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.
Destination

Chapter Summary

A foreigner arrives, and a new strain comes into creation...

Chapter Notes

Hello everybody, and welcome to my first fic! Now before you all begin, I'd like to state that this story is a crossover, but only in technical terms.

To sum it all up, what starts off as a simple alt-power fic will eventually morph into something else overtime, which will lead to a whole cascade of changes. I plan to do my best to to write something that you can all read without worry of lacking essential info.

Anyhow, I hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"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,
afterall. 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? 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—

_I fell asleep? A nightmare? But it felt so re—_

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.
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… 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. In truth, these changes won’t be the focus of the story, and events will mostly be centered around Izuku as a whole.

Any esoteric elements from Worm will be explained in time, so there is no need of previous knowledge to read this.

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!
Accord

Chapter Notes

Chapter 2: Accord

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!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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 occured 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, he 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 his in 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. Kaachan was already enough. He couldn't bear 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 sniffed.

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.

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 the 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 one 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?"

"Don't thin… scoute… no likes of… anywh"

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 slight out of control, but immediately ordered them back into stillness. He quickly thought up a response. "I, yeah. I gue- 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!

“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 looked at the outstretched hand. He slowly went to grab it. He shook the hand. “It’s my fault anyway, Fukidashi-san. 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.”

_Wat? Did I do something wrong? Already? “I—“_

“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 —”

“Oh—oh,” 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.”

“Ah!” 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
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 mindscape. 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 reall — 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 swept 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.

“What was I doing, again?” 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 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.

“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 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.

“A, 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.

“Ioi, 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.’

“Oi! 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 steed.

“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?_

“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 you’re talking about!”

She blanched. And stared on. Inchng 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.

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

“He—Help you do… what?”

“Why, help me make my babies, of course!”

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!*”

“Izuku-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.*
“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.” Her 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.*

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!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“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.

Manga sighed. “Ah, so innocent.”

“Izuku’s bubble shook. “Don’t tell me. You… like this girl, don’t you?” asked Manga.

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 laughed. “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!”

“How?” 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—”

“Ah!” 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. 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 nose dives 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
“Putting in your head that your quirk is bad?”

“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.

“Oh! 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.”

_A discus? 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.

“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 scarily 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.”

“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.
“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 everytime 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 taken to practice 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 and stu—”

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…

“Yes, 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 at 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 suppo— 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

“A 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, bit 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.

Izuku 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”

“All 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. “But—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?”

“Oh, 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 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!
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...

“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 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!”

“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.”

“Mhm! 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.

(^_^)

“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.

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, jolsted 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 overrun 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.

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 here hand was — His eyes widened in. A letter.

*Likes 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.

“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 about—*

“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!”

“Uh… 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 airtyme. 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.”

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.

*Hmn. 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!
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.”

“Mhmm. 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. Izukummediately 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?!”

“Oh, 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 the 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 teamed up by picking lots.

“They’re being picked so haphazardly?!” exclaimed Iida.

“You never know who you might have to get teamed 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]!
“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 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?*

“You say that you couldn’t feel my quirk?” 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.

“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.”

“I’m not sure.”

“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.

“Yeah. 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!
And now we have the U.S.J. incident. Hope you all enjoy.

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 inconsistently 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.

“He, Mineta.” No response, the boy continued muttering.

“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. Really 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. Amid 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 cloud.

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 to 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.

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.”

“Umm…”

“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.

Izuku shook his head. 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, Tsukauchi 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.

“Ah— 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.”

(´･ω･`)

“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.

“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.”

Chapter End Notes

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
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 your 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?”

“Yeah. 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 here 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. And then there was the distance; they were just outside if his capable range of his bugs.

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.

Chapter End Notes

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.

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 came 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
“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!”

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 demonstrate 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 assurances 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 cut 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 definitely 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 stop before the exit.

“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.”

“Ah, 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
“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.”

“Meaning 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.
And we arrive at the gates of the U.A. Sports Festival! It will be a multi-chapter arc, for those wondering.

Anywho, to the action!

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—”

“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.

“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 them—_

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 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… Izuku skimmed the scoreboards. Todoroki… Shiozaki… Tokoyami… That other guy… A couple others… Izuku blinked in disbelief. That leaves me in… 11th place… Again!??

Alright! Who the heck is rigging my scores?!?
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 eleventh 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 two people behind you in thirteenth 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!”
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?”

“Hmm?” hummed Mei. “Eh,” she shrugged noncommittally. “I don’t know. I think I saw her… somewhere around there.” Mei motioned her hands into the crowd unhelpfully.

“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.

“Heads 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!”

“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
“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 to 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!”

“Izuku!!” 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 Iida, 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.”

“Your pledge?” Izuku asked. His mind lit with realization. “You mean, you purposely 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.
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 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, walking 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.

“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?”

“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—”

“Oh!” 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.

“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
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.

“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 must 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!”

On the other hand, the fight between Shiozaki and Bakugo was on the cusp of its start.

“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.” 

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!”

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]!
“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.

“Uraraka,” 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.

Izuku 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?”

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 peeved whine. “You can just call me Setsuna, you know.”

Izuku nodded. “I’ll keep that in mind, Tokage-san,” he replied with a smile.

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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 your 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 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.”

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
“sweetheart.” Her remaining eye winked at him.

“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.
Highborow 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 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.

“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 stay 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.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“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.

However, there was still the deformity to consider. The defacement in the pavement was a fairly 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—”


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.

“Ah, 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, after all!”

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.”

“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.”

Iida 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, afterall,” 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. You’re near the top of the class just like me. And you’re the Class Rep! You’re entirely capable of doing this.”

“...”

“Midoriya?”

“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.”
So there was a bit skipping around, sure. I found it necessary, though. Next chapter will be a bit more coherent and 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!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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.”

“Oh, 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 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 cramped 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-
“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.

“Not 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. “I’m not so sure,” he began, looking at Yaoyorozu. “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.

“Your 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.

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.

“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.

“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 Snipe. 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.

“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.

“Mmm. 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.”

Izu 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.

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. “You were just behind us! 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.

“So?” 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. “It’s… 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—!”
“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 of 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.”

Aoyama suddenly popped in between his class and the other. “Mon dieu! Is it by fate’s hand that we meet our fellow class 1-B on this fine day?”

“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.”

“Oh!” 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.

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.

“Izuku!” came the cheery voice. “You’re coming with me!”

“I was busy!” she exclaimed. “But then I remembered that I needed to get some supplies for our trip!”

“Mei! What are you— Why are you here? I thought that you said you couldn’t come since you were busy with something?”

“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!”

Chapter End Notes

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!
And we arrive at I-Island. And it looks like this arc will be split into two chapters, I guess? Still not sure how a want to do the pacing for the second act. Guess we’ll see.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“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.

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.

“All right!” 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.
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.

“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 stammered. “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.”

“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?”

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?”

“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, reconsidering his words. “—Aquarium section! Yeah, aquariums…”

"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, reconsidering 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.

“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.

“Izuku,” 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 a 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.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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 too. 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 he’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.

“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.

“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.
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.

“Oh, 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.

Kaminari 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!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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 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.

“How was your stay?”

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.

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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 partsking 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.

“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 I 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…”

“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 Mandalay 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

“Yes. 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?”

“Sure you, set-senpai!” Izuku argued. “Just… focused.”

“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.”

“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.”

“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 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.

“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.

“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 women, thin and spindly with tall stature. She was wearing a simple brown cloak adjourned 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.

“W hat 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!”

“And Izuku fell to the ground too, just in tandem to the growing screams of Kota.

Muscular lifted his arm again, and slammed down onto Izuku’s chest.

The entity waits. It views the landscape below. Events transpire. And waits. And waits.

Izuku’s head is bleeding, and his arm might be broken. His vision blurs again.

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.

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.
Grab Bag

Chapter Notes

Hurrah! Onwards to the continuation of the Vanguard Action Squad’s attack! What’s to happen next? Well...

Izuku shook his head, attempting to rid his mind of the flaring visions. They had mostly stopped by then, but the foreign images still come easily to the forefront of his mind.

Izuku doesn’t even have a clue as to what they could mean, but he knows that he can’t focus on them for now. They nearly spelled the end of the battle for him, causing him to be unable to fight back against Muscular as his mind was invaded by the images.

Izuku looked down at the unconscious form of Kota, whose steady breathing tickled his arms. He looked back up to watch where he was going, using what bugs he could to spot potential allies or enemies.

Izuku let out a frustrated breath. “Why am I always getting into these situations?” he asked himself. “And in such a short amount of time in between too! And those random visions! No, no. Forget everything else. Just think about the now. Get Kota safe. Help the others. We’ll be fine.” He took a breath.

Izuku was so caught up with his own worries that he failed to notice the newer arrivals until it was too late. In an instant, two small forms pounced onto Izuku’s from above. The surprise nearly caused Izuku to trip, but he stopped himself just in time, standing in place. It was only when he realized that the unknown projectiles were actually animals — and not an actual threat — that he relaxed.

“Oh, it’s just more woodland creatures,” Izuku whispered to himself in reassurance. He took a moment and then fully examined the squirrel and mouse duo that had found themselves on his shoulders.

Izuku could tell that the rodents weren’t under his control, not even subconsciously. He couldn’t sense them, not in the slightest bit. And while his sudden control over crustaceans may have been unusually spontaneous in its arrival, Izuku could at least know that he could feel them. The rodents weren’t like that. Which begged the question: Why did they help?

“You guys helped Kota and I back there, didn’t you?” Izuku asked. “Why... Why’d you do that?”

Izuku didn’t know what he was expecting. Maybe for the animals to start talking, or at least motion some sort of message with their tiny limbs. But of course, the animals didn’t do any of that. They just dumbly looked at him.

“Right. Rodents. Simple rodents.” And then there was more movement. “And...other animals.”

Izuku sighed. He finally noticed them with his bugs after he took a moment to monitor any movement originating from things smaller than a human.
Hundreds, if not thousands of animals were moving in tandem with him. They surrounded Izuku like an irate angry mob would, erratically pacing and making small noises, pushing against one another with no concern for the other. They were all small mammals; from weasels and badgers, to things like rabbits or moles, and more commonly squirrels and rats.

Izuku breathed in. And out. In. Out. Just like Setsuna had showed him. He wasn’t sure how much more weirdness he could handle for one day, after all. So he looked. Used his bugs to find his next goal.

When he was ready, he continued his sprint, aiming for the closest trustworthy person he could find. He ignored the consistent shuffle of the animals around him, and just ran. It took only a few minutes for Izuku to stumble upon a ragged and worried Aizawa, who looked at Izuku and the boy in his arms in concern.

“Midoriya,” he said, his voice much more strained than usual. “What are you…” Aizawa blinked, but didn’t say anymore.

Izuku felt the squirrel on his shoulder make a noise, almost like a chuckling sound. Izuku quickly looked over, but found the animal acting as before.

Izuku turned his attention back to his teacher. “Aizawa-sensei?”

No response. Izuku felt the mouse on his shoulder climb up onto his head. The animal stood on its hind legs, then began looking back and forth, as if scanning its surroundings. Izuku shook his head, but the animal didn’t budge.

Izuku decided that whatever the animals were doing would have to be worried about later. He paced right into Aizawa’s face.


Izuku grumbled in frustration. “Sensei!” he yelled, jerking his body forward to support the abruptness of the call. Of course, Izuku was mindful of the animals on his body. He caught the mouse as it fell from his head, placing it back on his shoulder.

The sudden yell seemed to do it. Aizawa spurred from wherever his mind was, focusing his eyes back on his student. “Midoriya?”

Izuku sighed. “Aizawa-sensei, what was that?”

The man scrunched up his eyebrows. “What was what?”

Izuku took another breath. “Nevermind. Here.” He held Kota out. Aizawa took the boy without question.

“You take Kota back somewhere safe,” Izuku said. “I’ll stick around out here still. I can still help with my bugs. Even if the sludge zones are limiting my capability to do so.”

That statement really got Aizawa to react. “Midoriya. You aren’t in any condition to—”

“Go… Please,” said the recently gathered swarm, rapidly forming right beside Izuku.

An irritated look appeared on Aizawa’s face, his mouth opening to berate his student. But his mouth closed, and he sighed. “Fine. But I have a message for Mandalay.”
“Sure,” Izuku replied. “What is it?”

“Tell her to notify the rest of the students. They can fight if they must. It’s a matter of survival.”

Izuku nodded. “Of course, sensei. And don’t worry about me. I’ll be fine.”

Aizawa’s face remained impassive, but somehow Izuku could tell Aizawa didn’t believe him. Aizawa soon left, carrying Kota to safety. The animals followed too, the giant horde changing targets to the pro hero. Even the squirrel and mouse duo on Izuku’s shoulders left him, leaving Izuku alone with his bugs.

“Are they following Kota? But that doesn’t even make sense. Why would they even do that? Is it his quirk? Some sort of animal whisperer thing like Kota? But that doesn’t— Water Hose—” Izuku stopped himself there. He took another deep breath.

“No. Later. Think about it later. Focus.” And then he ran into the forest, forming a small swarm near the Pussycats so he could inform Mandalay of Aizawa’s message.

And he furthered into the forest, moving towards his friends and classmates. He had a job to do, after all. He needed to help everybody else.

Izuku rested against a tree, taking a moment to rest. His energy was fading, and his adrenaline from the fight with Muscular was basically drained. Nonetheless, he used his bugs to scout out his surroundings to see who he could help.

An unholy screech caught his bugs’ attention, and they went on to find Tokoyami’s Dark Shadow rampaging out of control. His bugs also noted Shoji, who was nearby. Izuku formed a small message out of his bugs in front of the boy, signaling that he was coming to help.

Izuku didn’t see Shoji shaking his head to ward him off. He steadily left the control of his bugs stood up. A sharp pain struck his head at that moment, but it went away in a flash, almost as if it never occurred.

Izuku shook his head, and went off in the direction of Shoji. Within a few minutes, he was at the scene. Shoji immediately grabbed Izuku, pulling him down in order to reduce his chance of being spotted.

One of Shoji’s tentacles transformed into a mouth, moving itself right beside Izuku’s ear. “I thought I said not to come!”

Izuku blinked in response. “You did?”

“Oh. Sorry. I probably wasn’t paying attention at that point. I… umm… I’m having thinking pains.”

It was only then that Shoji took in the full sight of Izuku, seeing his many open wounds and the blood trails emanating from multiple parts of his body. Shoji instantly ripped some fabric around his shirt and began to wrap Izuku up, careful to not make too much noise lest he alert the shadowed beast nearby.

“How are you even able to stand?” Shoji questioned. “Let alone talk? Or control your bugs, for that matter?”
“My senses are just a bit blurry right now, is all,” Izuku said. “I should be fine. I can barely even feel any of my injuries. Besides, it’s not like I have a have a concussion or anything.”

“Ah, sorry. That’s partially my fault. You’ll be fine in a couple hours/days.”


“What was that?” Shoji asked, moving on to bandage Izuku’s head.

“Nothing. Nothing.” Izuku used a small portion of his bugs to take a peek at raging shadow beast nearby. “What happened with Tokoyami?” Izuku asked.

“It was this guy with metallic teeth,” Shoji informed him.

“I lost one of my tentacles to him.” It was only then that Izuku noticed the bleeding stump. “The chaos made Tokoyami lose control. The darkness of the forest didn’t help to quell his quirk.”

Izuku nodded. “I see.” He sent his bugs out again, scanning his surroundings.

Shoji finishes wrapping the last piece of cloth around Izuku’s leg. “I’m going to carry you on my back, Midoriya,” he says.

“What?” Izuku said, his eyes meeting Shoji’s. “No, I’m fine. You don’t need to burden yourself with me. Besides, I’ll just slow you down.”

“Midoriya, I really don’t think you should still be running around in the condition you’re in.”

“I’ll be fine.”

Shoji looked over to the right, watching the rapidly forming swarm with uncertainty. “Right,” he says.

Izuku’s bugs notice a pillar of ice sprout out in the distance. “Don’t worry,” Izuku said. “I have a plan.”

Izuku falters, nearly tripping. The clone does the same. If Shoji notices, he doesn’t say anything. And despite his insistence, Izuku wouldn’t allow Shoji to use his back for transportation.

The two of them are nearly to the clearing where Todoroki is fighting Moonfish (as Izuku readily identified). Tokoyami is right behind, Dark Shadow chasing the hastily put together bug clone Izuku had set up.

When Shoji and Izuku break the clearing, they spot the surprised looks of Todoroki and Bakugo.

“Midoriya?” Todoroki questioned, looking him up and down. “Are you alright?”

“Nevermind me,” Izuku stammers. “We need light! Fire! You too Bakugo.”

Bakugo looks incredulous. “What did you—” He doesn’t have time to respond, as suddenly the massive tendrils of Moonfish’s teeth are dashing toward them. Thankfully for them, however, the enormous claw of Dark Shadow intercepts the attack and knocks the villain back.

“That’s why we need the light! Tokoyami’s quirk is out of control! We need to calm it down!”
Todoroki nods, igniting a flame in his hand; that is, before Bakugo stops him. The gathered four watch as Moonfish rises again, but just as abruptly falls as Dark Shadow lashes out at him, knocking the villain unconscious. Bakugo and Todoroki then light up their quirks, returning the control back to Dark Shadow back to Tokoyami.

As the shadowy mass rescinds back into his body, Tokoyami glances at the other four. “Thank you, all,” he says. He and Shoji have a brief talk, and then it's back to what comes next.

The five of them eventually decide to start making their way back towards the lodge, helping anyone they could as they went. It was quiet for a good amount of time. Bakugo was up front leading with keen, violent eyes. Izuku and Shoji were doing their best to monitor their surroundings given the limited visibility of a darkened forest, while the others stood guard ready to defend at a moment’s notice.

That was what lead to the girl atop of Uraraka being blasted off by one of Bakugo’s blast, her body colliding with a tree. However, it seemed that she was more sturdy than it seemed, given how quickly she recovered from the impact.

When she stood and faced the newcomers, however, Izuku grew shock still. His eyes met the villain’s face, and he saw an eerily familiar, vindictive smile and sharp, lovesick eyes.

Her eyes morphed into an even more lovestruck state than they were before. “It’s you!”

Time stopped that moment. Then the other students looked between the two, trying to gauge the situation.

Izuku panicked, stuttering his words in an attempt to keep his cover a secret. “You— You—”

But Izuku didn’t have the time to respond back. One of the clouds of wretched stench moved, and suddenly two more figures were in the clearing.

“Why hello everybody,” the first villain articulated with an open gesture. He was completely covered from head to toe: a yellow overcoat with red gloves, white boots, a top hat, and a white and black patterned mask. “I hope everyone’s night has been an eventful one?” he asked.

The other villain beside him laughed a wet, deep laugh. His body — if you could call it that — was comprised entirely of sludge. As was, what to most seemed to be a perpetually melting slurry stood beside the other villain, bellowing a creepy, echoing laugh.

The other villain, the girl still trapped against the students, beamed. “Ah! You guys came!”

“Oh of course, Miss. Toga!” the masked one said. “I will always aid a companion in trouble.”

The heroes in training didn’t dawdle with the villains arrival, taking the small reprieve to ready. They all stood, each facing one villain or another, waiting for the moment the villains would strike.

“Now now, we don’t need any of that, do we?” coaxed the masked villain asked.

Bakugo growled, small explosions erupting from his hands. “And why shouldn’t we?! Give me one good reason not to pound you face in!”

The villain chuckled, a sound much more friendly than his comrade who stood beside him. “A
feisty one, are you? Well, no matter. My name is Mr. Compress. My colleagues and I have a simple goal tonight. But of course, I’ll spare you the details.” With a swipe of his hands, four marble sized orbs appeared in between his fingers. “On with the show!”

The orbs hit the ground, rolling innocently on the forest floor until they come to a halt. Those who had dodged the projectiles and jumped away looked at the orbs confused. But then the girl — Toga, apparently — lunged forward, and smoke began to billow out of the orbs at a rapid rate.

The students scattered, unable to see and unable to properly fight without risk of friendly fire. The sentient sludge laughed even more, the squelches of his wet, heavy footfalls joining in on the chaos. Very few facts otherwise were used for fear of knocking the wrong person out.

Izuku suddenly finds himself alone in the smoke, turning left and right in search friend or foe. The sludge monster’s remnants are everywhere now, pieces of him trailing the surrounding area and slaughtering all the bugs that come close. He doesn’t know where his friends are, and he even more worriedly doesn’t know where the villains are.

And then, everything’s silent. None of his classmates speak, no laughter from the villainous girl, and none of the heavy squelching that indicated the mutation quirked individual.

And Izuku finds himself too slow to react. He sees the marble too late. It transforms into a knife midway to its destination, plunging itself into Izuku’s shoulder. Another blow comes from behind. He feels the weakened bugs on his head crushed into his scalp as the rock bangs against the back of his head.

Izuku grunts in pain, and he suddenly finds himself unable to hold himself up any longer. Simply too much trauma on his body in too little time. He gives in. His vision blurs.

“Ah shit! Your shoulder’s been hit again! That probably isn’t good for— Hey hold up! Izuku! Don’t—”

He didn’t know how long the darkness had enveloped him, but when he came to he felt slight jerking of someone gently shaking his body.

He blinked his eyes open, and the slight bobbing of short brown hair entered his vision. The figure was holding what seemed to be a handkerchief over her mouth, but the familiarity of her upper face was enough for Izuku to determine who it was.

“Izuku!” Uraraka said, relieved. She slowly helped him up to a standing position. She then held out a hand, a piece of cloth dangling down from her fingers.

“Here, take this,” she said. “It’ll help with the smell.”

It was only as his mind caught up to his senses that he registered the stench. He immediately went to grab the offered cloth and put it over his mouth.

“What happened?” he coughed.

“It was that sludge guy,” Uraraka supplied. “He starting lobbing his sludge ball things around. They really stink, huh?”

Izuku nodded. The rigid movement incited something else, however. Izuku grabbed his head, the pounding still riddling his mind.
“You good?” Uraraka asked, standing vigilant for anyone.

“Yeah…” Izuku said, the pain subsiding. “What happened? Where is everyone?” He narrowed his eyes, attempting to look further into the forest. It didn’t help much; his senses were still a bit muddled, and he’d need Uraraka to help him along to safety.

“They all split off. That magician and the sludge man caused us to separate. They probably didn’t notice that they left us behind. But I guess that it was kind of a good thing that I sort of got lost. I found you, after all!”

“Yeah… Thanks, Uraraka,” he sniffled. The horrible stench still seeped through the cloth — just a bit — but it was still bearable. Only just.

“I sort of need your help guiding me back.” He took a step forward and stumbled. Uraraka grabbed him by the shoulders, steadying his stance. “My mind hurts… a lot. And all of the bugs in the gas are dead. Even the ones in my hair.”

Uraraka nodded. “Don’t worry!” She took his arm, starting to walk forward. “I’m pretty sure they went this way. We just need to be careful not to be spotted by someone we wouldn’t want to be seen by.”

They walked forward, entering the treeline and leaving the clearing into the unknown.

“I’m really glad that you’re alright, Izuku!” She took a glance at him, her smile shining brightly. “I don’t know what I would have done if you had died.”

Izuku blinked. “Oh, um, thanks. I guess?”

“Mhm! You know, I was sorta just— Duck down!”

Izuku followed her order without question, allowing her to force him down behind a bush. Izuku held his breath, listening carefully to the footsteps as they crunched against the forest floor.

Two sets, he noticed. One with a large gait and another with smaller, much lighter steps. Probably those villains that were fighting the Pussycats, then.

As they approached, Izuku noticed that they were talking. Their voices were low, filled with urgency and a slight tone of irritance. Unfortunately, they were just outside the range of being able to understand what was being said.

A few more moments, and the footsteps faded into the forest. Uraraka had him wait just a minute more, just to be safe. Before long, they got up and continued on their path.

Izuku was silent from then on, listening carefully to his surroundings. He was much too frightened by the off chance that someone could sneak up on them. However, it didn’t seem that Uraraka shared his thoughts.

“You know…” she began, “I don’t really understand.”

Izuku flinched a bit at her voice, still paranoid over the prospect of an ambush further on. But then again, Uraraka had her full senses (except smell), unlike him. He supposed that if she thought it was safe, then they could make small talk.

“Understand what?” he asked
“Oh, you know~” she chirped. “It's just… You spent a whole semester at school around such wonderful girls, and yet none of them have even been crushing on you!”

That certainly wasn’t what he was expecting to come out of Uraraka’s mouth. Still, he supposed conversation was better than reeling alone in his mind with all those visions. So, he prepared an inquisitive response to Uraraka’s observation.

“Umm…”

“I mean, sure. There’s some aspects of reverence and companionship among a certain few of them. But then a good load of that is also filled with some inkling of fear too!”

Uraraka turned, her face meeting to face Izuku’s a bit too closely than he was comfortable with. “You really know how to woo ‘em, don’t you?”

“Umm…”

Uraraka turned away from him in a blur, and she continued leading him to their destination.

“I’m just so glad that I came, you know?” she continued with an upbeat to her voice. “I mean, when I heard that you were going to be here, I just had to come! And just look at you now! You’re so tattered and bloody and just—” she ended her spiel with a rather emotive squeal.

Izuku shook his head. He was fairly sure that he was hallucinating now. Uraraka’s personality was way off from what he was used to, even if he wasn’t as close to her as some others. But he personally believed that he could tell what a normal Uraraka would be acting like. He thought that maybe it was the gas, causing some sort of mental disruption for him, or maybe even Uraraka.

“Uraraka, I don’t really get what you’re sayi—”

“Here we are!” she exclaimed, pulling Izuku out into another clearing. Izuku was wrenched out of the trees, Uraraka placing him in front of herself.

What he saw wasn’t the sight he was expecting. Instead of familiar faces, instead of friends, instead of heroes, instead of safety — he finds villains. The sludge man. The marble magician. And another he hasn’t seen yet, wearing a sleek black costume.

“Aren’t you guys happy? I got him!”

Izuku froze. That voice was familiar. He turned around and found Uraraka replaced with a girl. It was her again; the girl he recognized with clarity due to his encounter with her in that alley, not so long ago. The sense of dread slowly rose from his stomach.

“Don’t worry, Izuku!” She leaned in, her face right in front of his. Izuku gulped, reaching for any bugs nearby. Another pain shot in his head.

A knife shot out, but instead of initiating a cut, the blade caught a droplet of blood that was about to fall from Izuku’s chin. The girl smiled appreciatively, and licked the blood clean off of her knife. She let out a small giggle. “We can have our fun later…”

He felt himself shrinking, and everything went dark.

Chapter End Notes
Being Izuku is suffering. Really, I only just noticed how bad Izuku has it in this chapter and the last. He was beaten up pretty badly, wasn’t he? Ah well. As it is if one wishes to find conflict.

On another note, next chapter! I’m going with something a little different for the next one, so be ready for that.

‘Til then! Ta-ta!
Interlude

Chapter Notes

Well, here it is. As the chapter title says, it’s an interlude chapter for a variety of characters. It’ll be a bit of switching around and stuff, but it’ll just sum up the happenings as of now. Besides, we can’t just be following Izuku all the time now, can we?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Yeah! You know exactly what—” He paused, letting the girl on the other end spout out more obscenities.

