Green Tea Rescue

by ss3dj

Summary

When Midoriya Izuku was 4 his quirk finally manifested. The doctor named it psychokinesis, but his friend Bakugou Katsuki called it worthless and weak. For the next 10 years, Izuku would grow up bullied and isolated, convinced his quirk was good for nothing, but still holding onto the distant dream of becoming a hero. Then, when a new student named Uraraka Ochako, who shares his same dream, transfers into his class the last year of jr high, everything changes.

Together they will work to become the world's greatest heroes. Fighting bullies, classmates, villains and hormones all along the way. Always together. Deku and Uravity, the heroes of Green Tea Rescue.
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Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The Origin of Heroes

"-and that is all we can report as of now. While the main threat has been neutralized it seems the heroes on scene are giving the area a full screening. They want to be absolutely sure that no villains are still in hiding after their base was raided just a few hours ago. Sources say considering the size of the hide out, this could take them well into the night and possible into the morning. We can expect a brief press conference in a few hours after the heroes have done their initial sweep. There is also a strong possibility that a member of Gree-

With a sigh a small boy watched as his older sister clicked the remote to turn the tv off and leaned back into her chair, a rather grumpy look on her face. Pulling out her phone she scrolled for a few seconds before putting it to her ear.

"Hey. Yeah about tonight? Oh you watching the news too huh. Yeah looks like we'll have to reschedule. Yeah it's a little annoying. Honestly if they had told me the place was as big as the news is saying we could have just made our plans on another day to begin with. Hmm? Of course he was trying not to worry me. He's my dad, you think I don't have him figured out."

The boy smiled when his sisters eye swept over him. He knew the topic between his sister and...boyfriend. Was it boyfriend? She got REALLY mad when dad had said that. Like super scary. But he knew they were talking about him now.

"Nah, we probably could use dad's gym instead but I don't want mom thinking I was slacking off looking after Toshi. We can get our reps in tomorrow. Maybe add a mile or two to our jog or something. Dads training plan does have stuff in it for sick days and such. Yeah I know entrance exams are only 2 months away. We. Will. Be. Fine. You really need to stop worrying so much."

Toshi watched as his sister suddenly went a little stiff, a faint pink flush forming on her cheeks. She absently reached up with her free hand and scratch her horn that grew above her brow.

"Yeah, um. Yeah I'm sure it'd be fine for use to go grab a bite at the mall after our training...um I'd need a chance to freshen up first of course..."

His sister's eyes suddenly hardened. She pulled her phone back and was looking at it like it had suddenly said something very, very dumb. Toshi always liked this part. Better when the boy was about to get it in person but it was still fun to watch.

"'If I need a shower you can just spray me down?!' Really? I'm not a car! I swear sometimes you can be so stupid. You know that?"

Toshi giggled. His sister seemed to remember he was in the same room as him and decided to end her call.

"Look we can talk about your little idea later. I need to get my brother to sleep anyways. Let him talk me into staying up late in case mom and dad got home. Huh, no I want you to think about why what you just said was dumb. Goodnight Kouta."

With a grunt his sister hung up and dropped the phone onto the couch before mumbling to herself, "spray me down, I swear he can be such a moron. You don't invite a girl to the mall and then say you'd spray her down if she's worried she'd smell after training all morning..."

Toshi laughed again. His sister was always funny when she mumbled like that. She sounded so much like daddy.
"And you mister," Toshi gasped suddenly having her undivided attention, "It's way past your bedtime."

Toshi shook his head, "No I wanna see mommy and daddy first!"

Toshi climbed out of the large couch and tried to scramble away but his sister effortlessly caught him and lifted him up. Toshi puffed his cheeks at how unfair it was that his big sister was well, bigger than him. Course he had his own ways of fighting back. Unfortunately his sister also knew about his ways and quickly put a stop to him with a look, "You blow fire into my face and you bet I'm gonna let mom and dad know who ate the rest of the cookies out of the jar."

Toshi's cheeks deflated, "but that's tattleing!"

"You better believe it is. Now let's go."

Not long after Toshi was tucked into his bed, with his sister making sure nothing was going to pop out of the closet, or under his bed. Toshi looked over at a small line of books on his shelf. Many were fantasy stories that either his mom or dad would read to him before bed. There were a few bio...bio...books about his parents that he enjoyed getting to listen too. Though mostly it was to see the funny faces his parents would make whenever the books got something really, really wrong.

"Will you read me a story?"

"Hmm? Sure. You were being read this one right? About the young squire and his merry band going off to fight the demon lord?"

Toshi shook his head, "Dads reading me that one. He likes it too. We are reading it together."

His sister blinked before a soft laugh escaped her, "that explains his sudden interest in medieval stuff. Ok what do you want to hear then?"

"Hmm," Toshi thought about it, his finger resting under his bottom lip as he did, "Tell me one about mommy and daddy!"

"Ok what do you want to hear?" She asked as she picked through some of the books reading off their titles as she skimmed their contents, "The great ocean adventure. Attack of the tree people. Floating horror. The day there was no green...man some of these are just so stupid. Whoever they have writing them needs to learn how to fact check."

"That's why daddy likes them. He likes pointing out the stuff that's wrong."

His sister smiled, "thats easy, just point at the book."

"Is that why mommy and daddy were laughing so much last night? That new doc...doc...um..."

"Documentary."

"Yeah that! They were watching it and it seemed really funny. Was it wrong too?"

His sister laughed, "oh boy it was. The 'true' origin story of the number 1 ranked heroes. They weren't even close."

Toshi's eyes sparked, "Oh tell me that one!"

"We don't have a book of that story yet though..."
"No, no. Tell me the true story about how mom and dad became heroes! I haven't heard that story yet. Tell me that one Eri-chan!"

Eri smiled and sat down on the edge of Toshi's bed, "Oh, you sure you wanna know that one? It's not just action like your other stories."

"Huh? But didn't mom and dad gets into lots of fights with villains when they were in school? Dad has said so."

"Oh sure, but if you want the origin story you'd better be ready for some icky romance. Like hand holding and even kissing!" Eri made sure to sound as aghast as possible as she said that. Toshi scrunched up his face, "ew! Not gross stuff!"

Eri smiled and ruffled his hair, but before she could come up with a different story to tell him Toshi looked up at her, "but..I still want to hear it. Just maybe...maybe warn me before we get to the icky parts."

Eri nodded, "ok then. The origin of the number one heroes Deku and Uravity! Heroes of Green Tea Rescue!"

There were two days that Izuku Midoriya remembered from his childhood with crystal clear clarity. The first was one of the happiest days he could remember. It was the day he had discovered he had a quirk. It had been a simple enough day to start with. He had been watching some of his favorite All Might videos when he had accidently knocked one of his action figures off the desk in his excitement. In a panic he tried to grab the falling toy but missed. However before it hit the ground the toy slowed before coming to a stop.

Izuku looked around, thinking his mother had stopped the toy herself but he was alone. Looking back down, Izuku bent forward and reached out. Slowly the toy rose upward and floated just above the palm of his hand.

Izuku sat in his chair just looking at the toy before his excitement could no longer be contained.

"MOM!"

At her sons cry, Inko rushed into his room, "Izuku honey what's wrong…"

She stopped and stood transfixed in the doorway. Watching as her son turned, and showed her the floating toy in front of him.

"Mom, I have a quirk! It's just like yours too!"

After a warm hug and much praise, Inko made Izuku his favorite dinner to celebrate.

The next day too had seemed to continue in Izuku's good fortune. Inko had taken Izuku to see a doctor so that they could have his quirk diagnosed and registered. There they learned from the doctor that Izuku's quirk was in fact a slight mutation of his mothers, and not a one to one inheritance as was more common. While both child and mother were sitting in the exam room, the doctor had asked what Inko's quirk was exactly. She explain she could attract small objects to herself.

The doctor nodded, "Your son has demonstrated that not only is he able to pull objects towards himself, but push them away and keep them in a levitated state telekinetically. As his quirk is able to perform different action then yours I believe we should treat it as a mutation, rather than a simple strengthened inheritance. As such I will be documenting it with a new name."
Psychokinesis

After the visit, Izuku ran off towards the playground at the park where he hoped his friend Kacchan would be. He wanted to show off his quirk. Now Kacchan wasn't the only one with an amazing power. He even spent most of the car ride home learning how to say the name right.

Hurrying up the path he soon was able to pick out Kacchan's distinct voice. When he finally came to the playground he came to a sudden stop. Kacchan and two of his other friends were chasing after another boy, laughing as they did. It was obvious that the boy was running scared before he tripped and landed on the ground in a tangled mess.

Kacchan and the others slowed to a stop, smiling wickedly as they slowly advanced on the fallen boy.

"Kacchan? What's going on?"

Kacchan turned and looked over at Izuku, "oh it's just you Deku. Just stay over there for now. I'm gonna teach this guy a lesson."

"Lesson?"

Kacchan smirked as he cracked his knuckles, puffs of smoke and sparks crackled with each pop, "he thought he'd try and show off. Said his quirk was better than mine."

Kacchan was now standing over the boy looking down on him cruelly, but before he could do anything else, a small pebble bounced off the side of his head. There wasn't enough force behind it to really do anything but it was enough to get his attention.

Slowly he and the other boys turn towards where the stone had come from.

Izuku.

Izuku stood there, shaking, hands outstretched. Face scrunched up in concentration. A few more small stones floated around him. He looked over at his friend, "stop it Kacchan."

Kacchan blinked a few times before reaching down and picking up the small stone Izuku has thrown at him. He looked at it for a few seconds before he started to laugh, "you finally get a quirk and that's it. Deku, anyone can throw rocks. See."

Before Izuku understood what was coming, Kacchan reared back and hurled the stone right back at him, hitting him square in the face. The sudden pain made him lose his concentration and the green glow around the other stones he had been holding up vanished. Each one fell back to the ground as Izuku reach up to hold his nose. Kacchan took that opportunity to strike, charging at Izuku and pushing him down. The other boys with Kacchan soon followed their leader helping him beat some sense into Izuku.

The boy who had been chased before quickly got up and ran away. Thankful that now someone else was Kacchan's target.

It was this day, one of his lowest that he could remember, that Izuku learned something.

All men are not created equal.

"You really are living up to your name Deku! You finally get a quirk and it's as worthless as you are!"
Those words and that lesson would be drilled into Izuku, time after time. And if Izuku ever started to forget, Katsuki would always be there to remind him.

Even now, ten years later.

In the same park.

In the same playground.

Izuku gasped and wheezed on the ground, desperately trying to catch his breath after getting knocked to the ground. Katsuki stood over him, hands still smoking from the explosion he had set off into Izuku's stomach.

Of all the luck. Why'd I have to run into Kacchan? Why me?

Katsuki let out a laugh, "it's good you came by when you did Deku. Been feeling a little stressed out these past few days and I really needed to cut lose. You make such a great punching bag I couldn't resist."

One of Katsuki's lackys gave Izuku's shuddering form a quick poke with his foot, "Bakugou here just got done with his mock exams you know. You should be happy to be there for him to let off some steam."

So I was just a convenient target then.

Izuku looked past the group as he tried to get to his knees. Trying to find something, anything, in his range that he might be able to grab with his quirk to defend himself. However Katsuki immediately saw the faint green glow the always formed around Izuku when he really started to push his quirk.

His hands let loose a few more explosions over Izuku's head and the faint glow vanished as he fell back to the ground.

"Careful there Deku. I almost thought you were gonna try and fight back. Just take your lumps and be happy I'm already done with you."

When Katsuki was sure Izuku had indeed given up he motioned to his followers to come with him, "come on. Let go find an arcade or something. Might as well do something with the day before school starts tomorrow."

Still laughing amongst themselves, Izuku stayed lying on the ground. Listening as their laughter faded further and further away before he dared to try and sit up. He groaned softly, nursing his battered front.

Tentatively he reached up and began to dust himself off. Wincing at the pain raising his arms caused his chest.

Still could be worse I guess. Shirts not so burned I can't play it off as an accident of some kind if mom asks. Could just say I had a fall…

Izuku was so preoccupied trying to remove the soot and dirt from himself he didn't notice a quicken set of footsteps coming up to him. Nor did he notice as someone stopped right by him. But he did finally notice when she spoke.

"Are you ok?"
Earlier that day

To say Ochako was nervous would be the understatement of the century. It had only been a little while ago she had said goodbye to her parents after they had finished helping her unpack all her things into her new apartment. Just that phrase alone was such a foreign thought she was still trying to wrap her head around it. It was only a week ago that her dad told her the news. A friend he had worked a construction job with knew of an apartment that had just opened for students and he would be able to get them a great deal on it. What's more it was close enough for anyone living there to be able to attend U.A with ease.

Ochako had always planned, when the time came, to be ready to live by herself if she was able to make it into U.A, but for it to suddenly be happening already was a lot to take in. And there was always the chance she wouldn't be able to pass the entrance exam anyway when the time came. But, if she was going to make her dream come true. Become a hero and ensure her parents would be able to live happily, she couldn't let such an opportunity pass her by. So after talking to her parents they all agreed to jump on the opening. And in a flurry of leases and school transfer paperwork she was now in her very own place.

Alone.

She wasn't afraid of course. Even if her father hadn't done extensive research of the area to make sure it didn't have any scary surprises, she was sure she'd be able to handle it. She just wasn't used to the silence was all.

"Right, what do I do now?" Her eyes turned towards her kitchen, "Still to early for dinner so I might as well pass the time…"

Walking around she found her new school uniform hanging, ready to be worn tomorrow on her first day at her new school.

"Hmm maybe a walk will put my mind at ease. Get a good sense of the area. Maybe there are some places students wanting to get into U.A train around here. I'm this close, might as well take full advantage of it."

With a smile, Ochako left to see what she could find. The area was nice, with many small thrift stores and more than a few grocery stores for her to choose from. She was sure to make a note of which ones had the better deals and sales. More than once she spotted a hero out on patrol. It was nice to know that this area was being kept safe. Course it did make sense. This close to U.A, there had to be plenty of heroes, teachers, and students working on their internships. What villains in their right mind would want to cause trouble around here?

"It's not a bad place to live honestly, she thought to herself. Continuing to walk around Ochako soon found herself at the entrance to her new school. Absently she watched as faculty hurried to and fro, getting the place ready for the start of the new school year.

"Aldera Junior High huh. I hope I make some friends here. Wonder if anyone else here is gonna try for U.A after the year is done?"

Ochako pulled her phone out and checked the time, "I guess I've wasted enough time now. Actually it's probably a good idea if I turn in early tonight anyway. I'd hate to over sleep on my first day."

As she made her way back she passed through a small park, but paid the area little mind. She was too busy thinking of what she would be making herself tonight, and if it would be ok to have some of the mochi her parents had left her.
"I mean, I'm on my own now. I could probably have just the mochi for dinner."

However before she exited the park she heard a very distinct popping sound followed by some yells.

"Hmm, is someone setting off fireworks?"

There was another pop and another yell, but this time she could tell it wasn't a yell of excitement. It sounded like someone had gotten hurt. Turning towards the sound she rushed forward, phone in hand ready to call an ambulance if needed. However when she reach the source she did not come to what she had expected. In a small clearing by a set of swings stood a group of boys. Two where standing behind a tall blond laughing and pointing at something. The blond had a menacing look to him, and he was yelling something, but Ochako couldn't hear him over the continued popping sounds echoing around. Ochako was shocked to finally see the source of the noise. The boys hands were sparking and popping with small explosions.

_What a crazy quirk. He should be more careful or he could hurt...oh, _ Ochako's thoughts skidded to a sudden halt as she took in the rest of the scene before her. Not to far away from the exploding boy there was one other boy who was lying on the ground clutching his stomach and gasping for breath.

When the boy on the ground move to get up, the blonds hands exploded violently. He didn't hit anything with the explosions but the smaller boy immediately fell back down to the ground, curling up.

"I should be helping him right?" Ochako wanted to move but she found herself seemingly nailed to her spot. Out of sight and more importantly, out of range of the rather terrifying boy.

After a little while, after it was clear the boy wasn't going to get back up the blond and his group walked away. Laughing loudly as they went. Ochako guilty waited till she couldn't hear them anymore before she finally moved.

She hurried towards the boy, who by now was sitting up and tentatively dusting himself off.

"Are you ok?"

Ochako wanted to kick herself. Of course he wasn't ok. She hadn't seen the start of whatever that blond had done, but the singe marks on his stomach and scuffed up knees and elbows told her the whole story.

_And you just hid away while that jerk terrorized him while he lay defenseless. Nice work. I'm sure Thirteen would wait for the danger to pass before acting too._ Ochako thought to herself in disgust.

The boy gave a startled jerk before looking up at her. His face was still covered in some dirt. Most sticking to his cheeks where she could tell he had been crying.

"Do you need help standing," Ochako reached out her hand for him to take.
The boy looked at her hand then back at her. They both stayed like that for a few moments more before slowly, timidly, the boy reached out and took her hand.

With a gentle tug, Ochako helped the boy up. Now standing he went back to dusting himself off, and wiping away the dirt on his face.

Ochako stood by not really sure what she could do. Or should be doing.

After he was done the boy turned and for a second seemed surprised she was still standing next to him. He smiled, but Ochako could see it was a fake. His eyes were dull. And fresh tears were already starting to form.

"Thank you for checking on me. I should be getting home now."

He gave her a half hearted wave and turned to leave. Ochako reached out but stopped herself from stopping him from walking away, "wait. Is there anything I can do?"

The boy stopped and looked back at her, giving her that same fake smile, "I'm ok. But thank you for checking on me. I hope I haven't taken to much of your time. I really should be going home."

And with one last little wave, the boy was gone. Ochako didn't move from her spot for several minutes even after she lost sight of the boy. Even when she finally did move, she felt numb to the world around her.

She reached her apartment and went about cooking and eating her dinner in silence. By the time she had gotten ready for bed her guilt over her inaction still continued to eat away at her.

*I should have done something. Anything else besides just hiding like that.*

Ochako looked up at her darkened ceiling. The few glow in the dark star stickers dotted it, giving her her own constellation to look over.

*I should have made sure he got home alright. Letting him leave like that wasn't right.*

She rolled over trying to get comfortable. Her sheets felt rough and cold.

*I wonder if he goes to the same school I'm going to?*

Ochako’s eyelids started to feel heavy at last.

*If I see him again I should see if he wants to be friends.*

She yawned

*I should at least learn his name.*

**The Next Day**

Izuku woke up feeling sore. Not surprisingly considering the beating he took yesterday. Fortunately he had been able to play if off to his mother as him tripping while at the park. He had by that point removed most of the evidence that he had been hit with one of Kacchan’s explosions. Mostly by picking away the burnt portions of his clothes.

With a sigh he quickly got dressed into his school uniform and had his breakfast. Giving his mother a quick hug goodbye, Izuku made his way to school. Absently as he got closer to school he scanned the students around him. Wondering if that girl from yesterday was around, but that was
wishful thinking. He had a pretty good idea of the students in his age group and he had never seen her before.

Reaching his school, Izuku followed the rest of his year for the opening ceremony, though he paid little attention to it. Half way through he had caught sight of Kacchan and was now making sure when they were dismissed he would be able to slip away without catching the eye of the explosive teen.

When the students were dismissed Izuku quietly made his way to class and his desk. With any luck he'll make it through the day without getting Kacchans attention. Hoping that at the very least they would be in different classes.

*Would rather not have a repeat of yesterday so soon. Even if I did meet that nice girl. I wish I at least asked her her name.*

Reaching down Izuku began unpacking his bag when he heard the chair next to him getting pulled out. While he was looking for his pencils he heard the person next to him speak up.

"Hi! Looks like we'll be sitting next to each other this year. I'm Uraraka Ochako."

Izuku gulp, *I'm sitting next to a girl. And she's already talking to me? Better say something or she might think I'm weird.*

Sitting back up Izuku tried to return her polite greeting, "h-hi I'm Midoriya -!"

Izuku's greeting was suddenly cut short as the girl gave out a startled gasp, "it's you! The boy from the park!"

Izuku was too stunned to reply, *the nice girl is in my class. The nice girl is in my class. The. Nice. Girl. Is. In. My. Class. And sitting right next to me!*

Ochako couldn't believe her luck. All last night she felt so guilty after not only doing nothing to help this boy after he had been attacked. But also just letting him walk off without at least seeing if he had needed help to get home.

*But here he is. You don't get second chances like this everyday Ochako. Go be his friend.*

"Hey so I really wanted to apologize to you."

That shocked Izuku enough to get him out of his endless train of thought. "Huh apologize for what Uraraka? You went out of your way to see if I was ok. No one else has ever been that nice to me before. I'm really grateful."

Ochako tilted her head confused, "no one's been that nice to you? What about your friends?"

Izuku looked down, "I don't really have friends. It can be a little dangerous honestly. Since I'm Kacchan's favorite target people are too afraid to be near me"

"Kacchan? Who's that. And dangerous? What do you mean. Wait does it have anything to do with-"

"Are you kidding me!? I'm in the same class as shitty Deku? God damn it."

Ochako watched as Midoriya paled and seemed to try and disappear into his chair. Ochako turned to find the source of the outburst and almost swallowed her tongue.
HIM! Why is that jerk here?

Ochako watched as the blond made his way through the classroom and stood before Midoriya's desk. When Izuku didn't look up he slammed his hand down onto the desk, a small puff of smoke billowing from his palm. This immediately got Izuku's attention as he jolted right back up.

"Kacchan! G-good morning! How are you!"

Ochako watched as a dark sneer crossed Kacchan's face, "how am I? I find out you are in the same class as me Deku, and you ask me how I am?"

"I'm sorry!"

"It's bad enough we have to be in the same school but now I have to look at your sorry face every damned day for the next year."

Several students started to laugh. Many had watched Katsuki and Izuku throughout the past couple of years going to the same school. So they were already familiar with their relationship. Getting a show so early in the morning was always quiet funny for them. A few pointed and snickered. Whispers of getting to see Deku get blown up already were spreading.

Ochako did not miss this. Even as she watched as the small boy tried more and more to vanish from the wrath being aimed towards him.

"I'm sorry!"

"Is that all you can say?" Kacchan's hands popped making Midoriya flinch back, "though I suppose someone as worthless as you Deku can't really say anything else huh? A worthless nobody, with a worthless name and an even more worthless quirk. Just looking at you-"

Ochako's chair clattered to the floor as she stood up in a flash of anger and shoved the blond back, putting herself between him and Izuku. The laughing in the class suddenly died down.

The blond was clearly taken aback at first. Ochako guesses no one had stood up to the bully before. He quickly recovered though and snarled at Ochako, "you want a problem Round Face? Are you gonna be Deku's little protector?"

Ochako's eye twitched, Round?

"I don't know what your problem is Kacchan, but you need to back off NOW!"

The blond blinked before looking past her to Midoriya, "Hey Deku. Why you telling other people that damned nickname?"

"I'm sorry. It just sorta slipped out."

"Listen here Round Face, it's Bakugou Katsuki. Don't call me that nickname again. Now get out of my way. I'm not done with Deku yet."

Katsuki raised a hand up and let off a few small explosions to scare her off. Ochako however didn't budge and returned Katsukis stare, "you think you're the only one here with a quirk?"

I wasn't able to protect Midoriya yesterday. I hid while this jerk hurt him. Heroes don't do that. They stand up for those who can't.

Katsuki didn't back down but, he was now giving her a good look. Looking for any tell or hint as to
what her quirk was "And what can you do huh? I doubt you got anything that can hold a candle to me you worthless extra."

Ochako didn't falter and shot back, "care to test that?"

The whole class seemed to be holding their breath. Izuku actually was holding his breath.

*Is this really happening? Is this nice girl actually standing up to Kacchan? No one's ever done that for me before. Heck even I don't do that unless I'm feeling really stupid. She's, I mean she's. Oh wow. And her fingers. I saw the pads when she helped me up yesterday. Are they part of her quirk? What even is her quirk. She's seen Kacchans. Does she have some kind of counter to his explosions?*

At some point Izuku had stopped thinking to himself and had started to mumble his thoughts out loud. The collective class slowly turned their attention from the nigh unheard of battle of wills happening between Katsuki and Ochako and towards Izuku. Ochako glanced back at him slightly perplexed, while Katsuki groaned in annoyance, "Great, and there he goes again. I'm done with this. Would rather be taking these stupid classes then have deal with him when he goes into a mumble storm."

Katsuki turned away and sat at his desk. Ochako blinked a few times before slowly sitting down herself. And releasing the breath she hadn't realized she had been holding. Strangely she swore everyone else around her had moved their desks a little away.

*Guess they want to be clear of the blast range.*

When she turned to see if Midoriya was alright she was a little taken aback, *why, why is he looking at me like that?*

Izuku had stopped mumbling and seemed to realize that Katsuki had left to go to his seat. Meaning this nice girl had not only stood up for him but had managed to do it without getting blown up. That never happens. So he was doing the only thing his brain could think of doing.

Stare.

Stare in wonder.

Stare in amazement.

Stare in unfiltered admiration.

He was also about to cry.

"That was amazing."

Ochako nervously ruber the back of her head, "it wasn't that big of a deal really. Most bullies will back down when you stand up to them."

"Kacchan normally just blows people up." Izuku stated. A little to matter of factly for Ochako's liking.

"Is that what happened to you yesterday Deku?"

Izuku flinched, "that's um. That's not actually my name. But yeah Kacchan needed to let off some steam yesterday. I just happened to be in the blast range I guess."
"Oh I'm sorry, everyone else was kinda saying it when Bakugou was acting like a jerk."

"Yeah… my name is Midoriya Izuku. When you mess with the kanji you get Deku. The one who can't do anything. It fits me to a tee. It really stuck after he saw how bad my quirk is."

Ochako frowned. She had honestly thought the name had sounded cute. Actually, this might be a good chance to defang that jerk a little.

"You know, Deku sounds a lot like dekiru. Gives me the feeling of 'I can do it.'"

Out of the corner of her eye she saw Bakugou turn towards the two with an look that she guessed was half angry and half offended.

Guess he didn't like me taking that one away huh, she thought smugly. Course if Midoriya doesn't like it…

Izuku felt his face flush. For such a long time that name had always been something negative. And yet she hears it just now and she turns it on it's head. I can do it. I can do it. I can…

"I'm Deku!"

"Are you sure? It was an insult before…"

Izuku looked away bashfully, "hearing it like that kinda makes me really happy. So I'm ok with it."

Soon their teacher arrived and class began. It was a typical first day. Syllabuses were passed out, and the teacher droned on. Soon enough the students were instructed to grab their textbooks and work on some of the problems from the first chapter. Bending down to pull out her text book, Ochako accidentally bumped into her desk, jolting her pencil off. It rolled just out of reach up against the shoe of the student in front of her. When the boy looked down and saw the pencil, he looked back over to Ochako. Ochako quietly pointed towards it apologetically, but the boy tensed up and quickly turned back around, lightly kicking the pencil further away.

Wow, does that Bakugou have everyone here so wrapped around his finger these guys won't deal with me because I stood up for Deku? Well forget them then.

Before she could decide to either forget the pencil and find a new on or just get up and grab it herself, she watched in wonder as a faint green glow surrounded it and then all on its own it began to roll backwards before it then floated up to her. Reaching up she began to pluck the pencil out of the air but stopped to give it a little inquisitive stare.

Ok, since when do pencils do that?

On a hunch see glanced over to Izuku and saw that he had his hand out like he was holding something invisible. When Ochako didn't immediately take the pencil back he looked over at her and sheepishly moved his hand a little. Depositing her pencil back into her desk.

"Sorry Uraraka," Izuku whispered. "I should have asked permission to use my quirk like that on something of yours."

The gears in finally started turning again and Ochako just smiled at him before whispering back, "No its ok. I was just surprised is all."

Izuku smiled before returning to his own textbook. Ochako followed suit, not wanting to have their teacher call them out on the first day.
Deku can move things with his mind? That's really cool. Before Ochako was able to start working on the chapter assigned to them however, she remember something from earlier, wait didn't he say his quirk was useless. He can move things with his mind. Who sees THAT and says it's useless?!

Slowly her gaze turned upward till she was drilling a hole into the back of Katsuki. Actually I don't really need to guess, do I.

As the day went on, Izuku couldn't help but steal glances over at the girl next to him. A few times she even caught him looking, but she would only smile and give him a small wave before going back to her studies.

What, what am I supposed to do in a situation like this? It's been such a long time since, actually I don't think anything like this has ever happened before…

Deku was interrupted as the teacher dismissed the class for lunch. Normally this would be when he would quickly scurry off and find a quiet place to eat and work on his Hero Analysis notebook. Yet instead he was still sitting at his desk. Ochako was digging through her bag, looking for her lunch he guessed.

"Um Uraraka?" There was no way this was gonna happen, Izuku thought. But to be fair, a lot of things had happened that shouldn't have happened either. "Um would you like to have lunch with me?"

"Sure I'd love to," Ochako replied cheerfully. "I was actually gonna ask if you knew any good spots to eat here."

"Yeah, yeah there's a nice place up on the roof I've been using for a while now actually." Izuku picked up his bag and started to lead Ochako out of the class. Izuku was grateful that Katsuki only gave them a parting glare. It seemed he wasn't bored enough to want to deal with them at the moment. Or get seen by the teacher going after them. Leading Ochako up to the roof, Izuku found a couple of the folding chairs left up there and brought them over, "Here you go Uraraka."

"Thank you Deku. This is actually a really nice spot."

"Yeah, I'm lucky most of the other students don't bother coming up here."

Both sat down and began to eat. Soon though Ochako began to wonder what she could talk to Izuku about. She wanted to make it a happy topic at the very least. It was a little disturbing to her that most ideas she came up with she didn't think would go over to well.

Whats the school like?

What do you and your friends do for fun?

Most of her thoughts followed this line of thinking. It should be easy, but just from this morning she doubted he had many pleasant experiences here. However Izuku surprised her by being the one to finally break the silence and ask her something.

"Uraraka, is it ok if I ask you a question?"

"Hm sure I don't mind."

"Well,"Izuku started, "this morning when you stood up for me, you got Kacchan to back down cause you mentioned your quirk. What actually is your quirk?"
"Oh let me show you." Ochako picked up the chair she had been sitting on and with a touch activated her quirk on it. Showing off a little she delicately made a show of balancing it on a finger, "when I touch something with all my fingers I can turn off its gravity."

Izuku was amazed, "Wow you can control gravity! That's such an amazing quirk."

Ochako nervously rubbed the back of her head as she lowered the chair down. With it floating only a little off the ground she put her fingers together, "and release."

The chair landed with a soft thud. Izuku reach out and nudged it with his foot, confirming that it was indeed heavy again, "So when you touch something with your fingers it loses its gravity. And when you touch your fingers together it comes back?"

Ochako sat back down and picked up her lunch bento, "Yep that's pretty much it."

"You are so cool!"

Ochako felt her cheeks heat up slightly as she waved Izuku off, "it's not that amazing honestly. And if I go over my weight limit I get really sick to my stomach."

"What's your weight limit?"

"Um I've never put an exact number to it, but from when I was moving stuff around construction sites with my dad, I'd say its a couple of tons. Give or take."

Izuku's jaw dropped slightly and Ochako could swear she saw him using his chopstick like a pen, writing down everything she had been saying. "Tons? You can lift tons? You have control over gravity and can lift stuff like cars with it. That is totally amazing. If you got Kacchan with that, I don't think he'd be able to do anything after that. If he tried using his quirk he'd probably just blast himself into a wall or ceiling."

"Or out a window." Ochako mumbled to herself.

"Hmm?" Izuku titled his head slightly, "Did you say something?"

"Oh nothing. Just talking to myself it all. I'm not used to someone praising my quirk so much. What about you Deku? Could you tell me about your quirk?"

Ochako frowned slightly as she watched Izuku's own look of wonder fade and he looked down at his lunch. Picking at it with his chopsticks.

Before Ochako could apologize for asking about something that might have been a sore point for him, she watched as a faint green aura surrounded one of the chopsticks he had been using. Slowly Izuku held out his hand, the chopstick floating a few inches above his palm.

Ochako stared at it for a bit before looking back up to Izuku. She almost missed it, but she could see a faint green glow around him as well.

"You can move stuff with your mind then?"

Izuku kept his eyes on his hand, "Yeah. Psychokinesis is my quirk."

Ochako tilted her head, "Is that like telekinesis?"

"It's the same thing really. Just a different word for it. I think the doctor was being a little overly dramatic when giving it a name. He was weird."
"Well I think you have an incredible quirk!"

Izuku's head snapped up to see Ochako beaming at him, "Huh?"

"Deku, I have to touch something to use my quirk. You can make stuff float just by looking at it. That is really cool."

Izuku flushed, his concentration broke and the chopstick fell back into his hand. Quickly he covered his face to hide his reddening cheeks, "No no it really isn't. I can't lift anything big like you can. I'm lucky if I can pull my shoes out of my closet on a good day without getting a massive headache...But even still..."

"Even still?"

Izuku let his arms fall back to his side, "um promise you won't laugh?"

"I promise Deku."

After a few seconds Izuku reached into his bag and pulled out a notebook, and handed it to Ochako who looked over the cover, Hero Analysis for the Future? No. 13?!

Opening the book, Ochako was blown away by what she saw. Page after page was filled with detailed sketches and notes on different heroes. Quirks, battle techniques, support items and so on. The amount of detail in the book was shocking.

"All this, are you studying heroes, because you want to be one?"

Izuku nodded, "yeah. Even if my quirk is bad. Even if i'm useless. I still..." Ochako watched as the timid look faded slightly from Izuku's, replaced with one of determination. "I still want to become a hero. When this school year is over I plan on applying to U.A. I want to help people, just like All Might does!"

Izuku waited for the laugh, or maybe even a chuckle. Maybe for her to say it was a stupid dream. Anything that would fall in line with what everyone else has told him here.

"I'm here to apply to U.A. too."

Izuku blinked, and looked at Ochako in a start, "Huh?"

As with Izuku before, Ochako now wore a face filled with determination, "I just moved into an apartment in the area because I'm also going to apply to U.A. I'm going to become a hero too."

"You, you moved here just to apply?"

Ochako nodded, "That's right. My dad was able to get me a place close enough that I'd have no problem going to U.A. We had no idea if we'd be able to get such a great deal on an apartment again, so I took it. This year, I'm going to make sure I'm ready for the entrance exam and make my parents proud."

"With a quirk like yours I'm sure you'll have no problem passing."

Ochako smiled, "Thanks. But it's not just the practical exam I have to be ready for. There's a written test too. Honestly that has me a little more nervous than the other parts of the test..."

Ochako's eyes drifted to the notebook she was still holding, hey now there's an idea. "Hey Deku why don't we work together!"
"You, huh?" Izuku wasn't sure he had heard her right.

"Let's work together to get into U.A. We can study and train together to get ourselves ready to the exam."

Izuku was trying to wrap his head around what Ochako had just said, "you'd want to train with me? But are you sure that's a good idea? I'd hate to hold you back."

Ochako held up his notebook, "Deku, you don't write 13 books to help you be a hero in the future not to put them to use right? That's dedication to a goal. And when you talked about getting into U.A, I could see you meant it."

*She actually believes I could do it? That we could do it?*

Izuku took a breath before he reached out his hand, "ok then, let's do it!"

Ochako beamed and took Izuku's hand in a hand shake, "Right, you and I will pass those exams and become heroes!"

"Great! So what's your plan for our training?"

Ochako blanked instantly and looked away sheepishly, "Oh? Um I haven't actually thought that far ahead yet." Izuku almost fell out of his chair as he started to laugh. Ochako frowned and playfully used Izuku's notebook to bonk him on the head, "Hey don't laugh. I only just moved here. I still need to figure out what I can even do here to get ready before I come up with a plan... What about you? You must have a training idea if you want to go to U.A."

It was Izuku's turn to turn away, "Um...that's actually a really good point. OK first order of business! We need to put together a game plan!"

Before Ochako could give a retort to Izuku over pots and kettles the lunch bell rang letting them know that lunch was over, saving the poor boy. Quickly the two put away the chairs and grabbed their belongings. As they made their way back to class a thought came to Izuku, "Hey Uraraka? When you said you're dad found you an apartment for you, did you mean you live by yourself?"

"Yeah. It's a student apartment so it's not that big a deal."

Izuku frowned, *if she only just moved in it has to be lonely right?*

"Um Uraraka, if you'd like. Would you like to come over to my place and have dinner with me and my mom?"

Ochako looked at Izuku, surprised by the offer. Izuku quickly added, "I mean, only if you want to of course. I just thought that maybe it's a little lonely for you right now is all. Of course Im only assuming that! You might like the quiet! And I don't want to step over and boundaries or anything... um... so it's completely up to you."

As Izuku trailed off, Ochako smiled back at him, "I'd love to Deku. You're right, it is a little lonely for me. Eating dinner really isn't the same without someone to talk to. Are you sure it'll be ok with your mom though?"

"Oh let me give her a quick call."

Hurriedly, Deku pulled out his phone and dialed his mother, trying not to think that he was trying to get permission to bring a girl home.
"Mom? Yeah it's me. No I'm fine. I wanted to know if I could bring a friend over for dinner?"

Ochako laughed as Izuku pulled the phone away slightly. She could swear she could hear some excited sounds coming from it even.

"Ok, ok mom thank you. I'll let her know then th-"

This time Izuku yanked his phone fully away, holding it at arms length away from his ear. Ochako could now hear his mother screaming from the phone.

"Ok mom, thanks. I have to get to class now. See you later!" Izuku quickly said before hanging up. He looked over at Ochako and trying to keep a straight face said, "she said it was fine."

Ochako raised an eyebrow, "that seemed a little loud for fine."

"Oh well you see, I don't really bring people over very often….or ever actually so, she got...a little um, excited"

As Izuku talked his straight face melted away into an embarrassed blush. Ochako smiled but didn't push for details over the issue, not wanting to embarrass her new friend any more. Turning a corner the two were almost to class but found their path block by Katsuki and a few of his pals.

"Hey Deku, where'd you run off to. You and I need to finish our talk from this morning."

Izuku gave a startled ep and came to a quick stop. Ochako however kept walking forward and right up to Katsuki.

"You got something to say to me Round?"

Her smile never leaving her face she casually place her hands onto Katsuki's shoulders. Then to the amazement of all, and bewilderment of Katsuki, picked him up and pushed him to the other side of the hallway where he softly bounced off the wall, floating a few feet off the ground.

Turning around, and ignoring the sudden string of expletives and flailing from the boy, she calmly turned back to Izuku, "come on. We don't want to be late."

Izuku quickly followed after Ochako and only when they were both seated did Ochako put her hands together. The screaming from Katsuki suddenly turned into a startled yell followed quickly by a solid thud.

A series of explosions echoed in the classroom from the hallway before the door was slammed open, "you bitch!"

The classroom tensed, ready for the inevitable attack Katsuki was bound to unleash. However the arrival of the teacher quietly put everyone at ease. Katsuki wouldn't dare attack with a teacher in the classroom.

Right?

Katsuki hands smoked as he glared daggers at both Ochako and Deku, before finally with a swift turn stomped back to his desk.

The rest of the day passed without incident, and as luck would have it, Katsuki had been asked by the teacher to carry some papers for him to the teachers offices. So both Izuku and Ochako quickly
gathered their things and left. Though not before the two in Katsuki's group got off some parting remarks, "never seen Bakugou explode a girl before. That's gonna be a hell of a show."

"And you Deku? You're gonna get it so bad when this chick isn't around to be your little shield anymore."

Ochako frowned and as she and Izuku passed the two, turned suddenly, hands outreached like she was about to use her quirk on them. It was a bluff and she pulled back way before even getting close, but neither boy cared. Both had leapt back getting far away from her.

Ochako looked at both of them, head tilted to the side, "thought so." She turned back to Izuku and gave him a bright smile, "Come on Deku."

The walk to Izuku's home was thankfully uneventful. Izuku had been worried that Katsuki may have decided to chase after him when he was done with the teachers errand but fortunately his worries had been for nothing. Though now at his house he he began to feel nervous for completely new reasons.

*I can not let her see my room. I think I'll die if she does.*

Taking out his keys Izuku opened his door and welcomed Ochako in, "please make yourself at home. I'll go find my mom and--"

Before he could finish though, Inko Midoriya came into the hallway with a huge smile to welcome the teens, "hello it's so nice to meet you. You must be the friend Izuku told me about on the phone."

Ochako bowed slightly. "yes I'm Uraraka Ochako. Thank you so much for letting me come over. I hope it isn't to much of a bother."

"Oh you are so polite. It's not a bother at all. I'm actually very happy to see my dear Izuku making friends. Dinner is almost ready. Izuku why don't you take Uraraka to the table. I'll have everything brought out in just a few minutes."

Both put their school bags to the side and Izuku lead Ochako to the dining table. Sitting down, Ochako could smell the dinner Inko had prepared, "It smells wonderful ma'am."

"Mom is a really good cook. Oh what are we having mom?"

Inko smiled as she finished getting things done from the kitchen, "I thought we'd have a nice hot pot."

"Yummy!" Izuku beamed happily.

Soon Inko brought the large pot in and the three began to eat. While they talked, Inko learned of Ochako's living situation. She was impressed that she was mature enough at her age to be living alone. She was also impressed to hear the reason behind her move.

"You're applying to U.A? I hadn't realized I had another future hero in my house."

Ochako blushed lightly, while Izuku nodded excitedly, "Actually mom, Uraraka and I are gonna start getting ready for the entrance exam together."

Inko was a little surprised to hear that, "Really? That sounds like a wonderful idea. I must say I really am impressed that you two only just met and you both are taking your future's so seriously.
You two must have had a great first impression of each other."

"Yes ma'am. Dek- I mean Midoriya showed me his notebook when he talked about his dream. It was actually really inspiring. I could tell he puts a lot of focus in his studies on herorics."

Inko nodded, "You should see the whole set. He has them all on his bookshelf in his room."

"Oh I would love to see them."

Izuku groaned and shrank down into his chair some, "Um actually my room isn't, um, ready for visitors. But I could go get them if you wanted..."

"But Izuku, didn't you to clean your room just a few days ago? Don't tell me you got it messy already?"

"Um no, its clean, it's just um..."

Inko gave her son a sudden knowing look, "Oh is it your All Might collection? Have you not had a chance to get all those collectables dusted yet?"

"MOM!"

Inko laughed at her panicked son before turning to Ochako, "My boy is a huge All Might fan. He has so much memorabilia and collectables."

"Really, I think that's really cool actually." Ochako said giving Izuku a reassuring smile. "I actually have some figures of my favorite hero Thirteen."

"Thirteen is a great hero. I've read about some of her rescue mission. Rescue heroes are so cool."

Ochako nodded in agreement, "Thirteen is actually my inspiration. I want to be a hero just as great as she is."

The two went back and forth, comparing their favorite heroes and their fields for some time. Inko watched the two and felt her heart warm up. It was so good to see her son having so much fun with someone. Soon both had taken a small break to eat some more, and Inko took the chance to talk herself.

"So," Inko began, "how'd you two end up meeting? I assume you are both in the same class?"

Deku nodded, "Yeah! She stood up to some bullies this morning. It was really cool."

"We actually met yesterday but we didn't get each others names. I'm actually really glad to have got to meet him again. I felt really bad about just letting him go on his own without making sure he was ok."

Izuku tensed but already knew he couldn't stop what was coming.

"Oh you saw him fall at the park? My poor boy can be clumsy sometimes."

Ochako blinked, confused, "fall?"

"Yes, Izuku came home last night all scuffed up. He had said he was out at the park and accidentally had a little tumble. Right Izuku?" Inko looked over at her son, and found him looking away from her. Ochako looked between the two and it suddenly clicked what had just happened, oh, she doesn't know?
Inko frowned, "Izuku, honey?"

After a tense silence Izuku finally spoke up, "I, I didn't want you to get worried is all mom. It was just some guys from school."

Inko reached out and put a hand on his shoulder, "Oh Izuku, you should have told me. I'm your mother. I'm suppose to worry about you. And take care of these things." She then looked over at Ochako, "The bullies you stood up to. Were they the same ones from the park?"

Ochako gave an affirmative nod, "yeah it was the same guy from our class."

Inko caught the singular description, "Guy? It was just one boy giving Izuku trouble...oh. It was Bakugou again wasn't it." Inko slumped slightly in her seat, "Of course it was him. And he's in your class this year? Maybe I should give the school another call."

Izuku sat up again and waved the idea off, putting on a brave smile for his mother, "its ok mom. Besides if they wouldn't do anything the last few times you called, I doubt they'd do anything now."

It pained Inko that she couldn't argue with her son. Ochako frowned when she saw that both of them seemed willing to accept the whole situation, "why won't the school do something?"

Izuku sighed, "ever since Kacchan got his quirk, everyone around him has given him so much praise. Which is fair, it is an amazing quirk. And because it's so amazing, everyone knows when he applies to U.A he's bound to get in. So no one really wants to be the one that gets in his way of that."

Ochako's jaw dropped, "HE'S applying to U.A? Seriously?"

"Yeah, he's aced all the mock exams and everything too."

Ochako could not believe her ears. The whole thing was starting to make her fume. How could someone like that Bakugou, not only get a free pass on being a dangerous bully, but also be getting ready to become a hero?

Inko looked over at the angered Ochako, "So when Izuku said you stood up to some bullies. He meant to say you stood up to that Bakugou? Then let me just say, thank you so very much. It means the world to me, knowing my Izuku has someone who's willing to stand up for him."

Ochako felt her anger evaporate some, and she started to blush, "I just couldn't stand by and let it happen in front of me like that. I didn't do anything special."

Izuku shook his head, "No it was incredible! You standing up to Kacchan really made you look like a hero to me."

"I agree with my son. It sounds like U.A has a great hero on her way at the end of this year."

"A, a hero? Me?"

Now Ochako was blushing heavily. Getting praise now not only from Izuku, but his mother as well? Ochako covered her face with her hands, trying to hide her blush. Unfortunately doing so while in her state of mind, she forgot to make sure to keep her pinky out, and activated her quirk on herself and floated above the table.

"Oh my!"
"Wow, I didn't know you could use your quirk on yourself Uraraka!"

Ochako now had another reason to be embarrassed as both Midoriya's helped her back down to the ground.

With dinner done, and after helping Inko clean up, Ochako was getting ready to depart for her apartment.

"Are you sure you don't want me to call you a cab dear?"

Ochako shook her head, "No, no its ok. It's not that far really. I'll be fine."

Inko then handed her a small bag, "Here, you can take some of the leftovers for yourself. Actually before you go. If you'd like, it's not that different cooking for three then two. So instead of eating all by yourself, you are more than welcome to have dinner with us."

Izuku nodded excitedly, "Yeah that's a great idea mom!"

Ochako was stunned by the offer, "Are, is that really ok? I don't want to become a burden."

Inko waved her off, "of course you're not a burden. If the two you you are going to be getting ready for U.A together it'd probably be easier to be able to spend more time together for studying and the like anyway, so I'm sure you'd be over here regardless. Plus I truly want to thank you for standing up for my Izuku."

Ochako was still stunned, "I don't know what to say. Thank you so much."

After saying her goodbyes to Inko, Ochako left the apartment, Izuku walking with her till she left the grounds.

"So Ochako, what do you think we should do first? For our training I mean."

"Hmm, I guess first thing we need to do is find some gyms and such. I have to think there are plenty around here. We can shop around and see what we can find."

Izuku agreed, "Yeah that sounds like a plan. And for the written stuff, I have most of the books to prep for the test. I can make you some study notes that you can work with if you'd like. I'll also browse online and see what else is out there we can work on."

"That sounds like a great idea."

Reaching the edge of the apartments Izuku waved goodbye to Ochako till she was out of sight. Walking back, for the first time since he could remember, Izuku was looking forward to the next day of school.

Chapter 1: The Origin of Heroes
Izuku and Ochako search for a place to start training to achieve their dreams while also dealing with the harsh reality of going to school with Katsuki Bakugou. Plans are made. Lines are crossed, and promises are broken.

It was the weekend and Izuku would be enjoying the very lovely day normally if he could stop himself from pacing around the park bench that he and Ochako had agreed to meet at, muttering to himself as he continued to walk in circles. Over the last few days he had come up with a list of gyms, registered quirk training grounds, and hero school entrance exam facilities for he and Ochako to go visit. And today was the day they were finally going to go check them out. Except now there was a slight problem. He had originally thought his mother would be accompanying them as they walked around the city. He learned last night however that she was perfectly ok with them going themselves while she took care of some shopping.

Which meant that he and Ochako would be alone.

That he would be alone with a girl. A very cool girl. A very pretty…

Izuku shook his head, trying to dislodge that thought. Ochako was his friend. And she wanted to be a hero. It would be wrong to think those things. Still he was having a really hard time keeping his thoughts platonic as this was a completely new situation for him. And he had no idea what he should do.

At school, things were easy. It was practically a routine by this point. They had class, ate lunch and avoided Katsuki. Even when she came over for dinner nothing really made him flustered as having his mother around kept him calm. For the most part. When she had brought out a photo album to share with Ochako, he did just about die of embarrassment. The ‘aws’ and ‘that’s so adorable’ and general cooing sounds she made at how cute he was in the All Might onesie came pretty close to doing him in. And of course his mother just had to bring up his All Might collection which this time Ochako all but demanded to get to see. Izuku was indeed proud of it, but showing it off was something he had never thought he’d do.

Ochako to her credit didn’t mock him or anything. In fact she was genuinely impressed and a little excited by the collection. But getting called an otaku was still enough to get Izuku completely flustered. His mother patted his shoulder and comforted him at least.
For, at least tenth time, Izuku checked his phone for any messages from Ochako. More of a nervous twitch then anything else. It still sent a shiver of excitement that he and Ochako had shared numbers.

“Deku!”

Izuku jumped, startled out of his thoughts. When he looked up he saw Ochako jogging toward him, a bright smile on her face, and waving at him. Which he returned with a, slightly nervous, smile and wave.

“Uraraka good morning!”

“I hope you weren’t waiting to long,” she asked as she reach the bench.

Izuku shook his head, “No its fine. I’ve only been here a few minutes.”

“That’s good. I was a little worried since I left my place a little later than I planned.”

“Oh? What kept you?”

Ochako gulped, “Oh you know, just um prep and stuff…” I am not telling him I went through 5 different outfits this morning.

Like Izuku, Ochako had been thrown for a bit of a loop after learning they would be by themselves for the day.

“So Deku, you got a list for us huh.”

“Yep so want to go check out the first gym then?”

Ochako nodded excitedly, “Sure, lets go!”
As they walked Izuku pulled out some notes he flipped through, “So our first stop is Yav-En Gym. It’s rated pretty good, and they claim that several heroes have worked out there too.”

“Oh who?”

“Oh,” Izuku flipped through his notes some more, “They don’t actually say…”

There was an awkward pause before both burst into a fit a giggles, “What kind of place makes that kind of claim but doesn’t back it up?”

“Well it looked good in the photos they had on their site.” Izuku showed her the pictures he had printed off, as well as the prices that the gym charged.

“Oh, Deku, those prices seem a little high, don’t you think?”

“Well actually their prices are on the low end honestly.”

Ochako almost tripped over herself as she skid to a stop, shocked and a little horrified, “Wait really!?!”

Izuku nodded as he waited for Ochako to catch back up to him, “Yeah unfortunately most of the gyms in our area really pander to the aspiring hero crowd, since they are so close to U.A. So they can get away with the higher prices.”

Ochako groaned, “great…”

“I did pick a range for us, and I do have some cheaper places, but most of the cheap places I looked up are further away, and not in the best areas honestly.”

As they continued on Ochako was doing the math in her head, on how she would need to break down her allowance to pay for the gyms if she could expect even higher prices. She was not liking the numbers. Soon though Izuku came to a stop and pulled her from her thoughts, “Um I think we’re here…”
“Deku...can I see those pictures again please…”

Wordlessly Izuku handed her the pictures and waited for Ochako to go over them. She sighed as she confirmed what she had thought, “Deku...these were taken back on their grand opening…”

“Well I guess now we know why this place is so cheap.”

While the photos of the gym showed bright white walls, pleasant green shrubbery and a small garden fountain, now the place was much more run down. The white walls now an ugly dirty grey, shrubs that had clearly not been pruned to watered in some time. The less said about the fountain the better.

“What kind of place are you taking me to Deku?” Ochako asked as she teased Izuku.

Izuku laughed nervously, “well...maybe they spend all their money on their equipment?”

With a shrug, Ochako handed the pictures back to Izuku, “Well I guess we wont know standing out here. Let’s go see what they have.”

“Yeah,” Izuku agreed, sounding optimistic, “let’s go.”

However their optimism was quickly crushed, Not just by the state of the interior, peeling and moldy walls, leaky ceiling tiles, and a smell that almost turned Izuku a shade of green that matched his hair. But also by the members themselves. A single word came to both Izuku’s and Ochako’s minds as soon as they saw them all.

*Macho.*

Every single person in the gym was large, with huge muscles and were either lifting huge amounts of free weights, or chugging down some kind of drink in containers the size of gallon jugs. Still they were here, might as well get a tour. Both walked up to the front desk and found a man, just as large as the members looking down at them.
“Can I help you two?”

Izuku cleared his throat, “um yeah. I saw online that you have open memberships for your gym? I was wondering if we get take a tour?”

The man raised an eyebrow as he looked from Izuku to Ochako before with an exaggerated groan stood up, “Yeah, sure. The guys could use a laugh. Follow me.”

*Charming*, Ochako thought dryly. *Not like we are potential paying customers you jerk.*

Taking them into the main gym room, he pointed around, clearly not very interested in doing so, “Alright so we got some stuff over there for your arms. Over there you can work your chests…” His eyes glance over to Ochako briefly, sending a slight shiver of revulsion down her spine. “Abs are done in the corner and that's about it.”

*QUICK!* Both thought.

Ochako leaned over to Izuku and whispered to him, “let's get out of here. This place….is not for us.”

Izuku agreed, “yeah, I don’t think…”

“HEY! Man what's with the kids man!?*

Both teens jumped as a huge bull of a man walked up to them carrying a huge type of medicine ball. The man while not tall enough for his head to scrap the top of the ceiling, his huge horns did. Sending small shards of moldy tile onto the ground. The bull quirk, which Izuku guessed the man had, also gave him the look of a spotted minitaur, completed with a bull face. He even had a large ring pierced through his nose. Izuku gulped when his eyes fell onto him.

“Easy there Tank. Kids are just asking about memberships.”

Tank chuckled, as did a few of the other gym members, “Really? Whys a shrimp like you looking at our place?”
Ochako frowned, but before she could cut in, Izuku answered, “We are looking for a place to help get ready for U.A.”

This time the man threw his head back and laughed out loud, “Seriously! Your little self is gonna try to be a hero? Aint no thing as a skinny hero kid. See look at these,” he moved the ball to one arm and flexed with the other, showing off his muscles, “you need these kid. And I can tell you ain’t got what it takes to get even half my size. Heck, catch.”

Before Izuku was ready, the bull passed him the oversized ball with a heft, with Izuku quickly losing his balance and falling from the weight of it.

“HA HA HA HA”

Laughs filled the room while Ochako quickly crouched by Izuku’s side, making sure he wasn’t hurt.

“Can’t even catch a small weight, that's just sad. Heroes are strong kid. You want to even think about being one, maybe first figure out how to lift that.”

Ochako helped Izuku up, but once she saw the gloomy look that had fallen over him, almost growled out in anger. This was not missed by Izuku though, who gulped seeing her seethe.

“Uraraka?”

Ochako however had turned her attention back to the bull who was walking away, “So to be a hero you gotta be able to catch this thing huh?!”

Tank, glanced back, “that's right little girl.”

The bulls eyes widened slightly when Ochako reached down and with one hand lifted the ball up. Izuku blinked looking from Ochako to the bull man, then back to her, “Um Uraraka…?”
Ochako however wasn’t listening, “Catch.” With scary ease, Ochako hurled the ball back into the chest of the bull, sending him tumbling into the nearest wall with a heavy crash. While everyone either laughed at the display or stared wide eyed at Ochako, she had already pulled Izuku away with her, leaving in a hurried huff.

Once they were a couple blocks away Ochako had finally calmed down some. *That freaking jerk. What does he know anyway. And poor Deku, he gets enough of that crap at school. He doesn’t need to be getting from adults too… Maybe I should say something.*

When Ochako turned around however she had to do a quick double take. Not only did Izuku seem unfazed by his encounter, but he had pulled out his hero notebook, from where Ochako had no idea, and was scribbling away in it. Mumbling with each stroke of his pencil as he had his face buried in its pages.

“Deku please tell me you aren’t adding that jerks quirk to your note. That book is supposed to be for heroes and awesome quirks right?”

Deku peeked over the top of the book quickly, and paused mumbling just long enough to say, “I’m just adding to your pages. Your quirk negates gravity but the objects still have mass….mumble mumble….so many uses…” before going back to his work.

Ochako blinked a few times before a she gave a startled scream, “wait I’m in your book!? Let me see that!”

Izuku took a few steps back holding the book to his chest and crossing his arms, “wait I’m not done with your entries yet! At least wait till I’m done!”

Ochako gave him an even glare before turning around and continuing on, “fine but you tell me the moment you’re done…wait you’re not sketching me too are you?”

Izuku hurried passed Ochako, “come on Uraraka, we still have more places to check out!”

Ochako didn’t miss how Izuku had ignored her question, but caught up with Izuku. The glare she gave him for the next block convinced Izuku to quickly scribble down one last note before he put his notebook away.
Unfortunately for the two, the rest of the places they visited did not go much better for them. Prices were too high, too far out of the way to be feasible to travel to, or were already filled and had a waiting list for memberships. After stopping to grab a bite of lunch on the go the two went on a walk.

Izuku scanned through his list, seemingly in the hopes that a new name would appear that he might have missed. Sadly this was not the case and he folded the papers away, “I’m sorry Uraraka. I thought at I had some good options for us…”

“It’s ok Deku, honestly I’m the one that’s been saying no to everything. Maybe I need to stop being so…stingy.”

As they continued to walk down the sidewalk looked around absently before her eyes fell on a large sign with different directions on it, “Oh wow, I didn’t know there was an open beach nearby.”

Izuku looked to where Ochako was looking, “Oh you talking about Dagobah Beach? That’s not a place you’d want to go for a swim.”

“Hmm is there something wrong with it?”

Izuku chuckled slightly, “Yeah you could say that. Actually we are pretty close, I’ll show you.”

Following after Izuku, Ochako soon realized what he had meant, “Oh wow, that’s a lot of garbage.”

Ochako gazed out almost impressed by the amount and variety of trash that littered the whole coast line.

“Yeah the tides wash a lot of stuff onto the shore, and since it’s already a mess, people will just dump their trash here on top of it.”
“And no one does anything?”

“You’d have to drag all the stuff up to the street for the cleaners to get to it. It’s just too much work I guess.”

“Yeah there’s a lot of really big stuff mixed in with all of it. I think I see some fridges and...is that a truck?”

Izuku laughed, “I wouldn’t be surprised. Hey, if we could get those bigs guys from that first gym down here I bet they’d have a fun time lifting all this stuff. Most of it probably weighs more than all the weights they had.”

Ochako laughed along with Izuku before a thought crossed her mind. She stopped laughing and looked back at the beach, scanning it much more closely, “You know Deku...that might be a good idea. Follow me for a sec.”

“Huh? Hey wait a second Uraraka!”

Walking down to the beach, Ochako began to weave around many of the mountains of trash piled up. Izuku followed close behind, not sure what he had said that was ‘a good idea.’ Or really what Ochako was thinking.

After a few minutes of wandering around Ochako seemed to come to a conclusion, yeah this could work.

“Hey Deku,” she began, “pretty much everything here is a piece of furniture or an appliance of some kind. None of it is really garbage like you’d think it’d be from back on the sidewalk. It’s all big heavy stuff.”

“You mean more like a scrap yard? Yeah I guess you’re right. But what about it? What are you thinking of Uraraka?”

Ochako turned to face him with a very satisfied grin on her face, “I say we do what you said. Let’s train here.”
“Huh?”

“It’s like you said, lots of heavy stuff that would need to be lifted up and carried up to the street for trash pick up. I’m sure carrying a few desks and such will help us build up our strength. Plus it’ll be good community service too, don’t you think. Doesn’t All Might say when he does interviews sometimes he wishes more people did this kind of thing. Help out around their community and such.”

Izuku put his hand up to his chin as he thought about that. She has some great points.

“Also it’s out of the way enough and I bet no one comes down here often enough that we could practice our quirks too without getting in trouble.” Ochako added with a smirk, “What do you think?”

“Practice my quirk huh…”

Ochako watched Izuku intently as he continued to think everything over. She knew he was still touchy when it came to his quirk, but if they were going to train for the practical exam, they were going to need to not just train their bodies, but their quirks as well. She knew he knew this. He just needed a little push to get going.

After a little more thought, Izuku finally responded, “Ok Uraraka. Lets do it.”

Ochako smiled brightly, “That’s the spirit Deku!”

With it decided, the two continued to plan, coming to the conclusion that by the next weekend after making sure it would be safe, they should be ready to get started.

A couple days later however, fate would set in motion events that would change their lives forever.

It was morning and after meeting up at Izuku’s place for breakfast, both were now heading for school, chatting happily over nothing very important. A normal boring start to their day.

“Oh by the way, I let your mom know I won’t be coming over tonight.”
“Oh why’s that Uraraka?”

“I gotta grab some groceries for my place. Eating dinner with you both is great but i still need to make sure I have some stuff in stock.”

“Do you want help?”

Ochako waved him off, “No no, it’s nothing to bad. Just enough to make some lunches for myself. I’ll be fine.”

They continued to walk on before suddenly a roar from a villain across the street grabbed both of their attentions. As did the small crowd of people around them. But it was seeing several heroes rushing past that pulled Izuku away as he ran off to see what the commotion was all about.

Ochako gasped for breath as she chased after Izuku, “Deku wait a sec! We should be getting to school!”

It’s too early in the morning for running, Ochako thought with a groan. By the time she caught up, pushing through the crowd so she could get besides Izuku, she couldn’t help but snicker some as she watched her friend gaze up in wonder at the fight.

“Uraraka look up their on the rails! Its Kamui Woods! He’s going after that giant villain! So COOL!”

With a teasing grin, she nudged Izuku with her elbow, “Deku with that cheesy grin on your face, your not even trying to hide the fact you are a huge fan boy. But please don’t go running off like that huh? I don’t want to be all sweaty when I get to class cause I had to catch up to you.”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head lightly in embarrassment, “Sorry Uraraka, but getting to see a fight like this so close is really cool. And its Kamui Woods too. He’s so new so I don’t have many notes on him. This is a great chance to see how an up and coming hero works in the field.”

“I guess so,” Uraraka looked back up to the train rails above them and gave a low whistle as she watched the fight, “wow he’s doing a great job dodging around like that. That giant can’t lay a hand on him.”
“OH LOOK! He’s getting ready to use his super move!”

“Wait you can tell that already? You sure you’re an All Might fan and not a Woods fan boy instead?”

Izuku balked slightly, “All Might is the greatest hero there is Uraraka! But I study as many heroes as I can.”

Ochako bowed slightly in mock apology, giggling as she said, “Please forgive me oh great studier of heroes.”

Izuku smiled and gave her a small push before returning his attention to the fight, “I was right, look he’s already started his move!”

As Izuku said, Kamui Woods arm began to grow, large tree branches growing out to ensnare the raging villain. Izuku cheered on calling out the move in his excitement, “It’s the preemptive binding lacquered chains prison!”

Before the heroes attack to reach the villain however, a new scream echoed out cutting everyone off.

“CANYON CANNON!”

A giant women drop-kicked the villain off the railing and into the street below. As she stood and introduced herself as Mt Lady, Ochako couldn’t help but notice how she was posing herself in her very tight costume. Practically flashing the crowd. She groaned as she became very aware that the men around her were taking many pictures now. A few mumbling about some great ‘money shots.’

Great, cause that’s what girls need to see in their heroes. You lower that bar lady...

“Well it looks like that’s that then. The police are moving in to arrest him so Deku why don’t we…” Ochako turned and stared dully as she found Izuku scribbling away at his note book, mumblelling to himself as he did.
“…Gigantification...showy quirk….hard to get around…”

*And he’s gone.*

“...she definitely has the looks…”

*Wait what?* Ochako blinked as she heard that. She then noticed that Izuku was glancing from his notebook to Mt. Lady as she waved to the crowd of people. *He’s writing about her? Well I guess that makes sense, she’s a new hero so he’d want to take notes….just hero notes…*

“Deku.” Ochako said calmly, getting Izuku’s attention. Izuku looked up from his notes and gave a small gulp. The look on Ochako’s face did not match the calmness of her voice. She had a friendly smile, but her brow was twitching, “Deku could I see what you were writing about that hero ?”

With the event over, and after convincing Ochako she could see his book after he was done, the two made it to school and took their seats in class. Izuku glanced over at Ochako nervously as she continued to give him a cold stare. He tried to wave her off, “Come on Uraraka I’d never put something bad into my notes.”

“I heard you mention her looks Deku.”

Izuku blushed, which did not help his case as far as Ochako was concerned, “Well some heroes also have brand deals and will act as models. Like Uwabami and Midnight.”

Before Ochako could point out that using those two as examples, *especially Midnight*, for reasons why she shouldn’t want to see what he had written down, she was stopped as their teacher entered the room and took his seat at his desk. The teacher pulled out a stack of paper after he had sat down at his desk before addressing the class, “now since you all are now in your third year, it’s time for you all to start thinking about your futures.”

He held up the papers he had taken out, “I should be going over with you what you should be doing to get ready. I even had these career aptitude tests ready for you ” He made a show of throwing the papers up in the air, “But you all are going to go and be heroes so why waste our time?!”

Everyone cheered and started showing off their quirks. Ochako giggled at the obvious laziness of their teacher, even as she joined in, floating her note book. Izuku besides her, sheepishly levitated
his pencil around his outreached hand. Ochako nudged him slightly, encouraging him to show off as much as everyone else. His smile broadened and raised his hand up higher as he straightened in his chair.

Katsuki was leaned back, his feet up on his desk, barely giving his fellow students a second glance. After all their quirks were nothing to take note of.

There teacher waved them down, “Yes! Yes, yes, you all have wonderful Quirks! But using your powers at school is against the rules! So tone it down!”

As everyone got back under control, including Izuku and Ochako who were grinning at each other and enjoying the rare light hearted moment they could share in the class, Katsuki scoffed loudly from his chair, “Teach! Don’t lump us all in the same group. Unlike them, I’m the real deal while everyone else would be lucky to be a sidekick to some washed up D Lister. I'm not gonna be stuck at the bottom with the rest of these rejects!”

Around him the class exploded in complaints and indignation.

“What the hell man!?”

“Don’t look down on us!”

“You think you’re better than us?”

Katsuki smirked, letting the students comments bounce off him without a care, “You all should just shut up like the extras you are. Go ahead and step up, I’ll take you all on!"

Behind him Ochako rolled her eyes, “How do you fit through the door with an ego that big?"

Katsuki leaned back and glared at Ochako, “It’s not ego. I just know I’m that good.”

The teacher flipped through some of his notes, “Hmm well you do have impressive test results. Maybe you will get into U.A.”
Ochako grit her teeth at that statement, while Izuku shrunk down into his chair with a groan.

“He’s gonna try for the national school?!”

“It has 0.2% acceptance rate!”

“It’s impossible to get into!”

Katsuki’s smirk grew as the students anger from before quickly turned to shock, “That’s why it’s the only place worthy of me.”

Katsuki leapt onto his desk and stood proudly over everyone else, “I aced all of the mock tests. I’m the only one here that stands a chance of getting in.” His smirk became almost manic as he continued, “I’ll become the richest hero of all time and even surpass All Might! Then everyone around the world will know who I am, and it all starts at U.A!”

Ochako snapped and slammed her hands down on her desk, “That’s complete garbage! Someone like you could never be a hero! You’d be rejected on the spot!”

“Ha, get real. Like you know what you’re talking about Round Face. You’re just jealous you belong with the extras too. And not with me at the top. And only the top get into U.A.”

“Actually,” their teacher cut in, “Miss Uraraka is applying to U.A as well. Isn’t that why you moved to the area. If I recall you’re transferred from a ways away and it was very short notice.”

Katsuki’s smirk faded, while everyone else shifted their attention from Katsuki to her.

“No way, even she’s trying to get in?”

“That’s crazy.”
“Wait she moved just to apply? That’s nuts.”

Ochako, while not exactly pleased that her teacher was ok with sharing her plans so openly with the class, rolled with it, and followed Katsuki’s example and stepped up onto her desk. Trying not to blush and show how flustered she was drawing everyone’s attention. Standing straight, she pointed her thumb to herself, “That’s right! I’m going to get into U.A! I’m going to become a great hero and rescue everyone I find. Just like Thirteen!” She then leveled her gaze towards Katsuki who returned it in kind.

“Oh yeah, Midoriya wanted to go to U.A. too, right?” Their teacher added offhandedly.

Katsuki froze on the spot, which Ochako found more than a little unnerving. He was still facing her direction, but was clearly not looking at her anymore. Or anything for that matter as he processed what he had just heard. Izuku buried himself under his arms and shrunk into his desk as far as he could go. A few seconds passed before the class erupted with laughter, causing Izuku to flinch, taken aback and visibly shaken.

Ochako felt her blood boil, “What’s so funny!?” Her classmates were quick to answer her.

“Midoriya? Huh are you nuts?”

“He’s got the weakest quirk out of all of us.”

“No way! Not gonna happen!”

“You may be a huge nerd but, you can’t get into the hero course just by studying! You gotta be able to do something too!”

As his classmates laughed, and Ochako tried to tell them all off, Izuku stood up even while looking clearly upset and began to defend himself. Trying to emulate both Katsuki and Ochako before him, but stopping short of getting on top of his desk as they had. “I know I’m not ready yet. But I’m going to study and train. I’m going to get into U.A!”

The class just laughed louder. Ochako watched as Izuku’s shoulders sagged from the weight of their cruelty. She turned towards their teacher about to plead with him to get everyone to stop, but before she could Katsuki snapped out of his stupor and charged Izuku, screaming. His hand
slammed into Izuku’s desk as he unleashed an explosion that boomed over everyone’s laughter. With his desk now cracked in half, Izuku was sent sprawling onto the ground. He looked up and found Katsuki looking down on him, an enraged and almost manic look on his face.

“HEY DEKU!”

Izuku scampered back as Katsuki stood over him. “Don’t forget your place you shit! You’re below the rest of these rejects and extras! Your quirk is the worst one in this whole class! What can you even do with it? Huh? How can you even think you can stand on the same level as me?!”

Ochako stood in shock by the sheer violence that Katsuki had just displayed while in class. And in front of the teacher no less.

Izuku was in a panic, and frantically waved his arms in front of himself as he backed away from Katsuki, “No wait Kacchan! I’m not...not trying to compete with you or anything! Believe me! Please!” His back hit the far wall and he slumped against it, “It’s just that, this has been my goal ever since I was little.” He looked up at Katsuki and tried to harden his resolve, even though he had quit literally been backed into a corner, “And well I won’t know unless I try. I have to try!”

Katsuki’s hands started to smoke, his sneer hardening, practically becoming monstrous, “TRY? Whaddaya mean, unless you try?! Are you taking the test for fun? Do you think this is a game? What can you even do with a quirk like yours huh? You will die during the exam and embarrass our whole class!”

The teacher sighed and clapped his hands to get the class’s attention, “Alright, alright that’s enough rough housing. Points have been made, so let’s get back on track.”

Katsuki frowned, and turned to go sit down. Ochako rushed past him, shoving him out of her way as she moved over to Izuku to help him. Knowing the teacher was watching him he let it slide, only giving Ochako a murderous glare, which she returned to him in kind, before sitting back down. Ochako turned her attention back her Izuku, “are you ok?”

“I...I think so.”

Taking her hand, Izuku stood up and joined her as they both took their seats. As the teacher told one of the students to run along and go get a new desk, Ochako leaned over and put a hand on Izuku’s shoulder, giving him a reassuring smile, “Don’t you listen to any of them. We’re getting
Izuku, while still flustered from Katsuki’s attack and the classes immediate dismissal of his dream, did his best to returned Ochako’s smile with one of his own, “thank you Uraraka.”

The rest of the day passed without incident and soon after the final bell of the day rang students got up and began to filter out of the class. Izuku scrolled through the news on his phone, scanning to see if the fight from this morning had made any headlines. His smile grew as he saw several articles pop up on his search, “man the villain incident from this morning is all over the headlines! I wanna hurry up and go home so I can write it down in my notebook.”

Ochako laughed, “I figured that’d be the first thing you’d do today.” Ochako then gave him a sideways look, “I still wanna see what you wrote down about Mt Lady.”

Izuku blushed and raised his hands to defend himself, “come on Uraraka. I’m not like those guys before. I’m only interested in her as a hero.”

“Uh huh.” Ochako did not sound convinced. “I’m checking it tomorrow. First thing in the morning. And I want to see my entry too. No more waiting.”

Izuku sighed in defeat as he started to pack his things. However as he went to put his notebook away it was suddenly snatched out of his hand.

“We're not done talking yet, Deku.” Katsuki growled as he held the notebook out of Izuku’s reach.

Ochako frowned as she stood up from her desk, “give it back Bakugou.”

Katsuki ignored her as two of his stooges walked over, “Hey what do you got there? Is it his diary?”

Katsuki held up the notebook so they could see its cover. Both started to laugh, “seriously? Are you actually taking notes on how to be a hero? That’s so freaking lame.”

“Man are you delusional or what Midoriya?”
Izuku stood up nervously, hands reaching out in a hopeful gesture to get his book back, “real funny guys, but please just give it back.”

When Katsuki showed no sign he was going to give Izuku his notebook back, Ochako lunged for it. However Katsuki had been expecting some kind of reaction from her and pulled back, out of her reach. He took a few more steps back till his back was against the wall and he leaned on the frames of the open windows. Katsuki glanced down at the book, flipping through a few pages, “Most top first-string heroes have stories about them from their school days. How even then people knew they were destined for greatness. That’s what people are going to say about me after I become the only student from this crap school to make it to U.A.”

Katsuki finished flipping through the pages of the notebook and looked up. His eyes boring a hole right through Izuku, “that’s not ego talking. I just know I’m that good. And I don’t need you two screwing up my shining moment. So don’t either of you two think about applying.”

Ochako glared daggers at Katsuki but the boys full attention was on Izuku, who kept his head down and said nothing. Behind them they could hear the stooges whispering to themselves.

“Man this is just sad.”

“Yeah he’s pretty pathetic huh.”

“Maybe he’s finally facing reality.”

When Ochako turned, about to give them a piece of her mind, Izuku surprised everyone by lifting his head trying to meet Katsuki’s stare down, even if he was trembling head to toe, “you’re wrong Kacchan. You aren’t the only one here that can be a hero.”

Ochako beamed proudly while Katsuki glowered at Izuku. He took a breath, “fine then hero, catch.” Katsuki slapped his hands together and, with the notebook in between, scorched it in a puff of smoke. Then with a casual flick of the wrist, tossed the book out the open window. Izuku gave a startled yelp as he watched the book tumble out the window. On instinct he reach out, but he was too far away to even hope to run and catch the notebook before it passed below the bottom of the window frame and out of view.

Ochako felt herself tense up, hands balled up into fists but she was unsure exactly what she could do. But some primal part of her was screaming to punch the smug bully right in his face. Before
she could act on this urge though a bright glow from her side got her attention. She turned and found Izuku, hands outreached and face so scrunched in concentration that his eyes were screwed shut, glowing from head to toe. She knew it was a side effect of his quirk. And that the brighter it was, the harder he was concentrating on using it. And he was glowing very bright. Izuku slowly forced his eyes open and gave a surprised little cheer, “I got it!”

Ochako looked out the window and sure enough, the notebook was floating up in the air, the same bright green glow surrounding it as well. Ecstatic, Ochako forgot about Katsuki and hurried over to Izuku’s side, “great job Deku!” She said encouraging him.

Katsuki rolled his eyes and walked away to gather his bag.

Ochako looked from Izuku to the floating notebook, noticing that it was still being held in place and the light around it was starting to flicker, “Deku? Can you bring it in?”

Izuku’s voice was strained as he shook his head, “I, I don’t think so. I've never tried to hold anything this far away before.”

One of the stooges snickered, “then move closer dumb ass.”

Izuku started to take a tentative step forward, but as he did the glow flickered again, and the book dropped slightly. Deku cried out and scrunched up his face in concentration.

“Lame.”

“Seriously lame.”

Ochako glared at the two before hurrying to the open window, “don’t worry Deku I’ll get it. Just keep holding on!”

Ochako reached the window but the notebook was just out of her reach. She reached out and leaned out of the window, the tips of her shoes only just scrapping the classroom floor, “Deku you have to bring it in some. I can’t reach it.”
“I don’t think I can!” Deku was trembling now. Sweat starting to form on his brow.

“Yes you can Deku. I know it.”

Ochako, still reaching out, watched as the notebook slowly, ever so slowly, began to move closer to her.

“You’re doing it Deku! Keep it up!”

It was so close now. Her fingers tips could just scrap it.

“You know,” Katsuki began, his voice almost kind sounding, “if you really want to be a hero that badly, there’s actually another way.”

Ochako felt a chill run up her spine and Izuku, despite concentrating so hard on using his quirk, found himself listening intently.

“Just pray that you'll be born with a better quirk in your next life and take a swan dive off the roof of the building.”

Ochako felt something inside her snap. She whirled around ready to give Katsuki more than just a piece of her mind. A punch to the face was only going to be the start of what she was going to do. Katsuki sneered and raised a hand up, small sparks and explosions popping in his palm, “got something to say round face?” He was practically begging for either her to act. He’d take any reason to put her in her place too.

Ochako however had already come to a screeching halt, but not from Katsukis intimidation. The green glow from Izuku’s quirk had vanished as his hands hung limply to his side. His head was lowered to the point Ochako couldn’t see his face. She could see the tears falling down his cheeks though.

Katsuki, not getting anymore reactions, gave a bored shrug and left the classroom. His two stooges following close behind, whispering to themselves over how pathetic Izuku was.
Izuku stood, rooted in place. It took him a few moments to collect himself enough to notice the hand that lay on his shoulder. It was trembling.

Gathering his strength he finally looked up and found Ochako right besides him, waiting patiently for him. Her face a mask of worry and compassion, “Hey, don’t take what that jerk said seriously ok. He doesn’t know what he’s talking about. So, so don’t...don’t think about what he said. Ok?”

He took a breath. And a second one before he finally spoke, “I dropped it.”

Ochako tilted her head slightly, not sure what Izuku menat, “dropped?”

“My notebook. I couldn’t hold onto it…”

Ochako blinked, then cast a glance over to the window. In truth she had completely forgotten about Izuku’s notebook. Too worried about how Izuku was dealing with Katsuki’s latest and, in her opinion, cruelest attack. It took her a few more seconds to get her own emotions under control. Part of her wanting to make sure Izuku was ok. To stay and make sure nothing else happens to him. The other part of her, wanting to go chasing after Katsuki and finally deal with the bully. She just wasn’t sure how’d she do it. Or at least, do it in a way that wouldn’t land her in jail and ruin her chances of getting into U.A. After all, she doubted having, ‘thrown weightless student into traffic’, would look very good on her transcripts.

“Then, let’s go find your notebook. It shouldn’t have landed far from the building.”

They collected their belongings and left the classroom. As they walked down the hall, Izuku slightly head of Ochako, felt the uneasy silence between the two had gone on for too long and said, “I’ve never thought about doing something like that. I-I want you to know that. No matter how bad things were for me, it never crossed my mind to kill….to do that.”

Izuku came to a stop at the exit door, hand raised to push it open, but before he did, he added, “And now that I’ve met you, and made such a great friend...I don’t want you to worry about me.” He turned to try and give Ochako a smile. All Might always smiled, even when things got bad. “Besides,” Izuku added, trying to lighten the mood, “I don’t think I could live with myself if you got sad that I was dead.”

The was an awkward pause before Ochako raised an eyebrow, “was that supposed to be a joke?”
"Yes?"

Ochako snorted as she tried to hold back a small laugh, “it was terrible Deku.” The cloud of unease that had hung over the pair lifted somewhat. The two then exited the school they made their way to the courtyard under the window of their classroom where they separated to looked around.

As Izuku combed through some of the bushes he heard Ochako give a sudden “ah ha! Found it!”

As he straightened Ochako hurried over to him, and handed him his notebook back. With some trepidation he looked over the scorched cover before flipping through the pages. To his relief, while the outer borders of the pages were charred, the inner portions with all his notes and sketches had escaped with minimal damage.

“I found it by the koi tank. If you hadn’t used your quirk, it probably would have landed in the water.”

Izuku instinctually held the book close to his chest, “That, that would have been bad. I guess my quirk was good for something after all…”

“Deku!” Ochako scolded him, “don’t say that about yourself.” Ochako reached up and put her hands on Izuku’s shoulders and looked him right in the eye, “you have to believe in yourself. You have an incredible quirk. But more importantly, you are an incredible person. And after we get ourselves ready and get into U.A you’ll show everyone, including that as…” she paused catching herself and took a steadying breath, “including that jerk Bakugou just what you can do.”

Izuku smiled back determinately, “you’re right Uraraka. Thank you.”

With a nod Ochako pulled her hands back and the two left the school. After some reassurance from Izuku, Ochako went on her way to do her errands leaving Izuku to walk home alone. However despite Ochako’s determination and his reassurance, doubt soon began to creep back into Izukus mind with every step he took.

*You’ve got the weakest quirk in class.*

*No way! Not gonna happen.*
You're below the rest of these rejects and extras! Your quirk is the worst one in this whole class!

Just pray that you'll be born with a quirk in your next life and take a swan dive off the roof of the building

Izuku shut his eyes as he came to a stop. Katsuki’s words still echoing inside his head. Izuku tried to force these thoughts down, That idiot, you can’t just go and tell people to kill themselves. What if I really jumped? What would he do then?

Izuku sighed, as he kept walking. I just need to think positive. Maybe the heroes from this morning. I still need to write down everything I saw.

Izuku thought back to Katsuki casually throwing out his notebook, like it was trash. Looking down at his book he casually ran his fingers over the scorched cover. He was lucky that it had only gotten some burns. If it had fallen into the koi tank? The idea that his dreams could have become fish food was not a pleasant thought.

Still it’s like Uraraka said, we are going to get into U.A. and prove to everyone we have what it takes to be heroes. Uraraka will make sure of it. Even if she has to drag me across the finish line...

Izuku wasn’t paying attention to his surroundings as he entered a short tunnel. He didn’t hear the manhole cover behind him rumbled or notice the muck and slime slithering out.

...But what if she gets so distracted by helping me. She loses her chance? I couldn’t even pull a small notebook back inside. How can I do anything but drag her down with me?

Izuku reached up and smacked his cheeks, “stop thinking like that. Believe in yourself. Just...just smile and be like All Might!”

Izuku raised his fists up and laughed, his declaration echoing through the tunnel.

“Well would you look at that.”
Izuku stopped laughing and turned, surprised to hear someone else with him. He looked up in horror as a mass of green sludge reformed into a huge mass and a sickening face looked down on him, “A villain!?”

“Looks like I found the perfect skinsuit for hiding!”

Izuku turned to run, but he didn’t even make it a few feet before the sludge villain launched himself and slammed down onto him. Izuku opened his mouth to scream for help, and the sludge took that opportunity to force a tendral of itself down Izuku’s throat.

*Whats he doing!? I can’t breathe!*

The monster held Izuku tight, looking down on him, his crooked teeth widening into a twisted smile, “Don't worry kid, I'm just taking over your body. It'll be easier for both of us if you don't fight back. It will only hurt for a little bit. After that, you'll feel better soon. Cause you won’t be feeling anything at all.”

*No, this can’t be happening!*

In desperation Izuku clawed at his mouth, trying to do anything to give himself a chance to breathe.

“Grab all you want kid, it's not gonna do you a bit of good. My body's made out of fluid.”

*Get out! Get out!*

“I gotta say, your helping me out a lot here kid.”

*Get out, get out, get out.....*

It was getting harder for Izuku to think. His vision was going dark. But even still, he kept clawing at the villain, even as his struggling was getting weaker. He couldn’t give up.

“There you go kid. Just go to, wait what’s blocking-!”
GET OUT!

There was a flash of bright light, and suddenly, Izuku felt his throat clear up and he fell to the ground, coughing and desperately sucking air into his burning lungs. His head hurt so much, leaving him dazed, and he could taste something metallic on his upper lip which left him very confused. Izuku looked around and was surprised to find that the sludge villain was no longer near him, but splattered along the walls around him. However any glimmer of relief he might have had was quickly quashed as the eyes of the villain reformed and he glared right at him, full of hatred and rage, “You little brat! I don’t know what that was, and I don’t care! Be a good boy and DIE ALREADY!”

Izuku was too weak to try and crawl away as the villain fell upon him again. With such force that Izuku was ground into the concrete and all the air he had just a few moments before was driven out of him. As everything went black, Izuku could only think of one thing.

Someone please, save me.

Behind them, the man hole cover launched into the air before coming back down with a loud clang. The sludge villain turned in alarm, his eyes going wide, “No, not you!”

Emerging from the uncovered hole, stood the hero of heroes. None other than All Might himself, “It’s alright now young man. I am here!”

The villain gave a started cry before lashing out with a tendril, but All Might simply ducked out of the way, letting the swing go wide and harmlessly smash away part of the concrete wall. A second tendril shot out, but All Might was ready for it. Pulling his fist back, every muscle in his arm tensed before he screamed out, “TEXAS SMASH!” and punched at the air between the two of them. The shockwave from the punch smashed through the tendril, ripping it apart, and kept going till it hit the villain who gave out one last startled cry, “Wind pressure!?” before he too was scattered by the attack, and was ripped away from Izuku who fell to the ground, losing consciousness.

Is that...All Might?

Slowly, Izuku began to regain his bearings. He found he could breath easily again, which was nice. His chest wasn’t burning anymore from lack of air and even his throat felt like it was back to normal. His head still hurt a little though, pounding in time with his heart beat. Maybe he had hit
his head when that villain had attacked him, though that didn’t seem completely right. He also still had that funny taste in his mouth, which was even more odd considering it tasted completely different than the part of the sludge that had been jammed in before. Also...someone was slapping him? Groggily Izuku opened his eyes to see what was going on.

All Might stood over Izuku, lightly tapping him multiple times on the cheek, a slight worried expression on his normally smiling face, “hey, young man. Hey, come on now, time to wake up. Oh! There we go.” All Might pulled back and let his smile return in full, “Thought I had lost you there for a second.”

Izuku’s eyes went wide as he gave a surprised scream, “ALL MIGHT!?” He sat up quickly, but a strong hand kept him from getting up too fast, “Easy there young man. Here take this.”

All Might handed Izuku a folded up handkerchief, which Izuku took but gave it a confused look, “Um thank you?”

“Young nose is bleeding. Sorry about that. I didn’t mean for you to get you caught up in my villain fighting.”

Izuku blinked and lifted his hand up to his nose which felt wet. When he pulled his hand back, sure enough, his fingers were red. I guess that explains the taste in my mouth. He then pressed the handkerchief to his nose. As Izuku dabbed at his nose, All Might continued speaking, still apologetic, “ Usually, I pay more attention to keeping bystanders safe. But it turns out the city sewer system is pretty difficult to navigate HAHAHA!!”

It suddenly dawned on Izuku the situation he was in. The number 1 hero in the entire world... All Might, the real thing, in the flesh standing right in front of me. He looks so much cooler in person.

“Well you were a big help keeping that villain, um, distracted! Thanks to you, I’ve captured the dastardly monster!”

All Might held up a small shopping bag, which had plastic bottles, filled with the green sludge of the villain from earlier. Izuku tilted his head slightly, how did he get all of that guy into those small soda bottles?...Wait why am I worrying about that!?

“Wait wait, I need to get an autograph please! I know I have a pen here somewhere!” Izuku looked
over and found his notebook lying next to him, “Here, please sign my notebook!” As Izuku flipped to find an open page however, “AHHHH! You already did!? Thank you! Thank you! I can’t wait to show this to my mom! Though, maybe I’ll leave out the part about me getting attack.”

All Might laughed at that, “Well it looks like you are going to be ok. So it’s time for me to be off. I gotta take this guy to the police so they can get him taken care of.” He gave Izuku a slight wave, “You stay out of trouble now. See you around young man”

“Huh? Wait are you leaving already?”

All Might gave his legs a stretch before he crouched down, “Heroes are constantly fighting time, as well as villains. Now stand back! I’m taking off. Thank you for your continuous support!”

Wait, you can’t go yet. They’re still so many questions I have to ask you. If anyone can tell me if I can be a hero, its you!

All Might kicked off the ground and launched himself skyward, however almost immediately he felt something was off. One of his legs felt unusually heavy. Looking down, he was alarmed to find that Izuku had grabbed onto his leg, and was hanging on for dear life.

“Hey, hey, hey! What do you think you're doing? I love my fans but this is too much. Personal space is important you know! You need to let me go!”

In a panic, Izuku shook his head as All Might pushed him down, “No I can’t! We’re too high up. If I let go I’ll die for sure!”

All Might blinked and looked around as he remember he was indeed many, many stories above the ground, “Oh yeah. Good point.”

“Please All Might!” Izuku begged, “You’re my favorite hero, and I have something I have to ask you!”

All Might sighed and put a hand on Izuku’s back, helping hold him in place so he didn’t fall, “OK, ok young man I get it. Just keep your head down while I find a spot to land.”
As All Might scanned the city to a clear landing spot, he felt a tightening in his chest. He covered his mouth as he gave out a few coughs. He could taste blood in his mouth after he was done.

_Well shit._

All Might found a close enough building and landed on its roof. Once on solid ground Izuku detached himself from All Might and crouched over, holding his heart and shaking head to toe as the fear of what he had just did hit him in full force, “Th-that that was too scary…”

All Might shook his head in disbelief. True, he had met his fair share of fanboys in his time, but no one had done something that crazy before. “**Young man, do you realize how incredibly dangerous that was?**”

Izuku could only nod. All Might thought about scolding him a little more, but he knew his was reaching the end of his time limit. _At the very least, _All Might thought, _this young man won’t go throwing himself into any more dangerous situations._

“**Good grief. Look, I’m sure if you talk to the people downstairs they’ll help you on your way. Now I really must be going. I am seriously outta time here.**”

Izuku’s head snapped up in alarm, “No please wait!”

All Might was already walking away and gave a curt response, “**No! I will not.**”

Izuku watched as All Might walked away. He could hear in his mind everything that had been said to him that day, and from days past. How worthless he was. How worthless his quirk is. How nothing he did would matter. How he could never become a hero. Mixed in with these voices however, he could hear Uraraka voice cutting through the negatives. Telling him that he can do it. That he will become a hero. Her words gave him strength. Izuku clenched his fists, _Sometimes I do feel like nothing I do will change that I am a failure. But I have to try. Because there are people who believe in me. I can’t give up._

Izuku took a deep breath and screamed, “Is it possible to become a hero even if I don't have a powerful quirk?!”
All Might stopped walking

“I’m a normal kid. And my quirk...I can’t really use it to do anything since its so, so weak. But even still, could I ever hope to be someone like you? To become a great hero?”

All Might turned back to look at Izuku. His head was bowed, and he looked desperate and almost scared to hear any kind of answer. A worthless quirk huh? Before he respond however, All Mights felt a jolt of pain run as his body began to let off great plumes of steam. It was a pain he knew all too well. Holy shit, come on. Not here. Not now!

Izuku however failed to notice any of this as he continued to speak, “You see people think I don’t have a chance because my quirk is so weak compared to everyone else’s. My classmates even really like to make fun of me because of it.” He paused now looking at his hands as he absently fiddled his thumbs together nervously. “But you know what, that makes me want to prove them wrong. To show them that I can do it. Ever since I was a kid, I would watch videos of you saving so many people and I thought it was coolest thing. And now I want to do that too. I want people to see my fearless smile and know that everything will be ok. That’s the kind of hero I want to be. Just like…”

Izuku finally looked up, just in time to watched as the steam surrounding All Might cleared away, leaving in his place, a skinny and emaciated man.

“....HUH!”

Elsewhere in the city Katsuki and his stooges were walking down an alleyway. With a board grunt, Katsuki kicked a bottle out of his way as he finished his drink.

“I gotta say man, you might have been a little harsh earlier.”

“Yeah weren’t you and Midoriya friends when you were kids? I mean yeah he’s pretty worthless, but still, you really gave it to him.”

Katsuki just shrugged, “It’s his own fault for trying to get in my way. Thinking he can be a hero like that? It just pisses me off. Besides it’s about time that he learns how the world really works.”
One of the stooges snickered, “I thought for sure that Uraraka was gonna come after you though. She looked so mad.”

The other stooge clearly disagreed as he shuddered slightly, “Dude don’t joke like that. She was scary man.”

“Pft, really? You’re scared of her?”

“Are you kidding, that quirk is nuts. All she has to do is touch you and you are done.”

The stooge gave a fake shake of terror, “oh no, I’m floating in the air. The horror is to much. Please someone save me.”

“Dude are you nuts? She doesn’t have to float you that high up before you are dead.”

“Huh?”

“Dude, the drop. Up you go, then she just touches her fingers together and then SPLAT!”

There was an audible gulp, “ok...thats…”

The stooge then pointed at Katsuki, “she was even able to get Bakugou and there was nothing he could do-!”

Katsuki exploded the can in his hand, “watch it.”

“Ok, ok sorry man.”

Thankfully for the stooges, Katsuki let that comment go.

“Hey why don’t we go hit up an arcade today. You wanna go Bakugou?”
Katsuki just shrugged, “fine.”

“Hey, why don’t we sneak into the bar at the station. Pick up some nice chicks?”

“Now that’s a great idea”

The two stooges snickered to each other. Katsuki though was not on board with that, “You idiots. If we got caught they’d put it on our records. U.A. would never let me in if they saw that!” Katsuki frowned though when he noticed both of them weren’t paying him any attention anymore. They were too scared to.

“Hey, what’s that?”

Katsuki turned around just in time as a wall of sludge filled his vision.

“You got a lot of fire in you skin suit. You’re perfect!”

Back on the rooftop, Izuku was in the middle of a complete freak out. He had just been talking to his hero All Might, a giant of a man. A larger than life hero for the whole world. But he had taken his eyes off of the hero for only a few moments and now, an emaciated man stood in his place. “Wait...who...what happened? You deflated? Where did All Might go? You... you're not him. You're a fake, an imposter.”

All Might stood up straight, “I assure you, I am All Mig...” he was cut off as blood poured out of his mouth. While he wiped it away with little care, Izuku gave a horrified scream. All Might sighed, “Listen kid, you know how guys at the pool are always sucking in and flexing to try and look all buff? I'm like that.”

Izuku was having a crisis as he tried to wrap his mind over everything that was happening in front of him, “THIS CAN'T BE REAL!!! All Might is, um you are, you are a giant who saves everyone, you overcome all obstacles and win the day with a fearless smile.”

All Might sighed sadly as he sat down, “young man, There's plenty of fear behind that smile.” He paused for a second, considering a few options in front of him. This boy wanted to be a hero, but by
his own admission, his quirk was very weak. Perhaps he could at least use this opportunity for something. “Listen I’m going to show you something but I’m counting on you to keep your mouth shut. Don't go talking about this online or telling your friends. Do you understand?”

Izuku gulped but still nodded. That was good enough for All Might as he lifted the side of his shirt up, exposing a huge and disfiguring scar on his side. Izuku covered his mouth in shock, taking a sudden breath through clenched teeth. All Might nodded in understanding as he glanced down at his scar, “yeah it’s pretty gross, huh. I got this from a big fight about five years back. I lost a lung so my respiratory system is basically shot to hell. I also lost my whole stomach. All that on top of all the surgeries I had to go through have reduced me down to this. Nothing can be done to fix it either. Right now, I can only do hero work for about 3 hours a day. The rest of the time, this is what I look like. This here kid, this is the price heroes have to be willing to pay.”

Five years ago? Izuku, who prided himself on knowing everything there was to know about All Might, thought back on all the big fights he knew All Might had had back then. Only one came to mind that could have left his hero in such a state, “So does that mean it was the fight with Toxic chainsaw? I remember you looked kinda beat up on the news…”

That actually got a small chuckle out of All Might as he lowered his shirt back down, “Wow, you really are quite the fan boy huh kid. Nah it wasn’t that fight. That punk may have landed some hits back then but he wasn’t anywhere near good enough to take me down. The fact is kid, I did everything I could to make sure the world never heard of this fight. Only a few people do, and each one has sworn to never tell another soul.” All Might paused and looked Izuku in the eye, to make sure he understood what he meant. Izuku nodded back, showing he understood completely. Satisfied All Might continued, “You know how I’m supposed to be the guy who always smiles, right? Be the symbol of peace and all that? I do it so people everywhere think that I’m never afraid. But honestly, I smile to hide the fear inside. It's just a brave face I put when the pressure is high. Because the truth kid this job isn't easy. If you aren’t up to it, either you die or worse, you’ll let someone else die.”

Izuku shuddered at the thought, color draining from his face.

All Might let that sink in a while before he stood up, he had taken his time to get to his point, but he felt it was needed. A part of him felt bad for what he was about to say next, but sometimes the hard truth was what people needed. If he had to crush his dreams to save him from a path that he couldn’t walk, it was the right thing to do… “The world is fill with villains just can't be beaten without strong quirks. So I’m sorry, but no, I honestly don't think you can be a hero.”

Izuku felt suddenly empty. Looking at the ground he mutters out a soft, “I...I see…” He hears All Might begin to walk away but does nothing to try and stop him.
As All Might reached the exit on the roof he stops in the doorway, feeling he should at least give Izuku some kind of hope or something, “Listen...If you want to help people, there's still plenty of other ways to do it. You could become a police officer. They get crap because the heroes capture most of the villains, but it's a fine profession and they are always there for the heroes when things get rough.” He turned away, “It's not bad to have a dream young man, just…” All Might paused before adding, almost sadly, “make sure your dreams are something that you can actually obtain.”

With those parting words All Might let the door close behind him, leaving Izuku alone. Not a pleasant talk, but I think that boy needed to hear it, All Might thought to himself. Still he could not help but feel troubled. A single word kept popping into his head no matter how he tried to rationalize it away.

Hypocrite

All Might coughed as he walked down the stairs, “What’s done is done. Right now I have other things I need to take care of. So what do you say villain. Let's get you to the station...huh?” As All Might reached into his pocket, he was shocked to find that the bottle containing the sludge villain was missing. In a panic he checked his other pockets and around himself, wait where is he?

A loud explosion echoed into the stairway. Alarmed All Might turned for a window and saw not to far away, a large pillar of smoke reaching into the sky. Dread filled him as he took off down the stairs and out of the building, gasping for breath as he was forced to run in his shrunken form, “not good. This is really not good.” When he finally made it to the site of the explosion, he leaned against a street lamp to catch his breath just outside of the forming crowd. He could hear other heroes working to clear the area, but by the sound of things, they were having a difficult time with the villain. Peeking through the crow, his fears were realized. It was the sludge villain from earlier.

*It must have been from back when the kid had grabbed onto me. I was so preoccupied with my time limit I wasn’t paying attention. After admonishing that kid, I go and make such a mistake. Pathetic. Its pathetic.*

Izuku back on the roof didn’t know what to do. For so long he had held onto the glimmer of hope, that despite everything, he could be a hero. And when Uraraka had come to his school and befriended him, that glimmer had started to shine so much more brightly. Even as everyone else around him doubted or made fun of him, the light of his dream had endured. But now? Now that light was as good as gone. After all, when your hero tells you it’s impossible, what can you do?

An explosion jolted him from his thoughts. Looking up in alarm, Izuku scanned the city and was shocked to see smoke billowing up not to far from where he was. Immediately he starting sprinting for the door, “A villain, I wonder which hero will show....” He came to a sudden stop as All Mights words echoed in his head. Before, he was always excited to go watch a hero work, it gave
him a chance to study them. To learn from their example on how to be a hero. But now, What’s the point?

Slowly he made his way down to the streets below, no longer wanting to go to the scene. It would be too painful after everything. Sadly he took out his notebook and scanned through the pages of all the different heroes before coming to the pages with All Mights signature.

It’s the reality I’ve been trying to avoid for so long. I suppose I always knew. I mean, everyone at school knew it. Even a pro hero, knows it too.

His thoughts then drifted to his friend. Her smile, and all the encouraging words she had given him, Uraraka, I’m sorry but I can’t become a hero with you. I’ll have to tell her to go on without me. I can’t let her put her dream, her future, in jeopardy trying to help me achieve the impossible.

Another explosion echoed down the street. Izuku was surprised at how close this one was. Looking around he was startled to find that he had somehow walked over to the scene without knowing it.

This is where that explosion from earlier was from? I guess I came here out of habit…

He could feel himself start to walk over to the crowd, but he still wondered why he was bothering, afterall it was meaningless now. But then he saw it. Through the people, he saw the Sludge Villain from before, in the middle of the burning street and gasped in horror.

Why is that guy here!? Did, did he somehow get away from All Might? But how is that possible. I saw saw him in those bottles from before!

Dread filled Izuku as he tried to recall what could have happened. He remembered seeing them in All Mights pockets before he had leapt into the air. But as he thought back to the roof, and All Mights deflated form, he couldn’t remember seeing them.

Did...did he drop him when...when I grabbed onto him!?

“Then...then this is all my fault…”

Around him, Izuku could hear other onlookers talking. That none of the heroes here could do anything and they just had to hope a hero with a better quirk would show up soon. But when
someone said that a junior high student had been taken hostage, Izuku felt the dread in his stomach twist into a horrible sickness. He covered his mouth with his hands, afraid that at any moment he would throw up.

*If someone was caught from that first explosion...How can they bear that? I thought I’d die just after only a few seconds...I’m so sorry this is all my fault. But I’m sure someone will come soon.*

“Hey, wasn’t that the villain All Might was chasing earlier!?”

“Oh yeah! He is here! I saw him earlier!”

“But where is he now? He’d be perfect to save that kid!”

*No, Izuku thought, he used up his time for the day. He won’t be able to do anything now. Please I’m sure a hero is on their way. So please just endure it just a little while longer....I'm so sorry....please forgive me, this is all my fault. But I’m sure, a hero will come soon....*

It was then, a few people in the crowd shifted to the side, and Izuku got a clear look at the Sludge Villain, and his hostage. Katsuki’s eyes, pleading for help, ripped through Izuku. And suddenly, the world around him just stopped.

Ochako gasped as she heard a loud explosion from down the street that interrupted her shopping. Almost immediately the area around was flooded with people either heading towards the blast, or moving away. Ochako was about to join the group moving away, when she spotted Kamui Woods swinging over head. She stood transfixed as more heroes rushed by her on their way to the source of the explosion.

*It must be pretty serious if that many heroes are all going to the same place. Deku will be so disappointed he missed a chance to see them in action. I’m sure there would be plenty of chances for him to jot down some more notes.*

For a little while longer, Ochako stayed in her spot. Still not doing what would have been the safest action and finished her shopping away from the action.

*I guess it wouldn’t hurt to take a quick peek. Plus I could tell Deku about it. I’m sure he’d enjoy that at least.*
Having made up her mind, Ochako walked off, and soon found a crowd of people bunched together
at the mouth of a street. From her vantage point she could make out the large form of some kind of
giant mass of sludge. Around it several heroes were clearly having a hard time figuring out how to
deal with it. The she overheard someone yell about a student being held hostage.

Oh no, that's awful!

Despite herself Ochako continued to move around the crowd, trying to get a better view. As she did
she was shocked when she ran into someone she had thought had gone home.

“Deku? Deku what are you doing here? I thought...”

She trailed off when it became clear Izuku wasn’t paying attention to her. Or even knew she was
there at all.

Must be in note taking mode. He really needs to pay more attention to what...going...on?

It was then she finally got a good look of his face. And how it was contorted into a look of absolute
horror as he watched the scene before him.

“Deku?” She had never seen him look like that before, and it stopped her dead in her tracks. She
turned to see what could be causing this. She was sure he’d watched hero fights before. Was this
the first time he’d seen a hostage situation? At least from here she had a much better view.

What is he seeing that's so terrible?

The villain was terrifying and the hostage looked like he was getting smothered. She could only
just make out his form as he tried to escape. Hands reaching out in desperation. Pops and
explosions ripping through the air before being silenced.

Wait?
Finally she saw Katsuki’s face, just as more of the villains form covered up his mouth and dragged him deeping into itself.

“Oh my god.”

She felt suddenly numb as she stood and watched as Katsuki was slowly consumed by the villain. She watched as every hero around did nothing but stand back and wait to see if anyone else would be able to save her classmate. Everything happening before her lead to only one conclusion.

*He’s going to die. The heroes can’t save him, and he’s going to die. Oh my god, he’s going to die.*

Ochako turned away, not able to watch anymore. It was too much. Too horrible.

*I should get Deku away from this.*

Holding back tears, Ochako turned to pull her friend away, just in time to experience a new kind of horror as the next few seconds slowed to a crawl.

She watched as Izuku’s notebook hit the ground where he had once been standing. She turned in alarm as Izuku broke through the crowd of people and past the heroes who had fallen back. And ran into the fire filled street and right towards the villain.

*No no no no no no no no no no no no!*  

“NO!” Ochako screamed as she chased after Izuku in a panic.

“DEKU NO!” Before she could break through the crowd, several onlookers yanked her back, screaming at her.
“Are you crazy!?”

“Stop you’ll get yourself killed too!”

Ochako fought back. She bit, and kick and screamed, “let me go! Let me GO! I can’t let him die! DEKU! DEKU COME BACK!”

More people piled on top of her till she landed face first onto the ground. Still she fought. And was able to move enough to free her head. But this only gave her enough freedom to watch the events unfold before her.

Izuku ran wide eyed down the street, not caring about all the people behind him screaming at him to stop. It was all just white noise. The only voice he heard now was his own, screaming at himself.

What am I doing? This is completely insane. There’s nothing I can do but...but I can’t stop running forward. I can’t stop!

As he ran, he didn’t notice his body begin to glow nor that so many pieces of shattered rubble he ran past also began to glow as well. A few skipping and skidding along the road to follow him.

The sludge villain blinked surprised to see someone brave enough to charge him head on. His surprise quickly turned to annoyance as he sneered, “this brat again? I don’t need you anymore! I got the perfect body now! So get lost!” The villain reached out to swat Izuku away.

Izuku didn’t have time to panic at the oncoming attack. His mind raced as he thought of any idea to give himself an opening to reach Katsuki. He thought back to his notes and remembered the newest entry he had wrote on Ochako from the day before. How she could use her quirk to throw heavy objects with ease. How she had thrown that heavy medicine ball at that jock jerk knocking him down.

Yanking his backpack off, after deciding he had no better options, he flung it like a ball and chain towards the villain. The sludge villain swatted the bag away but the multiple shards of glowing brick and glass from behind Izuku slammed into the villains face, who snapped back stunned as the debris stuck into him. He clawed at his face, rubbing his eyes as he was temporarily blinded. Izuku didn’t notice any of this however, focused solely on reaching Katsuki. Izuku screamed as he flung
himself into the sludge and began to desperately dig through it.

“Kacchan!”

“Deku?” Katsuki, exhausted from struggling for so long, was surprised to find Izuku clawing his way towards him. Or at least trying too. After getting hit the sludge around him had loosened enough that he could at least breath again, and gave him a chance to scream at Izuku.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing!? Get out of here you damned nerd!”

Izuku shook his head as he kept digging, “I can’t do that!”

Katsuki, despite his situation, despite how close to dying he knew he was, couldn’t accept that, “why are you here? I didn’t ask you for your help! What are you trying to prove? That you’re a big hero all of the sudden? Fuck off and get out of here!”

“I can’t do that Kacchan!”

Katsuki finally got a look at Izuku’s face and was shocked. There was fear, plenty of fear but it’s what was there besides that, that made him clamp his mouth shut.

Izuku was smiling.

It was a bloody smile as his nose had started bleeding again. But it was a smile nonetheless. Katsuki knew immediately who Izuku was trying to copy. Then Izuku screamed, “I can’t just do nothing Kacchan! You looked like you needed help!”

Izuku’s voice echoed back towards the crowd of onlookers. Behind them all, All Might who before had felt himself anchored down and powerless, felt a surge of emotions rip through him.

After everything I told that young man. After I told him he couldn’t follow his dream. He's the one doing everything he can to save that boy. Not the others heroes. Not me.
All Mights grip on the light pole he had been leaning against tightened. The metal creaking under his fingers as steam began to rise from his body.

Katsuki wanted to continue to tell Izuku off, but the sludge around him tightened suddenly as the villain regained his senses and dragged him deeper within his body. Izuku watched in horror as slowly what was left of Katsuki disappeared from view. Izuku could hear the villain laughing above him, probably over how Katsuki was his, but Izuku didn’t care. If he didn’t do something, Katsuki would be lost.

No no no! I can’t let him go!

Izuku's mind races. He didn’t have a plan. He hadn’t had one when he had run out here to begin with, he had just acted without thinking.

I have to do something.

Once again he felt his body move on its own. This time he leapt up and dove into the sludge after Katsuki, reaching desperately for him. Once again he felt the weight of the monster around him, crushing him as he burrowed after the disappearing form of Katsuki. In no time, Izuku was only aware of the the crushing weight and black darkness around him. His feet had left the ground so now he wasn’t even sure what ways was up or down.

It was a black suffocating hell. But still he clawed his way deeper.
Then he felt it. On the tips of his fingers, he could feel the cloth of Katsuki’s school uniform jacket. With one final push he was able to grab hold of it, gripping the fabric in a tight fist with his hand. He had him. But now what? What would he do next. Izuku didn’t know, only one thought kept repeating itself through his now pain filled head.

*Let Kacchan go!*

*Let Kacchan go!*

*LET KACCHAN GO!!!*

Ochako had gone through so many different emotions in the short time she had been tackled to the ground, preventing her from following after Izuku. Firstly was horror, at seeing her friend disregard his own safety as he ran right at the villain in some vain attempt to save their classmate. Next was shock. As Izuku ran, the fire filled street behind him so glowed with a bright green light. Ochako immediately recognized it as the light from his quirk. She didn’t know how he was doing it but he had picked up the rubble he passed and just launched it at the villain’s face.

Around her a few of the people holding her down had gave surprised yelps at this display of Izuku’s quirk. A sliver of pride flowed through her, hearing people be so impressed with Izuku. Even in this horrible situation he was after all proving all those jerks in class wrong.

But then that feeling of pride was crushed when she watched Izuku leap up, and dive into the the sludge villain’s body to try and rescue Katsuki.

“Deku NO! Dek-!”

Her scream died in her throat as a bright flash of green light ripped through the harsh red and orange of the fire. And the sludge villains form exploded outward and away from both Izuku and Katsuki.

Izuku gasped for air as suddenly he fell to the ground pulling Katsuki down with him. Katsuki lay on his side, coughing up the remains of the sludge that had been pushed down his throat. Izuku tried to sit up, but the pain in his head kept him down. He didn’t have to reach up to check to know his nose was bleeding again. Perhaps even more than before.
He was crushing me so hard though. Guess it isn’t a surprise my nose got so smashed.

Groggily he looked over at Katsuki a relieved smile now forming, “Kacchan...I think you,” Izuku groaned slightly from the pain, “I think you got him…”

Katsuki twisted his head to the side and shot Izuku a look that Izuku had never seen from the boy. It wasn’t his normal angry scowl. It had something else mixed in with it. Indignation? Confusion? Before Izuku could question this, a scream of rage from above him brought him out of his thoughts.

“You little BASTARD!”

The sludge villains body had been spread out but multiple tendrils had anchored themselves onto the street and buildings around the boys.

“I swear I’m going to kill you. I’ll rip you limb from limb. DO YOU HEAR ME!”

Izuku didn’t have time to react. Didn’t have time to push Katsuki out of the way of the incoming attack. Nor wonder why the villain was coming towards him and not Katsuki, who’s blasts had freed them. But at least if the villain was busy with him, Katsuki could make a break for it. Izuku shut his eyes and turned away.

At least Kacchan should be able to escape

There was a rush of air to Izuku’s side followed by a loud impact. But no pain. When Izuku opened his eyes he found Katsuki was no longer besides him. Looking back he saw that he had been thrown back into the arms of the heroes back with the crowd. Daring to look forward he gasped, “All Might!”

Between him and the villain stood All Might, his arm and side wrapped up in parts of the villain. In the split second Izuku had closed his eyes All Might had not only thrown Katsuki to safety but had also blocked the attack ment for him. All Might, while glaring up towards the villain, spoke down to Izuku, “I owe you an apology young man. After everything I said to you, I had the gall to not even be willing to follow my own words!”
With a flex All Might ripped himself free of the sludge, “Pro’s are always risking their lives!” He reached down and picked Izuku up and held him in one arm, cradling him safely from his next attack, while he reared back with is other arm, “DETROIT SMASH!”

The force behind the punch scattered the villain and easily put out the fires around the street. The heroes were able to protect the onlookers from the rest of the wind and shock wave. When the wind finally died down, there was a silence that fell over everyone. Then the first raindrops fell. Slowly people began to regain their senses with a few people looking up. The very sky had darkened with clouds from the force of All Mights attack. Soon though a cheer erupted from the crowd as they celebrated All Mights victory.

“He made it rain!? That’s incredible!”

“All Might is the best!”

“He saved them! Incredible!”

With the villain defeated and collected by the police, it wasn’t long till reporters crowded around All Might for a statement or interview. Katsuki and Izuku were moved to a less busy section of the street. Several of the heroes stood around Katsuki, praising him for his bravery and power he had displayed. A couple were even offering to take him as a sidekick when he got into a hero school. Izuku was not so lucky. Two heroes, Death Arms and Kamui Woods stood over him, berating him on his actions.

“Do you have any idea how stupid what you just did was?”

“There was absolutely no reason for you to risk your life like that.”

“You’re actions not only could have risked your own life. But the life of the hostage and any hero who tried to save you. Do you understand?”

Izuku kept his head down as he tentatively dabbed at his nose with the handkerchief he had been given earlier that day. He didn’t have anything to say in his defence. He deserved every harsh word.

Kamui Woods crossed his arms, “You actions were the height of foolishness. Even if you think
Before either hero could react, Ochako burst past them and wrapped her arms protectively around Izuku, putting herself between him and the heroes. She practically snarled back at them, “None of you were doing ANYTHING! You were just standing there waiting for someone else to do your job. So just leave him alone already. He doesn’t deserve this.”

Izuku blinked, surprised not only that Ochako was here, and at how tightly she was squeezing him. But by how she seemed to have no problem telling off two pro heroes. If his head still wasn’t pounding, Izuku would have made a mental note to add a slight change to her entry in his notebook.

Do not ever make angry.

Death Arms frowned and started to say something else, but was stopped when Kamui Woods put a hand on his shoulder and motioned over to where all the reporters were. His message clear to the other pro, best not to make a scene when the media was so close. It wouldn’t look good for either of them. Ochako watched as both heroes retreated away before turning her full attention back to Izuku. She unwrapped her arms and sat down next to him. Her eyes scanning him, head to toe, looking for any obvious injury that he would need to get taken care of. Besides his bloody nose, he seemed to be in good health. All things considered.

“Uraraka?”

Hearing Izuku’s voice snapped her back to her senses, and every emotion she had bottled up came flooding back. She wrapped her arms back around Izuku and buried her face into his shoulder and started to cry.

Izuku froze, unsure what he could do to console Ochako. Slowly, tentatively, he wrapped his arms around her too. Softly patting her back as she cried into him.

“Its ok. I’m ok. See nothing to cry over Uraraka.”

For several long minutes the two held onto each other, before Ochako was able to gather herself
enough to pull back and go back to just sitting next to Izuku.

“I was right next to you, did you know that? I was right next to you. I looked away for a second, and when I looked back, you were gone. Deku I can’t….I can’t even begin...” Ochako paused briefly, swallowing the lump in her throat, “I tried to chase after you but all the people in the crowd stopped me. So I had to watch as you ran right into that monster...I thought I was going to watch you die. And there was nothing I could do.”

Izuku slumped down as guilt ate away at him. He tried to hold back his own tears now and he could feel his nose start to run, “Uraraka, I’m sorry. I never meant-”

“Deku” Ochako interrupted him. There was a firmness in her voice that made Izuku clamp his mouth shut. “Deku I’m not asking for you to apologize. You did what you did to save Bakugou’s life. I meant what I said to those heroes. You acted while they did nothing.”

Ochako turned and looked Izuku right in the eye, “So I won’t ask you to apologize. But I want you to promise me something instead. Will you do that?”

Nodding his head quickly, Izuku agreed to Ochako’s request.

“I want you to promise me, that you will never, never, do something like this again. I want you promise me you will never leave me behind while you rush into a situation where you could get killed.”

“Uraraka…”

“Promise me.”

She sat there, her eyes never leaving his, as she waited. Finally Izuku said, “I promise. Uraraka, I promise.” Ochako relaxed visibly after hearing this, and let out a long sigh, satisfied.

“Good...that’s good…” Ochako reached out and pulled the handkerchief out of Izuku’s hands. Reaching up with it, she began to carefully wipe away the blood that still stained his nose, lips and chin, “of course once we get into U.A we’ll learn how to rush into dangerous situations...safely. Together. But we’ll cross that bridge when we get there, okay?”
Izuku felt a pit form in his stomach. She still thinks we’re both going to U.A, Izuku thought to himself sadly. Should I tell her? I should tell her I’ve decided to be realistic… Izuku didn’t want to say it. But it would be wrong not to, right?

“Uraraka, I…” As Izuku started to say something to Ochako, a low growl interrupted him, “DEKU!” Izuku felt himself tense up, almost jumping to his feet. He missed that Ochako had immediately clamped a hand on his wrist, and was now glaring daggers at Katsuki, as the boy stomped over to the two.

“Kacchan?”

Katsuki sneered as he pointed right at Izuku, “How long Deku?”

“Huh?”

“How long have you been fucking lying to everyone!?”

Izuku was stunned, mouth slightly agape, lying. What does he mean.

Katsuki however didn’t give Izuku a chance to answer, “You know what, it doesn’t matter. Don’t think this changes anything. I’m still above you. So don’t even think about looking down on me. No matter what you do, you will never be better than me. This, this means nothing. So you keep your act. I don’t give a shit. But don’t you ever forget, it was All Might that saved me. Not you. So I don’t owe you. You understand me!?” His rant done, Katsuki turned on his heel and stomped away, leaving a confused Izuku and an enraged Ochako.

“That...jerk,” Ochako seethed, “after everything you did, he’s still going to treat you like that?”

“Kacchan has...always been prideful. So I guess that’s just his toughness showing through…Still I wonder what he meant when he said I had been lying.”

“Just ignore him Deku. If he can’t accept that you saved him, then that just shows how...pathetic and petty he really is.”
Izuku looked over at Ochako and was surprised to see so much contempt and rage emanating from her.

*Does she realize, just how much she looks like Kacchan right now?*

Composing herself Ochako stood up and reached down for Izuku, “come on, you’ve already talked to everyone you needed to right? Let’s get you home.”

Absently Izuku glanced over toward All Might, but he was still surrounded by a hoard of reporters, *I don’t think he’ll be free for a while now. And I don’t want to be more of a nuisance…* Izuku took Ochako’s hand, “Yeah I think I’d like to go home now.”

The two walked back most of the way to Izuku’s apartment, before Izuku was able to convince Ochako he’d be able to manage the rest of the walk. It had taken some solid minutes of reassuring her, and reminding her that she needed to take her groceries home before they spoiled, before she agreed to be on her way.

Before parting however Ochako smiled brightly at Izuku and raised her fist in encouraging determination, “Oh Deku, make sure you’re ready for this weekend. Our U.A dream is about to really get going!”

Izuku faltered, but the huge smile Ochako had, stopped him from telling her the truth. Putting on his best smile he returned her fist bump, “Ye, yeah. Let’s do our best!”

Ochako took a small step back but stopped short of turning around. Then after a second's hesitation, she walked up to Izuku and gave him a quick hug. It was different from before in the market. This wasn’t an act of giving protection. This was a much softer embrace. But just as quickly as Ochako had given Izuku the hug, she quickly stepped back and after one last flustered goodbye, hurried on her way. Neither teen noticed how flushed the other was, though. They were too busy dealing with their own blushes and fluttering stomachs.

Now alone, slowly Izuku let his thoughts drift back to what he would do. *I have to tell her before the weekend. I will tell her. It’s the right thing to do…* Before Izuku could make it further down the road however.

“I AM HERE!”
All Might came skidding to a stop right in front on Izuku. Izuku, to his credit, only screamed a little bit in surprise. “All Might? You’re here? Why are you here!? But you were surrounded by reporters when I left. They can’t have been done asking you questions already.”

All Might just laughed, “Please young man, ditching the press is easy for me? Why you ask. Because, I AM ALL MIGH-!”

In the middle of his monolog, All Might’s form suddenly reverted back to its shriveled state in a puff of steam. He was also spitting out blood for good measure too. This time, even after seeing this transformation before, Izuku still cried out in alarm. It took a few moments for All Might to recover himself, wiping the blood with his hand and getting his cough under control.

“Young man. I’ve come here to offer you my thanks, to ask you a question, and make you an offer. You see, if it hadn’t been for you, if you hadn’t showed me that bravery, even after what I had said to you after you told me about your weak quirk and dream, I would have never been faced with the reality that I was not living up to my own ideals and standards. I would have become a fraud. A coward in a oversized muscle suit. For that, you have my thanks.”

Izuku was stunned. “No wait, please don’t say things like that. You’re the greatest hero in the world. I’m sure you would have saved Kacchan regardless of anything. All I did was mess things in the first place. If I hadn’t been so selfish and got in the way of you taking that villain to the police, none of this would have happened to begin with. I even got in the way of all those other heroes, even when I knew there was nothing I could do.

“Nothing you could do huh? Even with your quirk?”

Izuku shook his head sadly, “not a chance. My quirk is just too weak…”

All Might arked an eyebrow at that. During his run to meet up with Izuku he had had some time to go over the events from the attack and he had a guess as to what had happened now back with the villain, but he needed to be sure. So time to ask my question, “Tell me, what is your quirk?”

“Psykokinesis.” Izuku answered after a pause.

A mental emitter based quirk. Just as I suspected. “That’s a versatile quirk. I know many heroes that would love to have a quirk like that.”
Izuku actually scoffed, “no one would want mine. Just today before… before everything that happened I tried to use it to catch my notebook. It was only a few feet away, and it took everything I had just to hold it. No, ever since I was, you know, little and learned what my quirk was, and my… my friend… saw it… they knew that it was, useless. That’s when I learned it too…” Izuku trailed off. It wasn’t like this was something new for Izuku to think about, but giving these memories a voice, especially in front of his hero, just hurt.

“Your friends told you this? When you were still just a little child?”

Izuku nodded, “I’ve been classmates with hi… them ever since. So sooner rather than later my classmates learn about it too. I suppose it’s a way to make sure I remember my place…”

Bingo, All Might thought. “When you use your quirk, it has a tell doesn’t it.”

“Tell?”

“Something visual that would indicate you are using your quirk. Such as, perhaps a glow around yourself and the object you are holding with your quirk?”

Izuku blinked surprised that All Might guessed that from out of nowhere, *he must have run into other heroes with quirks like mine.* Izuku gave an affirmative nod, “Yes, yes that’s right. It’s a green glow. The harder I concentrate the brighter it gets.”

“And when you overuse your quirk? A headache, or a nose bleed?”

“That’s amazing All Might! The headaches are first, then my nose bleeds… a lot actually. How’d you guess?”

It took a large amount of effort for All Might not to let out a huge sigh, *it’s worse than I thought. He hasn’t connected the dots from today at all. Time to change tactics. Walk him through it perhaps.* “So you, even knowing your limits, ran out there anyway. Tell me, what happened back in that street?”

Izuku felt his grip on his backpack tighten as he thought back to the street, “When, when I saw
Kacchan, he looked so...so desperate. The next thing I knew, I was just running. I still have no idea why I did it. I just knew I had to help.”

“Your body moved without you thinking about it huh?”

Izuku nodded, “I got about half way before I realized that the villain was about to attack me. So I tried to throw my back pack at him, but he just swatted it away. But I got lucky, I guess that the explosions from before loosened some debris that fell into the villains face.”

All Might nodded, “I see. That’s how you saw that…” he noticed Izuku had stopped and gave him an inquisitive look. All Might waved him on, “forgive me. Please continue.”

“Right… well I tried digging Kacchan out, but it was just like when he had caught me. His form was too fluid so I couldn’t make any progress. After a bit he recovered and started dragging Kacchan deeper into himself. So I um...I dove in after him.”

It suddenly struck Izuku as he replayed the events that he was very lucky he was still alive.

“Then after that...um it gets a little hazy. I dug my way to Kacchan, I think I actually was able to grab onto his school jacket. After that...sorry but after that I think Kacchan used his quirk to free us both. He has an explosion quirk, so when he got dragged into the center of the villain he must have used it to rip himself and me free. I must have gotten caught in the blast a bit since that’s when I got hurt. The paramedics said I got my bell rung when they checked us out. But yeah, after we got free the villain got really mad and attacked but then you stepped in and saved us. That’s about it really…”

“Young man...would you like to know what I saw out in that street?”

“What you saw, All Might?”

“I saw a young man act in a way some of the greatest heroes had said they had acted when they saved someone their first time. Their bodies just acted when they saw someone in danger.”

Izuku felt his heart clench in his chest.
“I saw this young man glow so brightly as he ripped rubble and debris from the street around him as he ran and hurl it at a villain so that he could save a fellow student.”

Izuku’s legs wobbled some as his mind raced, *I was glowing? But…*

“And when that monster tried to drag that student away, this heroic young man dove into it, and ripped him wide open to pull his classmate to safety.”

When All Might used the word heroic, Izuku’s legs gave out and he fell to his knees as a rush of emotions overcame him.

“Young man, what I told you before, on that roof was wrong. Everything you showed me today let’s me say this with 100% certainty. You can be a hero.”

Izuku cried. He cried as years of self doubt, were finally washed away. He cried for never truly listening to all the times his mother had encouraged him, too afraid to have all the things his classmates had said to be proven right. He cried for thinking that he would have to abandon Ochako, to leave her to try and achieve her dream while she was so ready to share it with him.

It took him some time, but soon his tears dried and could finally sit up. “I...I still don’t understand how though. You said I did all those things but, I’ve never been able to do something like that. When I tried to use my quirk at school...I couldn’t do anything...”

All Might moved and sat down on the curb of the street and invited Izuku to sit next to him, “two reasons young man.” All Might held up his hand, pointer finger raised, “one, mind over matter. The human mind is an incredible thing. Something many people don’t realize is that being a hero takes a great deal of mental fortitude. To push yourself beyond your limits, to go plus ultra, takes more than just a strong body. If you think you can do something, if you know you can keep going, your mind can help push your body forward. But, the opposite is just a true. You grew up being told your quirk was weak, that you couldn’t succeed. And it's obvious that, you listened to those students. Then you started to believe them. Finally it got to the point that you were telling yourself that you were weak. All of that added together made one heck of a mental block.”

Izuku lowered his head, starting to feel ashamed of himself, but before he could fall to deep into these thoughts All Might continued, “And yet your subconscious, that part of you that held onto that dream of becoming a hero, was still able to dig deep to give you what you needed, when you needed it most. You should feel proud about that.”
All Might then raised a second finger, “the second reason I can see is much more simple, but just as important. Many people forget this but quirks are still a physical part of ourselves. Think of them like a muscle. People who are bedridden still have people come to work their legs. If they don’t the muscle will atrophy. It’s comes down to, if you don’t use it, you lose it. And you young man don’t use your quirk very often. Do you?”

Izuku shook his head, “well we aren’t supposed to use our quirks at school to begin with…”

“But what about when you would go out and play as a child? Or even more recently, just simple things you could do around the house. Maybe lifting a plate from your table to the sink? Pulling a shirt from the closet?”

“No, I never saw the point.”

“So now when the time comes when you want to use your quirk, it’s hard. You are effected by your quirks effect to give you headaches and such much easier, as we’ve both seen. Even simple things as you’ve told me, take you great effort.”

“So I’ve really put myself into a hole I guess…”

“Fortunately, I believe solving these issues will come naturally once we start your training.”

“Your right, I just...have….wait...we....,” Izuku trailed off before looking up at All Might in shock. His eyes widened as he suddenly felt his throat tighten, keeping him from finishing what he had been saying.

“This is why I’ve come to find you in fact. I’ve chosen you to be my successor.”

There was a pause before Izuku leapt up in shock, “YOUR SUCCESSOR!?!”

All Might nodded and pointed right at Izuku, “that’s right. What you showed me today are all the traits I needed to see. I deem you worthy to become my successor. My quirk is yours to inherit.”

Izuku’s jaw dropped slightly and his head tilt to the side. What did he just say? Inherit his quirk?
“Hey hey what’s with that look kid? I told you I had an offer for you. So you need to decide what you want to do.”

“All Might I don’t understand. What are you saying? That’s impossible.”

“Impossible huh? Do you even know what my quirk is?”

That stopped Izuku’s rant. “Your quirk? No. I don’t think anyone does. There are a bunch of theories out there but no one knows for sure. I know stuff like super strength and invulnerability are the two top runners. And whenever you get asked about it during interviews you always find a way to dodge the question.”

“I do that so people will keep thinking I’m just like them. A regular person with a quirk that became a hero. But the truth is there’s nothing regular about me or my quirk. I wasn’t born with this power, it was passed to me.”

“Passed to you?”

“That’s right. My quirk is like a sacred torch. It was passed to me a long time ago. And now I want to pass it on to you.”

Izuku’s mind raced as he listened to All Might, barely grasping what he was hearing. Out of habit he started to mumbled to himself as he analyzed this new information, “this, this doesn’t make any sense. Its true that there are methods to try and ensure a person is born with a certain kind of quirk, like those marriages people used to do, but even then the child's power would be their own and it's still a completely random result. To just be able to give someone a quirk just isn’t possible. It defies our societies understanding of quirks and…”

As Izuku spiraled into a mumbleing mess, All Might scratched the back of his head, “um kid, I think you might be overthinking this a bit...kid?” When it became obvious that Izuku wasn’t listening any more, All Might leaned forward and clapped his hands together in front of Izuku’s face, shocking the boy enough to get him to stop talking to himself. Izuku looked around before sheepishly apologizing, “Im sorry, I’m just having a hard time wrapping my head around this. It just doesn’t seem possible.”

“But it is possible. I can transfer my power to someone else. You are going to need to accept this
fact before we move on to the next secret of my power.”

Izuku took a breath before he calmed himself down and returned his complete attention to All Might. Satisfied, All Might continued to explain his quirk, “The name of my quirk is called, One for All.”

One for All, Izuku repeated in his head. Not daring to interrupt All Might now.

“This quirk goes back generations. One person takes the power, and improves it, before they then pass it onto the next person. They too will will improve the power before they pass it on. As the quirk is passed from torch bearer to torch bearer the power increases, and grows. Each person adding themselves to it. It is with this power of generations that I can save people who so desperately need a hero. This, young man, is the truth behind my power. I have been searching for someone worthy to pass this power to, and today you proved that you are that person.”

He’s completely serious. He chased me down and told me so much to encourage me. And even told me his greatest secret. The greatest hero in the world just ask me to take up his torch and become a hero. What I’ve always dreamed of becoming. After all that, there’s no way I can turn him down.

All Might watched as Izuku’s face went from one of shocked wonder, to one of determination. Izuku stood up straight and looked right at All Might, “I’ll do it.”

A large, impressed, smirk split All Might’s face, “Absolutely no hesitation at all. I knew I chose the right person.” All Might stood up and extended his hand towards Izuku, “then let’s make it official then. My name is Yagi Toshinori, but you can just keep calling me All Might if you want. It’s a pleasure to meet you young man.”

Izuku did his best to keep his inner, and outer, fanboy antics in check as he returned All Mights handshake, “Midoriya Izuku. It’s an honor All Might.”

It was soon after this that the two parted ways, with All Might promising to contact him again soon, once he had put together a plan on how to begin the process to ready Izuku for his quirk. Until then he made sure to have Izuku promise not to mention anything that had been said between them. Izuku was on cloud nine the rest of the way back to his home. So distracted that he never saw his mother running at him, the moment he walked through the front door and all but tackling him in a panicked worry. Confirming that she must have been contacted by the officers or paramedics who had been on the scene. Izuku had a sinking feeling he was going to be in for a rough next couple of days. And he was right. His mother had insisted he most recover from such a horrible experience. So she called the school to let them know Izuku would be staying home the
last two days of the school week. She would also be taking him to the doctor to make sure he was completely healthy. The fact that his shirt collar had been stained from his nose bleed had not gone over very well, and made sure any attempt to talk her out of doctors was ignored.

He was also grounded. So he wasn’t able to talk with Ochako, which had really, really sucked. Though perhaps it might be for the best, when he thought of her, his mind would wander back to the hug she had given him, and he would feel his face flush up like a bright red tomato. And he’d really rather her not see that.

It wouldn’t be till friday when he would finally get a chance to speak with her.

Ochako scanned over the message she had received from Inko, informing her that after supper tonight, Izuku’s punishment would be over and he would be getting his phone back. So she would be able to call him to plan for their weekend. She was also more than welcome to start coming over for dinner again. Inko had asked if she would be ok with waiting a couple of days before coming back over since she wanted to make sure her punishment for Izuku stuck. Ochako felt a little guilty thinking about how excited she was getting thinking about eating at the Midoriya’s. She had missed a well put together home cooked meal. She was, not the greatest cook, so these last couple of days had been very hard on her poor stomach.

The school day had ended a little while ago but Ochako had decided to spend a little extra time staying in class, so she could finish the extra notes she had made for Izuku for everything he had missed while recovering from the villain attack. As she finished the last few lines however she overheard some voices coming from the hall, one of which she instantly recognized as Katsuki’s. Much to her annoyance Katsuki had returned to class much earlier than she had hoped. She hadn’t wished that Katsuki had been hurt or anything like that, but being able to have a peaceful class had been a nice change of pace. And of course the class had immediately started asking question on what had happened to him. Katsuki though, instead of taking the opportunity to brag about himself, did not seem to want to talk about the villain. Ochako did find some amusement in that for once the class seemed slow to back down to Katsuki’s demands that they drop it and kept badgering him throughout the day.

“Will you fuckers leave me alone already! I’m not answering your damned questions!”

Ochako snickered and went back to jotting down the last of her notes.

“Come on dude, give us something. Is it true you blew up the whole street?”

“Wait really? That was you?”
“Dude the villain had a sludge quirk or something. Bakugou is the one that blows shit up.”

“That’s still crazy. Man Bakugou is strong.”

There was a pause from the other side of the door, giving Ochako a chance to groan at the last comment. *great, just what Bakugou needs. Getting his ego pampered even more.*

“Of course I’m strong. Did you think I was weak or something!?”

Shaking her head, Ochako decided to power through the last few lines of her work and just leave. No reason to let herself get upset over this.

“Hey, the news said that there was another student involved in the attack right?”

“Involved? I thought the news said the student rushed in or something?”

Ochako’s pencil slowed slightly as her attention was again brought back to the loud conversation happening outside the classroom.

“Yeah you’ll never guess who it was! It was Midoriya!”

“Wait what?”

“Your kidding!”

“Wait is that why he’s been out the past couple days?”

“Why didn’t the teacher say anything!?”
“Wait, so did Midoriya save you Bakug-!”

“DEKU DIDN’T DO SHIT! He’s a worthless waste of space. All he did was get in the way of the real heroes!”

Snap

Ochako’s pencil snapped in her hand. She took in one long shuddering breath before she bolted from her chair and rushed to the door and slammed it open, causing a few of the students to jump in surprise.

She scanned the group before she quickly found her target, “Bakugou, we need to talk. Get in here.”

The students looked from Ochako to Katsuki, who himself was scowling at Ochako, arms crossed, “you don’t tell me what to do Round Face.”

Ochako however didn’t back down and motioned to the group around them, “you wanna talk in front of everyone then? That’s fine by me. I’m more than happy to talk about what I saw happen during that villain attack.”

Katsuki’s scowl deepened but he also glance around at the students.

“Wait you were there too Uraraka?” Someone asked. Before Ochako could respond however Katsuki walked past everyone and into the empty classroom. When a couple of students moved to join him a quick glare from both Ochako and Katsuki sent the group scurrying, under the excuse that it was late and they should be getting home.

Ochako closed the door behind her while Katsuki leaned against the nearest wall, his scowl set firm as he glared at Ochako.

“This had better be good Round Face.”

Ochako planted herself right in front of Katsuki before harshly stating, “if Deku hadn’t jumped in
after you. You would be dead.”

Katsuki growled and started to say something but Ochako cut him off, “no, you shut your mouth! Deku saved your life. I don’t care if you don’t want to go and admit that to everyone. If that somehow protects that pride or ego or whatever you want to call it, fine. You do what you want. But I swear Bakugou, I will not let you drag Dekus name through the mud just so you can save face.”

“He. Didn’t. Save. Me.”

With every word, Bakugou stomped closer to Ochako till they were face to face. Ochako didn’t even blink, “I was in the crowd you idiot. I could hear what was going on. The heroes had no idea what to do to save you. They were waiting for someone else to show up.”

“And someone did. All Might.”

Ochako threw her hands up in frustration, “AFTER Deku rushed in!” Ochako took a breath, trying to calm herself before continuing, “Look, like I said, I’m not asking you to go around praising Deku, even though thats what you should be doing. But,” she poked a finger into Katsuki’s chest, “I am telling you that you will not talk about Deku like you just did to anyone else. Deku deserves...no he earned that much from you at least.”

Katsuki roughly swatted Ochako’s hand away, “I’m not going to do a damned thing for that liar.”

“Liar? Deku isn’t a liar.”

“All of a sudden I’m supposed to believe that that worthless shit Deku is able to throw shit around like he did? Hmm? Or how about this? When we fell out of the villain he tried to pass it off that I had done something. I know when I use my quirk. Explain that.”

Ochako frowned but couldn’t answer right away. It was true she had watched Izuku do things back then she hadn’t thought were possible for him to do. She had wanted to ask him about it, but was so relieved he hadn’t been killed she had forgotten to ask.

“I can’t. But it’s like you said back then. Doesn’t matter. He did what he did to save you. You’ve known him since you were little right? Do you really think he’s capable to putting on an act just to
spite you? He’s to ernest a person to even try something like that.”

Katsuki glared down on Ochako before breaking the silence, “Are you done?” Katsuki turned to leave, but before he reached the door, Ochako said one last thing, “tell me I’m wrong.”

Katsuki paused, then was gone. Slamming the door behind him. Left alone Ochako collected her things and left as well. As she left the school however she could once again hear a small group of students talking about the villain incident. However their voices were soon cut off.

“I TOLD YOU GUYS I’M DONE TALKING ABOUT THAT SHIT! DROP IT. I DON’T WANT TO HEAR IT ANYMORE! I’M NOT ANSWERING ANY MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT THAT SHIT VILLAIN OR DEKU!”

Ochako continued on her way, not happy with the current situation, but not angry like she had been, it’s not much, but I guess I’ll take what I can get.

Later that night Izuku bit his lip lightly to stop himself from giving out a happy cheer as his mother handed him back his phone and let him know he was no longer grounded. The past few days when he wasn’t getting checked on by my doctors he was either cleaning the apartment or studying. At least now it was over. He turned his phone on and scanned through his messages and gulped as he saw a missed call from contact ‘Toshi’. Thankfully he had a chance to record a new voice mail message stating he was grounded before handing his phone over to his mother. So at least All Might wouldn’t think he was ignoring him….he hoped.

*Good thing I thought to turn my phone off before I gave it to her too. I can’t even imagine what would happen if mom answered his call.*

As he hurried to his room, his mother called out behind him, “You should give Uraraka a call. I’m sure she’ll be happy to hear from you.”

“I will mom!”

Once safely in his room, and making sure his door was closed, quickly tapped the Toshi contact. After only a couple a rings All Might answered in a bemused tone, “Ah Young Midoriya. Is your incarceration over?”
“I’m so sorry about this All Might. Mom was so worried about me even when I told here I was fine, then she grounded me and I didn’t have a chance to call you, she was watching me everywhere I went just in case I collapsed or something...” Izuku rambled on as he bowed his head, only to remember All Might was not actually in the room with him.

“Don’t worry about it Young Midoriya,” All Might chuckled. “You should be thankful to have such a doting mother to look after you.”

“I, I am. I was just worried that I was missing out on my chance to train.”

“Don’t you worry about that. In fact I your timing for calling was perfect in fact. I have just finished my training regiment for you.”

“You have!?"

“I call it Aim to Pass: American Dream Plan. We will go into it in more detail when we start your training. Speaking of which, are you now free to leave your home unsupervised?”

“Yes. I’m ready to go!”

“Excellent then we will get you started right away. I will come to pick you up first thing tomorrow morning!”

After setting some plans, and Izuku almost swallowing his tongue at how early he was going to be getting up tomorrow, he hung up and sat down at his desk, his excitement threatening to bubble out of him.

I can’t believe it. This is really happening! I should probably get to bed early. Don’t want to start my day all groggy.

Izuku got up and started to get ready for an early night when he suddenly remember, Oh yeah I should give Uraraka a call like mom said.

A few phone taps latter, “DEKU!”
Izuku gulped as he heard Ochako’s voice, *her voice sounds so close!*

“Hi Uraraka. Sorry for taking so long to call you. I got grounded when I got home.”

There was a giggle on the other end, and Izuku felt his cheeks heat up, “Yeah your mom actually gave me a heads up. You know only being grounded for two days is light right? I’d have locked you away for a week.”

Izuku groaned in good humor, “I’m so sorry mom.”

“Well just so you know, I took some notes over what we covered in class while you were out.”

“Really? Thank you so much Uraraka!” Izuku was so touched by this. He had planned on asking the teacher for some notes when he got back to class. “Uraraka, really, thank you. You’re always looking out for me. I couldn’t have asked for a better friend.”

Izuku couldn’t tell over the phone, but Ochako’s cheeks had taken a rosy hue. She took a couple of seconds to regain her composure before she spoke, “It…it’s no big deal Deku. I was happy to do it. I’ll bring you the notes when we meet up tomorrow morning to start our training.”

Izuku blinked, “hm?”

“Oh I guess we should set a time to meet up at the beach. What time works for you?”

*Oh...oh no, oh no!* Izuku felt his legs give out as he collapsed onto his bed, his hand covering his mouth just in case he suddenly screamed out in horror, *I forgot about our plan. HOW COULD I FORGET!*

“Oh...Deku you still there?”

*I can’t believe I forgot. No, no, no! What do I do? What can I even say!?*
“Ye...yeah I’m here…”

There was a pause, “Deku you ok?”

No, no I’m not. I just completely stabbed you in the back, Izuku felt his chest tighten up as he spoke, “Uraraka, I...about...about our plan…” I can’t tell her All Might is going to start training me. What do I do?

The was a soft gasp on the other end of the phone, “Oh wait, I never asked if you were even ok enough to start tomorrow! I’m sorry Deku. I shouldn’t have assumed like that.”

“Yeah, I think….I think I still need the weekend, to...to recover a little more…” Liar.

“Of course! I should have asked you! Oh and you know what, it wouldn’t be a good idea for us to start our training while you have two days of school to catch up on. So how about this then. I’ll make sure everything will be ready for us when we start next week. You know, check for anything that might be dangerous. Then afterwards when I come over for dinner I’ll bring those notes and we can work on them together. That way you wont be behind on monday. Sound good?”

With great effort, Izuku replied, “Thank you Uraraka. I...I don’t….I don’t deserve a friend like you.” I really don’t.

“Oh don’t be like that Deku. Now I think I’m gonna turn in a little early tonight. I’ll see you tomorrow afternoon ok. Have a good night!”

“Good night Uraraka…” With a click Izuku heard Ochako hang up, and let his hand fall to his side, holding the his phone. It took several tries before Izuku was able to stand and get dressed for bed.

I’m a horrible friend...

The next morning Izuku made sure his mother was still asleep before hurrying out the door. He had left a note saying he would be going out for a bit. He hoped that would be enough that she wouldn’t worry. Once he had made it down to the street a small truck pulled up to him. He instantly recognized the skinny form of the worlds greatest hero and hurried to get in.
“You have any issues Young Midoriya?” All Might asked as he drove off.

Izuku shook his head but All Might could see the young man was troubled. Nerves he supposed. Truly it reminded him of himself when he first started training back when he was a young man.

“I can see you are troubled, but do not worry. While it’s true the start of a journey can be daunting. I have every faith you are up to the task.”

Izuku was started from sudden reassurance and smiled up to the hero, “thank you.”

The drive went by quickly but as All Might got closer to their destination a sinking feeling began to form in the bottom of Izuku’s stomach as he began to recognize the area they were in.

Dagobah Municipal Beach Park

When he pulled into a parking lot, and got out, Izuku followed close behind, stopping a few paces back from All Might as they reached the edge of the beach, overlooking the cluttered and dirty shoreline.

All Might surveyed the coast in front of him before asking, “I bet you are wondering why we are here? Well let me tell you. This will be the site were I will mold you into a vessel for One for All. Do you want to guess how?”

Guilt ate away at Izuku as he answered, “moving all the heavy debris and garbage will help build and strengthen my muscles. And it’ll be good community service too.”

All Might smirked, “exactly! You’ll get more out of this then just lifting some weights at a gym. Real world muscle growth. And community service is important too. So many heroes only care about getting seen stopping villains and the like. It’s good to go back to basics like how it was in the old days.”

He turned around, “I’m impressed you were able to guess my plan so quickly…” he stopped when he saw that Izuku had his head down, and was on the verge of tears.
“Young man? What’s wrong?”

*Is he overcome with emotion,* All Might thought. He knew just from the past couple of meetings that the boy wore his emotions on his sleeve. But just this shouldn’t be enough to trigger this kind of reaction.

When Izuku finally spoke his voice was quiet and shaky, “I’m a terrible friend.”

“Huh?”

“All Might, I…”

Izuku took a breath before he tried again, “a while ago I met the first friend that I’d had in years. She, she reached out to me and stood up for me when everyone around either didn’t care, or were the ones causing me all my troubles. She saw that I was in trouble and she was there for me.”

Izuku paused as he collected his thoughts. As he spoke his voice lost its stutter. Becoming more clear. All Might said nothing, allowing Izuku all the time he needed.

“When we met, she was the first person I felt I could tell my dream to. That even with my weak quirk, I still was going to become a hero. She didn’t laugh, or tell me that it was impossible. She actually told me that it was her dream to become a hero too. She’d actually moved away from her parents, all so she could be closer to U.A. On that day we decided that we would work together to help each other get ready for the entrance exam. We’d work on mock exams, study pro heroes, and start looking up places that we could start working out.”

All Might raised an eyebrow, beginning to understand the situation a little better.

“We had trouble finding a good place to train. They were either too expensive or the people around we a little too intense for comfort. Then a few days before you saved me we decided to go for a walk after visiting our last gym. And we walked by here. We talked about how sad it was that the beach was in such a sorry state. How that it’d take a lot of work to get it cleaned up.”

Izuku didn’t notice All Might’s gaze wander up slightly, looking past the young man. Someone had entered the parking lot on the other side. And was looking over at them.
“That’s when we had an idea. That we could train here. We could run up and down the coast. Work on our strength by moving all the garbage where it could get taken away. We even were coming up with ideas on training our quirks here too.”

All Might eyes widened slightly before he tried to motion at Izuku, to get his attention. The person he had spotted was making their way over. At a rather hurried pace in fact.

_Uh oh._

“All Might.”

Hearing his name, the shriveled hero looked back down to see Izuku looking up at him. A mixture of different emotions all fighting to burst from the young boy.

Guilt

Remorse

Determination

Hope

Fear

“All Might, last night, after I had called you and you let me know you were going to be picking me up this morning, I called my friend and I had to lie to her. Today was going to be our first day here. But I lied to her, telling her I was still a little shaken up from the villain and was going to need a few more days. So not only have I lied to my best friend. I’m even making her worry that I’m still not fully recovered from that sludge villain. She also said that she would use the extra time to get stuff ready for us. Instead of starting on her own she is going to waste time she could be using to make herself ready, to instead wait for me. How can I be worthy to be the next symbol of peace, if the first thing I do is hurt those around me?”
All Might wasn’t sure what to say. The situation was apparently much more complicated than he had thought. What he had thought were just nerves, was a storm of different emotions that had to be squared away before any kind of training could be started. Unfortunately before All Might could even begin to think up a proper response for Izuku, one more complication made herself known.

“Izeku?”

Izuku’s eyes went wide, and he quickly whipped around, “Urakaa!?”

Ochako slowed her pace as she finally made it to the two. She wore a faded tracksuit, and was carrying a small duffel bag over her shoulder. While she was surprised to find Izuku here after their talk last night, she was more worried by how alarmed Izuku was that she had walked up on him, and the skinny man he had talking too.

“Urakaa? What are you doing here?” Izuku tried to steady his voice and keep his panic from being to obvious. At least All Might was unrecognizable in his current state. So his secret was safe. He however was now going to have to deal with being caught in his lie.

Ochako frowned, tilting her head slightly, “I told you last night remember? I was going to make sure we would be ready to hit the ground running when you got better. We had discussed that we’d need to make sure there wasn’t anything dangerous mixed in with all the trash.” Ochako’s frown deepened and her eyes narrowed a little, *Deku’s eyes are all red. Has, has he been crying?*


“Izuku?”

*I just need to...lie again.*

“Izuku what are you doing here?”

Izuku opened his mouth, but his voice withered and died before he could think of anything. Ochako’s gaze never wavered, “and who is this that you are with?”
Izuku quickly glanced behind him to look back at All Might, before snapping back to Ochako, “He’s um. You see…” Izuku however could not think of anything to say. He was trapped.

All Might looked from his chosen successor to the newest arrival. Soon realization dawned on him on why the girl seemed so familiar to him. Back during the sludge villain incident, when he had watched Young Midoriya run in to save the boy from that monster. He had watched as a girl chased after him but had been stopped by the crowd. He remembered how much she fought to get free. If the crowd hadn’t stopped her, she very well could have followed Izuku right up to the villain. The same friend Izuku had spoken so highly of and the brave girl from the crowd were one and the same.

They both want to be heroes. And they were already working together to achieve their goal.

For a split moment the scene before All Might changed as a thought crossed his mind.

Instead of a young boy, stammering in a panic to come up with a believable lie, he saw his old master.

Nana Shimura.

She stood proud and strong. Ready to face whatever the world threw at her.

Instead of a young girl, face scrunched in worry as she became more and more upset as to why her friend was so panicked, he saw his old teacher.

Gran Torino.

He stood confident and headstrong. Ready to leap into his next fight.

He saw before him his master and teacher. Both had been the greatest heroes he knew growing up. And both had been close friends, right up till the end. Both had helped mold him into the symbol of peace he was today. Perhaps it was some kind of poetic irony or maybe it was fate that brought the young girl here. At the same time that he and Izuku had arrived.
The scene changed back for All Might as he thought of something else. *Those two helped mold me into who I am today. Who’s to say I couldn’t do the same for these two?*

Maybe.

All Might cleared his throat, loud enough to get the attention of both Izuku and Ochako.

“Perhaps I should explain things Young Midoriya.”

Before either teen could respond to this, All Might bulked up. Ochako’s eyes went wide and she stumbled back almost tripping on her own feet if Izuku didn’t reach out and steady her.

“All Might?”

He smiled down at her, **indeed I am young lady.**”

Ochako couldn’t believe what she was seeing. *Why is All Might here? Why was he so skinny before? Why is he here with Deku? Wait? Did Deku even realized that he had been standing besides his favorite hero?*

She looked over at her friend and while he did seem shocked, he clearly wasn’t as much as he should be.

“All Might, what about your secret?” Izuku asked.

*Secret? Wait...He knew!?*

“All Deku what is going on?”

Izuku looked back at Ochako, and she was surprised to see a look of such shame spread across his face. She was even more surprised when he took a step back and bowed his head till he was almost parallel with the ground, “I’m so sorry Uraraka. I lied to you. You’ve been such a great friend and I lied to you! I’m a horrible friend...I’m just...I’m just the worst...”
Ochako looked from Izuku to All Might, who looked slightly uncomfortable as he rubbed the back of his neck, then back to Izuku, “Deku wait, please hold on. I don’t even know what’s going on. So please don’t, don’t say that about yourself.”

All Might nodded in agreement, “She is right Young Midoriya. Hold your head up. I was the one that put you in this situation to begin with. So please let me explain things to young um…”

Ochako blinked before she hurried out, “Oh um Uraraka Ochako sir.”

“Young Uraraka, thank you. Now I suppose the best place to start would be at the beginning. I think when I saved Young Midoriya from that dastardly sludge villain the first time should be a good place to start.”

There was a pause before Ochako screamed, “first time!?”

All Might gave a small nod before he told the story of his first meeting with Izuku. To Izuku latching onto his leg, which Ochako scolded Izuku for. To their talk on the roof. All Might did have to pause briefly as he wilted some under the suddenly harsh look that overcame Ochako when he mentioned how he had told Izuku that he couldn’t be a hero.

Young Uraraka does not lack for spirit.

When he covered the attack back in the shopping district, Ochako suppressed a shudder thinking back on that day. All Might covered how after watching Izuku rush in to save Katsuki he began to wonder about Izuku’s quirk. So he ditched the press and chased after him.

“Wait you did? But I was with Deku after that.”

“Um, you did leave when I was about a block away from my home actually.”

Ochako groaned, “Seriously…”
This brought a chuckle to All Might and a sheepish grin to Izuku, though Ochako noticed, not for long as he soon went back to the guilt and shamed look he had before. But it was what followed that left Ochako speechless. Wide eyed, Ochako learned All Mights greatest secret.

One for All.

And that he had chosen Izuku to be the next inheritor of the powerful quirk, “So you see I brought Young Midoriya here to train so that he would be able to inherit One for All and become my successor.”

Ochako turned to Izuku ready to congratulate him however, All Might continued on, “But now, well I don’t think that is going to work like I had originally planned.”

Izuku flinched, and while he didn’t say anything, he didn’t seem all that surprised. Which Ochako could not understand. Ochako then looked from him to All Might, “Wait why?”

“When we arrived this morning, Young Midoriya here became racked with guilt. He felt he was betraying his greatest friend by striking out on his own after promising her that they would follow their dreams and becomes heroes together. He had even had to lie to her just to be able to meet this morning. In order to get ready for U.A. and to receive my power he would need to be able to focus on his training for the next 10 months. And I’m afraid that would be impossible if he is always thinking of the friend he is leaving behind.”

Ochako was stunned. When she looked back at Izuku he gave her a tiny nod in agreement, “he’s right Uraraka. When he brought me here, I felt so sick. All Might deserves someone who will be able to give their all. That’s not me.”

“No! Deku this is a chance of a lifetime. All Might is your hero. And he wants to train you!” Ochako was near panicking. While she was very touched by Izuku holding their promise in such high regards, she could not let him let this opportunity pass him by. She quickly rushed over to All Might and gripping the large heroes sweatshirt, looked up, pleading, “please, please reconsider. I’m ok, really.”

All Might looked down at Ochako and put his hands on her shoulders and just shook his head, “I am sorry but my mind is made up. My original plan is simply impossible.”
Ochako’s arms fell to her side as she let go of All Might, tears rolling down her cheeks. *This is my fault.*

Izuku didn’t know what to say as he walked to stand besides her. Ochako, his best friend, was in so much pain because of him and he had no idea what to do to make it stop. *This is my fault.*

“So I’ll just have to train both of you.”

There was a pause as what All Might had just said began to sink in. Both snapped their heads up to look up at All Might and saw his trademark grin now spread across his face.

Ochako felt her knees give as she collapsed backward into Izuku who lowered both her and himself to the ground. Izuku, who was still looking up at All Might, asked “were you, were you planning this when you told Uraraka everything?”

“That’s correct,” All Might confirmed.

“That’s correct,” All Might confirmed.

“Then why make us think...make her think that she was responsible for you not training me?”

“It was a test. Just now she has learned that a powerful quirk that had been promised to another was suddenly back ‘on the market’. So to speak. There are many, many people who would do anything and everything in their power to try and find a way to make it theirs. She could have easily tried to say or do something that might make herself a more appealing candidate. But what did Young Uraraka do instead?”

“She um, she asked…”

“I begged you to take him back.” Ochako finished for Izuku as he had trailed off as realization had dawned on him.

All Might nodded, “That’s correct. Putting others above yourselves is a key part of being a hero. And I don’t think you even considered trying to see if you could take his place. Did you?”
Ochako just shook her head, “No sir.”

“And lets not forget your actions from before as well.”

“Huh?”

All Might knelt down next to Izuku and Ochako, “While Young Midoriya’s action back then was what lead me to choose him as my successor, I do remember something else that happened that day as well. You Young Uraraka. I saw you doing everything you could to chase after this young man.”

“I...I was so scared I wasn’t really thinking…”

All Might glanced over at Izuku, “Both of you that day exhibited something that all the greatest heroes talk about when they speak of their youth. At some point in their lives, their bodies moved without them realizing it.”

Ochako shook her head, her mind racing as she came to terms as to what was happening. The more she did, the more excited she became. I’m going to get trained by All Might. I never dreamed something like this could happen. I have no excuses now. Mom, Dad, just wait a bit longer, soon you’ll never have to worry about money ever again. You’ll be living the easy life. Ochako glanced over at Izuku expecting him to be just as excited as she was, but was surprised to see that the same gloom from before had not disappeared from his eyes.

“Deku? This is great, right?”

Izuku smiled, though it wasn’t as bright as she was used to, “Of course Uraraka. I can’t even begin to say how happy I am...but,” lowered his head again, “this still doesn’t change the fact I lied to you Uraraka.”

“Deku...you know I don’t blame you for that. I’m not angry with you so please stop worrying.”

“But-” Izuku began but Ochako cut him off, “And it's not like you could tell me the truth if I had asked you. All Might trusted you with an incredible secret. So you couldn’t just say to me, ‘oh sorry but I’m going to go train with All Might instead’ now could you.”
Izuku was quiet as he thought about that. It's true, he had been so caught up in the *what* he had done, and not the *why*.

“We both know the secret now, but I’m sure All Might doesn’t want us going around telling people about this. Either his quirk, or that he’s going to be training us. That means we are gonna have to come up with some cover stories. So you really didn’t do anything wrong Deku. So please, don’t look so sad.”

“I will say though, Young Midoriya. The way you hold your friendship with Young Uraraka in such high regards, tells me I have made the right choice in picking you. Your character is *without question, truly heroic*.”

While most of the gloom had left Izuku, she could see a few specs left, so Ochako added, “If it's still bothering you though...then make it up to me. While we train, I want you to give it everything you have, just like I will. Do that, and we are even. Deal?”

She reached out her hand for Izuku to take. She watched as the last bits of gloom and doubt evaporated away, and a large smile, a real and bright smile, crossed his face. He reached out and took Ochako’s hand firmly, “Deal.”

All Might looked between the two, and knowing he had done the right thing, stood up and clap his hands together, “**Excellent! Excellent! You two are going to be the heroes people remember for generations. But first we need to get started! Now then, stand up you two. We only have 10 months before U.A.s entrance exams. We don’t have time to waste!**”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter ended up taking so long but I got really busy at work and since most of this is typed on my phone during breaks and such, there wasn't a lot of time to work on it. Also this is the longest thing I have ever written by itself. Including my old college papers. I hope you all enjoyed it.

So yeah, things are going to get a little interesting for our two heroes. Next chapter will cover their next ten months of training. Not sure if I'm gonna do all 10 months in one go, or break it down some. Let me know what you'd all prefer actually. That will help me decide. One big chapter or five some odd shorter chapters.

Side note, I don't hate Katsuki. But in jr high, he was a pretty harsh bully. But like the manga, I have plans for him later on :D
*cough* rivals are great *cough*
Big thanks to those anons that beta read for me! And if anyone sees anything grammar wise that stands out or there's something you just don't like, please let me know in your review. I want to make sure I do everything I can to make this story a good read.
PS
Thank you to everyone that left a review. Love you all!
Month 1 (April)

After reaffirming their dream with each other and some encouraging words from All Might, Izuku and Ochako were ready to begin their first day of training, or so they thought. By the end of their first day, both quickly realized what they thought was training was vastly different than what All Might considered training.

Izuku was feeling this difference as he groaned, digging his hands and feet into the sand as he tried to pull himself forward. Wrapped around his shoulders was a large pair of ropes tied to a large, heavy fridge that he was trying to pull up to a parked truck to get removed from the beach.

To his side, he could hear Ochako gasping for breath as she ran back and forth from a large tire pile, taking one out to carry it out of the beach and up the street to get picked up by the street cleaners.

All Might paced around them, either taking notes down on Ochako for her own modified workout plan or offering encouragement whenever he felt either of them had started to slack off.

After one last futile tug, Izuku collapsed on the sand, gasping for breath. All Might looked up from his notepad. “Hey now, do you think you have time to be lying around?”

“It’s...really...heavy...All Might,” Izuku gasped out.

All Might chuckled. “Really? If you are having this much trouble just moving a fridge, you’ll never be ready to inherit my power. One for All needs a proper vessel.”
“But you said I was worthy to inherit it!” Izuku would have sounded desperate if he wasn’t still trying to catch his breath.

As All Might started to reply, he could feel an intense stare coming his way. Glancing to his side, he caught Ochako observing him and giving Izuku a worried glance as she picked up another tire to carry. As she ran by him, he continued to speak to Izuku. “You have the spirit, Young Midoriya, but do you have any idea what would happen to you if you got my power as you are now? Your arms and legs would get blown off, and your body would explode.”

Izuku gasped in horror as the mental image of his bloody corpse flashed in his mind. Ochako almost tripped before catching herself and continuing her run.

“These next ten months are to get you ready to inherit my power. That’s why I put together the Aim to Pass: American Dream Plan in the first place. This training plan will help you be ready by the time you take the U.A. entrance exams. It’s set up so that every aspect of your life will push you forward! Even your sleep time will help. I will be honest with you, Young Midoriya. This is a super hard schedule, and it’s only phase one. So you need to ask yourself: can you follow it?”

All Might let Izuku think about that as he made his way towards the outer edge of the beach, catching up to Ochako as she hefted another tire onto its new pile.

“Very impressive, Young Uraraka.”

Ochako leaned forward onto the pile as she took a second to catch her breath. “Thank you, All Might.”

“Yes, you were able to get quite a few tires up here today, but imagine how many more you would have been able to move if you hadn’t slowed down every time Young Midoriya had a stumble. Or to glare at me whenever I am a little tough on him.”

Ochako flinched as she looked down at her feet, away from All Might. “I...I’m sorry. I don't mean to do that. I guess I just worry about Deku a lot...”

All Might smiled as he put a hand on her shoulder. “You are a good friend, Young Uraraka. However, we can’t have you distracted for the whole ten months worrying over Young
“Midoriya all the time. So let me try and help put your mind at ease. First, do you trust me?”

“Of course!” Ochako was surprised by the question. Of course she would trust the world's greatest hero.

All Might nodded. “That's good. I’d be a little stumped what to do if you didn’t,” he added with a laugh. “Now, you trust me, but do you trust Young Midoriya?”

Ochako blinked at that question. “Trust Deku? What do you mean?”

“Let me explain. For these next ten months, I’m not just going to be training Young Midoriya’s body to become the next vessel for One for All. I will be training his mind to overcome all the mental blocks he has.”

“So he’ll be able to use his own Quirk better?”

“That’s part of the reason, yes, but also to help him find some self-respect which he sorely lacks, if we are being honest.”

No thanks to that jerk Bakugou, Ochako thought to herself bitterly.

“Now, from you, I need you to trust me that I will not do anything that will hurt the young man. There will be times where I will have to be rough with him that I may come off more interested in tearing him down. But this is only so that he can put himself back together, stronger than he is now, in both body and mind.”

Ochako nodded. “I understand, All Might.”

“But you must also trust Midoriya. You need to believe in him, that no matter how hard things get, he will be able to pick himself up and keep going. He needs people around him that believe in him so he will start believing in himself.”

All Might moved to the side so that both he and Ochako could look back towards Izuku, who was
back on his feet pulling at the large fridge with all his might while they were talking. Watching for a few moments, Ochako straightened up. “I trust him, All Might. I know Deku can do this.”

All Might smiled. “**Good, good! That's what I want to hear! Now, I think you’ve rested enough. Back to it, young lady!”**

Ochako responded with a quick “Yes, sir!” before rushing back down the beach. As she passed Izuku, she gave him a little wave. “You got this, Deku!”

Izuku blinked, but returned her wave and smiled before gritting his teeth and digging his feet deep into the sand as he finally felt the fridge budge forward, if only a bit, but it was still progress.

With the sun now hanging high above them, All Might clapped his hands together to signal that their first day of cleaning the beach was over. Izuku lay on his back with his arms splayed out while Ochako sat down next to him, rubbing her legs as she tried to get some feeling back into them. All Might, now back to his smaller form, handed them both some water before he took a seat in front of them.

“A very good first day. I am impressed with both of your drives.”

Both Ochako and Izuku mumbled something close to a thank-you as they gulped down their water.

“Now before you two head off, I want to go over your workout plan. Fortunately, for now, you two will be able to use the same plan, so here you go. Give it a good look over. Come tomorrow you both will be following that plan to the letter.”

Handing them the stack of papers, Ochako held them so both she and Izuku could read them. Flipping through the pages, both Izuku and Ochako came to the same conclusion.

*This was going to be hell.*

“Well,” Izuku began. “U.A. is the hardest school to get into. So we’ll just have to work that much harder to get ready. It is the school that All Might went to, so it’s gonna be worth it.”
Ochako chuckled. “You are such a fanboy, Deku.” Skimming through a few more pages, she pulled out a sheet with a list of meals on it. “Wow, this is a lot of food, though…”

“You are going to need that fuel, Young Uraraka. Without it, you won’t have the energy to do this training.”

“Don’t worry, Uraraka; I’m sure convincing Mom to make all this for us won’t be too hard once she learns it’s for our training.”

All Might frowned. “On the subject of your mother, have you thought about what you will tell her?”

Izuku sat up so he could look directly at All Might. “I have. At least for now, anyway. I think I’ll tell her that Uraraka and I are going to be following a program I found to do our training and leave it at that. Honestly, I don’t know if I could keep track of anything more complicated than that.”

All Might nodded. “Considering how quickly you folded this morning, that may be for the best.”

Ochako snickered while Izuku looked away bashfully. “I bet if your mom did find out, she would have a heart attack.”

Izuku agreed. “I know she worries about me a lot. Whenever I talk about being a hero, she looks a little scared. I want to try and keep her happy as long as I can.”

“And you, Young Uraraka? What will you tell your parents?”

“The whole reason I moved out here was to get ready for U.A. So I can just tell them I’m training and not have to worry about it. No news is good news in this situation.”

With that settled, All Might stood up and pulled out his keys as he got into his truck. “Well then, I will see you two tomorrow morning, bright and early.”

Both Izuku and Ochako waved as All Might drove off. When he was out of sight, Ochako helped Izuku up. “Come on. We still have to go over everything you missed from school. We should be
able to cover it today.”

“Yeah, sounds like a plan. Thank you, Uraraka.” Izuku and Ochako collected their belongings and began their jog back to his house.

Month 2 (May)

From Izuku’s point of view, he wasn’t sure if either he or Ochako were having a rougher time at the moment. After a month of pure physical hell, All Might had added on a new part to their training. They were working on their Quirks.

_I knew this was coming, but it doesn’t make it any easier_, Izuku thought to himself as he continued the simple but grueling task ahead of him. To his side was a child’s play pool, and all he had to do was fill it with water from the ocean. Simple, in theory. But All Might had given him strict rules to follow. He must use a small coffee mug to carry the water to the pool, which was several yards away from the shore. He had to stay next to the pool while doing the training, and he was not allowed to ever touch the cup with his hands. The only way he could move the cup was with his Quirk.

With a small groan, Izuku reached out with his hand, willed the cup forward until it was over the open water, and slowly began to lower it down until it was fully submerged. Gritting his teeth, Izuku pulled the cup up and out of the water. His body trembled and his head throbbed as he brought the cup back towards himself, careful not to let any of the water splash out until the cup hovered over the pool beside him.

With a slight tilt of his hand, the cup was emptied, and Izuku took the chance to catch his breath as he looked down into the water. _At least I can actually do the training now. That first day was so embarrassing. I couldn’t even lift the cup at first. I’m just glad All Might was so understanding. And when I was able to lift it, Uraraka was so happy._

Izuku smiled at the feeling of actual _pride_ he had felt while they had congratulated him.

A sudden loud crash broke Izuku from his thoughts. Turning to his side, he winced as the abandoned cars Ochako had been floating crashed into the sand. Soon afterward, Ochako stumbled into view, holding her stomach before she heaved over. Izuku quickly turned away, but he could still hear Ochako vomit up her breakfast.
No, now that I’m thinking about it, Uraraka is definitely having a rougher time.

When she was done, Izuku shouted over to her, “Are you okay!?”

She gave him a shaky thumbs-up as she used a small towel to wipe her mouth before standing up. After taking a deep breath, she began to walk around each car, touching them and floating them up as she went back to her training.

Izuku couldn’t help but smile. No matter how hard things got, Ochako kept working at it. I wonder if she realizes how cool she is? She’s going to be so strong when this is over.

After catching himself staring for a bit too long and feeling his cheeks heat up, Izuku refocused on his own training as he once again pushed the cup out towards the ocean.

A few hours later, with the sun beginning to set, All Might stood over both Izuku and Ochako, who were both collapsed on the sand and trying to recover from their day of Quirk training. Izuku was busy rubbing his head with one hand and pinching his nose closed with his other. Ochako was curled up and clutching her stomach, trying to keep the little sips of water she had just finished from coming back up and joining her breakfast and lunch, which were splattered all over the sand.

“Kid,” All Might began as he took a seat next to Izuku, “you keep bleeding like that, and I might think you’re copying me.”

Izuku smiled despite the splitting headache he had. “It’s not that bad, really. I think I only lost a pint today. Plus, there are worse things I could be doing than copying you, All Might.”

All Might chuckled. “As long as you don’t get as skinny as me, you should be fine.”

While they laughed, Ochako groaned out her disapproval. “I swear, you start vomiting blood, I’m retiring you and taking One for All myself.”

Izuku rolled over, slowly as to not worsen his head, to give Ochako a lopsided grin. “Maybe you should work on your own vomit issues before judging me and my bleeding.”
Ochako’s cheeks puffed in a playful pout. “I know where you live, Deku. You be nice about my vomiting. Besides, you’re out for the count, while I’m just resting. I’m fine.”

“Really?” Izuku challenged.

“Really.”

Izuku smirked. Taking the challenge, he reached over and gave Ochako’s stomach a gentle but firm poke. Ochako dry heaved as she clutched at her stomach. “DEKU! I swear I’ll throw up on you next time.”

“If you two have enough energy to horse around, maybe I need to add a little extra to your training.” All Might teased. Both teens quickly looked over at him and shook their heads almost pleadingly for him not to. “Don’t worry. I’m not going to add anything... just yet.”

Both Izuku and Ochako sighed in relief. After a bit, Izuku looked back over to All Might. “Did you train like this when you got One for All?”

“Hmm. Honestly, not quite. While I don’t like to brag, my body was already fit enough that I didn’t need to train to receive my power, so I went straight into combat training.”

“Oh…” Izuku frowned as old feelings of self-doubt crept back into his mind. “So I’m really behind, then.”

“Deku…?” Ochako reached over and laid a reassuring hand on Izuku’s shoulder. “You’re doing great. I can tell you are getting stronger.”

“She’s right, Young Midoriya. I can already see the efforts you have put into your training are starting to pay off.”

Izuku smiled at that, much to Ochako’s relief. Over the past couple months, she had watched as Izuku’s constant self-doubts began to fade away. And while every now and then something would come up that would bring about new ones, it didn’t take more than a few encouraging words to push them away.
“Will we be doing combat training as well, All Might?” Ochako asked with just a bit of hope mixed in with her curiosity. While Izuku missed it, All Might didn’t. “Eventually. Though if I’m being honest, I’m still working that whole regimen out. You seem a little eager to learn how to fight, Young Uraraka.”

Ochako looked away sheepishly, but couldn’t deny there was perhaps one person she’d love to practice some fighting moves on.

With a grunt, All Might stood up and dusted himself off. “Now, if you two think you’ve recovered enough, help me load up my truck and we can all head home.”

With a groan, both teens slowly got up and began to load up the truck with the training supplies they had used that day. While Izuku loaded up some weights, Ochako walked over to where Izuku had been training to retrieve the small pool and cup. As she reached down to pick them up, All Might gave a hushed but quick call, “Ah, Young Uraraka, wait-!”

Ochako blinked in surprise, not from All Might’s call, but by the sheer weight of the cup. What had looked like a simple ceramic coffee cup weighed far, far too much.

*What is this thing made out of? Lead?*

Glancing over towards All Might, she saw him quickly put a finger to his mouth, practically imploring her to be silent as he rushed over and took the cup from her.

“All Might?”

“Shh, not so loud.”

All Might glanced back and gave a small sigh of relief after seeing that Izuku was busy loading stuff back at the truck.

“All Might? What’s going on here?”

“Do you remember the first day of training, when I said I was going to help Young Midoriya
overcome the mental blocks he’s put in place when using his Quirk? Well, this is it.”

“A cup?”

“That’s right. It looks like a normal coffee mug, which is how I want Young Midoriya to see it.”

Ochako tilted her head as she thought about that. “So...he thinks he’s lifting something that’s actually heavier than he realizes?”

“Correct. Right now, he only thinks he can lift a certain amount of weight. On the first day of Quirk training, I had him work on lifting a normal coffee mug that looked just like this until he was able to do it. If you recall, I switched the cup when he wasn’t looking. It took him a few tries, but he started lifting it quickly enough and was able to begin training with his Quirk.”

“So while he’s lifting what he thinks are light items, he’s actually training his Quirk much harder than he realizes, and he’s not running into the blocks he put up regarding his limits?”

“Correct. And when the time comes, I’ll show him just how strong his Quirk is. By then, all those blocks and self-doubts will be gone. But he must not figure this out before then. If he knows the trick, then the placebo effect won’t work anymore. And honestly, I had a heck of a time trying to come up with a safe way to help the boy work past his limits the first time. So let’s just keep this between us, okay?”

Ochako nodded vigorously. “I promise.”

As All Might carried the items away, Ochako let her gaze wander over to Izuku, a small smile spread across her lips as she watched him.

*After all this is done, I can’t wait to see just what you’ll be able to do, Deku.*

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for such a short chapter after a long wait, but work has been so busy that it was hard for me to find time to work on this chapter. So I decided to go ahead and split it into separate parts. With luck, the next couple of chapters covering the next few
months of training will come out much faster. Months 3 and 4 are about 70% done. I hope you all enjoyed this latest chapter and if so please leave a review. They help me so much as I try to better my, lackluster writing skills :D

A big thank you to my beta readers!
Aim to Pass Part 2

Chapter Summary

Villains are no problem for the world’s number one hero. A pissed off mother, that’s a whole other story.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Month 3 (June)

“I want to meet the person that’s been training you two,” Inko said suddenly while they sat down for dinner.

Izuku’s head snapped up in surprise while Ochako almost floated away her bowl of rice as she choked down her food. “What?! What do you mean?”

Inko gave Izuku a leveled look, “Izuku, did you really think you’d be able to keep something like this a secret from me?”

Izuku glanced over nervously towards Ochako, who gave him a look that screamed ‘don’t look at me.’

Inko took a bite of her food before reaching down underneath the table to pull out a small stack of papers, which both teens recognized as their older workout plans from the last couple of months. “You two have only ever shown me the meal plans you had been given. If I had seen the rest of this earlier, I would have wanted to meet your trainer then.”

Despite the serious situation they were in, Izuku at least could breathe easier now that his mother did not know he was being trained by All Might.

Still, this isn’t exactly great, either. I thought I was being careful to keep Mom out of the loop. I guess I got careless…
“Um, Mom...why are you suddenly so concerned? Uraraka and I are doing just fine.”

“You two for a while now have been training non-stop, and lately I’ve been getting more and more concerned. You both seem to be pushing yourselves so hard. And now that I know what you two have been doing, I want to make sure you aren’t doing anything else that could get you hurt. Or that someone isn’t pushing you two too far.”

There was a moment’s pause as Inko looked from Izuku to Ochako, both teens growing more uncomfortable under the woman's stern gaze. Finally Inko said, “So, why don’t you invite him to dinner, then? That should give him ample time to explain things to me. I’m sure your trainer would be able to make it tomorrow. Right?” From Inko’s tone, both teens knew she wasn’t really asking.

Izuku quickly excused himself and hurried to his room. Closing the door behind him and grabbing his phone, Izuku frantically pulled up All Might’s contact number and mashed the call button. As soon as he heard it stop ringing, he did not give All Might a chance to even say hello before blurtling out in a loud whisper, “AllMight! Youneedtocomeoverfordinnertomorrow! Mymomismadandknowsstuffnow!”

On the other end of the line, All Might blinked in confusion. He waited a few moments until he finally heard Izuku stop breathing so hard. “Young Midoriya. I am going to need you to take a breath and try that again. Now, from the top…”

After taking a few deep breaths, Izuku tried again, “My mom found our old workout plans you’d given us. Up ’til now I’ve only given her the meal portions you wrote out for us. So after reading through it she’s worried it’s a bit too much for us, so she really wants to meet you to go over it.”

“She does? She wants to meet me ?”

“Well, not you in particular. She wants to meet our trainer. She….I still haven’t told her that you are training us. So would you be able to come for dinner tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow? That’s very short notice…”

“My mom also wasn’t very happy we kept this from her. She’s worried Uraraka and I are pushing ourselves too much. Or really, I think she’s worried you are pushing us too much.”
All Might frowned. *I suppose I was a little too distracted by their strides in their training, and I may have overlooked how their training might appear to others from the outside...*

“She’s not going to take no as an answer here, is she? Alright, I will be over tomorrow.”

“Thank you.”

“*However, I still believe we should continue to keep our more sensitive secrets from her.*”
Before Izuku could respond to that, All Might quickly continued, “*Let me add, it’s not that I do not think your mother is trustworthy. I’ve had many friends over my time as a hero that I have trusted my life to, but at the same time, I’ve never told them about my power. I’ve wanted to, but once a secret is known by a few, it doesn’t take much for it to spread. A couple people here or there adds up after a while, Young Midoriya.*”

Izuku found himself nodding, even though no one else was in the room with him. “I understand. Then what should I tell her?”

“*Let her know I will be over for dinner and am more than happy to address any concerns she may have. Besides that, leave the rest to me. I’ll have a good story and everything ready for tomorrow.*”

Ochako numbly took another bite of her dinner as she and Inko sat in silence. It took a considerable amount of effort not to stare towards Izuku’s room. Fortunately, before the silence became even more unbearable, Izuku hurried back into the room and got in his seat. “*Mr. Yagi said he’ll be more than happy to have dinner with us tomorrow and to talk with you.*”

Inko smiled a very frosty smile. “That’s excellent. I’m looking forward to talking with him.”

Both Izuku and Ochako tried to swallow the nervous lumps that formed in their throats. Neither of them were looking forward to tomorrow's dinner.

The next day was clouded with a haze of distractions for the two. Neither Ochako nor Izuku could focus on their school work or their training that day, which All Might had been absent for. Izuku got caught by their teacher muttering under his breath as he went over everything that could go wrong at dinner. Ochako had drifted out over the open water while practicing floating herself, much to her soaked dismay. Now, much to their chagrin, the day was over and they sat alone in
Izuku’s room, waiting for All Might to come over.

“So,” Ochako began, “You don’t have any idea what All Might is planning?” She already knew the answer, but the stifling silence was beginning to take its toll on her nerves. Izuku sat quietly on his bed, giving no sign that he had even heard her. Ochako’s fingers drummed softly on Izuku’s desk. The soft tapping almost echoing like drums in the silence.

“I’m sure we’re overthinking this. It’s going to be fine.”

More silence, and no reaction from Izuku at all. Ochako watched Izuku carefully. She could tell this dinner was making him nervous. It made her nervous too, but she knew something else was eating away at him. Every once in a while throughout the day, she would see a look come over him, a look she remembered him having the morning they had started training.

“Deku? What’s on your mind?”

Nothing.

“You know if there’s something bothering you, you can talk to me.”

Again, nothing.

_Okay, no more nice girl. I’m done with this silent treatment. Just need to get some kind of reaction from him._

Ochako rubbed her chin before a slightly wicked thought crossed her mind. It was cheap and dirty, but Izuku was not leaving her much choice in the matter. Ochako was _not_ going to just sit in silence when she knew something was bothering her friend. Getting up, Ochako made her way over to stand in front of Izuku, and bent down slightly so that she was leaning next to his ear.

“D-e-k-u,” Ochako started, making her voice as sickly sweet as she could, “I can’t hide my feelings for you anymore. I love you.” Ochako paused and then added, huskily, “and I want to _kiss_ you so much it _hurts_.”
There was a pause over a few heartbeats as Ochako waited to see if her words would finally get a reaction out of Izuku and break him out of his silent stewing. Much to Ochako’s delight, she soon got her wish. Izuku’s head snapped up fast enough that Ochako was worried he’d have whiplash. His eyes went wide and his face turned several shades of red before settling on a shade not unlike a ripe tomato. He leapt up, tangling himself in his bedsheets in the process, and tumbled to the ground in a stuttering mess.

“U-U-Uraraka! I, I you, YOU, KISS! You-!”

Ochako doubled over in a fit of laughter, unable to hold herself back from Izuku’s priceless reaction. Izuku soon clamped his mouth shut and glared daggers at Ochako, “THAT WAS MEAN!”

After finally getting her laughter under control, Ochako sat down on the bed and offered Izuku a humorous but genuine apology. “Sorry, sorry. But you didn’t leave me much choice.”

Izuku huffed as he got up and plopped down next to her, cheek puffed out slightly in a pout. “I think I prefer when Kacchan bullies me. At least with him, he just goes for the kill. You are way too creative.”

Ochako scrunched her face in disgust. “Ew, please don’t compare me to Bakugou.” She rubbed the back of her head briefly. “I am sorry. I probably shouldn’t have teased you like that.”

“No kidding,” Izuku replied, but without any real bite to his words. While his face was still flushed, he was at least smiling, much to Ochako’s relief.

“So, Deku, you have something on your mind? You’ve been really out of it all day.”

Izuku’s smile dropped as he slumped down and let out a sigh. “Maybe? Honestly, this has been bothering me for a while now, but I’ve been so focused on stuff like school, or our training, or studying for the written exam that I’ve been able to kinda put it out of my mind. But now that All Might is coming here, it’s kinda front and center. Makes it hard to focus on anything else, really.”

“Do you want to talk about it?”

“Yes? I think.” Izuku answered while nervously twiddling his thumbs. “It’s kinda hard to put into
Ochako waited patiently as Izuku collected his thoughts before he turned to look at her. “You know, I’ve wanted to be a hero ever since I was a little kid, right?”

“Yeah, I’ve seen the baby pictures to prove that.”

Izuku groaned but continued on. “And now, I’m taking real strides to make that dream a reality. In ways I couldn’t have ever imagined.”

Ochako smiled. “Yeah, I bet getting trained by All Might really is a dream come true for you, huh?”

“I’m not just getting trained by All Might, though. I’m also getting trained with someone who’s now my best friend.”

Ochako nudged Izuku in the side softly. “Careful there. I might think you’re putting me and All Might on the same level.”

“I am.” Izuku stated matter-of-factly.

“Eh?!” Wait, what?

Izuku smiled sadly. “It’s true I always wanted to be a hero, but I also...I also wanted a friend. Growing up, no one wanted to risk Kacchan coming after them too, so everyone just ignored me or joined up with him to get on his good side. So I never really had friends. But now, just like how I could never have dreamed I’d be training with All Might to become a hero, being friends with you, Uraraka, was something I could have never dreamed would have happened.”

All at once several thoughts and feelings rushed through her: how sad and lonely Izuku must have been growing up, how the temptation to see just how high she could throw that jerk Katsuki into the sky was starting to get very, very hard to ignore. And while these thoughts rushed through her, Ochako felt a few butterflies flutter in her stomach as she was suddenly keenly aware of just how close she and Izuku were sitting next to each other, on his bed no less, and how much warmer it had gotten in the small room.
“It, um, it sounds like you're getting everything you could want, Deku.”

Izuku nodded. “Everything is going so well, or at least it was.”

“I’m sure All Might will be able to handle this, Deku. He’ll get your mom to not be so worried about everything.”

“He’ll get Mom to trust him, and us too?”

“Yeah! It’ll all work out.”

“By lying to her?”

Ochako started to speak, but her words died in her throat. *Oh…*

“Uraraka, I know how crucial keeping All Might’s secret is. I really do. He trusted us with something so...so important, and I would never think about betraying that trust. I *know* how important keeping One for All to ourselves is.”

Izuku tapped his forehead lightly. “I’ve drilled it into my thick skull just to make sure I don’t screw up and let something slip. To become a great hero, *I have to keep this a secret.*”

Izuku lowered his hand and placed it on his chest over his heart. “But here? I can’t help but wonder: for me to become a great hero, do I have to become a bad son?”

“Deku…” Ochako whispered, at a loss as to what to say.

*When I think about it, Ochako thought sadly, Deku wears his emotions on his sleeve. He’s so earnest and open about everything. Keeping secrets like this really does go against his very nature.*

Reaching out, Ochako took Izuku’s hand into hers and gave it a gentle and firm squeeze. “Deku,
the fact that you are so worried over this tells me all that I need to know. A bad son wouldn’t be worried about what his secrets were doing to his mother. You are a good son, and a good person, for that matter. Don’t let anyone tell you different. Especially yourself.”

Izuku smiled and unconsciously moved his other hand to fold over Ochako’s. “That being said, Deku,” Ochako continued, “One for All is All Might’s secret. And it’s up to him when and who gets to learn it. Like you said, we have to respect that. We have to keep it secret.”

With a nod, Izuku agreed. “I know. I really do know that, Uraraka.”

“How ever,” Izuku blinked as Ochako continued on, “when it becomes your secret, then you’ll get to be the one that decides who knows what.”

When it becomes my secret? Oh, OH! “OH!” Izuku’s face lit up as it came to him, “I never thought of that. One for All is...is going to be mine, isn’t it?”

Ochako nodded. “Yes it is. But until then, we have an important responsibility. We have to make sure All Might knows he put his trust in the right people.”

“Right,” Izuku agreed. I can do this. All Might trusted me. I won’t let him down.

When the two heard a knocking coming from the front door, they both snapped out of their trance. Both looked down and, seeing that they were still holding hands, gasped before letting go of each other, blushing and laughing nervously.

Izuku stood and quickly composed himself, at least he hoped he had. “Let’s...let’s go. I’m sure that’s All Might. Don’t want to leave him outside too long.” Ochako nodded and followed after him, trying to desperately rub the blush from her face while he wasn’t looking. What, what was that!

Opening the front door, Izuku welcomed All Might, who was in his smaller form. Ochako eyed him as he walked in, impressed that he had thought ahead to get dressed up for the meal. All Might wore a bright yellow pinstripe suit that looked several sizes too big, but at least it looked clean and pressed.

I guess since he has to be ready to bulk up, all his clothes have to be like that. Ochako thought to
herself.

“Welcome to my home, All-”

At once All Might put a finger up to shush Izuku while Ochako elbowed his side. Izuku had the good grace to immediately realize his mistake and quietly apologize.

With an exasperated sigh, All Might bent down and whispered, “Let’s just go with my actual name for right now.”

Both Izuku and Ochako nodded just as Inko came into the hallway. “Izuku, is our guest here?”

All Might stood up, and he was suddenly very grateful for the years of heroics that had taught him to remain calm and keep a good poker face. Outwardly he was the picture of calm and professional, but inside, he was suddenly reeling. She was shorter, and perhaps a bit more plump, but there was no denying what he saw.

*That, that is a hell of a resemblance. She looks just like…*

Mentally, All Might shook his head and buried the old memories that had started to creep up.

Izuku turned towards his mother. “Yeah, mom. This is Mr. Yagi Toshinori, our trainer.”

Inko smiled as she welcomed All Might into her home, though Izuku could see a coldness behind her eyes. “Welcome to our home, Mr. Yagi. I’m so glad to finally get a chance to meet you.”

*Scary*, all three thought.

For All Might, it became clear he was in an uphill battle for sure. Bowing his head slightly, he replied, “Thank you for having me. I’d hate to think I’ve been troubling you. I hope I’ll be able to put to rest any concerns that you have tonight.”

There was a brief pause while Inko stared at All Might. Her smile never wavered, however. “Well
then, you are just in time. I was just about to start plating, so please follow me and we can eat and you can...talk.”

The three each gave an almost audible gulp as they followed after her. As All Might walked into the house, he shuddered from the brief glare he had been given.

And I thought Aizawa had a mean stare.

For the first few minutes of dinner, Inko made polite small talk with Izuku and Ochako. Asking about their day, how school was going. While they talked, All Might was left to sit in relative silence as he waited for his turn.

She definitely has no issue making sure I know my place here, huh. I’ll get my turn when she says so, I guess.

“So, Mr. Yagi.”

Upon hearing his name, All Might snapped to attention. “Yes, ma’am?”

And here we go.

“Please, tell me about yourself. I would very much like to hear how you got to become a trainer for potential heroes. I’d also love to hear about how you came to know my son and Ochako.”

“Yes, yes, of course. I actually have something I would like to give you before I start, which I hope will explain my job a little better.”

Reaching into his coat, he pulled out a small business card and a sealed envelope, which he handed over to Inko.

“This card is...” Inko, despite herself, had a startled stumble as she looked over the card. “You work for All Might’s hero agency?”
All Might nodded but refrained from speaking, letting Inko look over the card before moving on to the envelope. Opening it, Inko pulled out a folded-up letter and carefully began to read it over, her eyes lingering on the signature and seal at the end.

“This is a reference letter signed by the principal of U.A. High, Mr. Nezu.”

Izuku started to lean over to try and read the letter too, but a quick under-the-table kick from Ochako got him to straighten back up. She leaned over and whispered, “maybe let All- Mr. Yagi finish before you do something to blow his cover?”

Shrinking down into his seat, Izuku nodded in agreement.

Inko gave the letter one last look before folding it up. “These are...impressive credentials. But I find it difficult to believe that you can work at both these places when they are so far apart. And I am still interested in how you met my son and Ochako.”

“You are of course welcome to call the number on the card if you wish to confirm my employment. My work at U.A, however, will be a bit more tricky, as I don't technically work there. My involvement is more unofficial. I was honestly lucky the principal was willing to write out that little referral letter, to be honest.”

Inko frowned lightly. “Unofficial? So you are not a member of their staff, then?”

“A better term for me would be ‘talent scout.’”

“Oh?”

“Working at such a high-profile hero’s agency gives me a unique perspective on what qualities make a good hero. So U.A. had me use my unique perspective to look out for young talent with special qualities that might fall through the cracks and go unnoticed. And when I find potential students who I believe have the unique qualities to become great heroes, I make sure they are ready for the exams.”

All Might watched as Inko mulled over his explanation. *So far, so good.*
“And how does someone like you end up meeting my son, then?”

“Honestly, by pure chance. A few months ago, your son was involved in an incident with a dangerous villain.” Everyone at the table frowned as that memory was brought up. “I was in the crowd that day, and I saw Young Midoriya rush into that situation to save his friend,” Ochako coughed, shooting All Might a quick frown, “er...to save his classmate.”

“So my son rushing into danger like that was the special quality that you noticed?”

“Er...yes.”

Inko let her gaze shift over to Izuku. “That special quality got him grounded, Mr. Yagi.”

“As it should have, ma’am. But when you break it down to its simplest form, being a hero is rushing into dangerous situations. And both Young Midoriya and Young Uraraka displayed this tendency that day.”

Inko blinked and turned to look at Ochako in surprise. “Wait, what does he mean, Ochako?”

*Ah, looks like they hadn’t told her that fact...whoops,* All Might thought to himself sheepishly.

Ochako fidgeted nervously as she explained. “I was...I was there too. During the villain attack. When Deku rush out, I sorta...chased after him. The crowd of people grabbed me before I could get him, though.”

Inko sat there stunned for a moment as several emotions flashed across her face. “Well, thank goodness that they did. You could have gotten hurt.”

“It’s just, I was worried about Deku. I guess I wasn’t really thinking,” Ochako explained.

Inko’s eyes started to brim with tears. “Well, thank you for worrying about him. And you, Izuku, you mustn't make your friends worry like that.”
Izuku gave his mother a nervous smile. “I know, Mom. Uraraka already made me promise not to do it again.”

“Well, at least there’s that.”

After a few more moments, Inko turned her attention back to All Might, who had kept quiet as the three had talked. “Please, go on, Mr. Yagi.”

All Might noted that some of the frost in her voice was gone now as he continued. “Of course, Mrs. Midoriya. Upon seeing the young man's bravery, after the incident, I decided to see if the two had any desire to enter into the field of heroics. Fortunately at the time, they were discussing how they planned on training together to prepare for the entrance exams. After explaining who I was and hearing my pitch to help them train, they took me up on my offer. Since then I’ve been helping them get ready to enter U.A.”

“Okay,” Inko began as she mulled over All Might’s story. “But let’s talk about this training, then. I’ve only just yesterday finally seen the regiment that these two have been doing, and I can’t help but feel it’s too much.”

All Might nodded slowly before he leaned forward. “Ma’am, not to sound condescending, but are you aware of what awaits your son at U.A.?”

Inko frowned. “Do you mean the entrance exam?”

“Yes, U.A. has a rigorous entrance test that it uses to select its students. And while I personally feel it’s limited in scope, that doesn’t change the fact that it relies heavily on a student’s combat potential. Which, and I mean no offence, you son was lacking to an extreme degree when we started.”

Izuku groaned in embarrassment while Ochako stifled a laugh. All Might looked over at Ochako and added, “Don’t laugh too hard, Young Uraraka. You were just as bad.”

Ochako blushed and shot Izuku a quick dirty look, which clamped his mouth shut before he could say anything or laugh at her as well.

“Still, how much combat potential would a new student need at that point? It’s only an entrance
exam.”

“They have to fight a horde of giant robots.”

“Oh…”

“What’s more, the students are split into large groups, so not only are they supposed to destroy these robots, but they are competing against each other to see who can destroy the most.”

Inko sat in silence as she mulled over everything she had heard. Put together, everything did make sense. In truth, after everything she had heard, she knew she should feel elated that her son and his friend were able to find this man, that they were getting the best chance to achieve their dreams to become heroes. There was just one last thing she needed to know.

“Mr. Yagi, one last thing. You said you were a talent scout, correct?”

“That’s correct.”

“A talent scout. Not a talent trainer."

The room was silent at that. Again All Might was grateful for his poker face while internally he was beginning to sweat. Oh...well, shit. I guess the boy gets more than the tears and Quirk from his mother.

“That’s...correct.”

Inko leaned forward and looked All Might dead in the eye. “So why are you so invested in these two? Why are you putting in all this work, when from everything you said, it’s only your job to find people. Not train them.”

All Might sat in silence as he mulled over how he would respond. Finally, he gave his answer. “Because I can see the future in them. These two, their drive, their desire to become heroes, is more than just a dream for them. Even before I met them, they were already taking steps to become heroes. That ambition, that drive...I suppose I want to see where it leads.”
Both Izuku and Ochako flushed from All Might’s words while Inko smiled, no longer as frosty as before. “Then I suppose I have only two things I want you to do for me. If you can, then I have no problem trusting these two to you.”

“Of course, ma’am.”

“I want regular updates from the three of you. No more being kept in the dark. Understand?”

“Yes, ma'am,” the three said in a chorus.

“And from you, Mr. Yagi, I want you to promise to look after them. If you are so invested in their future, I want you to help keep them safe to reach it.”

All Might put his hand over his heart as he spoke. “Mrs. Midoriya, I give you my word. I will do everything in my power to make sure they will reach their future.”

The rest of the dinner passed without incident as the four passed the rest of the time with light conversations and simple pleasantries. When dinner was over, All Might said his goodbyes and promised to return some time soon to give Inko a proper update on his two trainees’ progress. He offered to give Ochako a ride back home, and Izuku followed after them under the pretence that he wanted to send them off. When the three reached All Might’s truck, as one they breathed a sigh of relief and collapsed against the vehicle.

“Young Midoriya. Are you sure your mother was never a professional hero. I’ve been in rooms with trained interrogators that didn’t scare me as much as that woman!”

“She wasn’t that bad!”

Ochako shook her head in exasperation. “Really? Says the boy who looked ready to run away every time she looked at him.”

Izuku puffed up as he countered, “You’re one to talk! I’ve seen you look less pale after you’ve puked all over the beach!”
There was a brief pause before the three broke into a fit of laughter as, at long last, all the stress of the evening began to fade away. When their laughter began to finally die down, All Might straightened up and got into his truck, with Ochako following soon after him.

“Well, tonight has been...an experience. But fortunately my story should help keep your mother from asking any other questions for now.”

“Actually, All Might,” Ochako began, “I was wondering about that letter you had. How’d you get that? Did the principal of U.A. owe you a favor or something?”

“Oh, that? Well, just between us, I’m going to be teaching at U.A. this coming year. So I didn’t really need any favors to get that letter.”

“Wait, really!?” Ochako and Izuku were both shocked by this revelation.

“All Might, does this mean you’ll be teaching Uraraka and I? Are you going to be our homeroom teacher!?” Izuku asked quickly as he pulled himself into the truck through the opened window in his excitement.

“Easy, EASY! Down, boy! DOWN!” Ochako laughed as All Might tried to push Izuku back outside. “I'm going to be teaching heroics, so I’m not a homeroom teacher.”

“Who are the homeroom teachers? Do you know them? How high are they in the polls?”

“Deku! Deku, calm down already. You should probably focus on getting in before you worry about all that.”

Bashfully, Izuku lowered himself back to the ground outside All Might’s truck. “Sorry, sorry. I guess I got a little excited that All Might would still be teaching us after our training is done.”

_A little, he says, _Ochako and All Might thought._
“Don’t you worry, Young Midoriya. Even after you and Young Uraraka get into U.A., I know for a fact I won’t be done with you. That's when your work will really begin.”

Ochako and Izuku glanced towards each other, both thinking along the same line: *that was both incredibly reassuring and terrifying.*

With a few quick goodbyes, All Might pulled his truck out of the parking lot and left Izuku alone to walk back up to his home, hopeful that the upcoming months would be conflict-free, and without any more surprises.

Chapter End Notes

A huge thanks to the beta reader of this chapter Deadliest Sin Bin. Thank you so much!

Hey, I posted a new chapter without a multiple months break in between. A new record! Part 3 is chugging along nicely since work has slowed down some. With luck, it'll be out soon. I hope you all enjoyed the new chapter. Please leave a review if you want. I love hearing from you all :D
Month 4 (July)

When the bell signaling the start of lunch rang, Ochako celebrated by letting her head fall onto her desk, with a very undignified thud. She didn’t care how bad it looked though, she was too tired to care. She knew she had to get up to eat her lunch eventually, but she would worry about that later. Right now, her desk beckoned her to take what little sleep she could get, and she was more than happy to take full advantage of her short break as she wrapped her arms around her head.

Deku will wake me when it’s time to eat. Right now, sleep.

Izuku couldn’t help but smile as Ochako took her short nap. He had pulled out their lunches for the day, but decided to wait a bit before taking Ochako up to their lunch spot. She deserves a few minutes at least.

As he waited, Izuku pulled out his notebook and used the opportunity to scribble away in it. While he was still filling it with hero stats and analysis, a large number of pages were now dedicated to Ochako and himself, cataloging their improvements and coming up with ideas for team attacks and individual super moves, as well as a page dedicated to just team names he had toyed around with, but none he thought were worth mentioning.

“Oh man, do you still have that crappy notebook!? I though Bakugou blew it up?”

With a quick yank, someone pulled the notebook from his hands. Suppressing a groan, Izuku looked up to see two of Bakugou’s ‘friends’ walking by him, holding the notebook over him, like they were teasing a treat for a dog.

“It is the same notebook, look its all burned and shit. Dude, Bakugou you seeing this?” The other
boy laughed, while Bakugou turned to look at them but didn’t say anything as he watched.

“Come on Midoriya, don’t you want your book back?” The boy teased as he dangled the notebook over Izuku’s head. The other boy laughed to the side, unaware that Ochako, who was no longer feeling sleepy, was looking right at him from behind her arms. As he casually walked past her desk she quickly reached out and grabbed hold of the boys wrist in a vice like grip, but making sure she kept her pinky pulled back. The boy went stiff as he looked down at Ochako’s hand, then at Ochako’s face. The boy audibly gulped when he saw a pair of very angry eyes glaring back at him.

“Um dude, maybe give him the book back. Please.”

While still holding the book above his head, the boy looked over to his friend, “Ah crap. Um, yo Bakugou a little help?”

Katsuki rolled his eyes at them, “You shits can get yourselves out of this one.”

Seeing that he wasn’t going to be getting any help from Katsuki, the boy looked back towards Ochako, “Um, let him go and I won’t throw the book out the window?”

Ochako’s frown deepened and her pinky twitched closer to her hostages wrist. “Are you really trying to negotiate here?”

“Dude can’t you just break free? Why are you letting her hold you down like that?”

Ochako tightened her grip, causing the boy to squirm. “Ow hey, OW! She’s got a grip like a damn vice man. Shit come on, you’re going to break my wrist!”

“Okay so you just float him. Is that supposed to scare me?”

Ochako brought her pinky down till she was just barely not touching the boy with it. “He’ll still have mass, you knucklehead. So when I use him as a club it’ll hurt him, and you.”

Both boys gulped at that, while Katsuki raised an eyebrow as he watched the scene unfold. He then looked over at Izuku and noted that he didn’t look panicked or concerned for his friend. He looked almost bored. Turning towards Izuku, the boy in a last ditch attempt to get out of the mess and still save face, tried to get him to reign Ochako in. “Okay, tell her to let go. You’ll get your notebook
back if you do.”

Izuku shrugged. “I think I’m going to get it back regardless of what happens next. So I’m good right now.”

The boys were stunned by that. Even Katsuki was giving Izuku a strange look. Ochako just smirked and asked, “Well? What’s it going to be?”

Both boys looked at each other before quickly dropping the book back onto Izuku’s desk. The moment Izuku picked it up, Ochako let go of the other boy who quickly scampered away with his friend out of the classroom. With them gone Ochako was ready to relax and pull Izuku away to have lunch, now that she was fully awake. However thoughts of lunch came to a screeching halt when Katsuki got up from his desk, and walked over to Izuku.

Katsuki stood over Izuku and looked down at him, while Izuku looked back. Izuku no longer looked bored as he had with the other two boys, but he wasn’t acting like Katsuki was used to him acting around him either. Katsuki could see some of the nervous twitches and ticks he was used to seeing come from Izuku whenever he got close, but there were so few of them now. He wasn’t shaking, or desperately looking for a way to put some distance between the two.

*When the fuck did this happen?* Katsuki thought with a frown.

“Kacchan?”

“When in the fuck did you get a backbone Deku?”

Izuku blinked in surprise, while Ochako felt herself tense up. She didn’t like how Katsuki was looking at Izuku. The whole situation felt like a powder keg, and every instinct in her was telling her to be ready for it to go off.

After giving Katsuki’s question some thought, Izuku answered simply, “I guess I had to grow one eventually.”

*The fuck!?* Katsuki wasn’t sure why, but that response just pissed him off even more. *Deku shouldn’t have any backbone. He’s a worthless extra. Where is this coming from?* Katsuki’s eyes then fell onto the notebook Izuku had held against his chest before he looked back at Izuku and
stared him down, “Why do you still have that? I thought I made myself clear. Right?”

Much to Katsuki’s surprise, and anger, Izuku didn’t shrink away from Katsuki’s glare. Izuku gulped as he tried to find the right words to say, but he was struggling. He might not be running away in fear from his old friend turned bully, but that didn’t mean he still wasn’t intimidated. Ochako however had had enough of Katsuki’s intimidation of her friend and stood up, “Back off, Bakugou. He doesn’t owe you any kind of explanation.”

Katsuki let his eyes shift over to Ochako as he removed his hands from his pockets, and let them hang at his side as a few small explosives crackled in his palms. Ochako didn’t back down and let fingers brush against her chair, each pad making contact while she leaned on it, not letting Katsuki know if it was floated or not. Before either student could call the others bluff, Izuku cut in, “Kacchan stop, please.”

The popps coming from Katsuki stopped as Izuku once again had his undivided attention.

“I don’t know why it bothers you so much, but I’ve been trying to...improve myself. I can’t stay the way I was back then and expect to accomplish anything. I want to be better, that’s all.” Izuku paused briefly before gathering the rest of his courage and adding, “To be more like you.”

There was an almost physical shift to the atmosphere in the room after that as both Katsuki and Ochako looked at Izuku. Ochako looked completely flabbergasted while Katsuki looked ready to burst..

What the fuck? Be like me huh. Fat chance you little shit. Though that last thought lacked the usual conviction Katsuki was used to having. And that fact unnerved him enough to want to get out of the room.

“You want to waste your time trying to do the impossible? Fine. I don’t give a shit. You improve yourself to your heart's content. It doesn’t change a fucking thing you worthless shitty Deku. You are an extra and will always be an extra compared to me. Got it? Nothing you do will ever matter.” Katsuki turned away and stalked towards the door of the classroom, stopping only briefly to look back at Ochako, “And you Pink Cheeks, keep pushing and I’ll show you I got no problem fucking your shit up even if you’re a fucking chick.” With that said, Katsuki left, slamming the door behind him and leaving Izuku and Ochako alone in the class.

Izuku sighed, “Well that could have gone a lot worse. You really shouldn’t push him Uraraka. He might actually call your bluff one day.”
Under her breath, Ochako growled out, “What bluff?”

“Huh? Did you say something Uraraka?”

“...No, I didn’t.” Ochako’s voice was still sharp as she quickly tapped her fingers together and let her chair come to rest back on the floor.

“Now that that’s over with, let’s go eat. I’m getting pretty hungry.”

As Izuku started to get up from his desk however, Ochako interceded. “Hold it Deku. We need to talk.”


“Right now.” Ochako’s curt response left no room for debate on the issue, Izuku recognized. So he quickly sat back down.

Ochako frowned as she collected her thoughts, while Izuku squirmed in his seat, growing uncomfortable from the sudden seriousness emanating from Ochako.

“Are you mad at me?”

Ochako shook her head. “No. I’m not mad Deku. You haven’t done anything to make me mad.”

“Oh, because you seem mad.”

“I’m not mad at you,” Ochako corrected. “I’m mad at what just happened. At this whole situation.”

Izuku could only shrug. “It’s just the way things are. It’s...not great sure, but I guess I stopped caring about it some time ago.”
“Deku...” Ochako tried not to let her growing frustration get pointed towards Izuku as she looked at her friend, clearly not understanding how he could think like that. “How can you just accept that? Maybe back when we first met I could understand you wanting to keep your head down. But now? I know how far you’ve come in your training. You could easily deal with this and nip it in the bud.”

“Because what they do to me doesn’t matter Uraraka. I know who I am, and who I am working to become. Some teasing from some guys that are that immature isn’t going to change that.”

Ochako wasn’t entirely sure how to respond to that. She was of course happy that Izuku had found a sense of self respect. That had been one of the main goals of the training that All Might had mentioned to her back when they started, but it also led into her biggest issue she had with everything that had just taken place.

“Are you really trying to become more like Bakugou?”

Rubbing the back of his head, Izuku answered with a sheepish, “Yes.”

Ochako slammed her hands onto her desk, startling Izuku with her violent outburst. “WHY!? Why would you want to be anything like that, that JERK!?”

“I’m not saying he doesn’t have his issues Uraraka. And I’m not saying I want to be exactly like him, but he does have good points.”

“I can't believe I’m hearing this from you Deku. You’ve told me how he’s gone out of his way to make your life miserable since you were kids! Years of verbal and physical abuse, and you’re going to defend him with, ‘he has good points’!?"

“Uraraka, I’m not pretending that all those things didn’t happen. But I like you said, I’ve known Kacchan for years. I’ve watched him grow and get stronger day after day. He has an amazing quirk, is a natural when it comes to combat and he has so much confidence in himself.”

“None of those things makes up for anything he’s done Deku.”
“No, it doesn’t, but I know that I need to have those qualities in order to become a great hero.”

Ochako was about to say something, but decided against it. Instead she let Izuku continue with his explanation. At least that way, she thought, she would know exactly what she was dealing with.

“I know I lack those qualities. I’m working to make myself better in that regard, but I’d be kidding myself if I thought I was close to what I needed. Kacchan though, has these in spades. So if I can be more like him, in those regards, then it’ll help me overall be a better hero. It’ll help me surpass him when the time comes.”

“So,” Ochako began, “You want to be more like Bakugou, to surpass Bakugou?”

“Pretty much. Yeah.”

“Deku, don’t you think there are better ways to go about this? Ways that don’t involve you having to deal with Bakugou?”

“I’m sure there are, but I guess I want to see it as a rivalry. Maybe it’s petty, but I don’t just want to beat him Uraraka. I think I have too. If I don’t, then I’m afraid I’ll keep living in his shadow. And I can’t be a hero like that.”

“Deku,” Ochako began after a few seconds to digest everything Izuku had said, “I’ll be completely honest. Whatever this thing is between you and Bakugou is, this fated battle between men, I don’t understand it at all. I honestly think you shouldn’t have anything to do with him at this point, he is not worth your time. But if you need this. If you feel this strongly about needing to surpass Bakugou, then I’ll do everything I can to help you do it.”

“Uraraka…Thank you.”

“Besides,” Ochako added with an almost predatory grin, “if the end result is you being happy and Bakugou losing. How can I miss the chance to see that jerk finally get what’s coming to him.”

Izuku laughed, “Uraraka, remind me to never get on your bad side. You have a little mean streak in you.”
Ochako laughed as well before she stood up and grabbed her lunch from her bag, "Come on. Let’s go eat before lunch period ends."

For the following days Izuku and Ochako were able to enjoy some peace during their time in school. Their fellow students did not try to antagonize Izuku anymore, and in fact were now going out of their way to avoid him. Though Izuku assumed that Ochako had put a healthy amount of fear into them, and they had come to the conclusion that avoiding him was the best way to avoid her. Katsuki had also gone back to simply ignoring the two, though Ochako would catch him every now and then glancing at Izuku. What he was thinking she couldn’t guess, she couldn’t see anything past the anger in his eyes. Izuku at least hadn’t noticed and she was in no hurry to let him know. Katsuki could stew in his own little world, for all she cared. There was no reason to have Izuku become paranoid that Katsuki was watching him. With their issues in school dealt with, both were free to turn their attention towards their training.

Izuku pulled at the ropes that were wrapped around the base of a large industrial refrigerator before squatting down and sliding his arms though the ropes loops and tightening them against his shoulders. On the other side of the fridge, he could hear Ochako getting herself ready as she wrapped the rope around herself.

“You ready back there Uraraka?”

“Yeah, I’m strapped in! Let’s get this thing out of here!”

All Might had made their training for today simple. They were given some heavy rope, and shoulder straps and told to move all the large industrial and home appliances out of their section of the beach, without using their quirks. What followed was a day full of hate filled tug of war with abandoned ac units, ovens, water heaters and kitchen fridges as all of them were carried or dragged across the beach like sleds, to All Might who would load them onto his truck for disposal.

With the sun low in the sky, and their legs burning from their work, both teens were ready to remove the last obstacle in their way, and go home.

“Okay, on three, we lift!”

“Right. On three, got it Deku.”
“One! Two!”

Both Izuku and Ochako pulled their ropes tight as they tensed up and took deep breaths.

“THREE!”

Digging their feet into the sand, both fought through the weight pulling them down as the forced their legs to straighten out, until finally the fridge popped free from the sand and wobbled in the air between the two.

“Okay, it’s up. It’s up!”

“I know! We going on your count, right Deku?”

“Yeah I’ll call out our steps.”

“Okay, just don’t let this thing tip over onto you!”

“If it does, just promise you’ll get me a nice headstone.”

Despite the strain she was fighting through, Ochako chuckled, “Do they make All Might branded tombstones?”

“Very funny. Let’s get this thing moved already. On my count, one!” Izuku and Ochako stepped forward as Izuku called out each step. Slowly, but surely, they walked across the beach till they reached their goal line, with All Might clapping for them as they finally came to a stop.

“Good, very good! Now set it down gently, don’t crush your toes.”

With the last piece lowered down, Izuku let himself fall into the sand and slid his arms out of the straps. Ochako walked around and sat down next to him with a soft groan.
“I can’t feel my legs Deku. You’ll have to carry me home tonight.” Ochako groaned as she rubbed her legs to work the soreness out.

“Only if you float yourself. I don’t think I can handle carrying any more weight today.”

Ochako stopped rubbing as she turned and glared at Izuku, who felt a sudden chill run down his spine, “Did you just say that I was heavy, Midoriya?”

While Izuku frantically backtracked his statement, All Might lifted the last appliance and loaded it onto the truck. Shrinking down, he reached into the front and pulled out some water for the two, “Come on you two, I’ll give you a lift back. I think you both earned a little break today after all the work you put in.”

Cheering their good luck, Izuku and Ochako stumbled into the truck and relaxed as All Might drove them away from the beach. The drive back was quiet and uneventful, with Izuku and Ochako enjoying their chance to rest. When All Might pulled into the parking lot of the building Izuku looked over at his mentor, confused as he had assumed All Might would just be dropping them off.

“Are you coming up with us?” Izuku asked.

“I figured I’d take the chance to speak with your mother some. Give her a quick update on how you’re doing. Nothing major.”

“Oh, okay.” When Izuku turned around to exit the truck, he missed the quick glances and smirks shared between Ochako and All Might as they followed after him. Entering into his home, Izuku blinked in confusion when he saw that none of the lights were on.

“Mom? Are you home?”

Fumbling in the dark, Izuku made his way down the hall into the dining room. Ochako lagged behind a few steps, letting izuku move ahead while she handed a small object to All Might.

“Hold on, let me grab the light. I guess mom is out right now.” Izuku called back to them.
Finding the light switch, Izuku flipped it on. He paused when he noticed a banner hanging on the wall besides the dinner table.

*Wait, happy birthday?*

“SURPRISE!”

Behind him, Ochako and All Might yelled at the same time as they pulled the small cords on two small confetti poppers startling Izuku enough to make him jump. Which was just the reaction Inko was waiting for. From her hiding spot she quickly snapped several photos of her startled son.

“Wait what? What’s going on?” Izuku asked in confusion as he tried to regain his composure.

Ochako giggled as she reached up and began picking a few strands of paper out of Izuku’s hair, “It’s a surprise party of course.”

Pointing at himself, Izuku asked, “for me? But I never told you when my birthday was.”

“Disregarding the fact you seemed to think it’d be ok to hide your birthday from me, which you better believe you and I are going to have a discussion over that, I’m your best friend Deku. You think I wasn’t going to find out when your birthday was.”

“But how…?”

“I asked your mom obviously,” Ochako answered with a smirk, “Now come on birthday boy, you have presents to open. Then we can eat.”

Still stunned, Izuku was lead to the table where his mother and All Might were waiting for them. Once they had sat down, All Might handed Izuku a cardboard tube for carrying posters, “Here you go Young Midoriya.”

“Mr Yagi, thank you.”
Pulling the top off, Izuku pulled out the poster inside, and tried his best not to scream in shock. “This is-!? This is the super rare poster that was made in America just after y- All Might made his professional debut! They only printed a few of these! Look it’s him in his very first costume with his super car! AND ITS SIGNED TOO?!”

All Might smiled, “Perks of the job young man. I had to check to make sure you didn’t have that one honestly. Considering your collection.”

A soft eep escaped from Izuku as he lowered the poster to look at All Might. “You’ve seen my room?”

“I may have taken a peek.”

Ochako laughed as Izuku lowered himself in his chair, trying desperately to disappear, “Come on Deku it’s not that bad.”

“Yes it is. It's embarrassing.”

“Young Midoriya, I can assure you, if All Might had seen your collection, he would be very flattered”

Feeling better, Izuku sat back up and rolled the poster back into its protective case. “I’ll have to make sure to find a good frame for this ...and try and find a space on my wall,” Izuku added with a blush.

Inko smiled brightly, enjoying the site of her son having a good time on his birthday, before she looked over at Ochako. “Would you like to give him your present now Ochako?”

“Oh um,” Ochako’s smile faltered. After seeing what All Might had gotten for Izuku, she was suddenly feeling very self conscious over her gift. “That signed poster is a hard act to follow, but I hope you like it Deku.”

Ochako pulled out a medium sized All Might themed paper gift bag and handed it to Izuku, who took it with a huge smile on his face, which did reassure her, somewhat. For the past few weeks, after learning of Izuku’s upcoming birthday, Ochako had spent almost all of her free time fretting over what she could get him. For a while she had been sure she was get him some kind of All
Might merchandise. She had a pretty good idea what stuff he did and didn’t have, so finding something hadn’t been that hard. Internet stores and some local shops had great selections to choose from. However two things ended up putting that plan on ice.

First and foremost had been the price of everything. The stored she had visited did have an excellent collection to choose from, but she had almost swallowed her tongue when she started looking at the price tags. While she had been able to save a nice chunk of money from spending so much time at the Midoriya’s place, she could not bring herself to spend that kind of money.

Then, when All Might was invited to the surprise party she and Inko had planned, and he had promised he’d find a perfect addition for Izuku’s collection, Ochako found herself back at square one. With less than a week to go, she had begun to worry that she wouldn’t be able to come up with a good idea for a gift. She toyed briefly with the idea of a gift card, but quickly discarded that. She was not going to get her best friend such an impersonal gift. By chance, during one of her walks home as she was browsing through a couple of stores she came across a small book store. On a whim she went inside and found what she hoped would be a present izuku would like.

Izuku reached into the bag and pulled out Ochako’s gift. A new notebook. It was bigger than his old one, and thicker too with a hard leather cover. It was the kind of notebook you could see an important business man, like an executive have, except for 2 key features. The leather was a vibrant green, the same color he would glow while using his quirk, and right across the front of the book was stamped, Hero Analysis for the Future No. 14.

As Izuku ran his fingers over the lettering, Ochako started to explain her reasoning behind the gift, stuttering some from her nervousness, “I noticed that you had filled out a lot of the pages in your other book, and it wasn’t in the best of shape since,” She paused as she decided not to bring up that episode with Bakugou. “Anyway, I thought you might be looking for a new one so I found that and thought you’d like it…”

“Uraraka, I love it. Thank you so much!” Izuku cut in excitedly, startling Ochako from her nervousness.

“You do!?”

“Of course. This is perfect. I can’t wait to start filling it out,” Izuku said with a huge smile.

Relief washed over Ochako and she returned Izuku’s smile with her own. “Well, happy birthday, Deku.”
Later that night, after everyone had gone home, Izuku sat at his desk with his new notebook opened, busily writing in its first entry. A knock on his door grabbed his attention as Inko peeked in. “Izuku make sure you get to bed soon. You still have your training tomorrow morning. Mr Yagi wants to make sure you and Ochako work off all that cake you two ate.”

“I will mom, I just want to start this before I go to bed.”

“Okay, just not too late.”

As she started to leave, Izuku called out, “Wait mom.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you for telling Uraraka about my birthday.”

Inko smiled, “Well she did come to me asking about when it was. Luckily she thought of it before it was too late.” She paused before asking, “Izuku, why didn’t you tell her before?”

Izuku shrugged, “I guess I didn’t think it was something that important.”

“Well, I'm glad you have someone around that clearly thinks different. She really cares about you, you know.”

Izuku blushed and desperately waved his arms around, as if to ward off the implications of his mother’s words. “MOM! Uraraka is my friend. My best friend. Don’t go acting weird about it!”

With a chuckle, Inko said her goodnight to Izuku and closed the door behind her, leaving Izuku slightly flustered. After regaining his composure, he went back to his work, wanting to finish the first page before bed.

Ochako’s entry.
The next day Izuku smiled brightly as he jogged down the street in the early morning. Ever since last night he couldn’t help but have a little spring in his step. It had been far too long since he had a friend wish him a happy birthday, much less buy him a present.

Actually, when was the last time anyone besides mom wished me a happy birthday? I think Kacchan came over but that was when we were still really little…and still friends…

Izuku shook his head to dispel the depressing thoughts, before he found himself thinking back to Ochako and her gift. Ochako’s bright smile filled Izuku’s memory and he couldn’t help but smile to himself, she really put a lot of thought into what to get me. I have to make sure I do the same for her, but I have no idea how to shop for a girl...

Suddenly Izuku was pulled from his day dream when a girl rushed past him, brushing him aside as she hurried by before quickly turning a corner and disappearing down an alleyway. Izuku blinked but quickly found himself getting pushed aside as some guys, who looked a few years older than him rushed by, “You see which way that chick went?”

“Yeah she went down here.”

The boys smirked, “Awesome, looks like she wants to have some privacy.”

The group snickered before they entered the alley and disappeared. Izuku regained his bearings before glancing towards the alleyway. A pit forming in his stomach.

I, I need to find someone!

But as he looked around he realised that with it being so early in the morning, there was no one else walking the streets.

If I go looking for an officer or hero, it’ll be too late...

Steeling himself, Izuku hurried after the group. Running down the alley Izuku soon came upon the group. Three highschoolers leaned over the girl who had her back against the wall. She looked about the same age as Izuku, and she was wearing a school uniform that was pretty roughed up, from a school he didn’t recognize. She looked like she had been living a rather hard life, since it wasn’t only her uniform that was in bad shape. She herself looked a little worse for wear. But
despite her situation, she didn’t seem overly panicked.

*She’s doing a good job staying calm...*

“Now come on girl. This shy act is getting a little old. A girl like you should be happy you have some paying customers.”

“Yeah, I doubt you get picked too often looking like this.”

“So lets have some fun already huh? No more running around ok. You don’t want us getting mad right?”

The girls eyes drifted up to the boys, “Mad huh...:”

One of the boys reach up towards her when Izuku made himself known. “GET AWAY FROM HER!”

Three heads whipped around at once and glared back at Izuku, who tried to return their looks with one of his own. Internally though he was desperately trying to think of what to do next.

*Okay, I got their attention....Now what do I do? I need a plan.*

“The hell do you want kid? Scram already!”

