been attacked. If it wasn’t for me, everyone would be fine.*

Shigaraki had been right in one instance. Maybe more. No matter how much he wanted to be a hero, no matter how loud he yelled it from the top of his lungs, the truth remained. While other people used their Quirks to gain popularity, he had cheated his way up the ranks and into the Hero Course.
He wasn’t someone people could trust. He wasn’t someone they could rely on. He was a fake. A fake so weak that he couldn’t even save himself.

*You might have not made it out, but you tried.*

*You tried.* He let out a bitter laugh. But what was the point?! He tried but he didn’t make it out. He couldn’t save himself. He let them down once again, he forced them to come and save his sorry ass and, in the end, this was all that he could do. All that he was good for.

*You'll never be a hero.*

He grabbed his face and sobbed as hot tears escaped his fingers. *Who was I trying to fool?*

*Why don’t you take a swan dive off the roof and hope for a Quirk in the next life?*

Izuku blinked. Yes, that was it. that was it. he looked at his hands one more time before he sat up.

That was it.

His guts groaned but he pushed through the pain as he stood up, pushed himself on the floor and onto the chair. It took the small boy a few moment to regain his balance, but once he did, he managed to make it to the door.

That was it.

Because what drove him to this point had been rage. Rage and spite. Hope had been lost long time ago, back on a roof with a skinny man breaking his dreams. If there was any left, it was too small to make a difference. No, what drove the little boy had been rage and revenge on the world that treated him not too kindly. What drove him had been the wish to help. But Izuku wasn’t like Bakugou. Bakugou was a generator of rage, pumping constant fuel to help him pass the day. Izuku was barely a container. One that had taken since he was four and had been wasted in less than a year. And, right now, there was no rage left for fuel.

Chapter End Notes

ok, so, before you all start screaming bloody murder, giving Izuku ofa was related to the plot. it won't make him op, it won't be a fix everything as it is in canon or some other works, are we clear? good about the panic attack, i do realise that not everyone has them the same, but, personally, this is how my friend pulled me out of one, so.... yeah the chapter for next week might be a little late, so as little warning anyway kudos and comments are my lifeblood. i shit you not. i have an exam tomorrow, so please, if you could leave me an opinion or something, it would really help shit, this was long. anyway, see you next time discord
Aizawa sighed as he leaned back on the uncomfortable chair, drowning what felt like the third coffee that day. It was awful and he was sure that he wouldn’t be able to get any shut eye in the next week, but it was necessary if he ever hoped to accomplish even half of what was happening.

Things have been going to hell for about a few weeks, but the news were currently busy with covering the rescue and the succinct capture of most of the League of Villains and its boss, so he could have a few hours of peace before all the bad eyes were back on UA. All Might was out cold, and he didn’t want to see the man when he’d wake up and see what his legacy had become.

Sure, a lot of people still loved the Symbol and wished him a swift recovery, “get better” messages abounding.

But there was also something else. People were sad. People were mourning the soon-to-be-retired hero. Aizawa wasn’t a man who enjoyed social media, but he did use it out of necessity, because one had absolutely no idea what were the things people tweeted about. And what he found wasn’t at all flattering or good to any of them. Because, as much as people loved All Might in the end what they loved was the Symbol, not the person.

So when that was gone, they didn’t care for the person left.

But, regardless of the dreary atmosphere, Aizawa still had so much more important things to do at the moment.

Like deal with the aftermath of Kamino.

All the six brats had been kept overnight despite the lack of injuries. Well, kept wasn’t really the right word. They have been shoved in a room that wasn’t all that equipped for patients and told to wait. Aizawa didn’t expect them to fall asleep, and, by the looks of it, they did try to avoid doing that, but, oh well, exhaustion was a powerful drug and it kicked in back with interest once the adrenaline was gone.

So, that’s why he had found them more or less passed out on the chairs placed to resemble a bed, or laid on the ground wrapped in blankets most likely provided by Yaoyorozu. No matter how much the man wanted to scold them, he was tired too, and, despite what all the student and teacher body alike said, he wasn’t cruel. So he allowed them to sleep some more, to not have to deal with the outside world for just a little longer.
That had been three hours ago. Three hours in which he had gotten the report on Izuku’s wounds, three hours in which he’d had to come to terms with what exactly had happened. And he didn’t like it.

Not one bit.

So, with a sigh, he opened the door to their room and walked inside.

Everyone was, only marginally, more awake, though remnants of sleep were still evident by the ruffled hair and blankets draped over most of their shoulders. Shinsou looked a few seconds away from face planting on the tiles, Todoroki was mournfully sipping from his coffee, while Iida was reading from his phone. Both Yaoyorozu and Kirishima were still asleep and Bakugou was wrenching his hands together. They all looked at him as he entered, and the two ones asleep woke up.

Aizawa eyed each and every one of them before he closed the door. He took a deep breath.

“Even though what you did is heroic and I’m sure Izuku will be very grateful once he wakes up” he took a deep breath, drowned the last of his coffee and sat down on one of the chairs, “I cannot and should not, in good faith, let it slide” they all stilled “I know that what I am going to say sounds like bullshit, but, if you meddle with police investigation, you are liable for charge.”

Shinsou stood straight, a look of something akin to pain and worry etched in his features. Todoroki gritted his teeth, Iida looked away and Kirishima stood up

“This can’t be true!” he clenched his fists “We saved Midoriya. We saved him. You saw how he was when we got him out!” Bakugou looked away “You saw it, you saw it, everyone saw it! How can you tell us that we shouldn’t have done it?! How can you tell us that we should have left him there- left him to die?” the redhead was clenching his fists and Aizawa just sighed. Why was all his class like this? Why?

He stretched, placed his coffee on the table before returning his full view on the teen.

“I didn’t say that.” Kirishima stopped mid word and Aizawa continued. “By any chance, did any of you use your Quirks?” different degrees of ‘No’ came to him. He looked at Bakugou. The blond looked away before he mumbled.

“No,”

Aizawa sighed. “Did anyone see you use it?”

“No,”

“Good. Then we have these next few possibilities; either you are arrested for breaking regulations and it will show on your records, or,” he stared at each and every one of them to make sure they were all paying attention “We swipe this under the rug. That means that no one will know you were even there. That a hero present at the scene will take credit for it.”

“Sure”

“Of course”

“Yes!”
All of them agreed, but the teacher’s attention was on the most volatile of the group. “Bakugou” the kid blinked at the words and focused on his teacher. “That means no credit for you. A hero will take the fame of the rescue and you will not be allowed to talk to anyone about this. Do you still consent?”

The boy’s eyes widened for a few moments before he scoffed “Of fucking course!” he spit, like the mere idea of refusing disgusted him. “I don’t want praise for basic human decency!” he clenched his teeth and Aizawa nodded approvingly.

“All right then” he said as he stood up. “You are all free to go, except for Bakugou. I have some questions for him.” He said as he stood up. “Bakugou, remain here” he said before tossing the kid a bag of gummy gears and walking out, already calling Tsuragame. Truth was, he wasn’t allowed to make such a decision on his own, but he was working with the police for way too long not to know that they would be relieved at the prospect of less paperwork and less negative press given by the fact that six teenagers had done their job better than him. He remembered with fondness how Izuku had gotten out of the Stain situation by basically saying “I’m Quirkless” and giving everyone the middle finger.

After he had half fixed the triple headed mess that was the fucking thing, Aizawa called Nedzu to make sure his other students were all right.

He also called Hizashi to fill him in, the hero being too busy the previous night to do anything other than collapse in bed after freeing the civilians from the rubble left behind by the god of calamity that grazed the earth.

He talked to a nurse, looked over the reports once again, drowned another cup of horrible coffee, his juice pouches having run out the previous night before making it back to the room.

Bakugou was staring outside, the bag of gummies empty in the trash bin.

“The others?”

“They left” he said before he turned around and plopped himself onto a chair. “So, why did you want me to stay?”

“I got what happened last night, up until the point of you jumping through the warp gate.” The man leaned forward “What I don’t know is what happened afterwards. We might pass the story as someone else’s success, but we do need to know everything that happened. And you are the only one who was there to see it.”

The boy sighed and leaned back in his chair, kicking his feet to rest on another. The gesture might have been intended as relaxed and carefree, but Aizawa could see through it and very much didn’t like it. Eventually, Bakugou spoke.

“When I arrived, there was no one. Only a corridor with empty rooms. I ran around until I found the room that Izuku was in,” he sighed and shook his head. “He was…. He was hooked up to these machines, and IV’s. There was something I’m pretty sure was an oxygen mask on his face- but whatever was pumped through it I don’t think it was oxygen. Most likely some form of sleeping gas considering how awfully sweet it was,” he cringed for a second, as if remembering the taste in his mouth. “He was full of bandages. I took out the IV’s and carried him out” he looked up. “Is he ok? The bandages must have been there for a reason, weren’t they?”

“Yes” Aizawa sighed. No point lying about things easily disprovable. “We don’t know yet, we are still running tests” he looked through the files he would have to return sooner or later. “
But the most dangerous injuries are a series of gashes on his chest. They are pretty bad, but not lethal or anything but aesthetically crippling. He will make it out.”

“I think I may have carried him too roughly” Bakugou clenched his teeth. Aizawa sighed. Bakugou was hard to read and unpredictable on most days, but this was something new he honestly didn’t have time to deal with.

“Anyway” he said, promising himself to deal with it later, when he would have the time to care for all of his surely traumatised students. “You carried him out. is that all?”

“No” Bakugou said “The villain, the one with the scars…” the boy looked up “He... he let us leave.”

“What do you mean by he ‘let’ you?”

“He saw us trying to escape,” Bakugou said as he clenched his fists “I was powerless. It couldn’t fight while carrying him, and he knew that. He could have stopped us,” the boy forcefully breathed out and flexed his fingers, not bothering to hide the red marks on the inside of his skin. “Instead, he showed me the exit and walked away.” The boy took another deep breath, calming the small sparks on the ends of his fingers. “after that, we walked out and found the ambulance. They stretched him on it and then the police took us here.”

“All right” Aizawa said as he looked at the other. “I’d like you to remain here a little bit longer. I haven’t yet managed to contact your parents, and I don’t want you to go back alone.”

“Fine!” the boy clicked his tongue and pulled out his phone. Aizawa sighed and stood up.

“I’ll tell you when he wakes up” and walked out of the room.

~O~

Dabi sipped from his glass of beer as Shigaraki threw a chair at the wall in the background. Drinking his problems away never truly worked, but he might as well try. Too bad he couldn’t drink the noise away, that would have been helpful. He was still debating if the hangover next morning was worth it.

“Tomura Shigaraki” Kurogiri said in a tone that was tethering on the edge between pleading and angry. “Please, stop ruining the hideout.”

“THAT BITCH ASS MOTHERFUCKING ALL MIGHT!” came the response, accompanied by another something getting smashed into the wall and Dabi let out a sigh much more fitting for an old man that a twenty five year old. He needed to ride out his tantrum before anyone might try to talk to him like an adult. And maybe suck on a lollipop in a corner for a few hours.

“Owww,” Toga nursed her ear. She had gotten a lot of scrapes and bruises the other day, but the most recent one was from a few minutes ago, when her earring had been stuck in a nail in the wall. She was trying to disinfect it, but she was doing a poor piss job at it. Sighing, Dabi put down the glass and patted the stool next to him.

“How dare he?! How dare he hurt Sensei?!” the man child screamed and the scarred one sighed in reflex as he grabbed the swab of cotton off the girl’s hand. He would talk to his “boss” after he was sure that he could dodge any stray limbs the fucker decided to throw at him. Right now, he didn’t want to aggravate the wound any further.
Toga winced as the rubbing alcohol entered the wound, but stayed still as Dabi made sure to disinfect it. Most people didn’t know, and Yami hadn’t either, when he saw the state of his apartment, but he was very very good at cleaning and disinfecting wounds. He kinda had to when his own face was prone to getting infected.

He tried to keep still as he thought of Yami. The man had read the news and that the kid had finally been rescued and given in the care of the police, and he tried so so hard to hide his glee from SHigaraki. Which wasn’t so hard, since the man had been throwing a tantrum for what felt like a few hours and didn’t show any signs of stopping.

Truth be told, when he had seen him unconscious on the table, on the bed, with all the IV’s stuck into him, he only wanted to rip them apart and be done with it already. To call whoever was in charge to pick him up. But he couldn’t. He was in too deep right now.

Truth was, logically speaking, he shouldn’t have stuck with the League, or whatever they were called not that there were only four of them left. Yeah, four. He had no idea how in the hell had Toga escaped and found them later, but he didn’t really care at the moment. But, point was, he had to stay. Why?

Because he was broke.

Say what you might about the League, But Kurogiri, being the one and only functional adult around, possessed the astounding capacity of dealing with money and saving them for later use, so, so far, his life was okay-ish. He knew he could leave, but, honestly, putting up with the man child was better than starving.

He finished disinfecting the wound before placing a bandage over it.

“Thanks Dabi” Toga said with a small, genuine smile before she hopped off the stool and ducked under SHigaraki’s awful pillow aim.

“THAT ROTTEN BASTARD, I’LL MURDER HIM”

Deciding that this wasn’t worth his ears, Dabi drowned the drink in one gulp, waited for the taste to disappear before he got up and walked towards the pale haired man. SHigaraki turned to yell at him, happy for a new target, but Dabi grabbed him by the collar and lifted him to his level (Ah, the advantages of being taller)

“Look me, you stale piece of mildew. You can’t just yell and expect things to be better!” he yelled, but didn’t expect the things to be better. He wasn’t a hypocrite.

SHigaraki growled and placed four fingers on his arm. “Let. Go.”

Dabi pushed him back and the villain stumbled and fell on his ass. He growled at the taller and tried to get up, but Dabi kicked him back to the ground. “Listen and listen well” he leaned forward. “You lost your mentor. That sucks. But flash news princess- shit happens!” He stuffed his hands in his pockets “You can either wallow in your own misery, or get the fuck up and be the fucking leader we chose to follow!” he kicked him once again, not letting him get up. “Where’s all that waxing poetical about changing society, huh? Where is it?! Where is all that flare and all the plans you had?!"

“Don’t you speak like that to me!” SHigaraki yelled.

“I will speak however I god damn please, until you show me you are somehow worthy my respect!” he spit near his feet just to make his point extra clear. “So I’m asking you once again, are
you worth my time? Are you worth me staying here, or are you nothing but a scrub who gives up after the first try?"

Shigaraki glared and got up, and Dabi had to admit he was, privately, a tiny bit impressed that he didn’t even seem to have felt the kicks. His face remained contorted for a few seconds before he forcefully smoothed it out and said, in a surprisingly calm, if raspy, voice “I will make you regret eat those words,"

Dabi leaned forward, getting way too close into the other’s personal space, glad that his little bluff had worked “Can’t wait for it.”

~O~

Katsuki groaned as he rolled his shoulders. The stitches pulled at his skin painfully, and the nurse’s placating smile pissed him off. He thanked her gruffly because he wasn’t completely without manners. His steps took him to the fourth floor, the room Aizawa told him they kept the nerd.

Katsuki didn’t know what he was doing there. He didn’t know what he would say, what he should say. Things would be very weird. He didn’t know if the nerd would thank him or if he was still as mas as he used to be. But anyway, thing was that nothing was going as well as it should, and no matter how little logic it made, the blond needed to see his childhood friend. He needed to see the boy alive and not corpse looking, he needed to make sure it wasn’t all for nothing.

Calm down. With a little luck, he’s still out and you won’t have to talk to him. Katsuki nodded, yeah, that was probably it. And, if he was awake, he could say that he got the wrong room. From that point it was the nerd’s decision if he wanted to keep the conversation going.

The explosive hero in training took a deep breath and knocked a few times. When no one answered, he pushed the handle and entered.

The room was empty. Dread pooled into his stomach as he looked around. No sign of the nerd. Katsuki gulped. He took a small step inside, searching for the possibility of Izuku being out of sight. He wasn’t. the room was empty.

He’s not supposed to be up. Cold sweat trailed down his spine. Those wounds are too deep for him to be wondering around.

The boy remembered his and Aizawa’s earlier conversation and how the man tried in vain to assure him that the potato carry wasn’t as damaging as it had surely been.

Katsuki should call the nurse. He should tell someone. But, at the same time, there was this deep nagging feeling that something was wrong, that he knew where the boy was. And he wished to be wrong.

I’ll check quickly and then make sure to call a nurse. He can’t have gotten too far.

With that, he walked quickly towards the stairs. He walked them up the fastest he could without running and made it to the roof. The door was unlocked. The blond gulped.

He’s not here, he’s not here, he’s not here.

He pushed the handle. And froze.

Izuku was walking towards the edge. Slim figure clad in white hospital gown, white slippers on the concrete. He was staggering, sometimes wincing in pain, but kept going with that
gods damned determination that was going to be his doom. Katsuki couldn’t breathe. The images from his nightmares popped up and crushed bodies on the ground meshed up with the boy on the edge.

*Next time I’ll let you die.*

Katsuki didn’t know for how long he just stood there, frozen, but, when his body suddenly remembered how to move, he dashed across the roof, grabbed the boy and wrenched him away from the edge.

Izuku stumbled a little but didn’t fall. He looked up at the blond and Katsuki could wet streaks trailing down his cheeks.

“What the actual fuck?!” Katsuki yelled.

Izuku blinked as he took a step back, eyes wide. His gaze darkened for a few seconds. “What are you doing here?”

“Stopping you from killing yourself, apparently!” he panted. “What the fuck are you thinking?!”

Izuku gritted his teeth and glared at the taller teen. “That’s none of your business, Bakugou! Leave me alone!”

“NO!” he stormed closer and, for the first time in a year, Izuku stepped back “You really think I will let you throw away your pathetic life?!”

“I used to think the world of you,” Izuku mumbled under his breath but Katsuki still heard it. It hurt the expected amount. Izuku was sniffling sadly and it took a while for the blond to find his voice.

“Why?”

Izuku looked away, wiping his cheeks. “What’s the point? It’s not like I’m of use to anyone.” He shrugged and hugged himself, looking completely miserable. “It’s my fault for everything. If I only weren’t so weak, so useless, so fucking Quirkless, I wouldn’t have gotten kidnapped.” He squeezed his eyes, letting more tears hit the ground “Then, All Might wouldn’t have tried to save me, he wouldn’t have revealed his true form and the No.1 hero wouldn’t have fallen.” He looked up “The society would still be in one piece and UA wouldn’t be facing so much trouble.” He shook his head “I ruined it. I ruined everything. And for what? Because I couldn’t follow a fucking order and turn back when I was told to? Because I tried to be a hero, yet all I could ever do was hurt people”

“What about your Mom?!” Katsuki stepped forward “What about Aizawa and All Might and all the people who sacrificed so much for you to make it”
Izuku shook his head “They’re better off without me. Everyone’s better off without me, I only cause trouble.” he looked up “I- I killed people, Kacchan!” he sniffled “I killed them and I didn’t even try to hold back! You guys almost got killed trying to save me!” he glared at the concrete “hero. What a joke. I’m a joke” he wiped his tears “I’ve always been a joke, but I was too stupid to see why everyone was laughing.”

Katsuki balled his fists and took a step forward. “You’re not”

Izuku shook his head, not looking up. “I’m…”

“Don’t. Don’t fucking interrupt me!” Katsuki yelled and Izuku clamped his mouth shut.

Katsuki got closer. “I was wrong!” he yelled and Izuku’s eyes widened “Is that what you want to hear? Fine! I! Was! Wrong! Very, very wrong! You’re not useless, you were never useless, or helpless or a waste of space and I was a kid with my head too far up my ass to see it!” he took a few deep breaths to slow his breathing “Was not the past year enough to prove it?! Fuck what everyone says, since when did you start to care about what other people think?!”

“But they are right!” Izuku said, his voice wavering. “All Might... he- because of me he’s-”

“No” he took a huge gulp of air before he continued. “He saved you!” he grabbed the smaller boy’s shoulders “That’s what he does. Are you really going to let that sacrifice go to waste?” he shook him as if that could physically put the mind back in the boy. Izuku’s lip wobbled. Katsuki squeezed his shoulders to get his attention back on him. “Ever since we were kids, you’ve always wanted to save people. You always jumped right in, you never pulled back.” His voice softened to a point he doubted it ever was before “You always save everyone. Why can’t you save yourself for a change?”

That was what did it. Izuku stopped holding back the tears and huge sobs escaped his throat. His voice was broken as he was wailing, not different from a child. Katsuki remained frozen, staring at the weakness displayed, like he had never seen before. Not since their childhood had the nerd allow Katsuki to see him this vulnerable.

The greenette’s knees collapsed and the blond was quick to catch him. They both fell to the ground, Katsuki’s knees collapsing under him. Izuku kept crying and, in a moment of softness, the blond pulled him to his chest. Izuku viciously grabbed his shirt and buried his head into his shoulder, his cries now muffled.

No words were spoken. None were needed.

~O~

Toshinori looked at his co-worker. He had called Aizawa to his room to tell him of what he’s done. Izuku trusted the man a lot more than he trusted the now former No.1 hero and the blond knew that he would need his help.

So toshinori told him everything. The tale of the two brothers, about One for all and All for One. About how he made Izuku his successor. He stood there and looked down, not sure how to face the man.

When he was done, the erasure hero was livid. He was looking him down, hair up and
eyes red and said, in a voice that barely concealed the anger boiling underneath.

“You did what?”

Chapter End Notes

oh god, dabi, hold back a little will, you? what would have happened if shiggy killed you?
anyway, i just want it to be clear, the mess between Izu and katsuki is not fixed. it's barely the beginning
thank you once again for the kudos and the comments, and, see you next time, i guess
discord
tumblr
this was coming for a long time and none of you has any excuses

Chapter Notes

ok, here's the new chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The atmosphere was so tense you could’ve taken a chainsaw to it and even that wouldn’t have been enough. Toshinori had the feeling that the man in front of him was much too close to murder for his comfort. Which was, in all fairness, justified-he knew that this wasn’t the best decision- it was rushed, sudden and x. But it was necessary- not that he expected that explanation to calm the younger man down.

“So let me get this straight,” the man rubbed his nose “You gave Izuku ‘fight me’ Midoriya the power to blow up buildings with the flick of his finger?”

“Aizawa, I know it might have not been the wisest decision, but Midoriya is a good kid. He wouldn’t use it to hurt people.”

“Have you not been present for his time at UA?” the man growled. “He might not want to hurt people intentionally, but he lacks any notion of restraint! He doesn’t know what too much is!” grabbed the roots of his hair and bowed his head. “Did you really think none of this though?”

The blond swallowed the dryness in his throat “I have been thinking of this for a while… I was planning on training him first to be sure he could handle it but then…” the younger looked up “It was fading, Aizawa. I can’t use it anymore. I only had enough to pass it over.”

“Did you talk about this with him?” the brunette looked through his fingers. Yagi scratched his neck.

“Er... yes? K-kind of... I believe I’ve mentioned it in passing at some point...”

Aizawa glared. “Yagi…”

“After the Sports Festival. I called him to apologise for my harsh words and asked him what he would do if he could gain a Quirk.”

“And what did he say?”

Toshinori looked at the other hero “He said that he gave up on getting one too long ago.”

Aizawa sighed and got up. “This is a disaster,” he mumbled under his breath “This is a grade A disaster.”

“Come now, Aizawa, it can’t be that bad. He’ll learn to use it and-”

“I’m not talking about the Quirk!” the man snapped. Yagi shut his mouth “Did you think for a moment, for a second how this’ll look like from the outside?” the blond didn’t answer “Well, let me tell, you, it looks bad. The kid who got kidnapped by villains to be recruited- villains who, need I remind you, work for the man with the ability to give and take away Quirks- just got a Quirk!” Yagi
paled “Even better, he got this Quirk right after you, apparently, lost yours!”

Aizawa took a few deep breaths “Tell me, Yagi, please tell me, how are you going to make sure people don’t attack him for it? Because, as I’m sure you know, children have been killed for less.”

The blond looked down. “I really didn’t think this through…” he clenched his fists “But my choice would’ve been the same regardless. I’ve been watching young Midoriya’s progress from the beginning and I’d already decided that I wanted him as my successor” he sighed and shook his head “I just wish I could have had more time to gain his trust. Now I’m not sure I ever will,”

He looked up with big pleading eyes and dark sclera “That’s why I’m asking you, Aizawa. Please, I need your help. I don’t know what to do or even how the Quirk will react with his body, considering I haven’t had the time to train him. Hell, I don’t even think he’s strong enough to use it yet.”

The man eyed him critically before sighing as he let himself fall in the chair. “Fine. But for the record I’m doing this for him, not for you” he glared at the man “He doesn’t deserve what’s coming to him just because you were an idiot. The media will tear him apart and the League might try a retrieval.” He sat up and glared at the man “I hope you’re ready to take this seriously.”

“Of course I’m-” Toshinori got defensive.

“No.” Aizawa didn’t yell, but, at this point, he didn’t need to “I’ve seen you teach, Yagi. You suck at it. You might have been a great hero, but when it comes to teaching, you suck. These are kids, not fully fledged heroes, they are here to learn. And if you are not ready to put some real effort into their development, you might as well not try at all.”

Toshinori looks down. He stares at the ground for what feel like hours before a slow, dragged out nod bobs his head. Aizawa sighed.

“Good” he stopped for a second before opening his mouth to say something more, but he was interrupted by a knock. Turning towards the door, he saw a small nurse enter the room.

“EraserHead?”

“Yes?” he asked and some of his earlier feelings must have remained in place because the nurse pulled back a little.

“Um there’s... there’s this kid, Bakugou who said that you should go to Midoriya’s room immediately. Emergency immediately. Midoriya seemed fine, but the blond was.., er...pretty adamant.”

Aizawa slitted his lids. Normally, he would ignore that, but this was Bakugou. Bakugo asking for help.

“He nodded and let out a sigh. “I’ll be right along. You don’t have to return to tell him that, I’m leaving right now”

The nurse nodded and scurried out of the room and, when the door closed, Yagi spoke. “Young Midoriya? But I thought he was fine?” there was genuine distress in his voice and Aizawa sighed. He was way too tired to deal with this bullshit.

“I’ll let you know of anything important,” he said before he strolled out of the room.

~O~

Izuku stumbled over the steps and would have fallen over, had it not been for the blond to catch him. His head was spinning and the wounds on his torso were aching, but other dragged him
along determinately.

“Katsuki!” he cried and felt the other’s hand tighten on his wrist before he went on “Let me go!” he tried to wrench away, but he had neither the strength nor the stamina.

Katsuki growled. “Yeah, like I’d do that” he gritted his teeth.

“Let me go!” he tried again, but almost slipped and was, once again, stopped form slamming his head on the tiles by the blond. Katsuki grabbed his shoulders and pined him to the wall, more to keep him steady than anything else.

“I’m not letting you go until I am sure you won’t off yourself on the nearest window,”

Izuku looked down and avoided his eyes. “It’s not like I can run,” he mumbled.

“Like I’d trust you on that either,” he spat before his expression forcefully relaxed and he let out a sigh “Look, we’re going to put you back in the bed you’re supposed to be and try to fix this. Now, I can either help you to your room or carry you to your room. Your choice.”

Izuku glared at the explosive hero in training for a few seconds before he let his head fall in defeat. He gave a slight nod and then Katsuki let him lean on him as they made their way to the room. His wounds were still aching, but Izuku didn’t let out anything but a slight whimper every once in a while.

It took way too long to actually make it to his room, where the blond dumped him on the bed before calling the nurse. It didn’t take long for Smiley to appear and Katsuki to tell her to get Aizawa.

“Katsuki…” Izuku started.

“Shut it” He said as he threw himself into the visiting chair and tried to glare the greenette into submission. Izuku didn’t have enough energy to resist so he remained sitting on his pillows, dreading the moment his teacher would appear.

That moment came all too soon and the door opened to show the unamused face of Aizawa. “What?” he asked, looking at Bakugou. The blond got up from his chair and motioned outside.

“Katsuki!” Izuku cried after him but Bakugou just closed the door. He turned and barely kept from stepping back with his teacher glaring down at him.

“Bakugou, I just got some very bad news, so please tell me you have a reason for summoning me”

“Izuku tried to throw himself off the roof” the blond said on one breath.

Aizawa’s mind blanked. “What?”

“Yeah. He was on the edge and I managed to talk him out of it,” he looked away “But yeah, he tried and I’m pretty sure it’s not done yet,” he chewed on his lip before finally looking up “Can you do something?”