“I know that Mei!” he interrupted. “It’s not like— No! For the fifth time, you aren’t coming!” He let out a frustrated groan. “Just… stay where you are. We’ve got this handled.”

He listened. “Yeah. I know. And put that mech suit back! You heard me. Bye.” He hung up the phone, staring at it and sighing.

“What did… What did Mei say?” Pony rasped through her oxygen mask. She rested limply in the hospital bed, just barely holding back her tears.

“You know her,” Manga replied. “She’s being as stubborn as usual. But I think that I actually got through to her.”

Pony let out a small giggle that sputtered into a harsh cough. “Did you really?”

“Yeah. She even got out that unstable mech she’s been working on. But she’ll stay put. I told her that we could handle it.”

“That’s good,” came a voice emerging from beyond the door. Setsuna emerged, her face piecing together as she came into view. “It would have taken her too long to get here anyways. Because if we’re doing anything, we’re doing it within the next hour or two.”

“I’m coming too,” Pony let out.

Manga blanched at the conviction in his friend’s quiet voice. He looked over at Pony laying in her bed; the oxygen mask above her mouth and nose barely accentuated her shallow breaths. She was deathly pale, and a cold sweat was beginning to form upon her forehead. She was better off than some since she was actually awake, but barely in any better condition. And there wasn’t much he could do himself; the doctors had said that all they could do was wait until the effects of the villain’s quirk had flushed out of Pony’s system.

Pony attempted to get up. Manga place a hand on her shoulder, keeping her down.

“I think that it’s best that you stay, Pony.”

She tried to shove Manga’s hand off to no avail. She struggled upwards, but fell back to her bed after a moment’s effort.
“He’s right, you know,” Setsuna said, walking up to the bedside. “You aren’t in any condition to go anywhere.”

“But Izuku—”

“She’s right, Pony,” Manga added. “Look at yourself. You’re barely able to stand.”

“I’m fine!” Pony yelled. But Manga and Setsuna knew she was lying to herself.

“Izuku wouldn’t want you straining yourself. Especially not for him. You should know that.”

“You don’t understand…” Pony mumbled. It was more of a plea if anything. Nothing like the exclamation she herself pictured in her mind.

Manga placed a reassuring hand on her arm. “We’ll come back alright. Promise.”

Pony’s eyes didn’t waver for a second, a stare off between two friends vying for the other’s safety. It was Pony who relented, breaking her gaze and pointing her eyes out the window.

“Fine,” she whispered. “Stay safe, you two.”

“Of course,” Manga muttered. He looked over at Setsuna and nodded. She nodded back, and the two made their way outside the room and out into the hallway.

“So what—”

“Shh!” Setsuna placed a finger on Manga’s nonexistent lips. “Let me check first.” Her face splintered off into various pieces, each darting off in different directions. A minute passed before all of Setsuna’s pieces came back.

“Alright. The coast is clear,” Setsuna informed.

“Good,” Manga replied. “What’s next?”

A manic glint appeared in Setsuna’s eyes, her mouth forming into her signature grin. “I’ve got just the thing. You see, I’ve been listening… around. And wouldn’t you know it, I heard through the grapevine that…”

“Hagakure and Jirou are okay, I suppose,” Yaoyorozu informed rather despondently. “The doctors said that they can’t do much but wait until the effects of the villain’s quirk wears off.” She sat down on a lone stool, closing her eyes. She felt the touch of cold steel as she wrapped her legs around stool’s own.
Yaoyorozu felt the pressure of a hand on her back, moving in a slow, methodical patting motion, as if the hand’s owner was saying *it's not your fault.* She stifled a cry from the thought.

“It’s okay, Yaomomo,” Ashido called out. “I’m sure everyone will be alright. Jirou and Hagakure will wake up soon and… Well, we have All Might looking for Midoriya right now, don’t we?”

Somehow, Ashido’s attempt at comfort did little to ease any of Yaoyorozu’s worries.

A growl of frustration suddenly erupted from across the room. “Why are we just sitting here?!?” exclaimed Kirishima. “Our classmate is in trouble! Who knows what those League guys are doing to him right now?!”

“Oh?” Kaminari asked, incredulous. “And what do you want us to do, go out there ourselves?”

“Yes, actually,” Todoroki added. The class turned to him. “The villains said that they were going to kill us. Yet they didn’t with Izuku, if Aoyoma’s recollection of events are true.”

The boy in question nodded. “Yeah… They only took Midoriya. That Mr. Compress had him in one of his marbles.”

Todoroki nodded, continuing. “And we don’t know how long the villains are planning to keep Midoriya alive.”

“This isn’t in our place to act!” Iida interrupted. “We should just all leave this for the pros!”

“For once I agree with Iida!” Mineta called from his hospital bed while sporting a broken leg. “Midoriya or not, you’d still be going right for the villains!”

“You think that I don’t know that? That we don’t know the risks!?” Kirishima responded. “If I don’t do anything now, then I’ll be neither a hero nor a man!”

“What are you talking about?! Think about what you’re saying!” Iida interjected. “You can’t go overboard with these crazy ideas!”

“It was our fault Midoriya was captured,” Todoroki admitted, somewhat quiet. “If we hadn’t separated from him, then the League wouldn’t have had an opening to take him.”

“What are you—” Iida starts. But before he could let his full thoughts out, Shoji interrupted.

“Exactly,” Iida added, happy that somebody else shared his sentiments. “We should let the pros handle this. I’m sure that Midoriya is fine and that he’ll be—”

“And how do you know that, Iida?!” Yaoyorozu interrupted, no longer able to tolerate the mess her classmates were digging themselves into with their fighting. Her verbal explosion and subsequent movement to stand scared the few around her, since just before she was unmoving in her seat.

“You saw what those villains did to him the last time they got to him! What’s to say they won’t do worse?!”
Iida doesn’t have a response to that, his face settling into a grimace. The room grew quiet, the fear of Midoriya’s fate tugging at their minds and guilt for not being able to prevent his kidnapping.

But after a few moments, one last individual of 1-A voiced her opinion on the matter at hand.

“If you guys go along with this plan of yours, then you’ll be fighting again and breaking the rules.”

It was Asui that time. She had it the worst out of everyone still conscious. Her tongue was sore and bandaged, while she’d temporarily lost all feeling in her arm due to the attack from the villain with all the blood vials.

“We know that, Tsu,” Yaoyorozu said.

“They’ll be no better than the villains themselves,” Tsuyu admitted.

Everyone was silent after that. The class eventually dispersed, some with faces of uncertainty and worry. Others left with purpose, their faces forged with determination and well placed resolution to save their classmate.

“So where is it?” Todoroki asked.

Yaoyorozu looked over her shoulder to find Todoroki looking at the tracker in her hand. She repositioned the device so that it was more accessible to eyes other than her own, and motioned for Todoroki to move to a more comfortable position.

“The nomu is due south of here,” Yaoyorozu said, pointing at the screen. “We’ll need to take a train to Kanagawa. If I’m not mistaken, they’re somewhere in Yokohama right now. It’ll take us and hour or two to get there.”

“And they are for sure where your tracker is?”

“Well, I’m fairly certain they are. The signal hasn’t moved since yesterday, so I think that’s a pretty good indicator. “

Todoroki nodded. “That’s good. The less time we leave Midoriya alone with those villains, the better.”

“Yes,” Yaoyorozu stated. “The only thing stopping us now is Kirishima. Where is he?”

Todoroki shrugged his shoulders. “He said that he’d be here. Just give him a few minutes.”

A few more minutes passed. Todoroki was content to stand where he was aimlessly looking around. Yaoyorozu stared at her tracker, keeping her eyes on the small yellow blip, as if it would move any second.

Eventually, the faint sound of voices fill the air, gaining Yaoyorozu and Todoroki’s attention.

“I can’t believe that you let me convince myself into doing this.”

Yaoyorozu and Todoroki turned toward the voice, finding Kirishima to be accompanied by a distraught Kaminari.

“But I’m proud of you, bro!” Kirishima exclaimed. “Going off to save someone who just a few months ago you hated!” Kirishima slapped Kaminari on the back, eliciting a huge outtake of air for the blond.
“Sheesh, don’t remind of that. I know that Midoriya’s a good guy now. Besides, nobody deserves what happened to him. He already got messed up bad by the villains the first time around at U.S.J.”

“You two should quiet it down,” Yaoyorozu interrupted, gaining the attention of the two. “You need to remember that what we’re doing isn’t completely legal. You don’t know when somebody might be listening in.”

Both Kaminari and Kirishima do little to hide their embarrassment. “Sorry Yaoyorozu,” they both said.

Their voices quiet down, and it’s Kaminari that’s the next to speak. He looked around at the group, sighing in disbelief. “Is this it? We really four-manning this?”

“Of course not,” comes another voice.

The gathered four jump in surprise, and immediately turn to find Iida to have appeared out of nowhere.

Iida eyes the group with a crucial eye, the presence of contempt obvious in his gaze.

Yaoyorozu narrowed her eyes in response. “Iida. You aren’t here to stop us, are you?”

Iida took a moment to respond, not breaking the expression on his face. However, he eventually sighed and softened his expression into something more akin to a withdraw relinquishment.

“I’m only here to make sure none of you get hurt,” Iida said, walking closer to join the group. “I don’t approve of your decision. But it’s my responsibility as your classmate to make sure you all make it back safe.”

He takes a moment and ends up shaking his head. “Midoriya wouldn’t want any of you pulling this stunt, you know.”

“And how would you know?” Kaminari asks, genuinely curious.

Iida didn’t respond. However, it was obvious to Todoroki and Yaoyorozu that he refrained from mentioning whatever he was going to.

Iida’s face morphed ever so slightly, as if he was facing some sort of inner turmoil. But whatever it is disappears when Iida raised his head to face them again.

“Alright!” Kirishima said. “That’s a five person group! Not too bad if I’d say so myself.” He turns to Yaoyorozu. “So where are we going?”

A lapsed whisper ends up falling upon the group. However, it is as they’re talking strategy that Bakugo suddenly arrived, planting himself amongst the group without a word. The gathered students — sans a smiling Kirishima — simply stared at him with weariness.

“Bakugo?” Kirishima the first to ask. “You here to join us?”

“What does it look like, shitty hair?” Bakugo growled.

Kirishima suddenly wrapped an arm around Bakugo’s neck, smiling while doing so. “Ha! I knew I could could on you!”

“Get off.” Bakugo’s words come out curt, almost like an order. Kirishima doesn’t waste any time complying, but his smile never leaves his face. “Course, bro. Happy to have you.”
“Alright, is that everybody then?” Yaoyorozu asked the group. “No more surprise additions, right?”

“Actually…” a voice comes from around the corner, yet again spooking some of the group.

Wasting no time, Setsuna and Manga revealed themselves then, making their way towardsthe group.

“We were thinking that maybe Manga and I could hitch a ride with you guys?”

“Wait a minute, you guys are from 1-B!” Kaminari exclaimed. “What are you two even doing here?”

“My guess is they’re here for the same reason we are,” Yaoyorozu chided. She turns back to the duo from 1-B. “Of course you two can come. You two are Midoriya’s friends as well, after all.”

The rest of the group more or less default to her decision. Bakugo showed some contempt, but the look quickly goes away. Others like Kirishima are happy for any additions for their rag-tag group.

This didn’t keep Kaminari from adding in one last comment, however. “Don’t you guys think that the group is a little too big, now?”

Nobody voices out any words of disagreement, but neither does anyone attempt to downsize the group.

And thus, the eight individuals set out into the night, minds set on rescuing their classmate.

Tsukauchi was in the middle of debriefing everyone about the consecutive raids planned for the night when it happened.

Officer Kuro ran up to him, sweating and out of breath. Immediately, Tsukauchi turned the face the man, dreading whatever news he had in store for him.

The first thought that came to mind scared him, and spelled disaster not only for the force, but for the student still within the clutches of the villains; Had them been found out before the raid could even begin?”

“What is it, Kuro?” Tsukauchi asked, a tone of urgency in his voice.

“It’s… command called in,” Officer Kuro began. “We’re receiving backup, sir. And a higher ranking member of the force is coming in to supervise.”

“Higher ranking?” Tsukauchi asked.

“Yeah,” Kuro continued. “Orders are to temporarily withhold the raid, sir. Your jurisdiction over the raid is still yours, but we have to wait for… um, him.”

“And who is ‘him,’ exactly?”

As if by command, the doors to the command center swing open, revealing the scowling newcomer. Kuro didn’t waste any time making himself scarce, instantly falling back into file along with his fellow officers.

When the presence of the man sunk in, the police officers in the room stood attention attention and saluted, Tsukauchi included.
“Commissioner General, Sir!” Tsukauchi greeted.

The aged man looked over Tsukauchi before relaying his command. “Stand down. No need to be so formal,” he said, voice gruff.

“Of course, sir,” Tsukauchi said, minding his words. While he wasn’t afraid of his superior, he did know that he did have quite the temper. It would be for the best if he tried to not stir the flames. “What are you here sir?”

The Commissioner General scoffed upon hearing the question.

“Why am I here? Isn’t it obvious?” he gestured around him to nothing in particular. “This League of Villains has been a growing thorn in our side ever since their debut. The public outcry has been substantial since the incident in Hosu, and more and more villains are growing a spine and throwing themselves out into a world of crime!”

“And doesn’t help that we still have Stain and his merry band of fanatics running around the streets causing havoc! Don’t you know the potential ramifications of this kidnapping?”

The Commissioner General slammed his hands down on the nearest table. “Do you know how I feel about the situation we’re in right now? The villains already bypassed into U.A. once, and yet it’s happened yet again! And a student has been taken this time!”

“I understand that sir,” Tsukauchi added, keeping his voice calm. “That’s why we are committing to this raid tonight.”

“You better,” the Commissioner General flared. “The fragile balance between our peace and the underworld’s chaos teeters at this very moment. We can’t afford any mistakes today.” The Commissioner General sighed. He then made a motion with his hands, signaling for the people further behind him.

“That’s why I got you some other officers for this mission. They’ll be working under special orders I’ve given them, but you don’t need to worry about those. Just focus on the current mission as is.”

“Of course, sir.”

The Commissioner General nodded. “I’ve given you the added bonus of you already know them, detective. That way it won’t be too hard for you to order them around.”

“Thank you, Commissioner General,” Tsukauchi said.

The Commissioner General nodded again. It’s only then as he pulls away that Tsukauchi notices the two newcomers that the man had been talking about.

“Tsukauchi! It’s nice to see you again!”

The detective let out a peeved noise. “I thought I told you to call me Kaniko!”

Tsukauchi laughed. “Of course, Kaniko. I’m sure that we’re going to have a pleasant time with you
around.”

Tsukauchi turned toward the other officer present who had yet to say a word. Just as the Commissioner General has said, the woman is another face that easily comes to memory.

“Nice to see you too, Officer Saya.”

The woman didn’t offer much else of a greeting other than the disgruntled, “Mhm.” Still, Tsukauchi didn’t let Saya’s lack of enthusiasm to stop him.

“Well, alright then! Do you two need a quick debrief?”

“Nope!” Kaniko responded. “We already had one on the way here. The only thing the C.G. told us was that it'd be best if we took part in the raid involving the student. A Izuku Midoriya, right?”

“Yeah,” Tsukauchi confirmed. “But is there any particular reason the Commissioner assigned you to that raid?”

Kaniko shrugged her shoulders. “Nope. But knowing the General, it might just be his soft spot for kids. Maybe he wants to make sure the boy comes out all right.

“Even with All Might on the job? Well, I can’t argue with that, I suppose. Alright you two. Make sure you’re all geared up. We’ll be going out in ten.”

Chapter End Notes

I kept having the problem of switching between past and present tense for some reason in this chapter. Don’t know why. Might be because of my experimenting on my other WIP fic I’ve got queued up, maybe? I tried to make sure everything went back to past tense, but I might have missed a few. Oh well.

Anyways, what do you all think of this one? Good? Bad? Hope I satisfied your needs for this week.
And back to Izuku it is! Just some fun happenings and stuff this time around. Talking, some new things, talking, characters, etc. Well, let’s go on to it!

For the second time in just a few days, Izuku woke with a start. As the haze faded from his eyes, a dull brown unfamiliar ceiling came into view. It was in disarray and slightly dilapidated, almost to the point as if the roof would cave in at any second.

Izuku shook his head; he had others things to be worrying about other than the structural integrity of the building he was in.

He attempted to get up, but his efforts yielded little in results. The sweet, cold kiss of metal greeted his wrists, preventing him from rising. The same was for his ankles, the smooth grip of the shackles holding him bound tightly.

While further wriggling around, Izuku began to notice something strange pressing down on his limbs. Looking around, he noticed that another material had been surrounding his arms and legs aside from the shackles. Weirdly enough, the material was oddly comfortable, which most likely was the cause for Izuku’s initial ignorance of it.

Pushing his legs upward to press against the substance, Izuku found the green coating to be a weird blend of being crusty, yet smooth at the same time. They fully encased his limbs — doing what the shackles couldn’t — and thus leaving him completely immobilized.

Izuku tried for his bugs next, but that proved useless as well. That horrible miasma from the forest was back, forming a protective barrier around the building. Worse yet, there wasn't any sight of anyone within his range, so calling for help wasn’t something he could do either.

Further reaching out proved the interior of the building to be entirely cleared out too, with not a single insect within reach.

*Whatever is was that the villains did to ensure the building’s security and my vulnerability, they did it well,* Izuku mused.

Nonetheless, he set his bugs to work. A small swarm gathered outside, looking for potential openings into the building and for people around that he could ask for help.

Izuku sighed, there wasn’t much he could do after that. A little more moving around revealed to Izuku that his bandages were fresh; unlike the thin rags of Shoji’s clothes, his wounds were covered in thick, industrial wrappings reminiscent of his time in Recovery Girl’s care.

They itched just a bit, but Izuku wasn’t necessarily complaining. The villains were nice enough to treat his injuries with proper care, after all.

*Strange contrast... Why did they even capture me, anyways?*
As if by command, Izuku saw the blur at the corner of his eye. Without a moment to spare, the figure came into view and stood over him.

“Hiya, Izuku!”

It was that girl again. The glint in her eyes freaked Izuku out all the more now. It was only becoming ever more clear to him now; it wasn’t one of bloodlust, or rage, or psychosis — it was infatuation. And it sent a shiver down his spine.

“It’s a real shame they covered you all up, you know,” the girl continued. “You looked so wonderful when Compress brought you out of his marbles! But then he said that you could die if we didn’t patch you up, and I couldn’t let that happen. I’m the one that has to kill you, after all!”

Right. Psychotic.

“You’ve got that right.”

Izuku stilled. The sudden onset of pain rung in his head. *Get—*

“I can’t wait until we can have some fun again! Oh, I knew you were the right one when we met all those weeks ago!”

“You know him, Toga?” Turning his head, Izuku saw another figure coming into view on the right, this villain being one Izuku hadn’t seen yet.

The boy’s face was marred with various stitch lines and purplish scars running ragged under his eyes and along his lower jaw down to his chest. Other than that, he looked remarkably plain looking.

“I certainly do!” the girl — Toga — responded. “We met up a few weeks ago! I was enjoying myself in this dingy alley when all of a sudden, Izuku here showed up being all shady and stuff.”

“Wait,” Izuku started, “that—”

“We had a bit of a scuffle then,” Toga interrupted with a grin. “And wow, was so rough! And he was so good! Especially the part where we went against the wa—”

“I don’t want to hear about your sex life,” the other villain snapped.

Toga merely giggled at the statement. Izuku, on the other hand, immediately felt the blood running to his cheeks. Izuku sputtered the first words that came to mind.

“No, w-wait! We didn’t— I m-mean, yeah we did— No! You’re taking it out of context!”

He immediately regretted it, of course. He had barely helped his situation, after all. He hid his embarrassment by turning away his gaze.

“Sure I am,” the villain yawned. “Like I said, I don’t care. You can do whatever you want with Toga as long as I’m out of the room.” He turned, leaving Izuku’s view. “I’m going to go get the boss.”

And then Izuku was left with the girl. She reached down at something behind Izuku, and suddenly the surface he laid upon shot forward. He was upright again, with Toga’s face just inches apart. A few gazes past her revealed a few tables and chairs, and a couple boarded up windows as well.

*A restaurant maybe? A bar? I think those are some pints up on that table over there. And I think I*
“You know,” Toga began, “I didn’t think that you’d be so cute under that mask of yours.”

Izuku flicked his eyes back towards Toga’s own. The words she had spoken sprung another question into mind regarding something he wasn’t exactly so keen in figuring out.

“Wait… H-how did you figure out that that was me that night? You didn’t even see under my mask!”

Toga giggled in response. “It’s a secret~” she chirped.

“You shouldn’t stand so close to him, Miss Toga,” interrupted a deep, familiar voice.

Izuku turned his gaze to find the monstrous villain from before. Only now, up close, Izuku noticed other features that did little to balance out against the villain’s presentable trousers and brown coat.

The eyepatch of the villain bared a toothy grin, haphazardly carved into the face of the patch’s leather. His branching arms were much more muscular than Izuku thought, and both were currently to his side.

Down from the villain’s face, it almost looked as if gills ran across the length of both sides of his neck. And if that wasn’t strange enough, his skin seemed pretty unusual. It was a strange blend of scales and patches of much rougher looking skin that dotted the exposed areas of his body.

“He might shoot insects out of his mouth,” the monstrous man continued. “You never know with quirks these days.”

“I can’t do that!” Izuku exclaimed with a disgusted look. “That’d be cruel! All those bugs would be all uncomfortable and stuff with all that moisture and stomach acid!”

“Don’t tell them what you can and can’t do!”

Izuku flinched again at the thought. If the villains saw him, they didn’t care to call him out for it.

Toga turned to the other villain without her smile ever wavering. “Please, Gerry,” she scolded, “I promise that I’ll be fine. Besides, like he said, it’d be too cruel for the bugs.”

The other villain adopted an incredulous look on his face. “You’d use my real name?! And in front of our captive? You wound me, dear Toga!”


“But still…”

“So, he’s awake?” came another unknown voice. This time, the words came out slow and heavy. They sounded a bit muffled, with a sort of gurgling sound breaching through the speech.

“Just how many of these guys are there?”

A hulking metal suit came clobbering forward, the heavy metallic clang of its footsteps echoing throughout the room. If Izuku were to place its looks, he’d say that the suit reminded him of those old diving suits used for early ocean exploration. The suit composed of thick boots and gauntlets, as well as a paned-glass window.
It was through the glass that a form slowly appeared, emerging from the helmet’s depths. It was a slurry of runny sludge and muck, with two empty holes for eye sockets and a gaping maw of a mouth.

*That sludge guy, then. But with a suit this time. Is there a reason for that? He wasn’t wearing one during the attack. Maybe he can’t turn off his quirk? Sorta like a mutation one like the Sludge Villain from before? Are they related? Maybe then the—”*

“Izuku blinked. It took him a second to put two and two together. “You’re the one that put this green stuff on me?” The question came out in an excited tone, and Izuku’s eyes shone with genuine curiosity like they always did when encountering a new quirk.

The sludge man laughed. “You’ve got that right, buster! My body has plenty of uses, you know. Crowd control, capture, annoyance. I’m sure by now that you’ve already noticed the stench surrounding the building. None of your pesky critters are getting anywhere near the hideout.”

“You should be careful with what you tell the kid, Caustic.” The words originated from the villain from earlier, the one with the scarred face.

Several other individuals came into the room behind him, resulting in the total number of people in the room to a total of ten if including himself.

The varied individuals immediately found their place in the room, some grouping up while others sat alone.

There were a few that Izuku recognized, like the man in the skin tight bodysuit. There was Harrow: the cloaked lady who made those ethereal limbs. There was also the misty guy from U.S.J. — Kurogiri if Izuku wasn’t mistaken — and Mr. Compress.

There was a newcomer as well, a boy with a gas mask and a gun holster at his waist.

Once everyone settled down, Caustic scoffed and turned towards the seated Dabi. “And what say do you have, fire boy? You ain’t the boss.”

“Dabi’s right, Caustic. You shouldn’t be divulging secrets like that unless we have secured young Midoriya’s allegiance.”

Caustic relented upon the reverberated words, and scurried further towards the back of the room, ending up near Compress.

The man who had spoken up entered the room. Upon first glance, he was fairly plain looking with his black suit. However, that was only if you didn’t take into account his mask.

The equipment was a navy blue, with various pipes sticking out of it from around the bulky collar. The piece of metal covered the man’s face entirely, creating a rather imposing look.

Looking behind the man, Izuku saw Shigaraki.

—“/;Ah, tHeRe

yoU aRe). —”
Like before, various hands covered the entirety of Shigaraki’s body. However, unlike the last time Izuku had seen him, there was something just a bit off.

It was the murderous glare that tipped Izuku off. Shigaraki flexed his fingers on his left; the sleek black hand and its shiny exterior glistened in the dim light of the room. Various joints dotted its surface along the fingers, ensuring that the prosthetic moved and acted like a normal hand.

And unlike before, he was much more repressed and less outspoken. In fact, it was almost as if he trailed behind the suited man in front of him.

*Is he the mastermind, then?*

The hulking man found a seat further back in the room, searing himself in a boot. “You first, Tomura,” he said. “Just remember that we still need him.”

“Thank you, sensei,” Shigaraki responded.

“*Definitely the leader.*”

Shigaraki strode up to Izuku, with the nearby Toga and Gerry making way for their leader.

Shigaraki’s face flared with repressed anger aimed right for Izuku, and Izuku could only guess one reason why.

“Do you have any idea what you’ve done?” Shigaraki scowled. “You did this! You did this to me!” The black hand waved in Izuku’s face, the faint scent of paint, oil, and metal crawling into his nostrils.

“You were supposed to be a minor character! A nuisance! Not some sort of hidden mini boss!”

Izuku saw the sloopy punch coming long before it slammed into his face, but there was little he could do strapped down like he was.

“Those hornets of yours ravaged my hand! And those spiders and beetles chewed it right off!”

“I… I wasn’t aware”— the second punch interrupted Izuku before he could finish.

Shigaraki rose his prosthetic hand, holding it right in front of Izuku’s face. One of the prosthetic’s fingers, the index one, popped right open at the tip. A small, jagged blade showed itself upon its reveal.

And then the thumb popped off, a small flame bursting from its confines. A vengeful glare took control of Shigaraki’s face, his teeth bared like a savage dog.

“How do you think it would feel if I—”

“Tomura. That’s enough.”

The hand villain hesitantly froze, his face twitching in anticipation, but ultimately dropped his hand.

“Yes, Sensei. Apologies.”

And just like that, Shigaraki’s hand closed off, with him retreating somewhere out of Izuku’s vision.
Next to come was the suited masked man, the one Shigaraki referred to as “Sensei.” The individual slowly stood up from his seat and strode up to Izuku, taking Shigaraki’s place.

“Greetings, Izuku Midoriya,” his voice echoed, repressed from the muffling barrier of his mask. “My name is All For One.”