Izuku shook his head and kept himself planted. “No. I’m not leaving you alone with her.” *I just need to reach her and pull her out of here. I don’t need to win a fight. Just escape back out into the street.* Izuku silently scanned the alley. It was dirty, with garbage littering around trash cans that looked like they hadn't been changed in way to long.

The largest of the group walked towards Izuku, giving him an intimidating look, helped by the rows of sharp teeth that peeked through past his smirk. “You trying to be a hero or something? That’s a good way to get yourself hurt.”
The girl tilted her head to the side, her calm demeanor turning more inquisitive as she watched, *A hero huh?*

Izuku took a step forward till the two were only a few feet apart. The highschooler was tall, and must be used to cowling people with his presence. But Izuku had stared into the eyes of a real villain only a few months ago. Compared to him, this guy wasn’t scary at all.

The highschooler’s smirk turned into a sneer, and more of his teeth flashed into view.

*Okay, maybe he’s a little scary.*

“Last chance to walk away kid.”

Izuku smiled, like he was sure All Might would. “I was gonna say the same to you.”

With a growl, the highschooler pulled his arm back, getting ready to slug Izuku right in the jaw, but as he did, Izuku activated his quirk, surrounding himself in viridescent light. The highschooler blinked in surprise and Izuku capitalized on that. Reaching up with his right hand, Izuku looked past the boy and to a trash can, which Izuku hoped wasn’t too heavy, behind him. The instant the can was surrounded in light, Izuku yanked his hand back and pulled as hard as he could. Immediately he felt a sharp throb in his head, but it wasn’t as bad as he had feared.

The can screeched across the pavement before rolling onto its side and slammed into the back of the first boy’s legs knocking his feet out from underneath him and sending him tumbling to the ground with a heavy thud. The other boys gave surprised yells before they rushed forward but Izuku was already getting ready. Reaching out again with his hand, Izuku swung in front of himself and at the same time, a large garbage bag launched itself into the head of a boy, knocking him down and covering him in days old trash that exploded from the torn plastic.

Unfortunately for Izuku, the last boy was able to close the distance between the two before Izuku could find something to hit him with. He only just had enough time to realise he was about to get hit when the boy swung and punched him right in the mouth.

“You little punk!”

As he readied to get in another hit, Izuku stumbled backwards almost falling. He needed to stay on
his feet. Falling down now would give the other boys a chance to get up and he’d have lost any element of surprise. The boy put his all into his next swing, and Izuku desperately reached out with his quirk. The boys fist and arm glowed green and Izuku pulled as hard as he could. Using his psychokinesis almost as a rope, he used the boys own momentum against him and yanked him down, while at the same time pulled himself up to keep himself from falling back from the first hit. As the boy stumbled past, Izuku he stuck out his leg, tripping the boy who fell face first into the ground.

Got ‘em!

Izuku didn’t celebrate his victory long though, as he rushed forward and took the girl by the hand and pulled her away from the three as they stumbled to get up. “Hurry lets get out of here!”

The two ran out of the alley, and down the street till Izuku put as much distance between them and the boys as he could before coming to a stop to give both of them a chance to catch their breaths.

Turning around Izuku looked at the girl. “Are you ok?”

The girl however was bent over still taking in deep breaths. She held up a hand and gasped out, “One…. sec…."

“OH! Oh sorry.” Izuku rubbed his head nervously as he waited. _I guess I’ve just gotten used to running longer since I started training._

Now that they were safe and the adrenaline he had built up finally started to settle, Izuku started to feel the pain from the punch that he got hit with. Reaching up, Izuku touched his lip and winced, pulling his hand away and looking at his fingers, which were slick with blood.

“Ouch yeah that’s not great…” Izuku searched his pockets for something to dab at his lip.

While he searched the girl surprised him when she suddenly closed the distance between them practically squealed, “that was so cool!”

Izuku did his best not to jump back in embarrassment as the girl invaded his personal space. Spending so much time with Ochako should have helped him some when dealing with girls, at least he had hoped it would. But in reality he only really spent time with Ochako, and this was someone he had never met before. Two completely different situations for Izuku.
“It was nothing! Really!” Izuku stuttered out. He took a step back to give himself some space, but the girl followed after him. Eyes wide and starry, and a huge smile on her face. A smile so big Izuku absently noticed something, fangs?

Yellow eyes stared into Izuku’s green eyes for a few more seconds before her gaze drifted down, “oh, your lip is bleeding.”

“It doesn’t really hurt, so please don’t worry about it. I just need something to—”

The sudden sound of fabric tearing cut Izuku off. The girl had reached down and ripped a section of her uniform top off. Taking the torn piece she gently wiped Izuku’s lip and chin before applying some pressure on the cut lip.

“You were so cool back there. Like a real hero!”

“Well I am trying to get into U.A actually.” Izuku fumbled as the girl continued cleaning him up.

“Really? U.A is that super hard hero school right?” The girl asked as she finished up and pulled away.

Pocketing the bloodied cloth, Izuku nodded in affirmation, “Yeah. That’s why I’ve been training every day to pass the entrance exams.”

The girl eyed him, during which Izuku tried not to shrink away. But there was no getting around how, penetrating, the girls eyes were as she looked at him.

*Does she think I’m making it up? I guess I don’t really look like much…*

The girls smile widened even more as she giggled, “Wow I got saved by such a cute hero in training. It’s really my lucky day!”

Izuku felt his face flame up and his eye bulge as he pointed at himself, “CUTE!? ME!?”
She nodded, “Oh yeah, you fit the cute hero role perfectly! Swooping in, and saving the damsel in distress. It’s like a fairy tale.”

She took another step forward, till she was almost pressed against Izuku “And after such a daring rescue, I think the hero should get his reward right?” She leaned forward and whispered, “A hero needs a reward.”

Izuku could feel the heat coming off her, she was so close.

Her lips so close to his.

Slowly.

Ever so slowly.

Izuku reached up and gently pushed her away.

Even though his face was flushed red, and he shook from almost uncontrolled embarrassment he made sure he was as gentle as possible as he put some space between the two of them.

“Thank you, but you don’t have to do that. I didn’t save you for a reward. I did it because you looked like you needed help. That you’re safe now is enough for me.”

The girls smile dropped and her eyes widened as she stared at him. Izuku was worried he had offended her. Soon though the smile came back and she started to laugh. She doubled over before she found a wall to lean on to steady herself. Confused, Izuku could only blink and try to guess what she found so funny.

“A hero that helps, just to help huh?”

“Is there something funny about that?”
The girl calmed down and shook her head, “No, I’m laughing because the person taking care of me
doesn’t really have a high...opinion of pro heroes. Thinks they care too much about the fame and
such, but I think he’d love to meet you. You sound like a real mold breaker. Or like All Might. He
talks about All Might a lot.”

*Did she just compared me to All Might*, the blush returned in full force as Izuku hid his face behind
his arms, stuttering and mumbling his thanks.

The girl smirked at this, “Well I have to get going now. Thank you again!”

Izuku gasped as she turned to leave, “Wait! Don’t you want to go to a police station, or hero
office?”

She shook her head as she dismissed the offer, “No, not really. I’m fine.”

“But miss?”

She whirled around with a frown, “ew don’t call me miss! It makes me sound old!”

“Oh, oh I’m sorry ... but I don’t know your name...”

She tapped her chin in a show of thinking before she seemed to have an ‘ah ha’ moment. “Actually
I don’t even know your name either. I should know the name of my hero. Don’t you think? So, you
tell me your name, and I’ll tell you mine.”

“Okay. I’m Midoriya Izuku. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

The girl smiled brightly, and her eyes practically shined. “Toga Himiko. And believe me, the
pleasure was mine.”

Then with a skip and hop, she bounded down the street and out of view leaving Izuku in a confused
state. He was happy he had been able to save her from those guys but he was also worried that he
should have done more to take her to a hospital or something. He was also more than a little
flustered as he tried to get his hormones under some kind of control. After all, he had come so
close, so very very close to letting her kiss him.

After a bit, Izuku gave the empty street Hiniko had disappeared down one last look before hurrying on his way.

At Dagoba Beach, Ochako fidgeted nervously as she and All Might waited at the beach for Izuku to finally arrive.

“No like the boy to be late,” All Might said as he checked his watch.

“I’m sure he’ll be here any second All Might.”

Ochako scanned the roads. Izuku wasn’t that late, but it was so strange that she couldn’t help but worry a little.

Before either could decide if they should start looking for him, “I’m sorry I’m late!” Izuku yelled as he came sprinting down the beach towards them. After reaching them, he bent over as he caught his breath.

“Young Midoriya, did you over sleep this morning?” All Might asked as he walked over to Izuku, followed behind by Ochako.

Izuku stood up, about to apologize again for his tardiness, but then All Might got a look at his face. “What happened to you? You look like crap.”

“Wait what?” Ochako thought in alarm as she moved around All Might and rushed to Izuku’s side. She gasped when she saw his face. Izuku’s lower lip and cheek had already swollen up, and the dark tint of a bruise had begun to form. He had the distinct look of someone who got punched in the face.

“Oh this? It’s nothing really. I kinda… got into a fight with these guys and one punched me in the face,” Izuku answered, embarrassed at Ochako’s worry over him.

“Deku what do you mean!? Who punched you?”
As All Might motioned for Izuku to sit down, Izuku explained the events that had happened earlier. How on his way to the beach, he had seen a group of boys chase a girl into the alley, and with no one around went after them. Ochako frowned deeply, making sure Izuku was keenly aware that she was not happy to hear he had rushed into the alley after the boys by himself.

“So you rushed into another dangerous situation.” Izuku could swear he could feel the frost on Ochako’s voice.

“I, um… I didn’t really have much of a choice.”

Ochako left out a small huff, but honestly could not say anything to disagree with him. “So I guess since you’re here you were able to help her then?”

Izuku nodded, with a slight smile, “I was, but that’s not the best part.”

“Oh?” Both All Might and Ochako, who was still miffed over the ordeal, leaned forward some. Both curious to what Izuku could add to the story.

“I used my quirk to save her.” Izuku had a huge grin now.

Ochako’s eyes went wide while All Might had a huge smile. “Did you now?” Perfect. It looks like the training is progressing like I’d hoped it would if he’s confident enough to use his quirk in that kind of situation.

“I mean, all I did was just throw some trash around, so it wasn’t really that impressive.”

“Deku,” Ochako cut in, “You used your quirk to help someone. That’s great!”

Embarrassed, and a little flattered, Izuku ran his fingers through his hair, “yeah I guess so. She thought I was really cool too.”

Ochako felt her eye twitch. “That’s nice.”
All Might gave Izuku a pat on the back. “Very impressive Young Midoriya.” Then with a teasing smile added, “Though I must admit, when you said you saving the girl wasn’t the best part, I thought perhaps you had gotten a kiss or something as a reward.”

The moment those words left All Mights mouth, he was suddenly very aware he had made a mistake. While Izuku lowered his head to cover his now red face, a look quickly flashed across Ochako’s face that let All Might know, I just stepped on a landmine. Young Uraraka, please don’t look at me like I’m something gross stuck to your shoe.

“She, she did want to…” Izuku squeaked out. Unaware that Ochako’s gaze had turned back to him.

_Uh oh. Young Midoriya be careful_, All Might fretted as he looked between the two.

“But I stopped her. I mean it wouldn’t be right for me to let her kiss me like that after saving her. Right?”

Ochako’s face lit up, “That’s right Deku. Heroes don’t go around accepting those kinds of rewards. You did the right thing. _Right All Might?_”

“Er, YES! Of course. Very well done. You not only showed courage by helping this young lady, but great character as well. As expected of the one I chose to inherit my power.”

Himiko frowned as she returned to her little hovel under an overpass in the more shady part of town. It was little more than a few large cardboard boxes and wooden pallets leaned together, but for the last few weeks it had been her home. Or more accurately, _their_ home. But, she didn’t have to look hard to know that it had been cleaned out and abandoned though. She gave a small sigh as she kicked an empty can of food left on the ground.

“So he finally went and left me. He always kept saying he was going to leave me, guess I never really believed him.”

She crawled into the box and sat down on the dirty sleeping bag, pouting she pulled her knees up to her chest.

“So what do I do. I was only gone for a few days, but he could be anywhere by now. And it was
almost impossible to track him down the last time he left me. Oh Mr Stain, I thought we had something special! But I guess you care more about those fake heroes then me.”

Silence was her only answer as she looked out to the harsh world before her from her hut.

“Stain was making the world better. I wanted to make the world better like him too. So I could live in it. It’s so hard to live in this world. But…”

She reached into her pocket, and pulled out the torn cloth she had used to clean that boy Izuku’s lip. She stared at it for a long time before taking the tip into her mouth. Even though the blood had dried, and turned dark, she couldn’t help but moan slightly at the taste.

*Is this what a hero tastes like? It’s so...so good.*

She sat in her hut, sucking on the cloth till it was left damp and sticky from her saliva. With a huff, Himiko fell back onto her sleeping bag and held the cloth to her heart “More! I want more! Mr Stain never let me taste his. But...but I bet it would have never tasted like this.”

Himiko whimpered as she felt herself heat up. She could feel herself on the verge of something wonderful.

And she loved it.

“Izuku Midoriya. You’re going to make the world a better place, right? That’s what *real* heroes do. I want that! I want it! I want it! I want...I want...you. I want you. I want more of you!”

She throbbed as she rolled around, laughing and crying out to the world her wants and desires. All the while, her mind raced. It wouldn’t be easy, finding a way to be with him. He was training to be a hero. And she, she was anything but heroic. But as she lay in her ecstasy, she came to a simple conclusion. Even if it was hard. She would find a way to be with him.

“Just you wait for me, my darling Izuku. I’ll find a way.”
Well, look who's poking their head into the story early now huh. I'm sure that won't have ripple effects >:)

Got lucky with these past couple chapters. Work has been slow so I've had time to sit and write. It's been nice. Unfortunately, it's looking like work is going to get busy again pretty soon, so updates may slow down a bit. I hope you all enjoyed the latest chapter. Please if you'd like, leave a review or a critique. Always looking for ways to make myself a better writer.
Aim to Pass Part 4

Chapter Summary

*Insert Rocky theme here* or Izuku and Ochako learn the wonders of solving their problems with violence.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Month 5 (August)

The quiet evening at the Midoriya home was suddenly shattered with a loud scream, “WE’RE NOT TRAINING TOGETHER ANYMORE!?”

All Might held up his hands as he tried to calm both Izuku and Ochako down, “Easy you two, it’s only for the next few weeks.” He had expected a little surprise from the two, but now that his ears were ringing All Might thought that perhaps he should have tried something to soften the blow.

Inko looked up from her dinner and gave her son an icy look, “Young man, do not scream like that.”

Izuku promptly wilted back into his seat. Ochako quickly followed when Inko shifted her gaze to her. With both teens quelled, Inko motion for All Might to continue, “Please go on. I would like to know why you’ve decided to make such a change.”

“Ah yes, thank you. With summer break coming up, I’ve decided that this would be the best time to move onto the next phase of their training.”

“Next phase?” Izuku asked.

“That’s correct. I want to take full advantage of your time off to begin combat training.”

Izuku gulped, his stomach twisting from a combination of nervousness and excitement. He had wondered before if he was ever going to reach this point, ever since his talk with All Might months ago. All Might had said he had started with combat training, and while Izuku had to work to make it to the same point, he was finally there. One step closer to becoming like All Might. One step closer to becoming a hero.

“Combat training can be very rigorous. As such I’m putting your other training on hold so you can focus solely on this.”

“But why are you separating me and Deku, Mr. Yagi? Won’t splitting your time between us cut back on us being able to fully take advantage of the break to learn?” Ochako asked.

“Oh…” Part of her knew this made sense. Izuku was training to inherit All Might’s quirk. So if it came down to who would need to be prioritized, Izuku would be it without question. She knew
this, but it still hurt.

While Ochako sat in her chair at a sudden loss for words, Izuku however had plenty to say as he stood up angrily, “That’s not fair! Uraraka doesn’t deserve this! She’s been working too hard for you to just leave her behind!”

Ochako blinked in surprise at how quickly Izuku came to her defence while All Might once again found himself trying to placate his protégé, “No one is getting left behind, Young Midoriya. Please sit. I’ll explain everything, I promise.”

When Izuku sat down, All Might continued, “Now, Young Uraraka is right. Splitting the time to try to teach you both combat training in a few weeks would not work. To get the most out of the work, you would need one on one training. So, while I train Young Midoriya, Young Uraraka will be training with someone else. That’s what I meant when I said you two would be training separately. It’s not permanent, just for the break. Then once your school starts back up again, you’ll go back to the normal training regiment.”

Both Izuku and Ochako relaxed in their seats after hearing All Mights explanation, much to his relief.

“So who will I be training under then? Someone from All Might’s agency?” Ochako asked. With her worries put aside, her curiosity was peaked

“No, not from my…” All Might coughed to stop that he was about to say his agency, “from All Might’s agency. I had to look elsewhere. Have you ever heard of Gunhead?”

Ochako shook her head, while Izuku stiffened as some of his fanboy leaked out, “Gunhead, The Battle Hero. His agency specializes in armed combat and he even developed his own fighting style called Gunhead Martial Arts which he teaches to all his sidekicks. Uraraka, he’s a really cool hero!”

All Might chuckled, “Well I guess I don’t have to explain who he is. Thank you for saving me the time.”

Ochako hid a giggle behind her hand, its cute when he gets all nerdy… Wait?

“You were able to get Ochako a chance to train under a pro hero? That’s incredible! How were you able to do that?” Asked a very impressed Inko.

All Might found himself flustered from Inko’s sudden praise, “Oh that? Its wasn’t that hard really. I promised to push forward some agency team up plans to the higher ups. The chance to work with All Might can be a very convincing deal maker.”

“I didn’t realize you had that kind of sway at All Might’s agency.”

“Oh it’s just a matter of knowing the right people is all. Nothing that impressive.”

Inko shook her head as she smiled gently at All Might, “nonsense. What you’ve done for my son and for Ochako is truly something special.”

All Might rubbed a hand through his hair, bashfully returning Inko’s smile. While this exchange was mostly missed by Izuku, who was distracted trying not to think about the double meaning of some of All Mights explanations, Ochako looked between the two, suddenly feeling a little
“Wait, Mr. Yagi,” Izuku began, “Gunhead’s agency isn’t exactly close by. Even by train it’s still a trip just going one way.”

All Might frowned, “Ah yes, unfortunately there is a bit of a catch that I haven’t mentioned yet. While I was able to get Gunhead to agree to train Young Uraraka, it will have to be at his dojo. He was not comfortable leaving his agency in such short notice for an extended period of time.”

“So I’m going to be doing a lot of traveling?”

“No. While you are training with Gunhead, you will be staying over there. We found a nice place for you to stay for the duration. And I will make sure everything is covered. So the only thing you will have to worry about is your training.”

Izuku and Ochako glanced at each other sadly as they processed this. Both had taken for granted the sheer amount of time they had spent together, and to now have that suddenly taken away left both feeling empty. All Might watched the two, a knowing glint in his eye. While he wouldn’t say this to them, at least not yet anyway, separating them was part of his plan for this month’s training too. If he had tried, he was sure he would have been able to talk Gunhead into traveling down to train Ochako. However over the months he had started to see a pattern form while they trained. The two had formed the habit of leaning on one another whenever one of them faced some kind of adversity. While relying on others by itself was not a bad thing, infact All Might knew several heroes, including a certain fiery hot head that could stand to learn to work together, it could become troublesome if they became too dependent on each other. So Ochako having to spend her time training away for the next few weeks became the perfect excuse to teach the two some self reliance.

After a bit Izuku put on a brave smile, “It’ll be ok Uraraka. We can still call each other. Plus its only a few weeks. It’ll be fine.”

“But who’ll look after you, and make sure you don’t start slacking off?” Ochako teased, feeling better after seeing Izuku smile.

Izuku rolled his eyes, “You’re worried about me slacking off? I’m worried you might get spoiled training in an actual dojo. You’ll come back and the beach won’t be good enough for you anymore.”

With a laugh, Ochako playfully punch Izuku’s arm, “You better watch out Deku. Maybe getting to go train at an actual facility will open up a little gap between us. I’d hate to have to wait around for you to catch up with me.”

“Seriously? That’s some big talk coming from you Uraraka.”

“Maybe.” Ochako smirked, “So how about this, when I get back, you show me everything you learned.”

“Definitely, but you have to make sure to show me what you learn too.”

A few days later Izuku was back at the beach, ready to begin his training with All Might.

“So does this mean you’re going to teach me to fight like you All Might!?” Izuku asked excitedly as he followed behind All Might down the far side of the coast.
“Am I going to learn the Detroit Smash! Or the Oklahoma Smash!” Izuku threw a punch into the air before spinning around and tripping on his own feet as he poorly imitated the two attacks.

All Might chuckled as Izuku picked himself back up, “Maybe one day I’ll give you some pointers on those, but for now you need to get some basics down first. Which you will learn here.”

Turning past a small bend, All Might lead Izuku into a basic, and quickly thrown together gym. Dug into the sand was a pole holding up a punching bag and other miscellaneous pieces of equipment. As Izuku looked around, All Might pulled out a pair of gloves and handed them to Izuku.

“Boxing gloves?”

“That’s right. You might have been hoping for something a little flashier but what you need is a good foundation. That’s what we are going to build over the next few weeks. Then once you have that foundation…”

“I can build on it!” Izuku finished as he followed All Mights train of thought.

“Exactly! Soon enough we’ll start to develop a style for you that incorporates everything you have. Quirk and all. But for now, let’s start with some basics. Now put those on and let’s see what you got.”

Putting the gloves on, Izuku quickly followed All Might to the hanging punching bag. All Might patted the center of the bag giving Izuku his target, “Punch it right here. As hard as you can.”

Nodding, Izuku quickly got into a fighting stance. Or at least what he thought was a proper stance. He was tense and stiff, from both nervousness and inexperience, but he tried not to let it show too much. Taking a deep breath, he twisted around as he threw a hard right, with all his weight behind it. The chains holding the heavy bag barely squeaked from the blow, and Izuku not expecting the resistance he got, tripped over himself and fell into the sand. All Might looked down at Izuku, while he collected himself, “Young Midoriya. You’ve never thrown a punch before, have you.”

“Um, no.”

Thinking back All Might asked, “What about when you helped that young lady from before?”

“Oh? I really just used my quirk to trip the guys bothering her, then ran away.”

Both All Might and Izuku stood in silence for a few moments before All Might coughed into his hand. “Well, then we’ll just start with the basics.”

Izuku nodded vigorously, “Yeah basics sounds like a great place to start.”

Ochako couldn’t help but feel a sense of trepidation as she hurried down the sidewalk. By all accounts she shouldn’t feel like this. The apartment she was staying at was very nice, in fact it was a much nicer place than her own. And all her food and board was being covered so she didn’t have to worry about money while she was here. She had also been assured by All Might that Gunhead was an excellent teacher, and her time with him was going to be nothing but positive. She had even
done a little research herself, and was confident that Gunhead wasn’t some secret creep or something. Izuku should also be fine while she was away. Since he would be spending pretty much all his time during the break with All Might training, she didn’t have to worry about Katsuki targeting him.

And yet, she was still nervous. This was a huge opportunity and she didn’t want to squander it, or even embarrass herself in front of a pro hero. What’s more, while she may have fantasized about showing one Bakugou Katsuki what for after learning how to fight, she had honestly never seen herself filling the role of a combat hero. She thought she would be more like Thirteen, and focus more on rescuing people.

Of course I never thought I’d be spending this year before taking the entrance exams training under All Might, so I guess I shouldn’t be surprised that some of my original plans don’t jive with reality anymore. Plus I guess being a rescue hero with combat training will open more doors down the line.

Absently she felt her fingers trace along her phone in her pocket as she once again found herself fighting the urge to give Izuku a call. Not to check up on him, of course. She didn’t need to do that. And she didn’t need to call him already, he had seen her off when she had boarded the train yesterday and they had talked last night too during which they decided that they’d call or text in the evenings after their training was over.

Get it together girl. You’re acting like you’re going through withdrawal or something. You can go a day without talking with him. Plus he’s probably already in the middle of training with All Might. Now woman up and get your business done.

When Ochako looked up she found herself right outside of Gunhead’s dojo. Taking a deep breath to steady herself, Ochako walked through the front door, “Pardon the intrusion”

As Ochako came into the dojo she was quickly greeted by a large and intimidating hero that she had to strain her neck to look up at when he stood from his desk and walked over to her, “Ah you must be Uraraka Ochako.”

She had seen some videos so she had thought she knew what to expect, but to see the man in person was a completely different animal. Ochako bowed her head as she addressed the pro hero, “Thank you so much for taking the time to train me sir!”

Gunhead waved his hands in front of himself, trying to downplay Ochako’s formality, “Please you don’t have to be so formal with me. Just call me Gunhead, and besides, I’m always looking to help young burgeoning. Though I think this is the first time someone from another agency has asked me to take on someone they had scouted. And someone who isn’t even in a hero school yet. Your scout must think very highly of you.”

Ochako blushed, “I’d like to think he does si… Gunhead.”

“Well why don’t I give you a tour and then we can get a feel of what you will be learning here. Follow me.”

After only a short time, Ochako had quickly gotten over her initial reaction to the large hero and had come to the firm conclusion that Gunhead was unbelievably cute. Which was somewhat surprising considering he was a giant man with guns on his arms and he had razor blades sticking out of his gloves. But after he had walked her around the gym they would be using, and gave her a training gi to wear, Ochako couldn’t ignore that the way he talked and moved was just cute.
After quickly putting on the gi she was given, Ochako joined the hero in the main room of the gym where he was waiting in the center of a large padded mat.

“So Uraraka, do you have any experience with martial arts? Or any kind of self defence training and techniques?”

“Um not really, no. I don’t. Sorry.”

“That’s perfectly alright. Everyone starts somewhere. So let’s see, before we start, let’s talk about your quirk. From what Mr. Yagi told me your quirk, Zero Gravity, lets you negate an object’s gravitational pull after you touch it.”

“Yes sir, though I have to make contact with all my fingers for my quirk to activate.” Ochako held up her hand, showing off the pads on each finger.

Gunhead rubbed his chin as he looked at her hand. A soft hmm leaked past his mask as he was deep in thought.

“So keeping your hands safe should be a priority for you then. If they get damaged it could have a negative effect on your ability to use your quirk.”

“Is that a problem? Do you think my quirk won’t work well in combat?”

Chuckleing, Gunhead shook his head, “Not at all. In fact, I think your quirk could be extremely effective. Being able to neutralize an opponent with just a touch would make you very dangerous in close combat situations.”

Despite herself, a wicked grin spread across her face when she heard that, which didn’t go unnoticed by Gunhead, “seems you like that idea.”

Ochako flinched back as she waved her hands in front of her nervously, “Oh well, I guess it would be pretty cool to be someone a bully wouldn’t want to mess with. Makes it easier to protect someone…”

“Bully? Someone?”

“VILLAIN! Someone a villain wouldn’t want to mess with. Easier to protect people from villains! That’s what I said!”

Gunhead tilted his head to the side as he looked at Ochako, a pose she would have thought as kinda cute if she wasn’t recovering from her slip of the tongue. Fortunately, Gunhead chose not to push the subject since he did not want to cause his new student to feel too embarrassed on her first day. Once Ochako had calmed down, Gunhead motioned to a place for Ochako to stand and began to walk her through some basic stretches to warm her up.

Izuku panted heavily as he circled around All Might, avoiding a padded mitten that sailed past his face as he leaned backward. Straightening back Izuku watched as All Might left his chest open for a counter, but unlike the multiple times before these last few days Izuku did not press the sudden opening and instead kept his eyes on the other mit that soon followed sweeping at him ready to punish Izuku if he had been reckless enough to fall for the false opening. Again. Over the last few days, All Might had worked with Izuku through a sparring routine, with the end goal being Izuku landing a direct finishing hit on All Might. The routine was long, and had several trap openings and moments meant to punish izuku for being too reckless or reserved. It has taken several days, bruises and ice packs, but Izuku was now able to get to the tail end of the routine. He had struggled
here for a while, being tired made him sloppy, which All Might punished relentlessly. But now, now he was near the end, and he was going to win.

With both swings dodged, Izuku closed the distance quickly and unloaded a fury of punches into All Might before just as quickly skipping back when All Might had ‘recovered’ and ‘retaliated’. This time the attack from All Might was more wild. More unfocused. Izuku recalled what All Might had taught him, that an injured villain could be just as dangerous, if not more so than when he was healthy. And sometimes the best way to deal with wild attacks was to just avoid them and not engage at all.

So Izuku back tracked, keeping himself away from the wide swings, waiting for his moment. All Might swung a giant arm down but made the ‘mistake’ of letting his own momentum carry him off balance. Resulting in tripping himself up and leaving his head completely exposed, unprotected and right at the perfect height for Izuku to hit it.

There’s my shot!

Izuku rushed forward before digging his feet into the ground. Twisting his hips, Izuku attacked with a hard right cross, screaming at the top of his lungs, “SMASH!”

The punched landed cleanly, right into All Mights jaw, with a solid smack. For a second both fighters stood completely still, All Might hunched over, and Izuku with his glove smashed against All Mights face. Then with a smile, All Might threw himself back dramatically, landing on his back, “Curse you hero, I am defeated!”

Izuku stood frozen in place for a few fleeting seconds before an almost unbridled joy bubbled out and he leapt into the air cheering, “I did it! I did it!”

As he landed, Izuku felt his legs give out from the stress of the day and he tumbled into the sand, but he didn’t care. After days of hard work. Days of non stop practice, and having techniques drilled into his skull he had won his first fight.

“Very good Young Midoriya. Very good.”

All Might stood over him, and reached down to help him up. Izuku looked up at All Might smiling, “I guess I had to get it eventually.”

“Don’t sell yourself short. You’ve made incredible progress considering the short amount of time you’ve had to work with.”

All Might meant this. After a few days of learning some basics punching forms and foot work, Izuku had been thrown into the deep end, so to speak. Izuku was forced to learn quickly if he wanted to capitalize on the time available to him, and sparring gave him the closest to real life experience he could get. So All Might ran him through the ringer. The first few days were rough, but in Izuku’s own words, ‘the sooner he learned, the sooner All Might would stop hitting him.’ All Might was very happy Inko was nowhere near to hear Izuku say that. That phrasing needed work.

“So All Might,” Izuku began, “I only have a couple more days left until school starts back up. Do we have time for me to learn anything else?”

All Might rubbed his chin, “Honestly you burned through everything I had planned for you and then some. In fact, I think you’ve earned yourself a little rest.”
Izuku smiled brightly before All Might finished, “For today at least. I want you well rested for tomorrow.”

“What’s the plan for tomorrow?” Izuku asked, not sure he liked the change in All Mights smile.

“I have a new sparring partner for you. I think it’s time you fought someone not me.”

“Really? Who is it?”

“It’s a surprise.”

Ochako took a deep breath to calm her nerves and steady herself. Today was her last day at Gunheads dojo and the pro hero had set up several stations to test her knowledge and skills that she had learned since she had started. She had completed the stations that tested her grappling and throws. She was quite proud of herself after finishing her throwing challenge when she had been able to send toss Gunhead himself to the mat, without having to use her quirk to lighten him first. Now though, she was about to begin her routine for her strikes. As she walked through the moves one last time before she would begin, she thought back to the day Gunhead first started to teach her how to strike and attack her opponents.

“Now Ochako, show me what’s the first thing you think to do when I tell you to strike someone?” Gunhead asked as he stood in front of Ochako.

Nodding, Ochako shifted herself on the training mat and threw a punch, much like she had done several times in Gunhead’s exercises. Gunhead nodded, “That is indeed the most basic form of an attack most people know. However, do you remember what I told you the first day you came here?”

“You mean about keeping my hands safe?”

“Correct. So while I know you can throw a good punch, I don’t think it’s the best form of attack for you to use. A badly thrown punch could damage your hand or fingers and that could be especially dangerous for you. That isn’t to say you should avoid punches altogether mind you. But I’m going to teach you there are other ways to fight your opponent. Besides your fists there are three other points of attack on your body...Well technically there are four other points, but I’m not sure we’ll cover using your head while you are here. First off is your feet, which of course you would use for kicking.”

Gunhead punctuated this by showing off several different forms of kicks, from sweeps to direct hits.

“Next are your knees and elbows. These can be especially devastating to your opponent if you land them right.”

Ochako nodded as she watched Gunhead demonstrate more varied strikes.

“So Ochako, let’s say you are in a fight, your opponent more often than not is going to be watching your hands. Either because that’s the most common place to expect an attack, or because they know that’s where your quirk is. But there is the catch, if they are just watching for attacks from your hands...” Gunhead trailed off for OChako to finish.

“OH! They won’t be looking for an attack from somewhere else!”

“Exactly. And there is a flip side to this as well.”
“There is?”

“Yes. if your attacks are constantly coming from your legs or elbows, your opponent may very well forget completely to keep and eye on your hands. When they do that, you’ll have your perfect opening to use your quirk on them and finish the fight.”

Opening her eyes, Ochako looked down the line of different dummies, each posed in a different pose of attack or defence. She was supposed to move down the line of dummies and demonstrate she knew how to properly attack her opponent no matter what position they were in. behind her, Gunhead stood off the mat ready to begin the final test. He knew she would do well, she had absorbed everything he had taught her like a sponge. It was a shame he knew he would not be available to take on work studies and interns this year, or he would already be making plans to make sure Ochako was back in his dojo to continue training under him. He could tell she was still a little nervous for this last test, so he decided to give her one good push, “One last bit of advice for this test Ochako. I always find it helps me when I visualize someone I don’t like standing in front of me, instead of a dummy. Makes me go just that bit harder.”

Ochako glanced back towards Gunhead with a determined smile, “Thank you Gunhead.”

“On your time then Ochako.”

Turning back to face the first dummy she nodded once, set her stance, and with one last deep steadying breath, attacked. Ochako moved down the line, striking openings in defences on some dummies, or moving to block incoming attack from others. Ochako continued on after a call out from Gunhead signaled her to do so. A dummy with a high block, attack with her legs, swiping at the base. Another yell from Gunhead and Ochako moved to the next dummy. A punch to her head, she deflected with her arms, and countered with an elbow to the chest. Gunhead called out again, and she moved. He called out again and she moved. Over and over down the line of dummies. Sometimes she would only be allowed to make a single move, other she went through multiple. Kick, knee, block, elbow, block, palm strike, block, deflect, counter, kick. Ochako was blur.

Final dummy.

A simple standing dummy.

There for Ochako to cut loose. And she did.

Ochako went through every move that Gunhead had taught her. Striking at soft points. Solar plexus, kidneys, the back of legs and jaw. Behind her Ochako heard Gunhead call out for her to deliver her finishing blow. At that moment she could also hear his advice from earlier, ‘visualize someone I don’t like’. As she thought of that, the dummy in front of her changed.

She could see his straw blond hair.

She could see his arrogant eyes.

She could see his condescending smirk.

She could see Bakugou Katsuki standing right in front of her, and Ochako cut loose and unleashed all hell. Reaching out, she gripped the dummy by the shoulder and yanked it forward, while at the same time delivered an elbow strike right underneath its chin, and into its throat.

Ochako stood over the fallen dummy, panting as the red mist in her vision faded, and from exerting herself so hard throughout the test. Gunhead walked up to her, clapping, “Masterfully done Ochako. You’ve passed every test I had for you. Congratulations.”
Ochako looked up at Gunhead and smiled, so proud to hear him say that. Putting a hand on her shoulder, Gunhead lead Ochako away from the training mat, “Come on. Let me buy your lunch before you head on home.”

“Thank you!”

Gunhead glanced back at the fallen dummy, “Oh and Ochako. Do me a favor.”

“Hmm?”

“I know you must really dislike that bully, but promise me that you won’t do that to him when you see him in school.”

Ochako looked back to the fallen dummy and was surprised at what she saw. The stitches that hold the head to the rest of the body had been ripped apart. Leaving the dummies head hanging by only a few threads. Ochako realized she had more or less just decapitated the poor piece of training equipment.

Month 6 (September)

It was the day for All Might’s surprise sparring match and Izuku sat on the tailgate of All Mights truck, trying to calm the butterflies in his stomach flying around. After a month of practice and preparation, today he was going to have his first sparring match. Taking a deep breath to steady himself, Izuku finished wrapping the tape around his hands and wrists, chuckling dryly that he didn’t have to redo it a fourth time. With the tape done, Izuku put on his headgear and gloves and hurried down to the beach where All Might had set up a shabby, but usable, makeshift boxing ring.

At the far corner of the ring All Might was busy talking to someone, his sparring partner for the day he guessed, who had their back turned to Izuku. Unlike Izuku, who was wearing a basic long sleeved gym shirt and shorts for the match, this person was sporting a martial arts gi, and on top of the same gear he had for his head and hands, they had added padding on their elbows and knees. Am I fighting a martial artist? Shouldn’t I be fighting another boxer like me?

As Deku stepped into the ring, All Might waved at him, “Good. You look like you are ready to go.”

“Yes, I’m ready to start. Um, is this who I’m going to be fighting?”

The person turned around and Izuku felt himself tense up in surprise, “Uraraka!?”

Uraraka smiled and waved happily at Izuku, “Deku it’s great to seeEEP”

Much to Ochako’s surprise, Izuku rushed forward to wrap his arms around her in a tight hug and lifted her up in his excitement, “Uraraka! I thought you’d be back later today!”

“All Might drove out and picked me up last night so I could be here,” Ochako quickly stammered out, still shocked by Izuku’s welcome.

While attempting to steady herself, Ochako’s arms lay on Izuku’s shoulders and her hands locked behind his head. Anyone looking right then might have the impression that the two were a young couple. At least All Might thought so, “Do you two need a moment to yourselves? I can go grab a cup of coffee if you want some privacy.”

Both Izuku and Ochako looked over at All Might before looking back towards each other before
they too realized the intimate situation they were in. Mechanically, but gently, Izuku put Ochako down before covering his now beet red face with his arms and whirling around away from everyone to hide, “I’m so sorry! I was just so happy to see you again!”

Ochako at the same time pressed her hands to her face, hiding the fact that her cheeks had also turned several deeper shades of pink, and inadvertently floated herself. As she tumbled in the air, upside down, she squeaked out, “It’s okay Deku! It was just a little surprising is all! I got excited seeing you again too!”

As she floated by, Ochako bumped into Izuku, startling both of them. When they both looked at each other, red faced and upside down, neither could stop the laughter that bubbled out. The whole scene was too ridiculous. After a few seconds of laughing, Izuku reached out his hand for Ochako to grab, “It really is good to see you again Uraraka. Phone calls are nice, but I definitely like it better when you are here.”

Ochako took his hand and turned herself right side up before letting herself drop back to the ground, “Same here Deku. Nothing beats having my best friend around.”

All Might couldn’t help but smile as the two caught up. However while he was happy for the two, they were here for a reason. So after giving them a few more seconds to talk amongst themselves he clapped his hands together to grab their attention, “You two will have plenty of time later to talk. This is the last day before your summer break ends. You’ve both used this time to begin honing your combat abilities. I know you’ve both come a long way in a very short amount of time.”

Izuku and Ochako beamed with pride at that, though All Might was quick to put his words into perspective, “Don’t let it go to your head you two. These past few weeks have only given you a foundation to build on. Understand?”

“Yes All Might!” They replied simultaneously.

“Good. Good. Now if you two remember you’ll be having yourselves a sparring match today. Now why don’t you head to your corners and we can get started.”

Izuku blinked and glanced to his side at Ochako. Truthfully he had been so excited at seeing Ochako again he’d actually forgotten that had been the plan.

“Looks like I’ll get to see what All Might taught you. This should be fun.” Ochako smirked before walking over to her side of the ring.

“Yeah…” Izuku frowned as he walked to his corner. The butterflies from before, now twisting his stomach into knots.

“I knew I’d be having a match today but I didn’t think it’d be with Uraraka… This means I’ll be trying to hit her… What if I do hit her!? I can’t hit her, I might… I might…”

“Now you two listen closely. While this will pretty much be a free for all for you two, it’s not a street brawl. There will still be some rules. The moment either of you see’s the other call for the fight to end, you pull up right then and there. The same goes for when I ring this bell here. You don’t start fighting until I ring it, and you stop immediately when I ring it again. Young Midoriya, this will be the first time you’ve fought someone who will be able to kick you. So the no hitting below the belt rule doesn’t really apply anymore, so watch out for that. However Young Uraraka,” All Might made sure he had Ochako’s undivided attention, “try to be careful where you kick.”

Ochako nodded vigorously, showing she understood exactly what All Might meant.
“Good girl. Now if there are no questions, I’ll ring the bell and you two can-”

“Wait a second All Might!” Izuku quickly interrupted, “I just...um” Izuku glanced at Ochako before turning away.

“What is it Young Midoriya?”

All Might noticed Izuku give Ochako another glance. He could see him becoming more uncomfortable as he fidgeted around and picked at his gloves. When he looked over at Ochako again only to look away just as quickly, All Might had a suspicion what was on the boys mind.

*Young man, don’t say what I know you’re thinking*

“Are you sure this is ok? For us to fight like this? I don’t want to accidentally hurt Uraraka if I hit her too hard.”

...He actually said it...

There was a pause before Izuku guessed he probably had said something he shouldn’t have. All Might was rubbing his brow, clearly embarrassed by his protégé. At what, Izuku couldn’t guess. He didn’t think he had said anything that emarressing. Then Izuku looked at Ochako, and he knew he had screwed up. Ochako looked pissed. Before Izuku could try to apologize however, Ochako whipped her head over towards All Might, and through gritted teeth simply said, “Ring the bell.”

*Wait, what?*

All Might nodded once and pulled the cord on the bell, signaling the start of the round. The ringing hadn’t even started to fade when Ochako whirled back to face Izuku and dashed forward.

Panicked, Izuku stumbled back, “Wait Uraraka! Hold on!”

Ochako had closed the distance between them, and Izuku, tripping over his own feet as he tried to step back, threw a wild punch that went wide. While it was never going to hit Ochako, it did give her the perfect chance to finish the fight there and then. Ochako sidestepped and with one hand grabbed hold of Izuku’s wrist. Pivoting she let his own momentum carry him forward and she reached behind with her other hand grabbed Izuku the back of his neck. At this point if she followed Gunhead’s training she would pull Izuku down to the mat, and pin him face down. However after what Izuku had said, she wanted to make sure he never made the same mistake again. With the hand holding Izuku’s neck, she pressed each finger into his skin. She felt her quirk activate and Izuku was now weightless and defenseless. Turning to make sure she was facing the right way, she threw Izuku up and out of the ring, and out towards the ocean. She waited for what she thought was an appropriate amount of time before slapping her hands together and releasing Izuku from the effecting of her quirk. Izuku fell unceremoniously into the water with a splash, before sputtering back to the surface.

Izuku floated on the water’s surface for a few moments as he collected himself and swam back towards the beach. Izuku kept his head down as he shuffled back to the ring. Once back inside Izuku looked up to find Ochako back in her corner, arms crossed and giving him a very intense and measured glare. In a snap, Izuku bowed till he was almost parallel to the ground, “Please forgive me! It was wrong of me to say something like that! It was completely disrespectful and out of line! I’m truly, truly sorry...”

Izuku stayed as he was, not daring to look up. He shook and trembled, not from the chill from
being soaked, but from a fear that he may have irrevocably damaged his friendship with Ochako.
For Izuku the next few moments of silence seemed to drag on forever until he heard footsteps on
the cheap plywood mat. As the footsteps got closer and Izuku could start to see the outline of a
shadow, he screwed his eyes shut.

This is it. I just screwed up and there’s no going back. I’m such an idiot -!

Izuku’s thoughts were interrupted when he felt a towel dropped onto his head, and someone
beginning to dry his hair. Startled, Izuku looked up to find Ochako standing over him, smiling.

“Uraraka?!”

“Easy there. You can’t really spar with me if you have to wipe those wet bangs out of your eyes
every second. So let’s get you dried up some.”

Struck dumb, Izuku couldn’t say or do anything as he waited for Ochako to finish. When she
draped the towel over his shoulder, she nodded in satisfaction, “There we go. Much better. I think
you can take care of the rest.”

When she turned to walk away, Izuku found his voice, “Wait? You’re… I mean, you don’t…”

Izuku trailed off, not wanting to put his thoughts from before into words. Still afraid that by doing
so, would make them a reality. Ochako looked at Izuku, her head tilted in confusion, “I don’t,
what?”

“…Hate me?”

Ochako blinked in surprise, “Hate you? Of course I don’t hate you.”

“But what I said before…”

“What you said was really stupid Deku. And it was a little hurtful too. I’d hope you would respect
me a little more than that.”

“OF COURSE I RESPECT YOU!” Izuku declared with just a twinge of fear in his voice, “I do, I
really do. I just…I was just…”

Ochako walked over and put her hand on Izuku’s shoulder, “You were just being a little stupid. It
happens to everyone. You were stupid, and then you apologized. Problem solved”

“But you looked so mad…”

“I’m allowed to be mad when someone says something that pisses me off Deku. Though,” Ochako
rubbed the back of her head as a bit of embarrassment and regret crept into her voice, “Maybe
throwing you into the ocean was a bit…much.”

“You did look pretty cool though…” Izuku said softly.

“Hmm?”

“Looking back, the way you just um, charged me like that was pretty cool. I guess you learned a
lot from Gunhead.”

Ochako wasn’t prepared to suddenly be complemented by Izuku like that. A light blush returned to
her cheeks as she glanced away, “Yeah, I guess I did pick up a few things.”
Another pause stretched between the two. Ochako could still see that while Izuku was no longer afraid that she hated him, he was still nervous about the match they were supposed to be having. She needed a way to help him get over this, so they could get on with their match.

*I just need to figure out a way to show him he won’t hurt me. I suppose the fastest way would be to let him hit me. Actually…*

“We’re still worried about hurting me, aren’t you?”

Izuku flinched, but still nodded.

*Yep, I knew it. Well I’m nipping this in the bud right now.*

“I know it, hit me.”

Izuku’s eyes bulged as she snapped his head to look at Ochako, “WHAT!?”

“I want you to hit me.”

“Wait, why would you want me to do that!”

“You’re worried that you’ll accidentally hurt me if we fight. I’m going to prove to you that won’t happen. So I want you to hit me as hard as you can, and I’ll show you that you can’t hurt me.”

As Izuku stood dumbfounded at Ochako’s request, All Might suppressed another groan. While he was tempted, very tempted, to step in and stop this, he honestly felt that while this might not be the best way for the two to work this issue out, it would at least be the quickest. Not only for Izuku, but Ochako as well.

*I don’t think she realizes just how strong the boy is. At least its not just the boy thats dumb. I swear these two share brain cells at this point...Note to self, I need to see if I can update my bet with Inko. I think I picked a date way too far off. No way they make it to their second year without realizing something.*

“Uraraka I don’t know about this…”

“IIf you don’t punch me right now, I will get mad again.”

“Okay, okay!” Izuku waved his hands frantically, “I’ll hit you. Um where do you want it? Not the face right?”

Ochako thought about it for a second, “Nah, let’s avoid that whole area. Just um… hit me in the stomach. That should be fine.”

As Ochako stood tall, giving Izuku a clear shot, Izuku readied himself, “Okay, sure just a punch to your gut then...On three?”

“Sure.”

*Okay Izuku, you can do this. She’s asking for it, so it’s fine...right?*

“Alright, on three.” Izuku confirmed.

Ochako nodded as she readied herself.

“One...Two...Thr...are you really sure about this?”
“Grrr Deku just HIT ME ALREADY!”

And he did.

Izuku hit Ochako has hard as he could, driving his fist right into stomach, and driving all the air out of Ochako’s lungs. Ochako’s knees hit the mat as she dropped to the ground, hard. Wrapping her arms around her stomach and with her forehead pressed down on the mat, she coughed and gagged vehemently as she tried desperately to refill her lungs with air, while at the same time, keep herself from losing her breakfast all over everything. Above her she could hear Izuku panicking, asking if she was okay, if she needed help. Saying how this was a bad idea. Through sheer will, Ochako pull an arm away from her shuddering stomach and held up a hand, silencing Izuku on the spot.

*Okay...that...that was...OW OW OW ow ow ow!*

Ochako ground her head into the mat as she tried to get her thoughts back in order.

*Need to...stand up. Stand up and show Deku that this...oh, no no no don’t throw up.*

Pulling her arm back, Ochako rubbed her stomach, desperately trying to calm herself. She hadn’t thrown up in over two months, a testament to her strengthening her resilience and limit of her quirk, and she was not about to break that streak.

*Just a few more seconds, and I’ll be fine...yeah just fine... So Deku learned how to throw a punch, good to know.*

Slowly as she was able to calm her breathing, she could feel her nausea begin to fade as well. Soon she had both under control enough that she was able to lift herself up into a kneeling position, before with a grunt, she forced herself to stand up.

Though red faced and teary eyed from coughing so much, Ochako gave Izuku a thumbs up as she quickly gasped out, “See. Fine. Completely. Fine.”

*This was a horrible idea. Who’s idea was this again? Oh yeah, mine.*

It took Ochako a few more moments before she completely collected herself, all the while Izuku fretted around her. Mumbling about possible permanent injuries he might have caused her. Ochako waved off his concerns as finally the pain in her stomach had died down to a low throbbing, “Deku calm down. See I’m fine.”

“*You’re sure?*”

Ochako sighed before reaching up to her belt, “Do you want to check my stomach to be sure?”

There was a pause before what Ochako had just said started to sink in. Izuku glanced down towards Ochako’s stomach, before immediately snapping back, like a kid with his hand caught in the cookie jar. Panicked Izuku covered his eyes with his hands, “NO, NO, I BELIEVE YOU! YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO THAT!”

Ochako quickly tried to back track, and play it off as a joke as she ripped her hands away from her gi. She was fortunate that Izuku couldn’t see her with his eyes covered, since the permanent blush on her cheeks were now practically neon., “I was kidding Deku. Calm down.”

*I can NOT believe I almost just did that. What is wrong with me. Whats next, gonna show him my br... Do not finish that thought.*
Izuku, after making sure he wasn’t about to see things he was sure he wasn’t supposed to, and pushing down the slight feeling of disappointment that he was very confused by, lowered his hands, “I guess, if you are fine, then I was worried over nothing. Sorry.”

Pouncing on the chance to return to a normal conversation, Ochako waved off Izuku, “Don’t worry about it Deku. It happened, and now it’s in the past. So we good?”

“Of course Uraraka!”

“Then I think we are ready to have our match then.”

“If the two of you are actually ready now, perhaps we can have at least one match before noon?” All Might asked, with only a small amount of snark.

Izuku and Ochako looked over at All Might, both completely forgetting he had been there. The entire time. Nodding hastily, both moved to their corners to get themselves ready. As Ochako rechecked her gear, Izuku dried himself off some more, before he looked down at his still dripping shirt before pulling it off, *better just take this off. I’d rather not get chafed.*

After making sure everything was still in place, Ochako turned her attention back towards Izuku, and promptly her mind came to a grinding, screeching, halt.

*Oh…*

Momentarily enraptured, Ochako took in the sight before her while her face got redder and redder. Her eyes closely following a droplet of water that dripped down from Izuku’s surprisingly well toned chest to run over the forming definition of his abs before it was absorbed into the waistband of his shorts.

*When did THAT happen?*

Ochako, with great effort, turned away from Izuku and tried to refocus on the bout she was about to have.

*Focus already. Stop thinking about those...When did he even get... all of THAT!? I saw him shirtless before when we were doing laps in the ocean. That was only a couple of months ago at most! He looked good back then yeah but… No, don’t think like that.*

Ochako, after making sure her face was back to a normal shade, turned around, ready to begin her match. Her eyes glanced over the toned lines on his arms, *At least now I know why he hits so hard.* She thought dryly as she rubbed her stomach.

Seeing that both Izuku and Ochako were both ready to go, All Might put his hand back onto the bell cord, “All right you two, lets give this another go.”

When the bell rang, Izuku and Ochako took up their stances and moved, carefully, to the rings center. Ochako held her arms up so that her forearms protected the sides of her head as she watched Izuku start to try and circle around her. Izuku jabbed at her with his right glove, but Ochako easily deflected the punch away. Not that it was meant to actually hit her. Izuku was testing, probing her. Izuku had only had a couple of matches up to this point. All of them against All Might who only ever used boxing mitts for Izuku to hit. With this limited experience in actual sparing, on top of his opponent being a fighter from a completely different field, Izuku was being extremely cautious. Not sure how Ochako would act or react to him. After his next jab however, he quickly found out.

His next jab sailed past Ochako and while his arm was still extended she closed the distance
between the two and grabbed hold of his arm and pulled Izuku forward, while at the same time she swept her foot out and hooked it on Izuku’s heel. With his foot kicked out from underneath him, Izuku fell down onto the mat with a solid thud. Ochako back off, giving Izuku a chance to get back onto his feet.

Ochako smirked at Izuku as she got back into her stance, “It’s two points for me Deku. Any time you want to try and close the gap, be my guest.”

“Wait, two? How’d you get two?”

“I threw you into the ocean.”

“The ocean throw doesn’t count!”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “The bell rang, so it totally counts. Now come on, if I wanted to practice on something that didn’t fight back, I’d use a dummy.”

Izuku grumbled under his breath before taking his stance. He took a few steps forward, jabbing as he did. Ochako continued to deflect, or move back, keeping herself at a safe distance on the edge of Izuku’s strike range. Choosing her moments to move in and deliver a kick at his leg before skidding back while Izuku straightened himself up. Smirking, Ochako taunted Izuku some, egging him on to try and hit her, “Come on Deku. You were so close that time.”

While Ochako taunted him however, Izuku was starting to see how her defence worked. While her form was different than what he was used to, what she was doing was simple. Right now she was the one deciding their distance. Keeping herself back until she saw an opening and only then closing the space between them. Knowing that, Izuku decided it was time to change the game. After another less than pleasant kick to the side of his knee, Ochako again moved back to her safe distance, however this time, Izuku wasn’t going to let her get away from him. His unfamiliarity from before had made him passive, but that quickly changed, and Ochako, feeling overly confident, was not ready for it. Izuku pushed forward, changing his punches from jabs to body blows. Ochako barely had time to yelp in surprise as she attempted to block the aggressive attack from Izuku. Switching between body blows and hooks, Izuku rushed forward and Ochako quickly found herself over powered. Izuku kept up the attack, pushing Ochako till her back hit the ropes and she tumbled out of the ring and into the sandy beach.

Laying in the sand, and rubbing her now sore sides from several solid hits from Izuku, Ochako looked up to see Izuku leaning on the ropes smirking down at her.

“So that’s two-all I think.”

With a groan, Ochako sat up, “We counting the gut punch huh.”

Izuku’s smirk grew into a full smile, which Ochako found extremely annoying. The urge to wipe it away built up inside of her, adding to a feeling she wasn’t all to familiar with. It was the same feeling Izuku had as he bent down and offered his hand to help her up, which she was happy to accept. Gripping Izuku's hand, Ochako was pulled back into the ring, but with both now back inside, neither let go of the others hand. Both stared at each other, their grips tightening as that intense feeling enveloped them. At first neither knew what they were feeling. It wasn’t resentment. Or some other kind of negative emotion. Neither felt bad or hurt from the quick pot shots they had taken against each other. But both could feel a fire burning inside of them they just had no words for.

All Might looked between the two, a knowing smile crossing his gnaught face. He knew what had
been sparked. Even if it had taken a few false starts at the beginning. For the first time since the two met, the fire of competition was raging within them. “Are you two ready to go again?”

Neither took their eyes off the other as they answered with a quick, “yes.” Letting go of each other, they took up their stances ready to go again. Gone was the apprehension, uncertainty and touch of cockiness. It was replaced with determined smiles and eyes burning with a desire to win.

By the end of the day, both Izuku and Ochako sat back to back against each other, panting heavily and nursing more than a few bruises, scuffs, cuts and swollen lips. Each had also gotten in a good solid hit during their bouts, which for Ochako was a nasty cross that left her with a shiner that was swelling her right eye. And for Izuku, he had taken an elbow to the face that came extremely close to giving him a broken nose. At the very least, he had enough tissue shoved up it to clog up a broken dam.

With a heavy sigh, All Might handed the two ice packs, which they gratefully applied to themselves.

“You two do realize that a part of sparing is to also practice defence. Right?”

Sheepish grins were the only response he got, making it clear to him that neither teen felt bad about their situation. It was also clear to him that the two had had way too much fun beating the crap out of each other to really care about the consequences they would face later. That he was going to face later he quickly realized.

“Oh I’m going to die. The moment your mother sees this, she is going to kill me Young Midoriya.”

Chapter End Notes

So yeah I'm really sorry for the long wait. I'd wanted to get this chapter out before the end of September but work got pretty crazy for a bit. I had to drive down to Chicago to do tests and it was a whole deal. Also to my surprise, this chapter got much longer than I thought it would, so that just compounded the issue. But it's here and I hope you all enjoyed seeing the cinnamon buns get a little toughened up. I haven't tried writing any kind of action scenes since my Legends of the Dovahkiin story so I hope these were good. A little thirst in this chapter too which was oddly fun to write. A little one-sided but don't worry, that won't last long. So, the plan is to have the next chapter be the last of the Aim to Pass series then we finally get to the exam, so I hope you'll all stick around for that. Please, if you see any glaring errors leave a comment. I'm always looking to try and improve.

Oh, I have a Tumblr and Twitter if anyone would like to add me and or ask me anything. Twitter is a little NSFW so be warned. I also cross-post on FanFiction dot net. Should probably add that to the tags.
https://ss3dj.tumblr.com/
https://twitter.com/ss3dj
Aim to Pass Part 5

Chapter Summary

The U.A. entrance exam is fast approaching. Can Izuku and Ochako finish their training in time while dealing with their greatest enemy of all? Hormones.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Month 7 (October)

With an exasperated sigh, Inko held up two thermometers as she read off the number that flashed on the tiny screen. Confirming what she already knew she turned and looked at her two charges, both crumpled on the couch, wrapped up in blankets and looking completely miserable, “It’s a fever. Congratulations, you are both sick.”

Izuku gave a half hearted sarcastic cheer that quickly devolved into a cough while Ochako sank deeper into her blanket as she continued to empty a box of tissues to blow her nose. Inko shook her head at their sorry state, “What were you two thinking staying up that late? And training in that horrible storm? You’re both lucky all you have is just a cold. You could have come down with pneumonia.”

Neither Izuku or Ochako could look at Inko as she scolded them. They knew they had screwed up and were now living with the consequences of their actions. It didn’t help that this was the second scolding they had each received that day as well. All Might upon seeing them in the morning had sent them straight back to Inko’s as they were in no condition to train. On their way back, he made sure to tell them the folly of their actions.

“I put the Aim to Pass plan together for you two to specifically follow. It was made to maximize the time we had so that you would be more than ready for the entrance exams. There was no reason for you two stay so late last night. And I know this isn’t the first time you two have done something like this. Working outside the limits of the plan will do more harm than good.”

“But All Might, if I’m going to be the next vessel for One for All, if I’m going to be the next number one hero, I can’t just make it into U.A, I have to excel! Be better than everyone else!”
Ochako nodded in agreement, “That’s right! We’re not going to settle for ‘good enough’! To be the best, We have to push ourselves past our limits, no matter the cost!”

Their words may have carried more weight if they both didn’t look ready to collapse in a heap in front of All Might, but he was still moved and impressed with their resolve.

“Alright, alright. Fine. I understand. You are both driven to reach the top. But you have to be smart about how you do it. Neither of you are in any condition to train today. So those few extra hours you earned last night—after I had left and told you to head home because of the storm, I might add, now meant nothing. And you might lose more time because if by tomorrow you aren’t over this cold, you aren’t training either.

Inko, after making her point, put the thermometers away, “Alright, you two just stay on the couch. I’ll call your school and let them know you won’t be coming in. Then I’ll see if I can throw together a nice soup for you two.”

A raspy and stuffy chorus of ‘thank you’s followed after Inko as she left the living room, leaving Izuku and Ochako alone in their misery.

“Hey Deku, whose idea was it to stay late?”

Izuku pointed to himself, but didn’t have the strength to try and look guilty. Ochako hummed in agreement, “Sounds about right. You owe me some mochi for getting me sick.”

“Aren’t you the one that said a little rain never hurt anyone when you agreed to my idea?”

Ochako huffed and looked away from Izuku, “I can’t be held responsible for my actions when they’re your ideas Deku.”

“You said, and I quote,” Izuku’s voice then came out as a high pitched squeak as he badly tried to impersonate Ochako, “‘That’s a great idea, Deku! I’m sure we can get this part of the beach completely finished before the storm hits! And besides, a little rain never hurt anyone.’ end quote.”

Ochako looked flatly at Izuku before she tossed her empty box of tissues at him. Chuckling, Izuku swatted the box away and leaned back into the couch. For some time Izuku simply lay back while
Ochako started to scroll through the channels on TV, looking for something to watch as they waited for Inko to return with their soup.

“Hey Uraraka?”

“Hm?” Was Ochako’s lazy response as she kept flipping through channels.

“Why do you want to be a hero?”

Ochako froze mid button press, her thumb hovering over the remote, “…Why the sudden interest?”

“Well I was just thinking about what you said earlier, about not settling for good enough, and it got me thinking that you’ve never mentioned why you want to be a hero. You know its been my dream since I was a little kid, but you never talk about what’s driving you.”

Ochako frowned as she looked away, admitting to herself that he wasn’t wrong. Since they had first met he had made it abundantly clear that he wanted to be a hero like All Might. A hero in every meaning of the word. But her? She almost went out of her way to avoid talking about the matter. After all, her reasons were much less altruistic when compared to Deku’s.

Izuku could see the frown on Ochako’s face and worried he might have gone too far, “Ah! Sorry, sorry! I didn’t mean to pry, Ochako. You don’t have to say anything if you don’t want to.”

Ochako shook her head, “No, no. It’s ok. After we’ve been training together for so long, you deserve to know, I think.”

Ochako clicked the TV off and turned to face Izuku, who gulped at the sudden seriousness the atmosphere had taken.

“I want to be a hero to make money.”

She paused for a few moments. Ochako looked at Izuku, waiting for a reaction. Instead, he was silent. As if waiting for an explanation.
“You see, my family owns a construction company, but we haven't gotten much work these past few years, so we're pretty much broke. And I want to make money so that I can help them.”

She didn’t know what reaction she was expecting from Deku. Condemnation perhaps. Or at the very least disappointment. But no, nothing like that crossed his face. There was a little surprise, though. He blinked a few times and mouthed out an “oh,” but he seemed more curious than anything else. Curious, not judgemental.

“I know it’s not the most heroic or admirable motivation, especially when compared to yours Deku. Honestly the whole reason is embarrassing.”

“Why is that, Uraraka? How is having a goal to support your parents not admirable? You’re actively putting yourself in dangerous situations to help people to earn money that you’ll use to help your parents! If that’s not heroic, then I don’t know what is.”

Ochako let out a sigh of relief as she felt the tension in herself release.

*I guess I was pretty dumb for thinking Deku would think less of me. That's not like him at all.*

Izuku absentmindedly nodded before something clicked in the back of his mind, “Wait, is that why you’re so good at saving money?”

Ochako laughed softly, fighting back a sniffle. Izuku reached over and handed her another box of tissues, “Yeah, I learned all sorts of tricks to save my money growing up.”

“You know, thinking about it, with your quirk, construction work would be a breeze. The money you’d be able to save by floating stuff around without having to use all the expensive heavy equipment...”

“I know, right!? That's what I told Dad when I was little! I’d grow up and work for him, I said, but he dissuaded me. He told me to follow my own dreams.”

Looking down, Ochako noticed she had the blanket she was wrapped in pinched between her thumb and finger, an old habit she still had from when she was a little girl. She could feel her eyes
moisten some as she recalled everything, “I promised myself that I would become a hero and make enough money so that my parents would be able to relax and not have to worry about work anymore. They deserve to be able to take it easy after working so hard for so long.”

When Ochako looked back up she was startled to see Izuku in tears, “Wait, why are you crying?”

Ochako quickly passed the tissues back to Izuku, “Sorry, sorry.”

“Don’t cry for me, Deku, I don’t want your pity.”

Izuku shook his head, “No, it’s not that Uraraka. Just that, with everything you said about helping your parents, it’s- it’s inspiring!”

Ochako felt a flush spread over her cheeks as she turned away, “It’s- I mean- It’s not- I don’t-”

She was at a loss for words. To hear Deku say that she was inspiring was not a reaction she had expected at all.

“Is that why you’ve never been out to see your parents? Or why they haven’t come out here?”

Nodding softly, Ochako sighed and leaned back into the sofa.

“Train tickets are expensive. Plus there’s the cost of finding a place to stay and food to eat. We still talk over the phone, so it’s not like I’m cut off from them all together.” She explained

“But in all honesty Deku, getting me out here to begin with was something of a small miracle. I can’t ask them to spend any more for me than they need to just to feel better. It sucks, but that’s the reality of our situation.”

Izuku had to stop himself from saying ‘I’m sorry’ on autopilot but held it back. Uraraka didn’t want his pity and he didn’t want to come off that way.

After an extended silence, Ochako went back to switching between channels, effectively ending the
conversation. It would be a few more minutes before Ochako would speak up again, but on a completely different topic. While Izuku let the topic change go, internally he couldn’t help but wonder just how fine Uraraka was. Being away from family for so long had to eat away at her, even if she tried not to show it.

_I just wish there was something I could do._

**Month 8 (November)**

It was late. Very late, and Izuku was convinced he was never going to fall asleep. After getting tired of trying to force himself to sleep, Izuku rolled out of his bed and sat at his desk. Perhaps his mind just needed a distraction, that is what he told himself as he pulled his hero analysis notebook out. He just needed to get lost in some busy work, and by then he would be ready to sleep. He just needed to stop thinking about what had happened earlier that day. About what he had seen.

Unfortunately for Izuku, trying not to think of it, was having the opposite effect. It brought the memory right to the forefront of his mind.

This afternoon had been just like any other he had had for the past few months. Instead of cleaning the beach, today had been sparing day. Sparring was something he looked forward to every week because he loved sparring with Uraraka. The intensity of the bouts, the rush of adrenaline he felt from match to match, the feeling of closeness and trust they had with each other that let them go all out without worrying about the other getting hurt. But something had happened today that had thrown Izuku into turmoil.

Near the end of their final match, there had been an accident. No one had been hurt, in fact Izuku would have preferred if he had been hurt. At least then he wouldn’t be feeling everything he was feeling right now.

It was the final moments of the fight, Izuku had gone in to try and knock Ochako down, but she had been ready for him. Grabbing his arm and pulling him into a throw, but that’s when it had happened. When she had pulled him, his hand, his thumb had hooked into the front of Ochako’s gi, loosening it. Opening it just enough so that when he landed on his back and looked up, and she was leaning over him, he got a very unobstructed view.

The top of a black sports bra, and just a hint of cleavage.
Izuku covered his face, cheeks burning red at the memory. He hadn’t meant to look of course. It had been an accident, and Ochako after noticing her gi’s looseness quickly snapped up and tightened her top back into shape. Both had immediately apologized to the other, with Ochako simply saying whoops and playing it off with a laugh, even though her face had turned neon. Izuku had been much more serious, almost begging for her forgiveness, though she quickly made sure he knew she wasn’t mad. It had been an honest mistake. And besides, she said, “You’ve seen me in my school swimsuit when we swam laps here back during the summer, that was way more revealing. Plus it’s not like you to go ogling me, it was an accident so don’t worry about it. It’s not like you meant to look.”

But he had looked, and even if it had been an accident, even if he hadn’t meant to, he had seen and most importantly, he hadn’t looked away.

*It wasn’t my fault. And it was only for a second at most. I’m spending more time thinking about it than when it actually happened. I just need to stop thinking about Uraraka’s bra-*!

With a muffled groan, Izuku rubbed his temple as once again the memory unintentionally replayed in his mind.

*GAH! Stop it. Okay, just...just focus on something else. I’ll update an entry in my notebook. That’ll take my mind off... of this.*

Grabbing a pencil, Izuku flipped open his notebook, not caring what page it opened to. Looking down, Izuku had to bite his lip to stop himself from screaming in frustration.

*Of all the pages, it lands on Uraraka’s!? Really!?*

Looking down at the entry, Izuku lets himself stare at the page for a few seconds. The sketch he had drawn of Ochako was one of his most detailed, it was her in a basic track suit, but compared to his other sketches there was obviously more time put into it. Around the sketch, the page was smudged from stat entries getting erased and constantly updated. Scribbled along the margins in almost illegible chicken scratch were small notes and comments going over anything and everything. All in all her page was a complete mess, filled with everything he could think of about her. He was going to need to make a new entry for her, and maybe cut out some of the more miscellaneous information.

*But what can I cut out?*
Twirling the pencil in his hand, Izuku scanned over the page, looking for any fat to be trimmed.

Let’s see. Her quirk stays of course. Limits and usages, that’s a check. Combat strategies, yep that’s a must. Rescue applications. Support items and gear. I’ll need to make sure there is plenty of room when we start to come up with our costumes. Thirteen is her favorite hero. Will probably mimic their space style in her costume. Likes japanese foods, mochi is her all time favorite. Loves the stars at night. She can still remember the first time she saw a hero in action, and the smiles from the crowd. She wants to make people smile, so saving them is a given for her...

Izuku frowned, the last few entries sticking out to him.

Why did I write all that? Almost half the page is just filled with her likes and favorites things.

Flipping the pencil around, Izuku brought the eraser end down to start removing the excessive information. At least that’s what he tried to do, but after a few grueling seconds he let the pencil fall from his hand and roll off his desk. None of it was excessive. Everything he had written was important, and it just felt wrong to try and remove it. Izuku however couldn’t figure out why everything was so important to him.

I mean, everything here defines Uraraka. Shows the kind of person she is, and the kind of hero she’s going to be. So it is important. Plus she’s my best friend, I actually know her, so of course her entry is going to have more information than say, Mt Lady. But still, having this much info on what she likes to eat, spend her time doing, her dreams and goals, it makes it look like I have a crush... on... her...!!!

Izuku’s mind tripped over itself in alarm as he shook his head, “What am I thinking!?”

I do not have a crush on my best friend. I don’t, I can’t! She’s my friend. I like her sure, but BUT ONLY as a friend. It would be beyond awkward if I actually had a crush on her. Worse yet, if she found out I had a crush on her, which I DON’T, it could ruin our friendship. She’s trying to make sure her family is taken care of. She doesn’t need me and my...everything messing that up. Besides, what would we even do as a couple? We wouldn’t have any time. Once we get into U.A. we’d be studying all the time...

Images flashed of Ochako and Izuku studying for something, sitting at his living room table, though now Ochako was sitting right next to him instead of across like she normally would. Coyly she snuck a hand under the table, finding his, and interlocked their fingers together to hold his
hand, while cutely keeping her pinky up to avoid floating him.

With a loud WHAM, Izuku slammed his head onto his desk, driving the horrifically pleasant dream out of his mind.

*Nope! Nope! Do not go there! I am not imagining holding hands with my best friend. I am not imagining how the pads on her fingers feel… I’m not… I’m… I’m… I’m in trouble.*

It took Izuku a couple more restless nights before he was able to put aside his (self described) momentary insanity. By the end of it he had rewritten Ochako’s whole entry on fresh pages, making it much nicer and cleaner, with plenty of room to add more to it.

He didn’t end up removing anything, keeping everything he had written about her intact.

Ochako took a shuddering breath as she tapped her fingers together and released the multiple large dumpsters, filled to the brim with trash, she had floated up to the street where they would be collected later. With her burden released, she walked over to All Mights truck, where she hoped there were still some cold water bottles left. Absently she rubbed her stomach, pleased that unlike before, she now only felt a dull throbbing, and not the horrendous nausea that used to affect her when she would lift so much weight repetitively over such a long period of time.

*I might be time to see how much I can lift now before I get too sick.* She thought happily and with a hint of pride.

Leaning into the truck, Ochako rummaged around until she found one for herself. Taking a sip she stood back up and saw All Might, shrinking down and walking up to her, hand outreached, “I’ll take one of those if you don’t mind.”

Pulling out another bottle she tossed it to him, “Here you go.”

All Might hummed out a thanks as he cast a glance at the large dumpsters then towards her, “How many trips did it take you to bring all those up here?”
“Just one.”

“Oh? You got them all in one go?”

Ochako puffed up, “All of them.”

“I need to find some heavier trash then for you then, if this is getting too easy.”

Ochako promptly deflated at the idea of an increase to her work load, which made All Might chuckle, “Well, we’ll worry about that later. It’s getting late, so you and Young Midoriya can head home.”

“Where is Deku anyway? Didn’t you both go for a run?”

All Might vaguely pointed back down towards the beach, “He’s laying dead out there.”

Sure enough when Ochako looked to where All Might had pointed, Deku was indeed there, lying down in the sand.

“What did you do to him? I thought you both just went for a run?”

“*He* went for a run, *I* observed him.”

“You observed him? What does that mean?”

“*Young Midoriya* ran the whole course I laid out. I just tagged along to make sure he didn’t get lost or drop his pace.”

Ochako stared at All Might, “You made him carry you, didn’t you.” It wasn’t really a question.

“Yes.”
“Piggy back?”

“Yes.”

“Were you big or small?”

All Might just smiled, and Ochako couldn’t help but imagine the sight of poor Deku carry the hulking All Might on his shoulders. She broke out into a fit of laughter. All Might got into his truck, and fished out another water bottle for Ochako to hold, “Here, give this to him. I’ll see you both tomorrow.”

Waving goodbye, Ochako made her way down to Izuku, who was staring up at the sky when she stood over him.

“So are you really dead?”

Izuku groaned out, “I’m dead. Bury me here.”

Ochako held the water bottle over Izuku, sloshing it around, “Come on, it can’t be that bad. And look I got some water for you.”

“Do you want to run ten kilometers with All Might sitting on your back?”

Ochako paused, before vigorously shaking her head, “No thank you.”

Looking up at the offered water, Izuku made a pitiful attempt to reach up and grab it, before letting his arms fall back to the sand, “Too tired.”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “Seriously? Am I going to have to feed you like a baby or something?”

“Remember to pat my back afterwards.”
Ochako dug her toe into Izuku’s side, getting a pained laugh from him as he rolled away. With a great show of effort, again earning him an eye roll from Ochako, Izuku sat up and reached out to take the bottle. Ochako started to lean forward to hand it to him, but was surprised when the bottle glowed green and was pulled from her grip. Ochako watched as the cap unscrewed itself and Izuku brought the water to his mouth, and drank greedily, crushing the flimsy plastic flat as he drained it.

I wonder if he realizes, Ochako thought to herself. Lately he’s been using his quirk more and more for stuff like this. Like when we helped his mother with the dishes, he didn’t even bat an eye when he was stacking all the plates.

“Thanks for the water Uraraka. Let me throw this away, and we can head home for dinner.”

Standing on wobbly legs, Izuku hurried over to a dumpster, leaving Ochako to smile behind him, I wonder how much longer until All Mights lets the cat out of the bag. I can’t wait to see the look on Deku’s face.

Month 9 (December)

I think Deku is hiding something from me.

Ochako thought to herself as she glanced over her shoulder at Deku, who when he saw her looking at him, immediately broke eye contact.

Oh he’s definitely hiding something, he’s way too nervous.

It was christmas eve and Izuku and Ochako were finishing up their last day of volunteer community service. For the past few days to get into the giving spirit, instead of working at the beach, All Might had suggested the two spend their free time at the local community center helping with both food and toy drives. Overall, it had been a great experience for them.

Today was their last day, and they were busy moving boxes, tables and chairs around to and from storage so that everything would be ready for christmas day when people would be coming. Half way through the day however Ochako noticed a strange change in Deku’s behavior. After getting a call from his mother a little after lunch, suddenly Deku was going out of his way to avoid her. And if they were in the same room, he would only talk in stutters and avoid looking at her. If she asked if something was wrong he would try at the very least say everything was fine, but would then
clam up, leaving Ochako very confused. While Deku’s strange behavior left Ochako stumped, it at least provided a decent enough distraction to her other problem. It was the holidays and she missed her parents.

For the past week Ochako had been dealing with a case of the holiday blues. She had been calling her parents every night to try and help deal with their absence, while not letting them know how much not being with them was hurting her, but the calls only gave her brief breaks. Once the call was over she would be hit with the same feelings of sadness and loneliness.

*Not that I’m actually alone*, she kept telling herself.

Deku and Inko had gone above and beyond making sure they were there for her, especially making sure she would be having dinner with them during the holidays once they found out she wouldn’t be going home to visit her parents.

With a grunt, Ochako dropped the large box she had been carrying, when one of the community center workers walked over to her. She was an older lady who had been supervising her and Deku as they had worked at the center. Peering over her thick glasses at her clipboard then the last box Ochako had brought in, she made a small humming sound as she quickly made a check mark on her paper, “I think that was the last of the boxes of toy donations.”

“You sure had a lot of them.” Ochako said with a smile.

“Hmm yes we were very fortunate this year. Lots of donations for the children.”

Flipping through her papers, the work supervisor smiled, “Well not only was that the last box, that was the last thing we needed moved as well for tonight. You’re all done.”

“Really? It doesn’t feel like I’ve done all that much.”

“Dear you’ve been hard at work all day. You don’t have to try and put on a show for me, you must be tired.”

Ochako rubbed a hand through her hair nervously. It wasn’t really a show. Compared to the work she was used to doing, the work at the center was unbelievably light and hardly taxing at all. But she couldn’t just go and say that so she just laughed it off.
“Well if you’re sure there isn’t anything else I can help with…?”

“No, no. You’ve done more than enough. Thank you. Now I’m sure you and your boyfriend have much more fun things to do tonight, so you go find him and run along.”

“Boy-boyfriend!? No no no, it’s not like that at all! We’re just friends!” Frantically Ochako waved her hands in the air in a panic.

“Is that so? Oh so you two just haven’t confessed to each other yet then. I guess that makes sense with all the sneaking-glances-at-each-other, every chance you got.”

“Just friends! I’ll be going now! Bye! Thank you!”

Ochako bowed quickly and hurried out of the room, but not before she heard the lady call out, “Don’t wait to long, you never know when someone will pop and and snatch him away!”

After making her escape, and doing her best to settle herself down, Ochako soon found Deku waiting for her near the exit to the building, holding onto her coat. As he had been for the last few hours, he was fidgety and flighty. Tumbling over his words.

“He-here you go Uraraka. I was told we were done, so I got your coat.”

When he handed her the coat, he blinked a few times and for a few seconds seemed to turn back to normal, “Are you okay? Your face is all red.”

Ochako pulled her coat on and pulled up her hood, “I’m fine. One of the workers told me a really funny joke. Guess I was laughing pretty hard.”

Well that’s a lame excuse.

Izuku nodded, “oh okay,” and immediately went back to acting nervous once he was sure he was alright.
Thank god Deku bought that.

“You’ll have to tell me that joke later,” Izuku mumbled.

Crap!

“Um sure Deku. But later. Let’s get going. I’m looking forward to the dinner your mom is preparing.”

The walk home was uneventful for them. With a light snowfall and it being later in the evening, the walk back was peaceful, if a little silent. A few times Ochako tried to start a conversation with Izuku, but they all staled. So Ochako let herself become content in their silent walk. Hopeful that maybe she would get some answers once they reached his home.

Maybe Inko knows what’s going on. Deku only started acting up after she called him. I hope it isn’t something bad. Deku would tell me if something was really bothering him.

Reaching his apartment Izuku called out, “Mom we’re back!”

Inko peeked her head into the hallway, “Oh you both are just in time, dinner is just about ready. Why don’t you two take your seats. Mr Yagi got here not that long ago so we’re just about ready to eat.”

After a few quick nods, both Izuku and Ochako took their spots at the dinner table smiling and waving at All Might. Ochako chuckled silently to herself seeing the hero in his apparent favorite oversized yellow pinstripe suit. Settling in, Ochako looked at the spread already set and was very impressed.

Deku’s mom is such a great cook. This all looks so good! She sure did make a lot though. I know Deku’s appetite has gotten pretty big recently, but this is more than enough for us. There’s only four of us and she made enough for like six.

Inko brought in the last of the food, “There we go. Now I think we’re ready to dig in,” she turned and gave Izuku a brief look and smile, “unless there’s anything you’d like to do first?”
Before Ochako could ask however, Izuku cleared his throat, “Actually yeah. Uraraka, I’d...I’d like to give you your christmas present now.”

“Huh? Wait now?” Ochako felt a twinge of panic, she hadn’t known they were doing gifts tonight, “But I don’t have your gift here! I thought we were doing gifts tomorrow!?”

“Oh thats fine! This is kind of a special case.”

“Does this have anything to do with why you’ve been so jumpy today?”

“Um...a little.”

All Might snickered, “nervous huh?”

Inko quietly hushed All Might, “Shh Toshinori. Tease later.”

Ochako looked at the two adults confused before looking back at Deku, “if you want to Deku I don’t mind. I still feel bad I don’t have your gift here though.”

“Please don’t worry about that. Just...close your eyes and hold out your hands?”

“Oh um okay.”

Closing her eyes, Ochako held out her hands. She heard a chair scrape across the floor, guessing it was Deku getting up. There was also some shuffling. Someone was moving around. Ochako felt someone, Deku she guessed, take her hand and put something in it. It was thin. And very light.
“Okay, you can open your eyes now.”

Ochako blinked her eyes open. The first thing she noticed was that Deku was back in his seat, a huge smile on his face. Behind him Inko had her phone out, recording everything. Confused, Ochako looked down at her gift. It was indeed a card. A simple christmas tree shaped card. Opening it, Ochako found it empty, at least there isn’t money, don’t need that kind of charity, however there was something written on it.

“Merry Christmas, and surprise?” Confused, Ochako read it aloud.

Suddenly two pairs of arms wrapped around her, “SURPRISE!”

Yelping in shock, Ochako looked to her sides and was beyond shocked by who she saw, “MOM!? DAD!?”

Mr. Uraraka laughed, “How has my little angel been?”

Mrs. Uraraka hugged Ochako tighter, “Oh we’ve missed you so much.”

So many different questions raced through Ochako’s mind. How had they gotten here? When had they gotten here? Did they fly? Take the train? Wasn’t it too expensive? But with her parents hugging her, these thoughts were quickly tossed aside. Her parents were here, and she couldn’t be happier.

“I can’t believe you’re both here!” Ochako estacily returned her parents hug, wrapping her arms around them and making sure to give them an extra hard squeeze. Mr. Uraraka gave a small, but still surprised chuckle, “Well you better believe it. And go easy on your old man now, someone here clearly doesn’t know her own strength.”

Ochako blushed, “Sorry Dad.”
Mrs. Uraraka put a hand over her mouth, trying to hold back a snicker, “It looks like all that training you’ve told us about has been paying off.”

“Maybe a little,” Ochako said as she let her father go.

Mr. Uraraka made a show of sighing in relief and rubbing his sore sides, “A little she says. Just about snapped me in half.”

Ochako just rolled her eyes while her mother gave him a little poke before turning back towards Inko, who was still recording the whole thing, “I do hope I’ll be getting a copy of that.”

“Oh I’ll make sure you do.” Inko said with a smile, while poorly holding back some tears.

Suddenly remembering they had an audience, Ochako looked back at the other three people at the table, All Might smiling at the show, sipping on his drink. Inko was still recording them, making Ochako somewhat wish she had had the chance to change into something less worked in. Then there was Deku. Who like his mother was also in tears, except he was doing a much worse job holding them back. He wasn’t like a leaky faucet, he was a hydrant cracked open.

At a loss as to what to say next, Ochako ran with the first thing that popped into her head, “Um everyone, these are my parents,”

Not long after everyone took their seats, and began to fill their plates. Ochako sat between her parents on top of the world. But now past her initial surprise that she could start asking a few questions.

“So when did you all get here?”

Her father tapped his chin, “Oh not that long ago, a few hours I think. Inko was kind enough to pick us up from the station.”

Ochako tilted her head, *a few hours ago huh?* *Wait…* Turning to look at Deku something clicked in the back of her head, “Wait, Deku. You got a call from your mom around lunch, then you started acting all weird. Did you know my parents were here?”
Izuku rubbed the back of his head, “Um sorta…”

“Dear,” Mrs Uraraka began, “Your friend is the one that set this whole thing up.”

“What? Deku set this up?” Ochako glanced from her mother back to Deku, “When, how?”

Suddenly finding himself the center of attention, Izuku gulped nervously, “Do you remember when we caught a cold after we got caught in that storm?”

“Yes?”

“Well a couple days after that I talked with mom, and we started looking into trying to get you and your parents tickets so you’d be able to spend the holidays and your birthday together.”

“Wait tickets for all of us?”

Her father answered, “He got us tickets so we would have the chance to celebrate the holiday with everyone thats been taking care of you since we’ve been wanting to meet them, and he got you a ticket so you’d be able to come home with us for a few days, to celebrate with the whole family.”

Ochako was amazed, she was going to get to see everyone, but one part of her question was still unanswered, “But this is just so, its so…” She left the word hang in the air unsaid. Expensive. And gift or no gift, she couldn’t see her parents just being okay with someone spending this kind of money them. She wasn’t sure how she was feeling even. It was just too much. Before Izuku started his answered, her eyes drifted towards All Might, if it was a question of money, then maybe he had a hand in this. All Might however, seeing her look at him shook his head, just enough that only she saw.

“Well Uraraka, you know all that trash we’ve been cleaning?”

“Yeah…” Ochako nodded, not sure where Deku was going with this.

“And you how much of it is full of copper and other kinds of metal?”
Ochako blinked. She blinked again before her eyes widened, “wait you sold the scrap metal?”

“Yes.” Izuku said with a grin.

“But scrap metal doesn’t sell for that much!”

“Yeah but, we’ve cleaned up a lot of trash these past couple of months. And what was left, I was able to pay with some money I was saving.”

“Deku… All of this, just for me though?”

“Uraraka you’re my best friend and you’ve helped me so much this past year. I just wanted you to be happy.”

Ochako could feel her heart skip a beat at that as she squeaked out a soft, “Thank you Deku.”

Her father smirked, “Not many boys are willing to so readily meet a girl’s parents. I don’t know if I should respect that or be worried he’s so forward.”

Izuku gulped, “Forward!?”

While Ochako shrieked, “Daddy!”

All Might didn’t bother holding back his laugh as Izuku tried to get out that he and Ochako were just very good friends. Mrs. Uraraka abolished her husband, but not without a playful smile, “Now dear, you promised you wouldn’t be to hard on the young man.”

“It is not only my right, but my duty to give any boy my daughter ‘hangs out with’ a hard time.”

Izuku sank into his seat while All Might gave him a good natured ribbing, “Always fun meeting the parents, isn’t it my boy.”
“DADDY! We’re just friends! Stop being weird. You’re embarrassing Deku.”

“See Dear. They’re just friends. Right Inko?” Mrs. Uraraka asked Inko.

“Oh yes. They are very good friends. Best friends for sure.”

“And I’m sure its a friendship that will last, won’t it.”

“Oh it’s definitely one thats going to get stronger as they grow up.”

The two mothers shared a quick knowing smile, which was lost on everyone else.

As dinner continued, the poking and prodding from Ochako’s father finally let up, much to Izuku’s relief and soon turned to question of their training. Something All Might was all too happy to share.

“So let me get this straight, for the past nine months, most of their training has been cleaning a beach?” Mr. Uraraka asked in slight disbelief.

“Correct,” All Might confirmed, “My goal was to get them to strengthen muscles that are used everyday. It has much more real life applications than what they’d get simply going to a gym and lifting barbells all day.”

“Ha, if cleaning can be used for hero training, maybe I should have the kids clean up job sites for me. They get to train, and I get free labor.”

“Honey, don’t say that, it’s horrible.”

“Oh like you aren’t thinking the same thing.”

Mrs. Uraraka choose not to answer her husband, and instead when a few sets of eyes looked at her, whistled a little tune, not meeting any of their looks.
“Still Mr. Yagi, I have to say you’ve gone far and beyond anything I could have ever hoped for for my little girl down here. You even got her time under a pro hero.”

“Please, it has been my privilege to help these two. And getting in contact with Gunhead wasn’t that big a deal. Most of the leg work was already done by the agency, I just slipped in and took advantage of it.”

“I do have a question Mr. Yagi,” Mrs Uraraka began, “With your connections with U.A., and after all this training, couldn’t you put our daughter, and Midoriya, in for a recommendation? Bypass the entrance exams all together?”

“Ah so you know about U.A.’s recommendation policy?”

Ochako’s mother shrugged, “Only a little. I mostly know that it exists.”

“To get into U.A through recommendation still requires several tests, written and practical. On top of that there is an interview, so just having the recommendation isn’t a sure way to get it. Also the recommendation needs to come from someone who is well known and respected. Unfortunately for me the name Mr. Toshinori Yagi doesn’t have that much weight behind it.”

All the parents nodded in understanding, while Izuku and Ochako kept their mouths occupied with food. The idea of trying to get into U.A. this way had been brought up before but ran into the same problem. And the alternative, having All Might himself recommend them seemed to big a risk. They didn’t want to have that kind of spotlight on them right from the get go.

Through the rest of the meal, the Midoriya home was filled with warm and pleasant conversation but all too soon it was beginning to get late and in order to help Ochako get packed for their train ride home, the three readied themselves to be off. As Ochako was preparing to follow her parents out the door, Izuku asked her to wait a second before rushing into his room. To her side Ochako heard her father snicker, “Did you see all that All Might stuff. Think the boy has enough?”

“Daddy, don’t you think you’ve teased Deku enough?”

“Never!”
Mrs. Uraraka promptly pushed her husband out into the cold, “You get moving. You’ve had far too much fun tonight. Ochako, we’ll wait for you downstairs.”

“Okay mom, I’ll be right down.”

Ochako heard Izuku’s door slide open and turned to find him hurrying back into the hallway, holding a gift wrapped box in his hands. With a nervous smile, Izuku held up the box to Ochako, “Here, it’s your birthday present. Since you’ll be out of town, I thought I’d better give it to you now.”

“Deku!? You’ve already given me so much already!”

Ochako was floored. She had only just come to terms with the idea that Deku had spent more than enough on her to give her the chance to spend time with her family. Now this? It was too much. Izuku however either, clearly thought otherwise or had no idea that Ochako was fretting over such things as he handed the box to her, “Now this is for your birthday, so you have to wait to open it.”

Nodding, Ochako agreed. The box wasn’t big, just the right size to fit in her arms, and it wasn’t that heavy either. Despite her misgivings over how much money had been spent for her, she couldn’t help but wonder what was in the box. As she thought about what else Deku could have gotten her, a thought crossed her mind.

“Oh no! Your christmas gift! It’s still at my apartment. I won’t be able to get it to you till after I get back!”

“Oh don’t worry about that. It’s okay really. You spending time with your family is way more important.” Izuku waved off her concerns with a reassuring smile.

Ochako pouted, this wasn’t right. Leaving Deku empty handed after all of this just felt so wrong. But it wasn’t like she had anything on hand she could give him. Standing in the doorway she wracked her brain to come up with something. Eyes inadvertently glancing around as her mind raced for an idea. Then she glanced up, and something small and green caught her eye hanging above the door frame.

Mistletoe.
She blinked once. Twice. At the third blink, Ochako could feel her cheeks warm up as she came up with an idea.

*I can’t do that? Can I?*

Ochako looked back at Deku’s smiling face.

*Oh yes I can.*

Swallowing the large lump in her throat, Ochako spoke softly, “Hey Deku. Could you come over here for a sec?”

“Oh sure. Did you need something?”

Izuku took a few steps forward, until he was standing right infront of Ochako. With him so close, and taking just split second to reaffirm her courage, Ochako leaned in and very quickly pressed her lips to his cheek, kissing him.

“Merry Christmas, Deku.”

Then, just as quickly as it happened, Ochako pulled back, turned on her heel, and sprinted out the door and down the stairs. Izuku stood in absolute shock as he raised a hand to his cheek, fingers just grazing where Ochako had kissed him. The skin felt unnaturally warm, and tingly. That warmth quickly spread throughout his body and a huge smile split his face. It was only after a few seconds that Izuku could hear several clicking sounds. Turning slowly, Izuku found his mother, phone in hand, taking picture after picture, “My baby boy is growing up!”

“MOM!”

A couple days later, Izuku got a text message from Ochako. It was a selfie of her holding her gift from him. A Thirteen figure. She had the biggest grin on her face.

Izuku made sure to save the picture.
Month 10 (January)

“Ah you must still be asleep. I don’t blame you, it’s still pretty early now that I look at the time. I’ll keep this brief. I’m afraid something has come up and I’m going to be flying to the other side of Japan. So I’m going to have to leave you and Young Uraraka for a time. Most of this month if I had to guess. Unfortunately I can’t get into the details, legal and libel reasons, but that’s hero work for you. I’m sure you’ll see news reports about it eventually. But I’ll try and make sure I’ll call when I can. You two just make sure to follow the plan I put together for this month. Don’t either of you try and slack off while I’m gone. We’re only two months out, it’s the final push, so you two need to make sure to give it your all. Take care, and be safe.

With a click, Izuku turned off his phones speaker setting and ended the message. Sliding the phone into his pocket he glanced over to Ochako who had a small frown, “And you don’t know what could be happening that All Might needed to fly out so fast to take care of?”

Izuku shook his head, “No. I did some quick searches online but nothing came up. None of the cities on the coasts seem to be having any kind of emergency that I could see.”

“Well, we’ll probably hear about it after its taken care of, like All Might said. That’s normally how it goes.”

“Yeah…”

It was only a few days into the month of January and the early morning air had a sharp crisp to it as Izuku and Ochako sipped on their tea to warm up. After spending her holiday with her parents, Ochako had returned ready to pick up her training where she had left off. Neither she nor Izuku had brought up the kiss. It would be weird for friends to dwell on such things after all.

Taking a sip from his cup, Izuku looked out over the beach.

“Hey Uraraka?”

“Yeah?”
“There isn’t really that much trash left, don’t you think?”

Ochako turned to look at the remaining piles of garbage that litter the sandy beach. Even if she took into account the area’s All Might had sectioned off, she could see that Deku was right. There wasn’t that much trash left, relatively speaking.

“No, we’ve really done a number on this place. It’s almost suitable for people again.” Ochako turned to look at Deku, “Why? What are you thinking?”

Izuku pulled of the paper with the months workout plan, “I think that going off what All Might has written here, we’d be able to get about half of our section cleaned up. Don’t you think?”

Taking a sip of her tea, Ochako scanned over the notes and ran the numbers in her head. After thinking about it a bit she nodded in agreement, “Yeah that seems about right to me. Again, what are you thinking Deku?”

“Want to clean all of it?”

Ochako almost spit out her tea. Sure, the amount of trash left was small, when you compare it to what it had been, but there was still a lot of trash. Ochako would call it crazy to even think about trying to get it all cleaned up. And after their little stunt a few months back, All Might made sure they stuck to his plans.

But All Might wasn’t there now.

Ochako finished her drink and tossed the cup into a trash can, “All Might will be mad if he finds out we tried to clean everything. It’s so far outside his plan I bet he never even thought about it.”

Izuku smiled and threw is cup away, “Only if we try.”

Both looked at each other, smiles turning into smirks. Izuku held up a fist, “Plus ultra?”

Ochako bumped her fist against his, “Plus ultra.”
It wasn’t very often that All Might was caught off guard, let alone left speechless. After having to miss almost the whole month due to hero work that had taken him to the other side of the country, All Might was finally back in town, and had let his two trainees that he would be joining them for their morning workout, as well as bringing with him their new and last work out plan for the month of February. With the entrance exam scheduled for the end of that month, All Might had put a great deal of time into planning out how to best use what little time they had left to the maximum while at the same time making sure he didn’t burn the two out without any time to recover for the exam. The trip back was spent going over so many different factors his private jet’s cabin looked like a conspiracy nut’s room. But after pulling his truck into the beach’s parking lot, and with the sun only just peeking out from the horizon he didn’t think he was going to need it anymore.

All Might looked at the scene before him. From one side of the beach, to the other. From the shore, to the open water. It was clean. Dagobah Beach, the most well known unofficial junk yard in the city, was completely clean. Finally, after getting over his initial shock, All Might felt his voice come back to him, “Hey, hey, hey! This is incredible, this is too much! Not just the sections I told them, but the whole beach is clean! Seriously? There's not a can, a bottle, I don’t even think they left a speck of dust! Seriously?? I can understand if they got a little ahead of schedule, but this, they jumped ahead a whole month! This isn’t just a win, it’s a flawless victory! OH MY, OH MY GOODNESS!!”

Someone cleared their throat, and All Might turned. There, on top of a large heap of the last remaining trash to be picked up, sat Izuku and Ochako.

Sweaty.

Dirty.

Tired.

Proud.

Both looked down at All Might from their perch, with wide smiles. They had pushed, worked, and fought to finish the cleanup. And after a month of early starts, and late finishes with the last few hours from this very morning, they had reached their goal. Seeing the shocked All Might had been the icing on the cake.
“Well,” Izuku began, “What do you think All Might? Beach looks pretty good, don’t you think?”

All Might bellowed out a laugh, “Pretty good. I’d say that’s the understatement of the century Young Midoriya. You two have gone far beyond what I had envisioned. You both have lived up to Plus Ultra.”

“Thank you All Might,” both said in unison.

All Might pulled out a notebook from his coat, “I had this whole next month planned out for the both of you, but now?” All Might turned and tossed it into the open tailgate of his truck, “I don’t think we need it anymore.”

Izuku looked over at Ochako, who mirrored his own shocked expression. Turning back Izuku asked, “If we don’t need that plan anymore, does that mean? Are we?”

“Congratulations. You’ve both completed the Aim to Pass! American Dream Plan.”

Ochako cheered, loudly. She didn’t scream out any words. No hurrays, or awesome. It was just a yell of pure joy and pride. While Ochako expressed her joy in exuberance, Izuku was much more reserved. He was in tears, but he kept himself as collected as he could. If he was done, then he had a question he had to ask. Standing up on wobbly legs, Izuku made his way down the heap and kept walking until he stood before All Might. Ochako let herself calm down as she watched Deku, feeling that her screaming at this moment was wrong. What came next, deserved her undivided attention.

“All Might, you said that I’m done? That I’ve completed your training?”

“You have. You’ve done everything I asked for, and more.”

Izuku swallowed, his mouth and throat suddenly dry, “Then I’m ready right? I’ve become a proper vessel. Worthy to carry One for All.”

“You are worthy, Young Midoriya.”
Warm joy bubbled up from Izuku’s heart. His reservations faded, and he started to laugh. He had done it. After all his hard work. He would finally, finally…

“But.”

The warmth Izuku felt cooled. A chill of dread crept into him.

“I’m not going to give One for All to you.”

Izuku felt as if the ground had been ripped from underneath his feet. In an instant he was falling into a pit of his own self doubt, fear and despair. Every feeling he had before he had started training came roaring back in that darkness, in spades. Panic tightened around his throat like a noose as he tried and failed to steady his breathing. It didn’t make sense. What had he done wrong.

“I don’t, I don’t understand. Did I make a mistake? Are you angry with me? What did I do wrong?! What did I do!? All Might what did I do wrong!?”

Quickly, but firmly, All Might reached down and took Izuku by the shoulders, “Young Midoriya please, calm yourself. Please just take deep breaths. You’ve done nothing wrong. You’ve done everything I asked of you. Everything and more.”

“Then why? Wasn’t giving me One for All after I completed your training the whole plan?”

“You’re correct. From the moment you agreed to become the next vesal I planned to give you One for All once your training was done for the entrance exam. But as we got closer to the end, I started to realize something. I knew what the effect One for All could have on your body, but not the effect it would have on your quirk.”

“My quirk?”

“That’s right. I need to know that both your body and quirk are ready for this. And I can think of no better way to see than for you to use your quirk while you are in U.A.”
“But how am I supposed to get into U.A. without One for All?!”

“You have your own quirk that you can use.”

Izuku shook his head, “I can’t use my quirk. It’s not good enough! I’m not good enough!”

All Might said nothing for a bit. He supposed it was now or never. Time to see if the other part of his training, his plan had worked.

“Young man, I think it’s time for you to realize just how powerful you are.”

Getting up, All Might walked over to his truck and leaned inside, rummaging around as he looked for something. All Might had known that sooner or later this day would come, and he was thankful he was prepared. As All Might dug around, on a whim he looked up through the trucks windows and confirmed that Uraraka was watching him very closely. She had not rushed down to comfort Young Midoriya, nor had she said anything harsh or uncouth towards All Might as she may have once done in the past. Before, All Might had asked her to trust him when dealing with Izuku, and by staying back and letting this play out, she was showing that trust. And All Might was very grateful.

With a muffled “ah ha!” All Might found what he had been looking for. With a bit more rummaging and some sly prep work, an impressive feat for someone of his size, All Might pulled out two objects and showed them to Izuku.

“Do you recognize what I’m holding here Young Midoriya?”

Numbly, Izuku nodded, “Those are the containers I use when I practice with my quirk. That one,” Izuku pointed at a small cup, “was the first one I used. And that one,” he pointed at All Mights other hand, “is the bucket I’ve been using now.”

“A big difference wouldn’t you say. Going from a coffee cup to a five gallon bucket,” All Might held the two containers right next to each other, showing Izuku the vast size difference, “And when you think about how much water they hold, how much added weight you’ve moved around, it’s a very impressive improvement. Wouldn’t you agree?”
“But that bucket only holds around forty five pounds of water. It’s not that impressive.”

“All Might glanced briefly at Ochako who was leaning forward as she watched. A look of nervous anticipation etched on her face. She had a guess at what was coming. She just had to trust that All Mights plan worked.

“All Might, would you hold these please.”

Izuku frowned, not seeing the point of the request, “All Might why…”

“Please Young Midoriya. Just trust me. Everything will be clear, I promise.”

After only a brief pause, the two containers glowed bright green, and lifted out of All Mights hands. Hovering above the ground between the two. All Might looked from one container to the other, his eyes lingering on the large bucket a few extra moments. He watched it carefully then smiled.

“Not too heavy right?”

Izuku shook his head, “No, they’re empty so it’s easy. All Might what does this have to do…”

All Might held up a hand, silencing Izuku, “Do you remember the rules I put in place when I started your quirk training?”

Izuku nodded.

“What was the most important rule I gave you. The one rule I emphasized over everything else.”

“Um watch my toes?”
Despite the seriousness of the situation, Ochako giggled at that. Even All Might chuckled softly to himself, rubbing the back of his head, “That’s true. I did definitely tell you that. But I also said something else. Something just as important.”

“That any equipment that was for quirk training I was only to use my quirk to move it. I was not allowed to touch it.”

“That’s right. Now you can go ahead and just drop those.”

Izuku blinked but did as All Might said. The cup landed in the sand with a solid thud, but when the bucket hit the sand, a loud crash rang out from it that echoed out far past the beach. The loud noise startled Izuku enough that he instinctually skipped backwards a few steps. Ochako leapt up from her seat and off the trash heap, staring at the dropped bucket then at All Might wide eyed. All Might, the only one not startled from the noise, glanced back at her and smiled. Ochako looked at All Might, then the bucket, then Deku, then back to All Might. Her nervousness evaporated away, replaced with excitement as her lips quivered into a large toothy grin.

“All might,” Izuku began, “What?”

“Young Midoriya, pick these up. You may go ahead and use your hands.”

Cautiously Izuku moved forward, before choosing to pick up the coffee cup. Reaching down, Izuku plucked the cup from the sand, eyes going wide when he felt the weight of it. It wasn’t just a little heavier than a normal coffee cup, its was heavier by several pounds. Izuku wasn’t dumb, and feeling this caused something began to click in the back of his mind. The gears in his head were starting to turn. Izuku dropped the cup shaped container back into the sand and rushed over to the bucket. Grabbing the handle Izuku pulled up, and almost fell over when it stayed stuck in the sand. Izuku regained his balance and tried to pull it up again, but it wouldn’t budge. He moved his hands to the top rim and was hit by two surprises. The first was that, like the cup, this bucket was not made of normal plastic material, now that he could touch it, he could tell it was some kind of ultra dense metal. Very sturdy. Very heavy. And second, the bucket wasn’t empty. Stacked inside, almost to the top were multiple round weight lifting plates. Reaching down, Izuku hefted the top plate up and out of the bucket, letting it rest on the rim for everyone to see. On the top plate was its weight stamped into the metal. It took Izuku several tries to make out the number in his addled state.

100 Lbs.

The bucket was filled to the brim with 100 lbs plates.
“All Might? I don’t, I don’t understand. What’s going on?”

“Think back Young Midoriya. The day I made the offer to you, I told you what you had two things holding your quirk back. Your lack of use had atrophied it, and your conscious thoughts, as a result of being bullied as a child, limited its strength to a preconceived limit. So I came up with a plan. One, make you use it. Train it. Work it so that it grew stronger through repetition. But also, I made sure you were doing more than what you perceived you were doing. So that you didn’t limit yourself, I made sure you trained past any limit your mind could come up with.”

In Izuku’s mind, everything clicked into place at last, but the conclusion he came to, it was too far fetched to put into words. Too impossible to be true.

“I don’t believe this…”

“Yes you do. I can see those gears spinning in that head of yours. You know exactly what this means. You just have to accept it.”

The last remnants of self doubt clawed and clung to Izuku, practically speaking for him in defiance of the truth, “But, but I’m still just me. Even if, even if this is all real. How can I be good enough for U.A.?”

All Might laughed, “Young Midoriya, you were so focused on the end result. Of getting One for All. I don’t think you ever noticed the changes you went through. What you’ve become. What do you think becoming a vessel for One for All did to you?”

Walking forward, All Might in one swift motion yanked Izuku’s sweatshirt off and pull him to one of the trucks side mirrors. Making Izuku finally look at himself. Gone was the timid, skinny, twig of a boy. In his place was a young man, sculpted from months of training to become a hero.

That’s me?

That person in the mirror is me?
Izuku blinked away a few tears, and repeated that phrase in his head again, but it was no longer a question.

It was a statement.

A fact.

A declaration.

That’s me.

That person in the mirror is me.

All Might took Izuku by his shoulders and lead him back a few steps past the truck and the training gear. Back enough so that he had all the room he could want.

“Young Midoriya. I want you to do something for me. Close your eyes and just reach out with your quirk. Don’t think about it, just reach out and grab what you can and lift it up. No overthinking. No over analyzing. Block out everything around you and just focus on the act.”

Izuku looked up at All Might and gave him a stiff, but affirmative nod. Turning back, Izuku closed his eyes, letting himself become enveloped in a black darkness. With each deep breath he took the world around him faded away. The sound of the waves, the smell of the ocean, the feel of the crisp air on his skin all vanished from his mind. The doubts from before were silent, the cruel words from his memories no longer reached him. It was just him. Just Midoriya Izuku. With one last deep breath, Izuku raised his hand out and just let his quirk spread out. He could feel it take hold of something. Many things, but what they all were, he didn’t think about. He just kept reaching out until he felt there was nothing left to grab hold to. Slowly, carefully, Izuku turned his hand over, palm up towards the sky, and did what All Might had asked him to do. He lifted up. There was resistance at first, but he kept the pressure of his quirk constantly pushing upwards. He could feel a give, then suddenly the resistance was gone. He could feel it in his mind. He had lifted something up.

“Deku, oh my gosh!”

He heard Uraraka to his side. She sounded like she was in awe.
“Well, I’ll be… Young Midoriya, I want you to open your eyes.”

Opening his eyes, his first instinct was to look over at Uraraka. She had sounded so awestruck. Sure enough she was just staring straight ahead, a hand over her mouth, and tears in her eyes. She looked so happy. Slowly, he turned to face forward, and his whole world changed in an instant.

Izuku had reached out with his quirk. Only he had reached out much much farther than he realized, or had ever thought possible. And he was holding so much more than he could have ever thought possible.

The fake cup.

The metal bucket.

All the 100 lbs weights.

All Might’s truck.

The scrap heap.

All of it, surrounded by a bright green light, was floating several feet in the air.

“I think, Young Midoriya, it's safe to say you’ve finally arrived.”

In that moment, the dam broke for Izuku. He had shed some tears up till then, but now, he wept. He fell to his knees and wept loudly, and openly. He hadn’t cried like this in months. Not since All Might first told him he could be a hero. In some ways for Izuku, that was a lifetime ago.

As Izuku cried, All Might gave a small exasperated sigh, speaking softly with a bit of humor “We still need to get those leaky eyes of your fixed, but I suppose it’s not the biggest deal in the world.”
All Might then took a few small purposeful steps back, so that he was no longer standing between Izuku, and Ochako. Ochako looked from Deku to All Might, who gave her a quick nod, and launched herself at Deku, wrapping her arms around him and holding him as he slowly regained his composure. Soon Izuku was able to reel himself in and stood back up. He smiled at Ochako, thanking her for being there. Ochako returned the smile, though as she got a better look at him, noticed fresh beads of sweat forming on his forehead, and she could see his temple and brow were twitching. It dawned on her that Deku was *still* holding everything up.

“Um Deku, I think you can let go now.”

“Let go… OH! Yeah I think that’d be a good idea, my head is starting to hurt. A lot actually.”

“Please don’t drop the truck Young Midoriya!”

Izuku flinched before giving All Might a thumbs up, “Right, I’ll put everything down gently.”

With the pressure on his head gone, Izuku sighed in relief. Ochako looked over everything with a calculating eye, “how much do you think all that weighed? Three tons?”

“Three sounds about right. Maybe a little more.”

A little competitive feeling surfaced as Ochako puffed up, teasing Deku a a little, “Well Deku, keep working at it, and I’m sure you’ll be able to lift as much as me one day.”

Izuku glared at her from the corner of his eye, “Can’t you just let me have this Uraraka?” Despite the words though, both of them were smiling brightly.

“Ah, but we would be remiss if we overlooked Young Uraraka and everything she’s accomplished.”

“Eh?” Ochako gasped out, suddenly finding herself the new center of attention.

“Not only have you been able to increase the maximum weight limit of your quirk, you’ve also made great strides in your ability to use it on yourself. On top of that,” All Might took
hold of Ochako’s arm rolling up her sleeve and while not as defined as Izuku’s there was a definite muscle bulge as she flexed, “I’d say you have come a long way in terms of your physical strength and combat prowess. You’ve shown some real natural talent.”

“I had some really good teachers to help me get here,” Ochako beamed proudly from All Mights praise, while Izuku tried his best not to stare too hard, though he was finding it very hard not to.

Rolling her sleeve back down Ochako looked over at the beach, “So what happens now? You said we’ve finished your training, but the entrance exam is still a month away.”

“I think this would be a good chance for the two of you to let your bodies recover. You’ve been pushing yourselves hard for a long time. Take the opportunity to rest. Now I’m not saying to let yourselves to get lazy, maintaining yourselves in times of ease is just as important as the training to get yourselves here, but you’ve both earned a chance to catch your breath.”

Both Izuku and Ochako nodded, neither wanted to let all their hard work vanish now that they were so close to their goal.

“I suppose,” Izuku started, “We could use the time to make sure we are ready for the written exam. I’d be really bad if that's the part that catches us off guard.”

“That’s a good idea Deku.”

All Might nodded in agreement, “Very good. A hero is more than just a strong body. However, before you get to that, this is a time to celebrate. So let me take you two to get a nice breakfast, my treat.”

Izuku and Ochako were more than happy to take All Might up on his offer and quickly got into his truck.

After a nice day of celebrating, it was a few hours after sundown and Ochako yawned as she fell into her bed happy, but exhausted. Knowing that she was finally finished with her preparation training and would be able to sleep in for the first time in forever, she wondered if her body was
about to collect on all the sleep she had missed. Not bothering to set her alarm Ochako pulled on her mittens and buried herself in her comforter. As she drifted to sleep, she couldn’t help but think back to the morning. Seeing Deku finally, fully, break through the mental blocks holding his quirk back, had been breathtaking. The look of unimaginable joy he had, seeing what he could do for the first time made her feel so happy and proud of him. He had worked so hard, and it showed.

Oh boy did it show.

Ochako could feel her face heat up as she recalled the way that the early morning light, and the green glow from Deku’s quirk, had done a wonderful job of defining each and every muscle that had been uncovered when he had his top taken off. Try as she might, which wasn’t very hard if she was being honest with herself, she couldn’t deny that her best friend, Midoriya Izuku, was hot. He was hot, and looking at him made her feel, something. A lot of something. She just couldn’t find the right word for it. Or the right word that didn’t make her make her extremely uncomfortable if she thought about what it meant. She didn’t hate this feeling, but she wasn’t a fan of how distracting it was. What it did to her.

What it was doing to her.

How it made her feel so warm.

Too warm for the heavy comforter that after some tossing and turning was kicked to the side in a huff. Ochako lay still, looking up at her ceiling in the darkness of her room, lost in her thoughts.

I don’t know why I’m so surprised. I know how hard he’s work to get where he is. Of course he’d be in great shape. So what if he’s hot now? It doesn’t change anything. He’s still Deku. My best friend. My Deku...

Ochako ignored the best she could the small shudder that went up her body with that last, possessive, thought.

And it’s not like he’s the kind of boy to go and show off. He’s focused on his dream, like me. So I don’t need to worry about him getting distracted. He’ll want to be just like All Might. Focused on being a hero.... Though... He’s such an All Might fanboy he might decide to mimic his costume too.

Ochako’s imagination flashed an image in her mind. Deku posed, arms raised mid flex, in a perfect
replica of All Mights hero costume. A costume that clung to Deku so tightly it showed off each and
every muscle he had. Ochako smiled and unconsciously licked her lips. Soon though the image
changed, and Ochako wasn’t the only one looking at Deku. He was a hero, so the whole world
would have its eyes on him, and the world was filled with other girls besides herself. And the
thought of other girls looking at Deku, her Deku, brought a deep frown to Ochako. But just as
quickly as the thought came, Ochako shook her head and covered her face with her mittens,
groaning into them in frustration.

**WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME!?**

Ochako kept her face covered as she tried to force herself to calm down. She had no reason to be
getting this upset over something that hadn’t happened. No reason to feel this jealousy.

*Calm down. Just calm down.*

Slowly, she could feel herself cool off as she practically willed her heart to stop beating so fast.
Faced still covered, Ochako remember the breathing exercises Gunhead had taught her, and walked
herself through them. Deep slow breaths. With each breath, she felt the unease leave her, until at
last she felt calm and collected.

She was fine.

She was fine right up until her phone suddenly began ringing, startling Ochako enough that she
bolted upright. Reaching out in a daze, Ochako forgot to take her mittens off as she fumbled with
her small flip phone.

*Who could be calling me at this hour? Mom? Dad?*

Ochako looked at the caller I.D.

Deku.

Ochako stared at the screen in disbelief, **ARE YOU KIDDING ME!? Deku’s calling me now!? After
all of...whatever all that was. I can’t talk to him now.**
The phone rang again, as if to spite her.

*I’m asleep right now. It’ll go to voicemail and he’ll think that I’m asleep and I can deal with this in the morning or something.*

Another ring. Only a couple more and then she could go to sleep. One ring. Two rings. At three, Ochako practically growled as she ripped a mitten off and flipped her phone open, “Hello?”

She tried very hard to keep herself calm. She was not going to let her own frustration cause her to snap at Deku.

“Hi Uraraka. I’m sorry I hope I didn’t wake you or anything. I know its really late and I probably should have waited, but I really wanted to ask you something, but it’s definitely something that could have waited but I had this idea that I wanted to try but I know it’s not super important but…”

Deku was lost, mumbling on the other end of the line. It was late at night, well past time for phone calls and Deku had called Ochako and immediately started to mumble and ramble away. And Ochako, who just moments before was lost in a storm of confused emotions and feelings couldn’t help but smile as suddenly all those silly thoughts melted away. Deku, was still Deku, and that was more than enough for her.

“Easy Deku, easy. It’s ok. I hadn’t fallen asleep yet, so don’t worry about it.”

A sigh of relief, “oh that's good.”

“So what’s up? Everything okay?”

“Oh yeah, everythings fine. Everythings really good actually.”

*He does sound pretty happy,* “Well you did have one heck of a morning today.”

Ochako could hear the phone swoosh as Deku bobbed his head quickly in agreement, “It really was incredible. That I could do all that. Uraraka I can’t even begin to imagine what’s possible for me to do with my quirk now… Which is kinda the reason I called you.”
“Oh?”

“Well you see, it’s like I said. I have no idea what I can do with my quirk. What’s my actual max weight limit now? How far away can I be and still lift things? How hard can I throw something? Push it? Pull it? How many different things can I hold at the same time? I just don’t know. I really don’t know anything about my quirk.”

For a few seconds Ochako could feel worry creeping into her mind. Worry that Deku was starting to panic and that old lack of confidence in himself was beginning to worm its way back into him. However these fears were quickly dashed.

“And Uraraka, I really really want to find out. I want to test myself, and see just how strong I really am. Just what I’m capable of. So even though All Might said we should take some time to rest, I was thinking of going back to the beach tomorrow and well, seeing what I’m made of.”

The determination in his voice dashed every worry Ochako had, and she felt her smile grow, “That’s a great idea Deku. That should help you a whole lot when we take the entrance exam.”

“Yeah, exactly. So like I said, I decided that I was going to head over there tomorrow morning, and then I thought…” Izuku trailed off towards the end.

“You thought what Deku?”

“I thought I’d ask if, if you’d like to come along. I know I’m probably being a little selfish, but we’ve been training together for so long it felt weird going by myself so I thought maybe you’d want to um, maybe come with me? Though I’m sure you would rather,” Before Izuku could continue Ochako quickly cut him off.

“Yes.”

“Huh?”

“Yes, I’d love to go with you.” *LOVE?!”*
“Really? That’s great! It doesn’t have to be super early in the morning or anything. We could do something around after lunch then come back to my place for dinner like normal.”

“Yeah, sure. Let’s say noon then? That should give us plenty of time.”

“Okay great! Thank you Uraraka. I was a little worried about calling you so late to ask you about this. I thought maybe you’d rather use the time we had left to relax.”

“Deku, we’re in this together. Of course I’d want to be with you for this.”

There was a brief pause, during which Ochako swore she could hear some sniffling from Deku,
“Uraraka, thank you. Really. Thank you. I’ll um, I’ll let you get back to going to sleep then. See you tomorrow.”

“Sweet dreams Deku.”

Closing her phone and putting it away, Ochako couldn’t keep the smile off her face. After months of waiting, and getting a huge peek earlier, she was finally going to get to see Deku let himself go and use his quirk to his heart's content. Of course she was going to want to be there. Mind filled with the possibilities tomorrow would bring, Ochako pulled her mitten and comforter back on and finally she fell asleep.

Izuku was a bundle of nervous excitement as he waited at the beach for Uraraka. After his phone call with her, instead of going straight to bed, he had stayed up late writing out different ideas on how he was going to test out his quirks newfound limits. If his mother hadn’t walked into his room and practically thrown him into bed, he was sure to have stayed up all night.

Upon arriving Izuku quickly made his way down to the far edge of the beach, where the man made concrete wall separating the shore and the main land ended and a natural wall made out of many large stones and boulders began. Far enough away that he should be able to do his tests without worrying about possible hurting any passersby or getting spotted by an officer ready to reprimand him for using his quirk out in the open without a proper license.
Pulling out his notebook, Izuku started to mumble to himself as he again went through the tests he planned to run, making sure the had space for each tests results in the marked off pages.

*It’s funny. I don’t think I can remember the last time I was excited over anything about my quirk. Actually the last time was probably before I ran into Kachan after visiting the doctor...so maybe not so funny now that I think about it. BUT, that’s in the past! And I need to focus on the now, and future! Still, I wonder what Kachan will do once he sees what I can do now. Maybe he’ll finally think my quirk is cool, like his...*

Izuku was so caught up in his thoughts, he failed to notice Ochako walking up behind him. Ochako, with a big smile, tapped Izuku on the shoulder, “Hey Deku-!”

“WHAAA!”

Startled, Izuku jumped up, inadvertently throwing his notebook up in the air. Frantacly, Izuku fumbled around catching the book before it hit the sand, before turning to find Ochako, hand over her mouth, trying not to laugh at the spectacle she had just witnessed.

“Uraraka!? Don’t sneak up on me like that.”

“Pft, I’m sorry but that’s completely your own fault.”

Rubbing his head embarrassed, Izuku remembered why Uraraka was out here with him, “Uraraka, thanks again for coming out. I’m sure you had other things you’d want to be doing on your time off.”

Ochako waved him off, “Deku I lo-like spending time with you. And if there’s something I can do to help you, all the better. So I assume you have a plan for today?”

Izuku smiled and opened his notebook up and showed the pages filled with tests to her. Uraraka blinked as she scanned over the many different tests, “Wow thats a lot.”

“We don’t have to do all of them of course. I kinda just wrote down every idea I had before I went to bed.”
“Okay then. Do you have any equipment? All Might took everything with him after we finished yesterday.”

Izuku motioned to the wall of rocks, “I figured I could practice with all the large stones over here. No need to carry anything, plus if something breaks it’ll be fine.”

Ochako hummed in approval, though she did give Izuku a pointed look, “Just make sure you don’t include yourself in the ‘if something breaks it’ll be fine’ category.”

“Oh come on, you make it sound like I have a habit of hurting myself.”

Deadpanned, Ochako pulled out a pouch of tissues, over half of which were gone because of all the times his nose started bleeding. Izuku laughed nervously and quickly moved to change the subject, “Sooo, you ready to start?”

“Sure Deku.”

For the next few hours Izuku and Ochako experimented with his quirk. At first Ochako had very little to do. Izuku started by pulling large rocks from the beach wall face from increasing distances, jotting down in his book his effective radius. Next he moved onto seeing how many different large objects he could move around independently of each other, making a bit of a show acting like he was juggling some of the smaller stones, much to Ochako’s delight.

When Izuku moved to throwing objects, he quickly came to interesting result that he immediately wrote down into his book, “So while I can lift a couple of tons, I can’t throw that much weight around.”

“Don’t you think that’s odd?” Ochako asked as she casually watched him write in his notebook.

Izuku chewed on the end of his pencil, “Not really when you think about it. You remember some of the large pieces of trash we cleaned up here. Like the sinks. You could pick those up towards the end without issue” Ochako smirked and flexed, “but do you think you’d be able to throw one?”

“Oh, when you put it like that. I guess it does make sense.”
Izuku nodded and after finishing his notes closed his book, “Okay Uraraka, do you think you could use your quirk on that rock over there?”

“That one? Sure. One sec.” Walking over, Ochako tapped the large stone and lifted it up, “Anything you want me to do with it?”

“Yeah just push it up a little higher and then drop it. I want to try and catch it as it’s falling.”

“Oh, okay. Just be careful and don’t stand under it.”

Izuku laughed, “Right, because that’s something I’d do. Walk right into something that dangerous.”

“No you’re right. You’d run.”

Izuku snickered, “Okay Uraraka I think that’s a good height, I’m ready.”

“Release!”

The stone plummeted towards the ground as Izuku quickly reached out with his quirk and grabbed it, stopping it a few feet from the ground. Izuku inhaled sharply as a familiar dull pain throbbed in his head. Ochako heard Izuku and glanced his way, “Deku? You alright?”

Izuku dropped the stone, and spent a few seconds collecting himself, “I’m fine. Learned something too. Using my quirk on an object that already has a force acting on it is a lot like when I try to throw something. The extra force lowers my weight limit. Also makes things harder to keep hold of.”

As Izuku put that into his notebook, Ochako rubbed her chin, “What do you think would happen if something you were already holding had a force put on it?”

“Oh, thats a good one! Let’s test that next.”
Izuku lifted the large stone back into the air in front of Ochako, “Try and move it Uraraka.”

Nodding, Ochako put her hands onto the rock, and pushed. There was a little give at first, she could hear Izuku take a sharp breath, but soon afterwards, the rock stayed put. She put her back into it, and while she could hear Izuku’s strained breathing letting her know he was putting in some effort, the rock wouldn’t budge. Pulling back, Ochako was about to tell Izuku he could drop it, when a sudden idea came to her. On a whim, she leapt up and hung onto the rock, keeping her feet off the ground.

“Uraraka!”

Ochako, after she was sure she was secure, looked over at Izuku, “try and move it now.”

Izuku grunted, but after some effort started moving the rock in a circle around himself.

“Come on Deku! Faster!” Ochako cheered, having fun with her new ride.

Smirking, Izuku gave her what she wanted and pushed the rock faster and faster. Soon though the inevitable happened and Ochako after one too many rotations could feel herself getting dizzy. With a yelp her grip loosened and she tumbled to the ground. Izuku started let his grip on the rock drop, sending the stone into the ocean. Hurrying over to Ochako, worried he may have hurt her, his worries were brushed aside as Ochako sat up laughing.

“That was awesome Deku! I wanna go again!”

Izuku laughed as he helped her up and began scanning around, “Sure, though maybe I can get something a little bigger for you to hold onto.”

Before he could, Ochako came up with an idea that brought a huge smile to her face, “Actually I have an idea, lets cut out the middle man.”

“What do you mean?” Izuku asked, his head tilted to the side as he watched Ochako, who was almost giddly with excitement.
“Okay Deku, why don’t you try picking me up.” Ochako said quickly as she moved to where the last few test boulders had been.

“Are you sure?” Izuku asked. While the day had been going great, he had learned so much and had filled many pages in his notebook on his quirk, lifting a person was a completely new direction for him.

“Come one Deku. Don’t get cold feet now. You just launched a boulder all the way out there,” she motioned towards the ocean, “I wanna see what you can do to a person!”

Ochako paused when she noticed a mischievous grin cross Izuku’s face, “Though I swear, if you do that to me, no hero in the world would be able to save you. Got it?” she cracked her knuckles for added emphasis.

Izuku just smiled at Ochako’s threat, but chose not to say anything on the matter. He could try and play it off by pretending to be offended, but he had serious doubts Uraraka would buy it. So instead he simply asked, “Are you ready” and after an excited nod from Ochako, reached out his hand and let his quirk envelope Ochako, like he had done multiple times to the rocks and boulders before.

Ochako held back a gasp as she felt Izuku’s quirk take hold of her. She hadn’t been very sure what to expect, but it certainly hadn’t been this. The green glow had a warmth that made her skin tingle and there was a constant pressure all over her body. Not like someone grabbing her, but like she was being swaddled. It felt good. It felt really, really good.

*I should have asked him to use his quirk on me ages ago.*

For Izuku though, almost immediately he could feel something was different. Moving from an inanimate object to a living person was a night and day difference. He had to concentrate much harder just to get a hold of Uraraka, and even when he had her, he could feel his quirk getting repelled back.

Ochako looked over at Deku, about to tell him to go ahead and pick her up when she noticed the look of concentration on his face with his eyebrows all scrunched up, “Deku, are you okay?”

“It’s weird. It’s like trying to hold two magnets with the same poles facing each other together in my hand. I have you, but it’s a constant fight. Are you okay? Do you feel anything weird?”
No this feels great! “I feel fine Deku.”

“Alright, I’m going to lift you up now.”

Izuku rotated his hand so that his palm faced up and lifted, but Ochako stayed on the ground and a very strong feeling hit Izuku as he tried. It was a sensation he had already felt earlier when he had experimented with lifting an object from incremental distances, but this was much stronger and he was feeling the strain from an exceptionally closer distance than before. It seemed that issues he had lifting an object were magnified greatly when applied to a person. Izuku continued to try to life Ochako for a few more seconds before he felt an all too familiar pain start to pound in his head. Quickly the green glow around Ochako flashed out, and Izuku whipped his hand to his forehead, hissing out an “ow ow ow!”

“Deku!”

Rushing forward, Ochako dug her hands into her pockets to pull out some tissues she always carried with her. After being around Deku and his bloody nose, she was always prepared for a quick clean up when he overused his quirk. When she reached him, she was relieved to see that at least some of her worry turned out to be unnecessary. While he was busy rubbing his temple, he at least wasn’t bleeding.

“Deku,” Ochako started again, this time more calm, “everything alright?”

Izuku nodded slowly, “Yeah, yeah I’m ok. I may have pushed a little too hard. By the way, ow.”

Once Izuku had, more or less, rubbed the pain out of his head, he gave Ochako a smile to show he was okay, “Sorry for worrying you. I’m fine now.”

“Do you know what happened?”

“Yeah I do. I tried to lift someone who eats too much mochi.”

Izuku snickered when Ochako gave him a playful shove.
“You better watch yourself Deku.”

“I got it, I got it!”

Izuku sighed after he calmed down, “I think I know what happened in case you’re still curious.”

Ochako nodded, giving Izuku her full attention.

“When I tried to lift you, it felt different than when I was moving those boulders around. It was like my quirk was getting pushed away, so I was having to put a lot more effort into holding you with it.”

“Why do you think that is?”

“It’s probably related to my Mom’s quirk. She can pull small objects towards herself, but that’s the limit to it. Her quirk doesn’t work on people at all. I guess even though my quirk is a stronger version of her’s, I inherited that issue. I’m pretty sure I’ll be able to lift a person, but it’s going to take some work.”

“Well that’s not too bad. It’s just something you’ll have to work towards is all,” Ochako said encouragingly.

“Yeah I guess so, but it’s strange,” Izuku put a hand on his chin as he began to think, “A few months ago when I followed those guys that were harassing that girl, Toga, I was able to pull one of them when he threw a punch at me. I don’t remember having this issue. Could I have ignored it since it was a spur of the moment decision? Maybe I was in such a hurry and focused on helping her I just don’t remember the finer details? Perhaps I was being boosted by adrenaline, or its like when I was attacked by the Sludge Villain and was subconsciously going past a mental limit.

“Um Deku?”

But I’m over that now and I’m still having an issue. Hmm maybe I’m looking at this wrong. With Uraraka I was trying to lift her completely, which I suppose is fundamentally different than the other two times. With the Sludge Villain I wasn’t actually using my quirk on his body. I was more
or less using it to create a force to push him off, which now that I’m thinking about it, how did I even do that? I’ll need to look into that.

“Deku? Hello?”

Then there’s the guy from the alley. I know I was able to pull him off balance. And I didn’t feel that repulsive feeling when I did. Could it be because I was only using my quirk on a smaller part of his body. Just his arm. Could it be because he was already moving in the direction I pulled so his own force added to my quirk? No, even before I was trying to move Uraraka, I could feel the difference. Then what made that time and this time different? Could I have grabbed something else besides his actual arm? But what could I have....

“DEKU! Earth to Deku!”

Startled, Izuku stopped what he was doing when Ochako grabbed him by the shoulders and gave him a little shake.

“What? Oh Uraraka. Yes?”

Ochako deadpanned at Izuku’s seemingly lost response, “You know that you said all of that out loud right?”

“Oh was I mumbling?”

“Mumbling, rambling, falling down a rabbit hole to Wonderland, take your pick.”

Izuku blushed, rubbing the back of his head in embarrassment, “Sorry about that, I guess I got carried away.”

“I swear sometimes I wish I could see what’s running through your head when you dive off the deep end like that. Then I remember that besides being a huge hero nerd, you’re a teenage boy and I’d rather not be subjected to all the stuff you got in there as well.”

“HEY! I’m not like that.”
“Uh huh? Do you remember the magazine I found in your room? The one with the Wild Wild Pussycats?”

Izuku flushed red, “It had a brand new article over their most daring rescue opt! They were talking about how they used their quirks together to pull it off”

Ochako crossed her arms, not convinced at all, “Right. You got it for the articles. Not the Pixie-Bob spreads.”

Arms flailing, Izuku continued to defend himself, “I don’t see how this even matters right now! That was a while ago, and you took it before I could even use it!”

Ochako raised an eyebrow, “Use it?” Implications heavy in her voice.

“READ IT! I MEANT READ IT!”

Izuku covered his face as he sank down into the sand in embarrassment. Ochako soon broke out into a small fit of snickers, “Sorry Deku, but sometimes you make it so easy.”

Izuku stood back up in a huff, “One day Uraraka, one day you’ll get yours.”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “Right, that’ll be the day. So want to tell me what you were mumbling about? I could only catch every other word.”

Deciding to take the opportunity to change the subject, Izuku nodded, “I was trying to figure out how the couple other times I used my quirk on a person, I didn’t have the same issues as I am having now.”

Intrigued, Ochako asked, “Oh did you come up with anything?”

Izuku thought about it for a second before he gave her a brief nod, “Actually I think so. I’d like to try lifting you again, but in a different way. If you don’t mind?”
Ochako smiled, “I don’t mind at all. Just don’t go hurting yourself okay?”

After getting her consent, Izuku took a couple steps back to give himself some space. With his hand raised, Izuku once again let his quirk reach out towards Ochako, but instead of focusing on her as a whole, he narrowed down his target. To her clothing. Satisfied that he was not feeling the repulsive force from before, Izuku pushed his quirk to lift Ochako up.

Ochako gave a startled yelp when her feet left the sand and she was lifted, wobbly, upward. It wasn’t a perfect hold, in fact he could already find several flaws with it, holding onto just her clothes meant that the hold felt off. He could feel her shifting around in his grip, and her movements were pushing back on his quirk, so he knew he wouldn’t be able to hold onto her for very long. Plus if the clothing torn, whoever he was moving would be in a free fall. But while it wasn’t a perfect way to lift a person, it was still something, and you can improve on something. While Izuku was lost in his thoughts, going over different methods he could use to improve his quirks effect on people, he failed to notice a sudden change in Ochako’s face.

When Izuku had reached out, Ochako was surprised, and a little disappointed when she didn’t get the same feeling as before. All she felt was her clothes getting pulled tight and up and dragging her along with them. She tried to find the best way to make herself comfortable, going rigid or going slack, but there really wasn’t much she could do. However, Izuku was able to lift her this way, so that was a check in the win column. That is, until another attempt from Ochako to get comfortable caused herself to drop slightly, and out of a certain piece of very important clothing.

Oh no.

“Deku, Deku put me down! Put me down right now!”

Jared out of his thoughts by Ochako’s sudden yell, Izuku immediately lowered Ochako back to the ground. The moment her feet touched down, Ochako whirled around so that she was facing away from Izuku. Concerned he had hurt her, Izuku took a few steps towards her, “Uraraka?”

Ochako quickly and very adamantly cut him off, “I’m fine Deku. Just please, please back up some.”

“O-Okay?”
Izuku, while confused, did as he was asked, and took several steps back all the while watching Ochako intently. After a bit, Ochako peeked over her shoulder and added, “Could you um, turn around too?”

Why is her face so red?

While tempted to ask what was going on, Izuku turned around and waited. Once Ochako saw that his back was turned towards her, she finally felt brave enough to act. Pulling her arms into her hoodie, Ochako quickly and discreetly pulled her sports bra back down. Once she was sure everything was back in place, and she was presentable, Ochako turned around and found Izuku still with his back turned, looking down at the ground fidgeting nervously.

Walking over she tapped him on the shoulder and made sure she was smiling when he looked at her, “Thanks for that Deku. I’m all better now.”

“Oh, that’s good. Uraraka, did I do something wrong? I didn’t mean to do whatever I did. I swear.”

He doesn’t suspect anything. Dodged a bullet there. Thank goodness Deku isn’t really a pervert like some of the boys at school. Psychokinesis is dangerous in the wrong hands.

“I’m fine Deku, don’t worry about it,” Ochako said with a wave of her hand.

Izuku nodded, relieved. If he had accidently done something to hurt her. Izuku shook his head, not wanting to think about that. She said she was fine, so there was nothing to worry about, “Well I’m glad. And while it wasn’t perfect, I guess I do have a method of lifting a person now.”

“Yeaah, maybe work on it a little more before you go putting it into practice.”

“Oh? Does it have something to do with you wanting to get put down?”

Ochako looked away, hiding her blushing face, “something like that,” she mumbled before adding, “Was there anything else you wanted to try? It’s getting pretty close to dinner time.”

Izuku thought about it, then shook his head, “I think I’m good for today. Let’s get going.”
The walk back was peaceful, with Izuku spending most of the time scribbling away in his notebook detailing everything he had learned during his quirk practice.

*I may not have One for All yet, but that’s okay. All Might still believes in me, and once I’ve shown I can control my quirk, then I’ll be ready to take up his torch.* Izuku glanced over at Uraraka, his eyes were drawn to the bright smile she had as she walked beside him, *and I have Uraraka too. As long as we’re together, I’m sure nothing at U.A. will be able to stop us.*

**Month 0 (February)**

If one were to ask any of the fellow police officers or pro heroes that have worked with Detective Tsukauchi to describe the man, you would get several answers.

Dedicated.

By the book.

Earnest and Hardworking.

A bit stiff.

So if any of these people knew what the detective was mulling over as he sat at his desk, they would be quite surprised. Strewn across his desk were folders, files, pictures, reports and all manner of documents almost all pertaining to a single case file. A case that numerous departments, local and national were following. The Hero Killer Stain.

The sheer amount of paper on Tsukauchi’s desk was a grim mirror to the length of time that Stain had been active, targeting and killing heroes. For months all anyone could do was follow the trails of blood to the most recent victim. All found after they had gone missing for some time. Evidence was sparse at the scenes with no witnesses and the heroes only suffering a few cuts and a lethal stab wound. The number of victims that shared this same M.O. had lead the departments to come up with two main theories about how these attacks worked. Either Stain would ambush his victims, or he was such a powerful villain that the heroes were simply out matched and overpowered in direct combat. Though honestly, Tsukauchi thought it was something more in the middle. All the attacks happened in areas away from public view, which lead itself to the ambush theory, but these were still trained professional heroes. Even with the element of surprise, Stain still needed to be a
dangerous combatant to be able to pull all this off.

However this was not what was keeping him up so late this night. No it was the strange turn the case had taken. For some time, his department had started to receive anonymous tips about Stain. This by itself wasn’t that strange. High profile cases like this always came with a mountain of calls from people who thought they had information that the police might want or need. Most of the time it was only rumors or bad info leading to nothing, but it was still his and the departments duty to investigate, but recently they had received a call that was different. It was not a call of a sighting or crime in progress, but of possible future attack locations. At first the department didn’t take the call too seriously. How could someone know where these attacks could take place. But then there were three more attacks, and every one took place at one of the locations that the anonymous caller had mentioned. And that got everyone’s attention.

Almost immediately everyone in the department who had any free time was trying to follow up on who the caller was. But after weeks, no one could find anything. With virtually no trail to follow people were shifted away from finding them and back onto other cases, the general sense was that they were not going to hear from the caller again. That changed a few days ago when a call was forwarded to his phone.

“Hello this is Detective Tsukauchi of the Musutafu police. How may I help you?”

“You police force bozos don’t listen very well do you. I gave you three prime locations and you still let two heroes bite it, and a third is what, crippled, maimed. The paper was really vague about the details.”

In a flash Tsukauchi bolted upright in his chair, and quickly snatched a pen and paper to start taking notes.

Female

Young?

Low opinion of police = Bozo’s

Speaking just loud enough that the officers at the desks around him could hear, “You’re the one who gave us the tip about potential locations Stain would attack.”
The office went quiet as word spread. Tech teams immediately went to work plugging into his phone to try and trace the call, while officers and others crowded around Tsukauchi’s desk.

“Yep that would be me.”

Happy / Chipper.

Voices in background of call. = Public location?

“Tell me Mr Policeman, how’d you manage to screw up catching Mr Stain. Its like you guys weren’t even trying.”

Mr. Stain = Familiarity?

Tsukauchi scribbled quickly as he replied, “We receive multiple tips over the Hero Killer case each day. We only have so many men and women available to follow up on each one.”

The voice on the other end sighed, clearly annoyed, “Save the bull shit for the papers Mr. Policeman. I’m not interested in it.”

Tsukauchi could see a few of the other officers listening in on the call wince with him at that. Everyone knew how important keeping this woman on the line was. If he upset her too much, there was a good chance they could lose their best lead on Stain.

“We didn’t believe you. We didn’t think any legitimate source would have that kind of information readily available to them.” He hoped that honest answers would placate her.

Fortunately, it seemed to work, since when she spoke again, her voice carried an air of cheerfulness. An uncomfortable amount of cheerfulness.

“Ah that makes sense since I never saw anyone around. But that begs the question, do you think I’m legitimate now?”
Playful tone.

Happy

Possible unstable?

“Yes.”

The caller giggled, “Good. Do you want more information on Mr. Stain?”

The room held its collective breath. Officers learned so hard on his cubicle walls, they started to bend. Tech team signaled for more time to trace. Tsukauchi steadied himself, “Yes, we do.”

“Then I think we can do some business.”

He blinked, “What do you mean business?”

“I gave you that tip for free mr Policeman...and if I’m being honest, I didn’t really think you’d be able to catch Mr. Stain, but I needed all of you to know that I knew what I was talking about. So if you want the rest of what I know. It’s gonna cost you.”

A murmur filled the room at the same time a frown crossed Tsukauchi’s face, “What do you want?”

“For starters, a full pardon.”

Tsukauchi drummed his fingers on his desk as he moved from the large pile of paper to a much smaller pile. He didn’t like this. Not one bit. Making deals with criminals went against every fiber of his being. When the caller had started to go over their price for their information, he had thought that perhaps he was dealing with a vigilante. A vigilante that had probably gotten in too deep and wanted out of the game, but once he had gotten a name, he was sure he wasn’t dealing with a vigilante. While the file he was reading through was nowhere as big as Stain’s, it still held some stomach turning information. The first page was a missing persons report, not filed by the family. Finding this strange, Tsukauchi had made a couple of calls to the family, but once the subject was
The call was cut short with them stating he could talk to their attorney if he wanted more information. Further calls were ignored outright. The next reports were all criminal activities. Criminal mischief, trespassing, aggravated assault, assault with a deadly weapon, attempted murder and canibalism.

He was dealing with a criminal at least, and a burgeoning villain at worst, and much to his chagrin, he was working to make their demands for a deal go through. This was not ultimately his call, but a decision that came from above. The order was simple, make this happen now. He was convinced someone up top was seeing a promotion in their future if this could lead to Stains arrest, but he would never say this out loud.

So despite his misgivings he had gone to work. Most of what the caller had wanted turned out to be rather simple and disappointingly easy to make happen. The pardon came through almost the same day, though fortunately much to Tsukauchi’s relief, Chief Tsuragamae put some limits on it. More or less it came down to if their caller stepped too far out of line, the pardon would be pulled and they could come down on her with their full authority. So at the very least, they had a safety net of some kind to make up for the higher up’s rush to make this happen.

However, it was the last few bits that were turning into a mess. As much as the higher ups in the police force tried, they did not have as much sway with the heroes as they wanted, and that’s what this last part of the deal came down to. The heroes. Or namely one person in the hero community in particular.

Tsukauchi’s thoughts were interrupted when his phone started to ring. Absently he checked the caller I.D and took a breath before picking up the phone.

“Hello, this is Detective Tsukauchi.... Ah yes, it’s good to speak with you sir.... Yes I was hoping you had a chance to read over the information I sent you earlier?... Yes sir....I agree this is a very peculiar case.... Sir if I’m being honest, I’m against this.... Even if the information they have is good?...I agree stopping Stain must be a priority.... You’re interested? Really?...Potential huh...I can give you what we have on record, but it’s not much...Where would you like me to start?.... Very well I will start from the beginning. Name, Toga Himiko.”

Chapter End Notes

At last, the training arc is complete. I swear this was never supposed to take this long, I apologize for the long wait. I'm just happy I was able to get this chapter out before I had to go on a company trip, and then deal with family for thanksgiving. I hope you all enjoy the chapter, it was fun to write, especially since none of it was written in order. I
jumped all over the place, it was crazy. But, next up is the big one folks, the entrance exam is upon us. Let's hope our young heroes are ready for the challenge! As always please feel free to leave a comment, review or critique if you see something that you think needs fixing. And a big thanks to my beta readers! Since almost all of this chapter was either written on my phone or at 2 AM, it had some issues.
Chapter Summary

It's test day for Izuku and Ochako, and it all comes down to this. No more training. No more studying. It's time to put all that hard work to use. Today's the day.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It was the night before the exam, and Izuku Midoriya was no closer to falling asleep than he was an hour ago. He had decided to go to bed a little earlier than normal to try and make sure he was as well rested as he could be so it wasn't too late yet, only 10:40 but, Izuku was beginning to worry about just how much longer he was going to lie awake. Of course, if that was his only worry it wouldn't be so bad; however, the upcoming test weighed heavily on his mind.

Izuku knew he was ready. He had been training for months, preparing his body and quirk for the practical exam. He had studied to the point where he was passing the written mock exams with relative ease. His backpack was filled with everything he would need, and he had already planned out his battle strategy for the robots. He was ready.

And yet, despite all of his preparations, Izuku's confidence was still held down by his worries and doubts. He found himself imagining all the worst case scenarios that could happen, some of those where he failed in rather creative ways.

Rolling onto his side, Izuku picked up his phone, he needed a distraction.

No, no. If I start looking up any hero news I'll be up all night reading that.

Letting his phone drop onto his bed, Izuku grabbed a pillow and covered his face. Closing his eyes, he tried to will himself to sleep.

A soft vibration from his chest however grabbed his attention. Pulling his pillow away, Izuku grabbed his phone and looked at the screen.

O.Uraraka: Hey u up?
Guess I’m not the only one who can’t fall asleep, Izuku thought with a grin.

I.Midoriya: Im up

I.Midoriya: Can’t sleep either huh?

O.Uraraka: (-^○^- )

O.Uraraka: Nope

O.Uraraka: Been trying

O.Uraraka: No luck

O.Uraraka: (✘ Mirage ✘)

I.Midoriya: Sounds like me

I.Midoriya: Test got u up?

O.Uraraka: Crazy that its tomorrow

O.Uraraka: After everything

O.Uraraka: All that work

O.Uraraka: Am excited
I.Midoriya: Makes 1 of us

O.Uraraka: ???

O.uraraka; U ok

I.Midoriya: I guess Im a little worried

I.Midoriya: Nervous

I.Midoriya: Scared

O.Uraraka: U dont need to b!

O.Uraraka: U r strong <(¬_¬)> 

O.Uraraka: U got this!!!

I.Midoriya: Thank u

I.Midoriya: Means a lot

I.Midoriya: Really

I.Midoriya: Just a lot to think about

I.Midoriya: Future & all that
O.Uraraka: Then think about it differently

O.Uraraka: No stress

O.Uraraka: Make fun!!!

I.Midoriya: ???

I.Midoriya: Ok

I.Midoriya: How

O.Uraraka: Bet

O.Uraraka: Lets make a bet!!!

I.Midoriya: Ok

I.Midoriya: Wut kind?

O.Uraraka: …

O.Uraraka: From robots part

O.Uraraka: Least points buys lunch for most points

I.Midoriya: Oh sounds like fun!
I.Midoriya: Sure lets do that!

O.Uraraka: Awesome

I.Midoriya: Just have to pick a place not to expensive

I.Midoriya: Ramen is cheap

I.Midoriya: I want ramen

O.Uraraka: ( # ` ´ Ʉ )/

O.Uraraka: Don't assume

O.Uraraka: You havnt won anything yet!!!

I.Midoriya: LOL

I.Midoriya: Hey

I.Midoriya: Thank u for texting

I.Midoriya: This helped

I.Midoriya: A lot

O.Uraraka: (^///^)
O.Uraraka: Happy to

O.Uraraka: Feeling sleepy now

O.Uraraka: C u n morning

I.Midoriya: Gud nite

Not long after putting his phone away, Izuku was finally able to fall asleep.

Today’s the day! Today’s the day!

“Um Deku?”

Today’s the day! Today’s the day!

“Deku you’re mumbling.”

Today’s the day! Today’s the -

“DEKU!”

Snapping his head to the side, Izuku looked over at a bemused Ochako, “We ever going to go in, or are you just going to stand in front of the entrance the whole test?”

Blushing, Izuku quickly apologized,” Sorry Uraraka. I guess I got caught up in the moment. It’s just, we’re here. This is U.A.”
Ochako smiled, “Yeah, and we have to go inside to take our tests.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, sorry. Okay I won’t let anything else distract me.”

“The fuck?! You two actually showed up? Just who I needed to see today, Deku and Round Face.”

Izuku flinched while Ochako suppressed a loud groan, Speaking of distractions.

Turning around, both saw Katsuki walking up the steps behind them.

“AH! Kacchan, good morning! I hope you’re ready for the test! Let’s all make sure we do our best today.” After his initial shock of suddenly finding Katsuki behind him, Izuku tried to keep his voice calm and start a normal conversation. Unfortunately, nothing was ever normal with Katsuki, who seemed to take Izuku’s words as either an insult or challenge of some kind. The result was the same either way: it just made the explosive teen angrier.

“Of course I’m ready for the fucking test, you shit. Did you think I was going to fail?”

Ochako stifled a groan while Izuku waved his hands around frantically, “No, of course not! I was just-”

“Just what, you shit? You trying to throw me off?”

“Oh for crying out loud Bakugou! He was trying to have a normal conversation with you, you jerk. If you just toned down the ego you’d be capable of doing it too!”

Katsuki snapped his attention right towards Ochako, cupping his hands and raising them, small pops and crackles sparked from his palms, “What the fuck did you say to me Round Bitch?”

Izuku took a step forward, putting himself between Ochako and Katsuki, “Leave her alone Kacchan.”
Looking ready to blow a gasket, Katsuki narrowed his eyes as he took a step forward, “Or else what you shit?”

Before the powder keg that was Katsuki could blow up, a new voice cut through the tense atmosphere, “Excuse me, would you mind taking your school yard rivalry somewhere else. There are people who don’t need the distraction this close to the test.”

Katsuki whirled around, while Izuku and Ochako looked over his shoulder to see who had spoken up. It was another student, who Izuku noted had large bags under his eyes, *Must have spent most of last night cramming.*

“You got something you want to say Lavender?”

“Kacchan, please!” Izuku was now worried that Katsuki was about to blast whoever this new person was.

However, the tired student didn’t seem all that worried, even with Katsuki so close to him, “Would you just move, I want to find my seat for the test.”

“You got some nerve telling me what to do. Why don’t you try and make me, Extra.”

“You want me to find a teacher and report you for not only preventing other students from taking the test, but also making threats?”

Katsuki flinched. Ochako snickered and Izuku felt his jaw drop to the floor. For a few seconds both waited to see what happened next, when Katsuki turned on his heel and snarled at Izuku, “MOVE before I set your ass on fire.”

Deciding not to tempt fate, Izuku took hold of Ochako’s wrist and moved both of them to the side, safely out of the walking bomb’s way, who stormed off into the testing building. With Katsuki gone, Izuku turned his attention back to the other student, bowing his head, “I’m sorry about that. Kacchan can be a little…um…”

“He’s a loud obnoxious jerk. And yeah like Deku said, sorry that we kept you from finding your seat,” Ochako said as she apologized too.
The purple haired student shrugged, “I’m just here to take my test. So is everyone else. So if you don’t mind, I’ll be on my way.”

When the other student left, Izuku lowered his head and left out a long sigh, “Well this day is going great so far…”

Ochako gave him a pat on the back, “Well look at it this way Deku.”

Izuku glanced up at Ochako as she finished, “You just stood up to Bakugou.”

“I did?” Realization dawned on Izuku as he remembered that he stepped in front of Katsuki when he had turned his attention towards Ochako, “Oh, OH I DID!”

Ochako giggled, “Yep, you did. Congratulations. So now that, that distraction is over and done with, let’s go and ace this test.”

“Right, test. Because today’s the day. Today’s the day…”

“Oh NO YOU DON’T!”

Cutting Izuku off, Ochako dragged the green boy into the test building before he lost himself into the rabbit hole that was his mind.

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With the written portion of the test completed, the group of students made their way into a large auditorium for the practical exam orientation, chatting and whispering amongst themselves over the test they had just finished. Some brushed it off as too easy, while others lamented the fact they spent too much time working out for the practical and didn’t spend enough time studying. Izuku and Ochako both felt confident in their results, briefly going over a few questions as they self-graded themselves on the way to their seats.

Izuku to his credit, only panicked for a second when he saw he was sitting right next to Katsuki,
who only graced the two with a quick sneer before turning his attention towards the stage at the
center of the room.

Ochako leaned in and whispered, “We can switch seats if you want.”

Shaking his head, Izuku declined, “It’s fine Uraraka. Plus it’s assigned seating, and I don’t want to
risk you getting into trouble.”

“Well if you want to be my human blast shield, be my guest,” Ochako said with a smirk before
following after Izuku who just rolled his eyes.

Taking their seats, it wasn’t long before the auditorium was filled, with every seat occupied. Even
with so many people filling the room, it was quiet; only a few students talked in hushed whispers
amongst themselves. When the lights dimmed and the huge projector screen flashed on with the
U.A. logo even the whispers stopped. Everyone's attention soon turned towards a lone man, with
tall, blond hair, wearing a leather jacket with a large metal callow with speakers in it, as he took
the stage and stood behind a podium.

“Hello, listeners! Can I get a ‘HEY’!?"

His sudden shout took everyone off guard. No one in the room knew how to respond, so everyone
just stayed quiet.

The man tugged at his jacket collar, thrown from the complete lack of enthusiasm from the
students, “Wow, you sure are a refined bunch, huh?”

Recovering quickly, the man redressed the room, with his enthusiasm returning in full force,
“Alright then, let's get down to business! I’ll be giving you a rundown on the practical exam. Are
you ready!? YEAH!”

Once again, whatever response the man was expecting, he didn’t get it as the silence in the room
remained. Izuku eyes suddenly widened as he recognized the man giving the presentation, “That's
Present Mic, the Voice Hero! I can’t believe it, I listen to his radio show all the time. All the
teachers here really are pro heroes.”

As Izuku practically vibrated in his chair, Ochako covered her mouth with her hand, to hold back
from snickering too loudly.

“Will you shut up,” Katsuki grumbled under his breath.

“All right listeners! So as you’ve read in your brochures, you lot will be participating in a ten-minute mock urban battle right after this! Once this presentation has finished you will each go to your specified battle center. Make sure to check your cards so you know which bus to take!”

Katsuki leaned back and glanced over at Izuku’s card, “Looks like they got everyone split up.”

Ochako nodded, “They must make sure that people from the same schools are put into different areas. Don’t want people helping their friends and cheating huh.”

Holding his card out and looking at both Ochako and Katsuki, Izuku agreed, “yeah, our examination numbers are right next to each other but we’re all assigned to different groups.”

Katsuki was in group A, Izuku in group B and Ochako was in group C.

*Though All Might did warn us that we shouldn’t expect to rely on each other on test day,* Izuku thought.

Growling, Katsuki pulled his card away and out of Izuku’s sight, “Don’t look at my card. I’ll fucking kill you.”

Glaring at Izuku for a few more seconds, Katsuki turned away, grumbling under his breath, “Damn it, now I won’t get a chance to obliterate you in the exam.”

Izuku laughed nervously while Ochako began to seriously wonder if anyone in the room would mind if she reached over and floated Katsuki up towards the ceiling.

Present Mic continued with his presentation while behind him the giant screen changed to show three different black silhouettes, “Now, there are three different types of villain robots scattered throughout each battle center. Each type is worth a different set number of points based on their level of difficulty. Now where you all come in. Your goal, listeners, is to use your quirks to earn
points by defeating as many robots as you can. Wreck them, immobilize them, as long as they are no longer a threat, you will get points. However a word of warning! Attacking other examinees and any other unheroic acts and actions are prohibited and will get you immediately DQ'd!”

Both Izuku and Ochako glanced over at Katsuki, who did an excellent job of ignoring them.

A few rows in front of them a student shot his hand up, “May I ask a question?”

Present Mic pointed toward the student, “Okay!”

A spotlight turned on, illuminating the student who stood up and held up the information sheet on the villain robots that would be used in the practical exam, “On this printout, you have listed four different types of faux villains that we are to face. If that is a misprint, then U.A., the most prominent school in Japan, if not the world, should be ashamed of such a foolish blunder.”

*Wow is this guy uptight,* Ochako thought. Not sure if she should find the tall student funny, or what.

The student continued, “We examinees are here taking this test because we wish to be molded into exemplary heroes. We can not do that if U.A. is unable to provide accurate information. Also, you there...” The student turned around and set his spectacle sights right on Izuku, who flinched back at the sudden attention, “Yes you, with the curly green hair. This whole time you’ve been muttering to yourself. It’s distracting! If you can’t take this seriously then you should leave immediately for the sake of the other examinees who wish to take this test!”

Izuku sunk into his chair, covering his face in embarrassment and whimpering out a soft, “I’m sorry.”

Katsuki snickered to himself while Ochako very suddenly didn’t find the uptight student very funny anymore.

_The heck’s this guys problem! Deku wasn’t being loud!_

Before Ochako had a chance to tell the student off, Present Mic cut in to restore order to the room, “Okay, okay. Examinee number 7111, thank you for the great question and message! Now you are right, there is a fourth villain robot type,” A new silhouette popped onto the screen, “However this
guy is worth zero points. He’s more of an obstacle than a target. There is one in every battle center, and this guy goes crazy in the narrow streets of the arena. It isn’t invincible so you can defeat it, but really there’s no reason to. So my recommendation is that all you listeners just avoid it.”

Nodding in understanding, the student bowed, “I see. Thank you very much. Please excuse the interruption,” and sat back down.

_Apologize to Deku too you uptight jerk!_

Ochako held up her hand, “I’d like to ask a question!”

“Examinee 2235, you got the floor!”

“If we immobilize a target, but leave it intact, and that target later gets destroyed by another student, who gets the points?”

Present Mic clapped, “An excellent question. We have multiple test supervisors watching your test, so if you are able to stop a robot you will get those points. If someone then comes along and wrecks that robot, they will get no points. But just in case some of you listeners are worried, you won’t get punished for doing that. We’ll just assume you saw a target and went on the offensive.”

Ochako bowed, “Thank you,” Before turning her attention down a few rows, “Also you, tall guy!”

The tall student turned in his seat, blinking in confusion. Ochako pointed right at him, making sure he knew she was talking to him, “Don’t go accusing people of not taking this test seriously when you don’t know how hard they worked to get here! It’s rude!”

With a huff, Ochako sat back down. Izuku leaned over and whispered, “Thank you, Uraraka,” which brought a small smile to her face.

The other student simply turned back around, choosing not to reply. If it was because he didn’t want to make a scene or thought she was right, Ochako didn’t know or really care.

Waiting a few moments to see if anyone else had any questions or comments, Present Mic finished
his presentation, “Alright listeners, that’s all I have for you on the test. So, I'll give you all a present. A sample of our school motto! General Napoleon Bonaparte once said, ‘A true hero is someone who overcomes life's misfortunes.’ A great sound bite! So, Go Beyond! Plus Ultra!”

As the room began to empty, Izuku and Ochako held back, wanting to make sure they wished each other luck before they separated and went to their designated areas.

“Alright Deku, looks like this is it.”

“Yeah. Good luck out there Uraraka. I know you’ll get tons of points, just stay safe.”

Ochako smiled, “Same to you. Just don’t do anything reckless, okay.”

“I promise I’ll do my best.”

Ochako deadpanned, “To get points, or not be reckless?”

Izuku just flashed her a huge grin and answered, “Yes.”

Ochako groaned into her hands, but when she lowered them she was smiling. Izuku reached out his hand, which Ochako took in a hand shake, “See you on the other side, Uraraka.”

“Yep, here’s to us.”

“And don’t forget, I want ramen for my lunch.”

Ochako punched Izuku softly in the arm, “I told you not to assume! You’re going to be buying my mochi for lunch. Got it!”?

Both smiling, the two made their way down separate halls, ready for the last part of the test, they had spent months preparing for.
The bus ride to the entrance of the arena was uncomfortable and noisy. Students were smooshed together shoulder to shoulder, and several of the more boisterous students started talking loudly, either bragging about themselves or trying to psych out perceived weak targets. So Izuku got called out a lot, but he just ignored them the best he could. When the bus finally came to a stop, long enough for Izuku to wonder *just* how big was U.A.’s campus, he made sure he got out as quickly as he could. He wanted to try and get as far in front of the group as he could.

Izuku knelt down into a sprinters stance, digging the soles of his shoes into the concrete surface and pressing his fingers down hard. Around him, Izuku could hear the other students jostling about, some were still talking themselves up. Bragging about how this test was going to be a cake walk. He was able to block most of them out, drowning out their white noise with his own calming thoughts. A strange noise nearby did catch his attention however.

*Is that...an engine revving?*

Looking to his side, Izuku was surprised to see the tall student from the orientation standing next to him, focused on the large door to the arena. Izuku followed the sound closer and confirmed it was coming from the student. More specifically it was coming from his legs. His calves had several muffler pipes sticking out. Izuku blinked and momentarily found himself falling into his habit of quirk analysis, *he has some kind of motor or engine quirk?*

“They’re so noisy. This is the top hero school and so many of them aren’t taking this seriously. Why are they even here? Are they trying to sabotage those of us who are serious?”

The student wasn’t talking to anyone, in particular, just venting his own frustration, but Izuku felt the need to speak up anyway, “This exam is pretty stressful, I’m sure they are coping the best way they can.”

The tall student glanced down at Izuku as he continued to speak, “I don’t think they are trying to sabotage others, it’s just that everyone deals with stress differently. Some people joke, or brag, or… mutter to themselves.”

The student arched an eyebrow at that last bit, clearly seeing Izuku was talking about himself and his antics during the orientation that got him called out.

Deciding that he had said enough, and not wanting to come off as a distraction while talking about
distractions, Izuku turned back to the door, and waited for the signal, countdown, starter pistol, Izuku wasn’t sure what to expect, he just needed to be ready.

“Okay, start!”

HUH!? 

Above them, Present Mic called out, “What’s wrong? There are no countdowns in real fights! Run, run! The die has been cast, you know!”

Even as the hero berated the group for hesitating, Izuku had snapped to his senses and launched himself forward as the other students wasted time looking up towards the tower and listening to Mic’s explanation. Running past the large doors and into the arena, Izuku immediately began scanning for targets and ammo for his quirk. Running down the street, Izuku ran by a manhole cover, and with a quick yank of his quirk, pulled it up, keeping it hovering next to him. Behind him, Izuku could hear the other students charging in behind him.

I only have a few seconds head start. I need to capitalize on it and take out as many villain bots as I can. Once they all catch up, it’s going to be much harder to get points!

Turning a corner, Izuku found himself facing three large bots. Two three pointers, and a two pointer.

Perfect!

Not slowing down, Izuku twisted the manhole cover around and flung it right into the chest of the farthest three pointer. The metal disk easily tore through the flimsy robot breaking it in half, much like Izuku expected.

They really are made to be broken.

The closest robot, the two pointer lifted its arm to strike at Izuku, but it was slow and Izuku was able to dodge out of the way. As he skidded to a stop, his eyes glanced at the ruined three pointer. Reaching out with his quirk, Izuku lifted several large pieces of shrapnel and shot them towards the 2nd bot, shredding it.
As Izuku turned to finish off the last bot, he saw his target get swiftly dispatched as the tall student from before leap up and with a roar from his engine’s kick the head off the robot, sending it skipping along the ground, sparks crackling from exposed wires. Without a word the student landed and blasted off down a different street. Soon, more students began running up on Izuku, who after a moment's thought grabbed some more robot shrapnel and the manhole cover before turning and running down a different street.

No point following after that guy, he’s fast, and I don’t want to be left picking through his scraps, if he even leaves anything behind.

“Okay start!”

With that less than grand signal, the giant doors to the arena opened, and several students looked at each other in confusion. Ochako however, was not one of them. Slapping a hand to her thigh, she kicked off the ground and rocketed upward. Her aim was the roof of one of the buildings a ways down the street.

Let’s see what I’m working with!

As she shot up, Ochako reached out and gripped the ledge of the building, stopping her ascent. Tapping her fingers together, Ochako touched down, and began scanning the city.

From up here, I’ll have a much better view of where all the robots are. No running in a maze for me, thank you very much.

Moving towards the ledge of the roof, Ochako smirked as she spotted a group of villain bots that was far enough away from the arena’s entrance that the other students were still a ways off, bottlenecking with the first few bots near the entrance.

Perfect, I can grab all the points before anyone gets close.
Gripping the ledge, Ochako once again floated herself and kicked off, descending towards the group of villain bots. As she closed in, Ochako reached out her hands and touched several robots as she passed by floating them up into the air. She finally stopped herself fully by grabbing onto one of the robots while making sure she kept pinky out, not wanting to float the one that had become her anchor. Coming to a full stop, Ochako quickly let go of the two pointer and slapped her fingers together, “Release!”

Ochako’s feet hit the ground, followed closely by the floating bots that came crashing back to earth. Moving quickly to deal with the bots she hadn’t floated, Ochako ducked a wild swing from the two pointed and grabbed onto its tail. This time she did make contact with all her fingers. With its gravity gone, the robot became the perfect weapon to deal with the rest of the group.

With a completely unnecessary, but utterly satisfying scream, Ochako planted her feet as she twisted her body and swung the robot around like a ragdoll into the remaining robots, reducing the lots to large chunks of metal and sparkly bits. Giving the ruined robots a parting glance, making sure she hadn’t missed any and that they were all neutralized, she kicked off the ground and floated herself to the nearest rooftop, ready to repeat the process all over again.

If there was one thing from his months of training that Izuku was grateful for, and honestly there was many things, it was that after months and months of hard work, he had more stamina than he knew what to do with. The test had been going on for a few minutes, four if he had to guess, and already several of the other students were bent over or leaning against something, trying to catch their breath, even when just a few yards away, there were two villain bots just waiting to get destroyed. Izuku on the other hand was running full bore down the street, pulling behind himself several large metal shards and robot limbs, and he didn’t feel winded at all. His head was hurting a little from prolonged use of his quirk, but that was neither here nor there.

As he passed the heavy breathing students, Izuku pulled two of the larger and sharper pieces in front of him and after aim shot his hand out, firing the metal out and sinking it into the robots ‘chests’ like giant knives. As he ran past the downed bots, he yanked whatever metal he thought would make the best ammo and moved on.

_Those were just one pointers. I think that puts me in the 30’s? Ugh, I should have paid more attention... Oh well, I should be okay. Just need to keep moving and not let myself get-!_

“ARGH! Damn it!”
A scream broke Izuku’s train of thought as he came to a sudden halt, almost tripping over his own feet.

*What was that? Was that another student?*

Izuku whipped his head around trying to find the source of the scream.

*Could someone be in trouble?*

“Damn it why’d it have to be robots!”

*The alley!*

Izuku bolted down the back alleyway. Making his way inward, he quickly found the source of the scream.

*That’s the tired guy from this morning?*

While he hadn’t gotten his name, Izuku recognized the other boys distinct purple hair, though now he didn’t look anywhere near as tired as he had, though he still had those bags under his eyes. He was also in trouble. He had a villain bot in front of him and behind him and since the alley wasn’t very wide, he was trapped. In his hand was a trash can lid, that was almost folded in half. Izuku also saw that the boys knuckles were cut up. It looked like he had tried punching the robots before moving onto the trash lid.

*Wait has he been trying to use that to attack the robots?*

Izuku watched as with a scream, the purple haired student charged the robot in front of him, trash can lid raised above his head. He slammed the lid down on the robot, but while the robots were flimsy, they weren’t going to break from a strike from an aluminum trash can lid. And after a few more strikes the lid completely folded over, not leaving any damage that Izuku could see. After the failed attack, the front robot swung its arm out knocking the boy backwards into the second robot, which almost rudely, smacked the boy into the ground.
“Damn it, damn it.”

As the boy struggled to stand back up, Izuku could hear him curse and grumble to himself.

“Nothing works. I can’t do anything against these things.” The boy got to his hands and knees but stopped there. It looked like the fight had been beaten out of him.

Izuku readied a shrapnel bolt, aiming it to take off both the robots heads.

*I need to get this guy out of danger.*

“Can’t even use my worthless quirk on these things. I’m completely worthless here.”

Izuku flinched, that word echoing in his mind, bringing up too many old and painful memories.

*Worthless...*

A loud metallic shear rang out as the shrapnel ripped through one of the one point robots, exploding and severing one of its arms. Pieces, including a large section of the one pointer’s forearm armor, scattered onto the ground as the boy looked up in alarm, twisting around to look right towards Izuku.

“You?! You’re from that loud bunch at the entrance. How did you do...oh” His eyes looked past Izuku and towards the many floating bit and pieces, “oh...”

“Use that instead.”

The boy’s attention snapped back to Izuku, and he saw he was pointing at something. Turning back, he saw the large piece of metal lying in front of him, “wait what? What are trying to pull?”

“You had the right idea, but you weren’t using the right tool. These things are super fragile, but you need something hard enough to break through first. That should do the trick.”
“You’re helping me? Why?”

Izuku just smiled, doing his best to give off the same aura All Might, “That’s what heroes are supposed to do right? It looked like you needed help.”

The boy looked up at the recovering robot, then back at the second robot behind him that was turning to lock onto Izuku which it saw as a bigger threat. The boy was clearly confused, shaking his head, “This doesn’t make sense. If you wanted to help me, why didn’t you just destroy the robots. You clearly have a quirk strong enough to do that. You easily ripped that one apart, and you’re carrying enough parts back there I bet are all from robots you destroyed.”

Izuku could hear some bitterness in the boys voice, especially when he mentioned his quirk, but he ignored it, “I could have yeah, but…”

“But?”

Izuku looked the boy right in the eye, “I don’t think that’s the kind of help you needed.”

The boy blinked, tempted to ask what that meant, but the creaking of gear grabbed his attention. The damaged robot was starting to roll forward. With a grumble of, “what the hell” the boy raced for the large plate of metal. Picking it up, he had just enough time to rear back and slam a jagged edge right into the large wheel the one pointer balanced on. The metal sheared through bearings and rubber, tripping the robot so that it fell flat on its face. Reaching around, the boy felt for the off switch he knew the machine had, but had been unable to reach. Pressing it, he yanked the metal from the neutralized robot and charged the second robot. Sensing the threat, it tried to turn away from Izuku, but its size made this difficult, as its large shoulders scrapped and got caught along the buildings walls. Slowed down, the boy took his chance and drove the metal plate into a gap in the robots chest. With a shuddering groan, the robot collapsed onto the ground, some internal component destroyed, rendering it defeated.

Taking several deep breaths, the boy was able to calm himself as he looked over at what he had done.

“Holy crap, that worked.”

When he heard Izuku start to clap, he was ready for some condescending grin to accompany it, the
guy must have a huge sum of points and was just here to have a laugh, the cynical part of his mind told him. But when he looked over at Izuku he saw him grinning happily ear to ear.

“That was awesome! Looks like you have everything under control now.”

Looking at the two robots, the boy nodded, “Yeah, I guess so.”

“Okay then I’m going to head this way then. Good luck during the rest of the test!”

Before Izuku could turn to leave, the boy called out, “Wait hold on a second.”

“Yeah?”

“...Thank you.”

Izuku smiled brightly, “Happy to help.” and then he sprinted away, leaving the boy in the alley.

“Huh, maybe I should have asked for his name.”

Looking down the boy thought about what Izuku had said, didn’t think that was the kind of help I needed…

Yanking the metal sheet free, the boy examined it, instead of just ‘saving me’ he gave me a way to save myself. Showed me a way to get my own points.

With a huff, the boy shook his head, but he felt a grin from despite himself, “I guess that’s what you call being heroic.”

Izuku hurried out of the alley and down the street, on the lookout for more villain bots. He knew he had wasted precious time back there, but for some reason it didn’t bother him too much. He felt good, confident he had done the right thing.
I’m sure I still have plenty of time left. I wasn’t back there for that long.

“SIX MINUTES HAVE PASSED LISTENERS! BETTER PICK UP THE PACE!”

Oh...shoot.

In a large room filled with monitors, several heroes and teachers sat watching the test unfold. The screens switched to different areas of the multiple arena’s letting the group have an uninterrupted view of the students as they entered the home stretch of the test.

“Doesn’t this year's group look promising?”

A few mummers of agreement echoed in the room. A calm but high pitched voice soon got all of the rooms attention, “In this practical exam, the examinees have not been informed of the number of villains or their locations. They only have a very limited amount of time to cover a large area so we force them to find different methods to draw the villain bots out and defeat them.”

He paused and flipped through several channels, he paused on a screen with a girl with pink cheeks as she bounced from rooftop to rooftop, scanning the far horizon, “Gathering information to better understand the situation before anyone else.”

The screen changed to show a tall, glasses wearing student as he rocketed down the road, moving from target to target, “Mobility that can be used in many different circumstances.”

The screen changed again, showing a glowing green student, using large robot parts to damage some villain bot far away, while he kept a safe distance, “Ingenuity to use what is available to achieve victory.”

The final screen showed a blond haired boy, standing on a pile of broken machines, smoke billowing from his hands, “and of course pure combat ability. All of these basic abilities are needed to keep the peace in our streets, so all of these abilities are tested and turned into points.”

A new voice spoke up, “Well, we can't know for sure yet how good this group really is. Their true
test is yet to come. And how they react to an overwhelming threat will show their true nature.”

With a groan, Ochako leaned against her most recent small pile of villain bots as she rubbed her stomach taking a second to catch her breath and give her stomach a chance to settle. While she wasn’t very queasy or exhausted by any means, the constant on and off of her quirk on top of the breakneck pace she had set for herself was beginning to catch up to her. Plus, she needed the quick break to re-evaluate her plan.

For the first half or so of the test she had been making the most of her high ground strategy to find high value groups of robots. Maximizing the points she could get while minimizing the times she had to use her quirk. However, at about the halfway point this method stopped working. By that point enough students had dispersed throughout the city to cause the groups of bots to scatter. Now Ochako was running through the streets with everyone else, relying on luck to find more bots to add to her score.

_I know it’s not like I haven’t been able to still get some points like this, everyone keeps trying to be the first to the higher point robots, that they leave the one pointers wide open. But I can’t just settle for this. Pretty soon everyone else is going to try for the single points and then I’m stuck with everyone else, going after the same targets. I just need a new strategy._

“Eight minutes gone kids! You got just two left. Better get moving if you want to get enough points!”

Ochako whipped her head up to the tower where Present Mic was, _the test is almost over already?!_

Standing back up Ochako smacked her cheeks, psyching herself up, _Okay, no time for plans. Just pick a direction you haven’t been yet and grab as many points as you can before the buzzer._

Ochako turned, and took off. However, she only got a few yards before the ground beneath her feet rumbled then shook violently.

_“Whoa!”_
exploded into dust, steel beams twisted and tore, and shattered glass rained down in the wake of a giant mechanical monster.

From out of its hiding spot, the zero pointer towered over the buildings around it, easily sending them tumbling as it’s treads pulled it forward.

Ochako found herself staring in horrified awe as it came into view, “That’s the zero pointer!? Don’t they think that’s overkill?! The pamphlet made it look like it was the same size as the other robots!”

Even though she was several yards away, she could feel the monster rolling down the road, crushing everything in its wake.

Despite the insanity of the situation, Ochako breathed a sigh of relief when she noticed that the zero pointer was not headed towards her but was moving parallel to her position. So as long as it didn’t suddenly turn, she would have no problem keeping her distance. Which was her plan up until she saw that a couple of students were in its path, looking up in horror. Looking up, and not running for their lives like the others around them.

“Hey! Hey! You guys need to get out of there!”

Neither of the students budged from their spot.

_Are they too scared to move?_

Ochako looked over at the zero pointer, still rolling forward towards them, _it’ll stop before it crushes them, right? It’s just a test, U.A. wouldn’t do anything that could actually kill a student._

Ochako whipped her head from the robot and back to the terrified students.

_No ones ever died in the entrance exam right? Right?!_

Ochako looked at the students. She looked at the robot. She looked at the students. Back at the robot. It wasn’t stopping and Ochako screamed as she willed herself forward. Her legs burned as
she broke into a dead sprint hoping to reach the students and pull them to safety, but she quickly realized she wasn’t going to reach them before they got crushed. She was just too far away and the zero pointer was closing the distance too quickly.

*I’m not going to make it!* Oh no, *I’m not going to make it in time! What am I going to do!*?

As she ran, Ochako’s eyes darted everywhere as her mind raced.

*If I can’t reach them in time…*

As Ochako raced closer she soon entered the debris field. Large sections of concrete littered the road.

*If I can’t reach them in time…*

Ochako skid to a sudden stop, right next to a large concrete piece that was more than three times her size.

“I’ll just have to stop the zero pointer!!”

Ochako gripped the concrete, digging her finger pads into the rough face of the block. With that touch, Ochako ripped the block off the ground and holding it in both hands reared back behind her head and with everything she had Ochako launched the concrete right into the zero pointers head.

The concrete bounced off the robot's face, leaving an impressive dent. Right afterward it’s treads came to a grinding halt. When the zero pointer turned to look down at Ochako, she smirked, *alright I got its attention!*

Ochako stood as an eerie silence fell upon the arena. The two students were looking at her. Ochako looked back at them. They blinked. Ochako blinked.

….*Oh god, I have its attention!*
The zero pointer lifted one of its giant arms, its intention obvious. Ochako gulped loudly, “you two get out of here!” The two nodded and quickly scrambled away while at the same time Ochako pivoted and took off in the opposite direction just in time for the giant fist of the zero pointer to crash down. While Ochako was able to avoid the main hit, she was caught up in the shockwave which sent her spiraling and tumbling across the pavement.

Coughing and sputtering Ochako struggled to get back to her feet. The dust kicked up from the punch burned her eyes, and coated her throat as she tried to catch her breath. Spitting out globs of spit and dust Ochako stood on wobbly legs while at the same time, the zero pointer began to slowly pull its arms back.

*It’s powerful, but it’s slow. I should be able to get some distance before it attacks again. Just need to get...to get...*

As Ochako readied herself to make her escape, a number of red glowing lights broke through the dust, letting Ochako know she was not alone.

*Where did all these guys come from? Were they escorting the zero pointer?*

When the villain bots broke through the dust and charged Ochako she gave a startled yelp as she dodged and weaved around them while trying to keep an eye on the zero pointer.

*This would be a perfect group for me if I had more time and wasn’t trying to get away from that huge monster that’s about to try to crush me...*

As Ochako rolled under a wild swing from a three pointer she was struck with an idea.

*I don’t have time to float and neutralize all these robots. Not when that thing is about to throw another punch. But maybe I don’t have to be the one to deliver the kill shot.*

Glancing back up, and seeing the zero pointer was almost fully turned around and already pulling it’s arm back, Ochako narrowed her eyes and set her jaw in determination.

*Okay Ochako, if you're going to do this, DO IT!*
Ochako dived forward, scrambling more than running, between as many robots as she could and floating them, but being careful not to push them away. She needed them all in one place, around her.

Once Ochako floated the last robot, she could hear the zero pointers arm lock into place. The gears and pistons straining under its own weight.

*Out of time!*

Ochako quickly pressed her fingers into her arm and kicked off the ground as hard as she could. Floating away just as the zero pointer pulverized the spot she had just been. Destroying everything, the road, buildings and robots. The shock wave hit Ochako sending her tumbling end over end until she hit a wall, knocking the air out of her.

Back against the wall, Ochako gasped for air and watched in horror as the zero pointer pulled itself back up and began to reach for her.

*I didn’t get far enough. This is bad*

Dazed and out of breath, Ochako couldn’t do anything as the zero pointers hand inches closer and closer to her.

“And THATS TIME!”

The zero pointers hand stopped right in front of Ochako who stared at it, eyes wide. Slowly the giant hand retracted and Ochako pushes herself down, floating calmly and gently back to the ground. Pressing her fingers together and mumbling, “Release,” Ochako let herself stand tall. Proud that she had completed the entrance exam.

And Ochako, after a few seconds, proudly and promptly, threw up.

Getting thrown off his feet, Izuku looked around in a panic as everything around him began to shake violently. Several other students cried out in alarm as they tried to steady themselves.
“What the hell is going on!?”

“Is it an earthquake?”

Nearby a building exploded in a shower of glass, steel and concrete as the largest thing Izuku had ever seen poked through the dust and smoke. Izuku’s jaw hit the ground in shock.

“How big is that thing! The exam pamphlet wasn’t to scale at all!”

Around him, students began to panic as they climbed over themselves to try and get away with Izuku scrambling to his feet to join them, I know Present Mic said that thing isn’t unbeatable, but come on. Why would anyone want to even try!!

Izuku, now on his feet, was ready to make a break for it when, over the loud screams and horrific metallic sounds, he heard something that made his heart stop beating, and blood go cold.

“...Help…”

As people ran by him, Izuku turned around, wondering if he had imagined it.

“...Help...me…”

He hadn’t.

From the large pile of debris and rubble that was the remains of the building, a hand was sticking out, grasping fruitlessly at the air. A feeling Izuku hadn’t felt since he had saved Katsuki from that monster almost a year ago filled him. Something else took control of Izuku, pushing basic survival instincts to the side. Someone was in trouble, and Midoriya Izuku was not going to stand by and do nothing. Taking off into a sprint, Izuku rushed to the person’s aid, pushing past other students as they ran to get away. One student gave a startled yell as he brushed past him, “HEY ARE YOU CRAZY!? WHAT ARE YOU DOING!”
Izuku didn’t bother to look back as he screamed back, “THERE’S SOMEONE TRAPPED UNDER THERE! THEY’LL GET CRUSHED!”

Even as the huge zero pointer rumbled closer, Izuku didn’t slow down, running as fast as he could, determined to reach the trapped person. Sliding to a stop, Izuku grabbed the student’s hand, “I’m here! Don’t worry. I’ll get you out!”

Izuku examined the pile. While most of it was made of very large sections of concrete, it looked like almost all of it had fallen around him, forming a small tented pile giving enough space to not get crushed to death, but small enough that he couldn’t get out.

If he had been anywhere else, he’d probably be dead. Isn’t this supposed to just be a test, how could something like that zero pointer just be allowed to run loose!? No, focus on helping first, then...then worry about other stuff.

Bending down, Izuku looked into the small opening past the student’s arm, “Is there anything pinning you? Holding you down directly?”

The boy’s arm pulled back into the hole, allowing Izuku to see his face for the first time, while also letting the boy see who had come to his rescue, “No, I’m trapped in a small pocket! I can’t believe I let my engine stall at a time like this. Wait, you!?"

Izuku was shocked, it was the tall student who had berated him from before.

No, that doesn’t matter. He needs help.

“Listen, I’m going to lift this stuff off you. I need to let me know if anything shift and starts to press against you.”

The boy blinked in shock, “Wait, you’re going to try and lift all of this? Can you do that!?"

Can I?

Izuku glanced up at the approaching zero pointer.
I have to!

“I’m going to start now, I can’t tell exactly what's going to move around and shift when I start. Its all tangled together and stacked up. I’ll try to be careful as I pick stuff off you, but that huge robot is getting closer, so we don’t have much time.”

The boy nodded, “I understand!”

Okay, I can do this. I picked up all that stuff at the beach. And that was like 3 tons. And all of this...is probably more than that, but it’s just a number. The only limits are in my head, and I just spent months learning that I can overcome those. No more limits. No more holding myself back! So let's do this!

Reaching out, Izuku let his quirk flare to life, as he took hold of the rubble. If he felt he had time, he would try and pick at it, one piece at a time, making sure he didn’t dislodge anything and cause it to collapse. But since he was being forced to hurry, he grabbed everything that was in front of him. Izuku could feel the strain already pressing against him, his forehead already throbbing even before trying to lift the heavy load.

“Alright, I’m going to start now! Just hold on a little longer!”

Turning his palms upward, Izuku lifted his hands up and pushed. The pain in Izuku’s head went from a dull throbbing, to hammer blows in an instant. But it didn’t matter, he had a job to do and nothing was going to stop him. Slowly, inch by inch, the rubble began to rise up.

I got this! Just a little longer!

“Hey! HEY! Behind you! There is a villain bot behind you!”

Nothing but that.

Glancing over his shoulder, Izuku gulped as he confirmed that not only was there a villain coming up from behind him, but one on each of his sides as well. They were surrounded.
You have got to be kidding me!? 

“Can you squeeze out!? I can’t fight them and hold this stuff up!”

Two arms stuck through the larger opening, but it was clear to both that the student's large build was not going to fit just yet. The robots were charging in fast and Izuku couldn’t lift the rubble off the student any faster. They were out of time.

“Put it down! Defend yourself!”

Izuku shook his head, “I can’t do that. I’d have to drop it, and it might crush you!”

Faux villains moving in from the sides and behind. The zero pointer closing in from the front. Izuku was at a loss. One of the robots broke off from the rest, charging in with an arm raised, ready to attack. Izuku closed his eyes as he braced himself for the hit, Don’t let go. Keep lifting and don’t let go!

Just as Izuku was sure he was about to get hit, there was a screech of metal against metal, then a loud thud. Confused, Izuku peaked back and saw the robot laying on the ground broken. And just behind it, still using the same piece of armor he’d given him, “its you, the purple guy!”

Yanking the plate out of the robot, the boy held it up like a shield putting himself between the two remaining robots and Izuku, “Hurry and get that guy out already! I’ll keep these guy back. And its Shinso Hitoshi, not purple guy!”

“Thank you. I’m Midoriya Izuku by the way!” Despite the gravity of the situation, it would be rude not to introduce himself.

The trapped student stuck his hand back through the hole, waving it like he was shaking someone’s hand, “Iida Tenya!”

Hitoshi sighed, “Great we all know each other. Now let’s get out of here before that big guy gets any closer!”
“Right!” Izuku turned his full attention back towards the rubble, while Hitoshi kept the other two robots busy, bashing at them and forcing them to roll backwards. The plate hit an axel holding the robot onto its wheel, snapping it and toppeling it to the ground.

*Almost there... just a little more!*

Tenya poked his arms out and started to push his upper body through. Hitoshi after smashing the flat plate down on the last robot’s head, sprinted over and grabbed ahold of Tenya’s wrists. Planting himself, he gave one hard tug, and pulled Tenya through the rest of the way.

“I’M OUT! DROP IT!”

Immediately, Izuku let go of most of the rubble. A few remaining blocks floated in the air, as Izuku turned his attention upwards, something Hitoshi noticed right away, “Midoriya what are you doing!? We need to run.”

Tenya, who was leaning onto Hitoshi favoring one of his legs, nodded in agreement, “Yes we must get away while we can before that monster is upon us! We look out of its range, but we won't be for long!”

Izuku shook his head, “It’s still thrashing around, someone else could end up getting hurt if this thing keeps on going.”

“And what, you’re going to stop it!?"

Izuku glanced back at Hitoshi, a determined glint in his eyes, and confident grin, “Present Mic did say they could be defeated. Please take Iida,” Turning back to face the zero pointer, Izuku’s green glow brightened as he focused on his next move, “I’m going to stop this thing before someone else gets hurt!”

“Crazy bastard,” Hitoshi mumbled under his breath as he helped Tenya stumble away, “You, is your leg broken?”

“No, I think it’s just a sprain... Should we really be leaving him like this?”
“You’re hurt, and I know for a fact, I can’t do anything to that giant. Besides, you saw that Midoriya guy, he wasn’t going to back down.”

The two didn’t get very far when they heard a loud crash. Looking back, they watched as Izuku launched another large block of building rubble at the zero pointer.

Izuku grunted as he threw a third, then a fourth. Each piece hitting the zero pointer, but bouncing off its armor, leaving little damage.

_Darn it, this isn’t working! This stuff is too small to do any real damage to it! I can’t break through its armor!_

Dropping the rest of the smaller blocks, Izuku changed to a much larger piece of debris, though this was much harder for him to throw. Arcing up like a toss up, more than getting shot out, resulting in it hitting much lower than his other shots. And with less force

_And if I try the larger stuff, I can’t get the force I need. This isn’t working at all!_

Wiping his nose, Izuku confirmed what he had already figured, _and my nose is bleeding. Great. Okay, I need a new plan._

It wouldn’t be much longer until Izuku would be in reach of the zero pointer. A quickly running out time limit, pumped up on way too much adrenaline, with a pounding headache and now bleeding from either the initial lift of the rubble or him throwing so many pieces, Izuku was not in the best of conditions to come up with a new plan on the fly. As evident with his very next decision. Dropping the rubble, and ignoring it completely now, Izuku reach out with both hands and focused solely on the zero pointer.

For the briefest of moments, the robot’s whole body lit up bright green as Izuku grabbed hold of it. Izuku even started to yell out in victory, but this was quickly crushed. The zero pointer just kept rolling forward, ripping itself free of Izuku’s quirk and sending the boy back several paces, holding his head as pain ripped through his skull.

_That… was not a good idea. Oh god, my head… Maybe I do need to get out of here…_
Looking up, Izuku found himself in the shadow of the zero pointer. Well within its strike range. Before he could finally decide to try and run, from a safe distance away he could hear Hitoshi screaming, “Shouldn’t that thing have an off switch like the rest of the robots! Or a wire you can cut to shut it down?”

Off switch? I can’t remember. And a wire? I wouldn’t even know where to look to use my quirk on it… I’d waste all my time just feeling around inside for…. It…. Wait. Inside. If I can’t beat this thing because of its armor, then maybe I can use my quirk on its parts!

Wobbling as he steadied himself, Izuku took a deep breath, *I’ll break it apart from the inside out*, and screamed.

His aura blazed brightly as he pushed himself. Reaching beyond the armor plating, Izuku latched onto anything and everything he could and started pulling, ripping and tearing. He had no idea what parts he was damaging, and at this point, he was beyond caring.

Pain blurred his vision. Each time he found something new to try and break, it made his head hurt. The pain had long gone past just throbbing. Past even the harshness from a few moments before. This was a stabbing pain. A hammer and chisel to his head. This new pain, and the sheer amount of blood dripping down his chin, Izuku knew something was different. From all the other times he had suffered from over using his quirk, this time was going to be different. If he was thinking rationally, he would have stopped. But it was so hard to think now. Everything was echoing and blurry.

*Break! Just BREAK!*  

Something snapped. Everyone in the battle arena could hear it. Something from deep inside the zero pointer snapped. Lights flickered. Its body no longer moved smoothly.

More snaps.

Crackles.

Smoke was escaping from vents. Dark black smoke.

For a second the zero pointer stopped moving, before an explosion ripped apart a section of armor.
Followed by another, then another. A chain reaction was taking place, turning the robot into smoldering shrapnel. Izuku sighed, letting his quirk fade, then collapsed to his knees.

“Holy crap.”

Tenya could only nod in agreement with Hitoshi, “He must have broke a power cable or damaged some reactor to cause that.”

“Don’t care. Just, holy crap.”

Hitoshi looked down from the exploding behemoth and pointed at Izuku, “Hey...shouldn’t he be getting away?”

Tenya frowned, “Perhaps... he’s admiring his accomplishment?”

“Hey Midoriya! Get away from that thing! You can do your cool walk away-” Hitoshi was cut off when Izuku fell to his knees, “Oh fuck.”

“AND THAT’S TIME!” Present Mic screamed over the intercom, signaling the end of the exam.

Hitoshi and Tenya hurried back to Izuku, crouching down beside him. Izuku’s glazed over eyes weren’t focused on anything. A large trail of blood ran from his nose, and dripped off his chin, leaving a large stain on the front of his shirt. Hitoshi snapped his fingers in front of Izuku’s face, “Hey, Midoriya, you in there? Hey?”

When Hitoshi moved to give him a shake, Tenya stepped in, stopping him, “Wait, don’t do that. If he’s suffering from some kind of head injury, we don’t want to move him. We should wait until medical teams arrive.”

Hitoshi nodded in agreement and took a seat next to Izuku, while Tenya did the same, wincing some from the pain in his ankle.

Izuku lifted his head slightly as he looked around, though he wasn’t focusing on any one thing “the test? ...Is the test...?”
“Test is over, they called it,” Hitoshi said.

“The...the big one… where...?”

“You blew it the fuck up.”

Izuku laughed softly, head lowering back down with a sleepy smile, “Take...that...Kacchan…”

Fortunately for the three, they did not have to wait much longer. In only a few minutes a stretcher carried my two small medical robots rolled over to them, with an elderly lady wearing a white coat walking besides. She gave the three of them a quick once over, shaking her head, “My, oh my, you three look like you went through the ringer. You especially, young man.”

Tenya recognized the woman and did his best to bow respectfully, while he was still sitting, “You’re Recovery Girl. The head doctor of U.A. with the healing quirk. It is an honor to meet you.”

She turned to Tenya, “I’m just an old lady who does what she can. Now let’s get two you taken care of before I go to work on your friend here.” While the two medical bots gently carried Izuku onto the stretcher, Recovery girl handed Hitoshi a few gummies and gave Tenya a quick kiss to his forehead. The effect of her quirk was instantaneous, and he could feel his sprained ankle heal till it was as good as new.

With them taken care of, she walked over to the lying form of Izuku, “Tsk, tsk. Young man, you sure hurt yourself something horrible with your own quirk. You’d think at this age you’d know your own limits.”

Bending down she gave Izuku a kiss on the head. The blood dripping from his nose dried and the slack and far off gaze relaxed as he closed his eyes and fell asleep. Recovery Girl looked back at Tenya and Hitoshi, “You two are good to go. I’m going to take this young man back with me to run a couple of tests. You can never be too careful when dealing with a head injury, even when I use my quirk to help it heal.” Tapping the side of the stretcher with her cane, the bots rolled away taking Izuku with them.

Left alone Tenya rubbed his chin in thought, “Why do you think he did that?”
“Hmm?”

“There was still time left in the test. He could have made a break for it and tried to get more points. Instead, he took himself out destroying the zero pointer. What do you think he was trying to gain from it? Do you think he figured out some aspect of the test we hadn’t? We are constantly being watched as Present Mic said.”

Hitoshi glanced at the wreckage that was all that was left of the zero pointer, “I think you’re overthinking it. I think it was just what he had said, after seeing you trapped like that, he didn’t want to risk anyone else getting hurt. Simple as that.”

After getting checked out by the exams medical staff and taking a chance to get all the dust and rubble cleaned off Ochako found herself waiting near the exams exit. It had been some time since the rest of the students from Izuku’s test group had left but Izuku himself was still nowhere to be found.

“Come on Deku, where are you?”

After she had figured she’d waited long enough, Ochako turned and marched back into the U.A building hoping to find a teacher or someone that could help her.

As she walked the halls she even began peeking into rooms, trying to find anyone.

*I’m overthinking this. I’m sure nothing bad happened to Deku. I’m sure he’s fine.*

Despite trying to reassure herself, she found her pace down the hallway quickening.

*He’s fine. I mean what the worst that could happen?*

Memories of the zero pointer and the scared students flashed through Ochako’s mind. Visions of the treads of that monster crushing everything in its path. Cars, hydrants, lampposts, buildings, and
people. People with messy green hair.

Ochako broke into a sprint down the hall. Logically she knew she was overreacting. If something bad had happened, the group of students wouldn’t have been so chipper as they left. But after her own experience during the practical exam, especially with the zero pointer, Ochako wasn’t sure logic applied to anything at U.A.

As she rounded a corner, Ochako gave a startled gasp as she collided with someone and almost sent herself tumbling to the floor.

“Whoa there, little listener!”

Fortunately for Ochako, Present Mic was able to quickly grab her and hold her up. After finding her feet Ochako quickly apologized, stumbling over her words as she tried to get them out as quickly as possible, “I’m so sorry. I wasn’t looking where I was going. I was just trying to find someone and I…”

Present Mic raised his hands as he tried to calm Ochako down, “Easy, easy there. No harm done. Why don’t you take a second and breath.”

Ochako nodded and forced herself to slow down. Taking several deep breaths until she was was no longer looking like she was ready to jump out of her own skin.

Present Mic smiled, “That’s better. Now little listener, what are you doing running through the halls. The exam’s signed off, so you should be headed back home.”

“I know but I’m looking for my friend. He took the exam too but he wasn’t with the rest of his group when they got back and left.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, his name is Midoriya Izuku. He has green messy curly hair. And freckles. Oh his quirk makes him glow green when he uses it.”
Present Mic scratches his chin for a moment as he thought over Ochako’s description, then snapped his fingers, “Oh, the green glow-stick? Can throw stuff around with his quirk?”

“Yes, that’s him,” Ochako said excitedly.

“Oh I know where your friend is.”

“You do!”

“He’s in the infirmary with Recovery Girl getting smooched on.”

“...”

Present Mic spent the whole walk to the infirmary trying to assure Ochako that her friend was fine and that despite her name, Recovery Girl was a nice elderly lady. Ochako never actually asked about Recovery Girl, mostly she spent the time worrying about what her friend had done to be sent to the infirmary, but something about the way her eye twitched made him think it would be better to make sure there were no misunderstandings.

For Izuku the past few minutes had been more than a little confusing. The last thing he could remember was doing everything he could to stop the giant rampaging zero pointer from potentially hurting any more students. After that, everything was a blur up till he woke up lying on a metal table with an older woman, who introduced herself as Recovery Girl, looking over him.

“How are you feeling, young man?”

Glancing around Izuku answered, “I’m okay I guess. I do feel a little sleepy. Um, where am I?”

Izuku tried to sit up, but a firm hand from Recovery Girl kept him lying down, “You just stay there. It looks like you overused your quirk and gave yourself a head injury. I healed you, which is why you are feeling tired, but I want to run a quick scan on you. Brain injuries can be tricky. It won’t take long.”
With a press of a button the table Izuku was on retracted into a large CT machine.

“I hurt myself? Normally I just get a headache then a nose bleed if I push my quirk.”

“Well congratulations young man, you’ve discovered a new extreme symptom of overusing your quirk. Now hold still for a bit, I’m going to start the scan.”

As the machine hummed to life Izuku couldn’t help but feel a little proud of himself, despite lying where he was. He had blown up that huge robot all on his own.

_Though I wonder how many points I gave up to do that. It wasn’t the wrong thing to do, but what if it costs me passing the test._ He frowned at that thought, worry creeping into his mind.

Recovery Girl looked over the images that popped onto her screen, “Well it looks like you got lucky. Your scans look just fine.”

“Oh? Well, that’s good then. Nothing to worry about.”

When the table pulled back out Izuku gulped when he saw the look of disapproval on the healing heroes face, “Young man, you need to be careful. Just because nothing happened this time, there’s no guarantee the next time you hurt yourself there won’t be permanent damage that can’t be healed. Understand?”

Izuku nodded quickly.

“Good. Now you can sit up. I’m just going to run a few more tests, then you’ll be good to go.”

Izuku tried to keep his eyes open as Recovery Girl pulled out a small flashlight and shown the light into his eyes. She hummed to herself, apparently happy with what she was seeing. With a click she turned the light off and pocketed it.

Holding up a finger she instructed Izuku, “Follow the tip of my finger with your eyes. Keep your
Izuku did as he was told and once again seemed to do exactly what Recovery Girl wanted.

“Well, I think I’ve kept you long enough. You’re free to go, just try to take better care of yourself.”

“I’ll try ma’am. Thank you for healing me.” Getting off the table, Izuku looked down at himself and gulped at the site. The front of his green track suit was stained red with blood.

“Whoa, I really bleed a lot, didn’t I?”

“You sure did young man. Concussions aside, that kind of blood loss can be dangerous on its own. So be careful.”

“Yeah…” As Izuku looked down at himself, the door to the room opened and much to Izuku’s shock, Present Mic walked in, “Ah Recovery Girl, looks like your patient is all healed up?”

“Yes, yes the boy is in perfect health. Though I can’t say the same for his decision making. I just discharged him. Though, why are you here?”

Present Mic rubbed a hand through his long slicked back hair, “Well I ran into a young lady who was beside herself looking for the kid.”

Izuku blinked, *someone was looking for me…* “oh no! Uraraka!”

Mic smiled and then stepped aside allowing Ochako to come inside, “See, here’s your friend. And he’s in prefect…er near perfect condition.”

“Deku? what happened? Did you get…hurt?” Ochako’s voice trailed off and her eyes widened in shock as she looked at him. At first, she thought he looked fine, but now that she had a good look at him she saw all the blood on his clothes.

Before Ochako could start to fret over him, Izuku leapt off the table to diffuse the panicked head still.”
questions he knew were coming his way, “Uraraka! It’s great to see you! How’d your test go!? I’m sure you did fine! Great, even! I’m fine by the way. There’s no reason to worry, Recovery Girl just wanted to check a few things, but I’m free to go, since nothing is wrong. Nothing at all! Right? I’m totally fine and there is no reason at all to panic or ask any questions!”

Ochako, still in shock at the sight of so much dried blood on Izuku’s top, and the sudden deluge that came pouring out of his mouth was stunned to silence. Present Mic just looked between the two while Recovery Girl rubbed her temple, “Laying it on a little thick, don’t you think?”

Izuku laughed nervously, “But I am free to go, right?”

Sighing, Recovery Girl waved him off, “Yes, yes. Just do a better job of taking care of yourself. I don’t want to see you here again.”

Nodding, Izuku pulled a still stunned Ochako along ready to leave the room but, stopped and turned to look at the two heroes, “Um before we go, can I ask you two a favor?”

Recovery Girl and Present Mic glanced at each other before Mic shrugged, “Sure listener. What do you need?”

Izuku held up his hero notebook, “Can I have your autographs?”

Ochako, Present Mic and Recovery Girl all blinked while thinking the same thing, Where was he hiding that?!

A short time later Izuku and Ochako were on their way home, with Izuku smiling at the newest addition to his notebook while Ochako walked beside him, arms crossed, “You know I’m not letting you off the hook. I still want to know what happened to you.”

“It’s not that big a deal, Uraraka.” Izuku had hoped that he wouldn’t have to tell Ochako what had happened during the test. Partly because he was worried he may have hurt his chances with his impromptu rescue and didn’t want to worry or let her down. Also she could be a little over protective and learning that he had given himself a concussion might get him chewed out.

Ochako’s eyes narrowed as she gave her final warning, “Dekuuu,”
Izuku held up his hand in defeat, “Okay, okay. So...um do you remember during the orientation over the practical test, when Present Mic talked about the robot that was worth no points.”

Visions of a giant hand reaching towards her flashes through Ochako’s mind. She shuddered before nodding her head, “Yeah, I remember. He told us to avoid it.”

Izuku rubbed his neck, “yeaaah, I didn’t do that.”

“Oh,” Was Ochako’s quick reply. *I guess I wasn’t the only one who decided to take some risks today. Maybe I should let him know that. I may have been coming off to strong.* Before she could speak up however Izuku continued.

“I kinda fought it and blew it up.”

Ochako came to a dead stop, staring at Izuku wide eyed, “YOU WHAT?!?”

“I blew up the zero pointer.” Izuku emphasized this with by mocking an explosion with his hands and adding a small sound effect, “kaboom.”

*Wait, “What,” How, “You did,” But! Ochako sputtered, her thoughts and words jumbling over each other as she tried to comprehend what she had just heard. After a few seconds she was finally able to reel herself in and get out a coherent sentence.*

“Deku, are you telling me that you really blew up a zero pointer. The one that was as big as a building. That one. You blew it up?!”

“Um... yes.”

Ochako’s jaw dropped in awe, “Deku is amazing.”

When she saw Izuku flush, she immediately realized she had said that out loud and tried to quickly cover it up, “I mean what you *did* was amazing!”
Thankfully for Ochako, Izuku bought that, “oh well, thank you.”

“But how did you do it?!”

“Well,” Izuku began, “at first I tried to just throw stuff at it, but that wasn’t really doing anything.”

Ochako nodded in understanding, *when I threw that concrete at my zero pointer it didn’t do much either.*

“After that didn’t work, I tried to pick it up but that really didn’t work,” Izuku picked at the dried stain on his track suit while Ochako shook her head.

“You tried to pick up that robot? Deku that’s crazy.”

Sheepishly Izuku scratched behind an ear while looking away, “yeah, not one of my better judgment calls. The moment I thought I had it held it just started to roll forwards and broke free pretty easily. Got a pretty bad headache after that.”

*Pretty sure that’s also when I got my nose bleed too.*

“Then what?”

“Then Shinso, oh he’s one of the other students I ran into during the test asked if there wasn’t an off switch I could hit or a plug I could pull, something inside to turn it off. Since I didn’t know where to even look for something like that I decided to instead just start to tear it apart from the inside, and hope I got something important. Which I guess I did since all of a sudden I set off some kind of chain reaction and it started to explode from the inside out.”

Ochako shook her head, “That’s crazy Deku. Absolutely crazy.”

“Yeah. It didn’t help much when bits of it started raining down around me.”
“Huh? Deku wait, how close were you to this thing when it started to explode?”

“I was pretty close actually. It was pretty much on top of me when it finally started to go.”

“Wait, seriously?! Deku!”

“Uraraka please, it all turned out okay.”

Ochako decided not to push Izuku on his definition of *it all turned out okay*, and simply asked, “So when it exploded, is that how you got hurt? Something hit you or you got caught in a shockwave?”

“Oh, um, not really.” Izuku looked away, something that Ochako immediately caught onto that.

“Deku?”

Izuku took a deep breath before he began his explanation, “Well you know how if I over use my quirk I get bad nose bleeds?”

Ochako glanced down at the large blood stain on Izuku’s top. She had seen Izuku have bad nose bleeds before, but this one looked like it had been the worst one yet, “Yeah... Is that why you were in there? Blood loss?”

“Sorta. Recovery Girl did say losing blood like that isn’t healthy.”

“No kidding,” Ochako added dryly.

Izuku continued, trying to keep his voice light, and almost playful. Trying to play off what he was about to say as no big deal, “so here’s the thing. Turns out if I really, *really* push my quirk, there’s an even worse symptom I get after nose bleeds. I can give myself a concussion.”

“...” There were a few seconds of silence before Ochako exploded, “HOW IS THAT A THING YOU KNOW!?”
Izuku did his best to look innocent as he answered, “Because I gave myself a concussion destroying the zero pointer.”

“YOU DID WHAT!”

Ochako, in a state of shock and horror, latched onto Izuku’s shoulder and began shaking him, “what is the matter with you?! “

His vision spinning, Izuku tried to get some control of the situation, at the very least he wanted the world to stop moving in circles, “Uraraka! Stop! Shaking! Me! My! Head! Can’t! Take! Anymore! Abuse!”

Snapping back to reality, Ochako let Izuku go and looked away, feeling ashamed she had snapped like she had.

“I’m sorry Deku. I didn’t mean to yell at you like that.”

Izuku smiled as he reassured her, “It’s okay. I know you’re just worried about me. Though I think you forget how strong you are sometimes.”

The two continued to walk some more in silence before Ochako spoke up, though she made sure to keep her voice calm and level. Reasons aside, she was not going to manhandle her friend again.

“Was it an accident?”

“Hmm?”

“When you overused your quirk on the zero pointer. Did you know you were pushing yourself so hard? Or did it just happen?”

Momentarily Izuku was tempted to say that it was. It was an easy out. He was still getting used to his quirk, so it was believable that he hadn’t meant to push himself so hard.
“No, I knew exactly what I was doing. Immediately after using my quirk on that robot, it started to hurt. It wasn’t a full throb like my normal headaches. It was a shooting pain, like someone was jabbing a knife into my skull. The pain, and the wetness I could feel on my face from my nose bleed… I knew I was hurting myself. I didn’t know exactly what was happening, but I knew it was going to be worse than anything that had happened to me before.”

Taking a very deep breath, and making sure she was as calm as possible, “Why would you do something so dangerous? If you could feel it hurting you. Why didn’t you stop.”

“I didn’t want anyone else to get hurt…”

Ochako tilted her head to the side, confused, “what do you mean Deku? Did something happen during your exam?”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah. When that giant robot attacked it hit a building sending a lot of debris raining down onto the street below.”

“Sounds scary.” Memories of her own experience with the zero pointer flashed through her mind, but she pushed them aside as Izuku continued.

“You remember that tall guy that called me out during the orientation?”

“The uptight guy wearing glasses?”

Nodding, Izuku continued, “Well he got trapped under a lot of rubble. I was able to get him out with some help, but as he got carried away, that robot was still wrecking everything in its path. I couldn’t just do nothing when someone else could get hurt because of it.”

“So you decided to stop it.”

“Yeah.”
Ochako covered her face with her hands and let out a loud and very long groan. Izuku could help but snicker at Ochako’s display, even as he expected her to call him out on being an idiot.

“You really are incredible Deku.”

Izuku was thrown for a loop, not expecting her to say that.

“I am?”

Ochako gave him a warm smile, “Deku, you don’t think about acting heroic. You just do it. That’s pretty incredible.”

Izuku blushed some while a bashful smile crept across his face. Ochako’s smile however did harden some as she narrowed her eyes at him, “It was still an incredibly stupid thing do.”

Izuku laughed nervously, “Yeah, I guess it was. Stupid, but the right thing to do.”

Ochako threw her hands up in defeat, “Okay fine, I agree. It was the right thing to do. The heroic thing to do. But the way you did it was the wrong way to do it.”

“Yeah…” Izuku had to agree with that. Saving someone, only to incapacitate himself was not the way to go about being a hero. That was the way to go about being a liability.

“So Deku. You are never ever going to hurt yourself again like you did today. Riiight?”

The glare from Ochako left no room for arguments. So Izuku responded with a very immediate, “Yes ma’am!”

Satisfied, Ochako smiled cheerfully at Izuku, “Great! Now let’s get back home. I’m hungry and your mom said she was going to cook us up something to celebrate us being done with the test.”

As Izuku walked on, he couldn’t help but think. While he was sure he had done the right thing, he worried that his actions may have hurt his score, putting his chance to get into U.A. in jeopardy.
He supposed that he could just ask All Might about it.

_I’ll just give him a call later._

It had been one week since the entrance exam and after several calls and texts had gone unanswered by All Might, on top of the fact that he could not remember how many points he may have scored from the practical exam, a result of the concussion he had at the end of the test, Izuku was beginning to freak. His mood had not been helped when at school he had to deal with everyone in class asking himself, Ochako and Katsuki questions about everything.

“Was the test hard?”

Katsuki smirked, “Fuck no it wasn’t. The written part was a joke. The damned mock exams I had to take were harder.”

“What’s the campus like?”

“It was huge! I don’t even want to think about what it cost to maintain it,” Ochako answered.

“Did you see any heroes?”

“Oh… um yeah, Present Mic gave us our orientation,” Izuku said, far less enthusiastically than one would expect. Both Ochako and Katsuki glanced at him.

“What did you guys have to do for your test?”

“We’re not supposed to talk about the test details-” Ochako began before getting cut off by Katsuki, “We had to destroy a bunch of robots.”

“Bakugou!”
Katsuki shrugged, “That part is common knowledge at this point. Everyone knows it. U.A. just has to make us sign that stuff along with waivers to cover their asses.”

The classroom beamed, “So it is true! That’s an insane way to test someone!”

“It was a cakewalk. I just blew everyone of them up!”

“They were pretty fragile,” Ochako scratched her cheek when the class looked at her, “Not that I’m saying the test was easy. There is a reason U.A. is hard to get into. Don’t let Bakugou undersell it.”

“We all know how Bakugou thinks he did, what about you Uraraka? How’d you do?”

“Oh well, I think I did okay. My strategy worked out pretty well for most of the test,” Answered Ochako.

“Wait what strategy? How’d you destroy your robots?”

“I found big groups and used one of the robots as a club and bashed the others to bits with it,” Ochako stated, very matter-of-factly.

“....Scary....”

“What about you Midoriya, how’d you do?”

“I bet he pissed himself during the test.”

“Yeah, no way he was able to do anything against U.A. robots.”

Ochako narrowed her eyes at a few of the students, who immediately shut their mouths. Izuku took some time before he answered, “Oh...well, I know I did good on the written test...”
Someone coughed into their hand. “Nerd.”

“And I’m pretty sure I did alright in the practical,” Izuku finished not very convincingly.

“Dude you failed didn’t you?”

“Totally failed.”

The arrival of their teacher to start class broke up the group. Ochako leaned over and put a hand on Izuku’s shoulder, reminding him that she knew he did just fine. Katsuki rolled his eyes and huffed, making his thoughts on Izuku’s chances known.

Izuku decided to not bring up the fact that he couldn’t remember what his score was because he got knocked out at the end. No reason to give the class, and specifically Kacchan more reason to doubt him.

Now after a week of dealing with no returned calls, and a class that was sure he had failed, Izuku was about at the point where he just wanted to curl up into a ball and never leave his room.

Sitting down for dinner Inko and Ochako shared worried glances as Izuku was blankly staring at the fish they were eating.

“Deku?”

“Izuku dear, your food will get cold if you just stare at it.”

Blinking, Izuku shook his head, snapping out of his daze, “Sorry, sorry. Just thinking is all.” He quickly began to eat his dinner.

“Your results should be arriving soon right?”
“Yeah, they said we’d get everything in about a week,” Ochako confirmed, “so today or tomorrow if we’re lucky.”

“Lucky, huh?” Izuku mumbled under his breath.

A knock at the door, grabbed the three’s attention. Izuku was about to get up, but Inko waved him down, “It’s okay. I’ll get it. You two just enjoy your dinner.”

With Inko out of the room, Ochako decided to briefly broach another reason she knew was causing Izuku’s unease, “Deku, you’re worrying way too much over everything. All Might may just be busy. He’s had to go radio silent before.”

“Not like this Uraraka. He always made sure we knew ahead of time that he was going to be out of touch,” Izuku sighed and sank into his chair, “I must have really screwed up the test. He must be so embarrassed that he wasted all that time-! OW!”

Ochako, not liking the line of thought Izuku was going down, kicked him in the shin, “That’s enough of that. I’m not going to let you keep thinking like that. Positive thoughts only, from now on.”

Bending down and rubbing his shin, Izuku looked up at Ochako over the lip of the table, “You’re going to beat positivity into me?”

“If I have to.”

“I think you’ve been hanging around Kacchan too much.” Izuku smirked, the first smile he had had in some time. It was immediately wiped away when Ochako kicked him under the table again, not happy at all at being compared to Katsuki.

“IZUKU, OCHAKO!” Inko rushed into the dining room, both teens startled by the shout, “Look who it is!”

Inko moved over and behind her, wearing his oversized yellow suit that looked completely ridiculous in his shrunken form, was All Might.
“Young Midoriya, Young Uraraka, it’s good to see you two.”

“Mr. Yagi!” Both shouted in surprise.

“I’m sorry to barge in like this unannounced. Especially after not getting back to you sooner, Young Midoriya.”

“Oh I’m sure you must have not been getting my messages or something, Al- um sir.”

Sheepishly All Might took out his phone and flipped over a few screen and showed the group the long list of missed calls and texts, “No, no. I got them…”

“Oh…”

The room dropped a few degrees as Inko crossed her arms, and glared at All Might. Sending a shiver up the pro heroes spine, “I’m sure you have an excellent excuse for worrying my son for such a long time.”

The room got even colder as Ochako also glared at All Might as well. All Might sensing the incredible amount of danger he was in, reached into his suit pocket and pulled out two envelopes, stamped with the U.A. sigal, “er Yes, about that. Since I wasn’t able to respond sooner, I thought I’d personally come down and deliver these to you two!”

Izuku looked at the envelopes, “Are those…?”

“…our test results?” Ochako finished.

“Yes. I thought you’d want to open them together, so I picked them up and well, here they are.”

Ochako glanced over at izuku, and found him frozen in his chair. With a huff, Ochako quickly stood up and took the letters from All Might, “Thank you!” Bowing quickly, Ochako rushed over to Izuku and grabbing his wrist, pulled him into his room, closing the door behind them.
Inko took a step to follow but All Might said softly, “Perhaps we should give them some privacy. This is the moment they worked so hard towards together, after all.”

Sighing, Inko nodded in agreement, “I suppose so.”

With the door closed behind them, Izuku and Ochako stood facing each other, holding their letters in varying states of nervous excitement.

“So…” Ochako finally broke the silence, “You going to open yours?”

Izuku glanced down at the envelope in his hands in uncertainty, “Um, why don’t you go first Uraraka.”

“Eh!? Me first? No, no, no, you’ve been worried about these results all week. I don’t mind waiting till after you.”

“Uraraka, you’ve been anxious about your results too. I can tell.”

“Whaaa? I have not.” Ochako found one of Izuku’s posters very interesting as she answered.

“Your hands are shaking Uraraka.”

Ochako quickly hid her hands behind her back, she was about to deny Izuku’s point but stopped. Both looked at each other before they broke into a small fit of giggles, “Okay, this is pretty sad, Deku.”

“Yeah… So, who’s going first?”

“Hmm,” Ochako thought about it for a second, “Why don't we play for it. Rock paper scissors sound good to you?”

“Yeah, that sounds alright.”
“Great, let me put these on your desk and we can play.”

Izuku handed Ochako his envelope, which then she immediately torn the end off.

“URARAKA!”

Ochako grinned brightly, “Oh, yours is open now, would you look at that.”

“You...you cheater!”

“Yes.”

“...How did I fall for that?”

“Really easily, so here you go.” Ochako handed Izuku back his open envelope, who took it back while giving Ochako an annoyed look, which she returned with an even bigger grin.

Reaching in, Izuku blinked in confusion as he pulled out a small disk. Before he could ask what it was, it suddenly turned on, with a projection of All Might, startling both teens, and making Izuku drop the disk onto the floor.

“I AM HERE AS A PROJECTION!”

“All Might!?”

“I had to do some paperwork that took quite a bit of time, and I had to record all these videos for all examinees, so I wasn't able to contact you.”

Ochako glanced quickly at the door behind her, and to the room that All Might was in, before she could decide if paperwork was a good enough excuse for making Deku worry for so long, the message continued.
“Plus I had to wait to record this one last since the director here wouldn’t give me enough time to talk to you two when we still had other videos to make.”

Izuku and Ochako looked at each other, “Huh? ‘Talk to’…”

“…’You two.’”

“You see I know you’ll both be watching this, so I figured to save time and give you both your results at the same time. That’s right, both disks have the same message!”

As All Might laughed at his brilliance, Ochako rubbed her brow, so that whole thing was a waste of time!

Izuku smirked, “enjoying your pyrrhic victory?”

“You hush!”

“Still, not contacting you soon was wrong of me. I’m sorry.”

The projection of All Might bowed deeply, “But let us get down to business. I’m sure you both want to know how you did on the exam. Take heart, you both passed the written exam with flying colors. All that time you two spent studying paid off spectacularly. You should both be proud. Too often the public, and even some heroes, forget that one’s mind is just as important as one’s body. And these scores show you both take that to heart.”

Ochako smiled, “Awesome! It’d suck if it was the written part that did us in.”

“Yeah, but after we self-corrected, I wasn’t too worried about that.”

“But now, let’s get to the meat of the exam and what I’m sure you’re both eagerly waiting for:he practical results!”
Both Ochako and Izuku gulped, *here we go.*

“So let’s see, Young Uraraka, lets go over your performance during the exam.”

“Pyrrhic victory.”

“I will float you!”

All Might turned to a screen to his side, which flickered to life and replaced All Might as the main projection. All Might talked over the video that showed a recording of Ochako as she ran through the exam. Izuku gasped in shock as he watched Ochako fly from building to building.

“*Young Uraraka, your decision to use your quirk to take the high ground and survey your surroundings was a stroke of genius. And attacking groups that were far enough from the rest of the examinees to maximize your points while also only using your quirk a minimal amount to dispatch the faux villains shows you understand the importance of thinking ahead. With such an impressive tactic, it should come as no surprise that you would get and equally impressive score!*”

Ochako rubbed the back of her head, as she tried to not let it show too much how happy she was at the moment from All Mights praise, though her smile gave that away.

The screen then switched to show Izuku, kneeling at the entrance of the battle arena.

Izuku gulped as he realized it was now his turn to see how he had done.

“*Now for you Young Midoriya. Right away you started off strong. While your fellow examinees were left startled by the suddenness of the start, you were off the line and closing in on your first target. Breaking the robots and using their own parts as ammunition showed great ingenuity, and the stamina you displayed being able to stay on the move constantly as you went from target to target was a testament to the work you put into you training. However…”*

Izuku winced. He had a feeling he knew what was coming next.
“...While you made excellent progress during the first half of the test, you slowed down a great deal during the second half. Twice you stopped focusing on the faux villains, hamstringing yourself and your final score.”

Izuku sighed sadly, *I knew it.*

“Deku…”

“If that was all there was to the test, that is.”

“Huh?”

“Wait what did he say?”

“Sorry to lead you both on, but I also am an entertainer. You see, this test was not graded by villain points alone.”

The image changed back to Uraraka. Clips of her running towards frightened students, and then throwing a huge chunk of debris at the zero pointer flashed by quickly, ending with her floating several villain robots to get destroyed by the zero pointer’s attack.

“Young Uraraka, when you saw those students too afraid to move, you didn't hesitate to throw yourself into danger to save them. And then after they had escaped, you were able to use the zero pointers destructive power to gain even more villain points. Courage and cool headedness in the face of overwhelming danger, these traits are a must for heroes.”

“Uraraka...you fought the zero pointer too?”

Ochako made a small eep at getting caught, “Oh, did I not mention that?”

“No, no you didn’t.”
“Well...um…”

“AND you gave me a hard time.”

Ochako gulped, she was caught, and they both knew it. She was grateful that Izuku only looked mildly annoyed with her.

The screen switched again to show Izuku.

“And you, Young Midoriya. When you saw another examinee struggling, you didn’t just save him and take the points for yourself, but gave him the tools to save himself. Then when the zero pointer attacked and a student was trapped, you rushed forward to save him. What’s more, your actions inspired others to come to your aid. Even after rescuing the student, you were worried for the safety of everyone else. So much so, you took it upon yourself to protect them by stopping the threat, even at the cost of taking yourself out of the test.”

The screen ended with Izuku, collapsed on his knees, before All Might took center stage again.

Izuku flinched at the image of himself, while Ochako held a hand over her mouth, horrified. She had guessed it had been bad, but seeing just how bad Izuku was after destroying the zero pointer was something else entirely.

How can a school for heroes not consider the actions of people who save others and do the right thing? Some may call that lip service. But you see, this is a job that requires risking one’s life to put that lip service into practice! That is why we have rescue points! These points are given by a panel of judges. This quality is what we at look for at U.A. You both showed this quality!

Uraraka Ochako: 58 villain points and 28 rescue points for 86 points total. And Midoriya Izuku: 44 villain points and 65 rescue points for 109 points total. Not only do you pass, but first and second place are yours. It is my honor, privilege and joy to welcome you both to your hero academia.”

The projection faded leaving the two standing in stunned silence. But not for very long.

Ochako screamed as she leapt at Izuku in pure joy wrapping her arms around in the biggest hug she
could muster. Izuku didn’t bother trying to stop the tears as he caught her and gleefully returned the hug even as he lost his balance and the two tumbled onto his bed.

“We did it Deku! We did it!”

“We did, we really did!”

Together they cheer and cried, rolling over the bed and getting tangled in the covers in a state of unfiltered bliss wrapped in each others arms. With a dull thud, the two rolled off the bed, taking the top cover with them. Ochako landed on her back with Izuku on top of her. Neither cared. They were too happy to be worried about anything else. They had done it. They were in U.A. And nothing was going to bring them down now.

The door to Izuku’s room slid open as Inko rushed inside, “Are you two okay!? I heard screaming and a crash and -!!!”

