**To Be or Not To Be**

**by Bluehorse44**

**Summary**

Izuku Midoriya is a quirkless nobody with a history of mental health problems somehow attracted the attention of the principle of UA while juggling not one but two secret identities.

**Notes**

I decided to write something just for fun and this is what I came up with. A sassy Izuku with no shame.
If you told Izuku Midoriya that he would be standing before Hero Course students at UA watching Kacchan practically wither from his gaze under tinted glasses he would have called you crazy, told you your girlfriend was cheating on you (regardless if it was true or not) and then punch you for good measure.

But that was the situation he found himself in. Kacchan had folded into himself and with shaking with repressed rage because he knew that Izuku had more power in that moment.

He knew it probably made him a bad person that he enjoyed it.

But did he care?

Hell no.

He had abandoned morals along with personal safety a year ago.

He was perfectly aware that he looked he had crawled out of a garbage-can and frankly that was exactly the look he was going for.

He hadn’t cut his dark-green hair in over a year and hadn’t brushed it in nearly as long. It was pulled into a loose bun with a rainbow hair-tie he had found on the pavement outside. He wore a beaten and stained aviator jacket with unintentionally distressed black jeans along and a t-shirt for a band that he hoped no one looked up. Emerald eyes peered predatorily at the class from under aviator sunglasses. There was also, of course, the handcuff that hung from one of his wrists that he could feel eyes being drawn to.

He knew exactly what the class was thinking,

Why the fuck is this trash gremlin here
And oh boy was that a story.

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It had all started when he had jumped out a window.

Now, too many that may be slightly concerning, for Izuku it was just a normal Tuesday.

It wasn’t his fault that the cops had happened to see him smack a villain upside the head with a baseball bat because the heroes were useless as per usual.

Said villain had decided to break into an appliance store and steal a fridge (for some odd reason, he might be able to respect it if it was something decent like a 56-inch flat screen tv) only to be met with a hard smack of a bat that Izuku had pulled from his backpack.

And of course, the cops finally decided to arrive just in time to see the assault.

That had prompted a chase through the city with Izuku darting through back alleys and dodging the random pedestrian but never loosing the unwanted police entourage.

The chase ended up with him being cornered in the third floor of an abandoned building with cops surrounding the only exit.

God the lengths these people go for a teenager who only made one villain concuss.

“Young man I’m going to ask you put your hands up and kick that backpack over to me.” said the cop at the front of the others.

Izuku scoffed and lit a cigarette, if only to antagonize the cops, because what’s better than doing something illegal right in front of authority. But yeah like hell he was going to give them his backpack, there was some expensive shit in there. The bat, an ax, an illegally owned handgun, a bar of Dove chocolate.
His mind didn’t supply any obvious escape routes so that left only one option.

The three-story drop to the hard pavement. Well, a four-story drop didn’t kill him so he doubted this one would.

Plus he had all intentions of dying in the first one.

And so with a running jump, he crashed through the window, glass cascading into the street as he fell.

*Crumple your body to lessen the impact, roll when you hit the ground.*

Surprisingly enough, he didn’t suffer any injuries other than a slight twinge in his ankle and a scraped knee.

He heard shouts of outcry and he spared a quick glance back up at the window to see the cops leaning out the window with a mix of concern and rage.

With a small bow, he booked it.

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If his psychiatrist had seen that little stunt he would no doubt readmitted to the looney bin he had spent six weeks of his life in.

If his psychiatrist saw half of the shit he did he would no doubt the readmitted.

Ever since the “accident” he had taken up a new philosophy, fuck you and everyone else.

As far as he was concerned Deku had died in the fall, after six months of therapy and some very needed venting sessions he had been reborn. Risen from the ashes of his shattered dreams into the bat-wielding maniac he was today.
His mother had pulled him out of school so he was now being homeschooled which lead to insane amounts of free time for him to get into all sorts of trouble.

Boredom was his main adversary in his quest to not spiral back into the pit of hell he had been unknowingly living in. Boredom had at first been a great motivator to get into shape. He had been doing parkour, free-running, boxing, gymnastics, and Ko-Ryu for quite a while.

Once he found out he would never develop a quirk he realized that he had to hone his body if he even stood a chance. So he had been doing classes once a week and had a fairly decent base. Now he did a class for each every day and was improving at an insane pace that baffled even his teachers.

But soon he found that even with the intense physical training, he still found himself bored.

So he had gone searching.

And what he found…

He had learned fairly quickly that he was much more perceptive than most people around him. His psychiatrist called him Sherlock Holmes (whoever the fuck that was) and on multiple occasions and he had often solved petty crimes before even the police.

(He attributed this to the now burned Hero Analysis Notebooks he had been writing since he was four.)

Due to this, he realized that it was surprisingly easy to find blackmail on people along with learning things about them at just a glance. As soon as he figured that out he began to hone those skills until he had achieved a bit of a reputation.

It really wasn’t much but he had wrapped a few people around his finger. He had even become an informant for a few vigilantes or minor heroes.

Now, he wouldn’t call himself either of those and he has chosen to remain an entirely neutral party. There was really no reason behind it other than he had been bored and decided to do something
with the skills he had.

But sometimes he couldn’t stave off the boredom and that always lead to some memorable moments such as mixing things with his anti-depressants or ending up in police custody for some odd reason he could never quite remember.

*Adrenaline junky* had flashed across his mind more than once so points for self-awareness.

His basic schedule went along the lines of something like this:

6:00 a.m.: Wake up from the imaginary sleep

7:00 a.m.: Home-school

11:00 a.m: Whatever bullshit he could get himself into

3:00 - 8:00 p.m.: Physical classes

9:00 p.m.: Basic information gathering

12:00 a.m.: More reckless bullshit

and rinse and repeat.

His mother was hardly ever home so everything worked out.

Dimly he was aware that today had been the day for UA’s entrance exams and he couldn’t give less of a shit. He had made peace with the realization that he couldn’t be a hero and frankly had better things to do than play in the dream of every three-year-old.

Right now it was 1:32 in the morning and the rest of the day had passed with little drama and Jesus Christ he was *bored*. For once nothing was happening in the city and perched on the top of a skyscraper in one of the worse parts of the city. There was a cigarette hanging from his lips as he
let his mind wander.

He had this thing where he often couldn’t remember how he got to where he was and right now had absolutely no idea how he had gotten up here or how he was going to get down. He would probably pick the lock on the door and saunter out of the building leaving some very confused security guards in his wake.

A sudden thought possessed him and he had never been very good at ignoring his bad ideas so he figured why not.

He pulled out his lock picks and began to shimmy the lock on the maintenance door when there was a large rush of air and with a bored expression, he turned around very slowly to see the outline of a very large and very muscled man.

His hair was unmistakable and his smile seemed to be generating its own light.

All Might.

“NEVER FEAR FOR I-“

He had long ago murdered his obsession with heroes and wasn’t reduced to the weeping fanboy he would have been a year ago. Instead, he cut him off and with a bit more poison than he anticipated said, “Zip it He-Man. Spare me the speech, I’m fine.”

All Might looked a little taken aback because that was a reaction he didn’t experience often. He was still blinking in surprise when Izuku turned back to the door and finally got it to open.

The youth dropped the cigarette, crushed it under his heel and pocketed the lock-picks. He gave All Might a wave from behind and slammed to door in his face.

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Toshinori stood frozen staring at the door that he had just been so rudely dismissed by.
That had never happened before.

Usually, when he met someone that boy’s age they tried to hide their awe but he had never been met someone that didn’t care.

The entire reason he was here was due to Aizawa so maybe he had planned it. It sounded like something Shota would do.

The story he had been told was that Shota was on the hunt for a boy who frequented the shadier parts of the city and he had started to amass an army of people he held something over. He had no codename and hadn’t made any move to use the information.

But it was how Villains were born so they had wanted to cut it off at the bud. Shota had found a video of the boy had when he had shown it to the police to see if they knew anything they had all consecutively groaned.

Apparently, he was a bit of a problem child and had had multiple run-ins with the law but nothing that was less than noble and the charges never seemed to go through. If anything he seemed to be more of a vigilante.

The boy’s file had revealed that his name was Izuku Midoriya and he looked familiar but Toshi couldn’t put his finger on it. He had been surprised when he learned he was quirkless but when he had read that he was clinically depressed and had attempted suicide last year his heart had cried for the child.

He was much too young to wish to die.

So when Aizawa had called him saying that Midoriya was seen at the top of a skyscraper he had feared the worse.

After all, he had jumped from the top of the school and lived. If he were to jump from the skyscraper he would definitely not survive.

Thankfully, whatever he was doing up there seemed to be harmless. He had caught him trying to
break back in the building and was smoking a cigarette.

He disapproved of the cancer stick.

But the boy was interesting. An air of mystery surrounded him but and he had to admit that his coldness stung a bit.

He secretly hoped they would meet again under much more fortunate circumstances.

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It wasn’t until a week later that that experience caught up with him. Izuku had once again found himself in the custody of the police for underage driving. But honestly fuck that. He had been chasing this random dude who decided to snatch his wallet.

So he naturally grabbed the nearest motorcycle and took off after the guy.

When they had caught him (but not the thief) they had slapped handcuffs on him and Izuku raised a green eyebrow and whispered “kinky” under his breath which made one of the female cops snort.

Inko couldn’t be reached (mostly due to the fact that Izuku had long ago blocked the police’s number on her phone) and they ran through a series of events and what was going to happen.

Izuku only sighed, he knew how this was going to work. They would unsuccessfully try to intimidate him, they would review their paperwork, they would find the massive loopholes in the system, they would return dejected because he was quirklessness they couldn’t do anything, and bing bada boom he was free to go.

Honestly, why did they even try?

But you can imagine his surprise when the police walked in with two people that had no reason to be there.
First, it was All Might, his large stature filling the holding room. Izuku only gazed at him with a disinterested eye. The man next to him was much more interesting anyway.

He looked like a much older version of Izuku with dark tangled hair and tired eyes that rivaled Izuku’s. A large scarf was tied around his neck and looked overall really done with everything.

He immediately decided he loved the guy.

Something about his was familiar but he couldn’t quite figure out what exactly it was.

“Well hello, people I either don’t know or don’t care about!” Izuku said with an overly smile, “What you doing here?”

“We’re here to talk about what we found in your backpack.” the dark-haired man’s hoarse and exhausted voice replied.

Ah. Yeah, he was currently down an ax, a bat, a handgun, a small sword, and of course, his prized notebooks of information and blackmail.

“Look the weapons aren’t mine.”

The man raised an eyebrow, “We aren’t here for that impressive assort,”

So they were here for the notebooks then. He could probably figure out why but his insomnia was catching up with him and he didn’t particularly care at that moment.

“Good to know. So why is Mr. G.I. Joe here —no offense Mr. All Might sir— but he doesn’t seem like the best person for anything other than illegal weapons and I feel like he had better things to do than deal with a fifteen-year-old who stole a motorcycle.” he shouted the last part, flipping off whichever cop was unlucky enough to be behind the one-way glass.

The man seemed thoroughly unamused and All Might looked surprised at his blatant disrespect for authority.
“It’s about the notebooks.”

“Yeah, I figured.”

“How did you get that information.”

“I asked.”

The man didn’t buy that for a second.

“What does it matter to you?”

The man sighed before rubbing his bloodshot eyes, “I’ve been keeping an eye on someone who seemed to have blackmail on a fifth of that part of the city.”

“I’m flattered, but it’s more like a sixth.”

“And Nedzu took interest in you so when we were told you got arrested he sent us with a proposition.”

Izuku actually leaned back for that. Well, that was a curveball. Out of everything that was not even on the first ten pages of possibilities.

Nedzu, the slightly sadistic principle of UA had taken interest in a quirkless nobody.

“What is it.”

The man looked as impassive as he had the entire conversation when he said, “He wants you to be his personal student. You wouldn’t be with any of the other classes and would be more like a student teacher.”
What in the fuck.

This had come out of absolutely nowhere and he couldn’t count all the plot holes on his fingers.

“What does he want in return?”

There was no way that he didn’t was something in return.

“Just a different perspective on the students and what they could do to improve. He feels they could benefit from an instructor in their own age level.”

Every part of his body screamed at him not to accept, there were too many red flags and it was so entirely unrealistic it was almost laughable.

But he had never been known for a good sense of self-preservation.

“Sure.”

All Might had been sitting quietly, watching the exchange in silence and offering no input when he suddenly jumped up and pointed at Izuku, “I remember where I know you from!”

The dark-haired man raised an eyebrow as the number 1 hero continued, “I saved you from a sludge villain last year and you asked me…”

“If I could be a Hero without a quirk.” Izuku finished for him, eyes hard and half-closed.

“… and I said no.”

“Indeed you did. Thanks for that by the way. That dream needed to die anyway.”

All Might had suddenly gone silent as he connected the dots, he had been the final push that
shoved Midoriya over the edge. The guilt that blossomed in his chest was almost enough to cripple him and revert him back to his true form.

“Well anyway, when does this special tutelage start?”

The man seemed very interesting in the drama between him and All Might but replied to the question all the same, “Tomorrow at normal school hours.”

“Great see you then.” he flashed a smile at the duo before screaming at the top of his lungs, “NOW CAN SOME BASTARD UNCUFF ME SO I CAN GO HOME AND TAKE A FUCKING NAP! I HAVE A FISTFIGHT SCHEDULED WITH GOD AT 8 O’CLOCK! YOU ALL NO PERFECTLY WELL YOU CAN’T FUCKING TOUCH ME!”

At that precise moment, Aizawa realized that was probably the worst idea Nedzu had ever had.

Chapter End Notes

R I P quality. I don't know what that is
Izuku’s first day did not start well.

First off his alarm didn’t go off and he had no time to get ready. But then again his version of “get ready” was drowning a pot of coffee in the space of three minutes and throwing on some questionably clean clothes.

Due to his tardiness he couldn’t jump-start his neurons with normal caffeine so he grabbed one of the already made bottle that consisted of coffee, five hour energy, monster, and just the tiniest bit of alcohol.

So not exactly legal but one cannot be a living corpse on his first day of tutelage with the world’s one and only rat-bear-thing.

His second and possibly more annoying obstacle was being arrested again.

Alright, this one was actually not his fault.
He saw this man covered in spikes drag a struggling young woman into an alley and he wasn’t stupid enough to know what was about to happen.

He might be a bad guy, just not a bad guy.

So naturally, he attacked the guy. It was actually really pathetic how easy it was to take him down. It only took a well-timed kick to the head and the guy was out.

The woman nearly broke into tears in gratitude but Izuku needed to get going now so he told the woman to call the police as he booked it out of there.

Only to run point blank into a cop.

Jesus the universe hated him.

Do not be fooled, behind this cop’s blubbery face and handlebar mustache burned a hate for Izuku to rival the flames of hell.

He took one look at the sobbing woman, the comatose would-be rapist, and Izuku’s panicked expression before slapping on a pair of handcuffs on both him and the criminal.

The woman had pleaded that Izuku hadn’t done anything wrong but Mr. Donut-Walrus was having no of it under the pretense of “assault”.

Izuku just glared at him and said with a deadly calm voice, “You know perfectly well what would have happened if I didn’t intervene. Sure, let’s go ahead and say it was ‘assault’ but if that’s how we are playing the legal system you have the moral backbone of scented candle.”

At this Sir. Evil Cop had the audacity to be offended, waving a fat finger in his face going off about ‘respecting his elders’ and ‘keeping his mouth shut’.

Izuku felt his temper mount but just huffed when Mr. Donut walked away to call this into the
Now was the perfect time to make a break for it.

So he did.

Bolting across the street — hand’s still cuffed — he heard the shouts of Rent-a-Cop yelling at him to stop and his heavy footsteps in his half-hearted attempt to chase after him.

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Soon enough he found himself at the gates of U.A., only half-an-hour behind schedule. His hair was in a literal afro because of sweat and humidity.

Luckily for him, he found a discarded rainbow hair tie on the floor just outside the building and pulled his dark green hair into a dark bun. Try to make an at least decent impression.

At some point on his sprint to the school he had managed to liberate one of his hands from the cold steel prison. The other however remained stubbornly attached to his wrist.

He wandered into the school, not even pausing to stand in awe at the fact that he was entering the school of his dead dreams. He had changed, heroes no longer entranced him and villains didn’t seem quite so villainous. The only reason he was doing this was to try and stave some of the boredom that nipped at his heels like he had Kacchan’s as children.

Kacchan.

He had gotten into U.A. hadn’t he?

Oh that was just too good.

Ever since his suicide attempt he and Kacchan had reached an unsteady neutral ground. He had come to visit him in the hospital to say that was a shitshow was an understatement. Although, they had someone settled some of their differences during that particular screaming match.
He looked back at his time at the mental ward with fond memories that involved being chased across the hospital and his psychiatrist busting down a door just to call him a demon and then leave. There was of course the time when he had attempted to find a way to avoid the insomnia his meds caused which led to two days and three notebooks full of incredibly detailed drawings of heroes in various stages of death and conspiracy theories about how quirks were corrupting society and how they should be abolished, leaving the quirkiness to rule the world.

Ah. Good times.

Anyway, he needed to meet Nezu and get a better hand on what this ‘special teaching’ even entailed.

He wandered the halls of U.A. aimlessly, some tiny nagging voice in the back of head informed him of details he truly didn’t care about. Like how this was the first day of school for the normal students, the basic layout plans, and the ever so useful knowledge of what the walls were made off.

Did his brain ever shut up?

Finally locating the teacher’s lounge he figured that would be a good place to start looking for the principal.

Inside the lounge was a coffee machine, plush couches, and a microwave. All essential items.

Only one person other then Izuku occupied the room, a skeletal man with lanky blond hair and blue eyes with black scleras. He looked so weak a small breeze could blow him over.

With a small nod in the man’s direction Izuku asked, “Sup’ All Might. Any idea were I could find Nezu?”

All Might basically jumped out of his skin at his recognition in his true form. “Y-you know?” he stuttered.

Izuku scoffed. Please, he had been prophesying the fact that All Might had a significantly different and weaker form due to some sort of strength quirk. It really didn’t take much brain power to connect the dots and realized that this living skeleton was All Might.
“No, I don’t.” he replied with a deadpan expression, voice practically dripping with sarcasm.

“H-how.” bless this poor man’s soul.

Izuku actually sighed at that one and rubbed his temples, “Look, Superman I really don’t have time to walk through basic logic with you. I am already late seeing I got held up on my way here,” he held up his still handcuffed wrist, “and I don’t want Nezu being any more pissed than he might already be. So I will repeat, where is the mammal?”

All Might was still reeling but pointed down the hall, “T-take a left.”

Izuku smiled, a tiny bit of madness sneaking into his eyes, “Gracias, Bumblebee.”

—

Nezu’s office was exactly where He-Ra had said it would be, he entered to find the mammal sipping tea from a porcelain cup staring at nothing with rapt attention.

“I was beginning to wonder if you were ever going to show.” the principal said, eyes not even shifting to meet Izuku’s.

Oh, so this was what they were doing.

“I was beginning to wonder if I would ever get here.” Izuku replied just as curtly as he swept in and spun a chair around and sat so his head was perched on the chair’s back. Ever the picture of an uncaring teen with a slight rebellious streak.

Nezu smiled and finally made eye-contact, beady black eyes boring into Izuku’s green ones. He expected Izuku to back down, to flinch and look down at the floor cowed.

He did no such thing.
Instead he stared back with a bored expression but fierce fire smoldering slightly behind his irises.

The principal smiled for real now, and clapped his…paws. “Wonderful, you can read a situation just fine and counter it accordingly. Wonderful, just wonderful!.” he exclaimed.

Izuku raised an ungroomed eyebrow.

“Well, seeing as we are already late I’m afraid we will have to skip the pleasantries and get straight to business,” Nezu pushed a manila folder towards the teen, “To start you off I’m placing you with the 1-A class to observe and help them develop their quirks and assist their teachers in any way possible. Our lessons will be more hands-on so I am authorizing you the same authority as the teachers here.”

Well, that was a mouthful. He flipped through the folder and found profiles for every student in the 1-A class. Kacchan was in the class along with Shoto Todoroki, that would be amusing as all hell.

One question nagged at the back of his mind however, “Why, exactly did you think I would be good enough for this. I don’t have a quirk and my morals are questionable at best. I can’t help but feel… under-qualified.”

Nezu laughed before turning deadly serious, “You are being much too modest. Whether you realize it or not, if you truly wanted to you could turn Japan into your personal playground. It doesn’t take much to get someone to fall under your influence. Only one bit of information and they are yours. I figured it would be better if we got you with us before the Villains.”

Izuku smiled bashfully but inside his mind, he was in hysterics.

*If only you realized that you are too late.*

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Aizawa was not particularly happy at his new “student teacher”s arrival.

Izuku on the other hand fell more in love with the man when he saw the he had bundled himself in a sleeping bag and was laying on the floor like a caterpillar sipping a juice pouch. What an absolute *mood.*
Specifically it was Izuku’s mood. 24/7.

If a pro-hero could do that then could he come to school in a sleeping-bag too?

“We have an assistant with us this year. He is Nezu’s personal student so I expect you to treat him with respect.” Eraserhead monologued.

Oh yes, he had done so research and had learned that the man how had been there for his ‘recruitment’ was none-other than Eraserhead, the an underground hero who hated the spotlight. His type of dude.

The class was already nervous out of their minds being this was their first day but at the news of an assistant they all perked up.

But when Izuku had walked into the room with his wild hair, aviator glasses, and trashy clothes their expressions flipped between disappointed and confused.

Kacchan, of course, had recognized him immediately and looked to be visibly restraining himself from saying or doing something violent.

“He will be helping me analyze your quirks and help you train them.” Aizawa monotoned.

Izuku apprised the class with a trained eye, careful to let only a sharp glint be seen through the glasses. He adjusted his posture to appear confident and commanding only to immediately let it return to normal because he realized he didn’t care.

“I’m Izuku Midoriya. Your new resident trainer apparently?” More eyes landed on his handcuffs, “I honestly have no fucking clue why I’m here, all I know is that I got arrested yesterday and then boom, I have a job.”

Aizawa glared at him but Izuku only turned to him and said, “Wait, am I even getting paid for putting up with these brats?”
Izuku didn’t miss the smile that tugged at his lips for a millisecond before it turned back to its granite mask. He was winning him over then.

“No, you are not. Now everyone needs to put on their gym uniforms and meet us on the field.”

—

While the students were getting ready Aizawa moved to talk with Izuku. Probably tell him what the hell he was planning and what was his role in it.

“I’m conducting a quirk assessment test. You will be watching the students and see what they could do to improve them.” Aizawa’s bloodshot eyes lingered on Izuku, “I really don’t want you here but if you’re as good as Nezu thinks you are better not disappoint.”

Izuku gave him his most annoying smile, “Why would you ever underestimate me. After all I have a sixth of the city wrapped around my finger.”

The first few students had begun to trickle onto the field and Eraserhead explained the quirk assessment while Izuku not so inconspicuously lit a cigarette and observed. A girl with short brown hair inquired about orientation and Aizawa’s answer led to an almost comical round of gasps.

When he had asked Kacchan to throw a softball using his quirk Izuku couldn’t help but be impressed with his 705.2 meters. Kacchan had really grown.

But then Aizawa had dropped the bomb that the lowest scoring in this exercise would be expelled. He scoffed at how the student’s reacted to the obvious lie. Did none of them have actually functioning brains?

Soon enough the fifty-meter dash commenced and Eraserhead joined Izuku on the sidelines, he glanced at the cigarette before sighing and returning his attention back to the students.

Tenya Iida’s quirk was practically built for this test but they would have to work on to getting to a higher gear faster.
As they ran through the roster Izuku pulled out his water bottle of pure caffeine that he hadn’t had a chance to drink yet.

Aizawa eyed the bottle hungrily and Izuku knew that he was just as tired if not more so due to the bags under his eyes.

“Would you like some?”

“What even is it?”

“Coffee, five hour energy, monster, and a little bit of tequila.”

Eraserhead’s morals seemed to battle out before he extended a hand. He took a swig of the concoction and in seconds his pupils dilated and he looked a bit more alert.

Another step in the direction of befriending the underground hero.

Soon enough the tests were coming to a close and the last few people were completed the softball throw when the same brown-haired girl from before—wasn’t her name like Uruaka or something—brought up the idea of making Izuku try the test.

Deku might have tensed up but new Izuku didn’t even glance up from his notes when he said, “I don’t have a quirk.”

The general uproar this statement caused was almost comical. “Why are you even here then?!” Iida’s voice shouted over the din. It was quickly seconded by a majority of the class so Izuku just sighed before looking towards the student body.

He pointed at Iida, “Your brother is Ingenium. You want desperately to become just as good as a hero as him and keep your family’s name alive. Total busybody but that doesn’t take much to figure out. You are extremely straightforward and jump to conclusions. Despite your humble nature you are also vengeful and can abandon your own moral code in order to achieve revenge.”

Iida stood with his mouth-agape but Izuku didn’t pause. Now he turned to attention to Uraraka,
“Your here because of your parents. Not in the way Todoroki is, —I want to talk to you about your mother later by the way Shoto— but because you want to give them a life where they don’t have to worry about money. You are extremely empathetic but are also fierce and if you incorporated physical fighting with your quirk you could make major progress into getting that money for your parents.”

The entire class was silent. Too surprised about the analysis of their classmates to make a sound other than Kacchan’s grumbling.

“H-how do you know that?” Uraraka questioned, still stunned beyond all belief.

“Simple observations. Now does anyone else have any objections about my being here?”

Kacchan apparently had multiple objections. Being that he snapped and flew at Izuku, shouting “DIE! STUPID DEKU!”

With one smooth motion Izuku had his right arm in an arm lock just waiting to be snapped. “You always start with a right hook. I recommend you fix that Kacchan.”

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His comment about Todoroki’s mother had been forgotten by everyone other than Todoroki.

He approached Izuku later that day with his stone cold expression. “What do you know about my mother?”

Izuku looked up from his notes and smiled softly when he saw Todoroki. “Your mother was in the same hospital I was in and she became one of my best friends. I’ve briefly met your sister and I know about everything that happened between all of you.”

Todoroki stiffened minutely before speaking, “And your point?”

“I want to bring Endewhore to justice.”
Chapter End Notes

SOMEONE DID FANART FOR THIS AND I CRIED

https://starssketches.tumblr.com/post/181850090731/fan-sketch-for-to-be-or-not-to-be-on-a03-check
Underground Workings

Chapter Summary

We get a glimpse at what Izuku does at night

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Night had fallen in the city, casting deep shadows into the alley Izuku was meandering down, earphones blasting rock music full volume as he read posts on the hero forum.

He had once been such an active member on the forum that he had almost made him an admin, but then they found out he was only a kid and although they were thoroughly impressed by his analysis of the heroes they couldn’t let a child be running the website.

After his accident and thorough smashing of his dreams he had gone completely silent on the website and had seriously contemplated deleting his account but then realized that it was a wonderful way of receiving information and ever since Aizawa had said that he had a fifth of the city wrapped around his finger he resolved to make that statement true.

At least Izuku Midoriya needed to get a fifth of the city wrapped around his finger.

He still couldn’t get over how he hadn’t be recognized. The pro heroes were just as disappointing in person as they seemed when he observed them during villain attacks. They had not only missed recognizing one wanted man but two.

It was almost impressive.

He had honestly expected more from Nedzu, he had been almost 100% positive that he was at least recognized one of his secret identities. He was still pretty sure they were trying to play him until Nezu had said they wanted to get him before the villains.

But Witch and Beetle were still at large and an entire school of pro heroes had no idea that they were teaching among them.
That actually made him giggle. Right in the middle of a dark alley at midnight.

*That probably looked insane.*

But if the fact that a vigilante and a villain were currently teaching at the best hero school in Japan wasn’t a reason to start giggling uncontrollably then he didn’t know what was.

Witch had been created before Beetle. Both had been almost total accidents. Witch was a vigilante that had been born of pure spite of one-upping the heroes and Izuku was nothing if not extra so he had embraced the role with a passion unmatched by even the most passionate passion fruits.

He had created a costume and designed his own weapons and had taken to the streets for his debut, crashing villain parties and stopping more serious crimes than Izuku’s random thief.

He may have lied on his mindless ramblings on the roof he had first met All Might when he said he didn’t consider himself an informant or a vigilante.

That was true to an extent, *Izuku* wasn’t an informant or a vigilante but Witch and Beetle... not so much.

Beetle dangled dangerously close to the line of villain, that idea had spawned when he realized how much easier it would be to take down villains if he got to know a few. And so Beetle was born and that had honestly grown into something so much bigger than he had initially intended.

It had originally started with him being a double agent for himself, then Beetle got out of hand and had taken up the role as an informant for the villains and if Izuku was being totally honest, he didn’t overly mind it.

He had even made a few villain friends as Beetle, like Kurogiri—a dude with a warp gate quirk who was really just tired of dealing with the antics of the others like Toga, Dabi, and Shigaraki.

That was probably another reason he kept his stupid forum account. Witch and Beetle both had their own pages and it was honestly the highlight of his life whenever someone tried to figure out their quirks.
For some reason, Witch had gotten like super popular. He had the whole shebang, self-insert fanfiction, NSFW fanart, and the occasional shipping war (there had once been someone who had tried to convince the rest of his fanbase that he and Beetle would be super compatible and Izuku had spent half the day in near tears. If there was one thing he wasn’t good at it was self-love). He attributed Witch’s popularity to his flair for dramatics, unique personality, and his very very impressive escapes from custody.

But tonight he hadn’t donned Witch’s ice-blue braid or Beetle’s fiery orange and yellow space buns (that had been Toga’s idea and it worked surprisingly well). As he had mentioned earlier Izuku needed to get a fifth of the city wrapped around his finger so he hadn’t dyed his hair and was wearing his beloved aviator jacket.

He was headed to his favorite information gathering spot in the city and he was almost to its entrance.

The door was as inconspicuous as they came and if you didn’t already know about it you wouldn’t even so much as glance at it.

He cracked it open and confidently walked down the dusty steps, eyes adjusting to the harsh light and his nostrils flared at the stench of sweat and blood. Encouraging shouts sounded from the bottom of the stairwell followed by thumps and grunts.

Reaching the bottom he watched two unknown competitors threw punches and lunge at each other with brutal kicks and elbows. One had shoulder length brown hair that hung in sweaty strands while the other had skin so pale it looked translucent and it took Izuku less than a moment to determine that the brown-haired man was going to win.

He took a seat at the bar and continued to watch the fight with a nod at the barkeep who passed him his usual order of tequila.

Sure, they were both built like trucks and were handsome enough to appear in his wet dreams later but the pale guy was losing stamina fast and was lashing out with absolutely no tact or planning. They both fought like uncultured swines but at least the other one looked to have some form of plan.

That’s another reason he loved this place, he could make bank at betting on who would win these matches. He was almost never wrong. Add money making with loose-lipped patrons who were drunk on bloodlust and cocktails and you had the makings of a perfect establishment.
Sure enough, the pale man was flipped on his back and pronounced unconscious by the ref who lifted the brown-haired man’s arm into the air in triumph and asked if anyone wanted to challenge the current champion.

Not a single person rose to the challenge and Izuku couldn’t help but roll his eyes.

*It would be so easy. I could do it, are these idiots really too scared to actually go against that absolute goosefoot.*

“WELL HOW ABOUT YOU TRY IT PIPSQUEAK!”

And that’s when Izuku realized that he said that out loud and the current reigning champion was staring at him with righteous fury, apparently not too keen on being called an ‘absolute goosefoot’.

*Well, one can’t back down from a challenge. And if he calls my bluff then I’ll lose all my street cred.*

So he sighed and drowned the rest of his glass and handed off his coat to the barkeep who cast him a sympathetic glance that he definitely didn’t need.

The entire room watched with bated breath as a scrawny fifteen-year-old stepped up to face off against a man who was about three times his size. He saw a few bets being placed —mostly against him but he noticed a few of the people who knew him casting them in his favor with crooked smiles— he mentally calculated how fast this fight was going to last and he rounded it off at two minutes max.

*I can’t fight like Witch does.*

He walked into his corner and the other man (obviously surprised that he had actually risen to the challenge) stalked to his own while the pretty pink-haired ref stood in the middle waiting to call the fight. She told them the rules, no using your quirks, no killing, etc.

They both squared up but Izuku had no intention of actually using is fists first.
With a whistle, the ref stepped out of the ring and the man flew at him just like he thought he would.

He ducked and centering all of his weight onto his left foot kicked his right leg into the air so he was in a sideways’ splits and hit the man right under his chin. Knocking his head into the air and for him to stagger back a step.

Taking advantage of the momentary stun he twisted so he was on the side of the man and took a jab at the space right between his ribs and his pelvis but the man turned right before so it didn’t connect properly.

Like the cretin he was, he once again tried to hit Izuku with fists, Honestly, do they never learn, and had the audacity to be surprised when he only found air as he dodged.

Running through possible plans he decided that he could go for pressure points or Izuku could give the audience a show.

Being a dramatic bitch he, of course, chose the showier option.

Jumping up and taking the man’s still outstretched arm between his legs he let gravity drag both him and the man onto the floor with a thud.

He unlocked his legs and rolled onto his feet as the man was getting over the surprise that he had been dragged to the floor by a fifteen-year-old who looked like he had crawled out of a dumpster.

Thankfully, the man had a decent recovery time and was almost standing when an elbow jammed him in the throat.

Retching for air had gasped and clawed at this throat but before he could recover Izuku decided to bruise his knuckles just for the novelty of it and jumped (because he was short enough he couldn’t reach the man’s face without jumping) pulling his arm back before hearing his fist connect with the man’s jaw with a satisfying crack.

Head spun so fast to the side that he got whiplash the man stumbled and Izuku sighed, No one
thought they could take this. before casually walking behind him and tripping him with an outstretched foot.

He landed on his ass with a thud and within moments Izuku’s foot was on his throat, poised to crush his windpipe.

The ref called the whistle and the room did what could only be described as exploded with cheers as people pointed and wolf-whistled at Izuku who removed his foot from a new extremely embarrassed competitor.

He flashed a smirk at the crowd before strutting out of the ring back to bar with a raised middle finger. The bartender threw him back his jacket with an awed expression before passing him another shot of tequila.

Soon enough he had amassed a small crowd of people eagerly asking how he had done that and Izuku soon came to the conclusion that bloodthirsty, drunk, and astonished patrons were the best combination for information extraction.

They were all too compliant to share personal information and with a few well-timed minutes of silences on Izuku’s part he had the entire life story of three men and could gather that one of them was having an affair, the second had an eloped with a girl he no longer loved, and the third had about seven girlfriends.

He quickly typed this information onto one of the notes titled *Blackmail* on his phone along with the men’s names. You’ll never know when you needed info on a stranger who was random at the time.

It continued like this for another hour, his notes growing longer and longer until they had reached the max limit and he decided he was done for the night.

With a wave of his hand, he excused himself and strutted out into the alleyway.

He would definitely need to participate in the fights more often.
His clock read 4:34 a.m. when he crawled through the window into his room and flopped onto his bed.

In the faint light of the streetlamp outside his window, he could see the empty spaces on his walls where the posters for All Might had once been hung and the missing figurines that had stood vigil on his desk all those years.

Now it was bare and he hadn’t found time to redecorate.

He felt tears start to prick the corners of his eyes at the thought of the memorabilia that had played such an integral part in his childhood that had worshipped the man that had crushed his dreams.

He didn’t really blame All Might. He was being realistic and hadn’t been wrong, but you can’t exactly let the destruction of the tiny bit of hope that he had harbored for so long get snuffed out by a few harsh words.

Maybe that’s why he had been driven to do it. Maybe he just wanted to get back at Kacchan. Maybe…

R I P. He needed to get out that pity party right now. If he went down that road he really didn’t want to know where it would lead.

He doubted he would get to sleep without those thoughts swirling around and keeping him up.

So, he dragged himself over to his desk and reviewed his notes on Class 1-A. He now was playing every court, villain, vigilante, and now hero. He still had a job to do and he was hardly a slacker. He wondered if he could take Aizawa into giving him a day to do individual training on each of the students.

He had some basic starting plans but he hadn’t seen enough of them to get concrete reads on them.

Nezu might also decide to have him branch out to other classes and that would add a substantial addition to his workload.
Then there was the plan to deal with Endewhore. Todoroki looked very eager and if anything Rei had told him was even remotely true then he couldn’t blame him.

He hadn’t had the pleasure to meet the man in person but based on his basic profiling he was a major asshole.

Of course, he could never support a man how abused his family.

Just the thought made his blood boil.

Oh, Endewhore would get what was coming to him and he might just inlist Beetle and Witch’s help in taking him down.

This motherfucker isn't going to stand a chance.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so I know it probably seems like the inclusion of Witch and Beetle probably seems like overkill and it IS but it will open up so many more plot opportunities and I promise I will try to make it all fit nicely. They are being almost as sperate entities and in a sense they are. Izuku adopts an entirely new personality (if I can write it well enough) for each.

Also sorry for Izuku not being as sassy as usual
Izuku almost puked when All Might entered by proclaiming, “I AM HERE, COMING THROUGH THE DOOR LIKE A NORMAL PERSON!”

How corny and idiotic could this guy get? He had literally seen him twice in the span of two days and the very idea of having to ghost the class and spend time with the man was exhausting.

It was almost enough to make him want to throw himself from a roof again.

*Jeez, file that one away under ‘things to never say in front of my therapist’.*

It was an ever-growing file and that was probably worrying.

Anyway, back to He-Man.

Class 1-A responded to the ‘dramatic’ entrance with awed gasps and one student —his name was like Kaminari or something— even stated the obvious, that it was really All Might, with wide eyes.

And to think that a mere ten months ago he would have been among them, with shining eyes and practically worshipping the man. They said to never meet your heroes and he had yet to receive substantial evidence that whoever the ‘they’ in this equation was wrong.
The only person who even somewhat lived up to his expectations was Eraserhead and he had already had Izuku’s respect for avoiding the media like the plague and then had won his heart with his absolute ability to not care. They were kindred spirits, really.

His gaydar was sending crazy signals whenever it was pointed at the older man and it had never been wrong. He might have swooped in but Aizawa and Present Mic were OTP. He would definitely have to set them up sometime, a locked closet might prove useful perhaps.

I wonder what Aizawa would do if I wrote some EraserMic smut and sent it to him. Under a pseudonym of course.

Suddenly, an ingenious idea struck him.

What if I send it as Beetle? That would be hilarious! See how he reacts to having a villain send him smut, saying that he shipped him with Present Mic! That would be priceless! Maybe show it to Toga, she would die.

He resolved to do that at the first opportunity, Beetle screaming his agreement in the back of his mind. But then came the serious question. Should he write it purposefully bad or really well to make Aizawa question everything.

He was interrupted from his fantasy by All Might’s overly cheery booming voice, “And young Midoriya will be observing with me!”

Blinking he leaned back in his seat, “What?”

All Might’s grin faltered for a moment and Izuku noticed he was wearing his Silver Age costume, and then promptly got mad at himself for knowing that.

“For the combat training! You will be observing with me and taking notes on how the students use their quirks in a real fight!”

They were doing combat training this early? Well, it didn’t really matter. The faster he got aquatinted with their quirks the faster he could train start training them to be better.
Wait a minute, when did he start caring?

That needed to stop immediately.

“But another part of being a hero is looking good!” All Might bellowed, pointed at the far wall as it split open to reveal numbered boxes, “The support team specially designed these for you based off the forms you turned in at the beginning of the year and your quirks!

The round of cheers from the student body was almost deafening. I mean God, they can help you with your quirks but it was still just over-glorified fabric.

“Get dressed and meet us at Training Ground Beta!”, All Might gestured for Izuku to follow him and he reluctantly stood and shuffled after the number one hero.

Once outside Izuku lit a cigarette, making Toshinori frown but the muscled man said nothing. In fact, neither of them said anything until the student body had gathered and a few students glanced at the offending cancer stick hanging from Izuku’s lips and wondered how he was getting away with it.

“They say that the costume makes the hero and you are the living proof of that!” All Might complimented and even Izuku had to admit that they did look pretty good.

Kacchan had on giant gauntlets that resembled grenades on his wrist and Izuku wondered how heavy it was and their purpose. Kacchan may be an asshole but he wasn’t an idiot, there was no reason he would wear such debilitating pieces unless they served as some other purpose. He also wore a mask (which Izuku thought was overkill) that grew into giant winglike things that were supposed to resemble explosion tucked behind his ears with— with what? Barretts? Abruptly, the thought of Kacchan wearing a tiny barrette with die written in flowery cursive came to mind and he suddenly knew what he was getting Kacchan for Christmas.

Uruaka, the girl with the anti-gravity quirk, wore a skintight bodysuit that loosely resembled No. Thirteen’s astronaut costume but she was pulling at it, indicating that she had not intended it to be that tight.

Iida Tenya, the boy with a speed quirk and whose brother was none other than Ingenium, looked like a cross between a knight and a robot and it was almost identical to his brother’s costume.
And Shoto, oh Shoto. His costume literally covered his entire right side in ice. If he didn’t know his quirk or his mother then he would have just assumed it was a cosmetic choice. But since he did know his quirk and his mother he knew that he had both fire and ice and absolutely refused to use his fire, out of spite for his asshole father. He literally was trying to hide that part of him.

Right, I got my own share of daddy issues and Endeavor is still a major dick who deserves to burn in hell —too bad Satan already turned him down— but we need Avatar here to realize that his quirk is his not his father’s.

As All Might explained how this exercise would work, two teams, heroes vs. villains, blah blah blah. Izuku felt a pair of eyes on him and he scanned the crowd until his green eyes met purple ones and they both narrowed.

Hitoshi Shinso. Quirk: Brainwash, can mentally control those who verbally answer him. Extremely useful and extremely dangerous.

What did he want?

They kept up their impromptu staring contest until Shinso apparently got intimidated by the tiny bit of Beetle’s insanity slip into his gaze. He would need to watch him closely during this test.

Then it was time to announce teams and Iida got the unfortunate pairing of him and Bakugo v.s. Uruaka and Shinso.

This will be one for the history books. Now if only I knew who’s grave I should start digging first.

——-

Once they were gathered in the controls room Toshinori nervously glanced at Midoriya, who was muttering under his breath as green eyes flicked across the screen, watching as the teams prepared.

It would be young Iida and Bakugo as the villains and Uruaka and Shinso as the heroes.
He knew he should be focusing on the students but the guilt about what he had said that day to Midoriya was eating away at him and was hurting him more than any villain ever could. He knew this was a perfect time to bring it up but he couldn’t quite bring himself to broach the topic.

Then Midoriya sighed and turned to look at him with an exasperated expression, “Look, I’m not going to tell anyone about your little secret.”

Toshi blinked, that hadn’t even crossed his mind. Well, it was now or never.

“No. That isn’t it. I- I just wanted to apologize for what I said that day and say that you can become a hero, even if you don’t have a quirk.”

Midoriya scoffed, “A little bit late for that.”

Toshi averted his gaze, guilt increasing a tenth-fold.

Midoriya noticed the weight bearing down on the man’s shoulders before exhaling through his nose and saying, “I don’t blame you. You were right. You are right. I always knew that but never really acknowledged it. Add up a sudden realization at you’ve been lying to yourself for fourteen years and suicide baits and it makes a bit of a toxic explosion of negative emotion.”

Toshinori was taken aback, “Suicide baits?”

Midoriya only shrugged, “People didn’t like me much at my old school.”

The number one hero suddenly had the urge to track down every student who used to attend Midoriya’s junior high and make them pay.

In the end, the heroes had won with Shinso baiting Kacchan into replying to him in a rage-filled fury and Uruaka hitting Iida like a baseball with a concrete pillar. All and all, pretty standard.
They awarded MVP to Iida and everyone agreed it was the correct choice.

The rest of the exercise passed pretty uneventfully, the only interesting thing being Shoto freezing the entire building (show off) and Yaoyorozu actually drop kicking Mineta out of a window (he deserved it).

By the time he got home, he was stuck somewhere between bursting with energy and passing out on the floor. Seeing all of the student's battles had made him itch for a fight of his own but the mental strain of analyzing all of their quirks had taken its toll.

His phone pinged and made the decision of what to do for him. One of the hero forums had released an article about Witch’s inactivity and Izuku decided that was what he was going to do. At nightfall, he would become Witch, fight some criminals, save some folks, burn off some of his non-existent energy.

Maybe an hour after sunset he donned his black cloak with light-blue thread embroidered the edges that had been a bitch to do, along with grey jeans and shirt. He located his bottle of hairspray-dye thing he used to make his hair a light blue that washed out after one use. Plaiting it into a fishtail he put on the finishing touch to the ensemble, a thin midnight blue cloth that he tied across his eyes that he could see perfectly out of but hid his identity well. There was also the signature black and blue witch’s hat that gave him his name.

He luckily didn’t have to hide this from his mother. She was hardly ever home, having to work her ass off to pay for his hospital bills. Another drawback of his idiotic decision to jump from a four-story building. Didn’t he know that he could have survived?

He snuck out his window before slipping into the shadows of the alleys and sunk into the persona of Witch.

It was almost like acting, except he wasn’t pretending to be someone else. He was becoming someone else. He developed new demeanors reflexively and his entire thought process shifted. He was still in control and could switch anytime he wished but it was almost eerie.

Witch was reserved but sarcastic. Always willing to mess with the cops and often played right into their hands, only to escape again last second.

His posture changed as he climbed onto the roof of a building in the business district and began
running along the rooftops, avoiding the attention of the few people still milling about that evening, adopting a posture much more like Iida’s stiffness instead of his perpetual slouch.

He soon arrived at the abandoned penthouse apartment that had started to serve as his home base ever since he had discovered it on one of his escapades a month or two earlier. He retrieved Witch’s weapons from where he stored them in neat racks. His arsenal consisted of a tactical whip that could be used much like Eraserhead’s capture weapon, a carved wooden mage staff, and a tranquilizer gun. He also had a belt of throwing knives that—although he knew how to use them—he never had to use and hoped he wouldn’t have to. They were lethal and he really didn’t want to kill anyone. There was also the set of tiny lock picks that he carried around with him constantly so he could escape from the police if need.

When he was fully outfitted he stalked over to the cork-board that was covered in maps of various surrounding cities. He stopped ten feet away at a small strip of white tape he had placed exactly for this reason. In one smooth motion, he pulled a knife from his belt, closed his eyes, and flicked his wrist back, and let it fly.

Opening his eyes, he looked at the cork-board to see where the knife had impaled directly in the center of a map for Hosu. So that’s where he was heading tonight, if he got on a train ASAP he could make it in time for prime villain activity.

That was another thing about Witch that differed from Izuku, Witch always had a system for everything while Izuku was constantly in disarray,

After retrieving the knife he practically flew in the direction of the train, jumping along the flat rooflines of this district until he reached the train tracks. Catching a train was always a nerve-wracking experience. It was maybe one of the most dangerous things he did in his line of work. It involved a perfectly timed jump and then remaining perfectly still for the entirety of the ride. Riding atop a moving train was much harder than it looked and staying alive was even harder.

Tunnels were always the worst, if he didn’t push himself flat on his stomach he would be vaporized instantly.

The few passersby’s gaped at the vigilante train-surfing but Witch only cast a disinterested eye. Witch didn’t need publicity or to be a media star, he just a creature made entirely out of spite with a point to prove. He didn’t shy away from the cameras but he didn’t pose or wave or even acknowledge the existence of the photographers.

In the back of his mind, Izuku itched to strike a pose, do a mock salute, flip them off even. Just
something. Beetle laughed maniacally as he sensed Izuku’s desperation, always one for inner turmoil, even if it was his own.

Soon enough, he spots the familiar outline of Hosu, double and then triple-checking to make sure that he wasn’t missing any of his weapons, he braced his body to jump off of the train. He landed in an elegant roll that makes his cloak billow out behind him and the wind catch his braid. He sees the bright light some a camera flash and he knows that that picture will be viral by morning.

Izuku and Beetle both gasped in delight, total drama bitches and attention whores. The idea of their face plastered over every website made them nearly faint. Witch was much more sensible, however, the more publicity each of them got the easier it would be to compare images of the three of them and connect the dots that they were all the same person.

Face remaining impassive he scrambled away from the tracks and melted into the shadows of the city. The tangled alleyways of Hosu were perfect villain territory and he wanted to get at least one tonight.

It was 1:43 a.m. and the police thought they had him.

Granted, he was currently sitting the back of a police cruiser handcuffed next to the villain he had captured earlier that night. The two cops in the front seat were bantering about how proud the detective would be of them, for finally getting the vigilante that had caused him so many headaches in custody.

Beetle and Izuku both simultaneously scoffed.

Witch was not an idiot, in fact, he was probably the most logical out of the three personas and did not blindly run into situations like the other two.

He had procedures to follow in case this ever happened, and frankly, it happened more than he cared to admit.

The handcuffs had already been picked and he was just waiting for the opportune moment to escape.
The villain next to him had been strangely silent throughout this entire exchange and Beetle ever so helpfully offered information on the man.

_Hiroaki Kamin, quirk: Gravity, can create a gravitational pull around him and pull things toward him. Sounds fancy but it’s actually fairly weak. More of a thug than an actual villain. Personally, I don’t like the guy but I do have a contract with him. Dabi is currently my insurance on that front. We got him on the threat of being slowly burnt alive if he broke it._

So if he were to escape along with Witch he wouldn’t pose much of a threat to society if he was in Beetle’s pocket. Suddenly an idea struck him and he minutely scooted towards Kamin.

“If you were to hypothetically pull the glass in the windows towards you they would shatter therefore giving us an easy escape route,” he whispered so quietly it was almost inaudible.

Kamin blinked, obviously surprised at the vigilante who had captured him just minutes earlier was willing to escape with him. Then he realized that the plan would actually work and smiled wickedly.

His hand made a small grasping motion and Witch felt himself be pulled slightly towards the man and then the sound of shattering glass filled the cruiser and the cops stopped talking and glanced at the now open window that the villain was crawling through. Witch moved to follow him but received a kick to the head.

Almost received a kick to the head, he had assumed that the man would try and stage some form of betrayal so he was able to duck. Then the villain had rolled out of the moving vehicle and onto the street. His arm looked broken and with the absolutely dismal execution of that jump, Witch didn’t doubt it.

The cops were staring opened mouthed but were quickly getting over their surprise so Witch took the initiative to at that moment shed his handcuffs and follow the villain. Although he didn’t break his arm in the process, rolling like he did when he got off the train.

The police were the only people he actively antagonized and annoyed. He knew it drove Detective Naomasa absolutely insane, not being able to keep him in custody for more than nine minutes. So, wanted to further mess with the authorities he left a note where he had previously been sitting.
The cruiser was pulling over and if the villain didn’t try to leave him for dead he would have let him escape, but now he had vengeance running in his veins.

He pulled out his tranquilizer gun from the folds of his cloak— they really need to check him for weapons better— he aimed at the fleeing villain. He fired one round and he saw Kamin’s hand fly to his neck, only to have his body fall down in the middle of the street seconds later.

Seeing that his work was done, he broke into a dead sprint and soon lost the police in the maze that was Hosu.

He was safely back home when Izuku when he received a text.

3:12 a.m.

Dabitch: Someone at the bar asking 4 u

Bugboi: Be there in 30 <3

Dabitch: Stop

Bugboi: <3333

So he was going to have to be all three people in a single night.

He had washed out the dye he used for Witch but Beetle’s hair was a bit more complicated to color. It was a faded ombre that changed from red to orange to yellow, giving it a fiery appearance. It took a good fifteen minutes to get it right and then to place it in Toga’s twin-buns. He used colored contacts to change his eye color to match his hair and then let Beetle take control.

His lips widened into his signature crazed smile before strutting out the door, like a normal person.
Witch scoffed.

He pulled his hood over his head to hide the extremely noticeable hair as he practically skipped to the bar. Beetle knew he was a giant flirt and probably insane but he didn’t care. He was smart and that’s all that really mattered.

He was two minutes early when he breezed the bar, he spotted Dabi and Toga making small talk with his client. He glanced at Kurogiri who immediately started on his favorite drink, a concoction consisting of vodka, white rum, pineapple juice, and about twelve cherries. Everyone else found it disgusting but Beetle thought it was delicious.

He found a seat on Dabi’s lap who immediately pushed him off and then menacingly lit a fire in his hand, daring him to try it again. Beetle stuck his tongue out and then sat on Toga who made a sound of delight and then started playing with his hair.

His possible client watched this all with a slightly amused expression.

Kurogiri slid him with his drink and Beetle began sipping it serenely. Dabi looked disgusted and Toga crinkled her nose.

His client cleared his throat and for the first time, Beetle got a good look at the man. He had wild black curls and dark green eyes that were about five shades darker than Izuku’s.

Beetle suddenly went completely still.

He knew this man. He had only seen him in pictures but he knew without a doubt that the man before him was Hisashi Midoriya. Inko didn’t know what had become of her husband but Beetle, due to his villain connections knew that his father was a villain/vigilante that went by the name of Dragon and was universally feared throughout Japan. But, he was never in this part of Japan so he didn’t have to worry about him.

For once both Izuku and Witch were silent.

Then Beetle composed himself, his too-wide grin returned and insanity once again was lit behind his fiery eyes.
“What can I helpcha' with?”

Hisashi swallowed, “I want information on my wife and son.”

Beetle’s heart actually stopped.

“I left when my son was born fifteen years ago because I had made a lot of enemies and I wanted to keep them safe but now I want to meet them and explain and…” Hisashi rambled.

Beetle shut out all personal connection, this was Izuku’s problem. This was just another client.

“I’ll help you, for a price of course. What’s your dear son and wife’s—ex-wife’s?—name?”

He obviously knew that but he shouldn’t know so he had to play dumb.

“Inko and Izuku Midoriya.”

Beetle smiled, “Wonderful! I’ll track them down for you! Now for payment…”

Hisashi wasn’t stupid enough to reply.

“How about a favor?”

“What’s the favor?” the infamous villain inquired.

“I don’t know yet! Just a favor! Equal or less to tracking down your beloved family. A favor from the all mighty Dragon could be quite valuable!”

Toga and Dabi stared at the man. They hadn’t even realized who it was.
Beetle looked them directly in the eyes with a scandalized expression, “Did you really not know?”

Still stunned both didn’t reply.

Beetle tutted, “I am surrounded by idiots.”

Toga pouted and Dabi shot him a glare that he returned, looking him directly in the eyes to establish dominance.

Only once Dabi backed down did he return to his father, “Anyway, do you accept?”

Hisashi nodded, “I do.”

Beetle clapped his hands and then produced a contract from the pocket of his hoodie, “So just sign here and then we are done!”

“What’s the catch.”

So this is where Izuku got his brain from.

Beetle suddenly turned serious and adopted an expression that had made several thugs lose their bladders, “If you fail to complete your end of the bargain, this contract will burn right along with your dear family,” he cocked his head, “You see, I have a quirk called Bind. Wonderful for my line of work. It can let me create contracts that when signed, makes sure that whatever the contract entails comes true.” he pointed to a bit of fine print at the bottom of the paper, “If you look closely you will see that it says ‘if {the signer} doesn’t complete their end of this bargain, {closest family members} will burn painfully’.”

A lie of course, in any other situation it wouldn’t be but he wasn’t planning on killing his mother along with himself. He also didn’t have a quirk, but they didn’t know that and he had never once been questioned if he was bluffing. Plus, if they truly didn’t uphold their end then he usually asked Dabi to do what the contract entailed.

Hisashi didn’t show any sign of weakness but Beetle saw the slight hint of trepidation in his eyes,
then he blinked and it was gone.

“Deal.”

Beetle took another long sip of his drink as Hisashi signed the parchment. “We’ll be in touch.”

With that, Hisashi walked out of the bar and Dabi looked at Beetle like he was crazy.

“Did you just threaten Dragon?”

Beetle went to pat him on the cheek but was stopped when Dabi caught his wrist and he backed down, pouting. “No, I just threatened his family. Are you worried about me babe? Don’t worry, we die like men.”

“I fucking hate you.”

“<3”

“How the hell did you just say that out loud?”

Toga giggled, still playing with Beetle’s remarkably soft and fluffy hair, “Practice <3.” and then suddenly as if she remembered something important she jumped up, “Oh Beetle-kun! I almost forgot! I got some new eyeliner I wanted to try on you!”

Dabi groaned but Beetle smiled brighter than the sun.

—

Shouta was having a rotten evening.

He had started off with him patrolling Hosu looking for villains, even though the school had
started up again didn’t mean that he could slack off. Villains didn’t pause for school, so why should he?

For once, he was having no luck finding any criminals. At least that was until he spotted a familiar pointed hat and ice-blue fishtail braid. The owner of which seemed to be locked in an intense battle with someone he presumed was a villain.

The vigilante Witch had been a pain the side for the police for about four months. Constantly taunting them, leaving notes, sending pictures, and perhaps the most irritating— never staying in custody for more than nine minutes.

He debated stepping in right there. Capturing both the villain and vigilante, erasing both of their quirks (whatever they might be), and turning them over to the police and making sure that they actually stayed in custody.

But then he figured, why not let them burn themselves out in this fight and then swoop in when they were tired.

So he observed, Witch, moved with almost unmatched speed and switched between weapons almost flawlessly. First, he was defending himself against an onslaught of random objects that the villain seemed to be pulling towards himself, almost hitting Witch.

*How can he even see through that fabric around his eyes?*

There was much controversy about what Witch’s quirk was. Some said it was the ability to escape from any situation and that did certainly fit, but right now Shouto would bet on it being some form of enhanced senses.

The villain was quickly running out of materials to throw at the vigilante and Witch knew it. As soon as he saw an opening he attacked like a viper. A whip unfurling and wrapping around the villain’s legs, pulling him to the ground.

In an instant Witch was above the villain, a gun pointed directly into the throat of the villain. Before the villain could even beg for mercy they pulled the trigger and a gunshot echoed through the alley where the fight had taken place.

Aizawa was concerned that he had actually shot the man until he remembered that Witch never
actually hurt the villains and that he carried a tranquilizer gun.

The villain had gone still and Shouta was preparing the capture the vigilante when the cops, most likely attracted by the gunshot, appeared and promptly handcuffed both Witch and the unconscious villain.

They loaded both of them into the back of their cruiser and by the time they left the tranquilizer was wearing off the villain but everything seemed under control.

Aizawa could see no easy way that Witch could escape so he had left it.

Only to later stumble across those same police officers seven minutes later and received the news that Witch had once again escaped and left them a note.

The note read:

Dear Police,

I was debating letting my time run into the double digits, then I got impatient. You really need to teach your officers how to pat down better. I was able to keep all of my weapons except my staff. Hold a seminar.

Love,

Witch

What an absolutely infuriating and cocky child.

Aizawa had then stalked off back to the city to look for villains there and try to take out his annoyance at both the police and himself.

If only he had followed the cruiser when it left. Maybe Witch wouldn’t have gotten away.
He was still in a foul mood when he saw a boy in a dark hoodie picking his way through the back alleys of one of the bad parts of town. He briefly wondered what he was doing out at 4:30 in the morning, then he saw a bit of bright orange and yellow hair and paused.

A young boy in the bad part of town in the early morning. Fiery hair.

There could be other reasons but there were only so many boys with hair like that.

Beetle.

Beetle was up there on the scale of annoying and illegal children. He would take Witch over Beetle any day. At least Witch caught villains. Beetle, however, was a villain. An informant of sorts that, based off what the villains they had captured said, had a quirk that made any contract he made come true. He had been attributed to multiple fires since he had made his debut three months ago.

He was a slippery one, they had never even seen him. Only descriptions.

Well, if he was wrong what’s the worst thing that could happen?

The underground hero leaped off the roof he had been perched on, capture weapon already wrapped around the boy.

He looked surprised and then once he saw Aizawa his face broke out into a brilliant smile the reeked of insanity.

“Holy crap! You’re Eraserhead! I’ve been captured by Eraserhead!” he exclaimed in… joy?

He pulled back his hood and Aizawa got a good look at the boy, wild orange ombre hair that was twisted into two buns with matching eyes that were wide with awe and madness. There were a smattering of freckles on his cheeks and… was that eyeliner?

His face looked familiar but Shouta couldn’t place it. He was sure that he had never seen someone with such vibrant colors so it was probably just coincidence.
“I love you! You’re so cool! What do you think of Present Mic? I think you would make a great couple!”

Shouta was taken aback, *This kid is definitely insane, and he ships me and Yamada?*

He couldn’t say he was opposed to the idea.

What was he thinking? He is talking to a villain who was responsible for arson and some severe injuries and deaths.

“Come on Aizawa! Talk to me! I’m your biggest fan!”

“How do you even know I like men?” those words just slipped out and he mentally cursed himself for even talking to the little gremlin.

Beetle scoffed, “My gaydar had never been wrong and you are making it short circuit.”

Was he really that obvious?

Getting himself back to track he pulled out his phone, he was preparing to call Detective Naomasa to tell him that he caught Beetle when Beetle’s voice suddenly got lucid.

“I wouldn’t do that if I was you.”

Shouta’s gaze snapped to the young villain before asking, “Why not?”

Then Beetle’s voice reverted back to its tinkling insanity, “Well, what are you arresting me for?”

“Arson, murder, assault,” he replied immediately.
“But can you ever prove I ever actually did those things? I mean, you don’t even know who I am. I could just be a civilian who wrongfully was mistaken for a villain.” he with false innocence.

The worst part was that it was true.

“And even if I was hypothetically, say, Beetle. You can’t prove that he is even responsible for those crimes. It might just be one giant coincidence. Maybe a different villain decided to burn down those houses. You can’t prove it.”

The little gremlin was right.

With a sigh, he returned his phone to his pocket and prepared to try and get more information out of the villain but suddenly had to dodge a giant blue fireball.

*What the hell?!*

He couldn’t find the source but he didn’t doubt that it was one of Beetle’s villain friends.

Eyes scanned the surrounding area, everything was still shrouded in shadows so he couldn’t see anything other than the still captured informant.

At least he thought he was still captured.

For the first time, he noticed that the fireball had in fact, *not* missed. It had hit his capture weapon and seared through the fabric. Leaving it remarkably easy for Beetle to slip out of and that was exactly what he had done.

The child was nowhere to be seen and where he had been standing there was nothing but his heap of a capture weapon.

So yeah, Shouta was having a rotten evening.
On the topic of how Beetle doesn't care that he has had Dabi kill people at broke his contracts.

It is established that Witch and Izuku don't want to kill anyone but I'm here to remind you that that is WITCH and IZUKU. They tolerate Beetle's arson mostly because it really isn't him doing it and once again, they are a separate entity.

And yes, Shinso is in class 1-A. I needed someone to replace Midoriya so there you go.
Exasperation

Chapter Summary

Witch being annoyed at everyone.

Chapter Notes

I literally named this chapter because I'm fairly sure that I used the word 'exasperated' about twelve times.

On the subject of Izuku having DID. I realized after I started writing this chapter that a lot of Izuku's behavior regarding Witch and Beetle is quite similar to symptoms of DID. I never intended it to be that way and I really don't want to offend someone with DID by writing it incorrectly/poorly. In previous comments I've answered the question of 'does Izuku have DID?' with no, however, after writing this chapter I am going to change that answer to yes. It fits too well for me to deny it and if I don't do it justice please tell me so I can hopefully get it right in the future.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku saw the exact moment Aizawa opened the email and read the first few sentences.

He knew because the underground hero’s eyes went wide and he practically threw his phone at the floor.

Beetle cackled in the back of his mind and Izuku tried to hide a smirk as he reviewed the notes he had taken on the class.

Everyone’s eyes immediately flew to their flustered teacher and Aizawa tried to save his dignity by clearing his throat, picking up his now cracked phone, shooting a glare at the entire class, and then finally wrapping himself in his sleeping bag as if nothing happened.

Beetle had done an amazing job on the fanfiction, it had taken around two hours to write and he had to do the finishing touches on his way to UA. Beetle was a much better writer than both him and Witch so he had to be very careful to not interact with anyone until he switched back to Izuku. Explaining why he had acted verifiably insane would be annoying.
Their run-in with Aizawa had been nothing short of hilarious. Beetle and Izuku both had been raving about how furious Eraserhead had been when Dabi had burnt through his capture weapon and Beetle had disappeared.

It was only made better knowing that the villain he no doubt was now dead set on capturing was currently sitting not five yards away wrapped in a dark green sleeping bag and figuring out how to help the next generation of heroes become better.

It was almost poetic.

Fortunately, Izuku had had time to freak out the whole father-who-is-a-villain-is-paying-one-of-your-personas-to-give-him-information-on-his-child’s-and-wife’s-whereabouts situation in the few hours afterward while Beetle was writing and he had come to terms with the fact that whenever Beetle decided to give him the info he would be receiving a visit from dear old dad.

Yay.

Witch had been right about that photo of him jumping off the train going viral, the forums were basically exploding and even the class had been abuzz about his escape from custody.

“Dude! Did you hear that Witch escaped from the police again?!” A boy with hair so red it had to be dyed, exclaimed to a kid with an electricity quirk. He showed a video to an amassed crowd that was the entire class with the exception of Todoroki, Bakugo, and Iida.

“He’s so manly! Just look! He jumped off a moving train!” Kirishima gestured wildly at his phone that showed a GIF of his exit.

“Do not praise the behavior of vigilantes!” Iida reprimanded although no one payed him any heed.

Someone’s got a fanboy, Izuku teased Witch who groaned in exasperation.

Why don’t I have any fanboys? Beetle pouted in a very Toga-like fashion.

Izuku could feel Witch rolling his eyes as he replied, You do have fanboys, you idiot. Entire
But those aren’t the same! No one ever praises me in real life! You have an entire class ready to get in your pants!

Witch, being as unfazed by sexual anything as normal, didn’t even have the decency to blush, Beetle, you literally are responsible for over a dozen deaths. I highly doubt that a group of kids in the Hero Course are going to fanboy over you.

Not for the first time in his life Izuku realized how weird this was. He was literally arguing with himself as two different people. Those two different people had grown to a point where they were sentient and he had come to regard his body as nothing more than a host for his different personas. Was he a persona? Was he the host? Who was really in control here? Did he have some type of identity disorder?

Look who rolled a nat 20 on perception, Beetle purred, his argument with Witch forgotten.

Eh, I’m not feeling like a 'his' right now. More they/them.

Witch and Izuku prayed to whatever forgotten god to give them strength. Normally he respects others gender identities but Beetle had at some point decided that they were gender-fluid and that just felt like stepping over a line.

Izuku was totally fine with them being sentient and living their best lives with their own personalities and such but having an entirely different gender was a bit too odd.

They were all just different aspects of Izuku after all and he was very comfortable with his gender as male.

You sure we’re just different aspects of you hun? Beetle batted their eyelashes, I think we graduated from there a while ago.

