**World Walker**

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**World Walker**

by Sandtalon

**Summary**

Izuku has seen himself live as a hero, villain, vigilante, civilian, adventurer. He's seen worlds rise and fall through snapshots, analyzing each glance in neat notebooks. Now his story has started, and only one thing is certain: He hasn't saved them yet.

Aka the fic that takes the dimension travel troupe, throws it out the window, and replaces it with bad puns and plot.

I'm re-writing the summary bc Izuku's still an anxious green bean but the story's evolved.
Spoilers for specific arcs posted in the beginning notes of each chapter. (first posted fanfic, lmk what you think!)

Notes

Eri and Shinsou are mentioned by name, but that's about it for spoilers.

Trigger warning for past major character death in this chapter. Iida will still appear in this story, alive. He hasn't died yet. (I'm NOT killing the main cast. probably.) Another version of Iida (like an echo???) is implied to have died. Skip until the first break to avoid.

Opening world/scene is a reference to We Can All Be Heroes by Amandyalmonds

See the end of the work for more notes.
Izuku is in a graveyard when it hits him. A mental wave of something rolls through his head before trickling down his shoulders and leaving his body buzzing.

He’s been to this graveyard a hundred times - ever since he found the well-kept stone, he’s made it a point to visit often- so why does this feel different?

It’s like up until this moment, he’s been viewing his life with a thin film over his brain. For the first time, he’s well and truly aware.

It can only mean that today’s the day. Today’s the day Kacchan tells him to - well. Maybe he’ll be better in this timeline. It’s the day he almost dies (in this world) for the first time. Today’s the day everything hinges on. Today, his story has started.

He walks to the edge of the graveyard, fall sunlight filtering through the fiery leaves. He could leave from the gravesite, but something about that seems rude. If there’s any grave that deserves some good rule-abiding respect, it’s that of the student buried seven feet under him.

At the edge of the graveyard, Izuku turns, bows to the friend he hasn’t met yet, and lets himself fall back. The ground rushes up, and he’s falling through a thousand starlight echoes. Galaxies and nebulas knit themselves together as he passes. The stars are larger and closer than in any other sky. Izuku doesn’t bother admiring what he’s seen every day.

Another world approaches, one more city-sized orb containing his entire universe. Flashes of monochrome moments flit across, pieces to his puzzle - when he left, it had been an empty, blank surface.

Izuku swings around to hit it feet-first, tumbling through to fall on the carpet in his room with a soft thump. Light filters through his window; morning.

Whoops.

He stumbles through his morning routine, pushing the long gray bandages from his bed back to the desk, carefully. It’s difficult not to smudge the ink writing. Still, it’s a lot of effort to re-draw any of the restrictive seals if he messes them up.

He slips on the wide bracelets right after, feeling them snap around his wrists tightly. Whispers in his ears and the dull pressure on the back of his mind fade away. Izuku breathes a sigh of relief before moving through the rest of his routine.

As he gets ready for school and wishes his mom goodbye, Izuku is careful to act as he would on any other day. He wants to tell her- he really does, but they both know the hard facts. One divergence ahead of time, one slip up, and it will all turn to dust. He’s watched this day in countless other worlds, watched countless other Izukus- quirked or not- and it always starts here. She’ll understand.

Assuming that today is actually the day. Anxiety hits partway through the walk, making it suddenly hard to believe. Ah, doubt. His old friend.
He gets sidetracked by the hero fight on the way to school. Mount Lady makes her debut, and he’s muttering up a storm when the man besides him turns.

“So, a fan, are ya? Guess you’re aiming to be a hero, huh?”

Izuku beams. “Y-yes sir!”

“Good luck!”

“I’ll do my best!”

The stranger’s words lift him up on his way to school.

*Maybe my story will be better,* he thinks.

*Maybe my story will be kinder,* he hopes as Matsuzaka Sensei lectures them on their futures.

“…but then, I suppose you’re all aiming to be heroes, aren’t you?” Matsuzaka Sensei throws the papers up in the air, letting the class cheer uproariously.

*Maybe my story will be less lonely,* he almost-whispers, not really believing it, as Kacchan’s hands slam down on his desk. The resulting silence is just one more way to flaunt control over the classroom.

“Sensei! Don’t lump me in with these extras,” Kacchan calls out, and Izuku knows its hopeless.

The class rebels again- “Hey Bakugo, chill out!”

“I’ll be a hero, just you watch!”

“Shut up, you extras!” Kacchan’s palms crackle slightly. “I’m heading straight to the top, to surpass even All Might - you losers stay on the sidelines where you belong!”

“Oh, that’s right,” Shuya adds. He has a light mutation quirk that leaves him with ram horns. “You were going to UA right?”

Izuku breathes in through his nose and out through his mouth. As long as the attention isn’t on him, he’ll be fine. He places one hand subtly on his desk, trying to commit the feeling of its wooden surface to memory. It grounds him, just enough.

He’s bullied in this timeline too, of course. Who better to pick on that the kid with a light teleportation quirk who couldn’t even see punches before they hit? Who couldn’t even run because he’ll come right back?

*Teleportation my ass.* The wood is light and cool under his fingers. He’s seen this day so many times in so many worlds, for once he has a step up on the universe.

One thing he didn’t see coming was the teacher’s flippant announcement-

“-isn’t Midoriya applying for UA as well?”

Izuku wished he could sink into the floor - hell, he could, but not in class. *Just my luck.*

“Haah?” Kacchan’s head snaps around.

Matsuzaka Sensei chooses this moment to regain control over the classroom, but the damage is
already done. Izuku is doomed. He wraps his other hand around the cold metal desk leg, anchoring himself.

Class wraps up, and Izuku grabs his stuff, hurriedly stuffing everything into his backpack. World analysis notebook first, textbook, then folders. He’s almost done - the hero journal needs to go in last for analysis - when it’s ripped out of his grasp. Kacchan stands before him, something ugly stamped into his expression as he thumbs through the pages.

“I don’t believe it.” Kacchan’s followers snicker behind him as their leader holds it up like a trophy. “You still daydreaming, nerd?”

“Give it back, Kacchan.” Izuku hates how his voice trembles. Just another reminder of how broken their friendship is.

“Give it back,” Kacchan mocks, his voice whiny and not at all Izuku’s. “Think you can be a hero like that? You’re nothing. Runaway crybaby who can’t control his own damn quirk.”

Izuku tries to make himself small, hunching his shoulders and clenching his hands. He could go now. He could leave, easily. But Kacchan has his notebook, and if he leaves, he’ll never get it back.

Kacchan’s minions snicker, and one of them – Tsubasa - reaches over to grab Izuku’s arm. He hates it. Hates how it means he can’t leave, hates how it anchors him but sends his point of view out of his body, fog covering his senses.

He hates that he’s thankful Kacchan’s never the one to grab him.

Kacchan says something again, and Izuku can barely blink back. Kacchan says something again, yelling this time. Oh. He wants a response. Explosions pop through the fog, and Izuku watches distantly as his notebook sails out the window. Izuku practically collapses when Tsubasa lets him go.

His hearing clears a bit, letting words register themselves in his mind. Kacchan steps closer, grinding notebook paper under his heel as he leans close. “Don’t get in my way, Deku. I’ll be the only one to apply to UA.”

Kacchan straightens, signaling his group and leaving. “Oh, and Deku. If you really want to get into UA, here’s an idea….”

He really did it. Kacchan really said that. Why did he think it would be different here? The echoing words: “Take a swan-dive off the roof and wish for a better quirk in the next life” had hit him like a train, even if he saw it coming.

He’ll never be ready for that.

A part of him had hoped it would be different here. A part of him knew it wouldn’t.

He packs up his stuff and retrieves his notebook from the water cistern. It’s burned and damp, but still legible. This is his only copy that’s on waterproof paper sprayed with fire resistant coating, so the writing isn’t as smudged as it would be.

At least his quirk can predict notebook damage.

There are other things Izuku needs to focus on, so he holds his head high and marches on.

Phantom explosions echo in his ears all the way.
This is it. Izuku stares at the overpass ahead of him. This is where it starts. He takes a step forward to- Is this really ok, the little voice in his head murmurs, stopping him cold. Is it ok to bend reality for this? You haven’t done anything, just gone where you know he’ll be. You’re manipulating this. Life isn’t a card-game, you know. Is it ok if All Might doesn’t find you by chance - not really?

Izuku thinks. He thinks about the futures he’s explored and the friends he’s found there. He thinks about Kacchan, and how in this world, there’s still a chance that he’ll smile - actually smile - again. He thinks about Uraraka, and Iida, and Todoroki and Kirishima and Tsu and wonders if they live in this world too. And he thinks about Shinsou, hurting and more deserving of One For All.

Then he thinks of All Might with sunken eyes, and Iida lying drenched with blood in an alleyway - it always happened, it will happen here too - and Eri, afraid - He hasn’t saved them yet.

He walks into the shadows of the underpass.

Izuku is careful to walk past the manhole, slowing his pace. It’s all for nothing if he’s too far away. The voice returns, life isn’t a card-game, but he squashes it down. I need to save them.

He’s almost out of the underpass- did I walk here too quickly? Is today not the day? -When the manhole cover explodes and holy sssshit that was loud.

Izuku doesn’t need to turn to see the slime oozing towards him, but he does any way. The first thing he feels should not be relief. Relief that turns to fear in a second.

“Oh, my. A perfect-sized vessel just for me. Hope you don’t mind if I help myself.”

“N-No thanks!” Izuku yells back, and scrambles away. It won’t make a difference, he knows, but flight or fight instinct has plopped itself down in his brain to watch the show. He can’t have himself completely abducted, anyway - can’t save them that way, an awful part of him chirps. The slime is surrounding him in an instant, forcing itself down.

Its gross and sticky and honestly smells like snot. Izuku fumbles at his bracelets, but the slime gets in his way, making his fingers slip. He can’t get them off. There’s a wet chuckle from all around him, and hot breath blasts past his right ear.

“Must have a good quirk if you’re that feisty. Try to make this easy for both of us.”

Izuku can’t reply, but he settles for a mostly-muffled scream.

What if I played my cards wrong, he thinks as he slips under, clawing at the edge of consciousness to stay up. The little voice contributes one final whisper: What if All Might doesn’t come?

A gust of wind blows the villain away.

“EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE,” comes a shout that can only be one universally famous hero. “WHY? BECAUSE I AM HERE!”

Oh thank God, Izuku thinks, and passes out.

He wakes up and finds All Might patting his face frantically.

“Kid - hey, kid! Ah, You’re awake!”

Izuku blinks up groggily at the number one hero of This World, here to save Him. Huh. The iconic,
blinding smile broadens when All Might sees Izuku awake.

“All! My- uh- um-“ Izuku casts about. What is he supposed to do? He knew that he would get abducted by the slime villain. He knew that All Might would somehow end up training him. But hell if he knew what happened in between.

Besides, this is All Might - All Might!! From his World, and Izuku may be just the tiniest bit starstruck.

He casts about and finds his notebook - a signature - only to find it already signed?? What kind of hero-level preparedness??

“Glad to see you well, my boy! That criminal slipped through my grasp at first, but I’ve got him now!” All Might is crouching down, preparing to take off, and Izuku hasn’t said a word to him.

“I must fly! Evil never sleeps after all.”

“Wait - I have a question-“ All Might can’t leave, this can’t be it.

He hasn’t saved them yet.

Seconds before All Might launches himself into the sky, Izuku makes a very stupid decision.
Yagi Toshinori has had a long day. He’s stopped a bank heist and purse-snatcher already and put in a brief appearance at UA to meet the other teachers. Overall, it’s almost three hours now.

Now to drop off this criminal and go home. He should get some new groceries too.

This all goes out the window when the green-haired kid latches onto him. It’s like the universe has decided to throw him a curve-ball. Suddenly he’s soaring above the city with blood crawling up his throat and a kid on his leg.

Shit.

When Toshinori lands, he makes sure to deliver a resounding lecture on safety. It doesn’t seem to stick - the kid looks like he’s listened to the same lecture every day.

He’s got bags under his eyes now that Toshinori looks, messy green hair and a scar from right ear to eye. He stammers and stutters, giving thanks and a question that Toshinori doesn’t have time for. He’ll hear it anyway, because All Might loves the people, and so does Yagi Toshinori.

“Can I be a hero with a useless quirk?”

It catches him off-guard. He hesitates, and that’s just enough for his time to be up.

The transformation-steam obscures his vision and when it clears, the kid is still there.

It must be at least a little startling to see your hero shrink right in front of you, but the kid barely reacts. Instead, he takes a step forward, holds Toshinori’s eyes, and repeats his question.

“Can I be a hero with a useless quirk?”

Toshinori stares back. “You’re not - this isn’t a shock?”

The kid blinks. Something passes over his face- desperation, fear, then it settles on guarded.
“I already knew; my quirk’s weird like that. Can I be a Hero, All Might?”

Toshinori is still reeling- another person who knows his secret, another person who may be targeted because of him - but the kid asks like the world weighs on his answer. All Might will always answer to the people.

“My boy,” he says. “What’s your quirk?”

Izuku is stuck now. He could tell All Might his quirk, and risk breaking free of the plotted timeline early, or he could play it safe and tell him later. Izuku pictures that: Hey All Might! Funny story: I’ve been lying about my quirk! All Might’s disappointed face flashes through his mind and he knows he could never do that.

He draws a breath instead. “My quirk is called World Travel. I can visit and watch different dimensions. It takes a bit of time to get there, though. Chronologically, they’re usually a bit ahead, so I can guess some future events from the patterns there. I-I can’t see fine details, just major events, and those always change. I can’t bring anyone with me, either.” It’s oversimplified, but it does the job.

All Might’s face freezes. “Different…. dimensions?”

“I know it’s a lot. Think of it like when you step into a room with a lot of mirrors? Like, uh… a bunch of echoes?”

All Might still looks pale, but makes a visible effort to get back on track. “So this conversation...”

“This is new to me. Useless quirk, right?” He says it like a joke. It’s not a joke.

The little voice in his head decides this is a perfect time to speak up. *Liar, liar pants on fire, couldn’t save them all then, can’t save any now. He knows you staged this. You’ve tossed your chance, played your cards wrong.*

All Might looks at him with sunken eyes full of regret, and there’s some deeper hurt but Izuku doesn’t know this All Might well enough to tell.

“No, I don’t think you can be a hero with that quirk. If you can’t see the details to use it in a fight, then I’m afraid not.”

Izuku feels everything crash and burn around him. This was his chance.

All Might lifts his shirt and shows off a twisted mass of scar tissue. “A villain did this to me five years ago.”

“Five years? Then- the fight with Toxic chainsaw?”

“You know your stuff. But no, Toxic Chainsaw was too much of a low-life to do this kind of damage. This was a fight I asked the media not to show.” He let go of the shirt, and Izuku watches it flutter down- So that’s why.

“This is the truth of heroes, kid. A hero must always be ready to risk their own life. Without a way to fight, you’ll just end up being another casualty when you debut. If you could even clear up the fine details, then perhaps. But as you explained it, no, I don’t think you can be a hero.”
Izuku stands shell-shocked as All Might goes on. He had gone through so much for this conversation, just to be told by his only hope that it’s hopeless.

“You could take up police work. A precognition quirk of any kind is especially suited to the detective life.”

Izuku would cry, but he’s too empty. For once, the tears don’t come.

*You can’t be a hero.*

All Might exits down the stairs at some point.

*You can’t be a hero.*

*You can’t save them.*

He finds himself almost dragging his feet home. What if he missed something? What if he forgot some detail and would never see All Might again except through his phone and the TV screen. He hasn’t saved them yet. What if he never does.

The sounds of a hero fight drag him out of it, and Izuku wanders over listlessly.

“Why aren’t the heroes doing anything,” he mutters to himself. “Why are they just-”

Explosions.

Kacchan’s explosions.

Izuku pushes through the crowd. Heroes are gathered around, but none of them are doing anything besides containing the fires. They’re avoiding a writhing mass of slime, a figure caught inside. That’s- that’s the slime villain, the same one that All Might- no. Izuku’s train of thought stutters to a halt as he realizes. All Might’s pockets were empty when they had talked on the roof. It’s his fault.

*Life isn’t a card game, but if it is, I sure played my hand wrong.* Because now Kacchan- unbeatable, future hero Kacchan- is struggling and when Izuku locks eyes for an instant-

He’s running before he knows what’s happening. Crying too, but that’s nothing new. He searches frantically – where’s the villain’s weakness, everyone has at least one - and finds it.

His backpack goes sailing into the villain’s eyes while Izuku claws at the slime. It’s disgusting and sends all of his instincts slamming down on the flight button, but he reaches through the panic and oozing green slime to Kacchan. It gets in his fingernails and sticks to his arms, but Kacchan looked so desperate that Izuku keeps trying.

The slime villain laughs. It sounds garbled, and he’s vaguely aware of Kacchan cursing at them both. Izuku doesn’t listen, just focuses on fighting through the tears. He won’t let Kacchan die this time. They need him.

Then All Might is there.

A single smash blows the slime villain to pieces. Izuku can only watch on the sidelines, stunned, as a single hit from All Might changes the weather itself. The heroes swarm the scene, police just behind with flashing lights and yellow tape.

Izuku is largely ignored once they find out about his quirk. He’s grateful. The ground is nice and solid, an anchor to Here that he can focus on, so he sits and waits to go home. He answers questions,
is lectured again, then he can leave.

Theoretically, anyway. Kacchan is in his face right after the heroes aren’t.

“Told me to help you, Deku.”

“Never said you did.” Izuku should care. He really should. But it’s been too long and disappointing of a day for that. All he feels now is strangely empty.

“Then what was with that fucking stupid look in your eyes, huh?”

“You looked like you could use a hand. So I offered mine.”

Kacchan struggles for a moment, and Izuku watches distantly as his face contorts into the most interesting shapes. “Fuck you!”

He stumps off, leaving Izuku to breathe in through his nose and out through his mouth until the hammering in his chest subsides to a more manageable level.

His bag is covered with a thin layer of slime, and the police have confiscated it. Izuku’s just barely able to hide his analysis notebooks under his jacket before the bag is taken away. Supposedly he should get his stuff back by tonight.

With that, he’s left to walk home. Looks like he can’t be a hero, but maybe as a vigilante-

“I AM HERE-” aand there he is. Today is just filled with chance meetings. All Might skids around the corner in muscle form, speed walking to Izuku at a terrifying pace.

“I thought.. the press…”

“Escaping the press is no matter to the Number One hero,” All Might declares, before spewing blood and transforming.

When the steam clears, All Might stands before him, grave and shrunken.

“Kid,” he says, and Izuku braces for another lecture. “I owe you an apology.”

Izuku blinks, but his brain won’t let the words come, so he stays silent.

“I told you today that heroes must always be willing to risk their lives. But I did not listen to my own advice. I stood by as innocent suffered. Of all the heroes gathered today, it was you who moved forward.”

“I didn’t mean to,” Izuku says. It sounds like an excuse because it is. “My feet just…”

“Moved on their own?” All Might smiles, and even though it’s different from the smile in his true form, it somehow means more than any symbol could.

“My boy, there are often stories of heroes in their youth who moved before they knew what they were doing. You have the makings of a true hero.”

Izuku’s going to cry at this rate.

“You may know that my quirk is a much-debated topic.”

“Yes.” Izuku finds his voice again. “I know.”
He knows more than that, but right now, this moment means everything.

“The truth is, it’s a power stockpiling quirk, one that can be passed down from one person to the next.”

Izuku feels tears building up, blurring the man, the legend in front of him.

“My boy….”

The wind blows past All Might, lifting his shirt just enough for the scar to show.

“You can be a hero!”

Izuku can’t stop the tears when they come.

Chapter End Notes

is this a cliff hanger? does this count???. Anyway, yesterday i walked around barefoot in 32 degree weather because my flip flops broke, so fuck climate change for this polar vortex. Am science, can confirm: polar shit is global warming.

Also shout out to my friend K for beta reading this chapter and stopping me from writing a "ass of slime" instead of "mass of slime." Not all heroes wear capes.

Should I update earlier on the bad cliff hanger days? i.......... don't know, tell me thoughts in the comments.
It Might be a Ladder to the Stars

Chapter Summary

Mamadoriya talks, and then the greek chorus makes root beer floats but BETTER.

Chapter Notes

I think we're spoiler free yet again!!

See notes at the bottom. A lot is introduced, so if you're confused over anything, that's where you'll find it. On a side note, I realize my plot seems a little slow. There's a lot I need to set up before UA, so apologies for that.

(Hint for this chapter: if you spell Cannon backwards its Nonnac. Interesting.)

“You can be a hero.”

Those words he had always wanted to hear- directed at him, not at an echo or copy or different self-blazed their way into Izuku like the sun itself. He went home happy, grinning from ear to ear.

“Mom! I’m home!”

“Welcome back,” she says from the kitchen, and it hits him like a truck that because he’s in it for good now, so is she. She needs to know. Anxiety rolls through him, leaving him tenser than usual.

“Mom... something happened.”

“Sweetie?” She hurries out of the kitchen, a dish towel in one hand, and kneels in front of him. After checking him for injuries, and finding none, she places her hands on his shoulders. “Are you ok?”

He nods, and she relaxes. “Would you like to talk about it?”

“I - I used my quirk. Today. To... to do what some of the other timelines did. But I don’t know how much I can tell you-not in the physically can’t way, but in the logically shouldn’t way- because if you know, that might mess up the future, so if I do explain, it can’t be everything. But I want you to know.”

“Sweetie-“

“I’m gonna tell you, because I think that’s something I regret. When I don’t.”

Arms wrap around him. He looks up, and his mom smiles through watery eyes. They always were a family of criers, after all.

“Has it started? Your story?”
“Today- this morning, and the hard part was getting it to go right but, Mom- Kacchan, he- he almost died, too.”

Inko’s mouth snaps shut into a thin line at that last word. The hug switches from reassurance to protective.

“Too?”

_Oops._

“I’m okay, Mom. All Might showed up-both times actually-”

“Both?!?” She looks like she might pass out.

“It’s not that bad, in fact it’s great!”

“Sweetie, I’m gonna need you to explain in a bit more detail,” Inko says faintly, before ushering him to the table for dinner and a long talk.

Izuku keeps out All Might’s injuries, and focuses on the training and new quirk. His mom sees through any attempts to brush off the day’s danger, but after a bit of fussing she turns to the matter at hand.

“I told him I needed to think about it. There are a couple other people who could have his quirk too, but… there are so many people I haven’t saved yet. Even If I don’t… the training will help. I think I might accept. Maybe.”

“Does this happen out there, as well?” She waves her hand in a vague movement, and Izuku nods. His mom has never quite known how to refer to Izuku’s quirk, understandably. She tries, and that’s all he could ever ask for.

“I’m usually trained by him. Sometimes it’s other heroes, but usually him. I don’t know how long he’ll teach me, or if I’ll succeed, but I need to try, mom. I need to.” He’s fairly certain she’ll say yes - she does in other worlds, anyway.

“Izuku, you know this is dangerous.”

“Yes.” _Oh, he knows. “I know.”_

“So you understand why I’m against it.”

_What._

“I support your dream to be a hero, you know that.”

_No._

“And I want you to be happy, I do-”

_Please, no._

“But All Might training you crosses a line. He hasn’t contacted me at all, and it sounds like he just chose you off the streets. I’m sorry, honey.”

“Mom, it’s the only chance I have,” he whispers, staring across the table desperately.
Inko picks at her food, not meeting his eyes. “Oh, my baby…. I know you want to be a hero, but isn’t there another way?”

“I don’t need to be a hero, Mom.” That gets her attention. “I just need to save them.”

“Sweetie, it hasn’t happened yet.”

“But it will! It always does!” Oh, he’s crying now. “It will happen and I haven’t saved them yet.”

Inko Midoriya knows those five words. They were the first thing she heard after her little boy stumbled into darkness in the living room. She knows those words from when he came out, crying and in shock, with a neat bandage over his right cheek and a letter in his hand. She knows those words as a mantra since that first portal. And she knows a lost argument when she hears it.

“He should have contacted me first, before asking,” she whispers, and Izuku sees tears in her eyes.

Yeah, he should’ve.”

They both cry through the curry and sit together on the couch, watching an All Might film until the tears run their course.

Inko shifts. “Do the other three know it’s begun?”

“Not yet.” The I’ll tell them tonight goes unsaid, but they both feel it. Now, though, it’s time for movies, popcorn and blankets.

That night, Izuku slips on a hat and hoodie, tucks an envelope into its pocket, stands in the center of his room, and falls backwards. The ground rushes up to meet his head but right before hitting the floor, he opens a portal and plunges through. The shock is like dropping into water headfirst- both pleasantly warm and icy cold- and he free-falls down in the Null.

The Null is filled with galaxies and nebulas contracting, expanding, destroying and creating. Worlds are suspended in the stars - huge planetary orbs the size of cities flashing with bits and pieces of lives. His life, to be exact. But not His at the same time.

Off in the distance, one world shines brighter than the rest. The world Nonnac has always stood out. Supposedly it was made first, but whoever found out is long dead. Now it’s just a star for navigation.

He sees a world with clouds circling the outside like Saturn’s rings and directs his path there. At the last second, he swings around to hit the planetary body with both feet and hands first. A circle opens, and Izuku falls through.

Mustafu is dark. A neat circle opens just above an empty street, the purest form of starlight inside, and Izuku tumbles out. He looks around and adjusts the hat over his recognizable messy green hair before he sets out. This world already has an Izuku, and it’s not him.

He hadn’t planned to end up on the street. The bracelets around his wrists sit heavy, reminding him he could have better aim if he weren’t so afraid. He heads towards a certain small café; a place where
world-travelers can meet safely.

The Lonely Owl is always open, its owner always ready to send Izuku back if he’s too tired to walk on his own. Hisen runs the same café on every world, existing in each simultaneously. It’s like the rest stop/gas station hybrid of the Null, though with a decidedly more refined and welcoming interior.

The Lonely Owl is filled with golden light. Glass bottles containing little stars and moons and sometimes sunsets line the walls, and a fish tank stretches from floor to ceiling on one side. It’s filled with goldfish- one from each world.

In the back, a young man with a subtle snow leopard-mutant quirk shuffles through paperwork. Hisen, behind the counter, is older with salt and pepper hair and an impeccably groomed beard. The tattoos on his arms move as he continues to restock the cabinets.

Izuku tosses the envelope on the counter before heading to the back.

“You’ll never guess what happened today,” he says, flopping into a chair. “Where’s Taka?”

“On her way.” Clouddancer looks up from his paperwork to study Izuku’s expression. “It this a hot chocolate day or an ice cream day?”

“…. Both. Like a root beer float but better.”

Hisen rolls up his sleeves. “A la mode?”

“I’ll get it.” Cloud ruffles Izuku’s hair fondly before stretching and gathering up the papers.

“Let an old man have his cooking.” The two bicker a bit, and Izuku moves to the barstools.

Izuku met Cloud first, when he first discovered his quirk. Cloud taught him to travel safely, to select destinations from the Null. (Izuku is responsible for a faint scar that traces over Clouds’ jaw. It’s a reminder of that first time world traveling, something best left forgotten.)

From what Izuku can gather, Cloud and Taka’s home worlds’ genetics are different - pieces of both parents’ quirks are usually passed down together, leading to mismatched patchworks of quirks.

“She’ll be here soon,” Hisen informs them, before turning to pass over the hot chocolate a la mode. There’s a mint sprig on the vanilla ice cream. He takes the envelope, opening it neatly. As he skims, his eyebrows raise slightly. “Miss Inko seems worried.”

“Ah, well…. ” He trails off as light blue dust swirls out of the ground, allowing Taka to enter. She ruffles Izuku’s hair carefully on the way to the bar. Her arms are wrapped with protective seals, and her gloves have always been a little… sharp.

“Sorry I’m late.”

“It’s fine, we weren’t waiting long.” Cloud puts away the last of his paperwork and suddenly all the attention is on Izuku.

It’s not bad- he’s with friends and found family. The decision he’ll have to make sits heavily in his chest, but for now he can’t even keep the smile back when he starts.

“I met All Might today…. ”

Chapter End Notes
SO!!! ORIGINL CHARACTERS!!!!
Honestly? the chance that in all the multiverse/null/void, there's only one person with the quirk to travel? Thats like a 0.0000001% chance. I can say that these will be the only three original characters. Human ones, anyway.

Basic facts on each bc I know some people like to know that stuff (skip if you don't care bc I'll get to most of this later anyway):

Hisen's pretty well described above. He used to be an informant, so he's familiar with most of the underground. He likes tea and makes really good snickerdoodles. Right now his purpose in the story is as a "hestia/home/hearth" role (I drew him here bc his expression is super hard to explain)

Taka's got whitish short hair and lots of scarring over her shoulders. She likes exercise and the ocean, and not being caught in Cloud's pranks. She's the only who's collecting goldfish. I'll get to drawing her later.

Cloud is,,, honestly a big mood. His quirks are Starcloud and Sight. He's got greyish hair and wears this giant moutaineering coat thats almost a blanket. He was a rescue hero but isn't anymore because,,,,, p l o t. Anyway, he likes to prank Taka, smoothies, and also dancing. He's the hardest to draw but I'll do my best!

Chap title is inspired by No Hopers, Jokers & Rogues
Toshinori sits down on a large piece of concrete used to mark the beach’s entrance. He shouldn’t be nervous - Midoriya was certainly a nice boy, with the makings of a hero practically bursting at the seams. Even should Midoriya refuse, he still has an appointment with Sir Nighteye tomorrow about this very subject. Life will go on.

That’s what he tells himself as his remaining half of a stomach twists with nerves.

“All Might!”

Toshinori spits blood and jumps up to see the boy who had seemingly popped into existence. “Midoriya, my boy. I’m Yagi Toshinori out of costume - Are you well?”

Midoriya offers him a smile like the sun. It will be a wonder if Toshinori can make it through mentorship without being blinded at this rate.

“Yep! I’ve made up my mind!”

“Oh.” Toshinori quickly strives to cover up his fraying nerves. “And?”

“I want to say yes, but...” Toshinori feels dread fall, another dead weight on his shoulders.

“There’s a chance that me having this power will hurt someone else.”

“Midoriya?” Toshinori stands dumbfounded. This certainly wasn’t the reason he was expecting.

“I’ve seen a lot of worlds, All Might. And a lot of the time, there’s a power that myself, or three other people have.”

Oh. Shit.

“And every time they have that power, it saves their life at some point.” Toshinori knows what’s coming before Midoriya says it.

“I think that power is One for All.”
“Midoriya… I chose you.”

“I know. But I want you to meet the other three. Tell me what you think, and if they’re not what you’re looking for, then I’ll accept.” The boy fumbles in his pockets for a moment, before drawing out a small piece of folded paper. He holds it out like a peace offering.

“Are you sure?” Toshinori takes the yellow post-it, glancing down at three unfamiliar names.

“I’m sure.” Midoriya shakes himself and smiles up. “I wish I could accept now.”

“Well.” Toshinori carefully tucks the already-crinkled paper into his own pocket. “Would you be willing to train for that day?”

The smile he gets in response is determined, and all the answer he needs.

Toshinori pulls out the post it, looking over the thee names and short descriptions. According to Midoriya, he’ll be meeting one of them with Nighteye. It’s a surprise that the boy knows the hero at all.

Then again, the entire list is unexpected, so Toshinori decides to wait. Perhaps tomorrow’s meeting will be a good start.

He doubts, deep in the back of his mind, that any of the others will be the one. He can’t help but think that he was right the first time. Midoriya is a true hero in the making.

He’ll still check, if nothing else because Midoriya seemed so sure when passing over the note.

A mental image of Midoriya passes through his mind, unphased at All Might’s transformation. “It’s my quirk,” he’d said. Foresight.

All Might thinks of a man who was once his partner and tucks the note away. Foresight quirks tend to ruin those who don’t listen.

Izuku pushes a rusty refrigerator and almost falls on his face. All Might is nearby, ready to step in if need be, but for the most part it’s just him, the beach, and mountain upon mountain of trash.

The beach was probably beautiful once. Emphasis on once. Now it’s cluttered beyond belief. Izuku’s only seen it on worlds once he’s started. Nothing could have prepared him for the daunting landscape of refuse covering the entire beach. It might even be larger here.

Either way, Izuku cracks his back and sets himself to the task. He has to be stronger.

There’s also a small detail All Might mentioned of his limbs popping off.

The refrigerator tips over and this time Izuku really does fall. The sand tastes disgusting; he’s not looking forward to picking the cigarette butts out of the beach once this is over.
The days fall into a steady rhythm: wake up, school, beach, home, travel and sleep.

Kacchan notices him switching into training clothes before he leaves but doesn’t say much. Izuku braces for the coming storm.

Inko, however, is happy to help. She adjusts their meals according to his plan and they eagerly discuss his progress nightly. She also contributes a couple weights to the cause, and Izuku may have cried. Maybe.

Everyone at the Lonely Owl is ecstatic, although they do recommend he cuts down on time world traveling to catch up on sleep. Hisen passes over some gloves for use on the beach, Cloud tells him its *under-sand-able* to get exhausted, and Taka offers tips on lifting heavy objects safely.

Overall the plan is a manageable hell. Izuku’s even able to squeeze in some extra work outs on other worlds - the time difference lets him pour a full two hours workout into 30 minutes - before Cloud catches him (admittedly half-dead) and sends him home to sleep.

All Might even left a few hours of “relax time” on the weekends, which Izuku supposes is for hanging out with friends. There’s just one small problem in that he doesn’t… have… friends. Kacchan could count, but Izuku’s hesitant to seek him out.

That’s how he ends up in front of Aeon Shopping Mall on Sunday. It’s fun browsing, and he can eat a quick lunch in the food court later. He should pick up a first-aid kit for the beach too.

He didn’t account for the absolutely packed food court. Izuku wanders the crowd, gripping his tray of salad and udon with white knuckles. His brain helpfully contributes the statistics for villain attacks in crowded areas. There are almost no seats. He scans the sea of people for an empty chair, and there - two are empty right across from a familiar face.

Familiar in that he’s never seen it before, but those horns and that horse-mutation quirk are recognizable from enough worlds. She’s always from abroad, usually America, and always in class 1-B.

If only he could remember her name.

Well, either way he needs a place to sit, and the only two spots are across from her.

She’s listening to music as she digs into a absolutely huge bowl of miso ramen. Izuku has to tap the table before she notices.

“Oh!” She tugs out her headphones. “Hello.”

Izuku points to the seat and shrugs, trying to communicate through expression that he just needs to eat, and then he’ll leave.

She gives him a quick “Go ahead,” and Izuku slides in.

They go back to their own food, and Izuku pulls out his own headphones. He’s very aware that she probably doesn’t want to talk to him, which is just fine. Relatable, honestly.

She taps the table this time, catching his attention. Guess he was wrong.

“What music?”
Oh. He flashes her a quick grin before passing over one of his earbuds rather than responding. He can’t say something stupid if he doesn’t talk.

She listens for a solid fifteen seconds before yanking the earbuds out and staring at him.

“I- what is this name in Japanese? In English, we call it Rickrolling.”

Izuku sputters before replying in English. “I know, sorry, I didn’t think you’d be offended-“

She cuts him off with a laugh before offering her own music.

Africa by Toto.

Her grin is a touch wilder than he’s expecting. “Same hat!”

Izuku grins back shakily, replying in the same language. “Same hat.”

“Young English is really good! It’s almost British dialect but not quite. I can barely hear an accent.”

“O-oh, well, I’ve studied a bit? Your Japanese is good, too!”

She follows his switch back to Japanese. “Thank you! I’m trying to study because of high school exams. In Japan, they are super, super, SUPER difficult.”

“Yeah, I’m training for the same thing.”

“I don’t know that word.” She wrinkles her nose, repeating it. “Training.”

“Oh! It’s like practice for sports. I practice fighting, I want to be stronger, so I train. Am training. Have trained.”

Just as he’s speaking, Izuku becomes aware that someone has been standing behind the seat. For a while. The horned girl looks up and waves nervously. Izuku is too busy staring at the new but familiar gravity-defying purple hair. It’s a lighter shade here, and there’s a faint scar that traces over the bridge of his nose.

“Hello,” his seatmate starts. “It’s nice to meet you.”

The stranger blinks slowly before responding. “This seat is open.” It’s not a question. If anything, he sounds completely dead inside.

The girl nods her head to the seat. “Go ahead. Oh! My name is Pony. What’s yours?”

Izuku and the new arrival exchange mirrored deer-in-the-headlights looks.

“Midoriya.”

“Shinsou.” He goes back to his hamburger at top speed. If it’s to get away from an unwanted conversation, then Izuku doesn’t blame him.

All Might mentioned that he’d met Mirio Togata last week and would try to get in contact with Shinsou next. Izuku can’t exactly hint that he both knows, and has cried in front of, the actual literal living Symbol of Peace, so it looks like he’ll have to keep quiet.

That’s fine. Izuku has been holding his tongue for most of his life. One more secret won’t make a difference.
On a different note, Izuku’s never seen Shinsou and Pony interact on… any… world. They seem like the kind of people who’d get along like oil and water. Then again.. maybe not.

Pony picks at her noodles. “Midoriya-san, what are you…uh.. tr-hmmm.?”

“Training?”

“Yes! What are you training about? What sport?”

Izuku rubs his neck. “Ah- entrance exams. I want to go to UA, but honesty its all up in the air if I can make it.”

“No way. Me too! And you, Shinsou?”

“So, what if I am.”

Pony cheers. “Same hat!”

“Same hat!”

Shinsou swallows before grudgingly joining in. “Same hat.”

Pony slams the table with both hands, rattling their bowls. “You know the meme! Almost nobody here knows memes. Do you speak English?”

“My father is an English teacher. I know a little. Many memes.”

Izuku startles a bit at this information but wrestles the surprise back. It might just be a coincidence.

They keep talking, alternating from one language to the next. Pony’s Japanese is a bit better that Shinsous’ English, so they tend to stay in that language.

Shinsou doesn’t speak much, but it’s something.

They talk for a bit before Pony ends up dragging them around the mall. Izuku’s not sure how it happens, but he’s finally around people his age who aren’t actively trying to humiliate or hurt him, so that’s a plus. Even when Pony teases him about his “very very fluffy” hair, it’s good natured.

They’re playing claw games when Shinsou shifts. “I should go pick up what I came for.”

Pony’s eyes widen comically. “Oh, yeah! Me too. I want to buy the small study papers and gloves! How about you, Midoriya?”

“Oh, I’m working with a lot of metal, so I should probably have a first aid kit, in case anything happens and my supervisor isn’t there. It’s probably something I should have gotten earlier, but all of the stress and busy schedule really weighed me down, I guess. Maybe he gave me these afternoons to prep? I should start doing exercises then as well just in case. That would-“

“I didn’t understand- a bit slower?”

Izuku stumbles out an apology and explanation before they agree to head to the second floor. Pony trots ahead, leaving Izuku and Shinsou to catch up.

It’s here that Izuku sees a perfect opportunity.

“Hey, Shinsou, I know this is coming out of left field, but I’d like to be friends. Pony never gave each of us a chance to decide, but I’m asking now. Please be my friend.”
Shinsou blinks at him slowly and doesn’t respond. His expression is wary- like he expects someone to stab him to the back in the next moment. Izuku can relate.

“I don’t have many because of my quirk, and I don’t know what your situation is Here, or your strategy for UA, but let’s meet there, okay? Let’s make hero course together.”

His expression must communicate how much it means to him, because Shinsou nods steadily.

“I’ll see you there.” He sounds noncommittal, disinterested, but Izuku will take it. Maybe they’ll be good friends someday.

They all end up exploring the mall for another half hour. At the end Pony insists on getting everyone’s LINE codes, so Izuku walks home messaging the weird little group chat.

“SAME HAT”

Uniunicorn: today was really great!! We should all meet again before the exams!!

Uniunicorn: I have time next weekend if you would like to meet!!!

That sounds great!!

I have this time off from training then too.

Uniunicorn: Awesome!!

Uniunicorn: what about @Tired Cat ???

Uniunicorn: are you okay???

Uniunicorn: imma spam youuu <3

Uniunicorn: @Tired Cat am concerned

Uniunicorn: yo

Tired Cat: yea ill join. Srry, I was biking.

That’s ok!!

Izuku makes his way home with a smile on his face. He has friends. Maybe. Possibly.

Pony was probably just bored and wanted to hang out, and Shinsou may have just been humoring them, but it’s still more than he’s ever had.

Mom’s great, but she’s a parent. Hisen is more of a grandfather to him to count. Taka and Cloud are closer to his age, but they’re still not quite family but too close for friends.

But this? This is friendship.
BONUS:
That night, All Might is jumping from building to building, on his way to Tsukauchi’s office when grey fabric shoots out of an alleyway, wrapping around his leg. It doesn’t adjust his course much—just enough to be noticeable. Still, it’s a challenge, and All Might has time. Better to arrest whatever criminal awaits than let them run around the city wreaking havoc.

All it takes is for him to grab the cloth and tug, before he’s landing forcefully at its source.

An empty alleyway. The cloth leads upwards, to the roof, where a somewhat familiar figure stares down. All Might had just been reading about him, of all coincidences. He doubts he would have known the hero’s name otherwise.

“Eraserhead?” All Might was given a list of teachers by Nezdu that morning. On second glance, the fabric unwinding from his leg looks suspiciously like said teacher’s scarf of all things.

“I’m surprised you know me”’ a voice mutters. The shape drops down from the roof, finally moving into the lamp light of a broken laundromat, though still a fair distance away. “I have questions.”

All Might smiles as confidently as he can. “Ah, about UA? I expected Nezdu to announce it much later.”

Eraserhead doesn’t react, only continuing to stare down All Might with dead eyes. “Announce what.”

“Ah.. so it’s not…” All Might fumbles for a moment, caught off guard. “Nezdu mentioned he had plans… it appears he hasn’t told you yet.”

All Might feels sweat slide down the back of his neck. Well. This is awkward.

Eraserhead, however, doesn’t seem to care. He sighs, mutters something that sounds suspiciously like “damn that rat,” and waves the conversation away.

“I don’t care,” he announces, as if they can change topics that easily. “You had the police department look up a Shinsou Hitoshi today.”

All Might does a double take. “I - what?”

“Shinsou Hitoshi. Why did you look him up.” Eraserhead’s doesn’t say it like a question.

“I- That’s confidential.”

“No, it’s not. There was no paperwork filed, no investigation linked. Nothing that would warrant the number one hero looking up the file of a random citizen.” Eraserhead’s scarf pulls All Might forwards, into the alleyway. The underground hero stares him down mercilessly. “Why did you call a favor for a meaningless file.”

All Might blinks, slowly. “The name was recommended to me as a promising future hero, though I can’t say where from.”
Eraserhead frowns further, exasperated. “So you looked him up in the police database?”

“I remember seeing a case settled. His name was mentioned.”

Eraserhead moves back. “He’s been adopted. Keep your nose out of it, and let the kid have a normal life.”

“I didn’t mean to—“

“You know what will happen if the media catches wind of your interest. Back off and let the kid make his own choices. Better yet, wait until he’s accepted into high school before offering an internship.”

Eraserhead leans forward, and even though All Might is much taller, there’s something in the underground hero that makes him feel like the lesser hero. “I do not need to remind you that as pro heroes, we are bound by more laws than any other employee in Japan. ‘Looking up a minor without just cause’ breaks several.”

Apparently deciding that was enough, Eraserhead abruptly leaves, scaling the alleyway with his scarves. It’s abrupt to say the least. All Might lets his shoulders drop.

This was not the first meeting he’d wanted to have with his future colleague.

Chapter End Notes

See, All Might? this is why Nighteye was in charge of investigation and recruitment. I headcannon All Might to be the kinda person to try and do what's right but kinda trip over their own feet. Like uhhhhhhhhhhhhhh......... He's like a puppy who wants to good but ends up falling down the stairs bc he ran too fast.

Also Pony was surprisingly easy to write while I was living in Japan but now its really hard?? huh. I did her dialogue by translating it in and out of both languages... Hopefully it shows the way words start trying to microwave themselves past the second year of speaking.
Void Cafe

Chapter Summary

no spoilers yall.

Inko deserves better than I could ever give her. (This chapter is entirely to get Mamadoriya on the same page. No way am I letting her stay 100% in the dark *cough* cannon *cough*)

Chapter Notes

today I got mad at traffic and did the Had To Do It To Em pose at a car and it s c r e a c h e d to a stop so that was the inspiration for some of the wording in this chapter. Easily the funniest thing I've seen today; my friend and i were screaming when we crossed the street.

Theres a lotta oc worldbuilding here, so just hang in there!!! the bonus scene takes up like a third of the chapter to make up for that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Any good mother would want her son safe. Midoriya Inko has known this because it’s what has governed her life since she first laid eyes on her baby. She’s watched him disappear somewhere she can’t follow every night since he was four years old.

And now, she watches him train for a future he can’t tell her. Whatever it is, it’s bad enough to haunt him every day.

Izuku is off at school, and Inko sits alone at home. Her job as a translator has Wednesdays off, so she has time. Today, she needs it.

She packs her purse with an extra set of tissues and sets off on a mission.

Inko has walked past this café many times since she found it a month ago. Some would call it over baring or overprotective, but it’s always been a foremost question in her mind. The Lonely Owl here looks quite a bit like what Izuku used to draw with crayons in his first years. It matches his descriptions from Elementary and Junior high. She’s never entered, never asked, but today she needs to know.

A little bell jingles when she enters, and the first thing Inko notes is how the warmth and sunlight filtering in on dust moats seems to slide right into her soul. A man with salt-and-pepper hair is puttering behind a bar- Izuku never mentioned a bar- and when he turns her way, Inko recognizes
him from his mustache, of all things.

Izuku drew it in his quirk notebook. The grandfather that her son never had; he’s taller than she expected.

“Excuse me,” Midoria Inko starts, “I believe it’s high time we met face to face.”

Hisen nods in return. “Indeed it is.”

He beckons her over to a table, and they keep up a light chatter as he sets the kettle on. Inko has been pen pals with Hisen for years, so maybe that’s why talking with him feels nostalgic somehow. Maybe it’s just the café’s ambiance. If All Might is a symbol, Hisen and the café are an anchor.

“Izuku always talked about this place so much. I feel like I know it already.”

“He has an eye for these things, doesn’t he?” Hisen slides a cup of tea towards her and pulls up a stool on the other side. It’s a floral blend, achingly familiar but the memory is just out of reach.

“Forgive my bluntness, Mrs. Midoriya, but why today?”

“If he hasn’t told you, then I shouldn’t say.” It’s not her secret to share, and Midoriya Inko would never break her son’s trust.

“About his story, or All Might?” Hisen shakes his head. “I’m referring to your decision. Why meet today? I only came to this world a couple weeks ago.”

She fidgets with the cup before replying, gathering her thoughts. “You never told me, so I assumed it was none of my business.”

“Technically, I’m the one who doesn’t belong. This world is yours and Izuku’s and if I could leave, I would.” Hisen smiles ruefully. “My quirk says this place and I are tied together; both need to exist on every world. It doesn’t care about the details.”

“… It’s a bit much to ask, though.”

“Not really. It’s his and your world, not ours. If you’d like us gone, I’ll move to Hokkaido. Out of the way.”

“I’d rather you didn’t,” Inko finds herself saying. “It’s easier to know he’s safe when I can come check on him. That first time he went missing….”

“Stop by any time, Mrs. Midoriya. We’ve done our best to keep an eye out for him since then.” He looks at the bar and chuckles.

“So many little changes. We’ve switched to a café over the last decade, and upstairs has a greenhouse now. Your son has a way of brightening up this old place. He’s gotten Taka to come out of her shell, and Cloud’s like a whole different person since then.”

“I wish I could have been there.”

“You were, but I know what you mean. I should have an old photo album around here… Aha!”

The book is old and worn, and Inko turns the pages carefully. There are two people who appear in it as well as her son, both the age of college students. It’s clear from the laughing faces and silly poses that gravitate closer over time that these three are close. Sure, the older boy is probably a troublemaker and the girl seems a bit rough around the edges, but it’s a close group, nonetheless.
(There’s an occasional terrible selfie with all four people in it, and Inko singles one out. Izuku had taken the picture, his fluffy hair taking up one half of the frame, with the others all gathered around. Inko asks for a copy.)

Eventually one, then the other stranger holds shiny new hero licenses for the camera.

There’s a blank spot next to it, waiting for the youngest.

Inko looks at the pictures, and hears the stories, and slowly a little puzzle in her heart knits itself together.

Hisen trails off from pointing out a picture of three teenagers covered in flour. “Oh, I nearly forgot. Would you like to meet the others?”

Inko nods, and Hisen glances across the café. “He’s on his way.”

Across the room, mist collects, then solidifies by the staircase. Stars morph into the innermost folds of the mass before a young man steps out. Inko recognizes him from the jacket he wears.

“Gooooood morning!” He looks up at Hisen through grey bangs, grinning cheekily. “You called, old man?”

The cheek vanishes when he sees Inko and practically falls over backwards.

“Oh! You must be uh- a customer! Nice to meet you!” He brushes off his coat a bit before bowing low- way too low for a fellow customer.

“And you must be Clouddancer. Izuku’s told me all about you.” She might as well have given him a winning lottery ticket by the way he bounces up.

“Thank you! All good things I hope,” Clouddancer says merrily before adding, “Call me Cloud, everyone here does, after all.”

Hisen chuckles. “Rapscallion.”

Clouddancer- no, Cloud – skips over, settling in on a comfy chair nearby. “I’m sorry about teaching Izuku to pick locks.”

“You did what?”

Hisen heads to the back. “You got yourself into this mess,” he says to Cloud’s panicked expression.

Inko fixes the young man with her best ‘mother’s disapproval’ look as Cloud tries and fails to explain himself.

He has a point, though. Izuku should have as many skills as possible as a hero.

Eventually Inko lets up and steers the topic to English, only to find that Cloud has a slight southern accent. They chat for a bit that way, before the café owner slides another tea over to Cloud and takes a seat.

“Clouddancer, Mrs. Midoriya,” he says in quiet British English, “I believe it’s time to address the elephant in the room.”

Inko clasps her hands in her lap and steels herself. “Yes. Yes, it is. I came here today expecting to find one of you if I was lucky, and that luck has held.”
Cloud and Hisen wait, letting her sort through her thoughts and lay them out in Japanese. “I would
never go behind my son’s back, because if he isn’t telling me something, there must be a reason. But
a mother worries, and if nothing else, I know it will only get more dangerous from here on out.”

Inko looks up at two people who sheltered, cared for, and watched her son grow when she could
not.

“I want a promise. That if he ever gets in over his head, and needs you, that you’ll be there. And I
want you to tell me as well.”

Hisen dips his head briefly. “I promise.”

Cloud grins crookedly. “It’s what we would do any way.”

Inko sighs before continuing. “I mean it, no funny business. He tends to work himself into the
ground, and I’d like to see him taking care of himself for once.”

Judging from their expressions, Cloud and Hisen are all too aware of this.

“Thank you.” Inko says the words before she knows it. “For looking after my son where I can’t
follow. And… Thank you for saving him.”

“Thank you for allowing me to watch after him,” Hisen replies. “I wasn’t too sure at first.”

Inko’s expression darkens and for a moment she’s back watching her four-year-old son in the living
room, shaking hand clutching a letter and whispering, I haven’t saved them yet, but then she’s back.

She offers a small smile and takes a sip, trying to calm her nerves. It’s a grounding flavor- familiar in
the way an old forgotten book or distant memory are. If only she could just grab it before it slips
away.

She takes another sip, and it hits her like a sack of bricks.

“That’s my mother’s tea,” she whispers.

Hisen’s eyes widen. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to-”

“No, no, its fine, but… how?”

“It’s a constant. One of the little details that stays the same no matter what- that blend always was the
favorite of Midoriya Inko. If it’s a bother….”

“No, but will you tell me what’s in it? I could never find it after she passed.”

“Mrs. Midoriya,” Hisen informs her seriously, “it’s hand-blended, and I have a full tin you can
take. I’ll add the recipe on the outside.”

Inko stares at the cup. I’ll need this over the next year, won’t I.

**BONUS:**

Toshinori hums as he walks back to his apartment, briefcase in hand. He’s used up all his time today-
the bank robbers made sure of that, not to mention an interview.

Ahead of him, a large group of children, just out of daycare, march home together. It’s a fine day, and just for a moment, Toshinori feels like the average businessman, making his way home from work. To think, this is where he could’ve been, had things gone differently.

The children are halfway across the street when everything goes wrong. A squealing of tires, a sickening crunch, and a child’s scream ring out within seconds.

He’s too slow.

Ahead, the car has stopped, bent in from impact as a middle school student braces against it’s hood. The children are fine, thank heavens, but Toshinori rushes over to make sure.

His civilian form will have to do.

The teenager seems fine as well. Toshinori notices the odd texture of his arms, and while the driver checks the student over, Toshinori herds the children off the street, fielding their questions and making sure none of them were hurt.

The student glances under the car, exchanging contact information with the driver. In the end, they both agree not to sue, and that’s that.

After the driver leaves on foot (“I have a meeting, I’m so sorry”), Toshinori congratulates the student. “That was quite the save, young man.”

“Yeah, my feet just moved without me thinking. Kinda funny, huh?” The student crouches down to the children’s eyelevel. “Do you have someone you can call to pick you up? It’s dangerous to walk home after something like this.”

One of the kids pouts, eyes wide. “Why?”

“Well, sometimes after we get really scared and surprised, we need to rest. If you get hurt, you gotta rest, right?”

“Uh huh?” a little girl frowns. “But we didn’t get hurt.”

“Sometimes, when somebody’s hurt, we can’t see it. So, we should be careful after scary things happen!”

“Will you rest?” one of the kids asks, clutching his backpack.

The student beams. “Yep!”

The children end up calling a couple parents, and Toshinori and the older student both wait until the rides come and go. The student is about to leave, offering Toshinori thanks, though its unfounded.

He wasn’t the hero here.

“Toshinori Yagi. If he does sue, call this number. You were in the right and I’d be happy to support any legal action,” Toshinori says, holding out his business card.

“Kirishima Eijirou- wait.” The student reads, then re-reads the business card, before looking up. “You’re the secretary of…. All Might?”

Toshinori nods, but his mind is elsewhere. Where has he heard that name…. oh. OH. SHIT. Young
Chapter End Notes

Middle-schooler: does something vaguely heroic
All Might: h e l l o w would you be interested in, h e r o i n g and possibly a quirk depending on your situation in society?????????????????????????

Also I finally drew Taka but can't add images like a f o o l so here she is.

if yall know how to put images in the notes I will owe you like two peanut butter packets cause that's all I can give
Two weeks later, Izuku is jogging to the beach. It’s not exactly required exercise, but he needs all the strength he can get. He needs this. So, he jogs.

It keeps him out of his head, just a bit.

As the beach approaches, Izuku needs to squint a little. It could be a trick of the sun and silhouettes of trash, or that could be someone standing next to Toshinori-san. They’re shorter, but that doesn’t mean much when the Symbol of Peace practically towers over everyone else.

It is a person. A student his age, in running shorts and a tank top with black hair tied back in a ponytail. Izuku doesn’t recognize them.

All Might waves him over. “Young Midoriya! I’d like you to meet someone. Though, you may already know him.”

The stranger bows immediately, hiding their face. “Thank you for recommending me for this!” They look up, grinning with sharp teeth. “All Might said you refused his quirk- that’s super manly!”

Izuku feels like the sun is shining in his heart. *Oh, fuck yes, it’s him.*

“Thanks, Kirishima-san!”

He’s going to be a great symbol of peace.

Kirishima’s eyes widen. “You know my name - Wait! We’re scar buddies!” He points to a small scar over one eye excitedly. Izuku reaches up, brushing his hand under his right eye.

Izuku’s grin drops minutely. He wasn’t expecting to be reminded of this so early in the morning. “Yeah, I guess so.”

All Might clears his throat, something like guilt written across his face. “Midoriya, I’m sorry about-“

“It’s fine.” Izuku smiles up at the number one hero. “This world needs the best future it can get. I’m
glad, actually.”

All Might nods, still looking hesitant.

“I’m truly, honesty happy, All Might. Cross my heart.” Izuku leaves out that with One for All, Kirishima has a better chance at surviving. A better chance at saving them.

With a sigh, All Might launches into a description of the beach-cleaning. It’s… suspicious, the sudden change. Before Izuku knows it, he’s tugging at a pile of metal twisted beyond recognition. The shifting sand is bad footing, but Izuku’s had time to adjust. Kirishima stumbles over to help.

“Y’know, when All Might offered to train me, I almost said no.”

Izuku pauses, glancing over. Kirishima keeps working, maneuvering metal so it’s less likely to stab them both if it falls. He looks different, with black hair. Less energized, almost nervous. His hands are already covered in grime and metal shavings. Despite it all, there’s a glint in his eye, a determination Izuku recognizes.

“Why?”

“Why not?” Kirishima meets Izuku’s eyes, still frowning. “I’m not set to be the flashiest hero, you know. The Symbol of Peace…” He kicks at a piece of rubbish. “There are stronger, gentler people. Better.” Kirishima shakes his head and goes back to tugging at the pile. “Of course I almost said no.”

Izuku hesitates, before taking off one of his gloves and tossing it over. Kirishima lets out a squawk as it hits him.

“Dude, what was that for?”

“You’ll get hurt without equipment.” Izuku joins him at the pile. “Did he tell you about why I recommended you?”

Kirishima looks over curiously. “Only that when he offered, you suggested me and a couple others. Speaking of, how did you know about me? We’ve literally never met. That’s kinda….”

“Stalkery?”

“I mean I wasn’t gonna say it like that but uh. Yeah.” Come to think of it, Kirishima has been subtly watching Izuku like one might watch an angry goose or driverless car: with a sensible amount of caution and a touch of fear.

“Sorry, I should have thought about that.”

Kirishima squints, clearly not trusting him, and Izuku doesn’t blame him. He’d be scared if someone suddenly knew his name without explanation. Izuku tries to think of a good way to phrase this, tugging at the metal again. Kirishima joins him cautiously.

This time it shifts, almost tumbling, and Izuku rushes to help catch it. A bed-spring almost catches his hand without the glove, but together they push it back.

Oh. So that’s why All Might was in a hurry. Making them work together right off the bat in case of any hard feelings. “Toshinori-san,” Izuku yells. “you’re gonna make a great teacher!”

Across the beach, their mentor hides his smile behind a bloody handkerchief.

Izuku steadies the pile, returning to the topic at hand. “My quirk shows me alternate futures. I just
told All Might the people he tends to pick?”

Beside him, Kirishima lets out a hollow laugh and starts tugging the pile towards the dumpster. “Nice joke. Seriously. How’d you know ’bout me?”

Izuku grunts, trying to match his steps and avoid tripping. “This is why it’s so hard to tell people,” he mutters, before adding “It’s the truth. You can think I’m crazy if you want, it’s fine.” The dumpster is close by, a small blessing.

“Then what’s your quirk? Mine’s called hardening.”

Izuku hesitates before answering. “World travel.”

“Like you can teleport around the world? Because that’s awesome.”

Izuku keeps his eyes on the pile. “No, like…. Dimensions. Timelines. Whatever you want to call it. That kind of world.”

“You’re serious?” He can’t see Kirishima over the pile, can’t gauge his reaction.

Izuku hopes his voice doesn’t shake too much. “Yep.”

“That… oh no. “… is so manly!” Kirishima practically explodes. It’s completely unexpected—especially when Izuku was expecting a comment on how it’s not suited for hero work. “So that’s how you knew!”

Wow, Izuku is suddenly a little concerned for Kirishima’s scores on the exam if it took him this long. “Wait, does that mean you can take passengers? Not to be pushy but like, that is SO cool.”

Izuku blinks, all thoughts grinding to a halt. Usually when he tells people about his quirk, they call him a liar, or creepy, or look at him with pity. This is…. Weird. Not bad, but different.

“Dude? Sorry, I probably overstepped, sorry- “

“No-“ Izuku’s voice comes out a squeak, and he swallows before continuing. “No, it’s just- you don’t think I’m lying?”

“Should I?” Kirishima frowns, and stops, halting their progress. “Because you don’t seem like the lying type.”

_If he even knew-

“It totally sounded like a joke at first, not gonna lie, but now I know you’re serious-”

“Just checking,” Izuku says lightly, covering up his internal sigh of relief. “I haven’t taken anybody with me in years. The kickback is pretty bad sometimes.”

“Oh, that sucks. You okay? I didn’t mean to be invasive.”

“You’re fine.”

With that, Kirishima moves on, and Izuku is left with his head buzzing.

He’s forgotten something. Something about the only time he took someone with him. Somehow, he’d buried it deep down and forgotten, but he could feel it. He’ll worry about that later.
They manage to lift the pile over the dumpster edge, though Izuku catches his hand on one of the edges. Still, it’s one piece less on the beach.

Kirishima speaks up, looking straight ahead. “If I hold my hardening for too long, I can’t breathe.”

Izuku looks over in surprise.

“I used to hate hardening my chest and head, because part of me was worried it wouldn’t turn off.” He grins, and though his teeth are sharp, the smile is honest. “People told me to get over it, but I had to work on it at my own pace. Still can’t for too long. So, I think it’s really manly that you know your limits.”

Izuku smiles back, feeling something in his chest loosen just a bit.

“Thanks.” Izuku bumps shoulders with Kirishima, feeling just a bit brave. “I meant it, earlier. I recommended you because in every world, Kirishima Eijiro becomes a super manly hero. With or without All Might’s help.”

Kirishima smiles, but Izuku knows he isn’t taking it to heart. “Thanks, bro.”

Izuku catches his arm. This is important. “I’m dead serious.” Kirishima’s smile falls, but he doesn’t interrupt when Izuku keeps going. “The hero I’ve met has made top 50 every time. He’s saved countless lives and without him, most if not all of his class wouldn’t have made it to being heroes.”

Kirishima’s eyes widen.

“I don’t know you, Kirishima. But I know a hero who is one of the best out there. He took the world by storm.”

Kirishima looks like he wants to smile and frown at the same time and oh no those are tears- “Bro, we literally just met, and you’ve got us both crying.”

Izuku reaches up to touch his cheek, surprised when he finds it wet. “Sorry.”

Kirishima laughs quietly, then loudly, until Izuku ends up giggling as well. Across the sand, All Might smiles in relief at the two new friends as they approach the mountains of trash.

A glove hits Izuku in the face. “Hey!”

Kirishima grins back, hardening his hands to tackle a bunch of twisted metal. “You’ll get hurt without equipment.”

“Young Midoriya, are you really all right with this?”

Kirishima had to leave early, so it’s just Izuku and All Might at the beach now.

“Of course.” Izuku puts down the microwave oven he’s carrying and hops up to sit on the ledge next to All Might.
The hero sighs. "It seems unfair."

“I’ve always wanted to be a hero, All Might. Ultimately, heroes save people. And if more people will be saved because of Kirishima… then that’s what I think should happen.”

All Might frowns. He looks more haggard in his shrunken form, like the world rests on his shoulders. Izuku wonders for a moment if it really does. “I offered it to you first, my boy. Its only right if you resent me for taking that away.”

Izuku huffs. “I asked you to find him. I gave you a list.” Izuku throws his hands up in the air. “Will it be harder for me to be a hero? Sure! But I have a quirk and people who support me. Even without that, I’d find a way. Always have, always will. I’ll be fine. I’m glad you picked Kirishima.”

All Might doesn’t look convinced, so Izuku tries again. “Look, if you think Kirishima is the better candidate, then that’s that. It doesn’t matter if I have the quirk or not; I just want to save people.”

All Might’s eyes are wide, something between pride and satisfaction in his expression. “My boy,” he says, “you will make a fantastic hero.”

Izuku smiles back. “Can I keep training here, though?”

“Can you-” All Might throws back is head and laughs, the sound booming out over hills of trash. “I’d be honored, my boy!”

Izuku laughs too, happy and content. The future will be fine.

The week rolls around, and it’s time for Izuku to run his weekly errands. There are chores he needs to do, worlds he needs to check up on.

The null is filled with the shining, empty, blood of starlight, but Izuku hurtles through the nebulas without a second thought.

He knows he shouldn’t be world traveling this much. Kirishima has only known him a week, but apparently, he looks “like a zombie who could fall over any moment.” All Might’s exercise plan counts on him getting a full night’s sleep, but Izuku can’t cut this out of his routine.

Granted, he and Kirishima only ever met to work out, but still. Izuku pushes through his worries as he enters a new world feet-first.

He stops by a flower shop, hiding his face and distinct hair when he purchases two flowers (he doesn’t have money for more) from a clerk whose nametag reads ‘Yagi.’ He’s thinner here, more worn and exhausted.

Izuku wishes he could do something about that, but his mouth goes numb if he even thinks about talking. He leaves with a sinking pit in his stomach and walks with his head down.

A red poppy and a purple hyacinth. Remembrance and a request for forgiveness.

The graveyard is bathed in orange light, skyscrapers cutting into clouds like jagged dominos, ready to fall.
They did fall, somewhere else. He won’t let it happen at home. Izuku places his flowers on the grave, brushing dirt off the well-kept stone. *I’m coming, Iida.*

He doesn’t hear the wheelchair, so the voice startles him.

“I was right, somebody else *had* been leaving flowers. Where you a friend?”

Izuku flinches and turns to see Ingenium watching him patiently. Of all the people he could talk to here, this person would be his last choice.

“Not yet,” Izuku replies, trying and failing to hide his panic. He shouldn’t be seen here. Before he can make any other mistakes, Izuku drops into the Null.

“Wait-” the hero is gone. Izuku drifts directionless in the null for a bit, curled up in a ball. He didn’t want to talk to Ingenium, didn’t want to have the conversation they would have had. He’ll be okay.

It still doesn’t excuse running from his problems. Today’s just a day for regret, huh?

It’s only as he’s hurtling through the evolving stars that he realizes just how weird his response to the question was.

Izuku takes advantage of the null’s silence to scream into the void for a bit. Well. It’s time to awkwardly regret everything for the next few minutes.

Izuku throws himself into training with renewed vigor. Kirishima takes it in stride, probably assuming he’s usually like this. Neither he nor All Might are familiar enough with Izuku’s workout habits to pick up on the sheer desperation with which he trains, but that’s fine.

The last thing he wants is them worrying.

Kirishima and Izuku end up meeting at the beach regularly. With two of them there, All Might feels more comfortable leaving occasionally to take care of hero work. It means that Kirishima can blast music from a speaker they found, without worrying about missing instructions.

It’s one such day when Kirishima is trying to dislodge a refrigerator. He’s repeatedly slammed into it, quirk active on his arm and shoulder, but the stubborn thing won’t budge. Izuku pulls at the far side.

“Maybe it you lift it a bit, I can move it?”

“I don’t know, sounds a bit dangerous.” Kirishima’s voice is strained on the other side. “You might get crushed.”

“It’s on a piece of metal, so it should just slide forwards.”

“… If you’re sure.”

“3….2…1-“ It lifts, and Izuku pulls forward, hoping to inch it towards him. Instead, the edge of the metal it rests on catches in the sand, toppling towards him in almost slow motion.

Izuku more sees than feels the impact, and squeezes his eyes shut, ready to become a pancake as the
ground rushes towards him.

Kirishima’s shout is cut off, and Izuku opens his eyes to find himself in the null.

*Oh. Well, better than being a pancake.* Izuku lets himself fall towards the nearest world, entering feet first.

*The neon lights of a city rise to meet him, but he’s gone seconds later, reentering a portal before anyone notices from the streets below.*

Izuku flies through the stars as quickly as he can. Kirishima must be worried. He’s pleasantly surprised when he can pick out Dagoba beach on his home world, and swings around, entering feet first again. One leg lands in a paint bucket, and he promptly loses track of which way is up or down.

Eijirou is panicking. He just crushed Midoriya with an *entire fridge*, and the damn thing isn’t budging. Midoriya hasn’t said anything, hasn’t even made a sound since it happened, and Kirishima isn’t sure how long it’s been.

Too long, is the answer. He’s probably suffocating right now, because Eijirou didn’t think twice about trusting Midoriya’s judgement. He should have questioned it. He’s known the guy for about a month, and it’s already perfectly clear that his new friend has a self-sacrificing streak a mile wide.

He tries to lift the fridge again, hardening as much of his body as he dares. It budges, and Eijirou desperately shoves a tire under the edge, keeping it propped up.

He hits the ground, preparing for the worst and…. Nothing’s there.

Eijirou straightens up, glancing around. *What-*

In the corner of his eye, the sky above one of the trash piles flickers. A perfect circle, filled with countless pinpricks of light opens, and Midoriya slides out, hitting the trash heap with a squawk. Kirishima’s running as Midoriya loses his footing and tumbles down, making a painful halfway-descent before finally crashing onto a pile of cardboard and paper bags.

Eijirou hardens his hands and feet, scrambling up to his friend with less caution than he would normally use. He arrives to find Midoriya sprawled over the plastic bags and cardboard, dazed and scratched but otherwise apparently fine.

Midoriya pushes his green bangs out of his face and grins, wincing. “I lived, bitch.”

“Dude, are you okay?”

Midoriya struggles up, hissing when he moves too fast. “Not a pancake, so probably, yeah.”

“Dude. No.” He steadies his friend as they make their way down. “Anything broken? Numb?”

“Just some bruises. Mom’s probably gonna kill me for this, though.” He rolled his wrist experimentally. “I left before going splat, so no harm done, you know?”

“Was… that your quirk?”
“Yeah, sorry I took so long. I would be faster, just-” Midoriya shakes his hand, showing off the thick bracelets he always wore. “Suppressors. Sorry, that probably worried you.”

“No, bro you’re fine, just- suppressors? Like ‘quirk suppressors’ suppressors?”

They sit down on a couple of car seats. “Aren’t those restricted by the government and like... addictive?”

Midoriya fiddles with one, screwing up his face. It makes a soft click, before loosening just enough to slide off. The skin underneath is paler than the rest of his arm. Come to think of it, Eijirou has never seen Midoriya without them.

“They’re not restricted on about a third of worlds I’ve gone to. Addictive on less than five percent. I kinda need them, anyway.”

“Still...”

Midoriya levels Eijirou a look and explains. “My quirk has two aspects. I can travel but... sometimes it’s like the other versions of me want to be seen. They take my hearing and sight, and I just see what’s happening there.” Izuku plays with the bracelet, and Eijirou’s eyes keep getting drawn to the discolored ring on his wrist. “They keep me safe, Kirishima. I’m a liability without it.”

Eijirou hums, letting that sink in. Midoriya’s been using his quirk with suppressors all this time. Even ignoring whether that was legal (it’s probably definitely not), that leaves a ton of questions.

“I don’t think UA is gonna be cool with that.”

“You’re probably right....” Midoriya hesitates, before clipping the bracelet back on. Eijirou has to stop himself from protesting. “I’ll start going without at the exam. Probably need to get used to my own quirk, anyway.”

“You sure, Bro? I hear suddenly stopping a habit is rough, might wanna start now.”

“They aren’t addictive, you know.” Midoriya clacks the suppressors together as they make their way to the road. “Suppressors work in tons of different ways- ours cuts off the quirk factor in the brain completely, but it also impacts the frontal lobe and eye fields after a year of use. These dampen the quirk factor only, but extended use can build up a resistance. There’s no withdrawal.”

“... You sure?”

“Positive.”

Chapter End Notes

So!!! sorry again for the late chapter!! Hope yall like this one :P

Edit: fixed a spelling mistake and reworded a thing for clarity.
They’ve done it. It took right up until the morning of the exams, but they’ve cleaned the entire beach. There’s not a single speck of trash to be seen along the coast. Together, they did it. For the first time, Izuku feels confident in who he is; in where he is in life.

Izuku and Kirishima stand on top of the dumpster pile and scream their victory to the rising sun.

All Might watches from below and laughs.

There isn’t much time, so All Might gives them the quickest of pep talks- one Izuku can’t really hear past the blood roaring in his ears- before everything grinds to a halt, and announces that Kirishima is ready to accept One for All.

“NOW EAT THIS!”

“… huh?”

Kirishima’s face has Izuku struggling to hide his laughter.

Apparently, hair tastes absolutely disgusting.
It’s time. Izuku sits on his bed, ready for the train ride to UA for testing. He came back for a shower and his stuff, but there’s one thing he’s been putting off.

Quirk suppressors.

He’s only ever taken them off for a couple minutes at a time since he was five. Izuku un hooks the left one, deactivating it and then unlocking the safety. The buzz in the back of his head gets louder.

Frowning, Izuku puts in his earbuds, blasting music at maximum volume to ground him. The right cuff comes off and the buzzing increases, and his grip on Here weakens, wavers, and then stabilizes.

Izuku pushes through the static in his mind, stuffing the cuffs into his backpack. A hug goodbye to mom, and he’s out the door.

He’s at the station and halfway through a playlist by the time he notices something’s different. He’s not sure what, but it’s there.

Izuku rubs at his wrists, familiar pressure and weight of the suppressors gone. He’s used to the little nudges in the back of his mind. Little updates or murmurs of what other Izukus (assuming they even use that name) are doing. It’s al little louder now, but he can deal with that.

The pain is new.

It starts out on the train to UA’s exam with an ache in his hand. It’s barely noticeable, but once he does notice he knows. This isn’t from Here.

He slides out his phone and scrolls through his group chats to distract his mind. The world travel squad has wished him luck, and he lets his eyes glance over the messages before opening a hero news app. Pretending to scroll through makes him look busy, and with earbuds in, nobody will think twice if he doesn’t respond to them.

It’s easy to find the door he keeps shut in his head, open it, and trace the pain back to another world.

Its probably nothing big-

Gasping, hissing through clenched teeth, Midoriya raises his arm and braces it, he needs Todoroki to listen, to hear him but he can’t, not like this, never like this. There’s so much hurt in his eyes across the sports festival ring so Midoriya grits his teeth and funnels One For All into already-broken fingers –

This isn’t right, he shouldn’t be watching this close, shouldn’t be fighting Todoroki like this, they’re supposed to be friends-

-Todoroki fires off another blast of ice and Midoriya almost looses conciosness with the blast when he releases the power but he’s not done yet, not yet -

Izuku cuts off the connection, lurching back in his seat so his head hits the window.

That’s also new. He was watching through that Izuku’s eyes. He had felt the desperation and fought in tandem him, so why hadn’t it happened here? He obviously hadn’t yelled or the other people on
the bus would notice, and the pain was gone now, so why would his quirk change-oh. Oh. There was only one reason his quirk would be worse and that’s-

A woman standing nearby is watching him mutter.

“Whoops I must’ve uh, zoned out there, sorry.” He slips out when he talks, deflecting future questions. “Would you like my seat?”

“It’s no problem, dear. Are you sure you’re alright?”

“It’s fine, really.”

Izuku’s stop is thankfully next, and he ducks into the station’s crowd. He can worry about quirk problems after the exam.

The feeling hits him again as he steps past the gates. This time it wraps around his ribs, a swift, brief fuzzy numbness, then nothing. It’s not strong, by any means- more like a phantom brush of static-but its unexpected. Unexpected enough to make him trip over his feet.

*Welp, this is it.* Izuku confidently watches the ground get closer. *Guess I’ll just die then.*

Except he finds himself floating in the air as next to him *oh god that’s her is this really how we meet I thought it was the practical test and also wow that is not how I expected being weightless to feel-*

“Sorry for not asking before using my quirk on you,” Uraraka chirps, unaware of his internal screaming. “I figured its probably pretty bad luck to trip on the first day!”

Izuku is still trying to form words.

“Well, I should get going! Good luck! Lets do our best!” She darts into the crowd.

Izuku beams. *My friends exist! On my home world! I talked to Uraraka!* (He didn’t actually say anything, but that’s a minor detail.)

He aces the written exam. Hell. Yeah.

Izuku manages to score a decent seat for the practical explanation. The quirk suppressors are back on in case he misses any instructions, but he’s been doing pretty well so far.

He spotted Kaccan on the way in, but he ignored Izuku the whole time, heading to a different part of the auditorium. Izuku shifts in his seat, trying to focus on the here and now.

“Bro!”

Izuku feels a tap on his shoulder and looks up to see Kirishima of all people. He’s got a friend-somebody with pink hair and skin, and a mischievous grin.

“What’s up? These seats are free, go ahead.”
“Thanks! This is Mina-“

“Hi!” She grabs the first seat, and Kirishima is forced to take the aisle.

“-from my school! Super glad I saw you, bro because it. is. Packed in here-“

“HEY THERE LISTENERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Izuku ducks instinctively at the feedback. “There’s no reason for them to give him a microphone. Why did UA do that. Is it to deafen us before the exam?”

Kirishima grins. “Guess that’s plus ultra, huh.”

“CAN I GET A YEEEEEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH?“ Mic pauses.

Mina pumps her fist and starts to reply before Kirishima and Izuku frantically motion for her to stop. They meet each other’s eyes and the silent pact between two people with crushing anxiety is confirmed.

“WELL THAT’S COOL, MY EXAMINEE LISTENERS!!” Present Mic proceeds to scream the rest of their instructions.

There’s no reason for the volume beyond that it's Present Mic.

An examinee raises his hand partway through. “Sir! The examination lists four robots, not three! Please explain this discrepancy at once! The best hero school in the country should have nothing less than stellar instructions! If it is a mistake, then I’d like it corrected. And You!”

He whirls around to point at Izuku, who squeaks. “You’ve been muttering this whole time! If you’re not going to take this seriously, then please go home!”

Izuku shrinks into his seat and barely catches Present Mic’s explanation- something about a zero point robot. Kirishima shoots Iida a glare, while Mina just snickers.

“Friendship ended with Mina, Kirishima’s my only friend now.” He doesn’t register what he says until afterwards. Are they friends? Does he have friends? And they might be in the same class??

Huh.

Yeah, he’s still not used to that idea.

Mina and Kirishima are in different testing blocks, so he’s alone for the bus ride over. Shinsou is in his block, apparently. He has no idea how often that happens, but its nice to have someone he knows around.

Once they’re off the bus, Izuku unclips the quirk suppressors. A wave of static pushes at the back of his mind but he fights it back with careful breaths and a mental push.

Izuku stores the cuffs in a little pouch by his belt in case he needs them later. (It’s not a fanny pack, no matter what Cloud calls it.) He runs through his warmup streaches quickly and looks around, checking if anyone else he knows is in this block.

Uraraka’s here too. He hasn’t said thanks yet, and now’s as good a time as ever.

An iron grip lands on his shoulder, twisting Izuku around till he’s facing… Iida Tenya. Well. Here’s hoping this world’s Iida will be easy to talk to. He’s either the best of friends or a controlling
president depending on the world.

Iida looks him dead in the eyes. “If you’re planning to distract that girl, I suggest you rethink that. She’s obviously focusing.”

This isn’t the best start, but maybe its not too late-

“Like I said earlier, if you’re here to be a detriment to our fellow examinees, you should go home now.” Iida pushes up his glasses. “To prevent others from succeeding is a malicious goal. Please reconsider.”

Izuku can only stare. He had hoped to find a friend in Iida. There’s a nervous breakdown already ready to start, but Izuku pushes it back with the help of some adrenaline. He’ll deal with that later.

He starts running forward before the starting announcement is made. There are three things he knows about this particular exam: Robots, Bakugo is rarely in his group, Uraraka usually is, and that nobody is ready for the beginning.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNNND START!!!!” Present Mic’s screech heralds the large doors opening. Examinees hesitate, but Izuku is already moving. He sees a familiar face and catches Shinsou’s arm on the way to pull him through the gates.

No way the grape-rat is getting into UA. That spot is Shinsou’s.

“C’MON, EXAMINEES! REAL LIFE DOESN’T GIVE YOU A COUNT DOWN-
GOGOGOGOGO GOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!”

A one-pointer shows up ahead of them, and Shinsou sprints towards it. Izuku doesn’t wait to see what happens- they’ll end up getting in each other’s way if they’re together.

He weaves through an alley and a side street, and finds another one pointer. It beeps as it locks on to him.

Izuku dodges the first attack, rolling. Thank you, Taka, for insisting he spend a full two weeks learning how to fall properly.

It swings again and he dodges. There must be something he can do to take it out. His quirk can only let him run away- using it risks reappearing outside of the testing grounds or worse- once the test is finished.

For now, he’s stuck in the Here and Now.

The robot warms up to shoot- probably a laser- when a sparkling beam of light decimates it. An examinee whisks by, speaking in a thick French accent and practically sweating glitter.

“Nice teamwork~ but I do not believe we will see each other again. Adieu~”

Izuku can’t wait around to figure out if that really was Aoyama, but he snags a piece of metal from the robot. It’s small, but pointy. He’ll get a lecture later but right now? Anything to help him take them down will help.

There’s an examinee stuck under some debris he pauses to help, and another suffering from quirk exhaustion, so by the time he gets to use the metal, there’s no telling how much time has passed.

Except that it does absolutely nothing against the three pointer. He’s running for his life, hoping to
get it to bash into a wall or something, when a thin grey scarf shoots out of nowhere and wraps around it.

*Aizawa’s capture weapon?*

Spinning around, Izuku sees Shinsou slingshot himself at the robot, taking out its head in the process. It looks incredibly badass, and Izuku makes a mental note to ask later.

They meet eyes for a second before all hell breaks loose.

They run towards it.

Chapter End Notes

Also sorry for the late update. its like,,,,, 15 minutes after midnight?? wow. Next week I might be a day late because ive got a deadline for an Antarctica thing, but it should be fine. Probably. Climate change is real, yall
The Void Says Fuck You In Particular

Chapter Summary

wow. twice my usual length because so much oc shit and world building. oh no. a tragedy. oh dear that's terrible.

Chapter Notes

Spoilers for Eri's ark after the examn happens, and also a lil bit for the training camp at the very end. Nothing significant happens, just some hints.

Grasshopper is my take on Izuku with a jumping quirk. Its original. It's also part two of the Null and Void series, so there's a link under this fic's tags.

The other world briefly mentioned is from See(Too Much) by LadyGreenFrisbee. What happens when someone in the void watches you back? I promise that's not the last time we're going there.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The examinees are screaming. One kid rockets around the corner, shoving past them with wide, fearful eyes.

Izuku and Shinsou make their way into the plaza and look up at the behemoth of a zero-pointer trampling the street. It’s taller than all the buildings.

Uraraka is trapped in its path.

She can’t die here. She can’t die at all, let alone at the starting line. They haven’t talked, haven’t become friends, haven’t collapsed together after a day of training.

Shinsou looks ready to retreat, but when Izuku dashes forwards, he hears footsteps pounding behind him.

The robot is making its way forward, brushing into buildings and sending rubble cascading down. Izuku doesn’t even want to think about how much that must cost. As he runs, it seems to tower over the fake city. One step could squash an examinee like a bug.

Shit.

He calls out to Uraraka as he skids past. “Please use your quirk on me!” She doesn’t hesitate. A high five with her free arm, and gravity disappears.

Izuku kicks off the ground, launching himself towards the zero pointer. He doesn’t have a plan as he scrambles up its side. He doesn’t even know what’s happening below him.

He thinks of Uraraka and Shinsou below him, how he can’t let them die, not when he’s just started to
think he might save everyone; *he hasn’t saved them yet.*

He thinks of that when he grabs the robot’s metal plating and lets go of Here. He can’t really fall with Uraraka’s quirk, but the Null is always at the back of his mind, and without his suppressors it’s making itself known.

He’s been fighting it back all day. Letting go is a release.

The Null expands, taking over.

He twists, letting the galaxies embrace him and the zero pointer. With one hand he holds onto Here, and with the other he drifts in the Null. He’s never done this before. He’s never made a portal this big, transported something this large. The portal stretches, tearing at reality as well as his mind, until the robot is swallowed.

He would scream if he had the energy.

The robot drifts away into the Null and the portal begins to shrink. Izuku fights the abyssal void as it tries to drag him away. The test isn’t over yet. A cityscape and inky darkness mesh together between his hands as Izuku struggles to piece his sight together.

He can already tell the backlash from this is going to be massive.

Izuku claws through star-soaked reality, dragging himself bit by bit away from the Null. Static blooms in his skull as Izuku reenters the city, falling back into the testing ground for real. The beginning of quirk shock is clutching at his mind, and his mouth and chest are already numb. It’s all right, though.

Izuku doesn’t know much.

But as he falls, he knows that at least he saved two of them.

*And for now, Izuku thinks, that’s enough.*

Uraraka watches the zero pointer get closer. Each step causes the pieces of cement she’s trapped under to shift, slipping closer and closer. There’s rebar in there. She could easily lose a leg if it settles wrong.

With a family in the construction business, Uraraka knows how dangerous rubble can be.

The examinee from earlier rushes up, saying something about her quirk - it’s too loud to really hear - but Uraraka slaps his hand anyway, and he’s backing away immediately.

Guess he just wanted more points.

A head of purple hair appears beside her. The examinee sets his shoulder to the cement and pushes. It’s not much - he’s thin as a stick - but it lifts enough for Uraraka to twist around. She slaps the largest piece, one step closer to her limit.

The student stumbles before shoving it away and freeing her. Behind him, a green blur shoots into
the air.

They watch as a perfect oval of starlight expands, and the zero pointer, fueled by inertia, moves forward into it. A second later, there’s nothing where the gigantic robot once stood, just a shrinking oval that thins into nothing.