His head then tilted towards where Shigaraki had gone. “My apologies for letting my protégé being so rough with you. But he needed an avenue to vent. Surely, you understand? Considering what your bugs ended up doing?”

Izuku didn’t respond, still trying to gauge how badly his face had been messed up.

“He still has a ways to go,” All For One continued, “but he’s developing quite nicely, I believe.”

“Wh-what do you want?” Izuku finally asked.

“Right to the point, I see,” All For One chuckled. “Well, Midoriya, it’s quite simple, really: I’ve come with a proposition for you.”

“A proposition?” Izuku repeated.

“Indeed. I would like to offer you a place in our ranks. I believe that you have what it takes to be one of us. Of course, I assure you that we would treat you with the utmost care.”

“You… you want me to become a villain?”

“That’s one way to say it, I suppose,” All For One admitted. “But I promise you that it’s not all that.”

All For One began to pace, moving back and forth across Izuku’s vision.

“I’ve been keeping track of your extracurricular activities, you know.”

“You mean… you know about my martial arts practice,” Izuku stated shakily.

“No, no. Of course not. I meant your time out as a vigilante. Your patrol schedules, your capabilities. The fact that the vigilante Snitch and the young boy Izuku Midoriya are one in the same.”

Izuku swallowed upon reflex.

“You were within my sights since your first day of action. Not only had you taken out a hideout of the local yakuza, but you did so without an inkling of a clue that it was your doing. Suffice to say, I was impressed with your handiwork.”

“I looked into you immediately, of course. Sent informants and spies to track you down. I didn’t take long for one to track you back to your apartment.”

“I—”

“Don’t worry. Your mother will not be harmed. Tonight, this talk is between you and me.”

Izuku took a deep breath. He nodded for All For One to continue.

“As I was saying, it wasn’t long to find out who you were at the time. Izuku Midoriya, son of Hisashi and Inko Midoriya, student of Aldera Junior High, and boy with broken dreams, born
quirkless and outcast. Imagine my surprise when I found that part out,” he chuckled.

“I kept watch of you from then on. I didn’t really care for you dismantling the yakuza. They’re mere pawns to me at this point.”

“No, I was much more interested in your own growth. It’s not often that you find a mere middle schooler rising to the status of such an elusive vigilante.”

“But then, why would you want me?” Izuku questioned. “You said it yourself, I’m a vigilante. Why would I just suddenly turn villain?”

“I digress,” All For One responded. “Miss Toga over there helped finely with detailing a first hand encounter with you. You were a bit rough with the young lady, but nowhere near to the extent that you’ve shown before.”

“Wh— What do you mean?”

“The first instance was the Sludge Villain. Were you aware that your hornets went after the villain’s eyes?”

“Of course!” Izuku admitted with little time thought. “They were his only vulnerable spot.”

“And were you aware that you caused irreparable damage to his eyes?”

That gave Izuku a pause. “I… I what?”

“His eyes had to be surgically removed. He ended up looking a lot like own resident Caustic here.”

“I— I didn’t—”

“The second notable instance was U.S.J. Twenty one heavily injured villains. Two fatally wounded, and two dead upon arrival of the paramedics.”

“I— No. How could I?”

“Your bugs, Midoriya,” All For One simply stated.

_Bite, sting… kill._ The realization came rushing back full force.

“You… you mean that’s why it seemed as if everyone was walking on eggshells around me back then?”

It was All For One’s turn to take pause. “Quite the order of priorities for you.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Nevermind. Just expressing my inner thoughts. Let’s get back to topic, Midoriya. In fact, let’s talk about my Nomu.”

“The bird-like guy with the regeneration quirk?”

“That’s the one. Long story short, it died as well. Your bugs’ venom got to his regeneration. Sure, part of that was the police force’s fault. But the fact of the matter is, you provided the means for its demise.”

“You’re quite the vindictive one, Midoriya. Driven and ruthless, even if you don’t realize it yet.
That’s what I like about you. You persevere, and you don’t let others’ ridicule get to you.”

All For One stopped in place, turning to face Izuku with his nonexistent eyes. “That’s why I believe that you can find a place here. We don’t judge based upon your quirk’s nature, and our aim is to stop such vile practices as such.”

“And how do you plan on doing that, exactly?” Izuku asked. “By taking over Japan? By killing All Might? Is that why you have Stain running around killing heroes? To soften up your opposition?”

“No,” All For One bellowed. “By making sure society bends down and understands what it is like to be at the bottom, that is how we act. Only then can things change. Surely, you find merit in my claims?”

It was then that Izuku’s bugs picked up on movement outside. It wasn’t much, just a few people entering his sphere of influence. However, what caught Izuku’s attention were the people’s body armor and badges.

“So, what do you say? Open to the idea of joining the League of Villains?”

Izuku brought his attention back to his captors. He just needed to buy time. One way to do that would be to accept All For One’s offer, of course. To stall until the police barged in and raided the place, taking the villains off guard. But then again...

“No.”

“Hmm?” All For One hummed.

“No, I won’t join the League. There’s a line that I don’t want to cross out when I’m on patrol. A villainous lifestyle would break that. Besides, I’m training to become a hero. Eventually, I can give up in my vigilante pursuits and go full time as a hero.”

“I… see…” All For One trailed off, his words thick with resignation. “Your attitude and will is not so dissimilar to All Might’s. I can find respect with that,” he chuckled. “But that doesn’t mean that your out of the woodwork yet.”

“It’s a shame, really.” All For One inched closer, raising his hand up to in front of Izuku’s face. “I can hear the conviction in your words. I can sense how strongly you feel about becoming a hero. There’s little I can do to persuade you otherwise, it seems..”

The hand inched closer. “You would’ve fit in quite wonderfully with us. A place where you could truly express yourself without worry. You could have really thrived here with us.”

*Hold up! Hold up! I really should have said yes! I don’t know what this guy’s quirk is! What if I die with a touch?! Is he like Shigaraki?!*

“Don’t tell me you don’t like the conflict?”

“What! Are you crazy? Your h—”

Izuku closed his eyes to brace for his inevitable fate. He felt the massive, calloused hand meet his face, wrapping around its entirety.

Nothing. The hand was removed from Izuku’s face. *Was that it?*
“Just as I thought,” All For One announced. “Intriguing. You’re just like the others. You’re one of those anomalies that I can’t influence.”

Suddenly, the hand was back on Izuku’s face; Izuku froze immediately upon the hand’s contact.”

“No matter,” All For One said. “Let’s try crippling your quirk usage instead. You’re much too dangerous to allo—”

[Query].

All For One stumbled back, falling to the ground as his hand disconnected from Izuku’s face.

Izuku, on the other hand, flinched upon hearing the thoughts enter his head. There were so many words and ideas, compacted within a mere five letters. The onset of another headache was encroaching in.

“Oh fuck no! I’m killing that thing before it gets any stronger than it already is!

[Negative].

“What do you mea—”

Izuku groaned. He really didn’t need the voices in his head talking anymore than they already were.

And then he suddenly felt the pressure of hands around his neck, suffocating him. He couldn’t see what was around his neck, but he could see across the room.

Harrow was staring straight at him, her eyes basked in a cold fury. Her ethereal arms had likely sprouted from the board Izuku was shackled against, and were now slowly tightening by the second.

“That’s enough, Ruka. I’m fine,” All For One said, getting up from the ground with the help of two other ethereal limbs.

“But Sensei—” The first words Izuku had heard from her, and they were soft and caring, quite unlike the intimidating aura and appearance she displayed.

“It was my fault, Ruka. Don’t take out my mistakes on young Midoriya, here.”

Izuku felt the pressure of the hands disappear from his neck, and he could finally breathe again.

“Sorry, Sensei. I’ll be more careful next time,” Harrow apologized.

“Of course. Just remember not to be so hasty with your actions. You’d be surprised with the opportunities you can find if you take the time to think.”

Shigaraki came bounding into the room then, eyes darting back and forth among everyone present. “What happened, sensei?” he asked All For One.

“Nothing for you to worry about, Tomura. But come sit down here with us, will you? We’re almost done here.”

All For One then turned back to Izuku, wiping himself off of dust as he did so.

Outside, Izuku noticed an increased police presence, along with a couple pro heroes, hiding amidst
The alleyways and roads a single block away.

“That was a first,” All For One said. “You’re turning out to be much more interesting than I anticipated.” His hand rose again. “I’d like to take another peek, if you don’t mind. I promise that I’ll be more careful.”

All For One took a step forward, but before could continue, he stopped in place. His head tilted sideways, and a low, contemplative hum emanated from his mask.

“It seems that we may have a problem at one of our storage facilities,” All For One informed. “Tomura, hold Midoriya here until I get back. I trust that he’ll be safe with you.” All For One stepped away, moving towards the room’s exit.

“Wait!” Izuku yelled. *All Might is outside. If anyone can take down the League’s leader, it’s him!*

“No time. However, I do hope that we can continue this conversation at a later date, Midoriya,” All For One laughed.

The leader of the League of Villains turned his head towards the bar. “Kurogiri, if you please.”

And with that, he was gone in an black mist, disappearing to whatever his destination was.

Shigaraki was suddenly before Izuku’s immediate vision, eyes in a calculating stare.

“You heard sensei,” Shigaraki said. “Dabi, Caustic. Make sure he doesn’t escape. I’ll be back in my room.”

“Ha! Of course, boss man,” Caustic roared.” The little pipsqueak doesn’t look like much. Besides, if worse comes to worse,” he let out a small chuckle, “I could take him.”

And then came the few, short knocks on the door that led to the outside.

“Hello! Kamino Pizza Delivery!”

Chapter End Notes

And that’s that, I suppose. Stayed tuned for next time! For then, we have some reunions and fighting!

Until then, ta-ta!
Well, this chapter’s a bit later than usual. But hey, it’s still Sunday!

I will say that I’m a bit surprised with myself, however. I actually got this chapter out relatively on time despite all the stuff that I’ve had going this week up for me.

Hope you all enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“SMASH!”

The shout and the subsequent impact shook the building with ease. Dust and rubble flew every which way, lowering visibility with smoke that filled the room within seconds.

“Who would dare—”

“Kurogiri! Warp—”

Those little—”

“Oh no! The coppers! — Take me in, boys!”

Among the shouts and yells of discourse and surprise, Izuku remained in place within his restraints. His head immediately jerked towards the back wall, aiming to see through the thick wall of debris and smoke.

Out of nowhere, a sudden explosion of wood stretched out every which way, branches wrapping themselves around single every member of the League.

When the smoke cleared, Izuku caught sight of Kamui Woods hanging from the roof, with one hanging from the roof while the other extended into the hideout, trapping the various villains with little resistance.

Below him, All Might stood as imposing as ever, his face in a strange mix of anger and his usual happy smile. Beside All Might was a short, old man in yellow sporting a similar grimace minus the smile.

Turning to look at the villains, Izuku noticed the slumped form of Dabi — no doubt as a precaution by the heroes if Caustic’s earlier remark of “fire boy” was anything to go by.

Along with Dabi, Harrow was slumped over too, most likely due to the fact that her arms would pose too much of a risk if they wanted to keep her restrained.

Izuku also noticed that there were a few openings now around the building, some of the muck that Caustic had placed likely having been displaced with the stampede of police outside.

Izuku let a few bugs in, but now so much as to impede on the work of his saviors. The few flies and
spiders had called landed in his hair, their presence comforting him with their extra eyes and hearing. They all flicked over to All Might as he spoke.

“There’s no escape for you, League of Villains. Why, you ask? Because we are here!”

He then turned towards Izuku, his smile as radiant as ever. “Izuku, my boy, are you alright?”

Izuku hesitated. “Yeah, but… I… I’m sorry All Might.”

All Might tilted his head in confusion. “Whatever for, my boy?”

Izuku sighed. “It was… Their leader… I couldn’t keep him here. He only just left a minute ago.”

All Might’s eyes snapped even further open than they were, his eyes holding a glare unlike Izuku had ever seen. “Their leader!? What was his name?”

“He said it was All For One,” Izuku replied.

All Might’s face grew into a minute grimace. “I see.” He took a breath. “Don’t worry about that for now, my boy. What matters is that you’re safe. It seems that the raid has been successful.”

The door to the room began to open then, a short tuft of sticking out from behind. “Indeed. One must never neglect defense, especially when attacking,” came a familiar voice.

“Edgeshot!” Izuku exclaimed.

Behind said hero, the door slammed open, revealing a large swath of police officers. As the heavily armored police force swarmed in, two others trickled in through the doorway as well.

They were out of place compared to the rest, wearing normal police wear in place of the standard body armor.

Of the two, Izuku recognized one of the women as Asano Saya, one of the detectives that had questioned him all the way back after the U.S.J. Incident. The other was unfamiliar, her orange hair styled to a shape reminiscent of a crab. And, if anything, their next actions further cemented the strangeness of them being present.

“Alright! We all good? The baddies secured?” the one with orange hair asked.

“Be quiet and on guard, Kaniyashiki,” officer Saya said. “We’re still on enemy grounds.”

“Oof. Come on, Saya! You don’t have to be all grumpy anymore! We already cleared away that stinky glob stuff with Endeavor’s fire. It doesn’t stink anymore!”

“Hmph.”

“Midoriya,” Edgeshot said, gaining Izuku’s attention as the stampede of footsteps settled down. “I’m glad to see that you’re in good health. I hope the villains weren’t too rough with you?” he asked.

“No,” Izuku said. “They were actually kind of nice, all things considered. And this sludge is pretty comfortable, too.”

“Hah! It better be, brat!” Caustic spouted. “Any less gratitude and I’d be going off to melt your skin!”
“You aren’t in any position to be making threats, villain,” All Might said.

A growl of frustration then came from Shigaraki, the sound primal and infused with rage. “All that planning… all that scheming… and the final boss just ends up showing up at our front door!”

All Might’s eyes narrowed. “And what are you going to do about that, Shigaraki?”

Shigaraki scoffed. “Ohhhh. Plenty,” he drawled. “It’s a good thing that we’re not the only ones you should be worrying about.” His head swerved. “Kurogiri! Bring them all over to play!”

The heroes tensed, and the various police officers readied their guns, preparing for the oncoming onslaught.

But then… silence.

“Was something supposed to happen?” Kaniyashiki asked.

Kurogiri was the first to respond, more out of surprise than as a response to Kaniyashiki’s question. “I’m sorry, Tomura Shigaraki. But all the nomu put away for us… they’re all gone!”

All Might gave off a hearty laugh. “Looks like you still have a lot to learn, Shigaraki.”

“What did you just say?!?” he roared.

“Your little League here has underestimated much,” All Might continued without pause. “Your mischief has gone on for long enough. It all ends here, Tomura Shigaraki.”

“‘Ends here,’ huh? You think it all ends here?!! No, I’ve already started gathering allies. It all begins here. Kurogiri!”

And then the teleporter slumped in his restraints, too.

“What the heck happened?” the gas masked villain said.

“I merely rendered him unconscious,” Edgeshot said, emerging from Kurogiri’s body as a thin string.

“Ah! You used the ‘Thousand Sheet Pierce!’” Izuku said.

“I did indeed, Midoriya.”

“Heckin!” shouted Caustic, again gaining the attention of the heroes. “Hey, kid!” he said, looking towards the gas mask villain. “We lost our transport! Use your gas!”

“That’s a stupid idea!” the boy shrilled. “My quirk will just knock all of us out! What would be the point? Heck, if anything, you have the most chances out of any of us. Why don’t you just squirm out of the suit you’re wearing, huh? Oh wait, that’s right. You have control problems.”

“Why, you little—”

“Quiet!” yelled the short old man. “Stop bickering. There’s nowhere left to run. For any of you.”

He turned towards Mr. Compress. “Atsuhiro Sako.”

Then towards the other villain in the skintight suit. “Jin Bubaigawara.”
And he continued on. “Himiko Toga.”

“Gerald Sheldon,” he said, moving to Bombastic.

“Noburu Taro.” He spoke to Caustic.

Then towards the gas mask villain. “Inouye Hajime.”

The man scanned them all for a moment before continuing. “I suggest that you all make it easier on yourselves. Surrender now,” he finished.

“But one last thing. Now, tell me, Shigaraki, where is your boss?”

“No… Defeated… Just like this?” Shigaraki mumbled, his eyes darting back and forth in fury. “No freaking way!”

“Shigaraki!” All Might yelled. “Where is he?! Where’s All For One?!?”

And that was when the black ooze came out, spawning various Nomus all around the heroes.

Izuku felt the same ooze spurting out of his mouth, slowly growing to encapsulate his body.

The last thing he saw was the outstretched hand of All Might reaching out for him, only to miss as Izuku was engulfed in darkness.

Izuku came into being with the bubbling sound of the black ooze. He appeared in a slanted position midair, his body fixed as if he was still strapped down. He fell with his back facing downwards, his eyes facing upwards to the dust and smoke covered sky.

“My apologies, young Midoriya,” came the eerily deep voice of All For One. “I hope the ride here wasn’t too rough?”

Izuku instantly moved, rising from the ground to face the leader of the League of Villains. Behind him, the effervescent blub blub blub of the ooze came not too long after. Rather than turning, Izuku used the bugs on his head to take a look. He found the rest of the League standing behind him, just as shaken and confused as he was.

Of course, it wasn’t long until Izuku took note of another thing. He was in a new place, completely unaffected from the gases emitted by Caustic. There was a whole three block radius of insects and bugs and arachnids all to himself for the taking. He took hold, basking in the feeling of millions of the little creatures tingling his mind. He sent an order, and then—

“Oh ho. We can’t have you doing that now, can we?” laughed All For One.

Izuku looked toward the villain. “What?” He tried to play innocently.

All For One chuckled. And then he began to speak: “Heatwave. Blast Radius. Sphere of Influence. Range Enhancer.”

Then, in a blink of an eye, a blast of heat came emanating out from All For One, pulsing out into the surrounding area. The result was instant; while the heat may not have been enough to kill a human, it was enough to make them uncomfortable in a few more seconds.

Unfortunately, that also meant that it was good enough to take care of a majority of the bugs in Izuku’s range. Even the bugs on his head were dead, with some of his hair singed from the searing
heat. The few bugs still alive in his range were either on the verge of death or buried fairly deep within the confines of rubble that would take minutes to escape from.

“Wonderful.”

“Aww! come on, Mr. Bossman!” started one of the villains. “Did you really have to do that? That was way too hot! — But is was just what I needed! That hideout of ours was getting a bit cold with the draft we had!”

Izuku had to look back to confirm that yes, the two voices were actually one in the same and from the same man.

“That should take care of a good amount of your minions, Midoriya,” All For One said, unaffected by the contradictory words being spoken before him by one of the members of his League.

“My apologies,” he continued, “but I had to ensure that your quirk did little to hinder us. It is quite a troublesome power to deal with, after all.”

Izuku gulped. He was surrounded on all sides, and completely without his immediate access to bugs. His own skills wouldn’t overcome the fact that he was unnumbered, and All For One…

“You’ve failed again, Tomura,” All For One spoke to his protégé. “But do not lose heart. There are still many chances ahead of you to set things right and learn your path. That is why I brought along your little band,” he motioned towards the others, “as well as young Midoriya here,” his head tilted towards Izuku.

“So,” he continued, “try again, because that is why I am here. To guide you along on your own path. It’s all for you.”

All For One looked down towards Izuku. “Oh, and Midoriya,” he spoke, the sound of his voice filled with mirth, “I do hope that you refrain from dying anything soon. We still have much to talk about, after all.”

“All FOR ONE!!” screamed the voice of All Might, his form shooting down from the skies to collide with the villain.

The initial impact blasted Izuku and the other villains away, launched somewhere among the rubble of the destroyed section of the city.

All For One and All Might began a trade of blows unlike anything anyone had ever seen, hit after hit causing devastating damage to their surroundings and each other.

After the initial awe and wonder wore off, however, Izuku — still just rising from the ground — remembered that he was still surrounded by a bunch of other villains.

The same seemed to be the case for the villains too, for they just now were turning their heads towards Izuku.

Of course, that was the moment All Might was hit, the force of All For One’s attack throwing the Symbol of Peace across the ground like a stone skipping across water.

Izuku only stood still in place, too frozen in shock in fear of All For One targeting him next.
“Tomura,” All For One began, “you and Ruka must escape. Kurogiri will help you with that.”

“But sir!” Gerry — Bombastic, Izuku was calling him — began. “Mr. Kurogiri is incapacitated at the moment! He can’t help us!”

All For One’s fingers turned black and spindly, branching out until they stabbed right into the teleporter’s unconscious body. A rift open behind Kurogiri, the familiar black mist growing in size into a moderately foreboding portal.

“Oh,” Bombastic said. “I suppose that you could do that.”

“Indeed,” All For One confirmed. He then looked to Shigaraki. “Now go.”

“But what about you, sensei?” Shigaraki asked, his voice shaking.

An impact shook the ground, All Might appearing once more.

“Always think ahead, Tomura. You have much to learn and grow into still.”

Then All For One and All Might collided once more, and only then had the battle truly begun.

“Time to go Shigaraki!” uttered Compress. “Let the nice gentleman in the pipe mask hold All Might back!”

Izuku turned his head, spotting the magician compressing the form of Dabi and Harrow into his signature marbles.

“And take the boy, as well!” And then the other villains were looking right at him.

Izuku jerked his head side to side, searching for something to help him out of the predicament he found himself him.

Fortunately, he found a piece of rebar sticking out of the ground. He grabbed it, testing its weight; it would work as a makeshift eskrima stick for now.

“Stay back!” Izuku yelled, waving the rod of rebar forward. “I know how to use this!”

Caustic, for one, erupted in laughter. “You think that little piece of metal will do anything for ya?!”

“Heh… yeah…” And then Izuku turned, sprinting off in the other direction.

“Izuku!” Toga whined. “Don’t leave yet!”

Izuku didn’t get too far, unfortunately. It only took about ten seconds before he was covered on his front side and back. Bombastic’s speed carried him in front of Izuku while the others covered his back.

When Izuku tried for a path right, a large outpouring of Caustic’s slurry shot out, nearly hitting him head on before he dodged backwards.

“Come on, kid,” Bombastic said. “Don’t make this so hard on yourself. There’s no chance of escape.”

“Midoriya!” All Might yelled, moving towards him. However, he didn’t get far before he was
pulled back into battle by All For One.

Izuku panned his attention back and forth for an opening among the villains’ ranks or any little thing that could turn the tide in his favor.

“Caustic, fetch him,” Shigaraki ordered.

“Gladly.” The man stepped forward, the metallic clang of his feet echoing on the rubble below him.

Izuku couldn’t see much he could do to escape, but that didn’t stop him from acting. His hand jutted forward in a blur. The piece of rebar in his hand found itself lodged into Caustic’s suit, right in between the joints of his right leg.

Caustic attempted to make another step, but promptly fell forward. “You brat!” he cursed. “Just wait until I get out of here, then you’ll see—”

“Don’t ditch the suit, you idiot,” the gas masked villain berated. “We won’t be able to get you a new one at this point if things go sour!”

Caustic growled from his position on the ground. “Don’t think that just because we’re on the same side that that means I won’t melt your mouth off!”

“Gentlemen, please!” Compress begged. “We have little time as it is! Maybe we should—”

The villains’ bickering went on. Some joined in, others refrained and simply watched Izuku, making sure he wouldn’t make a break for it.

Izuku took the chance to scan his surroundings more, and that was when he saw… “Bakugou?”

“Hey!” Bakugou yelled, having appeared from behind a destroyed wall. “You little shits need to learn when to shut up!”

“Where the heck did you come from?!” the gas masked villain demanded.

Rather than respond, Bakugou — because of course he would — sparked his hands up as a challenge.

All the villains were facing away from Izuku. He was about to make a run for it, but stopped when he heard the faint voice of Setsuna whispering in his ears.

“What—”

“Shh!! Don’t talk. It’s just an FYI, but you should probably get ready and brace for impact, Away from the wall, anyways. Oh! And get ready to hold on when they pass by. Now!!”

Izuku did have much time to act or process whatever Setsuna had said other than by facing away from the wall.

The next thing he knew, a thundering ‘KA-BOOM’ shook the ground, launching rubble and smoke everywhere. It was just like before at the hideout, with the villains temporarily stunned and visibility all but dropped to zero.
A wave of ice arrived in the wake of the explosion, shooting out from among the smoke like a burst dam. Out front was Todoroki creating the ice. Or at least, he thought it was Todoroki. It was a bit difficult to tell under his disguise.

Behind Todoroki was a large metal sled being pushed by a much more identifiable Iida. And on the sled was a Kirishima with two metal horns protruding from his head with his hair down, and his hand held out for Izuku to take.

Taking no time to hesitate, Izuku took the offered hand, his body pulled onto the sled and whisked away from danger.

Izuku found himself hanging onto dear life onto the sled, sitting just behind Kirishima.

“Midoriya!” Iida exclaimed from behind. “You not feeling too hurt anywhere, see you?”

“Uh… no. I feel pretty fine, actually.”

“You do?” asked Kirishima. “That was the hold League going onto you! You sure you’re okay, man?”

“Yeah… yeah. I’m fine.”

Izuku was fine physically, at least. In his mind, everything was still in chaos. As they furthered away from the villains, and the sound of battle faded to the background, Izuku still worried.

Taking a small peak behind, All For One and All Might were only specks on the horizon. He didn’t have time to worry about it awhile ago, but now that he was safe, the worry had creeped back into his mind.

And that was what troubled Izuku, because he knew something that the others didn’t. Izuku knew that under that strong, indomitable image that All Might always showed, that there was still a frail man, one who couldn’t always hide behind his disguise of muscle and strength.

Izuku shook his head, focusing on ahead of him. He just had to trust that All Might would make it through.

“Alright. Uh huh. You guys all good? … The Akabi Toy Warehouse? Sure… gotcha. We’ll be there in a jiffy.”

Kirishima took his hand away from the headpiece and turned towards the other three people present.

He took a pause as he spotted the swarm of insects congregating above the boy they had rescued, almost acting as if some sort of watch dog. If watch dogs could fly and go everywhere at once, that is.

He found Iida and Todoroki still tending to the fatigued Izuku despite the swarm, making sure that he was in fairly good health and that his bandages were still in proper condition.

Kirishima cleared his throat, gaining the three’s attention. “The others are meeting up in the Akabi Toy Factory. Yaoyorozu said that it’s been abandoned for a while now, so we should be fine in there.”

“Where is that?” Todoroki asked, his eyes narrowing. “It’s not that far, is it? We still aren’t sure of
Midoriya’s injuries.”

“I said that I’m fine, Todoroki,” Izuku whined. “Promise.”

“Glad to hear it, Midoriya!” Kirishima exclaimed. “You guys don’t need to worry, though. It’s just down the street. Yaoyorozu made sure it wasn’t too far from us just in case Midoriya needed to be carried or something.”

“That’s good!” Iida praised. “This looks like a job well done. I may have not approved of this at all, but it seems that the outcome was satisfactory in the end.”

He stood, going over to pick up the discarded pieces medical supplies they had brought just in case. “I’ll start to pack. You three ready up and prepare to leave. Take whatever’s necessary.”