This was not how he had wanted to spend his morning, questioning his existence and the voices living in his head.
Wow, I’m offended. Just a ‘voice living in your head’, excuse you, this is my head too.

A steady headache was beginning to form as Beetle continued to force this existential crisis upon him.

We are so much more than just ‘a voice living in your head’, we are our own people! Just tethered to a single body.

Beetle, will you shut up? He’s going to have a panic attack. Witch sighed, obviously annoyed at the other persona’s blatant lack of consideration.

Luckily, the door of the classroom opened and Witch and Beetle shut up as the students hurried back to their seats as a more bedraggled than usual Aizawa shuffled into the class. He narrowed his eyes at the extremely similar dark green bag that Izuku had donned in his honor.

He could see why he liked it honestly, it was quite comfortable.

He attributed Aizawa’s even more erratic appearance to the verifiable horde of reporters that had crowded the doors of the school, latching on to anyone that even got close to the school for a comment about All Might.

Eraserhead avoided the media like the plague so that must have just been a delight for him to deal with.

For Izuku it was a delight for sure. The reporters had noted his straight-out-of-garbage appearance (aka lack of uniform) and how he strode towards the school like he owned it, then decided he was too much of an enigma to ignore, and had done their best vulture impression and descended on him like he was carrion.

Now, he had months of experience in avoiding the press as Witch so if he wanted he could have easily disappeared into the crowd, but, he was not Witch and did in fact quite like the media.

Scratch that, he liked to fuck with the media.
So, when a female reporter had called out, “Excuse me! Sir! What exactly is your position at this school and do you have any comment on All Might being a teacher here!?”, he had stopped and she put a microphone to his mouth while a sea of other reporters crowded her, hoping to catch some of what he said so they could take credit.

He noticed some Class 1-A students trying to make their way into the school; some were ignoring the reporters completely, fighting with the reporters, or just straight up trying to get inside the school in one piece through whatever means necessary. Not one of them was actively answering any questions so the reporters were getting desperate.

Perfect.

“Well, you see here Miss Vulture,” the reporter looked shocked his nickname for her but didn’t make any move to remove the microphone, “I am the school’s resident trash mammal and I take care of the students and make sure that none of them talk to any reporters,” he saw Iida staring at him in utter betrayal and he couldn’t help but smirk, “As for All Might, I have no idea who you are talking about and do not recognize that name at all. We do however have an All Right, he is our school nurse. Recovery Girl died last Tuesday so we had to improvise.”

He gave them the most genuine smile as possible, “Now if you would follow me I had direct orders for Nezu to bring you to his office for a personal interview.”

The reporters looked shell-shocked as if she couldn’t quite decide if this trashy looking kid was telling the truth or not.

Almost in a daze, she followed him to the gate. He knew what would happen if someone unauthorized stepped into school grounds, she obviously, did not.

With absolutely no hesitation she stepped over the threshold and the school locked down. She looked at Izuku with scandalized and hurt eyes, “You lied to me.”

Izuku cocked his head, the metal doors were coming down fast and if he wanted to get his last statement in he would have to do it fast, “Did I? Hm, I suppose I did. You’re right, Recovery Girl died last Wednesday.”

And with that the school’s defenses locked up the building with a snap, leaving an extremely confused reporter on one side and a positively giddy Izuku on the other.
Aizawa was not one for personal grudges.

Emotions clouded judgment so he tried to force himself to not care as much as he could on a daily basis.

But Beetle had stepped over a line.

He was already irritated at his haughty attitude towards him the previous night, taunting him about Hizashi and then escaping without so much as a trace.

And then his phone had buzzed after he announced that they were choosing class-rep and he had settled into his sleeping bag (that Midoriya had apparently copied). He had opened the unassuming file it contained only to lose his composure when he realized what exactly it was.

It was some very, very, very, detailed smut about him and Hizashi.

His first thought was how whoever sent it had gotten his email, his second thought was who had sent it.

The second thought was answered with a small note at the bottom of the three-thousand-word link, that had, regrettably, been read over four thousand times.

It was that note that had ultimately decided that he would be the one to bring Beetle into custody.

Dear Shota Aizawa (aka Eraserhead),

I wrote this after our encounter last night, I thought you might like it.

Lots of love,
Beetle <3

That insufferable, annoying, cocky, child arsonist would fall by his hand if it was the last thing he did.

Tonight, and every night after, he would be hunting. Waiting with handcuffs and one of his rare smiles.

He also wouldn’t mind catching Witch while he was at it. There was a much too large population of kids doing illegal things.

Witch had been driving Naomasa insane with his crafty escapes and the fact that he always somehow managed to catch villains they could never quite get their hands on.

Speaking of exhausting children, he needed to have words with Midoriya.

He arrived at school to a media circus abuzz with the news that Recovery Girl had apparently died either last Wednesday or last Tuesday. A reporter nearly in tears about how a homeless boy had made the security walls of the school almost kill her, and how All Might wasn’t at the school.

So, Midoriya had been having fun with the media (he was secretly jealous that Midoriya could get away with it).

Shota had reassured them that Recovery Girl was not dead and unfortunately had to tell them that All Might was actually at the school. That last statement had prompted a barrage of questions about how ‘he was adjusting to life as a teacher’ that he had left unanswered along with the ‘just who exactly was that boy then?’.

He had a feeling that telling them that he was Nezu personal student would not go over well.

Ultimately telling the reporters to shoo (which they did not do) he bypassed the security and shuffled into class.

He announced that they would be decided class rep—Iida decided to do it by vote—and Aizawa
was planning on taking a nap when he received that infernal message from Beetle.

All and all, he was really sick of annoying and sassy children,

—

The class rep thing was entertaining to watch.

Predictably, Yaoyorozu got the most votes, shortly followed by Iida.

Almost everyone voted for themselves which was expected, however, there were those few that didn’t and it made a difference.

Both agreed to their roles with no resistance and Aizawa pretended to sleep.

Izuku could see that Aizawa was in fact not sleeping. He just had his eyes closed and was probably trying to burn Beetle’s writing out of his brain.

*Ah, I love it when what I write effects people.* Beetle whispered dreamily

*You traumatized him,* Witch retorted matter of factly.

*Your point?*

Izuku really didn’t want to deal with the migraine that was two parts of his brain fighting each other so he politely asked them to quiet down, *Both of you need to shut your fucking mouths or else you won’t have control for a week.*

They both knew he was bluffing but they did, mercifully, go silent.

He shadowed the class to lunch, he wanted to see how their social dynamics were playing out and
if they had any effect on their ability to use their quirk.

Lunch Rush also made really good rice.

He was shoveling the grains into his mouth contently when a girl with bobbed brown hair and a gravity quirk walked up to him.

She smiled at him bashfully, “Hi! I’m Uraraka.”

He raised an eyebrow, he knew exactly who she was. She had called him out during the first day, plus it was his job to know the students.

She scratched that back of her head before looking down at the floor, “I just wanted to apologize for my behavior. You being quirkless shouldn’t dictate if you are good enough to help us. From what I can tell you are more than capable.”

Well, that was interesting. He searched her eyes for any form of pity but found nothing other than shame and guilt.

“It’s fine. I knew I would face some resistance, plus you didn’t do anything other than agree with Iida and the entire class did that.” he tried to make it sound as genuine as possible to placate her concerns.

It looked like a weight was lifted from her shoulders but she still bowed low, “Still, it was my asking you to participate in the test that put you in that situation.”

He gave her a soft smile, “You were just curious. Never fault yourself for wanted more knowledge.”

Beetle snickered in the back of his mind, Why are you sounding so formal?

Witch promptly backhanded the villain to which Izuku was thankful.

Uraraka smiled brighter than the sun, “Would you like to join us for lunch?” she gestured to a table
where Iida and Asui sat and even Witch chimed in to tell him it was a bad idea.

“Sorry, I have to talk to Aizawa.” Uraraka looked disappointed although her smile never left her face and Izuku realized that it would be an A+ poker face. Her unwavering optimism was almost disturbing.

“Ah, that’s fine! You’re always welcome!”

Izuku began gathering up his notebooks and preparing to leave, “Thanks. Maybe I’ll take you up on your offer sometime.”

Uraraka waved goodbye before skipping back to her table.

That was weird, Beetle chimed in. Never one to stand for more than a minute of silence.

Witch sounded so exasperated that he couldn’t quite discern exactly what he said but it sounded like something along the lines of, *Can I gag them?*

Izuku would not stop him.

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Although he didn’t technically have to go to the teacher’s lounge he figured it might be beneficial to meet some of the teachers somewhere other than their classes.

Opening the door he seemed to find himself in the midst of an intense argument between Midnight and Ectoplasm.

“NO! Iida and Uraraka are not compatible!” Midnight exclaimed, waving a marker wildly. Behind her was a whiteboard covered in names. Tally marks resided under the names and it took him a moment to realize that the names were actually ship names.

*What the fuck.*
Cementoss was watching the scene with a bored expression. Without turning away from his squabbling friends he answered the question Izuku must have said out loud.

“Every year Midnight holds a betting pool for which new first-year students are going to be dating by the end of the year. Right now she is doing Class 1-A.”

Beetle was positively tickled and was laughing so hard he was sure that the other teachers could hear.

Izuku held a brief press conference with Witch and Beetle before deciding on his ships, “I vote Tsuchako, MomoJirou, KiriBaku, SeroKami, and EraserMic.”

Midnight, finally noticing Izuku’s existence, spun around and pointed her marker at him, “This one. This one is smart.”

She glared at Ectoplasm, “He understands that Tsuchako is practically canon already.”

Nezu, who Izuku hadn’t noticed sitting next to Cementoss sipped his tea, “He isn’t wrong.”

Midnight gave a sound of triumph and put two more tally marks under ‘Tsuchako’.

She seemed to process the other names Izuku gave and gave him a skeptical look, “KiriBaku? Really? Bakugo seems too explosive to ever be in a relationship.”

“That’s exactly why Kirishima is perfect. His quirk means he can take Kacchan’s explosions. Also, Kirishima is the first person here to talk to Kacchan and not get exploded.”

Midnight considered, found his answer satisfactory and put the seconds tally under ‘KiriBaku’. Nezu was probably the first tally.

She seemed to agree to a degree to MomoJirou and SeroKami being she didn’t ask for an explanation and added the tallies.
Then she remembered his last bet, “EraserMic? That one isn’t an option.”

Izuku shrugged, “Class 1-A. Class 1-A’s homeroom teacher. He’s got to count right?”

Midnight decided that he was right and wrote ‘EraserMic’ with two tallies underneath it.

“Two?”

Midnight gave him a wicked smile, “I’ve shipped them since we were students here.”

“And you haven’t done anything about it?”

Midnight pointed to a corner of the teacher’s lounge, Present Mic seemed to be laughing so hard he was crying and Aizawa looked furious.

“I haven’t needed to. Three guesses to why Hizashi is losing it.”

He decided to answer the question truthfully, “A villain emailed Aizawa EraserMic smut and he showed it to Yamada.”

Midnight blinked, “…yes actually.”

“He chucked his phone at the ground his morning. I caught a glimpse.”

The 18+ Hero snorted, “Shota got flustered? I would like to meet this villain and thank them personally. No one’s gotten Shota that flustered before. It looks good on him.”

Beetle did a mock bow inside his head.
“I think you both might win your bet sooner than expected,” Nezu said cryptically.

Both Midnight’s and Izuku’s heads snapped to the principle, “What?”

Nezu continued to sip his tea as he pointed a paw towards the EraserMic corner.

They looked just in time to see Yamada press a soft kiss onto Aizawa’s lips.

Aizawa reacted accordingly, his hair stood on end, eyes wide in surprise.

The entire staff seemed to freeze. Thinking one of two thoughts, either what the fuck or finally.

Yamada pulled away, a slight flush on his features. Aizawa on the other hand… his face was the exact shade of Kirishima’s hair. He stood statue still, obviously in shock.

Then Midnight broke the silence with a victorious scream. She jumped at Izuku and hugged him. She was gone before Izuku could really process what was happening. Flinging herself at Present Mic.

“FINALLY! HOLY SHIT! YESSSS!” She shook him like a rag-doll, “WHY DIDN’T YOU DO THAT BEFORE!”

Aizawa was finally starting to unfreeze and Midnight turned to him with a glare she usually reserved for villains, “You better start dating or I will lock you two in a closet.”

Eraserhead sputtered, still trying to wrap his head around what just happened before squeaking out a tiny, “Of course.”

Beetle was having a regular party inside his head, overjoyed at his OTP had gotten together over their fanfiction.

Izuku was happy too, they were his OTP as well. Although, this was not how he had planned for this to work out.
Nezu and Cementoss both wore faint smiles. Glad their co-workers had finally admitted their feelings and they wouldn’t have to witness to Hizashi’s very visible pinning.

Izuku took a seat next to Nezu and watched as Midnight practically cartwheeled around the room. Yamada had taken Aizawa’s hand and Izuku had half a mind to snap a photo.

That half of a mind won and he took a photo.

But the wonderful mood of the room plummeted when an alarm overhead sounded and announced, “Warning. Level Three security breach. All students please evacuate the building in an orderly fashion.”

Every teacher immediately jumped up, reminded Izuku that they were pro-heroes.

They could hear the commotion outside the door as students scrambled to leave the building. Someone had managed to get past the school’s barriers and they were all panicking.

Aizawa and Yamada looked out the window and let out an audible sigh of relief. “It’s just the press.”

Nezu set down his tea and transformed himself into the UA Principle, “Eraserhead, Present Mic. You deal with the press. Everyone else help me get the students under control.”

Everyone in the room simultaneously nodded and hurried to do what they needed. Izuku didn’t quite know what to do so he just sat until Nezu noticed and said, “Midoriya, you are an honorary teacher aren’t you? Can you please assist the other teachers in telling the students it isn’t a real threat.”

Izuku hurried out of the room, he realized that Witch would be much better suited for this situation so he let him take control.

Witch found himself back before the lunch room, at the tail end of a mob of students trying to push their way to the doors. He saw kids being trampled and shoved against the windows. He sighed at how unorganized the students were acting.

If this is how Heroes are supposed to act then no wonder vigilantes like him exist.
He put his fingers to his mouth and let out the most ear-splitting whistle he could manage.

It echoed through the corridor and the students briefly paused their mad scramble and looked to find the source of the sound.

The students closet to the end turned to find a boy no older than a first-year with his hands on his hips. Green hair in a messy bun and sunglasses resting on his head. The first thing they noticed that he didn’t have on a uniform so at first they thought he might be the intruder.

The readied themselves to fight but Witch only rubbed is eyes before screaming as loud as possible, “I am Nezu’s personal student! He sent me to inform you that there is no threat! It is only the press!”

The students didn’t look convinced so he added, “Is this how UA students are supposed to react? You are supposed to remain calm and collected! Did not one of you actually check to see what the threat actually was?”

The silence of the crowd was enough to tell him that, no, they had not checked.

He scoffed as the student’s started to check the windows and realized that it had only been the press.

Soon enough the police arrived and Witch relinquished control back to Izuku who snorted and Witch’s exasperation.

Beetle still wasn’t over the fact that his OTP had gotten together.

Chapter End Notes

Hey kids! Your comments and kudos are super appreciated! They are literally my lifeblood.

I have a question for ya'll. Which side should Izu be on for USJ? Should he be on the villain's as Beetle or on the Heroes' as Izuku?
Preparations

Chapter Summary

Things are set in motion

Naomasa was prepared to start setting Wiley E. Coyote traps.

The ever-persistent headache that had settled into the base of his skull was quickly turning into a nausea-inducing migraine.

Five run-ins with Witch this week. *Five.*

To make matters worse, they had caught him four out of those five times. Had him handcuffed, in the cruiser, heading for the station. They had even gotten him into interrogation once. He tried to suppress his body’s involuntary shudder at the memory of that first time he had ever met the boy and actually try to use his quirk and interrogate him.

For one thing, his quirk was immediately proved ineffective for two reasons. First, the boy was such an amazing liar that it bypassed his quirk entirely. As standard procedure he had asked his name, and what day it was. “Friday, the sixteenth”, the boy had replied. His quirk detected no lie and the boy had only given him a small smile at his shocked expression.

It was Tuesday, the seventh.

Secondly, whenever he tried to get even the simplest truths out of the vigilante his quirk was set off three times. “What’s your name,” a simple question that was phrased so he wouldn’t even have to give away his true identity. “Witch.” the boy had monotoned in response without even a second of hesitation.

He expected his quirk to count it as a truth but instead, he got the three responses from his quirk, truth, lie, lie.

No matter the question he got three responses. He could never be sure which response was correct so his quirk was now twice as useless. That had never happened before and try as he might, he
couldn’t think of any plausible reason other than that Witch had a quirk that countered his own.

He stared into charcoal eyes that glimmered with cold amusement as he refuses to break the detective’s stare. It was odd to see the vigilante without the cobalt fabric around his eyes but he had to admit that it set off his periwinkle hair and made him all the more imposing. It was hard to remember that he was no more than fifteen.

He got the distinct feeling that Witch was enjoying this little staring contest and that he wouldn’t be any more intimidated by the police as he would be a rock. To avoid giving the pain-in-his-ass vigilante the satisfaction, he dropped his gaze.

Witch did not speak unless he asked a question that he replied to immediately with a tone more monotonic than Shota’s. The only facial expression that Witch ever showed other than the slight amusement that he got from confusing Naomasa was a frigid indifference to everything around him. It was infuriating, he acted as if he couldn’t even bring himself to care that he was finally in custody.

They had confiscated the band he wore around his eyes along with all of his weapons, wooden mage staff, tranquilizer gun, a whip, and a belt of throwing knives he had never seen Witch use.

He had given up trying to get anything out of the vigilante after fifteen minutes and elected to call Shota to come and erase the boy’s quirk just in case that was what was interfering with his ability to detect the truth. It wouldn’t hurt to have someone else qualified to see if they couldn’t get anything else out of the vigilante.

Like his name.

Shota had agreed and said he was on his way but when Naomasa walked back into the interrogation room there was no one there.

The two officers he had assigned to watch the vigilante were on the floor unconscious and there was no sign of the boy.

Of course, that didn’t make any goddamn sense.

They had given him the full package. Quirk-repressing cuffs that could cancel any physical quirk, extra normal handcuffs, full security coverage, and of course, the officers that were now laying at his feet.
At that moment someone from the tech department decided to inform him a few minutes too late that Witch was making an escape.

According to the security footage, Witch had somehow escaped from both sets of handcuffs and then promptly went to attack the two officers that were supposed to be watching him. To be fair, the vigilante moved with almost impossible to counter speed and he did get the drop of the officers.

From there he strutted out of the room with the haughtiest expression Naomasa had ever seen written all over his features.

Now, one would think that they could simply switch to the camera in the hallway and find where he went, he couldn’t have gotten far in the five minutes Naomasa was out of the room. However, when they switched to that camera they never saw Witch emerge from the interrogation room.

They went over the footage, looking for any loops or jumps in the time stamps but to no avail.

At some point in the time, it took Witch to walk out a doorway he was gone.

Naomasa was honest to god ready to start pulling his hair out.

He had been giddy, positively giddy. When some of his officers had led in a cuffed and surprisingly docile Witch. Maybe he could finally rid himself of the vigilante.

That wasn’t to undermine the villains Witch had helped them capture, loathe as he was to admit it. It was more that this was a kid. He could be seriously injured or even killed if he continued this occupation. It was for his own good.

It definitely didn’t have anything to do with Witch’s constant taunts and jabs.

Naomasa was halfway through the dozens of case files the next day when one of the junior officers set a vase full of periwinkle blue roses on his desk.
The detective had raised an eyebrow at the junior officer who rubbed his neck nervously, “What’s this?”

The junior officer cleared his throat before looking everywhere except Naomasa, “…They were left just outside the station. You might want to read the note.”

Naomasa had a feeling he knew exactly what the note would say but he read it anyway.

Dearest Naomasa,

I just wanted to send this as a congratulations on the achievement that is upping your high score of how long you could keep me in custody. Thirty-four minutes, much more impressive than your old nine.

It was wonderful to finally meet you in person and I hope we can do it again.

Sincerely yours,

Witch

The detective sighed and leaned back in his chair. He honestly didn’t know what he was expecting but he was still annoyed. Witch must have been directly outside the station and they still hadn’t noticed him.

The roses were actually quite pretty, a soft blue the exact same shade as Witch’s hair. The officer was still standing nervously at the front of his desk and he couldn’t help but wonder why.

And then he promptly got his answer.

Nestled directly in the center of the bouquet was an outlier. It was another rose but this one was a fiery orange and red. Tied to it with a crimson ribbon was a tiny cream colored card. It wasn’t Witch’s and something about the colors set Naomasa on edge.

He carefully extracted the orange rose and very slowly turned over the card.
Then he read it. And then he read it again. And again.

“Goddamn it,” he whispered.

Naomasa-kun,

I heard that Witch got away again. Sorry to hear that :( 

But you got your time up so good for you!! I was going to give you this rose as congrats but it looks like someone beat me to it.

I hope I can meet you sometime!

Xoxo,

Beetle <3

—

Izuku was seriously considering throwing himself from another building.

It wasn’t that he wanted to die.

It was that fucking Bitch and Weetle wouldn’t fucking shut up.

Ever since that run-in with Detective Naomasa and the entire dramatic as fuck rose thing they had been doing nothing but talk. Absolutely and positively in hysterics about how they had fucked with the police.

If he thought them arguing was bad than this was infinitely worse.
Right now he needed to focus on his first ever training session with class 1-A and he couldn’t be distracted by the voices in his head fangirling over ‘that look on Naomasa’s face’

He was this close from asking Todoroki to impale him with some of his ice.

Speaking of Todoroki, he was the first on his roster for one-on-one training. He still needed to finish the final touches on his plan to hand Endeavor his ass and it was a true masterpiece if he did say so himself.

Anyway, based off what he had seen of Todoroki’s quirk and how he used it he totally shunned his fire and based off what he had seen and heard about the absolute dumpster fire that was Endeavor from Rei he didn’t really blame him. But, he did need to get him to accept that part of himself. However, that was for another day. Right now he was going to have him work on intricacies of his ice.

Right now it was rough and jagged. It lacked finesse and detail. He hoped that by the time this term was over he would be able to create works of art with his quirk.

When he had told Shouto this when they were in the training field for his lesson he had raised an eyebrow, “And how will that help me?”

Izuku screamed internally, the real question was how it didn’t help him, “Well, for one it will help you with control. Also being able to create weapons of ice will help in hand to hand combat.”

That was only scratching the surface but he really didn’t want to explain anymore. He might break down into tears because of Todoroki’s ignorance.

Shouto nodded, seeming to grasp the concept thank god, “How do we start?”

“Made a cube.”

Shouto blinked, “What?”

“A perfectly smooth cube of ice. Just big enough to fit in the palm of your hand.”
Todoroki hesitated but then focused on the task while Izuku lit a cigarette and tried to shut out Witch and Beetle who were quite literally having a party in his brain.

It took five minutes for Todoroki to complete the task and by then he was panting but in Izuku’s book he did better than he expected.

Shouto obviously wasn’t expecting it to be that difficult and seemed thoroughly disappointed in himself.

“That was faster than I expected,” Izuku said, hoping to ease Todoroki’s displeasure in himself, “Now flatten it.”

Shouto didn’t say a word and set to work making the cube a sheet.

Two hours later, Izuku had a wicked headache and Shouto looked about ready to pass out.

Izuku had made him create various simple shapes out of the ice and Todoroki had made some substantial process. They had ended on the high note of a perfect sphere.

A stumbling Todoroki had drawn the attention of the rest of the class from where they were training with each other under Aizawa’s watchful eye.

A nervous murmur had run through the students because ‘someone had damaged the titan among them’. Izuku didn’t miss Aizawa’s slight smile at the student’s unease.

Aizawa had been a lot more smiley lately. He had attributed it to his new relationship with Yamada. He had turned a hallway the other day and had walked into them making out in the corridor.

Beetle wouldn’t stop screaming for an hour.

While Todoroki sluggishly crept into the field to go to spar with Iida (and the immediately pass out) Izuku had given a smile nothing short of terrifying and beckoned for Uraraka to follow him to
his secluded training area.

He couldn’t say that he didn’t enjoy her gulp and a worried glance at Iida and Asui.

——

It was 2 AM when Izuku got a text from Dabi.

He had been having the time of his life laying on his bed and working on some incorrect pro hero quotes. The secret was that everything he posted had actually been said by one of the pros he worked with at UA.

They would have his head if they ever found out but it was worth it.

Anyway, Dabi had texted him with the ever ominous message,

**Dabitch: Shigaraki wants 2 talk to u**

Izuku groaned. Shigaraki and Beetle’s relationship wasn’t the best and their meetings often ended with Kurogiri having to warp Shigaraki way in an effort to keep him from disintegrating Beetle.

Beetle being as antagonistic as possible never helped the situation.

**BugBoi: Why**

**Dabitch: Business proposition**

Now *that* caught Beetle’s attention. The villain had been snoozing in a corner of his mind and their eyes flew open at the mention of a business deal with Shigaraki, and therefore the League of Villains.
This was way not what Izuku wanted to do so he let Beetle deal with it.

BugBoi: Be there in 15

Fifteen minutes later Beetle was skipping into Kurogiri’s bar, mind racing with all the possibilities.

Shigaraki was sitting at the bar, nursing a glass of whiskey and looking for all the world that he would rather be anywhere else.

“You look so overjoyed to see me Tomura-kun!” Beetle said, sweeping into the barstool next to Shigaraki who growled.

Then Beetle abandoned all of their flirtatious insanity, although madness still gleamed through their orange and yellow irises, “Let’s make a deal.”

Shigaraki recognized that Beetle had stopped fucking around, “I need information.”

Beetle snorted, “No shit. On who?”

“Class 1-A of UA.”

Izuku actually started crying with laughter and Witch snorted. Beetle’s lips twitched and it was all he could do to keep from losing it.

Should he tell him about his true identity? It really didn’t matter, Shigaraki wouldn’t rat him out. Having a mole in UA, a teacher especially, would no nothing but assist the League.

Then a wonderful idea struck him. Oh, the drama would be spectacular.

“Sure, what info.”
“Quirks, weaknesses, strengths.”

“Why?”

Shigaraki sighed, obviously annoyed he had to share his plans, “The League is planning an attack on USJ. All Might is supposed to be there and he is apparently weakening. It’s the perfect opportunity to kill him.”

Truth be told, Beetle didn’t care what happened to All Might so he didn’t care. Izuku was impartial but Witch still held the tiniest bit of resentment. He highly doubted that this would go as planned for the League but as long as he got paid all would be well.

“Oh, I know about that little field trip! I’m assuming you want to know where to put the students in the different rescue zones!”

“You know I would much rather not work with you Beetle, but Sensei insists that we should be prepared.”

Beetle smiled, “Sensei is a wise man! Now, for prices!”

Shigaraki eyed Beetle apprehensively.

“You won’t kill Eraserhead, Shouto Todoroki, Ochaco Uraraka, and Tsuyu Asui.”

Shigaraki blinked, “Who?”

“Class 1-A’s homeroom teacher and three of the students.”

Shigaraki was still trying to figure out how Beetle knew them already when he asked, “Why?”

“I quite like Eraserhead and he’s part of my OTP who just got together, I have plans that involve Todoroki, and I have a bet to win with Uraraka and Asui.”
Shigaraki looked simultaneously confused and interested, “Fine. Kurogiri will warp them into a secure location until everything is over with.”

Beetle clapped his hands, “Wonderful, as for the other payment…”

“You just got one.”

Beetle scoffed, “Hardly. More you extract four players from the field in less than a minute.”

“What is it.”

Beetle thought about it, he probably wouldn’t get this request but it was worth a shot, “I want a quirk.”

Shigaraki froze, “No.”

Beetle shrugged, “Eh I tried. One million yen.”

“Five hundred thousand.”

“Six.”

“Deal.”

And just like that, they shook on it. Beetle was about to become a lot richer and all he had to do was pawn off some info he already had. It wouldn’t even take effort.

It would be interesting to watch how this played out. Izuku would be participating on the side of the ‘heroes’ of course. Although ‘participating’ probably meant in this case, looking like he’s helping but actually doing nothing.
Ah, it would be more than fun watching Shigaraki realize that Izuku and Beetle were the same.

All in all, today was very productive.
Despite contrary belief Nedzu did not know everything.

Frankly, he was glad he didn’t. Yes, he did have vast reserves of knowledge due to his eidetic memory and it had come in handy more than once. There was also no denying he was intelligent, more intelligent than most in fact. But, there were still things that escaped his roaming mind’s thirst for knowledge.

He considered this a good thing because to him knowing everything seemed…boring. What was the purpose in life if not to learn? Where was the challenge? Where was the fun in knowing and predicting every move of humans?

Oh how he loved humans.
So unpredictable and such chaos makers. He loved to observe how they interacted, constantly having to sift through layers of emotions just to respond to a simple question. He loved watching an impulsive decision shift an entire timeline. He loved wondering what would be different if that student hadn’t stayed in class a second longer or chose to give a kind word to the quiet student.

As a firm believer in the Butterfly Effect it was an exercise he did often.

So naturally Nedzu couldn’t help but wonder where Izuku Midoriya would be if he hadn’t thrown himself from the roof of his school eleven months ago.

He had a feeling it would be so radically different even he couldn’t even come close to predicting it.

Well, he couldn’t very well predict Midoriya now anyway. The boy lied as easily as he breathed and had more secrets then All Might that despite Nedzu’s best efforts he could not unearth.

While Midoriya was his personal student he was also his personal project.

The amount of people the boy had under his thumb was admirable enough to put him on Nedzu’s radar but it was his relationship with Yagi and Bakugo that had prompted him to take him on. There was also his being quirkless and to be honest, Nedzu had been itching to enroll a quirkless student. Not only was he quirkless but he was a morally grey quirkless student with ties to a teacher and a student ad truly, what more could want.

Yagi was practically swimming in his guilt at how he had crushed Midoriya’s dreams and in his words, ‘practically pushed him off the roof himself’. Midoriya obviously noticed it but didn’t make any attempt to remedy it other than the half-hearted attempt during the first Foundational Hero Studies class. He hadn’t been lying about not blaming Yagi and hadn’t been any more bitter than expected but did seem content to let the number one hero stew over it.

Nedzu would be the first to admit that he had placed Midoriya in 1-A to see how he and Bakugo interacted. They obviously had a long and painful history that bordered on abuse. It was ultimately Bakugo’s fault the Midoriya had tried to take his own life and Bakugo was struggling to cope with that. Bakugo was one of the most insecure people he had ever met and the added weight of knowing he had driven his childhood friend to suicide was surely not helping the situation. He would place money on the fact that Bakugo would break, not shatter outwardly like he seemed so prone to doing, but shatter inside so completely that he would be right beside Midoriya on the suicide roster.
Nedzu’s morals had battled as he was torn between his duty as a principle to make sure his students were emotionally stable, which Bakugo and Midoriya were very obviously not, or his duty as a pursuer of knowledge. Ultimately, his curiosity had won out and he had waited to see how this played out. He wouldn’t hesitate to intervene if things went too far and he would never let Bakugo actually go through with it but, he couldn’t deny that this situation made him giddy.

Midoriya had surprisingly enough taken to Shouto Todoroki and if security footage was to be believed they were plotting Endeavor’s downfall for being an, ‘abusive bastard who is more a villain than a hero’.

That statement confirmed what Nedzu had suspected of Enji for years and Shouto Todoroki’s behavior paralleled symptoms of abuse too well to ignore. He had an ongoing file about the Todoroki family and he had seriously considered opening a formal police investigation but decided to hold off until the boys were done with whatever they were plotting, deciding to observe and see how radically they handled it and how emotions clouded their judgement.

He was still trying to untangle the webs of lies that Midoriya had woven around himself and it was proving to be a much harder task than he had planned but he joyously accepted the challenge.

Midoriya was obviously hiding something and Nedzu was determined to find out what it was. He had caught his personal student muttering under his breath, whispering for things to ‘shut up’ or ‘you guys are the fucking worst’. He never sounded overly upset when he said those things to whoever he was saying it to, more exasperated and endearing.

There were also times when Midoriya’s demeanor would shift entirely. One moment he was his usual annoying and sassy self, then he would suddenly snap up straight and observe the area with cold eyes that rivaled Nedzu’s. Or on the completely other end of the spectrum, he would suddenly become quite insane and have a constant flirtatious grin plastered to his face. It intrigued Nedzu to no end, even he could not act that realistically and there was never a set time or reason Midoriya changed.

Right now he had some sneaking suspicions but it was nothing he could prove unfortunately.

Humans were such complex creatures.
Shota Aizawa was horrified.

Shota had been horrified for many reasons in his life. Whether it be from a villain’s actions or his recently gained knowledge of Hizashi’s abysmal cooking skills. In his line of work, it was part of the job description. However, right now the source of his horror had nothing to do with him being a pro-hero, although he had been horrified by this person before.

With his blatant disrespect for authority and bad habits Izuku Midoriya had horrified Aizawa more than once.

This time however it wasn’t directly Midoriya that horrified him.

It was the fact that he was growing to like the little gremlin.

Said gremlin was currently sitting in the seat behind Shota in the bus headed to the USJ and talking his ear off. Rambling about the student’s quirks and how well they were going to perform in today’s tests. With his training, they would apparently do better which Shota didn’t doubt.

Problem child was a bit of a mad genius.

Midoriya smelled like cigarettes and his ever-changing alcohol breath now told Aizawa that he had gone to some sort of wine. The boy had some serious addiction problems but something told him that if Midoriya didn’t want to change then they shouldn’t even bother.

He had snapped his sunglasses over his green eyes and had tied his hair into a high ponytail that made him resemble a homeless schoolgirl. He had adopted Aizawa’s sleeping bag permanently and he wore that almost everywhere he went. Underneath would be the absolutely destroyed clothing he never seemed to change out of but at least seemed to wash.

And the worst part was that his sass and bad hygiene was starting to grow on the underground hero.

He had come to this realization when the boy was halfway through telling him about how he was refining Todoroki’s quirk and he had almost crashed the bus into a ditch.
He was still in a small form of shock when he pulled into the USJ and the student’s filed out of the bus and No. Thirteen gave them their welcoming speech.

While the students were still gaping at the inside of the USJ and childishly snickering about its name he shuffled over to No. Thirteen with Midoriya at his side. The boy only seemed mildly impressed and despite being inside didn’t remove his sunglasses so he couldn’t see his eyes but he knew they were probably bouncing around the facility. He had seen pictures and such so they could prepare for the lesson but they truly didn’t do the USJ justice.

He interrupted No. Thirteen’s unneeded pose as he realized that Yagi was not present. Three guesses why not.

His suspicion was unfortunately proven right by No. Thirteen’s explanation with her helpful model of holding up three fingers to illustrate Yagi’s time limit.

Shota pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed, he was the most irresponsible person this school had ever employed.

Midoriya knew that All Might should be here and had met Aizawa’s gaze with a deadpanned expression that said he shared his sentiments exactly. The boy had somehow figured out Yagi’s state all on his own and looked to be just as disappointed in the number one hero as Aizawa was.

From what he had heard his and All Might’s relationship was…strange but as long as they were able to work together he didn’t care.

Although it did warm his heart to know that someone agreed with him on how absolutely under qualified Yagi was for a teaching position.

The gremlin had already met all of the UA staff and they had all taken quite a liking to the problem child so No. Thirteen didn’t bat an eyelash and gave Midoriya a ruffled his hair. Midoriya growled with no real menace and Uraraka squeaked and fawned at how adorable it was. Aizawa attributed the other faculties fondness to the fact that they didn’t have to put up with him all day as Shota did.

*But you like him too,* sometraitorous part of his mind whispered.
Nope. That needed to stop right now.

“We best get on with it. We are just wasting time.” he announced in his usual monotone, giving absolutely no indication he actually had emotions, much less that he was actually fond of someone.

Luckily, No. Thirteen took over and gave them a slightly terrifying talk about how their quirks could easily be used to harm. He noted how Shinso avoided looking at anyone as she spoke while she held everyone else’s rapt attention. He had put up with years of bullying because he had a supposedly ‘villainous’ quirk and knew all too well that it could easily be used to harm.

Thirteen bowed and the students cheered. Aizawa was ready to get on with it but as soon as he pointed towards the USJ proper the lights died and the fountain sputtered.

Aizawa felt the shift in the air and spun around just in time to see a regular void being ripped open in the main plaza of the USJ. Once birthed into existence the portal cracked and expanded in size until it took up the entire courtyard. Smoky yellow eyes glared at them from the top of the void and Aizawa snapped in hero mode.

Within moments of the appearance of the portal appearing it was pulled apart like a curtain by a man with ragged hair so light of a blue it was almost white that seemed to be wearing disembodied hands on his arms and face like they were accessories.

“No one move! Stay together!” Shota shouted at his students, instinct taking over, “Midoriya and Thirteen stay and protect the students!”

The students had taken notice of the vortex and were on high alert as the man covered in hands was shortly followed by villains armed with various weapons. Within moments the entire courtyard was completely full of enemies. The only one that truly concerned him was the behemoth of a man with one hell of a mutation quirk. He was an unnatural shade of purple and had eyes were sticking straight out of and exposed brain and rows of jagged teeth. There was a predatory glint in his eyes that make Shota wonder if he was even human.

He immediately slipped into his hero mode along with No. Thirteen. Midoriya shifted as well, posture straightening as his eyes darkened with cold calculation that he had only ever seen on Nedzu.

He was suddenly reminded that this boy was also smart enough to keep up with the principle and
not be intimidated by him.

He strapped on his goggles, mind racing. Right now the students were the first priority and he had to make sure they got to safety.

The students didn’t seem to know what was happening. Kirishima even inquired if this was part of the simulation. He was about to fill them in when Midoriya beat him to it, “No Kirishima, this was not planned. Those are villains and at the moment our top priority is to keep you safe so I’m going to ask you to run and get out of here immediately to alert the school.”

The class all gasped as their eyes flew wide with fright. Uraraka looked terrified but was able to squawk, “But what about you? You have to come with us! You don’t have a quirk and nearly enough power to take on all of them!”

Aizawa felt compelled to agree but didn’t have the opportunity to speak before Midoriya turned to Kaminari, completely ignoring Uraraka, “Try to use your quirk to alert the school. The villains probably cut off all communication so you’re your best bet.”

It was becoming more apparent that this was a well coordinated attack. They had cut off all communication and had very carefully chosen an isolated location to strike at an exact time a class would be present. They may be stupid for trespassing onto UA but they did have a goal in mind.

Shota was surprised how well Midoriya was handling this, taking control of the situation immediately and not even showing the slightest bit of panic. But that didn’t excuse the fact that he physically couldn’t take on the villains without a quirk. He needed to leave with the rest of the students.

“Midoriya go with the other students. You and Thirteen make sure they get to safety and alert the school.” Aizawa commanded, stepping forward to engage the villain group, capture weapon already starting to float around him.

Midoriya offered no response and instead stood stock still. He had removed his sunglasses to accommodate for the lower light level and his emerald eyes were bouncing from villain to villain.

Taking that as conformation he nodded at Thirteen who nodded back and he jumped down into the plaza, wind whipping through his hair as his mind blocked out everything other than the fight.

He activated his quirk on the first trio of villains and used his capture weapon to smash them
together, leaving them in a heap on the floor.

Soon he was surrounded and had obviously been recognized, a heteromorphic villain flew at him. Saying how he couldn’t erase his quirk which was true enough. He ducked under the villain’s fists and landed a solid hit to his face, knocking him into the air as he ducked the fist of another villain behind him. Letting his capture weapon wrap around the heteromorphic villain as he kicked the villain at his back, knocking him along with two others to the ground. Pulling his capture weapon he let the huge body of the heteromorphic villain crash into their amassed pile.

There were brief moments of standstill when the villain’s decided how to attack but he quickly ended those moments with a few kicks to the face.

He had been so wrapped up into battle he didn’t notice Midoriya had run down the stairs to join him until the boy was engaging the villains at the edge of the circle.

Midoriya was moving like lightening, hitting pressure points that rendered the villains useless. There was a glint in his eyes that spoke of calculated attacks and total destruction although his expression was totally neutral.

The boy was slowly clearing a direct path to the hand villain and it was all Aizawa could do to call out to him, “Midoriya! Get back to the other students!”

Midoriya didn’t offer any reaction as he picked his way across the field with nothing but his fists and feet with such brutal efficacy that Aizawa mentally kicked himself for underestimating him.

In that brief moment of silent observation and revelation Aizawa lost focus and received a punch to his stomach that left him gasping for breath.

Suddenly he felt himself falling, he looked to find the warp villain standing behind him as he fell into the warp gate that he had summoned on the floor.

The last thing Shota Aizawa saw before he fell through the gate entirely was Midoriya standing before the apparent leader of this attack. He saw the green-haired boy say something and a look of absolute confusion and outrage pass over the hand villain’s face.
Witch was annoyed.

Why was he the one that had to do all of the physical fighting and assess the situation.

He was strictly in the neutral, this was Izuku and Beetle’s ploy.

But here he was, picking his way across the ocean of thugs without his weapons and bruising his knuckles while he ignored Aizawa’s shouts for him to retreat and Thirteen and class 1-A screaming at him to come back. All of them too stupid to realize that it wasn’t Izuku and instead the vigilante they had been fawning over just days prior.

First of all, those are technically all of our knuckles you are bruising. Second, you are the best at physical fights with quirks like this so take it as a compliments and third, ouch, I happen to like some of the people in that class. Izuku said in his mind, ticking off the points on his fingers.

Plus we can’t disguise madness very well and Aizawa-kun would probably notice if it was me! Beetle ever so helpfully pointed out.

Izuku turned to Beetle, Are you sure you should be so proud you’re crazy?

Beetle pressed a hand over his heart as if he had been wounded, How dare you Izuku-kun. I thought we were friends T-T

For the hundredth time, how do you use emoticons in s p e c h?!

“Can you two shut up and actually help me. I am trying keep us from getting killed.” Witch murmured under his breath, ducking a villains punch as he caught the villain’s arm and twisted it, breaking the bone in two.

He was close to Shigaraki and once he reached Beetle’s employer he could retreat to sulk.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Kurogiri warp behind Aizawa and create a warp gate. Good. At
least they were keeping their part of the deal.

With a few more well placed attacks the remaining villains separating Witch and Shigaraki fell to the floor and Witch let Beetle deal with it.

Shigaraki looked momentarily surprised that someone had gotten past all of the villains and looked even more confused when Beetle waved at him, “Hiya Tomura-kun! Fancy seeing you here!”

Then Tomura recognized the mad glint in Beetle’s now green eyes and the flirtatious smirk that drove him so insane. His expression shifted somewhere between absolute rage and confusion and oh my god how Beetle wished he had a camera to immortalize that face.

“…Beetle?” he asked almost hesitantly.

Beetle smiled wider, positively giddy at his grand debut, “In the flesh!”

“What are you doing here!?” Tomura squawked, still trying to figure everything out.

“Well, I work here silly! …Well, technically Izuku works here but that is basically the same thing.” Beetle giggled despite Izuku and Beetle screaming at him not too.

Tomura grew suddenly furious, “So you’re a hero then!”

“None of us are heroes! I mean we have Izuku who is here because he’s Nedzu’s personal student but only because he was bored and Witch being a vigilante and being insanely salty about the world. Then we have me who had burnt down way too many buildings to ever be considered a hero!”

*WHY THE FUCK DID YOU SAY THAT!* Witch and Izuku shouted in unison, positively outraged that Beetle had given away their secret.

“Wait, Witch is a student here too?” Tomura growled, trying desperately to piece everything together.
Beetle sighed, “I think it would be better if I showed you.”

Suddenly he pushed Witch into command and the madness faded out his eyes and his face became the schooled into the cold mask he always wore. “Goddamn, it Beetle. It is your problem, not mine. Deal with it.”

And then Beetle was back with his signature insanity.

Shigaraki was left blinking in shock as he stuttered, “W-what the hell? Is it some sort of quirk or…”

Beetle shrugged, “Nope. We are all as quirkless as it gets. Probably some sort of personality disorder.”

YOU TOLD ME IT WASN’T A PERSONALITY DISORDER! Izuku screamed inside his head but Beetle shushed him as he continued his conversation with a stunned Shigaraki.

“It’s truly amazing what hair dye and colored contacts can do! I trust you won’t give away any of our secrets Tomura-kun! Having a mole in the school is much too valuable for that!” Beetle joyously exclaimed, having way too much fun messing with Tomura.

Tomura was still reeling but nodded.

“Wonderful! I trust Kurogiri has gotten the ones I want alive to safety?”

Shigaraki was snapped out of his daze by the sharp threat hidden behind Beetle’s words, “ Probably. Kurogiri knows what he’s doing and he never does back on a deal.”

“So true! Now if you could please look like you’re fighting me. It’s important to keep up appearances you know!”

Tomura wasn’t particularity in the mood for a fake fight, having realized how thoroughly Beetle
had been deceiving him all this time. So naturally like the child he was he flew at Beetle with every intention to serious hurt him.

Beetle just sighed and forced a pissed off Witch back in control.

Luckily, Witch was too busy staying alive to complain.
Aizawa was not someone who was quick to anger.

In fact, it was a near impossible feat. Sure he was bitter and tired all the time but never actually furious.

But here he was.

_Fucking pissed._

When he had said earlier that he would catch Beetle no matter what he had meant every word. He _was_ planning on doing everything in his power to bring that tiny and insane villain into custody. So what he had finally gotten him with the guy he had been crushing on since high school? He hadn’t been joking but it was more of a side project.

At least that was until the little orange haired _arsonist_ got him warped into a tiny metal box. Away from the battle. Away from his students. Away from _fucking Midoriya._

He had very unceremoniously been dumped into a ten by ten room with walls covered in steel with a single goddamn electric lantern hanging from the ceiling. It was bright enough that its tendrils of artificial light reached every corner, showing him that there was no way out other than a door like you would use in a bank vault. He had obviously tried the door and had very thoroughly locked.

There was also a note.

Because why wouldn’t there be.
Dear Shota (or whoever gets here first),

Hiya! I had ever so graciously made a deal that got you, yes YOU, transported out of the impending battle and into safety!

I can’t have one of the people in my OTP die so soon! (talking to you Shota! <3)

I have to win a bet to win for two of you (that’s you Tsu and Ochako!)

And the last one is just too fun to kill off so soon (process of elimination leaves Shoto owo)

Don’t worry, you’ll be freed once this (pointless) battle is over!!

Anyway! I’m not the best at physical fights so I’m sitting this one out! But don’t worry!!! I’m sure I’ll meet everyone soon <3

xoxo,

Beetle

That note left Aizawa with many important questions that he would very much like answered.

First off, how exactly did Beetle even know half the stuff he had casually mentioned. Like Shota’s new relationship and Asui’s preferred nickname and who Asui and Uraraka were in the first place. A bet placed on them was more than concerning and Todoroki’s explanation wasn’t even an explanation.

It was some small consolation knowing that at least three of his students would be safe. He had a feeling they would be joining him shortly, Beetle didn’t seem like the one who would let someone get away without holding their end of a deal. Actually, he knew Beetle wouldn’t let someone break a contract. His quirk prevented it entirely.
Alright. Alright, he needed to think about this rationally.

He took a few calming breaths, trying to clear his head so he could dissect the situation.

Beetle made a deal with the villains leading this attack, that much was obvious. What the villains wanted from him was still a mystery and Shota knew he got safety for Asui, Uraraka, Todoroki, and himself in return. In the grand scheme of it he highly doubted that their lives were all he got in return but he didn’t know what else he could have received.

The note told him that Beetle had some sort of connection in the school, only the faculty knew about him and Hizashi. There could be a variety of mediums but all of them spelled doom. They needed to sniff out how he knew all of that in the first place and destroy his medium immediately.

The bet with Asui and Uraraka could mean anything and Beetle wasn’t telling the entire truth about why Todoroki had been spared.

Now to the entire USJ attack as a whole.

The villains were organized and this was premeditated on heavily. They must have a concrete goal in mind that they were dead set on achieving.

His students were in serious danger and he couldn’t do anything about it.

No Aizawa calm. Panic later.

Midoriya had—for some reason—charged the main villain and had done something to shock him. Aizawa briefly noted how he had somehow gotten past the ocean of villains before he did and couldn’t help but be impressed. Although, Midoriya was now in the most danger, facing the main perpetrators head on without backup.

He had probably been relying on Shota to lend him that backup but now that he wasn’t there, whatever plan Midoriya had was probably gone and he was winging it.
Suddenly Aizawa was ripped from his train of thought by the tumble of bodies and he saw Uraraka, Asui, and Todoroki be dropped from a warp gate in the ceiling.

He wasn’t sure if he should be relieved or annoyed.

Uraraka looked confused but that confusion swiftly morphed into rage. Todoroki looked about as furious as Aizawa felt and Asui was calmly taking in the situation.

“What the hell just happened?!?” Uraraka screamed, stalking over to Aizawa with tears in her eyes.

If any of them were even remotely surprised to find their teacher in the same position none of them showed it. Opting to examine the door like Todoroki, reading the note like Asui, or just demanding answers like Uraraka.

“Can you tell us why we were forcefully removed from the fight! Our friends are in trouble! Deku-sensei is facing the villains alone! Thirteen is…” Uraraka started hyperventilating as the panic finally set in over the fury.

Dimly Aizawa wondered when Uraraka had started calling Midoriya “Deku-sensei”.

In an instant Asui was at her side, soothingly rubbing her back in an effort to stave the well-deserved panic attack. Taking this as his cue to offer what little explanation he could offer Aizawa opened his mouth to speak with an irritated sigh, “The only information I have is from that… infernal note that Asui just had. The only thing that told us is that the villain and informant Beetle was responsible for our removal and if he is to be believed—which we aren’t sure if he is or not—we’ll be released.”

Todoroki looked up from where he had been inspecting the only exit, “Any particular reason he chose us to ‘save’?”

Shota sighed and rubbed his forehead, “Nothing to really help us. His reasoning is cryptic at best.”

Asui croaked from where she was contenting to comfort Uraraka, “The note said something about Aizawa-sensei being part of his ‘OTP’, a bet with me and Uraraka-chan, and that you were just ‘too fun to kill off so soon’.”
Todoroki raised an eyebrow at Aizawa and he scowled at the acknowledgment, “The boy is mad. I have had the absolute pleasure of meeting him and if there is one word to describe him it would be ‘insane’.”

Having finally composed herself Uraraka hiccuped, “Boy?”

Shota realized that Beetle was a much lesser know villain to anyone other than a pro-hero or say a son of a pro-hero, “He can’t me much older than you. Although that doesn’t make him any less dangerous. He may be insane but he also his smart with vast reserves of blackmail and information if this attack was anything to go by. On his official record he has over fifteen cases of arson and eleven charges for murder, not including of course the countless people he’s injured and the cases we can’t prove as him.”

Uraraka swallowed, taken aback by the large criminal record on the teenager, “B-but you said he was an informant? Why had he killed so many people?”

This time it was Todoroki that answered, “It’s part of his quirk. It allows him to make contracts with people and if they don’t uphold their end the consequences written into the contract will come true. He his quite fond of setting the terms as ‘this contract burns and so do you or your loved ones’.”

Uraraka looked stricken although Asui only looked down at the floor sadly, “That’s horrible! Why should innocents suffer if they don’t uphold their end!?”

Todoroki left his post at the doorway and stalked over to were the note had been left, no doubt wanting to read it for himself, “Think about it from a villain’s point of view. What’s something even more compelling than their own lives? If he wants to keep them in check it really is one of the most direct routes to insure their cooperation.”

Todoroki’s frown deepened as he read Beetle’s note before continuing, “By organized villain standards Beetle is fairly mild in terms of identifiable crimes. However, the thing that makes him so dangerous is that we have no idea where he gets his information and how much information he has. It fairly obvious that he offered information on the USJ and the fact that he knows of our specific names, especially Asui’s nickname, is more than worrying.”

Aizawa nodded in agreement, even if he was slightly irked that Todoroki was only deepening Uraraka’s fear but everything he was saying was true.
Shota suddenly remembered that Uraraka had said something about the current state of the class and he desperately needed an update, “Uraraka, you said something about how everyone was faring? Is everyone alright?”

Uraraka blinked hard as if to dispel tears she refused to let fall, “No. Thirteen used their quirk on the warp villain and he turned it on them.”

Aizawa blinked, not letting any nerves break through his facade, his students were already worried enough, “You mean Thirteen turned themselves to dust?”

Asui took over from Uraraka who was starting to look overwhelmed, “Not entirely, only their back. As for the rest of the class, they were presumably warped into the different zones in the USJ so we don’t know of their current state kero.”

Understandable enough. A decent plan, divide the students so they could be easily killed if the note was any indication, “And Midoriya?” he was almost afraid to ask about the gremlin child he had grown to care about.

“Last time we saw he was still engaged with the villain with the hands. He got hit a few times although I couldn’t see how bad from the distance. There was a few bloody patches that we could see but once again how bad I don’t know.”

Not good. I really didn’t matter how physically strong Midoriya was, he couldn’t hold out forever against someone with a quirk. It was a small relief to find that he wasn’t already dead but he certainly would be after long.

“We need to get out of here, alert the other heroes. Whatever was blocking communications in the USJ is still effecting us here so we can’t be far unless it’s a device and not a quirk. Can you melt the door or freeze the lock Todoroki?”

Todoroki shook his head, “Already tried, some special metal that is extremely heat and cold resistant. They were prepared.

Aizawa’s mood somehow got worse. The only concrete idea he had was gone.
That was at least until Uraraka sniffled, drawing the attention back to her as a familiar fire overtook her eyes, “I think I might be able to help.”

Shota raised an eyebrow but didn’t stop her as she shuffled over to the door.

She closed her eyes as she placed both palms flat on the metal surface, “Deku-sensei has been helping me with levitating smaller specific parts of objects. It still takes a lot of concentration and doesn’t always work. But, if this is the locking mechanism that I think it is…”

For a few moments she didn’t speak, the tension in the room was palpable. If this worked he would have just another thing to thank problem child for.

Then there was a resounding click and the door popped open.

Uraraka turned back to them with a smile nothing short of wicked and out of the corner of his eye he saw Asui blush.

Todoroki cocked his head, “How did you do that?”

Uraraka flinched under the intensity of his gaze but didn’t pause for more than a moment, “It was a simple safe lock. Totally inaccessible from this side but if I can feel the door I can individually target the specific rings inside the lock and using my quirk I can make them spin until I feel the slight hitch when I hit the right area.”

Asui piped up from behind Aizawa, “Wow Uraraka-chan, that’s pretty impressive. I didn’t know you had that type of sensitivity from your quirk.”

Now it was Uraraka’s turn to blush, “I don’t. I have to constantly float and release until I get it just right. It’s time-consuming and makes me nauseous but I’m still learning.”

Aizawa cleared his throat, maybe Nemuri had been right about those two. “Thank you for getting the door open Uraraka. We don’t know where we are yet or if there are any villains waiting for us so we have to be careful. Everyone get behind me.”
They did so without too much reluctance, although Todoroki scowled. He could get over it.

As silently as possible the shuffled out of their cell, from what he could tell it was in the basement of an abandoned building. They peaked around every corner but found not another living soul other than a few spiders that while Todoroki flinched at the webs the girls swatted them away without hesitation.

Before long they were outside in a barely monitored part of town.

Shota checked his communication device, being pleasantly surprised that it was now functional. He called the school immediately to inform them of the development but was even more pleased to hear that they were already on it. Iida had apparently escaped and had run into All Might who was on his way to the USJ.

He couldn’t stop the relief that flooded him when Nedzu informed him that there had been no deaths.

“Any significant injuries?”

The pause on the other end was not reassuring and his blood went cold, “Only Thirteen and Midoriya have anything serious. Thirteen having gotten their quirk reversed back on them and Midoriya with disintegrated parts of his body and broken bones. Trauma to the face from when the purple monster smashed them into the grown.”

Aizawa stopped breathing for a moment, Midoriya had gotten seriously hurt. An unfamiliar rage at Beetle soon bubbled up under his skin, it was as much Beetle’s fault Midoriya was injured as Shota’s.

He was going to bring that child to justice and make him pay.

Before it had been a promise.

Now it was an oath.
Izuku was in pain.

It wasn’t unfamiliar and with all the pain meds Recovery Girl had him on now it was more of an annoyance than anything.

But Jesus, he knew Shitaraki would be pissed but not pissed enough to sick the fucking Nomu on him.

He could have died.

_I want you to shut up. You didn’t even do any of the work._ Witch grumbled in his mind, upset he wasn’t getting any credit but equally too tired to care.

_Well, I’m the one having to deal with the consequences of your failure because you pushed me back into control once the Nomu got us!_ Izuku quipped right back.

_I wonder how pissed Shota is right about now. If he wasn’t already dead set on me then this definitely set a price on my head!_ Beetle laughed, derailing the impending argument.

_Yeah, you. You said I didn’t have a personality disorder!_ Izuku was being increasingly frustrated with his ‘alters’, but he couldn’t deny the fact that he had already considered the possibility and was just unwilling to accept it.

_Did you honestly think this was normal?_ Witch replied with lazy eyes, being thoroughly exhausting from all the fighting he had done.

_Also, don’t lie to yourself sweetie! You had already come to terms with it a long time ago!_ Beetle batted innocent eyelashes.

God Izuku hated it when they were right.

_Does that mean I can just… spontaneously create new alters?_
No. Witch said at the same time Beetle said, *Yep!*

He could *feel* the staring contest they were holding.

_No that isn’t how it works._ Witch apparently won the dominance battle.

_Do I have other alters or is it just you two?_ Izuku asked, not expecting any answer other than ‘no’.

Instead, he was met with silence.

…_{Do I have alters other than you two?_ Now Izuku was brimming with something between excitement and apprehension.

_Maybe?_ Beetle replied after a few seconds of silence.

_Who are they? I want to meet them._

Witch was the first to shut it down, _No. I refuse to be the only somewhat sane person here. Plus, you may not like who this one resembles._

Now Izuku was definitely curious, _I want to meet them. I deserve to know who they are._

_Witch we have too! I happen to not entirely hate them! They aren’t exactly like him! He’s gotten better!_ Beetle pleaded.

Witch said nothing for another few minutes before issuing a small _fine._

Beetle clapped his hands and suddenly Izuku felt another presence in his brain. He was now slightly nervous and cautiously peered not his mind to locate the new alter.
The first thing he noticed was shockingly neon pink hair parted to the side. What was with them all collectively deciding not to have normal hair colors? Then again his hair was green.

The second thing he noticed was the bloodlust shining in eyes bluer than a mountain lake. Crystal clear they did nothing to hide the sheer rage hiding behind the irises. Izuku subconsciously flinched, he had only ever seen rage like that in they eyes of Kacchan right before he was beaten to a pulp.

Now he could see what Witch was talking about. The new addition was giving off a distinctive Kacchan like vibe. However, instead of it being directed at Izuku, Witch, or Beetle it seemed its recipient was Kacchan specifically.

While the others all held some sort of bitterness they had never even come close to the righteous fury contained within the tiny new alter. His smile was sharp enough to cut and it reeked of vengeance.

For some reason, there was an All Might baseball bat hanging off his shoulder and crimson stained lips smacking as he chewed pink bubblegum that Izuku begrudgingly approved of. Eyeliner sharp enough to skin a man accented those terrifyingly saturated blue eyes in a look that really matched the alter’s aesthetic.

His aesthetic was made obvious by the ripped flannel around his waist, the distressed jeans, and the wrinkled white shirt with stains that looked suspiciously like blood. And of course the black Vans.

While Witch looked like he was straight from a video game, Beetle dressing like an actual normal person, and Izuku’s style of straight from the trash the new ‘zombie-apocalypse’ thing fit in surprisingly well.

_Fucking finally. Took you long enough Beetle dear_, the new alter purred.

Witch sighed, resigning himself to being a babysitter of three instead of two.

While the new alter and Beetle gossiped and laughed Witch took the initiative to formally introduce Izuku.
This is Cypress, he sighed with the power of a hundred Aizawa’s

Witch darling! Thanks for letting me finally join you! Cypress broke off his conversation with Beetle and… skipped? over to the increasingly tired vigilante, twirling the bat.

Now Izuku was getting some mixed signals. While Cypress looked badass and radiated enough pure rage to make even Kacchan shiver, his way of talking and mannerisms were throwing Izuku for a loop.

Then Izuku accepted it because honestly, that was the least strange part of this entire exchange.

Hey Izuku! I’m Cypress! You got pretty fucked up back there. Cypress laughed and raised a hot pink eyebrow, I would tell you I’d help you fuck them up but they already got blasted out of the arena.

Izuku chuckled and Witch looked like he was going to jump off a bridge. He wasn’t kidding when he said he was now the only sane one out of the four of them. Izuku almost felt sorry for the vigilante. Then he remembered that he had forced Izuku to deal with the Nomu and that pity was quickly squashed.

Anyway, I’m sure we’ll get a chance to know each other but right now you got a Dadzawa to deal with hun.

Beetle started screeching at ‘Dadzawa’ and sure enough, a very pissed Shota Aizawa shuffled into the infirmary. It was kinda hard to see him through the bandages covering his entire fucking beautiful freckled face. His broken arms and partially disintegrated torso were also bandaged to the point where he couldn’t fucking move so there was that.

Fun times all around.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize if Cypress being added breaks the rules of DID but I did do some research
on it and because Cypress shares so many qualities with Bakugou, Witch being an absolute MOM decided it was best to keep him a secret.

Yes, Cypress is supposed to be an Avenger alter which does lead to some /fun/ interactions.

Also not sure if Uraraka's quirk and the lock would actually work? I did look up how safe locks work and it kinda made sense? Sorry if it's improbable and/or impossible.
Katsuki lived a life consisting entirely of rage and regret.

The spices of ire were as familiar to him as his quirk. Anger was like paprika, barely even noticeable amid the other tastes of life. Seething fury more of cayenne powder, embracive heat that left your mouth dry and a chapped smile on your lips.

But when he saw Deku. *Useless fucking Deku* rush the villains an indescribable rage so intense and passionate he had nearly choked when it had overtaken his mind. His vision was always tinted red, but here he couldn’t see anything pass the wave of crimson.

Everything was moving too fast. One moment that fucking nerd was herding them towards the door, pretending to be so superior because he was ‘Nedzu’s personal student’. Katsuki had turned snarl at the pretentious bastard who had at fucking *gall* to boss them around. Then just like that he was gone, shooting down the stairs at a speed that Katsuki had thought impossible without assistance from a quirk.

And Katsuki had literally exploded.

Was this what it felt like to watch your world shatter?

Because for once every ounce of Katsuki’s anger was directed to someone he never thought it would touch, Katsuki himself.

For years he bullied Deku-Izuku relentlessly. Taunted and tormented him for his lack of a quirk. Broken both in body and spirit, *reveled in it*. Tore into his self-esteem like it was a meal to enjoy. His own personal punching bag for when *he* needed a confidence boost. Had manipulated and fucked with his head just for shits and giggles.
Since he was *four* it had been his unequivocal goal to make Izuku Midoriya’s life *hell on earth*.

The worst part was that he had *succeeded*.

He had single-handedly pushed Deku over the edge. Literally.

While Deku might have just been isolated on his own because of his quirklessness it had been all Katsuki that had raised the entire *fucking school* against him. Even gotten the teachers on his side too. Had arranged the festering hatred against the boy, his only crime being his genetics.

Katsuki would never forget getting the call.

The old hag had been yelling at him to do his homework when the phone rang. Mitsuki had answered it only to find a sobbing Inko, babbling about how a roof and a hospital and *suicide Mitsuki suicide*.

For once the Bakugou household was silent.

But words had echoed all too clearly through Katsuki’s mind ‘*go jump of the roof then bitch. Maybe you’ll get a quirk in your next life.*’

He had finally made Izuku snap and it was only thanks to whatever merciful gods he hadn’t actually died.

Thank god it never got out it was Katsuki’s fault.

Thank god Deku had transformed himself out of the meek boy who had accepted all of Katsuki’s abuse and *still* revered him.

And right then that boy who had once been Deku charged into the heart of the villains. Not pausing his dance of destruction as he pirouetted and traded blows with villains much older than him with much more firepower.
He pushed through them all. Not stopping for breath or reprieve, plowing down evil with more ease and grace than Aizawa. Unhearing or uncaring to Aizawa’s pleas for him to return to the group and Thirteen and some of the other extras shouts for him to come back.

And in that moment Katsuki realized something through his haze of fury.

Deku had never been useless.

Katsuki had.

The invasion had turned out with the best possible outcome honestly. With only injuries to one staff member and an unofficial student that the media was unaware of they couldn’t leech off this story and threaten the school. If they were lucky they might be able to keep this from being blown out of proportion by the impending media circus.

From what he gathered this had been a much premeditated attack. Complete with exact coordinates and the weaknesses of the students. Ryo had swept the entire campus three times over, checking anything suspicious but had turned up empty-handed. Higari running enough tests looking for bugs and such it had nearly frozen the system, still nothing. However Beetle had attained the info would remain a mystery.

That left only two plausible conclusions, the villains had used the brief time the press that managed to breach UA walls to gain all the necessary files or there was a mole.

Nedzu sincerely hoped it was the former, it made more sense logically but it was still an awfully short period of time to achieve all of this information. It was due to that small sliver of possibility he hadn’t ruled out the idea of a spy.

Loathe as he was to admit it Nedzu’s mind had immediately jumped to Midoriya. Around the same age as Beetle if Shouta’s statement was to be believed. The boy had enough intelligence along with motivation to be the infamous informant but there was still the matter of Midoriya being one of the two people seriously injured. As cold-hearted as villains were they normally didn’t actively seek to harm their own.
This of course could be a logical ruse on the villains part, hoping the principal would believe since Midoriya had been harmed it wasn’t their devious informant.

Then again… they wouldn’t want Beetle dead and it was a well stated fact that if Toshinori hadn’t shown up when he did Midoriya would be six-feet-under at the moment.

He had to stop this. He would only drive himself mad, throwing reverse-phycology back and forth would get him nowhere. It was a game he could play all day and he would still be no closer to the truth.

The villains also hadn’t accounted for the newly acquired abilities of the students thanks to Midoriya and if he was Beetle those would have most certainly added those factors into equation.

By the end of his thought process Nedzu was quite sure that Midoriya Izuku was not Beetle and in a moment of rare fondness scolded himself for ever thinking so.

—

Aizawa still looked mildly furious. At who Izuku couldn’t tell. Probably everyone. Don’t think he hadn’t noticed how the underground hero had started to warm up to him over the last few weeks.

He was on enough painkillers he was a little loopy. Well, more loopy than normal.

“Sup’ Dadza— I meant Aizawa!” he finished off in a hurry, realizing he had started to use Cypress’s nickname for the older teacher.