Finally it’s gone, leaving only a figure plummeting towards earth.

He’ll crash.

Uraraka scrambles up onto the piece of cement she floated, and waves to purple-hair. “Push this!”

Grey scarves rise around him. “I’ll do you one better.”

Scarves wrap around the cement and sling it forward. It’s fast enough for her to reach out and slap the falling boy across the face with all five fingers. She feels her quirk activate, and the examinee below uses his scarf to bring them down to earth.

When she loses her lunch, the purple boy pats her back awkwardly, but they’re both more worried about the examinee lying on the ground. He looks how she feels but worse.

“TEN SECONDS LEFT LISTENERS! GET YOUR LAST POINTS NOW!!”

The green haired examinee grits his teeth and rolls over onto his stomach. He’s got dull black liquid pouring out of his mouth like sludge, and he’s trembling too hard to move, let alone stand.

“Just one point.”

She startles at his voice. It’s rough, like something else is trying to speak instead. The examinee moves again. He’s trying to push himself forward, Uraraka realizes.

“Just one.”

The examinee next to her moves over to his friend. “It’s over, Midoriya.”

“Just need one, Shinsou. Just one…”

Shinsou sits down next to Midoriya. He’s obviously unused to giving comfort, but he tries, and that’s more than Uraraka can do right now.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAANNNNNND STOP! EXAM IS OVER, PLEASE RETURN TO THE CHANGING ROOMS AND REPORT TO YOUR ASSIGNED MEETING AREA.”

Midoriya presses his face to the ground and cries. Shinsou pats his back awkwardly.

They sit like that until an old woman- one an examinee calls Recovery Girl- kisses Midoriya on the shoulder. The trembling stops and sludge slows, but when he stands the look in his eyes is dead.

Recovery Girl heals Uraraka next, but there are other things on her mind.

Just one point.

Uraraka has plenty of points, enough to share.

She also knows a hero when she sees one.
Kirishima has many regrets. He does not, however, regret sprinting forwards when an examinee with a broken leg barely dodges the monolithic zero pointer in time. Kirishima hardens his legs for support and tries to remember the last time he did something that mattered. There’s nothing. His brain helpfully supplies that he almost crushed a friend to death on the beach and he bites it back.

He needs to be a hero. He needs to make a difference. He needs to do something that matters.

He pours it all into his arm, pulls back, and screams.

There’s a huge boom. The zero pointer is crumpled, a crater in its upper half. For a moment Kirishima thinks All Might set off a punch behind him. Until the pain hits.

Haragakure is trying to help another student. He’s broken his leg from a 3 pointer and hasn’t got a single point, but they’ll both be dead if the zero pointer keeps moving.

Way ahead of her, an examinee runs straight at the zero pointer and settles into a ready stance, as if he can take it in a boxing match.

She notices something is wrong with his legs as he rears back, and screams desperately.

She thinks it’s a punch.

They more feel the shockwave than see it. The raining pieces of metal tell her all she needs to know.

She hopes he makes it in.

Izuku failed.

Failed.

0 villain points.

Nothing can top that- He doesn’t see the exam often, but from what he does know, he usually gets at least 40. At least. But instead he’s sitting here, homework on the table and weight in hand. It won’t change anything now, but maybe he can turn to vigilantism? He knows where to be and when, so it’s not like he’s stopped from interfering entirely.

Unless he can’t interfere.

He’s seen the worlds where he doesn’t exist. Where Midoriya Izuku was never born or pursued another career path.
Where Iida dies and Class 1A scatters.

Where the villains win.

Where Eri is still trapped.

She’s probably trapped right now.

And that thought scares him more than the rest, because she’s Here. He doesn’t know where, he doesn’t know why, but he knows that there’s a little girl being tortured right now and he can’t do anything. He can’t even talk about it. Izuku is staring at the weights when his mom knocks on his door before opening it.

“Sweetie? We’re heading out to dinner in 15 minutes.”

“Going out?”

“You need to relax, and I need a break. Sound good?.”

Twenty minutes later and they’re in the car. It’s getting to a part of town that Izuku hasn’t seen much - less because of the winding roads and more because he’s never had a reason to go.

His control on Here starts to slip, and Izuku is too emotionally exhausted to stop it. Slowly the streetlights and road signs fade out, and some other world sweeps over his senses.

Buildings make good vantage points for disasters.

Grasshopper’s known this since two years ago after middle school. It had been a building fire that time, and the heroes had almost left civilians behind. He shakes his head, batting away memories of smoke-stained walls and Bakugo cussing him out. Some origin story, huh?

Grasshopper doesn’t want this to happen. The heroes have been amassing resources for this bust for years, but they’ve got it wrong. They’re prepared to deal with angry gang members trafficking drugs for profit.

They won’t be expecting scared victims of human trafficking smuggling their own friends and found family into Japan’s borders.

And now the forces are about to clash right in front of him. On one side of the docks, he can see the heroes. From the bright costumes of All Might, Miriko, Hawks, and Midnight. Behind them, more underground heroes stood in the darkness. The estimated size of the cargo had accounted for the drug trade in most of northern Japan, so it’s garnered plenty of interest.

In short, as many of the big names as they could get.

On the other side, a small crowd gathers. They look rough, with torn shirts and few jackets between the lot. The strongest of them are out front. Mutation quirks have always been discriminated against in Japan. Less so in other countries, so they likely don’t know how bad this setup is for peacekeeping.

They stand together, refusing to flinch against the wind, and they stare at the heroes with something between hope and fear. Grasshopper is well versed in the light he sees in their eyes.

Desperation.
Grasshopper bites his lip, watching it all. The wind stings at his eyes and cuts through the cheap fabric of his homemade costume, but he forces himself to stay still.

He can’t afford to attract attention yet.

A single member of the foreigners steps forward. He raises his hands in a universal peace symbol, but it just makes the heroes tenser.

They’ve all been lied to before.

“Please,” The man says in broken Japanese. “We want to talk.”

Miriko’s voice rings out across the space. “So you say, villain. What about?”

Grasshopper notices movement amongst the underground heroes. This isn’t a peace talk. This is an ambush.

The man continues to speak, pleading for mercy, but the heroes are too cautious. Grasshopper reaches up to tap his headset. “Heya stale meme, where are you?”

Dabi isn’t long to respond. “Fuck you bug boy, I’m right by the ship. They’re still unloading.”

“Some undergrounds are heading your way. They don’t know I’m here.”

“Well, Shit. Go take the spotlight, grass guy. I’ll clean up here.”

“Thanks, T-poser vigilante.”

“Ant: the shortest fleabag.”

“S’mores-guy.”

The man is still trying to explain in halting words that they are the victims, but Miriko isn’t taking it. They’ve all heard villains’ monologue before. After a while, it becomes hard to differ between honest speech and manipulation.

“Bunny hop vigilante.”

“ Toasted wheat cereal.”

“You know what? I’ll take it.”

Too many heroes are lied to these days. Miriko moves first, clearing the stretch of open ground easily with her quirk. Grasshopper winces as the heroes move in tandem, a well-trained force.

An army. The victims won’t last long like this.

“Glad one of us has some self-worth. Going in.”

“Let me know if Hawks gives you trouble. Fucker owes me one.”

He needs to be smart about this. Grasshopper hesitates a moment longer before he jumps. The wind whistles in his ears and the city lights blur before he makes impact, hitting the ground right between Miriko and the smuggler leader.

Miriko doesn’t hesitate, kicking out with a vengeance. She might not even know who he is.
Grashopper blocks, just barely, but his arm explodes in pain. He kicks out with an attack of his own and she dodges, leaping up.

Grashopper runs, scooping up the leader- he’s too light to be healthy, unless it’s a quirk- and speeds through the crowd. He keeps his leaps long and low to the ground. Miriko won’t hesitate if they’re airborne.

He’d be mincemeat.

Something hits him in the back, and Grasshopper crashes to the ground.

Everything hurts.

The smuggler’s leader is yelling something, and Miriko responds, but he can’t concentrate over the blooming warmth in his back.

He can’t feel his legs.

He can’t feel his LEGS.

He’d heard of people losing their quirk in this part of town. A terrible thought hits, and Grasshopper pushes it back.

No.

He can’t panic.

The fighting is dying down. Grasshopper parses through the noises, trying to push himself up. The ground is warmer, wetter than it should be under his hands, color is leeching out of his vision.

“-he’s a vigilante for crying out loud! He’s never committed a crime beyond public quirk usage!”

“Not like I could tell!” Miriko’s scathing voice cuts off Midnight. “He shouldn’t even be playing hero.”

“He’s a kid!”

“Well excuse me for assuming a costumed, unregistered opponent was a villain. Better cuff him now with the rest.”

“No…” Grasshopper needs to say something. Needs to make them stop.

“There’s still villains left. Let’s go.”

They can’t. They can’t arrest the victims. “No!”

Grasshopper flinches away when a weight descends on his shoulder. He looks up to find Best Jeanist watching him cautiously.

“You’ve lost a lot of blood. Don’t move.”

“No, wait-“ Grasshopper makes the mistake of trying to prop himself upward, and pain shoots through his spine. He still can’t feel his legs.

Midnight speaks up. “Kid, sit this out. Let us do our jobs.”
“NO!” Grasshopper screams it out, hoping the heroes will hear. “Did you even check what their cargo was? Did you even look into their past records?”

Best Jeanist tries to calm him, but the words don’t reach. Grasshopper has been told to sit down and shut up his whole life. Not today.

“We’re all together!” Grasshopper fights through the pain, not caring if his hood has slipped back, displaying recognizable fluffy hair for the world to see. “The legislation, the broken hero system—“

He screams the truth out hoping someone out there will understand that words matter.

“They affect all of us, but we try to help people. And sometimes it hurts every one of us!”

Across the front lines, All Might glances to one of his colleagues.

“We just want to live and go home! So please- can we please-“ His voice breaks, revealing the teenager under the mask.

“Can we please just talk this out?”

Miriko moves, and Grasshopper tracks her with the corner of his eye. He catches Best Jeanist swearing before something hits him like a truck, and he’s out.

Grasshopper collapses unconscious.

Hood off. Green hair for all to see.

Paralyzed waist down.

Crying.

Izuku jolts awake, and watches streetlights pass, settling back into his seat. He takes a moment to remember where he is before letting his eyes slip shut again. He really wants his quirk suppressors, but they’re at home.

Exhaustion from constantly fighting his quirk and disappointment from events he can’t quite remember takes over before long, and the world blinks back out of existence.

Izuku stares out the hospital window, notebook on the bedside table. His quirk presses at the back of his eyes, but he squashes it down, turning instead to neatly write what it had shown him just minutes before.

Omnisence isn’t a hero’s’ quirk, but he can still save people. Izuku finishes one list of names and starts on locations.

He’s dozing by the time they pull up in front of a warmly lit café. Izuku makes it out of the car before his breath catches in his throat. There, above the awning, is a familiar faded wood sign. Golden light spills out onto the front steps.

Mom steps up behind him.
“Mom...” He can feel the tears already. “How?”

“Just a hunch,” she murmurs, before the door opens.

Hisen is standing there, in Izuku’s world, real and welcoming as always.

Inside, Taka is sitting on the back staircase, and Cloud is asleep by the fireplace. Its so achingly familiar but so real that Izuku doesn’t feel the tears when they fall. He’s never been able to share this part of himself with his mother before; never had everyone together in one place, but now they’re here. Together.

“I came by around a week ago, and we talked.” His mother says it gently, but something in her voice makes Izuku nervous. “Specifically, we talked about the future. Izuku, nothing has happened yet. Part of me doesn’t want to believe it will, but Mr. Hisen suggested we be proactive.”

Hisen clears his throat. “We thought you would feel better about the future if you and your mother had a safehouse. Since villains physically can’t enter the café, we considered this as an option. There are some changes to the doorways so your friends and Mrs. Midoriya can visit. We also added to the upstairs.”

Izuku’s crying in full force now. Mom brings him into a hug. It’s going to be okay. If nothing else, the villains won’t get his mother. She’ll be safe.

It doesn’t solve everything, but it’s a step.

When she releases him, Taka reaches over to ruffle his hair carefully. “Welcome back, green bean.”

Dinner is fantastic. Hisen has always been a skilled baker, so when he opens the oven to a complete salmon bake, covered in goat cheese and herbs, the smell the smell alone has Inko’s eyes growing twice in size. There’s homemade rosemary bread, salad, and apple pie to finish it off. The high-protein meal even fit with Izuku’s meal-plan perfectly.

Cloud barely wakes up to stumble to the table, and collapses first thing. He’s out like a light almost immediately, leaning on Taka’s shoulder. Inko keeps shooting him worried glances.

“Is he ok?”

“He’s fine. This happens sometimes when, uh…” Taka frowns. “Well. We stretched our limits a bit to change the place up.”

Now that Izuku thinks about it, the restrictive spells on Taka’s arms are slightly singed, and black sand is dusted through her hair. Cloud is completely knocked out on her shoulder.

Izuku frowns at them across the table. “How did you do it? Upstairs is massive.”

Taka puts down her chopsticks. “Hisen added a few new rooms and I slapped on some protections. Also, Cloud cleared up the Null so I could make a lil’ new dimension. Your room is a free-floating space.”

Oh, that’s the coolest. “Wait, that would mean that it can be moved. Can I travel from there to Here? Or maybe it would act as a kind of bubble from the null? What about windows, do they-“

“Why not explore,” Hisen interrupts the two. “I’ll clean up here and Cloud can get some rest.”

Inko rises from her seat. “I’ll help. You two go have fun.”
Hisen has re-vamped the entire upstairs. Not only does Izuku and his mom both have guest rooms at the far end of the hall, but there’s also a small training room through the upstairs hall by the stairs.

Taka swings the door open for him to check it out. There’s a spot for taking off shoes, but the rest is one huge white mat. The back wall has a rack of swords, staffs and knives; wooden, padded, and real.

“You know enough parkour and free running, but I’d be honored to teach you martial arts.”

“You don’t mind?”

Taka raises an eyebrow. “I offered. UA doesn’t teach a specific style—which is good, don’t get me wrong- but you need technique to back up that raw strength. C’mon, your room’s this way.”

Taka pauses midway through the hall and tosses him a key. “The lock’s got magic fromSpritesworn. Nobody’s able to unlock it but you unless they think you’re in mortal danger. You can get the conditions changed at the nymph’s fountain.”

“Sweet” The lock fits easily, and Izuku slips it into his pocket carefully before stepping in.

Izuku’s room is massive- twice as large as his room at home. It’s western cabin-style, with high wooden beams made from entire tree trunks. The doorframe has a familiar mechanism next to it. There’s a bed, desk and empty closet waiting for him, while the window looks out past a tree onto Dogobah beach. The sand has become a little cluttered, but he can fix that.

“Are the windows real?”

“Yeah, but it’s funky. Ever watched Howel’s Moving Castle?”

Izuku freezes, whirling around to where Taka leans against the door. “No way.”

She grins. “Yes way. Whenever you open the door it’ll match up with a doorway. The switch is on the side, and it’s same as the movie for memory’s sake. Black is the null, yellow is here, blue doesn’t exist, and red is in the forest.”

There’s so much to process. Izuku opens the window, letting the sea air come in. The sun’s gone down, and city lights glimmer off distant waves. He can almost see stars in the sky.

“How?”

“Cloud trades on too many worlds and Hisen works miracles. I just made a space for it.”

“So I can world travel in?”

“Yep. We can add another portal if you want.” Taka leans into the room, snagging a roll of white tape from a shelf. “Blue’s still open.”

She taps the disk inside the door frame before tossing him the tape. “Use that around a doorway of your choice and you’ve got a portal. Let us know once it’s done and we’ll tie the gates together-oof.” She rocks back a bit when Izuku thuds into her with a hug.

“Heya, green bean.” She cards her claws through his hair. “What’s up?”

“Just... thanks.”
She ruffles his hair a bit harder in reply.

“You’re gonna save them, kiddo. We’re gonna train you up and those villains will have another thing coming. Doesn’t matter if you’re a hero or vigilante or heck, even a citizen. One exam has no right to change that.”

“I’m not strong enough. If one exam is this hard, how will I fight actual villains?”

“I know.” Taka steps back, hand still on his head. “It’s okay to be weak. Humans grow. They change. Even if it’s harder, if the stakes are higher, you’ll be stronger each time.”

Izuku shakes his head. There’s so much he hasn’t done, so much he needs to do. “I should have saved them. Eri is probably in danger right now.”

“But you’re on your way.” Taka sounds old and exhausted for a twenty-year-old as she straightens up. “Eri will be saved.”

“She isn’t always.” And that— that’s what really scares him.

Taka hesitantly reaches out, messing up his hair again. “Heroes save people, green bean. No matter the odds. Sometimes that means helping each other, and you’re not alone.”

Izuku looks down, and Taka sighs. “I know I’m not the best at this, but hear me out. You’ve got a lot of people supporting you. Don’t fight a war on your own when you have a whole army.”

She’s doing her best. The words don’t clear it all up, but some of the fog lifts. Not much, but enough.

When they make their way downstairs, Cloud is up and blearily making his way through a plate of salmon. Inko and Hisen are washing dishes and chatting like old friends. It’s weird to see them all together, but not in a bad way. Izuku could get used to this.

The mental peace he feels doesn’t last forever. Later that night, the mind-numbing shock sets in all over again.

He’s always assumed that he’d get at least one villain point. The zero he knows will be on his acceptance refusal haunts his dreams. It’s there the next day, and the day after, until he’s lost track of time.

The mental list of people he hasn’t saved bounces around in his head. He starts catching glimpses of a burning forest in other worlds, though mainly he’s revisiting a round building that’s in his notes.

More people he hasn’t saved, more people relying on him when he couldn’t even make it to the starting line. He doesn’t know why it’s important, or what happens, but too many worlds are burning with blue flames. It will happen.

Whispers in the back of his mind grow louder, louder, until there’s no room left to think.

Until one night at some hellish hour, his phone lights up with a text. From a friend(?)

Chapter End Notes
hahaha im dying, so sorry for another cliffhanger I promise they're not all like this.

Edit: fixed a spelling thing. Second edit: reworded some stuff for clarity and capitalized the movie title

Taka: how do I comfort this small lost child?
Shinsou: uhhhhh no idea
Taka: *messes up his hair*
Shinsou: *pats back*
Shinsou has A Cat, Apparently

Chapter Summary

Shinsou has a cat named Noisy/ShutUp and I love him

Chapter Notes

I think we're spoiler free. kendo? kendou? help I see her name spelled both ways. She shows up, but no plot is mentioned.

Late update=long update. enjoy, y'all. Also I would fight All Might for Urusai bc hes partially based on my own cat.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shinsou can’t sleep. It’s not unusual, but it is a problem. He’s done all the breathing exercises he knows and read through a good portion of the book by his bed for nights like this. It's done absolutely nothing.

The family cat, Urusai, is also sleeping on his back, so there’s a limit to how much he can move. He was still able to wriggle a bit until his arms were free of the covers, so now he can swipe his phone from the desk with a bit of effort.

It doesn’t help that Urusai is a full 20 pounds of tabby.

The doctors always say the screen brightness is harmful or whatever, but it’s not advice he’ll follow tonight. Did UA know how bad that test was for his mental health, or was it just a coincidentally stress-inducing nightmare that decided his very future? Oh wait, that’s Japan’s education system in general since before quirks. Oops.

He opens his chat app which has all of five names. His loud dad, tired dad, a friend from the system, and… Pony and Midoriya.

He knows they’ll be asleep, but it’s worth a try. Midoriya had the kind of look implying that he could use a few hours himself. Of everyone (besides his tired dad, who never sleeps but is out doing a night shift right now) Midoriya might be his best chance.

He taps Midoriyas icon- that smile literally lights up the screen- and opens the chat.

MESAGING “fall into the void”

Hey I know its late o’clock but what did you think about the exam?
Shinsou winces a moment after he sends it, remembering Midorya broken on the ground, dragging himself forward for a single point. The exam is probably not what he wants to think about. With a moment’s hesitation, Shinsou sends a picture of Urusai. Maybe that’ll make up for it.

A reply comes in just as he finishes checking Neko Atsume.

[picture attached]

fall into the void: !!!!!
fall into the void: Whats its name??????
fall into the void: I didn’t know you had a cat???????

Urusai

fall into the void: oh im sorry if im keeping you up!!! Goodnight!!!!

Shinsou is really winning tonight. Two social blunders back to back? He’s really overachieving.

No wait
That’s his name
His name is Urusai

fall into the void: you named your cat…. Shut up?
fall into the void: is he really loud?

Nah he came like that

fall into the void: that’s amazing
fall into the void: also abt the exam???
fall into the void: I guess im just reall nervous
fall into the void: like,,, I got a practical examscore of 0
fall into the void: grand total of nothing

you’ve got the written

fall into the void: might as well not count, its just there to provide like a quarter of the total grade
don’t sell yourself short

He probably shouldn’t have said that. Last week he had woken up from a nap to hear his loud dad
screaming about how “some green haired kid blew the zero pointer away! He just jumped up and then BAM.” The windows had rattled a bit. “Do you think he’s gonna be in your class, Ai?!?!?!”

It wasn’t direct confirmation, because even the teachers didn’t know yet, but Shinsou had picked up that Midoriya at least had a chance.

His phone dings in his hand.

fall into the void: yea but like….. 0 points
fall into the void: how many did you get? If you don’t want to tell that’s fine!!!

I think around 15?
Not enough.
fall into the void: You’ll get in. Gen Ed or 1-A.
fall into the void: trust me on this one

And that… that’s strange, how Midoriya can say it with such conviction. Shinsou tucks away that thought in his mind to look at later.

Abruptly, Midoriya sends something that has Shinsou sitting up as much as he can. Urusai grumbles, curling up on his back.

fall into the void: Besides, Eraserhead is training you, right?
fall into the void: ….. red eyes when he uses his erasure quirk??? Hair floats??? Underground hero????
fall into the void: Same moves as the ones you used??? Id know that capture scarf anywhere, and it was On Your Shoulders
Don’t know him
fall into the void: are you kidding me
fall into the void: you tell me you don’t know him??? Ive got like 10 pages that say otherwise bc that fighting style is the Same
Pages????
Are you a stalker??
fall into the void: No!!! I just like doing hero analysis
fall into the void: like fights and stuff.
The conversation with Shinsou at Hell Hour is, strangely, enough to get Izuku moving again. He’s been continuing the plan from All Might out of habit, but it’s time to change things up a bit. There’s a huge chunk of time open now that the beach is clear, and Izuku knows exactly what he’s going to do with it.

He needs form as well as muscle.

That weekend, he switches the sign on in his room, opening the door to the Lonely Owl.

When Izuku pads downstairs and looks for signs of life he notices Cloud on the sofa and lets out a wordless, monotone yell.

It doesn’t startle the ex-hero, and Cloud joins in, harmonizing without looking up. It’s about a full minute of yelling before Izuku runs out of air and Cloud bursts out laughing.

“I win!”

“I started first. What’s that?”

Cloud beckons him over. “You’ll never guess what I figured out.”

“The wifi?”

“Yes! Well- no, I still can’t get it to work on every world, but I did one better.”
Izuku frowns as he leans over the couch. “What’d you do?”

“This.” Cloud holds up his phone like it’s the most expensive diamond on earth. “I got them linked.”

“You- wait. I thought phones from different worlds couldn’t connect?”

Cloud grins crookedly and unlocks it. A second later, another phone starts ringing in the kitchen. A click, and Hisen’s voice filters through.

“It still works.”

Cloud whoops, and Izuku hurriedly pulls out his phone. When Cloud’s number comes up, it’s twenty digits long, but it works.

Within seconds a group chat is up and Cloud has assigned nicknames all around.

**FUCK YES FINALLY A GROUP CHAT**

Backpack4Life: HELLL YEAHHHHHHHHHH

TheGoodNeighbor: Cloud, language.

*TheGoodNeighbor has changed the group name to Cookies are in the Kitchen*

*TheGoodNeighbor changed their name to KinttingMan*

KnittingMan: I hope that wasn’t rude of me?

Going to the kitchen and also wheres Taka

OurSourceOfIncome: I’ll be down

OurSourceOfIncome: hey cloud homeslice breadslice friendo love you like a brother but what is my username

Cloud plops down on the couch and yells upstairs rather than texting a response. “Look me in the eye and tell me I’m wrong!”

Izuku slips under the bar to the kitchen as Taka’s sarcastic thunders back. “Who has time for that!? I work so you all can buy food on whatever weird-ass world you’re at, and this is how you repay me?”

“Language, there are children present.” Hisen doesn’t sound hopeful anything will change. There are trays of cookies everywhere. The café owner nods to Izuku as footsteps pound down the stairs. Armed with an oatmeal cookie, Izuku returns to see Cloud blow out his cheeks and cross his eyes at Taka.

“You’re incorrigible.”

“I’m a gift, is what I am.”

Izuku bypasses their squabble, heading to grab his backpack. “Got time?”
Cloud takes another sip of coffee from the couch. “Y’all working out?”

He twists around so only Izuku can see the awful face he’s making, pushing up his nose and blowing out his cheeks with wide eyes. Izuku covers up a snort when Taka shoots him a confused look.

Izuku keeps a straight face. “Yeah, Cloud. Join us.”

“Nah, just a thought but uhhh.” In one quick movement, Cloud slings himself over the couch and slaps a sticky note to Taka’s forehead, vaulting away. “You might wanna work on reflexes first.”

He crouches on the top of the stairs grinning like a cryptid gremlin as Taka slowly peels it off, reading the writing. Izuku tries to read, but the kanji is too different. Something about names and roads?

“Hey Cloud.” There’s something very dangerous in Takas voice as she crumples the note.

“Yes!” Cloud chirps, looking pleased with himself. He bolts as Taka sprints after him.

“You fucker, that wasn’t even a good joke!”

Izuku scrambles up the stairs after them, just in time to see Cloud slam a supply room door in Taka’s face, cackling. “Watch your language, there are children present!”

Izuku huffs, joining Taka at the door. “Kacchan’s said worse when we were five. What was on the note?”

“It won’t matter if he’s dead.” Taka tries the handle and pushes her shoulder against the door, edging it open.

“What- NO. OH MY GOD HOW ARE YOU THIS STRONG- IZUKU PLEASE HELP.”

There’s a scrambling sound before the door slides back marginally.

“Better tell me what you wrote, or I’ll help her,” Izuku says mildly, crossing his arms.

“FINE, I wrote- I wrote-” Cloud breaks off and Izuku can hear his wheezing laughter from the other side of the door. “What do you call a laughing motorcycle?”

Izuku shoots a confused look at Taka, who looks like she’s in physical pain.

“A Yamahahaha,” she deadpan.

Wordlessly, Izuku puts his shoulder to the door and starts pushing as well.

Cloud shrieks something unintelligible about unfair advantages before the resistance vanishes. The door slams open to an empty room. In the same instant Taka pivots, catching Cloud’s jacket as he portals in behind her. Izuku stumbles into the room, but turns and tackles them both quickly, sending them all off balance. Ah, yes. Revenge.

They all hit the floor in a heap.

“That is the worst pun,” Izuku announces. He stands up, accidentally kicking Taka and giving Cloud an elbow to the stomach in the process.

“It was,” Taka agrees, trying to detach her hand from the wood flooring. The tips of her gloves are impaled in it by almost an inch. “He should work out with us to apologize, don’t you think?”
“Absolutely.”

“Unfortunately for you, I have paperwork to do.”

Taka, now free of the floor, grimaces. “Next time, then.”

They make their way to the in-house gym, and Cloud makes a show of waving farewell. Izuku signs one of the ruder words he knows, turning away from the indignant squawk that follows.

Izuku questions Taka as they run through a warmup. “Are we continuing from earlier?”

“Well, you’ve got a pretty good grasp on parkour and free running, but heroes and vigilantes need combat skills.” It’s interesting that she keeps heroes an option. “Besides, UA doesn’t teach a particular style so I can teach a modge podge from off world – you’ll be a bit more unpredictable that way. Sound good?”

He nods, and her face splits into a fanged grin. “Let’s get moving then. We’re gonna work on form and basic attack patterns before sparring with quirks or support items. For now, show me your ready stance.”

Izuku blinks, and then settles into the stance he’s seen his other selves do. It’s all similar, save for a few outliers and one whose stance was just holding a gun, so he mimics as best he can.

Taka adjusts his form, lowering one hand and moving his feet in with a nudge. When he gives her a nod, she places one hand on his shoulder, and the other on his back, changing his posture to be more upright.

“This world tends to lean back too far in battle. It throws your weight off, so we’ll use Central’s hero standard. It’s close enough to what you have now.” She tucks his elbow in slightly and grins, settling into a practiced mirror of his own form in front of him.

“We’ll hold this for five minutes at the start of each workout. The best way to ingrain it is practice. So. Wanna hear the latest on SInKLock?”

Izuku’s arms are already stiff. “I thought they resolved it?”

“Nah, it’s falling. I’m betting Hisen a black hole the world will collapse in the next few days. He’s giving it a month.”

“What’s Hisen gonna do with a black hole?”

“Hell if I know. Maybe stick it in a jar to use later?”

“Huh.” Izuku thinks about the walls and walls of jars lining the Lonely Owl, and the years of bets Taka has lost. That’s not comforting. “Neat.”

“Izuku?” Mom knocks on the open door, and Izuku looks up. “I know you’re taking it easy this break, but I just got news about Suki Daro-san down the street. She’s looking into the beach you cleaned.”

“Dogobah?” Izuku sets away his Analysis Of My Future notebook carefully. “How’d she know it was me?”
“She doesn’t. I’ve been keeping an eye on the press around it, and it showed up in the newspaper.”

Izuku frowns. “Can I see?”

Looking over the article, it’s straight and to the point: Suki Daro is employed to the city’s care and management of parks. She’s looking for artists or students to care for the park now that it’s been cleaned.

“It sounds like she’s just hopping onto the work we did.”

“I know.” Mom reads over his shoulder. “I thought you would want to know. That last part is worrying.”

“’Whoever cleaned the beach, you have the community’s thanks?’ What about it?”

“I don’t think they’re planning to keep it clean. If only the community were a little more involved, we could take care of it easily.”

Izuku looks out his window, which now shows Dogobah beach. He could do something about this. That evening, he asks mom for some help managing the prefectural website.

As the week passes, Izuku texts Taka, inquiring about the portal on his doorway. If he’s going to fix the beach problem, then he’s going all in.

Pony texts their chat later that week, apologizing early for missing their weekly meeting at the mall. Apparently one of her moms is taking her on a trip, so they’ll be in the countryside up until UA’s entrance ceremony (if she gets in).

On the other hand, Shinsou has slipped into radio silence, only sending short replies when prompted. It’s probably due to the news oh HeroWatch of a crime ring fall- Izuku’s willing to bet Eraserhead and present Mic were involved.

With a lack of other things to do, Izuku throws himself back into training. On one sunny day, the public art permit he’d submitted is approved. Izuku heads down to the beach that morning, armed with supplies and a notebook full of designs. The wood is harder to carry than expected, but he manages.

It’s messier than he remembered- All Might had mentioned the currents caused trash buildup, but this?

Izuku looks out over scattered plastic bags and styrofoam and breathes in deeply. It smells cleaner, sharp and salty and everything a beach should be. It’s not a garbage dump anymore. He might as well clean it up, first. Izuku grabs his gloves and gets to work.

He’s a fair ways down the beach when someone shouts his name.

“Midoriya!” Kirishima waves, picking his way across the beach. “I guess great minds think alike, huh?”

“Yeah, it’s just habit by now.”

“True.” Kirishima tosses his bag over to Izukus stuff before pausing. “Is all that yours?”

“Hm? Oh. Yeah. Mom said something that got me thinking and I just kinda… yeah. I’m gonna make
some art. Got a permit today.”

“Wait. Like, out of all this? Do you need any help?”

Izuku blinks owlishly, still bent over a mess of fishing line. “If you want to, then please save my life.”

“Yeah!” Kirishima grabs a trash bag and races down the beach. “Let’s clean! This! Up!”

They don’t end up finishing the beach that day, but by the next it’s looking respectable. Izuku lays out a new notebook, covered in ideas, and the two brainstorm until they have a pretty good idea of what they want to make. Izuku is adamant on one part, though, and Kirishima would paint the whole thing red if he could, but it works.

People start to notice. A local artist with purple hair introduces herself as Mura Hatsume and gives a few pointers. She even brings down a few cans of extra house paint and shows them how to make their work last longer in the elements.

Izuku notices her resemblance to another Hatsume and doesn’t comment. Maybe they aren’t related, and it’s not really his business.

Another student with red hair and the absolute coolest quirk becomes a regular. Kendo mentioned it will help her with service hours, which isn’t a bad idea. Izuku knows he’s seen her in sports festivals, but physically can’t mention it. Kendo doesn’t mention she’d applied to UA, and the topic never comes up. It’s possibly one of the most frustrating and minor things Izuku has had to keep quiet about.

Other people help, too. Cloud shows up with more supplies he should reasonably be able to carry, and the local vigilante PopStep helps paint the higher parts on one afternoon. Community members stop by to help from time to time, and Mom keeps them well-supplied with lunches. She mentions it at night, how happy she is that they’re doing this, and Izuku beams. It’s really just carrying on what All Might mentioned about heroes doing community service.

When the acceptance date edges closer, it’s almost done. The sculpture spans around a quarter of the beach, made so rainwater and runoff from the sidewalk below will be filtered down into the ground through tubes, channels, and small waterwheels they installed. Doors they’d found in dumps and scrapyards sit behind it, repainted in blues and greens. It’s colorful, splattered paint due to Kirishima’s enthusiasm and insistence that all colors are beautiful, particularly red.

“Dude.” Kirishima collapses on the ground. “I can’t believe we did it.”

Izuku plops down. “Me neither.”

“Not gonna lie.” Kendo sits down beside them. “I thought you guys were crazy, but we all got it done. How’d you come up with this?”

“I just thought, if people saw the beach as a little more valuable, they’d help clean it. Maybe visit more, who knows.”

“Also cool.”

“Hey, wait.” Kirishima sits up, squinting down the beach at a doorframe three feet off the ground. “Are we missing a door?”

“Oh. Yeah, let me grab it. Might take a moment.” Izuku doesn’t want to stand up just to world travel.
Maybe if he rolls over, it’ll just let him in.

“Take your time.” Kirishima is used to him traveling by now. Kendo, though… Izuku doesn’t remember if he’s told her. Oh. He’s already moving by the time this realization hits, and the null opens up under him.

Kendo’s surprised shout is cut off as Izuku is dunked into starlight. Guilt twists around his ribcage as Izuku falls past a nearby film noir world. He should have explained first, and now they’ll never be friends. That was so rude of him, to just disappear, and now he’s made Kirishima explain-

Stop. Breathe. Does he even breathe in the null? This train of thought isn’t productive.

Izuku forces himself to focus on the worlds around him, until- there. A beautiful deep blue-green world. It has what he needs. Izuku twists, directing his path down to that world’s Dagobah beach. A sunset-lit circle opens, and Izuku falls through the portal feet-first.

He hits a mountain of junk clumsily, and freezes, listening for movement. His hair isn’t covered, and he has no idea if this world’s Izuku wants to be seen, or even should be alive.

There’s no sound but seagulls and waves. Izuku relaxes and slips down the trash pile as quietly as he can. He knows what he wants, and sneaks between the hills of trash until he finds the right one. There, partway up, is an ancient, worn door.

It’s old, with dark blue-grey chipped paint and a circular ship’s window in the center. The handle is a vertical bar of worn brass. Something about it strikes him as having a lot of character, so he’s been hoping to add it since he started thinking about doorways.

Something moves behind him. Izuku doesn’t hesitate, grabbing the door and throwing himself into the null before a green-haired teenager scrambles over a nearby hill of trash.

Izuku manages not to drop the door in the null. It’s clumsy to hold, so he sacrifices speed for comfort. He’s making Kirishima and Kendo wait, and the guilt comes back in force.

Izuku falls toward his home world and drops through a portal onto the sand. The door throws him off, pitching Izuku forward into a faceplant.

“Dude!”

“Oh crap.” Kendo practically trips as she runs over. “Are you okay?”

“I’m good, and sorry for the wait.” Izuku picks himself up sheepishly. “Sorry, I should have told you what I was about to do, that was really rude of me and thank you for waiting. I hope I didn’t take too long-“

“You’re good, bro.” Kirishima hefts the door up. “This is great! Should we paint it first?”

“Maybe? Do we wash it? I found it on this beach but. Uh.” Izuku steals a glance at Kendo, who is now staring at the door with huge eyes. “Not this beach.”

“That.” Kendo points to the door, face completely straight. “That’s from another dimension.”

“Yeah.”

Kendo watches Kirishima carry the door down the beach to a public hose. “Okay. Okay, this might as well happen. Probably should get used to it now…. okay.”
Izuku frowns as Kendo covers her eyes and takes a deep breath. “Are you all right?”

“Yeah. Let’s go clean the door from another dimension.”

Kendo continues to space out as they wash and attach the door. Izuku tries not to let the guilt in his stomach crush him. Maybe time will help her get used to it? They end up attaching it like a normal door. At one point Kirishima goes to find a better screwdriver and Kendo checks that the water wheel works. Izuku takes advantage of the distraction to line the doorframe with white tape. He won’t use the portal, but it’s a good escape point to have.

Maybe he’s being paranoid, but there’s a good chance the villains will go after him personally. He can be paranoid.

When the final door is shut and locked in place, the three take a moment to marvel at what they’d done. All in all, it’s impressive for a couple middle schoolers and the occasional community helper.

Kirishima inhales loudly before kicking off his crocs with a whoop and running to the shore. “We did it!”

Kendo breaks out of her trance, running after him. “Kirishima, I swear if you get sick so help me-there’s trash in there!”

Izuku struggles with his shoes, running to follow. “If there’s trash we should clean it up, I’ll grab some bags!”

“Yeah!”

“But we do it with shoes!”

“No!”

The letter sits at his desk, bright red seal still intact with the UA logo imprinted. Izuku’s been watching it from his bed for a good five minutes now, trying to scavenge any thought process long enough to open it.

It’s not that the letter is physically stopping or holds any threat- except that it does. These are the last few moments Izuku has without knowing where he goes to high school. As agonizing as every second is, it’s a second where he might get into UA. Depending on the contents of the letter, these might be the last few seconds before he breaks.

So he sits.

Unable to open it, unable not to. Something in his head is stopping him. Its almost like the door he keeps closed, sight into millions of worlds stretching beyond it. This door is just much harder to open.

There’s a knock at the door. “Sweetie? You’ve been in there a while now. Is everything okay?”

“You can come in, mom.”
The door opens with a creak, and feet shuffling on carpet, but Izuku can’t look away from the letter. The bed dips when she sits next to him.

“Well. It certainly is something, isn’t it?”

Izuku lets himself fall over until he’s leaning on her shoulder, and she brings him into a hug. They sit like that until Izuku can’t stand the waiting any longer.

“Hey mom?”

“Mhm?”

“Can I ask a really stupid question.”

“There are no stupid questions, sweetie.”

“Could you…. Put the letter in my hands? I don’t think- I can’t pick it up.”

The letter is taken from his tunnel vision. He blinks up at Mom as she leans down to plant a kiss on his forehead.

“Want me to be here while you open it?”

“I think I’m good from here… Thanks.”

The door creaks again and Izuku tears open the seal before he can second guess himself. A disk falls out onto the bed, lighting up into a hologram.

“I AM HERE! AS A PROJECTION!”

Izuku scrambles back, and the hologram sputters for a bit as the bed tilts. He really can’t deal with loud noises right now. Luckily, he finds a volume dial on the side, and the noise quiets drastically.

“YOU SCORED EXCELLENTLY on the written exam, young Midoriya, but as we all know, zero points is a failing grade on the practical- what? Get along with it? Ah, okay, sorry.”

All Might regains his bravado. “But! LOOK!”

A screen behind him shows Uraraka.

“Um, excuse me? There was another test taker- I think his name was Midoriya?” She pantomimes his fluffy hair. Badly. “Kinda plain looking with green hair? He saved me, but didn’t get any points for it, so I was wondering if I could give him some of mine?”

All Might pauses the video, smiling, but Izuku’s heart freezes. That would… no. Uraraka had to have a reason to try for the best of the best. The idea that she would throw it all away for him….

“I know instantly: if she doesn’t get in, he’s marching over and insisting they reconsider.

“But-“All Might presses the remote again. He really does live for the drama, pausing a video a giving Izuku a heart attack just for suspense.

Present Mic puts a hand on Uraraka’s shoulder. “Not to worry, listener!”

Izuku blinks at the projection, stunned, as Present Mic and later All Might explain a second system to the exam. It stinks of Aizawa’s logical ruses, but this is so large scale… whoever is in charge has to be terrifying.

He catches something All Might Says- 86 rescue points, zero villain points. A scoreboard flashes up, and All Might mentions something about his ranking, but the ringing in Izuku’s ears drowns it out. He can’t fully hear anymore.

The projection ends, but not before All Might’s voice breaks through the fog: “Come, young Midoriya. This is YOUR Hero Academia.”

That word. “Your.” HE got into UA. Not just a copy, or an echo, or another him. HE did it.

He swings off the bed, throws open the door, and crashes into his mother’s open arms.

He did it.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, "suki daro." (I know its a horrible joke but if BNHA's author can do that naming thing then so can I.) She was gonna be a nice old lady who wanted help making art, but somehow that changed???

On a side note: i'm gonna try to reply to comments, but stuff is happening (fuck capitalism) so from here on out I may not have as much time. I'm super sorry- It makes me really happy and genuinely excited to write more when I read what you think about World Walker! I'll still be able to read comments, but replying to them definitely won't happen as regularly. (this won't impact the update schedule, because I've written a good portion already. Don't worry abt that, I've hit 300 pages.)

Thank you so much for the positive words, kudos and feedback. It makes my day every time, and hopefully I'll be back on track to return to replying soon.

hugs to yall (⁄\^o^\/)
Spite and Sprites

Chapter Summary

chats and uhhhhhh fantasy!au. Tsu was a warlock who trapped her water spirit patron in a fountain.

Chapter Notes

spoiler free, I think. We hear Vlad King talk abt his students, but no specifics

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kirishima texts him that he got in, and Izuku only cries a little. They can’t talk for long- Kirishima needs to talk with All Might about One for All, but they do call and yell a bit to each other. It turns into concerned yelling at each other for being reckless when Kirishima hears about the massive portal, and Izuku finds out his friend shattered an entire fucking arm.

UA better have a good health facility if this keeps up. Then again, the bigger problem is surviving the school nurse if the pattern continues. Recovery Girl doesn’t strike him as the type to go easy on lectures.

However, it does remind him of a couple other groups he needs to text.

“SAME HAT SQUAD”

HOLY FVUGHGUJK I GOT IN

Uniunicorn: GREAT!!!! I DON’T UNDERSTAND BUT GREAT!!!

Uniunicorn: WHAT DOES “FVUGHGUJK” MEAN?

You know keystsmashing?

Uniunicorn: oh

Tired Cat: hey guys lets play a game

Tired Cat: its called the “Shinsou’s tired and yeah, he has no idea what keystsmashing means in Japanese” game

Keysmashing

Uniunicorn:!!!!

Uniunicorn: I learned something new!!
But yeah!!!! Have you gotten your acceptance letter yet, guys???

You’re gonna get in, trust me.

Uniunicorn: YES!!! I GOT IN!!! IM CRYING !!! : )))

IM CRYING TOO

Uniunicorn: CRYING FRIENDS!!! @Tired Cat, JOIN US!!!

ONE OF US ONE OF US

Tired Cat: Tears? In my Valentino White Bag?

Tired Cat: jokes on you lot, I don’t have emotions

Tired Cat: only spite in this house

Tired Cat: spite and an acceptance letter

HOLYFF

Uniunicorn: YAY!!!

CALLED IT FOR BOTH OF YOU

WAIT AIT WAIT WAIT

Uniunicorn: waiting!

Tired Cat: woute

Okay that’s cursed but also what classes are you in??? I’m in 1A

Uniunicorn: 1-B! we’re neighbors!!!

Tired Cat: heh. Neigh-bors.

Uniunicorn: I don’t understand

Tired Cat: Neigh is horse noises.

Uniunicorn: ah. Excellent. This pleases us

Tired Cat: I know this joke. why? Why me?  Also im 1a as well.

Uniunicorn: WE DID IT!!

Tired Cat: yep

Tired Cat: and what happened to the green one??

Tired Cat: Hey you dead?

nope! Just screaming into the void

im just super happy
we did it guys
ill see you all there!

Uniunicorn: YEAH!!!!
Tired Cat: yay

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**Broken physics or broken bones??**

I GOT IN!!
I think everyone else did too!

Crypid: I FUKING CALLED IT

LiminalSpace: Congratulations, we’re very proud

Crypid: FUKING SUPERB YOU FUNKY LITTLE VOID BEAN

eldritch: CONGRATS GREEN BEAN

THANKS!!

Crypid: yer a hero, izuku

Im a wot

eldritch: kids these days with their vines and shit. Ticktoks and what have you

LiminalSpace: Taka I’m older by a century at least.

Crypid: wait what

wait by that much?

LiminalSpace: You told me I was “older than dirt,” Cloud.

eldritch: Time is an illusion so long as it has no benefit to the corporate masses. Also im older if we’re using Central World’s time

Crypid: but that’s going by when you arrive on a world

Crypid: Izuku and I are like 50 by Noir’s time if we’re saying that

huh

Then you’re like five days old by PressF

Crypid: shit
LiminalSpace: Izuku, did you get into 1-A? Also Cloud, you misspelled your username again

Crypid: double shit

Yessss!!

eldritch: yall gonna fuck shit up

I hope so

lol what if i show up and nothing happens

its just a normal year

Crypid: fuck that, show crusty and vapeman whos boss

eldritch: kick their teeth in

What abt the graperat

Crypid: murderrrrr

eldritch: yeet him into the actual void, ppl cant breathe there without us

LiminalSpace: Please do not.

LiminalSpace: I will fish him out for the authorities if you do.

If he gets in im telling Nezdu

I have no choice in this but still

Crypid: u know,,,,, taka has blackmail

eldritch: yea I got dirt on the rat

LiminalSpace: I expected better of you.

If he gets in

then i wont stop u

Crypid: let us know if we can yeet the bitcj

Crypid: hmmm so many grape puns I can make,,,,, ive got,,,,, a bunch,,,,,

you come into my house

Crypid: reverse uno card

eldritch: hey cloud, love you like the brother I never had but uh

Crypid: I know

hey quick question

Crypid: You love me too don’t lie about it
It’s the last week of school. Izuku isn’t nostalgic- if anything, he’s excited to get away from the stares and offhand comments and finally start saving people. He’s excited enough to forget important detail: His teachers have been told.

When he finds himself in the teachers’ room with Kacchan, he’s expecting to be scolded.

“I didn’t do it,” Izuku begins, ready to deflect whatever the local asshats have decided to blame on him.

Kouchou-sensei doesn’t speak, only raises an eyebrow. “This is about your letters from UA, Midoriya. Bakugo.”

Kacchan snickers, which helps exactly nothing.

Izuku feels his face turning red and keeps his eyes on the ground. Kacchan swells beside him, grinning widely, though not very nicely. It only gets sharper when turned towards him, and Izuku feels it burning by the side of his face. It takes a lot of energy to stay where he is.

“I’d like to congratulate both of you on your acceptance. I hear you placed sixth, Midoriya. Quite impressive.” Izuku can see Kacchan out of the corner of his eye, the proud smile thinning into something much, much more dangerous.

“Bakugo, my congratulations on second place! I’d say you really took the metaphorical cake on this one, as expected. Well done. I look forward to seeing you both on the hero rankings. Do us proud.”

Izuku bows, too much of a coward to look at Kacchan’s face. He knows what he’ll find. The moment the teacher’s door is shut, Izuku sprints down the hallway. Footsteps pound behind him, but Izuku knows he’s faster.

He’s always been a coward. The perfect quirk for running away, and that’s all he’s ever done. It’s frustrating. He’s also angry and tired of running, so he picks a particular spot to slow down.

“Deku you worthless twerp.”

Kacchan catches up to him, grabbing Izuku’s uniform. The next thing he knows, Izukus back hits the wall and the wind is knocked out of him. Kacchan shoves palmful of crackling heat next to his face.

“What kind of shit did you pull, huh?”

His one mercy is that Kacchan still, even now, refuses to touch him. His uniform keeps him in place, but that’s all his childhood friend will do without backup. Explosions pop too close for comfort, reminding Izuku that Kacchan doesn’t have to grab him to make him afraid.

“It was supposed to be me,” Kacchan snarls, pain and anger lacing his words. “I was supposed to be
the first from this goddamn crappy school.”

Izuku looks down, letting the words wash through him. Some part of him had hoped things would change if they got in together.

“You’re not worth their time. All they’ll ever see is a useless, weak, dumbass liability. They’ll know you’re not fit to be a hero, so give it up now and save us both the trouble!”

_Not fit to be a hero._ Izuku has had a lot of people telling him what he can and can’t do because of his quirk his whole life. Hearing it now shouldn’t be different, any yet… it crosses a line.

“I will be a hero, Kacchan.” Izuku knows his voice is shaking when he cuts off Kacchans rant. He doesn’t care. “I’m not going to stop because you think I should.”

Kacchan spits at this, forcing Izuku to squirm as the explosions grow louder. He should really stop talking. The thing is, Kacchan won’t consider him any less no matter what he says. He’s only a liability, so maybe it’s time to make something clear.

Izuku takes Kacchan’s wrist, forcing the sparking hand away from his face. His old friend flinches at the contact, and Izuku bites back a surge of nausea at the reaction. He lets go hastily.

“I know you want to be the best. That’s fine. I just want to save people.”

Kacchan doesn’t respond. He’s staring at Izuku’s bare arms, and the pale skin where his suppressors once were. Izuku watches, puzzled, as the explosions sputter out and his childhood friend backs up, eyes wide like he’s seen a ghost. A second later Kacchan’s expression twists back into its usual scowl.

“They’ll find out you’re weak,” he snarls, palms crackling again. “You’ll never be one of us.”

“I don’t have to be,” Izuku says, letting go of Here.

He’s gone before Kacchan’s explosions hit the wall. The null is soft and cold and perfect to hide in for a while. He’ll find a world to visit, come back for his bags, and head to the beach. It’s time for a break.

He knows he’s weak. Useless. A coward with a coward’s quirk. A liability, Kacchan’s voice adds scornfully.

Why does it hurt so much to hear the truth?

After collecting his thoughts and hitting Noir - literally - Izuku sets out on some errands. He drops his backpack off in the room- it really does orbit this world like a little moon, which is so cool- and texts Kendo and Kirishima while he’s at it. He’s going to need their opinions on this next little task.

He packs some supplies and lets the null swallow him. Starlight trails past him as he falls through the darkness. It doesn’t particularly matter which four worlds he visits, so long as they have what he needs. At each one he stops just long enough to fill a glass jar with lake water - there’s no need for risking discovery. Supplies set, he lets the null take him again, and plummets through tangled nebulas.

Nonnac glints in the distance as Izuku navigates to the edge of his limits. He knows, logically, that there are more worlds beyond the invisible barrier. More worlds to discover with their own
individual stories. Maybe even another world traveler if he’s lucky. Despite this, his quirk has always stopped him, looping his path around until he’s headed straight back for Nonnac. He’ll wait, until his quirk lets him go.

A murky green-brown world catches Izuku’s eye, and he tucks his arms close to increase velocity.Spritesworn tends to be difficult to find, and he’d rather not have to make this trip twice.

A circle of sunlight opens as Izuku swings around, and he drops through into castle ruins. Izuku dusts himself off, regaining his bearings as he looks around. The worn grey stone is familiar, covered in creeping vines. Tree roots worm through cracked marble floors and walls, providing a ceiling of both dappled sunlight and broken stone. Izuku wanders through, less searching for his destination and more waiting for it to arrive.

He passes through halls and chambers, keeping to the central paths. Statues that look too similar to people he’s known guard the corners and doorways: Uraraka, with bow and knives; Iida, astride a crumbling horse; his mother, with a circlet of gold on her forehead and book in hand. He wanders past a cracked figure who looks suspiciously like All Might, in a suit of armor and crown. By the time he sees yet another statue of Eraserhead- a knight with broken wings, and a torn portrait of Todoroki, he’s fed up with twisting halls and courtyard paths. The door likes to take it’s time, but he doesn’t have all day.

Sure enough, an archway with long-gone doors leads into a smaller courtyard, draped in greenery with a large gurgling fountain in the middle. Around the four corners stand statues of forest spirits- they bear resemblance to Froppy, though more as a family. Her statue is perched on the fountain, looking down. Izuku keeps to the path as he approaches, halting just before the fountain. He plops down, takes out his phone, and opens the notes app. He’s hoping to annoy a specific occupant of this fountain into talking. Now to just sit and wait.

It’s his lucky day- after a minute the fountain swells into a wave that peeks over the fountain edge without spilling a drop. She looks a little like Auntie Mitsuki today, which is just weird.

The water sprite’s voice is like soda fizzing. “It’s been a while, what was your name again?”

“Nice try, Llyr. I come freely to propose a deal.”

“Oh?” The mound rises, forming the vague shape of spiky hair and shoulders. “What do you want, little green human?”

Izuku reaches into his bag, pulling out three of the glass jars and setting two on the fountain edge. He reads his next words from the phone notes. “I offer two samples of water from other worlds, in exchange for alterations of my specification to the key I was gifted.”

“You really are no fun. What’s the third for?”

“I’ll offer another water sample for a piece of metal of my specifications.”

Llyr reaches out, resting a hand over a jar. The limb is made entirely of water, and Izuku forces himself to sit still as she tries in vain to open it. Fae spirits from this world can’t take anything offered without completing the deal. So long as he worded it right, he’ll be fine. Probably.

“What metal?”

“A piece of inscribed clean copper. As part of the deal, I want the ability to affix its back permanently to rock and to change the words at my discretion.”
Llyr huffs, spraying out a fine mist in the process, and retreats. “I want five samples for that. Don’t test my limits, green human.”

“I have one more sample.” Izuku places the fourth jar on the fountains edge. “This one is from a world rich in magic different from your own, which raises it’s worth. I add it to the deal.”

Llyr passes a hand over it, before lifting herself fully out of the water. Izuku leans back as she towers above him. “You are testing me.”

“That was not my intention.”

“Intentions mean n o t h i n g.” The sprite drags herself forward until her head is inches away from Izuku’s eyes. “Intentions have given millions of souls to my domain, including that of your ancestor. Do not test my limits.”

Something clatters as it falls in front of Izuku, but he doesn’t look away. Llyr snorts- which sounds more like an unclogged drain- and splashes back into her fountain.

“You are lucky my warlock is gone, or I would have your head. Open these jars and the aforementioned deal is sealed.”

Izuku reaches for the first jar. “Taking my soul is not a part of this trade. By this condition, I seal the deal.”

“Fuck you. Tie a strand of hair around the key to change its laws. To speak of others, a lock of theirs.” Llyr sinks down, her voice becoming gargled. “Don’t come back expecting to leave alive.”

“My thanks is freely given, Llyr.”

The fountain doesn’t respond. Lids off, Izuku takes his key and metal with him. The moment he’s out, he drops into the null. That was… tense. But he has his soul and two kickass items, so who’s the real winner?

After a quick text to Kendo and Kirishima, Izuku makes his way to the beach. The space next to the public art is clear.

The metal is cool under his hands, and Izuku runs his fingers over the words. Other versions of him need to have this. The metal shimmers as he turns it, a reminder that it can be changed if Kirishima or Kendo want to add anything their text didn’t cover.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE, AND YOUR DREAMS ARE WORTH LIVING FOR.

The plaque affixes easily, sinking into the rock. Llyr does good work. Dealing with her is its own brand of trouble, but at least she’s honest about her goals.

Izuku sits down on the sand, admiring the beach. It’s different from any other world, that’s for sure. All considered, he’s as prepared for UA as well as possible. With these thoughts in his mind, he watches the sunset steadily creep up the horizon.

BONUS SCENE:

Aizawa sighs as he reaches for the next student file. The coffee machine is empty, one of the cruelties of working over afternoon hours.

Vlad King taps a full file on his desk, beaming. “Guys, I would take a bullet for my students as a hero, of course, but hear me out. You know when you just want to ensure their health and safety, and if someone told you that you could take a bullet to protect their mental health forever?”

Aizawa gently rests his head on his desk and prays for sleep as his coworker continues.

“I’d take a bullet for them. Maybe not in the arm, but I’d definitely give my left pinkie.”

“You say that every year,” Ectoplasm grumbles, while Lunch Ruch slips a 500 yen coin to Powerloader over the table.

“Yeah, but five minutes into reading these and I can already tell that Kendo will be team mom and Kurorio will quote HeroFeed Unsolved at least three times this year.”

“Don’t go easy on them,” Aizawa mutters, but Vlad King just smiles back.

“I won’t. Still would take a bullet for them, though.”

Chapter End Notes

YEEEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH FANTASY AU! I've wanted to do this for ages tbh

(also yall are amazing in the comments im gonna cry holy shit)

Edit: I found out that Taka's chat name was, while the name of a famous author, also the name of an absolute scumbag. It's been changed to eldritch instead. (I should not have included the name without doing my research, and apologize for this slip-up. It will not happen again- This fic is supposed to be a story exploring the diverse worlds we can
create together, and the idea that it could have harmed someone is very upsetting to me.
I am incredibly sorry for the mistake.)
Izuku can’t sleep, so he unwraps the seals from his arms and rolls off the bed headfirst, kicking the sheets on his way. He makes a portal and slips through before even hitting the ground.

Its icy enough to chase away any remaining sleep. Izuku lets himself fall, spreading his arms to slow down. He’s only in his flannel pjs and a t-shirt, completely barefoot. That limits his options.

It’s a combination of no sleep and lack of general foreboding that has him traveling to a world he checked up on recently. It’s not named yet as far as he knows, but sometimes previous world travelers wanted names to be passed down. He should really investigate that. There’s a list he can check.

The world approaches, green and brown as if moss is growing over it. It’s still new compared to the others. Izuku hasn’t been often, but he always meets the same person each time.

A circle opens, and Izuku drops down, landing on the soft grass. A field stretches out around him, and stars dust the sky above him. They’re distant here, so cold in comparison with the null’s dazzling uncertainty. The null’s stars all bleed together; these are separate, defined.

Izuku lies down in the grass, watching as meteors start to travel across the sky. He doesn’t know how long he’s there before metal clinks across the field, and footsteps wade through the dew.

A lantern comes into view, lit by fireflies and illuminating a cloaked figure. Izuku relaxes when he sees red and white under the hood, looking back up to the sky. The other boy joins him shortly, putting down the lantern and a satchel before settling into the grass nearby. Light continues to streak through the night- the meteor shower is just getting started.

Todoroki- if he is Todoroki here, Izuku’s never really asked- breaks the silence first.

“Be ye wounded? Chased by whispered dreams?”

Izuku glancing over to Todoroki from the corner of his eyes. His friend’s cloak is red, embroidered with rich gold tread, and the lantern is skillfully hand-made. Starlight glints off his face, making it
glow eerily.

“Not really,” Izuku says, returning to the sky. “I couldn’t sleep, is all.”

“Tis a large mood, as you say on these nights. Be gone by morn, or the watch will have a fresh head for their walls.”

“I will. Will you be all right?”

Todoroki grunts. “As well as can be. The northern wind howls and fools blow nonsense from their cheeks. Blood does not bear trust, though it may brew the oxen’s yoke. Best worry of the self before the stranger, particularly on these sacred grounds.”

“A stranger? Ouch.”

“Better names have been called.”

“True. You should take your own advice, by the way. I don’t know what’s happening but please take care of yourself.”

Todoroki stiffens.

“Did you catch these?” Izuku reaches up to tap the lantern glass, changing the subject.

“An old spell for seeking the lost. I could teach you?” Todoroki catches himself. “Assuming there is a wish to learn; knowledge without soil dies before harvest.”

“Sure. How do we start?”

Todoroki drops a chestnut into the hand Izuku offers. “Bring seed to heart, whisper an unborn secret, and toss it to the wind. The dancing light will bring it back to seek what has been lost.”

Izuku frowns, following the instructions. He doesn’t remember the secret he whispers, but when fireflies bring the chestnut back, his own voice is whispered in his ears.

“I want peaceful times like this to last forever.”

The fireflies gather, and Izuku places them in a jar Todoroki offers. When he holds it, it gently beckons him forward to the edge of the clearing. Izuku sets it down instead, and Todoroki frowns.

“Why do you not seek?”

“I’m enjoying right now.”

Todoroki startles, letting out a huff of laughter. “Truly, the heavens created you while drunk. Why must all my friends be so wise yet fools all the same?”

“Hey!”

Todoroki laughs again, and they settle back to watch the meteor shower. As light begins to creep over the horizon, Todoroki opens his lantern, letting the bugs out. Izuku follows suit, glancing over.

“Don’t you need that to get home?”

Todoroki shrugs, donning his cloak and pulling up the hood. “I have found what I seek. Beware- the watch will be out for blood shortly.”
Izuku nods, and Todoroki picks up the lantern. “…Safe light to ye.”

“Thanks, you too.” Izuku watches his friend leave before letting the null swallow him. He keeps the jar—some worlds have strict gift laws, and Izuku doesn’t know if this is one of them.

There’s still four hours until his alarm when Izuku returns to his room, and the stars outside are hidden behind city lights. He hopes Todoroki is okay.

Izuku stands before UA’s gates, hands clenched so tight they lose color. This is it. He really did it. He’s been to UA thousands of times, but never Here. When he steps forward, it feels like finally coming home for the first time. The feeling of wonder lasts a whole minute before Izuku reaches a shocking conclusion: He is very lost.

A couple of upperclassmen give him directions, and Izuku makes it to the classroom door with little other incident. It’s at least a floor higher than on other worlds, and there should be a staircase closer by that isn’t. It still feels like home.

The doors of 1A are big as ever. There’s something intimidating about it, even if he’s seen them before. This is his future, his story.

Izuku opens the door only to be greeted by Kacchan and Iida having a full-blown argument with each other. Shinsou is sitting in the back, subtly filming the whole thing.

“Take your feet off your desk, this is highly inappropriate! You’re being disrespectful to our teachers and all the students to attend such a prestigious school before us!”

“Eh? What’s it to you, four-eyes?”

“Four-eyes?!? I am Iida Tenya from Somei-“

“Somei? So you’re a damn elite!”

“Well I never-“

Izuku is so focused on melting into the wall he doesn’t notice Uraraka until she’s right next to him.

“Hey! You got in!”

“O-oh, Well-“ Izuku grins sheepishly and stutters. How does one talk? What even are words?

“I was supper worried when I heard you didn’t get any points- Present Mic said it’d be fine but I was still nervous, y’know?”

“T-thanks! I’m glad we’re in the same class!” He matches Uraraka’s smile as best he can, which is difficult when Kacchan is glaring daggers from behind her.

“If you’re here to play at making friends, go home.”

Izuku looks over Uraraka’s shoulder and there is a literal caterpillar on the ground. He blinks, and no, it’s Aizawa. Good to know that he’s here too. He looks more tired on this world, if that was even
Aizawa Sensei inch-worms his way into the classroom like some sort of goblin before standing up.

“I’m Aizawa, your homeroom teacher.” He holds up a UA gym uniform from seemingly thin air. “Put on these and meet me at training field A in five minutes.”

The whole class scrambles for the uniforms, and Izuku lets himself be carried along. He’s wearing an undershirt, so there’s no real need to be concerned about the changing room, anyway. The only other classmates who don’t seem too hurried are Shinsou and…. Oh, he knows who that is.

On the way to the training ground, Izuku catches sight of Todoroki and smiles. From what he knows, they’ll either end up best friends or trying to melt off each other’s faces. Who knows?

Todoroki fixes him with an ice-cold stare and walks by unaffected.

Well, that wasn’t the best start.

“Kinda frosty isn’t he,” Kirishima says, slinging an arm around Izuku’s shoulder. “I’m sure he’ll warm up to us eventually.”

“You have no idea how funny that is to me. Nice hair by the way.”

Kirishima brightens, reaching up to poke at the bright red hair. “Thanks! New school, new me, y’know?”

“If you have time to chit-chat, you have time to train.” Aizawa’s gruff announcement has them hurrying to the start line before Izuku can reply. Their teacher glares groggily from the pitch, before starting a familiar speech.

It’s the usual deal: prove their worth by quirk strength. An excuse for Aizawa to weed out students on the first day. Shinsou looks strangely passive about the entire charade, so Izuku can only assume he knows that it’s all a farce.

When Aizawa singles Kacchan out as the second highest in the practical, Izuku shoots Kirishima a look. His friend just shrugs back, which leaves Izuku with even more questions.

Kacchan blasts the ball out of bounds with his usual scream of defiance at nothing that matters, and Izuku winces when his childhood friend won’t stop cackling afterwards. This test is made perfectly for certain quirks.

Uraraka grins widely as Aizawa holds up the meter count. “This is gonna be great!”

“Sounds like a lot of fun,” Kirishima adds.

“Fun?” Aizawa’s glare could freeze coffee.

Izuku ducks his head as the teacher lays down the stakes. He needs to exceed expectations in order to stay. He’s never seen a world where he has a warp quirk for the test. Today’s about staying grounded and thinking on his feet.

There are a few ways he could use his quirk- the standing long jump, sprint, and ball throw are all options. There’s only one problem. Izuku lacks fine control on where or when he comes back from the null. It’s worth the practice, but his familiarity with an area helps him return, so any practice spots quickly become useless. The ball toss is probably a better-
“Quit muttering, Deku!” Aaand there’s Kacchan, right in his face. At least he doesn’t grab Izuku, which shouldn’t be surprising. Small mercies, though.

“Hey.” Shinsou comes jogging up.

“Think you can play it big with a fucking ass-wipe of a quirk? Well guess what-“

“Hey.”

“-You may have weaseled your way into this fucking class-“

“Hey.”

“-Fuck off! Don’t think for a single. moment. that you belong in the same class as me-“

“Hey.”

“-What.” Kacchan whirls around to face Shinsou, who squints.

“Bitch.”

Kacchan’s eyes glaze over in what’s either Shinsou’s quirk or a pre-explosion. And honestly? Either one is fine right now. Izuku lets himself be led away by his friend(?) before the fall-out.

Once they’re away, Izuku lets out a little wheeze. “Thanks.”

Shinsou looks at him oddly. “I wasn’t lying. He is a little bitch.”

They can almost hear the snap when Kacchan comes back to his senses. “What the hell did you say about me, dead-eyes?”

Shinsou raises his voice slightly. “The truth.”

Izuku just wants to lie down and scream until the earth receives his soul at this point.

Aizawa’s voice cuts through the bickering. “This is class time. Settle your arguments out of class or consider a different school. We’re here to learn, not to be disruptive.”

Kacchan snarls anyway and lunges. A thin scarf shoots out and wraps around him, and Aizawa glares, his hair floating up.


The rest of the class passes somewhat peacefully despite any remaining tension. Bakugo glares at them both from afar, which interferes with Izukus concentration. Shinsou, however, barely notices-or acts like he doesn’t feel the enraged glare.

He knows his best chance to get a good score is the ball-toss. UA has plenty of spares, but he still feels guilty as he opens a portal and drops the ball in.

It’s the first time he’s done this without actually traveling though the portal, but his mouth stays dry, so it must be fine.

The machine beeps, and Aizawa holds it up:”???” flashes across the screen. The rankings have him tied with Uraraka. When izuku freezes, expecting a lecture or to be told he has to go again- it always happens, he’s ready for it- Aizawa simply waves him off the pitch and calls up Sato to go next. Izuku
hurries back to the class and tries to hide between Uraraka and Shinsou, who luckily don’t seem to think anything of it.

All in all, it’s pretty fun to watch his classmates quirks. Kacchan absolutely destroys most tests, and Todoroki won’t use his fire, but everyone else is having at least a little fun. At the bottom of the scoreboard, Shinsou is more resigned than he should be while Haragakure panics.

The tests end with no expulsions, though Mina looks like she may melt through the ground.

In sum, it’s been an unextraordinary, disappointing day. Todoroki won’t talk to him, Kacchan wanted to murder him, and only Uraraka seemed willing to make a lasting friendship. Even Shinsou seemed distant, which isn’t encouraging.

“Excuse me! Midoriya!” Iida powerwalks behind him, strides long and robotic, and Izuku braces for a chastising again. He still has hope that Iida will come around, but the future turbo hero is incredibly straight-laced. Izuku’s willing to put in a lot of effort for this friendship.

When Iida reaches Izuku, the taller student bows deeply. “Forgive me! At the exam, I assumed the worst, when you had already figured out the hidden meaning behind the points. My apologies!”

“Oh, I didn’t actually-“

“Still! My actions were unbefitting of a future classmate and I am deeply ashamed. Please accept my apologies.”

“…Alright, Iida.” Izuku gives his best smile. Maybe Iida isn’t so bad on this world after all.

“Friends?”

Iida freezes and adjusts his glasses for a moment before offering his hand. “I would be honored.”

Izuku feels some of the weight on his shoulders lift. Today was only the first day – there’s always tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

Finally No Cliffhangers! it only took like what, 10 chapters?
Aesthetic

Chapter Notes

No spoilers besides Hosu arc.

World referenced is once again We Can All Be Heroes by Amandyalmonds and its turning into a minor plotline for izuku's development??? Honestly yall should check out the story if you havent.

I got permission to reference two works im super stoked for!! So heads up they're coming!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku hasn’t visited the graveyard in a while. Mostly he’s just afraid of seeing Ingenium again- having to talk to the older brother of someone he never met but still feels an emotional debt to is… terrifying. There’s also just a lot to unpack there that Izuku is still working through. He still hasn’t sorted out his thoughts, but he still owes respect.

It feels wrong to not clean the grave. That night, Izuku packs up his incense and yen, and falls. The null is quiet, and when Izuku closes his eyes, he can almost imagine he’s floating, rather than falling.

He portals into a dead end by the flower shop and picks up his usual two flowers. He takes the long way to the graveyard, avoiding security cameras and crowded streets.

He can’t be seen here.

There’s somebody in front of the grave.

Izuku can’t see much, only that they’re tall and wearing a trench coat. His best bet is another stranger, so Izuku tugs his hood up and loiters near the trees. Time runs faster here, and Izuku has a whole afternoon. He can wait.

Eventually the figure glances at their phone and leaves.

Izuku adjusts his backpack and makes his way over, sweeping off the dirt and leaves off the stone. There’s nobody else who can- Izuku doesn’t know why Iida’s parents have stopped coming, and Ingenium can only reach the front. Nobody had been fully caring for it when he had first found it.

Maybe that’s why Izuku keeps coming back.

He lays the flowers down and places the incense, sitting down before glancing into his bag for the matches. It must have slipped down to the bottom. Izuku is checking the outer pocket when a hand reaches over his shoulder, offering a lighter.

Izuku takes it. He keeps his eyes on the incense, as the soft sound of the lighter clicking rests in the silence. Whoever is behind him moves, the sound of fabric settling back.

He’ll see who it is later. Right now is for the dead, not the living.
Izuku sits and thinks. He thinks about Iida in this world and wonders why he had to take revenge. He thinks about Class 1A, and how they scattered afterwards, if the old newspapers in a local library were to be believed. He thinks about his own class, and how nothing has happened yet.

Once it’s been long enough, once respects have been paid, Izuku speaks.

“I’m sorry if I’m intruding.” He doesn’t turn around. Part of him doesn’t want to have this conversation. Part of him knows he has to, once it’s started.

“You’re not.” Iida Tensei’s voice is hard to read.

They sit for a while longer before Ingenium breaks the silence. “I don’t know your name.”

“Midoriya.”

“Thank you. Midoriya. Do you mind if I ask something?”

Izuku doesn’t respond. He shouldn’t be here. He’s breaking so many laws of world travel, so many rules Taka and Cloud have faced quirk shock from breaking. He’s seen what happens when you interfere in another story. It’s never pretty.

“How did you know him?”

Izuku appreciates the way Ingenium keeps it open, question unsaid. It lets him ignore it if he needs to. He can’t, though. He’s already intruding so much. The least he can do is answer.

“It’s complicated. I…. I saw it happen. But.” Izuku hears a sharp inhale behind him. “I- I’m sorry I shouldn’t- I shouldn’t put this on your shoulders. I’m sorry.”

He stuffs the incense box in his backpack and bows to the grave, placing his head on the ground. Iida deserves this, at least. “Sorry for intruding.”

It’s addressed to both Ingeniums.

“Midoriya, wait-“

Maybe it’s because he’s already intruded so much. Maybe it’s because Izuku hates world traveling directly from the grave. Maybe it’s because that little voice in his head will never let it go if he leaves now. Either way, he listens, finally looking Ingenium in the eye. The UA Teacher’s expression is soft and full of weariness.

“Grief isn’t easy, and you’re obviously going through this alone. I can direct you to people who can help.”

“I’m sorry. I’ve taken enough of your time.”

He bows and is about to leave when Ingenium calls out to him one more time. “Midoriya!” the hero smiles, though there’s a sadness in Ingenium’s expression that tears Izuku’s heart apart. “Thanks again.”

Izuku barely manages a smile back before walking to the treelined, where the null rises to meet him.

Izuku doesn’t remember getting home. He wakes up to an alarm and sounds of mom making breakfast, and it shouldn’t take this much effort to get out of bed.

Ingenium has figured out how to work through his grief. Izuku needs to do the same; he’s been
taking too long – that’s what he tells himself, anyway.

Iida disrupts Izuku’s plans for the day right off the bat with the news that a new hero has debuted-something Izuku missed while traveling over to the UA entrance. It’s also taken by the fact that Captain Celebrity has another son? He leaves the world for two seconds and all the news happens. Between a good discussion of the new hero’s debut with Iida and the class’s general rowdiness, Izuku is in good spirits by the time school starts.

After homeroom, Izuku grins when Kirishima absolutely *crushes* a wall sit contest. Kaminari didn’t stand a chance. Izuku catches Kirishima’s attention when it’s over.

“Kirishima! Mind if I join next time?”

Kirishama looks at Izuku like he just hung all the stars in the sky. “You’re on, bro! We’ve still got five minutes ‘till the bell.”

It’s not enough time. The door swings open to All Might’s proclamation: “I Am Here!!! To Teach!” but it’s ruined by the fact that Izuku and Kirishima are scrambling for their seats. The hero falters when taking the podium, but once everyone is in their seats, All Might regains his energy.

“Today we are doing… This!” The placard reads out BATTLE! in big letters. “Battle training. You submitted designs for costumes with your application, so suit up and meet me on training ground C!”

The class explodes into excited discussion as All Might presses a button. The back of the classroom slides open- Izuku was expecting it to be the left, but since that’s where windows are it makes sense-revealing cases with each student’s number. All Might finishes up his instructions with a seeping gesture, and the classroom springs to life.

Izuku lunges for his case and drags it to the locker room. It’s an old habit from Junior High, but there’s the added benefit that he’s able to get to the locker rooms first. He’s not exactly eager for anyone to see the scars on his back. He pulls on the jumpsuit of his costume before anyone else enters.

It’s like most of his costumes on other worlds, with a few changes. The trademark red shoes and green theme is a must, but he’s darkened the color slightly. He’s added a layer of armor- lightweight fabric Cloud had gifted him not found on this world.

Its tear-resistant, bullet proof, and fireproof. Possibly so he can dropkick Endeavor in the face.

Most of the others arrive and begin unpacking their costumes. Shinsou isn’t there at all, but Kaminari mentions he had wandered off to the bathrooms.

Izuku tugs on his gloves. They have a bit more structure, and their fit is tighter around his hands. He tries on the leg guards next. They’re a bit slimmer than the other Izukus usually go for- freerunning and parkour have taught him what he’s comfortable moving in.

The belt is a natural fit. He was worried about it slipping or being the wrong size, but they’ve got his measurements down perfectly.
There’s a note on a box stashed inside the case.

“Izuku Midoriya-

We altered the mask you provided per your request. However, as this was a preexisting piece of equipment, it was examined by the head of our Support Course. The contents inside are unpatented but functional, and a scan was taken for further inspection. Should this affect its performance, please notify us.

You have been cleared to use it. Please consult our department with any issues that may arise.

We hope you find this costume to your satisfaction.

-Support Course”

Izuku puts aside the note and opens the box. Inside is a mask made of untraceable pure black metal alloy. It fits snugly around his neck and folds out of itself to wrap around his head mechanically. Once done, it covers the bridge of his nose and ears, although it won’t do anything other than tone down noises above a certain decibel.

Take that, Present Mic and Jiro.

He experimentally brushes his neck and it shifts down smoothly, leaving his face clear and wrapping around the bottom of his jaw instead. Any punches to the jaw will be softened with this, but it will leave his face clear when he needs it.

He lets it slide back up and checks in the mirror. The support course has definitely taken artistic liberties. A glowing green design zig-zags across the whole mask, making it look more like a crazy smile.

It also covers most of his right cheek, so that’s good. The scar still pokes out, too close to the eye, but with the majority hidden he can stomach his reflection.

Izuku tugs up his hood and sets out. It’s more of a hoodie with two rabbit-ear looking pieces. They aren’t meant to stand up, but flap in the wind behind him. It’s homage to another Izuku who never got this dream.

They’re supposed to arrive in order, but the class ends up coming out whenever they finish with their own costume. Izuku is one of the first four out, and makes his way over to Shinsou. His friend wearing a purple and black jumpsuit. He’s standing awkwardly, as if trying to vanish into his capture weapon, but the mask makes his face too visible to properly hide. They exchange a quick greeting before waiting for the rest of the class.

Jiro is there as well, and Kaminari- which makes sense, with their simple gear. As more students make their way to the training ground, Izuku notices that all of their costumes are exact copies of the other worlds. The only one who’s different is Yaoyorozu, who’s wearing more of a sports bra and shorts costume than the less maneuverable gear she usually has.

Satou’s suit looks more reinforced here - he’s got padded gloves over his knuckles, which is new. In the back of the crowd, Haragakure’s costume flickers into vision in a flash of pink before fading out. It looked like a jumpsuit, but he couldn’t tell. She’s probably made changes as well.

“Wow, Deku! You must really like rabbits, huh?” Uraraka practically bounces into his field of vision.
“Uh, yeah. The ears are more for someone else though. Nice costume!”

“Thanks! I should have specified what I wanted a bit more- this is a bit too skin-tight for my taste, and I kind of wanted pockets.” Uraraka tugs down on her combat vest, which is still looser than some of the other world’s designs. “I’m aiming for a rescue hero job but they made it bullet proof.”

“That’s pretty useful, but yeah.”

“Damn, Midoriya!” Kaminari shoots him finger guns. “Going the creepy-cute route, huh?”

Izuku blinks in surprise and Sero whispers, “Oh my god he doesn’t realize.”

“Guys?”

Sero slings an arm around his shoulders. “Midoriya, love ya, but what kinda look were you going for?”

“I guess…. Friendly? The support course made it a little darker, though.”

Sato winces. “So, you have no idea?”

“No, what-“

“LET US BEGIN!” All Might cuts off the chatter, explaining the lesson. He does refer to a notecard partway through, and Shinsou rolls his eyes expressively.

The exercise is simple and expected: two villains, two heroes, recover the bomb, use capture tape, all before the time limit. Izuku finds, to his delight, his partner is Shinsou. This is the first time that has happened, but it’s good practice. Their opponents are… villain team Kacchan and Uraraka. Oh. Oh dear.

Hooray for being first, too. Nothing like getting his ass handed to him to set a good first impression.

All Might passes out floor plans and comms before ushering the class away to a viewing room. Shinsou scans the plans while adjusting his comm.

“So, your quirk lets you know about other people.” There’s a question in the way Shinsou cautiously tilts his head. “Pretty powerful.”

“Yeah. And Shinsou…. Out of every world I’ve visited, you have always had amazing drive to be a hero. Anyone who thinks differently is an idiot.” Izuku thinks back to all the hostage situations and ambushes he’s seen. “Your power is perfect for hero work.”

Shinsou blinks back, though the corners of his mouth twitch. “Thanks. Doesn’t mean much when you look ready to run, though.”

“We’re up against the two most terrifying people, do you expect me to be calm?” Izuku wheezes out a shaky laugh. “I’ve never seen this matchup before, but I know Kacchan’s coming right at me.”

Shinsou shrugs. “Then we’ll use that. I need info.”

“Oh! Kacchan sweats nitroglycerin, or something like it. He can ignite it with his palms. The gauntlets on his costume store up his sweat for him to detonate as a ranged blast. I’m not sure if it’s the same Here, but other versions have taken out a building with it with enough training. He always targets me first, leading with a right hook, but beyond that I’m not sure. Uraraka floats anything she touches with all five fingers, but its her drive to win you really need to look out for. In time, she’ll
probably stand a good chance against Kacchan. For now, she lacks fighting experience.”

Izuku startles as Shinsou chips in. “Your quirk, too.”

“I… I started muttering, didn’t I? S- sorry!!”

Shinsou waves his hand in a shooing motion. “It’s fine, now tell me about your quirk.”

“Oh! You know the basics, but it’s got a pretty big drawback: I can’t really control the time or location of my return portals. It usually takes a couple minutes, so I shouldn’t use it with the time limit. Beyond that, I can drop stuff into the void, but it causes strain because of a size limit so I’d rather not. It’s also kind of polluting, so. Yeah. It’s mostly good for observing fighting styles. It pretty much just accesses to the void.”

Shinsou taps his mask. “Interesting. I get the feeling Bakugo doesn’t know your quirk as well as you know him.”

Izuku’s mouth pulls back into a smile, seeing where this is going. “You’re right, he doesn’t. I have a plan. Can you mimic voices?”

“Oh. Oh, hell yeah.” Shinsou grins, an uncanny parody of Aizawa. “This is gonna be a party.”

Chapter End Notes

I tried to draw the costume but tumblrs not uploading it so the link will be posted if/when that happens

(Edit to mention that I have a world in mind for who his costume is referencing but talking to ppl takes energy so it might not be confirmed in story. srry ’bout that yall)
Chapter Notes

Once again spoilers for the stain arc, but that should be it!

the world quoted today is one of my originals. It was the first written for this fic, so I'm a lil nostalgic abt it and the whole idea of stain actually succeeding. Next few worlds will be actual works tho, promise.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“I’m taking Deku down, so don’t get in my way.” Katsuki gets two steps to the door before he realizes something’s wrong with gravity. “What the fuck?”

Round-cheeks huffs, crossing her arms. “We’re talking this out. I’m not some ‘extra’ you can push around- people worked real hard to get here, you know.”

“You bitch, let me go-“

“We will talk this out like civilized group partners. I’m willing to play defense, but I will not sacrifice my education for whatever you’re doing now.”

“Fuck that- I’m going to fight, and you do whatever the hell you want!”

Round-cheeks stares him down. “I agree you should go, but let’s make one thing clear. I can work better with a familiar space, and you might damage the bomb. That is why we’re splitting up like this. Not because of whatever argument you have with Deku.”

Katsuki doesn’t have a chance to reply before she puts her hands together, announcing “release.” He avoids crashing with a couple explosions, and round-cheeks doesn’t blink. Looks like she’s got at least some guts.

“Don’t get in my way,” Katsuki snarls, partially exploding the door on the way out. There’s too much boxes and shit for her to fight in that room, anyway. It doesn’t really matters if she moves, though. Katsuki’s going to win this alone, without any partner dragging him down.

This exercise might as well have been made for him.

As the buzzer goes off, Deku’s voice echoes through the building. “H-hey, Kacchan! Remember that pond in middle school? The one with all the fish?”

Katsuki’s head snaps towards the north entrance. That shitty nerd knew better to mention the pond. Reminding him of when he was weak, when his palms wouldn’t ignite. Damn him. Damn him to hell.

Katsuki hates Deku. He hates how the nerd thinks he can be a hero with a useless quirk. What, is his gonna run at the first sign of trouble? Disappear right when everyone needs him? Katsuki was five when he first heard the word “liability.” Right away, it fit the nerd perfectly.

How could you trust someone who couldn’t control their own damn quirk? Who fucking thought it
was a good idea to teleport into a motherfucking villain battle and forgot about the whole damn thing?

Nobody would want a sidekick that dragged them down. Katsuki would be number one, without the nerd.

And now Deku just has to mention that day.

It takes a simple blast for him to reverse direction, and two more to reach the stairs. Deku’s voice echoes through again, mildly surprised. It’s moved.

“I honestly thought Kacchan would have caught up to me by now. You were right, Shinsou! Maybe he is slower than I thought.”

“DEEEEKUUUUUUU!!!!” Damn nerd, thinking he was better. Katsuki jumped the railing, letting his explosions break the fall and accompany his voice. “I’M GOING TO KICK YOUR WHINEY SNOT-ASSED BUTT, SO SHUT THE FUCK UP.”

“Oh, Kacchan! Ready for a rematch?” The little freak is right around the corner. Katsuki rages, letting sweat build up in his right hand as he leaps forward, explosions rocketing him forward.

“REMATCH MY ASS-“ And there is nothing.

Katsuki can’t move, can’t react. Around the corner, the purple extra strolls leisurely.


Voice changers??

The damn extra caught me with a voice changer??