Inko’s eyes went wide as she looked down and saw Izuku and Ochako all wrapped up in covers and each other. All Might peeked in behind her, seeing if anyone needed help, but was quickly pushed back by Inko, “You two seem to be busy. I’ll take Toshinori with me so you two can…. celebrate in peace.” Inko quickly closed the door behind her leaving Izuku and Ochako alone again.

Turning away from the closed door, Izuku and Ochako looked at each other, and the sudden realization of how they must look, and what Inko must think they were doing hit both of them like a truck. Faces red, the two scrambled to get off of each other and chase after Inko and All Might before they left the apartment.

“MOM, NO! IT’S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!!!”

“MRS. MIDORIYA! NOOO!”

After convincing Inko that nothing had happened between the two of them, especially not that, All Might had suggested that the two check their letters, to see what class they were in. To both of their relief, they had gotten the same class, 1-A.
“HEY, BRAT! YOU GOT A LETTER!”

In a flash, Katsuki rushed into the room where his mother was holding a letter in her hand, “Give me that hag!”

Snatching the letter from his mother, and ducking a slap aimed at the back of his head, Katsuki ran off to his room, his mother’s screams echoing behind him. Closing the door to his room, and locking it for good measure to keep his meddling parents out, Katsuki plopped into a chair and stared down at the letter in his hands. He already knew he was going to get in, no one could have gotten more points than him after all. And that written test had been a joke. So this letter was just a formality. A little something extra to add to his growing legacy.

*It’ll get put into a museum after I’ve retired as the greatest hero in the world,* Katsuki thought with a smirk.

Reaching into his desk, he pulled out a letter opener and sliced through the top to the paper. Opening the letter up, Katsuki ignored the folded paper inside, and picked out a small disk.

“Yes, this is this thing?”

“I AM HERE AS A PROJECTION!"

Startled, Katsuki dropped the disk onto the floor, “THE FUCK?! ALL MIGHT!”

“Surprise! Allow me to introduce myself, I am All Might!”

“Everyone knows who you are!”

“And I am the new teacher of U.A’s heroics course!”

Katsuki promptly shut up when he heard that, *Holy fuck, All Might’s teaching at U.A?*
“Now let's get down to your test results. Young Bakugou, you passed the written portion of the exam expertly. A Hero is more than just a person of action. You must have a sound mind as well, and you showed that with these exemplary scores. Well Done!

The projection of All Might gave a thumbs up. Katsuki rolled his eyes.

“But now, the other results I’m sure you are waiting for.”

“ Fucking finally”

“To say that you simply passed would be an understatement. Your use of your explosive quirk to draw in the villains then counterattacking them was a genius strategy, and the fact that you were able to use this tactic for so long is a testament to your toughness. Your hard work not only has earned you a spot into U.A., but also the highest villain points score recorded. Congratulations!”

With his message over, the projection blipped away replaced with a chart of different names and scores but Katsuki had stopped paying attention. He was too busy leaning back in his chair laughing.

“A NEW RECORD! DID YOU HEAR THAT YOU HAG!?"

There was a pounding on his door, “You brat, if you want to talk to me OPEN THE DAMNED DOOR!”

_Oh right, locked that shit to keep her out. Oh what the fuck._

Getting up, Katsuki snapped the lock off and went back to his seat, grinning widely as his mother slammed the door open and walked in, “Fucking brat, what the hell are you yelling about?”

Katsuki pointed a thumb at himself, his cocky grin getting even wider, “You’re in the presence of greatness, so show some respect.”
Mitsuki cocked her head to the side, “What the hell are you talking about?”

“Not only did I pass that shit show of an exam, I got the highest villain score in the school’s history.”

Mitsuki groaned, *Great. That’s just what his ego needs. A new school jerking it off.* Taking her eyes off her son, she looked over at the display still being projected. It took her only a few seconds reading it before both her eyebrows shot up in surprise. *Holy shit, that’s Inko’s boy. I’ll be damned.*

“What was your score brat?”

“Fuck if I know, they didn’t say. Doesn't matter, I got the record. Most villain points. I won.”

Mitsuki shook her head, now it made sense. He hadn’t seen the list behind him yet. *He’s so caught up on one thing, he never bothered to look.*

“Yeah, you sure did good. Too bad you did such a shit job getting rescue points.”

Katsuki’s smirk faltered, “The fuck are you talking about? Rescue points?”

Pointing at the projection Mitsuki couldn’t hide her smirk, “Learn to finish what you're watching before you start running your mouth, 3rd place. Now I’m going to call a friend to send some congratulations. You keep your damned voice down, don’t want her hearing your screaming.”

Mitsuki turned and closing the door behind her, left Katsuki alone looking confused.

“3rd place? What the fuck is she talking about?”

Turning around, Katsuki finally saw the scoreboard.

“WHAT IN THE FUCK IS THIS BULLSHIT?!”
A few days after receiving their acceptance letters, Izuku and Ochako along with Katsuki were called into the principal's office to go over their acceptance into U.A. The three had mostly stayed quiet as the man spent most of the time self-congratulating his school and his own ‘incredible’ and ‘inspiring’ leadership. That must have been the reason that three of his schools students were getting into the greatest hero school in the country. After staying just long enough to let the man rub his own ego, the three were excused.

Now outside, Izuku let out a long groan as he walked beside Ochako, “Man, I’m glad that’s over. All he needed was a copy of our acceptance letters for their records. How’d that become a ten-minute meeting?”

Ochako crossed her arms and gave out a huff of annoyance. Her cheeks puffed out as she grumbled under her breath. Izuku glanced over at her, not sure what had her in such a bad mood, “Uraraka? What’s wrong?”

Stopping, Ochako rubbed the bridge of her nose, “That principal is a jerk.”

Izuku turned his face upward as he thought about that, “I’d go more with boring, than anything. He sure knows how to talk about himself. The way he went on, it was almost like he thought he had taken the test.”

“Didn’t what he said bother you?”

“Um you’ll need to be a little more specific. He said a lot of stuff in there.”

“He said it was a miracle of miracles that you got in.”

“Oh. That? Well...,” Izuku shrugged his shoulders, “I’ve had worse stuff said to me.”

Ochako raised her hands, along with her voice in exasperation, “He’s our principal! He’s not supposed to say that kind of stuff to his students!”
“You’ve been to this school for how long, and you still get surprised by this kind of stuff? We’ve had the same teachers right?” Izuku deadpanned.

Ochako recrossed her arms and started walking, “I really hate this school. It’ll be so great once we get out of here.”

Izuku moved to follow after her, opening his mouth to reassure her that they had both accomplished their goal, so she shouldn’t let some cringy teachers and principal get to her, but before he could, someone grabbed ahold of his collar and yanked him into a shadowed alcove in the side of the school building. Slammed against the wall, Izuku’s eyes watered after the back of his head bounced off the concrete. Dazed, and blinking away the stars in his eyes, Izuku hopped against all odds that the person holding him by the collar was not who he thought it was. That for once, when something horrible happened to him at school, or anywhere really, it wasn’t the same person it always was.

Don’t be Kacchan. Don’t be Kacchan.

When Izuku was finally able to focus on his attacker, his heart sank. It was indeed Katsuki that had grabbed him. Because of course it was.

“You little shit.”

And he’s in a mood today. Great.

Finally getting a good look at him, Izuku was taken aback from not just the anger emanating from the other boy, but the look of absolute hatred he wore. A look Izuku hadn’t seen since the start of the school year, when Katsuki had learned that he was also applying for U.A. Izuku tried to step to the side, but Katsuki only tightened his grip and pushed Izuku all the more into the wall.

“I told you. I fucking told you to not go to U.A.”

Katsuki’s voice quaked as he shook with barely controlled rage. His hands were smoking, he very clearly wanted to blow Izuku up and was only just holding himself back.
I guess he doesn’t want to take too big a risk of getting in trouble so soon to starting at U.A.

“Kacchan…”

“I was supposed to be the only one to get into U.A. My legacy was supposed to start here, when people looked back they were going to see how much better I was than everyone else.”

Izuku wasn’t sure what to do. He was walking a razor's edge right now, and any mistake, be it saying the wrong thing, or even doing nothing, could set Katsuki off.

“Now? Now my dream has been torn to pieces. But that wasn’t enough was it? Not only did you take my dream, you went and embarrassed me in the exam.”

Gulping, Izuku recalled the scores from the practical exam. With the addition of the rescue points, he had gotten first place, while Katsuki had gotten third.

“Kacchan, you got the highest villain point score ever recorded at U.A! How is that embarrassing!”

Katsuki seethed, “I got third place behind you, you shitty Deku. I was behind someone with a lower score!”

“But the rescue points…” Izuku tried to explain calmly, but was cut off.

“Are bull shit. The test was to get the highest score from destroying those robots. I destroyed the most, and got the highest score!”

Izuku could feel his heart pumping in his chest and hear is thundering in his ears. His flight or fight instincts were kicking into overdrive. Katsuki was so close to snapping. If that happened, *I think I always knew Kacchan and I would have to fight each other eventually. We’re both aiming for the top. But here? Now? Like this?*

“So here’s what you are going to do Deku. You are going to tell me how you and that round bitch cheated. ‘Cause that’s the only way the two of you could have passed that damned test.”
Izuku felt his fight or flight instincts take a sudden step back as a new feeling filled him. Righteous indignation. He could deal with Katsuki insulting him. Belittling him. He’s dealt with it almost his whole life, but to hear him talk about Ochako like that. Knowing just how hard she worked, and why she pushed herself. That upset him more than he expected. Much more than he expected. Worries about consequences from a fight vanished. Reaching up, Izuku grabbed hold of Katsuki’s wrists and squeezed down hard.

“Kacchan. Don’t you dare say that.”

Katsuki was startled but he quickly brushed that aside. More smoke waft from his hands as he tightened his grip, burning Izuku’s collar.

“What the fuck did you say to me?”

Izuku didn’t flinch back, “I told you to not say that. I don’t care what you say about me,” Izuku pushed himself away from the wall and against Katsuki, forcing the boy to step back, “I really don’t. But I will not let you talk about Uraraka like that.”

Izuku took another step forward, forcing Katuski to lose some more ground before he anchored himself, not willing to let Izuku push him any further backwards.

“Uraraka worked hard to make it through that exam. For months, and months she made herself strong Kacchan. And I won’t let you smear her, just because you’re jealous she did better than you.”

“You’re not going to let me? How the fuck you going to stop me, you shitty Deku.”

Izuku let his quirk flare to life, bathing himself in a bright green glow. The alcove was empty, so he didn’t have much he could use against Katsuki, but he made sure the other boy knew he would do whatever he could.

For a few more seconds boy boys stared each other down, then Katsuki ripped his hands free from Izuku’s grip. Absently he rotated his wrists some, loosening them and trying to get a little more feeling back into his hands before shoving them into his pockets, “This is your only warning. You stay out of my way, or I’ll blow you to bits. Got it?”
Turning on his heel, Katsuki walked away. Izuku closed his eyes, releasing his quirk and a breath he hadn’t realized he had been holding.

“What do you want Round Face?”

Izuku’s eyes snapped back open.

Katsuki had been leaving, but his path was now blocked by Ochako, who wasn’t just standing in his way, but had walked right up to him and was now toe to toe, and face to face. He couldn’t see her fully since Katsuki was blocking his view, but her hands were clenched into fists so tight, her knuckles were white. When she spoke, she kept her voice low, so Izuku could only pick out a few words.

“If ... touch ... again ... do more ... float ... so high ... splat ... Understand?”

Izuku couldn’t hear Katsuki’s reply, if he had said anything at all. After a few brief tense seconds, Katsuki brushed past Ochako, though since neither was willing to stand aside for the other, their shoulders slammed into each other. If Katsuki was surprised at how hard it had been to try and move Ochako, he didn’t show it. Glaring down at her as she held her ground, before stomping off. After watching Katsuki finally leave she whirled around and ran towards Izuku, her anger gone in a flash, replaced with concern and worry. The quick mood change was enough to throw Izuku for a bit of a loop.

“Oh gosh, Deku, I’m so sorry! I should have noticed you had disappeared sooner. I just thought you were being quiet.” Her hands waved about as she fretted over him, “Are you okay? Your collar is all burnt up! He didn’t hurt you, did he?”

“No, I’m fine. Hit my head on the wall, but-!”

Izuku clamped his mouth shut when Ochako got even closer, so she could rub a hand over his head. Her fingers brushing through his hair, felt uncomfortably good. Distracted, Izuku wasn’t ready when her fingers pressed against the back of his head, causing him to wince and suck in a quick breath through his teeth.

“Sorry! Sorry!”
Much gentler, Ochako brushed her fingers over the same spot, feeling the small bump. Pulling her hand back, Ochako examined her fingers and let out a relieved sigh, “At least you aren’t bleeding.”

“Yeah, when Kacchan grabbed me, he slammed me against the wall. Guess I got lucky he didn’t do it too hard.”

“Bakugou…”

Before Izuku could reassure her that he was fine, a sound he had never heard before reached his ears and stopped him dead in his tracks. It took him several tries before he could definitely assure himself that he hadn’t misheard.

Did...did Uraraka just growl?

Doing his best to ignore the funny feelings that started to bubble to the surface, Izuku quickly moved to calm Ochako down, not wanting her to get upset over something he saw as trivial, “Hey, Uraraka. Hey, I’m fine. Like you said, no bleeding. It’s just a little lump. It’ll probably be gone before tomorrow morning.”

“You’re sure you’re okay? We could go to the nurse’s office if you want.”

Izuku waved the idea off, “I’m fine. Really, it’s not that big a deal.”

Ochako sighed, “My best friend was just assaulted. I’m allowed to make that into a big deal, Deku.”

“Come on, Uraraka. I wouldn’t go that far. Kacchan and I were just having an… aggressive discussion.”

Rolling her eyes Ochako simply said, “Uh huh. I happened to hear some of it too.”

“Oh you did? How much did you hear exactly?”
“Just around when Bakugou asked how we cheated to pass the test.”

“Oh.”

“So Deku two things,” Ochako smiled at Izuku, which coupled with the fact she was still so close to him, brought a blush to his cheeks, “One, thank you for standing up to Bakugou for me. It means a lot to me to know you think so highly of me.”

“Of course Uraraka! After everything you’ve done, you deserve to be respected.”

“The same goes for you too.”

Izuku blinked, “Huh?”

Ochako poked Izuku in the chest, “You did everything I did. So if I deserve respect, you better believe that you do too.”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head, “I suppose it does. Old habits, I guess.”

“Well, work on it. I don’t want to hear you being okay with anyone talking badly about you. Don’t just stand up for me, stand up for yourself too.”

“I’ll be sure to try, Uraraka.” Izuku paused then sighed, “Of course, the moment I do that with Kacchan, it’s going to lead to a fight for sure.”

Ochako’s smile turned confident, and a little aggressive, “And you’ll kick his butt!”

Izuku laughed, but didn’t argue with her. Ochako’s confidence aside, while that fight was probably inevitable, it didn’t mean he had to look forward to it. After all, he had been hit by some of Kacchan’s explosions before, and he was in no hurry to deal with that. Plus, there was a small part of him that held onto the hope that they could salvage their relationship before they came to blows.
“And you’re sure you have everything?”

“Yes Mom.”

What about tissues? Do you need those?”

Izuku finished tying his shoes, “Yes mom, I have those packed up. I have everything I need.”

“Are you sure? I can check your things if you want.”

“Mom, please! I have to hurry. Ochako just texted me to let me know she’s at the gate. I don’t want to keep her waiting.”

Reaching for the door, Izuku stopped when Inko called out to him one last time, “Izuku!”

“Yeah, Mom?”

Inko, looked at her son, dressed in his new U.A. uniform and smiled, “You’re really cool.”

Izuku smiled brightly, “I’m off, Mom.”

“Stay safe.”

Closing the door behind him Izuku hurried down the stairs and towards the front gate of the apartment complex where Ochako was waiting for him.

“Izuku! You ready for our first day?”
Coming to a stop, Izuku was left stunned when he saw Ochako. Nothing about her had changed since the last time he had seen her last night, but seeing her in her new school uniform brought a flush to his cheeks. *She looks really good in that uniform.*

Shaking his head, Izuku walked up to Ochako and the two made their way to school. As they walked down the sidewalk, Izuku noticed that occasionally Ochako would be sneaking glances at him. After catching her for a fourth time, Izuku decided to ask what was wrong, “Is there something on my face Uraraka?”

“No, no. Your face is fine. It’s just...Deku, what’s wrong with your tie?”

For the rest of the walk to school as well as when they were walking down the halls Izuku was busy fending off Ochako’s hands as she picked at his tie.

“Uraraka, it’s fine.”

“Grr, no it’s not. That’s not how ties are supposed to look. Come here and let me fix it!”

Swatting her hands away, Izuku adjusted his tie back into shape, “I watched a video on how to tie this. It’s fine.”

Ochako crossed her arms in a huff, “Ties are not supposed to be less than six inches long Deku.”

Izuku ignored her and continued on, “Come on, our class is just down...here?”

Startled, Izuku trailed off and came to a stop. *Is that?*

Much to Izuku’s surprise, in front of the door to his new class stood two people he hadn’t been sure he’d ever see again. Tenya and Hitoshi.

Tenya noticed them first and raised a hand in greeting, “Midoriya, it is you.”
Hitoshi followed up behind, “Told you he was going to make it.”

“Iida, Shinso, you both passed! That’s great. Are you both in 1-A?”

“We are indeed. I assume that you are as well, unless you got lost on your way to 1-B?”

Izuku shook his head, “Nope, I’m 1-A. It’s great seeing you guys again.”

“Midoriya, you knew there was more to the test than what we were told, didn’t you?”

“Huh?”

“The rescue points, you must have figured it out. I didn’t suspect anything until after the test.”

Izuku blinked and looked over at Hitoshi for clarification, “He thinks you took on the zero pointer because you knew heroic action got you points.”

“Oh! Oh no, I had no idea about that.”

“Told you so, Iida.”

Tenya adjusted his glasses, “Incredible, to take on such a task without any thought to potential rewards. You are truly better than me. Please forgive my action from before. It was wrong of me to judge you so harshly during the test.”

Izuku waved his hands around, trying to put the other boy at ease, “No it’s okay, really…:

A cough from behind Izuku grabbed all three of the boys attention. Ochako looked at the two students, her gaze lingering on Tenya as she recognized him from the exam orientation, “You know these people Deku?”
Izuku gasped as he realized he hadn’t given Ochako a chance to introduce herself, “I’m sorry Uraraka, um yeah. These are the two I, um...ran into during the test.”

Hitoshi rolled his eyes, “He means the two he saved. I’m Shinso Hitoshi.”

“Uraraka Ochako... have we met before?”

“I ran into you when you were about to get into a fight with that loud blond guy.”

“Oh! Yeah! I remember now.”

Tenya stepped forward, “and I am Iida Tenya. You are an acquaintance of Midoriya’s?”

Ochako tried to not let her voice get to curt, “I’m his best friend.”

Tenya bowed deeply, “Then I must also apologize to you as well. You were right to defend your friend after my unjust and callous words. Please accept my most humble apologies.”

Ochako blinked a few times before smiling, “Hey, we’re all starting fresh here. And it seems like you’re already on good terms with Deku. So let’s just say it’s water under the bridge and move on.”

“You are a truly kind and forgiving person. Thank you.”

Ochako sighed in relief. Perhaps she had been a little harsh in her opinion of Tenya. While he was definitely uptight, he didn’t seem like a bad person, and he seemed genuinely thankful for Izuku saving him. And Hitoshi seemed like a good person as well. Plus he had stood up to Katsuki, so that was a plus in her book.

_We haven’t even gotten into the class yet and Deku is making friends. It’s nice to see I’m not the only one here that sees how great a person Deku is._

Before the four could head into class however, a loud yell grabbed everyone’s attention.
“IT IS YOU, IZUKU!”

In a flash, someone rushed past the group and tackled Izuku to the ground. Everyone stood in shock not sure how to process what had just happened. Ochako gapped, wide-eyed, as some girl sat, no, bounced on Izuku’s lap, laughing hysterically. Iida’s hands chopped at the air as he tried to comprehend the utter disrespectful display he had just seen. “Who tackles a fellow student like that?” and other such thoughts running through his head. Hitoshi just rubbed his head wondering what kind of crazy situation his new friend was going to drag him into if this happened on the first day, before classes had even begun.

Izuku once he had recovered from the initial shock of getting knocked to the ground, finally looked up to see who it was that was on top of him. Izuku promptly determined it was a girl sitting on his lap. Her skirt had ridden up more than enough to show him much of her pale, but healthy looking thighs. Looking further up Izuku was drawn the the girls wide, fanged, grin and flushed cheeks. Then Izuku’s green eyes met the girl's yellow eyes. Those piercing eyes that brought back memories from months ago. Memories of scary thugs and an almost kiss rushed back to the forefront of his mind.

“You remember me right? My cute hero remembers me, doesn’t he?”

“T-Toga?!”

Izuku couldn’t believe it. Was this really the same girl that he pulled from those thugs in that alley? She was cleaned up, all the grime washed away. Her hair was not hanging loosely by her shoulders but tied back into two messy buns, and she no longer wore the ripped and tattered old uniform but the same U.A. uniform that Ochako wore, minus the tights. No, the bright yellow eyes were the same, and the wide grin and fangs were the same. This was the same girl.

“Toga, is that you?”

Himiko’s hands covered her blushing cheeks as her smile widened and she began to giggle and bounce uncontrollably, giving Izuku an immediate reminder that she wasn’t just sitting on him, but straddling him.

“You do remember me! I knew my hero wouldn’t forget about me. I just knew it.”
Himiko let her hands fall from her face and as she leaned down, pressing them into the floor on either side of Izuku’s head. If not for the fact that the two were in the middle of a school hallway, their position would look a lot like a pair of lovers. Licking her lips, and grinding herself just enough to make Izuku suck in a sharp gasp, Himiko brought her face right next to Izuku’s, “You have no idea how long I’ve waited to see you again Izuku. And you know what?”

Izuku’s throat was dry. His head was spinning so he was only just able to squeak out a soft, “What?”

The tip of Himiko’s nose brushed against Izuku’s and she huskily answered, “I think I still owe you that kiss, hero.”

“EXCUSE YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO DEKU!?”

“I must insist that you stop this behavior at once. This public display is no way for heroes in training to act!”

“There’s a janitor's closet down that way if you need it.”

Himiko pulled back and fixed the group with an annoyed glare, “Do you mind? We’re having a moment here.”

“HAVING A MOMENT!?”

Himiko waved Ochako away, “You’re being loud. Go away. I want to be with my Izuku without interruptions.

Hitoshi could actually hear Ochako’s patience snap. He also realized he and Tenya were standing between Ochako and Himiko. And that was definitely not the safest place to be. Moving fast, he pulled the other boy, who was still going on about proper decorum, to the side giving Ochako all the room she needed.

“Get off Deku now!”
“No. Who are you anyway? And what’s a Deku?”

Ochako fumed as she pointed at Izuku, “That’s Deku! My best friend that you are sitting on! Now get off of him!”

Himiko rolled her eyes at Ochako, and looked backed down at Izuku. Smiling sweetly at him, she rolled her hips just enough to pull another soft whimper and gasp from Izuku, “Well it sure doesn’t feel like Izuku wants me to get off him. So I’ll stay put I think.”

Ochako bristled and stomped forward, grabbing the other girl and yanking her off. Through sheer force of will, she made sure to keep her pinky out so she didn’t activate her quirk and launch Himiko down the hall.

While Himiko pulled free of Ochako’s grip and went about straightening her uniform, Tenya and Hitoshi helped a neon red Izuku back to his feet. Once he was sure Izuku was okay, Tenya dramatically pointed at Himiko, “Explain yourself! Who are you? I don’t recall seeing you at the entrance exam. If you are a general studies student, you should head off to your class at once!”

Ochako crossed her arms, “You can also explain how you know Deku while you are at it.”

Himiko glared at Ochako, before turning her attention back to the others, “Hi I’m Toga Himiko. Nice to meet you all.”

The normalcy of Himiko’s introduction threw the three for a loop. On instinct they each quickly replied back.

“Iida Tenya.”

“Shinso Hitoshi.”

“Uraraka Ochako”

Himiko smiled brightly, though it was less manic than the one she had given Izuku, “It’s so nice to meet you. Oh and here,” Reaching into her book bag, Himiko pulled out a folded piece of paper,
Handing the letter to Tenya, he and the others gave it a quick look over. Ochako tilted her head in confusion, "It’s an acceptance letter, but it’s different than the one Deku and I got…"

Hitoshi nodded, "Yeah it’s not like mine at all, strange."

Tenya continued reading through the full thing before stiffening, "This is a recommendation acceptance letter!"

Ochako yanked the letter out of Tenya’s hands, "Wait, seriously!?"

"I guess that explains why we didn’t see her during the exam,” Hitoshi reasoned.

Izuku, now recovered from getting pounced on looked over at Himiko in awe, “That’s incredible Toga. You must be incredibly talented to get a recommendation.”

Himiko cheeks flushed as her smile started to take a more manic state, “More determined than anything. U.A. was my best chance to see you again, so I did what...was necessary to get in.”

Everyone turned to look at Izuku, who was doing his best impression of a deer caught in the headlights. Before anyone else could ask any more questions Tenya glanced at a nearby clock on the hallway wall, “Ah the bell is about to ring! We don’t want to be anymore late than we are!”

Izuku looked at the time, confused, “But the warning bell is still a ways off?""

“Heroes in training must be in their seats at least ten minutes before the first bell!” Tenya stepped forward and after taking the letter back from Ochako, handed it to Himiko, “While it sounds like you and Midoriya have a history, it would be good for everyone to remember that we are aspiring heroes and must conduct ourselves accordingly. Such public displays are inappropriate. Also, we have stood out in the hallway for far too long. If we do not hurry, we will be late for our first day.”

Himiko stared at Tenya blankly, “Wow, you are a special kind of person, aren't you.”
Tenya, missing the sarcasm, smiled proudly, “Thank you. Now let us head into class, while we still have time to find our seats before the bell rings.”

As Tenya hurried into the class, Izuku followed behind him still a little bewildered after everything. Unconventional meetings aside, Izuku was feeling happy.

_I can’t believe Toga is here. I always did wonder what happened to her after that day. I guess if she’s here everything worked out for her. And I ran into Shinso too. I’m so glad he was able to make it. He helped me so much when I was trying to save Iida, it’d be horrible if he didn’t pass the exam. And Iida. He’s nowhere near as scary as he seemed back during the test. What a great start to the school year. I wonder who else is in class, I can’t wait to see what everyone’s quirks…. Oh… oh no…._

Ochako, noticing Himiko was giving Izuku her undivided attention again, quickly stepped between the two. To prevent any more displays or other actions from the girl. Himiko narrowed her eyes at Ochako, not pleased at being cut off. Ochako returned the glare before following after Izuku, who was oblivious to the whole exchange. Hitoshi, who had seen the glares, chose to stay off to the side, and out of harm’s way.

Ochako rubbed her head, the school day hadn’t even started yet and she was dealing with whatever this situation was. This was not how she envisioned her start of U.A. going. Hopefully nothing else would jump out and catch her by surprise.

Ignoring the murderous glare she was getting from Himiko, Ochako followed after Izuku into their classroom but came to a quick stop when she saw he had stopped only a few feet into the room, blocking everyone else behind them.

“Deku? You gonna move?”

Izuku looked back and Ochako was startled by an unbelievably fake smile on his face. She knew what Deku’s smile looked like, and that was not it. He actually looked a little panicked.

“Deku what’s up?”

Behind her, she could hear Himiko mumble something incoherent to herself when she looked at him, while Hitoshi actually agreed with her thoughts, “what’s got him all jumpy after everything
else that just happened?"

Izuku stepped to the side, so Ochako could have a view of the classroom and students.

“Look who’s in class with us Uraraka.”

Ochako blinked and then scanned the room. Some of the students were talking amongst themselves, while some were giving them inquisitive glances, making Ochako wonder how much of the incident they had heard. While a little embarrassing, it was nothing to get panicked over. She doubted they could have heard everything, though the girl with purple hair and what looked like audio jacks coming out of her ears, was whispering to a pink-skinned girl and both were looking right at them.

But Deku wasn’t looking at them. So who could Deku be talking about? ...Oh. YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!?

There leaning back in a chair, feet propped up on his desk, and an ugly sneer on his face was Katsuki Bakugou.

Izuku waved at him while laughing nervously and looking like he wanted to cry.

Ochako blinked as she realized that once again she and Izuku would be spending another year with Katsuki, “Motherfucker.”

Chapter End Notes

It’s surprising how much you can get written when you are stuck at an airport ALL DAY!

So yeah, here we are. Our heroes have finally made it to U.A. And now that they've made it, their lives are about to get really interesting. Thank you all who've been reading my little story up till now. I'm sure it taking over 100k words and so many months to reach this point was exhausting for you.

Big thanks to Creston and Tmalasia for beta reading this chapter!

Please feel free to leave reviews, comments or critiques!
Chapter Summary

It's Izuku's and Ochako's first day at U.A. What could possibly go wrong? Besides the sudden threat of expulsion, an over-competitive dandelion, and a girl that does not know the meaning of personal space.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku blinked, and looked behind himself quizzically, “Huh? Uraraka, did you say something?”

Ochako clamped her mouth shut, and shook her head.

Shit! Shit shit shit!

“Oh, guess I was just hearing things.”

While Izuku looked away, Ochako let out a sigh of relief.

Where did that come from? Okay, just calm down. It’s not as bad as it seems right?...Okay, fuck it, it is as bad. Why? WHY IS HE HERE?? After everything, Deku deserves a break, but does the universe give him one? NOPE! I swear, I may actually kill Bakugou this year. Fucking fuck...and now I’m starting to sound like Bakugou! Stop swearing....FUCK!

A soft cough from behind made Ochako turn around. Hitoshi and Himiko were giving her looks.

“So, I take it you two aren’t a fan of that guy, then?” Hitoshi asked.

“Oh!? What makes you say that?”

“Well, Midoriya looks like he’s looking for a hole to hide in, and you just dropped a bomb that I
can not believe Midoriya missed.”

“Gah!”

“So, what gives? The way you two are acting, I guess when I ran into that guy he wasn’t just having a bad day.”

Ochako shook her head, “No, that’s just normal Bakugou.”

Hitoshi deadpanned, “Seriously? All that yelling, screaming, and cursing is normal?”

“There are...reasons why Deku is so nervous around him.”

Himiko looked away from Ochako, and stared directly at Katsuki. She didn’t know who this person was, but if he was making her Izuku so nervous, then he was someone she was going to need to take care of. Stabbing was a solution that popped into her mind.

Malice dripped from Himiko’s voice as she asked, “And what reasons would those be? I’d love to know why my Izuku looks so unhappy. What’d that boy do to my poor Izuku?”

Where do I even begin?

Before Ochako could start however, she was interrupted by a very worn out and tired voice, “You lot will never learn anything if you keep standing in the doorway.”

Four pairs of eyes blinked in confusion and looked down to find out who had spoken. A thing with horrible black bed hair, and huge bags under its eyes was cocooned in a yellow sleeping bag lying behind them in the hallway, “This is the hero course, you don’t have time to waste just standing around.” The thing finished by pulling out an energy gel pack and sucking it dry.

Several students in the class freaked out at the sight, Ochako took a step back in terror, right into Izuku who wasn’t sure whether to run or hide from it, What is that thing!?
Himiko looked between the thing on the ground and Hitoshi a few times, enough to catch the other boys attention.

“Your long lost father?”

“Not funny,” Hitoshi dryly replied.

Unzipping the bag, the thing, which turned out to be a person, stepped out and addressed the classroom, “I’m your homeroom teacher, Aizawa Shouta. Nice to meet you.”

Izuku blinked in surprise, looking at the teacher more closely, He’s our teacher? That means he must be a pro hero right? But I don’t think I’ve ever seen a hero who looks so worn out before...still, there’s something about him that seems familiar. Could he be one of those underground heroes?

As the class settled down, Aizawa looked down at his watch, “It took you all eight seconds to calm down. I told you, you don’t have time to waste. You aren’t rational enough.”

Reaching into his bag, he pulled out a set of gym track suits, “It’s short notice, but I want you all to put these on and meet me outside on the track field.”

Huh?

After getting changed, the class made their way outside to a simple track-and-field setup. Much to Ochako’s annoyance, as soon as the boys and girls had met up in the hallway, Himiko had practically tied herself to Izuku. She could hear Tenya talking to someone about how unprecedented this was and his worry over missing the entrance ceremony and orientation.

“Oh, it is you, Toga! I thought I recognized you from the test.”

Himiko perked up hearing her name, “Oh, hi, Yaoyorozu. Nice to see you again.”
Izuku looked from Himiko towards the other student, a very tall girl, who was walking up to them, smiling.

“Oh, is she a friend of yours, Toga,” Izuku asked.

“I met her when I was doing my tests for my recommendation. Looks like you made it, Yaoyorozu. Congrats.”

“Yes, congratulations to you too. Though, are you sure you’re in the right class?”

Tenya stepped forward, “She showed us her letter of acceptance; it had her listed as 1-A.”

Momo rubbed her chin, “That’s very strange. I came to class with the other recommendation student, Todoroki, over there.”

Momo pointed over to another student with a scarred face, who was standing off to the side, away from the main group.

A boy with spiky red hair overheard the conversation and looked at the three, “Wait does that mean our class has three recommendation students? That’s awesome!”

“Wait, really? How’d that happen?”

“Isn’t that strange though? I always heard it was two for each class?”

As his classmates started talking over each other, Izuku did a quick head count, “Oh there are 22 of us. That is really strange.”

Ochako leaned over, “Is it that weird Deku?”

“Yeah, U.A has two hero classes each year. 36 students from the entrance exam are split into two classes, and 4 are selected from the recommendation group that are then divided so that each class has 20 students. But we have 22.”
Ochako looked around, doing a quick head count herself, wondering if perhaps Izuku had miscounted.

“Wow, you’re right, we have two extra students in our class.”

“So it is strange, just like...um” Izuku turned toward the other girl, suddenly remembering he didn’t know her name.

Hearing Izuku blank, Momo smiled, “Oh I’m sorry, let me introduce myself,” She turned to face Izuku and the others, “My name is Yaoyorozu Momo; it is a pleasure to meet you all. Perhaps we should take this time to introduce ourselves, before our teacher arrives and explains what we are doing out here.”

So formal

With everyone gathered, people began to introduce themselves, some more boisterous than others. They had only just gotten through basic introductions when a tired voice cut them off, “If you want to play with your friends, go somewhere else. You’re here to become heroes, act like it.”

The class turned to see their teacher, Aizawa, walking up behind them and dropping a small bag to his side. Satisfied they had all quickly quieted down, he continued, “As you all have noticed, this class has extra students then what is normal. This is because our principal is not rational in the slightest. On a whim he decided to allow the entry of a 5th recommendation student.” Aizawa looked right at Himiko, who just rolled her eyes at him.

He continued, “But what's worse is that to avoid one class having an odd number of students, he also decided that instead of the normal 36 candidates, we would take 37 from the entrance exam. So one class will have the normal number of 20, and my class will have 22. As I said, our principal is not rational, so it’s up to me to fix this mistake.”

Mistake?

“Bakugou, step forward.”
Katsuki frowned as he stepped out of the group of students. Aizawa reached into a gym bag and pulled out a ball, tossing it to him, “Since junior high, you all have been doing these physical fitness tests, correct? What was your best softball throw result?”

“67 meters.”

“Hmm, during those tests you weren’t allowed to use your quirk, were you?”

Katsuki shook his head.

“No, none of you were. Our country still wants to think that everyone is equal, so these kinds of tests are done without students being able to use their quirks. It’s not rational. Bakugou, you scored the highest villain score in the exam. I want you to throw the ball with your quirk. You can do whatever you want, as long as you remain inside the marked circle.”

Nodding, Katsuki walked into the throwing circle, stretching his arms as he readied himself.

*I can do whatever I want huh? Then I’ll add a blast to the pitch.*

Winding up, Katsuki screamed out, “DIE!” as the ball exploded from his hand, the blast sending the ball rocketing out, and the shockwave sending a few students scurrying back, some covering their ears and cursing under their breaths.

“Thanks for the warning, jerk,” Kyoka grumbled in annoyance.

Izuku gulped, he had never seen Katsuki just unleash himself like that, while Ochako groaned, *Die? What are you some emo ten year old?*

Aizawa held up a small device, with a score of 705.2 meters flashing on the digital screen.

“This test is the most rational way to form the foundation of a hero. Learn what you are able to do, and build from that.”
Some students started to get excited at the idea of being able to use their quirks in tests they hadn’t been able to before, but Aizawa cut them off immediately, “However, a hero can not be built on a weak foundation. I told you, our principal is not rational, and I am going to fix his mistake. Having an odd number of students is not an issue. Having an extra student who does not belong in the hero course brought in to make things even *is* an issue. I will not have liabilities in my class.”

There were several audible gulps from the group. No one liked where this was going.

“So here’s what going to happen. You will each take part in a series of tests, and you will be allowed to use your quirks while you do so. These tests will determine who does not belong in this course. So after the tests are done, the person with the lowest score will be expelled.”

“WHAT!?”

“Expelled!”

“That’s not fair!”

“Life isn’t fair, the sooner you all learn that the better. Villains, natural disasters, these things *do not care* about fairness.” Aizawa cut in coldly.

Tenya frowned and stepped forward, “Sir, is this kind of action even allowed? To let a single test determine if someone belongs here seems cruel, not to mention unethical.”

“What do you think the entrance exam was, but a test to see who belongs here?”

Tenya flinched as Aizawa continued, “As for ethics, teachers at U.A. are given free range to teach their class how they see fit. U.A. is well known for being unrestricted to common school traditions. Now does anyone else have a question, or are you all through wasting time?”

No one said anything. Katsuki smirked at the news, but kept it to himself.

*At least I won’t have to worry about Deku anymore after today. He’s getting kicked out for sure.*
“Good. I want you all to line up on the other side of the ball toss circle, we will do that test first. Hmm, Midoriya, come carry this bag. It has all the balls we’ll need for the test.”

As everyone else started to go where Aizawa pointed, Izuku hurried to collect the bag. Standing up, he was startled to see that Aizawa had paused besides Hitoshi, saying something to him by himself. Walking by, Izuku overheard some of what his teacher was saying, and it made his stomach drop.

“...got the lowest exam score. You are the 37th student. You wouldn’t be here if the principal hadn’t changed the rules. If you fail to impress me during any of the tests, I will expel you on the spot. No 2nd chances and regardless of the final scores. Do I make myself clear?”

Hitoshi nodded quickly, and hurried to get back to the rest of the students. Izuku gulped as he also hurried to catch up.

*Shinso...this isn’t right... There has to be something I can do to help him...right?*

Dropping the bag next to the circle, Izuku took his place with everyone else. Ochako to his side frowned when she noticed how on edge he was, “Hey, it’s going to be fine, Deku.”

One by one, Aizawa called out the name of a student and they would walk up and take their throw. A few clearly didn’t have quirks that were suited for this test, while some did. Even while nervous about the test, Izuku didn’t pass up a chance to record all the quirks being used in front of him, mumbling to himself and quickly scribbling down notes into his notebook.

A few students gave him strange looks when he started. More than a few openly wondered where he had that notebook stashed away. Ochako just shrugged her shoulders, “That's just one of Deku’s...quirks.”

“It’s fucking annoying.”

Ochako shot Katsuki a glare who just glared back.

“I think it’s cute!” Himiko added, earning her a glare of her own from Katsuki, and a strained look
from Ochako.

After a few names, Hitoshi was called up. Izuku was impressed the other boy didn’t look more freaked out. He was, at least externally, calm.

*I could probably push the ball after he threw it. Give it some more distance. But people will see me glow...Well I can try and tone it down, and play it off as nerves maybe... But is it the right thing to do? Shouldn’t I trust that Shinso will be able to do this?*

Hitoshi stood in the circle, ready to make his throw. As Izuku continued to think over if he should do something, he felt a cold shiver run up his spin.

*What was that? Is someone looking at me?*

Izuku shook his head, he must be imagining it.

Hitoshi threw the ball, grunting loudly as he put as much power into his throw as he could. Izuku watched the ball arc in the air, if he was going to do something, now would be the time.

...*No, even if I want Shinso to pass, it wouldn’t be fair to everyone else. I just have to believe he’ll make it.*

By the time Izuku was paying attention again, Hitoshi had been given his score and was back with the group. A few more students went before Tenya was called up. He surprised everyone by not throwing the ball, but kicking it instead and sending it several hundred meters. Some students looked over at Aizawa, wondering if that was even aloud, but the teacher just read off the score and didn’t say anything else.

Himiko was called next, and smiling turned to Izuku, “You’ll wish me luck, right Izuku?”

“Oh, of course, Toga. G-Good luck. I’m sure you’ll do great!”

Giggling, Himiko poked a finger into Izuku’s chest, “Well, with a vote of confidence like that, I don’t have anything to worry about.”
Ochako eyed the two intensely, wondering why Himiko had to keep touching Izuku all the time. A couple students noticed and snickered to themselves.

Himiko, let her hand run down Izuku’s chest briefly before leaning in and whispering, “You watch me closely now, and I’ll show you something good.”

Satisfied she had left Izuku blushing so much his ears were starting to turn red, she turned and skipped up to the throwing circle.

“Is she taking this test serious?”

“No kidding.”

“...She was like this during the recommendation exam…”

“Oh my god, you talk!?”

Himiko bent over and picked up her ball, and tossed it in her hand a few times. Taking a few steps back until the heels of her feet were up against the white line of the circle, she glanced back and seeing that Izuku was watching her, winked at him. Then turning her focus on her throw, Himiko shocked everyone by flipping forward and twisting in the air, hurling the ball with both hands as she sailed through the air, using her momentum tumbling in the air to give the ball more force behind it, and then landing just before the white line on the other side of the circle.

“Whoa!”

“Okay, so girl has some moves, wonder if she dances too?”

“Flexible and cute. A+ combo.”

“Kero, you’re creepy.”
Not really caring about her score, Himiko skipped back to her place besides Izuku, “So, did you like that?”

“That was really incredible. The way you twist in the air was so neat. Did you take gymnastics before coming to U.A?”

Himiko shook her head, “No, no, nothing like that. Just a few tricks I learned while...while I was out and about, but I’m glad you enjoyed the show.”

“It was really cool.”

Himiko laughed, while Ochako felt her eye twitch.

“Midoriya, you’re next” Aizawa called out.

Katsuki’s ears perked up and smirked. He hadn’t been paying much attention to the other students, none of them had been able to match his score, as expected of a bunch of extras. Now that it was Izuku's turn, he wanted to watch just how badly the other boy failed.

*Then he’ll be exposed as a cheater for sure.*

Izuku nodded towards Aizawa, and walked up to the throwing circle. Once again he felt the same unnerving shiver run up his spine.

*I swear I’m being watched. Though everyone is watching me right now, so maybe it is just nerves.*

As Izuku walked up to make his throw, Hitoshi spoke up, “So anyone here want to make a guess how far he throws the ball?”

Tenya rubbed his chin as he gave it some thought but before he could say anything, Katsuki interrupted, “30 meters. At best.”

A few of the other students looked over at him. Ochako huffed but held her tongue. Hitoshi raised
an eyebrow at the sudden answer from Katsuki, while Tenya looked confused, “that's a very specific number, and so low too?”

“That's as far as he could throw the ball last year. Not like the worthless shit is going to suddenly become an Olympic Shot Put in a year.”

Himiko’s eyes narrowed at Katsuki but the boy didn’t notice, too busy watching the test in front of him.

“Ah, but this time we are allowed to use our quirks, if you recall. You were able to reach over 700 meters for your throw. Midoriya will more than likely use his quirk, so his results will be drastically different.” Tenya pointed out.

Hitoshi and Himiko nodded in agreement, though Himiko’s head bobbed much faster. Katsuki laughed scornfully, “If he’s stupid enough to use his quirk then he deserves to get expelled. That useless Deku has the worst quirk I’ve ever seen. He can’t do shit with it. He’s pathetic. The ball won’t even go a meter if he tries!”

Izuku had reached the circle when he overheard Katsuki yell. He glanced back his way, meeting the explosive boy’s eyes.

Himiko growled under her throat, and Hitoshi looked over at her worriedly, wondering if he should move so he wasn’t in the fanged girl’s way when she inevitably attacked Katsuki. While Hitoshi wondered if he was going to see a murder today, Tenya looked at Izuku before turning towards Katsuki, confused, “I can’t say I follow your logic. How can you call a quirk that was able to make one of those zero point monsters explode weak?”

Katsuki’s eyes went wide as he whirled to face Tenya as the rest of the class also began to ask questions, overhearing their conversation.

“WHAT!?!”

“Wait, you mean that guy over there took out the huge robot?”

“Dude, no way! I ran away from that thing as fast as I could”
“C’est vrai! I was there. His glow was dazzling!”

“That’s so manly!”

“You’re serious? How’d he manage that?”

Izuku hearing the commotion behind him, turned to look and was surprised that so many of his classmates were gathered around Tenya and Hitoshi with Ochako laughing off to the side. Tenya was making some wild hand gestures then pointed right at Izuku. Everyone turned to look at him.

Katsuki’s voice roared over everyone else’s, “THERE’S NO FUCKING WAY DEKU TOOK OUT ONE OF THOSE! HE CAN’T LIFT UP A FUCKING NOTEBOOK, MUCH LESS BLOW UP A GIANT GOD DAMNED ROBOT!!”

Oh, Izuku guessed, Iida or Shinso must have told them about the practical test. Kacchan is taking it... well.

“That’s enough!”

Aizawa’s voice cut through all the other students question, silencing them instantly, “Midoriya, take your throw.”

Izuku nodded. He started to turn back around, his gaze passing over Ochako who was smiling at him. She gave him a quick thumbs up. When his gaze fell onto Katsuki he stopped. Katsuki was almost snarling at him.

No more hiding, Kacchan.

Izuku, looking Katsuki dead in the eye, lifted a hand up, and pulled the ball off the ground and quickly into his hand with a crisp clap. Katsuki flinched at the sound.

Can’t lift a notebook, huh?
Izuku stared Katsuki down, not in anger, but confidence, before fully turning around and facing the field. Izuku held his arm out to the side, hand facing up. A blazing green aura engulfed Izuku as he unchleched his hand, releasing the ball so that it floated a few inches above his palm. The ball began to glow brighter as Izuku built up the force to fire it. Swinging his arm out, hand now facing the field, Izuku’s arm was like a cannon ready to fire.

Watch this Kacchan!

Twisting his hand, and giving the ball a little spin, Izuku let all the force built up go and yelled, “SMASH,” as he fired the ball. There was no loud explosion. No sudden flash of light. Just Izuku’s scream, and the sharp pop as the ball ripped through the air.

A few students mumbled amongst themselves, having expected something flashier from someone who had taken out a zero point faux villain. Some looked over to their teacher, waiting for him to show everyone the distance on his remote. When the device didn’t ding right away, indicating the ball had landed, a few more students turned their attention towards him. Seconds crept by until the remote went off, and Aizawa showed the class the score.

705.4 meters.

Ochako cheered first, “Way to go, Deku!”

She was quickly followed by startled shouts and surprised gasps as everyone else reacted to the score.

“What, he got further than the first guy!”

What the fuck!?

“Did you see that spin? Looked like he was showing off.”

What the fuck!?
“No, that was actually a clever idea. He mimicked how a canon is rifled to make the projectile go further.”

*What the fuck!?*

“There, strong and smart. That’s a good combo.”

*What the fuck!?*

“Hey, why can you say that, but not me?”

The more people praised Izuku, the angrier Katsuki got.

*What the fuck was with all that power!? He’s never been able to do anything like that! He’s never...*

Katsuki thought back to a year ago, to his encounter with *that* villain. When Izuku had rushed in to help.

*So that really was him!?*

For a few days after the attack, Katsuki was convinced Izuku had been lying about his quirk. However after his *talk* with Ochako, and the fact that Izuku never showed that kind of power again, Katsuki had convinced himself that something else had happened that day. What it was, he’d never decided on, but he was sure that Izuku was not the reason he had been thrown clear of that monster. But now? After seeing Izuku use his quirk to beat his score, he knew.

*So all this time, ALL THIS TIME HE’S BEEN LIKE THIS! Was it all some kind of game to him? Did he think it was funny, tricking me? Was he laughing at me behind my back?*

Sparks and fire flashed in Katsuki’s palms as he yelled and charged out onto the field making a beeline right for Izuku, “Deku! You lying bastard! You’re going to tell me what the fu-urk!”
Katsuki was so focused on Izuku, he never saw that someone had chased after him. Only making it halfway to his goal, his world came to a sudden, screeching, halt. A vice like grip grabbed his wrist and stopped all his momentum before yanking him backwards and flipping him up and over, slamming him onto his back and into the ground with a hard thud. Immediately after both of his hands were wretched upward, and twisted outward, so that his explosions could not reach his attacker. Katsuki looked up wanting to see who had the balls to touch him. He only had just enough time to register the attacker's yellow eyes, and fanged snarl. Opening his mouth to yell, Himiko cut him off by pressing her foot into his throat, so that the only sound that escaped was a little strained squeak.

“And what do you think you were going to do to my Izuku?”

Katsuki’s hands sparked and crackled but with his palms facing away, Himiko was safe from them. Initially at least. Himiko could feel Katsuki’s arms tense, he was readying himself for a larger explosion to rip himself free, but just as he was about to fight back, the sparks in his palms fizzled out, at the same time, long straps of cloth wrapped themselves around Himiko’s arms and body.

“That’s enough out of both of you. Toga, get off of him. Now.”

Aizawa gave the long cloth he had Himiko wrapped in a tug, further incentivising her to relent. Shooting her teacher a dark glare, she eased up the pressure on Katsuki’s throat before releasing his hands and taking a step back, holding her arms up in surrender. Katsuki coughed as he sat up, looking down at his hands in confusion, “Why can’t I use my quirk? What did you do to me, you bitch?”

“Toga didn’t do anything. I erased your quirk,” Aizawa answered.

Izuku gapsed, wide eyed, “You erased Kacchan’s quirk?”

Izuku saw the red gleam coming from his teachers eyes and then noticed a pair of goggles hanging from the teachers necks, that had been hidden by the straps of cloth, “Those goggles! And you can erase other people's Quirks just by looking at them. You’re The Erasure Hero, Eraser Head!”

While the rest of the class talked amongst themselves over this revelation, Aizawa released Himiko and looked away from Katsuki, pulling his capture cloth back around his neck, “You two settle down. I’m not going to put up with fighting amongst my students. And stop making me use my quirk when I don’t need to. I have dry-eye. Now, all three of you, get back in line so the next student can go.”
Standing up, Katsuki glanced back at Izuku angrily before stomping back to his place with the other students, ignoring the death glare he was getting from Himiko. Once he was back with the others, Izuku walked up to Himiko, “Um, thank you Toga. I can’t believe how easily you took down Kacchan.”

Himiko head snapped back, her frown disappearing instantly, replaced with a huge smile, “Oh Izuku, it was nothing really. But how are you? That must have been so scary! Here, let me walk you back, just in case that meanie decides to try again.”

“Oh no, that’s oka-” Izuku trailed off when Himiko wrapped her arms around Izuku’s arm and pressed herself against him. Dumbfounded, Izuku could only obediently walk besides Himiko as they walked back.

“Yaoyorozu, you’re next.”

Ochako politely pushed by a few students as she hurried to get to Izuku. When passing by Katsuki however, she made sure to ‘accidentally’ bump her shoulder into him, whispering “enjoying 2nd place?”

She didn’t bother to listen to his retort as she moved on, finally getting to Izuku. With Himiko still wrapped around him. She forced herself to smile, grinding her teeth as she did, “Thank you, Toga, for looking out for Deku. But he’s fine now, so you don’t have to hold onto him like that anymore.”

Himiko pretended like she thought about her answer, “No, I think I’ll stay. I want to stay here and keep Izuku safe just in case.”

Ochako’s eye twitch, “But Deku’s fine. And you’re making him uncomfortable. Right, Deku?”

“Um…”

Himiko rubbed herself against his arm, “It don’t think I’m bothering him at all. You don’t mind, do you Izuku?”
“Um…”

Katsuki crossed his arms as he watched, *whatever* it was that was happening, happen to Izuku, “The fuck is going on over there?”

“I know right, it’s disgusting.”

Katsuki turned, and looked down. Minoru was standing next to him, looking very annoyed, “The ratio of boys to girls in this class is screwed up, and that guy is already two girls deep into a harem. Leave some for the rest of us you greedy bastard!”

“The fuck is wrong with you?”

Izuku hopelessly looked between Himiko and Ochako. Not sure what he was supposed to do. Or what was even going on. There was some kind of tension between the two girls, but he had no idea as to why. Competitiveness perhaps. The fear of getting kicked out must have them both on edge, was the only conclusion Izuku could come up with. There was absolutely no reason for Ochako to be upset with Himiko after all.

“Hey, is that girl taking her top off to use her quirk!?”

Izuku blinked, *Wait what?*

In a moment of impromptu teamwork, Himiko turned Izuku away while Ochako covered his eyes with her hands, preventing him from being able to look.

“Guys, hey, I can’t see!”

“EXACTLY!” Ochako and Himiko replied in tandem.

“But I want to see!”

“…Is Izuku a pervert?” Himiko’s grip on his arm tightened.
“Deku…” Ochako’s up held pinkies twitch, coming close to touching Izuku.

Izuku felt the air around him get much much colder, and quickly realized he needed to clarify what he wanted to see, “NO! NO NOT THAT! Her quirk! I need to see how her quirk works so I can take notes!”

Himiko’s grip loosened some, though she made no move to let Izuku go, “Oh, for your notebook. Well that’s okay then. I was worried for a second you were a pervert.”

“I’m sorry for doubting you, Deku. I knew you weren’t the kind of boy to get excited over that kind of thing.” Ochako didn’t take her hands away either.

“Um… so can I look?”

“No.”

“Nope”

Izuku, very wisely, didn’t show how disappointed he was.

“But,” Ochako continued, “I’ll describe what’s going on for you.”

Himiko nodded, “Yeah, we’ll give you a great description.”

“Oh, okay then. So what’s she doing?”

Ochako glanced over Izuku’s shoulder, “She’s facing away from us, with her tracksuit opened up. Her front is glowing a little I think. There’s like rainbow sparkles or something...”

A loud metallic thud interrupted Ochako. Ochako’s mouth hung open in shock, so Himiko continued on for her, “Soooo, that girl just plopped out a giant cannon from her chest.”
“WAIT WHAT!? How’d she do that!? Details, I need details!”

“Oh look, she closed her top. I guess you can look now, Izuku.”

With the girls letting him go, Izuku quickly turned around and confirmed that indeed, the tall girl was now standing besides a huge cannon.

“Incredible, how did she make something like that. It’s obviously heavier than she is. Some kind of mass transfer? But where did she get all the materials to make it….”

As Izuku mumbled to himself, Himiko gave him a curious look, “He sure loves quirks huh?”

Ochako sighed, “You have no idea.”

“Are there...quirks that he hates?”

The hesitation in Himiko’s voice caught Ochako’s attention, who glance over at the other girl, “I’ve never heard Deku say he hates any kind of quirk.”

“Oh, that’s...that’s good.”

Ochako watched as several emotions crossed Himiko’s face. Concern and worry before she had answered, then surprise and relief, before that wide grin returned to her.

While Ochako and Himiko chatted, Tenya and Hitoshi walked over to join them. Hitoshi gave Izuku a concerned look, “Is that normal?”

“For Deku? Yeah. You learn to tune it out.”

Tenya rubbed his chin as he looked out to the field, “I wonder what’s she’s planning to with that?”
“Well, the whole point is to use our quirks to throw the ball right,” Ochako reasoned, “So I think it’s pretty obvious.”

Sure enough, while everyone in the class was busy talking, Momo calmly dropped the ball into the canon’s barrel, turning towards her classmates she smiled, “please cover your ears.”

Once she saw everyone was ready, she pulled out a pair of acoustic earmuffs and put them on. Then calmly pressed down on the firing pin, firing the canon. The bang ripped through the air, making more than a few students flinch back from the force of it. After a bit Momo took off her earmuffs and looked towards Aizawa, eager to see her score. With a beep, the remote registered the distance, and Aizawa showed the group the number. Katsuki just about swallowed his tongue.

1.08 Kilometers

“HOLY SHIT!”

“Dude, how are we supposed to compete with this!? The last three are getting ridiculous scores!”

“That’s a recommended student for you. Scary.”

“She had great boobs.”

“...Keep being creepy, and I’m going to melt you.”

Izuku groaned into his hands, “Well, so much for first place.”

Ochako started laughing as she patted him on the back, “Look at the bright side, Deku.”

“Hmm?”

Between laughs Ochako finished, “Bakugou got bumped down to third.”
Katsuki glared angrily at Ochako, who just started to laugh more. Himiko soon joined her, while Izuku fretted between the two, “come on you two, don’t antagonize him.”

Someone from the class laughed out, “Hey dude, you gonna go charge her too? She just creamed your score worse than the other guy!”

“YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, LIGHTNING DOLT?!?”

Izuku’s jaw hit the ground, shocked that someone, anyone, was giving Katsuki a hard time. Ochako bent over as she started to laugh even harder.

“Uraraka! You’re last on the list. Take your throw and then we’ll move on to the next test.”

Ochako quickly got control of her laughing, “Yes, Mr. Aizawa.”

Izuku flashed her a smile and a thumbs up.

Making her way to the circle she slowed when she saw Momo struggling to move the cannon she had created.

“Sorry, I’ll have this out of your way in a moment. I put it on wheels so it’d be easy to move… in theory.”

“So the stuff you make is permanent?” Ochako asked as she tapped her knuckles on the metal barrel.

“Yes. It’s not a projection or solid hologram. I convert my fat cells into the matter I need to create the object. Though since it comes out of my body, anything in the way gets destroyed...”

It clicked for Ochako, “Oh, that’s why you…”
Momo blushed, “yeah… Though hopefully, if they were able to make my costume to the spec’s I requested that shouldn't be an issue in the field.”

Ochako nodded, having to get naked every time you would need to use your quirk could be complicated, “Here, let me give you a hand with that.”

Momo started to protest; she had made the thing, it should be her responsibility to remove it; but Ochako wouldn’t hear it. Tapping the cannon with her fingers, Ochako lifted it up, making Momo, and several of the students behind her gasp, “Here, this should be easier right? Just put it wherever you want.”

“How?”

“I just turned off its gravity is all.”

Momo nodded and carried off the canon, and finding a good place that was out of the way, laid it on the ground. Seeing Momo put the cannon down, Ochako tapped her fingers together, “and release.”

Momo kicked one of the cannons wheels, confirming that it was heavy again.

With that taken care of, Ochako reached down and picked up one of the balls to make her throw. Despite the seriousness of the whole test, she couldn’t stop herself from taking a quick glance back, right towards Katsuki and smirk. Looking back to her front, Ochako wound up her throw, and with no fan fair, threw the ball as hard as she could, making sure she floated it first.

Ochako and the class watched as the ball went up, up, up before disappearing into the blue sky. It took Aizawa’s remote almost a minute before it finally beeped with a reading.

Infinity.

“OH, COME ON! REALLY? SHE GOT INFINITY!?”

“Okay, dude, are you going to scream every time someone gets a good score?”
“700, 700, 1000, and now infinity. We are screwed.”

Ochako took a moment to bask in her victory before walking back to her friends. She caught Katsuki out of the corner of her eye, fuming and made sure to flash him a quick ‘four’ with her fingers. When she made it back, Izuku had a huge grin on his face, despite the fact he had been knocked down to third place in the event. Tenya chpped at the air, “A very impressive throw, Uraraka. I had no idea you were so strong.”

“No kidding,” Hitoshi added, “You also lifted that canon no problem. How’d you do that?”

“I can turn off an object’s gravity.”

Izuku added, “That’s how the other girl was able to carry the canon after Ochako handed it to her.”

“Ah,” Hitoshi nodded, “Now that makes sense.”

“Alright,” Aizawa cut off the students discussions, “next will be the long distance run. I want you all on the oval track. Your goal is to complete as many laps as you can before the time runs out. Get to your places; I’ll signal when you are to begin.”

The class quickly moved to the track, not wanting to give their scary new teacher a reason to get annoyed with them. As everyone took up their places, Izuku glanced over at Hitoshi worriedly; he hadn’t scored the lowest in the last test, but he had still been pretty low. Aizawa’s warning still echoed in his mind. If Hitoshi didn’t impress him even for one of the tests, he was going to be expelled. It wasn’t fair, and he wanted to help so badly, but it wouldn’t be the right thing to do. So he had held back during the ball toss. He wanted to have faith in him. He did have faith in him. But it was still nerve wracking.

“Deku? You alright?”

Izuku quickly tried to smile, “Sorry Uraraka. Just… this is a heck of a first day.”

“Hey, we got this. A little run around a track is a piece of cake compared to the runs we had to do before.”
“Yeah, we got this. No problem.”

With the class now all lined up, Aizawa raised his hand, getting everyone's attention. One by one, each student prepared themselves for the run. Hitoshi crouched down, ready to sprint forward, when to his side he saw the cannon girl, Momo, take a few steps back putting herself behind everyone else. Curious he watched as she pulled her tack suit up, not all the way, and pulled a bicycle out of her stomach. Hitoshi looked up to see if this got any reaction from their teacher, but he was clearly unphased.

*He did say we are supposed to use our quirks to take these tests. And if a cannon is allowed, a bike is fine too I guess…*

Hitoshi looked back at Momo deep in thought. It wasn’t fair what he was thinking of doing, but fairness wasn’t what was being tested here.

*I’ll apologize later.*

Getting up Hitoshi hurried over to Momo, “Excuse me, that’s a neat bike you have.”

Momo smiled, “Why thank yo…”

Hitoshi felt his mind control quirk take effect right as she responded to him, “Give me the bike.”

Mechanically, Momo rolled the bike to Hitoshi who took it and got on just as Aizawa dropped his hand signaling for them to start. Hitoshi made sure to give Momo a hard bump, knocking her out of his control as he rode off.

“Wait, what just happened!? Where’s my bike?”

Izuku, who had been able to pull ahead of most of the group was startled when Hitoshi passed him by, ringing the bell on the bike as he did.
After the long distance run was the 50 meter sprint. Izuku, not having a quirk that boosted his speed, was still able to run near the middle of the pact. Ochako had done what she had done back in the practical exam and flew down the track after floating herself and getting a good kick off the running blocks. Hitoshi finished near the end of the group, while Himiko showed off some impressive speed, beating Izuku by over half a second. To no one’s surprise however, Tenya came in first easily, with the help of his engines. Katsuki came in 2nd, much to his annoyance.

The next event was the standing long jump. A few classmates groaned when Ochako took up her position. They already knew or had a good guess as to what was coming, and Ochako was more than happy to prove them right. With a jump and touch, Ochako floated over the sandbox and didn’t stop until she reached the other side of the field, and grabbed hold of the fence, not wanting to float out of the school. Aizawa ended up giving her another infinity score. Many other students were able to clear the sandbox as well, though nowhere near as far as Ochako. Himiko landed in the sand, though she explained to Izuku later that her flip and twist in the air helped her get further. Izuku wasn’t sure how true that was, but it was a very impressive jump, so he was sure to compliment her. She seemed to really like that a lot.

Izuku watched intently as Hitoshi walked up to the line, the desire to help eating away at the back of his mind. Hitoshi took his jump, getting a respectable distance, though still far in the back compared to the students that had help from their quirks. When it was Izuku’s turn he tried to be clever and as he jumped, tried to use his psychokinesis on his clothing to pull himself up and forward. Unfortunately he was still not that great holding onto people like this, much less himself. What resulted was him pulling his legs out from underneath himself and face planting into the sand. Worse however was the fact that he had not let go of his clothes when he fell forward, so while he fell, his pants did not. The result was him upside down in the sand, with his sweat pants bunched up around his ankles, and his boxers and legs on full view for the whole class. Unfortunately since he didn’t land on his feet, he got last place in the event.

While Katsuki didn’t hide how funny he thought it was, most of the other students held themselves back to only soft chuckles or turned away, so as to not to make Izuku anymore embarrassed. Ochako had quickly covered her eyes, and absolutely hadn’t peeked through her fingers. Not at all. Nope. To her side however, she heard someone groan, hungrily.

“I-ta-da-ki-ma-su.”

Ochako head slowly twisted to the side. Himiko was right beside her, *not* looking away, and licking her lips.

*THIS GIRL!*
After Izuku had recovered, the class moved onto the next set of tests. Repeated side steps left many students disheartened when Mineta was able to score ridiculously high thanks to his quirk bouncing him between the lines. With the track and field tests completed, the class moved into a gymnasium to finish. For seated toe touches, Himiko made sure Izuku was watching when she did her test, showing off her flexibility once again, and giggling at how red Izuku became before he quickly looked away.

When it was time for sit ups, Himiko was fast enough to pull Izuku away to be her partner in the test. As she walked away, she flashed Ochako a quick peace sign and a cocky smirk. Ochako fumed as she turned to find herself a partner. However, Tenya and Hitoshi had already partnered up. So had most of the class. The only person left, much to her horror, was Katsuki, who looked just as happy with the turn of events as she was.

The two glared at each other before Katsuki hissed, “Don’t try and fuck with me and my score, Round Face.”

“Right, like you’re worth the effort.”

The two ended up grinding their heels into each others toes as they held down their feet for sit ups. This did nothing to stop the two from putting on good scores for their test. Their contempt for each other was a great motivator.

Himiko smiled happily as she knelt down to hold Izuku’s feet in place as he did his sit ups. About half way through, his tracksuit top started to ride up, giving Himiko a peek at his belly and abs. She had to bite her lower lip to stop herself from moaning too loud, but this did nothing to stop her from drooling at the sight.

*Oh, the things I’m going to do to you.*

The final test, grip strength, only had one hiccup when Izuku had to request a new strength meter.

“Deku, what did you do?”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head nervously, “Well I just used my quirk to help me squeeze the thing, and I sorta, accidently, crushed it.”
Tenya adjusted his glasses as he looked at the crushed meter, “Well, I suppose that’s still a result.”

When a piece broke off and fell onto the ground, Ochako let out a chuckle.

Soon afterwards everyone gathered around their teacher, anxiously awaiting the results. Aizawa looked at the results on his device, before looking up at the class. Anyone hoping to a hint from his facial expressions were out of luck. He still had the same tired look to his face.

“Going over all these results will take too much time, so I’ll post the final scores.”

With a press on the screen, a holographic display flashed up. Immediately everyone started looking for their names, praying they were not at the bottom.

1st. Yaoyorozu Momo
2nd. Todoroki Shoto
3rd. Bakugou Katsuki
4th. Uraraka Ochako
5th. Iida Tenya
6th. Tokoyami Fumikage
7th. Midoriya Izuku
8th. Shoji Mezo
9th. Ojiro Mashirao
10th. Toga Himiko
11th. Kirishima Eijro
12th. Ashido Mina
13th. Koda Koji
14th. Sato Rikido
15th. Asui Tsuyu
16th. Aoyama Yuga
Izuku let out a huge sigh of relief, not only was he and Ochako in the clear, but Hitoshi was too. He hadn’t been pulled after any of the tests and he had not come in last. Though looking at the results again, seeing that Katsuki was above him was a little annoying, but he couldn’t argue that his quirk gave him an edge with most of the tests they had run. He was sure though that Ochako was going to have some words about it too. He was happy for Tenya finishing so high, his engines really gave him a leg up, so to speak, on many of the events.

Himiko finishing in the top 10 was also a welcome sight, even though, thinking back he wasn’t sure she ever used her quirk once. All the tests she did, she completed using her own physical abilities. The same could be said for Hitoshi, with the exception of the distance run when he had somehow gotten ahold of one of Momo’s bikes, he never used his quirk. Though thinking back he wasn’t even sure what their quirks were. Momo making first wasn’t that much of a shock to Izuku either. While she may not have gotten first in all the events, her versatility always kept her near the top for every event.

While almost everyone was feeling some kind of relief, one student looked like he had seen a ghost. Minoru stared at his name at the bottom of the list, “oh no…”

The students that heard him, look down at him in sympathy. Reasons aside, it was still a cruel twist to come this close to reaching your dream only for it to be snatched away.

“Oh, one more thing. I lied about last place getting kicked out.”

There was a pause as everyone soaked in this new information. Then everyone exploded.

“WHAT!”

“IT WAS ALL A LIE!”
“I’M SAFE! OH, THANK YOU, GOD!”

“It was all a clever ruse to make you all fight to your fullest and bring out your quirk’s potential. A completely rational deception.”

A few students swore they saw their teacher smiling when he said that. It was not a pretty sight.

Aizawa then looked down at Minoru, “however, Mineta, use this test as motivation. If I hadn’t been lying, you would be going home. Don’t forget that.”

“Y-Yes, sir.”

“That will be everything for today. Go get changed and collect your syllabi from the class. Read them over and be ready for tomorrow, that’s when your tests will really start. Oh, and welcome to U.A.”

As the students began to disperse however, Aizawa added, “Midoriya, I would like a word with you.”

When he saw a couple of students stop, he added, “Alone.”

Ochako gave him a worried look, but Izuku just gave her his best reassuring smile, “I’ll catch up with you in a bit.”

When everyone else had left, Izuku stood in front of Aizawa, not sure what the teacher wanted to discuss with him.

“Midoriya, you placed first in the entrance exam, didn’t you?”

“Oh! Um yes sir.”
“With a score over a hundred. Very impressive.”

Izuku tried to keep smiling, but the way he had said that didn’t make him feel that his teacher was overly impressed.

“And how many of those points were rescue points?”

“Um, 65, sir.”

Aizawa nodded, “A couple of times you stopped and helped fellow examinees during the test. You couldn’t stop yourself, could you?”

“I guess…” Izuku was not sure what point his teacher was trying to make.

“So, it must have been hard for you not to assist Shinso during the tests.”

Izuku’s mouth opened and closed a few times before he could find any kind of words, “I…don’t…?”

“You overheard my conversation with Shinso, did you not?”

“I…” Izuku wanted to disappear. Aizawa’s cold gaze pierced right through him. Finally, Izuku swallowed and nodded his head, “Yes sir, I did hear you.”

“I’m in trouble. I shouldn’t have eavesdropped and now I’m in trouble.

“Of course you did. I made sure you were nearby when I talked to him.”

“Huh?”

“If I wanted to have a private discussion with a student, I’d make sure no one else was around. Like
now. Not call someone over, and then have the conversation.”

“Huh!?”

“The gym bag. I had you come get it, remember?”

Wait, wait a second!

“Mr. Aizawa, are you saying you wanted me to hear you threaten to expel Shinso!? Why?”

“Because I wanted to see what you would do. You’d already demonstrated you did not understand when to step into a situation and when to step back.”

Izuku blinked in confusion, before it clicked for him, “You mean when I destroyed the zero pointer? How I knocked myself out?”

“Correct. You stepped into save someone, fine. But afterwards you left yourself in a situation where you were the one that needed to be saved. What would have happened if the wreckage had started to fall on you? Would you want someone to risk their life to save you when it wasn’t necessary?”

“I just… I just didn’t want anyone else to get hurt.”

“And yet, someone did. I said I didn’t want liabilities in my class Midoriya, and I meant that.”

Izuku had nothing to say.

“As far as I was concerned, you were a liability. Someone that rushes into danger without thinking of the consequences is a danger not just to themselves, but the people around who would then try and save them.”

Aizawa paused as he looked down at Izuku. The boy was quelled and cowed, not even looking up at him anymore.
“So knowing what I know about you so far, you being someone that does not hesitate to stick his neck out for others, why didn’t you try and help Shinso, knowing he had the greatest chance to be kicked out?”

“I wanted to. I really did, but the more I thought about it, the more it didn’t seem right. Helping Shinso would be the same as hurting one of my other classmates. And...it also meant I didn’t have faith that he’d be able to make it, and that wasn’t fair to him either.”

“Those are the only reasons?”

“...I also wasn't sure I’d be able to do it, and not be completely obvious about it. I glow after all. Hard to make that not noticeable.”

“So you exercised restraint?”

“I...yes.”

“Good, then you did exactly what I wanted you to do.”

Izuku’s eyes widened as he looked up at his teacher, “I did?”

“You did. I was watching you, to see what you would do.”

*I guess that explains all the cold shivers I was getting.*

“And if you had tried anything, I would have expelled you right then and there.”

Izuku gulped loudly.

“But you didn’t. You exercised restraint and better judgment. I expect you to keep doing that from now on, understand.”
“Yes, yes sir!”

“Good. You can go now. I’m sure you have friends waiting for you.”

Bowing, Izuku hurried away, relieved that at least, he had passed his teachers other test. Watching Izuku leave, Aizawa sighed to himself already getting a feeling that the boy was going to be a problem child for the rest of his school tenure. Walking back towards the teachers lounge Aizawa paused when he turned a corner and found All Might leaning against a wall, waiting for him.

“Aizawa, that was quite the lie you just spun. Too bad April Fools was last week.”

“So, that was you skulking about. Stealth is not one of your strong suits; you should leave that to the professionals.”

“Hmm, The lie about the expulsion is bad enough, considering that you expelled an entire class of first years last year, but then to use one student to trap another is a different level of cruelty altogether.”

“Oh, so you overheard all of that too?”

“I did. Going after Midoriya like that was rather harsh, don’t you think?”

“The world is cruel, All Might. If he wasn’t ready for this, then he shouldn’t be here.”

“And yet you let him stay?”

“He showed that he learned his lesson from the entrance exam, at least to a degree.”

All Might smiled, “So you see the same potential in him too then.”
Aizawa turned and looked at All Might, an eyebrow cocked up, “‘Too’ huh? You seem to be rooting for him pretty hard. Is that something a teacher should be doing when he has over 40 other students he has to teach.”

“Er...”

“It’s simple, he showed he was willing to learn from his mistakes and not let himself become a liability. If he hadn’t, he’d be gone. It’s as simple as that. Better to cut him off now, then let him get himself hurt or killed. I doubt he, his friend, or his family wants that. There’s nothing worse than seeing those you care about die.”

“So you’re trying to be kind then?”

Aizawa just shrugged and walked away, leaving All Might alone with his thoughts, “Well Young Midoriya, you were able to pass your first test, but I hope you’re ready. Your journey is only just beginning.”

After getting talked to by Aizawa, everyone else had already changed, so Izuku was left alone in the locker room to change. Once changed, Izuku checked his phone, wondering if Ochako would say where she was waiting for him so they could head home. Sure enough, there was a notification that he had a message.

O.Uraraka: Hey! Hope u aren’t in trble. Im at the front of the scool. O others r with me!

Oh, she with everyone? I better hurry then, I don’t want to make them wait too long.

As he closed his locker, a thought crossed his mind. Tapping on his phone, he made a quick call.

“Hey Mom.... No, nothing’s wrong. The day’s over, so I’m headed back pretty soon.... Yeah, it was a good day.... Actually I wanted to ask you something.... Would it be okay if I brought some people over that I met today?.... It’s alright? Great! I still have to ask them, so I’ll let you know if they can... Love you too Mom.”
Putting his phone away, Izuku hurried back to class and picked up his syllabus from the empty classroom. Making his way out of the school, he quickly found everyone at the front entrance. Ochako saw him and waved, “Hey Deku!”

“Izuku!”

Himiko cut her off as she broke off from the group and hurried over to him, once again latching herself onto his arm. Ochako did an excellent job not cracking any of her teeth as she ground them together trying to keep a straight face.

“Oh, Izuku, I was so worried when that mean teacher asked you to stay. What did he want? I tried to stay and listen, but someone,” Himiko glanced over her shoulder at Tenya giving him an annoyed stare, “said that eavesdropping was unbecoming of a hero.”

“It is! A hero must not fall prey to such uncouth habits.”

Himiko stuck out her tongue at him, sending the boy into a sputter. Ochako walked up to the two, pulling Himiko off the blushing green boy and moving so that she was between the two, though she tried to be subtle about it. Or as subtle as she could, anyways.

Ignoring the look Himiko was giving her, Ochako asked, “What did Mr. Aizawa want, Deku? Any problems?”

“Oh?” Izuku rung his hands together as he thought about what he would say, “Um, Mr. Aizawa wanted to discuss my entrance exam performance. That’s all.”

Tenya rubbed his chin, “Your exam? Was there some kind of issue with your results?”

“Er, not so much the results, but how I got them.”

Ochako looked at Izuku, her eyes searching his face for a tell, “Was it about you giving yourself a concussion?”

“Yeah, pretty much.” Izuku confirmed.
“Eh!? Izuku, what did you do to yourself?” Himiko exclaimed in alarm.

“It’s not as bad as it sounds!”

Ochako narrowed her eyes dangerously while Hitoshi chimed in, “Obviously not, if our teacher pulled you aside to talk to you about it.”

“Yes, you were in a very bad state when Recovery Girl took you away.” Tenya added.

Izuku sighed, “He just wanted to make sure I understood that taking on the zero pointer like I did wasn’t exactly…”

“Smart? Clever? In any way a good idea?” Ochako finished for him, curtly.

“...Yeah, that.” Izuku sighed.

Tenya nodded in approval, “I think it’s very appropriate that the issue was addressed. Very responsible of Mr. Aizawa. Though I can not say I approve of his past deception. Lying in such a way is unbecoming of a hero.”

“Unbecoming or not, it was a hell of a motivator. It sure got me going, that’s for sure.” Hitoshi said, shuddering slightly at the memory of the tests, his own talk with the teacher, and what could have happened if he had failed.

Himiko looked at him, “You did see pretty nervous during the tests.”

“I did? I thought I kept myself calm.”

Himiko shook her head, “I’m pretty good at watching people. You might as well have been in the middle of a freak out.”
Izuku smiled happily, “Well, it all worked out in the end. No one got expelled, I’d say that’s a good first day.”

“And you learned not to be stupid with your quirk.” Ochako added.

“Yep, a good first day.” Izuku kept smiling as he ignored Ochako. Earning himself a glare not just from Ochako, but Himiko as well.

Sensing that he had better change the subject, Izuku nervously asked, “Hey, I don’t want to presume, but do you three have any plans for the rest of the day?”

“Nope, I am completely free!” Himiko answered immediately.

“I don’t think I have any plans.” Hitoshi said after some thought.

“Hmm I was planning on turning in early. Early to bed, early to rise. But that’s not for another few hours. Did you wish to do something, Midoriya?”

“Well, would you all would like to join me and Uraraka for dinner at my house with my mom?”

“Sure, if you’re offering.”

“If its not too much trouble for you mother to cook for all of us, then I would be honored.”

“YES YES! Absolutely...wait you and Uraraka?” Himiko started enthusiastically before looking at Ochako, her smile flattening into a neutral line.

Ochako felt herself puff up some, smiling, “Oh I’ve been eating with Deku and his mother for a year now.”

“A year?”
“He’s”

“And you’re friends?”

“Best friends.”

“A year eating together with his mother and still friends?”

“Yes?”

Himiko’s smile returned, “You’re still just best friends; that’s so sweet.”

While no one picked up on Himiko’s wording, Ochako’s smile did falter some.

*Why do I feel like I just lost?*

Tenya and Hitoshi made quick phone calls, making sure they were fine to stay out longer with their friends. After getting the okay, the group started to leave the school grounds, looking forward to enjoying a nice meal together with their new friends. However, as Izuku turned around a corner he came to a sudden stop when he saw Katsuki, leaning against the wall just on the other side of the school’s main gate.

“Kacchan?”

To Izuku side, Ochako bristled at the sight of the boy, eyes narrowing and knuckles popping as she clenched her fist.

Hitoshi and Tenya gave each other inquisitive looks, while they did not understand what exactly was going on between the three, or especially between Izuku and Katsuki, it was enough to get their friends to act defensive, so they made sure to close ranks next to Izuku.

Himiko bright smile turned into a snarl, putting her fangs on full display as she slowly slid her hand into her school bag. Her previously thought of a stabbing solution was beginning to sound a lot
better to her the longer she had to look at Katsuki.

Katsuki frowned as he pushed off the wall and walked over towards Izuku. He gave everyone a sour look, his gaze lingering on Ochako then Himiko, absently rubbing his neck, before he stopped and looked directly at Izuku.

“Deku.”

“Yes Kacchan?”

“Fuck you.”

His message delivered, Katsuki stomped off, leaving the group in several different stages of bewilderment and sputtering offense. Tenya’s arms chopped at the air towards the direction Kasuki walked off, “THAT is the most disrespectful, unheroic person I think I have ever seen.”

“Did he seriously wait at the gate just to say that?” Hitoshi shook his head, not sure what to make of Katsuki at all.

Izuku laughed, “Yeah… Kacchan’s a… um… character for sure.”

Himiko pulled her hand out of her bag and crossed her arms, “Is he in love with you or something?”

“What!? NO IT’S NOT THAT AT ALL!!!” Izuku yelled out, startled at Himiko’s suggestion. Ochako bent over laughing at the very idea. It was just too funny.

“What, he waited for you after school, and everything. Either he’s in love with you and is a complete tsundere, or he’s a stalker.”

Izuku waved the idea off, “No, you got it all wrong, Toga.”

“Is he in love with Uraraka and jealous of you?” Hitoshi threw in.
Ochako looked mortified then went a little green looking sick, while Izuku again waved off the notion, “Again, it’s not like that at all!”

“Then what is going on, Midoriya?” Asked Tenya, “You clearly have some kind of past with him, and it’s clearly not pleasant? Did something happen between you two?”

Ochako, seeing her opening was about to unload everything she knew about Katsuki, happy that finally more people would know the kind of evil crap he had put Izuku through. Izuku however cut her off, “It’s complicated.”

“Complicated?” Hitoshi repeated.

“Um, very complicated.”

Tenya, Hitoshi and Himiko looked at Izuku in varying degrees of doubt, then turned to look at Ochako, who was absolutely besides herself.

“Deku….” Ochako was doing an excellent job not exploding at that very moment.

Izuku quickly continued, “Look, Kacchan and me do have a history, but since it’s a new year, and we’re at a new school I’d rather not drag up old history. If you could leave it at that, I’d be very grateful.”

“Deku! He CHARGED you after your throw! He was probably waiting here to do something else then curse at you. If everyone wasn’t here then-!”

“Uraraka, please. This is my choice. Please respect it.”

Ochako’s face contorted and twisted, before she took a very, very deep breath, “…fine.

Everyone else nodded, “If that’s what you want, Midoriya, we won’t pry further,” Tenya said.
“Thank you.”

With that issue dealt with, at least for the moment, the five continued on their way to Izuku’s house. The walk was pleasant, with everyone taking part in the small talk. When they finally arrived at Izuku’s place, Inko was waiting for them, a huge smile on her face, “Welcome to our home. It’s so nice to meet more of my boys friends.”

“We’re honored by the invitation, Mrs. Midoriya. Thank you so much for allowing us into your home.” Tenya said as he bowed respectfully.

“Oh please, any friend of my son is welcome here.”

Himiko moved past everyone, “Is there anything you need help with for dinner. Anything to prep, or wash? I can cut stuff up, I’m really good with a knife.”

Hitoshi shook his head at what Himiko was obviously doing.

*Wow, she’s not even going to hide how much she’s trying to butter his mom up*

Looking to his side, he confirmed he wasn’t the only one to notice as Ochako’s eye was twitching something fierce.

“Oh, aren’t you just precious. So nice to be willing to help but no, I was able to get everything ready before you all arrived. Izuku, why don’t you show them where they can wash up and get seated. I’ll have everything ready then.”

Soon everyone was seated at the table, Himiko quickly grabbing a chair next to Izuku, and Ochako grabbing the other. Inko blinked as she watched the two, covering her mouth to hide a soft chuckle. With food served everyone was chatting happily. Soon the topic of that morning’s test was brought up, with Izuku happily recalling all the different quirks that each classmate used along with everyone.

“...Then there was that other recommendation student, Todoroki. All the different ways he was using his ice was crazy. Making one of the lanes in the track a skating rink was pretty clever.” Hitoshi said after finishing a bite of food.
Ochako nodded, “I was impressed with just how much ice he made and how much force he can put behind it. When he made that ice spike to launch the ball? What was it, like twenty feet long when he was done?”

“He’s strong sure, but he’s as cold as his quirk. During the recommendation test some guy tried to be friendly with him and he got the cold shoulder.” Himiko recalled.

Tenya thought back, “he was pretty standoffish this morning, but so were a few of the other students.”

Ochako shrugged, “could be first day jitters. Not everyone is super friendly right off the bat.” Ochako shot Himiko a quick side eyed glare, but the other girl made no sign she saw or cared.

“There was the other thing that he did that was super interesting,” Izuku mentioned, getting everyone's attention.

“What other thing, Deku?”

“Well, after each test, he melted and evaporated all the ice he made, so he must have some kind of heat based quirk.”

Tenya rubbed his chin, “I never considered that. Incredible, your powers of observation are truly remarkable.”

“Only when it comes to quirks,” Ochako teased.

Izuku blushed, “well, it makes sense when you think about who his father is. I’m actually surprised he has an ice quirk.”

“Huh?”

“What do you mean, Deku?”
Izuku looked at everyone surprised they couldn't follow his logic, “Todoroki… his last name?”

Himiko scratched her head, “Yeah, what about it?”

“The number two hero Endeavor is Todoroki Enji.”

Ochako’s eyes went wide, while Tenya slapped his forehead, “Oh, of course! It’s so obvious. He must be Endeavor’s son. How did I miss that?”

“Yeah like I said, its weird he has an ice quirk. He must have some kind of fire like his dad if he can melt all that ice. I wonder why he wasn’t using it during the test. If he could do stuff like his dad, he probably would have gotten first place in the final scores.”

Hitoshi shrugged, “maybe its a control issue, or maybe heating things is the limit of what he can do. Just because his dad has a fire quirk doesn't mean he’d have it.”

“Technically Endeavor’s quirk is hellflame, not fire.”

Everyone stared blankly at Izuku, who slumped into his chair.

“Like I said, only quirks.”

Himiko laughed while Hitoshi shook his head, “any more quirk knowledge you want to drop on us, Midoriya?”

“No, don’t say that. That notebook he has is his 14th!” Ochako cried in mock horror.

“Uraraka!”

“Well it is! Once you start, you don’t stop.”
Izuku pouted, but soon broke into a small laugh, “okay, maybe I am a little bad.”

This time Inko was the one to laugh.

“MOM! Not you too!”

“I’m sorry dear, really. But a little? It’s not nice to lie to our guests.”

Everyone laugh while Izuku took a few bites of his dinner in silence. Then he looked over at Himiko and Hitoshi, “Actually speaking of quirks, there was something I wanted to ask you two if that’s okay?”

Hitoshi and Himiko glanced at each other before shrugging, “Sure, Midoriya, what’d you want?”

“Well during the test, I don’t think I saw either of you use your quirks. I was just wondering what your quirks are.”

Himiko’s smile faltered while Hitoshi rubbed the back of his head nervously. Izuku seeing that neither were entirely comfortable with the subject added quickly, “I’m sorry, if you don’t want to you don’t have to! I didn’t mean to upset you guys.”

“No, no its fine, Midoriya. Honestly, since I’m in the hero course people are going to figure out what my quirk is sooner rather than later. Yaoyorozu already knows about it after I used it on her during the test, and apologized to her…. So glad she was so understanding. I don’t think I want a person that can just make a cannon angry at me.”

“Does your quirk have something to do with how you were able to get that bike from her?” Ochako asked.

Tenya nodded, “I was wondering about that too. She did seem quite upset with you right after that test.”

Hitoshi sighed, “Yeah, like I said, very lucky she was so forgiving and understanding.”
“So what did you do? Does it have something to do with your quirk?”

“So, see, my quirk is brainwashing. When someone responds to something I say, I can take control of their body.”

Hitoshi waited for the inevitable. He’d grown up with people freaked out by his quirk, so he had no reason to expect anything different here. No matter how kind a person was, they would always be unnerved by the idea of someone else being able to control them.

“That’s so cool! Does it have a range? How many people can you control at a time? Does it have to be a vocal response or would something like nodding set it off?” Izuku let loose a barrage of questions.

“Oh, that explains how you were able to get her bike. That’s very clever,” Ochako added.

Tenya agreed, “Yes, for a test that was supposed to test us on using our quirks to get the best score, you were able to capitalize on a chance expertly.”

“With a quirk like that, I bet you’d be super dangerous for villains,” Himiko reasoned.

Hitoshi was thrown for a loop, clearly not expecting this kind of reaction at all, “Wait? None of you think my quirk is scary?”

Everyone exchanged some quick glances before Izuku spoke up, “why would we think that?”

“I mean, it’s a pretty evil quirk right?”

Izuku jolted up, alarmed, “Says who?!?”

“That's just...how it is. When you think about it, my quirk would be great if I was a villain.”
Ochako frowned, “do you want to be a villain?”

“No.”

“Have you ever used your quirk to hurt someone?”

“No!”

“Then why would we be scared? You’re a good person. You want to help people, and I think you have a quirk that will let you do that.”

Hitoshi looked at everyone at the table, “you all think that?”

“Of course.”

“You have nothing to worry about!”

“You do realize there are people and heroes out there that have way scarier quirks than that right? Doesn’t the number 2 hero, fire-stache or whatever, like, burn people up on a regular basis? That’s way scarier than what you got.”

Hitoshi took a second to compose himself, “Thank you. That’s the first time anyone has said something nice about my quirk.”

Himiko shrugged, “Then it sounds like you were dealing with idiots.”

“It does sound like you were dealing with some of the same issues my Izuku was dealing with in junior high as well.” Inko added.

Hitoshi looked over at Izuku, “wait, you had problems? With a powerful quirk like yours?”
Izuku rubbed his head embarrassed, “yeah, sorta. I spent the last year preparing for the entrance exam, as a result my quirk is like it is now. But before that, I couldn’t really do much with it, and I got picked on a lot because of it.”

Himiko thought back to earlier in the day, “Is that why that angry dandelion fu-jerk was so surprised when you scorched his throw score?”

Ochako broke out into a fit, “Angry Dandelion, oh that’s a good one.”

“Yeah, that was the first time Kacchan has ever seen me use my quirk like that.”

Ochako grumbled loud enough for everyone to hear, “Second time actually. But he likes to forget you saved his freaking life.”

Inko sighed sadly, “Oh dear, you’re in the same class as Katsuki again?”

Tenya waved his hands, as he tried to make sense of what he had just heard, “Wait, wait, wait. You saved his life, and he talks about you in such a disrespectful manner?”

Izuku chuckled sadly, “Like I said, Kacchan and I are complicated.”

Everyone stared at Izuku dumbfounded; each had different thoughts on Izuku’s desire not to discuss his past troubles with Katsuki and try to start fresh with a new year and school. Izuku, sensing the unease around him, quickly moved to try and change the subject, “So, um, Toga. What about you. Your quirk I mean. Could you tell us what it is?”

Ochako, knowing Izuku was just trying to change the subject, begrudgingly let it slide, “...Yeah. Did you even use your quirk once during the tests?”

The attention now on her, Himoko shifted around in her chair, “Oh, um no. My quirk...is a little complicated. I need...certain resources to use it, which I didn’t have at the time.”

Izuku perked up at that, “your quirk needs resources? Like what?”
How interesting. So she needs something to allow her to use her quirk? Is it like the hero Cementoss? He can control anything made with cement but can’t actually create it.

Himiko gulped, while normally she would be thrilled to have Izuku’s undivided attention, the subject was less than ideal. She hadn’t been lying to Hitoshi when she had said there were scarier quirks out there. The problem was she was very aware that her quirk could easily fall into that category, even if she didn't think it was all that bad.

But Uraraka did say that Izuku doesn’t hate quirks. So maybe...

Before Himiko could answer, a sudden ring interrupted everything. Started Himiko patted at her skirt pockets, “Oh! That’s my phone.”

Pulling the phone out, Himiko checked the caller I.D and groaned, “Oh...I may be in trouble…”

“Toga, what’s wrong?”

“He he he, I may have… forgotten to tell some important people I was coming out here to have dinner with you all. Whoops. Yeah, I have to take this, one sec.”

“Hi Hi!...Yeah, yeah I know…. Yes I know the rules…. Yes I understand my situation is sensitive…. But I got invited out to dinner…. Oh no, not a date. Don’t ask such embarrassing things…. Um where am I?... My friend Izuku’s place…. Can I prove it?”

Himiko blinked as turned to look around, “Um…”

Inko stood up, “would you like me to talk to them?”

Himiko nodded, mouthing a quick ‘thank you’, “actually yeah I can prove where I am. Here’’s his mom!”

Quickly handing the phone off, Inko took and greeted the person on the other end, “Hello, this is
The reply on the other end caused Inko to go stiff, her eyes widening in shock, “Principal Nezu?”

Everyone else at the table stopped dead and stared at Inko in surprise before looking at Himiko who smiled sheepishly.

“Yes sir, my son just wanted to have dinner with his new friends…. Oh no, she has been an angel. Very well behaved…. She said she just forgot to call…. Oh I’m sure it was just an accident, after such an exciting first day of class I think it’s perfectly believable that some things just slip by…. I agree, spending time with new friends is important…. You have a good night too sir. Good night.”

Hanging up, INko handed the phone back to Himiko, “That was Principal Nezu.”

“Yep.”

“The principle of U.A.”

“The very same.”

Inko took a deep breath, “I think I need to sit down.”

As Inko took her seat, Himiko was relieved that at least for now, all focus was off the question of her quirk, and onto something new. At least this topic she didn’t mind sharing. As long as she didn’t give away too much info.

“So I’m sure you all may have a few questions.”

Hitoshi nodded, “a few would be an understatement.”

Tenya’s arms chopped at the air quickly as he exploded into his question, “How do you know the principal!? Why was he calling you!? But most importantly, how could you forget to inform anyone that you were going out? That is very irresponsible.”
Was the general thought of everyone in the room. After waiting for Tenya to settle back down, Himiko started her explanation.

“So, I guess the first thing you should know is that I am a ward of U.A. The school and its faculty hold all parental rights over me.”

Izuku scratched his head, “Wait? What does that mean?”

“Basically U.A. adopted me after my parents... agreed to give me up. Technically speaking, I’m an orphan.”

Seeing the sudden looks of sympathy and concern growing on everyone's faces, Himiko quickly cut them off with more of her explanation, “It’s not that big a deal. I’d been living on the streets for years since my parents hated me for such a long time. So it’s not like I miss them or anything.”

Wait, maybe I should have worded that better.

“Oh my god.”

“You poor dear!”

“What parents hate their own child!?”

“Wait wait! It’s not that big of a deal. It’s fine now. I live on campus so it all worked out. No need to get all emotional over something that's been dealt with.”

While everyone else took Himiko’s word, that the issue did not bother her, Izuku still looked troubled.
“Toga… When we met, were you already living on campus?”

“Oh, um no. That only happened like, a couple of months ago.”

Izuku’s troubled look turn into distress as he covered his face in shame, “You were homeless when we met and I did nothing to help…”

“Hey, hey whoa, no crying! You had no idea, and I didn’t exactly tell you my life story before I ran off. So please don’t go beating yourself up over something like that.”

It took Izuku fighting back a few snifflies before he calmed down. Since the subject had been broached by Izuku, Hitoshi decided to ask a question that had been bothering him since they met that morning.

“So Toga, earlier today you said something interesting” Hitoshi brought up after everyone had gotten over the shock of getting called by the principal and learning about Himiko’s living status.

Himiko tilted her head to the side, “I did? What’d I say?”

Tenya nodded, “Yes, I remember. You said that getting into U.A. was your best chance to see Midoriya again. What did you mean by that? Do the two of you have some kind of history?”

Ochako tried her best not to show just how interested she really was in hearing the girls answer.

“Oh thats easy, Izuku saved my life.” Was Himiko’s quick answer.

Immediately everyone turned to look at Izuku, who waved his hands in front of himself trying to downplay the sudden attention, “Please it wasn’t that big a deal!”

“Incredible, you were already acting the part of a hero, even before the exam. You continue to impress me Midoriya.” Tenya’s praise made Izuku flush and fidget in his chair.

“When did this happen, Deku? You never said anything about saving someone’s life before.”
Izuku looked over at Ochako, “I did actually, I just never said I saved someone’s life. Do you remember after my birthday, I was late for our training with A… with Mr. Yagi.”

Ochako blinked before her eyes went wide, “Wait, you mean when you said you knock down some bullies harassing some girl. That’s what Toga is talking about?”

“Yes! It wasn’t that big a deal honestly. She was in trouble so I helped...though now that I know you were homeless at the time Toga, I wish I had taken you to a hospital or a police station for help.”

Himiko smiled sweetly, “Oh Izuku, you are so sweet...and kinda really naive if I’m being honest.”

“Huh?”

Himiko just shrugged, “First off, no way was I going to go with you to a police station. I was...a runaway for a reason. Like I mentioned before, me and my parents were not… are not on great terms.”

“Still…” Izuku began but Himiko cut him off.

“I was enjoying living out in the wild, nothing you could have done would make me go with you. Plus I had someone...um...sorta looking after me. Honestly I wouldn’t have made it where I am now if not for him. He showed me how to survive and fight in the harsh world.”

Tenya rubbed his chin in thought, “He sounds like a strong person.”

“Oh he is. Really strong. Incredible even…”

Himiko lost herself in her thoughts for a bit, before Ochako spoke up, “What did you mean when you said Deku was naive, Toga?”

“What, oh yeah. Sorry kinda got lost in my head there for a second.”
Inko leaned forward, “Are you alright dear?”

“Yep, totally fine. Just remembering some...fun times is all. But, back to what’s important. Izuku and being naive, that’s where I left off right.”

Everyone nodded.

“Okay, Izuku, what exactly do you remember from that day, leading up to the alley way and during.”

“Oh um…” Izuku thought back, “I was heading towards the beach for morning training when you rushed past me and ran into an alley. Then those other guys followed after you, I think one was laughing about something. When I saw them standing over you, I figured they were trying to rob you or something. I think they were talking about money but I can’t really remember. So I knocked them down and ran off with you. That’s about it. Nothing too special, I just gave you a hand with some douches is all.”

Himiko actually looked surprised after hearing Izuku’s memory of that encounter.

_He really has no idea does he. It’s probably never crossed his mind what was going on. He’s not just naive, but innocent too. Like a little green lamb…_

“Izuku, that is a very...G rated version of what happened.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah...See those guys, they thought I was a down-on-her-luck prostitute.”

Izuku and everyone else were shocked when Himiko said this. She didn’t, however, give them a chance to ask any questions as she continued on, giving her version of events.

“So I was just out on the corner of the street, trying to see if I saw someone that might be willing to
give a girl some money for food and such when those guys came up and said they’d gladly pay for my...services. Now I was hungry, sure, but I wasn’t hungry enough to want fu... to do that with them, so I turned them down. Course, some guys just don’t know what the word no means.”

Inko covered her mouth with her hand, “Oh my…”

Tenya frowned deeply, “horrible digenerates.”

Hitoshi said nothing, but the dark frown on his face spoke volumes.

“They of course ask again, even shoving some money into my face. This goes on for a bit, before I’ve had enough and just book it. At this point I’m just running to get away from them. If I had been thinking, I wouldn’t have run into a dead end alley.”

Ocakho felt her stomach twist, “and they followed you.”

“Yep. Basically I was given two choices. Let them pay me and have their fun, or don’t get paid and they still have their fun. So backed into a corner, I was ready to go down swinging but of course that never happened. Just as I’m sure things are about to get...messy, you Izuku just pop out of nowhere and take them all out. Glowing all green and throwing stuff around, it was like something out of a movie. Then, after that, Izuku grabs my hand and pulls me out of there. And that’s the story.”

Collectively everyone looked from Himiko, then towards Izuku, who was just as shocked as they were after hearing Himiko’s story.

“Toga, I had no idea…”

Himiko waved him off, “don’t go getting all sad and somber on me now. You saved me, that’s the important bit.”

“Still, now I wish I had done more to those guys.” Izuku’s voice had an edge to it that neither Inko or Ocakho had heard before.
“Deku, remember that back then you were still, um, limited in what you could do with your quirk. It sounds like you did exactly what you needed to do.”

Himiko nodded, “Yep, so don’t you go frowning now.”

“So what did you do after that, dear?” Inko asked.

“Well not long after, the person who had been looking after me finally disappeared. Looking back I really should have seen it coming. His...um...work was getting more intense, and he couldn’t really afford to have someone hanging off him. And really, I’m lucky he let me hang around him as long as he did.”

“How long were you with this guy?” Hitoshi asked.

“Lets see, I ran away just at the start of junior high, so about two years. Give or take.”

“Wait you were homeless for three years?” Inko looked horrified, “and all that time your parents never looked for you or anything?”

“I don’t think you quite understand how much my parents did not want me around, Mrs. Midoriya. So after my buddy left, I realized I needed a plan. And I started to think about you, Izuku. I really just wanted to see you again, but while I knew your name, I had no idea where you lived or anything; however, you mentioned something really important.”

“I was training to get into U.A.”

“Exactly! So for the rest of the year, I trained myself while at the same time thinking up ways to make sure I got into U.A. As a dropout, getting in through the normal way, with the exam, was out of the question, so I came up with other solutions. One was to sneak into the campus, but I quickly figured out that was impossible. Their security is something else. But while scoping the place out I learned about recommendations. That, I realized was my ticket in.”

“So what did you do?”
“Well, after a lot of careful planning and some...creative phone calls, I was able to meet Principal Nezu in person. We...talked about my situation and what I wanted. I gave him a demonstration to show that I would be able to deal with the strenuous work that would be required of me. Afterwards we came to an agreement. Boring details aside, me and my parents agreed to let U.A. take me in, and I got a crash course in all the classes I missed. I did everything that was required of me, and got to take the recommendation test, which I passed.”

“Ah,” Tenya cut in, “You are the 5th student that Mr. Aizawa mentioned, aren’t you.”

“Yep. I guess Principal Nezu didn’t want my unique circumstances taking away someone else's ticket into U.A, so he bent the rules a little. I guess being the principal of the school lets him get away with that kind of thing. But yeah, that’s my...whole story. I’m just a girl looking for a way to make the world an easier place to live in no matter what I have to do, and this seems like the way to go.”

Tenya shook his head, stunned, “incredible, what an inspiring tale.”

“No kidding.” Hitoshi agreed.

“Oh come on, it’s nothing that special.”

“No, it is,” Ochako said, “I don’t think there are many people who have gotten into U.A. quite like you did. Its something else.”

“Young lady, while I’m sure U.A. is taking very good care of you, if you ever need anything, I want you to know our door is always open to you.” Inko said as she wiped away some tears.

Izuku nodded in agreement, “definitely, you have friends here, Toga.”

Himiko blinked, clearly shocked at the kindness being shown her. She surprised herself when she felt tears start to trickle down her cheeks. Wiping them away, she smiled brightly, “Thank you so much.”

*Is this what it’s like to be wanted? To have a place I can belong? ...It’s nice... I just have to make sure they don’t learn, everything about me.*
After dinner everyone insisted on helping clear away the table and help clean up. Inko and Ochako were at the sink, rinsing the dishes before they were put in the washer.

“Well, it sounds like you and Izuku had quite the first day.”

Ochako sighed, “Technically today was just supposed to be orientation and the opening ceremony. Not sudden tests and risks of expulsion. Makes me wonder what the actual first day is going to be like.”

“It couldn’t have been that bad. It was just a trick to motivate you, and you two did make some new friends.”

Ochako smiled at that. Looking up she saw Tenya and Hitoshi clearing off the last of the plates and utensils from the table, while Izuku and Himiko were putting away leftovers into tupperware.

“Yeah, it’s been…”

Ochako watched as Himiko accidentally brushed up Izuku, her face right next to his as she leaned down to pick up some of the containers.

“…really great.”

Inko looked over at the table then back at Ochako, a knowing smile crossed her face, “Everything okay? You seem a little distracted.”

Startled, Ochako went back to scrubbing the dish in her hands, “I’m totally fine, just thinking about...school and stuff.”

Inko hummed, “I have to say, Himiko sure sounds like she had a rough life.”
“Yeah…” Ochako couldn’t argue with that. What she had learned about the other girl was surprising to say the least. “That she had made it to U.A. was a testament to her determination.”

“I’m so proud that my Izuku was able to help her so much. Though it does worry me that he seems to be developing a habit of putting himself into dangerous situations.”

Ochako’s head dropped dramatically, “No kidding. If I’m going to have to keep an eye on him all year, I’ve got my work cut out for me.”

Inko chuckled, “Well with your new friends around, hopefully you won’t have to do it alone. Still…”

Inko trailed off, catching Ochako’s attention, “Still?”

“It warms my heart knowing that you are with him, Ochako.”

Ochako could feel her cheeks heat up a little, but she ignored that and smiled proudly at Inko, “You don’t have to worry, as long as I’m around, nothing will touch Deku.”

“Thank you, dear.”

Inko smiled happily, then after making sure the others were out of ear shot, leaned forward some, and whispered to Ochako, “Just between you and me, I want you to know that I’m rooting for you.”

She then quickly righted herself and went back to finishing her dishes. Ochako blinked, not entirely sure what Inko had meant by that. But even still, Inko’s words filled her with a warmth that left her with a big grin on her face.

Chapter End Notes

Oh wow, two chapters in the same month? What dark sorcery is this? And how do I
Hi everyone, I hope you all enjoyed the newest chapter. This one was a fun one to write. I hope it answered some questions I know many of you had. If you liked it or have any critiques please feel free to leave a comment. I've got an outline started for the next chapter, so let's see if I can keep this pace up. Next up is the Battle Trials. Oh boy, oh boy do I have plans for that. See you all then :D

A big shoutout to Tmalasia who beta read this for me. You rock!
Uncertain Dreams and Heroic Preparations

Chapter Summary

Ochako learns that fantasy dreams can be tricky. Izuku finally dons the green cowl, and everyone learns that juice is very serious business.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The sound of horns blaring out in the dead of night jolted Ochako from her slumber. Spell books that she had taken to bed to read tumbled to the stone floor as she blindly looked for the candle she left on her tiny bedside table. Her hand brushed against the small brass ring of the candle holder more than once before her sleep-addled mind figured out how to make her hand grab it. Pulling the candle close to herself, Ochako pinched the wick in between her thumb and finger, and whispered, “Ignis.”

Ochako felt the smallest spark of magic spark from her fingers, lighting the candle, and casting the room into flickering shadows. Holding the candle up, Ochako looked around her small room, looking to find the source of the horrible noise that had dared to awaken her after she had finally found the time to rest after spending so long studying.

“Its...coming from outside. Who in their right mind is tooting those horns at this hour?”

Pulling herself out of her comfy bed, Ochako hissed as her feet touched the cold floor as she dragged herself, grumbling, over to her window, and pushed the heavy wood shutters open. Sticking her body out, Ochako held up the candle fruitlessly trying to illuminate the darkness more than the moon already was.

From her tower in the magicians courtyard she could see almost the whole of the castle grounds. Below, people were running around with no rhyme or reason. Knights and guards moved from one side of the yard to the other, their metal boots sending out a sharp echo that bounced off the stone walls. People yelled or barked orders; it was pandemonium.

Couldn’t they be a little more quiet? Certain mages apprentices were trying to sleep after all.

Again horns blared. Once, twice, three times, then four. Ochako rubbed the bridge of her nose, they were being so loud.
Why were they being so loud?

*If they kept that up, they would wake up the royal family for sure. Her majesty the queen and her son were kind and wise, but even they would be cranky if they got woken up by all this racket.*

*Four times the horns were blown again.*

*Ochako’s sleepy mind tried to tell her that the number was important. Why was it important though? Fighting back a yawn, Ochako finally recalled the importance of the horns and the number four.*

*“Oh yeah...if the horns blow four times, the royal family is in danger. That’s right....”*

*Ochako stood at her window for a few more seconds before her whole body went stiff, and her eyes went wide as saucer plates, “THE ROYAL FAMILY IS IN DANGER!”*

*Scrambling back into her room, Ochako ripped away her nightgown and fished out the first robe she could find from under a pile of parchment. Tightening a belt around her waist, and yanking on her boots, Ochako rushed out the door, slamming the door behind her before coming back to quickly grab her staff and hooded shawl, and slamming the door again.*

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*Ochako stood in a large room together with royal guards, knights, court magicians, and adventurers of all kinds. Up by the throne, stood a giant man in golden armor. He was the captain of the royal guard, All Might. Once the room had quieted, he finally addressed the large crowd, “Last night, a villain infiltrated the palace and kidnapped the royal prince.”*

*Ochako felt her grip on her staff tighten while around her people began to murmur. Wondering who could be so evil as to touch the young prince.*

*Ochako knew the prince well. They had met when she first began her apprenticeship to become a mage. He would sneak out and play with her when they were young. Watch her train as they got older. Talk to her about his dream of becoming a great knight like the captain. Prince Izuku was good, kind, and brave. The very thought that some villain had dared to lay their hands on him*
brought forth a rage inside of her she had never known herself capable of.

“How had done this horrible thing!?”

“We must ride out at once and save the prince!”

“Where has the prince been taken?”

“It was the Demon of the Mountain.”

Silence gripped the room. The mere mention of the demon was enough to sap the bravery from the whole room. Everyone knew that the Demon of the Mountain was a man-eater.

“We, the royal guard, must remain here and guard the Queen, so it falls to you to rescue the Prince. Who among you will venture to the mountain, and save the prince?”

While everyone stayed silent, too afraid to speak, Ochako stepped forward, “I will save the prince.”

The journey to the demon’s lair had been arduously, but Ochako now found herself at the mouth of a great cave. Inside was the demon’s lair, the demon, and the prince. Steadying herself, Ochako marched in determined to save her prince. Moving further inside the cave, Ochako began to make out a soft sound.

Humming. Someone was humming a song.

With each step the song became louder until Ochako found herself inside a large open room. In the center was a stone altar, where the prince lay. Still and unmoving. Fear gripped at Ochako’s heart. Had she been too late? Had she failed to save the prince? Had she failed to save her dear friend?
“Oh don’t worry, he’s not dead. Just asleep.”

Alarmed, Ochako held up her staff, ready to defend herself.

“Demon! Show yourself! You will answer for what you have done to the prince!”

Laughter echoed in the room.

“So scary. Fear not little mage, I haven’t done anything to the little prince. Yet."

“I will not let you harm him!”

“Harm him? Now why would I do something like that?”

“Do not try and trick me with your games! I know what you are. You are the demon of the mountain. A horrible monster, and everyone knows you are a man eater! You stole the prince, so you can eat him!”

More laughter, “Oh? A horrible monster, am I?”

A black figure stepped out of the shadows from behind the altar. Ochako gasped as the demon revealed itself, and she was nothing like Ochako had expected. Horns crowned her head peeking through her blond hair, and black wings stretched out, casting a large shadow. Besides the features though, the demon looked like a young maiden. A very scantily clad young maiden.

“You’re a succubus?”

The demon grinned, showing off the fangs in her mouth, “Oh, aren’t you so observant.”

“But what would a succubus want with the prince?”
The demon ran a hand over the prince's chest, pulling at the strings that tied his night shirt on, “I’m going to eat him of course.”

“But, your kind doesn’t eat the flesh of men…”

Hmm no, but what we eat does come from men.”

Ochako’s eyes widened, “You! You mean to...to!”

“My, my. Aren’t you such a precious little thing.”

“The prince would never do something so lewd with you!”

That’s why I’ve put him under my spell. He will sleep and dream and feel pleasure that no earthly woman could ever give. I will fulfill his deepest darkest desires, and he will fill me.”

Ochako pointed her staff at the demon, ready to fight, “You will not have him. You will not take him from me!”

“Then come little mage. Come and take him back, if you can!”

The battle was hard fought, but in the end, Ochako stood victorious. The demon lay defeated, and Ochako made her way up to the altar ready to bring the prince home.

Gently, Ochako shook the prince, trying to wake him up, but he did not stir. When shaking did not work, she patted his cheeks then moved onto spells and incantations. Nothing worked. After so many failed attempts, Ochako began to fall into despair. Had she come all this way just to fail her prince now?

“Foolish girl. That’s not how you awaken someone from an enchanted sleep.”
Ochako looked down at the defeated demon, “What do you mean? What magic spell have you cast on the prince! I defeated you, so you must answer my questions!”

“It’s such a simple spell, but oh so effective. A simple Sleeping Beauty curse is all it is. I needed a spell that would keep my prey asleep, no matter what I did to them.”

“Sleeping Beauty?”

Ochako thought back to everything she knew of sleeping spells.

“Wait...but to break that spell, someone must...!”

The demon smirked, “Only true love’s kiss can break the spell. So tell me little mage, do you think yourself up to the task?”

Ochako gulped, turning away from the demon and looking down at the prince. Her prince. To save him, it would take more than just a kiss. It had to be a true love’s kiss. Could she do it? Did she truly love the prince? So many thoughts raced through her mind. So many memories of their time together. So many happy times. Steeling herself, Ochako gingerly cupped the princes cheeks in her hands.

“Oh, my prince, it is time to wake up.”

Leaning down, Ochako could feel the princes warm breath against her face. It was warm and tickled her nose. Closing her eyes, Ochako closed the distance between them and -

The shrill, harsh tone of her alarm clock ripped Ochako from her dream. Sprawled out in her bed, Ochako stared wide eyed up at her ceiling, only dimly lit with the first touches of dawn’s first light. Her breaths were fast and shallow, and her face felt hot enough to be on fire. It took her several minutes to calm herself down enough to reach over, and slam her hand down on the offending clock, silencing its alarm.

Rolling back over, Ochako covered her face with her arms, “What the heck kind of dream was that!?"
And why, she thought, why was she so disappointed that it had ended so early?

“Are you alright, Uraraka?”

“Im fine. Totally fine,” Ochako answered quickly.

Izuku frowned as he walked besides Ochako in the hallway on their way to class.

“Okay, if you’re sure…”

When Izuku had met up with Ochako on their way to school, he had immediately noticed that Ochako had seemed off. She was a little agitated and flustered.

“Hey Uraraka, just... if you need to talk about anything, I’m always here to listen. I want you to know that.”

_Ugh, Deku, this is not the morning for you to be super considerate. Course you’re always like this, so I can’t act surprised._

“Thank you Deku. That means a lot. I just didn’t get the best sleep last night is all.”

“Oh, did you have a bad dream?”

“Bad? Um… let’s go with weird. Really, really weird.”

“Did you go to sleep after eating a bag of mochi chips again?”

Ochako laughed, “I should have never told you I did that; it was one time!”
“Uh-huh, sure.” Izuku didn’t sound convinced but he didn’t push anymore.

If Ochako wanted to talk, she would talk. No reason to push her, and risk getting her angry with him. Which Ochako was grateful for.

_I really need to get over that dream. It was just a dream. Nothing to get all stressed over. I’m fine. Deku is fine. Everything is fine. It’s not like some evil demoness is actually around to take Deu away from me or anything._

Izuku opened the door to class and hadn’t had a chance to step through when someone called out to him

“Izuku! Good morning! Look, we’re sitting next to each other!”

Himiko waved happily at Izuku from her desk as he walked over to take his seat. Ochako felt herself start to grind her teeth again before she made herself stop. She had no reason to be getting this upset. So what if Himiko was sitting right by Izuku, where she had been for the past year? So what if she was sitting on the other end of the class behind Tenya? Nothing about any of that was a reason to be upset. They were still in the same class after all. That should be good enough. Right?

When Katsuki entered the class and took the seat right in front of Izuku though, that was a reason to be upset. Fortunately, besides giving Izuku a particularly nasty look, Katsuki took his seat and proceeded to ignore the looks of varying degrees of unease, from Tenya and Hitoshi, and contempt from Ochako and Himiko, he was getting.

Soon classes began, and, to everyone’s surprise, they were incredibly normal: English, Japanese, History, and Math. All perfectly mundane classes they would be taking anywhere else, except that each course was being taught by a pro hero. All of whom Izuku fanboyed over every time a new one walked into the class. Fortunately, most of the class found this more or less endearing. At least until the fourth class of the day, when Tenya suggested that Izuku tone it down a bit, even though he understood the excitement of getting taught by such exemplary heroes. So when Present Mic came in to teach their english class, Izuku made sure to keep his excitement to a few controlled bounces in his chair.

When classes were over, everyone made their way to the cafeteria for lunch. After getting over the shock that Lunch-Rush was the head chef at U.A., Izuku found a table, and was quickly joined by his friends.
Ochako was the last to find her seat, carrying with her a large bowl of white rice. Hitoshi glanced at it curiously, “Carbo-loading?”

“This is what Lunch-Rush suggested is all.”

“Well, you clearly agree,” Hitoshi pointed at her face with his chopsticks, “Seeing as you started before you sat down.”

Ochako blinked and felt along her cheeks, blushing when she felt a few grains of rice sticking to her.

While Ochako cleaned herself off, Himiko pulled out a small drinking pouch, popped open the cap and took a long drink, making a face as she did.

“Oh, you also drink those energy drinks that Mr. Aizawa always has?” Izuku asked.

Himiko made a scrunched up face, “Ew, no thank you. Those things are gross! This is just...juice.”

“Juice? What flavor?”

Himiko paused for a second, looking down at the pouch in her hands, and the red tint to the cap, “…Raspberry.”

Tenya noticed her hesitation, “You don’t sound so sure.”

“Well, well the principal had the school make this for me. So it’s all artificial, so the flavor is...um artificial.”

“The school makes you juice?” Tenya wasn’t sure what to make of that. It was a strange statement for sure.

“Well...it’s medical,” Himiko added quickly, “It helps me keep my blood levels...um...level.”
“Ah, that makes sense then. Since the school is in charge of taking care of you, they would need to help you with your medical needs.”

Himiko nodded silently before going back to her drink, clearly not enjoying it very much. Tenya gave her a sympathetic look, “artificial flavor not the greatest, I assume.”

“It does what its supposed to do.”

“But nothing beats real, fresh juice, does it.”

Himiko paused, a blush creeping across her face, and her eyes glazed over for a few seconds before she snapped back to reality, “No, nothing beats...juice fresh from the source.”

Hitoshi looked over at the two, “Are we really having an in depth discussion about juice?”

Tenya nodded, “I take juice very seriously.”

“Why?”

“Well, to fuel my engine quirk, I have to drink orange juice.”

While everyone else at the table absorbed this new information, Izuku had taken out his notebook, and was quickly jotting down the new detail. Ochako snickered while everyone else watched Izuku for a bit.

“Midoriya, you really carry that notebook with you everywhere, don’t you?”

Izuku just shrugged, “Well, sure. I have to be ready when I see or learn something about a quirk.”

Tenya nodded in approval, “A true hero is always prepared. Well done.”
Himiko leaned over to take a peak at what Izuku had written down, “You sure have a lot of pages filled.”

“Well, I did get everyone's page started after all.”

“Everyone?”

“Everyone from class of course.”

Himiko’s jaw hung open, while Hitoshi coughed on his bite of food, “You saw everyone use their quirks, what, only a few times? No way that’s enough time to make detailed journal entries, or whatever you do.”

Ochako shook her head, “Wanna bet?”

Izuku opened up his notebook and laid it on the table. The other three started to flip through it, getting more impressed, and a little worried, after every page.

“Okay, Midoriya, how am I in this thing already? I only told you what my quirk was last night at dinner. You never saw me use it.”

“You have Aizawa in here. Capture cloth fighting style, and quirk usage? He did that once Izuku! ONCE!”

“Some of these hero entries are extraordinarily detailed. Strength and weaknesses. Best team up options for most effective quirk combos?”

Izuku blushed while Ochako beamed at the praise he was getting.

“Oh, you and Uraraka are in here too,” Tenya said as he flipped through the pages.
Izuku immediately pulled the notebook back, “Gah! Wait! Those are personal notes. Not done yet!”

Himiko watched Izuku put the book away, “What? You got a secret you don’t want us to see, Izuku?”

“Yeah Deku,” Ochako began slowly, “What do you have written in there?”

Izuku immediately caught into Ochako’s meaning, “Oh, no secrets! Nothing like that. It’s just some notes that I haven’t finished yet, and it’s kinda embarrassing to have someone look at them. I don’t really show people my notes that often to begin with.”

Ochako let out a short sigh of relief. She had really hoped that Izuku had not written down anything that could connect them to All Might, “Don’t take it personal guys. I don’t get to look at his notes that often either. And I got him that book. It’s a little unfair.”

Desperate to change the subject, Izuku brought up their remaining class that he knew everyone was looking forward to, “SO! We have Heroics coming up. Are you all looking forward to it too?”

“Well if it’s true that All Might really is actually teaching the class, I’d say I’m more nervously waiting than looking forward to it.”

Tenya agreed, “Even though it was All Might himself saying he was going to be teaching the class in the projection, I still can scarcely believe it. The very idea that we could be taught by the greatest hero of a generation, it’s hard to wrap my mind around. I have to say Midoriya, you seem to be handling yourself very well. After your… how can I say…”

“Excessive fanboying over every teacher we’ve had so far,” Hitoshi interjected.

“Yes, that. I was expecting you to be more, well, all over the place.”

Izuku and Ochako shared a quick secretive look. “That’s fair. I guess the idea still has me in shock. It’s still sinking in.”
It was an excuse everyone found believable, much to Izuku’s relief.

Himiko leaned back not really looking at anything, “It’ll be interesting to finally see if the man lives up to the hype.”

Everyone seemed shocked by how board she sounded. Especially Izuku, “Do you not like All Might?”

“No, no nothing like that. I’ve seen those news reports about him. I know he’s a great hero. It’s just everyone makes him out to be this Heracles of heroes. The guy who looked after me, he was obsessed over him. He talked about him all the time. And that’s not an exaggeration either, it was practically every other day that he’d bring up All Might. After hearing him get talked up so much, I just find it hard to believe he can live up to that kind of hype.”

Hitoshi could understand where she was coming from, “I guess I can see that. We live in a society full of heroes and people with incredible quirks. It’d be hard to believe that one man could stand above all of them so easily.”

“Well,” Izuku began, smiling at Himiko, “Maybe after meeting him you’ll see why.”

Izuku’s smile brought a blush to Himiko’s cheeks, “Well if he’s anywhere near as charming as you are, I’m sure I’ll be just as smitten as everyone else is.”

While Izuku covered his red face with his hands, Ochako grumbled at how corny that line was.

________________________________________

“I am…” With a yell announcing his arrival, the door to the classroom slid open and All Might lept through the doorway, “coming through the door like a normal person!”

Izuku, despite knowing he was coming, couldn’t help but smile as All Might walked dramatically over to the teacher’s desk. He had to fight the urge to wave at the hero.

“Oh man, it’s All Might!” Denki gasped.
“Then that recording was the real deal? He really is a teacher?!?” Eijiro exclaimed happily.

Himiko leaned over, “Is that a new costume? I don’t remember him ever having a cape.”

“Oh, it’s actually his Silver Age costume. The one you’re thinking of is his current Golden Age costume that doesn’t have the cape,” Izuku explained to her.

All Might stood behind the desk and put his fists against his hips in a classic heroic pose, and addressed the class, “Greetings! I will be your teacher in Heroics this year. In this class you will learn the basics of being a hero. As students in the heroes course, you will of course be taking this class the most during your time at U.A.”

With a flourish, All Might changed his pose into a flex. Ochako bit the inside of her cheek to stop herself from laughing. She should have guessed that All Might wouldn’t change his teaching style too much from when he had trained her and Izuku, but seeing him do the whole schtick for the entire class was almost too much to take.

“So, let’s right get into it! Today I have a special lesson for all of you! Today we will be doing combat training!”

Around the room some students were nervous at the idea of doing combat training so soon. Some were excited, with a few being more so than others. Katsuki grinned maniacally at the idea that today he might get a chance to make Izuku pay for making such a fool of him, and as a bonus, he’d make a good grade while he was at it. If Katsuki had taken a chance to look behind himself, he would have noticed that there were two young women staring right at him, each giving off an aura of menace.

“Ah, but that is not all. To go with your first lesson are these!”

Pointing at the wall, several long panels slid out, holding large numbered metal briefcases.

“Your costumes, everyone. Each one made specifically per the blueprints you sent in before school as part of your quirk registrations.”
All Might smiled as the class cheered, exactly the response he was hoping for.

“After you all change, you are to meet me at the entrance of Ground Beta. Savor this moment, students. You’re about to take your first steps towards heredom.”

All Might turned and left the class as everyone rushed to grab their suitcase. Before turning to walk down the hall, he glanced back and watched as both Izuku and Ochako held up their cases to each other, smiling, and looking besides themselves in excitement. He had meant what he had said before. They should all savor this moment, and All Might was so glad that Izuku and Ochako could share it with each other.

Following the other boys into their locker room, Izuku sat at his locker and opened the briefcase that contained his costume. The first thing he pulled out was a light green jumpsuit, trimmed in white. Izuku rubbed the fabric in his hands, smiling happily as he recalled the day his mother had brought it home to show him. Without him knowing, his mother had gotten a look at his rough draft for a hero costume and had gotten it made, wanting to show him how proud she was, and how much she wanted to support him in his quest to become a hero. Izuku had still been crying when Ochako had come over for dinner that day.

Slipping the jumpsuit on, Izuku then took out some black elbow and knee pads, and slipped them on. Next were a pair of red boots and padded large white gloves. The boots had to be red he had determined early on, and how well it fit with the rest of his costume he knew he had made the right call. Red shoes were the best after all. The gloves felt sturdy, just like the training gloves he had worn whenever he practiced his boxing.

Three pieces of his costume remained in the case, two of which had been made or modified by the support department. They had wanted to work on the whole costume, but his mother had made this for him, and he wasn’t going to thank her by immediately having someone else mess with it. The first piece of kit was a large utility harness, colored red to match his boots. His original sketch had been a utility belt, but with the long list of support items he wanted to carry, he needed more pouches and pockets than a simple belt could hold. First aid supplies, capture tools, and combat ‘ammo’ made the harness a little heavy, but not so much he felt off balanced.

The second item he’d asked the department to modify was his mask. The original mask had been a simple cowl with two long ‘ears,’ as the support people had termed them, attached to the top of the mask. Izuku was too embarrassed to mention that they were modeled after All Might’s signature haircut. Showing them the mask, Izuku wondered if they were able to make a slight update. Instead of the ear’s being attached at the top, would it be possible to have them float or levitate in place: A small visual changed that referenced his quirk. Sure enough, through some kind of scientific
witchcraft, they had been able to pull it off. While he wasn’t wearing the item, the ear’s lay on the mask, like it would look without the modification, but once he pulled it on, they lifted up and out a little over an inch away. Turning his head to the side and then nodding vigorously, the ear’s moved along with his head perfectly.

The last item was one he had customized himself. A respirator that he had painted a big smile on, once again drawing inspiration from his favorite hero. This way he’d always have a smile to reassure people that everything would be okay.

_I hope no one thinks this is too obvious._

Finishing up, Izuku looked at his other classmates in the locker room as they finished putting on their costumes. Iida had just put on the last part of his shining armor, a helmet that covered his head and face. The design struck Izuku as awfully familiar, but he could not place where he had seen it before. He knew he had, and that was going to drive him mad the rest of the day; he was sure of it.

A few lockers down, Hitoshi was stretching and twisting himself, making sure everything he was wearing fit perfectly. He tapped the heels and by the sound of it, steel-tipped toes of his dark purple boots on the floor. The tops of his boots were covered by the bottom of his black combat pant legs. Large pockets lined the sides of his legs, and a simple white canvas belt wrapped around his waist. Hooked onto the belt were several wireless speakers, no bigger in circumference than a soda can. On top he wore two layers. The bottom was a black compression shirt with a balaclava attached to the neck, covering his mouth. Over the top Hitoshi wore a loose dark purple, sideless shirt that was tucked under his belt. The shirt’s tall collar wrapped completely around Hitoshi’s head reaching just under his nose, and was surprisingly stiff. When Hitoshi bent down to pick up his dark purple gloves, Izuku could see why. The inside of the collar was wired with small microphones, the same number as speakers he had on his belt.

“Wow! You guys look so cool.”

“Thank you, Midoriya. I spent a lot of time working on my design. It cuts down my wind resistance.”

Hitoshi was still fiddling with the mics in his collar as he eyed the suit of armor, “Really? It kinda looks like you’re just showing off like Aoyama over there.”

Both Tenya and Izuku looked to their fellow classmate who was also in a suit of armor, though his was much more extravagant in its design. The boy was twirling around, gushing over his sparkling
“Er… That might be a little far, Shinso.”

Tenya nodded quickly, and pointed towards the gold pipes on the back of his leg, “YES! See here, I made sure that my suit was capable of helping keep my engine cooler than I can do myself. This will let me run further and longer than normal.”

“Uh-huh.” Hitoshi gave the armor one more glance as he closed his locker, but didn’t antagonize the other boy any more.

Tenya motioned towards Hitoshi, “What about you? Was your costume made to your specifications?”

“I didn’t give them a sketch or anything honestly. I just made a list of things I wanted from them. Lightweight, mobile, and not over the top. The only thing I asked for specifically were these,” Hitoshi plucked a speaker off his belt and tossed it over to the other two. Izuku caught it, and gave it a look over. It was definitely made to be durable, the casing was a thick, shock absorbent, rubber-like material. Hitoshi pressed a finger up to one of his mics. When he spoke his voice came from himself and the speaker, “I wanted something that would extend the effect range of my quirk.”

“That’s really clever Shinso,” Izuku said as he handed back the speaker, “And I think the look really suits you. Very cool.”

A brash voice from behind interrupted anything else that could be said between the three, “To bad you can’t say the same for yourself, Deku.”

The three turned to find Katsuki leaning against a locker, looking at Izuku scornfully. Izuku scanned Katsuki’s costume. Everything about it seemed designed to boost his combat balilites. The huge grenade gauntlets immediately drew his attention. Something told Izuku, those were not just for show. What they did exactly however, Izuku couldn't guess.

“What the hell are you even supposed to be anyway? A fucking green rabbit?

Hitoshi crossed his arms, “Its a hero costume, so what do you think he is Bakugou?”
“Watch your mouth, Lavender, or I’ll destroy you too.”

Walking by Izuku, Katsuki reached up and grabbed one of the ears and pulled it. The ear pulled away before whatever held it in place caught and yanked itself back to Izuku’s mask. Not caring, Katsuki looked over the costume, “Who the fuck even made this cheap piece of crap. Your mom?”

Izuku did an excellent job keeping his voice neutral, even when he really wanted to say something very off the cuff, Katsuki had just made fun of his mother after all, “Yes. She did.”

Katsuki blinked, not expecting that answer at all, “Are you fucking kidding me?”

Before he could say anything else, Eijiro walked up and motioned to the exit, “We should get going. You guys all set?”

Katsuki scoffed and left the room. Eijiro paused before he followed, “Hey, Midoriya. Cool costume. Really manly to have something made by your mom.”

“Oh! Thank you, Kirishima.”

Tenya and Hitoshi flanked Izuku as they left the locker room and made their way to Ground Beta.

“Midoriya, did your mother really make that costume for you?”

Izuku nodded, “Most of it, yeah. I had the support department help with the harness and my mask. She wanted to show how much she supported me becoming a hero, so she made this for me.”

Tenya made to wipe his eyes, forgetting he was wearing a metal visor over his face, “You mother is a true inspiration. A wonderful woman, with such a big heart.”

Hitoshi nodded, but felt obligated to express some concerns, “While I agree with Iida, are you sure that costume is going to be durable enough?”
“I’m sure it’ll be fine. I know eventually I’ll probably need to upgrade it once we do things like internships and field work but that kind of stuff isn’t till out 2nd year at least.”

While the boys had gone to their locker room, the girls had gone to theirs.

Ochako looked at herself in the locker mirror, striking a few poses and moving around, making sure everything was fitting properly. She was elated to be in her own hero costume, but she couldn’t help have a few conflicted feelings.

*I think I should have been a little more specific with what I wanted.*

Everything she had listed on her request form had been carried out spectacularly. The overall theme she had wanted was space, and she was more than satisfied with that. Her large boots felt perfect, even with all the fancy tech in them. Experimentally, she hopped a few times, feeling the cushion in her sole and spring in her heel absorbing the impact completely. The band around her neck was snug, but not uncomfortable, which was how it should feel, as it was supposed to stimulate the pressure points in her neck.

Holding up an arm, she examined her wrist bands, gloves, and giant bracer. The two pieces fit into each other like a ball and socket. The wrist bands, like the one on her neck, were made to apply pressure to pressure points to reduce her nausea if she oversued her quirk. Her gloves were simple lightly padded gloves, very similar to the ones she wore when she practiced her martial arts, the biggest difference was that these ended at the last knuckle of her finger, leaving her pads uncovered and left her free to use her quirk. Her bracers were modeled after her martial arts sensei, Gunhead’s quirk, though hers were a little less intimidating. While Gunhead’s gatling quirk made his forearms look like they came off a revolver, her bracers had their hard edges rounded off, and instead of metal, the material was a hardened pink polymer, similar to what her belt was made of. They would still hurt when she hit someone with them of course.

*I can’t wait to show Deku what I have inside these things.*

Tapping the side of her visor, she smiled when the heads up display flickered to life, popping up several little screens of information, showing her that everything was synched up and ready for use. Yes everything was perfect, save for one glaring issue.

“Why did they give me a skin tight bodysuit?”
While the black and pink material wasn’t latex, it was more than close enough for Ochako’s tastes. The material hugged her body so perfectly she had been worried as she was putting it on that it would show what she was wearing underneath. That would have been mortifying.

“Girl, you got nothing to be worried about. News flash, but you are kinda hot.”

Mina snuck up behind her and smiled into the mirror, “I mean you got curves, softness, and firmness in all the right places.”

Ochako pushed Mina away playfully, bashfully waving her hands in front of her, “You’re over exaggerating! I’m nothing like that!”

“Don’t try to hide it; I saw everything! One second, you’re just standing there looking all soft and squishy, then bam, you flex, and suddenly we got a mini amazon on our hands.”

AMAZON!?

When Ochako opened her mouth to deny this, another girl, Jirou, pointed one of her ear jacks at Ochako, “You have abs.”

Mina nodded, “You put that body suit on and you flexed to yourself in the mirror. Don’t try and deny it.”

Ochako reached up and put a hand on her stomach, “Again, you’re just seeing things. Right Toga? I wasn’t doing that, was I?”

Ochako turned to find Toga, wanting some backup, but stopped when she saw what the other girl was wearing. Given her overly friendly additude, and bubbly personality, she had expected something cute or maybe a little flirty. Something like what the Wild, Wild Puzzycats or Uwabami wore. Looking at Toga, however, made it clear, cute and friendly were the last things she had been thinking of when designing her costume. Dangerous, deadly, and sharp were the best words to describe her.

Around her face was a tattered-looking dynamo mask, tied into a messy knot on the back of her
head. A loose black mask hung around her neck, with rows of sharp metal teeth sewn or punched into the back material, giving the mask an overly stylized version of her own fanged grin. A small rack on each side of her head held a total of 6 steel canisters of some kind. Clear tubing ran from one end of the canisters down into a set of cylinders that she wore on her belt. Another set of tubes ran from more metal cylinders on the belt, up along her back and over her shoulders, back into the black mask.

The whole set up was enough to unsettle Ochako, but there was more to Toga’s costume.

Toga’s top was a simple black leotard that left her arms bare. Strapped to her sides were two large tactical knives. She pulled one out by sticking her finger through the ring guard, and twirled it a few times before catching the handle, holding the blade up as she examined it with a trained eye.

Around her forearm she had red bandages and a metal bracer that was lined with twin rows of forward curved blades, ending with a guard over the top of her hand that had two, much longer curved blades that extended past her fist by several inches.

Her legs were covered by a short, black pleated skirt with torn and frayed edges; black thigh high socks; shin guards that were exactly like her forearm braces; and black and red athletic shoes. When she lifted a foot up to finish tying her laces, Ochako could see that under the skirt, Toga had even more knives in a holster around each thigh, though these knives looked like they were of the throwing variety.

Overall, in her costume, Toga was one terrifying package. So when she turned to answer Ochako’s question, the other girl felt herself immediately get put on edge. Toga, however, answered normally, at least for her. Her bubbly voice a stark contrast to how she looked, “Sorry, but you were checking yourself out pretty hard.”

Minda clapped, “See! I told you.”

Ochako groaned, “I didn’t ask for this kind of suit; it’s kinda embarrassing.”

Momo finished putting on the last part of her costume, a small cape that hung over her left shoulder, “Is it really that bad? Everything you have looks completely functional. I don’t see why you are so embarrassed.”

“Honestly, I have a few issues with heros like Midnight and Mt Lady and their costumes. They
don’t really leave much to the imagination. I don’t want to fall into that camp.”

A gloved hand waved Ochako’s worry off, “You got nothing to worry about. Those two weaponized their bodies. You’re just a good looking girl in her hero costume. Big difference.” Tooru said, reassuring Ochako.

The others girls looked at the floating gloves and boots. “Kero...are you naked right now?”

“Of course not! See I have on my gloves and shoes!”

“...”

While a few of the girls debated if that counted as not being naked or not, Toga walked over to Ochako, “So, any idea what kind of costume Izuku is going to have? Something topless maybe?”

Ochako sputtered, “NO! No. I’m pretty sure that won’t be the case. His mom actually made his costume, so I think she’d want Deku covered up. Though, he didn’t show it to me so I have no idea what he’s going to look like, besides green; it’s his color after all.”

Toga’s disappointment turned into a squeal when she heard that, clasping her hand together, an impressive feet since she had those claws to deal with, “That is so incredibly adorable! Mrs. Midoriya is so loving and cute. I can’t believe there are mothers out there like her.”

Momo looked at the clock, “We should get going. We don’t want to keep our teacher waiting.”

Tsuyu nodded, “Still can’t believe All Might is teaching us. How lucky is that?”

Jirou agreed, “Wonder what it’s going to be like to get trained by the number one? Think he’ll be super strict?”

Ochako hid a smile as she closed her locker.

*If he’s even a fraction of what he was when he was training Deku and me, you guys are in for a
world of hurt.

As they all left, Mina walked up besides Ochako and asked, “So what’s your secret?”

“How’d you get to look like that?” Mina motioned to all of Ochako.

Ochako replied simply before heading towards the exit, “10 months of hell.”

“The class ended up meeting just outside the entrance to the battle grounds. Izuku was blown away by all the different designs and gear everyone was sporting.

“Deku, there you are! Oh wow. you look so cool in your costume!”

Izuku turned around, and was struck speechless when he saw Ochako running up to him.

Oh wow. Oh wow, Uraraka looks...She has those cool.... And her....Oh wow!

Ochako hadn’t noticed Izuku’s speechlessness and kept talking, “I can’t believe your mom was able to make something so cool for you. You look really heroic, Deku.”

Say something! Say something now!

“Uraraka, you… You look incredible.”
Ochako stiffened as she felt a blush spread over her cheeks. Izuku thinking what he said might not sound the greatest, tried to add on, “Incredibly COOL! Yeah you look really cool. You costume really suits you.”

“Really? I was a little worried that since it was so skin tight, I’d look weird.”

“NO! Er, I mean you look just fine. Right guys? She looks great, right?”

Tenya nodded in agreement, “You look truly heroic Uraraka.”

Ochako looked up in surprise.

_Oh, that’s Iida in there? Neat. And that look really suits Shinso too._

“What about me, Izuku?” Himiko asked as she rushed up from behind Izuku and jumped onto his back, wrapping her arms around his chest, “Don’t you think I look good too?”

Ochako tensed and almost rushed to Izuku’s side. Not so much over the fact that Himiko had _again_ invaded Izuku’s personal space, but because _way_ too much sharp metal was around Izuku now.

“Toga! Please be careful!”

Both Tenya and Hitoshi were momentarily taken aback when they saw Himiko, while Izuku was none the wiser. He hadn’t even looked down yet at the blades adorning Himiko’s arms, “I can’t see you if you’re behind me.”

“I can give you a hint,” Hitoshi said, “Sharp.”

Izuku tilted his head to the side, confused, “Sharp? Is she wearing a suit?”

Himiko burst out laughing and pulled back, giving Izuku a chance to turn around and see her.
In a momentary panic, Izuku checked his costume for any cuts, but Himiko dissuaded him, “Oh don’t worry. I know what I’m doing. I’m not going to... cut you. And Izuku I have to say, love the costume. You’re like some big, green warrior bunny.”

“You too Toga. You look, um…”

“Sharp,” Hitoshi repeated.

“Yeah. You look like you have a lot of combat gear. All the blades and those knives.”

Himiko smiled brightly, “I got way more of those!”

To prove this, Toga reached down and grabbed the hem of her skirt, lifting it up to show off her thighs and the numerous throwing daggers she had. Izuku almost fainted on the spot.

Tenya arms chopped vigorously at the air, as he sputtered, unable to form proper words. Hitoshi just looked away.

Ochako rushed forward and put herself between Himiko and Izuku, “TOGA! What are you doing!”?

Himiko shrugged and dropped her skirt, “What? I was just showing Izuku what else I had tucked away.”

“You can’t just do that though!”

“Pft! Relax, my leotard has all my important bits covered up.”

Ochako groaned into her hands, “That’s not the point!”
Himiko just ignored her and went back to admiring Izuku’s costume. While it wasn’t skin tight, the jumpsuit hugged all the right places. Ochako, not a fan of how hungry Himiko was starting to look at Izuku started pushing the boy forward, “come on, we’re starting to get left behind.”

“Oh yes, we mustn’t be late for our first heroics class.” Tenya noted as he also picked up the pace.

Himiko pouted some, but quietly fell in besides Izuku as they all followed the rest of their classmates. A few times she did try and grab onto him, but Ochako, carefully, swatted her away. Hitoshi shook his head, those two were gonna get into a fight sooner rather than later, and poor Izuku was gonna be the one beaten up, he was sure of it. Following the rest of the class through the giant doorway, Ochako eyed the ears floating on Izuku’s mask and the painted on smile. Rolling her eyes, she still couldn’t stop herself from smiling.

That isn’t subtle at all Deku.

Once the class had entered the large urban training ground, they found All Might waiting for them.

“There’s an old saying, the clothes make the man. With those costumes, young men and ladies, you are heroes. Congratulations, you all look so cool!”

Several students beamed at over getting such high praise from All Might. While this went on, All Might finally got a look at Ochako and Izuku. He hummed in approval at the gear Ochako wore. The large bracers were a nice touch and a great show of respect to her other teacher. He would need to make sure Gunhead got a picture of Ochako’s costume. He was sure the other hero would love it.

When he looked at Izuku however, he had to immediately turn his head and do his best not to laugh. Not that he wasn’t touched by what he saw.

So obvious, Young Midoriya.

“Alright, it’s time for some combat training!”

Momo raised her hand, “Excuse me, sir. This was one of the sites that the practical entrance exam was held. Does this mean that we will be doing more urban type battles?”
“No. While that would be what your normal first few classes would be, I’ve decided to move you all ahead some and take on a more advanced challenge that is more realistic to what you all will face in the future.”

A few of the more hot headed students started looking fired up, while some whispered amongst themselves at what All Might had planned for them. Neither Izuku or Ochako were that surprised that All Might was going to give the class a more intensive training. Their time at the beach drilled into them that the hero had his own way of doing things.

“Alright class, pop quiz. Where do most villain encounters take place?”

Tsuyu raised her hand, “In the city?”

All Might laughed, “Ah, technically true. But think in more broad terms. Not specific locations.”

Izuku raised his hand, “Outside?”

“Correct! Most of the time, you will be fighting villains outside, such as city streets for example. Now, 2nd question. Where do you find the most atrocious villains?”

“Outside!” Denki immediately answered.

“Wrong.”

Denki lowered his head dejected, while a few people around him laughed.

Himiko raised her hand, “Inside. The smart ones anyway.”

All Might gave Himiko a thumbs up, “That is exactly right. Sure you’ll run into many pickpockets and small time thugs outside more often than not, but the worst kind of villains,
the clever ones; the ones that take hostages, make backroom deals, consort, and plan; these are the ones that stay in the shadows where we heroes have driven them. These are the ones that heroes must chase after, into their own domain.”

The levity the class had, evaporated as they listened to All Might. While they had never experienced anything like All Might talked about, they had all heard some news broadcast, or read something online about a hero raiding a villains hideout, or something along those lines. Sometimes even if the raid captured the villain, the hero didn’t come back out alive.

“So, for this class, you all are going to get a crash course in some indoor combat. You will be split into small teams of villains and heroes and take part in team battles.”

“Sir!” Tenya broke in, “Is that safe with our lack of basic training?”

“The best training comes from experience!”

Again, neither Izuku or Ochako were surprised by this. What was All Might’s idea to give them combat training before? Beat each other up of course.

Sato rubbed his chin, “Well, I guess we have some battle experience, after going through that entrance exam and everything.”

All Might shook his head, “That’s where you are wrong. There is a world of difference between fighting robots that you can just destroy, and fighting a living, thinking, person.”

More questions came from the class. How would teams win? Will losing teams be punished? How will teams be split up? Can we destroy the other team anyway? Ochako snapped her head to the side to glare at Katsuki after he asked that last question. Izuku just laughed under his breath, though he didn’t find the idea at all funny.

“EASY! I will answer all your questions. Just give me a moment.”

All Might pulled out a small booklet and opened up to a planned script. Ochako covered her mouth to stifle a giggle. All Might shot her a quick look over the top of the booklet that did nothing to stop her. At all.
“Right, so this is the situation you all will be playing out. The villains have hidden a nuclear warhead somewhere in their secret base. The heroes are trying to save the day by taking control of the weapon. The heroes can win by either capturing the villains or taking control of the weapon in the time limit. The villains win by protecting the weapon for the entire round, or by catching the heroes. Now, a word of warning. While I will stop the fight if things go to far, remember, this will be very close to a real battle. So if you want to win, you will have to go all out, and not worry about getting hurt. Remember we have the best healer in the country, Recovery Girl.”

Izuku started to nod in agreement, but stopped when he felt a cold glare directed at him. Ochako leaned forward and whispered, “That was not permission for you to be reckless, Deku.”

All Might flipped through a few pages, making sure he wasn’t leaving anything out before continuing, “Now, teams and opponents will be determined by drawing lots.”

Tenya flinched at that, “They’re being determined so haphazardly? Is that wise?”

“Well,” Izuku pointed out, “A lot of times pros have to create makeshift teams on the fly. Maybe doing it this way is supposed to reflect that?”

All Might smirked.

*The kid knows his stuff. As befitting my successor.*

“That is correct. Real life doesn't often let you do things in an orderly fashion; you must learn to adapt.”

“Oh I see. Please pardon my interruption.”

“It’s fine. Oh, before I forget, you will be split into teams of two, except for two teams which will have teams of three. The three manned teams will automatically be fighting each other.
Also, you don’t have to worry about failure. You won’t get expelled or anything like that.”

The class breathed a sigh of relief...

“These matches will be recorded and sent to your homeroom teacher though, so I’d advise you not to slack off.”

...and promptly stiffened again. No one had planned on slacking, but knowing that Mr. Aizawa was going to see their matches was enough to light a fire under everyone.

All Might pulled out a large box with the word ‘TEAMS’ written on the front.

“Alright, everyone come up and pull a ticket. Lets see who everyone will be working with.”

One by one each student pulled out a ticket until all the teams were determined. Ochako had been the first in line with Izuku right behind her. She wasn’t able to stop herself from cheering when Izuku pulled out the same ticket as her. While Himiko growled in annoyance, All Might looked down into the lottery box and wondered if he had made sure to mix up the tickets properly.

*Of course, even if I did forget, I’m not going to be the one to tell those two they can’t be on a team. I’m not ready to retire just yet.*

He gave the box a good shake before the rest of the students reached in to pull out their tickets. With the last ticket pulled the teams were determined.

Team A. Izuku Midoriya & Ochako Uraraka
Team B. Shouto Todoroki & Mezo Shoji
Team C. Momo Yaoyorozu & Hitoshi Shinso
Team D. Katsuki Bakugou & Tenya Iida
Team E. Eijiro Kirishima & Mina Ashido
Team F. Hanta Sero & Yuga Aoyama & Minoru Mineta
Team G. Denki Kaminari & Kyoka Jirou
Tenya was not thrilled that his partner was Katsuki, nor was he happy when both Izuku and Ochako patted him on the back in sympathy.

With it already decided that Team F and Team J would be facing each other, All Might prepared the next lottery boxes. These were marked ‘HEROES’ and ‘VILLAINS’.

“Now lets see who will be fighting first!” All Might declared before dramatically reaching into the twin boxes and pulling out two tickets.

“Team H will be the heroes, and Team A will be the villains!”

Chapter End Notes

I'm on a roll! Right into a busy work week >.<

I'm so glad I was able to get this chapter out to you all. My schedule is about to get pretty crazy so I really wanted to give you all something before my writing time gets cut in half. I hope you all enjoyed the new chapter. I got to play around with some medieval fantasy and hint at some unconscious feeling one of our cinnamon buns is dealing with. I also had a lot of fun coming up with costumes too. The next chapter is Battle Trials! And our first match pits Izuku and Ochako against Tsuyu and Fumikage. I'm sure a few of you were really hopeful for Katsuki, but nope. THAT fight is still a little ways off.

A big thanks to my beta reader Tmalasia who just keeps finding all my mistakes.

Before I head out, I want to show some love to Cat-Illie | Cal. She was kind and awesome enough to do a little fan art of what Momo's costume looks like in my story. If you all could show her some love by swinging by her place, that would be awesome! You can find her at these sites.
Battle Trial Part 1: Green Tea Endangerment

Chapter Summary

Izuku embraces his inner bad guy and learns if you can punch a shadow in the face. Ochako teaches gravity whose boss, and Katsuki chokes on his own rage.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“All right. Teams A and H will follow me to the building for the match. The rest of you, please make your way to the monitor room; I will join you shortly.”

After a chorus of ‘yes sir’, the rest of the class departed, leaving the four students to follow All Might. Leading them to a modest-looking multi-story office building, All Might directed Fumikage and Tsuyu to wait behind.

“Ah, before I forget, here. These are floor layouts of the building. The villain team will be allowed five minutes to prepare for your break-in. I would suggest you study well while you make your plans Young Asui, Young Tokoyami.”

Taking the papers, both nodded and as they began to read them over. All Might then brought Izuku and Ochako to the building’s main entrance and handed them a similar set of building plans, those contained the location of their bomb. All Might then added that once they reached the bomb room, their five minute set up time would start.

“Now you two, I know this probably isn’t a role you were expecting to play, but I encourage you to embrace your villainous sides for the match. Thinking like a villain can give you a good insight into how they act and plan.”

Izuku thought about that for a second, “If I were a villain, I’d probably just use the bomb as bait. and when the heroes come for it, I’d blow it up to cover my escape.”

“Er…”

Looking at the concerned looks he was getting from Ochako and All Might, Izuku back pedaled,
“What? He said think like a villain.”

Ochako shook her head, “You just came up with that idea off the top of your head? ‘Oh no heroes, guess I’ll just blow everyone up.’”

Izuku turned away, trying to hide his embarrassment, “It was just an idea is all.”

“You worry me sometimes, Deku. Besides we have to protect the bomb to win.”

“You’re right, I get it. I guess since all we’re doing is protecting it, we don’t get some remote detonator for it.”

Ochako tilted her head to the side, “Remote detonator? Deku you don’t think the bomb is real, do you?”

Izuku just nodded, making Ochako’s jaw drop, “Why would you think the bomb is real!?”

Holding up his hand, Izuku counted off his reasons, “All Might said this is a more advanced class than what we’d normally be taking.”

“Yeah, but…”

“We also fought giant killer robots for our entrance exam.”

“Um…”

“And don’t you remember the sports festival last year? They had students running through a literal minefield. Nonlethal sure, but they were still blasting runners up into the air.”

Ochako blinked a few times, before whirling on All Might, “It’s not an actual bomb right!?”
All Might waved his hands around frantically, “No, no of course not! It’s paper mache. U.A. would never dream of letting first years near an actual armed bomb.”

Ochako placed a hand over her heart, to steady herself, “Oh thank god…. Wait what was that part about first years?”

“All right! You two should get going. Remember you’ll have five minutes to get yourselves ready. Oh, and Young Midoriya,” Izuku looked up at All Might when he mentioned his name, “please remember that villains are selfish by nature, and try not to put themselves into situations where they are at a disadvantage. Do you understand?”

Izuku gulped, recalling the conversation about liabilities he had had with Aizawa the day before.

“I understand All Might,” Izuku answered with conviction, putting All Might at ease.

Happy with the answer, he watched the two enter the building and turned to leave. Just before he was out of earshot he picked up Ochako’s voice echoing faintly, “Are you sure you don’t want me to translate that for you?”

“Uraraka!”

All Might chuckled as he walked away and towards the monitor room.

Young Uraraka sure has her work cut out for her with that boy.

Ochako and Izuku quickly made their way up to the room that held their faux bomb. While they had been reassured that their time limit wouldn’t start until they reacted it, they didn’t want to take too much advantage of the small window they had. That didn’t stop them from opening a few doors along the way and taking stock of the items skewen about.

“Lots of nice heavy office furniture in some of these rooms, and some construction equipment too. I saw some plywood sheets and some metal barrels,” Ochako noted.
“At least we have plenty of stuff to work with,” Izuku said as he examined the overall layout of the building compared to the plans he held, noting that besides the outer fire escape, there was only one set of stairs in the small building.

*With that and the how narrow these halls are, there are plenty of choke points we could exploit, if we set up barricades. But would things like that even be effective on them in the first place?*

“You know, speaking of plenty to work with, we should probably go over what gear our costumes have.” Ochako motioned to the numerous pouches Izuku had on his red utility harness.

“Oh yeah that’s a good idea Uraraka. I don’t really have anything too fancy if I’m being honest. Some basic first aid stuff like bandages, painkillers, cut ointment, and some sutures. I have some captures tools too: a net, bolas, nylon cord, and some folding cuffs. I have some ammo for attacking too, but I think I need to go over with the support department what I mean when I say non-lethal…”

“Oh? What’d they give you?”

Reaching into one of the longer pouches, Izuku pulled out a metal dart and showed it to her. Ochako winced at it, “Yeah that could be nasty.”

“Oh huh,” Izuku agreed and put the dart away, “What about you Uraraka?”

“Well besides it being so tight,” Ochako pulled at the material at her hip, inadvertently drawing Izuku’s eyes, though he immediately looked away and chided himself, Ochako patted the gear around her wrists, “The stuff I requested helps me deal with the effects of my quirk if I over use it.”

“That’s really useful. I also remember you saying you wanted something space themed, like how Thirteen looks. Those those bracers look a lot like Gunhead’s.”

Ochako smirked as she laid a hand on a bracer, “Yeah, I wanted to add something from his look as a way of saying thank you and to show my appreciation for the time he spent helping me.”

“Well they look really good on you.”
Ochako flushed and Izuku, realizing he may have embarrassed her, quickly added, “Cool! You look really cool with them.”

“Oh, thank you, Deku,” Ochako said with a smile, “But I haven’t told you the neat little trick these things can do.”

Izuku’s interest was immediately piqued, “Trick?”

“You know when I float myself I can’t really maneuver around very well?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, I decided to see how stuff, like satellites, orientate themselves in space. Turns out they use gyroscopes. They spin around and turn the satellites so they’re facing the right direction. So…” Ochako tapped the bracers, “I put some in here and in my boots. It should give me much better control when I use my quirk on myself. In theory at least. Still haven’t tested it yet.”

Izuku’s eyes glazed over as he fanboyed some over this new information, “That’s incredible. You’ve opened yourself up to so many possibilities now.”

The two finally reached the room with the bomb, as Ochako opened the door, she could hear Izuku behind her start to mumble to himself, “Actually, if Uraraka can now maneuver around while she’s floating, she might be able to counter…but what about….hmmm”

Looking back at him, she waited a few seconds before asking “Deku? You have a plan?”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, the start of one at least. There’s just one problem.”

“Oh?”

“Dark Shadow. Tokoyami’s quirk is a living being, but he isn’t flesh and blood. So I don’t know if my quirk would work on him.”
Ochako could understand Izuku’s concern, that was a pretty big unknown to try and work a plan around, “Alright, lets go inside and we can work on the plan together.”

“So where do you think the bomb is going to be?” Tsuyu asked as she looked over her building layout.

“The top floor would be the most logical place. Keep it as far from the building entrance as possible.” Was Fumikage’s quick reply as he handed his paper to Dark Shadow to hold for him.

“Then let’s take the fire escapes on the side and work our way down.”

Fumikage was about to agree, but Tsuyu shook her head, “That makes too much sense. Remember the other day, Midoriya was taking so many notes during the test. He might be a strategic thinker, kero.”

“Hmm, in that case, he might think that putting the bomb at the top floor is too obvious and put it somewhere else… Of course, that’s assuming they could even move it to begin with.”

“With their quirks, I think they could easily.”

“If the thing isn’t too big to fit through the doors.”

Both Tsuyu and Fumikage nodded in agreement, it was a good point.

“So what do you think we should do?” Tsuyu asked as she looked up at the building, tapping a finger against her chin.

Fumikage crossed his arms as he looked over the building layout that Dark Shadow was holding up for him, “There are too many unknown’s. There are several large rooms on each floor that I could see them barricading themselves and the bomb in. We don’t even know how big the bomb is. If the bomb is small enough, it could be anywhere in the other rooms too. We need to be methodical; cross off each floor one at a time.”
“I could climb to the top floor and work my way down, while you work your way up. That could cut our time searching in half.”

“Hmm, no. I don’t want to run the risk of a two on one fight. We’re already at a disadvantage here as it stands.”

“Speaking of fighting, we don’t just have to worry about the bomb, but Midoriya and Uraraka themselves.”

“Smart move would be to hide with the bomb.”

“I agree. Coming after us would open them up to getting captured. They have no reason to do that. Staying with the bomb and running out the clock is the best strategy here.”

Tsuyu wasn’t sure she agreed with Fumikage and Dark Shadow. Something about their opponents made her think that they weren’t the kind to sit back and wait. But it was almost time to go into the building, and getting into a potential argument didn’t seem like the right decision at the moment. “So, when we do run into them guarding the bomb, what then? Midoriya will probably stay back and pepper us with anything he can throw.”

“Midoriya’s quirk does lend itself to long-range, so he won’t want to get in close. Dark Shadow will be able to push through his attacks and capture him relatively easily.”

“Kero, Uraraka seems like she has to touch what she wants to make float. So if I stick to the walls and keep jumping around her, she won’t be able to use her quirk on me.”

“Hit and run for infinity-girl and power through for the glow-stick.”

Tsuyu looked over at her partner, all the basics of the plan seemed solid enough, but there was one thing that bothered her, “We shouldn’t forget that Midoriya did take out the zero pointer during the entrance exam. He must be pretty strong to be able to do that. Remember his ball throw score.”

“True, but he doesn’t seem to have the best control over his quirk. Don’t forget his long jump results.”
“Team H. You are free to enter the building. Your time starts now!”

Hearing All Might in their earpieces, both students nodded.

“Alright, Asui, are you ready?”

“Yeah. Oh, call me Tsu.”

As planned, the two entered into the building on the first floor. Tsuyu took the lead, clinging to the walls as they made their way through the building. In only a short time, the two were able to find and clear the rooms on the floor, and at no point did they see any evidence that either Izuku or Ochako laying in wait for them, or had even been down on the floor. Climbing the stairs, the two began the process again for the 2nd floor, moving from one room to the next.

“Kero, we may want to pick up the pace. If we keep going like this, time will run out before we reach the final floor.”

Tsuyu looked up ahead as she rounded a corner, eyes scanning the hallway that lead to the stairway to the next floor. While Tsuyu looked where they were going, Fumikage hung back, making sure they were not ambushed from behind.

“Agreed. Being cautious is fine, but we need to be aggressive too. Once we hit the next floor we may need to change our strategy.”

As Tsuyu neared the door for the stairs, she looked back at her partner, “We still haven’t seen Midoriya or Uraraka yet either. Maybe they are hiding with the bomb?”

“As I said, that would make the most sense. They don’t have to do anything in order to win since we are the ones against the clock.”

“Maybe, but-”

“Hey was that door always green?”
Dark Shadow’s interruption was all the warning either teen got before the door in front of them exploded off its hinges and rocketed towards them. Tsuyu kicked herself backward, landing behind Fumikage, while Dark Shadow shot out and used its arms to swat the door to the side.

Recovering from the sudden attack, both students watched as Izuku and Ochako walked into the hallway.

“So much for them hiding with the bomb, kero” Tsuyu said dryly.

“Yeah, maybe not one of your better predictions there.”

Fumikage side-eyed Dark Shadow, but held his tongue. No point in possibly putting his foot in his mouth again.

Izuku crossed his arms and giving his voice an overly dramatic deepness and flair, started to laugh, “mUahahaha!”

Ochako turned her head to the side, doing her best to contain the sputtering giggle that threatened to kill the villainous mood the two were trying to put on.

_Oh man, Deku, I know All Might said embrace our roles as villains, but you are going to kill me if you keep that up the whole match!_

“Such foolish heroes! Why would I hide in my own lair!?”

Ochako turned her head back around, “Our lair.”

“Our lair!” Izuku quickly corrected before pointing at the other team, “You have no hope of victory heroes. Surrender now, and save yourselves the embarrassment!”

Fumikage got into a battle stance as Dark Shadow puffed up menacingly, “Come on, we can take these guys.”
“Asui, when I send out Dark Shadow, try and get behind them. Let's try and pinch them between us. Cut off their escape route.”

Tsuyu nodded and crouched down ready to move.

“Looks like they aren’t going to surrender, Deku.”

“Perfect.”

For a few brief moments, all four glared at each other. Each ready for the fight that was about to happen.

“Dark Shad-!”

Fumikage was cut off from giving Dark Shadow his command when Izuku surprised him by charging forward, quickly closing the distance between the two of them.

*He isn’t keeping his distance!?*

Alarmed, Fumikage had Dark Shadow shield him from the assault. Izuku didn’t let this stop him and delivered a strong right hook right into Dark Shadow’s beak.

*“OW!”*

Izuku didn’t let up, he kept throwing hooks and jabs, pushing Dark Shadow back into an increasingly alarmed Fumikage.

*“Grr! Stop punching me in the face!”*

When he yelled, Dark Shadow swiped at Izuku in a flurry, his talons leaving gashes in the concrete floor. For Izuku though, the movements were almost identical to what All Might had shown him when an opponent went wild. Leaning back and dodging, Izuku waited until he saw an opening. Dark Shadow swung down with both arms, causing him to lean forward, and that was the perfect
opening for an uppercut. Stepping into the gap between his arms, Izuku twisted to the side, and launched his fist up and right into the jaw of Dark Shadow, snapping his head back. Seeing that the dark bird was dazed, Izuku reached out and shoved Dark Shadow back into Fumikage with his quirk.

“Oof!”

“Gah!”

Almost immediately Dark Shadow wretched himself free of Izuku’s hold, but that was fine. In that instant, Izuku now knew that he could effect Dark Shadow with his quirk, even if it was just for a moment.

*I got what I needed.*

“Uraraka, we need to fall back!”

With Izuku taking off, Ochako scanned the hallway, looking for her opponent. She found her right away. As Fumikage had asked, Tsuyu was already on the move leaping forward off to the side as she hurried to get behind them.

“And where do you think you’re going!?”

Ochako side stepped till she was standing in Tsuyu’s way, the frog girl didn’t stop and jumped up onto the wall so that she could climb past. Ochako however, was not going to let her get past. Breaking out into a run, Ochako quickly made it to the same wall Tsuyu was on and to her great surprise, she watched as Ochako effortlessly stepped up onto the wall and ran up it.

“Kero!?”
“You aren’t getting past me!”

For Ochako, the wall might as well had been the floor. The gyroscopes in her boots and bracers spun and directed their momentum down, perpendicular with the soles of her boots, though their angle could be changed with a simple command from her heads up display. So that down for her could be any direction she wanted. Unbeknownst to the other two, Ochako had already floated herself before Izuku had blown away the door, giving her the element of surprise.

Ochako slid to a stop and dug her heel into the wall, planting herself as she spun and kicked at Tsuyu’s head. The other girl was only just able to dodge, thanks to her frog reflexes. Ochako launched another kick, followed by a knee and elbow, both striking Tsuyu’s side and making the girl groan in pain. She was going to have bruises for sure after that. When she saw Ochako swing one of those huge bracers at her, she scrambled backward and leaped over to the ceiling, trying to put some distance between the two. Ochako followed after her, jumping up and twisting in the air, and landing with her feet flat on the ceilings surface before taking up her fighting stance once again.

“Like I said, you aren’t getting past me.”

A flash of green caught Ochako’s eye followed by two loud grunts.

That must have been Izuku.

“Uraraka, we need to fall back!”

Bingo.

Ochako pushed off the ceiling and flipped over, landing on the floor right besides Izuku, startling Dark Shadow and Fumikage, both looking up to see Tsuyu looking lost at Ochako’s sudden retreat from their fight.

“Fall back?”

“Yeah, up the stairs, move!”
Pivoting, Ochako bolted back into the stairwell with Izuku right behind her leaving Fumikage and Tsuyu confused, but only for a moment.

“After them!”

Fumikage rushed after the two but stopped dead in his tracks when the stairs and walls suddenly glowed bright green. Once they had made it to the next floor, Izuku used his quirk and crushed everything he could behind them.

“Follow us if you dare, heroes!”

Exiting the stairwell, Ochako slammed the door shut and Izuku snapped off the door handle, locking the door closed.

“You good, Deku?”

“Yeah I’m fine. Come on, we need to get to our places before they follow us up here.”

Ochako nodded, and with how quickly Tsuyu was able to move around, she doubted they had very long to wait. Moving down the hallway Ochako looked over at Izuku, “I guess you found out if your quirk will work on that Dark Shadow.”

“Yeah. It’s not as hard as trying to hold a person, but not as easy as holding object. I can grab him, but only for a second; he can break my hold pretty quickly. I can push him around a bit, but I don’t think I’d be able to hold him still for very long.”

“Every little bit that can throw him off helps.”

Izuku agreed, “Yep. Oh, so you were able to keep up with Asui?”

Ochako grinned confidently, “Oh yeah. The gyroscopes worked perfectly. I can orientate myself however I want, and still be able to fight.”
“That’s great!”

A loud bang from the locked stairwell got both of their attention.

“Looks like they took you up on your dare.”

Another bang echoed down the hall. The door now had a huge dent in it.

“Perfect. Now let’s see how far we can keep leading them.”

A final bang ripped the door clean off the wall as Dark Shadow pulled himself and Fumikage up and Tsuyu jumped through the opening.

Izuku smirked behind his mask as he summoned up his villain voice, “Ready for round two, heroes?”

Ochako bit her lip to stop herself from giggling.

*Deku trying to sound all evil, is so cute...Wait?*

———

“Team H. You are free to enter the building. Your time starts now!”

All Might took his hand off his headset and turned to look at his class, “Now, I want each of you to pay attention to this battle. Feel free to speak up if anything catches your eye. This is an open forum.”

Several screens popped up showing both the hero and villain teams moving through the building. The class watched as Fumikage and Tsuyu swept through the first floor.

“If they actually going to do anything? They’re just walking around. I thought we were going to
“See some action.” Denki said after getting tired of the slow pace of the first match.

“They’re checking every room for the bomb. Better to do that then to just run around and check randomly. They could easily miss their target; it’s the best option.” Momo countered.

“Bullshit it is.”

Katsuki huffed from the back of the room, leaning up against a wall, “They’re wasting their time. If they want to win, they should be going after the other team.”

“They have no idea of the combat capabilities of their opponents. It’s a much bigger risk to go after the other team versus going for the bomb.” Tooru added.

“If they’re too afraid of a fight, they why the hell are they even here? They don’t have time to be acting like a bunch of pussies.”

Momo put a hand over her mouth as she looked away from Katsuki, “How vulgar.”

“You bring up good points.” All Might interjected, “On the one hand, you have an option that may be easier, but takes up more time, of which there is a limited amount. On the other, a more direct path that is fraught with peril and comes with the greater risk of losing. This very question is something that pros are forced to decide on every day, and there is no way of knowing if you’ve picked the correct option until the end. Or, if there was even a correct option to begin with. Both choices could very well lead to defeat.”

While the class though this over, Mina looked up at the monitor and noticed something, “Hey, what are Midoriya and Uraraka doing?”

Eijiro looked at the same screen, that showed Izuku with his ear pressed against a door, and Ochako standing a few paces behind him in the stairwell, “Are they hiding? That’s not manly at all.”

“Their stealth is a viable strategy in a battle, Young Kirishima.” All Might corrected, though he did not confirm that was what the two were doing.
Katsuki laughed, “Yeah that sounds like, Deku. He’s too much of a coward to do anything else.”

Himiko looked at the monitor showing Izuku and Ochako, then the one that showed Fumikage and Tsuyu, “You’re a fucking idiot. You know that?”

“You want to say that again, Bun Head?” Katsuki growled.

Himiko didn’t bat an eye at Katsuki, “There’s a huge difference between hiding and lying in wait. Also, that’s a lame nickname. At least give me something funny like ‘Lightning Dolt’. Try again.”

While Katsuki fumed, Tenya rubbed his chin as he thought about what Himiko had said, “Midoriya does appear to be listening through the door. You think they are going to try and ambush the other team?”

“We’ll know soon enough, I think. I think that’s the hallway that leads to the door Izuku is behind.”

Himiko pointed at the screen showing Fumikage and Tsuyu. As they got closer to the door, Izuku pulled his head away, and motioned for Ochako to step back. Izuku pulled back his hand while at the same time he and the door glowed green.

“Um, what's he doi-!”

Before Kyoka could finish her question, Izuku punched his palm forward and the door was ripped off its hinges and rocketed right towards the other team.

“-ng! Whoa!” Kyoka flinched as the door headed right for Fumikage.

“Man, Midoriya isn’t playing around!”

“All Might did say we should treat this as a real battle,” Shouto observed quietly to himself.
“Ah, looks like Tokoyami was able to block it though.”

Katsuki frowned as he watched the fight finally start.

*If that’s all the little shit can do with his quirk, he’s still a nobody. I could easily blow up anything he could throw at me.*

“All Might, are you alright?” Momo asked, looking at the teacher with concern.

“Er, yes. Just had a tickle in my throat is all. Ah, looks like you all will get some action after all.”

The fight had started, and the class was not disappointed with what they saw.

“All Might, are you alright?” Momo asked, looking at the teacher with concern.

“Er, yes. Just had a tickle in my throat is all. Ah, looks like you all will get some action after all.”

Young Midoriya, that is not what I meant by embracing the role!

“We’re on fire! Look at Uraraka, she looks like she’s about to burst.”

At the same time, All Might turned his head and coughed hard into his hand, doing his best to not break out into a laughing fit.

“Izuku’s going after him like a prize fighter. WOW! That was totally a shoryuken. That is so hot!”

“Yeah that’s cool, but look at Uraraka! How is she doing all that!”
“She’s running on the ceiling! Wait, she doing flips on the ceiling. The laws of physics are broken!”

“That martial arts style seems familiar. Where have I seen it before?” Shouto whispered to himself as he watched the fight.

Once the fight had started, Katsuki’s mood had soured quickly. Disbelief had quickly turned into rage as he watched Izuku move in ways that should be impossible.

*What the fucking hell!? Just what was that little shit hiding from me?!!*

“Ready for round two, heroes?”

Dark Shadow bristled, “*Grr, he’s so cocky. I hate it.*”

Tsuyu could understand the dark quirk’s aggravation. Unquestionably that first match up had not only gone in the other teams favor, but it had also eaten up precious time.

*I had wondered why they decided to fall back. I guess now I know.*

Unlike the hallway one flight down, this one was littered with office desks, chairs, miscellaneous supplies and large filing cabinets from the adjacent office rooms.

*They must have spent some time setting this up for themselves.*

The huge mess would slow Fumikage if he had to fight, and it forced Tsuyu to have to move to the walls and ceiling if she wanted to move freely, which Ochako had shown she could do as well, somehow. It also supplied Izuku with ample ammo to be a huge worry on top of the fact he did not have any issue getting in close.
“We need to be careful, kero. They have this whole hallway set up to fight us.”

Fumikage agreed, but his eyes were drawn down the hall, past where Izuku and Ochako stood. Further back there was much more debris strewn about that got denser and more compact the closer it got to a large double door.

“Asui…”

“Call me Tsu.”

“...Tsu, look behind them. Doesn’t it look like they made an effort to keep that door back there blocked off?”

Tsuyu blinked and looked where Fumikage had pointed out along with Dark Shadow.

“You think…?”

Izuku and Ochako noticed that their opponent's attention had shifted, and looked behind themselves. Both stiffened and closed ranks, blocking the door from their view.

“Bingo. The bomb has to be there.”

“Tsu, we have to find a way to get by them.”

Tsuyu nodded, “Yeah. I think we need to bull rush them. If even one of use makes it by, they can get to the bomb and win.”

“Not the most clever solution.”

“We have to be past the halfway point by now. We don’t have time to be clever.”
“Then what are we waiting for? Let’s win this!”

Dark Shadows voice carried down the hallway, Izuku powered up his quirk while Ochako took up her fighting stance, “Here they come Deku. You ready?”

“I’m good to go. Just remember the plan.”

With Dark Shadow’s declaration, Tsuyu jumped onto the wall and began to bounce from one side of the hallway to the other, crisscrossing over the blocked floor. Ochako followed her with her eyes, timing how quickly she was able to jump around. Running forward, Ochako jumped and swung her feet up, the gyros spinning hard, pulling her upward to the ceiling. She had timed her jump so that her feet collided right into Tsuyu, sending the frog girl tumbling backward as she desperately stuck herself onto the ceiling to prevent herself from falling.

Ochako’s landing was not much better. She was forced to tuck and roll after getting thrown off kilter from the collision. Getting her bearings, she launched herself at Tsuyu, but skidded to a halt when tsuyu’s tongue shot out, and smacked her across the head. Tsuyu was able to strike Ochako two more times before she dodged the third hit. When Tsuyu tried a fourth time, Ochako was able to get three of her fingers to brush against Tsuyu’s tongue, her thumb and pointer fingers just missing the pink appendage. The close call was enough to make Tsuyu change tactics though. She shot out her tongue again, but instead of aiming at Ochako, she wrapped it around one the filing cabinets and threw it at Ochako.

“Oh shoot!”

Ochako jumped out of the way, which gave Tsuyu and opening to get past. Ochako quickly closed it though. Landing on the floor, she floated two large desks, “Oh, so you want to throw things huh!”

“Kero!?”

Tsuyu jumped back when the first desk cut off her path. She jumped to the other wall when the second desk hit where she had been, shattering the wall’s window and floating outside before hitting the side of another building across the street and coming to a stop.

Ochako wasn’t done throwing things though, after the two desks, Ochako backpedaled, picking up anything within arms reach and chunking it as Tsuyu who either, jumped around to avoid the
objects, or was able to kick or catch it with her tongue to launch it back.

“Will you keep still? If you dodge like that I’ll keep missing!”

Tsuyu watched as Ochako stopped her ineffective bombardment, and rushed towards Tsuyu, running up the wall. When she did, Tsuyu noticed that a great deal of the clutter that had been blocking the far of the hall was gone.

*Uraraka opened up the hallway. If we can get by them, we’ll have a pretty clear shot to that room!*

Ochako was only halfway towards Tsuyu when below them someone screamed, “Uraraka! Stop them! They got by me!”

Ochako skid to a stop and turned to look down. Izuku was sprawled out on the floor against the other wall, and Fumikage was rushing by him and through the opening in the hall that Ochako had opened up.

“Oh no!”

Ochako kicked off the wall and shot towards him, but Tsuyu wasn’t going to let her get to her teammate. Shooting out her tongue and wrapping it around Ochako’s waist, Tsuyu yanked her back and threw her right into Izuku, sending both tumbling to the ground. With Izuku and now Ochako out of the way, Tsuyu quickly joined up with Fumikage and rushed for the room with the bomb.

“I’m good, just remember the plan.”

The brief nod from Ochako was all the reassurance Izuku needed before he refocused on Fumikage and Dark Shadow.

“You’re mine now, you green rabbit! No more bouncing around and punching me in the face!”
“Oh? Is that so.”

“It is, Midoriya. You may have limited my movements with all this debris, but you have limited yourself as well.”

Dark Shadow loomed over Izuku, doing a good job of looking menacing, “Yeah, and while you’re down there, I can get you from up here. So what are you gonna do now?”

Izuku had to concede to that. Shrugging his shoulders he looked up at the huge shadow, “you’re right. I’m just as hampered as Tokoyami is. So I don’t think I’m going to be able to box with you in here,” Dark Shadow started to laugh, “but aren’t you forgetting something?”

“Oh? What?”

Izuku’s green glow flared to life as he grabbed one of the large pieces of office debris that Dark Shadow was hovering over and launched it into him, sending both crashing through the ceiling.

“I can do that.”

Dark Shadows voices echoed from the hole he was in, “Oh right. Quirks.”

Fumikage rubbed his brow, “You are a quirk, how do you forget about quirks?”

Pulling himself out of the ceiling, Dark Shadow went on the attack while Izuku pulled more debris from around himself and threw it at the two. While a few smaller pieces did graze Fumikage, Dark Shadow was doing an excellent job acting as a shield, batting away the larger and more dangerous projectiles. Even the pieces that Izuku pulled from behind them, Dark Shadow was able to react fast enough to stop.

It’s no wonder they scored so well on the practical exam and Mr. Aizawa’s test. Their combat potential is phenomenal.

When Dark Shadow shattered a desk that had been thrown at him, Izuku could see that Fumikage wasn’t looking just at him, but around and past him. Around them, the debris Izuku had used lay
scattered and in pieces. While the amount of stuff was still relatively the same, it had been broken down and spread out. Opening up the hallway and making it easier to move about. Izuku then glanced behind himself and saw that much of the large obstacles were no longer blocking the past to the door.

*Guess it’s time to move in.*

Izuku grabbed as many of the broken pieces of clutter he could and used it to create a giant wall between himself and Dark Shadow as he rushed forward.

Fumikage tensed as Izuku rushed towards him.

*He must have realized how badly the situation has changed for him. Now’s he trying to push me back so I can’t capitalize. Sorry Midoriya, but that not going to work.*

“Dark Shadow, breakthrough Midoriya’s barrier and get him out of the way!”

“*Got it!*”

Dark Shadow reared back, then dove right through. Izuku had just enough time to raise his arms to protect himself when Dark Shadow’s arms ripped through and slammed him into the wall. Izuku groaned in pain as he fell to the floor, gasping for breath as his makeshift barrier fell uselessly around him. Fumikage paused only briefly to make sure that Izuku did not look to hurt before he moved past, and ran for the door.

“Uraraka! Stop them! They got by me!” Izuku cried out behind him.

Fumikage turned, trying to find where Ochako would attack him from. He found her just as Tsuyu pulled her out of the air, and threw her back behind them. Landing beside him, Tsuyu joined him as they rushed for the door, “We need to hurry. They’ll be right behind us, kero!”

“*Don’t worry! This match is as good as ours!*”

Reaching the doors, Fumikage and Tsuyu yanked them open and rushed into the room. Their
momentum carried them almost halfway inside the large space before they came to a confused halt.

“Wait, what’s going on?”

“Kero?”

The room was empty. The bomb that they had expected to find to win the match was not there. Quickly the pieces began to click into place as a feeling of dread filled the two.

“Um, guys? Was this...?”

“It’s a trap! We have to get out of here!” Fumikage yelled in alarm, but it was too late.

A loud bang startled both teens, making them turn around to find Izuku and Ochako standing in front of the closed doors. Both of them, doing a great job of suddenly looking very intimidating. Izuku raised a hand and clenched his fist, his green aura enveloping him. From out in the hallway, a loud rumble and screeching echoed into the empty room, followed by a series of loud bangs and thuds. Each one was the result of Izuku pulling all the largest debris, filing cabinets and desks, right against the door forming a solid barricade to keep the door from opening. Locking them all in the room.

“I told you heroes at the start to surrender and save yourselves the embarrassment. Now it’s too late, and you have to deal with the consequences.”

Ochako rapped her knuckles against the side of the large faux bomb, sighing in relief at the hollow noise it gave off. Izuku snickered behind her which only made her roll her eyes, “Anyway, back to the plan. We’ll confront them on the 2nd floor first. I’ll keep Asui busy while you take on Tokoyami and find out if you can affect his quirk with yours. Once you have your answer, we fall back to the next floor.”

“Yeah, I’ll also try and see if I can slow them down at all. Time isn’t on their side, so we might as well eat up as much as we can.”
“That’s a good idea. Now how are we going to trick them into thinking that the bomb is on the 3rd floor?”

“We’ll need to set up a barricade to try and protect the room. Have stuff thrown about to make it harder for them to move, but really clog up the area in front of the doors.”

“Maybe try and draw attention to the fact we’re keeping them from that room. Block their view of it or something.”

Izuku nodded in agreement, “Yeah, if this trick is going to work, we’ll really have to sell it.”

“I’m not too worried about that. It’s the next part that’s gonna take some good acting. We’re going to unintentionally open up the path for them. If we’re too obvious they might suspect something and not take the bait. If that happens, we’ll be in trouble. We aren’t going to have time to set up any kind of defenses to protect the real bomb since all our time is going into the trap.”

“And of course they could always use that fire escape and come in on some random floor,” Izuku said with a sigh.

Ochako just shrugged, “We can’t go back and forth on every single possibility. Let’s stick with what we got, and if worst comes to worst, we just improvise and win.”

“Right...so where were we?”

“Luring them into the fake room.”

“Okay, yeah. The room you selected is a perfect trap. It’s right off the main hallway from the stairs and in the interior of the building. So no windows for them to escape through. They go in, and we block the door shut...and wait out the timer…” Izuku trailed off. Ochako couldn’t see it because of his mask, but she could tell he was frowning.

“Something wrong, Deku? The plan sounds good to me. By that point in the match there shouldn’t be that much time left. I’m sure we’d be able to hold them in.”
“It is, it is. It’s just…” Izuku reached back and pulled out the capture tape they had each been given, “I don’t want to win because of the time limit. I want to have a complete victory. I want to capture them.”

The look of determination in Izuku’s eyes startled Ochako. Compared to when she had met him over a year ago, when he had been so timid, to how he was now was so different. He always had a spark in him, she had seen it so many times even before their training. Now though, it wasn’t just a spark, but a full-fledged fire that burned brightly within him. It brought back a memory of something she had said to All Might, when they had gotten into trouble for working outside the bounds of his training plan.

“We’re not going to settle for good enough.”

Izuku looked up at Ochako. She now had the same determined look he had.

“Alright Deku, instead of locking them in, lets lock all of us in the room. You can still barricade it from the other side of the door, right?”

“Definitely, and you’re okay with this? It’s the riskier option.”

Ochako grinned and held up her fist towards Izuku, “Yeah, let’s show everyone what we can do.”

Izuku returned her grin, and raised his fist up to hers, bumping them together, “Then let’s get everything ready.”

With a nod, Ochako hurried out of the room to start getting stuff set up. They had only a few minutes left, and a lot to get ready.

“They’ve been trained.” Shouto said with absolute certainty.

The second round of the match had only just started but Shouto didn’t need to see anything else to come to his conclusion. A few students looked over at him waiting for him to explain further.
“We’ll I’m sure they practiced a bunch before they got into U.A. We all had to if we wanted to get in.” Denki reasoned.

“Yeah, I practiced and worked out like crazy to make sure I passed.” Eijiro added

“That’s not what I mean. Those two have been professionally trained. The way they’re fighting isn’t something you learn by watching some work out videos. It has to be taught.”

All Might did his best not to show how much his ears were burning as he listened to the students behind him.

Himiko hummed as she watched Izuku continue his assault against Dark Shadow, “Izuku did mention that he and Ochako trained together.”

Tenya nodded, “That’s right. If I recall, he mentioned something about it during dinner the other day.”

“That doesn’t explain how they’re this good, though.” Hitoshi added, watching the match closely with the others.

Katsuki glared at the three before turning his attention back to the match, just in time to see Dark Shadow slam Izuku into a wall. That brought a huge smile to his face, “Ha! Take that you little shit. You sure you know what you’re talking about over there Half-and-Half?”

Shouto didn’t reply and kept silently watching. He wasn’t looking at Fumikage and Tsuyu as they ran off, but kept his eyes on Izuku and Ochako.

*Neither of them is panicking. If they really were that close to losing, you’d expect them to be worried, but they aren’t. Why?*

“Oh man, they made it by them. They’re making for the door.”
“That’s game and match. Midoriya and Uraraka won’t be able to catch them in time.”

*Oh thats why.*

“Look, they made it in….wait….WHAT!?"

“No way! No way!”

“Wait, where’s the bomb? Why were they guarding an empty room?”

Himiko had a huge grin on her face, “It was a trap. The *whole* thing was a trap.”

Katsuki’s smile vanished as he watched the two slam the doors closed behind them and Izuku drag a pile of debris up against the door. Several more students looked back at Shouto who simply shrugged, “Like I said. They have been trained.”

“Yeah but by who?”

All Might really hoped no one saw through his poker face.

“I told you at the start heroes, surrender now and save yourselves the embarrassment. Now it’s too late, and you have to deal with the consequences.”

Izuku and Ochako began to advance forwards, while Fumikage and Tsuyu backed up, the realization of their situation sapping away most of their fighting spirit.

*“We’re trapped.”*

“We are.”
“They had everything planned out from the start, didn’t they?”

“Seems that way.”

“What do we do now?”

“...I don’t know.”

“We have to try and capture them, kero.”

Both Dark Shadow and Fumikage looked over at Tsuyu, “Can we do that?”

“If we want to win, we have to.”

“Teams! You have one minute left!”

All Mights voice rang out from the students earpieces freezing them still, but only for a moment. Time was almost up, and if Izuku and Ochako wanted their perfect victory, they couldn’t afford to waste any more time.

“Deku! Launch me!” Ochako turned off her gyroscopes so she started to float up into the air as she extended her hand for Izuku to grab.

Izuku grabbed on and as fast as he could reared back and threw Ochako as hard as he could right towards Tsuyu, who only had enough time to let out a surprised ribbit before Ochako body checked her and sent her flailing into the wall with a solid thud. Tsuyu didn’t even have enough time to catch her breath before Ochako was on her, pressing her attack with kicks and punches.

Fumikage was left gaping in shock after his teammate was suddenly and violently taken away from him, fortunately Dark Shadow was able to bring him back to the present with a warning, “Here he comes!”
Izuku dashed forward, pulling out his capture tape at the same time. He had just gotten by Dark Shadow, and reached out to try and wrap the tape around Fumikage’s arm, but he was pushed back by one of Dark Shadows claws, “oh no you don’t!”

Stumbling back, Izuku let the tape go with his hand and grabbed it with his quirk. Whipping it around a panicked Fumikage, “Dark Shadow, don’t let that near me!”

Displaying some impressive agility, Dark Shadow was able to bat the tape away, even as Izuku manipulated it in the air so it darted and twisted around while trying to wrap up Fumikage. When Izuku regained his balance he snatched the tape back and reset himself so that he was ready to try again. Fumikage narrowed his eyes, in his mind he could hear the seconds ticking away, “Dark Shadow, I want you to grab Midoriya and hold him down so I can capture him.”

“Got it!”

Izuku’s green glow flared up, warning them that he was about to attack again. This time both Fumikage and Dark Shadow rushed Izuku, intending to overpower him. Izuku however was prepared for it.

*Almost out of time, I need to make this count!*

When Dark Shadow was almost on him, Izuku reached out with his left hand and ensnared Dark Shadow in a green aura, stopping him dead. Fighting through the strain to hold him, Izuku wretched his hand up and forward, sending the shadow flying back into the ceiling with as much force as he dared.

Fumikage, now defenseless, didn’t have enough time to come to a stop when Izuku turned his attention to him. Dropping his left hand, Izuku pivoted his body as he threw a haymaker right into Fumikage’s beak.

“Smash!”

Fumikage’s head whipped around as he dropped to the ground dazed and with a harsh ringing in his ears. Dark Shadow was able free himself just in time to watch Izuku wrap the capture tape around Fumikage’s wrist.
“Tokoyami Fumikage has been captured!”

After getting thrown by Izuku, Ochako had moved her and Tsuyu’s battle upward, so that now both were up on the ceiling.

If, during this fight, Tsuyu had learned anything, after going two rounds and going on three, against Ochako it was this.

Keep your distance.

After taking a series of hits to her side and stomach, only just dodging a huge swing from one of Ochako’s bracers that left several spiderweb cracks in the wall when she missed, and on top of all of that, she was still reeling from the flying body check, Tsuyu did not want to be anywhere near Ochako anymore.

So if close quarters was out of the question, she had to rely on her tongue, but having only one method of attack, as unorthodox as it was, made her very predictable for Ochako, who was doing a great job dodging and weaving through her attacks. Ochako however, was not able to close the gap between herself and Tsuyu, so the two were in a stalemate. With time running out, if Ochako wanted to get her capture win, she was going to have to get creative.

Okay, I need to get Asui stunned. If I can do that, I can win.

Ochako side stepped as Tsuyu’s tongue shot out and immediately retracted back.

She really doesn’t want me floating her, does she.

Ochako ducked as this time Tsuyu swipped at her.

She’s either tried to spear me with that thing, or grab me… Wait…
A planned formed inside Ochako’s mind. It was risky, but at this point she was out of options and almost out of time. With her mind made up, Ochako waited for her moment.

_Alright, doge the spear strikes, and wait for her to… THERE!_

After multiple thrusts with her tongue, Tsuyu once again went to swipe at Ochako to try and grab her. This time, instead of dodging, Ochako let the tongue wrap around her arms and upper body. Tsuyu’s face lit up at her victory as she yanked Ochako off the ceiling and held her in the air. Which was exactly what Ochako had been hoping she would do. Tsuyu had her arms pressed tight against herself, but she had left her hands unbinded, and close enough together for Ochako to spring her trap.

Pressing her fingers together, Ochako cried out, “Release!”

Suddenly, her weight returned to her, and she plummeted towards the floor, along with a startled Tsuyu, who, not expecting her capture prey to suddenly weigh so much, was yanked off the ceiling before she had a chance to brace herself. Ochako was able to land on her feet, her boots absorbing the full impact. Tsuyu was not as lucky and belly flopped on the hard floor, having the wind knocked out of her. Ochako felt Tsuyu’s tongue loosen, and quickly broke free and dashed for the downed girl.

_“Tokoyami Fumikage has been captured!”_

All Mights voice rang in her head from the little earpiece she was wearing , proclaiming Izuku’s success. Ochako let herself grin at the news, but she could celebrate with him after she had finished with her end of things. Tsuyu was only just starting to prop herself up when Ochako grabbed one of her wrists and twisted it behind her back, while at the same time used her knee and body weight to push Tsuyu back onto the floor. With her free hand, Ochako pulled out the capture tape and wrapped it around the wrist she was holding.

_“Asui Tsuyu has been captured! Both heroes are out! THE VILLAIN TEAM WINS!_

After the match, both teams were given quick examinations by several medical robots, and while Team H were nursing some bruised bodies and ego’s both were given the all clear and sent on their way to the monitor room where All Might and their classmates were waiting for them.
Upon entering the room, the class as a collective turned to look right at Izuku and Ochako, both of which gulp nervously at the sudden intense interest. All Might cleared his throat, “Well done all of you. Both teams performed admirably and it is time to review your match with the rest of the class. Win or lose, it is important to look back on your action and learn from them. Now...er... Does anyone have any comments or questions they’d like to ask the participants.”

Katsuki, who looked ready to either bite Izuku’s head off, or just strangle him, opened his mouth to demand how Izuku had learned to fight like that, but he was cut off as the rest of the class started asking questions.

With everyone talking over each other, neither of the two teams knew who to answer first, or even which question was directed at how. Seeing that this was going nowhere, and that the four students were getting quickly overwhelmed, All Might stepped in, “Okay, okay! Let’s everyone settle down.”

The class immediately quieted down. All Might nodded in approval, “Now let’s try to keep this organized. Why don’t we have questions for Team H go first. Now does anyone have anything they would like to ask?”

Momo raised her hand, and after getting acknowledged by All Might, asked, “What was your plan of attack? We had no audio and the video feed only started once the match had begun.”

Fumikage answered, “My plan was to do a full sweep of the building. Since we did not know anything about the bomb we were looking for, that left too many places to look for us to try and pick at random.”

“We never actually got to see the bomb now that I think about it. How big was it, kero?”

“About the size of a couch,” Izuku answered.

Fumikage groaned, “That would have been nice to know…”

“You said, ‘your plan.’ Does that mean Asui didn’t have a say in what you did in the match?” Tenay asked.
“She never said anything against my ideas, so I assumed she agreed with my assessment of the situation.”

Tsuyu scratched her cheek nervously when Fumikage looked over at her, “I… had a few doubts about some of your ideas. Like when you assumed Midoriya and Uraraka would stay with the bomb the whole match.”

“And you chose to keep these concerns to yourself?”

“We only had a limited amount of time to come up with a plan. Getting into an argument seemed like a worse idea so I stayed quiet.”

All Might nodded and turned to address the class, “This is in fact a very common problem that can crop up when heroes and agencies team up on the fly. Communication break down. Young Asui prioritized team cohesion and prompt action over the risk of possible arguments and losing time.”

“So I did the wrong thing?”

“As with most things in life, there is no cut and dry answer. If you had said something, you and Young Tokoyami might have spent more time talking before you had a plan, but that extra time may have led to your victory. On the other hand, teams that bicker amongst themselves are inefficient and run the risk of suffering devastating losses.”

After a few moments of silence as everyone in the class thought this over, Mashirao raised his hand, “To be blunt, what went wrong?”

“Everything!” Wailed Dark Shadow, wiping away non existent tears.

“To be precise, how we figured Midoriya and Uraraka would fight was way off, kero.”

Fumikage nodded, “I believed that Midoriya’s psychokinesis would mean he would stay back and avoid any direct confrontation.”
“And I thought I had the mobility advantage.”

A few students winced at that. Neither had been prepared for what either of their opponents would end up bringing to the table. It was no wonder things had gone so wrong for them so quickly. When no other student raised their hand, All Might prepared himself for what he knew was going to be some extensive questions, “Now. Would anyone like to comment on, or have a question for Team A?”

Immediately, a sea of hands rose up. With so many, All Might decided to get the most troublesome one out of the way, “Young Todoroki.”

Shouto wasted no time and got straight to the point, “Who trained the two of you?”

Ochako went stiff, while Izuku started stuttering, “What, train? Who said...um…”

No giving Izuku a chance to come up with a story, Shouto pointed towards Himiko, Tenya and Hitoshi, “Those three said that the two of you trained together before coming to U.A. and you both clearly have some fighting experience.”

Tenya quickly added, “We were caught gossiping. I am deeply sorry.”

Izuku raised his hands, “No, it’s okay. It not like we were trying to hide anything. I guess we didn’t think it would be that noticeable.”

Ochako nodded in agreement. The whole class stared at them in disbelief.

“You’re joking right? You guys were working like a machine out there,” Kyoka said.

After a few more moments of silence Shouto asked again, “Will you tell us who trained you? You’re avoiding the question.”

“Um…”
Seeing the two struggling, All Might stepped in, “It was Mr. Yami if memory serves. He spoke about you two a lot.”

Izuku and Ochako snapped their heads up to All Might, while the rest of the class looked over at him.

“Let me explain, sometimes U.A. will use talent scouts to find potential students. Mr. Yagi was the one that scouted Young Midoriya and Young Uraraka and helped them get ready for the entrance exam. As for why they may be hesitant to disclose this information, we want the scouts to be able to operate anonymously. If people found out who they were, then potential students or their parents might start seeking them out.”

A few students whispered to themselves while Katsuki started to shake, grinding his teeth together as she stared a hole right through Izuku. Shouto nodded, finding the explanation believable, “you seem to know the man if you heard him talk about them All Might.”

“Yes, well he works for my agency. So I’d overheard him a few times when he was in the office or over speaker phone.”

More than a few students were looking at Izuku and Ochako in awe. To get picked up by someone what work in All Mights agency was incredible. Katsuki though had heard enough and finally exploded, “WHAT!? When did this happen!? When would someone ever take the time to scout you, Deku?”

“Oh well, you see...um.” Izuku hesitated, not sure if bringing up the fact that it was when he had been attacked by that sludge villain was a good idea.

Ochako, seeing that Izuku was hesitant to answer in front of everyone, cleared her throat and looked Katsuki right in the eye, “When do you think it was Bakugou?”

It was extremely satisfying for Ochako to watch as Katsuki thought about what she said, and then for realization to set it. His face turned pale and his eyes bulged as he made a guttural cough like he’d swallowed his own tongue.

That’s right. Choke on that you piece of-
Mina cut in, “So you guy got picked up by a scout, and then what, you got trained for a bit?”

“Well, it was actually pretty much our entire last year of junior high so close to ten months. We worked on strength training, endurance, our quirks and then eventually we learned some basic combat skills. I got taught some boxing, and Uraraka learned martial arts.”

Mina blinked, stunned. She then recalled something Ochako had said back in the locker room, “Wait is that what you meant when you said ten months of hell?”

“Pretty much.”

“So that’s why you look fine as hell. You were doing hero training a year before everyone else!”

Ochako blushed at Mina’s compliment.

“Alright, we can’t spend all our time grilling one team. And many of these questions can be asked later, if Young Midoriya and Young Uraraka want to. Not everyone wants their whole life brought out into the open so readily. It’s important to respect a person’s privacy. Now, does anyone have any questions about the match?” A few students nodded in understanding, while Shouto looked from All Might to Izuku. He could understand wanting to keep some things private, more than most, but still found it odd how quickly All Might seemed to want to shut down the line of questioning and give them a break.

Hitoshi raised his hand, “If your plan was to trap them in that room like you did, why confront them on the second floor?”

“I had no idea if my quirk would work on Fumikage’s Dark Shadow. I figured it would be better to find out early, when we could still fall back on the plan, than finding out after we sprung our trap and getting caught by surprise.”

“Your plan?”

“Um, Uraraka and I put it together.”
“It’s impressive that you two put that together so quickly.”

Tooru waved her gloved hand around, “Why not just lift Tokoyami and Asui up with your quirk and have Uraraka capture them? Wouldn’t that have been easier?”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head nervously, “My quirk doesn’t really work on people that well. Every issue I have moving an object is amplified when I try on a person. A weakness I inherited from my mom I guess.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah my mom can only use her quirk on small stuff, and not on people at all. Mine is just a super powered version of hers really.”

Shouto stared at Izuku for a moment, then let himself look over at All Might.

*A powered up version of his mothers quirk, and he was conveniently scouted by someone at All Mights agency.*

“We have time for one more question, then we will decide who the MVP of the match was.”

Tsuyu raised her hand, “May I ask them something?”

“Of course.”

“Why did you two lock yourself in that room with us? With so little time left you had basically won once we fell for your trap. Why risk giving us a chance to capture you?”

Ochako looked over at Izuku, and they both gave each other a small smile, “We decided we didn’t want to win because of the time limit.”
A few students started to talk amongst themselves. Momo frowned, “But either way, by capture or
time running out, it’s a win. The result is the same.”

“You want to answer that one Deku? It was your idea in the first place.”

With everyone looking at him, Izuku took a moment to collect himself. When he did, that fire of
determination burned bright in his eyes, “It’s not the same if your goal is to become the next
number one hero. You don’t reach the top by letting victoires come to you. You go out there and
grab them yourself.”

All Might smiled proudly.

Eijiro pointed at Izuku and proclaimed, “That is one of the manliest things I have ever heard!”

A murmur of agreement passed over the class. Katsuki looked like he wanted to throw up. Himiko
whipped her chin to make sure she wasn’t drooling.

All might clapped his hands together, getting everyone’s attention, “So class. I know who I intend
to award MVP for the match, but let’s see who you all think deserves it.”

Izuku immediately pointed at Ochako, while she pointed at him. Most of the class pointed towards
Izuku though a few, including Tsuyu pointed at Ochako. Katsuki kept his hands to himself,
sneering at the lopsided victory.

Izuku stood in shock that so many people were voting for him to be the MVP of the match, “Me?
But what about Uraraka!? Her fighting style was so much better and flashier than me. She was all
over the place and everything.”

“Don’t sell yourself so short, Deku.” Ochako said with a smile, though she did appreciate his vote
of confidence in her.

“Indeed, Young Midoriya. You were the MVP of the match. Would anyone like to guess
why?”
Momo stepped forward, “If I may?” All Might nodded.

“While Uraraka’s fighting skills were indeed very impressive, there are two factors that put Midoriya on top of her.

Minoru snickered before a sharp jab from one of Kyoka’s ear jacks shut him up.

“First was his ability to recognize an unknown factor in dealing with Tokoyami’s quirk but also to come up with a plan to figure out an answer that did not disrupt the original plan they had already put in place. Second was his drive to win. As Uraraka had said, it was his idea to go for the capture victory. His drive, which she followed.”

“Right on all counts. Very impressive.”

Izuku blushed at the attention he was getting while Ochako patted him on the back making sure he knew he deserved all of it and more.

“Now, while the stage is reset. Let’s find out who’s match is up next.”

All Might pulled out the lottery boxes and reached inside.

Chapter End Notes

HI! Remember me? I'm the person that takes way to long to update his fic. How you all doing? Me? I'm dead. Work killed me. Yep. That's totally what happened.

This chapter was actually a little more challenging to write then I thought it was going to be. Four different fighters and five different perspectives if you count the classes too. So I ended up doing a little jumping back and forth, so I hope this wasn't too hard to follow. So our cinnamon buns came out on top today. Cheers and hurrahs all around! Next chapter will have the rest of the planned fights, so I hope you all look forward to that!

Now as for me, Kingdom Hearts just dropped some DLC and I'm gonna go dive headfirst into that before work decides to kill me again. Huh... what do you mean I can't get killed if I die? Tell that to my back!

If you liked the chapter, or have any critiques, please feel free to leave a comment or
review.

A HUGE thank you to my beta reader Tmalasia, and props to GespenstMKIV for giving me the idea for the title of this chapter.

Also, Miggy Sawdust from the IzuOcha Temple drew this awesome piece, based off of chapter 6.
Battle Trial Part 2: Reality Check

Chapter Summary

As the mock battles continue, some of class 1-A's students are in for a harsh dose of reality.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

The deafening silence that filled the room did nothing to help the six dejected students reeling from their match. After the first match between teams A and H, the next group to be picked had been teams F and J.

A few students, after the incredible first match, had been expecting more of the same, especially since this would be a three-on-three fight. The reality, however, had been very different.

Minoru looked like a mummy, wrapped up in rolls of Hanta’s tape. What’s worse is that he was stuck to Mashirao tail, who himself was covered in tape and purple sticky orbs. Rikido still had large chunks of floor and wall stuck to him after trying to rush headlong into the building and getting stuck right away. Medical bots were still trying to help the three, but none of the solvents they had tried proved successful. Minoru thought they could cut him free of the tape at least; he didn’t want to be anywhere near the others when they finally got unstuck.

While those three looked pretty pathetic, no one was going to say anything bad about poor Hanta; Hanta was sitting in a far corner of the room with his arms wrapped around himself, rocking back and forth, covered from head to toe in tiny scratches and bite marks. In the silence, everyone could hear him muttering to himself, “Rats. Why were there so many rats? Stop please; I’m not cheese.”
Even Katsuki was not cruel enough to give him a hard time after *that* had happened to him. Though everyone took to heart a valuable lesson. When you have huge unpopulated cities as training facilities, you will inevitably have rats and other animals that move in. Which, while useful if you have a quirk that lets you control them, is downright terrifying if you are on the other end.

Of all the downed students, Yuga, who had been captured first right off the bat, had clearly gotten off the lightest, suffering only from an upset stomach which was already getting better thanks to some medicine Ochako kept in her belt to help herself if she needed it. It didn’t take long for him to, at the very least, start glimmering again. Sparkling would take a little longer to come back.

Only Koji remained unscathed. Having stayed outside the building and sending in his little army of animals in his place to find the bomb and then hurrying up to it, making sure to avoid all the purple balls that Minoru had stuck everywhere.

“Questions?”

The class looked at the sorry state of their classmates and shook their heads.

“MVP?”

“Koda!”

“I agree. Next round?”

“Yes!”

Koji smiled, happy to have been selected.

Once the building had been cleared of all sticky balls and deemed rat-free, All Might reached into his lottery boxes to determine the teams for the next match.
“Team B. will be the heroes, and Team D. will play the villains!”

“ Fucking finally.” Katsuki smirked as he pushed off against the wall he had been leaning on, “Now I can show you losers how a fight is supposed to go. Come on Four-Eyes, let’s go.”

Tenya’s eye twitched at the brash way Katsuki spoke while he, Shouto and Mezo followed All Might out of the room. As Tenya started to follow after them, Izuku and Ochako patted him on the back in sympathy and moral support.

“Good luck out there, Iida,” Izuku said, trying to assure his friend.

“Thank you, Midoriya. I’m sure now that it’s our turn, I think Bakugou will take this seriously and we will be just fine.”

Hitoshi wasn’t sure he bought that, “You think, or you hope?”

Himiko snickered.

Izuku tried to come up with something to say to reassure Tenya, “Look at it this way: since you’re on his team, you shouldn’t have to worry about getting exploded.”

“Shouldn’t!?"”

“Won’t. You won’t need to worry about getting exploded.”

Not at all reassured, but not wanting to fall behind, Tenya left.

“Soos,” Eijiro started, “this is going to be a bloodbath right? You guys see how excited Bakugou looked to finally throw down?”

Hitoshi reluctantly agreed, “Yeah, Todoroki and Shoji are going to have their hands full.”
Izuku didn’t say anything as he kept looking down the hallway, rubbing his chin, deep in thought. Ochako could see the wheels turning in his head, “Hey, what you thinkin’ about? You got that look that screams ‘I’m overthinking.’

Izuku wrung his hands together, embarrassed, “Am I that easy to read?”

Ochako, Hitoshi, and Himiko all answered immediately, “Yes.”

Izuku couldn’t help but laugh softly at their quick response, “I guess I do tend to wear my emotions on my sleeve.”

“Deku, you don’t just wear them, you put them on a sign and wave them around for the whole world to see.”

“So what gives?” Hitoshi asked.

“I was a little distracted thinking about the match is all.”

“What about it? You worried about what Kirishima said? About it being a bloodbath?”

“If you’re worried about the match, don’t be. All Might said he would stop the matches if things get out of hand. So Todoroki and Shoji should be just fine.” Ochako said as she tried to assuage Izuku’s worries, though now that she thought about it, she couldn’t help but worry for Shouto and Mezo.

Rubbing the back of his neck, Izuku shook his head “That’s not it really. I’m more worried about Iida and Kacchan, honestly.”

Several of his classmates turned to look at Izuku after he said that. Himiko tilted her head to the side, “You’re gonna have to explain that one I think.”

“Well, remember the test the other day? After the sprint, Iida said he wasn’t able to get up to speed
in such a short distance. Those hallways aren’t that much longer than the track, so his speed is going to be really limited. Plus the halls are narrow, so he won’t have very much room to move around to avoid any attacks.”

Ochako had to admit Izuku had a good point. Tenya was clearly at his best when he had room to freely move about. “But,” and it made her almost physically sick to say this, “He has Bakugou on his team. He should be able to compensate for that issue.”

*Oh god, did I just compliment Bakugou? Urg, I feel so dirty.*

“Well maybe, but didn’t you see how stressed Kacchan looked?”

“Well, his default setting is stressed.”

Izuku shook his head, “While that’s not untrue, this is different. He seemed off. Distracted. That’s not like him. When he has a goal, it’s all he focuses on. Right now though…”

Izuku trailed off, leaving his friends and classmates to wonder just how the next match was going to go.

Katsuki seethed as he stood in the room with the faux bomb. Behind him, he could hear Tenya *still* talking about plans and strategies, but he wasn’t listening. Because nothing he said mattered.

“Will you shut up already? We don’t need any kind of stupid plan. Haven’t I made that clear already? Or are you blind and deaf?”

Tenya gasped at Katsuki, taken aback by his rudeness, “Just because I wear glasses does not make me blind. And if anyone should be accused of not listening it’s you. It would be foolish to go into this fight without a plan, as I have said *multiple* times.”

Katsuki rolled his eyes, “You sound like fucking Deku.”
“Yes, and he won his match.”

Gritting his teeth, Katsuki turned to glare at Tenya, “I.Fucking.Know.”

_He won, and the whole fucking class was eating out of his hand. They almost ran out of time and everyone was still singing their praises. I’ll show these extra’s what a real win looks like. Then they’ll see how worthless that lying piece of shit really is._

“Fine, you want to have a plan. Here’s what we’ll do. You stay here, and guard the bomb. I’ll head out and destroy those other two.”

“That’s not a plan!”

“Oh, will you just shut up and stop acting like a damned bitch already!”

“Maybe you should stop acting like a brute, and more like a hero!”

_“Team B. you are cleared to enter the building! The match starts now!”_

“FINALLY!” Katsuki didn’t wait around another second. As fast as he could, he bolted out the door leaving Tenya alone.

_How someone like that got into U.A. I will never understand... AND this is the kind of person that Midoriya said he had a complicated history with. I know I promised I wouldn’t pry, but I can’t even imagine what kind of past those two have._

Tenya shook his head and closed the door Katsuki had left wide open when he had run out.

_No point in worrying about it now. I need to at least do something to prepare this room in case one or both of our opponents get past Bakugou._

With Tenya left behind and forgotten, Katsuki raced down the halls in search of his prey. Stealth, plans, and any kind of strategies were far from Katsuki’s mind. He was focused on only one thing:
finding his opponents and crushing them into the dirt, where they belonged.

At least, that’s what he told himself he should be thinking about.

In truth, Katsuki’s mind was in turmoil. In the span of just two days, the very foundation of everything he believed in had been shaken and was threatening to crumble apart. The cause of this was one person.

Izuku Midoriya.

Izuku, who didn’t have the good sense to keep his face in the dirt where it belongs.

To play the role of stepping stone like he should.

To fade away and be forgotten as the worthless loser he really was.

Izuku, who lied to him for years.

Who hid his power behind a condescending little smile.

Who had used the worst day of his fucking life to his own advantage.

Who ruined his dream of being the only person to make it out of that shit school and into U.A.

Izuku, who suddenly was showing him up every chance he could.

First place in the entrance exam.

Beating him in the ball throw.
Winning the first match and trying to steal the glory that was supposed to be his.

Did he think it was funny? Had he been laughing behind his back this whole time?

Had that bitch Ochako been in on it too? Had she been duped by him, or was she part of the lie? It honestly didn’t matter. She had clearly taken advantage of Izuku’s lie to advance herself. She would clearly do anything to advance. It made him wonder, to really think. How had she gotten such a high score? You can’t fake villain points, but those rescue points. Which judge gave them to her?

Who had she told a sob story to?

Who had she begged to?

Who did she bribe?

Who did she bend over for?

In the end, it didn’t matter. She was in his way, so he’d destroy her like the rest. He’d destroy her, Izuku, that fucking fanged bitch, and all his classmates. They were just stepping stones. There for him to walk over as he ascended to glory. To become the next number one hero.

Nothing is going to stop me. I’ll show them. I’ll show all of them what a real hero is like. I’ll be number one, and leave them all behin-!

A sudden blast of cold was the only warning Katsuki got before a wave of ice rushed through the whole hall, freezing everything in its path: walls, ceilings, floor and finally Katsuki himself.

“Wh-what!”

Frost covered Katsuki’s whole body, and his feet were frozen to the floor. The sudden cold was strong enough to knock the wind out of him, and leave him dazed and shivering. Though only for a few moments. Sucking in a deep breath, and ignoring how much the cold air hurt his lungs, Katsuki used an explosion to shatter the ice around himself, freeing his feet.
“Half-and-Half bastard! You think that’s going to stop me!”

Taking off running, Katsuki searched the floor, looking for Shouto, but could not find him before he made it to the stairwell. Leaping down a flight, Katsuki exploded the door in front of him, frowning when he found that this floor was frozen as well.

*The fuck? This place is frozen too? Did...did he freeze the whole building?*

Izuku’s jaw, as well as everyone else's, was on the floor.

“Holy crap!” Mina exclaimed

“He actually froze the whole building. That is insane,” Eijiro said in amazement.

“I mean, I know he’s a recommended student, but wow,” Hitoshi shook his head.

“His dad has a super powerful quirk. Some of the stuff he can do is really incredible, and scary. Todoroki must have that same power level, but with ice.” Izuku reasoned.

“Well,” Ochako started as she watched the screens with Katsuki on them, “looks like Bakugou can just blast through it though.”

“It’s not the ice Kacchan has to be worried about.”

Ochako, along with Hitoshi, and Himiko glanced over at Izuku.

“It’s the cold.”
A new blast of cold hit Katsuki, followed by a new layer of ice. Katsuki snarled and blasted his way through, keeping himself free of frost. The cold, though? There was no no protecting himself from the cold. He couldn’t stop himself from shaking now, and worse, his arms and hands were numb. His explosions only gave his palms the briefest flashes of heat, before it quickly faded.

“You’re going to have to do better than that! You hear me bastard!?”

Katsuki pushed on, dropping down floor by floor, ignoring the cold the best that he could. Ignoring the fact that he couldn’t stop his teeth from chattering. Ignoring the fact that the closer he got to the first floor, the weaker his explosions were becoming.

Once he had reached the second floor and finding that floor iced over and freezing cold as well, Katsuki finally admitted to himself that he might be in a tiny bit of trouble.

“Mother fucking shit! How much ice can one bastard make!?”

“As much as I need.”

Alarmed, Katsuki turned and saw Shouto standing at the end of another hallway.

“YOU!”

Katsuki started running at him, but Shouto didn’t let him get far. From his right foot, a wave of solid ice rocketed out. Katsuki raised his hands, intending to blow it away, but to his horror, only a small puff of smoke and a few sparks came from his palms. He was too cold to make anymore sweat. This realization hit him only slightly less hard than the ice that ripped him off the floor and slammed him against the wall, leaving him stuck against it.

Katsuki struggled, tried and failed to make an explosion to free himself, slammed his fists on the ice holding him, but nothing worked. He was stuck.
“No, no, no, no, no, no, NO!”

Shouto kept his distance, as he watched Katsuki fight to free himself. When it became clear that he wasn’t going to be able to, Shouto put a hand over his ear, and spoke into his earpiece, “Shoji, I’ve secured Bakugou. Please, for your safety, stay outside while I go and capture the bomb.”

He’s alone. He came in here ALONE!? This bastard!

Shouto turned away and started walking for the stairway. The initial shock of having someone turn their back on him, quickly snapped into a primal rage. His arms were still free, and he thought he had won? Snarling, Katsuki pointed one of his gauntlets at Shouto and yanked back the first safety on the firing mechanism, exposing the pin trigger.

“DON’T YOU DARE TURN YOUR BACK ON ME! THIS ISN’T OVER!”

“YOUNG BAKUGOU WAIT!”

Before Katsuki could reach for the pin, two streaks of ice encased both his arms, stopping him from being able to go through with his attack. Shouto glanced back at Katsuki, “Please try to keep calm. I’ll make sure to end this match before you suffer any frostbite or hypothermia.”

Shouto walked away leaving Katsuki helpless and at a complete loss. True to his word, Shouto quickly made his way up the stairs and found the room where Tenya and the bomb were located. Tenya was stuck in the middle of the room, his boots frozen to the floor, and his mufflers clogged with ice. The two boys looked at each other before Tenya slumped in defeat.

Walking by him, Shouto put his hand on the bomb. Immediately All Might declared Team B.’s victory.

“How humiliating. I didn’t even have a chance to do anything.”

Shouto put his left hand on the nearest wall and began to melt the ice covering the building, “Sorry, I’ll have you out in a second.”
Ochako felt extremely conflicted. On one hand she felt so bad for Tenya after such a one-sided loss. She was sure the poor boy’s pride must have taken a massive hit. On the other hand, she was elated to get a chance to watch Bakugou get, for lack of a better term, curb stomped. He hadn’t been able to do anything against Shouto, and watching the bully run into that ice again and again had brought such a smile to her face that her cheeks had started to hurt.

_I wonder if I could get a recording of the fight?_

When the camera had focused on Katsuki’s face, when he had been freed of the ice and realized that he had been completely and utterly defeated. Oh how _that_ had brought Ochako such joy, she almost cheered.

Almost.

She was still conscious enough to realize that cheering so openly against one of her classmates, both of her classmates since Tenya was on the same team, would look rather poor.

_I wonder if I can get a freeze frame of that, get it framed and hang it on my wall. Oh maybe a poster. 12 x 12. For the whole wall… On second thought, maybe I don’t want a huge picture of Bakugou on my wall._

When their classmates returned however, Ochako was startled by just how lifeless Katsuki looked. She was ready for him to be raging, complaining, or something loud, but he looked dead on his feet. Stealing a glance over at Izuku, she saw that he was just as surprised as her, and worse yet, he looked worried.

All Might walked up to Katsuki and put a hand on his shoulder while everyone was getting their questions ready. Ochako could just make out what he said to him, “_Young Bakugou, looking back and learning from your experiences is a part of life, whether you win or lose; let’s review the results, and see what we can learn._”
Ochako couldn’t help but feel angry. After everything he’d done, HE gets a pep talk from All Might to make him feel better. The very thought made her blood boil. It was only her worry for Izuku that kept her from maybe saying something she’d probably end up regretting. He was obviously worried about Katsuki and looked like he wanted to do something about it, and that brought a shiver of worry up her spine.

“So,” Hitoshi began awkwardly, “We’re on a team.”

Momo, who had been busy surveying the room their bomb was located, looked over at Hitoshi, “Yes? We found that out a while ago. Is there a problem?”

“Nope, no problems. None at all.” Hitoshi’s normal monotone voice went up a few pitches as he turned away, avoiding eye contact.

Momo sighed and stopped what she was doing, “You don’t have to worry. I don’t hold what happened yesterday against you. Mr. Aizawa said we should use our quirks to help us do better on his test. You simply followed his rules.”

“Yeah, I guess I’m still getting used to the idea that I’m expected to use my quirk on people now.”

“Well I suggest you get used to it quickly, because I doubt Kirishima or Ashido will hesitate to use theirs on us.”

What Momo said made sense to Hitoshi. His preconceived notions about his quirk aside, everyone in class was now being told to use their quirks on other people. They were all in the same boat, and if he didn’t get over his issues, he’d be the only one left on the boat before long.

Taking a deep breath, Hitoshi steadied himself, “Alright.”

“Are you ready to set up for the match then?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I’m good.”
Momo could hear some hesitation, but could also see he was determined.

“Alright then. I do have a question for you.”

“Shoot.”

“How many people can you brainwash at a time?”

“I can control more than two people, though I never really tried past that. I can only brainwash one person at a time though. So I can’t get them both at once.”

Momo rubbed her chin as she thought that over, “then even if you can get one of them, if the other breaks them out of your control, we may lose the element of surprise your quirk gives us.”

“I’m pretty sure I’d be able to get Kirishima under control pretty easily, but leaving Ashido seems like a big risk. Her acid quirk will make stopping her tricky.”

Momo nodded, “She could melt through anything we try to catch her in. She’d probably burn through the capture tape before we got it fully around her. Hmm…”

Hitoshi watched as Momo typed something onto the small computer she wore on her left glove, while at the same time images flashed over her visor, “What are you doing?”

“I’m looking up something that should help us deal with Ashido. I just need the molecular makeup, and I can recreate it.”

“Oh? You that’s a useful thing to have handy.”

Momo smiled, “Originally I had an encyclopedia I was going to carry that had all sorts of items and their makeup in it.”
“Wouldn’t that be heavy?”

Momo nodded, “It was. Course that wasn’t the worst part of my old design.”

“Oh?”

“I left… a lot of myself exposed since if I tried to create something through clothing it tore.”

Hitoshi remembered yesterday's test, and whenever Momo made something, she always had to lift up or move around her clothes to do it. Blushing Hitoshi turned away, “Oh, is that right…?”

“Yes, fortunately the support team let me know they had developed a method to create a costume that wouldn’t get destroyed every time I used my quirk. It’s supposed to be based off of work used for one of our seniors. The cloth is made from my DNA.”

“So… I won’t need to leave the room if you want to make something.”

“No,” Momo shook her head. “I can use my quirk without worry, for the most part. I was warned that, since this is still experimental, overuse could damage it. It's why I left my thighs and back uncovered. Those are both still great places for me to pull things from.”

Despite himself, Hitoshi looked over her costume, and saw that while the shoulder cape did a good job hiding it, her back was exposed. He immediately looked away, feeling a new blush creep over his face, and feeling a little ashamed of himself.

“If you’re looking up something to make, I guess you have a plan then?”

Momo nodded, “Yes, if you feel you can deal with Kirishima, I should be able to deal with Ashido.”

Mineta felt a cold feeling of dread fill him. Something had gone horribly wrong.
With a grunt, Eijiro kicked down the next door in the hall and stuck his head into the room, “Nope nothing in here either.”

Mina rolled her eyes, “Are you going to break the door of every room we check?”

“I duno. Are you going to keep skating around with your acid shoes and melting stuff?” Eijiro said with a grin.

Mina looked back at the trail she had left, and the number of opened doors that she had melted their door knobs to open. Flashing him a smile, Mina shrugged, “okay, so maybe it’s a little fun to get to use my quirk so openly.”

“Just don’t melt me while you’re at it.”

“Oh, don’t be such a baby.”

Eijiro was about to explain that not wanting to get acid burns did not make someone a baby, when he noticed that they were not alone in the hallway anymore. Hitoshi was walking up to them, at a leisurely pace.

“Ashido!”

“I see him. So the villain decided to come out of hiding and find us, huh?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “You weren’t exactly hard to find. Just follow the racket and destruction.”

Both Eijiro and Mina crouched into fighting stances. Mina looked around noticing that Hitoshi was alone, “Hey, where’s Yaoyozorou?”

“Doing something a lot smarter than confronting you two. That’s for sure.” Hitoshi sighed
dramatically, “How’d I get the short straw this time? Oh well.”

Hitoshi mimicked the other team and took up a fighting stance, “Hey Kirishima, let’s at least have a good fight. What do ya say?”

Eijiro smirked, “Hell yea…”

Hearing her friend trail off and go silent, Mina looked and was shocked to find him just standing next to her. Face slack and eyes glazed over.

“Hey!? HEY!? Kirishima? What’s wrong with you?”

“Kirishima,” Hitoshi ordered, “walk over here and give me your arm.”

When Eijiro started walking, Mina looked between the two boys, “Hey what’d you do to him. You two were talking and-!”

Mina suddenly snapped her mouth shut.