Cypress snickered, Witch didn’t dare shut him up.

Aizawa blinked twice, being smart enough to realize the back half of the nickname, before ultimately forgetting about it, “How you doing you brat? You kinda deserve it, being you decided to directly defy my orders and get yourself…” he trailed off, gesturing at Izuku’s mummified body.

Against his better judgement (a 1/4 ratio now) he replied with the most cliche and annoying response possible, “You aren’t my mom.”
Aizawa huffed and raised an eyebrow, “Would you like us to call her…?”

Izuku’s eyes flew wide in panic, his alters have all simultaneously frozen as well. “T-that isn’t necessary!!”

They were all having flashbacks to times when they had done something reckless and Inko had found out. The ensuing results were not pretty. They were always somewhere between Inko scolding his ear off and her being reduced to a sobbing heap. Neither were fun separately and together… it was more accurate to call it torture.

Delighting in the expressive response from the teenage Aizawa’s lips twitched upward, “To late we already did. Had too. Being you got attacked an all.”

Witch had presumably hit one of the ‘emergency use only’ buttons in his brain being it was completely shutting down. Cypress was trying to find a way back to a time when he hadn’t been in Izuku’s conscious, Beetle was sobbing on the floor, Witch was trying to keep it together and failing miserably.

Izuku only sighed and leaned back, his head hitting the pillows with a soft, “Oh.”

At this Aizawa actually laughed. It came as so much of a shock it galvanized Izuku back to life.

“Sorry kid. Just it was too funny, to think that the mighty Izuku Midoriya who literally just got nearly killed is terrified of his mother.” Aizawa cackled again and Izuku frowned.

“Just wait until you meet her,” he ground out through clenched teeth.

“Still, what were you thinking?” Aizawa snarled, apparently remembering that he wasn’t here to tease Izuku about his mom.

Izuku needed to make up a lie and quick. He couldn’t very well say, ‘Oh you see I am also the villain Beetle and therefore knew that you Todoroki, Asui, and Uraraka would be taken from the fight and I wanted them to stand somewhat of a chance. Also, I wanted to see the look on Tomura’s face when I told him that I was Beetle’.
Yeah no.

Izuku rubbed the back of his neck with bandaged hands, “I-uh, I knew I could help you and you wouldn’t be able to keep off that many villains. You’re better at one on one fights, not large groups.”

Aizawa narrowed his eyes, “You can’t be a hero if you only have on trick.”

“Still. You couldn’t have made it through the entirety of the battle unharmed.” Izuku said, slipping into the analytical mode of his youth. Remembering all the notes he had taken on Eraserhead as a child.

Aizawa recognized he spoke the truth and didn’t disagree but he still said, “So you decided to get beaten to a pulp by a purple monster? To help me?”

Izuku winced, “Look, I didn’t intentionally try to get beaten up. You had gotten snatched by some crazy villain and I had no backup. I’m not suicidal,” he paused then added as an afterthought, “Anymore.”

Wrong thing to say apparently. He blamed the painkillers.

_Witch I thought you said he wasn’t an idiot._ Cypress said with more than a hint of amusement.

_Witch, on the other hand, had facepalmed so hard he nearly broke his nose, That’s what I thought when I said it._

Aizawa immediately hardened. Whether it had been the crack at Aizawa being taken or at his previous attempt to kill himself he couldn’t tell. It was probably both.

“Look here you little brat. I will never forgive myself for not being there. Ever. I failed you along with the rest of our students. It is my job to keep you safe and I failed it. Miserably. As for you being suicidal, I really hope you have gotten that point in your life but know that if you _ever_ feel that way again you can to talk to me.”
Dadzawa, Cypress whispered, earning a glare from both of the other alters.

Izuku was slightly taken aback by the outburst and Aizawa’s offer to help him, he was still wrapping his mind around the fact that people other than his mother cared. It was painfully obvious how much he cared for them all, as much as he tried to hide it behind his bitterness and salt he truly had a caring heart.

There was really only one thing to do in this situation.

Izuku had his eyes filling with crocodile tears— he hadn’t cried for real in over seven months— “You truly are a Dadzawa. I’ll have to tell the group chat.”

Aizawa blinked (he tried to hide the slight flush in his cheeks at ‘Dadzawa’, apparently unimpressed by his show, “Group chat?”)

“How between me and the fellas.”

“Do I want to ask?”

“Probably not.”

Izuku winked then realized that Aizawa couldn’t see it through the bandages smothering his sass, “Ignoring my group chat of cryptic horrors I kinds want to know what happened after I passed out from head trauma. Getting smashed into the ground kinda makes a man black out apparently?”

*Not a man right now.* Beetle unnecessarily chirped.

*Well, good thing I’m not you right now so it doesn’t matter.* Izuku shot back, tone dripping with malice.

Beetle continued as if she heard nothing, *More she/her.*

The received no response but Izuku made mental note, being a decent person and all that jazz.
“And you think I know? I was trapped by an arsonist.” Aizawa replied lazily.

*Holy fuck. He has a sense of humor.* Cypress remarked, mirroring Izuku’s thoughts exactly.

“Please, I’ve been here for a day. Nedzu’s already filled you in.” Izuku was absolutely sure of that, despite keeping this under control with the media and dealing with terrified parents his mentor definitely gave old ‘Zawa here the run down.

“Aww he said ‘our’ Cypress cooed. His presence was an interesting addition to the constant mental monologue of his alters but he was quickly making himself at home as if he hadn’t popped into existence fifteen minutes ago.

“So tell. I want to know how our students did.” Izuku gave a feline smile that *still couldn’t be seen.*

Aizawa took a seat, apparently this was going to be detailed then, “Lets start off the moment you took off and decided to join the main battle…”

—

Baku-bro and him may have made tiny error. In hindsight it probably wasn’t the best idea to try and take on a villain made entirely of smoke. They hadn’t know what they were doing and because of them Thirteen hadn’t been able to use their quirk and everyone had gotten separated.

Totally not manly.

Kirishima’s warp landed him directly in water. See that would be totally fine except for the fact that his quirk was activated, leaving him the weight of a Kiri-sized rock so he immediately started sinking and there wasn’t anything he could do about it.
Once he realized he was dropping he immediately deactivated his quirk, but by that time his lungs were straining and the water pressure had built up, slowly crushing his now unhardened skull.

Drowning was definitely not a manly way to die but if he didn’t get up to the surface that was looking very far away it might be how he went.

In exchange for the decreasing pressure, he got black spots starting to dot his vision, the surface of the water looking more and more impossible to reach. But if he could just make it a little further he might be able to—

His train of thought was interrupted by a flash of razor-sharp teeth and he barely had time to dodge the shark villain, their jaws missing him by only a hair. His lungs felt like they were on fire and he had to suppress the urge to draw water in. To try and breathe.

If he knew he would have been in the water he would have taken a large breath in but he had just flown at a villain. Thus causing him to take shorter breaths, thus limiting his time underwater until he drowned.

However dire his breathing situation he might not get the chance to pass out if this villain got to him first.

Being part shark the villain had amazing reflexes, spinning almost immediately after missing Kirishima. He knew he wouldn’t have time to dodge this time and if he hardened again there was no way he would make it to air.

Basically, he was screwed either way.

It was perhaps through sheer luck that a large body crashed into the shark villain, sending him spinning into the deeper parts of the shipwreck zone.

By now his lungs felt like they were going to burst, dark spots flashing a fading as he struggled to hold his breath. Almost on autopilot, he started kicking his way to the surface, trying to make it before he passed out.
Luckily he didn’t have to try hard. Almost immediately he felt water rushing passed him as he was propelled faster than should have been possible.

He turned to find the cause of his sudden speed boost. He caught sight of them just as his head broke the surface of the water and he took in lungfuls of air.

He gave a shark-toothed grin to Sato, who was breathing just as heavily if not more so. A panting Shoji thrown across his broad back.

So they had picked the heaviest students to drown them but Sato had still gotten them to safety.

Super manly.

—

Katsuki was still in some form of shock-filled rage.

His plan to kill the warp villain bastard had failed spectacularly and now he was freezing his tits off along the invisible bitch and Private School.

While Deku was still battling the villains in the central plaza.

God fucking damn it.

There was no way this placement was pure luck. It combated their quirks too well for it to be random.

The invisible chick was probably getting frostbite being she was entirely fucking naked while the preppy bitch’s engines were stalling all to hell. All of Katsuki’s sweat was freezing too, rendering it mostly useless.

He needed to get to fucking Deku now. He couldn’t apologize for being such a useless asshole child if the bastard was fucking dead.
Breaking into a dead sprint he ignored the calls of four-eyes. They could figure this out themselves, they were capable. Should be capable.

And Deku was facing off against a shit ton of villains quirkless.

Yeah, let's see who needs more help.

—

Mina was not having a good day.

At first, she had though this would be amazing. Spend some time with her friends and train to save people. Great right?

It would have been if villains hadn’t decided to crash the part and ruin everything.

Now here she was, stuck in some crumbling building with Aoyama. Both not daring to risk using their quirks for fear it might upset the delicate foundations of the building and everything would come crashing down around them.

And there was a quickly advancing hoard of villains approaching.

That really left only one option.

Run.

—

When Hitoshi had thought about becoming a hero he didn’t think it would detail being attacked in a supposedly safe facility.
This would certainly be more exciting than he had thought. Hell, it might have even been fun if it weren’t for the fact that he was alone in screaming winds and harsh rain that carried all noise away, therefore rendering his quirk useless. If the villains couldn’t hear his questions and he couldn’t hear if they responded he was basically screwed.

There was something to work on in the future.

—

Sero didn’t particularly like fire. Never had, much too easy to catch his tape on fire. After all, it was flammable as fabric.

But after this, he would hate it.

The heat was sweltering, radiating waves in every direction. Aim some of his tape in the wrong direction and well… fwoosh.

It was extremely debilitating and limited his movements quite a bit.

Koda, Tokoyami, and him were back-to-back. Trying desperately to think of a plan to fend off the villains coming from every direction. Koda’s quirk was basically useless with no animals in sight and the light from the fires made Dark Shadow so weak he was more like a normal shadow than a sentient one.

Nothing was coming to mind but if they didn’t figure this out they would be so screwed.

—

Kaminari wasn’t an idiot, despite what his test scores might say.

He was smart enough to know that things were going downhill.
The ground was sloped, buildings partially submerged in the dirt. Villains prepared to battle him and Jirou.

He could take them all out but he could end up accidentally hitting his classmate. She had no way of escaping the blast and he had no way of sparing her from his electricity.

While he wasn’t an idiot he wasn’t the best tactician either. No offense to Jirou but they had left all the master plan makers somewhere else and they had no means of knocking out these many villains without the full extent of Kaminari’s quirk.

But if the villains got any closer they might just have to risk it.

—

Ojiro was stranded.

Alone in the mountain zone, backed into a corner with villains forming a tight semicircle around him.

His only two options were to try and launch himself over them or over the hills at his back.

Neither was the best but he needed to do something.

—

Momo was angry.

At the warp villain in front of her who had warped her friends away and Mineta who would not stop ogling her.
He needed to get some professionalism. They were facing off against a villain and all he could do was stare at her breasts when she created a staff.

Thirteen was in front of them, finger poised to create a black hole to suck up the villain. Momo hoped it would work but she was still on edge.

Couldn’t the villain theoretically create a warp gate behind Thirteen and have them accidentally use their quirk on themselves?

—

“… and then Kurogiri used his quirk on Thirteen and they got turned partially into dust. Luckily, All Might showed up a little while later. He was already on his way and got there just in time to save everyone.” Aizawa finished, obviously bored at having to tell the story by his oversimplifications.

“Wow. Beetle really knows their shit.” Izuku remarked drily.

_I didn’t think my placements would be so effective!_ Beetle clapped her hands in pride, _Someone might have actually gotten killed if All Might hadn’t magically appeared along with the rest of the staff. It’s too bad Uraraka got them out early and the school was alerted :(

Witch glared at the villainous alter, _You don’t actually want them dead. You like them just as much as Izuku does._

Beetle sighed dreamily, _Todoroki’s hot._

Cypress and Witch exchanged a look.

_You two wouldn’t know if sexual attraction if it hit you with a stick, _ Beetle pouted, _Izuku back me up here! Shochan’s is really pretty!_

Speaking of Todoroki… he really needed to get a hustle on ruining Endeavwhore’s life like he had ruined Rei’s.
“Well, it’s great that no one got super hurt. Class right?” Izuku said, flinging off his blankets and swinging out of bed.

Aizawa looked slightly alarmed and shook his head, “You are not going to class.”

“Nope,” Izuku said, popping the p, “Don’t tell me that you wouldn’t go to class if it was you in my place.”

Aizawa didn’t deny it.

“Besides, Recovery Girl patched me up. I really don’t need all of these bandages.” Izuku shrugged, ignoring the pain that ran down his still healing arms at the simple action.

Aizawa grumbled, “Fine. But your mother in on her way and you aren’t leaving this room until she’s gone.”

Izuku froze.

He had totally forgotten about that.

—

An hour later Izuku was making his way down the hall to class 1-A.

The meeting with Inko had been less than pleasant, her crying and scolding making him feel guilty in a way he didn’t think were possible.

Even Beetle, someone who had actually murdered people, felt cowed by the end of the exchange.

Yikes, let's repress those memories, shall we?
Besides, he had the opportunity for a dramatic entrance and he didn’t want to be bogged down by his mother’s tears of relief.

Before long he was standing at the comically oversized door to the classroom. He could hear activity on the other side and knew that Aizawa was teaching a lesson.

Perfect time for some strategic interruption.

He kicked open the door (ow) before striding into the classroom. The students were staring open-mouthed, obviously not expecting him to be back so soon. Aizawa only looked slightly irritated at being cut off.

His bandages were trailing behind him like some weird wedding train and both Cypress and Beetle were cackling. Witch was as resigned as normal.

Butting Aizawa out of his spot at the front of the room the underground hero realized this would take awhile and settled into his sleeping bag, opting to take a nap on the floor.

“I just want to say how proud I am that you all survived!” Izuku smiled at the class, although they couldn’t see it through the fucking bandages.

The expressions of the students ranged from Uraraka’s slightly disapproving shock to Kacchan’s… relief?

He ignored Cypress’ growl when his eyes locked with Kacchan’s red irises. The pure rage rippling off the pink-haired alter was almost debilitating but he pushed through the dizzying potency of emotion.

“As a reward you get….. drum roll please,” no one drum rolled to Beetle’s dismay, “More training!”

The room collectively groaned and Izuku could feel the satisfaction rippling off Aizawa.
“Great job not dying. I truly applaud you on that.” Izuku patted his aviator jacket, looking for his cigarettes. He was having some serious nicotine withdrawals. He mentally swore when Witch reminded him he couldn’t smoke in the classroom, “But, Kacchan here was the only one who actually managed to escape the villains and help me.”

He was nearly knocked to his knees by the viciousness radiating off Cypress at his borderline compliment, *He deserves no praise*

And this must be why Witch didn’t want Cypress here. There was some serious resentment harbored in the Cypress’ heart. Mental note, don’t let Cypress be in control around Kacchan. Based on the rage coming from the alter he felt it might end in bloodshed.

“So basically you guys need to get better on getting more creative with your quirks. I can think of probably a dozen ways you could have done just fine in the environment meant to directly combat your quirks as they are now.”

Some students blushed. Embarrassed at apparently failing.

“That isn’t something to be ashamed of. Jesus, we’ve been in school for like a month. You’re doing great kids.” Izuku realized he was sounding an awful lot like Aizawa and was slightly mortified.

“But Deku-sensei you are literally our age. In fact, six people here are older than you.” Uraraka said with an angelic smile that masked her true evil.

Izuku frowned.

That frowned only deepened when Shinsou spoke up from the back of the class, “Plus everyone is taller than you. You're tiny.”

His alters hissed in unison.

Izuku stomped towards Shinsou’s desk. Still mummified but obviously offended, “Look here you little bitch. Just because you can reach the top of the fridge doesn’t mean you are superior.”
Shinsou smiled lazily, “I could drop kick you across the training field. You’re what? Five feet?”

Oh, that was it.

*Kick his ass* Cypress growled, shortly followed by Beetle’s agreement and Witch’s silent glower of approval.

“Me, you, right now.”

And just like that everything went fuzzy. Time moved like molasses and nothing seemed to make sense.

*Oh, that fucking bastard.*

Then he was back. Well not back, Witch was in his place. Interesting. Apparently, Shinsou could only brainwash them one at a time. He had yet to have a training session with the kid so it was good information to have.

Witch gave up command and just like that was Izuku blinking at Shinsou who looked all too smug, “You are aware you used your quirk on a teacher. I could expel you.”

Much to his delight Shinsou’s eyes widened and soft gasps sounded through the student body. ‘Holy crap Shinsou brainwashed Midoriya-sensei’ and ‘he broke out of it?’

No one was more surprised than Shinsou, obviously trying to figure out how Izuku had broken free and now slightly panicked at the prospect of expulsion.

Izuku considered for a moment, letting Shinsou’s mind run to all the worst possible places, “Nah. I did challenge you first after all. Fair play.”

Tension visibly bled out of Shinsou’s shoulders and he averted his gaze.

Izuku clapped his hands, “Wonderful! Now I think Aizawa wants to get back to the lesson and I
need to find new ways to torture— I mean train you.”

No one looked convinced he meant train. Everyone who had come back from a training session had ultimately passed out. Even Todoroki.

Aizawa was pulling himself out of his sleeping bag and Izuku headed towards his desk in the back corner of the room. Pulling out his notebooks from the storage cabinet he began to write something special for Shinsou and Uraraka. Fucking devils.

Later, when class was being dismissed he hurried to catch Todoroki.

“What are you doing on midnight Saturday?” he asked, catching Todoroki unaware.

“Why?”

Izuku tried to give him a blinding smile through his bandages, “I want to discuss Endeavor’s impending doom!”

Todoroki blinked, really the man’s emotions were locked up tighter than Fort Knox, “Where do you want to meet?”

“I’ll just come to your house.”

Todoroki’s voice was carefully neutral, “Are you sure that’s the best plan?”

Izuku scoffed, “It’ll be fine.”

Todoroki gave the smallest frown, “See you then.”

Chapter End Notes
Yes Katsuki's redemption/angst is purposefully timed with Cypress' arrival

And we stan ace Cypress and Witch

Witch is an aromantic asexual
Cypress is a panromantic demisexual
Beetle is pansexual and genderfluid
Izuku is a chaos gay
WE PASSED 10K READS AND 1K KUDOS!!!!!!

CAN I JUST SAY HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU GUYS! THE SUPPORT HAS BEEN OVERWHELMING SO PLEASE NEVER STOP!

In celebration, I made a discord server that is probably going to flop but¯\_(ツ)_/¯

Come join me and watch your esteemed author not know what the fuck they're doing:

DISCORD

Honestly, I'm not even sure if that link works and if it doesn't someone please tell me so I can get it fixed because I've never done this before.

p.s. Don't be like Izu or any of the alters. They have too many bad habits. Don't do alcohol or smoke it's bad for you. Don't fling yourself off buildings either. Stay safe kids. I love you <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Witch ended up having to tackle Cypress to keep him from either slitting Shigaraki’s throat or beating his face in with his bare fists if the broken glass proved ineffective.

Both options would end with at least one of them dead so it wasn’t very popular among everyone else.

In hindsight, they should have expected this. Cypress was obviously very… protective of Izuku and had more anger issues than Kacchan with significantly looser morals. Bringing said burning ball of rage and vengeance to the man that resulted in multiple broken bones, massive facial damage, and very near death was probably not the best idea.

They had been smart enough to avoid Kacchan like the plague in the brief time they had been in the same room after Izuku had joined the class again. None of them had missed the glares Cypress had thrown Kacchan from the back of the class. If looks could kill Kacchan would have been tortured and murdered ten times over.

Izuku couldn’t say it wasn’t refreshing to have someone willing to fight for him and to try and right the wrongs done to him in his childhood. Even if it was still ultimately himself. He honestly wouldn’t have a problem with it if he hadn’t already made peace with the past and it wasn’t
technically his body doing the punching so, therefore, him getting blamed.

Yikes. Apparently, nothing screws with your moral compass more than throwing yourself off a roof and burning your dreams.

Anyway…

They (meaning everyone except Witch who vehemently disagreed) had somehow decided to pay a visit to the League and see how they were fairing after the whole failure of the USJ. There was a difference of opinions between them, Witch still being salty he had to do all the work, Izuku being salty he had gotten the shit beat out of him, and Beetle being somewhere between curious and concerned. Toga and Dabi hadn’t participated in the battle, being they were more powerful than what the League had deemed necessary. Obviously, a mistake but Shigaraki was bound to be furious and when furious Shigaraki had a tendency to disintegrate things. If Kurogiri or Sensei couldn’t reel him in the results would be unfavorable. Beetle was also a curious little shit who couldn’t help but rub salt in a wound.

Cypress’ silence really should have been a tip towards the whole shanking-Shigaraki-in-the-throat thing.

Around eleven p.m. Izuku had transformed to Beetle and let the borderline villain take control. They had skipped to Kurogiri’s bar, Witch giving him tips on how not to set off an already temperamental Shigaraki and not be turned to dust.

Cypress was silent the entire way but he had been a presence for less than a day and it wasn’t hard to forget he existed.

Now they realized Cypress had been plotting Shigaraki’s demise. Fantasizing revenge and murder or at least injury.

Yikes again.

When the reached the bar Shigaraki hadn’t been in the main room, although you could tell he had been in the main room. There were stools missing and tables having mysteriously vanished. Presumably disintegrated but for all Beetle knew they could have been some fire involved because to Dabi this was an opportunity to set things ablaze. He couldn’t deny the appeal. Fire was pretty. He had based his whole look off it after all.
Speaking of Dabi, the villain was sprawled on the few remaining bar stools nursing a glass of whiskey beside Toga who had some bubbling pink…thing in a champagne flute. Heathens.

Kurogiri was polishing glasses behind the bar and had almost dropped the cup when Beetle had skipped through the door.

Beetle was still half-mummified although he had removed the bandages around his eyes and mouth, being they were the most defining features besides his signature hair. However, he felt it wasn’t his condition that shocked our dear mother void.

“What are you doing here?” Kurogiri demanded, more in shock than anger.

Dabi and Toga had both dramatically spun around in their stools. Dabi looking furious and Toga delighted.

“What are you doing here?” Dabi growled, blue fire flickering to life in his palm.

Yikes³

*Explain right now. Dabi’s too strong for me to take without weapons, especially if Toga and Kurogiri get involved.* Witch commanded, already looking for an exit in case things went downhill.

“Relax Dabi-kun! I didn’t even do anything! I kept my end of the bargain!” Beetle grinned, sweeping into the only remaining vacant stool, “Wasn’t even me. Plus, we didn’t actually cause the plan to fail. We told Tomura to stand down and he didn’t. He postponed the battle to try and kill me. It wasn’t even my fault All Might wasn’t there.”

Toga took a sip of her pink drink before giving him a flash of sharp teeth, “Who’s we?”

Beetle gave her returning smirk, “Would you like to meet them?”

Toga nodded furiously while Dabi still seemed trying to leash his anger and wrap his mind around
the fact that there was a we.

Despite Witch’s protests, he was suddenly shoved into the spotlight. The madness faded from Beetle’s eyes and was replaced with exhaustion that can only be achieved by being the only voice of reason among three other completely irrational people.

“Kurogiri from one mom to another please for the love of God pour me a drink. Not that horrible concoction Beetle gets. I don’t care what it is. Whatever you take when you’re tired of dealing with all of them,” he said gesturing towards Dabi and Toga.

Toga’s eyes were filled with stars and Dabi was whispering a soft ‘what the fuck’ under his breath as he stared body that had once possessed his friend.

Kurogiri mercifully complied, sending a glass of amber liquid Witch’s way. The warp villain seemed surprisingly fine with the fact that the villain he had come to know had pulled a complete one-eighty. Going from a Toga to a Kurogiri in the space of a second.

Witch drowned the glass in one gulp and gestured for another.

“Are you really Witch?” Toga demanded, practically bouncing with excitement. Dabi was now in a full-fledged existential crisis and was just staring at Witch with unblinking eyes.

“Unfortunately. I am also the only mildly sane one of the group and despite my warning to not reveal our true identities we did so majority rules I guess.” Witch sighed, rubbing his temples, trying to stave off an approaching headache. “I am also the one who will actually accurately answer your questions so ask away.”

Toga’s eyes lit up, “What are you? A quirk or something else?”

Kurogiri returned with Witch’s refill which he graciously accepted, “Dissociative Identity Disorder. Nothing to do with quirks or otherwise. Mental defense mechanism. Officially I’m called an alter for Izuku Midoriya whom you will probably meet shortly. We are an interesting case where we have entire control on when we switch. It’s really hard to accurately explain so just run with it.”

Dabi finally ripped himself from his shock and with a quizzical expression asked, “Wait so you’re
all the same person?"

“More or less. Entirely different ‘people’ but only one body to share with our soul purpose is to help Izuku. Perhaps in some…unorthodox ways but that is always our goal.”

Aww. You care for me. Izuku cooed, causing Witch to noticeably frown. Seeing Toga cock her head and Dabi to narrow his eyes he decided to explain, “We can talk to each other in our mind.”

“That is so cool!” Toga exclaimed, spinning the stool like a child.

Witch directed his attention to Kurogiri, “It is literally having Beetle plus two others in your head 24/7”

The warp villain visibly winced, “I pity you. Free feel to come by and get a free drink anytime.”

Witch gave him a grateful smile and downed his glass, “Thank you.”

We aren’t that bad :’(. Beetle pouted.

Yes, you are now shut up while I try and fix your problem so we don’t get incinerated.

“KUROGIRI!”

An earsplitting shout rattled the bottles of the bar as a more bedraggled than usual Shigaraki stormed into the bar. Whatever he wanted was quickly and obviously forgotten as he saw the fiery twin buns of Beetle.

They both snapped at the same time.

The outside observer they could see the shift as Witch lost control and Cypress was in his place. Feel the pure rage rippling off the previously exhausted but calm alter. It was jarring and everyone except Shigaraki were too stunned to do anything as Cypress smashed the empty glass and grabbed a jagged shard, oblivious to how it cut into his own palm.
Shigaraki was still enraged by the USJ failure and when once again faced with it’s supposed saboteur the still boiling anger was once again reignited and he charged Cypress with all intent to kill. The difference this time being that Cypress had all intentions of murder as well.

Internally Cypress was battling off Witch who was trying to regain control. Beetle and Izuku were half-heartedly trying to contribute but neither being physical fighters they both knew they didn’t stand much of a chance and would only get in the way.

Cypress and Shigaraki were engaged in a deadly dance of broken glass and dangerous touches. Toga and Dabi were ultimately too amused to do anything and Kurogiri couldn’t find a good opening.

Luckily, both Shigaraki and Cypress were holding their own, avoiding the other as to stop the catastrophic injury that would surely ensue if they got struck. Kurogiri was relentlessly trying to find a way to stop the brawl but if he warped between them there was the risk of accidentally dismembering one or both if it was misplaced.

Meanwhile, Witch was winning the mental clash but Cypress was putting up a decent fight, using his bat to his advantage as both a defensive and offensive weapon. Cypress was too far gone to actively care if he caused permanent harm but Witch had much more experience.

A swing of the bat that Witch barely ducked, the vigilante’s legs moving to try and sweep Cypress to the floor. The pink-haired alter jumped just in time to avoid his legs being knocked out from under him. He, however, wasn’t in time to avoid the fist to his face that left him with a bleeding nose. In retaliation, he moved to hit Witch in the head with enough force it would bash in his skull. Witch dodged the blow, opting to keep his head, but he didn’t have time for it to avoid him completely and it hit his shoulder with a sickening *pop*.

On anyone else, a dislocated shoulder would be debilitating and they would be rolling on the floor in agony or at least gritting their teeth. But Witch fought villains for a living and this was hardly the worst injury he had received. Far from it in fact. (Ah the perks of knowing a villain who had a healing quirk and making them indebted to you.) Insane pain tolerance was something all of the alters along with Izuku were all blessed with, due to their various…occupations and in Izuku’s case, upbringing. So, Witch didn’t even flinch when he knocked his shoulder back into place.

It is probably worth mentioning that any non-life threatening injures the alters sustained when they weren’t in control the physical body of Izuku would show, although they were more of illusions and didn’t actually hinder it. But it was probably still unnerving to see his shoulder be dislocated and then popped back into place with no help from a visible outside force. Dabi wrinkled his nose
in distaste and Toga sighed at the lack of blood.

Shigaraki didn’t seem at all put-off and took it more as an opportunity to murder Cypress. Trying and failing to wrap his hands around Cypress’ throat and turn it to dust. Of course, Cypress wasn’t all that keen on the idea and instead opted to run point blank into Shigaraki, causing them both to topple to the ground in a heap. It was honestly a miracle that Shigaraki didn’t touch anything valuable and even more of a miracle that Cypress was able to get his knees onto the back of the villain’s hands so they only succeeded in disintegrating the floorboards.

By now Cypress was grinning with enough bloodlust in his eyes it even made Dabi gulp and Kurogiri actually start to panic. How would he be able to save Tomura without hurting Cypress? If push came to shove he would kill Cypress (although he didn’t know which alter it was he was smart enough to realize it wasn’t Beetle or Witch and they had obviously lost control) and as Cypress raised the shard of broken glass—tinted pink with his blood where he clutched it too hard — and moved to very gruesomely stab it into Shigaraki’s exposed neck. Kurogiri readied to decapitate the out-of-control alter when a voice rang in over the speakers.

“Enough.”

None of the alters had ever met the elusive “Sensei” and Cypress was still new, but even he was aware of the man’s power and quirk(s). Hearing the voice for the first time caused him to pause for a nanosecond. It was that nanosecond that let Witch finally tackle Cypress and retake control.

Kurogiri visibly slumped with relief when he saw the same bone-weariness he associated with Witch overtake the pure rage of the mystery alter. Witch stepped off Shigaraki, who shakily got to his feet, trembling with fury and glaring hard enough to kill. Kurogiri recognized that would not end well and forcefully warped Shigaraki out of the area.

“Sorry about that. New avenger alter. Not too happy about being nearly killed earlier.” Witch said, panting with exertion as he discarded the bloodstained glass and examined the wound on his hand. Shallow, bandaging would be fine.

At some point, one of Beetle’s buns had fallen out of the pins that held it together and there was a small waterfall of fiery hair. Witch absentmindedly retied it as he focused on pinning a still raging Cypress down for good.

*Get ahold of yourself. Shigaraki’s an ally. This is why I didn’t want you to ever join us.* Witch snarled at the avenger alter who was being held down by Izuku and Beetle.
Cypress hissed. Actually hissed. Like a cat.

Beetle looked far too delighted to be healthy and Izuku just looked detached. Having deemed this as ‘not really his problem’.

They seemed to have it under control so he focused back on the physical world and placating the villains who just watched their pseudo leader be attacked.

“That was Cypress. He has…opinions. We just got him today and were not anticipating that show and we beg your forgiveness.” he was more directing his voice to Sensei who would probably be a lot more upset than Dabi and Toga. They were villains who thrived on chaos and didn’t particularly care for Shigaraki, he doubted they really cared but Sensei…

Yikes, times four.

There was a pregnant silence as Dabi just kinda…blinked and Toga flitted to her champagne glass and took a dainty sip before pausing and then just downing it. Witch was—literally—internally cursing Cypress for his lack of tact or really any logic past ‘murder the ones who’ve wronged you’. He had thought Beetle was bad but this was an entirely new level.

“…I would like to finally meet you in person young Beetle or Witch or whoever you are at the moment. I feel like it would be an educational experience for all of us.” Sensei finally said, causing Witch to have a small panic attack. Sensei could very well want to kill him or maybe he just wanted to talk. It could beneficial or benign for all he knew. Sensei’s voice betrayed absolutely nothing of his intentions and the range of possibilities was staggering to the point that it was horrifying.

“Kurogiri will be back momentarily and then he will take you to me so we can chat. That is if you would allow?”

There was hardly a choice. None at all really. He couldn’t turn it down and if he was being totally honest he didn’t want to turn it down. Beetle had been pestering Shigaraki for a meeting for months and now he finally got the chance.

*Please please please Witch-kun. I want to meet him soooo bad.* Beetle pleaded, almost going so far as removing his hands from the still volatile Cypress to beg.
As if he had the option to decline.

“I would be honored Sensei.”

—

Five minutes and six drinks later Kurogiri appeared and stretched his body into a decently sized doorway than Witch hesitantly stepped through. Not sure if it would truly lead to Sensei or his ultimate demise. Perhaps both.

The feeling was somewhat surreal. It lasted for less than a second but in that brief moment, all gravity was abandoned as the very air shifted and Witch was transported to an entirely different location.

There were no noticeable features in the room. Slate grey walls. No doors and no windows. Only a small plain set of chairs and a table in the center. A single bare lightbulb hanging from the ceiling casting a dim light. There was nothing to indicate where he was but also nothing that could obviously be used to kill him. That included Sensei, who was conspicuously missing from the claustrophobic meeting room. Kurogiri’s warp gate disappeared and he was trapped.

Alarm bells started ringing immediately. Something was wrong. Why wasn’t Sensei here? Did he have some sort of invisibility quirk? Was this just some ploy to kill him for what happened to Shigaraki?

Relax! He’s a villain! We all have a bit of a flare for dramatics! Beetle reassured with an insane smile. Cypress had been deemed stable enough to be released and was chain smoking in the corner. Simultaneously sulking and being manageably pissed that he hadn’t been able to kill Shigaraki but also slightly ashamed that he had caused so many problems and accomplished nothing.

Witch hesitantly took a seat in one of the plain folding chairs by the table. Mind wandering to the possible outcomes of this meeting. Was he upset that they had interfered with USJ? On the entire opposite end could this be a good thing? Was Sensei officially recruiting them?

Suddenly there was a man occupying the opposite seat. Witch’s reflexes had him tensing before he really realized what was happening. The man towered over him. He wore a plain white dress suit and suit jacket. His most defining feature was his face, however. Or perhaps the complete lack of it.
Witch knew better than to stare but in the brief glance, he caught he could see there was nothing but scar tissue. He had a mouth but everything else was just mangled flesh. There were no eyes, no nose, no… nothing. Tubes jutted out of his neck and jaw that were most likely connected to some sort of support system.

Beetle knew Sensei’s history. His leading of Japan in the shadows all those years ago and his extended lifespan. His fight with All Might that left him his current state and his extremely overpowered quirk along with his true name, All For One.

It was because of that knowledge that Witch didn’t dismiss him as not being dangerous and denouncing him as a pitiful mess. He was very well aware that Sensei could kill him with half a thought and no amount of training could change that. If even All Might couldn’t take him down then a quirkless teenager wouldn’t so much as make a dent.

Beetle seemed disappointed he wasn’t more imposing but in Witch’s opinion, it was just fine.

“Let me start this off by first apologizing for Shigaraki’s behavior at the USJ. He should have known better than try and kill a potential ally.” All For One said, folding his hands.

Witch blinked along with everyone besides Cypress who was ignoring everything. An apology? That was not what on the list of possible statements.

“Now to whom am I speaking? I’m assuming Witch being you don’t have Beetle’s signature eye gleam of madness and Cypress would be an unfavorable choice for this particular meeting. But I haven’t had the pleasure of meeting Izuku so I can’t be sure.”

It took every ounce of bravery from every fight with villains and brushes with the police to keep his voice from shaking when he responded to the most powerful man in Japan, “You are correct in your assumption. Izuku would probably be an unfavorable choice as well, being he has no sense of self-preservation and would sass you into tomorrow.”

Wow, even facing possible death you still find a way to bad talk me, Izuku said dryly, having taken post by Cypress to share cigarettes and was braiding his neon pink hair.

Stop smoking. It’s bad for your health. Witch chastised.
Says the man who just had eight glasses of bourbon.

Touché.

All For One laughed and Witch almost flinched, “How exactly do you fare with having them every moment then? I can barely deal with the three I have and I have Kurogiri to assist. Not that I’m complaining. I never did thank you for bringing Dabi and Toga to me all those months ago. It’s nice to have some people other than low-level thugs.”

Seeing as this was directed at Beetle he let his briefly take control but carefully monitored what he said, All For One’s reason for this meeting was not yet clear and they couldn’t run the risk of offending him.

“Thank you, sir! They would be powerful on their own but they shared similar ideals as you and Tomura so I figured it would be even better united!” Beetle said grinning with stars in his eyes.

All For One nodded, “It was the correct call.”

Beetle smiled one last time before Witch took over again.

“Forgive me sir but I feel the need to ask the nature of this meeting. I sincerely apologize for Cypress’ behavior and for undermining you with our affiliation to UA. We never meant to betray you and in all honesty, we technically didn’t.”

“Right down to business. I respect that. Let me first ease your fears by first that I have no intention of killing you. Consider yourself forgiven for all possible wrongdoings. The reason for this meeting is only to discuss ways we can both benefit from your multiple lives.”

Red flags so large Witch was worried All For One would be able to see them too immediately started waving, “With all due respect we like to keep each of our lives from interfering with the other. This is a special case where it can’t be avoided but we would like to continue each of our detachments. Mostly due to our different moral codes and how ambiguous our individual morals are overall.”
“I understand and I would like to honor that. All I am asking is that you cater to our needs in regards to taking down the hero industry and continuously supplying us with information on UA’s movements.” the villain said leaning forward.

No. Izuku’s voice rang in Witch’s head and in all honesty Witch was inclined to agree.

*Ask him what we get in return.* Beetle said, ever the businessman.

“We are not official members of the League and therefore will not betray UA without a price.”

If All For One had eyes Witch thought they probably would be twinkling, “I would have been disappointed if you didn’t demand to be paid. I have prepared a list that I feel would be suitable.”

Interest thorough piqued Witch leaned forward, “Oh?”

“Our word to try and spare whomever you wish and giving you Beetle’s quirk for real you won’t have to rely on Dabi to do your dirty work.”

*Holy shit.* Cypress said, head snapping up from his pity party.

*Holy shit.* Beetle and Izuku echoed.

Witch was too much in shock to do anything but stare, “D-does that quirk even truly exist? And you have it in your possession?”

All For One smiled, “Tomura recommended the idea for your fake quirk no? Let’s just say he got the basics from me.”

*I don’t see a reason why we shouldn’t take this.* Beetle said grinning, he had been gunning for getting a quirk for months and now it was more than just a random quirk. It was *his* quirk.

*Being quirkless is kind of our thing though. I want to be powerful without relying on a quirk.* Izuku interjected with uncertain eyes.
But the quirk isn’t really good for anything other than what I plan to use it for! The rest of you wouldn’t even have a chance or a need to use it! Beetle was practically begging now.

...plus it keeps the League from withholding Dabi in case we have a falling out. Witch said slowly, there was no denying from a logical standpoint this was a good deal, And you know we would have just kept making deals like the one we made for the USJ. This guarantees that we can keep the people we want safe. We already have more money than we know what to do with.

I say we take it. Cypress said with a nod to Witch.

I agree.

Izuku grumbled but seemed to come to the same conclusion.

Beetle looked overjoyed and no one could blame him.

“We accept your offer. However, once we receive the quirk we would like to make a contract using said quirk to guarantee the safety of the designated people.” Witch said they needed to make sure they stood by their word.

“Of course.”

Being it was technically Beetle’s quirk Witch didn’t want to risk being the one to receive it. Based on what happened with Shinso quirks may only effect one of them at a time and Witch didn’t want to even have a chance of being the only one with access. For this he let a very enthusiastic Beetle take over.

Gaining a quirk felt…weird. It was like the blood in his body was being replaced. For a moment it felt like nothing happened and then a sudden wave of dizziness hit so hard Beetle had to grab onto the table for support. His vision swam and he felt nauseous. It stayed like this for a few moments and then it disappeared. Like it had never happened at all.

Except, there was a feeling in his gut that was foreign and hot. For a second Witch panicked, what if All For One had tricked them and had given them a deadly quirk? Beetle wasn’t at all concerned
and proved Witch wrong by digging into the mysterious heat.

He could mentally picture the contract that the power behind the letters that would bring it to life. It was odd but not unwelcome. By now it had grafted to his subconscious and it was like another limb.

“I had a feeling you would ask to use that quirk on me so I brought along some paper for that contract.” All For One said, pulling out a stack of parchment and a pen.

Using the quirk was surprisingly easy. All he had to do was tap into that warmth and force the power from it into the paper, the letters glowing slightly with every written word.

The contract itself was straight forward and simple, it guaranteed the League does everything in their power to guarantee the safety of every student in Class 1-A (minus Katsuki and Mineta) along with Aizawa and Present Mic. Beetle had months of experience excluding loopholes from contracts much like this and specially wrote in space to add names if needed. He also outlined that fact that under no circumstances would All For One be able to take the quirk back unless asked. In return, Beetle would supply whatever information the League wanted on UA with no other cost. The penalty for both parties would be death if they failed to keep their end of the bargain. Fire was unreliable in this situation, being they couldn’t be sure of he had a fire resistance quirk.

All For One read it over once it was completed. He seemed to deem it good enough and signed his name with a flourish. Mentally Beetle felt the contract appear, telling him its status and terms. It was like a handcuff, tying him and Sensei together.

*Thank god. Lord does that save me a lot of bookkeeping!* Beetle said happily, *Although I will have to go and resign my other clients…*

“It’s been a pleasure doing business with you. I look forward to our future partnership. Kurogiri will take you back to the bar.” All For One nodded, gesturing at the open warp gate behind Beetle.

Bowing Beetle let a brilliant smile sneak onto his face as he melted into Kurogiri and retreated to the bar.

___

*Well, that went much better than expected!* Beetle said, skipping down the street. They had spent another four hours fully explaining everything to Dabi, Toga, Kurogiri, and a still furious
Cypress had apparently somewhat gotten over it. Still pissed but not actively trying to kill the villain so a step in the right direction. Witch had made him formally apologize and he did but only after he left Shigaraki cradling his nose and Cypress looking far too smug but ultimately satisfied.

Witch had placed him in time-out after that but being Kurogiri persuaded Shigaraki not to disintegrate his face and Dabi and Toga just looked overall overjoyed at Tomura’s plight Witch had begrudgingly let them meet the alter.

Turns out Cypress and Dabi were practically brothers and had clicked so completely it was almost scary. They had spent half an hour arguing if wrapping a bat in barbed wire was better than a metal bat that had been heated up. By the end for that conversation Witch was actually considering in investing in a doomsday bunker and Beetle casually interjecting ship comments with Toga.

Dabi had threatened to burn both of them and Cypress gave Beetle a death glare so potent the informant had squeaked and hid behind Witch.

Yikes.

Surprisingly Izuku and Shigaraki got on like a house on fire. Izuku geeking out with Tomura over the newest video game and fanboying over strategies. Izuku even got Shigaraki to play co-op with him which Kurogiri had looked impressed by.

Witch and Kurogiri probably hadn’t been the best roll-models for their respective wards. Opting to spend their time drinking far too much alcohol and complaining about how much their ‘kids’ were pains in their ass. Witch shared some embarrassing stories about Izuku and Beetle that had Izuku’s face a bright red and Beetle terrified of Witch’s power. Cypress had been howling in laughter, secretly glad he had only been on the roster for a day.

Witch should probably do something about their respective addictions. Izuku and Cypress apparently shared a love for cigarettes although Cypress sometimes substituted nicotine with bubblegum and Witch wasn’t anything but self-aware so he knew the alcohol thing was most likely an issue that should be addressed.

Yikes (that’s what five times now?)
Minus the near-death experience in the beginning. Izuku added to Beetle’s previous statement, earning a hard glare from both Witch and Cypress. Not that I’m complaining! he raised his hands defensively. It’s only that you didn’t succeed!


Nah. I like Tomura! Killing me is what I meant.

Everyone abruptly stopped walking and turned to stare at Izuku.

Are you going to throw yourself off another building? If you are we are obliged to forcefully take over and drag your ass to the nearest mental hospital. Witch said with a hard edge in his voice that marked it as his Mom™ voice. Apparently not drunk enough to not intervene with a suicide joke.

Izuku had the audacity to look shocked, Jesus no! Can’t a guy make one joke about killing himself without being put on a watchlist? Just look at our generation! We’re all doing it!

It would be fine if you A.) hadn’t actually tried to kill yourself and B.) if we hadn’t literally been created to stop that from happening.

Izuku grumbled but couldn’t disagree.

The next morning Izuku awoke to his alarm blasting Verka Serduchka from the 2007 Eurovision contest with a nasty hangover. He mentally cursed Witch for being irresponsible and drinking so much with Kurogiri.

That’s technically your guy’s fault for driving me to become an alcoholic. Witch mumbled, voice still muffled by sleep.

You’re so much more brass when your sleepy, Cypress whispered, more seductively than anyone —much less a demisexual— should ever know how to do, not a hairsbreadth away from his ear.
Witch woke up and backhanded him.

Yikes. Apparently, Cypress was still drunk.

—

An hour later a uselessly mummified Izuku rolled into UA, ready to initiate his new torturous training plans on his unknowing victims. Victims he had now saved from being actually tortured to death by the League in a very odd but worthwhile deal made with the most powerful man in Japan. It was safe to say last night’s video game altered haze of memories were starting to come back together and—

Holy shit.

Those were the only two words to describe what had happened. They were up a quirk and up in safety of his students. The only price was knowledge about UA that Beetle probably would have given anyway with no way to guarantee that the League would keep their deal. Now he knew for certain that none of his students would intentionally be injured.

He couldn’t deny the fact that he had been a bit swamped with guilt at only saving four people in the USJ attack. He hadn’t wanted to push his luck but he still felt like a piece of shit for leaving Kirishima (a literal ball of sunshine who deserved the world in Izuku’s humble opinion) and Shinsou (sassy mofo that he admittedly had started to like, especially after yesterday’s debacle) along with the rest of class 1-A to drown.

So now knowing that he had a quirk that ensured their safety was something of a relief.

Did he mention that Beetle wouldn’t shut up about his quirk?

Yeah, that was happening. Witch and a still tipsy Cypress had both helped him shove the rambling alter into a mental closet before promptly going back to sleep.

If you listened very carefully you could still hear Beetle fan— boying? girling? Beetle was using they/them right now so who knows— over his quirk but it was mostly silenced thank god.
It brought back flashbacks to his former hero studying days. He almost wished he hadn’t burnt those notebooks. If only so he could scoff at his bad notes and even worse drawings.

Almost was the key word in that statement.

Anyway, he had just walked into class when Aizawa told him to immediately turn around and go to Nedzu’s office because the mammal wanted to talk to him.

He and Nedzu met every Tuesday and Thursday for special classes on how to manipulate people and plan sophisticated attacks but today was Wednesday so this must be something important.

Of course, everything deemed ‘important’ to Nedzu ranged from a tea leaf in the bottom of his cup looking like the Jabberwocky to finding a villain hideout.

Didn’t really give him many parameters.

So there he was, sprawled on a chair in Nedzu’s office, teacup in hand and sunglasses slapped over his eyes indoors like an asshole.

“I suppose you’re wondering why I brought you here. Although if you didn’t already have an idea then I would be thoroughly disappointed.” the rat chuckled, taking a sip of lukewarm leaf juice.

Nedzu wasn’t wrong. Izuku had an idea. Multiple ideas in fact. Some great like ‘I’m retiring so you take the school as my protege’ to ‘I know you’re Beetle and you’re being arrested’. Everything in that range seemed highly improbable so there was really only one thing that stood out.

“The Sports Festival,” Izuku said, casually pouring his leaf juice into a flask for later use.

Nedzu clapped his paws, “Correct! Now you know that UA isn’t made of money and we do have a budget but it is a very large budget along plus we have pros who can manipulate basically anything!”
Izuku slowly nodded, he had an idea of where this was going and he loved it.

“And since we have such resources at our disposal we have decided to up our ambitions for this year's festival which will be held in two weeks.”

Izuku didn’t question whether it would be the best idea to hold the festival so soon after the USJ attack. Nope. He knew it was a political move, showing Shigaraki and the League along with the rest of Japan that they wouldn’t be cowed by some thugs.

“I’ve also decided that it would be a wonderful time for an exam for you!”

Izuku was really liking where this was going.

“As a test, you will be designing the second challenge of the first year festival along with narrating the event with Yamada and Aizawa!”

Izuku would swear there were literally stars in his eyes. He got to design an event for the Sports Festival. And he got to host it as well! This was better than getting a quirk! Fuck you Beetle and AFO this was so much better.

“You will have every resource at your disposal and you can consult anyone except me. I want to be surprised.” Nedzu finished, eyes twinkling with the same excitement.

“I won’t let you down Principal Nedzu! This festival will be one for the history books!”

They both gave each other a frighteningly sadistic smile.

For some reason every first year along with their teachers collectively gulped.

Yikes.
Things that are gonna happen in the next few chapters:

Beetle's quest to resign his clients
Witch's perpetual quest to fuck with the police
Individual training sessions with Izu (aka torture)
Cypress and the fight club(s)
Katsuki starts spiraling
Shotou questions Izuku's teaching methods
Kirishima in a sunshine boy who I will protect with my life
The binder containing Endeavors downfall
Izu hasn't gotten arrested lately, let's fix that
Beetle finally gets around to talking to Dragon (Hazashi Midoriya)

THIS NON BINARY HAS PLOT POINTS NOW

Also a poll: Should I make Katsuki trans? I just kinda love the idea

Another useless note: Proofing this chapter I realized how much I use "honestly and frankly" as sentence starters and I don't know why

Final one I promise: I may have used the word 'yikes' seven times too many but as our Lord and savior John Mulaney once said, "that lines never gets a laugh but once you write it, it stays in the act forever."
How late can a chapter be? The answer is very late. I blame the fact that I've been running a fever of 102 and am hallucinating.

This chapter is a mess and I didn't edit it at all so there's that.

It was a cold day in hell when Midoriya didn’t look like total exhausted garbage but today he looked like extra steaming hot rubbish. For a person covered head to toe in bandages how he radiated such a ridiculous level of trashiness was beyond Shinsou. However, now he was not only was a raging dumpster fire he was also a very happy dumpster fire.

Aizawa had just announced the annual UA Sports Festival which was met with some questions and resistance and Aizawa had reluctantly explained Nedzu’s reasoning. Midoriya was conspicuously absent but really who even knows what he does in his spare time. He had been introduced to them with a handcuff hanging off his wrist and saying he had only got the job because he had been arrested. Shinsou wouldn’t mark him actually being arrested for good off the possible list of reasons Midoriya wasn’t here.

Maybe the boy was simply not coming due to his injuries or maybe he had stolen a car and was running from the police. How he had even managed to land a job at UA was something that Shinsou could not for the life of him figure out. There was no denying that Midoriya was a genius but he was also a sassy little shit that somehow got away with breaking laws at school. In the few weeks Shinsou, he had seen him underage smoke and give a teacher alcohol. He was also willing to bet that there was other stuff he hadn’t seen or hadn’t noticed. Not to sound like Iida but it was unbecoming of a hero. Even if Midoriya had never claimed to be a hero he was still training them. Was it really the best idea for a criminal to be training them?

For the second time in the span of two days Midoriya physically kicked down the door to the class and interrupted Aizawa mid-sentence. Still wrapped like a mummy save for his eyes and mouth it looked like he had gotten punched due to the shadows under his eyes. Shinsou was no stranger to sleep-deprivation and insomnia and if he had to place bets Midoriya hadn’t gotten a decent night’s rest in weeks. Midoriya usually had bags under his eyes but this was ridiculous. He must use makeup or something to make it seem like he wasn’t a walking zombie or Recovery Girl had healed him and he simply hadn’t even tried to replenish his energy. How Midoriya was still functioning and also looking absolutely ecstatic to a near terrifying level was a mystery that Shinsou kinda wanted to know the secret to.
Something told him that Midoriya was probably responsible for that sense of foreboding that had settled over them a few minutes before. While Midoriya was a chaotic neutral to the extreme he was also an amazing trainer and a more than mildly terrifying one if the horror stories of his one-on-one training sessions were to be believed. Hell, he had made Todoroki faint and every person who had participated have to be sent to Recovery Girl for various reasons, most exhaustion and quirk strain, although there had been a few bruises and muscle sprains because apparently, Midoriya could also do physical training. There was also yesterday’s bad decision of brainwashing him and Midoriya’s threat of expulsion.

In hindsight, it definitely wasn’t the best idea to use his quirk on someone who was basically a teacher, no matter if he challenged him to a fight. A fight that Shinsou knew he couldn’t win unless he used his quirk and even then he had failed. Midoriya had somehow broken it with what seemed to be no struggle which has never happened before. Maybe if he had a quirk it would be plausible but he didn’t so that left Shinsou with a lot of questions he would kinda like to be answered.

It was worth knowing how he broke free so easily, if not only to satisfy his growing curiosity but also to know the weakness and try to combat against it. Without his quirk he was basically useless and now knowing that he had such a glaring vulnerability was a serious concern. He was almost scared to ask Midoriya about it but he needed to get over that and approach him about it. Maybe running the risk of condemning his soul to some of Midoriya’s training that even Midoriya had not-so-mistakenly called torture.

Now back to the present, Midoriya was grinning like a jackal and everyone recognized that smile as a threat to their safety and were all tensed and waiting for Midoriya to speak and bring whatever ax down on their heads. Aizawa was looking all too pleased with their discomfort and that was hardly surprising. Aizawa was basically the same as Midoriya but only slightly less sadistic and with the ability to take away their quirk. Not that Midoriya would have any problem taking a majority of them down otherwise if the USJ incident was any indication. The only people that might actually stand a chance were Todoroki and Bakugou. Shinsou might have counted himself in that category once upon a time but after yesterday’s events, he now stood less of a chance than Mineta.

“Alright, kids! I’m sure you have been informed of the UA Sports Festival!” Midoriya said, clapping his hands and you could feel the nerves of everyone rise, they had a decent idea of where this was going and while beneficial it would also be painful. “And I’m guessing by the look on your faces you know where I am going.”

Several people visibly swallowed and Midoriya’s smile somehow grew wider and more terrifying.

“I have taken the liberty to place some bets against Kan— or Blood King as you probably know him— the homeroom teacher of class 1-B. I said that every 1-A student would make it to the second round and seven-eighths of the students to make it to the final round would also be class 1-
Note to self: the teachers apparently made bets against each other about their students. The easy way Midoriya said it led Shinsou to believe this wasn’t the first time. The whole thing put some serious pressure on everyone else. That’s probably was what Midoriya was aiming for.

“And I’m not all too keen on losing fifty-thousand yen. So to ensure my—I mean your success I’ve decided to spend these next few weeks refining your physical strengths along with strategy. And you are all smart enough to know what that means.” he wiggled his eyebrows and everyone winced, waiting for the ax to drop, “I’ve spent around four hours writing some specialized training exercises that will probably leave you all very hurt in both body and mind but hey! I’ll win my bet and take you all out to lunch.” Midoriya’s eyes were alight with mischief and malevolence as he told them of their impending doom.

Multiple people issued small gasps at how much he had bet on them. Even Shinsou was mildly impressed, for someone who dressed like they were homeless Midoriya wasn’t stupid enough to bet money he didn’t have. That meant he has fifty-thousand yen stored somewhere and he just didn’t use it to buy decent clothing. Where would he even get so much money? Did he steal it? Shinsou honestly wouldn’t put it past him and he couldn’t deny there was some level of humor in paying a pro-hero in stolen money.

More students seemed much more concerned about whatever hellish training Midoriya would bestow upon them. Four hours didn’t seem like much but who knows what Midoriya could come up with.

“So we are going to start right now. Last time it took you ten minutes to get ready and changed and I expect it to go down to seven or else no break! Meet me at Ground Alpha!” And then Midoriya breezed out of the room and there was a beat of stunned silence before everyone was practically tripping over each other to get to the locker rooms.

Aizawa had to give it to Midoriya. The little brat could galvanize the students into action. His entrance was dramatic and his speech even more so. His threat of no rest from his training got the students outside in record time. Five minutes and forty-seven seconds. Impressive.

Although Aizawa wasn’t sure it was good that they wanted to face the experience so quickly. If they knew what Midoriya had in store they definitely would have jumped ship.
Problem Child had explained the exercise to him last night. It was around four a.m. when he had gotten a call and learned that insomnia was the great equalizer. Midoriya had been talking rapid fire and seemed slightly drunk but Aizawa got the basic idea. It was ingenious and slightly sadistic. Everything he ever wanted in an exercise. Of course, he accepted the brats offer to have him help out.

Ground Alpha was a jungle, one of the smallest training areas but perhaps one of the hardest to navigate. All the trees were artificial and equipped with cameras, microphones, and speakers that liked back to the observation room. The teachers could monitor the students from almost any angle which was good, being the thick foliage allowed little light to enter and the sheer number of trees, roots, and vines made in nearly impossible to see a student unless they were directly in front of the camera. Nedzu had also somehow gotten it so the vegetation could be moved remotely from the observation room to create new obstacles or lower the light level even further. Aizawa didn’t know how the Principal had done it but he had long stopped asking questions.

Ground Alpha was usually used to practice stealth missions and villain chases for the older students. Aizawa had never used it with first-years but Midoriya was already breaking much of his old precedents.

Midoriya was looking thoroughly pleased with himself as he explained his plan for this particular exercise to a suspicious class 1-A. This was basically an exercise of teamwork and combat. Midoriya was putting them in the jungle in four groups of five each. Their goal was to make it to the center of the jungle, however, only one group could actually win the exercise. The objective was to retrieve the fake hostage and the first group to do that would get amnesty from the next exercise. It was that final reward that insured the groups battling it out to near death.

The group listings were predetermined and are were as follows:

Group A: Kirishima, Mina, Sero, Kaminari, and Bakugou

Group B: Jirou, Yaoyorozu, Todoroki, Aoyama, and Ojiro

Group C: Mineta, Koda, Sato, Hagakure, and Tokoyami

Group D: Shinsou, Asui, Uraraka, Iida, and Shoji
Aizawa noted how Midoriya had played into the cliques and friend groups of the class. It wasn’t the best tactic if he was being honest. The students should be exposed to people they don’t get along with. They might be forced to work with people they aren’t comfortable with in the Sports Festival.

The Festival was obviously what this was about. Midoriya was going everything in his power to simultaneously get the students to help each other through the two rounds so he could win his bet against Kan while also preparing them to potentially battle against each other in the final round. Aizawa was all in favor of training them specifically for the Festival being he had made the same bet as Midoriya but while this exercise was amazing multitasking the grouping was off.

That’s what Aizawa would have thought if Midoriya hadn’t explained what he was actually doing.

He believed Midoriya’s exact words were, “I was too lazy to make realistic teams for them only to be immediately trashed.”

The class was suspicious. Rightfully suspicious actually. This seemed awfully tame for all of Midoriya’s posturing. Aizawa could barely contain the sly smile that threatened to sneak onto his lips at their discomfort. A discomfort that would only grow and morph into panic as the exercises progressed and its true nature was revealed.

With a start, Aizawa realized he was starting to sound like Nedzu. He involuntarily shivered. Nedzu was starting to rub off on Midoriya and Midoriya was starting to rub off on Shouta.

——

Izuku still felt like shit but torturing the students were making his hangover bearable. Nedzu’s announcement of his test along with Dadzawa’s agreement to the help in today’s exercise was also really helping push the hangover to the back of his mind. By the back of his mind, he meant Witch who had done this to them in the first place.

Aizawa seemed absolutely delighted at his plan for this exercise and Witch, Beetle, and Cypress were all in agreement that this was going to be hilarious.

*I will once again I have to do the heavy lifting.* Witch half-heartily complained, as much as he denied it he loved this exercise and he was only stirring the pot.

*Cypress, you promise to not ballistic on Kacchan the first time we make contact?* Izuku inquired,
he didn’t want another incident like last night where he had nearly gotten disintegrated.

Yes, hun. I won’t lose it. Another time, another day. Cypress replied, words coated in disappointment and fake sugar.

Beetle groaned, Can we please get going? I want to watch this show!

Calm your tits. We’re going. Cypress playfully snapped, he wanted this moving just as much as Beetle but he was obviously a lot more subtle about it.

Izuku grinned, it was due time they began. Everyone was in position and they just needed his go. Aizawa was right next to him in the viewing room, surrounded by monitors fixed on the groups. Kacchan was arguing with Kaminari about something most likely very stupid and as entertaining as it was to watch his mortal enemy scream about nothing; betraying the entire student body seemed much more appealing.

“All right.” Izuku’s voice rang over speakers stationed in the jungle, and the groups tensed, “One. Two. Three. You may begin!”. Izuku might as well have had a gun to fire into the air for how fast the teams bolted into the fake jungle. Predictably enough Iida’s, Todoroki’s and Tokoyami’s group didn’t move to even try and locate or engage the other teams. They just dead sprinted into what they thought was the center of the jungle where the ‘hostage’ was supposedly located.

Kacchan’s group also headed for the middle but much more slowly, they were constantly scanning their surroundings to try and spot any other teams that they could assault and eliminate.

I wonder how they think people can be eliminated here, Witch wondered aloud. That was a fair point, Izuku had purposefully left out any details about how you could be eliminated.

Izuku turned to Aizawa who was watching the screens intently, “Three more minutes.”

Aizawa nodded and gave the tiniest smirk.

Those three minutes seemed like an eternity. They dragged on forever and Izuku was seriously considering just moving it up. The groups had at some point realized that they didn’t actually know what direction they were moving in, having to dodge all of the giant trunks of the trees and the low visibility was slowly getting them off course. No one had run into each other yet which
was mildly surprising. Ground Alpha wasn’t even that big. It almost took skill not to intersect.

Finally, after what felt like years the clock finally hit the three-minute mark and he and Aizawa
exited the monitor room but not before Izuku hit a switch and a countdown of five minutes started.
It probably wouldn’t take that long but better to be safe than sorry.

“I’ll get Todoroki and you get Kacchan.” Izuku reconfirmed with Aizawa gave a terrifying smile
once they were right outside the corpse of trees and vines.

“Meet you back here.”

—

Something was wrong here. This was a difficult activity sure, but it wasn’t absolutely hellish. As
much as Shinsou didn’t want to admit it this was too easy. For any other teacher, this would be
standard if not challenging but for Midoriya this was child’s play.

Shinsou’s mind was racing with possibilities for what exactly Midoriya was actually getting at
here. The teams were unbalanced, they were grouped with people they were already friends with
and it posed no laborious work to get along. Midoriya was much more of a person to lump
Bakugou, Todoroki, Shinsou, and Iida together and sit back and watch the fireworks under the
guise of ‘making them learn how to work with people you don’t like’.

At some point, they had gotten turned around and didn’t quite know which direction they were
running. The trees had been slowly destroying their set path to the center and for all, they knew
they were going back to where they started.

Perpetually tense Shinsou was constantly vigilant, looking for any sneaky traps or surprises set by
Midoriya. Behind him he felt everyone else do the same, sending fleeting glances to the thick
vegetation above their heads that only allowed sickly beams of light to illuminate the forest. There
were plenty of places to put some devious booby trap or enemy. Everything was coated in shadows
and they couldn’t see more than five trees away in any direction.

Although after a while of nothing Shinsou began to wonder if Midoriya had been honest and this
was simply about retrieving a hostage from the middle of the jungle before the other teams. Maybe
he was going for some kind of reverse-phycology tactic to make them jumpy.
And then those few shafts of light disappeared and everything was pitch-black. Somewhere around him, he heard Uraraka gasp in surprise as their entire party froze. None of them could see even see their hands but they were all in fighting stances. They ran a good risk of accidentally attacking each other so they waited to see or hear what had caused everything to be doused in darkness.

They stood like marble statues in the gloom, waiting for whatever threat Midoriya had likely devised to be revealed. This was obviously Midoriya’s work. Shinsou had been right to think it was too simple.

For maybe five minutes they waited stock-still. Their ears and eyes straining to pick up anything but to no avail.

They all jumped when Midoriya’s voice crackled over the speakers, highly amused and dangerous, “Dearest Class 1-A! You have been lied to. There was never a hostage or even anything in the center of this jungle. The real exercise is about to begin!”

There was a distant explosion and they flinched. What was happening with Bakugou?

“New objective! Don’t get taken out of the field of play! You have to stay in play for thirty minutes or be the last person to get taken out.”

Alarm bells started sounding in Shinsou’s mind. This sounded like a bruise waiting to happen.

“Now whom will be tracking you down to eliminate you? Why your dear teachers of course!”

Midoriya sure had a flair for the dramatics but that didn’t stop the meaning of the words hitting home. Aizawa and Midoriya were the people they were running from? This would not end well.

“But wait! There’s more! Two against twenty hardly seems fair and to those who were previously on teams with Todoroki and Bakugou you probably are now figuring out what happened to them.”

He had to be joking.

“That’s right kids! Our dear Explodo Boi and Elsa have been recruited and now are also hunting
you. If you are the last one standing then you *bravo* you get lunch and don’t have to participate in any other activity of your choice. You are eliminated if you are incapacitated, unconscious, or somehow have left Ground Alpha. Quitting isn’t an option because I want to win my bet against Kan and if you quit there goes my money.”

For not the first time Shinsou wondered if Midoriya was a villain in disguise. This could not be legal. Then again they had set them on each other the second day of classes and Shinsou had almost been exploded.

“The lights will not be returning but to give you guys a bit of an advantage the hunters will be wearing glow sticks so you can see us. Oh! If you take out Kacchan you get lunch on me and if you take out me or Aizawa you automatically win. Beat Todoroki and you get to sit out the next activity.”

In his peripheral vision, he saw a dull pink glow and he slowly turned to see a faint outline stalking through the trees. Thankfully, it didn’t look like it saw them and judging by their body type it looked to me Midoriya if the slightly glowing messy bun was any indication.

Shinsou tracked his movements, Midoriya moving like a neon wraith through the jungle, feet not making a single sound. If it wasn’t for the glow sticks Shinsou wouldn’t even know he was there.

Beside him, his previous teammates were barely breathing, afraid to even make a sound and alert the stalking predator of their presence.

At what point did this turn into a horror game?

Shinsou’s heart was jackhammering in his chest nonetheless, why he was so nervous he didn’t even know. He wasn’t scared of getting the shit beat out of him and he highly doubted that Midoriya would actually seriously hurt them. Maybe it was the ambiance and being so vulnerable that got to him. Like hide-and-seek, where no matter what you are always scared of being found.

And then the pinkish glow of Midoriya was gone and they all breathed a sigh of relief. He had passed them and now they just had to wait it out. Theoretically, if they just hid well enough they would be fine.

But theoretically didn’t get you anywhere when there is suddenly something very pink dropping from the treetops and crashing into Shoji.
The giant went toppling to the ground, the weight of someone falling on him shoving him into the dirt. For a moment everyone was too stunned to process what was happening and then they understood the fuchsia light belonged to Midoriya; who had somehow scaled the trees and silently made their way to their group, focusing on taking out their heaviest hitter which he had done easily.