Aizawa knew that this basically translated to Pease, help him, but the blond could never quite force his pride down enough to say that. The teacher sighed. This was bad. It wasn’t really all that surprising but Aizawa still felt his stomach lurch at the thought. But Bakugou had come to ask
him for help. And he wasn’t the type to lie. The man sighed before looking at the blond.

“I believe you. Did he say anything?”

The boy shrugged “His fucking martyr complex that got the best of him,” he said but the fire died down a few seconds after “He said it... it was the guilt.” He shrugged and the last part was almost whispered “It... I mean it’s also my fault, kinda” he scratched his neck.

*He told him to kill himself* Aizawa suddenly remembered. He took a deep breath. “Thank you, Bakugou. If you don’t mind, can you remain here? I’ll talk to you later, but right now, please, don’t leave the hospital.”

The boy only nodded dejectedly and went to the vending machine. Aizawa steeled himself and entered the room. Izuku was staring outside, not actually seeing anything if the glazed look on his face was enough. The man closed the door and sat on the chair. Izuku didn’t look at him, his gaze too tired.

“Izuku” Aizawa spoke. The kid sighed, shook his head and then looked at his teacher.

“He told you, didn’t he?” Aizawa nodded. Izuku grabbed the roots of his hair and buried his face into his hands. “This is horrible” he said. “This is awful.”

“Why?” he asked making his voice as soft as possible. Izuku just shrugged and looked away, though the rapid blinking was a sign that he was close to tears. Aizawa sighed. “How long have you been thinking about this?”

Izuku wiped his eyes. “I can’t remember” he shrugged. “I didn’t actively plan for it!” he tried, looking at his teachers with big pleading eyes. “It’s just...” he looked down. “Everything was just... clearer... better when I knew my place.” He finally looked at the man “You know? Like, everything was going down, but I kept telling myself that it would be better, that it would get better,” he grabbed his temples and squeezed “But it only got worse.” He shook his head “It only ever got worse.” He blinked and a few tears rolled on his cheek. He wiped them and covered his face with his arms.

Aizawa took that as a sign that he could talk. “Have you thought about getting help?”

“I tried” he said. He shook his head “But no one cared and those who did couldn’t do anything.” He swallowed and looked at his teacher. “I actually went to the teachers in the beginning, you know?” he looked out the window. “When the bullying got worse. They told me it was just good fun. Or that I shouldn’t let words affect me. Or suggested I talk things through with the other kids...” he let out a mirthless laugh, nails digging into the sheets “After all, I was Quirkless, this was going to keep happening, I might as well get used to it.” he shrugged and took in a shuddered breath. “Mom wanted to help, but, what could she do? The school had more lawyers and none of her co-workers were willing to fight for a hopeless cause.” He breathed in “At some point, she stopped asking and I stopped telling her.”

“You know that we care right? She cares, I care...”

“Yes, yes everybody cares. But everybody’s better off without me too,” Izuku cut him off. Aizawa frowned.

“Izuku...”

“Don’t deny it!” the boy said as he glared at his teacher. The white sheets crumbled under his fingers. “We both know I’m more trouble than I’m worth. I was from the moment we first met,”
the fight died as he looked down. “It’s my fault you’re in hot water. Before…” he gulped “I tried to
follow orders, I really did. I tried to stay behind, I tried to ask for help but…” He shook his head and
looked at his teachers “I can’t sit still and watch people get hurt. I just can’t,” he took in a few deep
breaths and shook his head “I never will. And, because of that, you and UA are butchered by the
media.”

“It’s not your fault…”

“Like hell it’s not!” the cry might have been intended as angry, but it only came out as
desperate. “If I just… If I’d returned when I was told to, had I avoided the villains, then I wouldn’t…I
wouldn’t have gotten captured. If I didn’t get captured All Might wouldn’t have fallen and none of
this would have ever happened.” He buried his face in his hands.

“And how is you dying going to fix it?” Aizawa couldn’t help but ask. He almost kicked
himself a second after.

“It’s gonna be one less problem to worry about,” the boy shook his head defeated “I’m
tired. I’m tired of hoping only to get my hopes smashed. I’m tired of having to prove every. Single.
Time. That I’m worth more than the dirt beneath my feet,” his shoulders slumped “I’m tired of
trying.”

“Why didn’t you tell someone? Why didn’t you tell me? About how you feel about how
it-”

“Didn’t you hear me? I tried. And, on the first day, you said you hated slackers and people
who wasted their potential,” he gulped “I barely had any in the first place, I couldn’t allow myself to
waste anything and I didn’t want my progress to be stunted by this.” He said as he sobbed silently.

Aizawa remained silent, pondering over what he was going to say next.

Izuku didn’t start another conversation, but the man didn’t leave either. He eyed the boy’s bandaged
wrists. The kid was covered in scars from head to toe and Aizawa had assumed that they were from
his time as the Vanisher. Now he wondered how many weren’t. In the end, the hero spoke. “As
sappy as this might sound, things can change. Things will change. You don’t have to despair over
it.”

“No, they won’t,” the boy shook his head. “They haven’t changed, in ten years, they never
changed. Not the classmates, not the teachers, not anyone.”

“I’m not them, am I?”

“No, you’re not” Izuku finally said. After a few more seconds of silence, the kid spoke
again. “Can you… Can you not tell my mom?”

“I can’t promise you that,” Aizawa said and Izuku looked at him, an alarmed look on his
face.

“But I won’t try it again, I promise!”

“And I want to believe you, Izuku, I really do” Aizawa said before he looked down and
sighed. “Thing is, I know you are prone to keeping secrets. You just told me that earlier.” He looked
up “I know you, Izuku, I know you bottle things up and I am very sorry for not noticing. As a hero
and, more importantly, as your teacher, it is my duty to see such things.”

“It’s not your fault…” Izuku started.
“And neither is yours.” He threw back. Izuku clamped his mouth shut and looked away. “You don’t believe me” izuku shrugged. Aizawa sighed. “Do you still want to be a hero?”

The boy’s head whipped in his direction. “I...” he started before he shut up. After a few moments he tried again “I want to help people,” he said, his voice meek and quiet. “But I can’t really help anyone. I never could” he clenched his fists “I never got to change anything, only delay it.”

“If you manage to stop someone from dying long enough for the ambulance to come, isn’t that saving them?”

The boy looked at him but didn’t say anything. “Look, Izuku,” the man got up and sat on the bed “You say you want to help people. But that means you have to allow yourself to be helped every once in a while. I know that there has never been anyone there to protect you, but there is now” he placed his hand on the mess of green curls “But we can’t do that if you don’t trust us enough to let us in.”

“I trusted exactly four people, Sensei,” Izuku said as he looked away. “You are the only one of them who told me that I shouldn’t give up on my dreams.” He looked at his teacher, eyes in pain but there was something hard in them. “I’ll agree to trust you. Don’t make me regret it.”

Despite the situation, Aizawa felt a smile tug at the corners of his lips “I won’t” his hand lingered in his hair a little longer before he pulled away. “Look, I know that this is hard. I might not truly understand how you feel, but I am trying.” He inhaled before he looked at the kid. “Can you try something for me?”

Izuku nodded.

“When you feel like giving up, tell yourself that you will hold on another day, hour, minute. Whatever works for you. But don’t give up.” he looked at the kid. “You are a strong kid, Izuku. You never gave up. Don’t start now.”

The boy thought for a few moments “I’ll try.”

~O~

Aizawa sat with him while they waited for Inko to arrive. She had been on her way since they had retrieved him, but with the Kamino disaster, no trains were able to make it. The man let the boy rest on him.

He would have to talk to Bakugou at some point too. Seeing something like that could be pretty traumatising, even if nothing actually happened. Aizawa had seen trauma and a lot of people didn’t know you could get one by proxy. There was such thing as second and third degree PTSD, which were basically witnessing something bad happening or hearing about it. And, no matter how much the blond tried to deny it, it had affected him.

When the woman entered, she could barely keep herself from choking the kid into her hug. Aizawa gave up his seat on the bed in favour of the woman, who spent at least half an hour crying over her child. Izuku seemed both relieved and scared, fingers fidgeting nervously in his lap. Aizawa waited until they were both calm and pretty much collected when he spoke.

“Ms. Midoriya” he said and saw how Izuku tensed, knowing what was to come. The man hoped that he was doing the right thing. A lot of parents reacted badly to their children not being the way they were supposed to, not necessarily out of malice, but because they didn’t know how to react. But Aizawa saw Inko as someone who could understand. And if she didn’t, he was there to
stop it. “There is something that happened and you might want to know?”

“Is it about his wounds?” Inko paled. “He got hurt, didn’t he?”

“I will let you know the specifics of his medical conditions when I get them myself” he said “As of now, it isn’t an immediate problem.” He sighed “We do have an immediate problem though.” He turned towards the kid “Izuku, do you want to be the one to share?”

The boy looked at him with pleading eyes once again before he let his head fall and shook his head. His lower lip wobbled but he didn’t cry. The man turned towards the woman. “I’m worried that Izuku might suffer from long time trauma, as well as the recent events that transpired. I highly suggest, no, actually, I think it’s necessary that he takes therapy. I was talking to Nedzu about some mandatory therapy for kids who went through traumatic events, especially the heroic course.”

Inko’s eyes darkened “That implies that he will keep going to UA.”

“Mom,” Izuku said with a wavering voice.

“No, Izuku,” she cut him off and the boy shut his mouth. She turned towards Aizawa “My son has been put through way too much since he entered UA. He has been tracked and attacked by villains, and he was in Gen Ed. They are supposed to be safe!” she yelled before wiping her tears “He is young. He is fragile,” He is Quirkless hung in the air, unsaid “Your school has failed to keep him safe for so long, what makes you think you will manage to now?”

Izuku looked on the verge of tears and Aizawa took a deep breath. “Ms Midoriya. What are the basis of you wanting to take him out of school?”

“Not school, just this school.” She glared “It is obvious that UA is unqualified to take care of him.”

“Ms Midoriya, let me put this in perspective” he leaned forward in his chair “The villains had been targeting him specifically. Not just the school, but they had the specific target in mind to take him with them. The fact that Bakugou managed to save him was pure chance.” Aizawa leaned back in his seat. “We are going to do everything in our power to keep your son safe. But can you tell me how exactly he will be more protected if he stays away from where heroes can help him?”

The woman clicked her tongue “There are other hero schools, UA is not the only one. There are other means to keep him safe.”

“That may be, but UA is the only school that will take his side in any conflict that might arise” the woman looked a little bit worried but didn’t falter “Miss. If I’m not mistaken, Izuku has been bullied in his past for being Quirkless. From what I gathered, he didn’t really have any friends, did he?”

They both looked at the boy who nodded meekly.

“He has friends here. Friends that, as we’ve seen, care a lot about him and are willing to protect him. If you move him to another school, he won’t only be targeted for his Quirkless status, but also his kidnapping. A lot of people will take him as villain material, this is just how things are. And this time, he will have no one there to take his side” he leaned back in his chair “The problem with today’s society is that everything is centred around Quirks and, from what you’re probably seen, people don’t really care a lot for the Quirkless.”

“And you do?” she spit.
“Yes actually” he said. “I care a lot about your son and I only want him to make something of himself. And I can guarantee that throwing him in an environment with a high stress factor where his current psychological problem won’t get addressed is very detrimental to his health.”

The woman faltered. “It can’t be that bad” he said as she threaded her hand through the boy’s hair “Izuku is strong. It might not look like it, but he is determined and ambitious. He doesn’t have a Quirk to help him, but he has gotten so far on his own, he will do it again, at another school where he won’t get attacked twice a week!” She looked at him and allowed a small smile to pass her lips “No, I don’t condone the bullying, but it couldn’t have been all that bad.”

The man sighed. He looked at the kid. Izuku was miserable. When their eyes met, the boy nodded for a second, for just a second before burying his face into his hands. Aizawa turned towards the green haired woman.

“izuku has tried to kill himself.”

A pin could have dropped on the other side of Japan and it would’ve ranged way too loud for their ears. The woman looked at him horrified, unconsciously tangling her hands tighter into the boy’s hair. Aizawa was internally ready in case anything went awry. “What?” her voice was strangled, barely above a whisper.

The man looked down. “I take full responsibility for not noticing this sooner. As his teacher, I spend more time with him than most people, so I should’ve noticed.”

“Izuku…” She said as she looked at the boy. He just shook his head into her side. “Is this… is this true?”

There were a few moments of long, agonising silence before the kid nodded, not looking at his mother.

“Why?” the woman started crying. Fat tears rolled down her face “Where did I … where did I go wrong?” she wailed. Izuku looked up, his face similarly wet.

“Mom…. No” he whimpered.

“How could I …” she wiped her tears “How could I miss it?” she clasped the boy’s hands into her own and rested her forehead on them “How could I miss it? How could I miss that my baby was in pain?” her voice was meek, small, barely above a whisper. The boy stared at her in horror.

“How could I …” izuku cried. He launched himself despite his injuries and grabbed her shoulders “It’s not your fault” he hiccupped “it’s not your fault, it was never your fault” he sniffled and then blew his nose in the tissues on the table. “I’m sorry” he cried “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m so so sorry.”

“Izuku” she pulled him to her chest and rubbed his back. “My baby…” his hands clenched around her middle and he buried into her chest “My sweet sweet baby…”

~O~

Katsuki sighed as he made his way towards the exit. After a very uncomfortable conversation with Aizawa about how he had to go to therapy and get over the clusterfuck of seeing your childhood friend on a surgical villain table and then pulling him off the roof he was going to use to jump. Katsuki didn’t think it necessary, he wasn’t weak, god dammit! But he also knew that the man wouldn’t let it rest, so he might as well do it and get it over with.

He was approaching the exit when a voice he didn’t think he’d hear again in a peaceful
The blond whipped around and came face to face with the woman that had been like a mother to him in his childhood. She looked shorter, or maybe he had grown up. She had gained a little bit of weight, but she still had those same kind eyes she had whenever she picked them up from kindergarten.

Katsuki never realised he missed her.

“Auntie?” the word felt foreign and wrong on his tongue, like he had lost the right to use it too long ago. The woman smiled meekly and stepped towards him.

“It’s been a long time” she looked up “You have grown.” She smiled.

Shit, this was awkward. He scratched his hair. “Yeah” because he knew that telling her that she’s aged would be inappropriate.

The woman looked down. “Aizawa told me what you did.” Katsuki froze and gulped “And…. And I want to thank you.”

Wait what?

“You see” her fingers fidgeted “He told me that you were the one to get him back and the one to stop him earlier this morning.” She let out an awkward laugh. “I guess that what I’m trying to say is…” suddenly, she pulled him in a hug “Thank you” katsuki froze. “Thank you for bringing him back” his shirt was getting wet “Thank you for keeping him here.” In the end, she finally pulled back. She looked up at him and smiled “I know you and Izuku haven’t been friends for a very long time” she wiped her tears. “But thank you for saving him. I don’t know what I would’ve done otherwise.”

The blond didn’t know what to say. So he just looked at the woman and shrugged. “Well, I was there, wasn’t I?”

The woman smiled. “Still, thank you” she pulled back. “Tell your mom hi from me, Ok?” the boy nodded before the woman walked away.

~O~

Izuku spent a week in total in the hospital. He could’ve left sooner, but recovery Girl had a lot of other patients, and he was doing pretty well on his own. The day before his last was when All Might was finally able to get out of bed for longer periods of time. It was that day that Izuku found out what his two teachers had known for a week.

Aizawa entered the room and All Might, now in his small form followed, his arm in a sling. Izuku sat up (he could do that now) and looked at his teachers.

“Hello, Young Midoriya” All Might said as he pulled a chair and sat down. Aizawa did the same.

“Hello brat” he said.

Izuku nodded and looked at his teachers. Aizawa had an expression that seems to be the compromise between anger, irritation and sadness. The boy didn’t like it. “Is it something wrong?” he asked as he eyed both men. Aizawa looked at the former hero and All Might scratched his neck.
“You see, young Midoriya….. there is something you need to know. About my Quirk. And about yours.”

Izuku frowned. The ma knew he was Quirkless. That meant….. His eyes widened “You don’t mean…. All for One gave me a Quirk, do you?” he gulped.

All Might blanched and Aizawa sighed and he rubbed his temples. He looked at his colleague and then gestured at the kid as if to say: see! All Might sighed.

“No. All for One didn’t give you a Quirk. But you have one now,”

Izuku blinked. “What do you mean…?”

All Might let out a breath and looked at the boy, black sclera pinning him to his bed. “My Quirk. People have been speculating for generations what it could be. You are one of the few that will be privy to the truth.

The man spoke. Izuku listened in fascination to the tale of two brothers from the first generation and of how they changed things- changed everything. He listened to the truth behind his injury and how One for All could be passed down.

“Wait,” he said in the end. “You said that I had a Quirk…” He gulped “You passed… You passed it on to me?” his voice wavered, too close to a whimper.

“Yes. Young Midoriya, I’ve had my eyes on you for a very long time. You have the heart and the mind for a very good successor,”

Izuku blinked. He looked up “Was I... Was I not good enough before?” he asked in a dying voice. All Might faltered. Aizawa sighed.

“Izuku. I know you had no choice in the matter, and I am very sorry for what happened.” This time he glared as he looked at Yagi “This man here was waiting for the perfect successor to fall into his lap and, as such, didn’t have time to really think about it”

“Hey!” All Might said “I thought very hard about it and Young Midoriya is a perfect fit” e looked at the teen “What you did up until this point was surely impressive, I don’t say anything else.” He sighed “I just think that you could do so much more with a powerful Quirk” he leaned forward. “I am sorry for what I said all that time ago. You can be a hero. I will help you become the best there is.”

But Izuku was no longer listening. Instead, he was focused on the thoughts plaguing his head.

_I’ve had my eyes on you for a very long time_

_Does that mean there was something you wanted to change?_

_He is young. He is fragile, he is Quirkless!_

_I did prove myself, didn’t I? I worked so hard. His fists clenched in his sheets. I’ve gotten so far without a Quirk. I didn’t…. I didn’t need one!_

_And look where that got you._

Images from the summer camp came to mind along with mean voices. Blood and bone and
the cheerful laughter of kids on the playground.

*Quirkless, useless, you’ll never be a hero.*

*Give up already.*

*I don’t need a Quirk, Izuku gulped I’ve gotten so far…*

**Except… you didn’t. You just got everyone in trouble.** He eyed All Might as he was fighting with Aizawa. He was skinny and weak. He would never be a hero again. He would never save anyone again.

*I never asked for it…*

**Bullshit, you always wanted a Quirk, you always begged for one. You never got far on your own.**

*But I didn’t chose it.*

**Beggars can’t be choosers, and right now, you’re barely worth the clothes you wear.**

*I’m not weak, I’m not useless, I fought, it won I …*

**You tried.**

Izuku blinked.

*That’s right. I tried. No matter how far I got, it was all useless when it came to the real deal.*

**You had your fun, now take the Quirk. All Might wasted it on you, he lost his power and his trust on you, the least you could do is carry his legacy.**

Izuku blinked once again and looked at his teachers. “Ok”

They both stopped and looked at him. Aizawa frowned. “Kid, you don’t have to decide now, you can think about it…”

“I’ve decided” he said and looked at All Might. “I will be your successor.”

A huge grin split the man and he got up and hugged the kid warmly. Izuku collapse into the embrace, and didn’t see the troubled look on the red eyed hero’s face.
this was coming for a long time and you don't have any excuses

Chapter Notes

hey there! thank you all so so much for everything, for the kind comments and all that you really made my week

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It took him another week to get out of the hospital because Recovery Girl insisted that he rest and he be healed in portions so there wasn’t any damage or bones that need rebreaking. He didn’t like it but, at the same time, he didn’t really have a choice. He hated being an invalid, being stuck in bed and all, but none of his teachers would even let him move a finger.

He was also banned from media or news. Aizawa knew he would look them up the moment he got home, but he was just as stubborn as his student, so of course, he didn’t let him get within ten feet of WI-FI. So, Izuku resigned himself to reading comic books and watching pre-recorded shows on his mom’s phone.

Shinsou and Hatsume came to visit him, which meant that she had really been very worried. Shinsou had been put on house arrest for the first week, which prohibited him from coming, but he made sure to make up for it. Hatsume tried and failed to bake cookies, so she had asked some of her classmates to make them. Apparently, in the end, someone from Management was the one to take on the deed, and Izuku spent a few solid minutes glaring at the sweets in the vain attempt of detecting if this was one last ditch at his life and mafia by the Management Course. He slapped himself a few moments later. Quit the dark humour.

Another voice, a meaner one that had accompanied him long before he knew how to read but was old enough to know that he’d never be All Might without a Quirk said like anyone will want to work with you. Which was true, but Izuku didn’t want to dwell on it.

If Aizawa had told Shinsou about his small roof happening, it didn’t show. The boy was his usual savage self, throwing cookies at him and being the depressive voice of reason in their group. This was the kind on normality that he had missed but was equally off putting by the lack of the familiar lab they usually worked in. No matter, Hatsume had managed to smuggle some of her smaller inventions and this time, both males had to talk her out of using it inside. Because, as Shinsou so gracefully put it, hospital wasn’t ‘Hatsume proofed’. Izuku doubted anything could be Hatsume proofed, but who was he to talk? He was basically ‘life proofed’ at this point.

Unfortunately, the girl had to leave soon enough, something about paperwork and Powerloader trying to do something and that left the two boys alone to their own devices. It took about ten minutes for Shinsou to sober up and look at his friend, with a serious expression. “Look” he said and Izuku instantly knew that there was something up. Shinsou angled his chair better “There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

Izuku felt his blood run cold and didn’t meet the eggplant’s eyes. Here it came, the accusing the harsh words.

Don’t say that, he’s your friend.
Dabi was your friend too and you managed to fuck that up.

He gulped and looked at Shinsou. The taller wasn’t meeting his eyes. “I assume you read the news, didn’t you? Or spend any kind of time online?” Izuku nodded. Shinosu sighed and rubbed his hands, looking away before shaking his head. He was so not prepared for this. “It is going to get very hard from now on.”

Izuku blinked and opened his mouth. Shinsou didn’t let him “Let me finish” Izuku clamped it shut. Purple met green.

“I know that you know how it is to be Quirkless. I know the prejudice you faced,” His gaze got darker. “But this... this is different. I know that you’ll hate me talking about it, but it will be hard. I don’t know how many people will remain by your side. I don’t know how many people will be willing to help you, what, with the way the media paints the incident and with the rumours that are no doubt circulating in UA right now” he shook his head

“But I want you to know that I will be one of them” Izuku looked up. Shinsou looked both incredibly soft and very awkward “Me and Aizawa. I... we want you to know that we will help you, and we’ll stand by you,” he looked down “I know how it is to be prejudiced because people don’t want to see things any other way than their own. And you don’t deserve this” he scratched his uncontrollable mane and looked at his friend.

Izuku blinked and wiped the tears in his eyes. He should really stop crying so much. “Thanks!” he said and he was smiling, “It really means a lot” he shook his head and fell into a fit of ugly sobs “I don’t know what to do! I thought I had gotten over it, but I didn’t and I’m scared.”

“That’s OK” Shinsou said. “You are allowed to. You are allowed to be scared,”

“I want to be a hero!” he cried I have to train One for All “I have to be strong” I can’t allow myself to be weak, I can’t allow it to die with me.

“Heroes are human” Shinsou said and somehow, that was enough to settle it. Izuku nodded numbly and looked away before he decided to talk. As much as he wanted Shinsou to be his friend, he couldn’t allow himself to hope if it was only going to be broken later. He didn’t want to and he wasn’t willing to make himself vulnerable unless he knew for sure that Shinsou was in for the long haul. So he took a deep breath and looked at his friend.

“I have a Quirk”

There’s a certain type of silence for every kind of situation. This silence was heavy and thick, like sticky syrup, covering each and every ounce of them both for what felt like a long time and too little nonetheless. Shinsou stared at him before looking away. “Oh,” he said. Izuku nodded, “What does it do?”

Izuku took in a deep breath “I don’t know” he shook his head “I have no idea” he shrugged, but his shoulders started shaking “He... he tried to... to make me join him. I... I didn’t...” he started to mumble.

Izuku squeezed his eyes shut and remembered the earlier conversation he had had with his teachers.

“Look” Aizawa said as he leaned forward. “We know how it is. But we can’t…”

“We can’t allow people to know about One for All” All Might finished. Izuku stared at them owlishly. Slowly, it started to sink in.
“But then” he gulped, hoping beyond hope that he was wrong “But then people will think that... that All for One gave it to me,” he shook his head “They’ll think that I... they’ll think I joined him,”

All Might looked miserable. Aizawa grimaced and sighed. “We know. And we are very sorry” he looked up and placed his hand over his “We don’t want you to suffer but... this... this is the best way that we could find to both keep One for All a secret and you out of danger,” he squeezed it. “I’m sorry,”

No. No, this- this couldn’t be. This had to be a joke. It had to. Having a Quirk- that... he could work with that. But being accused... Being forced to admit that he had accepted a Quirk from that villain...

Izuku looked down, trying not to cry. There wasn’t a choice- not really. “They will think that I joined him,” he said again “They’ll think I’m a villain,”

“We can say it wasn’t your choice,” All Might tried. Izuku still looked down and shook his head.

“I’m- I’m not... I’m not a villain,” his voice cracked. He didn’t want to cry, but his body apparently didn’t get that memo.

“We know” Aizawa pulled him closer. “We know,” his teacher started to rub circles into his back and Izuku buried his head deeper into his shoulder.

Shinsou stood up and izuku looked at his friend in fear for what looked like a few seconds before the boy sat down near him. Izuku eyed him while trying to wipe his tears.

“Do you... need a hug, or something?”

Izuku blinked before nodding and Shinsou placed his hand on his shoulder and pulled him closer. “I’m sorry,” he said and Izuku nodded “But my statement stands- I am your friend.”

“Well?”

“Because you’ve been mine.”

Izuku closed his eyes and leaned in his friends touch. Shinsou was taller and very huggable and the greenette did tried to steal his heat. They stood in silence for a while before Shinsou chuckled “You know, with all the bullshit you pulled, I doubt you even need a Quirk.”

Izuku found himself chuckling. And, this time, he meant it.

~O~

Aizawa was pulling into his driveway and Izuku was fidgeting on the backseat while his mom and his teacher were talking. He was hugging his yellow backpack and looking out the window, his oversized All Might hoodie making very well of its job as a comforter.

The ride had not been silent, but the adults sensed his lack of desire to speak and mostly talked amongst themselves, which he was grateful for. He had finally gotten his phone back and the few hundred messages weighed heavily in his pocket, thought he was still scared to try to read them all. He had no idea of how his classmates would react. He had only had Katsuki, Shinsou and Hatsume for a pattern, and those were the extremes. The boy knew he would be lucky if he was ignored.
Izuku was tired. So, *so very tired*. He had yet to have any appointments with the therapist and he knew he couldn’t avoid it for long. His teacher wouldn’t let him.

Out of his teachers, only two other had visited him. One was Yagi-san, who had been very happy and tried to…. Probably bond? Izuku wasn’t sure, the man was awkward as fuck when he wasn’t in his hero persona, but he had tried at least. The skinny man was pretty nice actually. All Might had been all bright smiles and laughter. Yagi was quitter, but deeper. If the No.1 hero was like the sun, bright and blinding and burning, than Yagi was like a sun peeking out from behind the clouds or though a curtain- less strong, less warm but much less likely to scald, as well. Not to mention it felt much more genuine.

But, even so….. there was something inherently wrong about the breach of his privacy. Izuku tried not to let it bother him, the man had the best intentions, but still…..

He didn’t want to think about it.

The other teacher had been Present Mic and Izuku had the suspicion his former homeroom teacher was barely holding back from aggressively hugging him and telling him that everything would be All right. A few days before he was discharged, he had given him something wrapped in present paper and told him to open it at home. Izuku didn’t question it.

Aizawa finally parked and Izuku must have zoned out long enough for him to make it to his glass and knock on it. The boy blinked before he opened the door and dragged his backpack. They climbed the flight of stairs and got inside.

“Remember,” Aizawa said and, even though he was talking primarily to his mom, Izuku appreciated the effort of inclusion. “If anything happens, I want you to know that you can call me. I work underground, so I don’t have set hours. If I don’t answer, then Hizashi will, so, please, don’t hesitate.”

“Yes, sensei,” Izuku mumbled. Aizawa placed his hand on his shoulder and Izuku couldn’t hold back startle. But he didn’t pull away and the teacher looked him in the eye.