*They were talking, and now Kirishima is under a spell or something.*

When Mina turned and glared at Hitoshi, the other boy couldn’t help but be impressed with her.

*She figured that out pretty quickly. Too bad she’s looking the wrong way.*

“ASHIDO!”

Mina’s eyes went wide as she heard her name called from behind her. Whipping around, she found Momo a few paces back, pulling out an air cannon from her chest and aiming it right at her.

“Sorry, you may want to close your eyes.”
Turning a valve, Momo fired the small cannon, shooting out a plume of dust that covered Mina head to toe. Mina had only just been able to take Momo’s advice, and was desperately wiping the flour like substance from her face, coughing up small puffs of bitter white dust. While she was struggling, Momo threw a net over her and pulled it taught, wrapping the girl up.

Mina hopped around a bit, struggling to free herself, “Arh! I’m so going to get you for that! I’m gonna melt through this and pound both of you!”

When Mina did try to use her acid however, something completely unexpected happened to her. Every place that was covered in the strange dust foamed up, leaving the net completely undamaged.

“Hey what gives!? EEK!”

“I covered you in a neutralizing agent. Don’t worry, it’s non-toxic, but your acid won’t be able to help you now!”

With a hard tug, Momo yanked the cord she was holding and pulled Mina over, toppeling her to the ground. Pulling out her capture tape, she was able to get it wrapped around one of Mina’s ankles just as Hitoshi wrapped his tape around Eijiro’s wrist.

“**Villain team wins!**”

Minoru weeped from behind the rest of the class, while Denki patted him on the shoulder.

“It’s not fair. It’s not fair.”

“Come on, dude. You gotta stay strong.”

Wiping his eyes, Minoru looked up at Denki pitifully, “But who would do something so horrible? Why would anyone make Yaoyorozu clothes that don’t get torn up when she uses her quirk?”
Denki nodded in understanding. “We live in a cruel and twisted world, my friend. Full of mysteries we will never comprehend.”

“I just wanted to see those boobs…”

Himiko felt her eye twitch, “Can I stab him? Please.”

“It’s time for our last two teams. I’m sure you four are ready to get started.”

*Just like I’m ready to call it a day. I’m going to be cutting it really close to my time here.*

Himiko beamed in excitement as she clasped Izuku’s hands with her own, “Izuku, you’ll be cheering for me, right?”

Izuku, wishing he was still wearing his mask to hide the blush on his face, smiled and nodded, “Of course. I know you’ll do great out there.”

Himiko giggled and bounced from one foot to the other, “Oh that makes me so happy, Izuku. Now, how about a kiss for good luck?”

Izuku squeaked, which brought another giggle to Himiko, “Ah, still too soon, but that blushing face is just so cute; I’ll take it.”

Letting go of his hands, Himiko took a step back and did a perfect Rosie the Riveter pose for him, “You just watch, Izuku. I can’t wait to show you what I can do.”

Himiko’s metal claws on her braces and hand guards seemed to glow, reflecting the light from the giant screen. Denki gulped looking at them, and at just how eager Himiko was to show off in the match. Then he looked at all the knives she was wearing, and came to one simple, obvious, conclusion.
“I’m going to get stabbed aren’t I?”

“Probably,” Kyoka said dryly. “Now let's go, pin cushion. We got a match to win.”

“So you want us to split up?”

Himiko nodded, “Yeah. Us staying together won’t do you any good. If we split up, a stealthy approach will work much better.”

Tooru’s glove flash Himiko a thumbs up, “Got it. Then our target should be the bomb then.”

“Yep. Sneak by the other team and get our target. No muss, no fuss.”

“Then in that case, I’ll get super serious. Time for super stealth mode.” Tooru’s gloves clenched into fists, showing her determination.

Himiko looked over at the invisible girl, “How can you get more stealthy? You’re invisible.”

Tooru kicked off her shoes, and pulled off her gloves, “See? Super stealthy.”

“So just literally naked huh?”

Himiko could hear something, Tooru’s arms maybe, whooshing around in embarrassment, “Don’t point it out!”

With a shrug, Himiko went back to looking over the building, “Hey I got nothing against it. Feels great, but sometimes not having everything strapped down can make moving around a little dangerous.”
“Yeah well… Wait? How do you know that?”

“Hero team, you are good to engage!”

Excuse me, All Might; I have a question,” Tenya asked as he watched the screens.

“Yes? What is it, Young Iida?”

“We’re supposed to watch these matches and learn from the actions our classmates take on both sides. Correct?”

“That’s correct. You should pay close attention to everything your classmates do. Learn from their experiences.”

“But Hagakure is invisible.”

All Might blinked and realized as had the rest of the class, that trying to watch what Tooru did, was going to be a challenge.

“Ah…yes… A very good point. We will just have to watch Young Toga and have Young Hagakure tell us her strategy when the match is over.”

Tsuyu looked at the different screens, “Where is Toga?”

“Well she’s… Um…” All Might looked from screen to screen, then began pressing buttons on his keyboard, switching to new displays that showed nothing but empty halls. Soon All Might felt the eyes of his students burning into his back.
As quickly as she could, Tooru hurried from room to room looking for the bomb. Thanks to watching all the past matches, she knew the exact dimensions of the faux weapon, and after studying the building layout, she knew there were only a few places the bomb could be. This greatly cut down on the time she would need to sweep the building.

Peeking around a corner, Tooru almost squealed in excitement. Both Kyoka and Denki were both standing guard in front of a room. All she had to do was sneak past them, and win the match. Slowly, Tooru walked around the corner and crept closer to the two. They were standing in the middle of the hall, so there was room for her to slip by on either side of them. As she got closer, she noticed that Denki was paying close attention to the other girl, and not saying anything. Which was strange, if his behavior the last couple of days since she met him was anything to go by.

Kyoka had her eyes closed, and both hands covering her ears. She looked like she was concentrating. Tooru was still several feet away when she finally saw that both of Kyoka’s ear jacks were plugged into the hard floor.

 Wait, she can’t hear me? Can she?

Tooru’s question was answered when Kyoka’s eyes snapped open and she pointed right at her, “She right in the middle of the hall. About 10 feet ahead. Zap her!”

“Alright!” Denki cheered as he ran right towards where Kyoka had pointed, electrical sparks discharging all around his body, “AoE’s are my specialty because I don’t have to worry about aiming! Just stay back Jirou and watch the magic!”

“Oh crud!”

Denki electricity began zapping everything around him, floor, walls, ceiling, and, unfortunately for her, Tooru herself.

“Ow! Ow! OW!”

Dazed, disorientated and a little smokey, Tooru collapsed to the ground. Denki pulled out his capture tape and began to feel around for her, “Okay, now I just need to find something to wrap this aroun-! OUCH!”
Kyoka jabbed an ear jack into his side, “You back up; I’ll capture her.”

“Glory hog.”

“No, I’m not letting you feel around while she’s naked.”

Denki blinked, before realization set in. He was right next to a naked girl.

Blushing, Denki turned around bashfully. Kyoka huffed and reached down to go ahead and capture Tooru when their earpieces crackled to life.

“Um hello. Sorry, not really sure how to work this thing. All Might sir, this is Toga. Over…. Am I supposed to say ‘over’?”

Denki started to laugh, “She doesn’t realize she’s broadcasting to us too.”

Kyoka frowned, “Why is she calling All Might though?”

“Ah! Young Toga!” Kyoka swore she could hear the hero mumble something about wondering where she was, “How can I be of assistance? Please remember that I can not give you any help that would give you any kind of advantage over the other team.”

“Oh, no. I just wanted some clarification on a rule.”

Denki scratched his head, “She’s really asking stuff like that now?”

“What rule did you have a question on?”

“To win, I just have to touch the bomb right? I don’t have to secure the other team like Todoroki did before he got to the bomb?”
“That’s right.”

“OH! Good. I was wondering because I’ve been with the bomb for the past like minute and you hadn’t said anything. Then we win! Yay!”

“WHA!”

Denki’s eyes snapped open while Kyoka jumped up in alarm, “No way!”

Running for the door, both rushed into the room to find Himiko leaning against the large faux bomb, waving at them.

Looking back into the hall, then back at Himiko, Denki looked completely lost while Kyoka was just as shocked, but a little more restrained. Her mouth was still hanging open though.

But...but I never heard her. I had this whole area bugged; how’d she stay so quiet?

“Hero team wins!”

Himiko cheered happily while Denki groaned into his hands. Tooru, now recovered from getting shocked, walked into the room, “Oh cool, we won!”

Himiko, hearing her partner gave her a thumbs up, or at least she gave her general direction a thumbs up, “Great job Hagakure! You were the perfect distraction.”

“Huh? I was the distraction!?”

Denki looked absolutely confused, “Wait, she’s invisible!”

“Exactly! Of course everyone is going to be looking for the invisible person. So while you two were distracted, I snuck in and found this.”
While Denki and Tooru thought that over, Kyoka pointed at Himiko, “how did you even get in here? The only way in is the door.”

Himiko smiled as she shrugged her shoulders, “Easily.”

“So, did anyone see what the heck happened?” Mina asked the class.

A chorus of negatives were her answer.

All Might chuckled nervously to himself, trying to think of what he was going to tell Aizawa when he asked for the tape for this match.

All lead everyone to the battle ground exit before turning to address them, “Everyone, you all did excellent today for your first class. It was clear to me that you all took this mock battle seriously, and no one sustained any serious injuries either.”

Izuku swore All Might looked right at him when he said that.

*I’m not that bad!*

Izuku then felt the side eye Ochako was giving him.

*I’M NOT THAT BAD!!!*

“I will have the video’s of your matches delivered to your homeroom teacher, so expect to have your reviews by tomorrow. I will be sure to let him know I felt you each performed exemplary. So with that, I’M OFF!”
Giving the class a quick wave, All Might turned on his heel and bolted out the exit, practically leaving the class in the dust. He felt guilty about having to leave so soon, wanting to spend a little more time going over the matches with the students, as he was sure Aizawa would be much more strict in his review of them than he would. He also wanted a chance to counsel the losing teams to make sure they knew that a loss today would help them achieve wins in the future. One boy in particular he knew needed to hear it.

Young Bakugou, you are a mass of pride and self confidence, but I fear these feelings were too fragile to hold you up after your illusions have been shattered. I wish I had the time to reassure you. As your teacher it is my responsibility, but I’m at my limit. I will just have to find you later and hope you have the strength to pull yourself up.

“Man, he rushed off pretty quickly, don’t you think.” Hanta observed.

Ochako shared a look with Izuku. Both had a pretty good guess why All Might had hurried off like he had.

“A truly heroic exit. We should all aim to be able to do as much.” Tneya said, clear reverence in his voice.

Himiko gave him a strange look, “He just ran away though?”

“Heroically.”

“It’s just nice to have a normal class, kero.”

Many students thought back to Aizawa and his first lesson, and shuddered.

With the class now over, everyone had returned to their locker rooms to change and head home. Pulling off his gloves and starting to untie his boot, Izuku snuck a glance over at Katsuki, who was busy pulling off and collapsing his huge gauntlets. His face was still an emotionless mask. It hadn’t changed much at all during the rest of the day. Izuku was beginning to really worry about him. Katsuki could be calm, when he wanted to, but there was a huge difference between calm, and what Katsuki was now. It was like his soul, his fire, had been sucked out of him.
While Izuku debated over what to do, there was a commotion at the far end of the locker room that started to get the boys attention. Denki and Hanta were getting excited over something Minoru was showing them.

“There’s no way that’s what that is,” Denki chuckled, shaking his head in disbelief.

“That’s the kind of thing that only happens in B-grade porno’s man.” Hanta added.

Minoru waved his arms excitedly, “Don’t you see this is a gift from our upperclassmen! A gift any man worth his salt should be jumping at!”

Hitoshi finished pulling his over-shirt off, and looked at the three, “What are you guys going on about?”

“There’s a peephole into the girls locker room over here!” Minoru said with the biggest grin imaginable.

“Huh!?”

Several other boys shot up.

“Wait really?” Eijiro looked aghast.

“That is the wall separating our room from the girls’.” Fumikage said after a second.

Tenya’s arms were a blur of motion as he pointed at the three, “You must be mistaken. This a school for heroes. No U.A. student would ever sink to such disgusting lows as to invade the privacy of a fellow classmate of the opposite sex!”
Stepping to the side so that Tenya and all the other boys could see, Minoru pointed to a small hole in the wall, at perfect peeping height. Tenya looked absolutely devastated. His mood quickly changed to outrage when Minoru stepped up to the hole, “What are you doing, Mineta? Stay away from there! You have no idea what you might see! We must report this to the faculty at once.”

Minoru shook his head, “Are you crazy? This is a once in a lifetime opportunity! Sero is right, this kind of thing only happens in porn and hentai, and you want to throw it away?!?”

“Okay dude, don’t be gross.”

“Yeah that’s going too far, man.”

“Fools! I will not be denied any longer! Yaoyorozu’s bouncing breasts! Asido’s great ass! Uraraka’s juicy thighs-!”

“Don’t you DARE!”

The sound of concrete cracking and metal shearing was the only warning Minoru and all the other boys in the locker room got before something large, heavy, and glowing bright green whipped through the air and slammed into the wall, just inches above the purple boy’s head. Shocked, Minoru looked up and saw that one of the benches had been ripped out of the floor and was now very stuck, seat side flat, into the wall he was just about to place his head against.

Shakely, Minoru turned around and gulped loudly. Izuku’s eyes burned, and his mouth was twisted into an ugly snarl. He was also looking right at Minoru. In the future, Minoru would remember what he said next as one of the stupidest things he possibly could have said.

“It’s just a peek.”

Izuku’s face darkened as his quirk didn’t just flare to life, but blazed like a raging inferno.

Around them, every boy between Minoru and Izuku lept back several paces, not wanting to risk getting caught up in whatever happened next. Izuku reached out, and Minoru yelled in shock as his cape suddenly came to life and wrapped itself around him, dragging him right towards Izuku.
“Wait! WAIT!”

Minoru tried to dig his heels into the floor, but there was nothing he could do to stop himself getting brought before Izuku. A foot or so away, Izuku clenched his hand into a fist, fingers cracking and knuckles popping as he squeezed. At the same time, Minoru’s yellow cape squeezed tighter around him like a vice, making it very hard for him to breathe.

“Joking! I was joking, I swear,” Minoru gasped out.

Izuku pulled Minoru up till he was eye to eye with his. His feet dangling far off the ground, “If you ever, EVER, try and peek, or do anything perverted to Uraraka. At ANY of the girls again. I promise you. I. WILL. NOT. MISS. And after I’m done with you, I will personally drag you to Mr. Aizawa’s office, and let him deal with you. Am I clear?”

Minoru nodded his head vigorously, “I promise! I promise!”

Izuku glared at Minoru for a few more seconds, making sure his point was made, before dropping him unceremoniously back to the ground. Not wanting to look at the smaller boy any longer, Izuku turned on his heel, and went back to changing out of his costume. Leaving Minoru, and a few of the other boys to figure out what they were going to do about the hole in the wall.

And the bench sticking out of it.

And the gaping pit where the bench had been anchored to the floor.

While all this was going on, no one noticed the door to the locker room open, and swiftly close.

Kyoka had very good hearing. Even if her ear jacks weren’t plugged into something, she could still hear better than most people. So she easily overheard a commotion going on in the boys locker room through their connecting wall. When she focused on what was being said, a deep frown crossed her face, “There’s a hole in our wall.”

Every girl in the room stopped what they were doing and looked at her.
“Are you sure?” Ochako asked.

Kyoka plugged an ear jack into the wall and listened in, “Oh yeah, some of the boys are talking about it.”

“Someone made a hole?”

“Find it quick, kero.”

“What kind of pervert does something like that?”

Mina crossed her arms, “I bet it’s that creep Mineta.”

More than a few girls shuddered. He had not been very subtle when he was checking them out in their costumes.

Himiko picked up one of her knives from her costume, “I could stab him?”

Everyone in the room shot down the idea. Though they were all a little slow to do so.

“Okay, so it sounds like he didn’t actually make the hole. They all think some of the upperclassmen did it.”

Tooru touched her chin, though since her gloves were off, no one could tell, “To be fair, someone from this side could have made the hole.”

Tooru noticed some of her classmates looking at her general direction, “Hey, it's not like there aren’t girl perverts out there that wouldn’t love to take a peek at a good looking guy.”

Himiko licked her lips, “She’s not wrong… Hey whose lockers can you see through there anyway?”
Ochako snapped her head around to glare at her, “Why would you want to know that?”

Himiko just grinned hungerly, but before she could give Ochako an answer, Kyoka cut her off, “So it sounds like... most of the boys are not thrilled about the peep hole.” Her lips turned down into a frown as she added, “Mineta is not one of them. Okay, gross. He’s actually going to use it.”

Momo looked absolutely mortified as she hurried to pull her costume back on, “Wait, right now?”

A few other girls hurried to grab either costumes or uniforms parts to make sure they were completely covered. Kyoka extended her other ear jack and had it positioned right over the hole, “The moment that little creep looks I’m going to gouge his eye out. Oh gross he’s talking about-!”

A loud bam reverberated through the room, freezing everyone in place, and sending Kyoka shambling backward, yanking her ear jack out and covering her ears, wincing and cursing under her breath.

Worried, Ochako hurried to her side, “Jirou, are you alright?”

Kyoka nodded, “Yeah, just... that was loud. Ow.”

“What the hell was that? What happened?” Mina asked.

“I think, I think Midoriya just killed Mineta.”

Ochako’s eyes bulged, “WHAT!?"

Tooru kicked off her shoes, leaving herself completely invisible, “I’ll go see what's going on. One sec!”

As she rushed out the door, Himiko shared a look with Tsuyu, “She’s naked right.”
“Yep.”

“And she just ran right into the boys locker room. Filled with boys.”

“Yep.”

“Boys who are probably in the middle of getting undressed.”

“Yep.”

“...Lucky bitch.”

While Tooru snuck out, the other girls continued to ask Kyoka questions.

“Jirou, are you sure you know exactly what happened? Midoriya doesn’t seem the violent type to me,” Momo asked.

“That’s right! Deku is sweet and kind. He’d never do something to hurt someone.”

“Tell that to Tokoyami’s chin, kero.”

Kyoka just shrugged, “I can only tell you what I heard. Mineta started going on about which girl he was hoping to see,” there was a collective shudder, “and what parts he wanted to see,” more shudders and a few angry grumbles, “and when he got to you, Midoriya just screamed at him and threw something. That’s what made that huge crash.”

Tsuyu looked over at the wall, “I know he can throw stuff like furniture around, but there’s nothing like that in the locker room.”

“I think he threw a locker.”
“Eh?”

“Yeah I’m pretty sure I heard metal snapping or something. Whatever it was, it was big.”

Mina walked over to a locker and banged on its side. It was sturdy and as far as she could tell, attached to the other lockers on each side, “I mean he did destroy a zero pointer, so I guess it’s not that surprising that he could rip this off the wall..”

“Yeah, he could do that. It’s still under his weight limit.” Ochako answered confidently.

“What’s his weight limit?”

“Three tons, give or take.”

While a few girls gasped at that, Himiko went stiff, “you’re sure about that?”

“I watched him lift up a truck and a bunch of other stuff.”

Himiko felt her whole body quiver, “Oooh.”

“You’re drooling,” Tsuyu pointed out.

“Don’t care.”

Further discussions were cut off when Tooru came back in, “okay, I’m back.”

Momo looked around, “Hagakure? What do you mean you’re back?”

“I went to go see what the heck happened over there.”
“You snuck into the boys locker room? How scandalous.”

“Do you want to know what happened or not?”

Momo along with everyone else nodded.

“Did Deku hurt someone?” Ochako was a little worried. She didn’t want Izuku to be in trouble already. Especially if it was because of that perv Minoru.

“Kyoka thinks Midoriya threw a locker. Did he actually do that?”

“Do we need to report anything? Get help from a teacher?”

Tooru waved her hands around, frantically trying to slow down the question, though since no one could see her, it was a mute point, “One at a time please! No one was hurt. Though it looked like it could have been nasty if Midoriya wanted it to be.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, he um, didn’t throw a locker. He threw one of these.” Tooru lightly kicked the side of one of the benches.

Everyone looked down at where the sound came from.

“Deku threw a bench at Mineta?”

“Yep, it’s literally stuck in the wall right now.”

“Holy crap.”

“I guess that explains the noises I heard before it hit the wall.”
“Yeah, by the time I got in there, Midoriya had Mineta wrapped up in his own cape to string him up and was letting him know in no uncertain terms, if he perved on us again, there would be consequences. BTW, Midoriya looked really mad. Like he was legit scary.”

Ochako was shocked to hear this. She knew he could be competitive, driven and serious. but mad and scary? That just didn’t fit at all, “What did he say would happen?”

“He wouldn’t miss. Then he’d take him to Mr. Aizawa.”

Himiko frowned. While she found the idea of her little sheep hiding a little wolf under its clothing, she didn’t like the idea that it may lead to him getting into trouble, “What about the little freak? Is he going to rat on Izuku?”

“I don’t think so. After Midoriya was done, some of the other boys took Mineta aside and they hashed out a plan to fix up the locker room and plug up the hole, and no one will say he was going to peep if he doesn’t mention that Midoriya was ready to tear him in half and that he behaves himself from now on. Though Kirishima did say he was going to let us know about the hole. Said it wouldn’t be right to hide the fact that there was one from us.”

Mina smiled, “He’s such a big softy.”

Momo thought for a few moments, “While I’m glad the boys are taking measures to ensure this doesn’t happen again, I feel we should also have a hand in it.”

Everyone nodded. Even if he wasn’t going to get in any official trouble, they wanted Minoru to know exactly how they felt over the situation.

With the issue decided, the girls quickly went back to getting changed, wanting to make sure they were able to meet up with the boys before they left for the day. Himiko, seeing a chance, leaned over towards Tooru, “So, I don’t suppose you got any good looks at what the boys are working with?”

Himiko could hear Tooru’s smirk in her voice, “Boys? Or Midoriya?”
“Oh, am I that obvious?” Himiko asked jokingly.

“WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT!”

Ochako was glaring at the two of them. While she had been as shocked as Momo had been after she realized what Tooru had done, she was willing to let it go. She was not however going to let it slide if the girl was going to gossip about what she saw, especially if it was with Himiko and about Izuku.

“Relax, Uraraka. Midoriya was still pretty much dressed. All the boys were for that matter.”

Himiko pouted, “Well that’s no fun.”

Ochako shook her head in disgust, “You are just as bad as Mineta. You know that?”

Himiko actually looked offended, “I am nothing like that pervert. He doesn’t care who he pervs on, as long as he gets his rocks off.”

“And you?”

Himiko’s smile widened, “I know exactly who I want. Besides don’t you go acting all high and mighty on me. After spending a year training, I bet you’ve seen him with at least his shirt off. I’m just closing the gap.”

Ochako turned away, deciding she didn’t want to talk about the subject anymore. One because at least Tooru hadn’t seen anything she shouldn’t have, and two, Himiko had hit just a little close to home. It wasn’t that long ago, when they had finished their training, that All Might had made Izuku look at himself, and see just how much he had changed. Of course Izuku had been topless at the time. That was a memory that was still stuck in her head. A blush started to spread across her face that Himiko saw immediately, “See, I knew it.”

As the boys filed out of their locker room, they were a little startled to find the girls waiting for them out in the hall, all looking very serious. Hitoshi and Tenya exchanged looks and walked over
to Ochako, “Um Uraraka, there’s something…”

Ochako held up a hand, “Hold that thought Iida. If you don’t mind.”

Eijirou glanced over at Mina, and was about to say something but she stopped him too, “I know what you want to say. We already know about the little peep hole.”

“OH! Oh you do. We didn’t, I mean we weren’t going to…”

Mina waved him down, though her face did soften some, “I know. You have nothing to worry about, Horn Buddy.”

Momo stepped forward from the group of girls, “Where’s Mineta?”

There was a very audible squeak from behind the boys, who stepped to the side, leaving Minoru directly under the gaze of all the girls.

Swallowing the lump in his throat, Minoru tried to get out a shaky, “Hi,” but the icy glares from the girls made him quickly realize they were not interested in hearing him talk.

Momo crossed her arms as she glared down at Minoru, “Mineta, we know what you said.”

Minoru gulped.

“And what you were going to do.”

Some of the boys looked at each other and then at the girls, guilt on their faces. Momo continued, “We also know that the issue was quickly dealt with, and that you made certain promises to your fellow classmates.”

Minoru nodded vigorously.
“Promises that we are going to hold you to. Understand?”

Again, Minoru nodded his head as the cold glares of all the girls drove Momo’s point home. Momo then looked up at the rest of the boys, “We know that you all were against peeping, so thank you for standing up for us.”

“Of course!”

“You all are trying to be heroes too, after all.”

“We’d never think of being so disrespectful.”

Kyoka cut in, “Though a couple of you didn’t sound too disappointed that there was a peep hole.”

While she didn’t look at them too long, she made sure Denki and Hanta saw her look right at them. Both boys looked away.

Momo, seeing that their point had been made turned and motioned behind her. From behind their group, Tsuyu and Tooru walked up with two large buckets and a can of paint while Ochako dropped a perfect replica of the locker room bench in front of Minoru.

“Here, I made these for you...oh and you’ll need this,” Momo handed Minoru a trowel she created and pulled from her arm.

Minoru was clearly confused, looking at the stuff in front of him, “What is all this?”

“Drywall spackle for the wall; concrete for the floor; a new bench to replace the broken one; and some paint to make everything good as new. I think that’s everything you’ll need to fix your locker room.”

Minoru was about to open his mouth to ask if she really meant for him to fix everything, but in a moment of clarity, and self-preservation, he kept his mouth shut. Denki and Hanta glanced at each other and picked up a bucket, “we’ll give him a hand. Make sure he does a good job and everything.”
Momo and Kyoka nodded, satisfied.

“Mineta, we are willing to look past this, just this once. As long as you don’t repeat your behavior, we shouldn’t have any problems going forward. However, if we ever catch you, or hear about you doing anything so disgusting to us, or any other female student, again. Well, I’ll let Toga fill in the rest.”

Himiko walked past Momo, and knelt down so that she was at eye level with Minoru. Reaching out, she put a hand on his shoulder, and brought him close so she could whisper something to him. She had asked to be the one to deliver the final warning, though she had been purposely vague on just what she was going to say, and what she was going to do. So no one saw that in the hand she had put on Minoru’s shoulder she had hidden a retractable exacto knife that was now getting pressed very hard into his collar bone.

“I’m only going to say this once. Izuku may have said he’d deal with you himself if you perved on us again, but I don’t want him to dirty his hands with filth like you, so,” her thumb pressed on the small plastic nub and with a few clicks, the metal blade was pressed flat against Minoru’s throat, still completely hidden from everyone’s view, “I will make sure to get to you before Izuku has a chance. And it’ll be up to whoever finds what’s left of you to decide to take you to Mr. Aizawa’s, or the morgue. Understand?”

Minoru head jerked carefully, showing that he very clearly understood his position. Himiko smiled, though it was a cold and mirthless smile, and stood back up. Retracting the blade, and hiding it from the classes view.

“He gets it.”

“Good. Then I think that puts the whole issue to bed.” Momo said with a satisfied nod. The other girls around her relaxed, glad their point had been made. Denki and Hanta grabbed the rest of the supplies and ushered a very pale Minoru back into the locker room, eager to get everything fixed.

As the class began to break up and go on their way, Ochako walked over to Tenya and Hitoshi, “Hey guys. Sorry for cutting you off but we really needed to get that addressed.”

“Of course, Uraraka,” Tenya said, hands chopping as he did, “Such unbecoming actions should be immediately dealt with.”
Himiko, now back to her *normal* self glanced around inquisitively before reaching the small group, “Hey, where’s Izuku? I don’t see him around.”

Ochako blinked and quickly scanned the remaining boys. Sure enough, Izuku was not among them. Neither was Katsuki for that matter. A pit started to form in Ochako’s stomach.

“That’s what we wanted to talk to you about,” Hitoshi began, “Midoriya chased after Bakugou while we are still getting changed. They must have both gotten out before you guys showed up.”

“What!?”

Izuku had been so preoccupied after dealing with Minoru with trying to calm himself down, that when he finally bothered to look up, he noticed that Katsuki’s locker was closed, and the boy was nowhere to be found. Tenya seeing Izuku glancing around had said that Katsuki had finished changing and had already left. Izuku, still only halfway out of his costume, darted for the door, leaving Tenya to call after him.

Now, running through the halls in a state he was sure his friend would find unbecoming for a hero-in-training, Izuku raced after Katsuki, hoping to catch him before he left school grounds. Though he still had no idea what he would say to the other boy if he did catch up to him. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d given Katsuki a pep talk. Actually now that he thought about it, he’d *never* given the other boy any kind of pep talk.

Or motivational talk.

Just talking to him normally was rare in itself.

*Why am I chasing after Kacchan again?*

When Izuku had reached the front entrance of the school, he was ready to give up and just hope Katsuki was back to his old self tomorrow, but when he stepped outside, he found the other boy hadn’t left the school grounds just yet.
“Kacchan!”

Katsuki came to a stop, and turned to look back at Izuku who had stopped a few paces back. Izuku winced, normally he would go out of his way to not have Katsuki’s undivided attention, but this was a case of desperate times that needed desperate measures. Closing his eyes, Izuku just let the words he wanted to say tumble out.

“Kacchan, I know things were rough for you today, but you shouldn’t let it affect you so much. You’re strong, and U.A. is going to make you even stronger. It’s only the first day of our first year. There’s still plenty of time left. So please, don’t let this day beat you.”

There was a pause after Izuku finished that left the two standing in silence.

“What the hell are you trying to do here, Deku? Make me feel more like a fool than I already do?”

Eh?

Opening his eyes, Izuku was both glad, and startled to see that the lifeless glazed over look Katsuki had moments ago was gone. The fire behind Katsuki’s eyes was back, too bad it also came with a fresh look of rage and contempt.

“Kacchan? I’m not-”

“SHUT UP!”

Izuku flinched back.

“Is this how you’re going to celebrate your win? By trying to keep up the condescending lying act? Is that how you make yourself feel good? To treat me like a joke?” Katsuki pointed at Izuku, “I lost. Not just to that Half-and-Half bastard, but to you as well. Today I was made a complete fool. So congratulations, you won.”
Izuku took a step forward, hand outreached, “Kacchan wait, I never meant-!”

Katsuki exploded, “Don’t you fucking dare! I don’t want to hear any more of your lies, and I sure as hell don’t want your pity. You won today, but it’s going to be the last time you, or anyone else here beats me. Do you hear me?”

Katsuki pointed his thumb at himself, “You listen to me, you shitty Deku. I’m just getting started. I will become the number one hero. I will leave all of you in the dust. Nothing is going to stop me. I’ll be a hero that surpasses even All Might.”

His pride and convictions restored, as far as Izuku could tell, Katsuki turned around and left Izuku at the entrance.

Alone, Izuku took a deep breath, and let out the longest sigh he had ever had. He honestly hadn’t known what to expect to happen after chasing Katsuki down. The end goal was to help him come back from whatever had him so down, so at least that was a mission accomplished. Katsuki had his fire back, and was more determined than ever to achieve his goals. So Izuku should have felt happy.

Right?

Izuku didn’t feel happy. At least not as happy as he thought he should. Reaching up, Izuku groaned into his hand, “Ah, what did I expect to happen? That we’d be friends again? An apology? ‘Gee, I’m sorry for making your life a living hell for the last ten years. I didn’t mean it when I beat you up or burned you with my explosions. It was just a prank. A really bad prank. Let’s be friends again like nothing happened!’”

Izuku let his hands drop and looked up at the sky, “Yeah that was totally what was going to happen. He’d apologize, and I’d forgive him. Then everything goes back to being sunshine and rainbows...Oh well. I better get back and get changed. Don’t want to get in trouble being out and only wearing parts of my costume. Or worse, take the chance Uraraka finds out about me trying this. Don’t want to think what she’d say to me.”

Turning around, Izuku hurried back inside the school. Unaware that around the corner, out of sight, Ochako was leaning against the wall doing her best not to explode on the spot. How dare Katsuki say such horrible things. The idea that Izuku could have gotten better was too far fetched for the bully. The idea that Izuku closed the gap himself was just too impossible. No he had to have lied. That was the only explanation that he could settle on. It was enough to make her blood boil.
She had run out here afraid that Katsuki would do something to Izuku, physically or emotionally. At the very least, Izuku hadn’t seemed too upset after getting screamed at. Though something he had said to himself disturbed her.

*Deku, would you really forgive him? Just like that?*

That thought was so disturbing for her, and if she was being honest with herself, it scared her too. She knew Izuku was an abuse victim, and how many news stories there were of victims forgiving and taking back their abusers, only to end up getting hurt again. She was not going to let that happen to Izuku. Over the past year, she had watched Izuku change from a boy who was always ready to get hurt just being near Bakugou, to being able to stand up to the bully. He had made so much progress, she wasn’t going to let him stumble now. She would be there to catch him and help him to finally and completely move past Bakugou.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone! Thank you for reading my new chapter! I hope you enjoyed it, even if the ending got a little sad. Don't worry though, there are a lot of worse things around the corner for Izuku to worry about... That might not have been the right thing to say. I mean it's not like some major crisis is coming up. What's the next arc again. USJ? Oh... OOOOHHHH

*Nervously pulls at collar*

ANYWAY! I'd like to say that this chapter put a nail in good old Minoru. He's still gonna be around, but his perverted wings have been officially clipped.

Thank you to Tmalasia for once again beta reading my fic. You rock!

I also want to give a shout out to Ander Arias of fanfiction dot net. They made this awesome TV Tropes page of my story. https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/GreenTeaRescue Go give their stories a look over. Also, feel free to add to it. I'm not super well versed with tropes so it's been really interesting to see what stuff I've used without even knowing.
The People You Meet and The Choices You Make

Chapter Summary

These are days of peace, and tranquility. Days that are to be cherished. But Izuku, Ochako and Class 1-A don't see the dark clouds in the distance. They don't see the red sky in the morning.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was late, and after a long day of classes, Himiko wanted to be anywhere other than the seat she was forced to be in at the very moment. Even if she had agreed to be here, she didn’t have to enjoy it. Especially when it cut into her personal time. Leaning back into the cushions, Himiko looked over at her own personal counselor who sat across from her. Midnight was watching her, patiently waiting for her to finally say something.

“Do we really have to do this tonight?”

“You know full well that you agreed to these sessions.”

Himiko rolled her eyes. Agreed was just another way to say forced. One of the terms laid out to her.

“Uh-huh.”

“This doesn't have to be antagonistic. I’m here to listen and talk to you. That’s all.”

Yellow eyes flashed dangerously, “You’re playing the role of a shrink. Shrinks always want to put ideas into my head. Not exactly a fan of people trying to tell me how to think.”

Midnight didn’t show any outward reaction to the anger in the girl’s eyes, talking calmly she pushed on, “No, and considering your past, I can’t say that I blame you.”

Sneering, Himiko looked away, “Can we not go there? I was having a really good day. I don’t want
it ruined dragging up old shit. I should have just skipped this and gone to bed.”

Midnight raised an eyebrow as her voice took a stern tone, “And have two strikes in just two days?”

Himiko flinched. She hated to admit it, but the heroine had a point. Her tenuous position with the school and the law had her on thin ice as it was. Her decision to leave the premises without telling anyone was, in fact, more than enough reason to have her face serious consequences. Fortunately, Principle Nezu had decided to believe Inko after their phone call, that she had simply forgotten to ask for permission to leave the school, and had been kind enough to let her off with just a warning. A very pointed warning, detailing off-handedly everything that could happen to her if she broke her agreement again, but just a warning nonetheless.

Two strikes? Guess it really is three and I’m out.

Seeing that the girl understood, Midnight let herself relax, “If we aren’t going to talk about your past, then let’s talk about something more positive. You said you had a good day today?”

Despite being in a sour mood moments ago, Himiko smiled brightly. The sudden mood changes used to throw Midnight during their first sessions together. Now, she at least wasn’t so caught off guard.

“Oh, today was great. Playing with my classmates was so much fun, and best of all, I got to see Izuku in his cute costume,” Himiko covered her cheeks and squealed, “he was just so adorable. I could have just eaten him up on the spot!”

“Toga…” Midnight kept her voice level but still gave the girl a pointed look.

“It’s just a figure of speech. Calm down.”

That smile on your face sure didn’t make it look like a figure of speech.

Midnight decided to move on, “You’ve talked a lot about Midoriya before school started. Now that you’ve seen him again, does he still live up to your first meeting?”
“Oh absolutely! He’s still as cute as I remember. Such an adorable face covered in freckles. Oh, and his eyes. So kind, but with a fire behind them. Then there’s his body, oh I got such a nice little peek the other day, and then on top of what I saw him do during class,” Himiko shuddered, face burning red, eyes glazing over, and her hands clutched at her skirt, “just thinking what he could do to me. The things I could do to him. It’s enough to make me explode.”

“Please don’t. I don’t want to have to get new furniture.”

“Sorry.”

Himiko didn’t look at all sorry. Seeing that she was quickly losing the girl to her fantasies, Midnight coughed to get her attention, to keep her talking, “So he’s exactly like you hoped he’d be. That must be nice.”

The wide grin Himiko had gotten a little smaller as she made herself calm down so she could talk, “Well, he is a bit naive. It’s endearing and after seeing it, I wouldn’t want him to be any different, but the real world doesn’t treat naivety very well. Little lambs tend to get ripped apart by the big bad wolves.”

“Do you think he’s in danger of that?”

Himiko frowned, and a look came over her that Midnight had never seen before. It wasn’t the girl’s normal angry look. When she got angry-- really angry-- there was a dark and sinister glow in her eyes. This time, it was something else.

“He won’t be while I’m around.”

Midnight was momentarily stunned. This was the first time she had ever heard the girl talk about protecting anyone. She had heard that she’d stopped another boy from confronting Izuku during Aizawa’s strange test, but to see it herself. It might be the first time she truly, truly thought this girl had a chance. It might be based on some warped sense of possessiveness, but it was something at least.

“I suppose I can understand your...excitement seeing him again, but I’ve heard you’ve also made other friends. Tell me about them.”
Does that feeling extend to them I wonder?

Toga sat up and started listing them off on her fingers, “Well there’s Tenya. I’m pretty sure he was born with a steel rod up his butt, and a silver spoon in his mouth. He’s a good person though. Funny too; step outta line and he freaks out. He’s gonna be fun to tease. Hitoshi kinda reminds me of myself.”

“How so?”

“Guy grew up with people thinking his quirk was ‘scary,’” Himiko made air quotes as she rolled her eyes, “so he had to deal with a lot of stupid growing up. Kinda like me, except people weren’t trying to get him to pretend he didn’t have his quirk. Make him be someone he wasn’t…” Himiko took a deep breath, calming herself. “The boy needs to go to a spa or something though. He looks tired all the time.”

Midnight quickly scribbled a few notes as Himiko talked. While it was clear her connection to her other friends was not as intense as it was with Izuku’s, there at least still was a connection. She could build on that. When Himiko stopped talking Midnight glanced up at her, wondering why she had stopped. “There’s another person in your little group right? Uraraka.”

Himiko’s relaxed smile she had when talking about the two boys faded, “Ochako? I’m...not sure about her.”

“You’re not sure? About what?”

“I mean she’s nice, but it’s hard to be friends with a liar.”

Midnight leaned forward, “That’s a pretty harsh accusation coming from you. What do you think she’s lying about?”

“That’s the thing, I don’t know. It's kinda infuriating. Kinda makes me want to,” Himiko clenched her hands around an invisible neck and shook. “For the most part she’d be the perfect girlfriend to hang out with, like at the mall and stuff. She has the bubbly, down-to-earth, girl-next-door vibe to her, but she’s also hiding this amazonian spitfire just under the surface. Not afraid to get her hands dirty and throw down. That kind of thing. She does keep getting between me and Izuku though; that can get a little annoying, but she’s been his friend for awhile so I can give her a pass for now. I’d rather not get into a fight with a friend of his and make him think poorly of me. It’s just, when I
look at her, there are times when she looks off to me. She’s hiding something. She has this...mask she’s wearing, and that’s something I know a lot about. Pretending and wearing masks, like I used to. I sure wouldn’t trust another person like me, that’s for sure.”

“Do you think she’s dangerous?”

Himiko snorted, “Anyone can be dangerous. Just ask poor Tsuyu. Like I said, amazonian spitfire. If you’re asking if I think she’s another knife lover like myself, no. She’s not that at all. I guess I’m just saying it’s hard to be friends with someone who’s keeping secrets from you. Liars... don’t make great friends.”

Midnight hummed, wondering who Himiko was talking about at the end. Ochako, or maybe herself.

“What about the rest of your classmates? Any issues?”

Himiko hesitated, but ultimately decided to abide by the classes decision to not bring up Minoru, “I’ve only gotten to spend a few hours with them. So I don’t really know a lot about them. They seem nice I guess. It is a nice change of pace to have other girls to talk to. At least ones that aren’t three times my age.”

“I am not three times older than you,” Midnight replied curtly, making Himiko laugh. “Anyway, I saw during your class with All Might you chose not to fight the other team. You showed a lot of restraint given that you are allowed to use your quirk and support gear for those classes.”

Himiko shrugged, purposely avoiding eye contact with the hero, tapping her foot on the floor, “I suppose.”

“Being allowed to use your quirk would mean you’d have a chance to taste some real blood. I know you aren’t a fan of the artificial stuff we’ve been giving you. You weren’t tempted at all to collect a little? How long has it been since you had a taste?”

Himiko’s foot tapped the ground faster and faster the more Midnight talked. At the end her whole leg was bouncing as she fought to maintain her composure. She knew loaded questions when she heard them.
“Not since I moved in; you know that. I just didn’t think slicing open or sticking a needle into one of my classmates would leave the best...impression on Izu...on everyone.”

She’s worried what Midoriya will think when he finds out about her quirk. That's a pretty big change to how she was when she first got here.

“Hmm let's move on from that. Back to your classmates. I guess you’re pretty lucky to be in a class full of people you’d want to leave a good impression on. You must like them at least.”

For a brief instance, Midnight felt her instincts flair up, warning her of danger. Himiko looked absolutely murderous for a brief moment before she relaxed. Still, her killing intent was leaking out all over the place, and Midnight couldn’t tell if she was trying to hide it or couldn’t be bothered, “Not. Everyone.”

“Who?”

Midnight had a pretty good guess already. She thought back to the incident yesterday.

“Bakugou Katsuki.”

That's the same boy alright. What could the kid have done to get Toga this angry?

“I’ve heard the boy is a little headstrong, and kids in the hero classes are known to form rivalries with their classmates or even with the other class. A and B are often paired against each other to push them to work harder. Perhaps this Bakugou…”

Midnight trailed off. The look Himiko had sent a shiver up the hero’s spine. She had seen the girl in the middle of her blood lust before. During her early days at U.A, to help her work out her violent tendies, Ectoplasm would create his clones for her to hunt and kill. The look of sheer joy and pleasure she had as she attacked, had left an impression on her that she’d never forget.

The bloodlust she was feeling from Himiko now, had the same intensity, but the emotion behind it was completely different. This was anger, hatred, and rage. Himiko only got like this when discussing her parents or the treatments they had forced her to take. She got like this, but never to this extreme.
It was alarming.

“I’m...supposed to tell you, or any staff member when I start having feelings that I want to act on. Feeling that could get someone hurt. Right.”

“Yes.”

“I want to kill him. I want to stab him. Slit his throat open so I don’t have to hear his voice anymore. I hate him.”

“Why?”

“I think he hurt Izuku.”

“You think?”

“When everyone went to Izuku’s home, we ran into Bakugou on the way. He was waiting for Izuku. He said something mean to Izuku and left. When Tenya asked what their deal was, it looked like Ochako was about to say something, but Izuku got her to drop it. He got us all to promise we’d let it go. He wants a fresh start, or something. I dunno; boys can be stupid.”

Midnight frowned as she listened, “Each student in the hero course is given a screening before final admitience. If something like that had been in a police or school record, we’d know about it.”

Himiko scoffed, “Right, because we live in a perfect society where the talented and powerful aren’t given special privileges. Like clean records.”

“Do you have proof?”

Himiko shook her head. Midnight sighed, “I’m glad you told me that you are feeling like this. I have to ask, while you have these violent thoughts, do you think you are in danger of acting on them?”
“...No. I’m finally with my darling Izuku. I’m not going to screw that up now. Waited almost a year; some blond haired...jerk isn’t going to screw me over now.”

Midnight started to sigh in relief before Himiko added, “But, I’m not going to just stand by if he hurts my Izuku.”

No point in getting into an argument over that right now. She’s settled down now, and I don’t want to rile her back up.

“Alright Toga, I think this has been a productive session. I do have one question though. A follow up to something you said about Uraraka.”

“Yeah?”

“You said she’s keeping something from you. Is whatever she knows about Midoriya and Bakugou it?”

Himiko shook her head as she stood up, “It’s not that. It’s something else. Don’t know what it is. Sorry.”

With their talk over, Himiko got up to leave the office, but stopped at the door and turned to look at Midnight, who titled her head to the side. Once the meeting was done, Himiko normally left as quickly as she could. This might have been the first time she ever stopped before.

“I have a question for you, if that’s alright.”

“Of course.”

“Is this going to work? Or is it all just a waste of time? Heroes save people all the time, but can they save someone when she doesn’t think she needs saving?”

Midnight, taken aback by the question, took a second before she answered, “I think the answer all
depends on you. Doesn’t it?”

Himiko stood silently at the door for a few more seconds, before silently leaving.

Nezu scanned over the report Midnight had given him as she poured herself and the principle a drink, “Interesting. Very interesting. I must say, our Toga has come leaps and bounds compared to how she was only a few months ago.”

“She wants to kill one of her classmates,” Midnight added as she sipped her tea.

“Yes, but only the one now. I was expecting a few more would rub her the wrong way, but she seems to be keeping an open mind. Very good.”

“Wait, what do you mean ‘only the one now?’”

Ignoring Mindnights question Nezu kept reading, “And we mustn’t ignore the reason behind her desires. Before she acted just for the joy of it. The thrill. Now she has a reason, and it’s to protect someone, oh this is just incredible. She’s even making a conscious effort to keep her blood thirst under control. Remarkable.”

“I still think it was a mistake to let her arm herself like she has. One syringe would have been more than enough for her to be able to extract blood to use her quirk safely.”

“I agreed that we wouldn’t treat her any differently than any other student in the hero course. If a student is allowed to attach cannons to his arms, on what grounds can we say no to a few knives? It all comes down to tic-for-tac. She follows our rules; she gets to stay here and be with her darling.”

“Except she isn’t following all the rules.”

“She has within reason.”

“You do know Aizawa confiscated a box cutter from her today.”
“Within reason.”

Midnight groaned and took a large gulp of her tea.

“Kayama, what do you think about her last question to you? A moment of clarity? A deeper understanding of herself and her situation?”

“I don’t really know. Maybe? This girl is so broken, Nezu. She’s so twisted in on herself; her views of right and wrong are so warped.”

“And yet those twisted views brought her here. She followed kindness; I think that says something about her. How and why she followed are another matter I will grant you, but the point still stands.”

The two went back to their tea, drinking in silence before Nezu spoke again, “I know full well the risk we are taking. It wouldn’t take much for Toga to finally snap. If that happens it would mean the birth of a truly terrifying villain.”

Midnight smiled, “It’s a hero’s job to stop villains, even if that means stopping a person from becoming one. That’s what you said when you told all the faculty what you were doing.”

“And right after, you offered to council the girl. I guess my words hit home.”

Midnight shrugged, “I really hope we can pull this off. I really do.”

“We must. Failure is too horrible an outcome to fathom. If we do succeed though, not only will we have stopped a villain, I think we may have helped give rise to a truly spectacular hero.”

When Izuku had returned to the boys locker room, he was startled to find his friends waiting for him at the door. He was grateful that no one asked if he had been able to catch up to Katsuki. Tenya simply said he should hurry and change so they did not stay on school grounds after hours
for too long, though it wasn’t with his usual exuberance. He was surprised when Ochako walked up behind him and said he should hurry so they weren’t late for dinner. Sheepishly, he excused himself and got changed. While he did, he could help but think to himself, she knew.

Not that he had gone after Katsuki, but she knew everything that happened when he had caught him.

He wasn’t sure how he felt about that.

Ashamed?

As with anything involving Katsuki, it made things complicated.

Once changed, the group walked the halls slowly as they left. Taking time to talk about their first day of classes; what they had enjoyed; and what they looked forward to now that they had had a taste of the heroics course. When they had reached the front gate, Himiko hung back, stating she probably shouldn’t leave campus again after last night’s mishap. Everyone said their goodbyes and went on their way.

The rest of the time he spent with Ochako that day, the walk home and dinner, she never let on if she had over heard anything. She kept her conversations light and happy. The only clue Izuku had, was that every once in a while, when she thought he wasn’t looking, her smile would fade a little, and her eyes would darken. She was worried about him.

Uraraka has been there for me, is here for me, and I’m still running after Kacchan. What is wrong with me?

This thought ate away at Izuku long after he lay his head down to go to sleep.

He didn’t just have Ochako now: Hitoshi, Tenya and Himiko; they were all his friends. They were kind to him. Listened to him. Respected him. They were real friends, and yet he couldn’t stop himself from trying to get Katsuki back. Katsuki, who would belittle him, hit him, burn him and blast him. With no signs of remorse. This was the person he wanted to be friends with again.

What was he willing to give up to get Katsuki’s friendship back?
Tenya?

Hitoshi?

Himiko?

The thought made his stomach twist.

Ochako?

That made his heart hurt.

Losing Ochako would break him.

It would destroy him.

Losing someone that he l-

Izuku clenched his eyes shut, pushing that thought back. That was *not* a line of thought he was going to go down right now. He valued Ochako’s friendship too much. He respected her too much to dare to start to think about her like that. She was too important to him to let a few hormonal thoughts ruin everything they had.

Thinking back to how he acted seeing her in her costume, how he had stared at her when she wasn’t looking. Staring because of just how good she looked. He couldn't stop another feeling of shame washing over him.

*I'm just as bad as Mineta.*

Shaking the thoughts from his head, he settled to keep his mind on a problem that he might actually have an answer for. Which actually brought a chuckle to his lips.
Kacchan is the problem I think I can solve. Ha ha ha.

Months ago he had told Ochako that he felt he needed to surpass Katsuki. Maybe that was it; maybe that was the key to everything? If he could in some way, definitively prove to himself, Katsuki, or anyone that he had been better than him. Maybe then he would finally be able to just let go. To be able to move on and focus on what was really important.

Being the best friend he could to everyone.

Becoming a hero.

Making himself ready for One for All.

Convinced, at least for now, that he had come up with some kind of solution for his inner turmoil, Izuku finally closed his eyes, and fell asleep.

It was still an hour or so before his alarm would go off, that Izuku was awoken by a ringing from his phone. Groaning, Izuku blindly reached over and picked it up, staring at the screen until his blurry eyes could focus on the message.

Invitation to chat room Dekusquad from H.Toga

Do you accept: Y / N

Izuku blinked at the name on the screen, groaning in embarrassment.

What is that name? I gotta get her to change that before anyone else sees it.

I.Midoriya has entered the chat
I.Midoriya: Toga y that name!?

H.Toga: HI!

H.Toga: I couldnt think of othr names

H.Toga: Izuku & Midoriya dont really work 4 team names

H.Toga: Do u not lik it

H.Toga: .~(>_)<~.

I.Midoriya: WAIT!

I.Midoriya: I mean Im flaterd

I.Midoriya: But y me???

H.Toga: (ノ^∀^)

H.Toga: Tenya thought it was a gud name 2

I.Midoriya: W8 Iida is here???

H.Toga: He still typing

H.Shinso has entered the chat
T.Iida: I agree with you Toga. When it’s all said and done, Midoriya is the linchpin that holds our group together. We each have some connection to him so it makes sense that we name our group after him. I still think you should have waited and made sure he would be okay with your choice however. While Uraraka may use that name with him, so apparently does Bakugou, so there may be a complicated history behind it that we might want some clarity on before we ultimately decide to use ‘Dekusquad’ as our group name. Ah, good morning Midoriya, I hope this fine day finds you well. I find it so reassuring that you too also believe in the early to rise philosophy. Ah, I see you are confused by Toga’s idea for the chat room she set up for us. She reasoned that since each person in our group has some connection to you specifically, it should be named after you. I in fact agreed with her, though I did express some concerns that you may be put off by someone else using your nickname, as only Uraraka and Bakugou use it. Which I must admit I find perplexing, but I’m sure it’s part of your complicated history with him so I will not pry.

H.Toga: (・□・；）

H.Toga: Words

I.Midoriya: Yikes

H.Shinso: Y is the 1st thng i c n the morning that?

I.Midoriya: Hi Shinso!

H.Toga: Mr Sleepy is here!

O.Uraraka has entered the chat

I.Midoriya: Gud morning Uraraka!

H.Shinso: I was sleeping
H.Shinso: Hi everyone

T.Iida: Is there something wrong with my message? I thought I was very clear. Did I miss something?

H.Toga: I call the 1st meeting of Dekusquad to order!!!

O.Uraraka: Mornin Deku

O.Uraraka: Hey every1

O.Uraraka: Team Deku! Yay!

H.Shinso: I ws sleeping. Y now?

T.Iida: Yes I’m also confused as to why you decided to send out invites to this chat room so early. This easily could have been done during lunch today. Is there some emergency at the school?

O.Uraraka: Meeting?

I.Midoriya: No clue

O.Uraraka: So many words Iida O_o

H.Toga: !!( ´・ω・`) 中

H.Toga: Order!
H.Toga: 1st order!

H.Toga: All in favor of Dekusquad

H.Toga: [ Y / N ]

T.Iida: Yes

I.Midoriya: Um w8

O.Uraraka: Y!!!1!

H.Shinso: Y

H.Shino: Sleep now???

H.Toga: Y’s have it!

H.Toga: !!(´・ω・`)中

Izuku covered his face, groaning into his hand.

H.Toga: 2nd order!

H.Toga uploaded a picture

H.Toga: Luk @ this!!!!
Blinking, Izuku tapped the file Himiko had posted and gasped at the sight. It was dark, either right after sundown or before sun up, but there in front of the gate to U.A. was a hoard of reporters and news crews crowding the entrance. Large vans and their portable satellites blocked the street and sidewalks. It looked like a real mess.

O.Uraraka: WOW

H.Shinso: That's last nite rite???

H.Shinso: Dusk

H.Shinso: Not Dawn

T.Iida: That is certainly a lot of reporters. Word must have gotten out that All Might is teaching at U.A. now.

H.Toga: That's now

H.Toga: Just tuk pic

H.Shinso: No

I.Midoriya: How r we getting into skool?

H.Shinso: No

H.Toga: G8s already triggered 2X

H.Toga: woke me up.
H.Shinso: No

H.Toga: Wanted 2 warn u guys.

H.Toga: Have fun x’ing that

T.Iida: It’s only the media. As young heroes, we have a responsibility to create a working relationship with them to better help our advances in the world of heroics.

I.Midoriya: Thank u 4 the warning

I.Midoriya: gonna be fun

O.Uraraka: :cries:

H.Shinso: 3rd order???

H.Toga: Nope

H.Shinso: bed

H.Shinso: l8er

H.Toga: Boy need zzz

T.Iida: I must also start getting ready for our classes later. I will see you all in homeroom!

O.Uraraka: May want to leave early
O. Uraraka: In case we get ???’s

I. Midoriya: Yeah

I. Midoriya: I mite just make breakfast now

O. Uraraka: ok!

O. Uraraka: will text when close!

O. Uraraka: thx 4 warning Toga!

O. Uraraka: bye bye

H. Toga: U eat breakfast together?

I. Midoriya: I on her way to scool

H. Toga: Oh

H. Toga: That nice

H. Toga: HEY!

H. Toga: Easy fix to this problem Izuku

H. Toga: So u dont hav to worry about press anymore
I.Midoriya: Really?

I.Midoriya: Wuts your idea???

H.Toga: Sleep over here with me.

I.Midoriya: With u?

I.Midoriya: OH!

I.Midoriya: Camping

I.Midoriya: U mean camp over???

H.Toga: iaujfd;aazxdgadhaex

I.Midoriya: ???

H.Toga: Nvm

H.Toga: Dropped phone

H.Toga: U r so G rated Izuku.

H.Toga: C u l8er

Sighing and still a little confused, Izuku put his phone away and rolled out of bed. Convinced that today was going to be a long day.
“Are there more people here? This looks like more people than were in Toga’s picture.”

Ochako scratched her head in utter bewilderment while Izuku chuckled nervously. While both had been prepared for a crowd thanks to Toga’s warning, it was clear that the scale of the media circus was on a whole other level than what either had been expecting.

“I mean, All Might does tend to draw a crowd wherever he goes. Him teaching at such a prestigious school like U.A. was bound to get out eventually.”

“Still,” Ochako said as she looked at the sea of people, “this is way too much.”

“You know, I wonder if this is just going to be a thing we’ll have to deal with from now on?”

“Eh?”

“Well before reporters had to get lucky that they’d be at a site that All Might showed up at to help. Now they know that he’s always going to be here.”

Ochako thought about that, then looked like she was ready to cry, “Please no. I don’t want to have to deal with this every day from now on.”

Izuku couldn’t help but laugh at Ochako’s pitifulness while he pulled out his phone, “Well...I wonder if I gave Toga a text if she’d be able to sneak us in? She was pretty stealthy yesterday.”

And just like a switch had been flipped, Ochako went from timid in the face of the reporter sea, to determined. Eye’s hardened and jaw set, she looked at Izuku with enough force to make the boy take a step back, “Er... Uraraka?”

“We’re training to be heroes, Deku, and heroes don’t run from a challenge. We’re not going to sneak into our own school!”

“We’re not?”
“We’re going to walk right right that crowd and through the front gate.”

“We are?”

Dramatically Ochako pointed forward, towards the front gate of U.A, “Lets go, Deku!”

“R-Right!”

The pair’s exuberance was short lived however. Almost immediately reporters, seeing a new set of U.A. student’s they hadn’t gotten interviews with, descended on them and bombarded them with question after question.

“Hey, you! How are All Might's classes?”

“Will you tell us about what the Symbol of Peace is like as a teacher?!”

“What do you think of All Might as a teacher?!”

“Is it true he’s in a relationship with one of the other teachers!?”

“There are rumors that he and Midnight were seen talking to each other last night. Are they secretly dating!?”

“What kind of things is All Might teaching you?!”

They were finally given a chance to breathe a few yards away from the front gate when an alarm blared to life, and the security systems kicked on, slamming closed the gate, and erecting a high solid steel wall around the whole perimeter. A female reporter stumbled back in shock while a few people around her snickered at her rookie mistake.

“Ha, gate got another one.”
“Wh-What the heck?!” Screamed the reporter as she dusted herself off.

“You must be new if you don’t know about this. It's the U.A. Barrier. At least that's what we all call it at our station. The whole place has scanners and cameras everywhere. If anyone tries to get in without a student ID or pass, the security system kicks in and locks the entrances down.” An older reporter explained to her.

“The hell? They think they can just lock us out like that? That's so lame! They could at least send All Might out to at least give us a brief comment or something.”

“Ha, U.A. doesn’t play by anyone's rules but their own.”

Grumbling to herself, the reporter finished dusting herself off, and started to walk away from the gate, “Stupid high-and-mighty heroes. If I could just get an interview with All Might, it’d be my ticket for a promotion. At this rate, I’m gonna get passed up. I just need some way to get inside…” When she looked up, she spotted Izuku and Ochako making their way past some distracted reporters.

A student ID huh?

Ochako sighed in relief as they neared the gate, “Deku, promise me the next reporter that ever comes our way, you’ll protect me from them.”

“What happened to ‘not running from a challenge?’” Izuku teased.

“Okay, it is too early in the morning for me to deal with your snark right now.”

“You know I was right.”

Ochako ground her teeth, she was not going to say getting Himiko’s help was a good idea, but she also knew she couldn’t say it was a bad idea after what they just went through.
“Excuse me?”

Almost wailing, Ochako moved so that she put Izuku between her and the new reporter that walked up to them.

_Sorry Deku, I’ll make this up to you!_

Gulping, Izuku did his best to smile, though his jaw was starting to hurt after forcing it for so long, “Hi. I’m sorry, but we really need to get to class. We’ve already answered a lot of questions about All Might and the school.”

The reporter clasped her hands around Izuku and gave him the saddest puppy dog eyes she had, “Please just wait a second. I really need your help?”

“OH! Um okay?” Izuku stammered out, taken off guard by the young woman's plea. Behind him, Ochako blinked and looked between the two.

“Please I really need your help. You’re a student here, right?”

“Y-Yes.”

“So you have a badge that lets you get onto the campus then?”

While Izuku stammered out an affirmative, Ochako’s eyes narrowed at the woman.

“Please, can I borrow it? I really need to land this story, but U.A. has that stupid barrier so I’m stuck. If you help me, I’ll make sure all your quotes are on the front page, even your picture!”

“I-I don’t think I can do that.”

Ochako nodded.
The reporter frowned briefly before eyes went from puppy dog, to sultry, taking one hand off of Izuku’s, she made sure that he watched as she undid the top button of her blouse and pulled one seem to the side, “You know, you’re pretty cute, and I’d be more than happy to show you just how grateful I’d be for your help.”

Izuku went stiff, as he lost any ability to functionally form words.

-YOU FUCKING WHORE!

Now very angry, and very over all the reporters, especially the one flashing Izuku her cleavage, Ochako decided she didn’t want to wait for the gate to open back up. Reaching out, she grabbed Izuku by the back of his school blazer, floating him as she yanked him away from the other woman and held him above her head. Shooting the woman the angriest glare she could, Ochako floated herself and jumped up and over the outer wall around U.A. taking a still completely broken Izuku with her.

Sighing, the reporter redid her button, “Next time maybe I should try a boy that doesn’t have a jealous girlfriend holding onto him by the short hairs...oh well.” She was about to look for another student to try and get an ID from, when a very tired, but very stern voice got her attention, “Excuse me, Miss. Would you mind telling me what you were trying to do with my student there?”

When Ochako, roughly, slid the class door open, she got a few strange looks. When she came in, still holding a frozen and sputtering Izuku above her head, everyone turned to look at her. She ignored them and marched over to Izuku’s seat and slid the boy into his desk. Katsuki turned around while Ochako walked over to Momo, asking if she could make some smelling salts.

Himiko rushed over to his desk, while a couple of students snapped their fingers in front of his face, trying to snap him out of his daze.

“Hitoshi, did you mind wammy my Izuku?”

“No, though it sure looks like he’s under some kind of trance.”
“Dude looks broken.”

“Midoriya-dot-exe has stopped responding.”

Katsuki noted the glazed look in Izuku’s eyes and the very deep blush on his cheeks, “The fuck? Did the nerd get his first look at a pair of tits or something?”

While a few students chuckled, they all immediately stopped when Ochako, after getting some salts from Momo, whirled around and stomped back over, “Some women have no sense of self respect or decency.”

“Wait,” Denki started as he looked from Izuku to Ochako, “Is Bakugou right!? Who-” Denki could feel Kyouka’s ear jacks aiming for him, “-would do something so... horrible?”

Himiko, who appeared neutral, but was giving off such a blood curdling aura that several students were making sure they gave her plenty of space, also seemed very interested in hearing the answer. “Yes, who would do something like that... also you wouldn’t happen to know where they are right now? For reasons...”

“It was one of the reporters outside,” Ochako grunted as she bent down and snapped the smelling salt under Izuku’s nose, “she wanted Deku to give her his school ID so she could get into U.A. and interview All Might. Had a sob story and promised him he’d be on the front page. Deku said no.”

Tenya nodded in approval, “Our ID’s are badges of honor. To give them out for such a frivolous reason would be a great betrayal of trust with our school.”

Ochako continued “And when that didn’t work, she tried to seduce him, saying how grateful she’d be, and then she started to undo the top of her blouse.”

Izuku’s eye suddenly focused and he turned away, gasping for breath and to get the strong smell out of his nose. While Izuku recovered Denki scratched the back of his head, “Does Midoriya not have access to the internet or something?”

While this got a few snickers from some classmates, Ochako and Toga shot Denki a look that made...
the boy decide that it was time to go back to his seat.

Izuku looked around and saw that somehow he was in class, sitting at his desk with Ochako looking over him. Remembering what had happened, he felt a sudden panic.

*I didn’t mean to look. Oh no, what if Uraraka thinks I’m a pervert now!*

“Izaraka I…”

Ochako smiled and patted him on the shoulder, “Welcome back to the world of the living, Deku. Thought I lost you there for a second.”

*She’s not mad? Oh, thank goodness.*

When he looked around, and saw the rest of his class, holding back snickers and laughs, he let his head fall onto his desk, “They know?”

“Yep.”

“Oh no…”

Himiko, no longer angry, ruffled Izuku’s hair, “If Midnight is the R-rated hero, you are totally the G-rated hero.”

“Disney approved!” Someone from behind added.

Izuku groaned, “Bury me. Please.”

Seeing that Izuku was back to normal, Ochako, and the rest of the class went back to their seats. Not long after Aizawa walked in, holding a stack of papers.
“Right, there are a couple of things I want to get out of the way before we start class. I have reviewed your performances from yesterday's class. Good work. I will have more in-depth reviews for each of you at a later date. Bakugou,” Aizawa glanced over at Katsuki, “Yesterday, All Might told me he was going to speak with you over your performance during your match if he caught you before class. Did he?”

Katsuki looked off to the side, “Yeah, he did.”

“Good. You have talent, but you need to stop acting like a little kid. Stop wasting your potential.”

“...I know.”

Izuku stole a glance at Ochako, who just shrugged, not having any idea either why All Might would want to talk to Katsuki.

Maybe it had something to do with how down Kacchan was yesterday?

“Koda, Principal Nezu wanted me to inform you that he plans to have all the animals nesting in the battlegrounds humanely moved. Those areas are meant for students to be free to use their quirks in mock rescue and battles without the worry of living collateral damage. He will be contacting you at some point to help in the move.”

Koji nodded that he understood, happy to help.

“Midoriya; Uraraka.”

Both jolted in their seats, “Yes sir?”

“I will continue to hold you to the high standard you both set yesterday. Understand?”

He was satisfied when he saw both give determined nods, “Now that that’s out of the way, you all have homeroom business to take care of.”
The whole class tensed, worried that their teacher had some new horrible test ready for them.

“You all need to pick a Class Representative.”

Collectively the whole class let out a sigh of relief, happy that at least today they got to do something normal. The classes' relief quickly devolved into shouts as students stood up to claim the position.

“I want to be class rep”!

“Pick me!”

“Me too! I want to do it, too!”

“It's a job made for me.”

“I'll be the leader! You maggots follow me!”

“Let me do it! Me!”

Izuku almost laughed as he watched his classmates try to claim the spot. Even Katsuki had his hand up, yelling that he was the best choice for the position. If this were a normal class in a normal school, the job would amount to little more than giving speeches and making sure students behaved in class, so this kind of enthusiastic reaction wouldn't normally happen. Only people looking to add onto their future transcripts would be vying for the spot.

I knew in the hero course it would be a little different. It's a great way to learn how to be a leader of a group of heroes and gives you practice for taking the role of a top hero, but still this is a pretty crazy response.

Glancing behind, Izuku saw that Ochako was just as involved trying to get people to pick her. Actually, her intensity was making a couple of students take a few steps back.
As Izuku looked over his classmates, he saw that Himiko was still sitting down, and in fact looked rather bored with her elbow on her desk and chin resting in her palm. Even the more reserved students like Hitoshi and Shouto were making cases for themselves. Not as exuberant as the others, but they were up making their cases. Himiko just didn’t look interested at all. When she caught him looking at her, she smiled and gave him a wink, making Izuku blush and look away. Himiko giggled.

While everyone continued to talk over each other, Tenya stood up and tried to get the classes attention, “Everyone please! This position is very important. We can’t just have a class representative who just wanted to do it. It must be someone that the class can trust to represent us. It is a serious responsibility.”

“So what should we do then?” Mina asked

“I suggest we take a democratic approach. Let's hold an election to decide who will get the job.”

While some students seemed okay with the idea, others didn’t look so convinced.

“Do you think that could even work? Voting kinda means we're putting our trust in someone right?” Eijiro said after some thought.

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “We’ve only known each other for a couple of days now. That’s not enough time to build any real trust.”

Hitoshi agreed, “Honestly if it came down to a vote, most of the people here would probably just vote for themselves.”

“But,” Tenya started, “Don't you think that is precisely why whoever is able to get multiple votes here can be truly considered the most suitable person to lead our class?”

“I can see your reasoning behind your idea, but I think it does have a small flaw in it,” Momo said after some thought. “Using a vote should mean that the winner gets a majority. Your method might have a person win, even if they get two votes. I know there are some of us that have friends in the class, so it’s not outside the realm of possibility that while many of us vote for ourselves, someone would vote for their friend.”
Himiko, who had been quiet during the whole conversation, since she had no interest in the position, spoke up, “don’t people in America narrow down a list of candidates and then vote for them?”

Tenya nodded, “Yes, I believe that they do.”

“Then how about we nominate a small group of people, or something, and then hold a vote. That way we can have a majority and no one can vote for themselves.”

Himiko’s idea invigorated Tenya, “That could work out perfectly! Mr. Aizawa, is this alright with you?”

Aizawa had already slipped back into his sleeping bag, “I really don’t care. Just be done before the end of the day.”

Satisfied, and hearing no objections from anyone in the class, Tenya decided to get started, “So does anyone want to nominate someone?”

Izuku’s hand shot up, “Uraraka!”

Katsuki groaned, “There’s a fucking shocker.”

“I mean, she placed high in the entrance exam and Mr. Aizawa’s test. Plus, she’s worked really hard to get here. She’s driven and really clever. She even came up with support items that work so well with her quirk and fighting style.

Ochako fidgeted a little hearing Izuku heap praise on her while Katsuki rolled his eyes looking like he was ready to say something else, but Momo cut in, “Would anyone else like to support Midoriya’s nomination of Uraraka?”

Tsuyu raised her hand, “I will. She was really cool when she was kicking my butt.”

Tenya jotted Ochako’s name down on the board, “Who would like to go next?”
Ochako raised her hand, but Katsuki cut her off, “I swear to god! She’s just going to nominate Deku. I thought this whole nomination thing was to keep people from just picking their friends!”

While Ochako glared at Katsuki, Himiko stood up and after taking the chalk from Tenya, quickly wrote Izuku’s name under Ochako’s, “I’m nominating Izuku based on his character. When we first met, he saved me from a bunch of thugs. He didn’t have to, he could have just kept walking but he didn’t, and I learned that this wasn’t the only time he went out of his way to help people.”

Himiko gave Katsuki a pointed look as the boy went stiff, “During the entrance exam he helped out Tenya and Hitoshi when they got into a little trouble with some of the robots. I think that should be plenty of reasons why Izuku would make a great class rep.”

While a few students looked from Himiko to Izuku, clearly wondering what exactly had happened, Himiko tossed the chalk back to Tenya and took her seat. Turning she looked at Katsuki, “There, now it wasn’t Ochako who nominated Izuku. That good enough for you, or are you gonna be a bitch about this too?”

Tenya, moving to stop the shout he was sure Katsuki was ready to unleash asked the class if anyone would like to second the nomination. Ochako quickly raised her hand. For the remainder of the period, students spoke up and soon from the 22 in class, they had narrowed down a list of six. Ochako, Izuku, Momo, Shouto, Tenya, and finally Katsuki. Katsuki’s inclusion had come as a bit of a shock for a few, but Eijior had made a good case, having seen him in action in the entrance exam and reminding everyone of just how well he had done in the test they took their first day. With the homeroom period ending soon, it was decided that the final vote would take place by the end of last period.

When the bell rang, Midnight looked up, “Ah! It looks like we are out of time. We’ll have to continue our lesson about nudity in art another day. Also make sure you look over the list of models I gave you; we’ll decide on which one you’ll be sketching next week.”

Collectively the class nodded and began to file their things away before heading off for lunch. Some students were still very red after Midnight’s in-depth lesson. Izuku was clearly the most red out of everyone, having spent most of the time with his head down as he took his notes, only daring to look up when Midnight went out of her way to point something out on one of her many slides. Himiko, who had been completely unfazed by the lesson, had to stop herself from laughing every time Izuku made an eep or squeek when he saw a new picture.
I may have to get Midnight a present or something.

Behind her she could hear Ochako, Tenya and Hitoshi walking up to their desks, “...I mean it’s not that big of a deal. It’s art after all.”

Himiko rolled her eyes as Ochako tried to play off her own embarrassment.

*Says the girl that was giving Izuku a run for his money.*

Ochako bent down and playfully poked Izuku, “You still with us, Deku?”

“Uh huh.”

“Good. I’d rather not have to ask Yaoyorozu for more smelling salts after each class.”

Izuku waved her off, “That wasn’t...I mean… it’s just art.”

Tenya nodded, “Very true. We must keep an open mind over such things.”

“Says the guy whose glasses were fogged up after the first picture.” Hitoshi said, “So we going to get lunch or not?”

As the group was about to leave though, Midnight waved them down, “Actually, if one of you don’t mind, I could use some help. I have this box that’s full of all those little repose statues.” The boys all blushed remembering just what kind of statues Midnight had shown off. Smiling, Midnight looked over at Izuku and winked, “Midoriya, would you mind giving me a hand? I just need this taken to the teachers office. It won’t take very long, I promise.”

“Oh, um sure. I’m happy to help.”

Himiko glanced from Izuku to Midnight, giving the woman a questioning glare, that she either didn’t notice or did an excellent job ignoring.
“I guess you guys can go on ahead. I’ll meet up with you when I’m done.”

“Of course. We’ll make sure to save you a seat.”

The group left, with Himiko giving the hero one last lingering look. Alone Izuku picked up the box, “So just to the teachers office, sensei?”

“Yep, lets go. Oh and you can just use my hero name when we’re out of class.”

“Oh! Okay.”

Izuku quickly fell into step behind the hero, who every once in a while glanced back at him.

Not exactly a lot of time to talk to him, but I should use this chance to see what the boy that has Toga so enraptured is like.

“So, I trust U.A. has lived up to its reputation so far.”

“Oh absolutely being here is a dream come true. Seeing and meeting so many heroes and getting taught by them is incredible.”

Midnight smirked, the boy had spirit if his enthusiastic response was anything to go by. She had also seen the recordings of the class’ first day of hero training. Izuku had shown a great deal of skill during his match.

“You seem to have made a nice group of friends too. Just don’t forget that while it’s good to have people to rely on, heroes build themselves up by competing against each other. You won’t always be so lucky to have your friends on your side.”

“Of… of course. I understand.”
Midnight noted the more timid response, but before she could make a comment, Izuku continued, “But there are hero teams as well. Most may not be permanent, but they work together to help people. There are also agencies like the Wild, Wild Pussycats. Though I guess they’re more the exception…”

“You’re not wrong, and like I said, you were able to get a nice group together pretty quickly. Most students take a while before they find their clicks.”

“It is kinda weird having so many people want to hang out with me…”

Midnight arched an eyebrow, “Oh? Considering how popular you are, I figured you had a bunch of friends before coming here.”

Izuku chuckled softly, though Midnight could hear the sadness in it, and just a hint of bitterness, “I wasn’t… very popular back then. It wasn’t until I met Uraraka a year ago that I really had a friend.”

“What about Bakugou, you two come from the same school right?”

“That’s complicated.”

Izuku had flinched when he spoke. He did his best to hide it, but Midnight saw the reaction as clear as could be.

*Maybe Toga was on the money with those two.*

“Well, you have friends now,” Izuku smiled at that, “and you’ve even gotten the attention of Toga. She seems to like you very much.”

Izuku blushed, “She’s really nice and friendly. She really likes to get close to me though.”

“Do you not like it?”
“It’s just, I don’t see her do that with anyone else. It’s strange.”

“She must really like you then if you’re the only one she does that to.”

“Hmm, I think it's just her way of being friendly is all.

Mindnight almost tripped on her own feet.

*The girl is practically throwing herself at you and you think she’s just being friendly. Dear god, the girl was right; you are naive, kid.*

Coughing into her hand, Midnight regained her composure, “Friendliness aside, she told me you and your other friends are aware of her current living situation.”

“You mean that she’s a ward of U.A?”

“Correct. I’m actually her counselor.”

“Oh!”

“Has she opened up about anything else?”

Izuku frowned, “Not really. She’s dropped some hints a couple of times. I don’t think she and her parents got along very well…”

*That’s an understatement*

“Besides that, she really doesn’t talk about herself. She hasn’t even told me what her quirk is, now that I think about it.”

*She really has been keeping the kid in the dark, huh?*
“Midnight, is there something I should know? If there’s something I could do to help her, I want to do it.”

Midnight looked down at Izuku. He seemed determined to help, even if he wasn’t sure what he could do.

_Is there something you should know? Kid, you have no idea._

Midnight took a moment to collect her thoughts. Part of her was tempted to warn Izuku about Himiko. Despite all the work the heroes in the school had put into her, she was still a very dangerous person. However Nezu had made it clear, unless it was absolutely necessary, or Himiko herself chose to share, the girls past was not to be spread around outside of the heroes that worked at the school. If word got out, and suddenly her classmates, her friends, became scared of her, it could destroy any chance of saving her.

“Just...be there for her. She’s had a really rough time, and has made some...choices that weren’t for the best. She’s getting a chance to restart her life. Having friends she knows she can trust will be a great help.”

Izuku nodded, “I can do that. Definitely.”

_That desire to help others. She’s mentioned it a few times when she talks about him. Guess I’ve seen it for myself too. It just might be enough..._

“One thing, Midoriya.” Midnight added, her voice taking a sharp tone.

“Yes?”

“If you ever see her acting strange...er stranger than normal. Or you’re afraid she might...do something that could hurt herself or others. You find a teacher immediately. Me, Aizawa, All Might, any of us heroes. You find us and we’ll take care of her.”

“But what if I could-’”
“Midoriya,” Midnight cut him off, already guessing he was going to ask if he could do something. Her tone made it clear what answer she wanted to hear from him.

“I understand.”

“Good. I’m not saying that you’ll ever have to, but I want you to know that I’m not asking you to do this. I am telling you. Oh one last thing, while I wont ask you to not tell Toga and your friends what we talked about, if you decided to… be a little vague, I’d appreciate it. Toga doesn’t always like talking with me, and I’d rather not give her a reason to want to avoid our sessions. And there isn’t a reason to worry your other friends. Right?”

“I’ll…come up with something.”

“Good boy. Now why don’t we talk about something more fun… Oh are you dat-”

Before Midnight could finish, alarms started blaring throughout the hallway startling both.

“What is that?”

“That’s the security alarm? It means someone broke into the school!”

“Someone broke in!??”

Izuku’s mind raced. How was that possible? U.A. was supposed to be one of the most secure places in the country.

Midnight pointed at him with her whip, “Midoriya, I want you to go ahead to the teachers office and stay there. I need to see what’s going on. I’ll have someone either get you or contact you once this is cleared up.”

“But Uraraka and-”

“Midoriya. Teachers office. Now.”
Izuku nodded and hurried down the hall, while Midnight pulled out her phone and tried to get in contact with someone.

Alarms blaring and the first thing the kid wants to do is find his friends. Yeah, maybe I can see why Toga finds him so appealing. Course an attitude like that might get him into trouble if he isn’t careful.

“So, did Midoriya hurt himself again or something?” Hitoshi asked as he put his tray of food down and sat with everyone.

Ochako blinked, surprised by the question, “Um no? Why do you ask?”

“Because this is the second time he’s been taken away by a teacher. Last time was because he hurt himself in the entrance exam. Maybe he did something during the battle trial?”

“No, he’s totally fine.”

Tenya rubbed his chin, “It could be she just wanted Midoriya to help her carry the box. Every time a teacher talks to him doesn’t have to be over something serious or secretive.”

Himiko huffed before aggressively taking a bite of her lunch. Sensing the topic might not be something Himiko wanted to hear, Hitoshi changed gears, “Soooh how do you think the voting later is going to go?”

Himiko took another bite, “Well if it’s anything like a real election,” Himiko raised her voice, just enough for the table next to them to hear, “Rich-Girl will just bribe everyone to get her votes.”

Momo, who had been having a chat with some of the other girls, sputtered in shock while Mina and Kyouka laughed, “I would never!”
Ochako smirked, “Well if that’s the case, Iida will give her a run for her money for sure. Oh and I’ll take cash for my bribe please.”

Tenya’s shocked face matched Momo’s “Uraraka, Toga! To insinuate that bribery would take place in a hollowed tradition of electing a class representative is an insult to the very school.” Fixing his glasses, Tenya looked at Ochako curiously, “Also, why would I be the one to give her a run for her money?”

“’Cause you’re a rich boy, Iida.” Ochako stated.

“EH? But I thought I had done a good job changing how I speak.”

Hitoshi deadpanned, “That was you trying to hide it? Didn’t I hear you say you went to Soumei Junior High in class?”

Himiko blinked, “That a good school?”

“Private and prestigious.”

Rolling her eyes, Himiko glanced over at Tenya “Oh, so was the spoon silver or gold then?”

Both tables laughed while Tenya lowered his head.

“So, if U.A. is above bribery, I guess that just leaves blackmail. Who’d do that I wonder?” Hitoshi asked.

Ochako’s head turned to look over at Katsuki a few tables away. Himiko raised an eyebrow, “Is he subtle enough to be able to blackmail someone?”

“Nope. I still can’t believe he made the list.”
“Well Kirishima did bring up some valid...points…” Tenya wilted when Ochako narrowed her eyes at him.

As Ochako opened her mouth to tell Tenya why there was absolutely, positively, and without question no valid reason for Katsuki to have been nominated, the sudden screech of an alarm cut her off. At once the relaxed mood of the room shattered as everyone turned and listened to the warning from the intercom.

“There has been a Level 3 security breach. All students please evacuate outdoors promptly.”

Snapping her mouth shut, Ochako suddenly felt dizzy.

An alarm? Level 3? What does that all mean?

Around them, students from the other tables bolted up. Hitoshi looked around, “Hey what's going on? What’s that alarm mean?”

Himiko jumped up, pulling a startled Ochako and Hitoshi with her, “It means someone broke into the school. Let's get out of here, this place is about to be a madhouse. You too Tenya, let’s get going!”

“W-what?” Ochako was stunned. The idea that someone could possibly break into U.A. sounded completely ridiculous, and yet, the blaring alarm and panicking students painted a different reality than what she thought possible. All too quickly though, Himiko’s prediction came true as the halls were filled to the brink with students rushing for the nearest exit.

In the madness, the Hitoshi was separated from the three, and soon after Ochako and Himiko were pushed up against a wall, with Tenya not that far away. Ochako grunted as her back hit the window, and Himiko getting driven into her chest. Straining, Ochako pushed back on the wall of bodies that were getting close to crushing the tow of the.

“Get...off.”

Ochako looked down, alarmed to hear Himiko sounding so strained. Her face was twisted as she pushed back, trying to give herself some space, but to no avail.
“I can’t breath. Get OFF!”

Ochako was reminded of an alley cat she had seen as a child. Cornered by a couple of dogs, the cat turned nasty, with fangs bared, back arched and claws ready to tear anything that came near apart. Himiko reminded her of that cat; she looked just about ready to lash out at any moment. With a hard grunt, Ochako pushed hard against the wall of bodies, feeling the strain in her arms as she forced a few of them back, at least a few inches. Her muscles burned, but at least she had given the two of them a little breathing room.

“This is crazy, someone is going to get hurt.”

Getting mashed against the same window, Tenya nodded, “Yes, as expected of the best of the best. Everyone was quick to react to the order to evacuate.”

As one, Ochako and Himiko both snapped, “Not the time for compliments!”

Ochako felt a shift against one of the people she was pressing against. With a started gasp, Momo was forced through a small gap and shoved right next to the three.

“Yaoyorozu?”

“Yaoyorozu, are you alright? Wait what do you have there?”

What surprised the Tenay was that Momo was holding a megaphone that she was trying to make sure she didn’t drop.

“It’s the media!”

“Eh?”

“The media. You can see them through the window. I just saw them a bit ago. The teachers are confronting them.”
While Ochako had her back against the window, and Himiko was too distracted making sure she didn’t start dropping people to give herself some more breathing room, Tenya was the only one of the three that was able to look and confirm what Momo had seen, “They got inside? They must be the reason the alarm went off, and why there aren’t any teachers here helping us, they’re dealing with all those reporters.”

Himiko snarled, “Are you fucking kidding me? Everyone is freaking out because of a bunch of reporters!?”

“We need to let everyone know that there’s nothing to worry about.”

Momo nodded, “I thought I could get everyone’s attention with this, but I keep getting knocked around and it’s not carrying while I’m in the crowd.”

Tenya’s mind raced. They needed some way to get everyone's attention, which was impossible while they were getting pushed around in the crowd. They would need to get in everyone's line of sight, which would mean…

Looking to his side, Momo was to his left, and Ochako was to his right.

“Yaoyorozu, please hand me that megaphone!”

While not sure what Tenya was planning, Momo reached out and was able to just hand over the device. With the megaphone in hand, Tenya reached out towards Ochako, “Uraraka! I need you to make me float!”

“Huh!?”

Why does he want that? It’ll be easier for him to get carried away or crushed!?

Her confusion and worry must have shown because Tenya strained his hand closer to her saying, “I have a plan! Please trust me!”
Hesitating only a moment more, Ochako pulled one of her hands off the wall of bodies, almost cursing as in that moment, most of the space she had been able to give herself and Himiko shrinking. Reaching out, she strained to reach Tenya’s hand. Counting out the pads as they made contact with his hand.

One, two, three, four, grrr come on! FIVE!

Only momentarily taken aback from the feeling of weightlessness, Tenya quickly put his plan into motion. The engines in his legs roared to life and blasted him out of the crowd and up into the air. Angling himself, Tenya was able to turn so that his back hit the ceiling. Above the crowd, Tenya took a deep breath and brought the megaphone to his mouth, “EVERYONE PLEASE CALM DOWN! Everything is fine! The reporters and media are the ones that were able to get inside, but the faculty are dealing with them. Please, we are U.A. students, the best of the best; let us act in a way befitting this great school!”

Tenya’s voice carried over the noise of the crowd, his message having an immediate effect. The noise and panic died down. With the panic gone, everyone stopped pushing against everyone else and finally the stampede came to a halt.

Ochako sighed with relief as the pressure on her arms was released and she was able to lean against the window, and relax, abdently rubbing her arms to work out the soreness. Looking down, she saw that Himiko was much less wound up not that she wasn’t getting pressed against by so many people.

*Thank goodness that's over. If people kept trying to rush for the door like that, someone was going to get trampled and hurt. Iida did such a great job getting them to calm down. He and Yaoyorozu did a good job. She was the one trying to get everyone under control to begin with. They both acted like real leaders.*

Izuku reached the teachers office just as a large group of students came rushing by in a panic, only just getting the door open and slipping in before the large mob forced it closed. Leaving Izuku more or less sealed inside.

“Man, everyone is really freaked out,” Izuku let out a long sigh, as he tried to steady his own nerves, “But I guess I can’t really blame them. I don’t think I ever heard of anyone breaking into U.A. before...I hope Uraraka and the others are okay. If everyone in the cafeteria acted like that mob...”
Shaking his head, Izuku tried to put the thought out of his mind. He was stuck here until he was told he could leave. He might as well put the box on Midnights desk and make himself comfortable.

“Are you kidding me?”

Izuku blinked when he heard a coarse, but pitchy voice from behind him. Izuku had thought he was alone in the office, so hearing someone else took him by surprise. Turning around, Izuku found a tall but lanky young man standing on the other side of the room. He looked like he was older than Izuku, older than the third years too, but not by much. Only a few years. His hair was a light gray and his skin was pale and dry, with cracks along his mouth. Wearing all black he almost melted into the shadows of the dark room, but his eyes, his red eyes almost glowed in the dark, and they were looking right at Izuku. Izuku almost missed that the man had a folder in his hand as he stood next to an open filing cabinet.

Izuku wasn’t sure why, but he felt himself break into a cold sweat. Something about the way the man was looking at him was ringing alarms in his mind. The word danger kept flashing in his head but, this was U.A. He shouldn’t be worried like this. There were no real dangers here.

*The break in must have me more shook up than I realized. I should be ashamed, getting all freaked out like that because he looks...a little scary.*

“I know students shouldn’t normally be here unsupervise, but Midnight asked me to drop this box off for her, she was with me but had to rush off because of the alarm.”

The man kept looking at him.

“Are...are you a teacher? I don’t think I’ve seen you around before.”

If he was a teacher, then he was a hero too, but Izuku couldn’t think of a hero matching his description, and Izuku prided himself on knowing a lot of heroes, even the more underground ones that avoided the media and public.

“S-Sir?”
The man snapped the folder he was holding closed, and for the briefest moment, every fiber of his being was telling Izuku to run, but then the man smiled, “Sorry, didn’t mean to scare you, but you kinda caught me in the middle of something.”

His voice was still coarse, but had taken an *almost* jovial tone, “I thought you were a teacher for a second. I’d be in trouble if that was the case.”

“Oh? I don’t mean to get you in trouble...doing...?”

The man held up the folder, “I’m a new sidekick helping as a TA for some of the third years, but I totally forgot the lesson plan for the next few days. Nerves, I guess. This is my first...big break and I want to make sure it goes perfectly. So I kinda snuck in to make sure I have everything I need.”

*Oh he’s a sidekick. That explains why I don’t recognize him.*

“Oh, sorry if I spooked you too. With the alarms and everything, I guess everyone is a little on edge.”

“Right...the alarms.”

There was an awkward silence as the two looked at each other, before after a few more moments the alarms going off stopped. Izuku swore he saw the man tense when that happened.

“Hey um, kid...”

“Oh it’s Midoriya. Izuku Midoriya.”

“Midoriya, great. Listen, I really don’t want to get into trouble, like I said, this is my first big break. So if you wouldn’t mind...keeping this between us? I’d be very grateful.”

*Wow, he must be really worried he’s gonna get in trouble and mess up his chance, he’s shaking a little.*
Izuku smiled, “I don’t know what you’re talking about, I just came in and dropped off this box. I didn’t see anyone else come in.”

The man smirked as he put the file away, “Good, you’re doing me a huge favor, kid. Thanks”

Izuku nodded and turned carried the box over to Midnights desk, “Though with all the commotion, how are you going to get out without being seen?”

Silence answered Izuku, who turned to find the room empty. Blinking in confusion, Izuku scanned the dark room until he heard a window blind rattle against an open window.

“Wow, that’s one way to make a plus ultra exit.”

Sitting down, Izuku waited in the office until he got the all clear. Hopefully before lunch period was over, he was getting a little hungry.

“...the police are already helping us have the reporters removed from the grounds. As such classes will resume as normal...”

Ochako sighed as she slumped into her seat, after Tenya and Momo had gotten word out that the intruders were only a group of reporters, and now with Principal Nezu’s announcement the students in the cafeteria had completely calmed down.

A few of her classmates were patting the two on the back, impressed with how they were able to get the crowd to stop before someone got hurt. While they tried to play it off as just something anyone could have done, it didn’t change the fact that they were the ones that took the initiative and did it.

It was a great demonstration of leadership.

“Uraraka!”
Looking up, Ochako spotted Izuku darting between tables as he rushed over to her, “Deku, there you are!”

Ochako raised an eyebrow when Izuku reached her table and promptly leaned down to catch his breath.

*Did he run all the way here or something?*

“Deku, are you alright?”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, I’m okay. Midnight Sensei had me stay in the teachers office until the all clear. She just let me know I could leave. So I hurried over.”

“Why’d you hurry over? There’s still plenty of time left for lunch.”

Sheepishly, Izuku scratched the back of his neck, “I was worried. It got kinda crazy in the halls, so I figured it would be pretty bad here.”

Ochako smiled as a warmth filled her chest. Knowing that Izuku had been worried about her felt nice. If a little weird, when she thought about it, since she was feeling happy over him probably feeling pretty stressed out locked in the office. Promptly deciding she didn’t want the headache of trying to unravel that whole mess, she pushed out a chair next to her and motioned for Izuku to have a seat, “Here, have a seat.”

Nodding, Izuku sat down, “So everyone else is okay too?”

“Yeah, Shinso went to go get some more food. Toga is somewhere. Said she needed some space after almost getting crushed.”

Izuku winced, “It sounds like things got pretty bad over here.”

“Honestly, it was pretty crazy. People were panicking. If it weren’t for Iida and Yaoyorozu, someone would have gotten hurt.”
“Wait, what happened?”

Ochako told Izuku about how after the alarm, Tenya had seen the reporters in the window. How Momo had tried to get above the students with a microphone to get them to calm down, and how Tenya had taken it and had her float him so he could relay what was actually happening.

Izuku was clearly impressed, “Wow, that’s incredible that they were able to work together and get the crowd under control like that. That’s some great leadership.”

Nodding, Ochako leaned forward, a serious look crossing her face, “Actually, there was something I wanted to talk to you about that.”

Himiko sipped on her pouch as she looked at the ruins of the front gate. With most of the reporters cleared out, the area had an eerie calm to it. As someone who had made a living, so to speak, in dark alleys, Toga found the atmosphere welcoming. Especially after the incident in the lunchroom. Getting pushed around like that had almost been enough to make her lash out. She hadn’t of course, but she still swung by her room to grab an extra blood pouch for herself. She deserved an reward for being so understanding.

Behind her she could hear someone walking up to her. Someone small, “Shouldn’t you be with your friends finishing your lunch?”

Nezu stopped to stand beside the young girl.

“I was almost crushed to death. I think I’ll avoid the crowd for a bit until my next class.”

The furry principle nodded in understanding, “That must have been very trying for you, though didn’t you use to brag that a crowd of people was the best place to disappear?”

“A crowd, yes. A stampede of scared kids, not so much. No space to work with.”
Nezu nodded, before reaching up and tapping her side, his paw finding exactly where she had a box cutter tucked away at her waist. “At least you didn’t go so far as to try to make yourself some space.”

Sighing, Himiko reached under her uniform and pulled out the hidden blade, handing it to Nezu, who took it and quietly pocketed it. The two stood in silence looking at the damage, “You don’t really think it was a reporter that did this, do you? No reporter has the steel pair to try something like this.”

Nezu looked up at Toga, “What do you think?”

Himiko crossed her arms, “That I know there are people out there that would love to take a pot shot at U.A., and hope they got lucky enough to cause a little chaos.”

“True. Very true. We’ve had our fair share of roughiens and bad eggs that have tried their hands at vandalization and attempts to intimidate our students.”

“Doesn’t U.A. also have a rivalry with some other school. Katsu Bun Something?”

“Ketsubutsu. Do you think this was a prank?”

Himiko snorted, “Not really. No, someone took a shot at you.”

It was clear Nezu agreed. His eyes were scanning everything in front of him. Himiko could see his intelligence quirk was hard at work trying to put the pieces all together, “You are right; this was an attack. But what was the goal, the intention. A shot across the bow? A declaration of war? Or did something evil slip in while everyone was distracted.”

Himiko finished her pouch and crumpled it up, “Well you have fun figuring that out. I got troubles of my own to deal with. Like homework and stuff.”

“Stuff? Like school yard crushes?”

Wagging her finger, Himiko walked off, “Nope, a girl does not discuss matters of the heart with
“Enjoy the rest of your classes, Toga.”

“Oh yeah, math and social studies, always the funnest part of my day.”

Himiko made it a few more steps before Nezu added, “Oh, Toga? When you talk to Midnight tonight, please be sure to mention how you didn’t use this weapon,” Nezu patted his pocket, “When you were getting crushed today.”

Himiko groaned, but didn’t talk back. Getting into an argument with him was not worth the headache.

It was the end of final period and at long last, it was time for the students to vote on who would be their class representative. Aizawa had quickly slithered into his sleeping bag and handed over the responsibility to Tenya. After handing out cards for people to write down their vote, Tenya addressed the room, “Now, of our nominees, would anyone like to make any closing arguments on why they should be elected?”

Katsuki stood up, “You all want a leader that’s going to go places, and that’s me. You’re looking at greatness in the making, and on my journey to the top, it’ll be easy to drag you all out of obscurity. You’ll all be better just by proxy.”

Kyouka groaned, “The hell, does the guy think he’s the second coming of All Might or something?”

“All Might is going to wish he was as good as me when I’m done here.”

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “How’d your battle trial go again?”

“What’d you say, frog-legs!”
Tenya moved between the two, calming them, or mostly, Katsuki down, “Does anyone else want to say anything?”

Ochako raised her hand, “I’d like to say something.” Standing up, Ochako glanced over the class, eyes briefly meeting Izuku’s who gave her a supporting nod, “Earlier today, there was an... incident during lunch.”

More than a few students winced or frowned, the stampede was still fresh in their minds.

“Well while everyone was either trying to get out of the building, or just trying not to get crushed, Iida and Yaoyorozu were taking actions to get the whole thing under control.”

Both Tenya and Momo tensed in surprise, neither having expected Ochako to talk about this.

“They were able to work together, find out what had caused the alarm, and get everyone to settle down before someone got hurt. They showed initiative, ingenuity and leadership. All traits I think that would make them great reps for our class. I think you should vote for them. So I plan on withdrawing from the vote. If you had planned on voting for me, I’m sorry but those two deserve it more.”

Many in the class were shocked, none more than Tenya and Momo who weren’t sure what to say. Izuku then stood up, “I’d also like to withdraw my name from the vote. While I wasn’t there, Uraraka made it pretty clear what had happened, and I have to agree with her, if there are two people here that deserve the position, it’s them.”

“Wait, wait a second please,” Tenya’s arms were moving in a blur, “It was Yaoyorozu who noticed it was the media first. She was also the one trying to get everyone's attention, she’d even made a megaphone to try and talk over the crowd.”

“But it was you who was able to do it, Iida.”

Tenya blinked and turned to look at Momo, “I wasn’t able to get the crowd to calm down, but you were. It was your idea to have Uraraka float you above everyone and use my megaphone to talk over everyone. I don’t think I would have ever thought of that.”

The class was talking amongst themselves openly now. Many agreeing with Ochako, Izuku and
Momo said. Hitoshi then spoke up, “Heck if you think about it, Iida’s the one that took charge of this whole election thing to begin with. He’s kinda already been leading the class.”

More people nodded while Tenya looked around, not sure what to say.

Aizawa’s rough voice cut over everyone, ‘If you all are going to vote, then get on with it. Class is almost over.’

Nodding, everyone took out their cards and quickly wrote down their vote. After everything was tallied, Aizawa made the official announcement, “Iida has been elected as your class representative, with Yaoyorozu acting as the vice representative.”

Katsuki frowned but kept quiet, while everyone else clapped for the winners. Tenya bowed deeply, “Thank you all for your votes of confidence. I promise to carry out the duties as your call representative to the best of my ability.”

With classes over the Dekusquad made their way towards the school gate, with everyone but Himiko dreading the thought of having to walk through the sea of reporters again.

“You know, Toga, maybe I should take you up on your offer.” Izuku said with a laugh.

Himiko blushed and a huge smile crossed her face, before she remembered just what Izuku thought she had offered.

*Though, if I could get him to stay overnight...Nah, that’d be too fast. The poor boy would short circuit before I could get to the fun parts. I mean I’m not that thirsty...*

Himiko noticed the smile Izuku had while looking at her and gulped.

*Nope, I’m thirsty. I want a tall glass of this boy, right now.*

“What offer are you talking about, Deku?”
Himiko could feel Ochako’s gaze drilling into her back. Izuku quickly answered, “Oh Toga joked about maybe I should camp out on campus so I don’t have to deal with the reporters.”

“YEP! That is totally what I meant. Yep, totally.”

Ochako narrowed her eyes at Himiko while the other girl turned and waved at her, smiling.

Deciding to let it go, Ochako made a note to herself to find a convincing way to let Izuku hand over his phone. Of course she still hadn’t gotten a good look at her entry in his notebook so getting his phone might be a bit problematic.

_I swear, I’m just gonna take it and run._

“Ah, before I forget,” Tenya started, “are you all free this weekend?”

“I am.”

“I’m pretty sure Deku and I are.”

“I live here and have no social life, so yeah, totally free.”

“Excellent! Since we had such an enjoyable time at Midoriya’s I would like to extend an invitation for you all to come over to my home for some relaxation and recreation.”

Hitoshi translated, “You mean you want us to come over and hang out?”

“Yes.”

Ochako smiled, “That sounds like fun.”

“Yeah,” Izuku agreed, “It’ll be fun to hang out again.”
Hitoshi shrugged, “Sure, I’m pretty sure I can make it.”

“Well if everyone is going, I sure am not getting left out.” Himiko added.

“Yes, but please make sure you get permission this time. I would hate to have to reprimand you to someone.”

Himiko shot Tenya a look, but kept her voice light, “Just because you’re the class rep doesn’t mean you’re my boss.”

“As your class representative, it is my responsibility to ensure you follow the rules laid out by the school. All the rules.”

“...I’m hiding your glasses.”

“I have spares,” was Tenya’s quick reply.

While everyone laughed as for once, Himiko looked completely lost, something that she would not forgive Tenya for, their laughter came to a stop when they reached the remains of the front gate. Hitoshi whistled, “Wow, is this how the media got in?”

Ochako lightly tapped on the gates side, and was startled when some of the metal crumpled under her knuckles, falling to the ground as a cloud of rusty dust, “I know they wanted an interview, but this is ridiculous.”

“To damage school property in such a careless way, have they no shame!?”

“No, no they don’t,” Ochako, remembering the woman from earlier in the morning, kept her voice low when she responded.

While everyone else looked over the gate, Himiko peeked her head out, “Well it looks like someone scared the reporters off at least. Must have learned just how much trouble they could get
in for breaking into the school like they did.”

“If we’re lucky that the most exciting thing we’ll have to deal with this week.” Hitoshi said, sounding tired.

“This week?” Ochako asked.

“I’m learning to expect the unexpected at this point. Giant robots, surprise expulsion tests, and now stampede causing reporters. It’s honestly exhausting.”

Ochako and Himiko laughed at the poor boy. Izuku reached up and pulled a chunk of metal off the gate, rubbing his thumb over the rusted metal, “ Whoever did this must have a really powerful quirk. The metal in the barrier is what, six inches thick? Look,” Izuku squeezed and the chuck of steel crumpled in his hand, “I’d hate to be on the bad side of someone who could do this.”

It was the next day and everyone had just returned from lunch which had thankfully involved less stampeding than yesterday. As everyone took their seats, there was a nervous excitement in the air. Their next period was Heroics, and after their last lesson, many were looking forward to making up for their loss in the mock battles. Just as the bell rang, Aizawa entered the class, which caused a few students to glance around. Heroics was All Might’s class after all.

Their disappointment and confusion must have shown as Aizawa eyed them and gave an exasperated sigh, “You all need to learn to hide your emotions better. You’re too easy to read.”

There was an audible gulp from the class.

“Anyway, today’s Heroics class is going to be different from last time. Myself and one other teacher will be joining All Might for this training course.”

*Today’s different? I wonder what makes this lesson different from last time?*

While Izuku tried to come up with an answer, Himiko decided to just ask, “So what are we doing today anyway?”
“Today will focus on rescue training. Natural disasters, shipwrecks, man made catastrophes, and
everything in between.”

Ochako’s eyes lit up. While she had come to really enjoy combat training these past few months;
rescue heroes, like Thirteen, had been her biggest inspiration; and now she was going to get a
chance to work towards being like hero favorite hero. Ochako couldn’t help but feel herself getting
fired up.

While Ochako was getting excited, a few students looked less than pleased. Katsuki sighed and
almost looked bored, while Denki groaned as he leaned back into his chair, “Rescue training, huh?
I get the feeling this is going to be a lot of hard work.”

“Yeah, no kidding,” Hanta agreed, not looking forward to what this training was going to entail.

Ochako frowned at their dismissive attitude, “Are you guys for real? Heroes save people all the
time. Just because you don’t get to do it while fighting a bad guy you're going to have that kind of
attitude?”

Both boys winced at Ochako’s sharp chiding, which was not helped when some more students
came to her side, “Yeah, come on guys, that's not a really manly perspective at all. You two should
be ready to go like me.”

“Exactly! It is a hero's duty to rescue people,” Tenya added, hands chopping in their direction.

While some students made sure others were going to give it their all during the class, some others
were looking forward to a chance to show off, “If there are going to be shipwrecks and water
rescues, then I’ll be sure to come out on top. No one can beat me in the water.”

Kyouka smirked, “if it’s search and rescue, that’ll be perfect for me.”

“Hey, I wasn’t done talking,” Aizawa’s voice cut in, silencing everyone, “I’m giving you all the
choice if you want to wear your costumes to this lesson, though I recommend you do so. There is a
good chance that aspects of your costumes may hinder or limit your abilities in rescue situations.
This is a good time to find out. The training today will be held off campus at the USJ, so we’ll be
taking a bus. Hurry up and get ready. We’ll meet up and head out immediately.”
As everyone got up to collect their things, Izuku could help but smile as he watched Ochako excitedly get her costume case. Her excitement was obviously contagious as several other students were getting pumped up along with her, Izuku himself included.

*Rescue work has always been important to her. I guess it makes sense why she’s so excited. And she isn’t wrong either; rescue work is an important aspect of being a hero. Even if you were able to beat the villain, what was the point if you couldn’t save the people he was threatening. Saving people, that’s how a hero wins. Above all else, a hero has to save the people in danger, no matter what.*

“Class 1-A, gather round! I will be instructing you on how we will be boarding the bus to USJ. We want this to go as smoothly as possible so follow my instructions to the letter.”

Tenya’s hands were moving in a blur as he made sure everyone in the class was paying attention to him. Off to the side, Hitoshi sighed as he gave Ochako an annoyed look, “You made us elect a dictator. Everything that happens now is your fault.”

“I want you to form two lines going off your student number. Each group of two will sit next to each other. Now let's make this go as smoothly as we can. Smoothly!”

Ochako laughed nervously, “Well...at least he’s taking the position seriously?”

“You two! Shinso, Uraraka! Please do not talk amongst yourself while I am directing you on how we will be loading up the bus.”

Uraraka blinked before muttering under her breath, “Vive la révolution.”

“Vive la résistance,” Muttered Hitoshi.

Tenya felt a shudder run up his spine, and looked back over at his two smiling friends. Before he could question why he was filled with such dread, Momo walked up to him, “Iida, there may be a problem with your seating arrangement.”
“Eh?”

While Tenya learned that the layout of the bus was not what he had expected, everyone else took their chance and filed in.

Izuku found an empty seat and quickly sat down. While he tried to stay calm, he was filled with nervous excitement. The USJ was one of the most premiere rescue training facilities in the country. It was supposed to be able to recreate a wide range of different natural and man made disasters that could put even the most well trained rescue hero through their paces, and he was about to have his first lesson there.

“You look like you’re ready to go, Midoriya, kero”

Looking up, Izuku was surprised to see Tsuyu standing over him.

*I guess I’m still not used to people just coming up and talking to me.*

“Yeah I am, Asui. To get a chance to have a rescue lesson at USJ is so exciting.”

While her face stayed the same she tapped her finger to her chin, “Call me Tsu,” and sat down next to him, “You don’t mind?”

“Oh! Please, it’s fine, Asu-.” Tsuyu eyed him, “Um, Tsu.”

“Izuku! You saved me a seat, how nice.”

Himiko smiled happily as she plopped down next to Izuku with a little squeal of glee. Though she was more than a little into Izuku’s seat, making sure her shoulders rubbed up against him, but being careful that none of her blades came to close. Izuku returned Himiko’s smile, “H-Hey, Toga. You seem excited. Looking forward to the lesson?”

“The lesson? Oh! Um yeah, it should be fun.”
Himiko decided not to mention that she was more excited at the chance to get to see Izuku in his cute costume. Tsuyu leaned over, “You don’t really look like you have a lot of support or rescue gear on your costume though.”

Izuku rubbed his chin, and reached up and tapped on of the cylinders on Himiko’s mask, “maybe these things are-”

Himiko eeped and pulled back, putting her hands over the gear, “Um nope! Nope those are not for rescuing! Please no touching.”

That’s just what I need to happen: have a big ol’ needle go right through Izuku’s hand.

“So you don’t have any kind of rescue gear then?”

“Err...not really no.”

Izuku eyed the gear on Himiko’s mask, and the mask itself. Noting that there was a smaller mask hidden underneath the fanged larger one.

Those tubes almost look like they would go into her mouth? Like a bunch of straws. Maybe she has to drink something for her quirk to work. She did say it needed resources to work. Could those things be filled with whatever she needs, or...oh

Izuku noticed that Himiko was growing increasingly uncomfortable under his gaze, and was trying to keep the gear out of sight, while not drawing attention that she was doing so.

OH! If they are something to do with her quirk, and she hasn’t told me what it is, of course she’d be uncomfortable with me looking to close. Idiot, change the subject!

“Well, er, well this will be a good opportunity to see if you need to make any alterations. I’m sure everyone here will be making upgrades and the like after getting some actual experience while in our costumes.”
Himiko relaxed as Izuku averted his eyes and changed the subject, “Yeah, I guess so.”

“With how quickly you were able to find the bomb the other day, I bet you’d do great at search and rescue, kero” Tsuyu added.

“Oh, I’m not too sure about that, but thanks, Tsuyu.”

“Call me Tsu.”

Himiko blinked, “Tsu? I get to use a nickname? Does that make us friends?”

Tsuyu nodded. Himiko smiled brightly and leaning over Izuku wrapped a startled Tsuyu in a hug, “Yay! I got another friend!”

While Himiko hugged Tsuyu, and Izuku tried very hard not to think about there being a girl lying across his lap, Ochako got onto the bus with the last of the class and paused that the scene playing out before her. Himiko looked up at her as she straightened up and took her seat next to Izuku, smiling at her. Ochako smiled back before taking a place across from them, next to Momo and Tenya. Izuku swore he could actually see sparks going off between them as he looked between the two. A little concerned since he could feel the tension between the two. There always was it seemed since the first day, but every once in a while it spiked, like it was spiking now.

*It’s like they’re competing over something. Did this start after Mr. Aizawa’s test? Did they become rivals or something? First it was the test, then our first hero lesson, and now the rescue lesson. They must have formed a rivalry. That’s great; I’m glad Uraraka has found someone to push her, and Toga has someone else to be close with along with Iida, Shinso, and me. Though should rivalries always be this intense? I get that they’re gearing up for the lesson, but this is just a bus ride. What could they be fighting over here?*

“Midoriya, you’re muttering, kero.”

“Oh sorry.” Izuku rubbed his head, embarrassed.

“Also, you are really oblivious.”
Before long the bus was on the road, on its way to USJ. For most of the trip, Izuku went back to wondering what kind of practice he was going to get to do, so he wasn’t paying much attention to the conversations that were taking place around him.

“What do you think, Midoriya?” Eijiro asked

Izuku blinked, suddenly hearing his name, “Huh, what was the question?”

“Well, according to Uraraka you’re the quirk expert,” Ochako chuckled when Izuku shot her a glance, “So, how important do you think having a flashy quirk is to being a hero? Take mine for example, it’s pretty good against people, but it isn’t really flashy.”

Holding up his arm, Eijiro hardened the skin showing it to everyone in the conversation.

“I think it’s a great quirk though. It can easily be a pro’s quirk. There are so many ways you could use that for offense and defence.”

Mina nodded, “Told you.”

Eijiro smiled as he put his hand down. Denki then threw in, “But don’t heroes also have to think about popularity? Having a flashy quirk would make that a lot easier.”

“Says the guy that lights up like a christmas tree,” Himiko deadpanned.

“I’m just saying, flashy and strong make it way easier to get noticed.”

Eijiro agreed, “I see what you mean. I’d say the three of the strongest people in class have the flashiest quirks.”

“Todoroki, Bakugou and Midoriya. Those three have really strong quirks and they’re flashy as hell.”

A few students nodded in agreement.

“Wait me?”

While Izuku was shocked that he was considered one of the strongest in the class, Tsuyu cut in, “Bakugou may be strong, but he’s too mad all the time. I don’t think he’d be very popular.”

“THE FUCK YOU JUST SAY!?”

Bakugou screamed from his seat.

Kyouka added, “Yeah, even though we haven’t known each other that long, it’s pretty telling that we can all see your attitude is a total dumpster fire.”

“Real brave of you to say that all the way down there. Why don’t you come over here and say that shit!” Katsuki growled.

Kyouka sighed and surprised a few people, Izuku most of all, when she stood up and walked over to Katsuki’s seat and looked down at him, “Your attitude is complete shit. Plus I wouldn’t have you in the top three.” Pointing over to Momo she continued, “Yaoyorozu can make cannon’s so she can do what you do, but way cooler.”

Momo blushed at the compliment and vote of confidence. Katsuki seethed at Kyouka who returned his glair with an eye roll as she went back to her seat. Ochako broke out into a laughing fit while Izuku was having a very hard time registering that there were people giving Katsuki such a hard time.

This is crazy. If I looked outside and the sky was green, I wouldn’t be surprised.
“Thank you, Jirou, but it takes time for me to make something like a cannon, even if I wanted to make a small one. Bakugou could do a lot more in the same amount of time.”

“Damn right I fucking could!”

Izuku blinked and scratched his chin, looking at her, “Yaoyorozu, do you have to fully form something before it can work?”

“Eh?”

Ochako frowned for a second, then blinked as the guessed what Izuku was asking, “OH! That’s a neat idea Deku.”

Their classmates looked confused, Momo most of all, “I’m sorry, but am I missing something.”

“I’m just wondering, if you made the cannon barrel, powder and projectile but kept it attached to yourself, you’d be able to cut down on your attack time and save you resources to make other things...actually what do you use to make things?”

“Body fat,” a few girls shot Momo some jealous looks as she looked down at herself, questioningly, “and I… never thought of that before.”

Ochako smirked as she saw more than a few students giving Izuku some impressed looks, “See, quirk expert.”

After the short trip, the bus pulled into the facility parking lot and as everyone disembarked, they found the hero Thirteen waiting for them.

“Hello everyone, and welcome to the USJ. I’ve been waiting for you.”

“EEK!”

Ochako, upon seeing her favorite hero in person, wasn’t able to hold back her excitement as she
latched onto Izuku’s arm and started jumping.

“It’s Thirteen! Deku, Deku it’s Thirteen! Oh my gosh, it’s really her! She’s the greatest rescue hero there is! She’s saved so many people, and she’s going to be our teacher. I love U.A!”

A few students laughed, while Thirteen chuckled, rubbing the back of her helmet, “It looks like I have a fan.”

Katsuki groaned into his hand, “Great, Deku’s infected her with his hero worship shit. Just what I fucking need.”

Aizawa fixed Ochako with a look, “Uraraka, calm down.”

Ochako quickly closed her mouth, but was still bouncing up and down in her excitement.

Thirteen clapped her hands together, “Right, let’s all head inside without further delay.”

Tomura sat, away from the group of thugs that had been gathered for him. Around him, he could hear the others, talking and shouting. There was an air of excitement. The large group knew why they had been gathered and knew what was expected of them.

They were going to kill the symbol of peace.

They were going to kill All Might.

They were also going to kill anyone that stood in their way.

Teachers and students alike.

The group josted and pushed each other. There was blood in the water, and they were one misstep
away from going into a frenzy, but they made sure to keep their distance from Tomura, and the hulking monster behind him. A couple had made the mistake of getting too close, wondering why they should be listening to some punk. They were either a red smear on the ground, or had been reduced to rotting chunks.

His plan had almost fallen to tatters before it had even begun. Running into that student, Midoriya, had almost cost him, something Sensei had made sure to let him know when he had returned to the bar. Sensei did applaud his restraint however; killing the student would have had the same effect if he had been caught. The window to strike would have closed, and any other further attacks would become almost impossible. He was lucky the kid was so gullible to believe his lie. Such a stupid little kid.

Tomura reached up and scratched at his neck, he was getting tired of waiting. The urge to destroy something, to kill, was eating away at him. Waiting was boring, and he was tired of being bored.

Behind him, the air twisted and warped as a cloud of black mist formed, taking the shape of something almost human.

“Shigaraki, the students have arrived at the facility.”

“Finally.”

Pulling out a pale severed hand, and placing it on his face, Tomura couldn’t help but feel his excitement start to bubble up, “Kurogiri, lets go kill us a hero.”

Chapter End Notes

So how a single episode in the anime, and like half a chapter in the manga became this huge chunk of words I will never understand, but here it is. USJ is here folks, I hope you are ready for it >:

Honestly this was a fun one to write. Getting to dive into Toga's head a little more was fun. Got to show that while she's in U.A. and training to be a hero, she isn't a truly heroic person just yet. The twisted grinning stabber is still in there. Also Kyouka got a nice little scene too huh. She may end up being a bigger character later on.

I hope you all enjoyed the new chapter. I'm always open to comments, reviews or criticisms, all are welcome here!

A big thanks to you readers too. Still surprises me that there are people out there that
like this silly little story.

Huge shoutout to my beta reader Tmalasia! Find all my mistakes so this thing is readable.
Chapter Summary

In an instant, everything they thought they knew was changed. The evils of the world have come for them. They were not safe and this was not training. This wasn't some comic or movie, this was life. Their life. And life doesn't always have happy endings.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Following Thirteen and Aizawa into USJ, Ochako couldn’t help but have a little bounce in her step. She was living a dream at the moment. The USJ was the premiere rescue training center and Thirteen was the premiere rescue hero. Her obvious hero crush made Izuku laugh as he leaned over and whispered, “So this is what it’s like on the other side.”

Ochako blushed, and playfully shoved Izuku away, “I’m not as bad as you are.”

“Yes you are.”

“Completely.”

“The resemblance is uncanny.”

Ochako turned and stuck her tongue out at the other three members of the squad, earning her a few more chuckles from them. Once the class was inside the facility, all the talking came to a stop as they got their first look at the inside of the enormous facility. While the class stared in awe, Thirteen turned and swept her hand over the whole building, “I designed this facility to have multiple different accident and natural disaster scenarios to test and prepare people for the work they will be doing in the field: shipwrecks, landslides, city wide fires, and typhoons. Here, you will learn the heroic act of saving a person’s life. This is my Unforeseen Simulation Joint, or USJ. Welcome everyone.”

While the class continued to marvel, Aizawa walked over to Thirteen, “Where’s All Might? He was supposed to…”
Izuku's ears perked up at the mention of All Might's name. While the teachers' voices had lowered so he couldn’t over hear them, he watched their interaction and saw Thirteen hold up her hand with three fingers held up. Leaning over Izuku whispered to Ochako, “I don’t think All Might is going to be teaching the class today.”

“Eh?”

Izuku pointed towards the teachers, and Ochako saw that Thirteen was still holding up her hand.

“I bet he used up his time this morning.”

“Sounds about right.” Ochako agreed, “You think he’d be more careful when he has a class to teach.”

Izuku shrugged with a smile, “Well, it is his job to be a hero after all.”

Ochako frowned, but was quick to hide it. A part of her couldn’t help but disagree with Izuku.

*I'm sorry Deku, but that’s not completely right. He should be making sure you are ready for One-for-All when he finally passes it down to you.*

Aizawa groaned, running a hand through his hair, “That man is the definition of irrational. We should still be able to have the lesson at least.”

Thirteen chuckled, “I’m sure you’ll give him a piece of your mind when this day is done.”

“I guess we’ll go ahead and get started then.”

“Actually, I’d like to address the class first, if you don’t mind.”

With a nod, Aizawa moved off to the side, giving Thirteen the floor.
“Everyone, before we start, I’d like to say a few things. As I’m sure a few of you are aware, my Quirk is Black Hole. With it I can suck up anything and turn it to dust.”

“It’s an incredible quirk that you’ve used to save so many people from horrible disasters of all kinds,” Ochako blurted out.

Thirteen chuckled softly, “Yes, that’s right.” Her voice though lost its levity as she continued, “But this is a power that can also easily kill someone.”

The mood of the class changed in an instant.

“I am aware that some of you have Quirks that are like that. You have so much power, but since we live in a society where yours and everyone’s Quirks are documented and regulated, you may not think about the kind of power you actually have. I implore you all to always remember that all it takes is one misstep for a tragedy to occur.”

Many students found themselves looking at each other or even themselves. Mina glances down at her skin; its pink color a side effect of the acid her body produces. She had burned through more than a few pieces of clothes when she was still learning to keep her fluids neutral. How easy could it have been a person she had burned instead. Shouto reached up and gently touched the scar on his face, before he pulled his hand away with a frown, the ice covering his left side cracked and creaked some as he got his emotions back in check. He knew the damage fire could bring. Denki nervously rubbed his hands together; he could still recall all the electronics he had shorted out when he was little. What would have happened if he shorted out someone's pacemaker, or worse? Ochako frowned as she thought back to a few of her more angry thoughts when she was dealing with Katsuki. She had even made the threat to him about what she'd do if he attacked Izuku again, but really thinking about it, she could hurt a lot of people with only a touch.

Katsuki looked down at his hands for a second before grunting. He was bored with the speech and ready to get the lesson underway.

“Now, when you all took Aizawa’s special...physical fitness test, you got the chance to find out the hidden possibilities your quirks are capable of. Then, with All Might’s mock battles, you experienced using your Quirks on other people and being on the receiving end of them. This class, however, will be different than either of those. Today you will learn how to use your Quirks to save the lives of people in danger. If there is one thing I hope you take from this lesson, it’s this: your powers are not meant to hurt others, but to save them.”

The class, moved by the speech, started clapping and cheering for the rescue hero. Thirteen bowed
before turning to Aizawa, “So shall we get started?”

“Yeah. Class reps, I want you to divide the class into-”

Above everyone, the lights illuminating the giant facility flickered and sparked. While the class looked around, down in the courtyard at the center of the room, the very air began to twist in on itself. As the air continued to warp, it darkened until a large wall of black mist expanded out in both directions. Soon people began to walk through

Eijirou glanced down at the courtyard, “Hey what’s that down there? Are they part of the lesson?”

Izuku took a step forward, “Oh, is this like the entrance exam, where the lesson just sta-” He didn’t get to finish as he was suddenly yanked back by Himiko, “Toga what’s...wrong?”

He stopped when he saw her. Her normal smile was gone, replaced with a snarl while her eyes were narrowed into slits, “Izuku, stay back. Those people are dangerous.”

A few other students looked at Himiko confused. When they took a step forward to see what was going on, Aizawa stepped in front of them, “None of you move!”

“Sensei, what’s going on?” Ochako asked, worry etched across her face.

“Those are villains.”

As more villains poured through the black warp gate, Tomura soon joined them while a large silent monster kept to his side. With them being the last two to step through, the black gate twisted and reformed into the shape of a tall man.

“Everyone is accounted for Shigaraki. They are all in place.”

Tomura nodded as he overlooked the courtyard, “and the heroes and kids?”
“They are still up at the top of the stairs. I counted all twenty-two students...and two heroes.”

Glancing up Tomura quickly found the group. Frowning he reached up and scratched at his neck, “Only two?”

“The rescue hero Thirteen and Eraser Head,” Kurogiri clarified.

Tomura scratched at his neck harder, leaving red marks on his skin, “The teacher's schedule I found yesterday said that All Might was also supposed to be here.” His voice started to raise, the pitch on the verge of cracking, “Where is he? I even went through the trouble of bringing this whole crowd, too. Do you know how long it took to find all these people? How utterly boring it was? Are you telling me I wasted all that time!?”

“Shigaraki, please calm yourself. It is possible he is simply late. There were reports of him performing some heroics in the city not that long ago.”

The fingers clawing at his neck stopped, and fell to his side, “All Might, the great symbol of peace is tardy?” A dry chuckle, a sound almost like dry leaves, escaped the young man's throat, “I wonder, Kurogiri; will he show up faster if we start killing the kids? Heroes are supposed to come and save the day after all.”

Looking to his side, Tomura examined the giant that stood completely still, “Maybe I should sick the Nomu on a few. Wouldn’t that be fun?”

Nomu, hearing their name, twisted its head around, their beak and jagged teeth making them look like they were smiling.

“You want to kill something, don’t you? Don’t worry. One way or another, you’ll get your blood; I promise.”

Aizawa frowned as he surveyed the courtyard below.
An attack the day after the incident yesterday. No way that’s a coincidence, and they showed up just as this class was starting. This attack of theirs has been carefully planned. So they must have some sort of goal in mind.

Himiko glanced around, “Hey shouldn’t there be alarms going off right now?”

“There should be, yes; all school facilities have them,” Aizawa answered. He paused then added, “We’d be able to hear the other facilities if they were also under attack…More than likely they chose to attack this building since it’s isolated.”

Himiko huffed, “Great, guys that are stupid enough to attack a school filled with heroes, but smart enough to do it with a plan.”

Aizawa turned to look at her. While the other students were doing their best not to break into a panic, Himiko had walked away from them and was analyzing the situation like he was.

“Get back with the others, Toga. You’ll be evacuating with the rest of them.”

The two stared at each other. Aizawa could see the bloodlust building behind her eyes. While he was tempted to throw the living blender at the large group of villains, she was, despite her past, his student. And he was going to protect her.

“You have people you want to protect right, Toga. Stay with them.”

Himiko’s eye twitched to the side, towards Izuku and the others, before she fell back in with the rest of the students.

“Thirteen! Have you been able to contact the school?

“No, I’ve been trying to get in contact with the school and police, but all my calls are getting blocked.”

So they must have someone to disrupt our security and someone that can stop us from calling for help. Someone with a radio-wave-type or electromagnetic wave type Quirk perhaps.
“Alright, Thirteen, our first priority is getting the students out of here. Start the evacuation, and try getting in contact with the school once you are out of the building. Kaminari!”

Upon hearing his name, the electric boy bolted to attention, “Yes sir!?"

“I want you to try contacting the school with your Quirk too. See if you can break through whatever is blocking our communications by boosting the charge in your headset.”

“Oh, right! I can do that!”

Satisfied, and seeing the students converging on Thirteen, Aizawa turned and slid his goggles on.

“Sensei? What about you?” Izuku, noticing that his teacher was not joining them stopped and asked, “You’re not planning on fighting them yourself? Even if you erase their Quirks, there’s still so many villains. Isn’t your fighting style more surprising the enemy and then capturing them? A frontal assault is-”

“Midoriya,” Aizawa gently cut him off, “Something you’ll learn about being a hero: you don’t survive long if you rely on just one trick. I know what I’m doing.”

Taking one last look at his class, Aizawa turned back to the courtyard, and the mass of villains, “Thirteen, I’m leaving it to you. Get them out of here!”

With a running start, Aizawa launched himself down the steps and into the horde below.

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All Might frowned as he hung up his phone. His attempts to contact Aizawa and Thirteen had both gone straight to voicemail.

_I guess the class must be in full swing at this point. It's not surprising they aren't picking up at the moment._
Glancing at the clock on the wall, All Might groaned in annoyance. He had pushed himself this morning and had ended up using almost all of his time. So he was forced to wait in his office, in his smaller form, and hope he would recover enough to catch the tail end of the class.

*I really am bad at this whole teaching thing, aren’t I? Regardless of the reason, because of my off hour activities, I am being forced to neglect my duties as a teacher.*

He had hoped that his time training Izuku and Ochako would prepare him somewhat for what was going to be asked of him when he started teaching at U.A. At the very least it could help him manage his teaching time, and his heroics time.

*Well that sure didn’t happen.*

Despite his sour mood, All Might couldn’t help but smile at the fond memories thinking about the months he had spent training his young protégés. It had been a simpler time.

*I could go for one of Inko’s dinner’s right about now. I should probably give her a call or something pretty soon. Say I’m checking up on everyone. It would be bad if I suddenly just dropped off the face of the earth. She’d probably give me a hard time if I did that… she’d definitely give me a piece of her mind if she found out I wasn’t teaching her son like I was supposed to, that’s for sure…*

Sighing deeply, All Might leaned back, “I’ve gone and done something very foolish, haven't I.”

“I’d say that's a given.”

All Might jolted up, at the door Principal Nezu smiled brightly as he walked in. A bit too brightly if All Might was to say honestly.

*That's his, 'I know you did something and am now going to lecture you' face. I’m about to be in trouble. I think I’d prefer getting scolded by Inko… actually maybe not. She can get really scary.*

“Good afternoon, Principal. Your coat is looking extra glossy today.”
“The secret is keratin; helps me get a color and luster no human could hope to achieve. We can talk about it later if you’d like. I’d much rather talk to you about something else at the moment.”

Taking out a tablet, Nezu scrolled through some news articles before stopping at a picture All Might, after stopping a crime, “All Might Resolves Three Incidents in Only One Hour!” Nezu read off the title, “You really outdid yourself this morning, didn’t you?”

“I have...no excuse.”

“There are many agencies in this town that can handle these kinds of incidents. You don’t have to go running off every time a cat gets stuck in a tree. Your time could be much better spent, don’t you think. For a real emergency, or your students.”

All Might winced.

“Or your successor?”

All Might winced harder.

“Even with your injury and its effects on you, you still want to be seen as the symbol of peace, but doing so is becoming much harder for you. Since the incident, your time has continued to shrink. You becoming a teacher and slowly fading from the public eye was the best course, I thought. If it suddenly got out you were weakened, it would be very bad.”

All Might didn’t want to think about that. After spending so much time as a pillar for the people, the thought of what would happen if that was gone was not pleasant. Nezu was right; working as a teacher was the best way for him to step back in a way that the public would accept.

“Even if it’s a cover for you, you still must take your responsibilities seriously. Those students deserve to be taught by the best. And so does Midoriya, don’t you think?”

“Of course, you are right.”

Nezu nodded before getting onto the couch and fixing himself and All Might a cup of tea, “Tell
me, how long until you plan of passing One for All to the boy?"

“I plan on giving it to him around the start of his second year. By then he should be ready physically and mentally. He’ll also have a better grasp of his own quirk before adding my power to it.”

Nezu frowned as he looked at his reflection in his cup, “Cutting it a little close, don’t you think?”

All Might didn’t answer as both heroes sat in silence. Both thinking the same thing.

This year, or the next.

“...If something happens…” All Might stopped, taking a breath, “Then the responsibility is on me. As long as it’s just my life that’s... I will not rush this just because of some arbitrary time table. Young Midoriya doesn’t deserve to have that on his shoulders. It is my burden to bear.”

“Perhaps, but if you hadn’t spent a year before hand training someone fresh, and then waiting another year for them to be ready, we wouldn’t be having this issue I think.”

All Might frowned at that, “I’ve chosen who I believe deserves to be the next to have this power. Young Midoriya is worthy of it.”

“And none of the candidates you were shown when you first arrived here were?”

Recalling the students he saw, All Might nodded, “They were all fine young men and women. Each of them will become fine heroes, of that I have no doubts. But I was looking at something more than just skill and drive. I needed to see...a spark. Something that can’t be measured… or described very well I’m afraid.”

“A spark, huh? Did Toogata Mirio not have this spark?”

That name made All Might flinch.
“If I recall, you were very impressed with the young man back in his second year.”

“That’s true, he was… is very impressive.”

Nezu took a sip of his tea, “You’ve been keeping track of the boy?”

“I have, yes.”

“Because you are impressed with his progress, or because of who has been training him?”

The “who” hung in the air as both heroes sat in silence. Sir Nighteye: All Might’s estranged former sidekick. It had come as quite a shock when he learned that Mirai had helped train the boy, and had pushed for him to be the top candidate for One for All.

“All Might… Toshinori, there is something I have been meaning to ask you. I understand that ultimately, who you pass One for All to next is your decision. And while I don’t think you would do this, I still have to ask. Did your decision to pass over Toogata for Midoriya have anything to do with the troubled past you have with Mirai?”

“No, not at all,” was All Might’s instant response.

“Young Toogata has a good head on his shoulders, is strong, and is developing instincts that will serve him well into his future. He has also developed his quirk into something truly magnificent.”

“And he has that spark as well.”

All Might nodded, “true.”

“And Midoriya? What made you pick him?”

Pausing, All Might leaned back into the sofa, “When I first met the boy, in every way measurable, Young Toogata was better than him. Young Midoriya was…well a bit of a shrimp…that stays here right?”
“Afraid of something?” There was a hint of amusement in the principal’s eyes.

*Something? No. Someone, or two someones? Yes. If either the boy’s mother or Young Uraraka heard me say that, I’d be dead before I hit the ground.*

“Er, anyway. As I was saying, the boy was lacking in everything that Young Toogata excelled in. Physical strength. Quirk capabilities, and self esteem.”

“Every *measurable* way.”

“That’s right. Young Midoriya had even asked me if he could be a hero. I had said no…” All Might felt shame build up in his chest. Looking back, he had been very quick to judge the boy, and more than a little harsh in crushing his dream so quickly. “But, not even an hour later the boy showed me something.”

“His spark.”

“Yes. This timid, shy, and honestly weak boy saw someone in danger, and rushed in to help without hesitation. It was inspiring. Both boys, side by side, you would say at that moment there was clearly one winner. One was faster, stronger, and far more experienced. However, at that same moment, Young Midoriya’s spark blazed just as brightly as Young Toogata’s. Maybe even more so. And afterwards, when I looked at him, I didn’t see him as he was. I saw what he could become.”

“And that’s why you picked him.”

“Yes.”

“You have a lot of faith in this young man.”

“I do.”
“Then don’t you think he deserves you teaching him, like you’re supposed to be?”

Sighing, All Might lowered his head, knowing that Nezu was right.

“At least you should be able to make it for the end of the class if you rest up a little longer. However after today, I really hope you take the students’ needs into account before you rush off again.”

“Of course.”

Nezu got up and was about to leave, but stopped momentarily, “Did you ever end up calling Sir Nighteye and talk to him to let him know you’d picked someone else for One for All?”

All Might winced, “I let him know, but there wasn’t a lot of...talking.”

“Ah, I’m sorry to hear that.”

Soon, Nezu left, leaving All Might alone with his thoughts. Glancing back over at the clock All Might poured himself a new cup.

*If I wait a few more minutes, I’ll be able to reach the class and stay for a few minutes at least. Hopefully Aizawa and Thirteen have everything under control.*

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Tomura hated heroes. He hated them with every fiber of his being; but he could appreciate a good beat down, and that was what he was getting. Even if technically he was on the losing side.

“That Eraser Head isn't that bad. He’s making short work out of all our men.”

Immediately after landing among the group of villains and criminals, Aizawa began picking them off, one after another. It wasn’t just the physical beating that was throwing off the group, but the psychological attack as well. Seeing someone next to them suddenly lose the ability to use their Quirk was enough to spread panic through their ranks, which Aizawa capitalized on.
Sighing, Tomura couldn’t do much but shrug, “it really shows the difference in quality vs quantity. The masses just don’t stand a chance against a pro like him.”

While Tomura was watching the fight, Kurigiri was watching Aizawa specifically. Once the fight had started, he had felt the heroes eyes on him, keeping him from being able to put the next step of the plan into motion.

“He’s strong, and with those goggles you can’t tell who he’s looking at. He’s also keeping you in his field of vision so you can’t warp. I really hate pro’s like him.”

“True, Shigaraki, but,” Kurigiri trailed off as he felt it. For the briefest instance, the pressure on him vanished, “no one is perfect.” Not letting the chance slip by, Kurigiri’s body twisted and then he was gone, leaving only a few puffs of black mist behind.

Alarmed, Aizawa scanned the courtyard, “Damn! The moment I blinked the guy who looked like the most trouble got away. He must have been waiting for his chance.”

*But where did he go?*

Izuku, despite the current situation, couldn’t help but watch as his teacher worked over the group of villains.

“Wow, Sensei’s fighting style is so different from All Might’s, but he’s holding his own against so many people. Incredible!”

He didn’t get more of an opportunity to watch, however, as he felt a hard tug on the back of his costume, pulling him back from the steps, “Huh!?"

“Deku, there is a time and a place for you to fanboy, and it's not NOW! ”

Ochako spun Izuku around and grabbed hold of his wrist, pulling him with her.
Hitoshi nodded as he pulled up alongside the two, “No kidding, we need to get out of here.”

“I’m afraid I can not allow you all to leave.”

In front of the exit door, a pillar of black mist rose from the ground, blocking the class’ path. Bright yellow eyes narrowed as Kurigiri looked over the students and teacher. An arm slid out from the black mass and crossed over his chest as he bowed respectfully to them, ‘It is a pleasure to meet you all. My name is Kurugiri of the League of Villains. It may have been rude of us, but we have invited ourselves into your school in order to finally lay the symbol of peace, All Might, to rest.”

Izuku and Ochako glanced at each other in alarm, while a few students muttered amongst themselves.

“Our intel said that All Might should have been here. Was there some kind of change? Hmm well, that is neither here nor there I suppose. I am here to make sure my part dealing with you all is carried out.”

Thirteen narrowed her eyes at the villain, while the cap on her gloved finger popped off as she readied herself to attack the villain in front of her and give the students an opening to run. She didn’t get the chance, however, as several rushed past her. Katsuki, Eijirou, Himiko and Tenya rushed to attack Kurigiri. Himiko swung a knife into the center of his mass while Tenya swung a kick at his right, with Eijirou following it up with a swing to the left. Katsuki came down from above and unleashed an explosion that covered the area in smoke.

Katsuki smirked, “Did you think we’d just stand around and let you carry out your plan?”

“The guy was just standing their monologuing. Lame,” Eijirou added.

As the smoke began to clear however, black wisps of mist broke through, before Kurigiri reformed in front of everyone.

Tenya frowned, “If his body is made of that black mist, can he even be damaged?”

Himiko held up her knife, there was a small stain of fresh blood on it, “No, look; I cut him. He has
to have a body under all of that.”

“My, my, that was very dangerous. How foolish of me to forget. Even if you are students, you are still the future heroes of this society. I mustn't underestimate any of you.”

*This isn’t good!*

Thirteen could tell the villain was about to do something, “All of you, move out of the way now!”

“As I said, I have a part to play, and that is scattering all of you to be tortured to death!”

In an instant, Kurigiri’s body exploded outward, sending tendrils of black mist in all directions, encircling the students. Shouji leapt to his side, wrapping his six arms around the nearest students he could and pulled them out of the way, while Denki in a panic started letting loose bolts of electricity to try and keep the darkness away from him. Feeling the ground disappear from under her feet, Ochako tried to make sure she kept a hold onto Izuku, desperate not to get separated. Unfortunately, the shock of the attack and the sudden feeling of falling was enough to rip Izuku free of her grip.

“DEKU!”

“URARAKA!”

With a grunt and a crash, Izuku fell through a black portal into a small dark room. Slamming into the floor, Izuku hissed in pain while objects around him clattered to the floor or on top of him. Desperately, Izuku kicked the objects away as he fought to stand up. Once standing, he leaned against a wall and tried to get his bearings.

*Okay, calm down. This is no time to panic. Just calm down.*

Looking around, Izuku was able to see that he was in a storage closet of some kind, and after a quick examination of himself, saw that while his landing had been rough, he wasn’t hurt.
Alright, first things first. The class is under attack by a group of villains that are here to kill All Might. They have a member with a teleportation or warp quirk of some kind, and he used it on the whole class. That must mean I wasn’t the only one that got moved around. Uraraka was right next to me; but she isn’t here now, so where we were teleported must have been random...I think.

Izuku closed his eyes and took another deep breath.

She’s okay. Uraraka is strong, so she will be okay. She will be okay.

Izuku repeated that in his head several more times, trying to make himself believe it. At least he was able to calm himself down a little.

I need to find out where I am. Then I need to regroup with everyone else. After that...after that...I’ll think about that when I get there.

Nodding to himself, Izuku was about to open the door of the closet and step outside but stopped when he heard voices just outside.

“Did you guys hear that?”

“One of those kids must have been dropped off here somewhere.”

“Let's keep looking, I’d love a chance to get my hands on one of those kids. Teach them a thing or two about wanting to be a hero and making my life miserable.”

“You’re just a lazy fuck that would rather steal than actually work.”

“HA HA HA HA HA!”

Izuku held his breath, waiting for the group to pass by, hoping they would continue to walk by, and not check the room he was in. He kept listening as the group walked off, and only when he was sure they had walked off did he finally leave the room.
The building looked like an everyday office building, but much more rundown. Walls were cracked, and there was debris everywhere.

_This must be the ruins zone, and I’m not alone. Great. It might be better to try and avoid them for now. Focus on getting out of here, that’s what’s important. Get out and get help._

Doing his best to keep quiet, Izuku made his way through the building, weaving around the ruined and broken halls.

_Uraraka, everyone, please be okay._

Moving through the halls was slow going. The terrain was just rough enough that Izuku had to be careful where and how he moved around. Hanging lights, large cracks in the floor, entire sections of the hallway split and twisted. A misstep here could easily cause him to trip and fall, making all his work trying to go undetected for nothing.

_I was only a few stories up when I got warped here, and I’ve been able to make it down two. If I can go at least one more I might be able to jump out a window and make a run for it._

Reaching a turn in the hallway, Izuku came to a stop just before the corner. Much to his chagrin, he didn’t have to even bother to look to know there were villains down the corridor. Their voices were carrying down the hall. Frowning Izuku berated himself, he should have heard them sooner, but he had been so preoccupied with keeping silent and following the signs pointing to the exits and stairs.

_I should backtrack. A building this big should have more than one exit; I just need to find it._

Izuku was about to start moving back when he heard what the villains were saying.

“So the boys found two of them then?”

“Yeah, one group radioed in saying they found one of the kids down below. Said he was going to
take some men and take him out.”

“That was a while ago wasn’t it?”

“Eh? Maybe? If they were having trouble they would have called for help.”

“It’s a kid. They’ll be fine. They’re probably just taking their time as they kill him.”

Izuku bit his lip as he tensed up.

*I’m not the only one here?! Two more he said. Oh no, what do I-

“That slime bastard got real lucky I heard. Found a real cute one to play with. Poor girl.”

Izuku froze.

“No kidding, that guy’s a real sick fuck. Likes to play with his food way too much. The guy is going to break that pink chick.”

*What*

“Wouldn’t be so bad if the bastard shared. I’d love a chance with her; girl was fine as hell.”

“Maybe you can have what’s left.”

“I bet if we’re quiet we’ll hear her pretty soon.”

The group laughed, and Izuku felt cold.
Pink chick…

Images of Ochako, proudly wearing her hero costume flashed through Izuku’s mind.

Slime bastard…

The sludge villain, and the horror of feeling him choking the life out him as he tried to steal his body.

Real broken .

Izuku almost screamed as he forced the horrible thought from his mind. His stomach twisted and he could taste bile in his mouth.

I bet if we’re quiet we’ll hear her pretty soon.

If they could hear from this hallway, then she was close. She was close, and those villains were in his way.

She was close, and those villains were in his way.

They were in his way.

Suddenly, Izuku didn’t feel cold anymore.

One of the villains, a large multi armed man with rock like skin wiped at his eyes, he had started laughing so hard he was almost crying. Bent over he took a second to catch his breath, “oh man, that’s funny. Who wants to bet how long it takes to go from pain to pl…” he trailed off as he looked up, just as Izuku came around the corner and started walking right towards them, “whaat the fuck is that supposed to be?”

Another villain, with antler horns and a large single eye, tilted his head to the side, “it’s a student, Rock Nuts.”
“No, I mean *what* is he supposed to be. Are those ears?”

A woman with drills in her hair snickered, “The Green Rabbit.”

A man that was a cross between a bearded lizard and a man hissed, “Nah it hassss to be more edgy than that. Oh, like the Emerald Hare. Sssshit like that.”

That got the group to laugh again, but Izuku did not care, “You’re in my way. *Move.*”

Izuku’s voice made it clear, he wasn’t kidding around. The villains just didn’t care, breaking into a new fit of laughter, some almost doubling over. Izuku kept walking forward, eyes going over the group as he advanced.

The closests villain was a tall four armed man, with skin that resembled stone, gray and jagged, with a face covered by a black mask. Another villain to his side was another man, with an over-all unimpressive skinny body, but his head was a large venus fly trap. Further down, a woman in a red leotard and sporting two large drills in her hair. There was a short, bearded-lizard man, hunched over hanging on the wall. Under him was someone that looked like a human cutout made of paper, with red eyes painted on. A woman with a large scar across her face wearing a short purple kimono whose arms were folded in like an accordion. A villain with a single large eye and large moose-like antlers jutting out from his forehead flanked by a man dressed as an old american biker with a chainsaw blade that ran through his forearm and over his knuckles. Finally the last two at the back, a woman with the lower body and bladed arms of a praying mantis next to a large bull of a man with large horns a spotted body and a large golden ring that pierced his nose on his bull face.

Ten villains stood between Izuku and the door. Ten villains that had no issue with the idea of killing his classmates-- of killing him. Of doing all kinds of horrible things. Their callous words about the pink girl rang in Izuku’s ears. The odds were ten-to-one against him. Ten-to-one, and Izuku did not care.

“I told you to *move.*”

The large rock villain sighed and started walking towards Izuku, “Kid, if you’re gonna try for the indimiation act, at least look the part. I mean look at you, doing your slow serious walk, trying to look all bad ass, but you look like a fucking green bunny.”
The villains behind him snickered.

“Come on kid, there must be something you can do to try and sell this bull shit you’re putting on.”

A short time after finishing his training, Izuku began to notice a change in himself. He had always been observant, especially when it came to quirks. He would notice details even experts in the pro hero message boards didn’t notice. After he had gained confidence in his quirk and started practicing with it though, that trait, that gift of observation shifted. He could still pick out quirk details better than anyone he knew, but he also started to notice things around him more. A useful trait when your quirk could turn any object lying around into a projectile. From small things like pens, marbles, coins, and trash. To large things like tables, chairs, desks, and doors. Doors that were hanging by only a single hinge. Metal doors hanging by only a single hinge that a villain just walked in front of.

Izuku’s quirk flared, its intensity matching his resolve, bathing the hall in emerald green light.

“Ha, so you can glow in the dark? That’s real cu-!”

Izuku ripped the door off its hinge and slammed it against the rock villain, pushing it and him right into the cracked glass of a window, then through it. The villain screamed as he was thrown out of the building, and kept screaming for a few stories until he hit the ground with a crash of shattering stone and concrete. Izuku pulled the door back and twisted it to his side, just above his head, ready to fire.

“That’s one.”

For a moment, the hallway went dead silent as each villain looked from the smashed open window, then towards Izuku. The shock quickly faded as the biker villain charged at Izuku, chain blades whirling to life, “I’m gonna rip you apart, you little shit!”

Moving the metal door in front of him, Izuku blocked the man’s punch. The villain, however, pressed forward, driving his fist and chain blade against the door, showering the floor with metal shavings and sparks before his fist punched through and he drove his arm clean through the door, up to his shoulder, “You think this little door is gonna stop me!?”
Izuku answered, but not with words. With a twist of his wrist, and door wretched around, at the same time, a very audible SNAP came from the man’s arm. Making a fist, Izuku drove his hand down, at the same time driving the door, and biker villain, through the floor.

“Two.”

While Izuku had been focused on the biker, the paper man shot past and wrapped his arms around Izuku, securing him, “Someone hit this kid!”

Izuku struggled to get free, but was too late. The one eyed villain rushed up, and slugged Izuku across the face, cracking his respirator. The next punch shattered it, cutting his lip. The villain then changed tactics and started going for body shots.

“Dude, shoot him with your eye lazer!”

The next punch stopped as the villain screamed, “I keep telling you, I DON’T HAVE A FUCKING EYE LASER!”

“Then what’s the point of the one eye!?!”

“You stupid fuc-!”

“AHHH!”

Izuku sucked in a breath and screamed, focusing on the floor right under the one eyed villain’s feet. The villain only had a moment to look down at the glowing floor, before Izuku ripped up a chunk and drove it right into the man's groin. Foam sprayed from the villain’s mouth, and his giant eye rolled back into his head as he collapsed to the ground. The paper villain, shocked to see the other man go down, moved an arm up from Izuku’s body and around his neck, desperately trying to strangle him, “Choke you little shit!”

Dazed, and now cut off from any air, Izuku desperately tried to think of what he could do. He was vaguely aware of the other villains advancing on him. He needed this guy off him now.
I need to stick a pin in him and focus on what’s coming next.

The thought triggered something in Izuku’s head as he got an idea. Even with his arms held down, using his quirk Izuku opened one of the large pouches on his utility harness and yanked out several of the large metal darts he had been given by the support department. Floating them up, Izuku turned them around so that the pointy ends faced himself and the paper villain. The villains grip loosened a bit when he saw the darts, “Oh fuck me.”

Clenching his fists, the darts fired, going past Izuku’s body, but right into the villain behind him, ripping him off Izuku and pinning him to the wall by his arms legs and shoulders. Freed, Izuku gasped for breath as he snarled at the approaching villains, “four!”

“STOP COUNTING!”

The mantis woman screeched as she brought both of her arms down where Izuku was. Pushing himself back, the woman’s blades sliced through his chest, but the cut was shallow. Her mistake was putting so much force into the strike. Since she mostly missed, her arms drove into the floor. Izuku watched her try to tug her arms back. After confirming she was stuck, Izuku wound back as he got ready to throw a punch. The woman didn’t even get a chance to wonder if Izuku was willing to hit a woman. He was, of course, months of sparing with Ochako had driven home that a woman was just as capable of kicking butt as any man, and if he hesitated, he was going to regret it. With a scream, Izuku swung a haymaker that connected with the woman’s jaw, and dropped her like a sack of potatoes.

“Five.”

CRACK!

Izuku’s head snapped back as a fist smashed into his face. The female villain retracted her arm back from a few yards away, “Don’t go getting so full of yourself, you little shit!”

Both of her arms folded in, compressing until her fists were almost flat against her shoulders, “Rapid Fire Assault!”

The attack name was enough to tip Izuku to what was about to come next. He only just got his arms up as the flurry of punches hit. The punches were coming in so fast, there was no way he was going to be able to duck and weave his way through. If he wanted to keep pushing forward, he was
going to need to find a way to make her stop. Glancing around, Izuku saw the lizard man had climbed onto the ceiling and was advancing towards him.

*That’ll work!*

The lizard blinked when suddenly the ceiling tiles and light fixture he was holding onto glowed, just an instant before Izuku ripped them down, making the villain fall right into the path of the rapid punches. The woman swore in surprise but was not able to stop herself in time before she landed enough punches to send the man down to the ground in a daze. Seeing his opening, rushed forward, making sure to kick the man in the head as he passed by so that he stayed on the ground. The woman threw two hard punches that arced to drive Izuku into the ground. Izuku dodged to the side, making the first punch go wide. He ducked the second, her fist punching through one of his costume’s ‘ears’. While bent down he picked up the fallen light fixture and raised it above his head as he charged forward. The woman gulped, desperately trying to retract her arms. They slapped into place, just as Izuku brought the fixture down and shattered it over her head.

Izuku looked up just in time to see the giant jaws of the venus fly trap villain about to close around his head. Izuku jammed the remains of cheap sheet metal and fluorescent bulbs into the villain’s ‘mouth’. As the villain began to freak out, Izuku spread his arms out and slapped both sides of the villain’s head, driving his mouth closed. The villain dropped to the floor, writhing in pain, green puss dripping between his teeth. Standing up straight, Izuku stared right at the last two villains in the tight hallway, who were still blocking the door he needed to get through.

“Eight.”

Drill hair turned to the minotaur villain and shrieked as she started to panic, “What are you waiting for!? Get him!”

“Moo?”

“You’re five times bigger than him, Tank! Kill him!”

While the two villains bickered, Izuku reached behind his back, and opened another pouch on his belt, filling his hand with marble-sized, steel ball bearings. With his fist full, Izuku pointed it out in front of him, as the rest of him glowed, the ball bearings looked like little balls of fire.

“Delaware Smash!”
Izuku opened his hand, and fired the bearings like a shotgun shell, making sure to keep the spread as close as possible. Each ball hit the hair drill villainess, shutting her up and dropping her to the floor where she lay, twitching.

“Nine.”

Tank’s eyes went wide as he looked down at his fallen comrade. Shakily he turned to look at Izuku, standing in the middle of the ruined hall, that was now littered with all the other villains. Tank threw his hands up, “Dude, I give! I give!”

Izuku’s eyes narrowed as he listened to his voice.

“I don’t even like these guys, man. My gym got shut down, and I needed money. This guy with the hands said he was going to make us famous, and that we’d go down in history and…”

“You…”

Tank blinked, “Me?”

“You’re the one that said, you’d ‘love a chance with her’.”

Tank blinked a few times, “wait...you heard all that?”

Izuku’s glare was his only answer.

If it was possible for a minotaur to pale and start to sweat, Tank was the perfect example as he backed up until his back hit the door behind him, “Come on man, it was just talk’n shop. You know, locker room stuff. When you see a fine piece of ass like that you can’t really help but want to be...you know, the one breaking it in. Ya know what I’m saying?”

In one motion, Izuku reached out with both hands, green glow blinding Tank so he didn’t see the door, the door frame, the wall and a large portion of the ceiling glow as well. Clenching his fists,
Izuku pulled it all down as hard as he could, driving the man into the floor. A white hand was all
that was sticking out of the rubble, twitching uselessly, pawing at the ground. When Izuku walked
over the pile, he made sure to stamp his foot as hard as he could as he stepped on. A grunt and the
fading groan Tank made was music to Izuku’s ears.

“Ten.”

Walking through the opened wall, Izuku looked around. He was in a large stairwell. So he had to
decide which way to go.

*Up or down?*

A sudden scream from above made his decision for him.

*Izuku raced up the stairs, only making it halfway before a thought crossed his mind.*

*That scream didn’t sound like a girl’s.*

When Izuku reached the floor, the door in front of him burst open as a man came stumbling past
him clutching his face and screaming, “MY EYES! THE BITCH GOT ACID IN MY EY-!”

His screams were quickly cut off as Mina ran up behind him and gave him a strong kick in the
back, sending him tumbling down the stairs and landing in a heap.

Mina stood at the edge of the stair, glaring down at the man, “And you tell the rest of your friends,
that’s what you get when you try and mess with me!”

“Ashido?”

*Pink girl? Oh! They meant Ashido. Because of her skin.*
Mina had clearly gone through a time of her own. The fluffy collar of her tan jacket was almost torn off. Her mask was cracked under her eye, and her cheek was a much darker shade of pink, almost magenta. Her knuckles were a little roughed up and her knees were scraped up enough to tear through her costume. She either fell, or someone had pushed her down to her knees... Izuku cut that thought off as fast as he could.

Mina turned, fists raised, acid seeping through her fingers, looking ready to keep fighting, Izuku threw up his hands trying to look as nonthreatening as possible, “WAIT! I’m not a villain!”

“Wait? Midoriya!? It's you, oh thank goodness I heard that...oh god…” Her initial shock, then joy came to a stop when she got a look at him, “Oh my god, Midoriya you’re hurt!”

“I’m alright, really.”

“Your chest is cut open!”

“It’s just a scratch!”

“Your face?”

“Uraraka used to hit me way harder when we would practice sparring. I’m fine really, it wasn't...this isn’t that big a deal.”

Mina didn’t hide that she didn’t buy a word coming out of Izuku’s mouth. As Izuku tried to ward off Mina’s questions and concerns he finally got a look inside the room she had been in and had to do a quick double-take. Mina had clearly fought through a group of villains all her own, just like he had. The first man was obvious, a basic thug that was laying at the bottom of the stairs. In the actual room itself a person was knelt over, their head sticking through the wall. Another was a man laying on his back, with a face that had been clearly pummeled. Judging by Mina’s knuckles, Izuku guessed she spent a good amount of time punching him in the face. The final thing in the room puzzled Izuku. A large puddle of some neon blue *something* was bubbling and fizzing all by itself.

Mina noticed Izuku’s inquisitive glance and turned to look at the blue puddle, “it was a villain with a quirk that gave him a body of slime.”

*The slime bastard.*
Izuku remembered and shuddered.

“He said he was gonna get inside me and,” Mina made air quotes with her fingers, “‘have some fun’.”

Izuku’s face twisted in disgust.

“Buuut,” Mina continued, a smirk forming, “when he tried, I got my hand free and jammed it inside him. Pumped him full with as much acid as I could before I had to deal with the other guys here. I don’t think he’s dead, but I’m pretty sure no other girl is gonna have to worry about him ever again.”

“And you’re okay?”

Mina nodded, though hesitantly, “Honestly I think the shock of everything hasn’t worn off yet. Not looking forward to when that happens. But right now I have to make sure I live long enough to deal with it.”

“I was headed down to get out of the building and regroup with everyone outside.”

“Sounds like a good plan.”

“But then I overheard some villains say there was one other student in here below us. And that he might be in trouble.”

Mina’s face hardened, “Then we have to find them then.”

Izuku nodded and both headed down the stairs, Mina pausing only a moment to look at the gaping hole in the wall, and the multiple villains laying about. Pointing into the hallway, Mina asked, “Not that big a deal huh?”

Izuku just shrugged, looking surprisingly sheepish considering his current state, “They were talking
and made it sound like you were in trouble and they wouldn’t let me through. So...I just forced my way through, is all.”

Shaking her head, Mina decided not to press but made a mental note to be sure to store this little event for later. She was sure there were a couple of girls in her class that would want to hear about this. Not that they needed more fuel for their obvious crush.

Rushing down one more flight, both came to a stop when they heard a large crash. Both looked at each other and were about to reach for the door when it was suddenly thrown open and a pudgy, short man came stumbling out, holding a two-way radio in one hand screaming, “Is no one on the radio anymore? This kid is destroying us- HUH?!"

In one swift motion, both Izuku and Mina pulled back and punched the man in the face, knocking him senseless and dashed into the hall. They didn’t make it far in before they found who they were looking for.

In the room in front of them, a loud commotion could be heard, before a villain was sent flying through one wall and into the next right before the two. He was joined by two others as Dark Shadow slammed them into each other before dropping them to the floor.

“Oh hey, Fumikage, I found them!”

Fumikage stuck his head through the large hole in the wall, “Found who, Dark Shadow: our classmates or more villains?”

Turning he found Izuku and Mina, who was waving at him, “Ah Ashido, Midoriya! You’re both unharmed…” Fumikage trailed off when he saw Mina’s slightly roughed up appearance, and went completely silent when he saw Midoriya’s.

Dark Shadow peeked over Fumikage’s shoulder, “Wow, you look like shit Midoriya.”

“Dark Shadow!”
"What? He does."

Izuku sighed in defeat, while Mina looked into the room Fumikage was in, “Wow, you sure trashed these guys, huh.”

Dark Shadow puffed up, while Fumikage shrugged, “They were little more than street thugs.”

“Well at least that’s the last of them.” Mina said with a smirk.

“Hey, anyone still got their radios on? What’s the update on the kids? Did you say he was trash, or you were getting trashed?”

All four heads turned to look at the radio, that was still in the pudgy villain’s paw. When Dark Shadow opened his beak, Mina held up a hand to shush him, “That does not count as a jinx! It’s not like I said, it could be worse, or something.”

“Listen, I’m sending the rest of the boys up. You guys are taking too long to kill three kids.”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“I swear, not a word from any of you.”

Izuku decided to wisely not comment on the jinx and moved onto coming up with a plan, “We’re on the third floor right now, right?”

“I believe so,” Fumikage confirmed.
“Is that low enough that Dark Shadow can lower us out of the building?”

“Easily.”

“Then let’s find a window and get out of here. If we leave from the outside, we should miss everyone they send up. Should make our escape even easier.”

Mina gave a thumbs up, “Sounds like a plan.”

Izuku was quickly able to find an external window and blew it out. Quickly, Dark Shadow lowered the three down the side of the building. Free of the ruined structure, they made a mad dash for the courtyard. As they ran, Izuku thought back. First, that warp villain, Kurogiri, and then that guy in the hall, they both had said something that was now eating away at Izuku, now that he actually had the chance to think it over.

That Kurogiri said they were here to kill All Might, and even that bull guy said he was here to become famous. Killing All Might, or even being part of the group that pulled it off would do it. Villains have tried before and they’ve all failed. So what makes this time different? What’s their plan?

“Midoriya, you’re mumbling.”

Izuku’s head snapped up, “Oh! Sorry, Ashido. I’m just trying to figure this whole attack out.”

“You mean why this group seems to think they have a chance to kill All Might?” Fumikage clarified.

“Yeah, I’m just trying to think what their plan is.”

“Well, it won’t matter in the long run. Pretty soon, this place is going to be crawling with heroes, and these villains will be hauled away.” Mina said with confidence.

I hope you’re right Ashido. I really do.
The black mist in front of Ochako vanished as she fell through. To her shock and confusion however, she didn’t see the exit of the building or any other of her classmates. What she saw was a wall of water that was fast approaching. The warp had left her momentarily disoriented as she tried to figure out what she was seeing. A wall of moving water didn’t make sense; why was she looking at that?

Wait, that water isn’t coming at me, I’m going towards it--OH CRAP I’M-

Ochako didn’t get a chance to finish her thought before slamming into the water, sinking deep underneath the surface. By some miracle, even if the impact from hitting the water had driven most of the air out of her lungs, Ochako was able to keep herself from trying to suck in a breath of air as she finally came to a stop.

Crap crap crap! I got caught up in that villain’s warp quirk along with everyone else.

Grunting, Ochako kicked her legs and pushed herself towards the surface.

That guy, Kurogiri, said he was gonna scatter us. He must have warped everyone to different places, but there was something else he said…

Ochako caught a blur of motion out of the corner of her eye cutting off her train of thought. Turning, Ochako let out a silent scream as a shark-quirked villain swam right at her, jaw open, exposing rows of razor sharp teeth. Ochako’s mind raced, trying to think of a way to defend herself, but under water there wasn’t anything she could do. Fortunately, she wouldn’t have to do anything. When the shark villain was almost within arms reach, Tsuyu came out of nowhere and slammed into the villain, throwing him off and sending him tumbling through the water past Ochako.

“Uraraka, hold on, kero!”

Ochako gasped when Tsuyu wrapped her tongue around her waist and pulled her through the water. It was then she noticed that Tsuyu had her arms wrapped around someone else.
So I’m not the only person that got dropped here?

Tsuyu glanced around noticing that the shark villain was not alone, and that any path back to dry land was effectively cut off. The large boat sitting in the middle of the artificial lake however was clear of anyone else. Knowing she was running out of time, and her classmates were running out of breath, she kicked her legs and swam for the boat, reaching it as quickly as she could. As gently as she could, she lifted Ochako out of the water and dropped her onto the deck.

As Ochako coughed and gasped for breath, grateful that at least she was out of the water. That momentary gratefulness was short-lived as Tsuyu deposited the other person she had been carrying.

“Damn it, what the hell happened?”

Ochako suppressed a groan.

Great, just who I wanted to see: Bakugou.

Climbing on board, Tsuyu looked at the two, “are you both okay?”

Ochako gave the girl a smile, “Yeah, thanks a lot for saving me. I don’t want to think about what would have happened if you hadn’t shown up.”

“You’d probably have been eaten,” Tsuyu said simply.

Katsuki frowned as he removed his gauntlet and turned it over, a stream of water emptied out of it and onto the deck of the boat, “motherfucker, of course I got dropped into a lake.”

Tsuyu eyed the giant gauntlet, “Is it broken?”

After giving the gear a good shake, Katsuki stuck his hand back and inspected it, “Nah, but it’s gonna take me a bit to build up enough sweat to use it.”
While it was a useful bit of gear, Ochako couldn’t help but be grossed out that it was full of his sweat. How the things didn’t stink was beyond her.

“So what do we do now? I don’t think I’m fast enough to outswim all those guys while carrying both of you.” Tsuyu glanced over the boat’s railing at the group of villains that were surrounding them, and slowly inching closer.

Katsuki huffed, “What do we do? We fight and kill the fuckers, obviously.”

“But does your quirk work in the water?”

Katsuki grumbled as he looked down at his hands, “I can still blow the fuckers up when they get up here.”

“But you’ll blow up the boat.”

“Frog-Legs, I swear to fucking-!”

“HEY ENOUGH!” Ochako snapped, “Bakugou, Tsu is…” She paused, glancing over at Tsuyu to make sure using the nickname was alright before continuing, “Tsu is right. You’re grounded until we get back to dry land.”

Katsuki was about to tell Ochako just what he thought of that, but Ochako continued over him, “We don’t have time to argue; we need a plan, and we need to figure out why the villains are here.”

“They said they were going to kill All Might.” Tsuyu answered simply. After saying that she tapped her chin in thought, “he isn’t here, but that warp villain thought he would be like we all did. How did they know he would be here now, I wonder?”

“How they knew isn’t what we should be fucking worrying about right now.”

“He’s right.”
“Oh?” Tsuyu looked at the two, “What do you two mean?”

Ochako glanced over at Katsuki, the serious look on his face confirming to her that he was thinking the same thing as she was, “They wouldn’t be here if they didn’t think they had a chance to actually kill All Might.”

“So how the fuck do they think they’re going to be able to pull it off?”

Ochako thought back, remembering everything that Kurogiri had said, trying to pick at anything that could give her a clue. Then she remembered something she had been thinking of before she was attacked and rescued by Tsuyu, something that sent made her blood go cold, “separate and torture us to death…Oh my god.”

“What’s wrong, kero?”

Ochako fought down the panic that threatened to burst out, “We weren’t the only ones caught up in that attack. That villain warped us here where there were villains waiting for us. He must have done the same to everyone else!”

*Deku, he was right next to me, so he must have gotten warped too. Warped right to another group of villains!*

Katsuki shrugged, “You just figure that one out? Damn you’re slow.”

Ochako whirled around, eyes blazing, “You bastard! Deku-- everyone-- is in danger and you just--”

“We’re all in danger you stupid bitch. Worry about what you can do here and now.”

“Don’t you dare tell me what to worry about!”

“You want to die?! Stop thinking about that shitty Deku and focus!”
Tsuyu raised her hands trying to get the two to calm down, “both of you please, this isn’t the time to-”

“DID YOU BRATS FORGET ABOUT US?!”

While the three had been distracted, many of the villains had climbed up the side of the boat and were hanging on the outer railing. The shark faced villain had made it over and was reaching for Tsuyu, claws ready to grab the poor girl by the head, “You little frog, I’m gonna rip you limb from limb!”

Ochako and Katsuki turned to reach her, but they were too far, and the villain too close.

“TSU, LOOK OUT!”

“FROG-LEGS, MOVE!”

The shark grinned, rows of teeth ready to tear into Tsuyu, “I’m gonna drag you down and eat you alive you little-”

Something bright flashed and whirled by both Ochako and Katsuki’s heads.

THUNK!!!

The shark villain stopped just short of Tsuyu, blinking in confusion. Tsuyu also tilted her head to the side. The large webbed claw that was only a few inches from her face now had something new stuck to it. Some kind of black handle. While Tsuyu looked from the front, the shark villain looked at the back of his hand, just as confused, wondering why there was a large piece of metal on his hand.

Wait, that wasn’t right, both thought. Soon it finally dawned on both, that the two were looking at different ends of a very large knife. A knife that had gone right through and was now stuck in the villain’s hand. The moment it clicked for the villain was the exact moment the shock had worn off, and he finally felt what had happened to him.
“AHHHHHHH!!!!! MY HAND!!!!!!”

While the villains looked over at their comrade, clutching the wrist of his stabbed hand and screaming, Ochako, Katsuki, and Tsuyu all turned to where the knife had come from. There, on the far end of the deck, stood Himiko, eyes blazing with rage and hate. Her mouth, twisted into a snarl of pure malice that made her fangs all the more terrifying.

Dashing forward, Himiko slammed her bladed bracer onto the railing as she ran past all the distracted villains hanging on. The blades slicing through hands and fingers, sending each and everyone falling back into the water, screaming and splattering blood everywhere. She quickly reached the shark villain, who had been just tumbling backward over the railing, the pain in his hand had made him forget where he was. Reaching out, Himiko snagged the handle of the knife and twisted, keeping it stuck and making sure the shark villain was left dangling over the railing. The villain gulped, the hate in Himiko’s eyes making him unable to look away. So he didn’t see her reach up with her free hand and pull out one of the other large knives she had hanging on her side. If he had, he would have seen what was coming next and tried to avoid it.

Himiko pressed the blade against the villain’s elbow, “Don’t you ever try and touch my friends again.”

With a yank, the villain was falling back into the water, relieved that he was getting away from the monster, but as he fell, he couldn’t help but wonder why she was still holding his arm, way up on the boat. The pain and realization hit him just as he crashed into the water.

Himiko had cut off his arm at the elbow.

Himiko watched the water for a second, eyes focusing on the red cloud that was forming on the surface of the water, then with a huff, took the knife that wasn’t stuck in the severed arm’s hand and wiped it clean on her skirt and slid it back into its holster.

“No one is allowed to touch my friends.”

Ochako stood, in shock. One moment, she had been rushing to try and save Tsuyu, now she was standing in what looked like a horror scene. Blood splatters and drips covered the boat railing, fingers and a couple of hands lay on the floor, and a large pool of blood it was forming from the arm Himiko was still holding. Even Katsuki was left speechless by the sheer brutality of what he had just seen. When Himiko turned around, all three were taken aback, seeing the girl now covered
in blood splatter from her attack.

The sudden chorus of screams from below shattered the calm as all the villains that had tried to board the boat and been cut off resurfaced from the water, screaming in horror.

“My hand! Where’s my hand!?”

“My fucking fingers!”

“ARHHH!”

“What the fuck is happening!?”

“That crazy bitch!”

“Oh god, oh god!”

Ochako watched as Himiko, still covered in blood, quickly walked over to Tsuyu and returned to her normal self, “Tsu, are you alright? That horrible villain didn’t touch you, did he?”

The sudden switch in personality threw everyone, so Tsu could only shake her head. Himiko sighed in relief, her smile returning to her face, “Oh good. I’d just hate it if you got hurt.”

“Why the fuck are you still holding that arm!?”

Despite herself, Ochako found herself nodding in agreement. She could not think of a single reason why Himiko hadn’t thrown the arm away right after cutting it off. Himiko rolled her eyes, “You guys are just big babies. You look like you’ve never seen a hunk of sashimi before.”

Katsuki gagged, while Ochako was suddenly very grateful all her quirk training had helped her get a strong stomach. Tsuyu, who while a little grossed out, was able to recover first, “I don’t think just because a person has a fish quirk, that makes him food.”
Himiko sighed, “I swear you guys are no fun. Can’t take a joke or anything.”

Yanking the knife out of the hand, Himiko whipped it in the air a few times, spraying much of the blood coating the blade off and onto the nearest wall, before wiping it on a clean-ish part of her costume and putting it away. Walking to the edge of the deck, Himiko scanned the water while she discreetly pulled one of her large syringes and flicked out the long needle. From behind her, none of the others could see her stick the needle in and drain the arm of blood.

No reason to let this go to waste. Might have to go swimming later.

“Toga, what are you doi-”

“MY ARM! THE BITCH CUT OFF MY FUCKING ARM!”

Ochako was cut off when the shark villain resurfaced from the water screaming bloody murder. Pulling the needle from the arm, and letting the syringes tube pull the cylinder back into place, Himiko made a show of pulling back, holding the severed arm like a stick, “Here! You can have this back!”

Chunking the arm as hard as she could, she gave a little cheer when it hit the shark right in the face. Smiling, she turned back around to look at everyone and shrugged, “I’d make a ‘stop hitting yourself joke,’ but that’s beneath me.”

“You’re fucking nuts.”

“I’m literally covered in knives; did you think I wouldn’t ever use them?”

“At least…” Ochako began, “At least the villains shouldn’t try and get back on now. We should have a few moments to figure stuff out now.”

“Like where the fuck Psycho-Bitch was?” Katsuki mumbled, more to himself.
“I was warped into the boat, not the water.”

“Ah,” Tsuyu said, “That’s good. I was worried I missed you or something. So what now? Uraraka is right, we need to figure out what we’re going to do now that we have the chance.”

Despite the unsettling scene that had just played out, all four agreed they needed to come up with a plan. Ochako crossed her arms and she started speaking, “We need to get out of this water zone, and try and regroup with the others. They must be in situations like ours in the different zones in the facility.”

Himiko’s smile faltered as she scanned the domes and ruins around them, “Izuku’s in danger, isn’t he? Tenya and Hitoshi too.”

“We’re all in fucking danger. We need to worry about ourselves first.” Katsuki made a point of looking right at Ochako. Despite her resentment for the other boy, she couldn’t help but agree. While she was worried sick for Izuku, for everyone. There was nothing any of them could do about their friends at the moment.

Seeing that they all seemed to be on the same page, tsuyu started, “One thing at a time then. We need to get out of here. Any ideas, kero?”

“Swimming is fucking out. I don’t think Frog-Legs can carry three of us and out run the rest of these guys.”

“Uraraka could float us and then Tsu could carry us?”

Tsuyu shook her head, “Weight isn’t the real issue, it’s the drag you’d have in the water.”

Himiko nodded, “Well water is out; how about over them?”

This time it was Ochako who shot the idea down, “Getting everyone over puts you all at risk if they have any kind of ranged attack.”
Growling, Katsuki slammed a fist against the side of the boat, “We’re in a fucking boat; let’s just drive this thing!”

“I don’t think this has an actual engine.”

Everyone looked at Himiko, “How do you know that, kero?”

“Pretty sure the engine room was where I was warped.”

“MOTHERFUCKER!”

Ochako groaned into her hand, her mind racing. They couldn’t just stand here coming up with ideas that wouldn’t work.

*Toga freaked them out, but there’s no way they’ll stay back for much longer. Floating might be our best option...Maybe I could take everyone to the ceiling, but that’s a long way up and it still leaves us open...Think Ochako. There has to be a-

“ROUND FACE, MOVE!”

Startled, Ochako didn’t have time to react as Katsuki threw her out of the way, raised his hands, and unleashed a huge explosion that ripped apart a giant hand of water that had been about to crash into them and the boat.

While Tsuyu helped Ochako up, Himiko rushed to Katsuki’s side pulling several of her throwing daggers from her thigh case, “Baku-Bitch, which one did that!?"""

“The white faced basta...WAIT WHO ARE YOU CALLING A BITCH?!”

Himiko looked where Katsuki had been pointing, finding the villain with his hand raised and still encased with water. Himiko fanned the daggers out in her hand, then, in a blur chunked them right at her target. All three hit, sinking into his chest and shoulders with solid thuds.
While the villain screamed in pain, both Katsuki and Himiko growled down at the villains, “If any of you fuckers want to get blown up, then keep pushing your luck!”

“I’ll be more than happy to make you match all the other fucks I cut up!”

While the two screamed down at the villains, Tsuyu made sure Ochako was alright after getting knocked aside, “You sure you’re alright, he wasn’t exactly gentle.”

“I’m fine, really.”

Tsuyu nodded then looked over at the two, “That blast was so strong, I thought he was about to launch the whole boat.”

Ochako almost laughed, “yeah, he’s almost a living rocket...engine…”

Everything in Ochako’s mind came to a grinding halt before the gears in her head slammed into place and started turning again. She looked at Katsuki, remembering how during the quirk assessment test, how he had used his explosions to propel himself in the long jump. Then she looked at the boat.

Back to Katsuki.

The boat.

Katsuki.

Boat.

“Bakugou!”

Katsuki turned and looked back at Ochako, “What?”
“Can you fire off consecutive blasts like that? The big ones, not the small ones you used during the long jump test.”

As Katsuki thought over the question, Himiko and Tsuyu looked between the two, wondering what was going on. Ochako watched as Katsuki’s confused face morphed into a feral grin.

“Yeah, I can do that. Easily. Can you do your part though?”

Ochako’s smile matched Katsuki’s, it was almost frightening.

“Easily.”

Himiko scratched her head, “Wait, what’s going on here?”

Ochako pointed towards the back of the boat, “Everyone get to the rear of the ship, now! We’re flying out of here!”

Katsuki was already running off while the other two pulled up alongside Ochako, “Wait, I thought you didn’t want us floating off the boat because we’d be sitting ducks in the air?”

Ochako smiled confidently at Himiko, “Who said we were leaving the boat?”

“Eh?”

Reaching the back, Ochako pointed at Tsuyu, and Himiko, “You two grab onto something. This is probably going to get bumpy really fast. Tsuyu, I want you to hold onto Bakugou if you can.”

Tsuyu glanced over at Katsuki and after seeing he had no objection, wrapped her tongue tightly around his waist.

Himiko finally got what Ochako and Katsuki were planning and started grinning.
Once she was sure the other girls were anchored down, Tsuyu sticking to the floor while Himiko slammed down a pair of knives to act as a hand hold, Ochako turned to find Katsuki leaning forward, his boots grinding into the wall behind him, securing himself in place.

“You ready Bakugou?”

“Of course I’m ready.”

While he was still facing forward, his eyes glanced down to Ochako as she knelt down and readied herself, “You going to be able to do this, Round-Face?”

Ochako smirked, “Do you think Deku was the only one making his quirk stronger over the ten months we were training?”

Ochako pressed her fingers into the deck, and she immediately felt the effect. Her stomach twisted in pain, but she was able to push it down. It wasn’t as bad as she was worried it was going to be, at least.

Tsuyu and Himiko gasped as the boat suddenly felt a lot more unsteady, rocking side to side. It almost felt like it could tip over at any moment.

“Bakugou, NOW!”

“Stop giving me orders!” Katsuki screamed as his palms ignited and unleashed a torrent of blasts.

The villains in the water weren’t sure what was going on. The ones not bleeding out into the artificial lake, or being helped by their comrades watched as the group of kids pulled back and then ran for the back of the boat.

“Hey, let’s get to the front; we can sneak onboard and get them.”

“Yeah, good idea.”
“We’ll surprise those little brats and make them pay.”

The group moved to the bow of the boat. As they all grouped together, a pink flash enveloped it.

“The heck was that?”

“Hey, does it look like the boat is lifting out of the water?”

“Um…?”

Before the group of villains could figure out what was happening a series of explosions fired off from the boat’s stern, rocketing it forward, and slamming into the group flinging them off in every direction.

Kyouka gasped when the ground under her vanished right from beneath her feet. Falling through the black void, she felt her sense of gravity shift as she fell onto her back, hitting her head. Even from behind her eyelids she could see the stars circling around. Groaning, she started to sit up, but she was not able to get far. Suddenly, something was driven into her chest, slamming her back into the ground and driving the air out of her lungs. She didn’t even have a chance to scream out in pain as a pair of hands wrapped around her throat and squeezed.

A villain had fallen upon her the moment she had been tossed out of the portal, driving his knee into her chest and strangling her. Disorientated from the warp, dizzy from hitting her head, and panicking from not being able to breathe, Kyouka could do little else but paw helplessly at the villain’s hands, not even able to find the strength to leave a scratch.

Oh god, oh god! I’m going to die! Oh god!

The villain, so triumphant in his victory, never bothered to see if anyone else had been teleported near him. So he never saw the other student land and immediately rush to Kyouka’s aid. He did, however, feel the wooden bat breaking over his head, sending splinters everywhere.
The pressure now off her chest and throat, Kyouka gasped for air, desperate to give herself the oxygen she was just denied. In her current state, however, she was not able to tell that the person who bent down and pulled her up by her arm was a fellow classmate, so on instinct, she began trying to pull herself free. Hitting, scratching, and even biting at the hand holding her.

“Jirou! Jirou, please calm down!”

**HOW DO THEY KNOW MY NAME!?**

Fresh panic set in. This person knew her. Did they know where she lived? Did they know who her parents were? It was getting harder to breathe again.

“LET ME GO! LET GO!”

“Jirou, please!”

“NO NO NO!”

“...I’m sorry, but this is for your own good.”

SLAP!

Kyouka’s head whipped to the side, the harsh sting in her cheek enough to get her to focus on her surroundings. She was surrounded by high cliffs and rocky terrain.

*Mountains?*

Confused, she looked up and saw the USJ ceiling.

*Oh, I must be in one of the rescue-training zones.*

Letting her head look back down, she finally recognized who it was that had saved her and had snapped her out of her panic.
“Yaoyorozu?”

Momo sighed in relief, “I’m glad that worked. I was worried I might have to slap you again.”

Kyouka rubbed her cheek, “Yeah, I’d rather you didn’t.”

“HEY, I THINK THOSE KIDS ARE UP HERE!”

“GRAB ‘EM!”

Kyouka and Momo jumped in alarm. The villains were closing in on them. Thinking fast, from her thigh, Momo created a short and narrow metal cylinder, with a ringed pin at the top. It took Kyouka a moment to realize that it was some kind of grenade.

“Jirou, please close your eyes!”

Pulling the pin out, Momo tossed the stun grenade over where the voices of the villains had come from. A loud pop and blinding light bathed the area as the villains cried out in pain and alarm.

Creating a metal bo staff for herself, Momo started creating weapons for Kyouka as well, “Take something. We need to take as many of them out before they snap back to their senses!”

Reaching out, Kyouka gripped two handles that had started to form from Momo’s back. The first weapon was a metal bat, which had a nice heft to it that Kyouka approved of. The second weapon made her pause for a second.

This is a machete… Okay I guess we’re going full metal then.

The start of their counter attack had gone off without a hitch. Still blinded by the stun grenade, the villains were easy targets for the two. Kyouka sped through as many as she could, striking them
over the head with her bat or using the machete to help hack through some that were armored. Momo also displayed a great composure as she twirled her staff around, tripping up villains and striking them in any vulnerable areas she could find.

Soon, however, the stunned villains began to recover and push the girls back. Momo attempted to stun them again, but the villains, wise to her plan, knocked the stun grenade away so that it went off harmlessly in the distance.

“You’re a real idiot if you think we’ll fall for that again, kid!”

“Yeah, try something new!”

Two villains laughed as they charged Momo. They skid to a halt when Momo formed a cannon and pointed it right at them. “Is this new enough for you?”

The first blast sent the two villains sailing through the air. The next couple of blasts did the same to several other villains.

Kyouka brought her machete up as she blocked a knife from one villain, while at the same time she jammed an ear-jack into the villain’s chest, sending a vibration strong enough to knock the air out of his lungs. When he fell to the ground, she made sure to give him a good tap with her bat. Noticing a large group heading towards her, Kyouka plugged her other jack into the speakers in her boots, hitting them with a strong blast of sound, leaving them momentarily stunned as they covered their ears to try to block it out. Momo, seeing the stationary targets, formed a new weapon for herself: a pump action grenade launcher. Slamming the forend down to load a shell-- which Kyouka thought made Momo look badass-- Momo pressed the stock into her shoulder and pulled the trigger.

A loud thump echoed in the mountain range before the shell hit where the villains were standing and exploding. Kyouka turned and caught another group of villains with her soundwaves as Momo reloaded and fired again. They were able to do this a few more times before the grenade launcher ran out of ammo. Working together they had been able to get through almost half of the villains, but they were still outnumbered.

Panting, Kyouka did a quick head count and swore to herself, “There's still almost twenty villains here. I don’t think we can keep this up before we get swarmed.”
“I agree, we need to do something that’ll take them all out at once.”

The villains kept advancing, and the two now had their backs against the wall.

“Jirou, I have an idea, but it’s dangerous.”

“As dangerous as what these guys will do to us if we get caught?”

“No, I guess not.”

A couple of loud thuds let Kyouka know that Momo had made something new. Looking over, Kyouka’s eyes widened. Momo had created two of the largest standing speakers she had ever seen, but instead of making them face the villains, they were facing the cliff face behind them.

“Eh, Yaoyorozu?”

“I think it’s time to… oh what’s the phrase? Bring down the house?”

Kyouka was stunned. With the small speakers in her boots, she could make a sound blast strong enough to stun a group. With these?

“But that’ll?!”

Momo smiled, “I have a plan. Please trust me.”

Oh what the hell!

When the villains saw Kyouka connect with the speakers, they knew immediately something was up. They couldn’t predict what came next however. Momo raced for Kyouka and wrapped her arms around the other girl just as Kyouka put the speakers to work. The sound blast slammed into the mountain side, shattering stone and dislodging huge rocks. Even the stone they were standing on began to shatter. She had caused a landslide. As everyone began to fall, Momo created a cocoon of metal around them, a shelter from the collapsing mountain.
The two held onto each other until the roar of falling rocks and stone finally stopped.

When the black mist cleared, Eijirou looked around and was horrified to see almost all his classmates were gone. Right next to him was Denki, who had fallen onto his knees, sparks of lightning still crackling around him. How Eijirou hadn’t been electrocuted being so near him, he had no idea. Shouji unfolded his arms, showing he had grabbed Kouji and Rikidou. Tooru’s floating gloves could just be glimpsed behind Thirteen, who was dusting herself off as she stood herself up, keeping her eyes on the villain. Kurogiri was keeping his distance from the group, eyeing all the ones that he could see.

“Hey! Hey! Where is everyone!? Ashido?! Ashido?!” Eijirou’s head whipped around as he tried to see if anyone else was still with them.

“Kirishima, please stay calm.” Thirteen said, “We must not let ourselves panic now. Shouji, can you check to see where everyone is?”

Mezou nodded and extended his arms out, the ends turning forming multiple ears as he scanned the whole building, “It sounds like everyone is still here. He just dropped them off at different sections of the USJ.”

The rest of the students sighed in relief, but a grunt from Mezou stopped them, “They aren’t alone though. There are… a lot of villains with them.”

A cold chill fell over the group. The thought of their fellow classmates and friends facing such a danger filled each of them with dread.

Damn it, Eijirou swore to himself.

This is just like last year with that giant. I wasn’t able to do anything then, except now it’s Ashido that’s in trouble.

“We need to do something!”
“We will,” Thirteen reassured him. Though at this point she wasn’t exactly sure what.

“I’m afraid the only thing you will be doing is dying. While you were able to escape my Warp Gate, I am more than capable of dealing with the six of you,” Kurogiri said simply. It wasn’t a threat or a boast; it was a simple truth.

Denki blinked and started to look around and do a headcount, but a sudden, discrete, smack to his back from Rikidou stopped him. His message was clear, and now everyone knew it. Kurogiri had not noticed Tooru yet.

“You five, come here now.” Thirteen called for the other students to close ranks, while, keeping her hands behind her back, felt around for Tooru. She found the girl’s shaking hand and made sure she was directly behind her so that her gloves and shoes were out of sight. She wished she could speak to the girl, to reassure her, or make sure she would understand what she was planning. She would just have to hope that Tooru would pick it up. Before turning her attention back to the other students and Kurogiri, she pulled lightly at Tooru’s glove.

“All of you listen, we have no alarms and no phone signal. Even with Eraser Head dealing with the villains below, nothing has come back on. So they must have hidden the one interfering with everything someone else in the facility. At this point, by the time we could find this person, it would be too late.”

There were a couple of audible gulps. They knew what too late meant for them.

“However, even if they have someone hidden away that is interfering with our ability to communicate, it must only be around this building. If they disrupted phones any further out, it would cause a commotion that I’m sure they don’t want.”

Kurogiri’s eyes narrowed, while the students nodded that they understood.

“Kaminari, Eraser Head had you try to contact the school, but you weren’t able to, correct?”

“Oh...um, no. Even when I boosted my headsets power to extend the rage, it was still getting blocked.”
Thirteen nodded, “The headset is getting blocked inside here, but outside, away from the building, it should be able to break through and contact the school.”

Taking a breath, Thirteen continued, “I want you to take that headset, get outside and call for help.”

Kurogiri sighed, “setting aside the obvious that you assume I would let the boy escape…”

Kirishima stepped forward, arms and hands cracking as he hardened them. Rikidou pulled a few cubes of sugar from his belt and quickly swallowed them, his muscles bulging as he took up a fighting stance. Kouji, even though he was still clearly scared, stood right beside Rikidou. Ready to help the plan work. Mezou spread his arms out in front of Thirteen and Denki, blocking Kurogiri’s view.

“...Saying what your plan is in front of the enemy is the very height of foolishness!” Kurogiri screamed as he launched himself up into the air, a tidal wave of black mist ready to crash down on the group.

Denki bolted, running as fast as he could around Kurogiri. The villain started to turn towards him, but Thirteen reached out her hand. One of the caps on her fingers popped back, and a great vortex sucked up everything in front of her, including the villain.

“I won’t let you! Black Hole!”

Kurogiri grunted as he was hit by the attack, but was able to just hold himself together.

“I see; yes, that Quirk is indeed dangerous. If I didn’t know about you, hadn’t prepared for you, I would have been completely at your mercy.”

Thirteen blinked, Prepared?

Thirteen didn’t notice the black warp gate form behind her.
“You are an excellent hero, Thirteen. But you specialize in rescue operations, not combat. So compared to other heroes like Eraser Head, you don’t even have half the experience of a normal hero.”

Kurogiri opened a portal in front of himself, while at the same time opened the one behind Thirteen, hitting her with her own Quirk. Immediately she could feel her back being ripped apart, the pain making it impossible to even think. She tried to close off her glove, but the pain made it impossible. She couldn’t focus.

Kouji and Mezou rushed forward. Mezou smashed Thirteen out of the way of her redirected attack, while Kouji grabbed her glove and forced the cap back over her finger. They hit the ground, with the two boys doing everything they could to soften the landing for their teacher.

Denki stopped running, horrified at what had just happened, but Mezou shouted out, “Keep going! DON’T STOP!”

“I’m afraid I can not allow that.”

Kurogiri twisted around and rushed for Denki. Gasping, Denki took off, but the warp villain was already on top of him, “I’m afraid I can not allow you to call for help.”

With Kurogiri over Denki, he was trapped, ready to be warped away, but that never happened. With a sudden and loud thud, Eijirou slammed into Kurogiri, his arms cracking the metal brace that Kurogiri wore.

“Great throw, Satou!”

Rikidou smirked, “Toga was able to cut you and Kirishima saw that brace. So you must have a body that can take damage in there!”

When both hit the ground, Eijirou slammed a boot onto the brace, while he began to wail on the villain, “Lets see how much damage you can take!”

“That is ENOUGH!”
A wave of black slammed into Eijirou, knocking him back and onto the ground. Writhing around, Kurogiri warped himself away, reforming right in front of Denki, “I have had enough of this! You will not leave this place!”

“Ah crap!” Denki let off bolts of lightning, but Kurogiri opened a warp gate anyway, “I may not want something so lively going through me, but the alternative is too dangerous for the League. Now be a good boy and-”

Something was wrong. Something was very, very wrong. Looking down at Denki, Kurogiri’s eyes scanned him from top to bottom. It took him a few seconds before he was finally able to realize what was missing.

Where’s the boy’s headset? He was going to use it to break through our interference and call for help. But he doesn’t have it? If he doesn’t, then who?

Kurogiri looked up, examining each student. None of them had it. He was about to turn his attention back to the boy in front of him, but he stopped. A little ways away from where Thirteen lay-- being tended to by two Kouji and Mezou-- were a pair of shoes and gloves. Just lying on the ground.

The front doors to the USJ opened and Kurogiri turned his head in alarm, just in time to see a seemingly floating headset split right through the opening.

WHAT!?

Denki cheered, “Hagakure made it! Score one for our invisible girl!”

Invisible!?

“You...you were just!?”

Denki smirked, “Just the distraction! Now that she’s out there, you would be able to find her even if you wanted to!”
Eyes narrowing, Kurogiri lifted himself up into the air, away from the bolts of electricity the boy was still shooting off.

_This... this is very bad._

Twisting in on himself, Kurogiri vanished, leaving the group alone at the entrance.

Eijirou looked over at the injured Thirteen, “did we win?”

Mezou turned, looking at the door then back at the rest of the facility, where their classmates were fighting for their lives, “We’ll know if the heroes get here in time.”

Mashirao panted heavily as he did his best to keep himself from collapsing onto the ground. Scorch marks covered his costume and he had burns that criss-crossed over his hands, feet and tail. To his side, he could hear his classmates as they tried to recover from the villain’s vicious attack. Hanta, Yuuga, and Minoru were doing what they could to hold themselves up like Mashirao was. None of them had expected this much trouble from the lone skull-faced villain in front of them. In a matter of seconds, he had turned the tables on the students.

When the four had first fallen out of the black warp gate into the Landslide Zone, they were immediately set upon by villains. Minoru in a panic had started throwing the balls from his head at anything around them. Hanta saw that the villains had started to freak out since they couldn’t get the purple balls off themselves. Working together, with Yuuga holding Minoru up above his head so that the smaller boy would be able to reach more villains, Mashirao and Hanta worked quickly to force together as many villains as they could. Getting them stuck together and helpless made them easy targets for Yuuga to blast with his Naval Laser.

The plan had worked, and the four had been able to take out the group of villains. Except for one, a villain that had stayed back while the rest had charged in and gotten stuck. Yuuga had noticed the villain first. He turned so that he could shoot him with his Naval Laser, but the villain rushed forward in-between everyone. Electric bolts crackled over his skin as he slammed himself into the four, delivering painful strikes and electrical burns wherever he touched.

“What gives with this guy? We took care of all those other chumps. Why’s this one dude kicking our butts?” Hanta complained, wincing as the burns over his chest made it hard to breathe.
Minoru, using Yuuga’s cape as a handhold, “Why am I stuck with the scary strong guy? I bet no one else is dealing with this.”

Yuuga was holding his stomach, he was close to his limit from his attacks against the other villains earlier.

The skull face villain laughed, “Kids like you might be able to take on a bunch of idiot adults, but none of you stand a chance against someone like me.”

Mashirao frowned, “It’s still four-on-one. I wouldn’t be so sure of yourself.”

“Says the kids that look ready to run home crying to their mommies.”

Hanta caught Mashirao’s eye. The other boy had steadied himself and looked ready to go. Mashirao kicked off, twisting in the air to slam his tail down on the villain's head. The villain dodged to the side and reached out to grab hold of Mashirao, lightning arcing from his fingers. Hanta shot out a ribbon of tape that wrapped around the skull-faced villain's arm, yanking the arm back and away from Mashirao. Yuuga gulped, fighting down the sickening twist he felt in his stomach as he aimed and fired his laser.

The skull-faced villain acted fast. Grabbing some of his downed comrades he threw them into the laser, protecting himself. The lightning covering his body burned the tape off his arm, freeing himself. Twisting around he blocked a strike from Mashirao, making the boy wince as his hands hit the villain’s electrified skin. Grabbing the front of Mashirao's costume, he wrenched him to the side and tossed him into Hanta.

The villain yanked off the remains of the tap from his arm, “You kids are out of your league. If you had done what smart little kids do, you would have run. Maybe you’d have survived until we killed All Might. But now? The best you can hope for is that my electricity fries your brain before I make you all suffer.”

Minoru whimpered while Yuuga practically waddled over to the other boys. The pain in his stomach made it impossible to stand up and walk.

“Mon estomac. I think something is going to leak very soon.”
Hanta frowned, ‘We need to find a way to make him sit still for at least a few seconds. If we could do that, I’m sure me and Mineta would be able to trap him like the other villains.”

“Even if one of us could hold him, he’d just shock up on the spot.” Mashirao frowned as he glared at the villain. He was sure he’d be able to hold him. He had been taken off-guard before, but he was sure he’d be able to catch him this time. He just needed something to at least dull the villain’s electric Quirk. Looking down Mashirao saw the charred remains of Hanta’s tape.

“Sero…” Mashirao started, keeping his voice down. “When you had his arm wrapped up, were you getting shocked at all?”

“No, I wasn’t. I guess my tape isn’t very conductive.”

Mashirao paused, then looked at Yuuga, “Aoyama, do you think you can fire one more laser? If you can distract him, I may be able to hold him just long enough for Sero and Mineta to capture him.”

Yuuga gulped. After a few seconds of thought, the twinkling hero nodded, “Je vais...I will try my best.”

Minoru’s head whipped around as he looked up at Mashirao, “Hey, what are you planning?”

The skull-faced villain frowned as he watched the kids, “Are you brats going to actually do something? If you’re just going to give up, you’re taking all the fun out of this.”

“No, we aren’t giving up. Aoyama, NOW!”

With Mashirao’s yell, Yuuga forced himself up and fired the largest, and brightest beam he could through all the lenses throughout his suit. Most didn’t come close to hitting the villain, but the brightness of it made it impossible for him to see. As the light began to fade, he caught a glimpse of something heading right for his head, reaching out with both hands, the villain grabbed Mashirao’s tails, stopping him just short.

“You think a trick like that would work on me? Get real!”
Lighting arcs from the villain into the tail. He could smell burning, but was confused when he didn’t hear the boy screaming. Then he got a clearer view of what he had grabbed. It was Mashirao’s tail, but it had been wrapped up in a thick layer of tape. So while the villain’s lightning burned the tape, it didn’t electrocute him through it.

Mashirao wretched his tail from the villain’s grasp and closed the distance, grabbing his wrists with his hands and arms covered in protective tape.

“SERO! MINETA, NOW!”

Minoru screamed as he ripped off more of the purple balls from his head and threw them into the villains back, “Please work! PLEASE WORK!”

The villain tried to free himself, sending bolts of lightning into Mashirao and burning the tape around his hands and arms, but he held firm. Not letting the villain escape. Hanta at the same time shot out twin streaks of tape that wrapped around the villain’s shoulders. Gripping the tape, Hanta twisted around and pulled as hard as he could. The villain was pulled off his feet and slammed onto his back, where all Minoru’s purple balls were, sticking him to the ground.

Hanta rushed to Mashirao’s side as he hurried to help put out the burning tap and get it off. Yugga was lying on his side whispering “Ne coule pas. Ne pas fuir s’il vous plaît.”

Minoru stomped over the villains side, hands on his hips, “How’s that for a bunch of ki-OUCH!”

The villain, while stuck, was still awake, and, with a scream, tried to zap Minoru when he got too close, “You brats are dead. Do you hear me?! When I get free I’m going to rip each and every one of you apart!”

“Yeah, good luck getting free, pal; I took a great dump today, so my balls are nice and sticky.”

“Please do not antagonize the villain,” Mashirao pleaded.

“Yeah, and that’s gross man,” Hanta said, but he wasn’t very convincing, as he said it while holding back a snicker.
“Hey, we won; we should celebrate!”

Mashirao looked at the captured villains then out past the zone towards the courtyard far in the distance, “I think I’ll celebrate once this is all over, and all the villains are gone.”

For the multiple villains waiting, they felt like they had drawn the short straw. Their orders were simple: enter the warp gate, get stationed in different areas of USJ, wait until Kurogiri drops some unlucky kids into the zone, then kill the kids.

Simple.

Easy.

For the group of villains waiting for their prey, it was anything but.

“Why in the hell is it raining inside?!”

“Errrr, I think because it’s supposed to be like a monsoon or a typhoon.”

“NOBODY CARES!”

More villains grumbled in agreement. They had all agreed to come and help with Tomura’s plan to kill All Might, but being forced to wait around in the middle of a huge rain storm getting soaked had left them in a bad mood.

“I swear, if that warp bastard doesn’t drop a kid here in the next minute, I’m out.”

“Dude, it’s just a little water.”

There was a crack of thunder that echoed in the large domed city. While the villains were sure it
was their imagination, it felt like it was raining even harder now.

“I’m taking the first kid I can get my hands on and drowning them in one of the street drains.”

“Okay, no need to be a drama queen.”

“I’m drowning a fucking kid! Die wet, you fucking brat!”

Further complaining and grumbling was cut off when a black warp gate started to form above them.

“FINALLY!”

“About time!”

“The first one is mine! I want to drown them!”

“...You know, it’d really suck if whoever Kurogiri dropped had some kind of lightning Quirk.”

“...”

“...”

“Why the fuck would you even say something like that?”

A single student fell out of the gate and hit the wet street with a thud.

“Just one?”

“MINE!”
“Dog pile him quick!”

As the villains rushed the fallen student, their day quickly went from bad to much, much worse. In an instant, all the water flash froze and the Downpour Zone became the Blizzard Zone. Anything that had been covered in water was frozen solid: buildings, plants, streets, cars, and villains.

“What...the...fuck!?”

Shouto grunted as he got back onto his feet, flexing his right arm which was a little numb. He was pretty sure he’d fallen on his funny bone. Dusting off some stray powdered snow off his body, Shouto looked around and confirmed he had frozen all the villains in the vicinity. None looked like they would be able to break free.

*That Kurogiri said he was going to scatter us and torture us to death. I guess he meant to have these guys pick us off or something.*

Looking over the villains, he could tell, even while they were covered in ice, that none of them looked too intimidating.

*All this water made it easy to freeze them all, but I doubt even without it they’d have posed a threat to me.*

“I’d say I was sorry for treating you all so rough, but you all look like thugs that decided to take the easy route since you didn’t know what to do with your quirk. So at least use this time to reflect on your actions that lead you here.”

*When the attack first happened, and that guy said they were here to kill All Might, I figured they were trying to ambush him and overwhelm him with sheer numbers. They seemed to know he was supposed to be teaching this class today too, which is concerning. But none of these guys could possibly pose a threat to him, no matter how many they brought. They’re just a bunch of thugs, probably random people pulled from the street. Only a couple that I saw looked like they were actually dangerous. The guy that warped me here...the guy covered in hands, and that giant monstrous-looking one. What could they be planning? Unless the goons were for us and the other teachers maybe?*
Standing in the middle of the group, Shouto addressed them all, “If you all stay frozen like this, you’ll get frostbite, and eventually suffer from cell death.”

A few of the villains noticeably gulped. Some were starting to panic.

“First your toes and fingers, then your arms and legs will die and have to be amputated. And that’s if someone gets to you in time. If they don’t... well freezing to death is a grizzly way to die.”

More panic spread throughout the group.

“I’m trying to be a hero, so I’d rather not have that outcome on my conscience, so I will ask you all just once: how do you plan on killing All Might?”

Looking around, Hitoshi wasn’t sure what to make of his surroundings or his day. At first it had been normal. Wake up, have breakfast, go to school, meet up with his new friends for class, wonder from which angle Himiko would latch onto Izuku( it had been from underneath, and he didn’t want to know how she pulled that off). Then it was Home Room, Math, English, Lunch, and finally a bus ride for Heroics. Then suddenly his class was under attack, and he was at the front of USJ surrounded by a black cloud, created by a member of the League of Villains. Now? Now he was in a city he didn’t recognize at all, and to top it all off, it was on fire. Everything was on fire. Why was everything on fire? Hitoshi was a little beyond caring at this point.

“Hitoshi, you are having a day today huh. Yes you are... I swear if I got teleported to some post apocalyptic future, I’m done. I am too tired to deal with that level of bullshit.”

“Then perhaps you should start going to bed earlier, Shinso. A Hero-in-training must not allow himself to become tired when it’s only mid day.”

Tenya chastised Hitoshi as he made his way over to him.

While he was relieved to see his friend, he still couldn’t help but roll his eyes, “nice to see you’re still taking your class rep duties seriously, even when we’ve been transported by who-knows-who to who-knows-where.”
With Tenya wearing his helmet, Hitoshi wasn’t sure how he looked, but when Tenya put his hand on his shoulder and asked, “are you alright?” He liked to think his friend was smiling.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Just was not expecting this when I rolled out of bed today.”

Tenya could understand. He was also doing his best to cope with the sudden turn of events.

“At the very least let me put some of your worries to rest. We are still within the USJ. We have not been transported forward in time.”

Hitoshi groaned, “Great, you heard that? Wait, you’re sure this is the USJ? It looks like we are in a city.”

“Of course. The USJ has multiple training zones that simulate different disasters, remember? When we first came in you must have seen the giant dome with fire painted along its side. This is where they simulate citywide fires.”

Tenya pointed up when he mentioned the dome. When Hitoshi looked up he could see that ceiling of the dome peeking through the clouds of smoke.

“Okay, so we got warped here, then everyone else must have been warped around to the other zones as well.”

“A reasonable assumption.”

“But why go through the trouble of just dropping us off here? If they really wanted to, they could have just put us in the courtyard and let all those villains attack us.”

“‘Scatter and tortured to death’ is what that Kurogiri said. We must have been warped here for a reason.”

Hitoshi tensed while both he and Tenya looked around their surroundings, “I don’t suppose you
know where the exit to this place is?”

“No, I don’t. While I’m tempted to hurry and find it, perhaps a more discrete method of escape would be better for us.”

“Yeah lets...let’s get off the main roads here. Running around in the open, even at your speeds probably isn’t the best idea right now. Plus, you’d have to come back for me anyway.”

Tenya scratched at his mask, under his chin, “I could-”

“If you say carry me, I’ll smack the chrome off that suit of yours.”

Their decision to get off the main street quickly turned out to be the correct choice. Moments after they had moved into an alley, a large group of villains came running around the corner.

“I’m telling you, I heard someone talking over here.”

“Are you sure? All this fire is so damned loud; it’s hard to hear myself think.”

“Right, like you have a brain big enough to actually think.”

“You wanna say that to my face, punk?!”

“Bring it on, Jar Head!”

“My head is a lava lamp, and I will destroy you!”

“Oh, will the two of you just shut up?!”
The largest of the group screamed over everyone, making the two other villains fall silent.

“Lets fan out and see if we find something. The attack already started, so some of those kids should have been dropped off by now.”

From their alley, both boys glanced at each other and slowly backed up further away from the group.

“Okay, so now what?” Hitoshi hissed between his teeth.

“We should fall back.”

“Yeah, but what are we going to do after that?”

“If we’re lucky, this will have been all of them, and we might still be able to sneak by and find the exit.”

“And if we can’t?”

Tenya glanced back over his shoulder at the large group. They were splitting up, checking buildings, cars and even alleys. “Then we may need to come up with a plan to even the odds.”

When the two made it to the other side of the building, they confirmed what they had been afraid off. The villains had already surrounded the area. Any real chance of a stealthy exit was all but impossible at this point. Moving to the center of the maze of alleys, both ducked away and began to come up with a plan.

“Most of those guys don’t look too tough. A good kick to the head would probably knock them out cold.”

“The problem is I don’t want to fight them in the open. They could overpower us just from their sheer numbers.
Hitoshi nodded, “So we should keep the fight in the alleys. Their numbers won’t matter much in here.”

“We should also see if we can take advantage of the fact they are splitting up. If we could lure one or two at a time away and neutralize them quietly, we’ll increase our chances of success. The only issue is how do we set up a trap and keep ourselves safe at the same time?”

Hitoshi plucked one of the mini speakers off his belt and tossed it to Tenya, “I think I can help with that.”

Tenya was able to quickly spread out a few of Hitoshi’s speakers throughout several alleys around the building. While he did this, Hitoshi climbed up a fire escape and positioned himself so that he had a birds eye view of each place a speaker was left. The plan was simple, if a villain strayed too far from the rest of the group, Hioshi would use the speaker to draw in the villains and when they got close he would say something to get them to reply.

He would pretend to be a scared student, or he would insult them. He was also able to fool them into thinking that one of their comrades was calling after them.

“Hey! What are you two doing? You find those kids yet?”

“Eh? No nothing ye-”

“Huh hey what’s your deal? You look zoned out.”

“You’re an idiot.”

“The he-”

Hitoshi sighed. The trap was tricky when there were more than just a single person. He had to be quick to snag the other guy before he got too freaked out. Hitoshi was also now realizing that while his set up let him extend the range of his Quirk, it was still limited. He still had to see the person he was going to brainwash. He was also learning that trying to disguise his voice was killing his
Tapping another mic, he contacted Tenya through the speaker he had given him, “Got two more for you. Up by the north speaker.”

“I will be right there!” Tenya’s voice came in over his headset.

Tenya, after setting up the speakers, would stay hidden until a villain was caught. He would then rush to where the villain was and Hitoshi would order the villains to follow him to the main building. Tenya would then secure them and stash them away in closets or locked offices. Before leaving, he would deliver a swift kick to the head to each villain, knocking them out, and freeing up Hitoshi to use his Quirk on someone else.

This method had worked wonderfully for a time, and the two had been able to take out several villains, greatly improving their odds. As long as they kept this up, they would be able to take out enough villains to make their escape and none would be the wiser.

“HEY, UP THERE! IT’S ONE OF THE KIDS!”

Hitoshi looked over the railing and swore, right below him was a villain pointing right at him, “Oh crap.”

“Shinso? What’s wrong!?”

“I got spotted. And he’s calling for his friends. Where are you?”

“Still in the building. I just bolted the room with the last two villains we captured.”

“GUYS! I FOUND A STUDENT!”

Hitoshi leaned over the and screamed, ‘Will you shut up!’

“HA! Fat chan-”
The villain fell under Hitoshi’s control, falling silent, but it was too late. He could hear more villains coming.

“I’m going to have to make a run for it.”

“I will find you!”

Hitoshi quickly slid down the ladder and was about to make a run for it, before he turned to look at the villain that spotted him, “You. Slam your face against that building as hard as you can.”

Running he could feel his hold on the villain break. He just hoped that the villain hit himself hard enough that he was out cold on the concrete.

“And where do you think you’re going!?”

“Crap!” Skidding to a stop, Hitoshi turned and bolted down another alley that wasn’t blocked by villains. Unfortunately for him, this alley led right into the open, where the remaining villains were waiting for him.

Well this is just great.

Several of the villains sneered at him while a few were eyeing him cautiously. Hitoshi found it odd they weren’t just attacking him out right. What could be holding them back he wondered.

“You the reason over half of us are missing?”

“Yeah, what’d you do to them?!”

Oh! They noticed that, but they don’t know how me and Iida pulled it off. Actually they might not even know about Iida at all.
Hitoshi crossed his arms and stared the villains down, thankful that all the fire and heat made for a good excuse for how much he was sweating from how nervous he was.

“If you all know what’s good for you, you’d all be running right now.”

“Is that a-”

When the villain fell silent, several from the group looked over at him, confused. Hitoshi however didn’t want them to think about that. He needed to get them scared.

“You, walk over here.” Hitoshi pointed to his side and the villain followed his command.

“What the heck?”

“Why is he doing what the kid said?”

“It’s like he’s mind controlled or something...”

“...”

“...”

The villains looked at each other and then Hitoshi, “Oh, you have got to be kidding me!”

Hitoshi pointed at the villain, doing his best to be as menacing as possible, “You wanted to know what happened to your guys? I took over their minds, and made them walk into the nearest burning building.”

A few gasps.

A few shudders.
A few worried glances.

*I got them spooked. Now I just have to hope none of them have a brain in their heads and start to ask-

“Hey, if he could do that, why not just mind control all of us right away?”

...Crap...

“Hey, you’re right. He only got one of us.”

“I bet he has a limit on the people he can control.”

“Let’s just rush the kid already!”

*Crap crap crap crap.*

The villains rushed for Hitoshi, but only got a few feet towards him. In a blur of silver and blue, Tenya rocketed down the street dive kicked right into the middle of the group, sending most of the villains flying into the air. The couple few that were still standing, and hadn’t recovered from the shock of the surprise attack, Tenya dispatched with a quick kick to their faces.

‘Are you alright, Shinso? I got here as fast as I could.”

Hitoshi let out a huge sigh, “Class Rep, if nothing else, you have your dramatic timing down pat.”

“Er, thank you? We’ve dealt with most of the villains now. I say we make our run for it.”

“Yeah, let’s get going.”
Ochako could feel the strain of her quirk really starting to affect her. Her stomach was starting to twist into knots, and she was pretty sure she could already taste her lunch and breakfast. The uneven way their ship was being propelled didn’t help her stomach either. Though she wasn’t about to tell Katsuki to take it easy since one: they needed to get out of the water, and regroup with the others, and two: she would be damned before giving him the satisfaction of seeing her need him for anything.

“HEY OCHAKO!” Himiko screamed over Katsuki’s explosions.

Daring to look up, Ochako found Himiko still nailed in place with her knives, smiling at the fun ride she was on.

“What!?”

“How are we going to stop?”

Ochako blinked. Tsuyu let out a nervous ribbit, and Katsuki actually stopped firing off blasts. Himiko looked from Ochako to Katsuki, her smile fading, “Wait, did neither of you take into account what was going to happen if this boat hit dry land going this fast?”

“Fuck.”

Ochako’s mind raced, “Wait we just need to fire off some explosions from the other direction! Bakugou move to the-!”

Ochako wasn’t able to finish her thought in time. The boat’s bow slammed into the edge of the courtyard. The front crumpled in on itself while the back was lifted up into the air and flipped over. Tsuyu, still holding onto Katsuki, launched the two of them off the stern.

“Toga, give me your hand, hurry!” Ochako screamed as she reached for Himiko.

Yanking the knives out of the floor, Himiko leaped forward and grabbed Ochako’s hand. Ochako activated her quirk on both Himiko and herself letting the two float in the air safely as the boat
pulled away from them and fully flipped over into the courtyard where it broke in half. The bow of
the ship coming to a stop and floating lazily over the edge of the water and courtyard and the other
half that slammed into the courtyard fountain before getting stuck.

Several villains gaped at the destruction they had just witnessed before turning on the kids and
screaming, “Are you kids nuts!”

“What the hell was that!?”

“Wait, shouldn’t the water guys have drowned those brats?”

“Why the hell was the boat flying!?”

Katsuki put his thumb to his throat and dragged it across, sticking his tongue out at the villains as
he did, “Hurry up and die, you worthless ass holes! I don’t have time to waste on pawns like you.”

Tsuyu shook her head, “Right, because antagonizing the hoard of villains is the best thing we can
be doing right now.”

Ochako released her quirk, making the bow of the boat slam into the ground, making a few of the
villains that had started to advance on them scurry back.

Himiko smirked as she and Ochako landed next to the other two, “Oh, let him have his fun. He’s
like a kid in a candy...store... Oh... shit.” Himiko’s smile faded completely and her whole
demeanor changed. She was actually shocked by something. The other three turned to see what had
gotten her to go silent. They all looked as some distance away, Aizawa was thrown to the ground
by the giant Nomu with a sickening crunch, and skidded across the concrete floor.

No one moved as they looked at their fallen teacher, each in varying stages of horror.

The monster tilted it’s head to the side, waiting to see if their prey could still move.

Gingerly, painfully, Aizawa’s head turned so he could look up at his students. His face bloodied,
his eyes swollen and broken. He looked at each of the four as he gathered his strength. Not enough
to fight, not even enough to stand. He had just enough strength to give them one order, even if they were too far away to hear it, “Get...out...of...here...”

Nomu growled and began to advance on the teacher. They had been ordered to kill him, and nothing was going to stop them in their mission.

Ochako felt panic grip her heart. She was vaguely aware of Tsuyu saying something, and Katsuki screaming an answer. Himiko was doing something, but she couldn’t look. Her eyes could pull away from the scene in front of her. Her teacher was lying on the ground beaten and bleeding all over himself, and that monster was advancing on him.

With each step Nomu took, the panic inside Ochako broke, little by little. Broke and was washed away as a new feeling filled her.

Rage.

How dare these villain’s attack her class.

How dare these villain’s hurt her teacher.

Her rage focused on the monster in front of her, and in a moment of pure instinct, Ochako acted on that rage.

To her side, the bow of the boat still lay on its side, teetering on the edge of the courtyard. She ran for it, startling her fellow classmates. One of them asked what the fuck she was doing. It was probably Katsuki, or it could be Himiko. She couldn’t tell, too focused on stopping the monster before it hurt her teacher anymore. Gripping a section of undamaged railing, Ochako lifted the bow up above her head. With it broken in half, the pain it caused her stomach was greatly reduced, but it was still half a boat. So it would still cause a lot of damage.

The villains around her gasped, and scrambled back, horrified that the little girl had been able to pick up the large wreck.

“GET AWAY FROM MR. AIZAWA!!!”
Ochako reared back, the villain’s horror became outright panic and fear as they realized just what Ochako planned to do next.

Ochako chunked the bow as hard as she could, sending the front of the boat careening right towards Nomu, with the other villains jumping or ducking out of its way. What happened next, left everyone speechless.

It wasn’t the boat slamming into the monster, leaving it a smear on the concrete floor.

It wasn’t the monster, using its brute strength to catch the boat.

It wasn’t the boat shattering into pieces when it made contact.

It was that nothing happened. The boat hit Nomu dead on, but it didn’t break, or splinter or anything. It simply bounced off and came to a stop. Ochako couldn’t understand what she was seeing. Something should have happened. Even if the monster had some kind of invulnerability Quirk, then at least the boat should have been damaged where it struck it.

*It’s like, all the force behind it just vanished. It made no impact.*

Nomu stopped and turned their head, eyes focusing on the girl that had attacked him then at the floating bow to their side.

Katsuki swore loudly when he saw the Nomu raise its hand, “DROP THE FUCKING BOAT! DROP IT NOW!”

Ochako’s eyes went wide; then as fast as she could, she slammed her fingers together, screaming, “Release!”

Just as the Nomu raised it’s hand and struck the side of the boat.
With its gravity back, plus the force propelling it, the bow struck the ground and bounced just over Ochako’s head, bits skipping off her visor as it exploded into bits and pieces and rained down into the lake behind her.

Ochako, however, did not have time to comprehend just how close to dying she just came. In the blink of an eye, the monster covered the distance between the two and was standing right over Ochako. Reaching out one of it’s giant hands to grab her, and to tear her apart.

“Frog-Legs grab her NOW!”

Katsuki charged forward as Tsuyu launched her tongue out and wrapped it around Ochako, yanking her back. Katsuki, as Ochako sailed past him, yanked back the safeties on his gauntlet and aimed it right into the Nomu’s chest, “Eat shit and die, you ugly fuck!”

Pulling the pin, a blast of concentrated fire slammed into the Nomu, engulfing it and everything right behind in smoke and flames.

Tsuyu stared in shock while she put Ochako down, “Didn’t he try and use that against Todoroki back during the mock battle, kero? Scary.”

Katsuki grinned, “I wasn’t going to kill him. Don’t worry about stupid shit like that.”

Around them, the villains were understandably freaked out.

“What the hell is wrong with these kids!?”

“Why does he have a cannon? Who gives a kid a cannon!?”

With his grin taking on a feral quality, Katsuki turned to the group of villain, raising his hands up and he popped off some explosions in his palms, “That’s right, you fucks. You should be terrified of me. I’m the next number urk-!”

Tsuyu’s tongue shot out and ripped Katsuki off his feet pulling him back towards the group.
“Frog-legs, what the hell are you doing!?”

“Bakugou, shut up!” Ochako screamed. She pointed at the clearing smoke, “Look!”

Katsuki did and tried his best not to show how freaked out he was.

*Are you kidding me!?*

The smoke had cleared enough to show the Nomu, still standing, and besides some scorch marks on its pants, completely unharmed. The villains seeing their monster unharmed cheered.

“What the fuck does it take to hurt this guy!?”

“He’s got to have some kind of invulnerability quirk,” Ochako reasoned.

“On top of fucking super strength?” The flying boat parts were still fresh in Katsuki’s mind.

“So where does that leave us, kero?”

“Fucked,” Himiko added grimly.

Nomu crouched down, getting ready to charge the four students, before it could, however, “Nomu, don’t move.”

The crowd of villains parted, as Tomura walked through them. This action, on top of him, being able to tell Nomu what to do got Ochako’s attention.

“The boss?” She whispered.
“Probably. The others are scared of him at least,” Himiko noted as she watched some of the villains go out of their way to put some distance between themselves and the man in black.

“Who the fuck are you, Hand-Man?” Katsuki asked, while making sure to keep an eye on the now-still giant.

“You’re awfully noisy, brat. I am Shigaraki Tomura, the leader of the League of Villains.”

Himiko blinked, sharing a glance with Tsuyu, “There’s a league now? When did that happen?”

Tomura ignored her, his eyes set on Ochako and Katsuki, “You four, or really, you two have made quite the mess haven’t you. Aren’t heroes supposed to keep collateral damage to a minimum?”

“Fuck you.”

Tomura sighed, “Keep talking like that, brat, and I just might change my mind and sick Nomu on you after all.”

“What do you want?”

Tomura glanced over at Ochako, who flinched at the glare he gave her, “I want All Might to die.”

The four glanced over at the giant monster as they remembered that Kurogiri had said the same thing.

_I was wondering how they thought they’d be able to do it. That...Nomu must be how they plan on doing it._

“But since he isn’t here yet, I want to have a little fun.” Tomura continued, “watching you four die would be a perfect way to pass the time. Having Nomu kill you, however, would be too quick. I want you four to suffer. I want Eraser Head to watch as his students die in front of him and know there’s nothing he can do to save you. I want this to last as long as possible. So...” Motioning to the crowd around him, “I’ll let my men rip you apart.”
Katsuki growled, more pops and sizzles crackled in his palms as he looked over the villains, “You want to send your troops into a meat grinder? Be my guest.”

“Please don’t speak for all of us,” Tsuyu grumbled as she knelt down onto her hands.

Himiko pulled two knives from her holsters, twisting them in her hands. Ochako crouched down, readying herself for the fight.

When no one moved for the first few seconds, Tomura turned to his men, “What are you waiting for? Get. Them. NOW!”

Whatever reservations the villains had, going up against a group of kids, one of which could throw a boat around, and another that had cannons for arms, they were nothing compared to the fear they felt for the man giving them order.

With a chorus of yells, the villains charged.

The first ones to run up on Katsuki were promptly hit in the face with multiple explosions, sending them crashing to the ground, burnt and charred. A villain dove for him, hoping to grab onto him, but Katsuki used the man’s face as a step as he propelled himself up into the air. Grabbing the grenades at his belt, Katsuki tossed them into the crowd. While several villains rushed to get away, there were many who were still too bunched up and tripped over each other. The grenade’s explosions threw many of the villains up into the air, where they either crashed down onto the hard ground or onto other less fortunate villains. Twisting his hands back, Katsuki shot himself forward into the largest group he could see, slamming his boots into one villain’s face to break his fall.

Keeping herself low to the ground, Tsuyu launched herself into the first villain she saw, slamming her shoulder right into his gut knocking the air out of him. Landing, she twisted herself around and kicked the falling villain as hard as she could, and, since her Quirk was Frog, she could kick really hard. Sent flying backwards, Tsuyu heard several satisfying grunts and thuds come from behind.

“Come here, little girl!”
A large bug faced villain stood over her, menacingly.

“I’m gonna ACK!”

Not letting the villain finish, Tsuyu spat out a large glob of mucus into his face. While not very strong or acidic, suddenly having a large, slimy thing stuck to your face-- that also did burn a little- - was enough to make anyone freak out. While he clawed at his face, Tsuyu leapt up onto his shoulders and drove his face into the ground.

Ochako recalled everything Gunhead had taught her as she ducked and dodged around the numerous villains as they attacked her.

*Make them miss.*

Sidestepping a wild punch, Ochako drove her elbow into the man’s jaw. Dropping him and his teeth to the ground.

*Capitalize on their mistakes.*

When two villains tried to charge her, only to get into each other’s way, Ochako ducked forward and tapped both with her fingers. Immediately after their gravity was taken, she gripped both their fronts and tossed them into the air.

*Punish anyone who gets lucky.*

A glancing blow skipped off Ochako’s visor. Grabbing the arm, Ochako brought her bracer down on it as hard as she could. The snap was oddly satisfying for her to hear.