Shoji was out. Having received a blow to the head that left him unconscious. Shinsou briefly debated holding his ground and trying to take Midoriya out. If he was lucky maybe he could even get Midoriya to reply to him so he could be brainwashed but that idea was quickly dismissed, being his quirk had already proven ineffective against the quirkless boy. So that left eliminating him out with physical skills but Shinsou had only just begun classes on hand-to-hand and the trash gremlin was on a level to rival Aizawa. His hero complex suddenly reared its head and left Shinsou with the thought of just keeping Midoriya occupied so his classmates could run and escape.

He immediately banished the idea, the Sport’s Festival was on the horizon and he wanted to win it. If only to prove that he deserved to be a hero and wasn’t a villain like everyone had told him his entire life. To win he couldn’t sacrifice himself at the first threat.

What Midoriya was trying to accomplish here was still foggy, was he trying to get them to work together so they could get past the first two rounds? Or was he trying to tell them to fend for themselves? Shinsou soon realized it didn’t matter. Right now he needed to be concerned about not getting knocked unconscious and surviving this encounter.

At the current moment, their devious teacher was still perched on Shoji, no doubt hearing for the other students so he could eliminate them. The lights on Midoriya were dim at best, casting a hazy neon glow just bright enough to show Shoji on the ground. One of the glow sticks encircled Midoriya’s head like a halo and his hands, ankles, and neck were shackled with the cheap phosphorus sticks.

For a hot second, Shinsou considered Midoriya to not be a sassy pain in the ass barely younger than Shinsou himself that had by some odd stroke of luck landed himself being Nedzu’s personal student. He was never stupid enough to write him off as anything less than a threat but he had never considered him anything other than an almost absurdly smart and powerful hot mess that would probably land themselves in juvie. He was still pretty sure Midoriya would get his ass in jail but for the first time, Midoriya didn’t look like a garbage fire.

At some point, he had shed his bandages (Recovery Girl would scold him later for it) and his constantly erratic hair had been tied into an equally erratic bun that somehow made him look more professional. The soft coral lighting made his freckles seem to glow like tiny stars and his forever present aviator jacket had color spilling from its worn sleeves. Did Shinsou mention that Midoriya was wearing sunglasses? Yeah, Midoriya was wearing his sunglasses in near complete darkness. Although at the angle Shinsou was at he could see the tiniest glint of Midoriya’s emerald eyes and that’s what made him realize why his perception of the gremlin had shifted.
Instead of his usual exhaustion and glint of comical ingenious that often made him slightly intimidating they were now flat and hard, shining with cold calculations and careful consideration. They were the eyes of a predator and that sent a shiver down Shinsou’s spine. They weren’t necessarily malicious but he would sooner find them on a villain than a hero. In that instant, Midoriya reminded him of a more morally grey Aizawa and that thought alone was enough to make him abandon his previous assumption of Midoriya just being an incredibly gifted loose cannon.

He had seen him plow through the villains just as well as everybody else and that was enough to make Midoriya earn his respect and admiration but those attacks had been sloppy, focusing more on speed than actually keeping the enemy down. Shinsou wondered if Midoriya had worn this same look then. He doubted it, this look was of complete and meticulous destruction, it left no room for anyone to believe that a fight wouldn’t end with all of their weaknesses exploited and them entirely powerless to return and battle him later.

At that moment Shinsou was glad that Midoriya was on the side of the heroes. With his analytical skills and his sheer fighting capabilities and in time, he might be able to take down heroes. Perhaps he could now. For the first time, Shinsou was legitimately scared of Nedzu’s personal student.

He was suddenly pulled out of his observations by Midoriya unexpectedly unfreezing. In an entirely unnecessary backflip off Shoji’s back, he was instantaneously centered in the semi-circle consisting of Asui, Iida, Uraraka, and Shinsou. Whether it was by accident or purposefully Midoriya had landed almost perfectly in the middle of their petrified bodies.

There were an elastic sticking sound and a rustle of leaves along with a groaning tree branch that signified Asui disappearing into the foliage. Midoriya must have heard her but he made no move to follow, instead focusing his efforts on what he correctly assumed was the remainders of Group D.

Shinsou took Asui’s departure at face value.

A signal to run.

—

_Witch-kun have you ever thought about becoming a villain?_ Beetle inquired while intricately braiding Cypress’ hair. At some point, Cypress’ hair had been silently elected the unofficial thing to always play with.
Witch was thoroughly preoccupied chasing down Iida and didn’t reply.

_I mean you’re already a wanted criminal. With your skills, you could easily rise the ranks and become revered in the villain underground!_ Beetle had somehow materialized various poisonous flowers and was weaving them into Cypress’ hot pink locks.

_Uh no. Having one villain already interferes with my moral code enough._ Izuku remarked, staring into a compact mirror and trying to give himself wings sharp enough to skin a man.

_Beetle sweetie, have you considered getting a weapon?_ Beetle stared at Cypress confused, _By weapon I mean flame-thrower._

Beetle’s eyes lit up and an exuberant grin broke out over his features. _Holy Shit! That is such a wonderful idea Cypress-kun! I’m going to get one as soon as humanly possible! I don’t want my quirk doing all the work for me! That sounds so FUN!!_

Izuku groaned. _Please no, that sounds like a mistake._

_Beetle you are not getting a flamethrower._ Witch had apparently been monitoring the conversation and at the first mention of giving the resident pyromaniac access to something that could literally throw flames his mom instincts and common sense had kicked in.

Beetle stuck his tongue out, _Too bad! It’s happening!_

Witch glared but had to return his attention to dodging trees and roots so couldn’t push the topic more.

_Cypress-kun we need to get you something to do._ Beetle had now turned to make a flower crown now that Cypress’ impressive plait was completed, _I mean I have my information business, Witch has his vigilantism, Izu has UA. You need a responsibility._

_Preferably something that keeps you from murdering anyone that is even the tiniest threat to me._ Izuku commented, having moved on to choosing lipstick shades.
Cypress considered for a few moments, *How about a fight club?*

Izuku sputtered, *A what?*

*A fight club.* Cypress repeated earnestly, scooting towards Izuku and picking up his discarded eyeliner and began trying to outdo Izu in terms of intense wings.

*Like... participate in one?* his makeup forgotten Izuku was now just staring at Cypress with a look of utter disbelief.

*Ew no. Have you seen the current fight clubs? Yikes, they are bad. Unsanitary and barbaric. I’m talking about starting one.*

Beetle clapped their hands, grinning like a maniac. That sounded mutually beneficial to everyone not to mention fun, *I love it! I have the contacts needed to get it started up and if I remember correctly someone traded me an empty warehouse for some information of his estranged wife or something a few months back.*

Cypress had finished one eye and turned to Beetle with a sharp smile, *Sounds great. Tour tonight?*

Witch’s Mom™ senses must have been tingling because turned his attention away from Iida to confront the brewing concoction of bad decisions, *No you are not starting a fight club. We already have our plate full with Endeavor, my vigilantism, Beetle’s overall drama, your dad coming back, and UA. We cannot take on something else.*

Beetle and Cypress simultaneously gave him unamused stares.

*It is also not to mention illegal!*

*Says you. It’s literally your primary life goal to fuck with the police.* Cypress monotonued, having turned his attention back to finishing his eyeliner.
Actually, this might not be a bad idea. Izuku said, realizing the benefits of this possible arrangement.

That only reaffirmed the fact that this was a bad idea.

I mean it’s a good outlet for Cypress. It might keep his anger from boiling over and murdering Kacchan in class if he looks at me funny. Izuku was now fully sold on the idea. It sounded like chaos and therefore he was all for it.

Witch couldn’t deny that was true but still.

He looked out to the three expectant faces and at that moment knew there was no fighting them on this. They were all probably running ideas and calculations and once it got to this point Witch’s sanity would be useless against their sheer stubbornness.

Fine. But Cypress is the one doing all of this. I have nothing to do with it.

Beetle started grinning like the Cheshire Cat and Izuku pulled out a pad of paper and started writing messy notes, mumbling under his breath. Cypress just went back to doing his eyeliner with a smug look.

Witch made an outraged sound that somehow conveyed his opinion on the matter perfectly and went back to tracking and eliminating class 1-A, opting to use them as an outlet to distract himself from being forced to bear witness to the others horrible decisions and go along with them.

—

It took them longer than they thought to knock all of class 1-A unconscious. They had almost run out of time. Turns out Iida could still run in the darkness and it had only been a convenient ice slip-n-slid created by Todoroki that had stopped his mad dash. Witch just couldn’t keep up with someone’s quirk was speed and if Todoroki hadn’t stopped Iida they would have run out of time and Iida would have escaped.

Tokoyami had also proven a problem, this quirk’s strength magnified in the complete darkness. Thank god everyone besides Izuku had a quirk that could directly combat that. Kacchan had his explosions that generated light and Aizawa who could eliminate his quirk entirely. Todoroki could
have also taken him if he stopped his idiotic boycott on his power and used his fire.

The four hunters had ended up accidentally self-assigning themselves teams to take down. Izuku had taken Team D, Aizawa Team C, Todoroki Team B, and Kacchan Team A. Izuku may have overestimated Todoroki and Kacchan’s abilities and once Aizawa was done with Team C twelve minutes in he had gone to assist his students. He had gone to Kacchan first and although the stubborn blond would never admit it he needed help. He couldn’t take down Kirishima, Mina, Sero, and Kaminari by himself. In fact, he had only succeeded in taking down Sero because he had accidentally swung himself into a tree. Aizawa had stepped in and assisted in Kirishima being tied to a tree with his capture weapon, Kaminari maxing out and effectively frying his own brain, and Mina just straight up being knocked in the head.

Todoroki had been forced to hold his own against Yaoyorozu, Ojiro, Jirou, and Aoyama. Yaoyorozu had produced floodlights and eliminating the entire ‘fighting in darkness’ aspect right off the bat. Aoyama didn’t have enough power in his naval laser to keep consistently blasting down the shields of ice Todoroki kept conjuring and had been hunched over with a nasty stomachache by the time Witch arrived to try and help although it wasn’t needed. Todoroki had sent out and ice wave that had frozen all of them inside miniature glaciers. Witch wasn’t stupid and knew they would probably get frostbite if he didn’t let them out so he asked Todoroki to release them and declared them eliminated.

There were still a few stray students who had avoided them until then but once the four of them were directly looking they didn’t make it far. Iida and Tokoyami were predictable enough, Asui too. However, Shinsou had been a surprising outlier. Granted once he was tracked down he didn’t survive a minute but the fact that he had escaped at all was either an indicator Witch was slipping up or Shinsou had some stealth skills hidden under those eye-bags and Einstein hair.

Recovery Girl had frowned and given both Izuku and Aizawa a thoroughly terrifying scolding when they brought her to the field to heal the possible concussions and other various minor injuries.

Sure it probably wasn’t the safest activity, but it was still fun and effective.

Izuku was going to review the footage for hours later, analyzing how the class performed under nerve-wracking situations and in the dark. It was also good practice for them to go up against Kacchan and Todoroki, two of their stronger classmates that they would probably have to directly face in the Festival. Not that he didn’t want Kacchan and Todoroki to win.

Well, he didn’t want Kacchan to win but Todoroki he didn’t care about. He could win and Izuku wouldn’t have any qualms about it. He was entirely impartial.
Liar. Beetle giggle whispered in his ear.

Excuse you?

Cypress was sprawled on the floor and staring up and nothing, cigarette hanging off his lips as he rolled over so he was staring at Izuku from his stomach, *I have been here around two days and even I can tell you have a crush on Zuko and you would very much like for him to win.*

Izuku felt heat rise to his cheeks as he stuttered, *I- I do not.*

Cypress raised a single pink eyebrow, *Are you telling me that you weren’t planning on asking him on a real date after the destroy Endeavor date?*

Now Izuku was panicking, he *did not* have a crush on Todoroki and *was not* planning on asking him on a date.

*I have no romantic compass but even I can see that you like him.* Witch chimed in and Izuku felt thoroughly betrayed.

*I came here to have a good time and am honestly feeling so attacked right now.*

Cypress snorted and Beetle just wiggled his eyebrows suggestively.

*We won’t get in your way of getting yourself a man Izu-kun! He’s cute so I approve <3.*

Izu was now starting to doubt his own mind, what if he *did* have a crush on Todoroki. He wasn’t opposed to being his boyfriend and now that he thought about it it actually sounded pretty appealing. Being nestled against the bi-colored boy and watching a movie. Was his left side warming than his right side? Were his hands calloused or soft? His lips?

Time the fuck out.

How did he start on this spiral? *Why* was he thinking about that? It was *not* what he wanted to be
doing but here he was wondering what it would be like to kiss the bundle of daddy issues named Shouto Todoroki.

Fuck, he whispered softly but not soft enough to escape Beetle’s ears and they started cackling.

I knew it! I knew it! Izu has a boyfriend! he sang, skipping in circles.

I do not have a boyfriend, Izu hissed.

Yet. Cypress took a long drag of his cigarette but despite the plume of smoke, you could still see him smirking.

Yet. Izuku amended, now that he acknowledged his feelings he wasn’t just going to let them simmer. They would be acted on with no forethought and hopefully, he would score himself a boyfriend. The first step was getting Todoroki to like him back, he would start on that endeavor (ha get it endeavor) in their next training session. Todoroki was the one he personally trained with most often so if everything went according to plan that would be tomorrow.

How are you going to break down those ice cold walls of his? Witch logically asked, trying to feign indifference but he was just as curious and invested in this as Cypress and Beetle.

I mean, I kinda already have. He’s much more open with me during our training sessions then he is with anyone else in the class. Maybe it’s me knowing his tragic backstory or knowing Rei. Or maybe he just trusts me for some reason. Izuku was almost giddy now, the prospect of getting a romantic partner sounding nicer by the moment.

Go get him, tiger! Beetle was almost more excited than Izuku but that was probably because he just loved drama and this was very dramatic.

Cypress was interested but right now wasn’t fantasizing about a boy. Right now he was fantasizing about his fight club to be. He had been bouncing ideas off Beetle and Izu the entirety of the exercise and his mind was practically buzzing. Good luck.

Should I remind you that you are still teaching a class and it looks like you have been staring off into space for five minutes? Witch said, realizing that they probably looked crazy.
Oh shit right. Izuku broke off and went to go over the results of the exercise and kidnap a few students for individual training. Unfortunately, none of them being Todoroki.

So to go over our basic to-do-list for the next few days is, resign all of Beetle’s clients, go over the finishing touches for Endeavor’s doom plan, plan an event for the Sport’s Festival, train the students, apparently start up a fight club, and now make Todoroki fall in love with us? Witch checked off the points on his fingers, realizing just how many responsibilities they had taken on.

There are probably be a few more that we forgot about. Beetle oh so helpfully responded with a very unassuring grin.

Wonderful.

Chapter End Notes

Come yell at me about my shitty writing on my discord server:

Yikes
“Cypress sweetie I have a question for you”, Beetle was pouring over a list of villains and petty thugs he had to resign as soon as possible with his new quirk. He had undone his hair and instead of the Sailor Moon buns it cascaded in over his back and was held out of his eyes with black heart and crossbones pins that just screamed Beetle.

Cypress cast him a skeptical gaze from where he was sitting crosslegged, doodling on his bat with a sharpie cap in his mouth. He had been working on turning his All Might bat into a work of art and he was shockingly successful. Half of it was now covered in intertwining birds, flowers, and even a few scrawls of poetry. How such a violent and angry and seemingly impatient alter could stand to spend hours over a single branch of a sakura tree and not chuck it across the room when he made the wrong pen stroke was absolutely baffling but here he was; keeping a level head as he drew over the All Might insignia and blocky red, white, and blue script. “Yes?”

“How exactly are you shorter than we are? We are the same person but yet you are an absolute midget. An even five feet. The rest of us are five two.” Beetle asked this so calmly with his head cocked to the side Izuku began to wonder if his alters were on something. Beetle was being uncharacteristically sane and Cypress hadn’t hit anyone in over two hours.

Then again Beetle had just asked the monster why he was short so he was probably just as insane as normal. Just more focused.

And it turns out Cypress hadn’t hit anyone in over two hours because no one had provoked him and now he had been provoked. His oversaturated blue eyes flashed with rage and killing intent, he spit out the Sharpie cap and stalked over to Beetle, bat in hand and a feral smile on his lips. How someone so tiny could be so intimidating and angry was almost a feat in itself. Witch just watched coolly from the sidelines, height was a sensitive topic for all of them and he offered no remorse for anyone that mentioned it.

Cypress’ smile was all teeth and was stretched too far to be natural, “I am five feet and three eights of an inch. Not an even five feet and frankly I think I’m shorter because it just means I’m closer to hell and Satan needs to keep track of all his demons.”

No one necessarily doubted that, Cypress could very well be a demon so the logic was sound. They all expected the statement to be punctuated by a bat to the head, shoulder, or gut and in their minds, it would be well deserved.
That is what they expected and what they received. Beetle yelped and doubled over, clutching his stomach as the wind was knocked out of him and a few ribs were probably bruised. What they weren’t expecting was Cypress to materialize a knife from somewhere that they couldn’t track, push Beetle to the floor, and place it directly over Beetle’s sternum, poised to drive home. He put enough pressure on the blade that it broke the skin and a tiny spot of blood blossomed on Beetle’s light grey sweater.

None of them had seen Cypress draw the thin and frankly beautiful dagger and as far as Izuku was aware the alters couldn’t spontaneously create things so that meant Cypress had a sheath for it somewhere on his body. Where exactly that was he couldn’t tell, there weren’t many options with his exposed forearms and hole-ridden jeans. Then again Izuku didn’t know where Cypress had gotten his bat or his sharpie. Or Beetle his papers. Or the odious amounts of makeup and random accessories they always had on hand. Maybe they could spontaneously create things.

Now that he thought about it there was a lot of weird plot-holes and questions about the alters. Like how they all had a different level of proficiency in different things. Factually Witch should not be nearly as good at hand-to-hand combat as he was. It was just impossible. They had technically only been doing lessons for half a year. He simply should not be able to take on dozens of villains and emerge victorious. Sure he couldn’t take the Nomu by All Might shouldn’t be able to take the Nomu. It was also weird how the alter’s injuries could be visually transferred to Izuku’s body. And how they could shift control so seamlessly. None of that were typical for DID. In fact, the only thing that resembled DID was the fact that there were multiple people living in his head.

He could have a nervous breakdown about that later. Right now none of that mattered because he didn’t know what happened if an alter was to die and he wasn’t all too keen on finding out.

Luckily, Witch was already on the scene, slowly approaching Cypress from behind and with a masterful sweep of his legs he had Cypress on the ground, neon hair fanning out on the floor as he just sighed dejected, “Ow.”

“Where did you even get this?” Witch demanded, plucking the knife from Cypress’ hand and stashing it somewhere in his robes.

Cypress made no move to sit up and just stared at the ceiling and grinned, although he didn’t reply.

“Follow up question, how many knives do you have on you?”
This time Cypress deigned to respond with a tone full of arrogance and amusement, “Enough.”

Witch just sighed and accepted the answer. He helped Beetle to his feet and silently watch Cypress go back to drawing on his bat as if nothing happened, pink hair tucked behind his ear to expose a row of piercings on his ear that had not been present a day ago. At this point, Izuku didn’t question it and returned to questioning the validity of his personality disorder. Things just didn’t add up. He didn’t have anyone to compare it to and wondered if it was normal for a mental quirk to only be able to be directed to a single alter at a time, like what happened with Shinsou’s quirk.

He would run some tests later but he had been too caught up in watching his alter’s shenanigans to realize he had spaced out in front of class 1-A for the second time that day. It was now the last class of the day and he had thoroughly exhausted his resources with the whole Ground Alpha exercise so he was going back to teaching individuals. Unfortunately he Shouto wasn’t in the group today so he would have to wait to woo him. Now that his crush had been revealed and thoroughly accepted he would be damned if he didn’t get himself a boyfriend by the end of the year.

Should he make a bet with Midnight over it?

Today it was the purple bois that were on the chopping block. He really wanted to test Shinsou’s quirk and it’s capabilities but working with Mineta would be a challenge. Well, a challenge to keep Cypress from apparently stabbing him now that knives were a thing he carried. Cypress’ distaste of the grape was well known and unfaltering after he had seen Mineta try and grope Yaoyorozu yesterday. Thankfully, Jirou had beaten him to murdering Mineta and Cypress didn’t have to beat him senseless.

Izuku had been tempted to unleash the full might of Cypress’ fury on the tiny pervert but decided to try and keep his job. Today would hopefully solve that problem if everything went according to plan.

But he had Shinsou first and had just been staring blankly at the floor for three minutes. Shinsou looked thoroughly confused and just the tiniest bit salty about Izuku (Witch) knocking him out earlier in the jungle which was understandable. Witch may have not so accidentally made him run head first into a tree.

Izuku snapped himself out of his own mind, focusing his emerald eyes on the slouching boy. As per usual Shinsou had bags under his eyes to rival Izuku’s and his lavender hair stood up on end, making it seem like he had just been electrocuted.

“Sorry about that! Voices in my head just stabbed each other. Let’s get this over with.” Izuku said
honestly, not that Shinsou believed him.

Shinsou raked his gaze up and down Izuku, no doubt trying to figure out Izuku’s deal. Izu knew he was an enigma. It came with the territory of having three people living in your head.

“How did you do it?” Shinsou finally said hands stuffed deep into his pockets.

Izuku knew exactly what he was asking but feigned ignorance, “Do what?”

“Break free of my quirk.”

“Oh that,” Izuku took this chance to dig into his jacket pocket and retrieve a pack of cigarettes and one of those old square lighters. He tore off the plastic and placed a new cigarette between his lips and with a flick of the lighter set it smoldering. He took a long drag and blew the smoke into the air, setting it spiraling into the atmosphere. “Yeah, I don’t know.”

That was a lie. He knew perfectly well but he wasn’t about to say that.

Shinsou narrowed his eyes, “Yes you do.”

“But I don’t.”

“I want to know if others can use whatever you did to break free too. Without my quirk, I’m practically useless.”

Izuku cocked his head and flicked some ashes onto the ground, “Are you implying that being quirkless makes you useless?”

Shinsou’s eyes filled with alarm although he quickly replaced it with his normal indifference, he knew that he may have made a grievous insult. Day one Izuku had proved that his quirklessness did not make him useless and after the time a majority of the class had spent with him he had become something of a boogeyman. The USJ had only instilled more respect and hesitant fear of the green-haired boy and Izuku knew it. Shinsou had to tread carefully and try not to piss off the guy that controlled his training. Izuku left the people he liked exhausted, imagine what he would do to the people he didn’t.
“No. Not at all. I mean look at you. I’m just implying that I’m useless without my quirk.” Shinsou replied coolly. Beetle applauded from inside Izuku’s head, it was petty politics and wordplay. Something Beetle specialized in.

Izuku dropped his cigarette and crushed it under his heel before flashing Shinsou a sharp grin, “That’s what I’m here for isn’t it?”

He stalked over to Shinsou and was irritated that he had to crane his neck up to meet his gaze, “This is your first lesson so let me tell you how it’s going to work. Our time will be split in half. The first half will be working on your quirk and the other half on hand-to-hand combat. Your quirk is amazing for hero work so I’m going to need you to lose the whole ‘villainous’ thing. Bullies fucking suck but let me tell you, they are almost always wrong. I mean look at me. I was called ‘useless’ my entire life until I literally jumped off a building. Now I’m teaching at UA.” he ignored Shinsou’s shocked expression and continued on, “And you Mr. Villain got into the prestigious UA Hero Course. If only to spite your bullies you need to stop with the constant self-doubt and shit.”

Shinsou looked thoroughly surprised and took a small step back with wide eyes. He obviously didn’t expect Izuku to know all that and opened his mouth to speak but Izuku waved him off, “Yes I know about all of that. You aren’t nearly as subtle as you think you are.”

There was a beat of silence before Shinsou replied, “…You jumped off a building?”

Izuku groaned, why did heroes always get hung up on that? “About a year ago. Survived obviously. I’m on all sorts of meds. Old news.”

Shinsou blinked.

“Enough about my tragic backstory. We’re going to start by you trying to use your quirk on me.”

Shinsou seemed to focus again on the reason for this entire thing again and cleared the cobwebs from his mind, “But it doesn’t work on you.”

“Yes, it does. I just can break out of it apparently.”
Everything got hazy and time seemed to slow. Well, at least Shinsou followed directions. Witch took control and flicked his leg before switching back to Izuku, effectively breaking out of Shinsou’s brainwash.

“I meant do it without talking.”

Shinsou looked at him quizzically, “That isn’t how my quirk works.”

Izu rolled his eyes, “You need people to reply to you. That doesn’t necessarily mean with words. There is this thing called body language. Use it.”

Understanding flashed in Shinsou’s eyes and Izuku felt a smile tug at his lips. Izuku also felt a tug at his mind, like someone fumbling to grasp straws. The presence was known but didn’t actually take control. Well, it was a start.

“I felt that. Good. Keep going.”

—

A while later Shinsou limped back to the rest of the class. Aizawa was teaching them something that Izuku didn’t care about so he had no idea what it was. Something he probably already knew he was sure. What he did care about was the class’ reaction to Shinsou’s glorious return.

By glorious return, he meant thoroughly exhausted and sporting a few dozen bruises. Izuku hadn’t even switched over to Witch so the number of injuries sustained was actually kinda sad. Shinsou had almost involuntarily switched to the whole ‘curl into a ball and wait for it to pass’ thing that came with relentless bullying. Izuku figured that out in the first two minutes and empathized. He understood that all too well but he couldn’t have Shinsou just accepting it. His job was to teach him how to fight back.

Once they moved past Shinsou’s ingrained reflexes which was a process Izuku found that the kid could actually throw a punch. That fact was made clear when Izu pushed enough of Shinsou’s buttons to actually get the kid to sock him in the face. He was rewarded with a split lip and hope. Cypress had to be detained from returning the favor but the fact that Shinsou didn’t break his hand was great.
Izuku had then started on basic fighting stances because he wasn’t a total barbarian. Shinsou didn’t have any bad habits but he didn’t have any good ones either. Izuku could work with that.

And work they did. Izuku worked him hard with the occasional suggestion from Witch. He was already tired from using his quirk so unconventionally from the first half of practice so his fighting was sloppy but Izuku resolved to switch what they worked first every training session.

In time Shinsou could get somewhere. He definitely had the determination for it.

Not that you could see that now. Shinsou was dead on his feet and when the door to the classroom opened and Shinsou stumbled in shortly followed by Izuku. Aizawa had taken one look at Shinsou’s haggard appearance and curtly said, “Recovery Girl. Now. Rest and get those bruises taken care of.”

Shinsou was all too happy to comply and the class looked straight up scandalized that Izuku had done such a number on their classmate. Izuku had taken inventory but didn’t make eye contact with any of them. Instead, he turned to Aizawa and pouted, pointing at his split lip, “What about me?”

Aizawa gave him a deadpanned expression that had just a hint of hostility behind it, “You deserved it.”

Izuku shrugged, “Fair enough.” he then spun on his heel to face the class, he finger gunned Mineta and said, “Grape boy it’s your turn. Come on.”

Mineta visibly swallowed and Izuku got a small degree of satisfaction at his discomfort. Although when he didn’t make a move to stand up that satisfaction quickly turned into annoyance. Izuku patience for Mineta was nonexistent so he didn’t bother asking again. Instead he for the first time he voluntarily let Cypress take control and yet the unimaginable amount of rage the alter contained blanket the room.

He may have underestimated how potent it was, being several students actually jerked up and regarded Izuku with fear. Izuku also may have forgotten that Kacchan existed. Cypress however did not and locked eyes with the blond across the room. After the whole Shigaraki fiasco Witch realized this would not end well and wrested control back to Izuku who took it graciously.

The class looked relieved at the dissipation of fury and glanced around anxiously. Izuku was still tired that Mineta didn’t do as he asked and accept his fate so he stomped to the back of the room.
Mineta seemed frozen in fear so Izuku did what any insane person would do in this situation.

He picked up Mineta and threw him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. The class ogled but he pretended not to notice as he strolled leisurely towards the door. At the threshold, he turned back to the class and with a mock salute to Aizawa he said, “Carry on.”

In a sudden moment of inspiration, he threw a wink at Todoroki who blinked in utter disbelief as his mind tried to catch up. Izu didn’t see any more of the reaction as he shut the door and continued out to the field so he could actually do something with the boy still slung over his shoulder.

Mineta knew better than to do something like ask to be set down so he accepted the ride and they continued without a word spoken between them. Izuku humming some obscure song as he sauntered the halls of UA.

“Why do you act like you have a stick up your ass? We all know you are a giant dork. A soft boi. Hell, you and Shigaraki were giant cinnamon rolls last night. You got flustered earlier.” Cypress asked looking up from his two-thirds finished bat and fixating his ice blue stare on Izuku.

Izu glared, “I am not a ‘soft boi’.

Cypress, Witch, and Beetle all cocked an eyebrow, “You sure about that?”

Izu huffed and looked away, hoping to hide the creeping blush dusting his features. Thankfully, Cypress went back to this art project and Beetle and Witch left it alone to continue their trip in relative silence.

At one point they passed the emaciated version of All Might. Yagi stopped in his tracks to stare at Izuku who continued on as if he didn’t exist. In his mind, Cypress growled and Witch had to sit on him to keep something catastrophic from happening like Cypress getting into a fist fight with the number one hero.

After what seemed like an eternity of hauling Mineta’s ass they were on the field and Izu set him down, rolling his shoulders. Mineta stared up at him with fear filled eyes and said in a shaky voice, “What do you want with me?”

Izu gave him a dead stare, “To get two things straight.”
Mineta swallowed.

Izuku had forgotten how nice it was to be taller than someone, he usually could create the effect that he was looking down on someone but in this situation he actually was. It increased his intimidation by about one-hundred percent and he needed every ounce of coercion to make sure Mineta took his words to heart, “First off, I don’t like you.”

Mineta averted his gaze and Izuku wasn’t sure if it was in fear or shame. He wasn’t done so he hoped Mineta was still listening.

“But I don’t hate you.” Mineta’s head snapped up at that and Izuku continued unbridled, “That means you can be redeemed so you need to get your shit together. Yes, I am perfectly aware you are a teenage boy and are horny as shit but I want you to look around and see if any of the others pull the same stunts you do,” Mineta opened his mouth to argue but Izuku had prepared this speech and knew what he was going to say, “Yes I know, Kaminari is perverted too but not nearly as unsubtle and tactless about it as you. He can actually handle himself and not sexually assault his classmates. You, on the other hand, need to pull yourself together if you even want a shot at being a hero. I can guarantee that you were paired with Yaoyorozu during the USJ attack because you wouldn’t be able to handle yourself around her due to her revealing costume.”

Mineta was actually starting to look slightly ashamed now so Izuku considered that progress.

“Which leads me to my second point, Yaoyorozu’s quirk makes it so she has to have a costume that is open so she can create bigger objects. And I will not have you interfering with her growth because she doesn’t feel safe enough to reveal herself a little bit if you are in the general vicinity. That actually goes for all of the girls. So let me make myself crystal clear here. If you interfere with the girls in any way I will have you expelled so fast you won’t even have time to blink. This is your only warning. Shape up or get out.”

Tears of shame had started to flow out of Mineta’s eyes and Izuku nodded satisfied. He had gotten his point and hopefully, things would get better. Izuku had meant every word and now that that was out of the way he could actually work on training the grape boy. He needed to get him past the first round after all.

“Right. Now let’s talk about how to make your quirk stronger and more effective.”

—

“So this is it.”
It was around six in the afternoon, the sun being swallowed by the horizon; leaving streaks of pink and orange the same shades as Beetle and Cypress’ hair. Witch had imposed a one in the morning curfew tonight, being responsible enough to realize that if they didn’t get more sleep they would pass out at some inopportune time.

Cypress and Beetle had grumbled but accepted the logic behind it. Izuku truly didn’t care. He wasn’t sure if he even would be able to sleep but he had hopefully exhausted his body enough to bypass the insomnia. He certainly felt tired enough to crash right there but he had brought enough caffeine packets to hopefully shock him awake. Of course, he did take the first opportunity to switch out control so he could at least mentally get some sleep. He was fleeting out of consciousness and although he knew he should try to stay awake to monitor what was happening but ultimately let blissful oblivion take him. Witch could fill him later.

“Yep! Nice isn’t it!” Beetle chirped in confirmation. As promised he had taken Cypress to the warehouse that would soon be the home to his fight club. Cypress seemed very pleased with the results and once in control began to explore the area.

It was maybe ten blocks from Kurogiri’s bar so they were still in the correct part of town. Heroes didn’t patrol here often so they didn’t have to overly worry about being discovered. The warehouse itself was almost too big, four stories of abandoned rooms and a spacious basement besides. The basement was where they would actually host the fight club, the main space dedicated to the fighting rings and the few offshoot rooms serving as medical chambers, betting pools, and if they really wanted to get ambitious; bars and food.

Cypress basically ignored everything aboveground and wandered down to the basement, planning possible entrances and how many bouncers he would need. At the moment he looked like Izuku, they had yet to go shopping and get everything needed for Cypress’ look. After this Beetle would try and find as many clients as possible to sign but it was too early for him to go wandering the streets, much too conspicuous.

But they didn’t want to have to head home to become Beetle so they had loaded up a backpack with everything they needed, hair dye, colored contacts, bobby pins, and an extra set of clothes. The dye job wouldn’t be as good but they had changed their appearance much more on the fly than this. Cypress had also made them stop at a hardware store and stocked up on every color of spray paint along with a fluorescent pink respirator. Cypress had said it was to ‘mark their territory’ and based on what he had done with his bat they were curious to what he would create. He had also bought the exact same All Might bat he used and promised to turn that one into a work of art too. Not that he needed it. He had stolen some of Witch’s knives and stashed them somewhere on his person and put a handgun in the bag as well.
They were grossly over prepared but better to be safe than sorry. If they got caught they would only be down some knives and a gun. Everything else was inconsequential and could easily be rebought. Of course, if they got caught with all of the hair dye it wouldn’t be hard to connect the dots to his identity as Beetle so they probably shouldn’t get in any trouble with the police tonight.

As it turned out, Beetle had had this building in his possession for months and in that time had only come to check on it once. Surprisingly, the fluorescent lights still worked and it after fumbling for the light switch the basement was illuminated and Cypress could take a good look. Beetle’s neglect had left everything extremely dusty and apparently, squatters and teenagers had found it a good place to hang out. Luckily for everyone, it was at the moment deserted and all that remained were beer cans, wrappers, and cigarette butts. The far wall was covered with shabby and faded graffiti that Cypress immediately decided he liked. The air smelled like stale smoke and booze. Cypress put ‘ventilation’ on his mental to-do list along with ‘clear out the trespassers’.

He couldn’t do much about the first one other than contribute to the problem so he did just that. Beetle was keeping up a steady stream of chatter which he ignored and Witch just kept reminding him how bad of an idea this was.

“Beetle, I’m going to need some of your contacts. I need a manager to help me get this set up.” Cypress said, cutting off some of Beetle’s useless prattle. He set down his bag and started to remove the cans of spray paint. He strapped the ventilator over his head being he didn’t want to gas himself and carefully picked out the paints he wanted to use.

“I’ll ask around tonight! Shouldn’t be too hard if we pay well enough :P!” Beetle replied cheerfully. Neither of them held any hard feelings about the whole ‘almost stabbing you’ thing earlier. Neither regretted it either.

“Don’t take this the wrong way but it’s weird seeing you act to professional and not stab someone the instant to take control.” Witch said in such a monotone it was offensive.

Cypress felt this ever-present anger surge in the direction of the vigilante, “That only happened once.”

“If we let you people would already be dead.”

Cypress growled and pointed at Beetle with a perfectly manicured black nail, “He gets to kill people. Why can’t I?”
“Because he doesn’t kill people. They broke the rules. They killed themselves.” Witch patiently explained, rubbing the bridge of his nose in annoyance.

“Same for me then hun. They killed themselves by pissing me off!” Cypress was now getting dangerously close to the end of his very short rope and began to plot how to stab Witch in the eye.

“That isn’t how it works.”

“Isn’t it?!”

“CaN yoU GuYS ShUt tHe FuEcK uP aNd LeT mE SleEP!” their increasingly fatal conversation had awoken a very cranky Izuku who was currently flipping both of them off.

Beetle stuck his tongue at them, “Look at what you did. You woke up the child.”

“We ArE thE SaMe aGE yOu FuCKIng BUg .”

“Coleoptera specifically.”

“I fucking hate you.”

“Love you too <3”

Izuku grumbled and flipped off Beetle before turning away and going back to bed.

Witch and Cypress stared at the odd interaction. They often forgot how grumpy Izuku got when he was woken up. It often ended with whomever did it getting punched. Whether that was an alarm clock or Witch their ultimate fate was a fist.

Cypress chose to stop caring about Witch’s rudeness. He probably wouldn’t win that fight anyway.
Instead, he turned back to his paints and grabbed the hot pink can. He gave it a shake and overlaid his mental image on the wall. He would cover up some of the worse graffiti with his own marking he had been brainstorming for hours.

He tuned out Beetle and Witch and dedicated himself to not fucking up. There was no backspace or eraser. He had one shot and one shot only.

Three hours later when he was dizzy with fumes that sneaked through the respirator he finally stepped back to admire his work. The image was large, taking up a third of the wall. Although he had used over a dozen colors few could be individually identified at first glance. Layered under dark black feathers there were streaks of hot pink, electric blue, poisonous green, and neon orange. White accents dotted tail feathers that dissolved into typical graffiti font letters. An ebony belly seemed to melt into bright colored letters spelling out two words, “The Aviary”.

It was a bird in flight, wings stretched out in freedom dripping neon blood. Something mixed between a crow and a songbird with florescent feathers hidden under darker shades. It was beautiful no doubt, but also somehow angry and violent and dangerous.

The Aviary was now the name of the fight club and this glorious bird was now their mascot.

“Now that just isn’t fair.” Beetle said, slightly in awe, “You aren’t allowed to artistic when I can’t draw a circle.”

“Fuck off.”

Beetle just groaned, “Can we go now? I have people to track down.”

Chapter End Notes

There was a picture I based what Cypress drew for the Aviary but I lost it so oops

Come join the Discord:

Yikes
“You do understand that was not a suggestion,” Beetle was leaning lazily against the alleyway, manic smile gracing his lips and orange irises shining with insanity at the not-so-subtle threat. Beetle had been running in his business mode for hours now, long exposure slowly turning him more sadistic with every cornered client. By now he had stopped playing games and dangled terrifyingly close to a level of madness that left the uncooperative bleeding out in dark corners, one of Witch’s knives lodged in their gut or kneecaps shattered from the force of Cypress’ bat.

None of that had happened yet but they had been dangerously close. Witch had stepped in on those few occasions Beetle’s patience had started to fray, these were just business deals. They weren’t meant to end in bloodshed. Witch and Izuku had never been all too comfortable with the repercussions of Beetle’s deals, they understood their effectiveness but no level of moral grayness could erase the fact that people had died because of it. None of them innocent of course, they had drawn the line at killing family members and most of those threats were just posturing. They did have to live with the uncomfortable knowledge that the Beetle wouldn’t hesitate to uphold his end of the threat if they weren’t there. On the few occasions someone had broken their deal with their family in the repercussions it always took a considerable level of persuasion on both of their parts to make sure Beetle only faked their deaths. They allowed the deaths of the client only because they were menaces to society and usually villains. Plus if they didn’t Beetle would have no reputation and he wouldn’t be simultaneously feared and revered through the entire villain underground.

Not that they enjoyed that mind you.

“He just sign and I’ll leave you to whatever you were doing.” Beetle flicked a perfectly manicured and painted hand towards the bruised and beaten man struggling to stand and escape from the two tattooed men with mild mutation quirks and their boss. Beetle had had this contract with the gambling den for months, he would track down the debtors and would be given a portion of what they owed. Not a particularly fun deal but a profitable one nonetheless.

He had approached them on cat feet, silent until he had made his presence known when he had cleared his throat and had interrupted the beatdown of the remarkably plain man. The tattooed bouncers had both ungracefully spun on their heels to face the sound and their boss had turned around just as surprised, three-piece-suit slightly splattered with blood. Their shock was almost comical, as if they hadn’t considered the fact that they might be interrupted beating a man in the
heart of the city.

That comedy had turned sour as soon the moment one of the giant men had opened their big mouths, proving they were much better at kicking the shit out of people that actually talking or using common sense. “Who the fuck are you?” one of they demanded, unsubtly flexing their muscles in an unsuccessful attempt to intimidate Beetle. The ineloquent and blunt statement was followed by an even more annoying stream of words from the other that left Beetle rolling his eyes, “Get out of here kid. You didn’t see shit.”

He didn’t even deign to respond, acting as if he hadn’t heard them. Instead, he fixed his attention of their boss, whose eyes narrowed as he was trying to place the fiery hair that had become somewhat infamous.

“I just need to renew a deal. So if you two would kindly step away from my client.” he waved a dismissive hand and sighed in irritation when the bruisers made no move to clear the way. “That wasn’t a suggestion.”

“Can I shoot them? Please.” he mentally pleaded and earned a disapproving look from Witch and Izuku.

“No, you cannot.”

“Do you know this kid Boss?” the taller man said to the man in the suit who seemed to have figured out who Beetle was based off his mildly terrified expression.

Their boss didn’t answer the question and instead directed his attention to Beetle who was becoming increasingly frustrated after every moment of no progress, “I’ve never made a deal with you.”

Beetle was actually considering defying Witch and shooting the guy right there, the handgun a comfortable weight in his pocket. “I am aware. I have however made a deal with the guy you are beating the shit out of so it would be great if I could renew it and then we can all get on with whatever we need to do. Go back to beating him unconscious I don’t care. I just need his signature so if you could call off your dogs…” he paused with a hand flourish. The Giants had narrowed their eyes, trying to get their pea-sized brains to function long enough to figure out what was happening.
The boss shook his head, “I can’t do that. He’s our rival and stole some of our money and we can’t let him renew whatever deal with the devil he created. It would help him.”

Turns out the boss was as useless and difficult as his bodyguards and had the same level of common sense.

“As I said before. That. Was. Not. A. Suggestion.” Beetle channeled his inner Cypress (literally) and the air around them surged with anger, “Listen here. I can ruin you. Make whatever shit hole you own never receive another patron because as far as anyone else is concerned I am a bit more influential. If you don’t let me resign the ‘rival’ I will give you an offer. Bankruptcy or burnt down?”

The boss gulped and the bouncers tensed, reading the air and its telltale sign of a fight, “What?”

Beetle’s grin widened a fraction of an inch, “Would you like your gambling den bankrupt or burnt down?”

“Beetle no.”

He ignored Witch’s protest and forged onward, “Neither will only be an option for another five seconds. Step away from my client so I can get his signature.”

The boss was running calculations in his head, completely immune to basic logic apparently.

“One.”

Anxious looks exchanged between the bruisers.

“Two.”

Someone finally came to a decision.

“Thre-“
“Fine. Get his signature then leave.” the boss relented, trying to hold on to any illusion of authority.

“Great.”

Beetle strode forward toward his struggling client, the contract already in hand. The bruisers slowly cleared the way, uneasy that their boss was cowed by a child.

At the look of utter doubt on their faces, it took all of Beetle’s self-control not to flay them alive.

His client was coughing up blood and when Beetle was finally close enough for the man to see his eyes widened, “I- I didn’t break any part of our contract I swear.”

Beetle grinned at the blatant fear his presence inspired as he grasped his client's chin and felt him flinch under his touch. “I know. I’m not here to turn you into a ball of flame yet. I just need you to sign here.”

His client glanced down at the new contract Beetle was holding, unable to break Beetle’s grip his eyes strained to read the paper, “B-but we already have one.”

“Don’t worry it’s the same one. It just needs to be renewed.” Beetle cooed, letting go of the man’s chin and producing a pen and placing it in the shaking and bruised hand of his client.

“W-why?”

Beetle’s expression darkened. He was getting awfully sick of these questions. “Maybe I should turn you into a charred corpse.”

His client’s face paled and he hurriedly scribbled his signature onto the paper. Beetle felt the contract appear in his conscious along with the soothing heat that accompanied it.

“Wonderful.” he stood and smiled at the bruisers as he strode out of the alley. They had apparently either received an explanation or didn’t care because as soon as Beetle was out of the way they resumed teaching his client a lesson. The grunts and whimpers of pain made Beetle and Cypress scoff. He had brought that upon himself.

“Right. You are getting way to volatile. Time to go home.” Witch chastised, thinking of how close
Beetle had come to shooting someone.

“I agree.” Izuku didn’t really want to deal with murder tonight plus he was tired so he wanted to sleep in an actual bed.

Cypress, always one for violence, protested, “What. No. I was hoping Beetle would get himself killed. Or someone else killed. I’m not picky. Things were just getting interesting.”

“People are annoying. If I’m not allowed to kill someone then there is no reason for me to be let myself get so frustrated.” Beetle yawned, thoroughly exhausted, he could only remain non-violent around morons for so long.

Cypress grumbled something about betrayal and left to pout.

Witch and Izuku were relieved Beetle had folded without any resistance. Everyone was tired and didn’t want to deal with having to restrain someone the entire night. Cypress was migraine-inducing enough.

They were quite a long way from their apartment and Beetle spent the time focused entirely on sorting through all of the contracts he had signed tonight. He still had a long way to go but if he continued at this pace he should have everyone resigned by the Sports Festival.

“Speaking of the Sports Festival, Izu do you have any plan for that yet?” Beetle inquired, twirling a piece of his hair around his finger as he walked down the streets of Musutafu.

“I’ve been playing with ideas but I think I settled on one,” Izuku replied, grinning like a wildcat.

“Scheming face?” Cypress whispered in Witch’s ear who jumped, not hearing or feeling the alter approach.

“Well, it will only work if you guys help me. Which I’m sure you’ll do because you love me.” Izuku said, batting his eyelashes.

“Of course Izu! I love you <3.” Beetle chirped, patting Izuku on the head. Izuku apparently didn’t
appreciate this and punched him in the face.

“Betrayal!” Beetle screamed, clutching his bleeding nose.

“It depends on what you want me to do.” Witch interjected hesitantly, things Izuku asked them to do ranged from ordering pizza to taking on a horde of villains with no weapons.

“Well hun, I hate you so no.” Cypress monotoned, blowing a pink bubble that popped with a snap.

“Sweetie. You are more protective than all of us combined.” Beetle stated, wiping the blood off his face and onto his sweatshirt.

“I just want an excuse to stab someone and right now you are looking like a great candidate.” Cypress’ eyes flashed with killing intent as he didn’t break his stare with Beetle.

Beetle had been itching for a fight all night and this was the perfect opportunity, he had also been itching to use that handgun all night and this was a perfect opportunity for that too. Reaching into his bag he drew the gun, cocked and aimed at Cypress’ chest. “I won’t hesitate bitch.”

Cypress just inclined his head and reached under his shirt and brought out a wicked curved tactical knife, “I dare you.”

Witch’s eyes widened in alarm, he honestly couldn’t tell who would win this scrimmage but whoever did would only be crowned champion when the other was dead. He couldn’t only sedate one of them at a time and the other would undoubtedly use that time to kill the other.

Beetle was wired enough after dealing with so many cretins to actually shoot and Cypress just generally wanted to kill everyone and pick as many fights as possible.

He considered asking Izuku for help but found the green haired boy already creeping his way toward Beetle, he glanced at Witch and motioned for him to deal with Cypress.

A sudden bang made Witch jump. Apparently, Izuku wasn’t fast enough to stop Beetle from pulling the trigger. Fortunately, Cypress had dodged to the left and the bullet passed by his arm by
a fraction of an inch. Beetle scowled at the failed shot and cocked the gun again.

It had become increasingly apparent that Cypress wasn’t intending to run at Beetle and stab him. No. Based on his stance it looked like he was getting ready to throw the blade straight at the villain.

Witch saw Cypress’ wrist tense and his body shift, it would be a difficult knife to throw but he didn’t want to take any chances. Losing any illusion of stealth both Izuku and Witch tackled their targets.

Cypress flailed around and Witch kicked his wrist, sending the knife skidding across the floor. At the same time, Beetle yelped as Izuku shoved him to the ground and confiscated the gun.

“Let me stab someone goddamn it.” Cypress bemoaned, still trapped under Witch’s weight, “I’m feeling violent.”

“You are always feeling violent,” Izuku called from across the area, Beetle had lost any fight and was laying defeated, head perched on his hand. Cypress grumbled but didn’t deny it.

“Anyway Izu, what do you need us to do for the Festival?” Witch asked, Cypress was struggling to free himself but Witch shifted his weight so there was no way he could escape and possibly stab Beetle.

Izuku’s head snapped up from where he had been playing with Beetle’s hair, “Oh. Yeah, that. So basically I need you to help me get some stuff.”

And then Izuku explained what he had planned for UA’s first years. By the time he was does Witch stared at the green-haired incredulous and Cypress was cackling. Beetle had a dreamy smile on his face, no doubt imagining the implications.

“That is so illegal Izuku.” Witch said, slightly stunned that he would even think it was acceptable or appropriate.

“That’s the best part though. Imagine everyone’s faces oh my God.” Cypress was trying to piece
himself back together and keep from choking on malicious laughter.

“I know right! Nedzu said I would have all of UA’s resources at my disposal and I think this qualifies.” Izuku agreed, dissolving into restless muttering.

“I will have a list by tomorrow. I also vote that you use a megaphone. Like the best megaphone you can find.” Beetle was still in a haze of ecstasy at the sheer chaos this would create.

“I don’t think this qualifies on Nedzu’s list of resources.” Witch was grasping at straws here, trying to do anything to dissuade them from this path of pandemonium.

“Hun. You and I both know Nedzu would love this idea just for the sheer sadism of it.” Cypress explained, still trying to catch his breath. The situation not being helped by the fact that Witch was still sitting on his diaphragm.

Witch closed his eyes and sighed harder than Aizawa, “I hate it when you guys are right.”

—

Aizawa had said he would let it go.

He wouldn’t restlessly hunt the streets looking for the tiniest glimpse of fiery hair and that definitely wasn’t what he was doing now.

Midoriya was fine. His students were fine. He was fine.

But that still didn’t change the fact that Midoriya had been seriously injured and Shouta had been forcibly extracted from the battle, leaving his students to fend for themselves. Beetle was responsible for all of that. Sue him for wanting justice.

He wasn’t just doing this out of righteousness however, Beetle also seemed to know way too much about the inner workings of UA for them to feel safe. Some of the things in the note he left were overly specific and he should have no way of knowing them. For example, his fledgling relationship with Hizashi. No one outside of the staff should have any knowledge of that
development but there was Beetle, talking about it like he was there.

Hell, maybe he had been. He could have hacked into the cameras or gotten his hands on something that made him invisible. No one really knew Beetle’s methods of retrieving information or what resources he had at his disposal.

Shouta was still the only hero to ever actually meet the villain. He had avoided any other hero or vigilante for months, leaving the police with only descriptions, rumors, and crimes. Not that they could ever actually prove those crimes. That was probably one of the reasons that they hadn’t been actively possessed by tracking down the informant, they had no concrete proof of his misdemeanors. Beetle had been correct about that at their last meeting.

But now, after the USJ attack, they had something they could actually pin to the teenage villain. Based on the note they could get him for kidnapping and at least conspiring with the villains.

None of the thugs they had arrested after the attack had any knowledge of Beetle’s assistance in the attack and they offered no new information to his true identity or whereabouts. All of the other heroes didn’t see a point in actively searching for the arsonist since they had bigger fish to fry like the League of Villains and the limited leads on Beetle making him hard to track. Most of the pros agreed that if they found the League they would find Beetle.

That was probably correct but Shouta’s relationship with Beetle had long ago become personal. Even if he wouldn’t admit it he had been constantly vigilant for even the smallest hint of orange and yellow hair, whether he was in his civilian clothes or hero uniform.

So far it had been a fruitless endeavor but somewhere along the line Shouta and promised himself he wouldn’t rest until that menace to society was in custody, either permanently behind bars or rehabilitated into atoning for his crimes.

But regardless of Beetle’s misdemeanors, Aizawa couldn’t ignore the fact that Problem Child’s injuries were partially his fault. Midoriya had abandoned his bandages, much to the distress and scolding of Chiyo, and was acting as if nothing had ever happened. He miraculously didn’t have any scars from the encounter but Aizawa saw how he sometimes cradled his arm in phantom pain.

Shouta knew from experience that that arm would always pain him, his leg still ached when it was cold from a battle years ago and his wrist clicked awkwardly from his first real fight with a villain when it had been snapped.
Forever wounds were something every hero was plagued with but Midoriya was only a child who wasn’t even at UA to become a hero. This was something he never should have to deal with but because of Shouta’s failure to protect him, it was now latched to him like a cancerous growth.

If only he had kept his eyes on the warp villain he never would have been imprisoned in that metal room and could have possibly helped Midoriya keep the villain’s at bay until help arrived or at the very least directed their attention to Aizawa and he could have borne the brunt of the attack.

Speaking of Problem Child, Shouta needed to have a talk with him about his training methods. Shinsou had practically been a zombie when he had stumbled back into the classroom and had enough bruises he was nearly as purple as his hair. Midoriya had gotten a split lip for his troubles but it didn’t seem adequate for the injuries that Shinsou had sustained.

Aizawa was slightly irked at his mistreatment of their students but if Midoriya continued his torture the class might actually revolt to avenge their classmates. The Hell Class seemed to like Problem Child but another incident like what he did to Shinsou would inspire a coup and they might try and get him back. Shouta didn’t exactly want to see what that might entail but if he knew Midoriya it would not end well for anyone. The class would try to get him back and then Midoriya would try to get them back for that using an insane plan that probably involved explosives.

Shouta would very much like to avoid a Civil War consisting of his entire class and the one man army called Izuku Midoriya. Well maybe Midoriya’s side would include Todoroki as well, since they seemed to have attracted to each other and if Nedzu was to be believed they were bonding of trying to bring Endeavor down. Todoroki seemed to be gravitating towards Midoriya’s unique brand of insanity and Midoriya had winked at the bi boy yesterday. An action that went unnoticed by everyone other than Todoroki and Aizawa.

Based off Shinsou’s physical state Shouta had been slightly concerned about what he would do to Mineta. No one in the class liked him, including Midoriya and Aizawa. So far Midoriya hadn’t trained anyone he disliked before and he had traumatized the people he liked.

However, when Mineta had limped back to class he didn’t seem all that worse for the wear. Exhausted of course and with a sluggishly bleeding scalp but physical wounds. The girls had been disappointed he looked better than Shinsou but as time went on they realized that what Midoriya had done had been much more mental. The previously perverted child had resolutely refused to even look at any of his female classmates, a stark contrast to his usual drooling. Aizawa was secretly grateful for what mental trauma Midoriya had put Mineta through, if that got Mineta to stop being such a nuisance he would take it. Mineta had been hindering the female student’s progress and if it continued much longer Aizawa would have had no choice but to expel him.

Mineta’s expulsion had crossed his mind every day, Aizawa wouldn’t lose sleep over it but Nedzu
had asked him to give his students more of a chance. Apparently, the parents of expelled students were raising a stink and Nedzu wanted to avoid any pointless lawsuits.

Aizawa scoffed as he hopped from roof to roof, on his secret manhunt for Beetle. He didn’t expel students willy nilly and their expulsions had all had legitimate reasons. It wasn’t his fault that parents couldn’t cope with the fact that their child had failed.

He had been so lost in his own thoughts that he hadn’t heard the quiet bickering coming from the street below him. It wouldn’t be all that strange to hear someone walking down the street arguing with someone, it was barely after midnight and some drunks could be making their way home.

He didn’t think anything of it until he actually looked towards the noise. He had marveled at the scene for a moment, trying to figure out exactly what he was looking at. There was a boy strutting down the street having a very animated conversation with… himself? There was no one else around but the boy was still gesturing wildly at nothing. There was a bag slung over his shoulder and he had a grey hood up over his ears, shrouding his face in shadows.

There was something about him that made Shouta pause, who exactly was this kid talking to? He couldn’t quite hear what he was saying but he picked up words such as, “megaphone”, “illegal”, and “UA”.

Those phrases had made Shouta narrow his eyes. Illegal and UA were not words he wanted in the same sentence. For a brief moment he wondered if this was Midoriya, that boy would actually have reason to use ‘illegal’ and ‘UA’, being he specialized with both. However, that theory wouldn’t help him figure out who was the other person in this seemingly one-sided conversation. Midoriya may be crazy but not talk-to-yourself kind of insane.

His second theory was Beetle, he was insane enough to hold a conversation with himself and he had ties to both ‘illegal’ and ‘UA’. But that might just be wishful thinking of Shouta’s part.

At least that’s what he thought it was until the boy passed under a street lamp and his face caught the light. Aizawa promptly froze, not believing his luck. Yellow and orange hair peaked out of the hood and he caught a glimpse of madness filled orange irises. A smattering of freckles dusted his features and his lips were moving a mile a minute.

Before he really knew what he was doing Shouta had leaped from the rooftop, capture weapon already reaching for the villain he had been hunting. Beetle eye’s widened as the fabric wrapped around his body but once he saw Aizawa his surprise had morphed into mirth.
“Shouta! We meet again! Hope everything is going well with Hizashi. Love you guys <3!” Beetle chirped, not seeming at all panicked at the prospect of being captured.

Aizawa’s quirk activated on its own accord, eye’s flashing red with his fury. He knew it wouldn’t actively do anything but it still felt good knowing he had stripped Beetle of his power.

For a brief moment, Beetle furrowed his brow, confusion and anxiety sneaking into his madness filled irises. Shouta felt a small bit of pride that he intimidated the villain that had caused so much harm to the things he cared about.

That look was gone and replaced with the usual insanity associated with Beetle, “I kind of want to go home and sleep so can we do this later? The voices in my head are getting cranky. Mom™ wants us to sleep. He put on a one a.m. curfew and he’ll kick all our asses if we are late. Regardless if we ran into our idol.” Beetle flashed an adoring smile to Aizawa who curled his lip in distaste.

“You better hope that ‘Mom’ can pay bail or else your new home will be a jail cell.” Aizawa spat out, anger and revenge clouding his judgment and breaking his usual steel self-control.

Beetle gave a high pitched laugh, “Wow! I really got under your skin with the USJ thing! But don’t worry sweet ‘Zawa! I can afford bail so we might as well skip the whole arresting thing, how much do you want? It’ll be wired to your account by tomorrow!”

Aizawa could hear the desperation in his tone, Beetle was panicking. He didn’t know if he would be able to escape. Shouta’s eyes had started to hurt, he enjoyed the feeling of knowing he was rendering Beetle powerless but he was still rational enough to know it wasn’t really doing anything and there was no point in drying out his eyes. He blinked deactivated his quirk, the feeling of rehydrating his eyes almost as good as the satisfaction of capturing Beetle.

Beetle visible sighed in relief, apparently relieved to have his quirk returned. Shouta considered reactivating his quirk again, if only to make Beetle uncomfortable.

Unfortunately, he didn’t get the chance. Beetle had apparently wiggled a hand into the front pocket of his sweatshirt. Aizawa had been too intoxicated on revenge to notice his capture weapon had slacked slightly. The loose bondage had allowed Beetle to withdraw his hand from his pocket and out of the capture weapon, fingers wrapped around the handle of what looked to be an already cocked Glock 19.
Aizawa didn’t have time to dodge or kick the gun out the arsonist’s hand before there was a resounding bang and his arm exploded in white-hot pain.

This wasn’t the first time he had been shot. Wouldn’t be the last time either. But the previous experience didn’t stop him from groaning in pain as he pressed his other hand to the wound, blanching when it came back red.

It wasn’t a significant enough bullet hole to be an immediate danger but if he didn’t get help or aggravate the wound further he might stand the chance of bleeding out. He felt his mind start to sneak into the static of shock but he fought it off. He had an armed and dangerous villain still in his grasp and he couldn’t let him run free.

He mentally chastised himself for not remembering that quirks weren’t the only weapon. Many people forgot about simple weapons such as guns and knives when quirks that could punch holes through buildings existed. Shouta had always prided himself on remembering that nugget of knowledge but he had been too engulfed in the triumph of catching Beetle that he had forgotten the chance of the villain having another weapon.

He hissed through his teeth as he moved to kick the gun from Beetle’s hand, arm screaming in agony at the sudden movement. However, his movements were made sloppy from the injury and Beetle had no trouble jerking the gun out of the way. He wasn’t making any move to fire again and if he hadn’t been lying about Aizawa being his ‘idol’ he probably wasn’t going to do anything to over danger the underground hero. After all, he went to the trouble of extracting him from harm's way during the USJ battle.

But people would do what they needed to when backed into a corner and Beetle would rather kill Shouta than get caught. The longer he stayed captured the higher the chance of him actually fatally shooting Aizawa.

So Shouta had to get the gun out of his hand as soon as possible. He tightened his capture weapon to the point it was crushing the villain’s ribs. However, that did nothing considering his arm along with the gun was no longer pressed to his side.

For the second time Shouta lunged for the weapon, Beetle struggled but when he realized that he couldn’t escape he aimed the muzzle straight at Shouta’s head. Aizawa was a few feet away from the villain, even fewer from knocking the weapon out of his hand. Hot blood was dripping down his arm and he had to fight to keep from going into shock. The pain was making his head fuzzy and he weighted the chances of being able to get the gun before Beetle shot. Those chances were not good.
To his credit, Beetle’s hand nor voice wavered, “Let me go and I won’t blow your brains out.”

His orange irises had darkened along with his tone, gone was his flirtatious insanity. Replaced with a cold seriousness that reminded Shouta that this child was a murderer. He had killed people and if push came to shove Aizawa would just be another death under his belt.

Hizashi’s face flashed before his eyes, his obnoxious voice echoed in his ears. Memories of Midoriya’s sass and Class 1-A’s general bullshit clouding his mind. The future stood in glistening citadels and Shouta would be dammed if he wasn’t there to greet it. The gamble wasn’t worth it.

Slowly he loosened his capture weapon. Beetle stood unflinching, the silver muzzle of the gun still fixed at Aizawa’s head. His finger was pressed on the trigger and for a moment Shouta thought he was going to shoot regardless. At the last second, the aim shifted and was instead pointed at his thigh. He braced for the bang and he heard it before he felt it. He actually didn’t feel it. The pain didn’t register but he was still knocked to the ground. Dimly he thought, overkill.

Beetle was slowly backing away, his eyes not leaving Aizawa’s face. Gun had moved back to Aizawa’s head. By this point, Shouta was realizing that the wound to his arm was still bleeding and had been bleeding this entire time. Blood loss was becoming a very serious concern and if he didn’t get some pressure on the wound and stitches soon he wouldn’t have the energy to call for help. He now had two holes punched in him so that doubled the amount of lost blood.

Beetle was now halfway down the block, he had stopped his slow retreat and had broken into a backward jog, the Glock unflinching even with his pace. His eyes were not fearful or that of a cowed prey. This had been a battle of two predators and Beetle was still poised to win, ready to let a bullet fly if Shouta made even the smallest move to undermine his freedom.

Instead, Aizawa focused on the wound on his arm and leg, coming down from the adrenaline high the pain in felt excruciating, explosions of agony blooming down his limbs. A small puddle of blood had begun to form on the pavement, shining slightly with the amber glow of the street lamp.

By now Beetle had vanished entirely, disappeared in the streets and alleyways to wherever he resided when he wasn’t shooting heroes and burning down buildings. The arm wound hadn’t clotted yet, a sure sign it had hit something vital. The leg was still too early to tell, but for now, he would proceed if it was the worst case scenario. Shouta didn’t have any basic first aid on him to put pressure on the wound so he settled for his capture weapon, winding it around his arm and leg as tightly as possible. It wouldn’t last forever though.
He reached for his phone, wondering who he should call first, Hizashi or an ambulance. Logic won out as he dialed 119 and waited for the operator to pick up. After two rings a pleasant female voice asked him what was the emergency.

Years of hero duty along with this not being his first experience allowed him to calmly explain the situation, along with his status as a pro-hero. She assured him medical assistance would arrive shortly and hung up.

His next call to Hizashi wasn’t nearly as calm. Shouta explained it in the same monotone but Hizashi’s reaction was anything but. Hizashi seemed to be panicking more than Aizawa, talking a mile a minute and Shouta heard him scrambling on the other end. In rushed terms he informed his boyfriend that he was on his way, keeping up a steady stream of small talk in an effort to keep Shouta from passing out from shock or blood loss.

Surprisingly, Yamada arrived first. His hair was out of its ridiculous banana shape, instead it was twisted into a hastily done bun that was quickly coming out of its hair ties. At some point Shouta had migrated to the side of a building, propping himself up against its side. A trail of bloodspots following his movements like breadcrumbs. The world was spinning slightly and his face was wet with sweat.

Hizashi was at his side, talking about nothing and everything, none of it registered but Aizawa forced himself to keep his eyes open. Soon enough the sound of sirens filled the street and there were paramedics swarming the underground hero. In moments he was in the back of the ambulance and they were moving, inspecting the wounds and informing a distressed Hizashi they weren’t as bad as they seemed.

Something about the one in his arm grazing an artery but the one in his leg miraculously hitting nothing vital. One had an exit wound but one didn’t. He was too out of it to tell which one.

They might need a transfusion but probably not. If they got him patched up his body would be able to replenish the blood on its own. Luckily, he would be out of the hospital by tomorrow.

Shouta scoffed, the medics and Yamada had spun around, confused by what had made Aizawa laugh, “I would hope so. I’ve had worse than this fixed in less time.”

And then he blacked out.
If you were to describe what was happening inside Izuku’s mind right now it would be this: screaming.

There was a lot of screaming.

Witch was screaming at Beetle, outraged that he had **SHOT AIZAWA! TWICE! HE COULD BE DEAD!**

Beetle was still high on adrenaline, giggling uncontrollably at the fact that he had gotten to shoot the gun.

Cypress was somewhat in a panic as well, he liked Aizawa and really didn’t want the guy dead. He had joined Witch in shouting at Beetle who seemed impervious to their chastisement and rage.

Cypress regarded it an exceptional show of self-control that he didn’t kill Beetle and bash his head in right there. He doubted Witch would stop him this time. Instead, he settled for using words and a few punches, splitting his knuckles and giving Beetle a black eye.

After the first few hits, Beetle had started to argue his case, **“Well what was I suppose to do?! I couldn’t just let him take us!”**

**“I could have gotten us out of jail!”** Witch said, running a hand through his hair.

**“But I couldn’t switch! When ‘Zawa activated his quirk I couldn’t give you control! You got all fuzzy and unfocused!”** Beetle screamed in response.