“I mean it, Izuku.”

Izuku nodded and, after some more curtsies shared between the two adults, he left. Izuku and his mom stood in silence, before Inko bounced towards him. “So, is there anything you’d like to eat right now? I don’t have the ingredients for Katsudon, but I’m sure we can buy them if we go right now…..”

“Mom” Izuku said and the woman stopped. Izuku didn’t bother faking a smile, he was too mentally exhausted for it “It’s fine. I’m tired, I’m not hungry, I just wanna sleep…..”

“You… You sure?” her voice was meek and shy, as if she was threading a landmine and was worried about the bombs going off. Izuku’s heart clenched for a moment before he shook his head.

“Yes. I just… I just need time to process things outside a hospital room.”

“Oh, I- I… alright,” she hesitated before accepting and Izuku went to his room and closed the door before sliding down it. He looked up. His room was depressing.

The dust marks stood out more than ever, like paintings in a house long abandoned. Izuku sighed and forced himself to get up. He didn’t want to fall asleep on the carpet of all things.
The boy didn’t even look into his closet as he pulled out a T-shirt. He just chose the thing that seemed the most worn in there and threw it on the chair. He pulled out the shirt he currently had on and stopped for a few seconds as the marks on his torso brought his attention.

The healing had worked well, but it had scarred. His whole front was covered in thin, discoloured, still faintly red and raised strips. Izuku walked in front of the mirror of his closet. The scars stretched around his shoulders like claws, to his mid tights and he could swear they almost glittered in the sun.

He was also missing his nipples. The boy didn’t know what to think about that. Like, sure, it wasn’t like he needed them or anything, but still…. Izuku eyed his other scars; the wrinkled skin on his shoulder, the cuts on his arms….

His whole skin was a map of irregularities, freckles dotting at random, like splattered paint. Izuku gritted his teeth and slipped on the shirt before sitting on his bed.

It didn’t really sink in up until this point, but he was considered a villain. Out of all the things to ever happen, no one, no one ever considered him a big enough threat to become one.

And now you are the talk of the town.

He shook his head. Things were going to be different now. And he hated it. Izuku remembered earlier. When his mom had been walking on eggshells with him. How Katsuki didn’t want to leave him alone for more than a minute. He knew for a fact that the only reason Aizawa wasn’t there with him was because he still had a shitload of paperwork to deal with.

I’m not a villain.

Are you sure? You break the law to suit your own agenda. You blackmailed Dabi into being your friend and then you did the one thing he asked you not to just because you were curious.

The boy sighed and fell on the mattress.

Speaking of the League, most of it had been captured. It was truly a surprise, but, apart from Shigaraki, Dabi, Toga and Kurogiri, everyone had been arrested. Izuku killed the small thread of relief at the thought that his friend had made it out. He had been willing to kill his classmates.

Not like you didn’t know it. He killed a guy on your first meeting, for fucks sake!

Anyway, the League’s recent capture was probably the reason the media decided to stop giving the public palpitations and focus on the amount of dangerous killers that were out of the streets.

The greenette eyed his phone. The notifications were still there, haunting him into reading them and feeling like even more of a piece of shit. But, for probably once in a lifetime, he decided to kill his curious streak and not attack his mental health more than usual.

Still, he was tired. But the room looked depressing.

Izuku suddenly remembered the gift Present Mic had given him. He pulled up his backpack and took the wrapped gift out. Too lazy for careful unwrapping, he tore it apart and stared at the folded poster in his lap.

It was an Eraserhead poster.

Izuku stared at it for a few seconds before a huge smile spread across his lips. His fanboy
instincts suddenly awakened, the kid looked at the glossy paper with childish joy.

Being an underground hero, it was incredibly hard to come across any merchandise on him. Izuku had tried, and failed to get anything. And now, here it was, the one thing he didn’t have in his collection.

The boy got up and rummaged thought his desk for a few solid minutes before pulling out some scotch tape and, with some incredible equilibristic movements, he taped it on the wall. He was filled with stupid giddiness, and his lips pulled painfully at his skin, but he couldn’t stop now.

The poster showed the man in a dynamic pose, sitting perched on a roof, capture tape in hand, in a very similar way to another hero from before Quirks appeared. The moon shone above his head and his hair was flowing in every direction. Izuku knew for sure that the man had never approved of that thing and was willing to ask his blond teacher who did he blackmail to get it.

After being pleased with his art, Izuku returned to the rest of his present.

It was a onsie. A huge, dark, Eraser onsie, with white strings and a scarf design and the yellow goggles painted on the hood. The hood went over his eyes and had holes for eyes, so, when he pulled the string, he could be completely covered. Izuku felt giddy.

The present also had some Present Mic themed socks, and Izuku smirked as he slipped them on. They were the type with rubber on the bottom, the helped him not slip. The kid really, really wanted to go to his teacher like this, only to see how hard would Present Mic laugh when he saw Aizawa’s face.

But he didn’t.

Once his merch high was gone, izuku felt tired once again. He sighed and sat down, pulling his hood over his head. The greenette pulled his knees to his chest and tried to sleep.

~O~

Izuku closed his blazer and looked in the mirror. He looked awful. He had slept the previous night, but he’d been woken up by nightmares several times and it showed. The boy was glad he couldn’t remember them. Just as he was glad that he couldn’t remember how exactly his chest had gotten shredded to ribbons or when his life had started snowballing. As curious as he was, some things were better left unknown.

He closed the last button and stretched for the tie. He stared at it before he let it go. He didn’t like the possibility of someone grabbing it. Of being chocked, of not breathing. He felt something constricting against his throat and his breath hitched for a moment before he threw the tie on the bed. He didn’t want to know how he acquired that fear. Izuku sighed and shouldered his backpack.

The boy didn’t go running that morning. He had wanted to, but just didn’t have neither the energy nor the determination to do so. He barely had the energy to get up that morning, and one of the only reasons he did in the first place was that he knew both Mom and Aizawa would check to see that he didn’t die in the meantime.

Speaking of mom, she was apparently very determined to take exemplar care of him from now on. Last night, the woman didn’t let him sulk all day. No, she dragged him to the couch, complimented his new outfit and fed him katsudon. The small family had watched some shitty comedies and Izuku had allowed himself to forget and relax for a few moment.
He couldn’t remember the last time he did something like that. *I have to spend more time with mom.* He had looked at the woman who was laughing at the stupid people on the screen. Still, the boy couldn’t forget the last night, how she had been so tense around him. He didn’t want that. I can’t let her blame herself.

*It’s not her fault. It never was her fault for having a broken child.*

*It’s mine.*

He went to sleep and woke up tired. He would have to ask whoever Aizawa sent him to for something to give him more energy.

Izuku got downstairs. “Morning!” Mom said in a chirpy voice. Izuku blinked as the woman dragged him and placed him in front of his bowl of rice.

“I’m not that hungry” he mumbled, but he picked up the fork nonetheless. Mom smiled, but it was the wrong kind of smile. She was looking at him in a way someone very bad at sneaking does and the boy looked away as he chewed his breakfast. “So,” he said eventually “Anything interesting at work?”

“Actually yes,” she clapped her hands and turned to do the dishes. Izuku was glad that she had gotten to eat before him. “You see, there is currently some turmoil in a hero agency. It hasn’t reached the news, but I can tell you that my firm has been hired for the job”

“The whole company” Izuku nodded “That means it is a pretty big agency,” he squinted his eyes. There was something wrong, something she was hiding for more than the legal reasons.

“It is,” she clapped her hands and shoved a bento in his arms. “Don’t be late” she frowned for a few seconds “Unless you’d like to stay at home”

“No,” he shook his head and pocketed the box. In truth, he would have loved to stay at home. But he had to face the music sooner or later, and he knew that, the longer he waited, the worst it would get. People didn’t get kinder with time, and the boy wanted to fix any problem that might occur as soon as possible.

He kissed his mom on the cheek and walked out.

On the train, he got a text from Aizawa.

Aizawa

[How are you?]

The boy sighed and shook his head. He hated being treated like glass, like he was some fragile thing to be broken. But Izuku had done this himself. He should be grateful people cared enough to check up on him. So, he quickly texted:

Me

[Ok]

Aizawa

[If anything happens, don’t hesitate to contact me]
Izuku rolled his eyes.

Me

[Ok]

He placed his phone in his pocket and it no longer reacted. Izuku remained silent all the way to the school, his thought muddled and blank. It didn’t hit him exactly how bad it would be until he reached the classroom and stopped in front of it.

The graffiti with ‘Quirkless’ never truly faded. There was still the outline on the wood. But now, right under it, there was written in purple paint, all glittery and drawing attention, ‘Villain’. It was big, bold and could not be ignored. Izuku took a step back as his scars suddenly started to sting. A bone chilling shiver went along his spine and his skin and suddenly, there was a boy no longer small, with dragon wings and a rasped voice that had long lost human speech.

“Midoriya!” someone suddenly said and Izuku whipped around, falling into a fight stance before he got to fully process the threat. Said threat was Todoroki, who had not quite let go of his neutral mask, but it looked close to cracking.

“Todoroki” Izuku breathed and let his hands fall to his sides. “Sorry, it’s just...” he scratched his head “Paranoia”

“It’s ok,” he said before looking at the vandalised classroom door. “Why don’t you get inside?” he looked from the boy to the door “I’m going to get Aizawa. Would you rather accompany me?”

That was probably his nice way of asking if Izuku was too scared to face the music on his own. Which he was, but he wasn’t going to admit it. He couldn’t afford to be weak. “No” he said and didn’t bother faking a smile. Todoroki would be able to tell “I’ll be fine” he said, which wasn’t exactly a lie. He was sure there will be a point in the future where he will be fine. The heterochromatic teen was anything but convinced, but he only sighed and shook his head.

Izuku didn’t want to meet with his teacher just yet, but it had long ago been a decision out of his control. So he entered the class.

As uncomfortable as meeting Aizawa would have been, having every head turn towards him once he entered the classroom was surely worse. Everyone in the class was staring at him, no wonder waiting for something to happen. It didn’t. Izuku didn’t know what to do, so he just sat there awkwardly, not looking at anyone.

He risked a look at Katsuki, and, for the first time, there was nothing threatening in his intensity. How nice for a change.

“Midoriya!” Kirishima said and Izuku barely kept from flinching. *Fuck, I thought I had gotten rid of it.* Still, he put on a smile and looked at his classmate.

“H-hey, Kirishima!”
The spiky haired boy smiled, but it was a tad too strained to be genuine. Izuku still focused only on him. “We’re glad to see that you’re OK” yeah, I bet only you share that sentiment “I mean, you know- I mean, considering how you were when- yeah,”

“Yeah” Izuku scratched his head. A sudden thought occurred to him and he kept his face in check “That Noumu really did a number on me” he shrugged it off. He was prepared and actively listened for the horrified gasp that went throughout the class. He felt a little bit bad for the way Kirishima’s face fell at the words.

As selfish as it was, and as bad as it made him feel, having them feel pity over him provided a less chance that he actually allied with the villains. After all, why would they hurt someone they wanted to recruit? This was a question he was battling since he started to think about it, and bitterly avoided the even bigger question mark that hung over his head.

How much control did Dabi have over that decision?

The door opened and Izuku barely had time to turn around before he was engulfed in a huge warm hug. “Mido-chan” Uraraka nuzzled his chest before pushing him at arms level. She looked all over his features, as if searching for signs on trauma. But the only ones visible were the scars from his first real fight with Katsuki. Izuku held the impulse of pulling his cuffs over his wrists. “I was so worried,” she said and took a few steps back. A huge smile spread along her features and she looked at him “I’m so glad you’re all right.”

“Yeah, you don’t get rid of me that easily,” he said before he really got the time to think about it.

It was a joke. It was supposed to be a joke, a harmless joke. But it wasn’t. Izuku didn’t need to turn around to know that there was tension in the room. He didn’t need to look to know that Katsuki was glaring at his head, as if asking him how dare he make such a joke after almost flinging himself off a roof.

You fucked up.

Thankfully, that was the moment Aizawa chose to slam the door open and enter, followed by the youngest Todoroki. He looked over the kids with an unforgiving gaze before saying “Seats”

The teacher didn’t need to yell, or even raise his voice above minimum required level for speaking. He didn’t need to even glare at them before they scrambled in a fury for dear life to their seats. Aizawa stepped in front of the desk.

“I said it and I will say it again: harassment of any kind will not be tolerated, nor will slurs or bullying be condoned. We will find out the culprit and expel them. You have all been warned a long time ago.” He eyed each and every student until he was sure that the lesson had sunken in before he looked at them and pulled a stack of papers. “Due to recent events, we will change something in the program; you were supposed to use the training camp to be ready for the licence exam. But, that’s no longer on the table” he shook his head and stepped in front of the room, sitting on his desk.

“Since All Might is no a hero anymore, people think that UA can’t protect you,” he lifted the papers “You will have to take internships with different heroes. You will switch periodically, unless the study under one is very good for your development. These” he lifted them for all eye to see “are the offers you got since last time. Study them. You have by the end of the week.”

“Sir!” iida said. Aizawa turned towards him and nodded to continue “Don’t you think that
splitting us up is detrimental?”

“I do” Iida was shut up for a moment “But the Hero Commission doesn’t and they are the ones who ultimately decide whether we are allowed to continue or not” he looked over the class “You will not, by any means, cease school activity. After the initial week, you will still go to school, but will have a mandatory number of hours per week for your internship. We will receive feedback and compare it to what we see to have a good estimate of both your teachers and your progress,” That was final and the man started spreading the papers. His gaze lingered a little longer on Izuku before he landed the single sheet on his desk.


Well, this was better than it could have been, but still. It was pretty depressing compared to what he had after the Sports festival.

Be glad you got any at all.

He looked over the three names all over again. Nighteye had been All Might’s sidekick. He probably wants to test me. He would have really liked to go with Hawks, but he wasn’t sure his style fitted him. He didn’t have a Qui…. Oh. Right.

He would talk to Aizawa about it. He looked on the back of the paper and found a small post it note on it.

Office. After lunch.

Izuku smiled. A long time ago, he would have felt chills at such an ominous message. But the man knew about all the things he did and didn’t blame him for any of them. He probably only wanted to talk. It was… Nice.

He focused on the three names, trying to pry any information his starved brain was willing to give until the bell rang. The rest of the day went on more or less smoothly. Iida was chattier than ever, same with Mina, Kirishima and Uraraka. Izuku chimed in whenever he felt like it and Todoroki was keen on lurking in the background, carrying very important feelings of boredom and annoyance with the help of his eyebrows.

One thing he didn’t really prepare for was the way his teachers would treat him. He had assumed, wrongly so, that everyone would be like Aizawa or All Might. But no. they might not have been obvious, but Izuku could and did feel the glances, the wary stares, the way some tensed when he moved too fast, like he was going to jump and attack them at any moment. He didn’t like it.

You did shove a grenade down someone’s throat.

Which was true.

The last class before lunch was English, and it went pretty well. When the bell rang and Izuku made his way out, his former homeroom teacher stopped him. “Midoriya,” he said in a tone quieter and so much softer than he had ever heard before. For some reason, it didn’t feel patronising.

“I’m ok, I think” the class was emptying, leaving the two alone. They sat in a tense silence, the hero no doubt knowing that he was lying. Still, that didn’t stop the
mischievous smirk from crawling up his face.

“Did you get what I sent you?”

Suddenly, Izuku’s face started to burn. “I- I’m- I mean... y-yes,” he looked away even though he knew he probably looked like a very cute tomato. The teacher’s smile only spread further.

“Really? Would you mind sending me a picture? I really wanna see how Shouta would react.”

“Sorry, sir,” Izuku deadpanned “But I like all my limbs attached to my body”.

The boy never knew how much he needed for someone to laugh at his humour instead of look warily until Present Mic started cackling madly. Izuku let a little smile crawl up his face and the man pulled his glasses away to wipe his eyes. “True. You’re right, you’re right, he’ll probably eviscerate me for it. Still,” he looked out the window at the clouds moving lazily “I would die happy.”

“I did like the socks a lot though” he said and lifted his pant leg to show the bright orange abominations. The hero smiled a little wider.

“I’m glad” he shook his head “It’s very hard to get any type of merch on Eraser, but I knew that you’d probably like it” which was... very sweet actually. “Anyway, I won’t keep you any longer. But I need you to know....” His expression turned serious as he looked the teen in the eye “You can always come to both me and Shouta if you ever need any help. Do I make myself clear?”

“Crystal,” Izuku nodded before trotting to the cafeteria. Unfortunately, his good mood vanished the moment he got in. maybe it wasn’t like that, maybe it was paranoia, but he could swear that everyone there turned to stare at him. Even so, he didn’t stop. He couldn’t allow himself to, he couldn’t. He went on and sat at his usual table. Shinsou smiled and waved at him and Hatsume and Mina started to chat. Izuku wanted to focus on them, he really did. But all he could hear was the not at all chatter behind him.

Villain.

Evil.

It’s his fault All Might fell.

Is it true that he killed two people?

I don’t know, but I heard someone say that he went willingly. Was it even a kidnapping?

I’m pretty sure he’s the spy.

I heard her say that he showed up covered in blood. And it was not his own.

Izuku grabbed his head and stared into his bento. Calm down, calm down. You’ve dealt with it before, you’ve dealt with it for years, you have no reason to panic. Suddenly, his phone vibrated. The boy pulled it out and looked at the message

Shinsou

[go to the lab, I'll bring your meal]
Izuku looked at the purple petunia who nodded. Sighing, the greenette stood up and barely kept himself from dashing out of the room. He did that though when he was out, sprinting to the lab and collapsing on one of the beanies they had brought a long time ago to make it more liveable.

*It’s ok. It’s ok, It’s fine. They are not villains, they can’t hurt you.*

*They did before.*

The door to the lab opened once again and Shinsou, Hatsume, Iida, Uraraka and the rest of the gang showed up. Izuku threw them a smile and it seemed to fool the most of them, so he guessed it was all right.

It didn’t take long for them to fall into the natural flow of the conversation. Different from usual, no one related to his trafficking ring showed up. Izuku doubted they would want to have any affiliation with him anymore. Reputation could be so well destroyed by who you were friends with. He knew that too well from his childhood years when no one would talk to him, scared of getting his Quirklessness.

*You are no longer Quirkless, are you? Stop whining.*

Izuku munched on his rice as Iida fell into the trap of going into an argument with Shinsou, who was doing it for the sake of driving people insane. Maybe that’s why they had become so good friends. They had the internal desire to fuck with others.

Lunch ended and Izuku stretched. “Thanks guys, I really appreciate it!” he smiled. “Aizawa said he wanted to see me, catch up with you later.”

“Sure” Shinsou waved him off before taking something that looked very innocent but was very dangerous from Hatsume’s hands. Better not mix food with poison.

It was pretty fast that he found himself in front of the office, and he knocked hard enough to wake his teacher who was no doubt using this period as nap time. Oh, who was he kidding? The man slept like a rabbit, but he took advantage of the excuse.

“Come in!”

Izuku pushed the door knob and entered.

Aizawa was just standing up from his chair, stretching. He pointed to the couch as he took something off the desk before sitting on the armchair. Izuku plopped himself on the cushions and hugged a pillow. The office was surprisingly cold for the day and the pillow was comfy. It also felt a lot more intimate and personal than the chair and the desk. The man handed him a juice pouch, which the kid slurped in gulps.

“I guess you did read the papers I gave you?” Izuku nodded “Great.” He sighed and leaned back into his chair “You have three choices. Tell me what you think of each, and then I’ll tell you what I think. It is your choice, in the end, but you need to hear every aspect of it.”

“How come the other kids have a week to decide?”

“Because they have more choices to choose from.”

Izuku clicked his tongue, but slurped viciously on the straw, enough to be considered rude before he spoke. “Hawks is a pretty good hero, but I don’t think it will be all that good, not right now at least. I don’t know…” he shrugged “I guess you could say that, whatever my Quirk reacts,” he
felt bitter when saying that” it will be immediately put in the spotlight. With how close it is, time wise to my return I don’t think it will look all that good” he shook his head “True, from that same point, interning with the No.2 hero, who is so loved and popular might give me the public’s approval but…..” He squeezed lightly on the juice pouch “I don’t think it’s the right time.”

“Understandable” Aizawa nodded. “Go on.”

“One question, sensei” Izuku fiddled with his hands “Why didn’t you offer me an internship?”

Aizawa stopped for a second before nodding “I will tell you later, I promise. Now continue.”

Izuku nodded “Nighteye would be a good option, I think. He is specialised in intelligence, but he doesn’t shy away from combat situations either. He is also underground, which would take me away from the spotlight for a while and let the waters cool. He worked with All Might, so he might be able to help me with a Quirk and, since he can see the future, depending on how his Quirk works, he might already know that I won’t become a villain.” Izuku could swear he saw Aizawa’s lips twitch in amusement. “As for Nedzu” Izuku looked away as he slurped on the last remains in his juice pouch “I don’t think it’s the best idea.”

“So, from what I understand, you choose Nighteye’s office?”

Izuku nodded “I think that’s the best option.”

Aizawa nodded and gave the kid that half of a smile he was known for that was genuine. “Alright, time for me to answer my question. The reason I didn’t offer you an internship is because it wouldn’t benefit you as much as the others” Izuku opened his mouth but the teacher shut him up.

“We already have to figure out One for All, we’ll train together often enough. So, having an internship with me would be useless” he stood up “In addition, me and Nighteye will collaborate in an operation you will be a part of in your internship. So you can say that I will be there anyway. I didn’t tell you this before because I didn’t want to influence you.”

Izuku nodded. “So, are we done?”

“No, sit back down” Aizawa said and the boy pouted as he fell back into the cushions “There’s another thing we need to talk about.” He looked him in the eye “Your therapy,”

Izuku sighed and looked down. “I will go. I know you won’t get off my ass until I do.”

“You’re right,” Aizawa sketched a smirk. “That’s why I want you to go tomorrow.” Izuku nodded “In addition, I want you to meet me in ground beta after school. All Might and other teachers will be there, to make sure you don’t hurt yourself with the Quirk as we try to figure it out.” izuku nodded, knowing he didn’t really have all that much control over the decision. “In addition” the man leaned forward “And this is off the record, most people would recommend for you keep up with your studies. And it would be good not to fall behind. But if it ever gets too much, never hesitate to tell me, alright?”

“Yes, sensei” izuku said, though he knew he wouldn’t be able to keep his word. I can’t disappoint him. All Might chose me as his successor, I can’t let him down. I won’t be a weakling. Not anymore.

Aizawa nodded. “That’s it for now”
“Ok, sensei” Izuku smiled and made his way out.

The school was almost empty. He had told his classmates not to wait for him, and they didn’t. He walked the way home until he heard the familiar pattern of steps behind him. Izuku stopped but didn’t turn around. “What do you want, Katsuki?”

The other stopped before walking and getting next to him. “What do you mean, we live in the same neighbourhood?”

Izuku rose an eyebrow. “Yeah, but you usually avoid me” he turned to face his classmate head on “Spit it, why are you here?”

Katsuki glared, but said, with no less bite in his tone “I’m making sure you’re not jumping of a railway or in a river.”

Izuku gritted his teeth “I’m not gonna kill myself. And it’s not your job to guard me…”

“Like hell I believe you” he growled. Katsuki got closer until they were almost chest to chest and looked at him. Why was he taller? “Move”

Izuku clicked his tongue, but turned around and started marching ahead, with the clear intention of letting the other bite his dust. Suffice to say, it was useless, since the blond was good at keeping the step. They walked in awkward silence, and they stood in awkward silence on the train, until, a few yards from his house, Izuku spoke.

“We’re not friends”

Katsuki faltered for a few seconds before he tsk-ed “I never said that.”

“That means you don’t have to pretend that you care” Izuku fully intended to walk away, but the hand on the collar of his blazer stopped him. He turned around where he saw red eyes burning with fiery…. It wasn’t rage. Hurt? No, that wasn’t possible. izuku focused on the fiery blond.

“Look here, you fuckwit,” well, that was more normal “I’m not pretending. I never did, I never will. I’m not doing this as some failed charity case.”

“Do you mean to tell me you care?” he spit the words.

Katsuki seemed offended “Of fucking course!”

Izuku looked away and mumbled loud enough for the other to hear “You never did before.”

Katsuki sighed and looked away “I apologised.” It was the softest tone he had ever had, which only prompted Izuku to get mad

“Is that supposed to make it ok?!” he yelled. Katsuki blinked, obviously taken aback. Izuku went on “Am I supposed to forget a decade of your bullshit? Of pain and betrayal?” he blinked and took a step forward. Katsuki took a step back “You were my friend, Kacchan!” Izuku sniffled “You were my friend and- and my hero and the person I trusted the most…” he took a deep breath “And you just... you gave up on me. Just like everyone else, you gave up on me. On our friendship, on everything. You just became this... this knucklehead bully!” he gulped and took a step back “I still have the scars. I lived through them all, and you were never there. Hell, you were the cause of at least half of my problems! Why? Because I wanted to be a hero?” he looked at his hands. They were
trembling “How? I was weak and Quirkless and only wanted to help” he looked up. “Why did you attack me?”

“I-” he said, but the greenette was suddenly surrounded by a wall of blind rage.

“And- and when I finally, finally managed to do something on my own, when I finally got out of that shithole of a life you just had to come and tell Aizawa who I was. You just couldn’t accept that I was anything but the bug you could squish under your foot” tears were streaming down his cheeks and he used his arm to cover his face. “And after all this time, after all of this, am I just supposed to forget it all? Am I just supposed to forgive you because you managed to say ‘I’m sorry’?!” he hiccuped and wiped his face. Katsuki was looking away. “Look, I appreciate you pulling me off that roof. I appreciate you not letting me jump. But…” he took a deep breath “You can’t ask me to forget everything else,”

Katsuki nodded and didn’t look at him. Izuku hugged himself and turned around, wiping his nose. “Let’s go” he said and started walking. Katsuki followed without a word. Izuku was glad that his apartment building was close enough, but he felt the crimson gaze on his back as he got in. he managed to calm himself on the flight of stairs and take some deep breaths. This was fine, this was fine, this was going to be fine…

He knew that something was wrong the moment he opened the door. Sounds were coming from the kitchen, but they were different from the type his mom made. Izuku felt his pulse quicken as he took off his own shoes. That’s when he noticed. On the mat, next to the slippers, there was a slightly bigger pair of red shoes.

Chapter End Notes

ok, heavy chapter here
katsuki’s trying, but he sucks at socializing
i must admit, i am kinda disappointed with the last scene, it didn't have the same punch, but i like the chapter nonetheless. what do you think
the angst will slowly start to go down, but it will be gradual. if there is one thing i hate in fiction, it's when characters bounce back too fast from something traumatic, though i will try to make it tamer than the last time (Eyes stolen with fear) i'm the first to admit that it was a little bit exaggerated

anyway, thank you all for reading, please comment and see ya next time :3

discord
tumblr
I did not see that coming

Chapter Notes

wow, a lot of guesses last chapter, i’m impressed
really, all your comments made me really happy
so, i’ll not keep you in suspense any longer and....

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku froze as he listened to the racket coming from the kitchen. Slipping his shoes off, he slowly walked forward and hid behind the door.

There was the sound of a cupboard opening.

A curse. A curse in a very familiar voice.

Izuku dashed inside and was treated to the view of Shigaraki rummaging through his cupboards. He must have made a sound, because crimson eyes turned to look at him. “Oh, you’re here,” he said before he returned to messing with his snacks.

Izuku didn’t think. Maybe he should’ve, but, in that moment, he grabbed the closest thing and swung it at the villain’s head.

“Woah!” Shigaraki yelped as he dodged the cookware “Stop screaming, Rapunzel, it’s just me!”

Izuku yelled as he swung it again. But the man was more proficient in dodging flying cooking utensils than he let on because he evaded the second strike as easily and grabbed hold of his wrist. Izuku didn’t let himself be deterred, so he swung his fist at his head and was rewarded with the feel of his fist in the others face. Shigaraki grunted and punched him back, before grabbing his face with four fingers. Izuku froze. Shigaraki smiled. “Yeah, great, now be a good kid and let go of the frying pan,”

He should have shut up. But the first thing that came out of his mouth was “That’s a wok,”

The villain stopped. He stared for a few seconds at the tool, as if to see if the teen was right before saying “The wok,”

Izuku breathed a few times before his fingers unclenched from the handle. Shigaraki moved his hand from his face to his neck before he said. “Phone,”

“Why?” Izuku asked, mindful of the fifth finger.