He barely notices Mind-fuck wrapping something white around his wrist. The purple-haired bastard has the audacity to smirk at him. “You’ve been captured. Wait outside the building until the exercise ends. Sorry, but I don’t trust you around Midoriya.”

No.

Katsuki’s legs move on their own, leading him to the exit.

No, no, No, NO NO!! This was supposed to be his chance to prove he was the best! Taken out by a couple mere steppingstones.

“Let me get that door for you, blasty boi.”

Kacchan seethes against the fog surrounding his mind. Mind-fuck better watch himself.

Izuku takes off the moment the bell rings to hide. There’s a chance Kacchan will realize something’s wrong- he’s got a powerful analytical mind as well as pretty sharp reflexes. The plan stands a higher chance of succeeding if Izuku is removed from play until they know where he is.

They’re also counting on Uraraka to stay with the bomb. Statistically, Kacchan’s partners on all other
worlds do just that.

He finds a good spot on the second floor. There’s a tarp nearby and a stack of lumber that’s just far enough away from the wall to fit a small person.

“I’m in position.” It’s a pleasant surprise that the mask doesn’t muffle his voice at all.

The ear piece buzzes to life, and a copy of Izuku’s voice hisses through. “Same.” Across the building, Izuku can hear his own voice, followed by Kacchan yelling.

“He’s on the first floor. Good luck.”

Time to move. “You too.”

Izuku runs, bypassing the second floor and running to scout the third and fourth. Kacchan’s explosions had started fairly high up, near the back of the building. He’s in luck. A doorway is half-blocked on the third with a broken door.

Kacchan probably blasted the top half of the doorway earlier, but for her to use it for a visual and as a barrier is… tactically advanced. Izuku slips a mirror from his belt, checking the room. Uraraka stands in the middle, holding two huge boxes like they’re nothing. The bomb is behind her, floating close to the ceiling. She startles at an announcement.

“Bakugo has been captured!”

It’s better for him to attack now, when she thinks he’s downstairs.

He backs up and reaches for his earpiece. “Third floor, near the back. Going in.”

“Good luck. I’m headed up.”

Izuku backs up further down the hallway. He’s made higher hurdles than this in parkour training. Taking a breath, he sprints, keeping as low as he can so the box keeps him out of sight the first few steps.

He slides over the barricade, landing in a run so the boxes she’s holding hide him somewhat.

She’s faster than he expected, and Uraraka shoves the first box in his direction. “Nice try!”

Izuku dodges, trying to attack from behind with a punch.

Uraraka’s expression flashes from shock to determination lightning quick. She jumps to the side, pushing his shoulder with all five fingers as he passes. The combined force of his punch and extra shove send him into the wall, knocking his breath away.

He gathers his bearings- weightlessness is doing a number on his balance- when the other box crashes into him at full force.

Izuku shoves it back instinctively, still trying to collect himself.

“Sorry, Deku!” Uraraka’s shout is all the warning he gets before the box is back, catching his shoulder and slamming him into the wall a third time. This time, Izuku pushes against the wall, and down on the box. He overestimates and shoots up into the ceiling. Uraraka grabs the first box, and Izuku takes the few seconds to find his footing upside-down.

He’s too disoriented to open portals. The boxes are here to stay.
On the ground, Uraraka looks up in surprise, steadying the box. “Thought I had you there.”

“Almost did.” Izuku smiles down. “Your quirk is super strong!”

“Thanks - let’s both do our best today!” Uraraka throws the box at him without warning. Izuku kicks off a rafter, the box slamming into where he just was. He checks his position.

The bomb is on the other side of the room now. Whoops.

Uraraka catches the glance. “Release!”

Izuku kicks off the nearest rafter to angle his decent, jumping off a wall and tucking into a roll on the landing. He’s closer to it now—until Uraraka tackles him, using the force to push him out of the doors opening, back into the hall. The shock back into weightlessness is disorienting.

Izuku manages to grab the sooty door frame, winded. From here he can see the stairs, where steps are hurriedly approaching.

Uraraka grunts, and Izuku throws himself flat outside of the door frame. A box hits the wall across from him, hard. That would’ve hurt.

He underestimated Uraraka.

Shinsou peeks out of the stairwell, and Izuku hurriedly points to his own mask. His partner nods back, taking a deep breath and adjusting his mask.

“Hey, Uraraka! Are you okay?”

“Yeah, why–“

Shinsou rounds the corner first. “Just concerned,” he replies, still using the mask. Izuku wraps a piece of capture tape over her wrist, and the clarity snaps back into her eyes.

“Oh, darn it. I really thought I was winning.”

“Hero team wins!”

They’re interrupted when an explosion shakes the building outside. All Might’s voice crackles through the speakers immediately.

“Bakugo, the exercise has ended. Please return to the observation room.”

Izuku finds his way into the viewing room first. Shinsou strolls in next, soon followed by a disheartened Uraraka. Kacchan is still simmering as he follows, and Izuku edges back so both Shinsou and Uraraka are between them. Something tells him now’s not the time to be around his childhood friend.

Their classmates, however, greet them with cheers and compliments. Kirishima shoots him a pitying glance, though whether for the noise or being hit with boxes repeatedly, Izuku isn’t sure.

All Might regains control, and gestures to the screens playing loops of the exercise. “Now, who was the star player?”

Yaoyorozu raises her hand. “I’d say Uraraka was the star of this match.”

“Not Midoriya?” Tsuyu points at one of the screens. “He fought pretty well, kero.”
“I believe Yaoyorozu has it right,” All Might announces. “Why might that be?”

“Well, Bakugo failed because he was set on a personal grudge. He showed fine control with his quirk, especially using its maneuverability – but he allowed personal emotions to direct him. Shinsou and Midoriya used this to their advantage, and it cost him the match. However, Shinsou wasted time making sure Bakugo was outside of the building. He could have supported Midoriya earlier if not for that.”

Shinsou shrugs. “Sorry, blasty.”

It’s only Yaoyorozu’s further commentary that keeps Shinsou from being reduced to ashes on the spot.

“Meanwhile, Midoriya got distracted by the bomb during his match with Uraraka. He could have won earlier if not for showing his hand. He also didn’t use his quirk on the boxes.”

It stings, but she’s right.

“Uraraka utilized the weapons at her disposal well, and was able to hold her position, even keeping her opponent on the defensive for most of the fight.”

Uraraka beams.

All Might fidgets slightly, seemingly caught off-guard by the wealth of information. “Yes, well… young Iida? Do you have something to add?”

“Sir!” Iida lowers his hand, oblivious to All Might’s surprise. “I believe it is important to note the forward-thinking of Shinsou and Midoriya! Their plan was well-considered, and teamwork flawlessly executed. Additionally, we cannot overlook the importance of Uraraka’s planning. She prepared for the fight and set up her surroundings to give her an edge!”

All Might clears his throat. “Yes… I’d add that young Uraraka would do well to back up her skillset with hand to hand, as would young Shinsou, but uh, very good. Next, Team C as villains, Team E as Heroes!”

Team C (Iida and Kirishima) and Team E (Sero and Ojiro) file out to prepare.

“That was such a crazy round!” Sato announces while they wait. “I’m super pumped up now.”

“Yeah, nice dodging!”

Izuku squirms back, unsure how to deal with compliments. Uraraka, however, is practically beaming.

“It was super fun! I’ve never used my quirk like that but it was really good to let loose!”

“Wait, wait, wait.” Kaminari waved his hands. “Are you saying that was your first time fighting? For real, with those moves you pulled? What about you, Shinsou?”

“None of your business –“

“Yep! How about you, Deku?” Uraraka’s voice cut over Kaminari’s hushed “Holy shit.”

Izuku blinks. “I’ve trained a little, but this was my first practice fight.”

Kacchan lets out a few expletives at this and stomps off to glare at the reader boards, but Izuku can’t
really care after having all eyes on him. It’s a little taxing. “Um, Uraraka? ‘Deku’ isn’t my name, though…”

“It’s not?”

“No, it’s kinda my childhood nickname…”

“Well I like it,” Uraraka declares, pumping a fist. “It gives me kind of ‘you can do it’ vibes!”

*You can do it.*

“Oh.” Izuku freezes for a second, thinking this over. “Well, feel free to use it, then.”

“Thanks, Deku!”

Kaminari slings an arm over Shinsou’s shoulder. “Hey, your quirk was pretty useful there. I bet you’re popular with the ladies!”

“You have no idea how funny that concept is to me.”

“It was cool, take the *compliment!! take my love and support!!*” Kaminari raises his voice. “Everyone who thinks Shinsou is cool say AYE!”

The class choruses out a scattered “Aye” before All Might regains control and starts the next match. Shinsou looks around, bewildered, and Izuku meets his eyes with a tired smile. He deserves to be seen for who he is.

Izuku doesn’t catch the rest of the matches. The moment he sits down, his aching side and arms take second seat to a throbbing mental discomfort. He has just enough time to close his eyes and fake falling asleep before the door in his mind opens.

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_Midoriya sits at the dusty window. Rain splatters across it, trailing down in fits and spurts, stuttering and rushing all at once. The neon lights from outside are caught in each drop, a thousand perfect copies beyond the glass._

_A door opens behind him, steps echoing across the abandoned arcade. Midoriya doesn’t bother looking up to see Hitoshi’s face. He knows what he’ll find._

“We lost another scout. They’re closing in.”

_He leans forward, pressing his forehead against the cool window. Condensations sticks to his hair._

“What.”

“Veni. They found her just outside the city limits.”

“Damn.” She was good, too. They’re getting stronger.

“The squad’s been talking.” Hitoshi slides into view, mask still showing nothing of his face. _Midoriya hasn’t seen his eyes in over a year now. “They think we should move on to the next target.”_
“We can’t. Stain sent some of his followers ahead.”

Hitoshi’s breath hisses out of the mask. “What?”

“We’re surrounded. Got the news from Momo’s squad just now.”

“Then…. Shit. I’ll tell them- No we can do this. A quick strike, just to get through.”

“They’re expecting it. Ever since they got Tenya, they’ve been one step ahead.”

He closes his eyes, pressing further into the window. He can hear Hitoshi’s static breathing beside him. “Sometimes I wish we could go back and drag him away from Hosu. If internships hadn’t happened, none of them would have died.”

Hitoshi ignores the last part. “He’d never sell us out.”

“His human; it’s been years. They have torture and truth quirks. Even by resisting, any one of us would give stuff away.”

They sit quietly a while longer before Hitoshi breaks the silence.

“We should at least try to regroup tonight. Even if it’s gonna fail…”

“They march forwards to the stars.”

“…. To the stars.”

“Midoriya? Midoriya, wake up! Class just ended.”

What-

Izuku blinks up to Uraraka shaking him, Iida hovering just behind. Everyone else is filing out of the room. He checks, and no, nobody’s looking at him weirdly, so it’s safe to assume he’s not in trouble. They probably think he took a nap. Good.

“You should get more sleep, Midoriya,” Iida adds as they leave. “UA is a remarkable education opportunity we should not waste.”

“Sorry, Iida. I know I shouldn’t avoid this opportunity.”

Uraraka snorts. “Oh my god.”


“A void. Responsibility.” Uraraka cracks up, and Izuku fidgets, trying to erase the earlier world from his mind. Internships hadn’t happened yet. He’s fine, Iida’s alive, everyone is happy and good friends.

“Oh.” Iida frowns. “I will have to study wordplay tonight.”
Aizawa is too tired for this shit. He’s stuck grading the assignment from yesterday and waiting for All Might to finish up whatever exercise he had planned - and no, he doesn’t trust the new teacher as far as he can throw him - wait, that’s too much. He doesn’t trust All Might as far as he can throw the UA building. Fuck teaching; he needs a nap. Actually, yeah. He deserves a nap. This is self-care or whatever Hizashi was talking about yesterday.

Aizawa is reaching for his sleeping bag when footsteps pound down the hallway outside. The UA staff door slams open, revealing Vlad King. He’s carrying student files under one arm and has the biggest grin.

“I was right!”

Aizawa promptly buries his face in his sleeping bag. School has just ended, and it’s still too early for this.

“I would give my whole left hand for my students. They’re all little shits and Monoma might kill someone one day but I love each and every one of them.”

“Ughh.”

“Too loud?” Hizashi- bless that man for lowering his voice- leans over from his desk. “I’m getting coffee, want a mug?”

“You’re an angel.”

“N-no problem, Ai.”

Aizawa further presses his face into the desk to hide the blush. Is this revenge for calling him an angel? This is revenge.

“Aizawa-san!” No. Not this headache. All Might deflates into – what, Small Might? – and thankfully that lowers his voice. Small mercies. “I finished the exercise and was wondering if you had any, uh, advise?”

Fuck, something happened. Aizawa holds out a hand expectantly, not taking his face off the desk.

“Files.”

All Might passes over a folder, and Aizawa logs into UA’s database, accessing the match video feed. He watches fist with exasperation, then anger, as Aoyama twists an ankle, Todoroki freezes a building with occupants he knows aren’t wearing shoes, and Kirishima shatters an entire fucking arm for the sake of an ambush.

“All Might,” Aizawa says slowly, trying desperately to word this so it will fit into his junior teacher’s thick skull. “Did you at any point think that the match should be stopped?”

“Well, yes, actually-“

“When?” Aizawa listens, pinching the bridge of his nose as All Might lists off several moments the students had already crossed a line.

“That gut instinct that it’s too far. Listen to it.”

“Aizawa-san, are you all right-“
“We are teachers here, All Might. Not heroes.” So help him, if he can just make this one point clear-
“A hero saves civilians, and makes judgments in battle that students cannot because they don’t know their limits. Students who are still in their first week of school have no idea where those limits lie. Maybe this exercise would have suited the second or third years, but first years need to learn restraint.”

“I apologize, I should have considered that.” All Might lowers his head, and Aizawa wonders if he should have worded it better. Still, this is the safety of his students they’re talking about.

“Apologize to their parents if it happens again. Let’s go through and see where to change the rules for class 1B.”

“You think it should still be used?”

Aizawa grunts. “It needs work. Write in a consequence for injury to their classmates and have Vlad King look it over when you’re done. I like the assumption it’s random, but the reality falls short.”

“Aizawa-san?”

“I’m telling you to rig the system for teams and students. Talk with Vlad king about who does and doesn’t get along.”

Hizashi slides a mug of coffee onto Aizawa’s desk. “Is this today’s exercise?”

“Yes, Aizawa-san was just giving me advise!”

“Oof.” Hizashi leans over to look at the screen, which is currently replaying Kirishima shattering both a wall and his arm to ambush Sero. “This year is gonna be wild.”

Chapter End Notes

*throws chapter at yall*

Edit 1 & 2: spelling
Broken Mirror

Chapter Notes

SO SORRY FOR THE LATE UPDATE I FORGOT TIME EXISTED

spoilers: mentions of Nighteye and Kamino arc, I think that's it...

The world he visits is See(Too Much) by LadyGreenFrisbee and I super recommend reading it!!!! It's a quirk!izuku fic that approaches some ideas from a whole new angle!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Izuku and Cloud wander through a park in a new world. He hasn’t seen much of it, but the world aches like something happened. Something was lost, something gained that might not have been worth the price. Beside him, Cloud pulls his jacket tight.

“Something’s off about this place.”

Izuku hums, picking up a piece of discarded newspaper. Anyone else might not look twice, but any words, any news here is important.

“It’s written in slightly different kanji, but everything looks good. None of the usual warnings.”

“Which city are we in?”

“This is from Naruhata, but I recognize the city layout from home. It could just be the wrong paper.”

“Shit. I don’t like this.” Cloud spins, pretending to look at the city skylines. Izuku knows he sees endlessly more than simple buildings. “It’s like the world is copying everything we do. If something goes wrong, don’t hesitate to jump home.”

Every world has a feel. Something shown in the corner of the passerby’s eyes and the way sunlight hits the street. Some worlds burst and burn, others whisper in the reflections off windows or drip laughter from powerlines.

This one is a hospital, a held secret, the feeling of being watched. Occasionally the world shifts, crackling, as something under the air begins to splinter and is repaired slowly. It doesn’t bode well that the civilians around them don’t seem to notice. Something deeper is going on here.

“I’m gonna see if my quirk works better out of the city. Perspective and all that. Don’t get attacked while I’m gone.”

“What about you?”

Cloud grunts. His eyes are half-lidded, but there’s something eerie about the way light spins into them. It’s hard to focus on when he uses his second quirk. Cloud blinks and the effect is gone.

“I… am a space cryptid whose quirk is literally god’s farts and 20/20 vision. What are they gonna do, ambush me?”
Izuku shrugs. “Maybe. I feel watched.”

“Same.” Cloud’s quirk reactivates, and he looks up at the sky. “From what I can tell, this world is a shattered mirror. Like every move we make is reflected, a little different in each piece.”

“Poetic. Probably a quirk, then. If they haven’t done anything yet, we should be fine to explore.”

Cloud brings his attention back to earth. “One hour, back here?”

“Yell into the void for backup.”

Cloud nods, still looking at something Izuku can’t see. “Oh, and just a heads up – if you’re looking for your counterpart, he’s right over there.” Izuku freezes, following Cloud’s subtle nod to a figure on a nearby bench.

“What-“

“Later.” Cloud salutes and dissolves into starlit darkness, officially abandoning him like a good role model. *Yay for ex-heroes retaining a sense of responsibility.*

Izuku sighs, slowly making his way to the bench and sitting a good five feet away from the other him. He’s learned to be cautious of these meetings. Strangers don’t always take kindly to people they meet, and a surprising number of people don’t recognize their own reflection.

The kid who’s not quite Izuku seems frail, swamped in a baggy hoodie and sweatpants. When the breeze picks up, Izuku thinks for a moment it might blow right through him. The thinner teen’s eyes were closed, but he subtly glances over when Izuku takes a seat.

It doesn’t take a genius to figure out this counterpart has a visual-based quirk.

His eyes are completely overtaken by the blue fractured pieces spinning inside them. The effect is like one of those kaleidoscope toys he played with as a kid, or… a broken mirror.

*Huh.*

Izuku sits, and wonders what he should say. He ends up watching the park, trying not to flinch as the world around him shudders, further fracturing and repairing into smaller pieces.

“I’m sorry for the bother,” other-him says, startling Izuku slightly. You know what? He’s going to call this other him Midoriya. It’s a little easier that way. “You were probably going to explore.”

“It’s fine.” There’s a million questions he has, but Izuku shoves them back. “This may seem silly, but do you know what city this is?”

“Mustafu.”

“Huh.” Izuku leans back, on the bench, letting the breeze dance in his hair. “Thanks. I haven’t been here before, so I’m a little lost.”

“I figured.”

Izuku lifts his head up at this, and the other him- no, Midoriya- shrugs lazily. “You teleported right in front of me.”

Izuku grumbles. “It’s not like we chose to show up in front of you. Cloud usually picks places where people… aren’t… around….” Oh. *Oh, shit.* Pieces begin to knit themselves together in Izuku’s mind.
The fractured world, the feeling of being watched, and the swirling fractals in his counterpart’s eyes.

“You were waiting for me.”

“And you were looking for me.”

There’s an awkward silence where Izuku searches frantically for something to say. “How? I normally can’t even talk to other versions of myself—”

“Same, but I’ve never had the chance.” Midoriya laughs quietly at this. “I’ve never gotten to talk to an alternate future before.”

“So this is strange for both of us.”

“Yep. I hope I’m not keeping you from anything.”

“Not really. We wanted to check out if this world was safe to visit.”

“Well, compared with what I’ve seen of your world, they look about the same.”

Izuku fiddles with his jacket sleeves. “Huh. It’s really weird having someone see my life for a change.”

“Touché. I only get little bits and pieces- you blank out just as I look in.”

Wait.

What?

“Was… was the first time in a car?”

Midoriya kicks his legs against the park bench. “Yeah? What about you?”

“You were in the hospital watching the rain. I don’t see you do much.”

The two sit in silence for a moment before Midoriya snaps his fingers.

“It’s a two-way connection! We were watching each other at the same time.”

“I feel like an idiot,” Izuku groans, smacking his forehead. “Of course, someone would have a counterpart quirk to mine. It’s common enough with—”

“Don’t say it,” Midoriya cuts in, staring up at the sky. “Nobody knows about that yet.”

“… We are talking about the same ability, right?”

“The only quirk it can be? I get that dimensions are cool and all but come on. In ability to change the future, there’s only two, and we get one of them way more often.” Midoriya’s bright blue eyes spin.

“So we are talking about the same one.”

“Probably.”

Izuku pauses to consider this, and Midoriya snorts. “I’m guessing you’re not too far ahead.”

“I’ve just finished my first week at school, actually. Where are you in time?”
“Just met the big guy a few days ago.”

“Oh. Was he…”

“He’s fine. No offence, but I’m not completely sure who you are, so that’s not on the table for me to talk about.”

“I understand.” Izuku leans back, thinking of his world. It’s not like anyone from there can travel besides the Lonely Owl crowd, and they probably already know. The world splinters again and Izuku flinches. “Mind if I ramble?”

“Sure?”

“I don’t know if my quirk will let us meet again, but you should know that your world is kind of shattering.”

“Oh?” Midoriya frowns, and the world splinters again, worse this time.

“It did it again just then.”

Midoriya smirks, and it shatters further. “I haven’t noticed that.”

“… You’re doing it, aren’t you?”

Midoriya shrugs, and they leave it at that.

They sit in silence for a while longer, and the wind turns sharper. Izuku thinks back on the conversation. All the alternate futures he could have given his world and all the decisions he’s made to shape the timeline were in the best of intentions. Asking All Might to look again was one of these, but… was it the right decision? Izuku is so lost in thought that he doesn’t notice when Midoriya gets up, stretching.

“I’ve got to go, but it was fun talking. Stop by sometime?”

“If I can,” Izuku calls back, waving as his counterpart disappears down the park path.

He sits for a while longer, thinking. This conversation brought up so many old worries that he’s pushed off for too long. All Might’s future as the Number One, mainly. There’s something bothering him, and he’s not sure what it is.

Izuku hops into into the void and is promptly hit in the face with social anxiety. Izuku takes advantage of the nulls silence to cover his face and yell unintelligibly about how he’s such an idiot, oh my god. That was the first time in forever that he’s gotten to talk with a counterpart, the first time ever that he met someone with a similar quirk and he said "hey your world is shattering" like some kind of edgy teen drama from the 80s, how rude could he get-

“Bad day?” Cloud drifts upside-down beside him. “Because that sounds like a bad day.”

“Humans. Conversations. Why can’t I just-“ Izuku waves his hands, trying to explain. “Ugh. Why is talking so hard?”
“It just be like that sometimes. Other worlds have slightly different rules.”

“They’re too confusing.”

“They’d say that about our world too.” Cloud holds out a hand. “Let’s go home and get some ice cream.”

Izuku takes it, letting Cloud direct their fall through the null. “You’re paying.”

“Bold of you to assume I make much usable money in this line of work. There’s a tub of cookie dough in the freezer that’s much cheaper than ice cream and by far a superior comfort food.”

“Cheapskate.”

“Talking about yourself, Mr. I’m-allowed-to-take-snacks-from-other-worlds-if-they-don’t-use-currency?”

“That was one time.”

He knows, logically, that things are still starting. Izuku catches a glimpse of another world where All Might is fighting All for One and barely surviving, let alone winning. He’s not sure what it means or if it will even happen, but the implications scare him regardless. He adds a new page to his notebook and hopes it won’t happen here.

It rests in the back of his mind like a steadily growing weight.

Izuku’s taking a break from sparring with Taka when the words come to him. He’s gotten pretty good at hand-to-hand, but she’s still a league ahead. The day he beats her or gets her to step out of the ring they’ll talk weapons, and he already knows he wants a knife. Or a sword, that would be cool.

“Do you think All Might would be stronger if I hadn’t met him, or introduced Kirishima?”

She doesn’t reply immediately, and somehow that’s both worse and better. Instead, she fiddles with the lid of her water bottle before speaking up.

“We can’t know that.”

Izuku fidgets. They go another round before Izuku eats the mat. Taka is careful, avoiding his bad shoulder from Uraraka’s boxes. They take another break.

“Theoretically then. If... He hadn’t passed on One for All. And there- there’d be more time before...”

“He would have been at the same strength as now.” Izuku whips his head around at this, but Taka keeps messing with the stickers on her water bottle, either unaware or not showing it. Black dust begins to creep out from under her wrists over the seals, spreading slowly like roots.

“In your world, his power is a stockpile that’s copied and repeated. It will fade on it’s own time; passing it on doesn’t dampen the power.”
“So it’s not…” Something inside Izuku starts to loosen. It’s not gone all the way, but he can breathe now. It’s progress.

“It’s not on you when he falls, green-bean. We’ve talked about this. He made his choice, and you’ve seen it on other worlds: All Might knows what he’s doing. The informed choices of others are not your fault.”

They continue to spar, but Izuku is distracted. A thousand nothings bounce around inside his head. But it is on me. I’m the only one who knows- who really knows, not like Sir Nighteye who only caught a glimpse- I’m the only me who can fix this.

Chapter End Notes

Srry for the heavy OC chapter! that wasn't supposed to happen lol

thinking abt hopping to a bi-weekly schedule to keep up chapter quality - they're starting to get a little choppy. pls lmk thoughts in the comments!!!
Calm Before the Storm

Chapter Notes

Spoilers! Wow! So many!!! Holy SHIT!! okay lets break this down:

we've got kamino stuff and All Might's,,, secret? Basically just skip over Izukus convo with All Might to the next break. I'll put a summary at the end for that. Also, Eri is mentioned by name but not much else in the last little bit, nothing plot-relevant.

I think,,, that's it. Srry is the characterization is off, ive been watching moominvalley so it may sound funky.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku drops from a portal into class. He’s been practicing with speed, and it shows: he can now teleport within a couple minutes. The class is buzzing with nervous gossip and Uraraka rushes up to his desk.

“Hey, Deku! Guess with your teleportation quirk, you didn’t need to go by the gates, huh?”

“The gates?”

“Yeah!” Uraraka hops up on Kacchan’s desk, swinging her legs. “They tried to ask me about All Might. Guess this is the hero life, huh?”

“My dad calls the media vultures.” Shinsou makes his way to his own desk, can of coffee in hand. “Maybe he’s right.”

It’s at this moment that the classroom door opens, sending students scrambling to their seats. Aizawa stalks in, posture stiff. “I apologize on behalf of UA for the vultures outside. It will be dealt with shortly.”

Izuku shoots a glance at Shinsou, who’s pretty much chugging his coffee and avoiding all eye contact. Huh. The rest of the class doesn’t seem to have picked up on any possible father-son connection, and Izuku smiles serenely as he screams internally.

“On another note -“

The tension in the room is palpable-

“-It’s time to choose class presidents. I don’t care why or how you choose them, so long as it’s done by the end of the period.” Aizawa climbs into his sleeping bag, ignoring the twenty raised hands and uproar that followed his announcement.

Izuku covers his ears when people begin to talk over one another.

“I’ll work on no pop quizzes!

“Free pizza after school!”
“Office supply fund for underprivileged students!”

“I will make this class truly shine!”

“You can count on me, guys!”

Iida, hand raised higher than anyone else, regains control through sheer strength of will and exceedingly loud voice. “Let us settle this with democracy!”

“Or we could just, y’know, fight to the death.” The class collectively quiets to stare at Shinsou, who shrugs. “Fine, don’t vote for me, I guess.”

There’s an awkward pause, and Sero claps his hands. “I like it.”

“Indee- What? No!” Iida looks like somebody spat on his brother’s name. “How- why would you say that?”

Sero shrugs, and Mina starts cackling.

“Oh, shit. All eyes are on Izuku now. “I like Iida’s idea. You can probably ask Aizawa Sensei to fight after class, though.”

“It does make the most sense,” Yaoyorozu says. “We should go around to tell our name, quirk, and why people should vote for us.”

There are various noises of agreement before Yaoyorozu stands up.

“I’ll go first. My name is Momo Yaoyorozu, but please call me Yaomomo. My quirk is Creation. As president I’ll try to include study groups, and if you have any requests for the class or improvements we need, please tell me or drop a note on my desk. I’ll do my best to communicate your needs to the faculty. Thank you.”

The class applauds, and one by one everyone announces their name and quirk. Iida delivers his from the podium, and Asui asks everyone to call her Tsu. Izuku tries to brainstorm a way to phrase his quirk without dying internally. After Shinsou’s turn, Izuku chair screeches noisily when he stands.

There are so many eyes on him.

“I’m Midoriya, uh, Izuku. If you know the concept of the void? My quirk’s kinda like that. I’ve never been a class president before, but I’ll do my best. Honestly so many of you could do a great job, I think whoever wins, we’ll be in good hands. Thank you.”

Izuku fidgets after sitting down, running his hands over his desk to stay anchored. It’s a grainy, plastic texture. Did he just say his name out of order? Did anyone think his quirk’s explanation was weird?

Shinsou hadn’t named his quirk either (“Hitoshi. Shinsou. Homeroom for naps.”), so it should be fine. He wasn’t the only one. Maybe he could have a little bit of time before they turn on him because of his quirk. Before they called him a liar.

Hopefully they’ll just think it’s simple teleportation.

Introductions end, and Iida and Tsuyu - shit – Asui - no, Froppy - wait- Tsu - pass out pieces of paper. Izuku writes Iida’s name and slips it in the box.

The votes are tallied:
“Whoever voted for me makes horrible life decisions,” Shinsou remarks. He’s drowned out by a commotion in the front.

“Please only vote for people in this class!” Iida points at ‘John Mulaney,’ ignoring Shinsou’s snicker. “Whoever this is cannot be our president.”

Izuku doesn’t pay attention, too busy sinking further into his seat. He does not want to be class president. He can barely take care of his own plants, how’s he supposed to take care of a class of danger-prone teenagers? Besides, the position should go to someone who’ll need it on their resume—Izuku doesn’t, so-

“Shut the fuck up, Deku! Just accept the stupid job and quit mumbling.”

Fine then. Momo gives him a sympathetic look when he stands beside her at the podium, and someone cheers in the back.

“Yeah!! Void president!!”

Wait, what? “You… You elected me for my quirk?”

There’s an awkward silence before Kirishima raises his hand. “I think you’d be a great leader. Your quirk has nothing to do with it.”

“You knew what you were doing during yesterday’s exercise, kero.”

“I agree about yesterday but like, you’ve gotta admit the void is good branding. It’s flashy.”

Izuku winces at Hagakure’s remark. “The quirk doesn’t make the hero. I’ll do my best, and I’m okay with being called the void or whatever, but it has nothing to do with my leadership”

“As expected of class Prez!!”

Izuku hopes some of them got the message.
At lunch Izuku drags Shinsou over to where Uraraka is sitting, and waves to Iida shortly after. Maybe it is forcing the future, but he wants his friends to be… his friends. Kirishima has been abducted by Mina, but he’ll catch up later.

“Hey, Midoriya,” Shinsou says. “So you’re really okay with being called the void.”

“I mean yeah? One of my friends makes really bad void jokes so I’m used to it.”

Shinsou smirks. “Good to know.”

“I’m not good at puns, but I’ll try and think of some,” Uraraka chipps in.

“Why do I feel like I might regret this?”

Shinsou rolls his eyes. “No idea. Hey Uraraka, guess what fills the void.”

“What?”

Shinsou points at Midoriya’s lunch, and Uraraka cracks up. Izuku feels personally offended.

“Oh my god I regret everything.”

“He’s not… technically wrong,” Iida offers apologetically. “Although I myself am not very good at wordplay.”

“Oh, no.” Shinsou smirks, looking eerily like a shonen hero character. “This is but 1% of my power.”

Izuku’s not responding to that abomination of the English language, so he settles for glaring across the table. Uraraka seems to pick up that something unforgivable was said and changes the topic.

“By the way, Iida! I keep thinking I’ve seen your quirk before.”

Iida’s shoulders slump slightly. “I was trying to hide it, but if you must know- “there’s a sudden gleam in his glasses- “I come from a long line of heroes! Do you know the hero Ingenium?”

“Yeah!” Somehow Izuku makes it sound excited, and not like he’s seen that exact person killed multiple times. “He’s your brother, right?”

Iida frowns. “People don’t generally know.”

“O-oh.” Izuku wants to slam his head through the table, breaking it and knocking himself out instantly. “Sorry, I shouldn’t have said anything.”

Uraraka squints at him. “Are you a hero-stalker?”

Shinsou does a spit take and literally sprays out his water onto the table. Iida jumps at once into a lecture on sanitation and eating spaces, but Shinsou just wipes his mouth.

“Yeah, Midoriya keeps notes on ‘em. Hes got ten whole pages on a certain underground hero.”

“Not helping,” Izuku hisses, passing a napkin. Louder he adds, “It’s part of my quirk. Sorry about
that, I didn’t mean to pry or sound creepy, it’s just that I’ve… uh.”

Uraraka interrupts, saving him. “What even is your quirk, anyway? We didn’t see much of it at today’s practice.”

Or not saving him.

“O-oh. It’s uh…” He looks at Shinsou who blinks back drolly. Some help he is. Guess it’s time to bite the bullet. “It’s called World Travel. I can go to different dimensions. If I say something I shouldn’t know or make assumptions—”

Iida stills at this, regarding him like he’s a new person. Uraraka practically explodes. “Wait! So have you met all of us before? What was I like?”

“Yeah, sorry if that makes things awkward. And you’re a bit taller here? Or shorter? I don’t know, I’m sorry. I think you’re physically a bit stronger here, though… definitely a little more terrifying,” Izuku adds under his breath.

Uraraka glances down at her hands doubtfully.

“And Iida, you look taller, and your voice is clearer? Like it wasn’t hard to hear earlier, but it’s much more pronounced? Oh, and Shinsou—“

His friend’s mouth splits into a trademarked Aizawa smile.

“You uh… You’re a bit more okay with talking to people? You’re more chaotic for sure.”

It’s at precisely this moment that alarms begin to blare. Izuku doesn’t hesitate, years of anxiety for moments like this helping him dive under the table. He grabs the person closest to him- Uraraka- and pulls her under as well. He opens a portal with one hand, ready to pull everyone through if there’s a villain.

Transporting that many people might kill him, but they’d survive. One for the price of many are still fair odds.

“Um…. Deku?” Uraraka rests a gentle hand on his shoulder. “I think we’re safe, but thanks.”

Izuku blinks, taking in the cafeteria. People are running around, trying to get to the nearest exit. There’s no villain, no structural damage. Just panicking students.

Shinsou is also under the table, eyes wide and alarmed, focusing from detail to detail lightning-fast. Iida has gotten up and is directing students confidently. Beside him, Uraraka doesn’t look too ruffled, but Izuku can’t really tell.

Iida continues yelling something, and ushers them to the nearest exit, but Izuku can’t hear much. The cotton in his head is too thick.

He’s never seen this before, never been warned about it. He’s been to a lot of worlds, but this is new. They’re pressed into a stampede of students, thick enough that if someone falls, they’ll be trampled. Izuku finds himself near the window, and presses against it like his life depends on it. The cool glass grounds him.

A hand grabs his arm.

Izuku panics before he catches sight of a familiar face. Shinsou looks unbelievably stressed with all
the people and noise.

*Oh. It’s not Crusty-fuck.* Izuku can’t hear, but he follows his friend’s pointing to outside where the press is crowding over the lawn.

A blur of motion catches his eye, and Izuku watches as Iida spins through the air to the exit sign and screams…. Something. Whatever it is, the students disperse and Izuku is able to crumple into a stressed little puddle. Beside him, Shinsou does roughly the same.

*I hate crowds,* Izuku signs, not sure if anyone will be able to understand.

*Same,* Shinsou adds, his mouth thin with displeasure.

They sit and breathe, and slowly the cotton in Izuku’s head filters away just enough. Uraraka and Iida sit nearby, keeping worried classmates away.

They’re okay. Everyone’s safe.

When they get back to the classroom, Izuku stands at the podium with shaky knees and sweaty palms. He’s still too out of it to really be doing this, but it’s important.

“Uh, everyone?” The class quiets, and Izuku continues. “I’d like to make an announcement as class president. My first and last, I guess. I, uh… I hereby pass the title of Class President over to Iida.”

In the back, Iida’s face morphs from comically surprised to ethereally blessed.

“He acted and led well today, and I think we’ll need that when everything goes south, so…. Iida, lead us well. You’ll do the better job of keeping us safe.”

The class cheers, dissolving into a chant of “emergency exit Iida,” and Izuku collapses into his chair.

Shinsou pokes him with his pencil eraser. “Hey. Midoriya.”

“Yeah?”

“You said ‘when everything goes south.’ That’s uh, not really the best for anxiety.”

Izu knows exactly what Shinsou is asking, but he really, really doesn’t want to answer if he doesn’t have to. He signs instead, because talking is for people who have emotional energy, and he no longer fits in that category.

*What are you asking?*

*Will everything go to shit?* Shinsou signs the ‘will’ with larger movements.

Izu makes a finger spelled character “u” and moves it in a spiral to the right. *Sorry.*

Shinsou frowns for a moment, and sits back, gestures small and muted as their classmates quiet down. *You should tell the teachers.*

*Can’t. Quirk doesn’t let me.*

Shinsou raises an eyebrow, and Izuku shrugs. He can’t really say more than that without sounding like some cryptic doom herald, so this will have to do.

He turns around to watch as Aizawa carries on with the lesson, but Shinsou’s eyes burn into the back
of his head. It’s making it hard to focus on the lecture.

Wait.

No, that’s something else.

There’s a world pressing at the back of his mind to be seen and Izuku does not want to miss this lecture. It’s on the creation of sidekick policies! Arguably one of the coolest and most overlooked moments in history!

Izuku grits his teeth, focusing on the slides. He can do this. He can force the world back if he just tries hard enough-

There is nothing but silence.

Silence in the streets, where people walk together. Strangers and loved ones alike are bonded by the loss descending on all of them.

Silence in the alleys where even the lost and criminal wait together. No crime is committed when too much damage to society has been done.


Midoriya stands in the deserted rubble. All Might had known his time would end. They’d discussed it after the sports festival, and he’d mentally prepared for the passing of his father and hero. They both had.

He hadn’t been ready.

There is nothing but silence as the world morns.

Izuku stares resolutely at the blackboard. He refuses to cry in class. Class continues as though nothing has changed. To them, it hasn’t.

Two worlds with similar stories in under 24 hours. That’s too rare to be coincidence.

“Dude.”

Izuku glances back at Shinsou’s hissed whisper. Shinsou signs subtly, so Aizawa doesn’t catch it.

Are you crying?

Sorry, Izuku replies for the second time today. Sidekicks, you know? Some never get their own agency and that’s super sad.

Shinsou rolls his eyes and settles back. Aizawa glances over, subtly raising an eyebrow when he sees Izuku wiping his eyes.
When class is out, Izuku bolts. He’s really not in the mood to joke around with his friends. They’ll just assume he has work to do, anyway. Izuku hurries up to the teachers lounge, hoping and worrying in equal measures he’ll run into a specific teacher.

His luck holds- Izuku rounds a corner at top speed and immediately crashes into All Might’s smaller form.

“Young Midoriya, are you quite all right?”

Izuku hops up, rubbing his nose. “Yeah, I was actually looking for you.”

“Well, lucky I was here.” All Might leads the way to the teachers room, and Izuku hurries to follow. “What might be the problem?”

“Well, I was, uh. I was traveling yesterday and met someone…”

“Oh?”

“We talked and I wanted to, uh. Say thanks”

“Oh. You’re welcome? Is everything all right, young Midoriya?”

“It’s fine, just… thanks. I realized yesterday that I never really said it earlier, so I’m saying it now. I would have been a vigilante or worse if you hadn’t been following the slime villain, so thank you for being there.”

“… Of course. It’s a heroes job to work for the people.”

“All- Mr. Yagi.” Izuku stops in the hallway, hoping his mentor will remember these words later if he can’t stop the future. “Thank you for being a hero.”

All Might pauses, and something akin to realization passes through his eyes. “You saw the future, didn’t you?”

“Sorry.”

“Don’t apologize for the future, it hasn’t happened yet.”

“It probably won’t happen.” He’d known things would go downhill, but… “I was a villain in that world, so the timeline is different.”

Lies.

“If you can talk about it, I’d like to know.”

Izuku knows he can’t technically talk about it, but he should settle this.

When he nods All Might changes direction, moving to a room used for intern consultations. It’s an unsaid rule that meetings there contain delicate and often classified information. In short, it’s a good place for not being overheard.

Izuku trails after the hero, turning the events he saw over in his mind. He does not want to have this conversation, much less face the facts. He needs to, though. They probably both do.
“First off, are you all right,” All Might asks when they reach the room. He heads over to the tea, starting water to boil.

“I’m fine,” Izuku says automatically. “It probably won’t happen, anyway.”

He needs to stop lying like that.

All Might doesn’t buy it. “I worked closely with a prescience quirk in the past, and we’d often discuss the future. Your quirk is very different, but it sounds like whatever happened…”

“It was a lot,” Izuku says. “I can’t talk about much – my quirk doesn’t usually let me spill about the future before it happens.”

“You never mentioned that.”

“Sorry. It’s a weird quirk.”

All Might shrugs. “I’d recommend getting it on file. The teachers here are some of the best, but we can’t help if we don’t know.”

Izuku really does not want his quirk on paper. Mom has worked hard to keep it as ‘Teleportation’ ever since reading the first letter he’d brought home after traveling. Neither of them needs villains and sleeper agents in the government finding out he can access different dimensions.

“…I’ll think about it.”

The water heater turns off and All Might pours them both a mug of tea. It’s the cheap powdered kind. “My boy, would you like to talk about what you saw? It seems to have upset you, and time is a tricky matter.”

Izuku really, really, really doesn’t want to answer this one. He phrases and rephrases his answer until he has something the null will probably let him say. “… I saw a fight with a really bad… person. And it was- it didn’t end well.”

All Might grips his tea with white knuckles. “Did this person have a name?”

“I don’t think anybody knows it,” Izuku says, and he watches All Might’s face morph from realization, to grief, and finally to placid calm. The last one scares him. The last one means it’s going to happen, and he really doesn’t want that.

“You already know,” Izuku whispers, and the room seems suddenly too big, too empty, too quiet for this kind of conversation. “Of course, you knew. You’ve worked with Sir Nighteye.”

All Might doesn’t ask how he knows the name or their connection. He just nods. Izuku doesn’t want that response.

“We thought he was dead after the last battle.”

“All for One,” Izuku murmurs, the null doesn’t stop him from saying it. All Might startles so bad he coughs up blood. Izuku pushes the tissue box across the table hurriedly.

“You know about him?”

“We’ve talked.” Izuku waves off All Might’s concerned look. “Long story; I’m fine, and he looks like a-”
He breaks off, coughing and mentally curses the null. Come on, he can talk about All For One but not about how the man looks like a boiled potato? *What the fuck kind of logic is this?* All Might scoots the tea closer across the table.

“- he looks like *shit.*”

All Might looks positively scandalized at the English swear, but Izuku can talk again so he’ll take it. Besides, he’s heard his teacher use the exact same word over a papercut.

“I saw him fighting you, and it…”

“It didn’t end well.”

“No. it didn’t. Like I said, it probably won’t happen the exact same way, if at all.”

“I see. I’m sorry you had to witness such a future.” All Might sets his tea aside and sits up straight. “It’s time I was honest with you, my boy. It’s clear that the uncertainty of the matter has you very worried, so I’d like to explain simply. There are very few people aware of these facts, and on campus only Nezdu and Recovery Girl are aware.”

Izuku thinks he knows what’s coming. He hopes its something- anything else. Hearing it means it’s true here, too. All Might’s limited life span isn’t a constant, but it’s a possibility that’s all too real.

“This is the true story of One for All-“

*Oh thank god.*

Izuku wheezes in his relief, cutting off All Might’s speech.

“Are you all right, young Midoriya?”

“Yes- yeah, I’m fine I just… I thought you’d be saying something else, sorry. Let me just-“ he downs half the mug of tea, places both hands over his face, and tries not to cry in relief.

“Y-young Midoriya are you really all right?”

Izuku nods without moving his hands. “I just thought… *cough*” He swallows back the null’s presence and forces the words out shakily. “It’s just I thought something really bad would be true this time, and you aren’t talking about that, so-“

All Might’s been awfully quiet. Izuku looks up so see his teacher with an expression as if he’s at a funeral.

“All Might?”

“How much do you know, young Midoriya?”

Izuku frowns, counting off the facts. “I know about All for One, and I have some theories about the origins. Mainly that they were brothers, the quirk was forced, and that All for One wants it back, though I’m not sure why. They change world to world but I’ve met an original holder of One for All. The thing is, every time it’s so different that the events aren’t set in stone.”

“I’m afraid you’re correct on all points.”

Izuku hates being right. This also opens up a whole new list of problems. “Does Kirishima know?”
All Might shakes his head. “I’d like to give him some time to adjust to the quirk first. Additionally, I’d like to tell him myself once he’s ready.”

“I haven’t told him, but he’s ready now. You should tell him before the sports festival, at least.”

“Of course. He’ll need to know well before then. I’m rather concerned about what you thought I was going to say, though.”

“Oh.”

All Might sits as if nothing is wrong, and Izuku tries to find a way to phrase this properly. He can’t exactly go up to his favorite hero and say… all of this. There’s no real way to go up to your favorite hero and announce, ‘hey there’s a ton of worlds out there where you’re dying from your injuries and it might be true here too.’

Yeah, that’s not happening. Izuku’s not even sure he’d get that far, and he really isn’t a fan of coughing up sludge in front of the number one hero and his own personal idol.

“The thing is, I don’t know if it’s going to happen, and I don’t want to act like it’s real if it’s not.”

“It’s good that you know your limits, but this sounds close to denial. Would you like to talk to Hound Dog about it? He’s a gifted counselor, albeit quite bad at public speaking.”

Izuku shakes his head hurriedly. The fewer people who know about his quirk, the fewer people the League may target. It’s safer like this. There is one thing, though.

One question that will tell him if this worrying is all for nothing.

“I’ve got a question, and you may not like it and you really don’t have to answer, but I’m asking because I’d like to know so I can figure out the future more easily, and also because I’m a little worried-”

All Might laughs, holding up a hand to stop Izuku’s rambling. “It’s fine, my boy. I’m here so you can ask questions, after all.”

“Do you know how long you’re going to be an active hero?”

All Might freezes, staring at his tea which has long gone cold. Izuku doesn’t like that reaction. Maybe his mentor just hasn’t thought of retiring. The room is deadly quiet and Izuku loses track of how many seconds drag on before the hero clasps his hands with the finality of a judge.

“I suppose in some way I do owe you this much. The truth of the matter is…” No, wait- “I’m on borrowed time.”

No.

NO.

Izuku takes it like a punch to the gut. He knows he’s crying, but that doesn’t matter because it’s real, and he didn’t want it to be real but it is. All Might apologizes while Izuku cries, but it’s not his fault— it’s not the hero’s fault he’s in such poor health and he clearly hadn’t wanted to tell Izuku but he’d asked. It’s not All Might’s fault.

If anything, it’s Izuku’s.

He mentally adds All Might to the list of people he needs to save and chokes back the tears. All
Might comes over to awkwardly rub circles n his back, and fidgets nearby until his breathing is under control.

“I’m sorry,’ All Might says worriedly, and Izuku shakes his head.

“I asked. Who knows?”

“Nezdu, Recovery Girl. A close friend and some doctors. I haven’t told the staff, but Aizawa-san probably has some idea. I’ll tell Hound Dog today, so you can seek support from him without giving away information.”

“You don’t have to-“

“Young Midoriya. As a teacher I’m supposed to look out for the mental and physical health of my students. I failed at that today.”

Izuku snorts. “You sound like Aizawa Sensei.”

“Hm. Well. We may have talked recently.” All Might straightens up with all the confidence of someone who was lectured and doesn’t want to admit it. “He’s a very good teacher, you know. Has some very good points on lesson plans.”

Hitoshi is concerned for Midoriya. Normally he’d shove any problems to the back of his mind, go home and curl up in bed with cake and a cat, but something about today seemed off. He has known Midoriya for couple months and it’s already clear that his friend is a shit actor.

Midoriya looked pale today at lunch too, but the conversation in sign is more pressing.

“Hey, uh… Sensei?” Wow, that feels weird to say. Hitoshi hops up on a desk. He doesn’t care whose it is, honestly. It’s probably from that one stuck-up rich kid with fancy hair. Yeah, fuck that guy.

Eraserhead puts his papers away and waits. He’s the only person Hitoshi can ask questions to without feeling suffocated.

“Did you hear what Midoriya said today? When he made the announcement.”

“I heard it.”

Hitoshi kicks his feet against the desk, sorting out his thoughts. “I asked him what he meant by everything going to shit. He just kinda apologized.”

Eraserhead hunches his shoulders, burying his face in the capture weapon. “I can’t help unless he comes to me first. Japanese Board of Education passed that rule before quirks even existed.”

“He said his quirk doesn’t let him tell you.” Hitoshi absentmindedly rubs at the scar over his nose. “I’m worried.”

Five years ago he wouldn’t have admitted that.
“Interesting. Thank you for telling me,” Eraserhead says. “This counts as secondary reporting. I’ll talk to him tomorrow after the class trip, but there’s only so much the Board will let me say.”

“Thanks.”

He hasn’t saved them yet.

Eri, alone.

Iida and Ingenium, safe for now.

Todoroki, though he’s only got suspicions as to what’s wrong.

And now, All Might.

That’s a lot of people for someone who doesn’t even have a provisional license yet.

Izuku makes his way home with a list of names tumbling around in his head. They play on repeat right up until he opens the door, and Mom greets him with a hug and worried smile.

“You don’t have to talk about it,” she says, placing a salad in front of him. “Sometimes we just need time to think.”

“Thanks.”

Mom smiles back and disappears down the hallway. Being alone seems to make the apartment too loud in its silence, too big. He’s considering going looking for her when Mom pads back to the table, an old All Might blanket in her arms. She drops it over his shoulders without a word before returning to the kitchen to dish out her own meal.

Izuku tugs the comforting weight closer, feeling just a bit better.

“Tomorrow’s a new day,” Mom murmurs as she scoots her chair over and hugs him close. “I hear you’ve got a field trip?”

“Yeah. I think we’re working on rescue simulations tomorrow.”

“Already? They certainly move fast. You’ll have to tell me all about it.”

“Yeah.”

Tomorrow will be a new day.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s what you missed if you skipped the All Might convo: Izuku clarifies he's met OfA and Afo at least once for each but doesn't feel like its a big deal, All Might finds
out Izuku knows a Metric Shit Ton of secret history like quirk origins, and Izuku learns a thing and is like Shit I Havent Saved The Number One Hero Yet. Then he cries.

Hey!! if you got finals soon/now I hope you're drinking lots of water!!! eat a protein-filled breakfast if you can and look over notes before bed be that's when they stick in your brain rly well!! Get enough sleep!!! Don’t zone out on youtube or tumblr too much bc those suck time out of the day!! you can do it and I believe in you!!!channel lidas spirit and study like hell and then seek revenge against criminals!! Hydrate yourself!!

edit: reworded a minor detail

Please take care of yourself if its finals!! take care of yourself if its not finals!!
Izuku pushes open the door to Class 1A wearily. Recovery Girl finished healing his shoulder and he has very little intention of returning to her office anytime soon. Her lecture on training too soon with his shoulder was enough but coupled with the healing he’s exhausted. Adding in yesterday’s news leaves him barely awake enough to be at school. Izuku just wants to go home and faceplant into his bed.

He trudges over to his desk and buries his face in both arms. Maybe he can sleep before class.

This would be easier if he could just nap in the null. There has to be a world made for napping out there. One with big blankets and pillows and maybe even hot chocolate.

Voices echo from inside the classroom- Kaminari briefly flirts with Uraraka and steps back when she expresses disinterest. Guess he’s more respectful Here. Shinsou is talking with Hagakure about something, though it seems fairly one-sided.

Izuku buries his head under his arms further, trying not to think about how he was almost class president. He’s lying to them, for crying out loud. He’s letting them believe his quirk is teleportation. Sure, some of them know. Not everyone. Maybe he should just stop trying to hide it. Maybe he should tell them.

Kacchan arrives and Izuku stops breathing for a second when explosions rattle the desks. He needs to think of something else. Or sleep.

They’re supposed to go on a field trip of some sort today. As it is, he has barely enough time to snooze at his desk before they’re herded outside.

Iida takes to directing people onto the busses with a particular zest for life. “Alright, everybody - line up according to class names for maximum efficiency! Let us make the most of this learning experience!”

Iizu boards and drops into a seat next to Asui. He’s just in time to see Iida board last, take one look at the bus layout, and practically cry.

“It’s ok, prez,” Kirishima says from Izuku’s other side. “It’s uh, still a bus.”

With that, they’re off. Asui- no, Tsu puts a finger to her chin. “I tend to say what I think. Kirishima, your quirk reminds me of All Might.”

Kirishima freezes, but Izuku laughs. “His quirk is pretty different, though. Sure you don’t mean his personality?”
Kirishima groans. “Midoriya, all the respect, you’re my best bro, love ya forever…”

“But?” Izuku smiles innocently.

“But you know exactly what you’re doing."

Izuku shrugs, and Ojiro looks up from his phone.

“Speaking of personality, I bet you’re the hard-working type, Midoriya.”

His sputtering is cut off by a laugh from across the aisle. Sero elbows Kaminari, who looks affronted.

“You’re personality is like, Comic sans: Electric boogaloo.”

“Excuse you, I am Times New Roman, at least.”

“Yeah, if that’s true then I’m Papyrus. What’s your point?” Sero points to Kacchan. “Better than him at least.”

“What the fuck you just say ‘bout me, Soysauce?”

“Dude.” Kaminari gives a look. “It’s kinda telling that we’ve known you for less than a week and know your personality is like garbage marinated in sewage.”

Tsu ribbits softly. “Back to quirks, yours seems unusual, Midoriya.”

“It’s really not.” If they keep talking about this, Izuku might have to make a decision. He may have to tell them the truth and deal with the fall out. Maybe it’s better if he tells his classmates early on. They’ll have time to adjust to the idea of other dimensions before everything goes to shit. Besides, he should probably talk to Aizawa about it.

“Dude,” Kaminari says, “Warping quirks are super rare. No wonder you’re in 1A.”

Shinsou, on Kaminari’s other side, snorts. “Quirks mean jack shit unless they’re pretty like blasty’s.”

“IS THAT A COMPLIMENT OR DO YOU WANNA GO, MIND-FUCK.“

“He’s right, I barely made it in.” Izuku clasps his hands. Maybe if he says it now, it’ll be over with. Besides, maybe it’ll distract from the earlier All Might comment. “It’s not teleportation, anyway. I visit different timelines- or dimensions I guess, so the teleporting’s more like a side effect.”

There’s a moment of silence, and Izuku keeps his eyes glued to the floor of the bus.

Kacchan’s voice rings out and Izuku flinches back into his seat. “Are you still spouting that bullsh*t? We aren’t five, you know--“

“Bakugo, sit down.” Aizawa’s voice is mild from the front of the bus but it slices through the air like a knife in butter. “Dimension travel quirks exist, though extremely rarely.”

Izuku’s eyes snap up, laser focusing on the teacher, as Aizawa continues. Most of the class are staring at Aizawa as if he just claimed aliens are real, but Todoroki is looking at Izuku like he’s mothman and Mina seems ready to jump out of her seat.

“I’ve met and warped with one before. If used properly, they can be powerful tools for heroics and information gathering. On that note, all quirks are tools for whatever an individual chooses. I expect mutual respect in this class, understood?”
Everyone mumbles an affirmative before Shinsou flips off Kacchan and explosions redirect the bus’s attention.

Izuku’s mind is running a mile a minute. He’s never met others like him beyond the Lonely Owl crowd, but if Aizawa has traveled with someone, he must have trusted them. Was it someone else?

Mina slides across the bus to wedge herself between Izuku and Kirishima. She’s lucky—Iida and Aizawa are distracted by the commotion.

“Hey- hey Midoriya, you’re my absolute home-slice bread-slice bestie, right?”

Izuku stares at her, still caught off guard by the revelation that his teacher has traveled. “No?”

Kirishima chokes on his laughter, and Mina elbows him subtly. “Okay, but I got a real quick question: how likely am I to survive a zombie apocalypse? Like there’s gotta be a zombie apocalypse dimension like in the movies y’know?”

“Dude, you don’t have to tell her—”

“C’mon, Kiri! You can’t expect me to know there are dimensions and not ask.”

“I’ve only seen a couple zombie apocalypses.” The bus falls silent and Izuku keeps his head down, hoping his hair will hide his discomfort at the attention. “I- I mean, when someone with a quirk like mine finds a wor- a dimension that’s not safe, we kind of avoid it? So I haven’t been to many like that.”

“And?” Mina looks like she might explode.

…and I think I saw you blow up a house.”

Mina whoops and Izuku tries not to think about how Todoroki is staring at him like he’s an exciting lab specimen. Kirishima seems to pick up on his anxiety and redirects the conversation smoothly. He has the best friends.

Now that he has time to think, Izuku refocuses on Aizawa.

World travelers all but vanished around the time he was born—some dying world that most of them got caught up in. Whoever Aizawa knew probably vanished along with them. The teacher catches Izuku’s eye and raises an eyebrow, breaking him out of his thoughts. Right, it’s not his business. Still, the information worms its way back into his thoughts.

The other travelers probably don’t know who it was. They couldn’t even access his world from the time he got his quirk up until his story started. Before then? Eraserhead is a recent hero, only active for around a decade.

None of the information fits.

The thoughts buzz around in his head, only growing more confusing. When they’re getting off the bus, Izuku has a chance to ask.

“Aizawa Sensei? Um, which world— uh, dimension— did you visit? Who went with you?”

Aizawa’s expression remains impassive. “My old informant called it Lost Voice Lost Home.”

Izuku looks for Shinsou in the crowd reflexively—*he was okay, he was safe, good.* When he turns back, Aizawas mouth is a thin line. They both know what happened there. They both know the other
probably saw what happened afterwards. Neither of them want to talk about it.

“I assume you know better than to tell people things that aren’t in this future.”

“I know, sir.”

“On that note, we need to adjust your file. It says you have a delayed teleportation quirk.”

Oh. *Shit.* “We, uh. We’ve been avoiding villain attention. Because of my quirk.”

“Do you have time to meet about this after school?”

"Yes?" Izuku does *not* want to have that conversation, but Aizawa takes his words as confirmation instead of hesitance and wanders off to the gates before them. He’ll worry about it later. Right now, he desperately needs some time to focus on anything else.

Izuku runs to find the others, and if he sticks closer to Shinsou for his own peace of mind, then so be it.

13 meets them at USJ, and discusses something with Aizawa, holding up three fingers. Izuku’s read the news- he knows what’s going on when All Might’s name is mentioned- but that’s fine. It’s probably better that the hero rest, anyway.

Before the class gets restless, the teachers lead them inside.

Shinsou pokes him as they head to the doors. “You look spooked.”

“Oh- it’s nothing. Just thinking about what Aizawa said-“

Something’s wrong.

Izuku breaks off his reply, staring up at the doors. He doesn’t know why, but something about this feels wrong. Shinsou nudges him again to keep walking. Izuku goes, but the nagging feeling only gets stronger with each step towards the building. What is he missing? *What’s going on?*

“Midoriya?”

Uraraka is saying something about 13 - they must be her favorite hero. Why can’t he focus on that? On the worried look Shinsou is directing at him? Why can’t he listen to Aizawa and 13’s conversation or any of his classmates? He pushes through, continuing into the building-

*He shouldn’t be here.* The thought hits Izuku the second he walks through the doors, slamming into him like a wave of dread. He shouldn’t be here, *he shouldn’t be here, the class shouldn’t be here, Aizawa and 13 shouldn’t be here,*

None of them should be here.

USJ looks strikingly similar to a place he’s seen in bits and pieces for two years now. It’s called The Round Building in his notes- an impression from the first time he noticed it in multiple worlds.

Everyone dies in this room on another world.

Everyone in the school dies *because* of this room sometimes.

There *will* be villains here. 99% chance of attack. Mineta was the most likely to die, but he’s not here now. Shinsou is. Shinsou might die today. They all could die today, and *he hasn’t saved them yet.*
The sound of doors shutting behind him echo around the building, and a high-pitched ringing muffles out 13’s announcement.

“Deku?” Uraraka’s voice cut’s through the panic, and Izuku realizes he’s hyperventilating. Ah, there’s the adrenaline. Shinsou is on his other side, concerned as Uraraka reaches towards him. “Are you okay?”

“No.” None of this is okay.

He darts towards Aizawa, practically cashing into the teacher.

“Midoriya, what-“ It’s either the look on his face or some sixth sense that has Aizawa pulling on his goggles.

“13, evacuate the students.”

Izuku should protest. He should warn his teacher that in almost every world Eraserhead ends up crushed against the concrete, but he physically cannot talk.

It’s not that his mouth is numb this time. He just. Can’t. Talk.

Eraserhead launches himself down the steps, capture weapon unfurling itself. He’s halfway down before the space splits into a dark purple line and the first wave of villains steps out.

Izuku doesn’t say anything.

He’s used to being silenced by his quirk. He’s not used to his head emptying and the dull pressure of fear taking over like a slow, billowing cloud. It’s the first time this has ever happened. He should warn them- should tell Iida to run or Hagakure to escape- but he physically cannot.

And that scares him. He can’t talk, so he runs.

He runs after his classmates. His friends. Distantly, he’s aware that sounds are softer, and that his line of sight is slightly higher than it should be, like hes watching himself through a VR headset.

They almost make it, too. Jiro is inches away from the door when a flickering portal opens. She’s not able to halt- not many are- and falls through. The portal shifts, twisting, until only a quarter of the class is left.

Beside him, Shouji’s hand morphs into a mouth. “One of yours?”

Izuku can only shake his head.

13 plants their feet on the ground and raises one arm. “You’ll never get away with this.”

The villain chuckles, about to reply, when Kirishima and Kacchan yell, throwing themselves forward to attack. The portal simply stretches, and both of them are gone.

21 people to save today.

Izuku’s breath stutters.

19 left.

13 opens one of the capsules on their hands. A vortex appears, sucking the mist into their hand.
“That’s the trouble with rescue heroes,” the villain mutters, and Izuku recognizes him. “You’re rusty in combat.”

A ragged purple portal opens, and 13 screams as they’re attacked with their own quirk.

Izuku has always had mixed feelings about this villain, but that changes now. Kirogiri can keep the villains in line or make things worse, depending on the world. Izuku decides he doesn’t like him here.

“I have a plan,” Yaoyorozu murmurs, “Iida, Midoriya. You have to get out.”

“We cannot leave you all-“

“Okay.” Izuku cuts off Iida, not really thinking about his words. “I don’t think they know our quirks.”

There’s around an 95% chance, if he remembers his notes right. He can’t say it anymore- whatever let him talk is gone.

“Get help, prez.” Ojiro moves into a fighting stance. Behind him, Sero nods.

“We’re counting on you!”

Iida nods as well, ready. Yaoyorozu whispers directions, while Kurogiri monologues something about hurting children and ethics. Izuku’s heard it before, and he can’t really bring himself to care when his classmates and teachers are being actively hurt.

Iida doesn’t like the plan; they can all see it. He’ll run, though. Because he always tries to save them.

“Go,” 13 gasps, and that’s what does it.

Izu hasn’t saved them yet. So he runs at the villain. He can at least provide one last distraction. Beside him, Iida thunders forward. They meet Kurogiri together.

Kurogiri chuckles. “I think we all know how this will end.”

A misty portal opens, and Izuku shoves Iida away, entering it alone. One of his classmates speaks behind him.

“Yeah, mist-guy. We do.” He can see Sero and Uraraka attack before dark mist takes over. The portal closes, but that’s fine.

Izuku knows that trick, too.

When the portal opens over the flood zone, Izuku allows himself to let go of Here. He’s gone before Iida slams open the doors and races away.

Izuku makes himself as areo-dynamic as possible in the null. It feels like a snowstorm, stinging his face and forcing him to squint his eyes, but that’s okay. He just needs to be fast.

The closest world isn’t exactly one of Izuku’s favorites- some film noir version of Class 1A where quirks don’t exist- but it’s also the fastest.

He hits the monochrome world head-first, a perfect circle opening for him.
Satou was one of the best on the police force: he’s trustworthy and honest. The kind of officer you’d want to keep around, because nobody was better at keeping a team together naturally; he could look at a squad and name the flavor of cake each member had on their last birthday. The perfect guy for run-down detectives with not enough time and too many bills to have on the team.

He was checking his phone for the updates on the Yuuei Case when something out the window caught his eye.

High above the night skyline, a lone figure plummeted from the stars. It twisted gracefully like a dancer before disappearing again.

Satou returned to his phone. Sometimes life couldn’t be explained, but that’s for the best.

Izuku rockets through the null again. He slows as much as he can when approaching his target, trying to piece out images of UA from the patterns dancing across. There- He rockets towards what is definitely a classroom, and tumbles through, not bothering to reorient feet-first. It’s a mistake.

He hits a desk back-first before crashing to the ground, stunned. There are stars in his eyes, and everything hurts, but when the vision clears he is very much in UA.

There’s a student with a shock of blond hair and bright eyes saying something, but Izuku can’t quite hear. He still can’t talk much, either.

The student frowns before turning and saying something. It gives Izuku a chance to look around and realize that he just interrupted a third-year class.

His attention is snapped back when Present Mic taps his shoulder and signs.

Is sign better?


Present Mic freezes, and seconds later he’s shouting something. It’s all dull noise to Izuku, but the students hasten to obey. One with a speed quirk dashes out of the room, and the student whose desk Izuku had landed on picks him up. They’re probably taking him to Recovery Girl. Present Mic is on the phone, waving his hands animatedly.

He wants to say he can walk, that he doesn’t need to be carried. He also wants to lecture the student on not picking up people who don’t have a say in the matter. Still, considering anxiety and that he... did crash land on his desk...

Izuku resigns himself to being carried. Along the way, the panic lifts just enough that he can form words again.

“W-will they get... there in t-t-time?” He has to concentrate to form the sounds. It’s an uncannily similar feeling to stuttering. Better to stick with short sentences.

The student flashes him a reassuring smile. “Sure thing! Can you hear me?”

Izuku nods before shifting. The student gets the hint and sets him down, chattering all the while and somehow also keeping a wary eye out in case Izuku falls again.
“I’m Togata Mirio! The teachers are on their way, and All Might has gone on ahead! Didi you hear the announcement earlier?”

“N-no?”

Togata frowns briefly before his sunny smile returns. He provides a constant stream of information on the way, filling Izuku in- Iida arrived a minute after he did, and students have been ordered back to their classrooms.

They get to the nurse’s room only to find it empty. The placard showing where to find Recovery Girl has a hastily written ‘USJ’ on it, but the door’s open, so Mirio busies about finding a first aid kit. Izuku watches distantly.

“I… I’m going b-back.”

Togata’s smile falls. “It’s better to wait here. The heroes are already on the way and going back would just give another target to the villains.”

Izuku likes Togata- He’s pretty similar to All Might in some ways and explains his logic to Izuku rather than giving a simple ‘no.’ It makes his choice all the harder.

There’s a very specific way he needs to play his cards to make sure nobody dies today.

“Sor… ry.” Izuku dashes to the window and Togata moves with incredible reflexes. Still, he’s expecting Izuku to aim for the window itself. He doesn’t know Izukus quirk.

When Izuku trips and falls into the null right at Togatas feet, it takes the third year by surprise. A shout of alarm is cut off when the portal closes.

He rockets back to the film noir world, enters it-

A figure twisted through the sky again before disappearing.

This time, Satou reached into his desk for the small flask of whiskey he keeps for such occasions. Conspiracies are superintendent Todoroki’s thing, not his.

Izuku falls back though the null at lightspeed. The USJ is easier to find now that he’s traveled from there, and he tumbles out into the center of a warzone.

Someone- it might be Kaminari- is cackling. The sound dies out quickly, replaced with panicked yelling. Villains are knocked out everywhere, and two of his classmates are hiding near the water’s edge. It looks like Tsu and Shinsou- they need to leave.

Nearby in the central plaza, Eraserhead and a villain with hands covering him are fighting.

Any advantage, anything to get them out, is useful now. Izuku is reminded of his notes.

Round Building constants:

- Villains- all low-level thugs, besides Shiragaki, Kirogiri, Nomu, (or dad, or me)
- People scattered. Todoroki usually mountainside, Tsuyu in flood zone
- Tenko? Tomura? Is there
Izuku’s been waiting for that last one to lose the word “almost.” Hopefully today won’t be the day.

He catches three words before one of the villains- a hulking beast that’s not quite human- appears over Eraserhead.

The word “Nomu” comes to mind.

“Take him out.”

**BONUS SCENE: SHIPWRECK ZONE**

“I don’t like this, kero.” Tsu checks over the side of the boat. About 20 villains wait in the water below. “They’re too quiet.”

Hitoshi knows he looks like a drenched cat, but he directs that fury to the villain who dumped them in the water. It’s only thanks to Tsu that he’s not dead right now. “They haven’t attacked us yet.”

“It’s like they’re waiting for us to attack first. I don’t think they know our quirks.”

“… you’re right.” Watching the villains, Shinsou’s brain knits together the facts. “My quirk depends on surprise, and they’re letting us have the first move.”

“I have an idea. How many people can you take at once?”

Shinsou grins crazily. “I was born to fight god. Depends on how many you need.”

Shinsou leaps up on the railing of the boat, letting out a ear-spitting shriek. “WHICH ONE OF YOU FUCK-UGLY CHERUBS WANTS TO DIE FIRST TODAY?”

It works- villains shout back angrily, and he activates his quirk on them one by one.

“What the fuck.”

“Who do you think you are?”

“Me, I’LL FIGHT!”

“Huh, think you can take me?”
More villains fall under his control, and Shinsou screams his next question. “I AM WITHOUT GOD OR MASTER!!! NOBODY CAN TELL ME NOT TO SUMMON DARKENSS TODAY SO WHO SHALL I HUNT FIRST??”

“Woah, okay chill out-“

“Hey uh, kid. That’s kinda-“

“Wanna go, short-stack?”

Shinsou grins wildly, a headache blooming in his temples, but a good half of the villains are under his control. This can work. “BUCKLE UP BUTTERCUPS, BECAUSE MY BITCH SWITCH HAS BEEN FLIPPED! Restrain the other villains; attack them if you can’t.”

The water levels begin to drop while the rest of the villains turn on each other. It won’t last long – the villains will snap out of it soon- but all they need is a distraction.

Tsu has been busy finding two fire extinguishers from the ship. Handing one to Shinsou, she took his capture weapon wrapped in one hand and the other fire extinguisher in the other hand.

With that, at Shinsou’s nod in confirmation, she jumps out and begins swimming for shore. Shinsou, ready with his capture weapon tied to his waist and pin already pulled on the fire extinguisher, let himself be tugged along. The icy water was less of a shock when he’s ready for it.

When a villain comes after them, they get a face full of bubbles that clears once the students are already halfway to safety. Underwater fire extinguishers make excellent smokescreens.

Chapter End Notes

not sure if ive said this but im rlly thinking of changing schedule to updating every other week for quality's sake. Maybe past like,,,,, uh chap 17(?) chap 18?? I'll start doing that. not sure tho. Imk thoughts

Edit: fixed spelling and clarified that Shinsou flipped off Bakugo rather than the entire bus
“Take him out.”

Izuku doesn’t think before sprinting. He doesn’t hesitate before jumping forward, willing himself to outpace the Nomu as it rushes towards his teacher.

It’s almost in slow motion as he wraps one hand around Eraserhead’s sleeve, only for the teacher to redirect him, shoving Izuku further away just before the Nomu arrives.

Eraserhead is still turning to face the monster when it attacks.

Blood splatters the concrete and the hero lies crumpled on the ground. The Nomus eye snaps to Izuku as he stumbles back.

Beyond them in the lake, Shinsou has turned white.

Izuku scrambles to his feet. He hopes Aizawa is okay, but there’s no getting to him right now.

The monster lunges again, and Izuku squeezes his eyes shut. He feels it hit, but when he opens his eyes, he’s surrounded by swirling galaxies and blazing starlight. The Null. He needs to get back.

It’s desperation that makes him reach back for his home world. He knows it won’t do anything, because he needs to enter another world to get back in.

It’s a shock when he makes contact.

Izuku manages to grab the world, and pulls himself in, barely managing to turn feet-first in time. He feels himself break back through into USJ, and there’s Eraserhead in front of him and Nomu behind him.

By the fountain, Shigaraki scoffs. “We’ve got ourselves a cheater. Maybe it’s time to wipe out some of All Might’s pride.”

The villain tilts his head, eyeing Izuku as though he’s an interesting bug to be squashed. “Yes, that will do. Nomu. Squash it.”

Izuku scrambles away, opening a portal and practically tripping in his haste to get away. As he falls, Izuku tightens his mental grip on Home. Time to try something new.

As he passes through, he grabs the edge. The portal closes with the Nomu right outside it, exposed brain and gaping mouth close enough to touch.

The null’s silence is deafening by comparison.
Izuku is floating in the space-not-space, one hand holding onto the giant orb of home. On closer look, the world is actually made up of incredibly thin, wrapped thread. He’s grabbed a couple strands, but they seem strong enough for his own weight.

It would be peaceful, if not for the pounding in Izuku’s head and adrenaline in his veins.

When he parts it into a small gap, inside is the USJ and- wow.

Something about seeing his world with most of the color leached and moving sluggishly makes him feel sick.

“Oh, gross,” Izuku mutters, then gasps, nearly letting go when his voice works.

The Nomu has turned slowly, twisting back to his portal before lumbering beyond. It must be moving quickly, but from out here it’s at barely even a fraction of the earlier speed.

Beyond it, Eraserhead moves subtly, and Izuku feels nauseous.

He swings around, watching the Null until his stomach settles. Then a simple twist, and he pushes both feet back into Home. This time, he parts the strings an inch to the side of where his last portal opened.

The result is him tumbling into the USJ landslide zone.

Todoroki whirls around. Every villain is frozen solid, frost encapsulating the entire zone. He relaxes slightly when Izuku almost slips on the ice.

“Todoroki-“

“They have a villain that can beat All Might. Or at least, they think he can.”

Izuku shakes his head as he catches up. “I know. They took out Aizawa Sensei and 13. I got to UA and backup is coming, but Kuro - fuck, you don’t know their names.”

Todoroki stares at Izuku as he waves the muttered comment away.

“Sorry. The hand-villain, bird-creature, and warp gate are our biggest threats. Can you get to the plaza?”

Todoroki nods. “Easy.”

“Good.” Izuku lets himself fall. “See you there.”

Grabbing onto the edge of his portal, he’s a bit more careful this time about checking where he reenters. He picks a gap between the strings that looks out directly above Shigaraki.

When he swings himself around, he almost- almost lands the kick. A dark portal- misty and definitely not his, opens up just before it connects. Shigaraki’s hand reaches out, and Izuku makes his own portal between them. He enters it, swings around, and reenters the world in order to reverse his momentum. Izuku lands awkwardly and tucks into a roll for distance.

His foot is agonizing to put weight on. Probably twisted in the last fall. Shit.

Shigaraki tuns, glowering.

“It’s the cheater.”
Izuku knows he can’t run. He knows he’s on a time limit. His mobility is probably limited to only portals now.

But he can talk.

“Yep. Its me. I’m guessing you’re a boss?”

Shigaraki smirks. “Oh, wouldn’t you like to know.”

Izuku’s plan has one glaring hole in it: talking requires keeping up the conversation. He has no idea how to do just that. Shigaraki strikes lightning fast before Izuku can think up a reply.

He dodges the hand, hopping back again away from Aizawa and the pond. What does he know about Shigaraki?

The villain snarls and lunges again with inhuman speed.

“Shimura Tenko.”

Shigaraki stops. Guess that’s his name here, too.

“Five-point disintegration quirk.”

Izuku can feel his mouth going numb.

“Villain. Known Affiliations: League of Villains.”

What does he know about Shigaraki? Plenty.

“Tell me, can you really kill the Symbol of Peace?”

Shigaraki is frozen, eyes wide behind the hand he wears. Behind him, Kurogiri is also still, flickering warp-gate the only sign time hasn’t stopped all together.

It’s broken when Shigaraki practically wheezes. “You know too much, cheater.”

In a moment, the villain is beside him, reaching out. Breath hisses behind the hand on Shigaraki’s face, and the voice is too calm, too deadly. He’s made the villain angry. Izuku could have redirected a temper tantrum. He can’t do anything with cold rage.

“How do you know that name.”

Izuku tries to jump back, but Kurogiri’s portal opens in his path. Izuku stops inches before entering. Five fingers latch onto his shoulder from behind and…. Nothing happens.

Shigaraki chuckles. “You really are so cool, Eraserhead.”

Izuku wrenches free of the grip as Kirogiri calls out.

“Nomu.”

The creature reappears over Eraserhead, slamming his head into the concrete again with a sickening crack. Izuku knows he needs to get his teacher out, but he can’t think of anything until All Might is here. All he has are his words, a possibly twisted ankle, and a travel quirk.

Shit.
Shigaraki turns back, noticing Izuku now several meters away.

“Damn small fries. Kirogiri, this one’s mine.” The villain settles into a ready stance. “That name will be buried with you, brat.”

“You still haven’t answered my question though,” Izuku leans on his good leg just a bit more. He’ll portal away if things go south. “I mean, even if you are strong, it’s kind of hard to imagine taking All Might down.”

Shigaraki regards him before scoffing. “Like you’d know anything. Your Symbol of Peace and hero worship. It makes me sick.”

He thinks back to All Might’s smiles. His hero saves others even knowing about the borrowed time. It makes sense now. Izuku lifts his lips up in what should be a grin, staring Shigaraki in the eyes. “I wouldn’t be so sure. I know you, don’t I?”

That catches Shigaraki. His stance lowers, and for just a second, Izuku thinks he might talk.

Then the villain spits. “You. Annoying little glitch. You don’t know me at all. What makes you think you’re so special?”

He needs to keep them talking. Beyond him, on the lakeshore, Tsuyu is creeping closer to Aizawa. The Nomu hasn’t noticed her yet. What can Izuku say to keep eyes on him?

“Interesting. Well. I’m not special, but I do know some things. I know how you got here. I know why many heroes became who they are. I’ve walked with them and cried with them.”

Faces flash through his mind. Conversations and tears. A monster, a fire. Men who were both, sometimes. Graveyards and offices, hospitals and laughter. A woman who held the world on her shoulders every day and never once asked for help.

“I’ve met your grandmother, Nana, and I know you have her son’s eyes.”

_I met you once, in a world where Nana never died._

He keeps the smile up, breathing through his teeth and the fear. “Imagine what else I know, Tenko.”

Shigaraki’s breath catches, and Izuku wonders if that was too much. The silence stretches on and on, and Izuku begins to count each second as a second closer to All Might’s arrival.

“Shigaraki,” Kurogiri says finally. “Now’s not the time-“

“Don’t tell me what to do,” Shigaraki hisses. “The cheater’s going to die anyway. Little heroes who just have to be right, just have to save everyone.” Shigaraki’s hands rise to scratch at his neck. “Even though they never have. I hate every last one of them.”

“But if you kill the heroes… You want society to fall?“

“Idiot.” Shigaraki lowers his bloody fingers. “Of course. Now die.” He pounces, but Izuku has less distance to cover. The null is everywhere.

Izuku drops down into a portal, twisting around to reenter across the plaza. The landing jars his leg. Shigaraki turns, and a misty portal swirls to life. Izuku greets the arriving figure with a solid punch. It doesn’t land.
Instead, a second portal opens, engulfing his arm. Five fingers grab his hood, turning it to dust before Izuku can jump away. The rabbit ears are gone. He pulls his arm out of the portal before it can close.

“I noticed something interesting,” Shigaraki comments, breath hot and rank on the side of Izuku’s face. “You could have warped your classmates out, but you haven’t. You haven’t even warped me.”

Izuku’s blood runs cold as Shigaraki leers at him, too close.

“Let me guess, you can’t teleport anyone else.”

The villain lunges again, hand outstretched. He’s too close this time. Either Izuku takes the hit, or he brings the villain into the null. Both are losses.

USJ’s doors slam open. There, framed in light, is All Might and Izuku feels the tell-tale sting of tears in his eyes. It’s going to be okay. All Might is here.

“EVERYTHING IS FINE NOW—”

Something’s wrong.

“-BECAUSE I AM HERE!”

All Might isn’t smiling.

Yagi Toshinori should have known better. He should have left that purse snatching case and amateur villain to the local heroes. He should have come when Aizawa-san didn’t pick up the second call.

He has put twenty children in danger, all because he should have known better. And now, he is reaping his just reward.

His senior teachers are both down. 13 is shaking on the ground by the entrance, and Aizawa-san is crumpled in a puddle of blood.

Three other students are in the plaza. It takes only a glance to see that Shinsou is in shock, and Asui is trying to approach Aizawa-san. The other students seem to be fighting in different zones, though two are difficult to see and another is frozen solid. The plaza is most pressing.

One villain is close - too close – less than a meter away - from young Midoriya, and the boy looks terrified.

He needs to finish this. All Might can’t bring himself to smile as he fights through the pain in his side.

This is his fault.

All Might will always rush to save the day with a smile. It’s a promise he made to himself, to his mentor, long ago. This time, he’s failed before it even started. The children should not have gone thought this; his colleagues should not have broken themselves for this.

Yagi Toshinori should have stopped this.
All Might crouches, and leaps. He moves through the pain and pushes his limit because they deserved better than this. They needed him earlier, but he ignored the signs heroes are trained from early on and hard experience to never miss.

*This is all his fault.*

Izuku blinks, and All Might has knocked out several villains. A second later, the hero is by Tsu and Shinsou near the flood zone. Izuku can’t process how fast All Might is moving – in a moment all three students are at the plaza’s edge. All Might lowers Eraserhead gently onto the ground next to them.

“Everyone, head to the entrance! I entrust Aizawa-san to you. Heroes are on their way.”

Behind them, Shigaraki is trembling. Slightly bloody hands scratch under what Izuku suspects is a real hand frantically. The villain’s voice is hoarse. “Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes!! The great All Might, come to save his students. He’s faster than anyone else, and with the disgusting justice of a government official…. but…”

Izuku can see the villain’s face-splitting grin through the fingers of his mask.

“…he’s slower than anticipated.” Shigaraki lowers his hands, frantic glee in his voice.

Izuku reaches up as if he can hope to stop the Symbol of Peace. “All Might, wait. That bird villain, I’m pretty sure it can regenerate–”

“Young Midoriya.” All Might still doesn’t smile. “It’s going to be all right.”

Across the plaza, Shigaraki shivers with joy, beckoning to his trump card. It’s time for a victor to be decided. “Nomu. Take him down.”

Then the titans clash.

Chapter End Notes

**izuku: *figures out more abt his quirk*  
izuku: ever have one of those days where you're like Well This Might As Well Happen?**

I will most likely be taking an extra week on the next little bit. I'm so sorry for leaving with a cliff hanger but it was the only stopping place. feel free to comment tho!!! I love hearing from yall so much <3
Who Falls First?

Chapter Notes

Spoilers: none

I gave a glitch text transcription at the bottom but like,,, everythings together so idk if u want the chapter to be spoiled. Imk if anyone has a system for this that works better.

Edit: im going through chapters and adding hovertext, but it's slow going. If anyone needs a specific system for accessibility hmu and I'll add it

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Midoriya, let’s go.” Tsu places one hand on Midoriya’s shoulder. He’s shivering, she notices, but whether from shock or adrenaline isn’t clear. Either way, they’ve got places to be.

USJ is trembling with All Might’s fight, but that doesn’t matter. Getting her classmates to safety does. All Might will take care of the villains, but they can at least lighten his load by not being here.

Shinsou picks up Aizawa before she can. Tsu pretends not to notice her classmate crying when she ushers him on ahead. He seems to be out of the worst of the panic attack, but now she needs to get Midoriya moving.

“Midoriya, All Might will be fine. We’re just in the way here.”

At least that seems to catch his attention. Midoriya limps forward with a blank expression and follows her. His eyes are wide when he looks around, like a startled deer in front of an oncoming car.

That’s not good.

She can hardly fault him for keeping an eye on the fight behind him, but she keeps one hand tight around his wrist. Something tells her he’ll run back at the first chance.

He says something, and Tsu leans closer. “What?”

“I haven’t saved them yet.” Midoriya is starting to look like a cornered animal. She doesn’t know much about shock responses or how people act in emergencies, but this isn’t good. Tsu needs to get her classmates out before the danger comes to them.

“We’re saving Aizawa Sensei right now.” A tremor shakes the building. “Let’s get back to everyone else.”

He lets her lead the group into a forest section so they can sneak away. This is better. Out of sight, out of mind. One particularly large blast shakes them, and Tsu lets go of Midoriya to catch herself.

“Oh, this is not good. He’s gone. Shinsou stumbles, and Tsu hurries to help him carry Aizawa.

Midoriya probably teleported. Tsu needs to do what she can, and that doesn’t change. She continues ushering Shinsou to the stairs. Prioritizing. Triage- that’s the word for this, right? All Might is strong.
He’ll keep Midoriya safe.

Shinsou and Aizawa need her more right now.

