Flight of the Dragonfly

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Flight of the Dragonfly

by theantumbrae

Summary

Izuku Midoriya was eight when he found himself awake at night, unable to sleep. There was a strange buzzing at the edge of his mind, a presence persistently pleading for its release. Izuku decided to let go. Then came the swarm.
"Careful everyone! The situation is especially dangerous today!" yelled the Battle Hero, Gunhead. The hero was acting as crowd control for the current fight, making sure no civilians were caught in the crossfire.

"Best Jeanist and Gang Orca have everything under control," he continued. "The villain seems to have some sort of spatial warping quirk, and it's giving them a bit of trouble. I wouldn't want anybody to get hurt now, so please stand back!"

Indeed, the scene was rather dangerous for the common bystander. Debris went everywhere in multiple directions. Whether objects were being sucked in or shot out from the holes, the villain's quirk sprouted destruction wherever it manifested. Even so, it wasn't a surprise to find an eight-year-old Izuku Midoriya right in the thick of the action.

Behind the barriers the heroes had set up, Izuku was eagerly watching the fight. But from Gang Orca's sonic screeches to Best Jeanist weaving in and out through the villain's defenses, it wasn't long until the villain was defeated.

"Wow, so cool!" exclaimed the green-headed boy. "But what exactly was that villain's quirk? Gunhead had said that it was spatial warping, but it has to have more than that. Objects were coming through every now and then. Perhaps some sort of portal creation? But then there were those sucking attacks. Portals to space?" He quickly began writing down his observations of the battle into his notebook, his constant muttering going through all the details he saw of the battle. Suddenly, a voice from behind addressed him.

"Hey kid, you all right?"
"Huh?" Izuku took a glance at the woman that had spoken. "I, oh, uh… yeah. I just get a little excited whenever I see a hero fight, is all. Nothing to worry about."

"Ah, I know what you mean kid. It's always a sight to see the heroes in action." The stranger took a pause, considering Izuku's appearance. "But, on the other hand, I couldn't help but notice your uniform. Don't you have school or something? You'll be late if you don't hurry."

Izuku's eyes widened in realization. "Your right! Thanks miss. I've got to go!"

The woman laughed. "No problem kid. Now get going!"

Izuku started his way toward his school, departing from the scene of destruction left behind by the villain's quirk. However, unbeknownst to him, something was amiss with the world. While Izuku had arrived to the fight by himself, he wasn't alone - not truly - when he left the scene for school. And he wouldn't be for a long while.

The day had been going great for the most part. First was that fight with that strange villain in the morning. It was an enlightening experience, giving Izuku a nice problem to solve given the villain's quirk. Something to add later to his notebook, in fact, to think about for future reference.

And then there was school. Kaachan had seemed more subdued than most days; he didn't even bother to cause any trouble with anyone during recess or lunch. Izuku was intrigued with the uncharacteristic change, but not enough so to ask Bakugou directly. That was never a good idea, after all. Not ever since Bakugou had changed.

It wasn't until after school when Bakugou had spotted a girl sitting on some steps, twirling a piece of paper up in the air with her quirk, that he acted up to his usual self.

"And what of it Deku!? What are you gonna do about it, huh? You don't even have a quirk!" yelled the sandy haired boy known as Katsuki Bakugou. The other two at his side, a boy with wings and another with extendable fingers, voiced their agreement.

"But Kaachan, that's wrong! Hurting other people is bad!" Izuku responded. He was standing in front of the girl, another victim of Bakugou's sudden craving for violence. She was Sobbing, the piece of paper she had been playing with burnt to a crisp. Izuku had stood tall, having rushed in to prevent another attempt of his friend releasing an explosion onto the girl.

Bakugou continued to glare at him. Izuku decided to further his words with his friend. "Don't you want to be a hero?" Izuku continued.

Bakugou's eye twitched. "Shut up! You useless, quirkless Deku! What right do you have in telling me what to do?" He stopped, a grin appearing on his face. "In fact," he raised his hand up, lights and small trembles emitting from his palm, "since you're so interested in blocking her from my blast, why don't you take it instead?" Bakugou suddenly charged up another of his explosions in his palm and unleashed it point blank in Izuku's face. Izuku stumbled to the ground. The girl, seeing the opportunity for escape, ran away with no care for her savior. The two accomplices of Bakugou laughed up a storm.

"Not so tough now, are you Deku? Why don't you just crawl on home now, huh? You'd do the world a favor." Bakugou and the other two walked away, leaving a stunned Izuku upon the ground.

Izuku laid there for a while. He stared up at the sky, watching the clouds roll by and listening to the vivid ambiance of the cityscape around him.
He didn't know how long it had been, but he eventually got up from his position on the ground. He went to look at himself in a nearby puddle. His breath hitched as he looked at his reflection, a slight tear coming upon his eye. It was a reminder of what had just happened - of what had been happening for quite some time now. A tear dropped into the puddle, the splash distorting the image of his face.

Not... not yet. He thought. I just need to get home first. Then I can...

Izuku felt at his face. It wasn't too bad. It stung like the stings of a dozen hornets for sure, and it was a bit red from what he had seen, but he'd received worse. If anything, Kaachan had been more mild in his aggression than most days. Izuku picked up his backpack - the same All Might one he had had since he started school - and headed off towards home.

He thought about other things during his walk. The way the wind blew on his face, the sound of water as it flowed, or the endless sounds of the people that passed him without a care in the world. Even the savory taste of the katsudon that Mom made. It wasn't long before he found himself at his doorstep.

He opened the door and called out, "Mom?"

There wasn't an answer.

She must still be at work, then. Of course, considering how things were going. Mom has been having trouble for a while now. It doesn't help that... dad has never been around, but we're getting by, I suppose.

Izuku then found himself in his room, a darkened place littered with All Might paraphernalia and other hero merchandise. The place acted as a refuge from the reality of the world. A reminder of things that could be, that things could get better.

He walked over to his bed, and collapsed atop its surface with all the effort of a puppet cut from its strings. It wasn't long before the sobs rang true. The proverbial dam that hid his emotions for so long allowed itself to open, pain and hurt all hurdling out and slamming in full force.

Ka—Kaachan hurt me again. He... He didn't even hesitate. He—Why did it hurt so much? Weren't we friends before? Why? Why? Why? Why? What changed? Did I do something? Did I—I just... I just wish that we could— It... it was all too much. Why—

A jolt of darkness.

Two massive beings, swirling in an endless void. Shrinking ever so slightly, shards and pieces falling off one by one. Each piece jettisoned in its own way to-and-fro. One had set its course for its destination below, but something came in its way. A bridge was gapped, a connection formed, but just as quickly sealed, closed off. But that was enough. The being had gone through. It seemed hesitant, confused, observing its new surroundings. But it made its decision, darting away into the unknown. It reached out, moved, aiming for a new destination, landing just above hi-

Things. Millions and millions of things. Beneath the ground. In the sky. Within the walls. It was too much. Too much. Handle. Too handle. Too—And then again came darkness.

Izuku bolted up from his bed; hard, heavy breaths filled the eerie stillness of the room. He looked over to the window. It was dark.

I fell asleep? A nightmare? But it felt so re—
A buzzing sound found itself emerging from the back of his mind. A gradual buildup of static, scratches, chitters, and the like. It was... He could... he could feel them. Feel them all. Their many legs dragging their bodies, eyes swirling the world to a strange kaleidoscope, hardened exteriors bumping and interfering with their surroundings. The buzzing was begging for a release; a function jammed from its task. Almost as if a response to his current state.

He let it be. And released.

And he screamed. They were everywhere. Ants, bees, hornets, spiders. They covered the walls, arriving in through the vents and the window held ajar. Making their way from the farthest reaches of the darkness towards his person. Converging like an army in unison. Then he heard something else.

A yell in the distance. "Izuku! Don't worry, I'm coming, baby!"

He reeled in panic.

Mom. She was home. Of course. Of course she was home. She couldn't see this, see him like this. The insects, the bugs, she would—what would she think? He closed his eyes. Looking for a way out. For something that could get him out of this horror.

Please, he begged, please, go away! Go!

"Izuku!" The door slammed open.

"Mom! Wait! Don't—"

But he had felt it, and they had responded long before the door had opened. When he opened his eyes, when he had found his mom at his door, he found that the various creepy crawlies had retreated back into the depths, disappearing into the shadows and the outside, leaving no evidence of the presence behind. Nothing left that would hint of anything wrong. Izuku stayed there, upright and with wide, unblinking eyes.

"Izuku, honey, are you okay?" She walked up to his bed and hugged him.

He turned his head toward her. "I... I can't tell her. The insects, the bugs... All over the walls, all over the sheets, crawling all over—"I... yeah, mom. It was... Just...nightmares."

"Oh honey," she cooed as she rubbed his back in slow, gentle circles. "I'm so sorry. But you don't need to worry now. I'm here."

Yes, everything was fine, now. All fine. Mom was here, and the insects were all gone. For now, he'd forget all about it. For now, he'd sleep.

Chapter End Notes

There we go everyone. My first fic, up and running. This little idea came up in my head and I decided "eh, why not," and well, here we are. And in case you aren't aware, I've taken inspiration from a rather spectacular web serial called Worm. Actual factors from that universe won't necessarily be taking up the big stage, but rather are going to be influencing events in more... subtle ways, you could say. I mean, I'm sure some of you
Worm veterans out there have already seen some parallels. Anywho, I'm open to all thoughts and opinions, and would like to know what you all think!

And as per request by the great Wildbow himself, I'd like to mention that the characters, setting, and ideas of Worm are of no possession of mine, but belong to the wondrous John C. McCrae.

Thank you all for reading. 'Til next time!
A/N: And hello again! I'm back with this story's second chapter. For anybody that's curious, it's going to take a bit until we reach canon. For now we'll be focusing on the way Izuku's newfound powers of snuggles and hugs are going around and changing things up. Oh, and a few alterations were made to chapter 1, but nothing too major that would really garner a reason to backtrack. Anyways, enjoy!

P.S. Sorry I took so long to post again on here. Not exactly focusing all that much on AO3, but to offset that I'll post a couple all at once. I'll try my best at s consist rate in the future!

Izuku awoke from his slumber. Groggily, he yawned and pulled his sheets over his body, rescinding back to the comforting grasp of sleep. That is, until memories of last night resurfaced. Flashes of chitinous bodies and the chittering of insects came to mind. He shot straight up after that.

To his relief, Izuku found the room empty. Aside from the various All Might merchandise that littered the walls and shelves, nothing in particular caught his eye. He was safe.

But... then he felt it. The soft, effervescent buzz that lingered within his mind. It wasn't as strong as it was last night, however; in fact, it was almost non existent.

Wonder why that is?

But the inner workings of the buzzing didn't matter right now. What did matter was that it was still there. Taunting him, begging to be used, rather than to be hidden away and scorned. It plead and plead, constantly striving for Izuku's attention. He sat there trying to ignore it, wishing it to go away. It didn't, despite his best wishes.

And so, Izuku had made his decision. He got up to his door and locked it - he didn't want a repeat incident like what happened last night, after all. He then turned back around and sat at the foot of his bed. He felt for the foreign presence in his mind; he thought of what occurred last night, and considered what it meant. Again, he relieved the buzzing in his mind.

Instead of the invading swarm of the night prior, there came a single household centipede - a gejigeji, as he recalled mom calling them - from his room's air vent. He flinched back for a bit, reeling in the sight of the creature. But then noticed the insect had stopped moving halfway across the ceiling to where he sat. He considered what he saw.

It's almost like... it's responding to my thoughts?

He sat forward, and took a deep breath. He willed it to move. It complied. The centipede crawled its way across the ceiling and down atop his bed, it's very many legs skittering away until it laid in front of him. Izuku stared at the creature, its many appendages and antenna stiff and standing, awaiting for
an order. He still held a bit of fear, especially when remembering last night's event. He took another
breath.

_I've gone this far, I can't back out now._

He closed his eyes, and set his hand down. He felt the centipede crawling up his outstretched fingers,
slowly making its way to his palm. He opened his eyes.

To his surprise, the creature didn't bite. In fact, now that he thought about it, the centipede displayed
no outward characteristics known of the species. Nor any insect at all, really. He prodded again at his
power, focusing on the organism that lay on his palm. The centipede responded to his commands:
rearing up like a horse, running around in circles, and giving a 20 armed wave. The display swirled
amuck in his mind. It could only mean one thing, after all.

_This is… I… I have a quirk! A quirk! I'm not useless! I could prove Kaachan wrong. All those times
he had been brought down, shoved, beaten. It didn't matter anymore. He could be like All Might. He
could… he could be a hero._

He spent a few minutes daydreaming about his future, shooting his arms in the air and heading to his
computer, opening his favorite video of his idol, watching it over and over again in celebration.

But then he came off of his high. A bad feeling was growing in his stomach. There was something in
the back of his mind that he couldn't shake off. Something that he just knew was true. He thought
again of last night. The fear he felt if his mom were to discover him covered head to toe in a living
mass of insects. He imagined, the fear in her face if she were to see her boy covered in insects.

_He… couldn't. This quirk, this power…_

_It was a villain quirk._

The insects, the bugs… People would never accept it. Accept him. Insects were feared by everyone.
They would fear his quirk, be feared of him. He… He couldn't face that again. The rejection. The
isolation. Kaachan was already enough. He couldn't bare any more than what he already faced. He
began to sob, a quiet gasp emitting from his lips.

_Even with a quirk, I'm of no use. Kaachan… Kaachan was right… He could never be—_

A slight tingling sensation spurred him from his thoughts. It was the centipede, rubbing its body
against his palm.

_Almost like a puppy…_

He smiled, and let his finger slide over the length of the insect's body.

"Thank you," he sniffled.

He watched the centipede in fascination, and then his mind had a realization. Even a centipede - with
all its many squirming legs and generally creepy appearance - had found a way to comfort him. To
make him smile.

_He — He could do the same, couldn't he? His quirk didn't have to be what defined him as a hero.
There were other ways to being a hero. I just need to use my quirk as a secondary measure, is all._

The computer suddenly let out a line of laughter. "It's fine now. Why?" asked the virtual All Might.
Izuku looked down again at his new friend. He smiled again.

"Because I am here!"

"I'll name you… Rikai. How do you feel about that?"

The arthropod didn't respond, of course. But it didn't matter; the creature - a male, from what Izuku found when he checked - had done something miraculous, pulling him from his saddened state. It was responsible for his epiphany. Izuku owed the insect — Rikai — a whole lot.

He let his control over Rikai go. The centipede retreated away under his bed, no doubt looking for other insects to feed on. Izuku let him be.

_Everything can still work out well._ A large grin had taken over his face. _I can do this._

"Mom!" he yelled. He jumped off his bed, unlocking and pulling his door open. "I wanna start practicing martial arts!"

_I was going to be a superhero._

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Izuku had been going to a dojo for the past few months. His mom was worried when he first mentioned the idea, bringing up the effort he would have to commit if he were to go through with his wishes. He assured her that this was what he wanted to do to become a hero.

But then came the topic of money. Izuku knew that he and his mom weren't all that well off in terms of income, and had thought real hard when for when the topic would be mentioned. He proposed selling some of his All Might memorabilia, and for his mom stop getting him anymore presents for his birthdays or the holidays. His mother had outright refused the notion at first, but Izuku assured her that this was what he wanted. She eventually relented. Izuku jumped in joy and suffocated his mother in hugs.

It took weeks of strained searching, but he and his mom eventually found a joint dojo that fell just barely within their budget. While the place normally taught Silat and Eskrima as separate programs, the dojo's sensei, one Kage Kawabata, sympathised with Izuku's situation when he heard about the quirkless boy's desire to become a hero. Kawabata-sensei, as he would be called from that point on, gave the Midoriyas a discount, but only so long as Izuku promised to show up to each meeting on time, placing great focus on how difficult it would be for Izuku to become a hero if he didn't. Izuku immediately agreed.

The first martial art style was taught on Mondays and Fridays, the latter delegated to Wednesdays and an alternating schedule between Saturdays and Sundays. The setting did wonders for Izuku. He truly enjoyed it there; the thrill he found training amongst his various peers a bonus when considering all he was learning.

And so, there stood Izuku Midoriya one evening as he left the dojo, heading home from one back-breaking session of Eskrima. Although his body was extensively tired, he still felt up to testing out his quirk. Thus, he pulled up his pack. From inside he took out some shaded glasses, and promptly put them on. He also got out one of his grandmother’s canes that he found deep within his mom’s closet, extended it to its full length, and let his mind fade into the background. In an instant, he felt the reach of millions of organisms within a two block radius. The feeling was freeing - a refreshing
reprieve from his day.

What he had found out with his quirk was that he could hear and see through the insects. That particular ability he had discovered in the middle of the night when he was falling asleep. Again, another experience he wouldn't want a repeat of considering what is was that he saw that night. As such, Izuku made it one of his goals to ensure that he was a master in seeing and hearing to the best of his ability. He was able to focus his sight and hearing through the insects now, though the hearing still needed some work.

However, so far the ability only worked if he concentrated really, really hard. Enough concentration was needed, in fact, that that he loss focus on most - if not all - external stimuli that wasn’t connected to his bugs.

His body’s sight of his surroundings didn’t really matter, however; he could just place a couple bugs on his head to see where he was going and that specific problem would cease to cause him trouble. But, the constant collisions with random pedestrians was, and often disrupted his concentration, spurring him out of the moment. Thankfully, the people around him generally wove their way around a young boy with some shaded glasses and a cane.

_Wouldn’t want to cause to blind kid to fall down now, would you?_

A few minutes into his walk, and Izuku stumbled upon something unusual. He stopped in his tracks. Some sort of powder had killed one of the hornets he was using to observe his surroundings. He sent a couple more bugs in and set his mind to viewing the run-down building he sent them into. Through the eyes of the bugs he found stacks of money and an abundance of guns. Further surveillance revealed a table of the powder - white, he noticed - that had killed his hornet. His eyes widened at the discovery. There was no doubt about what it was he found.

It’s a yakuza hideout. What are the chances of finding one of the last safehouses of a dying organization? Well, no matter. The place looks like a good chance to test out my fighting skills, huh?

Izuku shook his head. _What kind of thoughts are those! I'd get myself killed thinking things like that! Not to mention it being illegal!_ Izuku continued to berate himself over the mere notion of barging into a yakuza hideout and expecting to come out alive without being riddled with bullets. He continued walking on.

But he couldn't shake the feeling that him walking away was just wrong. The yakuza were criminals, causing harm and destruction in many places even with the heroes that were running about. Innocents would be hurt if he just let what he saw be.

_I'll… I'll think over it for tonight. No need to rush into anything. It's not like they won't be there tomorrow._

The next week found Izuku two blocks away from the yakuza hideout. He thought over what he could do for the last seven days, spending hours over the possible ways he could take down the hideout without being outed himself.

As it was, he was within a rather comfortable ice cream parlor. A place that acted not only as a place to concentrate his focus, but also had great ice cream, from what he had heard.

So there he was, just digging in to his mint chocolate chip, when his surveillance bees picked up on a disturbance in hideout.

"Gre… thin… drugs ar… ready for ano…"
He was still working on picking up audio with his bugs, but what he had heard had been enough. There were people in there just asking to be arrested. He then enacted the second part of his plan.

In a discrete alleyway, Izuku found a payphone with his bugs. The various insects began to dial up a number. The phone rang, and then a voice came through.

"Hello? What's your emergency?"

Then came the hard part. Again, like his audio receptiveness, the next part of the plan relied too much on something he was having trouble mastering, but he pushed away his worries in place for action.

His bugs came together, and began to create sound.

"Yakuza… hideout… found…" relayed a harsh cacophony of chittering insects. Izuku ensured that the voice was as feminine and light as possible, while giving a sense of authority - something he thought up to keep the faceless mass of bugs as far from his own identity as possible. He thought up the ability just last week, deep within his planning session regarding the yakuza. He had trouble in getting the syllables to sound well enough together to form words, but a week of constant attempts brought him able enough to form individual words he had practiced hour on end.

_Hopefully, the conversation doesn’t deviate too much from what I predicted. I don’t have many terms mastered that wouldn’t just sound like a chittering of bugs, after all._

Izuku continued with his bug speech, giving the operator the address of the yakuza hideout he had found, and the loadout of the twenty or so yakuza members inside.

"Drugs… money…" he added. Over the phone, the operator voiced her thoughts.

"Uh, ma'am," _looks like the voice masking worked_, "would you please stay where you are? The authorities are on their way."

_Uh, nope. He wouldn't get caught up in all the action."No," the bugs responded in kind, and then they dispersed into nearby dumpsters and storm drains, leaving the phone hanging from its cord. Thankfully he didn’t have to say anything more than what he practiced._

Izuku waited, ordered another ice cream—chocolate chip cookie dough this time. About five minutes later, the bugs picked up on the arrival of someone on the rooftop across the hideout. The figure in mention wore a red and black costume, a scarf billowing in the breeze and two sharp headpieces jutting out from his head.

_Is that… the up and coming hero Edgeshot?_

It indeed was, as shown when his body stretched to the likes of string and slipped under the door of the hideout. A minute or so later, the hero arrived out through upper window of the building and reshaped himself on the roof. He spoke into his headpiece then, and crouched as if in wait.

_He's waiting for backup before actually doing anything. Smart._

Eventually, a whole squad of police rounded up around the corner. Edgeshot came upon then and began to talk. Izuku listened in with his bugs.

"Info… righ… round twenty-sev… you rea…"

"Trap?"
They're getting ready for a raid then.

The brave men and women readied themselves, surrounding the building. Edgeshot again shrank down under the door, this time unlocking it and allowing the police to come in. The insects inside watched in wait from their perches on the ceiling. The yakuza members never knew what hit them, a good majority of them being knocked out by Edgeshot's "Thousand Sheet Pierce." The remaining few surrendered to the overflowing police upon seeing their comrades subdued.

No holds barred, eh?

Izuku continued to watch as the police began to take in the criminals. Just in time too, as he had finished his ice cream. A large smile was planted on Izuku's face. The store's cashier noticed the huge grin on his face.

"That must have been some good ice cream, seeing as your smiling so much about it."

Izuku broke out of his thoughts and began panicking at the prospect of being found out, no matter how ridiculous it was to think the cashier knew what he was truly doing in the first place. His bugs buzzed slightly out of control, but immediately ordered them back into stillness. He quickly thought up a response. "I, yeah. I guess you could say that." He got up to leave.

Best not to stay at the crime scene, after all.

"Well, that's good then!" continued the cashier. "A few scoops of ice cream are a must to a happy and joyful life! I hope you have a great day!"

Izuku smirked a little. "Yeah, a good day. I really am having one. Thanks for the ice cream!" He exited the shop, and headed off towards home. His insects slowly lost sight of the hideout. Edgeshot and the police began to head off to the station. There was no doubt that they would be investigating the strange voice they heard over the phone. His first actions as a hero, masked in the reigns of vigilante action.

But that didn't matter. The yakuza members were utterly defeated and taken in without any deaths or injuries. The yakuza were twenty-seven members short, their already diminishing numbers becoming ever so smaller. All because of his quirk; he wasn't the useless Deku that Kaachan — Bakugou — always called him.

He thought back on the police. He would be careful, of course, if he planned on continuing to use this newfound ability to find criminals.

"Give me a debrief."

"Of course," responded the officer. "Two days ago, on the intersection of Sonkyo and Kaigancho, we received a call regarding a supposed yakuza hideout. Edgeshot arrived on the scene five minutes later. He checked the payphone where the call was made, and found the phone hanging from its cord. The phone was checked for prints later on, none were found."

"Mhm."

"And then," continued the officer, "Edgeshot scouted out the building. He found everything as the
voice had said it would be. He later raided the building with our officers, the operation going off without a hitch. Twenty-seven individuals were arrested, eleven being repeat arrests for prior charges. Nine of them were wanted for escapes and similar crimes."

"And the anonymous caller? What do we know of them at this point?"

"Not much. Aside from their apparent attempt to distort their voice, there isn't much we know. We believe that the caller was female, but then again, that could just be because of the methods used to hide their voice. Heck, for all we know it could be their quirk, or that's just their natural sounding voice."

"I see. Well, I'll keep this incident in mind. For now, I'll be looking around for similar events on my patrols. I'll keep you up to date, officer."

"Thank you, Eraserhead. I know you're still fairly new to this and all, but I believe you're best suited to solving our problem. You have my thanks."

Eraserhead nodded. "Of course. No worries, officer. We need to see what else this anonymous caller may know, after all." They both bid each other farewell. The Erasure Hero walked out of the station and into the night.

Chapter End Notes

And there we have it! Chapter two of this fic and here we take a glimpse into Izuku's newfound aspirations and the changes it has brought on his life. How'd you all like it? Good? Bad? Meh? Again, I'm open to any thoughts you guys might have. Even so, I hope you all enjoyed this addition of Flight of the Dragonfly.

'Till next time!
And from the endless swarm comes chapter three. Hello yet again, everyone! I’d like to give my thanks to all of you, who have come here to read this fic of mine.

And to note, I added a couple changes back in the previous chapter, if any of you would be privy to notice. I noticed that I wasn’t clear enough in mentioning Izuku’s limitations at this stage of his life. Thus, I highlighted how inexperienced he still is with his powers, as well as what he’s done to account for it.

Ah, but that’s not really why most of you are here, huh? Well, this time in Flight of the Dragonfly, we’ll be seeing even more butterflies due to Izuku’s steadfast path to becoming a hero. What butterflies, exactly? Well, you’ll just have to see for yourself! On to chapter three!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“You move too slowly, Midoriya.” A swipe was made at his legs, barely dodged in lieu of their swiftness.

“I try, sensei.” A strike made towards the older man’s arms, deflected effortlessly with the appearance of two well placed sticks.

“Indeed you try, but is it enough?” The master wove in through his student’s left side, then to his right, creating an endless onslaught of clashes that the younger boy was barely able to escape. A single swipe made through — again, at the legs. Izuku fell to the floor.

A deep, gasping breath, came from the exhausted boy. His sparring partner, on the other hand, stood with an aura of calm - no fatigue apparent in his stature.

“Good job, Midoriya,” said Kawabata. “That was ten seconds longer than your record. Five hundred more and I think you’ll be ready to face down a common thug.”

Izuke chortled. “Very funny, sensei.”

“Thank you, Izuku. Nice to know that this elderly man can still entertain his students even after all these years.”

The two were the only people present at the dojo at the moment, the others having fallen for the sensei’s supposed cancelation of the day’s session. Izuku didn’t fall for the ruse for one second.

Izuku got up and began to clean up, their session having come to an end. Even so, there was something he’d been thinking of for the past few days. If anything, now — with him and sensei alone — was the best time to bring it up.

“Yes?” asked Kawabata.

“Well, you see… I— Never mind.”

“Tsk-tsk-tsk. That won’t do. What was lesson number three again, Izuku?”

“Hesitation won’t do you any good in combat, Kawabata-sensei.”

“Precisely. Now, let’s just picture your thoughts as a battlefield, something of which wouldn’t say is too far from the truth, given from your mannerisms.” Izuku shied away and smiled, not really refuting the claims. “What is it you want to tell me?”

Izuku stood silent for a few moments. Do I really want to tell him? Sure, he’d probably know just how to solve it, or if anything was wrong at all, or if it was just him. But to say it out loud? Well...

He eventually revealed his thoughts. “It’s just… I’ve been here for awhile now, sensei, and I feel like… like… I feel like I’ve stagnated. I’ve practiced day in and day out, yet I feel like it’s not enough. Will I be ready? Will they accept me? Can I still be a hero? Even without my… my—

The click-clack of two wooden sticks disrupted Izuku. Kawabata shook his head. “You and your muttering.”

The teacher stared at his student, his stance shifting from martial artist master back to that of a simple old man. The only thing that stood out were his crossed arms. He eventually spoke.

“In all seriousness, Midoriya, the year and a half that you’ve spent here has done wonders to your body. What was once a feeble, flimsy stick is now an elegant, sturdy bokken. In fact, a few more months and you just may be able to match up to my nephew. And he’s been training since he was four! Your drive and spirit truly inspire me, Midoriya, and don’t you forget it.”

Izuku gulped in hesitation, almost unsure. “I… thank you, Kawabata-sensei.”

The older man nodded. “And thank you. You’ve made me realize something, Midoriya. I’ve ignored how your life goes on outside these walls for awhile now, focusing on your drive and will in our sessions. I’ve blinded myself to one side of your problem. And if I’m not mistaken, you have very little of a personal life outside of training at this point, if any at all. If anything, you need to calm down and relax. You are still a kid, afterall.”

One of Izuku’s eyebrows rose in question. “Meaning…”

“Don’t attend any sessions for a week.”

Both eyebrows shot up this time. “But sensei! I—”

“Nope,” the older man cut in. “Think this as a part of your training. Break it, and the deal is off. Got it?”

Midoriya furiously shook his head.

“Good. You need to learn that training isn’t all there is to life. Even with your circumstances. So go out; have fun. Be with your friends, or something. I don’t care really. Just don’t stress yourself out over physical training.”

“Yes, sensei.”
It’d been two days since his sensei had forbidden him from training. Two days void of the exhausting effort he had grown used to. It almost had felt as if he was wasting time, time he could spend bettering himself — preparing to be a hero.

But he had his quirk, at least. That was something he could still train, something his sensei hadn’t prohibited him from using.

He still felt bad for lying to his sensei about his supposed quirklessness. He’d gotten in to the dojo because his sensei believed in his drive to become a hero without a quirk. And behind his sensei’s back he was using said quirk to engage in vigilante activities.

*But a necessary action,* Izuku reminded himself. Bugs were not welcomed by society. Mounds of maggots in food, infestations of cockroaches in a home; his quirk would bring too many reminders to such horrors. *People wouldn’t accept him.*

*Besides, with the way things are going now I could just juggle around two personas. My hero identity, and a vigilante one.*

Izuku brushed away his hair from his face. It was a lot longer than it had been before, something he’d decided due to its given benefit to his quirk.

He was walking around the city again, donning the shades and cane to emulate the blind. But he was not in search of any crimes, this time. He was in search for something else entirely — golden orb weavers, to be exact. He’d only found two of the spiders around his apartment when he checked. They wouldn’t be enough, considering what he was planning to do with them.

He walked forward through the sidewalk, weaving through the people as they passed by.

*A hive of hornets... Some flys, some maggots... Aha! There we are. One golden orb coming rig—*

Izuku felt himself fall over. He’d tripped over... something; it felt kind of fleshy though. *A person then.* He felt for his face; the shaded glasses were fine, it seemed. A couple insects responded to his brief pain. He pushed them away.

“Ah! I’m so sorry! That was my completely fault, just crouching on the sidewalk like that. Here, let me get you up.”

A hand came into view. Izuku took it and hoisted himself up. The hand was attached to what seemed to be... a speech bubble. *Huh?*

“So sorry. Look at me, causing a hazard for the blind. Are you okay? Nothing broken anywhere?” The boy’s head grew and shrunk in size, the circular white bubble doing little to hide his levels of distress.

*Wow, must be his quirk then. But a simple bubble head? Probably not. It must have some sort of other use, then. Text display, perhaps? That would serve a lot of uses in education and such. I wonder how durable the thing is. Can it withstand more harm than a regular head can? Is it weaker? Maybe it could act a—*

“Ahem.” It was the bubble head boy.

*Ah shoot. He was mumbling. Again. And I’m still doing it. Perhaps I should—*

“Uh... sorry,” Izuku said. “I just, get sort of excited whenever I see a new quirk. Yours just turns out to match all the criteria of ‘uniqueness’. Sorry about that.”
The boy made a sound that indicated a smile. “No worries, I don’t mind. But, if anything, we should be focusing on you.”

“Me?” asked Izuku.

“Yeah! You fell over! And it’s all my fault! There wasn’t any way you could have seen me, and I was just crouching there in the middle of the sidewalk. A complete hazard for someone blind!”

_Huh? Blind? What does he mean tha—_

“Oh!” Izuku gave a nervous laugh, rubbing the back of his head. “I’m not, uhm, I’m not... blind, actually.”

“Oh,” the unnamed boy tilted his head. “Then what’s with the whole…” He motioned the glasses. And the cane.

“It— It’s uh, it’s because of my quirk, actually.”

“Oh?” he voiced in confusion. “What kind of quirk would make you need to look like a blind person? Seems like a weird sort of necessity, I mean. No offense.”

Izuku swayed his feet in place. “Well… I— I what? Control bugs? Yeah, I can order each insect individually if I wanted. I can see through them, too. Then, I could make the insects crawl into your orifices as you sleep, or ensure botflies find just the right place to—

“I’d… I’d rather not say.”

“Oh.” A pregnant pause. “Well, that’s fine then.” The boy held his arm out. “In that case, my name is Manga Fukidashi, and my quirk is Comic! I’m sorry for making you fall over.”

“No, no! It’s fine.” Izuku slowly went to grab it. He shook the hand. “I— I wasn’t paying attention. I’m, uh, Midoriya, by the way. Izuku Midoriya.”

Fukidashi crossed his arms in an ‘X’ shape. “Uh-uh. Nope! None of that, Midoriya.”


“None of that ‘Fukidashi-san’ stuff. We’re friends now, and I’ll only accept the usage of my first name from now on.”

Izuku blinked. _Friends? Is he—really?_ “Well, I… uh,” deep breaths. “In that case, Manga,” said boy rose two thumbs up, “it’s nice to meet you. And, uh... I’m sorry for running into you.”

“Ah, it’s no problem man. Just a common mistake. I know how quirks can be.”

Izuku shook his head, “But that doesn’t excus —”

“Alright, alright,” Manga interrupted. “How ‘bout this. I’m kinda new to the neighborhood, just moved in actually. You can show me around the city. You know, show me all the cool places you know of. What’d you say?”

_Sh—show him around? Like... like, hanging out? And he said we were... friends? He... nobody wanted to just hang out with him. Not after he learned he was quirkless. Perhaps..._

“I, uh, yes, Manga.” He opened his pack and placed his ‘blind man’s costume’ into it. “Come over
this way, I know this really cool ice cream parlor over yonder…”

*The spiders could wait, I suppose.*

“How did you discover such a good ice cream place, Izuku?” questioned Manga as he dug into brownie fudge sundae.

The two were currently in the ice cream parlour Izuku utilized during his first stakeout. It’d taken a few hours to get there, considering the detours they had ended up taking to several shopping places and a few parks. They eventually reached their original destination, however, and both were pretty tired by the time they got there. They voted to take up some ice cream.

Meanwhile, Izuku was watching in fascination. He was wondering if taking Manga to a place to eat was a good idea. After all, as far as he could tell, Manga lacked a mouth. Either that or the boy across from him simply didn’t need to eat, or had some other way of doing so. But seeing him now, well, it was fairly interesting seei —

“Your doing it again, Izuku.”

“Oh!” the green headed boy was shaken from his thoughts. “Uh, sorry again, Manga.”

The head shook in response, the thin base swirling it left to right. “Like I said a while ago, no worries. If anything, the muttering is really you. Fits you very well, I think.”

*And there we are again. A first. He didn’t think there was anything wrong with my muttering. The other kids back at school always found him weird for it. But Manga, here, he...*

“Thank you. That… that means a lot to me, Fukidashi-san.”

“Uh-uh!” This time, a giant red ‘X’ appeared in his head. “Manga, remember?”

“Of course.” Izuku smiled.” Thank you, Manga.”

It was already late in the evening by the time the two had reached Manga’s house, the sun just beginning to set down upon the horizon. Izuku hadn’t noticed the time at first, only realizing when he’d gotten in front of the door.

He ended up calling his mom with the Fukidashi’s phone, relieving her worries when he said he was at a friend’s house. Fortunately for Izuku, Manga’s family wasn’t home at the moment right then; he wasn’t really sure how he felt meeting new people, after all. Manga was already enough for the day.

He went to leave, even though Manga insisted that he could stay over. He declined - after all, he still had a couple passengers on him that he didn’t want to leave lying about where they could be found as he slept.

And so, when the door of the Fukidashi residence closed, Izuku was left in the dark. It was a first, Izuku had never been out so late before while alone. It was a truly new experience. In fact, all things considering, he was rather interested in the nighttime atmosphere.

*I suppose I could explore for a bit. Go and get those spiders from earlier, too. I have time.*

He started off in the general direction of home, albeit very slowly. His insects scouted out ahead to watch for any dangers. He eventually turned upon the corner where he had gathered three golden orb weavers. The spiders descended upon him from a second-story window sill. Upon reaching him,
they settled on his hair, the long strands acting sufficiently to hide them in plain sight. They joined the twenty or so others that had been hidden in his bush of a haircut that had been there the entire day.

Izuku had grown more comfortable to the presence of insects since he had gotten his quirk; a factor he believed was inevitable due to the intimacy that he would have with the insects that shared his mindspace. For months, they were his only friends. The insects in his hair were no exception, and even acted as a wayward comfort — a means of protection if he really required it.

But now that he had met Manga… Well, at least he now had a friend he could talk back and forth with. And all thanks to sensei, too. I guess I know what he meant now, and why he didn’t want me to be practicing martial arts all the time.

Spiders safely secured, he walked home.

Or he would of, if if his insects hadn’t taken a whiff of gunpowder about half a block away. His insects gravitated toward the area. What he saw made him stop in place.

A mugging. There was a man, based on the burly build the insects had seen. He was holding a woman against the wall of an alleyway. Where were the heroes? Was there nobody nearby? A gun glistened in the moonlight.

A Gun? Shoot! I need to get over there, quick! He took a step forward, but stopped himself.

I… Interfering with the crime itself? That was vigilantism. He shook his head. But he’d already done that - just, just not with his physical body itself. Could he really — The gun cocked.

He began sprinting toward the direction of the crime. He then quickly open up his pack to the section that wasn’t filled with stuff. He shoved the bag over his head.

Need to remain unidentifiable. And I can still see with my bugs, after all.

He came upon the scene with his own eyes. Both figures glanced in his direction. Oh shoot. Spotted already. Should of thought this through a little more.

“Oi, what the hell are you doing here, punk! Can’t you see I’m a little busy?” yelled the man. Izuku ensured he and all his bugs kept their eyes on the man.

Did he really think I would just go away as if nothing was happening?

“Hey! What did I just say? Why you still here?” the man yelled. The woman quivered in his hold.

Apparently so. He went to grab for his eskrima sticks at his waist. But… they weren’t there. Shoot, I forgot. I don’t have my things with me.

“Ah, hell. How’s your quirk canceling mine out?” Canceling out? What does he mean — The gun was then pointed in his direction. Izuku froze.

“Look here, punk. I’ve been stalking these streets for years, and not once have I been caught!” A single hornet landed on his hand. “And I’m not gonna let som— What the?” He looked at his hand. “Holy—” The man flailed his hand around, dislodging the hornet. The gun was also sent flying to the ground.

Izuku didn’t waste any time. He placed a fly on each of the man’s limbs and ran up to him. The thug provided a rudimentary defense against Izuku’s Muay Thai, barely blocking the blows laid to his sides. But the bugs allowed Izuku to predict the man’s movements and block the oncoming attacks.
Izuku then sweep at the criminal’s feet. The man tumbled.
Izuku placed all his focus on the fallen man then. He went for his opponent, planning t—

*What was I doing, again?* He felt a hit to his side. He fell over.

*What happened?* He was on the ground, splayed before the man he had just tripped up.

“Strange,” mused the man.” My quirk worked then. Why didn’t it a while ago?” The man stopped before Izuku. “Eh, no matter. A single man isn’t going to stop me now. I’ve been on these streets for years, picking off of the innocents one by one. Easy targets, they are.” The man took out a knife.

_A— A knife. Shoot. No way that I can get up in time, to move, or do something to— “Bugs! I can —“*

“Now, why don’t you just lay there while I—Gah!”

The man fell over, his head having been hit by a heavy bag. It was the woman from earlier. She hit the man over the head a couple more times.

Izuku blinked. The woman eventually turned to him, and helped him up. “I… Thank you for that,” voiced Izuku.

“You kidding?” asked the woman. “If anything, I should be thanking you. He caught me by surprise and then blamo! He had me against the wall. Don’t know how I didn’t hear him coming, though. I should have been, given my ears,” she pointed, the ears no doubt enlarged due to her quirk.

“Anyways, thanks, uhm… Who are you anyways? Bag-head-man or something?”

Ah shoot. Still being a vigilante, right now.

“I, uh, gotta go. Crime to fight and stuff!” Izuku ran off again, making as much distance as he could from the scene.

*That was a close one. That guy, he almost...*

Izuku hid himself into another alley. He made sure he wasn’t being followed by spreading all of his bugs everywhere. Thankfully, he wasn’t. He removed the bag from his head.

*I... I just saved someone. I know that I really shouldn’t have, that maybe I should have just called the police, just maybe. I almost died, even, but… That was kind of… exhilarating, actually. Izuku shook his head and slapped his cheeks.*

*Get it together. Still need to get home, after all. Izuku hoisted himself up. He shook his head. I need more practice after all.*

Izuku walked on home, and didn’t stop until he reached his bed.

A couple more days later had Izuku inside the dojo, training away with his peers and his sensei.

“Thank you, Kawabata-sensei,” voiced Izuku. “I understand now why you wanted me to refrain from martial arts for a week.”

Kawabata-sensei smiled. “What did I tell you? People your age need more than just work, after all.” The man took up a stance.

“Did you learn anything about yourself, Izuku?”
“Plenty, sensei. There was so much I didn’t really get until the last week.”

“Good. Now, get ready. Your stance is all off. You’d easily fall to a two-bit thug.”

Izuku smiled. “Of course, sensei.”

Chapter End Notes

And there closes the curtain on chapter three of Flight of the Dragonfly. How are Izuku’s extracurricular outings going to be influencing things? Well, for now you’ll just have to wait and see. Next time we’ll be focusing on matters closer to home, and yet another new arrival to the story’s center stage.

And just as a reminder, any characters, setting, or ideas of the web serial Worm don’t belong to me, but are delegated to its author John C. McCrae.

‘Till next time everyone. Ciao!
Welcome back everyone! For those of you here on AO3, just know that this work is crossposted. Updates may be slower here, which is why I’m going to upload the chapters I already have written over the next few days. However, just know that I try for a weekly update schedule, every Sunday.

Anyway, here we have chapter four of Flight of the Dragonfly!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Alright everyone! Settle down, settle down!” the teacher announced. The gruff man slowly descended in his own chair in wait, having used his quirk to assess the situation. The classroom eventually obliged to the command - a whole minute had passed, just as predicted - and slowly began to break away from their conversations and settle into their respective seats.

The teacher nodded, continuing. “It may be the end of the day, but I’d still like to welcome everyone back for the new school year. Now, as you all know, this is your last year of elementary. A big time in your life, in fact — beginning to prepare for the transition from elementary to middle school. The change will be rather…”

Izuku tuned out his teacher, having already thought over the current topic. Instead, he pondered upon the last few months since he’d met Manga. The months were unlike anything he’d experienced in awhile — experiences that were a rarity ever since he had discovered he was quirkless. Ever since Bakugou had decided upon tormenting him all those years ago, he hadn’t had a true sense of what friendship was. But with Manga… Well, it was still kind of strange; the feelings of having a friend, that is.

He and Manga couldn’t hang out all the time, obviously. However, it was enough; the few days in the week he spent with Manga. On the days without him, Izuku spent time wandering the city, collecting bugs and watching out for any ongoing illicit activities.

He had avoided direct physical intervention unless it was necessary, not wanting to have a repeat of the guy with the knife. Instead, he defaulted to reporting crimes with his insect decoy. Its voice had grown more defined over the months, mastering the simple phrases he’d practiced for reporting crime. Izuku was now branching out to other words, coming around to being able to hold entire conversations with his bugs if he so inclined.

A loud explosion shook Izuku out of his thoughts.

“Yes, yes. Calm down, Bakugou,” strained the teacher.

*Ah, looks like it's just Kacch—Bakugou acting up again. Typical of him.*

“What did you say, Deku?!?” His hands were sparking up again.

*Oops, was that out loud?*
“Yeah, it was! Now, wha—”

“Bakugou,” it was the teacher stretched out.

Bakugou’s eye twitched. But he relented, descending into his seat. He huffed, but didn’t do anything after the fact. He seemed unwilling to continue. For now.

Seems like he knows not to start anything now. Well, not in front of the teacher, at least. Izuku made sure that one stayed unsaid and hidden in his mind, that time.

“As I was saying, you all—” The teacher was interrupted again, this time by the bell. He sighed, this time letting things run their course. “Alright, class. Looks like that’s all for the day. We’ll continue with this conversation tomorrow. You’re excused.” He packed up his things and walked out the door. He was faster than any of the students, almost like he was a relieved survivor who had finally found an oasis in a desert.

The class that followed suit was no different, making their way to the door like a gaggle of geese to a pond. Izuku stayed back, however; learning long ago that it was best if he waited for everyone to leave. He continued to stare out the window, thinking up other ways he could use his insects.

The sound of student gossip and drama eventually disappeared, leading Izuku to look away from the window. Unfortunately, fate didn’t seem to want to be kind to him today. Bakugou had stayed behind. But he was noticeably alone, his sides devoid of his normal ‘friends.’

At least his two cronies aren’t here with him.

“Oi, Deku. What was that you said a while ago?” His hands crackled in energy, violent reds and oranges sprouting from his palms. The action used to scare Izuku, but after the encounter with that knife guy all those months ago the crackles of energy were nothing.

But Izuku still gulped. Just because he wasn’t scared of the mini-explosions didn’t mean Bakugou himself didn’t pose a danger. “It was nothing B—Kacchan.”

Better to stay under the radar, for now. Act as normal.

Bakugou’s face scrunched up in anger. “Nothing, you say?” He stalked up to Izuku, grabbing him by the collar of his shirt and holding him against the wall. Explosions racketed the other hand, dangerously inching towards Izuku’s face. “You sure?”

Izuku took a deep breath. “I…” But something came to mind. He took a good look at the boy in front of him. Kac—Bakugou… He’s really is nothing like that knife guy, is he? He’s… he’s just a bully. All he does is beat me up, every day at school. But why? Self-satisfaction? Popularity? No, that doesn’t make sense. Nobody’s here now to see him beat up the ‘quirkless Deku.’

“Oh! How about you quit that creepy muttering of your’s and answer me!”

A split-second decision accompanied by a crack in the facade, fueled by an unknown presence deep in his mind. It acted in his stead.

“Why don’t you stop being a self-gratifying glory hog?” retorted Izuku.

Bakugou’s eyes widened in surprise.

The connection faded from memory. Izuku blinked. Where did that come from?
Bakugou’s eye twitched. “Wrong answer.” An explosion blasted in Izuku’s face, leaving behind a harsh reddening of skin. A couple of the bugs in his hair died from the heat.

Buzzing.

A moment of anger surfaced; again, the presence returned. Without thinking, Izuku acted. A fist came up to Bakugou’s face, launching him back in surprise. Izuku fell to the floor, no longer supported by Bakugou’s hand. The influence disappeared again, leaving no evidence of its interference.

Izuku looked at his hand. Did I… Did I really just do that?

“Deku!!!” Izuku looked up towards the roar. It was Bakugou, blood dripping from his nose. His hands were crackling in energy, almost looking as if ready to kill someone.

Buzzing.

“Ah, Ka—Kacchan! I’m sorry! I don’t— I didn’t—“

“Shut it, you— The hell?!“ He was looking at the window.

Izuku turned as well, finding the outer surface of the window to be blanketed in bugs.

Shoot! What the heck are with all those insects? Are they responding to my distress? Need to focus on not doing that, then. Need to tell them to disperse, make sure they don’t revea—

The door to the class swung open. Izuku flinched, but got the insects to disperse.

“What’s with all this ruckus?!“

Izuku and Bakugou’s heads turned towards the remark. A rather large man stood in the doorway, his stature emitting an aura of authority and attention. It was the principal. He looked at the scene before him.

“What the — ? Have you two been fighting? To my office, now!”

The two adversaries complied.

Izuku found himself seated outside the principal’s office. Bakugou had entered first, grumbling and staring daggers at Izuku all the way there.

Why did I do that? I… I punched him. Punched Kacchan. I didn’t even think about it. My fist just acted on its own. But there was something niggling at the back of his mind.

But...

It kind of felt good, finally acting back, defending myself for once. Is this how Kacchan feels whenever he beats me down?

The door to the office slammed opened then. Bakugou walked out, still glaring at Izuku. He walked away, though, seeming to know conflict wouldn’t do any good at the moment.

A brief pause, and a scuffling of papers came from the open door. A voice rang out.
“Midoriya, my office, if you will,” echoed the principal.

Izuku complied, entering the man’s office. The room was rather dark, covered in wooden furnishings and dark leather seats. He found himself seated in one of those seats, a placard labeled ‘Renjiro Isoshi’ facing him from the desktop. The man in question was rather… robust, so to say. His large figure filled his chair. He was rather big around the middle, with his mustache hiding his mouth from view and producing a rather attention-grabbing voice that yearned for notice. He began to speak.

“It’s come to my attention that you involved yourself in a… scuffle with young Bakugou.” He looked at Izuku, as if judging his reaction, garnering his taking part of the event.

“I must say, Midoriya, whatever were you thinking? Starting that fight with him? He could have been seriously injured due to your actions.”

What? I… But I…

Buzzing.

“But Mr. Renjiro, sir, I was just defending myself!”

“Oh?” One of his bushy eyebrows rose in question. “Do tell.”

Izuku continued. “It was Kacchan that started it. I just— I just punched in response, after he blasted me with his quirk,” Izuku said, motioning to the red marks on his face.

The principal tsked. “Midoriya, while I am tolerant of most things, the one thing I don’t appreciate is lying.”

Izuku blinked in bewilderment. “Lying?”

The concealed bugs on his head began to scurry up and down his hair in agitation.

“Yes. Young Bakugou already told me what happened. And seeing things as they are, you are quite obviously the instigator of the fight.”

Buzzing.

The bugs began to gather at the window like before. Thankfully, the closed blinds prevented them from being seen.

“But that’s not wha—”

“Midoriya. I’m inclined to only give you a warning this time. You are normally very well behaved, and I’m willing to label this as a one time event.” He began to fiddle with his computer, as if the situation was already resolved, with nothing left to be discussed.

“But this isn’t the first time this has happened!” yelled Izuku.

“Oh?” The principal looked away from his screen, looking back at Izuku. “Are you saying that you’ve started fights with Bakugou before?”

“What? No! You— But I haven’t even shared my side of the story! You and Bakugou spent nearly ten minutes in here! You aren’t even trying to see how things started from my point of v—”

“Midoriya!” A hand slammed down on the table, the principal’s gruff voice echoing throughout the room.
Izuku jumped, his rant sputtering into nothing. He took a deep breath. *Calm, calm. Be calm. Disperse… Disperse.* The bugs outside complied. The ones in his hair relaxed.

The principal looked at him, as if expecting him to say something.

“I… Okay, Mr. Renjiro.”

He nodded. “Good. You’re dismissed.”

Izuku rose from the chair and walked out. *Calm… Calm…*

He peered outside the hallway, looking for Bakugou. He began to sneak around the halls, hiding behind walls before turning corners. But by his third corner, he smacked himself in the face.

*I can use my insects, duh.*

A couple of flies scouted ahead, weaving through the halls of an empty school. Izuku hid in the bathroom in the meantime. He looked at himself in the mirror. The reddened skin began to subside just a bit, but the wounds were still noticeable.


Izuku relented. The static grew into a clarity, the view and sensations of hundreds of thousands at once. A few bugs began to filter into the room, crawling in through the vents and the open window. They scoured the walls and the floors. They continued to arrive from the sink drains, some even from trash cans themselves. Izuku began to calm. Izuku found long ago that he became more relaxed whenever he connected to his swarm. Whether it was anger or sadness, he always felt at comfort when he connected to his bugs, the emotions just fading away. He wasn’t exactly sure why this was, but he wasn’t going to look a gift horse in the mouth.

Five minutes passed by the time the flies came back. No Bakugou in sight. Izuku had the bugs disperse again.

*Looks like he went home, then.* Another deep breath. *I need to clear my head, walk around for a bit.*

Izuku walked outside of the school. But he didn’t head home, instead going in the opposite direction. He began to think over what the principal had said.

*Why did he believe Kacchan at face value but not me? There must be some reason he did? Right? But why? What exactly makes me less believable in such a situation? The blood running from Kacchan’s nose with me only having near burns? Some sort of contrived reasoning that just discredits me?! Is it because it’s my word versus Kacchan’s? He’s done more for himself at the school than I have. While I stand at the sidelines, he’s made a name for himself, doing this and that an—*

“Why does he always go on unpunished and unscathed, while you go home hurt and bleeding?”

Yeah! *Why is that? Why does Bakugou always get away with what he does?!! He goes around hurting other people, and yet he still wants to be a hero! And everyone just watches! How could he? He —*

*Deep breaths… In… and out… Deep breaths.*

He connected to his swarm again. He immediately calmed, his walking became noticeably slower, with Izuku focusing on his bugs.
Izuku entertained himself with the daily ongoings of bugs, trying to veer his attention away from his anger.

*Have to take my mind of what happened for now. Investigate later. Figure things out.*

He witnessed as the bugs scurried under floorboards, flew free in the open air, raided trash for food, and eve—

Izuku flinched. A whole bunch of maggots had all died in a fiery onslaught of heat and shrapnel.

*An explosion?*

Izuku found himself turning right, following the road to a rather compact scrapyard piled high with refrigerators and discarded appliances.

*Why not?*

He walked in.

The few insects he sent in (he didn’t want more blowing up, necessarily) didn’t see much. There were a few rats, a couple of things that seemed like makeshift robots, a pink-haired figure just to his left, and even a coupl—

Wait. Wha—

He felt a hand pull him to the side. He panicked. Bugs swarmed his position. He grabbed for his escrima sticks, planning to aim for th—

He was met with the face of a young girl, about his age. Pink dreadlocks strewn about her head, yellow eyes seemingly peering into his soul. Her face was mere inches from his, close enough that he could feel her breath.

He faltered. *It’s— It’s… a girl! So close! Why’s she so close?*

“Heyo! What are you doing here?”

Izuku stood still in shock. Her face moved even closer. She bonked Izuku’s head a couple times, goggles bouncing on and off her own head as she did so.

“How do her eyes have crosshairs? Is it her quirk? Some sort of aiming quirk like Snipe? Ahh!! But that doesn’t matter! She’s still so close! A girl! I haven’t done something like this before. What does she want? Maybe I’m trespassing? Is this her scrapyard? Maybe her parents’? But the—

“Why do you have bugs in your hair?”

Izuku snapped at that. “What?” he asked.

“Bugs! In your hair!” exclaimed the girl.

“I…” *How did she...?*

“You have a spider and even a house centipede! Is that why your hair’s long? To keep all those creepy crawlies hidden from the outside world?”
“I… I… I don’t know what your talking about!”

She blanched. And stared on. Inching ever closer. “You’re weird.” She backed away then.

Izuku let out a sigh of relief. “I, uh…”

“But never mind that! I’ve got babies to make!”

Izuku blinked. ‘What?’ He observed the strange girl, watching as she picked up a wrench at went to work on a… something. He wasn’t really sure what the thing was. It was metallic, rectangular in shape, and seemed to have moving parts within the interior if the the vibrations picked up by the nearby bugs were correct.

*Perhaps she’s the reason there were a couple of messed up robots in all this junk?*

“Oh, hey!” exclaimed the girl. Izuku jumped.

“Oh, hey!” exclaimed the girl. Izuku jumped.

“I know! Why don’t you help me?” The girl got in his face again.

“He—Help you do… what?”

“What?!! What kind of declaration is that?!! Just yelling that out into the open air! Does she even know what that phrase means? It’s almost as if—

“Here, it’s simple.” She walked towards a hatch on the metal shape. “I put my head in here, and when I ask for a screwdriver, you hand it to me. A buzzsaw? Same thing. The chainsaw? Well, its under a few boards and a couple of things, and you may need to get creative with the cord reach, but otherwise, the same thing!”

...Oh! Oh, thank all that is right and mighty. She’s just talking about her creations. Machines. Not actual babies. She just wants me to help hand over her tools… Wait, chainsaw?

She ducked back into the hatch, screwdriver in hand. Clinks and clanks reverberated the air, banging against the walls of the… thingy.

“So,” she said, her voice echoing amongst the metallic interiors, “What brings you around here? Hmm?”

Izuku took a few seconds to organize his thoughts and create a story that wouldn’t reveal the nature of his quirk. Or make him look like a stalker.

“I, uh, was sorta just curious, I guess. I saw the place and then I heard an explosion. Wanted to investigate, see if there was any trouble.”

Izuku mentally sighed in relief. He got through that without a single stutter. *I just talked to a girl!*

“Well, it seems that fate has brought us together, then! I was just in need of an assistant, you know. In fact, you can start by co— Incoming!” Hatsume popped out of the contraption, hurriedly pouncing in his direction, tackling him into the ground.

The metal thing blew just seconds later. A gathering of flies disintegrated into non existence from the flare of steam and fire.
Oh. Well that solves that mystery. The machine sputtered and klunked, but otherwise seemed well held together.

“Aha! It’s working like a beauty! Just need a couple more touches and we’ll be done within the hour. What’d ya say? You in?”

The voice came from right on top of him. He was still on the ground, a strange weight strewn out upon his body. He looked up. Uh oh.

She was laying on top of him, her body pressing against his. And she wasn’t getting off.

Ahh!! On top. Physical contact… too much...

She seemed unperturbed by their position, however. Her head tilted to the side, face ever so closely nearing his again. “You know, I never did get your name.”

“I… I… It’s… Izu — Izuku! Izuku Midoriya!”

“Well then, Izuku…”

First name basis? Again!?!

“The name’s Mei Hatsume. Pleasure to meet ya!!”

As it turned out, ‘within the hour’ actually meant two hours, as well as an added time slot for a super magnet in the works. Also, after some light prodding, Izuku discovered that the explosion thingy was actually… well, an explosion thingy. Hatsume said that she was experimenting with explosions, attempting to see how well they could be used to insta-microwave food. Results so far weren’t too promising.

And so, there the two were, working on a handheld super magnet in the middle of a metal infested scrap yard, with Izuku hopelessly attempting to ensure neither he nor Hatsume died from any oncoming projectiles.

Still can’t believe how none of those things have come near her. I’ve been dodging this whole time! And she wouldn’t listen to anything I said as soon as she started fiddling with the magnetic field of the thing!

“And… done!” Hatsume announced. Izuku jumped again at the voice, barely dodging another metal rod. The third one in the past five minutes, to be exact.

“Looky here, Izu-kun! My baby is complete! It has a built-in on-off switch, a variable magnetic pull, and a basically limitless radius! Well, to this entire lot, at least. But that doesn’t matter! What does is that it’s complete! All thanks to you!”

Izuku sweatdropped, sort of overwhelmed by Hatsume’s outburst. He looked on at the sky, noticing its reddish tint.

Wow, it’s already evening.

…

Evening! Ah shoot! Mom must be worried! Again!
“Sorry Hatsume! I’ve gotta go! My mom will be worried!” He began to sprint off, but took a second to look back. “You’ll… you’ll still be here tomorrow, right?”

Hatsume looked at him. “But of course! I still have plenty of babies to make, after all.” He head tilted again, her eyes seemingly zooming towards his direction.

*Maybe it is a sort of binocular vision quirk? The past few hours have felt like she was zooming into my soul, after all.*

“Can I count on my assistant on being here tomorrow?”

Izuku blinked out of his thoughts, then smiled — something that was growing ever more common since he’d met Manga. He thought about Manga, then, who said he wouldn’t be available for most of the week. *Perfect.*

“You can count on it! See you tomorrow!”

He sprinted off toward home, thinking about the girl. Sure, Hatsume may have had no sense of personal space, and did seem a bit *too* steadfast regarding her inventions, but she was a nice person. Someone who was nice *to him.* Just like Manga was to him. Something he had been craving for so, so long.

He looked again at the nearing sunset.

*Time sure flies by when your having fun.*

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Chapter End Notes

And there we have it! This story’s fourth chapter out and completed. Chapter five will be out eventually, so just hold on to your seat ’till it comes around!

Anyways, signing off for now! ‘Till next time!
And welcome back everyone! Just to let you all know — if you haven’t already noticed — I’m trying for a weekly update rate with a chapter every Sunday or so. Of course, this isn’t set in stone, but it’ll be what I’ll be trying for in regards to updates.

Anyway, on to the story! Chapter 5 away!

“So, Izuku, where might we be going today?” asked Manga to his green-headed friend.

Said boy was moving in an anxious pace, obvious nervousness running through his veins. He looked on to his bubble-headed friend, responding with a tirade that he’d been planning in his head for this very moment.

“Well, I sort of came into a slight problem.” Izuku admitted. “You see, I… met this girl a couple of months ago. She’s really nice... and a… a really good friend. And... well…”

“Oh?” A pair of circles sprouted on the boy’s bubble, one appearing with an bent line above it. Makeshift eyes and a subsequent arched eyebrow of intrigue. Izuku noted.

“Izuku immediately responded. “But of course! She’s been so nice to me and everything! It’s refreshing, you know, having someone like her around. She doesn’t even care about my muttering or anything like that. She’s a… a very good friend.”

Manga sighed. “Ah, so innocent.”

“But—what? What do you mean?”

Manga’s bubble shook. “Nevermind. Anyway, the girl?”

“Oh! Uh, well, you see, I agreed to help her with something the other day. One of her projects. The problem is that, well, I was sort of caught up in the moment. I forget that you wanted to hang out today and well, now the two things come into conflict. I— I was wondering if the three of us could just spend the day together. It was the best I could come up with. I—if you don’t have a problem with it, that is.”

Manga laughed.

After a few seconds, he began to talk. “Sorry, sorry. I’m not laughing at your idea. It’s just, this is so you, you know. Worrying about something so unsubstantial. You don’t have to worry about things like this, Izuku. Of course I’m fine with it. Besides, miss out on a chance of a new friend? Fat chance!”
Izuku breathed a sigh of relief. “I… thank you, Manga. You don’t know how much this means to me.”

Manga nodded. “As long as she isn’t like that Bakugou guy that I met. That guy, honestly…”

“Ah! No, no. Hatsume’s nothing like Ka— Bakugou.”

“I know, I know. You said that she’s nice after all. I’m willing to believe your impressions of people.”

The two friends walked on, conversing about the most recent debut of heroes that month. Unknown to Manga, Izuku had insects patrolling their surroundings. Izuku was searching for any crimes in progress or new hideouts that had come about in the last day since he walked this route. Thankfully, it seemed that the criminals of the city had done no such thing as of current moment. Still, Izuku kept his bugs on watch, yearning for conflict.