That prompted Todoroki looked over at the sled that they had used to arrive at their current hiding place. “Does Yaoyorozu want her sled back?”

Kirishima laughed. “Wow, she was right! Somehow, she guessed that you would ask that.”

Todoroki simply raised an eyebrow in response.

“Right…” Kirishima continued. “Anyway, no. ‘I can make plenty of more’ were more or less her words.”

“Oh?” questioned Izuku. “Yaoyorozu made that sled?”

“She did, yeah.”

“Huh,” Izuku huffed. “Wait… how many of you guys are there? I mean, I know Setsuna and Manga were here. Setsuna for her mouth and Manga… also for his mouth… words… His quirk.”

“And then there’s you guys and Yaoyorozu, too, apparently… Oh! And Bakugou… Right…”

“That just leaves Kaminari, then,” Kirishima said.

Izuku’s eyes rose in intrigue. “Kaminari is here too?”

“Yup! Plus, he’s the one who actually came up with the plan for saving you.” Kirishima’s smile widened. “You should have seen how manly he was when he started ordering us around! It was completely unlike him!”

“Huh,” Izuku mused with a smile. “Guess I’ll have to thank him when we meet up.”

“Of course, Midoriya,” Iida added, his backpack all ready to go. “Any other questions you have before we go?”

Izuku truly considered to question for a moment, and that was all he needed for the thought to come to mind.

“Is everyone else wearing weird costumes like you guys?”

Chapter End Notes
So, there’s that! Not much for any new or unique things that deviate from canon for this chapter, unfortunately. But hey, that’s what the next chapter is for!

Hope to see you all next time. ‘Till then!
And we’re back to the non-canon stuff! More revelations this time around, and a nice little surprise at the end. Hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They never actually made it to the rendezvous point.

Instead, a pro hero by the name of Scope had met them halfway. If Izuku’s memory served him right, then the hero’s quirk, which was also named Scope, allowed him to sense a specific set of things at a time with a hundred feet radius of himself. Whether it was keys, rabbits, or people, the skill made him a valuable asset in search and rescue operations.

At first, the others aside from Izuku leap into defensive positions, unsure of the identity of the newcomer. However, at Izuku’s behest and assurance that he recognized the man as a hero, the others stood down.

But in spite of this, while Izuku may have recognized the man as a pro hero, it didn’t mean that Izuku immediately trusted the man. After what he had gone through the past few days, Izuku wasn’t willing to give up his friends’ location to the man without proof he was who he said he was.

And so, after a brief showcasing of his quirk — via pointing out several locations of various spiders that of which Izuku was able to verify — and the display of his hero license, Izuku finally let the man go.

After all was said and done, the hero berated them a bit for staying so close to the battlefield, but nonetheless ushered them away towards the paramedics upon finally realizing Izuku’s full condition.

The hero promised that he’d go after the others immediately, and so the group went on their way. Todoroki, Iida, and Kirishima led Izuku towards the medics, but that in itself wasn’t without any turmoil of its own.

In a small section within the triage site, someone had set up a temporary viewing area complete with one of those expensive holographic screen setups. It was to Izuku’s horror to find All Might on screen, not only battered and bruised, but reduced to his scrawny and powerless form. The only positive was the downtrodden form of All For One. The mastermind behind the League of Villains was on the ground with his mask shattered, revealing severe scar tissue and a lack of a true face.

And then, the still image of dread changed, with the Symbol of Peace himself raising an arm and pointing a finger right at the camera.

“IT’S YOUR TURN!!” his voice carried, just as strong and awe-inspiring as it was before, all despite his current state.

It was then that the paramedics finally got to Izuku, and they subsequently ushered him to the police after finding out his identity as the boy who was kidnapped by the League of Villains.
The police ended up escorting him to an ambulance, highlighting the fact that he needed to leave his friends behind. Izuku got into the vehicle without any resistance and a small goodbye to his friends; but that wasn’t what mattered in the end.

Izuku paid no mind of the police officers’ words or their promises of safety. Rather, it was the haunting scene that he had just witnessed on the screen that drew all his attention. After so much anguish and defeat over the past few days, everything finally caught up to him. And so, as the world faded into darkness, Izuku asked himself only one thing: Is it my fault?

Izuku was getting tired of waking up suddenly in a place he didn’t recognize. Thankfully, he took a few breaths and a couple frantic searches with his bugs before he realized he was in the hospital. The discovery calmed Izuku’s worries, his instincts calming down as he fell back into his hospital bed. Still, he sighed in resignation.

He had dreamt of the crystal again. That tesseract of colors and edges and lines that had first entered his mind during the fight with Shinso.

He still didn’t have an explanation for the event despite weeks of searching and researching. Nothing had come up in the libraries or online. And honestly, he was willing to bet that it had something to do with his weird strain of quirk that Melissa had told him about. However, as much as he’d like to find out exactly what was wrong with him, he wasn’t exactly keen on the idea of asking the government for help. It was simply infuriating.

“Yeah, I wouldn’t completely trust the feds either,” the voice laughed. “And, um… Sorry about that. The uh, lack of information, that is.”

Izuku took another breath in. And out. In. And out. The voice wasn’t real, after all. It was only in his head.

“When are you going to accept that fact that there actually is a voice in your head, Izuku?”

Not real. Not real. Not re—

“Howeber, I am only partially in your head, if that soothes any of your worries.”

“No! It doesn’t!” Izuku hissed to the air. “What do you want? I’m not so entirely stress free right now. And you aren’t helping.”

“Oh, yeah. Sorry. That’s partially our fault. I, uh, well... am sorry for any passed habits...”

“What?” Izuku questioned.

“And the fact that it did hurt you every time we interfered.”

“...You mean the headaches, right? And the brief flashes of pain?”

“Correct.”

Izuku took a moment to consider what he was doing. He was talking aloud to the open air, with nobody in front of him and only a voice in his head to converse with. He went through his options. There was the possibility that the voice was just a coping method. Maybe his encounter with the League was more traumatizing than he thought it was?

He might have actually been tortured and his mind may have just shoved all those memories deep
down to his subconscious. And now he had a voice guiding him away from the bad memories to
ensure he still functioned. The more dreadful of the possibilities was that he had developed a split
personality.

Maybe as a result of splitting up his consciousness between billions of bugs? And now this
otherself would take over his body in his sleep and take on a life of its own? Maybe that was why
he would suddenly get those urges of conflict? Was the other’s personality bleeding over?

“No, I promise you that I’m a completely separate entity attached to your headspace. On a side
note, you really need to get your act together. Your mumbling is a bad habit.”

“Sorry…” Izuku apologized. “I know that it is, it’s just that— Hold up a second! No. Uh uh. Nope.
We’re not talking about my head pains or my mumbling. We are having this conversation about
you right now. What are you? What do you want?”

The voice sighed. “I suppose this conversation has been a long time coming.” The voice made a
sound as if she — she, because it definitely sounded like a female — was clearing her throat. “First thing’s first. I won’t answer your first question. Not completely, at least.”

“What?!” But you—

“This is nonegotiable. Let’s just say that some things are best not said.”

Izuku took a few moments to calm down. “Fine. Then what can you tell me… um… What should I
call you? ‘Disembodied Voice’ seems a bit mean.”

“Well, you may call me… QA, for now. As for what we are, there isn’t much I can tell you.
However, I will say that I am glad that my powers found such a wonderful host. Even if your
capabilities aren’t up to par as mine were.”

“You… your powers?” Izuku asked slowly. “You mean… my bugs, right? Are you saying that my
quirk was yours before? Sort of like…” His mind blanked, fuzzed, and then focused into an image.
The information flooded into him in mere seconds. “All For One? But what does that… Wait! All
For One could steal quirks?! And give them away?! Are you saying that he gave me my quirk?
Your quirk?”

“No,” QA replied. “But what happened to you was a similar process, in a way.”

Completely useful and useless information at the same time. Great. “I’m not getting anything else
out of you, am I?”

“No!” QA chirped, her voice teasing and child-like. “Damn. I think that was some of Lisa
rubbing off on me.”

“Who?”

“It doesn’t matter. She isn’t around anymore.”

“Oh…” Izuku trailed. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I’m sure she’s doing fine.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes. “But I thought that she was de—”

“As for what I want, well, we just want to see you grow. To thrive and prosper and assert yourself.
To drive yourself up and into conflict. You're not that quirkless boy that you once were, Izuku.”

“But why? I don’t even know you. Why are you so invested in me?”

“Whether you like it or not, we’re bound for the foreseeable future,” she informed. “Surely that’s enough of a motivation for me? I don’t exactly wish to lose my sense of self again.”

“You mean… you need my to survive?”

“You could... say that. Besides, look at all the benefits this mutualism has given you. I have a place to be, you have powers, and now you don’t have to bend down to people like Bakugou anymore.”

“Bend down? I mean… sure… Bakugou’s a bit of a… pain. But he really isn’t a problem anymore. Heck, he even joined the rescue party for me!”

“No thanks to you inaction, might I add. I had to put him in place myself. You can’t have your enemies stomping all over you, Izuku. It gives them the impression that you won’t fight back. Trust me on that. Emma was the same.”

“All it takes is the right amount of pressure on one place. For instance, it’s a good thing that all it took were a few punches to make that Bakugou kid more cautious. You might not be here otherwise.”

Izuku’s mind flashed back to another time before, with one of the few physical altercations he had had with Bakugou. “You’re made me punch him that one time, didn’t you?”

“Of course. You can’t expect me to stand by idly while something like that happened to you? It’s no wonder you triggered. I hate bullies.”

So many questions. What was her life like? What did she mean by “trigger?” He’d have to go through everything one step at a time. “I… suppose I thank you for that, I guess. It is true that Bakugou was a bit less aggressive after that.”

“As was planned.”

Another question came to Izuku. “Wait a second. Why are we only doing this now? Talking, I mean. Couldn’t we have done this before?”

“No, actually,” QA responded. “I’m not entirely sure about all the intricacies and stuff, that’s not my area. But, based on my knowledge, I’m pretty sure All For One jumbled some things around. Knocked a few screws out of place and others in place when he tried to reach out to the source.”

“That… makes some sense, I suppose. Hmm… Another question. What—”

“Not now,” QA interrupted. “Act normal. Those detectives from before are coming this way. They just asked the nurse about you.”

“Wait, what? How do you even—”

True to her word, the door to his room opened and three officers made their way in. They were all people he recognized by now: Officers Tsukauchi, Asano, and Kaniyashiki.

“Evening, Midoriya!” Tsukauchi said with a blinding smile. “I’m glad to see that you’re alright! You gave us quite a scare, being kidnapped by the League and all that.”
Izuku took notice of the current situation, a small smirk appearing for a second. “Well, this is familiar,” Izuku muttered to himself.

“It is indeed, Midoriya,” Tsukauchi replied, having overheard the boy.

“But it’s also different! I’m here now!” Kaniyashiki exclaimed. “I’m Officer Monika Kaniyashiki, reporting for duty! However, I would prefer if you would call me Kaniko!”

“It’s nice to meet you, Officer… Kaniko,” Izuku greeted. “And it’s a pleasure to see you two again, Detective Tsukauchi and Officer Asano.

Tsukaiuchi gave off another smile while Asano continued on with her blank stare.

“So… more questions, I take it?” Izuku asked.

“Right in one, kid!” Kaniko answered.

“Right,” Tsukauchi butted in. “First things first: Anything you can tell us about the League that you learned through your time with them?”

“ Aside from what you already know?” Izuku asked. “ Probably not much. All For One could… uh… I probably shouldn’t mention his quirk. If they don’t already know… He was really strong.”

“We could already garner that from today’s altercation,” Tsukauchi said.

“Of course… right. Well, uh… that lady with the quirk that lets her make ethereal hands was named Ruka. And she called All For One ‘Sensei’ like Shigaraki does.”

“Ah, we didn’t know that,” Tsukauchi said. “To be honest, we’ve found very little on her. Nice to know that we have some sort of lead at least, no matter how small it is.”

“My turn!” Kaniko exclaimed, shoving Tsukauchi over to the side. “We already have several reports on most of the individuals of the League. Therefore, we basically know all their basic abilities! However, we’re still stumped in the matters of some of them. And since you’ve already covered Miss Harrow, all that leaves is Monsieur Bombastic and Caustic. What do you have on them?”

Izuku took a moment to think. “I don’t think I’ll be of much help to you guys. I mean, you already figured out their names. I’m not sure what else I could add.”

“Anything would help, Midoriya-kun!”

“Hmm… Well, the only other thing I can think of involves that kid with the gas mask and his interactions with Caustic.”

“Ah, you mean Inouye Hajime,” Tsukauchi supplied in a monrose tone. “He’s going by Mustard, now. To go along with his sleeping gas quirk, I suppose. It’s a shame, really. Such a promising young student, turned to the path of villainy.”

Officer Asano scoffed at the statement, while Tsukauchi shimmered with a slight grin.

The talk went on for a little while longer, with Izuku giving his own account of the events that had transpired while under the care of the League. He detailed intricacies of Caustic’s quirk that weren’t on public record, Shigaraki’s prosthetic hand, and circled back to Caustic again regarding his demeanor with his teammates.
“I don’t think that Caustic is on good terms with any of them really, but especially Mustard. The two of them were constantly bickering and insulting each other the entire time.”

“So, trouble in paradise, eh?” Kaniko quipped.

“Right,” Tsukauchi said, writing the info down in his notebook. “That’s good to know. That information might come in handy later. We might even be able to get Hajime back on the side of heroes with Caustic’s attitude, by any chance.”

Tsukauchi turned to another page of his notebook. “Alright, that seems to be all we have for now. If we have any more questions we’ll contact you. Any questions yourself before we leave?”

“There is one, and it’s been bugging me ever since what happened… A few hours ago?”

“Indeed, it was only a few hours ago,” Tsukauchi said. “And the question?”

“Yeah, uh… What happened anyways? With the rest of the League? I saw that All For One was captured, but how about the rest? I’m assuming that they all got away since you’re asking me about them.”

“Mhm! The big scary guy made sure that they escaped using a combo of the portals and Harrow’s hands,” Kaniko said. “Quite an effective escape plan, if I’d say so myself.”

“Yes, too effective,” Asano spoke for the first time. It sounded as if she was both annoyed and scolding towards Kaniko’s almost carefree attitude. “We weren’t able to track them, as per usual. They’ve gone dark again.”

“Yes, it’s unfortunate,” Tsukauchi added. “But don’t you worry Midoriya! Your safe here; heroes and guarding this place twenty-four seven. The League won’t lay another hand on you, I can promise you that.”

Izuku smiled. “Thank you, Detective Tsukauchi.”

“Of course. Well, I hope you get well seen. We’ll be taking out leave now.” Tsukauchi turned and left, Officer Asano leaving not too long after. However, as Officer Kaniko trailed behind, she let out one last remark.

“Just like ‘Kauchi said, hope ya get better!” She waved, turning to leave. “See ya soon!”

Izuku watched with his bugs as the trio left the building. He set aside some sentry bugs as well, setting them up in places to make sure Kurogiri wouldn’t suddenly be able to snatch him up without him knowing first. When he was sure that he was alone, Izuku finally relaxed and sunk back into his bed.

“Well, she’s an intriguing one. Ain’t she, QA?”

…

“Hello? QA?”

…

“Great. Just great.”
They landed within the decrepit warehouse in a scramble, their bodies harshly impacting against the cold concrete floor. The portal that had led them to their current predicament quickly closed up behind them, leaving no trace of its existence.

The various travelers of the rift were in various states of disarray. Kurogiri and Ruka had begun to come to their senses — a result of both the jarring impact of the floor and a few administrations of Caustic’s stench.

Others began to regroup and recuperate, taking count of their resources and ensuring the perimeter was safe.

However, this wasn’t the same for Shigaraki.

“Sensei… sensei… they… they… All Might…”

“Shigaraki,” Kurogiri muttered, “I know what you must be feeling right now. But for now, you must calm—”

“They took him!!!” Shigaraki yelled. “All Might and those heroes and everyone!” His hands slammed onto a nearby table. As his real head gripped the wooden surface, the table slowly began to disintegrate.

The others froze, caution and intrigue filling their minds as they watched their now de facto boss’s outburst. However, one other member of the group had another reaction.

“Sensei… They. Took. Him?” Ruka hissed, her words slow and methodical, as if she herself was still deciphering her own words.

“Shigaraki,” Kurogiri started. He turned towards the other irate member as well. “Ruka. You two—”

“SENSEI! They took him!” Shigaraki interrupted in a fury. “They took him Ruka!”

Ruka’s reaction was vastly different from Shigaraki. While Shigaraki was loud and child-like, Ruka was much more quiet and reserved. However, that didn’t mean that her fury was any less as strong. Hidden behind her cold eyes were thoughts of anger and rage.

Shigaraki grabbed a nearby stool and threw it, the seat already beginning to dissipate before it was raided off the ground.

“They took him! They took him! They took—”

His mind flared, and everything went dark. All was dark. All was quiet. All was nothing. Seconds, minutes, hours, days; time was irrelevant.

But from the depths of the abyss appeared the presence. A scribbling mass of tentacles, shaded black and spreading wide with a maw as large as a sun.

The dark pit emitted an aura of power, power too immeasurable to be understood even with the most observant of eyes. Its tentacles spread far and wide, as if establishing a welcoming embrace.

Shigaraki stared down the eye of the beholder, but refused to give in.

And suddenly, he was back. He was met with the dull, grey ceiling of the warehouse. He was lying in a pile of ashes that his quirk had created, his hands having latched onto various objects in his
struggle of unconsciousness.

“Shigaraki?” Kurogiri asked, appearing above him. “Are you alright?”

“Kurogiri…” His eyes readjusted to the light glow of the room, quite unlike the endless void that he had just experienced. “What happened?” He slowly got up, clutching his head in pain.

“I’m not entirely sure, Shigaraki,” Kurogiri replied, his head darting left to right in search of danger.

“We thought that it was an attack, at first. Especially since you, Caustic, Mr. Sheldon, and Ruka all fell at the same time.”

Shigaraki narrowed his eyes. “They what?” Looking around, he noticed that the aforementioned people were also regaining their senses and rising from the ground.

“What the hell was that?” Caustic yelled. “Those fuckin tentacles looked all weird.”

“You saw it too?” Bombastic asked, perplexed.

Ruka’s eyes narrowed in suspicion. She herself figured that she’s experienced some sort of shared vision with the other three who had fallen. She didn’t voice her opinion, however. She jumped a little upon hearing the roar from across the room.

“Why?! Why?! Why!?” The dust and ash around Shigaraki shook as his tantrum let out in full.

“First Sensei, and now this?!” he exclaimed. His erratic movements spurred the ash around him to rise, spiraling and swirling in the air. “These weird attacks? And that monster! I don’t know what to do! Sensei would know what to do!”

“Shigaraki!”

“It’s all those heroes fault! All Might’s fault! All Might! I hate him!”

“Shigaraki!”

“And then—”

“Tomura.” Ruka’s cold tone shot through his words. It elicited Shigaraki to stop, one of the few things that did. “What?!” he hissed.

One of her ethereal hands rose from the ground, forming a finger that pointed behind him.

It was only then that Shigaraki finally noticed the outline of a shadow that was cast over him. He turned slowly, afraid of what he would find. After all, he recognized the shadow within seconds.

It wasn’t long before the figure was in his full view.

“Sensei?”

Chapter End Notes

And I’ll wrap it up with a cliffhanger. One that won’t be explained for a while. Heh
he. I’m sure some of you can figure it out. But until then, well, good luck!

Anyhow, that’s all for now! Another chapter same time next week! See you all then!
And we continue on with another chapter. It'll basically be like last chapter; you know, talking and more talking and such. Action and similar aspects will be off the table for awhile, of course. So it’s smooth sailing for Izuku from here on out! (Or for a couple more chapters, at least. It seems like the kid just can’t catch a break).

It was around midnight when the others found their way into Izuku’s room. Having little to nothing to do — especially since QA hadn’t yet resurfaced — Izuku was spending his time lost in his bugs. Therefore, unlike the police officers from before, Izuku had actually sensed his friends long before they reached him.

“Hei!” Manga scolded. The utterance of her name was enough for her to know his displeasure, but that didn’t necessarily mean that she cared.

“What?! You know how he is!” Mei defended. “He won’t learn his lesson if he isn’t punished for it! He probably got caught doing something reckless like he usually does! He has no sense of self preservation!”

“While that may be true, Hatsume, that wrench probably wouldn’t be too good for Izuku’s health,” Yaoyorozu added. “Especially after everything he’s gone through, more injuries aren’t what he needs.”

“Uh, hey guys,” Izuku finally muttered, placing everyone’s attention back onto him. He moved Mei’s wrench off of his pillow and into his lap, allowing him to to lay back down in a more comfortable position. “I see that some of you still have your costumes on,” Izuku added.

Izuku had made the observation a while back ago with his bugs, but he still felt as if he needed to point the fact out. While a select few like Yaoyorozu and Iida had disguises that were more tame and sensible, others like Kirishima still had his weird metallic horns while Kaminari somehow found the time to invert his hair colors with dye.

The others — which consisted of the rest of the rescue party members minus Bakugo, plus the addition of Jiro and Ojiro — were wearing relatively normal clothing.

“Oh…,” Yaoyorozu laughed, rubbing her arm. “Yeah, some of us… we were still a bit high strung after we got you out of that fight,” she admitted somewhat skittishly. “I…” She eventually walked over to Izuku and gave him a hug. “I’m just glad that you’re alright, Midoriya.”

“Heck yeah, man!” Kaminari shouted. “I mean, you were facing down all those villains without breaking a sweat! I can’t believe all of that was happening just in front of us!”
“Yeah. You’re lucky that your buddy here thought up an escape plan, Izuku,” Setsuna added, pointing to Kaminari. “None of us were really up to it at the moment, given everything that was happening.”

“Yeah, Kirishima told me all about it,” Izuku said, turning towards the boy in mention. “Thanks for that Kaminari. I appreciate it.”

“Hey, come on man. It was nothing. Anything to help a friend out.” Kaminari rubbed the back of his head, diverting his eyes away.

Iida appeared behind Kaminari, giving him a rather forceful pat on the back. “And I applaud your resourcefulness, Kaminari. You really thought of everything regarding how we could use our quirks in that situation. And all without us directly engaging in a fight. I’m very impressed.”

“If only he was just as proactive in class, maybe he wouldn’t be struggling as much as he was,” Jiro teased.

“Hey!” Kaminari retorted. “You and I both know that I find certain subjects unappealing! That’s why I’m a bit behind!”

“And that’s the problem, dunderhead. ‘Certain subjects’ mean all of them.”

“They do not!” Kaminari replied. “Pfft. It doesn’t matter. At least I can take solace in the fact that I contributed to the rescue of our fellow master of bugs, here.” He gestured to Izuku in a rather exaggerated pose.

“And I thank you for that as well,” Manga admitted. “I was just planning to set off a bunch of ‘booms’ with my quirk. Your plan was actually smart and organized, unlike mine.”

“Hey, Midoriya’s my friend too,” Kaminari said. “I just did what I could to get him out of a bad situation.”

“Ah! Speaking of which, what exactly did those League guys do to you, Midoriya?” Kirishima asked.

“They didn’t… torture you or anything, did they?” Todoroki spoke up, his eyes transfixed in a calculating concern.

“Nah,” Izuku responded rather nonchalantly. “They actually wanted to recruit me.”

“WHAT!!!”

“They were actually pretty nice about it,” Izuku continued. “My restraints were pretty comfy, too. The only one who was actually violent was Shigaraki. Then again, I guess that should have been expected since I made him lose one of his hands.”

“No. I was during their attack at U.S.J.” Izuku informed, causing some of those in the room to pause. “Apparently, a bunch of my bugs chewed his hand off and injected enough venom for necrosis to settle in fairly quickly. I mean sure, he’s missing a hand. But now he has a nice prosthetic with all these little tools and doo-dads in it. It’s kinda cool.”

“Oh.” The sentiment rang throughout the room.
There were a few seconds pause before Yaoyorozu cleared her throat. “Are you sure that was all, Midoriya? They didn’t do anything else?”

“No, not really. I did get to meet All For One though. He was actually pretty nice, too. Even if he ended up causing all that destruction to Kamino afterwards.”

“Wait. You’re telling me that you had a civil conversation with that big, scary mask guy?!?” Kaminari interjected.

“Yeah. It was still pretty messed up. He tried to do some stuff to me. But then QA— err, well I was able to shrug it off. Whatever it was.”

“Dang, Midoriya,” Ojirō spoke for the first time. “You sure your quirk isn’t finding yourself getting into new problems? Because at this point I wouldn’t be surprised if you ended up in a situation like this again.”

One of Izuku’s eyebrows rose in intrigue. “What do you mean?”

“Well… I don’t know. I just think that… you find yourself in some pretty problematic scenarios. You’re like a trouble magnet.”

“Please, he’s not that bad,” Setsuna said. “He just lacks a filter with his bugs and has a problem not butting into situations with villains harming innocents.”

“I do not!” Izuku argued.

“But you are, Midoriya,” Yaoyorozu chided. “Even you must know that by now.”

“You do. It’s true. Can’t deny it.”

“Oh, of course. Now you come back. It just took everybody to be here.” Izuku retorted.

“Uhh… Izuku?” Manga questioned. “Who are you talking to?”

“What?” Izuku spurred, realizing that he was talking out loud again. “Oh, uh… nothing. Nothing. Don’t worry about it.”

“You sure?” Manga asked.

“Pfft. It’s just Izuku being his ‘ole oblivious self,” Mei deduced. “I bet he got a knock on the head somewhere in transit; it’s making you a bit more woozy than you usually are, Izuku.”

“You could say that, I suppose,” Izuku admitted. “I’m probably just tired and all. It’s been a long couple of days.”

“Oh! We aren’t bothering you, are we Midoriya?” Yaoyorozu asked. “We can leave if you want.”

“Yes,” Manga added. “We wouldn’t want to intrude. We’ll have plenty of time to talk later.”

“No, it’s not that,” Izuku said. “I’m fine. In fact, I sorta really need this right now. Talking and stuff, that is. You know, how about we talk about your costumes. What’s up with those, anyway?”

“Ahh!” Kaminari exclaimed. “Funny story about that…”

And so, the gathered bunch talked. It was a nice change of pace from the past few days for Izuku. Instead of being chased around by villains and being kidnapped and placed into seedy lairs, he was
finally able to rest and catch up. Just some quality relaxation time interacting with friends without worry of impending doom.

He learned about how widespread Mustard’s attacks were on the classes, Ragdoll’s newfound condition (likely due to All For One, but Izuku didn’t mention that), and just how badly All For One had beaten the pros who had raided the Nomu warehouse.

But of course, as if summoned by word, the topic of All For One called upon one of its few experts. A knock on the door gained the attention of everyone present, and the presence who revealed himself upon the door’s opening had everyone up in surprise.

“All Might?!”

The man in question chuckled at his student’s response to his presence. “Hello everyone. I hope I’m not intruding?”

His voice was much more muted and much less booming than usual. Of course, that was a given considering his current state. Unlike what the world knew of him as the Symbol of Peace, All Might was a different man under it all.