Izuku feels the grip on his wrist let go, and falls. It was the only thing grounding him at that point. The null is like an icy bucket of water to the face. It snaps Izuku out of the panic he’d gotten stuck in and forces him to concentrate on the present. He’ll panic later. Nobody’s been saved yet. Izuku grabs the edge of his portal and pivots to find a re-entry before it even finishes closing.

Between the threads, he sees Todoroki running to the plaza. Footsteps follow in the dirt - Hagakure is behind him and seems fine.

Jiro and Yaoyorozu have defeated all the villains in the mudslide zone. Kaminari is near them, expression frozen and brain fried from his own quirk.

Kacchan and Kirishima have defeated all villains in the inferno zone, and are on their way to the plaza.

Ojiro and Tokoyami make use of the rain cover to hide and ambush villains. Neither are injured.

Then he finds the plaza.

All Might and the nomu seem evenly matched from first glance, but as All Might attempts to restrain the creature, he catches a glimpse of All Might’s expression. The hero looks desperate. Angry. There is no smile of hope. In slow motion, the nomu is driven head-first into concrete.

Purple-black mist erupts from the world, making Izuku yelp and nearly let go. It kind of looks like a travel quirk, but much smaller. Izuku leans close, finding that it comes from two small gaps between the world’s surface thread. He sifts through the images again, until…

Oh.

Kurogiri’s opened a portal, allowing the nomu to attack All Might from below. Izuku’s seen that move before. He could have warned All Might.

He could have saved All Might but he didn’t.

Izuku doesn’t know how much time passes. Everything seems to have stopped, and the only sound he hears is the dull roar of blood in his ears and fluttering of his heart. This is bad, he rationalizes. Kurogiri has shifted the portal so that All Might is caught in the middle.

Izuku knows what happens when it closes, but there’s nothing he can do from here. He might be able to arrive as a distraction, but Kurogiri might close the portal faster on instinct, and Shigaraki would attack if the nomu didn’t get him first- wait.

He stops muttering, carefully finding the threads that surround one of Kurogiri’s portals. This is a bad idea. In fact, this is a terrible idea. Izuku takes a deep breath and pulls at the portal’s edge. Quirk shock doesn’t happen the same way in the null, but Izuku can feel his bones warping, lengthening just enough to feel but not enough to see.
The fabric of reality shifts, just a little. Izuku pulls before it can close again. His head pounds as he opens it enough to pitch forwards, wedging his shoulders in to keep it from closing. His own portals can’t close if somethings stuck in them- hopefully it counts here, too.

Izukus back hits something warm, and he looks out at the USJ. He’s floor level, Shigaraki in front of him and Kirogiri seemingly hunched over in the background.

“You!” Shigaraki howls, “You- you cheater!”

Oh. He’s back to back with All Might. Well, this is interesting. Nomu is still barely in the portal, only arms and a head. Izuku tries not to think about how close it is.

"Hey," Izuku says, and promptly coughs up sludge all over USJ's semi-pristine floors. "My portal. How to get your own." He pushes further at the portal edge, slowly claiming the mist as his. He can’t seem to claim All Might’s portion, but it’s not shrinking anymore.

"Young Midoriya? How--"

"The power of a fucking up life," Izuku grits out. He’s got one shot at this. "Give me your hand."

"What?"

"HAND," Izuku all but screams in desperation.

All Might lets go, shakily reaching out over his shoulder. Izuku grabs the hand, braces his knees against the portal, and pulls over his head. His muscles scream in protest at the weight, but he can do it, he must, and it’s not like the null wants to be split in two like this. There’s nothing to it but pushing through the pain and hoping this is all over soon. It’s like the worst sit-up he’s ever done. The null shrieks in his mind and Izuku’s costume is splattered in sludge, but goddamn it, portals are his, and this one is no different.

"Kurogiri, what are you doing? Cut them in half!"

The mist villain gives a strangled cough. “I can’t-“

An explosion interrupts his words, and Izuku cries in relief as Kacchan slams into Kurogiri. Nitroglycerin-covered hands pin the armored collar to the ground, their owner leering at the shaking villain with bared teeth and narrowed eyes.

“IT’s all in the metal shit you’ve got here, isn’t it?” Kacchan lets little explosions pop in warning. “No use protecting what’s not there. So, what is it? Head? Heart?”

Kacchan bares his teeth, and Izuku recognizes the look from schooldays past. “Lungs?”

Kacchan, that’s not very nice, Izuku wants to say. He settles for spitting some cosmic sludge at Shigaraki. The villain in question strolls towards Kacchan.

“So, a new pawn has arrived. They’re like termites.”

Kurogiri’s mist rises up before a larger explosion reasserts that Kacchan is still watching.

“You piss me off,” Kacchan announces, and Izuku would roll his eyes if he weren’t practically dying. “Get your whiny snot-nosed ass the fuck outta my damn field trip.”

All Might’s breath stutters when the Nomu tightens its grip. Izuku takes the chance to claim another inch of the portal and Kurogiri’s misty armor becomes just a little more visible. Izuku refocuses as
Shigaraki is finishing.

“...like lambs to the slaughter. And now, two children have somehow interrupted, so I may be just a bit more... pissed.” Shigaraki swipes at Kacchan.

“Fuck off!” Kacchan snarls back with an explosion. “I’m trying to do some fucking learning, not this crap.”

Shigaraki gets closer next time, and Kacchan dodges instinctively, letting Kurogiri go. Shigaraki doesn’t seem to care, pivoting and nearly catching Kacchan’s grenade. Izuku registers a red blur after it happens.

“BRO!”

Ice crackles in warning before Izuku’s line of sight is blocked by a massive wall of ice. All Might releases his hand, and ice cracks again as the teacher hastily leaves the portal. It shrinks as a result, and Izuku finds himself back to back with the nomu. That’s not comfy at all.

One of its eyes turns a complete 180 degrees to Izuku. He drops into the null on instinct, grabbing the world’s thread and swinging around to enter beside Todoroki.

Explosions crackle beyond the wall of ice. Nomu and All Might are gone. There’s a huge boom from one of the One for All holders. Todoroki and Izuku share a look before rushing to see. Izuku rounds the corner a moment later due to his ankle. The moment he arrives, Kirishima flies through a misty portal directly at him. They collide and Izuku dives through the closing portal. He’s not afraid of them anymore, for better or worse.

Before it closes, Izuku locks eyes with Kirishima. “Please help Kacchan.” He’s gone before Kirishima can reply.

He lands right behind Kurogiri.

He can at least distract one of them. Izuku aims a punch at Kurogiri’s armor. In the same moment, the villain sees Izuku. His red sneakers are swallowed by an unexpected portal instantly. Instead of running, Izuku lets himself drop, opening one of his own inside it. By wedging both knees against it, he’s able to stop both portals from closing.

Kurogiri lurches back. “Stop,” he grunts. “You’ll tear us both apart.”

Izuku grins back through still-blackened teeth. “Exactly.”

“What?”

“It’s a waiting game. Whoever drops first loses everything.”

Kurogiri tries to close the portal, but it won’t budge. Portals aren’t supposed to work like this, and they both feel the effects. The villain collapses while Izuku coughs up more sludge. Whoever cleans the costumes is going to have a field day with his.

Izuku watches the villain warily. He can hold out- he’s faced quirk shock for years over the tiniest names. He knows his limits, and when attacking is the better option. He doesn’t know Kurogiri’s limits. Worst case, the villain recovers and helps kill his classmates. Or Izuku ends up killing the villain. He’s really not okay with that.
Across the plaza, All Might is pushing his limits in a colossal show of power. The nomu takes each hit head-on. Few have any impact. Shigaraki is watching, too enraptured to notice his second-in-command shaking like a leaf, or the other students scrambling away. They’re new to fighting, and he’s a hardened villain. They won’t last five minutes in combat, and Todoroki seems to realize it. Between him and Kirishima, they’re dragging Kacchan away.

Izuku winces at the curses. He refocuses on All Might’s fight. The Symbol of Peace is struggling in combat with all the power he has left. It doesn’t take the nomu down. In fact, it seems to be doing very little.

Kirishima leans away from Kacchan. He’s down an arm. “Holy- Bro! Hold on, I can-“

“I’m good. Go help All Might. I think something’s going to happen.”

Todoroki stops at the sound of his echoing voice, ice building around him and anchoring Kacchan’s boots to the ground. “How do we help?”

“It’s just stand-off. I’ll see you when it’s over.”

“You sure, bro?”

“Yeah, just, A-All’s ok if anything happens.”

Kirishima gives him a thumbs-up, struggling to carry Kacchan away. The explosive student is doing everything he can to break free. Todoroki stays a moment longer, building up a wall of ice to keep Shigaraki away. He frowns, then re-ices it.

Beyond the wall, Shigaraki scrams in rage, pressing both palms against its cold surface. Todoroki strengthens the ice again, backing up. The frown is worrying. The frown means Shigaraki is still moving forward, no matter how thick the ice.

“How long until he gets through?”

“Hours, if you can move.”

“Why can’t?”

“Three minutes.” Todoroki refreezes the ice when a hand nearly pokes through. “Two minutes,” he corrects. “What about you?”

Izuku hums, the sound covering up a screaming void in his mind and the pain where his knees and back are wedged against the border of reality. “One? Ten? Not sure.”

Kurogiri moves minimally, transitioning from blob-shaped to puddle shaped. This is the most ineffective fight ever. Izuku can’t move or the portal will snap shut, and it looks like Kurogiri can’t do much either. It sucks, and his opponent has more maneuverability.

He’s never trying this again. Still, taking out one villain will heighten everyone else’s odds of surviving. That’s all Izuku needs to know for this to be worth it.

Kurogiri looks like he’s melting. “Drop the portal. We’ll both die if this carries on too long.”

Todoroki glances over at this, another step nearer. His expression is still a mask of calm, but Izuku catches a fleeting frown. Mild panic. Izuku hasn’t saved him yet.

Izuku coughs up more sludge. His stomach rolls and vision flickers. Nobody will die today.
Ochaco has no fighting experience. She doesn’t know how to track the big threats or tell them apart from the smaller ones. She’s never sparred beyond one class of training. Then again, growing up on construction sites makes people tough in different ways. So Ochaco squares up, pictures each villain as haywire equipment, and sends them crashing to the ground.

Sweat stings her eyes. Another villain charges with gross, multiplying hands. They’re desperate, though why is unclear. Ochaco taps the villain as she passes, hitting another on the shoulder when they get too close. Sero binds their legs, taping the two opponents together. Ochaco nearly hurls. She’s near her limit.

A huge boom echoes across the USJ. Everyone freezes, turning to watch the plaza. The floor rises up, a wave of concrete in the wake of All Might’s fight. One punch turns into twenty, then a hundred.

The bird-villain is flung through the ceiling rafters. A moment of silence descends on students and villains alike. Small pieces of debris fall, caught in sunlight that filters through momentarily like golden ichor to earth.

Down in the plaza, she catches sight of the hand villain ducking out of a huge mass of ice. Ochaco notes how Todoroki was being pushed back and tries not to feel sick at how far the villain had burrowed through her classmates defenses.

While the villain is distracted, Todoroki hurries to encase another villain in ice. He picks somebody up from the ground, slinging them over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. Ochaco tries not to worry over who it was—their costume was too roughed up and covered in what looks like black paint to really tell.

Wait. It was green, under the mess.

Midoriya?

The USJ doors slam open. Iida’s voice carries across USJ, ringing out in desperation and relief. “I HAVE RETURNED WITH BACKUP!”

The students around her cheer, but Ochaco doesn’t let down her guard. She’s heard about fights and knows it’s not over until she’s safe. There are still villains about.

Shoto isn’t even three steps away when Midoriya shivers, scrambling to be let down. No sooner have his feet hit the ground than Midoriya coughs up at least a lungful of black goo, grins at Shoto like some feral void creature, and tugs him towards the stairs.

Midoriya pivots once they’re there, plopping down on the stairs to watch as Shigaraki stalks toward where Kurogiri lies. The warp villain is barely moving, and his misty cloak has retreated so Shoto can just make out shoes through it. Midoriya watches the approaching villain through wide eyes that glint weirdly in the harsh light.
"Is it over?" he whispers, and though Shoto can’t make out the words, he can understand the sentiment. After what felt like so long fighting, such an easy end feels… unnatural.

The two villains disappear, to the cheers of Class 1A. Midoriya stares at the plaza blankly, as though unable to hear the pure relief around him.

Chapter End Notes

hey lmk if yall want transcriptions of the glitch text. I'll start doing them if it gets too much worse but I still wanna know opinions. Here's toady's glitch text transcription:
“Come on already-”
“Hey,” …. “My portal now, go get your own.”
“The power of a fucked up life,” … “Give me your hand.”
“HAND”

Next bit of text:
“Exactly”
“It’s a waiting game. Whoever drops first loses everything.”

Next convo:
I’m good. Go help All Might- I think something’s going to happen.”
“It’s just a stand-off. I’ll see you when it’s over.”
-
“Yeah, just… I’ll yell if anything happens.”
“How long until he gets through?”
“If I can’t?”
-
“One? Ten? Not sure.”
Final line:
“Is it over?”

Also thank you all for being so patient with me on this!!! I'll probs be taking extra time for the next bit, too. Chaos is still happening. its making me kinda late replying to comments, but I read them and love you all!!!

(also!! happy pride month, pls remember to drink water and treat yourself well. Don't feel like you have to come out for any reason other than for yourself, and if ur going to pride, look out for each other!! if anyone's in a country that doesn't allow pride, pls know I love you and recognize who you are. You are valid and worthy of love <3)

Edit: I forgot the chapter title asjlkkgf;lhg
Edit2: glitch text transcription!
Edit 3 like,,, months later: toned down the glitch text
Jirou doesn’t know how long she’s been sitting on the curb before Momo joins her, looking worse for wear. “Hey.”

“Oh my god damn,” Jirou says hollowly. “That just happened.”

They watch as medics attend Kaminari, who’s slowly breaking out of shock. “This isn’t a dream, is it?”

“Don’t think so.”

“My goodness.”

“You think the teachers are okay?”

“I saw them go to the hospital,” Momo says quietly. They watch the class mill around. One by one, students are taken aside by officers, interviewed, and then sent to the bus. They’ll wait for dismissal afterwards.

Jirou watches it all distantly, afraid and angry all at once. The day replays again and again until she fishes out her phone, desperate for any music to drown it out. Yaomomo seems to understand, creating a split earphone jack so they can both listen.

Uraraka flops down on Jirou’s other side before she starts the playlist. “They sent me over to say everyone’s gathering at the bus. Watch out though, somebody dropped an All Might pin and Bakugo’s been trying to get it. You guys okay?”

“Been better.”

Yaomomo nods. “As well as can be, but what happened to the class?”

“Mina and Kaminari tried to start up the bus. Midoriya went to the main building and Midnight was talking to Shinsou about something. Not sure beyond that. I don’t—“

“Oi! Round-face, what the fuck was that? Give me the damn pin already!”

Uraraka pats her pockets. “Hold on. Aha!” She holds up a middle finger to Bakugo. “Here you go!”
Jirou dodges the explosion by leaning against Yaomomo. Uraraka is long gone, racing off to the bus with Bakugo right behind.

“We have the weirdest class.” Jirou scoots back. “Sorry, by the way.”

Yaomomo shakes her head, standing up. “For what? Come on, we’d better get good seats before they’re taken.”

Izuku doesn’t remember getting to the nurse’s room. It’s like he blinks and he’s there. Recovery Girl seems to notice he’s aware and presses a cup of water into his hand.

“I’ve got other injuries to tend but give a shout if you need me.” She gestures to a clipboard by his cot. “Once you feel well enough, fill this out.”

It’s a form for quirk shock and drawbacks. Izuku pencils in what he knows of his quirk, emphasizing that usually it’s more of a nuisance than anything else. She’s gone by the time he’s done, so Izuku sets the clipboard aside and looks for his phone. It’s in the classroom. With no way to pass the time, Izuku counts the ceiling tiles and number of paper cups by the sink. Any way to distract himself from the panic resting behind his eyes is welcome.

Izuku is frowning at his bandaged ankle when a detective walks in. There’s a file tucked under his arm, but Izuku recognizes the brown coat and honest face. Izuku knows this person from many worlds. Someone whose knowledge is powerful enough to topple everything, but who never does anything to hurt All Might.

It’s one of those constants Izuku fears and trusts at the same time. He’s waiting for it to break.

The detective’s about to introduce himself when Izuku cuts him off.

“Detective Tsukauchi.” The detective blinks in surprise at his own name. “I have information for you.” Maybe he’ll stay up late staring at the ceiling and regretting being rude later. That’s fine. He needs to this meeting count, because he may not have another. Politeness can wait until after Izuku has said his piece.

The detective flashes his badge before pulling out a notepad and pen. “It’s nice to meet you. Are you Izuku Midoriya?”

“Yes.”

“Could you tell me about the attack?”

Izuku gives his story. He keeps it precise as he can, trying to slip in as much extra information as possible. His mouth starts going numb once the Nomu is discussed, so Izuku tries to be clever with his word choice. If he spills too much the null could knock him out for a day or two, and he can’t leave school. Not when more attacks might happen.

“It seemed to have multiple quirks, but that’s…. hard to believe.” A lie. Shit.

Tsukauchi writes something down. “Could you elaborate?”
“It had a shock absorption quirk and regeneration for sure, but also showed speed and strength beyond standard physical limits. I’m guessing it hasn’t done anything since arrest, because it only acts on orders.”

“You seem familiar with it.”

“A little.” *Fuck. Another lie.* Izuku’s going to sound like a traitor at this point. *Oh.* He has a brilliant idea. “Wanna hear a fun fact?”

“Sure?”

“My quirk lets me see a lot of different futures, and sometimes I can see patterns- actually, do you mind if I ramble a bit?”

Tsucauchi’s eyes widen in a look of understanding. He gestures to continue.

*Thank the heavens,* Izuku thinks. “It doesn’t like me talking about stuff so I can’t do much with what I know.”

“Oh?”

“Isn’t it funny, though. To have lots of quirks in one person… you’d have to kill or kidnap a lot. Civilians, too.”

The detective starts writing on his notepad as Izuku continues. “If I wanted to do that, I’d make a lot of monsters… Doing things by halves isn’t really a villainous style, huh?” His mouth is completely numb, and pressure builds softly under his chin. ”I’d want to store them; somewhere big like a warehouse would work. More importantly, I’d have someone else lead them.”

Izuku can barely spit out the last words. “Like Shimura Tenko.”

Tsukauchi freezes in his notetaking.

“What Izuku was going to say next: *Pretty good phycological warfare, huh?* Sit heavy in his mind.

He can’t take it anymore. The pressure in his throat wells up until he’s coughing, and sludge stains his teeth black. It’s less backlash than he was expecting, but he can’t talk anymore.

Guess that’s just the mood for today.

Tsukauchi hurries to find a paper cup. Water won’t do any good – Izuku’s more concerned with the black goo trying to fall out of his mouth than the stuff going in – but he appreciates the sentiment.

“Is this the backlash?”

Izuku nods, croaking out something that might sound like a yes. Tsukauchi seems to understand, so Izuku flashes him a quick grin through blackened teeth. The detective only frowns and looks towards the door.

“Recovery Girl, do you have a moment?”
Recovery Girl pushes open the door, bustling over. “I just fixed him up, how is he injured already? Honestly…”

Tsukauchi steps back so she can access the cot. She tuts and gives Izuku’s hand a kiss. The pressure in his throat lessens and breathing gets easier. Once the detective leaves, Izuku scrambles off the bed to the sink. Black goo pours down the drain. He really did not want to deal with this in front of a police officer and close friend of All Might.

Recovery Girl draws up a chair for Izuku to sit in. He’s reading the poster on washing hands – the implication that some people don’t is terrifying- when Tsukauchi steps back in. Izuku offers up another smile. It must look like terrifying with too-sharp teeth and black sludge running down his chin, but it counts.

See, he can be polite.

Tsukauchi coughs into his hand and addresses Recovery Girl. “If you don’t mind, I’d like to ask one more question.”

Recovery Girl shoots a look that has the detective flinching. The wheels on her chair squeak too loudly as she turns back to her desk.

“Right. Well.” Tsukauchi glances to the door longingly before addressing Izuku. “How much of all this do the villains know?”

Ah. Is that important? “Yay! Shingeki no kyojin 5.”

Tsukauchi has Izuku repeat it twice before getting the meaning straight. “Alright. Is there anything else you can tell me?”

Izuku shakes his head, and Tsukauchi passed him a business card. “Thank you for your help. That’s my number, so please call if any other information turns up.”

Izuku takes it, and the detective bows, apologizes for the inconvenience, and leaves hastily. It doesn’t take long to figure out why he’s in a hurry - Recovery Girl looks ready to commit some degree of crime. She glares at the door until it closes.

“I know he needed a report, but really now… no information is worth putting a child into quirk-shock for.”

Izuku shakes his head. *It was my choice.*

He gets another lecture for that.

Tsukauchi is concerned to say the least. He had entered to interview the last student, expecting a quick story with no new leads. Maybe Toshinori’s first successor would give some hint as to why he had passed up inheriting the ultimate hero’s quirk, but nothing more.

The moment he had walked through the door, Midoriya had called him by name- without introduction- and practically led the interview himself. He’d given pages of information, including a
The full analysis of Shigaraki’s quirk, and hinted at a traitor. At first Tsukauchi had connected the lies as a hint that the boy was being forced into the act, but in review that idea had been largely disproved.

The real kicker was that last bit. ‘Wanna hear a fun fact?’ Tsukauchi rubs a hand over his eyes. He’ll have to be careful with this information, and fact-check all of it, but for now….

Whatever future made a child smile like that—tired and broken with stained teeth so it was almost a grimace—is not a restful future.

Recovery girl almost doesn’t let Nezdu talk to Izuku. When she does it’s with a time limit and threat of knocking the principal out. Izuku is starting to suspect Recovery Girl was a combat hero rather than support.

“Ah, Midoriya! I hope you’re doing well?” The principal is either unaware of Recovery Girl’s glare or doesn’t care.

“Yes?”

“Excellent! Join me in a little walk.” The principal waves to Recovery Girl as they leave, his paws making a soft pitter-patter sound in the hallways. (Clever of him, to redirect away from Recovery Girl.) There should be no way to make paw-pads sound ominous, but somehow Nezdu manages. “I’d like to discuss your actions today.”

Izuku squints down at the principal, who smiles like some piece of clip art: fake without trying to hide it. “Specifically, your choice to engage two top villains.”

The principal shouldn’t know that. USJ’s cameras were hacked, the signal cut. Police reports are confidential until police interviews end, even to Nezdu. Parents probably won’t know details until this evening. Izuku stops, and the principal’s smile sharpens under a flickering hallway light.

“Good to know I was right. Midoriya, the school is responsible for your safety. Should you put yourself in danger like that again, Aizawa will try to expel you.”

“Try?”

“He needs my signature.” Nezdu’s eyes betray no emotion. “I’ve never refused. Why should I?”

“I would do it again,” Izuku says without hesitating. It’s the opposite of what he should be saying when everything about the principal screams danger.

“Oh?”

“They were going to kill Aizawa Sensei, and who knows how many of us. Nobody died today.”

“Is survival the only priority?”

“…Sir?”

Nezdu begins walking again, and Izuku must hurry or else be left with too many questions. “You’re prioritizing survival of your classmates and teachers, nothing else. What about the villains, and the
information they gathered on you through that fight?” Nezdu smiles, a plastic manufactured copy of what smiles should be. “What about who they’ll target next? What about your classmates, who may take your example to heart? What about your survival? Next time leave the fighting to your teachers, Midoriya. They are equipped to handle this.”

“You don’t care about them?”

“I never said that.” Nezdu’s smile wavers, though it’s so well placed, Izuku wonders if it’s an act. Inhuman features make it hard to read the principal’s expression. “The hero world doesn’t have mercy on those who rush in. I suspect you may be the type.”

Izuku’s finding it hard to track the conversation, but something about the principal’s views strike him as cold and detached. He can’t support that. “The universe may be cold and indifferent, but I don’t want to be. So, excuse me, sir, if I can’t watch my friends die.”

There’s a chill over the hallway before Nezdu nods. “You understand that if you had suffered any further injuries, the public would demand we expel you and fire your teachers?”

He hadn’t considered that. “Yes, sir.”

Nezdu smiles cheerily. ‘Good! Well, I must be off. Be sure to rest up over the weekend!’

With that he’s gone. Izuku leans against the wall and steadies his breathing. Why does talking to the principal take so much energy?

BONUS SCENE:

Shigaraki lies face down on the bar’s dirty floor, blood seeping between cracks in the floorboards and staining his cheek. “Those cheaters.”

Kurogiri staggers to the chairs, collapsing with little of his usual grace. He hasn’t the energy to stand now. After that green-haired kid’s plan leaving him practically torn in two by his own quirk, Kurogiri can’t do much of anything. It shames him to feel this strongly about a child’s murder, but he wouldn’t mind seeing that one ended.

The television crackles to life, words flickering into view on its screen.

“Welcome back.”

“It failed.” Shigaraki’s voice trembles. “It failed- failed! All Might wasn’t even there at the start- but you were right, Sensei. He has gotten slower.”

“And the Nomu?”

“Lost. Captured. I don’t care. It should have worked. Why didn’t it work- That fucking kid. We would have won if the students hadn’t gotten involved. One of them knew me, Sensei. He knew everything, he knew my old name, my quirk, everything. I want him dead. No- I want them all dead, but he goes first.”

“Kurogiri?”
“I would not object, myself.” It’s hard to keep a steady voice. Weakness is death when demons speak. Kurogiri perseveres. “He mentioned meeting Tomura’s grandmother. I don’t see how it’s possible, given the child had a warping quirk not unlike my own.”

“Interesting. Keep an eye on that one, for now. What of the other students?”

Kurogiri does not sigh in relief when the question is not for him. He’s survived by avoiding such shows of humanity. He will never fool whatever watches from the dusty screen. Shigaraki, however, is a different story.

“There was one you’d like, Sensei. He had a quirk like All Might’s.” Shigaraki peers upwards through dirty hair and his own blood at the screen. “I want them all dead.”

“Interesting. Send me his name after the Sports Festival. But don’t hunt them yet, Tomura. Let the heroes grow attached to the children first. That will make their loss sting more. The public will hate them for it. The heroes will doubt themselves and each other. And once everyone has turned their back, All Might will be at his weakest.”

Shigaraki presses his face into the floor, shaking with soundless laughter. The plan is inelegant and well-made all at once. Kurogiri pushes himself up painfully, searching for the first aid kit. He can’t have their figurehead bleed out on the floor.

How did he turn into a babysitter, anyway?

Chapter End Notes

I have achieved some kind of stability in my life!!! Kinda!!! we're back to weekly updates! Maybe! Also I promise we're getting to some of the fics yall asked WorldWalker!Izuku to see soon. There's two I'm super stoked for and got permission for like... months ago (oh fuck I hope the authors aren't mad) but!!! they were placed far ahead bc I wanted to get it right!!! so hopefully its okay.

But yes sidenote to whoever needs this- pls remember to stay safe during pride!!! support each other, especially members in minorities!!! be safe, use common sense and trust ur gut especially at big events. hydrate!! Remember that self love is a radical act and it's okay to take care of yourself!!!

Edit: hovertext over the glitch text! shoutout to auPHE for the suggestion
When Izuku finally leaves its with the faint sensation of smoke tickling his throat and shaking hands. He finds Uraraka, Iida, and Shinsou waiting outside. Or at least, Uraraka and Iida are waiting and Shinsou is sleeping under a tree just inside the UA barrier. God, he loves his friends.

Maybe it’s the fact that they’re all alive, and here. Maybe it’s because the first danger is past; with nothing to do, no distractions present, everything comes crashing down. He’s been holding off, moving from one goal to the other, but now it’s okay to let the day sink in. It’s okay.

They’re okay.

They’re safe and he doesn’t need to save anyone right now.

Uraraka sees him first, waving excitedly. “Oh, it’s Deku!”

Iida looks over just as Izuku’s knees hit the ground. “Midoriya?”

Izuku can’t breathe, can’t respond. He’s out, they’re fine, nobody died, All Might is alive, Shinsou is right there, Aizawa Sensei was taken to the hospital, but he’ll be fine. They’re alive.

“Deku!”

Izuku runs his hands through his hair, trying to focus. He’s here, he’s fine. Somebody touches his shoulder and Izuku’s quirk activates on instinct. He drops through the pavement, just as they call his name.

The cold shock of the null hits him like diving into the Antarctic Ocean. It clears his mind just enough to lock eyes with Uraraka, and see Iida reaching out to him.
Izuku reaches back through the closing portal, taking his friends hand. Iida pulls, and with Uraraka’s help they’re able to heave Izuku out onto the sun-warmed concrete. The null snaps shut behind him.

Izuku lets himself flop down on the pavement, scraping his cheek on the gritty surface in the process. He ducks, curling into a ball. He loves his friends, but they shouldn’t have to see him like this. They’ve been through enough today.

Another pair of footsteps reverberate through the ground, but Izuku is disoriented enough that he can’t tell who from. He simultaneously doesn’t care and is hyperaware of how vulnerable he is. Izuku hates it.

Somebody crouches down in front of him, and Izuku curls into himself as much as he can.

Shinsou’s voice is quiet. “Hey. Midoriya. Do you want me to use my quirk on you?”

“Yes,” Izuku croaks, and everything goes blissfully still.

He hadn’t realized his lungs had been filling with phantom smoke until the pressure vanishes. It feels a bit like floating through the null, but without direction. He watches with clearer vision as Shinsou orders him to relax, then tells Uraraka and Iida to back off a bit. They wait for his breathing to slow before Shinsou says something unexpected.

“If you want to, walk over to the tree and make yourself comfortable.” If you want to. It’s incredibly cool that Shinsou can even order things that depend on the targets opinion.

Izuku finds that, despite the apathy that comes with floating in non-existence, some part of him does want to not lie on the pavement by UA’s gates in a puddle of misery. The moment he realizes this, his body uncurls, following orders. His body accounts for the bad leg, which does not happen usually.

Huh. Uraraka says something, but Izuku can’t make it out, or Iida’s response. It’s as though he’s underwater.

“If you do, I will burn this entire school to the ground,” Shinsou says back. Iida’s reply is still muffled.

Shinsou lets Izuku settle down before crouching in front of him. “I’m going to wait five seconds and then release you.”

Izuku braces himself and snaps back to reality with a shuddering breath. He almost chokes, but the smoke he’s breathing doesn’t exist here – another Izuku must be dealing with fires right now.

“Do you want me to do it again?” Shinsou is hesitant, and Izuku shakes his head, running his hands through his hair. It’s not the same- he reaches out and grabs a hand – Iida’s - plopping it down on top of his head.

Iida stiffens at the sudden contact before slowly beginning to card his hands through the green curls. When Izuku leans into it, Uraraka settles on his other side and starts French-braiding the curls behind his ear. It gives him something to focus on beyond the beating of his heart and racing thoughts.

Shinsou lies down on the grass in front of them, phone out. “Incoming cat pictures.”

Izuku feels his backpack begin vibrating with Shinsou’s messages. After a moment, he fishes the phone out to find an ungodly number of pictures of Urusai, as well as what seems to be every cat Shinsou has ever seen. Each cat has at least one accompanying selfie with Shinsou staring blankly
into the camera and giving the cat bunny ears.

They sit together until Izuku feels grounded enough to talk.

“Thanks, guys - I, um. My mom used to brush my hair when I…”

“It’s okay,” Uraraka says when he trails off.

Iida hesitantly stops messing with Izuku’s hair to place a hand on his shoulder. It’s awkward and clearly not from someone used to comforting friends, but the effort matters more than he realizes.

“Are you feeling better?”


“Hell yeah, it happened,” Shinsou mumbles. “Today was shit. Too much drama for me.”

“You call a villain attack drama?”

Iida shakes his head. “I’m just glad it’s over.”

“Sorry for keeping you guys, by the way.”

“We were waiting for you.”

Shinsou gestures to the UA building. “I’m waiting for my dad. He’s uh. He’s pretty shaken up, and really wanted to drive.”

“Okay. Well… thanks for earlier.”

“Any time, problem child.”

Izuku sputters. “That’s- Aizawa Sensei’s -I thought you only knew English through memes!”

“Anything’s a meme if you try hard enough.”

“Hey Deku, what’d he say? I’m not good at English yet.”

“Indeed, I too am not as far in my studies as I would like to be.”

Shinsou locks eyes with Izuku. “Nobody will ever believe you.”

Izuku gapes. “You – you just-“

“Deku, what’d he say?”

Izuku shakes his head. “Nothing,” he says, glaring at Shinsou. “Just a little betrayal because why not?”

Iida frowns. “I do not condone-“

“Betrayal is the hight of friendship,” Uraraka announces, and Shinsou snickers.

“Worth it.”

As the three bicker about “the true meaning of friendship” Izuku relaxes just a bit more. It’s gonna be
all right.

Mom practically crushes him as he walks through the door. “Oh, my baby, you’re safe now.”

“I know mom.” Izuku lets his backpack drop to the floor, too tired to carry it to his room. “I saved them.”

“It’s okay to save yourself, too.”

“Mom?”

She steps back, placing a hand on each of his shoulders. “I want you to be happy, honey. But I want you to be safe too. They told me you jumped in while All Might was taking care of it.”

“I’m sorry, I’ll be better. I promise.” The promise is also to himself. He hadn’t considered what she would have felt if he’d been injured worse.

“I know you want to do good, sweetie. I just don’t see why you’re hurting yourself like this.”

“I’m not hurting myself. Just… stretching my limits.”

Mom cups his face gently. “Sometimes, pushing yourself too far does more harm than good. You crossed that line today. When the school called about what happened, they said you were the most injured out of the class.”

“Exactly. Nobody else got hurt.”

“But you did. I know how much being with UA means to you, but I will pull you from the school if this keeps up.”

No.

“I need to know you’ll be safe with them.”

“Mom, I can handle it! Just let me be there.”

“Even so…” She hugs him close, just like when he’d come home from an adventure in middle school. The situation is uncannily similar, but now she has a say in whether he continues to go. “I can’t let you go back if you’ll get hurt like that again and again. Just promise me you’ll stay safe.”

“I can’t,” Izuku says, because it’s the truth and he’s already broken his word today. “I can’t know that, even if I’m not at UA.”

Mom is quiet for a long moment. “Can you promise you’ll try your very best to stay safe?”

“I… I can do that.”

“Good.”

As they grab dinner and prepare an All Might Movie marathon, Izuku realizes that this hurt her, too.
He can’t let her down. He has to save himself, for her sake.

Mom finds almost every blanket in the apartment and throws them over the couch while Izuku gets out the box set All Might Movie Collection 100. It’s practically routine by now. Whenever Izuku found an upsetting world or had a particularly rough day at school, this was their unspoken protocol.

They curl up on the couch, and as the opening theme plays, Mom begins combing her fingers through his hair. Izuku relaxes into the blankets, happy to be in the here and now.

By the time the credits roll on the second movie, Mom has fallen asleep and Izuku becomes aware that his phone has been buzzing steadily.

He checks to find over 100 notifications from the class. Everyone has checked in on the class group chat at least once, minus Todoroki. Yaoyorozu sent a quick note that she had called and he was fine, just busy training at home. Izuku nearly drops his phone in shock after reading that.

There are some rare, utopia worlds where Todoroki is quiet and aloof for whatever reason. Izuku had been hoping against hope that his silence here wasn’t because of the disappointment of a number 2 hero. He’d let himself assume so. Izuku buries himself in the blankets, trying not to think of murder plans and instead focus on the opening lines of All Might and the Mighty All-Powerful Destroyer. It doesn’t work.

Maybe he can pit the League against- no. Too many fatalities in that plan that aren’t his target. If he could get in close-range, he could just drop the scumbag into the void, but when?

_Oh. Sports festival._

Wait, that would knock him out for the rest of the events and he’d have to wipe the cameras. It’d be worth it, though.

Izuku reads through the rest of the chat to distract himself. There’re a couple people on who are obviously trying to forget what happened and distract themselves.

_**One week in and we’ve found villains**_

**ManlyMan:** I didn’t mean to shatter my arm!!! And it was wild in the inferno zone bc bakubro and I were a power team

**XPLOSION KING:** hell yeah we kicked fuckin ass and exploded their crappy faces off

**Pika:** u did what

**Ribbit:** hopping in to say that’s illegal

**XPLOSION KING:** well maybe they deserved it

**Alien Queen:** Woah hey there blasty that’s kinda controversial

**XPLOSION KING:** fuck u too then

**Alien Queen:** I came out here after being attacked and honestly im still feeling attacked right now

**ManlyMan:** Hey can we get back on topic?? I liked discussing smoothies???

**Tired Cat:** I thought insulting blasty boi was the topic
XPLOSION KING: ANYONE ELSE HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, MOTHERFUCKING FUCKS???

MESSAGING TIRED CAT

Tired Cat: could you ask blasty to unblock me, I gotta tell him something

Izuku knows for a fact he’s going to regret this, but he sends off the text anyway. Regret is for weaklings and Izuku has loads.

One week in and we’ve found villains

Shinsou wants to be let in guys

Alien Queen__: that makes it sound like hes a puppy omg

Pika: I mean,,, his username,,, cat,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

Manly Man: also we probs shouldn’t block from the chat in case anything like usj happens again

Iida Tenya: this is very true! Let’s make sure the chat is a safe space for everyone in case of future emergencies!

Pika: wow way to jinx it lol

Oh big mood

Pika: ????

We’re all doomed, welcome to the party

Manly Man: same

Alien Queen__: same

Pika: wait don’t you like,,, know the future

exactly

XPLOSION KING: OH FOR FUCKS SAKES

*Tired Cat has been unblocked from the chat*

XPLOSION KING: WHAT.

Tired Cat: Bitch.

*Tired Cat has left the chat*

angrypea: guys please
ManlyMan: Woa hey lets calm down

XPLOSION KING: FINE

*XPLOSION KING has left the chat*

Let him rest
He probs just needs time
On anlther note tho

*Void Screaming has added Tired Cat to the chat*

If I have to suffer so do u

Tired Cat: lmao heck no see yall suckers later

Alien Queen☹: ouch, my heart

Pika: noooooooo

Tired Cat: my parental unit is yelling he saw a bug I legit gotta go

your,,,,,, hero,,,,,, dad????

Tired Cat: Midoriya if u don’t drop this i willl burn ur shoelaces

DarkSoulChaosBringer: What a mad banquet of darkness

Alien Queen☹: h. hero???? Dad?????? owo

ManlyMan: I never heard about this

ManlyMan: Hero dad?

angrytea: yeah, I’m curious

oh no

srry shinsou

Tired Cat: ughhhghhh why

Iida Tenya: Indeed! Do you have family in the hero business as well, Shinsou-kun?

Friendly Neighborhood Office Supply Hero: spill them beans man

Tired Cat: doesn’t matter just let me perish

Tired Cat: Midoriya decided I had hero family after knowining me for two (2) (二日) entire days

Tired Cat: All I’m saying is my dad is scared of bugs and too awake to resemble me in the slightest

Tired Cat: not that it’s any of your business

Sorry
Tired Cat: its gucci
ManlyMan: that was us being nosey. Srry
Tired Cat: yall better stop apologizing this instant
Tired Cat: my dads a language nerd who broke the washing machine and cried about it yesterday
ManlyMan: that’s so valid and manly
Friendly Neighborhood Office Supply Hero: adding crying over washing machienes to the Manly Things List
Tired Cat: still.
Tired Cat: you think that he could take down criminals?

This is not what I was expecting tbh
Tired Cat: Excuse me, I have bugs to deal with
Angrytea: he has a point guys
Alien Queen: ok but this is just making me curious
ManlyMan: mina pls theres no gossip, let it rest
Pika: I go get chips and find out shinsous dad cries over washing machines what

More people begin to sign in, until the conversation moves to bubble tea flavors. Izuku makes his excuses and closes the app. He has a movie to bingewatch with mom, and sleep to catch up on. Sometimes not being able to dream is pretty useful.

It’s getting to sleep that’s the problem. Lucky him.

He doesn’t even have time to pause the movie before his vision blurs, and the sound of All Might’s booming laughter disappears. Ah, Izuku thinks. This nonsense again.

Izuku watches wearily from the beanbag as his friend hurries about a worktable. The holographic screen blasts Bohemian Rhapsody even though it must be around midnight. Mrs. Okyoita is out doing something related to work- Izuku doesn’t really know what – but it’s excuse enough for Bit to be as loud as he desires until she comes back. His dad seems to have resigned himself to the fate of 200-year-old music, all day every day.

Izuku hums, squashing down worry and the corresponding scales covering his arms. “How about something less explosive?”

“It’s safe, and also badass.”

“You said the drone was safe, too.” Izuku isn’t going to argue about the badass part, but he’s more
concerned with not watching his friend do something obscenely life-threatening.

“Exactly.” Bit fiddles with the parts on his worktable, somehow avoiding sharp pieces of scrap scattered across the floor. “The point of jet pack is to explode. Continuously. Beautifully. Like a mistake that just keeps giving until I’m flying.”

“Let’s think this through- what about a way to fly that doesn’t involve fire?”

Bit straightens abruptly, glasses reflecting the scattered ceiling lights. “Wings,” he whispers prevailently, as though giving voice to a holy epiphany bestowed upon him. “I could make wings.”

Izuku startles. “Wings?!”

“Think about it! I could make them like a modified glider, so they’d only really be for descents, but wings, Mido! It’s too good not to make.”

He can’t really argue with that.

“Can you imagine what it’s like to fly with wings?” Bit rolls out new blueprint paper, frenzied drawing keeping him from noticing how Izuku curls up deeper in the beanbag.

The Leviathan twists through the sky, crashing into buildings as rain pours down in torrents. 32 people dead, their blood on his hands.

“I haven’t really thought about it.”

Izuku stares up at the ceiling, heart hammering in his chest and fighting for breath. Mom hasn’t woken up- he really doesn’t want to bother her with this. Whatever world that is, Izuku should really check that it’s okay. He should make sure nobody is hurt, and that his counterpart is all right. He’d seemed fine for the moment but… thirty-two entire people.

That’s a lot.

I should check that out. Just... not today. If he leaves now, mom will panic. Carefully, Izuku pauses the movie and fishes the Future Analysis notebook from his backpack. Better to visit it later, anyway.

He marks down what he remembers, prepared to go through the archives tomorrow. After a second, he makes a note to stop by the world tomorrow as well.

When Izuku unwraps null-restricting seals from his arms the next morning, phantom smoke fills his lungs. His quirk suppressors are on the desk - almost too far away. Izuku struggles to breathe as he fumbles to put them on. As the first suppressor is locked, clean air begins to filter through his lungs and the tickling sensation of white-hot flames around him is more noticeable.

Latching the other suppressor with trembling hands is its own struggle. When the lock snaps on, choking smoke fully vanishes from his throat. Izuku takes a deep breath, willing his hammering heart to calm down.
A world must be burning again.

Izuku would usually go looking for the source. Any information on his future is useful, but his barriers are down after that stunt with Kurogiri and his mind is buzzing from yesterday. So instead, he slips on his workout clothes, packs a bag with his usual travel gear just in case, and switches the dial on his door. When Izuku comes down the Lonely Owl stairs, Hisen takes one look at him and points to an armchair in the corner.

“You have been through hell,” he rumbles. “Punishing yourself will not make the pain lessen.”

“I’m fine-“

“You’re wearing quirk suppressors again.”

Izuku shoves his hands in his pockets grumpily. “So what.”

Hisen reaches for a mug and the matcha tin. “So, I think that if you need to let your mind rest, there are better ways to do it than punishing yourself for what you couldn’t do.”

“It’s not punishing myself; I need to be better.” He doesn’t need to listen to this.

“You will be better in time. Provided you let yourself recover first. Would you let Cloud or Taka work out with a broken leg?”

“No, but it’s not the same.”

“Is it? Just because you can’t see an injury doesn’t make it less real.”

Izuku glowers at the dark countertop for a moment before sitting at it. At least the stool is comfy. “But I’m not injured.”

“Maybe. Maybe not.” Hisen sets a large mug of warm matcha milk in front of him. “If you thought Taka might be injured from her job and not know, how would you feel about her exercising?”

“… but that isn’t my decision to make.”

“Agreed, but you see the logic. I won’t stop anyone from training if that’s what they really need. Is it?”

Izuku squints, knowing what Hisen is saying but not wanting to hear it. “Is it what?”

“Is it what you need?”

Izuku takes a long sip, avoiding Hisen’s eyes. “No,” he says after swallowing. “It's not.”

“So what do you need?”

“…. Sleep, but I can’t. Every time I’m about to, I- I- They… It’s like I’m there again.”

“And that’s a common struggle to face after these things. Besides falling sleep, what’s the next best thing to get similar results?”

Izuku hesitates, thinking of the armchair in the corner. “You knew it would come back to this.”

“I am ‘older than dirt,’ apparently. Wisdom with age and all.”
The rest of the afternoon, Izuku is curled up under several blankets, warm matcha milk on one side, and hero analysis on the other. He can’t really focus on much – everything seems to surround him like a weighted cloud, making focusing on even things he wants to do difficult.

He dozes off to the sound of a crackling fire and soft footsteps in the distance. It’s not the worst way to spend a Saturday. That night, he wakes to the sound of a the fireplace while mom chats with Taka in the background. It’s good, to be safe.

BONUS: EARLIER THAT DAY

Inko opens the door cautiously, relaxing when she recognizes the tired face on the other side.

“Come on in, dear.”

“Thanks for letting me stop by on such short notice, Inko-san.” Taka slips off her combat boots, anxiously following Inko to the living room. “Cloud wanted to share the news, but he got caught up in work. He sent these in apology.”

Inko hums, accepting the fancy packet of koi-shaped mochi Taka presses into her hands before busying herself with the tea. Taka nervously settles onto the couch.

“I hope everyone’s well?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“You can drop the ma’am, I’m not that old.”

“Yes ma’am.” Taka wilts under the mother’s sharp eyes. “Inko-san.”

“Now, what’s so urgent that it can’t wait for a letter?” Better to get to the point now. “This has to do with that school trip, doesn’t it?”

“I’m afraid so. After the recent attack, there’s a good chance villains have noticed Izuku’s quirk. They’ve been chatty about something related to recruitment, but most of my old contacts are dead or under new identities so I don’t know what’s going on.”

Inko brushes aside the implications of that. “You think I should move.”

“In all honesty, yes. But I also know how hard letting go of home can be. If you refused, I couldn’t judge.”

“Have you talked to Izuku about this?”

“You’re his guardian.” Taka looks Inko in the eye momentarily. “Besides, he just went through a traumatic event, and this wouldn’t help.”

“I suppose so.” Inko lets her gaze wander across the room. All the photographs of Izuku and her together, the scuff mark from when he tried to climb on the windowsill, the uneven paint in the hall from spilled fabric dye. The small apartment is filled with memories. Inko catches Taka’s knowing look.

“It feels like leaving more than just a building behind, huh? As if the past has sunk into every inch.”
“That’s a good way of putting it. I’d rather not leave, but if it’s for my son… I’ll do anything.”

Taka blinks in surprise, and Inko chuckles at the look on her face. “I’ve been prepared to run since that first portal. In all honesty, I’m surprised it’s taken this long. I’ll have to talk it over with Izuku first, mind you, but for now it’s a very real possibility.”

It’s just then that Inko’s phone vibrates. She shoots an apologetic look at Taka, and the Traveler waves her on.

“Might be important.”

Inko glances down at the news notification- the UA sports festival is still on. “I’d like to visit the café today and discuss this with Hisen as well.”

“I can give you a lift.” Taka stands, helping clear the coffee table. “It’s eco-friendlier to teleport, anyway.”

Chapter End Notes

Ok. opinions. pls give them!!! Basically, I keep different docs with mini story outlines and uh. I lost kirishima's. It's not a big deal bc ive re-worked it today but long story short do yall mind having a bonus chapter on like. Saturday? It would be a tiny 7 page mini-arc with him. I might yell more about his character development more if that happens.

The other option is I turn this fic into a series with outtakes and upload the Mini Arc in it's own separate fic, and it never happens in this cannon.

So give me thoughts: Adventure With Kirishima Mini Arc, or I turn this into a series called Null And Void. Please for the love of all that is good give me opinions bc I'm lost.

I love all your comments so much, thank you all for reading this fic <3

Edit1: yea I removed the meme, catch me posting and then realizing it looks funky so I reword a whole convo
Edit2: wait chapter title
It looks like everyone is planning to meet on Saturday, but one by one members of the class cancel. By the end it's only Kirishima and Izuku, so they meet at the beach to discuss the recent downward spiral of life. The sand is still clean, though a few pieces of trash have washed up. They're throwing the last of it away when Izuku's phone rings and Clouds icon pops up.

Izuku answers as Kirishima flashes a thumbs up. “…Hello?”

“Ayyy it’s the void calling another smaller, greener void! You didn’t read texts so I’m here to yell that Zuelni’s fire fest is today.”

“Oh. Fuck.”

Kirishima looks over in concern, so Izuku flashes a reassuring grin.

“Hey, no judgement if you forgot; Taka’s running late too. Just figured since you were excited, I’d double check.”

“I totally forgot, when’s it over?”

“Starts in 10 minutes our time, takes 30 more. Over there it’s five hours.”

“Oh. Kirishima and I just met up. I, uh.” Izuku squats, glaring at the sand under his feet. The festival came once a year, and he’d missed the last one. There are people he wants to annoy, specifically their king. “I don’t think I can make it.”

Kirishima joins him. “Something happened?”

Izuku shakes his head hurriedly. “It’s fine.”

“I’ve got an idea but you’re gonna hate it. That was Kirishima, right?”

“… yeah?”

“I got three tickets, and since Taka plans to sneak in… You’ve got a plus one.”

“Wait, what.”
“He’ll have to hang out with one of us and keep from breaking too many laws, but it’s an option. I can take a couple passengers so long as they’re light.”

“Isn’t it like – I don’t know, a little dangerous?”

“Zuelni has low martial arts capacity. You could probably win a fight against the vast majority by now, so I wouldn’t worry about that.”

“… I’ll ask, meet us at the beach.” Izuku says faintly, ending the call.

“Midoriya? You good?”

Izuku stares at the phone blankly. He could stay quiet. He could let today be normal. Boring. Unadventurous. It would also be safe, and take the choice from someone who would want their opinion counted. “Hey, Kirishima? Remember when I told you about my quirk?”

“Yeah?”

“…Do you still want to see another world?” He’s never asked this before. Showing someone else such a huge part of his life – Kirishima was the first to ask. It’s only right that he gets to be the first to go. (Even mom said long ago she wouldn’t want to, as some things were best left to those who belonged. Izuku’s never faulted her for it.)

Kirishima’s eyes grow huge.

Ah, he should have prefaced that with an explanation. Shit. “Sorry- it’s just, my friend can take people to other worlds and there’s a really big festival happening in like ten minutes, and it’s only once a year and kind of wild because the country’s on the edge of rebellion and music is only legal for a day so they go all out, but you can totally say no and I’m cool with continuing to hang out here anyway-“

“Dude. Do you think I’ll say no?”

Izuku squirms. “I mean, maybe? It’s a little dangerous but the martial arts there are pretty weak, and I might be… um. A good number of people there are wanted by the government.”

Kirishima brushes all these crucial details aside in favor of the initial fact. “I’m not turning this down. Hell yeah, I’ll visit a whole different dimension. Let’s go!”

… Oh. Ok, then. “You’re sure? There’s no police there, and the king is an ass.”

Kirishima just grins in response, bouncing up and down. “Bro. I have never been more sure of anything in my life. I’d go to an apocalypse, a supermarket – I don’t know, even if it’s just a gas station.”

Izuku squints. He asked, but part of him still wants to think the belief is a trick. Funny how doubt always hits afterwards. Kirishima hauls him to his feet.

“It’s super manly of you to ask me, okay? I don’t have to think about it, I know this is a majorly cool opportunity. So let’s go.”

Izuku lets out a breath he hadn’t realized he was holding, and pulls Kirishima over to the mural. The blue door is still connected to his room, and Izuku climbs up and opens it without a second thought. Behind him, Kirishima makes a strangled gasp of surprise. Oh.
He never told anyone about this.

*Oops.* Izuku helps his friend up to the door, mind racing as to an explanation. Kirishima beats him to it.

“This was the reason for all that art?”

Izuku shrugs, closing the door. “Community service. One moment, I need to get something.” He twists the dial so the Lonely Owl is connected out of habit. Kirishima sticks his head out the window as Izuku tugs a cardboard box from under his bed and rummages through.

“Sorry. I’m totally steamrolling todays plans and if you don’t want to go, I completely understand.”

“What- no, it’s fine, just…” Kirishima waves a hand through the window as if expecting it to disappear. “Do you just go through random doorways and end up here? The beach is like, way over there now.”

“Only certain doors.”

“Only certain- our class is going to riot when they find out.”

“Just wait until we get dorms. I can’t tell Aizawa about that, but maybe…” Izuku shrugs, finally locates the bag- it’s not a fanny pack- and stuffs some trinkets he may need inside. “Anyway. There’s weirder stuff out there. Good distraction if they ever bring up All Might’s quirk, though.” He opens the door to yell down the hallway. “Hey, Cloud! You ready?!”

Kirishima sticks his head out, inspecting the hallway as though it’s an illusion. “How did you-“

“It’s already started, let’s go!”

Kirishima steps out as if the floor will vanish under his feet. “Wait. Is this like that one really old movie with the moving house…? Oh, nice fanny pack.”

Midoriya squawks defensively. “It’s not a fanny pack!”

“Yeah it is.” Cloud drops down from the ceiling, scaring them both half to death. “Sorry- we’re late, by the way-” he stops midsentence, only just noticing Kirishima. “Hey, you came! Call me Cloud, it’s nice to meet you, Kirishima. Just checking, but will you be joining us?”

Kirishima brightens, not noticing the use of his name. Izuku is very concerned. “No way am I turning this down.”

“Great! Here’s void 101: Stay calm, enter worlds feet-first, and whatever you do, don’t let go of my hand. Sound good?”

Kirishima nods seriously, so Cloud holds out both hands. “Let’s get this party started. Yeet haw or whatever the kids say.”

Izuku takes Cloud’s right hand, and after a moment Kirishima follows. Black clouds filled with starlight envelop them and the Traveler pulls them back into the void. The lonely Owl disappears, melting into the woven surface of Home.

Izuku watches as Kirishima’s jaw drops, taking in the null. Starlight bleeds together with emptiness, and worlds are suspended in every direction. Cloud lets them float for a moment, likely so Kirishima can adjust. It looks normal to Izuku, so seeing shock written all over his friends face is a good
reminder of how far from reality this is to some people.

“What- Dude. No way this is real.”

Izuku gestures to the expanse beyond them. “Surprise.”

Cloud grins wildly, and Izuku abruptly remembers the second time he traveled. The retired hero is the type to treat life like an amusement park. This may be a mistake.

“Hold on to your sanity, kids.” Cloud leans back, slowly beginning their head-first fall through the abyss. “It’s chaos time!”

Kirishima bites back a scream as they pick up speed, hurtling through the void like a shooting star. Cloud abruptly twists into a 360º loop just for the sake of being a horrible role model. Izuku really shouldn’t be surprised at this point.

Beside him, Kirishima grits his teeth so hard his quirk partially activates. “Please tell me we’re not gonna die.”

Izuku shrugs impassively. “Probably not.” Nothing is certain in life, especially when falling through the void.

“Thank you. That is the opposite of comforting.”

Worlds flash by. Izuku takes the opportunity to point out a couple so Kirishima gets the proper tourist experience. One catches his eye, covered in careful electric blue coding - he should stop by IIOHAH. Another passes not long after, blue green and ominous. A monster that looks all too familiar flickers over it and Izuku makes a second mental note of where it’s located. Not today, though.

Zuelni is always burning, fiery red and angry. It’s the home of a tyrant fire king who puts on huge, vibrant festivals once every year to appease its citizens. Traces of azure ice run under its surface, but the most is red-hot with heat rolling off it in waves. Someday it will be half-ice, and Izuku hopes that means what he thinks it does.

Izuku nudges Kirishima. “Feet first,” he says, and his friend nods nervously.

“Sure we won’t crash?’”

“It’s Gucci.”

Cloud snorts. “Never thought I’d hear that from someone wearing a fanny pack. What are you, twelve?”

“On a scale of one to ten, yes.”

That, at last, gets a laugh from them both. When the world opens to greet the three with billowing dark starlight, Izuku pretends not to hear Kirishima yelp. They stumble into an alleyway, dancing lanterns strung overhead while strange music drifts beyond. It reaches into Izuku’s soul and lifts him up from the inside, easing the weight of the past week. He wants to join them. He wants to dance.

“Right. Before you two run off, take a look at where we are.” Cloud points down the alleyway. “Hisen – another one of us - lives down there. Kirishima, I’m going to write on your hand if that’s cool.”
“Sure?”

Cloud takes out a sharpie, scribbling out words in kanji so old and warped Izuku can barely make them out. He adds the café name below it in katakana. “Stick with one of us, but if you get lost, there’s a world traveler at this café who can contact us. We worked out some magic a while back - anyone you ask about it will point the way, even if they say they don’t know. Oh! Don’t give your full name, don’t mention you’re not from here, just say you’re an apprentice or something.”

“We’ll stick together, it’s fine.” Izuku rolls his eyes. “Besides, don’t you have work?”

“Hey, I’m the reason we have money to spend on this. Speaking of-“ a small bag is passed over, which Izuku takes care to hide immediately. “30 drac. Don’t let anyone swipe it. Don’t die. If you get arrested remember to leave by dawn and that I don’t have political weight here, so just break their noses and run.” With that, Cloud salutes after that spectacular pep talk and vanishes into black flickering mist because he clearly remembers how to take care of children. Why are all my role models so weird?

Kirishima turns around slowly, taking the stone streets and crooked houses. “This is another dimension.”

“Yes.” Izuku bounces on the balls of his feet nervously, sorting out half of the coins for Kirishima. “You good?”

“I’m in another dimension.”

“Yes.” Is this going to break his friend’s mind? He hopes not. That would be rather bad for everyone, especially Kirishima.

“That’s… so manly.”

Cold breath whooshes past Izuku ear. “What a mad banquet of darkness.”

Kirishima startles, his eyes fixed on the wall beyond them. Izuku ducks, anticipating the clumsy punch where his head was and spinning to face his own shadow. It lengthens, darkening as a tengu with familiar features eases herself out of the wall, bird-like head tilted to one side. Her wings are folded neatly, but Izuku can tell they’re longer than last time. She’s faster, which is trouble.

“Oh! I didn’t recognize you, Toko!” Izuku smiles at his old friend with only half-false excitement, subtly checking her blood-red scarf for the rebellion crest. It’s not there yet, which means she still hasn’t been released from service. Two years ago she’d dropped hints of defecting. Either the king found out, or she’s undercover. Both mean trouble. It’s not the dance he was expecting tonight, but Izuku is familiar with Toko and her tricks.

“You brought a friend.” She accepts Izuku’s hug gingerly, as though expecting to be stabbed. It’s understandable given their history.

“Yes! Toko, this is Kiri. Kiri, Toko. Before either of you ask, I know the other looks familiar and those aren’t real names but I promise this is to keep things from being confusing and no, they aren’t the same person you’re thinking of, so can we please avoid talking about that for my own mental stability?”

“I’m Toko now?” The tengu grins, through it’s hard to tell with her beak. “About time you gave me a nickname, Izu. Come, the night won’t be young for long.”
Eijiro is pretty sure his brain might explode. First, Midoriya had asked if he wanted to go to another dimension, and then they’d literally gone on a roller-coaster ride without the roller-coaster through the void itself, which was the opposite of empty - and now they’re in an actual fairy tale.

They’d been greeted by one of Midoriya’s friends, who looks almost exactly like Tokoyami but with wings and much fancier clothes. She and Midoriya seem to dance around each other, both watching the other warily and laughing it off. Eijiro hasn’t had a moment alone to ask, but the two have shown him around tents and stalls selling magic - real, working magic where he’s able to buy an actual dragon tooth bracelet. They’ve tried loads of snacks, though there’s no way he’s eating the live salamander candy. Midoriya did, like an absolute legend.

Music hums through the streets constantly. They’ve passed multiple knights, sorcerers, and at least one shapeshifter. Eijiro’s even seen somebody who looks way too similar to Best Jeanist for it to be a coincidence, and Todoroki’s likeness painted onto some of the lanterns, which is kind of weird. The clothing is woven deep reds and golds, interspersed with blue detailing that turn the crowd into a fire blazing through glowing streets. When they inspect a weaver’s cart, the crafts are intricate and beautiful, like molten rocks and silver. The festival is lit by painted lights strung from uneven rooftops, bobbing as drumbeats shake the air.

The street is packed, and he has to be careful not to lose his friends. Several times they’ve nearly disbanded, only for Midoriya to drop out of a portal beside him. Toko always seems to find them after that. It’s like she has a Midoriya-radar.

It’s after one such occasion before Toko arrives that Midoriya leans close. “Listen, Toko’s an executioner. I’m on her list so she’s trying to tail us till dawn – there’s no death tonight by law, anyway.”

“Wait- she’s trying to kill you? Like actually un-live you? Dude-”

“Just tracking, and she’s not really trying that hard. She can’t try anything until the festival ends, anyway. You’re safe, don’t worry.”

Midoriya seems to be completely underestimating the situation, and given his friends track record with self-sacrificial habits, Eijiro isn’t confident tonight won’t end without a fight. He doesn’t regret coming at all, but this is… questionable.

“We have to leave by dawn, then.”

“Of course!” Midoriya smiles reassuringly, nodding to the feathered head hurrying towards them. “Always do – Toko, you found us! Great, let’s go find those little lava cakes.”

“I always find my friends,” Toko says easily, and this time Eijiro catches the way her hand drifts towards the empty sword scabbard by her hip. Midoriya leads the way, tracking them both with little glances and conversation. When they finally perchance lava cakes, Midoriya startles at a particularly loud beat and drops his. Eijiro tries to stay between the two, hoping it helps steady his friend’s nerves. The music drums through his veins with nervous energy.

Midoriya would have told him if they were meeting friends tonight.

He also didn’t mention being tracked by an executioner for an unnamed offence.
“What did you even do?” Eijiro hisses once Toko is distracted by a knife-throwing game. He doesn’t like her accuracy.

“The king’s an asshat and doesn’t like me telling people,” Midoriya says casually, ignoring the terrified looks he garners from everyone who hears. Toko returns, the silk scarf she won tied around her waist and obviously eavesdropping. Eijiro slips between them.

“…So what’s this king like?”

Toko hesitates, so Midoriya answers instead.

“What didn’t he do? There’s a spell on the city so nobody can say he’s an idiot without being reported. He arrests or kills anyone who disagrees with him and adds a new law every other day. The festival is a bribe to keep people from rebelling, not that it’ll work.”

Toko’s hand strays to the empty scabbard by her waist. “You’d be killed three times by now.”

“Dude, what?”

Toko shrugs. “I am executor of the court. Were it not tonight, Izu would be dead three times for that blasphemy alone.”

“No offence but killing people’s kinda unmanly, y’know?”

Toko stares at him as though he’s declared tacos have feelings while Midoriya laughs, too loud and too angry. His friend seems to have a habit of pissing off dangerous people.

Midoriya nudges Toko, ignoring the poisonous glare she shoots him. “He’s right, you know. Besides, city rules: nobody can be killed during the festival. Flames are safe because the king wants us to think so, and so are the people under them.”

“All fire is born of our king, may he live forever.” Toko does a strange salute with both hands, though her voice is sarcastic. “Truly, a great and powerful ruler.”

“So you don’t like him.”

“To say otherwise is death,” Toko says carefully. “Come dawn, I shall hunt this one-“

Midoriya looks unbelievably smug.

“- again. He has evaded me for too many years and spoken more atrocities against our king than any other, save the blue prince and King Might’s false son. The Flame king’s son suspects Izu and the false son to be the same person.”

“He’s wrong.”

“More words on your grave.”

“You’ll never find me.”

“Mayhaps, but I shall seek regardless.”

Midoriya winks at her cheerily before getting distracted by a blacksmiths tent. Not for the first time, Eijiro questions his friends’ sense of self-preservation. He should have considered the dimension travel offer a bit longer.
The scabbard on Toko’s belt lacks a sword— it’s built for a long blade with a blunt end. As she follows his friend, Eijiro catches sight of the inscription.

*Seek mercy beyond heaven, rather than earth. There is none left for thee.*

The next time Eijiro loses track of the others, he waits in a side passage. Sure enough, darkness opens to his right, now-familiar dancing starlight resting beyond. Midoriya doesn’t fully leave the portal.

“She tried to poison my lava cake – what a waste of perfectly good pastries. I don’t like bored executioners, so tell you what. You feel okay with traveling alone?”

“Like, between dimensions?”

“No, just two blocks back. I’ll try to lose her and double back to meet you. Cloud’s performing at the square, and the café is straight down this street, three blocks to the side past that lizard vending cart. If you see them selling hot mochi, you’ve gone too far.”

“Okay,” Kirishima says, because this sounds vaguely dangerous and he’ll support his bro until the end.

“You- you’re sure you’re okay with this?”

“Dude, I’ve been keeping track in case I got lost.” Eijiro reaches into the portal for a fist bump. The action doesn’t seem too strange, though yesterday reaching into the void would have had him hesitating. “It’s only two blocks. Besides, I trust you’ll find me. Just stay safe, yeah?”

“…Oh.”

“You okay?”

“Just… surprised. Not in a bad way.” Midoriya returns the gesture before reaching into his fanny pack. (And it *is* a fanny pack, no matter what Midoriya says.) He passes over a little glass with paper folded inside around a chestnut. “Finding spell. Use the directions, it should work here. If not, just ask people about the café.”

“Thanks.” Eijiro slips the jar in his pocket, spotting Toko in the crowd. “Better hurry.”

“Good luck. The other two travelers here are named Taka and Hisen. If you’re not two blocks back we’ll come looking.”

Eijiro waves him on. “Sounds good; here she comes.”

The portal shuts abruptly. Eijiro watches the tengu stop, glance around, and wander off away from him as another portal opens. Midoriya takes off in a full sprint, weaving through the crowd like a fish through water.
Toko freezes, beak splitting into a grin. Slowly, black wings unfold from her back, extending as far as they can in the narrow street. The vendors hold down their wares as mighty wingbeats generate great bursts of wind, lifting her over the rooftops. Eijiro ducks back against the passage wall until she’s long gone.

Two blocks back. That’s not too hard, right?

This universe hates him. It had started with one of the cossroads being a five-way, and ended with getting caught up in a crowd of fire-breathers, which was unfairly cool and also incredibly distracting. Eijiro watches the way people gesture when he asks about the café, but now he’s in the backstreets, with nobody to ask.

It’s like a maze of cobblestone roads and off-center buildings. Each intersection has a single lantern, and they all blend together. At day it would look quaint, but now the winding paths are just confusing. He’s hesitant to use the glass spell, in case it’s needed more later. Anxiety is keeping that from being an option for now.

Eijiro needs to always have a plan B. Right now is plan B, so that’s plan C. *I need to stop catastrophizing. It’s going to be okay.* The streets twist until he finds himself at the same intersection. The single lantern has a badly drawn picture of Endeavor on it, glowering down with splattered red flames around him. The familiarity mocks Eijiro. He’s so alone, maybe he’ll be stranded-

“You look lost.”

Kirishma whirls around trying to find the voice. Metal clangs to his right, but nobody’s down that street.

“Up here.” Two stories up, lantern light illuminates a woman perched, cat-like, on the roof edge. Her arms are wrapped in what look like bandages, and the gloves are hero-grade. Compared to everyone he’s seen so far, she looks out of place. “You’re in the wrong world, kid. Did someone summon you here?”

“No- I’m with a friend.”


Eijiro squints up, trying to make out the strangers face against the darkness. “You know Cloud?”

“Bad jokes? Also a Traveler? About my age? He’s an ass and I’d fight Captain Celebrity for him. Was it his idea to bring a minor to a world in political upset?”

Does Traveler mean like dimension traveler? “I’m trying to find him. Or, do you know where the Lonely Owl is?” *Wait*- he can’t see where she’s pointing like this-

“Yeah, I can take you there.”

Eijiro steps back as the woman drops out of nowhere beside him, immediately heading down a twisting street. She’s easy to follow in the dark, with such a pale uniform and white hair. “Call me Taka, by the way.”
“Kirishima. Thanks.” Eijiro hurries to catch up. Izuku mentioned Taka earlier, so he’ll trust her directions. For now. She shows him up a series of rooftops, until they’re hopping across the skyline. Even when crossing streets, roofs are so close together that quick hops aren’t a problem. One glance down has him convinced it’s a bad idea, regardless.

Taka is always one step ahead, pointing out details he’d missed. The lantern design always points to the castle, and bricks are laid so the middle row points to the sea. Music slowly returns in the distance. She hums along when a new, livelier song begins.

“The fire king’s first son made this one- it’s only allowed once a year, today. Best of the lot if you ask me.”

“Why not allow music all year?” Eijiro nearly slips, barely catching himself when Taka pushes him back from the roof edge. “Thanks.”

“Music belongs to the soul, not a distant ruler. People everywhere but especially those in power fear what they can’t control, such as songs of rebellion. So, only 62 songs allowed for 364 days.”

“That’s not many.”

Taka makes a face. “Yeah. Half are old ballads. They have to be approved, worthy of The Great Inferno, King Enji’s reign.” The words drip sarcasm. “What better for such a benevolent ruler who definitely has a happy populace.”

“That’s pretty unmanly.” Eijiro stops, watching the distant glow like cracks of golden ichor through city streets. It all had seemed so merry and lively. People had laughed while trading; knights and farmers had been treated equally and mingled easily. It didn’t seem like a country on the edge of rebellion. “Is the song that bad?”

“Eh. It’s not flattering. A while back the first prince saw his usefulness to the throne end. He had one last festival to reach the people, and a performance to do. The king cast him out, but all music is free today so the people play it, if just to remember they can.” Taka hums along to the tune. “Listen, they’re singing his words.”

“-Broken dreams, I watch through angels
As the road lies out before us.
Oh I look back to your faces, masks full of lies.
But my people stand together,
For the fire’s in our battle cries
Not as power of my father
But memory through-”
“More heart than the rest of them,” Taka says bitterly as he hops to the next roof. “Needs to work on the lyrics, though. He’d have a future in that if this were the right world. Come on, the café’s a few blocks up.”

“Wait, you know where Izuku is, right?”

Taka blinks before gesturing to the glass jar he carries. “So do you. Come on, I saw him by the square.”

Izuku spins through the square, clapping in time to the lost prince’s tune. The people sing words of a rebellion they never commit to, while their feet pound the earth in time with drumbeats. He twists away as Toko shoulders through the watching crowd- she can’t interrupt a dance, can’t disrupt the rhythm by an unspoken law. The lyrics ache but the tune- oh, how he loves it. It’s bright and hopeful and speaks to his very core that come what may, right now is for the living. Izuku dances, and sings until his throat is raw.

He loves this, loves being alive for it. The moment the song ends Izuku drops through the pavement, staring out at the null in wonder. How good it is, to have survived for this.

He should find Kirishima.

Izuku sorts through the worlds surface, looking for the corner they’d agreed to meet at. He spots Toko running through the square- he’s teleporting more this time, and it’s caught her off guard. She won’t really try anyway. Toko is sympathetic to the rebellion from what he’s seen, and probably isn’t working for the king by choice. He moves on, sorting through the world’s images until he spots a familiar intersection.

Kirishima isn’t there.

Taka pulls Eijiro up short just before they enter the main street. Toko sweeps by, searching the crowd like a hawk. Midoriya must have escaped. Eijiro ducks as she passes, and Taka disappears back down the sidestreet. She passes, and a nearby Takoyaki cook eyes Eijiro suspiciously.

“You in trouble with the big guns?”

“Uh-“

Toko passes by just before the cook shoos them away. She picks up a pebble, throwing it high across the street. The bustling crowd is too loud to catch it’s fall, but Toko zeroes in immediately.

Taka grimaces at the reaction, pulling a rude gesture when she thinks Eijiro isn’t watching. It’s not exactly the manliest thing he’s seen all day.

“You could fight them face to face, you know.”
“Not worth it, and you’ll be hunted too.”

Behind them, Toko freezes. “I know that voice,” she hisses, whirling around and partially spreading her wings. Knights and citizens alike scramble out of the way. All of the ease he’d held around Midoriya is gone, leaving behind nothing but the concentration of a trained hunter.

Taka breaks into a run. “Time to go.”

“IT’S YOU!”

Eijiro chases after Taka. She bolts to the side passages, eventually stopping long enough for Eijiro to catch up. Behind them, Toko struggles to navigate her large wings in the narrow street. It must be too small for her to take off.

“TRAITOR!”

“Now’s a good time to mention I’m wanted by both political factions here.”

“What?” Eijiro yells as they weave through the streets. “What is with you guys and being wanted?!”

“Absurd- Cloud hasn’t done anything bad enough. Yet.”

“Not helpful!” He chances a glance back- a couple knights have joined the chase, and they’re outnumbered. “They should face us one on one- that’s the manly thing to do!”

“How rude.”

The tengu barks out orders behind them while Taka vaults over a vendor’s cart. Eijiro slides under a table. People part before them, re-entering the road in time to impair Toko’s hunting. It’s too practiced, too perfect to be a coincidence. Either they don’t favor the city guard, or just don’t care enough to help them. Some of the knights don’t join in either.

“Seriously-“ Eijiro dodges a large cart. “-why are they chasing us?”

“Nothing big.” Taka takes to an alley, cutting through the narrow passage to another large, crowded intersection. “The green bean and I got lost a long time ago. Crashed a couple parties, drew a mustache on the king while he was asleep, maybe set a guardhouse or two on fire. It’s all a blur, really.”

Eijiro follows, nearly tripping over a crate as they re-enter the festival. “How is that a blur?! You can’t just commit arson and forget about it!”

“Sure, you can!”

“No, you can’t!” Eijiro takes a right, changing up their pattern. Taka follows without question.

“Anything is forgettable after a day at my job. I’d ask Izuku but he’d been awake for two days straight.” Taka skids to a stop by a construction site to shove debris into the road. “Ha. Straight. Do those people still exist?”

She lifts a plank of wood like a javelin, squinting through the crowded streets. Just as the first city guard comes into view, she throws the makeshift weapon with uncanny accuracy. “Yeet!”

Eijiro a is tugged away before he can see the fallout. “Did you kill them?!”

“It’ll take more than that- dragonscale armor is a pain. This world has tough people, even if only
around three can fight properly.”

Taka ducks into an alleyway, pulling them into a side tunnel. Eijiro hides the fireflies as shouting echoes on the main street. They hold their breath as it passes, and the street returns to it’s busy hum.

Footsteps slowly echo from inside the tunnel. Taka squints into the abyss, black dust crawling up her face and into her eyes. Eijiro is abruptly aware that he doesn’t know what her quirk is.

Something scrapes the stone walls softly.

“… Green bean? That you?”

He knows the voice that calls back. “Taka? Kirishima?”

Eijiro gasps, hurrying down the damp tunnel to hug is friend. “Bro, you got away!”

“‘Course I did,” Midoriya says as he hugs back. There’s dust in his green hair and the bags under his eyes are deeper. “Can’t die today. Sorry- it’s my fault you got lost and that was really dangerous of me to leave you when there are only a handful of world-travelers around so I completely understand if you’re mad-”

“Bro, no worries! Tonight was awesome- it’s just a lot of adventure, real fast, you know?” Eijiro glances back past Taka, where shouts of merriment and music drift through the streets. “I’m fine.”

“Ah, I should have warned you-“ Izuku breaks off, yawning. “Sorry.”

“Y’all. Let’s hit up the café ‘cause we need a break.” For the second time that day, a Traveler holds out their hand to Eijiro. “Feel comfortable with traveling back now?”

Eijiro and Izuku glance at each other, a mutual agreement that enough had happened passing between them. Starlight envelops the three as they take Taka’s offered hand.

Unlike Cloud’s chatter, Taka doesn’t talk as nebulas pass by. They fall quickly and dragging the two behind her. It’s a steadier journey, and light blue dust trails behind them like a comet’s trail as they approach a larger planet.

Eijiro still yells when the planetary dimension nearly crashes into them. He doesn’t know how he ends up in a café, just that he’s very done with visiting the void for a good long time.

The café owner is welcoming. He presses ginger tea and hot apple cider into their hands, and gives him the much needed silence to adjust to being back in a somewhat-modern setting. Eijiro looks out to see cars and streetlights. It’s their reality. Taka disappears upstairs while Midoriya fills in the owner on their day, providing a story that very much downplays how dangerous it was.

Eijiro catches none of it, too busy staring at the empty jar and realizing it was real. Midoriya talks like they just went to the gas station, instead of… that harrowing experience.

Midoriya offers a shortcut back to the beach, and they walk part of the way home together. Eijiro knows his friend could just disappear into the void and hop out at home, but it’s good to do things normally, too. They end up walking most of the way in comfortable silence.

“Sorry today got a little out of hand. I’m not usually hunted there, promise.”

“Dude, I got to go to a whole other dimension, it was so freaking manly. Thanks for having me.”

“Oh! Yeah, no prob. It was pretty fun.”
Eijiro shakes his head. “You need to stop underestimating your quirk.”

“Hey, I keep hearing you underselling hardening in class. Take your own advice.”

“Bro… that’s so manly.”

Midoriya snorts. “It’s true though. This is my street- um, one quick thing. Could you… not tell our class about this? I don’t want anyone getting jealous and it’s not like I can just take people every day, you know?”

“Yeah, sure. You plan to take the others?”

“Probably. Once I can. I can’t carry anyone and all the other people with this quirk are too busy.”

Eijiro hums, thinking back to how wildly different everything was in that other dimension. “They’d love it, but you might want to choose a more peaceful destination, y’know?”

“Oh. Huh. Yeah, probably.”

Eijiro is home playing video games when he sits up straight, finally connecting the dots.

“That king was Endeavor.”

Thank goodness the one here is a hero, rather than a tyrant.

Chapter End Notes

I love Toko with every fiber of my soul. She's such a layered character, and so badass

Edit: two sentence changes
Izuku can’t sleep the next night. Figures this would happen. He’d just found out that mom will be moving to the Lonely Owl- well, to a whole house inside it because Hisen is extra like that. Excitement over that, coupled with sleeping all day and the events from earlier worming their way back into his mind, and Izuku can’t sleep. Instead, he tosses and turns, trying not to wonder if everyone’s alright, or if it was just a dream.

He scrolls through his phone instead, pausing when messenger registers Shinsou as active. Izuku sends a message before he can regret it.

MESSAGING TIREDCAT

U up?

TiredCat: Do I look like the kind of person who sleeps

No?

U look like you wanna be comatose

TiredCat: sounds festive tbh

TiredCat: What’s up

TiredCat: ?

TiredCat: You good?

Can I call?

TiredCat: yee

Izuku nearly drops his phone in the darkness. Shadows are starting to flicker in the corners of his vision, and Izuku isn’t keen on lying awake tracking them. He needs to hear a voice, anything. Some part of him whispers that if he’s talking to somebody, the shadows can’t take him. The rest of him knows this whole fear is just his brain being funky, and that the shadows move due to trees outside.

“Shinsou, you up?”

“I just texted that I was. It’s like 4:36, man. Only one regretti spaghetti allowed in this house,”
Shinsou drawls.

“God, what a mood.” Izuku scrambles for a conversation topic before the silence can stretch – if it does, they’ll end up talking about feelings. Ugh. He huddles under his blankets, talking more for the sake of hearing another voice than anything else. “Listen, I can’t sleep. Are pop tarts calzones?”

“… you call me at ass-o’clock to ask if pop tarts are calzones?”

Did Shinsou just ask him a question? Is that the first question Shinsou asks him? Why. “I mean I guess, yeah.”

There’s a moment of silence across the line. “Shit, I don’t know. Ask Iida, he probably has answers.”

“Iida probably knows the history of calzones. I want opinions.”

“He’s also probably asleep.” Another pause. “Wikipedia says they’re savory.”

“America made pop tarts. It’s their fault.”

“They took a forbidden step.”

“It can never be undone.”

“You have to draw a line in the sand.” Shinsou’s voice cracks as he transitions to English. “You have to draw a line in the sand and ask, what am I willing to put up with today? Not FUCKING this.”

There’s distant rustling on the other side of the call, before faint, muffled older voices sound in the background. “Hitoshi, why are you yelling memes at 5 am?”

“Because he’s our kid, Ai. Go back to sleep.”

“Are those your dads?” They sound suspiciously like a certain two heroes.

“Yeah, my dad just got home from work- no sleep in this house. Y’all need to hit that hay.”

The quieter voice grumbles at this. “Go to sleep, Hitoshi.”

“Someday, maybe.”

“… I’m glad.”

“What?”

“Just… you got a good draw this time around. I’m glad. Sorry, that probably sounds super weird and personal-“

“Nah, you’re right. I got lucky a while back. Once you unlock my tragic backstory, I might spill some beans.”

“Guess I gotta level up then.”

“Meh.”

They sit for a bit in silence. Izuku watches the shadows on his wall warily - he’s pretty sure that his
jacket made one, but the other is weirdly shaped. Is it anxiety? Sleep deprivation? Probably sleep deprivation.

“Do you think everyone’s okay?”

“I mean physically, yeah. We’re a bunch of golden eggs off to cause baby-chicken chaos.”

Izuku snorts. “Chicken chaos.”

“I don’t trust chickens. You think they’re all nice and soft but they can and will murder for no reason.” There’s rustling on the other end of the line, and Izuku can hear purring.

“Like cats.”

“Cats have logic and relatability. What to chickens have? Flesh beards? I don’t think so.”

“…. But back to the class, though. We went through a lot and I’m worried about what’s gonna happen.”

“I’ve known them each for a week but they’re strong. We survived.”

“Still. What if things are only going to get worse?”

Shinsou is quiet for a moment. “Is this a quirk thing or an uncertainty thing?”

“Quirk. Shit, sorry. That’s probably bad for your anxiety, I didn’t mean to-“

“I never told you I had anxiety.”

“You did. After class elections.”

“Huh. There’s where my last braincell went. Well, you gotta tell somebody about that inevitable doom prophecy.”

“I’ve been trying to keep a lid on doom prophecies, actually.”

“No- no, you should go all out. Catch me with the same quirk strolling by 1B and telling them the world’s gonna end in three years. They can’t prove me wrong till I’m graduated and living a life full of cats and crime.”

“Crime?”

“Look me in the eyes and say you’ve never pirated music.”

“… you got me there.” The shadows have stopped moving. “Maybe I’ll go rouge. Live in the hills and become a hermit.”

Shinsou yawns. “That’s the spirit. Stick it to the capitalism. Seize the means of production.”

Izuku hums, thinking back to a world he’s seen. “I’ll be Robin Hood. Sneaking into billionaires’ offices and redistributing the wealth. I’ll start a baby animal YouTube channel and teach yoga so they’ll never suspect me while I donate all the pocket change to stranger’s college debt. A reverse-Batman. Tony Stark’s worse enemy.”

“That sounds like a shitty movie’s plot.”
Izuku puts on his best angsty hero accent, earning a snicker from Shinsou. “I was born in a stormy night to seek redemption. My hands are black with ink of forged checks and red from the blood of empires.”

Shinsou snorts, seemingly deeming this worthy of an actual question rather than his usual blank statements. “Who- who are you?”

“A kill-count 57 yoga instructor.”

“...How long have you been a yoga instructor?”

“I dunno, a while.”

“What did it cost?”

“It’s actually pretty economical.”

Shinsou cracks up at this one, and Izuku can’t help chuckling along before breaking into a yawn.

“Seriously, get some sleep. It’s after 5.”

“Huh. Well... thanks, Shinsou.”

“No prob. I will never experience the sweet bliss of unconsciousness so hit me up whenever.”

“That’s not healthy.”

“I do not want to hear that from someone with matching designer eyebags.”

“Touché. G’night.”

“Toodles.”

Izuku passes out not long afterwards, safe and reassured that everyone is, in fact, alive.

“No.” Hitoshi stands in front of the door, watching his stubborn-as-all-hell dad fumble around the kitchen.

“Hitoshi, where are my keys?”

“You can barely see, let alone teach.”

His dad really can’t, but it’s more than that. Hitoshi knows he had a panic attack when his father was smashed face-first into the concrete. He’s also very aware that seeing his workaholic dad stumble through the day will probably give both him and his loud dad a dozen more.

“I’m fine.”

“Bullshit. I’m taking the bus to school, and you’re going to stay here. Relaxing.”

“Hitoshi, did you hide my keys?”
Dad straightens up, and the two stare at each other for a moment. Across the room, the coffee machine beeps.

“You need to rest.”

“I need to teach. You need to go to school. The only logical way either of us will be on time is by car.”

That’s fair. Not breaking eye contact, Hitoshi finds his phone and speed dials the second contact.

“Hey.”

“HEEEEEYYYYY HOWS MY FAVORITE SON DOING TODAY???? DID YOU GET THE CATEPILLAR MAN TO SLEEP???”

“No, but I hid his keys. Also, I’m your only son.”