It wasn’t long until they reached the scrapyard.

“This place is kinda big. You say that this friend of yours just has the whole place to herself?”

Izuku nodded. “Well, her parents own the lot, actually. Hatsume has free reign to do whatever she wants in there. Her strive for invention just so happens to fit right as well in the yard.” Izuku tilted his head. “Or maybe her love her invention was inspired by the lot. I’m not entirely sure.”

The two walked into the scrapyard, Izuku calling out to Hatsume.

“Hatsume? I’m here! Please stop tinkering with your stuff! At least until I get there. We both know the contents of your boots are volatile enough to— Duck!!”

Izuku jumped to the side, behind a broken dishwasher.

Unfortunately, Manga was too absorbed in examining his surroundings, too slow to respond to the warning. A metal casing rushing onto his figure. But fortunately, the debris just ricocheted off of his head, leaving no apparent damage.

Manga turned around. “What was that?!”

Izuku came out from behind his cover. “Sorry Manga, that was probably one of the propulsors we were working on yesterday.” Izuku turned his head towards where the projectile had originated from, yelling out into the distance. “Hatsume! I told you that you need to be more careful with your things! You could’ve hurt somebody with that!”

The inventor appeared from behind a pile of scrap, drawn to the sound of her assistant’s arrival. “Izuku! You came! And you brought help!”

“I HELP?” sweatdropped Manga.

“But of course!” she said, taking a step forward, fist taking shape in the air. “By stepping foot into my domain, you’ve submitted yourself to the task of creating my babies!”

“Babies?” Manga asked, dozens of exclamation points appearing all around his face.

“Ah but never mind that!” Hatsume said, walking back to the pair of boots she was working on. Izuku and Manga followed.

Hatsume continued, “So, Mr. Bubblehead…”
“Ah, Manga, actually. Manga Fukidashi.”

“Well alright, Manga. I’ve got to say, you’ve got a really nice head.”

“Oh, thanks! It may be a bit unconventional, but I’ve grown used to it after all this time. Besides, I think it fits right well with my quirk.”

“And what’s that?” questioned Hatsume as she began securing the soles of his boots.

“Well, it—

“Oh!” interrupted Hatsume. “Izuku, scratch our current work. The propulsions are too bulky. I noticed it when that one from a while ago just blasted off. Too volatile. We need to consider turbines instead!” Izuku got out a notebook — one specifically designated for Hatsume’s invention ideas — and began to write down possible applications of turbine powered boots.

“Anyway,” said Hatsume, “go on.”

“Right. Well, uh… What was your name again?”

“Hatsume Mei! And don’t forget it!”

“Right! Well, since you asked, Mei, my quirk is comic! I can physically manifest sounds with my voice. Unfortunately, the more I use my quirk, the sorer my throat gets.” He demonstrated his quirk by announcing ‘BOING,’ which produced a platform that he bounced a rock off of.

“Interesting… You say your throat gets sore after a while?”

Manga nodded.

“Well, I’m not an expert in biology, but perhaps I can whip something up to counteract that. A type of humidifier for your throat, maybe? Hmm… this might be a difficult one.” Hatsume brought out one of her own notebooks, writing down possible ideas as they came from her mind.

Manga was surprised at the girl’s willingness to offset his quirk’s drawbacks. “Oh, there’s no need to—”

“Oh!” yelled out Hatsume. Both Manga and Izuku jumped at this, the latter dropping the notebook he was writing in. “Izuku! You still haven’t told me about your quirk! You should tell me! Think of all the wonderful babies we can make together to synergize it!”

Izuku froze halfway bending downwards as he went to pick up his fallen notebook.

Oh no.

“Hmm. That is a good point, Izuku,” added Manga. “I remember you saying you didn’t want to talk about it when we first met.”

Oh no. No. No. No. They… they want to know about my— my quirk. About… about the bugs. They bugs, the insects, the legs, the skittering — What… would they think?

“Izuku?”

They would run. Run away scared. They would longer wan— want to be frie—

Izuku took a deep breath.
No. They’re— they’re my friends. They’ve been nice to me ever since we met! Manga’s so nice that he plays around with the younger kids we pass by. And Hatsume is pretty understanding, she wouldn’t ridicule me for such a thing, would she? I— I should just come out with it, be straight with them. And then —

Manga chimed in. “Look, Izuku, I know that you said that you want to keep that info to yourself, and that’s completely fine with me. You’re free to keep to yourself to whatever yo—”

“Umm.” Izuku interrupted. He looked away from his friends, taking glances at the junk and scrap that littered their surroundings instead. “My quirk…”

His two friends waited with bated breath, waiting for Izuku’s response.

“My quirk… I… I haven’t told anyone about my quirk, actually. Nobody knows about it. Not even my mom.”

Hatsume rose an eyebrow. Manga manifested a pair and one rose too. There was a long moment of silence.

It’s now or never.

The silence broke abruptly. “I control bugs.”

…

…

“That’s it?” asked Manga.

Izuku blinked. “What?”

“You control bugs?” asked Hatsume, hand under her chin. “How, exactly?”

“We—Well, I—”

“Show me,” demanded Hatsume.

Izuku gulped. So far so good. He connected to a swarm of flies from a nearby dumpster, calling them over.

Think non-scary. Something fun. Something that wouldn’t scare them. Like… like the circus! There’s nothing scary from the circus!

The flies arrived, responding to Izuku’s commands. They formed a ring in the air, the miniature swarm hovering in a rotating shape. Individual flies were given the order to fly loops and nosedives through the air, and eventually make their way through the hoop.

“I’ve gotta admit, that’s actually kinda cool, Izuku,” voiced Manga.

Izuku looked toward his friend. “Ah… Really?”

“Yup!”

“There’s… nothing wrong with it? Having insects so close to you guys, I mean.”

“Not that I can see with it,” voiced Manga. “Why? Was it that Bakugou jerk again? Has he been
“Ah! No… I just thought that, well… the bugs would be… would create a bad image, is all.”

“Pfft! As if!” announced Hatsume. If anything, your problem if that you’re too squishy.”

“…Huh?”

“You know, squishy! Well, that and pretty scrawny, too. I mean, look at those noodle arms of yours! I bet you couldn’t carry a car!”

“Umm… I’m pretty sure that I couldn’t carry a car normally unless I had a strength quirk.”

Hatsume scoffed. “And what about my babies? They would increase your strength ten-fold!”

Izuku pondered upon that factor. “Well, I suppose they could… But I’d rather not have any… uhm… augmentations to that category. My fighting style wouldn’t necessarily need the use of unrefined brute strength.”

“Fine,” she whined. “Be all that with your ‘no strength-providing exoskeleton apparatus’ mindset. There are plenty of other things I could work upon. Like pouches! Special ones that can hold multiple insect species at once! Or maybe a costume to make up for that vulnerable body or yours!”


“You are?”

“Yeah, I have this project going on at home with a couple of Golden Orb spiders. I have them making a costume for me in my free time. I can only have them working when I’m within two blocks of my house, though. That’s how far my reach is. I have a couple containers to keep them in for when I leave, to make sure mom doesn’t kill them or they wander off too far. I only have ten at the moment, so progress is kind of slow. But at least it’s pure spider silk, so—”

“Wait! Pure spider silk!?! You can just tell them to make however much you want?!”

Izuku began to rub the back off his head. “Uh, yeah. The only problem is making sure the spiders don’t over exhaust themselves.”

“Why don’t you make more?” asked Manga.

Hatsume and Izuku turned to him. “Huh?” they both asked.

“Oh, umm, you know. You probably have both male and female spiders, right?”

“Yeah. Three females and seven males,” informed Izuku.

“Good. Well, there you go!”

Izuku scratched his head. “I don’t get it.”

Manga made a face.

( — — ;)

He sighed, “Never mind. Best to let you figure it out.”
“Oh!” Hatsume interjected. “That’s why you had—” she paused, her eyes zooming in on Izuku’s head, “—still have bugs in your hair! Quick access defense! I like it!”

“You have bugs in your hair?” Manga questioned.

Izuku rubbed the back of his head, “Uh, yeah... You guys... You guys want to see?”

They nodded. *Good. Still not scared. Actually want to see my bugs. You’re doing good, keep going. You can actually do this, can actually go through wit —*

“Ahem.”

“Ah! Yes!” Izuku yelped, reaching into his hair. When he pulled it away, out came a house centipede with it, its dozens of squirming legs coming along. “This is Rikai! He’s one of the first bugs that I allowed into my hair.”

*He named it?*

*Ooh! Centipedes too! Think of the irritation bombs I could make with their poison!*

“Hmm. I’m gonna have to get used to having insects around pretty closely, aren’t I?” mused Manga.

“Oi! Don’t be a party pooper! ;)” Hatsume said, encroaching into Manga’s personal space. “Think of all the possibilities that can come upon us with these bugs! I, for one, don’t care for the fear factor! Bugs are bugs, marvelous and wondrous applications all over!”

Manga rose his hands in surrender, backing off from the *rather too close* girl. “I didn’t mean it like that! I mean, I think the bugs are pretty cool when you think of it! I’m just worried I’ll accidentally swallow one or something like that!”

Izuku smiled. *They really don’t care. The fact that I control bugs doesn’t faze them in the slightest. Hatsume and Manga... They really are great friends.*

But then he grimaced. Another problem came to mind. *I need to tell Sensei. He’s been as good to me as Hatsume and Manga have. He has the right to know as well.***

“And if he kicks you out of the dojo?”

...*I still have my skills as they are now. I can adapt.*

---

The next day had Izuku in front of the dojo of Kage Kawabata. The place wasn’t actually open yet, Izuku having arrived a long time before the day’s scheduled meeting. Still, Izuku was certain that his teacher to be present at the dojo. The man basically lived there, after all.

Well, that and he also checked with his bugs. The man was definitely inside, sitting in a crossed legged position in front of a table with tea, reading a book. It didn’t seem that he was leaving anytime soon.

Izuku took a deep breath, gazing upon the front of the building. This was a moment he’d been dreading for for a long time. He’d felt bad the first time he had arrived at the dojo, getting in through a lie. The fact that his sensei had essentially brought him in based on his quirklessness didn’t bode so well with him either. He knew that he would have to tell the truth one day, no matter how much it scared him.
But with yesterday, with the time he spent with Hatusume and Manga, he was feeling more optimistic. Perhaps not everyone would avoid him out of fear. Perhaps some could actually accept his quirk. He just hoped that Kawabata was like that, as well.

He began to walk up the steps, hand ready to knock on the imposing barrier between himself and an uncertain fate. He was surprised when the door opened at its own accord, Kage Kawabata standing in the doorway.

“Midoriya. Nice morning we’re having, isn’t it? Come! Come in! We have much to discuss.”

Discuss? What does he mean? And how did he know I was at the door?

A tap on his shoulder. He looked up to find the arm to be that of his sensei.

Izuku gave out a nervous laugh. He walked in after the older man. I really need to get that muttering under control. It could prove disastrous in real combat.

The two sat upon the low standing table.

“Tea?” asked Kawabata.

Izuku nodded. Kawabata poured him a cup. Izuku drank it sparingly, drawing out the time to hold off for the moment he decided to say anything. It was during this timeframe that Izuku began to panic in his head.

What will he think? What’s going to happen? Will he be scared? I control bugs, after all. I wouldn’t blame him. But this needs to be done. I owe it to him to tell him the truth. He’s taught me so much. I can’t go on lying to him.

He took a sip, but discovered a lack of heat and liquid emanating from the china cup. Empty.

He sighed. He looked up, looking at Kawabata straight in the eyes.

Izuku gulped. “Sensei… I’ve… I’ve got a confession to make.”

The man merely nodded, edging Izuku to continue.

“I… I… lied to you. When we first met.” The waterworks began, tears falling from Izuku’s eyes. “I said that I was quirkless, but… But… I’m not. I can… I can control bugs. And with scarcely fine control too. Enough that I could become a hero with just that. But— But— I was just so—” his breath hitched, and he went to wipe his face with his sleeve. He opened his mouth to continue, but was interrupted by Kawabata.

“Calm yourself, Midoriya. No need to shed tears over such a dilemma.”

“But Sensei! I—”

“I already know about it. Your quirk, that is. I’ve known for quite some time, actually.”

“But… but… but…”


Izuku gave a slight nod, looking to the ground in shame.

Kawabata took another sip of tea. He continued, “I never did tell you about my own quirk, Midoriya.
I never felt the need to inform you of it, and usually never do with most of my students.”

Another sip. “Cognition, is what it’s called. In short, I can sense brainwaves, as well as the things that the thoughts I pick up on are directed at. Just a moment ago, when you flew those insects in here, I sensed them. They were screaming thoughts of [Resolve] and [Confession] and [Guilt]. I could tell you were nearby, and had deduced your reasoning for being here. I knew that you had finally decided to tell me of you quirk.”

“That’s how you knew I was at the door.”

Kawabata nodded. “Yes.”

“How… How long have you known?”

“It was one of our first lessons together, actually, when you had that fly stuck in my sleeve.”

“I found that I could track your movements, if I wanted,” Izuku said in resignation.

“Yes. I was rather surprised at first, and I almost called you out right then. The supposed quirkless boy suddenly demonstrating a mental connection to a random fly? And the the two of them having the same emotions at the time? If that didn’t scream ‘quirk,’ well…”

“I… I understand, sensei.” Izuku went to stand. “I’ll… I’ll just pack up my things an—”

“Not so fast, Midoriya.” Izuku faltered, but obliged to listen to his teacher. He settled back down.

“As I was saying,” continued Kawabata, “I was rather perturbed when I discover the truth. But,” he emphasised, “your thoughts showed your true self. [Guilt], [Dishonor], and - what surprised me the most - [Fear]. I understood then that you weren’t withholding the information of your quirk for an advantage, but rather as a factor of you being afraid of using it. The mind of a young child can be rather quick to judge when you consider the nature of insects. Not many show them any kindness, after all.”

Izuku looked up, blinking a couple times. Does that mean...

The man took another sip from his tea. “That, is what I’ve judged your character on, Midoriya. Your mind, and what I’ve gathered from you during your time here. And you, Izuku, are a good person. You shouldn’t let your quirk determine your character. Don’t forget that.”

The tears had cleared up by now, them being replaced by a rather minute smile, the relief apparent on his face. “I— Thank you, sensei. I appreciate all that you’ve done for me. And— And I understand if want to get rid of m—”

“You need not fret, Midoriya. I do not plan in any time in the future to ban you from this dojo. You still deserve a place in here as much as anyone.”

“Re—Really?!”

“Yes. Just promise me one thing.”

“Of course, sensei!” came the boy with the outright outstanding smile.

“You do your best to get into U.A. And don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. You have the means to become a great hero, someday.”
Chapter End Notes

And there we have chapter five! A bit more of a character building chapter this time around, but fret not! You action seeking fans will get what you want next time. Anyhow, how do you guys think so far? Good? Bad? Anything you think I should take notice of?

Anyhow, I hope to see you all next time! See you in [Chapter 6: Rogue]!
Hello everyone! Here we have chapter six! Not much to say this time around, so, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“So that would be two Pork Cutlet Bowls, madam?”

“Yes please,” replied Inko Midoriya. “Oh, and could we get extra meat for one of the orders?”

“Of course.” The waiter took note of the order on his notepad. “Would that be all?”

“Yes, thank you!” replied Inko. The waiter walked off afterwards.

“Uh, mom?”

The woman turned toward the voice. “Yes, Izuku?”

“Why exactly are we here again? This place looks kind of… expensive.”

The boy wasn’t wrong. The Corner gave off a rather high etiquette vibe, its candlelight tables and high-strung attendants demonstrating what kind of atmosphere the restaurant withheld.

“I already told you! I just got promoted at work. I thought we could celebrate at a place like this.”

“But couldn’t we have just gone the usual place? We are just getting Katsudon, after all.”

“Oh, you’re no fun Izuku. There’s no harm in going to a place like this every once in a while. Plus, the meat here is of a higher quality!”

“I suppose. Even if we haven’t been to this part of the city before.”

“Ah, enough of that. Enough of that,” said Inko. “How was school today?”

Izuku grimaced at that. Kacchan was in one of his more grumpier moods today. The bruises on his leg were enough to prove it. “It was alright,” Izuku replied. “Just the usual, you know.”

“But your going into your last year of middle school soon! Surely there’s something interesting happening in class?”

“Not really.”


Izuku grimaced again, at that. He still hadn’t told her about the way his relationship with Bakugou had changed.
Best not to add to her worries. She has enough on her plate.

“He and his friends just played games with me—” as in, *chased me down and roughed me up, “—during lunch. The usual.”

“Hmm...” hummed Inko. She had picked up on her son’s dejected attitude towards her questions. He’d been like this every time she mentioned school, but she didn’t want to push. She decided to shift her manner of questioning. “And your training?”

Izuku perked up at that. *That he could talk about.* “It’s doing great mom!”

Inko smiled at that.

Izuku continued. “Aside from training with Kawabata-sensei, I’ve been practicing with my quirk, trying to increase my range an—” he stopped, having noticed something at the edge of his said range.

While he may have told his mother about his quirk just last month after he told his sensei, Inko didn’t exactly know everything Izuku was doing with his quirk. In fact, at the current moment Izuku was scouting out the currently unfamiliar part of the city for anything illegal or illicit. As it turned out, he’d found another criminal hideout not too far from where he was.

“Honey?”

“Uh, mom?”

“Yes?”

“I... I, uh... Some of my bugs are getting kind of hungry. Would it be alright if I...”

“Oh! Of course. Of course. Besides, I’d much rather have you feed them in the restroom than out here with the food. Go on ahead.”

“Thanks mom!” He grabbed his bag and ran off towards the restroom. Once he got in, he began to check for any occupants. The various flies he sent in scoured the stalls - a rather indecent method, but a necessary one - and deemed them empty.

*Good.*

He turned around, opening the door to the restroom and sending out a couple of scout flies, just in case. He didn’t want somebody barging in on him while he was getting ready, and he’d rather have a ten second warning beforehand if it was unavoidable. He turned again, this time placing his attention on an entry point.

Initial scouting had revealed that this restaurant had discrete access to the outside via a bathroom window. He had practiced for searching for such things whenever he went somewhere new. He had just started doing it some time ago; constant vigilance in the case he needed to act with his quirk.

He moved toward the window, unlatching the pane while letting in the cool nighttime air. Izuku took a deep breath of fresh air, just lowering his head seconds before thousands of insects came swarming inside, gathering around Izuku.

Reaching into his pack, Izuku retrieved a black, lightweight cloak that he had asked his mom to get
from a costume store. He’d made sure with his bugs to remove any trace of methodology that could trace the cloak back to him or his mom. Stray DNA was eaten up, as well as the label for the costume store.

A couple of near close calls made him realize how easily his bugs could be discovered – and thus subsequently connected to him. The cloak acted to remove any connections between him and his vigilante persona. Now that he was less cautious with his quirk, he needed to preserve his secret identity. After all, any news of a vigilante with a potential bug mutation quirk would be quite problematic.

As the fliers swarmed into the cloth, two small lights resonated in his hair. They were fireflies; he always carried two within the hair that now reached just past his neckline.

The fireflies placed themselves within the hood of the cloak, acting as two rudimentary eyes that glowed a luminescent yellow. The figure then rose into the air, emitting a slight buzzing sound. The now floating cloak was devoid of view beyond the shadows casted upon its openings, appearing almost as if all that filled the cloak were its piercing eyes. It stayed still for a few seconds, before zooming outside the open window.

Izuki smiled and nodded. Task done, he closed the window, leaving the bathroom and returning to his table.

He spotted his mother upon turning a corner. “Oh, Izuku! The food came while you were gone. I made sure yours had the extra meat. Are your insects are all fed well?” asked his mother.

“Yup!” responded Izuku. “The lesser insects acted food to the more important ones. I may be a few short now, but that’s how life works. Everything’s in order..”

Inko blinked. “Ah, that’s… good to know… Um, and your training?”

“Oh! Where was I…”

“You said something about range?”

“Oh yeah! I’ve increased my range to up to three blocks!”

Three blocks, the outer edge of where he had found the villain hideout. Just out of sight of the building, his cloaked figure grabbed for a phone booth, dialing for the police.

“That’s pretty large, isn’t it? Three whole blocks of coverage?”

“Yeah, I—“

“Hello? Who is this?”

“I have found a villain hideout at this location,” reverberated the feminine voice of his bugs. “Track this call and follow—”

The insects abruptly stopped their flow of sounds. They sensed something strange nearby.

A figure appeared within his sphere of influence, slowing closing in while jumping from rooftop to rooftop. His few scouts found the figure was mostly covered in black, with a loose, long cloth running from his neck. His face—”

“And I can sense what the insects can see and hear. It’s especially helpful for surveillance and spying
The insect-filled figure turned around, just as the black clothed jumper arrived on a rooftop that oversaw the scene. The dozens of bugs in the immediate area took discrete looks at the rooftop figure. Further observation revealed the long cloth to be a sort of scarf. The figure had long hair, almost in the current style and length of Izuku’s own. But most prominent were the pair of distinctive yellow goggles that covered his eyes.

**Eraserhead.**

“Uh-oh.”

*Each stared down the other, waiting for either one to make a move first. The robed figure’s yellow orbs pierced into the Erasure Hero’s own black lens. Each seemingly edged the other to act. After a few short seconds, Eraserhead jum—***

“Izuku? Something wrong?”

“Huh?” Izuku asked, shifting attention back to his mother. “What do you mean?”

“Well, you were just making this face. And you sounded worried of something. You okay?”

“Oh! Yeah. Yeah. I’m just…”

Izuku turned his figure down a wayward alley. Eraserhead was in hot pursuit, trailing behind what would seem in his perspective a suspicious, levitating figure.

The cloaked insects simply glided over various obstacles, surpassing large dumpsters and various debris that otherwise hindered the pursuing hero. It was enough to throw the hero of Izuku’s trail quite effectively, but not entirely.

Quick glances with other bugs saw Eraserhead’s eyes glowing an eerie red and his hair floating upwards, even as he ran. Izuku knew that the hero was using his quirk. No doubt the hero would think from this encounter that he was chasing a rather oblique mutation type. As long as they both kept their distance, Izuku would be fine. Izuku couldn’t let the hero see what was under the cloak, and he couldn’t prevent that in hand-to-hand combat (or the lack thereof, i. The manner of his fake body).

Izuku began to think, various exit strategies coming to possible fruition in his head. He began to send insects all over, but was careful to ensure his actions were kept under wraps.

“Want dessert, Izuku?”

“Uh… yeah. Need to stay a bit.”

“Alright, what do you want? The Ice Cream Fudge Brownie? Taiyaki? Moch—”

“Taiyaki. Or whichever takes longer.”

*He was having a craving for red bean paste. So what?*

Inko rose an eyebrow. “Okay?”

*There. An opening. Plan F.*

The insects skidded the corner of the alley and onto the street. They took a immediate veer left.
creating a rough five second window to commence a retreat. The thousands of bugs of his fake body abandoned the cloak, crowding and streaming their way into an open water drain. The insects left without a trace, leaving behind nothing but the cloak that concealed their presence.

“That’s a shame.”

“What is, Izuku?”

Said boy jumped in his seat. Shoot, that was out loud. Again. Need to fix that…

“Uh, nothing. Just a shame that we could only have one dessert,” he said as he bit into the fish-shaped cake he was holding. *That was a nice cloak though. I’ll have to see how I can get another one without mom getting suspicious.*

“We could get mo—”

“No!” Izuku exclaimed. He recoiled, having noticed the way he accidentally yelled. “I mean, no need to spend more here. We can spare ourselves from the, uh, higher expenses here.”

*Besides. I need to get away from here. I’d rather not stay so close to Eraserhead, just in case. I need to take note to be cautious around this area at night. It’s probably directly in lieu of Eraserhead’s patrol routes.*

“Are you sure you’re okay, Izuku? You’re muttering again. And you’ve been acting weird all night.”

“I— Yeah. Just… tired, I guess.”

He looked back towards the storm drain. Eraserhead was there, currently examining the cloak Izuku’s insectoid shape had left behind. The Erasure Hero was holding the cloth, then scanning the landscape for his target. The man tsked and sprinted away, rejoining the solitude of the rooftops.

*Another close call. I need to be more careful. Even more so now since I’m no doubt under Eraserhead’s radar.*

Izuku looked out the window of his mother’s car. He glanced up, towards the rooftops. He watched as the blurry shadow slowly faded away into the night.

“Officer Iwasaki.”

Said officer rose his eyebrow. It wasn’t often that a pro hero - especially an underground one - went out of their way to show up to the station at their own volition. He voiced his confusion.

“Eraserhead? What brings you here?”

The hero simply answered back with nonchalance. “An update. On one of your long-running cases.”

“Oh?” *Something noteworthy enough for Eraserhead to take note of? Perhaps its Stendhal? Or maybe Arkswan?* “Let’s get to one of the debriefing rooms first.”

Both police officer and hero walked towards the debrief room, both silent before behind closed doors.
“So,” asked Iwasaki, bringing out some blank pieces of paper and an inkwell, “what do you have for us?”

Eraserhead handed Iwasaki the cloth that was over his shoulders. He opened his mouth, uttering a single word, “Snitch.”

Iwasaki’s eyebrows rose in surprise. “Snitch?! You sure? I— wait, is this her cloak?”

Eraserhead nodded.

Iwasaki combed over the cloak. “It’s rather… mundane. Nothing special about it, really.” Iwasaki waved his hand over it. “No traces of ink, either if that helps. Can’t track it by the supplier. You sure it’s her’s?”

“Completely. I arrived just as she making one of her infamous calls. That was about… two hours ago from now.”

The officer blinked. “That would be the one at that club, with the secret basement hideaway… Wait, where were you then? We stormed the place with Death Arms just earlier.”

“Mhm. I fell in pursuit with the suspect. We strayed pretty far from the scene and, I’ve got to admit, she’s one slippery vigilante. Turned me around once or twice. She escaped. All I got was the cloak. I decided to finish my patrol rather than go on a goose hunt.”

“Alright, I supp— Wait, so you saw what she looks like under it, then, right?! That’s good, very good!” Iwasaki began to use his quirk, the ink transforming into words onto paper, clear and organized as any computer would produce. “We can finally set up a description of her after all this time. Just give me a brief rundown of what she looked like and I can—”

“I didn’t.”

Iwasaki’s scrawl abruptly stopped. “...Didn’t what?”

“I didn’t see her. Snitch was long gone by the I found the cloak.”

“Oh… shoot,” came Iwasaki’s dejected look. But that soon changed, turning to intrigue. “But… why would she leave it behind, then? There wouldn’t be a need, with such a clean escape. Why leave behind something that could potentially lead us to her?”

“That, Iwasaki,  is what I intend to find out.”

Shota Aizawa stepped out of the station. Upon reaching the bottom steps, he immediately spotted a flare of spiky, blonde hair to his left. He sighed.

“Hey! Shota! How’s it going?!’ exclaimed the figure.

“I’m fine,” Aizawa said. “Why’re you here?”

“Agh, that hurts!” yelled Hizashi, clutching at his heart. “Can”t a friend simply visit a friend?”

Aizawa simply started walking.

“Shota, wait up!” Hizashi whined. Upon catching up to his friend, he asked, “So?”
“So what?”

“Tell me! Ole buddy, old pal, why’d brought you in there? You usually never end up directly speaking with the police.”

“I had an update for one of their long-running cases.” Aizawa answered. “Most of the information on the case is within the police database, due to the nature of the case. I needed to see what else they had so I could find a lead.”

“Oh? How so? What’s got you so interested?”

“Snitch.”

“Ah, her! The mysterious Snitch! She’s quite a case, ain’t she?”

“She is. I encountered her on my patrol.”

“You did?! Where’s she at then? Police custody? Or was her quirk too volatile for that?! Is she being watched by other heroes, maybe?”

Shota simply gave his friend a flat glare.

“What?!? She got away? How?! This is like, what? The first time someone has escaped from you?” Hizashi asked incredulously.

Another stare. “Third. There was both Quill and Arson.”

“Ah, I remember them. Both mutation types. Huge pains to fight…” Hizashi tilted his head toward Shota. “You think Snitch is one?”

“Not sure. But I believe it's possible.”

“And why’s that?”

“I tried erasing her quirk. It didn’t work, she just kept going. However she was levitating, it was either through a mutant quirk or some sort of device, if the faint buzzing I picked up on is anything to go by. Besides, she was able to notice my presence before I came into view. That points towards a sensory quirk.”

Hizashi shrugged his shoulders. “Well, you’ve got to admit, at least it was a vigilante this time, eh? Less likely to retaliate in lethal force towards heroes, and at least doing good rather than crime.”

Hizashi took an exaggerated pose, eyes scrunched in deep thought and his hand rubbing his chin. “You didn’t see anything that could hint towards a possible mutation? Body parts?”

“Never got a view under the cloak.”

“Hands?”

“Covered by the sleeves.”

“Face?”

“Two yellow eyes, that’s all.”

“Well, how about her fee — Oh! So Snitch does levitate! Just like Emi told us!”
Aizawa’s eye twitched ever so slightly. He sighed again. “Yes, it was as she said.”

“Sweet! I’ve got another reason for a get together! Wait until Emi hears about this.”

“Please don’t. I like speaking to her on my own terms.”

“Hmm…”

Aizawa looked at his friend.

“Mmm… Fine. But only because you asked nicely. On the other hand, there’s stil— Hey! Where you going?!”

Aizawa, again the Erasure Hero Eraserhead, was jumping up the sides of two buildings until he reached the top. His goggles glinted in the heavy moonlight, capture device ready at his neck.

“I’m gonna take a look around. Never know, I might stumble upon Snitch again.”

“But you’ve already been at it for 7 hours! You need to sleep, you know! It’s not healthy if you don’t!”

Aizawa nodded his head. “Fine. I’ll only be out for another hour. But one thing’s for sure, I’ll be keeping a closer eye out for Snitch. This case isn’t going to be forgotten until it’s solved.

With that, Eraserhead blurred away into the night.

“Wait!! yelled Hizashi. “We still haven’t talked about whether or not you’re gonna accept that job opening!”

Hizashi Yamada stared after his friend as he grew smaller in the distance. He sighed. “Ah well, we’ll go over it tomorrow. Nemuri and I can gang up in him then.”

With that, Hizashi placed his hands in his pockets and walked on home. That is, until something else came to mind. “Ah shoot! I still need to finalize everything for tomorrow’s show!” And his brisk pace turned into a sprint towards his home.

Chapter End Notes

And done! Hope you all liked it. Oh, and for those of you who are wondering about the “villainous nature” (finger quotes, to emphasize) that Izuku sees in his of bugs, well… ;)

Anyways, see you all next time in [Chapter 7: Conflict]!
Conflict

And here we are everyone, Chapter 7! At this point on, we’re basically all caught up to canon. Now, let’s take a look at how this is all going to go down, shall we?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright class, listen up!” announced the teacher. “Since you are all third years, it’s time for you to seriously think about your future. I’d pass out handouts for your future plans now, but… you’re pretty much all planning to go into the hero course, right?”

A cacophony of yells and hollers came from the class, various individuals flaring up with the usage of their quirks. The teacher began to quiet them down.

“Now, now. I must remind you that quirk usage prohibited on school premises. You all—“

“Don’t lump us all together as a group!” yelled out Bakugo. “I’m not gonna be stuck at the bottom like all of these rejects!”

The class began to voice their disapproval. Not too far back, Izuku Midoriya’s eye slightly twitched in annoyance. How could someone like him be aiming to be a hero?

“Oh, if I remember correctly, you want to go to U.A. High, right, Bakugo?” asked the teacher.

“That’s right! I aced the moc—”

“Ah, it says here that so does Midoriya!” interrupted the teacher. Everyone in the class went silent. Then came a small laugh, which erupted into an uproar of incredulity towards Izuku’s prospects.

Deep breaths, deep breaths. Keep them at bay.

A slight crackle originated from Bakugo hand.

Izuku sighed. Here we go again. He feigned disinterest, looking out the window.

“You listen here, Deku!” Bakugo said, rising from his seat. “I’m the only one here that’s going to get into U.A., you hear!” A growl came from Bakugo. “Hey! Are you listening to me?!”

Bakugo moved, aiming to ignite an explosion atop Izuku’s desk. Izuku, eyes widening as his insects followed Bakugo’s movements, jumped from the desk to evade the attack. With the brunt of the force having lost its target, it was redirected towards the desk, causing it to collapse in two. Izuku let out a small smirk. Unfortunately, Bakugo saw the expression.

“Well, looky here,” Bakugo scoffed. “Think you’re so special, huh? Dodging that?” Izuku’s smirk faded away. He remained standing, but pressed against the back wall of the classroom. Bakugo continued with his speech. “Well guess what! You’re below the rejects! You’re quirkless!!”

But only because I haven’t shown you. A part of his consciousness went to reach for his bugs, but he immediately went to shut that down. He took another deep breath. In, and out. Izuku stayed leaning
against the wall, eyes closed and controlling his breathing.

“What? Not gonna say anything, Deku?”

Izuku’s bugs took a look out in front of him. Bakugo had that manic glee in his eyes, the eyes that shone in apparent victory, the feeling of superiority over the inferior. The sight bubbled and seethed in Izuku’s mind, but he remembered to keep his control on a lease. His instead responded back with a verbal retort, rather than a physical one.

“I don’t need to say anything to you.”

The rage was apparent on Bakugo’s face. “What was that?!?” A larger explosion racked in Bakugo’s hand. “You—”

“Bakugo! Midoriya! Stop your fighting! I don’t want to have to send you both to the principal again! And I highly doubt the classroom can handle any more damage from your antics!”

Bakugo growled, but went back to his seat. Izuku went to do the same, but stopped himself. With his desk having been destroyed by the initial explosion, her had nowhere to sit. Sighing again, he went to retrieve his belongings and sat back against the wall. The teacher showed no sign of concern or notice.

The rest of the class went on, with Bakugo silently fuming from earlier, and Izuku again observing his surroundings with his bugs, his focus completely away from the teacher’s lecture. It wasn’t as if he would ever be called upon, after all.

Soon enough, the bell rang and the school day had reached its end. As per usual, Izukku waited for most of the class to leave. However, as he predicted, Bakugo and his cronies stayed behind. It wasn’t like Bakugo to leave such a threat to his ego unpunished, after all.

He began to pack his belongings as the trio began their approach. However, the unexpected happened as Bakugo snatched up his notebook. He hadn’t done that before, and Izuku hadn’t anticipated the move. He just hadn’t listened to what his bugs had seen in time.

“We’re not done talking yet, Deku,” Bakugo said, standing menacingly in front of Izuku. He set his eyes on Izuku, then turned his attention to the notebook. “’Hero Analysis for the Future?’” he read aloud. The other two behind him began racking up, spouting out remarks denouncing Izuku.

“Give it back,” Izuku said.

Bakugo simply scoffed, charring the notebook with a light explosion. Izuku mentally cringed. However, as Bakugo went to throw the book out the window, Izuku sent a few fliers after it, catching it just before it touched the water below.

“Listen here, Deku! I’m the only one from this dump that’s going to get out of here and get into U.A. So you better get off your high horse and think realistically. I don’t care what Horns or No Face are telling you! You’re nothing!”

The trio began to walk off, but not before Bakugo left with the last word. “Heck, who knows? Perhaps you’ll get a quirk in your next life. Just take a swan dive off the roof, will ya?”

Izuku remained standing there, musing over Bakugo’s words. Imagine if I did? I could screw over him right then and there. He’d never get into U.A. then. But I wouldn’t.

“Of course. Not with me here.”
With Bakugo and his cronies having left the school - Izuku checked with his bugs - he began to walk outside. He passed by the window of his classroom, where he found his notebook being held up by flies and dragonflies. Retrieving it, he began to walk home.

He eventually thought about his friends. It was a shame that they lived in different neighborhoods, since he didn’t have much time to hang out with them. It didn’t help that schoolwork got in the way, limiting get togethers to mostly the weekends.

As he approached an overpass, he again began to think over his school situation. His thoughts drifted over to Bakugo again. *If only there was a way to—*

He turned, his bugs having noticed an inkling of sludge moving unnaturally from a manhole cover.

The sludge sped up from its original, crawling pace. It formed roughly into a humanoid shape in seconds, then promptly dashed towards Izuku, encapsulating him in sludge.

“Wow,” said the sludge, “you noticed me pretty quickly there. I had to speed up my formation. Some sort of sensory quirk, maybe? I could use that, actually have a way to avoid *him.*”

Izuku began to panic. There was no doubt that he was being attacked by a villain. Horror and fear was forming over realization of what was happening, that he was suffocating, was about to di—

He reached out to his bugs, subduing his emotions. He began to formulate a plan. His skittering bug clone began to form, gathering insects from the surrounding area. The buzzing demonstrated their agitation, a loud, unbearable jarring of sounds filling the air.

*“Let me go.”*

The sludge villain blinked in stupefaction. “Oh shit, that’s you.” He looked at the chittering mass of bugs, the creatures piling over one another, rapidly falling apart and rebuilding at the same.

“I’m gonna be honest with you kid, that is a whole lot levels creepy, many times overboard more than me. And look at me, I’m an amorphous killer slime.”

He’s not scared?

“But who am I kidding? It’s just bugs. What are they gonna do to me, huh? Nice try, but I’m sorta of in a hurry so…”

He was right, of course. Upon contact the bugs either died or were sucked into the villain’s body. It did little but further annoy the villain. The tightening of the sludge quickened, squeezing and suffocating Izuku even further. “Don’t worry little invisibility cloak, we’re almost there.”

Izuku didn’t know what else to do. He couldn’t quite beat up something he couldn’t harm, right? He scoured his mind, trying to come up with something to counteract the villain’s quirk. There had to be some sort of weakness. He looked again at the villain with his bugs, scanning its form top to bottom. Then a lightbulb formed. Another plan began to carry out.

He knew the route they were on, knew which bugs carried their way through the area. He reached out, calling upon one of the hives he’d been cultivating during his walks to and from school. It was one of the things he often refrained from using, but he had little choice now. Then, a new buzzing filled the air.

A swarm of hornets - the native japanese kind - came upon the villain. The slime yelped a little as he saw them arriving.
Don’t blame him. These hornets are pretty terrifying, after all.

“Let go, or else,” demanded his swarm, along with the newcomer hornets.

The sludge rolled his eyes. “Look kid, I already said befor—”

I’m running out of air. Can’t breathe, can’t brea—

The hornets acted, swarming the sludge villain. But rather than just aimlessly attack, they had one goal in mind. They congregated towards the villain’s eyes, each taking turns injecting their stingers into the soft tissue. The villain screeched in agony, releasing Izuku and flailing around the overpass.

Izuku gasped for breath, coughing up excess sludge and barely being able to stand. The black spots in his vision were still there, and his thoughts remained fuzzy. He dispersed his bugs, gaining a little more focus with his own eyes.

A clattering of metal came soon after, an easily recognizable voice following the charge. “It’s alright now, youn— huh?”

Izuku looked right over, recognizing his childhood hero. Izuku stood and remained there staring, slack jawed.

All Might surveyed the scene, finding the sludge he’d been chasing earlier mostly subdued. Various chunks of him lying about, leaving only a small portion that was about the size of the villain’s face squirming to and fro.

He then looked at the boy he had heard struggling earlier, finding him relatively unharmed and standing in what he presumed was awe.

Izulu ran forward, joyfully bouncing up and down in front of his idol. “A- A- All Might! Sir! It- It’s really you!!”

“Indeed young man!” responded All Might, who began looking around. He eventually resounded an, “Aha!” and headed over to pick up some discarded soda bottles. “I must say, I’m quite impressed with you! Being able to take down such a tricky villain by yourself? And at such a young age? Amazing!” he laughed.

All Might began to scoop up the villain into the soda bottles. “How did you do it anyway? Super Strength? Aerokinesis?” All Might gathered the last of the villain, closing the caps tightly.

Izuku immediately responded. “It was nothing really, just bu—”

A rough cough interrupted Izuku. He looked over to All Might, who had been looking at Izuku’s notebook.

“My notebook!” Izuku said.

All Might smirked. “It’s rather extensive, young man. I’m impressed yet again.” All Might handed the notebook to Izuku.

He opened it up, and found a page with All Might’s signature. He already signed it!

“But alas, I must go. Villainy doesn’t fight itself, after all!”

Izuku froze, staring at the retreating figure of the hero. He still had questions he hadn’t asked, things that only All Might would know.
“All Might—”

“I’m sorry lad, but I really have to go!” All Might said, stretching. He turned one last time to the boy, uttering, “Stay safe!” And with that, All Might jumped into the air. However, he wasn’t fast enough to lose the rather energetic boy now attached to his leg.

Izuku mentally screamed. *Oh shoot, oh shoot! This was a bad idea!*

“I thought you were over trying to kill yourself?”

Izuku was clutching into All Might’s leg for his dear life, trying to resist the hero’s efforts to dislodge him.

“Oi oi oi, there’s such a thing as being too much of a fanboy, you know!” All Might yelled. “You should learn to keep your distance!” he said, trying to get rid of the green headed boy.

“If I let go now I’ll die!” Izuku yelled back in kind.

All Might stopped, considering the boy’s words. “Opps,” he gave a nervous laugh. “Good point. Just hold on tight then. We’ll be down in just a minute.” The hero and the boy soared through the air, eventually landing on the roof of a building.

All Might let Izuku down, and immediately began to head towards the railing. “Look kid, I’ve really got to go.”

“But All Might!”

“No buts! I really—” All Might began to cough profusely, interrupting his speech. It wasn’t long before steam began to seep from his form, eventually resulting in the complete transformation from the Symbol of Peace to an unknown nobody. “Ah shoot,” stretched out the transformed All Might.

Izuku blinked in surprise. “All… Might?” The figure standing before him was without a doubt his idol. The few bugs he had kept on the hero were still where he left them, completely untouched.

“Yeah… sorry you had to see me like this, kid.” All Might said dejectedly.

“What… what happened?” Izuku asked.

All Might gave off a small laugh. “It was a while back ago. Five years, actually, when I got this injury in a fight,” he said, lifting up his shirt to reveal said injury.

Izuku grimaced in seeing it. “Five years ago… was that the fight with Toxic Chainsaw?”

“I’m impressed yet again. You’ve done your research!” All Might sighed. “My quirk — One for All — has a time limit on it now. At most, I can go heroing for three hours a day.”

All Might sighed again. “Look kid, I can’t have this being found out. The Symbol of Peace must remain a beacon of hope for all.”

Izuku nodded profusely. “Of course, All Might! My lips are sealed!”

“Good! I trust you, you seem like a good kid,” All Might sighed again. “Well, I might as well be going,” he said, heading for the door.

“Wait!” Izuku yelled. “I still have some questions… If you don’t mind,” Izuku added quietly.
All Might turned back towards Izuku, mind in decision. After a few moments, he responded. “Ah, might as well. You’ve already seen me. So, uh… Um… I never got your name, young man.”

“Oh! It’s uh, Izuku. Izuku Midoriya.”

“Well, all right, Midoriya. What is it that you have to ask of me?”

Izuku looked down at his feet in hesitation. Now that he actually had the chance to ask All Might, he was kind of nervous.

“Hey kid,” pitched in All Might. “It’s all right. Anything you’ve got to ask, just go ahead!”

“It’s… it’s about my quirk. I— I’m not sure what to do about it.”

“You mean the thing that got you out of that mess of sludge? Surely a quirk like that had to be super strong to take down that villain. It would make the top ranks! What’s got you so worried?”

Izuku gulped. “It’s… not like you imagine. My— my quirk… I can control… bugs.”

All Might sweatdropped. “Bugs?”

“Yeah, bugs. I can control them, very fine control too,” Izuku demonstrated, forming a bunch of nearby bugs into a floating ‘HELLO!’

“Oh, wow. That’s mighty impressive. But, I still don’t see what’s wrong?”

“That’s the problem.” Izuku said. “Hypothetically, imagine that there was a villain with an emitter quirk that focused around their eyes.”

All Might nodded.

“If I really wanted to, I could neutralize them completely by placing maggots in their eyes.”

All Might blinked. “Uh…”

“Or someone whose quirk emitted from their hands. I could rot the tissue with spider venom and render the hands useless.”

“Definitely not going off in a grudge there.”

“Or with—”

“Okay, okay, okay, stop. You’re looking at this the wrong way.”

Izuku rose his eyes in surprise. “I am?”

All Might nodded. “Yup. You can find different uses from your quirk, from the sound of it. You could just, uh, blind villains with your swarm. Or wrap their hands in… uh… spider silk or something,” All Might said, rubbing his hands at the back of his head.

Izuku’s eyes widened in realization. “You’re right! Why haven’t I thought of that before?!”

“Damn.”

“Personally,” interjected All Might, “I believe it was a sense of focusing on the negatives. Bugs are viewed as scary by many, after all. Especially so to young children such as yourself. Maybe you had
a scare when you were young? Something that involved insects?”

Izuku thought back. “I don’t… think so. Maybe”

“Any way, young Midoriya!” All Might yelled, switching back into his muscled form. “Your quirk is very versatile. In fact, I can almost guarantee that you’d become a pro as long as you groom it right. Just remember, don’t let your quirk define yourself. Let you define your quirk.”

Izuku smiled brightly from the praise of his idol.

“Now, if you don’t mind, I can’t stretch my time in this form much longer. I really need to get this guy—” All Might stopped, patting his now empty pockets.

“Oh shoot! I must’ve—”

“Oh, right!” Izuku interjected. “The bottles! I almost forgot.” Izuku ordered his bugs to move, a hidden mass at the corner of the roof coming forward with two sludge-filled soda bottles. All Might went to grab them, securing them in his pockets.

“I noticed them falling when we were in the air. My grip sort of slipped them out from your pockets. Sorry,” Izuku admitted, rubbing his head.

“My gosh, young Midoriya! You almost gave me a heart attack! But I’ve got to say, nice job!” All Might said with a thumbs up.

Izuku jumped. “Bu—but, it was my fault the villain almost got lose!”

All Might laughed. “Nonsense! I should’ve been paying attention to this fellow. Your quick actions prove that you’re hero material already, even!”

“Thank you, All Might!”

“Of course! “I’ll be seeing ya!” With that, the Symbol of Peace jumped away, a bewildered Izuku watching from the rooftop.

__________

“Dr. Nakai, sir.” The doctor looked over at the nurse that had gotten his attention.

“Yes, Kanako?” he asked.

“It’s about the… uh, patient that we got an hour ago,” the nurse explained in a reserved manner.

The doctor rose an eyebrow. “The one that the media has deemed the ‘Sludge Villain’?”

“Yes sir,” she replied, nodding animatedly.

“He just came here for the routine checkup before they were going to process him, no? Did something go wrong? I thought they had heroes watching him.”

“That’s not it, sir. The check-up picked up on something rather, well…”

“Yes?”

“He’s mostly made of sludge, given he’s a mutation quirk. His eyes are the only thing that are still made of tissue. And, well, it’s his eyes. They’ve… They’re damaged. Irreparably so.”
“What’d you mean?”

The nurse took out a file folder. “Here, sir. We took some pictures for record.”

Nakai grabbed the folder, opening it and recoiling at what he saw. “By god! What happened?”

The nurse grimaced. “There are signs of them being stung - hundreds of times. We believe that they were from hornets, given the potency and damage. Fortunately for him, his physiology made it so there was no danger of death. Even so, a normal man would have died with the amount of venom in his system.

“...Who took him out?”

“It was All Might.”

“Oh. Well, it definitely wasn’t his fault.” The doctor rubbed his chin in thought. “Maybe it was something in transit? Or something before All Might came along?”

“What do you think, Doctor?”

“I don’t know. And I’d rather not bother All Might if we don’t have to. What’s done is done. We’ll just mark it down in the records, leave it be unless someone questions it. Our job’s done then. He’s a villain, after all. Not like anyone would really care.

“Of course, Dr. Nakai. As you say so.”

Chapter End Notes

And there we are folks, caught up to canon! We won’t exactly be getting right into the U.A. stuff, though. There’s still a whole ten months before the Entrance Exam after all! We just have a little bit to get out of the way.

Anyway, ’till next time! Ta-ta!

P.S. - Remember all, I’ve taken elements from Wildbow’s Worm! Go and check that out if you haven’t already! It’s great!
And here we are again! Hello everyone! This time we have a bit of pre-entrance exam stuff going on. Don’t worry though, we’ll be heading back on the canon train so enough. Hope you all enjoy!

“Do you know why you are here, Midoriya?” came a stern voice.

Izuku remained quiet. He’d already gone through this talk with the principal multiple times before. And the outcome was rarely ever different.

“You were causing trouble in class again with Bakugou,” he took a breath, as if he was tired over a repetitive task. “You claimed that he had attacked you.” The principal tented his fingers. “Why do you insist on pinning such things on him?”

Izuku had learned that nothing would ever prove Bakugou to ‘be in the wrong.’ Everything he would do would be ignored, while Izuku would take the punishment.

“Now, I know it’s the last day of your time here, before you head off to high school. So, there’s not much I can really do.”

He’d learned long ago the renown that came to a school when a graduating student got into U.A. He discovered how much a school’s reputation boosted from such statistics, and in turn the resulting greater influx of students next year. This led to more funding, and more pockets being filled.

The sound of a hand slamming the desk came about. Of course, no actual hand was on the desk, given the principal's quirk. His hands were still tented up. Izuku did jump in his seat, however, not having been able to see the action either with his own eyes or his bugs’. “Are you even listening, Midoriya?”

“Of course, sir.” Not really, though.

The principal sighed. “Do you know how difficult it is, dealing with you? Day in and day out, I have to worry about you causing trouble, or risk—”

“That’s enough.”

“You mean how difficult it is to ensure stuff like this doesn't get out? So that Bakugou has a chance of getting into U.A.?”

Izuku blinked. Wha—

It was no wonder that Isoshi Renjiro was so adamant on Bakugou’s good behavior. Any blots on his record could risk his chances in getting into the country’s top hero school.
“Now, Midoriya,” the principal said in a warning tone, “such accusations are unaccounted for.” A pause. “Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

Izuku stayed silent this time.

The principal’s blank face didn’t relay his emotions, especially given the slight growls coming for the corners of the room. “Get out. I’m tired of dealing with you. I should just take your leaving as a blessing.”

Izuku immediately complied, walking out of the office of Isoshi Renjiro for the last time.

“That old principal had you held up again?” asked Manga.

“Yeah,” replied Izuku. “Had me in for disrupting class again, apparently.”

“What is that, like, the fourth time this month?” asked Mei.

Another voice added, “He really does sound like a… uh…”

Izuku turned toward the voice, a more recent addition to his group of friends. He finished off her thoughts. “A jerk?”

“Yeah!” exclaimed Pony Tsunotori. “A jerk, that’s the word… Or just a meanie, maybe. I, uh, I mean, he must be, right?”

“Well, I think so,” said Izuku. “But it’s not like it matters now. We’re all out of school, after all. And I’ll never have to see him again.”

Manga had introduced Pony Tsunotori to the group just a few months prior. Apparently, she had come over from America due to family reasons; her parents had found a new job over here in Japan. Her having met Manga was a blessing to her, since she was still trying to learn Japanese. Manga’s ability to ‘pop-up’ words on his face allowed him to be a great teacher on the subject. It wasn’t surprising that the two became great friends.

Mei butted in. “Nevermind him. People like him are the type I ignore in favor on working on my babies! I just erase them from the memory banks and— Oh! I should try that,” she pulled out her notebook, “a mind wiper. In the form of a helmet? No, too bulky. A gun?”

Izuku added in his own thoughts. “I don’t think you should do that, Mei.”

Mei looked up with an incredulous stare. “And why not? I can’t be too hard. I just need to give the brain an electrical jolt! In fact, a simple shot of the Electro-Beam should suffice as a first experiment!”

“It’s not like that Mei! You can’t just mess around with someone’s brain without having researched neurology!”

“But come on! Really?!? It’s not—”

“But the way the brain works inhi—”

Meanwhile, Manga and Pony watched the ongoing strife as their two friends debated over memory erasure inventions.

“And there they go. They’re at it again,” uttered Manga.
Pony looked a little uncertain. “This happens too often, I think. How long did last time last?”

“Ehh… About an hour or so,” mused Manga.

They continued to look on, watching the continuous onslaught of techno-babble that neither of them could understand.

“Shouldn’t you stop them?” asked Pony.

After a few seconds, Manga sighed. “Alright, fine.” He walked up to the debating duo, internally dreading that he would end up getting coiled by the ‘Wire Arrow’ again.

He kept an eye on the contraption on Mei’s waist, before shouting ‘STOP’ to manifest a thin wall into existence. Both Izuku and Mei abruptly stopped their bickering. Seems like Mei was being more amiable today.

“Ok. Okay. Never mind that.”

“But—!” Manga stopped Mei before she could continue, placing a palm in front of her face.

Manga turned to his green-haired friend. “Izuku why did you call us out here, again? To the park?”

“Ah!” Izuku steadied himself. “It’s kind of silly, really. But… I’ve been inspired to work harder, so we are all going to train ourselves to the limit!”

Silence.

“Train? Why would I do that?” uttered Mei.


“But Izuku!” Mei whined. “We still haven’t finished that robot we were working on! We still need to retroactively connect all the circuitry!”

“Why did you do that, anyways?”

“Because I have you, silly! Your bugs can connect all the wires and stuff!”

“Right…”

“Guys!” shouted Manga.

Izuku cleared his throat. “Anyway, if we all want to get into U.A., we have to make sure our bodies are ready! Not just our quirks!”

“Well?” asked Izuku, garnering for their opinion.

“Well… I think it’s a… a…” Pony turned to Manga whispering what she was trying to convey. On his face formed the word ‘amazing.’ “Yeah! Amazing!” Pony finished.

“Thank you, Pony.” Izuku said. “And you, Manga?”

“Eh… I suppose. No harm in trying.”

(´_-`)
“I might as well follow,” said Mei. “But I’ll be trailing behind instead, working on my babies!”

Izuku sweatdropped. “I suppose that’s the best I can wish for,” he muttered. “Thank you! Now, I’d like to start with…”

He sighed. It was hard, living with a quirk like his. Sure, he liked what he was able to do with it. Sure, he was praised for it. Sure, it was powerful given the right conditions, but…

He took a seat on the bench, leaning his head back over the backrest, and leaving his arms stretched out. He closed his eyes, taking in the feeling of sunlight on his face and the melodious chirping of the birds.

It just didn’t feel… right. He’d never be able to stand on his own with his quirk. He would always just be… there. On the sidelines away from the others.

He thought back to his time at school. The others always found his quirk ‘cool.’ And he reflected that by the way he interacted with them. But he knew the truth of his quirk.

He never stood out because of what he could do, not necessarily. He decided that his quirk was more of a burden, with what he hoped to accomplish.

He sighed again. But his resolve refused to waver.

But I have a goal. A way to prove myself. I just need to get into U.A. That was for sure. And a complete guarantee. To be a Pro, I just need to—

“Alright everyone! Just a little bit more. We’ll rest up here for now though. Let Mei catch up, too.”

He opened his eyes, turning his head to look over at the fountain. There he found a group of three. There was a horse-looking girl - no doubt due to her quirk - given her horns and hooves. Then there was one with a speech bubble for a head - how does that work?

Then he glanced over at the other: the obvious leader of the group. The other two were both being led by the green-headed boy, no other remarkable features otherwise.

If only I could be like that, praised for my own qualities. He shook his head, intrigued by the scene before him. I wonder what he has, that makes the others follow him so resolutely. It must be something powerful.

He looked over again, an idea coming to mind. A smirk appeared on his face. Why don’t I go find out?

“Hey… Izuku,” said Manga, panting from their run, “it looks like that guy is… coming our way.”

Izuku glanced over at the figure at mention, who had just previously been resting on the park bench. He had blonde hair, parted to the left with his bangs hanging over his right. The boy held himself rather… contemptuously, if that was the right word. He simply walked up, hands in his pockets.

“Who are you?” asked Manga.

The boy smirked. “I’m Monoma. Neito Monoma.”
It seemed as if that was all he was going to say, showing no signs to continue. Manga spoke up instead, “And... what do you want?”

“Oh, not much, my fellow peers. I was simply… rather engrossed in what was transpiring here.”

Izuku rose an eyebrow, “Us training?” he asked.

“Precisely,” affirmed Monoma.

“...Why?” asked Manga.

Rather than answer, Monoma simply walked up to Izuku, placing a hand on his shoulder. Then he furrowed his brow, which eventually morphed into an expression of shock and confusion.

“Is everything… okay?” Izuku asked, concerned.

Monoma looked at Izuku, then at the two behind him. He backed away a few steps. “You’re… quirkless?” Monoma spoke, confused.

Izuku flinched, as if struck. “What?” he said in a deadpan tone.

Monoma shakily continued. “How could a quirkless be leading such a group of those obviously gifted with their own—”

“Whoa man, that’s uncalled for,” interrupted Manga. “Besides, he—”

“No, let him—”

“It… it just can’t!” exclaimed Monoma, showing a bit of unease. “It doesn’t work like that. You can’t— when I—”

He shook his head, his expression going back to as it was before. His resolve seemed to steel, as if he was remembering something only he knew himself. “How can someone as yourself possibly teach these people anything of circumstance?”

“A powerless nobody, are we?”

Izuku’s eyes shone with fury. Bugs began to congregate around his figure, buzzing and chittering. They came from all angles, from the beehives up in the trees to the taller grass that littered the floor of the park.

Surprise filled Monoma’s expression. “But… that’s impossible, I checked…” He backed away in fear, and the bugs that crawled on Izuku’s face and hair did little to deter that fear. “You can’t possibly have a quirk.”

That seemed to be the wrong thing to say. The bugs sped towards him, covering his body in seconds. Izuku refrained from any lasting damage, stopping any bites or stings, simply letting his creatures scurry over the boy’s body. But Monoma didn’t know that.

The boy screamed, panicking and running off away from the three. He didn’t stop until he reached the edge of the park, where Izuku ordered his bugs off.

Continued watching via [Bug Scry], as Izuku thought of naming it, revealed that Monoma was smart. Well, at least in the sense that he didn’t seem to want to head back to where Izuku was.

Back to where the friends stood, Manga slowly walked up, putting a hand on Izuku’s shoulder.
“Hey, buddy… What was that, just now?”

That seemed to shake Izuku out of his stupor. He blinked in realization over what had just occurred. “I… I don’t know, actually.” Izuku said slowly. “It just sort of… happened. It felt kind of right, you know. But I feel kind of bad now, with me covering him in bugs. That probably wasn’t a nice experience.”

“Well you shouldn’t!” yelled Mei, who was currently screwing in a bolt to her contraption. “He was acting all pretentious and stuff. Didn’t know what he was walking into.”

Everyone blinked. “How long have you been there?” asked Manga.

“Eh, around the part where blondie started freaking out. He’s a real jerk, by the way.”

“Ooh! Ooh! Like the principal guy, right?” exclaimed Pony.

Manga chuckled. “Yes Pony, like the principal guy.” He turned back to Izuku. “That was kind of weird, though. What was that all about?”

Izuku shrugged his shoulders. “No clue. He was very odd. I don’t know what set him off. And what did he mean, that I was quirkless? Maybe that’s his quirk? Sensing other quirks? And he saw that I didn’t have mine? That’s weird. I feel even worse now, I probably overrea—”

Manga came up to Izuku, grabbing his shoulders and vigorously shaking him. “Whoa dude! Snap out of it. That’s too much for one mutter session.”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head. “Sorry. You know how I am.” He shook his head. “Anyway, we’ve spent long enough here!” He turned to the other three behind him. “Onward! Toward U.A.!”

“Yay…” the group yelled dispassionately. However, they still followed Izuku’s lead. U.A. was the goal, after all.

Izuku walked up to the large campus ahead of him. It was a Saturday, and yet here he was, taking his first steps into U.A. High. Of course, the school term didn’t start for another few months, but that did little to ease his worries. He was here for an entirely different reason, actually.

He walked in through the large, imposing gates and followed the designated signs. The building he arrived at was apart from the main campus, standing off in the far corners near the edge of the fencing.

He walked in through the automatic glass doors, which were larger in size than what would be considered as normal.

_Why are the doors so big? Perhaps for people with gigantification quirks? That’s rather considerate of U.A._

He arrived at the reception room, which was empty and quiet. It made sense, considering why he was here. Fortunately, it wasn’t too long before someone else exited from the side room, quietly cursing as they went.

_His stuff probably wasn’t approved._ It was likely, given the rather obtrusive board that towered from his back. That broke rule three: Nothing larger than one’s own person.

A disinterested sounding voice called out from beyond the door, “Next.”
Izuku walked in, but at the moment he looked at the man in front of him, he froze. He recognized the man, with his black clothing and hair that was barely longer than his own. He’d only seen him up close once before - well, technically anyway - but that was enough to cement the image in his mind.

**Eraserhead.**

“Name?” the man asked, paying no heed to Izuku’s current state.

*Need to stay calm, not arouse any suspicion. Act as usual. He doesn’t know. Shouldn’t know.*

“Ah… sorry, Eraserhead.”

The man’s hand froze ever so slightly, before immediately continue its swipe across the paper.

**Opps. Probably shouldn’t have mentioned his name. I probably shouldn’t even recognize him at all.**

“Uh, sorry. It’s just… are you not Eraserhead? I assumed you were, since you matched the few reports they have been posted up online, and you sort of look tired. It makes sense, considering your late night patrols.”

**Great, dig yourself into a deeper hole.**

Eraserhead looked at Izuku, a rather inquisitive stare from what he could tell. But he simply repeated himself, “Name?”

“Ah… Izuku Midoriya, sir.”

Eraserhead wrote it down. “Reason of visit?”

Izuku moved for his pack. “These sticks, sir,” Izuku pulled them out from his backpack. “They’re specialized equipment used in several fighting styles. They’re esk—”

“I know what they are, kid,” Aizawa interrupted.

Izuku gulped. “I—Ah, of course.”

The man tilted his head in observation. “What exactly is your quirk?” he asked slowly. “Is it based around CQC? Enhanced reflexes?”

*I need to be careful with this. “ Um no. You see, well…”*

Insects began to crawl out from under his hair, skittering over his scalp and sides of his face. Others sprouted from his bag, emerging through the open slots. Others came from the outside through a nearby open window. To say the least, it was quite the spectacle for an unready viewer. But for the man in front of him, he showed little notice other than a slightly raised eyebrow.