**“You shot him in an artery! Right in the arm! He could bleed out before help arrives!”**

Cypress had walked away, murder on his mind and the only way to keep from strangling Beetle was to remove himself from the conflict.

Izuku, however, was not participating in that argument. Instead, he was having a full-blown
existential crisis, mind nearly exploding with the truth that had just been revealed when Aizawa had used his quirk.

Izuku had a quirk and that quirk made Witch, Beetle, and Cypress exist.

It actually explained a lot. The over corporeality of the alters and how easily they could switch. The different skill levels and how quirks only affected them one at a time. The fact that they hadn’t disappeared entirely proved that he probably did have some form of personality disorder and whatever his true quirk was built off that. Once that disorder had taken root his quirk had flown seamlessly into it and had made it much more serious. All signs now pointed to the alters being fully formed consciousness that Izuku shared a body with. They weren’t just copies of him with different personalities or appearances. They were different people.

This revelation nearly brought him to his knees. All the years of bullying for nothing. He had never been quirkless. But then again if they were going by them each being individuals then Beetle was technically the only one with a quirk. Izuku’s quirk had only brought them into existence.

Now that that was out of the way Izuku was forced to face the fact that Beetle had shot Aizawa. Twice.

That was enough of a shock to send him spiraling back into crisis mode. He really didn’t want Aizawa to die, especially by his hand. He tried to console himself with the knowledge that Aizawa probably had been shot before and he probably knew how to handle it. He could try and stop the bleeding with his capture weapon and the response time to heroes in distress was fast. Even if Aizawa didn’t have a way to call for help on him the gunshots had probably alerted a civilian and they would have called it in.

They had been running to nowhere in particular for a while now. Right now they were further from home than when they had started out. Beetle and Witch seemed to have stopped their shouting and were silently fuming away from each other.

A sudden wave of fatigue washed over Izuku, so much had happened in those few minutes. Too much knowledge invading his mind in too little time. Add in his perpetual exhaustion and you have the perfect recipe for passing out on a park bench.

An idea that was becoming increasingly appealing with every second. Luckily, Cypress wasn’t nearly as tired and snatched control before Izuku literally passed out on the floor.

He wasn’t all up for walking the miles back to the apartment, it would be too risky anyway. Every
hero in the city would be on the lookout for Beetle after the stunt with Aizawa. Luckily, they weren’t nearly as far from Kurogiri’s bar.

Breaking into a dead run Cypress tried his hardest to not punch the shit out of everyone in the general vicinity. Tensions were running high and all Cypress wanted to do was drink a metric ton of alcohol and curl up on one of the booths and sleep for about seven centuries.

Fifteen minutes of sprinting later he practically kicked in the door to the bar. Kurogiri was nowhere to be found along with Toga or Dabi. Cypress bemoaned the loss of the bartender but decided to say fuck it as he crawled over the counter.

Grabbing a coupe glass he scanned the bottles, debating on what he should use to knock himself out. Ultimately he decided that individually nothing was strong enough and decided to make the most potent cocktail possible. He reached for the gin but paused before he filled the cocktail shaker. Instead, he searched around for a muddler and a few jalapeños. A few minutes later he had himself a Bee Sting that was probably was way too potent.

He drowned it in one gulp and almost choked on the heat and strength. However, that still wasn’t going to be enough to make him forget shooting Aizawa. Even if he hadn’t technically shot him he hadn’t done anything to necessarily done anything to stop it. Right now Aizawa could be dead and they wouldn’t even know.

In the ensuing hours, Cypress had binge drunk and made twelvish cocktails. Ranging from Hurricanes to Zombies to just normal shots when his mind was too shaky to make any real drink.

It was sometime around three a.m. when someone finally decided to go notice that someone had practically broken into the bar. Cypress had amassed quite a pile of dirty glasses and had just given up on actually pouring the alcohol and was busy drinking brandy straight from the bottle. His face was flushed and disheveled, hair still dyed but it had long fallen out of its twin buns. At some point, he had removed the colored contacts and they were long gone, disappeared under the sea of empty glasses. Cypress was honestly surprised he hadn’t blacked out yet.

Izuku along with Witch was passed out and not getting very restful sleep and Beetle was for once just sitting in silence. Cypress ignored them all and focused on depleting Kurogiri’s alcohol supply. At least that’s what he had been doing until Dabi had wandered downstairs and found a very drunk Cypress surrounded by towers of empty bottles and glasses.

Cypress hadn’t even noticed the villain’s arrival until he had his bottle of brandy snatched from his hand’s, he had tried to spin around punch the thief, only to stumble and almost fall on his face.
Dabi had given him a deadpan stare and took a sip of the brandy and raising an eyebrow, “What happened?”

Cypress gave him a lopsided grin before trying to snatch the bottle back but Dabi lifted it out of reach, “What makes you think something happened?”

Dabi scoffed, “You don’t do something like this,” he gestured to the mounds of glasses, “without having something happen.”

Cypress gave a humorless laugh, “You caught me.”

“To whom am I speaking with? You look like Beetle but lack the craziness so I’m going to go with Cypress.”

“Ding-ding give the kid a prize. Beetle has been thoroughly shunned and Witch and Izu are passed out.”

“Why has been Beetle been shunned? I mean he deserves a lot more most of the time but right now specifically?”

“Shot someone we all love twice. Might have killed him.”

Dabi whistled, “Wow. Who was it?”

“Aizawa.”

“Who?”

“Eraserhead.”

“The underground hero?”
“What can I say, we spend a majority of the day with him. He’s bitter and cynical. Just our type.”

“You have a type?”

“Maybe.”

“Do I qualify?” Dabi had cocked his head and was staring at Cypress with the most peculiar glint in his eyes.

Cypress hummed, drunk as fuck and wondering how to answer that question, “I suppose.”

Dabi gave the smallest smile, “Good. That means I can do this,” he gently—more gently than Cypress had thought possible—reached out and grabbed Cypress’ chin. Cypress didn’t stop him when he leaned in and pressed a light kiss to Cypress’ brandy stained lips.

“You are aware you are taking advantage of someone who is thoroughly intoxicated,” Cypress said when they broke away.

“I can stop.”

Cypress decided to answer that by returning the kiss, hard and fast. Dabi started but then melted into Cypress’ touch. Cypress wondered if he would come to regret this come morning but then decided he didn’t care.

At one point Shigaraki walked down the stairs, saw what was happening in the bar, and turned on his heel to go back to bed and burn the image from his retinas.

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Katsuki spat blood, ears ringing from the roar of the crowd and his knuckles aching.

He hadn’t been sleeping, fighting off nightmares and memories. Dreams of Deku leaping from the
rooftop, pointing an accusatory finger at Katsuki who stood at the top, unable to reach out and grab the green-haired boy. Memories of every foul word spoken and every time he had beaten Deku into a bloody pulp because he had felt particularly bad about himself.

The guilt was eating him alive and he refused to acknowledge that he felt it at all.

He had been planning on cornering Deku at school, apologize for being such an asshole for all those years. But then Deku had turned to look at him during that final class before he hauled Mineta’s ass with such potent fury Katsuki knew that an apology would never even be close to sufficient.

So instead he had pretended that Deku wasn’t even there and went on with his day. Ignoring the gaping void in his chest.

After hours of that emptiness not fucking off he left the house in the dead of night, searching for any way to make himself feel whole again.

He stumbled upon a door in an alleyway that he could hear faint shouts behind. Naturally, he opened it and descended into a realm of bloodlust and pain.

And Katsuki did what Katsuki did best.

He fought.

And found in the heat of battle there was no room for the nothingness consuming his soul.

Chapter End Notes

I never intended the bar scene to actually happen until I wrote it and decided the romantic tension was too strong. Sue me.

Come join the Discord:
Yikes™
The Shattered Mirror

Chapter Notes

So if things are really fucking weird this chapter it's cause I don't know how to write emotion so oops

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cypress’ reflexes reacted faster than his mind, acknowledging the pressure of a body next to him by unsheathing the tiny five-inch tactical knife tucked the waistband of his jeans and shanking something soft and springy.

It took a considerable amount of effort to pry his eyelids open, trying to shake the sleep and nausea from his mind as identify who thought they had the right to be close enough to touch him. Sunlight streamed through blinds and when the world refocused and the fuzzy colored blobs became actual images several things became abundantly clear.

The first was that his knife had impaled itself directly between the unscarred fingers of Dabi, missing him by millimeters, the blade sunk hilt deep into what seemed to be a mattress. The second thing was that he was laying on Dabi, in a bed. Memories of last night flooded his mind, Beetle shooting Aizawa, his mad dash to the bar, the hours of nothing but ingesting as much alcohol as humanly possible, the drunken kisses he and Dabi had shared, them migrating to Dabi’s bedroom. Everything past that was a blur and Cypress tried to figure out what the fuck had happened.

The fact that he was able to draw the knife from his pants meant he actually had to be wearing pants. That was a relief, along with the fact that he wasn’t sore as fuck meant he probably hadn’t escalated to anything more than kisses. Of course, there was the slight possibility that Dabi had bottomed but that seemed highly improbable and he dismissed the theory when he once again remembered he was wearing pants.

Right now his body felt like it was trying to kill him, feeling ill and faint at the same time. He attributed that to the fact that he had drunk half a ton of alcohol and he had kissed Dabi. Multiple times. Even now his lips still felt swollen and raw, aching from kisses that had ranged from eternally soft to hot and hungry.

Emotions he didn’t think he had swirled in his mind like a typhoon of abject horror and satisfaction. Cypress had never felt anything other than rage, he wasn’t accustomed to these things that simultaneously made him feel like he was sinking and soaring higher than the moon.
Between the mortification and shock, there was something he couldn’t quite identify. Something warm and wicked that made his entire body buzz.

After a few seconds, he realized that this wasn’t an unfamiliar feeling, it was one of the few feelings he actually experienced over the haze of fury that he had grown so accustomed to. He normally only felt this specific type of elation when he was beating someone’s face in and the fact that it was happening now when there was a conspicuous lack of blood and broken bones meant only one thing: he had enjoyed this little escapade.

With that revelation, he noticed the conspicuous lack of another feeling that he had only been introduced last night after Aizawa’s shooting.

Regret.

The sickening yawning void of regret wasn’t on the roster of emotions bombarding his brain. Its absence was unwelcome and for once Cypress wished for that sinking drowning feeling that meant all of this was just one giant mistake.

That horrifying realization made Cypress sit straight up, he glanced at the sleeping form of Dabi who seemed blissfully unaware of what he had done to Cypress. Even more ignorant that he had almost had a hole punched through his hand.

Cypress’ legs were still pressed against Dabi’s and the villain’s body heat seemed to permeate the denim as if they were touching on skin. Dabi seemed to simply radiate heat and Cypress had to resist the urge to lay back down an absorb it like he had been doing the entire night.

Instead, he yanked his knife out of the mattress and scrambled to the bathroom. He barely made it in time to turn his stomach inside out into the toilet, puking both from the nausea of the herculean hangover that made him regret every cocktail and the fact that some part of him had enjoyed last night and was begging him to rejoin Dabi in the bed and maybe pick up where they had left off.

Dimly he was aware of the other alter’s silence and at the mere thought of having to explain this to them set him retching again, trying to vomit out his emotions and praying to God that they wouldn’t acknowledge this.

After a good five minutes of pure heaving, he finally found the strength to lift himself from the floor, still feeling like shit. But the hangover was secondary to the overall overwhelming amount of feeling coursing through his head and heart. Ninety percent sure he way about a second away from a panic attack he stumbled to the sink and splashed ice cold water in his face. He drank a few good gulps straight from the tap, trying to rid the taste of bile from his palette.
Some good it did him.

As soon as he had somewhat collected himself one look at his appearance in the mirror reverted him back to his erratic and panicked state. His hair was the definition of a rat’s nest, tanged with knots and snarls. The situation really wasn’t made any better by the fact that his hair was still dyed Beetle’s signature ombre, although streaks of viridian poked through the orange and yellow. A sudden memory of Dabi’s fingers snagging in the locks made him have to steady himself on the porcelain sink. He knew that if he were to look at Dabi’s fingers he would find them stained orange from the temporary dye.

He almost yelped when moved his neck and exposed the unmistakable dark bruises of hickies that exploded like miniature starbursts between his collarbone and neck. This was bad. This was very very bad.

It was a pipe dream. A ridiculous fantasy. He hated Dabi. Hated everyone. He didn’t have any emotion other than rage. He wasn’t supposed to. He was an avenger alter. Hostile and seeking retribution for those who had hurt Izuku. He wasn’t supposed to feel things like longing.

Because that’s what this was. There was something in him that screamed at him to go back to Dabi and make this more than a drunken mistake. Make it actually mean something.

But that would imply he would have to offer some branch of trust and dependency to the scarred villain. And he along with the others knew not to attach themselves to anything. Look at what happened with Bakubitch. Izuku had depended on him. Trusted him. In return they had gotten the shit beaten out of them every day, had his self-confidence ripped to shreds until he had literally thrown himself from a building, determining death was better than this existence. All Might had helped him, his idol crushing whatever small hope he had somehow saved from Katsuki’s abuse. Izuku had offered it to the hero with shaking hands and he had destroyed it with that unfaltering smile that Cypress had come to loathe.

Look at Aizawa and Beetle. Cypress had grown to like the underground hero and tolerate the other alter. In the end, he had only been signing himself up for the pain of Aizawa being seriously injured and Beetle being the perpetrator of the crime.

Cypress only tolerated Izu’s crush on Todoroki because he knew Todoroki would never do anything to hurt Izuku. Plus Izuku deserved someone to love and someone to love him back.
But Cypress. Cypress wasn’t a person. He was just a mental coping method created by Izuku. He shouldn’t have thoughts about petty crushes and complex and confusing emotions. Cypress wasn’t even real.

Dabi didn’t deserve that and Cypress shouldn’t pine over some impossible dream. They had all learned their lesson with dreams.

“But you aren’t an alter,” Izuku said suddenly, causing a hot fresh of fear run through Cypress. How would he react? He was too engulfed in his own anxiety to really process Izuku’s words for a few moments and when he did they still didn’t make sense.

“What?”

Izuku sat down, Witch by his side. The vigilante looked tired, huge dark crescents under his black irises and hair unbound. Seeing Witch’s periwinkle locks out of their fishtail braid was a shock, only further attesting to his exhaustion. Izuku didn’t look much better, eye’s dull and voice flat. They both look like they had just gone through multiple existential crises and after everything that happened last night, Cypress wouldn’t doubt it. If he hadn’t nearly drowned himself in alcohol to fight off his own mental catastrophe he probably would be in the same boat.

But those were catching up right now, will the added benefit of realizing he might actually like someone and spending the night with said person.

Beetle was conspicuously absent, retreated somewhere until this blew over. That was probably for the best. Cypress didn’t trust himself to not strangle the villain to death, it was his fault they were all in this situation in the first place.

“You aren’t an alter,” Izuku repeated, drawing a strange look for Cypress who wasn’t fully comprehending his words, of course, he was an alter. What the fuck else would he be?

“While you and Witch were busy beating up Beetle I was coming to the realization that I have a quirk.”

Cypress went deadly still. That meant everything, everything about Izuku being quirkless was null. Every year of abuse for nothing. That was earth-shaking but what exactly did it have to do with him not being an alter?

“When Aizawa used his quirk on us Beetle said that everything got really disconnected between us. I felt it too, everything seemed dimmer and you were all fuzzy and weird. I’m not sure if you noticed it but that reaction would only be caused by the fact that you guys are my quirk.”
This was what it felt like for your world to crash around you. Cypress was stuck in a collapsing house of cards. He wasn’t an alter, he was a quirk.

“I don’t think that you are just personalities or random wisps of people. I had been wondering about the stranger effects that didn’t come with normal DID and having you be the product of a quirk makes sense. It explains all the plot-holes about Witch’s enhanced combat skills and how easily we can take control. Along with how a quirk only effects one of us at any given time.”

Cypress couldn’t breathe.

“But the fact that quirks only affect the one who’s in control means that we aren’t the same people. You probably didn’t feel Aizawa’s quirk because it wasn’t directed at you. It was directed at Beetle so his connection to us was cut off. But that also implies that we are all different and individual people.”

But how did that work? What did that MEAN!

“I’ve come to the conclusion that my quirk built off my actually having some form of personality disorder. It evolved all of you to the point where you are all just as real of people as me. You aren’t some figment of my imagination. We are just four people sharing a single body.”

Cypress refused to believe it. He wasn’t a person. He had never been a person. He- he wasn’t real.

“So that means you deserve happiness as much as me. I like Todoroki. You like Dabi. Let yourself have that.”

Cypress staring into the reflection that wasn’t really his. He could almost image his bubblegum pink hair and terrifying blue stare. This wasn’t how it was supposed to happen.

“You’re just fine with this? It’s your body. It’s still you.” Cypress finally croaked, voice choked with emotion. He immediately hated himself for letting something as pointless as feeling take such a toll on him.

“But it’s not me. It’s you. Goddamn it Cypress. You are a different person.” Izuku’s eyes had started to mist over. Witch sat stoic, having had this same conversation with Izuku while Cypress had slept entangled in Dabi’s arms. He had gone through these same stages of denial and was still
trying to wrap his head around it.

“Maybe you had been me once but not anymore. Sure, maybe we share the same body but that should restrict what you do with it. You want to use it to bust kneecaps and kiss Dabi go for it. I’ll use it to analyze quirks and hopefully hold Todoroki’s hand. Witch’ll use it catch villains and fuck with the police. Beetle will use it to make deals and be generally insane.”

This was too much. Had his entire existence been a lie? Had everything been a lie?

“But what about you? It’s my job to avenge you! We are supposed to protect you! It’s the reason for our existence!” Cypress screamed, emotion reaching a breaking point.

“So avenge me. Protect me. It’s doesn’t have to be the reason for your existence but do it. I think we passed the stage of friendship being we literally live inside each other’s mind. But nonetheless I love you guys and you love me. Protect me because you love me and I’ll protect you too.”

Cypress’ vision had started to swim, fat tears appeared in his reflection. What was this? He wasn’t supposed to be crying. There shouldn’t be anything but righteous fury. None of this other crap like romantic attraction or love or caring.

He suddenly hated the mirror that showed the face that wasn’t his and the weakness it showed. He wanted it gone. Shattered. It took a single punch to fracture his face, distorting the image until it showed only fragments. His knuckles were bleeding, tiny bits of the mirror embedded in his skin.

The sound of breaking glass must have roused Dabi, the villain stumbling into the bathroom, rubbing sleep from his turquoise eyes. He took one look at Cypress’ tearstained face, his bloodied hand, and the shattered mirror before running a hand through his spiky black hair.

“I’m sorry. You regret it don’t you?”

Cypress had a sudden urge to run. To bolt past Dabi and into the streets. Run from his emotions and mistakes and his desire to tell Dabi that he didn’t regret it. Run from the crashing of his world and Izuku’s information that he wasn’t what he had thought he was. Run until his legs gave out and his lungs were nothing but pieces of raw tissue.

“Don’t you dare. One, this is our body too. You can’t destroy it. And two, don’t let this opportunity slip away from you. This could be a ticket to your happiness. If you want Dabi then fucking have
him. We already know he won’t be opposed.” Izuku commanded, a melancholy smile on his lips. Witch was staring at Cypress with something that looked like hope. Witch wanted all of them to be happy. He wasn’t exactly sure when but he had grown to want to protect all of them. Not just Izuku.

There was something about this entire situation that left Cypress feeling raw. These feelings were foreign and unwelcome. They weren’t the familiar tang of anger and fury that tinted his world in crimson. But despite how much he disliked the things that were writhing in his heart he could deny they had some sort of appeal. He wanted to trust and care. Wanted to kiss Dabi’s worry away. Avenge Izuku and Witch because he wanted to. Not because he needed to.

Cypress had come to a decision. As impulsive and probably bad as it was he wasn’t going to be ‘Izuku’s Avenger Alter’ anymore. He was going to be Cypress. The owner of the most successful fight club in the city and the boyfriend of a villain. He was going to be the vengeance for the people whom he shared a body with and cared about.

He flashed Dabi a soft smile, “No. I don’t.”

Dabi’s visibly slumped in relief then frowned, “Then why did you punch the mirror?”

Cypress turned fully to face the scarred man he had somewhere along the line started to care about, “Identity crisis. Izuku just told me that we aren’t the product of a personality disorder. Apparently, we’re the product of his quirk.”

“I know.”

“You do?”

Dabi shrugged, “Sensei told us. He sensed a quirk and said it created three new people all sharing one body. We all just thought you knew and Witch lied to us.”

Cypress was sent reeling at the confirmation that he was an actual person. Somehow Dabi saying it made it much more real.

“And that’s why it wasn’t weird that you were technically kissing Izu, Beetle, and Witch.”

“I wasn’t kissing any of them. I was kissing you.”

There was something in the way Dabi stressed the word ‘you’ that sent tiny fireworks of disbelief
exploding under Cypress’ skin. Someone had wanted to kiss him. Wanted to be with him.

“Do it again,” it was more of a challenge than a plea. Cypress inclined his head, daring the villain to prove it.

Dabi didn’t waste any time complying, talking two long steps towards the challenger. Izuku was still tiny compared to Dabi so the villain had to bend down to make their lips touch. It was anything but soft, an answer to the challenge that pulled at lips and made a rush of ecstasy run through both of their veins.

“I hate you,” Cypress said breathlessly when they finally broke away.

“I know.”

And they were back, teeth scraping lips and Dabi scooped up the still hungover teenager. He carried him bridal style back to the bed and unceremoniously dropped him onto the sheets.

Izuku and Witch had elected to try and track down Beetle, not really wanted to see their body have a make-out session with a villain. An admittedly hot villain but still.

Cypress was too wrapped up Dabi to notice, running his hands through Dabi’s spiked hair. This. He liked this. If this was what it felt like to be a person then maybe it wasn’t so bad.

He tried to convince himself this was only a daydream. This was nothing. Meaningless kisses just for pleasure and nothing more. He didn’t trust. He wasn’t dependent. He didn’t care.

He didn’t see the melancholy smiles of Witch and Izuku when they heard those thoughts.

They stayed that way until well afternoon. At some point Cypress had fallen asleep, Dabi’s warmth making him drowsy. He had tucked himself against the villain’s chest with Dabi’s back to the wall.
He probably would have remained sleeping off his hangover if a still-ringing phone wasn’t chucked at his head. Once again his reflexes acted faster than his common sense and a knife (a different one) was thrown in the direction of the doorway. He was disappointed in the lack of grunt in pain that meant he hit someone as he cracked an eyelid open.

Standing in the doorway was Shigaraki, looking eternally annoyed and slightly disgusted. “It’s been ringing off the hook. Someone named ‘Dadzawa’.” He then left a wide-awake Cypress to deal with whatever news this phone call entailed.

The fact that was coming from Aizawa’s number probably meant he wasn’t dead so that was good. He quickly answered and tried to find Izuku and shoved him into control.

“Hello?”

“Are you in jail?” Aizawa’s gruff and monotone voice made Izuku nearly sag in relief. He wasn’t dead.

“Not at the moment.”

“Well, then where the hell are you? You should be here helping me deal with the brats.”

Izuku glanced at Dabi who was staring at Izuku with interest, “I- uh, I’ve been busy.”

A pause, “Wait! You were shot! You’re not at school are you.”

There was a crash and shouts on the other line, Izuku assumed it was class 1-A reacting to the fact that their teacher had been injured and this was the first they were hearing of it.

Aizawa sighed, “You just had to tell them. How did you even know that anyway? Plus, you don’t get to talk. You went right back to class after USJ. You had almost died.”

Izuku laughed, “I have a fifth of the city wrapped around my finger remember. But you almost died too. You were shot twice. The first one hit an artery in your arm.”
More screaming in the background, “I’m not even going to question how you know that. Just get down here.”

There was a click and the call was over.

Izuku turned to Dabi, then decided it was too weird, and forced Cypress to deal with his boyfriend.

“Izu has to go back to school so he needs the body back. I’ll stop by again tonight.” Cypress informed. Dabi looked slightly disappointed but then smirked.

“Only if you come looking like Cypress. Not Beetle.”

“Deal.”

“What do you look like anyway?”

“I suppose you’ll have to find out.”

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The entire class 1-A seemed wholly convinced Midoriya was a cryptid. Kaminari was actually arguing that he was an Eldritch being with Mina backing him up. Sero was too busy making heart eyes to actually contribute.

Shinsou was actually on the side of minor deity. Midoriya was a paradox, a genius but impulsive. Apparently rich but dressed like he was homeless. If his phone call with Aizawa was to be believed then he apparently had a fifth of the city wrapped around his finger and Shinsou didn’t doubt it. Hell, he probably had more.

The fact that Aizawa had specifically asked if he was incarcerated made Shinsou wonder if Midoriya’s story on the first day about being arrested and then given the job wasn’t the joke they had all assumed.

Why they would ever think Midoriya would joke about that alluded him now, I mean the kid had
literally been partially handcuffed.

Aizawa had tried his best to keep what Midoriya said on the call a secret but when two of your students had quirks that gave them sensitive hearing as soon as Jirou and Shoji had heard what Midoriya said they had relayed it to the rest of the class.

Chaos had ensued.

The class was scrambling to know what had happened, Shinsou included. Some of them were screaming about how Aizawa-sensei you shouldn’t be teaching (Uraraka and Iida) while others were wondering How did you get shot? That's so manly! (the entire Bakusquad minus Bakugou, who was ignoring everyone with a black eye and split knuckles. That raised a few questions that no one dared to ask.)

Aizawa had sighed and retreated into his sleeping bag, giving them absolutely zero explanations. They decided to wait until Midoriya got here because they had a better chance of prying answers from the teenager than the teacher.

That’s when they had flown into the discussion about Midoriya’s apparent immortality, Kaminari arguing that he had some kind of magical power or something. Shinsou didn’t verbally contribute, keeping his opinion to himself.

Midoriya’s words from yesterday kept ringing in his head, Shinsou found it hard to believe that someone like Midoriya had been in such a place that he had tried to take his own life. He knew all too well the effects of bullies’ words but Midoriya had always presented himself to be impenetrable. It was morbidly comforting to know there was someone who understood his struggles but it was only by the grace of God that Midoriya was even here and not buried six feet under.

Shinsou eyed Bakugou, those two obviously had a previous relationship and from what he had seen it wasn’t a good one. Bakugou had tried to hurt Midoriya on the first day and in turn, Midoriya had almost broken his arm. From that point on they had resolutely ignored each other. Bakugou not even being on the roster for individual training. Shinsou attributed that to the possibility that they didn’t trust themselves to not kill the other, that was a fight he couldn’t predict the outcome of and he almost wanted to see. Could it be possible that Bakugou had been one of Midoriya’s bullies? The blond boy was violate and insecure enough for it to be possible.

He was suddenly broken from his train of thought by the door to the classroom being busted in, revealing Midoriya wrapped in a dark green sleeping bag, sunglasses on and caramel frappucino in
Shinsou suddenly got a flashback to the first day of class when Aizawa had appeared in a similar fashion.

“Sorry, I’m late. I had like twelve existential crises and four identity ones.” Midoriya said, not sounding at all apologetic.

Those sleeping bags seemed to also double as Mary Poppins' magical purse because somehow Midoriya was able to pull six boxes of Krispy Kreme donuts from its abyss. Kaminari and Mina whooped and proceeded to literally *pounce* on the boxes.

Midoriya stepped out of the sleeping bag and for a moment Shinsou wondered if he got a haircut, then he realized that he had just washed his hair. It was still wet from a shower and pinned into a bun at the top of his head. With the frappucino and bun he looked like a suburban mom, the only thing destroying the illusion was his bandaged knuckles and ragged clothing.

He took a long sip off his drink before casting a lazy eye over the frozen class, “What? I didn’t buy those donuts just for Pikachu and the alien.”

Kirishima didn’t need more prompting, savagely flying at the glazed and fried dough. It was as if someone had unleashed flood gates because as soon as Kiri moved the rest of the student body rushed the donuts. Shinsou was pretty sure he saw Jirou stab someone in the eye with her earphone jack and Tokoyami call on Dark Shadow to airlift an entire box out of reach. Asui then proceeded to use her tongue to snatch it out of the creature's talons and Uraraka used her quirk on both of them so they floated safely above the sugar inspired brawl.

For a second Shinsou debated just brainwashing the whole lot of them and making them move so he could take a pastry. Then he decided he didn’t trust his quirk to handle so many crazed people and elected to wait on the sidelines for the entropy to take its course.

The only others who were sitting out were predictably enough, Todoroki and Bakugou. However, Kirishima had somehow escaped the carnage with five donuts that he had placed on Bakugou’s desk. The red-haired boy himself was sitting in the desk in front of Bakugou and had spun around to face the battered teen. Bakugou was eyeing the donuts warily but didn’t seem to actively try to murder them or Kirishima so that was counted as a win.

Todoroki also wasn’t alone, Midoriya had migrated and was sitting on the desk of the bi-colored boy. Midoriya, of course, had produced more donuts and was trying to chat up Todoroki. But everyone in class 1-A knew you had a better chance trying to get a wall to respond. So Shinsou almost fell out of his chair when he saw Todoroki’s lips move to form words and Midoriya
laughing at those words. Todoroki looked confused as to why Midoriya was laughing so Shinsou could only assume that whatever he said he hadn’t known was funny. Or maybe Midoriya just got gigglely around Todoroki.

That was a thought. Midoriya having a crush. That idea made Shinsou’s head spin. Midoriya didn’t seem like the type to let emotions cloud his judgment or even exist in the first place. No feeling. Just sadism.

Shinsou had to look away before his mind combusted with absolute disbelief.

Unfortunately, he turned just in time for a donut to hit him point-blank in the face. It rebounded off his nose and landed perfectly on the desk. Shinsou was going to demand someone admit to throwing it but then decided that it was more of a gift than a punishment.

Not one to let proof of miracles go uneaten, he savored the glazed dough as he continued to observe the class and wait for Midoriya’s questionably true explanation on Aizawa’s injuries.

Witch was tired.

Well, Witch was always tired. Being the unofficial parent of three insane children did that to a person.

Person.

That word again. “Person”. It was those six letters responsible for his bone-aching weariness. He hadn’t reacted nearly as violently as Cypress, opting instead to let his world crumble around him internally. It was horrifying knowing that someone’s entire existence could be uprooted with a single observation. Witch had always been Izuku Midoriya’s protector, the first line of defense. Even his occupation was directly related to Izu, his vigilantism a way to prove All Might wrong. Even quirkless he could still be a hero, maybe not a conventional one but a hero nonetheless. He was a creature made entirely of spite, trying to offend All Might into realizing that he could have been a hero, even if he didn’t have a quirk.

But that was all null and void now. Because it turns out Izuku did have a quirk. A quirk that had only activated once an actual personality disorder had formed. If Izu was right (and he normally was) then whatever his quirk did to that personality disorder had made it evolve to the point where the ‘alters’ had grown sentient and were actually people. Izu’s body was just as much theirs as it
was his, all of them renting out space.

Witch couldn’t quite pinpoint the exact moment his goals had started to deviate from Izu’s. His vigilantism had morphed from a duty to a hobby, something he actually enjoyed. It served Izuku no purpose to fuck with the police but that was the only thing Witch ever wanted to do. Looking back on it now he probably should have noticed something was up when he had started to feel things other than the mandatory protective streak for Izuku. He should have been tipped off with the wicked satisfaction from escaping from custody and the endearing love for Beetle and Cypress along with his annoyance and exasperation for all of them. Maybe because he had been experiencing emotions like that for so much longer than Cypress he hadn’t reacted as violently.

Or maybe Cypress just reacted violently because he was Cypress.

It really didn’t matter though, it was clear enough that Cypress wasn’t used to feeling anything other than anger. Seeing the world in varying layers of rage and every second as one moment closer to the next fight.

It reminded Witch so much of Katsuki it was almost sickening.

Witch would be the first to admit that he hadn’t seen the thing with Dabi coming. He had fallen asleep and when he had awoken Cypress was in Dabi’s bed, snuggled up against Dabi’s scarred chest absorbing his warmth.

Witch was happy that Cypress had found something other than fury in the world but his resolute need to avoid the fact that this thing with Dabi could actually mean something was painful to watch. All of them had trust issues for days but to Cypress the idea of depending on anyone was unimaginable. He was an avenger. He was just supposed to avenge. The final stage in ridding whatever was plighting Izu.

It would probably be strange for Izuku and Cypress to both be in a relationship with someone using the same body but they were still ultimately different… people. Izuku didn’t seem to have too much of a problem with it so Witch supposed it was acceptable.

But Witch needed to stop worrying about the others until he sorted through the wreckage of himself and pulled it all together.

Izuku had filled him at the moment they were both awake. Witch had sat in absolute silence for the entire exchange, absorbing the information and rejecting it. He hadn’t even believed Izuku until he had explained it to Cypress and had watched his reaction. Then the mirror shattered and it all just kinda sunk in.
He didn’t even know how to explain or sort through everything that was going through his head. It was like this giant amalgamation of fear and betrayal and hope and disbelief.

All he knew was that it was too much and it was slowly crushing him.

Not that he showed it. He would put up a front, for Izu and Cypress. Cypress was still stuck in limbo of hating the world and having his world spin out of control, and despite how Izuku seemed now —explaining what happened to Aizawa entirely truthfully, earning a few outraged cries and pledges of retribution directed at Beetle from the class in his normal melodramatic and sassy fashion— Izuku was not doing good.

His entire world had become just as shattered and all of the conflict in his past meaning nothing. All the years of abuse about being quirkless were null and void now. His worldview had been turned entirely on its head. Witch had been there to see his empty eyes and how exhausted he was. The last time Izuku had gotten this bad he had thrown himself off the edge of a building. Witch didn’t want to see that happen again.

(Especially after everything that had happened in that hospital. The hospital where Cypress had been banished. The hospital where dozens of repressed memories lied in wait, Izuku blissfully unaware of all of them.)

But now Witch had the power to stop Izuku if this latest revelation truly drove him to the edge again. If he would keep himself together long enough to protect Izuku from himself. If push came to shove he would take control and make Izuku be readmitted.

For now, he would ignore the crumbling of his world and just accept it. He was a person now. So what. He would always and forever be Izu’s protector. As an alter or a person he would protect Izuku to his last breath. From himself or anything else.

He had already killed to protect Izuku Midoriya. It should be much easier to keep Izuku from killing himself.

Chapter End Notes

Discord
Beetle didn’t quite know where he was.

He had wisely disappeared into the folds of the mindscape and had been wandering for whoever knows how long. He still didn’t know if they were far enough to escape Cypress’ wrath for the holes they had poked through Aizawa. It was by pure luck that he had even managed to get away before Cypress regrouped and decided to make them a pincushion.

He understood everyone’s outrage, he liked Aizawa too. He wasn’t like the other ‘heroes’. Aizawa didn’t want all the limelight surrounding heroics. He was bitter and slightly sadistic. He didn’t particularly mind the mildly torturous training Izu put the class through as long as he didn’t seriously injure anyone. Shouta’s little speech to Izu after the USJ experience about his guilt about failing the students and offering his assistance if Izuku ever felt the undying need to jump off a roof hadn’t just surprised Izuku.

None of them had ever known someone that genuinely cared if Izuku lived or died other than Inko dearest. Izu’s second therapist didn’t count. It was in Kazuo’s job description to make sure one of his patients didn’t off themselves. Witch and Cypress didn’t count either. At this point they were basically family so they were lumped in with Inko. It was still mind-boggling to all of them that there was someone out there that wasn’t required to care that did.

It was because Beetle didn’t mind Shouta that he knew he fucked up. Fucked up bad. He was a villain. If he didn’t loathe a hero then imagine how the others who weren’t murderers felt. Actually, that was a bad ratio. Witch was a murderer. Cypress had every intent. Okay. Rephrase. If he didn’t loathe a hero then imagine how the others who weren’t wanted by every pro-hero in the city felt.

Despite the very real possibility of being Cypress’ first kill Beetle couldn’t bring themselves to necessarily regret their actions. If they hadn’t shot Shouta there was a decent chance they would have been caught and exposed. Who knows what that would spell for Izu. Being simultaneously outed for being a vigilante and the very villain whom your best teacher pal potently hated. It didn’t really matter that they technically weren’t him he had still condoned it. Plus it had been his body
doing the deeds. Izu’s mind honestly couldn’t handle having the single person who cared for them hate them again. Inko had taken some serious work convincing and then it had taken months after Izu was released and Inko found out about Beetle and Witch for them to trust that she wouldn’t turn them in. Even now Inko found reasons to be out of the house at nearly every hour of the day, hiding behind the flimsy excuse of working to pay off Izu’s bills. Disregarding the fact that Beetle had paid them off the moment they had gotten enough money from various deals.

Of course, the fact that Inko knew about her son’s alters and what they did was conveniently hidden from Izuku. Inko still loved Izuku to death and didn’t entirely hate the alters because she recognized they cared just as much but she still wasn’t comfortable being in the presence of murderers which was entirely understandable. Inko’s knowledge of their existence had been voided out of Izu’s memory along with... everything else.

Beetle wasn’t sure if Inko dearest would be consoled or horrified by the latest development. Beetle himself had gone through both of those stages. He had had quite a long time to ponder what it meant that all communication to the others had been cut off when Aizawa had activated his quirk. He also had an equal amount of time to freak about what it meant.

If Beetle was correct in their theory, which he was quite sure he was, his panic attack about it was well deserved. He had taken a good hour hyperventilating about what this meant for all of them, Izuku especially.

If they were actually the result of Izu’s birth quirk and they were actual... people then everything they had ever known needed to be rethought. All things considering Beetle thought he had handled it quite well, only passing out once. After that, he had been totally fine with it and was much more concerned about how the others were taking it.

Beetle knew people. He could read a man like a book and manipulate them like a marionette. Politics, loopholes, and handling people were all things he specialized in. Rich coming from the insane one he knows. But it was true. Therefore, he had a decent idea of how the others were reacting to the news.

Cypress was most definitely not taking it well. From what Beetle had observed the poor child had more trust issues than Izuku and a violent streak that encompassed their entire being. He wore his anger like a second skin and utterly rebuked any emotion other than rage. This new person thing meant he would have to accept that he had feelings other than righteous fury. In his mind, he was an avenger and nothing more. He wasn’t allowed to feel anything other than hatred and anger. Cypress clung onto how he was nothing more than an alter, deathly afraid to even have hopes or dreams he could fail at.

It had come as a surprise that he had even dared to start a fight club. It had thrown off Beetle’s
entire algorithm for Cypress but he soon realized it was Cypress’ way to abdicate the insurmountable amounts of pure fury that coursed through his veins. He was just picky about where he got his fists bloodied and didn’t want to use the pig pen around the city. Cypress had let his anger get the best of him last time, resulting in his banishment. Cypress was self-aware enough to know to keep the fury in check, it was on a short leash that he was trying his best to control. As far as Izuku was concerned Cypress losing control was the Shigaraki incident. Neither Beetle nor Witch knew this was true. That wasn’t Cypress snapping. That was the rope fraying. Cypress had been quick to patch it up but he knew that if he didn’t find an outlet soon there would be blood running in the streets.

It was partially Beetle’s fault that Cypress was so pissed all the time. Cypress had always been pissed anyway. Even before the hospital. He was an avenger alter in the beginning after all. Then the hospital happened and Witch and Beetle had both agreed it was best to put Cypress somewhere where he couldn’t commit mass murder. Beetle had only meant until he had calmed down. Not for the months that Witch had kept him exiled. It was well deserved but Witch couldn’t see how keeping him with no way to channel his anger would be more harmful. Beetle had been trying to get Cypress released forever and Izuku finding out about Cypress’ existence had been the final push needed.

Beetle had actually winced when Cypress appeared with neon pink hair and actually radiated fury. If Cypress snapping before had been enough to call for his exile then him snapping with months of repressed rage boiling under his skin would be catastrophic. Cypress didn’t hold any hard feelings about his banishment, he agreed that it had been necessary. He knew just how dangerous he could get. Beetle was sure that he was aware that Beetle’s provocation weren’t just random. Beetle knew when he was reaching his limit and had to give him someone to rage at before everything boiled over. Cypress ran along with it, being bloodthirsty and pissed at everyone he wasn’t particularly picky about who became his punching bag.

None of them wanted to see what would happen to Izuku if Cypress lost control over that rage and they were both prepared to do whatever it took to keep Izuku safe and sane.

Beetle had always aimed to protect Izuku, granted in a way that none of the ‘sane’ alters agreed with. That was fair actually, Beetle wasn’t going to deny that their moral compass was seriously skewed. But it regardless was their way of protecting Izuku, establish connections with dangerous people and building walls of contacts and favors. In their line of work betrayal could not be tolerated, if they let one traitor get off easy it would set the precedent that anyone could turn on them once a deal ran out. In dealing with the type of people they dealt with they couldn’t do anything less extreme than murder.

Maybe Beetle had always been a little flamboyant with his methods of disposal but it gave them a distinct calling card.

So what Beetle had grown to like the respect and fear that his name inspired and therefore the acts that got him there but who could really blame him?
Izuku had spent nearly his entire life being crushed under the heel of society, beaten, bruised, and contempted for being quirkless. Excuse him for reveling in the life that allowed them to be held in esteem by all. The life that had given him a quirk.

Witch was probably taking it slightly better than Cypress. He had been in commission longer and therefore had more desires and had discovered more of his personality than Cypress. However, Witch would also be wounded by the news of his new sentience. He had always dedicated himself entirely to protecting Izuku, that same protection subconsciously growing to encompass Beetle and Cypress. Beetle doubted that that loyalty would be shaken by the latest revelation and it was a fifty-fifty chance of Witch accepting it without comment or rejecting it and letting it eat him up from the inside. Personally, Beetle voted on the latter. Witch would deny it and for the sake of Cypress and Izu, he would hide his own wreckage. He would try to be the harbor in the storm, ignoring the fact that the harbor was imploding.

It was actually Witch that Beetle was the most concerned about. Witch would be able to help Izu and Cypress sort through their crumbling world but would refuse the assistance of anyone for his own plight. Despite Beetle’s knowledge of what made people tick he was useless when it came to being a therapist and helping people deal with emotions. That had always been Witch’s job. Izu would be the best bet in getting through to the vigilante but he would probably focus on keeping himself together to be of any assistance. Cypress would be over it fastest but was even more useless than Beetle when it came to feelings.

They were backed into a wall with how to help Witch and if the vigilante fell so would all of them. Witch was the backbone of them all. He kept them functional and out of jail (literally). They couldn’t afford to have Witch force himself to crumble in an effort to make sure the others didn’t shatter.

Izu was probably taking it as well as could be expected. Every hardship he had ever gone through was the result of his apparent quirklessness, learning it had all been for nada would probably seriously skew his worldview for a while. He would probably be an absolute depressed wreck that is pretending he isn’t a total depressed wreck. There was the slight possibility that he might try to leap from another rooftop but Beetle trusted Witch to keep that from happening.

Of course, that responsibility would fall to Beetle if Witch ended up self-destructing first and Izu would have a better chance of surviving by entrusting his mental health to a chocolate eclair.

Beetle was… well, Beetle didn’t really know how they were doing. After the preliminary panic attack, everything was good. It probably would have caused much longer of freak out time for Beetle if he hadn’t already been questioning the integrity of their altership. He had always found it strange the level of control they exhibited, effortlessly pushing the others into command of the body they apparently shared.

The confirmation still had come as a bit of a shock, sending that wicked panic attack to punctuate the point.
Regardless, Beetle knew they were handling it much better than the others probably were. It only took an hour to come to terms and accept his independence from Izu. He had always been the most different anyway.

With a start he realized that he had run far deeper into the mindscape then they had intended. He had never been this deep before, he had known this area had existed but had never felt the need to travel here. In fact, even being this close made him want to turn tail and book it out of there. He had already experienced all of these terrible repressed memories once and was in no rush to watch them on repeat, thank you very much.

As far as Beetle was aware Izuku didn’t know of this little niche, something that all of the alters had agreed on keeping hidden from Izu. There was a reason those memories were repressed and it was for Izuku’s own sanity that he remained oblivious to their existence.

Turning on their heel Beetle began the long trek back to the others, hopefully by the time they were back everyone had cooled down enough to not murder him on sight. It was a fifty-fifty chance that Izuku telling them about their new humanity had sobered Cypress enough for him not to cripple Beetle. Or maybe it had enraged him further.

Well, hiding away also had the very good chance of pissing Cypress off more and Beetle couldn’t really afford to pass Cypress’ very low level of tolerance.

Maybe it would be best to cash in some favors on Cypress’ behalf.

Pulling out their phone the villain scrolled down their very long list of contacts, they weren’t sure if this would work but it was worth a shot.

He pressed the phone to his ear and smiled when the line clicked to life and a very rude voice demanded why they were being called.

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Izuku wasn’t sure what to do about the current situation.

Not the current quirk situation that he was resolutely not thinking about but the one that involved Beetle lying on the floor with a few bruised ribs and a switchblade to his throat, Cypress being the
perpetrator of the crime of course. Half of his bubblegum hair was braided into tiny tight plaits on the side of his head, crystal blue eyes glowing with fury.

Now Izuku didn’t want Beetle dead but he didn’t entirely disagree with Cypress beating the shit out of him for shooting Aizawa. Okay, maybe it was necessary but was shooting him twice really needed? He knew Beetle had only shot Aizawa the second time was because he just wanted to shoot the gun at something that would cause bodily harm.

Witch seemed to be in the same conundrum, frowning off to the side with his eyes narrowed. Izuku could see him mentally struggle about whether he should save Beetle’s ass or make him figure it out himself as punishment. Turns out Witch was more bitter about the whole thing that he had previously let on being he just sighed and went back to painting his nails jet black. Izuku had never seen Witch do anything extra to his appearance, whether that be makeup or even styling his hair into anything other than the fishtail, so that he was so meticulously painting his nails for no apparent reason was interesting.

Izu turned back to Cypress and Beetle, intent on finding out if the villain was dead yet or working some kind of word magic to placate Cypress.

Izu blinked in surprise when he saw the insane smile Beetle usually wore whenever Cypress attacked him was missing. At that moment Beetle didn’t look crazy. The lack of insanity revealing something much darker. Something dangerous. Maybe Izuku was imagining it but he could swear he smelt smoke from fires long extinguished.

Cypress, however, didn’t seem deterred at the sudden level of lucidness and if anything increased his settings from terrifying to heart-attack inducing.

“You know that shit doesn’t work on me Beelzebub. I’ve seen you a hell of a lot more sane than this.” Cypress’ voice glinted like gun metal but Izuku still had to choke back a laugh at Cypress using Beetle’s actual name. It somehow undermined the threat in his words and the questions it posed.

“And I’ve seen you a lot more pissed. We have a deal remember.” Beetle’s voice was still as airy and high-pitched as normal but there was a slight echo to it that made it blurry. It reminded Izuku of burned parchment and ghosts that made the hairs on his arms stand at attention.

He had the sudden notion that this wasn’t a confrontation he should be listening to. In the corner of his eyes, he saw Witch go deathly still, his gaze having snapped to the couple and Izuku could see the warning in his eyes. Izuku felt suddenly betrayed. He had thought there were no secrets between them. This apparently was not the case.
Cypress growled, something low and feral. “It wasn’t a deal. It was a promise. I hate deals.”

Witch was making cutting motions with his arms, alerting Izu that they were entering dangerous territory.

Beetle’s madnessless irises flicked to Witch and then Izuku. He didn’t make eye contact but a manic grin bloomed onto his lips and the insanity returned to his gaze. It was so seamless that Izuku wondered if it had ever been missing.

The villain cocked his head, noticing what Cypress had been trying to hide with his hair. Cypress seemed to have relaxed slightly at Beetle’s insanity returning but immediately tensed when Beetle’s smile grew incrementally and he said, “Just what did I miss while I was making all those calls about the Aviary.”

Cypress blinked and the knife was lifted off the hollow of Beetle’s throat, “You were doing what?”

Beetle sat up and winced as he felt his ribs, “Yes, yes. I called in some favors. The Aviary should be up and running by Monday.”

“I am almost impressed.”

“Your welcome. Now just who gave you those?” Beetle said, pointing an accusing finger to the dark bruises dotting Cypress’ collarbone.

“My boyfriend.”

“Your what.”

How these two could go from trying to kill each other to having a perfectly civil conversation in the span of two seconds was truly astonishing.

“I drank half of Kurogiri’s bar last night. I and Dabi hooked up. I woke up, had a crisis about being a person, punched a mirror, and then made me and Dabi an official thing.”

Beetle listened with a bemused expression, lip quivering with barely contained laughter. Finally, the pressure was too much and he doubled over in hysteric, tears streaming out of his eyes either from the pain of his ribs or the hilarity of it all.

Cypress frowned, “What?”
Beetle took a few moments to compose himself, wiping a tear off his freckles before looking directly at Izuku, “Are we collecting the whole set?”

Izuku stared back, confused.

Beetle’s mouth formed an O as his eyes flicked between Cypress and Izuku. Both looked extremely bewildered. “I must have forgotten to tell you. Oops. Dabi is Todoroki’s missing older brother.”

Simultaneously, Izuku and Cypress blinked.

There was a pregnant pause before Cypress got up the nerve to speak, “I’m sorry what.”

Beetle looked slightly guilty but he couldn’t disguise his absolute delight at catching them both so off guard, “Dabi’s actual name is Touya. He left the Todoroki household a while ago. Endeavor had poisoned his view of heroes so he became a villain. Textbook story actually.”

Cypress didn’t say a word. Opting instead to stand up and leave.

Izuku was tempted to join him. This entire thing was already weird. But Cypress’ boyfriend and Izuku’s crush being related took it to a whole new level of bizarre.

Thinking back on it Izuku probably should have seen the whole ‘Dabi is a Todoroki’ thing coming. Potent fire quirk. Hatred of heroes. Turquoise eyes. Truly the whole thing was just another stone in the wall of realizations and revelations that were wreaking havoc on his mental health. He could practically feel his meds starting to lose effect. But hey, remember, if things got too much suicide was always an option.

(AN: Guys don’t listen to Izuku. Disregard that statement. Suicide is bad.)

Witch the watched the entire exchange with perfectly cultivated disdain. It had been a long night and the insanity was apparently leaking into his day. They hadn’t even been awake five hours and they had already found out that Cypress’ brand new villain boyfriend was Izuku’s crush’s missing brother. Witch was almost scared to go out tonight if they were following the same pattern of ridiculously vital information just being thrown in their path with no preamble they might not survive long enough to put Izuku’s insane plan for the Sports Festival into action. All of this could ultimately be traced back to Beetle but it really wasn’t his fault that he was the messenger.

Witch suddenly let out a groan that broke Izuku out of his self-destructive trance. Witch had never groaned in such frustration and defeat before. He didn’t offer any explanation but pointed up at nothing. “Sorry Izu but I just remembered that we’re having a training session with Ashido right now.”
Izuku swore, he probably should stop having full on conversations in his brain when he was around normal people. “Welp. The class definitely thinks I’m crazy. This is like the… fifth time this has happened?”

“Ballpark estimate,” Beetle chirped, not looking up from his spot on the floor.

Izuku could deal with this all later. Right now he had a student with a potent acid quirk whom he was making run laps and he wasn’t sure how long it would take to corrode the training field.

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Mina wasn’t entirely sure what was up with Midoriya.

There was definitely something up with their student teacher. The earlier conversation with Kaminari about him being some sort of cryptid or eldritch being hadn’t been just for kicks. Midoriya gave off a real ‘I’ve been alive over twelve thousand years and have lost all faith in humanity’ vibe. Maybe he was some low-key god of torturous training and peach schnapps. She would need to pay more attention to him and see if she saw him perform some miracle and make a bottle of tequila or something appear in his hand.

So far he had produced six boxes of donut from a sleeping bag and she was fairly sure that he couldn’t fit all of those in there, single-handedly take out a fourth of the class in the dark with no quirk, best more villains that Aizawa at the USJ, know about their teacher being shot, and apparently had a fifth of the city under thumb. Mina wasn’t even sure she wanted to know where UA had dug him up. Some ancient temple perhaps? They had tried to have Tooru trail him once but she hadn’t lasted a minute before Midoriya called her out and told her to skedaddle.

Mina really hoped Midoriya hadn’t figured out that it had been Mina behind that whole incident. Maybe this was her punishment. Running laps until he told her to stop, her leaving an acidic trail in her wake. She wasn’t sure which she wanted actually. If he didn’t know and this was just standard she didn’t want to imagine what he would do if he did find out.

She was too tired for such heavy thinking. Her legs were puddles and her lungs felt like she had just swallowed glass shards. Unfortunately for her, Midoriya was standing by the edge of the field and he showed no signs of telling her to stop. Actually…

Mina passed him by, acid making her fast enough to leave a slight wind in her wake. Midoriya didn’t even so much as blink.
She dared to slow to a walk. Midoriya didn’t scream at her to keep running so she took at a good sign. He hadn’t moved a muscle and was staring into space, eyes glazed.

Mina backpedaled until she was standing directly in front of Midoriya. There wasn’t so much as a flicker of recognition in his eyes. He looked a million miles away from Mina and the training field. What was he doing? Intercepting prayers?

She waved a hand in front of his face. He blinked but didn’t unfreeze. Mina was slightly offended. Wasn’t this important enough to not space off?

Was he sleeping with his eyes open? Midoriya always looked tired enough for it to be plausible.

Suddenly, Midoriya shook his head and Mina jumped back in surprise. Midoriya’s eyes refocused and he frowned, “Sorry about that. I just found out that my... brother’s... new villain boyfriend is my crush’s missing older brother.”

That was the problem with Midoriya. Mina could ever tell if he was telling the truth or not. The whole situation sounded crazy and like a total fib but Midoriya said with such conviction it sounded true. Plus, it was Midoriya and anything could be true about him.

Assuming that the statement was correct there was a lot to dissect. Apparently, Midoriya had a brother had a boyfriend who was a villain and said villain was Midoriya’s crush’s missing brother. First off, Midoriya had a crush. The idea was almost laughable. Midoriya didn’t seem like the type.

Mina wanted to ask about that but instead opted for the safer choice, “You have a brother?”

Midoriya sighed, “Two actually. And then one genderfluid sibling. Three siblings total.”

Mina furrowed her brow, where were their parents?

With a start, she realized that Midoriya had no way of receiving this information. He made it sound like he just found out but Mina hadn’t seen him on any form of communication.

Add it to the tally of weird stuff Midoriya did.
“Who’s the villain?”

Midoriya was patting around his tattered jacket, without looking up he replied, “A hot bastard who bonded with my brother over baseball bats.”

Mina had a feeling that the baseball bats were for more than playing baseball.

“And is your brother a villain?” Mina asked hesitantly. Was this a question she wanted an answer to?

Midoriya had apparently found what he was looking for: a silver flask and contemplated the question. “Not this one.”

*Not this one* implied that one of them *was* a villain and Mina wasn’t quite sure what to do with that information.

Midoriya took a long sip from the flask and Mina could smell the alcohol. She held out a hand, “I want some.”

Midoriya looked scandalized, “No! You’re a hero in training! You can’t be drinking! It’ll destroy your body!”

Mina narrowed her eyes, “But you’re doing it.”

Midoriya winked and took another long drink, “Yes, but I am neither a hero nor going to be alive long enough to have to deal with its permanent effects.”

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**AlienQueen:** Well that was interesting and slightly concerning

**Pikachu:** MINA YOUR ALIVE

**Knuckles:** YOU SURVIVED

**DuckTape:** Bravo you lived
AlienQueen: It was a educational experience in more ways than one????

Pikachu: What happened??

DuckTape: What did midoriya do to you

Knuckles: Come on he can’t be that bad

AlienQueen: Well I can’t feel my legs and the world is spinning but thats not the point

AlienQueen: I learned some shit about midoriya

Pikachu: More stuff to add to the file??

AlienQueen: Indeed

DuckTape: Tell

AlienQueen: K so he had be running laps which sucked but whatever but he had totally spaced out and i went to make sure he didnt have a stroke or smth and it took like two minutes but he finally unfroze and told me that he had just found out that his brothers new villain bf is his crushes missing brother

Knuckles: that is…

Knuckles: A lot

Pikachu: There is so much in that

DuckTape: No comment wtf
AlienQueen: I’m not done

AlienQueen: So I asked him about his brother and he said he had three siblings

AlienQueen: Two brothers and one genderfluid

AlienQueen: And basically said that one of them is a villain

Pikachu: …

Pikachu: I’m still trying to wrap my mind around the fact that Midoriya has a /crush/

AlienQueen: Ikr

Knuckes: Ok so Bakubro grew up with Midoriya and I asked him about that and he just looked at me super weird before saying that Midoriya is an only child

DuckTape: So Midoriya was messing with us??

AlienQueen: It didn’t seem like it

AlienQueen: But I’m still not done

Pikachu: Jesus christ woman what else is there

AlienQueen: I asked him about why hes allowed to drink and im not and he said and I quote “Yes, but I am neither a hero nor going to be alive long enough to have to deal with it’s permanent effects”
AlienQueen: Which raises alot of red flags

AlienQueen: Is Midoriya okay???

DuckTape: Yikes

Pikachu: Yikes

Knuckles: Yikes

Insomnia: …

Insomnia: Not sure if this will help the situation but during our training session Midoriya said he onced jumped off a building

AlienQueen: !!!!!

Pikachu: And you’re mentioning this now

Pikachu: Also

Pikachu: Your in this group chat??

Insomnia: Apparently

Knuckles: Ok so I just asked Bakubro about that too and he got like really defensive but also confirmed that that happened like a year ago
DuckTape: The only conclusion im drawing from this is that midoriya is not okay

AlienQueen: He really isn't is he

Insomnia: Doesn’t look like it

Knuckles: We need to make sure he doesn't do something like that again

AlienQueen: Mhm

DuckTape: Make a Midoriya protection squad group chat?

AlienQueen: Good plan

Chapter End Notes

Discord
Shouto didn’t quite know what to think of Izuku Midoriya. He wasn’t so naive to agree with the rest of the class that he was a celestial or eldritch being, equal parts because he had spent more time with him than the average student, knowing his backstory and how the Todoroki family had become weaved into it, and having practicality drilled into his mind from a young age. Shouto didn’t believe in gods. If they were as merciful as people insisted then they would never have let his father continue to be such a flaming garbage can without consequence.

Somehow his thinking that gods didn’t exist made it better than if they did. Because if they did they certainly did not deserve to be worshipped. If they existed they were cruel things that people revered. It reminded Shouto too much of Endeavor to let is sit soundly in his mind.

Midoriya also didn’t believe in gods. They had had an entire conversation centered around the possibility of there being a higher power. Shouto’s opinions were something he kept close to his chest but for some reason around Midoriya, they flew freely. It was something that was almost terrifying in its unfamiliarity. Shouto casually found himself halfway through a conversation with Midoriya where he was defending his opinions or agreeing with Midoriya’s. Arguments were common things to have while Shouto was training and Midoriya was supervising. Arguments. They weren’t the type of arguments that he and his father got into. Not the type that left the situation worst and Shouto small and shriveled.

The first time it had happened Shouto had frozen. Become cold from the tips of his fingers to his toes. Midoriya didn’t pause his tirade about corrupt hero economics but his eyes had flicked to Shouto so he knew he had noticed. Shouto had half prepared himself to face scalding remarks that left his heart hurting and his pulse skyrocketing for a reason he couldn’t name.

But Midoriya didn’t stop to yell at him about... well about what Shouto didn’t really know but it was what he had expected. Of course, Midoriya didn’t. Why would he? Midoriya wasn’t Endeavor. Midoriya wasn’t even close.

After that Shouto started to notice it. It being how he didn’t know how to argue. At some point, Shouto had forgotten how to argue so he started to pretend he didn’t care. He didn’t know when it
had happened. He had started to become cold. No one could yell at him about showing emotion if he just… didn’t.

Shouto didn’t cry anymore. He shed his tears in sheets of ice. He pretended the stuff he didn’t know didn’t bother him. He pretended that it didn’t hurt when he saw Endeavor do something good and heroic on TV. He pretended that it didn’t burn when he was nice and it almost made his father’s anger seem like a nightmare. He pretended it didn’t scar when the nightmare proved to be real.

And Midoriya didn’t ask about it. He noticed it but it wasn’t acknowledged. Shouto was grateful. Midoriya seemed to understand and Shouto was grateful.

And maybe it was because Midoriya understood that Shouto stopped being scared to share his opinions. Shouto started to like the training sessions. They were filled with smooth sheets of ice and meaningless debates about everything from ethics to the best way to run. Shouto had begun to trust Midoriya. So when Midoriya had asked him to meet with him on Saturday to talk about the one topic he had never pushed Shouto had hesitantly accepted.

It was strangely reassuring to know that Midoriya was trying to avenge them. Them being Rei and Fuyumi and Natsuo and Touya and… him. Shouto knew Midoriya would do it. Midoriya would bring Endeavor down. For them. Midoriya had no personal squabble with the number two hero. But he would do it anyway and that knowledge for some reason made Shouto feel hot all over.

Tomorrow night Shouto would meet with Midoriya to talk about how they would do it. The very idea made him buzz with excitement and trepidation. Was he really going to do this? It would very possibly end with Endeavor being forever shamed or possibly arrested.

But that was tomorrow and today he had one more training session with Midoriya. Midoriya who had shown up late for undisclosed reasons with bandaged knuckles bearing knowledge that Aizawa had been shot the previous night.

Midoriya was leading dozens of lives. Shouto was envious; he had been nothing but his father’s for so long their lives had bled together.

Standing in the middle of the training field Shouto studied Midoriya. Midoriya didn’t look any different from this morning when he had appeared at Shouto’s desk with donuts and a laugh born of nothing Shouto considered particular funny. Midoriya always looked like Midoriya. Exhausted but exuberant. But there was something different about it today. Shouto had worn enough masks to recognize them on others. Midoriya had always been suspiciously unmasked but today there was a
damper on his normal mood. Less exuberance and just… exhaustion.

Midoriya had always given Shouto space and although he hungered to know what had all transpired in the last twenty-four hours he would not push it unless Midoriya brought it up.

“Are we continuing where we left off last time? With the ice wall?” Shouto said this with the intent to try and bring the bouncing joy that infected Midoriya whenever they were playing around with his quirk.

The bouncing joy didn’t come. Instead, Midoriya averted his gaze and said “No. Today we are going to work on controlling your fire.”

Shouto didn’t respond. Midoriya knew. Midoriya knew that Shouto couldn’t. Wouldn’t. Midoriya knew that it kept him up at night. That sometimes he wanted to claw at his arm and face until he scraped out his fire. Scraped out his father. Scraped out the proof. Scraped out the thing that his father worshipped.

“No,” Shouto felt the mask starting to slip back into place. He had been so stupid to think that Midoriya could be trusted. That Midoriya understood.

Midoriya’s gaze snapped into his. There was something in his eyes that looked an awful lot like regret. It made Shouto pause. “Todoroki, please. You can’t keep going like this. Repressing a part of yourself. It was never his power. It’s your power.”

Shouto didn’t respond.

Midoriya closed his eyes and swayed to a beat that Shouto couldn’t hear. When he opened them again Midoriya’s mask was gone entirely. Shouto saw that there was nothing there. Nothing there but a bone-weariness and hollow soul. Midoriya was a boy drained of life. For the first time, Shouto saw how Midoriya could have possibly tried to end his life. Midoriya had always been untouchable. The idea of his previous suicide never seemed really true. It seemed true now. This must have been how he looked when he stood on that rooftop.

“A year ago I would have killed for that power. A year ago a nearly died because I didn’t have it. But that was a year ago and I’m not going to guilt trip you into using it. You can’t tell me that you sometimes don’t feel human. Sometimes you don’t feel real. You feel broken and shattered and incomplete. Sometimes you don’t know if you are you. If there is one thing I know it’s control and how exhausting it is to fight for it every minute of every day.”
At some point, Midoriya had stopped talking about Shouto. It still applied and Shouto was stuck somewhere between confusion and elation. Midoriya understood more than he had thought and it made Shouto feel... whole. There had always been some part of him that told him he was overreacting and making up fake notions. To know someone who got it so completely made him wonder what had happened to make Midoriya understand.

“But you learn that control isn’t always needed. They are begging you to work in tandem. Let go. I promise it won’t make you any less you. For the first time in my useless life, I’m telling the truth. Endeavor never owned you. Your power is not his and it never will be. You shouldn’t be imprisoned by your lineage.”

You shouldn’t be imprisoned by your lineage.

You don’t have to be a prisoner of your blood.

Nearly similar words from a memory resurfaced. Rei had told him that. Rei was right. Midoriya was right.

Fire sung in Shouto’s veins. A chorus of smoldering embers. All around him there were flames. It was a power unshackled. There was a ghost of a smile on Midoriya’s face, illuminated by orange and yellows.

Shouto was careful to keep the fire an arm’s length away from the green-haired boy. He didn’t want to accidentally burn him.

Midoriya pulled out a crumpled pack of cigarettes. He didn’t bother with a lighter. He used the living pyre named Todoroki Shouto to set it alight. He took a long drag and crossed his arms. Shouto’s eyes prickled as Midoriya smiled. Shouto would set the world ablaze for that smile. It was a million sunrises, unburdened by whatever weight Midoriya held on his shoulders.

It made the blaze rise higher. He probably couldn’t hear him over the roar of the flames but Shouto shouted anyway, “Thank you Midoriya.”

Midoriya mouthed back, “Call me Izuku.”
Midoriya wasn’t a god. Izuku Midoriya deserved to be worshipped.

—

Bakugou knew he didn’t deserve anything. He was as bad as a murderer.

He knew he didn’t deserve Kirishima, turning up at his desk with donuts and small talk that had made his shoulders relax.

For a moment it was almost like he was a good person.

But then he saw Deku in the corner laughing with half n’ half and he remembered he was a monster.

Chapter End Notes

Discord
It took Cypress and obscenely long amount of time to get ready. It took him an even longer amount of time to run around the mall and grab all of the needed materials to make Izuku’s body look like him. He was taking his promise to Dabi very seriously and even went so far to mark his hands with sharpie and splatter them with spray paint.

He curled his hair to make it more closely resemble the wild ringlets that outdid Izuku’s and it took three boxes of pink hair dye to get it the right neon shade. He took a knife to his new flannel shirt and shredded it artfully along with brutally distressing his black jeans. Colorful splashes of spray paint randomly painted across the dark denim. Izuku wouldn’t let him actually pierce his ears so Cypress settled for a sleeve of clip ons. His eyes were colored icy blue.

Beetle mercilessly teased Cypress about his attention to detail but Cypress quickly shut him down with the accusation that he was just a lonely bitch.