Across the kitchen, the man in question glares. Jokes on him, because Hitoshi has built up a resistance. He flips him off lovingly and gets a signed lecture in response that is not worth paying attention to.

“GREAT! Do you need a lift to school? I just finished the lesson plan, so let me know where to meet you.”

Beyond him, his dad begins to make his way to the hall. Hitoshi takes the chance to lower his voice.

“I feel like I forgot to hide something, but I’ll meet you out the back.”

“… Bus pass? OH!! Hide his capture weapon, too.”

There’s about one second of realization before Hitoshi and his father are both scrambling to the hallway. Unfortunately, his dad is fast, injured or not.

Izuku hesitates outside the classroom. Inside everyone’s talking and cheery, but the idea of rejoining them seems a little daunting. It’s nothing he’s proud of, but having people treat him like glass has always left a bad taste in his mouth. After years of being the kid with the weakest quirk who could do nothing but run away and go into quirk shock, sometimes it’s a little stifling.

He leans his head against the wall outside, gathering his strength before opening the door.

“Midoriya!” Kirishima practically breaks off his conversation, nearly vaulting over a desk to meet Izuku. “Dude, I totally blanked and took that magic jar-thing home with me-”

“It’s fine,” Izuku interrupts, very aware that if anyone in this room finds out he has access to magic he may be hunted by his school, the government, or worse, Nezdu. Kirishima doesn’t seem to notice. “Just… you didn’t bring it here, right? Cause uh. Magic kinda breaks physics and I don’t want the support department finding out.” Hatsume, to be specific.

“Almost did, but It’s at home. Still, I feel kinda nervous hanging on to magic, you know?” Kirishima steps aside so Sero can enter the classroom, and Izuku winces. This is a very public conversation.

“Let’s talk about it later. Can you bring it by the café after school? I’ll text an address.” Izuku waits
for Kirishima’s answering grin before moving to his desk. He’d completely forgotten entrusting magic to someone with no training in properly breaking physics. (Or how not to do so.) Kirishima catches his arm before he can sit down.

“Dude. Earlier- that… guy. The king.”

Izuku is abruptly aware of Mina and Kaminari listening in. “Yeah?”

“Was he Endeavor?”

“yeah.” The words flow easily, unimpaired by the null. “He’s an asshat.”

“Endeavor isn’t an asshat,” Hagakure interrupts, and wow Izuku did not see her there. “He’s super cool, and also our classmate’s dad. Todoroki is right behind you, Midoriya!”

Ah. So he is. Todoroki has twisted around in his seat, watching the conversation with an unreadable expression. Izuku remembers distantly that Todoroki was training with his father right after USJ and takes a deep breath. Time to make friends.

“Todoroki, I’m going to be honest. I think your father is deeply suspicious and dislike him strongly. I understand if I’m wrong and this offends you, but you should know that I have very little trust in him.”

“I don’t care,” Todoroki says, gripping the desk so hard his knuckles turn white.

Izuku should really stop talking, but the words flow out of him like a river. “Cool. I also don’t consider you anything like him, heads up. I’ll see you in the sports festival final rounds.” Izuku walks quickly back to his seat, sits down, and buries his face in his arms. Todoroki probably thinks he’s so weird. He wants a nap, not this nonsense. Aizawa is the ultimate relatable hero.

“Ooh, way to throw down the gauntlet, Midoriya!” Hagakure bounces up and down, and Sato frowns from his desk.

“Guys, it’s way too early for this. Let’s save it for the sports festival, okay?”

“Sato is right!” Iida’s voice pierces the classroom air. “We must inspire the spirit of community and teamwork within our class.”

Kirishima pats his shoulder in forbidden knowledge solidarity before heading back to his own desk. Izuku doesn’t know how much his friend has figured out. He doesn’t care right now. Todoroki’s stare bores holes into his head and Izuku wants to melt through the floor.

Aizawa distracts everyone by shuffling in wearily. He’s encased in bandages, and when Izuku looks back, Shinsou’s expression is an odd mix of resigned and exhausted.

“Seats, everyone. You may have heard about the UA Sports Festival. The top brass seems to think we need to present a strong front, so it’s continuing.” Aizawa pauses and Izuku could swear his eyes roll under the bandages at the yells of outrage. “If you have complaints, pass them on to administration. We will increase security this year, as well. Moving on to weekly events….”
Class comes and goes, and before long Izuku is making his way to the lunchroom with Shinsou, Uraraka, and Iida.

“Oh, I remember what I wanted to ask!” Iida’s hands slice through the air in precise gestures. “You know why I want to be a hero, but as for your own motivations I find myself in the dark. It would benefit me greatly to know of the different aspirations of my comrades!”

“You can’t help what the heart yearns for.” Shinsou continues down as if this answers everything.

Izu grins, remembering the last time he heard another Shinsou say those words over live television. This certainly wasn’t how he was expecting to hear them.

“Midoriya,” Iida starts seriously, “if you are laughing at a friend’s ambitions…”

“Oh! No, I’ve just heard that before, and it… um… caught me by- by surprise?” Izuku trails off when he realizes how that sounds. “Sorry.”

“Hey, is this your quirk, Deku?”

Izu nods, expecting the backlash- it’s creepy, to know what’s happening, to know what people will do before they think of it, why doesn’t he just go away and stop bothering them with all of this, he’s just looking for attention-

“Cool. My reasons aren’t noble at all,” Uraraka says, cutting across Izuku’s spiraling thoughts. “My parents run a construction company, and sales have been going down. If my quirk is licensed, then….”

“You could help them out,” Shinsou finishes, reaching the stairs.

“Yeah. I guess ultimately I’m in it for the money?”

“Still a worthy goal! Helping our parents is an essential part of maintaining society!”

Shinsou snorts at Iida’s announcement. “Depends on the parents. Also, Midoriya, don’t feel like you have to share.”

Izu catches Shinsou’s unspoken question. “That’s alright. Being a hero is kind of different for me. There are people I need to save- I have a list, actually- and being a hero is the easiest way.”

“Another noble cause!”

It’s at that moment All Might pops out of a hallway. “Young Midoriya!”

“A-All Might!”

“You’ve been called to the teacher’s room! Walk with me?”

“I-uh, I’ll be right there!” Izuku follows his idol to whatever meeting awaits him. Behind them, Uraraka gushes about All Might.

“Are you all right, young Midoriya?”

“All Might?”

“After the field trip. I was not in time to prevent you being injured. If I had not squandered my time earlier….”
“I’m fine, sir. My leg is still a little sore but otherwise everything’s fine.”

All Might adjusts his tie, guilt lining his posture. “I see…. Well, if you ever need an ear to talk to, I’ll be there.”

“Thank you.”

They stop outside the faculty doors and All Might ducks away before opening them. “I must fly, papers to grade. Aizawa Sensei asked for you, he should be inside.” And with that, he’s gone. Wouldn’t he be grading papers inside…?

Ah, shit. Izuku has a feeling he knows what this meeting is about.

He pushes open the massive doors and announces his jikoshoukai. Aizawa waves him over from across the sparsely populated room to sit on a chair nearby.

“Problem child, let’s discuss your quirk.”

Izuku hates being right. “Sir?”

“Dimension travel. Are you familiar with quirk analysis?”

“Yes.”

“Good. I’m assigning you an analysis of your own quirk. At least one page single spaced, and a half page of bullet points on possible weaknesses. If you’ve ever experienced quirk shock, I expect you to visit Recovery Girl and notify her. You could also tell me, and I can pass it on.”

“Yes, Aizawa Sensei. I think she already knows.”

“Is there anything I need to know now, any accommodations you may need?”

Oh, there’s a whole notebook of things he needs to say, accommodations or otherwise. Izuku swallows, his mouth already slightly numb.

“Yes, I-“ he can’t feel his throat. Not Hosu, then.

“Todo-“ He can’t feel his chest either. That one’s a little easier, but still too much. He’ll probably be able to talk about it sooner.

Izuku swallows thickly. “No, Sensei. Sorry.”

Aizawa’s eyes narrow beneath the bandages. “That didn’t sound like nothing.”

“Sorry.”

“I’d much rather you tell me than not.”

“Sensei- Endeavor’s a-“ the word gets cut off, ripped from his tongue and melted to fine goop that Izuku swallows reflexively. “I can’t talk about it yet,” Izuku says, hoping Eraserhead will understand. You worked with world travelers, Aizawa Sensei. Please, figure it out. Please know what it means when we say this.

Eraserhead nods impassively, and Izuku lets himself hope that maybe he knows.

“Tell me when you can, then. All Might is also available to talk whenever you might need him- the
man could at least hide playing favorites with you and Kirishima.”

He doesn’t understand.

“Thank you, Sensei,” Izuku says, stuffing his disappointment away in a neat little box for later. He’s been keeping these secrets his whole life. “I will.” Lying shouldn’t be this easy.

BONUS:

Inko steps through the new doorway, taking in their new apartment. It’s a beautiful space at the back of the Lonely Owl, separated by a single green door. Hisen’s quirk allows for endless expansion, and the man clearly has too much time on his hands. She’s a little concerned by what he’d meant in that there were two days for changes, though.

He’d put in the portal only yesterday, informing her that only she and Izuku could pass through. She’s been too busy to inspect the new space until now.

“A fireplace would have been nice,” Inko murmurs, running her hand over a wall. The paint splits under her hand. Inko draws back quickly as pale paint morphs into stonework, reshaping into a rustic chimney.

“Oh,” Inko says wondrously. “I see.” She wanders off into the apartment, windows opening around her and color blooming behind. Carpet sprouts like grass in her footsteps. There’s a scuffmark under one windowsill, while all the others are perfectly new.

Chapter End Notes

oh shit I should probably explain how physics are happening in that last bit. Skip if you don't wanna read, it's not plot relevant:

Hisen's quirk: Hestia. Gives Hisen 100% control over reality within the place the wielder (and whoever he identifies as close family!!!! that's not a subtle hint at all!!!) sees as home. (its like Hisen's set the house to accommodate whatever will help Inko feel at home!) yes, Hisen can break physics and bend space. No, he cannot mess with time and yes, he has plenty of limits on controlling the people within. If he leaves the property, it all collapses and whoever is inside will be thrown into the null. Inside, he cannot die. Outside, he's functionally quirkless and cannot protect anyone. He's stuck with unlimited power in a tiny café. A gilded cage is still a cage, or whatever they say.

Hisen's old as dirt, yall. I spent a whole week building his powerset (T.T)

Edit: italicssss
Yaomomo is Too Powerful

Chapter Notes

Hey!!!! I’ve been very excited to yell about this for a very long time!! Huge shoutout to LunartheDragon for letting me reference their fic If I Only Had a Heart and yall should read it if you haven’t be its amazingly well written!!!

Spoilers: There are really vague spoilers for the training arc, but like... super vague.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku is spending the better part of last period trying to ignore the strangely crowded hallway outside class. He’s not the only one.

Shinsou is procrastinating homework by making a very good point that pop tarts ‘can’t be Americanized calzones because America makes it a point to Americanize everything (Pizza? Sushi? Doughnuts? Even tea isn’t safe). Therefore, calzones are calzones and pop tarts are pop tarts.’ Iida watches on in despair and Uraraka takes it as a challenge. Her rebuttal is cut off when one loud and unfortunately familiar voice calls out from the doorway.

“So, this is the infamous Class 1A? Looks like you all think you’re so high and mighty just because a few villains interrupted your field trip.” Monoma leers in, students behind him staring with equal distain.

Izuku’s breath catches, remembering the all-encompassing terror he’d felt. They thought that was privilege? More like a punch to the gut and trauma party for all involved but sure, whatever floats their boat.

“Got a problem, extra?” Kacchan slouches up to the door. He takes a moment to survey the mass of faces, then dismisses all of them as worthless in typical Kacchan fashion.

The student laughs, wide eyes giving him a slightly unhinged appearance. “So it is true! You’re all a bunch of stuck-up snobs-”

Izuku pen scores a dark line in his notes at the sound of an explosion.

Kacchan sneers out into the crowd. “Who’s next? Or are you extras gonna sit here and stare all day like a bunch of damn empty-headed pricks?”

“Bakugo, it is improper to call our fellow schoolmates ‘extras!’”

“Put a sock in it, four-eyes.”

“Now wait a moment.” A tall student with white papery eyelashes pushes his way to the front. Tetsutetsu is taller in this world. “We came out here to scout competition, but now I’m starting to think there might not be much of one. Are you all this rude?”

“HAAAAH??”

“Oh, I’m sorry. Let me be clearer.” The student pounds his fists together, the sound of metal
colliding startling other onlookers. “I’m saying gen ed students can transfer into class 1A and 1B if they place high enough.”

Izuku straightens at this and Shinsou moves to the doorway silently as though lured by the opportunity to cause maximum chaos.

“And you better believe all of 1B is gonna stick around.”

“I’m guessing this is a declaration of war.” Shinsou leers out at the students from behind Kacchan. Between the two of them, Class 1A is making a horrible first impression.

“I guess it is. Got a problem?”

“Yeah, let’s start with your sad excuse of a face,” Kacchan growls, stepping forwards until the student is forced to back up.

Shinsou smirks. “Real eloquent, blasty.”

“Fuck off.”

“No, you.”

The end of school bell rings, but nobody leaves. This could get ugly. Izuku hurries to the classroom door to soften the fallout when inevitably someone gets in trouble. “Guys, wait—"

Kacchan flinches away from Izuku as if burned. “Don’t fucking touch me, Deku. And you extras. That first place is mine, so don’t even try.” With that, he stalks off, explosions crackling behind him. The students part warily, swarming the doorway again once he passes.

Shinsou pushes past the crowd next, intentionally shoulder checking a few on his way. It’s not exactly the representation they need after Kacchan’s abrasive show. Shinsou has a way of seeming like he wants to murder everyone he looks at, and students part like he’s got the plague.

Izuku heads straight for home, and it is weird that ‘home’ and the café are now in pretty much the same location. Mom’s been moving stuff from the apartment, but they aren’t fully transferred over yet. Taka starts up their normal sparring proactive as usual, and they start practicing throws.

On one hand, this is an unfairly badass move and the padded floor takes out any real impact. On the other, Izuku is being thrown halfway across the gym when he catches sight of Kirishima in the doorway.

He’d completely forgotten about Kirishima coming over. Of all times for his friend to walk into the gym, it’s when he’s thrown across the room. Izuku hits the mat in a roll and lets himself fall.

“Bro?”

“’Sup. Wanna join?” Izuku waves from his collapsed position on the floor. He twists his neck to looks at Taka, who’s not even trying to muffle her laughter. She probably heard him coming and forgot to tell. He has the worst friends.
“Can he join?”

Kirishima accepts this strangeness with less surprise than Izuku would have accepted and joins them on the mat readily. “I was gonna lift weights anyway,” he reassures them when asked.

Taka rolls her eyes. “Fine. Rules are no quirks, and anyone can call a break anytime. Two on one, show me your teamwork. Questions?”

Not really, no.

“Great. Match starts now.”

Izuku and Kirishima hesitate for a second, and that’s all the time Taka needs. She’s between them in an instant, targeting Izuku first. It’s kind of a gift- Kirishima isn’t accustomed to the pace yet. Izuku rolls, springing up with a kick that doesn’t land. Kirishima follows with a strong left punch that’s batted aside.

“That style is centered around boxing, right?” Taka catches Izuku’s kick easily.

Kirishima readjusts his stance. “Yeah. Picked it up around a year ago.”

Taka dodges the next two hits and sweeps Kirishima’s legs out from under him. “Be careful to learn extra groundwork. Boxing is great for maneuvering and hand-to-hand, don’t get me wrong – but in hero fights you’ll need to make use of your legs, too.” She gently shoves Izuku back so more weight is on his good leg. “Villains can recognize your style and target its weakness. I can teach some basics that pair well.” Taka shakes out her hands and beckons them forward, posture relaxed and ready. “So. Team tactics. Come at me.”

Taka redirects Izuku’s next hit, straightening form and advising tactics in the same breath. Kirishima takes to it like a duck to water. Their teamwork is messy, but promising. Taka takes training up a notch when she finds their levels are roughly the same, forcing them to collaborate. It’s incredibly productive- turns out with three people, Izuku can get a first or second-hand view of the same move.

Neither of them is able to land more than a solid couple of hits till near the end. Even then, it’s more of a tackle, but Izuku will take what he can get. He can go for longer- they both can- but Taka sends them off after a couple hours.

“Training heroes need their rest,” she says lightly. “Be sure to go for a light jog before school and stretch a bit. Besides, tomorrow’s going to be rough enough anyway.”

Whatever that means.

Okay, so maybe it’s not resting, but it’s not exercising and that’s basically rest. Anyway. Izuku hasn’t forgotten the feeling of smoke in his lungs from the weekend, and he’s not keen on experiencing it again. Sometimes you just gotta flip off fate and get your own gas mask. So, he tugs on a beanie and dives into the null.

He has a mental list of advanced worlds, and the closest is covered in light blue and grey lines. The pattern indicates futuristic tech, though appearances can be deceiving. The world was named
IIOHAH long ago. It stands for something, though he doesn’t know what. Izuku enters feet-first as close as he can to where the jagged lines converge and hopes it’s the right decision.

Sunlight explodes into existence. He stumbles on short, bright grass. It’s a sunny day, and a busy park spreads out around him. People go about their day, jogging or simply enjoying the warm sunshine. There’s no fancy technology to be seen, and even the phones seem to be similar models to Home. The colors are brighter here. Lighter.

Izuku pretends to stretch, buying time. The world feels remarkably varied. He catches little glimpses—a soldering iron, gleeful laughter, middle school hallways and hospital corridors. Hope twists through the air while sadness lingers underneath. It’s a strong world, though. Stronger than his own.

“Excuse me! Do you have time to answer some questions?”

Izuku nearly leaps into the null, whirling around in surprise. A woman who looks nearly identical to his own mother stands beside her son of around nine years old. They have a box of equipment on a park bench, and Izukus breath catches as he pieces it all together. He knows who that is. How is the null letting him be here? How is it letting two Izukus meet? Sure it’s happened a couple times, but most of those were orchestrated—wait. He’s not wearing quirk suppressors. Did that change things? The woman smiles, and her son watches hopefully for the answer. Izuku has nothing to lose, so he shrugs.

“I—I have time. I may have to leave suddenly, though.” More like he’ll be forcefully thrown into the void at any second, but they don’t need to hear that.

“That’s all right,” the boy chirps, readying a clipboard. He’s got an eyepatch, and when he twirls a pencil it’s with an incredibly advanced prosthetic arm. Maybe it’s a quirk, because the motion is way too fluid and natural. “I’m Midoriya, and this is my mom!”

Ah. He has to introduce himself now. The idea of a fake name presents itself before Izuku squashes it down – he shouldn’t lie. “I’m, um. I’m also Midoriya.” He waits for starlight to consume him in revenge for speaking out of turn.

The null doesn’t take him, so Izuku is left to fidget under Midoriya-san’s scrutiny. “Sorry.”

“It isn’t a very common name,” Inko says, slightly suspiciously. It’s not clear if she’s figured him out or is trying to dismiss the idea, but both are bad options.

“Um,” Izuku says intelligently. “It’s not…. What are the questions?”

His counterpart squints up, and Izuku can see the dots connecting. Coming here was a mistake but it would be so rude to leave now.

“First, what’s your quirk?”

Izuku nearly breaks down from internal screaming. “Dimension travel,” he says miserably, squeezing his eyes shut tight. The null is going to yeet his soul out of his body for this. He’s so screwed, and then this younger counterpart will be left wondering what happened forever-

“What?!” There’s a split second of silence before Midoriya practically explodes with excitement. “Oh my gosh you’re me, from another dimension! Oh, wow.”

Izuku peaks down to see his counterpart practically vibrating with excitement. “… Yes?” this is not what he was expecting.

The kid hurriedly reaches for his notebook, writing quickly with his left hand. It’s the same notebook
brand Izuku uses, though a different color. “How does that work?! The multiverse theory was widely denounced as fantasy before quirks even began to arrive, and none have been discovered relating to it- until now. I have to tell Mashi about this- wait, is there a Mashi in your dimension?”

“I haven’t met a Mashi, sorry. And the multiverse theory is only half-correct.”

This stops the kid cold. “How?” he questions seriously. Izuku glances at his mother, who is taking the exchange in with a faintly startled but bemused expression.

“Izuku, manners,” she reminds him gently. This must happen often.

“Yes, ma’am. How is it wrong?”

“It’s um. It’s fine. Rambling is pretty common across our counterparts. But yeah, the multiverse theory is partially incorrect. The space between dimensions might decide to throw me out of this reality for saying it but. Um.” He’s never had a chance to explain this to someone who may understand, but now that he has a chance all the words desert him. “It’s sentient. Or at least semi-sentient. My quirk works by weakening the barrier between me and the space between dimensions, from what I’ve figured out. We call it the null because it’s not really… void-like. It’s got decision-making abilities and can feel pain, if nothing else.”

Midoriya’s eye widens. “It’s alive?” He sounds almost scandalized, and it’s hilarious. Was he like this when he was nine?

“Probably.” Izuku hides a smile as his counterpart notes something down, mind moving faster than his pencil.

“How’s it structured? I haven’t read up on intra-dimensional theory in ages but is it branching? Layered? Oh!” The boy looks up from his notebook as if just realizing something. “Is it all right if I take notes?”

“Go ahead. It’s not like any sci-fi story or book I’ve read. It’s more like a bag of marbles? They’re all floating together, contained in the void. You have to travel through nothingness to reach them.”

“Through nothingness?” The note-taking stops abruptly.

“I think it’s opened by expanding the space between atoms, if that helps.”

Midoriya looks around him, taking in the park anew. That might have been a bit too much.

“Izuku, sweetie, remember to breathe.”

“They’re not interpenetrating dimensions. They’re completely separate- Mom! Mom, do you know what this means?” The younger Midoriya throws both arms up joyfully. “It’s all wrong! There’s so much to discover! I can do so much with this-”

Izuku coughs abruptly as the null claws at his mind. It didn’t like that. “I don’t think that’s a good idea,” he manages, roughly swallowing back the sludge that’s welling up in his throat. The kid startles at the echo to his voice, while his mother moves in between them slightly.

“Sorry. I’m a side effect. I don’t think the void will like you experimenting on it.”

“Oh,” he says quietly. The notebook is set aside carefully. “I guess that makes sense – it is a whole new field of physics so the room for error couldn’t even be calculated.”
Izuku shifts from foot to foot in the awkward pause that follows. “I could still answer those questions, but if you want me to leave that’s totally fine. I’m just running errands, anyway.”

“Errands?”

“This is a high technology world.” Izuku stops abruptly and then backtracks. “I mean, it’s marked from the outside that advanced technology exists here, so I’m looking to get modifications for my gear. It looks pretty normal, though.” He doesn’t mention the kid’s arm—maybe it’s just prosthetics or medical care that’s advanced. Some worlds are like that, with magic systems or social orders re-worked for equality, with little else changed.

He’ll need to re-class this world as a utopia in his notes.

“What kind of gear,” the kid asks carefully, and Izuku recognizes the eager look in his eye. He knows something. This world might be dangerous, might have regulated invention laws. Izuku should have watched his word choice. Maybe not a utopia, then.

“I’m at— is it even a school here? Do you have heroes?” Izuku glances around, spotting a billboard with Mount Lady on it. A jogger runs past in an All Might top. “Okay, you have heroes. Is UA a hero school here?”

“You’re at UA?!” And oh, he knows that look from when he was little. That hope and disbelief because he didn’t think he’d make it but needed to so desperately—

“Yep! Are you planning to go?” Izuku shouldn’t have asked that. Midoriya’s eye darts up to his mother and Izuku abruptly changes the meaning.

“Because no matter what you’ll do, you’ll make it,” Izuku says confidently. It’s not his business why Midoriya doesn’t want his mother to know, but he can respect the kid’s wishes. Midoriya-san doesn’t react to the change in her son, so that’s a plus.

“What do you mean?” The words are cautious, and that need to know is so familiar that Izuku needs to answer this one completely.

He settles down on the concrete, making sure his movements are telegraphed so as not to startle anyone. “I’ve seen a lot of futures. We—other versions of us, that is—always make our mark on history. Doesn’t matter how, but you’ll change everything.” He lowers his voice slightly. “If UA’s the way to go then you’ll do it. If it’s not, then another equally amazing path will open. That’s just who we are. So long as you fight for it, you’ll be a hero, one way or the other.”

The younger Midoriya frowns, as though filing the words away to fully consider later. “Thank you.”

Izuku dips his head in a semi-bow, unsure of how far the social niceties go here. From the reactions it’s a bit off, but close enough. They get back to the survey.

“What’s your gear, anyway?” the younger Midoriya asks as he rummages through his supplies for a test.

“Pretty basic stuff. I need to find someone who can modify my mask. There’s gonna be a—” The null cuts him off, and Izuku swallows abruptly. It takes a moment to steady his breathing. Midoriya-san moves to sit on the bench as well, once again between them. He’s really making a great first impression.

“One moment,” he manages. No way will he go into quirk shock today, not in front of a kid. Nobody needs to deal with a stranger looking like a cosmic horror in the middle of polite small talk.
The null fades away after a few seconds. Izuku straightens up, wiping his mouth on a tissue through more habit than necessity.

“Sorry. I need it to filter smoke.”

“Are you okay?” The kid watches him cautiously, white kit gripped in his hand tightly.

Izuku fidgets, nodding. “It’s nothing, just trying not to collapse time.” There’s a second of silence before Izuku gestures to the kit, desperate for a distraction. “Is that for DNA testing?”

“Oh- yeah, do you mind if…”

“I don’t know if it will work, or if DNA structures on my world are even the same. You’re welcome to try, though.” His test comes out inky black, and Izuku knows instantly it will fade away into nothing within the hour.

“Um, I’m also collecting samples of quirks, if it’s possible. Do you know of any part of your quirk that works for it?”

Izuku hesitates, then asks for a test tube. There are a couple things he could do, but only one that doesn’t result in him going into shock or breaking physics. This is going to be tricky. His counterpart watches, eye wide as Izuku creates a portal.

“This may not work,” he warns, before leaning through as far as he can, hoping- praying – the null will let this work. He feels its presence around him, all encompassing, and asks it for a piece of its nothingness.

*Just a drop*, he whispers to the void. *Please.*

He’s never tried this. He’s asked the null for help before, with varied results. Never enough to count on. Then his heart stops. The null takes everything at once- everything is so, so bright, and he can feel his bones lengthening, twisting so that walking will be a pain.

His teeth are too long, too sharp, to animalistic. Izuku stays facing into the null, so as not to frighten the family behind him. He hadn’t expected physical mutation.

*Please.*

The test tube is filled halfway with liquid starlight- Izuku doesn’t see it happen. It just is.

*Thank you,* he thinks.

His bones revert, and teeth dull until the difference is barely noticeable. Izuku ducks back into the world’s reality, passing the sample back. Everything is too bright. Sunspots disappear as he blinks, but the portal won’t close. The null isn’t happy. It’s not mad at the kid, though. Just Izuku. His counterpart hastily caps the vial, tucking it away carefully in the neatly organized box.

“Be careful with that. When you’re done, scatter it on the grass or something- every drop.”

Midoriya-san hasn’t left her son’s side. “It’s dangerous?”

“No, just not meant for humans. It’s kind of magic? Anyway, it’s somewhat conscious, so if you respect it and keep it for as little time as possible, you’ll be fine. Oh, and I wouldn’t touch it.”

Midoriya closes the box carefully. “I understand. Thank you, by the way- why isn’t that closing?”
Izuku glances back at the younger Midoriyas question. The portal is shrinking, albeit very slowly. “My quirk isn’t happy, I guess. Do you need anything else?”

“No, but…. Is that-“ The question – even the notion that it’s an option- seems to be a struggle to someone who’s just learned how physics can be broken. “Can I- can I look through?”

There’s no reason why he can’t, technically. “Ask your mom.”

At Midoriya-san’s hesitant permission, Izuku opens the portal further. He anchors one hand in the null, and another in this reality. His counterpart approaches with an odd gait and peers out at the null. It’s beautiful, even though this makeshift window. Their worlds surface is out of view, but the distant millions of other worlds are visible. Midoriya-san holds her son’s flesh hand tightly as he leans over.

“This isn’t space,” he says, taking it all in analytically. “The planets all look different and I don’t recognize any star systems.”

“You know your stuff.”

“I’ve been thinking about outer space,” his counterpart admits sheepishly, still watching the endless expanse. Izuku can almost see him turning it over in his mind like a puzzle, chipping away in search of answers. “Thought about going.”

“You can do it.” Izuku watches as the portal starts to close slowly. It’s time to close. “I’ve got to do my errands, but do you need anything else?”

Midoriya steps back from the unknown reluctantly. “No, thank you so much.”

“Thank you for helping us,” Midoriya-san adds after her son.

They say their goodbyes, and Izuku wanders off in search of an inventor. He’s a good ways away when he hears someone shouting his name. His counterpart waves with the prosthetic hand, the movement completely natural.

“Midoriya-san! Why are you a hero?”

“I need to save people,” Izuku calls back. “And to do it, I’m trying to become one.”

His counterpart fidgets, looking back to where his mother gives an encouraging ‘go ahead.’ After a moment he looks up, decision made. “If you prove it, I can fix your mask!”

Izuku’s thought process stutters to a stop before he brightens. “Really?” There are a lot of worlds out there- one with a child genius doesn’t seem impossible at all.

The next day, Izuku figures Taka’s advice out the moment he wakes up. His muscles are screaming, and the lactic acid buildup in his legs could probably put Mina’s quirk to shame. Judging from Kirishima’s face when they meet outside the classroom, he’s not the only one.

“Dude, I’m dying.”

“Same. We spar once a week if you want to join.”
Kirishima wheezes when he tries to move the door. “That’s so manly, I’m in.”

Yaomomo opens the classroom door easily. She watches with mild concern as Kirishima wobbles through collapses at his desk before fixing Izuku with an unreadable expression.

“We still have 20 minutes before class. Care to talk?”

“Um… yeah?”

“Good. I have a question about your quirk.”

*Shit.* Izuku follows Yaomomo down the hall to a vending machine. It’s quieter here, because everyone knows the one upstairs has better drinks. She gets a hot green tea, but Izuku doesn’t buy anything. Yeah, he’s cheap. Vending machines are money vacuums in Japan. So what?

“I can’t take passengers,” Izuku announces before Yoamomo can start. “I can send letters, but that’s about it.”

“That does put a damper on things, but I’m worried about something else.”

“I- what?”

“Midoriya, I have to apologize. I didn’t mean to overhear your conversation with Aizawa Sensei before USJ, and I may be poking my nose into where it’s not welcome.”

“You heard that?”

“I don’t think anyone else did.”

Izuku frowns. What did they even discuss? The time before USJ seems so long ago. “Thanks for letting me know.”

“Frankly, I don’t think Aizawa Sensei remembers it after… *that.* So I have to ask this as class vice-president: are you okay?”

Izuku freezes, abruptly remembering how he broke physics not even 24 hours earlier. He’s gone into quirk shock at least ten times since then. “…Yes? No? We live in a superpowered society and our principal is a super-genius who publicly declared he hates humanity so none of us are really ever okay, but I don’t think that’s what you’re asking-”

“You actively implied villains have hunted you.”

Did he? “They haven’t yet – won’t. They won’t. Why- what?”

Yaomomo takes a long, slow sip from her tea and Izuku wants to slam his head into the wall, effectively knocking himself out instantly. Someday he’s going to learn how to lie properly.

“Look, I-“

*Wait.*

A ton of worlds have traitors at UA. Anyone but All Might and Nezdu might be one. The whole class knows his quirk. He’s never been hunted by villains so early, but it might happen now. *Mom’s* in danger and neither of them realized it. She’s still moving in to the café- wait. She knows. Does she? Did something happen? They’d tell him if so… right?
“Fu**k.”

“Midoriya?”

Izuku squeaks, scattered thought process making it hard to concentrate on the concerned look Yaomomo gives him. “No worries! I have come to a very startling conclusion and am currently panicking. It’ll pass. Anyway, you said you had a question?”

“If you don’t want to talk about it, that’s fine,” Yaomomo says easily, and Izuku feels a stab of guilt for not dealing with her concern better. “I’m worried. You have the ability to effectively see other timelines – essentially the future, right?”

Izuku nods. “Alternate futures. I have no idea what’s happening now.”

“But you knew what was happening at USJ.” Yaomomo frowns when he doesn’t deny it. “Midoriya, forgive me if this is too forward, but we’re going to be attacked again, aren’t we?”

Izuku stares at her blankly. There’s a dull hum in his ears, and for a moment the ground seems to drop away under his feet. “…What?”

“You were surprised at USJ, but not as if it was new. Like you were reliving a bad dream.” She’s not wrong. Yaomomo continues, watching Izuku’s reaction closely. “If I knew about something like USJ, I’d have told everyone. Even if I couldn’t, I’d tell them it was the only attack. I’m guessing either you can’t tell or it’s not the last.”

 “… You got all that from a short conversation and mid-battle analysis?” Izuku stares at Yaomomo. She’s… terrifying. He knew she was smart – she always is – but this is on par with Tsukauchi or AFO on some worlds.

“If I’m reading into things too much the I deeply apologize-“

“You’re right.” Izuku leans against the stairwell and breathes deeply, trying to work out what he can and can’t say without coughing up the fabric of reality. “Even if I could talk about it, what would happen?”

“They’d be prepared. The teachers will know, and they’d stop this.”

“They wouldn’t.”

Yaomomo looks over at him sharply. “What?”

“Sorry, that was a really bad way to put it. It’s just that, um. I’ve seen UA be warned. Nezdu always has USJ happen anyway, and maybe they send extra teachers - maybe they’re just a little more prepared, but it will happen. It always does.”

“So stop the next one,” Yaomomo says as if it’s that easy. Izuku no longer knows if it is, to her. In less than two minutes, Yoamomo has introduced herself as an unexpected variable to the future.

“That will happen too,” Izuku says right before the null slams into his chest, knocking away his breath. He coughs lightly, forcing the discomfort down.

“So there will be another one.”

“Maybe. And if there theoretically was one, I won’t be able to talk about it without-“ the null rises up again and Izuku swallows thickly. “- quirk shock.”
“Ah. Nevermind then.”

“I’ll try to drop hints, but there’s really not much I can do until it happens.” All that’s left is to hope he’ll be in time.

Yaomomo blinks slowly. “So there may be a fatality.”

“… What?”

“Based on what you’re not saying. Am I leaping to conclusions?”

“I- No. You’re not. How did you figure that out?”

Yaomomo thinks for a moment, her nails clacking against the tea bottle as she fiddles with it. “For starters, you haven’t assured me it won’t happen. That would be the first step in this discussion if not, and you’re not the type to ignore social rules like that. You mentioned the future couldn’t change even if you warned about it and confirmed future attacks. Your expression just now, too.”

She’s sharp. Izuku takes this all in, letting his mind run over what he can and can’t say. “It depends on if I’m on time. If not… I don’t know.”

“I should have known.”

“W-what?” That seems to be the word of the day. Izuku is starting to feel very confused and bewildered. It’s not fun.

“… Feminine-presenting heroes have a higher chance of dying in action, Midoriya. We die and villains are given an extra number on their kill count - but nobody cares about the hero who died, no matter how famous she was. We die so other heroes can suffer and we die to further the reason they save others. We die because villains see this and think we’re weak. They target us specifically for shock value; for the headlines. We die because people are used to it happening.” Yaomomo peels the label off her tea bottle with surgical precision. “I have no intention of letting that happen in my class. To any of us.”

“You think it will? Happen, I mean.” She’s implying six specific classmates may die. Izuku’s list is wildly different.

Eri.

Iida.

Ingenium.

Todoroki.

All Might.

Shinsou.

Yaomomo watches him, perfect posture and poker face giving nothing away. “With all the timelines you’ve seen, you think it won’t?”

Starlight screeches in the back of Izuku’s mind like nails on a chalkboard, cutting off any chance of replying. In less than a week, she’s figured out more than he has - more than the null will let him, at least.
"Oh, fuck the voil!" Izuku mutters, and Yaomomo glances up sharply at his grating voice. "Sorry--sorry. Quirk does... this. But I don’t know. It might. There’s a real chance of fatality, though I have no idea who."

“Not if I can stop it,” Yaomomo says so confidently Izuku fully understands why she makes the top listings every year. “Tell me anything you learn, I’ll be listening.”

Izuku takes a deep breath. “Great. Can I ask a favor?”

“You can ask.”

“If anything happens, keep the class together. Please. The worst happens when- when we split up.” He’s giving all the information he can with this. They will be split up, they will be attacked, something happens so that they are scattered in a burning forest. The class survives when they’re together. Usually. He has an important card to play and Izuku knows when to wear his heart on his sleeve. Honesty is the best policy.

Yaomomo watches him, weighing his words carefully. She’ll keep the class together anyway, but he needs this to count. He needs everyone to be protected even if the villains take him. And now that he knows how far Yaomomo can see ahead, there’s a slim chance they’ll be ready. They’ll stay together.

“Physically? Metaphorically?”

“Yes.”

Yaomomo shakes her head. “I would do that anyway, you know.”

It’s still a relief to hear.

Chapter End Notes

oh. this chapter is over two times the size it was going to be. Oh no. The travesty. Guess we’ll just have to see Yaomomo being too smart and nearly shattering the fourth wall with intellect alone. She’s genre-aware, yall.

also in the travel section, I used 'Midoriya' for If I Only Had a Heart Izuku, and 'Midoriya-san' for If I Only Had a Heart Inko. I get that it might be a lil confusing, srry!!

Edit: oh heck I realized that If I Only Had a Heart ends with chap songs so um, Wake Me Up by Avicii was stuck in my head while editing that bit.
Iida Thinks I'm a Vigilante

Chapter Summary

iida didn't ask for any of this to happen to him.

Chapter Notes

HEY! I'M STILL FIGURING OUT THE GLITCH TEXT! No promises on when it'll be finished by bc stressTM

Spoilers: I think we're good.

Triggers: there's a kidnapping mention in passing. Skip from "You're a threat to my sanity" down like 9 chapter breaks.

Izuku drops his quirk analysis off with Aizawa once they get back (“I don’t remember asking for two extra pages, problem child.”) and morning classes pass peacefully.

They’re doing hand-to-hand combat with quirks during the afternoon. All Might is out doing “hero business” and Aizawa is overseeing the lesson instead. Luckily, this means Izuku won’t be paired with Kacchan. Unluckily, Eraserhead has no pity on students who are still sore from earlier workouts. The universe must be laughing at Izuku for his screaming muscles, because all he and Kirishima get from Aizawa is a grin full of teeth and advice to do their best.

It’s a random pairing so Izuku finds himself thanking his good luck as he grins across the mat at Iida. Iida smiles back before bending over at a perfect 45-degree bow. “Let’s do our best, Midoriya!”

Izuku shifts into a ready stance. “Ready when you are!”

Aizawa calls the start, and they run to meet on the mat.

Iida makes the first move- his legs giving the upper hand with speed- and swings a broad right kick. Izuku barely redirects before Iida twists in midair, landing wobbly. He recovers quickly, and Izuku plays defensive for the next few hits, waiting for an opening.

In the back of his mind he looks for a chance to use his quirk and counteract Iida’s speed. It takes too much focus and he earns a bruised shoulder for his troubles. He needs to change his approach. Izuku dodges again- hooking his foot around Iida’s ankle as he goes.

Iida turns, over balances, and falls. Instead of attacking again, Izuku backs up.

“Hey, Iida! Mind if I try something with my quirk?”

Iida practically snaps back up, eyes wide with excitement and adrenaline. “An excellent use of training! How may I assist?”
Izuku finds his hold on Here and resumes his stance. “Come at me.”

Iida runs, telegraphing a high punch more than he usually would, and Izuku hurls himself forward. He’s never tried this before, but trainings the best chance he’ll get.

He opens a portal on Iida’s other side. With luck, he can dodge, slip through, and reappear above the fight for a solid punch.

Iida swings, and Izuku dodges past. He’s almost to the portal when Iida’s hand wraps around Izuku’s arm, and there’s too much momentum to stop. When Izuku tumbles through the portal, Iida falls in as well.

The Null feels considerably icier this time. Izuku’s mind goes foggy, and he’s only half-aware of Iida’s shocked shout. They fall into the abyss.

The world is already too far away to catch.

Izuku grabs Iida – no matter what happens, they can’t get separated - and uses the last of his mental energy to redirect their fall. He locks onto the nearest familiar place and mentally pulls with the rest of his energy. As they begin to plummet, Izuku slips into unconsciousness hoping Iida will survive the Null.

Tenya is terrified.

It had been instinct to grab Midoriya- he had come so close, so fast, that it had just happened. The next thing he knew, it was like the stars had formed an ocean and dunked them in.

The training hall is gone. Instead, they’re next to a massive orb covered in red string. Flashes of a life- Midoriya’s life- play across it. One of them blinks by- Bakugo and Midoriya in a sandbox, one laughing, the other crying.

Tenya refocuses. This isn’t for him to see. He looks around wildly. Where-

“Midoriya!”

His friend is slowly drifting away, so Tenya pushes off the planet towards him. His friend’s face is obscured by that untamed hair, and he’s limp. Not good. With a family of pro-heroes, Tenya knows a shock response when he sees one.

“Midoriya, focus - you have to get us out of here. How do we leave?”

Midoria blinks up at him blurrily. Hands wrap around Tenya in a tight hug. He doesn’t question it. Instead, he wraps his arms around Midoriya and trusts his friend as they begin to fall through an ocean of starlight. Along the way, Midoriya’s arms go slack.

Tenya is hurtling headfirst through who- knows-what with an unconscious friend. His quirk works but does nothing to alter their path. Another orb- is that a planet? - rushes past, and Tenya may or may not scream.

Not that anybody can hear it.
Another planet approaches and Tenya distantly notices they’re headed right towards it. He braces himself, angling the fall so that he’ll hit it first. With any luck, Midoriya will survive this.

It gets closer, closer. Tenya draws in a breath and squeezes his eyes shut tight. At the last moment a perfect circle of light opens on the orb’s surface, right where they’re set to impact. When Tenya tumbles through, it feels like a warm cloud has swamped his senses.

They crash onto damp concrete in a tumble of limbs. Tenya doesn’t register much – it’s an alleyway at night, likely downtown. There’s more litter in the street than Japan’s laws would ever allow, and it looks like a whole new country. He’s more concerned with how Midoriya’s eyes snap open and how his friend pushes away. There’s a split second of relief that Midoriya is alright, before he hears a wet cough. Midoriya struggles up before he collapses all over again. Tenya can only watch as his friend shudders, gasps, and black sludge pours from his mouth like a river.

“Midoriya? Hey wait.” His friend blinks, looking more exhausted than ever. “Hey, stay awake.” Tenya hurries to check his friend for injuries, running through the drills dad has had him practice for years now. It’s a quirk-related response for sure, but Tenya doesn’t know beyond that.

"My..." Midoriya slurs. "Shock’s a helluva drug."

Tenya knows the effects of shock. He’s discovering them right now. He sits next to Midoriya, one eye on their surroundings and the other on his friend and tries not to think about what just happened.

He’s been prepared since grade school to deal with disaster, studying rules and regulations in place to keep heroes - his family, specifically – safe. There are no rules for this, no procedures or laws. All he can do is actively ignore the fact that Midoriya doesn’t just teleport, so there’s no telling how they’re going to get home.

Midoriya coughs again, bringing Tenya’s attention back to the present. The sludge around them is smoothing out, disappearing slowly until it’s all gone.

“Are you okay,” he asks instinctively, and immediately regrets it when Midoriya starts to laugh.

"Nobody’s ever okay," he wheezes, and wow that is really concerning. "Sorry, I’ll get us back, just give me like five minutes."

That is... very concerning. "More than that," Tenya says, hoping he sounds more confident than he feels. “You’re in shock.”

"I know." Izuku waves vaguely to the dumpsters and fire escape. "Anyway."

“We are resting for more than five minutes.”

Midoriya squints at him. "We’re missing class."

“I don’t care,” Tenya says, and Midoriya stops breathing for a second.

"You what?"

“- I know what I said:“

"You can’t not care about class! You’re kind, you always care about class!"

"-We are waiting or so help me."

"Because that’s like, your defining characteristic.”
"I will tell Aizawa if you don’t take at least ten- wait, what?"

Midoriya shuffles away cautiously. "What have you done with my friend?"

"I’m right here."

"No," Midoriya draws himself up as much as he can while leaning against a dirty alley wall. Tenya gives it an A for Effort and F for Intimidation. He looks like a miserable sack of potatoes. "I’d care about class. He arrives early every day because learning is fun. He sucks to the rules. He would never skip class, so I’ll ask one more time: who are you and what have you done with Aizawa?" He’s serious, Tenya realizes. Midoriya looks like a mess. He’s in shock, shivering, sapped of energy, and half-dead, but he honestly is willing to throw down for Tenya right now. It’s… nice to know Midoriya cares so much in a weird, unnerving sort of way.

Tenya holds up his hands in as pacifying a gesture as he can make. “Rules are in place for the safety and honor of everyone involved. I don’t see why they should be followed if people have been hurt.”

Midoriya quiets at this. He doesn’t look reassured in the slightest. "Okay, just one question."

"Yes?"

"What are your thoughts on vigilante justice?"

What? Tenya isn’t sure where that question comes from. They were talking about skipping class, which is not something the average conversation should be about, but it’s better than his everyday thoughts on vigilante justice. Is this another one of Midoriya’s weird habits? Disappearing into the void to fight crime illegally? Tenya has no idea how he’s supposed to respond, so what ends up coming out of his mouth is “are you a vigilante?”

"No, I meant, not now, really. Or ever. Not in this timeline."

“You’re a vigilante.” They’re in so much trouble.

"I’m not."

“I’ll have to tell Aizawa.”

“First, rule! Stitches get stitches. Second, I’m not, and third, if you do then Nezuka will most certainly have me arrested which benefits precisely nobody.” Midoriya holds up a hand before Tenya can reply and spits out more sludge onto the ground. "Fourth, I need to be out of police custody and in class after the Sports Festival for reasons." Midoriya crosses his arms, looking for all the world like a stubborn toddler between the stains on his clothes and pout. "So there."

“This is not convincing.”

Midoriya throws up his arms. "I’m not a vigilante! Maybe in other dimensions, but not here. Now stop avoiding the question and spill. Give me the thoughts."

Why is this the detail he gets suck on? “It’s wrong, of course. Nobody can take the place of our legal system.” It’s a textbook answer, one Tenya’s heard since he first heard about unlicensed heroes. Midoriya nods, eyes drooping shut.

“I hope you’ll remember that,” he mumbles, leaning on Tenya. It’s not ominous at all. Tenya lets the
conversation drop, figuring he’ll get back to it when time’s up. Midoriya has a habit of leaving conversations open-ended or steering them away from the point. Besides, they need rest. He opens his mouth to say as much, only to come to a slightly horrifying realization.

Midoriya has passed out.

Tenya almost wakes him. It’s a near thing, but Midoriya is asleep- and he is asleep, not unconscious if the quiet snores are anything to go by. Midoriya has shown up to class everyday with bags under his eyes on par with Aizawa, and Tenya knows his brother’s friend has been building them up for over a decade. So if he lets Midoriya sleep, nobody’s the wiser. Besides, now they have a chance to rest after that… ordeal.

Tenya sits and tries not to think about how he’s in an entirely new dimension. Or time. Oh dear, can Midoriya time travel? He’s not equipped to handle that.

There’s no Japanese around them. When Tenya inspects the alley further, he manages to find a torn-up newspaper by the dumpster. It’s all in English, but Tenya pieces out the name of the city. They’re in New York. America. Home is so very, very far away. And worse, the date has them at least a century in the past.

Tenya realizes very quickly that if he loses Midoriya, his chances of getting home are slim to none. In a way, that’s what scares him the most.

He sits close to his napping friend, as if that will keep them safe, and gives himself one minute to panic before pulling himself together. Tenya cannot sit still when he panics- ever has, never will. He needs to do something, be that seeing to the details or moving towards a solution. So, this? This is agony.

The thoughts spiral down, down, down, until Tenya doesn’t fully process it when a portal opens in the alley wall, made of dark flickering clouds and encrusted in stars. The dark clouds bloom out as if claiming the alley as theirs. It’s too soon after USJ with another dark warp gate. Tenya is used to Izuku’s portals. Nobody else’s.

It’s a relief in some small way, to be allowed to act.

Tenya places himself between the portal and Midoriya, ready for whatever comes through. When he sees silver hair, Tenya doesn’t stop to think. He launches himself forward, aiming a high kick to force the villain back in.

The figure ducks quickly and catches Tenya’s next attack so he can’t follow it up. For a second, nobody moves. All attention is on where the stranger holds Tenya’s whole, non-disintegrated knee.

“I’m not crusty-face. Call me Cloud.” The man lets go and holds up both hands slowly. Tenya can identify knives in his jacket and moves so he’s in front of Midorya. “Here-” the stranger carefully shrugs off his jacket, tossing it to the far side of the alley. He’s got two swords under it, which join the pile.

“Believe me now?”

He’s not Shigaraki, now that Tenya stops to look. He’s too tall, skin too dark and features structured differently. Still, it’s a stranger. “What are you doing here?”

“My quirk is similar to Izuku’s. I’m a friend. Saw y’all crash from a couple worlds away. Let me help him.”
“No offence, but I don’t know you.”

“You also don’t know anybody on this world. No offence, of course.”

That’s… not a good reason, but fair point. Tenya steps aside, allowing the stranger – Cloud, or whatever his name is - to reach Midoriya. He stays close enough to intervene if this is a abduction attempt or worse. Cloud checks them both over for major injuries before flicking Midoriya’s forehead.

“Somebody hasn’t slept much this week. Rise and shine.”

Midoriya bats the hand away. “Five minutes.”

“Nope,” Cloud responds cheerfully, hauling Midoriya to his feet before Tenya can intervene. “C’mon. Suns up; puns up.”

It’s night. Tenya is very unimpressed, and Midoriya echoes the sentiment by going limp. “Nooooo.”

“Maybe you should let him sleep,” Tenya tries, but it has no effect.

“Nap once we’re safe. Come on bean boi, we gotta get you home. At least tell your friend I’m not a threat.”

“You’re a threat to my sanity,” Midoriya mumbles, refusing to open his eyes. “Iida, this is Cloud.”

“… you know him.”

Cloud snorts. “Hell yeah. There’s a kidnapping, come on.”

A what? Midoriya wakes up as though shocked, flailing around. Now that he’s fully conscious, Tenya hurriedly glances around, trying to locate the crime. There’s nothing – the streets are deserted, aside from… them. Oh. Oh dear, this really isn’t ideal. He should have taken the stranger in a fight earlier but now he’s poised to kidnap them both. “Are you kidnapping Midoriya!?”

Cloud dumps Midoriya unceremoniously on the dirty ground. “Nah, he woke up. Let’s get you two home.”

Midoriya whirls around, taking in the rooftops and dingy dumpsters. “Where’s the kidnapping!?”

Cloud collects his jacket and swords. “Well, he’s not napping anymore.”

Midoriya stares in disbelief before turning to Tenya. “I am so sorry. Think we can kill him?” It’s impossible to tell if he’s joking.

Tenya blinks back at his friend. “I mean, I don’t think a kidnapping attempt is worth murder, per se.”

“Y’all’re precious. Come on, let’s get you back to UA.” Cloud holds out his hands, and when Midoriya takes one, Tenya hesitantly takes the other. “Ladies and gentlemen, keep your arms, legs, and head attached all times while flying Eldrich-Airlines. Please hold tight and enjoy your flight.” There’s a rush of air, a realization that he’s falling, and soft inky black clouds envelop them, melting away until it’s like the night sky has been packed with thousands of extra stars and wrapped around them.

They’re still falling- head-first too, which is incredibly dangerous. Cloud hums an old song Tenya recognizes as that children’s show theme- the one with a blue hedgehog. Midoriya doesn’t seem all
that worried at the danger either. If anything, he looks preoccupied. The planet from earlier swings by, images flashing across, too distorted to catch.

Midoriya points to it. “That’s another world. It’s got a lot of coffee shops.”

“Why?”

“No idea. They just started appearing. Most of 1A works in one or another.” He points to another. “That one’s pretty cool. Aizawa Sensei adopted all of us there.”

Tenya doesn’t comment on how rough Midoriya’s voice is or how the idea of Aizawa adopting any of the class is a bad idea. He settles for a polite “is that so?”

“You’ll have been gone for around five minutes,” Cloud interrupts, as if he’s driving to UA and not hurtling through the void. Perhaps to them it’s the same thing. “Be sure to give Nezdu my regards. If we’re lucky, it’ll creep him out for a change.”

“It won’t,” Izuku says.

Tenya has no time to respond to this, as the surface of a red orb- is it the same? He can’t tell- is ripped open in billowing clouds of mist. The swirling darkness solidifies into the tall gates of UA, and they all step onto the street together, still holding hands.

Tenya is horrified. They’re wearing their indoor gym shoes of all things- and they’re outside. Now UA will have to provide them with cleaning equipment.

“If they’re angry, tell them we made you take a break. I’ll take the blame.” The strange man ruffles Midoriya’s hair before gently shoving them forward and stepping back. Midoriya waves, and Tenya has enough time for a quick bow. The former hero salutes jauntily as his quirk activates.

“Hey Izuku, one last thing!” Galaxies of mist and inky sky open around him as Cloud calls out, “be sure to get some sleep! Otherwise you’re resisting a rest.” The starry void swallows up the finger-gunning hero before vanishing.

Midoriya groans and heads inside, uncaring about wearing indoor shoes while outdoors. Tenya follows before it hits him. “Midoriya…. Was that a joke? About arrest?”

Midoriya nods and mumbles something about terrible puns and worse people before making his way haphazardly to the shoe lockers.

Tenya makes sure they wear the guest slippers instead of going barefoot. Students give them a couple second glances, but he brushes them off. They must show proper respect to the school and its occupants, after all.

Chapter End Notes

this is the start of an original mini-arc. I am so sorry - for this chapter and the next few.

Edit1&2: spelling/glitch format
Stairs

Chapter Notes

Spoilers: none

Guess who was a liar and didn't go back to fix the glitch text!! yes!!! it's me!!!!!
Anyway my life got busy. If I have time it'll be done, if not then not.

I should clarify this: there are like. two mentions of entering/exiting high windows in this chapter. In both cases, the ppl thinking this are perfectly capable of slowing their descent adequately before hitting the ground. They are safe. Please do not jump out windows or scale buildings for the aesthetic. Stay safe.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shota isn’t mad, though it’s a damn near thing given how he didn’t see this coming. No, he’s stressed out of his mind. Two minutes ago, Midoriya and Iida’s match had started. He encourages experimenting with new moves in controlled, safe environments. If he’s going to raise competent heroes, he’s going to keep them alive as long as possible. So, when Iida gets dragged through the portal, Shota activates his quirk on instinct and sprints.

He’s too far away.

They’re both out of his line of sight, so Erasure won’t work. He almost makes it, too. The portal closes just as he arrives. There’s no sign of blood or shock, so at least they were both fine before entering. He needs backup, someone who will predict what he needs in a time crunch. The texts are sent in seconds.

MESSAGING YEAHHHHHHH

Need u
2 gone
4 18
Gym

YEAHHHHHH: omw

Behind him, class finally panics. Yaoyorozu freezes for only a second longer, and that’s telling. She knows something, and it’s not good. Uraraka is calming down Hitoshi – and oh this would fall under the kid’s triggers. Shit. Bakugo looks sick, and Shota makes a mental note to keep an eye on them both.

If - no, when - Iida and Midoriya come back they’ll need space.
“That’s enough,” Shota says, putting just a little force into his voice. The students quiet, looking to him for guidance. He can’t leave them to search for the other two, not when it will let panic return. 
“Other side of the gym. Now. Resume the teamwork problem from last week. Work teams out by rock paper scissors. Yaoyorozu plays referee.” She’s got too much on her plate to focus right now, so a no-contact position is better.

“Asui and Kirishima, you two are group leads.” Asui is the calmest under pressure, and Yaoyorozu’s too distracted right now. Kirishima is a team player good at emotional grounding. Either group will be good for Bakugo and Hitoshi. Two points of reference will stabilize the class and allow for them to work out problems without him.

Mic arrives as soon as he’s done and wordlessly shoves Shota out the door. Has he mentioned he loves Hizashi? Because Shota adores Hizashi.

“Bakugo and Hitoshi,” he murmurs on his way past, and Hizashi nods, fully understanding.

Shota takes the stairs two at a time. Goddamn hero school with slow elevators and high ceilings. Goddamn principal who insists on having the highest office available and training grounds at ground level. Shota spent most of his elementary life thinking up quirks he would rather have. He hasn’t wanted a speed or teleportation quirk this badly in decades.

Is he getting old? That’s something an old person would say. Shit. Shota really doesn’t want to be that one grouchy old teacher.

Wait, is he already-

Ughh.

It’s his responsibility to find the problem children, especially when there’s no telling what their current status is. He’d received a quirk analysis from the problem child that morning and read through it over lunch. The kid can’t take passengers. He doesn’t know what that means, or what will happen to any supposed passengers. Iida is a stickler for the rules, but he’s lacking adaptability. He’s one of the top students in first-aid training, but they’re still first years, and Iida is prone to freezing up when things go south too quickly. This is a terrible combination.

He has no way to know if they’re alive. Shota’s never lost a student before, and damn if he’s going to start now. Not knowing what happened is the worst part.

Especially when it happened right in front of him.

Goddamn stairs. He pulls out his phone because this school is built like a skyscraper. Why the fuck is it a skyscraper? More importantly, why does Nezdu willingly make everyone troop all the way up the stairs just for a conversation? Someday Nezdu will answer his calls and the world will end.

Shota can’t reach his old dimension-hopping informant either. The line’s been dead for years and doesn’t show signs changing anytime soon. Shota switches to the next number, hating every second it rings, and nobody picks up. He needs his network of informants, but it’s damn hard to track anyone down. Especially during the day.

He doesn’t bother knocking on the principal’s door. His kids are in danger. Nezdu looks up from his chair with fake surprise as Shota storms in.

“Afternoon. Who else has a dimension hopping quirk?”

“Why, Aizawa-kun! Lovely day, I hope classes are going well. I’m sure you know Midoriya has
one. Nobody else is registered.”

What? “Even outside UA?” Shota sags against the doorway, mentally preparing himself to run back down to the gym or worse, the hospital.

Mic hasn’t texted him. They’re not back yet.

Nezdu presses the pads of his paws together, smile stretching from ear to ear. “On earth.”

That can’t be right. Shota starts to pace, all too aware that this is a time-crunch. “There has to be someone. I have two students vanished from reality and so help me, Nezdu. They are coming home safely.”

“What I suspect there’s very little we can do.” Nezdu’s smile thins minimally, and Aizawa bites down on some choice expletives. He was hired specifically for this protective quality, and they both know it – Aizawa Shota will keep his students safe. He can’t do that right now, and it burns.

He expects a catch; the hidden suggestion, the part where Nezdu reminds him humans are collectively a bunch of chaotic idiots and reveals one of a hundred plans to fix the situation. Sure enough, Nezdu’s smile sits frozen as he glances down at his computer. “Join me for a cup of tea, Aizawa-kun.”

Tea? Tea?! His students are missing and Nezdu wants to have tea?

As if that’s not enough, Nezdu picks up his phone, punching in an absurdly long number. “Hello, this is the principal of UA. I’d like to propose a trade.” Nezdu waves him to sit down and there is nothing Shota would like less. He sits on the very edge of the couch, as close to the door as he can. He has places to be- who knows where, but he’d be a whole lot more productive than sitting around. The tea remains untouched.

“Well, I think you have bigger problems than how I got your number.” Oh god. Nezdu is threatening someone. Shota hopes whoever it is has an easy end.

“Yes, we can fit those needs quite easily. I’d like to make use of your quirk to locate two of my students.” The swearing over the line is very audible. “Oh, so you saw it?” Even louder swearing. Nezdu beams as if he’s just received the best news of his life. “Excellent!” The call cuts off abruptly, and Nezdu glances down at his laptop screen. “He’s left.”

“Who?” This is not what Shota needs to be doing right now.

“A similarly quirked individual.” Nezdu waves away Shota’s concern over the fact that his students are missing and someone with a sailor’s mouth is hunting his students down. “I tracked security records and cameras of individuals with no documentation- even criminals have paper trails, and I’m rather proud of my programming skills. Go back to your class, Aizawa-kun. I’ll handle this.” That answers nothing, except that the safety of his kids is up to a total stranger of dubious legality. Shota hates his job. He wants his kids safe. He wants a nap.

“You said nobody was registered.”

“Exactly,” Nezdu chirps like it’s an answer. “Go herd those bright young minds back to their class. I’ll have Mic bump up English lessons.”

“They’re my students. One of which is self-sacrificial and the other refuses to run from helpless situations. This is the worst possible pairing, sir. I’m not sitting around until they’re safe.”
“And the rest?” Nezdu asks quietly and damn, he always knows how to get under Shota’s skin. He’s right, too. Shota wants to slam his head into the concrete walls, but triage has been drilled into the bones of every hero and he has a class to teach. Okay, more like a group of children to calm down, if he’s being honest. He’s almost out the door when Nezdu laughs under his breath.

“That was fast. I’d hurry, Aizawa-kun.”

Goddamn.

Will nobody tell him what he’s running for? At least say that his kids are safe.

Shota bolts. He doesn’t bother with the steps, instead vaulting down the stairwell via capture scarf. He considers kicking out a window and dropping into freefall to save time but ultimately decides to set a good example for the third years. Someone with a flight quirk tried to copy his shortcut last year and got expelled. As he nears the testing grounds, Shota picks up the sound of rhythmic chanting. What now?

Teaching is just babysitting but in panic mode. He can deal with this.

When he finally finds the class, it appears they’ve started a cult around a newly returned Midoriya and Iida. So, average teenage behavior. Shota needs a nap.

Uraraka tackles Izuku and Iida once they find the gym. Mic briefly tries to maintain order but gives up once it becomes clear nobody is going to do any work until they’ve interrogated their classmates. He does shove through to check them both for injuries.

“You’re okay.” Uraraka hugs them again once Mic gives the all clear.

“We’re fine,” Izuku says, and Iida nods in agreement despite being squeezed half to death.

“Honestly thought you two died or something,” Shinsou says impassively. Wow. Izuku feels so loved.

“Don’t listen to him, he was worried, too! What happened?” Kaminari grins. “What’s it like to teleport, Prez?”

“If you’re okay with sharing, kero.”

Mina grins evilly. “Yeah, spill the beans.”

“BEANS!” Sero’s voice calls over the crowd. “Beans! Beans!”

Kaminari and Mina join him in chanting, and slowly more and more of the class pick it up. Mic intervenes, but only to get them chanting it’s English equivalent. When Aizawa kicks open the door, it’s to a class surrounding Iida and chanting “BEANS, BEANS, BEANS” like some sort of legume-worshipping cult. Aizawa takes one look at them, raises both hands to his face as if regretting everything he’s ever done in life, and takes control.

Izuku waves apologetically. It doesn’t seem to help.
Aizawa handles the situation with all the grace and skill of a man used to herding cats. Once he glares the class back into order, he sends Iida and Izuku to Recovery Girl. “Midoriya, after class come meet me in the office. We need to adjust your training plan. I am forbidding any further use of teleportation until we get this sorted out.” He cares, in his own way.

Iida drags Izuku out of the gym before Aizawa can decide to lecture them further.

“So,” Iida begins. “We should impress upon or classmates the importance of giving your quirk space.”

Izuku freezes, then tackles his friend in a hug. “You did it! Oh my god, Iida, you made a pun!”

“I did?”

“Space!” Izuku hops up the stairs with more energy than he has any right to use. “A space pun! Get it? The void! Space! Give the void space!”

“I don’t think that’s a pun.” Iida follows him up the stairs, smile tugging at his lips. “Is it?”

“It totally is. Just say you meant for it to be one.”

“I meant for it to be one.”

“YES!” Izuku tries to spin up the stairs, goes lightheaded, and ends up falling forward like a limp noodle. Iida catches him.

_Trust falls, y’all._

“You’re still in shock,” Iida observes. “You ought to be more careful.”

“You said ‘ought.’ That’s old people speak.”

_Definitely in shock._ Iida picks him up easily, which is kind of insulting given Izuku likes to think he’s not that small and carries him up the rest of the stairs. Its probably for the best because Izuku’s starting to feel reality set in.

He took Iida to the void.

That’s like, so dangerous. Unbelievable levels of danger. Then Izuku thinks of Iida’s face when he’d traveled a second time and giggles.

“Worth it. Once I can travel with people, I’m totally showing Shinsou the void. He’s going to make the worst puns.” Is this the sleep deprivation or shock talking? _Probably both_, Izuku notes.

Iida sighs like the dad-friend he is. “I thought you couldn’t warp people,” he says as they reach Recovery Girl’s floor.

Izuku chews his lip, focusing on making his words make sense. “I could, but the backlash was super bad.”

“This wasn’t?”

“It was way worse; mom says I was in the hospital, but I don’t remember. Maybe I’ll start training to carry people.” The rescue implications are certainly something else. If he could get people to safety or remove them from danger quickly, that brought up loads of options. Most heroes had to escort civilians or lessen their firepower to avoid creating casualties (not that Endeavor was any example)
but he could do that in an instant. Maybe-

“I agree.” Iida interrupts his muttering as they reach Recovery girl’s door.

She lectures them both and kissing Izuku’s forehead. Instantly, the lightheadedness vanishes, and weight returns to his shoulders. She presses a full bag of gummy bears into his hand.

“Finish that by the end of the day,” she orders as the bell rings for passing period. “And I mean it. Tell your friends to buy their own snacks.”

They arrive at the classroom back in blazers. Izuku barely manages to hide the gummy bears in his pocket before Mina finds them.

“Well?” She leens out of the doorway, hungry for gossip. “Gimme the dish!”

“Dish?” Iida blinks slowly. “Is this another word for tea, or beans?”

Kacchan scoffs from his seat on Aizawa's podium, though his voice lacks much of its usual fire. “Hey Raccoon-eyes, maybe let them in the fucking classroom already.”

Mina pouts but hops back, letting Izuku skitter to his desk. Thankfully, most of the class seems interested in interrogating Iida, and leaves him alone. Shinsou stays put, and signs as Izuku approaches.

“You good?”

“Yeah, just tired. This is why I don’t take people.”

Something about his face must be funny, because Shinsou lets out a snort.

“They’re worse than the media.” He points to their classmates, wrinkling his nose.

Izuku nods. Iida, meanwhile, is trying to damage control. “It was a very informative experience I must reflect further on. Moreover, I advise we all give Midoriya’s quirk extra room during practice and sparring. The drawbacks are not worth it.”

All eyes snap to Izuku and he tries not to sink into the floor. “I- They’re not that bad.”

Iida levels him a look and Mina gasps. “Ohhh? We have a class dad now.”

Attention returns to discussing which teacher is the ultimate dad. They decide on All Might or Cementoss. Izuku remembers Aizawa's reaction to their earlier bean worship and struggles not to make a face. Tsu seems to be having similar thoughts, and states as much. She's overruled by majority vote for All Might as Dad-Might, Cementoss as second place as CementDad, and finally Dadzawa in third place. Upon further discussion Present Mic scores an honorary mention.

“Deku? You good?” Uraraka sits on Bakugo’s desk, because she has no fear. She exchanges a look with Shinsou before bumping his desk with her shoe. “No offence, but… well, you look a little rough.”

Izuku appreciates it. He does. But after years of having people worrying over him shattering because
he breathed the wrong name or some shit- “I’m fine. Thanks for asking.”

Shinsou raises an eyebrow and Izuku sighs. “Even if I’m not, I just want this-“ He waves his hands, trying to gesture to the whole building and the oppressive feeling of getting the kid-treatment “-to be over.”

“Understandable,” Shinsou says, and gives Uraraka a nod. Izuku isn’t sure what happened between them while he was gone, but it doesn’t seem to be his business. Uraraka drops the subject.

Izuku fishes out the pack of gummy bears when nobody is looking. So what if it’s stress eating? He deserves candy. Besides, doc’s orders. Shinsou swipes one like the traitor he is. At the sound of chewing, Kaminari glances over.

“Dude, what’s in your mouth?”

Izuku freezes.

“Deku?”

He’s not sharing. Izuku starts chewing faster, stuffing the gummy bear bag into his pocket. He dodges when Uraraka tries to swipe it, jumping back towards the windows. The latch is easy to undo.

“Wait-“ Mina and Sero try to stop him from jumping out the window but jokes on them because the null is everywhere. Izuku drops into nothingness and is met with regret instantly. The null fills his lungs and sharpens his teeth. It hurts. He swears and catches the portal edge. There’s no need to check where to enter with such a short jump. It’ll be fine.

Somehow Izuku ends up crouched on Aoyama’s desk like a drooling gargoyle. He’s hidden from the class by Tokoyami, who seems to appreciate the aesthetic enough to keep quiet. Izuku owes him one for this. He grins with too many, too-sharp teeth in gratitude.

“You look like Mothman,” Shinsou signs before taking out his phone and filming. Maybe he can sense chaos. Todoroki notices the exchange but continues his strong and silent nonsense. Bullshit. I know it’s a universal constant that you win every wankosoba competition you enter, pretty boy. Don’t pull that fancy act on me.

"This class is a nightmare."

Ojirou falls off his chair. Kirishima yells. Kacchan pretty much explodes and Jirou's earphone jack misses his cheek by millimeters. Iida looks around at the chaos with levels of disappointment only Aizawa can hope to match. Shinsou nearly dies of laughter. Mic chooses this moment to walk in and Izuku greets him with a blackened grin.

"Hey. We're doomed."

He should feel responsible for the glass-shattering screech, but it’s been a long day. Maybe Shinsou’s doom prophecy advice really was a good idea. He should do this more often.

Aizawa stomps back into the classroom, takes one look, and pulls Mic into the hallway for a whispered conversation. Jirou can definitely hear it, if the sympathetic look she shoots him is any indicator.

“Rest in pieces, my dude,” she says, before Mic bounces back in to start class. Izuku stays for the start and is sent to the teachers lounge once reading begins.
“But English class,” he tries to tell Mic. “My education.”

Mic cheerfully informs him that since he’s fluent “it doesn’t matter if you miss one English lesson,” before sending him on his merry way. Izuku hates this school. Some of it must translate to his face because Mic is gentler in his reminder to finish reading the Great Gatsby by Friday.

Izuku wants a nap.

Chapter End Notes

hey! two notes: one, this is part of a mini-arc! there's one chapter in it we're all gonna hate!! im excited!! let's go!! It's not this chapter but it's soon!!! the other note is longer:

it's kitten season!!! if you have a car, pls check the hood before starting it up on chilly nights!! mama cats are doing their best but idk, its good to check!! anyway, sorry for yelling abt something so random. One of my friend's cats is lost. check ur cars. even just rapping on the hood should wake up sleeping cats.

Anyway, every time I write Aizawa's class as "my kids," I cry. He's not even denying it. The class (minus 2 students) has no idea they've been adopted.

Edit: spelling/character placement
This May Be A Mistake

Chapter Notes

I’m not tagging Stain arc spoilers from here on out. Sorry, yall. We’re too close to avoid them.
Spoilers: Eri and Overhaul mentioned briefly by name, nothing relevant.
Triggers: If blood or cyberpunk-style body mods are triggers, skip from the dust storm scene all the way to the next big break.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Aizawa also looks like he wants a nap. Izuku also wants a nap. How he got placed with the most relatable teacher is anyone’s guess. Wait. No. It’s because of the repeating nature of the time-space-continuum and Izuku hates it.

“What did I say about teleporting, problem child?”

“Not to do it.”

“And what did you do?”

“Teleport.”

“And why,” Aizawa asks from his desk as if how he ended up asking this is baffling, “would you do that?”

“They were going to take my gummy bears, sir.”

Aizawa doesn’t say anything else for a moment. He just pinches his nose and breathes in slowly before glancing at Izuku with all the regret of a thirty-year-old who never asked to be a pseudo-parent of twenty volatile children, all of whom will prove at some point they are incapable of following directions. Specifically, his directions. Izuku kind of feels bad about that. He’s not going to change his actions, but he’ll feel bad.

“Do you think… that may have been a mistake,” Aizawa asks slowly.

“Yes, sir.”

They both know it’s a lie, but Aizawa looks like he’s surviving on 5hour energy and little else, so the conversation moves to training plans.

It turns out Aizawa has already read through his quirk analysis and made a step-by-step plan for improving his quirk. It involves slowly strengthening his ability to travel with others who have similar quirks. They’ll slowly increase the amount of weight Izuku is pulling when he takes passengers. He’s never mentioned he knows why he can’t take passengers or how the null works. Aizawa has mentioned he’s traveled. There’s a connection here, but Izuku can’t find it. He’s too tired.

Either way, there’s a training plan now.
“And no quirk use for the rest of today,” Aizawa adds.

“Yes, sir.”

“I mean it. All Might will be told if you do.”

Izuku cannot disappoint All Might. He does not want the disapproving dad stare from both his teachers tomorrow. Traveling is officially off the schedule.

“I understand. No teleporting.”

Izuku can’t follow directions. He knows this. He has made peace with this. Someday everyone else will, too.

That evening, Izuku packs his bag with as many packets of ramen he can find, two bags of coffee beans, his usual lighter and incense, and digs out an old, tattered cloak from his closet. He ties another cloth over his mouth and nose before falling through the null. Today he has two errands. Entire universes rush past as he falls, each contained in a perfect sphere. One bearing a striking similarity to Saturn approaches, and Izuku angles his descent so he falls not towards the world itself, but one of the eight moon-like dimensions orbiting it. He has a very specific goal for today.

The smaller dimension is hollow, like spun glass. Izuku is careful to enter where it’s thickest. Worlds like these can collapse at any moment, and he’d rather not cause the disintegration of reality.

A portal opens, dropping him into a dust storm. The sand is immediately underfoot, in the air, and on his clothes. Everything bleeds together into gray so much that he may as well not exist, which is exactly how he wants to appear. This is by all purposes a no-man’s-land.

He checks the sky, navigating by light source. The earth stopped turning long ago here- if it even is an Earth. Izuku never asked. It isn’t important enough. Eventually the storm fades away and he makes his way up steeper, rockier paths that grow in familiarity as sand stings his eyes. He should have entered closer, but portals are finicky on dying worlds.

The shack is cleverly hidden in rock. Izuku enters, punches a code into the rusting pad, and descends creaking stairs. Faint rock music grows louder as he approaches the hangar door askew below. Izuku kicks it open with little care for formality and the smell of coffee and choking smoke hits him like a truck. Hatsume always did appreciate the finer things in life. She’s somewhere inside, though it’s hard to tell when the room is set up like a futuristic scrapyard.

Hatsume here has a very specific aesthetic. Izuku likens it to that old Tron movie, but with way more chaos and mad scientist vibes. Everything is lit from below through the bioluminescent fuel she uses in every creation. It coats the ground as well, creating a gentle glow filtering up from the floor itself and eliminating the need for actual lighting.

He finds the stereo by a half-finished spaceship, but no sign of intelligent life. He turns it down.

“Hatsume!? You here?” Izuku calls, ready to be ambushed. Metal clangs behind him and there’s barely enough time to suck in a breath before she appears.
Arms encircle him from behind and Hatsume nearly crushes his ribs in a hug. She’s more machine than human by now, from the static laugh and bars of code that promptly light up under the arm’s dark skin. His measurements, weight, age and last meal show up, too. That’s not creepy at all.

“Minion!” Hatsume lifts him up and spins around because she’s a showoff and doesn’t care that Izuku is still very, very mortal.

“Please let me breathe.”

“God, you haven’t changed in years.” Hatsume sets him down and tactfully ignores his dying breaths. “So, what challenge do you have this time? Biodegradable invisibility cloaking? Regenerative lazar shielding?” Hatsume hops around, and Izuku is finally able to see her grease-stained face. Her goggles glow bright blue from within eerily.

“Still dying,” Izuku manages because one doesn’t get over being squeezed to death that quickly. Hatsume settles for tugging at the bag on his shoulder.

“You have the goods? C’mon, the time-space continuum is breaking down, we don’t got all day.” They do but Izuku hands over his bag anyway. Hatsume grabs it desperately and flops down to upend the contents. She looks from the pile of assorted ramen packets and coffee beans before looking up reverently. “Have I mentioned you’re the light of my life, the beat in my heart, the stars in my eyes, and I would gladly die for you,” she breathes. “What can I do to repay you?”

“I don’t know if you can manage it,” Izuku begins slowly, just to annoy her.

“I can make anything. Literally. You don’t know what I’d do for coffee.”

Izuku rolls his shoulders slowly, pretending to consider it. Hatsume is crazy and a danger to everything that breathes, but she does good work. Especially this world. Still, Izuku can’t let her have it that easily- he values their friendship too much. “It’s self-destructive, but I want to limit the side effects.”

Hatsume grins, sharp and quick. “Just tell me the job and deliver your end. Or let me replace your arm.”

“No stealing arms. I want to poison my blood for an hour.”

Hatsume regards him for a second, then spins around triumphantly. “Finally!” She shoves his bag back into his arms and marches off, holding her new ramen packets like newborns.

Izuku squawks and follows her further through the hanger, trying not to feel insulted. “What do you mean, finally?!”

“I mean I’ve been asking what mod you wanted for years!” Hatsume is nearly lost amid the tangled wreckage. Izuku catches up just as she kicks open a circular doorway and climbs through. The walls are sticky.

Ew.

“I’m not doing anything permanent; I just have a very specific person to fight and chances are, he’s going to drink my blood!” Izuku scrambles under a containment cell, ignoring the pulsing, non-humanoid organs within.

“Drink your blood?” Hatsume glances back, eyebrow inching higher. “Son, you’ve got problems.”
She then drops the ramen on the disgusting, sticky floor to shove a gross, wriggling, luminescent… thing back in its container like a true hypocrite. It looks like something from a horror film, and Izuku would know. He’s been to horror worlds. Heck, he sometimes looks like a horror film, and that… thing is worse.

She thinks I have problems while living like this? Izuku doesn’t bother trying to argue when there are more important details.

“I’m still not giving you an arm.”

“Come on, it’ll be fun!”

“It’s an arm! It’s my arm! You’re not getting it, because I’m rather attached to it!”

“I can fix that.”

“Please don’t. I need it.”

Hatsume does not seem to appreciate this very important fact. “Arms are boring.” She puts the last of the coffee away amidst the rubble and roots around, kicking aside dark tubing and the luminescent piping spread like a web around them. They’re closer to her planning station, if the occasional crumpled paper is any indicator. “At least let me give you a teensy-tiny upgrade. Night vision, waterproof lungs, the good old knife-bones trick, anything!”

“As cool as that sounds, I am not letting you take any of my organs.” Izuku settles back to watch her rummage around. The lights are especially dim here.

“I can modify existing ones!” Hatsume drags out a bucket of… something. The green liquid is glowing, so Izuku can safely assume it’s alive on some level. Hatsume dunks both hands in, washing them off and just getting dirtier. Her face is illuminated from below in pale green, contrasting with the blue glow of her goggles. She’s really going for the mad scientist aesthetic. Hatsume wipes off her hands, then shakes them as if that will dry them further.

Truly, a pinnacle of lab safety. Izuku regrets everything. “I need it to be gone by the time I’m hospitalized. Where I’m from, that’s a good half hour from the start, and I need it active for at least fifteen minutes. Can you base it on adrenaline?”

Hatsume snorts. “Can I base it on adrenaline? I can base it on your level of physical activity. I can base it on a snap of our fingers!”

“He paralyzes by drinking blood, though.”

“Then I’ll nullify that! I can make it flammable, come on! Show some imagination! Plus Ultra, as the rebellion used to say!”

“I cannot express in words how little I want flammable blood.”

“Not my fault you have no taste.” Hatsume sniffs, holding out a still-glowing hand Izuku regards warily. She wiggles her fingers after a second. “I need a sample so my babies can adjust.”

“Only blood,” he clarifies as Hatsume takes his wrist. He’s going to have green handprints all over his arm. That’s not suspicious. Thanks, Hatsume.

“Only blood,” she echoes, finally serious. “I’m going to take a small sample to figure out how your dimension differs from mine. Then it’s just about finding which of my babies will pair with it.
This is why Izuku trusts Hatsume. She’s chaotic, unpredictable, and dangerously eager to share her babies—especially on a world where machines are given the last name of their creator. Hatsume understands consent and boundaries perfectly. She talks him through her process as she takes his pulse. At some point he assumes she takes a drop of blood, though Izuku can’t tell the exact moment. Technology here is too advanced to track.

“You’re not wearing the cuffs,” She says as she computes the results. There’s no computer, just flashing numbers flicking across her arm. “You didn’t lose my babies, right?”

“Nope. Just trying to use my full quirk.”

“Good.” Hatsume pauses, letting go and reading data scrolling across her arm. It’s too fast for Izuku to catch, but Hatsume excels at body modification. She probably has at least three supercomputers under her skin by now. It’s still weird, to see any version of Hatsume stand still for this long.

“Ohayou!” she announces suddenly, and the illusion of peace is shattered. “I have just the baby for you.”

Izuku follows her through still more piles of junk. A holographic screen flickers to life beside them as they go, and they pass a small pack of cleaning bots. Hatsume has strapped knives to them and created a jousting ring. Why do Roombas exist on nearly every world? Why?? Somewhere, God is laughing at Izuku.

Hatsume skips ahead, chattering merrily. “I’ll have to modify my baby a little, mind you, but it’s perfect, I promise. Well. Mostly.”

“Hmmm, don’t like that.”

“The drawback is, I use Bio4 in all my babies. It’s a luminescent compound I made way back in the good ol’ days, and in case you hadn’t noticed—” Hatsume gestures broadly at the twisting expanse of glowing rubbish “—it’s bright. Your veins are going to stand out so much. Oh, it’s gonna look so cool.”

“Can I hide the glow?”

She looks insulted that he would want that. Betrayed. By her own ramen supplier. Then the rambling comes back in force.

“Hm. Nails, inside of mouth, and a good portion of your circulatory system are going to light up like the inside of a Christmas tree. It’s going to look like you’re glowing, especially your chest. We wouldn’t have this problem if you’d let me just replace your blood.” Hatsume throws out the option as if it’s totally reasonable and wouldn’t get him dissected back home.

Nezdu wouldn’t go that far. The government might. Overhaul definitely would, and Eri doesn’t need that in her life.

Izuku does not want the Area 51 lifestyle. He does not need to look like an alien, thank you very much. He makes a mental note to avoid security cameras while it’s active.

“What are the effects?” Izuku can deal with looking like a lava lamp. People might not notice that. He draws the line at replacing his circulatory system, because there’s no way to hide the fact that all his blood is just straight up gone.
Hatsume skips ahead backwards. She doesn’t trip. Izuku climbs over a mass of fizzling wires and is very jealous. “You’ll feel a little bit of a burn since it’s your first mod. My baby takes three seconds to activate, and there should be no noticeable changes besides a glow and some stiffness. To anyone who drinks your blood for around, say, until you take the antidote- “

Oh, Izuku hadn’t considered antidotes.

“- It’ll taste like durian and rotten onions with wasabi aftertaste. Upon ingestion by a foreign entity they’ll be spreading my own little toxins, and your opponent is down for some nasty stomach cramps over forty-eight hours.”

“He’s going to hate me, I love it. How does it activate?”

“They can be modified for whatever you need. Ooh, what if I made it into pasta? Like you could eat it beforehand and then a delayed activation from fancy spaghetti?”

Izuku hums. “Which option is safest?”

“All are safe.” Hatsume stops abruptly, once again dead serious. “My policy is quality, not quantity. Nothing leaves this shop unless I’m sure it’s safe and I’ve tested it on myself. I’m not letting your first mod be a bad one, Izu.”

“…I know.” Izuku follows her through the rubble. “That’s why I’m here.”

Hatsume claps his shoulder before running ahead to brew coffee like the chaotic entity she is. His shoulder starts glowing green where she’d touched it, because of course it does.

When Izuku leaves, it’s with a small device in his pocket and instructions from Hatsume. The compote is already in his veins, waiting to be activated. Stain is going to absolutely loathe him for this. Hopefully it won’t be necessary.

With this, he visits the graveyard and then travels home. Izuku throws open his Analysis of my Future notebook, reworking through events and changing statistics. He stops at the page on Stain.

It’s soon.

He isn’t ready yet. Maybe it’s time for direct action. Izuku spends the rest of the night working through his notes, searching for a loophole. He finds nothing. Devoid of inspiration, Izuku shuts the notebook and falls sideways out of his chair. He doesn’t hit the floor.

Starlight bursts around him. Izuku falls, not sure what world he’s searching for. He needs direction, advice.

The null is always alive.

Izuku closes his eyes and trusts in omniscience. He doesn’t know what to do, how to stop fate. He just knows it can’t happen. The void sees everything, including the answers he needs. So, he falls.

Izuku bursts into a world head-first, and crashes into water.
It’s cold. Murky green water stings his eyes and rushes into his mouth as Izuku swims up to the surface. It’s a sunny day, hard to appreciate when he’s just been yeeted by the abyss into a fucking pond. Izuku sputters through the surprise and swims for shore.