“Entomokinesis…” he said in thought. “And why do you need the Eskrima sticks?”

“I, uh, know how to use them. Muay Thai, too. And a little Silat, but that’s more on my own time.

The man simply continued. “So you’ve been training your body, along with your quirk?”

Izuku grew a large smile. “Yes sir!”

Eraserhead simply stared at Izuku. Izuku began to sweat in anticipation, nervous gulps appearing at his throat.
Eraserhead grabbed a paper from under the counter. He began to write, eventually ripping a slip separately and handing it to Izuku. “These should be fine,” he motioned to the sticks. “Bring this in with you on the exam date. It’ll allow you entry with your equipment.”

Izuku merely nodded, grabbing the slip and walking outside. He didn’t notice, but he had been holding his breath, which he eventually let out once he left the building.

*Great. Just great. He’s definitely not suspicious of me at all.* He sighed. *Maybe he’ll just think of it as nerves. No point in worrying about it now.*

As he began to walk away, he turned around, taking in the view of U.A. *Yeah, I still have a goal to reach, after all.*

Chapter End Notes

*Heyo! How was this chapter, everyone? Was the Monoma POV alright? I’m not entirely sure I got his character correctly on that part, really, but it had to be done. But hey, two character introductions in one chapter! Quite ambitious, eh? Thoughts on the newfound friend the group has found with Pony?*

*Anyhow, hope you all enjoyed! ‘Till next time!*
Chevalier

Heyo all! Here we are on Chapter nine, and back to canon! I’d like to thank all of those who’ve given me feedback and such regarding the various inner-workings of this story. Hope you all enjoy the next installment! Anyhow, on to the story...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Well guys, this is it. U.A. The most prestigious school for heroics in all of Japan, if not the world,” Manga motioned to the campus, hands outstretched.

Around the three - which consisted of Manga, Mei, and Pony - were people their age as well. They moved about in anticipation, just as eager and hopeful to pass the entrance exams in order to enroll into the school. The outcome of this day would decide upon their futures, and ultimately, whether or not one could become a hero.

“Be ready to fight tooth and claw for a position within its halls, and—Ow!” Manga recoiled from a smack from the girl beside him.

“Cut that out already,” relayed Mei. “I have enough of that commentating when Izuku and I are working.”

“Oh?” Manga laughed, “That doesn’t seem to stop you from getting your inventions to the point of being able to use me as a guinea pig everytime.”

“And? There’s nothing wrong with that! If anything, you’re the best of us for it! You can’t get any head injuries, after all!”

“Doesn’t mean it still doesn’t sting, oh holy queen of the scrapyard,” Manga mocked.

“Oi! I resent that!” whined Mei.

“She’s kind of right, though. Out of us all, you’re the most resilient,” added Pony with a small smile.

“Gaah! Not you too!” Manga sputtered in mock agony, clutching at his heart. “Where’s Izuku when you need him? I wouldn’t be under such an onslaught if he were here!”

Mei scratched her head. “Yeah, where is he, anyway? Didn’t we all agree to meet here?”

However, almost as if by demand, the pitter-pattering of steps resounded behind the group, revealing the lost friend in mention.

“I’m here!” exclaimed Izuku, barreling into the group and out of breath. “Sorry that...I’m late. I sorta got...sidetracked this morning.”

Manga rose a fake eyebrow. He huffed in amusement. “It was that commotion up near the railways with that gigantification villain, wasn’t it?”

“Yeah…” Izuku admitted with a laugh.

“I’m not—”

“Keep denying it all you want, greenie. It’s the truth,” Mei said.

Izuku looked over at the only friend who still hadn’t voiced her opinion. “Pony?”

She gave a small giggle. “They’re not wrong. I mean, look at those notebooks of yours!”

Izuku sighed in resignation. “All right. Is there anything else we have planned for out here?”

“Hmm, nope. We still have a good seven minutes before we need to be seated, though,” Manga said.

“Well, we might as well go in, right? Getting to our seats might be a bit tough if we wait until the last second,” mused Pony.

The friends voiced their agreement, beginning their jaunt toward the renowned U.A. That is, until Izuku stopped in place, hands out.

“Watch out for that crack,” Izuku pointed out. The group of friends looked down, and spotted an indenture on the ground.

“That’s… a fairly unnoticeable crack,” voiced Manga. “I’m pretty sure you couldn’t trip on it if you wanted. Unless you were really nervous, your foot probably couldn’t even get at the angle to trip you up.”

The slight depression went a centimeter or two into the ground, indeed being fairly unnoticeable and unlikely to cause someone to lose their footing.

Izuku hummed in agreement, but then he squatted down, peering at the crevice. “That’s not why I pointed it out, though.”

“Izuku?” questioned Pony.

The boy in questioned tilted his head towards the crack. “It actually leads down to an ant colony, just below us. Just a vast network of tunnels and rooms… It looks like it’s been around for a while, too.” He placed his hand down near the space, gathering a few ants up his sleeve. After a bit, Izuku shook his head, standing up. “Sorry, got caught up in the moment again. But I could use a couple of these guys later,” he gestured to his new passengers.

The group began their walk toward the auditorium.

“Mhm. Still think it’s weird, you being able to be so calm around insects,” said Manga.

“Yeah… but they kind of were my first friends before I had you guys, you know?” A reminiscent smile adorned Izuku’s face at that remark. “It feels like it was just yesterday that I had Rikai bundled in my hair. Now all I have left are his children. A good amount of them too! All those centipedes crawling and squirming in my room and my clothes, free to do as they please.”

The group let out a collective shiver. Of course, they didn’t let their friend take notice. They’d gotten used to his musings of insects and bugs by now… Mostly.

It wasn’t long before the group came upon the expansive auditorium, already filled to the brim with prospective students. “Well, looks like this is it,” said Izuku. He turned to the others, “I really do
appreciate you all being my friends. I don’t think I’d have gotten this far without you guys,” he sniffled. “No matter what happens, you’ve been truly great friends.”

Pony jumped to hug him. “Aww, don’t be like that. We’ll all get in for sure! We’ve been training day in and day out!”

“My! Now, don’t you not get in, Mister! I’ll be sorely disappointed if you don’t!” added in Mei. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have some babies to make! To the support exam!” she exclaimed, running off.

( ^ ^ ) b

“Thanks guys.” At that, they wished each other luck, and made their way to their seats.

Izuku spread out his bugs to all corners of the room - scouting out the competition, so to speak.

He noticed a few people that stood out, but that was mostly due to their mutation quirks or similar physical changes.

Nobody screamed immediate competition, and thus Izuku would just have to wait and see what everyone was capable of. Most of the really good people would have already gotten in through recommendations, after all. He’s just have to see the ones who slipped through the cracks.

In the process of finding his seat near the back, Izuku made the unfortunate discovery of finding that one of the accompanying people designated beside him was Bakugou. *Just great.*

Izuku slowly made his way to his seat, somewhat dreading the inevitable confrontation. It had been a while since he had last seen his former friend, and he didn’t know what would come of it. He wasn’t doubting the hostility that would be present, however.

As he approached, Izuku saw Bakugou twitch ever so slightly. Of course, it wouldn’t stop there.

“The hell are you here, Deku?” Bakugou questioned as Izuku sat. Izuku didn’t respond - which went to further infuriate the fuming boy - but it wasn’t long until they were interrupted by a deafening announcement.

“Hellooo everyone! Welcome to today’s show! Can I get a ‘hey’!” The pro hero stood, ear to the audience.

Silence. But that didn’t cause the man to falter.

“What a refined response!”

*Ah!! It’s Present Mic! So cool!*

Present Mic went on to detail the upcoming exam, mentioning things like ‘Goombas’ and ‘Thwomps’ as well as the point system that accompanied them.

Meanwhile, Bakugou continued to express his agitation. Izuku ignored the taunts, but that went to infuriate Bakugou even further.

*It’s strange,* Izuku thought, trying his best to pay attention to Present Mic. *Af ter all this time, he still doesn’t know about my quirk. Or my training.*

“Deku… What’s with those sticks, huh? Think you can defend yourself with some flimsy wood?”
Ah, my eskrima sticks. That’s right, he hasn’t seen these yet either.

Again came his voice, filled with irritation, “If you think—”

“Hey! You two in the back! Stop your chit-chat! You are causing a disruption for all of us!”

Us two? But I haven’t said a word!

Izuku took a glance from over where the voice came from. His bugs revealed a rather serious looking boy with dark blue hair.

Further physical examination with his bugs revealed cold metal that adorned his legs. They jutted out, almost as if in the shape of exhaust ports. A relative of Ingenium, perhaps?

“And Mr. Present Mic, Sir!” the boy continued, “It says here that—”

Izuku shook his head, resigning himself to the scorn of the others around him. He listened to the rest of the demonstration, attempting to ignore the death stare of the boy beside him.

The bus that had been tasked in transporting the participants of Site B was mostly quiet apart from the few deep breaths and scuffling of feet amongst its riders. By the time it had arrived at its destination, most of the anxious students were ready to go, standing and waiting for their next instructions.

Along the bus ride, Izuku had been gathering his bugs. Along with those he could feel in the replicated city ahead of him, they numbered in the hundreds of thousands within his immediate vicinity.

It just so happened that a small portion of those bugs sensed a familiar presence approaching Izuku from behind. He turned around, and was faced with the stern-faced boy from earlier.

“Why exactly are you here?” he asked.

“What?” Izuku felt around, connecting to the vast network of bugs that inhabited the simulated cityscape. Every sight, scent, sound, and touch from blocks around was now within his grasp.

I wasn’t even talking. That was all Bakugou. Why am I suddenly a nuisance by association?

“A delinquent shouldn’t think that they can get i to a school as prestigious as—”

Further investigation with his bugs prived a surprising discovery. Hmm… It seems I found the robots. They’re all underground; seems they’re released from several ramps hidden all over the simulation. Probably wouldn’t count if I just went there and started destroying them, though.

“Hey, I’m talking to you. Do you have any—

Oh? His bugs picked up movement from a tower to his left. It’s Present Mic. Wonder why he’s up there… Unless—

“OKAY, START!”

The glasses-wearing boy turned at the exclamation in confusion. Izuku, however, sprang into action, retrieving his eskrima sticks from his back and bouting into the urban landscape.
“Aha! Now that’s what I’m talking about! Someone here knows how things go!” Present Mic announced, looking at the rest of the students.

“Well? What are you waiting for? There aren’t any countdowns in real fights! RUN! RUN! GO! The die’s been cast!”

The students snapped out of their stupor, and the oncoming stampede went off running to join Izuku.

He had to give it to U.A. The simulation was complexingly realistic and finely detailed. His bugs found each building he had run past were designed room by room and with amenities. The alleys were littered with trash, and some streets showed evidence of wear and tear from weathering and usage. The rooftops even shared in the trash pileup and puddle holding. However, as much as he enjoyed exploring the detail of the mock-city, Izuku still had a task to do.

Alright, two-pointer around the next left turn into the alley, around nine yards ahead.

Turning the corner indeed revealed the robot, its legs jutting outward and robotic tail risen high above its frame. The almost scorpion shaped robot turned its way toward the movement it sensed down the alleyway.

Izuku sprinted for the creature, eyeing for potential weak points. Eyeing the head and possibly the legs, it wasn’t long before Izuku was within a few feet of the metallic contraption.

“Target acquired. Commence elimination.” The two-pointer lunged for Izuku, but the boy was ready. He quickly dodged to the left, barely avoiding the barreling robot as it rushed past.

The robot’s speed, having not been able to predict the miss, rammed it into a nearby dumpster, temporarily stunning it. Izuku took his chance, running up onto the robot’s backside and onto its head. A couple well-placed and forceful swings at the robot’s fragile orb disabled it from combat. Two points.

That… wasn’t that bad actually. It was surprisingly fragile for a robot. Though, I suppose that makes sense, considering they—

Izuku’s eyes widened; again he took evasive action, this time moving to his right. He had sensed a three-pointer just nearby with his bugs, but was not ready for the insane speed that it had demonstrated. The robot seemed to be sturdier too, if it’s bulkier form and second head were anything to go by. Strength and speed combined, then? Much harder than the two-pointer, worthy of its title.

“Eight Minutes!” yelled Present Mic.

Already? Shoot, I need to speed this up.

Izuku glanced at the three pointer, which was apparently content in waiting for Izuku to make a move. He looked at its form - his weapons might not be able to do much - and then to its head, it’s red orb pinging in response to his— That’s it!

Izuku reached for his bugs, gathering them in a cloud and plunging them onto the robot’s red orb. The three pointer acted in kind, thrashing wildly and, as Izuku predicted, unable to see. It made it all the easier to reach its back and the space between it’s heads. It wasn’t long before the robot crumpled as it’s circuitry became damaged. Five points.

I can do this. I really can. He gave a small laugh. But I need to hurry. Time’s running down. He sprinted off in another direction.
It's a good thing I spent all that time inventing with Mei. I suppose I can ask my bugs to go a little overtime for now.

In a separate part of U.A.’s campus was a dark monitoring room packed to the brim with various pro heroes and staff members. They watched the myriad of students as they pummeled into the robots sent into their path. Of course, considering the nature of the gathered people, it didn’t take long for some of them to take notice of certain green-haired boy.

“Hey, what’s with those sticks?” asked the Blood Hero, Vlad King. “Are they part of some sort of martial art?”

“Hmm… an inquisitive observation, Sekijiro-kun,” came Nezu. “That would be eskrima, if I’m not mistaken; a martial art that has since declined as quirks have become more commonplace.” The principal leaned forward in his chair a little, observing the green haired boy.

“But, unless his quirk involves them, we have yet to actually see him use his quirk,” Ectoplasm mentioned. “What is it listed down as?”

Present Mic obliged himself, quickly shuffling through the files they had of the various aspiring students. “Let’s see… Awase… Garou… Jiro… Kuroiro… Aha! Midoriya! Let’s see, it says here that he’s… quirkless. Huh.”

The judges showed their various reactions to the news, ranging from disbelief to intrigue. The intrigue was especially profound in the present All Might, who had recognised the boy. That’s strange, he thought. He has a quirk, he showed me himself. Why does his file label him as quirkless?

Despite the commotion, Nezu was the one individual who remained focused on the boy. This came to notice to the number one hero.

“Nezu, something on your mind?” asked All Might.

The principal nodded. “A quirkless? Perhaps not. Have any of you noticed the bugs?”

“Bugs?” All Might asked. He remembered the demonstration Midoriya had shown him, but he hadn’t taken notice of anything similar as far the screen displays went.

“Yes. All around the simulation, jostled from their hidden homes. They’ve been moving with purpose. Some even disabling some of our robots. Yamada-kun, is there anyone listed with bug control of any kind?”

Present Mic again shifted through the files. “There is one student, with the quirk Anivoice.” One of the screens focused on a student with peach colored skin and a rather rock-like appearance. The boy was getting birds to distract the robots he fought. Present Mic continued, “Basically, control over animals, as shown. But he’s over at Site C. Here in Site B… nobody.”

“Mhm,” Nezu hummed, hands raised above his head. “And thus, our mystery is solved! The supposedly quirkless boy has a quirk after all. And a rather unique one, I find. How peculiar it all is.” A feral smirk came upon the principal’s face. “I do hope he passes.”

A pair of eskrima sticks came down upon a one-pointer robot, easily neutralizing the contraption.
“Three minutes!” resounded Present Mic.

And that’s number twenty-one. Not bad if I were to say so myself. Izuku looked around at his surroundings. Various other robotic remains stained the backdrop, other participants panting in fatigue after the fight they had endured.

Despite his confidence in his score, Izuku was still a bit worried. He had heard some other scores awhile ago reaching into the forties, and that had him uneasy. Were his twenty-one points enough to pass? He surely hoped so, otherwise he’d get a beating from Mei late—

A deep rumbling shake literally shook Izuku from his thoughts.

Explosions began to litter the cityscape as a large figure arose from the smoke and ashes. Within seconds, the zero-pointer stood in all its glory, towering high above the surrounding buildings.

Well… That’s kinda too big, isn’t it?

The giant turned its way towards the students and began its slow advance. The various faces of Site B began to run from the beast, terrified by the seemingly unstoppable obstacle. Few seemed to notice, but the panicked boys and girls moved like a stream around a rock past the unmoving Izuku who simply stood still, staring at the robot.

“Interesting.”

Wow… There’s got to big some way to take this down, right? It’s part of the test, so it can’t be impossible to neutralize. Internal wiring, maybe? The spaces in between the circuitry have to be huge! Or, at least big enough for my bugs to fit. Maybe I can jam it? Chew through the wiring? No, that would take too long, way longer than two minutes. Perhaps I can—

A shrill cry for help broke Izuku’s concentration. Through the thin layers of smoke he spied a girl pinned down under some rubble. That’s the girl I saw causing some robots to float a while ago. Some sort of gravity manipulation. But it seems as if she can’t move the rock on her own. Has she reached her limit?

The robot began to inch ever closer, threatening to crush the trapped girl. The situation was enough for Izuku to move forward, his legs seemingly moving by their own accord. He began to gather his insects into a giant mass, conglomerating onto his position. He sent them towards the zero-pointer. After seconds of observation, half their number seeped into the only opening found through a port on its left arm. The other half rose to its face, blocking it’s orb from being able to see. Unfortunately, that did little to divert it from its current path.

Izuku eventually came upon the injured girl. “Hey, don’t worry. I’ll get you out. Can you move the rubble a bit?”

“Not… much… I’m nearing my limit,” the girl responded.

“That’s fine, I just need some assistance in getting your leg out from under there. There’s no way I can move that all by myself. Can you activate your quirk on the piece of rubble on your leg on my go?”

She nodded.

“Alright!” Izuku placed his hands under the stone. “Ready, set, go!” Izuku grappled the rubble and lifted it up. His already tired muscles ached from the stress, but the girl’s quirk aided in a quick and fast removal. However, the girl promptly began to vomit up rainbows. Weird. Maybe one of her
parents had a rainbow quirk or something?

Izuku helped the girl to her feet, and he promptly began to move away from the encroaching zero-pointer, slowly helping the limping girl along. At the same time, Izuku furthered his bugs along until they had reached further into the robot’s arm. A couple of chewed-through wires and bug-inspired short circuiting eventually were able to cause the arm to twitch. The robot stopped, and attempted to raise its arm. The limb complied, but did so while twitching at random intervals.

Shoot! It still works after all of that? At this point the robot will just continue its way towards us! We’ll be crushed! The only things I’ve done to it so far are blind it and give it at best a shock to its arm! And— That’s it!

Various insects and bugs began to stray from the robot’s eye and gathered upon the twitching arm. They amassed to form a humanoid shape - but a masculine one at that, to keep Izuku’s involvement in vigilantism apart. Once the zero-pointer could see again, the first thing that gained its attention was the shape on its arm. The figure promptly rose in flight and zoomed back from where the robot initially came from. The robot followed, having sought out the one responsible for its damaged arm.

Izuku sighed in relief, having prevented the robot from getting uncomfortably close to their position. A few more seconds and it would have been on them. He then looked to the girl beside him, who, too sighed.


Izuku set the girl down gently on some debris as he sat down next to her. He’d wait for help. He was exhausted from all of that.

“That was close, huh?” Izuku said, turning to the girl. “That robot almost got us.”

The girl laughed. “Yeah if it wasn’t for you and whoever that other guy was, I would’ve been toast!” She turned to him with an arm out. “Thanks for that, by the way! I’m Ochacho Uraraka!”

Izuku smiled, eagerly taking the offered hand. “A pleasure. Izuku Midoriya, nice to meet you.”

Chapter End Notes

And that’s chapter nine with the U.A. Entrance Exam! How’d you all think off it? Hope I didn’t disappoint any of your expectations. Anyhow, stayed tuned for next week! By then we’ll have [Chapter 10: Classification]! ‘Till next time!
Izuku awoke to familiar sound of tymbals. He rose from his laid position, rubbing his eye in a tired response to the makeshift alarm. He tapped off the machine to his right, ending the sweet, relaxing song of the cicadas.

They sound wasn’t from real cicadas - not yet anyway. But he had been working on such a thing for the past few months.

Just outside his window was a rather wizened tree. It was there - or rather, in its roots - that Izuku had been cultivating a healthy population of cicada nymphs that would come about yearly during the summer months.

They were part of his collection, a collection that ranged from tall cylindrical tubes and small glass jars, to the large rectangular terrariums that now littered his room.

His collection had almost over run his All Might memorabilia, but Izuku’s mutual love for the two had led to them both sharing the space. Each aspect took up around half of his room, steadily fueling his healthy obsession of both.

After a few moments, he eyed his room to ensure everything was as it should be, connecting to the surroundings bugs to take a double check at the things his human eyes couldn’t see.

Fortunately, a brief run over concluded that his collection had met little problems overnight.

Izuku then stood up, going over to open one of the terrariums. Calling upon the two collective two spiders from the tank, he placed them on his bed. He then summoned the population that he had been slowly building up within his three block range. With his control, Izuku had developed the golden orb weaver population in his area, ensuring their steady multiplication and safety. With them, he had an endless supply of materials for his prototypes.

He wished there was a faster way to gather them all - one that didn’t take over an hour - but the separation was necessary if he wanted to ensure the spiders didn't maul each other over territory and food.

And so, with the rest of his spiders on the way, Izuku focused on the golden orb weavers in front of him, beginning to work again on his costume. The golden threads of the spiders had been through various versions of the suit, the creatures now going about the seventh version Izuku had thought up.
The costume was nearing completion, its golden form slowly coming into existence by the work of thousands of tiny bodies.

He took another look over at the costume before he went to check out his closet for more supplies. 

*Hmm… Seems I ran out of the dye I want for this iteration of my costume. I'll need to get more later.*

At that moment, Izuku sensed the first of his outside workers arriving at his windowsill. He nodded, making a mental note to get more dye later at the store, and walked over to his window to open it.

Dozens of spiders came about into his room, but the mini-swarm was just a glimpse of what would be seen as the hour ticked by.

As the remainder of his spiders began their work, Izuku’s mind drifted off to musings of U.A. He’d be getting the results of the exam today, but he’d entertain himself with his costume until then. His mind still raced at the prospect of getting into U.A., both in anticipation and unease over what he would hear upon getting his letter. He just hoped that it was good news.

It was an hour or so into his progress on his costume when Izuku felt a presence beyond his bedroom door. A couple quick glimpses revealed the presence to be his mom, getting ready to open his door.

Long ago, Izuku would have panicked at the possibility of his mom barging in and finding the walls and floors covered in bugs. It scared him to wits end, making him ponder over dozens of preposterous scenarios that could have occurred.

But Izuku had eventually learned to accept his quirk and all the oddities that came with it, just as his mom did when Izuku told her.

And so, he paid little heed to the door being opened, instead continuing to concentrate on the task in front of him.

Inko Midoriya entered, yet somewhat hesitant to when she heard the chittering of insects behind the door. The chittering was accompanied by thousands of spiders, littered upon the room. Some worked on the golden costume, others on the sidelines in rest for their own turn.

Inko did her best to hide her discomfort, as she had many times before, but Izuku still saw through her facade. Izuku had long discovered that his empathy with his bugs was part of his quirk, and didn’t put it against anyone who was a bit creeped out. And so, he dumbed down his quirk when his mom was around, but he never did tell her that he knew. It would just put more on her plate to worry about.

Izuku turned to face his mother. Now that she was in the room, a couple things came to Izuku’s attention. He hadn’t noticed it at first, but it seemed as if she was trembling. And in her hand was —

His eyes widened in. A letter.

*Looks like I’ll have to put off finishing my costume for a later date. Hopefully I’ll be able to finish it in time — if I’ll even need it, anyways.*

Izuku dismissed his spiders then, having them stash his costume under his bed while the rest returned to their respective homes.

“Izu… Izu… Izuku! It’s here!” she exclaimed.

Izuku went to grab his letter, simply taking it and heading back to his desk. Inko seemed hesitant to leave, but knew the results were something that Izuku needed to deal with himself at first. She left, closing the door behind her. She continued to pace just outside, something that didn't go unnoticed
by Izuku.

Izuku scooted over to his table, a bead of sweat streaming down the side of his head. One of his centipedes came over then, and slowly began to chip away at the envelope. After a few tense moments, a clean cut was made at the seam, exposing a refined, metallic disk.

Izuku gulped, having the centipede bring out the disk. It was then that the device abruptly activated, causing Izuku to jump in his seat.

“"I am here, as a projection!"” exclaimed the figure of the Number One Hero.

“"Young Midoriya! It’s a pleasure to see you nice and well!""

A—A— All Might? What’s he doing on here? This is a letter from U.A. right? Why would—

"You wouldn’t have known it for the brief time that we met, but I came to this town to work at U.A. as a teacher!" All Might laughed.

All Might!? Teaching?! At U.A.!!

“Imagine my surprise when I saw how well you were doing at the exam! It was extraordinary! Beating down those robots and the like! And those bugs of yours!"

All Might gave out another laugh. “Ah, but that’s not what you’re waiting to hear now, is it? You want to know the results of your exam, don’t you?"

All Might cleared his throat, somewhat adopted a more subdued persona. “Well, I’d like to inform you, Midoriya, that you passed your written exam.”

Okay. I thought that was the case. But what abou—

"On the other hand, you received 21 points in total during the practical exam. Now, it’s nothing too impressive, but it is what it is, given you took down a good portion of the robots without your quirk. Given your 21 points, it was pretty close…”

Stop stalling, All Might!

The hero laughed again. “But that wasn’t all!”

...What.

“Your actions reflected that of a true hero. Your bravery in the heart of imminent danger was inspiring!"

“Afterall, what kind of hero school would U.A. be if we rejected those who saved others and did the right thing? This is a job that requires risking one’s life!”

“The exam the other day was not graded solely on villain points!” All Might gestured to a screen.

“Rescue Points! Another basic aspect we at U.A. take notice of.” The hero stopped, and looked directly into the camera. “And how does this relate to you, you may ask?”

All Might spread his arms out, “Izuku Midoriya: Thirty Points! A total of fifty-one points! Placing you just behind the top ten!”

“You pass. Quite spectacularly so,” the hero affirmed.
A large grin grew on the All Might’s face. “Now, come, Young Midoriya! This, is your hero academia!”

Izuku grinned over the image of his idol. “Yes sir!”

Izuku stood before the door of classroom 1-A. He'd just said his farewells to Pony and Manga, who themselves were in the next class over, 1-B.

Now, he stood in wonder before the door, anxious to begin his high school journey. He examined the door, noticing its enormous height.

*Guess the school really does accommodate for those with gigantification quirks.*

Izuku gulped, then took a deep breath. *Here goes nothing.*

Izuku grasped for the door knob. Wanting to surprise himself with finding who were his classmates, he hadn’t peeked in before he entered.

That ended up not being the best course of action. Upon opening the door, he was faced with a rather loud cacophony on yells.

*Of course. Bakugou and Engine Quirk. Just great.*

His sent his bugs around the room, not wanting any further surprises.

The slight buzzing that he emitted, as well as his arrival, seemed to alert a good portion of his class to his presence. It was then that Engine Quirk boy - who he had just heard was named Tenya Iida, came in his direction.

“Hello! My name is Tenya Iida! Of Soumei Junior High!”

*Best be amicable now. Even if he was a bit off-putting. “My pleasure. Izuku Midoriya.”*

Iida quickly nodded. “I profusely apologize! You noticed something more to exam. I had no idea. It seems I misjudged you!”

“Oh… sure,” uttered Izuku. *Does he mean the rescue points? Ah, might as well leave it be.*

Izuku had his insects observe his classmates. There were a few he knew for sure were not present during the practical, like the kid with heterochromia. One of Endeavor’s children, if he wasn’t mistaken. The French kid with the belt seemed to be there too. He didn’t exactly recall the others, however.

“Oh! That long hair! Midoriya-kun, it's you! We’re in the same class!”

He turned around, finding Ochaco Uraraka. *Ah, I never did correct her on her mistake about me using my bugs distract the zero-pointer, did I?*

Izuku was about to voice his revelation, however, he faced an oddity beyond the door. It wasn’t another student, given that the class was already full when glancing at the available seats and people present. No, it was a man within a yellow casing, a sleeping bag if he wasn’t wrong, with hair eerily as long as his ow—
Oh. Shoot.

“Uh… Midoriya-kun?” Uraraka questioned, waving her hand in front of Izuku’s face. “Something wrong?”

Izuku didn’t respond. He was still getting over the fact that Eraserhead was probably his homeroom, of all people. There wasn’t another reason for him being there.

“Go somewhere else if you just want to make friends.”

Everyone turned towards the pro hero.

“This is the hero course.” The hero removed himself from his sleeping bag. The process had Izuku imagining the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly.

“It took a total eight seconds for you all to be quiet. Time is limited. You kids aren’t rational enough,” came the man’s deadpan voice.

“I’m your homeroom teacher, Shota Aizawa. Nice to meet you,” he continued.

Aizawa pulled out a uniform from his cocoon-esque sleeping bag. “It’s kind of sudden, but put this on and go out to the field.” He then began his trot towards the aforementioned field, slowly making his way through the halls.

Great, one of the few heroes who’ve actually seen my vigilante form themselves is my homeroom teacher.

It was going to be a stressful year.

Izuku and the rest of his class found themselves on U.A.’s field. The news that they were taking a Quirk Apprehension Test came abruptly and suddenly, confusing many of the students who had heard Aizawa speak.

From beside Izuku, Uraraka spoke up. “What about the Entrance Ceremony? Orientation?”

Aizawa scoffed, “If you’re a hero, you don’t have time for such leisurely events. One of U.A.’s selling points is how unrestricted school traditions are. Teachers run their class on this idea too.”

He eyed the class. The silence helped to fuel the students’ unease. “Bakugou.”

“Yeah?” questioned the boy.

“You topped for first during the practical, didn’t you? What was your best result for the softball throw at your old junior high?”

“67 Meters.”

“Then, now try it with your quirk.” He handed the boy the ball.

Bakugou smirked, getting into position.

“You can do whatever you want as long as you remain in the circle,” added Aizawa. “Now go give it a try.”
Bakugo committed himself to some stretches and launched the ball. “DIE!”

The ball blasted off into the air, the explosion propelling it in an impressive arc through the air.

_Die? Izuku mused. Ah. Should I have expected anything else?_

The ball landed after seconds of airtime. The display that Aizawa held up displayed the ball having gone a distance of 705.2 meters.

The gathering of students from 1-A voiced their opinions of the spectacle. One peculiar remark brought up all the fun that could come with using their quirks for the exercise. That particular comment had reached Aizawa’s ears, leaving him amused.

“‘It looks fun,’ huh?’” questioned the teacher. You have three years to become a hero. Will you have that kind of attitude the entire time?”

Nobody made a peep. Aizawa decided to continue, a smile appearing on his face.

“Alright, whoever comes in last place in all eight tests will be judged to have no potential and be punished with expulsion.”

“Expulsion?!?” the class yelled in unison.

“Welcome to U.A’s hero course.”

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The first exercise consisted of a fifty meter dash. There were a few noteworthy participants, like Iida with his 3 second Engine-allotted time, or - dare he say - Bakugo with his time just over four seconds.

Meanwhile, Izuku didn’t anything with his quirk for this specific task. Rather, he simply used his physique that he had gained over years of training, earning him a decent 6.15 seconds.

Next was the grip test. Everyone ending up being outshined by Mezo Shoji, who seemed to have various morphable limbs for his quirk. While he got an admirable 740 kilos, Izuku built up a well received 63 kilos.

Izuku didn’t get too far with the standing long jump, unlike those who passed the pit like the French kid.

Izuku got a decent score for the repeated side steps, if only for his stamina holding up well. Not as good as the short kid with purple balls, though. Nobody got nearly as good a score as him.

Then came the ball throw. At his turn, Izuku caught the ball from Aizawa, and eyed the expanse in front of him. He decided it was time to use his quirk.

Calling upon the flying insects in the surrounding area, Izuku gathered them to his location. Dozens of hornets came to Izuku, landing on his head. The action triggered a couple gasps of panic from the crowd - not that Izuku paid any heed to such.

Izuku positioned the bugs around the ball, lifting the object into the air and flying it forward. With the average speed of giant hornets gauging around 40 km/h, a little over half a minute passed before the insects made their way to the edge of Izuku’s range. Aizawa’s device read a total of 255 meters.

Izuku nodded in satisfaction. It was nowhere near Uraraka’s infinity, but similarly to the situation with Shoji, nobody could surpass her score.
As Izuku turned toward his class, he found that many of them had fallen into a stunned silence, some even with their mouths hanging wide open. However, the silence didn’t last long.

“DEKU!” The class caught sight of Bakugo launching himself towards Izuku in a rage.

“What the hell! You better—” he was interrupted by a white strip of fabric that had wrapped itself around his body. The capture device originated from Aizawa himself, yet Bakugo still continued to struggle as he was held back.

Izuku breathed a sigh of relief. He really didn’t feel like fighting Bakugo in front of his classmates. It would set off the wrong impression.

“These cloths— Are hard…” noted Bakugo.

“They’re weapons for capture made of carbon fiber, woven together with metal fabric made of a special alloy,” affirmed Aizawa.

“Bakugo,” simply warned Aizawa. The teacher removed his hold over the boy. “And don’t make me keep on using my quirk. I have dry eye,” he turned uninterestedly. “Whoever’s next, head on up.”

Izuku glared at his former friend, walking off to join the rest of his class.

Bakugo continued to growl as he too went back into the crowd, eyeing the one he had long ago deemed worthless.

The rest of the test remained fairly uneventful from then on. For the long distance run, Izuku’s stamina did most of the work. He did have his insects help pull him along, to ease the amount of force he needed to propel himself forward. It wasn’t much, but it got him to be the third to last off the track.

Situps were a breeze, the exercise being a common one within Izuku's own routine. The seated toe touch proved similar, with Izuku easily surpassing the average.

Eventually, it was time for the results. Many of the class stood in anxiety over the results. It wasn’t long before Aizawa revealed everyone’s placement.

Izuku found his name. 11th place overall. *Dang, just outside the top ten again. I’m sensing a pattern here.*

The shortest kid in the class, the one with the sticky, purple balls for hair, let out a small whimper. *Hmm. Must be number twenty, then. Minoru Mineta.*

“By the way,” spoke Aizawa, “I was lying about the expulsion. It was a ruse.” He took a glance at the purple-ball headed boy.

One girl spoke up about how obvious the ruse was. Others were still shocked in surprise.

“However,” the class held their breath for the possibility of an even greater worry, “Mineta, that doesn’t mean you’re off the hook. I’ll be going over detention with you tomorrow.” Aizawa walked away, leaving the students to their own devices. The class - except for the fidgeting Mineta - sighed in relief.

Izuku looked after the departing teacher, doubt filling his mind. He’d been studying Aizawa ever since the encounter he had with him on that night. And his research showcased Aizawa’s tendency
to expel students, especially his actions from last year. *I don’t believe that the expulsion was a ruse. Eraserhead wouldn’t lie about something like that. The question is, what changed his mind?*

Izuku met Manga and Pony at the school’s front. Mei, having decided to stay to work on her inventions, told them to scamper off. And so, the trio began to walk off home, talking through the ins-and-outs of the day.

“You guys got to test out your quirks!?” exclaimed Manga. “Pony and I had to sit through the ceremony! We did nothing! Absolutely nothing!”

“We got to see a bunch of pro heroes, though. That was fun,” added Pony.

“You did!” exclaimed Izuku.

Both Pony and Manga looked at him in amusement.

“I— I mean, I—” Izuku was interrupted by a hand placed on his shoulder. He turned, finding Tenya Iida to be the owner of the hand. “I—Iida!”

"Midoriya. I’d like to apologize to you again. I greatly misjudged you during the practical. Seeing you today on the field shows how wrong I was."

"Uh, it’s no problem Iida. Bakugo does leave an impression on people. Me sitting next to him probably added to that."


“Yes! I am Midoriya’s classmate! Tenya Iida. Nice to meet you.”

Manga nodded. “Hello, I’m—"

“Hey, Midoriya-kun! Are you going to the station? Wait up!”

The collective four turned to find Uraraka running in their direction.

“Uraraka?” questioned Izuku.

“Hi again!” She turned to the other three. “I’m Ochaco Uraraka! Nice to meet you!”

Once everyone shared their own introductions, Uraraka once again turned to Izuku.

“By the way, why did that boy named Bakugo call you ‘Deku’ during the test?”

“What! You’re saying you all share a class with Bakugo!” exclaimed Manga. They all nodded.

“Dang. Sorry to hear that Izuku,” Manga said.

Iida quirked an eyebrow. “Why? Does Izuku have some history with Bakugo?”

"It's a long story..." Izuku spoke up. "To sum it up, 'Deku' is what Bakugo calls me to make fun of me. He's been doing it since we were kids."

“An insult, then?” mused Iida.

“Oh, sorry,” said Uraraka. “Umm... You know, ‘Deku’ kind of sounds like ‘You can do it!’ so I kind of like it!”
“Eh… I suppose it kind of does. But, uh, I’d rather not be reminded of it. Or Bakugo, for that matter.”

Uraraka laughed. “Yeah, sorry about that. Midoriya-kun it is, then!”

With that, the group of five walked off to the station.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: And there we have chapter 10. Did you all think the Apprehension Test part was okay? Any other things you have questions for? Ask away! I’ll respond.

Anyhow, stay tuned for the next chapter. Until then! Ta-ta!
Teeth

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone! This chapter goes on into the next canon event in the timeline. Well, that plus a couple of other little things. Hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“So, how’s class?” came the echoed voice of Mei, her upper torso deep in one of her inventions.

“It’s… alright. I suppose,” Izuku responded steadily.

“Wrench.” Mei asked, sticking her hand out of the contraption.

Izuku obliged, handing Mei a pipe wrench from the table.

“How so?” Mei continued.

“Well, there’s this one girl. She’s pretty nice, I guess. Though, that’s probably an all-encompassing thing she has with everyone, if I’m going to be honest.”

“Mmhmm. Flathead.”

Izuku handed the screwdriver to her. “Then there’s this other guy. I’m pretty sure he’s related to Ingenium.” Izuku refrained from expanding further than that.

Mei paused, peeking out to look at Izuku. “Hmm…” she hummed, heading back to work on her device. “That’s it?”

“What do you mean?” questioned Izuku.

“What do you mean, what do I mean? You mean to say that you met a pro hero’s sibling? And you neglected to question them about it?”

“Oh.” Izuku gave a nervous laugh. “I guess that does seem weird, huh? Uh, well, it more has to do with Iida himself. He’s kind of… off-putting. Very serious-like. I’m still kind of holding off my judgement on him for now.”

“Uh-huh. Wrench. Combination, this time.”

Izuku switched out the tools in Mei’s outstretched hand. “But, uh, enough about that,” Izuku said. “On another note, you remember that blond kid that we met in the park a couple months back?”

“That jerk that kept spouting out that you were quirkless, you mean?”

“Yeah, him. Apparently, he’s in the same class as Pony and Manga. His name’s Neito Monoma.”

“Hah! He’s going to be knocked down hard by the two of them! I feel kind of sorry for him. Almost.”

“Yeah, but that’s the thing. He hasn’t done anything, apparently. All he’s done is take a few glances
at them. ‘Calculatingly,’ in Manga’s words. Just sitting and looking. Nothing like he was in the park, acting like he wanted a fight or something."

“Hmm. Strange. I wonder if— Oh! That reminds me!” Mei exclaimed. Izuku jumped in surprise.

“You guys are probably gonna do some fighting today. The only reason Maijima-sensei left in such a hurry a while ago was because he forgot to finalize all the stuff for the Hero Course costumes.”

“Wha— Really?!“

“Yes, really,” replied a voice from the workshop’s doorway. Izuku glanced toward the door, finding a short man surrounded by a metallic, yellow apparatus. Izuku immediately recognized the man before him.

“P— Power Loader-sensei!” yelped Izuku.

“Midoriya,” Power Loader nodded. “I hope Hatsume hasn’t been overworking you too much?”

“N— No sir! I’m sort of already used to working with her, anyways, so its nothing different than how it was before.”

“As I heard,” Power Loader took a nice trot through the room, eyeing every nook and cranny between every desk and chair. When he was done, he nodded to himself. “Hmm. Everything seems to be in order.”

“Yeah...” Midoriya replied. “Umm... you sure it’s alright for me to be here? It kind of seemed like a rushed decision awhile ago, when you said yes.”

Power Loader looked at Izuku, responding. “Oh, I’m sure, Midoriya. Hatsume spent all of yesterday after class whining about not having her assistant. Heck, I can already tell that you can act as a neutralizing agent if Hatsume gets too extreme. It’d probably save me from a couple headaches.”

“It’s a shame that she ruined the surprise for you, though. You would have been told about the Battle Trial by All Might himself.”

“All Might?!“

“Ah, I said too much.” Power Loader shook his head. “You know, I’ve had students like Hatsume before. They’re the type who won’t give up until they get what they want.”

“You got that right! Nothing gets in between me and my babies!” exclaimed Mei.

“You see?” Power Loader laughed. “There wouldn’t be a point in denying her. She wants the workshop to work on her own stuff on her own time? Sure. She wants her assistant to help? Only on non-curricular oriented projects. She wants to build a giant mecha capable of lobbing nuclear warheads? That’s where I draw the line.”

“You should just do what he says! Agree with what he says Izuku!” came Mei’s attempt of persuasion.

“But—”

“Besides, if you truly do anything too bad, I’ll just snitch on you to Aizawa. You got that?”

“Y— Yes sir!” Izuku shook his head vigorously.
“Good. Now get going. Class starts in ten minutes.”

Izuku shifted his head toward the clock. “You’re right! Have a nice day, Power Loader-sensei! Bye Mei!” Izuku said, running out of the classroom.

“You too Hatsume! Back to the regular classroom,” berated Power Loader.

“But sensei!”

“What happened to doing as I said?”

“Bu—”

“No buts!”

The aforementioned surprise ended up being ruined for Midoriya anyway. Not because of Mei’s loose lips - at least, not entirely so - but with his own bugs.

His flies had spotted a debuffed All Might emerging from what Izuku assumed was the hero’s office. In a puff of smoke, the man transformed into the Symbol of Peace, donning — his Silver Age Costume!! Ah! So cool!

The hero sped through the halls, stopping just outside the door to Basic Hero Training. “I am coming through the door, like a normal person!” came the booming voice of the Number One hero.

All Might lit up the classroom with his personality, instantly gaining the awe of the students. All Might went on to explain the ins-and-outs of the Hero Basic Training course, captivating the class even further with the mention of combat training.

“And now, we have these!” He gestured to the side of the room, shelves emerging seamlessly from the wall. “Your costumes were approved and/or based upon the specifications you sent in three weeks ago. After you change, we meet at Ground Beta!”

Izuku stared down at his costume. Three weeks ago he had sent in the piece for approval. Well, that, along with his quirk registration.

The registration was a bit of a problem when it came up at first. He hadn’t thought of it for a long time, but the document had reminded him that he still appeared as “none” in regards to what his quirk was. He worked himself into a frenzy then, trying to come up with something to name his quirk.

[Entomopathy], like Eraserhead had said? Something gimmicky, like [Eye of the Swarm]?

He ended just going with [Bug Control]. He could change it later, afterall.

And so, here he stood at U.A., his costume ready for its first outing. He looked over his creation, the streamlined, reinforced dragline silk intricately bound together. The golden yellow was accented with a dark green, the color taken up the space where the silk covered the limbs.

The golden torso was accompanied by Izuku’s trusty eskrima sticks on his back, and a few pouches that were - at the moment - filled with spider silk, woven together to make thin ropes capable of supporting his body weight.
On his head sat a pair of goggles of Mei’s design. They were mostly for eye protection - even if he didn’t really need it - and part of Mei’s insistence. She’d designed it so it externally looked like an insect’s compound eyes, thousands of photoreceptors making up a kaleidoscope look.

Izuku didn’t want to admit it, but he thought that he looked somewhat like Eraserhead with his long hair and goggles. It was a rather uncanny coincidence, now that Izuku thought about it. That, or some cruel twist of fate to remind him of the danger Aizawa posed in discovering his other persona. But at least the bright coloring of his costume prevented any other similarities with the Erasure Hero.

But that was another matter entirely. For now, he needed to worry about school. Izuku walked out into the open air amongst his peers, they themselves donning their own respective costumes. Unexpectedly, he was called out fairly quickly.

“Midoriya.”

Izuku turned toward the voice. He was met with— why is her costume so revealing?!?

“We haven’t been properly introduced yet, have we? Momo Yaoyorozu, a pleasure to meet you.”

She stretched out a hand.

Izuku shook it. “I— A pleasure.”

She nodded. “I couldn’t help but notice the material your costume is made of. It wouldn’t happen to be spider silk, would it?”

Izuku rose an eye in surprise. “You can tell just by looking at it?”

She nodded. “It’s part of my quirk. I need to know the molecular makeup of things so I can make them. I’ve made spider silk before, so I know how it’s like. But I must admit, I never would have been able to make something quite so exquisite. The weave of this must have taken some work to create.”

“Oh, yeah…” The work of spiders, at least.

“Wow! Your’s looks so cool, Midoriya-kun!” Uraraka said. “Nothing like mine though.”

“Well, I think it looks great.” Izuku said.

“Really? Thanks!”

“All right, class!” announced All Might. The collective of students turned to face him, their conversations cutting off in favor of listening to the hero. “Now, it is time for battle training.”

“Sensei!” Iida spoke. “This is the battle center from the entrance exam, so are we undergoing urban battles again?”

I wonder, how often he interjects like that with everyone. Did he think that maybe All Might was about to something about that?

“No, we are moving ahead two steps.” All Might explained the statistics and facts of villains then, providing a nice little backdrop to the situation the class was about to be placed in.

“For this class, you’ll be split between teams of two; heroes and villains who will fight indoor battles.”
A whole load of questions erupted from the class, ranging from the way this activity was going to play out, to expulsion, to how stylish a certain purple cape was.

All Might refrained from answering any. Rather, he pulled out a little booklet, and began to explain how this class was going to play out.

*A booklet? Huh. I suppose he would be a novice to teaching. Especially to high school students.*

Eventually, All Might came to the part where he said we’d be teemed up by picking lots.

“They’re being picked so haphazardly?!” exclaimed Iida.

“You never know who you might have to get teemed up with in the field,” Izuku provided in explanation.

The class eventually picked lots, each of them getting sorted into their respective teams. Izuku found himself teamed up with the girl who wore a green costume and had a tongue that stuck out of her mouth. Izuku introduced himself, raising a hand to shake.

The girl took it in kind. “Tsuyu Asui,” she ribbeted. “I often say what’s on my mind.”

“Good to know, Asui.”

“Call me Tsu.”

Izuku paused, considering her words. “Alright.”

Izuku glanced at the other teams, sizing them up and forming strategies against them. He held a little laugh when he discovered that Bakugo got paired up with Mineta.

“First up, Teams A and C! Team A are the heroes, Team C the villains.”

Team C turned out to be Bakugo and Mineta, who strode their way inside the designated building. Team A consisted of Aoyama and Todoroki.

The battle... didn’t turn out to be much of a battle. Todoroki froze the entirety of the building, seemingly catching even Bakugo off guard. Izuku gave him props to that. Even if the resulting angry yells and curses were getting a bit annoying.

“Alright, um, Teams D and E?” All Might said hesitantly.

*Team D is us.* Izuku looked at All Might. *Looks like he’s still a bit off put by Bakugo.*

“Ahem. Anyways, Team D will be heroes. Team E: villains.

“Looks like we’re heroes then.” Izuku said to Asui. She nodded.

“Good luck, Midoriya-kun!” yelled Uraraka.

“Likewise. Good luck,” said Iida.

Izuku nodded. “Thank you, guys.”

Team E consisted of Mezo Shoji - the boy with morphable limbs - as well as Hanta Sero - the boy
who could shoot tape out from his arms.

Both teams walked up to the building they were to utilize, All Might leading them the whole way.

“Villain team!” exclaimed All Might. “Go on ahead and set up. In five minutes, the heroes will break in and the battle will begin.” All Might then sped away back to the monitoring room.

Once they were alone, Asui spoke up. “Midoriya-chan.”

Izuku quirked an eyebrow at the familiarity. “Yes?”

“Your quirk. You control bugs, yes?”

Izuku simply nodded.

“Alright. My quirk is [Frog]. Basically, I can do whatever a frog can.”

“I thought so,” mused Izuku. “In that case, you wouldn’t mind taking on Sero, would you? I’d rather not go against someone who would have more agility than me.”

“I can do that,” she ribbeted. She pulled out the map of the building, ready to study its interior.

“Ah, we don’t need to worry about memorizing the building’s floor plan. I can guide you through.”

Asui put a finger to her lips. “With your bugs, I’m guessing?”

“Mhm. I’ll send in a pair of dragonflies in your heed.” Izuku gathered up flying insects at the outside of the building’s openings, ready to head in once permitted.

A whistle rang through the air, signifying the start of the battle. Before anything else, Izuku sent in his bugs, surveying the building’s interior.

“Sero is on the second floor. Seems like he covered up the staircase and the hallways, trapped them to his advantage. He’s hiding in the middle of it.”

“Is there space at the top of the hallways?” Asui asked.

“Hmm. It seems so. About a foot or two.”

“I can climb on the ceiling, then.”

“You can—that’s right. Does what a frog can. Gotcha.”

The insects continued their trip through the building. “Shoji’s on the third floor. Looks like he’s… he has an ear to the floor. A couple others rotating in the air.” Izuku tilted his head in thought. “Got it. We’re good to get in.”

Asui hopped onto the building, traversing its outer walls and stopping before a second floor window. She eyed the two dragonflies that appeared beside her, and immediately followed as they flew inside.

Meanwhile, Izuku eyed the third floor. He had a plan to place into motion.

“Hello, Shoji.”

Shoji turned around, looking out the window. There floated a figure made of bugs and insects,
squirming and crawling all over one another. A slight buzzing accompanied the bugs, the snapping of tiny jaws and the fluttering of wings filling the air. Shoji retracted all his limbs to himself, transforming the enhanced ears and eyes on their ends back into arms.

“I suggest that you surrender now,” came the chittering of the bugs, bearing a voice exactly as that of Izuku Midoriya. “It would save you from a load of discomfort, if you did.” The buzzing became louder, harsher, filling Shoji’s ears.

The figure descended from its place in the air, entering through the window and touching the floor. It slowly made its way towards Shoji, each step collapsing upon itself - the bugs making ripple like movements on the floor - and instantly building itself back up again. It stopped a few feet from Shoji, crossing its arms and tilting its head. It stopped, almost as in wait. It didn’t take long to see why.

“Hanta Sero is down! The hero team has garnered a capture,” the speakers rang out.

“Your teammate is already down. You will have no backup to fall upon.”

Shoji reacted to the announcement, gazing upon the swarm in front of him.

“I will not surrender, Midoriya,” said Shoji. “If we are to fight, we will fight.” He took a fighting stance.

The bugs gave a little laugh. “If you say so.”

The mass of bugs abruptly collapsed in on itself, falling onto the floor. Shoji scrunched his eyes in confusion, scanning the mass, until they opened wide in realization. The mass reformed into a wave, rolling and descending towards Shoji. Insects hidden amongst corners and crevices of the room joined the movement, all aiming to fall onto the boy. Shoji attempted to run, to escape the clutches of thousands of little feet before they were upon him. He didn’t make it far. He was covered in seconds, his yells of surprise lost in the cacophony of buzzing.

The monitoring room was in complete silence. Just seconds before, everyone was commenting on the harrowing fight between Sero and Asui, and the frog girl’s ensuing victory. They were especially pumped up with the way Asui’s stealthy entrance via the ceiling caught Sero basically off guard, ensuring his quick defeat.

But then came the ‘fight’ between Shoji and Midoriya. It was a sight to behold.

Now, All Might and most of class 1-A stood in shock at the display that Midoriya had laid upon their eyes. For them, the image of the insect figure was still in their minds, as was the way it collapsed onto Shoji.

Others had looks of intrigue on their face, another was growling in fury.

Mina Ashido broke the silence. “That was… definitely something.”

“Yeah…” muttered Uraraka.

“Wasn’t that kind of much?” asked Iida.

“Huh,” said Denki Kaminari. “You know, that display would have fit his image a lot better if he was on the villain team instead of th—Ow!” he yelped as he felt a sharp pain at his neck.

Kyoka Jiro retracted his ear jack, reprimanding her teammate. “Don’t be an ass.”
“Um…” All Might looked up at the monitors. “Oh! Uh… Team D has taken control of the bomb. Heroes win.”

“What?!” questioned the class. They looked up at the monitors, and there stood Izuku next to the bomb, hand outstretched and touching the fake explosive device. “How did he get there?”

Previously…

Izuku circle his way to the back of the building. *Turn left,* his mind supplied. The mental command was directed to his two dragonflies. Asui—Tsu took the left. Another right, and then left. It wouldn’t be long until she was upon Sero.

Task nearing completion, Izuku focused his attention up. The fire escape stood before him, granting him a back entrance to the building.

But there was only one problem. The metal that the staircase was made of would make too much noise if he were to climb up the steps. The ears that Shoji had listening in to his surroundings would pick up Izuku’s steps long before he would even get to the second floor.

And Izuku didn’t really didn’t feel up to picking a physical fight with someone that had a grip strength of 540 kilos.

But he had a plan to circumvent that. Izuku began to form his bug figure - this time, in the image of himself - on the third floor.

“Hello, Shoji.” he relayed.

Izuku watched through his bugs as Shoji quickly turned, morphing his limbs back into arms.

*Bingo.* Izuku began his slow up the steps, making as little noise as possible. He continued to talk through his bugs.

“I suggest that you surrender now. It would save you from a load of discomfort, if you did.”

He rose sound of his bugs, raising the amount of insects that produced their distinct buzzing. He improved his pace just a little in company of the noise.

Eventually, he reached the top. But he stopped himself from going further, just as he did with his bug decoy. He remained outside, waiting for Tsu take down Sero. To make Shoji unsure, hesitate just a bit. He waited.

“Hanta Sero is down! The hero team has garnered a capture.”

He spoke through the bugs yet again. He paused.

Izuku laughed a bit from Shoji’s statement, and the laughter bleed into the speech of the bugs. He really didn’t know what was coming.

Izuku enacted the next phase of his plan. The bug decoy collapsed, falling to the floor. It then rose, moving with purpose and descending on the tentacle-armed boy. His voice was drowned out by his bugs.

With Shoji neutralized, Izuku simply strolled into the room. He strode in, funding himself in front of
the fake bomb. He smiled, placing his hand upon it.

“This is getting exciting. Let’s continue with this, shall we?”

Chapter End Notes

And there we have the Battle Trial! Spoke right to your interests, I hope? How about the costume design? If anything, that was the part I was stuck on the most. So I just winged it. Not sure if I’ll keep the look.

Anyways, until next time in [Chapter 12: Grue]!
And here we have [Chapter 12: Grue]! Hope you all enjoy! I’m sure you can all guess where we are at this point.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So, Monoma.”

“Midoriya,” the boy said with a smug look on his face.

“Why are we doing this again?”

It was currently lunch, Izuku flanked on both sides by Manga and Pony. Mei, on the other hand, was currently in the workshop - again - working on another one of her inventions. Across from them sat a rather smug looking Monoma. He sat seemingly calm, as if he had his entire speech planned out. But his look - his facade - didn’t fool Izuku. He could feel that the boy in front of him was a full of nerves.

“Manga and Pony said that you were… sorry?” Izuku questioned, almost disbelievingly.

“I—” he paused, seemingly in an attempt to reconsider his words. His image broke a little as he faltered. “Yes,” he said, almost reluctantly. “That day in the park, I misjudged you, you see. An honest mistake, if I’m to be honest,” he said. His smug smile found its way onto his face. His facade was back up, as strong as ever.

“A mistake?” Izuku asked. A couple bugs rose from his hair and found their place beside his head. The hornets, a total of three, buzzed, urging Monoma to continue.

Monoma nodded. “I didn’t believe you to be… so powerful. But it showed. Yesterday, during my class’s battle trials. The strength of your friends - my classmates - revealed themselves to me. They are true warriors, worthy of being here at U.A. It was afterwards, after reigning in their fights, that I knew you to be the one responsible. Only someone sufficiently as strong could motivate such a group to be so successful and proficient.”

Izuku took a second to take in all of the information supplied by Monoma. He takes the excuse, for now. But another question came to his mind. “And how about that little bout you had in the park? What was that about me being… quirkless?” Izuku said, warning him to choose his next words carefully. The hornets landed near Monoma, on the table space in front of him.

“Yes. Well, you see, my quirk… I can copy other peoples’ quirks upon physical contact. I can copy up to three at a time, as long as I use each quirk by itself, none simultaneously.” The hornets inched closer in response to the half-answer.

“What does that have to do with your… expressive vernacular?” Izuku said in a warning tone.

“That’s what’s strange here,” Monoma admitted seamlessly. “That day in the park… I didn’t feel a connection when I touched you. No ‘spark’ you could say, that established a connection to your quirk. Just an… empty void. A giant expanse. It was similar to how I feel when I touch other…”
quirkless people. But different, at the same time, in a way that I can’t explain."

Izuku scrunched an eyebrow in confusion. “You say that you couldn’t feel my quirk?”

Monoma shook his head. “Precisely. None that I could feel. It’s why I called you… called you what I did. So I sincerely apologize for all the trouble I’ve caused.”

“Huh.”

Hmm. I suppose I can give him the benefit of the doubt. But why wouldn’t he be able to feel my quirk? What’s so special about it?

“Thank you for your honesty, Monoma. But if I end up finding out that you’re lying, or anything of the sort…” The hornets lunged at Monoma, causing him to flinch ever so slightly. But the insects stopped before they touched him, instead buzzing dangerously close to his face.

“Yes, I — I know. You’ll send your swarm upon me with the utmost wrath. I shall rue the day I dared to defy you,” Monoma sarcastically remarked. His facade was back up again, making the flinch from before almost seem like it never occured.

“Good.” The hornets flew back into Izuku’s hair. “Glad you understa—"

A blaring siren disrupted the lunch time air. “There has been a Level 3 Security Breach. All students please evacuate outdoors promptly,” announced the PA system.

Everyone was still at first, quiet aside from the screeching sound of the alarm. But then people started to panic, the rumble of feet against the ground filling everyone’s ears.

“It’s the security alarm system! It means that someone has trespassed on school grounds! I’ve never seen anything like this in my three years here!” someone explained expositionally.

Is that really what this is about?

Izuku remained seated in his seat as the masses around him began to panic. He motioned to Manga and Pony and - yes, even Monoma - to sit still. All three complied, even if the third did so reluctantly.

As Izuku connected to his swarm, he utilized the ants near the school’s entrance to see what all the ruckus was about. A large amount of the ants had taken refuge underground, hidden from the hundred or so feet stomping on the ground. A little scrying revealed that the media that were crowding around the entrance from the morning had found their way through the school’s barrier.

Not an actual emergency, then? Must be a fluke in the security system. He peeked with his ants again, finding Aizawa and Present Mic talking down the eager reporters.

Better calm down the masses, I suppose.

Izuku called upon his insects again, this time gathering them above the cafeteria’s exit. The swarming bugs also caused another bit of panic, students screaming at the incoming mass of bugs. Izuku forgot at that second that some people weren’t exactly comfortable with insects swarming past their heads and feet. But he went along with his plan anyway.

The large mass of insects found their place, forming the words ‘Stop. Do Not Panic’ in the air. The message seeming caught the attention of most of the students, temporarily halting the stampede.

“There is no need to worry. The trespassers are merely the media folk that were crowding around the entrance this morning. Nothing to worry about. Eraserhead and Present Mic are currently
taking care of the situation,” the bugs said in unison.

At that, a couple students actually looked out the window, thereby confirming what Izuku’s bugs had announced. The resulting discovery calmed down the students, and it wasn’t long before everyone was mostly back to their normal routines. A few of the more rule-abiding students continued their march outside, but most returned to the cafeteria to resume their lunch.

As the commotion died down, Uraraka and Iida - who had seated themselves elsewhere when they saw the meeting between Izuku and Monoma - approached Izuku after departing from the crowd.

“Wow, Midoriya-kun! That was a cool way to use your bugs!” Uraraka exclaimed.

“That is, if those bugs were yours. Unless there is another student who wields some sort of bug control?” asked Iida.

“Nope, they were mine,” Izuku said, sending the bugs back to the outside. He called upon a few of them back to himself, their bodies taking residence in his hair again.

“In that case, good job, Midoriya. I knew that I voted for the correct candidate for Class Representative.” Iida said.

“Yeah! Nice going, Class Rep!” Uraraka exclaimed.

Oh. I forgot about that. If he were to be honest, Izuku was quite baffled by the results earlier, when his class decided upon anonymous voting to choose Class Representative and Deputy Representative. Yaoyorozu came in second place with three votes, gaining the deputy position. Meanwhile, Izuku got several more votes - six, to be exact - which secured his place as Class Rep.

It was strange, because Izuku didn’t expect to get any votes at all. He personally voted for Yaoyorozu; her brief introduction convinced Izuku that she had the right mannerisms and intelligence to handle the position.

In regard to his votes, the only ones that he had confirmed had voted for him were Iida, Uraraka, and Asui — Tsu, he mentally corrected himself.

“You got voted as Class Rep?” Pony quietly asked.

“Hmm?” He turned to Pony. “Uh, yeah. I haven’t been able to tell you guys yet since it just happened a while ago,” Izuku responded.

“Huh, who would’ve known,” Manga said. “Izuku voted as his class’s representative.”

“Well this has been nice and all,” interrupted Monoma, “but I believe that I should excuse myself. If I may?” He turned to Izuku, asking for acceptance to leave.

Izuku nodded. Monoma nodded as well, then walked back to where a good portion of 1-B was seated.

Uraraka and Iida gazed at the blond boy with questioning glances, turning to Izuku. “If I may ask, what was that about, Midoriya?” Iida asked.

“Oh, it’s nothing much. Just something that happened a few months back at—” Izuku abruptly stopped, becoming slightly disoriented with the output of some of his bugs.

In another part of the school, some of his bugs were engulfed into a black mist. The bugs found
themselves suddenly transported into what Izuku believed was a run-down bar. But before he could further explore the place, his connection to his bugs were cut.

“Strange,” Izuku muttered.

“Izuku? Something wrong bud?” Manga asked.

Izuku’s thoughts rushed back to the present, taking root back to his body. He looked to Manga, who was beside him. “Uh… yeah. No, I mean. I think. Something weird with my bugs, is all. Probably just… I’m not sure, really. But it’s nothing. Probably.”