“Because I don’t want to be interrupted” the replied easily. Izuku sighed and handed the man the device. Shigaraki placed it on the counter before pointing at the table. “Sit,”

Izuku shuffled to the table in the middle of the living room. Shigaraki most likely wanted him there because he didn’t have any weapons within reach and in the time it would take him to lift and throw it, Shigaraki could probably get under his guard.
“So,” the man said, apparently satisfied with his prisoner’s placement “Where are the crackers? I didn’t get lunch today,”

Izuku felt suddenly, utterly exhausted “Shigaraki, why are you here?”

The man clicked his tongue “Didn’t your parents teach you manners? Should I swing by later and tell you mom how you treat guests?”

He didn’t even bother to hide the threat in his tone. Izuku looked down “Third cupboard to your left, middle shelf,”

The man smiled and pulled out an already opened bag and munched happily for a minute before Izuku spoke again “So, did you come just to eat my food or did you actually have something to do?” Izuku asked and regretted his words immediately afterwards.

If the man had come to kidnap him, it would be laughingly easy. He could just force him to come quietly. He knew where he lived, he could attack mom at any second, he could just nab him off the road.

The man took a very long time to lick his fingers of the cheesy powder and disintegrate the bag before looking him in the eye. “I do, actually, have something,” He placed the rest on the counter “A warning- stay away from Overhaul,” his look darkened “I have plans for you and I’d hate you to be killed before this quest is done,”

Izuku gulped “Why would I be involved with Overhaul?” a better question was who the fuck was Overhaul. He’d heard the name a couple of times but had yet to get any good info on him beyond the fact that he was scary and had a powerful Quirk.

Shigaraki clicked his tongue “Ask your teachers, it’s their job to tell you about stuff like this, right?”

Izuku gulped as he stared at them. He should let it go. He shouldn’t remind the man, yet he still found his mouth talking without his consent.

“What- what did you mean by plans?”

Shigaraki turned around and looked at him seeming equally confused “What I meant. You’ll join us at some point,” he opened a can of soda and gulped it down “And I don’t want you to have damage when that comes around”

“I don’t...” Izuku gulped, hands clenching and unclenching in his lap “I’m not- I won’t join you,” he said, letting a little bit more steel slip into his voice. The villain looked at him before he blinked once and took another bag in his hands.

“You will,” he said, with the kind of finality that spoke of a hard, casual fact, like the blueness of the sky and gravity acceleration; like it wasn’t something up for dissection. The boy leaned back in his chair, the backrest stabbing into his shoulder blades.

“So why am I- I mean why didn’t you-”

“Now?” the man pulled out some fizzy drink and poured it into a fancy wine glass and tilted the glass forward, the blue juice glinting in the lamp light “We don’t have the space, manpower or time to properly contain you,”

He tilted his head and looked outside, sipping sagely from the glass.
“Besides you’re not fit for this level,” He shrugged “So, yeah, I guess you get to stay here for now,” he looked around “In any case,” he shrugged “it’s not like I can’t just come and take you whenever it’s necessary,” he said and a sly smirk “I mean- man, the heroes don’t really do much to protect the students these days, do they?”

“How’s…” he started and the villain’s gaze suddenly switched on him. Izuku barely kept from gulping before he looked the man in the eye “How’s Dabi?”

Shigaraki looked at him for a few seconds before he snorted “Don’t worry, your boyfriend is fiinnee!”

Izuku had just enough time to think Why would he- before his face started heating. He wanted to say something his voice caught in his throat. Shigaraki laughed. “Anyway” he said, placing all his fingers on the glass “This was fun, but…” the glass crumbled “Things to do, people to kill, you know how it is,”

He put the phone on the table and slipped on his shoes before the familiar smoke appeared and the man stepped through. Izuku waited till he was gone before he sent Aizawa a message with ‘Shigaraki just left’ and his location and leaning his head on the table.

He breathed heavily as he tried not to rip his hair from his scalp.

The police didn’t take all that long to come and Izuku spent that time trying to calm down on the ground. He barely got enough time to open the door when they started knocking before they tore it open.

Aizawa marched in. “Is he here?” he looked around, hair standing up.

“Not anymore,” Izuku shook his head. As policeman entered the room, his teacher grabbed his shoulders and looked at him head to toe. Izuku let the man check him for wounds, mind already hazed from the torrent of things that had already happened that day.

“Are you Ok?” Aizawa eventually asked. Izuku opened his mouth, but that was the moment was the one his mom chose to show up.

“Izuku!” she wailed before dragging him into a hug. The boy didn’t fight it. he just let himself fall into her embrace. He didn’t know how long it took until the woman let him go, but he knew that he was guided to the couch and collapsed into it. Inko turned towards the hero with burning passion in her eyes. “You said that he would be safe!” she yelled and swung at the man’s head. Aizawa dodged but didn’t retaliate. The woman may have been small, but she was angry. “You said that you would keep him safe from villains! How come that villain knew that he was here?!”

“I don’t know,” Aizawa said, face neutral. The small mother looked even madder than before and she prepared to yell when officer Tsukakuchi decided to save his friend from death via purse.

“Miss Midoriya,” he said and Inko momentarily stopped her assault on the underground hero “We understand your feelings, but we need to get your son’s statement…”

“I’m coming,” she said.

“You don’t have to,” Izuku mumbled. The woman turned towards him.

“Sweetie, you’re a minor. They can’t ask you questions without your guardian there” she
placed her hand on his cheek “Or would you rather not go? I’m pretty sure this gentleman knows not to force you to give a statement” at the last part she turned to glare at Aizawa. Izuku threw him a look as he suddenly remembered the deal he had made with his teacher all that time ago.

*I should have asked for a lawyer* he realised. The man, for his part, managed to keep his face neutral.

“I wouldn’t even think of it,” he said. “I would even suggest to stall it, but I doubt that the police would accept it.” he took a deep breath and rose to his full height “In the end, it is your decision whether or not you feel ready for it. Neither me nor anyone else can force you to do it now” in the back, an officer opened his mouth but Aizawa glared at him and the poor man slowly closed it back.

Izuku shrugged “Let’s get it over with,” he sighed.

Thankfully, they didn’t need to go to the police station. Tsukakuchi was nice enough to take his statement at home while some good Samaritan made him some tea. He suspected they were looking for fingerprints form Shigaraki, but, judging by the way the woman didn’t get a murderous glare from his mom, it must’ve been worth it.

“So,” the plain detective looked through his notebook “You say that you came home and saw him here?”

“I actually saw his shoes” he said “They were red. I first heard him in the kitchen and when I got there, he acted very casual”

“What do you mean by that?”

Izuku looked into his tea “Well, like him being here was perfectly normal. He was looking for snacks to eat and finished a bag of crackers. He destroyed it, so no fingerprints I suppose” he gritted his teeth and buried his nose into the heat.

“And what did you do?”

“I swung a wok at him” he said.

There was a perfect moment of silence when the officers froze. Tsukakuchi had a frown on his face, like he was still trying to see if he head right. Aizawa had an eyebrow up and every other officer in the vicinity had a look of disbelief on his face.

“I’m sorry, can you repeat that?”

Izuku kept his face neutral, even though his mouth was fighting against it. “A wok” he said, like it was completely natural “That” he pointed to the fallen cooking device “I took it and swung it at his head.”

“Alright” Tsukakushi looked at his notes and Izuku could see Aizawa’s eyes widening in amusement “What happened after?”

“He dodged” Izuku deadpanned. The boy took a sip from his tea and looked at his red slippers “He managed to catch my face and forced me to surrender. Then he told me to sit at that table” he pointed at it.

“And then?”
“He talked,”

That was the moment Aziawa decided to chime in “What about?”

Izuku looked into his tea and started swishing it in the cup “He told me to stay away from Overhaul” they may have tried to hide it, but both the hero and police man stiffened “He said that he has plans for me for later and that he didn’t want me to die before he got to put them in action” Izuku masked his gulp with a sip of tea.

“I see,” the plain detective tapped his notebook “Did he-Did he say anything about the specifics of those plans?” Izuku shook his head. “Then, and, please, I’m so sorry for asking, do you know why he didn’t take you now?” the man shook his head “I know how this sounds and I’m not accusing you of anything” He tried so, so hard to look reassuring. Tried and failed royally. “But, considering he had tried to kidnap you before…. Why didn’t he do it now?”

“He said they don’t have the, and I quote ‘space, manpower or time’ to contain me” Izuku said. Tsukakuchi blinked. The boy sighed “Basically, it would be too much of a pain to take me now”

“I see,” the man tapped his notebook again. “Anything else?”

I won’t join you

You will.

“No” he said “This is all” Tsukakuchi eyed him warily before he closed his notebook.

“Ok then, I think this is all” He got up “He left by warp gate I assume” Izuku nodded. The man turned towards his mom “The interview is over, but we would advise you not to remain in this house tonight”

His mom started mumbling “I understand, I’ll have to call a hotel, let’s see if there’s anything close enough….”

“That won’t be necessary,” Aizawa said as he stood up “We need to keep the place under observation in case he returns. In addition, a hotel reservation is easy to spot, and we can’t protect you there.” Both mother and son remained silent, waiting for the man to finish his thought process. “I suggest you stay at my place for a few days, just to be sure he doesn’t come back. Both me and Present Mic share an apartment, and we would be close enough to do something shall danger arise,”

It was like his mom did a one eighty. She was stuttering and blushing furiously “No, we can’t accept. You don’t have to do this…”

“Ma’am” Aizawa probably didn’t mean to cut her off but it sure felt like it “There’s no problem. Plus, both me and my colleague can make sure that he gets from home to school safely without sending an escort,”

Izuku could see that she wanted to refuse, she really did. But the man really had some great points. So, in the end, she caved “Very well,” she said and shook her head. “Izuku, gather some clothes for a few days and be ready,”

The boy nodded and went to his room. He grabbed his books and stuffed them in his backpack before he took another rucksack and started shoving clothes inside. He moved as fast as he could. His fingers lingered over the Eraserhead onesie, pondering whether or not to take it with him before he decided that Mic sensei would be too disappointed if he left it at home. In conclusion, he
managed to put it in his overstuffed backpack and prepared to leave.

He stopped in the door for a few seconds. The boy took a deep breath before opening the drawer and taking out an All Might plushie. It was one of his first ones and had helped him a lot in the past. He always kept it at hand for when he had some very crappy day and he didn’t want to bother his mom about it.

The greenette looked at the thing. It was old and ripped at the seams, no matter how many times he had sewed it closed. It had dust on it, not having used it in over a year.

You haven’t needed it in over a year.

Izuku buried his head in the soft cotton. He stood like that for a few seconds before shoving it in his coat and walking out of the room. They entered the car, which was pretty awkward, with the adults trying to strike a conversation. Izuku leaned on the window and stared outside as the lights ran by.

It didn’t take all that long to reach the apartment and for the Midoriyas to make their way inside. Izuku yawned and waved to present Mic. He should’ve expected the hero to be all up in their faces.

“Hello, Ms Midoriya,” he shook her hand vividly “We’re happy to have you here. Let me show you to the guest room” he said and dragged the woman away. Izuku sighed and turned towards his other teacher.

“So we’ll go to school together tomorrow?”

“Izuku,” Aizawa said and placed his hands on his shoulder. Izuku blurrily realised that he had gotten much more comfortable with it when it came from his teacher “You can panic. You can cry and scream if you need to,”

“I know. It’s just…. “ he shrugged then shook his head to clear it “I’m just... used to it, I guess... I know that’s... probably not alright but...”

“Getting attacked twice a week isn’t normal,” the man said and the boy had the distinct impression that he was trying to both sigh in exasperation and be sympathetic at the same time.

“It is now” Izuku said as he looked the hero in the eye. They stared at each other for almost a minute before Izuku broke eye contact “Do I lay my futon in the same room as last time?”

“Sure,” Aizawa sighed and it was clear that this conversation wasn’t over. The grenette could hear his mom and teacher chattering in the kitchen. He took off his shoes and unwrapped his futon on the floor, making sure to leave enough room for his mom. “You should eat something before bed, you know?”

Izuku blinked and had half a mind to say that he wasn’t hungry, before a stray thought his him and he felt like giggling. “Ok,” he said, making sure to keep his face straight. He waited till his teacher was gone to pull out his PJ’s.

The look on Aizawa’s face when he stepped into the kitchen wearing the onesie was priceless. Yamada-san started cackling and high fived him while and mom had a playful smile on her face. Aizawa tried to murder them both with his eyes. Unfortunately, his eyes only looked like lasers, so they got away scot free. Izuku ate something light in silence and waited for the waters to cool.

The next day he woke up before his mom, who was snoring peacefully at his side. He eyed her before he got up and wasted his time scrolling on his phone in the kitchen. Pres Mic had apparently
already went to his radio show, which was airing from the speakers and had left them a pretty big breakfast. Looking at it, Izuku was sure that the blond was the only reason Aizawa was still alive. Mom then woke up, ate fast and they all got into the car. Pres Mic had a direct line to the studio, so he didn’t need to ride there.

“Take care, stay safe,” Mom said as she got down at the train station. Izuku waved at her as Aizawa drove away. They reached the UA parking lot quite fast, but when Izuku tried to get out, the doors were locked. He looked at his teacher who had the “We need to talk” look on his face.

Izuku sighed. “Is this about the onesie?” he could hope.

“No,” Aizawa said, breaking the previous hope, thought his tone was evidently at least a little bit bothered by it. “This is about yesterday and how you lied.”

“I didn’t lie!”

“You omitted,” Izuku clamped his mouth shut. The man let out a breath of air and shook his head “You know that my opinion of you will not change, no matter the circumstances. I don’t know what you hid, but please, at least tell me, it might be important.”

Izuku looked out the window “Only if you tell me who Overhaul is,”

“Deal. Shoot.”

Izuku blinked. That was fast. He took a deep breath. “I told him I wouldn’t join him. He said that I will” the boy shook his head “I know that it doesn’t seem like much but…” he clicked his tongue “He looked so convinced. And I ….” He placed a hand on his chest, feeling the outlines of his scars through his dress shirt “I don’t want to know how much he means it. Because I know he does. I know that he will try and I just…. ” He bit his lip “I’m scared.”

“It’s all right to be scared….”

“But I can’t- I’m not-” he lashed out. the man didn’t react “I can’t…” I can’t be weak. “All Might chose me as his successor. I can’t allow myself to freeze up,”

Aizawa rolled his eyes and looked at the sky as if asking where had he gone wrong. “Do you know exactly how Bakugou got you out?”

Izuku blinked. Where had this come from. “Yeah, he found me and got out”

“He was let out” the kid frowned. “Touya Todoroki, or Dabi as he goes by now, found you and let you go. He had the choice to stop you both, but he allowed you two to leave.”

“Why…” Izuku shook his head “Why would he-?”

“You told me you were friends.” Aizawa said.

“Yes, but I betrayed him” that still hurt, the rejection, the anger, it still hurt “He captured me, he was angry at me…”

“Well, apparently, not angry enough to keep you hostage.”

“And what?” Izuku gritted his teeth “What does that have to do with anything?”

“It means that things aren’t as bleak as they seem” he rapped his fingers on the wheel “Tell, me, by what you thought, did you expect him to help you?”
Izuku looked down “No.”

“No. That would be far too risky. But, while a healthy dose of pessimism is required to be in this business, please, don’t forget that you need optimism too. You need light in your life; you need motivation. You need to want to keep living in the world you save,” The man shook his head. “And I know, believe me, I know how it is to fail. Sometimes things just don’t go your way. Hell, a lot of times things don’t go your way. But remember,” His teacher looked him in the eye “Things get better. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and you won’t be able to see it if you’re not here to do so,”

“But” Izuku munched on his lip. “Let’s say that I do hope, that I do try” he looked at his teacher. “But cold hard facts remain that I can’t save everyone” he knew, he remembered all those nights he had forced himself to forget, when there were too many villains, where he only had time to grab one person. That’s why he admired All Might so much. That always, he managed to rescue everyone.

And you had to be the reason for his fall.

“It’s true” Aizawa sighed “You can’t save everyone” he looked at the child “But you at least have to try”. They sat in silence for a few seconds, Izuku contemplating the words. The man looked at his watch and let out a groan. “Go to class. I’ll pass the teacher lounge to give a brief report and, if you are in some way shape or form late, the training tonight won’t stop until you pass out.”

Izuku let out a chuckle, put his fingers to his temple and opened the door.

“Izuku,” the man called and the boy looked at his teacher. Aizawa stared him with such intensity, taking his eyes away would have been a crime “I told you to try and save everyone. That includes yourself as well,”

“Yes, sensei” Izuku nodded and slammed the door before dashing to the school. A head start meant nothing when your teacher was middle aged, jaded Spiderman.

He made his way to class and only had minimal staring from his classmates. He ate in the lab that day too, and had a sinking suspicion that Pres Mic wanted to reveal his temporary residence, but barely kept it in. the day passed fairly fast, all things considered. The speedwalking helped him ignore the not quite whispers behind his back and his classmates at least knew not to talk shit in his hearing distance.

Izuku waved his friends goodbye and headed for the training ground. Aizawa and All Might were already waiting. Seeing All Might in small form with fitting clothes was surprisingly painful. Izuku tried not to let that eat at him.

He failed.

Aizawa stepped in front of him. “We will see how much we can figure out today, and then you will go to your appointment.” The man said. Izuku nodded. The underground hero turned towards the former one: “So, how exactly does One for All work?”

“Well” the man shook his head “It stockpiles Quirks and the strength of the previous users.”

“With how much?” Izuku asked. The man cocked his head “What does it mean the Strength? The
physical strength? Does it double every time it passes?"

The man shook his head “I’m afraid I don’t know.” Izuku hummed at that.

“Wait” Aizawa chimed in “You said stockpile. Does it stockpile strength or muscle?”

“Strength. And speed.”

Izuku looked at Aizawa “So it’s an enhancer,”

“Yes,” All Might agreed.

Aizawa rubbed his chin “That raises a different problem: how much does it enhance. What does it enhance? Only muscles? Or other senses too? If a user was to have a Quirk beforehand, would it enhance it too?”

The blond considered “Only muscles. Nana never mentioned having better senses than before, and neither do I. the question of how much can be answered only by the user controlling the percentage.”

“That makes sense” Izuku rubbed his chin “If you used it 100% all the time, you’d destroy buildings just by walking.”

“About the Quirk question, I think so. I don’t know how Nana’s Quirk was before One for All.”

“How was yours?”

All might rubbed his head. For the first time, he looked bashful “Yeah, about that…. I was born Quirkless”

A pin could’ve dropped on the other side of Japan and they would’ve heard it. Izuku stared incredulously while Aizawa’s face went through a range of emotions from angry, to irritated before settling on bottled angry rant. “Hypocrite,” he muttered under his breath while Izuku was rubbing his temples.

Of fucking course.

“Anyway” he shook his head before he looked back up “Are there any risks we might need to know of? Think well, All Might, Recovery girl cannot fix everything.”

The walking skeleton seemed to ponder before he said. “Well, the strain might be too big for his muscles to contain it. I don’t know, it might break his bones if he goes 100% the first time”

Izuku cocked his head “Like hysterical strength?”

Aizawa groaned “Of course your Quirk would be like that.”

“I don’t know!” the man shrugged “I mastered it from the first try”

Of course he did, he’s All Might.

“Oh then” the dark haired man said before turning to the brunette “You can try to activate it. If I feel that it goes too far, I’ll stop it.”

“Got it” Izuku jumped to his feet, forcing energy he did not have into his bones. “I’ll punch in that direction” he motioned towards the space without too buildings and saw Aizawa nod. He took a deep breath and pulled at the new thing inside of him he assumed was the Quirk. Clenching and
He felt his macaroni cut at the half and immediately knew that Aizawa had erased his Quirk. He turned towards his teacher who was glaring at him. “Why do I get the feeling that you were going to go 100%?”

“How would I know what is 100%, I have no means of comparison?”

“Try it like this: activate it, but use the smallest voltage you can think of.”

“Ok” Izuku said. He let the energy go through his arm, but tried to, not quite gently, punch it back. He didn’t manage it. there was also the problem, that, usually, when something is charged, it wants to shoot. And, in the case of a particular sentient Quirk, it wanted out really badly.

So, it didn’t really matter that it wasn’t 100%. It was still too much for the boy with muscles not made for strength but for speed.

It took Izuku a full minute to realise what happened. Partly because he couldn’t feel the pain. His arm was bent in a weird shape and he couldn’t move it all that well. It hung limply at his side.

And then pain arrived.

“FUCK!” he screamed before clenching his mouth shut and closing his eyes. He felt Aizawa kneel near him and look at his arm. Izuku sucked in a deep breath, keeping the pulsating pain in check.

“This is broken” Aizawa said “You need to see Recovery Girl”

“Oh,” Izuku said and tried to stand up, but his arm jostled and sent waves of pain through his arm.

“I’ll get her,” the dark haired man said before telling something to Yagi-san and running away. The man kneeled near him. Izuku kept in his tears, but the pain in his arm was too strong, too burning for him to ignore it.

“It’s all right, my boy,” the man said in a calm, soothing voice that somehow felt much more genuine than all the times he heard him say ‘I am here’ “You just got this Quirk. It is so much more powerful than it had the right to be. You can’t expect to master it from the first try,”

“You did,” Izuku said, keeping back a whimper. Fuck, this hurt more than any other injury before.

Well, I did have those injuries in the middle of the battle, so maybe the adrenaline was too good of an anaesthetic.

Yagi-san seemed to be regretting his earlier comment.

He heard steps and the underground hero arrived, followed by the small woman, cane clicking on the concrete. “Oh, dearie,” she kneeled near him and looked at his arm “We need to put it right before I heal it, lest it needs re-breaking,“

He managed to make it to the nurse’s office, where the woman gave him something for the pain while she placed his arm in splints. The moment her lips touched his skin, Izuku felt both the pain fade away and the energy seep from his bones. Luckily, someone stopped him from face planting the floor.

“Here,” the woman handed him some gummy bears, which Izuku chewed on absent mindedly

“Return tomorrow morning for me to take them off and rest” she stressed the word, glaring at the
two other teachers all the time.

“Understood” Aizawa said and petted his good arm. Izuku stood up and let the man help him walk to the car. Yagi-san said that he was sorry and goodbye and the boy soon found himself in the car. “Don’t you think you escaped therapy” the dark haired man said as he switched the key.

“I wouldn’t dream about it”, Izuku joked before he released a big yawn. The man rolled his eyes. Izuku looked at the window “Can I ask you something? And you promise me that you’ll tell me the truth?”

Aizawa frowned “Yes”

“The whole deal, with me moving to 1A and you threatening to throw me in prison. It was rigged, wasn’t it?”

The man looked ahead “Yes and no.” he tapped his fingers on the wheel “You should have asked for a lawyer” he took a deep breath “And yeah, legally speaking, the proof we had was circumstantial. But...” izuku looked up and saw the man staring at him in the rear-view mirror “Proof can be faked. Lawyers given by the police are not the best, your mom couldn’t have legally taken your defence, being related to you and all. And, unless you could hire someone very competent, chances were you would have really ended up in juvie.” He tapped his hands on the wheel. “Legally speaking, you didn’t have to do what you did. Logically speaking, it was for the best.”

“I guess” Izuku sighed “Shigaraki already had his eyes on me, he could’ve picked me off the street. Not to mention that, if he did, chances are the heroes wouldn’t have gotten involved.”

“Yes”

They stood in awkward silence for a few seconds before the teen spoke “What will you be doing at home. I know I will be more or less forced to sleep, but what will you do?”

The man rose an eyebrow “The same thing, probably. I have a patrol tonight and need all the rest I can get before the internship starts and I will be stuck on the next mission.”

“Overhaul” Izuku said “You said you would tell me about him.”

“Wait another week” Aizawa said as he pulled the car “Nighteye will explain the full picture to the both of us.”

Izuku was too tired to argue. He barely had the energy to go up the stairs and collapse on his futon.

~O~

Toshinori walked and sat in front of the glass. On the other side, the man who had killed Nana and indoctrinated her grandson looked to be smiling. “All Might, what a surprise,” he said. “I’ve been waiting for someone to talk to for a while. It gets kind of boring in here. The guards don’t speak to me. There’s really not much to do when the slightest move can turn you to swiss cheese,”

Toshinori glared. He knew that the man didn’t need physical eyes to see that.

“Where’s Shigaraki?”

“No idea,” he said “There’s more hideouts and safe-houses than I can count and I’ve probably forgotten some of them too,” He said before he stopped for a few seconds, as if sensing something.
Then, like a snake, a huge smile spread along his scarred visage. “Oh, but what is this? Does my
quirk play tricks on me or have you finally found a successor?”

Toshinori blinked.

“You did. No, don’t tell me- let me guess. It’s Izuku Midoriya, isn’t it?”

“How did you…?” he growled, but the man only chuckled.

“All Might...If you live as long as I did, you learn a trick or two.”

“Well, while we’re on the subject of Izuku Midoriya- what exactly did you do to him?”

“Hmmm... elaborate?”

“He was found strapped to a table, with drugs pumping through his body. Shigaraki may have taken
him for a reason, but you had your own agenda. So, I ask you again, you filthy bastard, why did you
take him?”

The man chuckled “Hmmm... tell me, how far have you people gotten with studying the
Nomu?” Toshinori stayed quiet, mostly because that wasn’t the kind of thing he was privy to. And,
besides, the man was apparently bored enough to monologue, better let him “Well let me tell you-
there are two main problems with making one. One making sure the mutations don’t spin out of
control and make the creature immobile or incapable of surviving and two the managing the quirk
strain that a brain packed with three to five quirks is under. Normally, a brain can only sustain one
Quirk. But, interestingly enough, a Quirkless person doesn’t have that problem. If the body
assimilated the DNA, it assimilates a blank slate. That way, you can trick the brain into making
more... durable Noumus.”

Toshinori clenched his fists “So you wanted to use Young Midoriya to make more of those
abominations?!”

“Please, that boy could be used for multiple purposes. After all, I hate to waste such good raw
material,”

The blond gritted his teeth. The way this villain spoke about humans, about his student, his
successor... No, he couldn’t afford to be careless. He took a deep breath and asked “Why did you
wait this long? There are other Quirkless people around.”

“Yes. But you seem to ignore the fact that over 90% percent of them are old. The younger the
person, the easier it is to assimilate new quirks. Not to mention, finding someone who fits all the
donation requirements is difficult to say the least,” he shook his head “And besides, quirkless people
are so hard to find these days, you know?”

“Young Midoriya can’t be the only one with the good mix of genes in all japan.”

Here, the man smirked. “Oh, he’s not,” Toshinori felt his blood run cold “Really, it’s honestly a bit
worrying how easy it is to make a Quirkless person disappear in this day and age,”

He chuckled “Half the time, the family is just glad they got rid of the shame of having someone so
useless among them.” Toshinori felt ice in his veins “The times they do call the police, they’re
usually written as runaways. What can you do- society is just desperately wants to forget them. To
pretend they don’t exist. Finding them is hell- but keeping them is, honestly, a piece of cake,”

He paused leaned a little bit forward, as much as his restrains allowed him “Tell me, Yagi. How does
it feel to know that you abandoned your own kind to me? That you wilfully sustained that myth that Quirkless people are useless. Were you really so disgusted of your own nature? Or maybe you got your new shiny Quirk and swiped it under the rug?”

“Shut up!” the former No.1 hero, stood up, chair falling behind him.

“I’ll let you know a little something” he smiled again. “That cursed Quirk you placed upon that boy? It will do nothing to protect him from me. And please, in those moments when you are searching desperately for him, knowing that it is futile, remember that it is your fault.”

Toshinori stomped out of the room without a word.

Chapter End Notes

i did intend to make the first scene serious..... then i realised i can't and i went all out with the blue gatorade in a wine glass
izuku finally finds out that dabi kinda saved his life
hooray
anyway, i absolutely love reading your comments, so, i guess, see ya next time!

tumblr
discord
You know, I think I’m starting to see a pattern...... dark haired assholes

Chapter Notes

wow, your comments and kudos left me absolutely stunned
thank you so so much for everything

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Surprisingly, he did manage to make it to therapy the next day. His arm had healed, but Recovery Girl forbid him from physical activity which Aizawa took upon himself to enforce as the word of God. Yagi-san looked like he wanted to say something, but one glance from the erasure hero was enough to shut him up.