Someone got their arms around her from the back while another woman reached for her neck. Ochako drilled her elbow into the villain’s ribs, forcing him to let go. With her other hand, she grabbed the woman's shirt and yanked her forward, slamming her face against her visor. Her visor was made to handle large impacts, but the woman's face, not so much. Twisting around, and seeing the other villain was still bowled over, Ochako slammed the side of her boot into the man's head as she delivered a hard kick that sent him to the ground, out cold. More villains rushed forward, but Ochako was ready for them. Soon more villains were bouncing off the ceiling.
The moment the villains surrounded them, Himiko vanished. She had told Nezu that a crowd of people was the best place to disappear, and her immediate actions were living proof of that. Unlike the students from before, these villains had left enough space between themselves so they could attack her without hitting themselves in the process. This was just the right amount of space for her to get to work. Diving into them, Himiko’s knives and blades cut through flesh and bone and tendon, spraying blood everywhere and causing more than enough confusion and panic that everyone lost sight of her.

There were no rocks, or trees to hide behind. No alleys and dark corners to fade away in. Just people, and that was enough.

“Where did she go!”

“Did she turn invisible!”

“Maybe she AHHH!”

With a more than necessary twist, Himiko yanked her knife out of a villain’s knee, while at the same time slicing through the achilles tendons of a four-legged man. She heard a gasp; looking up, Himiko saw a villain open her mouth to scream she had found her.

*Yeah, no.*

Himiko slammed her fist right up into the woman's ribs, driving the blades on her hand into the woman's lung, making sure she didn’t scream, and wouldn't be able to call for help. She left her other lung un-stabbed so at least she wouldn't suffocate.

*In theory.*

Honestly, she wasn’t sure if that was how lungs worked.
Weaving around, Himiko kept her eyes on her target. With every down villain she got closer.

Tomura Shigaraki.

He was the leader of this league. Take him out, and the rest would devolve into panic. She had seen it many times before while living on the streets. Gangs liked to see themselves as an unstoppable force, but kill the leader and the members either scatter or kill themselves with in-fighting.

She had made it to the edge of the crowd, and Tomura was right in her line of sight, busy watching the fight. While there were no more villains between her and him for her to hide in, she had ways of slipping by. Her Quirk, Transformation, made it real easy to sneak up on people. And as luck would have it, she was coated in more than enough blood to hold a form long enough to get over to the leader and take him down. Better yet, none of her friends, especially Izuku, were close enough to see her use her Quirk, so she wouldn’t have to explain anything and freak them out. She gets to stop the bad guy, and no one would question how she did it. Win-win.

*Maybe Izuku will be so impressed he’ll want to celebrate.*

Big win.

Raising up one of her bloody knives, Himiko stuck her tongue out and ran it up the side, getting enough of a taste that she felt shivers run up her spine. She had missed this. The taste of real blood. Not the fake stuff she was forced to drink.

The taste of real blood ignited a fire inside of her. Urges burned, begging to be let free. It took a great deal of will to force them down. She had a job to do. She had people counting on her, which was a new feeling she was desperately trying to deal with. Besides, this wasn’t the blood she *really* wanted to drink. No, this taste was just for her Quirk, and nothing more. This was business, not pleasure. No, the blood she wanted to enjoy, to revel in its taste, its flavor, belonged to a boy with green hair and freckles she desperately wanted to spend all night counting and to see just how far down they went.

*Focus, girl. It's time to go to work.*

Himiko felt the change come over her as her new form took shape.
I guess now I’ll get to find out if those nut jobs actually made me something that won’t get destroyed when I transform in it.

Tomura sighed as he watched the fight unfold.

“What the hell are they teaching these kids? They’re so violent.”

Another explosion went off, while at the same time more of his men were sent sailing weightless into the air before suddenly plunging back to the ground. He could see the green girl hopping from one person to another, jumping off their heads, and kicking them into the one another every time she jumped.

That’s three of them, but where did that fourth one go?

The other girl had been swarmed by the villains, and he was sure she was about to get crushed, but soon pained and panicked screams echoed over the crowd. People started getting picked off, and no one could find where the girl had disappeared to. Movement to his side made Tomura look over, and see one of his villains walking the outer edge of the crowd, moving away from it. A large man with a stone jaw, was putting some distance between himself and the commotion.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing? I don’t want cowards in my league.”

“Just waiting for an opening, boss. Can’t do much when everyone is all crowded together.”

Great, the pawns are trying to think for themselves.

“Your job isn’t to try and think about what to do. Just do what I say.”

The man grunted, but kept walking around. At first Tomura didn’t really care. He could just kill the man later if he felt like it, but soon something started to feel off. He just didn’t know what it was but something had his instincts on edge. Red eyes scanned the courtyard. Nomu was standing by as ordered. Kurogiri was still up by the entrance, though the commotion he had heard from that direction had given him some cause for concern. Eraser Head was still lying on the ground, though
it looked like he had started to try and crawl towards his students. However, he was so injured there wasn’t much reason to be worried about him anymore.

Tomura looked at the approaching villain, before shaking his head.

*Maybe I should just kill this guy now. He’s starting to piss me off.*

That could be the reason for his onease. He just didn’t like when someone didn’t listen. He looked back towards the fight. More of the villains were crawling away now. Some burnt, some nursing some nasty bruises, either from a kick, or belly flopping onto the concrete floor. Most of them were bloody messes, clutching at severed or deeply cut limbs. One man was clutching at his knees.

Tomura blinked.

The man was nothing special, except he had a stone jaw. Just like the man walking up to him. Who was almost next to him.

The man noticed Tomura looking back from him and then the crow. He looked and saw the bleeding double.

“Shit.”

The villain yanked out two large knives and drove them right into Tomura’s chest. Since Tomura had already been on edge and had seen the man’s double, he was able to get his hands up in time and catch the knives. While he now had deep cuts in his palms, he was able to stop the knives just shy from going right into his chest.

Himiko clucked her tongue in annoyance, “Damn, just my luck that the person I copied crawled out like that.”

Pushing forward, Himiko frowned as Tomura was able to keep the knives away.

*Damn guy I transformed into looks big, but he’s weak as shit.*
“Look at you, catching my knives like a real badass.”

Tomura tightened his grip on the knife blades, “you tried to kill me.”

Himiko laughed, which sounded strange coming from the big man’s mouth, “you're the big bad villain here. Don’t think you’re in a place to throw stones.”

“And you’re supposed to be a hero?”

“Pfft, hell if I know. I’m just here to stop you.”

This time it was Tomura that laughed, “U.A. sure let in some strange ones this year.”

“Oh, you have no idea.”

“But how exactly do you think you’re going to stop me?”

Himiko’s manic grin came through, even while looking like the stone jawed man. If anyone else had seen it, they’d probably be a little freaked out, “I’m going to stop you by jamming these knives right into your chest. If you're lucky, you’ll still be alive when the heroes get here.”

Tomura’s smirked, though you couldn’t see it past the hand over his face, “Knives? What knives?”

Himiko blinked and glanced down. To her shock she watched as the bright steel of the knives darkened and then exploded into a cloud of dust in Tomura’s grip. It wasn’t just the blades that fell apart however. The black leather grips rotted away and the plastic handle turned to dust.

A deep painful itch ran up her fingers into her hands. The skin was turning gray and cracking open. The same pain was spreading up her arms as well. Distracted by the sudden turn, Himiko only just saw Tomura reaching for her face, his fingers just brushing the skin. The brief touch was enough. The same pain was spreading out everywhere.
Snarling, Himiko kicked herself backwards, getting as much distance as she could as quickly as she could. At the same time, she tore her disguise off her body, the gray goo of its remains splattering on the ground, though this leftover residue quickly dried and decayed away. Hurriedly, keeping an eye on Tomura, Himiko checked her hands, arms, and face. Confirming that it was only the disguise that had been affected, and not her actual body.

*Though I bet if I had waited even a second longer, I’d have been a goner no matter what I did.*

Reaching up, Himiko pulled another set of knives out while at the same time confirming that at least she did still have all her gear. She made a quick mental note to thank whoever made her costume.

Twirling the blades in her hands, mostly to make sure everything was still working, Himiko eyed the man in front of her.

“How’d she get in front of us? I was worried when we couldn’t find her, but I guess she was just fine.

“Toga! Are you alright!”

Himiko kept her knives pointed at Tomura as she backed up, falling back with the other three, “Guys! Do not let that one touch you!”

“Toga?”

Katsuki scoffed, “The hell has you so spooked?”
“I just saw this guy’s Quirk. Remember the break in yesterday, and how the gate was so torn up?”

Ocako nodded, she could still clearly see Izuku picking up a piece of scrap off the ground and easily crushing it in his hand.

“He’s the one that did it.”

“Kero!?"

“Wait what?”

“This skinny bitch?”

Himiko nodded, “He turned my knives into dust, and...I saw what it does to a person. It’s some kind of destruction Quirk. He touches something and it just...dies.”

“Decays actually. Everything can be destroyed: gates, people, societies. All of it. All it takes is a little...touch.”

There was an unhinged tick to Tomura’s voice that sent a shiver up the three students’ spines. Katsuki recovered and flipped Tomura off, “Yeah, big scary villain. Like I give a shit. His Quirk is worthless if he can’t touch us, so don’t get touched.”

Around them, the remainder of the villains began to converge on them. As the four got ready for another round, the air next to Tomura twisted as Kurogiri warped next to him.

“Oh great, this guy again,” Ochako grumbled. The idea that they could get warped again, and worse, get split up was not something she was enjoying thinking about.

“Shigaraki...”
Tomura turned and looked over at the warp villain, “Oh you’re back? Have you killed Thirteen already?"

Ochako felt her blood freeze.

What?

“I was unable to. There were students that escaped my warp gates that prevented me from finishing her off.”

“Prevented you? So you ran away?”

“No exactly. During my confrontation, one of the students was able to escape. She is most likely already contacting the school for help.”

“And you didn’t go after her?” Tomura’s voice cracked and his fingers twitched.

“She is invisible.”

Hagakure!? She got out!? Then back up is on the way!

While Ochako and the others felt some relief hearing this news, their attention was immediately brought back as Tomura began to shake. His fingers clawed at his neck, digging his fingernails into the skin. Tearing at it until the welts began to bleed.

“Kurogiri...you…”

Just when it seemed he was about to rip his own throat open, his hands fell to his sides and his whole body slumped, his face staring up at the ceiling, “Oh maaaan. This means it’s game-over already. This sucks.”

EH!? What the heck!?
Ochako was completely thrown. One second that man looked ready to murder anyone next to him, and now he was whining like a spoiled child.

Katsuki’s eye twitched as he had no idea what to make out of what he just saw. Tsuyu just croaked nervously, Tomura’s unhinged personality making her more nervous than before, Himiko was completely flummoxed; she couldn’t get a read on this person, and coming from her, who prided herself on reading people, this said something about the man in front of her.

“Kurogiri, we can’t win if she brings all the teachers from U.A. here. That many pro’s, we’d be crushed instantly. This really is game over for us. Let’s just go home.”

Around them, the remaining villains were clearly in agreement. None of them wanted to be around when the teachers got there.

Ochako narrowed her eyes as she watched the man, *He’s just going to give up? This whole operation was to kill All Might, right? He should know that U.A. is going to beef up security now. He won’t get another shot like this again. He’s treating this like, likes it’s a…*

“He’s treating this like a game. This whole thing was a game to him. He’s like...he’s like...”

Himiko glanced over at Ochako, “He’s like a child. Throwing a tantrum one second and just giving up the next.”

“So he’s a fucking cry baby. What’s the big deal?”

“Have you ever seen a little kid lose gracefully before?” Tsuyu asked. Everyone looked over at her, “When my little sister loses, she’ll flip over the board and send the pieces everywhere.”

Ochako felt a new feeling of dread come over her. USJ was the board, and they were the game pieces.

Straightening up, Tomura looked over at the four, “Oh yeah, before we go, there’s one last thing I want to do.”
Himiko felt the killing intent first. Alarmed she pushed the two closest to her away, only to find that Tomura had already covered the distance between them.

*Shit, he’s fast!*

“I’m going to kill some of these kids and smash All Might’s pride!”

Himiko dodged to the side, but her eyes widened when she realized she wasn’t the target. Nor where the two she had been able to push aside. Tomura had his hand reached out for someone else.

“OCHAKO, MOVE! DON’T LET HIM TOUCH YOU!”

Ochako was frozen in place. Everything had happened too fast. She didn’t have time to react. Even when she heard Himiko’s warning, even when she realized she was the villain’s target, even with his hand going for her throat, she wasn’t fast enough to get out of the way.

He was too close to dodge.

Too close to block.

She was caught.

All she could do was close her eyes.

Time passed. One heartbeat. A second. A third. Nothing had happened. Confused, Ochako opened her eyes and was greeted with a sight she wasn’t sure what to make of. Tomura was standing right in front of her, hands reaching out to grab her neck, but now, he was glowing. He, along with all the villains around them, were glowing bright green.

*Green? Wait...GREEN!?*
The moment it clicked for her, and the others, a new voice echoed into the courtyard.

“GET AWAY FROM HER!”

Past Tomura, past the ring of villains, Izuku stood, glowing brighter than Ochako had ever seen him before as he held Tomura and all the villains in his Quirk’s grasp.

“We’re out! Finally!” Mina cheered as she and the others leapt over the wall that separated the Ruins Zone and the central courtyard of the facility.

“We should still be cautious; there were many villains emptying into here when the attack first began,” Fumikage warned.

Grunting as he landed, Izuku steadied himself. “He’s right. We should try and not draw attention to ourselves and make for the entrance.”

Mina and Fumikage nodded, though Mina let her gaze linger on Izuku, “I wish you’d let us try and patch you up some. You’re still bleeding you know.”

Izuku looked down at his chest. While the cuts that the mantis villain had given him were long, running diagonally from his collar bone to just over his naval, they were not very deep. Though that didn’t stop them from bleeding quite a bit, staining his costume red. They were going to need stitches, he guessed. Mina had pushed multiple times during their escape to stop and let her and Fumikage bandage him up. They had plenty of first aid materials between the three of them, but Izuku declined every time. It would take too much time, and they needed to capitalize on their head start.

“We’re in the open now, Ashido. It’s not safe.”

Mina rolled her eyes before adding sarcastically, “If this is a macho thing, it doesn’t suit you at all.”

“It’s not. There are just more important things that need to get done first.”
This was the fourth or fifth time they had done this dance, so Mina was at the point of just accepting it, and making a mental note to make sure she let Ochako and maybe Himiko know about all this. Mina was sure that between the two girls, they’d be able to knock some sense into the stubborn boy.

“Hmm, interesting.”

Izuku and Mina looked over at Fumikage, “What is?”

Fumikage pointed to the center of the court, “Is that a boat?”

Mina tilted her head to the side, “Yep, or at least half a one. How’d that get there? Also is it just me, or should there be more villains, yah know, everywhere?”

Izuku scanned the courtyard, “You’re right. It looks like most of them are gathering over by the lake.”

“Then I’d say we have our opening.”

Izuku and Mina agreed with Fumikage. Carefully, but quickly, the three made a dash for the entrance. As they crossed the courtyard, Izuku started to hear more of the commotion where the villains were located. Glancing back over, he tried to see what was going on. There was the crowd, where some smoke and flashes of light peeked through. Then a little ways off, he saw three villains off to themselves: a smaller man in black clothing and covered in hands; a giant monster who looked even taller than All Might was further back; and another villain that was walking around the group. Izuku’s eyes stayed on the smaller man. There was something about him that caught Izuku’s attention. Before he could start to think why that was, Mina grabbed his and Fumikage’s arms.

“Guys! LOOK!” Mina pointed a little away from the villains. There was Aizawa, lying face down in the ground.

“Mr. Aizawa!?”
“He…isn’t moving?”

“We…we have to help him, right?”

Izuku snapped his head to the stairs leading to the entrance, then back to Aizawa. Running for him would put them out in the open. They had a clear shot for the stairs at the moment, but there was no telling if that was still going to be the case for much longer. Added together, the answer to what to do was obvious.

“Let’s go get our teacher!”

The three sprinted as fast as they could as they crossed the open courtyard. Reaching their teacher, each sucked in a deep breath seeing how hurt he was.

“He’s not…”

Fumikage knelt down and was about to put his fingers to Aizawa’s neck to check for a pulse, but stopped when he cracked open one of his eyes and looked at the three, “What… are you…three doing?”

Tears brimmed in Mina’s eye while Izuku let out a sigh of relief, “We’re saving you, sir.”

“Yeah, and I don’t think you’re in a position to complain.” Mina added.

“Dark Shadow, carry Mr. Aizawa.”

“Right!”

As Dark Shadow scooped up Aizawa, Izuku was about to tell everyone to make a break for the stairs, but some instinct kept him from speaking. They were much closer to the group of villains, and Izuku could hear what had been going on. He had been hearing explosions and what sounded like fighting until recently, but now the whole villain group had gone quiet.
Turning around, Izuku froze. The warp villain was now standing next to the smaller man and the monster was still a little ways off, but he could also see Ochako, Himiko, Tsuyu and Katsuki.

*Uraraka!? Toga!? Kacchan and Tsuyu!? What are they doing over there!??*

He could hear Mina and Fumikage telling him they needed to go, but another voice drowned them out.

“*OCHAKO, MOVE! DON’T LET HIM TOUCH YOU!*”

The man had suddenly dashed forward, Himiko as she jumped back had pushed Tsuyu and Katsuki clear but hadn’t been able to reach Ochako. And Ochako was the villain's target.

Don’t let him touch you.

For an eternity, those words echoed in Izuku’s head.

Don’t let him touch you.

For an eternity, Izuku watched the villain’s hands reach for Ochako’s throat.

*Don’t let him touch her!*

*Don’t let him touch her!!*

*Don’t let any of them touch her!!!*

In that instant, Izuku dug as deep as he could, and pulled out all the power he could. Shooting his hands out, Izuku grabbed onto everything the villains were wearing that he could, and held them back.
“GET AWAY FROM HER!”

“Hey, I can’t move!”

“The heck, my shirt is strangling me?!”

“Why am I green?!?”

“What’s going on?!?”

“Help!”

All around, villains cried out in alarm as they suddenly found themselves unable to move. Tomura screamed in frustration as he pulled at his invisible bond, futilely reaching for Ochako, who had recovered from her shock and had taken several giant steps back.

“What the hell is this?” Tomura growled. It felt like his own clothes were pulling him back.

“Kurogiri! DO SOMETHING!”

Twisting his head to the side, he found the warp villain pressed into the ground, the metal brace around his ‘neck’ glowing green. Black mist slapped at the metal as he tried to wretch it off, but to no avail.

Screaming in frustration, Tomura tried to push himself forward, but Izuku wouldn’t let him. Gripping his fists tighter, Izuku pulled down, dragging the villains down onto the ground, “No you DON’T!”

“Deku!?”
Ochako was shocked. She had never seen Izuku do something like this before. She knew he had been practicing using his quirk on people in different ways, but to do something on this scale was unreal.

“Dang, Izuku…”

“Kero…”

While Katsuki didn’t say anything, he was giving Izuku a look that wasn’t angry or contemptuous.

Try as Izuku might, however, the big villain was still standing, but at least he wasn’t moving so his four classmates were safe, at least for the moment. He could feel each and every villain fighting against him. The feeling in his head was beginning to remind him of back during the entrance exam and the zero pointer. He could not afford to let himself end up like he had, so he knew he wasn’t going to be able to keep this up for much longer. Worse yet, there were other villains in the courtyard that hadn’t been at the edge of the lake that were beginning to notice their comrades were in trouble.

Everyone needs to move now!

Glancing to his side, Izuku found Mina and Fumikage looking at him, shocked and worried. Aizawa, even wrapped up by Dark Shadow, was watching him intently. If they stayed for much longer, their clear shot for the entrance would be gone.

“GO! Get Aizawa Sensei out of here!”

“Wait, hold on!”

Mina began screaming her objections before Izuku cut her off, “Ashido, I can’t hold them forever. You have to go now! Please! Before more villains show up.”

A hand on her shoulder from Fumikage stopped Mina from attempting to argue any further. Giving Izuku one last look, Mina took off. Fumikage lingered a step behind, “Good luck, Midoriya.” was all he said before he and Aizawa were gone.
With that taken care of, Izuku turned his attention back towards Ochako and everyone else.

There’s too many villains still between them and the stairs for them to make a run for it. They’d have to fight through and I know I won’t be able to hold all these guys for that long.

Grunting as the pain in his head continued to build, Izuku racked his brain for some idea.

We could try and all make a run for it, but I don’t think I can move right now. It’s taking everything I have to hold them down. If they came to me, maybe someone could carry me or something...no, that’s no good. Uraraka could float me but they’d still waste time getting over here. The villains would be on top of us by then...Wait... float...carry? THAT’S IT!

“Uraraka!”

Ochako looked up when she heard her name shouted.

“Float everyone now!”

Katsuki frowned, “Why the hell does he want you to do that? We’ll be sitting ducks when those other guys get here!”

Tsuyu nodded in agreement, while Himiko eyed the downed Tomura. He was helpless now. A perfect target.

“Uraraka, please! I can can you all out of there. Trust me!”

Ochako stiffened. Everything was happening so fast. One second she was about to be strangled, and now she was trying to understand just what Izuku was thinking.

He asked me to trust him...Then what the hell am I waiting around for?!

Himiko took a step forward, gripping her knife tightly in her hand. So focused on Tomura, she didn’t have a chance to tell Ochako to stop when the other girl rushed over to her and tapped her
shoulder and lifted her up into the air.

“The hell, OCHAKO?! I was…”

Himiko shut her mouth, deciding maybe it was better not to say how she was about to deal with Tomura. Tsuyu was tapped next, but as Ochako rushed for Katsuki, the other boy backed up, sneering, “Don’t you fucking touch me, Round Face. I’ll be damned before-”

SMACK!

Ochako didn’t have to slap Katsuki to make him float. She also didn’t have to metally yell yeet when she tossed him into the air a little harder than she had with Himiko and Tsuyu. But she didn’t not have to either. Tapping herself, Ochako pushed off the ground and floated into the air along with everyone else.

Tomura growled out in rage as he watched them float away.

“Okay, so now what?” Himiko asked. Tsuyu shrugged while Katsuki glared daggers at Ochako, who didn’t care.

“Deku screamed for me to float us. This is his plan.”

“Fucking Deku! I swear I’m going to...What the shit!?"

Ribbitting in surprise Tsuyu looked alarmed as Katsuki started to glow green. Quickly, Tsuyu also glowed, followed by Himiko and Ochako. Ochako gasped at the feeling. This was exactly like her first time at the beach. Instead of just grabbing her costume, Izuku had grabbed her whole body. The warmth, and the pressure brought a feeling of just being safe despite the immense danger they were in.

Himiko’s eyes fluttered, as she groaned into her hand, teeth biting into a finger as she tried to keep herself under control, but that was hard to do when she felt Izuku all around her.

Don’t...not here. Not here! Oh god this feels incredible! NO! No exploding!
The moment Izuku saw everyone in the air, he acted, praying his idea would work. He hoped that with their gravity removed, it would make moving them much easier. Lifting a hand up, and gently closing it, he split his attention away from the villains and took hold of his classmates. He could still feel their bodies repel his quirk, but it wasn’t as intense as when he’d first tried it. An effect of a few more months of practice, or not having a gravitational force acting on them, Izuku wasn’t sure. What he did know was that he was able to hold them, and move them. Pulling his arm out he pointed it towards the entrance stair, and willed them over. As fast and high enough that they were out of danger of the villains still on the ground.

When they rocketed by, Izuku could hear Katsuki swearing something about this not counting. Himiko may have been shouting ‘whee’ and for a split second his eyes caught Ochako’s. So many different emotions passed between the two. From him, relief that they were getting away safely, while from her, worry that he was getting left behind.

*It’s alright. This is alright. I can still make it.*

The pain was getting worse. Using his Quirk like this hurt, but it was worth it if he got them out safely.

*Once they make it, I’ll have to make a run for it. If I’m lucky the villains will be too confused to chase after me right away. Time to put all those laps on the beach and around the city to work I guess.*

*‘DEKU WE’RE AT THE STEPS! DROP US!!!’*

He could only just make out Ochako’s voice. She was so far away now, she must have screamed herself hoarse to make sure he had heard her. But he had. With a sigh, he let go, and hoped that they would be able handle their own landing strategy.

*Alright time to-*

*“NOMU!!! KILL THIS FUCKING KID, NOW!!!”*

A sharp burning pain stabbed into Izuku’s head as something ripped itself free of his Quirk. The sudden pain twisted Izuku’s stomach and made him feel like the whole world had shifted
underneath his feet. He had no time to recover though. Suddenly, Izuku found himself in the shadow of the giant Nomu. In the blink of an eye, Nomu raised their hand up, and like they were killing a fly, swatted their giant hand into Izuku’s right side.

Izuku’s arm shattered and his shoulder and collar snapped instantly from the force of the hit. However, Izuku never felt the pain. The strike launched him off his feet so fast, he tumbled across the ground where his head slammed into the concrete floor with a sickening crack before he landed in the open water of the large indoor lake.

The cold unforgiving water dragged Izuku’s lifeless body into its depths. Ripples danced across the surface where he’d sunk, soon joined by a cloud of blood that stained the rich-blue water red.

Chapter End Notes

...Soooo I’m just gonna go hide in a nice fallout shelter. This was a lot of fun to write. There were several scenes that I’d been planning since day one of this fic. I’d always wanted to give Izuku a Dare Devil style hallway fight. Himiko FINALLY getting to go nuts and just cut people up. Ochako throwing the boat (which in fairness I remembered being a LOT smaller than what it actually is in canon) at the Nomu. Tooru being the one to sneak out since you know INVISIBLE! And yeah, also the ending. That was something that I’d wanted to do as well. It seemed to fit since Izuku would, of course, stick his neck out to save Ochako and his friends. So yeah, if everything goes to plan, we'll have two more chapters left of USJ. The conclusion and the fallout chapters.

I hope you all liked this chapter, its actually the longest thing I've ever written, to date. I want to give a huge shoutout to my beta reader Tmalasia for going through this chapter and cleaning it up. Thank you so much. And of course, to you all reading it now, thank you for your time. You all have made writing this little story so much fun.

Please if you like what you saw, or have any criticisms, feel free to leave a review or comment!
Despair, Hope, Consequences and Revelations

Chapter Summary

The USJ is under siege. With All Might nowhere to be found and the threat of the U.A.’s teachers on their way, Tomura Shigaraki has decided that before he leaves, he’ll make sure to kill a few students. With a word, he has Izuku’s broken body thrown into the lake. Horrified, Tsuyu, Himiko and Katsuki can only watch as he sinks into the water. Ochako however, refuses to do nothing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tooru ran. The moment she slipped out the door of the USJ, she ran as fast as she could. Thanks to everyone, she had been able to take Denki’s headset and escape the overrun facility. Now that she was out, she just had to get far enough away from the building that she got out of the range of whatever was blocking all their communications.

Her lungs burned, the bottoms of her feet were going to be bruised from running barefoot on the hard concrete, but she didn’t care. She had a job to do, and she was going to do it.

*I’m not running away. I’m running to get help to save everyone. They’re all counting on me!*

Reaching up, she tapped the keys on the side of the headset and tried to make the call again. Unlike the first few times, instead of just silence, a soft crackle came from the speakers. It wasn’t a ringtone, but it was more than what she had moments ago. She had run almost a mile away, and, finally, she felt there might be hope.

*I have to keep going. Don’t stop. Just a little further, and I’ll be able to contact someone at the school!*

Pushing herself, she kept moving. She couldn’t let herself stop for anything. Tooru kept repeating those words in her head. Keep moving, and don’t stop.

By chance though, when she lifted her head up to try and suck in some air, she saw something. Something was soaring over the tops of the trees some distance away. Looking closer, she corrected herself, it wasn’t soaring, it was leaping. Whatever it was, it was jumping so far, it almost looked like it was flying. And it was going to come very close to her if it kept going on its path. As
it got closer, she could tell it was a person at least.

Panic filled Tooru.

A villain!? Do I hide? Keep running? They won’t be able to see me right?

As the person got closer though, something clicked in Tooru’s head. They were coming from the wrong direction.

If that was a villain, they’d be coming from the USJ, not the city...right?

Tooru kept running as she followed the person with her eyes. Whoever they were, they were covering the distance at a scary pace, though they didn’t look like they were in a hurry. Just bounding along. They were big too, if Tooru had to make a guess.

Big, and moving like that...wait...WAIT! Is that!?

Tooru slid to a stop, wincing as the concrete scratched up her feet. She squinted against the sunny sky at the figure, not sure if she could believe her eyes.

It’s All Might!

“All MIGHT!”

Tooru screamed as loud as she could, but the hero was too far away. Too high in the sky to hear her. Worse yet, Tooru realized as she started to wave her arms to get his attention that there was no way for the hero to see her like this.

It looks like he’s heading for the USJ, so this is great right...no wait. He wouldn’t know about the villains. He’d be walking into a trap. No no no, this is bad.

She had to do something. Anything to get the hero’s attention.
“Please All Might...see this.”

Tooru focused on the light around her, this wasn’t a move she had perfected yet, but all she needed to do was grab All Might’s attention. Even for a moment. The light around her started to refract and bend as it passed through her.

All I need is to make myself BRIGHT!

“Light Refraction!”

Floating in the air, Ochako let out a startled gasp as she felt herself get pulled hard towards the stairs leading to the USJ exit. It finally dawned on her just what Izuku’s plan was.

Wait? Wait he’s not! Deku!

Ochako turned to find Izuku as she flew past him, His eyes were filled with determination and relief.

Deku no! This isn’t how this is supposed to work!

He was saving them, but leaving himself in danger. This wasn’t right. She didn’t want this. She didn’t want to leave him behind.

Further and further Ochako, Himiko, Tsuyu and Katsuki were carried away, Katsuki complaining the whole time.

“God damn it! This doesn’t change a thing, you shit! I didn’t ask you to try and help me!”

Himiko swiped at Katuski, but he was just out of her reach, “Will you stop bitching already! We need to figure out what to do about Izuku!”
Tsuyu glanced back, “He’s holding all those villains but some are still free. They’ll get him…”

“All the villains will get him.” Himiko finished, her grip on her knives tightening, “…We’re going back for him.”

“Of course we are,” Ochako added firmly. “We’re pulling his butt out of that fire, and when all this is over, I am going to rip Deku a new one for doing something so stupid.”

Ochako wanted to scream. How could Izuku think this was alright? How could he think she would just leave him at the mercy of all those villains?

*I am going to make sure he knows to never do something like this again. Even if I have to drill it into his thick head.*

Looking up, they were just about to the steps leading up to the exit. Not wanting Izuku to send them all the way up, Ochako screamed as loud as she could, “DEKU, WE’RE AT THE STEPS! DROP US!!!”

A moment passed, then the green light around each of them vanished. The moment it did Ochako tapped her fingers together, “release!”

Released from her Quirk, the four landed. Ochako’s mind raced with different ways to get back to Izuku. She recalled that out of the four of them, Katsuki had the longest range for his attacks. Especially with that cannon on his arm. She just hoped that it was recharged. Ochako turned to Katsuki, “Alright, Bakugou, listen, I need you to-”

“NOMU!!! KILL THIS FUCKING KID, NOW!!!”

Ochako’s words died in her throat as a cold dread froze her heart. Ochako and everyone turned around just as Nomu swatted Izuku away. The facility was still so loud, with the sounds of combat happening all around them, but for Ochako everything had gone dead silent. She heard the hollow snap and crunch of bones breaking. The horrific crack as Izuku’s head bounced off the ground. The harsh ripples of the water as it dragged Izuku away. She heard and saw it all in perfect, cold, harsh, clarity.

Tsuyu croaked, terror holding her in place.
Katsuki was a mix of shock and rage, his mind trying to comprehend what he’d just seen.

Himiko’s grip on her knives loosened, both clattering on the ground, as she fell to her knees. She knew what she had just seen. She had just watched Izuku die. Despair tried to force a scream out of her throat, but the shock kept it stuck inside, suffocating her in her own horror.

Ochako felt everything they all felt, and more.

Fear.

No.

Terror.

No.

Horror.

No.

Despair.

No.

Rage.

NO!

While these feelings nailed the others in place, Ocahko rejected them. These horrible thoughts.
These terrible feelings would not hold her. No, instead of holding her back, they drove her forward. She didn't hear the startled cries from her classmates as she dashed forward. She didn't hear the mocking jeers from the villains as they neared her. She was focused on only one thing.

Getting to Izuku.

Making herself float, the gyro’s in her costume screamed to life as she pushed them to their limits, dragging her as fast as they could upward to the USJ’s ceiling. Twisting in the air, Ochako slammed into the giant overhead dome, denting the metal ceiling while her boots strained to absorb the impact as she landed at what felt like terminal velocity. Safely above the villains between her and the lake, Ochako scrambled forward. Pushing herself as fast as she could, all the while, her eyes never left the rippling water where Izuku had landed.

Once she was finally over the water, Ochako switched off the gyros and kicked off the ceiling. Propelled down, Ochako held her hands forward as she took a diving position. Some feet above the water's surface, Ochako tapped her fingers together and dove straight into the water. Slicing through the surface, Ochako began looking for where Izuku had sunk to. If she wasn’t so intent on finding him, she would have been horrified at how easy it was. All she had to do was follow the trail of blood that stretched down into the water. Following it down, she soon found Izuku, limply lying on the lake's floor.

Wrapping her arms around his chest, and holding his head against her shoulder, Ochako kicked as hard as she could bringing both of them to the surface. Breaching the water, Ochako gasped from breath. Pulling Izuku with her, she swam to the shore and pulled both of them out of the water. After running all the way to the lake, her dive into the lake, and now that she had Izuku with her, her adrenaline was starting to peter out. With the loss of that adrenaline-powered numbness, she took one look at Izuku and began to fully comprehend the horror that was done to him.

His right arm looked ruined. The flesh was almost black from the blunt force trauma. His forearm was bent inward, something that should be impossible, if not for that fact the bones inside had been crushed. His upper arm was twisted completely around and his shoulder was mashed into his body.

Blood seeped from the gash where his head had hit the ground; half of his cowl was torn away, the other half along with most of his costume was stained red. Soaked from the lake, all the blood spread over him even faster. Added with the injuries he had taken earlier in the Ruins Zone-- the punches and the cuts along his chest-- Izuku looked like someone out of a horror movie.

So horrified at the damage, it took Ochako a few seconds to realize something else. When they had made it to the surface, he hadn’t gasped for air like she had, even though he had been under for longer. When she had held him against herself she hadn’t felt him move. She hasn't felt anything
from him. She placed a hand on his chest and she lowered her head next to his.

She didn’t feel his chest rise and fall.

She couldn’t feel his breath on her cheek.

_He’s not breathing…How long has he been…!? No no no no no no!_

“Deku, no! Please no!”

Ochako’s mind flashed back to months ago. Back when she and Izuku had only been training together for a couple of months and were about to start doing laps in the ocean. All Might had pulled the two aside, having decided that some basic rescue training was in order before they started. One of the things he taught them was CPR and why it was so important to start right away.

_“You both should know, it doesn’t take long before a person's brain is permanently damaged from lack of air. If it goes too long, no matter what you do, there will be no saving them. The quicker you start, the better their chances.”_

Ochako ripped her visor off, and moved Izuku gently into a supine position as she had been taught while she knelt by him.

_Okay, I can do this. I have to do this. Just remember the steps._

Pressing the hands onto his sternum, Ochako took one last steadying breath, forcing back her tears through sheer force of will and began to apply compressions, counting off each one. Reaching thirty, she moved to his head, gently tilting his chin up, careful not to do anything that would make his head injury worse, she opened his airway. Leaning down, she pressed her mouth over his, at the same time pinching his nose shut. She puffed one breath into him, watching carefully to see if his chest rose. Seeing that it did, she breathed into him one more time before pulling back and starting the compressions again.

_Please, Deku. Please open your eyes. Please..._
Ochako was concentrating so hard on trying to revive Izuku she failed to notice that several of the villains she had passed by were starting to advance on her. It was only when they were close enough for her to hear them that she realized.

“Is this little girl seriously trying to do CPR in front of all of us?”

“I think she’s an idiot.”

Freezing as she was about to start the next set of breaths, Ochako’s head snapped up in horror. The villains were practically on top of them, laughing as they got closer. To make matters worse, out of the corner of her eye, she could see the three from the Shipwreck Zone walking over to her position too.

Tomura.

Kurogiri.

Nomu.

Her mind raced. She had to get them away, but every moment that she wasted was another moment closer to Izuku never coming back. She couldn’t stop, but she couldn’t stay. Staying there, knelt down like she was, she was defenseless. The villains wouldn’t have to do much to kill her. She could run, but that thought was instantly tossed away. Nothing was going to make her leave Izuku’s side. If she could only get him to cough, to take a single breath on his own, then she could escape with him. Hurriedly she bent back down and puffed two breaths back into his lungs before desperately applying the compression to his chest.

*Deku, you have to breathe. Just one gasp or cough. Anything!*

A shadow of a villain fell over her, “Time’s up, little girl.”

In the villain’s hand he carried a long metal pipe that he raised above his head, ready to beat Ochako to death, “At least you’ll get to be with your little boyfriend after you die.”
More laughter from the villains. The man swung down, and Ochako covered Izuku with her body, a last ditch attempt to save her dearest friend from getting hurt anymore.

*Mom, Dad... I'm so sorry...*

Thunk!

Thunk!

Thunk!

Thunk!

Thunk!

Thunk!

Six soft, hollow impacts, followed by the harsh clang as the metal pipe hit the ground made Ochako look up. She watched as six of the villains fell to the ground, faces contorted as they screamed in agony. Each villain had a metal cylinder, with a long clear tube, sticking out of their backs. The remaining villains whirled around to find Himiko standing behind them. Ochako's eyes went wide, wondering when the other girl had followed after her. Himiko met her gaze and screamed, “Keep going! I’ll keep these bastards busy!”

Ochako immediately went back to work while Himiko reached up and grabbed all of the tubes in her hand and yanked all the syringes out. With a small flick of her wrist, she made sure the needles sliced across another villain's face, leaving deep scratches over his eyes. He fell, clutching at his face, screaming and blood seeped through his fingers. The remaining villains launched themselves at Himiko, forgetting about Ochako and Izuku completely. Himiko ducked a wild swing as her syringes were drawn back into place. Reaching for her thigh holsters, Himiko filled her hands with all the remaining throwing knives she had. Holding them between her fingers, she started throwing them as fast as she could aiming at all the villains’ legs. It was the fastest and most sure way to down them short of actually killing them. Falling onto her back, she turned her attention to the villain that had tried to punch her. Lifting her feet up, she drove her heels into his knees. There were twin pops as the villain pitched forward, his knees bending in the completely wrong direction. Rolling up onto her shoulders, Himiko kipped-up off the ground and landed back on her feet. After her attack, all but one of the villains were on the ground in a great deal of pain. She glared at the
last thug who put his hands up and started to back away.

Right into Tomura.

“You guys are really useless, aren’t you.”

“Bos- URK!”

Himiko didn’t bat an eye as the man’s body crumpled into a pile of gore just from a touch of Tomura’s hand. The league’s leader looked down at all the villains he had brought and sighed dramatically, “this is really just sad. I know you guys wouldn’t stand much of a chance against pro’s, but to get beat by students... That's just sad.”

“Shigaraki, we must leave soon before the U.A. teachers arrive.”

Tomura waved Kurogiri off, “I know. Just be ready to warp us out. These kids have really thrown a wrench into my plan. They need to pay for that.”

Himiko tensed. She was now standing between the three villains and Ochako who was still desperately giving Izuku CPR. Subtly, she did a quick count of what she had left to work with.

*All my throwing daggers are stuck in the villains. I have two combat knives left, my six needles and my bracers...Shit.*

“Nomu.”

The giant monster tilted their head.

“You were too fast with that boy. Make sure you make this hurt for the girls.”

The Nomu screeched and began to advance. Walking slowly up to the students. Himiko launched all of her syringes right into its chest, though she wasn’t sure what good it would do. She had seen the monster shrug off a boat and an explosion. Knowing that, Himiko was shocked when the
needles pierced into the monsters chest, and the machine on her back started to suck out its blood. Nomu didn’t seem bothered at all by this, but it showed that it could at least be hurt.

But why did that work?

Himiko’s thoughts were cut off when the Nomu reached up and gripped the tubing. Right as they gave it a pull, Himiko sliced through the tubes and backpedaled, preventing herself from being dragged over to the monster. Blood dripped from the ends the Nomu still held; without a care it yanked all the needles out of its chest and dropped them to the ground, crushing them beneath its feet.

Well shit, now if I survive this, the nutjobs back in the support department are going to kill me. So what now? He can get stabbed, but not blown up or crushed? What kind of Quirk does this freaking thing have? Should I try for that exposed brain? Also, is it just my imagination or did my needle not leave any-

The world around came to a screeching halt as a harsh hacking wheeze reached Himiko’s ears. The sound almost didn’t seem real; it was almost inhuman. Even the villains stopped and turned to look while Himiko glanced over her shoulder. Ochako had stopped giving CPR and was kneeling down, eyes wide in shock and looking on the verge of breaking in tears. Izuku was spitting out water and blood from his lungs, while, at the same time, desperately sucking in as much air as he could, leaving him a wet, bloody, wheezing, hacking, coughing mess. But most importantly an alive, wet, bloody, wheezing, hacking, coughing mess.

It was getting harder and harder for Ochako to hold herself together. No sooner had she just breathed into Izuku again, then his chest heaved and he started coughing. The shock of him suddenly coming back to her left her momentarily dumbfounded. Her mind just stopped working. It was only when she felt a hand rest on her arm that she was able to focus, and look down. Izuku had laid his hand on her and even while seriously hurt, blood pooling around him, his glazed over eyes focused just enough to look right at Ochako, “Ura..raka..you..'re...o...okay?”

“Are you kidding me!? How hard is it to kill some snot nosed kids!”

Tomura screamed, hands scratching at his neck, “Do I have to do everything myself!? Kill them! Kill them! KILL THEM!!!”

Ochako’s head snapped up, wrapping her arms around Izuku. Himiko pulled the last two knives out, ready to rush forward.
Then there was a loud boom and crash that echoed throughout the whole of the USJ. Everyone turned to find the source of the noise.

It had come from the entrance.

A large dust cloud blanketed the top of the steps, but soon a shadow could be seen walking through. A very large shadow.

“It’s fine now!”

The dust began to clear, and everyone saw who had arrived.

“All Might had finally arrived.

Himiko sighed, “The hell, playing up the, in the nick of time, cliche a little close, Teach.”

Ochako held Izuku close to her chest, turning him just enough so he could look up the steps, “We’re going to be okay, Deku. You’re going to be okay. Look, it’s All Might!”

Slowly, Izuku’s eyes looked up at the figure in the distance. He could feel himself slowly putting everything back together: The USJ, the attack, the danger they were in. As everything started to come back to him, his eyes focused, “All...Might…”

Tomura started to laugh. A feeling of absolute joy filling him as he looked up at the symbol he hated so much, “Oh? We got a continue? Then we have a real chance now. We can kill All Might for sure before the teachers get here.”

“Then all these villains came out of this warp guy. There were so many! And none of the alarms
were working and we could call for help! Aizawa Sensei lept in to fight them and told us to run, but the warp guy got us! He sent almost everyone to different parts of the building! Thirteen wanted me to sneak out and use this headset to try and call the school, but when I was leaving I saw her get really hurt! Now I....now I...

“Young Hagakure, you have done splendidly. I understand what’s going on now. I will rush to the USJ at once. I want you to continue on and get the teachers over here. Understand?”

“Yes sir, All Might!”

All Might might not have been able to see Tooru, but he could hear the way her voice trembled. She was afraid. Terrified even. Even still, she was doing her best to ensure her classmates and teachers had the best chance to survive this attack. But if she was still so scared, out in the open where she was safe, what must the other students be feeling right now. An anger built up inside All Might’s chest. Kicking off the ground, All Might launched himself into the air right toward the USJ building.

If I hadn’t been so foolish, none of this would be happening. Even if these villains wanted me, I would have been able to do something!

Shaking his head, All Might crashed through the doors of the building. He could hear the startled gasps of some students, crouched over the injured form of Thirteen.

My fellow heroes fought so hard to protect the children too...

With each step All Might took, he could feel himself get even angrier. These children should not have had to face something so horrible like this. It hadn’t even been a week of their first year, and to deal with such an attack. It made it impossible for All Might to show his smile.

But, at the very least, I can give them this message. I must stand before them and proudly say...

“It’s fine now! I am here!”

All Might’s voice boomed throughout the facility. Eijirou and Denki cheered, while Kouji slumped in relief. Walking further in, All Might began to take stock of everything he could see. Down the steps he could see four more students. Katsuki and Tsuyu were helping Mina and Fumikage carry Aizawa up the stairs, though the four had stopped when they saw him. All Might’s teeth clenched
when he saw how badly hurt Aizawa was. Both the teachers had been hurt because of his carelessness. He would have to make sure to apologize once this was over. A small glimmer of pride did fill him as he saw the students working together to take care of their injured teachers.

“All Might! All Might!” Tsuyu called out.

Looking down, he was about to let her know it was going to be alright, when he saw she was pointing. Pointing out towards the lake. He let his eyes wander up, and was startled to see a great deal of damage had been done to the courtyard. Half of a large boat was lying in the center of the room, and there were multiple bodies laying around.

_The villains? It looks like Eraser Head was able to get a lot of them. Or perhaps the students stepped in as well. Some of those injuries don't match Eraser Head’s style._

Looking further, his eyes fell onto the shore where there were even more bodies, and three villains left standing: one matching the description of the warp villain; an unimpressive man; and a towering giant All Might could tell would be trouble just by looking at him.

_It looks like those are the main threat. I’ll deal with them and…and…_

His thought trailed off. He finally saw what Tsuyu had been pointing at, Young Toga stood guard, placing herself between the villains and Ochako and Izuku. He then saw Ochako cradling the broken and bloody body of Izuku. Even from this distance away, he could see all the blood, and he felt a fear and terror he hadn’t felt in so many years.

_Young Uraraka...Young Midoriya...oh my god._

The ground shattered under his feet as he kicked off, rushing to their side. Any villain that was still standing that was between him and his protégés was instantly slammed into the ground. The villains Kurogiri and Tomura were also two he intended to neutralize on his way, but the giant Nomu grabbed them and leapt back, keeping them safe. All Might would have been impressed, and more than a little worried about Nomu’s speed, if he wasn’t completely focused on Izuku. During his time as a hero, All Might had seen more than his fair share of horror. People hurt from natural disasters or by the hands of other people. He wasn’t numb to it by any means, but he had built up a strong stomach.

Seeing Izuku looking like he was though, broke his heart. His composure was about to crumble
when Izuku reached out with his unbroken arm towards him, and despite his injuries, despite the pain and fear he must be in, Izuku’s eyes were filled with hope. He smiled up at his hero, “All Might...you’re here.”

_He’s smiling. In his condition, after going through all this, he’s smiling?_

Not only was All Might stunned by just how composed and calm Izuku was, but hearing him speak like that finally burst the dam that Ochako had been holding back. Tears cascaded down her cheeks as she started to sob, holding Izuku against her. All Might knelt down and took Izuku’s outstretched hand in one of his, and put another on Ochako’s shoulder. Speaking softly, All Might did his best to reassure the two that everything would be okay, “Come now Young Uraraka, you’re flipping the roles. It’s supposed to be Young Midoriya that has the water works. I’m too old for you two to be flipping the script now.”

Despite everything, the three shared a soft chuckle between themselves. This time of peace was quickly ended as Tomura spoke, “Hey, hey. Did you forget we’ve been waiting for you too?”

All Might stood up and turned to look at the villains, “Young Toga, would you be so kind as to help carry Young Midoriya to safety?”

Himiko nodded and hurried over to Ochako. As the two helped Izuku to his feet, Ochako turned towards All Might, “All Might, wait. That Nomu. He has some kind of invulnerability Quirk. I hit him with half of that boat, but it didn’t do anything to him.”

All Might glanced quickly at the half of the ship that had crashed in the courtyard, “Thank you for the words of warning, Young Uraraka. Now please stay back. I will handle this now.”

With the three falling back, All Might turned his full attention to the villains, “Coming after me is one thing, villain. I’m a pro; I handle low lifes who think they’ll get lucky all the time. But you went beyond that. These are students; children. This horror you’ve inflicted on them, I will not allow it to stand.”

Tomura shrugged, “You heroes are the trash of this society. Government officials with a license to commit horrendous acts of violence on the ones you deem threats. And you, All Might, are the very pinnacle of this society. Of course we’d want to kill you, our greatest oppressor.”

“Spare me the speech. You don’t even believe what you’re saying. If that was the case, you
would have just left once you saw I wasn’t here. No, you stayed so you could hurt the children too. You’re not here because of some moral. You’re here because you just want violence.”

“Well, I suppose that's true. Leave it to a pro to call me out like that. Though it's not completely untrue. I hate heroes. So while I hate you most of all, I want to kill all heroes too. You’re like weeds, and the best way to kill a weed,” Tomura turned and looked over at Ochako and Himiko as they helped Izuku get away, “is to rip it out, root and stem.”

All Might had heard enough. Rushing forward, All Might raised both his arms across his chest, ready to swiftly take Tomura out.

“Carolina!”

Out of the corner of his eye All Might saw Nomu dash from where it had been standing. Putting themself right between All Might’s attack and Tomura.

“Smash!”

All Might’s hands came down with enough force to send shockwaves through the air, shattering all the concrete around them. Nomu however took the attack head on, and, to All Might’s shock, was completely unharmed.

*To be able to take a punch is one thing. This is something else...Young Uraraka seems to be right. It's a Quirk of some kind.*

Nomu quickly reached out for All Might, who leapt back. Nomu, however, rushed to close the distance.

Tomura whistled as he watched the fight, “He’s so fast. I couldn’t even follow his attack. Without Nomu I’d be a goner for sure...but you know, he’s not as fast as I thought he’d be. Sensei was right; he’s slowing down.”

Ducking under Nomu’s hand, All Might delivered a punch right into their gut, but once again it had no effect on the giant. Changing tactics, All Might moved to targeting the head, delivering two
massive punches, one into their jaw and another right into the side of their head. However, like before, this had no effect.

“You're wasting your time, All Might. This Nomu was genetically engineered to be the perfect match for you. He’s as strong as you; he’s as fast as you; and his Shock Absorption Quirk is the perfect counter to you.”

Himiko stopped momentarily, her head whipping around to look back at the fight, “Shock Absorption; that explains it.”

Ochako frowned, “huh?”

“Why when you hit that thing with the boat, and when Bakugou blasted it. If it can absorb the shock of an impact, then that’s why it looked invulnerable. It also explains why I was able to stab it. Different kinds of impact trauma.”

Ochako looked back at the fight worriedly, “Then that’s why All Might’s punches aren’t working?”

“Probably. If I was All Might, I’d probably try and rip the thing apart. But I don’t think that’s All Mights style, so I’m not sure what he’ll do.”

“He’ll win,” Izuku answered. “All Might always finds a way to win.”

Nomu connected a punch that sent All Might sliding back yards. All Might had to admit that this Nomu was indeed a very formidable opponent. A straight up fist fight might not be the best course of action. Perhaps if he had more time, but he was down to minutes.

*I originally thought I’d have enough time to swing by for a brief hello and apologize for missing the class. I was not prepared for this kind of confrontation at all.*

All Might chided himself. This was another consequence of his foolishness today, but there would be time to dwell on that later. Right now, he needed to focus on winning.
“Engineered, you say? You don’t strike me as the mad-scientist type.”

Ducking another swing, All Might decided to change up his attack. Rushing behind Nomu, All Might wrapped his arms around their stomach. Grabbing his hand, All Might bent backwards and suplexed Nomu head first into the ground as hard as he could. Hard enough that a pillar of dirt and dust exploded up into the ceiling, and sent shockwaves through the air like gale force winds. If a fist fight wouldn’t work, he could at least trap this villain in the ground. Shock Absorption wouldn’t help it with its head and body drilled into the ground.

Ochako and Himiko did their best to shield their eyes and Izuku’s from the dust and wind. Even from where they were, they had felt the impact of All Mights attack. Himiko whistled, “Okay, that works too.”

As the dust began to clear, the three’s awe turned sour.

All Might was still bent back in the suplex with the Nomu’s lower body still in his hold, driven not through the ground as he had intended, but a black warp portal. A second one was opened right underneath All Might’s back, where Nomu’s head and arms stuck out. Nomu reached up and grabbed onto All Might’s side, digging his fingers into his flesh. Right into All Might’s old scar. All Might winced as he let go and grabbed onto Nomu’s hand, trying to force the monster to release him.

Damn, he’s got me right in my weak spot!

“Excellent! Good job, Kurogiri. You picked just the right moment to make your move.”

Looking at the balck portal underneath himself, All Might then looked over at Tomura, “Not confident in your monster to fight me, huh?”

Tomura scratched his neck while shrugging, “Nomu was never supposed to kill you in the first place. All he was supposed to do was make sure we could spring our trap.” Tomura pointed up at Kurogiri, “He’s the one thats going to kill you.”

Kurogir’s eyes narrowed as the portals underneath All Might began to shrink down, “I was not fond of this plan, but if it’s to kill someone like you, I will gladly deal with all the blood and guts that will spill into me.”
“Once Nomu pulls your body into my warp gate, I will close the gates and tear you apart.”

Izuku’s eyes went wide as he realized how much danger All Might was in. If he couldn’t break free of Nomu’s grip, he was going to die. Panic filled him as he struggled to get back and do something to help his hero. Ochako’s and Himiko’s tightened their hold on him startled by him trying to get away, “Deku, hold on a second!”

“NO! I have to do something!”

Trying to take a step forward, Izuku’s legs collapsed under him, almost sending the three tumbling to the ground. Fortunately the girls were able to keep themself upright and prevented Izuku from falling flat on his face.

“Are you stupid! You’re hurt, you idiot!” Himiko growled out, “Stop fighting us!”

“Deku, please, stop!”

Izuku looked over at Ochako, desperate eyes pleading to be let go so he could do something, “Uraraka we have to do something. Please! All Mights...he’s...”

“Recipro Burst!”

The scream was the only warning anyone got before a roar of an engine and a streak of silver slammed into Kurogiri and drove him into the ground.

Tenya thanked his luck that he had guessed right and had attacked where he recalled Himiko had been able to strike him before.
Toga was able to cut him, so he had to have a body somewhere. Why else would he be wearing that metal brace except to protect his body!

“Shinso, NOW!”

Hitoshi, who had been holding onto Tenya’s back, swore under his breath, wondering how he let the class rep talk him into a piggy back. Pulling himself up he looked down at Kurogiri over Teyna’s shoulder, “Hey, you black mist bastard; how’d you like that?!”

“You impud…”

Kurogiri fell silent, coming under the effects of Hitoshi’s Quirk.

“I got him! Now you, you stay on the ground and don’t move!”

While Kurogiri was dealt with, the ground around Nomu and All Might froze as ice shot across its surface and slammed into Nomu, freezing its arm and legs. The ice stopped short of reaching All Might, who looked over and was stunned to see Shouto not far off, “Young Todoroki?”

Reaching down, All Might could feel Nomu’ grip loosening because of the ice. Seeing his chance, All Might was able to force himself free of their grip and lept to safety.

“My thanks, everyone.”

Shouto shrugged, “You are the symbol of peace, All Might. You can’t fall to the likes of these people.”

Izuku couldn’t believe what he was seeing, Tenya, Hitoshi and Shouto had appeared out of nowhere and had just saved All Might, “guys, you’re all here?”

Hitoshi looked over at the three, and gasped when he saw Izuku, “holy crap, Midoriya, what the hell happened to you?”
Tenya was equally horrified as he hurried over while Hitoshi stayed with Kurogiri, “Midoriya, you’re injured!”

“It’s not as bad…”

Two sets of eyes zeroed in on Izuku, who clamped up immediately.

*Maybe now is not the time to try and act like I’m alright.*

Himiko looked up at Tenya, “I had no idea you could move that fast.”

Ochako nodded, “Do you think you could use that speed and get Izuku somewhere safe?”

Tenya shook his head sadly, “I’m afraid not. My engines stall after I move like that. It’ll be a few minutes before I can use them again.”

Frowning, Ochako nodded in understanding, “Well at least you guys took care of that Nomu and Kurogiri.”

“Now all that’s left, is the leader.” Himiko added as everyone turned to look at the, now alone, villain.

Tomura, now standing by himself, looked around himself as he took stock of his situation. His body posture and voice was eerily calm for someone now backed into a corner.

“Kids these days are really incredible aren’t they? Not only are most of you uninjured,” His head twitched towards Izuku, with Ochako and Himiko sneering back at him, “But that one was even able to subdue Kurogiri somehow. Now our exit plan is out of commission. You did all that even after dealing with the rest of the league when he scattered you. You’re so great that you make the rest of the League of Villains look bad.”
All Might, pressing his hand against his injured side, stared Tomua down, “Time’s up. The other teachers are surely on their way by now. And now that your muscle and exit strategy are out, you are all on your own. Surrender.”

Himiko’s face twisted at the idea, “Or don’t. I’d love to see All Might put you in the ground.”

No one else noticed Ochako, Izuku, and All Might flinch a little at that. While they each might want to see the villains leader taken out, to varying degrees, they were all very aware that when All Might had said ‘time’s up,’ he could easily have been talking about himself. Tomura though paid Himiko no mind, nor did he seem worried about All Might's statement. He just looked over to his side, “Nomu, get up.”

Twisting around, Nomu pulled itself out of the portal, their frozen arm and leg cracking before finally shattering, sending shards and chunks of ice and frozen flesh scattered on the ground. Shouto’s eyes went wide in shock at the display of self mutilation. Freed, they twisted their head around to look right at the group.

Tenya wasn’t sure what to think, “that villains just...why would it do something like that?”

“It still wants to fight? How can it like that?” Ochako added, horrified. Just what kind of monster is this thing?

More ice broke away from Nomu as the exposed ruined flesh twisted and bulged. Muscle and tendons reformed and everyone watched as Nomu regrew its lost limbs.

“What the fuck!?” Himiko swore loudly, “Didn’t you say their Quirk was Shock Absorption?”

Tomura just shrugged, “I never said that was his only Quirk. I said Nomu was made to be the perfect match against All Might. Now Nomu,” Tomura turned and pointed right at Kurogiri, and Hitoshi, “go get our gate back.”

SHIT!
In a flash, Nomu disappeared and the area that Hitoshi was standing exploded in a cloud of dust with enough force to push everyone back. Ochako wrapt her arms around Izuku as she tried to protect him from the blast.

“Deku, are you alright?”

Izuku nodded, but Ochako could feel how stiff he was holding himself, and the way his broken arm was twitching and starting to spasm.

“Uraraka, what about Shinso?” Izuku asked through pained gasps.

As Shouto helped Tenya up, Himiko looked over at the huge dust cloud, “oh shi...wait Hitoshi?”

Everyone turned to where Himiko was looking and found Hitoshi flat on his butt, looking just as confused as everyone else as to how he was with them. Quickly the shock wore off as he cursed under his breath, “Crap, that broke my hold on that Kurogiri guy.”

As the dust cleared, Nomu and Kurogiri stood tall, the black mist narrowing his eyes at Hitoshi who gulped at the glare.

Izuku started to put together what had happened, since there was still someone missing. Along the ground were deep grooves that lead to a shattered wall dividing the zones of the USJ. Right in the middle was All Might, arms held up to protect himself from the devastating.

“Damn, do you not know how to hold back?”

Tomura shrugged, “Nomu was only trying to rescue a valued colleague. Ah ,but that's the hypocrisy of a hero for you. Now that we’re back together, lets try this again, huh.”

While the three villains turned their attention back towards All Might, the hero’s dire situation had become obvious to the group. Hitoshi got up with a frown, “All Might had his hands full with the big guy. If they team up on him, he’s going to be in big trouble.”

Shouto nodded, “Then we should back him up.”
Tenya checked his legs and frowned, “My engines are still stalled, but I can fight. Though what about Midoriya? He needs to get taken away from here.”

“No...I can still,” Izuku while trying to stand felt his legs give out, though Ocahko was still there to keep him up, she made sure to cut him off.

“You are doing nothing.” Ochako countered sternly.

“No, I want all of you to stay back. Take Young Midoriya and flee at once.”

“If these three hadn’t shown up, you’d have been in big trouble, you know,” Himiko stated.

“True, and I will make sure to thank everyone properly once this is over. But this is a different situation now. If you all get too close, I won’t be able to fight without worrying about your safety. Please stay back, and let a pro show you what he’s made of.”

“But All Might?” Izuku started to say, but a quick smile from the hero silenced him. He knew what had the boy so worried. What had Ochako looking at him with such trepidation. Time. They both knew his time was almost up.

“Kurogiri, Nomu. Let’s go”

The three villains charged in, while All Might took a deep breath and prepared himself.

*It’s true I may have less than a minute left, but how can I call myself a hero if I drag children into this fight? No, I will deal with this threat here and now. I will show these villains what it means to face the symbol of peace!*
In a flurry of punches, Nomu and All Might went blow for blow as Tomura laughed even as he and Kurogiri were pushed back by the strong winds, “You idiot. Don’t you remember what his Quirk is?”

“Shock Absorption right? So what? If it’s only absorption and not nullification, then I bet it has a limit. Let’s find out!”

The students watched in amazement while the villains watched in horror as little by little, Nomu was pushed back as the punches from All Might got faster and stronger. Suddenly, Nomu was knocked off their feet and stumbled backward. All Might seeing his opening, drew his fist back and summoned all the power he could. He could feel One for All swell and burn within him, even as his body's time limit fought to douse the flames.

“You decided to come to our school, so let me teach you something before you go. It’s our school’s motto. Go beyond! PLUS ULTRA!!!”

All Might’s fist slammed into Nomu’s chest with the force of a missile. Their Quirk tried to absorb the impact, deforming as it did, but nothing was going to lessen the power of the punch. With a crack of thunder, Nomu was launched through the air, ripping right through the roof of the USJ and rocketing into the sky.

The students, once the shock and awe over the power they just witnessed wore off, started to cheer.

Slowly, All Might lowered his fist and stood up straight, which was all he could do now. His body was done, screaming at him to release his form and to let it transform back to normal. Gritting his teeth, he fought back. He still had to deal with the last two. If he was lucky, the loss of their monster would demoralize them. And all he’d need to do is bluff them to either buy time, or for them to escape. It wasn't ideal, but it was all he had now.

“So what now? Your monster is long gone. Do you want to keep fighting, or do you want to make a break for it?”

Tomura took a step back, eyes wide in shock, “How? How did he do that? Nomu was supposed to match him. What the hell just happened?”
While Tomura started to become undone, the students, save for Izuku and Ochako, started to see light at the end of the tunnel. Victory was so close.

Himiko whistled, glancing back at Izuku, “Okay. I take back what I said the other day. All Might lives up to the hype. Holy fucking shit.”

Any other day, any other time, Izuku would have been overjoyed to hear Himiko say that. Right now though, he couldn’t. Not because he was in too much pain, which he was. Not because the wound to his head was starting to make him nauseous, which he was. Not because the blood loss was making it hard to stay conscious, which it was. No, it was because as he looked at All Might, he could see through the smoke and dust, wisps of steam coming off his body. Steam he only ever saw when All Might was about to transform back into his smaller form.

He was about to transform back while two of the villains were still standing.

“Uraraka, look.”

Ochako knew what Izuku saw, “I see it, Deku.”

“It’s the steam he makes when he comes out of his transformation. Uraraka, he’s out of time.”

Izuku was shaking, and all Ochako could think to do was agree with him, “I know Deku. He’s… he’s bluffing.”

Her gaze then turned towards the villains.

_Come on, buy it. Just run away already. What kind of maniac would still want to go after All Might after seeing what he just did to that Nomu._

She could see that Tomura was freaking out again, screaming that All Might must have cheated. Even if he just kept freaking out, then that was still more time for the other teachers to show up. She was about to try and reassure izuku again that everything was going to be okay, when Kurogiri wrapped himself around Tomura and started talking to him. Soon Tomura had calmed, and both villains were looking right at All Might.
“That’s right...That’s right. The final boss is right in front of us. We can’t just leave now. We’re almost at the congratulations screen.”

Oh no.

Tomura took off screaming while Kurogiri shadowed him. Ochako’s breath caught in her throat, All Might was in trouble and there wasn’t anyone to help him now. She felt a strong pressure on her hand. Izuku had grabbed tightly onto her. Figuring he must be just as scared, if not more so than her, Ochako turned to at least turn him away. To give him some kind of comfort, even if it was going to be a lie. When she did though she realized that Izuku wasn’t just holding her hand anymore. He had lifted her hand up and pressed it against his chest. With his unbroken left hand, he pressed each of her fingers into himself. Looking up at his face, she saw him look apologetic before his focus went back to the charging villains. It was the moment after she felt her Quirk take effect and Izuku began to glow green that she realized what he had done.

“Izuku!”

Izuku ripped himself free of Ochako, and with his gravity removed, launched himself right at the villains.

NO NO NO NO NO NO!

Every horrible emotion she had felt when she had watched Izuku get hurt before ripped Ochako’s heart apart as she watched Izuku fly away, “DEKU, NO!”

Ochako’s scream got everyone's attention as they looked to see what was happening. Himiko turned around just as Izuku rocketed past her.

“The hell, IZUKU?!”

“Midoriya!”

“What are you doing?!”
Izuku knew three things. One: ever since he’d hit his head, his legs had turned to jelly. He wasn’t able to stand without someone holding him up. Two: even if he could run, he’d never be able to close the distance to help All Might in time. Three: when a person was under the effect of Ochako’s Zero Gravity Quirk, he could move them like anything else. So what he had done, making Ochako use her Quirk on him, made perfect sense. As he was now, he would easily reach the villains before they got to All Might. None of this helped the guilt he felt for using Ochako as he had. But he couldn’t focus on that. He had to stop the villains before All Might was hurt.

“GET AWAY FROM ALL MIGHT!!!”

The villains and All Might turned in alarm as Izuku screeched past the hero.

“Young Midoriya⁈”

“What the fu-!”

“Shigaraki!”

Izuku slammed into Tomura, the force knocking the man off his feet as he was driven back several yards as Izuku kept pushing himself forward until Tomura tipped over, and Izuku slammed him into the ground. The collision jolted his broken arm so much that Izuku almost blacked out. Through force of will, and a small miracle, Izuku kept conscious, and forced his knees into Tomura’s chest as he straddled him. Raising his left hand, Izuku drove his fist right into the villain’s head. Izuku delivered punch after punch, while Tomura screamed in rage. Tomura’s hand shot out and slammed into Izuku’s face, he made sure to squeeze each finger down as hard as he could. After a second though, nothing happened, much to his confusion.

What, my Quirk isn’t working? How…?

Glancing to his side, off in the distance, he saw the very faint red glow of Aizawa’s eyes looking right at him.

ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?
As Izuku batted Tomura’s arm away, the villain’s hand snagged onto the rest of his mask, ripping it away while Izuku hit Tomura with the strongest left hook he could, knocking the severed hand off his face. For the first time that day, both finally got a good look at the other. The faces they saw brought both to a halt as realization hit them. Hard.

“The TA from the office!?”

“You’re that stupid brat!?”

Shock quickly gave way to horror as Izuku realized that the person leading this attack, the person that had endangered and hurt his friends and classmates was the same person he had met in the teachers office the other day. The same person that he hadn’t told anyone he had seen. Izuku’s horror made him hesitate, which Tomura capitalized on, kicking Izuku off of him and sending him tumbling through the air.

“You! I should have killed you the moment I saw you! Well, I’ll kill you now!”

Tomura lunged at Izuku, who was in too much pain and shock to defend himself. The jolt sapping any strength Izuku had left. His vision darkened at the edges as all his injuries finally broke through his adrenalin and left him completely helpless.

BANG!

A gunshot ripped through the air as Tomura grabbed his leg as a bullet ripped through his thigh. Several more gunshots rang out that hit his other leg and arms. As Tomura fell to the ground, the rest of the bullets were absorbed by Kurogiri as he encircled the fallen leader.

Izuku could just make out Tomura’s ranting, promising he would be the one to kill All Might. The villain's rants were not only what Izuku focused on before he finally lost consciousness. It was the sight of all of U.A. ’s teachers standing on top of the steps of the USJ, finally coming to save them all.

They’re here...They’re finally here... All Might... Uraraka... you’re all safe...
Tomura grunted as Kurogiri gently warped him onto the floor of their hideout. A bar for the time being. With Tomura lying down, Kurogiri went in search of first aid for his gunshot injuries. As he did, he turned on a monitor. The words ‘sound only’ flashed onto the screen before a voice spoke.

“Ah, Tomura, Kurogiri. I see the mission did not go as you had planned.”

“You were wrong, Sensei. All Might wasn’t weak at all.”

“Hmm no. It wasn’t that he wasn’t weak. You were just not fully prepared to deal with all the variables. Almost all your forces were decimated before he even showed up.”

A new voice joined from the screen, “Yes, those children were much stronger than we planned. We underestimated them. Fortunately, we used that throwaway League of Villains name so the heroes won’t be looking for us. At the very least this failure won’t affect yourself, Master. All for One can still rest easy.”

Tomura reluctantly agreed. He hadn’t been lying when he had said the kids had been incredible before. “They were strong...but it was that one brat. He’s the one to blame for everything going wrong. Midoriya Izuku. If he hadn’t stepped in, I would have killed All Might! I should have killed him the moment I saw him at that school!”

“No, Tomura,” All for One spoke calmly, trying to soothe the injured young man, “Even if your decision ended in an unwelcome outcome, it was still the correct one to make at the time. If you had killed the boy, then this attack would have been impossible.”

The second voice spoke again, “By the way, What happened to Nomu? Master and I spent a great deal of time on that creation to make him as strong as All Might.”

“Gone. All Might blasted the thing into orbit I think.”

“What!?""

Kurogiri, returning with first aid, cut in to explain, “All Might’s final attack launched the Nomu out of the building. With such a short amount of time, and without knowing where it had landed, I was unable to warp and retrieve it.”
While the second voice grumbled angrily, All for One sighed, “It's unfortunate, but it cannot be helped now. We may all have regrets on how this mission went, but let us not see it as a complete failure. We now have a better understanding of our enemy, so let us use that to our advantage. We now know that just picking up random street thugs will not be enough, so, Tomura, I want you to start looking for elites. People with power that can rival heroes. Do not rush this; you may take all the time you need to build a true league. This league, and yourself, will become a new symbol that the world will fear.”

After the teachers arrived, everything else that happened was a blur for Ochako. Their counter attack against the League of Villains was swift and brutal. Whatever power the League thought they had in numbers was shattered under the might of the U.A. teachers. In a matter of minutes, all the villains were defeated and the students and faculty were saved. All Might had been quickly whisked away before anyone saw him in his depowered state. Jirou and Momo were recovered from the landslide they had caused in their zone. The two had been in good spirits and unharmed; the shelter Momo had thrown around them protected them from the falling rocks. Minoru, Yuuga, Hanta, and Mashirao had been congratulated by some of the teachers on capturing the villain responsible for disabling their alarms and communication.

Izuku had been loaded up on a stretcher and taken straight to Recovery Girl’s recovery ward, along with Aizawa and Thirteen. Seeing just how badly her hero, Thirteen, had been hurt shook Ochako to her core. When Izuku had been wheeled by, Ochako, who had felt numb after seeing Thirteen, felt several new emotions build up in her. Relief that at least now, he was going to get treatment, horror over everything that had been done to him, and finally anger. Anger but not just directed towards the villains, but angry at Izuku as well. Angry at his actions. Even with all these different emotions twisting her insides into knots she still moved to follow after him, but a firm hand on her shoulder from Tenya got her to stay.

“He’s being taken care of now. You should let Recovery Girl and her team do their work.”

The only other student not with them was Himiko. When they had gotten off the bus, Midnight had taken the girl aside and left with her. A few of the officers had started to interject, a detective most of all, but Midnight had been firm in telling them that Himiko was coming with her. While she hadn’t heard the whole conversation, she had made out a few words.

Blood.

Control.
Our responsibility.

Ochako guessed Midnight was taking Himiko somewhere private to get cleaned up, just like she had been asked to do by a medic. It was only during the bus ride back that both girls realized they were both covered in blood.

Izuku’s blood.

A quick but desperate shower later, Ochako joined all the other students, save for Izuku and Himiko, back in their classroom. A detective who had been at the USJ with them as they were getting loaded up in the busses, Detective Tsukauchi, joined them with an update on what was going to happen now.

“We’ll have some officers come by shortly to take statements from each of you. Afterwards, you all will be free to go. I’ve also talked with your teachers and principal, and we agree that for the rest of the week, the school will be closed while we address the security concerns this attack raised.”

Tenya stood, “I have a question. Why is Toga not with us?”

Tsukauchi stiffened, but did a good job hiding this from the students, “One of the teachers has asked that she be questioned separately. Beyond that I can not say why, for her...privacy.”

While a few were confused, Tenya, Ocahko, and Hitoshi wondered if this had anything to do with her being a ward of the school.

Tsuyu raised her hand, “Sir, what about everyone that got hurt?”

“Everyone is expected to make a full recovery. Your teachers, Aizawa and Thirteen, are in critical but stable condition. It’ll be a few days before they recover fully, but the medical teams will be here to make sure that they do. All Might got beat up, but he’s been through worse. He wanted me to let you know he would be fine, and that he was proud of each of your actions during this crisis. He is sure you all will become strong heroes.”
A few in the class murmured happily with the news. Ochako frowned and raised her hand, “What about Deku?”

“Deku?”

“Midoriya,” Shouto clarified.

“Ah yes. As you are aware he suffered a horrific injury to his head and arm. Recovery Girl is working on him now, but he will need to have surgery on his arm for it to fully heal. I believe he is being prepped now. She will also be taking her time while healing his head as she wants to make sure he did not suffer any brain injuries. He should be released today, but it won’t be until later tonight.”

Ochako sank back into her chair silently, her hands gripping her desk tightly as she processed that.

_Surgery. Deku was hurt badly enough that Recovery Girl couldn’t just heal him; she had to have surgery performed on him first. He was that hurt, and he still ran off!_

Soon, officers entered the room and started taking statements, but again this was mostly just a numb haze for Ochako. She answered questions, but her mind was always more on Izuku than anything else. When the officers had everything they needed, Ochako didn’t walk with the rest of her classmates towards the exit. She turned away and made a beeline for the recovery ward. She was aware she would probably not be allowed into the actual ward, so she found a good place in the hallway and leaned against the wall to wait.

“Uraraka?”

Turning she was surprised to see Tenya, Hitoshi and Tsuyu walking up to her. While Ochako looked confused Hitoshi just shrugged and took a piece of wall for himself, “Guess we’re all going to wait for him, huh?”

“The detective said he’d still be awhile; let us keep you company while we all wait.” Tenya added gently.

“Guys?”
Tsuyu took a spot next to her, “Midoriya risked a lot to help me; I want to make sure I thank him for that, and well, you look like you could use the company too.”

Reaching up, Ochako wiped away the tears that were building in her eyes, “Thank you.”

“Hey, are you two going to be okay? You look like you survived a horror movie.”

That had been the question that Denki had asked Himiko and Ochako on their way back to the school. Himiko sighed and gave the boy a loop sided star, not having the energy to fully turn and address him, “what are you talking about?”

“I mean, you’re both covered in blood. Didn’t either of you realize?”

What?

Slowly Himiko looked down at herself at the same time Ochako examined her own stained costume. Confused realization dawned on the two that they were indeed covered in, now drying, blood. Himiko fought back a shudder that ran through her body. Now that she was paying attention to it, the aroma she was giving off was mouth watering. It was a little dry, but she was sure it would taste better than anything the school had ready for her. Still, she fought the temptation back.

Where did all of this come from anyway? I was sure I was being careful not to get splattered when I was dealing with those league guys. Didn’t want the temptation... this temptation in particular. It smells so good, I just wanna lick...

“I mean weren’t you two carrying Midoriya around a lot at the end there right? He was bleeding all over the place.”

Ochako paled and Himiko suddenly found herself frozen in place.
This is Izuku’s blood?

Someone smacked Denki upside the head for needlessly pointing something out that hadn’t needed to be said, but Himiko didn’t care. She was too enraptured by all the red she was covered in. Though now she also had a much more difficult problem to deal with. She had resisted the temptation to let herself go wild when she had her first taste of blood earlier in the day. Because she had wanted to wait to let herself go when she got to taste Izuku’s blood again. Now? Now she was covered in his blood. The slight metallic aroma filled her as she breathed in deeply. She could almost taste it from the smell alone, but almost wasn’t going to be good enough. No, she wanted to actually taste it. To taste Izuku on her tongue and lose herself to the incredible pleasure and nirvana she hadn’t felt since she had tasted him all those months ago in her little cardboard hovel.

Two things, however, kept her from indulging in her deepest desires, no matter just how badly they were screaming at her to give in. The first was that she was surrounded by her classmates, friends, and teachers. She knew from past experience what would happen if she lost control in front of people. She didn’t want to see those looks coming from her new friends.

If I go nuts here, now, it’s going to be jr. high all over again. I didn’t cause the blood this time, but it won’t matter...

Worse yet, she was very aware that now she was being watched extremely closely by the teachers on the bus. Ectoplasm and especially Midnight, were eying her carefully, ready to step in if she lost control. Midnight eyes bore into Himiko, looking for any tell as to what the girl would do next. While she was watching and was prepared to act, she kept a hand across Ectoplasm, preventing the other hero from getting up and stopping her before she could act. She was giving Himiko a chance to make the decision herself.

While the number of eyes around and on her was a strong deterrent to keep her from licking her own body clean, there was a second reason keeping her reasonably in control. She just didn’t know what it was. Under the bubbling euphoria she was starting to feel, there was a dark and twisted feeling just under the surface. Every time she was tempted to just lick one finger clean, maybe suck on a piece of her costume, this unknown feeling broke through and stopped her. Worse yet, each time it broke through, it didn’t recede back. Like black oil leaking into her pool of pleasure.

This feeling continued to grow until the bus finally stopped at the school and Toga got off with everyone else. Midnight walked up to her and placed a hand on her shoulder, “We’re leaving. Come on.”

Himiko was fighting off so many different feelings that she didn’t resist as Midnight led her away. She barely even noticed the police officers that tried to stop them, but were promptly told off by Midnight.
Soon she found herself led to an unused teachers locker room, “Toga, wait here. I’ll go get you something to drink.”

Midnight hurried off while Toga stood alone in the room. This was her perfect chance. She could let go and just enjoy herself. She could finally taste what she’d wanted for months, but she didn’t. The more she thought about it, the more that dark feeling bubbled up, until finally all there was, was that dark feeling. A feeling she finally could name.

Revulsion.

For the first time in her life, the sight, smell and feel of blood turned her stomach. It made her sick. But why? Why now? Why was this blood so different than anything else she’d ever seen or tasted. She remembered the first time she tasted Izuku’s blood. After he had ‘saved’ her, he had gotten a little hurt. A split lip from a lucky punch. She had helped clean him off before leaving. To be shown such care, for the first time in such a long long time, made his blood taste so sweet. She had wanted to have the chance to taste it again, and now she did but when she looked at the blood, she saw Izuku again. This time though, he was lying motionless, battered and broken.

He looked dead.

Himiko bent over and dry retched as the smell of this tainted blood hit her hard. This wasn’t the blood she wanted. Those villains had stolen it from Izuku. They had hurt Izuku so badly to make him bleed so much. She wanted to taste her Izuku. She wanted it so badly she was willing to deal with all the crap and rules U.A. put her through, but not like this. Not if it came at the cost of his life.

Dizzy, sick, and disgusted, Himiko scrambled for the nearest shower. Turning the water on, she began ripping off her costume, letting the stained parts all fall to the floor without a care until she stood naked under the spray of the shower. Grabbing a bar of soap and washing cloth, she began to franticly scrub herself clean.

Off! Get it off!

The soap suds turned pink as they washed herself clean, scrubbing hard enough that she started to rub her own skin raw. She was so focused on getting the tainted blood off her she didn’t hear the door to the locker room open, or realize she wasn’t alone anymore. She didn’t hear Midnight call her name. It wasn’t until Midnight physically yanked her hands off herself that she felt herself
come to her senses.

“Toga, that is enough!”

Himiko blinked some of the water and soap out of her eyes before she finally looked up at Midnight, and saw the surprise and concern on her face. Feeling more like herself, she tried to pull herself away, “I’m fine; you can let me go now.”

“You sure didn’t seem fine a few moments ago,” Midnight countered, though she did relent and let go of Himiko’s arms. “What was that?”

Himiko let the rest of the soap wash off herself before turning off the water and walking over to grab a large towel to wrap around herself. Sitting on a bench, she saw some of the blood packs Midnight had brought for her. Picking one up she tore off the top with her teeth and sucked it down. For once grateful for the artificial taste and scent of it.

It did an excellent job getting rid of the last of Izuku’s blood that lingered in her nose and throat.

“Toga?”

Himiko held up a hand as she grabbed a second blood pack, this time taking her time as she drank it. When that one was empty, Himiko finally, since the bus ride back, felt like she had some control over herself.

She reached for the third, “That was Izuku’s blood I was covered in. You’d think I’d be overjoyed. I was literally covered in my darling Izuku. I could feel him on me, I could smell him. I swear his blood smells a little more like copper coins. Most people smell like iro,n but he’s different. Maybe because of all the green. His hair’s green. Costumes green. His eyes are green. He glows green. Like a pretty brave...fragile emerald...”

“Why did you wash it off? I brought you here because it was the closest place where you could…”

“Lick myself clean without anyone seeing,” Himiko finished.
Midnight nodded, “I could see you fighting the urge in the bus. I didn’t want you having to go through that much longer, and not in front of everyone else.”

Himiko looked away, “...thanks...”

“Are you sure that was Izuku’s blood?”

Himiko nodded.

“So why?”

Himiko was silent for a bit, as she chewed on her words, carefully.

“It...it was tainted.”

Midnight straightened in alarm, “Was he poisoned?”

“No...no not that. The blood was fine. If I had started drinking it when Denki pointed it out to me, it wouldn’t have been an issue...besides you know, everyone freaking out that I’m licking blood off myself and probably looking like I’m in the middle of an orgasm or something.”

Pausing to chuckle at the absurdity that having to hide this side of herself was that big of a deal, even if some people saw it that way, Himiko then continued, “But the longer I waited to drink it, the more time I had to think about how it got there. Why I was covered in Izuku’s blood.”

While Himiko paused to open her new blood pack, Midnight filled in the reason for her, “You mean because of the villain attack?”

“Yeah. The more I thought about it, the less I was thinking about how tasty and sweet the blood I was covered was going to be, and more about...about just how hurt and broken Izuku was...You know, when he first showed up and saved me and the others, he was a little beat up. Looked like he got punched in the face a few times, and had this nasty cut right across his chest,” Himiko drew a line over hers as she mentioned that part. “He looked so hot. Looking like that, god, it isn’t fair. But how he looked after Nomu stuck him...seeing him just broken and just lying there on the
ground. The more I thought of that, the more I couldn’t separate the blood from that image. So the more I was thinking about how hurt Izuku was, the more the blood covering my lost its...appeal. Towards the end I just...couldn’t stand it anymore. It was disgusting. I needed it off me.”

Taking a sip from her blood pack, Himiko added, “I want to taste Izuku so badly. Sometimes it’s all I think about while I’m lying in bed, but not like this. Not when it comes at the cost of his life…”

Midnight was in shock. When she had left Himiko alone in the locker room, she had expected to come back to a very different scene. Normally when Himiko lost control she would either need to kill something, or would dive into her hematolagnia-fueled pleasures, giving a whole new meaning to the term blood lust.

This though, she had not expected this. To have to fight to get Himiko to calm down as she washed the blood off her body. Scrubbing so hard, Midnight was worried she’d rub herself raw. Then, to hear Himiko say that the blood was disgusting, left her at a complete loss. Fortunately Himiko had recovered from her initial episode and seemed ready to get out of the room and away from her, which was completely normal and Midnight welcomed it.

“So, you got any questions you want to ask me? Besides some standard statement or something. Review my actions or something?”

“Yes...yes I do. Do you want to get changed first? I got you something to wear.”

Midnight motioned to a set of U.A gym clothes. Himiko put the last empty blood pack down and got up to change, “Talk to me while I get dressed. That way we can both get out of here quicker...oh does this count as today's session?”

Not waiting for Midnight to answer, Himiko dropped her towel and started changing. Not caring that she was doing it right in front of the teacher. Figuring that once she was dressed, Himiko was going to leave anyway, Midnight rolled with it, “Yes, we’ll count this as tonight's session, though we are going to talk about what just happened.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

“So, how do you feel you handled yourself today? Before we started driving back, the police gave us a report on some of the villains they took into custody.”
“Oh?”

“A number of them were maimed and suffering from stab wounds. Anything you want to say about that?”

Himiko was busy hooking on her bra as she answered, looking over her shoulder, “Trufully?”

“Yes.”

“That was me.”

Midnight sighed, “Thank you for clarifying that Toga.”

“Oh what do you want me to say? A bunch of fucking shit-heads decided to try and kill me and my friends.”

“A number of them are in critical condition. Some may not make it through the night.”

“So what?”

“Toga!”

Himiko’s eyes narrowed as she looked over at Midnight, “Those guys were there to kill us. Not Aizawa or Thirteen. Not All Might. Us, the students. I am not going to apologize, or feel bad for defending myself or someone else from people trying to kill us. And just to shut you up on this whole point, I didn’t go for kill shots. There were hundreds of times that I could, but I didn’t. So I showed them a hell of a lot more mercy than they were going to give me.”

“Mercy, or did you just not want your friends seeing you take a life?”

Himiko opened her mouth to say something about Midnight’s whip and where she could shove it, but snapped her mouth shut when she saw the look on Midnight’s face. Trying to argue that point would just open up a whole new topic and keep her there longer, “Just...just ask the next question,
damn it.”

“Did you drink any blood today?”

“Yes.”

Midnight was silent, which Himiko knew meant she was meant to elaborate on her answer, “When a bunch of the villains were dog piling me, I stabbed one. Licked my knife to turn into him. Though just enough for a quick transformation.”

“You used your Quirk? In the open?”

“I was separated from everyone at the time.”

“Ah, alright then. Why did you transform?”

Himiko paused and swore under her breath.

Shit!

“Toga?”

“So I could sneak up on the Leagues leader and kill him.”

Midnight leveled a glare at Himiko, “So you did try to kill someone today.”

“Key word there is try. I didn’t kill anyone today.”

“The key word is intent.”
The air between the two was quickly becoming charged. If she kept pushing, Midnight was sure, Himiko would leave then and there, despite not being fully dressed. The girl was many things, bashful was not one of them.

“...So you tried to kill the leader, Tomura Shigaraki, right?”

“Yeah.”

“How the hell is he still alive then?”

Himiko’s head snapped up, looking at Midnight with raised eyebrows, “Huh?”

Shrugging, Midnight leaned forward, “I know what you’re capable of Toga. It's hard to believe that you weren’t able to get a kill.”

It took Himiko a few seconds to react to that. She finally blushed and looked away, “The villain I transformed into crawled out in front of Tomura before I could get my shot.”

Midnight laugh, “Oh that sucks.”

“You’re telling me. It was embarrassing. Then I came maybe,” Himiko held up her hand, keeping her thumb and pointer finger just barely not touching, “this close to dying. I’m sure you know the guy’s Quirk by now. Well he used it on me. I’m just lucky I was able to drop my transformation before I turned to dust.”

Midnight winced, while Himiko nodded, “yeah, not fun. I guess I was also lucky I lost my disguise before everyone else showed up. Save me having to come up with an explanation I guess.”

Arching an eyebrow, Midnight took note of that little fact.

So all of that happened when none of her friends were there to see her.

Deciding not to press the thought, Midnight moved onto the next subject, by walking over to the
discarded costume and picked up the blood-collecting gear, “So I’m guessing you used this then?”

“Yep, several times actually.”

Midnight could tell that, just from the added weight of the thing, “Well, we’ll have the support department catalog the samples and you can request them back later.”

“Actually, while you’re doing that. You should know I got that Nomu too.”

Midnight froze, “You what?”

“I got a pretty good sample from that big monster before I had to cut all my lines.”

“You fought that thing?”

Himiko bent down and tied her shoes, “I needed to do something. Otherwise Ochako wouldn't have had the time to be able to revive Izuku. Also fight is a strong word. I threw my syringes at him and stayed the fuck away from it.”

Giving her heels a quick tap on the floor, Himiko stood up fully dressed, “Well this has been fun, but I need to not be here anymore. Talk to you tomorrow.”

Himiko started to walk away but Midnight called out to her, “Toga, wait.”

Sighing dramatically, Himiko looked back, “Whaat?”

“I just wanted you to know, while I’m not completely fine with your methods, I am still proud of you.”

“Eh?”
“Today, you acted to protect your friends and classmates. You were selfless and put yourself in clear danger to help others. Thank you.”

Himiko flushed, at a loss for words. Not sure if that was something you would say, ‘you’re welcome’ to. As she collected her thoughts, she rubbed the back of her head, “I suppose it’s just something I’m going to get used to doing I guess.”

“Oh?”

Somberly, Himiko nodded, “Yeah, if anything, today proved the point I made a few nights ago. About Izuku. I told you little lambs tend to get ripped apart by the big bad wolves in the real world. And look what happened today. Well I’m not going to let it happen again.”

Himiko’s voice was strong and determined. Midnight regarded the girl curiously, “You aren’t?”

“Nope, I’m going to protect my darling Izuku until he’s ready for the world.”

“You are?”

“Well yeah, I love him after all. So of course I’m going to look after him.”

With that said, Himiko gave Midnight a little wave and left. Midnight rubbed her brow feeling the headaches she knew would be coming her way.

_Toga just used the ‘L’ word. Why do I just know my work with her has just doubled...Oh boy, that poor Midoriya has no idea what’s waiting for him._

Walking through the halls, she made a beeline for the recovery ward. With every step, she felt her conviction grow. She would protect Izuku from the horrible world that was so ready to hurt him. And she had the perfect feeling to drive her actions. After all, what better feeling was there to drive her to protect _her_ Izuku, than love?
No one was surprised when a few minutes after they all got settled in the hallway, that Himiko joined them. While she seemed a little startled to see Tsuyu, she easily rolled with it and joined her other friends as they waited for either some news on Izuku’s recovery, or for the boy himself. While she found herself a spot, her eyes fell on Ochako who was not doing a very good job hiding just how unhappy she felt. She was simmering. Negative emotions and feelings bubbled just underneath the surface, and only her self control kept a lid on them. Though keeping a lid on those feelings kept them simmering inside her, it was a vicious cycle.

Talk between the group covered a few topics, though they tried to avoid talking about the actual attack they had just been though, topics they brought up still almost always had a connection to it. They wondered what school was going to be like next week. Would new security measures would the school take. Would there be any backlash from the media over the attack. Tenya doubted this, though Hitoshi pointed out, the media and U.A. might not be on the best terms considering the school really came down on them for their actions the past few days. They might jump at the chance to get a little back.

“I think that’s a very pessimistic point of view, Shinso. Just because some reporters were unhappy doesn’t make the whole media system petty.”

“A pessimist is what an optimist calls a realist. Do you even watch the news? The moment they smell blood in the water, they’re on it like sharks. Just watch. By this time tomorrow, news stations all around are going to be asking if U.A.’s lack of transparency could be a cause for the attack.”

“U.A. could say that the distraction the media caused was more responsible for the attack though, kero. I don’t think the media can say it’s a coincidence that the day after a break in, which had reporters flooding into the school, we were attacked by villains.” Tsuyu countered.

Everyone hummed in agreement over that point, though Hitoshi wasn’t fully convinced that would be enough to stop the negative press that was sure to come, “They probably will try to not mention the break in all-together then. And just focus on…” Hitoshi trailed off as he looked up and saw someone walking up the hall, “…oookay, not who I was expecting to see. Bakugou?”

Everyone, save Tsuyu, looked up in shock at seeing Katsuki standing in the middle of the hall, looking just as surprised as they were. His surprised look quickly twisted back into his normal sour frown, “The fuck? Why are you all still here?”

Tsuyu could feel the mood in the hallway shift. While it hadn’t been exactly cheerful-- they were waiting to hear about a seriously injured classmate and friend-- it had at least been warm and welcoming. That feeling was gone in an instant. While Hitoshi and Tenya seemed a little on guard, they both just seemed genuinely surprised to see Bakugou at all. Himiko and Ochako however, were hostile. Himiko was much more open, scowling at the other boy with a deep sneer. Ochako
concealed her feelings much better, only giving the boy a cold stare but otherwise keeping herself openly disinterested, she was even still leaning on the wall like she had been. Internally though, Tsuyu’s animal instincts could just tell there was an inferno raging inside Ochako. Why Bakugou got such a reaction from those two, Ochako especially, Tsuyu had no idea.

Iida broke through the tension, either because he didn’t realize there was tension, or he took his duties as class rep extremely seriously and wanted to know why a student was still in the school after it was let out, “Ah Bakugou, we’re waiting to hear about any updates on Midoriya condition and for when he is released from recovery. Why are you here? Class was let out some time ago.”

Bakugou turned his head, breaking eye contact with the group and making a small ‘tch’ sound as he did. Tsuyu tapped her chin, “Are you worried about Midoriya too? That’s why I’m here. After he saved us I wanted to-!”

“I’M NOT FUCKING WORRIED!!!”

Katsuki’s sudden scream, along with several pops and crackles from his hands, shocked Tsuyu enough that the only sound she could make was a stunned croak. Everyone, save Ochako who seemed to have been expecting the outburst, flinched in surprise.

Tenya, after recovering, chopped an arm right at Bakugou, “How can you say something like that?”

“If Deku wants to play at being a hero, then he can deal with the consequences.”

Himiko growled, “Play?”

Himiko started to walk up to Katsuki, but Hitoshi put an arm out. He didn’t want her getting into trouble giving Katsuki the beating he was asking for. Tsuyu was just confused, not understanding anything of what was coming from Katsuki. She knew the boy had a horrible attitude, and was way too competitive for his own good. But this? She didn’t know how to process this.

“Kero, Why wouldn’t you be worried about Midoriya? After he saved us from those villains and everything?”

“Let me make this clear for you, Frog-Legs. Deku. Did. Not. Save. Me! All the worthless shit did
was get in my way. If he knew what was good for him-!

“Bakugou!”

Everyone could hear the strain in Ochako’s voice as she cut him off. She was off the wall, face contorted in anger, fists clenched and shaking at her sides, “You need to leave. Now.”

“What did you say to me, Round Face?”

“I told you to leave. You don’t belong here, and you aren’t welcomed either.”

“You know what? I’ve just about had it with you thinking you can tell me what to do. You want me gone bitch? Make me.”

Ochako took a step forward, just as the doors to the recovery wing opened and Recovery Girl walked out, “You lot need to settle down if you’re going to be staying out here to wait.”

Recovery Girl’s sudden entrance was enough to break through the hostile atmosphere, and stop whatever was about to go down between Ochako and Katuski, much to the others’ relief. Hitoshi for one had not been looking forward to trying to hold Ochako back. Seeing a great opportunity to change the subject, Hitoshi addressed Recovery Girl, “Do you have any news on Midoriya?”

“I do.”

Ochako suddenly didn’t care about Katuski at all. Twisting on her heel, Ochako gave Recovery Girl her full attention, as did everyone else.

“The boy just got out of surgery. Everything went back together just fine, and I was able to start healing him. A couple more sessions and he’ll be good to go, though that won’t be till after dark. If you all want to stay you can, but keep your voices down. Understand?”

“Of course! We will endeavor to keep ourselves quiet. Thank you so much for taking such good care of Midoriya.” Tenya responded instantly, bowing deeply.
“Um, Recovery Girl,” Ochako began, “The detective also said you were looking for signs of brain damage...”

Recovery Girl sighed, rubbing her brow, “That boy must have a thick skull. The wound looked much worse than it turned out to be. There wasn’t any brain damage.”

The group let out a collective sigh of relief. With her message delivered, Recovery Girl made her way back into the ward. With her gone, Himiko turned back, ready to encourage Bakugou to leave, but finally noticed, “Oh, he’s gone.”

Everyone looked back and confirmed that indeed, Bakugou had left the hall. Ochako, with him gone, let herself lean back against the wall. Soon everyone else went back to their spots and settled back in for their wait. At least now, with the good news from Recovery Girl, the mood of the group was much better. Except for Ochako, who was no longer ready to snap, but back to how she was before Bakugou had shown up. Simmering in her own thoughts.

With a sleepy groan, Izuku slowly began to open his eyes. It took a few minutes and a couple of times almost falling back asleep before he could start to focus on himself and his surroundings. The room was familiar, he had been here before, but he couldn't quite remember when. Sitting up, the next thing he quickly realized was that he wasn’t in pain anymore. His head, his arm and shoulder, his chest. None had the sharp agonizing pain he had forced himself to endure and grit through. Checking himself, he pulled the collar of his medical gown forward and checked his chest, but didn’t see a mark. He didn’t need to check his head, the itchy bandage was more than enough to let him know that wound had been taken care of. Gingerly, Izuku lifted up his right arm out in front of himself. It felt stiff, and then practiced making a fist and touching his fingers to his thumb the whole arm felt tender, but after a few tries he could feel the muscles loosening back up.

“It looks like everything is working just fine, Young Midoriya.”

Startled, Izuku looked to his side, one bed over, and saw his hero and teacher All Might lying in a bed wrapped up in bandages and looking at him with a relieved smile.

“All Might?”
All Might smiled, “Good to see you up and about. We’re in Recovery Girl’s nurses office by the way. Just in case you wanted to know where you were.”

Izuku nodded, now remembering his last visit to this room after the entrance exam. Soon though, the events of the day caught up to him. Eyes widening, Izuku started to look around, “Wait, where is everyone else? Is Uraraka okay? Toga, Todoroki, Iida, and Shinso? The class? Aizawa Sensei and Thirteen? What happened?”

“Easy, easy. Everyone is fine. You’re the only student that had to stay to get fixed up. Aizawa and Thirteen are stable and are getting treated. It’s alright. It’s over.”

Izuku relaxed and leaned back into his bed before he let his eyes wander to the heavy bandages wrapped around All Might, “Are you okay?”

“I’m…” All Might started to say that he was fine but stopped himself. Izuku deserved to know the truth, “Physically I’ll make a full recovery, or as full of one I can when I’m missing half my guts already. The real problem is my time limit. That fight today drained me.”

“How...how much time do you have left?”

All Might decided to play it safe and rounded up, “An hour...give or take.”

For a few seconds, Izuku forgot how to breathe. All Might had lost two hours because of those villains today.

*No, because of me.*

While trying to fight back his tears, and failing miserably, Izuku looked back over at All Might, “All Might...there’s something I need to tell you...and...something I need to tell the Principal.”

“Young Midoriya?”

“Please...”
Nodding, All Might reached over to his bedside tray, found his phone and texted out a quick message for Nezu. After only a few minutes, Nezu, as well as Recovery, Girl entered into the room. While Recovery Girl took a seat at her desk, Nezu walked over to Izuku’s bed.

“Hello there, young man. I’ve been told you wanted to speak with me? Is he well enough for that? I don’t want him straining himself.”

Recovery Girl nodded, “He’s through with the healing treatments. I just have one last check-up and a good telling-off for being back here so soon. After that, he’ll be free to go.”

“Ah excellent, so, Midoriya, what did you wish to speak to me about?”

Izuku sat up as he addressed the principal. The three could see he was scared, which was concerning. What could he possibly feel afraid of now of all times?

“The villains attack today. It’s my fault.”

All Might bolted upright in his bed, while Recovery Girl leaned forward in her chair, leaning hard on her cane. Nezu remained calm as he studied Izuku.

“Young Midoriya, how can you say that?”

Izuku gripped his bedsheet tightly, tears dripping down splashed on his hands as he tried to hold himself together. After everything, they all deserved to know the truth, and he deserved whatever punishment he got, “During the break in the other day...Midnight she...she sent me to the teacher’s office since it was so close. She told me to wait there until I was told to leave. When I...when I made it to the room...I wasn’t alone. Shigaraki was there.”

Nezu nodded as the last few pieces of what had happened yesterday and today fell into place, “Ah, so that explains how they knew when and where All Might was supposed to be today. Shigaraki must have taken a class schedule.”

Izuku continued, “He didn’t have...all those hands on him at the time. He said he was a TA looking for some paper work. He...he asked that I not mention what I saw. This was a big chance for him as
“...a sidekick and he was nervous...that’s what he said at least.”

“Young Midoriya, you aren’t…”

“No, this is my fault. I should have trusted how I felt the moment I saw him. I felt so uneasy and scared, but I didn't know why. I ignored it because I didn’t want to be like...other people I knew. Who only judge based on what they see...So I trusted him, let him leave, and kept quiet. Because of that, so many people got hurt. I put everyone in danger. This... all of this is my fault!”

Izuku hung his head, his shame making him weep openly now. The three teachers watched him in silence, but only for a few seconds.

“Nonsense. I may need to check your head again if you’re thinking foolish thoughts like that.” Was Recovery Girl’s immediate and blunt response.

“I quite agree. The young man needs to have his head examined again.”

Izuku looked up, shocked, “I...what?”

“Young man, at no point is a student responsible for the failures of the teachers. Maybe, maybe if you trusted your first response things could have been different. Or more than likely, Shigiaka would have tried to kill you if he suspected you didn’t trust him. However, things should have never even gotten to that point in the first place. This school got caught off guard; we failed you.”

“But if i thought about it, I would have realized…”

“Why didn’t you think about it hmm? Was it because I came onto the loud speaker and said that the press broke in and triggered the alarm?”

Izuku nodded.

“So you trusted my word that everything was fine. You had no reason to think that anything nefarious was going on. Midoriya, this was not your fault.”
“But...but All Might...”

“Young Midoriya, I used up almost all my time today acting foolishly when I should have been making sure I was prepared to teach you and your class. My time getting cut short is a result of my own actions. Not yours.”

Izuku was silent after that. He had been prepared for the worst. To have none of what he was prepared for happen left him at a loss for words. Nezu, seeing that Izuku was accepting their points, turned and waved goodbye, “well if that’s taken care of, I must get back to the mountain of paperwork. Please take care of yourself Midoriya. It wouldn’t do for All Might’s successor to look so glum all the time...or die, i suppose. You have to be alive to get One for All, after all.”

Izuku’s eyes bulged, while the principle left with a little laugh. Leaving All Might to quickly explain that the principle and Recovery Girl knew about One for All and everything. Recovery Girl pulled a clipboard from her desk once All Might was finished, “Now if you’re ready, and don’t have any more stupid thought tumbling inside that head of yours, I’m going to give you your last check up, then you are free to go.”

Izuku nodded.

“After I explain how I do not want to see you in this room again.”

All Might snickered, but was smacked by Recovery Girl’s cane, “That goes for you too!”

After getting changed, Izuku looked outside and was surprised at just how late it was. Throwing his backpack on, and wincing at his still tender arm, Izuku hurried out of the recovery room and down the hall for the exit.

_I better get home as soon as I can. I bet mom is worried sick about me. Oh, I better send out a text to everyone to let them know Recovery Girl released me._

Pulling out his phone, Izuku quickly typed out a message, letting everyone know that he was alright and that he would be able to talk more tomorrow. Izuku pressed ‘send’ and started to put his
phone away as he turned a corner to leave the building, when he heard several other phones ring or chirp. Startled, Izuku looked up and was floored when he saw that. Tenya, Hitoshi, Tsuyu, Himiko and Ochako were all waiting in the hall. A few had their phones out, to read his text, though now they were all looking at him.

“Guys? What are you all doing up here so late?”

Tenya smiled happily, “Midoriya, you look like you’ve recovered! Excellent! I’d expect nothing less from U.A.’s medical facilities.”

Hitoshi was about to also mention that he was glad to see Izuku was doing much better than when he last saw him, but he was cut off when Himiko pulled him to the side, letting Ochako slide past him and make her way up to Izuku. Knowing how long she had been waiting and stewing, the rest of the group decided to give Ochako her chance to speak.

Ochako kept her head down as she quickly marched up to Izuku. Izuku wasn’t sure how to react to Ochako advancing on him. It was only when she was a few feet away that she looked up, and Izuku flinched when he got a glimpse of her eye’s, full of fury. Before he could say anything though, Ochako pulled her hand back and slapped Izuku across the face. Hard enough that she almost knocked him down and loud enough that the clap echoed off the silent hall walls.

“What is the matter with you!?”

Hitoshi flinched, while Tsuyu croaked in shock. Tenya’s jaw dropped, while Himiko hissed.

Izuku stumbled back until his back hit a wall, holding his stinging cheek. He looked up, eyes wide as Ochako marched after him, “Uraraka?”

“What did you promise me!??” Ochako’s voice was hard, and quaked with so many different raw emotions that it was almost unrecognizable to the boy.

“I...what?” Izuku was so completely confused. The slap, the raw anger being directed at him, all by Ochako, left him unable to properly form words. When he tried to move off the wall, Ochako shoved him back and jammed a finger right into his chest.

With each word, Ochako jammed her finger into Izuku’s chest. She pulled back and looked Izuku right in the eye, waiting for what she was saying to finally click. She didn’t have to wait much longer. Izuku went stiff as the memory finally triggered in his mind.

The Sludge Villain.

The burning shopping district.

Him running into that hell to save Katsuki.

The promise he had made to Ochako when it was over.

“I want you to promise me, that you will never, never, do something like this again. I want you to promise me you will never leave me behind while you rush into a situation where you could get killed.”

Izuku paled, “Uraraka I-”

“What did you promise me?”

Izuku closed his eyes, trembling. Taking a deep breath he finally found the strength to speak, “That I...that I wouldn’t leave you behind to rush into a situation where I could get killed.”

“And what did you do?”

“I...I rushed in and left you behin-”

CRACK!

Ochako’s hand slammed into the wall right next to Izuku’s head, “No. That is not what you did. You used me so you could rush off. You used my Quirk on yourself and flew off.”
Ochako began to shake. She dropped her head, “You used my Quirk and made me watch you...you…” Ochako’s knees buckled as she fell into Izuku, burying her face into his chest, sobbing uncontrollably. Izuku wasn’t sure what he was supposed to do. She had been so angry just moments ago, and now she was cry like he had never seen before. Should he hold her? Would she be okay with that? Would she go back to being angry?

_She’s hurting because of you, you idiot. Do something!_

Tentatively, Izuku wrapped his arms around Ochako and held her as she continued to cry into his chest.

“I’m sorry, Uraraka. I am so sorry.”

Ochako’s grip on Izuku’s school blazer tightened as she spoke, “Two times. Two times today I thought I was going to see you die. After that Nomu...what it did to you. Your arm and...all that blood. When I pulled you from the water, you weren’t breathing. Even when I was giving you CPR, you were just...gone...”

“But you save me. You were able to bring me back.”

“And how do you repay me?”

Izuku winced. Ochako finally pulled her head back and looked up at Izuku, “I can’t even begin to describe the… the horror I felt when I realized what you did. I just got you back and you just…”

Ochako’s head fell back into Izuku’s chest as she kept crying. Izuku held her tight, letting her cry for as long as she wanted. Soon, the sobs grew silent, and the two stood in silence.

“Uraraka, I am so sorry.”

Ochako was silent for a few moments before answering, “I know…”
“I really, truly am.”

“I know.”

“...But…”

Ochako went stiff as she waited for Izuku to finish. Izuku spoke softly, so that only Ochako could hear him.

“But, what was I supposed to do?”

Ochako knew what he was talking about. She knew and she knew his reason for doing what he did, but it did nothing to make the whole thing any less bitter. Finally, in a voice as soft as his, she answered truthfully, “I don’t know.”

“All Might was out of time. You saw the steam. You know what that meant. He was seconds away from dying.”

“I know.”

“I couldn’t just do nothing.”

The conviction in Izuku’s voice scared Ochako. That conviction was what drew All Might to Izuku. It’s what made the number-one-hero pick Izuku to be his successor and the next holder of One for All. That conviction, Ochako was convinced, also had a great chance of getting Izuku killed.

“I’m sorry. I really, really am, but I had to help. What else could I do?”

It was an honest question. She could hear it in his voice. Doing what he did was the only solution he could think of, and that terrified her. She pulled herself up, straightened herself and took a small step back so she could look Izuku dead in the eye. She kept her hands gripping the front of his school blazer, “You could have told me.”
Izuku shook his head, that motion brought back some of Ochako’s anger, “Uraraka...no. You would have tried to stop me.”

“Or I would have gone with you, you idiot!”

Ochako’s eyes burned again, though not with the same kind of fury as before. This was passion and determination. It was enough to leave Izuku completely speechless.

“We are a team, remember? If one of us makes a stupid decision, the other has to be there to stop them... or to go with them and make sure they live through their stupidity. Remember I did say that once we get into U.A, we’ll learn how to rush into dangerous situations.”

“Rush into dangerous situations safely’, I think are your exact words.”

Ochako eyed Izuku, glaring at him evenly as she stepped back, “Oh so now you remember what I said.”

Izuku looked away, rubbing the back of his head sheepishly.

Ochako sighed, her anger and grief tapped out, she finally felt calm, but she needed to say one more thing before she was done, “I need you to do something for me. I need to hear you say something.”

Izuku tilted his head to the side, “Say? What do you want me to say?”

Does she want me to apologize again? I can do that. I'll do that until I'm blue in the face.

“I need you to say that you won't do this again. I need to hear you promise you won’t do this again.”

Izuku started to turn away. He suddenly didn’t have the strength to look Ochako in the eye anymore. He was stopped when Ochako reached out and cupped his face with both her hands and
Izuku, looking Ochako right in the eye and doing his best to keep his voice level answered, “I promise. I promise, Uraraka.”

Ochako stared right at Izuku for a few, drawn out seconds, before letting her hands fall to her side, her head drop and closing her eyes with a long sigh. Izuku frowned, the sigh wasn’t one of relief but of frustration, “Uraraka?”

Ochako was slow to respond. Izuku could see her chewing on her words. Finally she looked up, “I wish I could believe you.”

Ochako’s words hurt just as much as her slap from earlier, “I’m not lying; I swear.”

“That’s what scares me.” She took a breath as she gave Izuku a sad smile, “You mean it. I know you mean it. I don’t think you’re lying to me.”

Izuku nodded vigorously.

“But you weren’t lying back then either. Were you?”

Silence was the only answer Izuku could give Ochako for that. The two stood in silence as they each thought about what they had said to each other. Izuku ultimately came to a simple conclusion because of it, “...I’ve ruined this haven’t I?”

Ochako blinked, head tilting to the side, “Eh?”

Izuku raised his arms, motioning at the two of them, “This. Us. Our friendship. I’ve ruined it.”

It took only a second for that to sink in before Ochako acted immediately, by flicking Izuku on the forehead, “You thick headed dolt. I would not be this upset if I wasn’t your friend. Honestly, Deku. If you think that this is enough to make me not want to be your friend, you must have really hit your head hard. You’re not getting rid of me that easily.”
Sighing in relief, Izuku relaxed considerably. Ochako rubbed her brow as she added, “It’s just I’m starting to see I’m going to have my work cut out for me keeping you out of trouble.”

“You’re going to keep me out of trouble?”

“Yep, because apparently it’s my job to protect you now.”

The two shared a chuckle while back with everyone else, Himiko’s eye twitched. The ends of her mouth turning down in a slight frown. She had held herself back when Izuku first showed up. She had even given Ochako the chance to unload on the boy as quickly as possible because she had watched the girl stew in her own negativity since they started waiting. Izuku needed to get his head smacked for the sheer amount of stupid he pulled today, and Ochako, being his oldest friend of the group, got automatic dibs to be the one to deliver that smack. She even agreed with a lot of what Ochako had said. Of what she could hear at least. When they started speaking softly she wasn’t able to make out what they were saying. Towards the end they had started speaking normally again and she thought they were about done, but that last line triggered something in her.

Hitoshi, seeing the two laughing with each other coughed into his hand, “You two got that all sorted out?”

Izuku and Ochako turned, and remembering that they were not alone separated a few more steps. Embarrassed, Ochako rubbed her head, “Um thank you for giving me the chance to… talk with Deku, guys.”

“While violence between students is strictly prohibited except in authorized sparring matches and heroics training, I will look the other way this time.”

Himiko rolled her eyes at Tenya, “And if you knew she was going to slap him, would you actually try and stop her, Class Rep?”

Tenya blinked as he recalled just how upset she had been while they were waiting, and looked over at Ochako, who seemed very interested in his answer, “I…Well what’s done is done. No need to focus on such negativity. We are here to give our well wishes to our recovered friend.”

Himiko patted Tenay’s back as she walked by, “Keep holding onto that sense of self-preservation. It’ll do you a lot of good.”
Walking up to Izuku, Himiko eyed the boy up and down, “Ochako pretty much covered everything, so I’ll skip the part of me calling you the biggest fucking idiot I’ve ever seen. I shouldn’t have been so terrified after seeing your head all busted open since you clearly have no brain in there to actually get damaged. So consider yourself lucky.”

Izuku laughed nervously, “Sorry.”

Himiko waved him off, “Oh I’m sure, but we’re skipping that whole, ‘I’m mad and you apologize bit’, and moving to the next part.”

“Next part?”

Himiko answered by closing the rest of the distance and pulling Izuku into a tight hug. Initially startled, Izuku returned the hug, making Himiko sigh into his chest. After a little while, Himiko pulled back but kept her hands on Izuku, “So, who's gonna dip who?”

“Dip?”

Himiko’s wide toothy smile came back, sending alarm bells blaring in Ochako’s head, “You know, who’s gonna be the one to lean the other person back in a dip and give them a huge celebratory kiss.”

Izuku flushed while Ochako quickly moved to put herself between the two, “He just got out of recovery! Don’t just start teasing him like that!”

Before the two could start a fight Hitoshi and Tenya walked up, “it’s good to see you walking around, Midoriya. You looked pretty beat up.”

“Yeah, that Nomu hits like a truck.”

Tenya’s arms chopped in the air as he pointed at Izuku, “Considering the brute was able to trade blows with All Might, you are very lucky to be alive.”
Tsuyu came up from behind the boys, “Not to mention afterward, with Shigaraki. If Aizawa Sensei hadn’t erased his quirk, he probably would have killed you, kero.”

Himiko flinched. Having experienced what that man’s Quirk could do, and seeing him use it on his own people. Watching him put his hand on Izuku’s face had been horrible. She was going to have to give the teacher some kind of thanks for that save.

“Yeah, you’re right, Asui. I’m pretty lucky.”

“Call me, Tsu.”

“Oh, um alright. Also, you were with Uraraka, Toga, and Kacchan during the fight, right?”

“She pulled me out of the lake before I got eaten by a shark villain, and was a big help fighting off the villains once we got to dry land,” Ochako added.

Himiko nodded in agreement, “Girl kicks like a freight train. It was really cool.”

Tsuyu shrugged, “Frogs are predators. People seem to forget that.”

Izuku’s eyes widened before he turned back to Tsuyu and bowed, “Thank you so much for looking after everyone.”

“Kero, it’s fine. I’m glad you are doing better, Midoriya.”

“Thank you for staying so late to check on me. All of you, you didn’t have to do this.”

“Deku, did you really think we’d just leave you after today?”

“Not letting my hero come-to and not have someone there to greet him.”
“It’s no trouble at all Midoriya. As your class rep and friend, I was more than happy to wait.”

“Like they all said, we’re your friends. I’m sure you’d do the same for us.”

“It didn’t seem right to just go home after you saved me from the villains. I wanted to make sure you were okay, kero.”

Overcome by the sheer amount of care and friendship being given to him, Izuku started to tear up. Ochako giggled and took out a tissue and dabbed at his eyes, “Come on, none of that.”

“Sorry, sorry. Just give me a second.”

The group stayed together for a short time longer, talking about nothing important. Just acting like a group of friends until they all agreed it was time for them to head home for the night. They ended up taking the long way around so they could keep talking with each other longer for Himiko, explaining to Tsuyu she lived on campus. Once they made it to the front gate, they all said their goodbyes and went their separate ways to head home. Ochako kept next to Izuku as they walked to his apartment. During the walk, Izuku swore that Ochako was keeping closer to him than normal, but ultimately he ignored the feeling. Though if he was being honest, he didn't mind the closeness.

When Katsuki opened the front door to his home, he wasn’t exactly sure what to expect. It was definitely not to have his father smother him in a hug before he could even get out a ‘I’m fucking home.’

“The hell!? Get off me, old man!”

Katsuki struggled but was surprised that his father was able to keep his grip.

“Calm the fuck down, you brat, and don’t call you father an old man!”

*And the Old Hag is here now. Fucking great.*
After finally fighting the two off, Katsuki stomped off to his room, with his mother calling after him, “Hey brat, your school called to let us know classes were cancelled for the rest of the week. Don’t think that means you get to sleep in all day and be a little lazy shit!”

“Fuck off! I know that shit already! I’ll be up working out or something; get off my back!”

Slamming the door to his room closed, Katsuki threw his back pack into a corner and flipped on the light. His school blazer and shirt were tossed to the floor along with his undershirt. Looking at himself in his mirror, he examined some of the bruises he had gotten from the villain attack where a couple of thugs got in a couple lucky hits. None of the marks required any special treatment or care. They’d heal in a day or so, the medics had told him. All in all, he’d gotten out of the attack far better than some of his other classmates.

Pressing one of the darker marks, Katsuki hissed, and hoped that the bastard that had hit him was one of the ones he exploded during his brawl. Thinking back on the attack, despite his best efforts not to think about it, Katsuki thought back to when Izuku was attacked by that monster Nomu. How in a matter of seconds, he was there, and the next second, his broken body was hitting the water.

“Motherfucker.”

Katsuki turned away and stomped over to his bed. Try as he might, that scene had played out in his mind several times throughout the rest of the day. He had been so distracted by it, that he had unwittingly found himself running into Izuku’s friends who were waiting for him to come out of the recovery room. Fortunately, he snapped out of whatever stupid haze that had come over him and left. But walking home the same thoughts crept their way back. Not just that Izuku had gotten so hurt, that he had been hurt saving him.

“No, fuck that. Deku didn’t save me again...Fuck!”

He never asked for Izuku to help him. He was not responsible for Izuku’s action. He stepped in where he wasn’t needed and paid the price. Maybe, maybe things had started to get bad when that Tomura got involved, and there was no denying that if that Nomu attacked them, they would have been fucked. After all, he had blasted the thing, and it didn’t even make a scratch. That was bad enough for Katsuki’s pride, that as strong as he saw himself, there was still a huge power gap he wasn’t ready to try and close.
If he could just focus on that, then at least he’d be able to turn it into a challenge. Fuel to drive himself further, to get even stronger, but his thoughts kept getting pulled back.

To Izuku.

Izuku shouldn’t mean anything to him. He was a stepping stone; he had told the other boy as much. He didn’t matter, and yet when he saw him getting loaded up on a stretcher, soaked in his own blood, he could help but remember back when the two of them had been much younger. Back when they were still friends. What would his past self have done, if his friend had been hurt like that?

“The hell is the matter with me? The nerd stuck his nose where it didn’t belong and got it bit off.”

Then there was what happened after. While he had been frozen in shock, Ochako and then Himiko had rushed out to rescue him. What had he done? Nothing. He wasn’t a coward though. No, his ego would never even consider that. Especially when it had the perfect out. By the time Katuski had snapped out of his shock, Mina and Fumikage had arrived with Aizawa, and the teacher had forbade them from following them. The excuse saved his ego, but did nothing for his conscience.


*Just pray that you'll be born with a better quirk in your next life and take a swan dive off the roof of the building.*

Those words stuck in Katsuki’s head, long after he changed and went to bed. He hoped that a good night’s sleep would be enough to unfuck whatever was going on with him. He didn’t need the distraction. He had more important things to worry about than Fucking Deku.

“He wants to see me?”

All Might titled his head in confusion as Recovery Girl came into his room to deliver a message.
“That’s what he said. ‘If All Might is able, please send him here. I want to talk to him.’”

Frowning, All Might scratched his head, picking at the bandage until Recovery Girl swatted his hand away, “What would Eraser Head want to talk about now? Is he even in any condition to talk?”

Pulling out a chair, Recovery Girl sat down with a sigh, “He shouldn’t be, but he was insistent that he speak with you. I can tell him you aren’t able…”

All Might shook his head as he pulled himself out of bed and grabbed a medical gown for himself, “No. I’m well enough to talk if he wants to.”

Walking down the dark quiet hall, All Might came to Aizawa’s room, and lightly rapped his knuckles on the door, “Eraser Head?”

“It’s open.”

Even from the other end of the door, All Might could hear the strain in the other heroes’ voices. Speaking was painful for him. Walking into the room, All Might winced as he saw why he was having so much difficulty. Both his arms were cast and held together with splints and heavy bandages were wrapped around his head, almost completely covering his face.

“You’re not looking too hot there, Eraser Head.”

While the lump in the bed didn’t move, All Might swore the man’s eyes were on him, an incredible feat considering his eyes should be swollen shut after getting his sockets smashed.

“Some might say I’m still better off than you.”

The dryness in Aizawa’s voice made it impossible to tell if the man had actually told a joke, though All Might took it that way regardless, “If those villains knocked a sense of humor into you, I may have to give Fukukado a call.”

The room dropped several degrees, enough to make the hero shiver, “All Might, sit down and shut
Not wanting to push his luck, or put any more of a burden on the other hero, All Might pulled up a chair and took a seat, “Recovery Girl said you wanted to talk?”

“Hmm. Thank you for saving my students.”

“Oh, think nothing of it. Besides, they handled themselves very well. You have a good group of kids...Besides, I should have been with the class from the start. My foolishness put you all in danger from the very beginning.”

Aizawa grunted, “Yes, you should have been there, but I didn’t call you over here to chastise you over that particular failure as a teacher.”

All Might had been prepared for a dressing down, but when Aizawa pivoted to a new subject he felt himself at a loss, “And what other failure did you want to talk to me about?”

“Why, when you were training Midoriya, did you not teach him any kind of self-restraint or self-preservation?”

There were several long seconds of silence while All Might absorbed the question. When it finally fully clicked what he was being asked, All Might quickly put his hands up, “Ah I think you’re confused! You see-”

“Don’t. Don’t even try.”

All Might frowned, and let out a long sigh, he wasn’t sure if he wanted to know how Aizawa had figured it out, or when he had first. Aizawa, seemingly reading his mind, answered both questions.

“You really need to learn to cover your tracks better. Your name might not be public knowledge, even to other heroes outside, but not in the school, Yagi.”

Ah...shit
"I overheard some of the students talking about the scout that trained Midoriya and Uraraka, who miraculously had your name and worked at your agency, so I decided to do a little digging. Funny how a scout was hired around the start of last year at the same time that those two started getting trained? That's also when you had also been hired to be a teacher starting this year."

All Might rubbed his brow while Aizawa added, "It took me less than an hour to figure this out. Your interest in the boy's results the first day made it even more clear what was going on. I mean, if you wanted to keep this a secret, why in the hell did you use your given name?"

All Might would have laughed if the situation wasn't so serious, "It's like you said: stealth isn't my strong suit."

"You haven't answered my question by the way."

"No, I suppose I haven't...Truthfully most of my time training Young Midoriya was either spent getting the boy physically ready for the course and to help him overcome the psychological limits he was putting on himself that was affecting his quirk."

"Psychological limits?"

"When I first met him, the boy told me he couldn't even lift a shoe without giving himself a headache. He saw his quirk, and by extension himself as worthless. Turns out, being bullied most of his life had some negative effects on him."

"And how did you manage to fix that?"

All Might mulled over exactly what he could say without giving away any hints about One for All, "I helped the boy find a renewed sense of purpose, I suppose. Trained his body and his quirk, though I had to get creative with the later. Had to trick him into training his quirk harder than he thought he was. Little by little he built himself up confidence wise, then at the end, when I told him what I had done, it finally clicked for Young Midoriya just what he was capable of doing and everything else fell into place."

"And not once did he ever give you the opinion that he was suicidal?"
“Not once, nor do I think he is.”

“What about a willingness to disregard his own well being for others?”

Aizawa waited for All Might to reply, but his silence spoke volumes, “He’s shown this kind of behavior before hasn’t he?”

“...He has.”

“When?”

“When I first met him, a friend of his, Young Bakugou, was being attacked by a villain. Before I intervened Young Midoriya rushed in to save his friend.”

“...He rushed in?”

“He got past some of the heroes who were keeping the onlookers back and attacked the villain as he tried to free his friend.”

“And what did you do after that?”

“...”

“You told him he was a fool for doing that? That he could have gotten himself and Bakugou killed?”

“...”

“All Might?”

“I said, he had displayed the qualities of a true hero rushing in to save his friend. I also told him
that those actions are what made me decide to train him.”

“OF ALL THE THINGS YOU COULD HAVE SAID!” Aizawa, even while it caused him a lot of pain, sat up and turned towards All Might, “Of all the irresponsible, asinine, and just plain stupid things you could have done. You didn’t nip that behavior in the bud; no, you reinforced it. You, the greatest hero told a young child, that, by your own admission, probably did not view himself as having much worth, that his reckless self-endangerment was heroic and then you rewarded him!?”

“I’m not saying I did everything perfectly, but everything I did do was to give him a chance to achieve his dream. Young Midoriya has the potential to become one of the greatest heroes of his generation.”

“If he lives long enough to graduate. With all available evidence pointing to the contrary.”

As Aizawa’s temper began to show, so did All Might’s. Both men were digging in their heels over the issue, “Today was an extreme case, that he should not be judged over. It has been less than a week since school has started, so he hasn’t had a chance to learn his lesson from the entrance exam. Also, the boy suffered a head injury that easily could have impaired his judgment at the end.”

“If this was the first time this had happened you might have a leg to stand on. It's the fourth. Today was not an exception; it was part of a pattern.”

“Which he’ll learn to break as he takes classes and learns proper ways to deal with threats. He hasn’t had the chance, and I am going to make sure he gets that chance.”

“You, the man who is without a doubt the worst teacher here and a hero known for throwing himself into impossible situations, is going to teach Midoriya not to throw himself into impossible situations? Is that supposed to be a joke?”

“Does it look like I’m laughing? Young Midoriya will learn everything he needs from this school. Not just from me but all the other teachers and heroes. I will make sure of it.

Aizawa was silent for a while, which made All Might a little nervous. The man was smart. They might not get along, but All Might respected the man’s intelligence. It wasn’t outside the possibility that he might start to wonder exactly why All Might was going to make sure Izuku got
his heroics education here.

When Aizawa finally did speak, while his voice still had it’s edge, the heat was mostly gone, “Why...does it sound like that was a threat directed at me, All Might?”

“You’re well known for kicking students out that you don’t feel fit here. You should know I will fight any attempt to have Young Midoriya expelled.”

A very long sigh escaped through the bandages around Aizawa’s head, “You really are a complete idiot.”

“How?”

“Do you really think, after everything I saw today, and learned just now, that I would kick Midoriya out?”

“Err.”

“I do that, and in less than a week, he’s either getting arrested for vigilantism or he’s dead in the street trying to play hero. No, he’s staying here so that I can make sure this problem child actually has a chance.”

“So...we’re in agreement then?”

“I suppose so.”

“Good...that's good.”

Aizawa laid himself back into his bed, “Honestly, with how bad you screwed up with Midoriya, it’s a small miracle that you didn’t screw up Uraraka as badly.”

“Now hold on, I think I did alright by Young Uraraka.”
Aizawa recalled Ochako rushing into the hoard of villains after watching Izuku get struck by Nomu, “…I do not have the energy to get into that argument. Why the boy’s mother let you of all people train him is beyond me.”

All Might was quiet. Very quiet.

“All Might, how did you convince the boy’s mother to train him?”

“You see, that’s the thing…”

Aizawa found he had just enough energy to call All Might an idiot a few more times for keeping his identity a secret from Inko.

“IZUKU!”

The moment Izuku opened the door to the apartment, Inko rushed him and wrapped him in the tightest hug the boy could remember ever getting from her. Wailing loudly and with enough tears falling down her cheeks to flood the whole floor.

“My baby! I was so worried!”

Izuku tried to placate his mother, which was hard to do with his arms pinned to his sides from her hug, “Mom really. I’m fine.”

“The school called and said that your class was attacked by villains and you’d gotten hurt. I almost fainted on the spot. My poor boy!”

“Mom please! I’m fine now. All Might saved us and Recovery Girl fixed me up.”

Ochako covered her mouth with her hand as she fought back a snicker. While it was extremely
touching to see Inko fret over Izuku, it was also really, really funny.

“Oh, Ochako!”

“Eep!”

Inko, while still holding onto Izuku, wrapped an arm around a startled Ochako and dragged her into the hug. The two teens spent the next few minutes convincing Inko that they were fine until finally she relented and let the two go. When the two followed Inko into the apartment, the smell of dinner hit them. Inko smiled when she heard the distinct sound of two stomachs rumbling, “I figured you two would be hungry after such a long day, so I made sure I kept dinner warm for you both.”

After the three had eaten, Izuku collapsed onto the couch, with Ochako following after him.

“Oh man, I’m so full,” Izuku groaned, rubbing his belly. Ochako laughed and gave him a playful poke.

“I’m not surprised. You ate like four helpings.”

“Side effect of Recovery Girls quirk uses my body's own stamina to heal, so I get tired and hungry.”

The two just lay on the couch, silently just enjoying each other's company, and the calmness they now got to share, especially after the trying day they had. Inko watched the two, and smiled happy that they had both been able to make it through such a horrible day. She had noticed that the two kept close to each other. Closer than normal at least. They had moved their chairs closer together, and when helping clean the table and kitchen, they were practically attached at the hip. She could see they found strength from each other. Even if they didn’t know they were doing it.

Groggily Ochako pulled out her phone and groaned when she saw the time, “Oh my gosh, is that how late it is?”

“At least there’s no school tomorrow, so we don’t have to get up early. Poor Iida probably won’t know what to do with himself.”
“He won’t have a class to represent. Whatever will he do?” Ochako said in mock sympathy.

“Call everyone and make sure they are keeping up on any homework they were assigned?”

Both Ochako and Izuku looked at each other, and simultaneously turned their phone into silent mode. After sharing another laugh, Ochako sighed dramatically and stood up, “Well it’s late; I should be getting home.”

“Absolutely not!”

Startled, Ochako fell back into the couch as Inko stood over her, “You are not going anywhere tonight.”

“Eh?”

“Ochako, after what you went through at school today I couldn’t dream of letting you be by yourself.”

“Eh?”

“You are sleeping here tonight.”

“EH!?”

Ochako’s eyes bulged and her mouth hung open, “Wait, Mrs. Midoriya, that’s not necessary! Tell her, Deku.”

Izuku was just staring off into space, eyes glazed over and his body completely stiff.

*Don’t break now!*
“Ochako, you went through something so horrible today. The thought of you going to that empty apartment of yours...I don’t even want to think it. No, you are staying here, and that is final.”

Ochako was in turmoil, a sleepover was fine if they were still little kids but they were in highschool now. And a girl sleeping over at a boys house just didn’t happen. Even if he was her best friend. Even when they had been training all last year, she had never slept over.

“But I don’t have anything to sleep in…”

Inko waved her concern off, “Oh I’m sure we can find you something comfortable to sleep in. Izuku has plenty of nice sweats that I’m sure he wouldn’t mind you using.”

Izuku made a squeaking sound, which Inko took as an affirmative, “See? And I’ll take your uniform and have it cleaned by the time you leave tomorrow. Now, Izuku, you go pick out something for her.”

It took Izuku a few seconds for his mother's words to hit, before his autopilot kicked in and defaulted to ‘do what mother says.’ Getting up, Izuku quickly scurried away while Inko left to find a spare pillow and blanket.

Ochako was left on the couch, feeling not only conflicted, but unsure why she was feeling so conflicted. Sure having this decision made by Inko had flustered her, but if she was being totally honest with herself, it was probably more shocking that she hadn’t slept over at the apartment by now, considering how she already pretty much spent more time here than her own place. Plus the woman was worried about her, this was a decision made because Inko wanted to make sure she was alright. So what if she was staying over at a boy’s house. It wasn’t any boy’s house; it was Izuku’s. No, this was totally fine. She was just sleeping over.

*I mean, it’s not like I’m actually sleeping with Deku or anything…*

That thought drove her face back into her hands. How she didn’t float herself was a miracle.

“Um, Uraraka? Are you okay?”

Hearing Izuku’s voice, Ochaco snapped up, “What!? Oh, yes. I’m fine.”
“Are you sure? You’re looking a little red.”

“Totally and completely fine.”

“Oh, well okay. Um here, these should be fine right?”

Izuku handed over a pair of faded green sweatpants and a top. Ochako took them and despite her embarrassing thoughts, could help but think the sweats were nice and soft. She was also surprised that Izuku being back in the same room as her, calmed her down.

_I guess I’m just glad to be around him, after almost…_

Ochako shook that thought from her head, and instead focused on the clothes Izuku had given her, “I’m shocked you didn’t give me something with All Might’s face plastered on it.”

Izuku started to laugh, “Come on, not everything I own is All Might themed.”

“Pfft! Since when?”

That set both off. The two just laughed, the stress and horror from earlier in the day evaporating in the backs of their minds. Inko, returning with a large blanket and pillow smiled at the two, relieved that they were acting like they always had.

“Here we go; these should be just fine,” Inko said as she dropped the blankets onto the end of the couch, “Once you’ve changed, just drop your uniform into the laundry, and I’ll take care of it. Now it is getting late, so I want you two in bed and asleep as soon as you can.”

“Yes, Mom.”

“Yes, ma’am.”
Inko wished the two a good night and retired to her room.

“Poor mom. She’s probably exhausted too after today.” Izuku said after she had closed the door.

“You shouldn’t worry your mother Deku.” Ochako teased.

“Yeah, yeah. I know.” Izuku waved her off, “anyway, if you want to get changed in my room, my bed is all ready for you.”

“Eh?”

Ochako forced herself not to jump to any conclusions and waited for Izuku to elaborate what he meant when he said his bed was ready for her.

“Well, I’m not making you sleep on the couch, Uraraka. You can take my bed, and I’ll sleep out here. I’m already changed, so you can just go in and go to sleep.”

Smile? Check. No stutter, and he isn’t freezing up. So he has no idea how what he just said could be taken. I’m actually not sure if that’s really endearing or really concerning for a boy his age...Question for another time; let’s focus on the important stuff here.

“Deku, I’m not kicking you out of your room. The couch is just fine.”

Izuku shook his head, “You’re a guest.”

“And this is your home.”

He isn’t really going to get stubborn over this is he?

“Uraraka, you had a really stressful day; take the bed.”
Okay, yep he is.

“You did too.”

“Yeah but I don’t remember it that much, so it doesn’t count. Hitting my head has some benefits I guess.”

“You almost died, you dunce!”

“Technically, so did you. Everyone in the class almost died, when you think about it.”

“You got closer than anyone!”

“It’s a competition? Then I lost. You won. Congratulations, you get to sleep in the bed.”

Ochako groaned into her hands, “Don’t say it like you’re a game host!”

Izuku crossed his arms, “Look, either you sleep in the bed, or I’m sleeping on the floor.”

“You’re not serious.”

One look at Izuku’s smug face told Ochako otherwise, “Alright fine! I’ll take the bed. Happy?”

“Youp.”

Grumbling Ochako took her night clothes and stomped off. She was just about out of the room when Izuku called to her, “Good night, Uraraka.”

It wasn’t playful, or smug. It was just Izuku wishing Ochako a good night with a kind smile on his face. A very contagious smile which soon found itself on Ochako’s face as well, “Good night, Deku.”
After getting told off by Aizawa, All Might was ready for bed, but as he sat on the medical bed, he found himself flipping through his phone instead of trying to fall asleep. The day's events weighed heavily on All Might. So many things had happened that threw all of his plans into disarray. After being pushed to having to go beyond his limits, he knew his time limit had been cut down dramatically. If he still had an hour left, it would be a small miracle. On top of that was the villain, Tomura. All Might had heard him mention that he wasn’t as fast as he thought he’d be, something someone had told the young man. When he took that there was someone that apparently knew enough about him to say he was slowing down and they had a villain with them that had multiple Quirks, it didn’t paint a very good picture. The worst of all, however, was that today, he had almost lost Izuku.

The memory of Ochako cradling Izuku’s broken body was going to haunt All Might’s memory for days, he just knew it. So with everything that had happened, and the new thoughts of what could be coming next, All Might found himself in need of advice.

Finding the name he had been searching for, All Might took a deep breath and pressed the call button. He just hoped that the old man was still awake.

“Toshinori? Do you have any idea what time it is? A man my age needs all the sleep he can get.”

“I’m sorry, Torino. I know it’s late, I just...I just needed some advice.”

“...Things must be worse than I heard if it’s got you sounding like that.”

“You already know about the attack then?”

“It might not be on the news yet, but an attack on U.A. is going to get out, no matter what the suits up top do to try and slow down the story. How bad is everything?”

“You remember the boy I told you about? Young Midoriya.”

“Yes?”
“The attack almost killed him.”

There was a long sigh on the other end of the line, “How close are we talking?”

“He was attacked by a villain that was made to fight me.”

“Made?”

“Strong like me, and fast too. It also had multiple quirks.”

“...How much time do you have left?”

“An hour...maybe.”

“Damn...So what kind of advice did you want?”

“I had originally wanted to give Young Midoriya a year to come into his own, before passing One for All to him, but now...not only did I almost die,” All Might could hear the retired hero suck in a sharp breath, remembering Sir Nigheye’s vision, “but Young Midoriya almost perished as well. If...if he’s come back, then the boy will need everything at his disposal to be ready for the coming threat.”

“You want to give him One for All now?”

“I...I’m not sure. We came too close to losing everything. I don’t want to repeat that mistake.”

"Do you think the kid is ready for it?"

“That’s why I’m calling you...Torino… Did, did Master ever tell you when she knew I was ready to take on One for All?”
The other end of the phone was silent for a long time. All Might knew he was dragging up old memories, but he needed to be sure. He didn’t want to burden the boy out of fear.

“She never told me the exact day she knew you were ready.”

All Might sighed, but Gran Torino continued, “But, I remember that not long after giving it to you, you went on to win the U.A. Sports Festival. When you held up that medal, Nana was practically radiating pride. She just knew she had chosen the right person to carry on her burden.”

All Might wiped away a few tears that threatened to leak out.

“You’ll know when the time is right, Toshinori. For you and the boy. I trust you, and she would too.”

“Thank you, Torino.”

“Now get some sleep. That’s what smart recovering patients are supposed to do.”

“And I suppose that’s what cranky old men should do too.”

Gran Torino laughed before hanging up. All Might put down his phone and finally rolled into bed. Lying down he thought about what his old teacher had said. Just has he felt his eyelids start to get heavy, he had a thought that woke him up fully.

“The sports festival!”

All Might knew he had to speed up his plan on when he was going to give Izuku his Quirk. He just needed some kind of sign that the boy was ready. The sports festival was the perfect opportunity.

“That...that could work. I originally said I wanted Young Midoriya to show he had control over his own quirk before giving him One for All. He needed to have control over it before adding One for All on top of it. What better way to show he has control than winning the sports festival?”
The sports festival was only a couple of weeks away, if it wasn’t canceled because of the attack. Though All Might doubted that it would be. Canceling would be a huge blow to the hero community, a sign of weakness that he was sure the suits wouldn’t want. If Izuku could go from only just learning to tap into his power, to winning the festival in only a couple of months, that would be the perfect display of control that All Might had wanted to see.

*If Young Midoriya wins, then he will have shown he is ready for One for All.*

With that decided, All Might laid back down and let himself finally fall asleep.

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*Everything was on fire. Smoke in the air choked the lungs and the stench of sulfur burned the nose and throat. Yet even still, beaten and bruised from a day of battle, mage apprentice Ochako rushed deeper into the bowels of the horrible Mount Interitus.*

*The great mountain has been split when a hell pit opened beneath it, unleashing hoards of demons. The kingdom had been thrown into a panic, the demons' attack had been swift and brutal. It was only thanks to the combined efforts of the Captain of the Royal guard and the Royal Knights that the evil demons had been pushed back into the pit from where they came.*

*However after the battle, the injuries to the knights had been great, and the Royal Captain All Might had been unable to make the journey into the mountain to close the pit. Worse yet, the court mages had discovered that the pit could only be closed from within. Whatever brave soul that made the journey would most likely be trapped in hell with the demon host. This news quickly caused the camp to erupted into arguing over what they were to do, and who would have to be sacrificed.*

*Ochako was pushed back from the group, she was too young to be made to make the journey. Instead of arguing she went in search of the prince. He had been injured and brought to a private infirmary tent. She did not have to go far to find the tent, grumbling that they should have at least moved his tent further away from the main camp. He shouldn’t have to hear all the horrible news and arguing that was happening.*

*Moving one of the giant flaps, Ochako entered the tent, doing her best to put on a smile for her dearest friend. “I do wish they would have their fight somewhere else. It must be hard for you to rest with all the noise.”*
The tent was dark so Ochako moved to light a few lanterns for them, “Still I wanted to tell you, you were very brave out there today.”

Ochako frowned at the silence. She knew the prince had been brought to the tent not that long ago, so she had assumed he would still be awake. Had he fallen asleep already before the physician had a chance to dress his wounds?

Holding up a lantern she frowned at the lump in the bed. The shape looked wrong.

“Your majesty?”

Her hand fell on the blanket, “Deku?”

Pulling it back, Ochako gasped in horror. Pillows had been stuffed under the blanket, a hurried attempt to make it look like someone was sleeping underneath. Quickly Ochak scanned the rest of the room. Many of the prince's personal effects were missing. Pieces of armor, and his sword.

“But there’s a guard at the entrance. He couldn’t have…”

Ochako’s eyes finally fell on the back of the tent as a small breeze blew open the clean cut in the heavy fabric. A cut big enough for someone to sneak through.

“NO!”

Ochako knew what had happened. She knew exactly where the prince was, so she ran as fast as she could. Right into the heart of the mountain. The closer she got to the heart of the mountain the worse everything became. Yet she had to keep going. She could see the deep red fire from the pit now. The cavern was just ahead. And at the ledge of the pit, cloaked in green stood the crown prince himself.

“DEKU!”
She was close. She was about to pass the entrance when she ran right into something that knocked her back, almost off her feet. Regaining control of herself, she pressed her hands against the invisible barrier that blocked off the entrance to the cavern.

“Deku! There’s some kind of barrier. I can’t get to you!”

Izuku turned towards her and smiled, “I know. I put it up. I guess I learned something from those lessons you taught me.”

Ochako banged on the wall between them, “Deku, whatever you are thinking of doing, just stop! Please!”

Izuku shook his head, “I heard them. Someone has to be trapped to close the pit.”

Ochako stepped back and pointed her staff at the barrier and screamed the first spell she could think of. Lightning screeched and whined as it fruitlessly bounced off. Tears streamed down Ochako’s cheeks as she tried another spell, but the result was the same. Nothing. Dropping her staff, Ochako started slamming her fists against it, “Please don’t do this! Not you! Please not you!”

“I have to. It’s my responsibility as the next-”

“LET ME COME WITH YOU!”

Ochako’s scream cut Izuku off.

“Let me come with you, Deku. I can help. Don’t...you don’t have to do this alone. If we’re together...if we both go together then...”

Izuku shook his head sadly, “If we both go together, then you’ll die too. Goodbye, Uraraka. I’m sure you will become the greatest mage this kingdom has ever known. And thank you for being my friend.”

Beating on the barrier, Ochako screamed and wept as she watched the prince turn around, hold up
his sword, and plunge into the fire.

“DEKU!”

“DEKU!”

Ochako shot up from the bed, hand outstretched as she grabbed at nothing. Breathing heavily, Ochako stayed in that position as her heart raced and her eyes adjusted to the dark room. Slowly, Ochako calmed down as she lowered her hand and slowed her breathing. Bringing her knees up to her chest, she wrapped her arms around her legs and laid her head down, trying to force the horrible last few moments of the dream from her mind.

Guess I’m not over seeing Deku just rush into certain death. I swear if that boy gave me mental trauma, I’m going to kick his butt.

Looking over at the alarm clock next to the bed, Ochako groaned at the late hour.

Great, it’s way too late for me to be up, but I really don’t want to go right back to sleep after that dream. What am I supposed to do now?

Sighing, Ochako looked around the room she was in. Izuku’s room really was a living shrine to his favorite hero. So many different posters and figures lined the walls and shelves. Even the covers she was wrapped up in had the man’s name plastered over them. She had seen all this before many times. This wasn’t the first time she had been in Izuku’s room, but it was the first time she had been in it all alone. That, and it being so dark and quiet, made being there much more intimate.

But not uncomfortable.

Which was an odd feeling. In every measurable way, she should be feeling embarrassed to be here. This was Izuku’s room, and she was in his bed. At night. And yet she felt calm, and now that she was getting over the dream, at peace.

Ochako continued to look around the room, as if seeing it for the first time. Noting how items had
been carefully placed so that everything could be easily cleaned. It was impressive that even with
so much stuff, Izuku was able to keep the room tidy. The only place that wasn’t immaculate was
his desk, which wasn’t that big of a deal really. She knew he had been in a hurry to eat when they
had gotten home so he must have dropped his backpack next to it and simply stacked his books and
notebook on top since he was in a hurry.

*His...notebook…*

Even in the dark room, the moonlight that came in through the window was enough to make the
green leather stand out. It was Izuku’s hero notebook, the same note book she had gotten him for
his birthday. The same notebook that Izuku alway had an excuse for why she couldn’t look in it.
And there it was, right in front of here, completely unguarded.

*I really shouldn’t. I really shouldn’t read it. It'd be wrong right? An invasion of privacy and...oh
I’m already at his desk.*

Having gotten out of bed, Ochako stood next to the desk, looking down at the notebook, drumming
her fingers on the wood top of the desk.

*I can’t just open it...I should just go back to bed.*

Ochako turned and *accidently* knocked the book off the desk and it landed onto the floor. Opened.

*Oh well look at that, it opened all on its own. I can’t be held responsible for what I see when I’m
putting it back. Right? Right.*

With that decided, Ochako picked up the notebook and started looking through it. The pages were
filled with entries on heroes and their classmates. Each page was organized and filled with great
details. As she had seen before in his old notebook and from the peeks she had been able to get
here or there. Nothing out of the ordinary, and nothing she hadn’t suspected. She at least was also
able to confirm that All Might’s page did not have anything about One for All. She was about to
put the book back, slightly disappointed there wasn’t anything juicy in it that she could use to
explain Izuku’s reluctance at sharing it with her, when she got to the first few pages and the sketch
she saw made her pause.

*Is that...me?*
Unlike the other sketches in the book which were full body, this sketch was just a bust of her smiling, but the amount of detail that had clearly been put into it was far and beyond anything else in the book. In fact, *everything* about her entry was more detailed. Even his handwriting was much neater; it could almost pass as print. Ochako was further startled when she saw that her entry was multiple pages, when even the top ranked heroes in the book only got a single page dedicated to them.

Name: Ochako Uraraka

Hero Name: N/A

Quirk: Zero Gravity

Zero Gravity allows Uraraka to remove the effects of gravity from solid objects upon touching them with the pads on her fingertips. She must make contact with all five pads on one of her hands for her Quirk to take effect. The object will lose its gravitational pull and effectively become weightless, though they still retain their mass. With Zero Gravity, Uraraka can make anything float in mid-air as long as it is within her Quirk’s weight limit. This limit can be and has been increased through training. Uraraka can also use her Quirk on herself allowing her to float in the air, giving her a huge advantage in aerial mobility. To cancel her Quirk's effect she must press her fingers together.

Combat Prowess:

Uraraka has spent months honing her martial arts, taught to her by Gunhead, to an incredible degree making her a technical powerhouse. She is also a great tactical thinker, planning out how she will attack someone, and gauging their strength and weaknesses to her benefit. With her Quirk, Gunhead Martial Arts, and keen mind, she has the potential to become one of the most dangerous close range fighters. Uraraka’s physical strength is not to be underestimated. As evident by her physical feats during training, she is to not only be able to take a hit, if someone is lucky enough to break through her defense, but to deliver hard knock out blows.

Support Gear:

Uraraka’s Mk II?? hero costume takes cues from two heroes who have had a huge effect on her. The space theme is inspired by the rescue hero, Thirteen. Thirteen is Uraraka’s favorite hero and one of her key inspirations into what a hero should do and act. To show kindness and use your Quirk to save others. Uraraka is very kind. While Thirteen’s costume resembles an astronaut’s space suit, Uraraka’s costume is much tighter, more streamlined which helps facilitate her combat abilities. She wears two large bracers that resemble the arms of her martial arts instructor, Gunhead. A key support item she brilliantly had installed were gyroscopes to allow her to better mobility while she is floating. She has even been able to use them to run on walls and ceilings, which is just incredible.
Personality:

Uraraka is kind, and while capable of incredible feats, does not allow this to blind her to aspects she feels she needs to improve on. She takes her training very seriously as she is driven to become a hero to help her family, but she always has a smile on her face. If she is knowingly copying All Might or not, the effect she has is the same. She is inspirational and incredible.

While her main drive is to support her family, she also pulls from a moment in her childhood where she saw a hero in action and the smiles that it brought the crowd around her. She wants to make people smile, so of course she would want to rescue people. This shows her worry that her goal is just money-based to be unfounded. Someone just interested in money would not care about the people around her. Uraraka does care.

Her favorite style of food is Japanese, though her favorite food is mochi. She always seems to know when there is some nearby. It’s impossible to hide it from her. She also loves the stars at night, and owns several star map posters. Did loving the stars come first, or did her admiration for Thirteen lead to it?

Conclusion:

Uraraka wants to be a hero, but her actions to date show that she is already one. Her drive and motivation puts many pros to shame. She is grounded and realistic. Can be blunt but is never unkind. She is not only a hero that this world needs, but the greatest friend anyone could ever ask for. Uraraka is a hero, who has saved me more times than I can count with just a smile, or kind word.

If not for Uraraka I might never have gotten the chance I have now. I’d probably have taken Kacchan’s advice already.

Ochako blinked away the tears in her eyes. The more she read, the harder her heart beat, and the hotter her body started to feel. At some point she had forgotten to keep her pinkies out, and had floated herself and the notebook so that now she was lying against the ceiling, reading every word that Izuku had written about her. His analysis of her, and his personal thoughts and admirations. Gingerly, Ochako turned to the last page. This one was much more scribbled and rough. Parts were heavily smudged with eraser marks showing that many ideas and thoughts had been hastily written down and removed. It was more sporadic, and more raw. The pages title made her heart beat even more.
Team Ideas & Duo Super Moves:

Mumble Cheeks: I mumble a lot, and her cheeks have that cute pink blush. Not serious enough?

Bunny Hop: Everyone thinks I’m a bunny, and she bounces around a lot when floating on the wall. No.

Meteor Rabbit: More space themed, but I’m not a rabbit!

Gravity Duo: Space themed. Our Quirks are very compatible when you think about it. She could float an item that's beyond my weight limit that I could move around. Possible name change. Gravity Duo Smash for super move. Not a team name but a super move. Keep for later.

Green Tea: Play on name and color. Uraraka Ochako has kanji that read out Beautiful Tea Child. My favorite color is green. We both enjoy drinking tea. Green Tea? Serious enough?

Arizona Meteor Smash: Float multiple objects to pass weight limits of my Quirk. Wide range attack. Space themed. Arizona site of America’s largest creator. Possible adjustment, Arizona Asteroid Smash, instead of wide range, pull objects into one large ball, for single target attack.

Flight: If Uraraka floated a person, could I move them around easier? I’m not able to lift myself, but if I didn’t have gravity, could I fly?

Gently, Ochako pushed off the ceiling and floated back to the floor. Carefully, like it was made of porcelain, she closed the notebook and put it back on the desk. Ochako’s heart was beating so fast and so loud she almost couldn’t hear herself think.

Deku...he’s going to be the next number one hero. The next All Might once he gets One for All, and he still...he still wants to be together with me?

Ochako thought back to when they had first decided to work together to achieve their dreams. They had trained together for such a long time, and even showed that they were a force to be reckoned with in class, but the idea that Izuku would want to continue that beyond graduation never really occurred to her. But now that she thought about, and knew that Izuku was thinking about it, the idea they would be anything else but a team was laughable. They had started this together. So of course they should stay together until the end.
That word stuck in Ochako’s mind.

Together.

That single word when she thought of it concerning herself and Izuku took on a whole new meaning.

With the notebook put back in place, Ochako turned and started walking, but not to bed so she could go back to sleep. No, her feet took her out of the room and into the dark living room of the apartment. With every step she could see just a little better and hear Izuku’s breathing just a little more clearly. She finally stopped and found herself standing right besides the sleeping form of Izuku, wrapped up and snuggling with his pillow. Flashes of the nightmare earlier danced through Ochako’s mind, but were quickly brushed aside as she looked at the boy. Kneeling down, Ochako just watched him for a little while. Watched at how his chest rose and fell with each breath. A few hours ago, they had come so close to death. He had been so close. To look at his still form had been the most horrific thing she had ever seen. Now, to see him resting so peacefully, it brought such feelings of joy to her she couldn’t almost couldn’t find the words to express how relieved she was. And perhaps a little frustrated by him as well.

_Gosh Deku, you’re going to make being in love with you a huge hassle, aren’t you?_

In an instant, time froze for Ochako. That word she had just thought. That one simple word brought everything to a dead stop.

Love.

Ochako stood up, and hurried out of the living room and into the bathroom. Shutting the door, Ochako grabbed a towel off the wall and used it to muffle the scream of embarrassment that tore from her lungs.

_Why did I think that!? What is wrong with me!? I’m insane! That’s the only explanation! I’ve gone completely insane!!!_

Dropping the towel, Ochako looked at herself in the mirror and almost started screaming again. Her face was so red, she might as well have been a tomato. Slapping her hands over her face so she didn’t have to look at herself, Ochako felt herself start to float off the ground, though she didn’t
really care. She had more important things to try and figure out.

Okay! Okay! Just calm down! CALM DOWN!!! I had a really bad day today. After everything that happened, I’m probably just relieved Deku is alright. Yeah, that’s it. It’s just relief is all. That and...I guess I was touched after reading his notebook about me. To know that he thinks so highly of me, and is so dedicated...I mean... what girl wouldn’t be touched and a little emotional after that. That’s it, everything just has me emotional. I just need to calm down and think about this rationally. All I did was think that I love Deku.

Ochako could feel her heart skip as she used that word again.

All I did was think about it. Just a random stray thought that doesn’t mean anything. There’s a huge difference between thinking something and actually saying it. Wait that’s it! I’m all mixed up because I’m keeping everything internal. All I have to do is say that I don’t lo...

Ochako’s thoughts came to a hard stop. For some reason she couldn’t make herself finish that thought. Her heart wouldn’t let her.

Wait no, that sounds too mean. Okay, here’s what I’ll do. I just say out loud that I love him. Hearing myself say it should be enough to snap me out of this. I’ll say it, and it’ll sound so silly I’ll know I didn’t really mean it, and it was just the stress talking. Yeah, that should work.

Pulling herself back to the floor, Ochako looked at her reflection. Clearing her throat she readied herself.

Just say it. Say it, and then go back to bed.

“I love Deku.”

Ochako watched as her reflection started to turn red again. Not getting the response from herself she had expected, she tried again.

“I love Deku.”
Her reflection started to grin, and her eyes started to get glassy.

“I love Deku...I love Deku...I. Love. Deku.”

She tried again and again, but no matter what, she couldn’t make the words sound silly. Not when they felt so right. Each time she said it, her smile broaded, her cheeks glowed, and her heart fluttered in her chest. Soon she wasn’t saying it to try and deny it, she was saying it because she loved hearing it. Those three words were music to her heart and soul. There was no denying the truth any longer. Leaning against the wall, Ochako sighed into her hands, “Oh my god, I’m in love with Deku. I’ve fallen in love with my best friend. Oh no what have I done...wait no, this is Deku’s fault. What has he done?”

Lowering her hands, Ochako looked at herself in the mirror, and she saw a girl that was so obviously in love, “Oh this is...not good. We don’t have time for this... he doesn’t have time for this. Trying to become a hero is hard enough, but he has One for All to think about. I can’t...he can’t...he’s my best friend for crying out loud. How’d I fall for my best friend? Besides him being kind, gentle, brave, compassionate, cute and having a body that puts the Statue of David to shame…oh, so that’s how.”

Pushing herself up, Ochako tried as best she could to get herself under control, “Okay, I’ve fallen for my best friend. Fine, I can deal with that. What I am not going to do is let it get in the way of our goal. We are trying to be heroes, and I will not let this,” Ochako poked her chest, right over her heart, “get in the way of that. And I’m sure as hell not going to let it make our friendship awkward. I’ll get this under control and everything will be just fine.”

Ochako ignored the fact that her reflection still had the biggest love sick grin she had ever seen, and rosey cheeks that were practically neon. Walking out of the rest room, Ochako intended to go back to Izuku’s room and go to sleep, but the soft sounds of his breathing drew her in. Very quickly, she was back kneeling next to him, watching him sleep. With everything she was feeling, the temptation was too much for her. She watched him for a little while longer, smiling at his sleeping form. Softly, Ochako reached out and brushed a few stray hairs out of Izuku's face, letting her hand linger on his cheek. A soft hum came from Izuku as he nuzzled Ochako’s hand, resting his cheek into her palm. Ochako’s heart roared to life and she was suddenly very grateful she was kneeling, because she was sure she would have swooned after that.

Tomorrow...tomorrow I will deal with these feelings. I’ll make sure they don’t become a problem for me...for both of us...but tonight...right now. Right now I can be honest, at least to myself.

Licking her lips, Ochako leaned forward and pressed her lips against Izuku’s forehead. From the brief contact a warmth spread out from her lips throughout her whole body. Pulling back Ochako smiled happily, “I love you, Deku.”
It was only a soft whisper, but in the dark room, those words felt like a proud declaration for Ochako. A confession, maybe not to Izuku, but to herself. She knew that from here things were only going to get harder. On top of everything they had been expecting from school, now they had to worry about this League of Villains. She knew now more than ever, neither could afford any distractions. So she would deal with these feelings. She had to. At the very least though, she could use them. After all, what better feeling was there to drive her to protect her Izuku than love?

Chapter End Notes

Well hello new longest chapter that I did not plan on becoming my new longest chapter @_@

Hi everyone, I hope you all enjoyed the new chapter. It was a lot of fun for me to write, as I got to do a couple more scenes that I've been wanting to do for a while. Also, now I get to finally move into fluffy ship teasing! How many almost confessions and missed opportunities can I shove in before our favorite cinnamon buns finally kiss? *Looks at outline* Oh, the answer is a lot! Just one more chapter until my USJ arc is complete. If you enjoyed the chapter, or have some criticism's please leave a comment or review!

Again a huge thanks to my beta reader Tmalasia!
Chapter Summary

It's the day after the USJ attack and there will be no more classes until next week. So for Izuku and Ochako, its the perfect time to relax, hang out...and go out on a date?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When sunlight came through the window and fell on Izuku’s face, he tried to escape it. Pulling his covers over his head, he tried to block the offending light and go back to sleep. However, a giggle followed by a pair of hushed voices soon got his attention.

“We really shouldn’t let him go back to sleep.”

Mom?

“Well to be fair, Recovery Girl does say that getting a good rest after getting healed is important.”

Uraraka?

Izuku groaned into his pillow. Why were they talking so loud? Was it so wrong that he just wanted to sleep ?

“My poor boy, I suppose I could let him sleep in some more, but then he’d miss his breakfast and lunch too.”

Izuku sat up, blurry eyed and hair even more of a mess than normal, “I’m awake!”

While sleep was very important, he was not going to miss two meals. Ochako took one look at him, and burst into a fit of giggles, “oh man, Deku, that is not a great look.”
Blinking a few times to clear up his vision, and reaching up to try and get some control of his hair, Izuku finally got a look at the two. His mother was sipping on a cup of tea looking rather amused by her son’s state, while Ochako had turned away as she fought to get some control of her laughter.

“Oh, like you look good after just waking up,” Izuku said with a pout.

Ochako, after finally getting herself under some control, turned back around and smiled brightly at him, “Deku, I’m gorgeous all the time.”

Izuku blinked. While he had been ready to give a retort that would have probably resulted with him floating up to the ceiling, he suddenly found the words stuck in his throat as he looked at Ochako. Nothing was really different about her. She was in her normal chair, wearing his loose fitting sweats. Her hair, like his, was still a little messy, showing she hadn’t been awake that much earlier. And yet, as he looked at her, not only could he not help but agree with her, he couldn’t help but notice that she just seemed so much brighter. Her eyes twinkled, the pink on her cheeks were practically glowing, and her smile was dazzling.

Having expected some kind of tease from Izuku, Ochako tilted her head to the side, “Deku? You alright?”

Snapping out of his stupor, Izuku nodded vigorously, “Y-yeah. Sorry, I think I’m still just waking up. It’s just...”

“Well, you just seem to be in a really good mood is all.”

This time it was Ochako’s turn to be at a loss for words.

I’m in a really good mood? What could make him say...

Memories of last night, and the silly love-struck expressions she remembered herself making in the mirror flooded back. Gasping, Ochako rubbed her head nervously as she broke eye contact with Izuku, “Oh well um...”
“Dear, it’s not nice to tease your friends. I’m sure she just had a very good night last night is all. A nice night to get everything straightened out.”

Izuku nodded, “Oh, yeah I guess that makes sense, Mom.”

“Why don’t you go get yourself a cup, and have some tea with us.”

“Oh sure!”

While Izuku got up, Ochako shifted her gaze from the boy she loved to his mother. Inko didn’t say anything as she sipped at her tea, but Ochako swore-- she swore the woman was grinning at her past her cup.

She...she doesn’t know, right? She didn’t hear me or see me...Oh my god, what if? No, no just calm down. She was asleep. Everyone was asleep.

“I didn’t ask, but how was your night, Mrs. Midoriya? I’m sure hearing about everything didn’t make it easy for you to fall asleep.”

Inko smiled sweetly, “Why thank you for asking. Knowing that you two were here safe and sound helped put my mind at ease. I was asleep the moment my head hit my pillow.”

Ochako tried to make sure she wasn’t obvious as she sighed in relief, “Well that's good to hear…”

Inko continued on, however, “I just wish I wasn’t such a light sleeper. The tiniest noise and I’m wide awake.”

Inko took another sip of her tea while Ochako froze in place. Externally, she was still calm. Internally though…

AHHHHHHHHHHHRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
Ochako wondered what method would end her embarrassment. Floating into space or into a plane.

Izuku was on his way back to the table when the phone rang.

“Oh, I’ll get that,” Izuku said as he motioned for the two to stay seated. Picking up the phone, Izuku was about to answer when he glanced at the caller ID and went stiff. When the phone rang again, both Inko and a calmed down Ochako, noticed the drastic change in Izuku’s demeanor.

“Izuku?”

Izuku took a deep breath and answered the phone. His voice was calm, but also lacked any real emotion behind it, “Hello, Father.”

Ochako was surprised, as this was probably the first time she had ever heard any mention of Izuku’s father, and because the mood in the room had changed drastically. The joy and warmth had been sucked out, leaving a cold nothingness that made everything feel claustrophobic and closed off. Inko’s mood had immediately soured—her smile vanishing and while she wasn’t outwardly doing anything, keeping herself very neutral, Ochako could see there were many emotions swirling in the woman’s eyes. Before Ochako started listening intently to the phone call, she had a strange thought.

He said father. Not dad, or papa, or anything familiar...just father.

“Yes, sir… Yes, sir. There was an attack. No sir… No sir…”

What….what kind of conversation is he having? If Deku’s dad is calling because of the attack, this seems so..clinical. It’s mostly just two word answers from Deku.

The more Ochako listened, the more confused she became. This didn’t feel like a normal conversation a parent and child had after something traumatic. Inko’s reaction when they had come home last night, or even the tearful phone call she had had with her parents earlier in the morning, those were normal. She had no idea what this was.

“No sir, the teachers dealt with everything...Huh?”
For the first time in the short phone call, Izuku showed an emotion.

Shock.

His eyes widened and his mouth hung open. He was stunned by something his father had said, though he was able to recover quickly enough. Even recovered, Ochako could see some tears starting to form in his eyes. Though they were definitely not tears of joy. Steadying himself, Izuku answered, “No sir, I have not.”

Ochako could see that Izuku was upset, and trying to hide it. Inko saw it too as she started to get up.

“...Mom? Mom is fine. She’s...” Inko motioned for the phone, “Mom’s right here. Do you want to... Oh. Good b...”

Izuku trailed off as he pulled the phone from his ear, “...Good bye...”

Hanging up the phone, Izuku looked over at his mother, “He said he didn’t have time to talk...”

Inko’s face twisted as she gave the phone a nasty look. Izuku, sighing heavily, took his seat and slumped down. Inko followed after him, putting a comforting hand on his shoulder before taking her seat. While the two sat in silence, Ochako was left feeling very out of place, a first for her ever since she had started coming over.

_I feel like I just saw something I wasn’t supposed to see._

The more Ochako thought about it, the more she realized that she knew next to nothing about Izuku’s father. Besides a passing statement that he worked abroad, she didn’t know what he did or who he worked for. She didn’t even know what he looked like. There wasn’t a single photo in the whole apartment that she had seen that wasn’t just Izuku and Inko. Even the baby pictures and other photos from the albums Inko had shared with her didn’t have the man in them.

Ochako wasn’t sure what this all meant, but she was sure it was a very tricky situation that she was not really prepared to ask about. Or if she even had a right to ask about. This was a family matter,
and not something for her to just stick her nose into.

“Um, Uraraka.”

Looking over, Ochako saw Izuku offering her a small smile, “Are you okay? Your face is all scrunched up.”

_He’s worried about me? After whatever that phone call was, he’s making sure I’m okay…_

“Sorry, I guess I’m just wondering, what…”

“What was up with that phone call?”

Ochako nodded, and Izuku sighed, scratching hair, “I suppose…you were open about your…um family issues. It’s only fair if I am a little open with mine.”

“Wait, Deku you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to. You don’t owe me any kind of explanation.”

“It’s not that I think I owe you it. I just don’t want you to be worried about me. After everything I put you through, that’s the last thing I want. Just…is it alright if we talk about it later. Like after lunch?”

Ochako nodded, “Of course. Whenever you’re ready.”

“Thank you, Uraraka. You’re always there for me.”

Ochako recalled a line from Izuku’s notebook; ‘...the greatest friend anyone could ever ask for. Uraraka is a hero who has saved me more times than I can count with just a smile or kind word.’

“I’ll always be there for you, Deku.”
Soon the warmth from before returned to the apartment as everyone started smiling again. Inko poured Izuku some tea and the three talked. After a little while a low rumble grabbed the three’s attention as Izuku covered his stomach and looked away, blushing. Ochako covered her mouth with her hands as she started to giggle, “Deku, was that your stomach?”

“I might be a little…” Another rumble, “hungry.”

Ochako giggles got louder, much to Izuku’s embarrassment, before a new rumble cut her off. Letting out a small *eek*, Ochako quickly covered her own stomach. Izuku was grateful he wasn’t drinking his tea, because he was sure he would have spit it out as he started laughing. Ochako pointed at him, “You hush! I don’t have to take that from you!”

Izuuk rolled his eyes, “but I have to take it from you?”

“You’re darn right.”

Inko let the two playfully bicker before cutting in, “It is almost time for lunch. Was there anything you two would want?”

The two stopped as they both gave that some thought. Izuku leaned back in his chair, rubbing his chin, “A big bowl of ramen sounds pretty good.”

*Ramen?*

Hearing that brought back something Ochako hadn’t thought about in some time, “You know, if you want ramen, maybe you should finally cash in on our bet that you won.”

Inko looked over at Ochako, “Bet? What bet?“

“Oh, back when we took the entrance exam we made a bet: the person with the lowerst practical score had to buy the winner lunch.”

“Oh, that’s adorable.” Inko said with a huge grin.
While Ochako debated if adorable was the right word—she was still a little sore that she lost after all—Izuku shook his head, “Come on, Uraraka, I don’t actually expect you to do that, you know.”

Eh?

“What are you talking about, Deku?”

Izuku just shrugged, “I mean, you were helping me get over some jitters. I’m not going to hold you to that since you probably weren’t serious about it.”

Eh!? 

“And besides...I wouldn’t want you spending money over something like that either.”

EH!?

Inko leaned back in her chair, sipping on her tea. She had a feeling she was about to get a nice little show. And her son was about to learn a little lesson.

“Deku,” Ochako started, her voice taking a sharp tone that made Izuku immediately sit at attention, “Let me ask you something.”

“Y-yes?”

“If I had won, would you have taken me to lunch?”

“I mean...yes.”

“You would have?,” Ochako asked again.
“Of course.”

“Then explain to me why I am not allowed to take you out to lunch after losing my own bet. Explain to me how you decided that, after we shook on it.”

Izuku started to talk but Ochako added on, “But explain your reasoning in a way that won’t sound condescending or insulting.”

Izuku’s mouth opened and closed a few times as his mind raced. Ochako however delivered the final blow when she added, “Oh, and make sure you do it in a way that won’t come off as you pitying me because you think I’m too poor to buy a bowl of ramen.”

Izuku’s mouth snapped shut, with a very audible snap as his teeth clicked together. Ochako waited a few more seconds to see if Izuku was smart enough to keep his mouth closed.

He was.

“Deku,” Ochako pointed right at the boy, who even though he was already sitting up straight, somehow got even straighter, “march yourself into your room and get changed right now. I am taking you out to lunch. You are going to get your ramen. You will also brag about your higher score to rub it in that you got first place and I only got second, and we will have an incredible time. Am I clear?”

“Yes, ma’am!”

“Go!”

Izuku quickly stood up, bowed, and scrambled for his room. When the two left heard his door close, Ochako rubbed her brow, “You know what, maybe Toga was right and he doesn’t have a brain in that head of his.”

Inko laughed, “it can be a little jarring, can’t it? Him being brilliant one moment and then thick the next, huh?”
“I swear sometimes he can pick up on the tiniest details one moment and the next you have to literally spell something out for him, and it has to be on one of those huge sports arena monitors.”

“Well,” Inko began, a smile crossing her lips, “You certainly are doing a good job of that already.”

“Huh?”

“At your age, I don't know if I would have been bold and brave enough to tell a boy that he’s going to have lunch with me.”

Ochako froze, her face heating up as she realized what she had just done. Chuckling, Inko pointed to the laundry room, “You may want to go get changed too. Your clothes are hanging in there for you.”

Nodding, Ochako hurried to pick them up and to get changed.

After freshening up and getting changed, Ochako looked at herself in the restroom mirror. After a lengthy battle with a brush, her hair was now free of tangles and knots. Inko had also done a nice job of cleaning her uniform; it had even been ironed. All in all, she looked ready for the day. She just couldn’t help but be a little disappointed. She was about to go out to lunch, and all she had to wear was her school uniform. It wasn’t that she didn’t feel a sense of pride whenever she put it on. Getting into U.A. had been her dream, and she damn well worked hard to achieve it. For this afternoon though? Maybe a nice sunday dress? Or a nice pink top with some black shorts? Not her school uniform. It just wasn’t very romantic.

 Wait no, not romantic! Where did that come from? It’s not like this is a date. It's just me and Deku going out for lunch. Which we’ve done plenty of times before. Except now, I’m taking him out to do it, and paying for it...and I really like him and want to be a little dressed up for...It’s not a date! Stop it... I really need to get a handle on this. At least I have a few days before classes start up again.

After taking a few more minutes to make sure she was presentable, Ochako exited the room and walked back into the little living room, where Izuku was waiting for her. Also dressed in his school uniform.
Wait what?

“Deku?”

Izuku smiled and stood up, “Oh, Uraraka, you ready to go?”

Ochako nodded slowly, “Sure, but, why are you dressed like that?”

“How?”

“I mean, you’re in your uniform. Why?”

Izuku glanced down before laughing nervously, “Oh this? Well you only had your school uniform to get changed into. I was worried you might feel awkward if only you were dressed in yours, so I decided to wear mine too. Is this okay?”

Ochako could feel her heart beat faster as Izuku explained himself. It was such a simple, thoughtful gesture, but it showed the kind of person Izuku was.

Heart, stop it right now.

While making sure Izuku couldn’t tell how flustered his kindness had made her, Ochako smiled brightly at him, “That’s really thoughtful of you, Deku. You know, maybe we can casual-up our looks.”

“Oh that’s a good idea.”

Ochako brought her hand to her chin as she looked Izuku over, “Hmm, maybe lose the tie and unbutton your blazer. You could also not have your collar buttoned up all the way too. Oh, and you could untuck…”

She trailed off as Izuku started doing exactly what she suggested. First, he undid the front buttons on his school blazer then reached up and worked on his tie. After a couple of tugs, the front knot
came undone and Izuku pulled the red ribbon of fabric off his neck, in a way that wasn’t flamboyant at all, but from Ochako’s point of view, who was watching every move, it was very exotic. When he started to work the buttons on his shirt, Ochako licked her lips. First was the top button at his collar, then the second one down. When Izuku didn’t undo a third button, Ochako fought to keep a groan of disappointment from escaping her throat.

“How’s this, Uraraka? Better?”

Oh yeah...

“Um, yep! You look great, Deku.”

Izuku flushed and rubbed the back of his head shyly, “Oh, thank you.”

Izuku stood smiling which Ochako just soaked in before it clicked that she was also supposed to be trying to casula up her look as well. Reaching up she started to take off her own tie, but stopped when she realized that Izuku was still looking at her. Suddenly feeling very shy, Ochako turned around as she followed her own advice. Once she was done, she turned back around and found that Izuku was still smiling at her, none the wiser of her embarrassment.

“Looking good, Uraraka.” Izuku said, giving her a thumbs up.

The goofy gesture was enough to snap Ochako out of her shy mood, and she waved him off, “We should probably get going if we don’t want to have a late lunch.”

As the two headed for the door, Inko smiled and waved at them, “You two have a good time on your date.”

“MOM!? Don’t tease like that. This isn’t a date.”

Inko let her eyes drift over towards Ochako, “Oh, it isn’t?” Who immediately looked away, “My mistake,” She added with a small chuckle.

While Izuku huffed at the terrible joke his mother just said-- really. how could she even suggest
that Ochako would want to go on a date with him-- Ochako reached down and grabbed ahold of his wrist, pulling him along, “C-come on, Deku; let’s go.”

Opening the door, Ochako stepped out, but came to a stop when Izuku suddenly pulled back. Confused, Ochako looked back and saw that Izuku now had a pensive and thoughtful look on his face.

“One second, Uraraka.”

Turning, Izuku hurried back into the apartment. Ochako followed after him after a second in confusion. Izuku made his way back into the living room where Inko was still sitting at the table. She looked up at her son, “Did you forget some-”

Not letting her finish, Izuku wrapped his arms around her, and hugged her tightly, “I love you, mom.”

Inko’s eyes widened some before she returned the hug, “I love you too, Izuku.”

Holding her son a bit longer, she slowly let him go, “Now you go with Ochako and have a good time.”

Nodding, Izuku walked back over to Ochako and gave his mother one last wave goodbye, the two left the apartment and went on their way. Walking down the sidewalk, Ochako stayed close to Izuku’s side, watching him carefully. They had walked for a few minutes, just to the other end of the block when he finally spoke up, “Sorry about before, by the way.”

“You mean your mom teasing us? It’s not like it’s the first time she’s done that.”

*Makes me wonder if she’s known I liked Deku before I even did. Mom’s are scary…*

“Oh, um yeah that too, I guess. I was talking about afterwards.”

“Are you alright?”
Sighing, Izuku scratched at his neck, “I think so. It’s just… Just promise not to laugh alright?”

“Oh course.”

“You know how yesterday I almost died?”

Memories of the attack hit Ochako as she vividly recalled just how badly hurt Izuku was, “Deku, that’s not something I’m ever going to forget.”

“Well there’s… bits of that day I can’t really recall. Side effect of my head hitting the ground so hard I guess.”

“Yeah? Does Recovery Girl know about that?”

Izuku nodded, “She said that it’s completely normal. It should come back to me within the next couple of days, though she said some of the day may still just be hazy for me.”

Ochako could understand that. He had hit his head so hard, after all. “So does that have something to do with your mom?”

“Yeah...As we were leaving I... Well,” Izuku looked away feeling embarrassed. Ochako didn’t push and waited for him to finish, “Well it suddenly hit me, I couldn’t remember what the last thing I told Mom before I left for school yesterday. What if I hadn’t told her I loved her before coming so close to dying? So I guess I...wanted to make sure I said it this time.”

Ochako turned and put a hand on his shoulder, “Deku, that just shows how great a son you really are. She knows you love her; you know that.”

Izuku nodded, “yeah I just wanted to make sure I said it today.”

“Well unless something goes totally off the rails at lunch, everything should be fine and you’ll be able to tell her you love her again.”
Laughing, Izuku covered his mouth, “Uraraka, you totally just jinxed us; you know that.”

Ochako pursed her lips, “Well if something does happen, this time I’m going to make sure you don’t do something stupid.”

Groaning, Izuku rubbed his brow, “Oh no, you didn’t actually mean what you said last night, did you?”

“You mean it being my job to protect you?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh you better believe I meant that,” Ochako said as she puffed herself up, while at the same time Izuku deflated with a groan.

Inko sighed as she watched the two leave. It was only after she heard the door click shut and she couldn’t hear their voices anymore that she put her drink down and started laughing and crying at the same time.

*My baby boy is going to have a girlfriend!*

She hadn’t been lying when she had told Ochako that she was a very light sleeper. Ochako’s first cry from last night had woken her up with a start. However, when she didn’t hear anything else afterwards she assumed she must have dreamed the noise and was about to go back to sleep until she heard a door open and someone walking around. Getting up and cracking her bedroom door open just enough so that she could peek through, she could just make out Ochako kneeling beside her son in the dark before she suddenly jumped up and bolted for the bathroom.

Inko waited for a bit until she thought she might want to check on her. A soft voice however stopped her in her tracks.
“I love Deku.”

Inko held her breath as those same words were repeated again and again. It got to the point that it was clear to Inko that Ochako was no longer bothering to try and keep quiet as she had her breakdown/revelation. She could hear the girl arguing with herself for some time before the light in the bathroom turned off. Inko held her breath as Ochako walked back out into the hall. She expected the girl to return to her son's room, but instead she walked back out into the living room, and from the crack in her door, Inko watched as Ochako leaned down and gave Izuku a quick but loving kiss on his forehead before practically floating back into her son's bedroom.

For the rest of the night, and up until the two had left, Inko had done a good job keeping herself in check. Only letting out a few hints and teases that she couldn’t stop herself from doing, but now that she was alone, she let all her emotions bubble over as she celebrated. She squealed at how romantic and wonderful the whole situation was.

She had watched as the two so obviously started to develop feelings for each other over the months, even if they didn’t realize it themselves. While she was unbelievably happy that Ochako had finally figured out how she felt, she didn’t envy her the challenges that lay ahead. Dealing with her son’s...lack of social awareness and obliviousness was bad enough, but now apparently she had a rival for her son's heart in Himiko. The blonde girl had an almost feral beauty to her, and she was clearly infatuated with her son.

Very, very infatuated.

The whole situation just made Inko laugh while at the same time, feeling a little sorry for her baby boy and the two girls. From what she saw, he had been completely unaware of the painfully obvious hints that Himiko had been hurling at him at the dinner a few days ago, and now with Ochako, his every action this morning showed he didn’t suspect a thing from her either. Those three were careening headfirst into a storm, and she hoped that all three would be able to make it out with their hearts and friendships intact.

Inko’s happy thoughts were interrupted when the house phone started ringing. Getting up and walking over, she reached down to answer, but hesitated with her hand over the phone. A dreadful thought of just who could be on the other end souring her good mood.

He couldn’t be calling back already?

Picking up the phone, Inko quickly checked the caller ID and was immediately relieved that it wasn’t the name she was worried about, but at the same time she was more than a little shocked at
who was calling her.

_Bakugou?_

Bringing the phone to her ear, she did her very best to at least sound polite, “Hello?”

“Inko darling! It’s been forever.”

“Mitsuki?”

Taking a moment to collect herself, Inko tried to remember when the last time she had actually _talked_ to her old friend. They had exchanged a few texts here and there, the most recent when she congratulated her over Izuku getting into U.A. An actual conversation though? It must have been close to a year by this point.

“It...it has been a while hasn’t it.”

“Well, the faults definitely on my end over that.”

“Oh, oh no. I could have just as easily picked up the phone,”

“Inko, we both know what’s kept that from happening. Only one of us has a son competing to become the biggest fucking prick this side of Japan.”

Inko paused at that. Not sure if she should take the opening Mitsuki was giving her. Mitsuki, however, started laughing at the drawn-out silence, “See, I knew you’d agree with me.”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“You don’t have to. My son’s a fucked up little cunt.”
“He is a chip off the old block.” Inko’s eyes went wide as she slapped a hand over her mouth, “No! Wait I-!”

Loud, very loud laughter blew out of the little phone speaker as Mitsuki tried, and failed, to control herself, “You know what, you aren’t wrong. Now, on the subject of our sons. How’s yours doing?”

“Izuku? He’s… he’s alright. The doctors at the school were able to fix him up and he came home last night.”

“Really? From what I’d gathered, Izuku got pretty messed up. Almost died.”

Inko closed her eyes. She remembered the call she got from the authorities telling her what had happened. How the officer had been very vague when describing just how bad her son had been hurt.

“He..he did almost … die.” She hated even having to say that word. It twisted her stomach and chilled her to the bone. “The police didn’t go into too much detail over his injuries, but they said he came very close.”

“Fuck.”

“Yeah...Wait how do you know about it? The news report didn’t mention names and only said a few students got hurt.”

“Got the news from my brat.”

“From Katsuki?”

“Yeah, caught him damn near having an argument with himself over it. Brat was literally growling at his own fucking reflection. Made the little shit sit down and tell me what the hell he was going on about. Got enough out of him before he stormed off that Izuku got really messed up and that girl that’s been hanging around with you two for like the past year...um...Ochapo...Ohtako…”

“Ochako.”
“THAT’S IT! Yeah, Ochako. Brat normally just calls her...um...nevermind that actually. Yeah, he said that Ochako had to revive him or something. The way the brat tells it. It was a really close call.”

“I…” Inko trailed off. She hadn’t known that part. She knew about the attack. She knew that Ochako and Izuku had been forced to defend themselves against several horrible villains in the attack. She knew that Izuku had been horribly hurt during the attack, and she knew that Ochako had waited for Izuku until he was released and the two had returned home. Learning that Ochako had been with Izuku and had not only seen how close her son had come to dying, but was responsible for him not dying put last night’s sudden revelation in a whole new light.

“You there?”

“Yes! Sorry just got lost in thought.”

“Gotta say, if the kid was able to keep a cool head under pressure, fight off a bunch of villains, and was able to save Izuku, you need to get her locked down stat before someone else comes along and scoops her away. Girl sounds like a real winner.”

Inko could hold back a little happy hum which Mitsuki immediately caught, “Oh? Hold on a second. Really?”

Inko hummed again.

“Wow. Didn’t think the kid had that kind so spunk in him.”

“Actually,” Inko said a little slyly, “It’s not him that’s making the first move.”

Mitsuki paused for a second before bursting out laughing, “Oh?! Strong, brave, and knows what she wants. Nice. Sounds like I had nothing to worry about then. You seem to be having the perfect day after a shitstorm like yesterday.”

“It’s been…” Inko couldn’t stop herself from pausing for a second, her voice losing a little of its cheer, “…a roller coaster. That’s for sure.”
Mitsuki caught the pause, “The hell does that mean?”

“Oh you know, ups and downs.”

“It sounded like this morning was all ups? So down as in...?”

“...Hisashi called.”

Mitsuki paused for a second before she let loose a string of swears and phrases that would make even the most hardened sailor’s ears burn. Inko, despite being the paragon that she was, found herself agreeing with every single word.

“...And then twisted it sideways,” Mistuki ended with a snarl.

“You’re not wrong.”

“What in the fuck did the bastard even want anyways?”

“I don’t know. He only spoke with Izuku.”

“Wait, wait, wait. He spoke with Izuku? The bastard actually spoke to his own fucking son? Holy fucking shit, miracles do happen. I guess all it took was the poor kid almost fucking dying to make the selfish fucking piece of shit to pick up the fucking phone.”

Bitterly, Inko added, “The call lasted all of thirty seconds.”

“What?”

“It was literally only yes or no answered from Izuku before Hisashi said something to him that clearly upset him. Then he hung up before I could even get out of my chair to see what was going on.”
“Of all the...Are you **fucking kidding ME!?** After everything...he can only... **What the ever loving fuck! That slimy, needle-dicked, mother...**”

Inko found herself nodding along as Mitsuki just pulled out every nasty horrific curse and swear she could think of. Again, agreeing with a simple, “You’re not wrong.”

A knock from the front door interrupted Inko before she could say anything else on the matter.

“**Oh. someone’s at the door.**”

Walking over, Inko peaked through the peephole and blinked in surprise, “Toshinori?”

On the other side of the door, All Might waited patiently in his ridiculously oversized suit.

“**Who’s that?**”

“He’s a trainer. He helped my son and Ochako get ready for the U.A. entrance exam...He’s also a friend.” Inko added a little shyly.

Mitsuki’s ears perked up, “**A friend you say huh? Coming over while the kids are out?**”

Inko flushed at the idea, “Mitsuki, no! I had no idea he was coming over.”

“**Sounds like your day is about to have a lot more ups and downs.**”

Inko could practically hear the huge grin Mitsuki had.

“**Or maybe I should say, some in and outs?**”
Mitsuki burst out laughing, while Inko’s face burned, “I’m going to hang up now”

“Yeah, ha ha ha, yeah I figured, ha ha ha…”

“But… I’ll give you a call later?” Inko’s voice had a hopeful tone to it, which Mitsuki picked up on.

Smiling on her end, she answered, “Yeah, we have a lot we should catch up on. Now go get it, girl.”

“Oh you!”

With Mitsuki still laughing, Inko hung up though it was hard not to start laughing herself. Taking a few quick breaths, Inko opened the door smiling up at the skinny man, “Oh, Toshinori, what a pleasant surprise. What are you up to today?”

“Ah! Inko. Good morning. Well, I was in the neighborhood, and after that horrible incident yesterday I wanted to come by and see how Young Midoriya was doing.”

“That’s so thoughtful. He’s doing very well right now. You just missed him. though. He and Ochako just left to go have lunch not that long ago.”

“Oh, that’s too bad, but I’m glad the boy is doing well, and if Young Uraraka is with him, then that saves me a trip to visit her at least. Wait, they went to have lunch together?”

Inko didn’t bother to hide the little smirk on her face, “At Ochako’s insistence.”

All Might’s eyebrows rose before he started chuckling, “I knew I should have changed my bet with you. Second year was way too far off.”

“No take-backs, I’m afraid. Besides you could still win. She still has to deal with my son’s dense
nature after all."

That got another loud chuckle from All Might before he continued, “Honestly, I probably could have just called, but I suppose I wanted to make sure myself that everyone was okay…” All Might glanced away before adding, “How are you handling everything? If you don’t mind me asking.”

Inko sighed, perhaps a little more dramatically than she needed to, “All things considered, I suppose I’m alright. I knew eventually things would start to get dangerous for Izuku as he trained to be a hero. I just didn’t expect to have to deal with it so soon.”

“No one expected any of this,” All Might add gravely.

“All things considered, I suppose I’m alright. I knew eventually things would start to get dangerous for Izuku as he trained to be a hero. I just didn’t expect to have to deal with it so soon.”

“No one expected any of this,” All Might add gravely.

“Inko…” All Might paused, nervously fidgeting with the cuffs on his sleeves, “If you ever need anything, please feel free to call. I’ve actually started working closer to U.A. and should be for the foreseeable future, so if there was an emergency or something I could come over to help.”

Inko smiled at that. Both the kind gesture and the news that he was going to be back in the area for a while at least, “Thank you. That’s very kind of you. You know, if you’re going to be around again, you are more than welcome to come back over for dinner…” Inko paused before adding, a little shyly, “Or lunch, if you’d like.

“Oh! Oh, that is a very nice offer Inko.”

Both adults stood in silence for a couple of seconds before Inko wondered if she had been too vague with that. So Inko worked up some more courage and asked, “Would you like to come in and have a little lunch now? I could put something together that even a picky eater like you could enjoy.”

All Might laughed, a hand absently rubbing his stomach, “You don’t have to worry about that. My injury just means I can’t eat a lot of food at once…or drink.”

Inko sighed, “I still wish you had told me about your accident earlier. I feel so bad trying to get you to eat more.”

All Might waved her off, “You were just looking after me. I appreciate it really…and I think…I think I would very much like to have lunch with you. Thank you.”
Inko smiled brightly and let All Might in.

Izuku and Ochako had been walking for a few minutes now when it finally dawned on Ochako, she didn’t have any idea where they were going, “So, where is this ramen place anyway, Deku?”

“Oh, it’s this little shop I saw when I would do my piggyback runs with All Might. So it’s actually pretty close to the beach.”

“Oh neat. You know, I don’t think we’ve gone back there since we got our acceptance letters.”

“Do you want to head over after lunch? Maybe go for a walk.”

Ochako smiled at the idea, “That sounds fun. It’ll be nice to be able to go there and be able to relax.”

“I might start picking up trash on instinct now that I think about it.”

That made Ochako burst into a fit of laughter, “I swear, if it’s dirty again after all that work, I might explode.”

“Actually, I saw online that it has become a popular destination now, so the city is doing a much better job keeping it clean.”

“Oh, that’s good to hear, but what do you mean by popular destination?”

“Apparently a lot of couples like to go for walks there now. It’s one of the more popular places to bring a date.”

Izuku completely missed the look Ochako had when he mentioned that. Not for the first time in the last twenty-four hours, Ochako fought to keep her heart from exploding and her cheeks no pinker
than normal. However, while she was a little flustered that Izuku had suggested going to a couples hang-out, she was proud that she was able to keep herself, mostly, under control. At least she wasn’t having a complete melt down like last night. If she kept this progress up, by the time they were back in class and ready to learn, she would have everything under control so that there would be no danger of her feelings becoming a distraction to herself or Izuku.

*I’m just lucky Deku isn’t very observant on things like this. If he even had a hint over what was going on, I think I might die.*

“Hey Uraraka. Are you alright? You’re looking a bit flushed.”

*FUCK!*

Ochako almost slapped a hand over her mouth, but was able to keep herself calm, “Oh, I’m fine.”

*I guess I should change that to almost isn’t very observant. I guess after spending so much time together, he’s bound to notice some things...Also, note to self: figure out why I’m starting to sound like my Dad whenever he brings his friends from the construction site over for drinks.*

Izuku looked at her a little while longer, looking like he wasn’t completely sure he bought that, but before he could push it, both their phones started beeping, letting them know they had gotten a message. Ochako sighed, silently, in relief as she reached for her phone, grateful for whoever had decided to text them.

“Oh, it’s from Toga,” Izuku said as he checked his phone. He missed the slight eye twitch Ochako had at the mention of the other girl’s name.

*Request to invite T.Asui into chat by H.Toga*

*Do you accept Y / N*

“Oh Toga wants to invite As- Tsu into the group?”

“Oh?” Ochako’s slightly soured mood evaporated in an instant, “We were talking a lot while we
were waiting on you.”

“She and Toga we’re getting along on the bus ride yesterday too, and she was with you two during the attack.”

Izuku and Ochako both pressed Y on their phones. After sending her agreement, Ochako started to chuckle, “You know, I just realized something.”

“What?”

“Tsu is also someone you helped. Is that your plan now: wait until someone is in danger and swoop in to save them so they become your friend?”

Izuku blushed, “Uraraka! You make me sound so nefarious!”

Both their phones chirped with a new message.

Request accepted by 5 / 5

H.Shinso: So Midoriya iz jst collecting us leik cats now???

H.Shinso: Standing there w/ a net

H.Shinso: Danger = nu friend

Ochako burst out laughing while Izuku groaned and hurriedly started typing.

H.Toga: ( ă ) ᵁ

H.Toga: I wil send invite!
H.Toga: She will be so excited

I.Midoriya: GUYS!!

I.Midoriya: That's not at all!!!!

T.Iida: I'm afraid, Midoriya, that you have established a pattern at this point. To try and deny it would be most unbecoming. Also, I hope you are doing well. While you seemed fine last night, please be sure to take this time to fully recover so that you will be able to complete your studies when classes start up again.

H.Shinso: Do you not have an off switch?

O.Uraraka: No

H.Toga: No

T.Iida: It is my duty as class representative to ensure my classmates are behaving in a way that both represents the school and ensures they stay healthy.

O.Uraraka: I'm with him

O.Uraraka: Deku is fine

H.Toga: Are you??

O.Uraraka: Going to have lunch

O.Uraraka: <(¬_¬)>
Izuku blinked at the smug face Ochako had used, then looked over at her. She had a strange smile on her face. It reminded him of when she would get competitive, like during their old sparring matches, but it was still different enough in a way he couldn’t quite put his finger on.

*Am I missing something? Maybe this is some kind of girl thing?*

**H.Toga: (¬_¬)**

Ochako snickered when Himiko’s message popped up, making Izuku even more confused but confident in his idea.

*Yep, this is definitely a girl thing.*

**T.Iida: Toga, when you get in contact with Asui, please extend my invitation to come to my home this Saturday for some R&R. After the events of yesterday, I feel we all need the chance to unwind and enjoy ourselves.**

**H.Toga: Awesom!!!**

**H.Toga: I will let hr no**

**H.Toga: Got 2 run!**

**H.Toga has left chat**

**I.Midoriya: Im lukiing forwrds to it**

**O.Uraraka: Me 2**

**H.Shinso: Shood b fun**
T.Iida: I also must be getting off. I hope you two have a good time, and I am looking forward to seeing you all again under less stressful circumstances.

O.Uraraka: ( ^v^ )

T.Iida has left the chat

Putting his phone away, a funny thought crossed Izuku’s mind that made his chuckle. Ochako looked over at him, tilting her head to the side, “What's so funny?”

“Nothing really. I just had a funny thought. If Tsu accepts Toga’s invite into our group, in the span of less than a week, I’ve made more friends than I have since I was born. I don’t know whether to be elated or really depressed. I mean, what does that say about me?”

“It says that you are a great person. A kind person. Someone that anyone in their right mind would want as a friend.” Ochako answered quickly, but gently, making sure to give Izuku the biggest smile she could. Her answer made the boy blush and look away bashfully.
“Thank you. I just wonder what I was doing wrong before?”

Ochako’s warm smile flipped into a cold frown, “You did nothing wrong. You were just surrounded by jerks and cowards that were too worried about sucking up to the biggest as... the biggest douche in the world. Those kinds of people are not worth your time or a passing thought.”

Despite how cold Ochako had become as she spoke, Izuku burst out laughing, “Wow! That’s pretty harsh of you.”

Ochako crossed her arms, “Am I wrong?”

“I guess you may have a point.”

“Of course I do. You need to listen to me more often. I’m always right.”

Izuku smirked before adding, “except when making bets apparently.”

That earned him a not-so-soft poke into his arm.

“OW! Hey, careful. That arm was pretty much paste yesterday.”

Ochako fixed him with a doubtful stare, “Did that actually hurt?”

“No, but it could ha-OW!”

Ochako made sure to aim for one of the pressure points in Izuku’s arm that she learned from Gunhead when she poked him again.

“Here we are, Uraraka.”
Izuku pointed towards a small shack that was sandwiched between two large modern shopping stores. The modern, glass and concrete buildings made the small place stand out as almost run down, but as the two got closer the fresh smell of broth and pork wafted over them. Izuku pulled back a cloth divider so Ochako could walk inside. The restaurant was simply one small room, with the cooking station in the middle surrounded by a bar and a few stools. At two corners on opposite sides was a small round table with two stall chairs built into the wall.

“Ah, welcome, welcome! Please come in.” The chef in the center smiled and waved them in. He was an older man, with mostly gray hair, and a weather face.

“Ah I recognize you, the boy that was always running around carrying something heavy.”

Izuku laughed, embarrassed, while Ochako giggled. The chef’s eyes looked over at her, then back at Izuku, “My. Looks like this time you’re with someone much nicer though. Such a lucky young man to have such a pretty girl on a date.”

Face now beat red, Izuku’s hands waved about as he was sent into a stuttering mess, “W-wait, that’s not! It’s not a--! She’s just my--! I mean!”

Ochako rolled her eyes while the chef and a few patrons laughed, “There, there, no need to be so embarrassed. There’s a couple of open chairs at the corner table. Have a seat and pick out something from the menu.”

“Thank you,” Ochako said while pulling Izuku over to the opened table.

Getting himself back under control, Izuku took his seat, and immediately noticed just how small the little corner booth was. The two seats were anchored right into the corner so when they both sat down, there was no way to avoid bumping into each other. Their elbows knocked, hips bumped, and legs brushed against each other before they were able to get comfortable. Even when they were finally seated, Izuku was very aware of just how close he was to Ochako. The slightest move from either of them and they were rubbing against each other. It was an extremely intimate little corner table, and Izuku was sure Ochako must be embarrassed. When he looked up to apologize for once again brushing against her, he was not greeted with a flustered or upset friend like he expected. Instead, like she had been earlier in the day, Ochako was all smiles and was practically glowing. She was not bothered at all. She almost looked like she was enjoying it.

“S-sorry, Uraraka. I’ll ask if they have any stool opening soon.”
“No!...I mean, no this is fine.”

“Oh, um, alright. I’m sorry people keep teasing you about this being a...you know…”

Ochako arched an eyebrow, “Date?”

Izuku made a small eep, and nodded.

“Deku, you know this isn’t a date, right?”

“Y-yes.”

“And I know it’s not a date, so don’t let it bother you.”

Izuku was shocked, though he knew he shouldn’t be, by Ochako’s maturity. She always knew what to do to help him, even in situations like this.

After a couple of seconds, a faint red spread across Ochako’s face as she broke eye contact and fidgeted with a couple of chopsticks, “Besides…”

_Huh?_

“It’s a little...mean to hear you deny it so much like that...ya know…”

_Huh? Wait? I? Huh?_

While Izuku tried to figure exactly what she meant by that, Ochako handed him a small menu while she hid behind hers.
After a little bit, Ochako glanced over her menu to see Izuku running a finger over a list of some of the pork ramen. He was hanging around some of the cheaper items she noticed.

“If you order the cheapest item on the menu, I’m going to kick you.”

Ochako was very satisfied when Izuku’s finger immediately darted up into the toppings list. It wasn’t long after that they were able to place their orders and start eating.

Izuku couldn’t help smile happily as he twirled a large bundle of noodles up in his spoon and happily slurped it up.

“Man, Deku, do you actually taste any of the food as you scarf it down?”

“You are in no position to say anything. You pretty much dove right into your bowl,” Izuku countered, pointing his chopsticks at her. Ochako responded by just rolling her eyes, and filling her mouth with a large twirl of noodles and egg.

“Careful, or my mom is going to have to clean your uniform again.”

“I just don’t remind me that I’m having to wear this on an off day.”

Izuku’s head tilted to the side as he looked at her, “Why? You look good in your uniform.”

There was a pause as both of them realized what was just said.

*Did...did I just say that OUT LOUD!?*

Izuku looked down at his bowl and began to seriously wonder if he could fit his whole head into it and drown himself. Ochako meanwhile was very grateful that the seat and table were so tight since she was pretty sure she had floated herself in a flustered panic.
“Th-thank you, Deku. That's very nice of you to say. Y-you...look good in your uniform too.”

Both sat in awkward silence for a while before Izuku, afraid the silence would drag on for the rest of the meal and ruin their time together, gathered up enough bravery to say, “You know, um. If you want, you could leave some spare clothes and uniform over at my place. Just in case you ever wanted, or needed to, sleep over again.”

“Oh?”

Izuku started getting nervous again, thinking perhaps he might have overstepped his bounds in some way. After all, sleepovers with someone of the opposite sex, even when they were your best friend, was a tricky situation, “I mean, there’s a good chance that once our heroics classes start getting more involved, we’ll be let out a lot later in the evening. You might not want to walk all the way back to your place, so you could take advantage of the fact I live closer...Of course you don’t have too if you don’t...want to…”

Izuku trailed off nervously, but before his doubts made him walk back his idea, Ochako smiled brightly, “That's a great idea, Deku. Sure, if your mom is okay with it, I’ll bring some stuff over.”

While she mostly agreed with his reasoning, there was a small part of her that couldn’t help but think how nice it would be to sleep in his bed again, though she quickly brushed that thought aside as best she could. There was no reason at all to let thoughts like that taint an otherwise kind and honest gesture of friendship.

Even if sleeping in his bed had been really nice.

After lunch-- which Ochako made sure she paid for, even shooting Izuku a death glare when it looked like his hand was inching towards his wallet-- the two made the short walk down to Dagobah Beach. Neither could hold back the smiles they had as they looked over the clean white sand and crisp blue waves. Much to Ochako’s relief, it looked like Izuku had been right: the city was taking good care of the beach now; it looked as clean as the day they had finished their training with All Might. With it being a school day for everyone else, there were not many people at the beach. The isolation from everything was calming. The sounds of the waves drowning out the hustle and bustle of the city behind them. It was almost otherworldly. Looking at it now as a nice park instead of the dirty hellscap it once was, Ochako could easily see why it was such a popular couples spot. Along the beach were also several cabana tents that were perfect for
watching the waves and maybe even having a little barbecue or picnic.

Or, when closed up, the perfect place for a little intimate privacy for a couple.

“Want to walk along the shore? Or maybe the pier?” Izuku asked.

“Um, the pier will be fine. I’d rather not get sand in my shoes.”

“It never bothered you before though when we were training, though. Plus, you could always take them off.”

Ochako groaned into her hand.

*I swear this boy needs to start noticing things.*

“Deku, I’m wearing tights. Want me to peel these off too?”

Izuku glanced down at her legs, and confirmed that she was indeed wearing her black tights, like she always had when she wore her old school uniform and her new one too. Unconsciously Izuku also reconfirmed that Ochako had very nice legs.

*Peel them off…*

A scene flashed in Izuku’s head of Ochako reaching up under her skirt and pulling the black sheer material all the way down. Exposing her bare legs and thighs...

Ochako yelped when Izuku suddenly slapped himself, hard, across the face, “Deku!”

“Right! Let’s go, Uraraka.” Izuku, now recovered, made his way down the path with Ochako staying right besides him. While a little confused over whatever *that* had just been, she found herself soon just enjoying the walk they were on.
Soon the two were at the far end of the pier, happily chatting away for a while until they were simply watching the wave roll in. Izuku glanced over at Ochako a few times before clearing his throat, “Um, Uraraka?”

“Yeah?”

“Did you still want to know about that phone call I got from my father?”

Ochako tensed up. She had honestly forgotten about that after spending such a fun day together with Izuku. Looking over at him, it was hard to deny that now that she was thinking about the call, she wanted to know what exactly was going on. Just not if it made Izuku uncomfortable, “Deku, you don’t have to.”

“It’s fine. I kinda always knew that this was something we were going to have to talk about. I probably shouldn’t have put it off for so long to begin with.”

Izuku leaned against the railing of the pier while Ochako leaned on her side so she could watch and listen to him.

“I suppose you can already guess my father and I...don’t have the best relationship.”

_That much is obvious._

Ochako thought sadly, but kept that to herself, “Yeah, you didn’t seem that happy when you got that phone call.”

“Yeah, I guess that comes from not ever seeing him. I can count the times we’ve spoken on one hand since he went back overseas.”

_Went back? So he’s been gone before?

“When was that?”
Since Ochako hadn’t seen him once since she had moved and started spending so much time at the Midoriya’s, she guessed it was just before the start of his last year of jr high. To go a year and not speak with your family except a couple of times was unbelievable to Ochako.

“It was just before I started going to Aldera.”

Ochako’s eyes bulged, “Wait!? Seriously?! That's over three years!”

“Yeah...Oh and I’m counting today’s call as one of those times I can count.”

“You...you’ve only spoken to your dad five-”

“Four.”

Ochako clamped her mouth shut. She could feel some blue collar, construction worker language threatening to escape.

“I’m pretty sure he’s called Mom a few more times besides that, but talking to me personally, it’s just the four times.”

“I guess…” Ochako paused, not sure what exactly she wanted to say. “I guess having a divorced mom and dad can be rough.”

Izuku sighed, “...They’re still married.”

Ochako took a second to respond to that as she tried to figure out how someone as kind and wonderful as Inko could still be married to someone that sounded so cold and just the opposite of everything she was used to seeing when she was with her.

_I need to be very tactful with how I ask this…_

“WHY!??”
...You know what, that’s about as tactful as I can get, so just going to roll with it.

Izuku just chuckled at Ochako’s outburst, “I don’t know all the details, but I think I have a pretty good idea after putting everything together over the years. My father...it’s very important to him how people see him. How the people who work for him and the people he works for, see him. Being seen as this hard-working man, supporting his wife and son makes him look good. A divorce would look bad. Would tarnish his good name.”

“He cares that much about it?”

“His image is really important to him. He even took my Mom’s last name because of that. His old name had too much baggage or something. I only heard a little bit of that argument.”

“But Deku, the way you talk about him, I can’t see your mom staying with someone like that.”

“I think...she’s put up with it for my sake. He does support us financially at least, so she’s been able to be there for me.”

Izuku paused, before adding with a shrug, “Plus, he’s been gone for so long too. Being in another country gives them the space they need I guess.”

“Three years is a long time I guess.” Ochako looked over at Izuku sadly. She had no idea things had been like this for him…

“Oh he’s been gone way longer than that. He left to start working abroad a little after I got my Quirk.”

Ochako opened and closed her mouth a couple of times before she found her voice, “How...how old were you?”

A part of her hoped that Izuku had been a late bloomer. That he hadn’t been toddler, like she and most of the population were when they got their Quirks.
“I was four.”

*What kind of scumbag piece of-

“You know, for the longest time, I blamed myself for my father leaving.”

Ochako’s thoughts ground to a halt when Izuku said that.

“When he heard my Quirk was a stronger mutation of my mom’s he looked so excited. I’d never seen him look so happy. He insisted that we go out to celebrate. The whole time he kept talking about how wonderful it was. How proud of me he was. A mutation meant I was going to be so strong. He tried to get me to use my Quirk while he took a video, wanted to show his boss, I think. Or some coworkers.”

*Want to show his boss? The hell, was he going to try and use Izuku to impress his boss for a raise or something?*

“After that, father spent a little more time at home, so he could help me practice my Quirk.”

Ochako raised an eyebrow at that, “Your da…” Ochako stopped herself from saying ‘dad’. This man she was hearing about did not deserve to be called dad by anyone, “Your father wanted to do that? He didn’t want you to go to a Quirk Counselor at your school?”

*That’s so strange. Everyone see’s Quirk Counselors when they are growing up.*

Izuku shook his head, “He didn’t trust them.” He held up his hands and made little quotes with his fingers, “‘I don’t want those peons messing up my sons Meta Ability with their limited viewpoint.’”

“What?”

That whole quote left Ochako confused. Nothing about it made sense. The counselors helped kids learn how to control their Quirks so they didn’t accidently hurt someone. Also that term Izuku had said left her scratching her head, “Meta what?”
“That’s what my father would say whenever he was talking about Quirks. It’s a really old phrase that’s not used by anyone except in this old book he always carried with him. I always thought it was weird, but mom told me not to think about it. It was an old way of thinking that didn’t work in our world anymore.”

Leaning back onto the railing, Izuku continued, “So for the next couple of weeks Father would try and get me to lift bigger and heavier things. He kept pushing to see what I could do. At first it was fun honestly. Spending time with him, it felt nice, but after a while things...changed. I wasn’t getting better, I actually might have been getting worse looking back. This was about when Kacchan really started to lean on me and then the pressure from my father to do more, getting it from both ends like I was was not...fun. It’s probably what laid the groundwork for my Quirk being so weak for the next few years. When it got obvious that I wasn’t making the improvements he wanted, he stopped working with me and told my mom that counselors could have me. There wasn’t anything special for them to screw up.”

Izuku took a breath, turning so he was now looking out over the ocean again, “The next few days were so...bad. The way he looked at me, I could tell he was ashamed of me. Then one day, after school, Kacchan’s mom was dropping me off at home as my mom and father were in a huge argument. My father had taken an offer from his boss to work overseas, and he was leaving that day. I didn’t hear everything because Kacchan actually pulled me away to go to the playground, saying we should just let the grownup have their stupid fight, but I caught some of it. Father said he had more important things to do now. For a while I wondered, if I had been a better son, had a better Quirk, would he have stayed? Would we have been happy together?”

“Deku…”

“It took a while but soon I realized that my Father was not a good person. I still thought I was worthless of course, but I knew that wasn’t why he was gone.”

A bitter smile formed on Izuku’s lips, “You know, a few days after we got our acceptance letters, I overheard my mom talking on the phone. She was doing some paperwork, finances I think for making sure everything I would need for U.A. would get paid for. She had the phone on speaker. She was talking to my father. He sounded like he wasn’t happy at the idea of the increased spending and wanted to know why she needed more money. When mom said it was for high school, he blew it off and almost seemed like he didn’t believe I could get into a school that was going to cost so much in supplies. Then she dropped the bomb that I was in U.A.”

“How’d he take that?” Ochako asked.
Izuku huffed, “He assumed I was in General Studies before Mom corrected him, and said it was Heroics. He was quiet for such a long time; I thought maybe the line had been disconnected. Finally he just asked how. Just the one word. How? After Mom mentioned the training, he said he’d make sure the money he wired over would be what she asked for...He also said that U.A. is a very prestigious school and that many people around the world are always watching it, especially the students in the heroes course. So they would also be watching me. He wanted Mom to make sure I knew not to do anything that would reflect badly on him.”

The more Izuku talked, the less sad Ochako became over the fact that Izuku didn’t have a great relationship with his father, and more enraged at just how badly this man treated his family. Her last sliver of hope was that the phone call from this morning was something fatherly. He must have heard about the attack, and was calling to make sure Izuku was alright.

“What about the phone call today? He must have been worried about you after the attack, right?”

The shockingly bitter and sad laugh that came from Izuku shattered that last hope, “That call was to make sure my injuries weren’t because I had interfered with the heroes rescue. The last thing he said before asking about mom was to make sure I knew that if I ever did something at U.A. that reflected poorly on him, he would pull me out and put me somewhere where I don’t embarrass him any further.”

Oh my god. Oh my fucking god!

Ochako leaned against the railing, fingers pressing into the smooth painted wood so tight her fingernails were digging in, and looked out over the crashing blue waves as she tried to absorb everything Izuku had just told her. Absorb it and try to deal with the fact that in less than twenty four hours her list of people she actually hated had not only tripled in size, but that Katsuki was not on the top of that list.

She also now realized she had an actual list of people she hated, besides just the blond haired, loudmouth douche that would look so much nicer in the lens of her telescope as he floated up up and away.

That wasn’t a bad sign, right?

She was sure it was healthy.
For her-- not the people on said list when she got her hands on them.

“Deku, I had no idea things were so bad. You told me how bad things got with Bakugou and school, but to know you were dealing with abuse at home as well…”

“It’s not really abuse. He just doesn’t really care about me. If it wasn’t for Mom having to deal with him, I probably wouldn’t care one way or the other.”

Ochako was off the railing faster than Izuku could blink, wrapping him in such a tight hug he wasn’t sure if she was trying to comfort him, or squeeze the life out of him.

“Deku, neglect is abuse. You don’t deserve this. You mom doesn’t deserve this.”

“I told you, I’ve moved on. I don’t care.”

Ochako couldn’t see his face, but she could feel his tears on her cheek and the hitch to his breathing against her chest, “Then why did you look so sad today?”

Izuku didn’t have an answer for her. At least one that wouldn’t sound like he was lying through his teeth.

“So, was there anything you wanted to do? We are pretty close to a few shops if you wanted to go browsing,” Izuku asked, his mood now much better after confiding with Ochako. She hadn’t let him go until she was sure he had stopped crying, and even then, had kept very close until his smile and cheerful demeanor had come back fully.

“Ummm, nah. I’m good for things right now. Plus it’s too late for spring sales and too early for summer sales.”

The two were now walking back in the city, aimlessly walking around. Ochako tapped her chin as she thought of something else they could do before heading back to his place for dinner, “Oh, what
about we find an arcade? That’ll be fun.”

“Oh yeah. Let’s do that,” Izuku agreed happily. “I know a place. Follow me.”

Ochako glanced over at Izuku as he led the way. She was so glad that his mood had improved. Talking about his father had clearly not been enjoyable for him, and she wanted their time out to be fun for the both of them. Still as upsetting as the story she heard had been for both of them, she was touched he was willing to share it with her. That he trusted her with it. She wished she had noticed it before, so she could have done something for him. Despite wearing his emotions on his sleeve, the boy was capable of hiding a secret when he really wanted to. Especially if he thought it would upset someone. Probably why he had gotten so good at hiding All Might’s secret from his own mother. He had said he didn’t want to have that conversation any time soon.

_Trust huh…_

Ochako had convinced herself that it was in her and Izuku’s best interest that she _not_ tell him how she felt. They would be a distraction. An unwanted complication that would get in the way of their dream. There was also the chance that it could impact their friendship too. However, a little voice in the back of her head had started to scream at her that she was wrong. Even after he had done something so horrible and stupid by running off to save All Might, she had said that that wasn’t enough to get rid of her. Their friendship was too strong to be hurt by something like that.

She _knew_ he felt the same way about it. So maybe, if it could weather that, it could weather this. After all, wouldn’t holding these secret feelings from Izuku do more harm than good? All she did know is that she did trust Izuku, and she trusted that their friendship could weather anything.

_So maybe I should tell him? I mean...what if he feels the same way? Could he feel the same way?_

While Ochako was lost in her thoughts, Izuku was none the wiser to her internal struggle as he led the way. Today had been a really good day, which he knew he was lucky to have gotten to live to see. True, he hadn’t planned on talking about his father with Ochako today, but after unloading on her, he couldn’t help but feel like a little of the burden had been lifted from his shoulders. Now with that cleared up, Izuku was ready for anything the world threw at him.

“Hey...Deku?”

The nervousness in Ochako’s voice immediately grabbed Izuku’s attention, making him turn
around to look at her. She looked surprisingly pensive. That soft pink blush he had seen her have throughout the day was back but was much, much, much darker now. Looking into her eyes, Izuku saw a swirl of emotions pass over until she seemed to steel herself, “Deku there’s something I...I want to tell you.”

“Of course Ura-!”

Izuku was still walking while giving Ochako his undivided attention So he didn’t see the small child come running out from the dark alley to his side, and was completely unprepared when she collided into him, sending both tumbling onto the ground.

“AH! Deku!”

While Ochako rushed to Izuku’s side, Izuku shook his head to try and regain his bearings.

“...Please…”

Izuku could feel whoever had run into him was trembling.

“...Please…”

Glancing down Izuku saw a small girl with long knotted and tangled white hair, and a small horn sticking out of her brow looking up at him. She was dressed in rags and her arms and legs were wrapped up in dirty bandages. Looking up at him, the girl’s red eyes were filled with fear and terror. Her breathing was rapid and shallow as she tried to catch her breath.

“...Please...help...me...Don’t...don’t let...the bad man...take me away...”

After peeking through the door one last time, and confirming that her little brother was indeed sound asleep, Eri reached up and flicked off the lights to his room and closed the door. Sighing, Eri made her way back into the living room and fell onto the sofa. She hadn’t expected to be telling her brother that story for so long. At most, she had expected to finish just after getting to All Might, but her brother had been able to stay awake up till the USJ and just after. She ended up having to
get creative a few times since some details of her parent’s story were way too mature for him.

Eri started to reach for the TV remote when her phone started to buzz. Digging into her pockets, she checked the screen before answering.

Oh, well speaking of too mature.

“Hi, Fairy Godmother.”

Eri stifled a giggle at the annoyed groan at the other end of the line.

“Yes, I’m still going to call you that…. No I’m sure your reputation as the next R Rated Heroine will be just fine.”

Eri rolled her eyes as the person on the other end asked a question.

“No, no he’s asleep now. I’m responsible enough to be able to put my baby brother to bed.”

Eri stiffened a little, “On time? Well, um. What’s important is that he is in bed, and eventually he even fell asleep…Huh? Oh I just told him a bedtime story until he fell asleep…. I told him a story about Mom and Dad. No not that one…No not that one either, though did you see that documentary that they did about the Nabu Island incident? The picture they used of Shimano and his sister was so bad; no wonder Kouta gave him such a hard time….I know, there was so much wrong!…Dad didn’t even have that Quirk yet! Though I think that this time their bad info actually came from Mom and Dad. How else are they going to explain how Mom was suddenly able to…Huh? What story did I tell him?…Oh how Mom and Dad met and became heroes.”

Eri snickered, “Yes I mentioned you, though I did tone you down….I said ‘very friendly.’”

The laugh from the other end of the line could easily be heard in the quiet living room.

“How far did I get? To just after the USJ, when I ran into Dad…Yeah…Yeah I’m okay….Really, I’m fine. I didn’t even get into any of my past shit; he was already asleep. Besides, that’s all ancient history for me.”
Eri scowled, “It wasn’t the bird mask that freaked me out, it was you jumping out from behind the curtain. Who does that, you’re a grown woman!?...I don’t care if it was Halloween; act your age!...”

“...Yeah, yeah probably for the best he fell asleep there. Any further and I was going to have to really think hard on how to make things more kid friendly. I mean after their first sports festival things get… Yeah, rough.”

Eri paused for a bit, her mind thinking back to the events of that first year at U.A. for her Mom and Dad. Especially her Dad.

“Hey, how is everyone anyway? The news said they cleared out the hideout and such...Everyone’s fine? That’s good. Hey, Aunt Himi, thanks for always looking out for Mom and Dad....No, no, I’m fine really. I guess maybe talking about the past brought up a few bad memories is all...”

Eri sat up straight, face beet red, “No, I do not need Kouta to come over to make me feel better! That’s not funny!...”

Eri sighed, but had a smile on her face when she did, “You are a horrible fairy godmother...Ha ha ha, yeah yeah, love you too auntie. Tell Mom and Dad I love them too....And tell Mom I did get Toshi to bed. I know she’s the one that got you to call...My Mom isn’t as slick as she thinks she is...Bye bye.”

Hanging up her phone, Eri slumped back into the sofa, but didn’t immediately reach for the remote for the tv. Her mind was still wandering to the past because of her bedtime story. She was very grateful that her little brother had fallen asleep when he had. She honestly wasn’t sure how she would have been able to make the events that were coming up in the story, as important as they were in forging her Dad, Mom, even her aunt into the great heroes they were today, any less traumatic and horrific.

Plus then there was all the hand holding, kissing and stuff that happened as well, which might have been even more horrible for the poor little boy to hear.

Chapter End Notes
Hi everybody! It's May now...holy crap its May now. This story is just over a year old and we are just now finishing the USJ arc. It was fun to write a fluffy chapter. I don't have the most experience with hidden feelings and pinning so I'm probably going to learn as I write, so please bear with me :)

So yeah, guess who's here now and way earlier than normal too. Say hi to Eri everyone one! And we got a little Hisashi in our fic too. Just a little FYI, I'm taking a lot of ques from Evangelion's Shinji and Gendo while I was imagining their father-son dynamic. So yeah, possibly the worst father-son relationship is what I'm going off of. That's going to be so much fun. Also like Gendo, Hisashi took his wife's last name. The term for this in Japan is called mukoyōshi.

Thank you, everyone who have been following and reading my little story. I hope you all have enjoyed it. Up next I'll probably have either 1 or 2 chapters dealing with the time before school starts, still have to do that nice little hang out Tenya invited the now six members of the Dekusquad to. Yep Tsu is our sixth ranger, she's even green too so thats a plus. Then it's Sports Festival time. Debating how much of the two week prior to the actual sports festival I'm going to do. Guess You'll know a little after I do ;)

Once again, a huge thanks to my beta reader Tmalasia!

If you liked the chapter or have any critiques please feel free to leave a comment or review :D
Sometimes fate doesn't sneak up on you, it runs into you like a battering ram. Sometimes a single act of kindness can set off a chain reaction that no one knows how it will end.

After saying his goodbyes, All Might left the Midoriya apartment with a smile on his face. It had been some time since he had gotten to see Inko, and he had truly enjoyed the time they spent together talking over lunch. At first it had been about Izuku, and how he was recovering. Then, Ochako was briefly brought up. While Inko was coy when talking about her, not wanting to gossip too much over something so private, All Might guessed that something had happened last night that had brought a change in how the young woman saw her relationship with Izuku. While he was happy that the two’s bond was getting stronger, he did worry some. Becoming a top hero more often than not meant that personal relationships had to be sacrificed. His master, Nana Shimura, had been forced to sacrifice being a mother in order to continue her role as a hero and torch bearer for One for All. He himself had also followed in those footsteps, never settling down or having any kind of relationship out of a feeling of responsibility as the symbol of peace, and perhaps a small bit of fear that anyone he got too close to would be put in harm's way.

Balancing a personal life and a heroic one was tricky by itself. Adding the legacy of One for All to it? That made it all but impossible. At least in All Might’s view. He didn’t view it as right or wrong; it was just the way things were for him. Though, perhaps it wouldn’t have to be that way for Izuku. Maybe he and Ochako could find a way to make it work. If indeed they did end up together. Though, by the sound of what Inko had said, it might not be as smooth sailing as he might have wanted. Inko had let it slip that Himiko was also interested in the boy. That brought up a whole host of concerns. Inko was not aware of the girl’s past, but All Might was. And her past made the idea that she was interested in Izuku very concerning for the pro hero.

I’ll need to talk with Midnight about this. She’s said that Young Toga has made progress since she first came to U.A...and I suppose she has in some ways. She did help protect Young Midoriya and Young Uraraka during the attack. Still, considering her past action with those she had become infatuated with...that poor boy from jr. high and her time with Stain, I need to make sure she isn’t a threat.

He had agreed with Nezu that bringing the girl into the school was her best chance at some kind of recovery. But if he had known her reasoning for turning herself in at the start, he might have objected. Or at least asked for more restrictions to be put on her. All Might frowned at that. He didn’t like viewing the young woman with such scrutiny and distrust, and he felt that she could
become a hero herself, albeit a harsher one. But as with everything, One for All complicated everything. Izuku was going to one day inherit this power, and All Might needed to be sure that he would have a safe place to train and learn to master it. Knowing that Himiko was going to be around Midoriya constantly put All Might on edge.