(...)

“If you say so, Izuku.”

“Yes.” Just another mystery to add to today’s revelations.

The next day gave in to another surprise to class 1-A. Aizawa had announced that they were going to participate in an off-campus exercise to coincide with their Basic Hero Training class. It was supposed to be a practice rescue exercise, with the choice given of whether or not to your costume.

When the time came to head to the location, Izuku grabbed his costume and got on the bus headed to the site.

Despite Iida’s best intentions, his sternness to provide order proved to be fruitless when the bus turned out to be more luxurious than it appeared. Unlike a normal school bus, the vehicle had plenty of space. While their were normal rows of seats, there were also seats on each side, having students sit face to face.

It was this setup that brought along the predicament of conversation. And, to Izuku, it wasn’t hard to predict what was to be the topic of conversation, given the past few day’s events.

“Midoriya,” Kaminari said, “I’ve got to admit, your quirk’s a bit of a doozy.”

“Oh?” Izuku rose an eyebrow.

“Oh. And a bit scary too.” He paused. “No—No offense, of course,” he added quickly.

“Mhm.”

“Your quirk really is versatile, though,” Tsu said. “Your dragonflies really helped to lead me to Sero,” she ribbeted.

“Yeah, and it also helped you completely bury Shoji,” Ashido admitted sheepishly.

“Surely it can do other stuff, no? Just think of what he can create! Imagine a swarm of butterflies. It would be magnificent!” added Aoyama.

“I can... do things like that, I suppose. I just need to find enough of one bug and command them all at once. Sort of like this,” Izuku demonstrated his point by summoning the two fireflies he had hidden in his hair. The insects lit up and began to perform their own little light show.

The others around him were suddenly looking at Izuku in disbelief.
“What?” he asked, as the fireflies continued their performance.

“Oh, splendid! But I must ask, are you always so prepared?”

Izuku quirked an eye at the question.

“I think what he means to ask is: Did those fireflies really just come from your hair?!” Ashido questioned.

“Uh… yeah. I always have some bugs in supply. Just in case, you know?” Izuku said nonplussed.

“Ehh…” Ashido drew out.

“Well, I believe that you’re pretty manly just for that! I don’t think that I’d be able to stand being so close to so many bugs,” Kirishima interjected. “How do you do it?”

“How do I do it?” Izuku paused. “I’m not entirely sure of what you mean. But, I suppose that I could say that it comes naturally to me. A ‘the bugs are my friends,’ sort of thing.

“Wow! Being able to brave through it all? Just like that? Man I’m kinda jealous. You could get a whole lotta popularity if you play it out right. Unlike my own quirk, [Hardening], which isn’t too flashy.” Kirishima went on to demonstrate his own quirk, hardening his arm in example.

“Oh, I don’t know about that,” Izuku said. “You can easily be a pro with your hardened skin. You’d be like a bruiser, in that regard. A melee combatant who soaks up the damage. You’d be in the eye of the media just like that, taking up hits in a fight.”

“A bruiser?” Kirishima asked. “I haven’t heard of that term before.”

“Oh, yeah. It’s, uh, actually a video game term. A friend of mine kinda likes to go on about that kind of stuff. I thought that the term fit. Seems like his hobby-talk has sorta bled into my vocabulary.”

Izuku shook his head. “Nevermind that. I, on the other hand, am not a frontline combatant. I’d much rather stay in the shadows, using my bugs remotely. I wouldn’t actually show up on T.V. all that much. Unless I’m doing something wrong, anyway.”

“Really?” Kirishima asked.

“Mhm. Nothing all too flashy for me that the public has to see. You, however? I can see a couple Super Moves for you. Perhaps you can launch you at an enemy, like a human bullet? Or your armor, for example. It’s based on your stamina level, right? I can guarantee you that you haven’t reached your limit in regards to how much armor can cover your body.”

“Wow! You really hyper-analyzed me, didn’t you?! You even got that part about my stamina correctly! Kirishima exclaimed. “Thanks for the tips, Midoriya!”

Izuku nodded.

“You’ve thought long and hard about stuff like this, haven’t you, Midoriya?” Iida mentioned. “You even have usages for Kirishima’s quirk figured out.”

Izuku shrugged. “I suppose. I mostly analyzed all your guys’ quirks during the battle trial.”

“Scary,” Ashido said. “Wonder how far-in you’ve thought about all of us, eh?” she asked, not really expecting an answer.
“Well, I’m impressed,” Iida said. “A skill like that could go pretty far.”

“Pfft. You think Deku there can amount to anything?” Bakugo yelled from further away, interrupting the conversation. “All he can do is research others’ quirks. He got lucky with tentacle arms the other day. But in a real fight? Against somebody like me? I’d crush him!”

“Whoa man, kind of extreme,” Kirishima said. “What’s your beef with Midoriya, anyways? Aizawa-sensei had to stop you the other day when you were running at Izukj the other day during the ball toss. And what’s with ‘Deku?’ What’s that mean?”

Bakugo refrained from answering, instead making a frustrated sound and looking out the window.

“Wow, such a jerk,” Ashido said.

“Indeed,” Tsu ribbeted. “He wouldn’t get all that popular with an attitude like his.”

“What’d you say, Frog-Face?!”

“Ha!” Kaminari laughed. “We barely only started socializing and already you’ve made it clear to us the unpleasantness of your steamed turd of a personality.”

“What’s with that vocabulary?! Want me to pound you in!”

Conversation died down a bit after Bakugo’s outbursts. Rather than Izuku’s quirk, topics switched to more mundane things, like how school was treating everyone so far or the fact that All Might was a teacher. But excitement began to rise again as the class arrived at the exercise site.

“Wow! It’s almost like Universal Studios Japan!”

The class departed from the bus, herded by their teacher through the doors of the large facility. They were greeted by someone in an almost astronaut-like suit.

Ah! It’s the famous rescue hero Thirteen! Izuku thought.

“Hello everyone! Welcome to what I like to call, the Unforeseen Simulation Joint. It comes with every disaster and accident you can imagine.”

The various zones that Thirteen went on to mention were explored with Izuku’s bugs. The different zones were indeed very intricately detailed, looking almost like the real thing. Whether it was the Landslide zone and its steeped terrain, or the Flood zone with its ocean aesthetics, the site looked a promising place to practice the class’s rescue skills.

Izuku took notice of Thirteen and Aizawa talking in hushed tones away from the class. He inched his insects a bit closer to the two.

“Thirteen, where’s All Might?” Aizawa asked. “Isn’t he supposed to be here?”

“It seems that he reached his limit during his commute this morning.” Thirteen said, raising three fingers up

Huh. Looks like All Might used up all his time. Their lucky that I already know about it. They’d be having a problem with one curious and nosy student otherwise.

Thirteen went on to explain his own quirk, [Black Hole], as well as the potential lethality of it.
Thirteen’s point of his quirk - that despite being used for rescue, had the potential to kill - reminded Izuku of his own quirk. His own bugs definitely had their various uses. Some focused on neutralization, others border on lethal.

As Thirteen rambled on, Izuku’s bugs noticed a black swirl slowly expanding near the center of the room. He nearly jumped in place when his bugs saw the hand-covered face peek out of the hole.

“Midoriya?” Uraraka asked. “Something wrong?”

A few of Izuku’s bugs ending up getting caught up in the swirl, leaving Izuku slightly disoriented with the sudden shift. The swirl — the black mist — had transported his bugs to a rather large warehouse filled with various people. The constricting manner of the mist was all too familiar to the senses of his bugs.

It’s like the black mist from yesterday. But instead of a bar, this time it’s a whole group of - what I assume - are villains. That means that the media breaking through was, what, a distraction? For what? Getting info to break into here?

More and more villains poured out from the mist, leading to dozens of the criminals within the USJ.

“Thirteen and Eraserhead, is it not? asked the black mist. “According to class schedule I received the other day, All Might was supposed to be here.”

There we go, confirmation that this guy was on campus yesterday. Makes sense.

Izuku paid little attention to the speech, ignoring Eraserhead as he jumped down to defend the class. He can handle himself.

Izuku began to survey the scenario, taking note of any dangerous looking individuals that he would try to keep away from. However, he was interrupted upon the arrival of the black mist from behind — A teleporter, then. Tricky.

“Greetings,” announced the shadowy figure. “We, are the League of Villains. Forgive our audacity, but we’ve come here, to U.A. High School, this bastion of heroism, to end the life of the Symbol of Peace, All Might.”

His announcement was met with a stunned audience, the resolute, certain sounding goal to kill All Might shocking the students.


“Kill All Might?” Izuku said. “That’s quite the goal you guys have.”

“Indeed it is.” The mist said. Then he threw his arms up.

“Begone.” The man’s shadows exploded outwards, encapsulating most of the class.

“Writhe in torment, until you breathe your last.” The threat was the last thing Izuku heard before falling into darkness.

Chapter End Notes
A/N: So, USJ, huh? Onwards, to the fight! Next chapter features the League of Villains!! Along with their secret weapon: the super strong, regenerating Lun— I mean, Nomu!

Anyway, hope to see you all next time! Ta-ta!
He connected to his swarm, calling out to them. That was his first action upon becoming aware. He breathed in, and out. He was calm.

But then he noticed his bugs, unable to reach his position, dying left and right as they attempted to reach him. It wasn’t long before the cause of the problem came to Izuku’s senses.

He opened his eyes. The heavy downpour of water fell onto his face, the heavy winds and the sound of thunder echoing in the background. It seemed that he was in the Downpour Zone; the place best suited to suppress his quirk’s usage.

He was lacking reconnaissance and an edge to his offensive power now. Without his bugs, he needed to rely on his skills alone. He would have to deal with it.

A groan from behind spurred him to turn. He found two of his classmates, then. The one with a bird’s head - Tokoyami, his own head supplied - slowly rose up, rubbing his head. The other - Mineta - was nervously moving his head back and forth throughout the landscape.

Izuku ignored them for now, instead calling out to his bugs again. This time, he relayed a single command.

Come inside.

The bugs would find their way into U.S.J. They’d come into through the vents, any small cracks and imperfections within the infrastructure of the building. But that would be all, and then they’d continue on with their routines: scurrying, skittering, flying, eating. That was fine; all Izuku needed was for them to be there when he was ready.

For now, he needed to focus on the situation in front of him. He needed to get out of the heavy rain and wind.

A mere 23 bugs that had been within his hair - not that they could do much in this weather - and his trusty eskrima sticks on his back were all he had to work with.

He looked back to his classmates. Mineta was a crying mess, muttering inconsistency about the villains, All Might, and the possibility of death looming around the corner.

On the contrary, Tokoyami was rather calm. He was simply eyeing the zone, until his gaze fell upon Izuku. He walked forward, his beak opening to speak.

“Midoriya, are you alright?” Tokoyami asked.

“Yeah.” Izuku nodded, “I’m good. You?”
“I am fine,” Tokoyami replied. He then gestured to the other, shorter boy present. “I’m not sure that I can say the same about Mineta here, though.”

Both glanced back at their classmate, who was still panicking over their current situation. Izuku shook his head, and began to approach the boy.

“Hey, Mineta.” No response, the boy continued muttering.

“Mineta,” Izuku said, more forceful. It seemed to snap Mineta out of his trance.

“Mi— Midoriya.” His eyes widened again. “Villains! We can’t handle something like this! We need to wait for the real heroes to—” Izuku smacked him in the face, revving him out of his stupor.

“Look. Are you going to just stand there, being useless?” Izuku said. “Are we going to have to carry you on our backs? Or are you going to help us get out of here?”

“I— I—”

“Midoriya. We have a problem,” Tokoyami interrupted.

Izuku turned his attention away from Mineta, and only then did he notice what Tokoyami meant. Various villains had converged upon their position, surrounding them from all sides, preventing escape.

“Shoot. Looks like we’re gonna have to fight our way out of here. Tokoyami, surround Mineta. He isn’t in a position to fight.”

“Right. It is a good thing that we find ourselves in a pseudo darkness, then, within this storm. Dark Shadow!”

Izuku watched as the sentient being that was Tokoyami’s quirk rose from his back. “Oh ho ho. A fight? Oh, how I do love fights,” uttered the shadowy being. It’s claws lengthened as its size grew. A few of the villains visibly grew uneasy, but they held their ground.

“Oi! You brats should just come with us quietly. You’re outnumbered. Surrender yourselves now,” exclaimed one of the villains.

“If you believe that we would just give in here, you are exactly the fools I depict to break into such a bastion for heroics,” uttered Tokoyami.

The villain smiled, chuckling. “Perhaps so. But no matter, at least we’ll have some fun.” The others surrounding the students - Izuku estimated a little over twenty, - readied their quirks. Izuku reached for his back, wielding his only weapons against his foes.

Then it started.

Lunging at Izuku, a villain swiftly traversed the slippery terrain, their claws splayed out in attack. Izuku quickly rose his sticks to block the oncoming swipe, his body being pushed back by the force exerted by the villain.

The villain’s arm rose in for another attack, but Izuku found his footing before then, taking a low sweep at the villain’s legs. The villain fell, unready for the maneuver. With a hard, steady smash over the villain’s neck, they grew still.

A reflex parry blocked another incoming attack, this time two heavy fists from a four-armed
opponent. Izuku shifted into a loose stance, focusing more on evasion. The villain continued his display of brute strength, his punches hitting nothing but air. Eventually, his stamina depleted, and he grew tired. This provided a simple opening for Izuku to place a hard smash over the villain’s stomach, them reeling over in discomfort.

Izuku chanced a glance back at his classmates. Mineta was fine, but still on the ground scared out of his mind. Tokoyami was fending off three other villains, four already down at his feet.

Izuku swiftly turned again, continuing to defend against the onslaught of villains.

One thing Izuku hadn’t tried before was engaging in close quarters with villains. Sure, there was the Sludge Villain, and that one guy he fought in an alley to save that woman, but those were all singular, individual criminals.

He hadn’t fought groups before, and for good reason. He knew that he would have been overrun without the use of his bugs. And he couldn’t use his bugs for vigilantism if he didn’t want to get caught under his identity.

The fighting lasted quite a while, minutes passing by as villains fell. One by one they fell, but so did Izuku’s strength. He was vying for alternatives to end the fight.

One option he had was using the parasites he had noticed some of the villains were carrying. It was a novel alternative, but he scrapped the idea. The tapeworms would take too long to do any immediate damage, after all. So he continued fighting on.

Despite all the damage he was doing, Izuku didn’t escape completely unscathed, having taken a few hits himself. His experience - or lack thereof - of a fight within groups showed; a rather large gash was on his arm after a villain’s crystalline projectiles had cut through the durable spider silk.

Though he was growing tired, his breaths coming in loud huffs, Izuku decided that the situation wasn’t too bad. He was lucky that he wasn’t alone here, even if the only comrade he had was Tokoyami. He would have been overrun a long time ago, otherwise. Even if these villains were surprisingly weak for members of a so called ‘League of Villains.’

As Izuku finished off another enemy, this time with a double swipe to the back, he heard the distinctive sound of a sword being unsheathed.

Izuku knew that he wouldn’t be able to block in time, but he still turned, readying himself for the blade. But it never came. Instead, the sword wielding villain was on the ground, groaning and covering a broken, bleeding nose. Izuku was at first confused, until he looked at the villain’s feet. There lay a purple ball, pinning the villain in place.

More orbs came, pinning down all the villain’s limbs. Izuku turned, finding Mineta standing off to the side, holding his balls of hair in his hands.

“I’m— I’m sorry Midoriya,” Mineta said to Izuku. “You were right. I— I signed myself up to U.A. to become a hero!!!” He turned his head off to the side.

“And other stuff,” he muttered.

“What?”

“But that’s besides the point!” Mineta yelled. “You and Tokoyami were being like true heroes! Going all: Bamf! Pow! Zap! I just— I just— I saw that guy with the sword and— and—”
“I got it, Mineta. Thank you for the assist.”

Mineta smiled. Than—” and then he was blasted into a wall, making a deep imprint in the concrete and steel.

“I’m okay…” Mineta muttered as he fell to the ground.

Izuku turned back to face the villain that had launched Mineta into the wall. He was big, in a very muscular sense. His horns spiraled very much like a ram’s, a swirling tail branching from his hind quarters.

“You should’ve stayed down, punk,” the villain said to the now fallen Mineta. He turned towards Midoriya. “As for you, I think that I’ll— Agh!” He was cut off, Tokoyami’s Dark Shadow lashing out in a barrage of fury, subduing the unsuspecting villain into unconsciousness.

“Thanks, Tokoyami.”

“No problem, Midoriya.”

Izuku looked around, noticing the silence; the ram villain was the last of them. He turned back to the position where Mineta had landed, wandering over to make sure the boy was okay.

After a bit of observation, Izuku found that Mineta was mostly fine, even if he wasn’t in any state to move himself.

“Don’t worry Midoriya, I’ve got him.” Dark Shadow emerged from Tokoyami’s cape, taking Mineta in its arms.

“Good,” Izuku said. “I believe that we’re free to go. The exit is…” Izuku connected to the bugs outside the dome of the Downpour Zone. He focused on the bugs that he could to pinpoint the position of the exit. “That way.” Izuku pointed down a street.

Tokoyami and Midoriya trudged through the heavy rain and howling winds, keeping an eye out for any stray villains.

“Tokoyami.”

The bird-faced boy turned towards Izuku. “Yes, Midoriya?”

“If you don’t mind keeping an extra eye out, I’m going to connect to my bugs right now, see how everyone else is faring against this ‘League.’”

Tokoyami nodded. “Of course. Do you require any assistance to guide you, or…”

“No, I can walk. You can still follow me to the exit. My attention will just be split into multiple avenues, is all. I won’t be all that good at spotting any villains around us”

“Alright. I’ll leave it to you,” Tokoyami said. They entered a companionable silence, Izuku leading the charge as a Mineta-bearing Tokoyami followed.

Within seconds, Izuku’s attention was divided between the millions of bugs within his reach, and he finally gained sight of the people within the U.S.J.

Sato, Shoji, Ashido, and an injured Thirteen at the entrance, fighting off the guy with the teleporting mist.
Yaoyorozu, Jiro, and Kouda in the Mountain Zone, a swarm of birds aiding their cause.

Ojiro, Aoyama, and Hagakure - if his myriad eyes weren’t deceiving him - within Conflagration.

Todoroki and Sero were making a bigger mess in the Landslide Zone.

And Bakugo and Kirishima were in the Ruins doing what they knew best: smashing and fighting.

Then his view shifted to the more dire situation within the entire facility. He found a defeated Eraserhead, his broken body pinned down by the large, bird shaped villain.

And then there was Tsu, Uraraka, and a dazed Kaminari in the Flood Zone, just feet away from by the villain covered in severed hands, the teleporter, and the bird with the exposed brain. The one with the hands turned his way to the three students resting on the Floo Zone’s edge.

“Shoot, that doesn’t look good,” Izuku said.

“Hmm?” Tokoyami hummed.

“Quick!” Izuku alerted. “We need to hurry! Some of the others are in trouble!” Izuku ran off into a sprint.

“Right,” Tokoyami said to the furthering behind of his classmate. They quickened their pace, risking the chance that they’d end up falling upon the slick ground.

With his bugs, Izuku began to take in the situation. Some bugs discretely gathered near the trio, with some landing on their backs in the area exposed above the water.

“—his pride as the Symbol of Peace.” Izuku caught the villain saying. Then, he launched himself at the three with a burst of speed. Izuku was caught completely off guard, his bugs watching as the villain’s hands went to enclose around Tsu’s and Kaminari’s faces.

But the hands stopped just before they reached the faces. The hand-covered villain backed away a little, turning his way back toward Eraserhead.

“You really are cool, Eraserhead.” The hero’s eyes shone red with his quirk, eyes obviously canceling out whatever quirk the hand villain had.

*Eraserhead’s hurt. Real bad. Really, really bad. Bad enough that his body was nearly broken, probably by the villain holding him down right now. Yet Aizawa-sensei still went through the effort of canceling out the other villain’s quirk. He saw him as someone Tsu and Uraraka couldn’t handle, despite the obvious evidence that they had taken out the other goons in the water.*

The bird villain smashed Eraserhead’s face into the ground, deactivating the hero’s quirk.

*Which means danger, a greater threat than before. And the villain stopped his advance as his quirk was canceled out, rather than continuing to just grab them. Which means — which means his quirk is based around his hands. Meaning—*

Izuku acted to the revelation in earnest, rising the offensive bugs hidden on his classmates. They dashed forward, and - just as he thought - intercepted the incoming hands on the villain.

“OW! What the—”

The bugs were successful in their initial attack, stinging the vulnerable flesh of the villain's hands. The villain backed off, and Izuku stationed his bugs in a defensive line tens of thousands strong,
guarding his classmates from harm.

The villain went to grab one of the stray insects on his arm - a dying bee lacking its stinger. Izuku felt the bee disappear from his influence, almost like it had just slowly dissolved.

*Emitter quirk, hand based disintegration, then? On contact, or when he closes his hand on the thing? The latter would make sense.*

“What is this!?” the villain said, considering the ramifications of somebody being able to control such an array of insects. “A mini boss who summons minions? And bugs? I can’t grab those. Unfair. Unfair, unfair. Where are you! Come out!” he yelled, fuming and frantically searching around him.

*What’s with all the video game terms he’s tossing around? And why am I the mini boss?*

...  

*Huh, who would’ve thought that Manga’s video game knowledge would come to use like this?*

At the same time with Tokoyami, Mineta, and Midoriya, the trio came upon a large steel door. And with the flick of a switch, they finally made it out of the Downpour Zone.

Tokoyami and Midoriya could now see the incident with their own eyes, the Flood Zone being directly across from the Downpour Zone. They exited the dome as the hand villain spouted out the admission of a mini boss.

“Tokoyami,” Izuku said, turning to the boy and gesturing to the other on his back, “get Mineta out of here. I’m going to stall for time and see what I can do with these villains.”

Tokoyami gave Izuku a concerned look. “I’m not sure that is a wise decision, Midoriya. As much as I want to help out our fellow classmates, those villains over there—”

“Don’t worry,” Izuku said, cutting Tokoyami off. “I’m going to stay hidden over here, use my bugs.”

Tokoyami tilted his head at that, considering the prospect. Eventually, he nodded his head. “Okay. I’ll take your word. Though, I advise caution.” With that, Tokoyami ran away from the action, and back towards the exit. Watching the boy leave, Izuku quickly positioned himself behind a bush to keep himself hidden.

“Nomu.” Izuku’s bugs heard the declaration. *So the bird guy’s name is Nomu?*

However, Izuku’s bugs noticed that the hand villain had ended his outburst, his head looking straight for the Downpour Zone, and directly at him.

*Well, there goes the hiding part. He probably saw me as I hid behind the bush. Great. At least Tokoyami and Mineta are gone.*

“Ki—”

Whatever the villain was about to say was cut off from a loud clang and explosion of metal. A cloud of dust covered the entrance of the Unforeseen Simulation Joint, a concealed figure slowly marching out from the clouds.

Out came a rather rare sight: an unsmiling All Might. He was still in his teaching attire, his tie and blazer thrown off and in his grasp. His frown shook up many of the villains present still conscious
enough to fight.

His voice boomed in the open air, further enforcing his presence. “It’s fine now. I am here.”

With that, All Might launched himself into a speed that provided a challenge for Izuku’s bugs all around the facility to follow.

The blur of speed unceremoniously beat back the rest of the minor villains around the plaza. After mere seconds of battle, All Might went off the rescue the hurt Aizawa, as well as remove Tsu, Uraraka, and Kaminari from the grasp of the hand villain.

Unfortunately for Izuku, his position behind the bush seemed to have concealed his presence to All Might, leaving him stranded in the plaza as All Might brought the rest to safety.

This didn’t go unnoticed by the remaining three villains within the U.S.J. The villain with the disintegration quirk opened his mouth to speak, but stopped himself at the last second. He paused, as if considering his moves, then opened his mouth to relay an order. “Nomu, fetch the kid over there.” He pointed straight at Izuku.

Before Izuku could blink, Nomu was in front of him, its hand wrapped around his torso. And before he could even adjust to the sudden pressure around his body, he felt severely dizzy, reeling in from vomiting. It seemed that Nomu had zoomed back to its last position with him in hand.

Fast, really fast. As fast as All Might?

At the same time, a distressed All Might came before them, obviously worried with what the villains were going to do with Izuku.

Ah. I’m a hostage. That makes sense, I suppose.

“Ah, All Might. Glad that you could join us,” said the teleporter villain.

All Might, still barring his frown, retorted back. “Villains, release the boy. There’s no need to harm him.”

“You!” yelled the hand villain, looking at All Might. “I’ve been waiting for you.”

This isn’t good. I’m just in All Might’s way. He can’t fight any of them if I’m here in this guy’s grasp. I need to get out of here, see what I can do. This Nomu guy is tough, though, and probably just as fast as All Might himself. I have to hurt him, make him let me go.

“Hey, stop that muttering, kid!” yelled the hand villain.

Izuku quieted himself, again berating himself for his habit of muttering.

Then, he ordered some of the bugs out of his hair: spiders, beetles, hornets and the like coming out from their hiding place and crawling onto Nomu’s eyes. All at once by Izuku’s command, the insects bit and stung at the fleshy orbs, rising a broken, garbled screech from Nomu.

With Nomu effectively blinded, All Might sprung into action, launching a punch at Nomu. But what All Might didn’t expect was the lack of response towards the attack. Nomu instead going to scratch at one of its eyes. The clawed movement removed the bugs, but did so by removing his entire eye as well.

However, even more surprising was the instantaneous regrowth of the eye within its socket, restored
to pristine condition.

“Nice try,” the hand villain said, “but Nomu here was designed to kill you, Symbol of Peace. He has shock absorption and regeneration.”

All Might looked at the villain in a new light, uncertainty in his eyes. Izuku grew a bit more uneasy with the position he was in.

However, the next words that came from the disintegration villain’s mouth instilled a new worry into his head.

“Nomu. Kill All Might.”

With that, the brain villain screeched anew, throwing Izuku out of the way and into the distance.

Izuku landed with a crack, the force of the throw knocking him nearly unconscious, with him barely able to stand.

Izuku attempted to rise from his crumpled state, but did little but move his head towards the fight. He watched on as All Might and Nomu fought, an uneasy feeling growing in his mind. He knew that All Might had reached his limit in the morning; he didn’t have much time to fight the villain. And if that thing - that Nomu - had two quirks, and was supposedly made to kill All Might…

*There’s a chance that All Might won’t make it through the fight.* A shiver ran through Izuku’s spine, the realization of the League’s plan scaring him. *They really have a chance.*

As black began to fill his vision, Izuku ordered his bugs to act, however little he knew it would do to help.

*Bite.*

*Sting.*

*“Kill.”*

Izuku fell unconscious.

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Chapter End Notes

And that about wraps up the U.S.J. Incident. Well, mostly anyways. So, what comes next? Heh, that’ll be for the next chapter, everyone.

But, one small thing I’d like to tease: Get ready for some non-canonical events soon.

‘Till next time!
Hey everyone! I’d like to let you all know that I have a poll set up on my FFN account to
decide what you all would like to call Izuku’s quirk. Now, as far as I can tell, there
isn’t a poll system here on AO3. If I end up being wrong, do say so. But otherwise, for
those who’d like to, go ahead and vote over on FFN. However, I’ll leave the poll
options available on here if you rather just answer in the comments. Thanks!

1.) Hive Mind
2.) Eye of the Swarm
3.) Entomopathy
4.) Bug Manipulation/Control
5.) Entomokinesis

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku awoke to a white tiled ceiling, the steady beat of heart rate monitor blaring into his ears. He
shifted slightly, attempting to adjust his position into one that was more comfortable.

That was when he spotted the gray blur at the edge of his vision. Turning his head, Izuku saw that
the blur was the retreating back of Cementoss as he was leaving the room. Before he could even
think upon the strange occurrence, two police officers strode in.

“Hello, Midoriya,” greeted the one in the overcoat. “I hope you’re feeling alright?”

“I… well, yeah, I suppose. As much as I can be after being thrown into a wall with the force that
rivals All Might, anyways.”

The man smiled. “That’s good to hear. Anyway, I’m Investigator Naomasa Tsukauchi. The woman
next to me is Officer Asano Saya,” he gestured to the orange haired woman beside him.

“If you wouldn’t mind, she and I would like to ask you a couple questions regarding what occurred
this morning at the Unforeseen Simulation Joint.”

Izuku nodded, quite curious to what was happening. “Of course. But, uh, can I ask where I am at the
moment?”

“Oh. Thank you.”

“No problem. Alright then, let’s begin.”

The questions began simple, with Izuku recounting the events that had led up to the incident. Izuku
then went into detail on his exploits with Tokoyami in the Downpour Zone, as well as his
subsequent escape and incapacitation.

One thing Izuku found odd was the eerie silence that surrounded Officer Saya. Despite Tsukauchi’s
assurance that both were present to ask questions, Saya had been silent so far. However, his thoughts were paid little heed, his questioning by the police continuing on.

“Your quirk… It says here that it’s [Bug Control]?” Tsukauchi asked.

“Yeah. Still working on a more permanent name for it, though,” Izuku admitted.

Tsukauchi nodded. “How does that work exactly? You relay commands and the bugs just do what their told?”

“Something like that, yeah.” Izuku replied.

“Mhm,” Tsukauchi hummed, writing down some notes. “What was the last command you gave your bugs, if I may ask?”

Izuku rose an eyebrow in question, but he replied anyhow. “Just, umm… to bite. And sting. You know, whatever my bugs could do to help All Might at that moment. That Nomu guy wasn’t something to scoff at.”

“You’re absolutely right there, if the reports we’ve been getting are anything to go by. Anyways, another thing - what was the most damage you know of that you caused to any of the villains present?”

Now that’s a weird question, Izuku thought.

“Umm, I guess there was this one snake lady in the Downpour Zone? She was coming at me fast, and I think I heard a couple bones breaking when my eskrima sticks hit her. Probably her ribcage, when I think about it. Why? Is she alright?”

“Snake lady?” Tsukauchi took a moment to think. “Hmm… Ah, yes. I believe that I remember one of the villains matching that description. Don’t worry, last I heard was that she was in stable condition.”

“That’s good, I suppose,” Izuku muttered.

Both the officers quirked an eyebrow at that, but shook it off. “Alright then!” Taukauchi exclaimed, closing his notebook. “That seems like that’s all we needed for today. If we require a follow-up, we’ll contact your mother on your home phone.”

Tsukauchi turned toward the door, yelling out into the halls. “He’s clear!”

With that, the door to the room slammed open with a bang. “About time! You officers are already draining enough of his energy as is! Out, out!”

“Of course, Recovery Girl.” Tsukauchi smiled. “I hope you get well soon, Midoriya!” Tsukauchi yelled as the door was slammed in his face.

“Sheesh,” Recovery Girl voiced. “Those police officers don’t respect the notion of a patient’s rest.”

“Oh…”

“But seriously, young man. Minor head trauma, a few broken ribs, a large gash on your arm, and a couple or so bruises? You did a nasty amount of damage upon yourself out there. You’re lucky that your armor took the brunt of the force. I’m not sure that you’d be conscious otherwise.”

“Oh, sorry,” Izuku laughed sheepishly. “Oh! My costume! What happened to it?”
“Ah, yes. I had to get a specialist to cut parts of it off, took some time, too. But some of it is salvageable, I suppose. You made it yourself, right?”

“Yeah…”

“Truly admirable work. The quality of a professional’s, even. But enough on that. You still need to rest.”

“Sorry.”

“No need. But I don’t recommend you using your quirk at least until tomorrow. Too much stress on your brain is a bad thing. Now, come along,” Recovery Girl said, pushing on Izuku’s bed. “I need to transfer you to another room, have you join the rest of your classmates. I have another patient to attend to.”

As Izuku’s bed jostled from its position, it was only then that Izuku noticed the resting form of All Might in the adjacent space. Well, an unpowered All Might, anyhow.

*Man, I should really connect to my bugs. I need to keep track of—* Izuku shook his head. *I should listen to Recovery Girl, she knows what she’s talking about. I am kinda tired. Besides, what possible danger could come near the heart of U.A. High?*

“But how about—” Izuku stopped himself in reflex. He didn’t trust his own voice at the moment, with him about to refer to the skinny man as All Might.

*Does Recovery Girl know about— Duh, of course she does. In fact, she’s probably All Might’s doctor concerning his injury. I shouldn’t need to—*

“Oh, Toshinori?” Recovery Girl supplied, having noticed where Izuku was looking. “He’ll be fine. Just a couple flesh wounds and such. He got them from a bad shuffle with the villains. He was the one in charge of the security systems at U.S.J. That’s why he’s here. He got beat up over it.”

“Oh, alright.” A believable cover story, I suppose. Guess that means she doesn’t know that I know, though. Oh well, I’ll just leave it as be.

“And stop that muttering, boy. You’re already using enough energy as is.”

“Yes, Recovery Girl.”

The gurney was wheeled into an adjacent room, where he noticed another bed with their curtains pulled over, obviously concealing someone.

*Wait, other classmates? That would mean—*

The curtain opened. “Midoriya! You’re alright!” yelled the voice.

“Oh. Hey, Mineta.”

“I told you that you weren’t required, Asano,” Tsukauchi said in a chipper mood.

The two officers were just leaving the Infirmary, making their trek back to their car through the school halls.
“Better safe than sorry,” Officer Saya replied curtly. “My flames were a precautionary measure. You know that. Neither you nor your quirk would have been able to fend off a swarm of insects.”

“Come on, Asano. Did you see him? That boy wouldn’t harm a fly.”

Officer Saya gave Tsukauchi a blank stare.

“Eh, you know what I mean,” he said, waving her off. “Point is, everything the boy said was one hundred percent true, no lies whatsoever. You know that my quirk doesn't lie to me.”

Saya let out a grunt of indignation. “Then how do you explain the mess he left behind at the crime scene?”

Tsukauchi took on a sheepish expression. “Yeah… I’m not entirely sure on that part. Genbu’s thinking that the insects clutched onto the boy’s last commands before he went unconscious. The biting and stinging stuff do line up pretty well with that, you’ve got to admit.”

“But twenty-one injured villains? And four deceased?” Saya admonished.

“Hey, it’s the best theory we have so far. Who knows? Maybe some of the villains might have just been allergic. We won’t know until the coroner’s finished with them.”


“What?”

“You and I both know what we saw. Some of their faces were puffed up and swelling. Others had necrosis settling in! In fact, I’m almost certain that muscle failure got some of them.”

“But—”

“Heck one of the bodies still had a whole swarm of hornets stinging at it. Japanese. Giant. Hornets. Need I remind you what they look like? What they can do to a person?”

“Look, Saya—”

At that moment, Taukauchi motioned for Saya to stop, raising his hand to listen to his earpiece. His eyes rose in surprise.

“What is it?” Saya questioned, reverting back to a calm demeanor.

“Make that five,” Tsukauchi spoke as he lowered his hand. He slowly began walking forward, Saya not far behind.

Saya’s grew in pace with Tsukauchi, face scrunched up in confusion. “Five? Five what?” she questioned.

“Five individuals deceased,” Tsukauchi said. “You know the one with the exposed brain and the avian features?”

“The one who was completely unresponsive during interrogations?”

“Mhm. Seems that he died in his cell a little over half an hour ago. The medics weren’t able to do anything by the time they noticed anything. It didn’t help that this ‘Nomu’ neglected to act against any external stimuli. He was still sitting upright and motionless in his cell, with his beady eyes still open, when they found him dead.”
“But doesn’t he have a regeneration quirk?”

“He does - well, did. But it looks like his nervous system was already overflowing with venom and neurotoxins. Seems like all those bugs that were surrounding its head weren’t just lounging around as we thought,” Tsukauchi supplied.

“But all Regeneration quirks on record have been known to normally be able to fend off such a thing…” Saya mused.

“Unless the body was subjected to tranquilizers,” Tsukauchi continued, “which would in turn slow down his bodily functions - including his quirk.”

“And we pumped him full of tranqs when we arrested him,” Saya said in revelation.

“Yup.”

“Dang,” Asano muttered, her hair flaring a bit with her flames. “We should’ve been more lax with the precautions we took.”

“Hey, it’s not our fault. Like you said, better safe than sorry, right?”

“A prisoner still died on our watch. He died a preventable death.”

“And that same prisoner went head to head with The Symbol of Peace and escaped virtually unscathed, need I remind you. Besides, if what All Might said was true, he was having trouble fighting this ‘Nomu,’ even with the majority of the kid’s bugs focusing on it, slowing down the villain’s reactions. Who knows, All Might might have been in worse condition if the bugs hadn’t affected the villain.”

“All Might? Being worse for wear?” Saya said jokingly. “You do know who you’re talking about, right?”

A slight grimace appeared on Tsukauchi’s face, but it quickly disappeared. “Oh, I sure do.”

“Hey, Midoriya. You said that you can see and hear through your bugs, right?” came the eager voice of Mineta.

“Yeah…” Izuku replied cautiously.

“Well, have you ever thought of peeking in on— OWW!!! Alright!! Alright, okay!”

Izuku knew he was betraying Recovery Girl’s trust in him to not to use his quirk, but still. Mineta’s thought processes deserved at least one ant bite. Or two.

“You know, Midoriya, I—”

“If you’re going to say something about wanting me to spy on—”

“No! It’s nothing like that! I don’t wanna get bit again!”

“Good,” Izuku chuckled. “Go on, then.”

“I just… I wanna say thanks. You know, for saving my behind back there with the villains. I really
thought that we were going to die, you know? But then you and Tokoyami fought off all those villains, and I— I had to do something, yo know? And when I saw that samurai guy with the sword, I just…”

Huh. Izuku never could have imagined Minoru Mineta acting like this. With his perverted ways and his quick-to-breakdown reaction at U.S.J. - even his last place position the quirk assessment - it seemed that Izuku had underestimated him. He ultimately pulled through, though, his quick reactions having saved Izuku despite his quick defeat at the hands of the ram villain.

“IT’s no problem, Mineta. Just doing the duty as a fellow classmate. I couldn’t just leave you to die, right?”

“But still, thanks.”

Izuku nodded his head.

“Midoriya, you have some visitors. They’ve been outside for half an hour and haven’t left, so I’m just letting them in,” Recovery Girl announced.

Mei, Manga, and Pony made their way to Izuku’s bed, faces laced with worry.

“Izuku!!” yelled the eccentric inventor, tackling the laying Izuku with a hug.

“Oh— Mei— hurts…”

Mei jumped off him. “Sorry, Izuku. You okay?”

“Yeah, we heard what happened,” said Manga. “That stuff over at U.S.J. sounds pretty scary. Giant tentacle monsters, sharks with laser beams, poison gas, flying golden robots…”

Izuku gave Manga an incredulous look. “What are you talking about?”

“What do you mean?” asked Manga.

“I thought that the attack was just a bunch of minor villains and three main ones?” supplied Pony.

“That’s right,” Izuku affirmed. “I don’t know where you heard about all that other stuff.”

“Oh.”

“But you’re alright?” Pony asked. “Recovery Girl wouldn’t… um… elaborate is the word, I think.”

“Ah, it’s not too bad. Recovery Girl said I’d be out by Friday morning.”

“But it’s still Wednesday.”

“I know.”

“What the heck happened to you!” exclaimed Mei, shaking him. “You can still help with my experiments, right?!”

“Don’t worry. It’s— it wasn’t that bad. I just took a really bad hit from one of the villains. Got
“knocked out right after.”

“What?” Sprung up the voice of Mineta behind his closed curtain. “Tha— OWW!! Alright! Alright!” Mineta quieted himself then, resigning to simply watch the newcomers.

“Who’s that?” asked Pony.

“Ah, just a classmate,” responded Izuku. “One who doesn’t know how to control his mouth.”

“Heh,” whimpered Mineta.

“Anyway,” continued Izuku, “the villain tried to— tried to, uh, well— attack me, I guess. He was beat by All Might in the end, I’m told. So, no worries.”

The three friends looked at Izuku with unconvinced faces. But ultimately, they decided to rest their case.

Mei, Manga, and Pony stayed for a while longer, but under Izuku’s insistence left after the lunch bell rang.

After they left, Mineta’s voice reached Izuku’s ears yet again.

“When did you get so lucky?”

Some bugs found their stingers in use yet again.

“So Kaminari just jumped into the water. He didn't wait for the signal or anything, said he had to get into the water for our sakes. He only got around half of them because of that. We had to knock out the others by ourselves. Then Tsu and I had to carry him back to shore,” Uraraka shared.

“Indeed,” Tsu ribbeted. “If he waited, the boat probably wouldn’t have been sunk. Then we wouldn’t have had to go to shore where the other villains were. But, I am glad that your bugs were able to stall for All Might’s arrival, at least.”

“I’m glad too,” Izuku said. “When I saw what that guy could do, I knew that he couldn’t take a hold of you or you’d be— well…”

“Yeah…” Uraraka trailed off.

“Indeed,” Iida interrupted. “Your actions were… They were pretty impressive. I applaud you for your resourcefulness.”

“Oh! That’s right! exclaimed Izuku. “You three were up and about during the fight All Might had, right? What happened?”

“Oh! Oh! I’d like to know too! exclaimed the eavesdropping Mineta. “How was All Might?”

All three grew silent.

“Guys?”

“Oh come on! Was it something I said?” questioned Mineta.
“Hmm? Oh! No! It’s just… Uh, well, uh—” Uraraka sputtered.

All Might beat up that brain guy into submission,” Tsu said. “Your bugs really helped in the fight.”

“All Might said himself that your bugs helped slow the Nomu’s response time down,” Iida added.

“Really?! That’s a relief. I thought that my bugs would just get in the way or something. I’m glad they were able to help.”

“Yeah…”

Tsu, Uraraka, and Iida left not long after. It was after school, after all. Some had parents expecting them, and homework was needed to be done.

“That was kinda weird, don’t you think? asked Izuku.

“Kind of,” responded Mineta. “Perhaps it was just the fight? We all did just get out of a life or death situation not too long ago. Maybe the reality of the situation is just getting to them?”

Izuku blinked, looking over at the only other person in the room.

“What?” asked Mineta.

“Nothing.” Full of surprises.

Eventually night came, the sun’s setting declaring the end of class 1-A’s hectic day.

As the patients of U.A.’s infirmary got ready for the night, Izuku shifted his position in his bed, preparing for sleep.

“All this fighting…”

Izuku closed his eyes, eventually dozing off into sleep.

“Perhaps there’s room for improvement…”

Within the building of the Musutafu branch of the Police Force, Deputy Hachiro and Captain Omori arrived at their Police Chief’s office.

“Chief?” asked Hachiro.

“Yes, Deputy?”

“It’s about the kid…”

“What about him?”

“Well… What are we going to do with him?”

The chief sat silent for a moment, considering his answer. “Nothing, as far as we are concerned. We got orders from the Commissioner General. He said to let the matter go unless another incident occurs.”

“Seriously?” wheezed Captain Omori.
“Mhm. The Commissioner also said to divert the attention away from the deaths. Or, at least, say it was the villains at fault.”

“Wha— Why?” asked the captain.

“As far as we’re aware, the kid doesn't know anything about this. Tsukauchi’s report made sure of that.”

“So?”

“So, that means that this kid has had his quirk all his life. There weren’t any prior reports of him causing any problems, and not once has the kid had any irking of doing so.”

The chief grabbed a folder, handing it to his deputy. “It was an accident, plain and simple. A part of the kid’s quirk he wasn’t aware of, activated when he was knocked out. Besides,” the chief said, turning to the window, “I’d rather not have to fill the kid’s head with guilt where it’s not needed.”

“Are you kidding?!” exclaimed Captain Omori. “How do we know that? How do we know that he didn’t know exactly what he was doing, that he specifically ordered those people killed?”

“Omori,” warned the chief of police.

“Sorry, chief,” apologized the captain, calming his demeanor.

“As I was saying,” continued the chief, “Tsukauchi’s report made sure that the kid didn’t purposely kill those villains. Besides, if there was a homicidal villain out there murdering people with bugs, don’t you think that anyone would have heard of it? The last we heard of such a thing was with that whole Queen Bee fiasco.”

“Fine. But what’s to stop the villains from broadcasting this kid’s hand in the death of all those villains?” asked Omori.

“And risk tarnishing their name? I don’t believe that a group calling themselves ‘The League of Villains’ would want to drive away potential recruits,” voiced Hachiro. “Besides, we should be glad that the only ones who were harmed were villains,” Deputy Hachiro added.

“Yes. As much as it is wrong, you are right, Hachiro,” voiced the chief.

“How about the Commission?” asked Captain Omori.

The chief turned back to the two. “The Hero Public Safety Commission has assessed the damage done. There currently aren’t any pleas to take the boy into custody”.

“That’s strange,” admitted Deputy Hachiro. “If anything, they should be brewing up a storm trying to get the boy contained.”

“Indeed,” the Chief said. “It seems as if the Commissioner and the Commission have come to some sort of agreement in keeping the boy out of the loop. It doesn’t help that Nezu over at U.A. is trying to keep us out of the boy’s life as much as possible. Wants to see to the boy’s growth himself, apparently. Promises to do something about it.”

“That is, undoubtedly, very unusual,” said Hachiro.

“Very. But the point is, these were extenuating circumstances for the boy. Unless something of this caliber happens again, we don’t act. Orders are orders, after all. You two are dismissed.”
And that ends the chapter this time around. A whole view of U.S.J’s aftermath via multiple perspectives, laced with inklings of time butterflies. Hope you all like it!

Also, I’m enjoying having this iteration of Izuku use Japanese Giant Hornets. I mean, what kind of person with bug control powers wouldn’t use them? Just look at them! *Evil cackles*

Also, remember the poll! Again, the options are:

1.) Hive Mind
2.) Eye of the Swarm
3.) Entomopathy
4.) Bug Manipulation/Control
5.) Entomokinesis

Anyhow, see you all next time in Chapter 15! Ta-ta!
Hello everyone! I have something a little different for you guys this time. Hope you all enjoy...

As for the poll, it has been closed and tallied up. Results are at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Friday morning was met with little incident. Recovery Girl discharged Izuku from the infirmary just before classes, ensuring he would get at least one day of education before the weekend.

Izuku had gotten through his two day absence with a rather quick recovery, albeit with an arm that was still a little stiff from U.S.J. - but otherwise fine.

Classes were the same as usual, the teachers droning on about the subject material. But Izuku could sense that something was just a bit off kilter.

The atmosphere throughout the day felt rather off, creepily unlike what he had been getting used to in his short time at U.A. He wasn’t sure if it was just the tension from surviving an all out villain attack, but he was willing to bet otherwise.

Even stranger was what Izuku eventually noticed to be the cause of the changes - he himself.

For one, Cementoss seemed to be keeping an eye on him whenever he could for some unknown reason.

And while some of his teachers - like Midnight - seemed to be going about business as usual with her playful and flirtatious nature, the usually loud and upbeat Present Mic seemed to twitch whenever his eyes landed on Izuku.

Even his own classmates seemed to be a bit more jumpy than usual. Ojiro, Hagakure, and Kaminari seemed to be actively avoiding him, while Sato, Sero, and Ashido kept taking glances at him from across the room.

But Koda was the worst of the bunch. While Izuku had noticed Koda’s apprehensive approach towards Izuku’s presence before, it was nothing like it was now. Koda seemed to shiver whenever he glanced at Izuku, and even yelped when Izuku had passed him in the halls.

His other classmates appeared to not be fazed with whatever the problem was, however, treating Izuku the same as they had been. Even Shoji, whom Izuku would have thought to have leaned toward the ‘there’s something wrong with Izuku’ club, was acting amicable.

But of all things, Izuku had found out that Mineta was out of the loop. Whatever was affecting the others was absent within Mineta - while that was due to the time spent in the infirmary or something else was up in the air.

And as if the day wasn’t already taxing enough on Izuku’s thought processors, Aizawa - as sleep deprived as he was - had neglected to organize a whole myriad of papers that were needed for the
next day.

Izuku wasn’t surprised when Aizawa delegated the Class Representatives to stay behind and do the work in his stead.

And so, here he was, sitting in an almost empty classroom with Yaoyorozu beside him and stacks of paper towering before them.

“I’m glad to see that you are up and about, Midoriya,” Yaoyorozu said as she and Izuku began their duties.

“Thank you, Yaoyorozu. Honestly, I’m just glad that I am moving at all, really. That punch that I got really hurt,” Izuku said.

She nodded, smiling while doing so. But then she fell into a more somber mood, recalling the attack.

“Some of us were worried when you got hit by that Nomu villain, you know. And when we saw what that thing could do to All Might? We— We weren’t sure if you were going to make it.”

“But I did.”

“Yes, you did. And I’m glad for that. It’s just… I’m not sure what I would’ve done if you died on us,” she sniffled. “I was so relieved when Iida and Todoroki brought you back to us so quickly despite… the…”

There it was again, whatever mysterious conflict that arose from U.S.J. was still in effect.

“Yaoyorozu,” Izuku bluntly interrupted.

The simple utterance of her name broke Yaoyorozu out of her reverie. “Yes, Midoriya?”

“If I may put it bluntly, what is up with everyone? I’ve noticed that there’s been some unease with my presence.”

Her face lit up in realization. “Oh. Yes… That.”

“Yes, that. Whatever ‘that’ is.”

Yaoyorozu answered after a brief moment of silence. “It’s… well… Are you aware that your bugs started swarming the villains after you fell unconscious?”

“Well, yeah, I suppose. I told them to bite and sting the villains. Especially that Nomu one. I didn’t want All Might to fight that guy without any help since he was alrea— Well, Nomu hits pretty hard, from my experience,” Izuku laughed off.

“You shouldn’t joke about it, you know. You could’ve died.”

“But I’m alive. That’s the important thing, right?”

Yaoyorozu opened her mouth to answer, but whatever retort she had in mind sputtered out. “Yeah… Anyways, your bugs were rather… determined, I could say. They hurt some of the villains pretty badly from what I saw.”

“And the swarm was... Well, it was everywhere,” Yaoyorozu continued. “I’m sure that some of our classmates just felt a bit frightened by the experience, is all.”
“Oh,” muttered Izuku.

“Does it really matter? The villains were targeting children. They had to be stopped at all costs.”

“As for the teachers, I’m certain that they’re just wary over your control. You haven’t been here for too long, after all. They aren’t familiar with your quirk. They may just want to make sure another incident with your bugs doesn’t spring up again.”

“So everyone’s scared of me, is what you’re saying?” Izuku muttered.

Yaoyorozu looked over, sensing and seeing the dejected tone in Izuku’s voice. “Midoriya…”

She straightened up. “Look. I’ll be straight with you. When you got knocked unconscious, whatever your bugs were doing weren’t because of you, right?”

“I suppose.”

“Good. Then that means whatever happened wasn’t your fault.”

“But—”

“But what?” Yaoyorozu asked, as if already disproving of whatever Izuku was to say.”

“The bugs… they were still influenced by my whims and—”

“But they weren’t, Midoriya. What your bugs did were in the best interest of the class. We were already so fatigued and injured as is. Your bugs got rid of the villains. They forced their leader and the teleporter to leave while leaving behind Nomu. They helped All Might, of all things. In fact, I’m not sure what would have if you hadn’t acted as you did.”

“I—” Izuku sighed. “Thank you, Yaoyorozu.”

“Of course. Now, let’s get to work, shall we?”

“Izuku! Where are you going?” asked Inko Midoriya.

Izuku, halfway out the door, shuffled back inside to answer. “It’s Saturday, mom. Mei asked me to come over to help work on something, remember?”

“Oh yeah, that’s right. I almost forgot. You two are having one of those over-the-weekend giant projects again?”

“Oh yeah, that’s right. I almost forgot. You two are having one of those over-the-weekend giant projects again?”

“Yes. I’m sorry in advance if I don’t check in at all again. You know how Mei gets when she really gets invested into one of her projects.”

“Oh, yes,” Inko laughed. “She was all over the place when we went to visit that one time. That robot of her’s looked like it had a lot of effort put into it.”

“It did. It was all— Well, alright! I’ll try to be back by Sunday night, then.”

“Of course! Have a good time, sweetie!”

As the door to their apartment closed, Izuku let out a sigh of relief. After a moment’s respite, he
began his way to the train station.

He thought back to the excuse he made to his mom. Going over to Mei’s was the best cover for his weekend activities. He’d been over at Mei’s for days at a time before, and he didn’t always pay attention to when his mom called when he was over there. Him supposedly being over there would provide a way for his absence to be noticed by nobody. He hoped.

Mei was in on it, of course, but only for the part of his absence. He hadn’t told her what he’d be doing, no matter how much she insisted for him to say. As a result, he owed her a lot of guinea pig time in place of Manga.

Still, he felt bad for lying to his mom. But this was the only way for him to reach his goals. The only way he’d be able to go out as a vigilante without any obstacles.

Or, at least, find a way to get the urge out of his system.

Izuku couldn’t really describe the feeling he was having that led him to such drastic measures, if he was going to be honest with himself. A way to describe it was always just on the tip of his tongue, but the words always escaped him. It was like…

“A thirst for conflict?”

Izuku shook his head. He didn’t, now. But he’d been getting this urge to fight for a long while now. Ever since he’d gone out to have his bugs demolish the yakuza presence in Musutafu, he’d been suppressing the urge. But it was manageable then, barely present in his subconscious.

But he’d felt a surge - a sudden boost in its urgency - with the Battle Trial. That had ended in an easy victory. A hollow victory, the urge unsatisfied.

U.S.J. made it worse. The villains within the Downpour Zone were cannon fodder, mere crooks for the League. On the other hand, Nomu was too powerful; too strong to provide any satisfaction of a fight, and too quick in ending the fight. The urge was urging for a real fight, telling him to start one.

Izuku sighed, reorganizing his thoughts.

He knew how dangerous vigilantism was. He knew how stupid he was for going out like this. But the feeling in the back of his head was tired of fighting, only for him to ultimately lose when it mattered most.

That one petty criminal he’d fought, defeated by the victim Izuku was saving. The sludge villain, ultimately captured by All Might. And even Nomu, the monster that he was, taking Izuku as a hostage.

Yes, a small part of him was against this. That same part of him wanted the night to go as uneventful as possible.

But to deny his urges even longer…

He couldn’t. He just wanted it gone, no matter what he needed to do.

Izuku had traveled to a whole other prefecture during his time on the train.

He did so in order to dissociate his first physical outing as a vigilante apart from the cloak-wearing bug clone named Snitch.
As such, the vibrant sunset of the Kanagawa skyline as it met the waves of the ocean was both a blessing and a spell of doom for Izuku. Nevertheless, Izuku found his way to an abandoned building to begin his nighttime outing.

His costume for this specific task was different from the others. Prototype #4 was one of his earlier attempts at a costume, made to be much more flexible to the sacrifice of using a much thinner armor layer than later projects. It was created without any usage of more colorful dyes, and with functionality in mind over presentability. The result was a costume that many would have considered much too edgy and darkly-colored for a hero.

However, it’s appearance was perfect for a stealth-oriented vigilante stalking the streets at night.

The silk-woven costume donned a black and grey color scheme, consisting of armor panels made of arthropod exoskeletons around his more vital parts.

This version lacked any pouches, as did it any way to hold his trusty eskrima sticks. But that was fine, as he delegated to not use them in this costume. Instead, Izuku would rely and his lesser used knowledge of Muay Thai and general cqc.

His mask slid on and ended before his ears. It was evenly black aside from its lenses, which shone with an amber gleam. A last minute addition to the costume was the simple hood which was held firmly on his head.

Unlike most hoods, it was tightly bound with spider silk, unable to be pulled down until Izuku had the spiders break down the strands holding it in place. But even still it was a normal hood that provided little protection.

Instead, the hood ensured his rather identifiable green hair was tucked away from prying eyes. The fact that it hindered his peripheral vision played no importance, considering his quirk.

On another note, his fingertips ended in claws, sharp enough to cut, but not deep enough to kill. Still, too much force and the potential to cause lasting damage was there. It was one of the main reasons this piece had been hidden away in his closet until this night.

And so, as the moon rose high into the nighttime sky, Izuku took reign of the rooftops.

Izuku was hoping that the night was going to turn out mostly quiet. Maybe a few muggings there, an assault there, maybe even just a drunken disturbance. Something, anything, to satisfy the urge.

He’d planned to go through the motions throughout the night, pack it up as the sun took its place in the dawn sky, and head back on a train to be due back at home in the evening.

His bugs played a part, even if he wanted to keep them separated from this new persona. He used them to scout out the city, flying in sparse numbers while searching for possible crimes to stop.

But as the hours tricked by, it seemed that the chance to fill his urge had arisen. Because, of course, there would be an actual villain on the prowl on this night. Curse his luck.

The unmoving body laid upon the ground was oddly lacking any visible traces of blood despite the multiple gashes and stab wounds littered among it.

However, Izuku supposed that such a phenomenon would be possible if the girl lapping up the body’s blood had anything to do with it.

And, of course, Izuku stood there just taking the scene all in until the girl turned around and noticed
him.

She seemed to be around his age, a factor enforced by the easily distinguishable school uniform she wore under her oversized cardigan.

As her clothes were, her ashy blonde hair was sprinkled with blood from her victim. She seemed to be blushing as well, the redness of her face not completely to be blamed by the blood.

“Oh! Who are you?” she cheerily asked. “Have you come to play, too?”

Izuku immediately backed away, taking a defensive stance. He refrained from answering as well, choosing to adopt a silent character for this persona.

The girl rose a knife in the air, pointing it at Izuku.

“What’s your name?” she asked.

Izuku didn’t answer.

“Aw! You’re no fun!” she whined. “Oh well.” And she sprung forward with incredible speed, knife thrusting for Izuku’s midsection.

Izuku stepped backwards, dodging the blade by mere centimeters. But by the time he got his footing, she was already swiping at him again.

The blade ran across his stomach in motion of disembowelment, running from side to side of his torso. However, Izuku remained unharmed. Despite its thin layering, the costume was only slightly cut from the move.

Wow. She’s pretty strong. And her speed! She actual cut a little into the costume!

“Oh! So you do talk!” She laughed. “And thanks, by the way. You’re a real charmer.” She blushed with joy.

Dang. There goes that silent persona.

The villain lunged for Izuku again. This time, Izuku raised his arm in defense, the blade digging into the forearm of his costume.

Izuku retaliated by pushing back his opponent. He pushed forward with a quick fury of swipes from his hands. And while they did take the girl by surprise, she didn’t take the attacks without her own counter.

Her knives eventually found themselves parried against a few of the swipes, allowing her to make distinct cuts in specific positions.

And so, while some Izuku’s attacks found their way through, so did the girl’s - albeit with more precision.

After a long series of blows, they both stepped back from the onslaught, taking a breath to ready themselves next.

The clawed tips of Izuku’s hands drew blood from the villain, his hands covered in a thin layer of the red fluid.

The girl’s knife, miraculously, was in a similar state despite the nature of Izuku’s costume. This
caused Izuku to widen his eyes in surprise.

Reaching down, he felt at his torso. Izuku discovered that a small incision had found its place on his side, a result of the girl’s constant attacks on the single spot.

Across from Izuku, the girl inserted the blood covered knife into her mouth. The knife slowly slid out from her mouth, as if she were savoring the taste.

“Mmm! You taste good!” cheered the villain. “But it’s not enough! I need more!”

Again she lunged, her knife going for the exposed spot on a Izuku’s costume. Izuku saw the attack coming, dodging away to the left away from the thrust. However, as Izuku went to block her next attack, the villain disappeared from his vision.

Izuku looked left to right, but he couldn’t find her. It was as if she had suddenly disappeared. But his confusion didn’t last long. He felt a swipe aimed at his legs, originated from behind him. He fell backwards, feeling himself being pulled down to the ground.

His head met the pavement with a loud thump. The back of his head, with no armor protecting it, began to bleed. The injury left Izuku disoriented, dazed on the ground. He felt two hands rest upon his own, the weight of them limiting his movements. When he opened his eyes, he met the eyes of the girl.

“Hi! How are you— Oh! You’re bleeding!” Her face inched closer to his mask. “You know, I—”

Izuku’s head shot upwards, meeting the girl’s.

“Oww!”

The sturdy material of the silk mask met the villain’s fleshy face. As Izuku had hoped, the mask absorbed most of the force of the headbutt, thus preventing Izuku’s growing head injury from worsening.

However, the girl wasn’t so lucky. Her abrupt movement to grab her head left Izuku free from her weight. With his now two free hands, Izuku pushed her off his form and stood again.

Izuku ran towards the the dazed girl, grabbing her arm and twisting it to her back. His other hand grabbed for her other arm, but did so with little success. The villain twisted around Izuku’s form, gaining the advantage over him and pushing him against the wall.

The girl’s fingers then wrapped themselves around her knife, moving towards Izuku’s hood.

“I’m still safe. My armor’s fine. I just—

Her hands meticulously cut away at the bloodied fabric. As the cloth gave way, Izuku’s hair shot out, the long strands covered in his blood.

“Ooh! That’s some nice hair you have there. All nice and long. A bit wavy too.”

Her fingers curled around the the back of Izuku’s exposed head, wiping over where the blood slowly seeped from his head. Her fingers became enriched with Izuku’s blood, and she eyed the spectacle with a sadistic glee. She stuck out the still bloodied hand, observing it with joy.

“You know, I wouldn’t mind if we became friends. You’re pretty good,” the girl stated.

Friends? With her? Yeah, right. Now, to get outta this, I just needed her to raise her knife again. I’ll
wait for the opportune moment, then go for the opening on her lower torso; trip her over with my own legs. Then I’ll—

“Still not talking?” she asked. Her hand — the one still unoccupied with Izuku’s blood — rose, knife in hand.

“Fine. Just stand still so I can cu—” She abruptly stopped her speech, her eyes shifting to the right.

Then her head turned, tilting upwards to the rooftops. Her eyes widened, and she jumped away from Izuku with the swiftness of a cat.

Her vacated spot, just in front of Izuku’s body, immediately was filled with the sound of a bullet hitting the concrete ground, barely missing the girl by only a few centimeters.

“You didn’t tell me you had backup!” The villain whined to Izuku. “You meanie!”

She dodged another bullet, this time hiding her body behind a dumpster. “Aww! That’s no fun at all. Oh well. Guess we’ll be seeing each other around, yeah?”

And with that, the villain left the alleyway, sprinting off and taking a left into the city streets.

Meanwhile, a bedraggled Izuku stood dumbfounded against the alley’s wall.