So he had spent P.E getting to know his therapist. She was nice enough and seemed to have taken it upon herself to make sure Izuku knew what “self-preservation” meant. He appreciated the advice but he wasn’t going to lie to himself and pretend to take it.

The bad news were the bullying. It was amazing how someone could forget years of being looked down on after just a few months of good behaviour. People talked behind his back, just loud enough for him to hear, avoiding passing too closely to him, staring. He wanted to fight back, he wanted to scream at them to stop, but that would only prove them right. Threatening them would only make him look like more of a villain than the two kills he already had to his name, so he had to try and be invisible. To fall back to his old ways, shoulders hunched and head down.

He felt disgusted by how easy it was.

Walking to his classroom someone shoved their shoulder hard into him. The boy almost fell, but didn’t turn to fight back.

Don’t prove them right.

It still felt like he was dying inside a bit every time he bit his tongue.

That was probably why, when he felt a hand on his shoulder, he reacted in the only way he knew - ducking away.

Shinsou blinked and stared at him before Izuku felt his mouth hang open. “Sorry!” he squealed “It’s just...”

“Muscle memory. I know,” Shinsou gave a small smile. He looked around “Hey, come to the lab, Hatsume said something about that regulator.” Izuku almost asked what regulator before he realised how silent the corridor was. Looking around, he saw every student on the hallway looking at him. Some looked smug. Some looked suspicious. Some looked pained.

“Yes,” Izuku said before following his friend wordlessly to their third powerpuff member’s workshop.

It wasn’t a long walk, but it sure felt like it and every hair on the boy’s body rose at the stares that followed them. The silence of the lab in the absence of the tentacle haired girl was a relief. “Good duck” Shinsou said as Izuku rubbed his head sheepishly.
“They’ll think I am even more of a villain. They’ll think I’m hiding something,”

Shinsou sighed. “True,” at Izuku’s look he let out a small laugh “I’m not sugar coat this, and you know you wouldn’t want me to,” he looked up. “Ignore them”

“I knooooow” Izuku pulled at the word, turning it into a whine. “I know it’s worked for you, I know that I shouldn’t be bothered but... still...” He let his head fall into his hands “I worked so hard. So, so fucking hard to make a name, a reputation for myself, to make people respect me and like me and now it’s all just... poof! Gone! Just ‘cause I was too fucking weak and I got kidnapped!” he slammed his hands into the table and panted before shaking his head.

Shinsou spoke “Don’t blame yourself. It wasn’t your-”

“It was!” Izuku cried. Shinsou clamped his mouth shut “You weren’t there. I…” He gulped “I froze, Shinsou! I froze,” he blinked rapidly “There was one time, one time, I should have not failed, one time I should have fought harder and I just... didn’t. Couldn’t,” he looked down and pressed his hand on his face to keep the stress in. “I didn’t fight back. I just let him…” he took in a sharp breath and looked up. “I failed, Shinsou. I failed. After all this time, after all this training, I wasn’t good enough. And All Might fell,” he looked his fried in the eye “Because of me.” He stood straight “And now this, this thing I can’t even call a Quirk just-”

“You figured it out?!” Shinsou looked up, jumping at the potential change of topic. “What does it do?!”

“Aside from breaking my bones, not much,” Izuku grumbled.

“Wait, really?” Shinsou looked alarmed.

“No. Well, yes. Well... ugggh!” he looked at the sky- well, ceiling- before throwing himself on the bean bag on the floor. “It’s supposed to be an enhancer. Make me stronger, faster and, I don’t know, more annoying- or something” he let his head fall backwards “But, apparently, it doesn’t work well with my body, so it turns my bones into paste!”

“That’s... rough buddy”

“Gee, thanks oh, great dealer of words, your speech leaves me breathless!” Izuku threw his hand up for emphasis. Shinsou giggled. It was amazing how often he smiled these days. The greenete had only noticed it and felt a little shard of happiness when he remembered how closed off the other teen was in the beginning.

“Isn’t Aizawa helping you out?”

“He is,” he sighed “But we haven’t made any real progress yet,”

“It’s only for a day, and, who knows, maybe the person you’re interning with can help you figure it out,”

“Yeah,” Izuku rolled his eyes “Maybe.”

Shinsou sighed “Look, I’ll be blunt; we both know that people hardly change their opinions. If they want to believe that you’re a villain, they will. And we also both know that you,” he pointed at the small piece of shrubbery “Are not weak or pathetic or any other bullshit you say about yourself. You never were, so don’t start now, just because some people talk shit about you.”

“I know” Izuku hung his head low. “And that’s not exactly what makes me mad. Well, it
does, surely, but what I hate is….” He looked up “I’ve been a doormat all my life. I don’t want to be one anymore, but it’s not like I can fight back. I hate acting helpless and I hate how fricking easy it is!”

“Then fight back.” Shinsou said, like it was that simple.

“What?”

“You said it, you’re not a doormat. You can fight back. I mean, you don’t have to put them in the hospital- you don’t even have to hit them, but you can stop them from treating you like shit!”

“But then I’ll just be proving them that I’m a villain!”

The purple head let out a mirthless chuckle. “Again, they’ll think that anyway. There is no way to change their mind and, even if it there was, it’s not worth it if it hurts you,” He walked closer and poked the smaller boy in the chest with a pointy finger “You don’t have to suffer just because they are close minded” eh stretched his arm towards his friend “So, they think you are a villain. Why don’t you use it to your advantage?”

Izuku didn’t know whether to laugh or glare, since this was eerily similar to what he used to say when he was arguing with the taller about the morality of his trafficking ring. In the end, he clasped the hand and let himself be pulled to his feet.

~O~

The week of the internships came faster than anyone had expected. Izuku was for the first time in a week actually enthusiastic, brimming with energy at the prospect of meeting someone who could help him with One for All. Truth be told, he did start building some muscle, but it was a long and painful process. But he had no right to complain.

He and his mom had also returned to their apartment where there was no sighting of Either Shigaraki or the league and the heroes took that as enough of a proof that it was safe for them to return to their home. That and his mom didn’t want to impose on his teacher any more than she already did.

Aizawa entered the class and looked at them. “You have all made your choices and I dearly hope that your first internships were enough to teach you whether or not you made the right decision when trying applying for what you want later. As such,” he pressed a button and the cases with their suits were pulled out of their caskets in the wall “Get your suits and we will go to the station”

They moved pretty fast and, in no time, they were waiting for their trains to arrive. “Todoroki!” Izuku called as he approached his friend. The heterochromatic teen turned to face him “Who are you interning with?”

“Best Jeanist,” the boy said.

“Good choice. Is it because he might help you with your Quirk?”

The other nodded “Yes. His Quirk needs a lot of focus and delicacy in order to function” he looked at his hand “He might be able to help me. I do need it, not to mention, balancing both halves of my Quirk can be difficult.”

Izuku nodded. He turned towards Uraraka “You?”
“Thirteen!” she said happily “I’m so glad they are out of the hospital. I want to learn all I can about rescue, and, since the USJ…” She leaned her head. Izuku nodded. The USJ wasn’t exactly a pleasant memory. The girl didn’t seem all that bummed about it though, for she kept chattering. Trains came and, one by one, his classmates disappeared. Izuku waved them all until he and his homeroom teacher were the only ones left at the station.

“You ready?” Aizawa asked. Izuku nodded and followed him to the car. Once inside, the man said “Look, I want you to know that, if at any point, during this internship, I tell you to retreat, you retreat.”

Izuku eyes his teacher “Of course.”

Aizawa took one precious moment the eyes off the road to glare at him. Izuku gulped. “I mean it. If I or Nighteye, or even your senpais tell you to fall back and you don’t, there will be consequences.”

“What consequences?”

“You will not be allowed to take part in another internship or take the licence exam at the end of the year.”

“What?!” Izuku yelped.

“You heard me,” the man said, face colder than stone “I don’t care that you will be held back. If you can’t follow the orders, you are not fit to be a hero, since a lot of times, they are led by a team leader. You do not have all the experience necessary to make such a call, and you could put not only yourself, but also other people in danger if you run in blind.”

“But” Izuku tried to argue “What if someone is in danger? What if someone is dying and I’m the only one able to save them?”

“Then we will have one victim instead of two” Aizawa said unmoved. Izuku remained, mouth agape, staring at his teacher before sighing and falling back into his chair. “Am I clear?”

“Crystal” he huffed and looked out the window.

The Nighteye agency was pretty big, all things considered. Izuku followed the steps of his teacher in silence, eyes wandering over everything in sight. Halfway through the road, he saw something approaching him from the side and jumped before he came face-to-face with his upperclassman.

“Hey, Midoriya!” Mirio said, full of restless energy. Izuku looked at him for a few seconds before he righted himself and looked at the teen.

“Hello, Toogata-senpai,” he said with a curt nod before he followed Aizawa who had not stopped. “You intern here too?”

“Yup!” he said, seemingly proud of himself “It’s great that you could join too. I know how Sir, can look like but I promise he’s a really great guy. Not to mention he probably knows a thing or two about your new Quirk,”

Izuku winced “You know about that?” he said, looking around. There was no one else in the hallway, but his voice was loud and carried.

“Of course,” Toogata smiled, not really apologetic; but then again what did he have to
apologise for “Initially, he offered One for All to me, but I declined. I’m glad that it found its way to someone as good as you.”

Izuku smiled, as good as he could manage, which was pretty good considering his lying skills. I’ll make sure to be a proper vessel.

“We’re here,” Aizawa said in his more emotionless tone he used in class. Both boys stopped and stared at the office door. Toogata stepped forward and knocked on the door, only to hear a soft enter before his upperclassman entered.

The first thing Izuku noticed when he got in was the huge amount of merchandise all over the walls. His eyes widened like saucers as he took everything in, his collector’s sixth sense activating like a radar. He didn’t know how long he stared, he only knew it must’ve been a pretty long time because Toogaga cleared his throat. Izuku jumped and looked at the other three people in the room. Already feeling his cheeks starting to heat, landing him into his strawberry mode.

“Midoriya Izuku” Sir Nighteye said as he got up and pushed his glasses up his pointy nose. “I’ve heard quite a lot about you.”

“Sir!” Izuku said and did a ninety degree bow to the man “It is an honour to finally meet you.”

“Same here,” He turned towards the other two people in the room. “Would you mind letting us discuss in private?”

Aizawa shrugged as he made his way out the door and Toogata gave him a smile and a thumbs up before walking out. Izuku felt strangely threatened by those thumbs up. They meant he would need luck, and, if the man’s media appearance was enough to tell, he didn’t want to be on his bad side. Said man pushed his glassed on his nose, the light reflecting in them before he gestured to a seat in front of him. “Sit”

Izuku sat.

It didn’t take long for the man to speak “I’ve seen you looking at the merchandise earlier. What have you noticed?”

“Well” Izuku looked around “That is a not for sale 10th year anniversary tapestry. There had only been three issued at the same time, and the bidding was private,” he rubbed his chin “Though I did see some very accurate forgeries online” he muttered.

“There’s also all the volumes of the manga All Might’s Journey.” He said as he looked at the library “Though I’m surprised you did manage to get all twenty of them. They had stopped the production after volume seventeen due to the latest plot twist angering a lot of fans.” He bit his lip “What doesn’t surprise me is that you have that Limited edition All Might globe. It appeared only once, three years ago, and fans said that it was taken by a tall man.”

A small smile twitched at the corners of Nighteye’s mouth before he schooled his expression again.

“Well, if nothing else, you know your merch, at least,” The man nodded “But what I really want to know is what exactly are you planning to do with One for All?”

“What do you mean?”

The man narrowed his eyes over the glasses, “You were given a power most people would
kill for. How do you intend to use it? How do you intend to give people the hope they deserve, the hope they need, to carry them forward?"

“No offense to either you or All Might, but a Symbol is one of the things that was, detrimental to the hero society.”

The man rose an eyebrow. “Do tell,”

Izuku took a deep breath, knowing that, by the amount of merch displayed everywhere, the man was, undoubtedly, a huge fan. He had to make sure not to let any of his rage or bitterness slip into his words “All Might was a great hero; the greatest to date. But that meant that he cast a large shadow. No one will ever be able to fill his shoes in any competent way. In the collective mind of the people, he was the one everything depended on. The crime rate was so low, not just because he was stopping it, but also because most would-be villains were too scared to actually put anything into practice.”

“The problem is that, even though, logically speaking, we know that All Might was not immortal, that one day he would have to retire it was just... never discussed. At least not seriously,” Izuku said “All Might didn’t mention it so we didn’t either and gradually, it just faded into the background. Other heroes became more lax, because there was always All Might. People put all their hopes on him and...” Izuku waited a few seconds

“And that’s where he failed. A good hero should encourage growth in society though their actions-All Might’s actions, positive as they were, just stunned out societal growth. We became dependant on him so when All Might retired, the people weren’t ready. The world wasn’t ready. It created this power vacuum that everybody is trying to fill, and we’re all failing. A new symbol would be not only detrimental to society but also, for many, it would feel like a fake,”

“Why do you think that?” the man let no emotion show. Izuku took a deep breath.

“Because there will be two big, loud sides: the ones who want and need a new Symbol of peace, and those who will think that no one can quite equal All Might. So if the answer you’re expecting is ‘I’m going to be the next All Might’ I’m afraid you’ll be disappointed. What I do intend to do with One for All is to make it as strong as possible, make sure that it is used to its full potential for the purpose of helping people,”

The man’s lip twitched for a second “I see. Is that why did you become the Vanisher?”

Izuku kept his face neutral as his mind filled with curses.

 Fuck, does everyone know about this now?

He took a deep breath “In a way. I became the Vanisher because I saw people who needed help, but no one to give it to them,” he looked the man in the eye “Because the first heroes were originally vigilantes, and I didn’t have the luxury of a Quirk or training. Because I wanted to make sure I was ready to become a hero. Make sure I was ready to put up with all the bullshit and the danger, and that I wouldn’t give up three years into my career because I can’t take it.”

“Can you?”

“Yes,” there was no doubt in his voice when he said that. The man nodded.

“Why did you chose my agency, Midoriya?”

Because the other two were a mad rabbit and someone I’ve already learned plenty from?
He couldn’t say that “Because you’ve worked with All Might and, by extension, One for All. I hope you’ll be able to help me understand it better and learn to actually use it without crippling myself. Because you are an information based hero and I want to develop in that direction,”

“And how exactly could you help my agency?” the man looked up, his shiny glasses pinning him down “This office runs well enough with only two interns. Why would I need to use you?”

Izuku was momentarily caught off guard and caught himself from spitting

*Because you sent me a request?*

But he didn’t. he was smarter than that.

He took a deep breath and thought for a few seconds “Because, you’ve heard of me. My reputation didn’t come from nowhere. I may not be an expert, but I am good at analysis. Not to mention, when it comes to my background, I have been acquainted, if briefly, with the Villain Underworld. I am not clueless and, in the field, it is good to have as many people used to the environment as possible. As much as it is not advertised, not all arrests and rescues are made with big flashy fights and cameras. A lot are made with recon, with infiltration, to make sure you take down the whole hydra, not only the head.” Here, he tilted his head “And I seriously doubt that Endeavour has the talent or the patience for long, drawn out investigation.”

That got a small chuckle out of the man. When he looked up, he wasn’t smiling, but his features had softened. “Very well, Midoriya” he said stretching his hand over the desk “You had my interest. Now you officially have my attention.”

Izuku shook it with vigour.

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Dabi sighed as he watched Shigaraki pacing the poor floor of their new hideout. This was starting to become a habit. He, for one, was drinking a bottle of beer when the mist made man eyed him through the slitted fires of the void “Are you sure you are old enough to drink”

Dabi honest to god stopped for a second to glare at the man before taking one long gulp from the bottle “One, shouldn’t you have asked me that earlier? And two, yes.” He glared “I am twenty five” well, technically, twenty-four, but he wasn’t going to let him know that. The mist man still glared, but didn’t do anything, which was technically still a win.

Toga was sadly swinging her legs form one place to another on the bar stool “I’m bored” she whined “We do nothing these days.” She pouted.

“Well, that can be a side effect of the fact that half our team got arrested” Dabi said sagely as he put down the bottle. The girl pulled her tongue out at him before she started tapping the bar with a knife. Dabi didn’t know why there was a bar. This was just a new hideout, very very plain when they had arrived. The next day, there was a huge table and barstools in the kitchen, and Kurogiri was happily wiping his glasses like he always did. The man didn’t question it. he didn’t need nor want to know.

Licking his lips and letting the alcohol burn pleasantly inside him for a few seconds, he turned towards the pacing albino. “Oi, Handjob, do you wanna sit or will you keep brooding for the rest of the day.”

His ‘Boss’ glared at him before he threw the nearest vase in his direction. He missed by a
long shot but Dabi was glad he had gotten his attention. “Motherfriking birdman!” he yelled before he collapsed on the couch. Dabi rose and eyebrow and Toga pulled her knees to her chest and eyed him, waiting for the customary curses which would soon be followed by their next battle plan. Shigaraki was quite good at making plans as long as you let him vent beforehand.

Deciding that he didn’t really feel like waiting, Dabi said “Oi!”

Shigaraki glared “I’ll kill that guy,” he grumbled as he sat up “That cocksucking entitled endangered flamingo will pay” he looked at the ceiling “I’ll cut off his hands and stick them so far up his ass so he can choke on his fucking gloves.”

“Can I carve him open?” Toga clapped.

“You can deal with the rest” he waved dismissively, and that seemed to be enough for the teenage girl.

“Ok” Dabi leaned back on the counter “How exactly are you going to do that?”

“I don’t know yet, still thinking about it.” he shook his head “What I do know is that we have to start that second plan.”

The scarred man rose an eyebrow “You sure you want to deal with two operation simultaneously?”

“Overhaul is like- a sidequest, at best. I don’t have any limit in completing it, I can very well just bide my time. The other though,” he chuckled and rubbed his palms, like some cartoon villain.

“Didn’t you say that about the last plan,” he turned towards Kurogiri “And I assume every other one before?”

The metal collared man nodded and Shigaraki yelled “ This one will work!” he groaned “And kidnapping your little boyfriend hadn’t been in vain. It is all working and will work in the end.”

“I’m sure” Dabi said sarcastically. “And, for the last time, he’s not my boyfriend. I’m not a paedophile!”

“Well, he didn’t seem to deny it” Shigaraki grumbled and Dabi felt a cold shower run down his spine.

“What did you say?”

Shigaraki smirked, glad that he had found another button to press “You know, a week ago when I delivered my warning for him to stay away.”

“How do you even know where he lives?”

“Pfft, like it’s hard,” thee man rolled his eyes “Anyway” he wiped his hands on his shirt “We need to put the plan in action.”

“And you need to stay the fuck away from him.”

“Oh, please,” he waved his hand “It’s too fun messing with him” he scratched his neck “Though I will have to calculate my location better next time, can’t risk any more woks”
Dabi had absolutely no idea what that meant, and, after knowing Yami for more than a year, he really didn’t want to ask. Too big of a can of worms to bother. He just shook his head as Toga bounced on her seat.

“Oh, can we attack Uwabami? She has such nice accessories and is famous too. Or maybe Hawks? He’s so pretty and I always wondered how it would be like to have wings. They *pretty,*” he looked at her back, dreamily, no wonder imagining the crimson appendices on her back. Dabi sighed.

“You know, you don’t need to attack a hero if you want hairpins. Or makeup. Or anything else. Plus, I don’t think it would suit you all that well.”

“Why,” she crossed her arms “Because I’m not all that pretty?”

“No, because you have different skin tones which means her... *anythings,* really wouldn’t work for you,”

She seemed to want to say something, but stop and consider it for a few seconds. “What is good for my skin tone” then, eyeing the scarred man “Will you go with me to find it?”

“No” he said and looked away. Fuyumi had dragged him through enough shops to find something perfect when she was going through her awkward phase and he honestly didn’t want to go through the nightmare of does this fit all over again.

But the blond was as determined as his own sister had been to make his life a glittering hell because she latched onto her arm and started shaking it. “Pleeeease!”

Dabi tried to push her off of him, but she was Strong. Unsettlingly strong.

Kurogiri decided to save him, because he said: “You can’t get out. You are both wanted criminals”

Dabi thanked him with his eyes as Toga pouted before she woke up with new vigour “I can look different!”

“But then you’d have a differed skin tone, so what would be the point.”

“Why are we talking about makeup?!” Shigaraki asked.

Dabi measured him head to toe “Well, you crusty asshole could sure use some lip balm,”

Toga giggled as the light haired man jumped in his direction.

Chapter End Notes

ok, LoV fluff/crack, sue me!
anyway, please let me know what you think and see ya next time ;)
discord
tumblr
also, super special thanks to Dagi, who did this absolutely wonderful FANART
hello, i gotta thank you all for the wonderful comments in the last chapter as for this one
if you're wondering why i keep making this joke it wasn't intentional in the beginning but
logically speaking, it would be very very suspicious if Dabi, the tall Quirk ring fighter who roasts people on sight started hanging out and standing up for this pure naive child without reason, and, everyone who's been in a fandom know that people assume romance faster than friendship
but this should be the last time this is mentioned
warning over, now on with the chapter

Izuku waited next to Toogata for their teachers to finish planning and explain, once and for all, what the fuck was the deal with Overhaul and why everyone was suddenly so interested in him. His senpai seemed very cheerful, brimming with energy on the seat next to him. Izuku could only sigh and shake his head.

When they were finally summoned to the office, along with Bubble Girl, they found themselves facing a table with a lot of pictures on it. Nighteye was standing in one corner while Aizawa leaned over one edge, looking with intensity over some maps. Izuku look around and saw multiple pictures of a man wearing a plague doctor’s mask. “Is that Overhaul?”

“Yes,” Nighteye pushed his glasses up his nose “What do you know about him?”

Izuku scratched his neck “Not much. He is uhh...dangerous? So people tend to avoid him? He may or may not be somehow involved with the League but that's pretty much it,”

“Why do you say that?” Toogata asked.

“Shigaraki told me to stay away from him,” Izuku said “Apparently, he doesn’t want me to die before he can...” He shook his head “Execute whatever his plan for me is,”

“Is that all?” Izuku nodded. “Well then,” Nighteye held a picture up for all to see “His name is Kai Chisaki, he is the leader of a villain organisation called the Eight Precepts of Death and we’ve gotten hints of unusual activity from him over the past few months,”

“A Yakuza?” Izuku asked “Aren’t they like... almost non-existent, by this point?”

“Yes” Bubble Girl said “But this Chisaki guy is doing his damnest best to change that,” She looked at the photos, pointing at them in a small alley “As you’ve said, they’ve likely made contact with the League recently. No idea what transpired through,”

“Yes, he’s quite adept at hiding his goings on. For all out surveillance we haven’t been able to get any poof of any illegal activity that isn’t jaywalking, so far,” Nighteye said “For that reason we are unable to treat the Eight Precepts as an outright villain organization and get the
resources we need to deal with them properly.” He straightened his back “What we’re trying to do is get proof of their crimes so we can submit a report and get the resources needed to deal with them once and for all.”

“Moreover,” Aizawa said “There’s this drug going around lately” he held a picture of a man apparently turned into a shark and battling three heroes “Trigger, as it’s known. It’s not exactly new, since it’s been in circulation for a few years.” He put the picture down “It increases the power of a Quirk making any person using it almost impossible to subdue; it also decreases the person’s rational thinking. We have no hard link between it and the Precepts, but there have been rumours going around.”

“Ok,” Izuku nodded “So, what’s the plan?”

“We’ll do patrols and surveillance” Toogata said.

Izuku rose a hand and Aizawa managed to convey amusement with nothing but a flick of the eyebrow. Nightye nodded. “So... we’re basically just hoping for them to fall in our laps?”

“What do you mean?” Bubble Girl said.

“Well,” he scratched his neck, suddenly uncomfortable to be under the avid attention of everyone in the office “We, as heroes, or at least you and Toogata-senpai... umm... are very... I mean you wear very bright and very vivid colours- it’s really obvious that you’re a hero. I doubt that we will get all the information possible that way.”

“What do you suggest?” Aizawa asked, in the tone Izuku had learned to know that he was testing him.

“Well, I know from personal experience that people can be... really chatty when they think might possibly get from you? Like money for a drug?” he sighed “I understand the importance of patrols, but undercover surveillance could be useful too.”

Izuku waited with baited breath for the two adults to give their verdict. It took a few seconds, but Nightye’s lips sketched the faint trace of a smile. “You were right, Eraser.”

“There are hardly times when I am wrong,” the man said, completely deadpan.

“I have thought about that before. The danger there is that, as far as we can tell, the Eight Precepts don’t know that we’re looking into them. If we sent an agent undercover to ask around and they got recognized we risk for that to get back to them and God only knows how deep underground they’ll go then,” Nightye pushed his glasses up his head “However... that’s mostly because most of us here are very noticeable, or at least very obviously affiliated with the agency. However someone with a reputation for going against the heroes... and who’s new around... might just be able to pull it off,” He rubbed his chin “We’d still have to be very careful though... fake documents... camouflage... set up points of interest to ask around... it would be quite a bit of work to pull off,”

Izuku timidly rose a hand and Nighteye nodded towards him. Izuku took a deep breath. “I... may, or may not, kind of, but not really, have a few connections... and maybe a... a small identity? Set up? Just in case?”

The fact that Nighteye and Aizawa raised their eyebrows at exactly the same moment would’ve been hilarious in any other circumstance.

“Well...” Izuku looked away “It’s not much. I am registered as a regular to a Quirk fighting club from a few months back. I did stop when Aizawa sensei caught me, but I still have the
identity and some people might remember me. I could return and maybe even take someone else with me and introduce them. It would seem less suspicious.”

“That... might actually work,” Nighteye said.

“Why were you going to an illegal fight club?” Aizawa asked, which, ok that was a sensible question. Izuku shrugged.

“I wanted to see styles of fighting different from the ones I saw on TV,”

“So that’s where you learned to fight dirty” Aizawa said. Izuku shrugged

“We’ll do it like that,” Nighteye decided. “Midoriya, you and Mirio will go together. Stick to safe questions, at least in the beginning. We’re likely going to have to do this a few times before we actually get anything.”

“I will watch you from above and go in if you start a shit-show,” Aizawa said. “An adult might draw suspicion, but kids alone seem more naïve. It will go well.”

“Yes. Me and Bubble Girl will do our normal patrols, so we can both gather what we can and keep up appearances.”

“All right!” Toogata punched the air.

Three hours later, when they were all set, Izuku looked at his upperclassman, at his senpai, at the bright smile on his face and said.

“No.”

Toogata didn’t stop smiling, but the smile lost some of its intensity. “What’s wrong?”

The outfit would have looked inconspicuous in a normal environment. On the street, at the mall, people wouldn’t have thrown him another look. But in the underworld….

“Your clothes they’re... they’re too high quality,” Izuku replied “They’re not brand new but close enough, not to mention they’re obviously from reputable firms. And your face is visible. Anyone who watched the Sports Festival could remember you. Plus you just... you look so full of hopes… and dreams!” he gestured vividly in a way that would have probably made Iida proud “Those people eat it up and spit out the bones.”

“Weren’t you also full of hopes and dreams?”

Izuku clicked his tongue “I was full of spite and blackmail material!”

That seemed to shut him up for a moment. Izuku sighed “Look, unless, we are pretending you are some rich naïve kid who got tricked into this, it won’t work.”

“Well then, let’s do that” Aizawa said. They all turned towards him. The man was still leaning on the wall, eyeing the children critically. ‘You can say that he’s your rich friend who wants to get something different. Toogata looks too genuine and we can’t teach him anything that’s gonna save him from looking like that in the next fifteen minutes so let’s go with ‘local dumb rich kid wants to get in on the action’ as an excuse,”

Izuku opened his mouth before he stopped and considered it for a second. “Yeah, that could work.”
Toogata looked a bit uncomfortable, but he agreed easily enough.

They were off in the streets when Aizawa turned towards them “I’ll follow you from above. Do your comms work?” Izuku tapped the small device in his ear, which was well covered by the hanging earphone and dark wig and nodded. Toogata gave him thumbs up, bright smile peeking from behind the hood and Aizawa nodded before he climbed the nearest emergency stair. Izuku started walking, feeling his schoolmate fall in step near him.

“Remember” he said, not looking at him “If, at any point, you need call me by name, use Akatani or Mikumo.”

“Okay.”

“Do you have a fake name? Or something I might use so you are not recognised?”

The other rubbed his chin “I’ll think about it.”

Izuku nodded and took a sharp turn to the side.