Instead of the dauntless, shining beacon of hope, there sat a disgruntled scrawny man, bound to a wheelchair and covered head to toe in bandages of all shapes and sizes. And, if it wasn’t so glaringly obvious, there also was the stump that lay where his left arm used to be. It simply enforced just how badly the fight with All For One truly was.

“No, of course not, All Might,” Izuku immediately replied. “Your always welcome.”

“I’m glad to hear it, my boy. And I’m glad to see that you’re doing all right, all things considered.”


All Might gave off one of his signature hearty laughs, even if it was a tinge more hollow than everyone was used to. “I wish I could say that,” he sighed.

“I’d be lying if I said I was just here to check up on you, Midoriya. I have some things I would like to talk to you about, if you don’t mind?”

Izuku nodded. “Of course, All Might.”

The man smiled. “Good. I— Uhh…” He looked around at the other students in the room. “I, uh…”

“Oh! Are you going to be talking about confidential stuff?” Kaminari asked.

“Well, uh…”

“Don’t worry, All Might! We understand.” Kirishima said. “We’ll leave you to it.”

The rest of the occupants of the room slowly trickled out one by one, eventually closing the door behind them to give privacy. All Might was eventually wheeled forward beside Izuku. It was only then that Izuku noticed the old man who was pushing All Might’s wheelchair.

He was the same man as before — the old pro hero who had worn yellow during the raid upon the League. He was also bandaged up, but not as badly as All Might. And if his presence hinted at anything, it looked as if like All Might and the man had a pretty close relationship. That, or he also knew about All For One.
“So…” All Might began. “I was wondering if… Well— OW!” All Might flinched in his seat, recoiling from a smack to his remaining arm.

“Get on with it, Toshinori,” the old man said.”

“Right,” All Might began. “First things first. This is Gran Torino,” All Might gestured towards the man. “He’s my mentor. He taught me a lot of what I know.”

“You trained All Might?!”” The outburst was instant, Izuku’s eyes glimmering in awe.

“I did, pipsqueak,” Gran Torino said. “But we aren’t here about that. This is about All For One.”

The mood grew a bit more somber with the mention of the villain. Izuku knew what was coming, of course, he was mentally prepared for it. He set his mind into a more serious setting. He could fawn all over Gran Torino later, after all.

“I have many secrets Midoriya,” All Might said. “However, most of them have been kept for one reason, and one reason only. But,” he emphasized, “before I tell you anything, I need to know something. How much do you know about All For One?”

“This is the moment of truth. I mean, sure, this guy’s pretty important and well-renowned. And you’ve basically worshipped him since you were a kid. But just because he has all those traits doesn’t mean he’s entirely good. I did the same with the Triumvirate, after all. And look how they turned out in the end. Let me tell you, some heroes aren’t all they set out to b—”

“I don’t know much,” Izuku said, ignoring QA’s rant. He knew that he could trust All Might. The hero did the same with him all those months ago, after all.

“Other than him being powerful and him being the leader of the League, there’s only one other thing I know,” Izuku continued. “It’s his quirk. I learned that he could steal quirks and give them to himself. He tried to do the same with me.”

“Midoriya!” All Might said, startled. He didn’t—”

“No, he didn’t,” Izuku said. “I mean, he tried to. I’m just lucky he didn’t get so far, I suppose. He left midway. I’m guessing that it was the attack on the Nomu warehouse that led him away.”

“Oh, that’s a relief,” All Might said. “All For One has done immeasurable damage over the years. I’m glad that he didn’t get to you, too. Even so, there must have been a reason why he singled you out. Did he happen to mention why?”

“He did, actually.” Izuku nodded. “He said that he was interested in my quirk. And my… other activities. Like the Sports Festival!” Izuku added quickly. “And he said that he wasn’t finished with me. He wanted to speak with me again.”

“I was afraid of that,” All Might muttered. “Once All For One sets his sights on something, he won’t relent until he gets what he wants,” All Might sighed.

“It looks like it’s time for you to come into the fold, Midoriya. It’s time that I’ve come clean about some things.” He straightened up in his wheelchair. “Remember all those months ago, when you saw me in this form? I wasn’t exactly truthful about the entire thing.”

“I’m guessing that All For One was the one who gave you your injury? Not Toxic Chainsaw?” Izuku guessed.
“Heh. Right again, Midoriya,” All Might praised. “Truth is, All For One has been the underworld’s Bogeyman for a long time. Ever since the dawn of quirks, even. My predecessor faced him, as did all the other holders of One For All. But he just keeps coming back, like a cockroach that refuses to die.”

“Wait… predecessors?” Izuku asked, confused. “What do you mean predecessors?”

“It’s my quirk, Midoriya.” All Might nodded. “All For One isn’t a simple quirk. It is actually two different ones, combined together accidentally by All For One himself.”

“You mean All For One’s the reason you exist?”

“He is. Like All For One, the holders of One For All originated from the dawn of quirks. It started with All For One, who gave a stockpiling quirk to his supposedly quirkless brother. But it turned out that his brother had a quirk that allowed him to pass on quirks to other people. Thus, One For All was born.”

“And so, One For All has been passed down from one person to the next, each growing in power, yet never powerful enough to defeat All For One. I thought that I had done it before, all those years ago. It cost me most of my stomach, and yet he still came back.”

“But you got him this time, didn’t you?” Izuku asked. “He’s in Tartarus now.”

“Yes, and it only cost me arm.” All Might shrugged. “And now the last flames of my quirk have been snuffed out. I can no longer continue to be All Might.”

“What!” Izuku shouted, alarmed. “You mean… You’re retiring?”

“I’m afraid so, Midoriya.” All Might grimaced.

“But… but what about One For All?” Izuku asked shakily. “Is it just… gone?”

All Might smiled. “It isn’t, thankfully. I already passed it off a few days ago. I was afraid that something like this would happen, so I took the necessary precautions. As for the identity of my successor… Well, you’ll meet him soon enough.”

Izuku was amazed with everything that All Might was telling him. Yet again his worldview had been broken, the truth behind All Might being something he never would have expected. Even so, Izuku was even more surprised with the fact that All Might trusted him with such information. Why would he? Izuku couldn’t think of any reason why.

“Not that I’m not thankful for your trust in me, All Might,” Izuku began, “But why exactly are you telling me this? I don’t really need to know any of this, do I? Isn’t this a really big secret?”

“It is big, Midoriya. The few that do know about this I can count on a single hand. And besides, you do need to know this, Midoriya. The moment All For One took an interest in you, you were you brought into this decades-long battle between good and evil.”

“All For One won’t leave you alone for as long as he lives, and I’m not entirely sure that he’ll stay in Tartarus forever. You knowing these things protects you, or at least lets you know what to expect. If anything, it’ll make it easier for you to work with my successor.”

“Wow… Thank you, All Might,” Izuku said. “You don’t know how much this means to me.”

“Think nothing of it, Midoriya. I owe it to you, with how often I’ve failed you.”
“What are you talking about?!” Izuku exclaimed. “You never failed me!”

“But I have. I was late to U.S.J. And now with you becoming a target for All For One? You could have died. It’s all my fault.”

“It wasn’t!” Izuku pleaded. “You couldn’t have done anything to stop those events from happening. Besides, I’m still alright, aren’t I?”

“Well, there was also our first meeting where I almost dropped you to your death…”

“That was my fault, really. I promise you, All Might, nothing is your fault. If anything, it’s just me and my actions.”

All Might chuckled. “Thank you, Midoriya. You take the strain right off of my heart.” He sighed. “But there are still some things we need to know.”

“Yes. He didn’t say anything about a fallback hideout, did he?” Gran Torino asked. “Any place that he’d send the rest of the League?”

“No,” Izuku shook his head. “Nothing like that. Besides, I’m pretty sure that All For One wouldn’t be dumb enough to talk about stuff like that with somebody with a quirk like mine in such a close proximity.”

“Dang. He always gets away,” All Might cursed. “Even if we locked him away this time, Shigaraki is still out there. His League is still free to cause chaos.”

“We’ll get them, Toshinori. It’s just a matter of time.”

“Yeah…”

There was a sudden knock on the door. “Midoriya? You awake in there?”

“Edgeshot?” Izuku questioned, surprised.

“The door opened, revealing the shinobi. “Oh, All Might. Gran Torino. I’m not interrupting anything, am I”

“No, no,” All Might said. “We were just finishing up, actually. We’ll leave you two be.”

All Might turned back to Izuku. “Well, hope you get, Midoriya.”

“Take your time, boy. You’ll need it,” Gran Torino said.

And when the two heroes out of their prime finally left, what lay behind were a mentor and student who had some catching up to do.

Chapter End Notes

Nothing much happened in this chapter, huh? I’m just seeing that now, actually. Then again, I did say this was more exposition this time around, didn't I? Ah well.

‘Till next time I suppose. See you all then!
I know it may be a bit late, but I’m gonna say it anyway. I hope that everyone had a happy holiday season!!! Hopefully, you all had a small reprieve from the stresses of your lives and finally found some time to relax and cool down. On a similar note, I wish you all a Happy New Years! May everybody’s next year be a great one!

P.S. This chapter was originally going to be a holiday special that involved a knockoff Winter and Crimson duo (just some Worm characters for those of you aren’t in the know) wrecking some havoc. But alas, it isn’t; it’s just a regular, plain old update.

Oh well, there’s always Valentine’s Day. I do have an idea for when we get there, and it’d actually fit in with the plot instead of being a random one shot thingamajig. So there’s that.

Well, that’s enough rambling. Onwards, to the chapter!

“I highly wish for you to reconsider, ma’am,” came Nezu’s voice. “I assure you that things at U.A. are changing for the better.”

“And I already said, the answer is no!” exclaimed Inko. “My son has been hurt too many times since he started attending U.A.! He could have died this time, with all this kidnapping business!”

“Miss Midoriya,” All Might began rather quietly, “I understand that what happened must have been terrifying. And I truly apologize for Izuku’s abduction. I still feel somewhat responsible for the event, despite your son’s assurances that I’m not at fault.”

Izuku frowned from where he laid on the hospital bed. Despite all that had happened, All Might was still burdening himself about things that weren’t his fault. Even still, Izuku still felt comforted by his words, even if they didn’t do much in easing his worries. After all, there was a chance that he no longer would be attending U.A. All Might’s pleas just might sway his mom over to their side.

Nezu took a sip of his tea before speaking up again. “It’s true that what happened to Izuku was a mistake on our part. And as All Might does, I too take my own part in holding responsibility over your son’s unfortunate meeting with the League of Villains. However, that is exactly what the dorms system aims to circumvent. Izuku’s safety is our number one concern alongside his education.”

Inko sighed, a slight sniffle in her voice. She then turned towards her son. “I know that you want to keep going to U.A., Izuku. But I’m sorry. It’s just… you were taken by villains! I could have lost you.”

Izuku didn’t respond, instead lowering his eyes to his lap.

Inko turned back towards All Might and Nezu. “With the state the U.A. is in, I simply can’t trust
the school with my son’s safety. He’s had a target painted on his back ever since he started attending!”

Tears were starting to drip from her eyes, her voice growing more hoarse and broken as she continued. “This isn’t about him being a hero. It’s about him attending a school that is constantly being attacked by villains and can’t prevent students’ injuries!”

She took a pause, taking a breath. “I don’t want to ruin Izuku’s dreams, but there are plenty of other hero schools that he could attend, you know? I’d feel much more comfortable with that.”

“You drive a hard argument, ma’am,” Nezu admitted. “But there’s something that I’d like to point out that doesn’t apply to the other students.” Nezu took another sip of tea before continuing. “I can for sure guarantee your son’s safety from this point on. I know a couple people in high places who already have their eye on him, mine included.”

“I like your son’s tenacity, as well as his keen eye and calculating mind. It’s simply a delight to talk to him. Who knows,” Nezu spread his arms out wide, “he just might make a fine successor for my position one day. I’d still like to see that happen, or at least give him that choice. All I need is some time with him, and he’ll come out smarter and less foolhardy than before.”

That gave Inko a moment of pause. But before she could respond, the situation became even more unbelievable when All Might transformed into his hero form, only to plant himself down on his knees.

“I truly believe that Izuku would make an amazing hero in the future!” All Might proudly acknowledged. “His pure willpower and sheer tenacity are inspiring! His spirit has me wishing to personally cultivating him myself, evenku thrive,” All Might continued, much quieter than before. In a puff of smoke, he reverted back into his scrawny form.

“I understand your worries, Miss Midoriya. And it is completely reasonable for you to have doubts in U.A. and the staff at the moment, I know that. But please don’t focus on the now, but on U.A. and its plans in moving forward! Please allow me to continue mentoring Izuku. I want to help guide him along on his own path. And I promise, I will protect him to my utmost ability.”

Inko stood there dumbfounded at the utter devotion All Might had shown in caring for her son. Somehow, Izuku has gained so much praise from his idol, the man he had looked up to ever since he was a little kid. It took her a few moments, taking in all the support he Izuku had just received from his own principal and All Might as well. She sighed.

“Fine…” she spoke with a fire in her eyes. “But you two better make sure that nothing happens to Izuku. Because if something does, I promise that you’ll regret it.”

Izuku sighed, finally finding it in himself to relax. “At least All Might didn’t have to meet us at home.”

“Why?” Inko asked. “Is it because of your room? I’m sure that he would have been delighted to see the balance between your bugs and All Might memorabilia that you’ve amassed over the years.”

“Mom!” whined Izuku.

“What?” she teased. “It’s not like he’s still here. He left ten minutes ago.” It was true, All Might wasn’t listening in like some sort of super spy. Izuku had checked with his bugs.

“You know,” Inko began, “I’ll always support you. But… that doesn’t mean that I don’t worry
“When you finally got your quirk, you were just so happy! Your whole rhythm changed; you were more motivated than you were before. It just... it just made me so happy, finally seeing you looking forward to something again. I promised that I’d see through for you accomplishing your dreams, from that point on.”

“But looking at your injuries, watching how far you’d go to reach your goal during the sports festival, and now this... I’m just scared you know?” She went in to hug him. “Promise me... Promise me you’ll be careful?”

“Of course mom.” He accepted the hug. “And... thank you. For letting me continue at U.A. You don’t know how much it means to me.”

“Of course, honey. I just want you to be happy. And, if you think you can make it, then go ahead. Become a hero.”

“Thanks mom.” Izuku sniffled.

The two stayed there for a minute, simply enjoying each other’s embrace. “Oh!” Inko suddenly exclaimed, breaking the hug. “I almost forgot! You got a letter!”

Izuku blinked. “I did?”

“Mhm. It came in the mail the other day. Here, let me go get it.” She reached into her bag, retrieving a green envelope and handing it to Izuku. “Here. Someone named Kota sent it.”

“Kota?” Izuku spoke, surprised. He observed the letter in his hands. On its surface lay a somewhat messy scrawl that read: *To Mr. Midoriya-kun. From: Kota Izumi.*

“Huh.”

“Well, who is it?” Inko asked.

“It’s from a boy from the camp my class went to,” Izuku responded. “I helped him escape from a villain.”

“Oh! It must be some sort of thank you letter then! Go along, open it. I won’t peak if you don’t want me to.”

Izuku did as she said, opening the letter and divulging into its contents.

*To Mr. Midoriya-kun. I’m sorry that I hit you in the junk. Thank you for saving me and talking to me even though you barely know me. Get well soon, so I can say thank you and stuff. - Kota*

Izuku smiled at the brief message. However, something else caught his attention. Just on the other side of the paper was another message, written in a much more refined and legible handwriting. He immediately read on.

*P.S. Hello Midoriya, this is Mandalay. I'd like to start things off by saying that I hope you get well soon. We heard that you were rescued the same night as Ragdoll, and I'm relieved to say you were. I apologize in lieu of my team, for not being able to protect you.*

*On a different note, I hope you don’t mind me asking you something: what exactly happened to Kota during his encounter with Muscular? I assume that you had him within your range,*
considering all your bugs, so I’d like to know if anything was done to him. As is, he’s exhibiting some… features he didn’t have before. His quirk, the one he inherited from his parents, that is… well, it’s gone now. He can’t summon any water anymore, no matter how hard he tries. It used to come out as a small trickle, but he simply can’t now.

However, we’ve found that Kota can suddenly control small animals. Whether it’s squirrels, rabbits, or even the few invasive badgers that we have in the area, they follow him around. It’s eerily similar to your own quirk, even.

The only difference we’ve found is that the animals become smarter when more people are around, strangely enough. Now, I’m not too worried about the implications, since Kota seems fine at the moment of writing this. It’s been a couple days after the incident, and he doesn’t show any signs of injury. However, I’d just like to know if something caused this change. Did Muscular inject some sort of serum into him? Or perhaps a special mixture of the gas that was spread across the forest? Of course, I’m not expecting you to have any answers since this is all the villains’ fault, but anything you can think of would be useful. Thanks again, Mandalay.

Izuku took a minute or two pondering over the postscript. In all honesty, he’d completely forgotten about the strange occurrence with the animals back when he was still at camp. He had the League to worry about, after all.

But now that he had some time to think, he knew for certain that the animals had something to do with those visions. And that experience had while he was at Muscular’s mercy… it was almost the same as his own vision, all those years ago. Minus the presence of that weird man, anyways. And all those scenarios were completely unlike that starlit void.

You wouldn’t have any knowledge of this, do you, QA?

…


“Well,” he muttered, “at least I’ll have something to think over until I get out of here.”

The Heights Alliance was rather impressive for a place that was built at such a short notice. The collection of buildings acted as dormitories, each specifically tailored for each class of U.A. Inside and out, the buildings were filled with complete furnishings and facilities that guaranteed complete autonomy if needed.

However, if anything, Izuku was even more grateful for the rescue operation that his friends had staged, given the potential consequences that could have befallen them for their actions.

As for the present, Izuku’s unmoving position on the couch wasn’t just for show. He was currently in the process of readjusting himself; ensuring his familiarity of his surroundings through the extensive use of his bugs.

The little minions darted in and out of every nook and cranny of the building and the surrounding area in order to paint a general picture of the place. In the sky and below ground ground, no space remained unexplored.
His current findings painted the other dorms that he could reach within his range with the exact layout of the others. The entire design and build of each were the same, the only difference being the inhabitants within.

In fact, the only thing out of place was the oddly random metal box hidden underground. Wires and such extended from the cube, branching out to different parts of the campus. The wires were covered in stone and metal, completely defended from the threat of bugs. The peculiarity had been found by some of his more subterranean-focused bugs, and was currently bugging Izuku as his mind searched for the use of such a thing.

“That’s still kinda creepy, Midoriya,” Sero muttered. “You do know that, right?”

Izuku opened one of his eyes. “Hmm?”

“It is just him basking in his own tranquility. A short reprieve from the givens of life,” Tokoyami said. “Everyone has their own practices.”

“Even so, it’s pretty weird, him sitting so still and all,” Ojiro added. “You barely look like you’re breathing, Midoriya.”

“Well, no matter what it looks like, you all will have to get used to it,” Iida interjected. “We’re all living together now, after all! We must get used to each others’ oddities.”

“Eh, I suppose that’s true,” Kaminiari said. “Guess I’ll just have to accommodate myself to seeing bugs everyday, then.”

“You aren’t going to go spying on all of us with your bugs, are you?” Mineta asked, eyes in a mad frenzy. “Because if that’s the case, I want in!”

“Mineta!” Iida chastised.

Izuku ignored the sudden explosion of a verbal war. He had sensed the oncoming group of girls approaching, and relented his hold over the bugs on the outside. He’d have to look more deeply into the metal box later. He wasn’t exactly too keen on Ashido’s idea, after all, if what he had heard was true. And he needed to prepare his room if what she had in mind came to pass.

“You boys all finished up with your rooms?” chirped Ashido.

“Yeah! We’re just relaxing,” Kaminari exclaimed.

“Yeah, seems just like it, with all the shouting,” Jiro quipped.

“My apologies,” Iida announced. “I was merely having a word with Mineta about what is appropriate and what isn’t in living accommodations such as these.”

“Anyways,” Ashido interrupted somewhat uneased,” we’ve been thinking, and we’ve got an idea! Why don’t we have a peek into each other’s rooms?!”

They started off with Tokoyami’s room first. The boy was hesitant, blocking his door with his body. It took Ashido and Hagakure pushing him out of the way before he relented, giving the class a glimpse into his dark and gothic room.

Next was Aoyama, who was all too eager to showcase his own room. The shiny, twinkly room represented the boy quite well, considering his obsession with twinkling in the first place. The
And after Aoyama, came Izuku.

“I suppose that I’ll show you all,” Izuku sighed. He opened the door with little fanfare, giving his classmates their first glimpse into his room.

“Wow,” breathed Kaminari. “It’s full of bugs… and All Might.”

Kaminari’s observation was an apt description of the room. No space was left uncovered by Izuku, being filled up with something related to bugs or the Symbol of Peace.

Around the room were various terrariums and jars, each filled with their own type of bug. Whether it was the extensive termite enclosure complete with a mound in the corner of the room, the various spider-filled jars, or the water-filled tank that housed giant water bugs, there was plenty for the class to take in.

As for the All Might figures and posters, they were strewn atop cabinets and over his bed, some even finding their way in certain terrariums. It overall created an odd mix of All Might and bugs that only spoke “Izuku” to those who would understand.

As everybody began to explore, Izuku felt Rikai XV and XXI crawl up his leg in greetings. He responded back in kind with a small thought of appreciation. It was then that Izuku noticed Iida approaching him, his focus on the box at the foot of Izuku’s bed.

“Are you not done packing yet, Midoriya? I don’t recommend slacking off in that department. It’s best that you unpack now, lest that box stay there for the rest of the semester.”

“Also, I’d normally advise against having such cramped quarters filled with so many bugs, but considering your quirk, I suppose it’s fine. But in that case, it doesn’t seem like you have much space left, when looking at all these bugs.”

“Izuku let out a small laugh. “You got me, Iida. My bug collection sort of got to me. But I just couldn’t refuse the rhinoceros beetles!” he gestured towards the box. “I’ve been waiting for them for so long, that I had to take them. Even if I lacked the space.”

“Rhinoceros beetles?” Kaminari asked. “Aren’t those guys pretty big? Can I see?”

“Oh, sure!” Izuku said merrily, opening the box. The action revealed the box to be full of soil, with the said beetles laying atop the dirt.

Kaminari peered in with a confused look. “Those are worms. Bloated worms.” Some of the others agreed, others showing some disgust at the sight.

“They aren’t actually,” Yaoyorozu said. “Those are simply rhinoceros beetles in their larval stage.”

“You’re kidding.” Kaminari looked on in disbelief.

“No, she’s right,” Izuku said. “I actually have a couple beetles hidden in the dirt that are further along their metamorphosis and actually look like beetles, but they like staying in the dark. So I won’t disturb them.”

Yaoyorozu hummed in response. “Midoriya, can I ask a question?”

“Sure.”
“Alright. You see, I recognize most of the arthropods here. For example, I see that you have some giant centipedes, which are native here in the islands of Japan. However, I’m certain that wetas this large,” she gestured to the tank in front of her, “are from New Zealand. And I’m fairly sure that these,” she pointed to the tank on her right, “are Longhorned Beetles. Which are native to China.”

“You’re right,” Izuku admitted. “I actually got them from Melissa back on I-Island. The same with the rhinoceros beetles. They had this whole arthropod research center, and she let word in to the researchers that I was interested in keeping some of them. They were kind of uncertain at first, since introducing foreign insects could be pretty bad.”

“But then again, Japan has had plenty of instances where an invasive species turned out to be pretty harmless in the end. Plus, we have people with quirks that could solve the problem if any of the bugs got out. So, they eventually let me pick a few bugs from their labs. And well, here they are now.”

“I see,” muttered Yaoyorozu. “And you let them roam free in your room?”

Yaoyorozu’s statement caught a few of the class off guard, and it was only then that they noticed that the various tanks and jars had openings big enough for the bugs to escape.

“Yeah!” Izuku exclaimed with nonchalance. “They don’t like being all cramped up in their own enclosures all the time, you know. Some of them like to stay where they are, like the termites. But some others like the Darwin Bark Spiders roam around from time to time.”


“Is that why I’ve been here this faint clicking noise in your closet?” Hagakure asked, looking warily at said closet.

“Oh no, that’s just Spurt,” Izuku informed. “He’s harmless, I promise.”

Hagakure seemed satisfied with the answer. However, that didn’t stop her from screaming when she open the closet door and looked inside. “What is that!”

“Spurt’s a coconut crab,” Izuku informed. Spurt gave off a small wave in greeting upon hearing Izuku introduce him. Izuku walked over and petted Spurt in response. “His kind usually grows this big.”

“He’s just as big as the principal,” Jiro muttered.

“Yeah, pretty common for them. I promise.”

Ashido looked at Spurt in awe and confusion. “And you have a crab because…”

“Because. I just like him. He’s nice to have around.”

The class went back to exploring all the intricacies and wonders of his room, assured that they wouldn’t get attacked by any of the bugs with Izuku in the room. Some were still a bit weary, though that was mostly due to the sight of all the bugs rather than the threat of them.

Of course, that was when QA finally spoke again.

“You have some pretty nice friends, Izuku.”

What the— Hey! What’s with you all disappearing and stuff? I have questions, you know.
“I know. And I am sorry for not answering them all. But I already said—”

Yeah, yeah. Some things are best left unsaid. He sighed.

“Hey, I’ll tell you eventually... Maybe. When the time’s right.” She paused. “Your power is developing in interesting ways, you know.”

Izuku furrowed his eyebrows. What do you mean?

QA let out a small laugh. “You haven’t noticed, have you? With Spurt or the house centipedes? Heh, no matter. I’m sure you’ll get it in time.”

Right. I’m sure I will.

“Oh, one last thing. I’m sorry in advance. But you sorta have to live with it. The price of sharing your head with otherworldly beings, you know. I recommend checking in on that metal box you found. It’ll help. There’s an exhaust vent on the far side of your range. That’s where the entrance is.”

Before he could question it, Izuku already got that sinking feeling that he knew what QA was talking about. And after a few moments, his hunch was right on the dot. He felt that urge again.

“Your little run-in with the League doesn’t seem to be satisfactory enough, somehow. Probably has to do with your hospitalization and actual lack of fighting. But thankfully, I’ve managed to shift the urge back onto the usage of your power instead of physical fighting, so there will be less danger to your actual self this time around.”

Do I really have to?

“It’s best that you live with it, Izuku. I don’t like it either, but there’s nothing I can do about it. Besides, you’re going to be a real hero someday, with a license and all that. Your urges will be fulfilled daily by that point. Just try to live with it until then, yeah?”

Wow. Thanks.

“Of course!” QA’s voice rang with false cheer and a tinge of smugness. “Goddamnit! I did it again! I’m telling you, you spent too much time siphoning off of that Negotiator sh—”

And then she was silent yet again. Izuku sighed. “I guess I’ll have to scheme my way out of the security, then.”

“What was that, Izuku?”

Izuku’s head shot up. “Oh! Nothing, nothing. Just talking to myself, as per usual.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about this one’s tardiness. I had a lot going on this week. Anyways, I hope you all enjoyed the chapter! And remember, and questions or criticisms you guys have, simply go to the comments!