By the time mud and silt shift under his feet, Izuku is exhausted, shivering, and dehydrated. He crawls onto the beach and intends to never trust the null again.

This was a mistake.

Someone is humming nearby. Izuku follows the sound, grass crunching under his feet. He finds a garden eventually, sectioned off as somebody sits amidst the plants. Izuku nearly leaves, before the man looks up.

“You can rest a while, if you like.” The man waves Izuku over. His clothes hang too large, as though nothing fits right. The straw hat is pulled low, so Izuku can’t see his face well.

Izuku ducks between plants, navigating game trails of mulch until he’s able to sit by the man, who gestures to the garden and his pile of weeds.

“If you like,” he says gently, and leaves the option open. There’s no judgement, no passive-aggressive hint to work. Just an option.

“I’m sorry to intrude,” Izuku says. He buries his hands in the dirt, working through quietly. The sun warms his clothes and dries his hair.

“I haven’t had a visitor in years,” the man murmurs. “Little Mai stops by occasionally, but my big brother isn’t fond of company.”

“Your brother?”

“He has a good heart, somewhere.” The man says it like he’s repeated the words a thousand times in his head, rather than the most passive aggressive insult Izuku’s ever heard.

Izuku uproots a dandelion. “I’m Midoriya,” he says eventually.

“Call me… hm…. Phileo. I always liked the word.” Phileo coughs sheepishly. He’s small, with an almost sickly color to his skin. Izuku is reminded of All Might’s smaller form, with too much heart for his body to bear. He hopes this isn’t All Might. The name is obviously a false one, though Izuku has no idea why anyone so peaceful would want to hide their identity.

Wait.

There are only ever two crucial brothers.

On second glance, Phileo has a weight to him, like the fabric of time is tied to him. This is someone who plays a vital role in history. He doesn’t act like it, but Izuku can tell. Phileo is important.

“You look like you want to say something.”

The garden is quiet, lazy warm air blanketing every leaf, berry, and petal. Izuku wishes it could swallow his words up, for only the bees to hear as they drone by. “You’re One for All.”

“That’s quite a name.” Phileo repeats the name “One for All,” and the words sound right when he says it. The world lets them sit in the air longer, and that’s how Izuku knows he’s right. That means his brother….
Ah. I shouldn’t be here.

“You came at an awfully tense time,” Phileo says softly. “I do apologize.”

“I know, I… I travel dimensions,” Izuku says, because he can’t lie to this man. He can lie to anyone else, or twist by with half-truths because of the null’s pressure, but not One for All. “Do powers exist here?”

“Well, there are lots of powers,” Phileo says. “Arts, storytelling, music. I’ve always liked the odd tune myself. Some like acting, or dancing. My mother used to brew coffee perfectly every time, and my brother Storge can turn on the radio at the start of any song he wants. Little Mai’s laughter can light up a room.”

“So, there aren’t.” These brothers may be safe from the future.

Phileo hums a short, lilting tune. It’s a little melancholy, a little light. Izuku listens as it settles, waiting for his answer. Some people like to take time before they speak, and it seems One for All is cut from the same cloth.

“I never said that,” He says once the tune is over. “My brother can give or take different abilities. There are always powers, just some more noticeable than others.”

“You care about him?”

Phileo looks out over the garden. “For the best and the worst of it, as only brothers can.”

“I’m sorry,” Izuku says even though he knows it doesn’t make sense to this man yet.

“You lost someone.” It’s not a question. Izuku doesn’t know how Phileo can tell. He just does.

“A couple versions of the same person. Fate repeats itself, and I can’t…” He can’t finish. Finishing makes it come true. Finishing means he won’t be in time when Stain goes after Iida. Phileo seems to understand.

“Grief is like that. It makes us think back and regret, until we lose track of ourselves in the doubt.”

“What would you do?” Izuku focuses on his dirt-stained hands, afraid to see the expression Phileo holds. A butterfly dances by, orange wings flashing. “If you need to save someone, but you don’t know how? If history has been written before it even happens?”

“Have the courage to try. It all starts there. Even if it will never work in a thousand years, you try.”

“I will, but I don’t know how. It’s too much.”

Phileo gestures out beyond the garden, his blue shirt hanging loosely like sails on a boat without wind. “Every good story goes back to the beginning. Start there.”

Izuku can do that. The beginning for Stain? Ingenium?

No.

Iida.

It all starts at the sports festival, when Iida misses his match because his brother is in the hospital. Stain’s first attack. Izuku needs to stop Ingenium from going to Hosu. Whatever the cost.
Phileo’s smile is worn, like it’s been stretched thin and used in the scorching heat every day. Somehow, it’s still bright. “You found a way. A question, before you go.”

In the distance, the sound of tires on gravel sound, pulling up. It’s ominous, holding the same weight as a tragedy that starts with laughter.

Phileo glances at Izuku, eyes gentle in contrast with the hurried footsteps beyond the garden gate.

“My brother and I, do we make a good future?”

Izuku thinks of Shigaraki, who was once Shimura. He thinks of Nana, dead before he was born. It would be a lie to say it’s perfect, and he can’t lie to Phileo. Then he remembers All Might’s booming laughter and Kirishima, the current holder of One for All. It’s not terrible. In fact….

“It’s pretty good.”

Phileo’s smile is tired, nearly broken. “Then this will have been worth it. Thank you for visiting us.”

It’s a dismissal. Izuku steps away as wind picks up, slicing around them and making flowers bend as if cowering from whoever approaches. He makes it to the edge of the garden and ducks behind a bush as the gate slams open.

“What did you do,” a taller man hisses to his brother as clouds roll in around them. He’s making the storm. “What did you do to my projects?”

“I set them free,” Phileo says gently. “Everyone deserves to be happy, brother.” His eyes slide over to where Izuku hides for a second. “Everyone.”

“You’ve gone too far. This is the last straw.”

“It is.” Phileo says sadly. He stands and opens his arms, alone and still as the storm crashes into the trees and wind tears through the air. “Please, Storge. Before we end this, one last hug as brothers.”

The null knocks into Izuku, pressing him back. He can’t interfere. He isn’t allowed to change this timeline, not now. Izuku fights against an invisible wall, wishing he could scream, cry, anything to stop what he knows is going to happen. It’s escalating too quickly.

The taller man – Storge? - looks at the offered hands, and up to their owner’s face. “You ask me now… for a goddamn hug?” He sounds insulted by the idea.

“A goodbye,” Phileo whispers. The wind carries his words, as if Storge had willed it. Maybe he had.

For a moment Storge quiets. He looks back to something only he knows in the distance, and back to Phileo. The garden bends, as though trying to wade away from where the brothers stand, one waiting, the other choosing. Izuku can see the moment Storge’s eyes harden. “You’ve lost that right,” he snarls. “Goodbye, brother.”

Phileo accepts this and draws back an arm with thin tendrils of power pulsing through. It’s not enough; it’s never enough.

Storge’s attack is lightning fast in every sense.

The null drags Izuku away before he can stop it.
Izuku doesn’t remember coming home. Instead, he wakes up face down on his bed with dirt caked in his fingernails and salt-rimed eyes. The sun is just beginning to rise, casting the outline of gold onto his walls through the window. In a few minutes his alarm will start.

He burrows under the comforter, wishing it would all go away. Everything is too heavy to deal with, and a not-quite-headache presses at his mind.

He knows this is depression. He should get up, get some water, take a walk, anything, but it’s all too much. The worst part about times like these is that he wants to cry, to get this sadness out, but the tears won’t come because he’s not sad enough. He’s stuck knowing that no matter how crappy he feels, he’s not miserable enough.

Phileo’s voice echoes through his head. “Grief is like that. It makes us think back and regret, until we lose track of ourselves in the doubt.”

It hasn’t happened yet.

But it might.

Izuku needs to get up.

He has so much to work for.

Slowly, he rolls off the bed until he hits the ground with a thump, and the comforter is dragged off the bed with him. It hurts but gets him moving, so who’s the real winner? Izuku stumbles though his routine, taking it step by step.

He doesn’t have to jog, just has to put his shoes on. Once they’re on, he might as well put on his jacket. The door’s pretty close by, he could go outside for a walk.

It’s this mindset that gets him jogging, and slowly, slowly, he manages to get his energy back.

He won’t let it happen; not anymore.

He will save Iida.

“Hey Iida, can I talk to you?”

“Midoriya?” Tenya follows his classmate out into the hallway, watching as Midoriya almost crashes into the class’s doorframe on the way out. “Did you get any sleep last night?”

“Meh, sleep is for the weak and I have better things to do. Do you remember what I told you about my quirk?” Midoriya yawns, as though this weren’t an incriminating statement regarding personal well-being.

“Please take better care of yourself.”

“Yes, if you have a concern, I can pass it on to a faculty member.”

“I need to talk to your brother.”

Tenya freezes. This wasn’t what he was expecting. “My brother?”

Midoriya nods, and something in his voice takes on a hint of desperation. “Ingenium.”

“Yes, I know he’s my brother, but why?”

“It’s urgent.” This is not an informative answer.

Tenya almost begins explaining precisely why he can’t contact anyone for inside favors in the hero business, before he remembers Midoriya, unpredictable and afraid like a cornered animal in the USJ building. The look on his friend’s face is too similar right now. Too close to that time.

“Is something going to happen?”

Midoriya fidgets with his jacket. “… No. It’ll be fine, I just…”

Tenya knows he’s not the best at reading body language, but now, watching his friend avoid eye contact, it occurs to him that Midoriya is a terrible liar.

“…I have information he needs.”

Strictly speaking this sort of introduction is frowned upon, but something has Tenya wavering. Some idea that the rules need to be bent right now. “I’ll ask him if he has time.”

This better not be vigilante business.

Izuku is very tired. He can’t focus in class, and honestly doesn’t pay as much attention as he should. Most of the day is spent trying to figure out what the null will and won’t let him say to Iida’s brother.

The problem is, even hinting at the future will probably induce quirk shock. He’ll be lucky to even greet Ingenium before he can’t speak at all, and it’s not like the hero knows sign…

Wait.

Okay, there’s one thing that could work. He’s now got an ace up his sleeve, but he’ll have to get the hero’s permission first.

He can work with this.

BONUS:

VroomVroomFam
@Sonic my friend has information for you, do you have time today to meet him?

Gramps: kids these days are so edgy

Sonic: like intel? bc yea, seend it through wassup

RespectJuice: Is he in a safe place?? Informats aren’t usually doing too well at home

MomJokeHere: That or they’re caught up in something they shouldn’t be

RespectJuice: Especially at that age

I believe he’s well, but I will ask him regardless!

He would like to meet in person.

I am concerned about the nature of this information.

Sonic: I’m on the clock now, but my team is by the expressway dealing with a villain cleanup

Sonic: We’ll be here for another hour or two so why not stop by

Gramps: Oi don’t get distracted

RespectJuice: Hes right, you’re on the clock. Why don’t you two meet up at home

RespectJuice: im sure we have something in the fridge

Sonic: nah its slow going

I am sorry for distracting you at work!

Thank you very much, Niisan!

Sonic: Wait

Sonic: Is this the friend who can throw ppl into the sun

Sonic: or the vigilante??

Chapter End Notes

Guess what's the next week! It's the chapter I hate with every fiber of by soul!!! Izuku's gonna make a decision and I would like to apologize a whole week in advance bc wow!!! I am so sorry!!! holy shit!!!!!

Cyberpunk/Saturn's Moon was a world prompt from Makaiobro
But I Live For Regret

Chapter Summary

Izuku: oh! I have an ace up my sleeve
Izuku: *plays it immediately*
Izuku: *surprised Pikachu face*

Chapter Notes

Hi!!! I want to clarify that I hate this chapter specifically bc my pet peeve is characters making this type of decision. Buckle up bc it's time for regret

Spoilers: reminder that I’m not tagging Stain/Hosu/Internships round 1 anymore

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tensei is very excited. He’s practically vibrating at the crime scene with pent-up energy. Mori takes one look at him and shoves him toward the break bus.

“Get a coffee,” she grumbles. “You said caffeine has the opposite effect, right? Scram. We’ve caught the guys; I’ll handle the officers so go run some laps or whatever.”

Tensei hugs her gingerly, careful with the armor. He grabs a gallon of grape juice at the snack-laden bus and waits. Interns mill around, occasionally stopping by for advice, direction, and encouragement. Tensei gives out all three every time. He prides his agency’s teamwork, working like a well-oiled machine to create a found family. Speaking of family… Tenya had come home last night and dragged him away from dinner for an in-depth conversation.

He’d been worried about high school drama.

Instead, he sat through Tenya telling him all about his friend who might be doing vigilante activities in another dimension. He tried to explain that heroes and vigilantes work together on occasion. This did not impress Tenya. Learning Tensei was currently dating a vigilante impressed him even less. They have a long way to go. Vigilante nonsense and mild rule-breaking was exactly the brand of chaos he, Shota, Nemuri, and Hizashi got up to when they were at UA. He can never tell Tenya.

He’d settled for helping Tenya look up the rules for dimension travel. He didn’t even know there was paperwork for it until last night.

Anyway, Tensei gets a text that his brother and brother’s friend are waiting for him by the north end of the scene where caution tape makes up most of the scenery. Now he gets to meet the kid who supposedly has information from his possibly vigilante-aligned activities.

This is exactly Tensei’s personal brand of nonsense.

His phone beeps, a message from Tenya. It comes with a badly taken picture of Tenya with his
friend, a plain-looking kid with tired green eyes and a scar over one cheek. Somebody hasn’t been sleeping. ‘We’re here!’ the message afterwards proclaims. He needs to get Tenya a Snapchat.

Tensei finishes the grape juice, recycles the container, and goes searching for his little bro.

Izuku and Iida are walking towards the other side of the crime scene when a white blur shoots down the street, skidding to a stop in front of them.

“Nii-san!” Iida grins wider than Izuku’s ever seen him, on almost every world. He thought All Might’s smile was bright, but this? It’s like the fucking sun. “I thought you were taking down a villain?”

Ingenium ducks past a police officer and under the red and yellow tape to immediately wrap Iida up in a huge hug before lifting his little brother up like the teenager weighs nothing. Iida starts laughing. It’s amazing. They look like two puppies excited to see each other after being apart for five minutes.

“We’re already done! When the team heard I was meeting my little brother after school we all worked hard to get it wrapped up quickly. They’re the best, I gotta find a way to make it up to them.”

“You didn’t have to rush for us.” Iida is still smiling so much as Ingenium sets him down. Izuku resolves to protect this smile with his life.

“Anything for my little bro.”

Iida brightens instantly before Ingenium leans on him heavily, trying to balance his arm on the top of Iida’s head casually. He’s just an inch too short to make it work. The armor doesn’t help.

Izuku hops back a pace to avoid being crushed as well. “Hello.”

The hero suddenly turns back as an intern races up, rattling off a hurried question. He answers it, congratulates her on doing a good job, and points out a different set of forms she’d been missing. He’s not a dad-friend like Iida. He’s a team mom.

Ingenium takes off his helmet, carrying it under one arm casually as the intern races back to the scene. “Nice to meet you.”

Izuku bows. “Nice to meet you too! Thank you for meeting with me.”

Ingenium waves off the pleasantries. “Tenya’s told me a lot about your cross-dimensional vigilante adventures. I’m not turning down a chance to talk.”

“You told him I do what now- “

“Hey, no judgement,” Ingenium says easily.

“I needed advice,” Iida interrupts to explain. “Nii-san is trustworthy.”

“I’m not a vigilante,” Izuku clarifies before the conversation can turn to semantics of illegal crime-fighting. Ingenium takes his words, weighs them, and shrugs.
“That’s also valid.”

Oh, he’s found a kindred spirit.

Izuku is momentarily distracted by the crime scene when the famous intern OneShot wanders past and refocuses to see Iida apologizing for dragging Ingenium away from business. Izuku can already tell that Ingenium is an ADHD-filled hero with nothing but excitement for interruption, but Iida glosses over it to discuss ‘due process’ in handling information.

“I would have gone through mother’s agency, but Midoriya asked for you specifically.”

“Oh?” Ingenium beckons Izuku over, back in hero mode. “Do you feel safe telling me here, or would somewhere else be better?”

“It’s fine, just…” As expected, the null stops him from saying anything about Hosu. Izuku settles for re-routing the sentence. “You’re not gonna like this information. It, um. Might be easier just…. Um. To show you,” Izuku says hesitantly. He doesn’t want to take passengers, but it might be the only way he has to prevent Hosu.

This is going to be such a big mistake.

There’s a moment where both Iida brothers connect the dots, and everything is silent. It’s funny how Iida’s horror and Ingenium’s glee look drastically different when the two look so similar.

“You can’t,” Iida begins before his brother interrupts.

“YES!” the turbo hero yells, dodging one of his interns attempts to pass over a clipboard. “I will absolutely travel to another dimension with you, let's fucking go!”

At the same time Iida whips around to Izuku with an increasingly horrified expression. “You only just took me, and you know what happened- ”

Ingenium gasps, holding up a hand at this betrayal. “You’ve visited dimensions? You never mentioned that yesterday! No fair, I’m going.”

“Nii-san, please do not do what I think you are going to do- “

“Let’s fucking go!” the turbo hero yells louder, pumping his fist. He ducks under a barrier of police tape and pulls them after him. From Iida’s expression, this is somewhat illegal. Izuku’s done worse.

“Wait-” Iida doesn’t stand a chance; his older brother is on a roll. Ingenium has found a goal and goddamn, he will achieve it. It’s kind of inspiring.

“I’ll finally be able to shut Shota up about dimensional theory! Sure, we argued like, once… but if it comes back up, I’ll win!” Ingenium waves them through a maze of caution tape, ignoring a nearby policeman’s exasperation. They troop behind as he makes his way to the agency’s cars, trading out equipment and putting away his helmet. “Can we go now? Is that possible?”

“Nii-san, there are regulations for time and dimension travel. You can’t just disappear without filling out the proper paperwork!”

Ingenium opens his mouth to respond before getting distracted. He takes off through the crowd of interns a second later, speaking with another member of his agency and offering a quick hug. Iida follows behind, waving his hands empathetically and weaving through the bustling crowd.
Izuku decides to wait rather than follow. One of the interns gives him a maple doughnut. It’s the highlight of his day.

The brothers return, Iida continuing to extoll the virtues of due process. “I’ve read the regulations! You cannot—”

“I got permission, and my team is filling out the forms. You ready, kid?!” Ingenium skids back, almost bumping into an intern with panda-like markings and apologizing in one breath. “I’m finally gonna visit another dimension!”

Izuku tries to feel excited. “Yep! Just be aware, I might not be doing so well once we get there. Side effects generally look worse than they really are.”

Ingenium’s eyes snap to Izuku. “Care to clarify?”

“Taking someone else takes a lot out of me, so I might have a bit of trouble, but it’s nothing I haven’t dealt with before. Ready to go?”

“I’m suddenly very concerned.”

“It’s fine!” Izuku gives a thumbs up like All Might does, trying to look just as reassured as the hero. Ingenium hesitates, eyes flicking from Izuku to the medical team behind them.

“You’re the kid that breaks his bones?”

Izuku really shouldn’t laugh at that. He shouldn’t, he—

ah shit, his face must be doing something weird. Ingenium looks slightly concerned. “Sorry, nope!”

“That’s Kirishima,” Iida supplies.

Ingenium hums, crossing his arms. “What symptoms of shock?”

“Voice manipulation, sometimes numbness and a couple times unconsciousness. It can make my teeth pointy, but that’s only if I’ve made the void really mad. Also, I… uh. I drool space stuff. Sorry in advance.” Well. This is mortifying.

“Kaminari says it looks ‘badass and creepy as all hell,’ but I disagree,” Iida informs his brother helpfully. Izuku doesn’t know if he should feel flattered or insulted. He settles for both.

Ingenium glances to Iida, taking this all into account. He calls over a medic and turns to have a whispered discussion before checking one of the compartments on his belt marked with a red cross.

Does this mean…?

Iida sighs heavily, recognizing defeat. “I suppose I can’t stop you two?”

“Nope!” Ingenium informs him, giving his brother a half-hug. “I’m going to another dimension!”

Izuku smiles nervously at his friend. “I’ll bring him back safe, don’t worry.”

Iida looks desperately between the two of them as if searching for a single braincell. Jokes on him, because Izuku’s met all the Ingeniums and that critical thinking is rare. Really rare. It’s a pattern in other Izukus too, because Mom hoards all the common sense. Iida seems to realize this after a good few seconds of deliberation.

“…Watch out for Midoriya, Nii-san. And Midoriya. I expect you both back safe.” It sounds like a threat.
“You sound like dad.” The elder Iida sasses instead while slinging an arm over Izuku’s shoulders and lifting a peace sign. Ingenium laughs, ignoring his younger brother’s sputtering at the ‘dad’ remark. “Don’t worry, it’ll be fine. So, how does this work?”

This is it. Izuku clears his throat, feeling like one of those airplane attendants. “Well, it’s a lot like falling. Just don’t let go of my hand, and make sure to enter dimensions feet-first. I might not be doing well so… uh… yeah.” Izuku cuts himself off. “Anyway, that’s a lot of rambling. Are you ready?”

Ingenium shakes his head. “Sounded like important information to me. Is there anything else I should know, or be aware of? That last bit, especially.”

“I just… if we end up in the wrong dimension, there aren’t many people who can, uh. Get back.” Izuku explains how to find the café carefully before nodding. “That’s about it. I will go into at least a little shock, but I promise it always looks worse than it is. The void is a drama queen.”

“…Cool,” Ingenium says after a moment. “Ready when you are.”

Izuku holds out his hand and loosens his grip on here. “Remember,” he says. “Whatever you do, do not let go.”

When Ingenium confirms he is not motivated to get lost in the void, Izuku falls back into the null, pulling the hero with him.

The null hurts a little less this time. It’s not saying much, though.

Izuku was ready for it, already mentally reaching for his target world, but the null is so cold, and his mind is so numb that it takes a couple seconds to even remember he has a passenger.

“Holy shit.” Ingenium’s voice sounds like he’s speaking through water. The hero is twisting around, taking in the stars around them, and Izuku tightens his grip. They can’t get separated.

“Hold on,” he manages, and they begin to fall.

Izuku aims for Hubris537. It’s average, nearby, and he knows exactly where it is in the timeline. Hosu is on the side facing them, too.

Stars blend into a vague buzz and Izuku slips into unconsciousness once again. He should really have figured out how to stay awake earlier.

Izuku snaps awake the moment he crashes into Hubris537. He lands unsteadily, tries to stand, and ends up flopping over like a fish out of water. Ingenium catches him before his head hits the floor, so it’s not as bad as it could be.

Scratch that, it’s bad. Izuku coughs and gasps as he fights for air. He’s aware of the dirty wood floor splattered with black goo from the null and his mouth, and firm grip on his shoulder, but not much else. His vision is out of focus, limited to the point that seeing blurry shapes is difficult.

The pressure in his chest lightens, then vanishes, and Izuku takes a moment to orient himself.
Ingenium is crouched beside him, steadying him.

They’re on the second floor of an abandoned building that’s partially collapsed in on itself. Outside, screams and the occasional crash of a downed building make the ground reverberate.

Izuku tries to sit up and fails miserably. He flops over like a fish on land, which is not dramatic or pitiful at all. His balance is gone. When Ingenium speaks, Izuku only hears it through one ear.

“Are you alright? Thought I lost you back there.”

"M̸̴f̵. Izuku’s mouth is completely numb. "Can’t talk much, though."

Ingenium just raises an eyebrow, and Izuku brings up his hand to touch his face. It comes away slicked with inky goo. He must look like shit.

Quirk shock hits again and Izuku coughs. Cosmic drool pours out of sharpened teeth- *it must be bad*, Izuku thinks, *if my bones are starting to warp*. Ingenium rushes over, steadying him as he finishes. The drool smooths out into the floor until it’s part of reality.

“You all right?”

"Yeah. I’m good." Izuku manages to straighten up with the hero’s support and fishes out his pocket tissues. His mouth isn’t numb anymore.

Ingenium watches cautiously as Izuku crosses his legs and makes himself a little more comfortable. The building trembles for a second.

“Did you know this would happen?”

"The space between worlds does that sometimes. It didn’t like me bringing you here."

“...Might want to tell people a couple more details beforehand.”

"Sorry." Glass shatters in the distance and Izuku winces. "I’ll do that next time."

Ingenium moves to crouch by the windows, checking outside subtly. “What is this, anyway?”

"H̵̴o̸̴. Izuku locks eyes with the hero as he continues. "It will happen."

There’s a scream from outside, and Ingenium snaps into action, flying towards the stairway. Izuku has to take it slower- every step makes his stomach heave and numbness creep up his legs.

He’s an idiot. He brought a pro hero known for his generosity and genuine need to help to a warzone. He brought a *pro hero* here and expected him to sit still when people were in danger.

*This was a horrible idea.*

When he gets downstairs, Ingenium is struggling against an invisible wall, trying reach the doorway. He backs up, and runs at it again, as if this will make a difference.

It won’t. The null never changes its mind.

Izuku wobbles past him, bypassing the nonexistent wall and picking his way over the rubble outside. When a voice calls out, Izuku changes direction slightly, almost tripping in his haste. It’s hard to navigate rubble when he can’t see properly.
There's an unconscious man trapped under a fallen support column. A woman is trying desperately to lift it and almost succeeding. She scrambles back when he stumbles into view. Belatedly, Izuku remembers that he must look inhuman. It's not a good fashion statement with Nomu in the sky. Izuku nods to her reassuringly, places his shoulder under the timber as well, and pushes.

He shouldn't be doing this under quirk shock, and black liquid escapes out the side of his mouth, splattering the rubble.

He needs to save them.

The timber creaks and moves just long enough for the woman to pull the other civilian out. Izuku's vision swims so he can barely make out their faces, but her voice is clear.

"Thank you," she says, and Izuku points to where he knows Manual will be.

"Heroes are that way. Hurry."

"You-"

"Teleportation quirk, I'll be fine. Just a little backlash. Go."

Ingenium is waiting inside the building when Izuku gets back.

"I couldn't help," the hero says, and those words are like a punch to the gut.

"They're close to the heroes. Manual is always in the center of the city; he's probably within a couple blocks."

Ingenium shakes his head, staring out the doorway, something in his expression broken. "Why couldn't I go?"

"You're not supposed to be here. This world's Ingenium is recognizable to them and currently in Mustafu General Hospital. You can't be seen."

"But you can." There's no accusation, just confusion.

"There's probably a different Midoriya in Hosu right now."

Ingenium nods, taking in the information. The hero leans as close to the window as he can, and Izuku takes a seat on the floor. They both need time to process. Ingenium to the future, and Izuku to his mistakes.

Ingenium breaks the silence first. "I gotta say, this is quite a mess. What happened?"

Izuku knows the hero is just trying to distract himself from the screams and smell of gasoline and rubber. *This was a mistake.*

"I've tried to find out what causes this for years. There's always fuel to the fire, but the ignition matters more."

Ingenium's armor is dyed red in the light.

"And that catalyst is a certain hero getting attacked by "Stain."

Ingenium doesn't hesitate. "I'll stop them. Do you have details?"
“No, you can’t… you won’t succeed.”

“I will. I’ll go to Hosu and stop this from happening.” He doesn’t understand.

“You’re the one who gets attacked.”

The null lets him say it this time. Maybe it’s because they’re already here.

In the following silence, Izuku picks up a piece of rubble, passing it from hand to hand so he doesn’t have to meet the hero’s eyes. “There’s a death I need to prevent. Please, do not go to Hosu.”

Ingenium frowns. “I’m not afraid to die, Midoriya. If my death will save a single life, then it’s worth it.”

Izuku almost laughs at this. It comes out closer to a wheeze. “Your death hurts people too, you know. Nobody wants their friend to be a martyr.”

“It comes with the job,” Ingenium says, and it’s something about the way he says it - like he’s accepted it long ago, and it’s just a fact of life - that does it.

“No, it doesn’t,” Izuku snaps. “I know someone who believes that, and every time she says it’s her job to die, it hurts every single one of us. What do you expect Iida will do if you don’t come back? Just accept it? Don’t throw your life away for the people.”

Ingenium’s response is automatic, the one programmed into heroes every day. “It’s my job.”

“It’s your job to save people. Have you ever thought there may be people alive because you are?” Izuku recoils when Ingenium’s breath hitches. Maybe that was going too far. “Sorry.”

“Midoriya-“

Izuku scrubs a hand over his eyes, continuing in a quieter voice. “You don’t die for people; you live for them.”

Ingenium hasn’t moved from the doorway, and Izuku tries to get his breathing under control. “I’m sorry, it’s just… Don’t come to Hosu, Iida-san. I don’t want the Ingenium name on our world to end.”

“It won’t,” the doomed hero says, but Izuku can tell this is just to pacify him. “I’ll do what I can.”

“Thank you.” The words taste sour in his mouth, as if they were a lie.

“Let’s go home,” the hero suggests gently.

Izuku nods, taking his hand, and calling on the null. It wraps around them like an old friend, and Izuku’s vision goes dark. Two short jumps. Then he’s done.

He can’t feel much this time, and his vision’s gone. It’s mostly instinct and muscle memory that guides him to a familiar world. He’s not sure if he blacks out or dissociates on the way. Time is gone from his memory the moment it happens. Ingenium says something, but it doesn’t register. They’re speeding up.

He’s too out of it to fully notice, let alone care. The numbness spreads from his mouth to chest, until he can’t feel anymore. Izuku’s eyes close, and the warmth of distant stars is the last thing he’s aware of.
Light explodes around him as they enter, and soft grass blades brush his cheek though stinging tears. Izuku thinks he might have collapsed. It’s hard to tell when his senses are scrambled and limbs nearly numb. Slowly, light filters back through his eyes, and the sound of Ingenium saying his name registers.

“Midoriya? Hey, c’mon, bud. You gotta stay with me here.”

Izuku gives a shaky thumbs up, rolls over, and promptly starts coughing. Ingenium rubs circles on his back, talking him through it.

“You’re doing great, just hang in there. This doesn’t look like Mustafu, but I’m sure we can make our way home in no time. Take your time, I’ll have someone pick us up.”

“We’re not home,” Izuku croaks out, and wow does he sound awful. “Too long of a jump. Had to stop here first.”

Ingenium nods, sitting back on his heels. “Take your time to rest. Do you know where we are?”

Izuku takes in the tall oak trees and scattered gravestones. “Shit. I’m sorry.”

This is the last place Ingenium should be.

“Midoriya?” Ingenium’s voice sounds wary. “Is this place dangerous?”

Izuku shakes his head and focuses on trying to struggle to his feet. It’s a little difficult when everything distantly feels like one of those old TV screens. The sting of his eyes is all that’s left. In the end he manages to flop against a tree trunk, and Ingenium sits nearby. The hero reaches to his little first aid kit and starts treating the scrapes on Izuku’s hands. He can’t feel the tightness of the bandages. Everything’s cold and warm all at once.

“We’re safe, just… I’m sorry.”

“Don’t apologize, that doesn’t-“

Ingenium breaks off, eyes wide as he takes in the graveyard, and shame creeps up Izuku’s spine like thin ice. Tenya’s statue isn’t exactly subtle.

The hero slowly stands, hands shaking. “No.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t realize it was this world,” Izuku manages, but the elder Ingenium isn’t listening.

“Tenya, you idiot,” the hero says softly. “You did something reckless again, didn’t you.”

“I’ll be fine. Go ahead.” Izuku keeps his eyes fixed on the ground as the turbo hero’s footsteps stumble down the path.

He shouldn’t have brought them here.

Izuku keeps his eyes away from the grave, whispering apologies to the fallen student in his mind and trying to count the blades of grass in front of him.

He can’t even bow like this. Can’t give the respect this Iida deserves. Izuku screws his eyes shut and packs his shame into a far corner of his mind. He never meant to show anyone this world. It was supposed to be left in peace.

It was supposed to be respected, and now he’s used it as a rest stop.
The ground crunches and Izuku cracks open his eyes to see Ingenium returning to sit beside him. There are tear tracks down his face, so Izuku looks away to give the hero some semblance of privacy.

This is his fault.

“What happened?”

Izuku wishes the tree could swallow him whole. “I didn’t make it in time.”

Ingenium nods slowly, taking this in.

“Who dies more often?” Ingenium asks next. His voice is hollow. “Me or Tenya?”

Izuku swallows back his guilt. “Tenya, but it’s close. When I mentioned an end to the Ingenium name… it wasn’t just you.”

They don’t speak for a while after that. The trees rustle softly and Izuku thinks of all the other worlds he could have crashed on.

The sky is too pretty here.

Beside him, the hero scrubs a gloved hand over his face. “I can’t drop Hosu,” Ingenium whispers brokenly, and Izuku feels a empty space open up in his soul. “The paperwork’s already gone though.”

His eyes sting, and Izuku blinks away the tears. “But… you can’t.”

“I know,” Ingenium says so quietly Izuku almost doesn’t catch it. “You told me, and I almost didn’t listen.”

“Can you take sidekicks with you? Especially into suspicious dark—” he breaks off, coughing, and the hero rubs his back, almost reflexively.

“I’ll be careful; I’m not risking my brother’s safety.”

Izuku draws in a shaky breath. That will have to be enough. He draws up his knees and attempts to bury his face in them. “I’m sorry I brought you here.”

Ingenium is about to reply when Izuku’s head snaps up at a creak of metal. "We have to leave.”

“Are you sure? A little more rest won’t hurt—“ Someone’s coming.

"We have to leave. Now.” Izuku struggles to stand, but it’s no use. He can’t move his legs. Ingenium reaches out to steady him, and Izuku loosens his grip on Here. Either they leave now, or the null throws them both out.

"Hold on,” he manages.

“Wait-”

Then there’s nothing but darkness, and the instinct that pulls him home. The graveyard is empty before an older Ingenium makes his way past the treeline.
Tensei is still not used to dimension-hopping *(is that what it’s called?)* by his third time traveling. Midoriya has been steadily growing weaker, and it’s hard not to let his concern verge into panic at this point. He wishes they’d waited a bit before making the jump, but it had happened too fast to stop. Stopping to agonize over the past can get heroes hurt in this line of work, and Tensei knows he can lecture the kid once they’re safe.

The kid is out almost instantly once they’re adrift in the void, and Tensei takes Midoriya in a rescue carry as they fall. He must assume there’s a direction to this. If he doesn’t then he *will* panic, which helps nobody.

Planets flash by like trees on the freeway, picking up speed until they’re headed straight for a single lone planet. Remembering Midoriya’s advice, he tries to enter it feet first. The first two tries, he failed, but this time he’ll stick it for sure.

Just as before, right as they’re about to hit, a circular warp opens and delivers them safely to their destination.

He hits cement, stumbles, but stays upright. Midoriya still unconscious in his arms. Tensei searches for a pulse desperately and almost cries when he finds it.

They’re in some back alley, and Tensei’s com link is overloaded with messages immediately. Satsuki is a new intern, and good team player. It wouldn’t be surprising if she’s been sending these out since he left.

“*Come in, please. Ingenium, come in, it’s been two hours. Please establish contact immediately*—“

“I’m here,” he says immediately, and she breaks off.

“*Sir*?” she asks nervously, and Tensei smiles to keep his voice from giving away how scared he is. Midoriya hasn’t moved. His pulse is steady, so that’s something.

“I’m fine, Satsuki. Midoriya is with me, and he needs an ambulance. Is everyone all right?”

“Yes, Ingenium. We’re… Welcome back.”

“I’m home,” Tensei says, because finally he is.

Chapter End Notes

so? was it bad or are the characters just making bad decisions?

Please do not yeet, or agree to be yeeted, into the void.
Recovery & Also The Pokemans

Chapter Summary

I know the chap title is misspelled, it's an aesthetic choice

Chapter Notes

SPOILERS: none for this fic or cannon, but if ur reading Grasshopper skip over the italics section bc oh boi. I can't believe I have to tag spoilers for another fic. We've come full circle yall.

uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh anyhway:
Pika: Kaminari
AlienQueen;): Mina
FNOSH: Sero (short for Friendly Neighborhood Office Supply Hero)
RockyRiot: Kirishima
Yaomomo: Momo
AngryTea: Uraraka
XXXDarkSourHarbingerOfDarknessXXX: Tokoyami
~honhonhon~: Aoyama

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tenya takes the hospital stairs two at a time. His brother is here, somewhere, and so is Midoriya.

The agency said it was fine, that Tensei was safe, but they hadn’t told him about Midoriya. Tenya runs down the hospital corridor – he’ll break the rules, just once – and turns the corner to the hall with Midoriya’s room. Tensei is outside the door on his phone as Tena marches up indignantly.

“Nii-san, I-” Tenya stops as Tensei cuts him off, dropping the call and wrapping him in a hug.

“Do you have plans for internships?” Ingenium asks quietly.

“No?”

“Good, because I’m offering a spot at my agency.” Ingenium steps back, keeping a hand on his younger brother’s shoulder, face unreadable. “Far away from Hosu.”

“What?”

Tensei starts to speak, but no sound comes out. The hero stops, clears his throat, and sighs. “I guess that’s what he meant by hard to talk about,” the hero mutters.

“Nii-san?”

“It’s nothing. If you could intern at any agency, where would you go?”
Tenya squints. They’ve talked about this since before his brother was accepted to UA. “With you, of course.”

“Good. Welcome to the team.”

Izuku wakes up to a heart monitor and starchy white sheets. It’s probably another world, because he shouldn’t be in a hospital. Mom would be here if he were-

The door slams open and Mom strides in like a general on the warpath, single purposed and full of rage. “Who thought they can keep me from my son?”

“Oh.” Izuku is abruptly confronted with the crushing reality that this is, in fact, his world. Mom dashes towards him, sweeping him up in a hug as if predicting his panic.

“Oh, sweetie. Don’t ever do that again.”

Izuku hugs her back, and it hits him. What he did. Where he went - Izuku hugs his mom tighter. He’s home now. He doesn’t realize he’s crying until it’s hard to breathe. Mom sits with him, a hand on his back and the other gently combing through his hair as he finally cries it out. He made so many mistakes, but finally he’s home. It’ll be over soon, and everything can go back to normal.

“It’s okay,” she says softly, and Izuku holds on to her voice. It’s his mom’s voice, not a different version’s. It’s her.

He doesn’t know how long it takes for his breathing to calm.

“Ma’am,” a nurse at the door calls, “teleportation quirks are extremely dangerous, and I need to run some tests to ensure he’s not a hazard-“

Inko Midoriya sits up slowly, partially shielding Izuku. “The doctor never mentioned this.” Her voice is light, but Izuku can feel the danger under it. They’ve both known for a long time that if the wrong people found out about his quirk, he would be a target.

With his knowledge, it’s just a statistical probability.

“It’s just a small blood sample-“

“Dr. Isha-san and Dr. Akarui-san the only ones authorized to do my son’s quirk tests. It’s in his files, and I’m sure they are on staff right now.”

“I’ll check the paperwork, but we do need that sample soon.”

They knew this may happen. The likelihood he’d be injured and taken here in most if not all emergencies is practically a universal constant. Izuku and Mom have both prepared for this situation.

“You need to abide by the law.” Izuku tries to keep his voice steady as he peeks out at the nurse from mom’s shielding posture. “According to the clause added to Measure 239 of the Quirked Citizen’s Privacy Act, unless in life-threatening or urgent situations, a Preferential Quirk Examiner cannot be ignored or replaced without explicit, non-influenced consent given due to the nature of a protected quirk. Transport and teleportation quirks are listed as such.”
“W-well, I also need to know glucose levels, so-“

Izuku continues to watch the nurse as he speaks. “I’m hereby exercising my rights of the Quirked Citizen’s Privacy Act, Clause B-78, and refusing to allow tests until my preferred doctor is available.”

The nurse freezes, then bows. “Very well. I’ll have Dr. Isha called.”

The door slides shut, and Izuku leans against mom. “Do you think Dr. Isha will come?”

“I already called them and talked to Ingenium. We’re lucky to have a sidekick from his agency right outside the door.”

“Oh, thank goodness.”

Wait.

WAIT.

“Ingenium! Oh my gosh Mom, is he okay?”

“He’s fine.” Mom looks to the door thoughtfully. “He’d been sticking around to make sure everything’s okay but seemed rather shaken up so I told him we’d be fine. We all are, to be honest. Shaken up, anyway.”

Mom continues, mentioning all that’s happened- Ingenium arrived in an alley with him unconscious, he was rushed to the hospital, and it’s been around a day and six hours in total. UA was contacted when they confirmed unconsciousness due to quirk backlash and are waiting to hear if he needs time off.

“It certainly came as a surprise, though. Didn’t we talk about stretching your limits?”

Izuku nods, guilt crushing him, and Mom picks up on his distress.

“We can talk about that later. On another note, I saw your classmate earlier, the one with a speed quirk? You have good friends.”

“Iida’s here?”

“Oh, is that his name? Well, Ingenium texted me that they’d be back if you weren’t out by tonight, but I’m afraid they had to leave for school and work-“

Wait.

Waitwaitwaitwaitwaitwait.

“You have… Ingenium’s number?”

“HeroMap.”

Oh.

Holy S H I T there’s a tread about him on HeroMap, the app used in natural disasters to allow communication between citizens and actual hero agencies.

Izuku covers his face with his hands. He’s officially a natural disaster. Cloud will never let this go.
Maybe he’ll tell Shinsou just to see how far he’ll spit his coffee this time.

*He’s technically an official natural disaster.* This is the day he’s been waiting for, the day the world confirms just how screwed up his life is. Holy shit.

“Inko-san? Izuku-san?” The door slides open, and a tall doctor with teal and yellow striped hair steps through. Dr. Isha straightens their glasses imperiously. “A little birdie said you refused tests.”

“From anyone else,” Mom clarifies and Dr. Isha grabs a clipboard and drops gracelessly onto a stool.

“I shouldn’t be surprised they pushed it. How are you holding up, Izuku-san?”

“Like a waterlogged ant,” Izuku says immediately. “I drooled so much today.”

Dr. Isha gives a short, barking laugh before scooting over. Their long legs make them unfairly good at spinney chairs and Izuku is very jealous. They’ll need to be around for most of his tests, or Dr. Akarui. After quirk marriages and black-market trafficking of rare quirks started, records of some quirk holders were assigned protection status and preferred doctors took on a new meaning. Teleporters fit under that category.

Dr. Isha was the second doctor they’d tried.

They’re quirkless, with a dry sense of humor and attention to confidentiality. Their brother, Sir Nighteye, has a prescience quirk, and Izuku had found that talking to Dr. Isha about future-related shock is easier than it is with other doctors. The null doesn’t care what they know. They also specialize in self-destructive quirks of young adults. A perfect fit for Izuku’s messed-up life.

They’re present when a nurse takes his blood pressure, as required by the rare quirk protection laws.

Dr. Isha pulls up Izuku’s file and passes over a lollipop. He wants to say he’s too old for this, but he also knows that Dr. Isha saw him staring at the candy jar during their entire first meeting and has never let it go.

They’re going over tests now.

Izuku doesn’t catch much of the conversation. He gets around three seconds to realize *oh wait, I can’t hear anymore* before his senses shut down. He’s briefly aware of slumping against Mom when it happens, but that’s okay. She and Dr. Isha both know what this is.

The world pressing at the back of his mind rushes forth, dragging his consciousness in. It’s familiar, he notes distantly. He’s been here before.

“He made a mistake. Kids do that, you know.” Izuku steps around Iida, carefully placing himself between his student and the hero killer. He can’t do much right now. If Stain decides to attack, Izuku has his words, phone, two crutches, an injured back, and a stun gun. These are very bad odds. “He will be a good hero, Stain.”

His old acquaintance snarls at this. “No hero should be motivated by revenge. Their ideals should be pure and good, instead of spreading their rot across Japan. Heroes should be noble, willing to save for the act itself rather than a ranking system. It’s their job to heal and save, not seek retribution.”

He’s been working on representation for the Ainu community in Hokkaido.”

“He’s saving people for publicity. The press shouldn’t matter to a hero, only the act of doing good. They’re commercializing suffering.”

“Publicity to do an even greater good.” Izuku takes a step forward and is pleasantly surprised when Stain moves back. That small movement indicates that Izuku still has weight in this situation. Good. “Even if he weren’t, even if Iida continues to be motivated by revenge, they’re still saving people. They’re still working to make the world a little bit better, even if their true intention isn’t perfect. The family Native saved last week is alive. The people Iida will save will be truly grateful, because they won’t care in that moment why he’s doing it.”

Izuku bumps the back of his heel on Iida’s armor, pulling out his phone behind his back and sending his location to the first five contacts in his phone. Hopefully one is Zookeeper, Dabi, or Eraserhead. “And he won’t be motivated by revenge. Let me teach him, Stain. Let him live.”

Stain laughs. It’s hoarse and full of rage scraping the inside of his lungs raw, and Izuku can hear the betrayal in it. They were never close, but Grasshopper has worked with Stendhal on occasion. It will never happen again. Not after tonight. Izuku is burning that bridge, hoping the light of its fire will show Iida the way home.

Stain knows this, too. There’s steel in his eyes that wasn’t there a minute ago. “You’ve fallen blind to the evil rooting through their system. Even after they broke you down, how can you stand on their side? Don’t you see the corruption, the glory seeking that got civilians hurt? That took Grasshopper?”

That crosses a line.

“I see the flaws,” Izuku spits back. “It took my legs. You know what that means - my quirk was literally crushed under a hero’s foot, of course I saw it. But you know what? Every hero involved honestly thought they were enacting justice that night.”

“And yet you work for them now. You work for something that took your name, Hops. You know what that means.” ‘You gave them Grasshopper,’ Stain doesn’t say. ‘You gave UA a bomb to manipulate as they please. Midoriya Izuku gave them his mother’s protection and his father’s forgiveness. And now, Grasshopper has given them the vigilante community, wrapped up in a bow.’

The worst part is, Izuku can’t address it with Native and Iida here. “I am trying to make the world better any way I can. That will never be through death. The heroes today are doing good whether you like it or not, Stain. Every act, no matter why they do it or how big it is, still means the world to someone out there. Any impact is a good impact.”

“We’ll never agree.”

“Maybe.” Izuku nods to where Iida still lies on the ground. “But I’m going to keep arguing for the sake of anyone listening.”

Stain scoffs, then raise his blade. “Enough.”

Izuku shrugs. Then everything goes to shit.

Izuku jolts up, and Dr. Isha pushes him gently back to bed. “Sit down. Everyone’s safe, nobody’s hurt, this is your world, take a breath.”
Izuku anchors himself to their voice as they ramble on. “Your mom’s work called, she had to step out and tell them to shove it.”

“She didn’t say that,” Izuku croaks, and Dr. Isha snorts.

“Not in those words, no. But it gives us time to talk.”

“About?”

“Izuku-san. You know I see the injury records from your high school as part of UA’s wellness program.”

“Oh.”

“You induced quirk shock to play chicken with a villain.” It’s not the nicest way to put it, but Dr. Isha is blunt on the best of days.

“I had to.”

Dr. Isha takes a long, deep breath, before leveling Izuku a look. “I’m going to stop you there. You just got out of an intensely traumatizing situation, and I’d hoped that any one of the adults in your life would sit you down for a conversation about the danger of overusing your quirk.”

“I know about backlash.” It’s Izuku’s turn to level a look but Dr. Isha just stares back, unimpressed.

“Tell me what you know, then. Pop-quiz starts now.”

“Quirks are muscles. Over-using them can result in physical limits and even injury. The form quirk-shock takes differs widely based on the quirk’s nature. Rest and recovery are advised after episodes.”

“Carrying on with that, what you just did was break your leg and then try to run a marathon. I don’t want to see you back in here soon for the same reason.”

“I won’t,” Izuku says, though it sounds false even to him. Dr. Isha regards him for a moment before scooting over to the desk – he’s so jealous of their skill with the spinny chair, it’s not fair – and writes something out.

“Here,” they say, tearing off the slip and handing it to him.

“A referral?”

“They’re both trustworthy and have other patients under the Quirked Citizen’s Privacy Act. I’ve seen that one break a man’s knuckles for trying to violate patient confidentiality, and that one works directly under Hawks. I’m told you’ve met her son and worked with her in the past.”

Izuku’s head snaps up without reading the paper. “I don’t need a therapist anymore. I’m doing better.”

“Then they’ll agree. All I’m asking is for you to try.”
Izuku is quiet on the ride home. Mom lets him be, turning on the radio to play the soft music she likes so much. When the car is parked and she’s led him through the café side door to their apartment, Izuku murmurs an apology before bolting to his room.

He tosses his buzzing phone on his desk, lacking the energy to check who’s texting. Izuku crawls under the blankets, making himself as small as possible, and tries to forget about life for a little while.

He just wants to be alone.

A world starts to push at the back of his mind, and Izuku reaches out of the covers, searching blindly for his quirk suppressors. They’re cold to the touch- he didn’t realize the blankets were so warm- but once around his wrists he can relax.

He made so many mistakes.

Ingenium’s expression on that last world runs through his mind and Izuku ducks his head further under. He’d never meant to go there. If only he could go back in time and take it back.

If only he could fix what he’d broken.

At some point light begins to fade through the covers. Izuku can’t really bring himself to care, until there’s a soft knock on his open door.

“Sweetie?”

He should respond.

“Dinner’s ready, do you want me to bring it in?”

He really should respond. Why isn’t he?

“I’ll be checking on you in another few minutes, so take your time.”

Wait, mom.

He should tell her it’s okay.

He’s okay.

But that means leaving the bed.

Wait.

How’d he get out of this last time?

He didn’t, he just slept. This time he wants food.

Uhghhhhhgghhh. Izuku pulls the blankets further over his head, trying to think of whatever he did to get out of bed that morning. Maybe he can drop into the null from here.

Advise from Hisen runs through his head- “half-measures are okay. If you can’t make breakfast, eat a slice of bread and cheese separately. Can’t go to the gym? Put on your shoes so it’s still a habit. If you can’t leave the blankets-“

-take them with you.
Izuku rolls to the side of the bed, gathering the blankets like a tired void burrito. He can’t move his arms, but arms are for wimps. He’s got gravity on his side.

*I’m a genius,* Izuku thinks as he gives the final push, flopping off the bed. Unfortunately, the blanket snags from being tucked in at the foot of the bed, so he ends up hitting the ground head-first with an ungraceful thump.

*I’m a fool,* Izuku thinks, suspended half on and half off the bed, trapped in his own burrito cocoon. He can’t eat like this.

He’s wriggling around, trying to get free when footsteps pad down the hallway. Oh. Yes, she may have heard that thump.

“Sweetie? Are you okay, I heard a noise, are you-” He can’t see due to the blanket cocoon, but the silence probably means she saw him.

Izuku still can’t talk, but he manages a raspy grunt. Nailed it.

Ha.

Victory.

He tries to move his arms, just for a peace sign, but only succeeds in rolling and faceplanting into the blankets. Mom sighs, crossing the room. She pulls on the blankets still attached to the bed and Izuku flops gently to the ground.

“Do you want to join me for dinner?”

Izuku frees his face without too much struggle and nods. *Look, Mom! I’m an Eraserhead caterpillar.*

Mom smiles back, making her way to the kitchen. “Call me if you need anything.”

Oh.

Yeah, that’s not really something he can do. Izuku’s phone is all the way on the desk. That’s… that’s really far up. He manages it, rising like some sort of gremlin cloaked in blankets, and types out a quick message to mom. There are a ton of other notifications, but he doesn’t have the energy to deal with those.

Not yet.

**MESSAGING “Moominmama”**

I can’t really talk rn bc the voice thing happened agin

Thx for letting me live my caterpillar dreams

Moominmama: Anytime, dear

Moominmama: Do you need anything?

Well since you’re asking

All Might has a new action figure available today

Moominmama: does your allowance cover it?
Izuku puts down his phone, slowly venturing out of his room. There’s an upside to blankets, and that’s that his face is hidden. When Mom looks up to see a large mass of blankets skittering towards her with her son’s feet poking out, she gestures him over to the couch, and they sit together, watching All Might movies and eating from the hot pot.

It’s not perfect, and the weight on his wrists is a reminder he’d rather not have to deal with. But it’s better.

Taka knocks on their door later that night, half-covered in black dust from her own quirk’s backlash. She points one too-sharp claw at Izuku from the doorway and announces, “Cloud accidentally knocked himself out, but he said to ‘ask one of us next time you need a designated driver for hero kidnapping and general mischief-making.’ He also volunteered as tribute,” before attempting to leave.

Mom catches the door immediately.


“And what happened to you?” Mom asks, her tone allowing no dodging of the question.

Izuku figures the answer out when Taka doesn’t fully register the words and instead stares at Mom hollowly, then at Izuku with desperation. He blinks back dully, lacking the energy to help. For a moment it becomes perfectly clear that the only person in the room capable of complex thought processing is Mom. That’s just the mood for tonight.

“…Work,” Taka finally stumbles out, and looks in Izuku’s general direction. “Next time, don’t-“

She stops, dust inching its way across her skin like tree roots and makes a noise of frustration. Izuku can relate. Backlash-enforced silence sucks.

“Next time ask us for help. Even if it’s yeeting Tenko into the void,” she finishes. “You injured? Dead?”

“No. You?”

“…No. Need anything?”

Izuku hesitates. “I want to train my quirk,” he starts, only for Taka and Mom to speak as one.

“Not tomorrow,” they both say, and Taka nods to Mom briefly before giving her regards and leaving.

Mom sighs, making her way back to the couch once the door clicks shut. “She has a point, you know. I’d feel much better knowing you were safe out there.”

“Mom,” Izuku whines. He really does not want to talk about this. That means dealing with reality, which is lame and definitely not on his agenda for the evening. He’d planned to stew in denial and then sleep.

“We need to talk,” Mom says softly, and Izuku realizes that this conversation will only get harder with time. He may not like it, but that’s the cold, hard truth.
“Okay,” he says quietly. “Five minutes?”

Mom nods and leaves to find the timer. It’s something they’d worked out long ago after one too many skinned palms that couldn’t be played off as roughhousing. A short conversation, so Mom could say what she needed, and Izuku would know how much emotional energy he’d be spending. If they need more time, they’ll talk again after a long break.

Mom comes back, setting the All Might timer on the table. Izuku gets to push the start once he’s ready.

“I want you to be safe,” Mom begins. She catches his frown and continues. “I’m serious, Izuku. You know I can’t help you out—” she waves her hand for a moment before finishing. “-there. But I do understand that today could have been avoided, and I’d like to know why you didn’t choose the safer option.”

“Safer?”

“Why couldn’t one of the other three take you?”

Oh.

“I don’t know. I didn’t think about it, and they’re busy anyway,” Izuku says quietly, because it’s true. He honestly didn’t want to bother them.

“Did you ask?”

“…No.”

Mom sits, wringing her hands. “Do you feel safe asking them?”

“What- of course! Why wouldn’t I-“

“Just checking,” Mom says softly. “Will you ask next time?”

Izuku huddles back in his blanket burrito. He doesn’t know what next time will be. What is next anyway? The sports festival, probably. Or Hosu. Izuku doesn’t want to think about Hosu right now.

“I’ll try,” he says honestly. “I’ll get strong enough to use my quirk safely, too.”

Mom’s fidgeting is renewed at this, and Izuku hastens to reassure her.

“Aizawa Sensei gave me a training plan,” he says. “I’ll be stronger. Maybe even before internships.”

Inko hesitates before reaching out to run her hand through Izuku’s hair. “You’ll be careful?” she asks quietly.

“I will. I won’t even train alone, and you know Aizawa Sensei will know if I’m going overboard.”

Mom nods, seemingly reassured at this. “I’ll send him an email tonight,” she decides. “And don’t give me that look- I met him at the hospital today, he already knows what happened.”

Oh.

Shit.

Izuku’s gonna be expelled.
Actually, being expelled would be the easier option. He’s going to be scolded so bad.

The timer goes off, symbolically ringing in his doomed last hours as a student at UA. Izuku wants daisies at his funeral and for Endeavor to be launched from a glitter-filled cannon into the void at the reception. He’s mentally drafting his last will and testament as his phone starts buzzing.

Mom leaves him to his problems, collecting the timer. Izuku tosses his phone across the couch. It doesn’t stop. After a good minute of staring pettily, he fishes it out to find a long convo between Mina and Kaminari arguing about Pokémon’s ability to wear shoes.

Highschool is so wild.

MESSAGING “CHOSE YOUR FIGHTER: DADMIGHT VS. DADZAWA(1A CHAT)”

Pika: KIRBY DOES NOT HAVE STINKY FEET
AlienQueenenary: Lil red peets
AlienQueenenary: He has toes
Pika: they’re feet! He has round feet!!!
FNOSH: They’re shoes I swear
Pika: NO
RockyRiot: Alternatively he just kept applying nailpolish until it all covered his feet
FNOSH: headcannon accepted
Pika: NO!!!!!
AlienQueenenary: Hey has anyone watched the cloudy with a chance of meatballs movie bc uh
Pika: NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!
Yaomomo: oh I haven’t heard of it!
RockyRiot: Yes I hate this don’t do it
Pika: don’t you dare say it
AlienQueenenary: So the main character invents spray-on shoes but cant take them off
AlienQueenenary: what if Kirby has them
Pika: I am very disgruntled
AngryTea: cursed
XXXDarkSoulHarbingerOfDarknessXXX: What a mad banquet of darkness
Pika: Kirby doesn’t have fingers, how do you know he has toes
AlienQueenenary: How do you know he doesn’t have fingers
FNOSH: No
Pika: STAHP
Yaomomo: You stop that right now
RockyRiot: hmmm don’t like this
AlienQueen☺️: What if his fingers are so small they’re lost in his fur but when he touches you, you feel it
Pika: NO
AlienQueen☺️: Like lil babay fingers but too small and too far apart
FNOSH: I HAVE EVIDENCE THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TOES
Yaomomo: oh!! Excellent!!
AngryTea: hey mom ur too good for this world k thx bye
Yaomomo: <3<3<3 love u too <3<3<3
FNOSH: When he does like,, needle? Iron? Spark? His peets change color
FNOSH: I don’t speak pokemans
RockyRiot: mood
Pika: Illiterate peons
AngryTea: Funky little barefoot boi

He wears shoes
I met him once

Pika: MIDORIYA
AngryTea: !!!!
AlienQueen☺️: Called it
Yaomomo: Midoriya!!
Yaomomo: You were missing from class today, is everything all right
I was?
RockyRiot: Uh yeah man
Huh. Funky.
Hey on a scale of 1 to 10 how existentially displeased was sensei at my absence
Pika: like a 8??
FNOSH: rip

AngryTea: iida’s been super worried and shinsou’s starting to get anxious

AlienQueenQRST: Are we not discussing the fact that midoriya has nmet Kirby

FNOSH: no

Pika: also are u ok??

Ah shit ill talk to them

I’m good, just pushed my quirk too far

I’ll be back tomorrow!!!

Pika: Damn son

AngryTea: Get some rest!!! We love you <3<3<3

RockyRiot: Take care, man

Yaomomo: please take care

Thx!!

I gotta run but yeah, kirby has toes

Pika: How do you know this???

Too many mistakes resulting in cursed knowledge

Pika: Pls I need to know

AlienQueenQRST: Ye

Srry that’s in the repressed memory box, we can’t go there

RockyRiot: Dude???

Pika: Oh my god what did Kirby do to you

FNOSH: beans

no

AlienQueenQRST: BEANS

Pika: BEANS

FNOSH: BEANS

No beans

Only trauma in this chilis
Yaomomo: beans

AngryTea: BEANS

Pika: BEAMS

RockyRiot: beams???

AngryTea: beams.

Pika: asjsfgkld:algh:lg ‘tis aoyama

~honhonhon~: moi?

Pika: oh shit


The chat dissolves into nonsense and an argument over whether beams should be the new chat name. They have a pretty good shot at it too, with Iida offline. Actually, that’s not a good thing. It’s ominous. Izuku checks his other messages, and his heart breaks when he sees 41 missed messages from Iida.

MESSAGEING TENSEIWUZHERE-GIVE-MY-BRO-SOME-HUGS-U-FOOLS

I’ll be sending time updates just in case. 30 minutes now.

45 minutes.

Izuku it’s been an hour

The police have been updated. One hour fifteen minutes.

1 hr 30 minutes, are you all right?

Please let me know if you’re okay.

I remember you said time is different out there, so I’ll keep sending these every half hour just in case.

2 hrs.

We are on our way to the hospital

The class does not know, but I think Aizawa was told

I’m at the hospital. Let me know if you need to talk or text.

My brother is fine, not sure if they’ve told you

Here is a picture of the hero magazine downstairs.
He’s pretty worried, though.

Just heard some of what happened, please text me when you’re up.

I have asked Shinsou and Uraraka what to do when a friend is not doing well, and Shinsou recommended sending cat pictures, thus, I have done research and chosen the top selection of animals from various local shelters:

Attached: 23 images

I could not fulfill Uraraka’s recommendation of hugging, but let me know when you are earliest available and I shall give you one.

Let me know if there’s anything I can do.

Feel free to call.

Thanks, Iida

I’m doing better now

Also I think Ingenium changed your username again

Midoriya!

Do you want to talk about it?

I kind of cant. One of those quirk things

I’m sorry I made everyone worry

It’s no trouble.

We were worried because we care.

I still messed up though

Thought I was ready to travel with people

Should have listened to you

Sorry

And I got your brother involved in this huge mess

No!!

No apologies!!!

My brother said he learned something important from today, and also that you were very strong throughout it.

I put him in danger

I put you in danger and never apologized
It’s okay.
I’m glad you’re safe.

Still
I messed up big time

It’s okay!

Sorry.

Please take care of yourself!!!

I will

Thx

I am turning off my phone so you will be forced to get some rest!!!

But please do not hesitate to call if you need anything!!

Ur phone would be off tho?

Aha!

??????

I will put it on silent for texts only.

The ideal solution!

Hey Iida I love and support u so much

I love and support you too!

That is why my phone is on silent right now!

asjlkksakadfs

I am ignoring your texts out of love.

Right now.

Thank u for ignoring me out of love

MESSAGING TIREDCAT

yo

Just letting u know im good and the void sucks
Lmk if u need anything

Fuckinnnnnnnnn km,m6ty xxccwqa
Duidde
*dude

????

Look ill talk to you at school I just gotta
J:kf?L/
FUCK

U dying???
Bc big mood

No i
CAT
On hanlkkm

Cat?

Hand
Can’t type

Pictures required of cat
Please
I will trade coin for knowledge of any cat

Ugh

Picture sent.
You wouldn’t
U give no coins ever

Ur right im cheap as hell
Oh it’s Urasai!

Ye so I cnadnt tallllk
Fukiing lorge  cat

Valid, this excuse is accepted

Thx
the Does Kirby Has Peets is a long running argument with my friends. pls tell me ur opinions in the comments, its a poll for very sciency purposes and definitely not just to prove im right.

Also Grasshopper (the fic above first seen in World Walker chapter 8) is mine. Chap 1 of Grasshopper is now posted as part 2 of Null and Void Series. so. yeah. first series I've ever done!!! heck yeah!!!

Edit: fixed Iida's name
(also there are still only three OCs so the tag isn't changing. Hm. Suspicious. Who turned into a cannon character i wonder?)
Soulful Conversations But Too Many At Once

Chapter Notes

we were supposed to visit another fic in this chapter but I got sidetracked by political drama and aesthetic. Take my tiny Victorian Duelist universe instead while I cry over these sassy children. I promise we'll visit another authors fic soon I just gotta force myself to read something other than the same five galaxy brain fics

Spoilers: I'm not warning for up to the Stain arc, which includes the Sports Fest.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

UA has a policy for kids recently in the hospital. He’ll be excused from afternoon practical lessons for the next two days and can go home after lunch. It’s not perfect- most kids tend to stay and observe anyway – but Izuku needs a break.

Besides, there’s one thing he’s not looking forward to. A person, specifically.

Mom drops him off instead of the bus on the second day- she’s worried, he can tell. When she signs a clumsy, ‘I love you,’ Izuku echoes it back and mimes texting. They’d agreed that if he needed an early pickup, she’ll take a break from work.

Izuku waves as she drives off and faces the gates.

He can do this.

He’s there early, but that’s mainly due to Mom’s work. It gives him time to stop by Recovery Girl’s office and get lectured, so he’s right on time.

He’s walking past the faculty office when Shinsou steps out of the sliding door, almost crashing into him. He has a cushion imprint on his face with the UA logo clearly pressed in red lines, matching the pillow on the teacher lounge couch. Izuku looks from the faculty office, where Aizawa is falling asleep at his desk, to Shinsou, and raises an eyebrow. The latter huffs.

“I’m not related to a hero.”

Izuku raises his eyebrow further and signs in small, subtle gestures. “You sure about that?”

“Definitely.” Shinsou continues in the same language as they head back to the classroom. “By the way, Recovery Girl looked pissed today. Wonder what happened.”

Ah. “That was me. I took someone to another… place? Out of here.”

“Dimension,” Shinsou says out loud, signing the same thing. Izuku signs it back, nodding.

“My quirk didn’t like it, and I can’t talk again. Recovery Girl is scary.”

“I swear she could kill All Might if she wanted to. She’d just give him a disappointed stare and he’d combust. You ok?”
Izuku shrugs, watching Shinsou fumble in his bag for a can of Boss Coffee. “I’m good. Wildest thing happened, though.”

Shinsou nods for him to continue, opening the can.

“I got a thread on HeroMap now.”

Shinsou chokes on his drink, and Izuku hits his back until the coughing subsides. Students give them extra room in the hallway. “You’re an official disaster,” He gasps once the worst of it is over. “Holy shit he fucking called it.”

“Who?”

“Mic. Don’t worry about it. How’re you feeling ‘bout class?”

“Nervous,” he signs to Shinsou, ignoring the obvious conversation change. “I don’t like people worrying, and I can’t talk. Also, you think Aizawa knows sign?”

Shinsou nods, gestures subtle as he replies. “He does. You should tell him before class.”

Thant makes sense. They’re in front of the classroom when Shinsou claps his hands softly, regaining Izuku’s attention.

“I’m not the best but I can translate a little bit. Just… let me know.”

“Thanks, Shinsou.” How does he deserve people like this?

Shinsou slides open the door, taking most of the attention, and allowing Izuku to shadow him to the desk. Luckily, everyone seems engrossed with Kaminari’s mission to fit as many pencils in his nose as possible, so he’s able to sit down and pull out his notebook without much trouble.

Across the room, Iida watches him silently, but neither of the address the elephant in the room.

Izuku’s too tired for that. He jots down a quick note and leaves it at Aizawa’s desk. He’s heading back when Iida catches his arm.

“Are you-“ Iida stops, deliberating his next words. “Is there anything I can do to help?”

“I’m fine, Iida. I messed up, and-”

Iida frowns, and Izuku abruptly remembers this isn’t the universe where Iida knows sign. He gives a thumbs up. It doesn’t seem to convince his friend, so Izuku sighs and waves to Shinsou.

“Sorry, could you…”

“I said yes, don’t make me repeat it. One translator, at the ready for all your deep, soulful conversational needs.”

Izuku flashes a grateful smile before signing slowly, allowing Shinsou to translate clearly. “I’m fine. Not talking just happens sometimes, and sometimes it’s part of quirk shock, but this is different. It’s just a nuisance right now. Also, you and I went through hell. Because of me, and I took the option to back out away from both you and your brother.”

Iida draws in a sharp breath, and Izuku forges on, forcing himself to meet his friend’s eyes. He needs to apologize.
“I screwed up. It was wrong. I was too caught up in stopping the future to consider the present, and you both got hurt. I never wanted to hurt anyone and didn’t fully register what Traveling is to other people until after it happened. This doesn’t excuse anything; it just means I need to do better in the future.”

Shinsou stumbles in his translation of the last bit, and Iida looks like he bit his tongue. Izuku words the next bit carefully, keeping out any questions so Shinsou doesn’t have to voice them.

“I’d like to think that if this whole mess hurt out friendship, we can be friends again. I just don’t do well when people worry about me. It’s uncomfortable. So, if I responded badly, I’d like to apologize. I should have texted you when I woke up.” Izuku signs the last word before bowing slowly, deliberately, while holding Iida’s eyes. “I’m sorry.”

“Midoriya, I’ve been worried because I care. Please, after seeing your quirk for what it is… I understand now why you take such risks.” Iida’s started crying; Izuku might be as well.

Shinsou stands awkwardly to the side, looking vaguely confused.

“Anyone who sticks with me though all of that gets to call me by my first name. You too, Shinsou.”

Iida’s really crying now. “Izuku, please call me Tenya.”

“Hitoshi,” Shinsou- no, Hitoshi says. “But I’m not hugging y’all. Also, I am very concerned right now, and if you wouldn’t mind sharing that would really clear this up. Please. No pressure.”

Ah. Izuku’s face must be doing something funny because Iida- no, wait, Tenya laughs. “Do you want to explain, or should I?”

“Too many languages,” Izuku signs, and Hitoshi translates before announcing that he doesn’t care so just please get it over with. Tenya does the honors, running through the past few days events with an expected but not appreciated emphasis on all the risks Izuku took. Hitoshi takes it all with a steadily rising eyebrow.

“Never tell my dad,” he hisses to them at the end. “He’s ready to adopt anyone with a vaguely problematic backstory and I don’t need any brothers.”

“Should I ever meet your father, I’ll be careful to mind my words,” Tenya promises seriously. Behind him, Aizawa enters the classroom, holding the same brand of coffee Hitoshi has been sipping.

Izuku briefly wonders why the universe hates him. He manages to sit down right before a world slams into the back of his head, knocking his consciousness out instantly.

It’s going to look like he’s napping through first period. Izuku struggles to hold on to reality for the sake of his attendance record if nothing else. He cannot get any further on Aizawas bad side-

The streets run red once a year. Some match their trousers and waistcoats to the scenery as they would to the seasons, while those brave enough to wear skirts rarely opt for a stainable color. Izuku hates it. He hates how the bloodshed is normalized, necessary though it may be to determine the best in the county. He hates how friendships and comradery grow tight, save for the one partner duelists can chose as their second. He hates the spectacle, the bets citizens place on his shoulders as though they’re all show horses in a gladiator's ring. But he loves the people.
He will fight, because they asked him to.

The quaint store’s door chimes as Izuku strolls though. He tips his top hat to the waitress good naturedly before making his way to the small backroom. Patrons pay him little attention, though eyes linger on the slim rapier at his hip. The door in back is heavy, reserved for the Plus Ultra Tournament participants.

Beyond it, a dim room contains a single occupant who relaxes by the window. Shoto smiles in the soft way he reserves for Izuku, un gloved hand hesitating over a braille document. The light catches him well, glinting off an embroidered vest and spotless sleeves.


“He’s out visiting Hitoshi.” Izuku sets his cane by the door beside Shoto’s and selects his own reading from the wall. He lights a lamp before settling in across from Shoto. His partner hums contentedly, blank eyes half-closed. Izuku still regrets not running in time to stop the duke from pouring boiling water on his son’s face. Three seconds cost Shoto his vision.

Three seconds too late.

The door slams open, and Bakugo stomsps in. He tosses his hat at the coat stand and collapses into an armchair, sinking into it with minimal grumbling.

“Extras,” he greets with as little venom as can be expected. “Shitty-hair is bedridden. He elected to duel Soysauce again and got stabbed.”

Shoto sniffs. “One would think he’s invulnerable with how he carries on. Really, now.”

Bakugo squints at this, danger playing in the edge of his grin. “Are you implying my partner is anything less than the fourth-highest duelist in this county?”

“Of course, I’m not.” Shoto turns a page, voice betraying nothing. “He’s certainly better than you.”

Izuku shifts uncomfortably. “Gentlemen, please. May we keep a civil tongue during these meetings at least—”

“Let the man speak,” Bakugo says softly. “I won’t deny another their defense, weak as it may be. Most can see Shitty-hair is strong enough to beat any moron with a blade, and I’m no fool.”

“My, I hadn’t noticed,” Shoto remarks breezily. “I’d assumed you lacked the ability to see past the end of your nose. Perhaps those of us who are blessed with sight should start making use of it.”

Bakugo smiles, hand inching toward the dagger in his waistcoat. “Bold words from a man who lost to a flimsy butter knife.”

“If we’re comparing scores, I believe Ochacco defeated you in a similar manner that evening. Were royalty counted amongst the tournament list, neither of us would stand on top. She and Tsu would raze the kingdom.”

“Please,” Izuku interrupts desperately. “I’d much rather talk of the tournament than petty rivalry.”

“Of course, dear.” Shoto turns back to his book primly. “Some of us are able to tell the difference.”

There’s a moment – a blessed, peaceful moment where Izuku thinks Bakugo will let that one go. Shoto closes his eyes and leans back, returning to his reading. Bakugo begins taking off his gloves,
and Izuku buries his nose in his book. It’s tense, but quiet.

Then Bakugo throws a glove at Shoto’s face. Shoto catches it, tilting his head to the side as he checks it is, in fact, the left one. Izuku freezes, praying it’s not.

“I’d assumed we’d agreed to wait until the finals,” Shoto murmurs. “Perhaps breaking your word and Hitoshi’s arm come equally naturally.”

It must be the left glove. Izuku sets his book aside, hoping either colleague will come to their senses. “Shoto, Bakugo, please don’t act the fool.”

Bakugo collects his hat, donning it at a jaunty angle. “Quit interfering, Deku. It’s time we settle this formally, once and for all. Like true participants of the noble sport, unless Shoto is too cowardly to face me on the field.”

“It hardly takes courage to face a mouse,” Shoto announces while standing. He reaches behind his chair, clipping the dual red and silver hilted swords on either side of his sword belt.

Bakugo prepares as well, slipping on his brass knuckles before reaching the door. “How amusing. I thought the same thing upon challenging one just now.”

Izuku comes back to reality with a start. Hitoshi is not-so-subtly kicking his chair, and Aizawa is progressing through roll call quickly. Izuku barely raises his hand in time.

“Midoriya,” Sero hisses under his breath. “Do you ever sleep outside of school?”

Izuku shakes his head hurriedly and reaches into his backpack for his quirk suppressors. He needs to get through today, one way or another.

All Might calls Kirishima and Izuku to a meeting at the end of school. It’s still terrifying to be called to the teachers room at all, and Izuku’s voice may crack when he announces their arrival. Kirishima elbows him from behind, both in fun and as a reminder: It will be fine.

All Might is pouring tea for them both. He’s in his smaller form, but something about his expression is dark, as if the world were on his shoulders.

More than usual, anyway.

Once they’re settled, the hero begins, hands clasped. “I wanted to check on you two. First, Midoriya. Today I heard what happened earlier; I should have been there to help.”

“It’s fine, I kind of umped headfirst into that mistake.”

Kirishima frowns. “Pessimistic, bro.”

Izuku shrugs, and All Might clears his throat. “Yes, well… I should have been there regardless. Kirishima, how are you holding up?”

Izuku winces in sympathy before he has a brilliant idea. The future may come in due time, but why shouldn’t Kirishima get a head start on processing this mess? He sets his alarm for ten seconds. “Actually, I wanted to know if you’d talked about uh… Symbol of Peace stuff—” All Might’s theme song faintly fills the room, and Izuku curses himself for forgetting what tune he’s set. He checks his phone subtly and turns off the timer. “I have to take this. Sorry.”

All Might nods, completely understanding as Izuku excuses himself. “Take your time.”

As Izuku passes, he whispers, “I think he’s ready to know the truth, if you’re ready to share,” and leaves. There’s plenty for All Might to talk about if he’s not ready, plenty of excuses to make. It’s their call.

Izuku may be nudging events along, but he’ll leave the option to wait open.

He sits around the corner in the hallway, playing with his phone as time passes. He’s scrolling through a news feed when steps down the hallway stop in front of Izuku.

“No one told me that. Aizawa can’t.”

Aizawa motions to the floor before slowly settling a couple feet away from Izuku, also facing the empty hallway.

“I’m sorry,” Izuku says before his teacher can start. “I know what I did wrong.”

Aizawa is quiet, and that’s just terrifying. He doesn’t want to disappoint his teacher, not this early in the year. “And what was that?”


“You nearly died,” the teacher says eventually. “Did you know that would happen?”

“I did?” Nobody told me that.

Aizawa takes a large breath before blowing it out gustily. “You were out for 20 hours, kid. I need to know if you predicted it.”

“I didn’t think I’d go unconscious,” Izuku admits. “And once I’d opened the portal it was too late to go back.”

“Do you know what happens if you don’t make it back safely,” Aizawa asks, and Izuku finally finds the edge in Aizawa’s voice. The teacher isn’t mad. He’s frustrated, yes, but Izuku knows not he isn’t mad.

“No?”

“It falls on UA. We have no way to contact you, status or otherwise. There’s no way to tell if you or your passenger are dead or alive, and we can’t even start searching. You vanish off the grid. We can’t help you.”

He hadn’t considered what it would be like to lose someone. Izuku can’t- he can just disappear and look for them from the null. Aizawa can’t.
“Phones work,” Izuku hears himself saying distantly. “Mine does, anyway.”

Aizawa places his head in his hands for a solid five seconds. He looks like a renaissance painting titled *Regret Of The Unwilling Father Figure*. It’s very relatable. Aizawa finally straightens up into a lesser slouch. “In that case, UA will issue you a burner phone for emergencies. It will always be on silent, and whenever anything like this happens, *you will text me*. Understand, problem child?”

Izuku nods immediately, and Aizawa moves on. “Good, it will be added to your costume case, and I expect it to be with you at all times. Now, I have one last question.”

Izuku braces himself for the null to make itself a nuisance. How much did Ingenium tell?

“Did you consider before then that there are other ways to hand off information besides functionally throwing yourself and a pro-hero into the space between dimensions?”

*Oh.*

Izuku keeps forgetting how much Aizawa knows about travel. It’s impressive. “I can’t talk about it,” Izuku says instead, hoping that maybe this time Aizawa will figure out what he means. He knew an informant, right? He must understand.

He doesn’t.

“I see. Ingenium called me from the hospital. He wants you and Iida for internships but will wait for the sports festival like anyone else. Additionally; detention, Midoriya. A written apology to Ingenium, his agency, and the UA faculty. Two pages each.”

Aizawa gets up slowly, tugging on his capture weapon, and leaves. Izuku knows the teacher regularly refuses to do *aisatsu*, but still. It’s abrupt. He’s still staring down the hallway when a door rattles open.

Izuku hurries back to see Kirishima waving goodbye to All Might.

The hero looks nervous.

Kirishima is unreadable.

Izuku may have rushed into this. He bumps Kirishima’s shoulder and starts to the front entrance.

“You good?”

“…Yeah. Can I come work out?”

“Hell yeah.”

After the workout, they end up discussing the merits of the hero ranking system while Hisen putters around in the kitchen. Kirishima keeps trailing off mid thought, and eventually stops talking altogether.

“Alright,” Izuku says after the fifth time it happens. “Spill the tea.”
Kirishima looks distracted. “All Might spilled some major beans, man- Hey. Wait.”

“You know all sorts of future stuff. Is there any... big bad you’ve seen?”

“I already knew about All for One,” Izuku says. “Don’t worry about that. We’ve talked, and he looks like a saggy rotten potato.”

Hisen glances up at the exchange, grief weighing his shoulders down.

Kirishima seems to pick up on it too. “Hey Mr. Hisen, what do you think of All for One?”

Hisen shrugs, his voice barely loud enough to catch. “He’s somebody’s child.”

Izuku doesn’t say anything after that. In all the worlds he’s been to, he’s only ever thought of All for One as the archvillain, the scumbag, the manipulator, and occasionally the brother of One for All. He’s never thought of the man as a former child, let alone a normal, mortal man.

He isn’t sure he wants to.

“All Might told me today,” Kirishima says quietly. “I had no idea.”

“I thought he might. Kinda ditched the meeting so it could happen. Sorry, that was kinda uncool of me.”

Kirishima shakes his head. “I’m glad I know; I just wish it weren’t...”

“Real?”

“Yeah.”

Izuku asked for someone else to have the quirk so it could save their life. He’d skipped right over the dangers that came with it. “I need to apologize to you.”

“You- what?”

“I gave All Might a list, with your name on it. He didn’t put you in danger with this. I did. I’m sorry.”

“Dude, no – what? You didn’t know- “

“I did.”

“Well, I said yes.”

Izuku still disagrees, but he can’t find the words to argue. He settles for a neutral “hm,” and lets the argument settle. Kirishima moves on.

“You have any handy tips? Useful advice?”

Izuku frowns. There’s not much he can say except... “Avoid fighting at Kamino. Stay away from Shigaraki.”

“That is both oddly specific and incredibly vague, thanks.”

“Here for all your prophetic doom advice. By the way, when you start internships there’s gonna be
an old guy playing dead. It’s ketchup, not blood. Good luck.”

Kirishima nods at this sage wisdom. “Super specific. Cool. Not scary at all. I will be wary of old men playing dead with ketchup.”

“He’s gonna put you through hell.”

“That’s manly.”

They have very different definitions of that word.

Izuku is about to reply when he remembers what All Might always asks the next holder to do. It’s treated like a ceremonial start to be a successor. ‘Declare to the world I am here’ has consequences. The villains take more from it than the audience.

“Kirishima? Can I ask a really big favor?”

“Yeah?”

“Don’t make it obvious you have One for All during the Sports Fest.”

Kirishima freezes. “Bro? You know I can’t do that when everyone else is giving it their all.”

“Just… can you make it seem like your natural quirk?” Izuku knows he’s asking the impossible, but this is important.

“I gotta give it plus ultra, dude. All Might asked me to make an impact. I can’t let him down, you know?” Kirishima quiets. “I mean, it’s All Might.”

A leveled city flashes through Izuku’s mind. “This is about saving All Might.”

Kirishima frowns, watching Izuku’s expression. It’s strange, how they aren’t the closest friends in class. Kirishima knows more about Izuku than Shinsou and Uraraka combined, and Izuku is aware of the national secret his classmate has inherited. Weird circumstances make for strange friendships.

In the end, Kirishima shakes his head. “He asked me to show the world who I am. I can’t do that at fifty percent.”

“The villains are going to be watching.”

“Then they’ll know I am here. I’ll make a difference.”

“The Sports Festival doesn’t matter in the long run,” Izuku hisses finally. Maybe his words are harsh, but he knows that Kirishima is most likely to be kidnapped. Izuku refuses to let that happen. He refuses to bury a friend because he didn’t say anything. “It puts a target on your back, and All for One is watching for someone with two quirks.”

“And he’ll see me,” Kirishima says with the same proud, self-sacrificial tone Izuku has heard in all the heroes willing to die. He hears it from All Might in every word and hears it when Taka gets a new mission. Kirishima sounds like Ingenium, serious and willing to throw his life away even though that will just make things worse.

Izuku wants to cry.

“He’ll see you,” he says quietly, “and he’ll hunt you. I can’t watch that happen.” Not again. Izuku’s seen every way it could play out. Never again. Kirishima looks like he wants to respond, so Izuku
adds on the words he didn’t want to say. “He’ll take Kacchan as well. Please. Trust me when I say it’s not worth it.”

The silence is so thick Izuku feels like he’s suffocating. Slowly, Kirishima brings his knees up and wraps is arms around his legs. “… what do you mean?”

Izuku knows without trying that he can’t answer that question.

“Sorry,” he offers instead.

They let the conversation die, but the damage has been done.

Kirishima heads out early, something about one of his moms needing an errand done. Hisen moves to the kitchen and Izuku follows, deciding to do homework until mom comes back from work. It’s nice. Peaceful.

“I never thought of him as anything but the big bad,” Izuku says quietly, rolling his pencil across his notebooks. “All for One, I mean.”

“It’s easier that way,” Hisen allows. He pulls out the ingredients for a crumble while Izuku flips through his math textbook. Graphing makes more sense than area equations, but they’ve moved on from statistics, which is Izuku’s strong suit. The sound of Cloud practicing his guitar floats down through the open windows from upstairs.

Something starts to weigh on Izuku’s mind, until the words come tumbling out. “You knew him?”

“Yes.”

That is both very informative and frustratingly vague. Izuku suddenly understands how Kirishima felt with his random doom prediction.

“Do you think I should…?” he asks eventually. Hisen straightens up, question clear in his eyes. Izuku clarifies, “do you think I should consider him anything more than a villain, after all he’s done?”

Hisen takes a moment with this one, turning the words over. “You may not want to, but somebody raised him. Somebody’s his brother. In the end, that’s the truth. Everybody has some sort of family, even if they don’t know it. When you see people as anything else, it’s easy to forget what they were; to assume all monsters are born evil.”

Izuku doesn’t like that. “I don’t want to see him as human,” he says, struggling to find the words. “Like if I do, I’ll try to save him. But I can’t. And I know I can’t. But I’ll still try.”

“And?” Hisen begins slicing strawberries, juice turning the blade scarlet.

“And I know that whenever a version of me tries to save him, they…. ” Izuku trails off.

“I know.”
Hisen doesn’t push the topic. They work in silence a bit, distant music twisting through the air but leaving it strangely empty.

“So, what do I do? I want to save everyone and get the happy ending, but…”

“You can’t always be happy,” Hisen says, passing over a couple freshly cut strawberries from the bowl. “But you can be brave. And I think that’s the beginning of everything.”