Strangely, the greenete had never felt calmer. This was known terrain. This was something that worked for him. He was wearing his usual outfit. Cheap gym pants, hoodie, his purple wig that he somehow convinced not to fuck with his vision. The boy couldn’t believe it had taken him so long to discover the bobby pins, but Bubble Girl had given him some when she saw how the wig fell into his eyes. Izuku was determined to get some for his personal use. *Wait, could Hatsume put some small blades in them? And lock picks? I really need to think of this, no one would see it coming.* He also had huge dark circles under his eyes, thanks to his mom’s makeup kit, that made him look half dead on his feet. In short he looked like an average citizen of the district.

He smirked and looked behind, making sure his partner was still following him before he went down a few stairs and entered a basement. He stopped in front of the two tall gorillas in the door and asked them, looking up yet not showing any sign of fear “Who’s fighting tonight?”

One of them looked at him from beneath his sunglasses, as if wondering who was that little toothpick daring to speak to him. Izuku stood his ground. In the end, one of them said.

“Blue Bird and the Terminator are the main bet. There’s also Ratnest against Frello at time bet and a lot of other newbies.” Izuku nodded before he pulled the card he had been given to prove that he was from there without the guards checking the logbook every time. One of them studied the card for a long while before nodding. The other pointed at Toogata.

“And him?”

“My senpai” he said. No use hiding it, it was obvious that the other was older “He wanted to see if there was any good action outside of hero fights.”

They seem to nod between the other and looked at him. “He can get in without registering now, but he will need some if he intends to later.”

“Thank you” he said, because flattery gets you everywhere, and people tended to be nice to you if you were polite. The two doors opened and Izuku heard Toogata follow close behind him. “Look” he leaned close, to make sure only the other would get the message “There are a lot of bets going on around here, and, as you can see, there are a lot of people. If we get separated, go to the door we walked in. If the other is not there, we will meet at the point senset took for the roofs, all right?”
“Yes” Toogata said. “We are looking for drug deals or what?”

“Anything suspicious. Don’t seem too eager for something, it draws attention.” He sighed “It would be perfect if you don’t enter any type of conversation. For now, just try to listen closely and try not to get in trouble.”

He didn’t really get to finish when a voice suddenly said “Akatani-kun!” and an arm snaked around his shoulder. Izuku froze for a moment, which was enough for him and his senpai to be separated. “How have you been?!” the voice which had suddenly gained a body said and Izuku looked up at the man who was holding him all but hostage in his vicious grip. Karatino, as he liked to call himself, was a tall man, pretty buff who more or less attached himself to the small teen like a leech. Izuku had met him a pretty long time ago, when he was drowned in debts and the boy gave him some pointers out of pity. Well, not really gave, more like sold on a small pack of cigars he had disposed of the moment he was on his way home.

The man had then been struck by a wave of luck that saved his fingers from getting chopped off and was now trying hard to pay his debt to the teen. But that was a problem when he wanted to stay under radar and couldn’t outright ask for information, and most materials the other could market were drugs.

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“Hey there, Karatino-san” Izuku greeted. He looked in the ring where Blue Bird wiped the floor with the poor man with an ill-fitting name. “I must admit, not so well” he shook his head, to look as tired as possible. The makeup must’ve helped a lot. “hey” he looked at the other “Do you remember that thing you gave me last time?” the other nodded “is there any chance you have something stronger?”

The man smiled. Well, it was more of an insane smirk, no wonder at the prospects of getting a new client in the form of a teen who wouldn’t know better. “Sure. What are you looking into? Something to relax? Something to help you focus?” Izuku was keenly aware that everything he said was recorded and that Aizawa was probably listening to it right now.

He shook his head, rubbing his temples. “No, I was thinking…. Do you have anything that affects the Quirk? That makes it stronger? Got anything?”

“The look on the man’s face changed, if only by a fraction. He looked more guarded but still open to suggestions. “Why?”

“Finals” Izuku said.

“Hm” the man nodded, and put on a thinking visage. Izuku was waiting for him to say something. “And, if you don’t mind me asking, where did you hear about this?”

“He and there” Izuku shrugged “You know, people getting so strong they need more pros to be subdued. I was thinking that if they are strong enough to put up a fight, they might be strong enough to help me actually pass the class.”

Come on now, buy the fucking act.

“What you’re asking is very hard to get… and expensive.”

Izuku rose an eyebrow “How expansive are we talking?”

A smile that looked greedy but was probably trying to hide it showed up on the man’s face “Oh, about 50.000 yen a vial.”
Izuku didn’t need to fake the wide eyes that covered his face. “Hmmm,” he rubbed his chin, as if assessing what he needed to steal to afford the drug. “Come on, man” he lifted his arms “Can’t you do me a favour, you know, bidder to bidder?”

“Sorry” he shrugged. “I might be able to get you a free sample though. But, pay attention, next time you’ll have to get the whole deal.” He leaned forward “Sure you got the money?”

Izuku blinked but didn’t pull back. He let a long, relaxed smile fall over his featured before he jerked his head in the direction of where he had left his senpai “Remember the one I came with?”

“Big, dumb, rich boy?”

“That’s him,” Izuku nodded “Let’s do it like this: you manage to bring us more samples” he showed four fingers “And I get you a permanent clientele to buy it”

The man looked after the tall hero in training, thought there was no way to actually see him in the crowd before looking back at the smaller teen “You sure you can get the wall from earlier to do that?”

“Oh, please, you know rich kids” he leaned closer “They love the thrill, not the taste.” He chuckled a little, enough to not be all suspicious “And they learn to love the taste soon enough.”

“All Right” He shook his head “By the way, can you talk to your boyfriend, he keeps burning some buildings in the south area?”

Izuku’s blood ran cold, knowing exactly what he meant, but not trying to show it. “Who?”

“Pfft, don’t play dumb” the man slapped him on the shoulder and Izuku made a valid effort not to topple over “Dabi’s been a lot tamer since you two started dating” he scratched his head “Well, he had been. He started going bad again a few weeks back and these days he is attacking a lot of private properties and warehouses.” He tilted his head “Any idea why?”

Izuku wanted to say something, but he was currently redder than a tomato. From anger or embarrassment, he didn’t know. “No” he said, grinding his teeth on every word “I don’t.”

“Oh” Karatine said, as if he only now realised what was happening “You broke up, or something? That’s bad” he scratched his head and Izuku barely held in a groan. “Come on now, why was everyone thinking that?! He shook his head.

“So” he said, “What’s that asshole doing?”

“He started burning a lot of private properties.” He scratched his head. “A lot of the big deals got arrested in the ruckus.” He yawned a little “Don’t know, heard he joined that League of Villains shit or something.”

“Did he now?” Izuku tapped a finger on his arm as he thought “And? Are they any good?”

“Think of joining?” the man smirked and the words sent shivers down the boy’s spine “Well, I don’t know. They have yet to fail, but they also started a mini war with a few big deals around here, so I’m not sure how smart they actually are.”

Izuku clicked his tongue, displeased. If the man was going to believe that he and Dabi were a couple, he might as well take advantage of it. no matter how disgusting the mere notion seemed.
“So” Karatine said, a big smile suddenly on his lips “Tomorrow, here, for Bluebird and Witchlight? Don’t forget to bring your friend!”

“Yeah, yeah” izuku said as he turned heel and walked towards the opposite direction. He tapped the signal for Toogata to meet him and leaned on the door. It would have been ideal to stay and see more, but the boy had seen some people getting heated over the recent loss of their favourite, and he knew it was better not to stay too long. It didn’t matter if you weren’t part of the conflict, you could lose a few teeth anyway.

Toogata tapped back. Not three times, which was the signal for coming back. Not two times, which meant emergency. But four times, which meant that it would take a little longer. Izuku sighed. Toogata was strong, but not all that well versed in the triple truths that versed the fighting ring. He could hold his own in a fight, but Izuku didn’t want for it to get there. I might as well find him… he thought and started walking randomly, catching eye of the battle beneath every once in a while.

It didn’t take him all that long to find his senpai. It wasn’t even all that hard. Apparently, being a social butterfly was something that extended to heroes and villains alike, because the blond was surrounded by a lot of people cheering and yelling at the arena, a can of bear already crumbling slightly beneath the pressure of his fingers. Izuku leaned on the wall and watched from the shadows as the other talked and laughed at the match. When it was finished and Bluebird won, once again, his upperclassman stood up, said something to one of them and left in the direction of the exit. Izuku followed close behind, watching exactly how long it would take the other to see that he was there.

They were approaching the exit when Izuku decided to test his luck and sneaked an arm in one of his hoodie pockets to snatch something.

It took exactly a millisecond for Izuku to find himself pinned to the wall, his hand slammed between his shoulder blades. “Wow” Izuku chuckled “You really have amazing reflexes”

“Of course” Toogata let him go and tilted his head as Izuku rubbed his arm “Were you testing me?”

“Quite” Izuku nodded and started to walk out “Did you know that I was behind you?”

“I didn’t know it was you.”

“Hm” Izuku nodded “I have to get better at stealth”

“You weren’t that bad” Toogata tried “I’m just used to people trailing me,”

“How so?” Izuku turned to face him as they entered the cold air of the night.

“Paparazzi can be beasts. And, besides, Nighteye said it’s very important for a hero to not be followed,” he said.

“True” Izuku looked up trying to spot his dark cladded sensei.

“You know, it is not guaranteed that the enemy will come from above” his deep voice said and Izuku jumped and faced his teacher. Aizawa was leaning on a wall and the greenette had the distinct impression he had been there for quite some time. He sighed in relief when he saw that it was only him. Aizawa straightened his back “Let’s get back,”

~O~
Once in the office, in a very comfy armchair, Izuku waited for the debrief to start. Aizawa was napping in his chair, this time without the sleeping bag and Bubble Girl was tapping her foot on the carpet. The greenette only wanted to get home as soon as possible and go to bed. It might have not been all that much physically, but he felt the energy draining out of him and into the tiles and rocks that held the building and trapped so many workers in inhuman hours and gave nothing but disappointment back.

Nighteye finally entered and sat at his desk. “All right, let’s start.” He pushed his glasses up his nose and looked them in the eye before starting a recorder. “Me and Bubble Girl didn’t found anything related to the case. We caught a few villains and stopped a bank robbery. Now,” he looked at the three of them “Give me some good news. Mirio?”

The boy straightened his back and looked at his superior “Right. After we left the agency, Eraserhead went for the roofs. I followed Midorika, alias Yamikumo to the basement of a building and there we found an arena and a lot of people cheering and hollering. A lot of noise. Before that, Yamikumo talked to the security and convinced the bouncers to let us in. It has been brought to my attention that if I want to be able to come in the near future, I will need to register,” He took a deep breath.

Damn, this is pretty detailed.

“Once inside, me and Yamikumo got split up. I kept my eyes and ears open, though the unnecessary noise made it hard. I wandered around until I found a commotion and managed to stop it before anyone got seriously hurt, thought there were some minor injuries.” Here, he stopped as if he tried to make sense of what was to come. “They were all in different stages of inebriation. The one who seemed to be in charge challenged me in a contest of strength by arm wrestling, which I won and that... apparently gained their respect, I believe? They invited me to join them in watching the fights.” He frowned a little before continuing “From what I was able to gather, they were regulars there. Quite a few of them were actually fighters who stood out and enjoyed the night. They seemed to have little to no knowledge about the drug in question. Either that or they were faking. They offered to introduce me to the man who handled their money and join become a fighter myself. Apparently, my skills may be looked after” he took a deep breath “And here it is that things get interesting. You see, their ‘sponsor’ I think had just appeared. He talked to them and they introduced me to him. He was pretty tall, had a golden tooth and wore a magenta suit”

Izuku rose an arm. Nighteye seemed perplexed for a moment before nodding in his direction. The boy said. “Did he have a relaxed gait and white, unwashed hair?”

“Yes”

“Then his name is Giran. He is an information broker and was known to have associated to the man named ‘Sensei’... alias All for One” he breathed in “Presently I don’t know if they have any connection with the league, but there had been rumours that he was recruiting people with exceptional Quirks”

“Interesting” Aizawa rubbed his chin. Nighteye seemed lost in thought before he nodded towards the blond.

“Right” Toogata started again. “Anyway, I started talking with him. The others were quite helpful in asking for the steroids and such, and one of them mentioned a Quirk enhancer. Giran said that he was looking into it. I asked about other things related, about other villains and big names, but they said a lot of things with little importance. There were some points that brought my attention,
such as the mention of some new big names and such, and one of them cursing about the insistence of someone with a bird mask, but that is all” he straightened his back once again “I got the invitation to join them tomorrow for another match.”

“I will consider it” Nighteye said in the end and Toogata slumped in his seat “While information is useful, I want to make sure it is worth the risk.” He looked up and suddenly the shiny glasses were upon him once again. “Midoriya.”

“Right” Izuku stood straight in his chair, keenly aware of all the pairs of eyes that were on him. “After me and Lemillion got separated, I was met with a past acquaintance of mine. I managed to convince him that I intend to buy a Quirk enhancing drug, and he agreed to the deal.” Izuku bit his lip. He didn’t know how to make it sound more official. Compared to him, what Toogata did sounded so important “He also revealed the information that the villain Dabi, known member of the League of Villains, had started destroying a lot of private properties, both heroes and villains, and that, apparently, the League has entered a conflict with one of the powerful local gangs.” He took a deep breath, trying to remember if there was anything else before shaking his head sadly “That’s all I have.”

_Good job, you useless paperclip. That was the one thing you were supposed to be god at, yet Toogata, who's still green behind the ears did better._

Izuku looked down. “This is valuable information, Midoriya” Izuku looked up at Nighteye who was looking over some plans “We will see if the drug you found is Trigger or not” he looked up “Eraser?”

“I will give you my written report tomorrow” the man said with finality. Nighteye nodded. He sat up.

“Be here at eight o’clock sharp” he said. Everybody stood up and Izuku waited for his homeroom teacher to lead the way. He followed Aizawa out of the building and into his car. The boy waited for the man to start talking. To ask him about the mission, to tell him something, to chastise him… to something.

But Aizawa remained silent. He didn’t turn on the radio. He didn’t even look at him as he drove the familiar streets. And that was when Izuku realised that there would be something he wanted to talk about and that he needed his full attention for it.

_Fuck. _Izuku realised and started to calculate how long would it exactly take for him to make it out of the car once it stopped. His mom wasn’t yet home, so he couldn’t call the interphone. He had to get his keys and dash out a quickly as possible.

The car entered the driveway and Izuku prepared himself. Aizawa pulled in front of his house and the boy already had his hand on the handle when the soft click of the car locking made all hope gathered vanish like it was never there in the first place.

The greenette looked at his teacher, his best impression of dumbfounded on his face, thought he knew it wouldn’t work “Sensei?”

“There’s something I wanted to ask you” he said and Izuku deflated.

“I guessed by the way you ominously locked the door and stopped me from leaving the car.”

Aizawa wasn’t impressed. “You might have forgotten, but I did hear everything you two
talked about.” He shrugged “Granted, I did lower Toogata’s levels, because what you were telling seemed more important, but there’s something more I would like to ask you, and I thought it would have been better if you didn’t answer in front of the others.”

“All right” Izuku slumped his shoulders and stared out the window, resting his forehead on the cold glass. Outside, it was pretty dark and, when he looked up, his apartment was dark. And no doubt cold he thought and shivered at the thought.

“When you talked with that dealer. He mentioned something about you getting something from him another time.”

“I didn’t” izuku looked ahead, avoiding the scrutinizing eyes of his teacher “He gave me some cigarettes, which I didn’t take for the oh so simple reason that I didn’t know what they put in them” he sighed and looked at Aizawa “I am fully aware that unknown drugs can kill you, and don’t worry, there wasn’t any time I actually took any” he shook his head and remembered the broken bodies on the streets, the sunken eyes and how skinny and desperate some of the people he fought had become “Don’t worry. I saw the worst of what can happen” he sighed “I won’t ever get there.”

The man looked ahead “I don’t like this”

“This is the internship.”

“yes. We especially put you in here to protect you” he gritted his teeth “To teach you to get better. I don’t like that you go out there without supervision.” He looked at him “It’s too much noise, too much jamming devices. If you fell, or your comms stopped, we would have no idea where to find you.”

“But Sensei, I’m fine” izuku tried “I’ve been there a thousand times, and nothing ever happened.”

“You didn’t get kidnapped before UA either, but that didn’t stop villains from trying”

Izuku sighed and sunk in his chair “Well, there’s nothing we can do about that” he looked at his teacher, gaze burning “Like it or not, I am useful. I can help. I should do it.”

The man clicked his tongue, no doubt hating the way his own words had been turned against him. Izuku didn’t care. He just wanted this to be over already. There was about a full minute of awkward silence before Izuku spoke. “So, is that all?”

“No” Aizawa said, his voice taking a tone he had never heard before, yet the teen knew that he wasn’t going to like what followed “Actually, I found another part of that conversation very interesting” he turned to look at him, black eyes piercing him to the leather seat “What exactly is the nature of the relationship between you and the villain named Dabi?”

It took Izuku a few seconds to wonder what the man was referring to, before the earlier conversation came to mind and Izuku felt himself turn into a strawberry.

“What” he gulped and his voice cracked “What exactly do you mean?”

Aizawa looked something between angry and deadpan. “Was there a sexual nature to your relationship?”

“NO” Izuku cried and waved his hands” NO, NO, No No, nononononono” he threw his arms in signs of denial, accidentally hitting the ceiling of the car and letting out a pained yelp “No, there was nothing similar or any kind in that regard” he cradled his wounded appendices to his chest
and flexed his fingers “No, there wasn’t anything like that, I didn’t, I swear I …” he mumbled before looking up.

Aizawa’s face remained inexpressive, though there was some amusement in his eyes. “Are you sure?”

“What kind of question is that?! No, I did not sleep with Dabi, why the fuck would you ask that?!”

“I just wanted to make sure” the man said. Izuku clenched his teeth and looked away, fully aware that he was red to his roots. He clenched his hands.

“Can I go now, or do you want to humiliate me some more?”

“Well, I was considering asking at the office, I guarantee, it would have taken much longer.” The end of his sentence was lost in the squeal the boy revealed when he buried his head into his hands. He didn’t see the man cracking a smile, nor the fond look in his eye.

“Why did you have to put that image into my head?” izuku Whined. The man responded by unlocking the doors. The boy looked up before grabbing his backpack and walking out. he waited a few seconds with his hand on the door before he let out a soft “Goodnight”

“Stay safe” the Pro Hero responded without missing a beat and Izuku let the door close with a soft thud. He felt his teacher’s gaze on him while he walked up the stairs, up until he entered the building.

It was eerily quiet. Izuku walked and entered his house before turning on the lights. Mom wasn’t home and wouldn’t be home for a couple more hours, so he simply took off his backpack and jacket and made his way to his room.

Dabi was waiting on the windowsill.

It took Izuku three seconds to process the image before he yelped and took the closest thing to him – a jar – and chucked it at the man. Dabi dodged and said “Wait, please, just let me talk!”

Izuku stopped, his hand inches from his phone. He looked at the man, at the person he called his friend for a year, at the one who taught him how to fight and how to survive.

At the person who led the attack on his class.

“Please.” Dabi said and he took in a few deep breaths “Just listen to me, please…”

Izuku gulped. Call Aizawa. He must still be close, he can make it here quick.

Dabi joined the League, he kidnapped you, god knows what happened while you were unconscious. You need to get him arrested.

Yes, that was right, Dabi was a villain, he was a criminal, who had attacked them and he had…

…. He also let you go.

Izuku placed his phone in his pocket, hand hovering above the message. “What do you want?!” he said in a low growl, his voice rough and feral.
For the first time since he could last remember, Dabi looked uncomfortable. Like he didn’t like the conversation they were having. Still he took a deep breath “I came to apologise.” He gritted his teeth “And to explain.”

“There’s nothing to explain: you are a villain and you attacked my school and my classmates and kidnapped me and ….” Izuku stopped, as he felt his eyes start to burn. Dabi sighed softly and looked down.

“I know. And there’s nothing to excuse. That’s not what I’m asking”

“Then what are you asking?”

“You need to stay away from Overhaul and the Eight Precepts of Death, do you hear me?”

“Yeah, I got it, Shigaraki came and did the same speech, why do you bother?”

Dabi didn’t falter “Because I don’t want you to die.”

“Yeah” Izuku felt his blood boil “You care about me sooo much, you told Shigaraki, the guy who tried to kill me, *Multiple times*, where I live.”

Dabi frowned “I didn’t tell him shit”

“Then how did he know where to come?!”

“Izuku” Dabi said and the boy stopped. It wasn’t often that the man used his real name “You know as well as I do that it’s not all that hard to find out where you live. It’s public knowledge that you go to UA, someone can follow you home. Midoriya is not that popular of a name. You can find your mom through facebook alone.” Izuku gulped and looked away. Dabi sighed “Look, I didn’t tell him where you live. I had no idea he came and threatened you until he mentioned it”

Izuku looked away before he made the courage to meet the fiery blue eyes again “Why did you join him, Dabi, why?”

The man sighed, he looked extremely tired, like it had been weeks since he had last gotten a good night’s sleep. “Shigaraki may be childish, but he has a point. This society is broken, and it needs to be fixed.”

“And being a villain is going to fix it?” Izuku snarled. Dabi frowned.

“No hero ever tried” izuku looked away, not meting the man’s eyes. Dabi sighed “I’m not going to argue with you about this, I will…..”

“What happened to me after I tried to escape?”

“What?”

Izuku looked at him “After I tried to escape. Shigaraki knocked me out, and the next thing I know, I wake up in a hospital with my chest shredded to ribbons.”

Dabi’s eyes widened “You don’t remember?”

“No” Izuku gritted his teeth “And I would very much like to.”

Dabi scratched his head “You sure?” Izuku nodded “Fine” he sighed “You tried to escape a second time. You entered a lab with an experimental Noumu and it attacked you” he took a deep
breath “I got there in time” Was all he said, and Izuku didn’t ask for details. He still remembered Tsubasa and how he looked, how he spoke, the mind numbing fear that had gathered in his limbs and stopped him in his track.

He might not remember it, but that didn’t stop him from feeling phantom claws rack down his torso, cold blood gushing and trailing down his stomach, his tights, his throat hoarse with screams….

“Easy there” a soothing voice and scarred arms guided him to the ground and Izuku found himself resting on the fluffy carpet. He looked up and met the burning blue in Dabi’s eyes.

The boy slapped his hands away and pulled his knees to his chest. Dabi took the clue and stepped back a few paces, just enough to let a few meters between them. He looked up “Why did you kidnap me? Why did you let me go?”

He shook his head “Shigaraki already knew that I knew you. I don’t know how. I tried to get his mind off of it, but I was already suspicious enough. I didn’t want all of them turning against me”

“But why did you let me….”

“Because I care about you, goddammit” he snapped and Izuku shut up. Dabi calmed a little “because, as impossible as it might seem, I don’t want you to die” he took a deep breath and straightened his back “that’s why I’m telling you to stay away from Overhaul. He’s dangerous, more than you can handle.”

“I can’t” was all he said.

Dabi sighed and shook his head “I suspected it” he looked sad “I knew your fucking school and your awful luck would somehow land you here” he lifted his head “I will tell you if there’s anything or any time you need to stay away from something.”

Izuku nodded in acknowledgement but didn’t say anything else. He sighed “Take care,” he waited a few more moments before he shook his head in defeat and stepped through the window.

The message under Aizawa’s name was carefully deleted.

Chapter End Notes

ok, i’ve been receiving more asks and i want to put it out there right now
1- izuku and Dabi are 145395% platonic and it will stay that way
2-yes, they will become friends again by the end of this work, don't worry
this will happen
anyway
on another note, i might not be able to post the next week, because of this nasty thing
called exams and such, but by god, will i try
see you on discord and tumblr
also
please bow to dogi for this amazing aaaaart
and also this, really now, they are brilliant
The next day had started, depressingly predictably, with him getting utterly trashed on the floor of a gym. He didn’t like it but he didn’t exactly have a choice either so he tried to endure as best as he could.

Truth was, Nighteye was very adamant for the holder of One for All be able to, you know, wield the goddamn abomination. Izuku had almost argued when he’d been told to come in for training but one look at the man’s face, half cold determination, half challenge with a pinch of amusement around the corners of his eyes had been enough to keep him silent.

Which was why he was now struggling to drag himself off the ground, with both of his teachers eyeing him critically. He managed to make it to a bench where he promptly inhaled a bottle of water almost fast enough to choke before taking a moment to breathe. The sore muscles and bruises at fuck o’clock in the morning, reminded him with a bitter kind of irony, of his time with Dabi.

And speaking of Dabi...

Izuku had yet to tell Aizawa about their earlier conversation, but he knew he would have to. Dabi was a villain, part of the League of Villains and, apparently, somehow involved with Overhaul as well. The boy knew he would have to tell his teacher about that... later.

Truth was, he didn’t know what to think. He didn’t know what to do or what he wanted to do. He didn’t know all that much really. All he knew was that he wanted to believe the man. He wanted to believe Dabi when he said he cared, he wanted to believe that his friend was actually his friend and that he regretted the training camp incident. He really, really did.

He knew that he couldn’t trust the villain though. Izuku knew he should stay away from him, that it would be better to cut all ties and get it over with. He knew that he shouldn’t be so weak as to accept that apology after everything that had happened.

But... Dabi had been his first friend. The first person he actually enjoyed spending time with, the first person to listen to his dreams and not call them impossible. And, try as he might, he couldn’t forget that; a selfish part of him didn’t want to. A selfish part of him didn’t want the others to be right, didn’t want to admit that the time spent together had been a lie.

Didn’t want to admit that villains were unforgivable.

Because if they were…

What did that say about him?

Izuku was too engrossed in his thoughts to properly dodge the water bottle aimed at his head. The plastic collided with his sweaty mess of curls only to bounce off and on the ground. Izuku looked up and saw Toogata smiling and Nighteye motioning for him to get up. Izuku stretched and got to his feet.

“All right,” the man said, pushing his glasses up his nose. “Warm up over, time to get down to actual business. Let’s start from the beginning; how do you use One for All?”
“I don’t know,” Izuku shrugged and managed to stand up “I just activate it and it breaks my limbs,”

“Try to turn it on. Don’t do anything with it- just turn it on,”

Izuku looked at his arm and called upon the thing inside him that wanted so hard to get out.

The restless energy answered immediately, with the force of a tidal wave sweeping over him, beating again him trying to get out any way it could. Red and green lightning ran up and down his arm, vivid and jagged, nearly out of control, feeling like small, vicious needles, pricking at his skin. Izuku focused on keeping it in, keeping it in check, using the disapproving faces of both Aizawa and Recovery girl as motivators.

Nighteye leaned in closer and Izuku spared a moment to look at him questionably.

The man pulled back “Well, it certainly manifests differently in you, though both you and All Might seem to share the fact that you have your appearance somehow modified by the quirk. I assume it depends on the person,” Izuku allowed himself to shut off the Quirk and breathe a sigh of relief.

It was Toogata senpai who spoke. “Have you… have you tried to, maybe, lower the power?”

“Have I tried to what now?”

“Turn down the pressure?” he lifted his arms, like he was trying to find a gesture to convey his meaning “You know, like when you turn on a faucet at the highest pressure and it just bursts out?”

Nighteye nodded “You seem to turn it on at full power. Try to put a smaller amount of force into it,”

“All right,” Izuku said as he looked at his arm again. Taking a deep breath, he turned on the Quirk and stared at it. The lightning came back and the boy glared at the sparks of energy. It was too much. He tried to pull some back.

The lightning on his arm became smaller even as it spread and over his torso as well, but it still felt like it was trying to tear him skin and muscles apart to burst out into the world

“Hmmmm” Nighteye said and Izuku turned it off. “You only kept the Quirk in your arm, but it can go to your torso too.”

“Yeah” He shrugged “That’s the only way I can lower the amount in my arm; I have to spread it and focus it somewhere else so it doesn’t burst,” he flexed his fingers, remembering how many times they had broken previously and shaking his head.

Toogata frowned “That means that you could technically spread it along the whole body?”

“Hm?” Izuku looked up. Toogata scratched his head.

“Well, you did say that it feels too much. But you also moved the point of focus from your arm to the rest of the torso. That means that you could theoretically spread it out over your entire body, right?”
“Like pressure division,” Nighteye said and something in Izuku suddenly clicked.