Until next time then!
Izuku had to admit to himself that the design and make of Gym Gamma was ingenious. Coupled with Cementoss’ quirk, the facility became an easily customizable training ground capable of catering to the various needs of U.A.’s students, no matter the quirk.

And as if Izuku wasn’t already looking forward to training at Gym Gamma, there was also the fact that the class would be developing super moves for the next coming days until the school’s second term would begin and the license exam would take place.

The prospect was not only a pleasant surprise to Izuku, but also a nice and steady reprieve from the chaos that he had experienced in the past month. In fact, the assignment was compelling enough that Izuku devoted a good amount of effort in the activity, leading to where he was now, standing in front of an entourage of Ectoplasms.

Three Ectoplasms stared Izuku down as they all stood atop one of the plateaus Cementoss had created. All four of them were silent, quietly observing the other to gauge who would act first. After a few moments, the Ectoplasm in the middle of the trio was the first to act. Albeit, it was by talking rather than starting a fight.

“I see that you are still in fine working condition despite your run-in with the League, Midoriya. I’m glad to see that you haven’t been slacking off since then.”

Izuku smirked. “I wouldn’t think of it, sensei. I have much to do, after all. Slacking off on my training and exercise would prove detrimental to my goals in becoming a hero.”

“Glad to hear it!” The middle Ectoplasm’s grin stretched across his face. The other two at his sides moved slightly, shifting into ready stances prepared for a fight. “Let’s see it then.”

Izuku nodded. “I’ll try my best.”

He then walked backwards, taking steady steps back up until he plunged himself backfirst off of the plateau. All three Ectoplasms rose an eyebrow in confusion.

An uneasy silence stretched on for a few moments, with little sign of life coming from the now unseen Izuku. One of the Ectoplasms was about to head forward to check on his student when it happened.

Five bug clones suddenly appeared, two forming from a cloud of bugs in the air and three climbing up from the ledge of the plateau. Their buzzing pierced the air, creating a buzz that wasn’t present a mere moment ago. In fact, if Ectoplasm had any say in their appearance, he would say that they almost seemed as if they had appeared out of nowhere, simply coming into being.

“You’re not the only one who can make copies of themselves, you know,” the swarm chorused.
Ectoplasm smirked. “Ah yes, your swarm clones.” The three Ectoplasms separated themselves, putting some distance between each other.

“You know,” the leftmost Ectoplasm said, “I was rather impressed when you showed off this ability during the sports festival.”

“Even more so by the fact that each clone expressed different actions all at the same time,” the rightward Ectoplasm emphasized.

The center Ectoplasm took a second to gaze at each clone. “However, I’m not sure if I should be more impressed by the synchronization of your clones, since I can’t seem to notice any discrepancies among them.”

“I’ve trained my quirk for a long time, sensei. Multitasking and synchronization are two things that I’ve focused a lot of time on.”

The middle Ectoplasm let out a small laugh. “Of course. Your feats show your skillfulness. So, why don’t we find out just how skilled you are, hmm?”

However, the swarm clones moved as if expecting the action; both swarms effortlessly dodged the incoming attacks without a wasted movement. With two clones fighting on each side, that left a single Ectoplasm and three swarm clones left.

“You know,” the still unmoving Ectoplasm began, “these clones by themselves are already enough to count as a super move.”

The unmoving Ectoplasm dodged an incoming swarm clone, moving to the left as the swarm brushed past him. “I’m interested in how many other super moves you have up your sleeve, Midoriya. I feel like you hold aplenty, considering how skillfully you use your quirk.”

Another swarm clone came upon Ectoplasm, though this time he allowed it to hit him. As he had expected, the impact of the swarm’s punch had little force behind it. The attacking swarm easily dispersed, forcing it to reform further away behind Ectoplasm.

Suddenly, Ectoplasm felt one of his clones panic; he watched as a whole swarm covered the clone, stinging and biting it until the clone disappeared.

“Such tactics aren’t good for dealing with criminals if you don’t wish to significantly maul them, Midoriya.” Despite his words of advice, Ectoplasm watched the process happen again and another of his clones disperse. That left himself and the five clones still present.

“I advise that you change your strategy if you wish for me to pass you, Midoriya.”

“Don’t worry sensei. I know what I’m doing.” The words came from all the swarms at once, each clone relaying the message in a different voice. The swarms repositioned themselves, leaving two behind Ectoplasm and three in front.

“Trying to unnerve me? I promise that it won’t work.” Ectoplasm had some other clones that he had left off to the side to begin searching the area around him for Izuku. The situation was eerily similar to the one Izuku had displayed during the sports festival against Todoroki, which meant that
all Ectoplasm needed to do was find the real Izuku and take him out in order to disperse the entire swarm.

As his other clones carried on with their search, Ectoplasm continued to stand where he was as if nothing had changed. “You know, Midoriya, it takes a sufficiently strong blow for my own clones to dissipate.”

Ectoplasm was stalling by this point. However his own clones were coming up empty on their search. Wherever Midoriya was, he was hiding excellently.

Ectoplasm dodged the first attack which came from behind, moving to the right as the swarm moved past him. Another came at him from in front of him. Like before, he let the bugs crash into him, forcing them to disperse.

Another clone came moving toward him, and he relaxed himself, aiming to let it hit him yet again. The swarm lifted an arm, readying it in a punch. “I’m not sure what you’re planning to do with a simple swar—”

Ectoplasm recoiled from the attack, stumbling backwards from his spot. Unlike before, there was an actual force behind the swarm. He immediately reoriented himself, turning himself around with eyes wide. Although initially confused, the answer as to what happened was instantly obvious to Ectoplasm. “You’re wearing your bugs as a suit?!”

“As I said, I have a strategy,” the two clones in front of him admitted. “Had one since even before the fight began.”

“I knew that you were the real Ectoplasm,” another swarm said, “and that the other two beside you were fakes. That’s why I went for the killing move on the other two, and decided to go hand-to-hand with you.”

“You knew?” Ectoplasm asked. Then it dawned on him. “Then you have a bug on me?”

“Ever since we entered the gym, long before you split up and created more of yourself.”

“Mighty impressive.” Ectoplasm smirked. “I couldn’t even hear any of your footsteps. That buzzing is doing well in masking your real position.”

Ectoplasm shifted slightly. “Unfortunately, that won’t be enough.” Ectoplasm deftly turned and let out a flurry of kicks onto the swarm clone that had punched him. However, he stumbled forward as his prosthetics went through the swarm, revealing it empty.

“What?”

“I’ve done the classic switcheroo,” the clones said in tandem. “Can you figure out which is me?”

Ectoplasm went to open his mouth to create more clones, but stopped himself as a swarm flew onto him, covering his mouth.

“No more clones for you.”

Ectoplasm went for another clone, the one to his right. Another of the swarm went for him from behind, swiping a leg and causing Ectoplasm to fall.
Ectoplasm quickly rose up, but before he could turn, the bugs around his mouth created a veil over his eyes. However, just as quickly as they had risen, they fell back again to his mouth, revealing the various swarm clones around him to be in different positions than before. Ectoplasm looked left to right with no avail, unable to determine which clone held the real Midoriya.

Suddenly, the swarm around his mouth left him. As he was about to open his mouth to speak, he found that he couldn’t. He felt at his jaw and mouth, and felt various threadlike strings keeping his mouth closed.

“Spider silk,” the swarm informed. “Like it?”

Ectoplasm was impressed by Izuku’s actions. Not only had the boy created an effective counter for him, but Izuku had effectively cut off the usage of his quirk. He was a sitting duck, with little he could do to counter the bugs.

Ectoplasm had one of his nearby clones come to him, apologizing to Asui, whom it was currently working with, and promised to be back soon. Within moments, the clone arrived.

“You’ve gone beyond my expectations, Midoriya. I admit my defeat against your strategy. Nice job.”

As the clone talked, the real Ectoplasm attempted to remove the spider silk from his mouth. It was immensely difficult, but he was able to do it, albeit very slowly.

“I don’t believe that there’s much else I can do for you, unless you decide to create more super moves. You can go along to the support course. See if you can find anything that you can do to improve your costume.”

The various swarms dispersed, revealing the clone holding the real Midoriya to be the second one on the left. “Thank you, sensei. I’ll consider your advice, and I’ll go… eventually. I’ll work on some more of my moves, for now.”

Izuku then hopped off the plateau, leaving the real Ectoplasm still struggling with the spider silk wrapped around his mouth.

“Hey, Midoriya! Would you mind coming with me?”

Izuku cut off his connection to his bugs and opened his eyes, finding Kaminari in front of him.

“Where, exactly?” Izuku asked.

Kaminari gave a stunted laugh, rubbing the back of his head in response. “Well, uh, to... Hatsume’s lab.”

Izuku knew exactly what Kaminari meant. “Alright.” He stood up and walked towards Mei’s lab, Kaminari quickly matching his pace.

“Oh, thank you, Midoriya!” Kaminari exclaimed. “You don’t know how relieved I am to have you along with me. Hatsume’s pretty scary, you know! I’m not sure how you handle her.”

“That she is,” Izuku admitted. “Dealing with her and understanding what makes her tick is a accustomed skill. It’s taken me years for me to get used to it.”

“Though, why exactly are you going back?” Izuku asked. “You already have your gear, don’t you?”
Izuku pointed the sharpshooting gear on Kaminari’s arm. “It isn’t broken, is it? Mei would have a fit if it was.”

“No! Of course not! I wouldn’t dare break it after how useful it’s been in regulating my quirk, you know? It’s just that… she’s been asking for a progress report for some time, as well as time to test out some other things she says she has for me. I’ve just… been avoiding her until now.”

Izuku chuckled. “And you’re planning on having her attention divided between you and I so she gets less serious with your stuff?”

Kaminari rubbed the back of his head.

“Don’t worry about it,” Izuku said. “I understand how she gets sometimes. Anyways, how’s the gear holding up for you?”

“It’s great! I don’t have to be shocking everyone around me like before! And I have pinpoint accuracy as long as I have these glasses!” Kaminari gestured to said eyewear.

“Glad to hear it.” By this point, the two of them found themselves in front of the door to Mei’s lab. However, they were also met by somebody else, who was simply waiting outside to door to the lab.

“Oh! Hey, Todoroki,” Izuku greeted. “How are you?”

Todoroki slowly turned to face Kaminari and Izuku. “Ah, hello Midoriya, Kaminari. I’m doing quite well, thank you.”

“What are you doing just waiting outside?” Kaminari asked.

“I didn’t want to impose. I saw a couple others enter before I got here. I’m simply waiting until they’re done.”

“Oh, you don’t have to do that Todoroki,” Izuku said. “You can head in whenever you want. Mei’s never too busy for more people. Well, not the way she works, anyways. Unless she gets caught up with someone in particular. Or— You know what, forget that I said anything. Power Loader sensei is in there too, I’ve checked. He’ll be able to help too.”

Todoroki took a second to consider Izuku’s words. “If you say so, Midoriya. Mind if I accompany you, then?”

Izuku smiled. “Go on ahead.”


Izuku nodded in return, and went to open the door to the lab. However, he stopped just before his hand reached the handle and turned around to face Kaminari and Todoroki.

“Oh! And one more thing. Don’t be afraid to refuse anything that you guys don’t want, alright? Otherwise she’ll keep adding to your stuff and you’ll find that you’ll have more things than you know what to do with. And then before you know it you’ll be caught up in fifteen other experiments you didn’t realize you agreed to doing.”

“Speaking from experience, Midoriya?” Kaminari asked with a smile on his face.

Izuku sighed. “Too many times.”
Izuku reached the handle, opening the door to find an erratic Mei fussing over a resigned Pony and a distressed Monoma.

“Hi Mei, Pony.” Izuku waved. “Hello Monoma.”

“Oh! Izuku!” Mei screeched. “What are you doing here!?”

“Well, I was just—”

“You’re just in time! I have something for you!” Something found its way into Mei’s hands. It was a sleek black object with two small bumps protruding from it. Said object consecutively found its place onto Izuku, planted over his nose and mouth.

“What the heck Mei!” Izuku paused.

“Huh?” His eyebrows furrows upon hearing his own voice; its tone was deeper and more echoey, no doubt modulated through the use of some sort of mechanism in the mask.

“It’s a three in one!” Mei supplied. “Not only is it a gas mask, but it’s also a sound muffler! This baby here cuts off sounds below a customizable decibel! That way, you can now mumble all you want behind enemy lines without getting caught! And as a bonus, it comes with a modulator so you can be all spooky-like with your voice!”

Izuku attempted to pry the mask off to no avail. “It’s clamped shut.”

“It’s voice activated! That way the enemy can’t force feed you anything or expose you to noxious fumes.”

“What’s the passphrase?” Izuku asked, continuing to struggle with the mask.

“Get more wonderful babies from Mei Hatsume!”

There was a faint clicking sound, and the mask popped right off. “Of course it is,” Izuku muttered.

Mei sprung into action again. “Oh! And I also have this fligh—”

“Oh, Mei.” Izuku interrupted, dragging Kaminari in front of him. “Kaminari’s here for that checkup you’ve been waiting for.”

Kaminari’s eyes widened in realization. “Wait! Midori—”

“He is?!? Well why didn’t you say so! Give him here!” Izuku initiated the handoff, and Kaminari was then in the hands of Mei.

As the two of them wandered off further into the lab, that just left Todoroki with Izuku, as well as Pony and Monoma.

“That was kind of mean, Izuku,” Pony said.

“Eh.” Izuku shrugged. “So, why are you here? You didn’t finally succumb to Mei’s pleas for that harness, did you?”

“No!” Pony pouted. “I’m just letting Monoma tag along with me.”
Monoma scoffed. “More like... escorting, no?”

There was a sudden shuffling and clanking of metal that came from behind a whiteboard, revealing Power Loader. “Well, it looks like Hatsume’s going to be busy for a while. What can I do for you guys?”

“Oh! Power loader sensei,” Izuku said. “I forgot that you were here.”

“Yeah, of course you did. Mei caught all of your attention, as per usual. Despite the fact that I know you have a bug on me. Doesn’t matter.” He turned his gaze towards Pony. “Tsunotori? What did’ya need? Anything I can help you with?”

“Oh! Nothing,” Pony cheered. “Monoma just wanted me to accompany him here because he’s scared of Mei.”

“Am not!” Monoma cried. “Besides! I just wanted another pocket watch! And that… girl just kept on going on and on and on! Ugh. I don’t need a synthetic arm rocket or a custom optical helmet.”

“Another of your pocket watches you said? Should be pretty simple. I’ll get right on that.” Power Loader turned. “And you, Todoroki?”

“I just wanted some adjustments to my costume, is all,” Todoroki said.

“Ah, splendid. Always a pleasure to work with costumes. You brought your’s, yes?”

“I did,” Todoroki said, taking out said costume.

“Great!” Power Loader exclaimed. “Come with me then. We’ll go over the details over at the costume section.”

As Power Loader and Todoroki left, that left Izuku alone with Pony and Monoma. Pony looked between the two boys, somewhat nervous for having them right next to each other. After all, it wasn’t as if the two had had too many friendly interactions as of yet.

“So you can copy up to six now?” Izuku began politely, much to Pony’s relief.

“Huh?” Monoma asked.

“You have five pocket watches already on you.” Izuku gestured to Monoma’s jacket. “Meaning that another pocket watch would mean you can copy six quirks at once.”

A smug look felt upon Monoma’s face. “Well, it looks as if you’ve had me all figured out, Midoriya. As expected from the one I consider to be 1-A’s one and only deserving and qualified member.”

“That’s quite an improvement, given your previous limit of three,” Izuku said, ignoring Monoma’s comment on his class.

“Indeed! I’m getting stronger everyday!” Monoma bragged. “As is the rest of my class, unlike your own classmates. However, I’m sure that you’ve gone leaps and bounds, Midoriya. It’s just in your nature to do so.”

“Thank you, Monoma.”

“Of course.”
There was a moment of silence. Monoma was the one who broke it, that time.

“Though, there is still one thing bugging me.”

“And what’s that?” Izuku asked.

“It’s your quirk.” Monoma tapped Izuku on the shoulder to emphasize his meaning. “It exists, despite what my own quirk is telling me. Have you found out what that’s all about, by any chance?”

“I have.”

“You have?!” Monoma jumped at the words.

“I’m not telling you, however.”

“I— Yeah, I suppose that that only makes sense,” Monoma muttered.

“I’m not telling anyone, actually,” Izuku said. “So don’t feel left out.”

“Wait, what’s wrong with your quirk, Izuku?” Pony asked.

“It’s nothing,” Izuku soothed. “Don’t worry about it.”

Izuku stumbled into his room, tired from the effort of the day’s training. He landed on his bed and stared at the ceiling, relaxing as he made the connection with the arthropods in his room.

The atmosphere provided a fair level of serenity to Izuku. In fact, Izuku would have jumped out of his bed when QA began to speak if he wasn’t so deep in thought and bugs. Instead, Izuku merely startled when QA’s voice shattered the ambience.

“What I wouldn’t have done to have someone like Mei on my team. You’re lucky on that aspect, Izuku. You basically have a high rating tinker all to yourself!”

Izuku groaned. “You waited until now to speak again? Why can’t we at least have these conversations on my own terms? You’re the one in my head, after all.”

“Please. Besides, this way you can talk out loud all you want without looking crazy in front of your peers.”

Izuku sighed. “I suppose.” He laid back on his bed, closing his eyes to direct his swarm. “So, what’s up?”

“Oh? Just ‘what’s up?’ You’re not going to ask any questions about w-me?”

Izuku shook his head. “No. I’ve conceded to the fact that you’re not going to give me any information unless you deem it necessary. There’s no point in arguing at this point.”

“Huh, really? Because personally, I’d still be arguing with the passenger in my head if I was in this situation. You sure?”

“Mhm.”

“Huh. Well, alright then. As to answer your question, not much. I’ve just decided to check up on you. Have those urges in check?”
“I do. It’s still just a dull buzz for now.”

“But not for long. I give you until the end of the week until it becomes unbearable. Though, on the other hand, what do you have on the potential solution I clued in on?”

“I think that what Nezu did was pretty smart of him.” Izuku smiled. “Though that’s not really unexpected considering his intelligence.”

“And how so?”

“Well,” Izuku began, “while I’m sure that there’s a remote way to access the place, the actual location of the control room is pretty well concealed. For one, the control room is hidden away from the main building, which is something that most people wouldn’t expect. Second is the fact that it’s completely underground and enforced with a thick layer of steel and various other metals, with only a single entrance that’s hidden in plain sight amongst the dorms. Plus, only somebody the size of a small child — or more appropriately, Nezu — can actually crawl down the ventilation shaft that leads to the room.”

“Correct. But there’s still one thing; if your principal is the only one who can fit down there, how exactly are you going to deactivate the school’s surveillance so you can get along with your off-school activities?”

“That’s easy. Thankfully, I don’t have that restriction of size. I have my bugs.” As Izuku spoke, a few scouts were currently within the control room, observing the screens and watching for any possible ways to provide Izuku any shortcuts when the time came to execute his plan.

“And what?” QA asked. “You plan to have a bunch of flies try to press down on the keys and rewrite the coding so that you can go in and out of U.A. without being caught?”

Izuku smiled, taking a glance at the box that still remained at the foot of his bed.

“I like the way you think.” QA praised. “Seems that you’ve really thought this out. I’m glad to see that my power has fallen upon someone so resourceful.”

“You really mean it?”

“Of course, Izuku. It’s stimulating, and I just love seeing you progress.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, this chapter was originally going to end in a cliffhanger, but… Eh. We can save that event for next time. And thus, it looks like there aren’t any cliffys for you guys. Ah well, I know how many of you are probably disappointed with my poor decision, but you’ll just have to live with it ;)

Well, that’s all for now. See you all next week!
Alright! Some new stuff this time around. Considering the title, I’m sure that some of you can figure out what I’m hinting at… As for those who can’t, well, read on!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright, Spurt. What do you think? This one,” Izuku held up his cloak — the one most well known for his persona as Snitch, “or this one?” In his other hand was the clawed, dull toned costume he’d only used once before, on the night when he first met Toga.

A minute or so passed before Spurt made a decision, chittering as he pointed towards the more intimidating, black and grey costume.

“Thanks!” Izuku beamed with joy, quickly moving to his closet to hide his cloak away. When he came back out, he moved to pet Spurt, an action of which the coconut crab tenderly leaned into.

“I’ll be gone for the night, so watch my room for me, yeah?”

Spurt chittered in response, clicking his claws to show his understanding.

Over the past few days, a few of his rhinoceros beetles had finally reached full maturity. They were now currently outside of their box, and had been relocated to the area around the entrance to the control room.

A quick thought from Izuku made the beetles get right to work. With the aid of a few fliers, they quickly traveled through the ventilation shaft and into the control room. Once they were inside, they were planted in front of the main console and atop the keyboard, where they set off in rewriting a few things.

The changes that were being made would get rid of a few limitations to Izuku’s profile, allowing his I.D. to go unhindered past the school’s gates without a digital footprint. He’d be granted easy access in and out, with the staff being none the wiser.

Then there were the cameras, which would be looped to ensure his actions remained unrecorded.

However, there was one snag, and that was that the process would take time. After all, Izuku still needed to wait for the beetles that were slowly tapping away at the computer’s keyboard to complete their part of the plan. And so, for now, all Izuku had to do was wait.

“You ready?” QA asked.
Izuku looked at the clock on his desk. 11:35 p.m. It was late, and another quick survey revealed that everybody in the building was still asleep. There was still training the next day, after all. Izuku would just have to deal with the fatigue that he’d no doubt feel from his nightly actions in the morning.

“I think so,” Izuku replied. He was fully equipped and in costume, with a few minor additions having been added since the last time. A few utilities were in his belt, to aid both in and out of combat. However, he still wore civilian clothes overtop; a simple hoodie and baggy pants. He’d change out further off from the school.

“Good,” QA said. “Good. Have the rope ready?”

Izuku had the spiders retrieve it. The aforementioned rope was a wonderful creation given form by QA’s guidance. The rope was made entirely out of spider silk, woven and tightly bound together over the course of the past few days.

It was made alongside some other, smaller strings that were hidden among his costume. Those strings could be used to restrain and/or trip criminals up.

However, while the smaller strings would be carried with Izuku, the rope’s use would end on his balcony. After securing the rope, Izuku threw it over the balcony’s edge and quietly rappelled down the side of the building. As he reached the ground, he had his bugs lift the rope back up, their efforts bringing it back to his balcony to hide its existence.

“Nice.” QA said.

Izuku slowly made his way to one of the school’s more discrete — but just as heavily monitored — side entrances.

“No offense,” QA began, “but what exactly are you planning to do tonight? The yakuza population fell down years ago, and all you’ve been doing since then is watching for offshoot branches of them, taking out random petty criminals, and resolving domestic disputes.”

“What’s wrong with all of that?” Izuku asked. “Besides, I’ll be doing the same thing I’ve been doing for awhile now: patrol.”

QA sighed. “If that’s what you really want. We aren’t going off by train again, are we? I don’t exactly want to run in with that stranger— The shapeshifter, I mean.”

Izuku had reached the gate by now. Looking around at the various cameras and the thick steel gate, Izuku was still nervous. Taking out his I.D., Izuku placed the piece of plastic over the scanner. It was the moment of truth.

There was a small ding, and the locks of the gate released. Izuku walked through the gate, still tense and ready to run as if he was expecting a teacher to suddenly turn the corner. However, as he walked through without interruption and closed the gate with the same success, he relaxed. He was through.

“You mean Toga?” Izuku asked QA. “She wasn’t that bad. She had to run away, after all.”

Izuku split his attention, immersing himself with his surroundings as he talked to QA. It was only when he had spread his bugs out that he noticed that he was moving in the opposite direction of where he wanted to go, no doubt a mistake he made due to his conversation with QA. He immediately turned, of course, and set himself back to his bugs, where he caught a glimpse of the few people still out this late, at a time nearing midnight.
There was a diner a mere block away, decently filled despite the late hour. A few individuals were inside, laughing and eating to their hearts’ desires.

There was what Izuku presumed was a couple on a nearby rooftop, the two talking as they laid on their backs gazed at the night sky — something that would have been impossible with all the light pollution, if not for the recent actions of some heroes and inventors.

There was a middle aged lady sitting on her balcony, listening to the music of her radio as she stroked her cat.

Some more invasive observations revealed a van filled with young looking adults; there wasn’t any smell of drugs in the van, but instead the greasy and familiar smell of fast food. Izuku let them be.

All in all, it was just a usual night in Japan.

“Yeah. But only after that sniper intervened,” QA argued. “I’m not saying that you couldn’t have beaten her, I’m just saying that you should have seen the sniper.” The words brought Izuku back to the present. “They wouldn’t have gone unnoticed if you were paying more attention with your bugs.”

“That wasn’t entirely my fault. The urges that time didn’t exactly want me to use bugs.” Izuku reminisced over the event, remembering the feeling easily. “It isn’t like it matters anymore. Whoever they were, they were just outside my range. And it was dark. And they haven’t come back since.”

QA sighed. “That’s not an excuse, you know. You still could have noticed them long before they shot. Visually, at least. With bugs looking for nearby threats.”

“Okay, but still—” There was a click.

Izuku stopped in place, suddenly tense. The faint click of metal shot out just on the edge of his range. And then there was another, originating in a completely different location. If he wasn’t being paranoid, and if he was hearing things right…

His thoughts came out as words, slow and steady. “That… It sounded just like—” And then he heard it again. And if it wasn’t obvious before, it was now: it was the signature sound of a gun.

“Shit.”

Izuku was suddenly all the more aware, and much more motivated to see his surroundings. .

There was a sniper out on the rooftop, the one he had checked out just a moment ago. As it turned out, there wasn’t an actual couple stargazing, but a ready sniper and his partner with a scope and the barrel of a sniper aimed right at him.

The same went for the lady on the balcony, who was now speaking into her radio, calmly barking orders to whoever she was speaking to, and pointing her own sniper down at Izuku herself.

And then the bugs picked up similar movements to Izuku’s right. Izuku had been walking past the diner as well, and he realized then that they had probably waited until he was just outside it before they had made their move.

The place was almost the same as before, the only difference being how two separate groups had simultaneously stood up and left at the same time, meeting up outside and cautiously gazing in his direction. A quick discrete check revealed badges and guns hidden out of sight and under the first
layers of their clothes.

The bugs revealed more. The occupants in the van weren’t simple joyriders. Masks were now concealing their faces and protecting their airways, with protective gear becoming a completed set as they reached down under their seats and unfolded their rifles. The driver was slowly making his way towards Izuku, being a simple turn away before he was on the same street as the diner and Izuku.

There were other things as well: a duo of people blocking the next two alleys front and back of Izuku, having come out of the buildings moments prior. And the same for the buildings behind and in front of him, individuals waiting to burst out from the front entrances if he made any sudden movements.

Izuku took a deep breath.

They had set it up perfectly, waiting patiently and as unsuspiciously as possible until he had made it to where he was now, a convergence point to where their trap would be sprung.