Izuku ignored the writhing snake of jealousy curling in his stomach. It seemed unfair that Cypress, debatably the most incompatible of all of them, got a boyfriend before Izu. Not that Izuku wasn’t happy for him. He was. He definitely was. But he was stuck still pining after Shouto and hadn’t gotten up the courage to deal with it yet.

But he was going to deal with it. After today’s overwhelming success in training and finally getting Shouto to use his fire along with achieving first name basis Izuku had made up his mind to ask Shouto out on a date. Now, Izuku didn’t quite know when he was going to do it but he would. He may or may not have accidentally poured out a little bit too much of his soul in an effort to get Shouto to understand his personal worth and if he could do that he could ask him out to coffee.

Right?

Izuku knows all about secrets. Hell, his existence was practically a secret. He was very very good at keeping secrets. However, he also had got a 100% on his self-awareness quiz so that meant that eliminated one types of secrets. People could keep secrets from themselves and many did. Those secrets basically boiled down to I am afraid but since Izuku was good at keeping secrets from everyone but himself he acknowledged that he was afraid.

Fear wasn’t uncommon. Izuku lived a majority of his life afraid. He was afraid to the point it made
him brave. He just ignored his fear and powered through it. Despite what he led people to believe he was still as scared as the boy he had been before he decided to dive head first off a building. The only difference that he stopped really fearing the fear.

But why was Izuku so scared to asked Shouto out on a stupid date? Why was he so scared that he had a quirk? Why was he so scared that he shared a conscious with three other people?

It scared him that he didn’t know why he couldn’t push the fear away.

He knew it wasn’t for the fear of being rejected or becoming insignificant compared to the others. Izuku was constantly rejected. One more rejection would just add to the tally. He also already knew he was insignificant. He had always known he was replaceable. It wasn’t anything new. Izuku had always known himself and it terrified him that he didn’t know himself now.

Maybe it was like he told Shouto. He didn’t feel human or real or complete. While that was true it didn’t actually bother him that much. He had never been complete and being human or real wasn’t a major concern. If people didn’t accept him it didn’t matter. They didn’t anyway.

They didn’t accept him when he was quirkless and they definitely wouldn’t accept him if he had a quirk that made people. Besides, Izuku wasn’t even sure he technically had a quirk. If they were being technical then Beetle was the only one that had a quirk.

He would tell Shouto about it. About how he shared a body with a villain, vigilante, and… Cypress. He would tell Shouto about how Cypress was dating his long lost brother. He didn’t want to keep secrets from Shouto and then lose him when he found out about it.

Because people would find out about it. He had given some hints to Ashido. Izuku knew secrets and he knew that most secrets were given away. His was too large to never be found out. He wasn’t naïve enough to think Aizawa and Class 1-A would forgive him. That’s fine though. He never deserved them in the first place. Izuku was used to being abandoned by things he didn’t deserve.

It was some small consolation knowing that Beetle, Witch, and Cypress would never leave him. They physically couldn’t. Although, Izuku wondered how long their unconditional love and protectiveness would last. He almost wished that they could leave before they started to loathe the situation they were in, forever bound to a deteriorating body that wasn’t their own.

But then again, they had never known anything else and you can’t miss what you never had.
Izuku wondered how long it would take for them to start to loathe him. It would happen sometime. Izuku hadn’t been lying when he called them his siblings. They were that and more. But, siblings could learn to hate each other and being stuck with each other constantly would eventually turn their love sour.

Witch was scared that Izuku would try and kill himself again. It was a valid concern. Izuku had considered it. However, he didn’t know what would happen if their communal body died. Would the others die too? It wasn’t a risk Izuku was willing to take so, for now, he would stay alive. For their sake.

A sudden screaming broke him from his dangerous train of thought. To anyone else, it would be concerning but Izuku lived with Cypress and Beetle. Screaming was the second most common thing besides swearing.

As usual, it was Beetle who was screaming. It was less of a terrified Cypress-is-trying-to-kill-me scream and more of a Witch-is-trying-to-make-me-eat-something-other-than-candy type scream.

Witch was trying to steal the bag of sour gummy worms away from Beetle. Izuku found this offensive. No one should try and steal anyone’s gummy worms. Even their residential vodka mom.

Cypress also found this offensive and the screaming annoying but his eyeliner needed his undivided attention if he was going to get it sharp enough to skin Dabi if necessary. He shouted for Witch to let Beetle rot their teeth and Beetle to stop screaming like a little bitch and fight back.

Beetle ended up letting go but then pulling out another larger bag out from the pocket of their sweatshirt. Witch gave up and turned to Cypress, “Cy,”

Cypress scowled at the nickname and popped his lips to even out the wine red lipstick, “What?”

“Can you bring my vigilante stuff with. I want to go out and fuck with the police a bit. It’s been a long time.”

Cypress shrugged, “Sure. I don’t give a shit. Just don’t get us caught. You can have control at midnight or something.”

Izuku groaned. He would be sore as shit tomorrow. Witch had the highest pain tolerance of all of them and didn’t bother to notice when they passed the breaking point. There was also a decent
chance that he may be shot to have to jump through a window in an effort to escape the police or a pro-hero.

“Don’t get us killed.”

Witch looked offended, “That is literally everyone else’s job.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes, “You sassed. Witch. Are you drunk?”

“I have to put up with Cypress and Dabi’s romance for hours. Let me try and drown it out.”

Beetle cackled, “And you say we are the bad influences.”

Witch and Izuku said, “You are,” at the same time as Cypress said, “We are.”

Beetle blew a raspberry and continued to eat their gummy worms in pouty silence.

—

Thirty minutes later Cypress arrived at Kurogiri’s bar looking his goddamn best. Dabi had wanted to see what he actually looked like and here it fucking was.

He hadn’t specifically done himself up to the point of it being noticeable but Cypress knew he looked good. He fucking better for the hours of hair and makeup he put himself through.

Toga was the only one present at the bar and when she saw Cypress standing in all his zombie-apocalypse-graffiti-neon glory she had wolf whistled and exclaimed in joy about how much better than Beetle he looked.

Beetle had squawked in betrayed and outrage. Izuku and Witch snickered. Toga didn’t hear.
Then Toga moved onto say how she had called this from the Dabi and Cypress’ first-ever meeting. Cypress didn’t appreciate being on this side of ‘I told you so’. Luckily, Dabi magically appeared before Cypress lost his very short temper and did something rude, like punching Toga in the mouth.

Dabi stood shell shocked for a moment. Cypress cocked an eyebrow. Witch gagged at the romantic tension. Toga excused herself to presumably film the interaction from behind the corner.

Cypress took a large step forward. Dabi did the same. Witch excused himself.

Two more steps later Cypress and Dabi stood not half a foot away from each other. Dabi started to speak, “Wow. You look ev--”

Cypress didn’t let him finish. He punched him in the nose not lightly. Now, Cypress could knock out someone with a single punch so he didn’t hit Dabi that hard but hard enough to make the villain stumble back a step.

“What the fuck!?”

“That’s for not telling me who you actually were, Touya.”

“It wasn’t important !”

“The fuck it wasn’t! Now Izuku has a crush on your brother!”

Dabi blinked, “What?”

“Yeah. Izu is working his ass off to get Shouto to date him.”

Dabi started to laugh, “Oh my god.”

Cypress scowled, “It isn’t funny!”
“Yes, it is. It very much is.”

Cypress narrowed his eyes.

“I’ll endorse it. Tell Izu that Shouto loves cold soba.” Dabi paused, “At least he did. It’s been years since I’ve seen him.”

“That’s another thing! You abandoned your family!” Cypress shouted, suddenly pissed at the realization.

Now it was Dabi’s turn to be angry, “Well what was I supposed to do. Endeavor abandoned me. His gift of a quirk did this to me,” he gestured at his scars.

It was now Izuku who was in control. His irritation at Dabi’s selfishness boiling over, “AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU LEFT!”

“REI LOST HER MIND! YOU THINK YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE SCARRED?”

Dabi was taken aback. He knew it wasn’t Cypress but it being Izuku somehow made it worse.

“When I was in the mental hospital I met Rei there. She poured boiling water over Shouto’s left side because it looked so much like Endeavor.

And you weren’t there because you left. You left them with that monster.”

Dabi didn’t say anything. There wasn’t anything to say. He had blood on his hands. He wasn’t Touya anymore. Touya died years ago.

“I’ll kill him then.”

Izuku shook his head, “No. Shouto gets the final say. I’m meeting him tomorrow to discuss what
we are doing about Endeavor. I’ll be damned if I let him get off scot-free. If Shouto decides he wants him dead then I’ll let you do it. But you lost your right to vote when you left them.”

—

Cypress and Dabi made up quickly. Cypress wasn’t the type to forgive and forget but Dabi was the exception to all of his rules.

It was almost painful how easily Dabi fucked up his algorithm. He wasn’t sure he liked it. He wasn’t sure he disliked it either. He wasn’t sure he liked how he thought that the buttery glow of the bar made it look like the whiskey in Dabi’s glass look like crystalized amber and his raven hair glow.

Cypress didn’t know much about emotions. Hardly anything actually. He didn’t know why he felt like there were star systems growing in his chest. He wasn’t sure he liked it.

He couldn’t just sit here. Sit at the bar and try and drown the weird feeling while staring at scarred lips and wondering if they would taste the same and how it would look if he smeared his lipstick over them.

Cypress stood up, Dabi looked at him in confusion, “Leaving already?”

“Hell no. You’re coming with hun.”

Dabi raised an eyebrow, “Where are you taking me?”

Cypress didn’t answer. He grabbed the bag he had left by the door, it contained all of Witch’s shit along with all of Cypress’ spray paints. He wasn’t going to bring them with but figured he might want to do a late night art project.

He was already halfway down the block by the time Dabi caught up. Cypress grinned and began to run. Dabi swore and sprinted to keep up. Cypress was weighed down by his pack so he couldn’t beat his boyfriend’s ass but he still could keep a decent enough pace.
Cypress didn’t set out with a destination in mind. He didn’t know the city well enough anyway. He mentally asked Witch, Beetle, and Izu for assistance which they obliged. They told him where to turn and after fifteen minutes of sprinting Cypress finally got where he wanted to be.

He slows as he passes an alleyway before turning into it, he half jogs towards the rusty dumpster a few feet away, Dabi asking questions he doesn’t answer behind him. In one fluid motion, Cypress pulls himself onto the top of the dumpster and jumps, catching the bottom rung of a fire escape floating a few feet above his head that had been locked into place. He can feel Dabi’s eyes on his back as he climbs hand over hand until his feet find purchase, the rattling of his spray paint joining the clanking of the fire escape. He doesn’t turn around until he is on the first landing. Only then does he gaze down at Dabi who is staring at him with narrowed eyes, the twilight light casting his face in shadows.

“You can climb right?”

Dabi grunts before ungracefully jumping on the dumpster making it bang hollowly, he doesn’t have to jump to reach the fire escape and Cypress frowns. Fucking tall people. In a few moments, Dabi joins him on the landing.

Cypress continues up the stairs, rusted and creaky. Dabi’s stopped asking questions and follows wordlessly.

Soon they are five stories up and Cypress realizes that he doesn’t know exactly where he is going. He’ll be damned if he makes Dabi run back down this again. His pride won’t allow it. He rests one foot on the railing, calculating if the stunt he’s about to pull will work.

He decides to say fuck it. If he falls then oops.

Behind him, Dabi says, “Wait. Hold on.”

Cypress doesn’t think of the long drop down and launches up with his other foot, for a millisecond he’s floating in midair. Adrenaline pumps through his veins and then he grabs the edge of the building. He pulls himself up and over, muscles straining. The concrete scrapes his knees and arms, it’ll probably bruise but he doesn’t particularly care. Then he’s on the roof of the neighboring building and looking down at Dabi unamused.

“Well. Come on,” he says flatly as if he had been planning this all along and it wasn’t totally
improvised. He holds out a hand to help lift Dabi up if necessary. He’d rather Dabi not fall.

Dabi smirks and Cypress can’t help but think it’s poisonous and beautiful. The villain positions himself as Cypress did and jumps with no hesitation. He latches himself onto Cypress’ outstretched hand and Cypress slips a bit from the added weight. It doesn’t last long, Dabi using his upper body strength to haul himself over the ledge.

And then Dabi’s sitting next to him, their hands still intertwined. Dabi’s left hand his scraped and in all actuality Cypress’ is too. He lets go as he stands up, out of breath for reasons unrelated to the climb.

But Cypress isn’t done. This isn’t where he was going. He walks to the other edge of the building. With the dregs of sunset he can barely make out the barred windows below him and without thinking, he twists and disappears over the edge. He keeps a hand on the ledge as he kicks his feet to try and find the bars. Eventually, he finds purchase and lets go of the roof. The bars of the window clang loudly and he wince as his arms hit the wall.

It’s still a good seven-foot drop to the overpass and Cypress knows he shouldn’t but he removes his bag and lets it drop noisily onto the metal below him. By this time Dabi is standing at the roof edge and staring down at Cypress, his curly neon hair faded in the low light.

Cypress gives him a car crash grin before letting go of the bars and falling backward.

He hears Dabi reach out to catch him but he’s already hitting the overpass, his back aches as it absorbs the force and his breath stolen from his lungs.

He does nothing but lay there as Dabi works his way down to him. Dabi doesn’t fall backward and safely makes it down. He stands over Cypress and in the steadily growing darkness, only his turquoise eyes are visible.

“You’re crazy.”

Cypress smiles upwards at him, “So I’ve been told.”

“You have knives in that bag don’t you.”
“I left my daggers in the glovebox.”

Dabi lays down next to him, “What are we doing here? Looking at stars?”

Cypress scoffs, “Fuck no. I hate stars.”

“Why?”

He didn’t answer. He hauled himself to his feet and ignored his scrapped raw hands and the bruises peppering his body from his fall and the climb to where he fell. Rummaging through the bag he removed the neon cans of paint.

Dabi’s eyes follow him as he goes to the brick wall below the window they used to climb down. He walks to the edge of the overpass, shaking a can of white. He can’t see hardly anything in the twilight. Dabi hauls himself to his feet and seeing Cypress’ predicament, lights a ball of blue fire in his hand.

They don’t speak. Cypress too focused on getting the lines right. At some point, he lights a cigarette using Dabi’s fire, the smoke spirals and he burns it down to the filter. The discarded stub is tinted pink with lipstick.

Cypress isn’t sure how long he works on the graffiti. Dabi is a constant presence at his side, casting his art in a blue glow and radiating heat. The drawing isn’t as large as the bird for the Aviary. About half as big.

Dabi whistles low when it’s done. By that time Cypress’ hated stars dot the sky but the light of the city blocks out most of them. In the place where once was plain brick here is the dripping white outline of a bee, wings iridescent with neon pink, green, and orange. It’s on fire. Dabi’s blue flames licking its sides in saturated cerulean. Scrawled out in messy black sprawl above the burning bee’s antennae is the three words, “we’re all damned.”

“I didn’t know you could do art,” Dabi says finally.

“Obviously.”
And then the kiss that had been brewing the entire night explodes. Dabi tastes like iron, not honey and things nice and soft. That’s because Dabi isn’t nice and soft. Dabi is dark-eyed and remembering fire. He is molten rock and a heart of dented metal. Cypress tastes like salt and copper, not sugar and things sweet and kind. That’s because Cypress isn’t sweet and kind. Cypress is anger and split knuckles and split lips. He is frozen anger and a heart of a fleeting ghost.

And they don’t want anything else.

Witch wanted to catch some villains.

Chapter End Notes

Discord

Question: What happens when someone who prides themselves on self-awareness realizes they are missing a part of their memory?
Witch didn’t particularly like knowing breathing felt like drowning if you did it right. Witch liked even less that he was doing it right. He was inhaling frigid lungfuls of pond water while perched on the roof of a building in the Red Light District. Of course, he was not submerged under ice with chattering teeth so this led him to believe that he was having a panic attack. He was breathing like he had never learned the meaning of oxygen but there was something akin to delight boiling under his skin and it disturbed him. He supposed the dying was the only thing left to look forward to to fear and that meeting it halfway was the only way he would feel complete.

Witch wondered if he should become a philosopher.

Witch realized he needed to start breathing. The catharsis of the idea of dying had passed and he took shaky breaths to make the black crowding the corners of his vision dissipate. As the threat of suffocation passed the furious voices of Cypress, Beetle, and Izuku filled his ears/mind.

“Jesus Mary fucking Joseph. What the fuck Witch! For all the shit you give Izu for being suicidal here you are depriving yourself of oxygen because you decided that crawling through a tiny ass vent to chase a villain is a good idea.” Cypress screamed, the first one to scramble together coherent thoughts. Witch stared blankly at the words and decided not to give Cypress the satisfaction of agreeing even though he was right. He was still annoyed that he was forced to witness his and Dabi’s displays of affection.

“Witch, babe, that was really fucking stupid. We all know you’re claustrophobic as hell so why did ya do that?” Beetle was rightfully irked but Witch got suddenly tired of the argument so tuned it out before Izuku could put in his two cents.

Maybe it wasn’t the best idea to directly face his phobia of small spaces by spending half an hour crawling through a vent twelve sizes too small following a villain who, having a quirk that let them turn tiny, could easily navigate. But, to be fair, Witch was still more than a bit tipsy so excuse him for making less than logical choices. In the end, the villain had gotten away and Witch got a panic attack and a few minutes of on land drowning.
Well, you win some you lose some. Hopping off the building he tucked himself into roll to avoid breaking any bones, he ignored the twang of pain from his ankles and the hands that were now extra scrapped thanks to Cypress’ abuse of the body earlier that night. For some reason, Witch wanted to punch a wall. It was a very un-Witch-like action but one he wanted to do nonetheless.

As he did, his head started to pound along with his heart. The wall of the building didn’t give unfortunately, so he turned his attention to the window that, when punched with full force, shattered. Lovely. Witch found that the blood on his knuckles was no less satisfying than if it was someone else’s.


The vigilante was torn between actively seeking out the police and having a nice chat with Naomasa or finding another criminal to bring to the police station. If he tried hard enough he could do both.

Witch enjoyed not having to listen to the other’s ranting and ravings. They all seemed to get withdrawals if they didn’t make some form of conversation. Who knows what they were doing right now, for all Witch knew he could come back and Cypress would have killed them all for doing something dumb like antagonizing him.

For the first time Witch wondered if it was unfair. He was brought into the world as a fighter and a protector. For Izuku he was the judge, jury, and executioner. The lines of right and wrong didn’t exist, only protect. He didn’t mind it. Not really. He loved Izuku fiercely and would voluntarily protect him with his life. But, that his love didn’t change the fact that he still tried to drown memories of white hospital rooms with crimson stained tiles and that he would wake up with the plea of ‘let me go I miss myself’ on his lips.

Who exactly he was missing he didn’t know. Maybe the person he had been before he had sent Cypress away and knew death so intimately he swore he saw the Doctor’s ghost at the supermarket. That made sense now. Of course the Doctor knew Izuku wasn’t quirkless. The first thing they had told Izuku was that his quirk gave him the ability to know everyone else’s. Suddenly, the Doctor didn’t seem so delusional, anyone who knew that Izuku could make people would want to know how.

Witch looked down to realize his hands were shaking. He frowned and stuffed them into the folds of his robes. The air smelled of storms and thunder rumbled in the distance. Witch quite liked thunderstorms but was distracted when he passed two shadows that seemed too solid to be shadows.
He backtracked a few steps and paused at the mouth of an alleyway. From where he was standing he could tell that there was a man crouched over another man who had a katana sticking out of their back. At this point, Witch assumed that the other man was a corpse and he had just walked into a murder.

Supremely unimpressed he folded his arms and monotoned, “You’re going to get caught if you do it like that.”

The murderer spun around but didn’t look all that surprised, Witch subconsciously flinched when he saw that the murderer was smiling and that he had a long red and tattered scarf, “That’s kinda the point.”

The murderer’s gaze flicked up and down Witch before sneering, “You’re that vigilante. What are you gonna do? Try and lock me up?”

Now it was Witch’s turn to scoff, “I’m not an idiot. I would lose that fight. Plus, I admire your work.”

Stain looked skeptical and Witch couldn’t really blame him. Witch portrayed himself as a neutral good, definitely not the type to agree with a hero killer. “Do you now?”

“Oh definitely,” Witch said, flicking imaginary lint off of his robes, “I mean, heroes are corrupt, they deserve to be purged.” He paused as he thought of Aizawa by extension Yamada, “All except two.”

“Who?”

“Eraserhead and Present Mic.”

Stain raised an eyebrow, “Not All Might?”

“God no,” Witch laughed humorlessly, “He’s okay I guess but we have a bit of a personal grudge.”

“Do you now?” Stain grinned, although it was more a barring of teeth, “May I ask what that is?”
“He accidently made my little brother kill himself. He survived luckily. He didn’t mean to but it was an unhappy consequence.”

Stain seemed surprised and Witch wondered if it was the best idea, destroying the image of a hero to a hero killer. Then Witch remembered that he didn’t really care.

“He’s actually the reason I became a vigilante. To prove that you could still be a hero even if you don’t have a quirk.”

“You’re quirkless?” Stain didn’t sneer the word ‘quirkless’ so Witch took it as an honest question.

“More or less. Not everyone is gifted with fancy quirks like being able to paralyze people if you taste their blood.” Witch figured it would be interesting to see how Stain reacted to Witch’s knowledge.

The answer was surprisingly well, Stain threw his head back and laughed, “I must say little vigilante you’ve surprised me. You have spine. Not many people would dare to try and one up a murderer, much less a murderer of heroes.”

Witch shrugged, “I find myself surrounded by quite a few on a daily basis. Hell, my sibling shot one yesterday. It was unfortunate, we all like Eraserhead.”

Stain gave a smile that would have terrified most but Witch shared a mind with Cypress so he wasn’t fazed, “I like you little vigilante.”

And just like that Stain was gone and Witch was left alone with a hero corpse. He was also fairly sure that he could hear sirens in the distance.

The pros would be there shortly but Witch still wanted to talk to Naomasa so he broke into a halfhearted jog.

—

Mina stared at phone. This could end very very badly for her but a dare was a dare.
Kaminari, Sero, and Kirishima were all grinning at her like the little sadists they were. They were all at Mina’s house for a sleepover and around midnight they decided to start playing truth or dare. It had gone well, with Mina expertly crafting dares and truths that had gotten Kirishima to admit that he--for some reason-- had a crush on Bakugou and had even gotten Kami and Sero to finally admit their feelings for each other. It had gone well until Kami had dared her to call Midoriya.

It was like three in the morning and Mina wasn’t sure she wanted to risk waking up Midoriya. Although, based on his eyebags she felt like she could safely assume he never slept. Still… calling Midoriya. Who knows what he did at night but if his daytime antics were anything to go by something insane and that could be added to the file of evidence that he was a cryptid.

“Come on Mina. Hurry up.” Kami taunted, wiggling his eyebrows. Mina suddenly wanted to throw the phone is his smug face.

“Fine! Fine!” she snapped back and stared him down as she dialed Midoriya’s number. Kirishima had asked his crush for it and Bakugou had begrudgingly agreed because he did whatever Kiri wanted.

“Put it on speaker!” Kirishima shouted and Mina glared at him as she did so.

It run seven times and by that time Mina was marginally panicking. What if she woke him up? What if Midoriya was some kind of crime lord and she was interrupting an important meeting?

Finally, the other end crackled to life and a voice that distinctly wasn’t Midoriya asked, “Hello?”

Mina glanced at the others, did they get the wrong number? “Uh… is Izuku Midoriya there?”

The voice on the other end mumbled something they couldn’t understand before pausing and saying, “Not at the moment. This is his brother and the resident vodka mom can I take a message?”

So Midoriya did have a brother! He hadn’t been messing with her earlier. Mina looked at Kaminari with a slightly worried expression, now what did she say?

Kaminari gestured for her to continue the conversation and Sero had pulled out a notepad. Mina
instantly realized what they wanted. This was a great time to get some concrete information on Midoriya.

“Uh-” Mina started to respond but was interrupted by a loud crashing sound from the other end of the phone along with the distant voice of Izuku’s brother, “That wasn’t me. When have I ever killed someone? I use tranquilizers not katanas.”

Mina exchanged a wary glance with Kaminari and Sero as she suddenly remembered her previous conversation with Midoriya about his siblings. Which one had they gotten? The one dating the villain, the one who was a villain, or the one who they had absolutely no information on.

“Sorry about that.” the voice said, shocking Mina out of her thoughts, “The police think I killed someone which I didn’t. Just had a nice conversation with the murderer. Why did you call Izu?”

Midoriya’s brother said this so calmly as if having conversations with murderers happened everyday. Being related to Midoriya who knows. “Uhh… sorry just to clarify you’re Midoriya’s sibling right? If you are which one?”

There was a noise on the other end that sounded suspiciously like a gunshot followed by another remark from Midoriya’s sibling that wasn’t directed to Mina, “When has shooting me stopped me before? Naomasa would be annoyed if I died so don’t aim for the head or the heart. Honestly, I’m not even trying.”

It was at that point Mina decided everyone in Midoriya’s family was a cryptid. His brother was taunting whoever was shooting at him and had apparently been shot before. She was surprised when he answered her question, “Name isn’t important but I’m not the villain if that’s what your asking. I’m also not dating the villain. I am however universally hated by all authorities and am currently giving a halfass effort to avoid the police. Not that it matters if I get caught. Their current high score for keeping me in thirty four minutes and I still don’t think they figured out how I escaped.”


“Well.. okay then. Err.. do you know who Midoriya’s crush is?”

“Yes but I’m not going to tell you. Mostly because Izu would try and kill me and I find myself cornered with not windows to conveniently jump out of.”
“Oh...um okay. Thanks anyway.” Mina said and then hung up.

She turned to the boys, “What just happened?”

Naomasa was tired. He had already been tired. Now he was going to be extra tired because he was once again meeting with his favorite vigilante. He had allowed himself the tiniest sliver of hope that the vigilante had moved on being they hadn’t seen him in a while but that hope died tonight.

Once again, Witch was in an interrogation cell. Everything had been confiscated, staff, whip, knives, gun, and phones (he had four). They also confiscated his hat, robes, and bandana, leaving Witch in a black turtleneck and pants. Somehow, Naomasa liked him better in his vigilante outfit. At least then he couldn’t see his eyes. The cold black eyes that were staring directly into Naomasa’s, even though the detective was behind one-way glass.

Witch was also smiling. Something that had never happened before and Naomasa decided he didn’t like it. It wasn’t a malicious smile or a dangerous one. It was a soft grin that made Witch almost look angelic with his smattering of freckles and light blue braid. And then Naomasa remembered that this was a boy who trigger-happy officers had shot and regularly jumped out of moving cars with broken legs. It never slowed him down at all. The kid had insane pain tolerance and dedicated it entirely making Naomasa’s life as hard as humanly possible.

Naomasa also remembered that angels were actually six winged monstrosities covered in eyes and he felt like that somehow fit Witch better.

But maybe, maybe this time they got him for good. Maybe they could finally find this kid’s parents or get him into a foster home if he didn’t have any. Maybe they could finally get Witch to stop making their precincts life hell.

Naomasa took a deep breath before stepping into the interrogation room. He settled down in the chair across from the vigilante and noticed how Witch hadn’t touched the cup of water they had given him. Naomasa wasn’t surprised, Witch was too smart to give them his DNA willingly.

“We meet again Detective,” Witch cooed, still smiling, “Going to break your high score again? You’re at twenty seven right now. It’s plausible.”
Naomasa was suddenly reminded why he hated his job. “It’s four am. Can you please cooperate?”

“No.”

Naomasa sighed, “What’s your name?”

“Witch.”


Naomasa frowned, last time there had only been three responses. His quirk still didn’t work like it should and Witch seemed to know it this time. He still couldn’t think of a proper reason other than a quirk. But, the quirk repressing cuffs weren’t repressing it then.

“You should know that these cuffs are useless,” Witch said as if he had read Naomasa’s mind, “I don’t have a quirk to repress.”

Truth. Truth. Lie. --.

God Naomasa has a headache. There was no way that Witch was quirkless and the mixed response from his quirk made it so he couldn’t tell if he was lying. Besides, it didn’t matter. Witch’s lying skills had been proven to bypass Naomasa’s quirk anyway. Honestly, Naomasa was no better at interrogation than another random officer if it came to Witch.

“Quick question,” Naomasa glared at Witch but the vigilante continued, “What exactly am I in here for?”

Naomasa said nothing but was wondering why exactly Witch was being so chatty this time.

“I mean. I actually wasn’t doing anything. Just making my way across town and I stumbled upon a corpse and then I’m being randomly handcuffed.”
The annoying part was that Witch had a point, the only basis they had to bring him in was being near the body of a murdered hero and resisting arrest. “You didn’t talk this much last time.”

“I’m going to say that’s because I tried to drown myself in vodka earlier. I’ve been told I’m a chatty drunk.”

Naomasa honestly didn’t know what he was expecting, “You’re drunk?”

Witch grinned, “Hammered.”

“Well, there you go. Minor intoxication.”

“I don’t intend to be here when you press those charges.”

And then Witch, apparently unhandcuffed because of course, slammed his chair over Naomasa’s head.

The detective crumpled and the last thing he heard before he fell prey to a concussion was Witch grumbling about having to climb through another vent.

Chapter End Notes

I'm too lazy to put in the discord link. I'll do it later.
Shouto paced in his bare room, dual-color hair falling in his eyes. He kept glancing at the clock anxiously. Smoke curled from his left side and he mentally cursed himself for being so nervous. Ever since ‘Zuku had gotten him to accept his fire it sometimes got the better of him when he was feeling particularly stressed. There had been a few miscellaneous fires that Shouto had to quickly extinguish before his father found out or the house was burnt down.

While Shouto was still not *entirely* comfortable with his left side - years of repressment and hatred couldn’t be completely erased with one inspirational speech - he definitely didn’t want his father to learn that he was now willing to use his fire. It would prompt Endeavor to think that he had in some way *won* and that Shouto was now his perfect little docile creation. Shouto wasn’t quite sure that he was entirely ready for *that* conversation.

Hopefully, tonight might help him be ready.

The clock kept steadily ticking past midnight as Shouto burned blackened footsteps into the floor. As the hand inched past fifteen after he had begun to wonder if Izuku was going to show. Some part of him hoped that he didn’t, the reality of what they were going to do had started to sink in and knowing that tonight might very well spell Shouto and Endeavor’s future scared him.

He was under no illusion that Izuku would fail to fulfill whatever plan he had concocted. In their training sessions, it had become shockingly apparent that ‘Zuku was a genius who had enough connections in the hero world and otherwise that they could do practically anything they wanted to Endeavor. Shouto wasn’t exactly sure what he wanted to happen.

A subtle tap at his window startled Shouto out of his thoughts. He smoothed his face into a mask of careful calmness and peeled back the curtains. As expected, it was Izuku on the other side of the glass. He slid back the glass and gestured Midoriya inside.

Izuku just grinned and shook his head, “Sorry Shouchan I’m just here to pick you up. I don’t think your dear old dad would like us discussing his demise under his own roof.”

Shouto’s eyebrow raised a millimeter, “You want me to sneak out?”

‘Zuku snapped his aviator glasses over his viridian irises, nevermind the fact that it was twenty
“Yep. Also, you’re smoking,” a pause, “hot.”

Sure enough, Shouto’s left arm was smoking. He quickly stifled his quirk and wordlessly jumped out of the window and closed the pane behind him. By that time Izuku was already halfway across the yard, the back of his aviator jacket and wild green hair surrounded by shadows.

It wasn’t until Izuku reached a very expensive looking black convertible that Shouto realized that Izuku wasn’t legally allowed to drive. At this point, he shouldn’t be surprised and he was more startled that ‘Zuku had such a nice automobile. It was definitely fancy and as Shouto got closer he saw that the glossy black paint had been spray painted over in places. Blue flames along the door, neon birds on the fenders, stylized lilac branches on the bumper. The hood was bare but if Shouto looked closely he saw tiny daisies and bumblebees curled by the mirrors.

“You’re staring.”

Shouto’s head snapped up from his inspection to find Izuku leaning lazily on the car door, “Sorry. I didn’t know you had a car.”

Izuku didn’t reply until they were both inside the vehicle. He turned the key and the engine purred to life, “I don’t.”

Shouto’s expression must have shown his silent confusion and accusation because Izuku stuck out his bottom lip in a pout, “I didn’t steal it. It’s my brother’s.”

“You have a brother?”

“Two actually,” the car lurched forward and Shouto fumbled for the seatbelt, which the convertible didn’t have. “And one genderfluid sibling. He only got it a day ago and he spent a good amount of time fucking up the paint job. It’s the grand opening of his ‘business’ tomorrow and there was a significant amount of phone hold time so he decided to doll up the new car he didn’t need.” Izuku shifted gears and the car lurched again.

Shouto turned to Izuku and tried to steady himself on the dash, “Can you drive?”

He earned a deadpanned look in return, “Of course.”
As it turns out, Izuku could drive. However, he drove like he was a street racer and only used the brake to make hairpin turns and burn rubber. Speed limits didn’t apply and Shouto was left clutching the car door with white knuckles. Izuku laughed as he ran a red light and swerved into the other lane sharp enough to make Shouto almost fall out of his seat. The glove box also clattered open and spewed its contents, the car title, a pack of cigarettes, a half-eaten box of bubblegum, and a black switchblade.

Izuku turned to him and shouted as the wind tore at his hair, “Can you put that back? You have to slam it really hard to get it to close. The latching mechanism broke when Cypress punched it.”

Shouto filed away the name Cypress and did as he was told. He decided not to comment on the dried blood on the knife’s edge. When he finished he saw that Izuku wasn’t looking at the road or even had his hands on the steering wheel. Instead, he was lighting a cigarette and Shouto wondered if this was how he was going to die. Luckily, Izuku soon turned back to the road, occasionally taking drags and singing along to the radio.

He didn’t know where they were going or how long Izuku had been breaking every traffic law in existence when they finally heard sirens. Izuku glanced in the rearview mirror and Shouto twisted in his seat to see that, yes indeed, they were now being rightfully followed by a police cruiser. Shouto wondered what exactly Izuku was going to do. He couldn’t legally drive and the dagger in the glovebox was also an issue. Shouto was also in the car so he could be charged as an accomplice.

Shouto didn’t have time to voice his concern before Izuku gave him a pointed grin that made Shouto shiver, “Hold on Shouchan.”

No being an idiot, Shouto did.

If Izuku’s driving had been reckless before now it was downright suicidal. They skidded around a corner and Shouto almost got whiplash. Izuku just smirked at the road and shifted gears as he floored it. He turned up the radio and the lyrics pulsed around them as they tried to lose their unwanted entourage.

*We’re on a night run*

*Boy you better hold your tongue*

*Talking like you coming from kingdom come*

*Rhythm and reeling*
The feeling I’m riding
The sound through ceiling

Izuku released the clutch and they sped past a residential district. The sirens still hadn’t faded and Shouto was sure that the police would be calling in reinforcements soon.

Never got no money
But I’m running from the gun
My engines flooded
They cold blooded no money
Drunk on something uh
Killing the moonlight
With daylight
I’ve got my X-ray eyes
And I’m feeling so fine

Sure enough, another cruiser blocked the next intersection and Shouto thought it was over. However, Izuku was not deterred and twisted the steering wheel into a narrow alley. The back of the car spun and Shouto almost lost his dinner.

Night Running all night running (We’re running)
Star studded not far from it
We’re running all night running
Cold blooded all night running (We roll)
Night running all night running (We’re running)
Star studded not far from it
Night running all night running (We're running)
Cold blooded we’re all night running (We roll)

“Are you sure this is a good idea!?"
“Don’t worry we’ll be fine!”

We’re on the night shade
Tell me what we’re hiding from
Like someone could steal it
Are we waiting for some kind of feeling
Or saving it up for the morning?

The next turn Izuku shifted and they were suddenly driving backward. Shouto tried to ignore the rush of adrenaline and tell himself that this was wrong and that they were breaking the law. Still, he couldn’t stop the twitching of his lips as they swerved wildly and Izuku let loose a manic laugh.

Or saving it up for the morning?
Under cover
The cloak and dagger
Is there a creature in the attic
Are we for real yeah
Or just pretending
Will it burn it out by the morning

At this point, they now were being pursued by two police cars and waking up the entire city with the music and sirens. Izuku was now flipping off the police with violent ecstasy as he executed a one-handed turn that left Shouto flying out of his seat and into Izuku’s lap. The entire situation could have been avoided if the convertible had seatbelts and they hadn’t been painstakingly removed because of the Midoriya siblings’ philosophy of ‘you may need to jump out of a moving vehicle at any given time’.

We’re on a night run
No telling who we’re running from
In a world of secrets and demons and people hiding from the sun
Sending my message to everyone losing control
Better not stop ’til I get home
Sentimental flowers don’t grow

Shouto hauled himself back into his seat and brushed cigarette ash out of his hair. “How do you plan to lose them?”

“I’m going to drive into a wall.”

“What.”

Got to live through tidal waves
And parishes and biblical floods
I got the Gris Gris love
And the streets in my blood
I’m on the final run
Falling in and out of love, oh

Izuku was not kidding. They turned another corner and found themselves barreling towards a dead end. At the end of the road, there was an abandoned warehouse with a very solid looking brick wall. Izuku didn’t slow down and kept speeding straight towards utter demise.

Shouto cast a panicked glance at the teenager and seeing his determined glare he wondered if he would have enough time to jump out of the vehicle before they both died. He quickly dismissed the idea on the basis of not abandoning ‘Zuku and that jumping out of a moving car when the car was going eighty miles an hour would kill him just as surely.

Izuku turned down the music and shifted gears. They would hit the warehouse in less than three seconds and Shouto only had enough time to instinctively raise his arms to protect his face.

Luckily, it wasn’t necessary. As it turns out, the warehouse wall didn’t actually exist. Instead of going splat they drove straight through the brick into what looked to be a garage. However, before Shouto could really process what was happening Izuku slammed on the brakes and consequently slammed Shouto forward into the windshield.
The convertible skidded to a stop and as Shouto crashed back into his seat he saw Izuku sitting looking stunned. There was a light in his eyes that told Shouto that he was also coming down from the adrenaline rush.

“What happened?”

Izuku laughed and turned off the car engine, “The wall is a hologram. This is my brother’s building.”

He must have realized how little that explained anything because he fully turned to face Shouto, “He owns this warehouse and we’ve spent the last few days and couple hundred thousand yen fixing it up. We installed a holographic garage door for situations like this.”

“Situations like car chases.”

“What can we say? The police don’t like us that much.”

“That’s because you are constantly breaking the law.”

Izuku considered this, “I guess you’re right. It isn’t our fault the entire police force has a stick up their ass though.”

Shouto was left staring as Izuku exited the car and gestured for Shouto to follow. Shouto was trying to figure out what Izuku exactly was. Now he realized that he knew nothing of the life Izuku led out of school. From that short exchange, Shouto had gathered that the entire Midoriya family had some problems with the law and that they were rich.

Shouto could almost see how the entire class of 1-A thought he was a magical being.

Izuku led the other teenager to what seemed to be a lounge, complete with plush couches, a plasma screen TV, and a full kitchen. Izuku was making two cups of coffee and Shouto desperately hoped that he wasn’t getting the vanilla and whipped cream monstrosity. Thankfully, Izuku handed him the scribbled over All Might mug with the plain black coffee and took the overly sugary latte for himself.
They settled into the nearest couch and Shouto almost dropped his mug when Izuku slammed a thick binder onto the table.

“Alright. Let’s get down to business.” Izuku said, although, Shouto found him hard to take seriously with the whip cream mustache.

“That binder contains every possible way we can take down your asshole father. It gets progressively more extreme as you continue. It ranges from mild annoyances to kidnapping and murder.”

Shouto’s face must have been priceless because Izuku narrowed his eyes, “No murder then. It was just listed as a possibility.”

The other teenager blinked, “You can do that?”

“I’ve already gotten someone who said they will do it. I told them to wait for what you had to say.”

Shouto wasn’t exactly sure what to do with that information. The idea that Izuku was willing to *kill* Endeavor simultaneously made Shouto happy someone was willing to go that far for him and concerned that he had become friends with someone who would *kill* someone.

“We aren’t killing my father. He may be an asshole but not that much of an asshole. I don’t want to do anything illegal. I want him to be punished for what he’s done and I’m sure some of that falls under breaking the law.”

Izuku opened the binder and flipped through it until he got to a page filled with dense text. His eyes’ flicked over the page and he mumbled words under his breath. Finally, he said, “So you want to make sure he gets caught for breaking the law and leave it up to the legal system.”

Shouto nodded slowly, “Yes.”

“That’s doable. We could get him for domestic abuse, child endangerment, and possibly child abandonment.”

The fact that Endeavor could be caught with those things left Shouto feeling slightly breathless.
This was real. They were going to make him pay.

“Since we are doing this legally I can probably ask Nedzu for help. God knows he is already aware of this and has just been waiting for us to act.”

“How are we going to do it?”

“I had explored this option before. It’s written there.” Izuku said, gesturing towards the binder. Then, Izuku dissolved into muttering as he produced a notebook from nowhere and began to wildly scribble down ideas.

Shouto pulled the binder into his lap and found the tab marked *Legal*. It took Shouto half an hour to read the section in its entirety and once completed he stared into space for a good two minutes, awed by Izuku’s genius and that it would actually work. By that time, Izuku had filled half of the notebook but once he noticed that Shouto was done he set it aside.

“What do you think?”

Shouto opened his mouth and winced when his voice cracked, “It’ll actually work. We might finally catch him.”

“That’s the plan.”

There was a long silence while Shouto processed. The silence was soon filled by Izuku’s voice, “Uh, I’m going to ask you a question but before you answer, I need to explain some things.”

Shouto looked at the green-haired boy, Izuku had sunken into the couch cushions as if trying to disappear, “Oh? What is it?”

“Well,” Izuku cleared his throat, “I… I’m not actually quirkless.”

Shouto’s eyebrows shot up, “Really?”

“Yeah, I just found out the other day,” Izuku was resolutely not looking at Shouto as he spoke, “But it isn’t a normal quirk.”
“I don’t think there’s such a thing as a normal quirk.”

“Mine created three people who I share a mind place with and can control my body,” Izuku mumbled so fast that at first Shouto thought he had misheard. However, the floodgates had been opened and Izuku didn’t give Shouto a chance to speak.

“It started when I was in the hospital and at first I thought it was just a personality disorder like DID but then Aizawa used his quirk on me and the connection between me and them was severed. So now I know that they are actual people and we just share a body. I refer to them as my ‘siblings’ because that’s what they are to me.”

Izuku took a deep breath and Shouto honestly didn’t know what to say. What do you say when you find out that your friend is actually four people.

“We share control and each lives our own lives. Now, our situation is made even weirder by the fact that one of them is a villain, the other is a vigilante, and the last one is dating your brother.”

In some odd way, this didn’t overly surprise Shouto. It still came as a shock but it had already been proven that laws didn’t get a batty eyelash from Izuku. The idea that he was also a villain and vigilante didn’t seem like much of a stretch. It only meant that Izuku directed his blatant disrespect for authority at specific places. Some things had started to make more sense but the brother thing was unanticipated, “What?”

“Yeah, he’s dating Touya which is weird as hell.”

“He’s dating Touya ?!”

“He goes by Dabi now but yeah.”

Shouto set down his coffee and nestled into the couch. In the span of three minutes, he learned that his friend shared a body with three other people and that one of them was dating his long lost brother.

“Who are the villain and vigilante?”

Izuku winced, “Beetle and Witch.”

Now Shouto sat up like he’d been shocked, “You shot Aizawa.”
“Beetle shot Aizawa using my body,” Izuku said as if he was waiting for a blow.

“And you organized us being removed from the USJ battle.”

“Beetle did.”

“You’re working for the villains.”

“I am working for myself. Beetle may be a villain but our allegiances to always to each other first.”

Shouto knew he should be much more angry at this new information. Izuku was perhaps the reason for all of the strife UA had faced. However, Shouto had spent the majority of his life being considered his father’s. He knew how hard it was to be your own person. He thought back to everything Izuku had done for them, from training sessions to defending them at the USJ. None of that seemed villainous and Izuku had stressed how each of them was their own person. Maybe Izuku had had knowledge but it still hadn’t been him.

“Why are you telling me this?”

“Because if I’m going to ask you out on a date I want you to know what I actually am,” Izuku said softly and hurriedly.

Oh.

Oh.

Shouto’s mouth went dry and the world tipped a little bit sideways. If he hadn’t been sitting down he probably would have fallen over. Izuku was drilling holes into his coffee mug with his gaze and Shouto swore he saw a slight flush on his cheeks. Shouto’s world had been inverted three times over in the span of fifteen minutes but it was somehow the fact that Izuku would want to date him that left Shouto dizzy.

Izuku picked up on Shouto’s stunned silence and hurried to reassure, “Don’t worry about it. Forget I said anything. I just wanted to get it out there. It was a pipe dream anyway. I’m self-destructive, not stupid. Nothing will come of it.”
It took three tries for Shouto to find his voice, “Why do you think it’s a pipe dream?”

Izuku gave a humorless laugh, “I mean look at me. I just told you I share a body with a villain, vigilante, and someone dating your brother. Knowing me I’m not going to have a future for more than a few more years. I’ll piss off the wrong villain or the police will finally get a lucky shot.”

“A few more years,” Shouto echoed.

“I’m not dumb enough to think this won’t all catch up with me eventually. No secret stays a secret unless everyone who knows about it is dead. I’ll either end up behind bars or dead in a ditch.”

Shouto couldn’t deny that; Izuku would eventually get caught. It was only a matter of who caught him first, the police or his enemies.

“Yikes, that’s a downer. Come on I’ll drive you back.” Izuku stood and Shouto followed him on autopilot. He didn’t know what to do with all the truths Izuku had so neatly laid out for him. His head felt like it was filled with cotton and his thoughts moved sluggishly, sorting through everything and trying to compartmentalize it at all.

All the way back Izuku didn’t say a word. It occurred to Shouto that that was the softest and most flustered he had ever seen the other teenager. Izuku had always been cigarettes and defiance and spite. Shouto wasn’t sure how he felt about being the person to turn Izuku Midoriya back into someone that resembled a teenager.

Izuku dropped him off and then sped away silently. Shouto was left standing in his yard with dozens of conflicting emotions. It was hours before he could get himself to stop thinking long enough to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Song used- Night Running by Cage the Elephant
Painted Feathers & Midnight Renegades

Chapter Notes

Look at how late this is. I have nothing to say for myself

It's your favorite eldritch being's birthday today! I'm turning 1456

I literally wrote half of this on my phone I am SORRY

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki tapped the worksheet restlessly, impatiently gesturing at the equation with a finger as if waving hands would somehow get Kirishima to realize that negative exponents meant you needed to flip the fraction.

“No, no, no, nope. Reciprocals.” Katsuki had the sudden urge to shake Kirishima until the information lodged itself in his brain and fuckin’ stayed there.

“I don’t know what that means,” Kirishima whined, pencil flying through the air as he gestured just as wildly as Katsuki.

Katsuki groaned, “Yes you do. You literally did it five seconds ago! Stop second guessing yourself for God’s sake and solve the equation!”

Because that was the problem. Kirishima wasn’t an idiot like Pinky or the Pikachu knockoff, he had the basic premise down. It was only when there were multiple steps to remember and rules to follow that things really started to turn into a shitstorm. Kirishima started second guessing himself. Leading himself around in mental circles until he was lost, confused, and Katsuki wanted to bang his head against a wall.

For the ninth time Katsuki wondered why he even agreed to tutor Kirishima. On a weekend no less. He attributed it to fact that Kirishima had come practically begging to his front door with puppy eyes and flattery, basically offering up his very soul for help so he might stand a chance on passing Monday’s algebraic assessment on exponents.

It wasn’t like Katsuki had anything else to do on a Sunday afternoon other than be reminded how much of a shitty person he was. Besides, it would be hours until he could sneak out of the house and batter his knuckles bloody. The only thing somewhat significant about tonight was that
Katsuki’s usual haunt had been abuzz with rumors of a new club opening. According to overheard conversations it was leagues above the pigsty that Katsuki frequented. So, he figured he’d check it out while consequently closing the void in his chest.

But, Katsuki had to make it through tutoring Shitty Hair without blasting a hole through a wall.

Kirishima worried his bottom lip with sharp teeth as his pencil scratched over the paper and Katsuki wondered how he managed to not to break skin.

Finally, the redhead lifted his gaze to meet Katsuki’s and gave him a sheepish smile Katsuki mentally tched at. “I think I did this one right…” he said as he slid over the paper.

“I sure fucking hope so,” Katsuki’s eyes skimmed over the jumbled mass of numbers, “We’ve been doing this shit for hours and it's almost dark.”

He didn't mention how once it was dark he would sneak out to the Red Light District to feel adrenaline sing in his veins and earn more bruises. Not enough to repent but enough to make it feel like it.

“This is right by the way.”

Kirishima whooped and raised his arms in victory, a gross overreaction in Katsuki's opinion but it still made something warm in his chest.

“Thank God! You think I can do another one?”

“You can certainly try,” Katsuki said, sliding the paper back to the redhead.

And that's how it went for another hour or so. Kirishima’s percentage of correct equations steadily increasing and Katsuki trapped between long stares and the desire to kick Kirishima out so he could finally leave.

Finally, as the clock hit ten Katsuki decided he needed to leave if he wanted to make it for the opening ceremony.
“‘Opening ceremony’ christ it sounds like I'm going to a banquet,” he mumbled under his breath.

“Hm?”

He pretended he didn’t hear and changed the subject, “You've got the last ten all correct. You're good. Now get out.”

“That’s harsh Bakubro,” Kirishima swung an arm around Katsuki’s shoulders and he tried to hide his flinch. He wasn't a fan of physical contact in general but with Kirishima it was ten times worse. It made him feel...nice. He didn't deserve that.

“Oi- get off of me you fucker. ”

“Sorry sorry sorry,” the redhead hurried to let go before Katsuki brought out the pyrotechnics. He slumped back in his chair and spun around twice, “I guess you’re right it's late. I should go,” then he flashed a smile brighter than the sun, “Thanks you so much Bakugou! There's no way I'll fail this test now.”

Shitty-Hair must have some short term memory loss because he launched himself out of the chair and wrapped his arms around the blond. He ignored Katsuki's shouts of protest as he continued to squeeze.

“Yeah yeah yeah. Your fucking welcome.” Katsuki said, voice strained. “Now get the fuck off of me.”

This time Kirishima obliged and Katsuki breathed a sigh of relief. “Well I guess I better be going~”

Katsuki glanced at the clock and all but pushed Kirishima out the door, ignoring the part of him that begged Kirishima to stay.

“Cya tomorrow Bakubro! Thank you so much for your help!” Kirishima called when he was partially out into the street.
“Be glad I'm here to help your idiotic ass,” Katsuki grumbled back. He didn't give Kirishima a chance to respond before slamming the door and retreating back to his room where he retrieved his bag from his closet and jumped out the window.

Kirishima was halfway down the block when he turned around. The cool night air nipped at his exposed forearms in a way he didn't remember it doing on his way to Bakugou’s house. It took him that short walk to realize why. He had forgotten his Red Riot sweatshirt on Bakugou’s bed.

He whispered a not entirely true ‘crap’ under his breath. Half of him was glad for an excuse to go back to Bakugou’s, the other half was worried Bakugou might burn up that sweatshirt in retribution for Eijirou bothering him again.

Still...it was limited edition and it was kinda chilly out.

The redhead started to head back to the Bakugou’s, content with both the knowledge he wasn’t going to fail tomorrow’s test and that he would see Bakugou again. Partly because he enjoyed Bakugou’s company and partly because he was worried about the blond. These past few days he had seemed much more touchy and aggressive. Eijirou didn’t want to push but he had a feeling that it had something to do with the impressive amount of bruises and cuts that had marred the his friend’s body this past week.

He was three houses away when he paused. It was dark enough that Eijirou couldn’t see any details in his surroundings but he could still clearly see the dark silhouette leap out of Bakugou’s bedroom window. Kirishima knew that Bakugou’s parents were home but he highly doubted they jumped out of windows to exit the house. The figure passed under a streetlight his suspicions were confirmed. Bakugou was sneaking out.

Kirishima wasn’t entirely sure what possessed him to follow- a mixture of morbid curiosity, concern, and recollection of how Bakugou was so insistent that he leave perhaps. He trailed after the blond. He kept a healthy distance between them, he wasn’t sure he wanted to face the consequences of Bakugou catching him.

Bakugou never disappeared from his line of vision. Eijirou became increasingly concerned as they got closer and closer to the Red Light District. Nerves crept higher and and confusion swirled along with a slight twinge of irritation. Didn’t Bakugou know that if he was doing something illegal he could be expelled?
When they entered the Red Light District proper Eijirou began to wonder if this, perhaps, was a bad idea. He had no idea what Bakugou was doing. He had made an impulsive decision and now he was walking blind into a potentially dangerous situation. Logically, he knew he should probably just go home and forget about this entirely. But what if Bakugou got in trouble and needed help?

So he stayed and when Bakugou finally got to an abandoned warehouse, followed him inside.

Izuku was taking Todoroki’s rejection fairly well. He didn’t spend hours in tears or even sulk. Nope, he shrugged it off with a ‘that was a big Yikes’ and continued on with his life. He hadn’t been kidding when he told himself that rejection was expected. You can’t be disappointed if you didn’t have any expectations.

Cypress, Beetle, and Witch however were irate. Not at Todoroki. No, they were irate at Izuku. Witch for giving up their secret and Cypress and Beetle for not giving Todoroki a chance to respond. They told him that he dumped a shit ton of information on someone who was not expecting such information and then took silence as a no.

They all understood why Izuku wanted to tell him and respected that. Witch didn’t particularly like it but he understood it. Izuku was a liar but he never lied to anyone he cared about if it wasn’t strictly necessary. However, how easily Izuku accepted Todoroki’s lack of response as rejection was annoying as fuck.

Cypress was honestly ready to snatch Izuku’s phone and shoot off a text to ole’ Todo telling him to give an actual answer. None of them except Izuku thought that Todoroki didn’t like Izu too. They carefully observed all of their conversations and saw how Todoroki looked at Izuku like he was god.

But, naturally, Izuku had been blind to those gazes.

God damn it Izuku. Even on the opening night of the Aviary all Cypress could think about was his little brother’s love life.

Cypress dedicated himself back to watching people pour into the warehouse’s basement. He stood at the top of the stands looking like the god given gift he knew he was. Of course, no one knew that he was the owner, a fact that Cypress was determined to change momentarily.
“You should use a megaphone,” Beetle suggested for the ninth time.

“We’re saving that for Izu and the Festival remember?”

“Yes, but-”

Witch cleared his throat, “Speaking of the Sports Festival please tell me you aren’t going through with the plan.”

Izuku laughed, “Why of course I am! It’s a great plan. Beetle and I already have most of the preparations ready.”

“It’s going to get you arrested.”

“Wouldn’t be the first time.”

“It’s going to be nationally televised.”

“How’s that so different from live video streams of you?”

Cypress snorted and tuned them out so he could finally make his grand entrance. He’s neon pink hair had been half braided and he fiddled with the equally neon wrapping on his knuckles. He glanced at the betting pools that had opened along with the que for fights and the increasingly large bracket. Opening night provided free drinks that Cypress snatched when he passed the bar and downed in one gulp. He almost cursed his tolerance. It would make it tonight much more interesting if he had a buzz.

The Aviary has multiple rings, a large ring for group brawls, smaller rings for one v. one quirkless fights, the main ring in the middle however, was more like a cage. It was for the headliners or the ones with potential for destruction.
It was that ring Cypress stood in to kick off the opening event. He tapped his earpiece and heard the muffled thump over the speakers. It was so nice having money to spend on state of the art speakers and impulsively bought convertibles and holographic walls.

“Hello patrons!” he said into the microphone extending from his earpiece. The crowd slid into silence as they slowly start to rest their gazes on Cypress.

“My name in Cypress and the owner of this fine establishment.”

There were a few snickers and Cypress was sure to flash a grin that he knows makes hair rise.

The snickers stop and he practically preened.

“If you have any complaints please don’t take them up with me because I don’t give a shit.”

His eyes skipped through the crowd and he could feel Beetle and Izuku cataloguing faces. Cypress was just looking for a worthy opponent.

“Now, as I’m sure you’re aware in our lovely bracket the first fight listed is Owner v. challenger,” he gestured to the huge ever changing bracket next to the bird graffiti, “As our kickoff event I am going to challenge someone if the challenger wins they get an extra hundred thousand yen.”

At that the crowds starts buzzing with energy, no doubt thinking about how easy it would be to beat someone as small and young as Cypress. Cypress’ original plan was to pick the biggest opponent and then win to assert his dominance. Those plans are immediately thrown out the window when he spotted a familiar blond head.

“Bakugou Katsuki,” he breaths into the mic. So this was how Katsuki dear was getting all those extra bruises.

The blond froze. Cypress pointed for good measure and smiled into the mic, “You, with the red eyes and horrible attitude. Guess what, you’re the challenger.”

The people around Katsuki rippled with jealousy but shoved him forward. Katsuki stumbled but
righted himself and approached the ring with a snarl on his lips. Cypress could not contain his glee and was practically vibrating with anticipation. Tonight just got infinitely better and not even Witch would be able to stop him this time.

He could feel the others fighting to take back control but he batted them away with no lack of effort. This fight was a long time coming and now that the opportunity had presented itself he wasn’t going to let it slip away. He wasn’t going to intentionally kill Izuku’s childhood ‘friend’ but if he accidently hit him too hard…

He would chalk it up to a terrible tragedy.

Cypress tossed away his earpiece and let the familiar rage simmer in his veins. This was going to be so much fun.

When the owner - Cypress - called Bakugou’s name Eijirou felt his blood freeze. What Bakugou was even doing here Kirishima didn’t know. He had always known Bakugou was violent but he didn’t think he actively searched out fights.

But here he was, in the middle of a giant fight club in the Red Light District standing under a huge graffitied neon bird. The painting was almost as bright as the owner’s hair. The remarkably young owners’ hair.

The owner with ice blue eyes and a smile that made the hairs on his neck jump to attention. His instincts screamed danger get away and that was exactly what Eijirou planned to do until Bakugou's name was called.

He didn't know what it was about the way Cypress formed the syllables of Bakugou's name but it set off ringing alarm bells. Maybe it was the open contempt in his voice or the fact that knew it in the first place.

Whatever it was it kept Kirishima from walking back out and forgetting this ever happened. Bakugou might get hurt and Eijirou would be damned if he wasn't here to help if the need arose.
Still, that didn't stop Eijirou from feeling so incredibly of depth it was like he was drowning. He had never so much as been within a three kilometer radius of the Red Light District and now he was surrounded by the underbelly of Musutafu with absolutely no preamble.

Kirishima tried to fight his way closer to the cage, consequently bumping into a few patrons that threatened things he was fairly sure they would follow through on given the chance. Eventually he found himself on the edge of the crowd, using hardened skin as a deterrent for stray punches or random knives. On his left was a tiny girl with a peach undercut and eyes covering every inch of exposed skin that roared for Bakugou's blood, a cry that was echoed by nearly everyone else in the crowd.

In the ring Bakugou had stripped off his jacket and was only in a black tank top, his muscled arms on proud display. He was busily wrapping his hands and glaring at the owner with enough intensity it would make a lesser man kneel over dead. However, the owner only gave a smile ten times as deadly. Cypress had also removed his fashionably torn flannel to reveal lean muscles and scarred forearms that made Eijirou even more concerned for his friend’s safety.

The announcer stepping the ring and the crowd somehow roared louder. Eijirou didn't pay attention to his voice and focused on watching the blond stretch, arrogance rippling off him in waves. Bakugou truly believed he could win this fight and Eijirou wished he could share that faith.

But, he didn't know what the owner’s quirk was and everything about him made the redhead uneasy. He blew a pink bubblegum bubble and watched Bakugou square up with an expression of eternal amusement. Underneath that haughty gaze there was something red and raw and furious. Something about this fight was personal and Bakugou didn't seem to know it.

Kirishima watched helplessly as the announcer called the match to start and the peach haired girl screamed bloody encouragement.

Katsuki tuned out the announcer’s voice and focused on studying his opponent. He had no idea why he had been called out like that but he'd be damned if he didn't beat this arrogant pink-haired bastard into the ground.

He had been surprised when his name had rung across the speakers and the tiny teenager declared him the challenger. He hadn't been around long enough to become a ‘regular’ or famous by any means, but word traveled fast in the underground so he didn't think much of it.
‘Cypress’ wore a plain white t-shirt that exposed graceful forearms that would have been pretty on anyone else. Whatever aesthetic appeal they may have once held was ruined by bruises and bandages and scores and scores of scars, some barely visible while others looked suspiciously like the puckered starburst of bullet wounds.

Bakugou had seen plenty of scarred fighters in his brief time in the ring so he didn't marvel at the myriad of silvery flesh.

Instead he focused on his face, cheeks that still clung onto the tiniest of baby fat with a random smattering of freckles and burning blue eyes outlined with expertly done eyeliner that Bakugou couldn't help be slightly jealous of. When he noticed Bakugou staring he flashed a condescending smile that make the blond scowl.

He couldn’t wait to wipe that smile off his face. Many people had underestimated him in the ring and Katsuki always found those victories the most satisfying.

The starting bell sounded and Bakugou flew forward, he intended to win this fight quickly as a point of pride. Explosions sparked in his hands as he led with a right hook. It flew over Cypress’ head as he ducked almost leisurely.

“Still Katsuki? Really? Again with the right hook?”

Katsuki ignored him and let the rush of the fight fill his guilty conscious and erase the heaviness in his heart. He didn’t have time to think about what he had done to Midoriya. He was too busy dancing to the left as Cypress landed a glancing blow to his kidneys that he barely felt.

In return Bakugou aimed a solid hit to the other fighter’s jaw, it connected but didn’t hit with as much force as intended because Cypress gave a crimson smile, “How does it feel? Knowing that you’re the reason Izuku tried to kill himself?”

The first mention of Izuku made him momentarily pause. How the _fuck_ did he know about him?

That pause was enough for Cypress to jerk his knee up and into Katsuki’s stomach. He grappled for breath as he tried to put distance between him and the pink-haired teenager. His mind was whirling with possibilities and it was midway through avoiding Cypress’ foot it hit him.
His quirk. Cypress hadn’t shown his quirk yet.

The knowledge that Cypress knew about his biggest regret set a fire roaring in his veins. He stopped his retreat and met the other fighter, jabbing an elbow into his ribs and an uppercut into his nose, which made a satisfying *crack*, followed by an even more satisfying *boom* as he activated his quirk and filled the ring with black smoke.

He narrowed his eyes to try and see if he had successfully blown off Cypress’ smug face. The smoke cleared and Katsuki found his opponent by receiving a fist to the face, packed with enough force to send him tumbling. The world spun as he propped himself up and spat blood, gaze resting on his opponent. Despite the blood trickling down his now-broken nose he was smiling with crimson stained teeth. “Did it make you feel good? Beating someone who couldn’t even fight back? Did it make you feel *better*?”

Bakugou snarled in response and righted himself, the awful truth in the words scalding hot.

“How you even feel *guilty*?”

Everything was still spinning but that made him freeze.

“Answer the question *Kacchan. Do you feel guilty*?”

“Shut the *fuck* up!” Katsuki screamed, crossing the gap Cypress had made, sending off explosions in an attempt to silence the poison that spewed from Cypress’ mouth.

In turn the other fighter danced out of the way with ease, pink hair swirling behind them. “Well guess what! You won! He will never be a hero! He forfeited! He yielded!”

Bakugou’s anger gave him tunnel vision and the world reddened at the edges. This pink bitch had no *idea*. He had no idea how Katsuki could barely *sleep* anymore without having nightmares of Deku jumping off that rooftop. No idea how he was choking on enough guilt that the only way he could *breathe* was in a fighting ring.

Katsuki flew at Cypress, filling with the ring with explosions and tinting the world the same shade
as his red and yellow grief and rage. He threw a punch with the intent of blasting this so called ‘owner’ out of the city.

They caught his wrist. Their eyes shone with unmeasurable anger as he used other hand to trap the limb. They twisted his arm in some odd parody of the move Izuku used on him the first day of classes and kicked his legs out. When he was unbalanced they tackled Katsuki to the ground.

The blond struggled and thrashed, letting off explosions that only succeeded in blasting the floor. All the while Cypress screamed vitriol, “You destroyed him. When he was in that mental ward there was nothing left. You and All Might ruined him.” That’s when Cypress started punching him, knees digging into his sides. Bakugou didn’t feel anything after the first few hits. “You destroyed his dreams—” Punch “Because you thought he was a threat—” Punch “A ‘roadblock’—” Punch. (It was around this time Katsuki stopped fighting. The mantra of “I’m sorry” repeating in his head until it nearly squeaked past his lips) “I hope it was fucking worth it.”

“Please stop!!”

A familiar voice broke through Katsuki’s haze of pain and blood and hate. Through his blurred vision he saw a blotch of red.

Kirishima.

And then everything dissolved into blackness.

Eijirou didn’t know what to do.

Everything was going decently until Cypress started talking. Then it was only moments before he had Bakugou pinned and was staining the floor with Bakugou’s blood. It was only after Bakugou went limp and stopped fighting Eijirou knew that Cypress was going to kill him.

Cypress was going to beat his friend to death in front of a roaring crowd.
So he did the only thing he could.

“Please stop!!” he shouted, running to the edge of the ring and ducking the announcer. Cypress twitched but didn't turn to see who spoke. There was a sound ripping its way out of the other teenager, a combination of wrath and righteous victory.

Fists were still hitting flesh when Eijirou tried to pull Cypress off. He looked half feral, snarling and covering in both his and Bakugou's blood. Kirishima was strong enough to pry him off the blond, still kicking and possessed with bloodlust. Nails tried to rip into his arms but hardened skin made it so Cypress only succeeded in chipping his own nails.

Bouncers swarmed Eijirou but by then their employer had stopped fighting like a wild thing. “Let go,” his voice was surprisingly calm and the violent lightning storm of fury had disappeared entirely.

Kirishima complied.

Cypress waved off the bouncers who reluctantly complied when he gave them a hard glare. He wiped some of the blood off his face and stalked to the edge of the ring and retrieved a box of cigarettes. He lit one and took a long drag.

“Never come back.” His voice was empty of all emotion, body rigid, and he left the ring to a staring crowd.

Eijirou carried Bakugou out of the warehouse. He didn't know where to go. He didn't want to bring him back to his place and he didn't think Mr. and Ms. Bakugou would appreciate him turning up at their house with their son half-beaten to death

Plus, he needed to get Bakugou to a hospital. How he was going to get there he drew a blank. He could take the train but he wasn't sure he'd be able to carry Bakugou that entire way.