Backup? he mused.

Izuku looked over at the rooftop where the shot had gone off. Indeed, there was a shadowy figure armed with a rifle, aiming down at where he was. Unfortunately, their position was heavily concealed with darkness that high up, removing the ability to identify any distinguishable features with either his bugs or his eyes.

In a split second decision, Izuku took off in the same way as the girl had, but instead taking a right. He scrambled up to the rooftops via a fire escape staircase, and went off in a hurry.

His bugs noted that, thankfully, whoever was on that rooftop was not following, contempt to stay where they were. But Izuku didn’t take any chances. He ran. And traversed the rooftops until he reached the abandoned warehouses that made up some of the industrial district.

Finding his way to the warehouse where he hid his belongings, Izuku sat down to catch his breath. After a couple minutes of rest, Izuku slowly began to strip down, replacing is costume with his normal clothes.

As he packed away his things, Izuku connected to his bugs, surveying the surrounding area to make sure nobody would spot him leaving the warehouse. After he confirmed the lack of potential bystanders to see him. It was nearing morning, and soon he’d be on a train back to Musutafu.

As he thought back to the night’s events, he berated himself again for potentially getting himself killed. Between an actual fight with a villain and that mysterious figure on the rooftop, he knew that he had had enough excitement for one night.

…

Izuku’s eyes widened in realization. Huh. That urge is gone. Guess the night was a success?

Izuku let out a heavy sigh. He almost died — again — and yet he felt at ease. I guess I’ll be holding off on this type of vigilante stuff for awhile.
Alright, Poll Time. The results are in! And wow, were some of them close! The results are as follows:

In 1st place with 45 votes is [Hive Mind]!* As of now, Izuku’s quirk is registered as [Hive Mind].

[Eye of the Swarm] came 2nd with a sum of 41 votes. Quite a close matchup, if you ask me. It was first place’s top contender for the entire time.

Third came [Entomopathy] with 13 votes.

[Bug Manipulation] came 4th with 6 votes.

And lastly, [Entomokinesis] with 5 votes.

Thank you, for everyone who voted! I really enjoy interacting with all of you. Remember to feel free to ask any questions or bring up any suggestions in regards to this fic.

Well, that’s it for now. Hope to see you all next time!

*I’ll make a nod to “Hive Lord” as well in the future, as per request of a few voters. I’m looking at you two, Diraniola and EllipsisObsessed!
Sunday evening came and passed with little incident. Inko suspected nothing, going on to talk about the time Izuku had spent at Mei’s.

Izuku - still somewhat drained from last night’s experience - had planned for such a scenario occurring beforehand, and begrudgingly lied his way through the whole thing. It still didn’t feel right to Izuku — lying to his mother — but he powered through it anyhow. He didn’t need to worry her any more than she already was after the whole U.S.J. fiasco.

After dinner, Izuku snuck back to his room and took out his newly initiated costume from his backpack. The black and grey piece was moderately damaged, and would need work done on it before it was ready for another outing with it — not that Izuku planned on having another one anytime soon.

For now, the piece would reside far back into his closet, buried behind his past prototypes. He’d patch it up in the future, whenever that urge sprung back up into his subconscious.

With his task of hiding any of his more… questionable belongings complete, Izuku collapsed on his bed, exhausted.

He sighed, falling into the cushy comfort of his sheets. After a moment, he reached into the terrarium by his bedside. His hand reached for the centipedes kept within, direct descendants of his dear Rikai. A few of them began to crawl up his arm, already used to Izuku’s presence after all the years.

This “Centipede March,” as Izuku come to calling it, was in its own way a soothing experience. The little creatures running up and down his arm, tickling his senses, were great to lose himself in, the worries of the day falling away.

He often times resorted to this, whenever there were days where Bakugo was a bit rough, or his bugs were getting a bit antsy. His weekend activities weren’t all that different if he ignored the mortal peril he was in. Alas, after a few minutes respite, Izuku fell into sleep.

“So, what’d you do this weekend, eh?” asked Mei, bounding up beside Izuku. “What was so super secret that you wouldn’t tell me anything about it, hmm?”

Manga butted in, voicing his intrigue. “Oh? A secret? What secret? What did our dear Izuku do over the weekend without telling us, hmm?”

“I… well… I’d rather not say,” muttered Izuku, averting his gaze.

“Why not?” asked Pony, face fixed in scrutinization. “Hmm…” Pony stepped in front of Izuku, stopping him in his tracks. Her face came closer to Izuku, further unnerving the already anxious boy. “You didn’t go out on a date or something, did you?”

“Wha— What!?” exclaimed Izuku, red rising to his cheeks. “No! Of course not! Why would you think that!?”
“Eh.” Pony shrugged. “Because… why not? It was just a guess.”

“Well, I for one don’t believe that it was a date,” admitted Mei. “He was gone for most of the weekend.” Mei tilted her head. “Hmm… Unless…”

“No!” Izuku retorted. “What is wrong with you guys? I just… went out, is all.”

“Went out?” asked Manga. “And here I was thinking you’d finally fallen for someone.”

Izuku shook his head. “I promise, it’s nothing like that. But… It is private.”

“Private enough for your mom not to know, eh?” asked Mei. “I had to redirect her calls twice, you know. Not to mention when my dad got ahold of the phone of your mom’s third call. Ha! It’s a good thing I know how to disrupt the phone signals at my house.”

“Yeah… Sorry about that, Mei. I’ll try not to put you in a situation like that again.”

“No, no. Please do. You’ll just be giving me more favors along the line.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. But anywho, if you guys really want to know, maybe I’ll tell you guys in the future. By then it probably won’t even matt— Gah!” Izuku screamed.

A cooing grey bundle had just plunged itself onto Izuku’s head, startling him and the others around him. The ruffling mass of feathers took roost in Izuku’s green hair - stomping around until setting itself down - much to the dismay of the boy.

“What the heck?” mused Manga. “It’s a pigeon.”

“Huh, strange,” muttered Mei, poking the pigeon. The bird simply cooed in response.

“A pigeon? Why would a pigeon— Never mind. Look, can you guys get it off?”


“Bite you? You could just use you head!”

Pony began laughing softly.

“Pony? A little help, please?” begged Izuku.

“Manga can do it.” She voiced her refusal.

Izuku sighed, shaking his head. The bird refused to get off. The other three around him laughed even more.

Higher up, above the friends’ heads, two other birds were perched in their branches, surveying the scene below. One began to take off, its mission objective complete. Leaving the other behind, it began its way back towards U.A. High School.

Within the classroom of class 1-A, a meeting among students had just come into fruition. Aside from an incoming Midoriya and an absent Bakugo, all of class 1-A was present. All eighteen present students had come to class under the insistence of Yaoyorozu and Iida, both garnering their attention towards the rest.
“Alright everyone, I’m sure you’re all questioning why we’re all here so early…” started of Yaoyorozu, Iida at her side.

“I wished I’d gotten here earlier. Maybe then I could’ve—”

“Yeah, what exactly is this all ab—”

“Yo betcha! I could still be sleeping right now!” exclaimed a somewhat irate Ashido.

Yaoyorozu turned her gaze in Ashido’s direction. “I wouldn’t be so carefree about this. This meeting actually concerns some of us in this class, you included, Ashido.”

“Oh…” Ashido breathed. “What about?”

“It’s abo—”

“Uh, excuse me, Yaoyorozu-san?”

Said girl turned towards the boy who had interrupted her. “Yes, Sato-san?”

Sato rubbed his head earnestly, projecting his apologies. “Sorry, it’s just that I, uh. I made some food. When I heard yesterday that we were all having this early morning meeting, I thought that some of us wouldn’t be able to eat breakfast on time. So…” Sato pulled out an array of food, portions ranging from crepes and tarts to donuts and French toast.

“Mmm! Magnificent!” expressed Aoyama.

“It’s not really a traditional breakfast, but I’m really only good with sweets,” admitted Sato.

“Ah! Breakfast!” exclaimed Ashido. “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

Yaoyorozu sighed. “Alright then. But hurry, we have a time limit he—”

At that moment, a pigeon flew in through the open window. Some of the class reeled in surprise, though most calmed down when the bird landed on Koda’s desk. The boy quietly conversed with the bird, nodding his head while doing so. When he was done, he took out some bread crumbs for the bird, which the bird promptly ate and took off.

Koda looked at Yaoyorozu and Iida, silently voicing his thoughts.

“Thank you, Koda,” said Yaoyorozu.

Koda nodded vigorously in response.

“Okay everyone! We only have a little over eight minutes before we meet our deadline! Get your food and take your seat!” exclaimed Iida.

Everyone scrambled for the food, and after a minute or so, everyone had retrieved their choice in food and sat back in their seats. The few exceptions to this were Todoroki and Shoji, both who didn’t move from their seats in the rush for Sato’s food.

Iida nodded in satisfaction. “Okay! Good. Now, everyone listen to Yaoyorozu-san. She has a few words for some of you.”

“Thank you Iida,” Yaoyorozu said. “Now, as I said, you’re all probably wondering why we are here
today. To put it plainly, we’re all here because of Midoriya.”

“Where is Midoriya-chan, anyways?” Tsu spoke, voicing her insight. “I mean, Bakugo not being here is something I understand. But of anyone, I’d expect Midoriya to be here.”

“And usually you’d be right,” admitted Yaoyorozu. “The truth is, Iida and I purposely left Midoriya out of this conversation due to his involvement in the matter.”

“Is this about U.S.J.?” asked a sheepish Kaminari.

“No, it is not,” Yaoyorozu tensely replied to the boy. “Rather, I’d like to talk to you all regarding the way some of you acted towards Midoriya last Friday. I’d like to cut this in the bud before it spirals out of control.”

A few in the class visibly gulped at the accusation.

“What are you talking about?” asked a confused Mineta.

Yaoyorozu ignored his question. “You all know who you are, and the extent of what I am talking about.”

Kaminari’s voice rang out. “Are you kidding?! You all saw what he did! That swarm was terrifying! And those villains! We could’ve ended up just like them!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa!” interrupted Kirishima. “Kaminari! That’s not cool man. Midoriya wouldn’t have done something like that! Besides, are you forgetting that he saved you from that guy with all the hands?”

“Yeah! Midoriya-kun isn’t a bad person!” exclaimed Uraraka.

“But still…” Kaminari said apprehensively.

“I don’t know, Kirishima, Uraraka. Kaminari kind of has a point…” trailed off Hagakure.

“But it is not a valid point, if I am to say so myself,” Iida added.

“But how about you, Iida? You were just as freaked out as the rest of us!” exclaimed Sero.

Iida simply nodded. “Indeed I was. Who wouldn’t be, standing in the middle of that swarm. And I will admit, I was a bit uneasy at first. But I’d like to think of Midoriya as a friend. He did what he did to protect us. You all saw how badly the villains got the jump on us. And you all saw how the swarm acted. It could have gone after any of us. But it didn’t. It only went after villains.”

Ashido swallowed her strawberry tart, following up on Iida’s statement. “But he still.. His bugs…” She fell silent, thinking back to the incident at U.S.J., and exactly how dire it was.

“He did save us, I guess…” Ashido said in quiet revelation.

“Yeah. All Might himself said that the bugs helped beat that Nomu guy,” muttered Ojiro.

The two current heads of the class allowed a moment of silence for the class to ponder about what was just said. Eventually, Yaoyorozu spoke up.

“Are you seeing our points?”

A few of the class nodded. Yaoyorozu continued on.
“After class on Friday, when Midoriya and I stayed behind by way of Aizawa-sensei’s orders, we talked to each other regarding this. Midoriya was visibly distressed concerning what you all thought of him.”

Again, some of the class uncomfortably shifted, reacting to the news.

“I’d imagine that the way people view him matters a lot to him, considering his quirk. So, I’d like you all to at least understand what Midoriya did in his perspective. He was trying to save all of us. He wasn’t doing anything malicious.”

Ojiro cut in. “I shall apologize to Midoriya when he arrives. How I acted to him last Friday was unjust and dishonorable, disrespecting someone who was essentially our savior. I see that now.”

“I suppose that he wasn’t at fault,” said Sato. “I’ve decided. I’m going to make an apology cake for him tomorrow.”

Yaoyorozu nodded. “The rest of you?” she asked.

The ones guilty for acting cold towards Midoriya nodded in response, though some did so more hesitantly than others.

“Good. I expect all of us to forgive past transgressions and treat Midoriya as we did before. We can’t be going around forming grudges or enmity toward each other. We are all going to be seeing each other a lot for the next three years, after all.”

Another bird flew in through the open window, flapping over to the class’s resident animal whisperer. Yaoyorozu understood what that meant; Midoriya was almost within three blocks of U.A. She turned to Iida. “Iida-san.”

Iida nodded. “Thank you for listening, everyone. I like to think that we as a class can learn to overcome such hurdles. If another one of us were to go through a similar situation, I hope we don’t have to go through something like this again.”

Iida cleared his throat. “But if there is one thing I’d like to impose, it’s the importance of everyone here to refrain from mentioning this meeting to Midoriya. Let’s keep it all on the downlow. It’s best if Midoriya comes to class happy that we have turned around our digressions to him. I hope you all understand?”

A few nodding heads took up the classroom.

“Alright!” Iida said, taking the attention of the class. “Let’s all act as normal, then! We have just over a minute until we fall into Midoriya’s range.”

---

Izuku made his way to his classroom, somewhat curious to how the day would go. If last Friday was any example to go by, his classmates would probably still be a bit uneasy around him. The teachers who were just as uneasy would probably still be watching him for any minute hint that he’d go off like he did at U.S.J.

Izuku thought that he’d probably be more worried about these things if he was back in elementary. The fact that the kids back then had constantly berated him for his quirklessness probably wouldn’t have changed all too much even if he did demonstrat to them his acquisition of his quirk - however late it was. The point of the matter was that the seed of his inferiority had already been planted; he’d
be hard pressed to believe that kids that age would change their interactions with him just on a whim.

Izuku knew that now, but at the same time he knew that that early environment was what probably shaped the way his psyche was today, with him afraid of how his bugs would make others think of him.

Izuku had thought he’d grown out of it, with the early support of Manga and Mei. All Might’s nonchalance to his quirk furthered that prospect, even.

But the fear of rejection and isolation crept back up on him when he realized what was happening on Friday. Sure, he’d still have people like Manga, Pony, and Mei. Maybe even Tsu, or Mineta if his cluelessness was to be counted on.

But Yaoyorozu’s talk to him last Friday eased his worries somewhat. The thought that the people he’d be spending the next three years around, hating or even fearing him? It scared him. Yaoyorozu’s insurances that the scenario wouldn’t come to pass was relief to Izuku’s ears.

But after he thought it over, on his train rides to Kanagawa, he realized how unlikely it would be for his classmates to change over the course of the weekend. They probably would stay the same, acting uneasily around him, unless a who—

“Midoriya!”

The exclamation spooked Izuku, the startled boy backing away. He was so deep in his thoughts that he neglected to pay attention to his connection with his bugs. It barely even registered to him that he wasn’t already at his classroom door. Such inattentiveness would not a good habit if he wanted to—

“Midoriya.”

Izuku looked at the voice’s origin. It was Ojiro.

“Look… I’m sorry for the way I acted last Friday.”

_Huh?_

“I... wasn’t really all too well, considering recent events. U.S.J. was still pretty fresh in my mind and.. So were the bugs. I was a bit freaked out, if I’m to be honest. I’m sorry if I made you uncomfortable.”

Izuku stood in place, blinking, taking in the boy in front of him. “Uhm... It’s— It’s no problem, Ojiro-san. Thank you, though. I’m relieved, in a way.”

Sato cutted in then, the boy holding out a tray of breakfast sweets to Izuku. “I’m sorry as well, Midoriya. I wasn’t just to act so cold to you on Friday. Take this as a part of my apology, I made breakfast for everyone, and I still have plenty leftover. Oh! And be ready for tomorrow, too. I have some more food to make in mind to display how sorry I am.”

“There’s— there’s really no need for such a thing Sato-san. I already have—”

“Nonsense, Midoriya. I’m truly apologetic for my actions. My baking is another extension of how sorry I am.”

Ashido was next, appearing in front of Midoriya. “I really am sorry too! I don’t have any food for you like Sato-san does, but I’m still sorry! I wasn’t really thinking on Friday.” Ashido pulled Izuku into a hug, further confounding the already startled boy. “Please forgive me?”
“I— Al… Alright, Ashido-san.”

“Yeah!” exclaimed the pink girl. “Let’s put this all behind us, yeah?” She nodded, walking back to her desk.

Once Izuku regained his senses, he found a gathered trio of Hagakure, Sero, and Kaminari

“We’re sorry too,” Hagakure admitted in quiet manner.

“Yeah… I acted rather… cold last Friday,” muttered Sero.

Kaminari nodded, though stayed silent.

“It’s, uh, really alright guys,” Izuku said, rubbing the back of his head. The rapid-fire apology train was definitly getting to him. “Like you said, just lingering effects from U.S.J, right?”

“Yeah. So—”

“Stop blocking up the doorway!” came the sudden and abrupt voice of Bakugo. “You extras and Deku here should move out of the way!”

Izuku sighed. He began walking back to his desk, nodding to the gathered trio of Hagakure, Sero, and Kaminari as he passed them. He didn’t care to acknowledge Bakugo, instead complying with his demands. He didn’t need the morning ruined with an irate ex-childhood best friend getting in his business.

As he found his desk, Izuku quirked an eyebrow when he found Sato’s sweets from before atop it. He looked up to Sato, who was nodding at him, giving him the go-ahead to splurge himself. Izuku nodded back in appreciation.

As he sat, grabbing and nibbling at one of the tarts - blueberry, with all its gooey goodness - he looked over a Koda. The boy seemed more relaxed, unlike last Friday when he’d been basically shivering by sharing the room with Izuku. While he may not have confronted Izuku himself, it was to be expected considering his shy nature. Izuku mentally checked off that he was acting back to normal as well. If anything, the only ones he was still unsure of was Hagakure, Sero, and Kaminari. But such things would be worried about later.

Izuku took another bite of his tart, savoring the taste. Sato really knew how to bake.

By the end of the day, Izuku came to appreciate his classmates’ reversion to normalcy. The lack of cold stares and shuddering really did a lot to ease his mind, even if teachers like Present Mic and Cementoss were still acting like he had some sort of fuse like Bakugo did.

But of course, his newfound relief was met with another snag by the time the still-completely bandaged Aizawa mentioned the upcoming Sports Festival. The day really was filled with too much general confusion for one jumpy vigilante to handle.

Izuku’s bugs had picked up a huge bundle of activity outside the classroom’s door as he went to leave for the day. Analysis over the commotion revealed a whole crowd of students were hanging around out there, as if waiting to confront the first person to walk out of class 1-A.

“Midoriya-kun, is something wrong?” asked Uraraka. The rest of the class too noticed his abrupt
“No, not exactly,” Izuku responded. “It’s just— Well, there’s a whole crowd of people outside.”

“A crowd?” asked Kirishima. “Any idea what for?”

He tilted his head. “Don’t know… Why don’t we find out?”

As he opened the door, Izuku was met with the faces of various students from all around campus. However, those most prominent seemed to be around his age group, notably from class 1-B next door. In fact, his bugs spotted Manga and Pony far off in a corner.

Izuku took his time to glance at all the gathered students, refraining from speaking a single word in an effort to gauze their reactions. However, before any progress could be done, Izuku sensed the incoming form of Bakugo approaching his rear, steadily advancing to the class’s exit.

“Get out of the way, Deku,” the boy ordered.

“No,” Izuku spoke.

Bakugo’s face twitched. “What the fuck did you—”

Izuku’s bugs filtered out from his hair, the few flying ones present buzzing angrily at Bakugo.

Many of the gathered students visibly jumped at the sudden appearance of the insects. Some, who had recognized Izuku’s quirk as the one which ceased the cafeteria stampede last week, merely recoiled in surprise. One purple haired student quirked an eyebrow, intrigue evident in his face.

“You can go around,” Izuku spoke to Bakugo. “There’s plenty of space.”

Bakugo audibly growled, but made no move to argue. Instead, he met shoulders with Izuku, shoving him to the side before departing into the crowd.

Crisis averted, Izuku recalled his bugs back into his hair, laying his attention back to the gathered students. “So… To what do I owe the pleasure of all of you coming here?” he spoke in a polite voice.

Nobody moved at first, somewhat intimidated by the boy before them. However, a certain purple-haired student took the initiative and walked in front of Izuku.

Before the boy could so much as open his mouth, Izuku held out a hand in greeting. “Izuku Midoriya, pleasure to meet you.”

The boy took a pause, looking at the offered hand, then back to Izuku’s face. After a few moments, he shook it. “Hitoshi Shinso, General Studies. I came here under the assumption that 1-A was filled with a bunch of self-entitled brats. So far, first impressions seem to be proving me right.”

“Oh, that’s just Bakugo being Bakugo,” combatted Izuku. “He’s always been like that. My apologies if he soured initial introductions. I hope that you’ll come to think of us differently from now?”

“Hm. We’ll have to wait and see.” He took a glance at the rest of 1-A. “You know, some of us enrolled into U.A. hoping to get in Hero Studies, only to be forced to fall back onto other options. Depending on the results that some of us receive during the Sports Festival, it’s possible for us to be transferred into the hero course.”

“What?” asked Mineta, further back in the class.
Shinso eyed the boy. “Meaning, I wouldn’t get too carried away if I were you, since the school can just as easily transfer students from the hero course out.”

A few of those in 1-A shivered at the prospect.

“That’s good to know,” Izuku said.

Shinso glanced back to Izuku, tilting his head in observation. “Good day, Midoriya.” Izuku nodded a farewell.

As Shinso left, another student took the crowd’s attention, albeit with a more aggressive manner this time. “Hey! What’s to say that the rest of you aren’t like that Bakugo guy?! He seemed like a real jerk! And you don’t seem any better!”

“You don’t know Bakugo like I do, I assure you,” Izuku retorted. “And most of my class is unlike him, despite recent events that may influence such an attitude.”

Before the boy could retort back, another came in to view. This time, it was a boy Izuku recognized easily, given his blond hair.

“I’d like to believe that you 1-A idiots are just a bunch of lucky glory hounds, riding off of their sudden claim to relevance. If that Bakugo guy is any sort of example, I’m sure that the rest of you are not far off.” Monoma then turned to Izuku, hastily coming to praise him. “Except you, Midoriya-kun. If anything, you are the exception. I can only hope that your greatness can rub off on the rest of your classmates. Perhaps then they’d be a little bit more— Gah!”

“Monoma,” scolded an orange-haired girl. She’d hit Monoma, stopping him in the middle of his rant, and was currently holding him by the collar. “Sorry about him. I’ve come to think that there’s a hole where his heart should be.”

“Kendo…” Monoma whined.

“Come on.” The girl — named Kendo, apparently — proceeded to drag off the dejected Monoma.

Unfortunately, Monoma didn’t seem to be last wanting to have a go at 1-A. A few more students noted their declarations against the class, spouting out their own anger or jealousy.

Izuku decided to leave after the second additional student’s rant of 1-A riding off of the coattails of the U.S.J. attack. Izuku said his farewell to his fellow 1-Aers, departing with little spectacle. Iida and Uraraka followed after Izuku shortly after, and the two joined up with the already retreating backs of Pony, Manga, and Izuku.

Chapter End Notes

I’m gonna be honest with all of you here, this chapter wasn’t originally going to play out like this. There was going to be a bit of the Sports Festival and stuff, but the whole meeting idea just ran off in my head. So sorry for those anticipating the Sports Festival. But it’s coming! I promise.
The next two weeks were a mix of experiences to Izuku. The day after that whole crowd had gathered outside of 1-A, All Might had found Izuku out in the halls and apologised for not being able to confront him sooner. All Might then went on to praise Izuku for his actions at U.S.J., but did so while also scolding him for being so brash and reckless against the villains.

Izuku appreciated the thought, especially the fact that All Might was treating him as he usually did. All Might didn’t shiver, didn’t give any cold glares, and didn’t avoid him as best as he could. Instead, he had purposely sought out Izuku with his own will. Though, whether that was due to All Might being used to Izuku’s quirk via his previous encounters with the boy, or just his general forgiving attitude towards things was anyone’s guess.

The curt meeting was left off with All Might telling Izuku not to over exert himself, and another apology for not being there for 1-A when the villains initially attacked. Izuku responded in kind by telling All Might that it wasn’t his fault, reminding him that he had run out of time for [One for All] that day. All Might did a double take at that, a look of confusion appearing on his face, which slowly morphed into realization.

As per usual, All Might laughed it off with his signature smile, and bidded Izuku a good day. Izuku looked on, somewhat baffled at All Might’s reaction.

_Had be forgotten that day on the roof?_

Izuku supposed that it didn’t manner in the end. Not at all.

Both of them had left that discussion in good regard anyhow. And both had left in somewhat higher spirits than they were in before.

Classroom antics of 1-A were mostly back to normal, albeit with the still present - however unnoticeable it was - tension towards Izuku. While people like Ashido had reverted back to her bubbly self around Izuku, or someone like Sato had spent his own time baking Izuku a cake, there were still those who were still apprehensive with his presence.

Sero had somewhat come out of his shell, making curt comments to Izuku when needed, but that was where the progress ended. Izuku could somewhat tell that the swarm at U.S.J. was still a sore spot for Hagakure, given her still reserved nature around him.

Kaminari was the worst of the bunch, avoiding Izuku’s gaze and doing all he could to avoid conversation with him. It was noticeable enough that even Aizawa had scolded Kaminari for it
during one assignment that required the whole class to participate and interact with one another.

But Izuku didn’t let such things bother him. Like Yaoyorozu had said, he just needed to give time for his disgruntled to get over the fact that he amassed swarms of bugs with his quirk. In the meantime, Izuku found himself having to work his usual schedule around to fit his newfound responsibilities as Class Representative. This, unfortunately, also came with the problem of finding time to train for the upcoming Sports Festival.

Thus, Izuku went to arrange his schedule differently for the time being. With most of the remnant Yakuza in Musutafu having gone underground, Izuku decided that he could cut down on his efforts to walk around the city to report crime.

He spent a little less time helping Mei with her inventions - such as her Hover Soles that she was fine tuning for the festival - much to her chagrin. However, the promise that it was only temporary until after the Sports Festival let Izuku get away with the idea (even if the end result required more guinea pig time with her).

And so, after two weeks of juggling around his time with schoolwork, training with Kawabata-sensei in his dojo, and inventing with Mei, Izuku found himself trained to his current best. And before he knew it, the sports festival was just around the corner.

A lot more people had come to the Sports Festival than Izuku had expected. Granted, he should have expected such a high headcount given the notoriety of the Sports Festival. The event was known throughout the country, being broadcasted to every television in Japan. He supposed that he had somewhat underestimated how much the populace had cared for the event.

Around him, his fellow classmates were in varying degrees of anxiety and/or determinedness.

Some, like Ashido — or Uraraka who was trailing along — were amping themselves up by doing stretches and spewing out encouraging chants to the others.

Others were a bit more reserved, like the despondent Todoroki or the off-to-the-side Shoji and Tokoyami.

Izuku himself wasn’t exactly doing all too much in the waiting room at the moment, instead honing his connection to all the bugs in his three block sphere of influence.

Then again, people probably didn't want to disturb him due to the increase of bugs in his immediate vicinity, especially those who were still a bit jumpy in his presence.

Since everyone else was still engaging in their own little rituals before the event, whether calming their own nerves down or finding their concentration, Izuku decided start another activity of his own. Multitasking was still a thing, after all.

Izuku decided to entertain himself with his bugs, going out to survey the masses with his trusty army of millions. The Sports Festival really held up to its name, given the variety of people that had gathered to watch the event. Prominent business tycoons, famous celebrities, budding politicians, and the like.

One particular discovery had Izuku taking in a double take at what he saw. The eyes of his flies were met with the unfortunate presence of Renjiro Isoshi. Somehow, even in the light of such a spectacular event, the man had maintained his grumpy-looking face that Izuku had known him for. If
Izuku were to take a guess, the principal was probably here to cheer on his prized pupil — Katsuki Bakugo, of course — so he could gloat to his colleagues about how he’d brought up such an exemplary student at his school.

After all, despite the fact that he had called both Izuku and Bakugo to his office to celebrate their U.A. acceptances, he had spent the entire time focused on Bakugo. The stern principal still had shown bias and shortsightedness when the facts were dangled in front of him.

The sight of the man should have really put a hamper in his mood, but another recent discovery took his attention instead. Just five rows down and fifteen seats across from Renjiro Isoshi sat a rather familiar mop of greying hair. Izuku really shouldn’t have been surprised, all things considered. And so, Izuku sent some bugs in that direction, planning to form a bug clone so he could say hello.

Well, that is, until a certain purple-balled haired boy interrupted Izuku.

“Hey, Midoriya. You all ready for the Sports Festival?”

Izuku turned to look at the voice. “Hmm. I suppose that I am. How about you?”

“You betcha!” Mineta replied. “In fact, I have this little plan in mind for later. It involves cheerleaders and—”

“Mineta,” came the stern voice of Izuku.

Mineta went to open his mouth again, but stopped himself at the last second. “Fine, fine. Oh alright. I’ll just find somebody else to help me then.”

As Mineta walked away, he prepared himself to form up his bugs again. However, yet another interruption came up before he could do just that.

“Bakugo. Iida. Midoriya. Tokoyami. Yaoyorozu,” came the voice of Shoto Todoroki. The people he named looked over at his direction. This single moment was the most first he’d specifically sought anyone out, after all. Most he had ever talked, even.

“With the way things have been so far,” Todoroki continued, “I see you five as the most powerful and resourceful in our class.”

“Why, thank you To—” Iida went on, before being interrupted by Todoroki.

“But looking at things objectively, I think I’m stronger than any of you. And therefore, I am going to beat all of you.”

“Ha! Yeah right, Half-n-Half. You better give a good fight! But don’t count on Deku on doing so. He’ll probably be beat in the first round!”

Todoroki didn’t respond to that, walking away instead. Izulu, too, chose to ignore Bakugo’s taunt. Izuku instead spoke out to the boy who had essentially declared war on his classmates.

“Todoroki.” Said boy stopped in his tracks, looking over his shoulder.

“Good luck with that,” Izuku spoke. “I’ll be aiming to beat you too.” Even if such a thing is unlikely to occur.

As before, Todoroki didn’t respond. And Izuku was fine with that.

The announcement that signified the start of the Sports Festival rung not too long after that, and class
1-A joined the rest of the first years on their way to the field.

Present Mic’s voice filled the stadium, setting up the mood for what was going to no doubt be a spectacular event. But Izuku didn’t really care about that. He had other priorities than to listen to the entomophobic pro hero. Instead, he formed one of his bug clones up in the audience.

“Hello, sensei.”

“Ah! Midoriya! I was wondering if you’d notice me,” said Kage Kawabata.

A few people around Kawabata recoiled in surprise at the sudden appearance of a figure made entirely of bugs. A few even voiced their own comments upon seeing it.

“Wow! Is that quirk from one of the students down below?”

“What? Are you kidding? That’s disgusting.”

“Eww. That sends chills up my spine.”

“He controls bugs? So cool!”

“Are we sure he ain’t a villain?”

Izuku brushed off what he heard. “But of course, sensei. What kind of student would I be if I didn’t recognise my teacher?”

“A shoddy one, that’s for sure.”

The bug clone laughed. But, it soon stopped, Izuku remembering something else. “Again, I’m sorry that I haven’t been able to go to the dojo as often as before.”

Kawabata tsked. “Nonsense, Midoriya. You got a lot on your plate. Didn’t you tell me that you became Class Rep for your class?”

“Well, yeah. But that doesn’t excuse—”

“Midoriya, I don’t mind if your school activities take up our time. You’re still a teenager, after all. Besides, you’ve already grown far and wide beyond my expectations. You’ve been developing in your own ways for a long time now. And there isn’t much an old man like me can teach you by this point.”

“I—”

And don’t bother coming to the dojo this week. You’ve earned yourself a break with how far you’ve come.”

“... Thank you, sensei. I’ll see you later.”

“Mhm. Just try not to hurt yourself as much as you did at U.S.J.”

Izuku found himself back within the crowd of students, Bakugo up at the podium digging 1-A into a hole he had dug all those weeks ago.

Izuku straightened himself out, eyes focused forward. The first round was about to start.
The entirety of U.A.’s first year class was waiting just before the starting gate of the obstacle race. Many of the people present were muttering amongst themselves. It was perfect for Izuku and some of his friends to talk before the first round started.

“Are all of you ready for this?” Manga asked.

Pony nodded, somewhat withdrawn due to the suffocating presence of everyone around her. She was sticking close to Mei.

Izuku and Mei, on the other hand, responded in-sync with words of ‘yes’ in confirmation.

“I don’t know. I haven’t done something like this before. It’s kinda nerve-racking, you know?” admitted Uraraka.

“Ha! You think this is nerve-racking?” said Manga. “You should try being Mei’s guinea pig some time.”

“What’s that like?” asked Uraraka.

“You don’t want to know,” said Izuku.

“Oh, I don’t know. I could use another test subject if she’s interested,” said Mei.

“I, uh…” She looked at the rapidly shaking head of Izuku. “Heh. Probably not.”

Mei harrumphed. “Suit yourself. You don’t know what you’re missing.”

“You really, really don’t want to know,” said Manga.

As his friends talked among themselves, Izuku set to task of placing a single insect on anyone around him that could be considered a potential threat. This included people like Bakugo and Todoroki, or 1-B students like Honenuki or Shiozaki due to their insanely potent quirks. Others like Mei were also included since Izuku knew how dangerous she could be when she had a whole bunch of her gadgets on her person.

Izuku then looked forward, past the starting gate, studying the cramped, concrete corridor ahead of him. “It’s going to be a free-for all when that gate lights up, just so you know. And by the looks of that corridor, the first test will be right after the gate.”

“What do you mean?” asked Uraraka.

Izuku smirked, covering himself in a veil of his bugs that covered his entire body. “You’ll see.”

Manga shivered a bit. “Dang it, man! Give us a little warning before you do that!”

“Heh. Sorry.”

“Somehow, I don’t think you are,” mused Manga.

Izuku merely shrugged his shoulders in indifference.

The lights on the gate began to fade, three lights falling to two, two lights fading into one, until—

“START!”
The stampede of students immediately filled up the hallway. The giant fumbling mass of people clumped together, pushing and shoving one another in a desperate act to get to the front. Izuku however, was getting through the crowd a little more easily than others. The giant swarm of insects surrounding his body seemed to be quite effective at warding off his contenders. Most of the students avoided him like a plague, sliding around his form and pushing others to stray further away from him.

*Huh, avoiding me like the plague. Technically, they aren’t too far off when you consider all the viruses that these bugs carry inside of th—*

One of his bugs suddenly became victim to a sudden flash freezing, a little up ahead from where Izuku was. He noted that the bug was the one on Todoroki, which proba—

Izuku searched with his bugs, and surprisingly found Mei just behind him, using his swarm as a deterrent to other students. She was trailing right behind him, falling close behind with little care for the bugs. She advanced in his shadow in a way that most wouldn’t be so comfortable with, a factor Izuku found possible since Mei had gotten used to his bugs long ago. *Smart move.*

Izuku abruptly turned, uncovering himself of his bugs — sending them out of the tunnel — and grabbed for a surprised Mei. He needed her here at the moment if he didn’t want to get holed up in this suffocating hallway as a snowman. “Hover soles! Launch up!” he yelled.

*“Wha—”*

*“Just do it!”*

Izuku hugged Mei body, ensuring that he would launch up as she did.

The boots weren’t designed for sustained flight, but rather acted as a form of levitation. That didn’t mean that there wasn’t any power behind the thrusters, however, since another feature allowed for an enhanced jump height if used correctly. It was that capability that Izuku was counting on.

A giant wave of ice and cold filled the hallway, trapping many of the students who weren’t able to react fast enough. But the few seconds of upward movement spared Izuku and Mei from the freeze. As soon as the duo touched upon the ground, Izuku let go of Mei and sped forward. “Thanks Mei!”

Mei followed her friend after a second or so of confusion, shutting the engines on her Hover Soles off to conserve their power. Pony and Uraraka, on the other hand, were waiting on Manga’s heating words to thaw them out of the ice.

*Zooming ahead, Izuku took notice of the upcoming robots with a couple bugs he sent on ahead of his stead. Those too met the icy wrath of Todoroki as an entire Zero-Pointer became encased in Todoroki’s quirk. The heterochromatic boy continued on with ease.*

Izuku had to adapt to a different approach, lacking any efficient ways to take down the robots without his equipment. Bare fisted attacks would leave him with battered and broken, while chewing through the robots’ wires would take too much time. As such, Izuku adapted an evasion-based tactic, using his superior speed and smaller form to dodge the bulky robotic obstacles.

It was immensely easy to predict their movements, the hulking masses shifting around so much air and weight that his insects had plenty of time to warn Izuku of any potential danger. It wasn’t long before he strode past the robotic danger zone and was met with the next obstacle.

*The giant earthen terrain consisted of an immense drop, so far down that you couldn’t see the bottom. Giant pillars of rock strutted around the landscape, various wires spread out between them,*
connecting them together like some sort of spider’s web.

A little upways ahead, he could spot Todoroki icing the wires and riding over them. Off the top of his head, Izuku held no immediate shortcuts to traverse such an obstacle like Todoroki had done so. So, he did the best thing that he could: he went along with it. And so, Izuku made his slow crawl along the underside of the wires.

Bakugo flew over not long after Izuku began his crawl across the first wire. The explosion-oriented boy had caught up with Todoroki, even, the two making an obvious bid for first place. If Izuku were to guess, the boy was probably only took until now to catch up because he got caught up destroying robots.

Suddenly, another shadow passed right over his head. “Bye Izuku!” exclaimed Mei as she passed over Izuku, utilizing a combined use of her Wire Arrow and her Hover Soles. Izuku himself was barely halfway past the third wire, having maybe two or so more to go. Others like Shoji was taking immense leaps to glide across the outcroppings of earth, and Iida using his engines to perform a rudimentary balancing act. Eventually, Izuku made his way across, and sped his way to meet up with the others ahead of him.

He stopped, however, when he stumbled upon the last obstacle. It seemed to be a minefield, complete with mines that emitted a pink, launching gust of force on those who stepped on them if the person that flew past him was any indication. Izuku scouted ahead with his bugs.

All the way up in the front, Todoroki and Bakugo were butting heads. Both had devolved to the simple exercise of running; Todoroki’s quirk was too destructive and would set off the mines, and Bakugo couldn’t keep up his explosion-propelled flight forever.

1-B’s aces weren’t too far behind; Shiozaki was utilizing her vines to upend the mines and find her way around them, while Honenuki liquified the ground as he advanced, rendering the mines useless.

_I could try tiptoeing my way around the mines. The indentions in the ground aren’t too difficult to see, but one wrong one or misdirected look could send me sprawling all the way bac_— That’s it!

Izuku took a single bug a slowly placed lowered it onto one of the indentions on the ground. As the bug landed, no change of force was indicated, and the mine hadn’t gone off. _Ha-ha! It works!_

Izuku went surrounding setting bugs on all the indentions ahead of him in a straight line, utilizing an aerial view to ensure he didn’t miss one single mine. Iida had passed him while he was doing this, as did Tokoyami, but he paid no heed to their advancements. By the time Izuku was done, all the mines immediately in his planned trajectory were accounted for and completely covered, his connections to his bugs strong as ever.

With that, Izuku sprung forward, deftly moving his feet in all the spots absent of his swarm. With his connection to his bugs, he didn’t even need to physically look at his bugs. Izuku could easily pinpoint his path ahead of him, avoiding any of the mines that would risk his placement just by sensing for his bugs’ positions. Of course, he lifted off the bugs behind him as he went — didn’t want to give anyone else the upper hand, after all.

The round culminated for Izuku as he passed the finish gate, panting anxiously. He looked at the scoreboard; he’d made i—

_Wait a minute... Todoroki, Bakugo, Shiozaki, Honenuki, Iida, Tokoyami... That leaves me in... 7th place! Again!??!
Alright! Who the heck is rigging my scores???

Chapter End Notes

And that about does it for the Obstacle Race! Next up, Cavalry Battle!
It took a little bit of time for the remaining spots to be filled. Izuku watched as his fellow first years slowly found their way past the minefield, using their quirks and capabilities as they saw fit. Their faces were alit with both delight and relief after reaching the end — almost as if they had just passed through the gates of Tartarus and made it out through the other side.

Meanwhile, Izuku was still a bit taken aback by the sudden realization that he had placed seventh for the third time in a row in regards to U.A. scoreboards. He realized that the actual probability of such a thing occurring was rather low, astronomically so. Then again, he also knew that the chance of someone actually rigging his scores was an actual impossibly. But that didn’t deter from the fact that —

“Oi! You’re doing it again. But in the third person this time. Stop. It’s creepy.”

Izuku stopped muttering upon hearing the voice. He turned, finding an unsettled Manga looking at him with a bunch of scribbles scattered around his face.

“I— wha?” Izuku sputtered meekly.

“You were talking about yourself. In the third person.” Manga said.

Izuku blinked at the statement. “You’re kidding.”

“Nope! The lab rat here heard right!” exclaimed Mei, popping up beside Manga. A frazzled Pony wasn’t too far behind. “You were going all hoobally joobally about placements and stuff!” Mei continued with fingers wiggling as she spoke.

Izuku scrunched his face in confusion. “Hoobally… joobally?”

Mei just nodded eagerly.

“No, you know what, never mind. How’d you guys fair in the placements?” Izuku asked.

“Not too shabby, if I’d say so myself! I was a mere four people behind you in eleventh place.” Mei stated.

“Heh. I got thirty sixth place myself. Uraraka and Pony passed me like the breeze after I got them out of that ice,” Manga added.


“Am not!”
“Are too!”
“Uh-un!”
“Uh-huh!”

Izuku chuckled at his friends’ antics, turning towards Mei. “So what’d Pony get? I’m not too sure I can ask her myself right now.”

Mei cackled in amusement. “Quite an improvement from when she could barely speak Japanese, eh?”

“Heh, that’s Pony for you, even if she still struggles in some aspects.”

“Mhm! Anyways, I think Pony got in with twenty-seventh place, oddly enough. I mean, Anti-grav got eighteenth. Pony should’ve been around there, she and Anti-grav were running together.”

“Anti-grav? You mean Uraraka?” Izuku looked back towards the pair of Manga and Pony. “Where is Uraraka, anyways?”


“Anyways,” Mei continued, “Pony’s really fast on those legs of hers; she would’ve outpaced most of the others. Unless something was hampering her. But in that case, I bet that she couldn’t gotten further up if she just used the—”

“I already said that I wasn’t going to use those! Never never!” Pony interrupted. “They look all weird on me!”

“But Pony! Imagine the possibilities if you coul—”

Izuku stopped Mei before she could get into another one of her invention-centered rants. A cloud of bugs covered her face in seconds.

Some may have been disgusted by the fact that they had just had their face covered by bugs, but Mei had gotten used to it. She embraced it, even; she said it was just a working hazard with working with Izuku.

Izuku went to open his mouth to speak, but stopped himself when he noticed someone was missing.

“Where’d Manga go?”

“Went to go talk with Kendo-san,” Pony replied.

“Ah,” Izuku realized. “The girl with the orange hair that’s in your class, right?”

“Mhm.”

“Huh, ditched the three of us, eh?”

“I think it was the bugs,” came the muffled, buzzing voice of Mei. “You know how he is with them.” Izuku looked back to Mei. He decided that she’d spent enough time under the bugs and released his hold on them. The bugs dispersed.

“So, twenty-seventh, eh?” Izuku switched topics, turning back towards Pony.
“Yup. Why?”

“Ehh— Well… Honestly, umm…”

“You think that I could’ve done better, don’t you?” retorted Pony.

“Huh? Oh, uh, it’s nothing, really—”

Pony giggled. “I’m just kidding, Zuku. But you are right. I definitely could have placed higher.”

“Huh? But then why didn’t you—”

“Midoriya!” came the voice of Iida. Izuku turned at the interruption, finding the glasses-wearing boy approaching him. “Congratulations on your placement,” he said as he stood in front of Izuku and Pony. “You trailed just behind me; quite an accomplishment without a speed quirk or something that would have circumvented the mines. I... didn’t quite see how you did that, though. What’d you do?”

“He he,” Izuku laughed abashedly. “It wasn’t anything too special. I just used my bugs, really. Used them to navigate the minefield by planning out my steps.”

“Huh. I’m impressed yet again, Midoriya. You’ve must have undergone a lot of practice with your quirk, haven’t you?” Iida complimented.

“It’s— it’s nothing like that, really. It sort of just comes to me, you know?”

Iida gave out a curt laugh. “You’re too humble for your own good. Anyhow, we should keep quiet. I believe that I spotted Aoyama shooting through the gate just now. He should be the last of us.”

True to Iida’s word, once Aoyama had passed the gate, Midnight announced that he was the last to make it through to the second round.

It wasn’t long until the festival continued on its way, Midnight announcing the next round’s Cavalry Battle.

The score point system that utilized the placings from the obstacle race actually made Izuku thankful that he wasn’t in first, considering that Todoroki’s headband weighed in at ten million points.

And so, with fifteen minutes on the clock and various strategies already forming in his head, Izuku set to work in building his team.

His first action was turning back to Iida’s position, wishing to use his speed for the front position of the team setup. Only, he found that his speedy friend was absent, and instead all the way across the way with Todoroki along with Tsu and Jiro.

That’s strange. Why would he purposely want to work with Todoroki? That just paints a huge target on his back. The same goes with Tsu and and Jiro. Why? Are they that confident in Todoroki? Well, I suppose that makes sense, I would be too if he—

A hand on his shoulder spurred him from his thoughts. “Now that’s better,” said Mei. “You’re actually speaking like a sane person again. So, what’d ‘ya say? Team with me and Pony?”

“Uh, ye— yeah. That’s good. We’ve doubled down on mobility with you two then. And a little too on offense with Pony’s horns. My bugs can help with omnidirectional surveillance, but I’m not too comfortable with their combat ability against someone like Bakugo or Todoroki. We need someone with greater offensive ability in that regard.”
“Why don’t you just use your bugs en masse? Can’t you just blanket the area in them?” asked Pony.

“Nope. I, uh, actually asked about that earlier, yesterday to be precise. The school said that I had to wait to make it to the third round. Something about it not following the ‘intent to harm’ rule if I were to encase everyone in a flood of bugs. ‘Malicious intent,’ apparently.”

“Seriously? Seems like they were just undermining you,” Mei suggested.

“Well, there’s not much we can do about it. We’ll just have to cope. But, I do have someone in mind. In fact,” Izuku looked around, and found the person that he had in mind. In a few seconds, he was behind his target and was placing a hand on the boy’s shoulders. “Gotcha!”

Tokoyami turned around to face Izuku. “Midoriya?”

“Hi, he-heh. You, uh, you want to join my team? You don’t have to attack if you want to, though. Defense would just be fine.”

“Defense?” Tokoyami said, somewhat surprised. “That’s a rather interesting choice, considering how my quirk gets weaker the brighter the environment is.”

Izuku smiled. “I thought that was so. It makes sense, considering that Dark Shadow is, well, a shadow. His offensive power would scale with darkness, just like it did back at U.S.J.”

Tokoyami spared a glance at the two behind Izuku, taking a moment to observe them. “Heh. Sure. Use me as you see fit, then.”

“Yes!” exclaimed Izuku. “We’ve got the optimal team setup, I would think. I’ll be counting on you, then.”

Team Midoriya stood at the ready. Pony held her ground at the front of the formation, doing her part to support Midoriya on her back. Mei had her Hover Soles on, as well as one of her iterations of a “move pack.” She opted for the thruster pack instead of the turbine powered one, as its thrusters were moveable, and thus able to point backwards to aid in forward movement. Tokoyami held his head high, Dark Shadow peeking out and edging for a fight. All the while, Izuku sat at the top, a small army of flying insects surrounding his headbands. The swarm was there to deter some away from targeting them, though he knew that was hopeful thinking. There were some like Bakugo, after all, who would be willing to shuffle through some bugs for a second if it meant coining a win for their team.

Looking around, Izuku found that there were a couple notable groups among the twelve that were formed. Izuku found Manga, though he was acting for a back leg for Yaoyorozu. Kendo was at the front of that team, with another girl he didn’t know as the other leg.

Team Todoroki consisted of Iida at the front, with Tsu and Jiro as the legs supporting Todoroki. Meanwhile, Bakugo had Kirishima at the helm of his group, with Sero and Ashido at the back.

Izuku looked around, eyeing the eager faces of all the team. Everyone was ready, their minds set in taking the win for the second round. And all that pent up excitement was released when Midnight announced the start of the match.

Most of the teams beelined for Todoroki, aiming to be the first to snag the ten million point headband from the thermodynamic boy.
However, just like Izuku had, it did seem that Todoroki had thought his team setup. It considering the way Tsu wrapped her tongue around Todoroki to lower him towards the ground. As his hand touched the ground, a giant wave of ice sprouted similar to the act Todoroki had done back during the obstacle race, encasing most in his ice. Team Todoroki then sprinted off, their intent seemed to be placed in the art of evasion for the most part.

Izuku and his team watched on in the distance, seeing the ensuing entrapment of their fellow contestants. Then a lightbulb went off in Izuku’s head.

“Head toward the ice! Tokoyami, used Dark Shadow to pave a way to the other contestants!”

The other three followed up on Izuku’s orders, making their way towards the trapped contestants.

“We’re currently in fifth place,” Izuku explained. “But if we head up on there and start picking off the weaker targets…” Team Midoriya came upon a team with someone who blew a wall of what seemed like air in front of them. However, the barrier was easily worked around since that team was still encased in ice. The others attempted to move to stop Izuku, but it was a pointless defense. And with that, Team Midoriya was a little over two hundred points further in the lead.

“What’s this!” yelled the exuberant voice of Present Mic. “Look at that! Team Midoriya is taking advantage of the others’ misfortune and taking their headbands!”

Team Midoriya continued on their way way, closing in on a trapped Team Yaoyorozu. Unfortunately, their advance was halted with the appearance of a giant word wall that Manga had conjured. “Izuku!” yelled Manga in a panic. “Don’t you dare come any closer! I’ll spam my attacks on you!”

“Izuku!” yelled Manga in a panic. “Don’t you dare come any closer! I’ll spam my attacks on you!”

“Hey Manga!” Izuku greeted, completely ignoring Manga’s spiel. “Hello Yaoyorozu, Kendo, and umm… girl I don’t know,” Izuku continued.

“Gee, I’m the only one without a greeting?” said the girl.

“Hi Setsuna-san!” said Pony.

“Ah! There we are. Hey, Pony!” the girl responded.

Izuku attempted to have his insects go on attempt to steal the headbands by flying over the barrier, but a swath of heat came from a makeshift flamethrower via Manga’s improvised aerosol words and a lighter Yaoyorozu had created. “You’ll have to do better than that if you wish to take our headbands, Midoriya,” the creation girl said.

Just then, the girl — Setsuna — launch her arm off of her body as well as half of her head, setting up a barrage of projectiles towards Izuku and his team.

“Oh wow! It’s kinda like my bug control! I wonder if she can see and hear through those too?”

A loose piece of Setsuna that appeared to be her mouth zoomed by, shouting out, “I can! Cool, ain’t it?”

“Seriously, that’s what your concerned with right now!” exclaimed Mei. “Sure, they don’t hurt all that— Ow! All that much, but we—”

“Right! Sorry!” Izuku used his bugs - aptly gathered from his waiting swarm off the field - and launched a counter offensive against the floating bits of Setsuna.
“Let’s get out of here. This place is getting too hot, anyways. The rest are about to break free from the ice.’ Izuku noted.

Pony obliged, turning the other way and back away from the ice field. Team Midoriya continued to romp around the field, taking a few headbands here and there, losing some too. Some spoils were harder to retrieve than others, one example being the headband they’d stolen from the mobile tank that consisted of Shoji, Mineta, and Aoyama.

It was all going well for Team Midoriya until three minutes were left on the countdown. It was then that an irate Bakugo was suddenly hot on their trail.

“DEKU!! Come back here!”

“Shoot!” Izuku said. “Keep going. I’d rather not have to deal with his—”

A line of Sero’s tape shot past them. Izuku was confused at first, wondering about the increasingly lengthening piece of tape, until his backward facing bugs saw Ashido launching some forward acid and Kirishima hardening up. “Defense! Bakugo’s about to—”

Izuku’s yells were drowned out by the incoming blasts of explosions. Team Midoriya was quick to act, but not quick enough. Bakugo came flying sideways, having no care for the bugs around Izuku’s neck, taking seven of their eight headbands.

“HA!! You thought that you could have dodged me? Fat chance, nerd!” Team Bakugo zoomed away, along with seven headbands that placed them in the lead in second place. Izuku hastily checked his remaining headband, finding it to score a measly one hundred and five points. Looking up at the scoreboard, he found that that placed his team in seve—

“Whoa! Talk about a quick rebound!” announced Present Mic. “Team Bakugo has just swept the as-so-far untouched Team Midoriya right off their feet! They’re in danger now! Especially with there being only a minute left!”


“H—hey, Izuku. It’s alri—”

Whatever words were coming out of Mei’s mouth were drowned out when Izuku noticed a black smog in the distance. He spied Todoroki, with black smoke emitting from his exhaust ports. Team Todoroki currently wasn’t moving. Izuku quickly, yet discreetly, sent a few bugs ahead to take all he could from the situation.

“Good thing tha… you were abl… stop Yaoyor… Almost go… en milli…”

Dang it. I thought I had this listening thing down. Guess it really slips up when I’m not concent—

“Than… but no… engi… stalle…”

Izuku heard enough. He sent the bugs towards Todoroki, scouting the headbands on his neck. His flies found headbands ranging from a myriad of scores, but there was only one that mattered. There was only one that Izuku was aiming for; the ten million point headband.

“We’re going after Todoroki!” Izuku suddenly explained.

“What!”
“R—Really?!”

“Midoriya, certainty you don’t think—”

“There isn’t any time! We’re aiming for the headband second from the bottom! Take that one at all costs! Mei! Wire Arrows, but release the tension on them!” Izuku commanded. “Leave them limp and hand them over! Set the thruster pack to its final setting. Get ready for a final push!”

“Heh, if that big brain of yours says so... Fine then!” Mei cackled. She disengaged the Wire Arrows and handed them to Izuku, who held one wire in each hand.


Tokoyami sighed, attaching himself to Mei and readying Dark Shadow over his shoulder.

“Pony!” Izuku exclaimed. “Just like you practiced. Horn Charge!”

“Yes!” Pony immediately got on all fours and zoomed towards Todoroki’s team. Izuku found himself on her back, utilizing the wire arrows to pull along Mei and Tokoyami as a pseudo harness. Mei’s thruster pack lessened the burden of the weight, dramatically helping their speed increase. And right at Team Todoroki’s position flew in a swarm of bugs numbering in the thousands, gathered at a moment’s notice from the stands. Three bug clones formed around Todoroki, Tsu, Jiro, and Iida. They acted as an initial distraction.

In just a few seconds, Team Midoriya came to a surprisingly close distance to Team Todoroki. The sudden burst of speed via Pony’s charge and the boost from Mei’s pack caught Todoroki’s team completely off guard. The human shaped bugs helped to keep their approach as abrupt as possible.

Within feet of Todoroki and his team, Pony stood up, fixing the position of her hands to launch four horns at near point blank range. Izuku kept up with the abrupt movement by way of Mei, whose body in accompany with Tokoyami cushioned and rebounded his backwards movement, allowing him to keep up on Pony’s shoulders.

Izuku’s bugs swarmed forward, keeping up the assault, as did the dual charge of Tokoyami’s dark shadow. They advanced ever still, and as they closed in, Izuku grabbed for Todoroki’s neckline, where the headbands rested in plain sight.

The faces on Team Todoroki were in a state of shock. Jiro was barely able to knock two horns of course, with Tsu redirecting one of the other horns. The other horn got Todoroki on the head, dazing him slightly. Izuku took the chance to deconstruct two of his clones and direct them for the headbands in an attempt to take them. The oncoming danger seemed to be too much of a threat to Todoroki, however, as both of his sides upwards of his torso flared up in response.

A good portion of Izuku’s bugs died to the divided hot and cold, but it didn’t matter. As Izuku closed in on Todoroki’s fireside, the fire-consumed arm of Todoroki was swatted away by Dark Shadow. The resulting assault led to Izuku being able to secure a single headband; the second band from the last.

Todoroki was shocked still, looking at his arm like it was some foreign object. The rest of his team prepared to move and snap Todoroki out of whatever daze he was in, but it proved to be for naught. The buzzer signified the end of the Cavalry Battle sounded not too long after.
Chapter End Notes

I LIED!!

Triple Update, yay?

*Ehem* This definitely isn’t just me using the flow of the Sports Festival to catch up on updates over here on AO3. Nope. Not at all;)}
And a continuation of the sports festival! Next up: talks, fights, and other things.

*And... I lied again. Quadruple update, woohoo?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So… what is it that you want, exactly?” Izuku’s voice rang out, carrying its weight despite the roaring crowds above. He and Todoroki were currently under an archway that led outside of the stadium. Todoroki had asked for Izuku, pulling him apart from the rest of the group who were on their way to a cafeteria.

Across from Izuku, Todoroki leaned against the concrete wall, eyeing Izuku with a cold glare. Seeing no response from Todoroki, Izuku followed suit. His back found itself against the wall, his mind reaching for a couple of bugs. A few fireflies flitted about, bobbing up in down with their yellow lights. A giant centipede — a mukade — found its way down Izuku’s neck and onto his hand, where it milled about at its leisure. Izuku found the time to admire his creepy crawly friends, waiting for the boy across from him to initiate whatever conversation he wanted to have.

But Todoroki remained unfazed. Izuku sighed. “Look—”

“I swore to myself that I would never use my fire.”

The abrupt statement caught Izuku off guard. He ended his spiel before he knew it, wanting to hear what his mysterious classmate would say. After a few moments, Izuku nodded, signaling Todoroki to continue.

“You overpowered me. So much so that I broke my pledge. Nobody that I’ve met has done that before.”

“You pledge?” Izuku asked. His mind lit with realization. “You mean, you purposelly limit yourself to only using your ice?”

Todoroki merely nodded.

“But why would you limit yourself like that? You could learn from your fire. Adapt to conflict. Strive for more.”

Another bout of silence.

“You know that Endeavor is my father?” Todoroki said, ignoring Izuku’s rant.

“I— Uh, yeah. I know that,” Izuku admitted, confused.

Is this still related to the topic?

“Hmph. And do you know about quirk marriages, as well?” Todoroki asked.
“Yeah…”

“Good,” Todoroki said. “Then I can explain this to you simply. My father raised me for the single purpose to surpass All Might. Nothing more, and nothing less. And I won’t stand to be a tool for scum like that.”

“Mhm,” Izuku hummed, sounding uncommitted. Outwardly, he was calm. And he wouldn’t show it, but in truth, his mind was swarming with questions.

“I will fight you, and I will prove that I can do it without my father’s power.”

“I— I see,” Izuku said.

Todoroki rose from the wall, maintaining his dead stare and cold demeanor. “I really don’t get what the others see in you, Midoriya.”

“... What?” This conversation is going all over the place.

With a glance, Todoroki went towards the cafeteria. “Nevermind.”

Nevermind? “That’s it?” What did he even mean?

Staring after the retreating back of the half cold, half hot boy, Izuku took a second to place a bug on Todoroki, hiding it within the folds of the collar of his tracksuit. A small part of it was to see just how the would fare before the tournament. Another, more larger part was Izuku being curious by what he meant by that last comment.

As Todoroki walked away, Izuku attempted to try to understand the introverted boy. Izuku’s mind couldn’t quite find a hold around the boy known as Shoto Todoroki, especially since the seemingly anti-social boy had now been shown in a new light. A perspective which had destroyed Izuku’s previous assumptions on of Todoroki.

It was during these thoughts that Izuku gathered a swarm of bugs from the surrounding environment. Mind still on the departing Todoroki, Izuku haphazardly sent the bugs around the corner of the stone corridor he was currently in, paying no heed to their organization.

As a result, the bugs formed into an amorphous shape in the air, appearing before the only other individual in Izuku’s immediate radius. The bugs spoke a broken, harsh screeching, grating on the ears of the boy they flew in front of.

“Nice weather we’re having, eh, Bakugo?”

The boy in question growled in fury, breaking away from his cover. If he was surprised that Izuku had noticed him, he didn’t show. Instead, Bakugo stalked past Izuku, brushing past his shoulders and heading straight towards the cafeteria.

Izuku followed not long after, his mind adrift in the mystery of Shoto Todoroki.

Izuku watched the first round of the tournament with great interest. He didn’t know what to expect, with Ashido going against the unknown that was Hitoshi Shinso. But it definitely wasn’t this.

“What’s this?!? 1-A’s own Mina Ashido just walked out of bounds on her own! What was she
thinking there, folks?” shouted the enthusiastic voice of Present Mic.

It certainly was interesting, though, whatever Shinso’s quirk was. High up in his class’s designated seating area, it was hard to tell what exactly happened. In fact, from up in the stands, it looked as if Ashido had just given up to allow Shinso the chance to advance to the next round.

The only explanation that came to Izuku’s mind in regards to the strange situation was Hitoshi Shinso’s quirk. The boy seemed pretty powerful for someone enrolled in General Education.

Izuku continued thinking of the possible implications of the battle, digging himself deeper into the recesses of his mind to ponder. It was only when he heard Present Mic announce the next matchup, as well as the appearance of a sudden gout of flame that sprung up from one corner of his mind, that Izuku honed in on the eyes of one of his bugs. The bug, which he took note, was on Todoroki. Considering Todoroki’s previous statements from a mere hour ago, the fire could only mean one thing: Endeavor.

“—cting disgraceful,” came the voice of Endeavor, the hulk of a man endowed in a cloak of his own flames. “If you just used your left side, you could’ve overwhelmed everyone in the Obstacle Race and the Cavalry Battle, instead of being shown up by somebody who controls bugs.”

Really…? I bet that he’d—

“Stop this childish rebellion. You have a duty to surpass All Might. Unlike the rest of your siblings, you are the true masterpiece.”

Izuku cut his connection, then and there. Did he really just— I can see why Todoroki hates him so much. That self-righteous jerk! And the way he talked about his own children, like they were just pawns on a chessboard! How could a hero be like that! And the Number Two, no less.