“I don’t want to be brave,” Izuku says as he takes them, staining his fingertips red. “I want it to be over.”

“And it will be, in time. Focus on the present for now, and you’ll get there. Trust your friends, too.”

“I don’t want them to get hurt.”

“That’s where the trust comes in.” Hisen finds the rhubarb and begins chopping. “You’re not a one-man army, Izuku. Focus on what you can do, not what you can’t. Speaking of, your mother has asked me to talk to you about the past few days.”

Ah. “And?”

“Izuku, you know the rest of us can take passengers, right?” Hisen looks up from his work for a moment. “You don’t need to do this alone.”

“… I know. Taka said the same thing last night, but I just… I felt like it had to be me.”

“We’ve talked about this. You don’t need to be the one to save everyone.”

“I haven’t saved them yet, though.”

“Does it have to be you, alone?” Hisen pauses, speaking slowly as if testing out his words as they’re said. “So long as they’re saved, why not take the safest journey to reach your destination?”

Hisen is starting to sound like Izuku’s old therapist. Izuku plays with his pencil, officially ignoring homework. “…Dr. Isha thinks I need therapy.”

“Most people need therapy. Maybe all of us.”

Izuku bites his lip at that. It’s the non-answer he expected, but the words are still frustrating to hear. “It’s not like I can talk about any of it, though. Besides, a lot of people never go and they’re fine, right? I’ve already done my share.”

Hisen smiles into the mixing bowl. “I believe everyone should go at least once in their adult life. Starting early is perfectly fine.”

“I did. Three years ago. I’m better now, and it’s not like Hanabi would remember me – she moved to France, so I wouldn’t expect her to remember a random client. Every other person, it’s like there’s been a gap in understanding. They just don’t know what it’s like to travel, and I can’t tell them the future.”

“If that’s the problem, then why not find Aoyama-san again?”

Izuku stares at Hisen. “What?”

Hiren gestures upstairs with the wooden spoon. “Cloud has the archives. It’s his job to update them.”
It takes a moment longer for that to process. Guitar notes glide through the kitchen sunlight as Izuku’s mind connects possibilities. “You think he knows where she went?”

Hisen nods to the stairs, and Izuku hesitantly abandons his homework.

He follows humming to Cloud’s room. Mountain climbing gear clutters every inch of space, and posters from various worlds cover the walls. In one, Cloud and his twin sister smirk proudly at the camera. Izuku can’t make out the hero duo’s names, though she looks just as reckless. The music changes when Izuku sets foot inside.

“Hey. How you doing/well I’m doing just fine/l i lied, I’m dying inside.” Cloud continues the tune until Izuku joins him on the windowsill. “Beansprout, I’ve got a problem.”

Izuku freezes. Did something happen? Cloud strums another chord, looking off into the distance dramatically.

 “…I’m a trebled man.”

“Please never tell me a joke that bad again.”

Cloud snickers, starting a new, simpler tune. “So, what’s got your sneakers in a snack?”

“What?”

“Your bags in a bunch? Your trees in the trash? Your- “

“I will fight you.”

“I’ll win.” Cloud sets aside his guitar. “Seriously, what’s up.”

“I want to look at the archives.”

He might as well have said he wanted to hear worse puns from how the retired hero lights up. Cloud slips down to his desk chair, and holographic screens power up across the wall. “Whatchya looking for?”

“Hanabi Aoyama – remember, my therapist from three years ago?”

Cloud hums, typing away. Izuku’s grateful he doesn’t question why or joke about it. he just… does what he can.

Izuku waits. The archives are a database containing everything people with travel quirks have learned, everything they’ve done. The names of worlds, whether they’re safe or not. It tracks what the null has allowed, and the basics of what Travelers have done with their lives. Izuku’s section is only a sentence or two long, but some have whole paragraphs.

“… Here we are.” Cloud points to a screen displaying the familiar slim woman posing for the camera. It’s too bright, but it’s not hard to tell Hanabi is related to his classmate Aoyama by the sheer level of fabulous contained in her expression alone. He’d think they were the same person. The file pops up next to her, explaining how she lost her travel quirk years ago.

Cloud writes down the contact information she’d given. “She probably moved back for her son’s enrollment in UA.”

Izuku makes an appointment for next week.
Manuel waits at the train station for his new co-worker. They’re calling in all the big names to track down Stain. Not only that, but the Hero Safety Commission is doing checks to ensure everyone called in doesn’t fit Stain’s MO. The list is short, but overpowered.

“Manuel!”

He knows that voice. “Over here!”

Iida Tensei races up, out of uniform. The hero has somehow shoved a whole months’ worth of belongings into a tiny backpack, which is absolutely legendary for anyone in their career choice. His agency must be shipping gear separately.

Manuel has always respected Ingenium. Few heroes really put effort into building a family out of their interns, but he’s somehow pulled it off with no fewer than 40 interns at any given time. He and Manuel worked on a case last year together, which is likely why they’ve been paired again.

“How’s the agency?” he asks as Ingenium arrives and promptly gets distracted by a very small dog. Manuel ends up waiting until Ingenium has informed both the dog’s owner and the dog itself that it is a ‘quality doggo who deserves all the pats,’ and then given such pats.

“Everyone’s great,” Ingenium announces once he’s thanked the dog owner. “They wanted to get here road trip style. I think Mori just wants to subject the newbies to her playlist.”

“How many now?”

“46 interns, and they keep quoting memes at OneShot. We haven’t had so much as an argument all year!”

Manual snorts at this. As if. Ingenium is just too good for people to argue around. He’s probably solving the issues without even noticing.

“I have my eye on someone for internships after UA’s Sports fest,” Ingenium continues as they begin the walk to Hosu’s city hall. “More importantly, please don’t let-“ he stops, pauses, and clears his throat.

“Iida-san?”

“Why can’t I say it,” the engine hero mutters, before his eyes widen fractionally. “Oh. Shit.”

“Language” Manuel jokes and gets an elbow to the ribs for his sass. “Little early for internships, isn’t it?”

“It’s my little brother’s class.”

“Ha! No doubt he’ll get plenty of offers.”

“That’s actually what I wanted to talk about. He might-“ Again, Ingenium stops. He screws up his face as though tasting a lemon and sighs. “I’m worried about him.”

“You’re a good brother.”
Ingenium hums at this, looking troubled. “Hey, wanna co-sponsor an intern?” he asks abruptly, and Manuel nearly walks into a mailbox.

“What?” Working with any of Ingenium’s interns is like winning the lottery, and he’s offering a co-intern? That’s unheard of. “Why?”

“A kid reached out. He has potential, but I’m starting to think he actively seeks danger.” Ingenium stops walking. “His quirk is a form of prescience.”

“That’s a tricky combination.” Manuel looks around Hosu. It’s his city, one he’s grown to love over the past few years.

A kid with a prescience quirk who actively seeks danger has asked Ingenium about Hosu. There’s only one reason for that specific combination. Manuel has uncanny intuition. It’s kept Hosu safe, and his team alive.

Right now, it tells him he could be standing next to one of Stain’s targets.

Ingenium must know this. The way he’s talked today, as if some things physically couldn’t be said, doesn’t sit well with the lack of chaotic sunshine the hero usually exudes. Something’s wrong. Manuel doesn’t like this situation, and Ingenium’s expression says the same.

“What’s his name?”

“Midoriya Izuku.”

Manuel knows accepting this offer could suspend his hero license. He knows what Ingenium isn’t saying, the help he’s asking for. Something big must be on the line for Ingenium to ask him for this.

Manuel is also a hero who will never turn from an opportunity to save people. Including co-workers. “He sounds like a handful. I’m in.”

Chapter End Notes

hey! I love each and every one of you but unfortunately this week I will probs either not be able to respond to comments, or will need to take an extra week for this next update. If I end up doing both I’ll try to update Grasshopper or toss an interlude into Null and Void. Hopefully that wont need to happen but heads up!! Anyway, I need to go yeet myself into the wilderness

I love reading what yall think!!! every comment gives me the motivation to continue and sparks joy <3
Caffination, Smoothies, and Beetles

Chapter Notes

the world visited today is family, happy meal toys, and other plastic things by cereal whore and I recommend reading it at like. 2am for maximum effect.

the second world mentioned is just me writing a ton after reading a good prompt and also seeing art

spoilers: skip the whole italics section for training camp stuff

triggers: uhhhh oh god is forest fire a trigger? bc if so skip the second world mentions of cults in the first world travel section, also aftermath of related rituals.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The day before the sports festival, Aizawa calls Izuku to the Teachers Office. Old habits have him mentally running through everything he’s done in the past few days, searching for whatever other students or faculty may blame on him. Logically, Izuku knows UA is different from middle school, but these habits come back at the weirdest times.

Izuku slides open the door to see his teacher trying to faceplant onto his desk and Hitoshi passed out on the couch. They’re not even being subtle at this point. How the rest of the school doesn’t realize that they’re related is beyond Izuku.

Aizawa looks up. “I’ll be honest with you, Midoriya. I don’t like being left out of the loop, especially when my students and villains are both in play.”

“Sir?”

“We don’t recommend co-interning. It’s beyond me why Ingenium is offering you this chance. It’s even more strange that Manual has agreed to host the other half of the internship. Care to explain why they’ve offered you a position before the sports festival?”

“It’s a mystery to me too, sir,” Izuku says, fully aware of what probably caused this change. “I’m not about to turn down this opportunity. If one of the top ranked heroes and one of the best in Hosu are both offering to teach me, I’d like to take it.”

Aizawa frowns. “If this is about Stain,” he says, and Izuku’s breath stutters, “I’m telling you right now that intentionally hunting a wanted criminal is grounds for expulsion.”

“I don’t want to hunt Stain,” Izuku says honestly. “I know I’m no match for him, and neither is Iida.” Please, for the love of all that is good, take the hint, Eraserhead.

“I see. Well, keep it in mind. It will also reflect badly on your mentors if anything happens.”

“I know.” Izuku wants to scream. I’ve seen it happen.

Izuku is set to be in Hosu at the time of the attack, co-interning with Tensei and Manual. He’ll be where he’s needed. If he gets expelled, then vigilante work it is. It’s not the best plan, but it’s
something.
He leaves the meeting feeling drained. Someday he’ll get through to Aizawa. Hints don’t work if they fall on deaf ears.

Kirishima finds him during lunch. “Hey, Midoridude! You know the future.”
Izuku practically spits out his miso soup. “Yeah? I am so sorry about earlier-”
“What’s the best UA sports festival speech you ever heard?”
This was not what he was expecting. “You scored first on the exams?”
Uraraka spits soup this time. “What? You never told us this!”
“Apparently I beat Bakubro by three points.”
“Does Blasty know,” Hitoshi coughs after doing his own spit take. There’s a second where everyone freezes and turns to look at Tenya. He’s the last one. They all watch, waiting – hoping – he will join their soup-spitting friendship pack.
“Join us,” Uraraka whispers eerily. “Spit your soup and ascend to a higher plane of friendship.”
“You’re the only one who hasn’t,” Hitoshi adds helpfully. “Besides Kirishima, but he doesn’t have soup and is therefore an outlier who should not be counted.”
Izuku nods. “Accept our loving peer pressure as a token of trust and comradery.”
Tenya gives them a flat stare. “I refuse to desecrate the nutritional lunches prepared by UA’s hard-working staff.”
Izuku doesn’t think Lunch Rush cares how many bowls of soup are spit in the cafeteria, but sure. He can respect Tenya’s boundaries.
Kirishima turns back to the matter at hand. “Don’t make a big deal of it, guys. But anyway, I need to make a speech, but I have no idea where to start. Aizawa Sensei said it doesn’t really matter, and All Might said to give an impression, but I need a starting point.”
“You should focus on what inspires others.” Tenya claps his hands together. “The sports festival is an excellent opportunity to reach a broad range of people.”
“Nah, I’ve had a corporeal form for maybe fifteen years and let me just say,” Hitoshi sets his coffee mug down. “Tell a joke. Or just say Endeavors name, it’s the same thing.”
Okay first, **DAMN. Read that bastard like a book, Hitoshi.** Second, Izuku did not realize Hitoshi shared the flame-man hatred. Maybe it’s Aizawa’s parental influence. Kirishima doesn’t seem to notice, so the conversation turns back to the merits of a spit-take.
Izuku fishes out his world analysis notebook, keeping it angled so the others can’t see. Finding his page on the sports festival, he checks through and… wait. Maybe he’s going about this wrong. Izuku flips back, checks a universal constant, and slams it shut when his mouth starts going numb.
“Sorry, I shouldn’t have looked.” Kirirshima rubs the back of his head. “Didn’t realize that was private.”

Izuku shakes his head, now unable to talk without drooling and mortifying both himself and Tenya’s honor. He rips a corner from another notebook. Uraraka and Tenya discuss the merits of humor in speeches as he scribbles out two words, folds it and passes it over. He taps the table, letting Hitoshi know he needs a translator.

“All the best speeches end with this, so make it count.”

Kirishima takes the paper, reads it, and grins. “Thanks! And uh, I thought about what you said about... not dying.”

His tablemates quiet at this, before Uraraka whispers, ‘oh, mood.’ Then they’re off again, discussing the maximum number of puns reasonable in a speech without getting too cheesy. Hitoshi proclaims himself pun king, having said nothing but memes in English in his life.

Izuku nearly spits his soup a second time, but at the last minute decides to choke on his mouthful instead for the sake of Tenya’s sanity. He inhales burning miso soup but somehow the power of friendship keeps him alive. Hell yeah. Kirishima is busy bouncing on the balls of his feet and does not notice Izuku’s suffering.

“I’ll do my best. No promises, but I can at least try.”

“Thank you,” Izuku signs, crying from either his near-death soup experience of the sacrifice Kirishima is making. He’s delighted when Kirishima offers a fist bump without need of translation.

“Nah, thanks for looking out for me, bro.”

Izuku knows tomorrow won’t contain life or death situations, but sleep eludes him. After an hour of tossing and turning, he rolls off the bed. He unwraps the seals from his arms, feeling the null return to the back of his mind. Tomorrow’s going to be a mess- he might as well get some peace now. Maybe a midnight snack will help.

He tugs on a hat, shoes, and sunglasses. After a second of hesitation, Izuku grabs the backpack holding his usual supplies and stuffs a wallet in. Better safe than sorry.

Izuku plummets past worlds with much the same care as someone browsing Netflix for a new binge watch. He only slows when passing a world that screams fast food. Bright, artificially lit golden arches of a certain corporate nightmare have been woven into the very strings of fate. It must be massive for Izuku to see from so far away.

There’s definitely food there.

Izuku steps out of the Null to find a McDonalds. There’s a draw to it that informs him that, unfortunately, most of what matters in this world goes on inside or around it. Around him are signs of heroes – a billboard for All Might’s latest brand of merchandise gleams in the city, and a discarded newspaper with an interview of UA. Aizawa seems to be teaching the usual class. The problem is, Izuku isn’t drawn to UA. That would be too easy. Of all places, the world seems intent on him walking into this McDonalds.
It looks… unfortunate.

Simply put, the McDonalds looks like it’s been dredged up from Mr. Clean’s nightmares. It resembles some parody of a popular fast food chain pulled out of a health inspectors worst case scenario, and Izuku is certain little to none of the food produced within is fit for human consumption. Passing civilians react to the sight as though every fast food joint on the world has an equal air of lawlessness. In essence, it’s like nearly every McDonalds Izuku’s ever seen in his homeworld.

Some of the other dimensions have nice ones. Izuku doesn’t trust a clean McDonalds. At least if it looks like an abandoned food truck, customers know what they’re getting. Izuku slips on a disposable mask just for added protection.

The door chimes as he steps in to find one employee collapsed on the floor. Izuku takes a second to appreciate that yes, that is Todoroki on the floor feigning death. Somebody has taken the care to strategically place chicken nuggets on paper napkins on six points around him in what’s either a summoning circle or worship.

Izuku doesn’t have to wonder who.

Kaminari, also in a McDonalds uniform, kneels next to Todoroki. “How could you do this to me,” he sobs over possibly-dead Todoroki. “We are so understaffed.”

“Sounds like somebody else’s problem,” Todoroki responds mercilessly without opening his eyes, before waving a hand at someone behind the cash register. “Good luck.”

That redirects Izuku’s attention to the cash register. The employee there is wearing bedazzled pink Barbie sunglasses and takes care to flip off his coworkers in the time it takes Izuku to adjust to the situation at hand. This legend of a McDonald's staff has chosen to also wear a hairnet, long sleeves, mask, and gloves, all while it’s the blistering temperature of too-damn-hot-degrees-Celsius inside. They look like somebody properly overreacting to the biological warfare going on around them who has just been denied the use of a hazmat suit and is making do as best they can.

“What’s your order?” the discount hazmat suit asks.

Izuku knows that voice. It’s uncannily similar to a certain pyromaniac villain that has swallowed rocks and then a shot of strong alcohol to sterilize the damage to his vocal cords. Izuku’s going to be served questionable McDonalds by Dabi the night before the sports festival.

Okay, this is fine.

“Whatever’s edible,” Izuku hears himself saying distantly as he steps on a chicken nugget.

“Not the ice cream; Shoto and Kaminari tried to make it without the machine yesterday and trust me, you do not want to touch that shit with a ten-foot pole. Try a shake.”

“Cool. I’ll get one of those.”

Izuku pays for his food before trying to find a table amid the summoning ritual. Unfortunately, the only way through is right past both participants, and Kaminari evidently believes it’s appropriate customer service to recruit.

“Need a job?” he asks Izuku. “The pay sucks but it’s enough for me to buy useless stuff with, and you get somewhat free food on the side-“

“I cannot emphasize how little you want me on payroll.”
“It’s fine, we don’t even do background checks even though—Midoriya?!” Kaminari leans in way too close for comfort. Izuku does not want to have the alternate-dimension-not-your-friend conversation. He does not have the mental energy to break down in a McDonalds where Hazmat-Disguise-Dabi is making him a smoothie and Todoroki takes a nap on the floor in a summoning circle. Somebody in the back has started humming All Star, and Izuku can physically feel the fabric of reality attempting to turn the song into an American anthem.

“I’m 100% definitely not your classmate,” Izuku lies. It’s not convincing. The null starts to fill his mouth with drool and he hasn’t even gotten his smoothie.

“…Sure.”

“I promise.”

Kaminari does not look convinced. Izuku pulls away the mask covering his mouth and nose. While his face is probably familiar, the now-sharpened teeth and oozing black drool are definitely not.

“C̸ross̷ my heart” he tells Kaminari quietly. Yeah, okay. Not the best decision.

Kaminari blinks drolly and glances to the summoning circle as if reconsidering its effectiveness. In all fairness, it did bring forth a creature of the void. “Tokoyami’s gonna be sad he missed this,” he eventually decrees.

On the floor—which cannot be sanitary, by the way—Todoroki cracks one eye open and takes in the scene. He glances from Izuku, to Not-Dabi, and back again. Izuku sees what’s going to happen seconds before disaster strikes.

“Are you related to Natsuo?” he asks calmly, and Definitely-Not-Dabi-But-Also-Not-Natsuo slams his head down on the counter to groan loudly.

“I’ve never seen this man before in my life,” Izuku promises, forgetting he is a terrible liar. “Not him,” he adds, as if this will help. It doesn’t. “Never in my life. Absolutely not.”

“Interesting,” Shoto mutters, as though this were the socially correct thing to do before resuming what looks like a summoning ritual. This McDonalds is suffering incarnate. Izuku has never felt such empathy and pity as he does for McDonalds-Dabi. The villain looks like he survives on very little besides a coffee and a bread crumb every day. He has the anatomy of a pretzel stick.

A very threatening pretzel stick.

Not-Dabi-But-Definitely-Natsuo takes this opportunity to stride up to Izuku’s table and slam a smoothie down, effectively demonstrating what he’d like to do to Izuku’s skull. Izuku grabs the smoothie before any interrogation starts. He ducks under Not-Dabi’s arm and hops out of reach partially because he values his life, but also because this Dabi smells like burnt chicken and acidic smoke. Yeesh. Get some soap, dude.

Izuku practically sprints to the door, throws it open, and drops into the null.

He’s never going back.

Never.

The smoothie is bartered off at a familiar world for honey-dipped beetles. Finally, food he can trust.
The sports festival morning, Mom sees him off. “Don’t get hurt,” she tells him. “I know today is a big day but it’s a festival, Izuku. It’s okay to have some fun.”

“I’ll try.”

Izuku has mixed feelings about today. One hand, everyone will be trying their best to win, while Izuku just wants a fight with Todoroki and for Ingenium to be moderately uninjured. It’s going to be interesting with such different priorities. Adding in the fact that he’s seen the same sports festival a hundred times over, Izuku just… doesn’t care. It can be cancelled, and so long as he gets to have his fiery, soulful friendship-building match, that’s fine.

Ingenium’s posting in Hosu weighs on his mind like a sack of bricks. He’s set a timer for when the attack happens. Izuku will keep an eye on Tenya - but he can multitask. No way is he leaving today up to fate. He has two goals for today: stop Stain from being excessively stabby and achieve level one friendship with Todoroki. Beyond that, Izuku’s tempted to skip the whole thing.

UA’s stadium is on a separate part of the campus, either to mess with the press, villains, or both. Izuku opts to portal in at the entrance.

He steps out of the Null only to find something vaguely concerning.

Hitoshi is crouched by the vending machine, surrounded by empty cans of black coffee and Red Bull. He cracks the lid of another as Izuku approaches.

“Uh… Morning? That’s a lot of caffeine.”

Hitoshi stares directly into Izuku’s eyes as he pours the last Red Bull into his water bottle. “I will survive this on nothing but spite, fury, and coffee.”

If the universe has a voice, this is a sign that he really should turn around and go home right now.

There’s a sharp inhale behind them. Iida is staring down at the coffee cans as if each one has cost him a year off his life. Izuku and Hitoshi watch as the class president quietly covers his face with both hands, breaths out, and speaks, his voice trembling.

“Hitoshi, do you intend to drink all of… this?”

“Livin’ the dream.” Hitoshi caps his water bottle, shakes it, and proceeds to take a long sip. Tenya looks like he may faint.

“This may hurt your performance today! Even worse, it may impact your health negatively in the future. Your heart- “

“Already broken.”

“Oof.” Izuku is starting to think that today will be a wild ride. He digs out his packet of honey-dipped beetles and starts munching in solidarity of bad fuel choices.

“As class president, I support your dreams, but… Hitoshi, you’re coming with me. We’re talking to Aizawa Sensei about this.” As Tenya bends to pick up the cans, Hitoshi gently taps his hand away.

“My mess, prez. My job.” Cans safely in the trash, Tenya practically drags Hitoshi up to the
teacher’s viewing booth. Izuku follows, if only to keep Hitoshi from murdering either himself or Tenya.

Tenya pushes open the door, announcing his jikoshoukai with all the righteous fury of a concerned friend. “Iida Tenya, 1A Class president asking for Aizawa Sensei!”

Aizawa motions them back out to the hallway, taking his time. The teacher’s mug has a messy drawing of a cockatoo signed with an S and H, but his hand covers it too fast for Izuku to really see.

Hitoshi takes another sip from his water bottle, which Tenya promptly confiscates.

“Well?” Aizawa takes the offered bottle.

“Sensei! I found Hitoshi outside the stadium mixing multiple caffeinated beverages. Please speak to him about his health!”

Aizawa’s eyebrows only continue to rise.

Izuku feels the need to chip in. “There were around twenty cans, to be fair.”

“This is why I don’t socialize,” Hitoshi mutters. “It’s only Red Bull and Boss Coffee.”

Aizawa uncaps the bottle and smells it, before pouring some in his own mug. He rolls the mixture around like a wine taster, then does the unimaginable. Tenya goes stock still as Eraserhead sips the ungodly mix experimentally. He nods with all the certainty of a gourmet chef before handing back the bottle.

Izuku swears Tenya might actually collapse.

“Don’t add any more unless it’s black tea for the taste. Or sprite. Carbonation will help.” Aizawa takes another sip and Tenya starts shaking from the indignity of it all. “Let me know if he adds Monster or 5Hour Energy.”

The staff door slides shut with all the finality of a judge’s gavel. The silence of the hallway seems to stretch on and on forever until Hitoshi breaks it, taking a loud, long, satisfied slurp from his bottle. Tenya draws himself up, face impossible to read.

“Hitoshi, he grits out, and Izuku feels pity from the very bottom of his soul for Tenya. “Please. This is above the recommended limits of caffeine.”

“My birth dad’s quirk limited the effects, and I got the same genetics. It’s fine, Tenya.”

Tenya nods shortly and strides away in the direction of the changing rooms.

Izuku feels a pulse in the back of his mind. That’s not good. There’s a world begging to be seen and he’s standing up. Beside him, Hitoshi hasn’t noticed anything, so Izuku starts down the hall quickly. If he can just find somewhere to sit-

“You’re in a hurry.” Hitoshi glances at Izuku’s face as he matches his friend’s strides. “The festival won’t start for another hour, you know.”

Izuku grits his teeth, struggling to stay in the Here and now. “I gotta find somewhere to sit.”

“Somewhere to-“ Hitoshi blocks his path. “You look pale.”

The door in his mind is gonna burst any second now. Izuku can’t see color. “Hitoshi, can I trust
“Can I trust you?” Keeping the door shut is agony. Izuku can feel the pain radiating around his head and down his back.

“Yes.” Hitoshi nods quickly. “Just… please sit down.”

Izuku forces out the words as fast as he can. “Other dimensions can take my senses. People used to take advantage of it for stupid stuff so I don’t like them to know that I-“

The mental door slams open, and Izuku is faintly aware of his body crumpling to the floor before he loses all feeling.

“I can’t trust them.” Deku’s voice is a high-pitched giggle as he watches the forest burn blue. “But angels... they can be corrupted. It’s so much fun to see their feathers turn black.”

He moseys through the forest taking his sweet time. When the trees crackle and fall, Deku spins out of the way. It becomes a dance of sorts, embers lighting the way as his vest glows from twisting flames.

The fire is cool to his touch, and Deku cups a burning branch like a flower, inhaling the sweet, choking smoke. He giggles, lungs free of soot, voice smooth as ever.

Deku freezes when he hears a gasp. He tugs one of his still-white rolled-up sleeves back past his elbow and steps rhythmically. It’s a waltz now, until he passes by a particular tree, eyes closed.

When he reaches out for a hand, he finds it, dragging the student out into the steps without looking.

Two steps back, the groan of falling timber, and twirl, two steps right.

Deku opens his eyes, half lidded, to a student from the class. He doesn’t know any of their names beyond the Todoroki brat and Kacchan, but this student is obviously terrified. Their eyes are wide, blond hair stuck with twigs.

Deku smirks, blue light dancing across his lips. “You know your steps.” They sweep away from a burning bush, and the student says something indistinct. It’s in French. Classy.

Deku can appreciate the aesthetic.

“Well, angel. Are you so sure you’re in the right place?”

The student makes a choking sound, terrified. Maybe they can’t speak, what with the smoke. He doesn’t really care.

“That’s the thing about heroes, after all. Nobody talks about what they see. Only ever what they do.” Deku leans forward, dipping the student back gracefully. “I think the former is much, much more interesting, don’t you?”

The student’s eyes widen and Deku is vaguely aware of a swelling light. A second later the light explodes upwards in a laser, tearing open the student’s shirt.

Deku moves to the side just enough, though its more for outfit than anything else. These clothes are
Deku looks up, admiring the light as it shoots into the smoke-filled sky. The beam clips his cheek, not that it matters.

“*My, my, my,*” he whispers. “*What wings you have, dear one.*”

As the laser shrinks and stops, Deku watches the student blink in shock. It’s a slow reaction. There’s a haze of gas, now that he thinks of it.

“*Que-* it didn’t-“

Gently, Deku lowers the student to the burning ground as if tucking in a child at bedtime. There are few flames here, but they will come in time, as will all things. Embers glitter, illuminating the student’s hair like a halo.

“*Of course, your quirk didn’t work on me, angel.*” Deku breathes in the hazy gas as he stands, his mind clear as the student’s eyes slide shut. “*None of them ever do.*”

He steps daintily out of the clearing, dancing amid the flames. Clever of the student to send a flare for help. Deku won’t kill until he meets Kacchan.

*The forest twists and crackles to the sound of his laughter.*

Izuku gasps for breath. He’s surrounded by white halls, in a hallway. He can’t breathe, *where’s the smoke, where’s the villains?* Desperately he grabs his shirt, ready to find blue flames and chilled laughter. He can still feel lukewarm embers under his feet.

“*Hey- Izuku.*” A hand descends on his shoulder and Izuku flinches away. Hitoshi blinks, then takes his hand back, leaning against the wall. “You’re safe.”

Izuku blinks around at the hallway. They’re both sitting on the floor. Beyond Hitoshi, Aizawa Sensei watches them both.

“Problem child. You never mentioned this.”

Izuku runs his hands over the floor. It’s cool and slightly rough to the touch. Grounding.

“It’s not something I like people to know,” he says, just loud enough.

“Not gonna lie. That was a little scary.” Hitoshi flips the lid to his drink on and off, the snapping noise echoing through the empty hall. He looks pale, despite the steady voice. “You said other dimensions take things?”

“My sight, hearing… that kinda stuff.” Izuku runs his hands over the floor tile, keeping his head down. He won’t have to face the world if he doesn’t acknowledge it. “I can’t do anything right.”

“You know that’s not true,” Aizawa sighs. “Could you explain? I need to know in order to help.”

Izuku knows he’s right. He just doesn’t want to talk about this. “I can’t- I’m only physically Here when it happens. There are a lot of different versions of me- in different worl- um. Dimensions-“

*So many,* he thinks. Too many are villains.
“- and sometimes, it’s like I’m there. Watching through their eyes. Even if I don’t want to be.”

“Hitoshi said you seemed prepared for it.”

Izuku nods. He should have found somewhere quiet, somewhere nobody would see. Now middle school would happen all over again. “Don’t tell Kacchan.”

Aizawa raises one eyebrow. “That’s what you’re concerned about?”

Izuku is concerned about a lot of things, all the time. The look he gives back must communicate some of this because Hitoshi snorts a little bit.

“C’mon. Sensei.” Hitoshi says the word sarcastically, but Aizawa doesn’t blink. “I wouldn’t want everyone knowing if it were me.”

Aizawa sighs and rubs his eyes. “Fine. You have one month to tell the class.”

“You mean I’m still a student?” He’s a liability. He can’t even save himself.

Aizawa frowns. “You’ve made it this far without training. We’ll be meeting after school to work on this as well.” The teacher pushes away from the wall, heading down the hallway before Izuku can respond. “Good luck to both of you today.”

“Thanks,” Izuku says once the teacher disappears down the hallway. Hitoshi takes another swig of his hell drink.

“I only drank coffee and said bad words. Save gratitude for someone else.”

So. Todoroki always approaches someone and declares war. It might be Kacchan. Occasionally it’s Izuku but he hasn’t done anything special in this timeline. It’ll probably be Kirishima.

Izuku wants to laugh when Todoroki strides up to him in the locker room.

“Quirk-wise, I think I’m stronger than you,” he begins, and Izuku can’t hold it back anymore. He starts chuckling, then just all-out cackles. Conversation around them stops as Todoroki tries to intimidate or bond with Izuku, if that’s what this is. Hitoshi looks up in mild interest.

“I know,” Izuku manages. “I thought you’d be talking to Kirishima, this is- oh, boy.” He wipes his eyes and struggles to keep the chuckles back.

“You’re laughing.”

“Hell yeah, I am. Listen, Todoroki. I don’t give half a shit about that metal.”

Someone gasps, scandalized, but Izuku doesn’t really care. It never matters who wins, anyway. “I only care about missing one specific match in the finals and getting to face you in the third round. After that, I literally could not care less. If I’m in the final match, I’ll be dropping out unless it’s against you. So, don’t worry about declaring rivalry or whatever- just make sure to meet me in the finals.”

“Same thing. I’ll be waiting, so make sure to get there. I see you as a threat,” Todoroki adds as though trying to decipher Izuku’s laughter into something else. “But I also have my suspicions as to
your identity.”

Izuku collects his gym jacket and stands. “Cool. Just don’t forget your own.” He leans closer, away from listening ears as he passes. “I’m here to fight you, and only you, Todoroki. I don’t care about your father unless he’s being dumped in piranha-infested water.”

Izuku leaves. He’ll wait for the class by the field, and if Todoroki wants to talk? Then they’ll talk.

“Little harsh, I gotta admit.” Hitoshi follows, slight swagger to his walk as he sips from the death thermos. “Got a problem with Todoroki?”

“Not him.”

Hitoshi looks up into the stands, crease forming between his eyebrows. Endeavor’s flames are visible from here. “Huh. You butting into his problems, too?”

Izuku shrugs, trying not to let his emotions bleed through.

“You suck at lying,” Hitoshi says as he takes a sip. “Just don’t overload your quirk again.”

“I won’t!”

“Bet you will at least three times by the end of today.”

Well. That’s just unfair.

Chapter End Notes

hitoshi cannot be killed by coffee and I am not accepting criticism, thx

also, yall are my witnesses that my OC, Cloud, the idiot whose name is self explanatory, existed prior to vigilantes chapter 60 or whatever. I'm crying. my own character decided to not only have a resemblance to a foreshadowing panel, he decided to be a full-on cannon character and flip off both fate and his maker. this is fine

Also!! shoutout to A fake slug on discord, thanks so much for looking over the chaos scene!!!
these darn kids with their coffee n stuff. Please don't mimic hitoshi's life choices, I crunched some numbers and he should have gone to the hospital before this chapter started.

Spoilers: none??

triggers: mentions of guns. They're sci-fi lasers in Kaminari's case and a paintball gun for Izuku. I'm never giving my characters guns.

Todoroki does not find him for a soulful discussion. It’s rude, but not at the forefront of Izuku’s noxious cocktail of feelings.

There are many emotions in this chilis tonight. He’s swinging between indifference, spite, and the usual desperation to save people that plagues him constantly at hyper speed. His therapist says this is unhealthy and a product of trauma, but Hanabi also thinks that bedazzled beanbags are a good idea, so he’s allowed to have doubts.

It all manifests in him stomping out into the cheering stadium like a sleep-deprived Kacchan, and most of his classmates have the sense to steer clear. Key word being most. Uraraka fears neither deity nor man, Hitoshi doesn’t care about meeting a mortal end, and Tenya has lost all respect for the void.

He has the best friends.

Kirishima’s face is impossible to read as Midnight waves him up the podium for the speech. Izuku doesn’t have to look hard to see Kirishima’s fists clenched until they turn white.

“Hello.” The mic screeches, and Kirishima reels back a bit. He recovers, though Izuku notices the way his hands tremble against his notecard. “I know there’s a lot of people watching this, I know that we’re all in different situations, and we’re all facing something different.”

It’s a good start. Izuku’s heard a lot of speeches, and this is… surprisingly average.

“That’s why I’d like everyone to take a moment and look around. Even if you’re at home, there are so many people with fantastic dreams and quirks.” Kirishima pauses, searching the crowd on his right. “Or maybe no quirks at all, but that doesn’t define you. We’re all striving to be our best, so let’s work for that destination together. Our generation has a lot of goals, a lot of dreams... so watch out, because we’re next.”

Izuku remembers his page on Kamino and smiles with the cheering crowd. He won’t let it happen, but if it does, Kirishima really is All Might’s successor now. There’s no turning back for any of them.

Kirishima walks offstage to a deafening crowd. Behind him, Midnight claps approvingly and steps up. “Alright! Usually we select these events at random, but our illustrious principal has decided to
switch things up.”

Aaaand there goes his good mood. *It’s too early for this bullshit. Nezdu, what are you planning?*

They’re directed to a tunnel- one that’s eerily familiar from past sports festivals. Hopefully this isn’t what he thinks it is. They’re told to wait for instructions, and sure enough everyone quiets as Present Mic’s voice booms out.

“Welcome to the first event! I bet you all have done obstacle races before. Each student is required to face each obstacle.”

Oh, that’s not subtle at all. What a way to make him feel special. Izuku wants to perish. Hitoshi elbows him before pulling out a tiny reusable waterbottle and downing the entire contents. Izuku can see the caffeine activate when Hitoshi’s pupils dilate to twice their size.

“How many 5hour energy bottles are in there?” he whispers while Mic yells about the ingenuity of the support class. Hitoshi holds up three fingers, hesitates, then holds up four. Izuku tucks away this knowledge for later.

“-but students must cross the finish line! But there’s a catch.”

“Oh course there’s a catch,” Izuku mutters, and ducks when he’s hushed by a kid from Gen Ed.

“Oh shut up, 1A.”

Hitoshi flips the kid off.

“Each student may only use their quirk twice, or they’ll be disqualified! Good luck!”

The buzzer rings, and Izuku drops into the null.

He’s going to hate today. The Sports Festival is monotonous, and Izuku has lived through it too many times. He’s going to mess with fate as much as he can just to keep from being bored.

Izuku turns to the problem at hand. He has to face each obstacle. This is Nezdu’s doing, though Izuku still isn’t sure why beyond wanting to give the companies a show. Maybe it’s spite. It’s probably spite.

Izuku would do anything out of spite at this point in the day, and it’s barely begun.

*Wait, that’s not it.* Nezdu is smart enough to get more than just spite out of something this big.

Izuku drifts in the nulls silence, holding onto his world with one hand. UA faced plenty of backlash after USJ, and Nezdu needs to make up for that rep by showing a promising first-year class. Unfortunately, that includes Izuku. Nobody would cut funding if UA is filled with golden eggs. Nezdu wants a show, so he’s set up a course that puts the very class targeted at an advantage - they know not to hesitate.

“So, you want a show?” Izuku pieces through the images on his world until he finds one he wants. “Fine. I’ll give you a show.”

He has an internship offer already. Heck, he could probably finish last and be all right. The problem is, he’s very tired of chasing after fate. He’s seen today a million times and know that nothing matters besides what the villains learn, those two words in the speech, and his dramatic match with Todoroki.
It’s time to be petty. If that means showing off and making the Null hate him, then so be it.

*Just like the entrance exams,* Izuku thinks as he opens a massive portal directly under one of the zero pointers. *But this time, let’s see if it can be done with style.*

He lets gravity do the rest. The robot plummets into the null immediately. Izuku grabs part of its plating as the portal closes. For a second he drifts, one hand on a giant robot, the other gripping the fabric of reality. It’s weird, to float in the void with a giant robot. Still, it’s not the strangest thing he’s done.

Izuku opens a second portal ahead of the faster students. He shoves the robot through to start its momentum, and jumps back into reality once the last of it has left the null. The stadium shakes and the crowd cheers as the robot crashes to the ground. It’s fallen across the path like a barricade. Hopefully it will slow the encroaching wave of students down.

Izuku hears the crackle of ice and ducks as Todoroki skates overhead, freezing the downed robot as he goes and heightening the barrier. Tenya speeds after him before the ice is up, fast even without his quirk.

“All Midoriya, using his quirk Teleport to set up an additional obstacle! He’s quickly overtaken by Todoroki using his quirk Half-Hot-Half-Cold, who’s pursued by Iida!”

All Might or Aizawa must have talked to Mic about re-naming Izuku’s quirk. The villains won’t find him yet.

Izuku runs after his classmates. He technically never left the Null during that stunt, so from the start to the robot probably counts as one use. Now to just follow the steps other timelines take. The piece of scrap metal is waiting abandoned for Izuku to collect it, but he leaves it behind. He’s seen how that plays out. He doesn’t want first place.

Villains will see today.

*Are you watching, All for One? It’s only teleportation, nothing you’d want. I’m just a student, same as the rest. I don’t know you; don’t know what you’ve done. I haven’t talked to you or your brother, I don’t know what One for All is.*

*I don’t know you look like moldy potato chips left out in the sun and then rehydrated.*

Izuku’s grip nearly slips during the next obstacle, bring his attention back. Climbing is better than Todoroki’s choice to swing across (which is absolutely brutal and not sportsmanlike at all, as Tenya reminds them). It’s not like this hasn’t happened before loads of times. Life goes on. The world turns.

Izuku gets to the next obstacle just as Kacchan blasts past, avoiding mines with carefully timed explosions. *Great. Explosives. Wow, I’ve never felt an explosion before, how will I ever survive?*

Izuku gets through the field about halfway before he explodes a mine and drops into the null on instinct.

*It had been reflex. An accident.*

He doesn’t want first place. He hasn’t earned it, not like the others have. When Izuku looks through into his world, desperation, hope, and sheer level of *want* on his competitors faces makes Izuku feel sick. This is *wrong.*
They want first more that he does, but he doesn’t have an excuse not to take it. He needs a good reason not to portal in right by the finish line. Aizawa might expel him for not going Plus Ultra.

Then again, if the villains are watching him, they won’t watch Kirishima so closely. The world needs a hero. It doesn’t have to be Izuku. If he gets kidnapped, that means Kirishima is less likely to be. Ideally nobody would, but Izuku knows it’s a pipe dream to assume Shigaraki would keep away from the class. It’s him or Kirishima. That’s not even a choice.

Izuku steps back into his reality. The next step crosses a finish line.

The cheers feel empty. Hollow. The system was rigged from the start, and Izuku didn’t earn any of it. He’s not even out of breath. When other students break through- Todoroki, then Kacchan, Tsu, Tenya, Hitoshi- Izuku congratulates his friends, shakes off the glares, and drops into the null.

Up in a special viewing box, Nezdu takes a sip of his tea and laughs.

Izuku reappears just before Midnight explains the second event. Hitoshi has a re-filled mini water bottle that Tenya confiscates, but not much seems to have happened. The rules are almost always the same, so Izuku doesn’t bother paying attention. He ends up signing ‘We’re all doomed’ at a nearby camera and watching Uraraka nearly vibrate out of her skin at the chance to let loose.

“Might wanna pay attention,” Hitoshi tells him once they’re set loose to form mini armies and create drama by attacking each other for a piece of fabric. There’s a crowd gathering around them.

“Wow. I never expected this.” Izuku’s sarcastic voice rings out as the people on either side of him eye his one-million-point headband. “Never saw it coming.”

Hitoshi shrugs. “That’s future vision for you. Wanna be a team?”

“I understand if you don’t- what? Why? Wait, you just- you just asked me-

“Congratulations to level seven friendship, where I ask questions. Now let’s go kick ass.”

That’s a whole lot of friendship building in two seconds. Izuku almost feels cheated. “Dude-“

“Time’s a-wastin’. Now who’s next?” It is weird to hear Hitoshi ask questions so casually.

“Everyone’s out for my blood.” Izuku gestures around them, where most teams are already formed. “We’re screwed.”

“You’re going to the finals. So am I. Who else, Oh Great Oracle of Doom?” He sounds like a dollar store Tokoyami. Izuku wants to cry.

You know what? Sure. Fine. Be that way, fate. This was not how he was expecting to get teammates, but it might as well happen. Now who has he never seen himself work with? Izuku catches sight of a certain classmate.

Oh. Excellent.

This is a terrible idea, but Izuku’s mission is to not get bored during this event. Besides, now either
way they can beat the shit out of each other. If all goes well, they’ll do it in the finals. If not, then Izuku will just have to fend off his overpowered and angry classmate in Hosu’s streets or something. It’ll be like a discount Sasuke character arc. Both choices are good options. Dramatic, too.

Izuku drags Hitoshi over to where their target is standing beside Tenya, Yaomomo, and Kaminari.

“Todoroki!”

Hitoshi breaks down laughing as Todoroki stares at them with absolutely no emotion. “I already have a team.”

“Yes, but consider: I hate Endeavor with a burning passion. You hate him with roughly equal freezing passion. I currently hate Nezdu and fate as well. Teaming up will piss off all three to varying degrees, and I believe you have somewhat similar life goals.” Izuku holds out his hand and waits, smiling just a bit too wide. “Join my team of eldritch horrors.”

Todoroki considers this, then turns to his old team. “Good luck without me.”

Ouch.

Izuku nods to Tenya. “See you in the final round.”

Hitoshi is still nearly dying with laughter. Izuku confiscates his mini caffeine flask until they have a full team for the sake of everyone’s mental health.

“Now, our last member will find us. Todoroki, you be the rider. We’ll support you.”

Todoroki looks like he’s regretting his decision already. “It has to be you. Higher point values-”

“No I don’t. Here-” Izuku turns just as Hatsume bursts from the crowd, crosshair eyes trained on him like a hawk on its prey. “Hatsume! Do me a favor!”

“If you let me on your team, it’s a deal!”

God, he loves how Hatsume never changes. Izuku points out Nezdu’s viewing box. “If I’m wrong, Nezdu is going to tell us somehow. Has he?”

“Nope!”

Todoroki rolls his eyes with more emotion than he’s shown in the past month combined. It’s a big step in his character development. “That proves nothing.”

“Oh! He’s doing something!” Hatsume waves up at the miniscule box, her eyes trained on something inside. “He’s got a note card that says ‘give me a show’ on it!”

That’s not terrifying at all. Izuku smiles as though he knows what’s going on. “See? I take front because I’ve never taken front and it will piss fate off. Hitoshi takes left rear because he’s ambidextrous, Hatsume is on right so she has right-hand advantage when aiming any tech, Todoroki is rider. We call the shots together, or Hitoshi brainwashes us both.” Izuku stares down Todoroki, knowing the type to do a group project alone when he sees them. ”Sound good?”

Todoroki nods slowly, and Hitoshi whistles. “Savage. Okay, how are we sticking it to the big leagues?”

“Dunno. Hatsume, what babies do you have?”
Todoroki and Hitoshi startle at this, but Hatsume doesn’t question how he knows about her inventions. Instead, she laughs like the overcaffeinated mechanic she is, rattling off a long list of babies. Izuku spots three he likes. Hitoshi asks for one. Todoroki tries to go without until Hatsume throws one into his arms and tells him to deal with it. Then she loads up with all the others and pickpockets Hitoshi’s caffeine flask from Izuku.

This will be interesting.

The round starts, and Izuku thinks of as many futures as he can. He thinks about telling everyone around him and lets the null fill his throat.

He’s confident about getting into the final round, and even if not, the failure will still mess with fate, so that’s cool. Todoroki is on his team, and they can have a big dramatic showdown during training if all else fails. They’ll be better friends either way. Still, the others want to win, so Izuku will give it his all too. That means buying them as much time at the start as he can, whether through intimidation or otherwise.

So when the buzzer sounds, Izuku inhales deeply, pauses, and shrieks. He thinks of every secret, every frustration at not being heard, and lets a wordless yell rip from his throat with the void’s hollow edge rating through it. Todoroki startles on his shoulders at the unholy noise. Hatsume just cackles.

“God, that’s a mood,” Hitoshi mutters. The teams starting towards them stumble in surprise as the white noise washes over them like nails on a chalkboard, giving Todoroki enough time to sweep his arm and summon massive amounts of ice in a barrier. Hatsume sprays a quick-drying reinforcement foam on the ice, further strengthening their defenses.

Hitoshi takes the voice changer she offers, tying it around his face now that the teams can’t see, and Todoroki raises them up on a platform of ice.

Izuku checks his paintball gun. Hatsume’s loaded it with something a little extra special, and he is so ready to live his sniper dreams. Once, he’d found a cowboy world and gotten the Kaminari there to teach him how to fire a laser gun. He’d learned the basics before Taka had shown up and enforced her ‘no guns’ policy.

Izuku’s probably a rusty shot, but it’ll do.

There’s a distant yell, before Tetsutetsu breaks through first. Izuku scores a perfect shot on the fourth try, and pink foam explodes around the team, sealing them into the gap. They’ll be stuck, but it looks like they’re far enough in to easily defend from other teams.

Kurorio slips through the shadows of his team, successfully breaking off. Izuku fires two more shots, but foam doesn’t do anything against a shadow. Kurorio reaches the ice and vanishes.

“Ambush incoming,” Izuku mutters, scanning for movement. “Hitoshi?” Kurorio can enter and hide in any shadow he touches. He can easily nick their headband and rejoin his team before the final bell, all with barely any seconds in daylight.

“Hell yeah.” Hitoshi coughs lightly before- “Guess what I heard that Mushroom-girl say about Tokoyami-”
Darkness swells at Hatsume’s feet, and Kurorio attacks in a blur. He makes the mistake of responding. “She didn’t-”

“Got him.”

Hatsume pulls Kurorio fully out of the shadows and places what’s essentially a foam bomb in his hands. “Trap is set and activated!”

“Cool.” Hitoshi snickers at his absolutely terrible word choice before instructing Kurorio to place the bomb in the hands of his team lead. It’s not necessarily cruel - the team has enough points that if they stay away from the smaller groups, entering the final round would be a breeze.

Todoroki sniffs at the sudden screaming, explosion, and then muffled yells within his ice. “We should be fighting the other teams.”

“We’re doing what we need to for the third round,” Izuku corrects. “Besides, we should be worried about Momo’s team. I don’t think she’ll come after us, but if she does, we’re doomed.”

“How?” Hitoshi asks. “Gimme the deets.”

“I don’t know.” Izuku scans the top of the ice wall. “She’s too smart, is the problem.”

“Then take her down.” Hatsume passes over a couple foam grenades. “Your quirk is good for ambush and surveillance, right? Use these babies, Purple and I can carry Freezer Boy…”

Izuku steps out of the null. The ice on top of Todoroki’s barrier is spiked, so he wedges himself between two spires carefully. From this point, it’s easy to keep track of all sides without making himself that much of a target. It’s even easier to toss a grenade down whenever a team gets too interested. Three foam explosions later, Izuku has established himself as a threat.

Momo attacks first.

Of course, she would. Izuku realizes his mistake the moment he catches sight of her team - Uraraka, Tenya, and Tokoyami. High-mobility, close and long range. She’s managed to gather a well-balanced team and is staying just in the points bracket. Nobody is targeting her because of this, and by focusing on Izuku and Todoroki, she can stay under the radar. She’s even replaced her main headband with one for 100 points. Unless anyone catches on, she’s pretty much passed already.

This is the second time he’s underestimated Momo. There won’t be a third.

Izuku pulls out his sniper paintball gun, and tries to remember the lessons from Scrappy Zappy, lighting sniper of the wild west. The first shot goes wide, but it gains their attention.

Technically he’s here as a distraction, but Izuku doesn’t have a problem with causing maximum trouble for the other teams. The second shot hits a shield Momo creates. Pink foam goes flying, and the third shot misses entirely.

Izuku needs to get some paintball practice in. Maybe he can get All Might to incorporate it in a lesson.
He fires again, and while the foam misses Momo’s team entirely, it hits Kacchan’s team. One punch from Kirishima breaks it to pieces. Izuku is doomed. His whole team is doomed. He got Kacchan’s attention, and with Momo and Uraraka that’s the three scariest people in their class actively trying to break through-

Kacchan doesn't attack. He yells something, holds up a hand UA’s programming will definitely blur out, and targets a different team.

Izuku blinks, then goes back to warding off Momo’s team. He can tell she doesn't particularly want the points - both their teams have enough to pass - but the effort provides a distraction.

It’s a complicated truce, but Izuku’s game. Besides, they’re trying to chip the ice wall decor and that’s just rude.

Katsuki is pissed.

This isn’t new. He’s always pissed off. Usually, it’s because of a certain too-smiley idiot who knows too damn much to be normal. Nobody else is mad about it.

The problem is, Katsuki’s supposed to be the star of the show. He’s supposed to get all the attention from the big names and claw his way to first place with the kind of passion people assume to be effortless. Everyone will look at him and say “Bakugo is the best, the strongest, the most powerful. There’s no way he’ll ever lose.”

Except he did lose.

Deku beat him.

This stings. It twists something uncomfortable and nasty in Katsuki’s stomach because Deku shouldn’t even be within spitting distance of UA after he dragged Four-Eyes into that cold dark place during training. The nerd can’t save people.

He has a villains quirk. He can’t be a hero.

Katsuki isn’t stupid. He knows Deku doesn’t want to hurt anyone, but at the same time intentions don’t matter. Katsuki is more aware of what that quirk is capable of than any of these losers. He watches the students mill and plot idiotic strategies around stealing the show. They don’t stand a chance.

He’s never understood how they don’t see that there’s something so clearly wrong with the nerd. It’s as though someday Deku will simply unhinge his jaw to begin systematically inhaling reality. Katsuki sees it when Deku laughs at something that isn’t funny or abruptly lets conversations end like he’s heard the rest before. It’s wrong.

Katsuki’s got a good team. Shitty-Hair asked to take front, something about a promise to do his best. Soy-sauce and Raccoon-eyes are good support, strong in mobility.

When it comes down to it, Katsuki can win a fight against Deku.
Unless the nerd touches him again.

Unless darkness swallows them.

Unless Katsuki gets taken back to that cold, dark place with Deku only half aware and strangers in
bird masks all around them.

Katsuki isn’t stupid. He won’t let it happen – not again. Every single day for years he’s made sure
Deku knew better than to touch him.

So, throughout the second round of the tournament, he stays long-range. Even when Deku starts
trying and failing to lay waste to the competition, even when one of the foam bullets hits Kirishima’s
shoulder through luck and little else, they stay away. Katsuki picks off the opposition, playing it
smart. Crushing Deku under his heel can wait until final rounds when they can go all out. For now,
he’ll be patient.

His team sees the logic. They know it’s not because he’s a coward. Bakugo Mitsuki didn’t raise a
wimp, but Bakugo Masaru didn’t raise a fool, either. Midoriya Inko did the same.

Deku and Katsuki both pass the second round.

Nezdu arranges the matches in seconds, mind ticking away at possibilities. He needs to present the
first-years, especially 1A, in a positive, near-perfect light. Of course, some sacrifices will be
necessary to even it out. Nobody would accept it if the class is perfect. Two of the students are
particularly bright, good with publicity though not against overwhelming force. They can spring
back from a loss in ways the others can't. He stops, glancing at the passing teams again.

1. Bakugo, Sero, Kirishima, Ashido
2. Midoriya, Shinsou, Hatsume, Todoroki
3. Kurorio, Tetsutetsu, Shiozaki, Monoma
4. Yaoyorozu, Iida, Uraraka, Tokoyami

Kurorio has withdrawn - a good decision, given his goals of going underground as well as the
arena's harsh lighting. Nezdu scans through the files, selects another student who will be good at
publicity, and adds him to the mix. Randomization is a myth. Nezdu types away, sending out the
pairings before his fifteen-second interval is over. Midnight announces the match-ups are computer-
generated, not knowing the truth is so much more simple.

Nezdu sits back to watch the show.

Finally. One-on-one matches. Izuku has been waiting for the chance to nap, and from the looks of it
he’s got plenty of time. Technically he should be in the waiting room, but life is uncertain. The first
match- Kaminari against Shiozaki- will end in the vine-haired girls favor. Izuku’s seen it a thousand
times. He doesn’t need to watch it again. Hitoshi, however, has found chocolate-covered coffee beans and is actively hiding them from Aizawa and Tenya.

Izuku has given up.

“Let’s get this party started!” Hitoshi says, propping his feet up on the seat in front of him. “It’s a beautiful day to sit and judge people.”

Uraraka nods beside him, putting on sunglasses. “It’s a harsh world,” she says sagely. Izuku immediately resolves to put off napping in favor of listening to their running commentary. He has no idea what’s been happening, but Uraraka and Hitoshi have united in their fear of neither Kacchan nor any other man, and he is living for this friendship. Izuku loves his friends so much.

Kaminari loses. He gives it his all, but that ‘chivalry’ from letting his opponent strike first will be his downfall.

Watching with Hitoshi is honesty the best part of Izuku’s day so far. He narrates it like a golf tournament, and softclaps after particularly impressive moves. Uraraka joins in during the next match.

“Beautiful matchup here in the UA stadium,” she murmurs to Hitoshi. “Wonder what will happen, Jeff.”

“Well, Dave,” Hitoshi says softly while delicately selecting a coffee bean, “we’ve got clear skies here with a light breeze. It looks like Mina’s got to line up her moves carefully with Yaomomo’s shield and- oh, beautiful shot there, splendid work with the acid.”

“It really is. Don’t think I’ve seen footwork like that in years. Here comes Yaomomo, ready for her offensive shot.” Uraraka pauses, then softclaps again as the class goes wild behind them. “What a match. I can’t wait to see Yaomomo in the semi-finals.”

“Guess it’s my turn.” Izuku yawns as he gets up, then drops through the void and into the entrance tunnel in two quick movements. He’s getting much better at these short portals. On the stage, Midnight greets Monoma.

It’s showtime. Hopefully he won’t be expelled for this.

Chapter End Notes

Hi. Sorry in advance for my sense of humor, newly arriving in the next chapter

edit: hello yes take Nezdu being a crafty boi and also a team ranking. Also, spelling.
edit2: spelling and names
It's Free Real Estate

Chapter Summary

if you think about it, monoma's quirk is just him looking at other people's powers and going Its Free Real Estate

Chapter Notes

I am so sorry, pls don't stop reading the fic just bc of this chapter. I've been holding back most of my terrible sense of humor and this chapter is just kinda a chance to finally compact it into two nice skippable scenes. we'll be back to the usual brand of nonsense next week.

I wanted this scene to line up with April fools but we are also massively off schedule

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Do it, I fucking dare you.” Izuku holds out both hands to Monoma. “Let’s see if the void wants your soul.”

Please don’t copy my quirk, please don’t copy my quirk, please don’t-

Maybe he's playing it up a little bit, but they’re on live television. There are villains watching. Besides, the best way to keep Monoma from doing this is to outright offer it up. Izuku has theories as to what will happen, but isn’t in any hurry to confirm it. This is a good way to stop it.

Monoma looks at Izuku’s hands, then back to his face. “You’re bluffing.” He doesn’t sound confident.

“Am I?” Izuku pulls back his lips in a toothy, too-wide smile. “We’re all doomed, anyway. Might as well find out now. If you take it, I won’t move for a full ten seconds. That’s a lot of time in a fight, you know.”

Monoma’s eyes flick from his hands to his face, estimating distance and the weight of his words.

“C’mon, it’s an easy win for me, a mistake for you. Sounds like a good deal. Let’s see if the void wants you.”

Monoma hesitates. Then he moves. Izuku’s honestly impressed- the guy is way faster than expected. He grabs Izuku's shirt, trying to throw him out of the ring without making contact, but Izuku swings for his face.

Monoma lets go, hopping back.

“All right,” Monoma pants, “We'll do this your way.” He attacks again, and Izuku dodges.

“Don’t you mean ‘All Might,’ not ‘all right?’”
“Even 1A’s puns are bad.” Another missed swing. Monoma changes tactics, aiming for arms and face. He’s trying to get Izuku’s quirk.

“I learned from the worst.” Izuku rolls when Monoma knocks him off balance, coming up into a crouch. He launches himself forward, headbutting Monoma.

A hand comes down on his hair, and Izuku is alone on the pitch.

“Oh no.”

Midnight looks startled, before raising her whip. “On the count of ten, if Monoma does not return, then Midoriya wins!”

“One!”

The crowd is dead silent, waiting.

“Two.”

Izuku’s going to be in so much trouble.

“Three.”

The audience is starting to whisper, a low rustle that steadily builds.

“Four.”

Izuku wants this to be over. Monoma has definitely crashed into another world by now.

“Five.”

Maybe he got stuck in a dangerous world. Maybe the first student to die will be because of Izuku’s own quirk.

“Six.”

Oh, shit. The villains are definitely seeing this.

“Seven.”

The crowd is louder, now.

“Eight.”

What if people call him a villain? Izuku looks to 1A’s section, and locks eyes with Hitoshi. They’re both thinking the same thing.

“Nine.”

He’ll be lucky to get future offers like this, with such a dangerous quirk. Will Manuel still want to work with him in Hosu?

“Ten! Midoriya advances to the next round! Oh, and sweetie? If you could fish him out of the void, that would be great.” Midnight looks nervous when she pulls the mic away from her face. “…You can, right?”

“Yeah, just... give me half an hour or so? It’s easy to get lost in there, and I don’t know where he
Midnight nods, and Izuku doesn’t bother walking off the pitch. It might reassure the crowd if they see him going.

Izuku drops through a portal, grabbing the edge as he goes.

Monoma will probably leave a trace on whatever world he’s gotten to, but Izuku doesn’t know what color or texture the planetary ring will be. Instead, he looks out at the dark blue and seafoam planetary rings around his own world and sighs in relief. Cloud probably saw it.

He sifts through the images on his own world, finds the café, and slides through. The portal opens outside, next to Cloud. The retired hero stands alone, hands stuffed into his coat despite the sunlight. His eyes are fixed upwards, searching through what Izuku can’t see.

“I found him.” Cloud points at the sky, as if that helps. “He went straight past Viri, and left two worlds past Nannoc. The little world, kinda commercially? We explored it around a year ago.”

“What’s its name?”

“It’s the one where they tried to sell us bubbles. I think we called it 19.99, but who knows. I can’t track much else.”

“Got it. Thanks.”

“Good luck. Kick ass. Yell into the void if you need me.” Cloud doesn’t take his eyes from the sky as Izuku drops into the null.

He rockets past Viri and Nannoc, catches sight of bright orange world in the distance, and tucks his arms close to reduce drag. It’s got a yellow ring around it, and Izuku heads to where the ring is thickest. He lets the dust direct him, and it pushes him into a portal.

Izuku falls out and immediately crashes into Monoma. They collapse in the middle of the street, which would be a hazard on any other world. Here, people won’t hurt you unless its for sales purposes. Everything is either neon or covered in (probably copyrighted) designs. Even the sky is pale blue with orange five-point stars pasted over it.

“You! Are you real?” Monoma grabs Izuku’s uniform desperately - what is it with him and grabbing people? - and shakes Izuku as if that will help. “Because I have seen some messed up quirks, but this takes the cake. You live with this torture? Every day?”

“I’m real, just- stop shaking me- yes, it’s me, the void.” Izuku scrambles up. “Did you buy anything?”

“No! I don’t have money! I’m a broke high school student!” Monoma throws his hands up, gesturing to the buildings. “These people keep asking but I don’t want their magazines or real estate!”

A middle-aged man leans out of a nearby doorway. “Did someone say… real estate?”

“No!” Monoma screams, but the true power of fear has Izuku yelling at the same time.

“Yes!”

“Look! It’s free! Free real estate,” the man begins as if laying down a presentation he has studied his entire life for. “We’re giving you a house!”
“Oh my god,” Monoma grumbles, but Izuku grabs his sleeve. His turn to be the jacket-holder.

“No, this is how we survive. Wait for it.”

“It’s a free house for you! Well, you gotta bring furniture, but it’s free!” The man grins excitedly. He was born for one purpose: to tell them about this free real estate. Izuku has never been so afraid in his life. He’s seen this meme, he recognizes this man, and he knows what’s coming at the end. Monoma does not show proper respect and elects to huddle behind Izuku.

“Midoriya, I will throw you into the void which is alive in case you hadn’t noticed.”

“Good luck, that’s my quirk, too. We have to stay.” Izuku holds the edge of Monoma’s jacket for good measure. They can’t leave midway through.

“Two bedrooms, no rugs; Its free. You unlock the door to your free house, we got you the real estate!”

Monoma looks Izuku dead in the eyes. “You say this as if we can’t leave right now.”

“It’s a house, its free, it’s got a pool in the back…..”

Izuku grits his teeth. “Maybe, but if you crash here again, they’ll be twice as bad. Let him finish; then we can go.”

The man is shaking a pair of keys. “I’ve been carrying this around all day, it’s for your house!”

“Midoriya, are you absolutely sure?” Monoma looks ready to commit first degree murder, but Izuku’s known Kacchan for years. He’s built up a resistance to attempts on his life.

“Free real estate, I’ll pee my pants,” the man informs them earnestly. “Come get your damn house.”

Momoma shoots Izuku a poisonous side-eye from his shoulder, and Izuku sighs. “I’d explain but that would summon more of them.”

“It’s a FREE HOUSE,” the salesman screams, startling them both.

“Midoriya? Please end this nightmare - kill me, knock me out, it doesn't matter which-”

“I got real estate, does it get better than this?”

Izuku shakes his head, and the man proceeds to yell excitedly about his free house before beconing them closer. The universe twists around the man, lending unspeakable power to his words.

“It’s Free Real Estate,” he whispers, and with that, runs back into his free house.

“Now we leave,” Izuku says, and drags Monoma back into the null. Somehow, quirk shock doesn’t hit at all when he transports Monoma. Maybe because it’s the same quirk? That, or Aizawa’s training plan is paying off.

Monoma yells, struggles, then resigns himself to being carried through the void by the back of his jacket. “Your quirk sucks,” he tells Izuku once the initial panic wears off. “You know this place is alive? I can feel it in my mind.”

“It’s called the Null, and yeah.” Izuku makes himself as aerodynamic as possible while keeping a tight grip on Monoma’s wrist. No way is he leaving the steering to someone who only just got the quirk.
“Quirks aren’t supposed to be alive.” Monoma frowns. “Okay, bird-boy is an outlier and should not be counted. You drool, though. What’s that?"

Izuku sighs, and takes a right at a particularly large world. He angles their fall so they plummet close by. “That’s an alternate dimension. Every one of these is. You try going an getting the forbidden future knowledge and spilling it to everyone at home with a conscious quirk.”

Monoma grunts. “Well, obviously I’d succeed—"

“Sure. You know what- the training camp is gonna be attacked.” Izuku grins when the null stays blissfully quiet. It either doesn’t care what Monoma knows or counts them as the same because it’s the same quirk. “You tell anyone about that, and the words will melt in your mouth.” Izuku half-hopes he does and gets the knowledge out to heroes. He knows better than to be optimistic, though.

Monoma doesn’t say anything until they’re past Nonnac. “You know the way?” There’s an unspoken pact between them to never mention that man again.

“This world is the brightest one in the whole place. If you can get here then you can get anywhere.”

“You have access to the entire void and haven’t thrown any street signs in? How do you tell them apart?”

“Color, size, placement. Sometimes they’ve got moons- those are side dimensions, usually related to the bigger one through quirks. If you see planetary rings, then that’s how you find people with a travel quirk, so don’t use those as landmarks.”

“Rings?”

“Yours is yellow. Supposedly mines green, but I’ve never seen it.” Izuku points at Home. “That’s our world. The blue rings are two other people like us. That really faint grey dust is another person.”

It feels weird to explain. People like us. Izuku… doesn’t like the way those words feel. Like there should be more. The world rockets closer, and Momoma’s grip tightens.

“…How do you land?” Ah. He must have crashed the first try.

“Feet first.” Izuku keeps his eyes forward. “Like those playground slides.”

They hit the world together, and tumble out into 1A’s classroom.

Izuku frowns. “One more jump. Sorry, I aimed wrong.”

He leans back, grabbing Monoma’s jacket (aha, revenge for the jacket-grabbing!) and swinging them both out into the null. Monoma yelps, but Izuku is too busy parsing through the images to fully care.

He has less sympathy now that Monoma has a void quirk. It’s no longer a life-threatening situation.

Izuku selects a spot by the teachers viewing room and pulls them through. Monoma tries to push through the portal first, so they crash down from the ceiling together in a tangle of limbs. Nezdu peers over his teacup at them, utterly unsurprised.

“Welcome back,” he says cheerfully, and returns to watching the matches.

They get lectured, of course. All Might offers some words on sportsmanship, but for the most part it’s Vlad King’s disappointed dad stare and Midnight cackling in the background. The most interesting part is when Monoma tries to ask about the training camp, slaps a hand over his mouth,
and tells everyone that Izuku’s quirk is cursed.

Aizawa looks Izuku dead in the eyes and chugs a boiling mug of coffee.

At the end, Monoma catches Izuku past the door. “How do you do that?”

Izuku glances down at his jacket, which has been grabbed for the umpteenth time. “Do what?”

“How did you do that short portal?”

“Grab the edge when you go through.” Izuku instructs. “Check to see where you’re entering, and don’t rush it. Time doesn’t exist the same between worlds. If the quirk times out off world, find a café called the Lonely Owl. They’ll send you back here.”

Monoma thanks him begrudgingly and disappears into his own portal. Izuku tries not to worry too much.

There is a strength in knowing inevitability. Sero Hanta knows this.

Some people can believe blanket statements, claiming nothing is certain and that there is always hope. Some of it may be true. There’s just one problem with such a statement: uncertainty, or the mystery shrouding future events, is also so very unsure. Hope is flawed, but so is hopelessness.

A paradox. Hanta doesn’t particularly care what it’s called, except he knows he doesn’t have half a chance in hell against Todoroki’s quirk. He’s smart enough to know that last week’s math score and the failed English quiz have dismissed him as an average or even subpar student. He also knows smarts come in different forms, and Todoroki doesn’t know what a Tiktok is, much less how to dab. Todoroki might not even know what dabbing is. Hanta can’t help but feel a little jealous.

The goal of the Sports Festival is publicity. There’s more than one way to achieve it. Hanta grins wildly, cracking his neck, then knuckles, wrists, back, and finally elbows. Eijirou looks at him in awe.


Hanta laughs, bouncing from foot to foot. “Self-care? In this economy?” He runs through a few stretches, twisting around the waiting room in a half-jog, half-skip. He’s downed a powerbar, so his tape won’t run out for a good long time.

Social smarts are very different from fighting smarts. Todoroki likely assumes the match only begins when Midnight calls start, and that will be his mistake. Hanta needs to win before it starts. He needs attention, like the drama queen he is.

“I was born for this,” He tells Kirishima, pocketing a kazoo in case all else fails. “There’s no way I can lose.”

Kirishima nods firmly. “You’re the boss. Win this.”

Hanta winks and kicks open the door. It’s showtime.
He needs impact. He needs to be memorable. He needs… memes. Or at least to create enough of an impact for there to be memes about him.

He’d gotten Hitoshi to convince that crazy support girl to rig his kazoo. Hanta practically yeets himself out of the doorway, blowing on his super kazoo to maximum effect along with the music he’d lovingly selected.

The old soundtrack was surprisingly easy to convince Present Mic to play. When Hanta enters the arena, it’s with style. Retro, yes. But his music choice has survived as an internationally hated meme for over 200 years, crafted by the legend Rick Astley and upheld by generations. It will survive his kazoo-enforced war against being forgotten.

He shoots finger guns at a camera. Puts a little strut into his step, too. He can’t go too far, or they’ll accuse him of not taking this seriously, but a guy can live a little. Maybe he’ll do a backflip during the match, that’d be cool.

Hanta pockets the kazoo once he arrives at the Dueling Grounds or whatever they’re called. Dueling Grounds would be a cool name. They should consider it. He’s close enough to Midnight’s microphone that the words echo around the stadium.

“Let’s put on an ice match,” he tells Todoroki instinctively, because the opportunity is right there. Todoroki blinks, completely oblivious to the pun. The audience love it, proof that they see the value of his witty remark even when Todoroki doesn’t.

“Don’t worry, you’ll warm up to me.”

Again, no reaction.

Hanta is people-smart, like how Iida is book-smart, Eijirou is fitness-smart, and Ashido is friendship-smart. So when Todoroki frowns slightly, not at Hanta but at someone in the crowd behind him, alarm bells start ringing.

Todoroki isn’t in the arena right now. Mentally, he’s gone. That means Todoroki might not put up a fight, and on sports festival day? Not cool. Everyone’s doing their best. It’s not ordinary to encourage an overpowered opponent with no backup plan, but Hanta does it anyway.

Nobody makes it this far by being ordinary.

“Hey, don’t hold back, okay? I know we’ve got different skill sets but I’m gonna do my best,” he offers, shifting so Todoroki has to make eye contact. “Plus Ultra, you know?”

Todoroki shrugs. “Likewise.”

He’s not getting through.

Midnight steps forward, determining their conversation over. It’s not. She states the rules, gives them time to slide into ready positions. Hanta smiles, because heroes smile for the people, and he needs the audience to know he’s okay. This may hurt, but he’s okay.

He knows what’s coming, and he knows that they’ll see the worst of it.

Midnight calls start, and there is

Nothing
But

Ice.

Hanta didn’t even have time to process the ice, it just appeared around him.

Todoroki stares in alarm at the glacier he’d created. Hanta is so cold. For some reason, he’d always assumed being frozen would leave him able to move at least a little. Breathing is so hard when his chest can’t expand. He’d known Todoroki was strong but this?

“Bit much, don’t you think?” Hanta asks. It echoes around the stadium over the sound of his chattering teeth. The joke falls flat but tells the audience that he’s okay. They shouldn’t worry. Hanta smiles, because that’s what heroes do.

“I’m sorry,” Todoroki tells him hollowly while defrosting the ice. “I….”

“Hey, so that was wild and all, but can you make like, full-on glaciers any time?”

“Yes?”

“Cool. Literally.” Somebody’s probably made the pun before, but Hanta may be in a little bit of pain and struggling to keep the smile up.

Todoroki frowns a little, but at least it’s a reaction. He’s back in the arena, which is the second win of the day. Hanta is on fire.

Not literally, though. Thank goodness.

“Yo,” he yells back to Todoroki while exiting the stadium to the chants of ‘DON’T MIND’. “I’ll be here next year, so get ready for a rematch! Prepare thine ass for a royal kicking, Elsa!”

Once again, Todoroki does not appreciate Hanta’s intellect. That’s his loss, Hanta thinks. He’s a little sad the match ended this way, but he did what he could to be memorable, and that’s what counts. The audience will remember him. Hanta smiles up to the crowd, because he’s okay and they shouldn’t worry.

Heroes are supposed to worry for the people, not the other way around.

Chapter End Notes

i am so sorry.

Yes, that is the actual transcript of the Free Real Estate meme that's being recited. you can check: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cd4-UnU8IWy

Edit: yall i spelled tiktok as ticktock?? that's just weird
Hey! Bonus scene today as a thanks for putting up with last chapter and also bc World Walker passed 1,000 kudos while I wasn’t looking. we're back with my regularly scheduled brand of nonsense

Triggers: We're skimming over Todoroki’s stuff. Nothing explicit is mentioned, but it's implied to be the usual story.

Spoilers: none?? wow

Hitoshi doesn’t give two shits about the Sports Festival. He won’t say it, though, because Momnight has said he’s getting The Talk Part 2 the moment she hears him swear. So. It’s just a long day of him avoiding swearing in front of his godmother while attending an event geared towards above-ground heroes.

The whole ordeal is too much work, but he wants in on any inevitable drama. That’s the only reason he’s not asleep right now.

He’s on the way to find a can of Sprite for his Mistake Thermos currently. The Mistake Thermos is a pale copy of what his loud dad downs on all-nighters, but Hitoshi learned the ability to mix Gatorade, 5hr Energy, Monster, and Red Bull is a fine art. Boss Coffee is the only thing capable of making the mix palatable. It will still taste like lukewarm mistakes given physical form, but Hitoshi crossed that line long ago. Thus, the name.

It’s subtler than his water bottle, which went missing (suspicious) after Tenya saw him drinking from it after the second event (very suspicious). Regardless, coffee is an extension of his soul at this point and it requires carbonation. The fun juice must be attained.

He finds Kirishima seconds before he finds a vending machine. Hitoshi is an expert on body language – nothing like a traumatic past to teach a kid how to read the room. Kirishima is sending off all sorts of anxiety vibes. It’s bad news with a match in, what, fifteen minutes? He’s against that steel guy, too.

“Dude,” Kirishima mutters. He’s managed to wedge himself between the vending machine and the wall, which should not be physically possible. “Do you think I can win this without using my super strength?”

Oh, there are beans to be spilled here. Hitoshi smells an existential crisis.

“Spill,” he tells Kirishima. “I’m listening, just gimme a moment.” The Sprite is retrieved, and Hitoshi climbs on top of the vending machine to measure the sprite into his Mistake Thermos. Tenya won’t see him up here. Probably.

“Okay, so.” Kirishima holds out both hands. “Someone I know recommended I keep my strength secret to surprise the villains, and like, I have, but someone else I really look up to asked me to really
make a statement. Put myself on the radar, you know.”

“So do both. Be subtle about the bone-hurting juice.” Hitoshi takes a sip from his thermos. The grape flavored 5hr energy was a mistake, but he needed something to counteract the taste of Red Bull. It’s like what a chaos emerald probably tastes like. Except now with carbonation.

“I just... I gotta give it my all. Everyone else is.”

“Most of them. Todoroki’s giving somewhere around 30% and Izuku is definitely maxing out at 75. Also, have you seen class 1B? Monoma is 100% down to fight but would rather die than go about it legally.”

Kirishima doesn’t look convinced, so Hitoshi slides off the vending machine. He recycles the can before tugging Kirishima out of his squished little abode next to the wall. “Come on, stand up – don’t make me brainwash you into this. You know what happens when you keep breaking your limbs, right?” The question makes Hitoshi’s stomach turn. He makes a mental note that the brain gremlins are at it again. Trauma can fuck right off.

Kirishima frowns. He’s finally upright, if a little dusty. One clump of dust is caught in his hair, resembling a very tiny hat. “They heal?”

“They stop working. You have bones. You can heal bones. But not forever.” Hitoshi nods wisely. “And if you can’t work out... no boxing. No jogging.”

“Oh my gosh,” Kirishima whispers hollowly. “My quirk is super weird; I need to keep working out or it’ll be too much and my limbs will explode.”

This is not the information Hitoshi was expecting to hear at 1:27 in the afternoon when he woke up, but he’ll take it. “Right. So, don’t let your arms blow up or whatever, or you’ll have to live without arms or legs. Tenya knows what healthy life choices are, you should ask him. I think it’s facemasks or something.”

“Legs, too.” Kirishima stares through at Hitoshi at something only he can see. “I want to keep my legs. Shinsou, you gotta- oh my gosh, I can’t do this.”

“Yes, you can.”

“I can’t.”

“You can.”

“You’re sure, man?” Kirishima finally focuses on Hitoshi for a second before fixing his blank eyes on the floor. “Because I’m really not feeling confident.”

“I am.” Hitoshi raises his thermos lazily. “Three cheers for Plus Ultra.”

“Yeah.... Yeah!” Kirishima nods, finally getting a bit of his energy back at this subpar pep talk. “I’m gonna win this!”

“You’re the man,” Hitoshi deadpans, shoving his classmate to the door. “Go break your bestie’s kneecaps.”

“Thanks, bro!”

“Mmh.” Hitoshi watches Kirishima bound down the hallway. Someday he’ll have one fifth of that
energy and brainwash Endeavor. That’d be a riot. Literally.

Speaking of, he should really keep an eye out for a small void gremlin ready to fight Endeavor. Hitoshi doesn’t really know what’s going on with Izuku. He knows that his friend disappeared in a match with Monoma, stayed missing while Todoroki proved he was an ice queen and Tenya got turned into a commercial by Hatsume, and will likely be gone for Hitoshi’s first match. That’s actually pretty great, seeing as Hitoshi doesn't want Izuku to witness his match.

Kirishima wins his match. It would be close, but that super strength gives him too much of an edge for Tetsutetsu to keep up with. As Hitoshi predicted, Izuku remains missing.

When Hitoshi’s match arrives, Bakugo glowers at him from Midnight’s other side. He must think it looks intimidating, which is just sad. He looks like a Pomeranian.

“You ever thought about the plural of platypus,” he casually asks Blasty before the match, more to get used to asking questions than anything else. There’s the added benefit of this being the one time Bakugo can’t tell him to shut up, and the caffeine thrumming through Hitoshi's veins assures him this is a completely valid question. “Are they platapie? Platypuses?”

Bakugo’s eye twitches, and he shoots Hitoshi a poisonous look.

“Maybe they’re platypoctipi?” Hitoshi nods wisely. “I just call them Funky Lil’ Duck-Beavers, but the world isn’t ready for that hot take yet.”

Midnight calls the starting signal through her laughter, and Hitoshi dodges the classic strong right. Contrary to popular belief, Hitoshi happens to have a very good memory. It’s just selective. Hero legislation? That’s in one ear and out the other. Izuku’s advice from the bomb exercise, however…. Well, he’d been given a list of things that would garner a response from one Blasty Explodes-man. Hitoshi likes hanging on to that kind of information. He ducks away from the next two hits, thanking his dads mentally for drilling martial arts after they learned his goals. Bakugo looks ready to blow a gasket.

“Nice, Blasty. Practiced that move on little kids or something?”

Bakugo’s next hit is uncoordinated. It makes sense - Hitoshi isn’t blind to how Izuku flinches. He knows a bully when he sees one and isn’t afraid of calling out the truth.

“Right. Just your bestie. He wouldn’t tell me what the pond was about, though-” Hitoshi ducks the next blast, backing up breathlessly. “Let me guess, inferiority complex hit?”

Bakugo snarls, lashing out again. Ooh, touchy subject?

“Guess what, Blasty? We’re all geniuses. You think you’re special? You think this is a game to us?” Hitoshi grits his teeth, continuing to evade. Maybe he hasn’t aimed a single punch, but Bakugo hasn’t landed any. “Everyone in our class was top of their school. Think about it.”
Bakugo looks ready to incinerate Hitoshi’s internal organs, but he still doesn't talk. Fine. Hitoshi raises one hand before his classmate can begin a new round of attacks.

“I forfeit.” Hitoshi smirks at Bakugo. “Underground heroes don’t need the press anyway.”

The loss is on Hitoshi’s terms, and he’s made damn well sure Bakugo knows it.

Izuku has only just escaped the terrifying world of Free Real Estate, and apparently most of the round one matches are over. The crowd is roaring - they want more entertainment than whatever Hitoshi pulled with Kacchan, but Uraraka seems more than content to give them that show. Izuku finds a seat by Hitoshi just as the match starts.

Down in the arena, Uraraka sprints forwards, rolling away from Dark Shadow’s first attack and ducking under the next. She’s trying to get close.

“If you keep going, you’ll face Ochako in the finals,” Hitoshi tells him with calculated carelessness. “I, however, am a dumbass and forfeited just so Blasty will know that no matter what he does in this tournament, I could have beaten him. He’s gonna hate it. Every time he looks back at this festival, all the victories will be uncertain.”

Izuku needs to take a second to process that Hitoshi essentially poked a sleeping tiger just because he could. “...You what?”

Hitoshi smiles like a cat that just got the canary. “He knows his win against me was a gift. If he gets a medal, it will partially be won by my choice to leave. It’s the one thing he couldn’t control.”

Izuku stares at Hitoshi in awe. “How are you alive?”

“Scientists are baffled by my continued survival.” Hitoshi squints down at Uraraka’s progress, gripping his thermos - when did he switch the water bottle for a thermos - tightly. “I’m a fucking termite.”

Uraraka is merciless. She uses her quirk on Dark Shadow, who is essentially a part of Tokoyami for how much her quirk cares. Seeing as Tokoyami’s strategy was quirk-focused, he hadn’t considered an opponent willing to throw hands with quirks, their wielders, and gravity all at the same time.

“So how screwed do you think I am,” Izuku says as he watches Uraraka pry Dark Shadow’s (fingers? wings?) off the concrete and set him adrift over the boundary line. There’s a break before he faces off against Todoroki in the semi-finals.

Hitoshi shrugs. “Provided you survive Todoroki, and let’s be honest, Yaomomo is winning her next match so you’ll face her too? Somewhere between ‘Uh Oh’ and ‘Well, Shit.’ Both Yaomomo and Ochako will be so mad if you forfeit. Lmao.” The deadpan delivery just kills that last bit.


“Ed Sereen wouldn’t treat me like this.”

“Ed Sherren? Shereen? Hey Izuku, Hitoshi, you talkin’ shit about old people music?” Pony’s head pops over the barricade, speaking hyper fast in English. “What even is his last name?”
Izuku shrugs. “Beats me. Hey, you know Monoma knows the ‘it’s free real estate’ meme now?”

“Really?”

Hitoshi smirks, lacing his fingers together and straightening up slightly. “You know you gotta do it to him.”

“You’re right and I’m a fool.” Pony types something into her translation app before vanishing, but her voice still carries over to their side.

“Monoma! This festival is that free real estate!”

“YOU CLASS 1A FUCKERS ARE GONNA GET WHAT’S COMING TO YOU. Pony, I will pay you good money to never mention that to me again.”

“Sure, gimme like ten bucks, thousand yen, easy. Rest of the class will never know.”

“Fucker.”

“Monoma said a bad word!” Pony yells, more thrilled than insulted.

Kendou’s voice follows a crash. “MONOMA! THERE ARE CHILDREN PRESENT!”

“She started it!”

Hitoshi nods wisely. “Can I get a press F?”

“F,” Izuku adds, then watches with interest as Kaminari perks up at the sound of tragedy.

“F?”

“F,” Mina informs him.

“F,” Sero confirms as the sound of scattered yelling breaks out from 1B’s side of the stands. Clearly, Izuku needs to be a part of multiple friend groups because that is the ideal brand of humor. Then he spots Kacchan and abandons all hope. One friend group is enough.

Izuku knows exactly what’s coming when Todoroki tell him they need to talk. He is so ready for this. Who does Todoroki think is All Might’s love child? Izuku bets himself two whole yen on Kirishima. Then, he alternatively bets himself three yen Todoroki thinks Izuku is the love child. Maybe Aizawa’s the suspected father, but that’s unlikely considering Aizawa already has a child the whole class seems intent on ignoring.

“Real nice day for aliens,” Izuku chirps once Todoroki finds a decently secluded hallway. “You think the moon landing was faked?”

Todoroki, may he be innocent forever, doesn't catch on. “No? The moon isn’t real.”