A feeling of dread filled Izuku’s stomach. It wasn’t that he couldn’t escape — he was fairly confident that he could, actually. Rather, it was the fact that he didn’t want to escape, if doing so meant he would have to enact the few plans that he had. And so, there was only one thing that he could do. And so he did.

“Yeah… Shit.”

Izuku darted his eyes back and forth within the room. He was currently chained to the table of an interrogation room, deep within the heart of the police station. He had been taken into police custody a mere hour ago, and had been waiting in the room ever since.

Nobody had entered to talk to him yet, something of which Izuku wasn’t sure he was grateful for or not. His hands were currently encased in quirk-suppressing handcuffs, which too were bolted to the table. However, just as he had predicted, they had no effect over him. The bugs he had in his range were giving him an extensive layout of the station unhampered, and provided him with the image of the four individuals staring at him from behind the one way mirror.

Of course, he wasn’t going to broadcast the fact that he still had a connection to his bugs. Thus, he’d just have to be careful with his usage of them, and make sure none of the bugs within the station exhibited any strange qualities.

“You could have just attacked them,” QA chided. “Your suit is bulletproof, you can trust me on that. I’ve tested it myself.”

“I—!” Izuku instantly silenced himself, having remembered that he currently wasn’t alone, at least in the physical sense. He noticed the officers in the other room tense, but as the moments went by and they realized that Izuku wasn’t doing anything, they relaxed.

“They’re police officers, QA! I’m not going to kill them!”

“What?? No! That’s a horrible idea! Their innocents!”

QA sighed. “I suppose.”
Izuku sighed as well. “Why didn’t I notice them?” he asked himself aloud. “If it makes you feel any better, we had some help in that department.”

Izuku jumped in his seat. The sudden voice had come from officer Tsukauchi, who had somehow appeared in the seat in front of Izuku. “What the— How did you get there?!” Izuku exclaimed.

“Nice to see you too, Midoriya,” Tsukauchi greeted with a carefree smile. “As for how I got here, I’ve been sitting here the whole time. Ever since you were brought in, actually.” “But you weren’t!” Izuku argued.

“Don’t get too riled up over it,” placated Tsukauchi. “I’m about to explain it to you.” Tsukauchi grabbed a small remote from his coat pocket. A projector emerged from the ceiling above and began to show off an image on the wall to Izuku’s right. Izuku turned his head slightly, spotting an image that showed a rough looking man with various tattoos running across his neck, and a mouth that was in a scowl.

“This is Aichi Magamo,” Tsukauchi said. “You might not recognize him, but you aided in his arrest a couple years ago. Magamo’s quirk allows him to choose a target and make them suddenly lose their train of thought, as well as make them ignore a specific thing. Before, all he focused his quirk on was himself. However, he had potential. And the capabilities of his quirk grew.”

Izuku blinked. He was still getting over the fact that a criminal that he had taken down was being used by the cops. But when he thought back, he definitely remembered the moment when he had fought Aichi Megamo. Then his eyes widened in alarm.

“Exactly how long have you known?”

Tsukauchi waved the question off with a gesture. “We’ll get back to that later, Midoriya. You wanted to know about Megamo, didn’t you?” Izuku didn’t really, not now anyway. The implications had been clear. He mostly understood what happened, and when it had began. “He used his quirk on the idea of ‘police force,’ didn’t he?” Izuku questioned. “That’s why I turned around and ended up in your direction.”

“Indeed,” Tsukauchi confirmed. “And you never noticed the change, did you? Well, not then, anyways. He was waiting for you right outside U.A. You never noticed him; he stood right in front of you and you instantly turned the other way and into the city proper. Just as planned.”

“Fucking master-strangers.”

“By why is he out?” Izuku asked. “He’s a criminal! And you’re using him and letting him roam free!”

“We aren’t doing any such thing, Midoriya,” Tsukauchi refuted. “He’s still serving his sentence. He’s outside of prison and helping us now because we promised a few years off of his sentence for helping us in this case. He was a bit difficult to work with at first, but he turned very eager the moment we told him that it was you that we wanted him to help bring into custody. So you shouldn’t worry. He’s going straight back behind bars once we’re done with you.” Izuku gulped. “And what exactly are you planning on doing to me? Why are you telling me all of
“On the contrary, Midoriya. We’re being transparent with you. We aren’t holding any information back. The only thing we ask in return is the cessation of your vigilante activities and the refocusing of your efforts under the guidance of the police force.”

Izuku stared at the detective, unmoving and unblinking. “You… what?”

“We’re willing to ignore any of your illegal vigilante actions that you have committed in the past. All that requires is you signing up to work under us as a sort of… probationary hero in training, if you will.”

“How much do they know?”

Izuku’s eyes steeled. “And what evidence, actually, do you have on me being a vigilante? What exactly have I done?”

Izuku was still in the dark. He didn’t know how much the police knew about his nightly activities, and he didn’t want to give them more than they already had. And if they said they were going to be transparent, Izuku was going to use that to the utmost capability that he could.

“There’s plenty that we know of you, Snitch.”

And there went any hope that they didn’t know of Snitch. Still, there was the off chance that they didn’t know of his other activities, like the time when he had fought Toga.

Izuku looked back at Tsukauchi. “How—”

“Yes, we also know about your fight with Himiko Toga. It was our sniper on the rooftops, after all.”

“Oh.” Izuku replied with little tone in his voice.

“We’ve known about you for years, Izuku Midoriya.” It wasn’t Tsukauchi that had spoken that time. Instead, the voice came in through the room’s speakers from a burly, middle aged man who had suddenly appeared on the other side of the one way mirror — an appearance that was no doubt the work of Magamo.

“You were quite the mystery at first,” the man continued. “All you were was an anonymous voice on the phone calling in to report the activities of the criminal underworld. Quite a selfless thing to do. Then there were the sightings; a cloaked form appearing near the scene and disappearing into the shadows. But in the end, there was still someone out there on the streets using their quirk unlicensed. You, Midoriya, were carrying out heroic duties without a license. In the end, you were still a vigilante.”

“So you’d rather that I did nothing?” Izuku asked. “You would rather that I let the villains go free?”

Through his bugs, Izuku saw the man shake his head. “Don’t get me wrong, Midoriya. We were grateful that someone was targeting the already dying flame that is the Yakuza,” his deep voice reverberated through the room. “We’ve had similar cases to yours, of course. Of people who go out on their own and fight crime. Usually, we let them be as long as they don’t get carried away. You were a different case, however.”

“You were slippery. You always got away. And not even Eraserhead could corner you, even if it was just for a talk.” The man chuckled. “Of course, our indifference towards you change when we
learned that you were only a child.”

“But how did you figure that out?” Izuku asked.

“The answer’s simple. Kage Kawabata.”

“He did?” Izuku said in disbelief. “He knew?”

“Indeed,” the man said. “He was quite worried for your safety, you know. He told us once he pieced it together himself. It was the year that you had just started middle school. Ever since then, I’ve had a select few individuals assigned to watching over your well-being.”

Izuku remained silent, thinking to himself over what the future held for him. What exactly did the police have planned for him, under their jurisdiction?

“At least they don’t find you a villain,” QA said, interrupting Izuku’s thoughts. “Heroes and the police can be pretty cruel to villains when they’re captured and under interrogation.”

“We aren’t stupid, Midoriya,” the man interrupted. “The Safety Commission and myself see potential when it’s there. You’re resourceful, Midoriya. Competent and powerful as long as you have bugs on hand. We’d be idiots to have an asset such as yourself locked away. Especially since you’re just a kid who’s trying to do the right thing. But even more so now that All Might is no longer able to go around being the Symbol of Peace.”

“The decision of placing you under probation has been made between the HPSC and myself. You’ll still be able to attend U.A., as well as use your quirk in fighting villains. The only difference will be your role under our jurisdiction, whether it be during our operations of during more discrete infiltrations.”

“The H.P.S.C. and yourself?” Izuku muttered. “Then that means… Your the Commissioner General of the Police Force.”

“I am.”

Izuku sighed. “I don’t have much of a choice, do I? You aren’t just going to be letting me go, after all. The only other choices I have are going straight to jail or to slaughter all of you so I can escape.”

“Don’t say stuff like that out loud!”

The officers nearby were tense, their hands near their weapons if need be. Just outside, his bugs noticed Officer Asano become engulfed in flames, ready to burst into the interrogation room if need be.

Izuku sighed, resigned to his fate. “I accept, Commissioner General.”

The commissioner had a relieved look on his face. “That’s good. I’m glad that we’ve come to this without doing anything that any of us would regret. However, don’t think of this as punishment, Midoriya. In fact, I actually find your determination and devotion to your actions quite remarkable. Something to be rewarded.”

“Nonetheless,” the commissioner continued, “I can’t let your actions continue as be. I’ve already given you three chances. The first you lost after U.S.J. The second not but a few days later during you fight with Toga. And you used the last one today, when you rewrote U.A.’s internal systems to allow yourself to get off campus undetected.”
Izuku gulped. “I… understand, commissioner general.”

The man narrowed his eyes. “I don’t think you do. The problem isn’t you taking out villains and criminals. The problem is that you’re a danger to yourself.”

“Myself…?”

“It’s barely been a few weeks since you got out of the hospital, Midoriya. You did the same thing right after U.S.J. And you got attacked by Himiko Toga as a result. You could have died if it wasn’t for our intervention.”

“Yes right. You had that handled.”

“We simply want what’s best for you. And letting you roam the streets taking down villains isn’t that.”

“Izuku nodded. “I’ll… consider that. I’ll try to be more careful in the future.”

“Good. We don’t want another incident like your kidnapping, after all. Go ahead and uncuff him, Tsukauchi. Lead him to his debrief.”

With the eyes of his bugs, Izuku saw the Commissioner General leaving. A jolt of fear rang through Izuku then and there.

“Wait!!”

Tsukauchi, who was already halfway through removing Izuku’s second cuff, paused. The others on the other side of the mirror stopped moving too, as well as did the commissioner general. The middle aged man eventually made his way back to the microphone.

“Yes, Midoriya?” the commissioner asked warily.

“I…” Izuku hesitated. “It’s just… You haven’t told my mom yet, have you?”

The commissioner paused. “We were going to contact her after this talk. That’s where I was going, actually.”

“Oh…” Izuku muttered. “I… Can you… not inform her, please?”

Izuku’s bugs showed the obvious mix of confusion and suspicion on the commissioner’s face.

Izuku didn’t waste a second, lest he lose the man’s attention. “I promise that I’ll follow all your orders without question! Whatever they are, it doesn’t matter! It's just…” Izuku sighed. “I don’t want to worry her anymore than I already have. She’s already all worked up after everything I’ve been through.”

The commissioner’s mouth drew into a thin line. He didn’t speak a word, and the silence went on for a whole minute. Izuku was just on the edge of losing hope when the man spoke up.

“I suppose we can find some leeway with that.” The commissioner then left.

Izuku let out a relieved sigh. Tsukauchi continued uncuffing Izuku, and soon Izuku was free.

“I gotta hand it to you, Midoriya,” Tsukauchi said, “you’ve got quite a backbone on you. I wouldn’t even stand up to the Commissioner General like you did. Plus, you didn’t even show a hint of fear throughout the entire interrogation.
“I mean, you showed uncertainty and caution, but nothing close to fear or panic. It was unlike what I expected from a kid your age being in this situation.” Tsukauchi shrugged his shoulders. “Then again, this is you I’m talking about.”

Izuku slowly stood up from his chair. He did so while massaging his arms, said limbs being a bit sore after the extended period of time they had spent encased in cuffs. Izuku then looked towards Tsukauchi.

“What’s on your mind?” the detective asked.

“Why you?” Izuku asked.

Tsukauchi raised an eyebrow. “Huh?”

“Why were you the one who was in here with me?”

Tsukauchi blinked. And then he laughed. “You’re a strange kid, Midoriya. Is that really the first question you’re going to ask me?”

Izuku continued to look on.

“Well,” Tsukauchi began, “we know each other, don’t we? The guys up top thought that I’d be best to talk to you since I know you.”

“But I barely even know you.”

“Ah,” Tsukauchi pointed a finger out,” that may be true. But another aspect that influenced who got to be here with you was the amount of officers who didn’t really want to be in the same room as you. And I’d like to think understand you, at least a little bit. I don’t expect to suddenly turn violent and start attacking me.”

Izuku tilted his head. “And is that why officer Asano is currently cloaked in fire and waiting just outside the door?”

Tsukauchi groaned. “Of course she is.”

Chapter End Notes

And there we are. A bit of a turn in the story’s events, but it’s one I’ve been planning for a while. Thoughts?
More police stuff now!

Also, a new poll! This time, I want to know if you guys want a holiday chapter for this story. A Valentine's Day one, more specifically. Keep in mind, this will take up the slot of the story’s regularly scheduled chapter update on the Sunday after Valentine’s.

That said, it won’t be canon — it’s much too hard to find a way to fit it in by Valentines with where I have my chapter events set up.

Why, may you ask? Why a random chapter? Just because, really. I just have an idea for it. On another note, I’m still not entirely sure about polls here on AO3, so feel free to vote in the comments or head over to FanFiction for the poll there.

Anyways, on to chapter 38!

Tsukauchi reached into his pocket and pulled out a familiar looking black and grey object. “Mask on, Midoriya.”

Izuku nodded, taking said mask and placing it back on to his face. After Izuku made sure it was securely fastened, Tsukauchi led him out of the interrogation room.

The pair immediately ran into a de-flamed Saya Asano, who was still standing patiently outside the door. As she drew sight of Tsukauchi, the red-headed officer slightly nodded her head in acknowledgement.

“Tsukauchi,” she greeted, her face stoic and void of any trace amount of emotion.

“Ah, Saya!” Tsukauchi said, a small smile finding its way onto his face. “I heard from our friend here,” he gestured to Izuku, “that you were using your quirk again.”

“Now,” Tsukauchi raised his hands, “I’m not saying that I don’t appreciate the gesture, but I already said that your flames aren’t needed for Izuku here. I’m ninety-seven percent sure that he won’t raid the station with millions of bugs.”

“And where, exactly, did you receive that estimate?” Asano asked.

Tsukauchi shrugged his shoulders. “Eh… Mostly conjecture.”

Asano didn’t respond back, opting to narrow her eyes at Izuku instead. The two shared a brief staredown before she turned and began to leave down the hallway.

She was already halfway down the hallway when Izuku’s bugs heard her whisper a small reassurance to herself.

“I hope you’re right, Tsukauchi.”
Tsukauchi then patted Izuku on the shoulder. Izuku in turn snapped out of his bugs to face Tsukauchi.

"Don't worry about her, Midoriya," the detective encouraged. "She just takes a little warming up to, is all. You'll have plenty of time to do that now that you're working here part time."

The rest of their trip through the station wasn't what Izuku expected it would be. What Izuku thought would essentially be a walk of shame turned out to instead be a mix of hushed whispers and small inklings of gossip over who the supposed new hero gracing the station with their presence.

A quick question to Tsukauchi revealed that only a select few officers knew of Izuku's agreement to work for the force. The rest were in utter obliviousness over who he was; for all they knew, he was just another hero who'd come in to take on an investigation. In fact, considering the way hero gossip went, Izuku would be surprised if word didn't get out by tomorrow morning of his appearance at the station.

Eventually, Tsukauchi and Izuku reached their destination. An earlier check with his bugs had given him a clear image of the room. It was a fairly small space, furnished only with a single desk and a rather haphazardly filled board covered in a cliche jumble of pictures and red strings.

As is, the room only had one individual within it. Said individual immediately sprung up from her chair upon the opening of the door.

"Hiya guys!"

Izuku responded in kind. "Uh… hello, Officer Kaniya— Officer Kaniko." Seeing that he was now hidden from unknowing eyes, Izuku peeled his mask off.

"Midoriya," began Tsukauchi, "as the two of you have already met, I don't have to go through introductions, obviously. Though, I do have the pleasure of warning you that Kaniko is assigned to be your handler."

Izuku raised an eyebrow. "She is?"

"You betcha, Midoriya!"

Tsukauchi nodded. "I'll leave you two alone for now. You two have some things you need to talk about that I don't have the clearance for. Sooo…"

And Tsukauchi left the room, leaving Izuku alone with Kaniko. With little else left to lose, Izuku turned towards his newfound handler.

A broad smiling Kaniko held a hand out. Izuku took it, which led to Kaniko initiating a handshake that shook much too high and low than was necessary.

"Told ya that we'd be meeting again soon!" Kaniko cheered. "It's a pleasure to finally be working with you!"

"She's been expecting this. But how long has she been, exactly?"

"Right…” Izuku trailed off, his hand dropping as the handshake ended. "So, what exactly am I going to do?"

"Not much." Kaniko disclosed. "You'll mostly be waiting for orders until we actually have
something for you, really.” She moved around the lone desk in the room, sitting down in her chair and reaching down into a drawer to take out a vanilla folder. Izuku followed suit and sat in the opposite chair provided.

Kaniko opened the folder and began reading through its contents. “For starters, you’ll be expected to undergo a couple of physical and mental tests so that we can take note of your capabilities. But it’s kinda late right now, so that’ll be for tomorrow.”

She switched over to another loose paper, and her eyes widened in recognition. “Oh yeah! Aside from that, the only thing of note that’s happening soon that’ll be affecting you specifically is the Provisional License Exam.”

Izuku stilled. “What about it?”

Kaniko adopted a small apologetic look. “You’re not gonna be partaking in it. Sorry.”

Izuku nearly stood up from his chair. “WHAT?!! But that’s— But then— My license—!”

“Yeah, sorry about that, Midoriya.” Kaniko said, her apology tinged with sincerity. “But don’t ya worry!” Her tone changed in an instant.

“Considering your past experience, the higher ups think that the Provisional License Exam would actually be below your level. Therefore, they have something else planned that’ll act in place of the exam. If everything turns out all right, you’ll still get your license.”

“I will?”

“You’ll just have to complete a little… fieldwork. Ya know, an on the field practice scenario, if ya catch my drift.”

Izuku took a breath. What Kaniko was implying meant that he needed to successfully complete and undergo a police outing, or something similar. However, whether that meant going on a ride along or going out to capture criminals, it didn’t matter to Izuku as long as he got his license in the end.

“And I’ll still get my license as long as I pass?”

“As long as the conditions are met!” Kaniko said. Then she shrugged her shoulders. “Whatever those are, anyways. I’m not the one setting them up.”

Suddenly, Kaniko positioned her index and middle fingers into the generic gesture for scissors. She then rather abruptly began to cut out a portion of the paper she was holding. The heading at its top read: How To Act Around Your Handler: The Do’s and Don’ts. The whole section promptly fell into the trash.

The folder suddenly slammed shut. Kaniko then stood up and held out the folder in Izuku’s direction. “Here ya go! It’s for later.”

Izuku steadily held his own hand out and grabbed the folder.

“Well, that’s really all for now!” Kaniko exclaimed. “I’ll let you go back to your dorms.”

Izuku blinked. “That’s it?”
“That’s it!”

She moved to leave the room, and gestured for Izuku to follow. Izuku got up, and slid his mask back on before stepping behind her and matching her pace.

The two mostly walked in silence, the exception being Kaniko who hummed a cheery tune as they made their way through the station. In fact, it wasn’t until they had reached the foyer that Kaniko spoke up again.

“Make sure that you get lots of sleep tonight! You’ll be needing it!” She moved and held the door open for Izuku to pass.

“For the tests?” Izuku asked.

“Yup!”

They stopped on the curb. Kaniko continued humming, patting her legs in beat as she did so.

Izuku looked at her expectedly. He waited for something to happen for a whole minute. However, it didn’t seem as if Kaniko was going to budge anytime soon.

“Uh… Are you not driving me?” Izuku asked.

“What?!” Kaniko exclaimed. “No! Of course not!” She said it as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “We’re just waiting for your ride,” she admitted.

As if summoned, a sleek black limousine appeared from around the street corner and parked itself in front of the duo. The car’s door went agape with a small click, swinging open to reveal a very stout, very carefree looking figure who was sipping on a cup of tea.

“Hello, Midoriya!” Nezu cheered. His arms spread out wide, causing a bit of tea to splash out of his cup. He then gestured for Izuku to come inside the limo. “Mind taking a seat with me?”

Izuku quite expectantly did a double take. “Principal Nezu?”

“Of course!” the principal exclaimed. His head tilted forward. “Unless you know another mouse-dog-bear thing?” Nezu asked.

One of Izuku’s eyes twitched. He could tell that the principal was quite amused by the situation.

“No,” Izuku said with grated teeth, “I suppose not.”

“Didn’t think so.” Nezu turned, walking back inside of the vehicle. “Now, come.”

Izuku followed Nezu without another word. Going inside revealed a rather spacious and luxurious interior. Two sets of seats faced each other from each side of the limo, with a table separating the two in between. A tea set was already set up on the table, something which Nezu wasted no time sitting in front of.

Izuku sat across from Nezu, going on to watch as his principal took another sip of his tea. Izuku was about to open his mouth to speak, but was interrupted by a loud knocking on the limo’s window.

The window rolled down to reveal a brightly smiling Kaniko. “Just wanted to say bye! See you later, Hive Lord!”
And just as quickly as the window had opened, it slid right back up, signifying the beginning of the car’s return trip to U.A.

However, as the car drove, a look of confusion appeared on Izuku’s face as the car sped up. “Wait… Is that really what they’re calling me in this costume?”

“You don’t like it? I think it has a nice ring to it, really.”

Izuku turned his head to find Nezu taking another sip of the steaming beverage that he seemed to obsess over.

Nezu gestured to Izuku. “Please, cut the connection with your bugs, if you will. I want your full attention on this.”

Izuku tilted his head. “Can he even tel—”

“Yes, I can still tell that you are connected to your bugs. We’ve been over this already, Midoriya.”

Izuku froze.

“Microexpressions, Midoriya. Microexpressions.”

Izuku sighed. Right. Just reading me. Not you, QA. Of course he wouldn’t know of you… Right?

Izuku let go of his control, causing millions of bugs to return to their regular routines. He also went and removed his mask, exposing his face to the warm and tea scented air of the limo.

“Want a cup this time?” Nezu held out the offering cup. “It’s a nice and classic Earl Grey. Freshly brewed when we left the campus.”

Izuku warily looked at the cup. He was uncertain what exactly Nezu was playing at, and he wasn’t sure what exactly he had planned. There was a whole load of things the principal could have in store for him. There was only one reason he was, really.

In the end, Izuku took the cup; he’d probably be needing the energy for the upcoming talk anyways.

Upon seeing Izuku nod his head, Nezu gladly poured him his own cup of tea. “Splendid, splendid! A fine choice. You won’t regret it.”

Izuku took a sip of the tea, appreciating the feel of the liquid’s hot temperature in his mouth. He went on to watch Nezu from across, something of which Nezu was doing as well to Izuku. Nezu with apparent amusement, and Izuku with a downplayed wariness.

After a full minute of the back and forth staring, Nezu was the first to break the silence.

“So, how did you enjoy the trip, Midoriya? The police treat you alright?”

Izuku narrowed his eyes. He didn’t want to play the principal’s game.

“You knew all along, didn’t you?” Izuku accused. “You planned this. The whole thing.”

One of Nezu’s eyes rose. “Whatever do you mean, Midoriya?” He sounded rather amused — it was apparent that Nezu wasn’t even trying to hide the fact that he was being coy.
Izuku continued. “You made sure that I would find the control room, that I’d get curious over a strange and out of place metal box. You made sure that I would take notice of it, banking on the chance that I’d jump at the opportunity to allow myself a method to leave U.A. undetected.”

“Oh?” Nezu laughed. “Is that what you believe?”

“I know it’s true.” Izuku took another sip of his own tea. “I was unsure at first. At how the police caught on to what I was doing. They shouldn’t have a way to know that I was hacking U.A. ’s systems. They would have had to have somebody on the inside.”

“The control room was perfect. Minimal risk of villains or stray students stumbling upon its location, and limited accessibility to beings your size and under. It all lines up perfectly in the end.”

Izuku sighed. “My mind was just too clouded to care. I was stupid to think that you weren’t watching me the whole time.”

Nezu went to refill his own cup. “That’s quite a story you’ve concocted up.” He took another sip. “It’s quite a miraculous coincidence that it’s all true.”

Izuku scrutinized the principal that sat across from him. “So you admit to it? That what I said is true?”

Nezu chuckled. “I like you, Midoriya. I really do. It’s been a long time since the school’s come along and picked up a troublemaker like yourself. But that’s not all.”

“You’re different from them. The others. You’re smart. And crafty. And you aren’t afraid to step around a few boundaries if it means going out to stop crime. I respect that.”

Nezu took another sip. “So I’ll be straight with you. Yes, I did aid in your capture. Part of it is because I like seeing you riled up. I just love seeing a human like you squirm.”

Nezu adopted another one of those manic grins, something of which unnerved Izuku greatly.

Nezu eventually continued with his speech. “The other part of it has to do with making sure you’re still around by graduation.”

Izuku furrowed his eyebrows. “What do you mean?”

Nezu let out a full belly laugh. “More tea?”

Izuku blinked. He looked down at his own cup to find it surprisingly empty. He’d somehow drank all his tea up somewhere along the length of Nezu’s talk.

“Sure,” Izuku replied.

Nezu poured Izuku another cup.

“I’m not stupid, Midoriya. And neither are you. I know this, because I genuinely acknowledge your intelligence. You’re smart for a human. And for somebody your age.”

“However, that means that we both know that what you are doing is setting yourself down a path of self destruction. No matter how righteous your actions are.”

Izuku let out a frustrated growl. “I know that, Principal Nezu.”
“Oh? Then why do you do it? Why do you go out and fight crime, and nearly get yourself killed whenever you fight villains?”

He didn’t. He only went out and fought villains as Snitch, the anonymous caller who alerted heroes and police of criminal safehouses and watched as criminals were swiftly handed justice.

However, there was still that small piece inside of him telling him that he was just denying the truth. While those urges may have been a part of it, they weren’t the whole cause.

Izuku turned his head away, taking another sip of his tea. “Who’s driving us?” he asked. “The person driving had to be informed about the situation. And that means they know that I’m going out and being a vigilante. Who is it?”

“Diverting away from the question, are we?” Nezu chuckled. He clicked a small button beside him and spoke into a small microphone. “Midoriya wants to talk.”

The partition separating the passengers side from the driver’s slid down to reveal a familiar disheveled man.

“You’re doing one hundred laps later today, Midoriya,” Aizawa drawled. His eyes were staring right into Izuku’s soul from the rearview mirror.

“And another hundred for making me wake up at this godforsaken hour. It was supposed to be one of my few days off.”

Izuku gulped, readily nodding his head. “Yes, Aizawa-sensei. Of course. I wouldn’t expect any less for punishment.”

“Good.” His eyes went back on the road. “We’ll be talking about your vigilantism and your other resulting punishments at a later date. I’m going to focus on not falling asleep at the wheel for now.”

The divider slid back up, leading to Izuku turning back to face Nezu.

“So?” the principal asked. It was obvious that he hadn’t forgotten Izuku’s attempt on straying away from his questioning.