“I think I get it,” he looked at his arm “By that logic, if I increase the surface of my body, I will lessen the pressure of the Quirk”

“Give it a try,” Nighteye nodded and Izuku turned One for All on again. This time, he made sure to send the lightning all across his body, small tingles of green energy spreading all over the surface of his skin and clothes, creating a small, vivid glow. The energy still stung but now it was more like a cup or two of espresso rather than getting sneezed on by Kaminari.

I can control it! A giddy smile covered his features and Izuku looked up. toogata was giving him the thumbs up and Nighteye didn’t look… disapproving, which had to be a step up, didn’t it?

The door to the gym opened and Izuku looked to see his homeroom teacher walk in. Aizawa was somehow managing to look tired with life and existence itself and still let out a somewhat supportive energy Izuku really appreciated.

“How’s it going?” He asked, looking at the three of them

“I managed to distribute the power evenly!” Izuku giggled as he bounced on the balls of his feet. He then closed his eyes and focused, calling onto the power once again. It was still hard. Very hard. No matter how even he managed to spread the energy, it was still trying to get out, to explore, to devour. It was still gnawing at his bones and Izuku knew, without a shred of doubt, that if he ever let it loose, it would burst out in a fraction of a second.

He looked at his teacher. Aizawa was nodding approvingly and Izuku forced a smile on his face. It was good, he was getting better. He turned it off and couldn’t hide the sigh of relief when the pressure vanished and there was no more risk of destruction.

It was good. It was going to get better.

What if I do it anyway? There’s nothing you could ever do to stop me. What if I give you a Quirk that destroys you? What if I give you a Quirk so painful, so horrible, that you come begging at me to take it back?

Izuku shut the words out of his head. All for One was in prison. He couldn’t touch him now, he was far away. He can’t hurt you, he can’t reach you.

But Shigaraki can.

Izuku took a deep breath. He looked at his hands, visualising the thin streaks of lightning running underneath, the pain, the strain, the bones that could crack at the slightest slip in focus. It was true, he’d never asked for this Quirk. He didn’t know if there would have been a time when he would have taken it. Actually, thinking back to his helpless pathetic self he realised that yes, there had been a time when he would have accepted it with open hands. Heck, he might have not even questioned All for One if he had been given the choice.

All those years you prayed for a Quirk and now, when you finally get one, all you do is complain. Give me a break.

He never asked for a Quirk.

All Might gave it to you anyway. Don’t be ungrateful.
Izuku had wanted to be a hero on his own.

*You’ll be a better hero with this Quirk than you could ever have been alone.*

He clenched his fist. All Might had given him a chance. After he gave up on the hero, after he had been the reason for his downfall, he had still given him a Quirk, *his* Quirk, one of the most powerful out there. He had still believed that he could be a hero.

He couldn’t... he *wouldn’t* let the man down. He would make sure to control the Quirk, to make it as strong as possible, to find the right person worthy of inheriting it later. He had to.

“*Izuku,*”

The boy looked up. Aizawa was looking at him with an unreadable expression, measuring him from head to toe, trying to see what was going on in that mind of his. Izuku smiled and hoped that the man didn’t see through his façade.

Fat chance, but he could hope.

“You can control it, right?”

Izuku looked at his hands, covered in scars and burns, and tried to remember a time when they weren’t. He couldn’t. “With some difficulty, but yes,”

Aizawa nodded “Try to put it on the smallest output and use it.”

Izuku nodded and flared up. Making sure the energy was spread evenly across his limbs, he eyed the punching bag and released.

He was violently thrown into the wall behind him.

~O~

After some ice, some yelling at interns and people who came to complain, and a very, very long nap meant to make Izuku ready for whatever the next night was going to bring, the boy was staring at the ceiling. He had just woken up a few minutes ago and was trying to keep the few seconds of bliss before it all collapsed over his head and he realised that he had to get up and into town.

But... the couch was very comfy. Soft, but not too soft and pleasantly fuzzy; Izuku would have stayed there all night.

*Can’t I just... stay here? Forever?*

Apparently, not, as it was when the door slammed into the wall and Toogata jerked awake from the armchair he was sleeping in as well. Izuku would have too, but he was honestly too tired to move suddenly. The boy looked at his homeroom teacher, eyeing them with a critical look. “*Get dressed*” he said and walked out. the smaller teen sighed and got out of the blissful heaven that was the couch while Toogata was positively radiating sunshine energy. No wonder Nighteye wanted him for a successor, he was so goddamn *bright*.

*But he got you as a successor. The Quirkless little nobody who seems bent on screwing*
Izuku gritted his teeth and looked away before slipping on his hoodie, his weapons and starting to work on his makeup. He had to look just the right amount of dead and done with life. Toogata had gotten a black wig, which would have worked pretty well, except that it just... didn’t. It was clearly not meant for him and Izuku could only be glad that he would keep his hood up, and that he would manage to keep it up. Getting revealed would be very unfortunate.

He looked in the mirror one more time before he and his upperclassman took to the office. This time, the two teachers seemed to be in somewhat of an argument, but stopped the moment the two kids entered. Aizawa made the effort to glare at the taller hero, which probably meant that Nighteye had killed his cat or something, before they both turned towards the kids. Aizawa took a deep breath “I’ll join you inside today” he said.

Toogata frowned “Won’t you be recognised?”

“Yeah,” Izuku supplied “No offence, but you’re not exactly all that secret as an underground hero anymore”

“True, but I’m not All Might either. The chances of someone recognizing me aren’t null, but they’re still slim. And, even if they did,” he shrugged as he pulled out a hood that covered the upper half of his face. Since when does his costume have a hood? Izuku was sure that, if the man were to use his Quirk, his eyes would glow like some kind of Sith lord and scare everyone away. But, at the same time, the hero looked hella shady, which would have fit pretty well in the dark drunken shadows of the fighting ring.

The green haired man clicked his tongue but didn’t mention anything else before pushing his glasses up his nose and sitting at a computer. “All your comms online?”

Izuku tapped the small bud in his ear before nodding. The others did the same before Aizawa turned heel and walked out. The kids followed. They were about halfway from the ring when the man turned towards them. “I’ll find my way in. LeMillion still has to register from what I remember. I’ll scout the grounds and don’t forget to contact me when you get in” he said, sending a pointed glare to the greenette, enough to let him know that the comment was specifically tailored for him and him alone. Because, apparently, Toogata was doing just fine.

“All right” Izuku grumbled and looked ahead, listening at how the man climbed the railing and how his upperclassman was following him from behind. They moved pretty fast as they got in. this time, Toogata had to get a fake ID, to which no one batted an eye. It took longer than the smaller boy would have liked, but eh, what can you do. The moment they left the watch of the two bouncers, Izuku tapped his teacher and leaned over the railing of the arena, studying the two opponents.

[“Where are you?”] Aizawa asked.

“Left corner” Izuku mumbled, looking to his side where his senpai was already getting dragged away by the friends he had made previously.

[“Do you know when your dealer comes?”]

Izuku looked at his watch. “He should be here in a few more minutes,” he coughed and started cheering for the random newbie who was doing surprisingly well for the first time Izuku saw him there.
[“I’ll try to find you”] was heard before the line went dead. Izuku clicked his tongue and stared mindlessly at the ring. It took more than a few minutes for that menace of a man to appear and tap his shoulder. Izuku looked and rose an eyebrow, happy for the pins keeping his hair out of his face. “Do you have it?” he started.

The man nodded “Not here,” he whispered and dragged the other in a different direction. Izuku shrugged and followed the man, wrenching his wrist from his grip as he did so. The boy dodged different elbows in the vicinity, his short height being ideal for sneaking around, but not for splitting the masses like Moses. Toogata would have been good at this, people would simply shy away from his brightness.

The boy was dragged in a dark corner and boxed into the wall. It was most likely meant to be intimidating, but all Izuku could think of was No one will notice if I stab you as he rubbed nervously the hilt of the knife in his hoodie pocket.

“So” the dealer said, pulling something out of his pocket “I got my end of the deal” he said, pulling out a box, “Now it’s your turn.”

Izuku looked up “What the hell do you mean, the first batch was free.” He didn’t let it show, but cold sweat was starting to trail down his spine. Keep calm, Aizawa is here, he can protect you. He was at the camp too.

“Yeah, well… you see, there has been a change of plans”, the man smirked and leaned forward in a very predatory way. Izuku suddenly got flashbacks to the blond haired girl with the League of Villains and how she took way too much of his space. The boy had to consciously keep himself from stabbing the fucker right then and there. He just gently pushed him away so he could have some of his space back. The man grunted but allowed him a few measly inches of air “See, the bosses aren’t really all that happy to give you free samples, even with the guarantee of possible new comers. The risk is too big, and they are not sure that you are trustworthy” he shrugged in a very suspicious way that was meant to be nonchalant but only came out as forced.

Izuku looked down and pretended to think. “What are the changes in the deal?”

“Hmm, the deal,” he slipped his hand behind the teen and pulled him closer, as he looked at the arena. Izuku was seriously starting to entertain the thought of breaking a finger “They would have really wanted to meet you, you know? To make sure that you’re worth their time.”

[No] came from the comm before Izuku even got time to open his mouth. It grinded at him to just give up like that but he knew better than to argue in this position so he just sighed and shrugged.

“I really don’t know, man.” He looked away “What is the lowest price I could get?” he said with a somewhat sad look on his face. The one that spelled that he was desperate enough to pay more, but not enough to follow. The man was obviously displeased, as he clicked his tongue.

“Well” he took his arm off the kid as he looked in the ring, all interest gone now that the prospect of a potential kidnapping was off the table “The starting price would be 3000 yen”

“Alright, when can we….?”

“I’ll find you” he said and walked away without another word. Izuku stood flabbergasted in one place before he leaned and slid on the wall, putting his hands over his head to mask his talk in the comm.

“Why did you stop me?” he grunted, looking for all available parties like he was sulking the loss of
the deal “I could have found them and whatever the hell is happening if I met the boss.”

[Because that was most likely a kidnapping attempt] his teacher said.

“So, it would have gotten us farther than we already are” he mumbled. He could hear his teacher sigh on the other end.

[I don’t like you getting kidnapped. Plus they’re most likely selling Trigger. Who is currently in charge of Trigger? It used to be All for One but now is it Overhaul. Usually, he would have refused you until you simply brought the money. But he tried to bring you with him. That means that either the Precepts or their immediate underlings think you are, in some way shape or form, important. Which kinda defies the purpose of the whole undercover deal]

Izuku understood the reasoning. That didn’t mean he had to like it. He got up and looked after the man in the distance. It took some time, but the man rose a head over the masses, so it wasn’t hard to find him. Izuku got closer. The dealer seemed to be talking to someone. This wouldn’t have been all that unusual, had it not been for the appearance of the new comer.

The man had clothes of higher quality than probably everyone else in the building. They were neat and most likely recently cleaned. He was also intimidating the man who had tried to kidnap him earlier. But the thing that was surely of most interest was the beak like mask covering his face. Izuku squinted.

[What do you see ?]

“Something that might turn out important” Izuku whispered as he got closer. Yup, the dealer was scared all right. The newcomer looked over the masses and Izuku was for the first time glad that he was short, otherwise he would have surely been spotted over the crowd. “He seems scared by someone. I think I found our guy.”

[Don’t do anything reckless]

“They’re leaving” Izuku said as the two man turned heel and walked towards the exit “I’ll follow them.”

[Don’t]

“You’re right behind me” he said before he slipped through the crowd, trying to get close enough to those people. He could hear Aizawa grunt and huff behind him, but he paid the man no mind as he went forward. He didn’t say to pull back yet, so he wouldn’t.

The two culprits walked out. Izuku waited in the shadows for them to disappear before he followed. He couldn’t get close enough, for fear of them noticing him. So, as frustrating as it was, he kept his distance and followed through.

The bricks were rough under his fingers as he walked, their texture worn by weather and lack of care. Izuku’s heart was thrumming in his chest. Why was this? It wasn’t the first time he had sneaked around, certainly not the first time he did it around dangerous people. He didn’t know, but that didn’t stop his breath from flinching when the man turned around.

Izuku flattened himself to the opposite wall, praying for the other not to see him. It was a bunch of very long, very painful seconds in which he waited for steps to arrive before they finally started and got fainter.
The boy let out a breath and followed.

The two people finally stopped. They stood in front of a car, black, long, sleek and with no remarkable signs on it. They were talking. Izuku squinted, trying to see the number. It was something-04. Izuku squinted, leaning forward; come on now, it was so close…

A hand clamped itself around his shoulder and one over his mouth as he was slammed into the wall. He wanted to scream, but the hand cut of his airwave. The boy bit and heard a very familiar grunt before red eyes were glaring at him from behind the hood. Izuku felt his blood freeze in his veins, but remained silent.

After making sure that the teen was going to keep his trap shut, Aizawa took his hand away and looked over the wall. Letting out a curse, he signed Izuku to climb the window sill very close to the ground. The kid pushed himself up and climbed the wall, grabbing eventually onto a stair until he reached the roof, from where his teacher landed, carried by his magical toilet paper. He pulled the boy away from the edge and waited a few seconds until the unmistakable noise of a car drove away. Izuku ran to the edge.

“They got away” he said before he was yanked from the edge and grabbed by the collar, staring into the dark, deep red eyes of his teacher.

“I thought I told you to pull back” he growled in voice boiling with anger.

*I’m fucking* Izuku gulped. “I- I…” Izuku tried to step back, but the man lifted him, making him stand on his tip toes “Sensei I’m…”

“If you dare say you’re sorry when we both know you are not or I’ll leave you right here, right now” he leaned a little bit closer, forcing Izuku to look him in the eye “If you were, you wouldn’t have done it.”

Izuku looked down” Nothing happened,” he mumbled, more out of habit than hoping it would soothe the man “We could have found out their base, or a point, or something more than….” He clamped his mouth shut as his teacher let him go suddenly. Izuku stumbled and fell onto the concrete. He didn’t try to get up, he just looked at his teacher who was glaring down at him. Despite his training, Izuku cowered.

“In case you have forgotten, those people had an interest in you.”

“In Akatani….”

“Even worse. You are undercover, with minimal interactions and yet, you suddenly gain the attention of some powerful people. Which either means that they know who you are or that they don’t, which is bad in both cases” he groaned and grabbed his temples “They almost saw you. They were coming here. After an almost kidnapping attempt, they came here, and you just fucking stood! You delivered yourself with a big bright bow right to their car”

“I can take care of myself!” Izuku didn’t yell, but it was enough. “And you have no guarantee that they were trying to kidnap me” that last part was mumbled.

“I knew this was a bad idea, I knew” he rubbed his chin before letting out a sigh. “Get up,”

Izuku followed the order without another word. The man pulled out his phone and texted something before he looked at the teen “You will meet with Lemillion at the corner store. He will send me a message when he finds you and you will go directly back to the agency, no questions asked. Do I make myself clear?”
“Yes Sensei,” Izuku said, looking at the ground.

“Good” the hero slipped on his goggles and jumped on another block in the direction Izuku remembered the car had went. The boy watched his teacher and sighed, shaking his head as he thought of the way towards the meeting point.

~O~

Logically speaking, there were a lot of things Dabi could actually put up with. He had spent fifteen years in that bastards home, puking every day. He had watched his mother taken away, his siblings scared into submission, so it wasn’t like he didn’t know how to keep his mouth shut and let his anger fester and fuel. He knew how to bide his time, and his annoyance tolerance levels had reached god like level since he had first met the brat.

That said, Dabi didn’t have a short fuse. He didn’t just toast people out of nowhere because he couldn’t control his emotions, much like a certain sentient trashcan. He just knew that life was too short to put up with annoying people, and that making them think that you can literally blow at any possible seconds might actually convince them to lay it and think twice before crossing him.

And that was why, the once Todoroki was sure that Fate, Destiny or who or what ever pulled the strings up there wanted to fuck with him. Really now, why else would he get stuck with whiny bitch and blondie for a full night? Why would he have to put up with all the bullshit the League entailed?

“Who the actual fuck likes this shit?!” fuckhands McMoisturiser said as he disintegrated a piece of candy that apparently had the audacity of not suiting his fine tastes. Dabi groaned, shook his head and walked towards the door, settling the box he had just finished over the rest.

“You idiots do know that we are supposed to be doing something here, right?”

“But it’s booooring!” Toga whined as she kicked her feet on the desk and ogled at some calendar that contained either cats or porn. He couldn’t tell from the distance.

“And you are idiots, but you don’t see me complaining!”

“What the fuck are you talking about, you always complain!” Shigaraki all but dropped the files he was holding to glare at the other through his hand, which was weird, but Dabi was pretty used to it by now.

“Well, judging by how dysfunctional you all are, I have an obligation to.” It wasn’t like he needed a kid to take him off instant noodles and redbull. Well, he did, but he would never admit it. Not out loud and certainly not to them. Dabi had the distinct impression that Shigaraki wanted to pull his tongue out, but that would mean licking the hand on his face, which wasn’t the most fortunate outcome to come out of this. So, the leader of the now much smaller League of Villains, cursed, huffed and strolled into another room of the police station to probably waste time there.

Since the League had now been reduced to four members and no Noumu (Truly a tragedy, Dabi did like that they didn’t speak or disobeyed orders) Shigaraki had been forced to change his approach to things. Where once he could have thrown a tantrum and send the others to do the dirty work, now he had to get to the thick of things himself and do shit the old fashioned way.

And, since Kurogiri was cook, taxi and guard, the rough work put on the three other members, none of them a completely functional adult. The fact that Dabi was the one considered responsible was what was truly tragic, because Shigaraki had the mental maturity of a five year old
and Toga switched between a teen with a crush and a responsible, almost motherly font when the situation called for it. Dabi was trying his hardest not to associate her with Fuyumi in those times.

He had learned to care too little.

The scarred man looked over the files and sorted through them to see if they were of any importance. They had yet to find a way to hack the files, so they would just take the paper with them to the base. Dabi shook his head. They might have been very few of them, but it was a little bit better this way. In the beginning, there had been no glue, no connection between the members of the League. Barely a common reason to fight, to screw over the hero society. But now, now that they were forced to work together, to stick together, it was easier to find some semblance of peace in the chaos.

There was also a reason the League was so small in size, or, better said, remained so small in size. The media and the publicity.

Having more than half of your fighting force captured at once, along with Japan’s most prolific archvillain was a swift blow, one strong enough to destabilise the whole organisation. There had been volunteers after the initial blow, small fry who wanted to join, who wanted to make a name for themselves and take revenge on other heroes. And Dabi could understand that. He had been one of the small fries.

What he also understood was that you couldn’t do anything on wishes alone. Even the Brat had something, and that was scary ass info skills and fucked up pain tolerance. He may have not had a powerful Quirk, but he did have something useful that helped him go in life.

The villains that wanted to join barely had enough brain cells to properly function and Dabi had managed to convince his dry skinned leader that simply showing up wasn’t enough of a good criteria for joining a powerful force. But who as he to talk?

And that’s how they had found themselves working the menial job of sorting through years of police files in hope of finding something important.

Sighing, the man threw the box away, deeming it completely useless and passed to the next.

“Dabiiii!” the soon-to-be-the-no-2-brat-in-his-life whined from the other end of the room. The man let out a long suffering sigh and turned around just in time for her to collapse into him in the wheelie chair she had high jacked. Dabi stood still and didn’t give the chair the satisfaction of collapsing under its momentum. He groaned and looked at the girl.

“What do you want?” he growled as he looked at her. She was currently holding a bloody knife in a plastic bag, which was definitely from the evidence file.

“Look” she held up the thing and more or less vibrated on the seat. “It’s Stainy’s. look at how sharp and shiny it is. It also had Mido-tan’s blood on it, it is so precious!” she squealed. Dabi blinked.

“All right?” he said and moved to a different pile. The girl wouldn’t have it.

“Allright, don’t ignore me!”

“In case you hemophile fuckwit didn’t get it yet, we have a job to do, a job I want to finish so I can get back and get a drink! Why do you waste time, go and finish yours.”
“But I did.” She pouted and pointed to the pile and the man whipped around to stare at the boxes put not quite neatly near the door. He looked back at her.

“How the fuck…?!”

She just giggled and smiled sweetly at him. The man gritted his teeth and returned to his own work. The girl decided to stop pestering him by literally chasing him through the office and changed her tactic to launching the chair everywhere in the room, spinning madly. With the sheer number of curses coming from the nearest room, the fire user was pretty sure both Toga and Shigaraki were either related or put in his place to teach him some Confucian lesson about patience or something.

Dabi didn’t like fate. Or life. Most of the times, it was a grade A bitch he wanted to stay as far as possible away from because he had no control over it. The man blinked as he remembered the earlier years of his childhood, when he had asked his mom:

“Do I have to be a hero?”

She had just smiled sadly and didn’t answer, as if he, as a child, wouldn’t understand the implications. Yes, he had to, it was the sole reason he had been born, his father had spit in his face later that day. At that time, Dabi didn’t understand. He didn’t understand why he had to train so hard, why his parents always fought, or more like dad fought and mom stood still and waited for it to end. All he understood was that his dad really wanted him to be a hero.

There was something very satisfying to think about that bastard while he was all but robbing a police station as part of a terrorist group. He sighed as he placed a few more papers in a box before sealing it away.

The scarred man didn’t like to think about his father outside of the usual murder fantasies he allowed himself to have every once in a while. He didn’t think much about his mom either. He did allow himself to remember his siblings every once in a while. Fuyumi would be mad that he didn’t take care of himself. Natsuo was always so cheerful and Shouto had been nice before it all went to hell. His siblings were safe memories, even if painful.

He couldn’t even try to remember his parents. Mom, while he had good memories of her, the only way she ever showed up anymore was through the screaming mad woman getting dragged out of the house. Through a six year old with wrinkled skin, passed out from pain on a kitchen floor. Through a huge man – tall, too tall, too strong – dragging him away and burning him until he learned to stop him.

Dabi remembered the last day he had seen his mother. He remembered Natsuo attacking the No.2 hero with all the rage and power a nine year old could hold. He didn’t remember stepping in front of him, but he did remember the pain, the burn, the screams that followed.

*He* didn’t have the luxury of passing out.

Dabi shook his head. Not the right place, not the right time to remember. He clenched his fists and placed another file in a box, before sealing it and seating it on the not-quite-neat pyramid at the end of the room.

“All right” Shigaraki said as he entered the current office, with two boxes and looking like he personally fought at least one of them. “All done?”

“Yup” Toga said from her seat and Dabi shrugged as he gave away a grunt, which could
be both translated as ‘Yes’ and ‘I want pasta’. The scarred man trusted his poor excuse of a leader to be mature enough to tell the difference.

And he did, because the albino looked quite satisfied with himself. He looked at the taller man “Ok, Dabi, burn this”

“Wait!” Toga waved her hands and the two males turned towards her “Can we take the chairs?”

Dabi held back his instinct to automatically say no and looked at the station. They were going to burn it anyway…. He turned towards Shigaraki, and looked at how the realisation seemingly dawned on him as he said with a little awe. “Why the hell not?”

So, after three hours of paperwork, the three kids of the infamous League of villains spent the next half an hour stealing wheelie chairs and placing the boxes on them. They cleared the office of what was important, and then a few others of things like a mini fridge and a conspiracy board. Dabi didn’t like it. he didn’t laugh, or smile, it was definitely a pained grimace, fuck you Toga!

In the end, Shigaraki pulled out his phone and texted Kurogiri. Either that, or he was playing Candy Crush and the mist man was a mind reader. At this point, it could be both. Black smoke appeared out of thin air and the two least sane members of the League took care of the cargo. Dabi stared at the building.

With trained precision, he placed his hand on the wall and watched as blue flames covered it, turning it slowly into ash. Dabi walked through the room, making sure everything was sparking bright blue before he walked through the mist.

~O~

“What do you mean you’re taking me out of the undercover mission?” Izuku didn’t yell, but it was loud enough to be considered disrespectful. Aizawa gave him the courtesy of quirking an eyebrow and that was about it. Nighteye sighed and pushed his stupidly shiny glasses up his nose.

“I mean that I’m forbidding you to participate in this operation anymore. I’ve thought it over and this is the best course of action.” He straightened, taking full advantage of his height and peering down to the kid below. “You have gained the attention of either the Yakuza, or of someone important enough to grant a dealer put on your tail. Which defies the whole purpose of going undercover.” Izuku looked down. You just had to screw it up, didn’t you?

“I mean that I’m forbidding you to participate in this operation anymore. I’ve thought it over and this is the best course of action.” He straightened, taking full advantage of his height and peering down to the kid below. “You have gained the attention of either the Yakuza, or of someone important enough to grant a dealer put on your tail. Which defies the whole purpose of going undercover.” Izuku looked down. You just had to screw it up, didn’t you? He didn’t look up as the hero spoke. “That said, both you and Mirio will return to what is usual part of the internship, that said, patrols. Me and bubble girl will take the area that is most likely to hold them. You and Mirio will cover the other side, with Eraser making sure that you don’t get into any trouble.”

“With all due respect, sir” izuku rose a hand “if we are going to the safer area, why doesn’t Aizawa go with you?”

“Because I don’t trust you and your villain magnet tendencies.” The man in question spoke “Knowing your luck, you will literally stumble onto their lair or something.”

Izuku looked down before falling into a deep bow “I am sorry for causing so much trouble.” He said. If he looked up, he would have seen Nighteye’s coldness cracking enough to show a hint of discomfort. Aizawa just sighed.

“It was a joke, Izuku, get up” the boy stood straight. “The number of villains you encounter weekly is not your fault and you shouldn’t blame yourself for it. Now go change”
“Yes sensei” the teen nodded and dashed out the door.

It was ten minutes later, when the greenette found himself walking side by side with Toogata on the street. The blond really did look like a hero. His costume was fit and flashy, good for the kind of work All Might used to do before Izuku decided to get himself kidnapped.

Izuku shook his head, trying not to remember that. But, with the smile and literal sunshine radiating out of him, Toogata not just looked but also felt like the next All Might.

_Nighteye was right to choose him and he was a fool to refuse. He would have been better at this than you ever could, and you know it. He deserved One for All, and you took away the chance for that quirk to end up in someone with an actual chance of becoming a proper hero._

Izuku sighed and looked away. He saw people looking at them and knew for a fact that the wary looked were addressed to him. He didn’t inspire much trust, being dressed all in camo, with a metal mouth guard and goggles. He looked a lot like how soldiers looked pre-Quirk era. Well, it didn’t matter, his costume was meant for an underground hero anyway, having it flashy would be a disadvantage. _Like you’ll ever got to actually become a hero._

His self-destructive train of thought was violently crashed by something very small and very fragile slamming full speed into his legs. Izuku looked down, at the small dirty girl on the ground and quickly kneeled near her, pulling up his hood so he didn’t scare her.

“I’m sorry, are you all right?”

Suddenly, someone spoke “Come now, Eri, we mustn’t cause troubles to heroes.”

Izuku looked up, schooling his expression to remain neutral as he looked at the plague mask that decorated the face of the man.

_Overhaul._

_Stay away from him, I’d hate for you to die before I’m finished._

“Apologies on behalf of my daughter, hero” The man smiled behind the mask “She gets carried away in her games sometime and gets hurt. Such a troublemaker this one.”

“No worries, Sir” Toogata said as he pushed the hood back over his face “Really, we should be the ones apologising”

The girl – Eri – was trembling in his arms and Izuku couldn’t help but pull her a little closer. She tensed, but knotted her hands into his jacket, as if she were holding on for dear life.

“You must be a member of the eight precepts, right?” the blond continued

“That’s right. Pay no mind to the mask, I’m just sensitive to dirt” he looked them up and down, and, had Izuku not been used to the malice coming out of a person, he might have taken him for someone genuine. The man really was a skilled actor. “It’s the first time I’ve seen any of you around, are you rookies? You’re both rather young.”

“That’s right, we’re both rookies” Toogata smiled and scratched his neck “But we’re doing our best,” he turned towards him “Get up, partner, we must be ready to face uncertain futures!”

“Which office are you affiliated with?”
“We’re still students, we’re baby chicks! They’re having us do some field training right now.” He didn’t mention Nighteye, Izuku noted. “Now then, we’ve got till noon to finish this block, so, let’s get going,”

Izuku prepared to stand, but the girl clung to him even closer “Don’t” she whimpered “Don’t go, please” she sniffed. Izuku gulped. He wasn’t going to let her go. He knew that.

But I can’t directly confront him, not right now.