So. That’s a lot to unpack. Izuku considers the facts before him, decides to believe that Todoroki is probably joking, and steers the conversation to secret love-children.
“What about our class? Any thoughts?”

Todoroki frowns as their conversation continues to slip away from his goal. Izuku waits while his classmate ponders. He has time. There’s two whole yen on the line here he’ll own either way.

“Are you Aizawa’s secret love-child,” Todoroki asks finally, and Izuku wants to perish. He lost two whole yen he bet against himself. This shouldn’t be possible.

“No. Out of curiosity, do you think Hitoshi is Aizawa’s kid?”

Todoroki blinks at him drolly. “I’m not an idiot.”

Yes, finally someone who’s noticed-

“Of course he isn’t.”

Oh, fuckity fuck.

Izuku carefully gestures as though making the box he can shove this memory into for repression and regret. “Do you mean to tell me, that me being Aizawa’s secret love child is a possible legitimate fact, but that Hitoshi, who literally has matching ‘worlds best son’ and ‘worlds best tired dad’ shirts with Aizawa, cannot be possibly related- Wait.” There’s one last thing. Izuku inhales through his nose, summoning every last drop of sanity the void hasn’t stolen from him. “Do you at least see that Present Mic is married to Aizawa Sensei?”

Todoroki points to Present Mic in the broadcast playing nearby. The hero has unzipped his leather jacket, displaying a ‘worlds best loud dad’ shirt. Aizawa is beside him, dead to the world. “Present Mic and Aizawa couldn’t be a couple. They’re too different. So the shirts are a coincidence and therefore cannot be used as proof.”

“Todoroki. Please kill me now.”

“I was going to wait until the match.”

Well, at least he’s honest about it. Izuku cradles his head in his hands rather than pursue the conversation further. “What did you want to talk about?”

“So you know about quirk marriages?”

So they’re just gonna go for the deep stuff? Cool. Izuku can do drama.

Todoroki proceeds to tell the whole story, and wow, can’t the universe spare him just this once? Every time, it’s the same fate coming after Todoroki ruthlessly with a baseball bat and a vengeance. Izuku’s not sad so much as he is indignant – can’t he cut a break, just this once?

“So I will beat you,” Todoroki finishes, “because objectively you’re the strongest. My father has never fought a teleporter, and I’ll do it all without his power.”

“No,” Izuku snaps, a little harsher than he intended to be.

“...What?”

“I said no. I don’t consent to being used in your revenge plot. Do I hate Endeavor? Absolutely. But I won’t be dragged into your self-destructive resentment.”

Todoroki huffs. “I wasn’t asking permission. I’m declaring war.”
“Well, too bad. Do it for you, not for revenge.”

“You don’t know anything.”

“Try me,” Izuku snaps back, trying to shove all the hurt he’s witnessed into the mental box it belongs in. Holding back is hard when Todoroki is so intent on not listening.

“You don’t know what it’s like to hate yourself whenever you look in a mirror,” Todoroki hisses, and that does it.

“What makes you think I don’t.” Izuku’s hand rises to his own face without fully realizing, and he traces the scar back past his hairline. “I can barely look at my own reflection, and you’re telling me this? You’re not your father, Todoroki. And neither is your quirk.”

Izuku pushes forward, bumping a fist into Todoroki’s chest. “I have seen hundreds of worlds. I can guarantee you right now, that not once have you and your father been the same person.”

“You’re missing the point.” Todoroki frowns. “If I use it, he wins. I’ll be playing along with his plan. My mom got locked away for his ambition – I’m not about to let it come true.”

“Then don’t. Be a hero on your own merits, but use your own power. It’s yours.”

“No, it’s not.” Todoroki steps back. “All everyone sees is him if I so much as light a candle.” With that, Todoroki stalks away.

BONUS:

Yaomomo smiles at Shiozaki from across the stage. She hadn’t expected the vine-haired girl to be an opponent, but it makes sense they’d be matched up if Nezdu is rigging the matches. (And he is rigging the matches. It’s what Yaomomo would do.)

“I’m sorry,” she tells Shiozaki in advance. “I don’t think this is the ideal match for either of us.”

Shiozaki shrugs. “Perhaps. But I have been called to stand before you, and it is my earthly duty to follow through. This match may not be ideal for you, but I fail to see the downfall.” It’s not a bluff. Either she knows Yaomomo’s quirk, or she doesn't care. Innocence or willful ignorance, one much worse than the first.

“Either way, we would be able to show off against other opponents better. Let’s both do our best?”

Shiozaki inclines her head, smiling a little wider. “Of course.”

Yaomomo needs a way to keep the plants from growing. She runs through plans and chemical formulas before coming up with a last resort option. It will be diluted with water content and taxing on her reserves, but she can do it. CH$_3$COOH, around 4% dilution to create vinegar and inhibit vine growth. It will rinse away at the end, but the risk is too high. She may harm Shiozaki long-term, which is unacceptable at a school event. What kills plants? Fire is too hard to control, and most acids will burn her before the plants are affected. Bladed weapons are a good idea.

Yaomomo combines and sorts her blueprints as the small talk continues. She recalls the basic
schematics, pauses, and re-organizes them. A heated blade to burn the plants while parting them, dissuading regrowth. It’s like cauterizing a wound while cutting it, but for vegetation.

She can do this.

C3H80 works as a secondary plan. Yaomomo will need to make a mask first, but she can do it. Probably. Her plans have been failing recently, and as much as she’s aware of the impact on her confidence, doubt continues to weigh her shoulders down with disturbing ease.

Midnight calls the start, and Yaomomo dodges to the right, pulling a blade out from her side. Once it’s formed, oxygen sparks a chemical reaction in the hollow chamber she’d made inside the blade, heating it up rapidly.

Shiozaki’s vines whistle through the air, but Yaomomo’s blade cuts through it like warm butter.

The vines char at the ends, and Shiozaki calls them back, aware that Yaomomo isn’t playing around. It gives Yaomomo time to create a mask and safety goggles - which she really needs to implement in her costume - and sweep one foot across the ground, recalling C3H80’s properties.

Clear liquid leaks from her leg, subtly leaving puddles across the ground.

This is dangerous. She’ll need to step carefully, with highly flammable isopropyl alcohol nearby and a superheated sword in hand.

The stage cracks from underneath, allowing the liquid to seep under the rock. Shiozaki likely thinks Yaomomo hasn’t noticed her burrowing vines, but that’s just better. Yaomomo edges her foot closer to the gap, allowing the liquid to trickle down the cracks and soak into the waiting vines.

Those vines will need air to move. Oxygen will be readily supplied. She’ll need to be careful not to overdo the proportions. Shiozaki is attached to her vines, and they’re all standing atop what is quickly becoming a bomb. Yaomomo, however, has been making bombs since she was eight. She knows the safety limits better than some demolition experts.

Shiozaki likely assumes Yaomomo will rely on the same simple weapons as before.

The ground crackles as Shizaki decides to make her move, giving Yaomomo just enough time to roll out of the way. She slams her heated sword against the crack on the way, and sprints to Shiozaki as the earth swells around her.

The explosion is deafening, throwing dust and dirt up in plumes. It smells like burning leaves, and Yaomomo darts through the dusty clouds until she’s right beside Shiozaki, heated sword held inches away.

Shiozaki grimaces at the nearby heat. “I yield.”

Midnight raises her whip. “Shiozaki yields, Yaoyorozu proceeds to the third round!”

“Thank goodness,” Yaomomo sighs, lowering the sword. She keeps it away from the leg soaked in flammable liquid, because UA doesn’t need a student’s self-destruction aired after Monoma’s match. “I was running low on reserves. Do your vines need anything to grow?”

“Nourishment of body and spirit,” Shiozaki murmurs. “Come, let us partake of the Earth’s bounty together.”

Yaomomo and Shiozaki leave the ring together. The match was short, but the resulting friendship has
potential.

Chapter End Notes

Three notes before I disappear back into the void:
1. I love Pony from the bottom of my heart
2. Izuku broke the fourth wall recently (he was very confused why so many ppl were interested in his life when y'all've already seen it before a thousand different ways) and said that y'all need to take care of yourselves so I'm passing it on
3. I need to decide future shenanigans, put Shinsou or Uraraka's name in the comments as a vote I guess (EDIT: y'all... literally tied in the comments. like????? alright. guess ill just do both???)

edit1: swapped chap title
edit2: rewrote the fic summary bc I looked at it and was like "..... but what if I mentioned my terrible puns"
Caught Red-Handed

Chapter Summary

oh boy oh heck awe shit

Chapter Notes

Hi. grab some tissues for this one, folks.

Triggers:
uhhh knives. Just... you'll see when he's in hosu. once we hit the para starting with "This is wrong. Quirks have limits" then it's over.
From "This is wrong. Quirks have limits," we're in a hospital. you're clear once we hit "Izuku taps the mic once, leaning back into the Null."
FUCK I forgot one: panic attack (could be read as not one but i'm gonna play it safe.) It's also from "This is wrong." and goes until the glitch text.
I think that's it. Stay safe yall

Spoilers: I don't think so???

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Izuku collapses back into his seat, Uraraka looks at him curiously.

“Todoroki asked if I was Aizawa’s secret love child,” he explains, which isn’t a lie. Uraraka stares at him for a good long second before laughing so hard she starts crying.

Some people have no pity. Izuku turns to Hitoshi, hoping for some sort of reassurance, but is met with a flat stare.

“Can’t imagine what that’s like,” Hitoshi remarks dryly. “Being insinuated as a secret love child… of the hero you admire… just because of a passing resemblance…. That must be terrible. Izuku.”

This only serves to make Uraraka to snort and start wheezing. “You – oh, ahahaha – you asked for that one, Deku- oh I can’t-“

“He is though! He literally uses Aizawa Sensei’s capture weapon! They call the media vultures and have matching evil chaos grins! The coffee addictions!”

Hitoshi stares point-blank into Izuku’s soul. “Yeah, he’s totally my father.”

Uraraka wheezes with laughter.

“For All Might’s sake- does nobody believe me?” Izuku twists around, taking in classmates one by one. Kirishima is the only one to grace him with a response.
“Sorry, man.”

Izuku settles back in his seat, grumbling about the unfairness of it all when his phone vibrates with a news alert he’d set up weeks ago. Ingenium is patrolling in Hosu. Uraraka is still shaking with the remnants of laughter as Izuku vaults over the empty eat in front of him, rushing to the back.

Tenya, who really should be preparing for his own match after Izuku and Todoroki smash each other’s faces in, stops Izuku before he’s gone two steps. “Are you alright?”

“I- I’m fine, Tenya. I just got a text. Could you guys message me if my match comes?”

Hitoshi waves him on. “Say ‘hi’ to your dad for us.”

“No, and also thanks!” Izuku sprints away from the crowded halls. He needs to teleport, but there are so many people watching. So many people who may figure out his quirk- he’d better leave from the restroom. He turns a corner at top speed and runs straight into the living embodiment of shittyness.

“Watch where you’re going,” Endeavor growls, completely uncaring that his beard nearly set Izuku on fire. “Step aside for the real heroes.”

“Fuck you,” Izuku says instinctively, and regrets none of it because he has no impulse control and is feeling particularly justified in his emotions today. “I know you’re a dipshit of a human being so don’t pull that bullshit on me. I’ll show respect when you deserve it.”

There’s silence, and Izuku is abruptly aware he’s not wearing the fireproof shoes he’d bought for this day. He also threw the first verbal punch, so the teachers won’t be on his side. Oh well, he’ll make do with verbal evisceration.

“…What did you say to me?”

Izuku holds his chin high and tries not to flinch as the blistering heat rises. It smells like compensation. “I said you’ve done nothing to earn my respect, and you should watch where you’re going. I kept to the correct side of the hall- you’re the one wandering around in the middle without a visitors pass like you own the place. Go watch the exit sign instead, fuckface.”

Endeavor swells, the flames reaching new heights. Izuku distantly realizes he may be roasted alive but doesn’t care. The man looks like a peacock. A flaming, overinflated, peacock.

“Respect your elders,” the egotistical peacock snarls. “If you have this much fire, then at least put on a decent match for my creation. The world is watching, so try and give Shoto a chance to look like he deserves it.”

“Excuse me? Did you just refer to your son as a possession? Do you assume you can walk over me like that?” Izuku feels the null pushing his mind, restraining his words, but he’s had it. “Watch your step, Todoroki Enji, because there is very little stopping me from ruining you.”

The null does not want him to keep talking, but Izuku smiles through blackened, sharpening teeth and speaks anyway. “Prove to me right now why I shouldn’t throw you into the void itself.”

Endeavor leans down, flames from his beard blast heat into Izuku’s face and making his eyes water.

“You insignificant little bug-“

“Endeavor. Step away from my student.” The flames are abruptly cut off, and Aizawa’s voice has lost its usual soft edge as the teacher rounds the corner and steps between them in two quick
movements. “So help me, if you don’t have one good reason to be down here antagonizing my students-“

“I was looking for my son,” Endeavor growls. Izuku’s no professor of linguistics, but that sounds like quantifiable bullshit.

Aizawa gently pushes Izuku back, taking his place to stare the Number Two down. “Your son, who isn’t here. Get a better excuse or get out.”

“Where is my son.”

Aizawa doesn’t react to the snappish tone. “Busy resting for his match. Where’s your visitor badge, Endeavor?”

Endeavor crosses his arms and glowers like it’s a professional sport. He could win the Olympics of glowering, and that’s impressive considering that Izuku’s seen Hitoshi in the middle of a caffeine withdrawal. “I... Am the Number Two Hero-“

“I don’t care,” Aizawa declares bluntly. “Quit wasting my time.”

Endeavor turns bright red at that, but Aizawa’s glare only sharpens further. What a legend. Izuku makes the ugliest face he can manage at the disappointment of a bloated ego while Aizawa is distracted. Maybe he can get in a good punch before the flames are back-

Aizawa reaches over without looking and nudges Izuku, effectively stopping him from properly spitting upon the Number Two Hero’s dignity. “Be polite, Midoriya. Endeavor, you’ve overspent your visit. Leave or I will contact Nezdu, and I’m sure you remember your third-year festival.”

Oh? Beans? Izuku will get this blackmail if it’s the last thing he does. He watches on as Endeavor face reddens into a beautiful purple, and for a moment Izuku expects the man to spontaneously combust.

“Fine,” the pitiful excuse of a hero spits. “But I will have words with Nezdu on my own terms.” It’s the rough equivalent of saying ‘I’m telling mom’ which is by far a lesser retort than Izuku was expecting. The blackmail must be really good.

“You do that, see what he thinks.” Aizawa waits until Flame-Face is at the stairs before restoring his quirk. Tongues of fire char either sides of the hall as they spring forth.

“Midoriya,” Aizawa says once Endeavor is gone. “Why were you antagonizing a hero?”

“He’s not my hero,” Izuku mutters darkly, quieting when Aizawa glances down. “Sorry.”

“...I don’t care what personal opinions you hold, but there are better ways to sort matters out than open hostility,” Aizawa says quietly. The teacher turns as though expecting Izuku to follow him back to the Sports Festival. “I don’t tolerate enacting petty grudges,” says Aizawa, a man who clearly holds some sort of petty grudge against Endeavor.

“I don’t-” Izuku’s phone buzzes again- not an alert. It’s the timer he’d set that morning. “Hey Aizawa Sensei? Could my match against Todoroki be delayed?”

Aizawa raises an eyebrow, clearly unimpressed by Izuku’s request. “We don’t change the matches except for emergencies.”

It’s time to be a dumbass. Izuku has been training his whole life for this moment. “Cool. Guess I’ll
just… go to my waiting room place-thing. Normally. By walking.”

Aizawa frowns before brushing past him again, this time in the opposite direction so he’s leading the way down the hallway while grumbling about how teenagers can’t even walk to their matches unsupervised. In some ways, Izuku empathizes. The man clearly did not ask to teach kindergarteners, but for all the common sense in the class he might as well be.

“By the way, Hosu is nice this time of year,” Izuku announces, more because he feels bad vanishing unnoticed than anything else.

Aizawa whirls around in the hallway, some sixth sense warning him of the sheer level of stupid Izuku is about to commit. The teacher’s quirk activates just after his student has been consumed by the void.

“Dammit, Midoriya!”

Strictly speaking, it’s not Tenya’s business to wonder what emergency resulted in Nezdu re-shuffling the match timings. He’s worried about Izuku’s sudden disappearance, but there’s no time to be distracted now that he’s in the arena.

Tenya needs to make his brother proud.

There are things he must uphold, as the next member of his family to don the helmet. Honor and teamwork, for starters. His father’s compassion and mother’s strength all need to be reflected in his conduct; his brothers loyalty is the newest addition. Tenya remembers when he had just finished junior high and asked Tensei how he could trust his teammates so much.

“Well,” Tensei had said, “Think about it like this: we’re brothers by blood, right?”

“Yes? Momma says hero work is in it.”

Tensei had laughed. “Some people are blood family, but in a different way. I’d spill mine for my teammates, and they’d spill theirs for me. It’s a bigger family and has all the same parts - Mori says I’m the mother hen, but that makes her the crazy uncle. Someday you’ll find people like that for you.”

Tenya knows he will someday fight alongside his classmates as a team, bound by law for the sake of civilian protection in the noble fight against evil. He can’t wait to stand as heroes alongside them.

Kirishima wins the match, but Tenya makes him fight for every inch.

“Next year,” he tells Kirishima as they leave the arena. “We’ll be licensed then, anyway.”

The Null is too empty, as though trying to remind Izuku just how alone he is. There is no backup in
Hosu. There is no help coming if he fails.

Izuku frantically pieces through the images on his world’s surface. One hand holds tightly onto it while the other combs through the treads, seeking out the right darkened alleyway. He’s a good five feet away from where he entered the Null before Izuku finds Hosu. It’s a long time before he catches sight of blood on a dumpster - this must be it.

Izuku takes a deep breath, and opens a portal.

It’s too dark to see that clearly, too difficult to tell what’s happening. Ingenium is collapsed on the ground, red and white like some sick parody of the flowers Izuku had left on a distant grave.

The hero killer turns, blood coating the sword he holds leisurely. “Well, isn’t this a surprise.”

Ingenium wheezes, “Midoriya, run-“ but it’s too much like the time the last time Izuku had been in Hosu, too much like the last time Iida Tensei had died on his watch. He couldn’t save anyone when he was seven, but this is his story, dammit. His future to carve out with his own bloody hands so it won’t end in twenty-three cold, mossy gravestones in a UA plot.

Izuku can save them this time, and it all starts here.

“No,” Izuku screams, tackling the Hero Killer head-on. He has no gear, no backup. The device to start Mei’s blood-tech is in his locker. Only Aizawa knows he’s gone. This is wrong. It’s too twisted, too far from what he’s always seen. Izuku can’t predict a fight like this. It’s already been lost.

Stain slashes downwards, but it’s instinct and very little else that has Izuku disappearing into the Null before the hit lands. He catches the portal edge, twists, and returns to reality, falling down from above Stain to keep the hero killer busy. The sword arcs up, and Izuku vanishes again before it makes contact.

He needs to get Ingenium out.

Izuku floats in the Null and takes a deep breath. He promised Tenya he wouldn’t make the same mistakes. It’s time to break his word. Aizawa may expel him for putting himself in danger.

Izuku doesn’t need to be a hero. He just needs to save them.

He drops into the dirty alleyway to keep the Hero Killer occupied and dodges the next strike - he can’t stay here. The null welcomes him gratefully like a long-lost son. Carefully, he sorts through the images on his world’s surface until he finds one that will work- it looks out right over Ingenium’s shoulder.

Izuku holds onto the spot on the world’s surface with one hand. He can’t lose it. The nearest hospital is northward. It takes a small eternity in the Null to find the ER lobby’s location. Izuku grabs the world’s surface over the location to keep track of it. Now for the hard part.

He leans into reality from behind Ingenium and loops his free arm over the hero in as supportive a hold as he can manage.

The portal he’s leaning through expands, and Izuku carefully drags the hero into the null. He’s barely conscious, but alive.

Beyond the portal, Stain lets out an outraged scream. Silver flashes in between them, making Izuku duck instinctively. One dagger makes its way through the portal, but the throw was too rushed - it arcs wide and misses both Ingenium and Izuku. He snaps the portal shut before any more get though.
The null does not like Izuku taking passengers. It hates him on a deep, fundamental level right now. He can feel it splintering his quirk, stretching the muscle until it snaps. He’s pushed it too far, too fast. Everything hurts.

This is wrong.

Quirks have limits, and Izuku has been treating his like a finish line.

He can feel his legs lengthening, teeth sharpening and bones stretching into something that should not be as the Null takes revenge. That’s dangerous. He probably looks awful.

“…Midoriya, focus.” Ingenium unsteadily reaches for the world, eyes terrifyingly blank from shock. He’s too pale, has lost too much blood. Izuku’s vision flickers out as he struggles to open a portal to Hosu General Hospital’s Emergency Room, stumbling through to reality.

Ingenium stops responding before they step through.

The dull noise hits him like a wave. Nurses bustle around, lights flash, and everything is off white, red, or mint green. Colors swirl back into focus. Izuku barely manages to keep Ingenium steady as he collapses. The hero is probably unconscious, but Izuku can’t tell. Nothing seems real.

He can feel whatever happened in the Null fading away. His bones snap back to where they’re supposed to be. It’s difficult to sit up, to face the world, but he has a dying hero in his hands and blood soaking into his uniform.

Somebody calls for help.

Ingenium is taken away.

Hands steady Izuku’s shoulders as he coughs up sludge, mixing black and blue on his sports festival uniform.

This is a mess.

Not the worst-case scenario, but it’s close.

Nurses look him over, but Izuku refuses all treatment, stumbling through his legislation speech. They accept it, recording his name, state of health, and calling Dr. Isha to skype in for tests. He’s out in half an hour, all covered by insurance- one of the benefits of Japanese Healthcare.

His phone is blowing up with messages from Hitoshi and Tenya about the upcoming match with Todoroki and concern over his disappearance, but Izuku can’t reply. There’s no mental or physical energy to text, so he fishes out the burner phone Aizawa made him carry. It’s picked up on the first ring.

“Problem child. What did you do.”

“I can’t talk anymore.” Izuku manages before he simply can’t talk anymore. Of all the times for this to happen, why now?

“Sensei.” Aizawa’s voice is tight, controlled. “Midoriya I need you to tell me where you are.” He can’t do that. Izuku rushes to the front desk, holding out the phone to a nurse. She takes it hesitantly and understanding dawns in her eyes when Izuku gestures to his mouth and shakes his head.
Sir, this is Hosu General Hospital.” She passes Izuku a pen and paper so he can write his name. “I’m Nurse Satsuki, relaying messages from a young man here named, um… Izuku Midoriya.”

Izuku scribbles out a quick message, handing it back to the nurse, who has straightened up suddenly. “Yes…. Yes, he’s been checked out…. No. I understand, just a moment. Midoriya would like me to read a message to you.”

Izuku notices faintly that they’re playing the Sports Festival in the lobby. A couple is staring at him. Specifically, his uniform. It’s covered in sludge (when did that happen?) and blood. This is going to be a mess for Nezdu to sort out.

“He says to please delay his match, and that he’ll be back soon.” She lowers the notepad, meeting Izuku’s eyes. “Young man, you’re in Hosu. That’s at least two hours away.”

Izuku takes back the notepad. **Teleportation quirk, I can do it.**

“Ah- Yes, Mr. Eraserhead, one moment.” She passes the phone back.

Aizawa’s voice is tight. “*Midoriya, do you know the tap twice for no, once for yes?*”

Izuku taps the phone’s mic once.

“Good. Are you in quirk shock right now?”

Two taps. A pause, then one tap.

“Thank you for being honest. Can you get back to UA?”

One tap.

“Good. You need to check in with me and Recovery Girl.”

Izuku taps the mic once, leaning back into the Null. His quirk doesn’t hurt this time, though it does ache. He finds UA’s Sports Festival halls from there and slips through quickly. The crowd cheers distantly, unaware of what’s happening in Hosu.

“*Midoriya? Are you still there?*”

One tap. “*UA,*” Izuku forces himself to say, focusing on making the sounds rather than words. “*Hall- hmm- Hall- Hall…way.*” The words take more effort than he was expecting, but it’s still information Aizawa needs.

“Where?” Footsteps pound on the other side. Izuku glances around, catching sight of a sign.

“T- … 2-H L-locker. Whe-where.. are-“

“I’m passing 1-E. “

Damn, the man is fast. Izuku sprints through the halls, stumbling more than running. He probably looks like a crime scene victim but hey, guess what! That’s pretty much what he is! Capture scarves shoot down the hallway and it’s not Aizawa, but Hitoshi who yeets himself around the corner at Izuku.

“Izuku!”

“Hito-“ They collide, and Izuku lets himself fall dramatically to the floor. “Y-you did… it. You fi-
finall...ly kill- killed me.”

Hitoshi looks down at him, breathing heavily from his sprint. “Dude. Not gonna lie, you freaked Eraserhead the fuck out. I was literally there for that and holy fuck-“

“W-with your… dad?”

Hitoshi stops. He takes a long look at Izuku, sighs, and gets down on the floor to lie next to him. “Kill me now.”

“Then per… perish.”

Footsteps pound lightning-fast in the distance. They’re getting closer so fast Izuku almost expects a speed-quirk, but he knows better now. It’s the cat-dad.

“Here comes the man, the caterpillar, the absolute legend- Dadzawa!” Hitoshi whispers just as Aizawa speeds around the corner, quirk active, scarves out like some sort of over-protective hobo ninja still encased in bandages from USJ. Izuku hates how this is happening so many times in the same day.

Aizawa stops, panting. “Are you both dead now?”

Hitoshi lazily reaches into his pocket and holds up a reverse uno card.

Izuku bumps him on the shoulder, signing with wide, lazy gestures. “Don’t kill your father, that’s mean.”

Aizawa ends up carrying Izuku to Recovery Girl’s office because he’s just that tired. Hitoshi is texting someone - likely the squad - and stays outside while Recovery Girl declares him cleared.

Aizawa sits down by Izuku’s cot. “The police contacted us and said you were in Hosu.”

Ah. Izuku signs his response. “Sorry. I didn’t engage Stain, just saw Ingenium and got him out. I didn’t want to go to Hosu.”

Aizawa looks like the Cat No Banana meme. The level of distrust and insult in his eyes is terrifying. “Let me get this straight- you were in between dimensions, just happened to see the Hero Killer and Ingenium, and decided to intervene? Then, you carried a hero in full armor to a hospital even though we just talked about knowing your limits, and left before the police could question you?”

Well. Kind of. Izuku nods because it’s not technically wrong.

Aizawa looks like he’s dying just from the effort of processing Izuku’s levels of dumbass. “Next time consider calling the police or telling me. I’m canceling your match.”

Oh.

Hell.

No.

Izuku shakes his head vehemently. He’s not giving up a chance to make friends with Todoroki. “I’m fine,” he signs with quick, wide gestures.

“You came back from a crime scene. That is not fine.”
“I’ve been thinking about this match for years.”

Aizawa sighs with all the tragedy of a sleep-deprived teacher and presses his hands to both eyes briefly. “Your health is more important than a school event.”

Izuku keeps his chin up, hoping to communicate the defiance in his expression and signs properly. “It matters.”

There’s a very specific reaction to hearing someone believes the most important thing in life is a high school sports tournament match against someone they’ve talked to twice. It involves further cradling one’s head in both hands and inhaling as if close to tears of frustration. Izuku, however, refuses to believe Aizawa is physically capable of tears. Crying, sure. Tears? Never.

“Do you know what also matters, Midoriya? Your health.”

“Todoroki’s freedom matters more,” Izuku replies immediately.

For the first time, Aizawa takes the hint. He does not look happy at the hint’s implications, but he takes it. “...Will you step back from the tournament afterwards, regardless of the result?”

“Sounds good to me.”

Aizawa frowns, getting up from the chair. “You will tap out when it even starts to push your limits. I’m ending it if anything so much as resembles shock. Go get changed once you’re ready.”

With that, Izuku finally has time to process what had happened. It all comes crashing down as the door slides shut. That really happened. Izuku counts to 30, pretending to scroll through his phone rather than ward off a panic attack. Each number comes too slowly and goes too fast. The smell of blood doesn't help. He needs to get changed.

Izuku stumbles on his way to the door and shuts it behind him, trying to breathe normally. When someone calls his name, he turns to see… Tenya.

His friend brightens before his eyes drift to the stains on his gym uniform, and Izuku flinches when Tenya literally calls him out. “Izuku! Izu- is that blood?!”

Tenya reaches hesitantly towards his friend, and Izuku feels bile rising in the back of his throat. Ingenium’s blood is dried and uncomfortable on his clothes, and he just can’t handle this. There’s a nervous breakdown waiting to be had. Izuku can’t look his friend in the eyes, not with this blood literally on his hands.

“I—I’m sorry, Tenya,” he manages to choke out. “Go to Hosu.”

Izuku disappears into the null. He hides in his room at home instead of returning to the Sports Festival. He needs time to process.

The blood is washed off in the sink, and the soiled uniform top is cast off in favor of a custom T-shirt that reads “Fuck Endeavor.” It’s an old gift from another Todoroki that he’s been saving for today. Izuku crawls onto his bed, pulling a towel over his head for a nice little breakdown. His phone plays the live feed, and Uraraka and Kacchan’s fight echoes around the room so he doesn’t lose track of time. It covers up the sound of crying.
So. That was fun.

Edit: upon rereading this is... a tough chapter. i’m gonna put some chaos in Grasshopper’s fic (tomorrow) in case anyone needs some lighter stuff
Edit2: reworded a thing
Edit3: Around this point in the timeline, Urraka and Bakugo had a match. It's the first Deleted Scenes chapter (Part 3 of the Null and Void Series)
okay. so. last chapter there was a moment when Aizawa made a certain face and Princess_Crystal made this and it's the fic's first fanart!!! anyway I nearly died laughing.

shoto and Izuku will keep switching povs. I know it's hard to keep track of but you can tell by the first/last name changes with pov. also!! this chap is gonna be funky. It's all todo's stuff, so yall know what triggers to look out for.

Spoilers: none

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shoto stares at the waiting room table, tuning out the noise of his father yelling through the phone. Unlike the elder Todoroki, Shoto does not want this fight. He’s been watching Midoriya since USJ, first because dimensions were interesting and passing interest, and later because nobody else was either stupid or brave enough to almost server himself in half out of seemingly pettiness.

Then the day after USJ occurred. Midoriya had waltzed in, declared Shoto’s sperm donor an ‘asshat,’ clarified that he had nothing against Shoto, and then said they’d meet in the final rounds. Since then, nothing.

Except Midoriya went missing a few matches ago, reappeared to sprint past Shoto without noticing him while covered in what was definitely blood. Shoto overheard a couple third years saying he and the purple-haired classmate had taken a nap in the middle of the hall.

Now Midoriya is missing.

Shoto does not want this match, but he does at the same time. After so long of not caring, it’s an unwelcome change. Not caring was easy.

Dealing with problems is hard.

It’s time to go. Izuku forces himself to run through a warm-up, splashes cold water on his face, and stuffs some disposable hand warmers in his pocket because goddamn if Todoroki won’t take care of himself then Izuku will. He’s been charging up spite for years to use on this day, but now there’s nothing.

He feels empty.

Teleporting onstage in a T-shirt and his sports uniform bottoms gets the crowd’s attention. They cheer, unaware that he was gone because his friend’s brother was in mortal danger and not because of technical difficulties.

Izuku failed one friend. He can’t fail another. Tenya is watching from the stands.
His father is watching from the stands. Shoto has failed him before, in his refusal to use his fire and his small rebellious moments, but this is a big event, with an even bigger audience. To directly step out of line right now would herald a very long training session at home. He won’t lose. He can’t lose. It’s all pointless if the award is won by Enji’s power. Shoto will only use his ice. He can’t care about anything else.

A perfect circle of darkness opens and Midoriya steps out onto the stage. He looks dead, with red-rimmed eyes and a T-shirt that reads- wait. Shoto squints, not really believing his eyes as his classmate bears the words ‘FUCK ENDEAVOR’ across his chest.

Shoto is slightly jealous.

Midnight calls them together before the match, eyeing Midoriya’s non-approved attire critically. “Midoriya, are you sure that’s the shirt you want to wear?”

Midoriya blinks, taking a second to process before glancing down at his clothes in mild surprise. Shoto notices he has bloodstains on his pants. It’s against health code, but Midoriya gives off a slightly weird all-knowing vibe that makes even Midnight hesitate to ask. Shoto strongly suspects it’s the blood of a minor deity Midoriya met for breakfast. They must not have settled the pancake bill.

“Yeah. This is my friendship shirt.” Midoriya smiles, determination snapping into place behind the exhaustion. When he meets Shoto’s eyes, the challenge is clear: fight me at 100%. It’s not a request Shoto will answer, but he sees it.

Midnight frowns. “Well… it’s not really in dress code. One little thing, though: is that blood?”

“Uniform machine broke,” Midoriya mutters, which makes precisely no sense. Shoto has some googling to do after this match.

Midnight finds this hilarious and snaps her whip in Shoto’s direction with a bit more zest for life than necessary. ”Excellent! Ahh, the humor of youth- wait a moment.” Midnight adjusts her mask and pulls her mic away from her face. “Midoriya, you do know that shirt is misspelled, right?”

“What.” Midoriya asks before grabbing his shirt and staring at horror at the word ‘ENDEAVOR.’ Shoto hadn’t realized it was misspelled, but on closer inspection it reads “ENDEVOR.” Midoriya meets his horrified eyes at the same time. In Shoto’s defense he didn’t make the shirt and has horrendous ADD. Midoriya can’t claim at least one of those excuses.

“Well,” Midoriya says miserably. “If my ancestors are so determined to see me to make a fool of myself, I can’t disappoint them.”

Midnight smiles as through Midoriya hadn’t just spoken the most hardcore line they’ve ever heard. “Todoroki, are you okay with this?”

“It’s amazing.” If nothing else, it will piss off the old man. Besides, he doesn’t care about the misspellings. Enji will probably assume Midoriya didn’t even bother getting the name right. Sucks to be Number Two, am I right?

Midnight laughs. “In the interest of protecting our student’s creative freedoms-” which is a load of bullshit, but Shoto’s starting to remember some of the choice words Enji and Midnight had called each other at a press conference a few years back. It explains why she’s enjoying this - “I’ll allow it!”
Midoriya glances down at his shirt doubtfully as the audience cheers. Shoto takes it to be a sign his father is widely disliked and mentally cheers as well. Yay.

Present Mic’s voice booms out. “Wowza! It looks like Midoriya is playing dirty with this round- what d’ya think, Eraserhead??”

“I don’t care.”

Present Mic’s laugh shakes the stadium. “GREAT! Just a quick recap, this is Todoroki, quirk: Half-Hot, Half-Cold! Against Midoriya the Teleporter!” They keep lying about Midoriya’s quirk. Suspicious. Shoto makes another note to start a new theory board.

Across the ring, Midoriya backs up, looking ready to fall over at any moment. It’s time. Midnight calls the start, and Shoto fires off his quirk.

He’ll win.

He’ll win.

Izuku’s okay with losing – he has a different goal.

He drops into the null immediately, reappearing in the sky above freshly formed ice. He lets himself fall, just for the cinematic glory of that camera shot, and reenters the null again once the tell-tale crackle of ice hits his ears.

Hopefully he’ll be a meme.

Or on a poster. Maybe they’ll even replay that at the next Sports Festival like they sometimes do for the second and third years. Goal number one, ‘dramatic flair’ has been achieved. Now it’s time for angsty character building.

Todoroki is expecting him to come from behind, so Izuku throws himself out of the void to swing a right hook at Todoroki’s face. It’s blocked, and Izukus red shoes are nearly frozen to the ground. He jumps up, allowing the null to swallow him before it happens. Ice spikes up where he stood seconds earlier. He pops out of the null behind Todoroki, disappears again before the ice can reaches him.

Izuku hates this plan.

He appears, almost gets iced, and disappears into the void. Rinse and repeat. Todoroki is getting slower with each passing moment. His posture lowers as supporting himself turns into a chore. Still, he persists. The ring slowly turns into an ice mountain, with Todoroki frozen at its lowest point. Izuku remains mobile, still too far away to reach his opponent.

There’s frost on Todoroki’s uniform, sticking his hair into uneven clumps. Izuku has been tracking how far the ice can reach. He crawls out of the Null to crouch on the highest spire like an angry teenage batman. Todoroki looks up, anger and frustration seething up at Izuku. It’s too much like Endeavor in too many futures, bloody but never broken, surrounded by his own destruction in search of victory. Shoto – Todoroki - will never look like Endeavor, never match that man in hatred and callous disregard. It’s the desperation that links them, and Izuku hates himself for noticing.

They will never be the same. He pushes the thought far away, burying it under the memory of a
different Todoroki under a meteor shower, lit by a jar of fireflies in a distant world. Izuku has to trust
the friend he’s never made, but he’ll always believe in Todoroki’s innate goodness. He’s looking
forward to learning who his friend is.

“Give it up, Todoroki!” Izuku hates this plan so much. “You’re overtaxing yourself!”

Todoroki tries to capture Izuku, but the ice doesn’t reach. He’s at his limit. Izuku hates seeing this.
He jumps, skidding down the ice and into the Null when he nearly slips. Izuku reappears for a kick
to the left side. It connects, and frost-coated clothes crunch as Todoroki loses his footing. They’re too
close for big, sweeping moves.

Todoroki’s knee hits Izuku’s chest, and he can’t breathe for a moment. Izuku skids back on slippery
ice, then springs, headbutting Todoroki’s jaw. His opponent’s mouth closes with a snap, and he spits
blood.

“You aren’t your father,” Izuku screams through his aching head. Todoroki swings down, catching
Izuku’s shoulder and sending him into a roll. Izuku springs up into a low kick.

“Nobody else seems to think so,” Todoroki spits, dodging, before Izuku grabs his arm, twisting to
throw the taller boy to over his shoulder. Todoroki hits the ground hard, and ices Izuku’s feet to the
ground.

“That’s a lie and you know it!” Izuku lets the Null take him, slipping out of his shoes. He’ll do this in
socks. Pain is nothing for the sake of friendship. Izuku steps back into reality. Ice slips under his feet,
and Izuku grits his teeth against the numbing sting that accompanies it.

“Have you ever asked? Have you ever thought about something besides that asshole?” Izuku re-
directs Todoroki’s punch downwards, barely. “Quirks belong to you! I’ve fought my whole life to
protect the people close to me, all because I have this weird, self-destructing quirk, and guess
what?!”

Todoroki catches Izuku’s arm, trying to restrain him. “I don’t care!”

“Well fuck you because I do!” Izuku kicks back, trying to get Todoroki to release his arm. It doesn’t
work. Todoroki has been training with Endeavor for a long time, and he throws Izuku to the ground
in a restraining hold with practiced ease.

Izuku wheezes when his chest hits the cold, icy ground. “Your quirk has no right to define you.”

Todoroki presses Izuku’s face into the ground. “It’s never defined me.”

Izuku twists his head, glaring up at Todoroki. “So, step up and act like it! Your quirk, your dipshit of
a father doesn’t matter! You get to decide your future from now on.”

Todoroki pulls back when the Null opens under Izuku. He drops into the void. Immediately, he
opens another portal several feet away to glare at Todoroki.

Izuku meets Todoroki’s eyes from inside the Null. “We’ll be happy someday, Todoroki. But we
have to fight for it.”

For a moment, everything is still. Todoroki sits on the mountain of ice he’s built while Izuku leans
out of the void, green hair floating from the Null’s lack of gravity.

Todoroki doesn’t look angry, like he had earlier. He doesn’t look stressed or resigned. He looks…
lost. Alone in his self-built walls of ice, keeping everyone out. Izuku waits, because he’s given his
words, his actions, his match, his sweat and tears. Now, all he has left to give is his patience, so he
gives that, too.

Todoroki breaks the silence, running a hand through frost-crusted red hair. His breath puffs out in
little clouds. “You really believe that?”

Izuku smiles and hopes it doesn’t look as tired as he feels. “I have to. We’ll both grow beyond what
happened, because it’s in the past. It’s shaped me, but it doesn’t have to become me. I want to
survive. I want my friends to survive.”

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happened, because it’s in the past. It’s shaped me, but it doesn’t have to become me. I want to
survive. I want my friends to survive.”

Todoroki the ground, shivering. “I can’t let him win.” He says it like a question, a last-ditch request.

Izuku knows what he’s asking, but he can’t give it. He can’t acknowledge that this self-destruction is
okay. “Does Endeavor benefit from you destroying yourself,” he asks quietly, too quietly for anyone
but the wind and Todoroki to hear. “Because you know, sometimes loving yourself is the rebellion.”

Todoroki snaps his head up. “What?”

“You trying to stop the hurt inside of yourself doesn’t matter to him. This is wrong. Hurting yourself
is wrong.” Izuku takes out one of his hand warmers and tosses it over. “You’re in quirk shock,” he
explains when Todoroki catches and inspects it suspiciously.

“So are you,” Todoroki points out, but he clutches the hand-warmer like it’s a lifeline, or an olive
branch. It’s both.

Is Izuku in shock? Interesting, his shirt isn’t that stained from sludge- OH SHIT. I HADN’T
NOTICED AND NOW AIZAWA IS GONNA KILL ME. His shirtfront is stained with sludge, and
Izuku realizes with horror he’s been drooling like an idiot for most of this conversation. He told
Todoroki about the wonders of self-care while experiencing backlash from his (broken) quirk. This is
very much not an ideal situation.

He’s panicking enough not to notice Todoroki finally has the right kind of fire in his eyes until he
grins, standing shakily. “Let’s end this, Izuku.”

It’s been a long wait to hear that name from Todoroki. Izuku grins back, mentally checking another
name off his mental list of people to save. “You bet, Shoto.”

Shoto stretches out his arm, ablaze in flames that belong to nobody but himself. Izuku laughs wildly,
embracing the heat as it comes. Nothingness expands around him, and starlight glimmers in the
biggest portal he can make as he invites the Null into his mind. His teeth sharpen, broken quirk still
aching but starting to reshape itself, and he knows that it’s an even match.

Distantly, he can hear Midnight calling an end to the fight, can feel the ground reshaping as
Cementoss scrambles to reinforce the arena. It’s too late. The sudden fluctuation in temperature
explodes only to be eaten by emptiness itself. Across the arena, Izuku catches sight of Shoto’s
bruised face before they are both blown back. He’s finally smiling.

It’s beautiful.

Izuku passes out first.

Chapter End Notes
hi! I needed to warm up for inktober so I did two pieces for this chap. idk if yall wanna see them but I posted them here. Also, I wrote Uraraka and Bakugo's fight. if there are enough deleted scenes I'll throw them all together into a fic for Null and Void.

anyway, self care is a rebellious act and I support yall

Edit: spelling!
Izuku wakes up encased in bandages. Uraraka is sitting on the foot of his bed, messing around with her phone while Hitoshi stacks paper cups in a pyramid on his (cast-encased) arm. Izuku flips him off without disturbing them. He gets reverse-uno card to the face for his troubles.

“Welcome to the land of the living, broccoli-man.”

Uraraka snorts. “Guess who’s a meme now!”

“You’re kidding.”

“Nope,” Uraraka sings cheerfully. She passes over her phone, and yep, they don’t have audio, but all the highlights are there. Shoto looked at the camera at one point and his expression encapsulates ‘I am so done with this shit’ perfectly Izuku stands in the background looking half-dead. There’s already a popular screencap of his FUCK ENDEVOR shirt, another of Izuku throwing a hotpacket at a glacier, and someone edited the shot where he dives headfirst at a mountain of ice, so it looks like he’s flying. Shoto accidentally dabbed once when throwing ice. There’s also loads of icy-hot pain relief jokes, and Izuku is here for every second.


“Momo beat Shoto?”

“You shoulda seen it!” Uraraka mimes punching enthusiastically. “She made this chemical - I don’t know what it was but it was so wild! Present Mic said she was using the temperatures to make an explosion and distract from her attack.”

“Holy shit.”

“I know, right? Instant K.O.” Uraraka sighs, sparkles in her eyes. “I should add explosives to my costume.”

Hitoshi nods wisely. “Hatsume probably has some.”

“What about Kirishima?”
Uraraka is still mentally re-assessing the merits and detriments of explosives, so Hitoshi answers. “Tied with you and Tenya for fourth.”

Izuku winces, remembering Kirishima’s mission to tell the world he is the successor of All Might. “Oh, RIP.”

Aizawa steps through the door, not really bothering to announce his presence before pointing at Izuku. “You. You are going to be what kills me.”

That’s fair.

It’s further demonstrated by Izuku’s plans to do something very stupid once he’s allowed out of Recovery Girl’s office. Uraraka’s family texts her first, and Present Mic collects Hitoshi for what sounds suspiciously like a family victory dinner after the final student assembly. Izuku’s allowed to leave just after the students are dismissed from the arena.

Izuku watches students disperse. There’s laughing, crying, and plenty of reminiscing over the sports festival. He spots a familiar face in the crowd and pushes through. Yaomomo sees him coming and connects the dots immediately.

“Come on,” she says, dragging them both out of the foot traffic to a quieter hallway and ignoring his congratulations on second place. “What happened?”

“Remember, um. You said if I could pass on anything about the future.” Izuku wraps his hand around the quirk suppressor he’s wearing. It’s okay. The shock might not be too bad now. “It’s Tenya.”

Yaomomo inhales sharply, but motions for him to go on.

“Internships. I-“ Izuku’s lungs abruptly feel like they’re made of liquid, and he can’t continue. The coughing is rough this time. He’s at his limit.

Yaomomo notices and takes charge. “I’ll talk to him. He’s in danger during internships?”

Izuku nods.

“Fatally?”

A shrug. The null doesn’t like that, and he’s forced to double over or hack his lungs out. He settles for crouching down and wheezing. Yaomomo mistakes it for relief and joins him, rubbing his back.

“Don’t worry, I’ll pass it on.”

Oh, the Null really doesn’t like that. Pain rises up, and color starts to leach from Izuku’s vision. His bones ache to their very core, and it must show because Yaomomo tenses, stress flooding her posture.

“Please don’t,” he manages, and catches her hurried agreement right before everything goes dark. Izuku blacks out.

He wakes up in the nurses’ office and endures the lecture from Recovery Girl. Yaomomo has left for the day, and the office is empty besides a couple third years knocked out on nearby cots. There must
have been a fight. Regardless, Izuku steps outside the office only to find Aizawa waiting.

“Problem child,” he says in a voice that indicates these conversations are growing old fast. “Let’s talk.”

Izuku trails after his teacher, running through the list of everything Yaomomo could have said. It’s not that she wouldn’t have considered information is tied to his quirk and its drawbacks- no, the problem is that she’s too smart. He doesn’t know what she said. Yaomomo is fully aware of the cards in her hand, and she’ll play them perfectly well. Izuku just doesn’t know what she said. He knows, the voice in Izuku’s head whispers after being silent for so long. He knows you’re dangerous, a time bomb for villains to abduct, an information bank for anyone smart enough to catch on, and Nezdu will find out. We all know what will happen then.

Aizawa doesn’t lead Izuku to the principal’s office. Instead, he leisurely strolls in the direction on UA’s front entrance. “Yaoyorozu told me you were in quirk shock,” he says instead. “Midoriya, I’m going to ask a question, and I want an honest answer. It will have no bearing on your grades.”

“How often do you go into shock?” Aizawa’s voice is carefully light. Izuku thinks back to today, to ripping his limits apart again and again. With Ingenium, then with Shoto, then Yaomomo. He’s given a lot today. His quirk has probably full on snapped, which has never happened before. The limits have likely changed.

Izuku settles for a neutral, “do you mean how many times a day, or week?” and waits for the fallout. There is none. Instead, Aizawa inhales sharply and straightens up from his slouch.

“And what about what Yaoyorozu told me? She mentioned you two were discussing Iida’s internships when it happened.” Of course, she would. It’s a smart way to slip a hint to their teacher. “I’ve half a mind to pull the Hosu offer after today.”

“Sir?”

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“Nope, not happening. Abort mission.

“I need that position,” Izuku says with a bit more emotion than he’d intended. “I need to be there. If you’re going to pull me from Hosu, then at least pull Tenya, too.”

Aizawa raises an eyebrow at the venom in his voice, saying nothing.

“Please,” Izuku manages after a deep breath. “I need to intern with Manuel. He and Ingenium both work with civilians closely, and I’ve seen their teams in action.” Too often, he doesn’t add. Aizawa doesn’t interrupt, waiting for Izuku to say his piece. “I need to intern with them.”

Aizawa waits, understanding there’s more that needs to be said. The words don’t come - Izuku can feel the null threatening to swamp him if he so much as breathes a word. He’s not sure what exactly will happen, but Aizawa looks stressed, frayed at the edges after seeing his student collapse one too many times in the last six hours.

“I’ll be checking in with them halfway through the week for a full report,” the teacher grumbles eventually, and Izuku lights up just a little bit at the unspoken permission to attend. “So help me, if
you’ve gone into shock even once, I’m pulling you for a three day boot camp in quirk control. I’ve been meaning to pull you for training after class as well. We start immediately up until internships.”

“Really?” Izuku gasps, stars in his eyes.

“You’re only going if you keep a spotless record until then. Understand?”

“Perfectly!”

“I still want the essays.”

“Of course!”

Aizawa grumbles something about regretting his decisions already but Izuku is too relieved to care. Stain will show up on the third day of internships, just under halfway through the week. Izuku can work with this.

“What the fuck,” Cloud says the moment Izuku gets home to the Lonely Owl, “was that.”

He’s lucky mom is out, having watched the festival on Aunt Mitsuki’s larger TV. She’s implemented a swear jar. Cloud contributes daily.

“What? Shoto’s match?”


“Language,” Hisen calls lightly from the kitchen.

Cloud pays him no mind. “He’s heard worse shit from good ol’ blasty-palms-“

Hisen’s vaguely disappointed disembodied voice rises from the kitchen again. “Language.”

Izuku shrugs, heading towards the stairs to change out of his ‘FUCK ENDEVOR’ shirt before mom gets home. “I think I broke my quirk, but it’s fine now.”

“What.”

“It’s fine.”

“You broke your quirk,” Cloud says faintly, his voice pained, “and fought a whole-ass glacier with it.”

“Language.”

Cloud closes his eyes for a second, drawing on some sort of internal strength. He looks exactly like Aizawa had earlier that day, worn out and exasperated at Izuku’s levels of dumbass. “Well. That’s gonna leave a stain on your record.”

“I’m fine,” Izuku repeats, because he is and also doesn’t want to deal with the pun.
“No, let’s… You know what? Let’s unpack that. Where’s Taka?” Cloud spins around desperately, eyes searching beyond the world for what only he can see. “We need more brain cells in this room.”

These are bold words, considering that Izuku, Taka and Cloud all have exactly one brain cell between the three. Cloud vanishes into starlit mist before Izuku can voice his opinions. That’s fine. He has an apology essay to write.

He pauses upstairs to shower, pulling on a worn All Might hoodie afterwards and trooping back down to the cafe to finish Aizawa’s essays. One is done by the time a car pulls up in the driveway and Mom hurries to crush him in a hug.

“I’m so proud,” she tells him quietly. “You gave it your all. We should go out or do something to celebrate.

Izuku grins slightly. “Katsudon?” He can finish this homework later.

“Sounds like a plan.” Mom pauses on the way to the kitchen, glancing back. “Oh, and Izuku… I realize that in high school you may be around people who are swearing more than in junior high, but… let’s keep that shirt at home, okay?”

Izuku glances down subtly, double-checking he’s not wearing the shirt. “Okay.” It’s probably for the best, considering it’s now got bloodstains on it. He hadn’t switched out of the pants from Hosu up until an hour ago, and even then, everything is likely going to be burned for sanitation purposes.

Mom draws the line at cosmic drool.

“Was that your blood?” she asks quietly, and Izuku shakes his head. She nods, having accepted long ago that some worlds are weirder than others, but subtly checks him for injuries anyway. He must pass inspection, because a moment later she’s pulling him into a hug.

“You were amazing,” she tells him quietly. “I’m very proud to be your mother.”

“I’m proud to be your son,” Izuku offers back. “Sorry. I know today scared you.”

“Parenting is scary. From the moment I first held you, I knew letting go would be the struggle, not holding on. I signed up for this.” Mom pats his shoulder and draws away. “Just make sure you’re being as safe as you can, okay?” She offers him a smile and messes up his hair before disappearing into the larger kitchen to cook and chat with Hisen. Izuku gets back to work, moving to the coffee table by Cloud’s favorite couch. He has just enough time for the next essay before dinner.

It takes a full half hour for Cloud to find Taka on some distant world being hunted by the police, and another half hour to bring her back. His story is blatantly ignoring that it shouldn’t have taken that long to return, and Taka gives no explanation. Instead, she gargoyles-crouches on the couch’s back rather than the cushions, successfully upsetting the natural order of life. Izuku takes advantage of this to kick the couch.

“Beans,” he whispers in his best fantasy accent, which is admittedly terrible. “Please sir, I need the beans.”

Cloud plops down on the couch, aiming a lazy swipe at Taka as he falls into the cushions. He misses. “Give the green bean more beans,” he drawls. “It’s bean a while since he had ‘em. Get it?”

Taka holds out until Izuku tries to mimic mom’s ‘unimpressed mom stare.’ “They thought I robbed Best Jeanist and kidnapped Eraserhead,” she explains after Izuku’s glare sharpens. “It’s insulting. I hate denim, and kidnapping other heroes is a waste of time.” This does not help Izuku’s understanding of the situation at all.
“What’d you steal,” Izuku asks, figuring it’s better to get small details and work his way up.

“Atrocities to fashion, in jacket form.”

Cloud grumbles when Izuku turns to him for further explanation. “I also recall that last year someone got mildly poisoned before they tried to convince All Might he should give the Number One spot to Best Jeanist.”

“What,” Izuku hisses. He’s never around for the fun stuff.

“It was great,” Cloud tells him with glee. “Hawks agreed, and this was the day before he tried to murder Jeanist for his burnt boyfriend.” He sounds inordinately pleased with himself. Izuku glances to Taka, hoping for an explanation.

“The poison was a mistake,” Taka says mildly. “But the man does deserve Number One. I mean, look at him. He’s a genuine hero who just wants to wear turtlenecks and denim on denim.”

“You hate denim,” Izuku reminds her, having only just learned this a moment ago. “That’s not a supporting argument.”

Taka shrugs. “I’m not going to judge his poor life choices.”

“No? You are?” Cloud nudges Izuku. “‘Crimes against nature,’ she called it. ‘Abysmal. No hope left for the human species so long as he is allowed to make his own fashion choices.’ Also, nobody can replace All Might.”

There’s a moment of silence where each of them realizes that Izuku’s entire existence has been designed to do exactly that. Kirishima may end up replacing All Might. Mirio was trained to, although he doesn’t know it. Nezdu probably has all the backup plans.

“Well,” Izuku allows. “Nobody else can really be All Might.”

Taka hesitates. “Best Jeanist could.”

“No,” Cloud hisses. “He was at my old agency… yeah, no. You don’t understand, I swear he doesn’t have half of his face-”

“Even so, he does have style,” Izuku allows. He needs to choose the right side in this argument to get maximum nonsense. He’ll play neutral until it looks like one of them is losing, or a line is crossed.

Cloud shoots him a betrayed look. “Et tu, Izuku?”

Taka subtly shifts just out of Cloud’s range before contributing her next piece of wisdom. “You think there’s a world where they’re quirk swapped? All Might and Jeanist?”

Izuku pales at the mental image of All Might in jorts. “Cursed. Terrible. Get out of my house.”

Cloud looks like he’s seriously considering homicide. “The universe wouldn’t allow it, and if it did, I’d destroy all of existence just to cleanse that one moment where your dreams came true.”

“Only a monster would do that. Let me dream, at least,” Taka counters.

“Monsters make very good humans, and humans are very good at becoming monsters,” Cloud murmurs. “What are lines drawn in the sand? Do they even matter?”

Taka hesitates, at a loss for an equally dramatic response, so Izuku takes over. “You would destroy
everything? The universe? Me?” he asks quietly.

Cloud meets his eyes, dead serious. “In an instant.”

Izuku takes this fact and weighs it against his newly acquired mental image of All Might in booty shorts. “Yeah, okay. Valid, big mood, have a nice day.”

Taka winces. “Ouch.”

Cloud leans back to stare down Taka, “I have not killed before, but All Might in jorts cannot be allowed-”

“It’s a blessed concept,” Taka announces bluntly. “You’re just afraid of seeing the bottom half of Jeanist’s face.”

“Cursed,” Izuku spits. “Don’t disgrace my mentor like this, and nobody sees Jeanist’s face. It’s a universal constant.”

“Blessed. Just imagine the All Might uniform but as a turtleneck. It’s terrible. Truly, the ideal hero.” Taka nods sagely. “We do not deserve him.”

“Turtleneck All Might is a timeline that needs to burn,” Cloud argues.

“It’s iconic,” Taka spits back.

“A disaster,” Izuku decrees, hopping up from his seat to pace. “Have you seen the format of his uniform? He can’t have a turtleneck. Don’t spit on his name like this-”

“I’ll spit where I damn well like,” Taka mutters before getting up and grabbing the swear jar to toss a gold coin in, essentially buying a years’ worth of swears. “Jeanist should be the Number One hero.”

Izuku, who had a pretty good shot at being the future Number One, doesn’t know if he should feel insulted. They’re called in to dinner before he can decide, and spends most of the evening stewing in his own moral confusion. Dedication to All Might and years of fanboy tendencies is hard to beat but… actually, why isn’t Best Jeanist the Number One? When he asks mom, she blinks slowly.

“He’s All Might,” she reminds Izuku while refilling the water in his glass. “Nobody can be All Might, because he’s made for the job. We can’t take each other’s roles in life, sweetie.”

And, well. Izuku can’t argue with her logic.

Taka finds him later that evening, and pulls him through the void to the Lonely Owl’s roof. It's peaceful and still sun-warmed despite the dim sky. Neither of them has any reason to be afraid of heights, considering the null will catch them in the event of a fall. Izuku tells her about the sports festival she missed while at work. He glosses over the quirk trouble, but Taka calls him out easily.

“Cloud filled me in,” she tells him. “We should probably take care of that.”

Izuku shrugs. “I didn’t really notice. Kind of distracted by the serial killer, you know.”
“So? You get stabbed, stab him back. It’s not hard.”

“No? It really is that hard?” Izuku squints. “I can’t stab him back without a knife.”

Taka considers this for all of five seconds before nodding wisely. “Use the one he stabbed you with, then.”

There are many flaws in that logic, so Izuku focuses on the detail Tenya would worry about. “That’s not sanitary.”

“Hm. Use your badass new quirk, then. Speaking of, spill those beans.”

Izuku grumbles. “I don’t wanna. Maybe if I let it sit, it’ll go back to normal.”

“Valid, but…” Taka hums. “Travel quirks are dangerous. Cloud and I both had ours messed with on the job, and I’m gonna tell you right now that quirks aren’t meant to go beyond whatever you manifested at five. Either you added one or broke Travel.”

Izuku shivers. “You never told me that your quirk was broken.”

Instead of answering, Taka reaches out. Blue dust arcs over her gloves, tearing a small rip in the fabric of reality. The null opens in front of her briefly. “Not broken. The average human can survive two quirks before going Nomu. With genetic interference, three.”

Izuku does not like what that implies. He’d assumed Taka and Cloud were born with their multifaceted quirks. “You’ve gotten a quirk from All for One.”

Taka nods, letting the dust disperse and reality mend itself. “It’s different than what happened to you, but the same principles apply. Mind telling me what went wrong?”

“What- no? You don’t get to drop that and move on? Beans. Spill.” Izuku looks away from the skyline to see Taka rolling her eyes. “Hey!”

“I’m not spilling. You’ll go to Central if I spill, and we don’t need that.”

Izuku inches over. “Depends what’s in Central. Tell me and I’ll know not to go, unless y’all are hiding food.” He stares Taka down. “Is it food?”

Taka barks out a laugh. “Central has like... no vegetation.”

“Protein, then. What do you do for vitamins? Rocks?”

“Oh, rude? And we don’t even have farms anymore. It’s boring as heck; everyone but the top brass eats outta cans.” Taka ruffles his hair. “Stay away from my home world, okay? Ain’t nothing but dust and memories for anyone there.”

“But you work for them.”

Taka snorts. “Are you avoiding the topic of your quirk snapping like a pretzel stick?”

It’s a distraction, but Izuku can respect Taka’s boundaries. Izuku huffs before giving the full story of how he’s pretty sure his skeleton tried to hatch from his body. When he gets to the Null feeling like it was inside his chest as well as around him, Taka snaps her fingers.

“I’m willing to bet that’s it. Human body’s gotta have some sort of response to a sentient, omnipotent extra dimensional force breaking your reality-altering... superpower…” Taka trails off before glaring
Izuku can relate. “How do I work with it?” he prompts, more for the sake of Taka’s mental stability than anything else. She takes a moment to find what mental spoons she has left before shaking her head and returning to the topic at hand.

“Try and invite it in? We can find a better testing ground if you need it.”

Izuku shakes his head, already focusing. He remembers what it had felt like in the Null, holding Ingenium, *hands drenched with the blood of his best friend’s brother*-

“It had, hadn’t it? Izuku has only ever pushed the Null away when he doesn't want it, or called it when he needs a portal. Now, he inhales, exhales, and lets go completely.

Inhale.

Exhale.

The Null is always around him, so Izuku lets down his mental barriers and lets it in. Izuku has been anchoring himself to reality ever since he unlocked the suppressors at the entrance exam. Letting go is a release. He has a good second of confidence before everything goes awry.

Izuku’s vision warps first. The sky’s light is too bright, too powerful. Taka gasps as her own quirk reacts, dust swarming back up her arms. Izuku can feel his bones stretching. It hurts less this time, like he’s a puzzle clicking into place. Sitting becomes difficult. Izuku has to open his mouth slightly due to the length of his teeth. They’re sharper now.

“Edgy,” Taka deadpans once they’re sure the Null is done stretching his limits like taffy. “Welcome to the eldritch club, green bean. It’s a party.”

Izuku squints against the now too-bright light. “This is *my* quirk?”

“Hell yeah. I don’t feel the Null trying to absorb our souls or whatever shit it pulls at these times, so you should be fine to experiment with it over internships.”

Izuku nods, shaking his shoulders out. He can’t tell how, but his posture feels different. Lighter. Almost taller, but in a warped, re-proportioned way. He needs a mirror.

Taka reaches into her pocket for tape, re-wrapping the seals on her arms until her black dust retreats. “Speaking of, I’ll be gone for a bit. The big guns back home are calling everyone in for a mission. Cloud’s willing to spar while I’m out.”

Last time there was a mission that long, Taka showed up with the null trying to take over her mind again. Izuku bites back a response and settles for a neutral topic.

“Aizawa wants to meet for training, but he also doesn't pick up on any of my hints. I don’t think it’ll help.”

“He’s either gonna wake up or be stabbed in his sleep.” Taka hums, looking out into the sun’s fading light. “Still, teachers aren’t trained for reading hints like this. Heroes, too. It’s easier once you’ve dealt with the null, but for someone who hasn’t in a while…”
Izuku sits up straight. “Say that again.” He never asked if anyone from the Lonely Owl had met Aizawa before, never told them that his teacher has traveled.

“He’s gonna get stabbed? Because he’s done it before, and I’ll drink the goldfish water if he won’t do it again.”

“After that.” Izuku narrows his eyes against the harsh light. “You know that he’s traveled. You know how much he knows.”

Taka blinks drolly. “Wow, green bean, slow down. I also am unfortunately friends with Cloud, who sees everything, everywhere, and spills precisely zero beans unless bribed with hiking or quality teas. Now lets get your bones into a humanoid form again, yeah?”

Taka refuses to explain herself even while coaching Izuku through pushing the null out of his lungs. She disappears slightly later on a mission, taking both her secrets and expertise on his quirk’s new nonsense with her.

“I know you’re going to Hosu,” she tells him before disappearing into the void, “and I know you’ve probably got a plan, but bring some health magic. It’s not worth the risk.”

“Nezdu will find out,” Izuku grumbles, remembering the first time he connected the dots of exactly what the local super genius could do with magic. It’s why he hasn’t used any yet.

“Nezdu doesn’t matter when you’re fighting a serial killer.” Taka smiles, but he can tell she’s on edge. “Give ‘em hell, kid. Come home safe.”

That evening, Izuku drags an old cardboard box out from under his bed. There’s another in his closet, filled to the brim with assorted bottles. Glass and Crystal containers hold liquids of various colors, thicknesses, and luminosities. All are stoppered, and all have a sticky note attached. ‘Regrows Bones,’ one reads. ‘Paralysis,’ proclaims another.

He’s been stockpiling these for years. Izuku sorts out a couple of health boosting ones, and two that negate ‘harmful effects’ which hopefully refers to Stain’s quirk. He sets these aside for internships before taking the one labeled ‘Paralysis.’

He could fix this whole mess.

He could take this health potion to the hospital and Ingenium could cut his recovery time down to five seconds. Izuku could rewrite time and Tenya would never even go to Hosu. It’s the ideal solution. Izuku barely gets two steps out the door before the Null stops him. It fills his lungs, bringing the cold reality crashing down.

He’s not allowed to heal Ingenium.
so. yeah. lots of hidden plot prep. Aizawa is thinking and Yaomomo is connecting all
the dots. We've got a fic visit coming up that y'all have been asking for and I'm
absolutely excited. On a side note I've got enough for a Deleted Scenes fic (that was
fast???) so if you want that hmu in the comments and I'll throw it into Null and Void.

Shoutout to y'all in the kudos. I don't say it enough but I love and support y'all.

Poll for science: is Best Jeanist as #1 hero cursed or blessed?
Izuku hasn’t taken the bus in forever. It’s one of those little details where he’d figured that teleporting meant an extra half hour in bed, quirk practice, and eco-friendly transport all in one. Unfortunately, this also means he is wildly unfamiliar with the bus route to UA in the rare event he breaks his quirk in a Sports Festival. Izuku is squinting dubiously at the station map for his stop when he feels a small tug on his jacket. A little girl looks back up, stars in her eyes. When he glances around for her guardian, he catches sight of her father watching him cautiously with a small glittery backpack in hand.

“Hello,” he says gently. “How are you?”

The little girl beams, one tooth missing. She nods her head vigorously and announces, “you were on the TV!” as loudly as she can. People look over and smile, though a few continue watching Izuku cautiously. They must remember him from Monoma’s match.

Her father nudges the girl with a free hand gently. “Keiko, he asked you ‘how are you.’”

Keiko brushes this hiccup off immediately. “I’m well, how are you? You were in the sports festival, right?”

“I was, and I’m doing well, thank you.” He’s going to set a good example for this kid even if it costs him a panic attack. “Did you like the festival?”
“Yes!! I liked the explosion boy, but papa wouldn’t let me watch his part. I also liked when you made the other guy disappear – that was really cool.”

That had been absolutely terrifying, actually. “Yeah, that was super hard to do. My favorite part was watching friends do their best. We had a lot of fun.” It’s not a lie- Hitoshi had fun. Uraraka had fun for most of it. Kirishima probably thought it was manly. Tenya had the opposite of fun, and Izuku had swung between apathetic and spiteful like a metronome. So that’s at least two of them living the good life.

Keiko thanks him, asks for an autograph – Izuku’s first time giving one on this world – and waves when her stop arrives. The passengers give Izuku a wide berth, likely wary after seeing what his quirk can do. He doesn’t fault them for it – anyone would be cautious after learning a kid can drag people into the void itself, and the drool wasn’t exactly pretty.

Izuku mulls over the public’s reaction to the festival right up to the shoe lockers where a heavy hand descends on his shoulder. Izuku yelps before he recognizes the face. Tenya’s smile doesn’t reach his eyes.

“Tenya- I’m sorry,” Izuku says immediately.

The smile drops slightly before it’s back in place. “’Morning. I’m going on ahead.” Tenya leaves without preamble.

When Izuku finds him in the classroom, his presence isn’t acknowledged. Tenya speaks to nobody, burying his head in his book. He didn’t scold Kacchan for nearly exploding the door when Mina spooked him, and continues to be silent as Dark Shadow nearly blows out a lightbulb before math. By lunch, the whole class is on edge and better behaved than ever.

Tenya doesn’t go to the cafeteria.

Ochako isn’t an idiot. The moment she steps through the classroom door it becomes very clear something’s gone wrong. Deku is watching Iida like he would a bomb, and that’s bad news.

Hitoshi takes two steps in after her and sums up the whole situation in a few words: “looks like somebody replaced Tenya with a clone.”

Ochako shakes her head. “Bakugo would have punched him by now. He’s real.” Bakugo is unusually well behaved, glaring at anyone who so much as raises their voice above a whisper. That alone is a sign the apocalypse is nigh. The room is tense, silent as Ochako takes her seat, and every movement seems to echo.

Iida doesn’t say a word besides the daily aisatsu. Aizawa doesn’t comment, though Ochako could swear that partway through first period he stops to rest a hand on Iida’s shoulder.

Throughout the following classes she tries everything, from asking for an eraser to discussing the latest hero news, to get a reaction. Hitoshi even remarks very loudly that somebody had spray-painted some choice words of the four-letter kind on UA’s outer walls (a lie, but one well thought up). It’s like Iida has answered his true calling to be a robot.
Deku stays silent throughout it all.

She isn’t stupid. Ochako can tell there’s more to this story than anyone’s letting on, and she’s willing to bet Deku knows. Actually, he was acting weird yesterday. Deku probably knew before it happened, which is a lot to unpack that Ochako had decided weeks ago was better left stuffed in a suitcase when she’d first learned her friend had future-knowledge.

“Spill,” she hisses after cornering Deku in the hallway. “You know what’s wrong.”

Deku startles, hands fidgeting and eyes wide like a deer in the headlights. “I have absolutely no idea what you’re talking about.” It must be really big if Deku is this bad.

“Come on, we both know something’s wrong, and if my friend’s in trouble I’d like to be able to do something. What’s up with Iida?” Ochako watches as her friend squirms, hesitates, and then finally lets out a breath.

Deku speaks in a rush, eyes darting around the hallway nervously. “Okay, so I might have tried to fix the timeline and only screwed it up further and there’s going to be a news story on HeroWatch in like, ten minutes that is about Stain… getting… um.” He trails off, eyes slightly glassy as if remembering a bad dream.

“Ingenium,” Ochako guesses, hoping it’s not true. If there’s one thing that would tear Iida apart, it’s this. Deku winces, but doesn’t deny it.

“I don’t think he died, but it looked pretty bad.”

Ochako blinks in surprise. She does not like the implications of what Izuku knows, how he had spoken like he was there, but they need to deal with this. They need to- wait. “Have you said anything to him?”

Deku looks guilty, of all things. “I…. I think I hurt him, by getting involved. I don’t know. But on the off chance that I did, I want to stay away in case me being nearby makes this worse.”

“Okay.” That’s really mature. Ochako wasn’t expecting this, but she can respect Izuku’s intuition. Hopefully ‘giving Iida room’ and ‘not being there when support is needed’ don’t become the same thing. ‘I’ll talk to him. Do you know where he went?’

Deku brightens slightly. “I’ll find him,” he promises, stepping back. There’s nothing supporting his foot, and Ochako hops back from the expanding portal just to be safe. They all saw what happened when he took Iida to the void. Since then, Ochako has been feeling left out. It’s like the other three - Hitoshi as well, though she’s closer to him than the others and she doesn’t think he was in on it as much as Iida and Izuku - have been in on a secret. She doesn’t know why, or how, but she’s not an idiot. Something happened.

When Deku pops out of nowhere with the news that Iida is eating alone on the roof, she thanks him and heads for the stairs.

“Hey.” Uraraka surprises Tenya. He hadn’t marked her for the type to enjoy rooftop meals. UA’s roofs aren’t technically an option for dining location, but Tenya’s feeling just the slightest bit
rebellious. It’s calm and quiet up here, and he can see the whole city stretched out around him. Uraraka marvels at the view for a moment as she nears. Were Tenya able to think of much besides his brother in a Hosu alleyway until an anonymous civilian had intervened, he’d be worried about the others joining.

Tensei wouldn’t tell him who saved him, but Tenya had recognized the look on Izuku’s face as the same one his brother wore. They both knew, and what’s worse, something about that person made them worried. Tenya hates sitting still in a crisis. He hates when the people who know how he can help, who know how to fix this, keep information from him. It’s like he’s not being trusted to make his own decisions. Tenya is perfectly capable of handling the grief of his brother nearly dying, but it’s very hard to move forward when everyone is so intent on holding him back.

Maybe it would be better to just cut ties, sort out his problems, and continue on with life. “I’m sure the others are eating downstairs,” Tenya offers.

“I know. Can I sit?” Uraraka doesn’t wait for a full response before she settles down, pulling out her homemade lunch. She makes them every day. Supposedly it’s cheaper than UA’s meal plan. “Hero names are tomorrow. Thought about yours?”

“No.” Yes. Ingenium. The name is too sour now, the words too heavy to speak. Saying them would be akin to drowning, to moving on. Tenya needs to do something in a crisis, and just sitting in UA is torture. He can’t take the name, can’t taint it by carrying out the plan half-forming in the back of his mind.

He’s half tempted to buy a train ticket to Hosu and spend internships hunting. Seeing the Hero Killer captured, and doing it himself, would ease the rage and sorrow tangled together in his chest. He knows this, and it’s all he can think about.

“I’m thinking about Uravity.” Uraraka hums, light and cheerful. She’s set her phone facedown between them, so Tenya knows no notifications will pop up. Unless she checks it, he has until the end of lunch before anyone looks at him with pity and hollow well-wishes.

“A good name.”

“For a hero.” Uraraka shrugs. “Not for a friend. Can we use first names already? It’s been like, a whole month now.”

The offer is enough to shake Tenya out of his thoughts, and he offers what small smile he can. “...I don’t see why not.”

“Cool. Tenya.”

“Ochako.”

The roof is warm, sunlight soaking into concrete and resting on his face. Tenya doesn’t know when the news breaks - he just knows that at some point his alarm goes off, signaling the end of lunch is five minutes away. They pack up their lunches together.

“Tenya.” Ochako stops him at the stairs. “You’ll tell us, right? If you need anything.”

“Of course.” I won’t. “You are my friends, after all. “You can’t help me with this one.”
Tenya is doing a little better. Izuku can’t be sure if it’s whatever Uraraka - *Ochako*, she’d told him minutes ago - had said, or if Tenya just knows to put on a different mask and hide the pain under another layer of denial.

He watches them leave at the end of school from the classroom windows. Hopefully Ochako will get through to him - she’s got a better chance than Izuku, who can’t look at Tenya without seeing Ingenium, broken and bleeding, or dozens of Tenyas each brought down by their need for revenge.

“Problem child.” Aizawa’s voice drags Izuku out of his thoughts. “Glad you remembered our agreement at the Sports Festival. Training fields, warm up and wait for me.”

Iizu nods, dropping into the null. He’s barely completed five laps around the training field before Aizawa trudges out of UA, followed by Hound Dog of all people.

“Your quirk is unstable,” Aizawa announces without preamble, “and it’s controlling you.”

“It’s sentient,” Izuku mutters, surprising himself when the words come out clearly instead of garbled by the Null.

“Figures this year’s class would have two of those. I should have guessed,” Aizawa mutters before continuing. “We need to separate its will from yours and work out some grounding exercises. Starting with meditation.” The teacher plops down on the ground unceremoniously, and Izuku follows his example.

Hound Dog joins their triangle with a sigh. “Aizawa asked me to share some tips,” the K-9 Hero begins, voice rough from his quirk. “We don’t have a quirk counselor at UA - it’s required training before teachers even apply - but yours seems to have mental as well as physical drawbacks.”

Izuku is honestly impressed they’ve picked up on that. He listens as Hound Dog runs him through a meditation exercise, but it’s much harder to manage than he’d expected. Meditation with ADHD? Terrible. Horrible. Bad user experience, do not recommend. The Null’s presence in the back of his mind doesn’t help, although Izuku can see the point. It’s because it’s hard that it will work. He’s forced to notice all the little things around him, the thousand grounding forces.

He’ll trust his teachers.

That night he hops into the null to run some errands and check up on a new world he’s seen around. He doesn’t originally intend to stop in, but the null re-directs him there anyway, practically shoving him into it.

Izuku tumbles out of the void into a world that nearly slaps him in the face with awareness that reality is very, very off-balance here. It’s blunt and unapologetic with a thread of dry humor. It’s spat him out on a sidewalk. The sky is painted cotton-candy blue and pink, gold arching across the western horizon, implying it’s evening. (Some worlds switch them, and Izuku gets dizzy just thinking about the change in physics there.) Izuku dusts himself off and wanders down the street, not really caring where he’s going. It’s only when he turns a corner and quite literally bumps into Bakugo that he realizes this is right on the commute home from UA most of his versions take.
“Deku?” Bakugo freezes, looking behind him to where another Midoriya is standing completely unsurprised and back to Izuku. “What the fuck?”

“Sorry, you must have the wrong person.” Izuku scrambles back in his haste to get way before Bakugo grabs his wrist.

“Deku, this part of your fucked up quirk?” Bakugo growls, addressing his Midoriya, not Izuku.

This Midoriya looks at Izuku with none of the usual surprise or horror. There’s only mildly amused recognition. “I don’t think so. He’s from another fanfic.”

A what? What the fuck is a fanfic? It sounds like a cooling device. Midoriya reels back as though slapped.

“He doesn’t know what fanfic is,” Midoriya whispers to Bakugo in horror, despite the fact that this is completely reasonable. The author doesn’t think so, and most of the readers don’t either. Fanfics should exist in every world, and just because Izuku hasn’t been able to access the internet or cell service in different dimensions is no excuse for his world not… having… oh boy. Izuku does not like his abrupt knowledge of what a fanfic is. He’d kind of assumed this was a novel or at least an animated film. He almost feels cheated.

“I’m sorry,” Midoriya offers. “If it’s any comfort, you get used to it after a bit.”

“You shouldn’t have to,” Izuku says a bit sadly. He has a sneaking suspicion that this Midoriya has a quirk relating to the fourth wall and is trying very hard not to think about it. “That’s information overload like, all the time.”

Bakugo clears his throat abruptly. “Some people don’t have fucking creepy mind powers,” he points out rudely. “Either somebody explains real fast or I’m leaving you shitty nerds behind.”

That’s fair. Izuku bows, completely at a loss for how social niceties or politeness works here. He has a suspicion this world won’t really care, but it’s good to try. “I’m Izuku Midoriya. I’m from a, uh. Different dimension.”

“Fanfic,” Midoriya clarifies again. “Called World Walker. This is Self Aware, by the way. Your author asked if you could visit here so I’ve been waiting for another me to show up.”

“My author did what?”

Bakugo rolls his eyes. “Nerds,” he grumbles, and begins leading the way.

Izuku falls in step as they continue the walk home from UA. “So… you’ve seen my universe?” He hasn’t met anyone like this since that distant world where another Midoriya watched him back with omniscient, fractal-patterned eyes. It’s been a while.

“Yeah. All of them, actually.” Midoriya shrugs, pensive. “I don’t really like Orwellian or leviathan timelines, like yours- no offense.” he tells Izuku.

“None taken.” Izuku’s only been to a few and they scare the crap out of him. Considering his entire quirk is the void itself, this might be a case of the pot calling the kettle black. “I drool space sludge, do I look like someone who can judge people for keeping away?”

He briefly remembers Present Mic’s horrified expression while watching him eat curried beetles during English class. Izuku’s treasuring that memory for the rest of time.
Midoriya seems to find something funny, barely stifling a laugh before responding. “Anyway, reading monster fics like those? Sure, some are pretty well-written. But living them? No, thank you. Also, you shouldn’t eat beetles.”

Bakugo throws a glance over his shoulder from in front of them, evaluating Izuku with new eyes before deciding whatever is going on is none of his business. He’s one of the few to get used to this specific type of nonsense, and Izuku can’t help but feel impressed.

Wait.

Did Midorya just read his mind about the beetles?

Izuku needs to take a second to compute he’s in one of those worlds. A quick check and- oh. That’s a very breakable fourth wall. It takes a split-second of concentration before Izuku finds the mental block, which he promptly shatters. Awareness of the multitude of eyes reading his life, inspecting his entire existence floods through him, turning his stomach. It’s no worse than the last few times he’s done this, but it is the first time with people actually reading while he breaks the fourth wall. Midoriya makes a mildly sympathetic noise beside him, and even Bakugo stops walking ahead of them.

“Nerds?” he asks cautiously, and Midoriya makes a calming gesture.

“He’s fine.”

Izuku nods in agreement, taking a deep breath to adjust to his new awareness- oh wow that’s a lot of people. He offers a smile to Midoriya, though it probably looks more like a grimace. “You deal with this? Constantly?”

“You get used to it. Try living in a fanfic your whole life and suddenly experiencing two universes at once.” Midoriya shrugs. “Do you have any idea how much of my life is just timeskips?”

Ah. Yeah, that does suck.

“Don’t worry about it,” Midoriya says as though Izuku had actually said the words and this is just a minor inconvenience. He frowns, and Izuku catches on that his own narrative style probably gives his anxiety away just as much as a mind-reading quirk.

Fuck.

Izuku steadies his breathing and straightens up, adjusting to his new reality. Actually, now that he thinks of it…. Hi, readers. You know, I’ve only been to these worlds a couple times but it’s really weird to do it now that my story’s started. Also, you really need to stop reading this and get to bed if it’s that late, holy shit. Don’t think I don’t see you putting off work over there- and you! Straighten up! Your back is probably hurting, and wow that person has a lot of homework- Izuku blinks in surprise as the author takes back control of the story. That was fun. Maybe he should drop into the comments of this chapter and see what happens.

His author doesn’t know how to feel about that, but the null will love it. Clearly, Izuku only has one choice if his chaos quota for the day is going to be met. “Your world is perfect,” he tells Midoriya. “Got any places I should visit?”

Midoriya blinks, catching on. “A few.”

Fuck. The author intervenes because mentioning other fics by name requires author permission and they don’t have time to get that before this is posted.
“Sorry,” Izuku says, sounding anything but apologetic. “Time skip?”

Hell yeah.

“FUCK,” Izuku shrieks, tumbling out of the void into Tenya’s arms ten minutes before school starts. He has no memory of getting home or going to sleep, because paragraph breaks after worlds like that are always horrible for his memory. He does, however, remember finishing his conversation and Self Aware’s Izuku, so at least he didn’t just get swallowed by the Null partway through. That would have been rude.

Izuku looks up at his friends, vaguely insulted that the fourth wall he can distantly feel is beginning to fade back into the void. He can’t break it anymore. Tenya doesn’t put him down, but that’s fine. Izuku actually is pretty comfy in this princess carry - it’s like a very large hug, and Tenya gives the best hugs. It also prevents him from smashing his head against his desk in horror, which may be Tenya’s actual intention now that he thinks about it. Hitoshi sees the way he’s eyeing the nearest desk and moves his coffee can out of the danger zone.

“Are you all right,” Tenya asks cautiously, and Izuku belatedly realizes he doesn't have his backpack. At least his uniform is on, and his tie is done properly for once. It’s probably magic. Or at least witchcraft, which scores points for aesthetic.

“I’m good. Time-skip yeeted me a little too far.” Izuku smiles up at Tenya charmingly, aware he looks rather off-kilter compared to his usual calculated yet reckless abandon for the laws of physics. “What day is it?”

“Tuesday.” Tenya deposits Izuku on his own desk before returning to his seat. On the bright side that means Izuku only missed an evening. On the downside, Tenya is still in the danger zone and hero names are today.

Izuku pulls up his feet to crouch on his desk like a proper cryptid. “I need revenge on my author for making me think I was in a novel and not a fucking fanfic. Ochako, wanna visit another world sometime?”

“Hell yeah!” Ochako cheers, something between glee and honor lighting up her face. Behind her, Hitoshi goes pale and whispers ‘fanfic’ under his breath as he would a curse.

Chapter End Notes
out text so heads up.

Also the Deleted Scenes fic is up as part three of Null and Void.

edit: clarification and spelling
edit 2: y'all I added translations for all the glitch text in this entire fic, holy shit
Hey y'all!

I wanted to get this out before my regular Wensday update. Some stuff happened and I need to get my computer fixed before the next chapter goes up. This could take anywhere from one week to December, because I may or may not be yeeted into the woods before then for... science. (Yay.) Either way, I can pretty much guarantee that World Walker will be back before the new year. World Walker and Grasshopper are both backed up, but I lost the drafts for anything else be the universe decided to vibe check me repeatedly this week.

**This fic is NOT OVER.** Posting is just kinda difficult rn bc I need bigger screens to edit on. On the bright side this means I can read through all the fics y'all recommended I yeet Izuku into.

Anyway, stay safe, y'all! Scream into the void if u need me, tho I'm not gonna be replying to many comments this chap.

-Sandtalon

Sidenote: pls don't ask when World Walker is returning. I probs won't know until it happens so asking me doesn't really do anything.

I've already written a ton of this tbh. If y'all have "worlds" you want Izuku to visit, hit me up in the comments and I'll add it to the list!

pls be kind in the comments- thx!!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!