Izuku’s attention was brought away from his newfound insight of Endeavor by sudden shift in temperature he felt with not only his own body, but with the death of hundreds of bugs.

He found the giant iceberg (because that’s what in truth the only thing it could be called) encasing the frozen form of Kirishima below. Despite the red-headed boy’s brute strength and durability, the sudden blast of cold left him in no position to break out, his arms and legs frozen in place. He yielded not too long after; Todoroki then began apologising, waiking forward to free the disabled Kirishima.

And with that, Izuku stood up and made his way down to the locker rooms. The third round was coming up, after all. It was only a matter of time until the field was ready for round three.

“It looks like this time it’s going to be one hero class against the other, fellow listeners! Hopefully this time, third time’s the charm! Maybe this round won’t be another uneventful curbstomp! Introducing class 1-B’s Sen Kaibara! He looks like a good looking guy!”

The boy across from Izuku, Sen Kaibara, had a smirk on him, signaling that he was ready for a fight, and confident to win.

“On on the other side is— Uh, ahem. Is class 1-A’s scarifying, horrifying bug master of terror, Izuku Midoriya! He’s someone who I really wish would tone it down a bit in class. In mean, there was this one time with this spider that he —”

“Mic,” eased the deadpanned tone of Eraserhead.

“Right, right. Sorry.”
Down on the ground, Kaibara and Izuku stared down the other. One looked on with an unopposed glee. The other, beared an inquisitive, collected stare.

When Midnight signaled for the fight to start, Kaibara activated his quirk, his arms gyrating at immense speeds. “Alright, bug boy,” Kaibara spewed. “I’ll keep this short and si—” His words were drowned out by the giant mass of bugs that appeared behind him, immediately blanketing his entire body.

Izuku could feel the boy’s limbs gyrating, attempting to — and successfully — remove the bugs covering his body. Of course, Kaibara was at a disadvantage since he wasn’t actually killing all too many of the bugs. Then there was the fact that Izuku kept on replacing the bugs that were launched off, ensuring his opponent stayed under constant assault. The muffled screams did little to deter the waves of insects. Izuku simply looked on.

Eventually, the scene came to be interrupted. “Midoriya!” came the voice of Midnight. Izuku looked over to his Modern Hero Art History teacher, meeting her eyes. “I believe that he’s had enough,” she said.

Izuku considered her words, looking back at the squirming form of Kaibara. Eventually, he nodded his head. The bugs lifted off of Kaibara’s body, freed the boy with a look of relief on his face.

“Kaibara, you remained unable to move for an extended period of time. I deemed it that you were unable to continue. Do you understand?” asked Midnight.

Kaibara slowly got up to his feet. A visible lump appeared in his throat as he steadied his gaze at Izuku. Kaibara readily nodded in to relay his understanding.

“Then it’s agreed. Izuku Midoriya is the winner!”

Unlike the previous fights, the crowd wasn’t immediately filled with cheers. A few moments of silence eventually brought upon the missing cheers, the initial shock having worn off the crowd. But it was easy to tell that the sound wasn’t the same. It was a mixed signal of cheers and disapproval. Izuku then walked back, making his way back to his seat up back with his class.

Present Mic’s voice boomed over the heads of the audience once again, joining the mix of critiques that made up the stadium.

“You see what I mean?!? Eraserhead, how the heck do you even—”

“Mic.”

The rest of the tournament’s first batch of fights finished off quite spectacularly.

Shiozaki proved her angelic grace with her quick action. Her vines burrowed effortlessly into the ground to entrap a helpless Jiro. The battlefield didn’t prove to be to the ear jack girl’s advantage, especially with the lack of terrain for her to use, or with her lacking any of her amplifying equipment.

Iida versus Mei proved to be exactly how Izuku thought it would come to. Iida’s general attitude made it likely that he would accept Mei’s offer to “even the battlefield,” as she so eloquently put it herself. The end result was Mei getting free exposure to the world at large in showing off her babies. Sure, Iida ended up winning in the end, but Izuku knew it wasn’t a true victory to the bespeckled boy.
The fight between Bakugo and 1-B’s Rin… Well, it ended in the only way it possibly could. It was true that Rin’s scales were highly versatile. A perfect blend of offense and defense. But Bakugo was the king of brute offensive power, no matter how much Izuku hated to admit. There were few that would be able to take him in a real one-on-one fight, the exception Izuku was sure of being Todoroki at his full strength.

Tokoyami and Pony had an interesting fight. Pony was able to dodge a good portion of Dark Shadow’s attacks, her horns doing a good job fending off the creature of shadow. But it only took one mistake, a missed projectile, for Tokoyami to close in and commit to a takedown.

Funnily enough, the last round was a rematch of sorts. Tsuyu versus Sero yet again, starting with Sero’s voice of dread and subsequent words of a hopeful retaliation. It didn’t seem that fate was within Sero’s favor, however, since there wasn’t much change from the original fight back in the first few days of school. Tsuyu demonstrated her superior ability, using Sero’s attempt to launch her out of grounds against him.

And so, with the winners of the first bracket known, Midnight went on to announce the next round. And Izuku ended up being first. He again made his way down in preparation for the next battle.

“Izuku Midoriya,” announced Hitoshi Shinso, his voice filled with genuine delight, “I’m glad to see that you’ve come this far.”

“Shinso,” Izuku said, returning the goodwill of his opponent. “A pleasure.”

The two found their place on opposing sides, facing each other without batting an eye.

“I’ll be honest with you, Midoriya,” Shinso said. “I was surprised to learn that someone like me had gotten into the hero course.”

“Oh?” Izuku voiced with intrigue. “What do you mean?”

“Start!” announced Midnight.

Shinso smirked. “I suppose that I can say that I look up to you, in a way. It just goes to show that just because I have a quirk that has been labeled villainous, that doesn’t mean that I can’t make my goals to become a hero a reality.”

“You… A quirk? Like mine?” asked Izuku.

Shinso sighed. “I’m sure you know how it is. And, I do apologise, Midoriya. But you out of anyone would know what I am striving for. No hard feelings?”

Izuku froze up then and there, a purple haze creeping in from the periphery of his mind.

“Kindly walk out of bounds, if you will.”

Izuku turned, slowly making his way to the boundaries of the battle’s confines.

“What’s this! He’s done it again! Just what is this madness?” Present Mic yelled.

“Interesting. Acoustic based psychological manipulation?”

Izuku slowly made his way to the edge, the crowd watching in quiet anticipation.

A single bee from his swarm landed on his hand. It stung, hard. The purple haze faded. And so had the presence. Almost like it was never there to begin with. But Izuku knew better.

Izuku blinked, shaking his head. Her brought his breathing under control, which at some point had devolved into harsh, shallow breaths.

“H—how did you…”

Izuku turned around, spotting the amazed face of Shinso staring back at him.

“Mind Control, huh?”

Shinso flinched at the words, reeling from the sudden appearance of bugs behind him. But when he realized that the bugs had spoken, his eyes widened. Izuku felt the hold of Shinso quirk take hold again.

But instead of like the previous time, the effect dispersed amongst his swarm, rippling in each and every one of the bugs gathered near Shinso.

“Go out of bounds,” Shinso said in a curt manner. The bugs begin their way to follow Shinso’s orders. Shinso looked on dumbfounded, watching the bugs move while Izuku stayed in place. Izuku then tightened his control on the bugs, breaking Shinso’s connection.

In an instant, Izuku ran forward, arms aiming to grapple Shinso. Shinso attempted to counter, raising a fist to meet Izuku’s approaching form. It did little to aid the inexperienced boy. Izuku took the opportunity to grab Shinso’s arm, pinning it behind his back. Izuku effortlessly forced Shinso to the ground. By the end of the short spree, Izuku had his body weight over the downed form of Shinso.

“Do you yield, Shinso?”

Shinso attempted to escape from his position, wiggling under Izuku’s grasp. “I…” he drawed out.

“Hmm?”

Shinso again attempted to fight for control of the insects, relaying a command of “Attack Izuku Midoriya.” The command took into effect for just a moment, the nearby bugs going towards Izuku, yet they immediately were reigned in yet again by their true master.


“Then it is settled! Izuku Midoriya wins this match!” yelled Midnight.

Izuku promptly removed his body from atop his captive, easing the stress on Shinso body. Izuku, his face permeating his impressed state of mind, then lowered a hand towards the downed Shinso.

Izuku’s opponent made a loud sigh, yet ultimately accepted the help and pulled himself up. The two ended standing face to face, both faces filled in a manner of intrigue and fascination in the other.

“That was rather impressive, Shinso,” Izuku said, breaking the silence between the two. “I’ve got to say, that is quite a quirk you have there! I mean, imagine the possibilities! Diffusing hostage
situations! Forcing villains into submission in seconds! You just need to work on your hand-to-hand, and then you’d be set!"

Across from Izuku, Shinso was wide eyed in surprise. To the boy, Izuku’s enthusiasm in his brainwashing quirk was a first. He’d been faced with countless others before, who saw only the misdeeds he could enact with his quirk. Never had someone thought of the possible actions he could pursue that fell under the topic of heroics.

But here was someone, someone who had come under the effects of his brainwashing himself, that was praising him. Spouting out the nonsense of heroics. Someone who wasn’t afraid of his quirk, but instead was hopping around like one of those bobtails he played with as a kid.

Shinso felt a smile coming onto his face. “Thank you, Midoriya.”

Izuku froze up at the words. “I—"

“Oi!” came the shout of Present Mic! “Get off the field. You can talk in the locker rooms! We still have the other fights to get to, you know!”

“Shoot!” Izuku shouted. He then proceeded to gather up some bugs near the commentator’s box, a swarm of bugs appearing in front of the glass in an instant. “Sorry Present Mic! We’ll get going!”

Izuku ignored the screams of terror he had heard originating from Present Mic, as well as the way it was broadcasted amongst the stadium. He turned to talk to Shinso. He noticed that the boy had already walked off, and was now facing the crowds where Izuku could hear the praise Shinso was getting from his classmates.

It wasn’t too long until Shinso began to walk further away, back into the bowels of the stadium. It was then that Izuku began to jog towards him. He still had one thing he needed to do, after all.

Izuku caught Shinso just before the entrance to the locker room. Shinso turned at the sound of Izuku’s breathing, looking at Izuku in wait for whatever he was going to say.

“I, uh, I’m sorry, Shinso,” Izuku said. “You— Your striving to be a hero. And I sort of just took that opportunity from you, didn’t I? I guess… I just got caught up in the moment, you know? I wasn’t really thinking. I know how it is, having to pressure of a quirk like mine wearing me down. And I know how unfair the practical was. If you didn’t have a combat quirk of some physical training, you were basically a sitting duck. And I can imagine that your mind control wouldn’t be able to affect the robots, and it’s just that—”

“Midoriya. Shut up.”

“I— huh?”

“Your priorities are all over the place. And don’t you have a tournament to win?”

“What? But your dream to—”

“You shouldn’t worry about that,” Shinso interrupted. “If anything, you just showed me that I still have a ways to go before I’m truly hero material. If anything, you deserve to go on.” Shinso chuckled. “Besides, between the two of us, your much more impressive. You broke out of my brainwashing yourself, after all.”

A gleam came to Shinso’s eyes then, as if realizing the words that had come out of his mouth. “How’d you do that, anyways? Breaking out of my quirk?”
Izuku though back on the voice, that massive presence he felt. And the way that it had disappeared as well. He tried to find it again, but no matter how far he tried, he just couldn’t seem to find it again.

“I’m not entirely too sure, actually,” Izuku admitted.

“...Really?” Shinso said, disbelief in his voice.

“Yeah.”

“Huh. Well, as for parting words, you better not lose in some pathetic way, you hear me? I won’t forgive you if you do.”

Chapter End Notes

Looks like it’ll be one more chapter ‘till we can wrap up on the Sports Festival. The final part was originally going to be here, but I couldn’t quite get rid of the feeling that I was having a bit too much happening in this chapter by going that route.

On the other hand, that also means that the butt end of the festival is only going to fill up the first part of next chapter. The rest will be other stuff. Oh well.

But hey, it’s not like it matters to you guys! The next chapter is already there, after all!
Well, it looks like the final stretch of the sports festival sort of ran away on me. So it’s a bit longer than I originally planned, but it doesn’t take up the whole chapter, so there’s that.

Izuku watched on with an inquisitive fascination as the second round of the quarter finals started up. Down below, two of his classmates from 1-A had been paired, the matchup consisting of Bakugo and Tokoyami. Izuku was standing further up than the rest of his class, with his arms hanging over the railing and him leaning forward as much as he could to watch the fight. It wasn’t a necessary effort, of course, considering he could watch the fight with much greater efficiency if he used his bugs, but the excitement of seeing the fight firsthand had Izuku disregard the use of his bugs for now. But as fortune would have it, it was as the match had barely even started when the Izuku sensed a couple of forms walking toward him.

“I… I, um, Midoriya! ...kun,” came the voice of Uraraka, much more reserved than usual. Izuku shifted his attention to his side — delegating some of his bugs to watch the fight — to find Uraraka accompanied by Iida.

“Hey guys. How’s it going?” asked Izuku, shifting his gaze back on the fight.

“We are doing well, Midoriya. Thank you for asking,” Iida said.

“Yeah. But other than that, oh, not much. Iida-kun’s still waiting for his match. But I’m just watching the rest of the fights from up here, you know?” Uraraka added.

“Ah, yes,” Izuku said in understanding. “It’s too bad you didn’t get past the cavalry battle. I would have liked to see some more combat scenarios with your quirk. You have a very versatile power, after all.”

“Oh! Uh, thank you, Midoriya-kun. But really, if any of us has a versatile quirk, it’s you. Even with all the… bugs. I mean, your fight with — with Shinso was interesting!”

“It was indeed interesting, Midoriya,” Iida interrupted. “Uraraka and I didn’t know what was happening, and Ashido wasn’t back yet so we couldn’t ask her what Shinso had done with her. Much of our class was in the same position, but then Ojiro-san told us that Shinso probably had a sort of mind control quirk.”

“Oh? He did?” Izuku asked. “How’d Ojiro figure that out?”

“He said it was from the Cavalry Battle. Apparently, that was the reason he forfeited his position to Shiozaki.”

“Really? Did he now?” Izuku asked. A few moments passed before he spoke again, a bit more tense this time around. “But neither Rin nor Kaibara left their positions open for someone else to take their place. I guess it just goes to how much Ojiro respects his own moral code and sense of honor.”
Down below, Tokoyami found himself on the ground, pinned against Bakugo’s body and with his Dark Shadow weakened immensely from the explosions Bakugo produced from his hands. It wasn’t long until the match went to Bakugo. It wasn’t a surprise to Izuku, who knew that it was likely that Tokoyami would lose due to his weakness to light sources. Izuku sat down on the seat behind him.

“Dang. I supposed that I shouldn’t have expected anything less. Who’s next, again? I wasn’t paying attention earlier.”

Iida and Uraraka followed suit, sitting on one side of Izuku. “It’s Tsu and that vine-hair girl!” Uraraka said. “This one’s going to be fun!” The atmosphere grew a little less tense, the friends delegating their mind to the fight in front of them.

Shiozaki and Tsu had an interesting fight. Tsu’s agility had her dodging left and right from Shiozaki’s vines. Shiozaki herself was having trouble in getting a grasp on her frog-like opponent, only being able to prevent Tsu from coming in too close. Tsu attempted to secrete her toxins across the battlefield, but it did little to affect Shiozaki since she was stationary and surrounded by her vines for the majority of the match. It was that factor that decided the match in Shiozaki’s favor, her personal fortress proving to be unable to be penetrated by Tsu.

Then Iida went down to have his match with Todoroki. The spectacle that came after showed that Todoroki was right in believing Iida to be amongst the most powerful in class. While Iida was holding his own against the ice-wielding Todoroki, Iida ultimately failed to his legs getting frozen. But at the cost of Todoroki growing even more tired and fatigued due to his ice.

That left Bakugo, Shiozaki, Todoroki, and Izuku himself as the semi-finalists. And it seemed that Todoroki’s icy fatigue would be working in Izuku’s favor.

Izuku had been making his way to his next match when a swath of his bugs came into focus onto the waiting form of Endeavor. The fire hero was leaning against the wall of the hallway that led to Izuku’s match, leaving out any potential ways Izuku could miss running into the Flame Hero. Seeing no way to avoid the upcoming confrontation, Izuku braced himself for the insured drama that was to come.

Turning the corner, Izuku could feel the inherent heat that emanated from the hero covered in his own flame quirk. When Izuku came into view, Endeavor focused his gaze, his eyes filled with an animalistic delight that his target had arrived.

“Ah, there you are,” came the gruff voice of Endeavor. “I’ve been waiting for you, kid.”

Izuku had never liked Endeavor. Despite the fact that he was the second best hero after All Might, Endeavor was aggressive, brash, rude, and — quite ironically — cold whenever he appeared in public. Never once had Izuku seen an honest smile on the man, and never had the media. It reminded Izuku too much of Bakugo after he had grown egotistical from his quirk.

And if any of the things Todoroki had said were true, (which Izuku was finding hard to refute) it didn’t paint a nice picture of the man who was known as Endeavor.

“Have you?” asked Izuku in a curt manner. “My apologies, then, if you’ve stood there too long. But… it makes me wonder. Shouldn’t you be on the other end of the stadium, cheering on your son, instead?”
The man let out a grunt of dismissal towards the comment. “I’m here for a similar reason. This is actually about my son, so in a way I am cheering him on. First, you must know; my Shoto serves a purpose. It is his destiny to surpass All Might.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes. “I’m aware of that,” he said.

“Oh? You do?” Endeavor chuckled. “Good! Then you must know that I am sincere when I say that I am grateful that you forced his fire out of him. Nobody that I’ve put him up against has ever done such a thing ever since he’s started up this rebellion of his. In fact, I was surprised when it was you who did it. I never would have thought that someone with a quirk like yours would ever be so useful.”

A few bugs began buzzing around Izuku. However, he held tight onto his control, subduing the bugs the were subconsciously reacting to Izuku’s emotions.

“Is that all?”

“Hmph. Not much of a talker, then? I suppose I’ll keep this short. You keep doing what you are doing. Shoto needs to learn that he needs his fire just as much as he needs his ice.”

Izuku took a deep breath. I can see why Todoroki was so mad before. This man is infuriating. Just talking to him makes me mad. Almost like my old principal. Great. He reminds me of two people that I despise.

“My apologies, Endeavor.”

“Huh? What for?” the hero asked.

“You ask of me something that I won’t do. But no matter what it looks like, just know that whatever I do out their will be to my own accord. I won’t follow the whims of someone like you.”

Endeavor narrowed his own eyes, but didn’t offer up anything further. Izuku simply walked past him, entering the stadium proper and making his way to the battlefield.

“And here we are, folks! Both are top contenders in their class, and both are equally as fearsome in their own right! Introducing Shoto Todoroki, son of Endeavor! And Izuku Midoriya, master of creepy crawly bugs! H— hey Shota! Hold up a—”

Across from Izuku stood Todoroki, still visually worn down from his previous fights. The bug Izuku had planted on his opponent was barely alive, clinging on to the boy despite the gradual decrease in his body temperature. The cold emanating off of Todoroki, plus the small flakes of ice that dotted his right side, made Izuku to believe that Todoroki’s quirk had a limit. Or, at least, that he needed both his fire and ice to cancel out the negative effects both quirks held when used individually. And considering Todoroki’s reckless and immediate attacks… With that, Izuku had a strategy in mind. Even if it was very likely he’d lose here. He felt his body twitch.

Izuku edged closer to the right of the battleground so that he was diagonal from Todoroki’s right. It would provide a little extra time for his first step of his plan. And then he planted the bug on Midnight, waiting for his cue.

Seconds passed. And then Midnight had barely had the “s” sound of “Start!” rolling off of her tongue when the bug on Todoroki felt the immediate drop in temperature. Izuku moved, zooming forward and to the left as fast as he could.

Todoroki’s stream of ice sprung itself up towards the corner of the field, slowly expanding in its
width as it was aimed towards where Izuku was last seen. The blast of ice shrouded the field, particles of snow and ice littering Todoroki’s already fading vision. The crowd gaped in awe yet again at the display of power, seconds going by in silence. Yet Midnight had yet to call the match.

Some in the audience some gasped in surprise at what they saw next. Emerging from different points from behind the icy attack, nearly a dozen human shaped swarm clones appeared, all in different stances and locations. The swarm was effectively spread out, with there being no way to take them all out at once with a single attack. And Todoroki knew that he couldn’t waste any of his attacks. The boy set in stone on only using his ice tensed up, awaiting for the swarm to converge on his position and trying to determine where the real Midoriya was on the battlefield.

“Todoroki.”

The boy immediately reacted to the voice, creating a wall twice as tall and four times as wide as where the voice originated directly behind him. The wall wasn’t something new to Todoroki, having been used in spars against opponents that attempted to attack as his defenseless back. But what Todoroki didn’t account for was the fact that the bugs could fly, and easily did so as they flew over the top of the wall.

The other swarms clones began to descend onto him, edging closer to his position at surprising speeds. Todoroki did the only thing that he could, and constructed a dome made of ice around himself, effectively cutting of any way of attack from the bugs.

“That’s all you have?” asked the swarm, slightly muffled through the ice, yet still audible enough to discern. “Surely you can do better than that? Perhaps… you should use your fire?”

A righteous fury filled Todoroku at the statement, his dome of ice exploding outward and scattering the bugs clone gathered outside it. “I will not use my right side to fight!”

Another swarm clone appeared and began to speak to Todoroki. “But why not?” Another blast of cold dispersed the clone into a cloud of bugs. The voice continued. “Surely you’d be much more powerful with your right? Why limit yourself? Why diminish the conflict?”

Another shape appeared, this time much more robust and eerily similar in shape to a similar Flame Hero. “Is it because of your father?” Another wave of ice crashed into figure, this time crushing a good majority of the bugs.

“What do you want, Midoriya!?!?” yelled Todoroki.

Another figure appeared, this one in the shape of Izuku himself. It tilted its head, gazing at Todoroki with two glowing eyes. “It’s rather simple, really,” came the voice, distorted yet recognisably Izuku’s. “Are you trying to become a hero, or not?” The ice rammed into the figure, the space once filled with bugs replaced with a glacier of ice.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean? Of course I am!” responded Todoroki, more of his ice beginning to encompass his right side.

Another Izuku copy came into formation, the bugs perfectly replicating Izuku’s physique, right down to his strands of hair. “And you plan on doing that with only your ice?”

Todoroki’s foot slammed onto the ground, a pillar of ice springing up around the bug clone, instantly killing all of the bugs. “I will not use my father’s power!”

The bugs neglected to take any form this time, simply amassing into an enormous, floating clump of
bugs. “Your father’s power?!” yelled the bugs. “Don’t give me that crap! Reject your father all you want!”

“You don’t understand!”

“Don’t I? Isn’t your quirk your own?!”

Todoroki stopped in his tracks, his mind recalling a different time in his life. Time seemed to stop. And then fire emerged from Todoroki’s left side, the sudden change in temperature turning many of the nearby bugs into a crisp.

“There we are!” came Izuku’s voice, this time without the distortion that came with using his bugs. Izuku — the real version of him — jumped out of his hiding place, removing himself from behind Todoroki’s initial wave of ice. An almost manic glee shone in his eyes, quite unlike the much more reserved Izuku most knew him as.

The bugs began swarming again, this time surrounding the battlefield in an enormous ring. A dozen or so more clones appeared, using their earlier tactics of spreading themselves out to avoid being decimated in one attack.

“Are you ready to fight?” asked Izuku.

Todoroki simply smirked. “Thank you, Midoriya.”

Each stared down the other, both too caught up in the moment to consider their actions. It took but a moment for the blast to shake the whole stadium.


“It was a freakin’ cool fight, that’s what!” yelled Ashido. “Todoroki was all ‘Blam!’ and ‘Fwoosh with his ice and then Midoriya was being all cool and crafty with his bug clones! Woohoo!”

“I don’t know about that,” Kaminari said in a much more reserved tone compared to Ashido’s upbeat attitude, interrupting the cheers amongst his class. “I still think that Mi—”

“Kaminari! Come on man,” berated Kirishima. “As my friend, I really mean it when I say that you need to back off on all that stuff regarding Midoriya. You’re the only one still caught up in all that stuff.”

“That’s not true and you know it, Kirishima!” Kaminari said. “I’m just the most overt in sharing and voicing my opinions regarding my worries!”

A few of those present in 1-A shuffled in their seats nervously. It may have been quite some time since U.S.J., but that didn’t mean that everyone just forgot about what happened regarding the swarm of bugs present during the time. Kaminari went on to continue his rant. “Midoriya is—OWW!!”

“Stop yelling, jamming-whey. We’re all sitting right next to each other,” Jiro said, retracting her ear jack from Kaminari’s side. “On the other hand, I still don’t understand this thing you have going on with Midoriya. He’s a cool dude. So what if he controls bugs? It wasn’t his fault, what happened at U.S.J. We all know that.”

Kaminari huffed in frustration. “I don’t know, okay? I just don’t feel safe around him, you know? I feel like he isn’t as stable as he seems. What’s stopping him from having one bad day away before he
loses control? Or if he decides to switch sides?"

Tsu hopped over, leaving her seat on the other side of the group due to having heard the conversation being held. Her tongue lashed out and smacked Kaminari in the head. “You still seem to be forgetting that he saved your from being disintegrated, kero. I think that you are associating Midoriya with your trauma, despite it spawning from the villains that attacked us.”

Kaminari froze up, the words penetrating his mind. “I— Well you know what? You saw what happened to all those villains! And their leader! What happened to that hand guy when Midoriya was knocked out? He got stung! Dozens of times! I’d be surprised if he still has his hands after all those bugs swarmed them!”

“Come on, Kaminari,” Mineta said from beside Kaminari. “Midoriya isn’t that bad. You should of seen him when I was stuck with him in that storm dome! He was like an actual hero then!”

Kaminari huffed in annoyance. “I’ll believe it when I see it.” He looked back at the field was beginning to take shape again. Todoroki and Midoriy each walked away surprisingly injury-free. On the other hand, the fight between Shiozaki and Bakugo was on the cusp of its start.

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“So you’re saying that the entirety of your class purposely strayed behind during the race?” Izuku asked, walking towards home after the Sports Festival.

“Mhm!” intoned Pony. “Well, the ones who could get away with it, at least. People like Shiozaki and Honenuki had to… couldn’t limit themselves of it would’ve been suspicious.”

“Especially to you,” Manga added, ignoring Pony’s stumble in words. “It was supposed to give our class an advantage over yours. But, well... you saw how that went.”

“What do you mean? I say it worked. Shiozaki got third place with me, after all,” Izuku said. “And she’s pretty nice. Pretty deserving of such an achievement, if I’d say so myself.”

“She is!” exclaimed Pony. “She was so cool. Too bad she lost to Explodey, though.”

“Nevermind that!” interrupted Mei, getting into Izuku’s face. “What do you think you were doing, fighting Glacierman back there? You could’ve been killed from that blast!”

“Hey, for your information, my bugs took the brunt of that attack. And as you can see,” Izuku waved around his arms, then motioned to his face, “I’m completely fine.”

“Doesn’t excuse the fact that you have a death wish! What were you thinking? You trying to deprive me of my only assistant?”

Izuku gave out a weak laugh. “Funny you should ask, since… I’m not really sure.” Izuku thought back upon those unexplained urges, and the unmistakable presence of something large, folding and unfolding unto itself for a profound expanse. Something’s… wrong with me.

“Izuku?” Pony said.

“Hmm?”

“You alright, buddy?” Manga asked.

“I… yeah. Yeah. Just some stuff that I need to think about. Don’t worry.”

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Aizawa excused the class from the next two days of school after the Sports Festival. What was meant to be a short reprieve proved to instead be filled with strife, Izuku spending most of the two days trying to figure out all the unknowns of his quirk. Hours of thought and he was no closer to an answer. There hadn’t been any reference of what he’d seen online, nor from any of the libraries.

Izuku was so enveloped in his research that he hadn’t even noticed the change in his daily route to school. Izuku let his bugs unconsciously lead him on his morning route. What was usually a struggle in making space for one’s self against the tide of early morning travelers turned into a very uneventful contest of space.

Unlike most days, Izuku’s immediate presence was void of others, most of the other passengers actively trying to avoid the green-headed boy. Unease was present in many of their faces, no doubt recognizing Izuku from the Sports Festival.

Izuku stayed oblivious, not breaking out of his stupor until he found himself in his seat within class 1-A, Aizawa at the front of the class talking about Hero Informatics and code names.

“As you can see here, these are the results of the Sports Festival,” the surprisingly bandageless Aizawa said.

The board lit up with a blue text, displaying the names of a select few accompanied by a bar that was followed by a number. At the top was Todoroki with a whopping 3,923 offers from hero agencies. Below that was Bakugo with 3,193 offers. The gap between offers increased drastically after; Tokoyami and Iida having a little over two hundred with a couple others ranking below that. Izuku noticed his own name appearing as well, a rather generous forty-seven offers having been made to him.

The display was followed by the entrance of Midnight into the classroom, the 18+ hero going on to explain that she was here to help the class pick the code names that would be used for the duration of the internships.

The process was going as well as Izuku expected — his classmates picking names that easily matched up with their quirks and personalities — until Iida, much more tense than even his usual self, got up to present his choice.

Ingenium? But isn’t that his brother’s name?

“What’s up with Iida?” Izuku asked to Uraraka. “He was missing during lunch, and then he just sped off when the bell rang. Did something happen?”

“You mean you haven’t heard? It was all over the news!”

“Um… no? I was… kind of busy over the break. Didn’t have any time to catch up onto any news.”

Uraraka sighed. “It’s… It’s about his brother. Something happened during the Sports Festival. That’s why Iida disappeared near towards the end.”


“He got attacked by the Hero Killer Stain. But he’s fine! Well, not really. Iida’s brother’s been
crippled, unlikely to run ever again.”

“Oh. Shoot. And I wasn’t even aware of it. You think—”

“He’ll be fine, Midoriya-kun. Or, at least, I hope so.”

Izuku sighed. “Sorry that I brought this up. It’s supposed to be happy and exciting and stuff with our hero names being chosen. And here I am reminding you of this when I could’ve just looked it up without having to invol—”

“Hey.” Uraraka interrupted. “It’s alright. Better you know than figuring it out later at a bad moment, right?”

“I… yeah. I suppose.” The moment was plagued with silence.

“Well then!” Uraraka said, her mood taking a complete 180. “It’s like you said, right? We’ll deal with it when it comes, right?”

“I didn’t—”

“Oi. Shush it, Dragonfly! Let’s just find the others, yeah? I have some things to talk about with Pony.”

“I…” Izuku chuckled. “Alright, Uravity. They should be at the front gate as usual.”

“Cool! Oh, oh!” jumped Uraraka. “Have you decided on an agency yet? I only got seven offers, but you got a whole bunch! Have you chosen between your forty-seven?”

“Mmm… Not entirely. But I do have a couple in mind.”

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty then! Internships and other things next time! Whose offer will be the one that Izuku will accept? And what about other butterflies? Still not so profound for now, but just you wait.

Next up, [Chapter 21 - Browbeat]!
Browbeat

Chapter Notes

Internships! Whose offer did Izuku choose? All will be found out!

Also, there are some other things aside from internship stuff in this chapter, but it’s not like any of that is important, right?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright. You all have your hero costumes?” The class responded in the affirmative to Aizawa’s question. “Good. Just remember that you can’t wear them in public, and that you don’t lose them. And be mindful of your manners towards the heroes at your internships. Now get on your respective trains. I’ll be seeing you all in a week,” informed Aizawa, walking off and leaving his class to their own devices.

Izuku was rather excited for his internship, having thought long and hard between all of his offers before choosing the hero he believed would help with improvement the most. As is, Izuku was still a bit sloppy in using his swarm while fighting hand-to-hand despite all the training he had with Kawabata. It wasn’t necessarily his technique, but more of his lack of mobility and focus in tandem with his swarm. Fighting with his eskrima sticks or with his body was already taxing enough, even if Izuku had already mastered such methods. It was the addition of his bugs — or rather, the strenuous tasks that were currently impossible to commit while fighting — that would require Izuku to split his consciousness between two things that required his focus. Something which his quirk seemed unwilling to do.

However, despite Izuku’s excitement for the upcoming week, there was another thing on his mind. And that thing had just sped off right past him without so much as a greeting, his face tense and bearing a small scowl.

“Iuraraka,” Izuku said, tugging on his friend’s sleeve.

“Hmm? What is it, Midoriya-kun?”

Izuku pointed in Iida’s direction.

“Oh,” Uraraka said. “We should—”

“Mhm. We should.” Izuku interrupted. Both he and Uraraka moved towards Iida, calling out his name in an effort to get him to stop. He did so quite promptly, turning around to eye his two friends.

“Midoriya, Uraraka,” he spoke in a curt greeting.

“Hey, Iida-kun,” Uraraka said. “Midoriya-kun and I just wanted to let you know that you can talk to us about anything on your mind, you know?”

Iida eyed the two of them, taking a moment to respond. “Of course. We’re friends after all.” Iida nodded. “But alas, we each have our own destinations to meet. I’ll be seeing you two in a week.” He turned, leaving the two behind.
As the two watched Iida leave, Izuku spoke. “Uraraka.”

“Yeah?” the girl asked, uncertain.

“You go on ahead. I’ll catch up with you in a moment. I have something else I need to do.”

“You sure?” she asked, tilting her head.

“Mhm. It’ll be just a second. I’ll greet you off before you leave.”

“I… alright then. Don’t take too long, okay?” She put in a small smile.

Izu waited watching Uraraka until her form disappeared behind the masses if the train station. It wasn’t long before he sped off towards the direction Iida had gone. Izuku’s bugs had been keeping track of the bespectacled boy, watching as he weaved through the crowds of the busy station.

It was a miniature swarm of flies that caught Iida’s attention, the bugs forming an arrow pointing behind him, directly towards the form of the approaching Izuku.

“Iida,” Izuku said.

Iida, already stopped, turned slightly to meet Izuku’s face. “Yes, Midoriya?”

Izuku hardened his stare. “You’re going to Hosu City, right?”

And there it was, a blink-and-you’ll-miss-it moment. A vengeful glare appeared on Iida’s face for a split second, his eyes eerily similar to Izuku’s own whenever he felt the thrill of going out on his vigilante runs. Iida’s destination and current demeanor all meant one thing to Izuku, and he wasn’t liking it one bit.

The look disappeared, replaced with something more annoyed than angry. “Of course. But you already know that. We talked about it not too long ago.”


“You’re making a mistake, you know?” Izuku intoned.

“Excuse me?” Iida said, his facade of calmness cracking ever so slightly.

Izuku walked forward, moving until he was right in front of Iida’s face.

“You’re being stupid, if you think you can go after the Hero Killer yourself,” Izuku said, barely over a whisper. “He’s killed countless of experienced heroes. What good would someone like you, who’s barely in his first year of high school, be in taking him down?”

All manner of calm had disappeared from Iida, his face flaring up in anger. “You don’t understand what he’s done!” his voice spoke in a harsh whisper. “My brother was a hero! He’s helped people all his life! And he could’ve helped countless more! And Stain took that away from him! I can’t forgive such a monster for something like that!”

A tic. Izuku’s face rolled into a scowl. “And your not all right in the head right now,” he insinuated, getting up in Iida’s face. “I don’t fucking care about your revenge fantasy. You do know that there’s a good chance of you dying out there if you truly commit to this, don’t you? And Izuku here will be all torn up if you’re going to just throw away your life like that!”

A look came into Iida’s eyes. “What!? What do you — No. No, nevermind. It doesn’t matter.” Iida
shoved Izuku away, looking at him with an intense glare. “I’m not having this conversation. Goodbye, Midoriya.”

Iida scampered off, showing no regard with what just transpired between he and Izuku.

As he watched, Izuku sighed, his resolve fading. He had done the best he could, really. He knew that Iida needed to figure out all of this stuff by himself; otherwise his grudge would just build up as resentment grew on those that prevented him from action. And Izuku didn’t want that for his friend.

But Izuku trusted Iida to do what was right. And it was a risk. A truly big risk, to think like that. Izuku hoped that he wouldn’t end up regretting his decision later.

Izuku laid back in his seat with his eyes closed, losing himself to the deep rumbling of the train car. He listened as it traveled over the tracks, barreling towards the city of Kyoto. The trip as so far had been fairly uneventful, Izuku having already exhausted his excitement by watching the world blurred past the open windows of the train. The few bugs he had within his influence were within his hair, but he’s already played with them enough to where they’d rather rest for the rest of the trip. So, the only thing left Izuku could do wait until he reached his destination.

Izuku spent the first half of the trip in this state, dazed and resting. He wasn’t until when a familiar voice came to reach the ears that Izuku stirred from this state.

“Oh ho ho! Now what do we have here? Hey there, bug boy~” came the provocative tone.

Izuku open his eyes. He was met with the face of the girl from the Sports Festival, the one who had a quirk that Izuku found eerily similar to his own.

“Oh! Uh— Hi! You’re from class 1-B, aren’t you? And we sorta met at the Sports Festival. Umm… Setsuna-san, right?” Izuku asked dubiously.

“Oh? We’re going by first names already?” she laughed. “I’m glad to know that I made such an impression already,” she said teasingly.

A look of horror came unto Izuku’s face. “I— that’s not—!”

Izuku took a second to get his bearings straight. “Why do I always get into these situations?” he said under his breath.

“Hmm?” the girl hummed with a smirk on her face. “What’d ya mean?”

“Nothing, nothing. It’s just.” Izuku shook his head. “So, umm…”


“Right. Well, umm…” Izuku cleared his throat, “Izuku Midoriya. Nice to meet you,” he said, holding out his hand.

“Well, Izuku,” she said, shaking the offered hand, “nice to meet you as well.” She immediately sat down next to him, bearing no heed to the abruptness of her actions.

Izuku laughed nervously. “Well then, Tokage-san,” Izuku said, ignoring the pout that came onto the girl’s face to the formality, “would I be right in saying that you’re getting off at Kyoto too?”

“Got it in one!” She laughed, her smirk still present. “However, if I’m gonna be honest, my guess is that Edgeshot is only interested in imparting his cool ninja skills onto us because he sees our potential
in reconnaissance.”

“That’s what I was thinking too. He probably saw the way you and I were shooting off our quirks left and right during the festival,” Izuku added.

“Oh right!” Tokage interrupted, her hands clapping together. “The Sports Festival!”

“The Sports Festival?” Izuku asked.

“Yeah, the Sports Festival! What’s with you, making that guy use his fire? You basically had the fight in the bag! You just had to go in for the kill, smack him right out of the ring, and blamo!” she admonished.

“That, is a good point, Tokage-san.” Izuku chuckled.

A confused look sprung up on her face. “Then why’d you do it?”

He shrugged. “Eh.”

“That’s it?”

“Mhmm.”

Tokage looked at Izuku with an expectant look, yet eventually deflated after it was obvious that he wouldn’t explain any further.

Izuku spoke after a minute. “On the other hand, you’re a recommendation student, aren’t you, Tokage-san?” Izuku asked, changing the subject.

“Why, I am!” she said, reverting back to her usual tone. “Why do you ask?”

“Hmm… Well, I was just wondering about your cavalry team. It had a very versatile setup in its own right. With you as ranged defense, Kendo in close combat, and Yaoyorozu and Manga as your variable artillery, I would have expected you guys to make it to the next round. Well, either yours or Shiozaki’s team. I guess Shinso really skewed the odds in his favor, then.”

“Oh, purple hair?” Tokage questioned. “Definitely. That Shinso guy screwed us over bad. One second we’re in third, and the next we’re in fifth! Your vice rep felt kinda bad afterwards since she was the one who handed over the headbands. She was blaming herself for our loss way after.”

“Really? Huh. I suppose that solves why Yaoyorozu’s been a bit less talkative lately. Usually she talks a whole bunch whenever we’re delegated to our duties as class representatives. I’ll have to check in on her when we get back.”

Izuku’s face adopted a thoughtful look. “Thanks for telling me about this, Tokage-san.”

Tokage let a a peevd whine. “You can just call me Setsuna, you know.”

Izuku nodded. “I’ll keep that in mind, Tokage-san,” he replied with a smile.

Tokage and Izuku found themselves led into a large, windowless, room by the secretary from the front entrance. Despite its dimmed state, it was obvious that the room was designed in a very traditional sense, taking the image of a dojo with wooden beams and pillars providing the structural integrity of the space.
When the door behind them slammed shut, the duo of students found that the secretary that had escorted them had disappeared, leaving them in the darkened space seemingly alone.

Tokage and Izuku looked at each other in confusion. Tokage was the first to break the silence. “Hello?” she spoke to the open air.

Utter silence.

But then, a voice.

“Welcome, Izuku Midoriya. Setsuna Tokage,” the voice reverberated throughout the room with no discernible origin. “I must say, I was quite impressed by both of your performances during the Sports Festival. You two used quite some intuitive tactics against you fellow classmates.”

Izuku sent a couple bugs towards the rafters. “Uh... thank you, Edgeshot. But umm... where are you?”

“Think of this... as a test,” the hero said calmly.

“A test?” Tokage questioned.


Izuku’s bugs found something. He nudged Tokage beside him, gaining her attention. “Eighth beam to the right,” Izuku whispered, motioning towards Edgeshot’s location.

She nodded. A bit of her body broke off ever so slightly, ready to move at a moment’s notice.

“Don’t think that I don’t see those bugs, Midoriya. But, it does seem that you have found me. A little under thirty seconds since you sent up your bugs. Not a bad time. Prepare yourselves, now.”

A long, thin shape launched itself from the darkness, moving at a speed nearly untraceable to the average person. But lucky for the two heroes-in-training below, their trained reflexes and Izuku’s bugs gave way to an early warning.

Tokage split into a myriad of pieces to evade the speedy form of Edgeshot, the independent parts zooming into different directions. The end result was her being relatively safe from Edgeshot. It wasn’t the same for Izuku.

In front of Izuku sprung Edgeshot, immediately engaging in combat as soon as he deactivated his quirk. Izuku barely blocked the hero’s first strike with his arm, and barely did so with the second strike that came afterwards.

A barrage of Tokage’s pieces launched themselves at Edgeshot, yet were easily dodged when the hero folded himself inwards. A few of the pieces instead found their target in Izuku, the boy falling over due to the sudden attack.

“Sorry, Izuku!” came the voice of Tokage.

Edgeshot came into his normal form in an instant, swiping away at the three pieces of Tokage that came to his position. The pieces ended up slashed and in pieces, falling to the ground in a crumpled state. “I’ve read up on the both of you,” came Edgeshot.

“Tokage; you can deconstruct yourself to about fifty or so different pieces. Your pieces regenerate,
which means that I can hack away at them all I want. A simple a war of attrition.” Five more pieces came at Edgeshot, and another two fell to the ground useless. “They move to your will and at quite high speeds. And their impacts are fairly strong considering their size.”

Izuku launched himself at Edgeshot, this time aiming to land a hit with a barrage of fist and elbow strikes. Edgeshot spoke as he blocked and countered every attack. “Midoriya. Fine bug control, but really only useful when bugs are accessible. And I cleaned this room out, as you might have noticed. And there are no windows. No vents, either. Which means that you are limited to what you have on you.”

A sweep was made at Edgeshot’s legs. He retaliated by folding himself and reforming to Izuku’s side, grabbing his leg mid-kick and pulling him to the ground. “Proficient at hand-to-hand, but not a master. My first piece of advice; don’t use a kick unless your opponent for sure can not grab at your leg.”

Ten pieces launched themselves at Edgeshot this time, coming in from two directions. Four were lost, and one managed to hit Edgeshot, though seemingly did little damage.

Then the attacks suddenly stopped. Tokage’s attacks ceased, and Izuku had disappeared from the spot where he laid on the ground.

Edgeshot looked around the room, yet didn’t spot any obvious signs of the duo. He began stalking forward in search of the students. “What happened?” he asked. “You two came up with another strategy?”

Edgeshot had passed his third pillar when three pieces of Tokage came barreling towards his back. The hero immediately turned to swipe at the floating chunks, hearing the incoming projectiles, but suddenly found his vision to be blocked by a small cloud of bugs. He jumped to the side, removing a small orb from his waist. The orb expanded, and was launched from his hand towards the bugs. This was done at the same moment Izuku launched himself from behind a pillar, his fists connecting to the pro hero’s sides. Then Izuku was met with a harsh, blinding light of a flashbang, the bugs dying in the explosion of light as well. A kick pushed Izuku away.

“And now you’re without your bugs, Midoriya. But a nice job anyhow. I see that Kawabata still teaches his students well.”

Izuku’s eyes widened in surprise. “You know Ka—” Izuku’s words were interrupted by the sudden emergence of Edgeshot in front of him. The hero grabbed Izuku, placing a kunai against the nape of his neck. Izuku tensed.

Edgeshot eventually lowered the weapon. “Good job, you two. Not bad. You can come along now, Tokage. The test is over.”

The girl in question reformed in front of Edgeshot, her individual pieces converging together into place. She was missing half of her face, a bit of her torso, and most of her left arm, yet the smirk on her face was still present. “That was pretty exciting, Edgeshot, sir,” she said.

“Exciting indeed,” Edgeshot responded. “You certainly surpassed my expectations. Both of you were able to land a few good hits on me.”

“Tokage-san,” Izuku interrupted, looking over to his fellow student, “are you really okay like that?”

She chuckled. “What, this?” she motioned to her missing bits with her single arm. “This is nothing. It’ll all grow back in a couple hours. I’m glad that you care enough to ask, though. Such a
“He heh,” came the anxious laugh of Izuku. “Anyways!,” Izuku startled, facing Edgeshot. “You said that you know Kawabata-sensei?”

Edgeshot gave a short laugh. “Of course. I was under his tutelage for a bit. He was quite something back in his prime.”

“Really? And I thought he was just an old martial arts instructor.”

“Oh, but he is. But he’s also a bit more,” Edgeshot added cryptically. “But enough of that. I say you two are ready.”

“Ready?” Tokage questioned. “Ready for what?”

“Why, our first patrol, of course.”

“First patrol?” asked Izuku, rather calm at hearing the words. “Huh. Didn’t see that coming.”

“Didn’t think that either of you would,” admitted Edgeshot. “But you two are ready, I can assure you. Your performance just proved that. Now, you two rest up. I want you both in tip-top shape by 10:00 p.m. sharp.”

“We’re meeting one of my sidekicks here, so don’t be too jumpy now,” Edgeshot spoke to his two younger interns.

Izuku and Tokage — or rather, Dragonfly and Lizardy now — nodded in response. The two mostly milled about, eyeing the skyline and watching for their meetup.

Tokage’s attire, which consisted of a skin tight mass of sewn together scales, didn’t do well to ease Izuku’s anxiety. As such, the boy spent an inordinate amount of time negating his gaze away from the girl and her reptilian-based costume.

Around ten minutes passed until another figure landed on the rooftop. A small cloud of dust and trash launched themselves into the air as he landed. The young man sported a form fitting costume, skin tight and colored in black with grey squares dotting its entirety. He was massively buffed up, his body almost matching in the size and shape of All Might himself.

However, as he trudged forward towards the other three gathered, his body slowly shrank in size, turning into a much more normal figure that you’d expect from the average person.

“You found him?” Edgeshot asked.

Edgeshot’s sidekick nodded. “I did. Two blocks down. In the toy factory,” he said.

“Heh. Good,” Edgeshot praised. He then turned, motioning towards his interns in an effort to give his sidekick notice of them. “And here are the interns that I said would be joining us tonight.”

The other figure looked at the other two, staring in scrutinization until he spoke. “Call me Highbrow.”

“Oh! Umm… I’m Dragonfly, then. Pleasure to meet you,” Izuku greeted.

“Ditto! Lizardy, at your service!” swayed Tokage.
Highbrow merely nodded, turning back around towards the edge of the roof. Izuku watched in fascination as Highbrow slowly grew in height and muscle, reverting back to the form that he initially came with.

“Wow! Some sort of muscle augmentation?” Izuku mused.

“It’s actually a type of self-enhancing biokinesis, from what he’s told me.” Edgeshot said, appearing beside the hero in training. “It allows him to reshape his body to suit combat situations. Subdermal bone plating, increased muscle and the like. It creates a strong synergy with his other power.”

A strange look appeared onto Izuku’s face. “Other power? He has two quirks?”

“In a way,” Edgeshot spoke with nonchalance. “He also has a form of telekinesis. Tactile in the sense; reinforced punches, durability.”

“Isn’t that strange?” Tokage asked. “Have there ever even been people with two quirks?”

“It’s very unusual,” Izuku chimed in. “I mean, there’s Todoroki back at our school, but he’s sort of a special case. His fire and ice relate, kinda like thermodynamics. But I’m not seeing any relation between telekinesis and body morphing.”

“I’m not entirely too sure of it myself,” Edgeshot admitted. “Neither is Highbrow. What we do know is that he isn’t the first. There have been others before him.”

“Huh,” Izuku plainly stated.

“Indeed. But it isn’t as if I’m complaining. His quirks allow him to be the muscle on my team. He takes on the more physical threats, like the one we’re aiming for tonight.”

“Centaur.” Izuku clarified.

“Yes. Now come, we need to head to the factory before he moves.” Edgeshot jumped off the roof to the next building over. He was followed by Highbrow, the man leaping with an enhanced jump to the next roof.

Izuku and Tokage looked at each other, then followed suit not long after.

Izuku landed on the roof with a soft thud, his body rolling into his momentum. Tokage appeared not too far behind him, her floating pieces converging back together into her whole body. Edgeshot looked over at them and nodded.

“I’ll go on ahead, draw him out.” Highbrow interrupted, jumping off the roof not long after.

“I— is that really okay? Highbrow doesn’t have to go down there, really. Both Lizardy and I could both draw Centaur out without getting in harm’s way,” Izuku asked.

Edgeshot gave a short laugh. “Oh, he’ll be fine. Besides, he won’t like the help. He likes to have bouts of time alone with Centaur as they fight. Highbrow gets really agitated when others butt in.”


“The two of them each have this ongoing grudge. It’s rather unhealthy, if you’d ask me, but we only have to worry about that as long as Centaur’s out there roaming the streets. Hopefully by tonight we can finally corner him.”
“Don’t worry Edgeshot!” exclaimed Tokage. “We’ll do the best we can.”

“And I wouldn’t expect anything less. But enough about that. Pop quiz for both of you, to see if you were paying attention during the briefing. What do you know about Centaur?”

“Oh oh! I got it,” Tokage cheered. She cleared her throat. “Centaur has a transformation quirk. He morphs into a ugly looking monster-thing made of pinkish flesh. The legs also grow a bit, but mostly to the point to where the added strength is able to support his enlarged torso and his giant arms. The spines on his, well, spine can also be launched from his body, but they take a while to grow back.”

“Good,” Edgeshot said. “What—” A giant explosion rocked from inside the factory down below. The shockwave knocked Izuku and Tokage off their feet. Edgeshot remained standing eerily still.

“Holy shit!” exclaimed Tokage.

“Shoot. Is Highbrow alright?!” Izuku asked.

“He’s fine, don’t worry,” said Edgeshot calmly. “We’re doing something else right now though, don’t worry about him. What else is there about Centaur?”

“Oh… umm… His punches!” Izuku said, somewhat reluctantly.

“And what about them?”

“Oh, uh, they sort of have this type of force behind them. They knock you back even if they don’t hit, almost as if the punch really had connected. It gives him some fairly decent ranged capabilities aside from those spines of his. He also moves pretty quickly for someone of his size, too.”

Another explosion rocked the building below. However, this time came forth the monstrous form of Centaur as he was launched through the wall of the factory out into the open air. He stood just over a whole story tall, his miniature face and normal-sized legs nonbefitting of his monstrous form.

“Ah, that’s our cue. Good job you guys, looks like we covered everything. Let’s head down, I think I’ve given Highbrow enough fun.” Edgeshot leaped off the ledge, joining the ensuing fight.

“Ah, Edgeshot! I should’ve known you weren’t too far behind!” bellowed the deep, gargling voice of the monstrous creature below. “Looks like I’ll be able to play with you and kill Highbrow all in one night!” he laughed.

“Hey!” yelled Highbrow, getting up from one of Centaur’s attacks. “Get back over here! I wasn’t finished with you yet! I’m gonna pulverize you into a fine paste!”

“Like hell you are!” retorted Centaur. “When I’m done with you, there won’t even be anything left to bury!”

Chunks of concrete and the sounds of battle continued below The roof where Dragonfly and Lizardy stood remained untouched as the two watched on in awe and slight fear.

“Well… Alright then, Dragonfly. You have experience in fighting villains. What do you propose we do?” asked Tokage.

“Huh? Experience? What Experience?” Izuku said, panicked, thinking back to his more recent fight with that knife-wielding girl.


“You’re all gonna die!” roared the villain.

“Umm… we run interference?” proposed Dragonfly, a bit uncertain.

“Like hell I am! You’re dying first!” exclaimed Highbrow.

“Umm, sure. Okay,” replied Lizardy.

Chapter End Notes

And so we have Izuku interning at Edgeshot’s agency. And with Setsuna too. What else is there to be? Heh, we’ll see.

And remember Worm! This fic has elements based off of that story, so maybe give it a go if you like what’s here. In short: It’s Great!

Ahem. On the other hand, the internship will continue next chapter. I have a bit more in store for the occasion, so stayed tuned!
A little bit more of the internship, and then a some events to spice things up back at U.A. On a side note, my apologies if the jumps in between scenes seem a bit too rough. I personally had that impression when I wrote this, and I couldn’t really find a way around it. They are necessary, however, because otherwise I feel like there’d be a bunch of filler if I didn’t skip around.

“Are you sure that he’s going to be okay?” Izuku asked, looking at the deformity in the ground.

The question came out as a byproduct of the battle’s end. The fight was long over, with Centaur having taken a full retreat by disappearing into the sewers. Despite his size, he was fairly swift, and was easily able to shrink down in order to evade capture.

The actual battle spanned for quite a while. It was true that Izuku and Tokage could do little to the hulking beast that beared arms the size of small vans. It didn’t matter that the rest of Centaur’s body looked normal, his skin — or rather, hide — proved to hold strong against most attacks thrown at him.

The man’s punches proved it difficult to approach him, and his hulking strength would debilitate others in an instant. It was only as he steadily lost ground in the battle of attrition that Centaur left. The fight resulted in only a few minor injuries, with nothing too serious. The most anyone came to harm was Tokage with her missing limbs. And so now, the heroes were simply waiting for the police to arrive so they could give their statements.

However, there was still the deformity to consider. The defacement in the pavement was a fairy deep hole in the ground. Pieces of rubble had filled up the space around halfway, the aftermath of the as of now concluded battle between Centaur and Highbrow. The latter was buried deep under the rubble, lodged there by Centaur.

Izuku and Tokage had previously attempted to remove the rubble, yet Edgeshot had stopped them before they could begin.

“Oh, definitely,” Edgeshot spoke in response to Izuku’s concern. “Highbrow’s fought plenty of villains with monstrous transformation and mutation quirks. There was even a time when he nearly got pulverized by Godzillo.”

“Godzillo?” Tokage asked, standing to the side. She was missing both her arms this time, but was otherwise in fine condition. “But isn’t he a hero? Why would he and Highbrow be fighting?”

“Maybe… Oh!” Izuku exclaimed. “I remember hearing about the hypnotic villain, um, Hypno! He tagged a bunch of heroes with his power a while back. Godzillo was one of them. Are you referring to that incident, maybe?”

Edgeshot nodded. “Indeed I was. That’s why I know he’ll be fine. He’s already fought what is essentially a kaiju capable of bringing down islands. And, well, he survived, didn’t he?”
An uncertain look appeared on Izuku’s face. “But shouldn’t we at least try to help him out?”

“Nope. He’ll hate it, trust me. Just as bad as butting into any fights with Centaur. Besides, he’s probably not in the best of moods right now. Best not disturb him lest you aim to be a target.”

A figure suddenly burst from the hole, form all bulky and bearing muscles up in a predatory stance. “Centaur! Where the hell did you go?!” screamed Highbrow.

“He’s gone, Highbrow,” Edgeshot informed his sidekick. “He got away again.”

The sidekick roared in fury, letting out his anger on a nearby sign post.

Edgeshot, Izuku, and Tokage watched on in interest.

“Heh. Told you,” said Edgeshot.

A couple days in and there was still no sign of Centaur. Edgeshot’s agency and the police searched far and wide, yet the search proved fruitless. Wherever the villain had went seemed secluded enough that it would hide him for some time.

Edgeshot eventually called the search off for his team, despite the begrudging attitude of Highbrow. Edgeshot then delegated himself to the further teaching of his interns. And that’s where Izuku was now.

Izuku zoomed out from behind a pillar, aiming to strike the unsuspecting Edgeshot who was two pillars down. Izuku’s fist was met with Edgeshot’s open hand; the hand tightened its hold around the closed fist and threw Izuku away to the side.

“Too loud. Too slow,” Edgeshot berated, his eyes covered by a blindfold. “You need to learn to fight without your bugs, just in case. You can’t rely on them all the time.”

Izuku spun back up, closing in again at his current teacher. Two of his five punches hit their mark, one connecting to Edgeshot’s side and another in his chest. Edgeshot retaliated with a harsh kick to Izuku’s chest, sending him backwards. Izuku wheezed on the ground, kneeling to catch his breath.

“Come on, Izuku! You can get ‘em!” cheered on Tokage.

“Shut it, Tokage,” the cloud of bugs next to her said.

“You got it, Izuku!” she replied, nonplussed.

Izuku then took out his eskrima sticks, but those too were parried by Edgeshot, the hero’s dagger rising to meet Izuku’s weapons. The hero smiled. “We on to weapons now, eh?”

The two exchanged a flurry of strikes, each of their own landing hits. But a large gap of experience separated the two, and it showed. Once again Izuku was on the ground, panting.

“Good job, Midoriya,” Edgeshot praised, removing his blindfold. “ Eleven total strikes. Sixteen hits is what I’d expect from someone with your skill level, give or take. But we can build upon that over the week.”

“Really?”
“Mhm. If you were using your bugs, I’d say that you would have a decent chance of beating me. But,” a pause, “that wasn’t the point of the exercise. As such, I do have one suggestion. Cushion the soles of your feet more. They’d quiet your steps immensely.”

Izuku reacted to this, patting his feet on the ground. Izuku noticed to audible pitter-patter as his feet hit the wooden floor. “Oh! Okay then, Edgeshot. I’ll keep that in mind for the next design. I’ll, uh, I’ll head back to the rest area for now.”

“Good,” Edgeshot nodded. He looked towards the aforementioned area, then turned back to Izuku to speak. “Make sure you send Tokage over when you get there, she seems a bit busy. I’m going to refresh up on my equipment. And take a bathroom break.”

Shaking his head, Izuku made his way towards Tokage. However, unlike before, Izuku found her staring at her phone in a sort of reserved bewilderment.

“What is it?” he asked.

“Hmm?” Tokage hummed, looking up from her phone. Izuku in turn motioned to her device.

“Oh,” she breathed. “It’s uh… There was a big villain attack not too long ago. In Hosu.”

“Hosu?” Izuku asked quickly. “What happened?”

“That’s where Iida went to search for Stain.

“A bunch of property damage,” Tokage said. “Fire and stuff everywhere. Apparently they even found Native dead in a back alleyway. They say it has Stain’s handiwork all over it.”

Buzz.

“Stain?” Izuku questioned, confused. Iida. “But he only goes after heroes. What’s with all the property damage?”

Buzzing.

“Ah, that. They’re—” Tokage took a look around her, flinching a bit. “They’re saying that it was the those League fellas your class met back at U.S.J,” Tokage clarified. “It was kind of obvious given the three or so creatures with exposed brains.”

“There are more of them?!” Izuku exclaimed. “There can’t be! The last one nearly took down All Might! And— And Hosu! That’s where—”

Buzzing.

“Whoa, whoa!” Tokage cried out, placing her hands on Izuku’s shoulders. “Just breath. In and out. Calm down, you’re fine.” Tokage repeated the words to Izuku, becoming a sort of mantra.


Izuku’s breath slowed down, degrading to a much more normal rate. When did that happen?

“Sheesh man, you need to relax,” Tokage chastised. “They were pretty weak, apparently,” she added. “Endeavor got two of them himself.”

Izuku took another deep breath. The bugs around them calmed. “Endeavor, eh?” Izuku gave out a quiet laugh. He sighed. “Thank you for that, Tokage-san. I’m probably… just overreacting, is all.”

“Tokage—”

“Hmm…?” the girl hummed.

“I—Okay. Alright, To-ka-ge-chan,” Izuku emphasized.

Tokage blinked. Then her signature smirk bloomed upon her face. “Now that’s what I call progression! I’ll take it for now, but you better start calling me by my first name by the end of the week!”

Izuku nodded. “Sure, Tok—”

“Tokage, where are you?!” the voice of Edgeshot rang out.

Both of the two turned their heads at the voice. They both saw Edgeshot with his blindfold already on.

“I can tell that you aren’t within the boundaries that we set up. You aren’t still at the sidelines, are you?” questioned the hero.

“Oh, shoot!” Izuku exclaimed. “I forgot to tell you that it’s your turn!”

“Bah, it’s fine, Izuku,” Tokage said. “I just—”

“Tokage,” Edgeshot stretched out, “I’m going to ramp up the difficulty if you aren’t here in a minute. Maybe a few more added blades to my arsenal?”

Tokage sighed. “We’re gonna have a hell of a week, eh, Izuku?” She then turned to leave, but not before giving the boy a wink.

Izuku watched as his fellow classmate scampered off, resigning himself to whatever the next week was going to bring.

The doors to the train car opened with a loud hiss, its various passengers getting off the train as others took their place. A certain duo of heroes-in-training were no different, the two making their way through the crowd until they finally found a quiet reprieve in an unoccupied corner of the station.

“Whoo! That was quite a trip, eh, Izuku?”

At the voice, Izuku connected to the various bugs within his surroundings, sending them out to find any familiar faces. Still, he managed to share his own — if somewhat mild — enthusiasm with his friend. “Sure was! We certainly learned a lot from Edgeshot,” Izuku responded with a reminiscent look.

A couple hits. That green kid from 1-B who could produce blades. Ojiro having a chat with… Hagakure... Probably.

“Oi! Is that all you care about? Edgeshot gave us a whole day off to explore! What about the sights? The bamboo forest! The cherry blossoms! The temples!”
“Those we cool too,” Izuku added.