Still even with my concerns, I mustn’t do anything that interferes with Young Toga’s rehabilitation. At the very least, being around Young Midoriya and his new friends seems to be helping her...To think the first person that he knowingly saved with his quirk was her. Fate is so strange.

A soft beep from his phone interrupted All Might from thinking on the subject any further. Pulling his phone out, he raised an eyebrow at the name that popped up.

Young Midoriya?

Tapping on the message, All Might wasn’t sure what he was expecting to read.

I.Midoriya: Help

Underneath the message was a GPS map location.

All Might’s eyes went wide as a feeling of dread filled him. Could one of the villains from yesterday's attack have gone after Izuku? He remembered Tomura’s words, that he should have killed Izuku when they had run into each other in the teachers office. Filled with panic and worry, All Might buffed himself up and launched into the air. He was so preoccupied with reaching Izuku and Ochako, he didn’t hear his phone beep again as another message came through.

I.Midoriya: We ran into a little girl. She was worried someone was after her before she fell unconscious. Should we take her to a police station first or a hospital?

I.Midoriya: Oh Uraraka says I should mention that we are fine.

I.Midoriya: Says my first text might make you panic.
“This is pretty bad, isn’t it?”

A tall bald man grumbled to himself as he and his two comrades walked down the busy street. The trio were given a wide berth by everyone as they walked by. Their masked faces alone were enough to make the crowd lery of them. Looking around constantly, their eyes scanned through the people around them. A shorter man with blond hair nodded, fingers scratching at the edge of his plague mask nervously, “If we don’t find that kid soon, Chisaki might actually kill us. Hey, Tabe, you see anything?”

The final member of the trio, with a large burlap sack tied over his head, sighed a negative, “Nope. Haven’t seen hair or horn of the girl. If we’re going to die, I want to stop and get something to eat first. I’m hungry, hungry, hungry!”

Hojo, even with half his face hidden behind his white surgical mask, was obviously not bothered by the threat of death, “If that’s what happens, that’s what happens. No need to worry about it until it happens. Hey Setsuno, how’d the kid even escape?”

The blond haired man, Setsuno shrugged, “Hell if I know. Maybe someone left a door open.”

“Someone’s dying over this, that’s for sure.”

Making it to a cross light the two looked down both ways of the street, “Which way you wanna go?” Setsuno asked.

Before Hojo could make up his mind, a small group of people rushed by them, and headed down the street to the right.

“Did you hear, All Might was spotted near by!”

“Yeah, he just landed a couple blocks away!”

“If we hurry, we might be able to get an autograph!”
“Come on! Let's hurry!”

As the group hurried on, the three men glanced at one another, “All Might, huh?”

“We keep looking for the girl,” Setsuno then pointed to the left, “but that way.”

Nodding in agreement, the three headed in the opposite direction, away from where the number one hero had been spotted.

“I have to admit, I was hoping we would be seeing each other again for at least a little while longer.” Detective Tsukauchi said as he walked into his office where All Might, Izuku and Ochako all sat.

All Might chuckled softly, “It does seem like any chance we get to talk recently is always because of some unfortunate event.”

Tsukauchi nodded, before he closed the door to his office, “There. We can talk privately now if you want. I imagine holding that form so soon after your big fight isn’t easy.”

Izuku and Ochako shared a surprised look while All Might waved them off, “It's alright you two. Tsukauchi knows about me, and knows I’ve been training you two. Relax. And I’ll stay like this for now. No reason to take any chances. Plus, we shouldn’t be staying for much longer. You already got your statements from these two, right?”

“That’s right. You all will be free to go just as soon as the report is filed.”

“Um, Detective Tsukauchi, what about the girl?” Izuku asked while Ochako nodded, “Has she woken up yet? Is she alright?”

“She’s still asleep. The doctors are already getting her ready to be taken to a hospital so they can run some tests, but they said that she was suffering from exhaustion. Once she’s had a chance to rest, we’ll be able to figure out how to help her... And know the extent of any wounds she may have.”
“She was so scared that someone was after her...and she had on all those bandages...Who would do something like that?” Izuku’s question hung in the hug for a few seconds. Neither All Might or Detective Tsukauchi wanted to answer, even though they were fully aware of the kind of person that could hurt a small child like her.

Ochako reached over and put a comforting hand on Izuku’s shoulder, “It's going to be alright now, Deku. The police and doctors will make sure she’s looked after.”

“I promise we’ll make sure she gets the best care, and we’ll also begin an investigation into what happened to her.”

Izuku and Ochako were both grateful for that.

“I also want to commend how responsible the two of you were. You both kept a level head and were able to call a hero for help.”

Ochako covered her mouth as she coughed to hide a laugh while Izuku sank into his seat a little when All Might’s gaze turned towards him.

“Yes, though perhaps Young Midoriya needs to learn to explain a situation a bit more clearly the next time he sends out a text asking for help.”

With the last of the paperwork filed, the three were free to go. Walking outside the office and into the waiting area, Izuku was about to thank All Might for getting to them as quickly as he had, but was cut off by a sudden cry.

“Izuku! There you are!”

“Wait? Mom?”

Inko, who had been standing next to the receptionist, quickly made her way over to the three.
“Mom, what are you doing here? I told you everything was fine over the phone.”

Inko took out a hankie and dabbed at her eyes, “I know, I was just worried about you. I just wanted to be sure you were alright.”

“All Might was with us, Mom. Of course we were alright.”

Inko turned and looked up at All Might who smiled brightly down at the woman, doing his best not to give any hint that they had actually just had lunch together, not that long ago, “You were lucky that he called to check on how you were recovering Izuku when he did. I suppose this does give me a chance to thank you personally for saving my son and Ochako yesterday.”

“Think nothing of it. As a hero and a teacher, it was my duty and privilege. I only regret I was not able to stop the attack from happening in the first place.”

“Come on Mom. We should be getting back home now.”

Inko nodded, “Yes I suppose we should. It’s almost time for dinner.”

“Then this is where we must part ways. Young Midoriya, Young Uraraka. I will see you in class.”

“Of course.”

“Goodbye All Might, and thank you.”

Izuku and Ochako waved goodbye as All Might started to walk off. Inko however looked at him a little harder and called out, “Excuse me, All Might. May I ask you something before you go?”

“Er...Of course.”
“You know a Toshinori Yagi, correct? The man who helped my son and Ochako get ready for U.A. He works for your agency.”

“All Might trailed off while Izuku and Ochako went stiff. All three were watching Inko very closely now. Inko however didn’t notice and continued on, “I’m sorry, it’s just… you’re wearing the same suit is all.”

Izuku nearly swallowed his tongue while All Might put a hand behind his head and laughed, “Is that so? That’s quite funny. Perhaps the man decided to copy my sense of fashion. He’s a good one, that Toshinori. Ha ha haaa…”

While Izuku tried not to freak out, and All Might pulled out all the stops to show his best poker face, Ochako felt a question nagging her, “Wait, how do you know they have the same suit?”

“Oh well, Toshinori came over to the apartment earlier to check on you two. Since you two were out on your date,” Izuku started to sputter out an objection, but stopped when he remembered his conversation with Ochako, “and he was wearing that exact same suit. Though, his was way too big for him. I swear the man needs to find a better tailor.”

“Mr. Yagi came over?”

“Yes. We even had a little lunch and we got to catch up. It was nice.”

“Oh, that sounds like fun, Mom.”

While Izuku didn’t think much on the subject, Ochako slowly turned to look over at All Might who, feeling her eyes on him, did everything in his power not to meet her gaze.

_Young Uraraka, please! It was totally innocent! Don’t look at me like that! I didn’t do anything wrong! I didn’t do anything at all!_

“Well! I must be going now. You three do take care.”
Turning on his heel, All Might was gone in a flash. Inko blinked in surprise, “Oh my. He certainly left in a hurry.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah... he does that during class too.”

“It’s a shame. I was thinking of inviting him to have dinner with us to thank him. Oh well.”

Shrugging, Inko looked back at the two, “Is there anything else you two have to do here?”

Izuku and Ochako glanced over at Detective Tsukauchi who shook his head, “Everything is taken care of. The girl is in good hands now, so neither of you need to worry. I will give you a call if there’s anything you need to know. Don’t worry.”

With that squared away, the three left the police station and made their way back to the Midoriya apartment. While Izuku filled his mother in on what exactly happened, Ochako fell back a few steps as she took the time to think back over what she had almost done just a little while ago.

_I can’t believe I was about to tell Deku how I felt. What is the matter with me?_

The more she thought about it, the more she was strangely thankful for the incident with the little girl. Instantly, it had been like someone had doused her in ice water, snapping her out of her little fantasy, and cooling her off. She had fun today. She had really enjoyed spending some private time with Izuku after everything that had happened. Maybe she had let herself get a little carried away, pretending their lunch and time together was more than it really was, but that wasn’t necessarily a bad thing. It had been the perfect distraction. But that was the key. It was a distraction. Today, it had been a distraction from something horrible, but if she let these feelings keep going-- if she let herself focus too much on them, or worse, even dragged Izuku into them, then that would ultimately make a distraction from their studies and work to become heroes. And she wasn’t going to do that to herself, or Izuku.

*_I love Deku. I do. But right now, there’s no time for this. It’s like I was saying last night. We have too much work ahead of us to let my feelings get in the way. We need to focus on what’s important._*

Nodding to herself, Ochako let her gaze fall on Izuku.
I owe it to both of us to keep this under control. Focus on the here and now, then worry about...other things later.

“Are you sure this is the right address, kero?”

Tsuyu asked, looking over Hitoshi’s shoulder as the boy brought out his phone and swiped to the map screen again, “Yep this is the right address and building name.”

Himiko whistled as she craned her head back to gaze up at the tall luxury apartment building, “and what floor are we going up to again?”

“51.”

Ochako started counting the windows up the side of the building, but gave up about halfway up, “Iida lives in the penthouses... I should have really pushed for that cash bribe when we were voting for class rep.”

Izuku patted Ochako’s shoulder in mock sympathy which she swatted away with a laugh.

“Come on, guys; I’d hate to see what Iida would be like if we were late,” Izuku said as he led everyone inside the building.

Himiko snickered before straightening herself up and began mimicking Tenya’s habit of chopping his arms, “Shame on all of you! As not only students of the most prodigious school in the country but as upcoming heroes as well, we must all strive to ensure we are punctual.”

That got a chuckle out of the group.

Walking up to the front desk, the man sitting looked over the group, “Are you expected?”

“Oh, um, yes. The Iida residence is expecting us.”
The man nodded and pulled out a clipboard and ran his finger down a list of names before stopping at near the bottom of the page, “Ah yes, here you are: party of five. Please take the elevator to the left, I’ll buzz you in.”

Stepping into the elevator and pressing the button for the floor, the group rode up in silence for a bit until Tsuyu asked, “So did Iida say what we’d be doing when we hung out today?”

Hitoshi scratched his head as he thought about that, “Um, now that you mention it, he didn’t.”

“He’ll probably want to do homework or something to catch on the time we missed with the break,” Izuku joked. However a feeling of dread came over the group as they all thought about it—they could all see Tenya pulling something like that.

“I swear, if he tries to make me learn on the weekend, I might actually kill him. I had to agree to so much bullshit to get let out today,” Himiko said while crossing her arms.

Ochako nodded. “Sounds fair.”

Tsuyu glanced at Himiko. “What’d they make you agree to?”

Himiko blinked, “Oh did I say that last bit out loud?”

“Yep.”

“You did.”

“At least I just mutter.”

Scratching her neck Himiko groaned a little before answering, “I have to join a couple of teachers for a meeting. Which I’m not looking forward to.”
“Are you in trouble again?” Izuku asked.

“No, no nothing like...wait...what do you mean *again*?”

Himiko glared at Izuku who instantly looked away, whistling and putting Ochako between himself and the angry, fanged blond.

The elevator dinged, and the group walked into the hallway. Reaching the door, Izuku reached up and rang the bell. Almost instantly, Tenya swung the door open and greeted them, “Everyone! It is good to see you all in good health. You’re also right now time. As expected of my fellow classmates and future heroes. You know the value of being punctual.”

Himiko snorted as she tried not to laugh too loudly as everyone came inside, thanking Tenya for his hospitality. Leading everyone inside, they were all blown away with how nice the apartment was. Roomy enough to be a house, the large windows in the living room gave a great view of the city from up above.

“Mother and father are out for the day, but my older brother will be here in case any of you need anything. He helped me set out a wide assortment of snacks and drinks for us to enjoy.”

While Ochako noticed that Izuku perked up slightly hearing Tenya mention his brother, which she found a little weird. Hitoshi decided to be the one to bite the bullet and asked, “So what’s your plan for us today?”

“Ah! I’m glad you asked.” Tenya motioned to a table that had books stacked on it, “Since I suspected that none of you were using your time off to study, I figured that I would take the opportunity to help you all prepare for next week. I’m sure we will have to cram for the days we missed.”

Silence greeted him for several seconds before Himiko groaned. *Loudly.*

“Welp this is my villain origin story, I guess. Hitoshi, would you please open the balcony door so I can throw Tenya out of the building.”

“Yep.”
“Deku and I can each get a leg.”

“I’ll get one of his arms, kero.”

When everyone started to advance on him, Tenya waved his arms around frantically, “Wait! Wait it was a joke! Brother, help! Your joke is going to get me killed!”

A boisterous laugh got everyone’s attention as a man walked into the room, clearly amused by what he was seeing. “Please don’t kill my little brother. It’d be a pain to have to explain everything to the authorities.”

Putting some distance between his friends, Tenya introduced the man, “Everyone this is my older brother Iida Tensei.”

While everyone took the time to greet Tenya’s brother, Izuku, after hearing the man’s name, started making little squeaking noises and started to bounce excitedly. Tsuyu looked at him curiously. “Do you need to use the restroom or something?”

“It’s really Ingenium!”

In a flash, Izuku had his notebook out and opened with a pen in hand, “Can I have an autograph, please!”

Tensei laughed as he took the pen and began to write out his name, “I have a fan, it seems.”

Tenya’s looked at Izuku in shock, “Wait? Midoriya, did you know about Tensei being my brother and a hero already?”

Izuku blinked, “I mean...yeah? It was pretty obvious...Right guys?”

When Izuku looked back to see everyone else was in no hurry to answer that question.
“Guys? Come one, Ingenium boasts one of the premier hero agencies in the country, Team Idaten. It has dozens of sidekicks and whole teams of patrollers, navigators, and all other kinds of support staff. Not only that, but the Ingenium name has been around since the very start of Pro Heroes. The Iida name spans generations. Did no one put it together?”

“Err…”

Izuku shook his head, and looked at his friends with pity, “You guys... None of you even knew about Todoroki either… This is really sad.”

While everyone tried to come to terms with the idea that Izuku was so disappointed in them, and thinking of ways to bring him down a peg, Tenya coughed into his hand, “To be fair, I was trying to not bring attention to the fact…”

“...That was you trying ?”

The awkward silence hung in the air for a while before the group got seated and finally started to hang out. Tenya pointed to his brothers Game Station that they were able to use. After going through a list of games, they decided on a karting game: All Might Grand Smash Prix. Everything started out fine enough, with everyone picking little chibi Heroes and their karts. Izuku, surprising no one, picked All Might. Ochako picked Hawks, Tenya picked his brother. Hitoshi selected Best Jeanist, Tsuyu chose Gang Orca, and Himiko picked Endeavor.

Then, the racing began, and Hitoshi realized that he was sitting in the worst possible spot: between Ochako and Himiko.

The moment items were allowed, the two immediately started going after each other.

“Stop hitting me with those stupid feathers!”

“You threw a fireball at me!”

“I missed!”
“You still threw it!”

Hitoshi, seeing they were so distracted with each other, set up a trap that caught both of the girls’ karts in a net, holding them so he could pass and leaving them tied for last place. Suddenly two sets of hate-filled eyes were on him. Hitoshi moved to a new seat that was outside of the girls range and wisely never attacked either of them in the race again.

Tenya was also starting to get upset with Izuku. His kart’s specialty was its boosting, but Izuku was constantly countering that by having the chibi All Might smash huge pot holes into the track, which Tenya kept hitting.

“You are being most unsporting Midoriya! Spamming like this.”

“Just stop hitting the pot holes. It’s easy.”

While Tenya was stalled on the track, Tsuyu raced up behind him and blasted him off the track, much to his horror.

“Out of my way.”

“Asui! I wasn’t even moving!”

“Get good, kero.”

After several more races that had everyone ready to throw down, they decided to try and play something that wouldn’t have them at each other’s throats. Tenya recommended a board game, since those were calming. After searching for a little bit, he came back holding a box for everyone to see.

Monopoly.
This did not go quietly as Tenya had planned. While he played the game seriously, following each rule to the letter, everyone else started cheating right off the bat.

Himiko frowned as she looked at all the properties Izuku had been able to snatch up during the game. She needed some spaces, or she was going to be the first to be kicked out of the game. Glancing over at Izuku, she gave him a sultry smile and slid over. Leaning into his side, she brought her lips right next to his ear, and walked her hand up his arm until she was resting on his shoulder.

“I-z-u-k-u,” Himiko whispered, making sure each syllable ended with a light blow into his ear. Izuku, who had already stiffened up at Himiko’s touch, was now red and steaming as she started talking.

“I’m not doing so hot in this game. I don’t have a lot of money left. Do you think you could give me some of your spaces? I’d be,” Himiko’s hand started to travel down Izuku’s shoulder and over his chest where she could feel how fast his heart was racing, “so very, very, grateful. I’d give you anything that you wanted in return.”

“I...I...I…”

“I’LL PAY TRIPLE!” Ochako screamed in a panic as she thrust a hand full cash right into Izuku’s face.

“Eh? EH!? Uraraka wait thats-!”

Himiko was about to rip into Ochako for getting in the way, but stopped when she noticed that not only was there a lot of money in her hand, but she also had a lot of money stacked up besides her.

Way too much money in fact.

Sitting up, Himiko pointed right at the large pile, “Hey hold a second. What’s that!?"

Ochako blinked, “What? It’s my money.”
“Bullshit. There’s no way you have that much.”

“Um…” Ochako nervously looked around as everyone else now had their eyes on her, “I’ve been saving…”

“Saving? You landed on the boardwalk space every other dice roll at this point! You should be more broke than me!”

“N-no! My apartments have been-”

“Um is it just me, or is the bank cash really low?” Tsuyu asked.

Now everyone looked over at where the cards, spare pieces and cash were, and sure enough there was a lot less money than there had been a few turns ago. Ochako, who was sitting right next to the stash, gulped.

“You...you robbed the bank!?"

“I mean...maybe a little?”

Ochako was quickly forced to declare bankruptcy and was the first to lose the game. Unfortunately, from there everyone else's cheating ways were exposed. Hitoshi on more than one occasion was caught trying to brainwash people into selling their properties for prices that were way too low. Tsuyu tried to snatch a few extra properties with her tongue when no one was looking. Unfortunately for her, Himiko caught on and grabbed her tongue during one of her attempts. Even Izuku was not above trying to cheat. During a dice roll, he tried to hide the fact he was using his quirk to make the dice roll the way he wanted them to by coughing. Ochako reached over and smacked him upside the head, reminding him that he glowed every time he used this quirk.

At this point, Tenya was besides himself, disappointed that everyone would stoop so low as to cheat at a board game. When he started to rant that they, as upcoming heroes, must hold themselves to a higher standard, everyone broke into a fit of laughter. By the end of the day, everyone ended up enjoying themselves, but they all agreed that perhaps they should find games that don’t bring out the worst in all of them.
The next day everyone in the Midoriya apartment were finishing lunch when they received a phone call from Detective Tsukauchi. While he didn’t want to get into too much detail over the phone, he summed it up by saying there had been a few complications while the doctors and investigators had been working with the girl Izuku and Ochako had brought into the station. He asked if the two of them and Inko would be able to come to the hospital and meet with him. They immediately agreed, much to the detective’s relief. He said he would have an officer come by to pick them up. Before hanging up, Izuku asked if the girl was alright. Tsukauchi paused before saying that was a complicated question to answer, and that it would be easier to talk in-person.

Soon the three were picked up and driven to the hospital where they found both Detective Tsukauchi and All Might waiting for them. He explained that since All Might had been with them when they brought the child in, it made sense he should be here for what happened next.

“What exactly is going on Detective?” Inko asked. “You were so vague over the phone. Is the little girl alright?”

“As I said over the phone, there have been some complications in our investigation. All Might had a suggestion that might help the case, but I wanted to make sure that you three were as informed as possible before I make any requests of you.”

The three glanced over at All Might, but the hero kept himself back behind Tsukauchi, letting the man take the lead in the conversation and keeping his own thoughts to himself.

“To start with, we were able to get a name from the girl. Her name, at least according to her, is Eri.”

“According to her? That’s a strange way to put that.” Inko said.

“She only gave us her first name, and we only got it after a long struggle as well.; she couldn’t give us a family name. Unfortunately, Eri seems to have lost a lot of her memories. Almost all of them, as far as we can tell.”

“Oh my,” Inko put a hand over her mouth, while Ochako and Izuku shared looks of shock.

Izuku began to panic as he thought back to his encounter with Eri, “She has amnesia? But I didn’t see any head wound though. Did I miss something?”
Tsukauchi held up his hand, “You didn’t miss anything. We don’t think the amnesia is from any kind of wound. Or at least not one she currently has. We think that the girl’s own mind has blocked them out to protect herself.”

“She made herself forget her own past? Why would she...wait? Wait what do you mean ‘not the one’s she currently has?’” Izuku asked.

“We found signs of abuse. Extreme abuse. Those bandages hid multiple scars.”

Ochako’s eye went wide as she remembered something, “She said something about a bad man when we found her.”

“What’s more, these scars aren’t from random beatings. They’re methodical. Almost surgical in nature.”

Inko closed her eyes as she repressed a shudder. Ochako shook her head, not wanting to think about what kind of horrible person could hurt such a small girl like that. Izuku felt his stomach twist in revulsion while his hands clenched in anger.

“Can you...examine the wounds. Maybe get a clue from them about who was hurting her?”

“That would be difficult enough if Eri wasn’t terrified of the doctors.”

“Huh?”

“When she came too, she was very scared of the officers with her. Being surrounded by strangers is scary enough for a little girl as is. We were able to get a name, and were able to confirm she didn’t remember much else, but when one of the doctors came in, she went berserk. She was terrified; we tried to reassure her that the doctors and nurses were only there to make sure she was okay, but every time one got close, she panicked and tried to run. She got so bad that finally they had to bring in someone with an Anesthetic Quirk to get her to calm down long enough for them to examine her, but even that was tricky.”

“Why?”
“The orderly with the Anesthetic Quirk told me that normally he can keep a person under for hours at a time for long surgeries with minimal effort. With Eri however, she was coming too almost as soon as he stopped using his Quirk on her. For almost the entire time she was being examined, he had to strain to just keep her calm. He wasn’t ever able to put her under completely. We don’t know why that is; she might have some kind of healing Quirk beside her horn, but we just aren’t sure. We have only a few more questions we’d like her to try and answer before we move on, but the orderly doesn’t want to keep using his Quirk to keep her calm. He’s worried he may end up hurting her by mistake, and he’s also exhausted himself from the strain. That’s where I was hoping you two could help.”

Izuku and Ochako glanced at each other before turning back to the detective, “Us?” Izuku asked, “How can we help?”

“Well, multiple times throughout our questioning and examinations Eri asked, ‘where the two nice people were?’” When we asked her who she meant she described the two as, “the green fluffy one with warm hands and the lady with kind eyes and pink chipmunk cheeks.”’”

Despite the serious nature of the conversation, All Might turned his head to the side to hide the laugh that was threatening to erupt from his chest. Inko too also had to take a moment to compose herself while Izuku reached up and ran a hand through his messy hair, and Ochako pressed her hands to her cheeks. After taking a moment Ochako looked back at the detective and asked, “She was asking for us? But she was only awake for a few minutes after she ran into us,”

“And in that time, you left an impression on her with your kindness.”

“If only a few minutes of kindness left such an impact on the poor girl, one wonders what kind of treatment she’s more accustomed to.”

As All Might’s statement sunk in for everyone, Izuku turned his attention back to Detective Tsukauchi, “What do you need us to do?”

“I’d like the two of you to go see her. Stay with her while we finish up our last few questions. While she was being sedated it made getting answers from her hard. I’d like to see if your presence will be enough to keep her calm. Will you two do that?”

“Of course,” were Izuku and Ochako’s immediate reply. With their consent, and making sure with Inko, Tsukauchi led everyone to Eri’s room. Pausing to look through the large window that let
them look into the room. Inko leaned forward when she didn’t immediately see anyone inside, ‘Did she run away?’

Tsukauchi shook his head, “We have the room monitored. She’s just hiding under the bed again.”

“Again?” Ocako asked, as she peered inside.

“I told you, she’s very scared of the doctors here.”

“Can she see us?” Izuku asked.

“It’s a one way observatory window. She can’t see us. We didn’t want her to know we were keeping a close eye on her and upset her any more than we already have.”

“Is there...is there anything you want us to do when we go in?”

“Just be yourselves. You’ve already shown her kindness. Just do so again.”

Nodding, the two opened the door to the room and stepped inside. The room was brightly colored with pink walls and stuffed toys lay on the floor. In theory, it could pass as a child’s room, but everything felt too clean and the machines that stood next to the bed hummed and made just enough noise to remind you that you weren’t in a real room. Closing the door behind them, they walked towards the bed. As they got closer, both could make out a small whimper that was almost deafened by the background noise in the room. When they made it to the side of the bed, there was shuffling as Eri scurried around, pressing herself against the wall, putting as much distance as she could between herself and the two visitors while still being hidden under the bed.

Kneeling down, Izuku was tempted to crawl under to find her, but Ochako shook her head, whispering, “You might spook her reaching in after her.”

Nodding, Izuku stayed knelt down but didn't move to go under, “Hello, Eri. You don’t have to be afraid.”

“That's right. We met the other day when you ran into Deku. Do you remember?”
The soft whimper quieted some and there was a little more shuffling, “the nice people?”

Eri’s voice was barely above a whisper, but both teens could hear her.

“That’s right. My name is Izuku.”

“And I’m Ochako.”

Izuku slowly put his hand out, not reaching under the bed, but leaving up open for Eri to take, “Would you like to come out? We’d like to see you.”

“...I don’t want to be sleepy again. It makes me feel sick.”

Izuku and Ochako glanced at each other, both remembering what Detective Tsukauchi had said about the orderly and their worry that their Anesthetic Quirk might end up hurting Eri if he kept using it.

Izuku looked back towards the bed, “I promise you won’t be sleepy or sick.”

It was a few more seconds before Izuku felt a small hand reach out and take his. Looking down, Izuku gently closed his hand around Eri’s, and helped the little girl come out from under her bed. He never pulled or tried to hurry her, he made sure she got to move at her own pace.

Both smiled down at Eri as she stood up and looked up at them. Her hair was a little cleaner and straighter, though it mostly looked like someone had given up half way through brushing. Given her skittish nature, it wasn’t hard for either Izuku or Ochako to guess that one of the nurses had stopped out of fear of hurting the poor girl as she struggled to get away. She was wearing a fresh hospital gown now, not the tattered rags she had on before, and the dirty stained bandages she had been wrapped in were gone, letting both of them see just how badly she had been scared along her arms and legs. They both however did their best not to let the shock show.

“I didn’t know where you two were. When I woke up all these people were around me asking me questions, then the scary people kept poking me and I...and I...”
Eri trailed off, tears starting to run down her cheeks, but then something happened. Izuku and Ochako wrapped their arms around her and held her. Both whispering how they were sorry. That they hadn't meant to make her so afraid by leaving her alone with strangers.

The feeling of being held, of being comforted, was so foreign to her, even with her memories scattered, she knew that this hadn’t happened to her in a long, long time.

Outside the room watching through the one way window, Detective Tsukauchi couldn’t help but shake his head in amazement as he saw in a matter of minutes both teens make a connection with Eri that none of the social workers, nurses, doctors or officers were able to come close to all day yesterday; it was something to see. Over the next few minutes, the two sat Eri on her bed and either just talked with her, or Izuku, using his Quirk, began to have the little stuffed animals dance around, which Eri followed in wonder, clapping at the little jaunts Izuku had them do.

“Ah, Detective Tsukauchi sir. I am here as you requested.”

Turning at the new voice, Tsukauchi was happy to see the other officer, “Good to see you, Tamakawa. Glad you were able to make it.”

Inko looked away from the room to see who had joined them. A cat man, in a police officer’s uniform, was standing next to the detective.

“All Might, Mrs. Midoriya, this is Officer Tamakawa. I asked for him to join us today because I wanted him to finish asking our questions to Eri while Midoriya and Uraraka are keeping her calm.”

The cat man nodded, “Detective Tsukauchi hoped that my appearance would help avoid causing the girl any unneeded stress. Children love cats after all.”

Inko wasn’t entirely sure that that logic worked the same on a man with a cat head.

“Is the girl ready for the questions?”
Tsukauchi glanced inside the room and saw that Eri was the most calm, and collected he had seen her.

“I guess now’s as good a time as ever.” Reaching up, Tsukauchi tapped lightly on the door, getting the three insides’ attention.

When Ochako heard the light tapping, she quickly looked down to see how Eri was, and was relieved to see that she was more interested in the floating teddy bear that Izuku was holding up.

“One sec, let me go check the door.”

That did get Eri’s attention, and she reached out and grabbed hold of Ochako’s sleeve, “Are you leaving?”

Ochako shook her head and put a comforting hand atop Eri’s head, “I’m just going to see who’s at the door. I’ll still be here.”

Eri looked troubled but let go of Ochako, “Just...no scary people in the masks please.”

Ochako and Izuku shared a look, and then both glanced at the large mirror. Ochako smiled down at Eri, “No scary people in masks.” She said. Loud enough that anyone on the other side of the one way glass would be able to hear her.

Walking up to the door, she cracked it open and peered outside, only to be greeted with a face that if she hadn’t seen before, probably would have made her jump out of her skin.

“Oh,” Tamakawa started, “You’re one of the students from U.A. I took a statement from. A pleasure to see you again.”

“H-hello officer. Are you here to talk with Eri?”
"I am. If you think she’s ready?"

Ochako looked back towards Eri, who was once again captivated with Izuku and his puppet show. Clearing her throat, she got both of their attention, "Eri? There’s someone here that would like to see you. Is that okay?"

Eri looked over at Ochako then towards Izuku who reached out and took her hand, "We’ll both be right with you. You don’t have to worry."

Eri’s face scrunched up as she thought about for a bit, until she finally nodded, "Okay."

With her consent, Ochako opened the door to let the officer in. While Izuku smiled and gave the officer a polite wave, Eri’s mouth dropped and she pointed right towards Tamakawa, "Kitty!"

Tamakawa smiled, "Hello there, Eri. My name is Tamakawa; it’s a pleasure to meet you."

Eri tilted her head to the side as she tried to repeat the name, "Tama...awa?"

"Officer Kitty will work just fine if you want."

Eri nodded quickly getting a small chuckle from everyone.

"Eri," Tamakawa continued, "I’d like to ask you some questions."

Nervously, Eri glanced around. Izuku reached over and took her hand into his while Ochako sat down next to her, "It’s okay Eri. Both of us will be right here with you."

"O...okay"

Pulling out a pad of paper and a pen, Tamakawa began going through a list of questions for Eri, but almost all of them were answered the same way.
“Do you remember your last name?”

“No.”

“Do you know your mommy and daddies names?”

“No.”

“Do you remember running into these two?”

Eri nodded vigorously, “Yes! Izuku, he wrapped me up so I didn’t get hurt when we fell.”

“Do you remember where you were running from?”

“No...I’m sorry, I can’t remember anything…”

Ochako leaned over to give Eri a reassuring hug, “It’s alright; it’s not your fault.”

Tamakawa asked a few more questions but it soon became clear that Eri could not remember anything before running into Izuku and Ochako the day before. At least almost anything.

“Eri, can you tell us about the Bad Man?”

Eri looked away from the officer, pulling her knees up to her chest.

“The doctors said you were having some very bad nightmares last night. Were they about him?”

Eri shuddered and pulled herself into a tighter ball. Izuku gave her hand a squeeze, “we’re here for you, Eri. Uraraka and I won’t let anything happen to you.”
“That’s right! We’ll be sure that nothing bad happens to you, so don’t worry.”

Slowly, Eri relaxed some. She kept herself balled up, but she wasn’t wound up like a coiled spring anymore, ready to bolt. When she spoke she kept her head down and her voice was quiet, with an almost tangible fear behind it.

“The Bad Man...he...he’s always looking. Looking at me...looking in me...” Eri’s fingers brush along the many scars that ran across her arms. “He takes...parts of me and then puts me together again...It always hurts.”

“Can you describe him to me? Tell me what he looks like. His name maybe?”

Eri shut her eyes as she went taught again. Her body started to shake and tears started falling down her cheeks. Tamakawa was about to tell her she didn’t have to try and force herself to remember, but Eri finally said, “he had...a long...pointy mouth that he took off when he wore his...his mask to look into me.”

Eri put a hand out infront of her mouth and pressed her fingers together, mimicking the shape of a cone.

“He took off…” Tamakawa trailed off as he wrote down that detail, glancing back towards the glass with a raised brow. “When you say mask, do you mean like the ones the doctors are wearing.”

Eri nodded but kept silent.

“Alright, I think that’s all the questions I have for you Eri. You were very brave. If you two won’t mind staying with her a little longer, I need to go and talk with Detective Tsukauchi and All Might.”

“Oh course we’ll stay with her.”

“It’s no problem at all.”
As the two started praising Eri for being so brave to answer the officers question, Tamakawa silently got up and left the room.

“A long pointed mouth...Could she mean a beak? Perhaps the man has an avian Quirk of some kind.”

All Might rubbed his chin as he thought over Eri’s brief description.

“Possibly, though there might be more to it than that if he’s actually able to take his mouth off to wear a mask.” Tamakawa said as she put his notebook away.

“At least that explains why she’s so afraid of the medical staff here. Everyone either had or was wearing their surgical mask. If the person hurting her also wore one…”

The adults all humed in agreement over the unpleasant idea.

“What she said does match up to the report I got from the staff here when they woke her up from her nightmare. She was screaming for someone to put her back together.”

“True, I just wish we had more information to go off of. What I was able to get from her won’t make tracking down any leads very easy.”

“What about missing person reports. Have any come in that match up with Eri?”

Tsukauchi shook his head, “No. No one has reported this girl missing. If the person who was abusing her was a family member, they might not even report her missing at all. I’ll still make sure to check of course, but I doubt we’ll get any clues from that avenue.”

“We may not have much, but it’s still more than we had.”

“True, it was a good idea to bring those two kids in. They helped keep her calm and open her up
more than I could have hoped.”

“Those two are special. It was an easy idea to come up with.”

“Why thank you, All Might. I’m sure my son and Ochako would be elated to hear such praise from you.”

Inko, who had stayed near the window, had turned her attention over to the three when her son had been brought up.

“Ah! Yes. They do um...stand out in class after all.”

Inko smiled, “You only had a few lessons, and he’s already made such an impression. That makes me so proud.”

All Might nodded vigorously, being careful not to let on just how he knew Izuku and Ochako would be perfect for helping with Eri. Fortunately for All Might, Inko’s attention turned back towards the three in the room, “Detective, what’s going to happen to Eri now?”

Tsukauchi rubbed the back of his neck as he gave his answer some thought, “Honestly, I’m not entirely sure. Normally, Eri would be given to child services and they would either place her into some kind of protective custody and medical care, or she would be sent to a foster home to be looked after while her case is ongoing. However I’m not...over fond of those ideas. She would not do well staying at a medical facility. She’s just too terrified of the doctors, and sending her to a place filled with strangers I don’t think would work either. Her skittish nature makes me worried how’d she react to being around people she doesn’t know. You’ve only seen her around those two. How she was acting before, it was as different as night and day.”

“Considering she was hiding under her bed, I think I can guess,” Inko said as she turned away and went back to watching her son and Ochako work with Eri. They had, after some urging, gotten her back to how she was before the questioning. As she watched them, her mind kept going back to what the detective had said. Soon an idea popped into her head and she started weighing some options. All Might was watching her closely. He could tell that something was on the woman’s mind.

“Mrs. Midoriya, are you alright?”
Inko nodded, “I…” At first she seemed unsure, but Inko’s face soon set into a look of determination as she looked at Tsukauchi, “You said she would be sent to child services and they would either keep her at a medical facility to look after her, or move her to foster care correct?”

“Thats right?”

“And neither option was very appealing given Eri’s nature?”

“Yes?”

“And those are her only options?”

The officers looked at each other while All Might’s brow shot up, “Mrs. Midoriya, what exactly are you asking?”

When there was another soft tapping at the door, Izuku offered to be the one to answer it. Cracking it open, Izuku was a little startled to see his mom standing on the other end.

“Mom?”

“Izuku, would you come with me for a second. I’d like to talk with you for a bit.”

“Oh um sure. Just give me a second.”

Closing the door, Izuku walked back over to Eri and Ochako, “Hey, Eri. I need to go outside for a second, okay?”

”Are you leaving?”
“No, no. I’ll be right back, and Uraraka will stay with you.”

Eri frowned, hugging the teddy bear Izuku had been using to play with her tightly. Soon though she nodded, “okay, if you promise you’ll be back.”

After promising that he would come back, Izuku exited the room and found his mother waiting for him. Along with the Detective and All Might.

“Is everything alright, Mom?”

“Yes, everything is fine. The officers were very impressed with how much progress you and Ochako have been able to make with the little Eri. I’m very proud of you.”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head, embarrassed, “I wasn’t really doing that much though…”

“Oh nonsense. He said you got her to open up more than any of the staff here.”

“I’m just glad I’m able to help. She’s so sweet, I hated just leaving her before with the police.”

“So...you’d want to make sure she’s taken care of before we left today then?”

Izuku nodded, “yeah. I’m worried what’s going to happen to her after we leave.”

“I was too, so I asked the officers what their plans were.”

“Oh? You did?”

“Yes. Detective Tsukauchi told me honestly that he was worried that Eri’s immediate future wasn’t going to be very pleasant for her. She was either going to have to stay here for a while…”

“A place that’s filled with people she’s afraid of”
“...Or she’ll be moved into a foster home…”

“With people she’s never met. I don’t think she’d like that.”

Inko agreed sadly, “I’m afraid that’s right.”

“I wish,” Izuku started but stopped as he chewed over his words.

“You wish what? What is it?” Inko asked. She was watching her son carefully now, as were All Might and Tsukauchi.

“I wish we could bring her home with us. That way she could be somewhere safe and be with Ochako and me. We could keep looking after her, and help her. She could stay in my room. We could get a bunk bed for us and…” Izuku trailed off, shaking his head, “Sorry, I know that not something we can just do. I just want to help her…”

“Izuku, would you really be okay with her moving in? And sharing your room? It would be a pretty big change.”

“Of course, Mom. I meant it.”

Inko smiled warmly, “Well that’s good. Because that’s what’s going to happen.”

Izuku blinked several times before that sunk in, “Wait? Really?”

“I spoke with the Detective. Because of how well Eri has reacted to being around you and Ochako, and the high recommendation from All Might, he’s going to be able to fast track the paperwork that will let us foster her.”

Izuku’s jaw hung open which got a small chuckle out of Inko, “Officer Tamakawa left to go find her some clothes for the next few days before we go shopping for her, and All Might was even kind enough to say he would cover any costs that come up to get her settled in. It’ll take a little bit
more time, but if everything works out, Eri will be coming home with us today.”

Izuku started crying as he wrapped Inko in the tightest hug he could. He couldn’t find the words to describe just how happy he was. It took him a good while before he calmed down enough to let his mother go, “I guess, I guess we go make sure Eri is going to be okay with this too. Do you want to come in with me and meet her?”

Inko nodded, “I would like that very much.”

When Izuku came back inside, Ochako was immediately able to tell he had been crying. At this point she could see every sign as clear as day. No matter how hard Izuku tried to hide them. But at the very least, the giant smile he had said that what got his water works going was good news.

When Ochako gave him a quizzical look, his smile just got bigger and he gave her a quick wink.

“Eri,” Izuku asked, “there’s someone I’d like you to meet.”

“Who?”

Following behind Izuku, Inko walked into the room, “Eri, this is my mom.”

Eri looked at Inko then Izuku, “You have a mommy?”

“Yep.”

“Whoa.”

All three chuckled a little at Eri’s surprise while Inko walked over to her and knelt down, “It’s very nice to meet you.”
“Hello.”

“I’m sure you haven’t had a lot of fun these past couple of days, have you?”

Eri shook her head before grabbing onto Ochako, “I’m better now that Ochako and Izuku are here...but,” She looked at the two sadly, “You’ll both have to leave, won’t you?”

Ochako shifted on the bed, a small frown forming on her face, “Eri...I promise we’ll-”

“Actually Uraraka, if you don’t mind, there was something I wanted to ask Eri.”

Ochako shut her mouth, wondering what Izuku had planned.

Izuku knelt down and took Eri’s hands into his, “Eri, I’ve talked with my mom and we were wondering: would you like to come live with us?”

Eri’s eyes went wide and her mouth opened and closed a few times before she was finally able to talk, “You want...me to come with you?”

“That’s right. You wouldn’t have to stay here anymore. You’d get to come home with mom an- urk!”

Eri didn’t let him finish. She leapt from the bed and wrapped her arms around Izuku’s neck as she hugged him tight, weeping into his side, “Yes! Yes please!”

While Izuku held onto a very excited Eri, Ochako looked over at Inko, clearly looking for some kind of explanation. Fortunately, Inko was ready with one, “I talked with the officers. They think Eri staying with us would be the best for her right now. Give her a chance to start learning to trust people. They also hope that staying somewhere where she can feel comfortable will lead to her regaining her memories so they’ll be able to have a better chance finding whoever hurt her.”

“I see. I guess I do feel better knowing we’ll be able to keep an eye on her like this. I was a little worried how she’d be after we left.”
“So was I. I’m glad this all worked out.”

After Eri had calmed down, Officer Tamakawa returned with a couple of bags for Eri’s clothes and toys, and some paperwork for Inko to sign. While the three were busy, All Might pulled both Izuku and Ochako to the side to talk with them privately.

“I imagine this wasn’t how you all thought your first week was going to go, was it?”

Izuku and Ochako started counting off everything that had happened.

“Surprise threat of expulsion.”

“Advanced battle simulation.”

“A break-in.

“A villain attack.”

“I almost died.”

“And now rescuing little kids...It’s been a busy week.”

The three shared a small chuckle, “Well, I want you both to know that I am very proud at how well you two have done. You’ve both shown maturity and a level-headedness well beyond what first years are normally asked of. You’ve shown you understand that a hero is more than just muscles, power and fighting. A hero is also about protecting the hearts of those around them. Again and again, you are both showing I made the right decision to train you two. I’m proud of both of you.”

“Thank you, All Might.” They both said, blushing some from the high praise they were receiving.
“Now I have some work I have to get done before classes start up again tomorrow, so I will see you both then.”

With his goodbye said, All Might watched as the two hurried back to Inko and Eri’s side as they took care of everything to let Eri stay with them. Taking one last proud glance, All Might hurried out of the building and found Tsukauchi waiting for him in his car.

With the matter of Eri settled, at least for the short term. All Might and Tsukauchi had quickly driven to U.A. where the other teachers were setting up to have their final meeting before they reopened the school. All Might, who had returned to his shrunken form for the drive, buffed himself back up as they neared the meeting room.

“Doesn’t everyone in the meeting know about your other form? Why are you going back?”

All Might shrugged and pulled out his phone, showing his friend a message he had gotten from Principal Nezu, “He recommended it. Didn’t say why though.”

“Strange.”

“Er, not really. Our principal is known for his...unconventional methods.”

Reaching the room, All Might opened the door and the reason why he needed to be in his muscled form became instantly clear. Nezu, Midnight, Vlad King and Snipe were all waiting for them. Along with a surprising addition.

“Fucking finally. All Might’s here. We can start the meeting and then I can get out of here.”

Next to Midnight was Himiko Toga, who was reclining back in one of the large office chairs with her feet up on the heavy wooden desk. Her bored look turned sour when she looked past All Might and saw Detective Tsukauchi to his side. “Oh, great. The walking dick is here too.”

Midnight reached over and knocked Himiko’s feet off the desk. Judging by the look on her face, this wasn’t the first time she had done it either, “Toga. Language.”
Himiko rolled her eyes, “Seriously?”

“What is she doing here?”

Tsukauchi’s eyes were locked on Himiko who just smirked at how just her presence was able to get under the detective’s skin, “Nice to see you still hate me.”

“Toga.”

“Oh get off my case already, Mom. I’m not doing anything.

“Please let’s keep things civil,” Nezu asked. Motioning to the empty seat for All Might while Tsukauchi took a place in front of the heroes to deliver his report.

“As this meeting was to go over the League of Villain and its leader, I thought it might help if Toga took part so she could give her perspective. She is, besides All Might, the only one here to have actually confronted the man. And as we are aware, Toga has a unique talent for understanding and reading people.”

While Tsukauchi wasn’t a fan of the idea, he couldn’t argue with the logic behind the principal's decision. “Very well. If this is everyone, then I’ll go ahead and start. Unfortunately, at the moment, I don’t have a great deal to share with all of you. The police have investigated the group calling themselves The League of Villains, and there does not appear to be anyone registered with the name Shigaraki. In his 20’s or 30’s, he has a Quirk that lets him decay anything that he touches.”

Himiko suppressed a shudder, remembering the horrible feeling of her own body breaking down before she was able to rip off her disguise to save herself.

“It should be noted that this is the same situation with the villain with the Warp Gate Quirk, calling himself Kurogiri. Since neither of them are registered there is a good chance they are either not citizens or they are using false names. What’s more, the name Shigaraki has only just started popping up in the underbelly of our society according to our contacts.”
Himiko frowned, and looked over Midnight for some clarification.

“He means that until the attack, none of the criminals had ever heard of him either.”

“So in short,” Vlad started, “We don’t know anything.”

Himiko sunk into her chair. “Well shit.”

“The lack of information isn’t the only concern we should have,” Snipe said after some thought. “Once the League’s ringleader gunshot wounds heal, there’s a good chance they’ll try this again.”

Vlad frowned, “Do you really think there is a chance of that? The first attack was bold enough as it was. To try it again now that we are prepared for it seems foolish to me.”

Nezu leaned forward, “It depends on the mindset of their leader. A cautious man wouldn’t be so reckless to try the same thing twice.”

Himiko huffed while All Might hummed in thought. Nezu’s ears twitched hearing them, “It sounds like you two have an opinion on that matter. Would either of you care to share?”

All Might motioned towards Himiko, “The floor is yours, Young Toga. You had the first encounter with him. I’m interested to hear if his actions were different before I arrived.”

Sighing, Himoko glanced over at Detective Tsukauchi, “I don’t suppose you got the statements from Ochako, Tsu and Boom Bitch on hand? Since they were with me.”

Tsukauchi started going through his papers, but stopped at the last name Himiko mentioned, “I’m sorry. Who?”

“Bakugou Katsuki,” Midnight quickly answered before giving Himiko a leveled look.

Pulling the papers out, Tsukauchi read through the statements, “Overall, the three said the same
things, though Bakugou was much more...colorful in his description. They called him unhinged, deranged, and…” Tsukauchi was momentarily thrown off kitler when he read over Katsuki’s statement, “I’m not going to repeat this one, though you all have copies.”

“Any of them mention anything along the lines of ‘child-like?’”

Tsukauchi nodded at Himiko, “There are a few mentions that he had a temper and got upset when his plan wasn’t going the way he thought it would.”

“A temper? That's one way to put it. One second the guy throwing a tantrum like his MMO raid was getting wiped. The next, he’s just bored with everything and just wants to go home. More or less, the whole attack was a game to him. He was even using video game terms too, like ‘game over’ and ‘continue.’ The guy was a huge cry baby...That being said…”

A few heroes leaned forward as Himiko paused.

“...He had a horde of people following him. How many did you all arrest?

“There were 72 arrests made.”

Himiko whistled, “Yeah, some of them were clearly afraid of him. I’m betting they got to see what his Quirk could do to a person. But the rest? I don’t think it was fear pushing them.”

“What do you think it was then?”

“He was doing a lot of talking about destroying the society that had wronged them and getting rid of the pillars that held it up, heroes and you specifically, All Might. There are a lot of people who...hate this world. Who want it to change to suit their needs and whims. Put someone in front of them that's saying all the things they want to hear, and is willing...evil, enough to actually do the things that need to be done to go through with those convictions. Tantrums and acting like a kid aside, you have someone that people are willing to put up with that and follow them into hell.”

Nezu scratched his chin, “You think so? You almost sound like you’re projecting someone else’s qualities onto him.”
For the first time in the meeting, Himiko looked uneasy. Everyone knew who Nezu was talking about.

The Hero Killer: Stain.

That man, even though he operates alone, has his own group of followers who live by his ideals and reject the way society is, with its false heroes.

Taking a moment to collect herself, Himiko waved off Nezu’s guess, “Look maybe they could have some similarities. But their maturity levels are night and day. And besides, sometimes bad people just want to follow other bad people so they can do bad things. You don’t have to look too deep there.”

“I agree with Young Toga’s assessment. This Shigaraki acted like nothing more than a man-child. During my fight with that Nomu not only did he go on and on with his wild statements, he openly bragged about the Quirks and abilities of the monster, and his plan on how he was going to have me killed. That wasn’t just overconfidence but a complete lack of awareness of the kind of situation he was in. Then there was how he acted when things started to turn against him. To become upset is one thing, but this is just like Young Toga said. He was throwing a tantrum.”

Nezu agreed, “Yes, to go so far as to throw away his advantage of having a villain with unknown Quirks, that was very foolish indeed. Especially when fighting against the number one hero.”

“Like I said, totally different maturity levels.” Himiko muttered under her breath.

“With everything I saw, on top of Young Toga’s statements, I think that this Shigaraki still has not outgrown his sense of childlike omnipotence.”

Vlad groaned, “Great, that’s just the kind of threat we need. A child with a god complex that wants to kill heroes... great.”

“What’s concerning is that if one were to look at him as a child. You could draw some similarities between him and our students. He’s a child now, but if given time, he could mature or find someone to back him, one wonders what he could be capable of.”
Nezu’s statement grabbed All Might’s attention. A cold feeling of dread filled him as he thought of the unspoken thought behind it.

“At least for now we have some breathing room, he has to recover, and I think almost all of his forces were arrested. After this attack’s failure, we shouldn’t have to worry about him getting more men. The street thugs aren’t going to want to follow him again.” Snipe added.

Midnight frowned, taking a glance at Himiko before saying, “If you take into account his wild statements about wanting to destroy the current order, his Quirk, and his childlike actions...it makes me wonder if he ever received Quirk counseling as a child to help try and... temper him.”

At the mention of counseling, Himiko tensed, her jaw set, and her teeth ground against themselves as for a split second, a dark aura seeped out of her. It lasted only a second, and after a breath, Himiko had calmed back down, but in that time, every hero had been put on edge.

“Toga?” Nezu asked, keeping his voice calm.

“Sorry, touchy subject.”

“Of course. We understand. You’ve already given us a good insight into Shigaraki. So if you would like to leave...?”

Himiko started to get up, but stopped. Her face twisted in annoyance before she sat back into her seat, “I’d rather stay and hear everything you all say about this guy. I doubt this is stuff that’s going to be covered in class tomorrow.”

“Oh?”

Himiko shrugged, “Better to know everything I can about my enemy.”

Nezu made a face that might have passed for smug, if not for that fact he was a little mouse dog animal thing. “To kill him? Or to protect you little green lamb from him?”

“Oh one, yes. Two, never make that face again. It was creepy.”
Nezu offered up a very insincere, “sorry,” which Himiko ignored.

“*Three,* I’d like to add something. Snipe Sensei, you said this attack was a failure?”

Snipe poked his thumb over at All Might's direction, “The big guy’s still alive and all the students made it out alive.”

“That's not how the people in the dark alleys are going to hear it, you know. What they’re going to hear is that Shigaraki walked up to U.A and gave you a bloody nose. No one is going to care that the pawns got taken out. They’re just going to care that the guy that made the plan, and got really close to killing All Might is still out there planning his next move. That’s how people on the streets think.”

Nezu scratched his chin, “That is an interesting perspective.”

“Well, I lived it for awhile. I know how those kinds of people think. So really, it’s not a question of if he’s going to get more members for his league. It’s a question of what kind of followers he’ll get next.”

The meeting came to a conclusion, giving Himiko the opening to quickly make her escape. Soon after Detective Tsukauchi also left, promising to continue the investigation into the league. This left the heroes to collect their things and start preparing for tomorrow’s school day. A prospect that All Might was not looking forward to. As he looked through his planner, wondering what lesson he was going to teach, Nezu walked up besides him, “There was one last thing I wanted to discuss with you All Might.”

“Of course.”

“Right now, I’m still not sure if Aizawa will be able to return to his teaching duties tomorrow when classes resume.”

“You’re not...asking me to take over as homeroom teacher are you?”

Nezu laughed, “oh, of course not.”
All Might wasn’t sure if he should feel relieved that he wasn’t going to have to take that responsibility or slighted at how long Nezu laughed before answering.

“While I’m not yet sure who will be teaching in the morning, I would like to ask you a favor. If you would be so kind as to let Midoriya know that since he got first place in the practical examination he will be giving the opening speech for the Sports Festival.”

*Oh, the boy is just going to love that.* All Might thought with no small amount of sympathy.

“I was planning on speaking with him tomorrow anyway. I’ll make sure to let him know.”

Chapter End Notes

Hi everyone! I hope you all liked the new chapter! I gotta say this one gave me some trouble I wasn't expecting. It was just so slow. So I decided to split it in two. Part two will now be chapter 18 and will lead up to the start of the sports festival, which boy of boy, I have brackets and notes and everything ready for that...(he says knocking on wood). but yep, little Eri is living with the Midoriya's now. I'm sure nothing bad will happen because of that change >:) It was also fun to have the Dekusquad just act like kids for a bit. Mario Kar...I mean All Might Smash Grand Prix is where you learn who your friends really are, and Monopoly is where you learn just how little it takes for you to want to murder them. I hope to have chapter 18 out really soon since I have a large section of it already written so please look forward to that :) Of course Xenoblade might take up some of my time, cause I love this game. Loved X and Loved XC2 as well. Good JRPG's.

Again I really hope you liked the new chapter and thank you for reading. If you have any comments or critiques please feel free to leave them!

A big thank you to the IzuOcha Discord for the kind words of motivation, and to the True Believers chat in Epsi's Hoard! Thank you all.

Big thanks to my beta reader Tmalasia! They catch so many mistakes.
The Eternal Struggle and Pregame Warm-Ups

Chapter Summary

School’s back in session and it’s time for Izuku to prepare for the U.A. Sports Festival that’s only two weeks away! Of course, he’ll have to survive those two weeks if he wants to compete. Not easy when dealing with the Development Studio and Katsuki Bakugou. Also, Tenya says fornication, because the world just doesn't make sense sometimes.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“But do you both have to go?” Eri asked as she looked between Izuku and Ochako, both dressed and ready for their first day back to school.

Izuku knelt down and patted Eri on the head, “Now Eri, we talked about this last night, didn’t we?”

Eri pouted, but nodded. “You said you have to go to school to be heroes.”

“That’s right.”

Eri waved her arms around as she thought up an argument to make them stay. “But you are already heroes! So you can stay here!”

Both Izuku and Ochako felt their hearts clench at Eri’s words. Seeing the two waver, Inko walked up behind Eri and put her hands on her shoulder, “Eri, you said you’d be brave for them when they had to go. You even gave Ochako a pinky promise when she had to leave last night.”

“I know…”

Ochako smiled down at Eri, “Besides, you’re going to get to see your room get all set up. And later Mrs. Midoriya is gonna take you to buy some new clothes so you won’t have to wear these anymore. That’s going to be so much fun.”
Eri looked down at the oversized shirt she was wearing, that almost reached her ankles. On the front was plastered the huge smiling face of All Might, “Izuku picked this out for me though…”

“Oh *I know*. But you’ll get pretty clothes that actually fit. And not,” Ochako pulled at one of the sleeves, “this.”

Izuku gave Ochako a side eye, “Hey…”

Eri nodded, “Okay, I’ll be good, but you’ll both be back soon, right?”

“We’ll be back before dinner,” Ochako said with a smile.

With that settled, they waved goodbye to Inko and Eri and hurried on their way. As they walked down the stairs, Izuku finally asked, “Hey, what's wrong with the shirt I gave Eri? She needed something to sleep in.”

Ochako sighed, “You gave her an All Might shirt, Deku.”

“But she looks cute in it!”

Rubbing her brow, Ochako could only shake her head at the obliviousness coming from Izuku, “Deku...it is too early in the morning for me to try and explain *everything* to you right now. Let’s just put a pin in this, okay?”

*Deku you have...some worrying ideas on what cute is.*

When they made it to class, they found the class in the middle of a discussion over the news coverage of the attack.

“I still can’t get over how cool All Might was.”
“I’m so disappointed. When the news showed off our class, I didn’t stand out at all!”

“But...you’re invisible.”

“That’s besides the point!”

“Come on. They talked about you a lot, though. Like how you were able to get All Might’s help and call the teachers.”

“But they didn’t use one good picture of me!”

“Again...you’re invisible.”

Ejirou turned and was the first to notice the two coming in. “Oh hey. Midoriya, you’re looking good.”

When several students turned to look at him, Izuku blushed. “Yeah, I’m back to normal.”

Momo sighed, “That’s a relief. You were so hurt; you had us all worried.”

“I’m glad you were able to recover, Midoriya,” Fumikage said.

“No kidding! All of a sudden you just ran off and next thing I see--” Mina shuddered at the memory-- “not cool.”

Izuku bowed, “I’m sorry for worrying you two.”

Mina waved him off, “It’s fine. At least you had a nice long weekend to get better. Though, just recovering must have been boring.”

Izuku laughed as he took his seat, “Um boring would...not be the word I’d use to describe my
Hitoshi looked at him funny. “Weird way to say you hung out with your friends.”

Ochako leaned on Izuku’s desk as she said, “That’s not what he’s talking about.”

Himiko stared at Izuku intently, “wait what are you two talking about? You didn’t do something else did you? What happened after our game day?”

Soon the whole class was giving the two their undivided attention. Even Katsuki, who had been making it a point not to even look at Izuku had turned to look over his shoulder. Taking out his phone, Izuku pulled up a picture of Eri, and began to explain everything that had happened the day after the USJ attack.

“Holy crap dude, do you just not have normal days?” Denki asked.

Katsuki had a deep frown as he turned back around in his seat, doing his best to ignore the class as they reacted to Izuku’s news.

“Normally, you get the kid a lot later after the first dat…” Minoru trailed off when he felt Himiko’s eyes drill into the back of his head. He didn't have to look to know she had her hand on something sharp.

“So how long is she going to be staying with you?” Jirou asked.

“Um we’re not really sure. At least until her case is solved, I guess.”

“You and your mother are so responsible, Midoriya! Once again you have demonstrated a talent for helping people. We should all look to copy your example,” Tenya said with his usual exuberance.

“Are the police going to help you all pay for the things she’s going to need?”
“Oh, All Might’s,” Izuku started saying, completely missing the warning look coming from Ochako that he probably shouldn’t mention this part, “going to take care of that.”

While Ochako groaned into her hand, everyone else's jaws dropped, “Wait? All Might’s helping you?”

“How’d you manage that?”

“Wait, didn't you say he helped you get Eri to the police station? How’d he know you needed help?”

“It sounds like you have his number,” Shouto said as he watched Izuku intently.

The class looked from Shouto to Izuku, who went a little pale and made a show of not looking at anyone. Himiko caught on instantly. “Holy crap, you have his number don't you.”

“Er…”

“Holy crap.”

“How?”

“Can I have it?”

“NO!” Izuku screamed. “No he gave it to me because...of the attack! He was worried I might have made myself a target of the League because of...what I did.”

“You mean when you flew and punched that Shigaraki guy in face when he was about to attack All Might, kero?”

“Um yeah...because of that.”
Katsuki grumbled and didn’t bother to turn around to say, “You’re a fucking idiot, Deku.”

While Ochako and Himiko glared at him, Tenya turned the focus back to the situation with Eri, “Your...questionable action aside, if you or your mother need any help with the young girl, please don’t hesitate to ask.”

“Totally! We’d love to help!”

“Does she need anything? Toys or clothes, maybe? I could make some for her,” Momo offered.

Izuku smiled. “That's very kind of all of you. Mom is actually going to take her shopping today, so after that I’ll let you all know.”

“Oh, OH! Tell her to send more pictures of her. She's just so cute!” Mina asked while the rest of the girls nodded happily.

“I will. I’ll ask mom to send some pictures. Oh, maybe she’ll send some of the cute clothes I picked out for Eri to try.”

Ochako blinked while Tsuyu and Himiko looked at each other. A few of the other girls shared the concerned looks as well as they thought over what Izuku had just said.

“Deku... what do you mean your mom is getting clothes for Eri that you picked out?”

“Well after you left last night, me and Mom looked through the things Eri was sent with and I thought she’d like something cute to wear. So I went online and found some really cute clothes for her to get when they go shopping.”

Tsuyu tilted her head to the side, as she tried to imagine Izuku having the fashion sense to even know what cute was. Leaning over and asking softly so that Izuku wouldn’t hear, “Does Midoriya know how to shop for a little girl?”
Ochako and Himiko both thought of the boy in front of them, and while they both had strong feelings for him, they had both also seen his room, and all the All Might merch he had. Twin looks of horror fell over them as they shared a look.

“Deku...what kind of cute clothes are you thinking about?”

“Well Wookiees sells these cute pink All M-!”

“NOPE!!!” Came the twin cries from Ochako and Himiko while Tsuyu croaked in distress. The rest of the other girls and some of the boys also shook their heads.

“Eh? What’s wrong?”

Izuku was ignored however as Ochako ripped out her phone and began to frantically scroll through her contacts. Tenya frowned and pointed at her, “Uraraka! Class will be starting soon. It is most inappropriate for you to-!”

The death glare that Ochako gave him shut him up instantly. Putting the phone to her ear, Ochako tapped her foot impatiently as it rang. After a few rings though, she got an answer.

“Mrs. Midoriya? Hi!...Yes everything’s fine...No, no the school isn’t getting attacked again.”

That got a few chuckles from the class.

“You see, Deku--” Ochako made sure to glare at Izuku-- “said he picked out some clothes for Eri and-”

Himiko leaned over Ochako’s shoulder, “Don’t buy them!”

“-Yeah, what Toga said...When were you planning on going?...You weren’t going to go until after lunch?...Okay great! I’ll send you some clothes to look for before then...Oh by the way, were all the clothes Deku picked out All Might themed?...Yep that’s what I thought. Thanks, Mrs. Midoriya. Talk to you later. Bye!”
Hanging up her phone, Ochako sighed in relief as she returned to her seat, “Crisis averted.”

A chorus of cheers from the female students greeted her. Izuku slumped into his chair, grumbling, “No one here has any taste. I can pick out good clothes.”

Before any could point out the obvious that someone wearing a tie like him and thought it was fine had no clue about fashion, Tenya banged on his desk, “Everyone! Class is about to start. Please return to your seats at once!”

With everyone back in their seat, Himiko leaned back in her as she twirled a pencil between her fingers, “So who’s going to be teaching us today, anyway?”

Momo rubbed her chin as she thought about that, “Well Aizawa sensei will still be recovering from his injuries so I suppose we can-”

The door to the classroom slid open and Aizawa walked into the room. Looking more like a halloween mummy than a teacher. His face was completely covered in bandages and both his arms were in slings.

“Good morning,” came his muffled greeting to everyone.

After a moment, the classroom exploded in shock and surprise with people wondering why he was in class and not still in recovery. Tenya shot to his feet, “Sir, should you be up so soon?”

“I’m alright.”

Himiko rolled her eyes, “yeah because you’re the definition of ‘alght.’”

“You all should be less concerned about my well being and more focus on the fight you all have ahead of you.”
“Fight?”

“Wait what?”

“It’s not more villains, right?!”

Even with his face covered in bandages, Aizawa was still able to give the class a look that got them all to settle down. Satisfied that they were back under control he continued, “In two weeks the U.A. Sports Festival will take place.”

The was a beat before most of the class erupted again, this time in celebration at the news of something normal. While they started celebrating though, a few raised their hands in concern. Tsuyu frowned as she asked, “Is it safe to have the sports festival so soon after the attack? Aren’t the teachers worried about a second attack?”

Mashirao nodded in agreement, “Wouldn’t a venue like this be the perfect target for the villains?”

Eijirou crossed his arms as he thought about that, “but the sports festival normally has so many heroes who come to watch. It’d be crazy to attack it.”

“You could say the same thing about attacking U.A., and they did that,” Jirou countered.

“Apparently,” Aizawa said, cutting off the students, “the Hero Public Safety Commission thinks that U.A. needs to show the world that our ability to function normally has not been hindered at all by the recent attack.”

Himiko rolled her eyes, “Translation: They want the world to think everything is fine and that there’s no need to think that the heroes have gotten weak or that the villains have gotten stronger.”

“More or less, that’s correct. The U.A. Sports Festival can not be an event that gets cancelled because of a few villains. That being said, we will have five times as much security this year, so I don’t want you all worrying about that. You all will be kept safe. What you all need to be concerned with is not security, but making the most of your big chance. Our Sports Festival is one of the biggest events of the year; not only will the people of the world be watching you, but all the top heroes as well.”
There was an almost physical shift in the class at that last part. They all knew what Aizawa meant when he said that. If the top heroes were watching, that means that they were also scouting out talent. If they were able to impress the heroes watching, it would improve their chances of joining a good hero agency for internships, and after graduation, as a sidekick. While many do fall into the trap of letting that become their permanent position in the heroing world, there are others that will use that as a stepping stone into becoming independent and a top hero later on. In many ways, the path to becoming a pro hero started with the Sports Festival.

Aizawa could tell his students knew all this. “Don’t forget, you will only have three chances to use the Sports Festival to help make yourself known to the world and improve your chances of becoming pro heroes. There is only one event a year. If you mess it up, you don’t get a do over and you have to live with the consequences. So don’t slack off.”

When the bell for lunch period rang, people started to exit the class room. Though it was difficult to do since the hallway was filled with students that stopped and stared at them.

“That’s the class that got attacked?”

“I can’t believe some of them didn’t die.”

“They don’t look that tough.”

“That's right, my class is much stronger than this bunch; we’re going to crush them under our ack-!”

“Stop spouting nonsense. And don’t go picking fights either. You’ll embarrass our class.”

Izuku and his friends grouped up and pushed through the crowd. Making their way down the hall to eat. Himiko, however, was giving one of their group a very strange look.

“Oka,y so I’m just going to get it out in the open and say it. Ochako, can you tone down the whole aura you got going on? You look like a psychopath.”
“I’m just fired up is all!” Ochako declared proudly.

“You look like you’re about to go super or something. Maybe save it for when you’re training or the actual event,” Hitoshi added dryly.

“Keep and eye out for gold hair, kero.”

Ochako huffed and picked up her pace, ignoring the three. Tenya came to her defence. “The sports festival is a chance for us to advance as heroes. How can you all not be fired up?”

“I am excited,” came Hitoshi’s even and monotone reply, which got him a few worried stares.

“Wow, yeah. You’re like a frat boy or something with all that energy you’re giving off,” Himiko teased, “But moving on to other important things. I think I speak for everyone when I ask, when can we meet Eri?!”

Izuku rubbed his chin as he thought about that, “Oh well, I’ll talk with mom about that. She’s really um… skittish and timid. She’ll probably want to wait a bit while she gets settled in before she meets new people.”

“That is very responsible. You are taking your role to look over her very seriously,” Tenya said with a smile.

Tsuyu hummed at that, “When she’s ready for visitors, maybe I could bring my little sister with me, so she could have someone to play with.”

Izuku’s eyes practically glowed with excitement at the idea, “Tsu, that’s such a great idea. I’m sure she would love that!”

Ochako agreed, “Oh, we have to make sure to get tons of pictures of her playing! It’ll be so cute.”
Turning a corner, Izuku was about to ask what his friends were planning to do for training for the festival. “So what do you all think-”

“AH! Young Midoriya! There you are!”

When All Might’s sudden scream made the group jump in surprise. They all turned around to see All Might peeking out from around a corner in the hallway, pointing right at Izuku.

“All-Might?”

Izuku stuttered, confused as to why All Might had just singled him out like that. All Might then held up a ridiculously small bento, compared to his size, and asked, “Would you like to have lunch with me?”

Pointing to himself, to confirm he had heard right, the rest of the group was too shocked to even try to guess what was going on. Ochako however was able to keep herself together, and asked, “You want to have lunch with Deku?”

Ochako had to admit she was curious. Normally if there was something to discuss, she was included too. It was rare that only Izuku was pulled aside. All Might hearing the questioning tone in Ochako’s voice, nodded, “Yes, I wish to talk with Young Midoriya about certain...things...”


All Mights shook his head, “Ah, no no. Nothing like that. I wanted to make sure he’s recovering, and to talk to him about his actions during the recent...unpleasantness.”

At least it’s a believable lie, Ochako thought.

After spending so much time with the hero, she had learned quite a few of his tells, so she could tell he was leaving something out. Fortunately, no one else caught on and believed All Might’s story.

“Are you going to tell him he acted like a fucking idiot during the attack?”
Himiko’s blunt question made Izuku wince. He winced harder when he saw everyone nodding in agreement.

“You know what, that is an excellent idea, Toga,” Ochako said as she gave Izuku and All Might a look.

*Et tu, brute? I wonder if this is how Caesar felt when he got stabbed in the back?*

Not wanting to give everyone a chance to get anymore stabs in, Izuku hurried over to All Might and followed him to his office. Soon after, everyone else went on their way to the cafeteria, with none of them noticing that Shouto had watched the whole exchange from just down the hall.

Reaching the lounge, Izuku took a seat while All Might sat in front of him on a couch, letting out a sigh as he returned to his shrunken form, “Would you like some tea?”

After Izuku nodded, All Might filled a little teapot with hot water from a heated pitcher he had sitting on the table between them. Filling a cup, he handed it to Izuku who smiled and gave a quick thanks.

“So, Young Midoriya. How are you feeling? It's been a few days now since you sustained those...heavy injuries.”

Izuku looked down at his arm and flexed it, “I was a little stiff after Recovery Girl healed me, but I’m back to 100%.”

“That's good to hear. Things were a little busy over the weekend that I wasn’t able to ask you directly sooner. I apologize.”

Before Izuku could let him know that it was alright, a mischievous smirk formed on All Might’s face, “Though, maybe I didn't really need to ask. Considering the very next day, you were out on the town on a date. Very bold, Young Midoriya.”

Izuku’s face went red and his hands flew up, waving around frantically, “Wait! It's not like that at all!”
“Relax, young man. U.A. doesn't have the same rules as some other hero schools. You are more than welcome to go on dates with pretty girls if you want, even if they are your classmates.”

With his hands now covering his face, Izuku curled up in his seat, “All Might, please! Uraraka being beautiful has nothing to do with why we were spending the day together! We’re friends! Please don’t make it seem so weird and scandalous!”

All Might laughed as he waved Izuku’s worries away, “Come on, my boy. I was just teasing you. And for the record, if you think something like that sounds scandalous, you are not ready for what tabloids can say.”

*I’ll also cut you a break and not bring up that you changed pretty to beautiful, Young Midoriya.*

“Moving on, how is Little Eri settling in?”

Izuku was very grateful for the subject change. “She seemed like she was okay. It took a little convincing for her to let Ochako go home, and to let us go to school, but I’m sure she’ll be fine with Mom right now.”

“I’m sure your mother will be able to keep the girl happy until you return. Oh, and let her know that I’ll have the funds wired to her by tomorrow for all of Eri’s expenses.”

“I will.”

“Good. Good.”

“Is that what you wanted to talk about All Might? Eri and my injuries?”

All Might took a sip of his tea, “Part of it. I also wanted to discuss the upcoming Sports Festival with you, and it’s importance.”

Izuku straightened as All Might’s voice took a slightly more serious note. Izuku took a second to
consider what All Might had said. “I’m aware that the Sports Festival is more than just a game for the students. Everyone watches it, including heroes that we in the heroics classes need to impress to help us get internships and work studies.”

“That is a part of it, yes. But it’s not just heroes that watch. You can bet that villains will also be watching. Wanting to see what the future generation of heroes are going to be like.” All Might sighed as he put his cup down. “The same villains that will be watching you may be becoming more aware that my time is coming to a close.”

“All Might?”

“Soon, I’m going to have to retire. It’s an unavoidable fact that I’ve been faced with for years, and unfortunately after my battle with the Nomu, my time left has gotten shorter.”

Izuku looked down at his hands as guilt started to swell up in his heart.

*If I had only just-*

WHACK!

All Might’s hand came down, and smacked Izuku on top of his head. While it wasn’t a hard hit, it was enough to break Izuku out of his thoughts, and made him look up at All Might, who had a gentle smile on his face. “I know that look. You were about to start blaming yourself, weren’t you?”

“Um…”

“I told you before. My condition is a result of my own actions, not yours, so cut it out.”

“Yes sir,” Izuku quickly replied.

“And no crying!”
“But I wasn’t crying!”

“Kid, you cry at the drop of a hat.”

Both broke into a small laugh. All Might took a sip of his tea, and continued the point he had left off from.

“I can only sustain my muscle form for a little over an hour now. With such a short time, I won’t be able to be out there for much longer. Working at the school is a good way to delay it; but soon it’s going to be noticeable, and there will be people who will want to capitalize. That is why this Sports Festival is so important. U.A. must show that the future is still bright by showing the world the next generation of heroes. And…” All Might fixed his gaze onto Izuku, “…It's the perfect time for you to show the world who you are.”

Izuku jumped in his seat, “show the world...who I am?”

“That’s right. I want you to stand up in front of the world and tell them ‘I am here.’ Your goal is to become the next number one hero right?”

“Y-yes! Yes it is!”

“To be the next great hero, you have to stand out. This event is the perfect chance for you to do just that. For you Young Midoriya, this is your first great chance to show the world just who you are, and what you are capable of. To show the world who is going to be the next number one.”

Izuku could feel his heart start to race as All Might’s words hit home. This really was a rare opportunity for him to leave an impression on the world. He was only going to have a chance to compete in three sports festivals before he graduated, and he had to make sure to make every one of them count. Izuku looked All Might right in the eye as he said, “I won’t let you down All Might. I’ll go out there and make sure to make you proud.”

All Might smiled, glad to see the determination and fire in Izuku’s eyes, “Excellent, Young Midoriya. I know you’ll do great.”

All Might was taking another sip of his tea when Izuku asked, “All Might? Why...why are you just talking to me about this?”
“And not Young Uraraka?”

Izuku nodded. It was a fair question all things considered. He and Ochako had trained under him for some time.

“I do plan on giving Young Uraraka some words of encouragement. As her teacher and trainer, I want her to achieve as much as she possibly can. She, like you, is my protégé. But there is something that you must remember, Young Midoriya. You are the one that is going to inherit One for All. You are the one I picked to surpass me. So there will be times that I must push you harder than I would her. To push you further.”

Izuku frowned, but didn’t dispute All Might’s point. While he didn’t like the idea, he couldn’t argue with All Might’s logic. He had a responsibility to make sure he was ready to take up the torch when All Might passed it, and hearing All Might talk about the fact his time as a hero was coming to an end, Izuku knew he had to be ready all the sooner.

“I understand, All Might.”

“That's good. Of course that doesn't mean she’s off the hook completely. You can expect me to put her through the ringer every chance I can get in my class. Besides, that girl has started to show a disturbing lax disposition around me. I may have been a little too nice with her.”

Izuku laughed and All Might joined him.

“Well, why don’t we finish our lunches. I think that covers everything I needed to talk to you about.”

A couple of days later, class 1-A was having their next heroics lesson. Today however it was basic prep and training for the upcoming sports festival, though All Might had suggested that they go ahead and wear their costumes to continue to get used to them. Almost everyone else had changed and made their way to the training grounds. Izuku, however, was walking in the opposite direction that his classmates had left.
“Hey Izuku, where you goin’?”

Startled, Izuku turned to find Himiko and Ochako walking up behind him in their costumes, while he was in his gym uniform, “Oh hey, guys. I’m surprised you aren’t already out training.”

Ochako blushed and quickly threw out, “Oh well...it takes longer to put on our costumes than the gym stuff, so we’re a little behind, I guess.”

Himiko nodded, “yeah, what she said.”

Neither Ochako nor Himiko wanted Izuku to know they had been waiting just around the corner for him to leave the boys’ locker room so they could walk with him to practice.

“And you haven’t answered my question, you know,” Himiko added.

“Oh, right. Well, I wanted to meet up with the support department today. They sent me a text saying they were going to repair my costume after it..um..kinda got destroyed last week.”

An awkward silence fell over the three as they each recalled how the costume had been left blood stained and in tatters. Izuku, not wanting to dwell on it quickly continued, “Anyway! They recommended that I get it upgraded, so I was going to use this period to talk to them about it. All Might already gave me the okay to use the class time to get it done. Better to have it ironed out so it can be ready as quickly as possible.”

“Oh, that’s great, Deku.” Ochako said with a smile. While she had liked Izuku’s old costume, and the fact that Inko had helped make it gave it great sentimental appeal., last week’s incident really showed that he needed a costume that was professionally made. “So I guess we’ll--!”

While Ochako was ready to part ways with Izuku, since the support department was in the opposite direction of the practice field, Himiko clearly had different plans as she quickly moved from Ochako’s side and took a place right next to Izuku as he was getting ready to set off.

“So what kind of upgrades are you going to request?”
Izuku stammered over his words, still not used to just how close Himiko would get to him. Ochako frowned briefly before she too moved to Izuku’s other side.

“Yeah, I’m curious as well. You going to go with a whole new look?”

Himiko and Ochako’s eyes met, exchanging cold, challenging, glares with each other before turning their attention back to Izuku.

“I, um…” Being sandwiched tightly between two girls was bad enough for Izuku. Add onto that the fact that they were both in their costumes-- which, depending on who you asked, were snug in just the right places. Izuku could also feel that strange tension between the two. So the combo of being close to two very pretty girls-- two very dangerous heroes in training, that he was also sure he never wanted to piss off-- left Izuku in a tricky situation. Does he point out that they are pretty close to him and that he was going in the opposite direction they should be going, and risk setting something off? Or does he just roll with it and deal with the less explosive consequences that might pop up with them being late to practice.

“...Actually, I want to make sure they keep to the original look as much as possible.”

Izuku went with the option that wouldn’t get him stabbed and floated into space.

Probably.

*One of these days I need to figure out what’s making these two so tense around each other sometimes.*

Hums of approval came from both Ochako and Himiko, “That’s good. Honestly, after seeing how cute you looked in your first costume, I can’t imagine you in anything else, Izuku.”

Himiko pressed herself against Izuku’s arm as they walked down the hallway. Izuku stuttered while he tried to tell them some of his ideas for his ‘beta’ costume. While distracted, Ochako discreetly reached behind Izuku’s back, and *jammed* a thumb into Himiko’s side. Forcing her to separate herself from Izuku. Himiko rubbed her side, while shooting Ochako a death glare and slapping her hand away.

“...I was also going to ask if they had anything that might be able to help with the headaches I get if
I overuse my quirk,” Izuku continued on, oblivious to the war wagging behind him. Ochako, scoffed and rolled her eyes at the idea, playfully adding, “Right. Because that's something you need, Mr. Doesn't-Know-How-To-Hold-Back. Lets dampen the part of your Quirk that’s supposed to keep you from hurting yourself. What you really need is something that makes your head hurt more to make you stop.”

“You mean like how you deal with your nausea?” was Izuku’s quick, slightly frosty reply.

Himiko whistled, “You’re gonna need some ice for that burn.”

Ochako instinctively reached up and touched the band around her neck before holding up both her hands, “Okay, okay. Fair point. I’m just saying, you tend to ignore yourself whenever you feel it’s inconvenient for you.”

Izuku’s face softened, “I’m not—”

“I swear to god, Deku, if you finish that sentence after all the nosebleeds I’ve had to clean up, I’m going to kick your butt.”

This time it was Izuku who held up his hands in surrender. “I got it. Message received.”

Ochako was kind enough to drop the subject and the three continued down the hall until they reached a large metal door with a sign over it that read “Development Studio”. Ochako raised an eyebrow looking at the heavy duty door, “Thing looks like it could hold up after a bomb blast.”

Himiko grunted, “You’d think so.”

Both Izuku and Ochako looked over at her.

“What do you mean, Toga?” Izuku asked.

“There are a bunch of weirdos in there, and I swear stuff is always either exploding, catching fire, or melting. Sometimes it’s all at the same time.... Also,” Himiko narrowed her eyes as she leaned forward, examining the door, “this is a new door.”
“From the start of school?” Izuku asked as he also leaned in some to look.

“From last night.”

Silence fell over the three as Izuku began to sweat a little, “Um, maybe I don’t have to give them any input on how they upgrade my costume.”

Ochako waved him off and reached for the door, “Oh come on, Deku. You’re getting scared over nothing.”

As she pulled the door open however a loud scream ripped through the air catching all three off guard.

“LOOK OUT!!!”

None of them had time to react as something rocketed out of the room right into Izuku, sending the poor green boy tumbling down the hall until he came to a stop, flat on his back and not sure where he was anymore.

“DEKU!”

“IZUKU!”

Both chased after Izuku, to make sure he was alright, but came to a stop when they saw what had slammed into him. Or to be more precise, who had slammed into him.

Groaning, Izuku opened his eyes, but with everything still spinning, he immediately closed them to give his brain a chance to get its bearings. While he lay on the hard floor, he felt a weight laying over him, keeping him pressed down. There was also something pleasantly soft pressing up against his collar.

“Ow ow ow ow. I thought I was going to go splat against a wall. Thanks for catching me.”
Wait, the weight is talking?

Izuku then realized two things very quickly. One, the thing that was on top of him was a person. Two, the person, judging by the voice, was a girl. Even with his head still rattled, Izuku was able to add those two points together and realized that there was a girl laying on top of him. This revelation was more than enough to get him out of his stupor. Snapping his eyes open, Izuku craned his head up to see if they were alright.

“Are you okaaaaaa…..”

Looking up, Izuku trailed off as he got a completely unobstructed view at just what had been pressed against him.

Those are….those are….those are boobs….those are boobs! Don’t look! Don’t look!...I’M STILL LOOKING! So...big... STOP LOOKING!!!

The girl’s breasts were pressed tightly against Izuku’s upper chest, making her exposed cleavage much more pronounced from Izuku’s point of view.

When Izuku had trailed off, the girl frowned, “Hey, you okay? You’re going all red,” and pushed herself up onto her hand so that she could get a look at Izuku’s face. Unfortunately, when she did, her cleavage now hung right in front of Izuku’s face, making it very obvious to the stunned boy that the girl was not wearing a bra under her loose-fitting tank top. While the girl looked down at Izuku, wondering why he had gone so red, and Izuku was left a stunned and stupefied mess, Ochako and Himiko arrived and saw exactly what Izuku was seeing.

“Ex-excuse me!” While Ochako tried to stay calm, internally, her mind was going into overdrive.

Again!? How is this happening again!? Another girl just came out of nowhere and landed on Deku. And she STILL HAS HER BOOBS IN HIS FACE!!!

Himiko was in the same boat, as she tried not to let herself default to, ‘stab big-boobed pink-haired girl,’ and instead focus on how she was going to get the girl off Izuku as quickly as possible. Before she could think of a way that wouldn’t get her in trouble with all the teachers, someone came rushing out of the studio. A skinny man with a large, yellow excavator claw mask covering his whole head yelled, “Hatsume! Are you still alive?”
The pink-haired girl, Mei, looked over her shoulder and flashed the man a thumbs up, “Yup, I’m just fine, Power Loader sensei!” Twisting around, she pulled herself up, much to the relief of the other three. Though, this was short lived, as she unceremoniously sat right back down on top of Izuku’s lap as she started to unstrap the large metallic boots she was wearing, “Though it looks like you were right. I overclocked my hover soles too much. Whoops.” She tapped at some of the scorch marks that marred the bright silver metal.

“WILL YOU GET OFF IZUKU ALREADY!”

Mei blinked as she looked over at Himiko, then down at Izuku, “Oh, you’re still down there?”

*Is this girl for real!?*

Power Loader was initially relieved that his student was unhurt. Now that he was clear of the smoke and could see the current situation, however, he switched gears to make sure she stayed that way, “Hatsume, please get off the student and go put those things away.”

Mei saluted and hopped up, “Yes, sir!”

With her off, Izuku was free for Himiko and Ochako to rush to his aid and help him up.

“Are you okay, Deku?” Ochako asked as she looked him over. Izuku nodded as he dusted himself off.

Himiko crossed her arms and grumbled, “The nerve of that bi...girl. Just sitting on and rubbing on you like that. It’s like she had no respect for your personal boundaries.”

Ochako’s neck almost physically *creaked* as she turned to look at Himiko in disbelief that *those* words had come from her mouth. Himiko tilted her head to the side, and blinked a few times at the look Ochako was giving her, “What? What?”

With Mei now going back into the studio, Power Loader turned his attention back to Izuku, “You’re Midoriya right? All Might told me you would be coming by...though I was just expecting you.” Power Loader looked over at Ochako, who rubbed the back of her head bashfully, and
Himiko, who just shrugged.

“They were just curious about the costume upgrades I wanted to have done today, sir.” Izuku said quickly, not wanting the two to be in trouble for coming with him. Power Loader waved him off, “It’s fine, but they should probably be headed back to their cl-”

Whatever he was going to say was cut off as Mei rushed back out of the studio, “Wait! Costume upgrades! Is this the boy you told me about, Power Loader sensei!?”

“Er, yes.”

Mei zeroed in on Izuku and, before anyone could say anything, grabbed the poor confused boy and dragged him into the shop, “Excellent! I’ve been waiting all day to meet you! So you’re the boy I’m going to make so many cute babies with!”

It took only a few moments before those words hit Ochako and Himiko and they rushed after Mei.

“THE HELL YOU ARE! IZUKU IS MINE! GIVE HIM BACK RIGHT NOW!”

“THAT’S RIGHT YOU CAN’T JU...Wait, what did you just say, Toga!?”

It took a great deal of effort on Power Loader’s part to get everyone calmed back down. Explaining that Mei called her invention her babies had helped keep the two from jumping the unsuspecting inventor. With everyone now ready to listen, he calmly explained the situation to the three as he handed Izuku a small metal briefcase.

“Okay, first things first. Midoriya, here’s your repaired costume back. Like our message said, it’s completely fixed and as good as new.”

Izuku took the case and opened it, running his hands over the bright green fabric. “Thank you, sir. My Mom worked really hard to make this for me. I’d hate it if it had been completely destroyed.”

“Midoriya, while I respect that the costume has great sentimental value to you, I’m also happy you agreed to an upgraded costume. Which I suppose I should explain how this is going to work.
Normally costumes for students are made by support companies that U.A. has partnerships with. We can do minor tinkering here, but anything major has to be done by the company that originally made the costume. Your costume however wasn’t made by a company, so we have a unique situation I’d like to take advantage of.”

“A unique situation?”

“Yes. Instead of sending your new design out to one of the companies, I’d like to have it made in-house so to speak. This would give us a lot more freedom to be able to work on it and upgrade it as you progress in your studies.”

“Would..would you be working on my costume, Power Loader?”

He shook his head, “Not me personally, though I will be overseeing and giving everything final approval. No, the person that would be working with you would be Hatsume.”

Mei waved happily, ignoring the concerned and confused looks she was getting, “Looking forward to it!”

Himiko cut in, “Wait, you want to give the responsibility of making and maintaining Izuku’s costume to her? She’s a student too right? And a first year?”

Ochako nodded, “Wouldn’t it be better for Deku to have someone with more...experience make his costume?”

“Those are valid concerns, but students in the support department are eventually assigned student costumes to work on as part of year long projects. It’s a common thing that helps them get ready for the work they will be doing if they are hired by an agency that specializes in costume work. True, it’s normally a third year assignment but, ” Power Loader spoke up a little to cut off the objection he could see coming from the two girls, “Hatsume has demonstrated, in just her first week, a talent that I have not seen in a very long time. The sheer amount of inventions and gear she has put together is staggering.”

Ochako and Himiko glanced over at the pair of large boots that were still smoking in the corner of the room.
Power Loader hurried on, knowing exactly what they were looking at, “That's why I want to capitalize on this chance to work on a costume and not have to worry about dealing with permissions and red tape like we would if this was a costume made by one of the companies.”

Izuku could understand where Power Loader was coming from. If his costume was made in-house, the support department would have free range to do whatever they felt was needed, and it also made sense that the students would work on the costumes of the students in the hero course. And if Hatsume was as good as Power Loader seemed to think she was, having her work on something like this early also made perfect sense.

“Oh course the final decision is up to you. You are free to request that we send your design out if you feel more comfortable with that…”

Izuku shook his head, “No, I think this is fine.”

Turning, Izuku bowed towards Mei, “I’ll be in your care, Hatsume. I look forward to working with you.”

Mei clapped. “Excellent! I can’t wait to get started. I’ll just need to take some measurements, and then we can get to work.”

“Measur-EEK!”

Izuku was startled when Mei rushed over to him and began running her hands all over his chest and stomach. Ochako sputtered as once again Izuku’s personal space was invaded by another eccentric girl, “HATSUME! Wha- what are you doing!?

“I’m just touching his body. Hmm yes, yes. Much more solid than you’d think in those baggy gym uniforms. Not bad.”

Himiko’s patience finally snapped, “I’m stabbing her! I’m stabbing her right in her stupid face!”

Power Loader hurriedly began ushering out the two while Mei continued getting Izuku’s measurements. “You two have a class to get to. You’re both already late as it is. I’ll let All Might know you were here so you don’t get in trouble, but you two do need to go now.”
They relented in the end and let Power Loader take them out of the studio. As he began closing the door, however, a noise came from Izuku that neither Himiko nor Ochako had ever heard before. Some kind of cross between an eep and a moan. Both girls turned and saw that Izuku looked like his soul had escaped from his body as Mei was no longer feeling around his top, but was now crouched down and feeling up and down his legs, “Whoops sorry about that. Have to get your inseam and wasn’t expecting that to be there. Hmm yep, everything down here is nice and firm too. Not bad at all.”

Power Loader slammed the door shut, gulping nervously as he locked it tight. The looks on those girl’s faces had sent shivers down his spine.

Himiko and Ochako were both seething, but after a few failed attempts to open the door, they walked to their class. When they finally reached the practice field, All Might, who had been told to expect the two, could see that they were both in no mood for pleasantries, so he simply pointed them in the direction of a group of practice dummies. The resulting carnage that followed made the pro wonder just what had happened to piss them off so much. Though perhaps it was best he kept his nose out of it. This was a situation he could tell would get it cut off.

With only a couple of days left before the sports festival, everyone in the school was doing everything they could to prepare. Many of the students, especially those in the heroics classes made sure to take advantage of the numerous gyms that were on campus after their normal classes were finished. The gym that members of class 1-A was using was very impressive. There were plenty of weights and equipment. In the center, there were many training mats that were perfect for sparring practice and around the perimeter there was an oval track, which had become the resting place for the Dekusquad, after finishing Tenya’s endurance training. Which had ended up being a 10 kilometer sprint.

Hitoshi groaned as he lay on his back, looking over at Tenya with an annoyed eye, “I should have known your idea of training was going to involve running.”

Himiko, who was crumpled into a pile of limbs and sweat, also shared in Hitoshi’s annoyance. “I swear...I’m sticking...something into you tailpipes.”

Tenya, who was still standing, pointed down at the two, “This only proves my point. While you two may be physically fit, you haven’t done anything to improve your long term abilities. What would you do if you had to respond to a crisis on the other side of the city?”
“DRIVE!” Came the two’s simultaneous response.

While Tenya continued to berate the two, Tsuyu was talking with Izuku and Ochako. While the three were just as sweaty as their friends, they at least were still able to remain on their feet.

“You two look like you’ve done runs like that before, kero”

Izuku and Ochako shared a quick look before Ochako nodded, “Yeah, when we were training for the entrance exam, Mr. Yagi had us do a lot of running.”

“Towards the end, he started making us have to carry heavy stuff on our backs.” Izuku shuddered as he recalled all the piggyback rides he had been made to give his favorite hero.

“Really? How much?”

“I had to carry a safe once,” Ochako said as she remembered how much fun that had been.

“Wow,” Tsuyu said before adding, “No wonder you have such great legs.”

“Tsu!” Ochako gasped and gave her friend a playful shove.

Izuku counted his blessings that Ochako had been distracted, or he was sure she would have noticed him almost having to physically grab his own head to stop himself from nodding in agreement.

An explosion from the center of the gym cut off any further conversation as they all watched as Eijirou sailed through the air and crashed into a wall, smashing it and sending a web of cracks in all directions. Eijirou still had his arms up in front of himself, his hardened skin protecting himself from the brunt of the explosion, though his gym uniform was more burnt ash than actual clothing.

Dazed, he shook his head, “Damn, you don’t hold back, do you?”
From the epicenter of the explosion, Katsuki cracked his knuckles, “Fuck no I don’t. And next time don’t go talking so much shit. You can ‘take my explosions,’ are you fucking serious?”

While a few other students helped get Eijirou out of the wall, everyone else took that as a cue that it was time to call it a day. Plus no one wanted to have to be the one to explain to Aizawa why the gym was going to have to be repaired.

Again.

With everyone packing up their things, Tsuyu turned to Izuku and asked, “Did you have a chance to speak with your mom about setting up the play date with Eri and my little sister?”

“Oh yeah. Eri’s really started to open up recently so she thinks that it should be fine to bring your sister over. How about just after the-”

“Oh! Deku! Where the fuck are you going? You and I need to have a talk. Get your worthless ass over here. Now!”

For Izuku, a car crash would have been less jarring than suddenly realizing what Katsuki had just said, or more like, demanded.

“Eh!?”

Katsuki rolled his eyes, “Don’t ‘eh’ me. Get the fuck over here.”

He paused for a second, and looked past Izuku without bothering to hide his contempt, “We don’t need the cheer squad. Get lost.”

Momentarily confused, Izuku glanced behind himself and was startled to find that his friends had quickly closed ranks around him. Ochako crossed her arms as she glared at Katsuki, “What do you want, Bakugou?”

“Are you deaf, on top of being a dumb fucking bitch? I said-”
“Kacchan!” Izuku’s eyes hardened as he raised his voice, cutting Katsuki off sharply, “Don’t.”

Katsuki’s brow twitched in agitation, and he was visibly seething but he didn’t say anything else. Giving Izuku a chance to turn and look at his friends, “Guys, it’s okay.”

“So you actually want to be left alone with the literal ticking time bomb?” Hitoshi asked, not bothering to keep his voice low so Katuski couldn’t hear him.

“Guys…”

“I could just stab him for you,” Himiko added, shockingly casually.

“What!? NO!”

This time, Katsuki did speak up, “You want to have a go, Bun Bitch!? It’d be over in a second!”

Himiko smirked evily, “We talking about fighting or fucking? Cause both cases apply to you, you quick shot, needle di-”

“Toga please!” Izuku was quickly beginning to worry that there was actually going to be a fight at this rate. While Ochako had and does stand up to Katsuki on a regular basis, even she doesn't go so far as to sink to his level on language and threats of violence. At least that he was fully aware of.

Tsuyu tapped her chin as she looked from Himiko to Katsuki, “You do remember what she did to those villains last week right? She’s very good at stabbing.”

“Are you forgetting what I did to those villains? Besides Bun Bitch doesn’t have her knives now, does she?”

Himiko put her hands in her pockets and mumbled to herself, “How much you wanna bet on that?”
Everything was starting to boil over as Izuku waved his arms frantically, “Everyone please! Don’t start fighting!”

“I agree with Midoriya,” Tenya added sternly, “This kind of conduct, and foul language is unbecoming of us. Threats of violence and fornication,” Himiko snorted, “is best left to thugs and ruffians...Besides, the use of weapons is unneeded. A good swift kick to the back of the head will solve any issues.”

Everyone looked at Tenya after that.

“Guys, it’s alright. I can handle this.”

“Deku... if that’s what you want,” The look on Ochako's face made it clear that this was definitely not what she wanted. Did she want Izuku to be able to stand up to Katsuki? Yes. Had she perhaps had one or two dreams of Prince Izuku throwing a certain unnamed blond barbarian into a dungeon? Oh absolutely. But did she want his first few times standing up to Katsuki to be alone and inside the other teens blast range? That was a big no. Unfortunately for Ochako, she could see in Izuku’s eyes that this was something he was going to be stubborn over, and arguing may very well make the whole situation worse.

“Alright,” Ochako sighed, “Alright. We’ll leave.”

“We will?” Himiko asked.

“Guess we are,” Hitoshi confirmed, “I guess if things go bad, we’ll just follow the smoke, huh.”

“Come on, guys; nothing is going to happen.”

“Midoriya, do you want to try and say that again, but actually look like you believe it, kero?”

With not much else to say, the group turned and walked out the door, leaving Katsuki and Izuku alone in the gym.

“Fucking finally. Out of all the extras in our fucking class, how’d you end up surrounded by not
just some of the most annoying ones, but by one of the craziest bitches I’ve ever seen? If you want something that’s going to cut your dick off, go find a blender or something. And that’s on top of fucking Round Face who just loves being around you. What the fuck?”

“Don’t,” Izuku started as he turned around, “talk about my friends like that Kacchan.”

“We’re not here to make friends, Deku.”

“Then why have you been hangin around Kirishima so much recently?”

If Izuku wasn’t so on edge, he would have been more than a little proud with himself that he actually got Katsuki to close his mouth. At least for a few seconds.

“Kacchan, what do you want?”

“What do I want? What I want, is to know what in the fuck do you think you’re doing?”

“Oh shut the fuck up,” Katsuki growled as he marched into Izuku’s face, “I’m asking you, what are you doing!? It’s not that hard.”

The combo of the sudden closeness, and the raw emotions coming from Katsuki momentarily threw Izuku for a loop. He opened and closed his mouth a few times before closing it shut as he thought about Katsuki’s question.

What am I doing? I’m in a gym training for the Sports Festival. Unless he’s talking more broad? I’m in U.A. to…

“I’m here to become a hero.”

“Bullshit,” Katsuki spat. “There’s no way in hell that’s why you’re here.”
“Wh-what are you talking about?”

“If you were actually trying to become a hero, you wouldn’t be spending all this time playing Papa Bear to some kid you picked off the street: shopping for clothes, setting up play dates-- are you fucking stupid?”

For a moment. For a very brief moment, Izuku’s Quirk flared up. Weights hanging in their stands creaked as Izuku reached out and grabbed everything he could near him. However, a heartbeat later, Izuku replayed the words Katsuki had just said and came to the conclusion that Katsuki had not called Eri stupid. Just what he was doing for her. Which wasn’t really better, or less horrible, but it at least wasn’t worth a dumbbell to the head.

Almost wasn’t worth a dumbbell to the head.

“Kacchan,” Izuku started to ask slowly, “What does that have to do with anything?”

“Nothing, and that’s my whole god damned point, you shitty nerd. You got into U.A. Woopty-fucking-do! Now that you’re here though, you sure as hell aren’t trying to be a hero.”

Izuku had tried not to raise his voice too much; he didn’t want to get into a shouting match. Now, though, he was starting to forget that, “Are you crazy? I’ve been to all the classes, I do all the assignments. I’m here getting ready for an event that’s going to put me in front of hundreds, if not thousands of heroes in the hopes that I’ll get an internship and work study offers. Everything I’ve done is to try and become a hero!”

“All of Izuku’s anger, all his pent up frustration vanished in an instant-- replaced with a cold pit in his stomach and a vast sea of confusion.

I...what?

“Kacchan, I don’t…”
“Shut. The fuck. Up.”

Izuku’s teeth clicked as he shut his mouth with a snap.

“First you try and fight a fucking villain a year ago.

Izuku shuddered at the memory of the Sludge Villain that had almost killed the two of them.

“Then try to kill yourself in the practical test.”

Izuku blinked in shock, but Katsuki cut him off before he could ask how he knew about that, “I overheard you and your friends talking about it after that dumb test Aizawa Sensei gave us.”

*Oh right, Kacchan was waiting for me...*

“Then you decide to stick your nose into my fucking fight and almost got you damned head caved in, on top of fucking drowning.”

“But-”

“*AND THEN* you go and throw yourself at that fucking Shigiraki bitch. For fuck’s sakes Deku if you want to kill yourself, there are easier ways to do it. At the very least don’t do it in front of people who might decide to risk their own lives trying to save your sorry ass.”

Izuku’s swift reply came out far, *far*, more cold than he had planned. “So what? Would you rather I do it your way and go take a swan dive off a building?”

Katsuki then did something Izuku didn’t think he’d *ever* seen before in all the years he had known him. Katsuki actually flinched, and then looked away. The motion was so foreign, so alien to Izuku, he almost didn’t believe he actually saw it. The look on Katsuki’s face too was also so strange to see. If Izuku didn’t know better, he would have sworn that Katsuki looked...

“Fucking...Why the fuck do you still remember that shit?”
His words were quiet, for Katsuki, and almost didn’t have any edge to them. Izuku also wasn’t sure if he was even supposed to have heard them.

“Kacchan, I’m not here to get myself killed. I want to become a hero. Why do you think-”

Any further questions though were cut off as Katuki’s bad mood returned and he turned back to look right at Izuku, “Fine, you don’t want to die. Then let me get to the point. You’re weak and you’re an idiot. And here’s the kicker, you being so weak, and being such a fucking idiot, almost got Round Face and Bun Bitch killed.”

“I…”

“Did you have any kind of plan when you got involved in my fight?”

“…No.”

“Did you actually think that Round Face was just going to let you toss her out of the fight like that? While you were still in danger?”

Izuku wasn’t able to reply to that. In hindsight it wasn’t that surprising she rushed back. He’d have done the exact same thing.

“You were stupid to get involved, and you were too weak to do anything. So not only did you almost die, but you almost got some of your friends killed too. Congratulations, you’re a colossal fuck up. And you know what really pisses me off. Instead of trying to get stronger, you’re wasting your time doing bull shit that’s distracting you from your own fucking goal.”

“You mean…Eri?”

“On top of everything else, YES! You found a lost, abused kid. You then did the right thing taking her to the cops. That should have been it but no. No, you go and take her home. And time that you should be spending getting stronger to face those villains that you better believe are going to come back one day, you’re wasting on worthless bullshit. Focus on making yourself strong so you don’t end up dead, or getting your merry-band-of-bumb-asses killed along with you. Because dammit just
because I’m the only one who has a shot of actually becoming a fucking hero in this damned class, doesn’t mean I’m going to risk my neck the next time you decide to get yourself fucked. So get your shit together, and stop worrying about being everyone’s friend.”

Having said his piece, Katsuki turned and started to walk away. He got a few paces when Izuku spoke up, “I’m going to get stronger Kacchan.”

Katsuki stopped and turned to look back, and found a determined looking Izuku staring right back at him, “I’m going to get stronger. I want to be like All Might. He is the kind of hero I want to be like, so I have to be strong. I’ll become strong so that I can be kind. I’ll become strong enough to look after my family, my friends, and everyone that needs help. So Kacchan, I will become stronger than even you.”

Narrowing his eyes, Katsuki stared down Izuku, but the other boy didn’t back down, “You think you’re going to surpass me?”

“The only way I’m getting to that number one spot is past you.”

Both boys just stared at each other before Katsuki twisted on his heel and left the gym, his final words echoing in the empty room, “You’ll have to go fucking through me, you little shit.”

The door slammed shut and Izuku let out a long sigh, “That’s what I figured, Kacchan.”

Izuku stood in the empty gym for a few more moments as he collected himself and tried to figure out just what that whole thing had been about. As close as he could figure, it was almost like Katsuki in some strange, angry, roundabout way had been worried about him.

“Pfft, ha ha ha ha!”

While he was still laughing at the absurd idea, Izuku turned and left out of the door behind him.

Kacchan worried about me? Wow, I’ll need to tell Uraraka that one. She’ll get a good laugh out of it. I mean it’s kinda sad that the idea is so insane, but there’s not much I can do. I mean I could cry...Oh no, please don’t actually start crying.
As Izuku tried to force himself not to fall into the old habit, he pushed open the door to the hallway, and was surprised when it hit something.

“AHH!”

“OUCH!”

“I told you this was a bad-!”

Opening the door fully, Izuku was shocked to see all his friends sprawled out on the floor, “Um guys? What?”

“WE WEREN’T SPYING!” Ochako screamed as she scrambled back to her feet.

Himiko groaned into her hand, “First rule about spying. Don’t say you weren’t spying.”

“Shouldn’t that be, ‘don’t get caught spying?’” Hitoshi asked as he dusted himself off.

“Wise ass.”

“Wait, were you guys actually spying on me?”

Tenya bowed deeply, “I am truly sorry! I have no excuse for our actions.”

“We were just worried is all, kero.”

“But Midoriya, what you said at the end. That was truly inspirational.” Tenya added, wiping a tear from his eye.

Izuku blushed as he rubbed the back of his neck, “You heard that?”
“We did, Deku.”

If they heard that then…

“Um… Did you hear anything else?”

When, no one could look him in the eye right away, he started to sweat. When he looked over at Ochako and saw her giving him a very apologetic look, he knew what was coming next. Even if he hoped that they had missed it.

“Izuku,” Himiko started. The fact that she seemed to be taking her time with what she was saying did not fill Izuku with much hope. “What did you mean when you said ‘would you rather I do it your way and go take a swan dive off a building?’”

Crap. Now just think for a second. You can still salvage thi-

“Oh she doesn’t need to, I heard every word.” While Himiko started to look really scary, Izuku frantically tried to get control of the situation.

“Okay, just wait a second. Let me explain.”

The avalanche of words that came tumbling out of Ochako only stopped when she slapped a hand over her mouth, forcing herself to shut up. Hitoshi rubbed his ears and shook his head, “Okay, do you want to try that again? And this time, maybe space out your words a bit?”

“BakugouhastreatedDekulikecompleterapeversinceheyerelittlekids! He’syelledathim, andabusedhimbecausehethoughtsincehehadabetterQuirkitmadehimabovebeinganormalperson! DuringourlastyearinJr.HighhetoldDekuthathisbestchancetobecomeaherowastokillhimselfandhopehegotreb

“Midoriya, when you said that you had a complicated history with Bakugou. Did you mean that he’s been a bully for…” Tenya glanced over at Ochako who added, years, “…for years? That’s he’s been emotional and physically abusive and has even told you to commit suicide?”
“Um, something like that. Look, can I please explain?”

The desperation in Izuku’s voice and the almost puppy dog pleading look he had was enough to bring everyone under control and give Izuku the chance to talk.

“Okay, first things first. Tsu, you weren’t here when I said this, but the first day of school I told everyone that Kacchan and I did have a history, but since it’s a new year, and we’re at a new school, I didn’t want to drag up it up.”

Tsuyu nodded, “That seems like an understatement.”

“No kidding,” Hitoshi muttered.

“I also asked that everyone left it at that. Not to pry and make it into a bigger deal than it needed to be.” Izuku let his eyes fall on everyone, “And you all agreed.”

“Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Hold on just one second!” Himiko screamed as she raised her hands to stop Izuku in his tracks, “You are not seriously trying to make us drop this right? You can’t be?”

Himiko turned to Ochako, “He can’t be serious!?”

Ochako groaned as she rubbed the bridge of her nose, “Do you remember how the end of that conversation went?”

Himiko stared blankly at Ochako for a few moments before her jaw dropped as she recalled that Izuku had made Ochako promise to drop the subject too, “Oh...Fuck.”

“Yep.”

“To be fair Uraraka, you also broke that promise-“ Izuku started but stopped when she pointed at him, “You hush! It was out in the open already.”

Izuku crossed his arms over his chest, “I could have made something up!”
Tenya frowned, “Midoriya, lying to your friends is not very heroic.”

“He’s right, kero.”

As everyone nodded, Izuku deflated, “I didn’t mean…”

“Look, none of us are mad at you. Just explain to us why you want this dropped. At least that way we’ll know what you want to do, and maybe even help you with it. You know, like how friends are supposed to act,” Hitoshi offered kindly.

Okay. That's fair. So... here’s the thing. Kacchan and I used to be friends when we were really little, but as we got older and we got our Quirks, everyone would praise him because his was so much better than everyone else's. Our classmates and teachers would always just put him on a pedestal and treat him so differently than anyone else. They all could see that he was going to do great things when he got older. I guess because he got away with so much and he knew he was better than everyone else he started to get...meaner as he got older, and I was his favorite target. I tried to stand up to him a few times but because I was so weak I ended up getting beaten up every time. Worse though, is that he acted like it was an insult that I even tried. Since I was so weak, I should have just kept my head down. Jr. High was when it was at its worst. Honestly, if Uraraka hadn’t shown up I might have…”

As Izuku trailed off, Ochako recalled what she had read in his hero notebook. *If not for Uraraka I might never have gotten the chance I have now. I’d probably have taken Kacchan's advice already.* She could feel her blood start to boil.

*I really fucking hate that peice of shit.*

Izuku shook his head as he continued, “...Anyway. I suppose there are a couple of reasons why I don’t want other people involved in this. Honestly I don’t want anyone getting in trouble trying to do anything to fix this. If any of you actually tried to confront Kacchan over this, it’d probably just end in a fight, and that will just make you trying to become heroes all the more harder if you’re dealing with a punishment. I don’t think U.A. wants its hero students fighting each other outside of class.”

Himiko noticed that Izuku had looked at her when he had said that. She raised an eyebrow, but didn’t say anything. Mostly because he was right on the money, though there was no way he knew to what extreme she was willing to go. She had been ready, as soon as she realized just what
Kastuki had done, to go find the boy and at a minimum beat the boy into a bloody twitching pulp. Now hearing what Katsuki’s actions might have led to, even if Izuku wouldn’t actually say it, she was past just wanting to hurt him. At worst, she envisioned herself gutting him and letting him die holding his own entrails.

"Ah crap, I’m gonna have to talk about this to Midnight. Stupid rules about me and violence against other students."

“And what’s the other reason Midoriya, kero?”

“It’s selfish but I want to be the one that settles things with Kacchan. I think that, unless it’s me, I’ll never feel like this whole thing is done.”

“And how do you plan on doing that, Deku?”

“I need to prove to myself, and to him, that I’m not someone that’s worthless. I need to beat him in a way that leaves no doubt. And...I’m pretty sure I have a way to do that.”

There was a pause before Ochako put it together. “The Sports Festival! You want to use the Sports Festival to prove you’ve surpassed him.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah. That’s the plan at least.”

“And if he doesn’t recognize it?” Tenya asked.

“Then that’s on him. It’ll be settled for me, and I’ll move on and focus on more important things.”

Ochako caught the double meaning in Izuku’s words. With his explanation over, everyone else looked at each other as they each thought about what he had said. It didn’t take long before a unanimous agreement was reached between everyone.

“Very well, Midoriya,” Tenya said, “We’ll respect your wishes here. If you want to try and settle this between the two of you, and you want to use the Sports Festival as your means, we won’t interfere.”
“Tha-” Izuku started but Tenya silenced him by holding up a hand, “However, I think I speak for everyone when I say we will not stand by and let him abuse you in any way. He may have been able to get away with that kind of behavior before, but he will not now. If he tries anything, we will step in.”

A chorus of agreements echoed Tenya’s statement and Izuku could feel their resolve. His friends were going to be there for him, even if he didn’t want to ask for their help. It was a very overwhelming feeling, “I understand. Thank you everyone.”

It had taken some time, but after several days, Hari Kurono finally felt it was safe to enter the lower levels of the base. As he walked down the sterile white halls, everything looked like it was in perfect order. Everything was clean and unmarked, but he knew that just the past night, this was not the case. These walls were shattered and dripping with blood and gore from the rampage their leader Kai Chisaki had been running on those he deemed responsible for their current predicament.

Every watchman or guard that was on duty when Eri had escaped had been brought inside and left to the mercy of the yakuza leader. The man had taken his time, ripping them apart, and then putting them back together, just so he could kill them again, and again. He had been doing this for a very long time, but now he had finally gotten it out of his system.

Hari found the man known as Overhaul standing in the center of one of the labs. He stood motionless at the entrance and only entered when his leader motioned him in.

“Any word?”

“Unfortunately not. None of our contacts have seen her and we don’t have enough pull within enough police departments to check their records.”

Kai sighed, as he found a chair and took a seat, “There was a time when the yakuza had so much more influence than we do now. We used to have the police eating out of the palm of our hands. Now? Now we’re lucky to even get scraps.”

“So what do we do now? Without Eri…”
“Without her we only have a limited number of bullets we can sell and have tested. I have some material left over from my last session with her but we’ll have to ration it. I want to save as much as possible in case I make a breakthrough in my research.”

Hari bowed, “I’ll make sure the bullets are sold to clients that will give us the most data. We can’t afford to cast such a wide net right now.”

Kai nodded in agreement, “Good. And see how high you can up the price. We need to make up the difference now that we aren’t going to be able to sell as many bullets as before. At least in the short term…”

“Short term? Does that mean you have an idea on how to locate the girl?”

“Yeah. I want you to start spreading the word that anyone that brings us good information about Eri’s location, or the girl herself will get a substantial reward. Doesn’t have to be with just our normal contacts. I want this spread as far as you can. Just be careful that the heroes and police don’t get wind of it. I don’t want them to know we’re looking for her and have that lead them to us.”

“I’ll make sure it gets done.”

Kai leaned back, looking up at the ceiling. “Good. That girl is the key to our success. I want her back. I don’t care what it takes.”

*I’ll get her back, and I’ll make damned sure whoever’s keeping her from me pays.*

It was finally the morning of the sports festival, and Ochako’s jaw was on the ground. She, Izuku, Eri and Inko had been sitting at the table, enjoying breakfast when there came a knock at the door. When Inko left to go answer it, Ochako hadn’t thought much of it. So when Inko came back, with All Might and her parents, she was left speechless.

Speechless up until she started screaming, “Mom!? Dad!?”
Mr. Uraraka opened his arms as Ochako rushed to give her parents a hug, “Easy there, kiddo. You’re gonna break me in half.”

Even though he was just as surprised to see Ochako’s parents, Izuku couldn’t help but start to tear up seeing Ochako get so excited to see them. Eri squirmed in his lap as she tried to get away, “Mrs. Midoriya, Izuku is crying again. I’m getting soaked.”

Inko chuckled as she helped Eri get away before she ended up drenched.

Ochako, now over her initial shock at seeing her parents had so many questions for them, “What are you guys doing here? How’d you get here? Did something happen? Is everything okay? What-”

Mrs. Uraraka patted Ochako’s head as she calmed her daughter down, “Nothing’s wrong, dear. We just came to watch you compete in the festival.”

Ochako looked up at them in shock, “Wait you guys came to watch me? But you have a T.V.? Why would you need to come here? The ticket price alone is like…”

Ochako trailed off as she started trying to figure out just how much it would cost to come here, but stopped when her dad just grinned and said, “Well we had to come down here so we could get into the stadium.”

“Into the...Wait? Wait, you bought tickets to watch the sports festival!? But those are so-”

“Actually Young Uraraka, I happened to get some box tickets from work and I thought it would be nice if your parents joined Inko me and Eri for the day.”

Mr. Uraraka smiled, “there was no way we’d miss the chance to watch you on your big day.”

“This is so awesome!” Ochako cheered.

Izuku looked over at Eri sitting in his mother’s lap, “Are you excited to get to go to the Sports
Festival too, Eri?"

“I’ll get to watch Izuku and Ochako play games?”

“Yes.”

“Then I’m super excited!” Eri balled up her hands and waved them over her head as she cheered.

Izuku smiled, “And there are lots of foods that you’ll get to try. You’re going to have so much fun.”

“Food?”

“Yes, I’m sure there will be lots of treats and candies too.”

“Really!?” Eri started to bounce a little in Inko’s lap as she got more and more excited.

As everyone in class sat around, waiting for the call to enter the arena, Izuku was doing his best not to freak out as the weight of the day’s upcoming event felt like it was starting to crush him. He could hear some of his fellow classmates talking about what they thought the events were going to be. Some were just focused on making sure they were ready for anything and didn’t much care what they had to face, like Ochako sitting next to him. Then there were some that didn’t look bothered at all. Katsuki was sitting silently by himself and Himiko was humming to herself on the other side of the table.

“Hey, Deku?”

Izuku looked up to see Ochako looking at him seriously, “Yeah, Uraraka?”

“We’re probably going to end up competing against each other today, aren’t we?”
It wasn’t a question. One way or another, they were going to have to go up against each other today. Be it during the first two rounds sport challenges, or the final round in the tournament. While there had been many things Izuku had been thinking about today-- needing to make a good impression on the world, using this day as an opportunity to finally move past Katsuki and making sure he made All Might proud-- The fact that he and Ochako were not going to be together today had been something he had gone out of his way not to think about. Which in hindsight might not have been the wisest idea he had ever had. Leaving the issue to be unresolved until a few minutes until the sports festival was going to start, did not leave him a lot of time to come to terms with the idea.

“Yeah, I guess we probably will at some point.”

For a few seconds neither of them said anything. They were both so used to working together at this point that working against each other was an unsettling thought. Izuku felt a pain in his chest, he knew that for Ochako, this day boiled down to a great chance to further her goal of helping her family. Ochako also felt her insides twist-- Izuku had a responsibility that no one else here knew about, and he wanted today to be a chance to settle some serious problems. That they could end up being the reasons why their friend’s hopes and goals didn’t happen was not a pleasant thought for either. However, while the idea of getting in the way of their friends goals was distasteful, the thought of not accomplishing their own goals was even more unpalatable. They had to make the most of this day.

Just like everyone else in class.

Just like everyone else in the school.

They both understood that.

So in the end it was simple. Today, sooner or later, one way or another, they were going to be enemies.

So in the end, it came down to something simple.

Was their friendship strong enough to deal with today?

Did they respect each other enough to make the other earn their goal?
Of course it was, and of course they did.

“Uraraka,” Izuku started to say. Turning in his chair so that he could face her, “If, if we do end up facing each other, I’m not going to hold back. I came here to win today.”

Ochako turned and faced Izuku, her face an exact mirror of his. Jaw set, and eyes filled with determination, “Same here Deku. I’m going to go out there and win. I won’t let anyone stop me, even you.”

Both looked at each other, and slowly twin smiles formed on their faces that matched their determination. Izuku held out his hand, which Ochako took in a very firm handshake that Izuku returned in kind. When they both let go, they swore that some kind of weight had been lifted off their hearts. Everything else was still pushing down on them, but this singular worry wasn’t part of it anymore.

“Besides,” Izuku added with a small chuckle, “If it did hold back, you’d kick my butt.”

“During or after the festival?”

“Both.”

“Damn right.”

Izuku’s eyes bulged and he started to laugh, “Wow, you must be really in the zone. I don’t think I’ve ever heard you curse before.”

Ochako made a small eep, while ignoring the looks that both Himiko and Hitoshi were giving her. When Izuku wasn’t looking, she put a finger to her lips to shush them both.

*Neither of you say a fucking thing! Or I swear you’re both going to the moon!*

The door to the waiting room opened and Tenya stuck his head in, “Everyone we will be leaving soon for the opening ceremony. Please get ready!”
As everyone started to get up and get ready, Izuku was not prepared when someone called his name.

“Midoriya.”

Turning around, Izuku was shocked to find Shouto standing in front of him. His cold eyes practically pierced into him. A few other students stopped to see what was happening. Ochako and Himiko glanced between the two, while Katsuki looked over his shoulder. It was rare for Shouto to speak, period. Much less to someone else in the class.

“Todoroki? Did you need something?”

Izuku tried not to show how unnerved he was. The look in Shouto’s eyes was unsettling.

“You have a strong Quirk, and you’ve been trained very well. However, I still think rationally, that I’m stronger than you.”

Now everyone in the room was paying attention.

“You told us yourself that your quirk doesn't work on people. You said that it amplifies the issues you have when you use it, so by your own admission, your Quirk has flaws. I can use my Quirk against a person without issue. That gives me the advantage.”

“I-I guess you could see it that way.” Izuku wasn’t sure how to respond to this. He hadn’t ever talked to the other boy before, so suddenly having a conversation like this was leaving him very confused.

What exactly is he trying to say to me?

“But despite these flaws, you’ve got the attention of All Might, don’t you?”

Izuku went stiff, “I...wha...?”
“He clearly has some interest in you, but I’m not going to pry into that. What matters is that he is interested in you. That’s why I’m going to beat you.”

“Holy crap, did the best in class just make a declaration of war?”

“Wow Midoriya has got Todoroki as an enemy. Sucks to be him.”

“Technically, aren’t we all enemies?”

“Yeah, but he’s gunning for Midoriya.”

“I see frozen vegetables in the future.”

While most of the class was still shocked, a few frowned at Shouto. Hitoshi moved over to put himself between Izuku and Shouto, “Why are you picking a fight now when we’re about to start?”

“Yeah man,” Eijirou added, “That’s not the right way to do it at all.”

Shouto shrugged them off and walked away, “I’m not here to make friends. So why does it matter if I don’t do it the right way.”

“Todoroki, wait.” Izuku called out to the other boy, “I don’t know why you think I have some connection to All Might, or why that makes you think you have to beat me, but don’t forget that everyone here is aiming to win. And don’t think for one second that I’m not going to give it everything I have. You may have a powerful Quirk, but that doesn’t guarantee that you’ll win. You aren’t the only one that’s strong.”

Soon the call came for the class to make their way to the arena. As they walked down the hall, Izuku couldn’t help but wonder just why Shouto had made the connection between himself and All Might.

“I mean it’s not that hard,” Tsuyu said, “He pulled you aside for lunch, and he’s helping you with
“But,” Ochako quickly countered, “That’s only because Deku got hurt so bad during the attack. He was just making sure he recovered and was checking up on him. It’s all coincidental.”

“You two were trained by someone that works at his agency too,” Hitoshi added.

“Again, that’s a coincidence!”

“Yeah? How many coincidences does it take before something is just a fact?” Himiko asked.

Izuku waved her off, “Come on Toga. A fact? It’s more like a conspiracy theory. There’s nothing going on between my and All Might.

“Uh-huh.” Himiko trailed off, not hiding the fact she wasn’t completely convinced.

“What I wonder is, why does the fact that Tordorki thinks you have a connection with All Might, make him want to beat you so badly?” Tenya wondered.

“Maybe since his dad is the number two hero, he feels he has to beat you because All Might as the current number one has his eye on you, kero. A stand in for All Might’s son.”

Any further discussion on the topic soon became too hard. As they got closer to the large entrance the noise from the crowd outside drowned out everyone’s voice.

On several giant monitors hanging above the stands, Present Mic popped onto the screen, “HEY! Are you all ready!?"

A loud cheer from the crowd made the hero smile brightly, “EXCELLENT! It’s time for this year’s high school festival you all know and love to get started! The first year students are about to take the stage! Give them all a loud welcome!”
From the high box suite seat, Eri watched the crowd cheer while sitting in Inko lap, “Look! Look there are so many people!”

“That’s right. Everyone loves to watch the sports festival.”

Eri’s eyes lit up, “And they’re all here to watch Izuku and Ochako too?”

All Might smirked from his chair, “That’s right.”

“YAY!”

Mr. and Mrs. Uraraka laughed at the excited little girl. Mrs. Uraraka reached over and handed Eri another caramel apple, which Eri happily took. “You are such a little cutie.”

Another loud roar from the crowd drew the group's attention as down below, long lines of students began to enter the arena. Eri looked down then up towards the giant screen looking for Ochako and Izuku.

Present Mic’s voice echoed over everyone, “First up, we have class 1-A! These young warriors are the ones that overcame a villainous attack! If there was anyone to watch for, it would be this group of rising stars!”

Cameras panned over the group until Eri let out a little cheer when they passed over Izuku and Ochako, “There they are!”

While Eri cheered, Mr. Uraraka put a hand over his mouth to stifle a laugh, “That poor boy looks like he’s a little freaked out.”

All Might nodded. “Being in front of such a large crowd can be… intimidating.”

Mrs. Uraraka elbowed her husband in the side, “you be nice.”
More classes were called out, though some of the students in them were a little put off that their class’ intro was not as flashy as the first one was. Soon, all the students were grouped up in the middle of the stage, ready to begin the festival. They were soon joined by the judge of the event, Midnight. Getting up on the stage, she looked over the group of students and smiled, looking forward to the show they were about to put on. Raising her hand up, she brought it and her whip down with a loud crack, calling for quiet from the crowd and the gathered students. Himiko couldn’t help but groan at some of the looks a lot of the boys and some of the girls were giving Midnight, but at least they weren’t as bad as some of the cat calls she heard from the stands.

*Of course she’s the freaking judge today. Just great.*

“Today, before the first round is selected, we will have the speech from the student representing the first years. He placed first in the entrance practical exam with a total score of 109! Midoriya Izuku of class 1-A! Come up and give your opening speech!”

Izuku blinked, not sure he had just heard right, *wait what?*

“Oh Deku, I didn’t know you were going to be giving a...speech...Deku?” Ochako had started off excited, but that was quickly drowned out when she turned and looked at Izuku. Who looked just about ready to die.

“Deku? What’s wrong?”

Up above in the box suites, while Inko waited excitedly to hear her son give his speech, All Might was doing everything in his power not to freak out.

*Oh my god. Oh my god I forgot to tell him about the speech. I was supposed to tell him when we had lunch weeks ago! HOW COULD I FORGET!??*

“Toshinori, I had no idea Izuku was going to have to give a speech today. Something like that would normally make him so nervous and a wreck for days. But I never saw him freaked out. My little boy must be growing up faster than I thought.”

All Might didn’t trust himself to say *anything* at the moment. So he just smiled and nodded.

And prayed that if Izuku figured out he had forgotten he would be able to forgive him by the end of
the day, or that Ochako didn’t find out about this at all. Because she would kill him.

Chapter End Notes

And here we are folks! Its time for the Sports Festival! I can not believe I'm finally here. It only took over 250k words and a year and change >.< I hope you all enjoyed the new chapter and you are all looking forward to what comes next. Like Izuku's speech. You know, sometimes I think I'm a little bit to mean to the poor boy. Then I remember what's to come and laugh. I'd like to leave a big thank you to everyone that have been leaving me such nice comments! Love you all so much!

A big thank you to my beta reader Tmalasia! Thanks for adding all those commas!

As always, If you liked what you read, or you have some critiques, please feel free to leave a comment or review!
If You Can Dodge a Wrench...

Chapter Summary

It's time for the first event of the U.A. Sports Festival! To whittle down two hundred students, the survivors better be ready to take a beating. Of course for Izuku, this all assumes he makes it to the first event, and doesn't die on his way to the podium.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Today, before the first round is selected, we will have the speech from the student representing the first years. He placed first in the entrance practical exam with a total score of 109! Midoriya Izuku of class 1-A! Come up and give your opening speech!”

Izuku blinked, not sure he had just heard Midnight right, wait what?

“Oh Deku, I didn’t know you were going to be giving a...speech...Deku?”

Ochako had started off excited, but that was quickly drowned out when she turned and looked at Izuku, who looked just about ready to die.

“Deku? What’s wrong?”

“No one told me!” Izuku scream-whispered to Ochako.

Ochako tilted her head to the side, “No one told you what?”

Already sweating, Izuku finished, “No one told me I had to give a speech!”

No one told Deku he had to...oh my god.

“Midoriya Izuku! Hurry up! We don’t have time to wait around!”
Gulping loudly, Izuku robotically made his way up to the stage, while Ochako covered her mouth in horror. Feeling so sorry for her friend, she couldn’t help but wonder how this had happened.

*How could this have happened? A teacher should have told him, but no one ever came to...see him...Noooooooo... He wouldn’t. He couldn’t! ALL MIGHT, WHAT DID YOU DO!!*

While Ochako came to terms that she might have to kill All Might today, Izuku made it to the stage where Midnight was waiting for him. With every step closer to the stage and microphone izuku tried to desperately come up with something to say.

*I could just say I’m going to win...No, that’ll just make everyone hate me. Maybe I should just say the school motto. Plus Ultra!...Kill me. Someone kill me. Nomu? Where’s Nomu? There has to be some villain watching right now like All Might said. Please just show up and end me....*

When Izuku reached the microphone he stopped and held his breath. He hadn’t been there for more than a second, but in his quickening mind it was an eternity. A chance to think about that last thought a little more. He recalled his talk with All Might. How he was supposed to use today to show the world that the future was bright. That the next generation's number one hero was right in front of them.

*But that’s still just about me...Unless I can make it about...*

Closing his eyes, Izuku took a deep breath. If he stalled any longer, it was going to be obvious that something was up. He just had to speak from the heart, and hope he didn’t stutter too much.

“T-today, today myself, my classmates and the rest of the first year students are here to compete in our school’s sports festival. An event we are told we will only get to do three times in our lives. But two weeks ago, something happened that almost made this day not happen at all.”

As Izuku’s voice echoed from the microphone, a cold feeling fell over the students of 1-A, while the crowd in the stands who had been listening restlessly became more subdued at the mention of the somber topic.

“Two weeks ago, U.A. was... my class was attacked by a group of villains. These villains didn’t think twice about hurting us. Robbing us of our lives. Robbing us of our futures. That is what they wanted to do. To rob us of our future.”
Ochako closed her eyes; the image of a kind boy, limp and broken in her arms flashed in her mind, making her stomach twist.

“That’s what they wanted to do.”

That line made Ochako open her eyes and look up at Izuku as he kept going.

“That’s what they wanted to do, but we are still here!

The crowd started to get restless again. A wave of new excitement moving through them.

“We are the next generation of heroes. We are the future, and one day it will be our responsibility to take up the burden of those here now and carry on their legacies.”

From up high in the box suits, All might felt a great pride swell inside of him.

“We are the future that those villains couldn’t stop! We are the future that won’t be stopped! Today, we will show you all that the future is in good hands. Today, we will show you, and anyone watching, that the future is bright, and no darkness will ever dim it. We are the future, and we will rise to any challenge that is put in our way!”

Izuku raised his fist high into the air, “PLUS ULTRA!”

Ochako punched her fist into the air, “PLUS ULTRA!”

Quickly all the students, even Himiko with an eye roll and Katsuki with a groan, had their fists in the air and the school cry of Plus Ultra was echoing throughout the stadium.

As the crowd cheered, Izuku bowed and quickly got off the stage and made his way back to his class. He got more than a few thumbs-ups and claps on the back from his classmates and a pair of huge grins from ochako and Himiko.
“Not bad, Izuku. How long did it take you to come up with that little speech?”

Izuku blushed and rubbed the back of his head at Himiko’s question, “Oh you know...it was mostly just stuff off the top of my head, ha ha ha.”

Ochako snickered into her hand. Now that it was over, she decided that she wasn’t going to punish All Might right away. She would give him the chance to defend himself.

Then, she’d punish him.

Severely.

With a crack of her whip, Midnight spoke over the students gathered, “It’s time to select the first event of the day! Think of this as your first qualifier! Right now, there are a little over two-hundred-and-twenty of you students. When this event is done, only thirty-two of you will be moving on. Let this first event be a harsh reminder of how life truly is.”

The entire student body tensed hearing that. Only just over an eighth of them would be able to advance to the next round. It was a daunting reality check that made everyone glance at their neighbor nervously.

“Now let’s see what the first event is! What does fate have in store for you all?”

Behind Midnight, a large holographic screen suddenly popped up, and multiple events began to flicker and spin like a slot machine.

“This year it’s…”

The screen stopped spinning, on its selection.

Dodgeball.
“...this!”

While the students talked amongst themselves, a large section of the wall separating the stands and the area below opened up revealing hollow compartments lined with balls of varying sizes and colors. Midnight smirked and held up a small remote, clicking it, the balls vibrated and jostled around before flying into the air and encircling the whole arena where they hovered, ominously. The intimidating sight was enough to make everyone quiet down. Midnight approved of their fear and held out her hand where one of the balls flew over for her to catch.

“The game is dodgeball, but don’t go thinking U.A. would just let it be something as simple as that.”

The screen behind her changed reflecting what she said.

“First off, this is a free-for-all that will last 10 minutes. The main objective is to not get hit with these. They are fully autonomous and will seek you out. There are also several different sizes.” She tossed the basket-ball-sized dodgeball into the air, where a very large beach-ball-sized dodgeball replaced it. A few students winced at the idea of getting hit by that one, “Some of them are big boys like this, and some…”

There was a high-pitched whistle as something shot through the air right over their head and came to a quick stop to hover right besides Midnight. This dodgeball was much smaller, barely the size of a ping pong ball, “...are very small, and hard to see.”

Izuku eyed that last one with worry. While the bigger balls looked more intimidating, at least you’d be able to see them coming. Those smaller ones, though; those were going to be tricky.

“So here are the rules of the game. Each time you are hit, you will get a point. Like golf, you don’t want a high score. And don’t worry, these have been programmed not to hit you at fatal speeds. Of course, that doesn't mean it's still not going to hurt if you get hit. So, rule number one: you are allowed to use your Quirks to do whatever you can to not get hit. Rule number two--” the image behind Midnight changed to show a top down view of the stadium with a bright flashing ring around it-- “you may not step foot outside the perimeter of the building.”

There was a pause as Midnight stopped talking and the students waited for the rest of the rules.
Ochako glanced nervously at a few of her classmates, who shared her nervousness.

*There has to be more to it than just that. Those rules are basically, do whatever you can to win, just don’t leave the building!? That’s crazy!*

They were horrified, however, when they realized that there was nothing else as Midnight raised the remote up above her head.

*Oh this...this is gonna be bad.*

With a sadistic smile, Midnight pressed the button as she screamed, “AND GO!”

A moment later, all hell broke loose.

When Midnight held up the remote, Izuku immediately realized the danger he was in. It wasn’t just the balls that were about to go on the attack. It was the fact that everyone was grouped together without enough room to really move about, let alone dodge. For Izuku, at least the very first test of this event became crystal clear.

*I need space!*

“AND GO!”

*Rule number one, you’re allowed to use your Quirks to do whatever you can not to get hit!*

In a flash of green light, Izuku did just that. Using his Quirk on everything in front him, he *shoved* as hard as he could pushing several students aside. After getting the breathing room he needed, Izuku darted forward, running as fast as he could to get out of the crowd before the inevitable happened.
Panic and a stampede.

Anyone caught up in that group was going to be a sitting duck, stuck and unable to move and protect themselves.

His initial psychokinetic shove had given him a good opening, and he was almost able to reach the other edge of the crowd into the open field of the arena, but as he had predicted, the panic had set in, and the opening was closing fast. With only a few feet left until he hit open ground, the gap snapped shut as two large students slammed into him, trapping him between the two as they started to get swallowed by the crowd.

*But why were they running back into the crowd? What could...oh no!*

Izuku’s head snapped up and saw what had got the two students running back. Several large dodgeballs were flying right at them.

*They got herded back trying to not get hit! Now I’m stuck!*  

Izuku needed to get out quickly and he needed to make sure he wasn’t hit by the incoming attack. At first, Izuku focused his Quirk as he got ready to catch the incoming balls, but after a quick decision narrowed his range. Grabbing the balls in the middle of the pack, and grunting as he forced them to stop, Izuku flinched as the other balls sailed past him and slammed into the two students at his side, knocking them off their feet and freeing him finally from the large group. The dodgeball he was holding wretched itself free of his hold, but bolted back up into the air, looking for a new target.

Glancing back behind himself, he winced as he watched students crawling over each other as they ran around not knowing what to do. However, while Izuku was out of the group, he was not the only one. He saw several of his classmates making their escape as well. With a loud blast, Katsuki launched himself over the heads of the students and propelled himself away. Momo created a massive pole from her hand to pole vault out, and before he turned back, he saw Dark Shadow pulling Fumikage free. He almost let his eyes linger for longer, waiting to see if Ochako had freed herself as well, but he knew he couldn’t afford to be distracted now.

Refocusing his attention back to the game, Izuku kept his head on a swivel as he kept moving. By now, the dodgeballs were zipping through the air, moving in erratic loops and twists before suddenly diving sharply to slam into unfortunate students.
“AND GO!”

The moment Midnight signaled the start of the round, Ochako tapped her fingers against herself and launched herself up, and over the rest of the students. Reaching out in a hurry and grabbing the first head of hair she could-- and judging by how pointy and full of product it was it was obviously Eijirou’s-- she yanked herself forward over the rest of the crowd. Grabbing head after head, she pulled and threw herself right across the swarm of bodies.

*Lightning bolt, feathers, horns, buns…*

Ochako totally did not give the buns of blonde hair an extra twist as she kept pulling herself along.

Honest.

The cry of ouch was just a coincidence.

Totally just a coincidence.

As she got closer to the edge, Ochako was very aware that she was an open target for the dodgeballs. As tempting as it was to grab a random student and use them as a human shield, she wasn’t that heartless.

Fortunately, she made it to the edge of the crowd without getting targeted. Tapping her fingers together, Ochako landed on the ground and took off. Not far behind her, she felt the temperature in the air drop suddenly as Shouto skated by, using his ice to part the students and leaving many frozen to the ground. Ochako winced at those unlucky enough to get caught. She winced even harder when she watched a few of them then get pelted by dodgeballs. Turning her attention away from the crowd, Ochako looked around trying to see if anything was headed for her.

And there were.

Leaping to the side, Ochako dodged the first strike as the ball embedded itself into the grass, ripping out chunks of dirt as it launched back up into the air.
“YEAH! Look at those kids go! The first match of this year's Sports Festival is just underway and already I can tell we got ourselves a bunch of showmen! Listeners at home, the energy these kids are giving off is out of this world!”

“...”

Present Mic sighed as he glanced over at his co host, “Which is more than I can say for some people. Come on! Give us a cheer!”

Aizawa didn’t even bother to turn his head to look at Present Mic and answered with a simple, “No.”

“Ah ha ha ha. He’s a great kidder, everyone! So how about you explain today's event to the listeners? Like our lady judge said, it's more than just a simple game of dodgeball.”

“Sigh, fine. You’re right, this match is more than just dodging. In order to move onto the next round, the students are going to have to demonstrate several skills. Though for simplicity's sake, it can be best summed up into three. First is an awareness of their surroundings. Not only will the students need to be aware of where the dodgeballs are, but also where their fellow students are. You noticed that several students immediately moved to separate themselves from the group.”

“That's right! I’m sure there are viewers at home who found that a little weird.”

“They recognized the disadvantage of being bunched together. While some began to worry about getting hit, the ones that were aware of their surroundings knew they had to move.”

Present Mic nodded, “I saw a lot of your students high tailing it out of there. Seems like they knew what was up. They don’t want to worry about dealing with each other while dealing with the dodgeballs. So what's next?”
“Endurance. They will be under a constant assault for the next few minutes. If they expend too much energy early on, they’ll be too tired when the-”

“Hey! Hey now hold on! No spoilers for what's next!”

“... Fine. Basically, they need to be able to know when to attack and how hard to avoid getting too tired too quickly.”

“Makes perfect sense. So what’s number three? Don’t keep the listeners in suspense!”

“It’s their ability to be creative. Remember, there are only two rules for this event. That gives everyone down there a lot of room to figure out how to win.”

“Well listeners, there you have it-- broken down just for you. Now lets see what students down there will be able to come out on top!”

Izuku wasn’t totally sure, but after slamming one of the larger dodgeballs into the rest that were rocketing towards him, he swore that he was getting targeted more frequently. At the start of the match, he would at least have some time to scan the field to look for any incoming danger and act then. Now though, the frequency of the attacks left him very little time to react. No sooner had he dodged out of the way on one attack then he was desperately trying to pull the dodgeballs out of there paths. He didn’t have time to focus on one long enough to actually catch it anymore. Izuku also wasn’t the only one starting to struggle.

Fumikage had Dark Shadow working furiously to destroy any dodgeball that came close to him, but even he was starting to miss, leaving Fumikage to hop around trying not to get hit.

Denki was zapping everything that got near, but the other boy was starting to pant form the effort. He was also looking a little off. His eyes were not really focused on anything and he had a googly smile.

Maybe the dodgeballs don’t go after people with high points? It’s be unfair if people in the other classes kept getting clobbered...though Midnight sensei did say this match wasn’t supposed to be
“FUCKING! DIE!”

Izuku flinched as a large explosion went off to his side as he was forced to cover himself from the dirt and, much to his surprise, ice.

“Would you stop destroying my defences?”

Katsuki growled as he got right into Shouto’s face, “Half-and-Half I swear, you put another damned ice wall in my way, and the next blast I make will make both sides of your face match!!”

“Then you should move somewhere else with less ice.” Shouto replied dryly as he once again began to create more walls of ice around himself.

“Okay that’s it! I’m shoving my boot right up your-!’

CRACK!

Katsuki was violently cut off when one of the smaller dodgeballs slammed into his forehead, dropping the boy to the ground in a daze, and leaving a nice red mark when it had hit. Roaring out a string of curses, Katsuki lifted his hands up and while still flat on his back, fired off one of the biggest explosions Izuku had ever seen, disintegrating the small dodgeball as it tried to escape back into the air.

The resulting blast shattered large sections of the ice walls Shouto had been making, creating the perfect opening for a dodgeball to slip past and drive itself into his side.

While Izuku was tempted to continue watching, he knew he couldn’t afford to. Even though seeing Katsuki get laid out was a sight to behold. Turning his attention back to the game, Izuku realized, much to his horror, that there were now several enormous dodgeballs flying right for him, and they were too close for him to try and stop them with his Quirk.

Stupid! I got distracted!
Reaching out in a hurry, Izuku grabbed some of the large, table-sized shards of ice and yanked them in front of himself, just in time for the balls to collide with the hastily put up shield. The force of the hit splintered the ice and sent a nasty jolt into Izuku’s head, but it had done the trick and stopped the balls as they bounced off.

At least for a few seconds.

That few seconds was all Izuku needed. Grabbing the two balls at the ends, Izuku smashed them and the ball between them together. With a satisfied sigh, Izuku was about to let the broken scrap fall to the ground when a scream caught his ear.

“Ah! Oh no! Oh no!”

Izuku blinked.

That voice? That’s—!

“Uraraka!?”

Looking around, Izuku spotted Ochako running and dodging as multiple dodgeballs swooped by and dive bombed her. She was twisting and turning as she ran, putting her training under Gunhead to good use, but there was little she was going to be able to do against such a swarm.

Hearing her name, Ochako looked over at Izuku startled. Then her eyes widened and she stopped dodging and took off in a dead sprint, right for him.

“DEKU!”

Instinct took over for Izuku as he took the smashed scrap, lifted it up and took aim.

“SMASH!”
Firing the debris right over Ochako’s head, Izuku shredded the swarm. Ochako however didn’t stop running and dove into Izuku, tackling him backwards and to the ground. A split second later, a ball slammed right into the ground where he had been standing. Rolling off Izuku, Ochako grabbed a piece of debris and raised it above her head before hammering it into the ball over and over again until the ball was just padding, wires, and sparks.

With a huff, Ochako discarded the remains and reached over to help Izuku up

“You okay, Deku?”

Izuku nodded as he took Ochako’s hand, “Yeah thanks. I didn’t even see that one.”

“Well, you were a little busy helping me. Thank you by the way.”

Izuku shrugged, flashing her a quick smile, “Well, Midnight sensei never said we couldn’t help each oth-”

A loud alarm rang throughout the stadium, grabbing everyone’s attention. Midnight, from her judge’s podium, smirk deviously, “You’ve all done well to make it to the halfway point! But that’s enough foreplay. It’s time for the main event.”

*That doesn’t sound good.*

Raising her hand high, she pressed a button on the remote. Like before a section of wall separating the arena and stands opened up to release dodgeballs that soared into the sky.

Then another section of the wall opened up.

Then another.

And another

Soon all around the arena, hundreds of multicolored dodgeballs swarmed into the center of the
arena, becoming a writhing, almost living, cloud.

There was an audible silence from the students as they looked at the monstrosity before them. Then sticking her head out from between a group of punch drunk students, Himiko took one look at the swarm and summed up everyone's thoughts.

“Oh, what the actual fuck!?”

The only warning the students had of the attack was when the swarm froze in place for a second, going deathly quiet. The cloud then exploded outward, sending tendrils of dodgeballs in every direction. One of those tendrils was headed right for Izuku and Ochako. Izuku’s mind raced as the swarm got closer. He knew that the U.A. Sports Festival could be a bit mad. Last year, they had mined their own obstacle race. But this was just completely nuts. He could hear Ochako behind him screaming they needed to run, but that wasn’t going to work.

Run where? We’re in the open. Either we’ll run around until this overtakes us, or we’ll run into more students and then we all get pummeled.

Izuku felt his legs lock up as he dug his shoes into the grass. With the front of the swarm yards away, Izuku took one deep breath, and slammed his Quirk against the front of the oncoming wave. The front of the tendril came to a sudden halt as Izuku grabbed as many balls as he could. Unfortunately while he was able to stop the front ones, the horde behind slammed into them and pushed them onward, breaking Izuku’s hold. He tried again, but again his hold was broken. Like Newton's cradle, the collision from behind transferred too much energy for Izuku to overcome. He could slow the swarm down, but he wasn’t going to be able to stop it. Around him, he could see and hear groups of students get overcome.

If I don’t think of something soon, that’s going to be me soon! Come on think!

“Deku!”

Startled, Izuku glanced back and was shocked to see that Ochako was still right behind him.

“Wait, Uraraka? You’re still here?”

With a resigned look on her face, accepting that the two of them were about to get pretty beat up, she just shrugged, “Not like there’s anywhere to escape to now.”
She was right of course. Even though the arena was huge, they were trapped. There wasn’t anywhere now that didn’t have the dodgeball drones. They just didn’t have the room to avoid them.

*If only there was a way to get some space. But down here it’s just...impossible...*

Inside Izuku’s head, some gears clicked into place.

*Down here...*

And started to turn.

On a whim. Izuku looked up. And saw a clear blue sky.

*Oh...Oh! OH!* 

Izuku remembered rule number one of the event. You are allowed to use your Quirks to do whatever you can to not get hit.

*Whatever you can to not get hit.*

“URARAKA! FLOAT US!”

Ochako jumped as Izuku’s scream, “Eh?

The swarm was getting closer. He needed to move now or his plan was not going to work.

“Uraraka, float us! Hurry! Remember USJ?”
Ochako blinked, trying to recall just what Izuku was talking about. She remembered him holding back the villains. Pulling herself and the others to safety, against her wishes. Then a look crossed her face as she remembered the last thing he did that day. The one thing that pissed her off more than anything else.

*Deko used my quirk so that he could fl...oh my god. OH MY GOD!*

Ochako sprinted forward reaching out her hand, she tapped his back while at the same time touching her hip. Her quirk took effect, just as the swarm finally broke free of Izuku’s hold and broke over them.

“**Oh man oh man! What a show. What started out as a battle of attrition is now a mad fight for survival! Let’s hope those kids down there weren’t starting to relax just because they were doing better than some other, cause I’ll let you listeners in on a little secret. Those dodgeballs have a nasty little program installed in them. Once the halfway point is reached, how they pick their target changes. Now, they’re going to be looking for those special few that have the lowest score! That’s right ladies and gentleman, those over-achievers are about to have their hands full!”**

Present Mic clapped his hands dramatically as he delivered the update to everyone watching. This brought a huge cheer from the crowd, happy to know that the event was still wide open, and wasn’t going to get boring. While he gave commentary, Aizawa kept an eye on his students. Watching to see how they would react to this. It was an overwhelming force they were having to deal with now, and he was sure many of them were already feeling the effects of the first half of the match. How they acted now to minimize their score would be very telling.

“**EH?! Hey what’s that green light over on the other side of the field?”**

Present Mic leaned forward in his seat as he peered out. Aizawa followed his gaze and saw that the swarm of dodgeballs was now glowing bright green. On a whim, he glanced down at the electronic scorecard and raised an eyebrow.

*Well would you look at-

Aizawa’s thought was cut off when the bright light exploded, pushing the balls back and a bright green streak shot up into the air.*
“WHOA WHOA WHOA!!! What is that!?”

“Mrs. Midoriya! Look! Look at that!” Eri bounced in her chair pointing excitedly out the window.

Inko’s jaw hung open at what she saw. Mr and Mrs. Uraraka had similar looks of shock and awe. All Might, however, had the biggest grin on his face as he watched the green streak go higher and higher into the air.

*Well that's one way to stand out, you two!*

When the balls had fallen around them, Izuku gritted his teeth and did his best to hold them back far enough that he and Ochako had room to get themselves ready. Once he felt her arms wrap around his shoulder, he made sure that he had a grip on her with his Quirk, then with a hard push, forced the dodgeballs around them to part. Creating an opening that was just big enough for them to escape from. Rocketing upward, Izuku and Ochako soared into the sky until they came to a stop near the middle of the stadium. Far above the swarm of dodgeballs.

“Oh wow! Oh wow, Deku! We made it!” Ochako cheered loudly.

Izuku just started laughing, elated that his plan had worked, “I can’t believe that worked. Oh wow, we are pretty high up here aren’t we.”

While Izuku glanced around nervously as he realized just how high they were, Ochako’s arms tightened as she leaned forward over his shoulder. So he could see her, “And what do you mean you’re surprised ?”

“Er…”

“WOW! Would you look at that! Looks like we got a couple of rising stars here listeners!”
Hearing Present Mic’s voice over the loudspeakers, both looked up and were surprised to see themselves on the giant screen around the stadium. All the camera’s were pointed right at them. Izuku could feel his stomach twist a little nervously, but before he could think too hard on the fact, Ochako began to tap his shoulder furiously, “Deku! Deku below us! Look!”

Looking down, Izuku gasped. The dodgeballs they had escaped from were rocketing upwards for them.

“Uraraka, hold on!”

“Fly! Go go go!”

In a bright flash, Izuku took off, juking and ducking as balls rocketed around them. Even though the number of balls was still the same as it had been moments before, the added three dimensional movement gave the two a huge advantage. And Izuku was taking full advantage of it. Ochako was also having the time of her life soaring through the air, even if she grunted at some of the sudden turns. She was sure that even a few months ago her stomach wouldn't have been able to handle the strain of using her Quirk on herself and the dogfight she was in.

Rocketing over the arena, Izuku couldn’t keep the bright smile off his face. Even though he was still in the match, this feeling was just not something he could ignore. It was so different than before, when he had thrown himself at Tomura.

“Deku, turn left!”

Instantly, Izuku reacted to Ochako’s warning and twisted to the side. He felt the large dodgeball sail by, “Great job Uraraka! Keep watching my back please!”

“Always!”

With the reassurance, Izuku looked down trying to see if any more would pop up from beneath them. It also gave him a chance to see how everyone else was doing.

He spotted Mei dashing along the ground, being propelled by her hover soles and a large rocket
pack. From her side, a wire would shoot out into the ground, helping her make a sharp turn or pull her to the side to avoid as many of the dodgeballs as possible.

Tenya was using a similar tactic, using his speed to try and outrun the swarm. Every so often, he was forced to leap over some students so he didn’t break his momentum.

A small group of students were bunched together, though with how they were struggling, it didn’t look like they wanted to be so close. A second look let Izuku see some purple lumps stuck right in the middle of them. As well as a head of messy lavender hair.

Himiko was nowhere to be seen.

“Uraraka, do we still have some behind us?”

Ochako looked over her shoulder, “Oh yeah, there's um,” she started to count but just gave up immediately, “yeah, we got a lot behind us still.”

“Okay, I have an idea to get rid of a few. Hang on tight!”

Taking his advice, Ochako wrapped her legs around his waist, locking her ankles, “Ready!”

Izuku angled down and made a beeline for the wall that surrounded the outer edge of the arena. Pushing his Quirk, he sped up and ripped through the air. With only a few feet separating them and having a head on collision, Ochako watched what came next intently. Not once was she afraid they would hit. She knew that Izuku knew what he was doing.

Most of the time.

At the last possible second, Izuku twisted himself around so he landed feet first against the wall, stopping his momentum just long enough so that he could sharply rocket straight up. The balls following them were not able to make the same turn, slamming into the wall and each other before falling to the ground in heaps of scrap.

Izuku and Ochako climbed higher and higher into the air, flying over the cheering crowd.
“Uraraka.”

“Yeah?”

“Why was this not the first thing we tried after I learned how to use my Quirk after training?”

“...You know, that’s a good question.”

Coming to a stop Izuku surveyed the arena below looking to see if he could spot where the next attack was going to come from.

“Hey Deku, it has to almost be ten minutes right?”

“Maybe? It’s hard to keep track of time when you’re running for your life.”

Ochako chuckled, “I guess. It’d be nice if we were in the clear now at least.”

Izuku gulped as he spotted something down below that made him gulp, “Uraraka, I don’t think that’s going to happen.”

Izuku pointed down and Ochako looked where he had pointed.

Oh that doesn’t look good.

Almost all the remaining dodgeballs that hadn’t been destroyed by the other students were once again converging on each other. Multiple tendrils made up of balls slid around each other, forming a large almost serpent like shape that circled around the perimeter of the arena. The ‘head’ of the mass was facing upwards, right at Izuku and Ochako.

“What are the odds that all of that is coming after us?” Izuku asked, already having a pretty good feeling he knew the answer.
“Yeah I think those things hate us.”

Once the remaining dodgeballs had all converged, the ‘serpent’ stopped moving and was now very obviously pointing itself right towards the two.

“Oh yeah, they hate us,” Izuku agreed.

“Deku fly! Fly!”

Izuku bolted, just as the pillar launched up to chase after them. As it rocketed into the air it split into five ‘fingers’ branching out to entrap the two. Ochako could see this as she looked around frantically for some opening to point Izuku towards.

*Down is out. Left and right? Nope. Can’t go back, and if we keep going forward, we’re gonna run into a wall of those things. The only other way we can go, is to keep going up...*

The image that popped up when Midnight told them all the second rule of the match flashed before Ochako’s eyes. A bright yellow line, encircling the whole stadium. Encircling it.

*And what were Midnight sensei’s exact words? We can’t step foot outside the stadium...*

“Deku, go up!”

“Huh? But if I go any higher, we’ll fly out of the stadium!”

“Exactly! It's the only place that won’t have those darn dodgeballs.”

“But the rules! Midnight sensei said-”

“We can’t step foot outside, she even had the *perimeter* lined out. But she said we can’t *step foot* outside. And that picture never said how high we could go.”
Izuku blinked. His mind raced as he went over what Ochako said. He knew he didn’t have time to go over what she had said in detail. He didn’t even have time to mumble out his thoughts. He had to make a decision right now. So he did the most obvious thing he could.

He listened to Ochako, and rocketed straight up, avoiding the swarm by mere moments, and flew right through the giant opening in the stadium roof.

“HEY! Now hold on one second! They can’t just leave the stadium like that...can they?”

Present Mic was pressed against the glass as he tried to keep an eye on Izuku and Ochako as they soared higher and higher.

“Technically, they haven’t broken either of the rules Midnight laid out.”

Present Mic fell back into his seat, “True, but those two went about finding ways around the rules to an extreme, don’t you think?”

“What was the third skill I told you that the students were going to need to win this match?”

There was an awkward pause as Present Mic scratched at his mustache as he tried to remember what Aizawa said. Groaning in annoyance, Aizawa answered for him, “Creativity.”

“Oh yeah, that's right!”

A loud buzzer went off, signalling the end of the first round. Present Mic grabbed his microphone as he addressed the crowd, “And that’s the signal for the end of the round! Let's hear it for our brave students! Give them a round of applause! We’ll have the results of the match up shortly. Let's see who came out on top!”
Floating back down, Izuku tried really hard not to look at any of the large jumbo screens. Every once in a while one would switch from a panning shot of all the students to them showing his and Ochako’s descent. Without being in the crowd with everyone else, Izuku couldn’t help but feel a little exposed.

Tapping his shoulder, Ochako smiled at him and gave him a thumbs up, “Calm down. We need to stand out anyway, so don’t let it bother you.”

*Man, she always knows what’s bothering me.*

After the buzzer rang, Ochako had gotten off Izuku’s back and was hovering right next to him.

“So we’re doing this again right?”

“Huh?” Izuku blinked at Ochako’s sudden question.

Ochako smiled brightly recalling the entry she had read in Izuku’s hero notebook about the possibility of their Quirks comboing to let them fly, “The flying thing. We could make this a combo move. We’d have to come up with a good name for it.”

Izuku’s cheeks flushed as he smiled at the idea, “Yeah? Sure, that would be great.”

Once their feet were back on the ground, Ochako tapped her fingers together and released them both from her Quirk. Immediately several of their classmates converged on them to congratulate them.

“Dude, that was so cool!”

“So you two can fly now. Yeah that’s fair,” Hitoshi deadpanned.

From behind Minoru pointed up at him angrily, “You don’t get to talk about fairness! You brainwashed me to go make you a human shield! Those guys didn’t even realize I was under your control. They just think I captured them and stuck them together! I’m the bad guy while you get off clean!”
“Exactly.”

Himiko frowned down at Minoru, “I don’t see why you’re complaining so much. You’re probably gonna do pretty well because you got used, so be grateful.”

More than a few members of class 1-A laughed while Minoru huffed indigently.

When the rest of the students had regrouped, Midnight cracked her whip to silence the crowd, “The points have been tallied and the scores finalized! You all showed a lot of spirit today and fought hard. But there can be only one winner...is what I would normally be saying right now.”

A mummer of confusion swept over the crowd and students as they waited for Midnight to explain.

“We have a tie for first place. Two contestants were able to put forth the effort to not only win, but to do so flawlessly. I present to you, your dodgeball champions,” Midnight pointed up at the same time every jumbo screen changed to show the crowd the winners, “Midoriya Izuku and Uraraka Ochako!”

Izuku’s eyes went wide, while Ochako’s jaw dropped. Neither could believe what they had just heard.

*We...won? Deku and I won?...DEKU AND I WON!!!*

Elation filled Ochako as she turned ready to celebrate, “Deku we did i-!” She was cut off as Himiko rushed by and leapt into Izuku, wrapping her arms around his neck.

“Izuku, I knew you were going to win! You’re the best!”

Cheeks burning Izuku stammered out a response, “Th-thank you, Toga. But there are still two mooorrr…”

Izuku trailed off as Himiko pressed herself even tighter against him and her lips grazed his ear.
With each word, he felt Himiko’s hot breath set the skin on his neck on fire, “You need to learn to take your wins when you get them, Izuku. Celebrating isn’t a bad thing. And I’d be more than happy to teach you some fun ways to celebrate.”

Pulling back and giving Izuku a wink and a smirk that just about killed the poor boy, Himiko leisurely walked back towards the crowd, stopping only briefly to turn towards a stunned and shaking Ochako. She flashed her a quick thumbs up and said, “Oh yeah, good job, Ochako.”

That snapped Ochako out of her shock, but before she had a chance to say something to Himiko in front of Izuku that she might regret, someone from the crowd pointed up to the giants screen, “hey look, they’re posting the other podium finishes!”

Everyone else looked up and Ochako almost forgot just how upset she had been that Himiko had gotten so intimately close to Izuku, when she saw the names listed.

1st: Uraraka Ochako / Midoriya Izuku
2nd: Todoroki Shouto
3rd: Bakugou Katsuki

Bakugou got third? Oh that is just perfe-

“WHERE THE FUCK IS THAT SHITTY FUCK?! DEKU, WHERE ARE YOU?!”

You know what, I’m not even shocked he’s going to try and make a scene right now.

Many of the students scurried away as Katsuki burst through them. His eyes instantly fell on Izuku, “What the hell was that shit, Deku!? You think you deserve that first place after the shit you just pulled?!”

As Katsuki marched over to Izuku, Ochako moved to block his path, “Bakugou you need to-”

“Get the fuck out of my way before I blast your fat ass into the stands.”
“Kacchan!” Izuku walked up behind Ochako and put his hand on her shoulder, gently moving her to the side so she wasn’t between the two, “If you have something to say, then hurry up and say it. They’re probably going to announce who’s moving on to the next round soon, so I don’t have time to deal with whatever is bothering you right now.”

The edge in Izuku’s voice raised a few eyebrows from his class. While the girls hadn’t heard this tone before, the boys had. Or at least something similar. While his tone lacked the anger it had before, the tone was very similar to when Izuku had driven home the point to Minoru that he was going to either clean up his act, immediately or suffer the consequences.

Katsuki’s hands were starting to smoke as he got into Izuku’s face, “You don’t deserve that win you, little shit. You aren’t strong enough to fly around like that. You had Round Face over there float the two of you. You had to have fucking help. How pathetic can you get!?”

Izuku waited a few seconds-- waited to see if Katsuki had anything else to add. When it was clear that that was his problem, Izuku sighed. He was shocked by just how tired he was of this conversation already, “Kacchan, are you done being an idiot?”

The crowd was still loud. Present Mic was still broadcasting with his normal exuberance. Most of the students in the area were talking amongst themselves as they waited to see who else was going to go to the next round, but around Izuku and Katsuki everything went dead silent.

Eijirou was looking between the two, ready to step in and separate the two if he had to. He probably had the best chance of shrugging off any of the blasts Katsuki was getting ready to throw. Tenya was stuck; he wanted to get Katsuki to calm down, but he also felt he had a responsibility to reign in Izuku as well. While he couldn't blame him for standing up to his long-time bully, this was bordering on antagonistic, and might result in the both of them getting disqualified for fighting. Ochako’s jaw dropped when Izuku had called Katsuki an idiot. There were many, many different names that could work when talking to Katsuki, None of which she ever expected to hear out of Izuku’s mouth, And while idiot was the kinder of the lot, it was still something she had never expected to hear. At least not so soon.

Katsuki’s brow twitched, and you could see the veins pulsing on the side of his brow, “What. The FUCK. Did you call me?”

Oh...OH my god is this actually happening!? Deku you’re doing this NOW? This is NOT the time or place Deku! If you get into a fight now, you’ll get thrown out!
“Deku, maybe we should—”

Izuku however just started talking, too focused on Katsuki to hear her try and get things calmed down, “You heard what I said, Kacchan. Remember what the *first* rule Midnight sensei said. Do *whatever* it takes to win. And that’s *exactly* what Uraraka and I did. So don’t come screaming at me because you weren’t taking this first match seriously.”

“What!?” Katsuki’s eyes blazed at that, but before he could get another word in, Izuku cut him off.

“I saw you during the match, Kacchan. You weren’t trying to win. You were trying to pick a fight with Todoroki. You were going out of your way to keep running into the walls of ice he was putting up so that you could blow them up.”

A few of the class glanced over at Shouto, who *looked* like he wasn’t paying attention to the conversation.

“Kacchan, listen, I saw you get hit because you weren’t focused on winning. If you had been, I think the *three* of us would have tied for first. We aren’t in elementary or jr. high anymore. We are in high school. We’re in U.A.! It’s time to grow up.”

Izuku walked around Katsuki, not wanting to be where he was anymore, “If you don’t want to recognize the win...fine. I can’t make you. But Kacchan, are you going to make up excuses for the next two events too? Because, like it or not, I’m going to win today.”

________________________________________

“The wait is over! It is time to announce the next event and who will be participating!”

With a snap of her whip, the screen behind Midnight started to spin faster and faster until it came to a sudden stop.

Capture the flag.
“The first event was to see how well you acted when you all out for yourselves. Now it's time to see how you do working as a team! The winners of the first event will be split into four random teams of eight. Now before I explain the rules, let's see what those teams are going to look like!”

The giant screen split up into four large columns, with the words Team A, Team B, Team C and Team D in bold letters at the top. Soon in the eight empty slots underneath each team started to fill out.

**Team A:** Midoriya Izuku, Yanagi Reiko, Iida Tenya, Kaminari Denki, Yaoyorozu Momo, Monoma Neito, Hatsume Mei, Toga Himiko

**Team B:** Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu, Shouji Mezou, Kaibara Sen, Hagakure Tooru, Mineta Minoru, Kamakiri Toharu, Kuroiro Shihai, Tsuburaba Kosei

**Team C:** Bakugou Katsuki, Uraraka Ochako, Todoroki Shouto, Fumikage Tokoyami, Kirishima Eijirou, Ashido Mina, Ojiro Mashirao, Shinso Hitoshi

**Team D:** Kouda Kouji, Jirou Kyouka, Asui Tsuyu, Hanta Sero, Tsunotori Pony, Kendou Itsuka, Honenuki Juuzou, Tokage Setsuna

Izuku felt his stomach twist. His eyes looking over the names in Team C and seeing Ochako’s. He could hear Ochako to his side groan, *loudly*, as she also saw her team. Though, whether it was because she wasn’t on the same team as Izuku or because she was on the same team as Katsuki, he wasn’t sure.

The two of them had already faced the fact that they were going to have to compete against each other, and had promised to give it their all regardless. But it didn’t mean Izuku had to *like* it. He was about to turn and wish her luck when Midnight called out over the crowd of students, “Everyone listed above, you are to stay here while the faculty sets the stage for the second event. If you are not, please return to your assigned student seating. However, don’t forget that even though you were not able to make it to the next round, there are still more festival events you will have a chance to compete in. Midoriya and Uraraka! Both of you come up to the judge's podium immediately.”

Both Izuku and Ochako jumped at their names being called, and hurried up to see Midnight. Upon reaching her podium, Midnight glanced down at the two, “You both did well to find a way to come out on top in the first event. With perfect scores no less. Well done.”

“Thank you, Midnight sensei!” Both said in unison.

“However having two first place winners is a bit of a problem. Only one of you can receive the
reward for coming in first.”

“A reward?” Ochako asked.

“That’s right. It’s a special item for the upcoming event. We only have the one, and having two would make things a bit complicated. So we’re going to have to figure who gets it.”

Midnight paused. She had half-expected the other to offer the reward to their friend. She knew that was the kind of people they were. From observing them during class and from the updates she was able to squeeze out of Himiko during their therapy sessions. However, neither made such an offer, and that brought an almost predatory smile to Midnight’s face, “Good, you both have the right mindset right now. You both want to win. Don’t you?”

Both of them nodded.

“So let’s get this settled.” Midnight held up her hand, and showed the two a large coin. She flipped it once in her hand so they could see that the two sides were different, “Heads, and tails.”

She then flipped the coin high into the air before either had a chance to really realize what was happening, “Uraraka, call it!”

“EH!? Um! Heads!”

Midnight snatched the coin out of the air and slapped it onto the top of her hand. Removing her hand, she showed the two, and cameras the coins face.

It was tails.

“Yes!” Izuku cheered while Ochako crossed her arms and grumbled.

“Best two-out-of-three?” Ochako asked hopefully.

“Sorry, but no. Now Midoriya,” Midnight opened a box she had to her side and pulled out a black
“You hold onto this. I’ll explain everything once the area is ready.”

While the rest of the students left the arena, the ones that had passed the first round were now grouped up with their teams as they waited for the arena to get set up. First, crews came out and using white chalk on the grass, sectioned the field into four equal parts. Then scaffolding, wood and other pieces of building materials and large debris were brought in and spaced out, giving the field sections that were flat and some that were rugged and full of obstacles. Next, large sections of some kind of structure were moved in with crews quickly going to work putting the large items together, with obvious practice to build four large structures.

Mina rubbed her chin as she looked at them, “those look like playground forts.”

“We are going to be playing capture the flag. You can’t do that without a base.” Eijirou said watching as the multi story forts were moved into place and anchored down.

“Man if we had forts like that at our old playground when we were kids, I’d never want to leave.”

A crewman hurried over to Midnight and gave her a quick thumbs up, “Excellent! Then it’s time for me to explain the rules of the next event. Listen up! I’m only going to explain this once!”

Midnight pointed to the large screen as the rules popped up.

“First, each member of each team will be given one flag,” Midnight held up a red flag for them to see, “You must protect your flags from being taken by the other team. You may do this by hiding, holding, or defending them, however you may not bury or put the flag in a place that can no longer be seen. A flag is captured when a member from another team takes a flag and brings it into their own territory. If you choose to hold onto your own flag and cross over into an opposing teams side, the flag is still yours but if a member of the other teams takes it, it counts as a steal. Once captured, the flag is the same as the rest. This flag can be taken back, or stolen by another team. You may only directly attack another student if they have a flag. Be it to stop them from crossing the line and stealing it, or to take it for yourself. Do not start fighting each other or there will be consequences. This is not a brawl. You may use your Quirks to steal, or prevent your flags from being taken. You may also use your Quirks to shore up your base; however, you may not make an inclosed structure. Your base has natural openings in them, do not cover these up. The two teams with the highest flag count at the end of the round will move on.”
A hand shot up. Midnight pointed to her, “Yes, Tokage?”

The green haired girl pointed over towards Team A, “Midnight sensei, you said we could use our Quirks, but that girl over there is covered in gadgets and support equipment. Is that allowed?”

Mei just waved at the other girl, oblivious to some of the questioning looks she and her horde of items were getting.

“Students from the Department of Support are allowed to bring their own inventions if they are approved by the judges and safety officials. And they can be used in any of the events,” Midnight answered.

Izuku raised his hand, and Midnight grinned as she looked at him, “You want to know about your black flag. Right Midoriya?”

Izuku nodded, but had an uneasy feeling at the way she was looking at him.

“That black flag is the reward for the winner of the first round. So it has its own *special* set of rules.”

Neither Izuku or the rest of his teammates liked how Midnight said, special.

“First, that flag does not count to your final total.”

*Wait? That means we’re starting with a lower score right from the start?*

“But that’s not what you should be focusing on. Team A, if you lose that flag, it is an immediate loss.”

There was a beat as Team A let that sink in. Then they exploded.

“WHAT!?”
“How is this a reward!?”

“But what about our final flag count?” Tenya asked, his hands chopping through the air quickly, reflecting his unhappiness at this sudden revelation.

“Your final flag count doesn’t matter if you let the black flag get captured. As I said, it's an automatic loss, so you won’t have the chance to get it back. Also if you are able to keep the flag safe, you will still need a high flag count to pass to the next.”

Izuku rubbed his chin, mumbling to himself, “So the black flag only hurts us? If we keep it, it doesn't help us win. If we lose it, we lose the whole match…”

“Oh! I almost forgot,” Midnight said with a snap of her fingers, “The team that steals the black flag gets an automatic victory, despite how many flags they end up with.”

Instantly, the air around the students changed. Before it had been competitive, and perhaps a little sympathetic for Team A’s bad luck. This new news changed that. The small bit of sympathy evaporated as a firestorm of desire to crush the unfortunate team and get the instant win overcame everyone. Izuku gulped as the eyes of the other teams all turned and looked right at him. Him and the black flag he held in his hand. His breaths started to come in quicker, and more shallow, and he swore he was already starting to sweat through his clothes. The sheer force of their gazes was enough to make Izuku want to take a step back. Perhaps even more than that. He almost wanted to duck and run right then and there.

Then he felt a firm hand grip his shoulder. Glancing to his side, Tenya now stood besides him, glaring back at everyone else. Then Himiko came up on his other side, and casually leaned against him, propping herself up with an elbow on his shoulder as she flashed a dangerous smile at the other teams. Denki smack a fist into his open palm, sending small bolts of electricity out while Momo fell in besides Tenya, looking ready to go. Even Reiko and Neito from 1-B who were standing a little apart from the rest of the 1-A members were glaring back at the others. In Neito’s case, he looked extremely smug. Only Mei didn’t seem to be able to read the atmosphere as she tinkered with one of her gadgets, not caring at all about the other teams.

Izuku took a deep breath as he steadied his nerves and stared back, ready for whatever they threw at him.

“Excellent! I can feel your energy from here! I love it! Now collect your flags and make your way
to your bases. You will have ten minutes to get set up!”

Mr. Uraraka whistled in sympathy as he watched the teams separate, “Man, did my little girl dodge a bullet there.”

Mrs. Uraraka cleared her throat, giving her husband a dirty look, “Dear…”

*Feeling* the frost on her voice, Mr. Uraraka glanced over at his wife and saw her point towards Inko, who was looking *very* worried.

“Oh...OH! Oh don’t worry. I’m sure your kid will do just fine, even if he has a target on his back.”

“DEAR!!!”

While Mrs. Uraraka berated her husband, Eri looked up at Inko, clearly confused, “Mrs. Midoriya. Didn’t Izuku win? Why is he getting in trouble?”

“I’m not sure dear. U.A. is a very strange school, but I’m sure he’ll be just fine. Izuku is a bright boy; he’ll figure out a way to win.”

Mrs. Uraraka frowned and leaned back into her chair, “I still don’t get it, though. Why punish the winner like this?”

“From a heroes point of view, this outcome makes perfect sense.” All Might said getting everyone’s attention.

“How so?”

“Hmm think of it this way-- by winning Young Midoriya put himself in the number one spot, just like the number one spot heroes all over the country are trying to reach.”
“Okay…”

“Does the hero at the number one spot have an easier time or harder time once he’s there?”

The three parents blinked as they thought about that. Inko looked back down at the field, “I suppose they have it harder. They have to work to keep that spot, don’t they? They have all the other heroes gunning for the position. Plus, I’m sure there are villains that would love to be known as the one that…”

Inko closed her eyes, shuddering and deciding not to finish that thought. It hit just a bit too close to home after recent events. All Might gave her a sympathetic nod, “That’s what is being replicated and tested here. Young Midoriya worked hard to get that first place spot, and all that comes with it. Now we’ll have to see if he has what it takes to keep hold of it. Especially when everyone down there is going to be gunning for him.”

“These are…a lot bigger when you’re right next to them,” Denki said as he craned his neck up at their base. The structures were more like mobile fortresses than playground forts. Each one had multiple rooms, walls and had enough space to fit a small family. There were two door entrances at the bottom floor along with 3 open windows. The floor above that had two windows.

Momo nodded, “Creating a good defensive perimeter around the base will be tricky…but we are getting ahead of ourselves.”

“Of course, we must remember we are not just a team comprised of classmates,” Tenya turned sharply towards the three of their team not in 1-A, “My name is Iida, I am the class representative of class 1-A. I hope we will be able to work together to ensure our victory in the coming match.”

Mei, who had been eyeing the stands, glanced back at him and waved, “Hi, I’m Hatsume. I love making babies. I’ve made some with Midoriya already. I’m probably not going to remember any of your names though.”

Izuku wanted to defend himself, but the horror and embarrassment he felt from Mei’s unique choice of words left him speechless. While Momo and Tenya looked aghast, Denki started grinning ear to ear as he put his arms around Izuku’s shoulder, “You sly dog! You play up being a cinnamon roll, but when we turn our backs, you turn into a sin namon ro- OUCH!”
Himiko slammed her heel down onto Denki’s toes, making the boy hop up and down in pain, “That’s what she calls her inventions, you moron! Now moving on because we don’t have time for this,” Himiko turned to the 1-B students, “You two, who are you and what can you do?”

Neito pushed some stray strands of hair out of his face as he looked down at Himiko. His voice dripping with haughtiness, “And why should we give the enemy any kind of help? Just because we’re teamed up with a bunch of 1-A losers and a failure who gets stuck with such a handicap doesn’t mean neither I nor Yanagi will lower ourselves to your level to win this match.”

WOW! This douchebag just went from zero to ‘please stab me in the face’ faster than anyone else I’ve ever met...and I’ve met Baku Bitch.

Before anyone else had a chance to respond to Neito’s strange attitude, Reiko walked up behind him and tapped him on the shoulder, “Do not forget that I gave Kendou my word of honor that I would let her know if you acted in any way that might embarrass our class. Do you want me to tell her exactly what you just said so that she will have ample reason to punish you? Severely.”

Neito blinked as he froze in place as Reiko walked past him, “Hello. It is a pleasure to meet all of you. My name is Yanagi Reiko and this is Monoma Neito. I hope you can forgive Monoma, he has an inferiority complex that makes him a little hard to deal with. However, he works hard and will do whatever he can to ensure that we achieve victory. As for our Quirks, Monoma’s is—”

“It’s called Copy. I can temporarily copy a person’s Quirk,” Neito finished quickly, ignoring the slight head tilt from Reiko from being interrupted.

The momentary pause between the two led Izuku to think that perhaps there was more to his Quirk, but if he wanted to withhold that, he couldn’t really blame him. If...When they won, they would be facing each other in the next round, so it made sense he wanted to have some trump cards left.

“And my Quirk is called Poltergeist.” Reiko finished.

Denki gulped nervously, “Wait, does that mean you can make ghosts?”

“No, I can only move objects telepathically.”

Izuku’s eyebrows shot up in shock while Himiko pointed between the two, “Wait? You can do the
same thing Izuku can with his Psychokinesis Quirk?”

Reiko looked over at Izuku. While she didn’t show any outward emotions, Himiko swore she was looking at him with equal parts curiosity and competitiveness, “Yes, I suppose you could say our Quirks are similar in many ways. Though mine does not make me glow.”

Neito waved his hand, “Don’t worry about something useless like that. All it does is draw attention to you. Though I suppose that’s par for the course for you 1-A showoffs.”

“Okay dude, your attitude is like, the worst; you know that? And lay off Midoriya; he won remember?”

“Exactly,” Tenya agreed, “While I wish for us to work together, we will not simply allow you to continue to bad mouth us like this! Midoriya, do not take anything he says to heart.”

“Um,” Momo started, tapping Tenya’s shoulder and pointing at Izuku, “I don’t think he even heard him.”

The rest of the team turned and found Izuku with his head down, hand resting on his chin and with a far off look as he was mumbling to himself, so fast that even when they started to pay attention to him, they could only make out every other word.

“Potentially three… only need to send… Maximize defence…”

“Er Izuku, you still with...” Himiko stopped when Izuku turned and marched over to Mei, “...Us?”

Izuku began looking over all the gadgets Mei was wearing, making the girl fidget excitedly, “OH, are you interested in my babies?”

Nodding, Izuku started to point at different gear while Mei explained what each device was.

“Those are my wire arrows. They can help me traverse difficult terrain, or be used to attack. And that is my capture gun. It fires special cartridges that hold nets inside. And thats…”
“Soooo, is this normal for him?” Neito asked while he and the rest of the team watched Mei go over each and every piece of tech she had, “I can practically see the hamster wheels turning.”

“He also hasn’t stopped muttering to himself for some time now,” Reiko said.

“Midoriya tends to,” Tenya paused as he considered his words carefully, “...go off the deep end when he starts to really think about something. In his defence, he has one of the most analytical minds I have ever seen. His ability to analyze a person's Quirk alone is staggering. He’s also shown our class he is great at coming up with strategies and plans on the fly. During our first heroics lesson with All Might, he worked out a plan that led his team to victory.”

“Ah you mean that heroes vs villains battle simulation? I was wondering if All Might taught both classes with the same test. So he won that...Interesting.”

“A side effect though is that he tends to mutter and mumble to himself and gets lost in his thoughts. While we could snap him out of it, I think it might be best for us to let him work through what he’s thinking about,” Tenya finished.

Momoh nodded before glancing at the other teams. They were already hurrying around, either hiding their flags or moving the debris around to better their defences. Over on Team C, Shouto was busy fortifying their base into an ice fortress, making the already huge base even more intimidating. It was hard not to notice that they were still just standing around “Perhaps you are right, Iida, but I’d like to at least start doing something soon. Otherwise, even if Midoriya comes up with a brilliant plan, we won’t have time to go through with it.”

Neito sighed, “As much as I hate to say this, I have to agree with the 1-A cheerleader. Waiting around for the weirdo and the support department air-head to stop talking isn’t going to help us win.”

When Reiko was again going to remind Neito to not antagonize the other 1-A students, she was cut off when Himiko walked up to Neito and stood in front of him.

Smiling.

Smiling in an unsettlingly sweet and cheerful way.
Smiling in an unsettlingly sweet and cheerful way while her eyes glared straight into his soul.

Neito glanced around nervously, “um yes?”

“Hi I’m Toga Himiko of class 1-A. I fucking stab people. So please keep making fun of my friends and classmates.”

“I! HUH!?”

“Toga, please refrain from making such uncalled-for threats!” Momo said, shocked at how brazen Himiko had been. True, Neito had been aggravating, but that didn’t call for something like that.

While Tenya pulled Himiko aside to inform her that such action was detrimental to forming a cohesive team, and unbecoming of a young woman trying to become a hero, Neito shook his head and started to laugh, “That girl needs to learn to make sure she can back up what she says. If she was trying to be scary, she failed.”

Reiko shook her head, not bothering to mention how pale the boy looked. Denki, however, patted him on the shoulder, “Dude, you didn’t see what some of the villains looked like after we got attacked at the USJ.”

“Huh?”

“She ripped them apart.”

“As in…?”

“Literal pieces.”

_Gulp._
“I have a plan.”

Shortly after Himiko and Neito had been separated, Izuku turned to address the rest of his teammates. Going over everything in his head, all the people on the team, their Quirks, and the unique gear they had available to them. Izuku was certain he had come up with the best possible way for them to win the match.

“The key is to maximize our offence while not doing anything to minimize our defence. Because of our unique situation,” Izuku tapped the flag he had hanging from his pocket, “we can’t afford to have any holes in our defenses.”

“However, we can’t just turtle-up and wait for the end. We still have to get flags in order to win.” Tenya added.

Izuku agreed, “That’s right, however I think I have a way to make sure we can do both easily. Monama, I just want to confirm, you can copy any Quirk right. And use it without issue? Like mine or Yanagi’s?”

“Yes I can, though I would prefer to copy my classmates Quirk. I don’t want your inferior version.”

Himiko grumbled under her breath, but Izuku ignored the jab completely. “perfect! Yaoyorozu, if Hatsume was to describe in detail how some of her support gear is made, could you create it?”

Momo nodded, “if she can give me exact specifications, I can do it easily.”

“And do you think you’d be able to make a drone with some kind of grabbing attachment on it. And a camera?”

Momo frowned as she thought about that, “I can, but the only one I know how to make is a small one I had as a toy as a child. I could combine a simple hook or claw to it, but it’ll have to be remote controlled.”

Izuku motioned to the red flags they were carrying, “would it be strong enough to lift a flag?”
“I think so, but it would be slow.”

“That’s fine. It just has to get up into the air and into the open.”

“Then yes, that shouldn’t be a problem.”

Izuku clapped his hands together, a large smile forming as all the pieces of his plan were now fallen together “Then that’s all I needed to hear.”

Himiko smirked seeing Izuku so fired up. It was a good look for him she thought, “So, are you going to tell us what your plan is then?”

“Right!” Izuku exclaimed, excited to lay out his plan now that he had everything confirmed, “First let’s cover our defenses. The key to them will come down to you: Yaoyorozu, Hatsume, and Kaminari.”

Denki and Momo exchanged glances, “Just us three?”

“Technically, only Hatsume and Kaminari will be actively defending, but Yaoyorozu your Quirk is key. Hatsume, can you show her your capture gun and the ammo please. And the wire arrows.”

Mei excitedly handed Momo the support gear while Izuku explained, “I want you to make more of these,” Izuku pointed to the capture device, “but have them mounted onto stands of some kind, so they can be operated like turrets. We’ll then station them on the base and surrounding perimeter. I’d also like for you to make as much ammo as you can. Hatsume will be stationed at our base and man the turrets up there. The ones on the ground will be for everyone else to use if you see a chance.”

Mei clapped, “oh my babies are about to get mass produced!”

Momo nodded as she started to see Izuku’s idea, “with this we can actively defend our field with just one person if we have to.”
“But what about me?” Denki asked, “Am I going to be on gunnery duty too?”

“No, you’re going to be our main deterrent. I’d like to have Yaoyorozu make more of these wire arrows, and Mei will fire them across our zone. Each one will lead back to you. With them spread out, you should be able to send an electric current through them that’ll arc and hit anyone that gets too close. You’ll expend less power and have control where you send your electricity.”

“So you want me to act like a giant electric fence?”

“Yep.”

Denki smirked; the idea made a lot of sense. In theory, he could jump in front of any incoming attack and let off an area of effect blast to take care of the threat, but he could only do that a few times before he blew a fuse in his brain. This way, even if he had to perform a lot of attacks, he was pretty sure he’d be able to last the whole match, “Oh yeah, I can make this work. No problem.”

“So Hatsume and Kaminari will be on active defense, and you’re having Yaoyorozu mass produce the gear to help them. What about the rest of us?” Tenya asked.

“Iida, you, Toga, and the drone Yaoyorozu will make and pilot will be the only ones going after the other teams flags. While Yaoyorozu will stay on our side, you two will be infiltrating the other bases to get their flags.”

“Wait why only three?” Neito asked.

“They each have the best chance of infiltrating compared to any of us. The drone will be small and hopefully it goes unnoticed. Iida can use his speed to get in and out fast, and Toga is a stealth master. She should be able to sneak in with no issues. With those three actively stealing the flags, it’ll be up to myself, Monoma and Yanagi to retrieve them. When you get a flag, toss it into the air where we can see it, and from the safety of our zone, we can grab it and pull it over.”

“Ah! So that’s why you wondered if Monoma would be able to copy my Quirk. You want him as part of this retrieval team.” Reiko said as she came to understand Izuku’s logic. Even Neito found himself thinking that this could work. Though he would never say it out loud.

“That’s right. For each enemy zone, well have a team of a stealer and a retriever ready to pull over
anything they throw up into the air. That way we’ll always have six people on our side ready to defend our flags if we have to.”

Tenya rubbed his chin recalling what Izuku had said, “Maximize our offense while not minimizing our defense. I must say everything you’ve come up with seems to be just what we need Midoriya.”

Himiko rushed forward and wrapped herself around Izuku’s arm, “I’m teaming up with Izuku!”

No one dared tried to say otherwise.

Neito frowned after a few seconds, “There is one thing your brilliant plan hasn’t addressed yet. That black flag. There are quite a few people of the other teams that will probably try and bulldoze their way past everything and focus squarely on that.”

Izuku nodded, conceding the point, “It’s true. Right now the best I can think to do is to treat this flag like the others and protect all our flags the same way. I’ll keep it with me and stay inside the fort. I can still easily pull any of the flags Toga steals from there.”

Denki scratched his neck nervously, “I mean everything sounds good, but it might not matter to Bakugou or Todoroki much. Those two are going to zero in on it the moment they see it. And if they don’t see it right away, or notice that it’s being protected like our other flags we’re going to protect, they’re going to know you have it and rush you. Heck, I’m betting that right off the bat, a whole lot of people are gonna be gunning for that flag.”

Himiko frowned as she looked up at Izuku when he didn’t say anything right away. She could tell he knew they were right. In the end they needed to do something to keep the bulk of the aggressive students at bay and distracted. Letting her eyes wonder, they fell on the black flag hanging out of Izuku’s pocket.

Then an idea hit her in the back of the head.

“Hey...Izuku…”

Himiko’s hesitance immediately caught Izuku’s attention, “Yeah Toga? What is it?”
“I might have an idea on how to deal with Baku bi...with Bakugou and the others.”

“Really? What is it?”

Himiko glanced nervously at the others on the team, who were looking at her, waiting to hear her idea, “Do you mind if I tell you it privately? Maybe in the base or something?”

_Privately? Why would she need to talk privately?_

“Please.”

Himiko was clearly nervous. Izuku could see it plain as day, “okay. Let's talk. Guys can you get everything else set up?”

“Of course Midoriya,” Tenya said, cutting off the argument he felt was coming from Neito, “We only have a short amount of time left. We should get started right away.”

While the rest of their team went to work, Izuku and Himiko hurried to the fort. Izuku was unsure of just exactly _what_ Himiko had planned.

Ochako could _feel_ the look she was getting. She knew that right behind her Katsuki was glaring at her with cautious contempt. And she knew exactly why. For most of their teams prep time, he had only spoken a few times, saying that _he_ was going to get that black flag and win, and that no one better get in his way. After that he kept a close eye on Izuku until he and Himiko had disappeared into their fort. After that, she had become the other boy's focus.

It was starting to wear on her last nerve.

“If you want to say something to me, Bakugou, then just go ahead and say it.”

She _wanted_ to keep and eye on Team A so she could know exactly what their plan was. The armemements that they had started to set up had alarmed her, several members of her team and people
on the other teams too. Having Mei, a mad creator, and Momo, with her Creation Quirk, together was turning out to be a pretty dangerous combo.

“Just remember what team you’re on when the match starts.”

*Oh for the love of-!* 

Ochako turned on Katsuki instantly, an angry sneer on her face that perfectly matched Katsuki’s, “Are you really that paranoid!? I’m here to win, just like you.”

“Really? Even if that means Deku loses?”

“Yes.” Ochako’s answer was immediate and decisive. Leaving no doubt that she meant what she said. She didn’t *like* the idea of course. She knew how hard Izuku had worked, and what he wanted to accomplish today. But she had goals too. And she was going to do whatever it took to win.

“Good. I don’t need to be watching my back when I’m trying to win this damned match.”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “Right whatever. Just don’t expect Deku to make it easy for you.”

Katsuki frowned and looked back over towards Team A’s zone, his eyes right on the fort where Izuku had disappeared into. When he spoke next, Ochako was sure she wasn’t supposed to hear what he said. The two words that came out of his mouth was enough to momentarily leave her completely stupidified, “I know.”

*Wait. Wait, wait wait wait wait a second! Did he just-!?*

“I’ve finished with putting up the ice walls around our base. And everyone else is ready to go,” Shouto said as he walked up behind the two, followed by the rest of the team.

Katsuki smirked, “Good, now we don’t have to worry about some shitty extra’s trying to steal from us.”
Shouto looked over at the other teams as they quickly went about trying to get ready, though he didn’t pay them much mind. His gaze, like everyone else’s, went back to Team A.

“Has Midoriya come back out yet?”

Ochako shook her head, “No. He’s still in that fort...I think.”

Shouto looked down at her, “You think?”

“He could be hiding somewhere else. We don’t know what Quirks those two 1-B guys have.”

Katsuki scoffed, “Fucking coward.”

Ochako rolled her eyes, “Deku’s smart. If you don’t think he has a plan then to win, then you’re nuts. He’ll put together everyone’s Quirks and figure out a way that he thinks will give them the best chance to win. I mean look at all those things they have lining their fort. That had to be Deku’s idea.”

“Fucking wise ass,” was Katsuki’s response, though it lacked some of his normal bite.

“Uraraka, you know Midoriya better than anyone here. Will he hide that black flag, or keep it on him?” Hitoshi asked.

“Hiding it would be smart. Making us have to look for it while dealing with whatever Yaoyorozu made would slow us down,” Mina said.

“Maybe he’ll have someone else hold onto it. The rules never said that he had to be the one to deal with the flag,” Mashirao added.

Ochako shook her head, “No, that’s not something Deku would do. He’ll keep the flag on him.”

“That’s manly,” Eijirou said, “Almost makes me feel bad that we’re gonna bum rush the guy.”
Speaking of bum rush...

The atmosphere on the field was changing. People were lining up. They all could feel it too. Time was almost up. Any second the signal would be given, and all hell would be coming for Team A. Izuku would have a plan. But all plans have a fatal flaw.

No plan survives first contact with the enemy. I get the feeling Deku is about to learn that the hard way.

Ochako took a breath, clearing her mind. She wanted to become a hero so that she could take care of her family. She was only going to have three Sports Festivals to show the world just what she was capable of.

She was here to win.

One breath.

A few of Katsuki’s knuckles popped as his hands tensed. Little crackles and sparks sizzled in his palms.

Another breath.

The air around them dropped several degrees, Shouto’s breath coming out as a frigid mist.

Another-

“TIME’S UP! THE MATCH STARTS NOW!”

Everything happened at once. Members for every team rushed Team A, all with one single goal in mind.
Get the black flag, and win.

Using his explosions, Katsuki rocketed ahead of the pack, eyes focused squarely on the fort in front of him.

The flag was his.

The win was his.

He was done playing around with the extras.

He was going to show the whole world just what he was capable of.

Katsuki was focused. He didn’t want to admit it, out loud or to himself, but Izuku had been right. After hearing Shouto challenge Izuku of all people he wanted to show him just who the threat really was. He’d been so focused on that, he’d allowed himself to get hit far too many times in the dodgeball round. Now, he wouldn’t make the same mistake again.

Katsuki was focused.

So focused that as he neared the center of the field where all the zones met, he never saw a streak of blue rocketing right towards him. While he didn’t see it coming, he sure felt it when it slammed into him, knocking him to the ground. Snarling, Katsuki hurried back to his feet, looking for what had hit him.

The streak twisted in the air, large metallic hover soles aiding in their mid air recovery before coming to a perfect landing on a large piece of debris.

“What’s wrong, Kacchan? Didn’t see this coming?”

Leaning forward with his forearm resting on his knee, Izuku looked down at Katsuki, a confident smile on his face.
Katsuki was only vaguely aware of the panicked screams and shouts coming from Team A’s zone.

“What the hell!?"

“Midoriya!?”

“But what about the plan!?"

Those shouts didn’t matter to Katsuki as he stared back at Izuku, seething that he had the gall to attack him like that. He didn’t even care to notice all the weird gear he was wearing. No, it was the next set of screams from behind him that did catch his attention.

“It’s Midoriya!”

“Look, it’s the flag!”

“He has the flag!”

“It’s on his arm!”

Katsuki’s eyes snapped to Izuku’s arm that rested on his knee. Izuku glanced down at it before standing up straight and holding his arm up for Katsuki and everyone to see. In the moment before everyone reacted. While everyone was still in shock, Izuku’s smile twisted from confident into something closer to a condescending sneer. With his arm still held up, he clenched his fist before popping out his middle finger right towards Katsuki, “You want this flag, Kacchan, you fucking ball-less piece of shit? Come and take it.”

Chapter End Notes

So tell me, why is a speech so much more difficult to write than a whole new chapter >.<

Hi everyone! I hope you all liked the new chapter! Sports Festival proper is a go!
Decided to go with new events because I honestly wasn't sure how I'd be able to put an enjoyable spin on the race and cavalry battle that hasn't been done by literally everyone else in the fandom ;)

If you have trouble visualizing exactly what the dodge-balls are doing towards the end, go watch the last (3rd) Matrix movie. You know those drones that attack the city? The balls are acting like that.

Also I'm so happy I was able to have Izuku and Ochako finally fly together. That was been something I have been planning since the beginning. I wanted flying to be their thing, showing how working together helped them achieve something they can't do by themselves (as of now at least).

Catch you all next time for the 2nd event!

Once again a huge thank you to everyone taking the time to read this little story. You all are great! And if you have comments or critiques, feel free to leave a message :)

Thank you Tmalasia for beta reading for me!
Chapter Summary

Team A has a plan, or at least they had one. With Izuku going rogue, it's now all-out mayhem. With the instant win flag on the line and out in the open, Katsuki will stop at nothing to make sure he's the one to come out on top!

So predictable.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

With his arm still held up, Izuku clenched his fist before popping out his middle finger right towards Katsuki, “You want this flag, Kacchan, you fucking ball-less piece of shit? Come and take it.”

On all the teams, everyone from class 1-A stopped dead in their tracks. There was no way they had just heard what they thought they heard. The initial shock was short lived, however, as Katsuki snapped out of it first, face twisted in rage, “What did you just say!?”

Izuku let his arms fall to his side, “I called you a fucking ball-less piece of shit. What, all those explosions leave you with fucked up hearing? Or are you just a dickless dandelion idiot?”

“I’m going to kill you!” Katsuki roared as he launched himself as Izuku, his explosions rocketing him through the air at breakneck speeds. As he quickly closed the distance, Izuku didn’t even try to dodge. Instead, he reached behind his back, and pulled out from his waistband one of Mei’s Capture Guns. With a small flourish, Izuku snapped his arm up and pointed the gun right towards Katsuki. The other boy only had the briefest of moments to realize that something bad was about to happen. Not enough time to stop— or dodge.

Izuku pulled the trigger and shot out a large red net that ensnared Katsuki. Without his explosions to help propel him, he lost speed, tumbling through the air still headed right for Izuku. Lifting a leg, Izuku kicked Katsuki in the side while at the same time, activating the single Hover Sole and having it launch Katsuki back down toward the ground with a loud thud. Izuku didn’t have time to watch Katsuki hit the ground, though. A sudden chill was all the warning Izuku had as a pillar of ice rushed right towards him. Kicking off the ground, the ice raced past Izuku and upward into the air. Using the Hover Soles to twist around, Izuku activated the third piece of tech he had grabbed from Mei: the Wire Arrows. From his belt, the two wires shot out and snagged the side of the pillar as it continued to rise into the air, dragging Izuku safely away from the rest of the students that were converging on his position.
Using his momentum, and the propulsion from his boots, Izuku swung up to the top of the ice pillar and latched onto the edge, briefly holding himself upside down with just one hand. Righting himself, he looked down and saw that the teams were grouping up at the base of the ice Shouto had made. Smirking, Izuku activated the Hover Soles and reeled in the Wire Arrows, yanking himself forward and slingshotting himself down the ice. Once the arrow’s had detached, Izuku skied down, right towards the group of students who were all stunned to find Izuku heading right for them, looking like he was ready to crash into them. A few dove out of the way, while some readied themselves for the impact. Izuku however, at the last possible moment, pushed off and flung himself right over their heads. Sailing through the air, Izuku corkscrewed and landed behind everyone. Stopping only long enough to flip them off, Izuku rocketed away, heading deeper into Team C’s zone and closer to their ice fortress of a base with a horde of student hot on his tail.

“You want this flag, Kacchan, you fucking ball-less piece of shit? Come and take it.”

In the most undignified way possible, Ochako fell flat on her face. While she had tripped on her own two feet, if you had told her she’d tripped on her jaw when it hit the floor, she’d believe you. The sheer absurdity of the moment stunning her into a clumsy pile of limbs.

Then there was everything that happened next.

In the span of seconds, Ochako watched as several unbelievable things happened. First was Izuku immediately confronting Katsuki while holding the black flag that could lead to an instant loss for himself and his team. A move that apparently no one on his team had any idea was going to happen, judging by how much they were freaking out. Then came the language. Words she would have never imagined coming from Izuku. Words she didn’t think were physically possible for him to use. Words that were not only vulgar, but also bait to antagonize Katsuki into attacking. Finally, there was the way Izuku was moving. Even with the support gear he had, the way he moved through the air was just not possible. Izuku was by no means flat-footed. He was athletic. He could dodge around perfectly fine when in a fight. But these moves, these flips and kicks. The hand stand and aerial showboating. This was a level of acrobatics that Izuku had never shown before, and she was certain All Might had never taught him.

Maybe, just maybe she could believe if just one of the things she saw happened. Perhaps Izuku’s desire to win could be driving him to act out recklessly. Some repressed resentment towards Katsuki, making him say things he otherwise would keep to himself. Even the way he was moving she might be able to explain away as some combo of Mei’s support gear and an unknown Quirk from his 1-B teammates. All of them together though, defied all reality. This was impossible. Absolutely and completely impossible.
And yet it was happening. Right overhead, Izuku flew by only to land a few yards past everyone and suddenly take off, with everyone in hot pursuit.

“Uraraka?”

Hitoshi stopped and offered her a hand, “Come on. We need to go after Midoriya and get him before one of the other teams does. He’s in our zone. This is our best chance.”

Taking his hand, Ochako got up and started running with him, “Shinso, what the heck is going on?”

“You’re asking me? I was going to ask you that.”

“I...I have absolutely no idea. This feels so wrong!”

Hitoshi nodded, “No kidding. But we can’t stop to think about it now. With everyone chasing after Midoriya, we can’t risk letting another team steal that flag.”

*With everyone chasing...Wait!?*

Ochako ground to a halt, startling Hitoshi, “Uraraka?”

“Everyone is chasing Deku.”

“Yeah...?”

“No I mean look,” Ochako motioned to the other bases, “Team A still has all their people, but look at the other bases. They’re almost empty.”

Hitoshi looked around and saw what Ochako saw, the other two teams had indeed emptied their bases, save for a one or two students left to man the forts, “Hey...hold on a second. You’re right!”
Ochako glanced back towards the chaos ahead of them. She wanted to win. And the guarantee to that win was getting that black flag Izuku was carrying. Every competitive fiber in her being was screaming at her to give chase. But in the back of her head, something else was screaming. Warning her that something was not right. That chasing after Izuku was the wrong thing to do. The more she listened to it, the more this voice overpowered anything else.

“Shinso. I have an idea.”

“MIDORIYA!!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!?”

Tenya’s arms were a blur as he tried not to freak out too much. Unfortunately he was not doing a good job.

“Dude, what is going on? Wasn’t the plan for only Iida and Toga to leave our zone? When was this decided?!” Denki’s head was spinning. He couldn’t have forgotten some part of the plan right?

“No, you’re right Kaminari. Midoriya was not supposed to leave the base. Much less actually take the flag with him,” Momo clarified.

“I knew you 1-A show offs couldn’t be trusted! The green screwball stabbed us in the back so he could hand the win over to his girlfriend!” Neito fumed, on the verge of pulling handfuls of blond locks out of his scalp.

Reiko watched the chaos quietly for a few moments, “if that was his goal, why attack the loud one? Why would he go over there so armed? Why not simply hand the flag over? We are missing several pieces to this puzzle.”

Calming himself, Tenya nodded in agreement.

*Even if I take into account Midoriya’s history with Bakugou, this action still makes no sense. Midoriya wants to win today. As for Uraraka...she would never accept a win being handed to her. No, Yanagi is right. We’re missing something vital here.*
“Hey! Hey! Yida Yite! Um...Glasses! Whatever your name is! I forget!”

From the top tower of the base, Mei frantically waved her arms, trying to get her teammates attention. Tenya turned to look up at her, frowning, “Iida! My name is Iida! Please, as a fellow student of our illustrious school, you must work on remembering your fellow students’ names!”

Mei waved that concern off, and pointed down below herself, to the open window, “Whatever! just get over here! You guys need to stop wasting time!”

Neito looked annoyed, “is she stupid? Wasting time? We’re screwed. Our plan is shot. How can we worry about time when we’ve been stabbed in the back!?”

Tenya was close to agreeing when he finally noticed that Mei was pointing to the window, in a strange mix of trying to be obvious to him, but subtle to anyone else. It was a strange sight.

*What is she trying to tell me?*

“Let me see what she wants.”

Hurrying back to the base, Tenya started to climb up to Mei, but when his hand grabbed the window ledge, a hand shot up and took hold of his wrist very suddenly. Tenya was very proud of himself that he didn’t go ‘eep’ or make any kind of noise at all.

He did almost Recipro Burst off the wall, but he’d never admit that.

Ever.

Looking down, Tenya confirmed that it was indeed a hand holding him. A hand that was attached to a wrist and arm, with a black flag wrapped around it.

“MIDO-!?"

“Shhh!”
Crouched below the window seal, Izuku held onto Tenya's wrist while desperately shushing him, “quiet! Don’t make a scene! Look up at Hatsume like you two are talking! Hatsume please pretend to be talking to Iida too.”

Mei glances over the ledge to flash a thumbs up before she started talking, though she was only listing off her inventions to herself.

While it was hard to talk like this, Tenya kept his eyes up, “Midoriya, what is going on? How are you here and over there at the same time?”

“I’m not over there. That’s Toga.”

“Huh? That’s Toga? Midoriya, please explain!”

Midoriya frowned, “I’ll tell you what I can, but it’s going to be quick and there are some parts I promised her I’d keep to myself. You know how she’s been hesitant to talk about her Quirk. This is part of that…”

Tenya nodded. He was very aware that Toga had not let anyone know about her Quirk. Not their small group of friends or anyone in the class. He had guessed her reasoning had some connection to her turbulent past with her parents and the reason she lived at U.A.

“She told you her Quirk? Is that why she pulled you away?

Izuku nodded, “Yeah. Listen, the original plan is still a go, but Toga had a better idea for her part in it.”

Following Himiko, Izuku watched as she nervously looked around. They had made it to the base and Himiko looked like she was looking for the perfect blind spot.

She’s really being careful. I wonder why?
“Ah! Yeah this will do. Come on, Izuku.”

Grabbing hold of Izuku’s hand, Himiko pulled Izuku along up to a higher floor in the base, finding a room that had no opening to the outside. Once inside the room, Himiko nodded to herself, “Yep this is good. No one can see us or should be able to hear us. That crowd is just perfectly loud. Hmm?” Turning back, Himiko noticed the blush that was spreading across Izuku’s freckles cheeks. Flashing Izuku a smile that was a tad more devilish than was needed, Himiko couldn’t stop herself from teasing him just a little, “What’s the matter, Izuku? Getting a little worked up because I brought you somewhere where we could be alone?”

Izuku’s blush deepened, “W-well it’s just…”

“Oh my god, he is just so adorable! I totally made the right call to hold back and take it slow with him. If I had actually tried to take him back to my room the first day of class, I might have actually killed him… Though depending on how this goes…Maybe this is as intimate as I’ll get to be with him. Ah fuck it. You dragged him here. Just get it out in the open. Can’t really just pretend I didn’t make a big deal of wanting to talk to him alone.

Taking a breath, Himiko readied herself for what was to come next.

“Okay, Izuku, listen. It’s about your plan.”

“Oh?” Hearing that, Izuku straightened and gave Himiko his full attention. Doing his best to ignore just how soft her hand felt.

“Yeah. I think it’s a good plan. For the most part. I just think that Bakugou and Shouto are too
much of a wild card factor.”

Izuku nodded in agreement. While his plan was to make sure that their defenses were up to the task of defending their whole zone, and by extension their flags and the black flag, if it came down to it, those two could cause a lot of trouble if they really wanted to.

“I know. But I wasn’t able to come up with something that would deal with them. The plan I told everyone was the best I could come up with.”

“The best you could come up with, with a key piece of information missing you mean.”

“Huh?”

“Look, Izuku. I have an idea on how to deal with those two, and honestly probably a lot of the other people on the other teams too. But… I’m going to have to ask you to trust me. You see-“

“Of course I trust you, Toga.” Izuku answered instantly, cutting Himiko off and leaving her opening and closing her mouth, unable to form words.

Wait hold on a second!

“I-Izuku! Wait! I haven’t even told you what I want to do!”

Izuku just shrugged, “Sure, but that doesn’t change the fact that I trust you, Toga.”

Once again, Himiko found herself at a complete loss when it came to Izuku. When they had first met, he had acted so selflessly to help her, refusing even the most basic reward. Then when they met again, he invited her into his home and made her feel like she was actually welcomed somewhere. Now this. Giving her such unconditional trust while she was very obviously acting coy and keeping her cards close to her chest. Himiko was someone who prided herself in reading people, knowing what they thought and how they would act. But Izuku was just too pure for her to get a read on. He was too much an enigma for her to understand. He was just this bundle of kindness filled with joy, hope, and more than a handful of determination.
A ray of light in a very dark world.

A ray of light that was so bright, it hurt to look at, but she couldn’t turn away. And she’d never want to.

“I can transform into people by drinking their blood.”

It took a second for Himiko to realise what she had just blurted out. When she did, she slapped her hands over her mouth to stop herself from screaming.

*I DID NOT JUST FUCKING SAY THAT!!!*

She could not believe she had just said that out loud. She had planned to build up to it. Start off by explaining how everyone had been so freaked out by her Quirk, horrified by it. It had made her an aberration, a monster. She had needed to build up a buffer of sympathy and understanding to cushion the revelation. Start off with what her Quirk was, and then lead into how it works. But no, she had been so caught up in learning that Izuku trusted her that she spoke without thinking.

*You fucking stupid bitch! Now you’ve gone and done it. Months of dealing with U.A.’s bullshit. Weeks of friendship, and you throw it all-!*

“That’s incredible!”

*Eh?*

Snapping out of her thoughts, Himiko was stunned to find that Izuku was in her personal space. Eyes analyzing her and hands scribbling away at an invisible notebook, “Does the blood act like a genetic blueprint for your Quirk to work? Does it have to be blood or would any DNA sample work? When you transform, is it just an external change, or does your whole body transform too? Do you get the person's Quirk? Memories? How long can you…”

Izuku’s questions were coming in fast. That, coupled with the fact that this was not the reaction Himiko had been expecting, left her reeling and feeling unexpectedly exposed. Her defenses were getting peeled away, leaving her stark before Izuku’s gaze. His were eyes taking in everything they saw.
She felt suddenly very bashful.

Which was a first for her.

“Sl-slow down! Wait! Just wait!”

Himiko’s hands snapped up to push herself away, giving herself some much needed space.

Izuku snapped to his senses and backed off, rubbing his head bashfully, “Oh, sorry about that, Toga. Old habits.”

“Izuku you... sigh... You heard what I actually said right? The whole thing?”

_Maybe he just got the part that I trans-_

“That you’re able to transform by drinking blood? Yup, I heard you.” Izuku said with an excited smile.

_Holy fucking shit._

“You’re not...freaked?”

Izuku looked confused, “Should I be?”

Himiko didn’t know how to answer that. _She_ never saw her Quirk as weird. She _loved_ it. She loved being other people. If she had a chance to be someone she liked, or better yet, someone she loved, it was one of the most exciting feelings there was. And the way to make it happen was all the more sweeter. Blood was such an intimate part of a person. It gave them life and filled them up. And it came in so many different tastes and smells. Sweet, sour, sometimes tangy and savory.

Himiko loved everything about her Quirk. She loved everything about herself. She loved that
because of the way she was, it made it so easy for her to love others too.

She loved it all, despite the world telling her how wrong she was. Despite everyone trying to fix her.

After a lifetime of being rejected, to find someone who accepted her, well, it just reinforced that she had found the right person to fall in love with.

Standing there alone with Izuku, with her love now expanding to new realms she hadn’t even dreamed of, Himiko realized just how close to the edge she was. Sports Festival be damned. Crowds be damned. One slip and she was going to make her sweet Izuku scream her name.

Over and over again.

“Izuku,” She started, “You’re something else. You know that.? You’re the first person I’ve met who hasn’t treated my Quirk like it makes me a monster.”

Izuku looked stunned, “Wait? I’m the first? But what about your... Oh…”

The word hung at the tip of his tongue. Parents. She could see him put some of the pieces together, and watched as a deep and very unhappy frown spread across his face. She much rather he had his smile back.

“Izuku…”

“But what about the people here?! The teachers?! And I’m sure our classmates wouldn’t treat you like that!”

That was an interesting point. Despite her friction with the staff, they tended to focus on her actions and state of mind. ‘Don’t stab people, Toga,’ was more or less the running mantra. As for the actual act of her drinking blood? Thinking back, they were concerned about how she got the blood, more so than her actually drinking it. Heck, they actually make her some to drink. It tastes like crap, but they’ve never actually told her to not to drink blood. Hell, they approved all the support gear on her costume made to bleed people.
“You...might have a point. Though things are a little more complicated than me just *having* to drink blood to make my Quirk work.”

“What do you mean?”

*Oh boy, in for a penny, in for a pound I guess.*

“I don’t just drink blood to use my Quirk, Izuku. I drink blood because I *have* too. You need food and water right?” Izuku nodded, “Well I need food, water, *and* blood to function. If I wasn’t able to drink blood, I’d go crazy. Literally crazy, Izuku. And if I’m being honest...I love it.”

“You love it?”

“You know how some people love a good steak. Or they’ll crave a pizza from their favorite fast food place. It’s like that. I love blood. The tastes. The smell. The whole gambit. So...I guess you can see why I’ve kept this side of myself a secret. Hard to explain just my Quirk without diving into my other weird... quirks.”

Izuku nodded. If Himiko has grown up with her parents hating her Quirk and the side effect, if that’s the way you wanted to go with, he supposed it was natural that she wouldn’t want others to know. But that line of thinking only made him want to say something against that viewpoint, “Toga, I don’t think it’s weird at all.”

“Huh?! That wasn’t what Himiko had expected to hear.

“You said it yourself. For you, blood is just as important as food and water. So the fact you like... drinking it to survive and to use your Quirk isn’t something to be ashamed of.”

“You paused there for a bit, you know.” Himiko said with a smirk.

Izuku scratches his head, “okay, maybe it’s a little weird. But Toga, take a look at the Quirks in our class alone. Quirks are super cool, but they are also *really* weird if you think about them.”

Himiko laughed a little at that. He made a pretty good point. While she did, Izuku was struck by
something she had said during their first week of class.

\textit{It keeps my blood levels level.}

“Hey, Toga. Those juice packs you’re always drinking that the school makes for you. They aren’t juice, are they?”

\textit{Wow, he can be sharp when he wants to be.}

Himiko shook her head, “Nope. Artificial blood.”

“And they taste bad?”

“That’s right. Bitter and the texture is off. But I’m getting used to them...or more like I’ve accepted that they aren’t gonna get any better. It keeps the edge off, I guess. It’s just not very satisfying.”

“Well,” Izuku rubbed his hands together nervously, “if you ever want something not fake...I wouldn’t mind letting you have some of my blood; think of me as an all-you-eat-buffet... If that’s not a weird thing to say, of course!”

\textit{Are you kidding me? Are you fucking kidding me!? He just-! Izuku just said I could-! Kiss him! Kiss him! I’m fucking kissing him! I’m kissing him and then fuck this whole Sports Festival. I’m taking Izuku with me and making him mine!}

Himiko closed the distance between them faster than Izuku could blink. By the time she had her arms draped over his shoulders and pulling him into a tight embrace, Izuku’s mind only just sent the signal to his mouth to start squeaking and stuttering. Himiko’s eyes darted to look at her target. Lips that were perfect for being kissed and just begging to be nibbled too. She leaned in, not caring one bit about the Sports Festival anymore. It was stupid, and she hadn’t wanted to be part of it to begin with. It didn’t matter to her.

\textit{But it matters to Izuku.}

Himiko’s conscience screamed at her. Screamed over the raging fire in her blood, and the searing
ache and desires that made her tremble with want. It screamed that while she might not care about the Sports Festival, Izuku did care. He wanted to win today. He wanted to use today to not only settle things with Katsuki, but to help further his dream of becoming a hero. Today was important to him, so it was important to her.

And she had brought him here to this secluded place for a reason, after all.

At the very last possible second, Himiko turned her head to the side, missing Izuku’s lips, and planted a kiss right onto his blushing cheek. A kiss on the cheek was mild enough that she’d be able to keep herself under control. If it had been lips, well... Knowing where Midnight had all her emergency condom stashes all over campus would’ve come in quite handy for her.

_Damn you, conscience!_

She didn’t like that she could imagine her conscience waving back at her smugly. She _really_ didn’t like that her conscience was herself dressed up as Midnight. That whole image brought up a lot of questions she did not want answers to.

“Thank you, Izuku. You have no idea what that means to me.”

Izuku tried to say something along the lines of ‘you're welcome.’ But it came out as more of a high pitched mutter.

Pulling back, Himiko smiled, “So, Izuku. I think it’s time I told you my plan, don’t you think?”

Izuku’s glazed over expression took a second before it hardened, as he refocused back on the task at hand, “R-right. You sounded like you had a way to keep Kacchan and Todoroki off our backs.”

“Yep. You see my Quirk lets me transform into someone else. And while there are some limits to it, like I can’t use their Quirks, or have access to their memories. It does let me change more than just my own body. I can transform dressed like they are.”

Izuku blinked, “Wait you can transform clothing too?”
“Yep.”

“...How does that even work?”

“Er...I have no idea. It’s just something I can choose to do.” She could see that Izuku’s hands were starting to scribble again, “Anyway! Back on topic. Bakugou and Todoroki are both gunning for your head at this point. Right?”

Izuku nodded.

“And,” Himiko plucked the black flag from Izuku’s pocket, “They’re both going to be gunning for this little thing too. Right?”

Izuku’s impression of a bobblehead was still going strong as he nodded again.

“So... if we took this flag here, and wrapped it around your arm like so,” with a little flourish Himiko tied off the flag in a cute bow, “You make for a very enticing target, for those two and anyone else gunning for an instant win. Wouldn’t you say?”

The gears in Izuku’s head clicked into place as he got exactly what Himiko was getting at, “You want to transform into me and become a distraction!”

“Bingo. Instead of stealthy-- which, by the way, I love you know what I’m good at-- I’ll head into Team C’s zone and make as much noise as possible. Not only will that keep them busy, but should draw out quite a few people from the other teams, making Tenya and Momo’s jobs easier. And while I’m at it, if I happen to see a C flag, well, I’m sure I can make the time to snatch it up and get it in the air for you.”

“Toga, this sounds great! But what about you? By the end of this match, everyone is going to know about your Quirk.”

Himiko shrugged, “They’ll know I can transform into people. How I do it can still be our secret.”

“Okay, if that’s what you want. Though I really think you can trust our classmates, Toga.”
Crossing her arms, Himiko broke eye contact, “Maybe…”

“So how are we going to do this then? Do you have a knife or something sharp?” Izuku asked as he held out his hand for Himiko, “Actually, would you be allowed to have something like that?”

No knives. I got triple checked before getting to the stadium. Then checked again. It’s like they don’t trust me or something. It’s not like they’ve found me with any knives since...yesterday?

Chuckling to herself, Himiko shook her head, “Nope. Got nothing like that right now, soooo,” reaching up, Himiko hooked a finger into her mouth, and pulled back, showing off her fangs, “we’ll just have to do things the old fashioned way.”

Taking his hand, Himiko watched for any signs that Izuku had a problem with her biting him to draw blood. She was a little surprised that he didn’t just seem okay with it, but was watching her very intently.

Right...This is all Quirk related, so he must be taking mental notes. Well, guess I better give him a good show then.

Lifting his hand up, Himiko briefly let her eyes travel down to his exposed wrist. She’d be able to get a good mouthful from there, but she didn’t want to leave Izuku in any kind of weakened state. He had to go the distance today, after all. Ultimately, she decided on his pointer finger. To make her plan work, she wasn’t going to need that much blood. And while this moment had been a long time coming for her-- a day she had fantasized about and ruined more bed sheets over in the throws of her own passion than she could count-- She had to remember that Izuku had already told her she could get herself a taste any time she needed it.

Overall, today was a good day for Himiko.

“You’re going to feel a little pinch when I bite down okay. If it hurts...”

“It’s fine, Toga. Like I said. I trust you.”

Bringing Izuku’s finger up to her mouth, she briefly thought about just nipping his knuckle and
pressing her lips there to get what she needed, but that would be boring. This was a momentous occasion for her. Why not have a little fun and make sure they both never forgot what came next. Striking her tongue out, she ran it up the curve of his finger, where she gave the tip just under his fingernail a little flick of her tongue.

“T-toga!?”

Himiko caught the fingertip between a fang on her lower jaw and her top teeth and bit down before wrapping her lips around the finger to the second knuckle. Himiko thought about making a little show for Izuku, a demonstration of a few talents and tricks she knew, but when her tongue ran over the little incision her fang had made and that first drop of blood landed on her tongue, this moment stopped being a game for her.

The memory of her first taste, almost a year ago.

Putting up with the horrible fake packs.

Forcing herself to only take enough for a quick transformation at USJ.

It all became worth it. With that little taste, Himiko dove head first into nirvana. Her knees buckled. A moan ripped itself out of her throat, and she was pretty sure she was starting to cry. She had waited so long for this. To taste the blood of the boy that saved her. And without a single doubt.

It had been worth it.

To get what she needed for the match, took less than a minute. At most, maybe thirty seconds. For Himiko, as her mouth was covered with the sweet metallic flavor, seconds might have well been hours or days.

A few more flicks of her tongue and she knew she had enough. She wanted more-- oh she wanted more-- but there was a time and place to be greedy, and this was neither. Pulling back with a pop and leaving little stands of spit connecting her lips and his finger, Himiko kept a grip onto Izuku’s wrist as she swallowed. A piece of Izuku was inside of her now. The thought alone drove her mad. Lust threatened to take control, but she forced it back. Izuku trusted her, and she was not going to lose control now.
Opening her eyes, Himiko looked at the wet finger in front of her. The tip stained a little pink with a mix of his blood and her spit. Gently, lovingly, Himiko closed his hand into a fist and wrapped her fingers around it. Applying pressure to the little snip so it would stop bleeding. When she was done, she looked up at Izuku, eyes lidded, and cheeks flushed crimson.

“Are you ready to see something cool?”

Throughout the whole experience, Izuku forgot how to speak, so he only nodded his head. With a huge smile, Himiko started the transformation, transfixed with Izuku’s eyes as he watched her with awe and wonder.

“I see. So you haven’t left the base since Toga took you aside then?”

Izuku shook his head at Tenya’s question, “Nope. I’ve been hiding here the whole time.”

“Then when you came to check on things with everyone? And took our flags to store in the base, that was Toga?”

“That’s right.”

Tenya rubbed his chin, “Amazing. I never suspected there had been a switch at all. Her ability to impersonate you is incredible. But why keep this a secret until after the start of the match?”

“She said we had to really sell that she was me with the flag. One of the best ways to do this would be for you all to genuinely think that I was out there putting our win at risk. She wasn’t convinced you all could fake your surprise...sorry Iida.”

Tenya wasn’t a fan of the deception, but he couldn’t argue with the logic behind it. If they hadn’t sold the lie, then members of the other teams would get suspicious and then everything might have fallen apart, “I understand, Midoriya. We are here to win, and I suppose I’m relieved that Toga is taking this so serious. So what now?”

“You and Momo will hit the other bases like we planned. With Toga keeping everyone over at C,
that’s left B and D wide open.”

“Got it, I will inform everyone at once!”

Leaping down, Tenya hurried off to quickly explain the situation, and then to begin their attack.

With the Wire Arrow’s pulling her up, Himiko slipped through an opening in Team C’s base and pushed her back up against the icy wall. Peaking around, she watched as several students ran by underneath her, scanning the area around them on the field, not suspecting she had pulled herself up to the base’s top.

After minutes of being on the run non-stop, she took the brief opportunity to collect her breath, and stretch. She had anticipated that being a moving target would be a workout, but most of the trouble came from making sure Katsuki was too angry to actually think about what was going on. Izuku’s warning rang in her ears the moment she started her attack.

*Kacchan isn’t dumb. He’ll figure out that something is wrong the moment the match starts if he has time to think. You have to figure out a way to keep him so focused on you and the flag that he won’t think about anything else. Keep him driven, and keep him angry.*

Keeping him driven was easy; she just had to make sure she kept the black flag around her wrist in plain sight. Keeping him angry was a joy. Katsuki clearly had no emotional defenses in place to deal with a scenario where Izuku finally just gave Katsuki all the same shit he spewed out. While it was a joy to keep the boy in such a constant state of rage, it sure was tiring. He was surprisingly mobile, on top of being a long-distance threat. More than once already she had been a little singed by his explosions. Though she’s gotten in a few shots of her own. A smack here or there to really help piss him off. She had also gotten him to accidentally blast some of the other teams on more than one occasion. Though after a while, his wild shots started to get more targeted, and getting others hit stopped being so easy.

At least this short downtime allowed her to enjoy the feeling of the way Izuku’s muscles pulled and tightened as she stretched and kept herself loose. While his body had been pretty stiff at first, some strenuous stretching before the match allowed her to move how she wanted.