He looked up before he said in a voice as light as he could manage. “Wow, you weren’t kidding when you said she’s reckless. Those scratches must really hurt. You know, we have a colleague with a healing Quirk we’ll meet soon enough, she might help her a little,” he said. Toogata threw him warning looks, but Izuku ignored them, in favour of focusing on the man in front of him.

Overhaul squinted subtly. “That’s very kind of you but it won’t be necessary,” he said “I am a doctor, so I can take care of her myself,”

“Oh, but what kind of heroes would we be if we let a little girl suffer when we could help?” Izuku stood up, holding the girl close to his chest, ready to break into a sprint at the slightest sign of trouble.

“I guarantee you, she will be fine” the man’s voice held a warning, a sign, a last offer for Izuku to shut up and pull back. He didn’t.

“Really sir, I’m just really worried- you know how us, heroic types are. I would like to personally see her healed,” Izuku knew, without looking that Toogata was probably sending him warring signals. The greenette didn’t care.

“Ah, for the caring of the young,” he turned around and started walking into the alley “Well, if you’re really so adamant, follow me, please.”

Izuku really didn’t want to follow the Yakuza into the dark alley, just because he knew the kind of things that happened in dark alleys, but the push Toogata had given him was probably enough as it was.

“You see” the man spoke “I’ve been quite worried about Eri recently. No matter what I do, she keeps defying me,”

“Raising a child can be quite difficult,” Toogata kept making conversation.

“Indeed,” the man spoke “They can be quite hard to understand, children, with all their jumbled thoughts and messy imaginations,” he pulled at his gloves and Izuku felt Eri squirm in his grip. “Especially when they start to think about the kind of people they could be, the kind of people they want to become…”

Eri tried to get out of his grip, but Izuku held on. That was probably the reason he didn’t see the hand until it had grabbed his face.

There were a few seconds of terror, in which nothing happened. Time stood still, everyone frozen, waiting for the next thing to happen. The villain looked quite confused at the fact that Izuku was still there, which gave the boy time to wrench away and stagger back.

“Izuku” they all looked up where the erasure hero was perched on a roof, eyes red and scarf floating. “Run,”
Izuku didn’t wait to be told twice. He broke into a mad sprint to the street before he dashed through the crowd. He didn’t know if there was anyone behind him and he didn’t care. All he cared about was the little girl in his arms and how she held onto him so tight he might have suffocated otherwise.

Chapter End Notes

so yeah, eri is safe...... for now at least
dabi has to deal with other annoying brats and i’m having a blast here
please comment and tell me what you think
discord
tumblr
I’m pretty sure my Quirk doesn’t like me

Izuku would have liked to say that he ran to the agency, that his brain was lucid enough to take him to safety. But he couldn’t. Because he didn’t.

The moment his teacher had given the order, his mind went into overdrive, feet powered with fear and adrenaline and a little girl whimpering in his arms. Izuku would have liked to say that he could take her to safety. In truth, he could only take her far, far away.

The teen didn’t know for how long he ran, he just ran for as long as his feet would carry him and, when he felt like collapsing, he dashed into an alley and hid behind a trashcan.

He stood there, girl pressed to his chest, blood pumping in his ears too loud for him to hear his own thoughts. Izuku breathed in and out, in and out sporadically. The girl – Eri – was pressing her hand to her mouth and nose, eyes closed shut, making herself as small as possible at his chest. It could have been hours, it could have been seconds, but, eventually, his pulse calmed enough for him to afford relaxing.

His muscles would have creaked when he let them lose, if there had been such a thing as muscles creaking, much like an overheated machine put on pause. Izuku took a deep breath and pulled the girl away from him, settling her on his lap.

“Hey” he said, because he didn’t know what else. She looked at him with big, scared eyes and Izuku internally cursed.

She’s way too scared, I have to calm her down somehow.

He pulled off his hood and lowered his mouth guard. Then, he gave her the nicest smile he could manage. “What’s your name?”

She didn’t answer, only kept staring at him. Izuku sighed and opened his mouth to say something, but then his phone vibrated. Blinking, Izuku pulled the device out of his pocket and stared at the message.

Aizawa

[he got away, where are you?]

Me

[I don’t know, I ran randomly]

Izuku winced. Not the smartest decision.

Aizawa

[the girl]

[?]
Me

[here]

[safe]

Aizawa

[where are you?]

Me

[in an alley, behind a trashcan]

[no one in sight]

Aizawa

[Alright]

[I'll pick you up]

[Stay. There]

Me

[Ok]

Izuku looked at the girl. “Do you remember my teacher?” she looked up, but didn’t say a thing. Izuku continued. “He managed to get away from the guy with the mask. He’s coming to pick us up” she didn’t smile, but something on her face eased a little. Izuku kept smiling, reassuringly. “He’s a hero,” her eyes widened “I’m a hero too.”

“I thought you said you were a rookie,” she whispered before slapping her hands over her mouth. Izuku smiled kindly at her.

“Well... technically, yeah. But a rookie is like... a mini hero” he said, glad that he had found a word. He didn’t know how old she was, she didn’t look older than five, but he couldn’t be sure. He tilted his head “Can you tell me your name?”

Even though he knew it already, he wanted the girl to trust him enough to share. She looked at him for a second before she looked away before nodding and whispering in a small voice “Eri.”

“That’s a nice name” he smiled “I’m Izuku. Izuku Midoriya. It’s nice to meet you.” He shook her little hand and, even though she seemed foreign to the concept, she was enthusiastic enough to shake it back. Izuku smiled, before he noticed what she was wearing.

The dress on her was more of a bit T-shirt, probably meant for an adult. Her limbs were covered in bandages, and her face and hair were dirty. Izuku had a hunch that her hair was actually white, but right now, the dirt made it hang in thick, greyish strands. The pair of crimson eyes that looked at him had bags that no child should have.

For a second she almost reminded him of Shigarki before he pushed the thought away.
He also noticed that she was shivering. “Are you cold?” she nodded. Izuku moved her a little before he opened his jacket “Here. It’s warmer”

She didn’t seem to trust him all that much, but she did lean into his body heat. The jacket wouldn’t close over the both of them, so Izuku wrapped his arms loosely enough for her to pull away if needed. He let his head hit the brick wall behind him and closed his eyes.

A little longer and Aizawa would be there. He would be there and they would go back to Nighteye and take care of Eri.

Fortunately, it didn’t take long for his teacher to find them. Izuku relaxed before he realised that he could recognise the steps in the alley. Eri froze on his chest, making herself as small as possible and Izuku could only rub her back as Aizawa’s lanky silhouette walked into the frame.

“It’s all right, he’s my teacher” Izuku said. Aizawa looked them up and down.

“Is any of you hurt?” Izuku shook his head “All right then, come along, we’re going back”. The man stood and helped him get up, although Eri pulled away from his touch. They walked to the car. There was a man driving it, probably Aizawa had called someone from the agency to bring it while he went looking. Izuku slipped onto the back seat and watched as Aizawa took the shotgun, and held Eri’s hand, who remained tense throughout the ride.

~O~

Next morning and Izuku realised, a little demoralised, that he’d have to go to school again. Don’t get him wrong, Izuku loved UA. It was just that, he’d liked the internship better, and he liked Eri and he didn’t really want to return to school.

After they had brought Eri in, she had gone through a wide array of tests and stuff. Nighteye’s agency had their own doctor, since it was more comfortable to do such things there than go to the hospital every time. It had taken them three hours to coerce Eri into letting them take her blood, and another few to get her to let go of Izuku.

The rest of the week had been spent taking care of Eri and exercising control over One for All. Since Izuku, Toogata and Aizawa were the only ones the little girl let anywhere near her, they had been needed in most of the activities. Now, the week was over and he had to go back to school.

They still had a schedule though. After school, on the days Aizawa didn’t force him into therapy, he went to the agency where he practiced the Quirk and tried to get Eri to talk. But, unfortunately, aside from a few remarks, she didn’t say anything about the Yazuka or the Overhaul. Weather she didn’t know or she was too scared to share, that remained inconclusive so far.

Izuku gave up and his tie and threw it away on the bed before making sure his collar was straight. There was another reason he didn’t want to go back to school. Nighteye and Toogata had been very good at avoiding the topic when it came to his villain accusations. Shinsou had also texted him a lot from his own internship, and Izuku had almost forgotten that there were rumours about him in the first place.

Almost.

There was still such a thing as media and trolls online, and surely, two weeks weren’t enough to clear him up.
Keep calm, you’ve dealt with this before. Don’t let them get to you. Don’t let them put you down, their opinions don’t matter, they don’t matter.

He took a deep breath, grabbed his backpack and walked downstairs. His mom had just woken up and Izuku grabbed a granola bar. “Don’t you eat?”

“I’ll eat when I get back,” he munched on the bar. “I’ll be going to Nighteye’s anyway and we do get free meals as interns.”

Mom smiled, though there was something almost sad and wary in it. It’s because you tried to off yourself you idiot.

IZuku smiled once more before he walked out the door. On the train, he pulled his hood far up his face and stared into his phone, eyes darting from it every few minutes in case anyone looked suspicious. Overhaul had seen his face, after all and probably knew his….

Shit. Izuku internally cursed as he remembered how Aizawa had called him by his name. ‘Izuku’ wasn’t exactly a common name and it wouldn’t be hard to figure who he was. He sighed and pulled the hood lower on his head. It would be just his luck to have the Yakuza after his ass now too.

Thankfully, there were no hidden assailants on the train and he made it to school in one piece. Apparently, on week was enough for most of his classmates to get used to the idea that he wasn’t as big of a villain as they thought, because there was only a minimal amount of staring as he walked in. He sat at his desk and listened to Uraraka chat vividly about her week with Thirteen. It had been very fruitful and the girl had learned a lot about rescue and how to use her Quirk in it.

Todoroki was pretty pleased with his internship himself. Apparently, Best Jeanist’s only complaint was him being a little too stiff. Besides that, they really got along well and Todoroki had managed to gain better control over his Quirk than before.

“How about you, Midoriya?” the people turned towards him “How was your internship?

“Well” Izuku scratched his chin with a pen “What I can tell without breaking the contract of privacy, I went into an illegal Quirk fighting club” he lifted on finger “Got Aizawa to almost throw me off a building” he lifted a second finger “Managed to piss off a pretty powerful villain” he lifted a third finger “And saved a little girl.”

His classmates blinked at him and Izuku only gave them a sickly sweet smile before he returned to doodling in his notebook. He waited patiently for them to react and, lo and behold, he wasn’t disappointed.

“Wait, really?!” Kirishima almost threw himself over his desk to look him in the eye.

“Yup,” he nodded.

“An...illegal...Quirk fighting... ring.” Todoroki said.

“I also met and almost got kidnapped by a drug dealer who was working for the pretty powerful villain.” Izuku nodded, completely deadpan. The others blinked before Uraraka took a deep breath.

“You know, I’m, starting to think that Shinsou’s villain magnet theory was true.”

“Man,” Kirishima whined “Why did you get to do all the fun stuff? I only caught a guy with some Quirk enhancing drug,” he rubbed his arms “My partner got shot with a Quirk erasing bullet
through,”
Izuku stopped and put his pen down. “Is he Ok? Those things hurt like a bitch the first time…”

“He’s aright, yeah. His Quirk returned and ….”

“How do you know that?!?” Todoroki, as always, asked the more sensible question. Izuku shrugged.
It was technically in the past, wasn’t it?

“I got shot with one on my first internship.”

“And were you all right?” Kirishima leaned forward while Uraraka looked worried.

“Yeah” Izuku waved them off “It wasn’t like I actually had a Quirk to lose at the time”. Todoroki
slitted his eyes at the phrasing. Izuku tried to wave it off. They would notice the bone breaking
fuckup eventually. But the latest the better.

They didn’t really have time to finish the conversation, because Aizawa entered the classroom. “All
right, sit down,” they all scrambled to their seats. “I hope your internships were good for you. I will
give you some forms and you have to decide if you want to keep going there or if you want to
change the agency. You have by the end of the day to complete it” the man said before he started to
write on the board.

Izuku was glad for the interruption and started scrawling in his notebook, happy to take his mind off
of things. The class passed fairly fast, and soon enough, it was time for hero training.

“All right, students” All Might said and, no matter how many times he saw the man, he could never
quite get used to the skeleton form. The sentiment seemed to be mutual since everyone was trying to
hide their staring and pity, with varying amounts of success.

He didn’t want to, but Izuku felt bad for the man. He knew the looks of pity, he knew how they felt
and how they hurt more than they helped. The man might have hurt him in the past but he didn’t
deserve the pity after everything he’d done.

Funny how you feel bad for him after stealing his quirk.

All Might cleared his throat “Today, we will train in hand to hand combat, with Quirks permitted.”
Aizawa entered the classroom “This will not be like the Sports Festival though. You have to use
your Quirks with care and caution, and not destroy the whole training ground” he eyed Bakugou and
Todoroki at that. “In a lot of urban fights, you can’t allow yourself to hurt civilians, and that can very
easily happen when you don’t pay attention to your environment. So be mindful and try to retrain
yourselves. In this exercise, you win by either incapacitation your opponent or throwing them out of
the ring.”

“Now,” Aizawa spoke “The pairs.”

Izuku got paired with Todoroki. Which was on one side, good, because they were friends and the
other didn’t show any animosity regarding the training camp, or thought of him as a villain. But bad,
because Todoroki was still a goddamned powerhouse. Izuku raised his arm.

“Can I …?”

“No, you can’t have your weapons” Aizawa said and the boy let his hand fall with a pout. He
walked towards the mattress where Todoroki was waiting for him.
“Ready?”

“I guess,” he shrugged and fell into position. And this is where things went to hell.

Because Todoroki was good at hand to hand combat.

_Really_ good.

Which made sense; after all, both him and Dabi raised and trained by the same man, and Dabi spent a lot of time throwing him up the walls and whatnot. Todorki was also very good with his ice in close quarters. He had trained with it more than with his fire and, if the internship with Best Jeanist was any clue, it had only gotten better. And this was where Izuku was at a disadvantage.

Because he didn’t have his weapons. The limited space wasn’t really allowing him to jump or do most of his combat and the ice wasn’t helping. Izuku might have been able to hold his own in that fight, he might have been able to dodge, but there was only so much consciousness before his body decided to pull all the breaks.

So, when Todoroki sent a wave of ice his way, he didn’t think.

He punched.

There were a few seconds of silence after the ice broke, seconds in which everyone was speechless. Seconds in which everyone tried to understand what was happening. Seconds before the pain caught up with him and Izuku fell to his knees, gritting his teeth, broken hand throbbing.

“Midoriya?” Todoroki seemed shocked. He walked out from behind the wall of ice that had ultimately saved his life and looked at him in awe before a look of horror dawned on him. The heterochromatic teen ran and kneeled before him. “Midoriya!” he said and Izuku looked at him.

“Can you move?”

That was the moment Aizawa arrived and looked him over. “Again?”

Izuku nodded, trying very hard not to make any sound. He didn’t want them to think him weak, he couldn’t have them think him weak. He _couldn’t_. He was supposed to be All Might’s successor, the ninth user of One for All he couldn’t… the man sighed before turning towards the rest of the class “What are you staring at, go back to your own matches!”

Izuku couldn’t focus on the whispers, but he knew that they were there and experience had taught him exactly what they said.

“Do we take him to Recovery Girl?” Todoroki asked.

“Yes” Aizawa nodded “Can you help him?”

Todoroki took his good arm over his shoulder and lifted him up while Aizawa called Uraraka to take away his gravity. The girl did so with trembling fingers, Izuku keeping in any whines that might come out and, after he was floating, Both Todoroki and Aizawa dragged him to the nurse.

Todoroki stood there while he was treated and, somewhere along the way, Kirishima, Uraraka, Ashido and Iida appeared and waited for him to be ready. So, this was how, thirty minutes later, he was staring at the ceiling and feeling the unearthly glare of doom on his back.

He looked away. “I assume you have questions” he said in a rough voice.
“Mido-chan…” Ashido started but Kirishima stole her words.

“You have a Quirk” he said, and those few words were enough to sink his heart. The boy covered his eyes with his good hand, the one not in a cast and nodded.

“Yeah” he said in a strangled voice.

“Is it from All for One?” Todoroki was the one to finally ask.

No. No it’s not. It’s from All Might, and he lost it because I was too vulnerable, too weak not to get kidnapped and I ….

“Yes,” he took in a deep breath “He- he tried... he tried to... bribe me with a Quirk.” He took in another breath, trying his best not to burst into tears “But I didn’t… I couldn’t... told him straight up that I’d never join him so–”

“So he gave you a Quirk that breaks your bones?” Iida said. Izuku nodded. He didn’t look at them, didn’t take his arm off his eyes and maybe that is why it came as a surprise when he felt padded fingers land on his good arm. Izuku peered from under it and looked at Uraraka.

She smiled at him, a smile good, wide, though somehow broken, like she was sad and trying to hide it and was doing a terrible job. “It’s ok, Mido,” she smiled and took his arm from his face so she could hold his hand “We still love you.”

Izuku didn’t know what to say, but, apparently, her words had broken the others out of their reverie, because they came near his bed too. Kirishima approached the bed with a big beaming smile on his face “Yeah, man” he gave him thumbs up “So what if that Villain gave you a nasty Quirk. I’m sure you will work it out! If there is anyone manly enough to strive forwards when faced with nasty consequences, you are the guy!”

“Yeah!” Ashido said, jumping up and down, obviously trying to put as much energy as possible into her words “Like, have you seen what you did to that boulder?! It must be pretty powerful, you completely shattered Todoroki’s Ice! You get over the bone breaking part and you are sold!”

“You will have to work hard!” Iida chopped the air a little more aggressively than usual. “Such a Quirk is a huge burden, but I am sure that you, as determined as you are, will manage to make it.”

Todoroki sat on the bed next to him. He didn’t look at him, but blankly, a lost look on his face before the thin sketch of a smile graced his featured “It’s your Quirk now, isn’t it?”

That was what sold it. A wave of laughter bubbled in his chest and Izuku let out a giggle; a giggle that quickly transformed into full blown laughter spilling out of him. He winced when his arm jostled. He masked it by wiping his now wet eyes.

“Thanks” he reclaimed his arm and wiped his tears “it really means a lot guys, it really does”

They didn’t get to say anything else, because that was the moment that Recovery Girl entered and started to talk. “Stop assaulting my patient! He needs to rest if he hopes to walk out of here on his own accord. Don’t you kids have class?! Shoo, shoo!”

The others giggle and got up quickly, waving as they got out. Todoroki lingered a little bit longer, looking like he wanted to say something, but he was at loss of words.

“Today, young man” Recovery Girl said, lifting her syringe-cane and holding it like a weapon. Todoroki took a step back, lifting his hands as if to show that he wasn’t armed before looking back at
“If you need anything at all…”

“I will ask, thank you” Izuku said and watched the heterochromatic teen get hoarded out of the room by the pointy needle.

The moment the door shut, the nurse turned towards him. “Take this” she handed him a fistful of gummy bears. “I suggest you sleep. I will give you one more kiss, and it will knock you out pretty badly. But, with a little luck, you’ll be up in time for lunch.”

“Oh” Izuku said.

“Do you have money?” Izuku nodded. “Good. If you didn’t, I’m pretty sure Aizawa would have fed you one of his juice pouches and I can’t have you turn into a mini him.”

Izuku giggled as the woman pressed her lips to his cheek and felt the tiredness come over him before he closed his eyes and forfeited his consciousness to the pillows.

~O~

Izuku didn’t know how long it took him to get up, he just knew that he shouldn’t feel as tired as he did. Still, the impending and unavoidable prescription of doom coming full force his way did nothing to stop him from sitting up and, consequently, getting hit by the tsunami equivalent of a wave of vertigo. It wasn’t fun and he collapsed back on the mattress.

“You younglings, you never learn, do you?” the voice was accompanied by the tic-tac of the cane on the tiles. Izuku turned to look at the nurse “You are just like Toshinori, aren’t you? You have no care for your safety, and you jump head first into any confrontation.”

Izuku gave her a bashful smile as he let her help him get up. She looked at his arm “I will take off the cast, but you shouldn’t do much physical activity today, do you understand?”

“Yeah” he nodded.

“Good. I will tell Aizawa too, so you don’t get any bright ideas.” Izuku nodded. There was a knock on the door, and, when it opened, Katsuki stood in it.

Izuku blinked. “What are you doing here?” for the first time in a very long while, his words held no bite. Katsuki clicked his tongue and held up his bright yellow backpack.

“It’s almost lunch and it’s like you to forget to bring your money.”

Izuku was kinda surprised the blond didn’t go through his stuff to get the wallet. He asked though. “Oh, Aizawa sent you?”

An unreadable expression passed his face before it settled on uncomfortable indifference. “Sure, yeah, whatever.” He tossed the book bag onto the chair and leaned on the wall behind him. It was clear from his body language that he wasn’t going to be moving any time soon and Izuku knew him too well to even try to argue. So, he just sighed and put on his shirt, mindful of the bandages. He didn’t see the blond’s eyes trailing up and down his scars, not the uncomfortable look in his eyes before he glanced away.

Izuku grabbed his bookbag and walked out the door, knowing that Katsuki would be next to him in a second. He didn’t stick around for nothing, he wanted something and if the greenette could count
on one thing, it was the blond’s determination to get it. He wasn’t disappointed.

“So you got a Quirk now.” Katsuki said. Izuku sighed.

“Yeah. All for One gave it to….”

“Bribe you, I get that” Katsuki said. At Izuku’s quirked eyebrow the blond sighed “Your minions insisted on making sure that everyone knew that you got it without your consent and all, that you’re not a traitor to us.”

“Then why did you ask in the first place?”

“Because I don’t really trust other people when it comes to you” he growled, but somehow, none of the aggression in his voice was addressed to him. It felt…. Not nice, but reassuring in the least.

“There’s some other thing though…” Izuku looked at him “Word got out.”

His eyes widened “What?”

Katsuki sighed and shook his head. “Yeah. Some Extra, I don’t know who, let out that you suddenly got a Quirk that smashes things and whatnot.”

“Fuck” Izuku slapped his forehead. He shook his head, pressing his fingers into his temples “And I was asleep for a few hours already….” He looked away “How bad had the rumours gotten?”

As someone who had used them multiple times to spread false information, he knew exactly how farfetched they could get.

“Well” Katsuki scratched his neck “You being All for One’s illegitimate child is certainly a popular one.”

“What?!” Izuku jumped out of his skin and Katsuki couldn’t stop a chuckle. “Stop. Shut up! Shut up, it’s not funny!”

“Yeah it is,” The boy grinned before his face deflated. “But, that’s one of the worst, so you can’t really get any lower than that.”

“I’ve got a shovel and I’m ready to dig.” He shook his head “And they’re ready to bury me;”

“Pretty much,”

“Is that why you came here? To tell me how fucked I am in person?” Izuku raised his eyebrows.

“No” the blond growled, but it held no real bite “I came because I didn’t want you to get mobbed on the way to the cafeteria.”

“I can take care of myself, you know?”

“With a broken arm right after half a day of recovery sleep? Not a chance.”

Izuku glared at him, but, at this point, they had already reached the cafeteria and the blond saw no reason to spoil his air by being in the presence of a mere rival and walked away. Izuku just sighed and pointedly ignored the stares and chatter that followed him until he took refuge behind the tall back of the purple petunia. Shinsou looked at him.
“So, I heard you broke your arm…”

“Yeah…” Izuku mumbled right before Kirishima and Kaminari, followed quickly by Uraraka Iida, Todoroki and, surprisingly, Tsuyu stood down at their table. Izuku blinked and Shinsou glared. He really really didn’t like social interactions.

“Hey guys…..”

“So” Tsuyu said and Izuku knew, he just knew, using his bullshit sensor that she wold ask something sensitive “What does your Quirk do?”

And, surprise, he was right. Again.

“I don’t know” he mumbled and looked away. “I didn’t really get to ask, I just woke up one day and I wasn’t Quirkless anymore.”

"God made a wise decision to make you Quikless,” Kaminari spoke and all kids turned towards him.

Izuku would have felt offended if he didn’t feel confused more. He opened his mouth, ready to cover for iida, who was showing signs of chopping when the electric blond continued. “You are not human, Midoriya. The Gods didn’t want you to have a Quirk”

There were a few seconds of dumbfounded silence before Shinsou spoke “What?”

“If you had a quirk you would’ve been too fucking OP. The gods- the gods looked at the kind of person you were going to be and said ‘Alright, giving this one a quirk would be a bit too much’. And, so you were born Quirkless. But then All for One comes along and is like ‘Hello there! Would you like a Quirk?!’. And on that day on that day... on that day you could hear all of heaven screaming,” Kaminari said as if it made perfect sense.

“I mean, think about it,” he continued “You won the Sports Festival without using a Quirk, heck, you won the race against people like Iida – no offence class pres – a guy with a speed Quirk and a few hundred other students by blowing yourself up. A guy with a speed quirk” he emphasized the words with his chopsticks “Like, who the fuck allowed you to walk among mortals?”

Izuku was outright chuckling at this point, Kaminari making huge, wide gestures with his cooking devices.

“He’s right” Todoroki deadpanned. They all turned towards him. “You don’t react the way normal people do.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Well” Todoroki straightened his back and stared into his eyes “It wasn’t enough that you wanted to win this festival. No, you decided halfway through ‘You know what? I’mma pull a kamikaze for this kid I had one conversation with in a shady alley!’ ”

Izuku felt his face turn red as the others laughed. He looked away, pouting, even though he was still smiling.

“Don’t worry, you’re our little strawberry and we love you” Uraraka ruffled his hair.
The rest of the lunch passes in a light tone, the subject of his Quirk not being brought up again. Unfortunately, it didn’t stay that way.

When he left the cafeteria, he was one of the last. Shinsou had remained a little bit behind and Izuku had forgotten about the news and went unassisted. That was when a guy from another class, older and not from heroics since Izuku couldn’t remember him cut his way. The boy sighed and looked up at the huge guy, arm throbbing. If this got physical, he was at a disadvantage.

“Heard you got a Quirk now” the boy stepped closer. Izuku could feel the people staring at him, the looks increasing with the decrease of silence.

“And you are….?”

The teen stepped forward “What, ain’t gonna brag? Or do you not like the Quirk your villain friends gave you.”

Izuku didn’t entertain him, only tried to walk past. He knew it wouldn’t work, but he had to try at least. The boy put his hand on his chest and pushed him backwards. “I’m talking to you, shitstain!”

Izuku glared “What do you want?!”

He leaned forward “I want to know what gives you the right to walk around here all well and dandy when you know damn well you are the reason All Might fell.” He got closer and Izuku had to take a step back. The fucker was huge.

“I want to know why no one gives a fuck about the fact that you suddenly have a Quirk” he stepped even further “I want to know why are you not in prison when everyone knows that you’ll become a villain sooner or later?”

He was right. The teen was right. He had no right to be there. Izuku wasn’t hero material, he didn’t have the right to be there, he shouldn’t… but, as Izuku looked into the eyes of the boy, he realised something.

He doesn’t have to know that….

Izuku remembered the conversation he had had with Shinsou a week earlier. So, they think you are a villain. Why don’t you use it to your advantage?

“So what if I am?” he took a step forward and the other, too surprised, took a step back. “You say that you believe that I will become a villain. You say that you think that I am responsible for the fall of society” he looked up and gave a smile he knew too well from the too many villains he had the misfortune of spending time with “If that is true, are you sure you want me as your enemy?”

The kid was more than a little unnerved. Izuku smirked and took a step forward “Are you ready to prove that you are more than talk?” he took another step, ignoring the pain throbbing in his arm. The boy wouldn’t attack, and, even if he did, he still had an arm to spare “Are you willing to act on your words and try to take me down yourself?” the boy tripped and fell back and Izuku towered over him the way so many people did before, the way he had been threatened way too many times. “If the answer is no, then I suggest you stay away from people who can have a significant negative impact over your life and reputation.” A little intimidation never hurt.

There was perfect silence in the hallway. Izuku knew that they were all staring at him, judging him. The boy beneath him looked a little bit scared. Izuku didn’t care. The student had walked into this on his own. Suddenly, the silence was broken by the way too familiar step pattern
and the voice he had learn to both trust and dread.

“What is happening here?”

“Nothing sensei” Izuku kept his vice light as he extended his hand to the boy on the ground. The other seemed too scared to refuse. As the greenette helped him up, he held the hold a little longer, a little harder than necessary, enough for the warning to pass. He turned towards his teacher “Absolutely nothing.”

Chapter End Notes

heya, i wanna thank you all for all the nice comments, they really mean the world to me

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