“Pfft. Somehow, I don’t believe you.” Setsuna wrapped around an arm around Izuku’s neck, drawing him close. “You were too focused on getting some wasps from that hive we found.”

“Was not! The temples were cool! I found a few stink bugs nearby!”

“Ya see?” Setsuna chuckled. “Ah, it’s not like it mattered. I sure as hell know that the trip wouldn’t have been the same without you. It wouldn’t have had that same spark of excitement.”

A smile formed onto Izuku’s face. “You say that, but I know that you just liked the challenge I provided during our spars.”

There was Jiro having just arrived from what looks like Nara. Then there’s Ms. Kobayashi from the apartment above us, that old lady who runs the flower shop— Ah, there we are.

“Oi,” Setsuna muttered.

Izuku chuckled. “It was fun, Setsuna. But, I’ve got to go.”

“Aw, so soon?”

“Yeah, sorry. I’ll be seeing you.”

And that smirk was back on her face. “But of course! You can’t avoid since we go to the same school, afterall!”

Izuku waved one final goodbye before disappearing into the crowd. A part of Izuku made him feel a bit guilty at leaving Setsuna behind so abruptly, but Izuku had something he had to do.

As Setsuna’s presence moved farther away, Izuku’s bugs began coalescing to stalk their target. Izuku slowly brushed his way past the crowds, matching his pace with the other boy that he was watching with his bugs.

When the boy stopped, Izuku prompted his bugs away. He then made his way to his destination, revealing himself to his friend.

“Iida.”

The bespectacled turned to look at looked Izuku, his face morphing to hold a small amount of surprise, and then later shame, at the sight of the other.

“Midoriya,” Iida said.

Izuku let a pause hang in the air before he spoke again. “I heard about what happened in Hosu.”

Iida blinked. “Yes,” he said slowly. “It was… quite a disaster. Luckily there weren’t too many casualties, despite the presence of all the Nomu from the League.”

“That so?” Izuku questioned. “I’m glad to hear it. Especially since Stain is still roaming around freely. He could have easily struck down a number of other people.”

A gulp visibly appeared on Iida’s neck.”Indeed,” he spoke.
Izuku nodded. “I’m glad to see that you’re alright, Iida.”

Iida turned away at the proclamation, averting his gaze off to the side. It took him a few moments before he turned his head back towards his friend and forms his thoughts into words.

“I— I apologize for my earlier actions, Midoriya. I admit that I may have been a bit... rash during our last encounter. But I see now that I was entirely at fault with my grudge.”

Iida took a breath, “I... I almost abandoned civilians when the fires broke out, you know? I was going to go look for Stain, but then I remembered what you’d said, and the civilians... I was ashamed at myself.”

Izuku slowly nodded. “I understand, Iida. Izuku patted Iida’s arm in a comforting gesture. “What’s important is that you made the right decision. You saved civilians from the fires, stopped them from being killed by the Nomus.”

“But...” Iida started, “was it really alright? In the back of my mind I was still... I— I may have been able to find Native. Maybe then he would’ve—”

“You would of what, Iida?” Izuku interrupted. “Maybe you’d be killed just after Stain plunged a sword straight through you heart? Or you’d die when Stain would cut off your head? We all know that Stain is powerful. Plustorm, Dargan, Wrench: all heroes who’ve meant their end by Stain’s blade. You would have ended up dead in that alley along with Native. And if that happened, who would’ve carried on your brother’s legacy then?”

Iida sighed. “Yeah. Yeah, you’re right, Midoriya.”

A smile came onto Izuku’s face. “It’s alright, Iida. What matters is that you came out all right in the end. Otherwise... heh. Who knows what would have happened?”

“I haven’t studied at all!” screeched Kaminari.

It had been a week since the internships had ended, and everything back in class 1-A had gone relatively back to normal. Kaminari’s apparent distress was in response to Aizawa, who had just renotified the entire class of the upcoming finals. The blond’s yell was enough to spark the panic of many others in the class as well.

Izuku, on the other hand, was relatively calm. He wasn’t worried about the upcoming exams as much as his more outspoken peers, and he’d only need to spend some time reviewing the material he’d learned in class. The rest of his time would be spent scouting out the city for crime with his bugs.

As the rest of the class stirred to leave, Izuku split his attention. On one hand, he began packing up his things, methodically putting away his notebooks into his backpack. A few wasps came out and grab his pencils for him, which Izuku graciously took. Another part of his mind focused on counting his bugs — seeing how many bugs within his three block radius had died, how many had been born, and where’d they’d moved since the day had begun. He took a pause, however, when he noticed Yaoyorozu standing beside his desk.

“So what do you say?” she asked.

Izuku looked at her, confused. “Huh? About what?”

“Umm... About this weekend?” she supplied.
“I, uh, sorry. I wasn’t listening,” Izuku admitted sheepishly. “I was with my bugs. Didn’t even notice you standing there until now, actually. Could you repeat what you said?”

Yaoyorozu nodded. “Of course. It’s no problem, Midoriya. You’ve already told me how it is when you get all absorbed scrying with your bugs, after all,” she said with a slight smile. Izuku chuckled a bit at his own expense in response.

“Anyhow,” Yaoyorozu continued, “I told the class that I’d be holding a study session over at my house this weekend. It’s in order to help those who are... a bit behind in their own studies. I’d rather that our classmates not fail the exams so they can experience the summer camp with us, you know?”

Izuku nodded.

“Right,” Yaoyorozu said. “Now, the thing is, I know that I’d be able to handle it myself, that’s not in question. But in that instance I’d have to divide my attention between everyone that shows up. I... guess I’m just afraid that I wouldn’t be enough for them. And I would love it if you’d be available to help out.”

Izuku tilted his head to the side. “Help? With a study group? You think I’m qualified?”

“Of course! I’ve seen your grades during those times Aizawa has us filing and recording scores. Your near the top of the class just like me. And you’re the Class Rep! You’re entirely capable of doing this.”

“...”

“Midoriya?”

“Sure. I’ll commit to it, I suppose. But only because you think I’m capable of it, Yaoyorozu.”

“Great!” she exclaimed. “Now, we’re going to hold it on Saturday. That way everyone will be able to retain all the information for the exams. We’ll be going over English and—” Her phone made a noise then, and Yaoyorozu looked at the message that popped up.

“Oh!” she said. “I’ve got to go now, so I’ll give you all the information tomorrow. I wouldn’t want to leave Mr. Hinami waiting out by the front gates for too long. Last time he did that a whole bunch of people crowded around the limo to ask about it.”

Limo? Izuku shook his head. Makes sense, actually. The Yaoyorozu family is pretty influential, after all.

“Bye, Midoriya!”

I suppose that I can hold a study session. It can’t be too hard. Besides, I still haven’t had the chance to talk to Yaoyorozu about the Sports Festival. Actually, the class is empty now, so I could just—

“She already left.”

“Ah.”

Chapter End Notes
So there was a bit skipping around, sure. I found it necessary, though. Next chapter will be a bit more coherent and closer together in scenes. Though, I suppose that just makes sense since up next are the exams.

Well, see you all next time!
Better stuff this time around, me thinks. Final exams, study sessions... inklings of the teacher battles. Heh, you'll all have to see. Now, on to Coil!

The gates to the Yaoyorozu mansion were quite a sight to see. The wrought iron fence at its front towered above the neatly trimmed hedges, its ornate design fitting right in to such a high end residence. Izuku would admit, the impression that the mansion gave off was a bit daunting, especially when he considered the sheer size of the lot. With his bugs, Izuku noticed that the building and its accompanying yard stretched out for a fairly long distance; he estimated it laying around 40,000 square feet in total.

He was so impressed with the luxurious size of the mansion that he nearly missed the voice that came out of the miniature speaker positioned on the brick pillar next to the gates.

“Excuse me, sir. May I help you?” came the low, monotonous voice.

Izuku only then noticed the camera positioned at the gate’s upper arch, realizing that whoever was on the other side had been watching him gawk at the mansion for the past minute.

“I, uh—” Izuku cleared his throat. “Yes, sir. I’m here to see Miss Yaoyorozu. I, umm... I’m here to help out with the study session that she’s holding for our class.”

“Ah, yes. The young heiress told me that you would be coming. Izuku Midoriya, correct?”

“Yes sir.” Izuku nodded.

To his side, the massive gates opened, the two doors slowly parting ways.

“Please proceed to the foyer, sir. And please don’t wander around on the way. I will know if you decide to do so.”

Izuku promptly followed the voice’s wishes, only taking the time to appreciate the topiaries as he passed them by on his way to the entrance. Despite the long stretch of the cobblestone path, it wasn’t long before he had reached the large, red doors. He had barely raised his fist to knock before the door opened, revealing a stout, grey-haired man in clothes befitting of a butler.

However, Izuku’s eyes widened with recognition as he looked at the man’s face. The bushy eyebrows and drooping mustache were things Izuku having seen previously the other day. His bugs had picked up on the man’s face through the windshield of the limousine Yaoyorozu had used to go home.

“Oh! Your Mr. Hinami-san! A pleasure to meet you sir!” Izuku exclaimed, raising his hand out in a gesture to shake hands.

The man didn’t show any sort of response on his face, but he did take the offered hand in a curt handshake after a moment. He then immediately turned, motioning Izuku to follow.
The walk was short, ending with the two stopping in front of a door just further ahead of the foyer. What Izuku didn’t expect was for the man to open said door, revealing what was obviously a cleaning supplies closet, and motioning for Izuku to enter.

“Umm… You want me to go… in there?” Izuku asked.

Mr. Hinami nodded. “After you. I’ll follow you shortly after.”

Izuku hesitated for a second, but decided to follow the man’s word. Indeed, after Izuku had entered the rather spacious closet, so did Mr. Hinami. He then silently closed the door, his hand remaining on the doorknob for a few seconds.

A purple light shone from the edges of the door, basking the cramp closet in its hue. Shortly after, the light faded, prompting Mr. Hinami to open the door.

Izuku fell into a slight daze, his balance a bit off and his mind in a mix. It didn’t help that he had the need to reposition himself, for whatever had happened had shifted their position further into the mansion. Izuku could tell, as the bugs in the walls that he’d been monitoring had suddenly moved much further away from where he was previously.

And indeed, when the dazed Izuku was guided out of the closet by Mr. Hinami, it was quite obvious that the hallway they were in was quite different, the space holding a few paintings on the walls rather than the pottery that were held on stands from before.

“It will wear off shortly, sir. Come along now, Madam Yaoyorozu is waiting in the dining room.

It’d be best not to keep her waiting.”

The walk turned out to be another one one, Mr. Hinami walking a few steps forward to open a set of double doors leading to the aforementioned dining room.

“Madam Yaoyorozu,” announced Mr. Hinami, “one of your guests has arrived.”

The announcement spurred Yaoyorozu from her seat at the ornate table, spinning around to see Izuku. “Midoriya!” she greeted. “Glad you could make it!”

Yaoyorozu then turned her attention to her butler. “You can go ahead now, Hinami-san,” she said. “I can handle it from here.”

The man nodded in response, wordlessly turning to face the double door. Unlike last time, he merely placed a hand on one of the doors, the purple light shining yet again. Opening only the right door, the man stepped through into a room filled with screens. A low hum of electronics filled the air, but gradually faded away as the door to the room closed.

“Is that his quirk?” Izuku asked, still somewhat lightheaded.

“Yup!” Yaoyorozu said. “It’s called [Doorway]. Allows him to travel between any two doorways he’s been to before. Quite useful for a place this big, even if it kind of makes any first time passengers feel a bit woozy.” She then looked at Izuku. “You alright?”

Izuku gave a slight nod. “I’ll be fine.” He then noticed her attire. It was quite different than what he was used to seeing; yet again all that included was the hero costume and her school uniform. “You look nice,” he said.

“Oh! Uh, thank you, Midoriya. I just thought that I’d look the part, you know? A sort of teacher-
slash-tutor sort of thing. Do you think it works out?"

“Yeah, I do.” Izuku nodded. “So when does everyone else get here?”

“Ugh! This is madness! What do these things even mean?!?” squawked Ashido, head slamming into the table’s face. “It’s impossible,” she slurred.

The study session was relatively well so far. The group had been split between Izuku and Yaoyorozu to lighten the workload; Izuku paired with Ashido and Kaminari and Yaoyorozu caring for Jiro, Sero, and Ojiro.

“It really isn't, Ashido-san,” Izuku said. “Come on, we can go at it from the top. Kaminari here can help out since he’s already gotten a good handle on the material.”

The only problems so far was the disgruntled Kaminari, who as of yet remained to be difficult when interacting with Izuku.

Kaminari scoffed. “Why’d I get you again?” he offhandedly commented. “I didn’t sign up for this! I mean, sure, I need the help. But nobody said that you were going to be here. I thought it was just going to be Yaoyorozu-san.”

“Kaminari,” Yaoyorozu rebuffed, “Midoriya is just as capable as me in the material. His position as class rep should be proof of that.” She looked at him pointedly.

“Yeah, Kaminari,” added Jiro. “Be nice to Midoriya. He’s just as capable as Yaomomo here. Maybe he’ll actually knock some sense into you if you let him.”

“Pfft. Yeah, right.”

Izuku sighed. “Come on, Kaminari. Like it or not, you’re here to improve your chances of passing the exams. You want to have a fun experience at the camp, don’t you?”

“...Yeah, I suppose.”

“Good! Then work with me here and I’ll make sure that you pass the written portions of the exam. One hundred percent guarantee.”

Kaminari glared at Izuku for a long moment, aiming to see just one flaw in the boy’s demeanor. Just one reason to refute the other’s help.

When he couldn’t see one, Kaminari deflated, resigning himself to his fate. “Fine. But only this once.”

“Great!” Ashido exclaimed, jumping from her slumped position. “Help me with this then! Let me see your work!”

“Ashido!”

The study session had passed, the day turning into night.
Izuku found that the halls of the Yaoyorozu Manor were fairly dark this late in the day. He was almost certain that candles were probably in common use around the residence, but his bugs supplemented the need of light sources to navigate the expansive floor plan.

He didn’t need to worry about making too much noise either, even if he considered the fact that the rest of the study group was staying over. Yaoyorozu, having planned for the study session to span over the weekend, had set up individual rooms for everyone in advance. And with so many rooms available, there were plenty to spare, leading Izuku with the capability to slip out of his room virtually unnoticed.

The only reason he was out in the first place was due to the activity he had noticed on the far end of the mansion, in a room which purpose he had figured was for training — both physical and quirk-related. Despite it being almost midnight, Izuku’s bugs had heard the constant thud-thud-thud of fists against a punching bag. The bugs had also experienced the bright, glittery light that followed the spontaneous creation of objects Izuku was familiar with.

It wasn’t long before he found himself in front of two wooden doors, the apparent entrance to what seemed to be traditional dojo. His bugs could still feel and see the effects of Creation on the other side of the door, so Izuku had decided that now was the best time of any to talk to Yaoyorozu.

The low creak of the door gained the attention of the girl, who turned to witness Izuku entering the room.

“Oh, Midoriya! What are you doing here?”

Izuku took hold of the scene in front of him; Matryoshka dolls lined the floor, with various other weapons and materials being strewn about. Yaoyorozu herself was looking different from before, with simple white hand wraps and clothes much more suitable for her workout session rather than for tutoring.

“No much, really,” Izuku responded. “I just happened to notice that you were still up and about at this late hour. Something wrong?”

Yaoyorozu was silent for a moment, looking as if she wanted to say something. She shook her head instead. “Nothing you have to worry about, Midoriya.”

Izuku walked closer, sitting himself on a bench. “As team — as class representative, it’s my duty to ensure my classmates are doing alright. And you haven’t been doing so well since the Sports Festival. I noticed it during our meetups, even if I couldn’t tell what was wrong at first. But when Setsuna spelled it out to me it was clear as day.”

“Tokage-san told you?” Yaoyorozu asked.

“She did. Told me while we were in Kyoto.”

Yaoyorozu sighed. “I see.” She slowly made her way towards Izuku, plopping herself down beside him.

“I— I suppose that I haven’t been feeling all too sure of myself, is all,” Yaoyorozu admitted.

Izuku edged her on, merely nodding to show that he was listening. Yaoyorozu continued

“It was my fault that my team didn’t go on to the next round. Tokage-san, Kendo-san, Fukidashi-san; I failed all of them. I was the one who spoke out to Shinso-san. I handed him our headbands.”
“That wasn’t your fault, Yaoyorozu,” Izuku said. “Shinso was a wildcard. Even I don’t know what he could do until I faced him one-on-one. If I crossed paths with him during the cavalry battle I would have done the same as you.”

“But that’s just it, Midoriya!” Yaoyorozu retorted. “I froze up afterwards! You wouldn’t have done that! You would’ve had a plan to fight back, gain your points back. I just… I burdened down my team.”

Another sigh. “Do I really have what it takes to be here? I haven’t gotten a single win in my time at U.A. Not at the Battle Trial, not at the Sports Festival, not even at U.S.J. Koda did most of the work against the villains with his birds.”

“And then there was Uwabami,” her voice rose. “I didn’t learn anything, and Uwabami never went to fix that! All we did was star in a bunch of commercials!”

“I only got in to U.A. because I was a recommendation student,” Yaoyorozu continued, much more softly than before. “And the when I look at all my classmates who’ve worked so hard… Do I deserve any of this?”

“Hey, don’t say those things about yourself!” Izuku exclaimed. Yaoyorozu jumped at the sudden remark.

“You a very capable and intelligent person, Yaoyorozu,” Izuku continued. “Don’t let anybody tell you otherwise. Sure, you might have had a couple pitfalls here and there, but those don’t reflect on your skills! There’s a reason someone like you would get in through recommendations, after all. That achievement isn’t something to scoff at! And look at today’s study session! Ashido, Kaminari, Ojiro, Sero, Jiro; they all look up to you. Don’t sell yourself short, Yaoyorozu. You deserve to be in 1-A as much as everyone else.”

A small smile adorned her lips. She then suddenly wrapped Izuku in a hug, startling him. It took him a moment to readjust his mind and return the gesture.

“You’re a sweet guy, Midoriya,” said Yaoyorozu, lingering on the hug.

“Ahem.”

The two friends jumped, releasing each other and swerving their heads toward the voice. The two found the silhouette of another by the entrance.

“Oh! Hinami-san! What are you doing here?” Yaoyorozu asked.

“I’ve come to retrieve you, Madam Yaoyorozu. It has been half an hour since you’ve begun your training. Any more this late at night would be detrimental to your health.”

“I, uh, of course. I’ll be right there.” Yaoyorozu turned back to Izuku placing a brief peck on his cheek. Izuku froze.

Izuku flushed. “Oh. Uh…”

“Goodnight, Midoriya!” And then she left.

Izuku blinked. “Okay…” he muttered, getting up and heading towards the door, still being held aloft by Mr. Hinami.

However, before Izuku could get past the door, a hand fell onto his shoulder. “I suggest that you
refrain from any more wandering, sir,” spoke Hinami. “You should get to your room soon; it’s almost time for me to let out the patrol hounds. You wouldn’t want to be up and about with them roaming the halls.”

“...”

“I— Yes, of course, Mr. Hinami. I’ll be on my way.”

Monday came, and so had the written exams. As Izuku presumed, the written portion was a breeze. They lasted for most of the week, and by the end of it all everyone had passed. That left Friday, the day of the practical portion of U.A.’s finals.

And so, there stood class 1-A, suddenly finding themselves amidst the gathering of their teachers. Most of the class was rather confused with the setup. Izuku was even more so than the rest, though the source of his confusion was due to something else.

Deep within Aizawa’s scarf, Izuku could sense a lone beetle. When Izuku investigated the bug’s presence further, its weak visual allotments revealed that the bug was held by principal Nezu himself.

“Hello Midoriya,” whispered Nezu, still hidden within Aizawa’s capture gear. “I’d say that this was a pleasant surprise, meeting up like this, but that’d be a lie considering I smuggled in this beetle with me into my hiding place with Shota here.”

Izuku blinked in surprise, reeling in to the fact that Nezu was speaking to the beetle. How could he tell that I was listening in? Or was he just assuming? No, no. Unlikely, the timing lined up too perfectly with my forming the connection to the beetle. Maybe with—

“We’ll talk later,” Nezu said.

“Sorry! I’m afraid not!” exclaimed Nezu, revealing himself from his spot on Aizawa’s shoulders. Unsurprisingly, Izuku noted, Aizawa was completely indifferent to Nezu’s decision to conceal himself with the scarf.

“From this point on, U.A. is changing the contents of the test,” Nezu informed. “Simply put, from now on we’ll be focusing more on person-on-person battles in order to imitate circumstances much closer to a real battle. As such, all of you will be placed in predetermined pairs, formed up to face against your own teachers!”

A few within the class seemed uneasy at the declaration of them having to face pro heroes. Nonetheless, Nezu continued on. “Your pairs have been chosen based on grades, demeanor, interactions, you name it. We personally judged upon the pairings, so we’ll list off the matchups now.”

Aizawa was first, turning his gaze to two of his top students. “Yaoyorozu, Todoroki. You’re with me,” he said with a smile. The two widened their eyes at the revelation.

Aizawa plowed on, turning towards Izuku. “Midoriya. You’re—”

“With me!” interrupted Nezu.

“Nezu,” started Aizawa, “we already talked abo—”
“You’ll be paired together with Kaminari!” Nezu continued.

“What?!” exclaimed Kaminari. “You’re serious?”

“Of course!” Nezu said, cackling. “Why wouldn’t I be?!”

Aizawa sighed.

Kaminari visibly gulped, but nonetheless made his way to his partner, yet again resigning himself to his fate. “So much for single-time exceptions.”

Thirteen stepped in this time, taking the initiative to inform 1-A. “Asui and Tokoyami, you’ll be going off against Ectoplasm. Sato and Kirishima, you’ll be against Cementoss.” Both pairs nodded to each other’s respective partners.

“Jiro and Koda will be heading off against Present Mic—”

“OH YEAH!!”

“Ahem. Shoji and Hagakure versus Snake. Mineta and Sero against Midnight. Iida and Ojiro with Power Loader. And last but not least, Ashido and Aoyama with me.”

“Wait,” Uraraka said. “But then, that leaves me with—”

“That’s right, young Uraraka!” came the booming voice of All Might. “You and Bakugo will be facing off against me! But fret not!” All Might pulled out bracelets which Izuku found vaguely familiar.

“Are those… Hatsume’s Compressor Weights?” Izuku asked.

“Ha ha!” All Might laughed. “They are indeed, young Midoriya. Though, I suppose that I should have expected you to recognize them, considering your tendency to delve into your friend’s lab space!”

“Yeah, those weights were a pain to test out…”

All Might placed his attention back on his two opponents. “Anyhow, just know that with these, I won’t be at my full power!”

Bakugo scowled. “Keh! You’re looking down on me…”

All Might gave a hearty laugh. “Trust me, Bakugo. You wouldn’t want to fight me at my full power.”

“You—!”

“Anyhow, you two get ready!”

Uraraka made her way to her partner’s side, which prompted Bakugo to scowl at her presence. “Just don’t get in the way, Round Face!”

Uraraka sighed. Most of the class her shared in her worries, giving her looks of sympathy.

The individual pairs of students began fumbling about, each pair’s teachers motioning for them to follow.
Nezu was no different, making his way to his own designated pair. “Midoriya, Kaminari. To my office, if you will,” Nezu said, motioning his hand for them to follow.

“Come, come. We may still have an hour before the test is scheduled to start, but we have much to discuss.”

As he entered the room, Izuku found the sight of the principal’s office to be a much needed surprise. While the room was fairly sparse and devoid of decor, that wasn’t necessarily a bad thing in Izuku’s opinion. It was a huge improvement from his old principal’s room, the lighting being a lot brighter than Izuku was used to and the space feeling a lot less constricting.

Izuku sat in front of Nezu’s desk. If Izuku was going to be honest, the only thing that seemed out of place was the desk. It was obviously designed with humans in mind rather than whatever bear-dog-rat thing the principal was.

The wooden desk was comically large for Nezu, so much so that that Izuku had his suspicions for how the principal was able to use such a thing.

And, by connecting his thoughts to an inconspicuous fly on the wall, Izuku found his suspicions to be true.

“Yes I do use a booster seat. And it’s quite comfy, actually. Much better than the chair,” Nezu said.

Izuku broke out of his reverie at the principal’s remark.

“That’s quite a versatile quirk you have, being able to spy on others so discreetly,” Nezu continued.

Izuku remembered that the principal had done something similar just a while ago in sensing Izuku’s quirk. “How can tell?” he asked.

“Aside from the obvious?” Nezu chuckled. “Well, those would be all of those micro expressions that you humans use. However slightly the human face moves, it gives off a whole load of signals regarding what you’re thinking. You’re no different, Midoriya.”

“Really?”

“Mhm. But there are some other factors as well. When you activate your quirk, your body stills for a moment. The same goes hand in hand for your bugs when you connect to them. It’s quite a simple thing to notice to the trained eye.”

“Wow,” Izuku said in awe. “High Spec really does wonders, doesn’t it?”

“Ah, you give my quirk too much credit. Even humans can read micro expressions with enough practice. It just takes them a lot longer to learn how to do so.”

“Well, then that probably means that you're the best at doing it!”

“Perhaps,” Nezu agreed, not refuting the statement. “Though my skills are not infallible. I will say that you, Midoriya become virtually unreadable when you’re connected to enough bugs, strangely enough. It’s quite the peculiarity.”

“Oh. Uh… thanks?”
“Of course.”

Silence reigned for a few moments, the two individuals looking at each other, as if edging the other to speak first. Izuku was the first to break.

“Is there… Is there something specific that you wish to speak to me about, Principal Nezu?”

“Oh no. I just want to talk,” Nezu said. “You’re only alone now because I plan to do the same with Kaminari. Simple courtesy, you can call it. His turn is right after yours. That’s why he’s sitting outside with my secretary. We just need to get through this talk first.”

Nezu reached down below his desk, taking out a teapot and matching teacups. “Tea?” he asked.

Izuku looked at the ornate porcelain, eyeing the steady stream trail running from the teapot’s neck. “Umm… sure.”

“Great!” Nezu exclaimed, pouring Izuku a cup of the steaming brew. Nezu then sat himself back down on his side of the desk, holding on to his own cup of tea. “Now, you see, I’ve taken quite an interest in you, Midoriya.”

“Oh?” Izuku took a sip of the tea.

“Mmhmm. I noticed that you were registered as quirkless not too long ago. However, that is obviously not true. Yet, despite that, you’ve demonstrated tremendous aptitude in the usage of your… previously unheard of quirk. Would you mind explaining that?”

“Oh. Uh, it’s nothing all too exciting, really,” Izuku admitted. “I just got my quirk late, is all. I went to sleep one night, and the next thing I knew I could feel all my bugs. I just… kind of knew how to use it? Like it came with an instruction manual, you could say. A really unhelpful one, but a manual nonetheless.”

“Interesting,” Nezu chirped. “And it’s registration? You named it [Hive Mind], correct?”

Izuku nodded.

“Nice name. Rolls off the tongue and portrays your quirk nicely,” Nezu chuckled. “Anyways, continue.”

“I guess… Well, it was so late in my life that I never found a reason to register my quirk. I’m only registered now since my quirk needed to be known when I sent my costume qualifications in.”

“A late bloomer, eh? Definitely not unheard of, but nonetheless exceedingly rare. Seems that you were lucky, Midoriya, to get such a versatile quirk so late in life.”

Nezu took a long sip of his tea. “Tell me, Midoriya, how old were you got your quirk, if I may ask?”

“Umm… Around eight, Mr. Nezu sir.”

A small smile formed on Nezu’s face. “So no less than seven years ago, yes?”

“Yes, sir.”

Nezu let out another laugh, this one much more mischievous than the last. “You’re quite the paradox, Midoriya. Do you know that?”

“Umm…”
“Your demeanor, your quirk, how long you’ve had it. How you responded during the incident at U.S.J. And then there’s your… extracurricular activities.”

Izuku’s vision blurred. “My extra… What do you mean?”

Nezu’s smile became more profound.

*Does he…*

“Why, your physical training of course!”

“Wha…”

“It’s not so often that we get students that train their body when it doesn’t play a role into directly strengthening their quirk. Shota-kun being one of our more recent examples, for instance.”

“Who?” Izuku asked.

“Oh, silly me! My apologies, Midoriya. I mean your homeroom teacher. Skills like Aizawa’s have been few and far in between during my time here. Seeing someone like you is quite the refresher, you see.”

Nezu’s sighed, his head tilted to its side. “However, still quite the conundrum.”

“Uh… sir?”

Nezu’s paws slammed onto the table, creating a loud bang. Izuku stirred, as did a few of his bugs. The fliers rose slightly into the air, with Izuku’s body shifting into a more defensible stance, ready to leap from his position on the chair.

Nezu gave off another smile. “That’ll be all, Midoriya. Send Kaminari in on your way out.”

Chapter End Notes

And there we are. Teacher battles will be out the next time around, plus some other things. Until then!
“So,” Izuku began, “I was thinking that maybe... we could talk about this?”

Kaminari didn’t reply, of course. It was a reaction from the boy that Izuku had grown accustomed to ever since the incident at U.S.J. Still, that fact didn’t deter Izuku away; there was still a final exam to pass, after all.

“Look, Kaminari,” Izuku said, “I know for sure that you want to pass this exam as much as I do. But we aren’t going to get anywhere if we don’t have any communication between the two of us, especially considering the fact that we’re going against principal Nezu.”

Izuku held a pleading look in Kaminari’s direction for a solid minute. Kaminari didn’t show any sign of relenting his stance.

However, Kaminari eventually sighed. “Alright. Lay it on me, Bug Boy,” he said after a moment’s consideration. “What do you have planned?”

Izuku smiled. “It’s not much, but I have a rough basis of a plan. But I say that we don’t rely on it if things get too hectic. We’re going against a super genius, after all. You never know what he might have hidden up his sleeve.”

“No plan survives first contact with the enemy, as the saying goes,” Kaminari sighed. “I suppose I can work with that.”

“Good,” Izuku started, “because we still have ten minutes until the test starts. I’m sure we have time to think up some more plans.”

The desolate cityscape that the duo found themselves in was eerily quiet. Five minutes had already passed without sign of the principal, leaving them with just under half-an-hour to reach the exit.

The towering buildings imposed themselves upon the two as they walked, keeping them on edge in preparation for an attack from any direction.

A quick survey revealed to Izuku that the area was nearly devoid of any insects for blocks around. The few bugs that Izuku could sense numbered into a few hundred. Even then, a good portion of those bugs were relatively weak, barely being able to move.

“I think that Nezu sprayed down the place with pesticides,” Izuku informed.

Kaminari tsked. “Well, there goes plans A through E.”

“Yeah,” Izuku agreed. “I can probably only get up to a couple hundred or so healthy bugs at this point. Nowhere near enough for combat capabilities.”
Izuku took another look around at his surroundings. “But I’ve got to admit, it’s quite an impressive feat, blanketing such a large area and being so successful in the extermination of so many bugs in so little time. Especially given the fact that the teachers only have ten minutes to set up whatever they wanted.”

“Mhm,” Kaminari hummed. “So we’re going for Plan F?”

Izuku nodded. “Yeah. I already spread out my bugs as an early detection system. That way Nezu can’t get the jump on us… hopefully.”

“And you act as bait right?” Kaminari asked.

_Didn’t even try to dissuade me on that one._

“Yup. That way we’ll—”

“Are you two done making up your plans?” echoed the voice of Nezu.

Both Kaminari and Izuku jumped at the voice, turning their backs against the other and taking defensive stances. Wherever Nezu was, the proximity of his voice made out for him to be close.

“I thought you said that you were watching out for him so he wouldn’t get too close!” exclaimed Kaminari.

“I was!” Izuku retorted. “None of the bugs picked up on anything!”

“No need to worry, you two,” continued Nezu with a chuckle. “You’re just hearing me through the speakers I’ve set up throughout the city. Quite handy, don’t you think? You’ll never be able to tell where I’m coming from.”

The two don’t lower their guard, of course; Nezu’s words were just as likely to be a trap as if they were truth. However, after further investigation, the two did find the speakers Nezu had told them about, a few or so placed haphazardly amongst the landscape. It was that reassurance that allowed them to calm down and relinquish their stances.

“Wait,” Izuku interrupted, “you covered the entire test area in pesticides, and implanted a bunch of speakers, all in the span of ten minutes?”

Nezu laughed. “Of course not! I just predicted your route!”

“What do you mean you predicted our routes?!” Kaminari yelled.

“I mean exactly what I said,” the principal chuckled. “It’s quite a simple thing, really. With Midoriya being limited to a three block radius, all I needed to do was ensure there weren’t any bugs within three blocks of your route. After that, it was just a matter of figuring you two out in order to determine your most likely path through the test area.”

Both Kaminari and Izuku were both stunned silent at the principal’s explanation.

“Anyhow,” Nezu continued, “regarding those plans of yours, I can assure you that anything thing you’ve thought up so far will be rendered useless within the coming minutes.”

An uneasy feeling grew in the pit of Izuku’s stomach. He had the feeling that Nezu had them in a corner. Still, his own words betrayed his thoughts. “You’re bluffing.”

Nezu gave off another chuckle. “Am I?”

A loud, metallic roar tore through the air after his words. The noise startled the two test takers into
action yet again, scanning the environment for danger.

“What the heck is that?” Kaminari exclaimed.

“That,” Nezu informed, “is over 135,000 tons of metal heading right in your direction.” His words then devolved into deranged laughs. “I suggest that you run, humans!”

Izuku and Kaminari didn’t need any convincing. They did just that.

“He’s crazy!” yelled Kaminari. He was breathing heavily, leaning against the wall of an office building he’d taken refuge in. Izuku was in a similar condition, albeit being less fatigued due to his better physique. Still, both were quite winded, tired from their rapid escape and evasion of the destruction caused by Nezu’s crane operation.

The building they found themselves in had its power completely cut off; the fact that the windows were covered in newspapers had it so the building was shrouded in darkness. The only reason that they were inside the building now was because the destruction had stopped a minute before. The two were still wondering if that was either a good or bad thing.

“We have… fifteen minutes left,” breathed Izuku. “I think that I found… the exit. It’s directly west of here. We’ll… make it there in five if we run without any obstructions.”

“Pfft. With that crazy principal out there? Fat chance!”

A distinct shuffling sound met the ears of the two, stirring them from their brief reprieve. The slight pitter-patter of tiny feet echoed in the darkness, becoming more distinct after each step.

“He’s in here with us, isn’t he?” questioned Kaminari. “He probably planned for us to go into this building too.”

“I— Yeah, probably,” Izuku admitted.

“We’re screwed! He probably has the stairs covered already!”

“It’s alright, just calm down. We can…” Izuku sniffed the air. “Is that smoke?”

Suddenly, the building’s fire alarm went off, activating the overhead sprinklers and drenching the two in seconds. The shuffling sound arose again, this time accented with subtle splashes of water.

Izuku and Kaminari continued to peer into the darkness, yet Nezu had yet to reveal himself.

“This water is a deathtrap,” Izuku began. “I can’t use my bugs, and you can’t shoot out your electricity without shocking both of us… I say we defenestrate.”

Kaminari’s eyes widened. “You mean jump out the window?! But we’re on the second floor!”

“…Better than the third?” The shuffling became louder and much closer than before. “Nope!” Izuku said. Then he jumped, shattering the glass and landing on the ground below.

“Hold up a second!” Kaminari yelled, looking down from his position above. Suddenly, the hairs on his back rose; he could sense that something was behind him.

Turning slightly, Kaminari caught a glimpse of two glowing eyes from the darkness.

“Kaminari-kun…”
He screamed on the way down. And he continued to do so as Izuku caught him in his arms.

“He’s just behind us,” Izuku said, watching the moving form of Nezu with the sparse amount of bugs that he had. “But as long as we just keep on going at this pace I don’t think he’ll—”

Izuku stopped in his tracks. Kaminari stopped as well after noticing his partner’s sudden stop. “What are you doing?”

“He’s gone.”

“What?”

A loud amalgamation of musical notes and splint wood suddenly erupted in front of the two.

“A Bösendorfer 170!?! What even!” Kaminari exclaimed.

Izuku turned his head towards his fellow partner. “What?”

“A keen eye, Kaminari-kun,” Nezu said. The principal sat atop the airdropped piano, merrily sipping from the tea cup in his hand.

“But how did you even get there?!” Izuku exclaimed. “I was watching you with my bugs!”

“You mean with this little ant, here?” Nezu asked, taking said ant from his suit pocket and into his palm. “It’s a trade secret, Midoriya-kun.” Nezu said in a teasing tone. He then hopped off the destroyed piano, abandoning his tea cup at the top. “Perhaps one day I’ll share my knowledge with you. You certainly have the aptitude for it.” A feral grin slowly formed on his face. “Now, you two ready?”

“Plan Q, Kaminari,” Izuku said.

“Great.” Kaminari cleared his throat. “Don’t come any closer!”

“Oh?” Nezu piped, stopping in his tracks. “What do you have planned?”

“I’ll use my super move!” Kaminari supplied. “You’ll be shocked into next Friday!”

Nezu tilted his head. “You’d shock all three of us? That would just leave you with a failed practical, neither of you able to continue.”

“Ah, but that’s where you’re wrong!” Kaminari exclaimed. “Midoriya told me something that he hasn’t told anyone else! His suit is shock proof!”

The statement wasn’t true, of course; Izuku’s costume didn’t provide any protection from electricity. Kaminari was stalling for time, aiming to trick Nezu with information he shouldn’t have.

Meanwhile, Izuku was gathering a swarm — despite the fact that they were still within the confines of Nezu’s planned route.

Somehow, Izuku’s range had increased ever so slightly, adding another half a block or so to his range. He didn’t have a clue as to why that was, but he wasn’t exactly complaining. He’d take whatever he could right now, even if the numbers of available bugs ranged only in the thousands.

“Midoriya~ Your expressions are showing~” Nezu smirked.
Ah. Shoot.

"'Shoot' indeed," Nezu said. "A few hundred bugs won’t provide you with much to play with, I’m afraid."

He doesn’t know!

Nezu rose an eyebrow. "What’s with that look of hope, hmm?"

“Oh, it’s nothing,” Izuku said. “I’m just lucky that I have a few thousand bugs at my command, rather than a few hundred.” Clouds of insects filled the air above as he said this, blanketing the ground in the shadows of thousands of insects.

Nezu shot his head up towards the sky, looking up in wonder. “Hmm… An interesting development… Did your range increase?”

How did he—

“Oh ho! Splendid! I’m up for the challenge!”

Izuku didn’t wait, he ordered his swarm downwards, aiming to attack and slow Nezu down. When Izuku sensed Nezu lift up a manhole cover and jump into the sewers, Izuku simply grabbed Kaminari and ran.

“We’re… almost there… right?” questioned Kaminari. He and Izuku were still running. Nezu was nowhere in sight, and his presence in the sewers rendered him unable to be tracked by Izuku’s bugs.

“Yeah…” Izuku replied. “Just a little bit more. Though, I’m half expecting Nezu to jump out at us at any second with some crazy contraption. Something ridiculous like a mechanical rhino or a handheld cannon.”

“Don’t... tempt Murphy, man. Seriously.”

They stopped talking, then. The exit was just ahead, a straight beeline being sufficient to pass through the doorway. But of course, it wouldn’t be so simple as that.

Izuku’s bugs sensed movement. “Kaminari, just run to the exit!”

Izuku moved himself in between incoming form of Nezu and Kaminari. Izuku tackled the principal to the ground, preventing him from reaching his target.

“You two are getting close!” exclaimed Nezu, his eyes shining with feral glee. “Let’s mix things up, hmm?” Despite his small size, Nezu showed immense strength by kicking Izuku off onto his back. Nezu immediately got on top on Izuku, his claws scratching and scraping against the reinforced spider webbing that kept Izuku’s face safe.

Instead of attempting to get Nezu off, Izuku held the principal in place, stalling to give time for Kaminari to run. It paid off in the end — though not in the way that he had expected. Rather than hearing the sound that signaled that his partner had crossed the exit, the form of Nezu buckled above him.

Kaminari interrupted Nezu’s scratches with a kick to the principal’s side. Kaminari struck twice more, his last kick launching the principal out of Izuku’s grip.

But even from the air, the principal landed on his feet. “There we are,” said Nezu. He refrained from
moving, however, staring down his opponents as if waiting for their move first.

“Plan U?” Kaminari asked, putting his hand out towards Izuku.

“Sure.” Izuku reached for the place where he kept his eskrima sticks, but instead retrieved a metal pipe that he’d found earlier.

Kaminari took the pipe. “Alright. Random pipe time.”

Izuku took his cue, running forward towards Nezu. The principal followed suit, barreling towards his two students.

Much to Izuku’s displeasure, Nezu ducked under the flurry of punches that came his way. In fact, Nezu wove through Izuku’s defenses with ease and climb up onto Izuku’s body.

The principal made his way up and jabbed his paw into the crook of Izuku’s neck. Izuku crumpled a bit, yet continued to hold himself up. He took the opportunity to throw a confused Nezu off.

“Seems I underestimated the strength of your costume, Midoriya. Though—” Nezu jumped, interrupted in the middle of his words. He had dodged Kaminari’s incoming attack, an electrified swing of the pipe he’d been holding.

Sparks flew as the pipe missed its target and hit the ground, visible arcs of electricity branching off into the air. “It may only be a minor shock,” Kaminari began, “but it’ll make an opening for us!”

Izuku and Kaminari converged onto Nezu, aiming to knock their opponent down. Izuku’s refined techniques and Kaminari’s sloppy pipework did little to the principal, however. Nezu evaded every single attack.

However, this was just what the two test takers were aiming for. Eventually, Nezu took an anticipated evasion, and landed himself in the within the confines of a dead-end alleyway.

Kaminari immediately made his way to block off the entrance with his body, Izuku standing not too far behind him. “Ha-ha!” Kaminari cheered. “Now, don’t you move, Mr. Principal sir! Or I’ll unleash my super move!”

Nezu smiled, though this time it was in a way less maniacal than before. He then plopped himself down on the ground, delegating to sit where he was.

The two test takers adopted confused — yet weary — looks at the display. They refused to let their guards down, having seen firsthand just how crafty the principal was.

“What the heck is he doing?” asked Kaminari. “Its… not another trap, is it?”

“You think I would know?” Izuku said.

It was then that Nezu decided to speak up, his body moving slightly forward towards his students. “Well, what are you waiting for? You only have a minute left.”

“ONE MINUTE LEFT!” came the announcement system, ringing true to Nezu words.

“Son of a—l”

“Shoot!” exclaimed Izuku. “Watch him, I’ll go!”

“Right!”
Izuku shot off, going straight for the exit. No distractions, no obstructions, and — despite the risk — focusing only on his run and not on any bugs to watch Nezu.

However, it seemed as if his worries were for naught, as he passed the gate with a good twenty seconds to spare.

Despite the odds, they’d completed the test.

---

Izuku and Kaminari found themselves within the spectating room, standing side by side as they watched the screens showcasing their classmate’s own tests.

“You were pretty resourceful back there, Midoriya,” Kaminari suddenly said.

“Oh?”

Izuku watched on one screen as Todoroki and Yaoyorozu’s match against Aizawa began. Yaoyorozu started off by pulling Todoroki to the side, seemingly detailing a plan she had for restraining Aizawa.

“Yeah…” Kaminari trailed. “I’m pretty sure that our test wouldn’t have gone so well if it weren’t for your plans.”

On another screen, Uraraka and Bakugo argued away, the latter eventually deciding to split up without any feasible strategy in mind other than “destroy.”

“Thanks, I suppose,” Izuku responded. “You really helped too, with your electricity.”

Yaoyorozu had just finished creating what looked like a copy of Aizawa’s capture device. The view was then immediately blocked as Todoroki sprung up another one of his glacier walls. However, Izuku had a good idea at what Yaoyorozu had planned when the cloaks popped out.

Kaminari rose an eyebrow. “Even if it was just a couple bursts of electricity? That’s all I really did, and not until up to the end, too.”

Bakugo was having trouble with All Might, barely being able to dodge the hero’s attacks. Bakugo eventually found himself embedded in the pavement with All Might standing above him.

That is, until an enormous construction beam struck All Might right in the face, careening him down the street. The giant steel beam fell to the ground with a loud thud afterwards.

_Huh. Uraraka must have released her quirk right before the strike. Must’ve hurt reap bad for All Might._

Bakugo got up begrudgingly, but otherwise relinquished himself and followed Uraraka to regroup.

“I probably wouldn’t have made it to the exit if you didn’t have Nezu corralled into that alley,” Izuku said.

“I suppose,” Kaminari said. “Though that was mostly on the principal’s part. If he actually decided to rush me he still probably would’ve been able to escape.”

“Maybe. But as it went, he didn’t. That means that he didn’t have anything else in store for us. I’m just glad it’s over, really. Facing Nezu was a nightmare.”

Kaminari repressed a brief chuckle.
Looking back at the screens, Izuku was befuddled with how quickly Uraraka and Bakugo had set up. Once All Might was in sight, he was bombarded by hurtling, degravitized cars as they were launched by Bakugo’s explosions. Like before with the steel beam, Uraraka released her quirk right before the cars made contact with All Might.

The end result were piles upon piles or wrecked steel in the wake of their destruction. Once All Might went to take a breath, both Uraraka and Bakugo decided to make a break for the exit.

On the other hand, Todoroki and Yaoyorozu were wrapping up with their test, Aizawa captured and down for the count.

“You know,” Izuku began, “I could ask my friend to whip something up for you quirk. Something that would allow you to direct your electricity so it doesn’t just go everywhere.”

Kaminari’s eyes widened in surprise. “You’d do that?”

“Of course. She would love the challenge. Besides, having to resort to frying your brain like you do probably won’t be good in the long run.”

“Yeah, I was thinking about that myself… I suppose that you’re not that bad a guy, Midoriya.”

Izuku simply nodded in reply.

By the time everyone’s exams were done, most of 1-A were in utter relief. The only exceptions to this were the ones who had failed their exams — a number which included Kirishima, Sato, Sero, Ashido, and Aoyama.

However, when Aizawa had brought upon another one of his “logical ruses” and explained that everyone was still going to the camp — even if those who failed would be under heavier training — the class sighed in relief.

In fact, everyone was so excited with the revelation that when Hagakure suggested they go on a shopping trip to prepare for the camp, mostly everyone agreed. The only ones who didn’t were Todoroki and Bakugo.

Izuku agreed as well, even if he had a few unvoiced stipulations on the matter. When all was said and done, he ended up having a brief talk with Yaoyorozu regarding an idea he had. She was rather impressed with the idea, instantly agreeing with it. The only thing that was needed then were a few calls to be made.

“Well, well, well! If it isn’t Class 1-A! What are you lot doing here, hmm? I was told that— urk!”

Monoma fell, experiencing another of Kendo’s chops to his neck. Luckily for Monoma, Kendo grasped the scruff of his neck by the shirt before he fell. Behind Kendo, most of class 1-B stood with a knowing, resigned look at their classmate’s antics.

“Come on Monoma,” Manga said, coming along next to Kendo. “We already went over this with you, didn’t we? How many times does Itsuka have to ram it into your head?” Kendo then handed over Monoma to Manga, already having become accustomed to the process many times over.

“Thank you, Manga,” she said, smiling. She then turned to the individuals of class 1-A. “Sorry about that, you know how he is.”

Aoyoma suddenly popped in between his class and the other. “Mon dieu! Is it by fate’s hand that we
“He-heh… Uh, no.” Kendo shook her head. “Your class reps thought this whole thing up. You know, having both our classes meeting up and that. Didn’t they tell you?”

Upon hearing this newfound information, Class 1-A turned to look at Izuku and Yaoyorozu, both of whom looked a bit sheepish.

“I didn’t really consider that,” Izuku said, turning to Yaoyorozu. “I just assumed that you were going to do it.”

“Me?” an embarrassed Yaoyorozu asked. “I thought you were going to do it!”

“Eh, it doesn’t matter all too much,” Kendo said. “Anyways, I’m glad to see that so many of you were able to make it! I’m sure that we’re going to have a great time.”

It seemed that those were the words that signified the classes to split off. Izuku watched as the individual classes went on to merge into different groups. Some remained to their own, but there were a few who decided to mingle. One example was Kirishima and the guy from 1-B who had a similar quirk, but covered himself in metal to harden. The two confronted each other and seemed to form an immediate companionship.

Manga waved to him, though stayed in place. It seemed that he’d be staying with Kendo for the duration of the time.

One person that did catch Izuku’s notice, however, and was making her way over to him.

“Izuku~” Setsuna crooned. “You thought of this?” she gestured to the two classes. “I’m impressed, though equally curious on what was going through your mind. What, you couldn’t get enough of me? Needed to have an excuse to go out with me again?”

“Hi, Setsuna,” Izuku said, ignoring her remarks. He was used to the teasing — a whole week’s exposure to it would do that.

Izuku looked behind Setsuna, finding she was accompanied by Pony and four others he didn’t know. “Hey Pony. And hello, um… Sorry, I don’t kbow your names.”

“Ah!” Setsuna exclaimed. “Well…”

Izuku watched on as Setsuna displayed the others before him. There was the seemingly shy Kinoko Komori, the more reserved individuals Reiko Yanagi and Yui Kodai, and Kojiro Bondo — who reminded Izuku a lot of Koda due to his size and his gentle nature.

After introductions were over, Setsuna leaned in towards Izuku, asking a question. “So, what do you have planned?”

“Planned?” Izuku repeated. “I, um, don’t really have any?”

“What?! You decided to have our classes meet up and don’t have any team-building activities planned?” Setsuna chided.

“I thought that we could all just interact, you know? Let natural conversations do all the work. It’s already working, see?” Izuku gestured to one combined group of students, brought together by Kirishima and the metal transformation quirk user.
“That doesn't count. Tetsu and the red-head seem too similar. It’d be impossible for them to not eventually end up interacting.”

“Oh. Uhh… oh well?” Izuku said.

Setsuna sighed, shaking her head with a smile. “Alright then! “Will anybody else be joining?”

Izuku thought off a few others, though said individuals seemed to be otherwise occupied. He eventually shook his head in the negative.

“Well, come on then! We can go shopping for supplies later. There’s this nice bakery just further into this place.”

Izuku had to admit, the Karepan he was having was unlike any he had before. It was equally parts sweet and savory, and quite a delectable treat.

The treat was also a great parallel to use in explaining the past hour. Setsuna’s friends were an odd mix of much more reticent and restrained individuals; quite unlike Setsuna herself. In a way, it made sense why she took an instant liking to Izuku, if this was what most of her friends were like.

Moreover, Izuku was having a blast getting to know everybody else, and he’d like to believe that he made a couple more friends that day, even if the others didn’t outwardly show it.

But then came the unforeseen interruption.

It happened as he had gotten up to throw away his trash. He hadn’t noticed the figure sneak up behind him; he only figured it out as a hand fell onto his shoulder, its grip tightening within moments of contact.

“Izuku!” came the cheery voice. “You’re coming with me!”

“Wha—!”

Izuku was haphazardly spun around, his balance almost being thrown off. His arm was held in a tight grip, and when Izuku finally reoriented himself, he found that he was being forcibly dragged along by none other than Mei Hatsume. And it looked like he wasn’t going to out of her grip anytime soon.

“Sorry guys!” Izuku exclaimed, turning to meet the gazes of the rapidly furthering group of newfound friends. “I’ll catch up later!”

Izuku then turned back to the Mei, who was steadily bulldozing her way through the crowd.

“Mei! What are you— Why are you here? I thought that you said you couldn’t come since you were busy with something?”

“I was busy!” she exclaimed. “But then I remembered that I needed to get some supplies for our trip!”

“Our trip?” Izuku questioned. “You can’t come to camp with us, you know. It’s a hero course trip.”

“Well, duh,” she relayed. “Why would I want to go to some random place out in the wilderness? We have an expo to get ready for!”
So, the I-Island Incident. I'll admit, I'm still not sure how I'm formatting this. We'll be heading for it next, though I don't want to stretch it out for too long. So it should be either one or two chapters long. Guess we’ll see. Anyhow, ‘till next time!
“Pretty generous of those I-Island guys from the Sports Festival to invite you here, huh?” Izuku mused.

“But of course! Why wouldn’t they?” Mei laughed. “They saw my genius firsthand. And only a lunatic would refuse my glory!”

“Mhm. However, I’m more impressed with the fact that you practically forced a second ticket out of them, really.”

“Like I said, nobody can resist!” She wrapped an arm around Izuku’s neck, bringing him close. “Besides, you didn’t believe that I’d go without my best assistant, would you?”

“No, I suppose not,” Izuku chuckled. “Someone needs to be around to reign you in before you get too out of control, after all.”

Mei slapped Izuku hard in the back, making him wheeze from the affectionate strike. “There’s no such thing as too much chaos, Izuku! You should know that by now!” Izuku smiled at the display, albeit with a slight wince as he rubbed his back. Mei hit pretty hard.

The two then went on to resume their walk, making their way through the bustling streets of I-Island. Various attractions dotted the landscape, and a multitude of pro heroes wandered to and fro, instantly exciting Izuku.

The duo didn’t really have a set destination in mind. Mei had come to the island with the stipulation that she’d show off some of her inventions, something of which she instantly agreed to. However, her demonstrations weren’t due up until the I-Expo actually opened up to its full extent, which was still a few days away.

As it was, Mei and Izuku were deciding upon whether they’d go around visiting the attractions or if they would go and make sure that all their luggage had gotten to their rooms okay. They were just on the cusp of making a decision, but they were suddenly interrupted when a giant mass of people flooded their way around them, converging into a point further ahead.

The massive jumble nearly engulfed the two friends, but they managed to keep their place as the people around them thinned. Interested with whatever was causing the commotion, Izuku sent ahead some of his bugs to investigate.

Izuku wasn’t sure if it was a trick of the light or not, but he thought that he recognized two signature stalks of yellow hair peering over the swarm of paparazzi and apparent fans.

A concise check with a small band of bugs revealed that his assumptions were true, and that All Might was currently stuck in a hodgepodge of overzealous fans and reporters. “Huh,” muttered
Izuku, “looks like All Might’s here.”

“Is he now?” questioned Mei, her eyes rising with intrigue. She turned to Izuku. “By the way, how did my compressor weights work out for him, hmm?”

“You mean those horrid things that you almost broke my arms with?”

“Yup! Right on the mark!”

Izuku sighed. “Well, I didn’t experience them myself, but they seemed to work fa—” Izuku suddenly cut himself off, reaffirming his focus back on his bugs. All Might’s gaze had swerved right in the face of the bugs Izuku was using to watch the spectacle. And if Izuku was still unsure whether or not All Might knew he was behind the bugs, the next words that came out of the hero’s mouth quenched his doubts.

All Might turned his attention back onto the audience gathered around him. “I’m sorry everyone, but a student of mine requires some assistance!” exclaimed All Might.

Huh?

“Young Midoriya!” announced All Might, “please, show me where you are! Point me your way!”

Izuku was utterly confused. All Might apparently thought that he needed help with something. Still, there wasn’t as if there was any possible way Izuku could correct All Might. The crowd surrounding him was too thick, and the ten or so flies that Izuku had gathered weren’t enough to form any coherent words, never mind the factor that the proximity of the crowd made it unlikely any bug related words would be heard.

And so Izuku did the next best thing; All Might was asking something of him, after all, and he wouldn’t disappoint. He moved his bugs into a thin, rough shape of an arrow, pointing to his physical location. Izuku himself waved his arms in the air in order to make spotting him easier.

All Might immediately caught Izuku’s gaze. Within seconds, All Might was releasing a plethora of “Sorry’s” as he moved through the gathered crowd, making his way in front of a confused Izuku and a pensive Mei.

“Ah! Midoriya, Hatsume! What a coincidence!” All Might declared. His face was smeared with blotches of lipstick — no doubt due to his overeager fans — yet the hero seemingly paid them no mind.

Izuku ultimately managed to break out of his confused stupor, opening his mouth to broadcast his thoughts. “All Might, wha—” But then he was suddenly shushed by the hand that covered his mouth.

All Might leaned in, changing his voice into a much more quiet whisper. “Not now. I’ll explain later.” He suddenly scooped the two up in his arms, surprising them with the agility of his action. “What’s that?” All Might yelled, to nobody in particular, but still making sure as many people could hear. “You’re having an allergic reaction?! Quick! To the infirmary!”

All Might sped off, zooming past the crowds and not slowing down until they were in the midst of a flower garden.

“Phew!” All Might huffed, letting down Mei and Izuku. “Thanks for that, you two.”

“All Might!” Meri erupted, not sparing a single moment. “How did my—mauadbkfeafae.”
Mei suddenly found her mouth covered by none other than All Might’s hand, repeating the action he’d done earlier with Izuku.

The situation would normally be pretty funny to Izuku, considering what was going to happen next. However, considering who the oncoming victim was going to be… Izuku’s eyes grew in shock at the sight rather than in glee.

All Might, unsurprisingly, saw the expression of shock on Izuku’s face. “Midoriya, what’s—” All Might began, until he suddenly felt a small, moist pressure on his hand. All Might quickly raised his hand from Mei’s mouth.

“Mei!” Izuku berated.

“What?” the girl questioned unabashed. “He covered my mouth. You know how I am when people do that to me.”

“But still—”

“No, no. It’s my fault,” All Might said, wiping his hand on his costume. “I should’ve been more considerate of you two. Anyways,” he looked towards Mei, “what is it that you want, Hatsume?”

“I was wondering about my compressor weights!” Mei grinned, hopelessly caught up in the workings of her babies. “How did they do?”

All Might blinked. “That’s all?” he questioned with a disbelieving smile on his face. “Well, if you must know, they did really well. I actually had to strain myself a bit with them on.”

“Yes!” Mei exclaimed, pumping her fist in the air. “The prototype was successful, then. All I need now is the statistical data from the bracelets and then Izuku can go along and test…” Mei muttered on about the weights, leaving Izuku and the Number One Hero to converse among themselves.

“Anyways,” All Might continued, “I really must thank you two. You see, I was afraid that I was going to run late for a meetup I have planned with an old friend. The crowd didn’t look like it was thinning anytime soon, and I just couldn’t pass up the opportunity I saw. Your presence provided me the perfect opportunity to escape that crowd. And now, I’m actually a bit early.”

That’s what this was all about? “It’s, uh, no problem, All Might. Anything for you,” Izuku said.

All Might laughed. “Nonsense, young Midoriya! I have to find a way to repay you.”

“What!” Izuku exclaimed. “No, uh, It’s really alright. You don’t nee—”

All Might snapped his fingers, interrupting Izuku yet again. “That’s it! You two wouldn’t have happened to have heard of David Shield, have you?”

Izuku stopped his sputtering, and Mei was shaken out of her plans for her next baby. The expressions on their faces were quite telling to the pro hero.

Meeting the world renowned David Shield — Nobel Peace Prize Winner, and former sidekick of All Might — was quite an experience for Izuku and Mei. Unsurprisingly, meeting his daughter Melissa was just as phenomenal.

The moment they met, Melissa and Mei got off very well. Perhaps too well, in Izuku’s opinion.

Within seconds of both of them realizing they weren’t strangers to tinkering, the two began bouncing
ideas off the other. The concepts that Izuku heard spilling out from the two made him hope he wouldn’t be the one testing any of them himself.

Eventually, the conversation had somehow devolved from talk of mass-driver cannons and cheese transmogrifiers into talking about each other’s quirks; something which Izuku found to be a universal constant whenever someone struck up a prolonged conversation with a stranger.

“I’m quirkless, actually,” admitted Melissa.

“You are?” questioned Izuku, the statement immediately gaining his utmost attention.

Melissa shot him a look. A look Izuku was all too familiar giving himself a long time ago.

“N— not that! It’s just… well,” Izuku sighed, “I know how that is.”

A confused look came upon Melissa’s face. “What do you mean? I thought you could, you know,” she made a couple motions with her hands, “buzz buzz?”

“He can,” said Mei. “But the fact of the matter is that Izuku didn’t get his quirk until later on in his life! Funny, since he doesn’t seem to act like a late bloomer, eh?”

Melissa sighed. The expression had Izuku immediately apologizing. “So—Sorry,” Izuku stuttered. “I’m probably bringing up some bad memories by just—”

“No, no! It’s fine, really,” Melissa pleaded. “I’ve long gotten over it. I mean, sure, I always wanted to be a hero when I was little. But I’ve found a different calling since then! I can be a hero in my own way, like my dad is! My inventions can work to bring peace to the world, just like most of the registered heroes that we have.”

“Huh,” muttered Izuku. “I guess I never saw it that way. I mean, I’ve seen how useful support gear can be, but the inventors being just as much heroes as the ones who use their equipment?”

Mei guffawed, bumping her shoulder into his. “Finally realizing that you need me, eh? Well don’t you worry, the feeling’s mutual! I probably couldn’t survive without such a hardy test subject, after all!”

Melissa giggled at the two’s antics. “Nevermind that,” she said. “I’m actually interested in how you got your quirk, Izuku. You’re saying that you had a postponed quirk manifestation, right?”

“Uhh… yeah,” Izuku eventually said, nodding his head.

“Hmm…” Melissa hummed. “Do you remember anything weird from when you got your quirk? Any special things that happened that day that could have triggered your late manifestation? Any visual or auditory hallucinations you might have experienced?”

Izuku took a moment to respond. “I… don’t think so?”

“Okay…” trailed Melissa. “And the toe joint?”

Izuku didn’t need to ask for clarification regarding what she meant. “I still have the two I was born with,” Izuku rubbed the back of his neck. “Why do you ask?”

“Well… the truth is,” Melissa began, “you aren’t an isolated case, if what you say is true.”

Izuku rose an involuntary brow. “What do you mean by that?”
“I mean, you’re not the first person to suddenly gain a quirk later in their life. Sure, late bloomers exist, but even they have the single toe joint. I can say that what you experienced, Izuku, was likely part of this slowly growing new phenomenon. It’s most often accompanied by something traumatizing happening to the person, or with them experiencing some sort of delirium-induced hallucinations. We aren’t exactly sure what’s causing it, but it’s become a lot more profound over the years. And even if the number of cases we’ve bumped into only go into a few dozen of so, there aren’t any signs of it stopping.”

“You saying that Izuku’s a sort of rare specimen or something?” Mei questioned.

“Basically? Yeah,” admitted Melissa. “Though, I’m more surprised by how well put together he is. Most of the people we’ve found affected by this weren’t exactly… the most mentally stable. There are few exceptions, like yourself, in this case, but usually that’s not how it goes.”