But he would have to.
Bakugou was still unconscious when he reached the edge of the Red Light District. His face was a patchwork of cuts, bruises, and drying blood. Eijirou was terrifying that something had been broken or there was internal bleeding and he wouldn't make it in time.

He was still reeling that Bakugou had even *been* in a place like that. It certainly wasn't his first time in ring. His fear wasn't quite enough to bury the anger and betrayal that Bakugou would do something as reckless as *that*.

If Kirishima wasn't there Cypress wouldn't have stopped and Bakugou might be dead.

There was a sudden honk of a horn and Eijirou jumped half a foot. Tension hunched his shoulders and he eyed the black convertible that slowly pulled up next to them. That tension faded when he saw Midoriya in the front seat.

“Get in.”

Eijirou put Bakugou in the backseat and noticed the colorful painted details. He settled into shotgun and Midoriya wordlessly pulled away.

Neither of them spoke until they got to the hospital. Eijirou was bursting with questions but he took one look at Midoriya’s white knuckles on the steering wheel and decided not to ask.

They pulled into a parking lot and Midoriya turned to Eijirou, his green hair was damp and his nose swollen, although there was no bruising so maybe it was just a trick of the light.

“Don't say a word about the Aviary. I don't care what you say but don't tell them about the Aviary.”

Kirishima nodded, picked up Bakugou and walked into the hospital.

Fifteen minutes later he was sitting in the waiting room. He phone buzzed to a single text.
Unknown Number: He’ll be alright

And that's when Kirishima started to cry.

It was dark when Katsuki woke up. The first thing he noticed was that nothing hurt. He had spent a majority of his life waking up aching, either from training or fighting so the lack of sore muscles was… concerning.

So he went to overdrive and he sat straight up, then nearly doubling over because holy fuck. It felt like there was acid sloshing in his ribcage, burning everything down to marrow.

And that’s when he remembered it. ‘It’ being everything that had happened that night. The Aviary. The fight. The pink-haired bitch who used his quirk to torment Katsuki. Kirishima screaming at him to stop.

He took in his surroundings for the first time, white room, white bed, white sheets. He was in the fucking hospital.

His first impulse was to rip the IVs out of his arm and go home to pretend this never happened. But then he realized he couldn’t do that because a) Kirishima knew so there could be no avoiding the consequences of his actions b) those IVs were probably pumping full of needed painkillers and c) someone was in the room with him.

At first he thought it was Kirishima. They stood facing the window, phone pressed to their ear and talking a mile a minute. That was the first tip that it wasn’t Kirishima. Kirishima would have enough common courtesy to at least whisper.

Also, Kirishima didn’t wear his hair in pigtails.
They seemed to realize that Katsuki was awake and hung up the phone with a hurried ‘fuck you’ in place of ‘goodbye’ and all of Katsuki’s horrible suspicions were confirmed.

Izuku Midoriya stood glaring down at his childhood friend at the foot of his hospital bed. All Katsuki could think was that he should have been doing that same thing when they got the call that Deku had tried to kill himself. Instead he never even bothered to show up.

“W-what are you doing here?” He hated the way his voice scratched and stuttered.

Deku gave a humorless smile and draped himself over the nearest chair, “I think we finally need to talk about it.”

“‘It’?”

Deku scoffed in a very un-Deku-like way, “Don’t bullshit me Kacchan. We’ve been ignoring the elephant in the room for far too long. You almost died because of it.”

“So did you.”

His childhood friend whirled around suddenly enough that Katsuki flinched back, his green eyes shone with intensity akin to a dying star, “Cut that shit out right now. It wasn’t just you okay? I mean you were a big part of it but it was All Might too,” his lips quirked into a cruel smile, “And society in general really.”

“So what you’re forgiving me for all the shit I pulled?” Katsuki half shouted, suddenly furious at the idea of getting off so easy. “I taunted and tormented you every day of your entire fucking life! You were my literal punching bag, if I felt slightly inferior one day it would be you going home with a busted lip! I messed with your head for fucking shits and giggles!”

Deku snarled, a sound so startling it make Katsuki momentarily shut up, “And don’t you think I know that?! I’m sure the hell not letting you off the hook because you’re suddenly feeling guilty! I’m just saying it wasn’t entirely your fucking fault. I ate spite for breakfast lunch and dinner for months. I dreamt of when I could tell you to suck it. It was my ultimate fucking wet dream.”

“But you know what I learned? Is that you can get sick of spite. I don’t forgive you. I simply don’t care.”
Katsuki didn’t break eye contact as replied, voice level steadily rising, “You know what the shittiest part is? I never tried to make it up to you! Not fucking once! I was only in that fight club for me! Because then I wouldn't be choking on what I did to you! A selfish bastard to the end right?"  

Deku laughed, a harsh cruel thing, “Look Kacchan I don’t care why you were there. I’ve had closer scrapes with death than that so don’t expect me to be impressed. I’m just telling you to get over yourself. I got over it. Stop being a mopey bitch.”

Katsuki growled in frustration, “How can you say that? I ruined heroes for you!”

“The hell you did. You give yourself way too much credit Kacchan. Maybe you helped but it was All Might who ruined heroes for me.”

Katsuki blinked at that, “What?”

“Me and He Man had a wonderful conversation where he crushed my misguided dreams in five minutes more than you ever could.”

Katsuki was struck speechless. All Might had done that?

Izuku shrugged and examined his jagged nails, “Both of you were right anyway.”

“That’s not true! You can be a hero.” Katsuki hated the way his voice wavered and cracked with the words he should've said long ago.

A year ago Izuku would have crumpled and started crying in joy. Katsuki would have preferred that to the absolute lack of reaction he received now, “I probably could. But the thing is, I don't want to.”

Katsuki’s mouth went dry. Never would he of thought that Deku would ever not want to be a hero. Even after he jumped and started teaching at UA. He had always thought Deku would take the chance if it ever presented itself.
“I have grown abruptly tired of this conversation. We’ll never be friends again Kacchan but I don't want to see you dead because of that. I won't stoop to your level.”

Katsuki flinched.

“You're still a raging asshole but we should be let it go. Keep the past in the past. Give me another reason to hate you and give yourself a new reason to hate yourself.”

Despite himself Katsuki was dumbstruck. Maybe he should just let it go. Take it as a lesson and not make the same mistakes.

“... okay.”

He and Izuku shared a bittersweet half-smile.

“Well I'm gonna go. You should do something about Kirishima though. Not many people would carry an asshole like you all the way to the hospital.”

Katsuki gapped, “Shitty Hair carried me here?”

“He would have if I didn't come to give you a ride.”

The blond didn't want to dissect that statement more than necessary. It might as well of have been a bomb.

“How’d you get in here anyway? I don't seem like they would allow visitors at this hour.”

“I climbed through the window,” Dek- Izuku said. As if climbing through three story windows was an everyday occurrence. For all Katsuki knew it might have been. It was quickly coming to his attention that he didn't really know Izuku Midoriya much at all.
Later, Beetle added a name to a contract with Cypress’ full support.

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/jKtNPZM

Edit: It has come to my attention that people don't know what contract I am referring to with the last thing. Its the safety contract Beetle and AFO made all those chapters ago. They added Bakugou's name
Chapter Notes

I have no excuse for why this is so late and so... terrible

PSA!!!

NO ONE EVER DO ANYTHING IZUKU OR BEETLE OR WITCH OR CYPRESS DO

THEY ARE HORRIBLE ROLE MODELS

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Monday arrived with little preamble and Izuku’s alarm blasting anxiety given form. A groan worked its way up from his throat and a deep loathing settled into his bones. In any other situation, he would simply hurl his alarm across the room and nestle back into his blanket burrito. However, five a.m. Witch had planned for that and had planted the alarm two rooms over.

For a good three minutes, Izuku contemplated saying ‘fuck it’ and letting his alarm play indefinitely. He had before and it was a 4/10 experience, would recommend to some; specifically, a certain vigilante who set said alarm.

However, as they neared the ten-minute mark he felt the beginnings of a flute induced headache and it suddenly didn’t feel worth it. Izuku was so tired his entire brain felt blurry but…

He hauled himself onto his feet with no lack of second thoughts. The entire world swayed and he caught a glimpse of his reflection and gave it a slow lizard blink. To be frank, he looked like shit. The circles under his eyes were dark enough to be bruises and the bridge of his nose was slightly crooked and peppered with actual bruises. He had thrown on some concealer last night so Kirishima wouldn’t be too suspicious so he hadn’t quite been able to catalog the damage. But now that the makeup had been smudged and washed off he looked like he had been hit by a train. His nose had been broken numerous times before and it was only by the grace of a nonexistent God that it had remained straight after so much previous trauma. Apparently, that luck ran out after Cypress’ gross overreaction to Kacchan existing.

Exhaustion had settled so deep in his bones that he couldn’t even find the energy to sigh. Objectively, he knew that all signs pointed towards today being a Bad Day. It was either that or total exhaustion. It was probably both.
“Can you please shut that off,” that was Cypress, more touchy and miserable than normal. An unfortunate side effect of sharing a mind space was that when one of them was having a Bad Day all of them were having a bad day. It was only a question of who started the whole issue.

(It was Witch. He woke up trembling from a nightmare he couldn’t remember and hadn’t been able to so much as close the bedroom door since. The walls kept pushing in and his shared skin felt too tight.)

Izuku couldn’t seem to motivate his feet to move. The lead-heaviness a product of chemical imbalances and less than two hours of solid sleep that entire week. The inside of his mouth felt dry and sour, the unusual honesty he had used with Kacchan last night had left it burning and bitter. Somehow, that five-minute conversation felt more like a gamble than his confession to Shouto. It had hurt more too.

Beetle took over and pronouns were mumbled with no specific emotion. Bad Days made Izuku sluggish, Witch shaky, and Cypress a depressed sort of aggressive; but with Beetle, they made her apathetic to the point of being borderline disassociated.

She navigated them towards the alarm and then proceeded to throw it out the window, shattering the glass and watching in blank-faced fascination as tiny shards rained down onto the street. Stiffly, she walked into the kitchen and proceeded to initiate their procedure for Bad Days. She poured about six bottles of five-hour energy into a Big Gulp Cup robotically. Then, she drank it all in a single swig and shoved Izuku back into control.

Something about five-hour energy mixed strangely with their medication. If they had more than two bottles in a single sitting they basically warped through time and weren’t entirely aware of what they were doing until it wore off. They would remember it all afterward but while under its influence their thought process was...muddled. Essentially, it made them high as hell.

It worked great for Bad Days.

Izuku was in his kitchen, then he blinked and was at UA. He blinked again and it was suddenly sometime in the afternoon and it felt like he was in a car, the scene shifted again and he was back in his room, a dark feathered shape at the foot of his bed. A furrowed brow was all he managed before he crashed.
Things came back in ebbing waves and as it did Izuku regretting always living his life to the fullest. He didn't believe in saving things for later and every day he acted as if it was his last. Mostly because he knew someday it would be.

Actually, at the moment he mostly regretted living.

The mental review of that day’s events it ended with him viciously swearing and flipping off the hulking shape at the end of his bed before rolling over and pretending nothing from the last twelve hours happened.

—

He took the train to UA. He also took his wheelchair. He couldn’t tell you why he took his old wheelchair from when he had broken his legs after his attempt. That was the general theme of the day: doing weird shit and not knowing why. Izuku couldn’t tell you why he made a daisy flower crown on his way to the station or rummaged around his closet until he found one of Beetle’s knee-length pleated floral skirts and red stiletto heels. Or why he wore them the entire day. Not noticing when the daisy’s started to droop or the heels started to give his feet blisters.

Besides his fashion choices and mode of personal transformation, the UA commute was a relatively uneventful affair. The only exception was when a middle-aged man standing next to him on the train pulled out a grape cigar and Izuku felt like gagging. He knew it was probably hypocritical but… who smokes on a train. More importantly, who smokes grape cigars. As a fellow nicotine addict, Izuku felt personally offended and told the man so.

In response, he blew grape flavored smoke in his face and Izuku wondered if this was what hell felt like. In an effort to not get arrested for assault before he even got to school he turned away and scrolled through his plans for the Sports Festival on his phone.

“Whatcha doing twerp? Complaining to your boyfriend,” the grape man taunted, eyes flicking to the skirt and heels and bold green lipstick, mascara, eyeshadow, and highlighter that was bright enough to attract a magpie. Of course, the man was oblivious to both common human decency and that Izuku could have him in a chokehold faster than he could say ‘artificially flavored’.

Izuku didn’t look up from his notes, “No actually. I’m texting your dad, wondering when we can meet up so he can blow me.”
That earned an inelegant sputtering and Izuku wheeled off at his stop before he could reply. He caught a glimpse of a cherry-red face scrunched up to make it look like he had just been stepped on. Izuku just signed and adjusted his skirt as he steered his unnecessary wheelchair one-handed. Honestly, that wasn’t even a good one-liner.

Izuku breezed into the teacher’s lounge, intent on fixing himself a cup of creamed coffee. He got there just in time to hear Midnight loudly complaining about some random villain, “--knives and blunts. If I was a villain where would I get knives and blunts?”

“Ally behind the I-Hop. Ask for Kaza,” he said stirring in some creamer. “But if you’re interested in getting some for comparison bring a rag. Sometimes he doesn’t bother to wipe the blood off the blade.”

Then he rolled away at a speed that should not be achievable in a wheelchair, sipping his coffee.

He got to class early, early enough that only a handful of students were present. Scoring a perfect three-point shot with his empty coffee cup he noticed that Jirou was braiding Yaoyorozu’s hair. Her fingers were sure and graceful, threading glossy black strands in patterns and rhythms far simpler than the ones they had practiced on Cypress or even Witch’s simple daily fishtail.

Mina was slumped in the desk next to Yaoyorozu, drumming her fingers impatiently as she waited for Jirou to be done, “--hurry up Jirou. Aizawa will be here before it’s my turn.”

Without thinking Izuku intervened, “I can do your hair.”

Mina jumped, not having noticed Izuku’s arrival. She stilled for a moment, unprepared to see their trainer in such… interesting clothing. She stared for a good minute at the wheelchair and then decided she had seen weirder. Getting back to the topic at hand she gestured at his hair and snorted, “Sorry Midoriya, but you can’t seem to brush your own hair. I doubt you would be able to tame my wild mane.”

Izuku ignored her protests and wheeled over to her desk, but he went to fast and ran into the wall.
He shook himself off and made the ‘beep beep’ noise as he backed up until he was more or less behind Mina. By this point, Jirou and Yaoyorozu had taken to starring in minor disbelief at Izuku and...everything about him at that moment. From the makeup to the clothes to the face that was devoid of all sanity.

Naturally, he didn’t notice and bumped Mina’s shoulder until she conceded and gave him a few hair elastics. (He was unwilling to use the rainbow band that had become perfectly sized for his wrist.)

“What do you want?” he asks, picking up the extra brush by Jirou’s feet.

“Whatever you can do,” she said slowly, suddenly fearing for her life.

Izuku nodded, deftly brushing out her soft pink afro. There wasn’t that much hair to work with and even once he brushed it straight it only reached her shoulders. Still, he had worked with less when he was still growing out his hair.

He hummed a familiar beat as he worked, twisting quickly and efficiently. He had braided faster but he was doing something slightly more difficult than Witch’s fishtail. With her head start Jirou finished first and watched with a steadily climbing eyebrow.

“If you can do complicated stuff like that why don’t you ever do it to your hair?”

He shrugged, focused entirely on not letting any strands of Mina’s hair escape the plaits. “Makes me look too much like my brother who...from a scientific standpoint SHOULDN’T EVEN EXIST.” This revelation seemed to prompt an existential crisis that made Izuku almost start sobbing. However, he was unwilling to let go of Mina’s hair so he continued to braid while mumbling under his breath is agonized tones. Mina and Yaoyorozu shared a wary look and Jirou, desperate to stop Izuku’s meltdown, cleared her throat.

“Is that where you learned?”

He abruptly stopped his mumbling and nodded as he absently replied, “This is as simple as eating a candle while hotwiring a Lamborghini. I mean I’ve done fishtails with a bullet in my shoulder in a dark alleyway with a concussion seeing some freaky lookin’ angels.”
The backstory behind that experience was that Witch had pissed off the wrong villain and had gotten shot and then swung into a wall. They had escaped but by that time the vigilante had been so woozy with the pain they forced Izuku into control for a moment’s reprise. Izuku had spent the time biting his tongue and rebraiding Witch’s hair so it wouldn’t blow in his face and obstruct his mad dash to safety.

When he was done he rolled back to inspect his handiwork. Considering that Mina’s hair was near impossible to braid he would say he had done well. It took him a moment to realize there was a heavy silence in the room.

“What?”

Mina looked up at him, eyes narrowed, “How does that situation just happen?”

He gave her a mad cackle, “Someday we’ll all come face to face with the thing that sought it fit to let us exist in the universe and we’ll have to justify that space.”

Then he removed two tiny finger cymbals from his jacket, clashed them together, and then threw them out the classroom door, further concerning the room’s occupants. Seeing as the cymbals had made a noise when they crashed onto the floor his wheelchair got jealous. Being he wasn’t one to neglect his inanimate objects feelings he lifted and chucked his wheelchair at his desk, scattering papers and folders in a miniature paper tornado.

“Yee-haw.”

Izuku spent the entire day stationed at his desk, completing a thesis paper on astrophysics for Nedzu and systematically have mental breakdowns. Around lunch, he pulled out a bag of giant pink marshmallows and rummaged around in the vents until he found the old iron he had stashed there a few weeks prior. When the class stumbled in they found their trainer laying facedown on the floor, iron covered in pink marshmallow goop half a foot away, and his floral skirt just the tiniest bit on fire.

Todoroki put out the fire and then after a brief conference with Aizawa who had walked out of the room as soon as he saw Izuku in all his marshmallow glory gained permission to take Izuku home. It wasn’t hard to see that Izuku wasn’t in the correct state of mind and after Aizawa saw him jump on top of his desk wielding a chainsaw screaming ‘I challenge Buddha to a knife fight’ he conceded that Izuku was better off at home, preferably away from any sharp objects, or at the very
least, no civilian casualties.

At first, they tried to call Izuku’s mother. But Izuku had blocked all of their numbers on her phone (by all he meant the numbers of everyone in building, from teachers to third-years). Any other day they would have asked Bakugou to do something like call Mitsuki but both Bakugou and Kirishima were absent for reasons unknown to everyone other than Izuku.

The class was unofficially released from their classes until they figured out what to do with the insane Izuku Midoriya wheeling around the school. At one point they reached out to All Might for assistance but when the Number One Hero went to heed their request Izuku bared his teeth and revved his chainsaw menacingly.

After about an hour or so of increasingly desperate schemes to rid UA of the Midoriya Curse Izuku vanished. The entirety of Class 1-A along with a good few teachers conducted a search but after twenty minutes turned up empty-handed. They were about to get Nedzu when Todoroki finally found the disaster child. Well... it was more like Izuku fell out of a vent on Todoroki’s head.

The teenager fell out of the vent and flattened the other completely. There was a still-smoldering cigarette in his hand and he took a long drag before staring Iida directly in his eyes and asking, “Am I dead yet?”

“...No?”

“THEN wHAT'S THE FuCKING POINT!”

And then he hauled himself to his feet and gestured for them to follow. “Them” referring to Mina, Uraraka, Shinsou, Iida, and Todoroki, the current members of the search party he had interrupted. Everyone but Iida followed, both terrified and concerned for the other teenager. Iida said he was going to alert Aizawa that Izuku had been found but no one really paid attention, being that Izuku was elbows deep in a supply closet.

The fact that none of them were overly surprised when he pulled out a shopping cart full of cotton candy Peeps and had a shotgun over his shoulder was probably cause for concern. His red heels clicked down the hall and the party followed. Uraraka asked where they were going but before Izuku had a chance to reply his phone rang. All of them knew Izuku had some weird ass contacts so they all collectively held their breath.
“Oh, it’s just but my brother’s burnt toaster strudel boyfriend,” he pressed ‘decline’ and continued on his way. By this time they had now realized that they were on the way out of UA and a collective sigh of relief could be heard all the way from Canada.

They were only slightly surprised when they found a neon green van parked outside UA’s gates. They were significantly less surprised when Izuku shoved the shopping cart and shotgun in the back and opened the doors for them to enter.

There was only a brief moment of hesitation before they all piled in, Todoroki riding shotgun and the other three squished in the back. After all, they didn’t exactly trust Izuku to actually drive home without committing some sort of crime and having four heroes in training ride along seemed like a decent plan.

Much to Todoroki’s relief Izuku obeyed most traffic laws and there wasn’t a police chase. Uraraka and Mina tried to interrogate Izuku on anything and everything but they only got random gibberish they didn’t entirely want to understand.

“Why do you have so many weapons at school?”

“Aesthetic.”

“Why are you so crazy today?”

“Five-hour energy.”

“Who are your siblings?”

“Illegal.”

“Where are we going?”

“Home #4”

“Where did you get the van?”
“I don’t know. I texted the crusty man and he took care of it.”

Izuku had the window rolled down and was belting some random gibberish while Todoroki stared at the walking disaster, each of the answers he gave Mina and Uraraka holding a little more meaning. He had spent the entire weekend pondering what Izuku had told him and he was planning on pulling him aside for a conversation. However, those plans had been put on hold since Izuku was less than lucid. He wondered at what point Izuku had broken his nose or, rather, who’s nose had been broken.

His train of thought was distracted rather rudely when a large feathered shape flew through the open window and hit Todoroki right in the face. There was quite a bit of screaming from everyone except Izuku who calmly pulled the bird off Todoroki’s face and placed it on his headrest.

“...Izuku...” Shinsou started, the first word he had said about this entire affair, “Why is there a bird in the car?”

“It’s just a pigeon.”

“That... that is not a pigeon.”

Izuku seemed not to of heard him and continued to drive down the road. Seemingly unconcerned that a fourth of the car was now taken up by the ‘pigeon’.

And that was basically all Izuku remembered. Everything past the bird incident was foggy and therefore deemed unimportant. Shinsou had been right to say that it was not a pigeon who had flown into the van. It had, in fact, been a vulture.

Why the hell a vulture had decided to fly into Shouto’s face was beyond Izuku. It was even further beyond Izuku was why said vulture was in his room and he felt a strange emotional connection to the thing. He wasn’t aware vultures even existed in Japan.

Crawling out of bed he winced as something in his shoulder pulled. He looked down to find his left shoulder wrapped in bloody bandages and when he peeled back the gauze there was a criss-cross of stitches along a deep wound.
Huh, ok so maybe there were some important gaps in his memory.

Running a hand through his hair he walked out of his bedroom. He flinched when he heard the beat of massive wings and the vulture landed squarely on Izuku’s uninjured shoulder. His subconscious whispered a ‘what the fuck’ at the new bald companion.

Oh, wait that was Cypress.

“Can someone please explain why there is a vulture on Izuku’s shoulder and what happened in the past twenty-four hours?”

Somewhere Witch groaned, “The Five Hour Energy happened.”

“Remind us to never take it again.”

“What are you talking about? That was great!” Beetle laughed, spinning with their arms outstretched and head tilted backward. The picture of insane bliss.

Izuku stumbled down the stairs, listening to Beetle’s reverence of Five Hour Energy. His ear occasionally brushed against the vulture’s feathers and he found them surprisingly soft.

He was so lost in his mind that he didn’t notice the person in his dining room until he had made a pot of coffee and drank half a bottle of vinegar and whiskey.

“Izuku?”

Izuku’s head snapped up as he located the sound of the voice that distinctly wasn’t in his mind.

“Dad?”

Chapter End Notes

I keep promising that the Sport’s Festival will be next chapter but I SWEAR it'll be the
one after the next one!!

I need names for the vulture, the stranger the better.

<3

[Discord]
“Dad?”

Hisashi stared dumbly at his son, taking in the yet-to-be-named vulture slowly shredding the shoulder Izuku’s oversized lemon sweater. A color that clashed horribly with his son’s viridescent curls and florally undertoned skirt, “...Uh, yep that’s me.”

Izuku took a sip of his vinegar-whiskey-coffee and picked a shriveled daisy out of his hair. He stopped to stroke ebony feathers, the vulture preening under his careful touch. “Whatcha’ doing in my apartment?”

“Your apartment?”

“Yes, my apartment.”

“What about Inko?”

“I don’t really live with mom anymore. She’s always working and this place is much nicer.”

“How did you afford it?”

Izuku gave his father a stare cold enough to freeze over hell, “Why do I feel like you know that answer?”

There was only one possible explanation for how Hisashi had found this particular lodging. Personally, Izuku owned six homes/apartments/warehouses and this was the one he probably used
the least. Technically, it wasn’t even his. Officially, it was registered under Beetle’s name.

Beetle had yet to get back to Hisashi after the deal they had cut what seemed like years ago. It was a hell of a note when that their lives had become so busy that they hadn’t gotten around to dealing with their father/ infamous villain.

Now, it was apparent that Hisashi had become impatient and decided to track down Beetle himself. Izuku wondered which villain snitched. He bet it was Shigaraki.

“You’re Beetle?”

“Villany is genetic.” Beetle said dryly. Hisashi couldn’t hear the comment but Izuku wished he could.

“No.”

Hisashi narrowed his eyes, more in confusion than suspicion.

“They’re my sibling.”

Surprise and slight betrayal colored Hisashi’s freckled features, “Inko had another child!?”

“No.”

Surprise morphed back into confusion as his father’s brow furrowed, “I had another child?”

“I hope not. I can’t handle another sibling. Though, if you did I hope it was a girl. There is too much testosterone here already.”

Beetle squawked in outrage, “I’m a girl sometimes!”
“But are you now?”

“...explain?”

Izuku hummed, his overly calm composure crumbling as his god-tier bitch face fell away into a fire of spite-fueled daddy issues.

“No. I don’t think I will. Only a select few know what the fuck I’m talking about and they all didn’t disappear for ten years because they liked villainy more than their family!”

Hisashi winced, “You know about that?”

Izuku momentarily paused. He had just realized that Witch and Cypress had been unusually quiet, now he saw that was because they had been having a somewhat cordial conversation about a very un-cordial topic.

“That’s the one?” Cypress growled, pointing at Hisashi.

Witch nodded.

Cypress stormed over and shoved Izuku out of the control. For a moment Izuku wondered if it would be worth it to try and get it back, but Witch was standing to the side, arms folded with something like grim satisfaction on his face.

The vulture unhooked itself from Cypress’ shoulder as he stomped over to Hisashi. It flew across the room and landed on the granite countertop, beady eyes fixed on the father and not-son. To Izuku it looked like he was deciding if it was worth ripping out Hisashi’s eyes and he felt incredibly touched that the vulture would do something towards Izuku’s benefit.

Cypress, also looked like he was seriously considering ripping out Hisashi’s eyes. Only he was much closer and it would be messier. The vulture would probably eat the eyes but Cypress would leave them on the floor.

“Are we going to stop that?” Beetle sangsonged, watching Cypress get steadily closer to Izuku’s
father.

“No,” Witch said.

“But the tiles are unglazed and the blood might seep into them :( This is my apartment after all!”

“Cypress don’t kill my dad,” Izuku pinched the bridge of his nose, feeling a sudden surge of pity for Witch. This must be how he felt all the time.

Because Cypress was Cypress he didn’t listen to Izuku. Instead, he knocked Hisashi under the nose with a brutal uppercut and then finished the move with a dizzying elbow to the kidney.

All three of the spectators sighed. Although, they sighed for very different reasons. Izuku sighed in exasperation, it now looked like he just punched one of the most powerful villains in Japan in the kidneys. Witch sighed in wistful retribution, he didn’t particularly like Hisashi and how he had been an absentee father all those years. Beetle sighed in disappointment, they watched a crimson droplet of blood drip from Hisashi’s nose and stain their unglazed tiles, Cypress had also pulled his stitches and crimson was beginning to seep through the sweater. It was Beetle’s sweater.

The vulture made an ungodly screeching sound that an awful like them egging on Cypress.

Hisashi took it rather well, all things considered. It wasn’t a killing wound and he took it standing. Instead, he wheezed and clenched his teeth, “I suppose I deserved that.”

Cypress, somewhat satisfied, allowed Izuku to deal with the fallout.

“Now look at what you did,” Izuku made an annoyed hand motion as he gestured to the entire situation.

Hisashi had straightened so he was standing upright, somewhat alarmed, “Izuku! You’re bleeding!”

“So are you,” Izuku jerked his head in the direction of his bleeding nose, “And it’s Midoriya to you.”
Hisashi replied but Izuku wasn’t paying attention. He was busy stripping off his (Beetle’s) sweater and wandering around the kitchen, opening and closing drawers and cabinets. It took him about a minute to find a new bottle of whiskey and the sewing kit. Both, were, for some reason, in the oven. Izuku was not surprised.

He threw his sweater at the vulture who pecked at the bloodstain for a bit. Upon realizing it was inedible he snatched it and flew upstairs, presumably to burn it or throw it in the laundry.

As Izuku suspected, that last punch had torn his stitches open and now there was a bleeding open gash in his shoulder. Hisashi made a strangled sound but Izuku didn’t even glance up as he tore out the whiskey’s stopper with his teeth and took two large swigs. This is a routine he knew. A routine he had done both, concussed, shot, in dark alleyways, and under the influence of five-hour energy.

He walked over to the sink and poured some on the… stab wound? Cut? Slash? To him, it looked like someone had driven an inch wide spike into his shoulder and then dragged downward but with all the blood it was hard to tell. It stung but the effect was slightly dulled by the warmth in his stomach.

“We… could - should, go to a hospital for that,” Hisashi slowly suggested. The realization had dawned once he saw his son down a few more shots and start threading a needle.

Izuku made a noncommittal sound, too focused on trying to get the thread through the hole to tell his father ‘no’.

Hisashi watched slightly opened mouth as he watched. For a villain he acted like this was an unusual occurrence. Then again, Hisashi was a fancy villain and probably had some official medic or something.

It wasn’t until Izuku finally got the needle threaded and knots tied that he noticed Hisashi had migrated so he was not four inches away from his son’s face. Izuku hadn’t noticed he had gotten that close and nearly shanked him in the eye with the needle.

“You are not giving yourself stitches Izuku,” his Dad voice had nothing on Witch’s so Izuku was unaffected.

“Would you rather me bleed out on the unglazed tiles?”
“I would rather you let me take you to a hospital.”

“Ah yes, wonderful idea. Let’s take a wanted villain into a hospital so his son can get stitches for a wound he doesn’t even remember receiving!”

Hisashi frowned, “You don’t remember getting stabbed?”

“I just said that, didn’t I? Besides, you don’t get to tell me what to do! You just broke into my apartment after ten years of taking down international sex-trafficking rings and burning people alive!”

“AND YOU DON’T REMEMBER GETTING STABBED!”

“AND I AM DEALING WITH IT!”

There was a decent pool of blood starting to form on the tiles since all the sass and shouting had aggravated the wound further. Witch doubted that Izuku would actually finish the stitches before he bled out so he gently prodded Izuku out of control and proceeded to take the needle to his skin.

Hisashi looked ready to wrestle the needle out of his hands but Witch pinned him with a cold stare. He fell into the rhythm of threading and the pull on his flesh. Pain flared up from shoulder but he barely felt it.

It took around three minutes for Witch to complete the stitches. He stared at Hisashi as he half-leaned into the sink and washed the blood off his hands and shoulder. Somewhere in his mind, it sounded like Beetle was playing a violin like a guitar again, although, this time it sounded like he was being accompanied by someone playing a guitar like a violin.

He let Izuku take back control and proceeded to smash both the violin and guitar over Beetle and Cypress’ heads.

“Izuku…” Hisashi whispered, “What the hell was that?”
“Stitches,” Izuku replied with the same dryness of Antarctica.

“No, that… other thing. That… that wasn’t… you.”

Izuku strode past his father to retrieve a spare t-shirt from behind the TV. “Full offense, but I don’t think you know me well enough to judge whether I’m ‘me’ or not.”

Somewhere in the apartment, a fire alarm went off, the vulture having chosen to burn the sweater. Izuku was unconcerned.

“I want to know you! That’s why I’m here Izuku! I want to get to know you!”

Izuku paused from where he was shrugging on the slightly offensive shirt, “So why did you leave?!”

“Because it wasn’t safe for you or Inko! I make a lot of enemies and it wasn’t safe for you if I was to stay in Mastufasu!”

“I already knew that!” Izuku spat, “I suppose the better question is why you are back now!”

“When Inko called me to tell me you tried to kill yourself it felt like my world was crashing down around me! I left to keep you safe but I failed that! I felt so helpless!” Hisashi said, feeling quite tearful.

Unimpressed Izuku replied, “Oh cry me a river. If that was what this is about you would have shown up when I was still in the hospital. It’s been a year!”

“It takes a while to detangle yourself from criminal organizations. I run one of those criminal organizations and had to tie up quite a few loose ends.”

Izuku blinked, “Wait - what?”

“I’m back to stay Izu.”
Izuku’s world had to pause for a bit to reorient itself. He had long ago come to the conclusion that
Hisashi was an asshole father. He might have been able to forgive him if he had shown up at the
hospital and told him the whole story about wanting to protect his family in person. But he hadn’t
gotten so much as a phone call and Izuku had to hear about his father’s occupation through the
proverbial grapevine.

For the first time in a year, Izuku allowed himself to hope. Hope was a horribly dangerous thing, a
self-immolating weapon he often didn’t touch.

Something behind Izuku’s nose started to sting, “You’re really staying?”

Silent tears leaked out of corners of Hisashi’s eyes, “I’ve officially put the Dragon name to rest.”

Izuku felt a tear slide down his own cheek and he wiped it away with the heel of his hand. It had
been ages since he last cried and the sensation was foreign. “I can’t forgive you.”

“I don’t expect you to.”

“Have you told Mom?”

Hisashi shook his head, “I haven’t tracked down her number.”

“I recommend we have a dinner or something so you can break the news.”

Hisashi smiled, “Can I give you a hug?”

Izuku hesitated, “Okay?”

Izuku wasn’t used to being hugged and he could tell Hisashi was even less used to hugging. It
wasn’t the most graceful thing but it was somewhat comforting nonetheless.
“You smell like tobacco.”

“So do you.”

“I should also smell like whiskey.”

Hisashi pulled back so he was staring Izuku directly into Izuku’s eyes.

“We should have an intervention.”

“You can try but I don’t think the others will be very receptive.”

Hisashi frowned, “Others?”

Feeling it was inevitable Izuku explained, introducing the others as he did so. Cypress looked less inclined to punch Hisashi and Beetle complained about no longer being able to score off Dragon’s reputation. Witch was just tired and greeted Hisashi with a half-hearted wave.

By the end of the half-an-hour long crash course on Izuku’s existence, Hisashi was sitting down cradling his head in his hands. “That shouldn’t be possible.”

“Well, it is so get over it.”

At some point, the vulture had appeared and was perched on Izuku’s shoulder. Hisashi, needed something slightly saner, pointed feebly at the carrion bird and asked, “What’s his name?”

Izuku considered for a moment and said, “Pigeon.”

Cypress said, “God.”
Witch said, “Duck.”

Beetle said, “Carrion My Wayward Son! Hmm, actually, how about Cthulhu The Ass Destroyer!”

Izuku said, “Call him whatever the fuck you want but his name is Pigeon!”

This prompted a great huff from all involved parties and Pigeon nuzzling Izuku’s ear.

Izuku redirected his attention back to Hisashi, who seemed to be wondering if Pigeon was actually a pigeon or a vulture. “Soooo, Dad! How exactly did you find me?”

“I went to the bar and threatened them.”

“Who’s ‘them’?”

“The really scarred one and the ashy one.”

Cypress growled in indignation, “Only I’m allowed to threaten my boyfriend!”

Izuku suddenly remembered the phone call from Dabi he hadn’t picked up. Oh, fuck that was going to be a conversation. They had probably forgotten that Hisashi had shown up asking about someone named ‘Izuku’ until he showed up again asking about Beetle, who coincidentally shared the same body.

“What did they do?”

“The ashy one laughed hysterically and the scarred one wheezed a bit.”

“Well… fuck.”
Chapter End Notes

We get the whole Five Hour Energy story next chapter with..... THE START OF THE SPORTS FESTIVAL

https://discord.gg/xAtJsM7
As the days before the Sports Festival trickled through the hourglass of time Izuku barely had time
to breathe. Sleep was a distant dream and his bloodstream was 90% caffeine. Normal people would
have been miserable with the constant state of motion and absolute lack of relaxation but Izuku had
always been far from normal. He relished the hours dedicated to preparing, surrounded with
constantly ringing phones and running around the city, forcing people (read: villains) to sign the
necessary contracts with the help of Beetle.

However, there were a few plot points that occurred entirely separately from the drama of the
Sports Festival. Loose ends were tied and characters redeemed. News stations called and
explanations granted. So before we get into the absolute chaos that descended upon UA the day of
the Sports Festival let’s talk about three conversations, one about the past, one about the present,
and one about the future.

—

True to form the past conversation set up the future one. Actually, it was more a series of
conversations that were slowly used to piece together a series of events. Because he had absolutely
no common courtesy for people’s sleeping schedules Izuku took care of these conversations
directly after Hisashi’s reappearance.

Although he didn’t admit it, the fact that he was missing a good portion of the day along with the
reason behind a semi-serious wound was slightly unnerving. He normally always remembered
what happened if he decided to fuck with his medication using powerful energy drinks and he
couldn’t think of any reason this time had been so different.

It was an uncomfortable feeling. He didn’t know what he forgot only that something had been
forgotten. Suddenly he was fourteen again, waking up to the sterile scent of hospital in his nose,
legs unable to move and head pounding. He still doesn’t remember hopelessly trudging up the
steps to the rooftop or taking off his shoes or climbing the railing or stepping out onto open air. He
didn’t leave a note so he can never quite be sure of his exact thought process. He had a general
idea but he can never quite be sure his exact thoughts in those minutes before and as he jumped.
Sometimes, when he was feeling in a particularly dark humor he thought it bitterly unfair that he didn’t remember what it was like to fly, even if it was only for a moment.

There was a sort of static where the memories should be. It reminded Izuku of a video buffering, hitting a spinning circle that progressed the video so slowly it was more like a halting pause-stop. Most people just jumped ahead a few seconds, you could usually figure out what you missed but there were still those few moments that would be full of nothing but silence and left you with the feeling that you were missing something.

None of the shared body’s occupants spoke about it but they all were acutely aware of how much the hollow lack of memory distressed Izuku. Because they knew their little brother they saw how he would rather take Shigaraki’s touch than a quirk that stole memories. They shared guilty glances and wondered how much a fissure Izuku’s purposely repressed memories would cause.

As soon as Hisashi was exiled to whatever melodramatically expensive hotel he had booked Izuku had set to locating his missing memories. Four phone calls had to be made to get the full story. Mina, Uraraka, Shinsou, and a local news station, had to be individually contacted. He would have called Shouto but he may or may not have been subconsciously avoiding the bi-colored boy. It took an annoyingly long amount of time for most of them to return his calls and the vague answers he received from the previous call had made him want to set things on fire. Of course, he didn’t because that would steal Beetle’s brand, therefore stealing Beetle’s aesthetic, which they cared about more than their life.

First, he had called Shinsou, the person he expected to give him the straightest answer with the least amount of embellishment. He was not wrong but also not correct to a satisfactory level. The call went something like this:

The phone rings eleven times before someone deems it important enough to pick up, Izuku supposes this is fair being none of the class besides the Bakusquad and Shouchan have his number.

“Hello?”

Shinsou doesn’t sound at all like someone who had just been awoken. Any sane human being would have been sound asleep at this hour. Izuku hadn’t realized it until his father had left but that entire debacle had happened around two in the morning. It was now three forty-two. Izuku wasn’t overly surprised, Shinsou’s dark circles told him enough about his sleep cycle.

“Yes, hi Shinsou. It’s Midoriya. I was wondering if you could tell me how I got stabbed?”
There was a bit of sputtering on the other line before, “You were stabbed?!”

Izuku frowned at the ceiling. He was currently taking the call sprawled out atop Beetle’s granite countertop and Shinsou not knowing about his injury wasn’t a good sign. “It does appear so, being I just had to restitch a hole in my shoulder.”

“You restitched it? Wait- restitch? Who stitched it the first time?”

“Me I’m assuming.”

“You should probably go to the doctor for that,” Shinsou said, although he made it sound more like a question.

“Why does everyone want me to go to the hospital for one small stab wound?” Izuku mumbled under his breath, slightly exasperated.

“What was that?”

“Nothing. Anyway, any idea about the events that could have precluded to the stabbing?”

“Uh… well, you had me and Mina and Uraraka and Todoroki get into this hideous van and then said you were driving us to house #2 - or was it 4?”

“No no no, later on,” Izuku said flapping a hand, “Right after Pigeon hit Shouchan in the face.”

The other line went quiet, “…you are aware that it wasn’t a pigeon right?”

“Oh yes quite so but that’s his name now. Although my brothers keep saying his name is God or Duck or Princess Duchess Tiara Muffy Sparkleblossom.”

“You kept him?”
“Of course! He’s a valued member of the family now.”

There was a long pause, Izuku mentally pictured Shinsou pinching the bridge of his nose. “I’m upset that I’m not even that surprised.”

“We’re getting off topic. What happened after Pigeon flew into the van?”

“Well you kept driving for a while and then we hit a traffic jam. You of course - wait, why don’t you remember any of this?”

“I got high on Five Hour Energy but that’s beside the point. Continue with your tale.”

“You can’t get high on Five Hour Energy.”

“You can if you are on my antidepressants and you drink six bottles in the span of ten seconds.”

“I’m not going to question any of that and just kept going.”

“Good choice.”

“We hit a traffic jam in the Lime Mutiny and then--”

“The Lime Mutiny?”

“That’s what we christened the van.”

“Good name choice.”

“It was Mina’s idea. Anyway, since you are you and are not dissuaded by simple laws you parked
the van in the middle of the street, retrieved the shopping cart from the back and hopped in armed with a shotgun and cotton candy Peeps. You then proceeded to zoom through the vehicles dead set on finding the source of the delay. You dented twelve cars and I don’t think any of their insurance claims will be settled.”

Izuku hummed, that definitely sounded realistic.

“So we followed you and Uraraka brought up the idea about calling the authorities but Todoroki and Mina both shot it down because they didn’t think it would have any effect. I believe Todoroki’s exact words were ‘that will probably cause him to start another car chase’.”

“That’s only happened… one, two, three, four, five, FIVE times!”

“Remind me again how you aren’t in jail?” Shinsou asked, sounding legitimately curious.

“Some very large loopholes involving quirklessness and timely removals from situations. Let’s get back on topic shall we?”

“Well, you were somehow faster in the shopping cart than four heroes in training and Uraraka had to launch Ashido into the stratosphere so you could be located. The vulture-”

“Pigeon!”

“Right… Pigeon had also latched onto you like a bald leech.”

There was a loud crash as Izuku accidentally rolled off the countertop and found himself staring up into the beady eyes of Pigeon who looked on with concern and an ungodly screech.

“What was that?”

“My pelvis and my bird. Did you ever find me again?”

“Me and Todoroki didn’t. We lost the girls and therefore you. I had to drive the Lime Mutiny back
to UA two hours later because we had no idea what to do with it and I was the only one who knew how to drive. By the way, the color is somehow better than it’s driving capabilities. I am a pretty good driver and that thing is a death trap. I didn’t see Mina or Uraraka until the end of the day when I was on my way home. I met them on the train but they were covered in soot and dust. They said they spent the day pulling people out of burning cars but then it was my stop so I didn’t get the full story.”

Izuku ground his teeth. Shinsou’s story only fanned the flames of his curiosity and didn’t even come close to fully telling him what had truly transpired.

“Hm, thanks. I’m going to call one of the girls then.”

“Can you tell me what happened once you find out. I’ve suddenly become very invested in this.”

“Sure. Cya.”

Izuku hung up and groaned. He wanted a nap and a waffle but would only be getting one of those things. He hauled himself off the floor and shook off one of Pigeon’s feathers. As he stirred the waffle mix he called Uraraka. Sure, it was four in the morning but desperate times ya know?

“Hello?” Urararka said mid-yawn.

“It’s a Midoriya. I just called Shinsou and he said you spent the day pulling people out of burning cars so if you could please inform me of what happened to cause that situation.”

Uraraka was suddenly wide awake, “MIDORIYA IZUKU HOW DARE YOU BE SO RECKLESS!”

Izuku held the phone with his neck as he poured the batter into the waffle iron, unmoved by Uraraka’s reprimand.

“I can’t believe you! Going head to head with a villain like that! You could have been killed!!”

“Uh huh. Care to elaborate?”
Uraraka was too far into her rant to hear him, “And then getting arrested! That could affect your future! And you stole someone’s property! What if that was all they had! Motorcycles are expensive! Not everyone can go about impulsively buying things like you!”

“Wait, what. I got arrested? I stole a motorcycle?” Izuku said, confused. He wondered what he had done with the motorcycle. Was it in the garage? If he got arrested he must have escaped because he was very much not in jail.

On the other line Uraraka huffed, “Well technically you almost got arrested. But then you escaped on the stolen motorcycle. Things cost money Deku! You can’t go around stealing people’s stuff just because you need to run away from your bad decisions!”

Izuku was quickly realizing he would get nothing but rants and more unanswered questions from Uraraka. He waited until his waffle was done to hang up. She was still going on about how selfishly he acted and he was pretty sure she wouldn’t notice he wasn’t there anymore until she was done, something that could take either two minutes or two hours.

Some of her points did get across however and Izuku vowed to find the motorcycle, return it to the proper owner, and give them a couple hundred thousand yen as interest. Unless they were pompous assholes. Then he wouldn’t give them anything.

He dialed up Mina as he rummaged through the fridge for syrup and whipped cream. Mina picked up as he was contemplating why cotton candy syrup existed along with why Beetle owned no other syrup. He was further scandalized by the fact that the entire freezer was full of cotton candy syrup, save for one loaf of pumpernickel bread.

“Midoriya?” Mina asked groggily.

“Yes, it’s me. What exactly happened yesterday? After you started chasing me through the streets?”

Mina yawned, “Well… me and Uraraka chased you to the source of the traffic jam. Obviously, it was a villain wrecking havoc at the intersection. I think she made her debut a few months ago by stealing a metric ton of hospital drugs. I’m pretty sure her name was like Briar or something.”

“Uh huh,” Izuku replied intelligently. He was too busy staring in abject horror at the single bottle
of yellow syrup that was apparently ‘sponge bob’ flavored. It wasn’t even like the cartoon sponge bob. The packaging was just normal sponges and soap bubbles.

“She had these giant tentacle things that were covered in thorns that sprouted from her back. It looked like a hero cornered her and she took a hostage. This guy had been snatched from a champagne colored minivan and Briar had a five-inch thorn leveled at his jugular.”

“Let me guess the hero underestimated the villain’s power and was cowed.” Izuku said. He had elected to not use syrup on his waffle and was eating it drowsed in whipped cream instead.

“Yep. I think he was waiting for backup or something.”

Izuku sighed. He knew where this was going to go. He took a bite of his waffle and spoke as he chewed, “Then what did I do?”

“I actually… don’t know.”

Izuku was one step away from starting to bang his head against a wall, “Why not?”

“Well… the villain had knocked over a few cars and a few of those cars were on fire. People were still inside some of those cars so me and Uraraka got distracted trying to save them.”

Stupid heroes with their stupid hero complexes. He probably shouldn’t be annoyed that they were too busy saving lives to pay attention to him but he was still irritated. “Did anyone get hurt?”

“Nope! We got most everyone out on our own but then the pros showed up and helped in the end.”

“Is that all you know?”

“Yeah. There were a few gunshots and the last thing we saw was you steal a motorcycle with that vulture on your shoulder and get chased down the street by police cars.”
“Festive.”

“Why don’t you remember any of this anyway?”

“I got high off Five Hour Energy.”

“That’s a thing?”

“If you’re on the meds I am yeah,” Izuku said as he washed his hands to get the whipped cream off them. He hadn’t used a plate so they were a bit sticky. “Hey, were you the one that got Sero and Kaminari together? You won me a bet.”

“Why yes, I was. Thank you for noticing my efforts,” Mina said with a hint of pride but was then interrupted by a yawn. “I’m going back to bed.”

“Bye.”

“I’m calling because I was one of the people involved in the story. I do believe I have a right to know what was being said about me.”

Izuku hung up and dove headfirst into the couch with a groan. He was down to his last resort. With no lack of regret, he slowly dialed the number for the local news company.

“This is Musutafu News. How can I help you?” said a cordial feminine voice.

“Yes hi. I was wondering if you could inform me about what happened this afternoon involving a villain named Briar?”

“I’m sorry sir but we haven’t published that article yet. If you missed the live news then I’m afraid you’ll just have to wait for it to be released to the public. It should be out by tomorrow.”

Izuku stifled his frustration, “I’m calling because I was one of the people involved in the story. I do believe I have a right to know what was being said about me.”
“Sir, I’m sorry but I can’t give you the information before the story breaks.”

He inhaled sharply, “It isn’t even a story. It’s not some giant scandal. You already covered it. I don’t even need the article. Just a rough paraphrasing.”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that.”

“Yes, you can actually. You just don’t want to take time out of whatever very important task you are focused on completing at four thirty in the morning.”

The long silence afterward told Izuku he had successfully called her out.

“How about this. I’ll make you a deal. I’m a student at UA and will give you an exclusive interview about what it’s like to work with All Might.”

Izuku could practically hear the gears turn in the woman’s head. She was probably salivating at the thought about being the assistant to land an interview with one of All Might’s pupils. Reporters were like sharks and she smelled blood in the water. There was a slight chance that she might not believe his credentials but if it was a scam there wasn’t much lost. On one hand, she had a story that would be published in a few hours and on the other she had the possibility of an interview, something the reporters had been gunning towards for months.

“When can that be scheduled?”

“How about after the Sports Festival? By then you’ll know who I am and stuff.”

He heard her smile, “Sound wonderful.”

“My end?”
“Give me your email and I’ll send you the article.”

Izuku did and not a minute later there was a ping, signaling that the woman had indeed sent him the article.

“Pleasure doing business with you ma’am. Ask for Midoriya Izuku after the Festival and I’ll do that interview.”

“Hear from you then.”

Izuku hung up and scrolled through the article, eyes scanning the text.

Yesterday, many civilians met resistance as they made their daily commute home. The villain Briar made a surprise appearance yesterday at an intersection between a local café and a series of apartment complexes. She had made her debut a month prior with the thievery of a local hospital, the stolen drugs circulating the black market at a dangerous pace.

Blaze the Warmth Hero had cornered the villain, using his quirk he had trapped her in a ring of fire, effectively cornering her. However, Briar combated this with her own quirk, Hawthorn. Her quirk allowed her to sprout a series of thick thorned branches from her back, sacrificing a few limbs to extinguish the fires.

What followed was a scuffle where Briar emerged victorious, in her futile desperation she took a hostage and Blaze did his duty and stood down, trying to protect the life of the civilian. It was at that moment that Briar struck, injuring the valiant hero. Blaze, realizing that he could not win the fight without endangering the hostage’s life, began to call in reinforcements.

The fight between the Warmth Hero and the villain had destroyed a good portion of the intersection, overturning cars and smashing buildings. Several civilians were trapped in the rubble. Luckily, there were no casualties. A blessing owed to two first-year UA hero course students who happened to be in the area, Uraraka Ochako, and Ashido MIna. They were able to rescue many civilians before the pros arrived. Read their interviews here.

Meanwhile, Briar was still wreaking havoc. She was taken into custody later the day by no one other than the Number One Hero, All Might. However, he was not the initial confronter. Minutes before All Might arrived Briar met another opponent. From the crowd of terrified onlookers what witnesses say was a ‘teenage boy riding in a shopping cart with a shotgun, a vulture was perched
on his shoulder like a pirate’s parrot.’ Multiple sources state that he was throwing cotton candy Peeps® at the villain. Once it became apparent that the marshmallows were doing nothing he proceeded to fire once into the air.

Watch the live confrontation here.

(Izuku tried to click on the link but it only led him to an error 404 page.)

Once the boy reloaded he moved to shoot the villain, Briar moved the hostage to intercept the shot but the teenager’s shot when wide. Although she was not hit it did distract the villain and in her brief moment of shock, the boy’s vulture made a move to attack.

The bird flew at the villain, avoiding the thorns and branches. It was able to cut open the villain’s hand and allowed the hostage to twist out of her grip. The hostage had a minor speed quirk and was able to disappear into the crowd before he could be caught again.

It was at that point the teenager and the villain engaged in a pseudo-shoot-out. The boy’s shots were constantly blocked by a wall of steel strong thorns and returned with a spike of pure plant fiber.

Miraculously, the boy was able to avoid getting hit.

Ten minutes into the standoff the teenager ran out of bullets and also seemed to have run out of patience. He shoved the shopping cart towards her, forcing her to use her tentacles to throw it out of the way. It was in those moments that the boy was able to close the distance. Unfortunately, Briar had regained her wits and was able to lacerate the boy’s shoulder.

The vulture had been circling the air but once it saw its master become injured it flew down and started attacking the villain with vigor.

The boy and the bird provided a united front against the villain. The teenager using the butt of the shotgun to strategically hit the villain’s thorned limbs, causing a few to splinter. The vulture occupied the villain’s head, attacking her hair and eyes.

It was at this point the villain and the teenager started to converse, although we were not able to pick up much of the conversation. The only intelligible quotes we were able to hear were as
Briar: “You think you can stop me little boy~? You’re already injured!”

Teenager: “You think that is the worst I’ve gotten?? Listen, motherfucker, you are blocking traffic and I am a medical fucking abnormality so I theoretically have four lives!!!!!!”

Briar: “Such cruelty! You would make a wonderful villain!”

Teenager: “Yeah yeah sister, already joined the club~! Now~”

It was at this point reinforcements arrived in the form of the beloved Number One Hero, All Might. He was able to easily deal with the villain using his famous Detroit Smash.

Once the dust settled it revealed the boy standing in the famous Sailor Moon® pose, saying “In the name of the moon I will punish you~!” before he broke off into an insane giggle as the vulture landed on his shoulder.

It was at this point that the police arrested Briar and attempted to arrest the teenager. However, once the teen became aware of the police’s intentions he found a discarded motorcycle and disappeared down the street. The police have not brought him into custody.

All Might attempted to assist the police department in locating the possible vigilante but turned up equally empty-handed.

(To listen to All Might’s interview click here.)

This event prompted many questions about the teenager. Is he just a delinquent or an arising vigilante? If his response to the villain’s taunts is to be believed is he a possible villain? We will inform you more about his identity as we receive more information.

Once he finished reading the article Izuku was stuck somewhere between amusement and mortification. On one hand, the entire situation was hilarious and the news would be getting much more than they bargained for with his interview if the entire station had a boner for his identity.
On the other hand, however, he was being called a vigilante and had more or less confessed to the news that he was a villain. He could probably play off the villain thing but still… uncomfortable questions would be asked.

Witch and Beetle didn’t seem the view affair as anything other than terrifying. Both were skeptical about how easily the villain comment would disappear. It was as good as an admission and Nedzu might start to peek into Izuku’s affairs, thus discovering Izuku’s involvement with the League and Witch’s vigilantism. They hadn’t done the best job at covering their tracks, relying mostly on the general unbelievable-ness of their situation to avoid suspicion. They came to an unusual mutual consensus to work on using some of Hisashi’s old contacts to try and clean up a few of their affairs.

Izuku was stuck somewhere between a laugh and self-deprecating sigh. Pigeon settled on the arm of the couch and let Izuku stroke his ebony wings. Within moments most of his stress had dissipated and he just regarded the predicament as utterly hysterical.

Wow. Everyone should get a vulture. They were great therapy animals.

—

The present conversation took place three days after Hisashi returned. It was set in a lavish penthouse suite that while technically under Izuku’s name, Beetle mostly used for entertaining the most lavish of underground villains and the occasional desperate politician. It was all cherrywood tables and marble countertops and leather armchairs. As usual, it was spotless, Beetle having hired a private maid to clean it once a week.

Currently, Izuku was silently watching his father explain that he was back for good to his mother like it was a high stakes tennis match. He occasionally took a bite of his katsudon and a sip of the champagne he had played off as ginger ale. Inko was understandably slightly pissed she had not at all been informed about Hisashi’s plan and how he hadn’t contacted her after Izuku’s suicide attempt. Something Izuku had not known and made him eye his father in suspicion.

He belatedly wished he had brought Pigeon for his calming effects along with the knowledge the bird would happily attack Hisashi if given the command, but he had let his vulture out to go look for some carrion and stretch his wings. However, it was equally stressful and hilarious watching his mother tear Hisashi a new one better than he or any of his siblings ever could so Pigeon wasn’t really needed.

“-and you didn’t think to tell me that you decided to come back? I love you Hisashi but this is not
something you just randomly spring on your wife!”

Hisashi looked mildly stunned, he seemed to have expected Inko to break down crying and fly across the table to welcome him back with open arms. Hisashi got half of the equation correct, Inko was crying but she was also annoyed.

“I thought it would be a surprise??”

“This isn’t something you leave as a surprise!”

“I’m sorry?”

Inko looked mutinous and Izuku remembered for the 100th time why he loved his mother, “Hisashi this is ridiculous! You couldn’t have made me one phone call to tell me you were returning?”

“I don’t know. I was afraid someone would track it? Some people weren’t happy I was stepping down.”

“Don’t get me wrong ‘Sashi I’m so happy you’re back but I’m just… shocked.”

“I can come back later….?”

Inko practically leaped out of her chair, “NO no no.” She laughed a little nervously, “I haven’t spent all these years carefully suggesting you come home for to refuse when you actually do,” she smiled in earnest, “I’m just happy you’re home.”

Hisashi had definitely gotten part of his equation wrong. Now he was the one crying and leaping across the table to kiss Inko. Izuku lifted his katsudon above his head in an effort to keep it from getting knocked over as he watched his father kiss his mother fiercely.

He wrinkled his nose, “Gross.”

There was a chorus of agreement from the others, Witch especially.
Inko turned to her son, pleased smile on her face, “Someday you’ll love someone this much.”

“Enough to knock over the katsudon? Never.”

Inko laughed and intertwined her fingers with Hisashi’s. He was still sitting on the table.

“I still can’t believe you knew dad was a supervillain.”

Inko blushed, “Well, it’s easier to say that dad’s on business than saying dad’s dismantling international human trafficking rings and getting himself labeled a villain.”

Izuku made a noise and ate some katsudon.

Inko looked around the room, Hisashi having migrated to the chair next to her. She took in the apartment for what seemed to be the first time. She had been a bit preoccupied with her husband returning to notice just how nice and expensive the suite was. While it was at the top of a skyscraper overlooking the city it was also huge and bedecked in all the finery of an expensive hotel.

“Hisashi is this yours?”

“Nope! Izuku just told me to come to this address.”

Inko fixed a scrutinizing gaze on her son who looked like he would rather be somewhere else, “Funny. He said it was yours. Care to explain Izu?”

Izuku was half sunk down into the chair, “Uh… it might be mine?”

“The apartment!? ”

Izuku was now mostly under the table, “I… might have bought it?”
“WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU MIGHT HAVE BOUGHT IT!?”

“Oh wait you mean Beetle bought it,” Inko said, realization dawning upon her features.

Izuku sat up so suddenly he hit his head on the bottom of the table, “You know!?!?”

Inko raised her eyebrows with perfect sincerity, “You mean you didn’t know I knew? They all know I know.”

He turned a vehement glare at the others, who were all avoiding eye contact, “They did now?”

“Speaking of which, I have a surprise for you Izuku!” Inko untangled her hand from Hisashi who looked curiously confused to her purse which she left by the doorway. She returned with a handful of papers and a slightly guilty smile.

“I know I haven’t been spending that much time with you. I’m so sorry for that Izu but I was busy doing this,” she sets the pile of papers in front of her son.

Izuku looked at the first paper, Inko practically vibrating with energy at his side. It takes him a minute for him to realize what it is. Once he does he only became more confused, “A birth certificate?” he looked at the other papers in the pile, “Three birth certificates?”

Inko wrung her hands, “Well… I used some of Hisashi’s old contacts-”

This drew a startled “WHAT!” from his father whom they all ignored.

“- to make it so the others exist in the eyes of the law. They’re DNA is different from yours but it isn’t entered into any database and if people find out it’s all coming from one body then some people might want to know how it’s possible and…”
Izuku carefully set down the papers, “Are you telling me that Witch, Beetle, and Cypress actually exist now?”

Inko nodded, beaming, “Witch is officially Akitani Mikumo, Beetle is Akitani Akira, and Cypress is Koki Akitani.”

Witch, Beetle, and Cypress were all staring open-mouthed. They had all assumed Inko hated them and she was avoiding them. Not that she was getting them identification.

Izuku was similarly shocked, he looked over the birth certificates again. “Wait, why does it say Witch is seventeen?”

Witch replied at the same time Inko did, “Because I am?” “Because he is?”

“WHAT THE FUCK!!”

“Language!”

“You didn’t know that?” Witch asked, Beetle nor Cypress looking at all surprised.

“How the fuck can you be seventeen! You’ve existed for like a year!”

Don’t ask me how your quirk works. I was created seventeen just like Beetle was created fifteen and Cypress was created sixteen.”

“What!”

“None of us were kidding when we called you ‘little brother’ we are all, now legally, older than you,” Cypress said smirking.
“How did Mom know about this?!”

“She’s a queen. She knows everything,” Beetle said, half laughing.

Witch shoved Izuku out of the way to talk to Inko himself, “I thought you hated us?”

Inko recognized the change and laughed, “What? No of course not! You’re good for Izuku.”

“Not even after the… thing?”

“Witch, sweetie, I am married to a supervillain.”

Witch, now Mukimo, considered this. “Why are we under your maiden name?”

“It’s a bit harder to trace back to Izu. Lord knows you’re gonna get caught. It’s been a full-time job covering your tracks.”

Witch winced, “Sorry about that Ms. Midoriya. They have no sense of subtlety.”

Inko smiled, “None of this Ms. Midoriya stuff. Call me Inko at the very least, I’m practically your mother after all.”

Witch felt a tentative smile tug at his lips, “Thank you Inko. I’ll try and cover our tracks a bit better.”

“Well, I can get Hisashi to help with that now.”

Hisashi had been barely following the conversation, “I’m gonna what now?”

“Help me make sure our boys don’t get caught!”
“I don’t have a choice do I.”

“Nope!”

The future conversation occurred when Izuku swung by the school to pick up some plans for the Festival he had left at his deck. He had elected to take the rest of the week off to prepare for the Festival and had definitely not anticipated being cornered by the Number One Hero.

“Midoriya! I would like to talk to you in my office please!” All Might bellowed just as Izuku was slinking out of the classroom. Izuku didn’t bother hiding his groan and the others were just as vocal about how much they didn’t want to do that, Cypress even adding a few curse words.

“Do I have to?”

All Might’s smile faltered for a moment, “I believe you will quite like this conversation!”

“I really fuckin doubt it,” Izuku deadpanned but followed, more out of curiosity than actually caring.

Once he got to All Might’s office he very rudely sprawled himself atop the couch and lit a cigarette. The bitter taste filling his lungs and he exhaled, blowing a cloud of smoke in his ex-childhood idol’s face.

The silence between him and the hero stretched, All Might’s smile becoming more and more strained until he finally cleared his throat and began to speak, “I do believe you know about my… peculiar quirk.”

“Don’t worry He-Man. As I’ve told you before your secret is safe with my indifference,” Izuku said, monotone.
“Thank you for that my boy, but that is not why I brought you here.”

Izuku raised an eyebrow.

“I saw you attack that villain a few days ago. It was incredible! Reckless but incredible. Same with the USJ. You didn’t hesitate to save the life of that civilian! Despite your lack of a quirk!”

Izuku didn’t at all react to this, skeptically watching his old hero through lidded eyes.

“As you know my health has been failing-” this point was helpfully proven by All Might returning to his skeletal form with a cloud of smoke and coughing up blood. “Mostly due to a fight six years ago-”

“Uh huh, the one with All For One that I already know about. Keep on going.”

“How do you know that?” All Might said in utter bewilderment.

“I’m a fucking magician.”

All Might accepted that answer and dropped it for now, “Well I have a proposition for you…” he paused for dramatic effect, “I would-”

Izuku interrupted before he could say anything, “No. I’m not going to become your heir.”

As soon as he said the word ‘proposition’ it all clicked into place. Why All Might would think giving someone who’s hobbies included, committing felonies, having three siblings living inside your head, and hating heroes, the most powerful quirk in existence was a good idea was a complete mystery but Izuku didn’t want it regardless.

Some small part of him begged him to accept but there was no way he could be a hero after all the shit he’d been a part of. Plus, he had worked really hard to let go of his dreams and he wasn’t going to let All Might make him do something like relapse. He truly didn’t want to be a hero and definitely didn’t want All Might of all people to help him become one. There were too many bad memories associated with heroics and Izuku didn’t want any part of it. He was perfectly fine being
totally neutral thank you very much.

All Might looked ready to jump into an entire powerpoint presentation about why Izuku should be his successor but the teenager didn’t stick around. He needed to get out of the room before Cypress started throwing hands or Izuku did something stupid like accept the offer. Without another word he leaped through All Might’s window and ran to Kurogiri’s bar for a good rant and possibly a drink, words sticking in this throat.

The stadium was packed, much to Izuku and Beetle’s delight.

Izuku’s eyes scanned the crowd for the umpteenth time he decided packed seem too tame of a term. An army could have seamlessly joined the stands and no one would notice. Helicopters buzzed overhead and camera crews hurried around trying to get photos of the students. News reporters tried to corner students and teachers alike, questions being shouted loud enough for Izuku to hear them from where he and Pigeon were perched in the top box.

Security teams were being run into the ground, scanning civilians for weapons and keeping the random mob from forcing their way into the U.A. waiting rooms. Pro-heroes were milling around aimlessly, simultaneously signing autographs and discouraging villain attacks.

Izuku checked his watch, they only had a few minutes till the official event start and he should probably go give 1-A a pep talk so they didn’t make him lose that bet again Kan.

He slowly made his way down to the waiting rooms, Pigeon biting anyone who got too close. Inside his head Witch was floating in a pool sipping a margarita, absurdly relieved he wouldn’t have to deal with Izuku and Beetle’s chaotic run around for much longer. Cypress was on a skype call with Dabi being their own type of adorable, you know the type that would probably end in homicide? Beetle was frantically making phone calls and periodically screaming into various walkie-talkies, making death threats and telling people to get in position.

Eventually, he reached the entrance tunnel to the waiting rooms. A security guard tried to stop him but Izuku flashed him his badge, Pigeon screeched once and eyed the guard even after he let Izuku through.