Stopping briefly to admire herself in the ice’s reflection, she had to admit she was loving getting a chance to be Izuku again. A year ago, she had squealed at how cute she looked when she had
turned into him after getting her first taste of his blood on that little piece of cloth. Now though, after whatever training he had gone through and a nice round of puberty, Izuku had gone from cute to mouth-watering.

*Whoops, easy girl. Don’t forget that you’re in a boy’s body now. Getting all worked up is a lot harder to hide.*

Mei had been a little off when she had said that Izuku was more solid than he looked underneath his gym clothes. Izuku wasn’t just solid; he was coiled steel. In his compact frame, he packed a lot of power, which had been a welcomed surprise for Himiko.

She could do a lot of damage to someone, say an explosive blond, if she wanted to with this body.

*Buuuuut, I don’t think that would be a good idea. One, because I’d rather not deal with a lecture from the teachers today, and two, I bet Izuku wouldn’t like me doing that. Him being so open to this was shocking enough. Don’t want to give him a reason to turn against me now…*

Letting her mind drift, Himiko wondered if it had been a mistake to hide her Quirk for as long as she had. He clearly didn’t have an issue with it right now, and even Ochako had said that she didn’t know of a single Quirk that Izuku hated. Izuku, heck all her friends were very understanding people. The same could be said for the class too, now that she thought about it. Still, she knew there were things about her past that she couldn’t let get out.

Jr High and Saito.

What she did to survive living on the street and her time with Mr. Stain.

If these things got out-- If the things she did got out-- she doubted even someone as kind and good as Izuku would want to be near her. This life she had now would be over. And this life, even with the hassles and numerous pains in the ass she had to deal with, was not a life she wanted to see end.

So she would keep her secrets.

She would hide all the blood she was soaked in.
The buckets and buckets of blood.

Shaking the thoughts from her mind, she reloaded the Capture Gun she had taken from Mei. While she preferred a nice simple knife as her weapon, she could appreciate the crazy girl's invention. The boots and wires had also proven to be very useful in helping her keep ahead of everyone. Himiko couldn't stop herself from smiling; her plan was working perfectly. *Maybe* a bit too perfect if she was being totally honest with herself. She hadn’t expected all three teams to pretty much empty their benches to try and get the black flag.

*Though I suppose that just shows how everyone is determined to show they are number one, huh?*

Scanning the room, Himiko smirked when she found two red flags, ancord to the ceiling with ice. Snagging them, Himiko turned to leap out the window and to continue her role as bait, but stopped when she saw there were some birds sitting on the window’s ledge.

Lots of birds.

A very concerning number of birds.

“Er...shoo?”

The birds started going nuts, cawing and tweeting in a mad frenzy, while down below Kouji began pointing wildly up towards the window Himiko was at. Jirou smirked and patted him on the back, “Awesome job! Guys we found him! Midoriya is in the base!”

Himiko swore, “Always beware the silent ones! If he sics dogs on me, I’m done! Out of the way, birds! Tweet tweet, mother fuckers!”

Diving out of the window, and trying not to hit anything with feathers, Himiko twisted herself around and threw the flags she had been holding up into the air. She didn’t have a chance to see if they started to glow green when she finished her twist and landed on the ground, ready to take off running. However, that plan was quickly derailed when as she landed, her feet sunk into the ground, “Wait what the heck!? Why is the ground marshmallows now!?”
“Alright, Honenuki! We got him! Tsunotori! Take out those boots of his before he has a chance to recover!”

While Juuzou focused on keeping the ground soft, Pony from behind followed Itsuka’s orders and launched her horns right for Himiko.

Ah crap! Stupid 1-B!

As fast as she could, Himiko was able to snag one of the horns out of the air, preventing it from hitting one of her boots. She wasn’t able to grab the last one, as it darted around her hand and impaled itself into the boot sending smoke and sparks out of its heel.

Growling in frustration, Himiko shot the Wire Arrow’s out and began to pull herself free, while at the same time, used her one working Hover Sole to help.

“Asui!” Jirou yelled, “Don’t let him get free before we get the flag!”

Tsuyu leapt forward and wrapped her long tongue around Himiko’s arm, pulling her back. While being held, Jirou and Itsuka rushed to grab the flag from her other arm. Itsuka enlarging her hands to extend her reach.

Too close!

Glancing down at the tongue holding her, Himiko raised the horn she had been able to grab up into the air, making sure Tsuyu saw what she was doing, “Sorry, Tsu!”

As gently as she could, but still putting enough force to do something, Himiko pricked Tsuyu’s tongue, making it loosen its grip. Retching her arm free, Himiko pulled out her capture gun and fired several rounds towards the advancing Team D members, wrapping them up, and buying herself the time she needed to get free.

With only one working boot, Himiko could tell her aerial mobility was compromised. What’s worse is that she wasn’t sure if the boot that had been broken was going to explode. She didn’t like how much smoke was coming out of it.
Need to ditch this thing quick. I don’t like leaving a smoke trail, even if I want them following me. Where’s Bakugou? If this thing is going to explode, I want to throw it at him.

As the capture-the-flag match waged on, Midnight was doing her very best to keep a straight face from her judge’s podium, even as her mind raced and eyes followed the most difficult student to ever be admitted to U.A.

Almost immediately Midnight knew that it was Himiko in disguise. The girl wasn’t even trying to hide it. The only reason none of the students seemed to question it was because none of them knew what Himiko’s Quirk was. The teachers, though? They all knew.

After the first mid-air flip, Midnight’s ear piece came alive with chatter from the other teachers around the stadium.

“That’s not Midoriya!”

“When did she get the blood to use her Quirk?”

“She shouldn’t have any blood in her system to transform, right?”

“Should we intervene?”

“Did she hurt Midoriya to get his blood?”

“Does anyone see Young Midoriya?”

It was only when Nezu popped on and told them that he could see Izuku hiding in the top of Team A’s base when Tenya came over that the teachers calmed down. Himiko hadn’t snapped and attacked the poor boy. No, all evidence pointed to that for Himiko to transform, the blood must have been given willingly. Which for Midnight was as much of a relief as it was a whole new can of worms that she was going to have to deal with. But one that she had been expecting to have to deal with eventually.
Sooner or later, Himiko’s Quirk was going to come out. After that, how her Quirk worked would soon follow.

She’s held onto that secret for so long because of where it could lead. She was so afraid that she’d lose everything she’s built here, or more like she’d lose the reason she even came here to begin with: Midoriya. What the hell changed between now and our last conversation on the matter?

Midnight had a feeling that their next session was going to be an interesting one, to be sure. She also had to wonder, Now that Toga has gotten what she’s wanted, what happened next?

With a sigh of relief, All Might slipped his phone back into his suit pocket. When the match began and Himiko disguised as Izuku started her attack, All Might had quickly excused himself from his seat and hurried into the hall to contact the other teachers. Fortunately, Nezu’s reassurance that he had seen Izuku hiding was enough to bring All Might out of his momentary panic.

With the panic gone, All Might himself relax. Relax and feel a little guilty. While he wasn’t alone in his sudden fear for the worst, he hoped he wasn’t alone in his guilt either. All Might couldn’t ignore that the worst outcome could be a possibility, but Himiko had shown the ability to keep her more violent tendencies in check over and over.

We all jumped to conclusions far too fast just now, didn’t we…

Sighing and straightening himself back up, All Might snuck back into the box suite. His hurried excuse of needing to make a phone call appeared to not have raised any suspicions, much to his relief. Mr. and Mrs. Uraraka were cheering loudly for their daughters team, though a few passing comments made it clear they couldn’t actually find her in the huge crowd.

“Everything alright?” Inko asked as he took his seat.

“Oh yes. Everything is fine. How’s the match going?”
“Everyone is chasing Izuku! But they can’t catch him!” Eri waved her arms about as she watched, amazed at all the flashy Quirks being used. Inko reached over and patted her on the head.

“He’s putting on a great show, isn’t he sweetie?”

While Inko had a bright smile, All Might could hear something off in her voice.

“Mrs. Midoriya?”

Inko waved him off, “It’s nothing. Just something nagging me, I suppose.”

“Oh?”

Inko’s eyes followed the match for a little longer before she answered, a little uncertain, “You wouldn’t happen to know if any of those students down there have an illusion Quirk or something?”

All Might shook his head, “I don’t think so. Why?”

“It’s just… You might find this hard to believe but I just don’t think that person down there is my son.”

All Might blinked a few times, A mother’s intuition I suppose.

“I suppose watching Young Midoriya move around like that is surprising.”

Inko shook her head, “No it’s not that. I just don’t see my boy going around flipping his classmates off like that. My Izuku is a good sweet boy, after all.”

Eri looked up at Inko, “Oh is that what Izuku’s been doing when he does this?” Eri started to mimic what she had seen, much to Inko’s horror as she cupped the girl’s hands to stop her.
Mr. Uraraka broke out into a fit of roaring laughter before a hard pinch from his wife got him to shut up. All Might turned away, hoping that his coughing hid the fact that he also almost broke out laughing. When he turned back around and saw the glare of disapproval coming from her, he gulped nervously.

Glancing around, and confirming that she could only see Hanta guarding the front entrance to Team D’s base, Ochako dashed between large rocks, making sure he wouldn’t spot her approach. She had been lucky so many members of the team had decided to follow Katsuki’s, and, if she was being honest, everyone else's lead and decided to go for the instant win. Now only a few yards away from the base, Ochako kept her eyes on Hanta and waited for him to look away. As she waited, her mind drifted back to the start of the match and the strange behavior of Izuku.

*Something is up: that’s for sure. Even if Izuku is the bait, there’s no way he’d act like that. Izuku doesn't curse, ever. And if he is acting on his own, then one of his team members should be doing something to stop him, but they aren’t doing anything. They’re just staying in their zone. It’s like they’re waiting for something….AARRGH! I’m missing something here. What is it? What could I be overlooking!?*

When a large explosion went off over towards her team's zone, Hanta turned to look, “Come on guys! Get that flag!”

Seeing her opening, Ochako floated herself and kicked off the ground, soaring upward and grabbing hold of the top floor of the base. Pulling herself around, she found an open window and snuck inside. Looking around the room, Ochako smirked as she saw several flags hanging along the walls. Hurrying, she grabbed them and stuffed them into her pockets.

*That’s four. I’ll head down and see what else I can find, but I probably shouldn’t stay too long. It’d be just my luck that Sero will pick that moment to come and do a flag check.*

Finding the door to the lower lever, Ochako was about to open it when suddenly it opened all on its own. Panicked, Ochako started to reach out. Ready to float Hanta the moment he stepped through. She came to a sudden stop, almost tripping, when Tenya stepped through the door, looking equally shocked to see her.

“Iida!”
“Uraraka!”

For a brief moment, both just looked at each other, then their eyes wondered. Ochako found the flags Tenya had clenched in his fist, and he found the flags sticking out of her pocket. The roar from Tenya’s engines was the only warning Ochako got before Tenya twisted around and kicked, the mufflers in his calf propelling his leg at superhuman speed. Ochako leaned back, Tenya’s foot just missing her as she stumbled to regain her balance. Even though he missed, Tenya’s speed was able to give him the chance to make his next move while Ochako started hers. Rushing forward, Tenya body checked Ochako. Driving her into a wall with a loud thud. The cheap plywood wall cracked from the impact. While Ochako hissed and groaned from the impact, Tenya started to reach for her pockets to steal the flags.

“I apologize, Uraraka, but I will be taking these-!”

He had expected Ochako to be too dazed to do anything to stop him, but he had made a big mistake. Even while dazed, Tenya was letting himself stay in her strike range for far too long, something Ochako took full advantage of. Feeling a strong pressure on his chest, Tenya looked down and only had time to realize that Ochako had her fingers pressed into him, before she pushed him back and he floated into the air.

“Oh no!”

Ochako smirked triumphantly as she shook her head to snap herself out of her daze, “You were saying, Iida?”

Ochako was about to reach out to try and free the flags from Tenya’s hand, when he did something she hadn’t expected. Pointing his legs out, he fired off his engines in a quick burst, pushing him away from her reach, and right into a wall at the other side of the room. Right next to one of the windows.

“Sorry, Uraraka, but you won’t be getting these!”

For a moment, Ochako panicked. From her point of view, it looked like he was going to try and fly away with the propulsion from his engine’s while still under the effect of her Quirk. Which was insane. As far as she was concerned, he’d be more likely to blast off into the sky or dive-bomb into the ground.
“Iida! Wait a second!”

When Tenya smirked at her, she froze.

“Sorry, Uraraka, I might not be able to get your flags, but you won’t be getting these.”

Gripping the window seal, Tenya pulled himself around, but instead of trying to get out, as Ochako had been afraid he’d try. Instead he took his flags and tossed them into the air. Ochako watched them float up, confused as to what Tenya was doing. Her confusion only deepened when the flags came to a stop in midair before jerking to a stop and then zipping away.

“What the!?”

Racing to the window, Ochako followed the flags as they were pulled away and right towards Team A’s side.

*It’s like they’re being pulled by...Wait, wait one second! A telekinesis Quirk! But they weren’t glowing! If it was Deku, they’d be glowing green! What is going on!?* 

Ochako got her answer when the flags were snatched out of the air by Neito and Ochako’s jaw dropped. But even as her mind reeled as she took in this new information, she saw something else happen. Besides Neito was Reiko. And Ochako watched as she also pulled a set of flags out of the air and right into her hand. Ochako was floored. Team A had two other members with Quirks like Deku’s.

*Since they had people like Deku, they don’t have to send a whole lot of people over to steal flags. Especially since everyone is...*

Ochako’s stomach dropped. While many of the finer points still eluded her, the broad scope of what had happened hit her like a truck. She had known from the start that Izuku was going to have a plan. She knew it, and she had been ready to fight against it, but she hadn’t been prepared for something like this. As far as she could tell, *everything* had gone exactly like Izuku had wanted. He had everyone caught hook, line and sinker.

“Deku, you magnificent, infuriating-!”
“HEY! OUR FLAGS! WHERE ARE OUR FLAGS!?"

Hanta’s scream from below cut Ochako off. The panicked screams got both Ochako and Tenya’s attention. Soon they could both hear him rushing up to the room from below.

*Oh, he must have heard our fight! Crud! Time to run!*

Despite wanting to grill Tenya over what had just happened, Ochako didn't want to risk getting caught by Hanta. Ochako leapt out the window and floated herself briefly so she could land safely. Releasing her Quirk, and hearing the effect above as Tenya hit the floor, Ochako took off for her zone. Behind, she could hear Tenya make his escape too, engines roaring to life and speeding away.

*I need to get some more people together. Warn them about what’s going on. If Deku set this part up, there’s no way he’d risk it all going to pieces by letting his team lose by having that black flag stolen. We need to regroup and-!*

“TEAMS! You have one minute left in the match! I repeat! ONE MINUTE!!!”

*ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?*

Realizing she didn’t have time for any of her original plan, Ochako broke into a mad dash for her zone, hoping that the added flags she was able to steal would be enough to safeguard her team from elimination.

“So, you think you could just sneak into our base while everyone else was away? Did you really think we’d leave it unprotected?”

Hitoshi froze. After not seeing anyone around the team’s base, he had hoped that he would be in the clear, but that was clearly not the case. He had only been able to make it through the first door and reach for a couple of flags when he was spotted. Scanning the room, Hitoshi couldn’t tell where the other person was.
“Shouji, get down here! Someone from another team tried to sneak in! He’s from your class!”

\textit{Shouji’s here too? Great, I do not want to get in a fight with that guy. Also where is that voice coming from? It almost sounds like…}

“I’m on my way!”

“Good. Let’s make sure this purple haired rat doesn’t get away. ”

\textit{From above?}

Looking up, Hitoshi was startled to find a face sticking out from a dark corner of the room. The boy’s white hair stood out, while his black skin melted into the shadows. Above, the sound of footsteps paused, before their pace redoubled, “Purple hair? WAIT DON’T TALK-!”

“Better to be a purple haired rat than a bleach-haired coward. You like hiding up there?”

Shihai’s eyes narrowed angrily, “What did you say to…”

As Hitoshi’s Quirk took effect, he was already on the move. Grabbing the flags he saw, he turned to make a run for it, pausing briefly as he watched as a small drone flew by overhead. Its camera turned down to look at him before flying around the base and disappearing.

\textit{Okay...that was weird.}

A loud crash came from behind, followed by a loud groan, “Crap, he got you to talk! Wait, Shinso! Hold it right there! And what’s that buzzing sound!?!”

Hitoshi took off running, praying that all the laps Tenya made him run in the past couple of weeks paid off now. And that Mezou didn’t give himself extra legs or something to make himself run faster.
Himiko was coming to the conclusion that she may have underestimated her fellow classmates and the people from 1-B.

A little bit.

Just a little.

_I suppose you put enough blood in the water and get enough piranhas together, sooner or later they’ll tear their prey apart._

After leading everyone around by the nose, a disturbing trend started to take place after Himiko lost her first boot. The teams started to remember that they were teams. One such team attack involved a boy creating a solid wall of air suddenly in her path as she was swinging by and Minoru littering the area with those purple balls which ended up snagging one of her Wire Arrows and forcing her to take the device off before she was grabbed. As she was swinging away, though, Dark Shadow grabbed her remaining line and Mina, with a well-aimed squirt of acid, melted it.

Her next loss was more of a self-inflicted injury, but she still blamed Katsuki for it. She thought she saw him by himself. A perfect target for a well aimed Hover Sole kick. Unfortunately, in her tunnel vision, she missed Eijirou coming to his defense. So when she whirled around to deliver a kick, her toe didn’t hit Katsuki’s face, but Eijirou’s hardened skull. His hardened skin shredded the front of the boot. Himiko counted her blessings that she hadn’t also broken her foot along with the poor boot. She had hopped around briefly in _some_ pain, cursing Eijirou out some, though she knew the boy didn’t deserve all of it.

So now both boots were off and discarded, her Wire Arrows victims of team attacks, And her Capture Gun? Out of ammo. It had made the greatest hollow thunk when it hit Katsuki in the head after she chunked it at him.

So now she was just down to herself and a disguise, which if she was trying to disappear, would be more than enough, but since she _wanted_ to be a target. Things were a little dicey for her now. It didn’t help that her back was to Team C’s base and everyone else was converging on her from all other sides.

The only reason she had any space at the moment was that a few of the other team members had tried to rush her, and were now rolling on the ground after she had _defended_ herself. Himiko did feel a little bad for Toru though, who was sitting down rubbing her head. At least that’s what
Himiko guessed she was doing. She hadn’t meant to throw the girl into a walking steel beam head first. That Tetsutetsu needs to learn to drop his Quirk faster. But the space she had now didn’t change the fact that she was cornered.

Something Katsuki noticed and planned to capitalize on immediately.

He was done chasing. Done with the pot shots. Done with the constant badgering. Done with being led around like a complete fool.

“DEKU! You’re done!”

A quick series of explosions propelled himself into the air, before he twisted himself around and dive bombed right where Himiko was standing. As he rocketed down, he twisted his hands to his side and used his explosions to start to corkscrew down, gathering extra momentum and sucking in air to fuel his attack. He had wanted to save this for the last event. He had worked on this move in preparation of the Sports Festival to deliver a decisive victory against whoever he had to face in the tournament that was to come. To have to use it now was a blow to his ego, but he would be damned if someone else was going to get that flag.

*If that shitty nerd wants to act like a big shot, then he can take some big shots!*

“Howitzer Impact!!”

Himiko was startled to hear Katsuki scream at her. She was shocked when she realized he was above her. Looking up, Himiko could tell what was about to happen was not going to be fun, For herself and everyone else nearby. “Well shit.”

Katsuki’s explosion hit the ground right in front of Himiko, who threw up her arms to protect herself fruitlessly. The heat and fire from the explosion wasn’t the worst part, though she could feel an uncomfortable amount of heat hitting her chest, it was the force behind it, kicking her off the ground and sending her sailing through the air until her back slammed into the icy walls of the base behind her, leaving her dazed.

Everyone else had been far enough away that they weren’t thrown back, but several students were knocked to the ground and everyone was stunned by the ferocity of Katsuki’s attack. With everyone else recovering, Katsuki ran through the dust and smoke kicked up from his attack and zeroed in on his target. Lifting his boot up, he pressed it into Himiko’s stomach, holding her up as
he bent down and began yanking off the flag around her wrist, “You should have known better than to try this shit Deku. Now looks what’s it’s got you,” Katsuki pulled the flag free and held it above his head triumphantly, “a one way ticket back to the stands with the rest of the ext-”

“Oh my god! Bakugou killed him!”

“Oh man, Midoriya’s face is all screwed up.”

Katsuki froze. With more of the smoke clearing, some of Himiko could now be seen. The skin around her face was scrunched up and sagging. Clumps of green hair and scalp were hanging off.

*Wait… it wasn’t a direct hit! How’d he get so fucked up!? I practiced to make sure this wouldn’t-*

“Oh,” Minoru said, poking his head through the smoke and pointing just above Katsuki’s boot, “Since when did Midoriya have boobs?”

*What?*

The flag forgotten, Katsuki, and several other students looked at what Minoru was pointing at. Izuku’s gym top had been blown open from the force of the blast, with the edges strangely looking like they were melting into some grey sludge. Underneath, was not the chest and stomach of a young man, but the body of a young woman, covered only with the remains of a badly-scorched sports bra.

*What!?*

“ Fucking hell, Baku Bitch, you trying to kill me?”

Snapping his head back up, Katsuki felt himself reeling, that voice had started out like Izuku’s, but then changed, becoming more feminine. Katsuki watched as the hanging clumps on Izuku’s face started to fall off, turning grey and splashing as they hit the ground. Soon his whole head was starting to melt. Blonde hair peeking through the remains of green. Remains of a freckled face falling away to leave a dazed, but sinister smirk. Himiko stared up at Katsuki, her grin widening as she watched his utter confusion, “What’s wrong? Expecting someone else?”
“Bun Bitch!? What the hell is-?”

Himiko held up a hand, “Hold that thought. Mineta, you keep staring at my chest, and I’m going to slit your throat.”

“Eep!” While Minoru ducked his head, several other students were still trying to figure out what was going on.

“Wait that’s Toga!?”

“Wait she transformed into Midoriya?”

“Oh wow, that’s her Quirk!”

“So that’s why Midoriya was acting so weird. It was Toga all along.”

“None of that shit fucking matters!” Katsuki screamed over all of them, “I still got the flag. I won!” glaring down at Himiko he held the flag in her face, “Doesn’t matter if it was Deku or you, Bun Bitch. You still weren’t able to stop me. All you did was prove what I already knew. Deku was too much of a chicken shit to have actually come out and face me.”

“TEAMS! You have one minute left in the match! I repeat! ONE MINUTE!!!”

As Midnight’s warning echoed over the loudspeakers and students let out surprised yelps, Himiko looked from the flag to Katsuki, before her eyes drifted to his side, and her manic smile got bigger. Showing off every one of her teeth, “oh, Baku Bitch. What happens next is going to be an utter joy.”

Katsuki frowned, “what the fu-“

“GUYYS! Our flags are gone!”

From the side Himiko had seen him running from, Hanta screamed at the top of his lungs, waving
his hands around trying desperately to get his teammates attention.

Jirou gasped as she froze, “What!?”

She was cut off when Mezou rushed over from his team’s base, “What were you guys doing!? You left us wide open! They sent a drone over and-“

Minoru cut him off, “Wait we still have our flags, right!”

“NO!!!”

While Teams B and D started to panic Team members from C looked on confused but in higher spirits.

“Okay we won, but what’s going on with the other teams?” Mina asked.

Eijirou shrugged, “I have no idea. Actually, where are Uraraka and Shinso? I haven’t seen them since the match started. Do you think-?”

Dark Shadow began pointing wildly towards Katsuki and Himiko, and Fumikage was looking more than a little horrified, “Bakugou! The flag!”

Everyone stopped and turned. Katsuki blinked and looked down, his victorious smirk fading as the black flag in his hands melted through his fingers and splashed into a gray puddle on the ground, “wha-?”

“Eat shit, Boom Bitch, and choke on it. Looks like that’s another one in the win column for Izuku.”

Pulling out a small hand full of red flags, she took great joy in flashing them at Katsuki before tossing them into the air, “IZUKU! CATCH!”

The flags didn’t even have a chance to finish their arc up before they started glowing bright green and zipped away, right towards the top window in Team A’s base, and then right into Izuku’s
outreached hand. The hand with the black flag wrapped around its wrist.

Shouto looked from Izuku who was standing in his base, then towards Katsuki and the gray puddle on the ground, “we've been chasing a fake.”

As the members of the three teams stood in shock, it dawned on them just what had happened. They all had been so focused on getting the black flag, the fake black flag being waved in their faces by a disguised Himiko, they had left their own bases open. They had left their flags wide open to get stolen. Now with less than a minute left, the gravity of their mistake and the horror of Team A’s plan came to them in crystal clarity.

In short, they were screwed.

Himiko knocked Katsuki’s boot off herself, and hurried away. Her job done, Himiko dashed away, leaving the rest of the students to figure out what they were going to do. Shouto came to his senses first, as he used his ice to propel himself right for Team A. Soon everyone was in a mad dash running for Team A’s zone. They had no plan, no strategy. They were just a panic driven horde.

It took a few seconds for Katsuki to snap out of his shock, before her turned towards Team A’s base, his eyes zeroing in on Izuku.

“DEKU!!”

Katsuki rocketed after everyone, screaming Izuku’s name over the noise of his own explosions. Soon, Shouto, the teams and Katsuki ran headlong right into Team A’s defenses.

Shouto, as he reached the border between his team’s zone, was hit by Team A’s first line of defense: capture nets. While he had been forced to deal with them while Himiko had acted as a distraction, this time they were coming in waves, fired from every team member on Team A. To quickly protect himself, he created a small wall of ice and ducked down behind it.

*They made sure to capitalize on Yaoyorozu’s Quirk, didn’t they?*
Shouto knew trying to go through everyone would take too much time. He also didn’t want to encase the whole zone in ice as that would slow him down as his body dealt with the cold, and he could risk trapping Izuku inside his own base, making it impossible for himself or any of his other teammates to secure the win. So if going through wasn’t an option, he would just have to go over. Pushing his right foot down into the grass, Shouto began to form a pillar to propel himself over everyone. However, he had only been able to form a few feet of ice when, just past the top of his wall, the ice flashed green and deep cracks formed in the pillar just under his feet. A second green flash of light shattered the ice beneath him, sending him tumbling back.

*Midoriya!? I see; he’s breaking the ice while it’s still being formed.*

Hitting the ground, Shouto tried to rise up, but had to immediately roll to the side as large chunks of ice sailed by. Izuku was chipping off pieces of the ice and forcing Shouto back. Grunting and still staggered from his fall, Shout tried putting up ice between himself and the sudden attack, but it wasn’t helping much. The shards were either punching through the hurried defenses or the first attack weakened the ice enough for the next to get through. Suddenly on the back foot, and having his own ice used against him, Shouto’s concentration broke. He wasn’t able to pay attention to all his surroundings, so when he took another step back, his ankle rolled. Not enough to hurt, but enough that he started to fall back, just as another chunk of ice was headed straight for him. His right foot was in the air, and he right hand was out to his side as he desperately tried to regain his balance.

But his left hand was pointed right at the oncoming ice

For the briefest moment, survival instincts took over, and Shouto’s right arms burst into flame, ready to blast the ice into nothing, but the attack never came. The bright green glow around the ice vanished while Shouto extinguished his arm and fell to the ground, shocked and ashamed he had started to use fire in a match. While he held his right hand and arm against his chest, he wondered why Izuku’s attack had stopped so suddenly. A series of explosions overhead answered his question as Katsuki rocketed by.

A war was breaking out at the border of her team’s zone, but Himiko wasn’t paying it much mind now. After her cover was blown, and using the distraction from Midnights time remaining announcement, Himiko had escaped and done what she does best. She disappeared. Now all alone, she quickly made her way through Team C’s base looking for any remaining flags that she could take. However, much to her disappointment, she wasn’t able to locate any.

*Someone actually went through the trouble of hiding a few of them.*
After realizing that there just wasn’t enough time left to search and make it back to base, Himiko casually strolled out of the fort, content and feeling pretty good that she had been able to pull one over on Katsuki.

*So maybe this Sports Festival isn’t a complete waste of time. Still…I guess I better get myself ready for some questions later. I’ll probably need to explain why I kept my Quirk a secret for so long, on top of just answering questions on what it is. Also, I just know Midnight is gonna want to know how I convinced Izuku to let me have some of his deliciously sweet blood.*

Himiko smiled hungrily at the fresh memory of the taste, and the look of rapt attention Izuku had had as he watched her drink. The dilated pupils. The dusting of red that covered his cheeks and spread down his neck, disappearing underneath the collar of his gym top. The way his breath hitched at first, and he shuddered when she started to suck. All of it made Himiko’s insides twist and warm up in ways she couldn’t even begin to describe with words. Wrapping her arm around her body, she could help but think of what was to come later.

*Oh, tonight’s gonna be a good night.*

Her mood was only damped a little as her fingers ran across the melting remains of her disguise. She hadn’t bothered to try and reform Izuku’s face, but she had been able to reform most of Izuku’s gym top, so that she at least looked like she cared about modesty, but she still looked like a walking melted wax sculpture. With every step, a little more grey sludge dropped from her body. The disguise was a loss. She would have to drop it completely and make a new one if she wanted to play at being Izuku again.

She could do it now, but she doubted that U.A. would look kindly on her exposing herself like that. She had brought parts of her costume to wear under her gym clothes at Principal Nezu’s suggestion, but those were now pretty much ruined thanks to Katsuki’s attack, and the rest of her clothes had been destroyed when she had done the transformation earlier. So while she wasn’t technically naked, a stiff breeze would probably be enough to finish off what the explosion had started.

*Hopefully I’ll have a chance to get changed. I’d rather not go much longer looking like this. Not exactly a good look, and holding it all together is starting to be a real pain in the ass. Oh, and I get to explain to the nutjobs in the Department of Support why I need new transforming underwear…greaaat.*

“To-Toga?!”

Startled out of her thoughts, Himiko looked up to see Ochako running like mad as she crossed over
into her team’s zone. Not far behind, Hitoshi was right on her tail. Both skid to a stop once they crossed over. With Hitoshi bent over and breathing heavily and Ochako also taking big gulps of air, but holding herself up. Showing she was ready to defend herself if she had too. Himiko waved her off, “Oh please catch your breath. Do I look like I’m in any shape to fight you? Relax already.”

While Ochako still looked skeptical, she went ahead and put her hands on her head and worked at catching her breath. While they recovered Himiko noticed the red flags in their pockets, *Huh. Guess not everyone took the bait. Not bad.*

Hitoshi looked up at Himiko skeptically, “Why do you look like a melted candle anyway? You get hit by something? And why aren’t you helping to defend your base?”

“Actually,” Ochako cut in, “Why are you at our base?”

Himiko rolled her eyes and raised her hands up, showing that she didn’t have any red flags on her, “I said relax. I’m empty. And I’ve been here since the match started, helping my team. So I think I’ve done my fair share, thank you very much.”

Ochako blinked, “Wait? You’ve been here?”

“Yep, this right here is the remains of my transformation.” Himiko reached over and pulled a glob of melting skin from her arm and let it fall and splatter on the ground.

“Your...transformation?” Hitoshi asked while Ochako’s eyes started to go wide.

“Yep. My transformation into Izuku. My Quirk lets me transform into different people.”

Himiko let that sink in while over the loudspeakers Midnight’s voice echoed, “TIME IS UP!”

Over the announcement of the end of the match, Ochako covered her face with her hands and screamed in frustration, “AHHHH!!! That was what I was missing!!! Your Quirk! You were a distraction the whole time!”

Himiko smirked, “Yep.”
“What about the flag around your wrist? It’s gone.” Hitoshi wondered.

“Baku Bitch got it, but it was a fake.”

Ochako screamed again while Himiko started laughing. With the match over, she waved goodbye as she hurried off. “Hey don’t feel too bad. You two probably saved your team’s ass. So look at it this way: you did more to secure your victory than anyone else on your team.”

“Here they come! Wait for my signal! Kaminari get ready!” Momo called out while everyone else got their Capture Guns at the ready. The moment the first few students crossed into their zone, Momo dropped her hand. At once everyone started firing nets, snagging and tripping up the first several students who were up front. Quickly though, Team A’s first volley stopped as they were forced to reload or move onto another Capture Gun. This pause was long enough for the students that hadn’t been caught to make their move.

Jumping over or around their fallen comrades, the next wave hurried deeper into the zone, and towards their target. Fumikage lept around an ensnared Mina who was quickly melting her way out of the net around her.

“Don’t let them reload! Dark Shadow! Go for their base!”

“YOU GOT IT!”

The living shadow shot forward, ready to plow through any defence that got in its way.

“Kaminari!”

Denki smirked as he grabbed hold of all the wires, “Alright! Time to show the world what happens when you get near a downed power line!”

Bolts of lightning zapped down the lines, and spread out along the wires, creating a giant wall of
electricity. Anyone unlucky enough to be near a wire was instantly hit and stopped in their tracks. Anyone that wasn’t hit also stopped not wanting to find out if getting shocked hurt as much as it looked like it did.

Momo smiled triumphantly; the plan was working just as intended. Seeing their teammates tied up or getting zapped was enough to send the other teams into a panic. They needed to press on, but weren’t sure how to do it. The chaos was perfectly keeping them back and their flags safe. There had been a couple of students she had been worried about breaking through, but so far they had been held back. Fumikage and Dark Shadow had been one of those worries, since she was unsure if the nets would be effective against the shadow. However, when the lightning net was set off, Dark Shadow had recoiled back so fast Momo almost missed it. What she found strange though was that Dark Shadow had been far enough away from most lighting that he shouldn’t have had to worry about getting shocked too bad. But once that lightning flashed, Dark Shadow did everything it could to get away. Momo made sure to take note of that for later.

The next student was, of course, Shouto. His ice could easily have devastated the whole area, but for some reason he hadn’t chosen to do that. She assumed it was related to not making getting to Izuku and the black flag too difficult since time was almost up. When he put up his wall, and then tried to go over everyone else, Momo felt a twinge of panic set in. They didn’t have a solid plan to deal with an aerial invasion. She knew that to slow him down, she would need to target his ice platform he was pushing himself on. With a hand going to her top, she was ready to create a small cannon to blast the ice, but, fortunately, Izuku was able to save her the trouble and not only shattered the ice underneath Shouto, but was able to push him back.

A loud series of explosions reminded Momo of the final troublesome student they were going to have to deal with.

Katsuki, who like Shouto, was taking an aerial approach to his assault. Propelling himself over the ground and safely away from the lighting coursing through it.

“AIM HIGH! TAKE OUT BAKUGOU!”

Momo screamed as she and several of her teammates aimed their reloaded Capture Guns up and fired. Unfortunately, Katsuki was more a force of nature now, a raging storm of fire and smoke. So he easily blew through the nets and raced by. As he did, Momo hoped that Izuku had a plan for this. Or at last was ready for a fight.

Get the flag!
Get the flag!

Get the fucking flag!!!

Even as around him chaos erupted as the three teams hit Team A’s fortifications, Katsuki ignored it all. None of it mattered. No, only three thoughts raced through Katsuki’s mind as he blew up a wave of red capture nets fired at him.

First was the obvious and loudest, get the black flag and win. This thought drove him forward, regardless of what was being thrown at him to slow him down. He powered through. If he was thinking about it, he’d know he was lucky that everyone was attacking at once. It spread Team A’s defenses thin, giving him the opening he needed.

Second, his mind considered Izuku. As much as it twisted his stomach and made his blood boil, he knew that once he reached him, he would have to act fast. There was a good chance that Izuku was waiting for him. That he was prepared. That Katsuki couldn’t just brush Izuku off anymore drove him insane. That he couldn’t deny that Izuku was strong ate away at the very foundation his world was built on.

When did this happen?

How did this happen?

Why did this happen?

Katsuki didn’t have answers to any of his questions.

Strong enough to be kind. You have to actually be strong to say that. What drove him to be able to!? 

Katsuki pushed the thought back down; he couldn’t afford to think about them. So they joined the last thing on his mind. The tiny voice of worry that just wouldn’t shut the fuck up.
Where had Himiko gotten those red flags?

The answer was obvious, but he hated it. Himiko hadn’t left his team’s zone the whole time she was acting as a distraction. So those flags had to have been his. Teams B and D had been hit while everyone had been distracted, and they had at least left a few people behind to defend themselves. Team C though? They had followed his lead in going all-in on the black flag. Could Himiko have emptied them too? There had been moments when he had lost sight of her. Times when she had just vanished. What had she been doing when no one could find her?

How many flags did they have now?

With only a few yards separating himself and the base, he stopped listening to himself and did what came natural to him. He blew shit up.

Ripping his hands up, he pointed them right towards the open window Izuku stood in and fired. On the roof above Mei leapt to safety, her Wire Arrows pulling her out of harm's way, exactly like Katsuki expected. Izuku, however, didn’t do what Katsuki had expected. The room Izuku was in had two openings. Front and back. Katsuki had been ready to give chase when Izuku dove out the back.

He had expected him to run away.

Instead, he jumped out the front window and collided right into Katsuki, sending them both tumbling to the ground.

He hadn’t run. He had attacked.

Hitting the ground, Katsuki ripped and tore at the grass and he hurried to right himself, only to feel himself get yanked back by his own gym top. The bright green glow clued Katsuki immediately on what was happening. While he had tried to get up, Izuku had simply rolled on the ground to face him and with both his hands out, was using his Quirk to keep Katsuki back.

Like hell, you little shit!

Ripping his arms free of Izuku’s hold, he propelled himself forward, breaking free completely. He landed right on top of Izuku. One boot just past his head, the other right under his shoulder.
Swinging his hands forward, his palms were now pointed right at Izuku, popping and sizzling as he readied to fire. At the same time Katsuki did this, Izuku reached out and grabbed two large boulders, left as obstacles, and ripped them from the ground. Swinging his own hands up to face Katsuki, he pulled the stones hard, to throw into Katsuki’s side.

“TIME IS UP!”

Midnight's announcement over the loudspeakers was accompanied by a loud buzzer that cut through the noise of the match.

As everyone around them stopped their attack, groaning in annoyance or simply bent over trying to catch their breaths, Katsuki and Izuku were frozen in place. Twin stones levitating right next to Katsuki where Izuku had stopped them at the buzzer, and Katsuki’s hands, smoking and dripping sweat poised to unleash an explosion right into the prone Izuku. Neither moved. Both knew the match was over, but neither made any move to drop their guard. Both were simply frozen in mid-attack.

“Um, guys,” Mei said, dusting herself off, “The match is over. You can get up now. You both look ridiculous posing like that.”

Izuku’s eyes never left Katsuki’s hands, looking for some tell that the paused attack was going to be unleashed. Slowly, Izuku let his Quirk relax and let the stones drop to the ground with dull thuds. Katsuki let his gaze flick to the side, eyeing the grounded rock before his hands stopped smoking and he pulled himself back. Taking a few steps back, he gave Izuku room to stand. Both continued to stare each other down for a few more seconds before they were interrupted as Eijirou came running up to them.

“Hey, Bakugou! Were you able to get the flag?”

Clicking his tongue against his teeth in frustration, Katsuki jerked his thumb over towards Izuku, “Use your damned eyes, Shitty Hair.”

Looking over at Izuku, Eijirou spotted the flag still wrapped around Izuku’s wrist.

“Aw man…”
Eijirou’s shoulders slumped disappointed that their chance to secure a win was gone, “Man we got played.”

Righting himself gave Izuku a thumbs up, “Great job, man. You guys had our number from the start.”

Izuku blinked a few times before rubbing the back of his head, embarrassed at the sudden praise, “It wasn’t anything that special, plus all I did was think up some ideas. Everyone else were the ones who made it all work. Plus, Toga did most of the work keeping you all distracted for almost the whole match.”

“Come on, Izuku, give yourself more credit than that.” Himiko walked up to them smiling brightly. Her front was now recovered and her face was her own, but her body, the gym clothes, looked like melted wax, her transformation barely holding together.

“It was your idea that let us kick ass just now...Speaking of ass, you guys and the rest of your team better line up to kiss some.”

Katsuki’s face darkened but he was cut off by Eijirou, “what do you mean, Toga?”

Himiko pointed back to Team C’s base, where Ochako and Hitoshi were shaking hands and looking pretty pleased with themselves, “Those two probably just saved the rest of you from a one way trip to the stands.”

Eijirou tilted his head, “Wai,t huh? What’d they do? I never saw them at all during the-“

“Fuck. FUCK!”

Katsuki swore, loudly before stomping off with Eijirou following after him. He had seen what Himiko had really been pointing at. All the red flags sticking out of their pockets. It was bad enough he hadn’t been able to get the win, now he’d owe Ochako and Hitoshi for possibly saving their team from losing.

“All right teams! It’s time to announce the winners who will be moving on to the next round! Team A, you were able to keep hold of your reward, so it all comes down to which teams got the most flags.”
Cracking her whip, the giant projection behind Midnight popped up with the four teams and their flag totals.

Team A: 18

Team B: 4

Team C: 9

Team D: 0

“Team A you are the winners with Team C in second place. Members from these two teams will advance!”

Team A erupted into cheers as their victory was made official while Team C sighed in relief, happy that they were at least moving on. Then underneath the team top scores, more names and numbers flashed up, showing who was able to steal flags, and from where.

Toga Himiko: 5 C-Flags.

Iida Tenya: 4 D-Flags.

Yaoyorozu Momo: 2 B-Flags

Uraraka Ochako: 4 D-Flags

Shinso Hitoshi: 2 B-Flags

Looking up at these new numbers, Mina started running over them and the final score, “Hey wait a second...we only had three of our original flags left!”

Mashirao nodded, “If Uraraka and Shinso hadn’t broken off and captured the flags they did, there’s a good chance we would have lost.”

Overhearing the two talk, Katsuki gritted his teeth. It had been exactly what he had been afraid of. Not only was he not able to get the win, but it had been Hitoshi and Ochako that had saved their team.
Over the loudspeakers, Present Mic announced that there would be a short intermission as everyone broke for lunch. Afterwards, the third event of the day would be officially announced. As everyone started to disperse, Ochako waved off several congratulations from the other team members and heartfelt thanks from her own. Dark Shadow was openly weeping in joy while Fumikage tried to ignore how embarrassed he was over his shadow’s action. Moving through the crowd, Ochako scanned everyone as she looked for Izuku. She wanted to be sure to congratulate him. And maybe slap him over the head for pulling off such a dastardly plan. She found him with a few members of his team, Momo, Tenya, Mei, and Himiko, still stuck wearing her melting disguise. They were all still basking in their win, judging by the smiles they all had. She was about to call out to them, when Himiko suddenly wrapped her arms around Izuku’s neck and leaned in to say something right into his ear that left Izuku babbling and blushing. Momo put a hand over her mouth, while Tenya’s hands chopped in the air. Himiko skipped back, laughing at all their reactions.

As Ochako inched forward, she finally got close enough that she could hear the end of Momo and Tenya’s reactions.

“A joke is one thing, but that was so scandalous. Imagine if someone who didn’t know she wasn’t serious heard that.”

“To invite Midoriya into the girls’ locker room for a quick shower to get cleaned up. Toga goes too far sometimes. As her friend and class representative, I think I need to have a talk with her.”

Izuku sputtered and tried to play it off, but he was so flustered he couldn’t really speak, and was just waving his hands around. If Ochako wasn’t fuming, she might have said he looked pretty funny. But she was fuming. Grinding her teeth together, Ochako turned away from Izuku, and towards the tunnel that Himiko had disappeared into.

Alright...Enough is enough! I’m nipping this in the bud right now! Toga is not going to keep harassing Deku like this!

While Ochako went after Himiko, Izuku was finally able to get himself under control, “Really guys, she just has a...unique sense of humor is all. Don’t be so hard on her. Besides, it's not like she messes with anyone else like this.”

Momo raised an eyebrow and rubbed her chin as she thought about that, “I suppose so…”

“Regardless, let us get going. We are on an intermission and should use the time to eat and prepare ourselves for what’s to come. Midoriya, let's go find-”

“Midoriya,” Shouto cut off Tenya as he walked up to the group, giving everyone else a brief nod, “I’d like to talk to you before you go eat. Follow me.”

Izuku blinked, startled at the sudden command, what could Todoroki want to talk about?

Noticing the concerned look from Tenya, Izuku put on a smile and hastily replied, “Sure, not a problem. Iida, save me a seat, alright?”

“...Alright. I’ll find Tsu and the rest and we’ll make sure to save you a spot. Just don’t take too long.”
Shouto simply turned and walked away, with Izuku following close behind. Neither were aware that their leaving together had grabbed the attention of someone else.

Izuku followed after Shouto until the other boy had led him down a hallway and to a tunnel entrance that was isolated from the main entrances, and all the people coming and going. Something Izuku picked up on immediately.

_He must really want some privacy. What could this be about?_

Shouto stopped and leaned against a wall, eyeing Izuku who stopped walking when he could stand across from him. For a brief time neither said anything. The longer the quiet went on, the more Izuku swore he was being examined. Shouto’s cold glare never let up and the only reason Izuku was sure the drop in temperature around him wasn’t because of Shouto was because he didn’t see any actual ice.

_Todoroki...He’s as intimidating as Kacchan is, but it’s such a different kind of intimidation. At least with Kacchan, the smart move was normally to not say anything. But I don’t know what to do with this. Do the opposite maybe? Should I say something?_

“You know, Todoroki, if we wait too long, the cafeteria is going to be really...crowded.”

Izuku trailed off when Shouto kept staring at him. At this point he decided that he would just wait until Shouto was ready to talk. Convinced that anything that came out of his mouth at the moment would probably just make things more uncomfortable.

“You overpowered me.”

Izuku tried not to be too startled when Shouto started talking, “I what?”

“At the end of the match, you used my own ice against me. You pushed me, forced me back until I broke my oath.”

Izuku’s eyes lowered until he was looking at Shouto’s left arm and hand, “You mean...your fire?”
It’s true I’ve never seen him use his left side besides whenever he melts his ice after class or training. But I thought it was a control thing. It’s an oath? Why would-?

“It’s not my fire.”

The harshness, and contempt in Shouto’s voice started Izuku out of his thoughts.

Shouto took a breath, calming himself so that he could continue, “When you were attacking me, you didn’t let up. You didn’t give me a chance to counter. You completely overwhelmed me. That kind of attack, that kind of pressure, reminded me of something. All Might.”

Huh!?

“You might not,” Shouto paused briefly. For the first time Izuku thought he saw the boy look a tad uncomfortable, but he powered through and went back to his cold self, “You might not remember, but during the USJ attack, All Might was able to beat that Nomu in a similar way. He won by completely overpowering his opponent-- just like you did with me.”

While the events of that day were hazy for Izuku, and a few spots still completely blank, that fight was crystal clear, but why is Todoroki trying to compare us?

“Todoroki, I don’t understand what you’re saying.”

Shouto looked right at Izuku as he started to talk, “You fight the same way All Might does. You even use his ‘smash’ catchphrase. On top of that, you just happened to be trained by someone from his agency. He’s also gone out of his way to give you extra attention, inviting you to lunch so you two can talk, not to mention during class he keeps an eye on you almost the whole time.”

Wait!? Wait what’s going on here? What does Todoroki know? What does he think he knows!? He can’t possibly know about One for All, right!?

“Then there’s your Quirks.”
Izuku’s brain stopped. He locked himself down, not trusting his thoughts, his actions or voice. He was sure that if he did anything, it would only make things worse.

“You said your Quirk was a superpowered version of your mothers. And All Might’s Quirk is pure superpower. Separately, these things could be written off, but all together it’s too much. You’d have to be blind to miss it.”

Izuku held his breath, bracing for what came next.

“Midoriya, you’re All Might’s love child, aren’t you?”

Izuku’s mouth started moving before his brain fully grasped what Shouto had said, “Todoroki listen! You can’t tell anyone about this! All Might trusted me with...wait...huh? I’m sorry what did you just say?”

“So you are his illegitimate son.”

“What!? NO!!! How could you even think…” Izuku paused as he replayed everything Shouto had said, “…Okay maybe if you put everything together like that it might look that way, but Todoroki I swear, All Might isn’t my dad! My father is...he’s...nothing like All Might…”

Shouto raised an eyebrow as Izuku trailed off. The change in body posture, the change in his tone and the way his eyes looked away. It all spoke volumes. Even if he had gotten who Izuku’s father was wrong, the topic in general seemed to be a sore spot for the other boy. A realization that made Shouto start to feel uncomfortable. And as he looked closer, the look he saw from Izuku reminded him so much of his siblings. His sister, and brother watching from afar, left behind as his father pushed him forward.

That made him feel guilty, but he pushed it down. He brought Izuku here to talk. And while he had been wrong about what kind of relationship there was between Izuku and All Might, there was one thing he learned, “He’s not your father, but you two do have a connection.”

The far off look from Izuku vanished in a instant as he held up his hands and started to deflect, “That’s not-”

“Midoriya, you said that All Might trusted you with something.”
Izuku’s hands dropped to his side but didn’t say anything.

“Regardless of what kind of connection you have, you can’t deny that one exists. You have a connection to the number one hero, and I have a connection to the number two.”

“You mean Endeavor.”

“That’s right. I’ve never denied that he’s my father, but I’ve tried not to bring it up, though I bet you figured it out the first day”

_I mean I did, but what does this have to with anything? All Might, myself, Todoroki and Endeavor. What is this all about. Wait...what was it that Tsu said to me before the Sports Festival..._

“Midoriya, I don’t have a grudge against you personally, but your connection with All Might makes you someone I have to crush. If I can beat you and win this tournament without his Quirk, then that’ll be the perfect way for me to show my father I don’t need him or it.”

Resentment. Izuku could see it in Shouto’s eyes, etched in his face. Feel it radiating off him. It was a look, a feeling he knew all too well himself. A feeling he had lived with after his father had up and left him and his mother.

“Todoroki, I don’t understand. Why is crushing me going to help you show you father you don’t need your--” A sharp look from Shouto made Izuku quickly change his words-- “you don’t need his Quirk?”

Shouto was quiet for a few moments. Izuku watched him carefully, looking for any sign or hint as to what he was thinking. When his hand reached up and touched his scared face, Izuku had a sinking feeling he wasn’t going to like the answer he was given.

“I suppose that’s a fair question. I dug into your personal life afterall. Midoriya, what do you know about Quirk Marriages?”

The story that Shouto told Izuku left him reeling. The sinking feeling he had had was now replaced with something worse. Emotional abuse, physical abuse, all in the name of creating an heir that
would do what his father couldn’t—surpass All Might. A family shattered, his brother gone, and his mother—pushed to a physiological breaking point where she felt such hatred and disgust towards Endeavor that just by looking at her own child, his son, was enough to make her snap. Pushing her to try and burn Shouto’s left side away with scalding water.

Throughout the whole conversation, Shouto’s voice never wavered. He spoke with the same cold voice he always used. His eyes though, the more Izuku looked into those eyes, the more he felt he could see another side of Shouto.

“Today, if I can win against you—someone who has the eye of the greatest hero on him, the one person my father was never able to surpass—with only my ice. Then I will have denied my father everything. I’ll shatter his dream no matter what it takes. That is why I’m here, and I won’t let anyone get in my way.”

Izuku was still trying to come to terms with everything he had just learned. Endeavor was a powerful hero, but Izuku had always suspected that the number two wasn’t that good of a person. His interviews painted him as a rather harsh individual, on top of how often the villains he dealt with almost always ended up in the ICU before prison. Himiko had not exaggerated when she brought up his habit of burning people to a crisp. But this? This was beyond anything he could have thought of. A man driven by pride, jealousy, and spite, desperate to leave his mark on history, even it seems, at the cost of his own family.

As Izuku thought of this, something else that Shouto said picked at the back of his mind. That last line grabbed his attention.

*He’s just here to shatter Endeavors dreams? But that doesn’t make sense. If that was the case why would-?*

Shouto sighed and pushed off the wall, “Like I said, I don’t hold a grudge against you. And if you alone have been able to catch the eye of All Might, then I suppose I should be congratulating you.”

*Alone?*

“But that doesn’t change what I’m going to do. I’m going to crush you in the next round. I’m going to win and destroy my father’s ambitions with only my right side.”

As Shouto made his declaration Izuku watched him closely. That resentment still emanated from
him. It and so many different emotions wrapped Shouto up in a dark cloud.

Resentment.

Spite.

Anger.

All of these emotions driving the cold and seemingly emotionless boy. Emotions that Izuku couldn’t help but connect to Endeavor, because just from the story, these seemed to be the same emotions that had driven him down the path he was on. However, past all of it, Izuku swore that just under the surface he could see something else. A feeling buried deep down that even Shouto didn’t realize was there.

*He looks so sad.*

“Sorry for wasting your time,” Shouto said simply, before walking away.

“Todoroki I…”

The words died in his throat. Izuku wanted to say he understood. That he understood the pain of having a father who cared only about himself. That his own father had treated him and his mother like garbage. But he couldn’t bring himself to say it. The words, no matter how Izuku tried to twist them around only sounded shallow, patronizing, and condescending. How could he even think of comparing the two men? His father was selfish, and had abandoned his family after only a few weeks of trying to ‘help’ Izuku control his Quirk. He had only done this once, and after that, he might as well not have existed at all. Away overseas, he was practically gone from their lives, except for the occasional unpleasant phone call. What he had done was horrible, but he had only done it once. Endeavor? He had committed his sins multiple times. With each child, he tried to cement his place in history, and when one failed to be what he wanted, they were cast aside and a new child was brought in until Shouto was finally born. Shouto, who now bore the brunt of his father’s twisted desires to become stronger than any hero in history. Izuku had to deal with the pressure from his father for weeks. Shouto had to deal with it for years. Izuku’s mother had been hurt by him leaving. He could still remember nights when he would hear her crying in her room, when she thought he was asleep, but she had been able to pull herself up and raise him despite everything. Shouto’s mother? Pushed beyond the breaking point and left shattered. He hadn’t even seen his mother since the day she burned him.
At least his own father had the good grace not to show his face again, but Endeavor stayed. Stayed in the same house, with the family he destroyed. His father, a man who didn’t think his son could do anything. Shouto’s father, a man who wanted his son to do everything.

So really, how could Izuku say he understood anything that Shouto went through. Although, as he watched Shouto walk away, a new thought crossed his mind.

I can’t even begin to imagine what living with Endeavor was like, but the damage, the hurt it caused Todoroki...That’s something I might know something about.

What his father had done, had started him on a path that left him screwed up for years. Years of a bleak existence of living one day to the next, wondering what new pain he was going to experience, because he was too weak, too worthless, to have anything else. His mother, doing everything she could just to keep his head above the water while everyone else tried to push it down. That messed up life finally came to an end when he ran into his salvation. Ochako, who burst through the dark clouds of his life like a ray of light and hope. And then All Might, who reached out and pushed him towards his dream.

Endeavor had done the same thing, sending Shouto down a path of pain and isolation that had clearly screwed him up too for years. Izuku hoped that at the very least, he had someone there for him to help him. One of his siblings, perhaps. Still, it was clear to Izuku that Shouto was still consumed by everything that had happened and that no one had reached out to him yet. No one offered their hand to save him. Maybe they had been put off by the boy’s cold nature. He clearly went out of his way to keep everyone at arm’s length. Izuku wondered if perhaps he was the only person outside of Shouto’s family that even knew anything that the boy went through.

But I know about it. And now that I do...I don’t think I can just do nothing. But how can I help Todoroki?

Ochako huffed in annoyance. She had gone after Himiko when the girl had disappeared into the tunnel after their Capture the Flag match, but had lost sight of her. After aimlessly wandering the halls, she decided to make the trek down to the first year locker rooms. Maybe she had been serious about taking a shower after all.

If she isn’t here, then I’ll talk with her later. I’d rather not have to wait in line too long to eat before the Sports Festival starts up again.
Opening the door to the room, Ochako slipped in, and right into the middle of a conversation between a cleaned up Himiko, and to her shock, Principal Nezu.

“...urprised you're just giving me this, though. The other one I get, but this? What kind of hoops did you have to jump through?”

“Miss Toga, you’ve managed to make it to the final event of the day. Don’t you think it would be unbecoming if you weren’t able to give it your all? And as for any hoops, do you honestly think there’s anyone that could make me jump though any when dealing with one of my students?” Nezu looked like he was smiling. His voice was even still jolly and light. But underneath it, there was an undertone that made Ochako gulp nervously.

Himiko chuckled and Ochako watched as she tossed one of her juice packages between her hands as she looked down at Nezu, “Anyone ever tell you that you have a bit of a nasty streak?”

“Oh come now. I’m adorable. Now drink up, Miss Toga, I think you have a visitor.”

Himiko blinked and turned to look back at Ochako who was standing awkwardly at the door. Nezu waved goodbye to Himiko and walked out. Pausing briefly to look up at Ochako, “before I go, let me quickly commend you, Miss Uraraka. Your keen eye and quick thinking saved your team from an untimely exit. Well done.”

“O-Oh! Um thank you, Principal Nezu.”

Nezu looked up at her, glanced back at Himiko, who had stuck a little straw into her drink pouch, and was downing it quickly with a heavy blush on her cheeks, then back to Ochako who still seemed unsure just what she had walked in on, “I’ll leave you two alone now. Don’t take too long, though. You should make sure you get a chance to eat something before the next round. You both want to be at your best later.”

With a wave of his paw, he exited the room, leaving Ochako and Himiko alone. There was an awkward silence that drifted between the two that was only broken when Himiko got to the bottom of her drink, slurping air through the straw and squeezing the packet as she tried to get as much of it as possible. When Ochako thought she was going to suck the whole thing through the straw, Himiko finally stopped, sighing and mumbling something about it being a shame they mixed it all together because it made the flavor all over the place. Turning towards an open trash can, Himiko tossed the empty pack mimicking a free throw and smirked as it went in.
“Nothing but net. I guess if this hero stuff doesn’t work out, I can try out for basketball.” When she looked back over at Ochako, she seemed genuinely surprised to see her, “Oh! You’re still here?”

*Alright. Let’s get this over with.*

Taking a deep breath through her nose, and exhaling out her mouth, Ochako fixed Himiko with a serious look, “yeah. I’m still here. Listen Toga, you and I need to have a talk.”

“Oookay? Can we talk and walk? I’d rather not miss lunch.” Himiko asked as she started to walk for the door. She was still smiling, even if she was a little bemused at Ochako. That bemused smile soured when Ochako took a step to the side to block the door.

“No. I think it’d be better if we do this privately.”

The two looked at each other. Each in a vastly different state of mind. Ochako was tense, her eyes narrowed, and fists clenched. Himiko was still smiling, her body loose and she had her hands in her pockets, “Alright. I have no idea what’s going on. So please, talk. Clue me in on what the heck is going on.”

*Is she upset about me hiding my Quirk till now? Nah, she’s not petty like-*

“I want you to leave Deku alone.”

Ochako’s tone was firm and made it clear she wasn’t joking. Himiko blinked a few times, her loose posture gone. “You wanna run that by me again?”

Ochako took a step away from the door, and moved closer to Himiko, “Ever since I met you, you’ve gone out of your way to touch Deku. The very first thing I saw you do was tackle him to the ground and *grind* on him!”

As she talked, Ochako kept advancing towards Himiko. Now that she had started, weeks of frustration-- weeks of feelings she had kept in check-- came rushing out, “You latch onto him without warning. Rub on him. Invade his personal space without a care, and *say* things to him. Imply and you’d want to *do* things just to get a rise out of him. To tease him. I don’t know what’s worse, that you’re oblivious to what you’re doing to Deku, or you don’t care. He *hates* it. He hates being made uncomfortable.”
Ochako was now standing right in front of Himiko, staring right into the other girl's eyes, “You want to be his friend, but this behavior, it’s past fun and games. You’re...you’re sexually harassing Deku. And you are going to stop.”

Ochako wasn’t sure what she expected from Himiko next. Denial? Excuses? Maybe an apology? It was definitely not for her to suddenly start laughing. She was laughing so hard, tears started running down her cheeks, and she bent over, clutching her sides.

“Oh, oh my god that’s a good one!” Himiko took in several shuddering breaths as she tried to calm herself, “I’m sorry, but that’s just too funny. Izuku hates...ha ha ha ha ha!”

“TOGA!!”

Himiko held up a hand, as she tried and failed a few times to get herself under control, “Just...one sec. Oh god. Okay I’m,” she started snickering again, “Wait no really. I’m fine, ha ha ha...okay really I’m fine now. Wow yeah, back to normal.”

While Himiko wiped away a few tears, Ochako’s face was flushed with anger. Himiko didn’t seem to notice, “Okay, here’s the thing. This sounds more like a you problem. Because Izuku hasn’t said anything like that to me. Soooo until I hear from him that he doesn't like me getting a little close, I’m going to keep doing what I’m doing. And you? You can just deal with it. ‘Kay? ‘Kay.” Seeing that the conversation was over, Himiko started to walk around Ochako, “Glad we had this talk. Now that this is done , if you excuse me, there’s a lunch tray with my-”

She was stopped when Ochako turned and grabbed her arm. Holding her in place with a vice-like grip, “We are not done!”

The room went stone cold.

“You listen to me, Toga. I know how he feels. I know what he thinks. Just because Deku hasn’t said anything doesn’t change a thing. I’m here because it’s my responsibility to look after him. I promised I would, even if that means I have to protect him from you. Do I make myself-”

Danger.
That single feeling exploded throughout Ochako’s whole being as her instincts reacted as fast as they could to a sudden threat. Ochako, though, wasn’t anywhere near fast enough. She had only just recognized that she was in danger when her world flipped on its head, and she was slammed into the hard concrete floor. The impact drove the air out of her lungs and left her dazed, with stars and spots dancing across her vision. Sucking in as much air as she could, hacking and wheezing with each try, Ochako became very aware that Himiko was standing over her. Looking almost like she had back during the USJ attack.

There was murder in her eyes, and death dripping from her very being.

“You fucking bitch.”

Himiko was pissed off. If there was one thing she hated more than someone thinking they could make her do something she didn’t want to do, it was someone who thought they could make her do something she didn’t want to do while at the same time being a bold-faced liar.

To wear that liar’s mask so boldly, so openly, and then try to tell her what to do? That was a huge mistake. At least the heroes and teachers were honest when they tried to get her to think of other things to do. Then on top of everything, on top of the lying, Ochako had brought up another sore spot for Himiko.

“You think you know everything that’s going through Izuku’s head? Fuck you. If that were true, then you knew exactly what Izuku was doing back at the USJ when he pulled us out of that shit show.”

Ochako stopped breathing.

“You knew that Izuku was going to stay behind, leaving himself at the mercy of those villains. You knew and then you still went along with it to save your own pathetic self. You let yourself get saved and let Nomu have him!”

“N-no, that’s not-”

Himiko spoke over her, not caring to listen to what she had to say. She was past done. Done listening to some who lied so obviously and acted like she was so much better.
“And then after you left him to die, you have the gall to say that it’s your place to protect him!? ”

Ochako had regained her breath. The room wasn’t spinning, and all those blinding stars were gone. She could see Himiko in crystal clarity, but she couldn’t bring herself to move. Himiko’s words kept her held down. They beat her down more than any punch she could throw.

“You don’t know anything, Ochako. You think a little training and a new costume makes you ready to face the world? You think you’ve seen the worst this world has to offer because you fought the League? That fighting them off makes you strong enough to face the world and protect someone? Let me tell you something; you don’t know anything! The world is filled with evil and horrors that would leave you screaming. The world is filled with things that can do far worse than just scar your body; it’ll scar your very soul and leave you a husk. I’ve seen the things out there, and I know for a fact that you can’t protect Izuku. You wouldn’t even be able to protect yourself. So don’t even try to pretend that you can.”

Standing up, Himiko stepped over Ochako and walked for the door, stopping with it just opened a crack, “You think Izuku needs protection from me? I’m the only one here that can protect him.”

Ochako couldn’t bring herself to look at Himiko as she left. Leaving her alone in the quiet locker room. She had come here, resolved to end something. Now? Now that resolve lay shattered along the same floor she was sprawled out on. To have that thrown into her face was just about enough to break her.

She lay on the ground for a while. She might have cried some too. Because of the accusation she didn’t know Izuku as well as she thought and had left him to die because of it? The harsh reality that she might not be strong enough to keep her own promise? That Himiko was right and she was the only one who actually could protect Izuku? That she might be losing a part of her bond with Izuku as a result? It could also be because she was so unbelievably frustrated she had just gotten her ass handed to her so easily.

It could have been any one of these single reasons or some combo of them all but despite this, slowly she sat up. The act itself was like gathering the shattered pieces of her resolve. Standing up was putting them back together, even if it wasn’t a perfect fix. Using a sleeve to wipe her cheeks, and wincing at the full ache that ran along her back and head, Ochako left the locker room. Himiko’s words echoing inside her.

*I’m the only one here that can protect him.*

Those words, on top of everything else dampened the fire in her. But each step forward, it was like
a press of a bellow, feeding the forge inside her. Each step, feeding and heating the fire of her spirit. It would take a little time, Himiko’s words had done a lot, but eventually that fire would blaze again. Ready to reforge her resolve into something new.

If she was willing to temper it with some to keep it from being so fragile and easily broken again.

“Uraraka? Everything alright?”

Ochako stopped, stunned at the new voice. Turning around, Ochako found Midnight standing just around the corner. The normally energetic woman was visibly subdued and her eyes never left Ochako. She briefly wondered if the teacher knew what had just happened, but even if she had been right outside the locker room, she would have had to know to listen. The walls weren’t so thin that even a loud conversation could be heard by someone passing by.

Putting on her best smile, Ochako waved at Midnight, quickly brushing off her concerns, “Oh, I’m fine. Just some pre-match jitters, I guess. It's exciting to have made it to the third round.”

Midnight frowned; her eyes seemed to bore into Ochako, “You’re sure there isn’t anything you want to talk about. Or need help with?”

Pausing, Ochako’s smile almost faltered, but the young woman kept it up, “It’s fine. Nothing I can’t handle.”

“...Alright. Why don’t you head on to the cafe? Don’t want to move onto the round on an empty stomach.”

“Yes, sensei.” With a nod, Ochako turned and hurried down the hall. While she was still shaken inside, she knew that this was a problem between herself and Himiko now. And it was a problem she was going to address. One way or another.

When Nezu had called her and told her she needed to urgently head for the first years girls locker room, Midnight had been alarmed, and started to hurry for the room immediately. When he mentioned that there was without question going to be a confrontation between Ochako and Himiko, she had broken out into a sprint. From her talks with Himiko, she knew the girl had issues with Ochako. There was something about the girl that rubbed Himiko the wrong way. It didn’t
really help that Himiko couldn’t say exactly what it was that got under her skin. It always came
down to some lie that Ochako was always telling, but Himiko had no idea what the lie even was.

Nezu then finished his call by giving her an order. Listen in, but do not interfere unless she was
sure someone’s life was at risk.

She almost cursed him out then and there, but held back. Confrontations between students weren’t
exactly rare. U.A. was practically a breeding ground for rivalries; she herself had said so to Midoriya back during his first week. By telling her to stay out of it and let it play out, it boiled
down to simply this. Did she trust Himiko not to step over the line? The way Nezu spoke, he
seemed sure there was going to be some kind of physical altercation, but would Himiko leave it at
that? Reaching the locker room, Midnight pressed her ear to the wall and listened. Judging by what
she heard, she had arrived quickly enough to only miss a little of the start. But what she heard made
it easy to fill in. It was a heated and one sided start. When Himiko had finished laughing, and she
heard her move to leave, she hoped that was the end of it. But Ochako must have done something
to stop her, and she kept going.

Then Midnight heard the thud, and she felt her heart race. There was no question in her mind that
Himiko had attacked. But how had she? A shove? A punch? Enough to force her to step in? A
hacking cough and wheezing breaths let her know that Ochako wasn’t dead at least. Then Himiko
started to talk, to vent. To accuse and lecture.

You don’t lecture someone you plan to kill.

Himiko left the locker room right after she was done, with the door opened. Midnight caught her
next words perfectly.

“You think Izuku needs protection from me? I’m the only one here that can protect him.”

Exiting the room, Himiko’s eyes immediately zeroed in on Midnight, who looked back at her,
mirroring her seriousness, “We are going to talk about this tonight.”

Himiko didn’t argue. She didn’t complain. She didn’t even roll her eyes in annoyance. She just
nodded, and mumbled a simple, “Yeah…” before turning and walking away.

Midnight waited in the same spot, she could hear Ochako break down briefly. She was tempted to
go in, but after only a minute, she heard the crying stop and Ochako shuffle around. She wasn’t
sure what she expected to see when Ochako left the locker room, but the brief look she got put most of her fears aside.

Ochako looked determined.

So at least there was that. Though, that also meant that whatever was going on between the two wasn’t over yet. Not by a long shot.

Watching Ochako turn a corner and leave, Midnight let out a long and heavy sigh, “I swear, these kids are going to make me go gray.”

Something happened. Something changed.

That was the only conclusion Izuku could come up with for the strange behavior of Ochako and Himiko. During their lunch, the two had very obviously tried to sit as far away from the other while they ate. Not even joining the rest of the group at their table, they had eaten at opposite sides of the room. The odd situation was brought up by Tsu, but Tenya downplayed it, assuming the two were probably in their own heads, getting ready for the upcoming third event.

Izuku wasn’t so sure of that. There had always been some weird kind of tension between the two. Try as he might, Izuku had never been able to figure out what was the reason the two butted heads. Now though, it was open hostility. He saw them sneak looks at the other. He didn’t want to use the word, but hate fit the look they had in their eyes.

Now, not only did he have Shouto’s words ringing in his head as he joined everyone back out to the field, but now he also couldn’t help be worried over what was going on between those two. He had tried to ask, moving through the crowd to find them, but both had simply said ‘nothing was wrong.’

Sighing, Izuku decided that this was not something that he was going to be able to figure out at the moment, and turned his attention back to the podium as Midnight got up to address the crowd.

I just have to make it through this next event. Then...then I can try and figure this whole thing out.
He didn’t like that he was having to put his friends' problems out of his mind like this, but he knew that if he focused on them, and Shouto too, he wasn’t going to be able to focus on the Sports Festival. And while harsh, if Ochako and Himiko wanted to have their best chance today too, they would have to deal with whatever was bothering them so much.

“Alright, it’s time to see what the members of the two winning teams will be doing for the third and final event!”

With a crack of her whip, the giant screens around the arena began to spin. Izuku watched the screens, feeling his whole body radiate anticipation.

While the sports are different every year, the final event is always some kind of one-on-one competition. Last year was a racquetball match. That had been fun to watch.

Slowly the spinning list of events slowed down, before snapping to a stop and landing on the third and final event.

Combat Tournament.

Seriously!?

While he was shocked, Izuku wasn’t disappointed with the result. In fact, in many ways this was exactly the kind of sports match he wanted. Afterall, there isn’t much a person can do to refute who wins in a one-on-one fight.

Izuku wasn’t the only one that found this result satisfactory. Ochako clenched her fists, but was able to keep herself from looking at either Himiko or Katsuki, the latter who had an almost feral grin on his face as he got excited at the chance to put down some uppity extras.

“Now that the event is decided! Let’s see who will be facing off against who!”

A large bracket popped up on the screen, and at the end, the names of eighteen winners began to fill in under each empty spot until the whole bracket was completed.
Round 1: Midoriya Izuku vs Hatsume Mei

Round 2: Yanagi Reiko vs Kaminari Denki

Round 3: Bakugou Katsuki vs Kirishima Eijirou

Round 4: Monoma Neito vs Shinso Hitoshi

Round 5: Toga Himiko vs Ojiro Mashirao

Round 6: Uraraka Ochako vs Ashido Mina

Round 7: Yaoyorozu Momo vs Tokoyami Fumikage

Round 8: Todoroki Shouto vs Iida Tenya

Eijirou slapped his hands together, “Ha! Looks like it’s you and me in the first round.”

Katsuki just huffed and growled out, “I’m going to fucking destroy you.”

“That’s if your fireworks can get past my defences,” Eijirou countered confidently.

While the rest of the students began to size up their opponents, Tenya glanced over at Shouto and found the other boy staring at him coldly, Neito was smugly smirking at Hitoshi, and Mashirao tried not to think about fighting someone who had just run circles around him in the last event, izuku let his eyes wonder from his name on the bracket, to where Ochako’s name was. Curious to see, despite knowing he should be focusing on his current opponent, when he would be facing her. Following the lines, Izuku felt himself tense. It would be in the finals. The final match of the tournament, of the whole Sports Festival, was when he would have to face Ochako.

“Now that we have our bracket determined, it’s time for the recreational games,” Midnight said with a smile, that wasn’t predatory.
“This is still a school sports festival. You all should have the chance to have some fun, too. So
have some fun. The tournament will begin afterwards!”

While the rest of the first years began to compete in the recreational events, the final constants
either watched and cheered on their classmates or kept to themselves as they waited for the
tournament, not wanting to risk anything so that they could be at their best for the last event. Izuku
found himself standing alone. His friends being part of the later group, choosing to spend the time
mentally preparing for the upcoming matches.

“Hey, Midoriya,” Mei tapped Izuku’s shoulder to get his attention before motioning towards one
of the empty staff tunnels, “Do you have a second to talk privately?”

“Um okay?” Taken a little off guard, Izuku found himself answering and nodding his head on
reflex. Not giving him a chance to change his mind, Mei started walking, dragging Izuku with her.

*Wait, why does Hatsume want to talk to me? I don’t think I can deal with another bombshell heart-to-heart today.*

Walking into the tunnel, Izuku was startled to find other students waiting for them, all carrying
various cases and containers. While Izuku gave them and the stuff they had an inquisitive glance,
Mei spoke up, answering his unasked question.

“These are guys from my class. They’re just dropping off some of my babies for me.”

One of the support students grunted as he placed a large metal suitcase on the ground, “I think
that’s everything on the list you gave us. You sure you want *all* of this Hatsume?”

“Yeah this is *a lot* of stuff.”

Mei gave them all a thumbs up, “I got it totally under control. Thanks, guys!”
With some still looking befuddled and some seemingly just used to Mei’s eccentricities, the group left the two and large pile in the tunnel. Leaving Izuku to wonder just what was going on.

“So Hatsume, what did you want to talk about?”

Mei smiled brightly, “My babies, of course. Here let me show you.”

Mei hurried around, opening cases and giving Izuku a quick rundown on what each was. Some he recognized from a few of his visits to the Development Studio but others were brand new. Blinking at all the impressive gear, Izuku could only nod his head as he listened to Mei, who was doing her best impression of an infomercial pitchman, “Um why are you showing me all of these?”

“Well so you can pick out which ones you’ll wear in our match, of course. I don’t have any of the gear from your costume ready yet, so I figured I’d let you pick from everything that I’ve made to make up for that.”

“I’m sorry, what?”

“Well,” Mei looked away, scratching at her chin, “I figured that since I’m going to be wearing my babies out in our match. It’s only fair that you get to wear some too.”

...WOW she’s really bad at lying isn’t she.

“You just want to use me to show off more of your inventions to the crowd and any investors that might be watching. Don’t you?”

Mei was silent for a few seconds before reaching down and pulling out a pair of boots, “These are electromagnetic boots. They don’t have the same propulsion power as my Hover Soles, but they’re much sleeker and they’ll boost your mobility a lot too-”

“Hey! No changing the subject...even if those do look pretty cool.”

Mei sighed, “Alright. You’re right. I’m not really interested in the tournament. I got to show off in the first two events, and a showcase in a one-v-one fight would be a nice way to round out my sales
“pitch. So after we’re done showing off, I’ll bow out and you’ll get a win to move onto the next round. Sound like a deal?”

“No.” Was Izuku’s immediate reply.

“But why? This is a big chance to get my babies out and in front of potential customers! I promise I won’t do anything underhanded if that’s what you’re worried about. None of my babies will force you out of the ring. It’s an honest free win. You just have to humor me a little is all!”

Izuku just shook his head, “It’s not that I don’t trust you, Hatsume. I just can’t accept a win like that.”

Mei looked genuinely confused, “But a win is a win right? Is this a macho thing?”

“It’s more a heroics thing. I’m here because I want to take this opportunity to become a hero. You want to show off your inventions to investors and customers. I want to show off myself to professional heroes here to scout out talent. If I didn’t earn my win, they’ll know. But more than that, I’d know I didn’t earn the right to proceed to the next round. I think everyone who made it to this final event would say the same thing, too. I mean, you wouldn’t be as proud of one of your babies if someone else built it, and said you could take the credit, right?”

“Well...crud.” Mei’s shoulders slumped in defeat. When Izuku put it like that, she couldn’t argue against his point. She was about to start packing her gear up, when Izuku continued.

“Besides I’m surprised you don’t have more faith in your own babies.”

“Huh?”

“I know that you’ve made some incredible support gear. What you used today alone was just awesome. And the things we’ve talked about for my costume are always so incredible.”

“But you kept turning so many of my idea’s down, though.” Mei grumbled, remembering some of the hard ‘no’s’ Izuku had given on some of her upgrade ideas. It wasn’t her fault that the arm thrusters she pulled out to make his punches stronger almost threw him through a wall. It had only been a little technical glitch.
“My point is,” Izuku continued on, “that you’ve made some really awesome gear here; wouldn’t you want to show them off as long as you could? Show them how much faith and pride you have in your own work? Why just bow out so early? Wouldn’t it look better for you to use your inventions in a real fight, and not just some glorified demo?”

Mei blinked before a wide, almost Toga like, grin split her face, “You have a point! If I can show that someone with no battle experience like myself can not only go toe-to-toe with someone from Heroics, but can also beat someone from Heroics too, then I’m sure I’d be up to my neck in endorsement deals!”

“I’m not going to make it easy for you. I plan on winning,” Izuku declared with a determined smile. Happy to see her turn her mood around and actually wanting to compete.

Mei waved him off, “Oh I’m not worried. Unlike your Quirk, my babies don’t give me headaches. So I’ll be fine.”

Izuku chuckled, “Okay, first of all, ow. Second, how is that fix you mentioned coming along?”

Mei had already turned around and was going through her gear, waving him off, “It’s coming. The last mannequin’s head didn’t explode this time. It only imploded a little. But we can talk about that later. Right now I need to get ready. So shoo, you’re distracting me.”

Knowing when to bow out, Izuku left Mei to her own devices. Happy that at least this conversation had been better than his last one.

...Wait!? Did she say explode!? Did she say Imploded!?

While Izuku wondered just how okay he was with the idea of putting something on his head that might take his head off, his thoughts were interrupted when an announcement over the loudspeakers pulled him out of his thoughts.

“Midoriya Izuku! Hatsume Mei! Please report to your waiting rooms! Midoriya and Hatsume! Please report to your waiting rooms!”
While Izuku had sat inside the waiting room, he tried to keep his thoughts focused. While some might overlook Mei because she wasn’t from the Hero course, Izuku knew he couldn’t afford to make that mistake. Even in the short time he’d been working with her to develop his new costume, he had seen just how brilliant she was. Terrifying and borderline insane, but most definitely brilliant. Her inventions were the ultimate wild card. Her getting past the first event, and making sure their team survived through the second was not a fluke.

If he had some idea on just what she was going to use, he’d be able to form a better battle strategy, but as it was, he would have to rely on some spontaneous ingenuity to come up with a plan on the fly.

*Maybe I should have waited until she showed me everything in those boxes before convincing her to try and win,* Izuku thought with a bitter smile.

Even as he thought of his upcoming fight, he couldn’t stop himself from thinking about other things too, even if he knew he couldn’t afford to be distracted. First was of course Katsuki. Fate must have decided to have a laugh when it made the final event an actual fight. He wanted to use today to settle things with Katsuki once and for all. What better way was there than a chance for the two to beat each other senseless until one of them drops? Then his mind drifted to Ochako and Himiko. Seeing his two friends now so openly hostile was disturbing and made Izuku want to act, even if he wasn’t sure what he should or could do. On one hand, Ochako was his best friend, and his immediate reaction was to come to her defence and try and cool everything down. On the other hand, after learning about Himiko and her Quirk and how she was so slow to come forward with it because she was worried how she’d be viewed, made him also want to look after her. It was also probably the case that whatever was going on between the two was none of his business and that sticking his nose into it could probably just make things worse.

Then of course there was Shouto and the dumpster fire that was his father-issues. Sitting in the waiting room, he had time to think about everything Shouto had told him. And the more he thought about it, the angrier he got. Of course he felt angry at Endeavor. The man was a hero; that was supposed to mean something. He was supposed to be a symbol for everyone to follow, not be a jealous monster that schemes easy to come out on top. It was disgusting. Yes, that made him angry, but so did some of the other things Shouto said. Things that might have gone overlooked by anyone else, Izuku found himself zeroing in on them.

*Todoroki, what you’re doing-*

A knock on the door startled Izuku out of his thoughts. Looking up, Izuku called out to whoever
was on the other side, “It’s open!”

Izuku jumped in his seat when All Might stuck his head in, “Ah! Young Midoriya. Excellent. I was worried I might pick the wrong door.”

Laughing, Izuku shook his head, “You probably shouldn’t worry too much. Hatsume probably wouldn’t even notice you.”

“Ha ha ha. You might be right. Power Loader has told some of us teachers some...interesting stories.”

“I think you have to be a little crazy when you’re brilliant. It’s probably a rule.”

All Might smirked, “Says the boy who is an expert in analysing Quirks.”

“All Might!” Izuku looked away, but didn’t refute the claim. He knew he could be a little...overzealous when it came to Quirks and Heroes. “So All Might, what are you doing down here. Is everything alright with Mom and Eri?”

“Oh they’re both just fine, though we’ve had to spend some time teaching Eri that there are some things that little girls should not copy.” All Might said with a chuckle.

“What she saw me doing? But I was hiding out for almost the whole match. It was Toga out... there...”

Izuku’s hand covered his mouth and he gasped in horror, “Oh no! She’s!”

“Yep. Your mother was keeping her hands on hers so she didn’t try and flip anyone off.”
Izuku sunk into his chair, “Oh Toga, what have you done?”

“Speaking of Young Toga...I suppose you know about her Quirk now.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah she told me when we were hiding in our base. Did you know, All Might?”

“Yes. All the teachers are aware. I suppose you know how it works too?”

“You mean the blood thing? Yeah she told me she has to drink some blood to make it work. I let her have some of mine afterwards.”

Absently, Izuku rubbed his finger that she had drank from. The image of her looking so euphoric while she sucked on him was not something he was going to forget any time soon.

“Ah, I see. So you made the offer.”

Izuku shrugged, “Well yeah. It was her idea to pose as me to keep everyone distracted while we stole flags, and she needed my blood to use her Quirk. It’s not that big a deal.”

Not that big a deal he says. Young Midoriya, you are far more understanding than you give yourself credit for.

“Anyway, as to why I’m here. I told you’re mother and Eri I was going to go grab some snacks for her. Figured that was a good enough reason to give me time to come see you.”

“Really? What for?”

Smiling, All Might patted izuku on the shoulder, “I wanted the chance to walk you out to your first match. And to tell you I’m very proud of the way you’ve fought today. Two first place wins in two events. Very impressive.”
Izuku blushed and rubbed his hands together bashfully, “I mean I didn’t do it alone.”

“True, but what's important is you found a way to win. And to do it in a way that showed off what makes you great. Your control over your Quirk has come a long way. Before, even if Young Uraraka had removed your gravity, would you have been able to move around like that?”

Izuku shook his head while All Might continued, “And then there was the team event. I could tell you took charge immediately and set about putting a plan into action. Don’t underestimate your wins, Young Midoriya. You showed ingenuity and leadership in spades already.”

“MIDORIYA IZUKU! HATSUME MEI! PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE FIELD! YOUR MATCH IS ABOUT TO START!”

“And now, Young Midoriya, it’s time to show the world your strength.”

“HEY GUYS, ARE YOU READY!?!”

Present Mic’s voice screamed out over the cheering crowd, as he pumped them up.

“After two incredible rounds, it all comes down to this! A serious battle! This is the one-on-one event where you can only depend on yourself! To win, you’ll need heart, skill, body, wisdom and knowledge! These are the keys to open the way to the top!”

Around the newly finished fighting arena, large pillars of fire shot up into the air. The pyrotechnics fuels the excitement in the stadium.

“Listeners here and everywhere! It’s time to get the final event underway! Let's hear it for the fighters of round one! First up, even though he’s dominated the day, he looks a little green around the gills! From the Hero Course, put your hands together for Midoriya Izuku!”
Izuku rolled his eyes and tried not to think about how many people were watching him at the moment.

_Seriously? That’s my intro?_

“Versus-- A lady who’s inventions are as dangerous to herself as they are to everyone else and it looks like she’s brought her whole workshop with her! From the Department of Support, the madwoman herself, Hatsume Mei!”

As Mei entered the arena, Izuku felt his eyes bulge. Not only was she wearing enough gear to pass as a cyborg, she was pulling huge boxes behind her on a hover flatbed.

_Wait a second? Did she bring _everything_ with her!? There wasn’t this much gear back when we were talking!_

Izuku’s eyes quickly went from support gear to support gear trying to guess what each piece did. Some seemed obvious, while others were a complete mystery. Up on her podium, Midnight looked Mei over before smirking and giving the girls a thumbs up.

“It looks like our judge has given her the “okay!” If anything, this first match won’t be boring! Now, lets go over some simple rules! There are three ways to win! Force your opponent out of bounds, or immobilize them. You can also win by making your opponent say, ‘I give up!’”

More fire burst up, giving the match a more intense and dangerous feel. You could almost say it resembles a deathmatch you’d see in old B movies rather than a school sports festival.

“Also! Bring on the injuries! We have U.A.’s greatest doctor and heroic healer on site! Recovery Girl is on site and ready to get you all back into fighting shape! So don’t worry about silly morals and ethics. If you want to win, you have to fight!”

Izuku swore, he _swore_ that from the stands, namely the student section, he could feel eyes boring into him. Warning him not to be stupid.

_It feels like someone doesn't trust me. It’s not like I go around doing stuff that gets me hurt on purpose. I’m not that bad!_
The eyes looking at him looked *harder*.

*I’m not that bad! I’m a victim of circumstance!*

“But of course, anything life-threatening is a no-go! Heroes should only use that kind of force if they have to stop a villain! So our judges and safety officials are ready to step in if things get too crazy!”

While Midnight nodded, on the other side of the arena, Cementoss waved to the crowd, promising to step in if he had to protect the students.

Midnight stepped up and pointed her whip at both Izuku and Mei, “Fighters, are you ready?!”

Izuku nodded, while Mei smirked devilishly. Midnight nodded, “Then let’s get this fight underway! Ready…” Izuku took a deep breath as he felt his whole body tense up, “…FIGHT!!”

With that, Midnight dropped her whip, signaling the start of the match and immediately Izuku rushed forward. He only made it a few steps when Mei put a hand over her ear, and a sudden, horrible feedback ripped through all the loudspeakers in the stadium. Izuku covered his ears, while above, Present Mic started playing with the audio controls in his booth.

“Whoops! Sorry about that. Ah there we go, looks like I’m all hooked up!”

Izuku blinked in confusion as the feedback died down and Mei’s voice started to come through all the loudspeakers. Taking her hand away from her head, Izuku saw she had a small over-the-ear mic on.

*Wait, what is going on?*

“I’m sorry, Present Mic-sensei! But I’m hijacking your audio equipment for a little bit.” Mei smiled brightly as she raised her hands out towards the crowd, while never taking her eyes off Izuku, “Ladies and gentlemen! I’d like to welcome you all to my glorious demonstration! Today, I will show you, and the world, that no Quirk is a match for the right gear!”
Chapter End Notes

300k! I can not even...like holy crap!

I swear everyone! This is an Izuocha fic! It is! Even if Himiko is giving Ochako a beating in the Dekubowl...and in real life.

So, I can not believe I was able to get this chapter out as quickly as I did. I hope you all liked it. Like the flying scene in the last chapter, the two big Toga moments have been a long time coming. Her confession and dumping on Katsuki have been something I've had planned for such a long time. It was so much fun getting them down on paper finally :D

The Shouto / Izuku talk gave me a lot of issues. I knew I wanted to draw some parallels between their fathers, but the dialog was so tricky. This scene has been done so many times by better writers it was really intimidating. I hope it came out okay.

Now its time for the tournament! Got my bracket made up and ready to go. Feel free to place your bets. Let's have a little March Madness...in July!
Thank you to all you wonderful readers who have taken the time to read my story! You all are awesome! If you'd like, please feel free to leave a comment or review! Critiques are more than welcome too! I'm always looking to improve!

And lastly a huge thank you to my beta reader Tmalasia! This chapter had over 400 edits @__@
Being a Best Friend Means Sometimes Telling it Like it is

Chapter Summary

It's time for the third event of the Sports Festival! A tournament! Who would have thought!? Sixteen students will enter the opening round, but only eight will advance to the Quarter-Finals. So everyone must be ready to fight. Physically and mentally. Unfortunately, a couple of students seem to have other things on their minds. What could possibly have Ochako and Himiko so distracted? Izuku knows they can't let today's opportunity slip by, but what can he say to get them ready for their matches? Assuming he survives his own match with the mad inventor Mei Hatsume.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Everyone in the room cheered as the students started making their way onto the field. More junk food was passed around as Present Mic started listing off the different classes, with Saito and his group of friends clapping happily now that this year's Sports Festival was about to begin. Around the teens’ table, more patrons of the restaurant started to speak up, each an ‘expert’ on who they thought looked like they could win. The ones who had already consumed a number of beers were clearly the wisest, and loudest, as they pointed out the ‘clear’ winners.

“Oh hey, that’s the class that got attacked, right?”

“Yeah I saw them on the news. Oh, there’s that hot girl with the huge boobs!”

“Seriously, dude?”

“What? I’m not the only one looking.”

“So you and a bunch of drunk old men. Great company you keep.”

“Oh, bite me.”

Leaning back in his chair, Saito groaned as his friends argued. Choosing not to get involved he went back to watching the screen, “Doesn’t the class seem bigger than the news showed?”
“They didn’t have a group photo of the class, so they just used some quick pictures from the front gate as they were leaving.”

“It’s a good thing All Might saved them. None of them look really tough.”

“Okay, one, there’s no way you go up to any of those guys and say that to their faces, and two, didn’t the news report say that a lot of the villains from the attack had to be treated at ICU’s because they got so messed up?”

“You don’t actually think those guys took on a horde of villains? It was probably All Might and all the teachers that came to rescue them. I bet they were pretty pissed off, and those villains got the brunt end of it.”

The camera following the students from 1-A panned over as Present Mic continued his introductions. For a split second, a patch of ash-blonde hair caught his eye, but before he could focus on it, it was gone. Soon, it was time for the opening speech. More than a few people pointed out that the green kid looked like he was ready to faint, but he ended up giving a pretty rousing speech.

“You know, it almost sounded like he was calling out the villains that attack his class.”

“Oh yeah, because poking the bear is always a great idea.”

“Will you guys keep it down?! They’re about to announce the first event!”

When the tv screens flashed up ‘dodgeball’ a few of the patrons groaned, “Boring! Last year was way better. That obstacle course was sick.”

“Will you shut it? Midnight is about to explain the rules.”

When the match began, any worries the crowd had about the first event being boring was thrown out the window. The sheer insanity of everything made it feel less like they were watching an actual sporting event, and more like they were watching one of those American home video shows. Every time the camera cut to a new student, it was just in time to see them get clobbered. Saito
might have felt bad for laughing so hard, if it wasn’t so funny.

Then it happened.

In a flash of green, Izuku and Ochako soared into the air, and the laughter stopped and gave way to loud hoots and hollers, “Holy crap, look at that green kid go!”

“That’s the same kid that gave the speech, right? He looks like a totally different person.”

“Who’s the girl on his back? She a tag-along?”

“No, look; it's giving us their quirk details down below. Huh, Psychokinesis and Zero Gravity? The guy can move stuff with his mind, and the girl makes things float.”

“Oh they teamed up to fly away then? That’s pretty neat.”

“That’s cheap.”

“No, it’s smart.”

The rest of the first event flew by for everyone, with many applauding at the end. With the match over and the winners being announced, Saito reached over the table to grab a bag of chips from the bowl when he heard one of his friends gasp and another one swear.

“What the fuck?”

“No. No, no, no no! That can’t be her!”

Pulling his attention away from the bowl of goodies, Saito looked over at his friends and was shocked to see them looking horrified. Wondering what had gotten them so worked up, he looked over at the screen, and felt the floor get pulled out from underneath his feet. On the screen were pictures and names of each person that was moving onto the next event. There at the bottom of the list was someone that Saito only ever thought of in his nightmares.
“T-Toga?”

While Saito collapsed back into his chair, his friends started to panic.

“There’s no way that’s her, right!?"

“She has to be in jail by now. It’s just someone that looks like her.”

“After she vanished, they never said what happened, though…”

The noise of the crowd and his friends vanished as Saito clutched at his chest, hands resting over the large scar. All at once it came flooding back to him.

Her eyes.

Her smile.

The flash of the knife.

The horrible pain.

It all came flooding back, but none of it was as horrible, as gut wrenching as the memory that haunted Saito in his darkest nightmares. It was the sound. The sound she made when she used a straw to drink his blood.

“It’s her...It’s really her…” Saito curled up wanting to disappear. The attack had happened years ago, but seeing Himiko on the television brought it all back. For him, years didn’t matter. It might have as well happened yesterday.

“But how? If that's really her, why is she in U.A.? It’s a hero school!”
Saito didn’t have an answer. He wanted one, but nothing came to him. Himiko was a monster. Her own parents had called her a demon when he had met them after the attack. And yet, there she was, in a U.A. gym uniform, walking around without a care in the world. It didn’t make sense, but one way or another, he was going to find out what was going on.

“We are the future that those villains couldn’t stop! We are the future that won’t be stopped! Today, we will show you all that the future is in good hands. Today, we will show you, and anyone watching, that the future is bright, and no darkness will ever dim it. We are the future, and we will rise to any challenge that is put in our way! PLUS ULTRA!”

Reaching up, Tomura dug his fingernails into his neck, scratching the skin, and leaving deep red welts that stood out, harshly, against his pale skin. After being ordered to watch the Sports Festival because it would be a good opportunity to observe his enemy he had been told, Tomura had almost destroyed the television in front of him when Izuku had walked up on the podium. His already foul temper took a greater turn for the worse when he started to give his speech.

“This brat! If it wasn’t for him getting in my way, I would have killed All Might! He’s only alive because of EraserHead! He got lucky once, and he thinks he can talk about being the future?”

Behind him, Kurogiri stood motionless as he kept an eye on him, “Please be careful not to do anything to reopen your wounds. If we are to move forward with Master’s orders, you must recover as quickly as possible.”

Grunting in annoyance, Tomura took his hands off his neck and folded them into his lap. All for One had ordered him to watch, so he would, but he didn’t have to like it. The sight of all these teenage hero wannabes made him itch. But he would watch. Watch and see if this future was anything to be concerned about, and more importantly, to see if this future would be able to put up a fight before he killed it.

Despite his sour mood, he couldn’t help but grin as he watched Izuku walk off the podium. Grin as he imagined his hands around the boy’s neck, feeling him waste away into nothing.

“What a start, ladies and gentlemen! Hatsume just threw down the gauntlet! No Quirk is a match
for the right gear? How is Midoriya going to respond to that? After all, his Quirk has helped him keep hold of first place since the day started!

Aizawa grunted in annoyance and looked over at his co-host, “Yamada, what are you doing?”

“It’s called giving colorful commentary. You should try it sometime. And call me ‘Present Mic’ when I’m going live!”

Aizawa wished his arms weren’t in slings so that he could rub his temple to soothe the headache that was growing, “And just who are you giving commentary to, exactly?”

“My adoring audience, of course,” Present Mic said, sweeping his hands out towards the crowd.

“With a broadcasting system that’s just been hacked?”

“I...oh...”

“Yeah.”

Present Mic deflated into his seat, and the two hosts sat in silence. Down below, it was anything but quiet as the crowd roared in anticipation. The audacious claim that support gear could be a match for a trained Quirk had not only grabbed the attention of Mei’s fellow classmates in the Department of Support, but also several pro heroes. They all wanted to see if Mei could back up her claim. Izuku, now recovered from his initial shock, got back into his fighting stance.

“Are you ready to go, Hatsume? Or do you want to give another sales pitch first?”

Mei smirked, and waved him on, “Take your best shot. You won’t be able to touch me.”

Because her mic was still on, the crowd could hear their whole conversation, and they reacted with a chorus of reactions that made them sound more like a studio audience than a crowd watching a sporting event.
Well, at least she took my pep talk to heart, I guess. Let’s see, she has those Electromagnetic Soles she showed me, some kind of leg braces, and a harness with those weird cylinders hanging off her shoulders. Also, that is a jetpack, and I want it. Stop! Focus on what’s important. Win the match, and then ask about the jetpack.... She’s probably expecting me to use my Quirk right off the bat, so let’s give her a surprise.

Izuku charged forward, closing the distance between the two in several long strides. Pulling his arm back, Izuku threw a haymaker, letting his momentum add to his strike’s power. Mei smiled and fell straight backward, Izuku’s fist sailing right over head, and his momentum carried him several steps past her. He had expected her to dodge; it was as telegraphed a punch as he could manage. He wanted to see if she would use any of the gear she was wearing since he had no idea what most of it was. He had not expected her to dodge like that, however. Whirling around, he expected to find Mei flat on her back, but the small cylinders at her shoulders spun and hissed, sending jets of air out and pushing Mei right back up.

“HA! With my Auto Balancers, you’re never going to knock me over!”

Crunch!

A sound, not unlike a crushed soda can, followed by a high pitched hiss, echoed over the loudspeakers, as Izuku reached out and crushed the air cylinders on Mei’s shoulders with his Quirk. Izuku knew this was a fight, and that going easy on her would mean defeat, but he couldn’t help but wince as the hiss of compressed air that escaped petered out and finally stopped.

*That might have been a little mean.*

“YOU KILLED MY BABY!” Mei screamed in horror as she looked at her damaged gear. Izuku did his best not to lose his composure, “Please don’t say it like that!”

Mei glowered at him. “You’re a villain! Baby killer!”

“Don’t say that, either!”

A soft glow came from her boots as they activated, followed by a harsh roar as her jetpack came to life. Izuku yelped as Mei literally rocketed right for him. Izuku tried to slow her down, but anything he grabbed on her was ripped from by the speed and force behind her. Realizing she was about to ram him, Izuku braced himself for the impact.
But it never came.

At the last moment, twin pistons shot out from her belt, pole-vaulting her into the air and over Izuku. As she sailed by, she pulled a pair of cuffs from her belt and tossed them right at Izuku. Little lights flickered on as the single cuffs twisted in the air and snapped onto his wrist.

“Hey!?”

The cuffs were only the size of a watch band, but when Izuku pulled at them, he was startled to find that they were very sturdy and not coming off. Mei landed and glided over to one of the carts she had brought with her. Yanking a decent-sized, metal suitcase up, she tossed it out of the ring. When it hit the ground, it popped open and drove large piledrivers into the ground, anchoring it. Then a pillar unfolded up, reaching a few feet high. Pulling out a remote, Mei pressed a button, and both the pillar and the cuffs on Izuku’s wrists started glowing the same blue color.

*Oh, that’s not going to b-!* 

Izuku didn’t even get to finish his thought as the cuffs slammed together and started to drag him across the arena, towards the case Mei had thrown.

“HA HA HA! My Magneto-Cuffs will make short work of you, Midoriya!”

Izuku tried to dig his heels in, but he was still getting dragged out of the ring despite his best efforts. Trying to stop the constant pull almost made him lose his balance, which would result in him falling flat on his face and leaving a nasty smear along the concrete. Seeing that he wasn’t going to be able to overcome the magnetic pull, Izuku instead focused on the cuffs. First, he tried to use his Quirk to break them, like he had with Mei’s other invention, but these were much more sturdy. The metal used was thicker, and he could tell these were meant to take a beating.

*If these are supposed to hold villains, I guess they need to be strong. I could try and pull my hands apart, but that’s not going to do anything to stop me from getting pulled out. I’m almost to the edge of the ring. Think, Izuku, or you’re going to get yanked to that pillar, and that’s it for you!...Wait...THE PILLAR!!!*

With only a few feet separating him from a ring out, Izuku looked up from his cuffs and out towards the pillar. Quickly, he reached out, and a green glow drowned out the blue light the
machine gave off. With a grunt, Izuku yanked it up. The first pull pulled it, along with most of the grass and dirt under it, up into a small hill. The next pull ripped it free.

Alright! Now I just need to bre- OH NO!

Unfortunately, Izuku hadn’t realized that with the pillar out of the ground, he was now the new anchor point of the magnetic pull. Breaking out of his hold, the pillar flew right into Izuku, connecting with the cuff, and sending Izuku tumbling backward. Fortunately, it was away from the out-of-bounds line. Grunting, Izuku stood back up, the magnetic gear still attached to his wrists. Lifting it up, and ignoring the distressed yell from Mei, Izuku focused on the pillar, bathing it in bright, green light as he began cracking it. While the cuffs were very sturdy, the pillar itself and all the mechanics inside were more fragile. Once cracks started to form, Izuku slammed it into the concrete a few times until it fell off the cuffs and landed in a pile of sparks and scrap. At the same time, the magnetic pull between the cuffs stopped, and Izuku was able to pull his hands apart.

“Whew, that was close.”

Mei stomped her foot down, “Stop breaking everything!”

“No?”

Mei growled before whipping out one of her Capture Guns and firing; however, Izuku was able to catch the net and hold it in place before, with a flick of his hand, sending it right back towards Mei, who used her Hydraulic Bracers to dodge out of the way.

“How dare you use my own babies against me! You’re really asking for it, you know!”

“Do your worst, Hatsume!”

After saying that, Izuku was hit by a feeling that warned him that pushing an already-angry mad genius even further was not a great idea. She glowered at him, ripped off her head gear, along with the headset, and pulled out a strange headband from one of the boxes. It was a device that looked eerily familiar to him. When she then pulled out a soldering kit of some kind and started putting the two items together, he decided that maybe it would be a good idea to not let her finish what she was making. As he powered up his Quirk, Mei, not taking her eyes off her work, pointed a remote towards one of the retractable walls around the arena. A feeling of dread filled Izuku as he watched the section open, and multiple dodgeballs from the first event flew into the sky.
“That should keep you busy while I work.”

As all the dodgeballs ripped through the air, straight for Izuku, the poor boy didn’t even have time to groan in exasperation, “Oh, you have got to be-

CRACK!

Somewhere in the stands, a blond teen was laughing harder than he had in a very long time.

Present Mic frowned as he watched the match below, “Hey, Shouta.”

“Yeah?”

“Should we be worried that some kid is just able to hack past our security like this?”

Aizawa groaned, feeling a headache and a long meeting in his future. “Probably.”

“Mrs. Midoriya, why did Izuku try to catch that ball with his face?”

While Inko patted Eri’s head, Mr. Uraraka fell out of his chair laughing.

Izuku ducked and weaved about, doing his best to ignore the stinging pain in his jaw. Around his feet, the remains of a few of the dodgeballs Mei had turned on lay broken. After the first hit, he had been dazed long enough to get struck in the body a couple more times before he was finally able to start countering. Now after smashing the first half-dozen, Izuku was dealing with the last projectile. A small little thing that was whipping around like the world’s most annoying mosquito.
Okay, I think I'm done with this!

Picking up the largest chunks of scrap metal he could, Izuku had them hovering around himself, waiting. Just as the little ball whizzed by, he slammed them together. Izuku waited a second before pulling the metal apart, and sighed in relief at the smashed little ball, “Finally.”

Dropping everything, Izuku turned to find Mei, who had just put the finishing touches on her new invention. When she looked up at him, Izuku felt a cold chill run up his spine. When she looked at him, she seemed apologetic.

That...that's not a good sign.

“Hatsume?”

“Sorry, Midoriya, but like you said: I should be here to win. And I can’t have you breaking all my stuff before I move to the next round. So, sorry, but this is gonna hurt. Shouldn’t be fatal at least.”

“Wait, what does that even-!”

Mei didn’t let him finish. She turned on whatever she had made. At first, Izuku only heard a high pitched whine coming from all the loud speakers around the stadium, then Izuku’s vision went red. A sudden, searing pain drilled into his head, knocking him to his knees. The pain was sudden, harsh, but more disturbing; it was one he had felt before. It was a pain he felt every time he pushed his Quirk too far.

“Like I said, sorry about this. I didn’t tell the guys to grab stuff I was working on for your costume. I just told them to grab everything.”

Through the pain, Izuku forced himself to stand up. Now that she had said that, he recognized what the headband had been. He had asked Mei to make something that would lessen the effects of over using his Quirk. That headband had been one of the failed attempts. It hadn’t made them better, but had made them worse. Just having it near his head had given him a horrible headache. And now she had it hooked up to her headgear and was broadcasting throughout the whole stadium.
Izuku tried to reach out with his Quirk and snatch the device out of Mei’s hands, but he could feel his power get pushed back, painfully.

*She’s...making it so I can't use my Quirk...*

The pain was making him nauseous. It was making it hard to find his balance. He was only vaguely aware of his surroundings when Mei slammed into him. With her boots and leg bracers supporting her, she began to shove Izuku out of the ring. As dizzy as he was, it was impossible to try and anchor himself for too long. He’d dig his heels in, but after a good shove from Mei, he’d be backpedaling several steps before he’d try again. He was getting pushed back and pretty soon he knew he’d be out of the ring, and out of the tournament.

*Come on! Focus! Think of something!*

He was only a few yards away from the outer edge now. It’d only take one or two good shoves, and he would be done.

*Think!*

But it was hard to think. The constant pressure on his head was almost too much. The feeling of having his Quirk pushed back into his head was almost too much.

*Almost.*

*However that thing works...it’s pushing against me...maybe if I push back hard enough...*

Izuku was only a couple feet away from the edge. Gripping Mei’s arms, he focused the best he could. He didn’t focus on one single thing, instead he just pushed his Quirk against the force driving it back.

“AAH HHH!!!”

Digging deep, Izuku forced his Quirk out, pressing it against the invisible force and driving it back. He had never done something like this before, using his Quirk on a force rather than an object.
The strain reminded him of when he tried to use his Quirk on the Zero Pointer. The kickback had been the worst pain he had ever felt. Now, though, for better or worse, he was more used to that kind of pain, and he had experience with worse kinds as well, thanks to Nomu. So he kept fighting, kept pushing. Ignoring the ice pick driving through his skull. Ignoring the wetness he felt on his lips. He just pushed. Around him, his green aura flickered-- off more often than it was on, but that started to change. The glow lasted longer each time. It was dim at first, though soon it became brighter and brighter.

With each time his glow came back, the headgear Mei wore sparked and crackled. Small whiffs of white smoke started coming off, and, through the loudspeakers, static started to broadcast over the grunts of the two students as they fought.

Then Izuku’s glow blazed to life, no longer flickering on and off. At the same time, Mei’s headgear whined, cracked, and finally fizzled out, while the loudspeakers popped before they went back to broadcasting.

The pain gone, Izuku was able to finally stop himself from getting pushed back. Slamming a heel down, he saw he was just at the line. Grunting, Izuku reached up and grabbed Mei’s gym top at the shoulders. Looking right at her, he saw surprise flash across her face, then resigned recognition as she realized what was about to happen. Sighing sadly, she smiled at Izuku, “Well, I tried.”

“I know.”

Tightening his grip, Izuku yanked Mei forward as he twisted around, throwing her out of the ring. Landing on her feet, Mei stumbled backward until she fell onto her butt with a grunt. Midnight raised her hand, signaling the end of the match, “Hatsume is out of bounds! Midoriya advances to round two!”

Midnight’s voice echoed throughout the stadium and the crowd erupted into cheers.

“Oh hey, looks like Midoriya threw her out...wait I’m live?”

“We’ve been live since Midoriya broke whatever that thing Hatsume made. How else do you think we’d be able to hear Midni-”

“WHAT AN INCREDIBLE DISPLAY, LOYAL LISTENERS! I’M NOT SURE WHAT WAS GOING ON AT THE END THERE, BUT WE HAVE OUR WINNER! Midoriya Izuku wins by ring-out!”
Using his sleeve to wipe his nose, and grimacing at the red stain, Izuku hurried out of the ring and over to Mei. Offering his hand to help her back up.

“That was incredible, Hatsume! Your babies were so cool...though I wasn’t really a fan of that last one.”

Taking his hand and standing up, Mei started to dust herself off, “Yeah, I might have gone a little overboard with that last idea. At least I only used the first failed prototype and not the one that makes heads go boom.”

“...Thank you for your restraint…”

Mei rolled her eyes before looking away from Izuku and up towards the upper sections of the stands. Her eyes scanned over the multitude of people until she saw who she was looking for. A bunch of suits whispering to each other and pointing right at her. Izuku noticed Mei grinning widely, “Um, what are smiling at?”

“It looks like all the people from the support companies bit. I might have lost the match, but the war is mine.”

Izuku blinked and looked up, “Wait, isn’t the company ring of seats all the way at the top in the suites? How can you tell?”

Mei waved him off, and started packing up her gear, which Izuku following close behind to give her a hand, “With my Zoom Quirk, I can see them easily.”

“Wait? That’s your Quirk?”

“Yeah. Why is that so surprising?”

“Well I just thought your Quirk had something to do with all the inventions you’re able to make,” Izuku rubbed his head, embarrassed. The more he thought about that, the more it sounded like he didn’t think she could have made everything without her Quirk. Which wasn’t very fair to her. Fortunately, Mei wasn’t bothered by the comment at all.
“That's silly, Midoriya. A person's Quirk doesn't dictate who they are. People are more than their Quirks, after all.”

The truth of that comment hit Izuku hard. Thinking it over, he thought about some of the people he knew. Ochako had a Quirk that could have easily made her perfect to help her parents’ construction business, but instead her parents wanted her to follow her own dreams. So she was now training to become a hero so she could take care of them. Then there was Himiko, who had a Quirk that some people might find villainess or at least disturbing, like he guessed was the case with her parents. Growing up with that hanging over her could have twisted her into something, or broken her, but she was here at U.A, too. Living her own life.

With the thought of family trouble fresh in his mind, Izuku’s thoughts then drifted to Shouto. Unlike the others, Shouto seemed to be only dictated by his Quirk. He didn’t even see it as his own, but belonging to his father, and he refused to use it. He’s here in U.A, where people are giving it their all to become heroes, and Shouto was only using half his power. That alone showed how much he was trapped by that fire Quirk.

_We’re all here to become heroes, but Todoroki said he was here to spite his father. How does he expect to become a hero if he isn’t willing to use a power he’s so ashamed of? That’s if he really does want to be a hero, and isn’t just here because he hates his father._

Ochako let out a long breath as Izuku’s name was called out as the winner. The match had been entertaining at first. Seeing Mei’s different inventions and Izuku’s solution to just smash everything had been fun. Even when Mei had surprised everyone by somehow turning on the dodgeballs from the earlier event, she had enjoyed watching Izuku fight back, even if she had been more subdued than everyone else. At the end, though, her gut had instinctually twisted in worry. While everyone else had been confused as to what was happening to Izuku’s Quirk, when the cameras had shown Izuku trying to fight while Mei pushed him back, Ochako had zeroed in on the fact that Izuku’s nose was bleeding. A lot.

However, now that the match was over and Izuku _seemed_ to be okay, Ochako let herself relax. Or relax as much as she had been able to beforehand. Despite herself, Ochako felt her eyes drift over towards Himiko, noting that she too seemed to be watching the giant monitor closely. While everyone else talked about the match, she was keeping a close eye on Izuku. Perhaps, she thought, she was also making sure he was okay, even if his nose was bleeding. She was aware that Izuku got bad nose bleeds when he was forced to push his Quirk harder than he should.

Instead of feeling relieved that someone else was looking out for him, Ochako felt a dark shiver run
through her. A swirl of emotions that had driven her to confront Himiko in the girls’ locker room. The confrontation hadn’t gone like Ochako had expected, and that wasn’t even counting Himiko throwing her to the floor. It had been Himiko accusing her of knowingly leaving Izuku to die and, after that, not being able to protect him.

Those words made Ochako’s blood boil.

How dare Himiko say something like that. She was Izuku’s best friend. She would never leave him behind knowingly. They had been practically inseparable for the past year. They could talk openly with each other without worrying about the other judging them.

And yet, Izuku never said anything about what Toga was doing to him.

Ochako shook her head. No, even if he hadn’t said anything, he couldn’t not have a problem with it. It was impossible.

Right?

Then there was the last bit: the idea that she couldn’t protect Izuku because she didn’t know what the world was like. Ochako clicked her tongue in annoyance. She had fought those villains just like everyone else. She would get stronger, and she would keep her promise. She would protect Izuku. She wouldn’t let anyone else hurt him like that ever again. As Izuku’s best friend, it was her responsibility to look after him.

The dark emotions inside her added one last line to that promise; as Izuku's best friend, it was her responsibility to look after him. Hers, and no one else's.

Especially if they claimed that they were the only one able to protect Izuku from the horrible people of the world.

She hated this feeling. This unknown feeling that twisted her insides up and left her feeling hollow. She wished she could just feel angry—just angry, and not whatever else was going on inside her at the moment.

Himiko, perhaps feeling the anger emanating from Ochako, glanced over at her, but Ochako quickly turned away and forced herself to calm down. While her being angry over that part of the
whole ordeal was easy for her to understand, everything else was not. Ever since she had met Himiko, the way she interacted with Izuku upset her so much, but she couldn’t put into words the emotions she was feeling. Whenever she saw Himiko brush up against Izuku. Pressing her body up to his or grinding her hips or an exposed thigh on him. Whispering into his ear with temptations and innuendos to tease him, Ochako wished she just felt anger. Anger, she understood. She had learned a great deal about anger from dealing with Katsuki. With Himiko, however, it wasn’t just anger. Anger by itself wouldn’t have driven Ochako to accuse Himiko like she had. It wouldn’t have made her so boldly claim that she would protect Izuku from her. It wouldn’t make her wish it was her that was brushing up against Izuku.

But doing such a thing was out of the question. Her own feelings for Izuku aside. Feelings she knew she had to keep out of the way for both their sakes since they were here to accomplish something. They wanted to be heroes, so neither had the time for silly things like flirting and touching, or romances and love. They had a job to do, and everything else was a distraction. And yet Himiko flew in the face of everything Ochako thought. The other girl made decent grades and excelled at hero training, even if she bemoaned the rescue portions and preferred the more violent aspects of it. She could do all that, and still found time to tease Izuku. Playing with her sex appeal to leave Izuku flustered and speechless. Doing things that should be between lovers. Between people with real emotional connections.

Ochako closed her eyes and pushed her feelings back down. She needed to be in control. She needed to focus. Focus, and ignore how much she hated the thought of Himiko hanging happily on Izuku’s shoulder and how much she wished she could imagine it could be her instead. But such a thought was too impossible to fully imagine. She was here to become a hero.

And heroes don’t have time for such silly things.

Maybe...maybe if I knew why she liked to tease Izuku, things would make much more sense. The way she talks, she sounds like she really thinks highly of Izuku. So why does she keep going out of her way to tease him like that?

What added to Ochako’s confusion is that despite their fight, and despite the way she acted around Izuku, Himiko had proven to be a good and reliable friend to Izuku, herself and the whole group. Despite tackling Izuku to the ground and sitting on his lap the first day she met her, she also stood up to Katsuki and prevented the bully from attacking Izuku because he had gotten a higher score during the ball throw. Up until everyone else learned what Katsuki had done to Izuku, it had been herself and Himiko who made sure Katsuki didn’t get too wild while dealing with Izuku. Their mutual dislike for the other boy giving them something to bond over. Then there were the times Himiko had gone out of her way, even endangering herself, to protect their group. She had viciously protected Tsuyu from a villain that had gotten the drop on her. She had even chased after herself when she had gone to rescue Izuku after he had been struck by the Nomu and left to drown at the bottom of a lake. There was little doubt in Ochako’s mind that she and Izuku would be dead if not for Himiko attacking the group of villains that had surrounded them.
Ochako closed her eyes, and sighed. It was Himiko’s idea to name their group of friends. She had stood up for Hitoshi when he had expressed some discomfort over using his Quirk when they first met. Himiko had done so much that should make her feel like a good and close friend, and yet here Ochako was. Left feeling angry, conflicted and confused by the other girl.

She hated this so much.

“Man, that was crazy. Everytime Midoriya got an advantage, that Hatsume pulled out a new gadget. Siccing the dodgeballs on him was just cruel,” Denki said as he leaned back in his chair.

Hitoshi nodded. “Yeah, then there was whatever was going on at the end. It looked like Midoriya was in a lot of pain. She was almost able to push him out.”

“Whatever she did to the speakers looked like it was messing with his Quirk. Did you see how it was flickering? Also did a number on my ears...ow,” Kyouka grumbled as she rubbed her ears, trying to get the ringing to stop.

Momo patted her shoulder, “I wish you had said something earlier. I would have made you some hearing protection.”

“What I don’t understand is how she had something like that to begin with. Sure she had to make it, but to be able to throw something together to nullify a Quirk is a little crazy,” Mashirao pointed out.

“Actually,” Tenya started, “If I recall correctly, Midoriya said his costume repairs were being taken over by the school, and that someone from the Department of Support was going to be working on his gear. I think that was Hatsume, so she may have had a better understanding of Midoriya’s Quirk, and knew how to counter it.”

“Who the fuck cares? Deku let himself get pushed around by someone not even in the hero classes. He should be ashamed of himself. Wasn’t even that good of a fight to be talking about it.”

Eijirou rolled his eyes at Katsuki’s dismissive tone, “Oh come on, you were watching the fight
closer than anyone else here. Todoroki’s eye never left Midoriya, but you-- heck, you were watching Midoriya like a hawk.”

Katsuki didn’t say anything, clearly not happy that someone had noticed how he had been watching the match. Though, he did shoot Todoroki a withering glare, which the other boy simply ignored.

“And don’t go sleeping on our fight coming up,” Eijirou continued. “You gotta go through me if you want to face Midoriya. And trust me; I ain't gonna make it easy for you.”

“I told you; I’m going to destroy you.”

Eijirou laughed, “Yeah that’s what you keep saying. It’s another thing to man up and back up your words, though, Bakugou.”

Katsuki sneered at Eijirou, who just returned his look with a confident smirk. Mina rolled her eyes as she elbowed Eijirou in the side playfully, “Oh my god, just go find a room already. All this sexual tension is getting to be a bit much.”

Katsuki ignored her while Eijirou playfully pushed her back, “Very funny, Ashido. I guess I can’t blame Bakugou too much, though. With his Quirk disadvantage, it makes sense he’d be worried about Midoriya.”

There was a pause as everyone stopped and turned to look at Eijirou, who flushed some at the sudden undivided attention he had. Katsuki’s head snapped around as he glared at him, “Care to fucking repeat that, Shitty-Hair!?”

Eijirou, not in the least bit worried or insulted by Katsuki, answered simply, “I mean it’s kinda obvious, right?”

Again there was silence from the class.

“I mean, come on guys...Uraraka, this is obvious right? You’ve known these two for a while now. You have to know what I’m talking about.”
A few heads turned to look at Ochako, who up till now had been in her own little world deep in thought. Blinking a few times she shook her head slowly, “Not...really.”

“Bakugou’s Quirk blows stuff up, right?” Eijirou started, clearly a little surprised no one else could see what he saw. “So when he uses it, there’s going to be loads of collateral damage.”

“Yeah...The gym always has to get fixed every time he uses it to practice his Quirk,” Mina said as she leaned forward.

“Not every fucking time! I’m not some out-of-control mad bomber,” Katsuki countered harshly. The blank stares he got in reply made it pretty clear no one really believed him.

“Like I was saying, when he uses his Quirk, he’s gonna wreck the arena, I bet.”

“Your point? They got Cementoss down there to fix everything if something breaks. What does me blowing up the arena got to do with anything?” Katsuki asked, not very happily.

“We’ll, isn’t that just gonna give Midoriya huge chunks of concrete to use as ammo?”

“You’re a fucking idiot.” Katsuki seethed, “All the ammo in the world isn’t going to make a bit of difference because I’m going to blow Deku the fuck up before he can use any of it!”

Eijirou rubbed the back of his head, “Ah...yeah I guess there’s that.”

“You’re assuming your explosions will be able to stop Midoriya fast enough, though, kero.”

Everyone turned to look at Tsuyu, who wasn’t fazed at all by the death glare Katsuki was giving her, “I assume? You think I’m weak or something, Frog-Legs?”

“No.”

“That’s fucking righ-”
“But are you stronger than the Nomu?”

“…” Katsuki’s mouth clamped shut.

“Midoriya was attacked by Nomu. It hurt him really bad, too. We all saw how Midoriya looked when they carried him off in the ambulance.”

An uncomfortable silence fell over the class. Some shuddered at the memory, while some others looked visibly nauseous.

“But despite that, after Uraraka revived him, what was the first thing he did? He picked a fight with Shigaraki, the leader of the League of Villains.”

As that statement sunk in, the class was interrupted from their thoughts as a voice came in over the intercoms, “Kaminari Denki, Yanagi Reiko. Please report to your waiting rooms!”

Denki clapped his hands together as he got out of his chair, “Well that’s my cue. Wish me luck guys.”

Soon after he had left, Izuku walked around the corner, dabbing a tissue to his nose. Tenya was the first to notice, “Ah! Midoriya! Congratulations on your victory.”

“Oh thanks, Iida.”

As Izuku took his seat, Katsuki huffed, rolling his eyes, “You let that support chick make you look like an idiot.”

“Aw, come on, Bakugou, lighten up.” Eijirou said, “Though, what’s up with your nose, Midoriya?”

Izuku waved him off, going out of his way not to look over at Ochako, who he swore was eyeing him pretty hard.
“Alright, everybody! It’s time for the next match! Its the ghostly apparition of Class B, who would be great for haunted houses! From the hero course, it’s Yanagi Reiko! Versus-- Class A’s living fuse box! Let’s just hope he doesn’t short out! From the hero course, Kaminari Denki!”

Denki eyed Reiko as she took her position in the ring, *The way she holds her arms is a lot like Asui. Super cute! Plus, she totally has a kuudere-look going on. I wonder if she’s got a boyfriend?*

“Hey, sorry to say, but even though we were teammates just a little while ago, I’m not going to take it easy on you. But what do you say to grabbing a bite to eat afterwards? My treat. It’s the least I can do after I win this match.”

Reiko tilted her head to the side, “I remember you. Your electricity is indeed very dangerous...”

Denki puffed out his chest, “That’s right. My Quir-”

“...If you can manage to hit me, of course. If not, then you’re nothing more than puffed-up words and sparks.”

*Yeouch! That’s harsh...Though, maybe I should be careful. Her Quirk is a lot like Midoriya’s, and that dude can be scary if he wants to be. Might be worth it to try and end this as fast as I can.*

*“Let’s get this match underway! Fighters! START!”*

The moment Present Mic signaled the start of the match, Denki started powering up. Lightning jumped and arked all over his body as he got ready to attack.

“This match is over! I’ll cover this whole arena with lightning! Indiscriminate Shock -- 1.3 Million Vol- URK!!!”

Denki didn’t get a chance to call out his attack. An invisible force grabbed him from behind and yanked him backward. As he was getting pulled back, he let off his attack, engulfing the whole area around himself with lightning. However, as he was getting pulled backward, Reiko had also moved herself as far back as she could, putting as much distance as she could between herself and
Denki. With the added distance, even though she was still stuck with some stray bolts, the power behind them was greatly diminished. Fighting through, she kept pulling Denki until he cleared the arena, and she let him go, sending him tumbling backwards into a heap.

Midnight raised her hand up, “Kaminari is out of bounds! Yanagi advances to the next round!”

“WHAAAT?! It’s over already?! If you blinked, then you missed it, listeners.”

While Reiko let out a breath of relief, Denki was still laying on the ground with a goofy grin on his face. “Weeeeee.”

“Well, looks like you know who you’re facing next, huh, Midoriya?” Hitoshi said.

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, I guess I do.”

“Man, I feel bad for Kaminari, but how cool is it that we’ll get to see a match between two Quirks that are so similar,” Eijirou said with a smile, “Brain power battle!”

“It’ll be interesting to see how you two use your Quirks differently; though, by looking at her, she doesn't seem to have the same physical training you have,” Tenya observed.

“HA HA HA HA HA HA! You don’t actually think you stand a chance against a superior Quirk do you?”

The class turned to find Neito crawling over the wall separating the two class sections, “You’re puny Quirk is just a counterfeit of Yanagi’s Poltergeist. You must be quaking in your tacky red boots.”

Izuku blinked, “Umm?”

“What nothing to say? Just as I thought, all talk and no act-ACK!”
A giant hand raised up from behind Neito and smacked him in the back of the head before pulling him down from off the wall. Itsuka poked her head up after removing Neito. “Sorry about that. He...likes to talk.”

When Itsuka left, the rest of class 1-A was left wondering what the heck had just happened. Tsuyu tapped her chin thoughtfully, “At least we know that they have weirdos in their class, too.”

Collectively, the class nodded.

With a disinterested grunt, Katsuki stood up, “Hey Shitty Hair, let's get going. We need to get to our waiting rooms.”

Eijirou blinked before following after him, “Oh yeah, our match is next.”

“Good luck, you two!” Izuku called after them.

Katsuki clicked his tongue against his teeth, “I don’t need your fucking luck.”

Kyouka rolled her eyes, “Do you ever turn off the douche?”

“No, he never does.” Ochako grumbled, ignoring the hate getting thrown her way by Katsuki before he turned and walked off with Eijirou close behind.

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “I wonder what’s got him in a bad mood?”

“That’s just Kacchan being Kacchan. He’s just really competitive.”

Katsuki was tempted to turn around and tell Izuku to keep his nose out of his business. He didn’t need him making excuses for him when he didn’t give a shit about what anyone else in the class thought of him. Besides, he wasn’t even right about what had him in a sour mood at the moment
anyway. At least. not fully. At first, he was in a bad mood because his day had not been going like he had planned it, but now that the tournament had started, he had put that on the back burner. He didn’t want the distraction messing up his fights. Then he had been upset that he had gotten caught keeping tabs on Izuku’s fight, and, rightfully, getting called out for overlooking Eijirou. Then he was upset because he hadn’t learned anything useful while watching Izuku’s match. The whole fight-- if you could call it that-- had been a shit show. The gear used made it more of a demonstration than an actual fight. He knew Izuku had a long-range Quirk that could be used for offense or defense depending on what he had around him to use. Despite this, Izuku had the habit of closing the distance and getting his hands dirty. Katsuki was very uncomfortable with how similar that was to his own fighting style. No, he was upset because Eijirou was right; his Quirk would end up giving Izuku ammo because he would damage the ring, and he couldn’t think of a way around it. If he tried to keep the ring intact, he’d either have to aim high, which would be a huge pain to do throughout a fight, or he’d have to lower the power behind his explosions, which led into Tsuyu’s point.

Fucking Deku can take a hit and keep swinging. I can’t pull my punches...fucking hell...

This was a problem, and worse yet, he couldn’t afford to be worrying about it right now.

Need to focus on Shitty-Hair first. Then either Lavender or that annoying shit from the other class. Then, then I’ll have a plan for that worthless upstart Deku.

“Alright, you connoisseurs of carnage! Are you ready for your next match? This one is going to be explosive!”

A loud groan escaped from beneath Aizawa’s bandage covered face, “Who writes this junk?”

Present Mic ignored him, “First up, he makes high-fives a serious health hazard! It’s Bakugou Katsuki from the hero class 1-A! Careful folks; he’s just a tad volatile, like any good bomb! Versus — Whatever you do, don’t fist bump this young man. Also from hero class 1-A, it’s Kirishima Eijirou! A walking shield that uses more hair products than me!

Eijirou sighed, running a hand through his hair. Pulling at the ‘horns’ he gave himself, “Man, he didn’t have to call me out like that.”

“Alright, you two! Let’s get this match started! Fight!”
Almost immediately, Katsuki used an explosion to close the distance between the two. When he was right in front of Eijirou, Katsuki slammed both his hands together and pointed them right into Eijirou’s chest. Eijirou brought his hardened arms up to protect himself just as Katsuki’s explosion slammed into him.

But Eijirou had learned his lesson. He’d been on the other side of these explosions several times now. After the first time in the gym when he had been sent flying into a wall, he had been thinking of ways to keep that from happening again. So while he protected himself from the blast with his arms, he hardened a foot and leg and slammed it into the ground, ripping through his shoe and digging his toes into the concrete, anchoring himself.

Katsuki’s eyes went wide when Eijirou didn’t go flying like he had planned, instead swinging a hardened fist right for Katsuki’s face. Katsuki was able to just dodge to the side. He avoided a direct punch, but the hardened skin still grazed his cheek, leaving several shallow cuts. Suddenly finding himself on the back-foot, Katsuki could only fling out a few smaller explosions that Eijirou tanked through as he pressed his attack.

“Bakugou’s getting pushed back?”

Ochako leaned forward, shocked at how the fight was going. It wasn’t that she thought Eijirou couldn’t win. She thought he had a chance, but she hadn’t been ready to see what was pretty much a one-sided fight.

Mina was clapping wildly. “Way to go, Kirishima! You got this!”

“I thought he was a goner when Bakugou blasted him right off the bat, kero.”

“Yeah,” Rikidou added, “Normally after something like that, I’d have to pull him out of a wall.”

Izuku nodded. “Before Kacchan’s attack, it looked like Kirishima anchored himself down. That was a good idea. Now he has Kacchan off-balance, and he can’t use his explosions as much as he’d like.”
“He’s still popping a lot of them off, though?”

Izuku shook his head, his eyes never leaving the match, “No, they’re too weak. He can’t use any of his big explosions while he’s off balance or he might knock himself over completely. Those small ones are just to keep Kirishima from being able to finish the fight. They’re small, but Kirishima still has to protect himself.”

Mina grinned, “Then it’s only a matter of time before Kirishima wins then. If Bakugou stays like that—“

“He won’t,” Izuku stated, cutting Mina off. While this got him a few quizzical looks, Ochako wasn’t one of them. She was frowning now, “If Kirishima can’t take advantage of his edge soon, he’s going to lose it.”

“Eh?”

“Kacchan is smart. He hasn’t just been backpedaling this whole time. The moment he gets his balance back, he’s going to know what he has to do to win. If Kirishima can’t win before then…”

BOOM!!!

A loud explosion ripped through the air signaling that Izuku’s dire words were about to come true.

Katsuki sneered up at Eijirou as, after another glancing blow, Katsuki, instead of taking another step, started to fall backwards. Eijirou, thinking he finally had the upper hand, took a step forward to slam his fists down into Katsuki. He flinched when Katsuki’s sneer turned into a horrifying smirk.

“Gotcha!”

Wait!? Did he mean to fall on purpose!?
Pointing a hand out, Katsuki used an explosion to propel himself to the side, giving himself plenty of room to regain his composure, “It’s my turn now! Let’s see you keep up with this!”

*Oh, this is gonna suck…*

Keeping one hand pointed to the side, Katsuki used it to accelerate himself as he began running circles around Eijirou while with his other hand pointed right at his opponent, firing explosion after explosion.

*Up till now, he’s only been hardening parts of himself I hit. He’s been avoiding using his Quirk over his whole body. His fucking Quirk is supposed to be a perfect defence, and yet he’s been avoiding using it like that. Let’s see what happens when I fucking make him use it!*

At first, Eijirou tried to keep himself facing Katsuki, his hardened arms raised to protect himself, but Katsuki’s superior speed and mobility quickly made that impossible. After taking several blasts to his unprotected back and sides, he was forced to change tactics and began hardening his whole body. With his whole body protected, he charged through Katsuki’s explosions, trying to reach him and pummel him into the ground. Katsuki, however, never let Eijirou get too close. Again, his speed and mobility let him slip by and stay out of Eijirou’s strike range. As Eijirou kept chasing after Katsuki, and Katsuki kept blasting Eijirou, the former started to notice something, bringing a feral grin to his face.

“That’s why you tried to keep from using your Quirk on your whole damned body! Keeping yourself hard like that is a real pain in the ass for you, isn’t it!?”

*Oh crap!*

“And everytime you move to attack me, you’re fighting against your own Quirk! Attacking and keeping up your defences at the same time is making your Quirk crumble! That’s why you tried to only use your arms!”

Eijirou charged forward, swinging wildly at Katsuki, who launched over him, “You’re coming apart at the seams! So let’s see how much more punishment you can take, Shitty-Hair!”

Bakugo redoubled his efforts, running rings around Eijirou and hitting him with blast after blast, all the while Eijirou kept trying to catch him, until, after a devastating blow to his side, forced him to stop and hunker down. When Katsuki saw that, he stopped worrying about staying out of
Eijirou’s hands, and focused solely on his attack. Coming to a stop, he began firing blasts in rapid succession. Over and over, tearing Eijirou’s hardened skin apart. Seeing Eijirou start to wobble, Katsuki charged forward, using the opening to deliver his last attack. Hands inches away from Eijirou, Katsuki fired a huge explosion that engulfed Eijirou in fire and smoke, tearing the ground under him apart and sending him sailing into the air.

“Darn...it…”

Eijirou slammed into the ground, rolling over himself before coming to a stop on the concrete arena floor. Pulling his arms under himself, he tried to push himself up, but before he was able, his arms gave out as he collapsed into a smoldering heap on the ground. As he tried a second time, Katsuki stomped over and stood next to him, palm pointed right at his back. “Stay down, Shitty-Hair. You’re done.”

With a grunt, Eijirou went slack on the ground. Turning his head to the side, he found Midnight watching him closely. “I give up.”

Midnight, hearing what she had been waiting for, immediately raised her hand, “Kirishima has conceded the match! Bakugou is the winner and will advance to the next round!”

While the crowd cheered, Cementoss got off his chair and walked over towards the two. “Kirishima, do you need assistance getting to Recovery Girl’s office?”

Eijirou was about to answer before Katsuki waved the teacher off and reached down to pull Eijirou up by the scruff of his ruined gym top, “I’ll drag him there. Not gonna let Shitty-Hair embarrass our class by letting himself get carted off like a wimp. And you, man the fuck up and let’s go. Don’t make me have to throw your ass down the fucking halls.”

Scrambling to his feet as Katsuki dragged him out of the arena, Eijirou did his best to keep up, “Ouch! Man, your bedside manner needs some work.”

“Shut the fuck up and move!”

“Er… How about that camaraderie, folks!? He’s not letting anyone else take care of his friend but himself!”
Katsuki glared up at the announcers booth. “Fucking bite me!”

“Shinso Hitoshi, Monoma Neito, please report to your waiting rooms.”

Without a word, Hitoshi got up and started walking toward the hallway.

“Hey, Shinso. Wait a second.”

Turning around, Hitoshi looked over at Izuku who was hurrying after him, “What’s up, Midoriya?”

Izuku frowned, “There was something I wanted to talk to you about. Is it alright if I walk with you?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “Sure. What’s on your mind?”

Falling in line with Hitoshi, the two walked down the hallway. Izuku glanced back towards the rest of the class, and only started talking when they were out of sight, “I wanted to talk to you about Monoma...and I didn’t want Iida to hear...”

Hitoshi arched an eyebrow, “Oh?”

Izuku laughed nervously, “Yeah he might...think what I’m about to do is cheating.”

Almost tripping on his own feet, Hitoshi felt his jaw drop as he stared at Izuku, Midoriya? Cheat? I can’t even imagine this guy jaywalking. What is he talking about?

“Okay, Midoriya. Before you ruin your reputation and we have to call you the PG-Rated Hero,” Izuku groaned loudly, burying his face into his hands, “What exactly do you want to tell me?”

Recovering from his embarrassment, Izuku straightened up, “It’s about Monoma’s Quirk.”
Hitoshi almost laughed. He had been expecting something else. Something more serious. Maybe some kind of dark secret he could capitalize to make getting him mind controlled easier. Though, with how much the class B student liked to talk, Hitoshi wasn’t worried about that at all.

“Midoriya, relax. Us talking about other people’s Quirks isn’t cheating. Besides, I already know what it is.”

Izuku blinked in surprise, “Oh it isn’t? That’s good to know...Wait? You do? How?”

“Yeah. Uraraka and I talked about it for a bit right after the capture the flag match. He has a Quirk like yours and that girl from 1-B, Yanagi. So don’t worry about...what?”

Halfway through Hitoshi’s explanation, Izuku started shaking his head vigorously. Hitoshi frowned and crossed his arms, “What?”

“That’s not his Quirk.”

“Huh? But Uraraka said she saw him pulling those flags out of the air from the other base she had snuck into.”

“Shinso, his Quirk is Copy. He copies Quirks.”

Hitoshi blinked before he swore under his breath, “He can copy...well shit.”

“Yeah. He copied Yanagi’s Quirk for our match. But He might not have that Quirk when he faces you.”

The more Hitoshi thought about that, the more concerned he became. He was suddenly facing a lot more unknowns now than he had been ready for.

“Wait...what else do you know about it? How does he copy Quirks or…”
Izuku shook his head sadly. “Sorry, but I don’t know anything about it. He made sure that Yanagi didn’t talk about it, and he went out of his way to make sure he didn’t let anyone know anything about it. I didn’t even see how he used it. Or if I did, I couldn’t tell.”

“So, not only could he have copied anyone from his own class, but he could have copied anyone from our class that was in that match at this point.”

Izuku rubbed his hands together nervously, “It might be safer to assume he could also copy everyone from our class. Since we don’t know how he does it, he might only have to be near someone, or it could be like Aizawa Sensei and it’s visually activated.”

...Son of a bitch.

An unsettling thought crossed through Hitoshi’s head as he was already trying to wrap his mind around everything else that Izuku had just dropped into his lap, “I don’t know jack about the other classes’ Quirks. None of the people from 1-B were on my team, and I wasn’t exactly watching them while the match was going on. I either had my eyes on yo--on Toga or was busy sneaking into another base to steal some flags. Great, just great...”

“Well,” Izuku started as he reached behind his back, pulling out his notebook, “You might not have had a chance to watch them, but I did.”

Hitoshi looked at Izuku, then at the green notebook he was holding out. Then back at him, “Wait...you’re serious?”

Izuku nodded, “When Toga was running around, I took some mental notes and made some quick scribbles in here. It’s only on the students that were chasing Toga, so it’s not the whole class-- and it’s only my quick observations-- but it’s better than nothing, right?”

Holy crap. Midoriya was able to take notes while that whole crazy match was going on? This guy is scary sometimes.

Hitoshi looked at the notebook again and weighed his options. Some might argue that this kind of info was a bit unfair. No one else had this kind of insider information to use. Heck, even Neito would be going into the match somewhat blind since Hitoshi hadn’t used his Quirk on anyone from Team A. But Hitoshi knew he had limits. His Quirk relied on him getting a reaction out of his opponent. If he couldn’t do that right away, he’d need every advantage to last until he was able to
trick Neito into replying and getting him under his control. In this world, if you aren’t taking every advantage, then you’re just asking for trouble.

Reaching out, Hitoshi took the notebook from Izuku, “Thanks, Midoriya. I really appropriate it. I better get going if I want to have time to study what you wrote down.”

Izuku smiled before something flashed over his face, and a dusting of red spread over his cheeks, “Yeah...um just do me a favor?”

“Sure?”

“All the stuff for the 1-B students would be towards the back. So...” Izuku looked down at his shoes and mumbled out, “...You don’t really need to look at the front...”

Hitoshi’s response was instantaneous, “Oh so that’s where you have Uraraka’s entry and all your professional team-up fantasies and super moves dreamed up, right?”

“Eep!” Izuku wrapped his arms around his face and turned away, blushing while squeaking out denials and making sounds that you would expect from a dog’s chew toy than an actual person.

*Oh wow, I hit the nail on the head. He actually has all that written in this book? No wonder Uraraka hasn’t been allowed to look....Great, now I feel bad for teasing him.*

Hitoshi raised his hands as he tried to calm Izuku down, “I was joking, Midoriya. Don’t worry, I won’t look.”

“O-oh....right. A joke. Just a joke...ha ha haaa,” Izuku trailed off with a sigh, “Like I would actually have something like that with me where anyone could actually read it...haaa. Well um, good luck, Shinso.”

“Thanks. I’ll see you after the match.”
“ALRIGHT! After that explosive last round, it’s time to give these next contestants our full undivided attention. The last round was super flashy, but I get the feeling this next one is gonna be a real battle of wills! First up, he may look tired, but his sharp tongue will leave you dazed. From the hero course of class 1-A, Shinso Hitoshi! His bark will make you bite! Versus-- A jack of all trades, master of none, this young man is a living random encounter. Also from the hero course, of class 1-B, Monoma Neito! I’d talk about his bark, but this is a family broadcast, so I’ll just have to pass!”

Hitoshi watched Neito closely as the other boy took his position across from him. In the short time he had in the waiting room, he had gone over everything Izuku had jotted down about the Quirks of the students of 1-B.

First there’s Poltergeist and that metal skin Quirk, which are just like Kirishima’s and Midoriya’s Quirks. So if he uses those, I just have to deal with it like I’d deal with them. Then there was that guy that was able to spin his hands like a drill, the girl with the super big fists and the green dude that made swords pop out of his arms. All are close-range-combat Quirks that I do not want to get into a straight up fight with. Hopefully, I’ll have him brainwashed before I have to deal with those. If not, that’s going to suck. One guy was able to turn the air into a solid wall and another turned the ground almost into water. Those will be a pain if he tries to entrap me with them. Best solution, get him brainwashed before he can use them. Also, it’d probably be a good idea to just stay back. The horns and that girl’s Quirk that lets her come apart are the two I’m worried most about. They give him range if he uses them. At that point...I’ll just have to try and get lucky and either get him to talk right away, or try and knock him out of bounds. Of course, if he has a Quirk from my class...like Dark Shadow...

Hitoshi shuddered at the idea. After racking his brain, his plan ultimately came down to simply getting Neito to talk right off the bat, or doing everything in his power to stay in the match until he did. Getting up close and trying to actually fight was not an option.

“Alright, you verbal gladiators! Time to put your money where your mouths are! FIGHT!”

“S-”

“You know, none of the other matches had the fighters acting very sportsman-like. No hand shakes or glove touch. That’s a real shame don’t you think? Want to shake my hand?”

Neito cut Hitoshi off before he could even get a word out, making the other boy stumble over his words before silencing himself. Neito had a smug grin as he held out his hand towards Hitoshi. The odd request, and gesture from the boy, on top of the smug smile he had kept Hitoshi from moving from his spot. He did notice that Neito had been in such a hurry to start talking over him, that his first few words he spoke had been jumbled together. Hitoshi frowned and opened his
mouth to try to speak, but with a growing grin, Neito talked over him again, “So are you just going
to stand there? Here I am trying to be a good sport and you’re just acting like a spoiled brat.”

Hitoshi clicked his tongue in annoyance, “Liste-”

Neito’s smug smile grew larger as he withdrew his hand and shrugged dramatically, “What?
Nothing to say? Are you 1-A brats so full of yourselves that you think it’s beneath you to show a
little good sportsmanship?”

*He’s intentionally cutting me off. He’s going out of his way to keep me from talking. But why
would...Wait? Nothing to say? He just asked if I have nothing to say? He’s been hurrying to cut
me off, and is baiting me like he knows... He knows. Shit, how the hell did he figure out what my
Quirk is? I didn’t use it on anyone from his team. So how would he even know...oh...*

Hitoshi recalled that while he hadn’t used his Quirk on anyone on the same team as Neito, he had
used his Quirk on someone from his class. The student that was hiding, literally, in the shadows,
Shihai. Worse, he also recalled Mezou trying to warn him not to speak when he had used his Quirk
on him. It wouldn’t be hard to put it all together after that, and Shihai could have easily warned
Neito about his Quirk the same way Izuku had warned him about Neito’s.

*At least it doesn’t seem like he’s copied me, or I would be brainwashed already. Should have
thought of that possibility sooner before I started talking back.*

Eyeing Neito cautiously, Hitoshi now had a choice to make. He could keep trying to get Neito to
reply to him, but that option wasn’t looking too good. The blond had come up with a brilliant way
to circumvent the trigger for his Quirk. He needed a reply for it to work. If Neito just kept talking,
something he was *clearly* good at, over him every time he even opened his mouth or interrupted
him before he even got a full word out, he was safe. And the longer he tried and failed to get him
under his control, the more time Neito had to counter and attack him with whatever Quirk he had
copied.

No, he couldn’t afford to keep waiting. So that left him with option B. Which boiled down to
running up and punching the smug blond in the face before shoving him out of the ring. Hitoshi
wasn’t thrilled when, after a brief moment of shock, Neito just went back to smiling. He really
wasn’t thrilled when Neito lifted up his hand, formed a fist, and shot the hand off his wrist.

*Crap, he has that one girl’s Quirk!*
Ducking to the side, Hitoshi deflected the hand away with his arm, wincing at the glancing blow.

_That wasn’t as bad as the dodgeballs from earlier, but it still packed a punch...Note to self; tell no one I made that pun._

Neito raised his other hand and shot it off as well.

_Just have to get past this one, and get him out of bounds before he puts himself back together._

Hitoshi’s thoughts were interrupted when the second hand Neito threw at him suddenly grew much, _much_ larger. Large enough to easily grab him. With a flick of his handless wrist, Netio started to squeeze his hand around Hitoshi, pressing his arms against his side and making it very hard for him to breath.

“ACK!”

“Sorry, you weren’t expecting that I guess. I bet Midoriya told you what my real Quirk was, but I didn’t tell him everything. I only told Midoriya that I can copy Quirks. I never said I could only copy one at a time.”

Hitoshi tried to free himself, but he was trapped. Glaring up at Netio, he tried to force his ways closer to him, but the giant first kept pushing him back.

“Don’t worry, though; I’m not some sadist. I’m not going to squeeze you till you pop or anything like that. But since you’re with 1-A, you don’t get to get off with _just_ a ring out.”

“Bastard, what are you-”

Whack!

From behind, the first fist Neito had launched swung back around and enlarged before chopping Hitoshi in the back of the head. Knocking him out cold.
“Shinso is unable to continue! Monoma is the winner and advances to the next round!”

“And the match is over listeners! The match started slow, and it looked like Monoma was trying to get Shinso to shake hands with him. Then WHAM! Like a kick to the head, or I guess a karate chop, Monoma won by knockout!”

While Present Mic yelled into his microphone, giving a summary of the most recent fight, Aizawa watched as Midnight helped Hitoshi to his feet. This match, he had been anticipating, and, unfortunately, it had gone similarly to how he had expected. As class 1-A’s teacher, it was his job to help prepare these young students for their future as heroes. This meant making sure they grow up and mature as they improve. The best way to do this, in his mind, wasn’t to help improve their strengths, but to get them to realize their weaknesses. Which meant that he had to be aware of his students' weaknesses. And he was very aware of Hitoshi’s weaknesses. After all, they reminded him of his own when he was a student.

For the first two events, Aizawa watched as Hitoshi was able to use the element of surprise to use his Quirk effectively. However, in his first one on one match, he wasn’t able to repeat his success. Neito had known what was coming, and Hitoshi had no answer for that. His tactic of using insults to get a reaction out of people could be effective, but so far, it was the only tactic Hitoshi had. So once that had failed, he fell back on trying to win through brute strength by running right at his opponent. Unfortunately, that meant he was pretty much fighting Quirkless against someone with an endless possibility of options to take him out.

Which is exactly what happened.

So as far as Aizawa was concerned, Hitoshi had two areas of improvement he needed to work on right away. His fighting capabilities were one; fighting head on, as he had learned after several lost fights, was not always the best option after all. He needed to learn tactics, and mobility. Aizawa had some ideas that would help with that front.

The other thing that Hitoshi needed to work on was how he deployed his Quirk. Insults would only get you so far. Hitoshi needed to learn of other ways to get reactions out of people and, unfortunately for Aizawa, he knew of someone who was very good at getting a reaction out of whomever she wanted. He just hated the idea of having to make that call.

Izuku winced when the second giant hand hit Hitoshi in the back of the head, “Oh no.”
Tsuyu croaked sadly while Tenya sighed, but kept himself composed.

Momo leaned backed after watching the match closely. “It looked like Shinso wasn’t able to use his Quirk.”

Kyouka frowned. “How, though? That Monoma was talking pretty much the whole match.”

Izuku shook his head. “Hitoshi needs someone to respond to him. Just because Monoma was talking doesn't mean he was responding to what Shinso was saying.”

Fumikage crossed his arms as Hitoshi was called out and Neito declared the winner. “Having to rely on a Quirk that needs someone else to activate puts him at a real disadvantage.”

“Himiko Toga, Ojiro Mashirao, please report to your waiting rooms.”

Mashirao sighed, “Well I guess we should get going, Toga. I hope we’ll give everyone here a good...Um Where’s Toga?”

When Mashirao had looked over to Himiko’s seat, he found it empty. Tooru, who had been sitting next to her, turned and made a surprised gasp, “Wow! When did she sneak away?”

Izuku looked back, equally surprised Himiko could have snuck away, considering she was in a seat farthest away from the exit.

She left before anyone could wish her luck...Normally, she would have at least teased me a little to make sure I was rooting for her. Something must really be eating at her. I wish I knew what was going on.

Izuku glanced over at Ochako, who had also looked over with everyone else. He watched her eyebrow twitch and lips turn down in a frown. Izuku blinked, startled when Ochako’s face briefly turned into an ugly sneer before she turned away. As she did, her eyes caught Izuku’s, and she stopped. The sneer vanished, replaced with momentary shock. Izuku didn’t know what he was looking for as he looked at her. It wasn’t like the problem was just going to show itself on her face, right?
When the shock on Ochako’s face melted away, she didn’t go back to being angry, or distant, like she had been. She looked guilty and ashamed. She broke eye contact and looked away, back out to the wide open field and arena, doing her best to ignore Izuku completely.

Oblivious to the strange looks going on between Ochako and Izuku, Tooru shrugged her shoulders. “Maybe she wanted to have some privacy while she prepped for your guys’ match. Don’t think too much about it. It’s not like she’s going to be able to do that during your match.”

“Oh unless she turns into you, Hagakure,” Kyouka added thoughtfully.

Mashirao gulped. Fighting an invisible Himiko was not an appealing thought.

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “She didn’t have to be invisible when she tore through all those villains, though, kero.”

Paling at that idea, Mashirao stiffly started to walk. Tooru, noticing his unease, called after him, “Ojiro, wait!”

Mashirao turned around to see one of Tooru’s sleeves raised up, “Good luck out there! I’m sure you’ll do great!”

Mina chuckled, “What are you doing with your arm?”

“It’s a thumbs up! I’m giving him a thumbs up. Can’t you tell?”

While most of the class just stared at her, Mashirao smiled and gave her a small bow. “Thank you, Hagakure.”

After sneaking away from the class, not wanting to deal with everyone wishing her good luck at the moment-- or worse, Izuku, because she didn’t feel she could handle that without bursting-- Himiko sat in silence, staring at an empty chair in the waiting room trying to come to terms with a
feeling she didn’t have a lot of experience with.

Remorse.

After her fight with Ochako, Himiko had expected to feel vindicated, Or at least more so than she did. Since meeting Ochako, the other girl had rubbed her the wrong way. It didn’t help that she had such a hard time getting a read on her. It had been easy to understand people when she was living on the streets. Out in the dark corners of the world, people were simple, and all their wants and goals revolved around simple things.

Money.

Sex.

Drugs.

Power.

Blood.

Those five things were always the answer, one way or another. Want money? Sell drugs, offer sex, or kill someone. Want drugs? Offer sex, steal money, or kill someone. Want someone dead? Pay them in money, drugs, or sex. Want power? control the other four things. Even Himiko had fallen into the same pattern, though her want for blood was much more literal, but she got it the same way as everyone else. It was so simple. People liked to think they were complicated, but when it was all boiled down, it was so simple. It made people so easy to read and easy to copy when she put on a new face.

Then she got to U.A., and things got complicated. Suddenly, she was surrounded by heroes and kids that wanted to be heroes. At first, most of her logic still applied. In fact, it was almost easier. Blood and drugs were pretty much scratched off the list, which just left money and power. Sex was still around, but this was more a byproduct of the fact that teenagers are horny and the adults were just better at hiding it, Midnight notwithstanding.

Things didn’t stay that way, however. These people, her classmates, her friends, started acting in ways that Himiko hadn’t expected. It took Himiko time to realize what was different, and it was
the why behind their actions. Why were they trying to get stronger? Why were they trying to be heroes?

She didn’t have the answer to the why’s for everyone, but she had some pretty good guesses. Tenya was legacy, Eijirou was his manliness, Bakugou was pride and ego. Izuku was because it was his dream, to help people, to be like All Might, etcetera and etcetera. With Izuku, she was still learning, and she loved every second of it.

Ochako, though, was different. There were so many things she didn’t understand about the other girl. The things she did know, she could list on one hand. One, she was here for money. Whenever Home Economics or the rare non-combat-driven Heroes class the lesson covered money-related topics like investing, savings, or what to charge as a hero, Ochako would be at attention, taking more notes than even Izuku did when he was analyzing a Quirk. Two, she was Izuku’s best friend, and the two had trained together for a year to get into U.A.

That was it.

Everything else about her was a big question mark. So she tried to learn everything she could about the other girl. Her goals, her desires, or at the very least, the reason why she kept putting herself in between Izuku and herself and spoiling her fun and chances to woo the boy. However, immediately she ran into several roadblocks.

First was Ochako’s constant lying. Even now, Himiko didn’t know exactly what it was that Ochako was lying about. It was such a strange thing. It wasn’t that she was walking around telling some bold face lie. This was different. The lie was part of her. How she talked. How she acted. It was only just after the USJ attack that Himiko thought perhaps she had figured something out about it. That the lie was becoming more obvious. The next few days after the attack, whenever she saw Ochako, she seemed off. Himiko at first contributed this to surviving the attack, but soon she saw that the strangeness was more often than not directed at Izuku. A lingering glance. A pause when saying his nickname. Walking just a little slower so that she was always next to Izuku in the hall. Little things that didn’t add up. But soon, the strange behavior faded into the background, or Himiko just started to ignore it. Whatever the reason, the lie she was looking for also became harder to find.

So, because Ochako’s lie, her mask, was so hard to narrow down and uncover, Himiko decided to try to do what she normally did when studying someone she intended to change into. Watch them closely and see what makes them tick, but this also proved tricky, as Ochako played her cards close to the chest. She could tell Ochako wanted to be a hero, and that she wanted money, but there’s more to it than just that. She couldn’t understand what was driving Ochako to work so damned hard all the time. The superficial stuff she got easily. The inner workings of the other girls mind,
though, not so much.

*Girl needs to learn that keeping a mask on like that is only going to get people hurt.* Himiko shuddered unconsciously at that, though.

Faced with that dead end, Himiko decided to try a more direct approach to learn what she wanted about her. She snuck into the U.A. records room to find Ochako’s file. U.A. does background checks on *everyone*, according to Midnight. So a quick peek would give Himiko all she needed to know. At least that had been the plan. What she found instead was Principal Nezu waiting for her with a fresh cup of tea and a lengthy speech as to why sneaking into off-limits areas of the school was a bad idea.

So after so much hard work, Himiko wasn’t any closer to understanding Ochako. She was judgmental and thought she knew what was best for others. She saw Himiko’s actions as a threat, and was determined to stop them. In many ways, Ochako reminded Himiko of her parents and the Quirk counselors she had dealt with growing up. The ones that wanted her to wear a mask and pretend she was just like everyone else. Pretend she wasn’t herself. Their words echoed in her head, over and over. Like a hate-filled record playing with a faulty needle.

*What’s wrong with you?*

*Stop acting like that!*

*Be a good girl.*

*Be normal.*

*Be like everyone else.*

All Himiko was doing was expressing her love for Izuku. All she was doing was trying to be herself, but that wasn’t good enough for some people. She had compromised some with the heroes when it came to blood. At least with that she had a better chance of not repeating the incident that had happened back in Jr. High. But Himiko would *not* compromise her love. No one was going to tell her what was right or wrong about how she fell in love. No one was going to tell her that being in love with someone that *trusted* her so completely was wrong. No one was going to tell her how she should express her love, either. Not her parents, the counselors, the heroes, and sure as hell not some secretive, lying bitch like Ochako.
So Himiko should feel good about tossing Ochao to the ground. She should feel good telling her off finally, after putting up with her bull shit for so long. Ochako was secretive and judgmental. She was just like the people she hated. Ugly, horrible people. Himiko should feel great after everything.

And yet, she didn’t. Sitting alone in the waiting room, she felt *some* vindication, but also remorse over her actions.

*So why do I feel like shit?*

Himiko knew the answer even before she asked the question. Because, despite all the issues Himiko had with the other girl—despite not understanding her reasons for how she acted, and everything else she *didn’t* know about her—*she knew* this.

Ochako Uraraka was a good person.

So while Himiko hated so many things *about* Ochako, she didn’t hate Ochako herself. Which made looking back on her fight with her very complicated. Maybe, *maybe* throwing Ochako to the floor was a step too far. Himiko knew so many different ways to get out of the grip Ochako had had on her arm. At the very least, if she had gone a less violent way, she wouldn’t have to deal with talking to Midnight later after the festival. However, throwing Ochako to the ground wasn’t what was making Himiko so conflicted. It’s what she had said afterwards that ate away at her.

“You think you know everything that’s going through Izuku’s head? Fuck you. If that were true, then you knew *exactly* what Izuku was doing back at the USJ when he pulled us out of that shit show. You knew that Izuku was going to stay behind, leaving himself at the mercy of those villains. You knew, and then you still went along with it to save your own pathetic self. You let yourself get saved and let Nomu have him!”

Himiko leaned forward and groaned into her hands, “Fuck me, why’d I go and say that shit?”

She had been so angry at that moment, so enraged that Ochako would *dare* to say the way she expressed her love was something dirty, to claim she knew Izuku’s own thoughts, and to say he needed to be protected *from her*. Himiko had been so angry that she instantly went for blood, not even bothering to think about the words coming out of her mouth. She had just wanted to hurt Ochako, and the look on the other girl’s face when her words hit let Himiko know she had done exactly what she had wanted to do.
At that moment.

Now, though? She knew she didn’t just step over the line, she pole-vaulted over it. Not only was what she had said cruel, but beyond stupid. Of course Ochako hadn't knowingly left Izuku to die. She had seen the shock and horror in the other girl’s eyes when Izuku had lifted them all up and pushed them away. Everything that Ochako had done after that proved that she would never abandon Izuku. Putting herself in danger as she rushed back and saved his life. The hollow look in her eyes as she drifted through the rest of the day until Izuku had finally stepped out of the recovery ward. Even to her arrogant declaration that it was her job to protect him now.

“I could have just brought up that Izuku said he trusted me to get her to shut up. Nope, not only did I stick the knife in, I gave it a good twist, too.”

With a heavy sigh, Himiko sat back up, “Still, at least I know I was right about something today. Ochako needed a reality check. At least everyone else in class learned they need to get ready for the world. But what does Ochako decide she’s going to do right after almost dying? She’s gonna try and protect herself and Izuku. Ha ha ha, it’d be funny if it wasn’t so fucking arrogant. I just wish I knew if it was just arrogance or if she’s just that stupid. I mean, being Izuku’s friend is one thing, but why does she think she’s going to be able to protect him? If I understood where all this stupid was coming from, I could fix her before she gets killed. I mean, really, what is driving that fucking bitch?”

“Toga Himiko, Ojirou Mashirao, report to the arena.”

Leaping out of her seat, Himiko stretched her arms and shoulders, “Oh well, no use worrying about it anymore. Got a fight to go win. Plus, it’s not like I’m suddenly going to have an epiphany and figure Ochako out. Don’t know why I care so much anyway. It’s not like we’re really friends, right? We’re both just going through the motions is all...Right?”

Himiko glanced back at the empty chair, almost expecting to hear a certain heroine’s voice talking back to her. He found the silence that greeted her more than a little unsettling. Perhaps she had just gotten so used to whenever she opened up, Midnight was there listening to her.

Shaking her head, and ignoring the empty feeling she had because Midnight hadn’t been there to answer her, turned and left the silent empty room, “...Right...”
“Would you look at this, loyal listeners! Two new contestants are entering the ring, so that must mean it’s time for another match! And another great introduction by yours truly!”

“...You’ll stop once the next round starts, right?”

“NOPE! I got enough for all the way to the finals!”

Aizawa sunk into his chair, wishing his arms weren’t broken so that he could throttle his co-host and save himself a headache.

“Now lets see who we have first! She slices, she dices, and I bet she’d make great julienne fries. From class 1-A, Toga Himiko! But wait there’s more! Keep your eye on this one people, she might not look the same after you blink! Versus-- He may look ordinary folks, but look again! Also from class 1-A, Ojiro Mashirao! Do you see what I mean, everyone! He’s got a tail!”

Himiko glared up towards the commentators box, “Did that greased up, leather-coated loud mouth just make me sound like a damned product from an infomercial!?"

“Pfft!”

Whirling around, Himiko caught Midnight coughing into her hand, doing a horrible job hiding the huge grin on her face.

*'*im switching out her birth control pills with tic-tacs!*

Mashirao sighed as he rubbed his arm, “At least yours was funny.”

“Define funny.”

With a shrug, Mashirao crouched into a fighting stance, “Hopefully, he’ll do a better job with my intro in the next round.”
Himiko’s head creaked back around as she looked at him, “WOW, look at you trying to be all bold and tough. I think I’m going to make you eat your own tail.”

“Alright! It’s time to FIGHT!”

Mashirao launched himself forward, twisting in the air and swinging his tail right for Himiko’s head. He had hoped that a sudden and swift attack right off the bat would take Himiko off-guard. When his tail hit concrete instead of Himiko, though, he quickly realized he had guessed wrong. Himiko had sidestepped his attack and swiped at his exposed side. Wincing as Himiko dug her knuckles into his exposed ribs, Mashirao used his tail to somersault away. Himiko, however, didn’t let him get far, as she kept pace with him.

Coming to a stop, Mashirao attacked with several high kicks, using his tail to hold himself up and extend his attack range. The kicks sailed over Himiko, who had folded herself over before scrambling right for Mashirao. He punched down, but she slammed her shoulder into him before twisting around and grabbing his arm. Pulling him over her shoulder, Himiko slammed Mashirao into the ground. With him dazed, Himiko drove her knee into his shoulder, pinning him to the ground so she could wail on him. While Mashirao was able to get his free arm up to block most of the strikes, more than a few were able to get through. He could tell he was going to have a nasty shiner on his eye later, and counted his small blessings that Himiko was striking him with the bottom part of her hand and palm and not her knuckles. Muscle memory, he was sure, since she would have had a knife in her hand if this had been a real fight. Grabbing the front of her gym top, Mashirao grunted as he pulled and threw Himiko off him. Using his tail to spring back up, he chased after Himiko, who was rolling away.

Scrambling to her feet, Himiko leaned to the side as Mashirao swung for her. While his punch missed, his followup didn’t. Letting his momentum carry him, he whirled around and swung his tail. Himiko brought her hands up just in time to protect her head from being struck, but not from letting the end of the tail wrap around her head. Her grip on his tail tightened as she strained to keep from clamping down.

“Incredible! It looks like Ojiro has finally managed to land a hit! Toga had been running rings around him before, but it looks like it’s all over for her!”

Himiko strained as she tried to keep the tail from fully grabbing hold of her head, but even with both hands pulling it back, she could feel it getting tighter.

Alright, time to play a little dirty.
When Mashirao saw Himiko open her mouth wide, exposing her fangs, he only had a second to recognize what was about to happen, “Wait a sec-”

CHOMP!

Himiko didn’t wait. She also didn’t give him a chance to pull his tail back. Taking as big a bite as she could, she clamped her teeth down and bit into Mashirao’s tail.

“AAHHH!!”

Ripping his tail back, Mashirao desperately started rubbing the end of his tail, wincing at the deep teeth indentations left in the skin.

“Oof! I bet that hurt!”

Letting his tail go, Mashirao redoubled his efforts against Himiko. In a flurry of punches and kicks, he tried to drive her back towards the arena’s ring-out line so that he could deliver a final blow with his tail, but she kept dodging him or deflecting his blows. With each deflection, she would close the gap and strike him before backing off so she wouldn’t get hit when he tried to counter. When this tactic didn’t work, he tried attacking with his tail more often, but quickly found this left him at an even bigger disadvantage. To try and strike her, he would twist around so his tail would whip around to deliver a strong hit. However, everytime he did this, there was a brief instance when he would lose sight of her. In that instant, she would dodge and attack him in his blind spot. After another miss with his tail, Himiko slammed her elbow into his ribs. The strike toppled him over onto his knees as he gasped for breath and left him open for Himiko to keep up her attack. After landing from her first attack, Himiko whirled around and kicked Mashirao in the side of the head.

The crack from Himiko’s foot hitting Mashirao’s head echoed throughout the stadium, followed closely by the soft thud as he fell to the ground, out cold.

“Ojiro is unable to continue. Toga is the winner and advances to the next round!”

While most everyone sitting in the 1-A seat winced in sympathy after the harsh kick, Tsuyu tapped her chin and looked over at Tenya, “Looks like Toga took your advice Iida, kero.”
Tenya looked over at her startled, “Wait, what advice?”

“A good swift kick to the back of the head will solve any issues,” Tsuyu quoted.

Tenya blinked a few times before he noticed a few of his classmates looking at him questioningly, “Er..well I...um...Context is important!”

While Tenya fretted, Tooru fidgeted in her seat. “I hope Ojiro will be okay.”

Mina reached over and gave her a pat on the shoulder, “He’s a tough boy; I’m sure he’ll be fine.”

“He might not remember anything, though- ACK OW!” Denki swatted away a pointed jab from Eijirou, “It was a joke, man!”

“Whatsoever. Not manly to make fun of someone when they're still out.”

Hanta frowned as he rubbed his chin, “I’m just shocked at how one-sided the fight was, though. I thought for sure Ojiro had the advantage. He did so well against the villain we fought at the USJ.”

Yuuga nodded along with Minoru. “Je suis d'accord. His fight was dazzling for sure.”

“Plus, Toga didn’t have any of her knives. Isn’t that how she wrecked all those villains? At least, that’s how I heard it,” Denki added.

“Fucking idiots. Just because Bun-Bitch likes to use knives doesn’t mean she’s helpless without them. Bitch knows how to fight, and she was a better fighter than his Curious-George-lookin ass.”

Denki glanced up at Bakugou, “I’m sorry, did you actually read Curious George?”

“Shut. The fuck. Up.”
While Denki turned away from Katsuki’s death glare, Fumikage spoke up, “We shouldn’t forget how she was able to keep all of us at bay during the capture-the-flag round. Toga is clearly a very skilled fighter, with or without her favored weapons. She has stealth, mobility, skill, and savagery in spades.”

“Plus, she can transform into other people. Imagine if she turned into someone like All Might and used his super strength to fight like she does,” Kyouka added.

Momo nodded. “True, she has a potentially devastating Quirk. She can be very dangerous if she wants to.”

Izuku frowned, not liking where the conversation was going, even if he didn't think anyone really meant any harm. “That’s not entirely fair to say. You have the potential to create any number of weapons or explosives if you wanted.”

Izuku didn’t think anyone meant anything bad. They didn’t even know about the blood aspect of Himiko’s quirk yet, and they were just talking hypotheticals. He did it all the time when he made notes on a Quirk, wondering what a person could do with it. But knowing that Himiko had taken great care up till now to hide her Quirk, seemingly because her own family had thought it made her a monster, he wanted to change the train of thought going on.

Izuku’s quick defence of Himiko made Ochako look over at him subtly, while Momo nodded. “That’s...a fair point. You could honestly say that about all of us in some way. And Heroes, too, for that matter. I shouldn’t have let myself go so far like that.”

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “Now that I think about it, she can copy how someone looks, but can she copy their Quirk, too? When she was disguised as Midoriya, I don’t think I ever saw her use his Quirk.”

Several students who had been on the other teams all agreed that they never saw her use his Quirk, or even glow once.

Further discussions on the topic were cut short when a call came in over the intercom, “Uraraka Ochako, Ashido Mina, please report to your waiting rooms.”

Mina jumped up from her seat, “Welp, looks like it’s our turn,” pointing down a few rows at
Ochako, Mina flexed dramatically, “Hope you’re ready, Uraraka!”

Getting out of her chair much more subdued, Ochako looked up at Mina silently with a cold eye. Mina raises an eyebrow, “Oh? Trying to take a page out of Todoroki’s book and go with the cold silent treatment? I can deal with that.”

The two started making their way towards their rooms after everyone had wished them good luck in their match. Izuku silently watched the two turn a corner and disappear out of sight. A couple of times he almost got out of his seat to go after them. He could tell something was still eating away at Ochako, but he wasn’t sure it was his place to get involved. He was here for a reason, too, after all. But at the same time, so was Ochako, and it didn’t seem like she was focused on that reason. After his fourth time almost standing up, he felt a hand give him a hard shove. Forcing him to his feet. Startled, Izuku looked around to see Tsuyu pointing towards the hall. “I’d hurry if you want to reach her before she gets to the elevators, kero.”

Izuku’s breath hitched; he nodded and gave Tsuyu a quiet and quick, “thank you” before jogging down the hall. While the whole exchange had been quick and subtle enough not to get too much attention, Hitoshi rubbed a hand through his hair as he leaned over towards Tsuyu. “Good job.”

“Didn’t want him worrying about not saying something when his next match comes up.”

“Hmm, yeah neither of them can afford to have anything distracting them.”

Tsuyu croaked nervously as she eyed one of the jumbo screens that showed the current bracket.

“Uraraka, wait!”

Ochako had just pressed the button to take the elevator to the lower floor when Izuku rounded a corner and waved his arms to get her attention.

“Deku?”

Wait, why is Deku here?
Guiltily, Ochako eyed the close doors button, her finger hovering over it. *I know he probably wants to talk about why I haven't talked with him much but...I really don’t want to discuss it right now. No reason to get him dragged into my fight with Toga. I’ll just pretend that I didn't hear hi-*!

Ochako’s thoughts were interrupted as Mina gave her a shove in the back, sending her skidding out of the elevator and into the hallway. Whirling around, she saw Mina grinning deviously at her as she pressed the close door button, “You two have a nice talk.”

“Ashido!”

Mina waved as the doors closed, “See you in the ring, Uraraka.”

The doors closed with a ding and Ochako was left seething, *Ashido, I swear I’m going to throw you into orbit for this!*

“Uraraka! I’m glad I caught you.”

With Izuku now right behind her, Ochako turned around and did her best not to show how annoyed she was at her current situation. When she saw Izuku flinch and nervously look away, she realized she probably wasn’t doing a good job hiding her feelings, which made her feel a little guilty. She knew Izuku was just doing what he always did. The problem was that she didn’t want him worrying about her right now.

“Deku, look, I get you're worried over what's going on right now, but I really need to concentrate on my fight and-”

“Uraraka, please,” Izuku quickly cut her off, “I...I need to say this. If I don’t, I might not have the courage to do it later, and by then it might be too late.”

Despite not wanting to have this conversation, Ochako kept quiet. It wasn't like Izuku to just plow over someone like this, which meant he really was determined to say his piece. She could try and cut him off, but he could be very stubborn when he wanted to. They had that in common. If they just kept trying to talk over each other, it might lead to an argument, and Ochako wanted that even less than she did the conversation.
Seeing that Ochako wasn’t going to interrupt him, Izuku took a deep breath and just started talking, “It’s obvious that something happened between you and Toga. There’s been something going on between you two since school started, but now it’s gotten bad. Before I thought it was a rivalry or something, but now I don’t know what is going on. I want to help, but I wouldn’t even know where to start.”

At least Deku isn’t going to pry...then what is it he wanted to say?

“But just because I don’t have a solution to whatever is going on, doesn't mean I don’t have something to say to you.”

Izuku took another breath, readying himself. Ochako tilted her head to the side and raised her eyebrow as she waited for Izuku to speak.

He’s probably going to try and say something to pump me up...

“Uraraka, you’re an idiot.”

For a few brief seconds, Ochako’s brain just stopped while she stared at Izuku, bug-eyed and with her jaw on the floor.

Wha...wha... WHAT!?

First, her jaw snapped shut followed quickly by her eyes narrowing at Izuku. Face reddening in anger, Ochako sucked in a huge breath through her nose, filling her lungs with enough air to fuel the tirade she was about to unleash against Izuku. However, when she opened her mouth to start telling him off, Izuku cut her off, “Uraraka, I’m sorry, but you need to be quiet and listen.”

The look in Izuku’s eyes, the firmness in his voice, his whole body posture, Izuku’s past nervousness was gone. Now he looked ready for a fight. Not a physical one, but Izuku was ready to stand his ground as he made sure Ochako listened to what he had to say, “Do you remember what Aizawa-sensei told us about today? Today is one of only three days we get to go out in front of the world and show what we are capable of. Three chances to be on a world stage and to make people remember our names. But today is more than just our first chance; this could be a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Think about it, Uraraka. Normally when do all the really big news crews show up? When are stands really filled to capacity? When are the heroes really watching? It’s when the third-years are on. Because they have the most experience and are about to graduate. Except that’s
not the case today.”

The faint roar of the crowd sounded a lot louder than it had a few moments ago.

“All those reporters are *here*, the stands are *packed*, and there are so many *heroes* here watching us because of the attack on the USJ. After that attack, our class was in the news for days. Because of that attack, we aren’t just first years, we’re the class that fought the League of Villains, and everyone wants to see what that means.”

Izuku motioned out towards the whole stadium, "Uraraka, today isn’t a one-out-of-three chance for us to shine. This is a once in a lifetime chance. After today, there’s a good chance that some new news story will grab the attention of everyone, and by the time our second Sports Festival happens, they’ll go back to watching the third years again. And when it’s our turn as third years, who’s to say if something won’t pull their attention away from us? For all any of us know, this might be the best chance we have to put a good word out to other heroes that are looking for new talent. This could be our big break, but you aren’t focused on it. You’re distracted. Earlier, you were giving it your all, fighting tooth and nail to come out on top, but now? Now, you’re focused on other things that *can’t* be as important as today and what it means.”

“Deku, you…” Ochako took a breath. She couldn’t argue with anything that Izuku had just said, but she could be just as stubborn as he could. It was almost instinctual to try and argue anyway. Plus, she still wasn’t exactly happy at being told to shut up and listen, “You have *no* idea what I’m thinking right now. Or what has me *distracted* .”

“Is it more important than your parents?”

Izuku might have well struck Ochako across the face with how hard she flinched back.

“That’s why you’re here, right? So that you can earn enough money to take care of them. I’d say getting scouted by some well known heroes today and getting to spend some time doing a work study at their agency would look pretty good on a resume. And the better your resume, the better your chance of getting a good job right out of U.A. and earning the money you’ll need to take care of your parents.”

Izuku finally broke eye contact, turning away as he kept talking, “I know I might not be the best person to say all this. I’m the one that said I was going to use the Sports Festival to try and settle things with Kacchan. But while that’s important to me to try and do, I haven’t lost sight at what’s really at stake here. I have to give everything I have while I have the chance...and I can’t stand the idea that you might be letting today slip by.”
He didn’t bring up the other subject that was on his mind either. His talk with Shouto still weighed heavily on his heart. He was being a hypocrite, the living definition of ‘do as I say, not as I do.’ Even still, he had to say *something*.

After Izuku had brought up her parents, Ochako felt like she had been hit in the face. She had of course *never* forgotten what her true goal was. Her family would always be her biggest priority. But along the way, she had taken up other responsibilities, too. She had discovered new things she wanted, new emotions she had never felt before, and new people she wanted to protect. Things, people, and emotions that for, good or ill, came with baggage. Her parents, her goals, her wants and emotions, both positive and negative, had all gotten so mixed up and twisted with her own self-doubts that they had threatened to drag her down. But standing there after getting hit in the face with some truths and facts from Izuku helped. The weight dragging her down suddenly didn’t feel so heavy anymore. She knew she still had things to figure out-- a lot of things-- but there would be a time for that later. Here and now? She had to focus.

After all, she had a fight to go out and win.

When Izuku turned his head back around to look at Ochako, he wasn’t sure what to expect. Would she still seem distracted? Maybe she would be mad at him? He just didn’t know. So he tried to prepare himself for anything.

At least almost anything.

When he was greeted with a determined, and dazzling, smile, it took Izuku a couple of seconds to remember how to breathe. “U-Uraraka?”

“Thank you, Deku. I think I needed someone to slap me awake.”

Sighing, Izuku ran his fingers through his hair. “I’m glad I could help. I was worried, you know…”

Ochako nodded. “I know.”

“Plus...I didn't want to have to watch Ashido beat you up and melt you or something.”
“Pfft!” Ochako covered her mouth, “You know what? I’d rather that not happen, either. She did place pretty high in Aizawa-sensei’s test.”

“And she throws a mean punch... look out for that.”

“I will.”

“And, Uraraka... if there’s anything else I can do...?”

Ochako shook her head, “Deku, you got my head back on straight. That’s more than enough. As for the other thing, that’s... something that’ll have to be settled between me and Toga. Okay?”

Still smiling, turned and called the elevator back. Stepping inside, she gave Izuku a quick wave while he wished her good luck. Just as the doors were closing though, she stuck her hand out and held it open, “Oh, Deku, one last thing.”

While Ochako was still smiling, there was an aggressive glint in her eye that made Izuku a little nervous, “Y-yeah?”

“I may still need to smack you after that ‘shut up and listen’ stunt you pulled.”

A brief silence followed before both broke out laughing, “You know what, Uraraka? You can try and get back at me in the finals.”

“Try?”

Izuku just grinned, “I know what I said.”
Mina groaned into her hand, “Wow, that was so horrible.”

“You know your name is Da Ba Dee now, right?”

“Shut it, Mambo No. 5!”

Ochako wasn’t impressed at all. “Yo listen up, here’s the story about a little girl that lives in a pink world.”

Mina covered her ears, “Oh my god, I liked it better when you were giving me the silent treatment!”

Ochako crossed her arms and smirked, “You shouldn’t have pushed me out of the elevator then.”

“Guess your make-out session with Midoriya really got you loosened up then.”

Ochako’s face lit up, “W-wait WHAT!?”

“FIGHT!”

The bell was rung and Mina went on the offensive. Using her acid, she started skating right up towards Ochako, wanting to use her flustered state to close the gap and deliver a strong uppercut she was sure would lay Ochako out flat. Except, there were two problems with that plan. One, Ochako wasn’t flustered anymore, and two, she had also decided that her opponent needed to get laid out.

Mina let out a yelp of surprise as she slid to the ground, just narrowly avoiding the elbow Ochako had tried to drive into her chin. Ochako turned after her, swinging her foot out to kick Mina, but the other girl had already slid far enough away that she was safe. Ochako, though, wasn’t going to let her stay that way, as she quickly chased after her. Before Ochako could press an attack, Mina skidded to a stop and flipped herself onto her hands, swinging herself up and over her own body and twisting around.
Ochako gasped as acid sprayed from gaps in Mina shoes, forcing her to back off before she got too close. Wincing, Ochako batted away at her thigh and leg, where drops of Mina’s acid had hit her, burning through her gym pants and leaving red blistered skin underneath.

*Okay, acid hurts!*

While Ochako was distracted, Mina flipped back onto her feet and started to skate circles around Ochako. As she did, she filled her hands with gobs of sticky, viscous acid and hurled them at Ochako. Ochako’s first instinct was to bat the globs away, which she instantly regretted, as the skin on her forearm and wrist flared in pain. Ochako made sure to dodge the other acid balls Mina threw at her afterwards, but this was trickier than it seemed. The attacks weren’t coming from the same place every time, so Ochako was constantly working to keep Mina in her line of sight. She also wasn’t always throwing large globs at her. Sometimes it was spray from her fingers, little droplets like rain, or ribbons of it kicked from her feet. The change in direction and size of the attack meant Ochako wasn’t able to dodge all of the acid getting hurled at her.

Mina, after her opening attack had almost backfired completely, had decided that keeping her distance and adopting hit-and-run tactics was her best way to win. With her acid, she could skate across the surface of the concrete like it was ice, giving her a huge speed advantage, so she could easily get around Ochako and hit her with more of her acid. Sooner or later, she would get worn down. *Then* she would close in for the knockout.

*This isn’t working. I’m getting hit with as much acid as I’m able to avoid! And I can’t reach her if I’m constantly dodging, I need to - AHH DAMMIT!*

A large glob splashed against her side, sizzling as it dissolved through her clothes and left another blistered patch of skin before Ochako was able to hurriedly brush it off with the back of her hand.

*Waiting around is not an option anymore. I need a new plan!*

“**COME ON, OCHAKO! KICK THAT GIRLS A-**”

“Honey,” Mr. Uraraka said, tugging at his wife’s arm, “Maybe not in front of little Eri.”
Mrs. Uraraka blushed before sitting back down, eye glancing over at Eri who was hiding her face into Inko’s side, not enjoying watching Ochako getting burned. Inko patted her on the head, “it’s okay dear. I’m sure Ochako is just fine.”

“That’s right! My daughter is going to give that pink girl what for, just you wait and see,” Mr. Uraraka said with a smile.

Mrs. Uraraka slammed her fists against the arm rests of her chair in frustration, “AHH! That pink one keeps skating around! Ochako can’t get to her.”

All Might leaned forward as he watched the fight, “Unfortunately for Young Uraraka, the arena’s terrain puts her at a disadvantage. Young Ashido is capitalizing on the flat ground and using her Quirk expertly. She’s well aware that getting in close is dangerous with someone like Young Uraraka. If this was a close-quarters fight, or at the very least there was a roof over them, Young Uraraka would be able to use her own Quirk to move around better. She’s picked up a few tricks to bounce around closed-off areas.”

Inko frowned. “If she can’t turn this around, though…”

“They have Midnight down there, as well as Cementos to keep an eye out for safety. If things go on too long, one of them may call the match to protect Young Uraraka from getting any more burned, but I don't think we have to worry about that just yet.”

Eri pulled her face out of Inko’s shirt, “You think Ochako will be okay?”

All Might smiled down at the little girl, “Young Uraraka is tough; tenacious; and most importantly, smart. She’ll figure something out.”

Ochako scanned the arena around her. At first, she had hoped that Mina’s acid would break up or weaken the concrete so she could rip some of it up, either to use it as a shield or a wrecking ball against Mina. Unfortunately for her, this wasn’t the case. The acid, while it was strong enough to eat through cloth and leave some nasty blistered skin, was not strong enough to eat through the concrete floor.
I’ve seen her make acid that eats through rock before...I guess she didn’t want to use something that strong against another person. All this acid she’s leaving behind is doing is - OW - leaving a slimy trail so she can skate...wait.

On a hunch, Ochako put a foot onto one of the acid trails and pushed. Her shoes slipped over it with little to no traction. The acid was starting to bubble and melt the bottom of her shoe, but not *that* quickly. She’d have a little bit of time before her shoes were gone.

Sidestepping another spray of acid from Mina, Ochako’s mind raced. Normally, if she wanted to move from one point to another quickly, she would float herself and kickoff to propel herself forward. If Mina was skating in a straight line, she might be able to catch her, but she wasn’t going in a straight line. Ochako also didn’t have a way to change direction once she was moving through the air. Chasing after her on foot was also a no-go. Even if she took out all the dodging she had to do, a person running just wasn’t going to catch up with someone skating.

But what if she started skating, too?

*I’d only have a few seconds before my shoes melted, but I should be able to do it. The other issue is that - OUCH - is that I won’t be able to dodge since I’d be on a set path after her.*

Wincing as more of her skin burned and blistered, Ochako clicked her tongue against her teeth, “Okay, I’m already getting burned after just trying to dodge everything. I can take a few direct hits.”

Eyes scanning the ground, Ochako found Mina and an acid trail that would work. Taking off into a dead sprint, Ochako leapt into the acid trail behind Mina and skated after her. She could hear the hissing coming from her shoes as the soles melted away and feel the heat in her heels and toes as she pushed forward, faster and faster. She wasn’t sure she was going to have anything protecting her feet from the acid trail in a few more seconds, but that didn’t matter to her. She had done exactly what she wanted. She had caught up to Mina.

Mina’s eyes bulged as Ochako caught up to her, “Are you crazy!? Who jumps *into* acid!?”

Spinning around so that she was sliding backwards, Mina faced Ochako and filled her hands with globs of acid, as thick and viscous as she could make it. When she threw them, they deformed and stretched out into long ropes. Mina had made them that way to cover more area since she was sure Ochako was going to try and move out of the way, but she didn’t. Ochako, keeping her arms raised up to protect her body and face, powered through. She hissed and grunted with each hit, but she was done dodging. Ochako had weighed her options and decided that if she was going to get hit
regardless of what she did, she might as well get hit while ending the match.

Shocked that Ochako was still barreling right for her, Mina tried to turn and skate away, but she was too late. Ochako tackled to the ground. While the two rolled over on each other, Ochako pressed her fingers into Mina and pushed, sending the other girl up into the air before pushing her towards the wall surrounding the area, where she floated on by, helplessly pawing at empty air to stop her movement. Ripping off her melted shoes, Ochako, gingerly, rolled onto a clean section of concrete and took a seat watching as Mina finally and softly bounced off the wall.

Midnight raised her hand, signaling the end of the match, “Ashido is out of bounds! Uraraka will advance to the next round!”

“Are you sure you don’t want some help getting to Recovery Girl’s office?” Mina offered as she stepped into the elevator to go back up to their seat.

Ochako just waved her off, “It’s not a big deal, Ashido. I can take care of it.”

Mina might have been more convinced if Ochako didn’t wince everytime she took a step, a side effect of the acid burns she got on her feet after her shoes had dissolved away. She also had holes in her clothes and more chemical burns that were red and blistered underneath.

“If you’re really sure…”

Rolling her eyes, Ochako reached in and pressed the button to take Mina up to the rest of the class, “Tell everyone I’ll be right up after I get treated...and get some new clothes.”

Ochako picked at one of the holes in her top. Mina chuckled, “Alright, alright. I know when I’m not wanted. Though you might want to keep the look; it shows off some of those nice muscles you got, like those abs.”

Slapping the close door button and giving Mina a massive eye roll, Ochako waved goodbye and made her way down the hall towards Recovery Girl, wincing with every step.
This, ow, really, ow, sucks, ow! Should have, ow, taken Midnight sensei’s advice, and let the stretcher, ow, carry me, OW. Oh man, I think I popped a blister...Whose stupid idea was it to try and skate on the acid? Stupid brain, coming up with the idea. Stupid pride, saying I had to walk on my own. Almost there, ow! Just have to make it down this...hallway...oh what the hell?

Ochako’s thoughts trailed off when, only a few doors down from Recovery Girl’s office, she found her path block. By Himiko. Himiko had her back against the wall, leaning lazily with her arms crossed. Slowly, she lifted her head up and looked at Ochako. Then she looked her over, eyes passing over each and every chemical burn. She started at the top and worked her way down, a deep frown forming the lower she went until it was a sneer of disgust when her eyes reached her feet.

“Remind me,” Himiko started, voice dripping with contempt as she pushed herself off the wall and started walking towards Ochako, “What was it you said to me a little while ago?”

Ochako felt her body tense as Himiko walked up to her, taking very deliberate steps. She eyed the other girl silently, preparing herself in case Himiko decided to try something. Though, what she could do at the moment was very limited.

Himiko sneered at Ochako’s silence, “What? Nothing to say? You sure didn’t have a problem running your mouth when you decided you knew what was best for Izuku and then called me a sexual predator.”

Ochako’s eyes drifted to the side, but Himio wasn’t going to let that slide, “You fucking look at me, you selfish bitch. You don’t get to act like a fucking boss and say that kind of shit to me, then start acting like a simpering coward. Own up to your shit.”

Fists clenched, Ochako’s eyes hardened as she looked right at Himiko, “What do you want?”


Ochako started to replay the events from earlier in her head, but she could already tell her delay was getting Himiko even more upset.

This is getting nowhere. I should just ask what she’s talking about.
“Why don’t you remind me?”

...Right...not the best way to phrase that.

“You said it was your responsibility to look after Iuzku. To protect him.”

“That’s right, I did. And I will.”

Himiko glared at Ochako for a couple of seconds before her hand whipped up and she jammed a finger into Ochako’s exposed, blistered shoulder. Ochako hissed in pain and withdrew a few steps. “Ahh! The heck!”

Ochako looked down at her shoulder, wincing at the ripped open blister that leaked down her arm. Himiko brought her hand up and rubbed her finger and thumb together, feeling the clear serum make them feel slippery, “Do you still honestly think you have any right to make that claim? Look at you; you’re the worst off out of everyone that has fought today. Even Eijirou was in better shape after his match after getting blasted by Baku-Bitch. You? You look like shit. Mina’s acid can melt through stone. What would have happened if she hit you with some of her strong stuff? You think that bullshit you pulled out in the ring would have worked then? If that had been a life-or-death fight, you’d be a puddle right now.”

“Except,” Ochako countered, “It wasn’t a fight to the death. It was a Sports Festival tournament match.”

“That’s right, it wasn’t. You went up against someone that was holding back because she didn’t want to fucking melt, and you still got your ass handed to you. So,” Himiko stepped up until she was face to face with Ochako, “What’s going to happen to you when you get into that ring with me? Because right now, I think hurting you would be the best thing to wake you the fuck up.”

Ochako’s eyes narrowed, and despite the pain she was in, she willed herself to get ready, “You’re more than welcome to try, Toga. Let’s see what happens when you don’t start with a cheap surprise attack.”

Neither Ochako or Himiko were willing to back down, and neither was going to take the risk of taking their eyes off the other. So neither saw the handle of a syringe cane come down and smack them both across the head.
“OW!”

“WHO THE FU…!? Oh, hi, Granny.”

Recover Girl eyed the two disapprovingly. “If you two are done rabble rousing like a couple of immature children, I think one of you needs to come into my office for some treatment and a change of clothes.”

Ochako, still rubbing her head, nodded, “Yes, ma’am.”

“You both are going to get a chance to sort your feelings out later in the ring. Save it for then, and not in front of my office. Now you,” Ochako jumped when Recovery Girl pointed her cane at her, “If you can manage to not burst anymore blisters, go find a bed to sit on, and I’ll be with you in a moment.”

Himiko eyed Ochako as she made her way around, but stopped when Recovery Girl smacked her hip with her cane, “And you stop instigating things. Go back to your seat this instant. You’ve been sulking down here in my office since her match started. Get going...and don’t call me Granny again.”

Himiko glared down at the older hero, “You don’t scare me.”

“Deary, we both know that isn't true. Now get going.”

With a huff, Himiko walked away leaving Recovery Girl alone in the hall, “I swear. Why are these kids today such idiots? No time to just talk; they just yell and scream like toddlers. Hopefully, they’ll knock some sense into each other during their match.”

When Himiko made her way back up to the rest of her class, she noted that there were two other empty seats, besides Ochako’s and her own. “Huh, I guess Momo and Fumikage already left?”

Kyouka looked up along with a few other students, “Yeah, they got called a while ago. Their match should be starting pretty soon, actually.”
“Oh, then I won’t miss a good show then,” Himiko said as she took her seat.

“Do you mind if I ask where you went after our match, Toga?” Asked Mashirao. “You disappeared so suddenly.”

“Oh um...I...just went for a walk to unwind is all. Ended up watching the next fight in Recovery Girl’s office.”

Tenya turned to her, “Were you injured in your match?”

Denki snickered, “Maybe she chipped a tooth after taking a bite out of Ojiro’s tail.”

Denki continued to laugh until he was brutally silenced by an ear jack jammed into his neck, Himiko rubbed the back of her head nervously, “Um...no hard feelings about that I hope.”

Mashirao shook his head, “None at all. I just wish I could have given you more of a challenge. You avoided my attacks so easily.”

“Well, taking your eye off your opponent is a pretty stupid way to attack someone. Your tail might be unconventional, but if you attack the same way with it all the time, you get easy to read.”

While a couple people winced at Himiko’s blunt reply, Mashirao nodded in agreement, “You’ve shown me something I need to work on. Thank you.”

Himiko blinked, not expecting that, “Oh um, sure. No problem.”

“Hey, you said you came from Recovery Girl, right?” Mina asked, leaning forward.

“Yeah?”

“Did you happen to run into Uraraka? She was headed that way after our match.”
Himiko’s teeth clicked together as she closed her mouth and thought really hard on just what to say. Suddenly very aware that Izuku had turned around in his seat and was looking right at her, “Yeah...we...met. She’s getting treated now.”

Not technically a lie. Not gonna say I was waiting for her and ambushed her...Doubt Izuku would like that very much...

Fortunately for Himiko, the class's attention was pulled away when Present Mic’s voice boomed over the loudspeakers, “All right! After a thorough washing and some minor repairs, the stage is back up to one hundred percent, and we can move on to the next match!”

“Down below are two people that go to show that if you thought Quirks were weird before, you ain't seen nothing yet. The law of conservation of mass means nothing to her; she’s the Vice Representative of class 1-A, Yaoyorozu Momo! Versus -- The ethical questions that come up when you think too hard about his living Quirk give me a headache, so I’m just going to focus on his bird head. Also from 1-A, Tokoyami Fumikage!”

While around them, the crowds cheered, both Momo and Fumikage watched each other carefully, waiting for the moment the signal was given and their match would start. However, while Fumikage directed his full attention towards her, Momo found herself glancing between Fumikage and Dark Shadow while her mind went over her plan again and again in her head. Before today, the only time she had ever seen anyone get the better of Fumikage, or more specifically Fumikage and Dark Shadow, was their first day of Heroics class when Izuku had been able to take them by surprise and temporarily overpower them. Since then, however, they had been dominant in their execution of the class training, cementing themselves as one of the powerhouses of the class and not letting anything stop them.

Until today, if Momo’s plan worked out.

I just hope my defenses hold up long enough.

“FIGHT!”

The signal was given, and the fight was on.
“Dark Shadow, GO!”

At Fumikage’s call, Dark Shadow flew across the arena, claws reaching out to grab Momo and quickly end the match. Momo acted just as fast. She had expected a direct attack, and quickly put her plan into action.

*First, I need to buy myself time to make a defensive wall!*

Lifting her hands up, palms facing her oncoming attacker, a pair of large army green canisters popped out of her hands, along with two pulled pins and safety levers that bounced off the ground. Seconds later, huge pillows of white smoke began covering Momo’s whole section of the arena. By the time Dark Shadow reached the smoke and swiped where Momo had been, she had vanished.

Fumikage squinted as he tried to peer through the dense smoke, “Dark Shadow, do you see her?”

Dark Shadow shook his head as he darted around and through the smoke. Swiping at the air, hoping to get a hit.

“Keep looking; she’s in there somewhere. The breeze is already starting to blow the smoke away. So either we find her, or her cover will blow away-!”

Movement caught his eye, whiffs of smoke, being pushed against the wind.

“Dark Shadow, to the left!”

Dark Shadow swung in the air, diving right for the break in the smoke. What followed were a series of sounds that left Fumikage confused.

CLANG!

BANG!
And finally a loud screeching sound as something was dragged across the concrete, leaving deep scratches on the surface. As more of the smoke cleared, Fumikage saw what had made the strange sounds and what Dark Shadow had run into. Following the deep scratches in the floor, Fumikage saw Dark Shadow smashed up against a large black shield-- a shield easily as tall as Momo was, with large metal spikes that dug into the concrete, holding it in place. Dark Shadow has pushed the shield back several feet before the spikes had dug in, stopping it. Along the front, were deep gashes from Dark Shadows attack, but even with the damage, the shield was holding.

Some kind of ballistic shield!?

Dark Shadow slashed and slammed itself against the shield again, causing even more damage while Fumikage’s mind raced. Why would Momo create something so heavy? It might have withstood Dark Shadow’s first attack, but it wouldn’t last much longer. Plus, there was no way for her to lug it around the arena. Something like that was meant to get put in place and stay in place.

Unless she it’s only supposed to protect her from the first few attacks!

From where he was standing, he could just see around the shield and caught sight of a tattered U.A. gym uniform.

Tattered? Wait? What else did she make!?

“Dark Shadow get back!”

As Fumikage called out to Dark Shadow, Momo was already springing into action from behind the shield. Pulling out a long bandolier with a series of unpinned canisters that looked just like the ones she used at the start of the fight, Momo tossed them over the shield in the gap between herself and Fumikage. Dark Shadow whirlered around and dove from them, “No more smoke from you!”

Fumikage was moving around, making sure he wouldn’t get caught up in the smoke if Dark Shadow wasn’t able to toss the smoke bombs away in time. From his new angle he had a better look at Momo, and nearly tripped when he saw just how much gear she had strapped to her back. While he didn’t recognize what everything was, his eyes stopped when they reached Momo’s face, which was obscured by a dark tinted visor.

Oh no!
Fumikage didn’t have time to warn Dark Shadow to drop the bandolier. Right at that moment, each one exploded with a deafening crack and blinding light. Dark Shadow shrieked and recoiled back, while Fumikage closed his eyes tight and covered his ears with his hands. With Fumikage distracted, Momo leapt from behind the shield and rushed forward as fast as she could. The bright light from the flash bangs had already faded and Dark Shadow was beginning to recover. If she had had time to congratulate herself, she would. After seeing Dark Shadow recoil back from Denki’s electrical attack, she had theorized that the shadow had a weakness to light. So she just needed to create some items to keep Dark Shadow away. The only problem was she needed time to make them and used them. The smoke bomb gave her time to make everything, and her ballistic shield gave her the opening she needed. Now, she just had to capitalize on her opening and win.

Yanking some of the gear off her shoulder, Momo slammed down several portable industrial searchlights, aimed them right for Dark Shadow and turned them all on. The light might have been physical with how hard Dark Shadow recoiled back, further and further away until he was back toward the other side of the arena. With Dark Shadow dealt with, Momo pulled the other item she had been carrying. An item used by the sidekicks of one of the most villainous looking heroes around.

A perfect copy of the Cement Gun used by Gang Orca’s sidekicks.

The ringing in his ear, and dots in his vision had only just started to clear for Fumikage when something wet and heavy slammed into his chest, sending him tumbling to the ground. Gasping, he tried to get up, but he found his arms held in place as the cement hardened around him. Desperate, he tried to roll over, but Momo was already on top of him, slamming her foot down to hold him in place and pointing the Cement Gun right towards his head.

With Dark Shadow held back by the powerful lights, and himself immobilized, Fumikage bowed his head towards Momo, “I surrender.”

“Tokoyami has conceded the match! Yaoyorozu has won the match and will advance to the next round!”

“Okay, I’m sorry but what just happened?” Denki asked, scratching his head.

Kyouka smirked. “Yaoyorozu just kicked butt. That’s what happened.”
“But how? Shouldn’t have Dark Shadow, you know, kicked her butt?”

Katsuki growled as he glared at Denki. “Is you’re fucking brain still on the fritz after your shit show of a match, Lighting-Dolt? It’s fucking obvious how Ponytail won.”

“Lame name,” Himiko coughed out.

“Bite me, Bun-Bitch!”

Himiko turned to look at Katsuki and flashed her fangs at him. “if you insist, Baku-Bitch.”

While Tenya and Hitoshi helped keep Himiko in her seat, Eijirou did his best to redirect Katsuki back to Denki’s question, “Anyway! What did you mean it was obvious?”

With a huff, Katsuki turned away from Himiko and answered, “Obviously, Ponytail figured out that Birdbrain’s Quirk is weak against light. Doesn’t matter if it’s a living shadow. It’s still a shadow.”

Denki blinked before clapping his hands together as a thought struck him, “OH! So that’s why Dark Shadow was so freaked out by my electricity. I thought that was pretty weird.”

Katsuki shook his head. “How do you even function?”

Izuku, who was scribbling away in his notepad, stopped and tapped his pencil on the edge of the book, “I wonder, if Dark Shadow gets weaker when exposed to light, what happens when it’s used in a dark setting?”

Tsuyu looked over at him, “Where do you pull that out from, kero?”

“Oh, I just keep it in my -“
“Todoroki Shouto, Iida Tenya, please report to the waiting rooms.”

Without a word, Shouto stood from his seat and left. Tenya was right behind him, pausing long enough for his friends to wish him good luck, and Hitoshi to give him some advice.

“Try not to get frozen.”

“Boy, do we have a gift for you now, loyal listeners. Here in the final match of the opening round, two young students are looking to continue the family business! He’s a little frosty, but only because he’ll give you the cold shoulder. From class 1-A, it’s Todoroki Shouto! Versus -- The only boy in school to have afterburners and exhaust fumes that aren’t the result of a stupid dare and too many beans. The class representative of 1-A, Iida Tenya!”

Tenya frowned at the announcers booth high above, “I understand that Present Mic is also a radio host and their job sometimes means making off the cuff remarks, but must he compare my Quirk to something so unsavory?”

Shaking his head, Tenya turned his attention towards Shouto. During his wait, he had debated how he would face his classmate. Overall, while the exact how he would try and win was still up in the air, he knew he could not afford to let the match drag on. If Shouto was able to freeze the arena, he would either be trapped, or he might slip on the ice and his own speed could be used against him for a ring out. So he had decided to use his trump card and risk the ten second time limit.

“FIGHT!”

The roar of Tenya’s engines drowned out Present Mic’s voice and the cheering crowd as Tenya went on the attack, “Recipro Burst!”

Tenya’s engines rocketed him forward, right for Shouto. As he closed the distance though, the ground under Shouto flash-froze as ice exploded underneath him, shooting him upward into the air on a pillar of ice. Tenya’s feet slammed into the ground as he forced himself to stop going forward before kicking off the ground, leaping after Shouto.

As Shouto rose higher and higher into the sky, he pressed his hand into the ice pillar forming large jagged edges to grow out along the side, to get in the way of Tenya as he came after him.
Unfortunately for Shouto, Tenya was able to kick through the ice, and used them as a platform to further propel himself upward.

_Almost there! Almost there!!!_

With one more arching kick, Tenya smashed through the last of the ice in his way, and roared above the pillar. Now face to face with Shouto, Tenya wound his leg back to deliver a kick to end the match. Just as he was about to swing his leg out however, the roar and fire coming from his legs sputtered and died out.

Tenya’s ten seconds were up, and his engine had stalled. Wide eyed, Tenya realized he no longer had any propulsion to go through with his attack, or to keep himself up in the air. This realization was quickly followed with stomach-sinking horror as he fell backward and plummeted towards the ground. He knew from this high up, there was no way he was going to be able to land without sustaining some kind of injury. However, instead of slamming into the concrete below, Tenya was ensnared by more ice coming from the large pillar, preventing him from hitting the ground, but securely capturing him. Held in the prison of ice and with his engine stalled, Tenya was not able to continue the fight.

While Midnight declared Shouto the winner, Shouto himself let out a long breath. He had been lucky that he had seen the Tenya’s Recipro Burst once before during the USJ attack. If he hadn’t, he wouldn’t have guessed that Tenya would try to use the move to end the fight quickly and not risk losing the terrain advantage to his ice.

_“What an incredible match, loyal listeners. It was less of a fight, and more like a quick draw at high noon. Iida looked like he had the advantage in pure speed, but just before he could capitalize, Todoroki was able to keep himself safe for just long enough and come out on top. And with that, the first round of the tournament has come to a close. We’ll pause for a quick intermission while all that ice is cleaned up, and then it’ll be time for the quarter finals! Who’s up next anyway? Hey Eraser Head, you know?”_”

_“Toga and Uraraka.”_

_“...Uh oh.”_

With a click, Tensei turned off his phone and pocketed it. When he turned back to his sidekicks, he
saw them each giving him sympathetic looks.

“That's too bad, Ingenium. I thought your little brother had it in the bag when he broke out that super move.”

“I hope little Iida doesn’t get too discouraged.”

Tensei waved them off, “He’ll be fine. If I know my brother he’ll turn this loss into a learning opportunity. I’m sure he must have thought that using Recipro Burst was his best chance given his opponent, but he needs to learn that sometimes it’s better not to take the high risk move right off the bat.”

With his phone put away, Tensei reached over and picked up his helmet, “Now, thank you all for letting me have the chance to watch my brother's match, but it’s time for us to get back to business.”

“Yes, sir!” They all answered immediately.

“Now, for the past few days Hosu City has seen an uptick of attacks against their local heroes. While the police and the Hero Public Safety Commission have tried to downplay this, I believe these incidents are more than just random attacks. The attacks fit the pattern of the hero killer, Stain.”

A cold shiver ran up the backs of all the sidekicks in the room.

“Despite their best efforts, the Commission has still not yet been able to bring this monster in after months of trying. Now they’ve become very gun shy with sending heroes after him and seem to want only to have heroes in the top ten do the job which has only delayed the capture even further since these heroes are all over the country and Stain is always on the move. It’s gotten to the point that the Commission has outright refused to share information about Stain to any other hero or agency.”

The group grumbled at the obvious politics at play. Having a high profile hero catching Stain would make the Commission look great, while at the same time, if it looked like they were sending in lower ranked heroes and they got hurt, it wouldn’t look good form them at all. The president of the Commission didn’t get to her position without being very aware of public image.
“So if this is Stain, we’re going in blind?”

Tensei nodded, “That’s right. So while I think this is the work of Stain, I don’t have concrete proof thanks to the Commission keeping everything to themselves. That’s why while we are on patrol, I want everyone else to group up into teams of no less than three. It’s possible that I may be wrong, but I don’t want to take any chances.”

“We understand!”

“What about you Ingenium?”

Tensei put on his helmet, “I’ll act as a vanguard and see if I can find anything while you all take a more controlled and methodical approach. You’ll work through the streets after me and catch anything I kick up.”

“Yes sir!”

“Good! Alright Team Idaten. Let’s get to work and see if we can find this monster.

Chapter End Notes

Boy did this chapter take awhile to come out. Sorry about the wait everyone! This chapter was just slow to get written. But it's here! And boy oh boy I have a feeling some people are going to be very angry with me. Considering NO ONE guessed that Neito was going to win. Everyone was like "He talks so Hitoshi is going to win." But NOPE! I turned Neito's talking into the ultimate shield! Now he gets to face Katsuki...>:)

I also hope that this chapter clears up some questions on the whole Ochako and Himiko dynamic and made their POV's a little more clear. While they may have good intentions, neither is going about this thing the right way. Having good points doesn't make you right. At least they're going to get to air their problems with each other in the ring. Which I'm sure won't have any unintended consequences. At all...maybe Present Mic was right when he said "Uh Oh."

So here's what our bracket looks like now! Feel free to make some more guesses!
Also Bubba from the IzuOcha Temple played around with the photo mode from My Hero One's Justice 2 and recreated a scene from the end of Chapter 8. I love this!

A big thank you to all you readers. I hope the new chapter lived up to your expectations! If you have any comments or critiques, please feel free to leave them!

Another huge thank you to my beta reader Tmalasia. Dude puts in so much work making my stuff readable.

Catch you all later for Chapter 22, and the Quarter Finals!
Convictions vs Reality

Chapter Summary

With the opening round of the tournament done, it's time for the first round of the Quarter Finals! After weeks of tension that finally and violently boiled over, Ochako and Himiko are ready to step into the ring, and beat the living hell out of each other. With this much bad blood though, will either of them be able to walk away from this match the same as they were when they walked in?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Toga Himiko, Uraraka Ochako. Please report to your waiting rooms.”

With a grunt, Himiko stood up from her seat and stretched. As she did, her eyes drifted over to Ochako’s still-empty chair.

“I guess she needed a little more time to get patched up,” Tooru observed.

Himiko just shrugged. “Either she’s ready or she isn’t. I don’t really care one way or another.”

The frost in her voice got the attention of a few students that looked up at her questioningly, but she ignored them. Himiko’s statement also wasn’t entirely true. She in fact did want Ochako to be ready. She wanted to see her standing in the ring at her best. It would make driving her into the ground all the better. But if she got into the ring and wasn’t at her best, it wasn’t going to stop Himiko from beating her all the same.

“She’ll be ready.”

Izuku’s quick reply and the confidence in his eyes made Himiko pause before she left. She had only made it a little ways into the hallway before she heard footsteps following after her.

“Izuku, no offense, but maybe we shouldn’t be talking right now.”
She heard the footsteps skip a few steps, and turned to see a startled Izuku coming to a stop, “Toga?”

“Sorry, sorry but let’s be honest here. I’m not the person you want to win. Am I?”

Izuku stuttered as he looked away, but Himiko cut him off, “Calm down. I’m not mad or anything. You’ve been friends with Ochako for way longer than you’ve known me, so honestly it’d be weird if you chose me right now.”

Izuku smiled sadly. “Well if we’re going by that logic, I’m going to be cheering Kacchan on for the rest of the day.”

Both stood in silence for a few moments before they broke into a fit of laughter. “Oh, oh god, Izuku. That’s too much.”

“Well, at least I got you smiling again.”

“Huh?” Himiko blinked

“You haven’t been smiling for a while, which is honestly really, really weird.”

Himiko scratched the back of her head, “Well...there might be a...reason for that.”

“You and Uraraka had a fight.”

Himiko went stiff, “Wait, you know!?”

Wait, wait a second! What exactly does he know? Did Ochako go tell him? Does he think I attacked her...which I sorta did but it was totally justifiable...ish!

“I know you two are having some issues, but I don’t know over what exactly. Uraraka said this was something the two of you were going to have to work out. Probably in your match, I guess.”
“Bitch has got that right at least,” Himiko grumbled under her breath before she suddenly realized she had said that out loud and slapped a hand over her mouth. “I MEAN! Um! Wait!”

Izuku wasn’t mad like she had been afraid. He just looked sad, which in so many different ways was worse for Himiko.

“Things are pretty bad, aren’t they?”

Sighing, Himiko nodded. “They aren’t great right now, no.”

“And I probably shouldn’t be sticking my nose into it?”

“Honestly? Not unless you’re ready to lose it.”

Rubbing a hand through his hair, Izuku sighed, “Will you at least let me wish you good luck?”

“You sure? You know I’m going into this fight to win, and I don’t plan on holding back.”

“ Probably a good idea not to. If you did, things might get a little floaty for you.”

Himiko chuckled, but it was cold and humorless, “Yeah well, that’s not gonna happen. Still, thank you, Izuku. You’re a good friend.”

Izuku smiled as best he could given the circumstances, “You are, too, Toga. And good luck.”

Waving goodbye to Izuku, Himiko made her way down the hall, not entirely sure she could agree with Izuku on that last point. Getting into the elevator, she pushed that issue aside. There would be time to deal with that later. Right now, she had a lesson to teach.
Ochako looked down at her phone as she read through the texts she was getting from her parents and friends wishing her good luck. Sighing, Ochako closed her phone and put it into a locker. She felt a little bad not going back up to her seat after she had been fixed up by Recovery Girl, but after her last encounter with Himiko, she thought it best to make sure they had their space before their match. On top of everything from before, Himiko had once again brought up the fact that she didn’t think Ochako was strong enough to survive the real world. That she was weak. After taking that kind of disrespect from Katsuki for over a year, she was not going to take it from Himiko, too. So to prevent any potential pre-fight scuffles, Ochako stayed back. Now though? Now she was free to show Himiko just how wrong she was.

“So our baby is facing Toga, right? She’s one of her friends,” Mr. Uraraka asked as he sipped his drink.

Inko nodded, “Izuku, Ochako, and her started hanging out right after the first day with a few other friends. The group has gotten a little bigger since then, and they spend a lot of time together.”

“She actually lives at U.A., if I remember what Ochako told us. She didn’t go into exactly why, but from her tone it didn’t sound like a pleasant reason,” Mrs. Uraraka added.

Mr. Uraraka rubbed his chin, “Hmm, she looks pretty tough. Maybe she’s been getting extra lessons since she lives on campus. She was leading all those kids by the nose for a while. And then she knocked that other poor boy out cold. It’s enough to make a father a little worried. What do you say, Mr. Yagi? Don’t suppose you know anything that would put my mind at ease?”

All Might frowned, “Young Toga’s...a...unique case. Her records are sealed, so even if I knew anything, I couldn’t tell you more than what Young Uraraka was told by Young Toga herself.”

Any further questions were cut off when All Mights phone rang with a text message. Blinking, All Might took out his phone and read through the message, “Um...if you all will excuse me. I have to...make a call. I will be right back.”

“Try to hurry back, I think Ochako’s match is going to be starting soon.”

Nodding, All Might quickly exited the suite, and made his way down the hall until he ran into Principal Nezu who was waiting for him.
“I got your text message, sir. What did you want to talk to me about?”

Nezu was typing away at his phone, an impressive feat with his paws, “Well I needed to talk to all the staff before the next match, and since you aren’t wearing a headset like everyone else, having you here saves me a trip to talk with you privately.”

Holding his phone out, Nezu put it on speaker, “Now, I think that’s everyone accounted for.”

A chorus of affirmatives came through the phone's speaker.

“Excellent, excellent. Now I wanted to take this opportunity to talk with everyone about the upcoming match.”

“You mean between Uraraka and Toga?” Aizawa asked.

“Yes, exactly. I think we all need to be prepared for this match to be a little more...plus ultra than the others.”

All Might frowned at Nezu’s choice of wording, “Wait, why do you think that?”

“There was an incident between the two earlier today,” Midnight said after a few seconds of hesitation.

“Define incident.” Aizawa’s seriousness was mirrored by the other heroes. All Might included as he waited for Midnight’s reply.

Midnight sighed, “The two were fighting. Arguing mostly, though it got a little physical at the end. but nothing that required me to step in. Most of the damage was psychological from differing opinions on things.”

“And we’re only learning about this now?” It wasn’t hard to miss the edge in Vlad King’s voice.

“Arguments in the hero course aren’t that uncommon. Scuffles happen from time to time between
students, too.”

“Toga isn’t just another student, though,” Vlad quickly countered.

“Perhaps not, but the incident was dealt with and observed by Midnight, who will make sure that Toga talks about it during her next therapy session. The incident isn’t what this call is about, though.”

“You think Young Toga and Young Uraraka will use their match to air out their personal grievances against each other?”

“That is correct. And since both young ladies are exceptionally trained,” Nezu looked up at All Might for a second before turning back to his phone, “I think we should expect a more intense fight that the others.”

“I see,” Snipe said, “So we’re going to discuss our plan to restrain Toga if she loses control?”

“Oh, absolutely not. This call is to remind everyone that all calls on if this match is to be ended are up to Midnight. While Cementoss will advise for medical reasons, it will be Midnight who has final say on everything. As such, no one is to do anything to interfere with this match unless she asks for help.

“Wait, are you serious? You expect us to do nothing, even if the fight goes south, unless Midnight calls for help?”

“Exactly. You all were so ready to jump in during the last event, I feel it’s necessary to remind you all that you are part of the audience right now. We can’t have different people deciding when to step in. Midnight has spent the most time with Toga out of everyone here. She is the perfect person to decide when, if at all, intervention is necessary. Now, is this clear? I don’t want you all to do anything. Understood?”

There was a long pause before slowly each teacher agreed. Even All Might, who was now more than a little anxious of the upcoming match, nodded in agreement. Satisfied, Nezu bid everyone a good day and hung up his phone, “Well then, now that that is settled, I’ll be on my way. Please give Midoriya and Uraraka’s parents my best wishes. Oh, and that adorable little girl, too.”
All Might eyed Nezu quietly as he left. Suddenly, some things about this year's sports festival made a little more sense, Ah, so that's why you have Midnight as the judge this time. You wanted to make sure Young Toga had the best chance to compete without interference...Still, just what kind of fight do you think we’re going to get...

With a grunt that sent several small-time heroes scurrying for a new seat, Endeavor leaned against the railing as he looked over the arena. He had been walking around the stadium for the better part of the day and had yet to run into his son. The stupid boy was obviously avoiding him, which only grated the giant man's nerves more. Watching his son throw his temper tantrum and refuse to use his full power was something he was used to at this point. He had hoped that by the time Shouto had made it into U.A. the school course would have made him use his fire. Sadly, that hadn’t happened, and even worse, it was becoming clear that the boy was set on trying to win the whole sports festival without using it either.

“Not that there are many kids here that are strong enough to push my son that far...What a joke.”

Out of sheer boredom, he stepped out from the halls and found a decent spot to watch the next match. While he didn’t think much of the two little girls that would be fighting next as neither had seemed that impressive in their first round, at the very least he would see if maybe the winner would be able to make his son use his fire in the semi-finals.

Though, he seriously doubted that.

“Loyal listeners, after a short intermission to dry the ring, we are ready to get the quarter finals underway! Are you all ready!?”

The crowd exploded into screams and excited shouts.

“That’s what I like to hear! Now let's introduce our fighters! They might not need any introductions, but I’m going to do it anyway! First up! I don’t think anyone here understands the Gravi-Tea of this girl's power! It’s Uraraka Ochako! Versus-- Her smile might seem like A Positive influence, but one look at those fangs and you’ll know that’s a big Type O! It’s Toga Himiko!

While the crowd around them groaned at the puns, neither Ochako or Himiko paid any of it a
second thought. Both were silent as they stepped into the ring and made the way to their starting positions. Ochako’s knuckles popped as she clenched and unclenched her fists. The muscles and tendons in her body felt taut, like a bow string pulled back, ready to fire. She was very grateful for the breathing exercises Gunhead had taught her; otherwise, she was sure she would have snapped by now.

Across from Ochako, Himiko stood waiting for the match to finally start. Her arms hung limply by her side, but her hands were flexed, fingers curled inward. Her normal smile was nowhere to be seen, instead replaced with a thin, down-turned line. A dark shadow fell over her eyes, which were narrowed into slits. The yellow of her irises was practically glowing with a cold inner-fire.

From her podium, Midnight looked between the two, doing her best not to show how nervous she was. In so many ways this was beyond just a simple match between students. Ideals and values were being put on the line. This was just as much a psychological fight as it was a physical one. It was also the biggest test of the time and effort U.A. had put into helping Himiko move beyond her violent and twisted nature. She saw this as even a bigger test than the USJ attack. There, Himiko had held back even if she technically didn’t have to. Here? She had to hold back, and Midnight knew Himiko didn’t want to.

A small crackle came from her earpiece as Present Mic spoke up, in an unusually subdued tone, “We good to go Midnight?”

Midnight glanced up to the announcers booth, “Yeah. Let’s get this started.”

Alright, Toga, it’s time to show them just who you are.

“Alright, fighters! Let’s get this party started!”

Ochako and Himiko crouched into their stances.

“Fig-!”

Present Mic hadn’t even finished signaling the start of the fight before both Ochako and Himiko exploded towards each other. Ochako struck first, firing a flat palm strike right for Himiko’s head; the other girl deflected it away with a raised arm. Ochako ripped her arm back as she attacked with her other palm, striking at Himiko again and again. Himiko, however, kept deflecting. When another of Ochako’s palm strikes was blocked by Himiko’s raised arm, Ochako didn’t immediately
pull back, instead opening her hand up. When she pulled back this time, she swiped and tried to have each of her fingers brush against Himiko’s head. But Himiko was ready for it. She had kept an eye on Ochako’s hands and with her fingers curled up for the palm strikes, she could afford to simply block and deflect. With her fingers outreached though, she immediately changed tactics and dodged, leaning to the side as Ochako’s hand whooshed past her, missing widely, and leaving her open for Himiko to go on the offensive.

Himiko’s first strike grazed Ochako’s cheek before she was able to get her arms up, with her forearms now taking a beating as Himiko slashed away at Ochako with her fingers and nails, each attack leaving a cut on Ochako’s arms. Grunting, Ochako twisted herself to the side and swung a foot out, landing a solid hit into Himiko’s side. Ochako had expected the blow to stagger Himiko, but she was shocked when Himiko, through gritted teeth, wrapped an arm around Ochako’s leg and held it against her own body. With one leg held up, Ochako balanced herself precariously on her other leg while Himiko swiped at her with her free hand. Ochako leaned back and kicked herself backward, ripping herself free of Himiko’s grip and putting some distance between herself and Himiko. With several feet now separating them, the two took the moment to collect themselves before they started up again.

Himiko winced as she pressed a palm into her side where Ochako had kicked her, while at the same time, flexing and rotating her wrists that were red from the multiple palm strike’s she had deflected, Okay. Bitch knows how to throw a half decent punch…and kick. Those fucking thunder thighs aren’t just for show.

Ochako hissed as she touched her cheek and saw a red smear on her finger tips. Her arms were also covered in scratches. Deep red beads of blood seeped up from some of the cuts, She fights like a darn alley cat. She’s also making sure to keep an eye on my hands. I guess I’m not too surprised, though. I didn’t think this was going to be easy.

With little warning, Ochako went on the attack. Covering the distance in a moment, she lifted her knee up to drive it into Himiko’s side. Himiko sidestepped the attack and threw a right hook into Ochako’s back. With Himiko now slightly behind her and sucking in a breath through clenched teeth, Ochako swung her elbow back, only for Himiko to lift up her arms and block the attack. Ochako felt some satisfaction that she was able to draw out a nice sharp hiss from Himiko, certain that the hit was going to leave a nice dark bruise. Her attack wasn’t over, however. Twisting her body, she pushed Himiko back with her elbow, and, as the other girl stumbled back, Ochako extended her arm and reached out with her hand. One by one, her fingers made contact with Himiko’s shoulder.

One.

Two.
Briefly, Himiko’s eyes went wide in an instant before narrowing again and with a snarl, Himiko snatched Ochako’s wrist and yanked her hand away. Ochako tried to pull her arm and hand back, but Himiko held it in place. With her free hand, Himiko reached up and grabbed hold of Ochako’s pinky. Ochako didn’t have time to think about what Himiko was about to do before the girl’s grip tightened. Toga sharply pulled the finger up, twisting it. Ochako felt a sickening pop in her hand at the same time, Himiko yanked the finger backwards. Biting back a scream, Ochako pulled her hand back, at the same time, Himiko let her go. She then rolled across her back and grabbed her other hand, doing the exact same thing to it as well.

Stumbling backwards, Ochako fought tooth and nail not to scream at the sudden pain she found herself in. Himiko, though, wasn’t going to let her get far, closing the gap; this time, she caught both of Ochako’s wrists in her hands and held them up at eye-level so Ochako could see exactly what she had done. Blinking away tears, Ochako looked at her hands. Both her pinkies had been dislocated. The bottom knuckle joint had been popped out and pushed back into the hand so that it looked like a small hill compared to her uninjured fingers and knuckles. The finger was already beginning to swell and turn a dark purple.

“Count yourself lucky I only popped it out.”

Ochako lifted her gaze from her hands to Himiko who was glaring down at her.

“If I had wanted to, I could have ripped it off easily. That’s what people do out in the real world, Ochako. If this was real, you’d be Quirkless now. Right now, though, you just won’t be using your Quirk for this fight.”