Izuku took all this new information in, his mind becoming even more heavily-steeped in the mystery that was his quirk. There were those weird instances where he would experience something with his quirk: use unexplained urges, those moments of clarity and… and that feeling that he was missing something. But… did he want to bring those up now? “Even more questions…” Izuku muttered.

“What was that?” Melissa asked.

“Huh? Oh! Uh, nothing!” Izuku sputtered. He submerged his mind into a few stray bugs lying in the rafters above, trying to find a way to explain his brief mumble. Thankfully, it seemed as if fate had smiled upon him that day, giving him a perfect guise to his outspoken thoughts. “I just noticed that a couple of my classmates from U.A. are here! We should go say hi!”

As it turned out, Yaoyorozu had — unsurprisingly — been given passes to visit I-Island during the duration of the I-Expo event. The fact that she only had two extra passes, however, limited the number of guests she could have accompany her. Yaoyorozu explained that, consequently, as winners of a game of rock-paper-scissors, Jiro and Uraraka could come with her.

Izuku was surprised with the coincidental nature of their meeting, but otherwise welcomed his fellow peers on their Melissa-guided tour. After everyone calmed down, Izuku figured out after a brief moment’s consideration that a good amount of his classmates were probably on the island. If Yaoyorozu was any indication, Izuku wouldn’t be surprised if Iida was here too, considering the status of his family. There was also the fact that Mineta had asked Izuku to accompany him on I-Island as waiters for a part-time job he scored, which meant that the little grape-head was on the island as well. Considering everything, Izuku wouldn’t be surprised if there were going to be some other unannounced arrivals from his class.

Eventually, the combined group of six made their way to a nearby restaurant. It coincidentally also turned out to be the restaurant Mineta was working at.

“Oh wow! Hey everybody!” Mineta exclaimed upon seeing the group. As per usual, his gaze lingered upon certain individuals of the group longer than others, but his response was otherwise much more muted than one would expect from the boy. In part, this was a result to the… stinging punishments he’d received from a certain green-haired boy he’d singled out from the rest.

“Midoriya!” Mineta exclaimed, “you really don’t know what you’re missing out on here! The pay’s great and there are so many lovely sights! Especially in the—” Mineta shivered, reconsideri his words. “—Aquarium section! Yeah, aquariums…”
“Hello to you too, Mineta,” Izuku greeted.

It was then that another figure appeared before them, emerging from within the restaurant upon hearing familiar voices.

“Oi, Jammingwhey’s here too?” Jiro questioned upon seeing said boy.

“Oh! Hey Jiro, and everybody else. Quite a few of us here, huh?”

Kaminari’s, gaze fell upon Izuku. “Oh. Hey Midoriya,” he spoke with a bit of apprehension.

“Hello, Kaminari.” Izuku smiled. His relations with Kaminari were getting better, even if such developments wouldn’t just get better automatically. But the lack of any hostile greetings showed that the two were moving along quite nicely in a positive direction.

The group eventually settled down in their seats, ordering tea and some baked goods from the two waiters. They’d spent a little under an hour at the place, conversing and catching up on what they’d all been doing over their brief summers. As Izuku expected, even Iida had showed up, zooming up onto them and berating them for not properly representing U.A.

However, all the joy and glee eventually came to an abrupt halt to Izuku. A part of his senses suddenly recoiled in pain, and he flinched as a result. “Geez!” he exclaimed, turning to Kaminari and Mineta. “What the heck are you guys doing, boiling bugs back in the kitchen?”

Both Mineta and Kaminari both adopted confused expressions on their faces. Kaminari was the one to speak. “Bugs? As far as I know, we aren’t cooking any bugs. The only thing the chef would be boiling would be the spaghetti or the crabs if anyone ordered them.”

“Crabs...?”

“Mhm,” assured Kaminari.

Izuku narrowed his eyes, focusing his senses on every organism he could feel around him. There were the normal expectations, such as the dozens of wandering flies and the bumbling bees in the nearby gardens. There were even a few bugs he hadn’t ever sensed before, all held up in a massive building on the edge of his range — no doubt some sort of entomologist’s laboratory.

However, there was something new filling his senses; an armored carapace submerged in water, two large claws adjourned with pinchers, and stalky eyes serving for its vision.

Izuku got up from his seat, moving towards the window of the restaurant. Through the glass pane, he spotted a small tank, filled with a couple of crabs. Reaching into their minds, he sent out a few orders to test out his suspicions.

Move your claw up twice, one inch in the air.

Izuku watched in surprise as the three crabs within the tank did just that. He relayed another order to make sure he wasn’t imagining things.

Walk side to side from one side of the tank to the other. The crabs did just that, marching in tandem with the other without one step out of line. Izuku bite his cheeks. He sent out one last order, just to be sure.

Crawl up onto each other to form a stack of three. Then wave your claws in greeting. It took some time, but the crabs had followed through with his order. What sent it home was the simultaneous
waving of their claws at Izuku.

Izuku’s took several deep breaths. He turned back towards the group, who were still chatting away, oblivious to his stunned state.

“Melissa,” Izuku said, interrupting the conversation she was having with Uraraka and Jiro. “Are these crabs… special?” he gestured to the crustaceans within the tank.

“Special?” Melissa questioned. “Well… they aren’t farm grown, if that’s what you asking. They’re completely ocean caught, as far as I know. A way to catch a “taste of the ocean.” We like our stuff natural here on I-Island, despite what our technology might imply.”

Izuku nodded along to the information. “Alright then. Thanks.”

“Of course!” Melissa said, resuming her conversation with the others.

At that, Izuku turned back towards the tank, and began to think of all the other times he may have been around crabs before now. He’d been to restaurants like this one before, places that held live crabs and cooked them fresh on the spot.

The strange thing was that he was almost certain that he never had connections to these organisms before this point. In fact, now that he paid more attention, he could sense a few other things within his range. He could sense lobsters in some other nearby buildings, and a group of shrimp as well if he wasn’t mistaken in nearby waters.

Suddenly, an explosion rang out in the background. A quick check with his bugs revealed the source to be Bakugo, scaling up a sort of mountain. Because of course he’d be here.

Back in his mind, Izuku was gaining more questions. *What exactly was wrong with his quirk? What were these things that he was experiencing? Are the others in my situation feeling the same thing?*

“Midoriya.”

Izuku jumped in place. He turned around, spotting Yaoyorozu.

“Are you coming?” she asked. “Everyone went to go check on the explosion.”

“Uh… yeah. Just a bit.” He turned around, back to facing towards the crabs. “And it’s just Bakugo by the way. No need to worry.”

Yaoyorozu remained for a bit, looking at Izuku. But she eventually left, knowing that Izuku would be fine.

Despite that, Izuku spent a long time staring at the tank.

Chapter End Notes

So, two chapters it is. Mostly action next time, I suppose. Until then!
And here goes the second act of Two Heroes. It’d different in its own way, I suppose. So, yeah, some stuff happens.

Izuku was still deep in thought when Mei led him to the hotel they were staying at. He wasn’t really paying attention to his surroundings, and was instead trying to form connections between the peculiarities of his quirk as Mei dragged him along.

It was only when he’d passed through the door and he noticed Mei beginning to unpack at the edge of his vision, that Izuku broke himself out of his thoughts.

“Why am I in your room, Mei?” he asked meekly.

She quirked an eyebrow. “You mean our room? Because if that’s what you’re asking, it’s because I dragged you all the way over here from that window you were staring into back at the restaurant.”

That wasn’t what he meant, of course. But Mei’s first sentence brought up even more questions. “Our room?” Izuku asked. “Why are we sharing a room?”

“They gave us two passes, not two rooms,” Mei answered, as if stating the obvious. “Besides, what’s wrong with sharing a room?”

Izuku sighed, taking a second to absorb Mei’s obliviousness. “At least they’re two beds, so there’s that,” he muttered to himself.

“And our luggage came in alright, which means we won’t have any problems going to the reception!” Mei continued. “And I’ll get another chance to talk with David Shield again!” At that moment, an elegant maroon dress came flowing out from her suitcase.

“Huh,” Izuku said under his breath. “I never thought that I’d see you in something so formal.”

Mei scoffed. “This thing?” she waved the dress around. “This isn’t the first time I’ve worn stuff like this; my mom gets invited to events like this all the time, after all.” She took an opposing look at the piece of clothing, giving it the stink eye.

“But… just… Bleh. I wish I didn’t have to. But they wouldn’t let me in otherwise, so I have to.” She shook her head.

“Now,” Mei continued, “where’s yours?”

“I, uh… don’t have one?” Izuku admitted slowly. “I didn’t know we’d be going to anything like this. Sorry I’m not prepared, Mei.” He rubbed the back of his head. “Besides, I wasn’t one for formal events anyways. I feel like I’d crash the event with my presence rather than act normally in one. Don’t exactly know why, but I think it just has to do with my bugs. I never really had a good grip on them back when I was younger and I still don’t feel comfortable without them on me. It doesn’t help that all those parties always seemed so stuffy to me, and with my bugs I’d just—”
“You’re rambling again,” Mei waved Izuku off, diving back into her own luggage. “And I wasn’t talking to you, actually. I was just thinking out loud.” After a few moments Mei arose from her luggage with glee, a full piece suit in hand. “Aha!”

Izuku stiffened.

“Oh come on, don’t be like that,” Mei pouted. “I just wanted to see my assistant wearing a nice looking suit for once. Can ya blame me?”

Izuku was stuck yet again within his own thoughts. Nevermind the fact that Mei had packed him a suit without consulting him first. Even if the matching maroon coloring did look promising. He had one question in mind.

“When did you get my measurements?”

Izuku grunted as he readjusted the small pack on his shoulders. The bag was weighing him down a bit, making him stumble every now and then when something inside jostled around. “Why are we bringing all this stuff with us again?” he asked. “I mean, it’s not like you’re going to need these. We’re just going to a party”

“Yeah, a party with David Shield! I wasn’t prepared last time, but now I’m ready!” Mei declared.

“I’m sure Mr. Shield will have plenty of time to review your gadgets with you later, Mei. He’ll be busy tonight.”

“Oh, hush you. Just you wait and see,” she challenged. “I’ll have him within my sights and captivated with my babies in minutes!”

Izuku didn’t reply back. He knew I’d be useless to argue back at this point with Mei as fired up as she was, so he let her ramble as they walked on.

It didn’t take too long for them to get to their destination. They passed through a set of automatic steel doors to enter the lobby that held the elevators that would lead up to the reception. Inside were the familiar faces of Iida, Todoroki, Kaminari, and Mineta.

“Evening, Midoriya, Hatsume,” Iida greeted. “Glad to see that you could make it.”

“Ever the formal one, ain’t ya, glasses?” Mei instantly quipped.

Iida crossed his arms. “I suppose I am, Miss Hatsume. It’s in my nature as a member of the Iida family, for I must uphold the utmost integrity to my family name.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Mei said. “I really must thank you, though. I wouldn’t be here right now if it weren’t for the spectacular demonstration you provided for me back during the Sports Festival.”

“I— You— Now hold on a second…’’

Izuku smiled at his friends’ antics. Leaving the two alone, he planted himself in front of the other three people present in the room.

Todoroki was off in a corner by himself, while Kaminari and Mineta occupied another corner, quietly talking among themselves.

“Hello Midoriya.” Todoroki nodded in his direction.
“Hi Todoroki,” Izuku responded in kind.

Todoroki laid back against the wall with his head down, seemingly content with a simple greeting instead of a conversation. Izuku wasn’t sure why that was, but it was something he had gotten used too. Ever since the sports festival, Todoroki would greet him whenever they crossed paths, but that would be all. Todoroki had yet to fully break out of whatever shell he hid himself in. But still, it was progress, Izuku mused.

“Hey guys,” Izuku said, turning to the other two.

“Hey yourself,” Kaminari said.

“Hey Midoriya.” His gaze shifted around Izuku. “I’ve got to say, your friend is— ACK!” Mineta reached for her hand, a small bee flying off of it. “Alright, alright.”

The door to the lobby then opened, bringing along Yaoyorozu, Uraraka, Jiro, and Melissa.

“Hello everybody!” cheered Yaoyorozu.

Izuku’s gaze found itself focused on the newcomers. “Hello, Yaoyorozu,” he said. “You look nice.”

“Oh,” Yaoyorozu stuttered. “Thank you.”

Izuku turned to the others. “So do you three, Jiro, Uraraka, Melissa. Quite unlike your usual selves. I like it.” The three girls acted in a fashion similar to Yaoyorozu with Izuku’s words.

Off to the side, Mineta looked curious, leaning over to Kaminari. “When did Midoriya get so good with girls?” Mineta whispered.

Kaminari shrugged. “Eh. Who knows?”

The group then went on to linger for a while, waiting for the late arrivals of Kirishima and Bakugo. Minutes passed by, and the group nearly decided to leave without them.

However, their efforts were blocked with the sudden emergence of a blaring siren, and the immediate closure of the metal shutters along every opening in the room.

“The heck just happened?” Kaminari questioned.

It took a moment, but Melissa eventually responded. “It’s the island’s security system. It means that someone has breached the island and set off the alarms.”

“My phone doesn’t have a signal,” informed Jiro.

“Yeah, that’s part of the security measures. Makes it harder for villains to communicate,” Melissa said.

“We should go and get All Might, or at least see what he’s planning with the other heroes,” Izuku blurted out.

Everyone moved their heads towards Izuku, mulling over his proposition. There were a couple of nods all around, and everyone got ready to head towards the party.

It was only when they were halfway there that Izuku noticed the situation using a stray fly that had found its way into the party. After a brief session of All Might trying to and failing to blow away a
rogue fly, the hero finally noticed Izuku up above.

Izuku promptly motioned to Jiro, which led to All Might briefing them on the events leading up to his predicament. After All Might finished, Izuku and Jiro hurriedly made their way back to the rest of the group, debriefing them on the situation.

A couple arguments flared up, with Iida arguing for escape, Todoroki, Jiro, and Yaoyorozu aiming to help the trapped heroes, and the rest staying silent.

“There must be something that we can do,” suggested Yaoyorozu.

“Well, there might be something…” Almost everyone looked Melissa’s way as she spoke the words. “If we get to the top of the tower, we can possibly reset the security system against the villains.”

There was a slow roar of approval from most of the students. All that was needed were the thoughts of a few more.

“How about you Midoriya?” asked Melissa.

“Huh?” Izuku uttered, refocusing himself. “Sorry. I’ve been trying to get some bugs in from the outside, but I’m having trouble finding any openings into the building.

“Yeah, that’s another security measure of the building,” Melissa surmised. “The building is air tight due to all the shutters closing up.”

“Ah. I see,” Izuku said. “Well, I’ll be directing some bugs as we go up then, just in case I have a chance of bringing some in.”

“Umm, how many bugs do you have in you, Midoriya-kun?” Uraraka asked.

“How many?” Izuku questioned. “Let’s see… Two fireflies, five wasps, three spiders, three bees, one stinkbug, one mukade, two denkis, a mountain leech, a cockroach, two ants, and two dragonflies. Twenty-three in all.” As Izuku listed off the creatures, one by one they revealed themselves from Izuku’s hair; flying out of the green mess or crawling onto more noticeable parts of his skin.

Most of those present were staring at him with various looks of surprise and alarm. The only exceptions were Todoroki, who seemed unsurprised, and Mei who was digging around in the bag on Izuku’s back.

The bugs eventually returned to their place within Izuku’s hair, buzzing and squirming their way until they were virtually unnoticeable. When the process was over, Izuku looked out in confusion as he noticed the mixed variety of faces.

“What?” he asked.

Mineta was the first to break the silence. “Thanks for reminding me to never mess with you, Midoriya,” he muttered.

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Everything had been going fairly well until the 80th floor. Minutes of traversing the tower floor by floor came to a halt when the group found their way blocked by a barrier. With neither Mei nor Melissa having the skills capable of bypassing the barrier, they were left with the option of using a narrow vent.
Luckily, Mineta had found it in himself to volunteer for the job. And so, with the barrier opening up after Mineta’s journey through the vents, the group was able to continue their trip. That is, until multiple shutters began closing on their path, forcing them to escape into the tower’s botanical gardens.

Much to Izuku’s chagrin, the garden only held a few birds, being completely void of any insects. To make matters worse, the central elevator had brought upon two members of the invading villains into the room.

Out of nowhere, the two goons were suddenly being held off by a wayward Kirishima and Bakugo. Todoroki joined the fray after, sending up an ice pillar so everyone else could keep moving towards the control room. But then came another obstacle.

Mineta was much more wary of using the vents this time. Izuku didn’t fault him, since Mineta would have to crawl up the side of the building to get to the next floor. Still, Izuku could feel the swarm he’d amassed outside the walls. The promise that he’d watch Mineta with the bugs convinced the boy to go through with it.

As Mineta made his way in, so had an equivalent of three clones worth of bugs. The remaining nine individuals (plus three, if counting the clones) then continued their way up the tower, eventually finding themselves in front of a swarm of security bots on floor 130. Eventually, plan A was formed. But before it came into fruition, Mei pleaded for a few moments of time.

“Izuku. Turn around,” Mei commanded. “I need the pack. Gimme gimme.” Izuku followed her request, turning so Mei could more easily reach into the pack he was still carrying. Meanwhile, the bug clones stood eerily still, no doubt completely under Izuku’s control.

“Why is Izuku lugging your stuff around anyway, Mei?” Melissa asked.

Mei looked at Melissa as if she were crazy. “Are you kidding? You always have to be prepared for situations like this!”

“I thought you just wanted to show off your inventions to Mr. Shield,” one of the clones rebuked.

A few of those present jumped in surprise at the response, not expecting for one of the bug clones to speak.

“Pfft. That’s a simpleton’s train of thought, Izuku! Sure, that was the main reason I had you bring my stuff, but this just goes to show that you can’t go anywhere without my tech!”

A few moments later, Mei let out an excited noise and held out a small bracelet.

“Finally! Zappy, get over here!”

Kaminari blinked in surprise when he heard his designated name being called out, its usage ingrained in his mind after the few times he spent in Mei’s lab. He walked up to the eccentric inventor unsure of what to expect.

“Yes, Hatsume?”

The bracelet in Mei’s hand suddenly found itself wrapped around Kaminari’s wrist, making a distinct clicking noise as it locked in place.

“Hey! What the— Is this what I think it is?” Kaminari said, eyes wide in disbelief.
“Mhm! It’s still just a prototype, though. I need to work on a bigger, more versatile version still, but this one should work! Just clench your hand into your wrist. Then watch the magic happen!”

“Miss Hatsume,” Iida began, “what is that, if I may ask?

“My baby? Well, if you must know, it amplifies and concentrates Zappy’s electricity in one place. Pretty neat, eh?”

“It is. But why do you have a device that specifically caters to Kaminari’s needs?” Iida asked.

“Hmm? Oh, Izuku brought him in the other week. I’ve been working on this baby since!” That seemed to fulfill Iida’s curiosity. And so, with questions answered, Plan A was set into motion. Kaminari slowly made his way towards the security bots. When he was ready, he clenched his wrists and let out some electricity in his hand.

Three wires shot out of the device, embedding themselves into the bodies of three robots. As Kaminari’s electricity went through the wires, the robots light up in a bright yellow. They then went into a frenzy, eventually toppling over with smoke rising up from their charred chassis.

The rest of the robots then turned their way toward Kaminari all at once.

“Oh. We didn’t think this through,” Kaminari muttered to himself. He quickly turned towards Mei. “How do I retract the wires???”

“Press the button on the side!” Mei exclaimed in an instant.

“Button?!!?” Kaminari yelled, panicking down below. “Which button?!!? I don’t— Aha! I found it!” As the three wires retracted into the device, Kaminari suddenly found himself surrounded by dozens of security bots.

“Son of a—” Kaminari let out his signature move as the robots launched their own coils, rendering Kaminari out of action.

“Well, there goes Plan A,” Jiro said.

After rescuing a dumbed down Kaminari with the sacrifice of one bug clone, the group found themselves on floor 138 with a horde of robots closing in by the second.

“What are we going to do now?!” Mineta huffed.

“We’re almost to the generators,” Melissa informed. “They’re outside, and I should be able to bypass the door so we can ride the wind up the rest of the way.”

“That’s good!” Iida exclaimed, stopping the group. “In that case… Miss Shield!”

“Yes?”

“You go ahead with Uraraka and Midoriya. Uraraka will be able to lift you up with the generators while Midoriya can direct your flight with his bugs.”

“Right!” Melissa exclaimed. “Let’s—”

“Hold up!” Mei exclaimed. “Give me my pack! This is a prime time to test out my babies!”
Izuku laughed a little. “You never change, do you?”

“Nope!” Mei laughed as she grabbed the pack, diving her hands into it yet again.

That was when a distinct rumbling of metal began to arise from further down the hallway.

With the onslaught of robots incoming, the designated trio made their escape. They made their way outside without any complications, leading Uraraka to activate her quirk. Izuku and Melissa to rose up into the air as the wind generators pushed them upwards. That was when the robots had caught up.

However, Bakugo, Todoroki, and Kirishima suddenly appeared, pushing back the robots.

Meanwhile, up in the air, Izuku used his bugs to guide himself and Melissa to a nearby shutter. After a few moments of tinkering on the panel, Melissa had the shutter open with a loud thunk. They promptly made their way inside as they felt Uraraka release her hold on her quirk.

A guy with swords for hands immediately came charging at them, though he just as quickly fell to the ground as he became covered in a swarm of biting and squirming bugs.

“Huh. That was quick,” Izuku muttered to himself.

“Is… is he going to be alright?” Melissa asked, slightly horrified by the sight.

“Of course,” Izuku assured her. “As long as he’s not allergic, anyways.”

“Oh.”

The swarm lifted off the unmoving — but still breathing — man. They flew their way further up the stairs, a few screams echoing down as they found themselves attacking new victims.

Izuku grabbed Melissa’s arm. “Come on, we need to get the control room.”

They quickly made their way up the flights of stairs, still uncertain of what was to come.

“Thank you, Miyata,” came the voice of the presumed leader of the villains. If Izuku had heard right from All Might’s debriefing, the man’s name was Wolfram.

Izuku had been completely blindsided by Wolfram’s sudden appearance. In fact, he and the lackey beside him had seemingly appeared out of nowhere. Izuku’s bugs hadn’t picked up on a clue of the villains’ presence, which was something that what greatly bugging Izuku.

Sure, Izuku could have blamed the fact that he had just found out that David Shield had hired the villains in the first place. The shock might have been enough Izuku to have not noticed the villains with his bugs, but he had a feeling that that wasn’t it.

Izuku coughed, a small trail of blood spurting out from his mouth. His vision was blurry, and he was having problems clearing out his thoughts. He was fairly certain that he had hit his head when Wolfram had shot all that metal at him, pinning him to the wall.

He was mostly defenseless, since all his bugs were outside the vault, unable to get in due to the giant sheet of metal blocking their way in. All Izuku had were the bugs in his hair.

Already, the spiders were spinning and the fliers were flapping their wings. They would have to do.
It was fortunate that Wolfram had disregarded covering Izuku’s head. Before long, all twenty-three bugs began to disperse themselves around the room. A crude plan was slowly forming within Izuku’s mind.

The first thing Izuku did was assess the situation. His small battalion of fliers took note of what he couldn’t see with his eyes.

Wolfram was monologuing to David Shield, who was splayed down bleeding on the floor.

Wolfram’s lackey — Miyata, if Izuku heard right — was simply smiling, looking down at Shield in contempt. The villain was a mystery for now; as for his quirk, Izuku didn’t have a clue. It was likely that he’d been hiding up here in the control room the entire time, unseen by any of the heroes below.

Izuku winced as Melissa was struck to the ground by Wolfram. The sight made him furious. And then the gun’s trajectory made its way towards Melissa.

Izuku didn’t think.

The miniature swarm of fliers swooped down towards Wolfram. Unfortunately, Wolfram saw the bugs coming. He switched his target, aiming towards the trapped form of Izuku.

A single shot went off before the bugs could arrive, but by then it was enough. The denkimushi-wielding bees aimed for the man’s hand. The sudden shock and stinging had Wolfram immediately releasing his grip on the gun, the weapon dropping to the ground. Two wasps went for his exposed eyes, and the man screamed.

The noise triggered something in Melissa, who quickly got up and ran straight for the control room.

Rather than take chase, the other villain quickly backed away, his body turning somewhat see through and misty. The wasps aimed at him merely passed through the man’s body.

*Intangibility, then,* Izuku thought. Made sense as to had they arrived so discreetly.

Izuku was about to send back the wasps, aiming to keep them within Miyata’s body so he couldn’t shift back, when the villain backed away and jumped through the wall. It seemed that he would be abandoning his leader, then.

Meanwhile, spiders and the giant centipede crawled their way up Wolfram’s legs, biting and injecting small traces of venom as they made their way up. The wasps and bees went for his other hand, and the case holding the quirk enhancer clattered to the ground. The electric bugs kept on shocking. The bees and wasps kept stinging.

Izuku sent an order to the stink bug, and it emitted its stench right in front of his nostrils. And then he sent the two ants right down both of his ear canals.

The assault had the intended effect. Wolfram was unable to call upon his quirk to help with all the pain he was under. He couldn’t see, and soon enough he wouldn’t be able to hear. He’d be unable to make an escape. The villain fell to the ground within minutes.

Wolfram was incapacitated. And that was good. He could finally rest.

“Midoriya! Midoriya!” came the voice, distant and yet so close. When he came to, Izuku was barely registering that somebody was shaking his body and screaming his name. It didn’t help that he was still disoriented from his potential head injury. And he didn’t exactly feel like making his body move,
either.

At this point, Izuku could tell that the shutters had all been deactivated, which meant that Melissa was successful. It also meant that he could amass his swarm again.

High above, the slowly gathering bugs painted a picture for Izuku. All his classmates were there, minus Jiro and Mineta. Wolfram was missing, but so was David Shield and his assistant. It was safe to say that they had already been escorted away and/or restrained by his missing classmates.

Switching his attention, he found that everyone else had gathered around his crumpled form, head slumped and body unmoving. Yaoyorozu was the one shaking him as Kirishima and Mei attempted to pry and melt away the metal holding his body captive. Izuku sent his newly formed clone down to the floor.

“Yaoyorozu, could you stop shaking me, please?”

She jumped, as did everybody else present. They all looked at the newly formed swarm, and it didn’t take long to put two and two together.

“Midoriya! You’re alright!” Yaoyorozu sniveled.

Everyone else adopted similar faces of relief barely concealed emotion.

Except for Bakugo, who predictably scoffed and stomped off.

Yaoyorozu began making some white cloth with her quirk. Izuku paid it no mind, his mind more focused on the more important matter at hand.

“Is Wolfram taken care of?”

“You serious!?” exclaimed Mei, stopping her work. “That’s the first thing you think of?” she sighed. “No, no. That’s just how you are, it makes sense. Carry on,” she relented, focusing her attention back on her… blow torch-gun-thing.

“He has been,” Iida spoke. “Mineta is currently restraining him with Jiro. All Might was here earlier, but he went ahead and took Mr. Shield and his assistant to get help. Miss Shield went along with him. All Might was a bit reluctant to leave you behind, but we said that we’d take care of you.”

“Oh,” the swarm echoed. “Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it, Midoriya,” Iida said.

After a moment’s silence, the clone spoke again. “You know, I was expecting something more climactic to happen,” Izuku mused.

“Climactic!?” Yaoyorozu exclaimed. “You got shot!”

The bugs’ attention went back to her, and it was only then that Izuku noticed that she was slowly wrapping bandages around his shoulder area. Splotches of blood were easily viewable behind the thin wrapping.

“Oh. I didn’t even notice.”

“You didn’t notice that you got shot?” Kaminari spoke for the first time. “You’re kidding me.”
The swarm shrugged its shoulders in response.

“High pain tolerance,” Mei suddenly said. “He’s had to adapt to having one with what I put him through!”

“I’m not sure that even a high tolerance of pain would have prevented Midoriya from noticing he got shot,” Yaoyorozu added.

“Eh, gave it my best explanation. Worth a shot, I suppose,” Mei said.

Uraraka was the next one to speak. “Are you sure that you’re okay, Midoriya-kun?” she asked.

“Of course,” the Swarm immediately responded. “Why do you ask?”

Izuku heard Yaoyorozu exhaling air out of her nostrils. “Aside from the gunshot wound, I mean.”

“Well… It’s just, you look kind of creepy right now,” Uraraka said.

Kaminiari chuckled. “Heh, she’s not wrong.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, first off, there’s all the blood all over the place,” Kaminari said.

The clone peered over to the body, and upon closer inspection did find a lot of blood oozing from the wound all over onto the floor.

“And two,” Kaminari continued, “you really look like you’re actually dead right now.”

“Kaminari!” Iida interjected. “Don’t say things like that!”

“What? I’m just stating what I’m seeing, you know.”

Izuku made himself raise his head. “I’m alive. Don’t worry.” He took a breath. “Sorry if I freaked you all out,” he added as an afterthought. He took another breath, lowering his head this time due to fatigue.

He brought himself to relax, enjoying the feeling of Yaoyorozu wrapping the bandage around him, simply waiting until he’d be able to get out of his entrapment. The tearing of metal and low hum of fire melted away, and found joy in the ambivalent sounds.

But then another thought came to mind.

“Hey, would one of you mind asking Melissa about the bug exhibit-slash-research center that I sensed earlier?”

Chapter End Notes

And that does it for Two Heroes. Does the in-between feel a bit rushed? I think it does, and I think that’s because I sorta wanted to get the trip up over with in two chapters. It’s the ending that I really had something different in store, so that probably has something to do with it.
Alrighty, on to the next story arc! Sorry if this one’s a bit late. I had some stuff going on that I needed to do first. Anyways, to the remaining summer shenanigans of this arc!

Izuku took a deep breath. The humid midsummer air filtered in through his nostrils, easing up the aches of his body. The soft glow of the sun above shone through his closed eyelids, placing him a steady state of relaxation and bliss.

Izuku slowly rose from his recumbent position, stretching his one free arm high into the air as a small yawn came to his mouth. He instinctively dodged the incoming splash of water, having his body take a few steps back as the bugs on his head retreated further back into the depths of his hair. He opened his eyes to find Mineta looking up at him from the pool’s surface.

“Hey Midoriya!” the boy called. “You done doing nothing but laying down up there and ready to join us?”

“I’d rather not,” Izuku answered. “My bugs won’t like it. And my shoulder’s still a bit sore. It probably won’t be too good if I strained myself right now.”

Mineta scoffed. “I’m sure you can handle it after everything you’ve been through. Come on, we’re about to start a race. Even Bakugo is participating!”

“He’s still recovering, Mineta!” Yaoyorozu called out from the other side of the pool. Her gaze then shifted over to Izuku, who was still standing by the water’s edge. “Isn’t your arm supposed to be in a sling?” she asked.

“It’s alright!” Izuku reassured her. “Recovery Girl said I could take it off this morning as long as I don’t strain myself. I should be fine by tomorrow.”

“Hmm… If you say so, Midoriya,” she relented.

Izuku turned his attention back Mineta, who nodded in return. Mineta turned to the rest to announce Izuku’s decision. “Alright then everyone! We’re good to go. Midoriya will be sitting out!”

Izuku ignored the repressed snarl he heard coming from Bakugo’s direction. Izuku planted himself back on the chair he was on earlier, laying himself back down.

The first round of the swimming competition had barely begun when Izuku felt a presence coming towards his direction. Gleaming around with his bugs to see who it was, Izuku sat himself back up and greeted the newcomer.

“Hello Tsu.”

“Hello Midoriya,” Tsu said with a croak. “How are you doing?”

“Fine, considering the fact that I was shot,” Izuku spoke nonchalantly. “Apparently, I’m lucky that I-
Island has such good medical services. I lost so much blood that I ran the risk of shock and a couple other things. I heard that you were on the island too. How was your stay?"

Tsu blinked. It took her a few seconds to respond. “It was fine. Minus the fact that villains invaded, anyhow. I met up with a couple of the others after the fact.”

“That’s nice,” Izuku said warmly.

A companionable silence fell upon the two. The first round of the swim competition ended, with Bakugo reigning supreme. It was as the second round was beginning that Tsu spoke again.

“Can I be honest with you, Midoriya?”

Izuku turned his head towards Tsu, trying to gauge any sort of emotion on her face. However, as per usual, she was expressionless as a rock. “Sure. Go ahead.” He turned his head back to the race. “It’s what you do, after all.”

“You’re pretty reckless,” she said, not wasting any time to speak her mind.

Izuku slowly raised an eyebrow in response. “I am?"

“You are. First, there was U.S.J. where you were seriously injured. And the more recent event at I- Island, kero. And then there was that fight on the news. The one with Edgeshot and Centaur.”

“That was on the news?”

“It was,” Tsu ribbeted. “And you were much closer to the actual combat than needed, based on what I saw. You’re really prone to coming close to dying, Midoriya.”

Izuku remained silent.

“Just keep it in mind, Midoriya-chan.”

Beyond the two, the swimming competition was just wrapping up. Aizawa had come in at the last moment, cutting off the quirks of both Todoroki and Bakugo. However, that still left Iida — who was too engrossed in the race to notice Aizawa’s arrival. He had ended up winning the race by a technicality. He was also profusely apologizing to Aizawa for not heeding the teacher’s earlier commands.

Todoroki seemed unaffected, but Bakugo was being his usual self and foaming in the mouth. It wasn’t like it mattered in the end. Everyone would still be having a chance to show off at the camp, after all.

Izuku watched on as the trees and rocky mountain sides smeared out past the window of the bus. As the vehicle sped by, the presence of billions of bugs passed by in a blur. Connections were made and lost just as suddenly, only enough to relish in the feeling of them for seconds.

It was never like this in the city; or at least, not to this magnitude. The wilderness was devoid of human interference for miles around, allowing the populations of bugs to thrive and grow naturally unhindered.

A couple hours of this, and it wasn’t long until the bus reached a stop. The entirety of class 1-A found themselves at one of the rest stops Aizawa had previously mentioned.

But with the stop, Izuku noticed something else with his bugs. He had sensed the three individuals
beforehand when the bus was further off, but he waved it off as unimportant. And while he was suspicious at first, the feeling faded away as Izuku recognized just who he was looking at.

Aside from the kid, who wore a horned red cap but was otherwise unrecognizable, the other two individuals donned noticeable features. Their costumes fulfilled an obvious theme: ears, tails, and even paws reminiscent of a feline’s. It was immediately obvious to Izuku who he was looking at.

As 1-A filtered out of the bus, the class’s faces lit up with various expressions of surprise, indifference, and even confusion.

To Izuku, the sight of Pixie Bob and Mandalay was definitely unexpected. He supposed it made sense in a way, given the team was stationed in Nagano specialized in mountain rescue. The fact that the class was currently situated in such an environment enforced that belief. The only other possibility was that the Wild, Wild Pussycats were in charge of the camp. Which Izuku supposed, made sense in its own way as well.

Izuku’s suspicions were proven right as the two members of the group explained their roles in partaking to the exercise. Unfortunately, any form of interaction was cut short. The ground below Class 1-A rumbled. And within seconds, the rock and gravel was pulled from under Class 1-A. The result of Pixie Bob’s quirk, Earth Flow, Izuku mused.

And it looked as if the first part of training had begun, with Class 1-A thrown right in the middle with the aptly named “Beast’s Forest.” And they only had three hours to reach the camp or they wouldn’t get lunch.

Internally, Izuku sighed. He knew that the challenge would be a hard one, especially considering the fact that his bugs were basically useless against the artificial creatures popping up left and right. The best hope he had other than physically beating the beasts was helping in navigation.

“Izuku, congratulations!” exclaimed Pixie Bob as the disgruntled members of class 1-A entered the clearing. “It only took you guys… seven and a half hours! Not too shabby, if I’d say so myself.”

The majority of 1-A collapsed in response, falling to their fatigue.

On the other hand, Izuku was happy that the class had finally reached camp. He also was grateful that his bugs were able to point the way as well, stopping a few mishaps of the class getting lost. He didn’t know how much longer he could stand being back living rock with his bare hands.

After a few moments, he moved into a standstill, taking in the whole of the camp with his bugs. The place was fairly large; complete with lodging, plenty of buildings, and loads of open space.

1-B was lounging around as well further away. Albeit, they were scuffed up and in a similar state to the rest of 1-A. No doubt this was the result of them undergoing a similar task as well. Izuku also found Manga approaching, steadily making his way towards where Izuku stood.

Meanwhile, Pixie Bob continued to talk. It was hearing his name that got Izuku focusing his attention back onto the woman.

“Great job, all of you. Especially you three.” She pointed. “Todoroki, Midoriya and… Bakugo, I believe. It’s quite obvious that you have some skills in fighting actual opponents. Villains, in other words.”

Izuku drowned the rest out, ignoring Pixie Bob dashing back and forth between the three and focusing his attention back onto a familiar little kid as he hung back from the crowd. Izuku
recognized him as the same boy from earlier, shoes and all. Surprisingly, the kid stared right back. However, his look was filled with a lot more with scorn and hostility than Izuku’s more curious and calculating stare.

“You staring at that kid?” Manga asked, crossing his arms as he placed himself beside Izuku.


“You can just ask, you know. None of that shifty stealthy stuff that you like. Or I can ask I’m great with kids, didn’t you know?” Manga laughed.

Izuku let out a small laugh. “Since when?”

“Since forever! And one thing that Ii suggest, you probably shouldn’t look at him like you are. It’s maybe why he has that weird look on his face.”

Iida eventually commented on the boy’s presence, which spurred Mandalay to introduce the boy Kota as her nephew.

Immediately, Kota’s face morphed even more angry. He stalked past Iida and completely ignored the outstretched hand. When Manga attempted to greet Kota, he was met with a harsh kick to the shin. And when Kota finally came face to face with Izuku, the boy struck out right in front of him.

Izuku winced, twitching slightly from the unexpected attack. He may have high pain tolerance, but it was still a hit on his most sensitive areas, and he reacted accordingly. He took a few breaths as he watched the boy disappear into the woods.

“Heh. Nice kid. Another one, perhaps?”

“N—Yes.”

Kota was a much more intriguing character than Izuku had first thought. The realization began on that same night that they had arrived at the camp, with members of both 1-A and 1-B splitting off into their own respective hot springs.

Everyone was settling in when Izuku noticed it. Kota was at the top of the dividing wall, on the lookout for what Izuku presumed were any potential peeping toms.

“Huh. He really must be paying attention, then. Probably saw right through Mineta in minutes.”

“What was that, Izuku?” Manga asked.

“Hmm? Oh, nothing. There is one thing I want to ask, though.”

“Oh? And what’s that?”

“What happened to you being ‘good with kids?’”

“Oi! You and I both know that was an isolated incident.”

“But I thought that he still got you a second time?”

“Well, I—”

“That Kota kid really did get you good, didn’t he, Fukidashi?!” exclaimed one of the other 1-B kids
that Izuku didn’t recognize.

“You wouldn’t have done any better, Tsuburaba!” Various members from both classes laughed at the exchange, remembering both events that had transpired.

It was then that Mineta took his chance to climb up the dividing center wall. Izuku didn’t warn him of the overwatch that consisted of Kota, and instead asked Tokoyami to at least soften the boy’s fall.

As expected, Mineta fell off back towards the boys side after Kota flicked him off. The already ready Tokoyami caught Mineta mid-air and dragged him off to the other side of the pool.

What Izuku wasn’t expecting was for Kota to also fall. He was about to yell out, but Iida and Honenuki already had it handled. The first of the two used Recipro Burst to zoom out of the pool while the latter blanketed the floor under the wall his quirk.

The end result was Iida getting caught up in Honenuki’s quirk. However, e was still able to catch Kota, who seemingly had fainted in shock from the fall. As Iida and Honenuki both insisted on making sure the boy was okay, they both brought him over to the cabin’s office to get him help.

And whether Izuku wanted to or not, he ended up listening to the story of Kota’s life and his gradual descent into hatred towards heroes and villains alike. He listened in as Mandalay told the story of Water Hose and their subsequent demise to the villain Muscular.

Izuku felt a bit bad listening in, but there was nothing he could do about it now. Besides, the bugs were already there in the first place, after all.

It was 5:30 in the morning when 1-A had gathered outside at the insistence of Aizawa. When Aizawa demonstrated through Bakugo’s ball toss that the class had grown mentally and emotionally but not physically, Izuku knew that the man was making a good point.

Izuku himself was going out a lot less on his patrols and spent far less time with his old sensei. The fact that school work also filled up most of his time made it difficult to train his quirk. There was just too much happening all at once to able able to do much.

Both classes were eventually divvied up between the four members of the Pussycats as Vlad King and Aizawa took the remedial students. Izuku ended up joining up with Mandalay, which led to their current conversation.

“Midoriya, right?” Mandalay asked.

Izuku nodded. “Mhm.”

Mandalay tilted her head, focusing a heavy gaze onto Izuku. “Hmm…”

“Um, is there something wrong?”

“No, no. Nothing’s wrong. I’m just a bit curious, is all. I’m sensing multiple signals originating from you, a little under thirty, in fact. Though I suppose that those are just your bugs.” She straightened herself out, clearing her throat. “You know of my quirk, correct?”

“Oh, yup! Telepath. It allows you to send messages to multiple peoples’ minds at a time. You don’t really have an upper limit, as you’ve slowly been growing your quirk over time. As of now, you can
transmit to up to 300 people at a time. However, that’s only when you’re sending a single message. In the case of sending different messages to different people, you can send around twelve messages at a time.”

“Right in one kid. And sheesh. Aizawa really wasn’t kidding when he said to watch out with you. You really delve deep into people’s quirks, don’t you?”

“Oh! Well, um, thanks,” Izuku stuttered. “I uh... really like the way you build up your quirk. I like the way most heroes improve themselves, but you especially. It’s so cool that you just keep on improving day after day. And kinda with a quirk like my. Makes me know that I can still improve myself too”

“And that’s what we’re planning to do today with you, Midoriya,” Mandalay smiled. “First things first. I hear that you can communicate with your bugs. Mind showing me?”

“Oh! Of course! Just give me a second.” Izuku ordered a select few of the billions of bugs in their surroundings to gather near him. The bugs flew and buzzed together, forming a shapeless mass of biomass in the air. At Izuku’s command, they shortly conjoined and formed themselves into something much more distinct. Before long, an exact shape and form of Izuku himself was standing by the original..

“What would you like me to do?” came the voice, deep and monotone.

Mandalay rose an eyebrow in surprise. “I’m impressed. Such fine control and speed. It shows years of practice and training. I assume that you form sort of mental connection to your bugs, correct?”

“Yup. I can feel and control every single arthropod around me for three blocks. Or um… around fifteen percent of a mile in every direction, I suppose.”

“Much more control than I do. Though I suppose it’s just for bugs, after all. It’s a good thing you can’t do the same with people like I do. Anyways, there is one thing I’d like to work on. Something I would like to believe you have yet to attempt.”

“Something I haven’t tried?”

“Mhm. It’s like you said earlier about my quirk. While I have an immense capability to communicate to hundreds at once, it’s much harder to relay different messages to different people all at once. We’ll be working on something similar for you today, Midoriya.”

“Multiple conversations?” Izuku asked himself. “Huh. I haven’t even considered that. I just assumed that I wouldn’t need it? I guess.”

“Well, that’s why we’re here today. You’ll find that being able to relay different messages all at once will be useful in many rescue situations. It saves time and cuts short any unnecessary communication time that takes away from rescue time. Any questions before we start?”

Izuku shook his head.

“Good. Then we’ll start off with what I did to train my quirk. As we are both emitters and both our quirks stem off of mental communication, I believe that the exercises I went through will benefit you just as much.”

“I want you to strain yourself for starters. Try to find an upper limit to the amount of bugs you can control. When I first started off, I could only communicate with ten people or so. You’ll find with practice that your quirk can greatly improve as long as that’s all you focus on at the moment. Just
connect to as many as you can at a time.”

“Okay. That doesn’t seem to bad,” Izuku admitted.

“And it isn’t “ Mandalay countered. “But there’s still more. While you connect to as many as you can, try to do so with as much fine control as you demonstrated with your friend right there. “She pointed to the bug clone. “Then attempt as many complex actions as you can in as short an amount of time as you can. Talking and relaying messages, preferably.”

“That’s it?”

“For now. Part two will come afterwards. Just notify me with your bugs when you’re ready. I’m off to help the others. Good luck!”

As Mandaaly walked away, Izuku began thinking up his next course of action. He needed to complete a complex action with as many bugs as possible. That was when he remembered his bug clone, which was still standing obediently still beside him. He had an idea form in his mind.

“Well, let’s try a giant bug clone then, shall we?”

Chapter End Notes

This one’s a bit shorter and quietly uneventful this time, it looks like. But don’t worry! We all know what comes next, don’t we? The action will be all focused and centerfold the next time around. Hope to see you all then!
And thus begins the Vanguard Action Squad’s attack. I implemented something else in here, too. Don’t worry for those who find it confusing. You don’t need special Worm knowledge, necessarily. You’ll be learning alongside Izuku! Besides, all will be explained in time.

“Alright. So maybe a giant bug clone shouldn’t have been my first choice. But do you blame me? You wanted something complex!” Izuku pleaded, his words skittish.

Mandalay moved her head up and down the enormous length of the clone, taking it in all its glory. “Would you…show me again?” she asked.

Izuku nodded. At his behest, the mass of bugs moved.

Mandalay watched the motions of the giant. Something so big shouldn’t be able to move so fast, but she reminds herself that its a swarm of millions, perhaps billions, of individual tiny bugs.

She watches the individual limbs of the swarm detach from the swarm’s torso, separating into multiple pieces and forming their own miniature — albeit still fairly large — clones in their wake. The clones settled on the ground and stood in formation, unmoving.

“A Voltron-esque titan made if bugs isn’t exactly what I was going for, Midoriya,” Mandalay admitted. “I was thinking maybe a mass communication network. Where you have multiple groups of bugs pulled together to act as pseudo-headpieces that relay different messages. Or something. Just… not this.”

Izuku rubbed the back of his head. “Heh-heh. Yeah. I mean, I thought that it was pretty cool at first. Having a giant clone follow me around and stuff. And then it would separate into more clones if needed! But as time went on I eventually figured out that it was pretty useless. I mean, sure it’s big. But it’s still a giant swarm of bugs. It’s not any stronger than my normal clones, and any of the swarming techniques it can use are the same as if I had a normal swarm that wasn’t shaped like a giant version of me. But on the plus side, I noticed one of those supercolonies of Argentine ants within my range! Did you know that you had one here in your forest? I plan on taking a couple queens with me for my collection if you don’t mind. Nevermind that though. Back on the topic of the clone, I suppose I can use it for intimidation purposes, I guess. I mean, everyone else got so freaked out that there were some screams. And then there was still…”

Mandalay watched for a moment as the giant swarm dispersed into an enormous black cloud that blotted out the descending sun as Izuku trailed on. She took a deep breath before responding back, cutting the boy off. “At least you recognize your own mistakes, I suppose.” She shook her head in amusement.

“Come on then. We’ll start dinner early today.” Mandalay turned, motioning for Izuku to follow. “There’s no use continuing with training for the rest of the evening. Especially since everyone else stopped as well.”
Izuku looked around with his bugs, and noticed that almost everyone had indeed stopped their training. The few exceptions were the more isolated individuals like Tokoyami. Everyone else was more or less staring with disbelief in Izuku’s general direction.

“Oh. Well,” Izuku sighed. “Dinner it is.”

“All right everyone!” Pixie Bob yelled to the crowd of gathering students. “Today’s going to be different! We’ve set out all the ingredients for tonight’s food already! The thing is, you’ll have to make your own food! Good luck!”

Most of the students stood still for a moment before coming to realize the current situation. A couple students set right into action, telling others what they could do to help. Izuku was one of these people.

“I can cook if we don’t have any else who can,” he said to nobody in particular. “I’ve studied up a bit in cooking, so I think I can—”

“Oh, don’t you worry about that ‘zuku!” came a voice.

Izuku turned to find Setsuna’s head floating beside him. Fixing his gaze around the floating mouth, Izuku found the rest of Setsuna already gathering up supplies while being led by Kodai.

“I’m sure that we have plenty of capable cooks here. Like Yaoyorozu! Or Kendo! Or me!”

“You sure?” Izuku questioned.

“Please. Of course we do. Come over to my station! Manga, Pony and the others are already gathering around. Just get ready to have a mean plate of curry!”

“Alright. If you’re sure. I’ll be right there.”

Izuku found himself with Manga, Pony, and the rest of Setsuna’s group of friends. Izuku sat in between Pony and Kojiro, Komori, Yanagi, and Manga across from him. Some small talk sprung between them all, until they were interrupted from the arriving Setsuna and Kodai with the ingredients.

“So, Izuku,” Setsuna began, “what was with that giant clone?”

Pony gave off a small giggle. “He already talked about that. It was just him being his oblivious self again.”

“I’m not oblivious!” Izuku argued. “Just… focused.”

“Sure you are,” Setsuna said. “What were you trying to do anyways?”

“... Doing something complex.”

“Surely there were other ways you could do that?” Kojiro asked from beside him.

Izuku shrugged his shoulders. “I wanted to try something new, different. You know?”

“And utterly terrifying,” added Manga.

The group laughed it off, Izuku included. The topic died off and conversation directed more towards more general things regarding camp and summer.
As the food cooked, Izuku’s attention was suddenly on the boy hidden amongst the trees, watching the students’ every movement.

“Go.”

It looked like he was going to have a little chat with the boy later. Just after he had some food himself, of course.

As it turned out, Setsuna wasn’t as good a cook as she boasted to be. It was a good thing that Kodai had her own pot, because what Setsuna had made was a mix of overcompensating spices and liquids that combined into an inedible soup. Izuku could already feel the onset of something bad coming along, but he determined that he could probably hold off until he returned back to the lodges.

So here Izuku was, making his way through the forest with curry in hand. The bowl ended up coming from Yaoyorozu’s pot, (since Kodai’s portion had already been eaten all up, and Yaoyorozu’s cooking turned out to be delicious).

After a few minutes of travel with a small set of searching bugs, Izuku had found himself at the rocky outcropping Kota had isolated himself at.

Kota immediately scrunched his face in agitation at the sight of the older boy, but Izuku paid it no mind. He simply set the food on the ground and calmly found a seat beside Kota.

“What do you want?” Kota asked harshly.

Izuku took a moment to respond. “I… don’t know actually. Just to talk, I suppose. I felt like it” Kota scoffed. “I don’t want to talk. Especially to someone like you.”

Izuku looked over at the boy and sighed. “Yeah. I can see that. But I just wanted to let you know that it isn’t good to block people out. I saw the way you interacted with your aunt and the rest of the Pussycats. They’re just trying to help, you know? You shouldn’t ignore that. And you shouldn’t block out what people say without considering all the angles.”

“And what would you know about any of that?!” Kota yelled. He swerved his head away from Izuku, facing towards the vast wilderness.

“Plenty,” Izuku replied. “I’ve been through plenty of that for a good portion of my life. A lot of the bad things I’ve witnessed happened because I didn’t listen.”

“Everyone hurts,” Izuku continued. “How do you think your aunt feels? She lost her sister. And I understand, you lost your mother. But you have to understand that your parents didn’t just leave you.”

“You don’t know what you’re talking about!” Kota yelled, standing up and kicking the bowl of curry, launching its contents all over the ground.

Izuku let Kota calm down, the irate boy slowing his breaths and staring at Izuku, as if daring him to speak again.

“I lost my father, too.”

That got Kota to still.
“But I got passed that… eventually,” Izuku said. “For your parents… they were heroes. They let down their lives on the line, even knowing that they might not make it to see the next day. That’s what true heroes are like.”

That seemed like the last straw for Kota. “Go away! Now!”

Izuku didn’t put up any resistance. He let out a nod and left. He had done what he could for the moment. There was always tomorrow.

It was the next day already, and Izuku was still feeling a bit of the after effects from last night. He was getting better, but the lingering feeling placed a constant reminder to never let Setsuna cook for him ever again.

Training was basically the same. The only true difference was held for Izuku, who took up a different challenge aside from the giant clone he had made the day before.

He took up Mandalay’s advice and had set up a dozen or so different swarms around himself. He attempted to have the different swarms hold separate conversations, yet he failed to make a breakthrough.

Eventually, the evening came and Izuku was out of luck in his applications for his bugs. He decided that he would just continue his efforts tomorrow. Dinner rolled in and he went to eat with Yaoyorozu this time. The others from last night did so as well, much to the dismay of a pouting Setsuna. But even she could see the faults in her cooking, and delegated the role to Yaoyorozu.

And when everyone was done and had had their fill, the Pussycats announced their next activity.

Izuku had to admit that the test of courage was an interesting concept, even if it did seem a bit childish. In truth, the exercise would aid in stealth and ambush tactics, even if it didn’t seem so at first.

Izuku was mostly content sticking back and waiting his turn. He played around with his bugs, flying them around to and fro; that is, until he noticed a huge swath of them dying deeper within the forest. A pinkish, ominous cloud of gas had filled in between the trees, vacating the area from bugs.

It was then that Izuku noticed a few other individuals, hidden within the forest and finally emerging from the woodwork.

And then Izuku remembered something that Aizawa had said earlier that day, and his mind caught itself confused.

“I thought that there weren’t going to be any extra personnel arriving at the camp.”

Mandalay turned towards Izuku. “What do you mean?”

“The extra people in the forest,” Izuku said. “I don’t recognize any of them, but they all just arrived. Well, within my range, at least.”

“Extra people? But there shouldn’t be—” Her eyes widened. “Everyone back to the lodge!”

Iida immediately kicked into high gear, unquestioningly following her command. “You heard her! Go! Go! Single file!” he said, articulating his words with air karate chops.

The remaining members of class 1-A immediately fell into line; all except Izuku. He was still caught
up with the bugs dying in the pinkish gas. And then there was the slowly advancing, greenish sludge and its noxious fumes coming in from the west, slowly spreading and killing everything in its way. And then there was the last problem: Kota.

“Midoriya? What are you doing? We need to go!” Iida said, shaking him.

Izuku spurred back into attentiveness. He looked Iida in the eye. “Just go. I'll be right behind you.”

“What!? You aren't serious, Midoriya! You can’t fight! You told me this yourself! We’re inexperienced against these things!”

“I’m not! I mean, I’m not going to fight! It's just— Kota. The boy, he’s still out there. I can sense him with my bugs.”

Iida opened his mouth to retort, but he closed it in defeat. “Okay. Fine. Stay safe, Midoriya.”

Iida moved back towards the rest of 1-A who were further ahead standing in wait. After a few words and a few concerned glances, they left.

At that moment with his bugs, Izuku sensed two individuals coming their way, sprinting their way through the woods. The first was a woman, thin and spindly with tall stature. She was wearing a simple brown cloak adorned with a black faceless mask.

The other was a strange looking man — if he even was a person, and not another one of those Nomus. An eyepatch laid flat on his exposed face, contrasting with his pale blond hair. His arm ended in a stump, yet two other arms split off from the appendage, branching from above his elbow.

And before Izuku knew it, the two figures burst the trees, standing before the gathered group of pro heroes.

Izuku saw it happen in the blink of an eye. Three sets of ethereal limbs arose from the ground and wrapped themselves around the Pussycats’ legs. One set of tentacles, one set of arms reminiscent of a bodybuilder’s, and one set of paws complete with long, sharp claws.

They weren’t too strong — if the quick escape of Tiger, Mandalay, and Pixie Bob were any evidence. However, they did their apparent job by allowing the monstrous figure to close in and land a few hits on the Pussycats.

“Nice one, Harrow,” bellowed the monstrous figure. His words meant that he was capable of speech and therefore intelligent. And thus, not a nomu. Not that that eased Izuku’s worries all too much so.

Harrow didn’t respond verbally, but did nod to show she appreciated the compliment.

Tiger turned, catching a glimpse of Izuku. “Midoriya! What are you still doing here? Go!” he yelled, his body stretching ready for combat.

“Yeah! This isn’t a fight for you!” Pixie Bob exclaimed. “Go! Go!”

Mandalay was last, and she looked back at Izuku in worry. Izuku could tell, it was both for him and someone else, hidden deeper in the forest.

“Don’t worry. I’m going to go get Kota for you.”

Mandalay’s face morphed with fear and worry. “What?” she questioned. “No! There’s still—”

Another arm shot out of the ground. Mandalay dodged the appendage, jumping in the air to avoid it.
That was Izuku’s cue to leave. He formed a small swarm as he left, informing Mandalay that he was going no matter what. She didn’t have a chance to stop him.

With the mini swarm he had left, Izuku watched the battle. Izuku noted that the Pussycats were holding off the two villains with some difficulty. The unnamed monstrous villain held Tiger back with ease, the two coming to a standstill in terms of strength and durability. Harrow held both Pixie Bob and Mandalay back, ghostly arms sprouting from the ground to aid her as she fought.

And Izuku found that he couldn’t help. The sludge from earlier had spread throughout the surrounding area. A barrier of the stuff appeared seemingly out of nowhere. The sludge emitted noxious fumes all over, preventing any bugs from passing.

Bugs were dying left and right, and their numbers were dwindling. Now dangerously of course, given the high number present in the forest, but they were lowering nonetheless. There wouldn’t be enough to help the others.

And he had another task at hand. And thus, he ordered as many bugs as he could towards Kota to warn him of the attack.

He ran.

It didn’t take long for Izuku to spot Kota, and neither did it for him to see the villain.

Muscular was easily identifiable with the signature scar on his left eye and his imposing physique.

Nothing had happened yet. The villain was still a little ways off from Kota’s position, though it was obvious that Muscular was making his way directly for Kota.

It was only a matter of time before the two would meet, and so Izuku did all he could for the moment.

The millions of forest bugs capable of doing so within range began to converge onto Muscular. The villain roared, attempting to shake off the bugs as they swarmed and bit and stung and crawled and scratched.

But then his quirk activated, layers of exposed muscle expanding over his entire body. Suddenly, the bugs were useless. And Muscular continued his way on to Kota.

Izuku quickened his pace, pushing through the heavy underbrush.

Muscular happened upon Kota, and the boy froze in fear.

Izuku was nearly there, just a few more strides and he’d break through the treeline and onto the open cliff.

Muscular took off his mask, and Kota’s eyes widened even further. And then he fell to the ground, convulsing in a panicked frenzy.

Izuku crashed into the clearing, and he finally saw the scene with his own eyes.

“What did you do to him?!” came the mixed chorus of Izuku and bugs.

Muscular turned with a widened grin. “Oh ho!” he roared. “There you are, ya little punk! Those bugs were a real pain, ya know? You’re lucky that you’re on the list, boy!”
“List?” Izuku questioned. “What list? No, that doesn’t matter! What did you—”

And Izuku fell to the ground too, just in tandem to the growing screams of Kota.

*Izu*ki, the entity watches in place, high in the sky, listens. *Wtch*he beam fire off into the distance. It collides, collapses, and the landmass falls. The island crumples, clumps of rock and stone pelting into the surrounding water. A population of millions, sundered.

Izuku took a gulp of air. Before he could do anything, an enormous hand wrapped itself around Izuku, pummeling him into the ground.

Suddenly, everything hurt. He could feel his body entrapped within the small crater, pieces of rock covering his face as the enormous strength of Muscular pinned him down.

“I don’t know what you two think you’re playing at, but it’s really pissing me off!” Muscular yelled. “Why don’t you actually try and fight?!”

Muscular lifted his arm again, and slammed down onto Izuku’s chest.

*IIt hurts!* *Bugs. Bugs. Need.* *Atta—*

*The beast arises from the ocean as the rain pelts down around the entity. Breaths are held, everyone stills. Fear. Terror. The beast moves forward, striking down the first row of gathered individuals. Injury. Death. Instantaneous. Demise. The gathered react, laying down their powers against the beast. Little works. The entity intervenes.*

A moment of clarity, and suddenly everything hurts again. The bugs are biting, flying, injecting their venom into the villain’s thick hide.

Izuku’s head is bleeding, and his arm might be broken. His vision blurs again.

*IThe entity waits. It views the landscape below. Events transpire. But the entity stays. And waits. And waits. And waits.*

There are squirrels now. Mice too. Izuku isn’t sure if he’s hallucinating or not, but suddenly the tiny little furballs are joining in on the attack. Muscular becomes more feral, more sloppy, roaring and ripping at his own muscles. Voles and rabbits join the fray, biting, scratching, and digging into his flesh. Muscular’s roars of pain echo through the forest.

*IThe entity moves. Breaks the barriers in between. Enters a space, falls into another. The Keeper follows. The Collector follows. The entity faces them.*

There’s a large distance between Izuku and Muscular now. The villain scratches at his back and arms, throwing off the rodents. The insects continue to swarm in attack, but they too do little damage.

Izuku slowly rises from the crater in the ground. With his own eyes he sees the rampage, Muscular running into trees launching rocks from the face of the mountain all over.

Izuku’s legs are fine, thankfully. He slowly makes his way to the downed Kota, who continues to twitch and convulse at small, minute intervals.

Izuku picks him up and slowly retreats to the treeline. He looks back, and Muscular continues his rampage, showing no sign of stopping.

“There’s only one way to stop him.”
Izuku faces away from the villain, and goes deeper into the forest. The bugs swarm Muscular’s mouth. They invade the space, and enter his throat, his lungs.

“He’ll be fine. Just take them out before he suffocates and dies.”

Izuku ignores the muffled screams. He runs with Kota in his arms, bloodied and haggard as bits of clothing hanging off his skin, blown off by the sheer force of Muscular’s attacks.

And then he stumbles, one last time. And he sees her.

_The girl. The queen. She hovers beside the entity, flailing her arms about and yelling in frustration. The female bearing the administrator asks the entity to leave. The entity watches her form connections to implant her control over her subjects. They form a cloud to block the entity's view. It doesn’t matter. The entity stays. And watches. Too lost in the events below. The girl leaves._

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry. (Not really :) Yes, those of you who don’t understand won’t understand. But trust me, I’m writing this in a way where that doesn’t matter. You’ll all find out what this all means eventually. In that note, reading Worm is still an option at this point if you want to avoid possible spoilers. (I’m sorry. I just really like Worm. I recommend it to those who haven’t read it yet).

And for those of you who do know what’s happening and are seeing indiscrepancies: trust me. I know they’re there. Things are how they are for a reason.

Anyways, I hope you all still had a fun experience reading this. More on the attack next time! Hope to have you all reading next week! Ta ta.

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