The picture that he found when he entered the 1-A waiting room was not a reassuring one. An air
of nervousness had descended upon his students, the silence occasionally being broken by murmurs and half-hearted chuckles. Even the bubbly Mina and Kirishima had fallen prey to the Festival’s daunting prospect.

Silently, Izuku opened the door and slithered into the room. Everyone was so stuck in their own heads they didn’t even notice his arrival until he very loudly declared, “Jesus, suck it up you’re only being watched by half the country.”

The entire class jumped and everyone’s eyes immediately went to Pigeon. Pigeon did the vulture equivalent of rolling his eyes and flew to the counter to make a cup of coffee.

The students tracked his progress across the room. Shinsou was the first one to break the silence, “You actually kept him,” he said, somewhat disbelieving.

Shouto took a minute step away from the bird, remembering what it felt like to be hit in the face with ten pounds of pure Pigeon.

Kirishima, bless his soul, was the first to direct his attention back to Izuku with a vibrant smile, “Midoriya! Where have you been all week?”

“Preparing.”

“For what? You’re not competing are you?”

“Nope,” he said, popping the P.

Kirishima’s face screwed in confusion but Uraraka intervened, “What are you doing down here Deku-sensi?”

He raised an eyebrow at the name but didn’t otherwise comment on it, “Well, I’m here to give you your pep talk!”

“Pep talk? You don’t seem qualified,” Bakugou scoffed, more to himself than anyone else. Kirishima jabbed him in the side with an elbow but he surprisingly didn’t explode. Interesting.
“I’m offended Kacchan,” Izuku said, pressing a hand to his heart in fake hurt, “I am perfectly capable of giving pep talks!”

Iida adjusted his glasses, “I am going to have to agree with Bakugou-kun on this one. Midoriya-sensei I mean no offense but you have not given a single good pep talk all year!”

Mina glared at Iida, “I’m sure he is perfectly capable. Midoriya if you would like to prove them wrong?”

“Of course dearest Mina!” Pigeon picked that moment to return with a coffee cup in his talons which Izuku took gratefully. “You are all very capable students. In just these few weeks I’ve trained you I have seen immense improvement. There is not a single doubt in my mind that it will be one of you who wins this. There is even less doubt that you won’t all make it to the second round. Either way, I am proud of how far you have come and I know you will only continue to grow.”

Beetle wiped away a fake tear and Cypress and computer-Dabi wolf-whistled. Witch just flipped them all off and took a sip of his margarita.

“But if that isn’t enough, if you make me lose my bet with Kan I will have you doing the pacer test for a month.”

Yaoyorozu looked at Jirou and whispered, “Pacer test?”

A few of the students who knew what the pacer test was were pale and shaky, they quickly dispersed explanations to the ones who didn’t understand the threat so they understood what they were risking if they failed.

Izuku watched pleased as the entire class took on looks of terror. He smiled brightly and waved goodbye as he was halfway out the door, “Ta ta dears! Good luck!”

From inside the room, he heard Shouchan shout, “Izuku wait!” but he was still avoiding his unrequited crush so he pretended not to hear. He whistled all the way back to the announcing booth and arrive just in time for a voice to drone over the speakers, “All competitors to the stadium floor. Repeat, all competitors to the stadium floor.”
Izuku gave Present Mic and Aizawa a thumbs up and grinned manically. This was going to be so much fun.

Chapter End Notes

The Sports Festival is going to be a multi-chapter thing. I've been neglecting Izuku's relationships with the other students and just the other students in general so that is going to be a main focus of the Festival. Hopefully, it won't be such as long a wait as this chapter :)

Discord

Also, both Bubblegum and Sponge Bob syrup exist you can find it here:
Inko dragged her husband through the stands, Hisashi tripping over bodies and shouting apologies over his shoulder. He had no idea where exactly his wife was taking him and he didn't have the opportunity to ask her. Inko was a force of nature and while Hisashi had dealt with murderers and had dedicated a majority of his life to working and eventually running one of the largest mercenary agencies in Japan there was still no one who scared him more than his wife.

The best way to describe Midoriya Inko was that she was the living embodiment of the ‘looks like a cinnamon roll but could actually kill you’. She had toned it down since Izuku was born but Hisashi still remembered how she had beaten him in a good few boxing matches back in the day.

Back then he had solidly been in the middle of the business’ hierarchy and quite content to stay there. He wasn’t proud of his work and even less fond of how he had begun to be called an infamous villain. He hadn’t even chosen his so-called ‘villain alias’, the press just started calling him that and never stopped. Personally, he found ‘Dragon’ positively dull and would much rather be called something with more pizazz, ‘King of the Burning Glorious Force That Is The Entire Fucking Sun,’ for example.

Much to his chagrin, the press refused to call him that even after he submitted an amicably worded letter where he politely told them that he was not a villain and much preferred the terms, ‘vigilante’ or ‘mercenary’, and if they must call him any name they could use KOTBGFTITEFS.

Frustratingly, they had not complied.

Hisashi’s healthy fear of his wife had not diminished in the years he had been away from her and was further fostered by the knowledge that she had been spending much of the last year getting chummy chummy with his old contacts to create false-ish identities and cover the tracks of his son’s siblings/ mental hitchhikers.

Just thinking about the whole Izuku situation gave him a headache so decided not to unpack it and throw away the entire suitcase, refocusing on why Inko had designed to make them spend one of their first days back together at the one event that was probably the most dangerous for him at the...
current moment. He had only been detached from the most wanted mercenary agencies for a week at most and his reputation still preceded him as one of the most influential people in the criminal underground. Many a hero would like to capture him and many a civilian would be terrified to know he was in there midst. But, here he was, surrounded by pro heroes and what seemed to be half of Japan.

Hisashi was too lost in thought to realize Inko had stopped until he ran into her, nearly spilling their grossly overpriced popcorn. Inko stumbled a step and smiled over her shoulder, “Whoops! Let’s grab a seat over there shall we?” She pointed at a section that was currently being blocked off by a security guard and Hisashi felt beads of sweat pop up along his collar. It had been nerve-wracking enough getting past the first wave of security but to intentionally seek out an area where they would have to pass another guard was not the most logical.

“Uh… can’t we sit somewhere that doesn’t have security on it?”

Inko laughed, “Oh, it'll be fine Hisashi! They haven’t traced anything back to you yet and I doubt a simple security guard will figure it out. Besides, that section is reserved for the family of the participants.”

Hisashi looked at his wife, “But Izu isn’t competing.”

“He’s hosting.”

Hisashi frowned, “Like announcing or…?”

“I don’t know. He just said to look out for the second event.”

Hisashi was now extremely concerned for the second event. Izuku’s level for chaotic energy rivaled his own and he was an ex-mercenary.

Inko led him over to their reserved section and Hisashi stood nervously behind her. He knew he was probably overreacting, having spent the past year thoroughly detaching himself from anything illegal and scrubbing his record clean, but there was always a chance. Inko chatted up the guard and explained their relation. The guard looked slightly confused but once Inko flashed her ID there was something said over his earpiece that made him shuffle aside to let them pass.

They found a spot beside a family that vaguely resembled frogs and Inko started a conversation that Hisashi derailed onto much more ridiculous topics once he started to contribute; a natural talent of his.
Their discussion of the nutritional value of a tin can was cut to an abrupt end by screaming over the speakers. Upon further observation, however, it became apparent that the screaming was actually just someone shouting words very very loud. That someone was quickly revealed to be the pro-hero Present Mic.

“WELCOME EVERYONE TO THE U.A. SPORTS FESTIVAL!!!! THE ONE TIME A YEAR WHERE--”

His mantle was quickly taken up by a much younger voice that was just as enthused but quieter, “--you all get to see out fledgling heroes in action! In a ruthless battle to the death!”

A very tired voice sounded next, “Not a battle to the death. Midoriya no one is dying. Stop saying they are going to die.” They trailed off into grumbling what they were even doing here and how they had gotten roped into commentating when there were already two commentators.

Inko squealed at the confirmation that Izuku was announcing. Hisashi felt similar pride but was not as vocal.

“ANYWAYS!” Present Mic shouted as he got back on track, “COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE A WARM WELCOME TO THE FEARLESS FIRST YEARS WHO FENDED OFF A VILLAIN ATTACK WITH NOTHING BUT WILL.... YOU KNOW WHO I’M TALKING ABOUT!!!”

He paused to the crowd could cheer.

“OF THE FIRST YEAR HERO COURSE... IT’S CLASS A!!!!!!!!!”

The ensuing cheers were nothing short of deafening and Hisashi cheered right along with them, the roar making the whole stadium shake.

—

Jirou was horrified to learn that Midoriya would be commentating the events. She wasn’t entirely sure why she was horrified but she was. Something about giving Midoriya more power than he already had and no doubt subjecting them all to extremely biased and scalding remarks about their performance. Midoriya wasn’t one to mince words and while Present Mic would cater to their showing off their strengths Midoriya would be picking them apart for every mistake. Hopefully,
Aizawa-sensei would be able to rein in his assistant before he went totally rogue and tore the class’ confidence to shreds.

Classes strode through various hallways and Jirou squashed her thoughts of Midoriya and focused on not letting her nerves fail her. She had always thought herself to be a fairly confident person but even her confidence buckled at the sight of the crowd. People of all shapes, sizes, and quirks had filled the stands, rocking the stadium with their boisterous cheers.

The students assembled themselves into neat rows, standing around a podium with a microphone stand. All around her students from other classes whispered less than flattering things about class 1-A. Jirou remembered how half of the first years had turned up at their classroom to issue declarations of war and the such. Jirou almost wished Midoriya had been around when that happened because it would have been eternally amusing to watch him tear 1-B a new one. Monoma especially.

For one reason or another, Midnight had been chosen to be the referee and was standing with her whip in both hands. Why they thought she would be a good choice for high schoolers Jirou didn’t know but she was too nervous to really question it.

The crowd quieted and once they were at a reasonable noise level Midnight called, “Katsuki Bakugou! If you would come to the podium for the pledge!”

Jirou groaned along with most of class 1-A. Knowing Bakugou he would say something offensive and get the other classes to hate 1-A more than they already did. Although… he had been different as of late. There was still no explanation as to why both he and Kirishima had been absent earlier that week but since then there had been an added level of closeness between the two. Bakugou was still a raging asshole but had taken to integrate himself with the group that had formed around him.

Bakugou strode up to the podium, tromping up the stairs in all his angry and spiky blond glory. As per the last few weeks, Bakugou was covered in bruises and bandages but there was more than there had ever been before. It was almost imperceivable but there was a slight limp in the blond’s right leg and Jirou only noticed because she was around when it was more pronounced.

Ashido had asked why he looked like he went five rounds with sasquatch earlier in the week and she almost had gotten blasted out of the classroom. Later, she asked Kirishima and received an absolutely outrageous lie which told 1-A two things. Kirishima was aware of what had happened and that it was personal enough for Kiri to lie about it. They hadn’t discussed it after that.

“I pledge…” Bakugou growled into the microphone, “that I’m going to place first.”
Both classes and crowd erupted into rebuke at the bold statement, booing echoing around the stadium. Jirou mentally face-palmed and studied Bakugou’s features for any hint of shame or guilt. She found nothing but ego.

Jirou expected him to strut off the stage but he remained at the podium, glowering at every living soul in his line of sight. Despite this, she still jumped when he shouted into the microphone, “SHUT UP! I WASN’T DONE!”

The stadium was abruptly silenced, hatefully hanging off their seats making sure they caught every word. “I’m going to place first. I’m going to crush everyone in my path through every round,” the crowd tensed up for another round of booing but Bakugou wasn’t done.

“And I’m sure all of you are going to do that too. That’s what you all told yourself walking down here so don’t pretend I’m some egomaniac!” he snapped, “This is your pledge to you hypocritical losers! I’m speaking for everyone when I say I’m going to win because we all said that! Now, it’s just a question of who is going to deliver! Don’t make my victory easy for me!”

Jirou blinked. Then blinked again for good measure. That was... out of character. She glanced at Momo at her side to make sure she wasn’t dreaming. One look at the semi-dazed expression on her friend’s face told her she wasn’t the only one experiencing stress-induced hallucinations.

By then the stadium had switched from boos to deafening cheering (even more deafening for Jirou with her sensitive hearing). Bakugou reacted just as he did with the negative attention and strode down the podium’s stairs sneering.

Jirou doubted anyone else could hear it but under the roar of the crowd, she swore she could hear Midoriya laughing his ass off over the speakers.

Midnight retook her position on the podium and cleared her throat. “Thank you Bakugou Katsuki. Let’s continue on towards our first event.”

The large screen that he previously showed a live feed of the stage was replaced by a place card with the UA logo. At some point, Yamada had pushed him away from the microphone so the stadium couldn’t hear his manic laughter. Izuku was still keened over from Bakugou’s speech so he nearly missed Nemuri’s next words.
“The first event is always the qualifier! The event where most students get sent home crying! This year the fateful event will be…” Midnight gestured to the screen as the words “OBSTACLE RACE” were displayed in bold letters.

Izuku wiped away a tear and met Aizawa’s raised eyebrow, “Sorry, sorry. It’s just Kacchan saying anything to encourage anyone is,” he broke off to another fit of giggles. He saw Yamada concerned gaze meet Aizawa’s and the underground hero gave an almost imperceivable shrug.

He took a couple of deep breaths to steady himself and retook his position next to Yamada. He needed to concentrate if he wanted to accurately commentate the race.

—

“A strong start from young Todoroki, using his quirk to freeze his opponents like that! Effectively securing the lead! But how long can he keep it up?”

To Tenya the running commentary was the only thing that let him know just what was happening ahead of him. The starting gate had been a bottleneck, his engines proving mostly useless when squished against his fellow students. At first, he had bemoaned the wasted time but now he was grateful he had gotten so stuck. The first people out of the gate had gotten frozen to the spot and USJ had taught Iida just how hindering the cold was to his engines. He couldn’t disappoint Tensei by getting frozen immediately.

“Turns out not for long!! Kacc- Bakugou and some of the other 1-A students are hot on Sho-Todoroki’s trail! They’re approaching the first obstacle now!”

Tenya was happy to report that he was among those 1-A students. He had wasted valuable seconds letting his quirk build up momentum but now he was just on the heels of Ashido and Tokoyami.

“That looked like it hurt! 1-A’s Mineta Minoru has just been knocked aside by the first obstacle!!!!”

“Come on Mic, what’s a good obstacle course without-!”
“ROBOTS!!!!”

“You do know that I am sitting right here and you are both breaking my eardrums. Shut up will you.”

The comment was followed by something that sounded very much like someone blowing a raspberry. Iida was too occupied marveling at the giant hunks of metal to pay much attention. His calves burned as he skidded to a stop before the giant 0 pointers.

Todoroki said something he couldn’t hear before there was a rush of cold air. In mere moments most of the robots were frozen. Todoroki immediately started through the gap and Tenya almost followed before he saw just how unstable some of the robots had become. He didn’t have the chance to sprint through before they came crashing down.

“TODOROKI SHOUTO FROM 1-A SABOTAGING WHILE ALSO ELIMINATING THE OBSTACLE!”

“An amazing move! Heartless but that’s what it takes to win this thing! Outstanding! Bravo!!”

“Midoriya that was absurdly biased.”

“Fu-”

“Sorry little listener! No swearing!”

"Araw! Araw!"

Iida didn’t waste any time hesitating. The only way through was to break apart the robots so he used the momentum from his kicks to try and smash his way through some of the metal.

“Both Kirishima from 1-A and Tetsutetsu from 1-B were crushed but NEITHER ARE DEAD!!”

“See them emerge like zombies!!”
“It appears that Todoroki’s distraction isn’t as effective as he wanted it to be! 1-A’s Bakugou blasts ahead followed by 1-A’s Sero Hanta and Tokoyami Fumikage!”

Tenya didn’t pause his attempt to get through but he listened to Present Mic and Midoriya’s commentating. It was nice to hear that 1-A was leading by a large margin.

“It isn’t that 1-B is bad. It’s just that 1-A knows you can’t hesitate. They’ve been up close and personal with the real world and they know there isn’t any time to pause. It means life or death and they know that. They’ve learned to overcome it.”

“Thank you, Eraserhead for that amazing explanation!”

Iida had made it past the first obstacle but came to a screeching halt, almost falling off the cliff. His train of thought adjusted accordingly. The momentum from his engines should be enough to keep him balanced…

“Seems pretty unsightly to me!”

Tenya didn’t want to give an unsightly performance. Especially since Tensei might be watching.

“The pack’s leaders are pretty far ahead while the rest are all pretty bunched together!”

“The racers don’t know how many move on so they all gotta shoot for first! Clever on behalf of the administrators!”

Iida was almost past the second obstacle…

“Todoroki has reached the last obstacle! The first one to do so!”

“Can you guess what it is folks?”
“IT’S A MINEFIELD!”

“It’s pretty easy to see where the mines are planted to be sure to keep your eyes peeled and feet sure!”

“These mines won’t actually hurt of course!”

“But they’re loud and flashy enough you might need a new pair of pants afterward tho!”

“Depending on the individual.”

Iida made it past the second obstacle and started picking his way across the field. There were explosions left and right but he only paid attention to where his feet were going next.

“AND JUST LIKE THAT FOLKS, WE HAVE A NEW LEADER!!!!”

“They’re really feeding the media here!”

“THE OTHERS ARE CATCHING UP!”

“With these two will be dueling it out for first can they hold on to the lead?!”

“Please shut up.”

Tenya could see Bakugou and Todoroki ahead of him, detonating mines in their path. He was maybe a good yard away from the duo. For a brief moment, he thought about activating Reciprio Burst but thought better of it last second. He had no idea how much rest time they had before the next event and he wanted to save his special move.

“WE CAN’T TELL WHO’S IN FIRST!”
“It’s too close to call!”

“They are mere feet away from the finish line and we have no idea who’s going to win this thing!!!!”

Iida put one last burst in his engines.

“THEY CROSS THE FINISH LINE AT NEARLY THE SAME SECOND!”

“You’re going to have to wait for the results while they review the footage!”

“The others are streaming in!”

Tenya shook and panted, legs quivering. He would have to thank Midoriya for helping him with his stamina. He hadn’t been able to pass Bakugou or Todoroki but he had passed two students from 1-B in the last second.

He struck up a conversation with Uraraka and Asui while they waited for the results. Iida was fairly confident he had placed third and he hoped Tensei was watching. Todoroki and Bakugou were undeniably the powerhouses in the class and he was proud of himself for keeping up.

“And the results have been posted! Forty-one contestants move on!”

“HA KAN! I’M HALFWAY THERE!”

“Todoroki Shouto beats Bakugou Katsuki by a millisecond!! We’ll turn it over to Midnight for the post-preliminaries! But first! A word from our sponsors!”

—

Izuku excused himself immediately. Beetle was talking rapid fire into various cell phones and walkie talkies. Witch had pulled himself from his pool to watch and Cypress had hung up on Dabi and made popcorn.
Yamada and Aizawa looked at him as he hurried out of the room. Neither knew he was hosting the second event and no one knew what that event even was. Or at least Izuku hoped no one did. If someone did then he would be arrested before it even began and the shock factor would be severely diminished.

Sure, Cementoss knew what he had to do but he didn’t know what *for*.

“I got to do a thing. I’ll be back before the second event!” Izuku lied, Pigeon perched on his shoulder.

“Oh- Alright little listener!” Yamada waved as Izuku left the room. Aizawa narrowed his eyes in suspicion but didn’t say anything further.

Izuku hurried down the steps and into the bowls of the stadium. He had ten minutes to get everything in place so he could be in position when Cementoss did his thing. Before he could get far however he ran directly into Shouto.

He toppled to the floor, Pigeon flapping frantically.

“Oh hi, Shouchan. Fancy seeing you here.”

“Izuku! I uh, wanted to talk to you.” Shouto said, offering a hand while avoiding eye contact.

Izuku picked himself up. “Look Shouchan I would er, love to talk but, uh not now. I got to go.”

“But-“

“Sorry!” he said, sprinting away. Izuku wasn’t sure he wanted to have whatever conversation that was and the eight minutes remaining before he had to terrify most of Japan provided a great excuse.

“That was the single most frustrating thing I have ever seen. Sweetie. Please. He likes you too,” Cypress said.
Izuku ignored him and quickly ducked into a supply closet and grabbed the megaphone.

“Everyone’s set right?” he asked as he jogged under the stadium.

“Everyone’s a go. Just waiting for your signal!” Beetle replied, texting furiously.

“Good.”

—

Shouto didn’t know what to expect for the second round. Despite Present Mic saying Midnight would be there for the second round, the R-rated hero was conspicuously absent. He tried to distract himself from the sting of Izuku literally running away from him with the nerves for the second round but to no avail.

He tried to remind himself that his father was watching but ever since Izuku said they were trying to get him arrested and he had accepted his fire there wasn’t any big reason for him to prove himself to the man. Izuku had done that.

It always seemed to track back to Izuku and Shouto didn’t know how to feel about that. He still wasn’t entirely sure how to feel about Izuku. He didn’t know how attraction worked or what to do about Izuku’s admission to his secret siblings/identities.

Shouto didn’t know a lot these days.

Thankfully, he was torn away from his thoughts by Cementoss stepping out and onto the stage that had previously been set for Midnight. With a raise of his hand, the hero set a pillar rising behind him. The assembled forty-two students shared looks of confusion as the pillar rose high enough to tower above them. Twenty-two students were much more confused at the person sitting on top of the pillar. Twenty shared looks of absolute horror.

It was Midoriya Izuku sitting on top of the pillar, vulture perched on his shoulder and megaphone in hand.
Shouto should have known when he ran into Izuku under the stadium. Zuku had no reason to be down there if he was just commentating.

“Boo,” he said into the megaphone.

Present Mic made a choking sound over the speakers, “For the majority of those who don’t know that is Midoriya Izuku, Principal Nedzu’s personal student who was commentating with me a few minutes ago.”

“I am also a quirk trainer for class 1-A although I suspect Principal Nedzu is going to have me in 1-B soon too.” Izuku said smiling at the ashen faces of class 1-A, “Don’t forget that one Mic.”

“Midoriya what are you doing?” Aizawa asked monotone.

“Well, you see, Nedzu set up a little test for me. He told me that I get to prepare the second event for the Sports Festival.”

“Oh my God,” Jirou whispered behind Shouto. He shared her sentiments.

“Cementoss if you would please.”

And just like that, the ground began to shake and parts began to rise. Before long they were entirely boxed in and separated. Shouto himself was staring down a large hallway that branched off into other corridors. A boy from 1-B and a pink-haired girl he didn’t recognize covered in support gear stood next to him in similar states of confusion.

They could no longer see Izuku but could hear him through the megaphone Shouto was 90% sure was just for dramatic effect.

“Thanks, Cementoss. Now, as you might be able to tell you have been placed in groups of three or four. If you haven’t realized it yet I placed you in a maze I specially designed. However, there isn’t anything fun in the maze and a maze isn’t heroic at all.”

“Ooooh did he boobytrap it?” The pink-haired girl asked, bouncing on her feet.
“You know what is heroic though? Fighting villains! That’s pretty heroic.”

_Izuku you didn’t._

“Now, a lesser man might say that half of the teams are villains and the others are heroes and pit you against each other. However, that’s boring and predictable.”

As soon as the words left Izuku’s mouth a great purple portal appeared above them, sharing an uncanny resemblance to the portal from USJ. From the portal dropped dozens of bodies. None of them landed anywhere Shouto could see but he knew that they had been dispersed around the maze.

Shouto couldn’t see the crowd but he heard the clambering and shouting, wanting to know what was happening. Shouto looked around until he found the broadcasting screen, one camera was focused on Izuku on his pillar and the others showed various parts of the maze.

Izuku stood, vulture circling his head menacingly, “I just dropped around two hundred low-level villains into the maze.”

__

Inko and Hisashi looked at each other in unison,

“That’s your son.”

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully, Izuku's plan is satisfactory :)

https://discord.gg/xAtJsM7
Catalyst

Chapter Notes

Hey...

I am so so sorry that this is so late. From this point forward we'll most likely be going back to the once per week so YAY! I have plotted the rest of this fic in its entirety so I can safely say we are probably a little bit more than halfway through chapter wise. Maybe a little more.

For a moment there was absolute silence as the stadium absorbed those words. Then, with all the force of Bakugou’s explosions, it erupted. People were half out of their seats, shouting for explanations and mercy. Calling for Izuku’s head and screaming curses and vitriol. Mothers were clutching children to their chest and men would throwing anything they could at the boy on the pillar.

Izuku stood unruffled, Pigeon now perched on his shoulder and megaphone held loosely in one hand. He knew there was no point trying to speak over the crowd but there was also a very small amount of time before one of the teachers sought to bring him down to avoid an all-out riot. He had maybe thirty seconds to explain himself before his event got shut down.

“This was a bad plan. I told you it was a bad plan and I will not be breaking you out of jail again,” Witch said in the tone of someone who was gloating and not even trying to hide it.

“Petty,” Beetle pointed out with a snap and finger gun.

“You are absolutely correct.”

Izuku considered for a moment. He knew Witch was bluffing about breaking out of jail again but, since it would be Izuku instead of Witch it would be a thoroughly different experience. He would also prefer to not be branded a villain and hunted through the streets so…

“Ok wait, before y’all crucify me.”
Predictably enough, no one waited.

“SHUT YOUR TRAPS SO I CAN EXPLAIN!!!”

Izuku took a hearty sigh as only about a quarter of the stadium listened. He tried to send a telepathic message to Present Mic or Aizawa so they could get the crowd to shut up. He also made eye contact with Cementoss on the floor, the pro-hero was glaring at him with something akin to disbelief and Izuku tried to combat that with a look that said, *You know me. I would never do something like this without it being under control.* Trying to beg for those few extra minutes to explain himself.

Surprisingly enough, Present Mic somehow figured out what Izuku wanted and tried to shush the crowd although his tone left Izuku feeling a little reprimanded, “Let’s hold on one second! Midoriya! Please explain yourself!”

Yamada’s booming voice got it so there were only outraged murmurs. Izuku didn’t waste a single moment of relative silence and launched into an explanation.

“Thanks. So, right now I can tell you’re all thinking that I’m a villain in disguise and I’m trying to kill all of those kids. Personally, I am offended but since you don’t know me I guess it is a logical conclusion. I want you all to be aware that this entire situation is 100% under control and those kids are in no more danger than if they were facing off against each other. Less, actually. I would like all of you to notice that none of the villains have attacked yet,” he gestured at the broadcasting screen. Just as he said none of the villains had moved anywhere even close to the students.

“And that would be because they are under a strict contract to not fatally or permanently injure the students. They aren’t even allowed to attack until I give them the go-ahead.”

He hadn’t expected that to nullify the crowd entirely but it at least stopped some of the all-out hatred being sent in his direction. Unfortunately, however, some people had some justified questions.

“What makes you so sure they’ll keep that contract?!”

“Yeah! And why should we believe you anyway?”
Izuku had hoped to get through this without outing his connections to all of UA, but he couldn’t stand the thought of people thinking he had purposefully put his students in danger. He would already have to explain the portal to the faculty anyway. What was one more villain in the mix?

“Fuckin’ rude. I am an informant who happens to partake in the occasional murder,” Beetle said, hand pressed to her heart in false hurt.

“Shut the fuck up. Every competent lawyer could chalk every bit of blood on your hands to manslaughter. Murder is giving yourself way too much credit,” Cypress replied with a sick smile.

“I will digest your eyelashes.”

Izuku ignored their petty squabbles (“that’s the only squabbles they have”) and tried to think of a way to minimize the loss of trust between him and UA while also placating the masses.

“They’re going to keep the contract because if they break it they will be rendered immobile so one of the heroes can arrest them. Quirk magic. And you should believe me because I literally work at the school and have the principal’s approval. You all trust that Principal Nedzu wouldn’t do anything to hurt the kids.”

So maybe the last thing was a bit of a stretch, being that the principal didn’t know what he was doing. Izuku just had to hope that from wherever Nedzu was watching he wouldn’t be too pissed and would vouch for his student later on. There was a 70 to 30 percent chance that he would thoroughly enjoy Izuku’s creativity and not be furious for using actual villains. He would probably be too pissed about the portal to worry about Izuku’s lie anyway.

The crowd was sent into wild whispers as they weighed Izuku’s words, wondering if he was telling the truth. Izuku really hoped they believed him because he honestly couldn’t easily prove anything. Just to be sure he added,

“Plus, this is an entirely controlled environment. We are surrounded by pro-heroes who could easily take most of these villains if they get too rough. The entire maze is made of cement so Cementoss can control the environment. Eraserhead literally has a birds-eye view of the entire thing so he can cancel quirks.”

The solid logic of that statement seemed to resonate with most of the people in the stadium. If anyone disagreed they didn’t voice it so Izuku deemed it unlikely there would be a revolt. For the
first time in his life, Izuku was glad of the blind faith that the majority of the population had for heroes.

“We good? Can I actually explain the event now?”

There was a moment of silence before Yamada cleared his throat over the speakers, “Um, yes. I do believe that you have adequately explained the safety measures in place. Please explain the event.”

“So! Hopefully, the tech crew has put together the teams so you can direct your attention to the screen to see the groupings!”

Izuku glanced at the screen as well. He hadn’t known who would make it past the first round so the teams were entirely random. He was pleasantly surprised to find they were all fairly well balanced.

**TEAM A:** Ibara Shiozaki, Toruu Hagakure, Pony Tsuburaba, Kirishima Eijirou

**TEAM B:** Itsuku Kendo, Aoyama Yuga, Mineta Minoru, Setsuna Tokage

**TEAM C:** Togaru Kamakiri, Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu, Koji Koda, Manga Fukidashi

**TEAM D:** Mina Ashido, Mashirao Ojirou, Juzo Honenuki

**TEAM E:** Katsuki Bakugou, Yui Kodai, Ridiko Sato, Shoda Nirengeki

**TEAM F:** Denki Kaminari, Tenya Iida, Kinoko Komori, Hitoshi Shinsou

**TEAM G:** Shouto Todoroki, Hatsume Mei, Yosetsu Awase

**TEAM H:** Kosei Tsuburaba, Sen Kaibara, Momo Yaoyorozu, Kyoka Jirou
“Uh-huh, those are some nice teams. Completely random so there will be some teamwork involved here. Naturally, the objective is to make it out of the maze. Of course, there are a couple of rules on how to do that. If you intentionally break any of the walls or try to fly over the walls to get an overview or something you will be immediately disqualified.” Izuku said after he gave the stadium enough time to read through the groupings, the megaphone slightly distorting his voice.

“But that’s not all! There is also a point-based system. Each villain is worth a different number based on their skill level. Most of these villains are low to mid-tier so don’t worry about someone like Dragon being put in there,” Izuku winked at his father in the parent and friends seating section. Hisashi narrowed his eyes in response, Inko chuckling beside him.

“All in all, basically the same skill level as the villain's 1-A faced off at USJ. That’s why there are two hundred. Twenty-ish students were more or less able to handle like… was it seventy-two or seventy-eight? Either way, the USJ villains were 100% ready to kill. Point value can be identified by the headbands each of the villains is wearing. Please acknowledge how much effort I put into determining point value because it was literally the worst.”

“Also, to make things more even, the higher you place in the obstacle race the harder you have to make your points matter. For example, if you scored first place, four points would only count as one. We’re working with ratios here folks! But, for your convenience, the overall standings of the teams will be displayed on the screen with the point ratio factored in.”

“The teams with--” the words died on Izuku’s throat as he saw Aizawa storm out of the student entrance. His quirk was activated with the potency of his rage and when Izuku met his gaze he was met with a glare that held only a hint less malice than the look he had given Beetle in the moments before she shot him. Izuku swallowed thickly and tore his eyes away, “The deal is, the team that gets the most points and makes it out of the maze fastest wins.”

Aizawa was now talking to Cementoss, gesturing wildly at Izuku and his concrete pillar. For a brief moment, Izuku thanked god that he had planned for Aizawa’s reaction because facing him without a suitable series of lies/excuses would be terrifying. Still, Izuku kinda just wanted to stay up on the pillar forever. But, alas, he should probably get the explaining done ASAP.
“Well, now that that’s out of the way. Shall we begin the second event of the UA Sports Festival?”

Izuku was met with uproarious cheers. Give it to people to forget about a scandal in favor of watching people beat each other up.

“Ready! Set! GO!”

—

Here’s the thing.

There is always a catalyst. Always a near-death experience. Always a fight that goes wrong. Loss always has to be casting a filthy shadow for the realization to finally hit.

Here is this story’s catalyst:

Izuku Midoriya being led off a concrete pillar by a rageful pro-hero, looking for all the world that nothing was wrong.

The catalyst is always immediately followed by a reaction. In this story the reaction is this:

The knot that had slowly been tying itself behind Shouto’s sternum for the duration of Izuku’s speech being tightened to the point where he chokes on an unnamed combination of emotions. There is no name for it, equally ugly and beautiful. It is bleeding, and bruised, and raw. Somewhere in that twisted bouquet of feelings, Shouto identified anger -because it always leaves him choking- and worry -tying knots behind his bones-.

Shouto is angry because Izuku is an idiot. He has so many secrets, each a danger to his freedom in their own way. And then he announces part of a secret to most of Japan. Why Izuku thought something this stupid and reckless was worth it for the dramatic flair Shouto could not fathom. It left him wanting to punch something.

Shouto is also worried because Izuku is not an idiot. “I’m not going to have a future for more than
a few more years.” and “I’m not dumb enough to think this won’t all catch up with me eventually. No secret stays a secret unless everyone who knows about it is dead. I’ll either end up behind bars or dead in a ditch.” repeating like a sick war cry in his head. Izuku is not an idiot and he knows that he won’t stay out of the clear forever. The flippancy in which he said ‘either behind bars or dead’ making Shouto worry if Izuku even cared. He had said it like a fact, without a hint of self-deprecation. Matter-of-fact, the sky is blue, Shouto Todoroki attends UA, Izuku Midoriya won’t have a future.

Shouto had believed him. He had never once doubted that Izuku would get away with all his lies. That’s how it works right? Good vanquishes evil and in every iteration, Izuku is the Evil. The traitor, the arsonist, the vigilante, the accessory, the liar.

Yet, Shouto was still worried that this was the end. From this moment onwards Izuku Midoriya would not have a future. He was being arrested right this moment. Logically, Shouto knew that he was probably spinning lie after lie to create a suitable excuse to keep him out of custody and in Aizawa’s trust. Logically, Shouto knew that he shouldn’t be worried. Logically, Shouto knew that he should want Izuku to be caught. Logically, Shouto knew that Izuku was the Evil.

But, the idea of the Evil finally being put to rest made the knot behind his breastbone tighten. Maybe that made Shouto part of the Evil too. He searched for any part of himself that rebelled at the thought but found nothing. He searched and searched but found nothing but the knot. The knot that was part anger, part worry, and part something more.

It was the something more that Shouto found himself stuck on. He wanted to know it. He wanted to know why it was unknown. He wanted to know why it was part of the knot. He thought about its fellows, anger and worry, and how it might possibly fit in with them. It sent his toes tingling with something similar to panic and his pulse warming with something similar to...

Regret.

In a sudden tornado flurry, Shouto adds it all together. Anger plus worry plus a panicky-regret. Add it all together like a complicated math problem and the equal sign spits out a white-hot realization.

*I can’t lose him.*
“Todoroki!”

Shouto jumped at the sound of his name. The 1-B boy was looking at him, brows furrowed with concern. The pink-haired girl was bouncing on the balls of her feet, a complicated contraption in her hands. He was still pulling himself out of the colossal tailspin that left his world more or less overturned. If Shouto was being completely honest with himself he had never experienced true loss. A missing brother he never knew enough about to miss and a mother he had kept at an arm’s length. But, here, was something he might lose.

“I need to get out of this maze,” he said, voice an echo in his ears.

Was this love? Not being able to stand the thought of losing someone? Shouto had loved his mother. He still has nightmares about her being taken away. Yes, he decides, that is love.

Does he love Izuku then?

“You and me both. Mei and I have been trying to get you to move for like a minute. I know it’s a shock that they’re using real villains but you’ve already fought real villains before! That Midoriya guy must be crazy though! Is he always like that?”

Oh. Right. The Sport’s Festival. Shouto shook himself and refocused. At this point, he didn’t care if he won the festival. He just needed to make sure he hadn’t lost Izuku. That Izuku wasn’t being shipped off to Tartarus right that moment. But, to do that he had to escape the maze.

“Usually he’s worse. Let’s go.”

—

Katsuki could not believe the audacity of Midoriya. The motherfucker using real actual 100% organic villains. And then using that same warp fuck to transport them there. Katsuki had no idea how Midoriya got so chummy chummy with the same villains that beat the shit out of him at USJ, but he intended to find out. If that fucker thought they wouldn’t notice that little gem of a detail then he was sorely mistaken. How could Katsuki forget the smokey bastard? He tried to fight the guy and got sent to the goddamn tundra for his efforts.

He mental tirade paused as he heard voices and footsteps from around the corner. Holding up a fist to signal his team he rolled his eyes at the less than quiet stop from behind him. From the sound of it, Katsuki would bet that one of the extra’s had run into the extra in front of them. There was a bit of a crashing sound and thud that caused the voices to stop abruptly. For some reason, the use of real villains had everyone jumpy. Fortunately for Katsuki, he had spent such a significant amount of time in the midst of criminals and less savory types to be mostly unbothered.
Still, that didn’t stop the tingle of fear and adrenaline than ran down his spine as the footsteps picked up and the villains ran around the corner. By that time he had shifted to a fighting stance and when the trio of villains got within a yard he sent an explosion scraping along the floor.

The ensuing boom left his ears ringing and the sweet smell of nitroglycerin stuck in his nose, both which he ignored as he surged forward. The explosion had knocked the villains off balance and he grabbed the one closest to him. She had some form of mutation quirk that made her look vaguely like a lizard and granted her a tail and scally beige skin. Neither of which particularly helped her as Katsuki grasped her shoulder and flipped her on her back.

At his side, the 1-A extra had joined in the fight. Katsuki was fairly sure that he was the one with the sugar quirk. Either way, he was throwing a villain who would have looked entirely normal if it wasn’t for the chicken feet into one of the walls. Katsuki winced in sympathy as he connected with the concrete and slumped to the floor.

It appeared that the 1-B extra’s had gotten over their shock and were capably enough dealing with the third villain. They were engaged in an exchange of blows that Katsuki was content to merely observe. However, it seemed that his villain had other plans for him. She had gotten her wind back and her tail hit Katsuki squarely in his still-healing ribs.

He hissed through his teeth and slid back a couple of feet. There was a millisecond where they merely regarded each other with narrowed eyes but then Katsuki was in her face, palm open and sending an explosion straight into her face. She reeled back and Katsuki kicked her in the stomach, hunching her over herself. Katsuki took that opportunity to knock her head back into the concrete of the wall and she slid down unconscious.

He pressed a hand to his side and then looked at it like it would come back covered in blood. Somehow his palm remained clean as the pain in his ribs flared. He felt his bones for new cracks because it sure as fuck felt like he had rebroken something.

If that stupid pink-haired motherfucking made him lose this thing then Katsuki was going to go back and blow his fight club to smithereens. It had only been Kirishima’s puppy dog eyes and threat to never talk to him again that had kept him from doing just that as soon as he was discharged from the hospital.

Once he had made sure that nothing was broken he glanced up at the scoreboard and felt his standard scowl deepen. They had literally been in the maze for five minutes and somehow Icy-Hot’s team was six points ahead of Katsuki’s.
The extras had dealt with their villain, totaling their score to seven. A glance at the various headbands told Katsuki that without the point stipulation in place they would be somewhere around fifteen. God, why did Katsuki have to do so good in the obstacle course.

The fact that Todoroki’s team was at thirteen while Todoroki had scored first during the obstacle race mildly baffled Katsuki. He would have been impressed if he didn’t want to win so badly.

“Come on. We have to beat Icy-Hot,” he snarled while not taking his eyes off the changing scoreboard. Now, they were seven points behind with only a two-point margin between them and the third-place team.

“Which way do you think we should go?” the silver-haired 1-B extra asked as he pointed at the branching hallways ahead of them.

Katsuki took a shuddering breath through his nose and cursed the day Midoriya was born. Of course, the green bean had made it a maze. He had to know how much Katsuki loathed mazes.

(Izuku did, in fact, know how much Katsuki hated mazes)

The more dead-ends Eijirou ran into the more he started to dislike Midoriya. It wasn’t a personal thing. It was just that the guy had made the second event impossible to navigate without losing your mind. There was absolutely no way to tell which way you had already been since everything was the same monotonous seamless gray. The only landmarks were the unconscious villains that they left in their wake.

By the sixth dead-end and the third time being led back to the same red-haired villain Kirishima was about to say screw it and hop the walls, never mind the fact that it would get him disqualified. From the frustrating noises coming from Tooru and crinkled brows of the 1-B students, he could tell they were thinking the same.

“Okay, we need a new plan.”

“I agree,” Shizozaki said in her typical serene manner, “This simple wandering is getting us nowhere.”
Pony seemed to search for the right words and then said in halting Japanese, “Split up? There was never a rule about us having to finish together.”

“That’s true! Do you think that only one of us has to get out of here for it to count for the whole team?” Hagakure asked.

“Being that Midoriya never specified I think that if we tell him that we didn’t know he’ll say it’s fair.”

Hagakure gave him what Eijirou thought was a flat look, “Kirishima. Let’s be honest here. When is Midoriya ever fair?”

Eijirou winced and conceded the point, “Well, Aizawa will probably say it’s fair?”

“This is obviously Midoriya’s event. I doubt Aizawa-sensei knew about the whole villain airdrop thing.”

“Even if this Midoriya has the final say at least one of us will know the general direction of the exit,” Shiozaki said.

“Plus, Hagakure, you’re better at recon than fighting villains for points,” Eijirou contributed, “Whilst me and the others are better at getting points.”

Pony looked like she had barely been following so Kirishima smiled at her and tried in heavily accented English, “Split up?”

Shiozaki nodded and Eijirou was pretty sure Hagakure did too, “So Hagakure is going to look for the exit while we all try to get as many points as possible?”

“Sounds good to me.”

“Me as well.”

“Ah, ok!”
Eijirou smiled, “Good luck!”

—

“Is anyone else concerned that this seems vaguely trappy?”

Hitoshi looked at Kaminari, “Trappy?”

“Yeah. I mean, doesn’t this vaguely remind you of the jungle exercise?”

“The jungle exercise?” Komori asked.

“It was an exercise that Midoriya-sensei hosted, he set us up in fake teams and then chased us down in complete darkness,” Iida said, as he pushed up his glasses.

Hitoshi peered around a corner but found the next hallway’s villains had already been knocked unconscious, “It was terrifying and made us all deeply distrust any teams Midoriya put us in.”

Kaminari held up his hands in false surrender, “I mean yeah, Midoriya gave us trust issues but hear me out here.”

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow as he rounded the corner, Kaminari, Iida, and Komori beside him.

“So, you know how much of a stink Midoriya raised about the bet he made with the Blood King right?” both Hitoshi and Iida nodded, “Well, with the teams like they are it’s impossible for him to win that bet!”

“Yes, but these teams were totally random. Midoriya said that himself,” Iida countered.

“But Midoriya always had safeguards in place. We all know that he wouldn’t make a bet he was going to just leave up to the placement of teams.”

“He always stacks the deck…” Hitoshi whispered to himself.
“What?”

“Kaminari’s right. It’s Midoriya we’re talking about here. His bets are never actually gambles. I’m sure that if it looks like he’s going to lose then he’s gonna stack the deck.”

“Midoriya isn’t that honorless!”

Both Kaminari and Hitoshi looked at Iida with expressions that told him just how much they thought he was fooling himself.

“And he’s trusted around students?” Komori asked in a small voice.

Kaminari rolled his eyes, “Pfft he’s fine. Sure, he’s absolutely moraless, but he’s actually super great! He’s helped us grow our quirks so much. And totally saved our butts during the USJ. He almost died protecting us.”

“While Midoriya-sensei and I may not agree on hobbies and techniques there is no denying that he had certainly been beneficial to the class,” Iida agreed.

“Our class is split between deciding if he is a minor chaos deity or a cryptid.”

“Shinsou here thinks he’s a deity but I am 100% sold on the fact that he’s a cryptid,” Kaminari said as he nudged Hitoshi with a smirk.

“I think that discourse is absolutely ridiculous,” Iida said but after a moment of Kaminari staring at him intensely he averted his gaze and regretfully whispered, “...Deity.”

Shinsou hummed in satisfaction at Kaminari’s betrayed face.

Komori was about to open her mouth to say something but was cut off by a voice over the speakers.

“Editing Midoriya here! By now you’ve been in the maze for about fifteen minutes and it’s time for part two of the second event!”

Kaminari threw his hands up.
“So for my 1-A students, this may seem awfully familiar. The rules have changed! Now, there are no teams! The teams have been disbanded! The scoreboard should have changed to show each of you individually with the points corresponding to how many villains you have taken down already!”

“You now have fifteen minutes to escape the maze. Any student who is still inside after those fifteen minutes will immediately be disqualified regardless of how many points they have. The sixteen students with the highest point value out of the maze will continue on to the final round.”

“The rule about breaking the maze and hopping walls still stands so don’t get any ideas :))”

Hitoshi and his ex-teammates shared a look before they started running.

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/NCYct77
Intermission: Therapy Session

Chapter Summary

A therapy session between Izuku and his psychiatrist. An explanation in one act.

Chapter Notes

Sooo.... this is /not/ what chapter 26 was supposed to be. I just kinda wrote it as an explanation as why Izu is so OOC in this fic. The reason the real chapter 26 is taking so long is that I've written and rewritten it 14 times and I cannot get it right to save my life. No promises on when it'll be up but hopefully sometime soon

*Be careful my children there is probably some trigger warnings here*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

If Izuku was to break down the time he spent in the mental hospital he would divide it into thirds; a third befriending Rei and the other patients, a third attending mandatory therapy sessions with a psychiatrist that was just a smidge over mediocre and a third spent trying to figure out of his mind while he waited for his bones to knit back together

While this estimation would be inaccurate at best and a straight-up lie at worst it was the only way Izuku could possibly convey how much he disliked the experience. He only found it bearable 50% of the time and vaguely enjoyable about 36.2.

It took his two days before he started counting down the days, hours, minutes, seconds, till he was able to walk out of the front doors on his own to feet and not the crutches he was subjected to after he finally talked his way out of the wheelchair three weeks in.

The clock above Okita Kazuo's desk was loud, the ticking punctuated by the tapping of his pen against the notepad in his lap. Izuku had long since claimed the armchair in the corner as his designated spot for their hour-long sessions, mostly because it gave him a perfect view of the fish tank full of freshwater fish and snails he was systematically identifying and naming.

“How have you been?” Okita said with a smile that was a few ticks off from authentic.

In the earlier sessions, the fish tank had been used as something for Izuku to focus on other than
Dr. Okita’s pitying expression as he talked through sobs about how sorry his lot in life was. Now, six-hundred eighty three hours, fifty two minutes, and twenty four seconds since he jumped off the roof of his middle school the fish tank was used as something to keep his mind from running away from his mouth and saying something that would get his admitted longer than the six weeks he had agreed to while high on pain medication.

“I know it’s only been two days since we last met but what have you been up to?”

_Talking to the voices in my head that may or may not be crazier than me._

“Hung out with Mrs. Todoroki some more.”

Dr. Okita nodded, pleased with his answer. Izuku knew he’s only half genuine about it but he doesn’t much care what he thinks. He doesn’t much care what anyone thinks these days.

“I’m glad to hear it. You mentioned last time that you were going to start jogging once your leg gets out of its cast?”

The bluefish in the corner of the tank looked dead, Izuku stared at it for a moment before it flicked it’s back tailfin and stopped looking like it was floating.

“Mhm. There isn’t much to do when you’re missing the function of one of each of your limbs.”

Dr. Okita had laughed, hoping to dissolve some of the tension that he become ever-present in the room since the third session. Izuku was the obvious reason for the tension and it was something both he noticed and actively encouraged.

“Well, there’s always writing. You’ve mentioned you keep notebooks?”

“Not anymore,” Izuku said. Tick tock goes the clock. It grated on his nerves and he had half a mind to throw it out the window if only to see Dr. Okita’s reaction.

“Do it,” that half of his mind said.
“Do not,” said the other half.

“Why not?” Okita asked, “I’ve seen them before they’re very good. You’re a modern-day Sherlock Holmes.”

Izuku slides his eyes away from the fish tank to the clock to Dr. Okita’s face, “I broke my dominant arm.”

While it wasn’t a lie Izuku had learned pretty early on in his stay how to write with his left hand. It was only half the reason anyway. The truer reason is that his notebooks were a testament to a dream Okita helped kill. Both of them know it was for the best but Dr. Okita didn’t know about it’s more dangerous side effects.

“Oh, yeah that’s right,” Dr. Otika replied, looking slightly ashamed for forgetting. Izuku had expected it. “Well, do you plan on starting them again when your arm heals?”

He bit back, *I don’t plan for anything,* and instead said, “I don’t know.”

Okita wrote something that Izuku was fairly sure was just scribbles, “Why is that?”

*The person who wrote about heroes was fatally wounded on impact four weeks ago. We finished him off a week later in this very room. I don’t know because I don’t know anything anymore.*

“I haven’t thought much about what I’m gonna do once I’m out of here.”

Izuku was lying through his teeth. He had spent a good majority of his time thinking about what he was going to do once he got out of here. He had come up empty every time. Midoriya Izuku was directionless for the first time in his life and he didn’t know what to do about it.

“Why not?”

*Because I had been told I was worthless for so long that believed it. But it didn’t matter because I*
was determined to be a hero whether I was worthless or not. Then I was told it wasn’t going to happen by the only person who I thought mattered and I lost the last thing I was holding onto.

But, Dr. Otika already knew that part of the story. Izuku had sobbed it out the first day. Izuku couldn’t say that Kazuo was totally useless nor incompetent. Izuku now knew that he was not worthless but that didn’t matter much anymore. Currently, he was faced with a different problem.

“Because I don’t know what to strive for anymore.”

Otika nodded sympathetically and wrote actual words down onto the notepad.

“Well, that’s okay. You’re only fourteen. Most fourteen-year-olds don’t know what they want to strive for either.”

Otika wasn’t wrong. Most fourteen-year-olds didn’t know what they wanted to do with their lives. But most fourteen-year-olds didn’t have a dream so constant that they couldn’t remember living without it. Izuku had never thought about a future where he didn’t become a hero and now he could think of nothing else he was interested in doing.

Eventually, he stopped thinking about having a future. Once he was released he committed petty crimes and let Witch have his vigilantism and Beetle have his business. He resigned himself to not having a future at all and never stopped counting. He started counting the days, hours, minutes, seconds, until he got caught or killed, not being particularly concerned about either. He was existing on borrowed time and he had yet to find anything that made him want to keep any of it. So far, the people who loved him were the only thing he could sink his fingernails deep into enough to want and hold onto. Them and understanding himself so thoroughly he could pick out the parts of his brain that didn’t belong to him.

Dr. Otika said he overanalyzed himself and that it must be exhausting. Izuku disagreed. He had extra people in his brain so he thought that being able to separate their thoughts from his was the only thing keeping him relatively sane.

On their last session before Izuku was released Otika asked him this: “Are you interested in dying?”

Izuku responded “No” and it wasn’t a lie.
It wasn’t a lie but it wasn’t the whole truth either.

Midoriya Izuku was no longer interested in dying. But, he wasn’t all that interested in living either.

Chapter End Notes

I’m thinking about doing a character Q & A so leave your questions in the comments if you have any

:) 

https://discord.gg/xAtJsM7
Beetlejuice

Chapter Notes

I wrote this in comic sans

Shouta’s anger left very little room for anything else with mass to be present within a ten-meter distance; up to and including air, sucking up every ounce of oxygen in preparation for what all occupants of said ten-meter distance assumed was about to be a sizable explosion.

Some were much more concerned about this than others.

Being that only two people were in this radius it would come to much surprise of a curious stranger and zero surprise of anyone that knew either individual that it was the creator and curator of this anger that was most concerned.

Shouta had always prized himself on being practical and Izuku had always prized himself on being dramatic, a combination that paired surprisingly well when they were on the same side, like Triscuits and biodegradable edible glitter. Unfortunately, Izuku was only on Shouta’s side roughly 33.3% of the time (give or take up to five percent) at any given time.

However, only one part of the statistic knew about the statistic and the other 66.7 ish percent were technically not part of the statistic at all.

Statistics got infinitely more complicated when the number of people in them varied by opinion.

If you asked Izuku there were five parts, a 1:4 ratio.

If you asked Shouta there were two parts, a 1:1 ratio.

If you asked the disputed four parts it was a 4:1 ratio.

All in all, this ended up being exactly as much as a disaster as the 66.7 ish percent had anticipated.
“Wow the oxygen deprivation is really doing its thing isn’t it,” thought the 33.3%.

“You should probably tell him that he’s going to make you pass out,” said one of the 66.7 ish percent. Or thought. It varied with opinion.

“I don’t think he realizes it,” said a different part of the 66.7 ish percent, the smallest part of the percentage. Only earning a part in the percentage at all because he encouraged many bad decisions. He was much more active as a part of a different statistic called public menace, ranking in a glorious 3% and rising. It was a quite impressive percentage being it involved a lot more people than the percentage that they were discussing.

“If he thinks the word ‘percentage’ one more time I’m going to hit him with a thesaurus,” the last part of the 66.7 ish percent said/thought.

“Just when I thought you couldn’t get any more Witch you prove me wrong.”

“You know I didn’t know that people could go without oxygen for this long, it’s very good to know ;)”

“Stop.”

“Zawa,” Izuku gasped out, surfacing from the public pool that were his oxygen-deprived thoughts as he remembered that he was accidentally being smothered to death. “Can’t really breathe here buddy.”

He couldn’t see how Aizawa reacted to this news being he was cocooned head to toe in capture weapon but the message was obviously received being it was loosened to where there was a new airflow and just the tiniest bit of light from the newly created cracks.

Izuku focused on breathing in enough lungfuls of air to clear his stray thoughts and contemplated how exactly he was supposed to explain and or lie to Aizawa if he was a glorified caterpillar.

He hoped he wouldn’t have to outright lie. He tried not to lie to people he cared about and had yet to lie directly to Aizawa.
“Hate to say this bud but you should probably figure out how to talk to old Zawa before you start worrying about lying to him,” Beetle said from somewhere in his subconscious.

Izuku knew Aizawa would be pissed but he hadn’t factored in being wrapped up like a Christmas present into the equation of explanation.

Well, sometimes you needed to force a plan to distract from the fact that there was a plan at all, “Can I explain myself at least? Before you lock me in a closet or something?”

There was quite a long bit of silence. It was the silence that reassured Izuku that he’d been heard. Previously Aizawa had been pacing and dialing numbers that wouldn’t pick up. Now Izuku got the distinct feeling Aizawa was simply staring at him.

As the silence stretched Izuku decided that Aizawa wasn’t going to reply any time soon so he started talking anyway.

“So obviously you’re a bit pissed and a bit betrayed. That’s understandable. However, every part of this is a win-win. The kiddos get a real kicking villain ass experience and you get a shit ton of villains once this is over.”

The silence was really starting to becoming slightly concerning.

“And I know that you know that it was Beetle I made the contract with cause you’re not stupid and I know you disapprove but it was really the only option. I swear to God I had no idea that they were with the League. The portal surprised me just as much as you. I never would have made the deal if I knew they were in cahoots. Although, now you have an inside line so silver lining I guess.”

The lie he had just told tasted sour but it was a necessary evil. There was a sharp intake of breath and Izuku was almost relieved. Just get the yelling over with and move on.

“The only option?” Aizawa said in exactly the same cadence as he usually talked which was kinda freaky. He said it like he hadn’t gotten past that part of Izuku’s defense which was a touch concerning. “The only option? I feel like not making a deal with a villain was an open option.”
Oh, there it was. The lack of comment on the portal sent up warning flags though. “Not if I wanted to make sure no one died.”

“Oh you could have just not used people who would want to kill the students.”

Izuku let out a tiny huff of laughter, “Let’s be totally honest here. The students could kill each other just as easily. I mean they aren’t exactly pacifists with harmless quirks.”

“But they don’t want to.”

“But they want to win and that’s basically the same thing!” As soon as the words passed his lips he wished he could take it back. It was very much not the same thing and this was not the situation he wanted to showcase his roulette wheel moral compass.

He tried to backpedal, “Ah, that’s not what I meant. It’s just that this is so competitive they can lose sight of the fact that they are fighting their classmates and people can get hurt and-”

Aizawa cut him off, “Sometimes I wonder about you Midoriya,” the darkness seemed to amplify every other sense so he could feel how still Aizawa had gone. “Every part of this is deeply concerning.”

This was so spectacularly not going to plan. He didn’t really care if he went to jail but he wanted the eventuality to happen later rather than sooner.

“I never implied that I was a paragon of heroism,” it was a weak defense but he hoped the lack of bite behind it made it worth something.

It, apparently, didn’t. “That isn’t the same as being a villain.”

“I’m not a villain!” Not technically. Not really. He was trying very hard not to be.

“I’m seeing quite a bit of evidence otherwise.”
Something still in Izuku’s stomach. It curled like dread and he wondered at what point he started caring enough to feel dread again. It was such a foreign entity that he was busy dissecting it his response became a gauzy wraith-like thing that definitely didn’t add to his defense, “What does that mean?”

“Convince me that you aren’t Beetle.”

And there it was. The guillotine dropped. The other boot fell. Izuku hadn’t felt this panicked in a year and he remembered why he hated the feeling. He had planned this conversation out. Planned for every eventuality. He had planned for this accusation. Why was he unable to read the script?

“Text Kurogiri and tell him to initiate plan 6U.”

“Uh-huh, already did it.”

To his credit he was able to turn the panic into offense when he recalled his pre-planned response, “In case you didn’t catch what I said before but the portal was the League’s, therefore Beetle works for the League, which I didn’t know before today, and in case you forgot, the League almost killed me.”

“Pre-planned.”

God Izuku hated it when Aizawa was right. “Beetle shot you.”

“Which you somehow knew about.”

“Cause I have a police scanner! It wasn’t exactly a low profile event! It was a shootout in the street!”

“I am still unclear on how Beetle goading Zawa is going to convince him that Izuku isn’t them.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“I am now very worried.”
“Do I seem crazy to you?” Izuku asked, ignoring the Cypress and Beetle as he often did.

“You just filled a stadium full of villains to fight kids.”

Izuku started to reply about how UA fills the stadium with kids to fight other kids but the sound of the door opening stilled his tongue.

“Cancel Kurogiri.”

“Principal Nedzu,” Aizawa said.

—

Nedzu’s addition was something Midoriya had been both praying for and hoping against. All plans involving Nedzu swooping in ended with Midoriya getting off nearly scot-free or totally outed for everything. There was no way to anticipate which one it was going to be. Nedzu was just too unpredictable.

Izuku really wished he could tell if this was starting out on a good or bad foot. Even after Nedzu asked Izuku to be released from his cocoon and sat them all down at a table Izuku couldn’t tell if it was as a peace offering or to lull him into a false sense of security.

Nedzu and Aizawa sat across from Izuku, Aizawa glaring and Nedzu looking as cheerful as always. Neither of them spoke broke the silence first.

“Do you where my bird went? If so can I please have him back? He’ll just find me eventually. Save us the heart attack of him flying through the vents?”

Nedzu didn’t reply but Aizawa jumped in, eyes flashing red, “Do you not care that we can arrest you for consorting with very wanted villains and possibly be one of them yourself?”

Izuku subtly swallowed, “Some wild accusations are being thrown around here and while I’m not going to fault you from having them I will still be offended,” his voice stopped it’s light tone and grew abruptly serious as he leaned forward, “Aizawa, I promise, I would not have gone through
with this plan if I didn’t know for certain that the kids would be safe. I would die for class 1-A.”

He said it both because it was true and because it hopefully scored some points with Nedzu.

“While I am certain that you’re speaking the truth that does not necessarily discredit Aizawa’s questions,” Nedzu responded impassively.

“I already went around with Aizawa. He accused me of being Beetle and while I see why it would make sense I would never hurt him or the class.”

“Well, quite a few things do line up. Particularly everything about USJ. There had to be someone to tell the League about our student’s quirks.”

Izuku didn’t know how to dig himself out of the hole. He couldn’t offer a good defense because what they were saying was essentially true.

“What about the glaringly obvious fact that I am quirkless?”

“It isn’t entirely impossible for you to have developed a quirk late in life or hidden the fact that you had one at all. Sometimes quirks are activated by trauma.”

Why did Nedzu have to be so smart? Izuku was quite sure that the only reason they weren’t hitting the nail squarely on the head was that the nail was so completely outrageous that it was never even a possibility.

“Don’t worry Bro I’m coming to rescue you!”

“I said to cancel Kurogiri!”

And then Aizawa’s phone started ringing.

—

Aizawa glanced at the screen. It was a blocked number.
He turned to Nedzu and waited for the Principal to nod.

Izuku knew who it was long before the line crackled to life.

“Hiya boys! I see you're doing some interrogating!” Beetle said.

Aizawa looked at Nedzu and then Izuku who held his hands up to show that he didn’t have a phone nor was he talking.

“Nedzu I don’t believe I’ve had the pleasure of talking to you! Although I thought that you hosted the third-year events.”

Nedzu looked unflustered which was unsurprising. “Indeed I was. However, once I heard about your and Midoriya’s event and how he used my name to nullify the crowd I hurried over. That and Aizawa calling me and telling me to come over and help smooth everything over.”

“Well, I felt like you wouldn’t appreciate an all-out riot,” Izuku interjected.

“You are quite right, I definitely would not appreciate it,” Nedzu laughed and Izuku couldn’t tell if he was talking exclusively to him and not minding the villain listening in or was talking to everyone, “I would also have appreciated you telling me about this before so I could have briefed the staff, but I did tell you to surprise me.”

Ah, the first one then.

“Before we get into the unfortunate business I just want to say how impressed I am by your ingenuity! I could not have been more surprised! While it is something we will never repeat in the future, it does give the students a more realistic feel on what fighting villains will be like! I must say I was thoroughly blown away.”

Midoriya tapped two fingers to his temple in a salute, “Thanks Nedzu.”

“However, that was from a personal point of view. From the perspective of the Principal, I will have to say that this could have been potentially damaging to the school’s reputation. The only
reason that I am not pushing for legal repercussions is that you did not use Beetle’s name and the
general public does not know their quirk or how much of an influential player they are in the
villain world. No one outside of class 1-A knows what the portals of the League of Villains look
like so we were saved from mass media asking about our involvement in getting the villains into
the stadium. Also, I am assuming that once this event is over we are free to arrest all of the
villains? We got the police to look into them and almost all of them are wanted for something or
another.”

“They are free to be arrested whenever. None of them realized that could be a possibility when
they signed Beetle’s contract.” Izuku confirmed.

“Ah yes I noticed that loophole too! I decided not to mention it to any of our contract-ies :)

Izuku had forgotten about Beetle casually listening in but by the looks, Aizawa was throwing
Nedzu and how Nedzu was meeting them head-on neither of them had.

Nedzu nodded and continued to look at Aizawa, “Can you call the pros in the area and tell them to
prepare? I expect most of the villains to still be unconscious but still make sure they are aware that
there might be a struggle.”

“It appears my phone has been compromised,” Aizawa ground out.

Beetle giggled.

“Ah, yes. Can you contact them after we finish this call.”

Nedzu directed his attention back to the phone, “Purely for academic interest may I ask how you
knew that we were inquiring Midoriya about your connection?”

“Well, that’s easy! Cameras! You guys really need a better firewall.”

“And why you called as soon as we started to accuse Midoriya as being you?”

“I quite dislike seeing other people take credit for my work. Especially since you were so off. Mido
is such a teacher's pet that he made a contract insuring his class’ safety!"

“That’s laying it on a bit strong,” Izuku whispered to Beetle.

“Shut up,” they singsonged in return.

“Did he really? What did he trade you?”

“Money. So much money. I could swim in it. I did swim in it. Oh, also his life if he blabbed about how to find me or who I am.”

“Why are you telling us this so easily?”

“Well. I quite like Mido and I mourn for his lost patronage. It’s truly tragic. I’ve been outed as a member of the League so now he probably won’t make any more deals with me :(. Right, Mido?”

Izuku curled his lip to show just how much he definitely wasn’t going to do business again, “I’m giving you a zero out of five-star Yelp review.”

“See! Unfair standards!”

“How did he make a deal for 1-A’s safety if he didn’t know you were with the League?”

“Oh, he made the deal with me. And since I’m part of the League he technically made a deal with them too. I can forward it to you. Very specific wording. I made it like that. I like 1-A. They have charisma!”

Izuku had the good sense to pretend to look floored.

“But alas, because of my affiliations me and Mido are no more. Someone tries to kill you once. If I was that picky I wouldn’t have any friends!”
Izuku glowered at the phone, “You’re insane.”

Beetle yawned, “Tell me something new.”

And then hung up.
Authors Note

Howdy! Blue here.

I've been meaning to write this to clarify a few things but I'm writing this on my phone and I'm lazy so I'm just gonna do a bullet pointed list thing.

- First of all I want to stress that I have no idea what DID is like and it is not at all my intent to romanticize it. It is because of this that I veered off from it and instead decided to make Izuku's situation because of a quirk and not because of DID. They misinterpreted it as DID originally but it is NOT. This decision has allowed me to have some creative freedom without me feeling guilty about misrepresentation. Beetle, Witch, and Cypress are NOT alters and are instead a byproduct of a quirk. A quirk that creates new people and yes, there will have consequences of how absurdly against science this quirk is. Even by quirk standards. I apologize for any confusion.
- People keep asking me what is going on with the phone and video calls and I don't have an answer because I have no idea. Almost every decision plot wise has had no prethought so it works cause I said it does. A wonder of Izu's quirk I guess.
- The updates are being not at all consistent and I'm sorry but I've been in a writing rut for a while. There is no guarantee that there will be frequent updates.
- I'm not replying to all of the comments mostly because I get roughly 50ish per chapter and my inbox currently has 328 comments and I cannot reply to all of them if I want to keep my sanity. I do read all of them tho <3
- I'm not sure if ya'll have noticed but there may or may not be some glaring pot holes and that is because I never have any idea where the fuck I'm going with this. I have an outline but I make a lot of impulsive writing decisions that drastically changes how everything works out.
- Lastly, I don't feel like I thank all of you enough for the support I never imagined that my stupid unplanned fic would get so much attention. I love all of ya'll.

Works inspired by this one

Path broken, but not yet shattered by strbrymilk

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!