Ochako looked back at her hands. For her Quirk to work, she had to make contact with all five of her finger pads. Now though, with her pinkies dislocated, bent backwards, and swollen, she couldn't move the finger at all, meaning she couldn’t use it to touch anything or grab anything. Her fifth pad was now a non factor in the fight, making her Quirk null and void.

“This is how fights in the real world work, Ochako. So what are you going to do now that you can’t float me?”
It was a fair question, and Ochako had a fair answer. As Ochako leaned back, Himiko blinked a few times before Ochako snapped back and drove her head right into Himiko’s face. After the initial hit, Himiko let go of Ochako’s wrists and covered her face with her hands, leaving her open for Ochako to drive her foot into her stomach with the strongest push kick she could throw. As Himiko stumbled back several yards, Ochako shook her head to shake out the ringing and focused on trying to ignore the pain in her hands. Glancing up, she saw Himiko was also collecting herself. Bent over and hacking, she had an arm wrapped around her stomach while her other hand was held up to her nose with blood seeping through her fingers and running down her chin, staining the collar of her gym top.

“I’m going to do that, Toga.”

Himiko glared at Ochako as she stood up, pulling her hand away from her face. Her nose was smashed to the side, the skin along the bridge was busted open, and all the blood dripping from her broken nose fell past her lips, outlining her teeth and fangs in bright red. This gave her snarling face a much more gruesome and animalistic look.

She almost looked like a monster.

“Okay, Midoriya, what the hell is going on between Uraraka and Toga?”

Since the match had started, no one had been able to say anything. The whole of 1-A had been blown away with the ferocity of the fight. The savagery of it. Other matches in the opening round had been fierce, too, but everyone could tell there was something different about this fight.

Izuku, after tearing his eyes off the match, looked over at Eijirou and gave the only answer he could: he just shrugged while looking completely and totally lost. Katsuki rolled his eyes and sneered. “Way to live up to your fucking name, Deku.”

Izuku supposed that wasn’t a completely unfair statement. As Ochako and Himiko’s friend, he felt that maybe he should at least know what was bothering them. Especially now since whatever it was was making them tear each other apart.

Izuku was brought out of his thoughts though when Denki pointed down towards the ring, “Hey, is Toga melting?”
Turning back around, Izuku’s eyes went wide, “She’s transforming!”

*But into who?*

When Toga’s body began to excrete gray sludge, Ochako was more than a little disturbed and worried. Though, only for a moment. As the strange grey sludge started to cover Himiko up, she had taken off into a sprint right for Ochako. Halfway to her, Himiko flipped over and used her gymnastic strength to propel herself into the air. As she arced into the air above Ochako, her whole body was covered in sludge. Ochako’s eyes widened as she recalled the way Himiko had looked after the capture the flag match.

*Her Quirk!? But who is she going to transform into? One of our classmates? Deku or -!!!*

The glob of sludge grew bigger as it descended towards Ochako, and suddenly every instinct Ochako had screamed at her to fall back. To get away. Ochako leapt back just as the grey sludge came down where she had been, and a pair of huge jaws with rows and rows of razor sharp teeth snapped shut where her head had been. Skidding to a stop, Ochako’s eyes went wide as the person before her finally took shape.

*The shark villain from the attack on the USJ!?*

Seeing this villain again sent a shiver up Ochako’s spine. After she had been dumped into the lake by the warp villain Kurogiri, it had been this villain that had been the first to try and kill her. It was thanks to Tsuyu pulling her to safety that she hadn’t been hurt. He was also the villain whose arm Himiko had cut off after he had tried to grab Tsuyu when she hadn’t been looking.

*But this guy is an amphibious villain, so I bet he won’t be anywhere near as fast as he was in the water. So as long as I avoid all those teeth, I shouldn’t have to worry too much-!*

“URK!”

Ochako’s thoughts were violently cut off as Himiko kicked off the ground and closed the distance between the two of them faster than Ochako was ready for. That, and Himiko’s now extended
reach left Ochako completely flat-footed and unable to defend herself. Himiko had a large opening
to take advantage of, driving her fist straight into Ochako’s stomach. The force of the attack was
strong enough to lift Ochako off her feet. Coughing and hacking, Ochako backpedaled as she tried
to defend herself. The sudden change of reach, power, and form of her opponent left her reeling.
Each punch that followed slammed into Ochako’s arms and shoulders as she desperately tried to
keep her head, body, and hands from taking any more damage. The downside to this was that her
arms were starting to go numb, but at least she was still on her feet.

Which was pissing Himiko off.

Growling in frustration, Himiko kept hammering away at Ochako. While her attacks still had
Ochako on the back foot, she still hadn’t been able to knock her down. She’d be impressed if she
wasn’t starting to get pissed off.

Time to change things up. Try and counter this!

After her last punch, Himiko didn’t throw another. Up until now, she had just been using the added
physical strength to beat Ochako down, but now Himiko was going to use her new form’s mutation
to her advantage. Leaning forward, Himiko opened her giant shark jaws wide and snapped at
Ochako. Ochako’s eyes went wide, and she leaned back, while at the same time pulled her arms
back as well to keep herself as far away from the rows of teeth as she could, which was exactly
what Himiko wanted her to do. With Ochako leaning so far back, she was off-balance and an easy
target to finally topple over. Stepping forward, Himiko used her form’s long legs to put a foot
behind Ochako’s leg and sweep Ochako’s feet out from under her.

Ochako hit the ground with a pained grunt. Now flat on her back, Himiko chased after her with her
jaws, intending to snap up Ochako’s head and hold her between her teeth, forcing her to concede.
Afterall, there’s not much a person can do when their head is inside a shark’s mouth. Bending over,
jaws opened wide, she dove down to finish Ochako off, but found her herself suddenly stopped.
Ochako had curled herself up and put her feet between Himiko’s jaws and her own head. One foot
slipped under the top lip while the other did the same with the bottom lip. The soles of Ochako’s
shoes dug into Himiko’s gums, and her legs flexed and strained as she kept Himiko back.

“You! Aren’t! Eating! Me!”

Himiko just roared in response, spraying spit over Ochako, though the other girl had more
important things to worry about. Not only were her legs burning from the strain of keeping
Himiko’s teeth away, she could feel herself starting to slide along the arena floor, the concrete
leaving scratches and cuts along her back, giving her a horrible case of road rash as she desperately
clawed at the ground to slow herself.
Desperation, and some slight panic, drove Ochako to take a chance and pull back her foot that had been pressed against Himiko’s top jaw. Immediately, Ochako’s other leg started to buckle, but she grit her teeth and fought through the pain. With her other leg free, she pulled it as far back as she could, her knee almost pressing into her chest, and kicked Himiko in the mouth as hard as she could. The first kick didn’t seem to do anything, but that didn’t deter Ochako as she tried again and again. With her third kick, several teeth flew from Himiko’s mouth and skipped off the concrete floor. However, instead of blood dripping from the gums the teeth had been, more of that grey sludge dripped down until each tooth that had been kicked out was replaced. Ochako, though, immediately noticed that detail and it got her mind racing.

Before, when I ran into Toga after the capture the flag match, it looked like she was covered in a melting form. Her transformation was falling off her. And just now, she covered herself in that gray sludge before she took on this villain’s form. So she’s wearing this transformation, and it’s not her actual body… and after it takes a little damage, it falls apart. She might be able to fix it later, but if I want these teeth gone, I don’t have to worry about doing too much damage to her!!!

Eyes blazing, Ochako kicked Himiko again, this time aiming for the gum line. She kicked and kicked and kicked until she felt the flesh of the gums gave and mash together, turning gray and soft. Before Himiko could fix the damage, Ochako jammed her foot into the gray mess and sunk her foot into Himiko’s upper jaw.

Growling in rage, Himiko pulled back, but with Ochako’s foot stuck on her gums, Ochako was pulled up as well until she was standing vertically over Himiko, with her legs split over Himiko’s open jaws. Ochako bent down and dug her working fingers into the sludgy mess of her upper jaw. Screaming, Ochako pulled with all her strength, and, with the most disturbing squelch sound Ochako had ever heard, she pulled the whole upper jaw out of Himiko’s shark villain’s mouth.

Ochako could already feel the jaw starting to melt in her hands, so she moved fast to capitalize on her new weapon. Twisting the jaw around so the teeth were facing down, she started hacking away at the remains of Himiko’s jaws, head, and face until everything was a gray dripping mess. no longer able to hold its form. Ochako’s feet fell through, and she landed back onto the ground. Hitting the ground, Ochako was about to press her attack. but a wild swing of Himiko’s arms made her take several steps back. Himiko’s form made a few more horrific gurgling sounds before everything started to melt away.

“Holy shit.”
“You can say that again.”

“Holy. Shit.”

Hanta’s jaw was on the floor, “Okay, hold on a second here. Uraraka just ripped off Toga’s shark jaw...and then beat her over the head with it. Man can you imagine what she could do to someone she didn’t actually like?”

Tsuyu, Hitoshi and Tenya all turned in their chairs to look over at Katsuki. Katsuki blinked at their gazes before snarling and turning back to watch the match.

Ochako watched Himiko closely as the rest of her transformation melted away and turned to sludge. As more and more of it fell off her, Ochako could start to see Himiko’s new form. Instead of a giant shark man, Himiko was a tall woman, wrapped tightly in a light lavender kimono. While her body looked normal, her face was elongated, narrow and blank, with only narrow black slits for eyes, topped with long greasy black hair.

*Does she...does Toga actually expect to be able to fight in that form?*

Deciding she wasn’t going to wait to find out, Ochako charged. As she got closer, Himiko, with grey sludge still dripping from her hand, swung her arm out. Ochako dodged the sludge and made it a few more steps when she realized something was up. The sludge around Himiko’s outstretched hand hardened and formed a long pole that extended past Ochako.

*She can transform the sludge into weapons, too!?*

While this realization hit Ochako, Himiko reached up with her other hand and swung the long pole right into Ochako’s side. Ochako was able to get her forearm up in time to protect her side and ribs. Himiko’s attack wasn’t over, however, as she yanked the pole back. When Himiko did, Ochako heard a few horrified gasps from the crowd just as she saw the bright flash of metal pass by her peripheral and felt a searing pain as something sliced through her shoulder.

“AHH!”
Ochako came to a stop, reached up her shoulder, and winced at the cut that ran along it. It wasn’t very deep, but it hurt. Glancing back over at Himiko, Ochako also now knew that if she had wanted to, she could have cut her a lot worse.

*That’s not a polearm...it’s a scythe!*

Himiko twirled the weapon around before pointing the curved blade right at her.

“Midnight. Should we intercede?” Cementoss’ voice rang in Midnight’s head from her earpiece.

Midnight glanced over at Cementoss, who was still, at least outwardly, calmly sitting in his chair, observing the match.

“No. No one is to do anything.”

“Are you sure?”

“Toga hasn’t broken any rules yet.”

“But that weapon…”

“Don’t forget, Yaoyorozu used her Quirk to make tools and weapons in her match, too.”

She could hear Cementos’s resigned sigh on the other end of the mic. “Very well. Still, I’m very curious how Toga was able to get the blood for these transformations.”

For Midnight though, there wasn’t much to think about. “I think we both know who gave her the blood.”
If Midnight had to guess, he had probably given it to Himiko just before he called to warn her about the impending fight between Himiko and Ochako in the locker room.

With terrifying speed and skill, Himiko swung and jabbed the scythe at Ochako, who was now backpedaling desperately to try and get out of range of the large blade as Himiko just walked after her. Each time the scythe passed by, Ochako got a new cut added to all her other injuries.

_Darn it! She’s tearing me apart! At this rate I’m going to lose by ‘death by a thousand cuts.’_

Ochako knew she needed to get rid of Himiko’s weapon sooner rather than later. So when the scythe blade passed by her side, she lifted her arm up so that the pole passed between her arm and side. Before Himiko could pull it back, Ochako trapped the pole to her side and grabbed it with her hand.

Growling, which was impressive considering her current form didn’t have a mouth, Himiko tried to yank the scythe back, but Ochako’s grip was too tight. Ochako, with her free arm, raised it above the pole and brought it down, cracking the wood as she snapped the pole in two. Gripping the remains of the scythe, Ochako reared back and threw the blade right back at Himiko. As it sailed through the air, the broken weapon burst into grey sludge and splattered over Himiko.

Ochako lifted her arms up, and after hissing through her clenched teeth at all the cuts she now had, looked right at Himiko and dared her to make her next move. “Well? What else you got?”

Himiko stood motionless, glaring back at Ochako as she slowly began to transform again.

Sighing, Ochako stood back and waited. She knew she should be pressing her attack, but she needed the moment to catch her breath. As she recovered, she watched as Himiko’s form melted away. Immediately, she could tell this new form was shorter, which Ochako hoped meant that she wasn’t going to have to deal with someone who had a longer reach than her. As more and more of the gray sludge fell off Himiko, Ochako could start to see what was behind it.

_Okay, she’s definitely picked something more my size. Looks like they’re wearing some blue sweats with red shoes...and they have green...hair...Oh...OH SHE ISN’T!_
As the last of the sludge fell away, Ochako found herself with a perfect doppelganger of Izuku Midoriya. Smiling brightly, Himiko stepped out of the sludgy remains and waved happily at Ochako, “Hey, Uraraka. This what you were expe-”

WAM!!!

Himiko had only gotten a few feet closer before Ochako stepped up and drove her foot right into Himiko’s groin, dropping the fake Izuku to her knees. Before Himiko could respond, Ochako twisted on one foot and kicked Himiko in the face, leaving her sprawled out on the floor.

“Two things,” Ochako said as she stood over Himiko. “One, I really hope you weren’t stupid enough to think I’d hesitate just because you looked like Deku. I watched you turn into him. And second, Deku and I trained together to get into U.A. A lot of that training was sparring toward the end. I got over punching and kicking Deku a long time ago. You can’t do anything in that form to trick me or make me hesitate."

CRACK!

While still on the ground, Himiko pulled a leg back and slammed it into Ochako, forcing her back several paces. With Ochako no longer standing Himiko sat up before grumbling as she got to her feet, “Stupid boys and their extra equipment. Fucking hell that hurt.”

Now on her feet, Himiko’s hands went to her face and frowned at the damage. Ochako’s kick had turned her transformed face into something that resembled a mask that was pulled too far to the side. Fortunately for her, it took very minimal effort to fix. Once she had, Himiko turned her full attention back towards Ochako who had recovered from her kick, “Now, as for you. What did you just say?”

Ochako’s eyes narrowed as she got into her fighting stance, “You’re not going to trick me looking like Deku.”

Himiko arched an eyebrow, “How about we stress test that theory?”

Ochako expected Himiko to charge her. Instead, she just started to walk forward at a very leisurely pace. After a few steps, Ochako watched as once again a grey sludge began to cover her and run down her body. With each step, more and more sludge hit the ground, but at no point did Himiko’s
transformation start to melt away.

_She still looks like Deku, but she's clearly losing parts of her transformation? What is she do...do...EEHHHHHHH?!?!!!?!!!??!

Ochako’s eyes bulged and her face went scarlet as it finally hit her just what Himiko was doing. As she continued to walk, her gym clothes were melting off her body. Or more specifically, Izuku’s clothes were melting off his body. Himiko took another step and her feet left behind the remains of Izuku’s socks and red shoes. Another step and Izuku’s shoulder, chest and finally abs were gleaming in the sunlight. And finally Izuku’s pants liquified and started to run down his hips and past his gro-

Ochako _ripped_ her eyes away as she turned her head and covered her face with her hands, “TOGA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? YOU CAN’T JUST DO THAT TO DEKU!!!”

_Oh my god. Oh my god! She’s naked! She transformed into Deku, and is walking around as him naked. IN FRONT OF ALL THESE PEOPLE! How could she do this to Deku!? This...this fucking bitch! When I get my hands on her I’m going to wring her neck! Why go this far? Just because I said I wasn’t...going...to...be...tricked...I’m not looking at Toga anymore...Oh shi-!_

The revelation she had been tricked into taking her eyes off Himiko hit her _almost_ as hard as Himiko’s fist as she drove it right into her stomach, which she followed up with a second punch, and then a third. By the fourth, Ochako was able to get a defence up and fight Himiko off, even driving her elbow into Himiko’s shoulder. With Himiko driven back, Ochako readied herself for what she was about to do. She knew she couldn’t keep fighting if she avoided looking at Himiko, so she turned to face her, prepared to deal with the consequences with Izuku later, which would involve no small amount of fervent apologizing.

Then she looked, and her mind sort of just ground to a halt. _Not_ because of what she saw, but because of what she _didn’t_ see. While Himiko had melted all of Izuku’s clothes off, she hadn’t left his body exposed as she had feared. At least not fully. His chest, arms, legs and feet were bare, but the area around his waist line and his upper thighs were pale and, more importantly, blank and smooth. The skin looked waxy and was close to the same color as the sludge that her body was covered in whenever she transformed. At worst, Himiko had made Izuku look like he was wearing a U.A.-issued swimsuit that was a few shades off from his skin tone.

“_You’re not...but I thought..._”

Himiko rolled her eyes in annoyance, “Let me save you some time. No, I’m not. No, I wouldn’t,
but yes, there are people who would and do. And if you can’t deal with something as minor as a little nudity, you’re going to get fucked up in the real world.”

Ochako frowned at that, “You keep bringing that up! WHY!? This is a school tournament!”

Himiko took up a fighting stance, which Ochako instantly recognized as Izuku’s fighting style, “Because, Ochako, you need to learn what’s coming for you. It’s for your own good.”

Ochako didn’t get a chance to ask what she meant by that, as Himiko was already on the attack.

“Bwahahaha! You’re a fucking Ken doll!”

Katsuki fell back into his seat as he clutched his sides. While Katsuki laughed, Izuku buried his face in his hand, “Ah, this is so embarrassing!”

Mina tapped her chin as she leaned forward, “Hey, Midoriya. Just how...accurate is Toga’s transformation of you?”

“That’s what I look like,” was Izuku’s muffled reply, not understanding what Mina was getting at.

Mina glanced over at Eijirou who nodded, “Midoriya is surprisingly ripped.”

“In that case, Midoriya, you got nothing to be worried about.”

Lowering his hand, Izuku looked over at Mina, “I don’t?”

Mina nodded, crossing her arms and looking serious, “Nope. Honestly, it's a little unfair. A face like yours attached to that body. You’re a walking trap for an unsuspecting sweetheart...but at the same time you’re a delectable snack for a carnivore.”
“I...huh? What do you mean by that?”

Mina smirked but before she could reply, Tsuyu’s tongue smacked her across the head, “No corrupting the innocent, kero.”

Mina snickered while Izuku glanced between the two, “Wait, what am I missing?”

“Can we not talk about this shit!? I don’t want to lose my lunch and miss the chance to see Round Face get the crap beat out of her.”

Katsuki’s growl shook Izuku out of his confused stupor, and he turned back to the fight at hand just in time to see Ochako get struck again by Himiko. It was a little disconcerting, seeing himself attacking Ochako with such ferocity. He also couldn’t help but feel like the match was not going to last much longer. While it was almost impossible to tell what, if any, extra damage Himiko had sustained during the fight because she was inside her transformation. Ochako was not looking good. She had started out strong, but he could tell she was slowing down. Himiko was also slower than she had been at the start, but not to the same degree.

Other people and heroes in the crowd were coming to the same conclusion as well, including All Might. While Ochako’s parents were still cheering their daughter on, he had become much more subdued. At the start of the match, he had seen Ochako start off in a blaze. Her attacks were fast and her defence was sturdy. She had brought all her talent and training under himself and Gunhead to bear against Himiko and had shown everyone the depth of her resolve and her drive to win. As Himiko began to change up the fight, Ochako had adapted and done her best to keep pace with her opponent. However, an unfortunate fact was beginning to become clear to All Might, and he was sure to many of the other professional heroes. Throughout the whole fight, Ochako had been at a disadvantage. Those with a keen eye could tell there was an experience gap between the two fighters.

Ochako’s drive had done wonders to close it, but as the fight dragged on, Himiko’s experience started to widen it again. She started taking less damage, and more often was able to keep Ochako on the defensive. While Ochako had several moments where she was able to break through, she was never able to fully capitalize on them. Perhaps she might have if not for the damage done to her hands that was preventing her from using her Quirk-- another factor showing Himiko’s greater understanding of the fight. Even now, Ochako was once again playing defense as Himiko was able to use Izuku’s body to over power her, and beat her down. This wasn’t to say that Ochako wasn’t landing blows of her own, but for everyone one of hers, Himiko was landing three. Unless Ochako was able to pull something out soon, and take Himiko by surprise, this match would be coming to an end very soon.
When Himiko’s fist collided with Ochako’s side, she felt the ribs give. The second and third time she hit the same spot, she felt them give more and more as the spot felt softer to hit. Ochako tried to counter, driving her elbow up to connect with Himiko’s jaw, but she leaned back and the blow went wide. With the miss, Himiko found another opening and threw a left hook. Ochako moved to the side, but the punch still grazed her chin with enough force to leave her dazed.

It had taken her longer than she had planned-- Ochako had put up much more of a fight than she thought she would-- but finally the fight was turning into a one-sided beatdown.

“If you were smart, you’d concede.”

Himiko ducked an attack and jabbed her hand out and struck Ochako in the chin again.

“No,” was Ochako’s firm and quick reply.

“Good.” With a grunt, Himiko knocked Ochako’s arms to the side and threw an uppercut right into her stomach. She quickly followed up with a second hit that drove out any air Ochako still had left. It should have knocked her to the ground, but Ochako only stumbled back. She was standing on very wobbly legs, but she was still standing.

“The longer you stay on your feet, the more I get to kick the crap out of you.”

Ochako hacked and wheezed as she fought to catch her breath, “Don’t--” a guttural cough interrupted her for a moment, but she pressed on, ignoring the fresh taste of bile and iron in her mouth. “Don’t get too full of yourself. You haven’t won yet.”

Rolling her eyes, Himiko shook her head, “Riiiiight. You’re going to suddenly get a second wind and win the day because of your drive or something comic book-ie like that. Oh wait, no. It’s your convictions that’re going to push you to victory right?”

“Shut up! You don’t know anything about why I’m here!”

Ochako still hadn’t fully caught her breath, but she charged at Himiko anyway, rage flashing in her eyes as she struck. Himiko arched an eye at the sudden snap and change in Ochako. Sidestepping,
she stuck out her leg, tripping Ochako as she sailed by. “Oh, I know enough. You aren’t that complicated.”

Himiko swung down, but Ochako rolled into her fall and was able to get away. Himiko clicked her tongue against her teeth. “Selfish brats like you are so easy.”

“Selfish?”

Ochako stood upright and stared Himiko down, face contorted in anger, “What do you mean selfish? What gives you the right to call me that!”

“Oh, would you prefer greedy then?”

“AHH!!” Ochako screamed as she attacked, first with a kick, then a knee strike. Not only did she miss, but her own momentum tripped her up, All Himiko had to do was give her a hard shove and Ochako hit the ground with a thud.

“What? Did I touch a nerve? Don’t like getting called out like this? Then maybe you should have actually tried to hide why you were here. The way you talk about money, how you penny pinch, everything you do makes it so obvious you’re here just to make money.”

“I SAID SHUT UP! You don’t know anything about me!” Ochako’s eyes started to water as she struggled to stand up. “You don’t know anything, so don’t you dare stand there and pretend to judge me.”

The tears in Ochako’s eyes, the anger, and the hurt made Himiko slow down.

“I’m here for a reason, Toga. I’m here for more than just myself.”

“Enlighten me then. What reason is that?”

Himiko’s legs tensed as she got ready to sprint forward...
“My parents!”

...Only to come to a very sudden stop, “W-what?”

“I’m here for my parents. They don’t...we don’t have much, and I don’t want them to suffer anymore. They try to hide it, but I always see it. I see the stress, the hurt, and the worry. I grew up watching my parents be afraid of what the next day would bring, even while they tried so hard to shield me from it.” Ochako pressed her hands off her knees as she forced herself up, eyes leveled with Himiko. What she was talking about she had only shared with Izuku, but to have Himiko belittle her and simplify her goals and dreams to simple greed compelled her to talk.

“Toga, you’re right: I want to make money. I want to make money so that my parents never have to go another day feeling the stress they do now. So that they never have to pick between paying a bill, paying rent, or food. I’m here to make sure my parents get to live the life they deserve. You want to call me greedy and selfish? Fine, maybe I am. Because you know what I want even more than that. I want even more than what I first dreamed about when I trained to come here. I want to do more than just take care of my family. I want to take care of my friends and classmates. I want to take care of Eri and Mrs. Midoriya. I want to take care of Deku. And, you know what, I even want to take care of you. I will become one of the greatest heroes the world has ever seen, and I will protect everyone!”

Standing straight, Ochako stood proud in the center of the arena, “Toga, I’m going to protect everyone that is important to me. I’m going to protect everyone that I love, and no one is going to stop me. Not the League of Villains, not Shigaraki, and not you! Because you know what? For all your talk about how this dark world has made you so strong-- how it’s made you stronger than me-- You still haven’t stopped me yet! Toga, I will not stop!”

For Midnight, the whole fight had played out, mostly, as she had thought it would. Both girls were set in their ways and were impressive fighters for their age. Midnight wasn’t surprised at all that the fight had turned nasty and become more personal than just a competition. After what she had heard go down between the two, she knew that if the two ended up facing each other, someone was going to have to make a visit to Recovery Girl. The two just kept slamming into each other, over and over, with neither showing signs they wanted to stop. Then slowly, Ochako started to slow down, and Himiko took that opportunity to start talking. To twist the knife as she got ready to end the match. To beat Ochako down physically and emotionally.

Then things changed.
Then Ochako started to talk.

Driven by Himiko’s words, instead of being discouraged, Ochako unleashed her convictions onto Himiko in an avalanche. When Ochako started talking, Midnight could feel the girl's conviction. Her drive, her dreams, and her desires were expressed so openly in every word. That kind of display was normally just the kind of thing that would get her excited and her blood pumping. At the moment, though, that potential excitement was chilled by a cold dread, because the more Ochako talked, the less Midnight was able to get a read on Himiko.

Himiko just stood there as Ochako made her declarations. Stood motionless and almost expressionless. Which was scary. There were many things Midnight could say about the serial stabber. There were many ways she could describe her. Reserved was not one of them. Himiko was just standing there, and listening. Listening to everything Ochako said until finally her face twitched into an emotion Midnight almost couldn’t describe.

It almost looked like pity.

When Ochako had finished, Himiko closed her eyes as she took a deep breath before she took up a fighting stance as Ochako did the same. Then she opened her eyes to look right at Ochako.

Every U.A teacher that saw those eyes knew something was about to happen. All Might way up in the suites, watching the fight on the giant monitors, acted as fast as he could to turn Eri away, distracting her with a snack. Midnight felt a cry get stuck in her throat. A cry to call the match. To end it before what happened next, happened.

But she was too late.

“I believe you,” Those were the last words Himiko before she moved.

“I believe you.”

Himiko wasn’t lying when she said that. She had listened to every word Ochako had said, and came to the conclusion that the other girl meant every single word.
So for Himiko, there was only one thing for her to do. In one instance, she was in her fighting stance, and then next she was closing the gap between herself and Ochako.

When Himiko had first transformed into Izuku, she had been shocked at just how strong he was. She had compared his body and muscles to coiled steel—power just waiting to be unleashed. In that moment, she unleashed all of it. By the time she had closed the gap between the two of them and had pulled her arm back to throw her punch, Ochako had just gotten her arms up to block.

But that didn’t matter.

The punch Himiko threw smashed through Ochako’s defenses like they weren’t even there. Ochako didn’t even have time to realize she was about to get hit. Himiko’s fist slammed into the side of Ochako’s face, making her head snapped back, and a crack echoed over the suddenly quiet crowd. Ochako’s legs buckled, and through sheer willpower, she kept herself from falling down as her world spun.

Himiko, however, wasn’t done. Reaching out, Himiko grabbed the front of Ochako’s gym top and held her in place as she pulled back and hit her again.

_CRACK!_

And again.

_CRACK!_

And again.

_CRACK!_
And again.

CRACK!

After the final hit, Himiko let go of Ochako and let her drop to the ground, where she lay face down on the concrete floor. Himiko stood over Ochako’s motionless form. Her heartbeat thundered in her ears and her hands shook as she forced her fingers to uncurl from a fist. Looking down at Ochako, Himiko frowned, “Why? This would have been so fucking easy if you had just been another money-hungry piece-of-shit. But no, you have to go and be an actual good person. You had to have goals and dreams that make the rest of the world look as dirty as it really is. And you had to actually believe you could do all that too. You had to be so stupid to think that you’re convictions would be enough to help you achieve your goals. Well, guess what, convictions can’t beat reality.”

Himiko took a shuddering breath, “If I have to be the bad guy and beat that into you, fine. Better that I beat the shit out of you than you getting killed in some alley trying to do too much. I doubt your parents want to bury you...and I know Izuku doesn't want to see you die trying to do something you can’t do. You need to learn your limits. You want to save your parents; fine, do that. Just don’t then try and lump everything else on top of that. It’ll weigh you down, and you’ll drown. It’s a brutal lesson, but this is the kindest way I can drill it home, Ochako. Look after yourself, and leave the rest to the people that are strong enough to protect someone else.”

Taking a step back, Himiko started to turn away, but paused and added softly, “I’ll look after Izuku for you.”

Turning fully around, Himiko’s eyes met Midnight’s and the two just looked at each other for a few moments before Himiko sneered, “What the fuck are you doing!? She’s done! Call the fucking match already and get her to Recovery Girl!”

Midnight nodded. While there were many things she and Himiko were going to need to discuss, she had a responsibility as judge to end the match. Raising her hand up Midnight signaled the end of the fight, “Uraraka Ochako is unable to compete. Toga Himiko adva-!”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!!!”

A loud scream ripped through the air, cutting Midnight off and startling Himiko enough to make her jump. Midnight’s eyes went wide as she closed her mouth, no longer able to finish. Himiko whirled around and stood in stunned silence as Ochako screamed as she forced herself to stand. This wasn’t a scream of pain, of anger, or of fear. It was a scream of effort and raw emotions.
When she finally stopped, Ochako was standing up and looking right at Himiko. She was hurt. Anyone with eyes could tell that last flurry of punches from Himiko had hurt her. Half of her face—her normally round, pink cheek—was now swollen and a deep maroon. The cuts under her eyes were splitting open, and past the swollen bloody flesh, Ochako’s eye glared back, red and angry. It was obvious Ochako was hurt, and it was obvious that she did not care.

Then she took a step forward, and Himiko took a step back.

“I told you, Toga,” Ochako started, spitting blood as she spoke and stepping closer to Himiko who backed up in shock. “I told you I’m going to protect everyone that is important to me. I’m going to protect everyone that I love, and no one is going to stop me.”

Another step. “Not the League.”

Another step. “Not Shigaraki.”

And another. “And not you!!! After all that, you still haven’t beaten me, Toga. And if that’s the best you and your dark world has, you never will. Your reality is no match for my conviction.”

Himiko stopped taking steps back, and her face contorted into something horrible. Her face twisted from so many different emotions until it settled on one that looked completely unnatural on the disguise she wore, “You think that’s the worst I have, Ochako? You have no idea what I’m capable of.”

“Bring it on.”

Himiko’s form exploded as her Izuku transformation melted away. Gray sludge seeped out of every pore and extruded from every orifice until she was nothing but a glob. A glob that started to get bigger and bigger until the sludge towered far above Ochako. A humanoid form slowly began to form as the sludge hardened and giant arms ruptured from underneath. The skin, pale at first, darkened until it turned black with deep red scars running down her arms. Torn, tan khakis covered her legs, pushing her new form even higher into the air. A yellow beak with sharp jagged teeth was exposed as the excess gray sludge fell away, followed by large eyes and an exposed brain.

Nomu stood before Ochako, tall and terrifying. Opening her mouth, Himiko screamed her answer to Ochako’s challenge as she crouched down, toes and fingers digging into the concrete as she
prepared to launch herself at Ochako.

Ochako didn’t blink, crouching once more into a fighting stance.

Inko hadn’t realized what All Might was doing when he reached over and turned Eri away so suddenly with a treat, but now she was grateful that he had. Holding the little girl close to her chest, Inko patted her head as she looked up at her confused, “Why is Ochako lying down? Did something happen? Is it over?”

Inko glanced over at Ochako’s parents. Both were pale and holding onto each other as they sat back down. The end of the fight had been so strange for the group. In reality, the match hadn’t been that different than the others, if you looked at it objectively. In the other matches, students had tried to electrocute each other, used weapons or acid, and were even blown up. Even at the start of this match, things while intense, still felt like a tournament. But seeing someone who looked like her son beat Ochako down like that had changed the room.

As parents, they knew there was the chance their kids weren’t going to win, but none of them expected Ochako’s run to end like that.

“Yes, dear. The match is over n-”

Then they all heard the scream. Even with only Midnight and Cementos wearing mics, they could still hear Ochako scream as she stood up all the way up in their suite. Mr. Uraraka leapt from his chair, “She’s getting up!...Oh lord, she’s getting back up.”

While Mr. Uraraka switched between excited for his daughter and terrified, Mrs. Uraraka had her hands clasped in front of herself, watching everything intently.

“Oh, it looks like Young Toga is transforming again.”

Inko’s sigh was obvious, which got her some sympathy from Mr. Uraraka, “I guess having a young women running around looking like your boy while not being...completely dressed can be a little stressful.”
“You have no idea.”

The brief exchange brought back some humor back to the suite, but as they watched Toga change, that mood quickly turned.

“That's...that's the monster that almost killed my Izuku…” Inko was in shock while besides her All Might tightened his grip on his arm rests as the giant form of the Nomu took shape in the arena and started to get ready to attack Ochako.

Nezu, what did you do!?

Midnight only had a few seconds to recognize the monster in front of her before the receiver in her ear blew up. Teachers calling out in alarm. Wondering how Himiko could have gotten the blood needed.

“Everyone please remember what we discussed.” Principal Nezu’s voice cut through everyone else, even though he sounded calm and collected.

“Have you lost your damned mind! If you think I’m just going to-”

“I have my eyes on Toga,” Aizawa cut off Vlad King, “If I have to, I can end her transformation instantly.”

Vlad King grunted, “Uraraka is your student. As her teacher, you have a responsibility-”

Again Aizawa cut in, “Uraraka and Toga are both my students, and making sure both are safe is a responsibility I take very seriously. Safe, but at the same time, making sure they do everything they can to grow into heroes. Clearly, both have decided to give this match everything they have. Something I encouraged my students to do since they only have three chances at these Sports Festivals. Something I know you did for your students, too. They may be using this match for more personal reasons, but it will still get them noticed by other pro heroes.”
Aizawa stopped, giving Vlad a chance to counter, but the teacher of Class B had nothing to say.

“Then let me cut to the chase. Midnight, is Toga in danger of losing control?”

“No,” was Midnight’s instant reply.

“Is Uraraka in mortal danger?”

“No. I think...Toga, in her own admittedly twisted way, is trying to save Uraraka’s life.”

“Interesting. Very Interesting,” Everyone could see Nezu rubbing his paws together just from his voice. For Aizawa, Midnight’s answer was enough. “Then I will keep doing my job up here and trust in Midnight’s judgment as the official in these matches.”

There was a muffled snort as Present Mic mumbled, “What job? You’re the quietest commentator in the world.”

If there is nothing else everyone,” Neru waited, but no one voiced a new objection, “Then let us go back to watching this match. I have a feeling it’s about to kick off again. And I for one want to see how this ends.”

Ochako was staring death in the face, and she didn’t care. Himiko had taken the form of the monster that had put her teacher into the hospital, fought All Might one-on-one, and had almost killed Izuku with a flick of its arm. This was a monster in front of her, and she should be scared. She should be, but she wasn’t. Looking at the Nomu in front of her, all she felt was angry.

A tightening in Himiko’s legs, and a twitch from her eyes was the only warning Ochako got before Himiko started her attack. The concrete underneath her exploded into chunks as she rocketed into the air. As she came back down, Himiko pressed her fists together and brought them down in a devastating hammer blow. Ochako dove out of the way as Himiko’s fists slammed into the concrete, causing fissures and huge cracks to spread out and chunks of concrete to fly in all directions.
The sharp chunks cut into Ochako as she rolled away, but she didn’t pay them any mind. She was marked up all over a few more cuts and bruises weren’t going to make a difference. However when something soft splashed against her leg, that did get her attention. As she scrambled to get to her feet, and reached down to see what had hit her.

Is this...a part of Toga’s transformation?

Ochako looked down at the sludge that was dripping through her fingers, and then back up to Himiko. Past the kicked up dust, she saw that Himiko’s giant arms had liquified and were reforming back into shape. Even her legs were dripping and paler than the rest of her body.

She destroyed her arms in that attack, and her legs must have been damaged when she kicked off the ground. Is...is Nomu’s strength tearing her own transformed body apart?

Himiko ripped the remains of her arms out of the concrete and charged at Ochako. A disfigured fist pulled back to swing at her.

She’s slower! I can dodge this!

Ochako was able to dodge Himiko’s fist, but the force behind the attack still struck her. Hit by the shockwave, Ochako tumbled back as she fought to keep Himiko in her line of sight.

OKAY! I can’t let her hit me! One strike like that, and I’m done.

Hurrying to get up, Ochako had just enough to time scramble away as Himiko attacked her again, driving her first into the concrete floor and cracking the arena in half. The once pristine flat concrete was now cracked open, and jagged rocks split out of the ground like rows of teeth along the giant crack. Himiko chased after Ochako, but Ochako noted, she wasn’t using the terrifying speed she had at the start of the fight, or like she had seen when the real Nomu fought All Might.

I still don’t understand. Even if that form is too strong for her to attack without destroying her body, shouldn’t it’s Shock Absorption Quirk keep the kickback from the attacks from doing anything?
Then something clicked in Ochako’s mind.

*Wait, I don’t think I’ve seen Toga use any Quirk when she’s transformed. She didn’t use Deku’s during the capture the flag match, or again just now. And I’m pretty sure she didn’t with those other villain forms.*

Ochako’s eyes scanned the ruined arena floor until they came across a chunk of concrete that she was sure she’d be able to pick up and swing around. Rushing over, and with Himiko hot on her heels, Ochako grabbed the rubble and heaved it up. This would have been much easier of course if she was able to use her Quirk on it. She probably would have gone for an even bigger chunk, but she wasn’t in a position to complain, and besides, she had spent months and months picking up heavy trash at the beach. A single cinder-block-sized piece of concrete wasn’t going to give her much trouble. Swingin it and herself around in an arc, Ochako launched the concrete as hard as she.

It hit her square in the face, ripping through the Nomu’s beak and head. With its head now gone, Ochako could see the top of Himiko’s hair buns sticking out from its opened neck, confirming at least that Ochako hadn’t accidentally taken Himiko’s real head off along with her disguise.

Grabbing another large chunk of concrete, Ochako charged Himiko while she was distracted. Lifting the concrete up, Ochako slammed it into the Nomu’s giant legs, forcing it to a knee. She then took the chunk and started hacking away at its chest, spraying gray sludge everywhere as she tried to get at Himiko inside the transformation. She saw more blond hair. Reaching in, she grabbed hold of it, and braced herself against the hulking frame of the Nomu, “Get out here, Toga! You can’t hide in this monster any mo- ACK!!”

Ochako had been so focused on getting to Himiko, she hadn’t thought to keep an eye on her arms and hands, both of which were now fully fixed and beginning to squeeze her. Both hands were wrapped around her chest and shoulders, driving her arms into her side. Ochako tried to suck in a breath, but Himiko just squeezed harder. As she was squeezed, Himiko was able to fix all the damage done to her form and stood back up, lifting Ochako into the air and holding her up so that her feet dangled uselessly.

Nomu’s giant eyes glared at Ochako angrily. Himiko snarled from behind them, applying more and more pressure to squeeze not just air, but the fight out of Ochako. This match was over, and all she needed was to see Ochako acknowledge it. She needed to see it in her eyes that she had lost.

She didn’t see that. What she saw was fire glaring back at her. And then teeth.
Rearing her head back, Ochako opened her mouth and bent as far forward as she could. She could just reach Himiko’s thumbs and knuckles with her mouth. Sinking her teeth into one thumb, she ripped and tore into it. The skin and flesh popped and melted as she did, loosening Himiko’s grip and letting her free one of her arms. She then tore into the other hand, loosening its grip so she could free her other arm. She slipped it free just as Himiko fixed the damage and started to squeeze out the last of her air.

With her vision starting to go dark, Ochako reached out with her hand and grabbed hold of the top of Himiko’s arm.

One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

Her swollen and dislocated pinky wouldn’t bend, preventing her from making contact with all five of her fingers. At least, it wouldn’t bend without help. Gritting her teeth, Ochako raised her other free hand up, and slammed it down on her pinky, forcing it to pop and bend, pressing its pad right into Himiko.

\textit{FIVE!!!}

Himiko tried to toss Ochako away when she realized what she was doing, but she was too late. With her gravity gone, her feet left the ground while Ochako’s feet touched down. Himiko growled angrily; even as she floated up into the air like a balloon, she refused to let Ochako go. As long as she kept hold of her, she could still win. Ochako, though, wasn’t done. Pressing her now ‘fixed’ hand into her chest, Ochako floated herself and kicked off the ground as hard as she could. Driving herself and Himiko up into the air.

Startled by Ochako’s move, Himiko let go and Ochako slammed into her chest. The two tumbled higher and higher into the sky. Grunting, Ochako climbed around Himiko’s body until she was sitting on Himiko’s stomach, knees pressing into her sides to keep herself fixed in place. By that point, Ochako guessed, they were high enough for her to finally end this fight. Biting into her sleeve, Ochako grabbed her other dislocated pinky and yanked it forward, popping it back. Ochako
could feel her head spin, the lack of air and pain almost making her black out. But that didn’t matter now. Looking down, Ochako looked Himiko dead in the eye as she pressed her fingers together, her mind screaming, PLUS ULTRA!

“Release!”

With the effect of her Quirk cut off, the two plummeted back to the earth with a *splat*!

It took Ochako a few seconds to remember where she was. Her head was throbbing, her body ached and all the cuts stung something fierce. Her hands and fingers felt three sizes too big and ready to burst. She also felt wet and sticky, which she decided was the worst part of everything at the moment. Forcing herself up to her hands and knees, Ochako looked around to figure out what her situation was.

She was still in the arena, landing close to the edge of the ring. She was laying on what was left of Himiko’s Nomu transformation. The top part of the Nomu’s face, upper torso, and hips were melty, but still recognizable. Her arms, legs, and the entire back of her body was gone, splattered over the ring from the force of the impact. All in all, Ochako’s plan worked perfectly. Not bad since she had thought of it on the fly.

As Ochako got to her feet, more of Himiko’s transformation melted away until her bruised and bloody face started to poke through the remains of the chest, gasping for breath. As Himiko started to sit up, Ochako put her foot on her collarbone and pushed her back down. Himiko scowled up at Ochako, but stopped short of saying or doing anything. Something in the other girl’s eyes made her stop.

“I told you, Toga, I *am* going to protect everyone I love: My parents and Deku. I will take care of them, and nothing you say-- nothing you do --is going to take that responsibility away from me.”

Himiko’s scowl started to deepen, but then she blinked. Once, twice, then at the third time, her scowl simply vanished as her eyes widened and her mouth opened into a small ‘oh’ shape. Her shock turned into a deep inquisitive look for a few moments as her mind raced, putting pieces together that had eluded her up until now. Finally, her expression changed again into a calm, bemused recognition. Ochako, who had watched every change, was left wondering what was even happening. She would have scratched her head, if her hands and fingers didn’t hurt so much.

“Toga, what are-”
“You love Izuku.”

Ochako clamped her mouth shut. She refused to allow herself to get flustered now. Not in the middle of a fight. Not after her last mistake of letting herself get distracted allowed Himiko to pummel her. Himiko, though, just started to chuckle, letting her head lay in the gray sludge around her, “All this fucking time, it was right in front of me, and I couldn’t...wow, I suck at reading people like you, Ochako. I couldn’t figure out what you were trying so hard to hide, and I couldn’t figure out what was making you act so stupid. And it was the exact same thing. Love. You love him too, don’t you.”

Ochako’s heart thundered in her chest. She never expected to have someone call her feelings out like this. She really didn’t expect it to be Himiko to call her out, either. She started to deny it. Say that Himiko had it wrong, but as she replayed what she had just said that led to Himiko’s epiphany, ‘I am going to protect everyone I love: My parents and Deku.’ And the fact that her hiding this feeling had been behind whatever confusion and anger Himiko had towards her originally, lying now just seemed so wrong.

“Yeah, I love Deku.”

For Himiko, the mask she had seen on Ochako’s face was suddenly just gone. She was still bemused that it was love that was the key to everything, but she supposed since Ochako’s version of love seemed to include love for her parents, it made sense she didn’t understand it in the slightest. It also made something else clear to her: Ochako really wasn’t going to be stopped. Unless Himiko was willing to cause her permanent physical harm to stop her from her goal, which she wasn’t at the moment, there wasn’t anything she could do now. Plus, she went into this fight viewing Ochako very differently and didn’t know how she felt fighting her now after this revelation.

“Ah, fuck this. I give up.”

Ochako stiffened as she looked down at Himiko in shock. “Wh-what!?”

Midnight almost fell off from her podium as she rubbed her ears. “I...didn’t quite catch that...I think?”

“I said ‘I give up!’ This bitch is crazy. I’d have to kill her to win at this point.”
“Toga…?”

“You have your foot at my throat, and you literally just dropped me a few stories. At this point, I’m scared at what you’d do next.” Himiko’s normal wide grin was back as she finished, “I misjudged you, Ochako. You...you’re a lot stronger than I thought you were, So, today, I concede.”

While Ochako stood stunned at the sudden turn of events, Midnight was quick to act. Raising her hand she called out to the stadium, “Toga Himiko has conceded the match! Uraraka Ochako advances to the Semi Finals!”

“What an incredible turn of events! With a last second gambit Uraraka has turned the tide and won her match! Our Infinity Girl and Princess Stabbity both have given us a real Plus Ultra show here, folks! Give them a round of applause!”

While the crowd around them started cheering loudly, Ochako was still at a loss. She had thought the only way for her to win was through knockout or ring out. For Himiko to concede the fight was not what she had expected at all. That, and everything else Himiko had said had Ochako’s mind racing.

“Um, Ochako?”

Blinking, Ochako looked down at Himiko, “Yeah?”

“You mind taking your foot off my throat now?”

“Take my foot...oh...OH!”

Quickly taking her foot off, Ochako took a few steps back, making sure she wasn’t standing on top of Himiko anymore, “Er...sorry about that.” Pausing briefly, Ochako extended her hand down to Himiko, “Um, here. Let me give you a hand.”

Himiko’s eyebrows raised some in surprise as she looked from Ochako then to her outstretched hand, “You sure?”
Ochako nodded, “Yeah, I’m sure.”

Reaching out, Himiko wrapped her fingers around Ochako’s wrist, careful of her damaged finger, and Ochako pulled her up out of the melted remains of her Nomu transformation, “Toga, I think...I think we need to talk.”

Himiko nodded, “Yeah. I think that’s a good idea. Fortunately, it’s a bit of a walk to Recovery Girls office,” A teasing smile came to Himiko’s lips, “Think you can make it?”

Ochako rolled her eyes, but was smiling too, “Oh please, I’m fine; you’re the one thats dripping...dripping…” Ochako trailed off as she looked at Himiko. Once she was pulled out of the giant sludge puddle, and more of the remains were falling off her, Ochako noticed that she wasn’t wearing her gym uniform anymore. In fact, as the rest of the gray sludge dripped off, it became obvious to Ochako that Himiko wasn’t wearing anything anymore.

“TOGA! YOUR CLOTHES!”

Himiko looked down at herself and laughed. While there was still some sludge covering her important bits, everything else was exposed, “Oh yeah, When I transform over my clothing they get destroyed, and Baku Bitch ruined the clothes the support department made that don’t urk-”

Ochako yanked her blue gym top off and rushed to wrap it around Himiko to cover her up, while at the same time Midnight was screaming for Cementoss to put up a wall around the arena and exit. Several stories of concrete shot up, separating the arena and exit tunnel from view. Himiko looked at everything and started laughing, “Seriously? This is a bit much.”

“But you’re-”

“Naked, yeah, yeah, whatever. Not like anyone could see any of the important stuff. But,” Himiko trailed off as she gave Ochako a smile, “Thank you for doing something to help...I guess. Anyway let’s get going.”

Ochako shook her head exasperated as she walked besides Himiko. As they walked, Ochako glanced over Himiko and took a breath, well she did say it was a long walk...
“Toga, you said too before.”

“Huh?” Himiko tilted her head to the side, “Too, what?”

“When you said that I loved Deku. You said too.”

Scratching her head, Himiko grinned happily, and even with a heavily bruised face Ochako could tell the other girl was blushing, “Well, yeah. I thought that was obvious. I followed him to this school after all. Hell, I know I’ve been taking things slow, but I thought it was pretty obvious.”

Ochako’s jaw dropped. Nevermind that now all the teasing she had seen Himiko do to Izuku took on a whole new meaning, but that bit at the end punched through all her other thoughts, “Slow!? That was you taking things slow!?”

Himiko laughed, “Hell yeah it is. After finally seeing him again at school I had to change up my plans a little. I knew if I came on too strong and went with my original idea, I might break him.”

“Original plan,” Ochako chirped. “What were you going to do to Deku?”

Himiko’s grin turned devious, and her eyes took on a hungry glint that sent a shiver up Ochako’s spin, “I was going to take him back to my room after Aizawa’s test and fuck him through my bed.”

Ochako stopped dead in her tracks, face red, and mouth hanging open. Himiko also swore she could see steam coming out of her ears. “You...but...you were going to...take Deku and...”

Himiko broke out laughing, “Oh my god get a hold of yourself. It’s just sex; it’s not that big of a deal. You’re thinking about it way too hard, though...are you just thinking about me wanting to have fun naked times with Izuku, or just of fun naked Izuku? I did give you a pretty good idea of what that’s like.”

When Himiko stopped laughing and looked back towards Ochako, she found the girl wasn’t next to her anymore, but had floated up and was pressed against the ceiling of the hallway, hands pressed firmly against her face.
Oh my god, how the fuck did I never get that she’s **this** in love with Izuku? I’ve missed weeks of chances to tease her!

“Do you want me to pull you along?”

Ochako shook her head and after taking several **deep** calming breaths, pushed herself back to the floor and de-floated herself.

“So,” Ochako began after she trusted herself to speak, “All the...teasing and stuff. Why go so over the top...Why not just...say it?”

“Say it?”

“Why... haven’t you said you love him?” Ochako’s eyes looked away as she spoke. This wasn’t exactly the kind of conversation she had envisioned herself having with Himiko after their big blow up.

Himiko shrugged, “I could ask you the same thing. Why haven’t you told him how you feel? Why **hide** it?”

Ochako looked away, chewing on her words, “I...You remember what I said, I was here for my parents.”

Himiko nodded.

“Well, that’s the reason.”

“Huh? How do your feelings for Izuku and your goal to look after your parents have anything to do with each other?”

Ochako sighed before she looked over at Himiko, her face taking a more serious look despite she still had some of her blush on her cheeks, “I’m here for a reason, Toga, and so is Deku. I can’t allow my...personal feelings get in the way.”
Himiko rubbed her chin as she thought about that, “I’ll be honest, that makes no sense to me, but since you seem to put your love for Izuku in the same breath as you love for your parents, maybe that’s why I just don’t get it, cause you know. No love loss there. Not going to say you’re wrong, though; a person should be free to love how they want.”

Ochako frowned but didn’t say anything to add on to Himiko’s mention of her parents. To not have love for or from your parents was such a foreign feeling, “You haven’t said why you haven’t told Deku how you feel.”

“Why I haven’t walked up to him and said, ‘I love you?’”

Ochako nodded.

“Two reasons. One, actions speak louder than words, and I’d like to think I’m pretty obvious about how I feel for Izuku. Or anyone for that matter.”

Ochako felt her insides twist at that, She was being obvious...

“And two,” Himiko continued, “Izuku is not ready for that kind of confession. Ignoring the fact that I think he would actually combust if I flat out told him how I feel, I can kinda tell he’s pretty dense when it comes to romance. He’ll blush and stutter when I’m on him, but he plays it off as just teasing or my sense of humor. That boy needs to grow up a little more before he’s ready for a relationship.”

*That was a very fair and thought-out point*, Ochako thought. Now that she thought about it, she wasn’t sure she had ever seen Izuku express any interest in romance. She knew he was aware of girls-- the magazine she had confiscated before told her that-- but besides a natural interest, he hadn’t shown any desire to further that line of thought. “Yeah, Deku has...other things on his mind.”

*Deku isn’t just here to become a hero. He’s also here to become the next holder of One for All.*

Himiko sighed dramatically, “No kidding. He’s so wrapped around Baku Bitch’s little finger it’s sickening.”
Ochako coughed and sputtered, but she knew Himiko had a point. “Hopefully he’ll be able to do what he said and move on after today.”

“That sure would be nice.”

The two continued on in silence for a while, both thinking over everything that they had talked about. Ochako felt conflicted. On one hand, she wasn’t exactly overjoyed that Himiko had feelings for Izuku like she did, but at the same time, she felt better that all the teasing wasn’t being done for her own cruel amusement. Now that she had a better understanding of the situation, it also put her own feelings, and her own previous actions, into perspective.

“Hey, Toga,” Ochako began slowly. Himiko glanced over at her, but seeing the serious look on Ochako’s face, she kept quiet and let her talk. “I...I owe you an apology. I crossed a line accusing you like I did. I just saw everything you were doing and just assumed the worst. After almost losing Deku, I just want to keep him safe from everything. I failed so horribly last time that just the thought that your actions might hurt him in some way, I just...acted. I was so angry at you...and...and jealous of you ; I just wanted you gone. I didn’t want you near Deku, because...I didn’t want you to take him away.”

Himiko’s eyes widened when Ochako mentioned she was jealous of her. That was not something she ever thought she’d hear from anyone. At the last bit, her eyebrows scrunched together, “What do you mean, take him away? Like, I’m-the-villain-from-the-USJ kind of take away? Or I’m-the-mistress-coming-to-steal-your-man kind of way?”

“I...both. I guess I saw it as the same thing…”

“Wow, that’s pretty fucked up.”

Ochako nodded, shame etched across her face. “What I did is inexcusable. I want you to know that I am so sorry for what I said.”

Ochako bowed her head as she finished. Himiko frowned, not entirely comfortable at the heartfelt apology, “Um...can you not be so...earnest here. You’re forgiven and all that. I mean, you aren’t the only one that fucked up today.”

Ochako looked up, confused for a second before she recalled what Himiko had said. “O-oh...right. That. About how I left Deku…”
“Yeah, like I said, you aren’t the only one that overstepped and said and _did_ something pretty fucking stupid... Sorry.”

“I forgive you, Toga.”

“Just like that?” Himiko asked, surprised at how quick Ochako had said that, “Is it really that simple?”

“I think it should be for friends.”

Himiko was silent for a few more steps before asking, “Are we? I don’t think we were before.”

Ochako frowned, but she couldn’t exactly argue that point. Their relationship was different than with everyone else in their little squad. They had hung out together while with everyone else, but the two had never really talked with each other besides trading barbs and dirty looks. But after talking with Himiko, and now maybe understanding her a little better, Ochako thought they could be-- If Himiko wanted to, that was.

“How about a fresh start then?” Ochako asked as she held out a hand towards Himiko.

Himiko blinked and looked down at the offered hand. She stared at it for a little while. Everything that had kept her from opening up to Ochako before was gone. Ochako’s views on some things were still so strange to her, but now that damned _mask_ was gone, crushed to dust under their feet from their match.

Himiko smiled, a huge toothy smile, and took Ochako’s hand. Carefully.

“I’m Toga Himiko.”

Ochako smiled back, “Im Uraraka Ochako. It’s nice to meet you, Toga.”

“Same to you, Uraraka. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”
The two shook and when they let each other go, both felt like a huge weight had been lifted off them. It felt really good.

“Say, Toga.”

“Yeah.”

“I have this friend. He’s a bit of a dork, and can’t keep himself from getting into trouble.”

Himiko snorted, “He sounds like a real handful.”

Ochako rolled her eyes and let out an exaggerated groan. “Oh my god, you have no idea. But you see, he’s a really good person, and I’ve been trying to keep an eye on him for a while now.”

Himiko nodded, “He’s lucky to have someone like you looking after him.”

“I am a saint; what can I say?”

Himiko cackled, earning her a playful shove from Ochako, making them both wince, “Anyway, I’ve been looking after him for awhile now, but...I think I need help.”

Arching an eyebrow, Himiko looked over at Ochako, “You want me to give you a hand with him?”

“If you wouldn’t mind.”

“Any benefits to this job?”

Ochako blushed as she smirked, “His smile will light up your day.”
Himiko made a show thinking the offer over, “Well I dunno…”

“He’s also really cute.”

“Sold!”

Both broke out into a fit of laughter, though they ended up wincing as their injuries reminded them they were still both pretty beat up.

“Hey Ochako, I might have lost today, but don’t think I’m going to lose tomorrow.”

The fire in Himiko’s eye was reflected in Ochako’s as the two looked at each other, “Good. If everything was easy, it’d be boring. Now come on, I want to get fixed up in time to watch the next match. And you really need some clothes.”

“Yeah yeah yeah, again with the clothes. Tooru runs around naked, you know. Besides, are you really in a hurry for whatever lecture Recovery Girl is going to give you after having to see her a second time today?”

Himiko nearly broke into another fit as Ochako started walking a lot slower.

Chapter End Notes

Hi there! Looks who dropping by to post a little update. So, originally the plan was for this chapter to be all the Quarter Final matches and the first Semi Final, but after my Editor-and-Chief Tmalasia looked over the Ochako Himiko fight, he suggested that this become it's own chapter. And I agreed with him. Since this is the end of this part of their character arc it's fitting that it's gets its own chapter instead of being lumped together with everything else.
I really hope you all enjoyed this match. I've had this fight sitting in my outline since near the beginning of the fic. I wanted to build up to it and I really hope you all enjoyed the payoff. Also fun fact, the original title for the fic was Time to Shonen Logic some Friendship >.< I think new title it better.
A big thank you to all you readers out there! It's a shorter chapter but I think it turned out pretty good. If you liked it please feel free to leave a comment or a critique :D
A Huge shoutout to my friends at IzuOcha Temple and Epsi's Hoard!
And a huge thank you to my beta reader Tmalasia!

P.S. That scythe villain is actually a canon villain in the show. Go watch the USJ and pay attention to the background people. Some of them are crazy
Rush for the Semi-Finals

Chapter Summary

After winning her Quarter-Finals match, Ochako has earned her spot in the Semi-Finals. With just 3 openings left, everyone else is going to give it everything they have to advance. Well almost everyone.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I really don’t want to go in there.”

Ochako stared at the door to Recovery Girl’s clinic and made no move to open it. Despite the numerous cuts, bruises, contusions, cracked ribs, gashes, dislocations, and facial swelling she was in no hurry to go in. Himiko rolled her eyes at her. “Oh my god, you are acting like a baby. Grow up and go take your medicine. I’m going in, too, so it’s not like you’re going to have to deal with her alone. Friends stick together after all.”

Putting her hand on Ochako’s back for support-- and to let her know she wasn’t going to let her run away, again-- Himiko opened the door to the clinic where Recovery Girl and Midnight were waiting for them.

“Midnight-sensei?”

Himiko’s eyes met Midnight’s and she blinked, “Yeah, fuck this. I’m out.”

Ochako gasped as Himiko turned on her heel and started to make a run for it. She didn’t make it far, as Ochako snatched her back by her wrist. “What happened to ‘friends stick together?’”

Himiko shook her head, “I didn’t sign up to deal with both Nurse Mengele and the Mother Hen here.”

Midnight’s eye twitched while Recovery Girl tapped her cane on the floor hard enough to get their attention, “You two get in here before I cane the both of you for being so stupid.”
Grumbling, Himiko shuffled after Ochako as the two went inside. While Ochako made her way to a bed, Midnight walked up to Himiko and handed her a new set of gym clothes. “Go get dressed. Then Recovery Girl can treat you...and don’t call me Mother Hen again.”

“Old Maid?”

Everyone in the room could hear Midnight’s teeth grinding together. Himiko cackled as she walked behind a changing curtain, while Ochako looked over at the R-Rated here nervously. “Are we in trouble, Sensei?” Ochako couldn’t think of a reason why the Sports Festival Judge was waiting for them.

Himiko answered before Midnight could, “She probably had time to check on me to make sure I behaved on the way here since I kinda broke the ring.”

Midnight glared at the blond girl, “I also went to get you some new clothes and I made sure that the hallway from the arena to here was clear.”

Ochako glanced between Midnight and Himiko as she pulled the curtain closed. “It’s very kind of you to come check on Himiko, and I-EY!”

Ochako yelped as Recovery Girl dabbed at her cuts with a cotton swab and iodine, “OW ow ow ow!”

Recovery Girl just ignored her, “Oh, you be quiet. You got like this; you can deal with the treatments.”

“Aren’t you supposed to just kiss me?”

“Do you want to be half-asleep by the time your next match comes up?” Recovery Girl asked. “My Quirk uses your own body’s energy to heal you. I already treated you once today. If I do it again, you’ll be aching for a nap that’ll last until tomorrow.”

Ochako frowned, not liking the sound of that. Recovery Girl gently cupped her chin and turned her face to the side as she exclaimed the swelling and cuts, “I’ll heal your face’s swelling, get your hands back to normal, and close up a few of the nasty cuts that would have needed stitches, but everything else is getting treated the old-fashioned way. Disinfectant, bandages, and time.”
Ochako nodded, that would work for her. At the very least she’ll be in fighting shape. “Okay, but don’t you have anything that, OW, doesn’t sting?”

Recovery Girl pulled out a fresh cotton swab and soaked it in the bottle of iodine. “Probably.” She then went back to cleaning all of Ochako’s wounds. From behind the changing curtain, Himiko snickered at Ochako’s plight.

“Oh, don’t you laugh, young lady. I might just heal you completely the old-fashioned way. How would you like to go walking around for the next week wearing a nose clip until that smashed face of yours heals?”

Himiko promptly stopped laughing, which got a snicker out of Midnight. Ochako, given a reprieve as Recovery Girl went to get some gauze pads and bandages, looked over at Midnight. “Um, sensei? Why were you the one to come down here? Even if there is a break to repair the ring, won’t it look bad for the judge of the event to leave?”

Midnight waved her off, “As long as I’m back and not causing a delay, it’s not a problem. Besides, I have to take responsibility for this ball of stability.”

“I hate you,” Himiko sang out.

Ochako tilted her head to the side, “You have to take responsibility? Because Toga is under the care of U.A?”

“Technically--” Midnight began, but Himiko cut her off as she pulled back the curtain and walked out fully dressed. “She’s my counselor. She’s the one that gets to check on my mental and emotional well-being on top of everything else I put the teachers through.”

“Which you make so, so easy.”

“Yep, I’m the reason she has those extra wrinkles.”

Ochako looked between the two as they bickered. Perhaps after it was a result of her eye opening heart-to-heart with Himiko earlier, or maybe she had gotten her bell rung worse than she thought,
but looking at the two, they weren’t acting like a teacher and student, or a counselor and her patient. It seemed closer to Ochako. More familial. The brief look of worry Midnight had and the wave of relief when Himiko had opened the door to the clinic reminded Ochako a lot of her own mother.

“Sooooo…” Hitoshi began, looking down at the unresponsive form of Izuku, “Is he just gonna...you know...lay there forever?”

Tsuyu reached down and gave him a poke, “He might be actually broken, kero.”

“Perhaps we should inform a teacher…” Tenya said, adjusting his glasses, “Unless you want to try some stronger smelling salts, Yaoyorozu?”

“I’d rather not. At that point, we would just be sticking pure ammonium up his nose.”

Minouru leaned over the back of a chair, “I don’t know why he freaked out so much; you couldn’t even see anything from up here, and the camera’s were already pannin away before that wall went up.”

Denki sighed, “True, but Midoriya was aware that there was a naked girl in front of him. That's too much stimulation for the poor guy.”

“But if you think about it, all girls are naked under their clothes. If you told Midoriya that, I bet he’d stop functioning every time he looked at a woman,” Minoru added smirking.

As the two snickered, Kyouka snuck up behind them and jammed her ear plug into Minoru and Denki’s ears and sent a few angry sound bursts right into their ear drums, “You two need to calm down. And leave Midoriya alone, he and Dark Shadow are pretty much our classes' wholesome mascots at this point.”

Katsuki, tapping his boot on the floor in annoyance growled out, “I swear I’m throwing that annoying shit over the ledge and letting the people below deal with him.”
Tsuyu looked up at him, and, with a completely neutral expression, asked, “You’re sure you’re the one that should be making that kind of joke?”

Katsuki’s boot stopped mid-tap and he looked hard at Tsuyu, who didn’t seem intimidated in the slightest. Before anything else could happen however, “Hey guys, we’re back!”

“Why are you all crowded around like that?”

Ochako and Himiko, both freshly patched up, walked out of the hall and stopped at the strange scene in front of them. The scene got stranger as there was a sudden, startled yelp, and the why for the classes strange gathering came to.

“Uraraka! Toga!”

Seeing Izuku suddenly bolt up off the ground got a bemused chuckle from Ochako and a few hard laughs from Himiko. She even had to use Ochako’s shoulder to steady herself. As they laughed, Izuku looked from one to the other. Both clearly had been worked on by Recovery Girl. Himiko’s nose and face were back to normal and Ochako’s major injuries from her fight were perfectly healed. The only thing telling Izuku that the two had been in a match was the gauze and bandages Ochako wore on her cheek and arms, as well as the memory of it that was seared into his memory. After looking them over, Izuku then realized something else. They had come back together. They were laughing together. Ochako was actually letting Himiko use her to keep herself from doubling over as she got her laughing under control.

“You two...are okay?”

Ochako and Himiko shared a quick look, and then smiled at Izuku, “Yeah. We’re good, Deku.”

“It’s all water under the bridge.”

While Izuku sighed in relief, Ochako and Himiko led Izuku back to his seat, with Himiko this time taking an empty seat so that she could sit with the rest of their group and not off by herself as she had been. Quickly though, the rest of their classmates started asking questions about what had gotten them so fired up, but both played it off as a personal difference of opinion. This got them a few looks, but fortunately their classmates didn’t push too hard. Kyouka leaned over towards them. “It looked like the two of you were talking a lot towards the end.”
Himiko nodded, while Ochako watched the punk girl closely, “Yeah we were discussing some stuff...you couldn’t you hear it? You have super hearing, right?”

Ochako bit her tongue so she didn’t squeak, but her worries were quickly put to bed as Kyouka shook her head, “Not that good, and especially not good enough to block out all the extra crowd noise without some special equipment.”

Ochako sighed quietly to herself; she hadn’t even thought about if someone could be listening in on her when she opened up to Himiko at the end. She supposed she was also lucky there weren’t any microphones near the ring either, now that she thought about it. If Izuku had learned about her feelings like that, she’d never be able to live it down.

“I still can’t believe you could turn into that Nomu, though,” Denki said. “That was crazy.”

Himiko smirked. “Yeah, but the darn thing was too strong for me to use really well. Kept blowing up my own limbs. If I had its Quirks, it would have been easier.”

“Ah! So you can’t use the Quirks of the person you turn into then?” Mina asked.

Himiko noticed Izuku shift a little in his chair and smiled to herself. The boy was paying attention since he knew why she had kept her Quirk to herself for so long, “No, I can’t. If I turn into someone that’s just naturally strong, I can use that, but no Quirk-based super strength.”

“How do you transform?”

Himiko did a good job not showing too much emotion at that question. A far better job then Izuku was, in any case. The boy kept glancing between her and the class.

“Yeah, Midoriya avoided the question when we asked him. Since you turned into him, we thought he knew.”

Izuku sunk into his seat a little. Himiko glanced over at him before recalling what he had said to her back when she revealed what her Quirk was to him. ‘I really think you can trust our classmates.’
Well, I guess this is it.

Reaching over she gave Izuku a pat on the shoulder, “I asked him to keep it between us. My Quirk has caused me some issues in the past.”

Some of the class looked a little uncomfortable, “Oh? We didn’t know.”

“We shouldn’t have pried like that.”

Himiko waved them off, “Honestly guys, it’s not a big deal. I’m the only one here that’s kept their Quirk a secret. It’s natural you all would be curious, I guess. At this point, keeping it a secret is only going to cause more issues, I think, so I guess I can tell you all.”

“So how do you do it? You were with Midoriya for almost the whole prep time in the last event. Is it complicated, kero?”

Himiko scratched her head, “Not really. Most of that was us just planning. All I had to do was...drink some of Izuku’s blood.”

Himiko explained how her quirk worked, how the more she drank the longer she could hold her transformation. How she could also make clothes and things the person has. She then also talked about how as a side effect of her Quirk she actually needed to drink blood to keep herself healthy. After her explanation, Himiko watched her classmates closely, looking for any obvious signs of disgust. Instead, she saw a few surprised faces. Some thoughtful. Some didn’t seem to care, and others seemed to have been expecting something else. Again, Himiko found herself coming to terms that there were people out there that wouldn’t see her as a monster.

Tsuyu tapped her chin, “The juice?”

“Well, you know.”

Hitoshi leaned forward. “That's why you were so quick to say I was dealing with idiots. You were dealing with the same kind of stuff.”
“Pretty much, though my idiots had me go to a Quirk Suppression therapist. So, you know, that was fun.”

A few of the students hissed at that. Momo looked aghast, “But that’s such an archaic form of Quirk control. I didn’t even think there were those kinds of practitioners around in this day and age.”

“My folks really didn’t like my Quirk. Anyone else got any questions?” While Himiko was warming up to opening up about some parts of her past and self, she wasn’t eager to go down that whole rabbit hole just yet. Fortunately, Tenya was quick to bring up a different subject.

“So to turn into those villains, you had to get blood samples. How did you do that in all the chaos?” Tenya asked. Ochako and Tsuyu glanced at each other. Both remembering the carnage Himiko had left behind when she had attacked the villains on the boat.

“Um Iida, how would you describe my hero costume?”

“Sharp….Oohhh. That...should have been obvious.”

“Toga,” Ochako started, “When you cut off that shark villain's arm, you stuck something from your costume into it. Those needles I think.”

“They’re syringes, actually. They’re attached to a little pump to draw blood.”

Izuku snapped his fingers, “OH! So that gear did have something to do with your Quirk!”

“Yep.”

Ochako continued, “and when you were keeping me and Izuku safe from that Nomu, you stuck him with those syringes. That’s how you got its blood.”

Before anyone else could ask any question however, a call came in over the loudspeakers, “Yaoyorozu Momo, Todoroki Shouto, please report to your waiting rooms.”
While Shouto, who had been quiet for Himiko’s explanation, simply got up without a word, Momo turned to the rest of the class. “I suppose they are ready to restart.”

“It’s about fucking time. You’d think having Cementoss here would mean we wouldn’t have to wait forever to fix all the damage Vamp Bitch caused.”

Himiko flashed Katsuki a fanged smile while he just ignored her.

“Um dude, it’s been like fifteen minutes.”

“Shut up, Shitty Hair.”

Kyouka, ignoring Katsuki and Eijirou, flashed Momo a thumbs up. “Good luck, Yaoyorozu.”

“Ladies and gent-le-man, it’s time for our next round. The doozy that was the last one may be a tough act to follow, but I think these two are up for the task. After all, they come highly recommended. She is the very definition of ‘knowledge is power,’ and considering just how smart she is, you better believe she can teach you a lesson. Class 1-A’s vice representative, Yaoyorozu Momo! Versus -- This young man laughs in the face of global warming. Around him it’s always an ice age, so you better have your parka’s ready. From class 1-A, it’s Todoroki Shouto!”

Even as the roar of the crowd echoed throughout the stadium, neither Momo or Shouto could hear it. While Present Mic had yet to call an official start to their match, for both of them their fight had already started as they played out every conceivable way the match could go. Whittling down their options and weighing their best chances against what they thought their opponent would do. For Shouto, his biggest concern wasn’t that Momo had an almost infinite arsenal at her disposal that gave her near endless possibilities to attack him and defend herself. No, his biggest issue was that Momo had the potential to unleash devastating powerful attacks. He still vividly remembered seeing her use her Quirk during Aizawa’s test the first day, creating a cannon to dominate the ball-toss test. He had also heard how she had defeated the villains attacking her and Kyouka during the assault on the USJ by bringing down the side of a mountain. With all of this in mind, Shouto had come to the conclusion that any kind of prolonged match would be too risky, and had settled to try and end the match as quickly as possible with a fast, frontal attack.
Momo, too, had taken everything she had seen Shouto do to date and was reviewing it it as she mulled over her plan. The raw power of Shouo’s ice was obvious. In every training exercise, his power was put on display, not just the force of the ice, but the mind boggling amount he could create as well. Shouto could create and attack with his ice at incredible speed. He was a terrifying opponent at long range. With these close quarters, the time between his attack and it hitting would be less than a second. So for Momo to have the best chance to win, she concluded she would have to end the match before he could hit her with his first attack. That meant she would have to not only be fast enough, but be powerful enough to end it in a single attack. Instantly, her mind went to creating a cannon. Make a cannon and immediately fire a projectile into Shouto. Hopefully, it’d either knock him out of the ring or just knock him out.

However, there were other factors she had to consider. One was how much force she would need to get the knock-out without it being lethal. Next was what she would be firing. Any kind of cannon ball or solid projectile was out of the question; it would have to be something malleable so the impact wouldn't rip Shouto apart, but strong enough to withstand the force of being fired from the cannon. Given the distance between the two, she could roughly judge how much propellant she was going to need, and a modified beanbag round, enlarged and enforced, would be the best thing to fire at Shouto. Next, she had to consider how fast she would be able to create her weapon and fire it. The weapon structure was easy-- simple metals and polymers she could recount those molecular structures in her sleep. So creating it was not the issue; it was how fast she would be able to create it. As best as she could figure, a fully armed-and-ready-to-fire cannon would take no more than a couple of seconds.

But she didn’t have a couple of seconds.

She couldn’t risk changing the structure too much. Too many modifications to make the process faster, thinning the metal of the barrel could mean she only ends up making a giant pipe bomb. Changing to a less-complicated polymer for the bean bag could mean it was too hard or too fragile. She needed another way to cut down on her time. Then she remembered a conversation she had with Izuku during their bus ride, ‘I’m just wondering, if you made the cannon barrel, powder and projectile but kept it attached to yourself, you’d be able to cut down on your attack time.’ The idea had merit, but it was risky. The recoil could take her out the moment she fired, but there was a work-around. First, she would have the cannon form to her side instead of straight on, and if most of the recoil was in the barrel, she wouldn’t have to worry as much. Anti-aircraft artillery cannons the barrel gets pushed back into itself to lessen the recoil to the whole unit. Changing to that design should fix one of her two problems. Her last problem, though, was aiming. The cannon would be coming out of her side, aiming was going to be tricky. There would be no eyeballing it. She would be, more or less, performing a quick draw.

But even with all the risks, Momo still thought this was her best course of action.

Both Momo and Shouto, plans at the ready, waited for the final signal.
The crack from the cannon jolted Present Mic in his seat, almost to the point of tipping him over. It only took a few seconds for him to regain his balance bring his attention back to the match. As he opened his mouth to start giving commentary, he had to pause and do a double take.

“Wha? I...I don’t believe it! It’s already over, folks. Yaoyorozu and Todoroki just gave us a U.A-version of an old-American-Western shootout! Both went for the quick draw! And...Yaoyorozu is out of bounds! Todoroki advances to the semi finals!

When the signal had been given, a stream of ice shot out from the bottom of Shouto’s foot, covering the distance in a blink of an eye. Before the ice hit Momo, though, Shouto found himself staring down the barrel of a cannon that was ripping out from her side. He couldn’t move, he couldn’t breath, and he was sure his heart stopped. There was a flash and a loud crack as Momo fired. Shouto felt something blast by him. The blast from the air almost enough to knock him back as Momo’s projectile missed by a finger’s breadth. Then his ice hit Momo, driving her out of the ring and into the outset wall of the area which she was now frozen against. Her cannon dropped, fully formed, halfway to the out of the ring.

Shouto was only just aware of his victory being declared as he turned to look at the wall behind himself. The projectile, something like an undersized potato sack, was only just plopping onto the ground after hitting the wall, leaving a spider web of cracks.

*If that had hit...She fired that while it was still attached to her.*

Momo, still stuck to the wall, hissed at the pain in her side. She had probably bruised her ribs pretty badly with that move, but at least the worst of the recoil had been absorbed by the canon itself. She hurt, but it wasn't anywhere near as bad as her damaged pride. She had done everything she could, planned it all out, but she had failed in her execution. Sighing sadly, Momo let herself hang on the wall until Shouto came up and began melting the ice to free her.
“Aw man, she was so close.” Kyouka fell back into her chair, deflated.

Mina nodded, “I can’t believe she tried something so dangerous, though.”

Mezou shook his head, “At this point, I don’t see how anyone can beat Todoroki.”

“No kidding. The guy is invincible,” Rikidou agreed.

“Gee,” Ochako cut in sharply, “Thank you for your votes of confidence.”

The sharp, annoyed glare Ochako gave the two sent shivers up their spines as they both quickly apologized. Still, Ochako had to admit that Shouto was one heck of a roadblock to her march for the finals. Crossing her arms, she started going over everything she knew about how Shouto fought and began looking for weaknesses.

“Bakugou Katsuki, Monona Neito, please report to your waiting rooms.”

“Hey, looks like you’re up, man. Good luck”

While Eijirou flashed a thumbs up, Katuski just grunted disinterestedly and stood up, “Not going to need luck. I blow that Copycat bastard straight to hell.”

“Ha ha ha ha ha! How funny. Class A’s loud mouth doesn’t think he’s going to need all the help he can get to win!” The haughty laugh and boast grabbed everyone’s attention. Neito was standing right inside the hallway to their classes seat, smirking confidently as he walked in. He wasn’t alone, either. Two of his classmates, Kosei Tsuburaba and Toharu Kamakiri, were also with him.

Katsuki’s eyes narrowed as he started walking up to Neito, “You want to start our match now, you fu-!”

Toharu stepped between the two as he quickly lifted up an arm and extended a large blade right at Katsuki. “Don’t even try it punk.”
Denki and Eijirou were out of their seats in a flash, but ran into a barrier created by Kosei. Eijirou glared at the three. “Are you guys seriously here to pick a fight now?”

“Monona was just talking. This guy was the one that was going to start crap,” Toharu snapped back.

Tenya was now out of his chair, putting himself between the two groups. “Please! We are here to compete for the honor of our school. We shouldn’t disgrace ourselves with fighting outside of training and matches!”

Neito raised his hands. “I'm not even here for the loud mouth.”

Katsuki ground his teeth together, “Keep calling me that, and I’m going to destroy you.”

“Then why are you here dude?” Denki asked.

“My commitment to good sportsmanship, of course.”

Himiko didn’t even bother to hide her scornful laugh. “Yeah. Thats total bullshit.”

“Toga,” Izuku began, “We shouldn’t jump to conclusions.”

Himiko rolled her eyes, mumbling something about Izuku being too naive that was missed by everyone else. Neito smiled brightly. “I see you do have someone with some common sense in your class. A shame it’s attached to someone with a second-rate Quirk. Though, I suppose you’ll all see first-hand when Reiko wipes the floor with him.”

A low growl reached Neito’s ears, and he turned, expecting it to be coming from Himiko. However, when he, Izuku, Tsuyu, and Hitoshi all turned to the source of the sound, it wasn’t Himiko; it was Ochako. Ochako eyed the haughty boy with narrowed eyes. “Be careful what you say to my friend, jerk.”
Maybe Neito understood the sudden danger he was in. He had just seen Ochako not long ago deliver and take a beating in her last match. The image of her ripping the teeth out of the shark villain transformation was still fresh in his mind. Brushing a few blond strands of hair, and trying not to shudder, Neito turned his attention to his actual target. “Shinso. I’m here to see you.”

Hitoshi looked at the other boy but didn’t say anything.

“You see, my conscience wouldn’t stop bothering me. While our match didn’t go the way you probably wanted, I also behaved poorly. I left you lying in the ring, and that was uncalled for.”

“Oh?” Hitoshi frowned. He honestly hadn’t given the subject much though. He had been more focused on his own failure to make a guy like Neito, who clearly loves to talk, to talk, “It’s not that big a deal really.”

Neito waved his hands, “No, no, no. It’s like your class rep said. We are here to honor our school. So surely at the end of a match, the contestants should shake hands to show there are no hard feelings. Right?”

Towards the end, Neito extended his hand towards Hitoshi, who just looked at him questioningly. Finally, with a sigh of annoyance, Hitoshi shook his hand, “Fine. No hard feelings.”

Neito smiled, “Good, good. Now that that’s settled I can focus on shutting the loudmouth up.”

Bowing dramatically, Neito turned and left. Toharu retracted his blades into his arm, and Kosei let his barrier of solid air fade before turning and leaving with Neito. The rest of 1-A was left scratching their heads at the strange scene.

“So...the heck was that all about?” Hanta asked.

Kyouka and Mina just shrugged.

Katsuki looked where Neito had left before glancing back at Hitoshi. Then, with an angry snarl, walked off, “Doesn’t matter what it was. I’m going to kill that little prick.”
Himiko watched him go, “You know what, I might actually want Baku Bitch to win this round...and I think I need a shower for saying that.”

Tsuyu leaned over towards Hitoshi, “You alright?”

Hitoshi just nodded, “Yeah. I’m fine. That was just weird is all.”

While everyone got back to their seats, Ochako looked over and saw that Izuku had his hand up to his chin and was mumbling to himself. She could see the gears turning in his head.

Wonder what he’s thinking about?

Before she could ask, Minoru jumped up in glee, “They’re back! They sent them back out!”

No one needed to ask what had Minoru so excited. Between each match, to keep the audience entertained, a group of american cheerleaders that had been flown in for the event would perform for the crowd. Up until now, Ochako hadn’t paid them much mind, too focused on other, now settled, things. Looking at the bright orange and yellow trimmed outfits, Ochako couldn’t help but roll her eyes. “Those don’t really leave much to the imagination do they?”

Himiko nodded, “Yeah, no kidding...Okay, can you not jump up and down like a freaking dog?” Turning around to look at Minoru, Himiko frowned at him. “You’re supposed to be on your best behavior at all times. You’re not off the hook for the little locker room stunt you pulled, you know.”

Minoru crossed his arms, “I’ve been good around you all! I haven’t done anything wrong!”

“Oh huh,” Himiko didn’t look convinced at all, glaring at the little purple boy, “You just haven’t been obvious and gotten caught yet is more like it. Don’t forget, I’m the one that gets to punish you if you get caught acting like a creep again.”

Minoru waved his arms around, “I haven’t done anything! And I’m not doing anything wrong looking at the cheerleaders, either! It’s their job to draw our attention! We’re supposed to look.”
“Really?”

“Thats right!” Minoru declared, “Besides, it’s not like I’m the only one looking!”

“Name one person I actually care about looking at those cheerleaders.”

Minoru pointed to his side, “Midoriya.”

Himiko blinked and slowly turned to see what he was talking about. Ochako also turned to look, having heard their whole conversation. Izuku, who had been lost in thought before, was now watching the jumbo screens as the cheerleaders danced around. A slight blush on his face as he followed their routine. He wasn’t leering by any stretch, but he was watching.

“See? Midoriya is just like the rest of us. Put a beautiful and sexy cheerleader in front of him, and he’s gonna look.”

“Izuku,” Himiko countered angrily, “Doesn’t leer at us in class like you did.”

Minrou tapped his chin, “No, he doesn't. But then again, he only has girls to look at in class. Maybe he’s more a woman kind of guy. You know, with actual figures to -urk!”

Kyouka, suddenly tired of Minoru talking, jammed both her ear jacks into his head. “Will you please shut up?”

While Kyouka dealt with Minoru, Ochako and Himiko traded glances with each other before looking back at Izuku. He was cheering along with the crowd and the cheerleaders did their stunts. It was totally innocent, and neither had anything they had to worry about.

“Hey, Ochako,” Himiko whispered, “You’ve never seen Izuku show that kind of interest right?”

Ochako shook her head, “No of course no…” She trailed off when she remembered something.

“What?”
Sheepishly, Ochako twiddled her thumbs, “Well...I did catch him with a magazine once a while ago...”

“A...magazine?”

“Yeah...Do you know who the Wild Wild Pussycats are?”

Himiko tapped her chin, “I think so. Three chicks and a huge guy that dress up like cats in frilly skirts, right?”

Himiko wasn’t super familiar with other heroes beside some of the top ten, but that team had stuck out to her for some reason. Thinking back, she was almost sure she had heard and seen pictures of the team during her stay at U.A. before school had started.

“Well one of them, Pixie-Bob, did some...spreads for the magazine...I actually don’t even know how Deku got it. He said it was for the articles.”

Himiko snorted, not buying that for a second, “She’s the blonde one, right?”

“Yeah. And in her thirties.”

Both girls blinked, before twisting around for Izuku. “Deku!”

“Izuku!”

Izuku turned, surprised at suddenly hearing his name, “Huh?” Noticing the slight looks he was getting from the two blinked a few times, “Is everything alright?”

“You were watching those cheerleaders pretty intently there.”

“Yeah, you’re risking your squeaky-clean image,” warned Himiko.
Izuku’s face went red, and his eyes went wide at the implication, “WHAT!? No! I was just...I was just wondering if they have Quirks that help let them move around like...that...During their routines. That’s all!”

Ochako and Himiko squinted at him, neither looking like they bought a single word that was coming out of his mouth. While he wilted under their combined attack, Ochako decided to show him mercy by changing the subject to something she had noticed earlier, “So Deku, let me ask you something. If you’re done hypothesising, of course,” Izuku nodded vigorously, “Good, so you were mumbling to yourself back after that Monoma guy left. What were you thinking?”

“Oh that? I think he came over here and copied Shinso’s Quirk.”

Hitoshi snapped to attention at that statement, “Wait, what?”

“Kero?”

Tenya leaned forward in his seat, “Midoriya, are you sure?

Izuku scratched his head, “I mean, it’s only a theory, but at the start of your match, Shinso, he tried shaking your hand, right?”

Hitoshi frowned, “Yeah, he tried.”

“Well, maybe he has to touch a person to be able to copy their Quirk. He could have brought his classmates over to be a distraction, act like they were ready to start a fight while he got you to shake his hand to be a good sport. Most everyone else was focused on the other two, so no one was really paying much attention to him then.”

Hitoshi covered his face with his hands, “I don’t believe it. Did I really fall for something so obvious?”

Izuku shrugged, “Like I said, it’s just a theory. But if he thought your Quirk would give him an advantage in his next match...”
“Against Bakugou,” Tsuyu finished as the rest of the group let that sink in.

“Bakugou is about to face an opponent that just has to get him to react to something he says...and he wins,” Tenya said in shock.

Ochako blinked, once. Twice. Then she broke into a laughing fit.

“I don’t know about the rest of you, but I’m ready for another round! And I have a feeling this one is going to be a blast!”

There was an audible groan of pain from Aizawa, which Present Mic shushed.

“First up, you saw him in the opening round, so you know he’s got a flare for being loud and flashy, but that’s nothing next to his bombastic personality. From class 1-A, it's Bakugou Katsuki! Versus -- He’s a young man known for his sharp tongue and devastating repartee, but it’s not his mouth you should be worried about. From Class 1-B, Monoma Neito!”

“You know, I don’t like that Midoriya.” Neito began smirking over at Katsuki before looking up towards the 1-A seats. “He’s such a little know-it-all. And he’s so creepy, talking to himself as he watches people. Voyeurism is a crime you know, and yet he gets to be here to train as a hero. And then there's the stupid innocent act. I mean come on, no one is really like that. But you know what, while he’s an annoying little creep with a horribly gaudy, second-rate Quirk…”

“FIGHT!”

“...At least he’s a threat to me. Unlike you.”

Neito’s grin was ear to ear as he waited, but after a few moments, he realized something had gone wrong. Katsuki hadn’t said a word. His smile dropped, ‘Didn’t you hear me, loudmouth? I said that that worthless Deku was a bigger threat than you are...um…”
Finally, Neito turned back to look at Katsuki and his blood went cold. He knew instantly things hadn’t gone wrong. They were FUBAR’d.

As Katsuki walked towards Neito, his eyes burned with hate. His hands were smoking so much he was enveloped in a thick, black smoke giving him an aura of death and across his temple, Neito could see his veins throbbing. He was also biting his lip to keep his mouth shut.

He’s not talking...so he must know that...oh crap.

Suddenly realizing that his master plan for an easy win hadn’t worked, Neito slammed his palms into the ground, activating his classmate’s Quirk: Softening. The concrete leading to Katsuki, and under him, rippled like jelly. Almost immediately, he started to sink up to his knees, “HA! How do you like that?! Good luck getting out of-”

KABOOM!

A pair of explosions from Katsuki’s palms ripped him free of the ground and launched him into the air, yards above Neito. Twisting in the air, Katsuki pointed his palms backwards, and with another large explosion, launched himself right for Neito. As he rocketed towards Neito, the other boy desperately sucked in a breath of air before blowing out as large of a barrier as he could with Solid Air, that he had borrowed from his classmate. Katsuki slammed into the transparent wall of solidified air, but was able to grab the upper ledge of the wall and glare down at Neito. Looking up at the enraged explosion-made-flesh, Neito began to think that maybe, maybe, he should have copied Shouto’s Quirk instead of Hitoshi’s.

When Katsuki reared back and punched through the barrier and pointed his smoking, sizzling, and crackling palm right at him, Neito knew he had copied the wrong Quirk, and that Katsuki was more clever than he had originally thought. This was also the last thought he had before Katsuki blasted him with enough force to send him flying out of the ring, where he landed like a charbroiled cadaver.

“Shut. The fuck. Up, and fucking die, you fucking annoying copycat piece of shit!”

Midnight; after making sure the charred blond was still alive, which he was; and making sure he wasn’t hurt too bad, which, by U.A. standards, he wasn’t, raised her hand to call the match.

“Monoma Neito is out of bounds! Bakugou Katsuki advanced to the Semi Finals!”
“Alright! Way to go, Bakugou!”

“You show that class B creep who’s boss!”

“Explode him again!”

While Eijirou Denki and Hanta wildly cheered, along with most of the class, Ochako just sat with a brittle smile on her face. Izuku elbowed her gently, giving her a nervous smile. “Come on, Uraraka. We should at least cheer for our class, right?”

“Are you going to cheer for Bakugou?”

Scratching his head, Izuku laughed, “well no...I guess not. But I kinda have a history. You don’t have to be petty like me.”

In the most serious voice she had, Ochako replied quickly, “Deku, when it comes to Bakugou. I choose to be as petty as possible.”

Both looked at each other before huge grins split their faces and they both started giggling.

“You’re a good friend, Uraraka.”

“I’m the best. That’s why I’m your best friend.”

“Midoriya Izuku, Reiko, please report to your waiting rooms.”

“Well I think that’s my cue.”

Tenya reached over and gave Izuku a slap on the back, “I wish you luck, Midoriya. And be careful, you are facing someone with a very similar Quirk to your own.”
Tsuyu nodded, “She probably thinks like you since she has to attack like you do, kero.”

“Just don’t get insta-beat like Kaminari did,” Hitoshi added.

“Hey!”

“You’ll be fine, Izuku. If she gives you trouble, just punch her in the face. Works wonders every time,” Himiko added while punching at the air.

Ochako gave her a side-eye. “Really? You tried six times on me and it didn’t take.”

Himiko waved her off, “Your skull’s too thick, and your brain is made of mochi. Nothing there to hurt.”

“My face?”

“I thought it was an improveme- ack! Hey! Don’t smack me!”

While Ochako and Himiko bickered, Izuku smiled happily. The strange tension from before that always sparked between the two was clearly gone. Whatever had been the issue between them was clearly gone, and the two were acting like good friends at last. And rivals, if the glares the two were giving each other was any indication.

Slipping away, Izuku turned his thoughts to his upcoming opponent.

She was able to just throw Kaminari out of the ring. It didn’t look like she was just pulling him by his clothes. So she must not have the same problem moving people like I do.

Walking down the halls, Izuku’s mumbled to himself, going over possible scenarios and ways that Reiko might use her Quirk differently than himself. So caught up in his own world he didn’t notice someone walking up to him in the hall.
He didn’t notice when they called his name.

BOOM!

He did notice when a small explosion went off a few feet from his face.

“Ahhh!”

Jolted from his thoughts, Izuku looked up and almost gave a startled yelp when he saw Katsuki standing right in front of him. Hands at his sides, still smoking. Old habits started to kick in and Izuku almost found himself apologizing for being in his way, but he fought them down. Calming himself, Izuku simply said, “Oh, hi Kacchan.”

Katsuki’s brow twitched, “Watch where the hell you’re walking, Deku. Walk into me, and I’ll blast you through a wall.”

“Er...right. I’ll keep that in mind. I was just thinking about my upcoming match, is all.”

Katsuki rolled his eyes in disgust, “Of course you were. You have to overthink everything, don’t you?”

Izu just shrugged, “It’s like Uraraka says. It’s just one of my quirks.”

Clicking his tongue against his teeth with a sharp tsk, Katsuki started walking. Izuku should have just let him go, but his mouth just started moving, “During your match, you weren’t talking at all. You must have realized that Monoma had copied Shinso’s Quirk.”

Katsuki stopped but didn’t turn around to look at Izuku. “Of course I fucking did. You’d have to be an idiot not to put it together. The bastard tried getting it in his first match with the _good sport_ bullshit. Doing the same thing again was stupid.”

“Yeah...I figured you would notice something like that.”
Not thinking anything needed to be said, Izuku was about to continue on his way, but was surprised when Katuski called out. “Deku. Don’t you fucking dare lose to that class-B extra.”

Izuku almost tripped over his own feet, even though he had been standing still. Whirling around, Izuku looked and saw that Katsuki was still facing away from him, “Kacchan?”

“I want the privilege of reminding you where you stand, Deku, and I want to do it in front of everyone. I’m going to show the world that you’re nothing more than a stepping stone on my path to greatness. So you better win, Deku. Cause if you don’t,” Katsuki’s hands popped and smoked, sizzling and cracking. Explosions barely contained, mirroring Katsuki himself. “If you don’t, then I’ll come find you after I win the Sports Festival and beat it into then. And trust me, you want the tournament's rules to keep me from destroying you.”

Katsuki stormed off after that, not waiting for Izuku to respond, and not caring if he had even wanted to. He had said his piece, and didn’t care for anything else. Izuku watched Katsuki go until he turned a corner and disappeared. Taking a deep breath, Izuku went his own way.

One way or another, I guess it ends today.

“Yo! Midoriya! You...are not here.”

Class 1-A turned, startled at the sudden yell, to find Mei Hatsumi standing at the entrance to their section looking over everyone.

“Where did Midoriya go?”

“He already left for his match some time ago,” Tenya answered. “May I ask why you are up here? The support class’ section is still a ways off, if you are lost.”

“Oh, he already left. Drat. And I came all the way over here to wish him luck.”

Mei crossed her arms, looking disappointed, before shrugging and finding an empty seat to sit down in. Which just happened to be Izuku’s seat.
“Er, Hatsume. What are you doing?” Ochako asked.

“Well I know Midoriya will come back here after his match. So I might as well stay and cheer him on here. If he loses, then I can tell him ‘better luck next time.’ If he wins, then I can congratulate him and I’ll get my chance to wish him luck on his next match.”

Ochako was about to point to a few other open seats she could sit in, but ultimately decided that making Mei do anything was not worth the headache. Hitoshi looked at Himiko, to Ochako, to Mei. Feeling a headache start to come on, he rubbed his brow. “And then there were three.”

A sudden chill made him forget his headache as he looked up to see both Himiko and Ochako glaring at him. Desperate to get their attention off him, and to prevent any untimely floating and or stabbing, Hitoshi turned to Mei. “SO, Hatsume. It’s sure nice of you to come up here, considering Midoriya beat you in the first round.”

“Oh that? Honestly I’d already forgotten about that.”

“Wasn’t that match only about an hour ago?” Mina asked.

“Yeah, that’s a long time ago. Besides even if I lost, it’s thanks to Midoriya’s advice I was able to put on such a good showing for all the support companies. Probably an even better one than if Midoriya had fallen for my trap...I mean agreed to my idea!”

“Trap?”

“Idea?”

“Like I said, ancient history. But thanks to his advice that I go all out, Power-Loader-sensei says a lot of companies expressed interest in my babies. Midoriya really saved me from making a horrible mistake. He’s a good friend. That also got me thinking. He might have even more good ideas, so maybe I should hang out with him more. Besides all the time we spend making babies together.”

Minoru fell out of his chair and landed with a thud.
Ochako groaned loudly. “Inventions! She’s helping Izuku make support gear for his costume, and she calls all the stuff she makes her babies!”

Mei, completely oblivious to the looks she was getting, turned to Ochako and asked, “Hey, you wouldn’t happen to have Midoriya’s number, would you? Or know if he’s a part of any chat rooms or something?”

Ochako, Himiko, Tenya, Tsuyu, and Hitoshi all glanced at each other before a silent consensus was reached. Tsuyu pulled out her phone. “Here let me get you signed up.”

“Oh, you guys have your own chat room. That’s cool!”

Hitoshi leaned back, “And now the sextuplets are...what comes after six?”

“Septuplets,” Tenya answered. “We are definitely growing as a group.”

Hitoshi shrugged, “Well, she fits his MO. He helped her, and now she becomes one of us.”

Himiko looked over at Mei, “So we have a mad genius now. Think you could make something to shut him up?” she asked, pointing over at Katsuki who just sneered at her.

Mei looked over at him, “Why? Is he loud?”

Eijirou, Hanta and Denki burst out laughing while Katuski rounded on them, threatening them with all kinds of bodily harm.

“Alright! After 3 incredible matches, it’s time for our last Quarter-Finals match! And these two fighters, they give new meaning to ‘it’s the thought that counts!’” First up, don’t let that cold shiver fool you, listeners; there’s nothing paranormal about this young lady, though she isn’t going to give her opponent a ghost of a chance. From class 1-B, it’s Yanagi Reiko! Versus -- Giving new meaning to ‘glow up.’ This crazy kid has some tricks that will make you green with envy. From
class 1-A, Midoriya Izuku! Now, let's get this match star-

“Hold it.”

Aizawa cut Present Mic off as he leaned forward watching the two students, “it looks like Yanagi is waving Midnight and Midoriya over.”

“EH? Hey what's going on? Is she forfeiting?”

A brief crackle of static came through their speakers before the home room teacher of 1-B spoke up through the comms, “No. Yanagi is not the kind of student to just give up. So don’t go saying such nonsense over a live broadcast!”

Present mic gulped, “Er...Sorry Vlad King. ANYWAY, that was class 1-B’s homeroom teacher folks. If he says there's something else going on, we’ll just have to wait and see what our judge has to say!”

Izuku frowned as Reiko started calling for Midnight and waving her over before she did the same to him. Quickly walking over to her, he met Reiko at the center of the rings edge, closest to the judge’s podium.

I hope nothing is wrong.

Midnight arrived at the same time Izuku had, “Yanagi, is everything alright?”

Reiko bowed, “Yes Midnight-sensei. I am perfectly alright. There was just something I wanted to discuss with both of you before our match officially began. Or more accurately, I wish to offer an additional challenge to Midoriya and to get your consent, Sensei.”

Izuku blinked, not following her at all, “A-an added challenge? What do you mean?”

Midnight arched an eyebrow but motioned for Reiko to proceed. Given permission, Reiko turned to
face Izuku fully, and Izuku finally saw, even if her face was neutral, there was determination burning behind her eyes, “Midoriya, our Quirks are very similar. Wouldn’t you agree.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah. I would.” Izuku paused before adding with a grin, “They even both start with ‘P.’”

Midnight groaned, *loudly.*

“I’m glad you agree. However while our Quirks are similar, I wish to find out how different they are. I want to know which is stronger. Your Psychokinesis or my Poltergeist.”

Izuku frowned, “Do you not think we can with our match?”

“We could, however in your first match, you showed that you were capable of attacking without it. And if Toga’s display of your...physique,” Izuku hid his face behind his hands, while Midnight chuckled, “and the power she displayed while using it is accurate, you have something to fall back on if you need something other than your Quirk. I...do not have that kind of safety net, Which brings me back to my challenge. Midoriya, for our match today, I formally challenge you to a duel. Our weapons will be only our Quirks.”

Izuku blinked, surprised by the challenge, “You want to have a Quirk-only match?”

“That is correct. We will only use our Quirk to attack and defend ourselves. If we break this agreement and attack physically, that person loses. If Midnight-sensei allows us to make such an agreement, that is.”

Midnight smiled wickedly, “This kind of competitive spirit really gets my blood pumping. If Midoriya wants to agree to these terms, I will allow it.”

Izuku rubbed his chin as he thought about it. On one hand, he had complete faith in his Quirk, something that he would have laughed at a year ago. He knew he could fight with it now. On the other hand, agreeing to this duel would limit him. He had trained his body as well and to intentionally hold himself back in a match that had huge implications for his future was risky. But the more he thought about it, the more he was tempted. Very quickly it was a temptation he couldn’t ignore anymore. “Okay. I agree to your terms. We’ll have a Quirk-only match.”
Reiko bowed, “Thank you.”

Midnight clapped her hands, “Excellent! Excellent! You two know how to make things interesting! Now back to you places, I’ll make sure everyone knows what is going on.”

While Izuku and Reiko turned and walked away, Midnight cracked her whip and raised her hand up, getting the attention of the stadium crowd, “Everyone! After consulting with the two contestants, they have agreed to a stipulation for their match!”

The crowd went silent as they listened, very curious at what was going on.

“In this match, both fighters will only be allowed to use their Quirks to win. There will be no physical contact between the two. If either breaks this rule, they will automatically lose the match. These rules were agreed upon by both Midoriya and Yanagi, and I will allow it. Present Mic, when you are ready. Start the match!”

Up in the announcers booth, Present Mic scratched his goatee, “Um, is that allowed?”

Aizawa shrugged, “She’s the judge, So it’s her call. Unless you want to go down there and argue with her.”

“Yeah I’d rather not…” Tapping his headset, Present Mic went back to broadcasting, “Did you hear all that, loyal listeners!? This match just took a turn for the interesting! Quirks only! This is gonna be interesting! Looks like both fighters are back in their places, so let’s get this match going! FIGHT!”

The fight was on, and Izuku reached out with his mind, grabbing the back of Reiko’s top. As he started to pull however, a force slammed into him, shoving him back even as he dug his heels into the ground to try and stop himself from. From the crowd's perspective, it looked like both fighters suddenly just flew backwards. Grunting, Izuku turned his Quirk on himself and shoved his own body back against Reiko’s telekinetic attack. At the same time, Reiko yanked herself back against Izuku’s pull and both abruptly came to a stop.

Izuku could feel the strain at having another force push back against his Quirk, not only on himself, but on Reiko, too. While the match had only just started, Izuku had learned something.
While he was having to push and pull through their clothes because of his limited ability to affect people directly, Reiko was applying her Quirk to his whole body.

*Her Poltergeist can be used on people directly.*

Watching her closely, Izuku saw her glance back at her pulled clothes then back at him.

*What are the odds she just figured out that I-!*

Izuku’s thoughts were interrupted when suddenly he wasn’t getting pushed back anymore, but shoved to the side. Not expecting the change, Izuku tumbled over and hit the ground, breaking his own concentration and freeing Reiko. Again, Reiko started pushing Izuku towards the edge of the ring, but Izuku wasn’t about to let himself get beaten by a ring-out. Reaching out, Izuku focused on Reiko’s shoes and yanked them right out from under her.

“ACK!”

Landing on her back, Reiko’s concentration on Izuku wavered and he came to a stop. Scrambling to his feet, Izuku gasped as Reiko yanked him back down and started to push him into the concrete. Grunting, Izuku kept his arms locked to keep himself from getting pushed down flat. It felt like there was another person sitting on him. Fortunately, he was used to this. All Might had made him do pushups with him sitting on his back multiple times. What he wasn’t used to was his arms getting pulled out from under him, making him faceplant.

*Okay, ow!*

Swinging his hand out, Izuku focused outside the ring to the field of grass that surrounded them and started ripping large chunks of dirt out of the ground. The dirt clods slammed into Reiko, knocking her back. Pushing himself up, Izuku pulled more dirt out of the ground and fired it at her. Each hit made her stumble back, closer and closer to the edge. Reiko gasped and grunted, keeping her arms held up to try and protect herself, but Izuku just made the clods arc around to slam into her side. She tried to grab the projectiles out from his Quirk’s hold, but Izuku’s hold on them was too strong for her to break. She couldn’t rip them free or stop them from coming at her as every time she pushed back on one; he just overpowered her.

Getting forced to step back again, Reiko looked back and saw she was only a few feet away from the edge. If she didn’t do something soon, the match would be over for her. Desperate times call
for desperate measures. Dropping her defenses, and stopping to try and halt the projectiles, Reiko focused solely on Izuku. She took a few more hits, but once she had grabbed Izuku with her Quirk, she put everything she had into it and forced him up into the air. Suddenly airborne, Izuku’s assault stopped, and Reiko shoved as hard as she could.

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**Whoa whoa WHOA!?**

Izuku reeled as he suddenly found himself off the ground and flying backwards. Dropping all the clumps of dirt he had been throwing, Izuku focused on himself. His gym clothes glowed brightly as he pulled himself against Reiko’s Quirk. He started to come to a stop, hovering over the ground, then he heard the ripping sound. His gym top was starting to rip at the seams. It was at that moment Izuku realized that Reiko had realized his Quirks limits and was using it against him. She had grabbed his body, not his clothing. So when he pulled himself back, using his clothes, the fabric would start to tear. If he pulled too hard, it would rip for sure, leaving him helpless and embarrassed.

**Oh crud. This isn’t good**

Grunting, Izuku extended his Quirk out to grab Reiko, but splitting his concentration while Reiko was putting so much force into moving him made him quickly realize that by the time he could push her out of the ring, it would be too late for him. So he quickly changed tactics and brought his power back in, holding onto himself like he had when he had flown around the stadium under the effects of Ochako’s Quirk. Then he pushed back. The combo of an outside force *and* trying to use his Quirk on himself made it extremely hard to keep hold, but he was able to do it. If only just. The biggest problem was that this was not a solution, but a delaying tactic. While he wasn’t sure how long Reiko would be able to keep applying this much force against him, he could see in her face that she was pushing herself hard; he knew that he would only be able to hold this for a few seconds.

Those few seconds would have to be enough.

As Izuku hung in the air, feeling the pressure from Reiko’s Quirk something struck him as very familiar. While not as extreme, the feeling of having something intangible pressing against his own Quirk reminded him of his first match against Mei and her invention that had almost neutralized his Quirk.

*I beat Mei by overpowering her invention, even though there wasn’t anything physically there...Can I do the same against Yanagi?*
Feeling his hold on himself wave briefly, Izuku decided he didn’t have much of a choice. Closing his eyes, Izuku let himself focus on the feeling of the force acting on him. In his mind, he was standing in front of a giant brick wall that was moving against him, pushing him closer and closer to a ledge. Visualizing his hands pressed against it, Izuku recalled the feeling when he pushed against Mei’s invention, and pushed back. At first, his hands passed through. He brought them back and tried again. He tried again, and again, all the while, he was moved closer and closer to the ledge and the vast chasm below. His heels crested the lip of the ledge, and he knew he had to get it now. With his hands pressed flat, Izuku took a deep breath and pushed.

His hands didn’t pass through, and the encroaching wall shuddered against him.

_GOT IT!_

Izuku opened his eyes and pressed his Quirk against Reiko’s, his body glowing green as his aura grew brighter and brighter. He pressed back, his aura expanding off his body as he felt Reiko’s hold on him lessen until he had pushed off himself completely. Catching himself by his clothes, he lowered himself gently back to the ground, while keeping the pressure against Reiko. Feet now back on solid ground, and still inside the ring, Izuku could focus fully on pushing Reiko back. Reiko’s eyes widened as she felt her Quirk pushed back, but gritting her teeth and raising her hands up towards Izuku, she dug her feet in and pushed back.

For many in the crowd, it looked like Izuku and Reiko were just standing on opposite ends of the ring. They couldn’t see the raging war of wills as Psychokinesis and Poltergeist slammed against each other like two giant waves. Reiko’s Quirk had no visual cues to give anything away, but Izuku’s green glow told the story. Slowly, his aura expanded forward. A wall of ethereal green light that was inching closer and closer to Reiko. As his green glow expanded out, Izuku took a step forward, applying even more power into his Quirk. Soon inches became feet as Izuku pressed against Reiko, and he wasn’t just taking single steps anymore, but was walking right up to her.

Sweat beaded on Reiko’s brow as her face twisted at the strain she was put under trying to keep Izuku back. Soon she could feel Izuku’s Quirk was right up against her, but she kept pushing. She had wanted this kind of fight, and for better or worse, she was going to go through with it until the very end.

Then, the green glow pressed her Quirk fully back and up against her body. Immediately, the force behind it slammed into her and flung her up and out of the ring. Reiko was thrown yards away, landing in the grass, she kept skidding until she finally came to a stop.

_“Yanagi!”_
Shocked, Izuku chased after her. He hadn’t meant to hit her like that. When he made it over to her, she had rolled to her side and was now sitting.

“Are you alright?”

Reiko nodded with a sigh, “Yes, though this isn’t how I expected this to end.”

Izuku bent down, offering his hand to her, “Can you stand? You landed pretty hard.”

Taking his hand, Reiko was pulled back to her feet. Taking a chance to brush off the clumps of grass stuck to herself, Reiko looked over at Izuku, her normal neutral expression was back, “I suppose the day is yours, Midoriya.”

“You almost had me, though.”

“Maybe. It’s clear your Quirk is very powerful. I’ll have to make sure to train myself hard so that next time, I’ll win.”

Izuku smiled brightly. “I look forward to it.”

Midnight, after seeing that Reiko was uninjured raised her hand up, signaling the end of the match, “Yanagi Reiko is out of bounds. Midoriya Izuku advances to the Semi Finals!”

The bright lights and constant noise of the city betrayed the dark night sky and the late hour of the night. While cars honked and people scurried about in the street bellow, they all passed by an unimpressive office building. The building looked like any other. Tall and made of steel, concrete and glass. No one paid it any mind or noticed the single light in a window high above. A light coming from a single office, illuminated by a desk lamp. A plain-looking man sat at the illuminated desk, looking through stacks of paper and jotting down notes onto them and sometimes into his computer. Nothing about this man was extraordinary. The very definition of a plain-looking business man. His dark, charcoal-gray suit was crisp and clean even while worn. His dark green hair, parted and slicked back. This plain-looking man was clearly someone who put a lot of effort into making sure he looked his best whenever possible.
Looking over another paper, with names and faces of strange-looking people, the man sighed, took out a red pen, and proceeded to cross out name after name before writing at the bottom not/special. Taking the paper, he put it into a tan folder and placed it onto a large stack of folders. Before he reached for a new paper from another stack, he pulled from his pocket a small pack of cigarettes and plucked one from the box. Without bothering to reach for a lighter, the man put the cigarette into his mouth and inhaled. A soft glow came from the end of the cigarette as it was lit. Leaning back, the man exhaled slowly, letting the smoke drift up to the ceiling.

The man’s tranquility was soon interrupted as his cell phone started ringing. Sighing, The man took another long drag, before reaching for his phone, pausing briefly when he saw the name flashing on the screen, “What could she want?”

With a flick of his thumb, the man answered the phone and brought it up to his ear, “Miss Kizuki. What do I owe the honor of your call?”

There was a soft chuckle on the other end of the line, “As stiff as always. Still the perfect little business man I see, Midoriya.”

Hisashi frowned, but kept his voice calm and polite. He was talking to a superior after all, “Yes, ma’am. If I may, if this is about my next report, I will have it ready by the end of the week. As scheduled.”

“Oh, I’m sure. If you are anything, Midoriya, it’s punctual.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

“But not honest it would seem.”

Hisashi went stiff, “Ma’am? I don’t understand.”

“You haven’t been watching the U.A Sports Festival, have you?”

Frowning, Hisashi’s mind raced, “I...no ma’am I haven’t. Why?”
“I suggest turning it on. I know the time change is a little rough, but you should be able to find a live broadcast.”

Hisashi’s hand flew to his computer, and after a few quick searches, he was able to find a live stream of the event, “I have it open now, ma’am. What did you want me to...to…”

Trailing off, Hisashi found himself unable to speak as he watched as two announcers he recognized as Present Mic and Eraser Head talked over a highlight reel. A highlight reel of his son. Both were talking about Izuku and the impressive skills he had displayed to reach the Semi-Finals of the Sports Tournament. Clips from the first two events flashed on the screen. When he saw his son fly, he almost dropped his phone. Inko had said he had gotten into the hero course. She had said he had trained for his whole last year of junior high, but he had assumed that U.A.’s standards had simply dropped. There was no one that the little, timid boy he had left in Japan could be the same one he was watching now.

But it was. They were one in the same.

“So, Midoriya. When were you planning on telling us you had such a powerful son?”

Chitose’s voice snapped him back to reality.

“Imagine our surprise when suddenly this young man, with your name, popped up on our screens. He’s not only gotten first place in the first two events, but is now on his way to the semi-finals. He’s very close to winning the whole day. Now, I know you’ve mentioned you had a wife and son some time ago, but why hide this? It makes one wonder what else you might be hiding.”

“It’s not like that at all! Izuku...my son, never showed this kind of potential before. I’ve never seen him do anything like this! I would never hide this from-”

Chitose laughed. “Oh so this is what it takes to break you out of your shell. Calm down, Midoriya. We know you’re too straight-laced to try and pull a stunt like this. Still, I think it would be in everyone’s best interest if you keep us up to date on your son’s progress. After all, that is your job. Someone with this kind of potential could be very beneficial to our cause, if given the right kind of direction.”

“Yes...yes I understand, ma’am.”
“Good. Good. Now while I’m sure you’re working hard as usual, why don’t you take a little time and watch the rest of the event? As the boy’s father, I’m sure you’re very interested in how he does going forward, just like we are.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“I’m glad. Now, I have some other business to take care of, so I’ll let you go. Some of my contacts have let me know of a potential story brewing. Your son isn’t the only surprise to come out of U.A’s little show. Goodbye.”

With a click, Chitose hung up and Hisashi put his phone down, carefully. Taking another long drag of his cigarette, Hisashi exhaled sharply before slamming his fist into his desk in a rage.

*That bitch! How dare she keep this a secret from me! Did she think it would be funny to find out that her bra...that our son has gotten so strong? Did she think just saying that Izuku got into U.A. would be enough? Was this her plan all along, for my own son to humiliate me to my superiors...No...no that worthless sow isn’t smart enough to try something like that. I’m giving her too much credit. She knows I’m the only reason she has a roof over her head and food on her table. She would never think of going against me. Perhaps I’ve been gone too long. If her mind has gone the same way as her body, it’s no wonder she didn’t think to let me know about the boy’s progress.*

Taking the butt of his cigarette, Hisashi ground it into his ashtray, before pulling out a new one and leaned back into his seat. There would be time later to figure out a way to deal with Inko and her failures. For now, he had a chance to do something he never thought he’d be able to do. To watch his son compete and, perhaps, even feel proud of him.

Frowning, Izuku tugged at the slightly-frayed seams of his gym clothes. While there was no fear that they were about to fall apart(U.A. made very durable clothing for obvious reasons), it was still a stark reminder to Izuku of the limitations he still had. His limited ability to hold an actual person came close to costing him his match. Granted, he had come away from the match with a new skill in his arsenal that his mind was already racing to think up new uses for, but not being able to grab onto people was something he needed to work on. He couldn't afford to rely on grabbing clothing forever, highlighting the issue as he pulled at some of the loose threads.

Still, as Izuku walked out of the hallway and into the 1-A seating section, he knew he had other
things to worry about. Katsuki, upon seeing him, turned away, making sure his attention was on anything but Izuku. That task was made a little harder as Denki and Eijirou ribbed him about his next match. Izuku could tell by a few anxious glances that some of his classmates had expected a more exciting reaction between himself and Katsuki when he returned. Tenya had already been on his feet, probably with a speech about example-setting ready to guilt them into behaving. Izuku, though, wasn’t that surprised at Katsuki’s controlled response. He had said his piece to him in the hall. Now, all he was doing was making sure he was ready for his match by ignoring all the distraction he could, though Denki and Eijirou were making that rather hard at the moment.

Deciding not to tempt fate, Izuku made his way to his seat, but almost tripped when he saw Mei waving at him. “Hatsume?”

“Great job out there, Midoriya! Oh, I’m a member of your gang-”

“Squad,” Tsuyu corrected.

“-Your squad now.”

Izuku blinked. While he wasn’t upset by any means that his group of friends was still expanding, and he did enjoy his time with Mei going over inventions or talking about support gear of other heroes, he was still left a little shocked at how this happened. Glancing over at the rest, it was Hitoshi that saw his confusion and came to the rescue with an explanation.

“She said you really helped her out when you convinced her to go all-out during your match.”

Izuku groaned, “Don’t say it like that.”

“If the shoe fits…”

Ignoring the sarcastic smirk Hitoshi was giving him, Izuku turned back to Mei with a smile. “Welcome to the group. We’ll have to make sure to get you a name tag. It’s cool we have a mechanic now. Maybe you can give Iida a tune-up some time.”

Himiko snorted while Tsuyu croaked happily. Tenya crossed his arms. “I don’t see what’s so funny.”
Hitoshi leaned over, looking at Tenya hard, “Wait… can you actually get a tune up with your Quirk?”

Mei’s eyes lit up as she turned to examine Tenya hungerly. “What exactly do you have under the hood? Do those calves open up? Do you have room for mods? Oh, I could give you a turbocharger!”

Tenya gulped and pulled his legs back. before getting up and putting another seat between himself and Mei. While this went on, Izuku finally looked around and noticed that their group was missing someone.

“Where’s Uraraka?”

“She got called to the waiting room before you got back, kero.”

Izuku’s shoulder sagged as he looked a little crestfallen, “Oh...I wanted to wish her good luck. Maybe if I hurry I can-”

Bop!

Himiko snickered as Tsuyu stood up and lightly bopped Izuku on the head, “Uraraka said that if you started acting sad because you missed her and weren’t focused on your own upcoming match, I was supposed to do that. She knows that you’re wishing her well, kero.”

“O-oh.” Izuku nodded before taking a seat, “I guess she knows me pretty well.”

“Oh, she does,” Himiko said before reaching out and grabbing Izuku’s chin, turning him to face her and lifting his head up as she peered intently at his face.

“Um! Toga!? Wha-”

“Checking for nose bleeds. She asked me to make sure you didn’t over do it, or if you did, that you
didn’t try and be slick and hide it.”

“I guess she knows you pretty well,” Hitoshi mimicked Izuku, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

After finishing her check, Himiko confirmed that Izuku was fine. “She also said you looked pretty cool out there, even if you were acting like a dense moron taking up that challenge.”

Izuku smiled, liking the idea that he looked cool, ‘Well maybe it was, but it was a good chance to stand out. Plus, I just can’t go running away from challenges if I want to be a hero.’

The group started chuckling, making Izuku look at them all confused before he sighed. “Alright, who guessed I’d say that?”

“We all did, in fact,” Tenya answered.

“Wait, all of you?” Izuku glanced over at Mei, and Tsuyu nodded in affirmative. Mei shrugged, “Your little speech to me kinda made it obvious.”

“You're a pretty open book, Izuku.” Himiko added, twisting the knife into Izuku’s pride.

“Hey! How do you know that I’m not hiding some dark secret or something!”

More snickers, this time from the rest of the class. Himiko leaned over and gave Izuku a leveled and serious look, though her bemused grin threatened to undo her act. “Do you have some kind of dark secret, Izuku?”

Izuku opened his mouth, then shut it with a snap, realizing that technically he did have a secret he was keeping away from everyone. All Might and One for All.

Oh...I did not think this through at all. Did I?

Fortunately for Izuku, before he had a chance to stumble through an on-the-spot story, Present Mic’s voice boomed out of the loudspeakers as he started getting everyone ready for the next
match. With the first Semi-Finals match about to begin, everyone's attention was taken off Izuku, and he sighed in relief.

With his match about to start, Shouto left his waiting room and made his way towards the field. Most of the time he had sat waiting, he had been going over who he would potentially be facing in the finals. Katsuki’s sheer destructive power and surprising mobility would be tough to counter in the open. In their last encounter, Shouto had used the narrow halls of the building they were in to his advantage to trap Katsuki and keep him from using his Quirk. In the open field, he would have to work to push him out of the ring. Trapping him might not be possible. Izuku was also tricky, but for different reasons. He didn’t have the same kind of raw power or mobility Katsuki had, but Izuku’s Quirk could potentially turn his own ice against him, as he had done in the capture-the-flag event. Midoriya was skilled, but his weight limit was the key. If he created enough ice, he could over power his Quirk and either trap him or push him out. All in all, while they both were strong, he was just that much stronger. Still, Shouto kept thinking over their conversation from earlier. While he may have been wrong thinking that Izuku had been All Might's secret child, Izuku had all but confirmed there was a connection. With Izuku’s obvious professional training continuing to shine, Shouto found himself wondering if maybe the story that he was trained by some scout from All Might's agency was just a cover, and that it had been All Might himself that had scouted and trained Izuku.

As he walked, Shouto’s mind wandered from the finals to his next fight with Ochako. Ochako had demonstrated in her matches that she was a tough and driven fighter, and her Quirk was an instant loss to whoever she was able to touch. But even still, Shouto was not concerned in the slightest. Izuku and Katsuki were both capable fighters as well, but they had range. Ochako did not. She had to get close to her opponent to use her Quirk, and Shouto was not going to let her get close. As far as Shouto was concerned, this would be a quick and simple match, which is why so much of his waiting time had been spent thinking about what came after. Perhaps it wasn’t fair to overlook Ochako in such a way. She was here to become a hero and had fought hard to reach the Semi Finals. Of that, Shouto had no doubts. However, the world was not fair, and Shouto would not show Ochako any mercy, especially when she had such an obvious weakness.

Turning a corner, Shouto paused briefly. His eyes narrowing and hands clenched into fists. His father, Endeavor, stood tall in the hallway, looking down at him in annoyance. Shouto however didn’t let the giant hero intimate him, “Why are you here?”

Endeavor frowned, “Do you plan on continuing this disgraceful performance?”

Shouto ignored the question and moved to walk around his father, “I have a match to get to. I don’t have time to talk with you.”
“You know, if you had used your real power, the power you hold in your left side, you would have dominated those opening events. Instead, you let someone else take that glory for himself. Do not forget, it is your duty as my son to surpass All Might. You won’t be able to do that if you continue this childish rebellion. All you are doing is throwing your potential away. Potential that I gave you.”

Shouto walked past, teeth grinding as he tried to keep himself under control.

“You’re different from your classmates, Shouto. You are a masterpiece, while they are just like everyone else. While they fight for mediocrity, you will achieve true greatness. Don’t forget that.”

“Are you done? I told you. I will never use your power. I will achieve greatness using only the power Mom gave me.” As Shouto seethed, he refused to look back at his father.

Endeavor sighed, “That may work for now, but what will you do when you reach the limits of that power?”

Shouto didn’t answer as he walked away. Too angry to trust himself to speak. Refusing to even consider the possibility of his father’s words.

*I’ll show you; my right side is more than enough.*

“And here we are, folks! After some spectacular matches in the Quarter-Finals, it’s time for the Semi-Finals! We have four contestants ready to fight tooth-and-nail for a shot at the finals. Now, let’s get our fighters out here! In her first match, she slipped and slid to victory over Ashido Mina with a ring-out. Then, her taste for finger food let her get the drop on Toga Himiko, forcing a concession in a truly gladiatorial battle. She laughs at Sir Isaac Newton’s apple because no force is holding her down. From Class 1-A, Uraraka Ochako! Versus-- I don’t know what’s colder, his personality or his Quirk. With two decisive and frosty elimination victories in the first two rounds against Representative and Vice Representative Iida Tenya and Yaoyorozu Momo, he’s on a real cold streak. From Class 1-A, Todoroki Shouto!”

While the crowds cheered, Ochako felt a shiver run up her spine. When she and Shouto had left the student section, the other boy had seemed like his normal, cold self. Now though, there was more raw emotion swirling in his eyes than she had ever seen. Even during the USJ attack he had been able to keep calm. Now though? Now not so much.
What the heck happened in the last few minutes that set him off? He wasn’t like this during his other matches.

Shaking her head, Ochako crouched into her fighting stance. There would be time to wonder about things like that after the match. Now she had to focus. Shouto clearly wasn’t completely himself; whether or not she could use this to her advantage remained to be seen.

The last two matches, and even in the other events, Todoroki has used his ice for easy wins. If I can avoid his first strike, maybe I can surprise him and get in close.

Out of the corner of her eye, Ochako saw Midnight raise her whip up. Holding it in the air for a brief second before dropping it with a crack. At the same time Present Mic called out, “FIGHT!”

The signal was given, and immediately after, the ground shook as a tidal wave of solid ice ripped through the air and froze everything in front of him. The ice built up larger and larger and reached out higher and higher, until it arked over the crowd and crested through the giant opening in the stadium roof. Even after that the ice kept forming and growing until its size dwarfed everything below it, casting a giant shadow and leaving everyone staring in stunned silence.

Cracking the ice under his boot with a snap, Shouto freed his foot and let out a long, shuddering, breath. His breath came out as a bright mist, and the moisture in it froze on his lips. Shouto’s body was covered in frost, but he fought back the urge to shiver, instead settling on giving his arms and body a good shake to remove the offending ice.

“Sorry, Uraraka. I’ll have you out of there in...no...time?”

Shouto trailed off. He had expected Ochako’s body to still be in front of him, frozen into the giant ice wave he had created. However, to his rising dread, she wasn’t. Dread gave way to horror as a sickening thought crossed his mind. Uraraka isn’t in there, is she? I only meant to...I couldn’t have lost control that badly!?

Panic drove him to rush forward, but after an attack like that, his body was sluggish and slow to move. He only made it a few steps before the screams of the crowd reached him.
“Welp, Round Face is fucking dead.”

“Holy crap, look at all that ice!”

“Forget the ice, someone save Uraraka!”

“Maybe it’s not so bad. She might just be cryogenically frozen.”

“How is that fair!? How can one guy do that!?"

While most of 1-A freaked out over the sheer power that Shouto had just displayed, or over the fact they couldn’t see Ochako anymore, Himiko had her eyes squarely on Izuku. She, and the rest of his friends, had been ready to make sure he wasn’t too freaked out, and to reassure him that Ochako was, probably, just fine.

“Midoriya,” Tenya’s arms were a blur and he spoke, “You must remain calm! I’m sure the teachers will have Uraraka freed very soon.”

“Yeah, what Iida said, I’m sure she’s just fine.”

“It’s probably not as bad as it looks, kero.”

“Guys, hold on a second.” Himiko cut them off as she watched Izuku closely. Izuku wasn’t acting like she expected someone who had just watched his best friend get frozen inside a giant glacier to act. He wasn’t freaked out or panicking. He was quiet. And not a state-of-shock kind of way. He was perfectly calm and looking skyward. More than that—in fact, he was smiling. Soon, Mei caught on. Looking up, Mei blinked before sitting back down. “Hopefully heights aren’t an issue for her.”

“Wait, huh?”

Izuku’s smile started to get bigger, turning into a wide grin as he pointed up. Himiko followed Izuku’s line of sight, up the side of the large glacier on the other side of the stadium. Higher and higher until she saw exactly what Izuku saw.
“Holy. Fucking. Shit.”

“Yep,” Izuku agreed.

“Are you kidding me!?”

“It’s pretty cool, though. Isn’t it?”

“Okay, that...that might just be the most kick ass thing I’ve seen today.”

Hitoshi and Tenya exchanged confused looks while Tsuyu squinted upward, ribbiting in surprise. “Um, would either of you like to explain?”

The rest of the class saw that Izuku was pointing up and searched the sky above the huge glacier. Soon their panic and shock turned into utter surprise and excitement. Above the ice, almost just a speck in comparison, floated Ochako—completely untouched by Shouto’s attack.

Katsuki exploded out of his seat. “HE FUCKING MISSED!!!”

“How do you miss with an attack like that!?”

“Uraraka is scary!”

“Look how high up she is!”

“I wonder how she’s going to get down?” Mei shrugged when people looked over at her, “I mean, she can’t fight from up there, right?”
“Incredible! Uraraka has somehow managed to avoid that icy onslaught! I wonder how she pulled that off?”

Even from so high up, Present Mic’s voice carried up, and Ochako was able to hear every word.

*With a whole lot of luck, sensei.*

When the match had started, she had a feeling Shouto was going to open with something big. When she had felt the ground under her feet shake and crack, Ochako instincts screamed at her to *get away*, so she had floated herself and kicked up just as the rush of cold air from the attack hit. The force from the wave of ice pushed so much air that Ochako was carried higher and higher until she was floating up where she was now.

The roar of the crowd below helped her refocus as she collected herself. Looking down, she saw the giant screens were split, half had herself floating in them, while the others were focused on Shouto. Ochako watched those screens carefully, getting a read on how her opponent was doing after such an overwhelming attack.

*He’s breathing so hard, and there’s frost all over him...and is it just my imagination, or does he look cold.*

The more Ochako looked at Shouto through the screen, another thought crossed her mind.

*He looks really worried. I wonder...if he pushed himself too far to make all this ice. His Quirk has to have a draw back or a limit of some kind.*

Carefully, so not to spin out of control, Ochako bent forward and flipped herself upside down so that her hands touched the ice and she was able to grab a hold of a ledge. With a firm grip, Ochako pulled herself down so that her chest and stomach was parallel to the glacier.

*Well, let’s see what else Todoroki has got!*

Ochako stretched herself out before launching herself forward, the muscles in her arms burning as she threw herself as hard as she could down the glacier like a toboggan. Ochako *flew* down the ice, as she kept herself a few inches from the surface. She could hear the crowd around her cheer in surprise, but she ignored them as best as she could, keeping her focus on Shouto, who seemed at a
loss at what to do next. The best that Ochako could recall, every fight Todoroki has been in----, from the hero classes, the villain fights at the USJ, and all the matches today-- Shouto had always won instantly with his ice. This might be the first time someone had been able to dodge it. So that, and Ochako’s theory that Shouto had pushed himself to his limit with his last attack, made her think that Shouto didn’t know what to do next. The speed of her return was probably not helping much either.

Finally, Shouto made up his mind and started backpedaling, giving himself some space from the base of the glacier. Room, so that when Ochako landed, she wouldn’t be able to attack him. Shouto knew he was in trouble, and cursed himself for letting his father get into his head. Cursed himself for being stupid enough to push himself so hard in a single attack that he was now at the point where his body wouldn’t be able to take much more cold.

*Much more*, he thought grimly. His body could still take a little more. He still had enough fight left to easily end this match. Once Ochako landed, he would snap freeze her in place, like he should have done from the start, and end it.

Shouto’s eyes followed Ochako’s descending form closely.

*Considering she only used her arms to fling herself down, she’s flying back rather quickly...*

That thought made Shouto’s stomach twist nervously, though he wasn’t sure why. As she got closer though, Shouto felt an itch at the back of his mind. It felt like he was forgetting something. Something important. Shouto shook the thought from his head; he didn’t have time to worry about little details. He was going to win with this next move, and that was all that mattered.

50 yards. The crowd was screaming so loud now.

40 yards. Shouto pressed his hand firmly onto the floor.

30 yards. His hand felt numb as his quirk started to work, it’s cold making his already chilled body even colder.

20 yards. He could make out her face now. Her eyes burned with determination, and her face was set. She seemed ready for anything. Shouto started his attack.
Ochako flipped herself over, slamming her feet into the glacier ice and kicking off. Like a bullet, she sailed over Shouto’s attack and the boy himself, swiping at him with her hand, but missing. Quickly, so she didn’t end up flying out of the ring by mistake, Ochako tapped her fingers together, screaming, “Release!” and landed back in the ring, towards the far end away from Shouto. It was further than she would have liked. Much further. If her plan had worked perfectly, she would have slammed into Shouto, giving her a chance to tag him with her Quirk. She, however, had guessed he would use his foot to attack, not bend over and touch the ground with his hand. Still, she could settle for this. At the very least she had dodged the obvious trap he had laid for her.

Now that she was back on solid ground, Ochako confirmed what she had thought she saw. Shouto was not looking good. Perhaps even worse after that trap he had tried to spring on her. The way he was shivering, the slight blue hue to his lips, it all but confirmed Ochako’s theory.

Todoroki can only make so much ice before he gets too cold. If he can’t make ice anymore he’ll have to go hand to hand. I don’t think I’ve ever seen him actually throw a punch. He’s always won with his Quirk.

Ochako took up her fighting stance, then took a step forward. Shouto took several quick steps back before slamming his foot down and creating a wall of ice between himself and her that pushed towards her, threatening to shove her out of the ring. Ochako could tell, however, the speed behind his Quirk was gone.

He’s still trying to use his Quirk? Maybe he isn’t that great in close-quarters!

Shouto cursed his father for throwing him off right before his match. He cursed himself for letting his father get to him, and he cursed himself for feeling so desperate to prove him wrong he attacked with everything he had without any plan on the off-chance he messed up. Now though, even if it hurt, he was acting on instinct. He should be warming himself up with his left side before trying to attack with more ice. It wouldn’t technically be to attack, so he wouldn’t be breaking his vow. He had used it multiple times already to help defrost his classmates after his wins, too. But using it during a match, for whatever reason, just felt wrong. So the icy barrier pushing Ochako back would have to work.

CRASH!

Shouto’s eyes widened as Ochako smashed through the wall. Ice shards rained down around her as she dashed through and made a beeline right for Shouto.
Another wall of ice popped up between himself and Ochako, but lifting her foot up, Ochako kicked through it and kept on coming. Shouto couldn’t believe what he was seeing. True, the ice wasn’t as thick as he normally made it— inches instead of feet— but it was still inches thick ice, and Ochako was battering through it. Again and again. Ochako’s eyes blazed as she closed the distance between them. She was less of a person now and more an unrelenting force.

Then something clicked in Shouto’s mind.

His earlier conversation with Izuku. “You didn’t give me a chance to counter, You completely overwhelmed me. That kind of attack, that kind of pressure reminded me of something. All Might.”

And something Himiko and Tenya had said, their first day of hero classes. “Izuku did mention that he and Ochako trained together.”

The pressure from All Might during the USJ attack, the pressure from Izuku during their last event, and now the pressure Ochako had, it was the same.

Uraraka was trained by All Might, too!

He had been so focused on Izuku, he had forgotten completely about Ochako. He hadn’t even given her a second thought, but looking back, it all fit into place. The gravity of his blunder hit him like a truck.

Ochako had closed the gap and only had a couple of yards left. He was right up against the edge of the ring, with nowhere else to move. She was too close for another wall, and, honestly, Shouto didn’t think he had anything left to make one. He had assumed that Ochako would never be able to get close to him. He was now dealing with the reality that there was nothing he could do to stop her from getting close.

She was going to get him.

She was going to use her Quirk on him.
He just had to make sure it was on his terms.

Ochako had made it. Shouto was right in front of her now. Cold, shivering, a little blue, and swaying. His own Quirk after being used again and had done more damage to himself than she could do-- or wanted to do, now. A punch to the jaw would probably drop him, but she didn’t need to do that. Reaching out as she ran forward, she pressed her hand right into Shouto’s chest. As each finger pad made contact she hissed at how cold his body was. That couldn’t be healthy.

When her fifth pad touched she felt her Quirk activate, and knew she had won. All she had to do was give him a little shove, but when she did, Shouto didn’t budge. Ochako blinked, *huh?*

She shoved again, but Shouto still didn’t move. Glancing down, Ochako’s eyes went wide. Shouto’s right foot was frozen to the ground.

*Oh no!*

She quickly realized that a push wasn’t going to be enough. She needed to actually hit him now. Ochako tried to pull herself back, but Shouto shot his hand out and grabbed her arm. She heard Shouto quietly whisper something-- an apology, maybe, or a warning-- before he froze her on the spot. Covered in a layer of ice, Ochako was helpless as Shouto reached up and yanked her forward, making her fall past him, and land outside the ring.

“Uraraka Ochako is out of bounds! Todoroki Shouto advances to the finals!”

Too close.

That thought ran through Shouto’s head as he started to warm himself up. Steam hissed off his body as all the frost covering him melted and evaporated. When Ochako had pushed him, he had felt the ice under his foot, anchoring him down. If Ochako had done anything harder, even just a hard shove, he would have lost. He was fortunate that Ochako had decided to try to end the match without unnecessary violence. Even with his stroke of good luck, Shouto was shocked he had been able to dig up anything else to freeze Ochako for even a few seconds. He doubted that the ice would have held her for very long and counted his blessing she had been stunned right next to the edge of the ring.
As much as he didn’t want to admit it, this win came down to a miss-timed act of mercy from Ochako and just plain good luck on his part.

With his body fully heated, Shouto no longer had anything holding him to the ground. Helplessly, he floated over the concrete arena until Midnight hurried over to him and grabbed ahold of his arm so he didn’t float away.

“Please take me to Uraraka so I can help—”

Crack!

Alarmed, Midnight and Shouto turned to see Ochako breaking herself free of the ice. Shards of ice rained down around her as she strained to force her limbs to move. Grunting, Ochako jerked from side to side until her arms were mostly free and she was able to press her fingers together, releasing Shouto from the effects of her Quirk.

Touching down, Shouto started to walk over Ochako, “Please wait a moment. You might injure yourself trying to break the rest of the ice. I’ll melt the rest—”

“Don’t touch me.”

The look Ochako gave Shouto stopped him dead. With her teeth chattering, Ochako forced her body against its icy shell. Fingers dug into opened cracks as she yanked the ice off herself. Piece by piece. Sometimes tearing bits of her gym uniform with it, sometimes her bandages. The cold spread through her body left her numb, except along the cuts. Those throbbed painfully.

Midnight frowned as she watched Ochako struggle to free herself. She was making progress but it was obviously painful, “Uraraka, you should allow Todoroki to melt the ice.”

“You may also start to suffer from symptoms of hypothermia. I cooled off your whole body when I froze you in ice.”

In a final shower of ice shards, Ochako forced herself to stand up, and glared at Shouto, “I don’t want your pity, Todoroki.”
“Pity?”

“You could have heated yourself up at any time during our fight. Right?” Ochako asked harshly.

“I…”

“You have a fire Quirk in your left side. If you used it during our match, you could have recovered from that first attack without any issues. Instead, you kept using ice and put yourself in a dangerous hole.” Ochako’s voice was heavy with accusations. The loudest and most obvious being that Shouto hadn’t fought his hardest in their match. In fact, he had purposely put himself in a bad situation to avoid fighting her with everything he had.

Shouto frowned, getting ready to deny the accusation, but Midnight’s hand on his shoulder cut him off. “Todoroki, please help melt the ice in the ring.”

“Sensei?”

“Heroes, even those in training, have their pride. If nothing else, you should respect how your actions and choices can affect that.”

Taking her hand off his shoulder, Midnight walked over to Ochako, “If you’ve made your decision, then head to Recovery Girl and get treated.”

Ochako nodded, and left. Leaving Shouto alone in the ring.

Recovery Girl took one look at Ochako’s sorry state and pointed to the closest bed. “Go sit down before you drip all over my floor. I’ll get some warm towels and a basin so you can soak your feet.

Teeth chattering and shivering from head to toe, Ochako shuffled quickly over to the bed as she rubbed her hands together, trying to get some feeling back into her fingers. Plopping down onto the bed, Ochako gasped when a towel landed on her head. “Use that to dry off a little.”
“Th-th-thank you.”

Recovery Girl shook her head, but went about getting the things she would need to start warming Ochako up.

*This girl… If there was one thing Toshinori didn’t need to teach her it was his thickheadedness.*

Thump.

Ochako blinked, while Recovery girl looked towards the door, “Huh?”

Thump thump.

That’s strange. It almost sounds like…

Thump thump thumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthump!

...*footsteps?*

The door to the recovery clinic slammed open as Izuku tumbled into the room. His momentum from running sent him to the floor as he tried to stop. “URARAKA!!”

Ochako gaped at the pile of twisted limbs that was, embarrassingly, her best friend. “Deku?”

“Midoriya! I must insist that you not run in the halls, even if school is not currently in session,” Tenya chided Izuku as he walked into the clinic. Hitoshi gave him a side eye as he followed, “You literally ran after him to tell him not to run. You know that, right?”

“Iida is like any good leader,” Tsuyu began.
“A hypocrite?” Himiko finished.

“Dedicated, kero.”

“...Riiiiight.”

Finally, Mei followed everyone else in. “So is this kind of thing normal?”

Tsuyu nodded, “Pretty much, but you get used to the chaos.”

Ochako looked at everyone in shock, “Guys? What are you all doing here?”

Izuku scrambled to his feet. “I...we wanted to make sure you were okay.”

“I can tell you from experience that getting frozen is a lot more painful than it looks. And I had the benefit of Todoroki helping me melt it off. You, however…” Tenya trailed off as she looked over Ochako with concern.

Himiko crossed her arms, a sour frown smeared on her face, “I can’t believe the bastard didn’t defrost you. The guy acts like douche because you almost beat him.”

Mei clapped her hands together, “Oh, is this the part where we plan our revenge?”

Ochako’s eye went wide. “Um, guys…”

“I could brainwash him into doing something embarrassing in front of the whole school during lunch”

“I could stab him.”

“Um, please don’t do that,” pleaded Izuku.
“Guys?”

Tenay frowned, “I must protest. As class representative, I can not do nothing when I overhear such things being discussed.” Tsuyu tapped her chin before putting her hands over Tenya’s ears, “There. I think we should gang up on him during a heroics lesson. Less chance of getting into trouble, kero.”

“GUYS!”

Everyone turned to look at Ochako as Recovery girl handed her a warm towel and slid a water basin under her feet. Guiltily Ochako fiddled with the warm towel, “Todoroki didn’t leave me all frosted up. I told him not to help me.”

“Huh?” Izuku’s head tilted to the side. Not really sure he heard that right, “Uraraka, you didn’t let him help you? Why?”

Ochako covered her face with her hands, groaning loudly in frustration, “Because I was angry, I guess. I went all out, but he didn’t, and I still lost.”

“Um, did you not see that huge glacier he threw at you? How is that not going all out?” Himiko asked.

“He didn’t use his fire,” Izuku said out loud, not really meaning to.

Ochako nodded. “Yeah, after that first attack of his, he was hurting. His body clearly has a limit to the amount of cold it can deal with.”

“Makes sense. It’s been documented that his father sometimes has to cool down before he can continue to fight. Same principle, I guess.”

Ochako huffed. “Well Todoroki has a way to fix that. We’ve all seen him do it when he melts off the ice for his costume. At any point in the match, he could have fixed himself up. If he did that, I don’t think there’s a way I could have gotten close to him.”
“He didn’t?” Hitoshi asked.

“No. He kept trying to use his ice.”

“That sounds...really dumb,” Mei observed. “If he has a way to regulate his body's temperature, why not use it?”

Izuku bit his tongue to make sure he didn’t say anything. It was not his place to go around talking about others' personal business, even if that business ended up hurting his best friend.

Ochako wrapped herself up in the towel, “Whatever the reason, he held back, and I...I couldn't stand it. I was so mad. I can take losing. That’s life. But knowing that I gave it my all, and he didn’t,” Ochako sighed. “My pride is a little too fragile, but I can't help but being so mad about this. Maybe I am being a bad sport-”

“No you’re not, Uraraka!” Izuku cut her off. “You fought with everything you had. We all have been giving it everything we have, and to know that Todoriki isn’t-- that he thinks he can just win without even trying-- you have every right to be mad. Honestly, it makes me mad too, It’s infuriating.” The passion in Izuku’s voice stunned Ochako, and everyone else for that matter. “Uraraka, you have nothing to feel bad about. Honestly, if Todoroki did that to me, I might not have reacted as calmly as you did. So please don't feel like you did anything wrong.”

Ochako smiled softly, “Thank you, Deku.”

“Yes,” Recovery Girl cut in, sarcasm dripping with every word, “Please make sure to prioritize your pride over your body. That's the best thing you can do.”

Recovery Girl eyed both Ochako and Izuku as she started pouring warm water into the basin for Ochako to dip her feet in. *I’m going to have to keep my eye on these two. Toshinori clearly hasn't been teaching them proper lessons.*

Kicking off her shoes, Ochako sank her feet into the warm water and sighed. “I guess now all I have to worry about is what I do next.”
“Next, kero?”

“Yeah, my parents came to watch me today. I don’t know how I’m going to face them after failing like this.”

Before Izuku could correct her, or anyone else, a new voice chimed in, chiding Ochako. “Uraraka Ochako, I will not have you talking like that.”

Ochako’s head snapped up, “D-dad!?”

Mr. and Mrs. Uraraka rushed into the room and wrapped Ochako up in a tight hug, neither bothered at all that their daughter was still soaking wet.

“You haven’t failed us at all. Your father and I are so proud of you!”

While everyone looked confused as to how Ochako’s parents had suddenly rushed into the room, they were soon joined by even more people. Inko, Eri, and All Might, who was still shrunken down, came in.

“Mom? Mr. Yagi? Huh?”

Tenya looked at all the people gathered and frowned, “Excuse me. I don’t wish to be rude, but what are you all doing here? This area is for staff and students.”

Eri looked up at Tenya and gasped. Almost whimpering, Eri clutched at Inko’s side. “Are we in trouble? Mr. Yagi said he had permission so we could see Ochako.”

Tenya began waving his arms around, suddenly at a loss. “Er, wait I’m sure…” Tenya could feel the hard glares burning a hole into his back because he was making a little girl almost cry. Tsuyu walked past him and knelt down next to Eri. “You’re Eri, right? Midoriya and Uraraka have told us so much about you. I’m Tsu.”

Eri nodded, “You all are Izuku’s friends. He talks about you all a lot. He even let me see what he wrote everyone.”
Tsuyu gave Eri a little pat on the head. “That’s right, we’re his friends, even the tall, grumpy one. He just wants to make sure it’s alright for you all to be in here is all. No one is mad.”

Izuku stepped forward. “This is Mr. Yagi. He’s the trainer Uraraka and I told you all about. He technically does work for the school.”

All Might coughed, “Yes. Young Iida, I fully understand your wish to make sure everyone is where they are supposed to be. Here, this is a text chain I had with Mr. Nezu. As you can see, I was given permission to bring everyone down to the clinical area for a brief time so Young Uraraka’s parents could see her. They were very worried about her after her match.”

While that was all sorted out, Ochako parents untangled themselves from Ochako and sat down next to her, “Ochako honey, we want you to know we are both so proud of you.”

Ochako leaned her head against her father’s shoulder, “But this was my big chance to stand out, and I blew it.”

Mrs. Uraraka shook her head, “Oh, trust us. You stood out. Everyone was expecting that Todoroki kid to walk all over everyone since he’s Endeavor’s son. You had him on the ropes that whole fight. Plus, there was your win in the first event, and you saved your team’s beacon during the second one.”

“And don’t forget about your wins during the tournament. Your second match sure left an impression. You overcame so much to win that match.”

Himiko scratched the back of her head adding, “I can attest to that.”

“Uraraka, if I may add something,” Tenya started, “I can understand your frustration with losing against Todoroki. I honestly hope my brother was too busy with his new assignment in Hosu City to have caught it.” Himiko’s head snapped up at that, though she kept herself as calm as she could. “But you pushed Todoroki harder than anyone else in the class. Neither myself nor Yaoyorozu were able to last more than a few seconds against him.”

“Plus,” Inko added, “I don’t think getting third place in your first Sports Festival is a bad thing.”
Eri nodded happily. “You get a medal, don’t you? Isn’t that exciting?”

“Third place?”

Ochako blinked a few times as she mulled that over. She had been so focused on winning and being so upset over how she had lost, she hadn’t realized that she had won a podium finish. It left her with several mixed feelings. All Might, having a pretty good idea what she was thinking, quickly spoke up. “Young Uraraka, if I may. I can understand your desire to want to win, and that those desires can make anything else leave a bitter taste in your mouth. You should use that feeling to push yourself harder moving forward. However, at the same time, you should take the time to celebrate your achievements. Focusing too much on what you don’t have and ignoring what you earned can be worse than simply settling for what you have.”

While Ochako took in All Might’s words, Izuku felt his mind wander. That advice could so easily apply to heroes like Endeavor, and maybe even Shouto.

Ochako looked around at everyone and smiled brightly, “Thank you all. I’m feeling a lot better now.”

Himiko sighed dramatically, “Well, it’s nice you’re back to your annoyingly sunny self. Otherwise, we’d have to keep an eye out on Shouto to make sure you didn’t float him into space in revenge.”

“Oh don’t worry. I’d never do that to Shouto .”

Himiko and Ochako shared a smirk while Hitoshi looked between the two worriedly, not sure how he felt now that both were on the same wavelength. It was a little scary. It made him feel bad for Izuku. Not so much for Katsuki, though.

Mr. Uraraka, seeing that his daughter was doing better, looked up at Himiko. “Oh. You’re the girl that was beating the crap out of my little girl.”

Himiko went stiff, “Ummmm.”

Mrs. Uraraka poked her husband in the side, “Don’t be mean, dear.”
“It was too easy.”

Everyone else chuckled while Himiko let out a sigh of relief. She stopped when she felt someone tugging at her pant leg. Looking down, she saw Eri looking up at her, “Um yes?”

“You’re Izuku’s friend that did the funny thing.”

“Funny thing?”

“When you were pretending to look like Izuku. Ochako’s daddy laughs every time, though I’m not allowed to do it anymore.”

“Huh? What aren’t you allowed to do that I did?”

Eri, not thinking about it, repeated the gesture she had seen and gave Himiko the middle finger.

“Eri!” Inko scolded.

Eri gasped and quickly put her hand into her pockets. “Whoops.”

Mr. Uraraka started laughing loudly before a sharp poke from Mrs. Uraraka got him to stop. Ochako’s jaw dropped while Izuku looked ready to faint. Hitoshi had a hand over his mouth to stop himself from laughing. Tenya’s arms were a blur as he turned towards Himiko. “TOGA! We must set a good example!”

“Er…Do as I say, not as I do?” Himiko knew she really didn’t have a leg to stand on here. This was not a fight she was going to win.

Tsuyu tapped her chin. “You really want to use that as your defense? You say a lot of stuff.”

“Um…okay, Eri, don’t listen to anything I say, and don’t do what I do.”
Eri frowned as she thought about that, “But if I’m not supposed to listen to you, does that mean I should do what you do then?”

Himiko blinked. “Um...Did I just get outsmarted by a four-year-old?”

Ochako broke out laughing, and was soon joined by a few more chuckles.

*Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki, Please report to your waiting rooms.*

Izuku, hearing his name, looked up in alarm. He had been so worried about Ochako, and then so relieved that she was alright, that he had completely forgotten that his match was next. His match with Katsuki. The laughing in the room quieted down as everyone looked over at him. Doing his best to smile, Izuku straightened up. “I think I should get going.”

“Izuku,” Inko started to say nervously, “please be careful.”

“I will Mom.”

One by one, everyone wished Izuku good luck until it was just All Might and Ochako left. “Young Midoriya, would you like me to walk you to your room?”

Izuku shook his head, “No I’m alright, Al- Mr. Yagi. I think a little quiet will be good for me. Give me time to think.”

All Might nodded, understanding completely.

Ochako, who had waited until everyone else had said something, finally spoke up, “Deku. You got this. You’re smarter than Bakugou, and you’re stronger than him, too. You know it. I know it. Now go out there and make sure he knows it.”

Nodding, and giving Ochako a thumbs-up, Izuku turned and walked out of the clinic. With every step he took, Izuku began to get himself ready for what he was sure was going to be an all out war. A war that had been a decade in the making. So Izuku took the time he had and did what he did best. He started to plan.
With a grunt, Katsuki stepped up into the ring as pyrotechnics went off around him. They were loud and flashy, and he didn’t even notice them. His attention was zeroed in on Izuku, who was making his way towards the ring. Izuku though, who was still making his way to the ring, his mind was going a mile a second. He had spent years, literal years, watching Katsuki. Now, he was doing everything he could to take everything he’d observed and condense it down into a plan. He just had to hope he knew the explosive teen as well as he thought he did.

Fourteen Hero Analysis books, however, let him know he probably had a pretty good idea. Not that that knowledge was going to make this fight easy. But in a strange way, Izuku didn’t want an easy match. If it was easy, then it might not mean anything. And Izuku needed this to mean something.

So using every second he had until the match started, even if he had to walk just that little bit slower, he went over his plan. Over and over again. Making sure each stage, each step, worked.

The loudspeakers blared to life as Present Mic called out to his loyal fans, “We have one finalist, loyal listeners. Now it’s time to get a second one. Forged in the fires of competitions, these two have worked their way to this match, but only one will advance to the finals to face Todoroki! First up! He’s a living firecracker, everyone. First, he blew apart the defenses of Kirishima Eijirou. Then, he left devastation in his wake to decimate Monoma Neito. From class 1-A, it’s Bakugou Katsuki! Versus -- He’s won at dodgeball, and he led his team to victory in capture-the-flag. The gadgets of Hatsume Mei stood no chance, and in a duel of Quirks, he came out ahead against Yanagi Reiko. He’s class 1-A’s little green man...and...”

Mic paused briefly as Izuku, while stepping up onto the raised platform of the ring, pulled off his gym top and tossed it to the ground, leaving him in only a black sleeveless undershirt.

“...And he’s giving some lovely ladies a little show! It’s Midoriya Izuku!”

When Izuku stepped into the ring, Katsuki glared angrily at him; Izuku returned Katsuki’s glare with one of his own. Filled with determination, He didn’t flinch back under Katsuki’s rage filled eyes. Those days were behind him now. He wasn’t scared of him anymore. Now all that was left to do was to make sure Katsuki knew it, too.

Midnight watched the two boys carefully, not a fan that she was suddenly feeling the same kind of pressure she had felt when Ochako and Himiko had fought. This match, she knew, was not going to be a clean one. Finally, Midnight raised her hand, signaling that both were ready for the match to
start. Present Mic didn’t waste any time screaming, “FIGHT!”

The moment he did, Katsuki unleashed hell.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, look! I’m back and before September ended! So we're getting pretty close to the end of the Sports Festival arc. We have our first finalist, now we just need to figure out who he's going to be facing next...If there's anyone left alive in the last Semi-Final match for move on. I hope you all enjoyed the newest chapter. The matches this time were a little...um...less intense than the last chapter. Next chapter though, yeah I've been building up to that fight for a while, haven't I? As always, I'm always open to comments and critiques, so feel free to leave me a review if you want. And thank you for giving my little story the time of day!

As always, a huge thank you to Tmalasia for editing and beta reading this mess of a chapter!
When Izuku was four, he learned that not everyone was created equal. That he was weak and worthless. As he grew up, he had this lesson drilled into his head over and over again by Katsuki. Now, as a student at U.A. it's Izuku's turn to teach Katsuki a lesson. What once was worthless can gain worth. What once was weak can become strong. Izuku plans to teach Katsuki that Deku doesn't mean worthless anymore. Deku is for "I can do it!" But once this lesson is taught, will things change for the better? Or will hate seep it's way in?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Uraraka! I must insist you stop this running at once!"

Ochako rounded a corner, sneakers skidding on the concrete floor as she grabbed onto the corner wall to help swing herself around that much faster. "No!"

After getting warmed up and dried, Ochako had been horrified to hear that Izuku’s match was about to start. After thanking Recovery Girl for her treatment, Ochako raced out of the room, determined not to miss a second of her best friend's big match.

"Once again, you’re running, too, you know!" Hitoshi huffed as he and the rest of the Dekusquad, chased after the pair. Mei was quite distressed that she was once again having to run. “Why are we running!? We could have watched the match on the TV!”

Tsuyu, who was hopping besides everyone, quickly answered, “It’s a grudge match, and she wants to cheer Midoriya on.”

“Grudge match? Do Midoriya and Baku...whoever he is, have issues?”

A resounding ‘yes’ from everyone answered Mei.

“Still,” Himiko began, voice dripping with sarcasm, “Shame on Ochako for running like this. She
should listen to her class rep and set a good example for...these empty halls.”

“Are you sure you should be the one making fun of setting an example? After what you did to that poor little girl?” Hitoshi asked as he side-eyed Himiko hard.

“Gah! That is not my fault! I can’t be held responsible for that! I never have, and never should be, an example for anyone!”

“But you’re training to be a hero. You’re an example by default.”

“Nooo....”

“And it’s even worse. You’re not going to win many brownie points with Midoriya’s mom after that either- URK!”

With a loud thud, Hitoshi suddenly found himself face-first with the floor.

“Oh no, Hitoshi!” Himiko gasped in shock, as she pulled her foot back and knelt down next to him, “You’ve tripped. You’re such a clumsy guy. You didn’t bite your tongue, did you?”

While getting pulled back to his feet, Hitoshi glared at Himiko. “Subtle.”

Ochako, turned a final corner and slid to a stop just short of cariencing over the first row of chairs and landing in the laps of her startled classmates.

“Has it started yet!? I didn’t miss anything, right!?”

Mina chuckled. “Easy there. Present Mic hasn’t even started his intros yet.”

While Ochako sighed in relief, she felt a shiver run up her spin as Tenya came up behind her. However, instead of facing her problems, she did the smart thing and simply ignored it and hurried to her seat. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see Shouto looking over at her, but she wasn’t going to get into that whole issue right now. She doubted yeeting him into space would be a good
idea since he still had a match. She might get detention. There were also all the moral questions involved, too, so she settled with finding her seat. Coming up behind everyone else filtering back in, Mei groaned as she plopped, promising to herself she would create portable hover-soles for herself if running was going to be a thing she did with her new friends.

To her side, Himiko grabbed her seat. “So how do you think this is going to go?”

“Deku’s going to win, of course.”

Himiko rolled her eyes, “I know that. Wasn’t looking for the grade-school-cheerleader answer. I’m asking you how you think this fight is going to go down?”

This time, Ochako chewed on her response while Himiko and the rest of her friends waited, “Honestly? I think it’s going to be a lot like our match. While Deku isn’t one to hold a grudge, he put up with Bakugou for years. I have to think some part of him is going to go extra hard because of that. And Bakugou...well, he’s Bakugou.”

Himiko bit back a laugh while everyone else nodded in agreement as Ochako continued, “But unlike our match, they’re more even, which is going to make the fight different I think.”

“Don’t pat yourself on the back too hard; you might float yourself,” Himiko said, giving Ochako a bit of a side-eye. She stopped when Ochako shook her head. “I didn’t mean it like that. Toga, you are way stronger than me.”

“Eh?”

“That whole match, you were fighting down to my level. Weren’t you?”

That got a few surprised looks from everyone who glanced between the two. Himiko raised her hands defensively. “Hey, I wasn’t holding back.”

“Oh, I know. Believe me, I know.” Ochako rubbed the side of her face that Recovery Girl had used her Quirk to fix, “What I mean was you were making sure you fought within the rules of the match. You weren’t fighting like you were at the USJ. I’d rather not face you when you’re in full Princess Stabbity mode. Going all stab kill kill.”
Himiko groaned loudly at the nick name, “I’m going to shave Mic’s stupid mustache off his stupid face for that name, I swear to every god out there.”

Ochako smiled at her distress, “I’m just saying you and I went into our fight differently. Deku and Bakugou though, I don’t think the gap between them is that big. As much as it pains me to say this, Bakugou is strong.”

Tenya frowned, “On the surface they may both be very strong, but how they deliver that strength is very different. I don’t see Midoriya being as vicious as Bakugou.”

“That’s true. Bakugou goes into fights with a totally different mindset, kero.”

“Bakugou is a literal loose cannon, and Midoriya is…” Hitoshi trailed off trying to think of a good way to describe Izuku.

Mina leaned forward, “A G-Rated hero?”

Hitoshi pointed back at Mina as he nodded, “yeah, he’s that.”

The rest of the class agreed. Izuku was strong, but Bakugou had a different kind of mindset. Ochako though shook her head, “It’s easy to say that, but Izuku isn’t always calm and friendly.”

Fumikage rubbed his beak, “He does have a fire in him. No one can doubt his determination.”

Mei leaned back, thinking of her talk with Izuku before their match, “He’s also surprisingly competitive.”

“There’s that, yeah,” Ochako agreed with everyone, “but I’m talking about something else. Back during the villain attack, Izuku charged the League of Villain’s leader, after he had been hurt by Nomu. Sometimes, Deku doesn’t know when to stop. He’ll keep going until he wins.”

*Or gets too hurt.*
Any further discussion was stopped when Present Mic’s voice boomed over the cheering crowd, getting them hyped up for the upcoming match. Ochako stood up from her seat instantly, looking down at the arena as both Katsuki and Izuku made their way to the ring, “We have one finalist, loyal listeners. Now it’s time to get a second one. Forged in the fires of competitions, these two have worked their way to this match, but only one will advance to the finals to face Todoroki! First up! He’s a living firecracker, everyone. First, he blew apart the defenses of Kirishima Eijirou. Then, he left devastation in his wake to decimate Monoma Neito. From class 1-A, it’s Bakugou Katsuki!”

“BOOOO!!” Ochako jeered loudly.

“Baku-Bitch sucks!” Himiko joined in with the heckling.

“Kick his butt, Bakugou!” Eijirou cheered before-side stepping and putting a little distance between himself and the death glares he was getting from the two, “Hey, it’s not manly to just pile onto one side, you know...”

Versus -- He’s won at dodgeball, and he led his team to victory in capture-the-flag. The gadgets of Hatsume Mei stood no chance,”

“Hey!”

“and in a duel of Quirks, he came out ahead against Yanagi Reiko. He’s class 1-A’s little green man...and...”

Ochako felt her face flush while Himiko hooted and whistled as Izuku tossed his gym top off.

“...And he’s giving some lovely ladies a little show! It’s Midoriya Izuku!”

Ochako hated how much she enjoyed what she saw. It wasn’t fair that Izuku was so fine. Leaning on the railing, Ochako cheered Izuku on as both fighters got ready, “Throw that loud mouth jerk out of the ring, Deku!”

“FIGHT!”
The first explosion stopped Ochako’s next cheer.

BOOM!

The next several seconds of rapid fire explosions silenced the whole arena. The moment the match started, Katsuki fired explosion after explosion in rapid succession until the entire other half of the ring was completely obscured in fire, ash, smoke and dust. Even with Izuku nowhere to be seen, Katsuki kept firing, ripping everything apart. Finally, after several long seconds of non-stop assault, Katsuki finally stopped, letting his arms fall to his sides.

“Holy. Fuck.” Himiko gaped at the destruction, not sure what else to say. Eijirou winced, “Oh man, maybe I shouldn’t have said anything to Bakugou about Midoriya. He must have decided to end the match before Midoriya could use any of the debris as ammo…”

Eijiro flinched hard when Himiko turned to look at him. Mina stepped between the two, “Easy! You can’t blame Kirishima because Bakugou decided to...do that. ”

“It’s not over.”

Everyone blinked and turned to look at Ochako, who was still standing, hands gripping the railing tightly. Tenya frowned worriedly as he looked at the smoke covered ring, with bits of concrete still raining down, “Uraraka, after that…”


Ochako knew Izuku. She knew he would expect Katsuki to come after him. He would have a plan-
-a strategy of some kind. He didn’t have a clue how Izuku would counter Katsuki’s assault, but she knew he would. All she had to do was wait for the smoke to clear, and then everyone would know it, too.

Katsuki huffed as he let his hands drop to his sides. His wrists throbbed after his attack, a soreness he had long gotten used to after using such strong blasts in quick succession. With the roar of the explosions now fading, Katsuki was aware of just how quiet everything was. He could hear small bits of rubbles hitting the ground. The shock of his attack was still reverberating through everyone, long after the last explosive echo had faded. Not that Katsuki cared. He was focused on more important things. Out past the ring, small fires burned, dotting the grass feeding the smoke and ash that covered the other half of the ring. Obscuring from him the one thing he wanted to see. The defeated, burned, and hopefully unconscious form of Izuku.

“How in the fuck is he still there!?”

Soon, the dust and ash began to settle, falling over the whole arena like a thick grey blanket. As it settled closer to the ground, it became thin enough of Katsuki to start to make out the other side of the arena. He could see the orange glow of the burning grass and a soft, green flicker of light.

Katsuki’s teeth ground together. As more dust settled, he could see Izuku’s glowing form, still standing where he had been when the match had started.

“How in the fuck is he still there!?”

Katsuki looked over Izuku. Scorch marks covered Izuku head-to-toe. Parts of his gym clothes were burned away, and his arm, which he had brought up to protect his chest and face, was burned. He was unsteady on his feet, swaying side to side, and the green glow of his aura was faint and flickering, except around his feet, which glowed brightly under the cloud of dust.

“He anchored himself to keep from getting blasted out of the ring!?”

Katsuki seethed as he stomped towards Izuku, the ruined concrete floor of the arena cracking loudly under his boot.

“You little shit. What did you think was going to happen standing up to me? Did you forget who I
am? Did you forget what happens *every* time you decide to stick your neck out? You think just because you have some worthless extra’s cheering you on that you’re suddenly not going to be an extra yourself? Did you think some training with a scout would be enough!?

Izuku didn’t respond, and Katsuki doubted he was able to. He was obviously too dazed to do anything. All it would take was one last blast to end the match. And Katsuki wanted to be up close to do it.

“You didn’t just forget who I am, you forgot who you are. A worthless Deku that shouldn’t even be here. Did you really think you had a chance? Did you think just because that bitch made you think your name meant ‘you could do it,’ you could be strong? Let this be a lesson, Deku. You can’t! You’re weak,” Katsuki was only a few feet away from Izuku now. His right hand pulled back to deliver the final blow. Taking one more step forward, Katsuki’s boot slammed down onto the flat floor of the arena, “and you will never be stronger than me!”

Katsuki swung for Izuku’s head, palm glowing red, and he readied to unleash one last explosion right into Izuku’s face to send him flying out of the ring. He was glad the floor had finally straightened out. It made throwing the punch easier now that he had solid footing. He was-mid swing when a question popped into his head.

Why was the floor not rubble?

Everything had been blown up between himself and Izuku. Except for this small area.

That was right around Izuku.

Alarms blared in Katsuki’s head, just as Izuku stopped swaying and his green aura stopped flickering. His form tightened, and he sidestepped. Katsuki’s strike went wide, the explosion going off harmlessly to Izuku’s side. Reaching out his hand, Izuku grabbed hold of Katsuki’s arm. Twisting around, Izuku pulled Katsuki off his feet and threw him over his shoulder before slamming him down onto the ground.

Bouncing off the concrete floor, Katsuki had the air driven out of his lungs. Coughing and hacking, Katsuki glanced up to see Izuku glaring down at him.

“Kacchan, shut up!”
Then Izuku’s aura blazed, bathing the whole ring in green light. Katsuki’s instincts kicked in as he desperately rolled away, putting distance between himself and the suddenly not-dazed Izuku—distance that Izuku quickly closed.

When Izuku stepped into the ring and took one look at Katsuki, only one thought crossed his mind.

*Oh, he’s gonna try and blow me up.*

Since he had known the other boy since they were four, he knew the look very well. He just had to hope his counter worked.

*“FIGHT!”*

As fast as he could, Izuku brought the full might of his Quirk to bear, while at the same time watching as Katsuki disappeared from view, obscured by his own explosions. A wall of fire, smoke, and raw force rushed at him, shattering the ground as it threatened to slam over him like a tidal wave. Izuku, though, was ready. After his matches with Mei and Reiko, he had learned something about his Quirk. As long as there was something to apply a force to, he could use his Quirk on it. Before today, that was against solid objects. Something that was physically there. Now though, after his shoving match against Reiko’s Poltergeist Quirk, he knew that it didn’t have to be physical. It just had to be creating a force he could act against. A force he could repel.

And what was an explosion but a violent force.

So Izuku focused his Quirk in front of himself and pushed back. Not a moment later, the explosion hit and Izuku nearly doubled over from the strain. The kickback that slammed into his head made his eyes water, but any tears he might have shed were quickly evaporated. While he had been able to stop the force of the explosion from hitting him. The heat and the fire still landed. Izuku brought his arms up as he bit back a scream, feeling himself cook. His clothes were scorched, as the skin on his forearms burned.

Katsuki fired again, and Izuku grit his teeth keeping his barrier up. A third blast, a fourth, a fifth. Soon the explosions overlapped and blurred together. Izuku was in hell. The air was too hot and too full of smoke to breathe. The noise was deafening, and the strain of keeping the explosions off himself was driving an iron spike into his head. Izuku was in hell, but it was a hell he was used to. It was a hell he had spent his childhood living. He had experienced first-hand what it was like to be
on the receiving end of Katsuki’s explosions. Perhaps not to this extreme, but, over time, the experiences added up. Izuku had survived Katsuki for years. He wasn’t going to let himself be beaten because of a few seconds of pain he had lived through already. When he felt his own feet start to slide back, instincts trying to force him to get away from the blasts, he grabbed them with his Quirk and held them in place. He was not going to let himself be moved.

There would be no running away.

Then just as Izuku began to wonder if Katsuki was ever going to stop, he did. The barrage of blasts ceased, and a quiet fell. Izuku could tell he wasn’t in great shape, but he was still in one piece. More of less. More importantly, he was still in the ring. After that horrific attack, he hadn’t been moved at all.

With everything still covered in smoke and ash, Izuku let his Quirk extend out, feeling out the ring and confirming that half of it was now shattered into a great many pieces, some of them very large chunks. As Izuku took stock, however, a harsh voice ripped through the thick black smoke and white ash. “Strong enough to be kind!? Where’d that get, you Deku!? Blown the fuck up!”

*He thinks he just won. He sure is talking like he did.*

Izuku considered ducking down into the smoke and ash. He could pop up and surprise Katsuki, but then reconsidered it.

*Kacchan won’t like that I’m still standing. But if he thinks I’m too dazed from the attack to protect myself, he’ll want to get up close to finish me off.*

So as more of the smoke cleared, Izuku let himself sway. Let his Quirk flicker. He even kept the hold on his shoes, just to give off the appearance he had anchored himself down to tank the explosions. Sure enough, the loud crunch of Katsuki’s boots on the ruins concrete echoed out. And as Katsuki got closer, he started to talk again.

*Kacchan loves to hear his own voice when he thinks he’s winning.*

“You little shit. What did you think was going to happen standing up to me? Did you forget who I am? Did you forget what happens every time you decide to stick your neck out? You think just because you have some worthless extra’s cheering you on that you’re suddenly not going to be an extra yourself? Did you think some training with a scout would be enough!?”
Keep talking, Kacchan. And keep walking this way. Just a little closer. You want to make this personal. You could finish it safely at range, but you always want to get your hands dirty.

“You didn’t just forget who I am; you forgot who you are. A worthless Deku that shouldn’t even be here. Did you really think you had a chance? Did you think just because that bitch made you think your name meant ‘you could do it,’ you could be strong?”

Izuku’s thoughts ground to a halt. The only way he was able to keep himself from screaming then and there was that he still needed Katsuki to make his move. He just needed Katsuki to throw that right fist.

“Let this be a lesson, Deku. You can’t! You’re weak, and you will never be stronger than me!”

Just as he expected, once Katsuki had gotten within punching range, he went for his right. He was mid-swing when Izuku sprung his trap. Sidestepping the strike, Izuku took a lot of pride in the shocked look he saw on Katsuki’s face, but he wasn’t going to stop with a dodge. Grabbing Katsuki’s arm, and copying a move Ochako has used on him many times in their sparring matches, Izuku twisted around and threw Katsuki over his shoulder into the ground.

Watching Katsuki bounce off the concrete, and the sound of the thud he made, was immensely satisfying for Izuku. Now that Katsuki knew he was still able to fight, Izuku finally let loose and said something he had wanted to say for years, “Kacchan, shut up!”

Rolling through clouds of dust, Katsuki sprung to his feet, with Izuku in hot pursuit. Lifting his hands up, Katsuki prepared to blast Izuku with an explosion. His palms crackled, but just as the blast went off, Izuku wrenched a hand to the side, and several chunks of concrete shot out from the dust cloud and slammed into Katsuki’s arms, knocking them outward and sending the blasts harmlessly wide on either side of Izuku. Taking advantage of his opening, Izuku stepped forward and drove his fist right into Katsuki’s jaw. Sneering as he was pushed back, Katsuki tried to get his hands pointed at Izuku, but Izuku deflected them away with his forearms while picking up more rubble from under the dust clouds and hurling it at Katsuki.

Exploding from the dust, several chunks peppered Katsuki before, with a growl, Katsuki pointed his hands out and blasted the remaining chunks of concrete. With his hands pointed out, Izuku threw a hook into Katsuki’s exposed side. Hissing, Katsuki pulled his arms back, but instead of pressing an attack like Izuku anticipated, Katsuki pointed his hands down and let off an explosion
into the ground, propelling himself backward, and forcing Izuku to stumble back as he was hit by a shower of debris.

Landing several yards away, Katsuki glared at Izuku as the other boy regained his balance. However, instead of charging back in, he stood motionless. Eyes glaring at Izuku, then shifting to the cloud of dust and smoke that billowed around them at their waists.

“You got a plan for everything, don’t you, Deku?”

Izuku frowned, but stayed silent. He could see the shift in Katsuki. Katsuki may look like an unhinged berserker-- and he may act like one, too-- but like Izuku had warned Himiko, Katsuki was smart. He had broken away from the fight and had used the few seconds after to collect himself, so Izuku knew he had to be very careful with what came next.

Katsuki motioned to all the dust covering the whole of the arena floor. “You’re using this shit as a damned smokescreen. Aren’t you?”

Doing his best not to give anything away, Izuku kept his eye right on Katsuki, “What makes you say that, Kacchan?”

“You haven’t stopped glowing since the match started, and this shit should have settled by now, or gotten blown away. It’s not just reflecting the light from your aura; you’re *using* your Quirk on it so I can’t see what you pick up to throw at me. The glows blend together so I don’t see it until it’s right in my face.”

Slowly, Katsuki started walking towards Izuku, “You must think you’re pretty clever, but you’re not going to survive relying on cheap shit like this.”

*Survive?*

Izuku, taking a breath to steady himself, got into his fighting stance, “Is that so?”

Swiping his right hand up, Izuku sent a large chunk of concrete right for Katsuki, but Katsuki pointed is hand out and exploded it before it broke through the dust, “What did I fucking say?”
Grabbing more, Izuku yanked more stone from behind Katsuki with his right hand while throwing more with his left. In a blur of fire, Katsuki blasted them before they could hit. Izuku blinked in surprise, *He’s watching my hands. I normally point my hands at the things I move around. He’s doing that in the middle of a fight? Kacchan’s scary sometimes.*

Still, Izuku thought. *If Kacchan thought that was his only play in this fight, he was sorely mistaken*. Izuku brought his right hand up just as Katsuki turned to stop the next projectile. Focused on his side, Katsuki didn’t see the fist-sized chunk of concrete shoot out of the dust behind him and smash into his head.

“The fuck!?”

Izuku let his arms fall to his side, while around him more and more pieces of blown up concrete popped out of the dust cloud and hung in the air, encircling Katsuki and Izuku. Rubbing the back of his head, Katuski looked up at them, then back at Izuku, who just shrugged, “My Quirk comes from my head. Not my hands. I don’t have to use them when I move things. It just helps me aim. It’s a mental thing.”

The floating pieces of rubble flashed as Izuku fired them in rapid succession right towards Katsuki. Katuski responded by sending explosions in all directions, ripping everything apart around him before launching himself into the air and propelling himself right towards Izuku. Izuku snapped up more ammo to fire, but Katuski surprised him by suddenly changing directions, using his explosions to fire off to the right and then to Izuku’s side. Reaching out, Katsuki grabbed the back hem of Izuku’s black shirt as he fell, pulling Izuku down with him. Katsuki was able to stop himself from landing flat by bracing himself with his free arm. Izuku, however, slammed into the concrete. Then just a moment later, the hand holding him lit up and an explosion sent him tumbling end over end across the arena. The broken jagged floor cut into him as he slid to a stop.

Katsuki wasn’t done, as he threw more explosions at Izuku, who rolled to the side as the place he had landed became a crater. Hissing in pain, Izuku scrambled up, charging right for Katsuki. As he got closer, the dust between them rippled and rose up, creating a wall between the two and obscuring him from Katsuki.

Pulling two large rocks from the ground, Izuku hurled them so they arced around each side of the dust wall. Katsuki blasted both as he eyed the center of the cloud. “That shit isn’t going to work, Deku!”

With one hand gripping his wrist to brace himself, Katsuki unleashed a large explosion that engulfed everything that was blocked from his view. Izuku could see what was coming next. As fast as he could, he slid underneath the fiery cone before leaping out of the dust, right underneath Katsuki. Not able to pull his hands back in time to defend himself, Izuku was able to unleash an
uppercut that snapped Katsuki’s head back. With a snarl, Katsuki responded in kind, throwing a right hook that connected with Izuku’s chin. Both boys staggered back before stepping forward and throwing haymakers. Soon, both were trading blows.

“GET’EM, DEKU! PUNCH HIM IN THE FACE AGAIN!”

Ochako cheered as she leaned over the railing, fists throwing mock punches. Behind her, Tsuyu held onto her collar, just in case she toppled over in her exuberance. Around her, the rest of her classmates, despite Tenya and Momo’s best efforts to keep everyone calm and more or less neutral, were cheering loudly, too. With the class more or less split on cheering for Izuku, Katsuki, or just enjoying the sight of the two beating the snot out of each other. Some, like Shouto or Fumikage simply watched the fight quietly.

“Man, look at Midoriya go. He’s really going after Bakugou.”

“I still want to know how he survived that opening. Like, he should have been in the stands.”

“No kidding.”

“He’s fighting completely differently, too. He’s way more intense than he was during his other matches, or when he had that battle trial with Tokoyami.”

“Yeah, but Bakugou is making him pay for it. Look how crispy he is. He needs to do a better job dodging. I could take it because of my Quirk, but Midoriya? He’s going to get hurt if he keeps taking Bakugou head on like this.”

Even as Ochako cheered, she also couldn’t help but agree internally as she watched Izuku. Her own concerns echoed some of the things she heard her classmates say. Izuku was starting to take too much damage. He should be using his Quirk to attack from afar. Sure, Katuski would be able to blast some of his projectiles, but he wouldn't be able to get them all. In fact, Izuku had started using this tactic at the start, but had inexplicably abandoned it, instead choosing now to fight up close with his fists and only using his Quirk sparingly. He was getting in some really good hits, but Katuski was too, mixing his fists and his explosions together. Even if Izuku wasn’t hit directly, just getting grazed left him burned. The way Izuku was fighting now, practically opening himself up
and encouraging Katsuki to use his explosions, felt dumb.

And Izuku wasn’t dumb.

He was always thinking, always analyzing things. True, sometimes this was to his detriment, he’d overthink something and that hesitation left him open. This though, this felt different.

What are you up to, Deku?

With a flick of his forearm, Izuku knocked aside Katsuki’s hand, pointing it away as another explosion ripped by his side, making his ear rings, and adding more scorch marks along with the rest. With his other hand, Izuku jabbed at Katsuki, getting a glancing blow as the other boy pivoted away, though Izuku didn’t let him put any distance between them. Stepping forward, Izuku kept himself within arms reach of Katsuki at all times, a tactic Katsuki made him pay for as he drove his fist into Izuku’s stomach. Izuku fought to keep himself from coughing out a lung from the force since he knew he had bigger issues. Katsuki didn’t withdraw his hand from the punch, but instead opened his palm up. With Katsuki’s hand pressed flat against Izuku’s chest, he knew what was coming before he felt the heat build up.

Too close!

Too close to knock his hand way in time. Too close to dodge. Too close to try and put up a barrier. So Izuku did the next best thing. He grit his teeth, latched onto Katsuki’s shoulders, and held onto his body with his Quirk, willing himself into one spot.

BOOM!

The explosion finished what Katsuki’s punch started, driving all the air out of Izuku. With a new scorch mark maring his chest and the remains of his black shirt blown away, Izuku glared up at Katsuki, who was equally shocked that Izuku was still where he was and confused at something else, Something Izuku felt a little proud of, though the fresh pain in his head and the taste of iron on his lip let him know it had come with a cost. Though, he couldn’t think about that right now. Too many things going on to worry about silly things like nose bleeds.

After all, he hadn’t reached the concussion phase of over-using his Quirk, so what was there to
Trying to take advantage of Katsuki’s momentary stunned pause, Izuku, who was still holding onto Katsuki since he wasn’t sure he’d be able to keep standing if he let go, yanked several concrete chunks and hurled them right for Katsuki’s head. Seeing the attack coming, Katsuki knocked Izuku’s hands away and launched himself back, twisting in the air in a circle of fire and blasting away Izuku’s attack as he put some distance between the two.

Landing heavily, and making sure Izuku wasn’t coming after him, Katsuki glanced down at his hands, rubbing his thumb over his palms and frowning deeping at the feeling. Grunting, he began whipping his hands on his sweatpants, something Izuku took immediate notice of.

“Cough, something wrong, cough Kacchan?”

“Fuck you! And fuck your dust shit!”

*Well, that part of the plan is working out.*

After watching Katsuki’s first two matches, Izuku had noted that Katsuki kicked up a lot of dust whenever he used his Quirk. From the smoke, to the kicked up dirt, to finally the shattered concrete. To beat him, Izuku knew he would need to use *everything* at his disposal. Even something like dust. Katsuki had been right, if he held the dust up, it did a good job hiding the glow of the objects he moved around the arena. In his previous fights, he had kicked up a lot, enough that Izuku thought this part of his plan would work. Fortunately, after his initial bombardment, he had created so much, it just made hiding *everything* so much easier. But there was something else the dust cloud did.

It stuck to anything remotely wet. And since Katsuki’s Quirk relied on the nitro-like sweat from his palms, the dust was sticking to his hands like crazy. And it was either dampening Katsuki’s explosions some, if his confused expression form earlier was anything to go on, and or it was annoying him. Both outcomes Izuku could work with.

Wiping his hands off some more, Katsuki pointed them back as he got ready to launch himself back at Izuku. With a scream, Katsuki rocketed towards Izuku, but the moment he was airborne, Katsuki’s eyes went wide when he noticed he was glowing.

*Shit!*
Izuku snagged Katsuki with his Quirk and yanked him to the side, wincing as he fought against Katsuki’s forward momentum. Going wide, Katsuki twisted his hands to the side and used another explosion to correct his flight and rip himself free of Izuku’s hold. Swinging around, Katsuki brought the heel of his boot down as Izuku brought his arms up to block. Izuku winced as he was driven back, *I knew it; he can still break my hold in the air with his explosions!*

Swinging upward, Katsuki let his next explosion ark and push Izuku even further back.

*But, Kacchan’s been using his Quirk a lot this match. He has to be getting dehydrated!*

Sliding to a stop, Izuku began chucking more concrete at Katsuki as he ran forward, “AHHH!!!” The concrete arked around, forcing Katsuki to twist to blast them before they hit and leaving Izuku a chance to bull rush him, throwing a flurry of punches.

“GET!”

Crack!

“THE FUCK!”

Crack!

“OFF!”

Izuku swung a haymaker for Katsuki’s face as the other boy screamed in rage, “ME!”

With both his hands, Katsuki shoves Izuku away, making the punch miss, while at the same time unleashed another explosion. This time, Izuku wasn’t able to grab onto Katsuki or anchor himself in any way. Izuku took the full blast and was launched several yards into the air. Blasting himself up after Izuku, Katsuki raised his hands above his head before throwing them back down, driving an explosion into Izuku, rocketing him into the ground with a horrifying thud.
Landing, Katsuki looked for where Izuku had landed, but the boy had already been swallowed up by the dust cloud. Breathing heavily, Katsuki brought his hand up and hissed as his fingers brushed against his bruised cheek, “fucking Deku…”

“Cough…”

Katsuki’s head snapped to the sound.

Hacking, and coughing, Izuku clutched his side. He had landed on his left, and he didn’t want to think what his ribs probably looked like. Everything hurt. His head was pounding after everything. The barrier at the start, and moving so much weight around after was, he wouldn’t be surprised if his brain was turning into liquid. On top of that, his skin was on fire from all the burns, his bones ached and throbed, and after that last attack, something was broken.

*Get up.*

Something in his body was broken, but not his drive. Not his will to keep going.

*Get up. You’re so close! Get up!*

Izuku had known this fight would test him. He had wanted it to test him. He wanted this fight to mean something, not just to himself, but to Katsuki as well. Izuku wanted this test; he wanted this challenge, but more than that, he wanted to win this. He wanted to win this fight. No, he had to win this fight. The path to his dream, if he wanted to walk it, he had to overcome any obstacles that blocked it.

Right now, that obstacle was Katsuki Bakugou.

*GET UP!*

Slowly, painfully, Izuku rolled onto his chest and brought his hands underneath himself. Bracing himself, Izuku pushed off the ground and onto his knees. Then closing his eyes and making sure to check everything was okay, Izuku stood up. Rising out of the dust and turning to face a stunned Katsuki and an equally stunned crowd. He could hear some shocked gasps at his condition.
Heh, I guess I look pretty messed up.

Katsuki could not believe it. After an attack like that, Izuku should be out cold. Then again, he should have been blown out of the ring with his very first attack. “What the fuck? How…are you still standing!? Why won’t you stay down, you shit!?”

As Katsuki looked at Izuku, and the absolute shit condition he was in, Tsuyu’s words from earlier roared in his head.

“Midoriya was attacked by Nomu. It hurt him really bad, too. We all saw how Midoriya looked when they carried him off in the ambulance. But despite that, after Uraraka revived him, what was the first thing he did? He picked a fight with Shigaraki, the leader of the League of Villains.”

“Kacchan,” Izuku began. Katsuki blinked, ripped from his thoughts as he looked back at izuku, and the determined fire that blazed in his eyes, “You’ve been hitting me, burning me, hurting me with those explosions since I was 4. After all these years, do you think I wouldn’t have gotten used to the pain!”

Used to the pain?

Those words hit Katsuki strangely, but he didn’t have time to think about it. Izuku crouched into his stance, his eyes hardening and an intense almost feral grin on his face, “Come on, Kacchan. We’re not done yet!”

After that last hit, Midnight knew Cementoss was going to be contacting her soon. When Izuku stood back up and openly challenged Katsuki to continue the fight, almost immediately the concrete hero was in her ear. “Midnight, we can’t let this go on much longer. Midoriya is getting torn apart.”

Midnight frowned; she couldn’t disagree with her colleague about that. Izuku was in bad shape. On top of the burns and swelling from the punches he had taken, she had heard the crack from how he landed, and could see his side turning purple from the impact. She also couldn’t help but remember the report from the attack on the USJ, and how Izuku after sustaining horrific injuries was still fighting up until the teachers had arrived.

This kid doesn’t seem to be the kind of person to let pain get in his way when he sets his mind on something. To be able to keep going like this is a testament to his drive, but there is a limit. At some
Midnight did have a guess as to what was driving Izuku so hard. She knew from her talks with Himiko that he and Katsuki had history.

“Midnight, Midoriya might think he can afford to go on like this because Recovery Girl will be able to heal him, but we can’t let him put his life in danger. This is supposed to be a Sports Tournament, not a gladiatorial fight. You let Toga’s fight drag on for too long. You can’t do the same thing here.”

Midnight’s fists clenched, Cementoss was right, of course. There had to be a limit to what was allowed. The match between Himiko and Ochako was important for her development. They both needed to get that poison out of their systems.

But doesn’t the same apply to Midoriya and Bakugou?

Before Midnight could reply to either her own thought, or Cemetoss, a sudden series of explosions interrupted everything.

“Come on, Kacchan. We’re not done yet!”

As he screamed, Izuku started firing chunks of concrete right towards Katsuki. Getting into another fist fight was out of the question now, so he fell back on his Quirk. Katsuki’s eyes went wide as he started blasting concrete left and right. His explosions, though, seemed smaller, with more smoke than fire. Izuku also swore that Katsuki looked dry. He wasn’t sweating anymore.

“God damn it! Stay down, you worthless shit!”

“I can’t! I won’t! If you think I’ll stop because of a little pain, I never will! I can take anything you throw at me! I’ve been doing it all my life! No matter what you did, I was always able to get back up! I’ll always get back up! No matter how bad I’m beat, no matter how bad I get hurt, I will always keep going, because that’s what heroes do! I told you, I would become strong enough to be kind! I’ll become strong and save everyone! I’ll become strong to stop all the villains and the monsters in this world!”
Every word Izuku shouted ripped at Katsuki. These weren’t things that a worthless Deku should be saying. The pathetic little kid he grew up with who couldn’t even protect himself shouldn’t be proclaiming these kinds of things.

*I’ll become strong to stop all the villains and the monsters in this world!*

As those words echoed in Katsuki’s head, images flashed before him. Images Izuku’s broken limp body after he was pulled from the water. His ruined form strapped to a gurney getting loaded up into an ambulance.

Izuku’s words echoed again, but this time, Katsuki heard the ending differently.

*I’ll become strong to stop all the villains and the monsters in this world, like you!*

Izuku blinked when he saw Katsuki’s face twist. His snarling face warped into blind rage.

“FUCK THIS!”

When Katsuki pointed both his hands at Izuku, he instantly recognized it as the same stance Katsuki had taken at the start of the fight.

*OH CRUD!*

Dropping the concrete he had been throwing, Izuku focused his Quirk and created a barrier as fast as possible. The first blast fired, and Katsuki watched it race towards Izuku. Then the air in front of him shimmered green right before the explosion hit, but the way it hit was off. He hadn’t seen it before—too intent on ending the fight then—and the size of his first blasts and the sheer number of them had hidden anything he might have seen as strange. These blasts though were not as strong as those, and he wasn’t firing them as fast.

So he could see that something was up.
What the hell was that!?

Katsuki fired again and again, but this time he watched carefully. Watched as his attacks inexplicably spread out over an area that was way too wide for hitting a single target. It looked like they had hit a wall.

Of all the bullshit!

“You shit! When did you get a fucking shield!”

Stopping his attack, Katsuki waited as the smoke cleared enough for him to see Izuku, hands held up shaking, his palms freshly scorched, and more of his gym clothes burned away. Keeping his hands held up, Izuku frowned, not exactly pleased his new move had been figured out so quickly, but he knew he shouldn’t be so shocked Katsuki was able to do it, “You figured it out?”

“FUCKING! WHEN?”

“Today,” Izuku answered simply.

Katsuki’s jaw opened and closed a few times, but no sound came out. Then he snapped his mouth closed, clicking his tongue against his teeth in annoyance, “Baby Tech and Ghost Girl.”

Izuku blinked in shock, “How...?”

“You were shoving invisible shit around all fucking day. I’m not a fucking idiot.”

No...no you’re not, Kacchan

“It doesn’t matter. I bet that shit fucks your head up, and you’re already at your limit.”

“Says who?”
Katsuki pointed angrily, “You’re bleeding all over yourself. One more shot from me, and you’re done.”

Izuku frowned, “You’re one to talk, Kacchan. You’re not sweating anymore. I bet you’re dehydrated, and it’s taking everything you have to even make those weak explosions now.”

Katsuki’s palms sizzled and he ground his teeth together, “Weak? Don’t you dare look down on me Deku! You think I’m weak!? I crush you and that little trick of yours into dust! When I’m through with you, there won’t be anything left!”

Katsuki leapt into the air, twisting his arms around his body. It was a move Izuku had seen him use once already against Himiko.

*Here it is!*

Izuku braced himself, the green shimmer in front of him glowing bright as he focused on it. Putting all his will power into making it as strong as he could.

Almost all of his will power into making it as strong as he could.

Katsuki twisted in the air, creating a vortex of smoke and fire as he flew towards Izuku, completely focused on smashing through Izuku’s defenses and finally putting Izuku down and claiming his win.

“Howitzer!”

So completely focused that he didn’t notice one of Izuku’s hands drop down and form a fist before pulling back hard.

“Impact!”

The twisting vortex slammed into Izuku’s barrier. Heat, and fire engulfed Izuku, but he didn’t even notice it. The pain in his head drowned everything out making his legs buckle and sending Izuku to his knees. The green glow flickered, engulfed in the angry red fire, then it vanished. With the rest
of the rush forward, but just before Izuku was swallowed up, he attacked. Katsuki was still twisted around, his arm outstretched from throwing his attack. Leaving him wide open from an attack from above. Katsuki never saw the fist sized chunk of concrete coming, but he felt it when it slammed into his shoulder.

*Finally!*

With this trumpet thought echoing in Izuku’s mind, he was sent sailing across the arena before slamming into the ground at the far end of the ring. While Izuku tried to recover on the ground, Katsuki yelled through clenched teeth, gripping his injured shoulder. At just a touch, he knew it was dislocated. It wasn’t his injury that had him so mad, however. His attack may have been able to make it through to Izuku, but that wasn’t because he overpowered it, at least not truly. His attack had been no where near the same strength it had been when he first used it in the last event, and Izuku had to have split his focus to throw that projectile at him. This, on top of his injured shoulder left him furious.

“You little shit!”

Grunting, coughing, hacking and wheezing, Izuku climbed back up to his feet, “What's...wrong, Kacchan? Feel like giving up?”

Izuku knew he was lucky. If Katsuki had attacked him with that move any sooner, he wouldn’t have been just thrown clear of the ring; he would probably be thrown into the stands. But after using his Quirk so much, and all the clouds of dust in the air sucking up his sweat, Katsuki’s power had been greatly reduced. Even better, he was down to one arm.

“I’m going to destroy you, Deku! Do you hear me!?”

“I can do this all day, Kacch-”

“MIDORIYA IZUKU!”

Suddenly everything stopped. Both Izuku and Katsuki froze where they were standing. Slowly both turned their heads towards the judges podium where Midnight was pointing her whip right at Izuku.
Oh no, this can’t be good.

“Midoriya, for your safety, this match is to be ended immediately.”

Izuku’s eye’s bulged while Katsuki looked like he was about to have a brain aneurysm from sheer rage.

“What!? You can’t do that!”

“Are you fucking stupid!? I’ll blow you up if you try that shit!”

Midnight blinked, slightly taken aback bow how vehemently upset both were over this. She hadn’t thought either had enough energy left to scream like they were, or threaten her in Katsuki’s case.

“Listen, you two-”

Then the booing started. While Midnight thought for sure she recognized the first couple of voices, soon the whole crowd was getting involved. She could hear shouts to let them continue, and shouts saying the teachers needed to step in.

“Midnight-sensei! Please! You let Uraraka and Toga’s finish their fight, and they were way more hurt than I am!”

Midnight eyed Izuku, paying close attention to Izuku’s red and blistered skin and the worrying amount of blood he was losing from his nose. “That’s debatable.”

Katsuki pointed at Midnight, “If you try and hand me a win like this, I won’t even show up for the final round. Let Half-and-Half have his worthless gold medal. I’m not here to have wins handed to me on a platter!”

Midnight shook her head, “Do you two even know what you’re doing here?”

Izuku nodded, looking dead serious. “Yes, clearly we know more of what’s at stake than you do,
Sensei.”

“Huh?”

“Sensei, I won’t lie, I do have a personal stake in this match. I don’t just want to win and move on to the finals. I have to beat Kacchan to do it. That means something to me. But that’s not the only reason. We’re here showing we have what it takes to be heroes! And heroes, the ones that reach the top, don’t give up or let others tell them to give up!”

“But your injuries…” Midnight began before Izuku cut her off, “Are everything I was prepared to deal with. I knew what was going to happen if I was going to win. There was no way I was going to fight Kacchan and not get burnt up. I know what I’m doing.”

Katsuki frowned while Midnight watched Izuku closely, both thinking something similar, that Izuku had planned on getting hurt in the match.

“Sensei, this Sports Festival is supposed to be a showcase of how strong the future is, by showing that the students at U.A. are willing to overcome any obstacle. Are you really willing to let the sports fest end with a gifted first place? What kind of example is that to everyone watching?”

Midnight crossed her arms, this kid could get a lot of jobs as a motivational speaker.

“Midoriya, I won’t disagree with you, but you have to understand that as your teacher, your safety is important to me.”

Izuku looked off to the side, eyes looking out over the great dust cloud. For a few seconds, he said nothing before turning back, “Please, let us continue our match. If Kacchan hits me with one more explosion, I’ll concede the match.”

Frowning Midnight closed her eyes as she thought about it. In her ear, Cementoss was voicing his concerns, though they were a little more muted after listening to Izuku. Finally, she simply asked, “Why one more?”

“Because one way or another, this match is going to be decided in this next move.”
There was not a hint of a lie in Izuku’s words. He spoke an absolute truth. Katsuki was now watching him very, very carefully.

*The hell does that mean?*

Midnight chewed on her response. Clearly there was more to this fight than a simple Sports Festival match. It was so much like Himiko’s and Ochako’s match, and she had let that go on for much longer than what would have been normal. She set the president, and if she went back on it, it wouldn’t look good. Especially if, going by the crowd noise, they also wanted the match to go on. And she had to take into account that clearly Izuku had something planned, “Very well. Midoriya, I will hold you to your word.”

Turning back to the crowd, “The match will be allowed to continue, under the condition that Midoria is able to keep from getting any more injured than he is!”

While the crowd cheered around them, Katsuki glared angrily over at Izuku, “What the fuck makes you think you can do anything different before I blast your ass?”

“Because, Kacchan, I have everything I need now.”

Before Katsuki could respond, Izuku took a deep breath through his nose and breathed out of his mouth. At the same time, his green aura vanished, along with the green glow on the large dust cloud that covered the whole arena floor. As more and more of the dust blew away, it became clearer just how much damage Katsuki had caused with his explosions. The ring’s floor had been reduced to a crater. Only a few yards of the white out-of-bounds line remained, the only hint that where the two were standing had once been a tournament ring. Blinking, Katsuki looked around as the dust finally started to blow away then back to Izuku, *What the hell. He’s spent the whole damned match keeping that thing up. Why is he stopping now?*

“Thank you, Kacchan. From the very start, you took this fight seriously. If you hadn’t, I’d never have been able to get this ready for you.”

Izuku lifted his arms up and out to his sides until they were level with his shoulders. Taking one last deep breath, Izuku clenched his hands into tight fists, and his aura raged back to life. At the same time, behind him, the arena floor still covered in dust exploded in bright green light. Izuku focused, recalling the day All Might had helped him realize his Quirk wasn’t worthless, that it had never been worthless. He recalled the moment he learned that the mental limits he had been putting on himself were just that, his own metal limits. Reaching out with his Quirk, he grabbed everything behind him, and like he had done that morning on the beach, lifted everything up. Every single
chunk of concrete that he had been stockpiling since the very start of the match that added up as several tons of concrete for him to use.

Higher and higher, the concrete was lifted up until it had formed a giant wall behind Izuku. While the crowd let out gasps of shock and wonder, Katsuki looked at Izuku in rage, as the pieces started to fall into place. As he realized just what Izuku had been doing.

He was using that damned dust cloud to hide his Quirk! Not just for those little attacks he peppered me with, but to hide that he was making a god damned ammo dump! He was doing that the whole time! Did he think he could get away with splitting his damned self up fighting me!? 

Lifting his palm up he pointed right at Izuku, “I’m going to fucking kill you, Deku! You were looking down on me this whole fight, weren’t you!”

“Kacchan, if I were you, I’d be pointing that hand somewhere else, and not at me.”

Katsuki frowned, and eyed the wall of concrete, “You think I’m worried about you taking pot shots with all that shit, I’ll blast each one!”

Izuku smiled. He meant for it to look like All Mights smile. The smile he shows when he’s about to do something incredible. When he’s about to overcome and win. But Izuku’s look was a bit off. His eyes were a bit unstable, burning with a fire of determination, but with just a pinch of spite. His smile was just a little twisted, more biting and clenched than a shining example of peace.

Izuku also just looked a little mad.

“WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT POT SHOTS?!!”

Izuku’s aura blazed into an inferno, while at the same time, each and every stone, from the smallest pebble to the largest chunk, turned into a burning green sun. Katsuki’s eyes went wide when he realized what was coming next. Izuku wasn’t going to fire one at a time. He was going to fire every single piece at the same time.

Oh... fuck!
The muscles in Izuku’s arms were pulled taut; his hands clenched so tight his knuckles popped and
turned white. Gritting his teeth, Izuku swung his arms out front, opened his hands, and aimed right
for Katsuki. With blood spraying from his nose, Izuku screamed at the top of his lungs, “DELAWARE SMASH!”

The concrete behind Izuku blasted off, creating a solid flying wall. As Izuku’s attack covered the
distance between himself and Katsuki, Katsuki snarled as he quickly thought of what to do. With
his left arm hanging to his side, and being so dehydrated, he knew that trying to blast the whole
wall was not going to happen. Even trying to blast a hole to slip through wasn’t feasible. He’d be
overrun and squashed flat or worse, pushed out of the ring.

So if going through wasn’t an option, Katsuki took the only option he had left. Pointing his hand
down, Katsuki fired explosion after explosion, rocketing himself up into the air. Getting the height
he needed was hard. The explosions were so small; it took several to get airborne, when before
he’d been able to reach the same height with only one. Rocketing into the air, he felt his boots skim
the edge of a chunk of concrete as he vaulted over the whole wall.

Clearing the massive attack, Katsuki grinned triumphantly. Izuku’s last ditch attack had failed.
Looking down, he got ready to twist the knife, and let Izuku know just how badly he was screwed.
He wanted to see the other boy in a panic. He wanted to see his despair at his oncoming defeat.
Katsuki was so sure of his victory, he didn’t even notice that Izuku’s hands weren’t pointing his
way anymore. He wasn’t pushing the wall. Twisting to his side, Izuku threw his hands to the side
in an arc.

“You missed, you worthless sh- URK!”

Katsuki completely missed as something shot from the ground and slammed into him, wrapping
around his arms and tying them against his body. Glancing down, Katsuki’s eyes went wide. It was
Izuku’s gym top he had discarded before the match had started. Now with its sleeves tied off, and
filled with rocks, Izuku had turned it into a makeshift bolas. With his injured arm and his good arm
tied down, he couldn’t create or angle an explosion to wretch himself free, or maneuver in the air at
all. Now, up in the air without anything to grab a hold of, hands popping uselessly, Katsuki was
helpless. Izuku gripped his makeshift weapon and pulled. He pulled as hard as he could and threw
Katsuki into the grass, outside the ring. Katsuki hit the ground and rolled along the grass until his
back hit the far wall of the stadium stands.

As everyone around him paused to take in what had just happened, Izuku stared wide-eyed as
Katsuki landed in the grass. As it finally started to sink in, Izuku felt his legs give out completely
as he fell to his knees. With tears streaming down his face, Izuku screamed.

“You missed, you worthless sh- URK!”

“Bakugou Katsuki is out of bounds! Midoriya Izuku advances to the finals!”
Ochako’s jaw was on the floor. In the span of a minute she had been on such a rollercoaster of emotions that she was feeling the whiplash. First, the utter rage at the idea that Midnight would even dare to try and stop the match. Her’s and Himiko’s booing had gotten them a harsh reprimand from Tenya, reminding them that Midnight was their teacher, and she was to be respected. Himiko responded by plucking his glasses off and chucking them. Fortunately, Momo was able to make him new ones.

Then, when the match was allowed to continue with the caveat that Izuku could not take another hit, she along with the rest of the class was left completely speechless as Izuku put on display just how strong he was. She had seen him lift a lot of weight before. She had *seen* him lift his weight limit before. But to see him lift so much concrete into the air was staggering. Then to see him throw it was something else all together. Of course, Katsuki had to go and almost ruin the moment when he was able to rocket himself over the attack, but just as soon as he had done that, he was wrapped up and thrown out of the ring.

“*Bakugou Katsuki is out of bounds! Midoriya Izuku advances to the finals!*”

Ochako collapsed into her seat, emotions brimming, threatening to burst out of her chest.

“Deku...won…”

The words tingled on her lips, so she said it again, “Deku won...Deku won!” Then the dam burst. Emotions ripped through her. She wanted to go down there right then and there. To celebrate with him, to hold him. To kiss him. To take him to Recover Girl and scold him for going so far. Though she could do that later.

The celebrating and scolding part.

Not the kissing.

Maybe. She wasn’t really sure at the moment, since she was so happy and ecstatic.

“DEKU WON!!!”
“Hell yeah he did!” Himiko cheered happily, “Threw that jackass right out of the ring!”

Soon the rest of the class finally started reacting.

“Did you see that attack? That was nuts!”

“I thought Midoriya was done for when Bakugou got over it.”

“I want to know how either of them were still standing at the end, they both looked like total crap.”

“What about that last thing Midoriya did, with his gym top? Where did that come from?”

Shouto, who had been watching the match silently, finally spoke, “Did Midoriya have that planned out from the beginning? Was he able to plan out a strategy against someone like Bakugou.”

It was hard to fathom, but from the moment Izuku had removed his sweat top, he had led Katsuki to the point where he could defeat him.

“Of course he did. Deku’s been studying heroes and Quirks since he was a little kid. He can analyze and plan with the best of them,” Ochako declared proudly as she gave Shouto a stern look.

“Er...uh oh!” Denki’s sudden concern got everyone’s attention. He was pointing back towards the ring, “Um, Bakugou is charging back into the ring.”

Ochako blinked, what?

“Oh man, you don’t think Bakugou’s gonna do something stupid, right? He wouldn’t attack Midoriya would he? That’s not the kind of guy he is...” Eijirou asked nervously, not liking that Izuku was still on his knees, and now slumped over.

Whirling around, Ochako confirmed that Katsuki was indeed bee-lining it back into the ring. And
given what she knew about the other boy, she could only come to one conclusion. He was about to try and hurt Izuku.

**THAT MOTHER FUCKER!!!**

“I’LL BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HIM IF HE TOUCHES DEKU!”

Slapping her hand on herself, Ochako grabbed the railing and prepared to throw herself down to the arena. She was stopped as several of her friends and classmates pulled her back.

“Uraraka, wait a second!” Tenya grunted as he wrestled with her.

“Easy! Don’t go doing something stupid!” Hitoshi grunted as he tried not to get thrown off, not prepared for how vigorously Ochako would fight back.

Finally, Himiko grabbed Ochako’s head and pointed, “Midnight is down there. She’s a pain in the ass, but she won’t let Izuku get hurt. Calm the fuck down.”

Ochako watched as Katsuki came to a stop right besides Izuku while Midnight hurried her way over.

Ripping himself free of the sweat top, Katsuki seethed as he rushed back into the ring, “Deku! Deku, you fucking shit!”

Katsuki was furious. Over and over, the same thought replayed in his mind. Izuku had played him. He had strung him along. Made him dance in the palm of his hand. Izuku must have seen this as just a game. With all his little plots and schemes, it was just a joke. Izuku was still on his knees, head bowed. His scream at his victory had long faded and been swallowed up by the noise of the crowd. Now he was quiet and still. Back in the ring, Katsuki stood over Izuku, “You really were looking down on me this whole time, weren’t you!”

Izuku didn’t respond.
“What, you think you can just ignore me now!? I’m not going to let you look down on me! You couldn’t take me in a straight fight, so you went and pulled this shit. You know it, too!...Stop looking at the damned ground and answer me!”

Finally, painfully, Izuku spoke. The adrenaline he had during the fight was all but spent, and without it to help drive him forward, he was feeling the full effects of the match. Still, he had to answer, “Kacchan...you’re too strong.”

Katsuki blinked, not expecting that, “Huh?”

“Kacchan, I trained for months. I worked and I worked to get to a place you got to naturally just by being yourself. Even when we both got into U.A., you were still ahead of me. This match...everything about it favored you. You’re mad I didn’t fight you like you would, but I’m not you. If I did that, I wouldn’t have fought you at my best. I had to risk everything on a long shot plan. If one single thing had gone wrong, you would have won. I had to push myself hard just to meet you here, and then I had to go further beyond, just to hope to win.”

Izuku took a shuddering breath. It hurt to talk, but he couldn’t stop now. The flood gates were open, and everything was spilling out, “I brought everything I had against you because I didn’t just want to win. I had to win. I...I told you to get to be the next number one, I had to get past you. Do you remember what you said?”

“You’d have to get through me.”

“And you were right. I gave you everything I had, Kacchan, because you deserved nothing less than everything I had.”

Katsuki looked down at Izuku, aware that Midnight was right besides them now, “You must really fucking hate me, if you wanted to surpass me so badly.”

Finally Izuku looked up, meeting Katsuki’s eyes. His skin was burned and blistered, his eyes glazed, and he had the worst bloody nose Katsuki had ever seen. But even in his shape, he looked Katsuki right in the eye. “I’ve never hated you, Kacchan. I could never hate my friends.”

Katsuki sucked in a sharp breath through his teeth, “I stopped being your friend a long time ago, Deku.”
Izuku nodded, “Maybe, but I never stopped being yours.”

Katsuki didn’t know what to say to that. Midnight, seeing neither had anything left to say at the moment, knelt down beside Izuku, “If you two want to keep talking, do it in Recovery Girl’s clinic. Can you stand, Midoriya?”

After a slow nod from Izuku, Midnight gingerly helped Izuku to his feet, and escorted both of them to the clinic.

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Sitting in the waiting room with several minutes left before he was to be called up to the ring, Izuku laid out the plan he had to win his match against Katsuki. A win by concession was out of the question. There was no way Katsuki would ever give up. A win by incapacitation was possible, but still very unlikely. Izuku didn’t have the power to hold Katsuki indefinitely with his Quirk, nor did he have any resources to tie him down either. So that left knockout or ringout. Both were risky, but then again, getting into the ring at all with Katsuki was risky. Of the two, ringout seemed to be the more feasible way to win. So Izuku went about thinking up ways to force Katsuki out of the ring.

The problem was, Katsuki had shown that he was able to stay airborne for short periods of time. So even if Izuku could toss him out, he could push himself into the air and back into the ring before he hit the ground. So he had to neutralize Katsuki’s Quirk. One way was to get him to use it, a lot. His Quirk needed his sweat. If he ran out of sweat, his Quirk would at the very least be weakened. Another way to help would be to somehow get him down to just one hand. Izuku wasn’t entirely sure how he would do that, but he would keep an eye out for an opportunity. Back to the issue of getting Katsuki dehydrated, if Izuku was going to get Katsuki to use his explosions, he was also going to have to face the fact that he was going to be getting hit by them.

A lot.

One way to help mitigate the damage he was going to end up taking was his Anti-Smash Barrier. Izuku paused and pulled out his notebook, scribbling down, coming up with a better super name for a new shield move...Don’t let Ochako see this. Ever.

The move should protect him from the larger explosions. The smaller ones, Izuku would have to rely on the fighting skills All Might taught him to minimize the damage. However, just relying on Katsuki attacking would not be enough to get him to over use his Quirk. Izuku would need him to
be using it in defense, too. Fortunately, Katsuki would be giving him the tools he would need to force that. With each explosion, he would damage the ring, giving him ammo to throw at him. Katsuki would have to use his quirk to explode the debris or risk getting hurt. The dust cloud his attacks kicked up could also be used, too. Dust sticks to anything remotely wet. If Katsuki was constantly getting covered in dust, it might muffle his explosion and soak up sweat. He might also be able to use it as cover. If he could hold it with his Quirk, it would in theory glow, and hide the glow of the broken concrete he was using as projectiles.

So that took care of wearing Katsuki down, but how would he make the final move? He needed Katsuki weakened, and in a situation where he would be totally at the mercy of his Quirk. He needed Katsuki in the air. He needed to come up with an attack that would be powerful enough that Katsuki couldn’t blow it up, or even want to try. Of course an attack like that would require a lot of ammo. He could use the dust kicked up to hide the fact he was stockpiling everything Katsuki broke. He’d still use some to attack throughout the match, of course. If he didn’t attack at all, that would raise suspicion too quickly. But he would have to be careful and not use too much. Which meant he was going to be relying more on close range fighting to force Katsuki to use his Quirk. Izuku was okay with this. Getting a chance to punch Katsuki in the face was very enticing. So a weakened Katsuki would be in the air, then what? What could he do to get him out of the ring while also making sure he couldn’t break his hold? He needed something to hold onto Katsuki that wasn’t part of him like his own clothing…

“And that’s when you decided to use your damned shirt.”

Katsuki frowned, sitting on the clinic bed as he watched Izuku getting tended to by Recovery Girl.

“More or less, yeah.”

Izuku shrugged sheepishly, hissing lightly when poked one of his burns as she applied ointment to it. Both had already received their kisses from Recovery Girl. While Katsuki was finished with his treatment since he could afford to be fully healed, Izuku was getting worked on to minimize the exhaustion he was going to feel when she was done with him. He still had another match coming up, Recovery Girl reminded him.

“Fuck, how the hell do you come up with that shit?”

“Well...I’ve been watching you for years, Kacchan. So…”
“So you’ve been planning how to take me out since we were kids?”

“What!? No! Nothing like that,” Izuku started to panic at the idea, “I’m not like that at all. You’re looking into it too much. I’d never think about getting revenge on you like that. Or shipping you a box full of spiders. Ha ha ha haaa…”

Katsuki looked at Izuku with an almost unreadable expression, “Who the fuck mentioned spiders?”

“Eep! Um not me. Nope…”

Recovery Girl sighed, “Will you stop fidgeting? I swear, you’re worse than Uraraka. You’re lucky you have time to get some treatment. The judges decided to start the timer for the next match after they fixed the ring. You could have easily been forced to face that Todoroki boy half-dead.”

Izuku frowned, “I know…”

“And don’t you forget what I told you. I want you back here, win or lose, so I can run a CT scan on you. I don’t like how hard you pushed your Quirk in your match. That geyser of a nose bleed you had has me worried.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Katsuki frowned before swinging his legs off the bed. Recovery girl frowned. “And where are you going?”

“I’m healed, right? I got better things to do than sit here and watch Deku get worked on.”

Recovery Girl sighed before waving him off. Getting to his feet, Katuski started for the door but stopped, “Deku. You’re not planning on going easy on that Half-and-Half bastard, are you?”

Izuku’s eyes snapped open and his mouth hung open in shock, not expecting that kind of question from Katsuki at all, “Wait huh? Why are you asking me that? Why would I do something like that. I’m trying to win and become the next number one.”
“Because you both got pieces of shit as fathers.”

Again, Izuku was shocked, “Kacchan what are you...wait, what do you know?”

“He talked to you right? Told you about his old man.”

It took Izuku a second to process that. Shouto had taken him to a secluded hallway away from everyone else. The only way Katsuki would know about their conversation was, “Kacchan, did you follow us!?”

“Don’t worry about that.”

“Kacchan!”

“Oh, shove it. I want to make sure you’re not going to let yourself get distracted by all that shit because you feel sorry for the fucking bastard.”

When Izuku didn’t answer right away, Katsuki turned to look back at him, and the look on Izuku’s face was just the answer he was looking for.

“At least you aren’t a complete fucking idiot.”

Katsuki started to turn back for the door to leave but once again stopped. Quickly, and shockingly aggressively, he turned back around and pointed right at Izuku. At this point neither noticed the door swing open.

“Let me make one thing crystal fucking clear! You might have beaten me today, but the next time I’m fucking destroying you! And another thing, don’t you fucking dare lose to that Half-and-Half bastard! I’m not going to settle for a rival that gets fucking second place. Do you hear me? You fucking win, so when I beat you, everyone will know I’m the greatest!”

Izuku’s eyes went wide at that declaration. His mind raced, “your… rival?”
“You heard what I said. Don’t go making it fucking weird.”

“That was so manly!”

Katsuki’s head snapped around, finally noticing that the door behind him was wide open. Standing in the doorway was most of the whole class with Ochako front and center and Eijirou poking his head over the crowd and giving Katsuki a big thumbs up, “A rivalry declaration-- that’s the most manly thing ever!”

Katsuki’s eye twitched, “Shitty Hair, shut the fuck up.”

While the class grumbled and protested, Izuku waved sheepishly before Recovery Girl forced him to get back to being still so she could treat him, “You stay still, and the rest of you, I’m busy getting this boy ready for his next match, so everyone out.”

Katsuki started to leave along with everyone else, but Ochako didn’t get out of his way, “You gonna move, Round Face?”

Ochako looked up at Katsuki, her face blank as she bit her tongue to stop herself from saying anything. So while almost everyone else didn’t notice anything, Himiko was watching the two closely. Katsuki looked down at Ochako glaring at her. As he did, he got a good look at her eyes and the fire burning in them. It wasn’t a fire of competitiveness, determination, or even anger, which he was used to seeing whenever she looked at him. This was darker.

Much, much darker.

Grunting, Katsuki brushed past Ochako as he left with the rest of the class, leaving Ochako alone in the doorway, with the rest of her friends waiting out in the hallway.

“Hey, Uraraka,” Izuku said, smiling up at her, tears brimming in his eyes. “I won.”

Ochako blinked, before she broke into a huge sweet smile, “Yeah, yeah you did, Deku. You were awesome out there. You looked really cool...Even if you overdid it.”
Izuku laughed gently, “Maybe a little.”

“Well don’t worry. I’m not going to get on your case.”

“Hurray!”

“Right now.”

“Doh!”

Rolling her eyes, Ochako shook her head with a chuckle, “I’ll tell you what, depending on how your finals match goes...I maaaay let you off the hook.”

“What if I punch Todoroki in the face?”

This time Ochako broke into a fit, “You know what, that might just be enough.”

Recovery Girl pulled out a fresh pack of gauze, “If you two are done flirting, I need to get to work. So shoo!”

Izuku was extremely grateful that he was so burned up, so no one could tell he was blushing like mad, while Ochako stammered out a quick goodbye and left, closing the door behind her. Now left alone with Recovery Girl, Izuku thought back to what had just happened. He might not be back to being friends with Katsuki, but for Katsuki to recognize him as a rival? Izuku couldn’t have hoped for a better outcome. But there would be time to dwell on it later. Now? Now, he had to focus on his next match. He was going to be facing Shouto in the finals.

And that came with its own host of unique issues.

Walking back to their seats with her friends, Ochako kept quiet. She did her best to keep on a smile, but the worried looks shared between Tsuyu and Himiko made it obvious she wasn’t doing a great job of hiding her emotions. Emotions that were raging and twisting her heart and soul. She was so
happy for Izuku-- so proud of him. He had overcome so much to reach where he was. It was truly truly inspiring. But her joy had been tainted because Katsuki just couldn’t leave Izuku alone. She had been the first to step through that door when Katsuki had been talking. So she had seen just how happy Izuku was when Katsuki called him his rival.

He had been genuinely happy, and that terrified Ochako to her core.

She had once wondered if Izuku would truly just forgive Katsuki after everything the other boy had done to him, and now it looked like she had her answer. She knew Izuku was an abuse victim, and how many news stories there were of victims forgiving and taking back their abusers, only to end up getting hurt again. She had thought about that the evening after their first lesson with All Might, after watching Izuku and Katsuki talk. Now, it seemed like her worst fear was coming true. Izuku was going back to him, as Katsuki twisted their bond into something that benefited himself, calling it a rivalry.

Izuku might not be under Katsuki’s shadow anymore, but the boy still had his claws sunk deep into Izuku, not letting him get away and move on. Dragging him down just to use him.

It made her so angry.

No, she was past angry. When Katsuki had looked at her after saying such bullshit to Izuku, her anger, her rage had turned into something else. Something dark, something black that she could feel staining her soul. It was hate. She hated Katsuki. She hated him so much, and she didn’t care. She had made a promise to herself she would always be there to catch Izuku if he ever stumbled while moving past Katsuki, and she would be. Now though, she was beginning to wonder if she needed to start dealing with Katsuki herself.

Shaking those thoughts from her head, she tried to focus on other things. Focus on how Izuku was so close to showing everyone how incredible he was. Focus on how proud she was. Focus on how happy for him she was. She even let those feelings she knew she shouldn’t be thinking about bubble up and bring a blush to her cheeks.

There would be time later to figure out how to finally deal with Katsuki, when he inevitably ended up hurting Izuku again.

Chapter End Notes
First things first, I want to apologize. Normally I try and make sure I reply to everyone that is kind enough to leave a comment on my work. You all took the time to write something so it's only right I send yo a reply back. I have not been able to do that for the last chapter. Things have gotten a little crazy here time wise and so I just haven't had a chance to sit down and type out my replies. So I wanted to take this chance to say to everyone, Thank You so very very much. You're comments, reviews mean a lot to me. They help give me motivation and keep me writing. SO form the bottom of my heart, thank you.

That being said, after a year, a literal year of build up. I give you Izuku vs Katsuki. I really hope you all like it. The ending, with Izuku using his sweat top to wrap Katsuki up and pull him out of the ring. That was in the first draft I wrote about a week before the very first chapter. So yeah, they fought and now everyone is on good terms and can be friends now right? Ha ha ha ha ha haaaaa, oh lord. Yeeeeaaaaah, no. I hope I was able to stick the landing for this, and you all enjoyed the ride too. Now, now it's just one more chapter until the Sports Festival arc is done. I'm sure it'll be smooth sailing for Izuku from here right...right? Uh oh.

If you liked the chapter and the story so far, please feel free to leave a comment, or if you have some critiques please I welcome all reviews too. And THIS time I'm going to try and find the time to type out my replies darn it!

A huge HUGE thank you to my beta reader and editor Tmalsia!

End Notes

My first time writing in years, and it's my first time with BNHA. But you can't help it when inspiration hits you like a freaking truck, now can you. What's so different with this story compared to my last big fic, is that I now know about google docs. So instead of just sitting at my computer and hammering out chapters like I did back in college, most of this was written on my phone in like 5 to 10 min intervals while at work inbetween lab tests and projects. Or late at night right before bed. Gotta say tech is just great sometimes. Since it has been YEARS since i've sat down and wrote anything like this, I'm sure there are grammar mistakes and such I missed. Please feel free to point these out, and of course I welcome any and all criticism.

So this is a retelling of BNHA but with some pretty obvious tweaks along the way. I was inspired after reading a few other retellings so I decided to give it a go myself. I hope you readers will enjoy this piece and I look forward to bringing you more adventures with our precious cinnamon rolls. Forewarning the M rating is really there just for later on. So don't really pay it any mind. Also please make sure you check out my inspirations for this story! I'll put them in a list below.

Inspired by:
What's in a Hoard - Titus621

Total Command - Epsilon110

Molecular Telekinesis - sunsetskywrites

The Mourning Star - rossorwell

Deku: The Telekinetic Hero - sremiehzla

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!