Izuku sighed. “I’m not going to tell you. I have my own reasons.”


“I’m already being lenient with you, Midoriya. Don’t break my trust. I see potential in you, and I still wish to cultivate it. It’d be a shame to see you blown away like mere dust.”

The car came to a halt. Nezu stood up and strode over to the car door, opening it and gesturing to the outside. “We’re here. Straight back to the dorms with you.”

“Yes, Principal Nezu.” Izuku took one final sip of his tea and walked over to the principal. However, just as he was about to exit the car, Nezu grasped onto Izuku’s arm, dragging him down to his height.

“I’ll be moving the control room’s mainframe for now. No more rewriting of the school’s security systems for you.”

Izuku had expected that. “Of—
“But,” Nezu interrupted, “I won’t be doing anything about any of the changes that you already
made. It’d be a waste of your efforts. So, feel free to take a nice stroll around the block every now
and then.”

“...”

“But please, keep it sparse. I’d still need to keep the police of your tail when you do, after all.”

Nezu let him go. Izuku nodded and continued on his way, walking past an irate looking Aizawa..
Izuku shied away and let out a nervous laugh as Aizawa looked at him with a dead stare.

When Izuku got to the gate, the system let out a chipper beep that signified his still working
unlimited access to the school. A discrete look back revealed a smirking Nezu and a further
disgruntled looking Aizawa. Izuku quickly sped past the gate and towards the dorms.

“What are you doing?”

“Gah!” Izuku swerved around, startled by the voice and the sudden opening of the lights.

“Oh.” Izuku breathed in relief. “It’s just you, Todoroki.”

“Yeah, it is,” Todoroki confirmed, his face unreadable as usual. “Why were you out so late? You
know we aren’t supposed to leave the building past curfew.”

Izuku gulped. “Umm… Well… I, uh...”

“Yes?” Todoroki’s eyes shone with an inquisitive nature.

“I’ll… tell you tomorrow?”

Todoroki’s eyes narrowed. “Midoriya, I—”

“It’s alright! I vouch for him!”

Both Izuku and Todoroki stumbled back from the sudden appearance of the principal in between
them.

Todoroki immediately calmed, slowly blinking as if digesting the situation. “Principal Nezu?”

“Of course! Don’t worry, Todoroki. Midoriya and I were just talking about some modifications I
wanted to make to his curriculum.”

Todoroki blinked. “At four in the morning?”

“Nothing to worry about!” Nezu said. “Besides, you're up because you wanted a glass of water. Is
talking about education any different?”

Todoroki didn’t respond back, raising an eye in disbelief instead.

“He’ll inform everybody tomorrow,” the principal said. “So off to bed, you two.”
Izuku didn’t need to be told twice.

“What!?!?” Ashido exclaimed, eyes wide in surprise. “What do you mean you aren’t taking the Provisional License Exam?!”

She, along with the rest of the class (which included everyone but a still sleeping in Bakugou) were in similar states of surprise and confusion.

Izuku laughed, glancing at the various faces of his classmates around him. “Principal Nezu and I had a talk last night. He uh…” Izuku rubbed the back of his head.

“What are you going to say?”

Izuku lipped his lips. “He said that—”

“I have something special planned for Midoriya!”

Nezu turned to Izuku with a satisfied smile. “No.” He then turned back to the rest of the class.

“Midoriya has exhibited some rather intriguing qualities that I’m personally interested in. I have actually been observing him quite closely since the entrance exam. I just knew there was something special about him.”

“And as it turned out, I was right! So Midoriya will just be carrying along with this new program set up for him. It's just the next step in his education here at U.A.~”

“Whoa man, that’s kinda cool!” Kaminari exclaimed. “You’re getting recognition from the principal himself!”

The rest of the class’s words of congratulations were drowned out by one boy’s explosive exclamation.

“Are you crazy?!?” screeched a distressed Mineta. He lunged forward and grabbed onto Izuku’s leg. “You can’t do this to us, man! We’ll be doomed! Without your overpowered bugs during the license exam we’ll all be crushed!”

Izuku wasn’t sure what to do with the anguished form of Mineta attached to his leg. He tried shaking the short boy with no effect. Izuku was getting a bit uncomfortable too, and was about to just attack Mineta with another swarm of bugs.

However, he didn’t need to resort to such measures, and was thankful when Tsu went and dragged Mineta off.

“Thanks, Tsu.”

“Of course, Midoriya,” Tsu croaked.

“Anyways,” Nezu continued, “Midoriya’s going to have differing obligations from this point on. No need to worry, however. He’ll still be regularly attending classes with the rest of you and such. He’ll only be called away for specific dates. As is, that includes the rest of the remaining days you all have to develop your super moves.”

“Well, that’s all for now!” Nezu waved. “You all better get ready! You all still have a big day
ahead of you!” He nodded his head in Izuku’s direction. “Especially you, Midoriya.”

The principal left through the front entrance, leaving everyone still in silence and disbelief.

“Wow, Midoriya,” Yaoyorozu began. “You really must be working hard if you’re getting Nezu’s attention like this.”

“Indeed!” Iida started. “It shows that the rest of us are quite still behind! If anything, I’m ashamed of myself for not striving forward enough! I must work harder!”

“I— It’s nothing like that guys, I promise,” Izuku said. “Nezu just sorta… liked my attitude, I guess. He wants to see that I develop right, or something along those lines.”

“Still sounds like a prodigy in the making to me.”

“Alright, everyone! That’s enough for now!” Iida began. “We can congratulate Midoriya later. Like Nezu said, we still have Gyn Gamma to get to! So chop-chop! Get moving!”

Later That Morning…

“Hey bro, Bakugou! Where were you this morning? You didn’t get to hear! Midoriya’s taking part in this special program thing! He gets special training and everything! And it’s being run by Nezu himself!”

“HE WHAT!?!?”

Chapter End Notes

And that’s Tangle for you.

And remember, it’s poll time! Vote for content!
“So, how do you think they’re doing?”

Down in the stadium arena below Izuku, a multitude of aspiring hero students were currently undergoing their Provisional License Exam. A huge battle was raging on, the various schools combating it out to see who would pass and receive their provisional licenses. The aim of the first test was simple: each student was given three targets to place on their body and six balls to use to attack. Eliminate two targets with the provided balls, and you’d pass to the next round. Have all three of your targets light up, and you were out.

Izuku thought that Class 1-A was faring pretty well. The majority of the class had grouped up into a formidable defense to defend against the other schools. There were a couple splinter groups of course - most notably the lone Todoroki and the Bakugo trio. And they were in danger of defeat due to their quirks having been broadcasted long before during the sports festival.

“Well, everyone’s doing surprisingly well. Except for Bakugo, of course. Loved how he got turned into a weird meatball thing. Funny how your little electric friend was able to win a fight that Bakugo couldn’t. So much for being superior to you.”

“It’s because he’s really taken up to training,” Izuku added. “He became a lot more determined after our final exam against Nezu. That, and he actually became really nice after. He took some of my tips and trained up. And I actually consider him a friend now despite our past… transgressions.”

“It’s funny how that works, huh? It seems as if we get people’s respect through fear and simply outmaneuvering our opponents.”

“Yeah…” Izuku straightened himself up and shook his head. He took a breath.

He eyed the other occupied seats of the stadium. There were full of teachers, adults, and various other officials watching the event. Down below, the various students battled on, determination painted on their faces as they aimed for a spot in the next round. And then there was him, the single outlier among them all. A student sitting up in the stands, rather than fighting in the arena down below.

“QA?”

“Yes, Izuku?”

“How do you…” He cut himself off, shaking his head. “What do you think about this?”
“...About what?”

“You know, all this… ‘working with the police’ stuff. I’m basically absconding from the Provisional License Exam. All I need to do is some police raid, and I get a license, guaranteed. I’m not putting in the same effort as everybody else. I’m getting what’s basically a head start. It… it feels like I’m cheating, to an extent.”

“Are you forgetting the fact that this is actually a punishment?”

“Doesn’t seem so to me. It’s just a bit of red tape, some moderate restrictions here and there, and a set of rules to follow. It’s not too bad.”

“Heh. Could’ve fooled me. Don’t you see? It’s just a matter of time until they up the ante and squeeze you for what you’re worth until you run dry,” QA evoked, her voice in obvious disdain.

“Or, what happens when some criminal uses their backwards contacts in the force to get you? Then they’ll know your face, and your family, and the location of your home. What then?”

“You’re being paranoid,” Izuku said.

“It isn’t paranoia if I have reasonable cause and justification and evidence to the contrary. It’s saved me plenty of times.”

“I don’t care, QA. I’m doing this. I’ll face the consequences, if there even are any, when we get to them. I’m not going to just cut loose and turn villain.”

“Right... Of course not.” QA sighed. “But still, you shouldn’t let the police dictate your every move, Izuku. You need to think more for yourself in these matters. The law doesn’t always have your best interests in mind.”

Izuku’s face scrunched up. “That right there. That’s something that I don’t understand.”

“What do you mean?”

Izuku could almost see QA rising an eyebrow in confusion. “It’s just, why are you so against the police?” Izuku asked. “They haven’t done anything all that bad to us… me.”

“And if they do? They bend over backwards to have you on their side now, but what happens they no longer find you useful to them? Suddenly, you might find yourself behind bars.”

“They wouldn’t do that.” Izuku shook his head. “Is this something you picked up from where you’re from? What kind of place would make you even expect something like that? And you think that same of heroes, too. This place is different from wherever you’re from. The police and heroes are supposed to protect us. Not act like villains.”

QA didn’t respond back. In fact, Izuku could feel her leaving the forefront of his mind, retreating to wherever she hid whenever Izuku couldn’t reach her.

Izuku let our a deep breath. Despite his frustration, he was fine with QA just randomly ditching him by this point. She was being just as secretive as usual.

Izuku looked down back at the chaos reigning down below. Sighing, Izuku relented his vision back to his bugs. In return, he gained an all encompassing view of his classmates as the bugs zooming back and forth between them
Minutes passed, and the first round was finally nearing its end. Eventually, Izuku sensed one of the more distinctive bugs that he had earlier planted returning to his location. Aizawa was coming back, and with somebody in tow.

A quick glimpse revealed Ms. Joke, who was basically hanging off of Aizawa. Ms. Joke was talking on and on, Aizawa not responding to any of her attempts to get a rouse out of him. Aizawa simply walked, trudging forward with unwanted cargo.

However, if Izuku looked just hard enough, it was almost as if — and dare he say it — Aizawa was more relaxed. Almost like a miniscule smile was about to burst into place. Almost.

“Huh. Weird.”

The duo eventually reached their destination and reached Izuku.

“Oh? Is this him?” Ms. Joke asked. Izuku suddenly found the hero zooming all around him, vigorously observing him from every angle with glee. “This the troublemaker you’re watching over? He so doesn’t seem like one.”

“Yes,” Aizawa replied, stoic as ever. “This is him. His name’s Izuku Midoriya. Midoriya, as I’m sure you know, this is Ms. Joke. Keep caution around her, or you’ll regret it.”

Ms. Joke playfully hit Aizawa’s arm. “Oh, please. That was one time. And it wasn’t my fault!”

“Mhm.” Aizawa sat down right next to Izuku.

Ms. Joke, meanwhile, took a seat directly behind them. However, this didn’t prevent her from beginning a conversation, and immediately dragging Izuku in.

“So, you’re the kid giving Eraser even more bags under his eyes, eh?” Ms. Joke laughed. “I’ve got to say, I’m impressed!” She held her hand out. “Nice to meet you, Midoriya!”

Izuku shook her hand, and felt a small tingle run along the length of his body. Ms. Joke herself had a blue aura surrounding her own body. A telltale of her using her quirk, Outburst. Ms. Joke immediately began laughing herself off. However, that changed when she noticed her target continuing to stare blankly at her. She quirked an eyebrow at Izuku.

“You’re not laughing? Weird.”

She turned to Aizawa, raising a hand between her mouth and Izuku.

“You’ve definitely got a strange kid, Eraser. He didn’t laugh at all! There aren’t too many people who haven’t laughed at me before!” The words were said with the general makeup as a whisper, but definitely loud enough to be heard by Izuku with his own ears. It was plain as day that she was joking around.

After her mini rant, Aizawa turned a lazy eye toward Ms. Joke. “Right.”

Aizawa turned back towards Izuku, a sudden unsettling smile appearing on his face. “We still haven’t talked about your punishments, have we?”

“Uh…” Izuku let out a broken laugh. “No. At least, not the full extent of it, Aizawa-sensei. I’ve only done those two hundred laps so far.”

Aizawa nodded. “It’s a good thing you remembered. You’ll continue with that until the next
month. But I’m feeling generous, so I’ll cut it down to seventy-five laps a day.”

“Sheesh, Eraser. That’s a bit harsh, ain’t it?” Ms. Joke questioned, butting in and planted herself between the two. “What’d the kid do? Rob a bank or something?”

“Yes.” Aizawa didn’t waste any time contemplating the question.

“Hey!” Izuku exclaimed. “I did not! You guys just caught me while I was out on pa—”

A carbon-alloy fibrous cloth suddenly found its way around Izuku’s mouth, effectively silencing him. Aizawa gave him a look before letting him go.

“Also, you’re getting cleaning duty for the next two months. I expect the entire dorm to be spotless until then.”

“Of course, Aizawa-sensei!”

Aizawa nodded. “Also—”

The stadium’s buzzers rang out, signifying the end of the first round. Izuku took it as his chance.

“Right!” Izuku abruptly stood up. “Sorry Aizawa-sensei, but I need to use the restroom. I’ve been waiting for the end of the round so I could. We’ll continue talking later.” He immediately sped off without glancing back.

Once he was far enough away and out of Aizawa’s sight, Izuku slowed down, letting out a sigh of relief. He didn’t actually need to go — he just really just wanted to get away from Aizawa.

He was a little ways away from the restroom, somewhere that ranged at around a minute or two walk from his seat. He could take his time before having to return.

“Nice one. Very subtle.”

“Hey!” Izuku whined. “Aizawa’s scary, you know.”

“Mhm. There are scarier things than him.”

“And I’m not saying there aren’t. I’ve already had to fight things like that. Like the league. Or their nomu.”

“Oh yes, that monster. I’ve got to say, you did quite well during that attack. Much better than I did against my first encounter with a strengthened hyper regenerator, at least.”

“You’re telling me that you went against something similar to that USJ nomu before?”

He finally arrived at the restroom. He swung the door open with little grace, having checked beforehand with his bugs and finding the place devoid of human life.

“We did. Though Lung was a bit smarter. And objectively stronger.”

Walking in, Izuku walked himself to the sink. The mirror revealed a few bags under Izuku’s eyes; nothing too noticeable, but present none the same.

The training sessions and tests demanded by him by the police took a lot from him, and paired with his normal school studies and Aizawa’s punishments it was becoming a bit overbearing.
A quick turn of the faucet later and Izuku was reinvigorated as the sting of cold water met his face.

“I wonder how the others are going to do,” Izuku wondered aloud. “1-B doesn’t start their own until 3:00, and their all the way in Osaka.”

“I actually think that they’ll do better than your class. They have more team synergy than your class does.”

“You think?” Izuku thought on. He turned the faucet off and went to dry himself off. “I suppose that I can see where you’re coming from. They don’t really have someone like Bakugo. The closest thing to that would be Monoma, and even he has the sense of the importance of team… work.”

Izuku paused.

His bugs had spotted an odd peculiarity. There was a girl. She had brown eyes and brown shoulder length hair, a Shiketsu cap adorned on her head, and a slim balck bodysuit. She whistled a merry tune as she walked, her head bobbing side to side.

As with everyone else, Izuku had been tracking her with his bugs. And normally, she wasn’t someone Izuku would have taken note of. The problem was that she had just entered the restroom that Izuku was in. The male’s restroom.

QA noticed too, if her silence was anything to go by.

Izuku turned to face the stranger. “Uh… Hi?”

The girl ignored him and instead went up to one of the sinks and looked into the mirror. She took out a bottle of perfume and began spraying herself with it, the green fumes filling the air.

“Umm…” Izuku said slowly, “I’m not sure if you noticed, but this is actually the guy’s restroom.” Izuku quickly jerked his hands up. “Or maybe you did! And you just, um…” Izuku turned away.

The girl suddenly turned his way. “Oh, I know that, Izuku!”

Izuku stilled. She knew his name…

And then he began coughing, almost taking on the urge to hurl right where he was. He shook his head, eyeing his surroundings. It was the perfume.

The girl was already spraying more of the stuff by the door. “Sorry ‘bout that!” the girl chirped. Then she threw the rest, the glass shattering once it reached the single overhead vent in the room. “Caustic’s stuff can really stink when he wants it to, huh?”

“The shapeshifter!”

Izuku’s arm moved by instinct, snapping in position to catch his attacker’s arm. The girl’s arm stayed firm where it was, preventing it and her own knife from plunging into Izuku’s eye.

The still-disguised Toga smiled. “Nice catch, Izuku.”

Izuku pushed back, launching Toga a fair distance away. Izuku himself swiftly bent down and reached down for his ankle, retrieving one of the more recent additions of his arsenal. After a quick unfastening of a strap, a glistening knife flashed into the open air, Izuku taking a ready stance.

He reached out for his bugs, but found them to be of no use. Toga had planned ahead, and with the
vent and her own body being covered in Caustic’s ooze, she was utterly immune to his bugs at the moment.

“What do you want, Toga?” Izuku asked, not relaxing from his stance.

Toga smiled. “What do I want?” She pointed her knife to her own mouth as if pondering the question. Her toothy smile widened. “Can’t I just want to be here with you?”

Izuku shivered. Her voice was tinged in obsession as per usual.

The two began circling around each other, eyes tranced and focused on the other ready for the other to pounce.

Izuku made the first move, dashing forward aiming to strike Toga down. Toga, quite predictably, parried the knife and went in for a counter. Izuku swiped and parried back, a sea of sparks flaring between the two.

“Aren’t these little meetups fun?” asked Toga, her eyes shining in mischief. She kicked forward, pushing Izuku back in a huff of air.

Izuku shook his head in frustration, reorienting himself in preparation for an attack. However, it didn’t come. Toga simply stayed where she was, smiling at him.

“Oh, seriously. What do you want?” Izuku pointed his knife at her.

“You can’t use your bugs, so just go in for the kill. She’s been too much of a needle in our side for too long.”

Izuku ignored QA.

Toga relaxed her stance, lowering her knife. Izuku didn’t reciprocate.

“I just wanted to have some fun before I left. Is that so hard to believe?”

Honestly, no. Izuku found that easily believable.

“And why exactly are you here for?” Izuku asked, eyes narrowing. “I had my bugs on you the entire first round. I wasn’t watching you specifically per say, but I did notice you a couple times. Why are you even taking that form and taking the test?”

Toga giggled. “That’s a secret.”

Izuku picked up some movement with his bugs. Aizawa was coming his way. The sight of his teacher brought something upon his mind. Stupid! Why didn’t I just alert Aizawa in the first place?!? He’d be here by now if I had!

He decided to remedy the situation. He focused on his connection to his bugs, forming a small swarm to alert his wayward teacher.

“Oh, ah ah,” Toga singsonged, wagging a finger in Izuku’s direction. Izuku himself halted his swarm.

“What?” Izuku asked, ready to spring his bugs and alert Aizawa at any moment.

Toga reached behind towards her waist. Toga didn’t take out a weapon. Instead, her hand clutched a small batch of vials.
Izuku stilled. If anything, the sight of those vials was even worse than a weapon.

“You wouldn't want me to use these, would you?” She shook the vials, the blood within swishing along the walls of the vial. “I can frame your friends for all kinds of things.”

“Whose blood did you get?” Izuku stepped forward.

Toga swiped her hand away. “No touching, Izuku,” she giggled again.

Aizawa was still a minute or so away. He wasn’t making any effort to get to the restroom in a hurry.

Izuku growled. “And why shouldn’t I just knock those out of your hands right now?”

Toga twirled her knife around in the hand that was absent of vials. “Because then I’ll use the ones that I stashed away. And then I’ll just call Kurogiri to warp me out. I’ve been standing in the same location for a good amount of time. He already has my coordinates.”

Was it possible? Did Toga have the time to hide away extra vials? He hadn’t been watching her the entire time of course, not when he didn't have a reason to be suspicious of her. But she likely wasn’t bluffing about Kurogiri. His range wasn’t a known factor, afterall.

“If you let me go nicely,” Toga continued, “I’ll reconsider. I’ll just use the vials in case of emergency, or if the situation is dire enough.”

Aizawa was still a ways away. Izuku needed to stall. “Nobody would believe that they did whatever things you’re planning to do.”

A glint entered her eyes. “But the stain on their reputation would last. And people will always wonder when they see them, ‘is that kid really that psycho I saw on t.v.’?”

Did Izuku want to risk that? Did he dare risk his friends to capture Toga? How much of their public image would be at risk, anyways?

“Tick tock!” She exclaimed. “If you don’t make a decision soon I’ll just default to the harsher option!”

“What?! How is that—” Izuku stopped himself

“And,” Toga added, “if Mr. Eraser comes barging in here, I’ll know that you tattled.”


Toga’s face blossomed in joy. “Really! Thanks Izuku!” She turned her back towards him and grabbed the door, holding it slightly ajar. Before she left, however, she spared one last glance at Izuku. “Hope we can play again soon! I just love how your blood tastes, you know.” She licked her lips and left.

The silence of the restroom stretched for what seemed like hours.

“Damnit.”

“Yeah.”

The door to the restroom finally opened with an audible creak. “Midoriya, what—” Aizawa’s words came to an abrupt halt. He came into view in the doorway, the sleeve of his arm covering
his nose.

“What’s with this smell?”

Izuku’s eyes widened. “Oh! Uh… sorry, Aizawa-sensei. Something I ate didn’t agree well with my stomach.”

“Mhm.” Aizawa’s hummed, his eyes narrowing. They shifted down to Izuku’s arm. “And what’s with that cut?”

Izuku furrowed his eyebrows in confusion. It was only then, as Aizawa mentioned it, that Izuku noticed a small trail of blood seeping out of a small incision on his arm.

_Huh. Didn’t even notice it. Guess she actually got another taste today._

“And what’s with the knife?” Aizawa’s voice rang out again, this time much more serious.

“W-wha—?” Izuku noticed that he was still clutching his knife in his hands. His eyes widened in realization.

“I—it’s, It’s not what it looks like! I just… I was… There was a leech! And it was a little hungry. So I fed it.”

Aizawa blinked. “And where’s this leech now?”

“I already dragged it down the sink,” Izuku immediately replied.

“Hmm.” Aizawa glared at Izuku, his eyes reaching deep for any hint of deception.

Aizawa turned. “Fine. Hurry it up in here, then. The second round’s about to start.” The door swung open and closed, again leaving Izuku to be the only physical person left in the restroom.

Izuku sagged his shoulders. “Why’d he have to take so long getting here?”

Further away, his bugs were trailing Toga, just outside of the stench that covered her body. Suddenly she stopped. She eyed one of Izuku’s lone bugs and smiled.

“Bye Izuku! I’ll see you next time!” And she faded away, merged and consumed by a swirling black mist.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s that. More things and stuff. Not much else to tell. Also, sorry if this chapter’s a bit later than usual. Had some stuff going on. But hey, it’s still Sunday, so it’s still on time.
I’ll keep the poll and voting up for another week. Results will be tallied next chapter for sure!

As for the chapter, I hope you all enjoy it! It’s very heavily action-oriented this time around.

It was night by the time class 1-A returned to the Heights Alliance. Mostly everybody was in the common room mulling over the course of the day, regaling in either the attainment of their provisional hero license or factors that prevented such from happening.

The lone exception was Izuku; this was entirely in part to his exclusion in the provisional license exam. The others were still shrouded in mystery over the details of the mystery program Izuku had found a part in, and were eagerly attempting to extract whatever information they could to ease their curious minds.

“I’ll come onnn, Midoriya!” Ashido groaned. “I want all the juicy details! What’s with your special exam thingy? What’s with all the cloak and dagger?”

“Actually, Ashido,” Yaoyorozu began, “I’m fairly certain that using that phrase greatly overexaggerates the situation.” She paused, eyes shifting. “Unless you’re implying some sort of outward questionable actions centered around Midoriya’s newfangled training?”

“Oh, you know what I mean!” Ashido fired back, swiping her hand in Yaoyorozu’s direction.

“I personally wonder how much harder it actually is going to be from the regular provisional exam, kero.” Tsu croaked.

Iida suddenly butted in, his hands chopping down as per usual and making his presence known to the rest of his peers. “If Midoriya doesn’t wish to divulge the details of his newfound training, he shouldn’t have to. He’s entitled to that right since he gained higher training in the first place.”

Izuku was simply letting this all happen around him. Rather than interfering, he’d let the errant rumor mill run rampant. It was Izuku’s belief that the more he kept the details sparse; the less likely his classmates would piece together all the factors regarding his training.

Besides, the less of a connection he had to the up and coming ‘Hive Lord,’ the less his class would be inclined to notice any discrepancies and/or similarities to himself and his vigilante (and now police-enforced) persona.

“Eh, I don’t know man,” interjected Kirishima. “This summer’s been pretty eventful to all of us, sure. But that fact doesn’t attribute more to anyone than Midoriya here. I mean, he was kidnapped by the League! And he fought off that Muscular dude at the camp! And now he gets this special apprenticeship thing or whatever. A bit much for one summer, don’t you think?”

“I still think that he’s just a trouble magnet,” Jirou mumbled. “Might even be some sort of second
“Meet me outside later. We’re going to talk about some stuff.”

Peeking past the blinds of his window, Izuku spotted the lone figure of Bakugou waiting in place and concealed in shadow down below.

It was an unnecessary effort of course; Izuku himself could have used his bugs to check and it would have provided the same result. And yet, Izuku refrained from checking with his bugs. He didn’t know why, but using his own eyes reassured him that what was happening actually was happening.

“You know that he’s going to goad you into a fight, right? I’ve seen the animosity he holds for you. And he hasn’t had a proper outlet for all that pent up aggression on you for months.”

Izuku closed the blinds, stalking away from the window. “I know that. I’m just deciding whether or not I should play into his hands or spite him by not showing up and letting him wait there all night.”

“Heh. Not a bad id —”

“I’m going.” Came Izuku’s terse decision.

“You are?” QA questoned. “Well then, lead the way.”

A hardlined focus on his bugs revealed that the rest of his class was sleeping, notifying Izuku that none of his classmates would be interrupting his late night brawl with Bakugou.

He turned to leave by the door, but not before letting out a small reassurance to the occupants of his room.

“Be back soon, guys. I’ve got to take care of a little something.” He paused. “And behave, Spurt. I’ll actually be back early within an hour or two this time.”

A chorus of chirps, buzzes, chitters and admonished clacking echoed throughout the room all at once. Izuku closed the door and began his trek down the stairs.

The walk would take longer than using the rope, but there wasn’t a point to using it to leave his room unless he just wanted to make Bakugo even more suspicious and frustrated. Which, honestly, was a fairly tempting action. But Izuku would hold off for now.

“You know,” Izuku began, musing more to himself than QA, “I’m having a strange sense of deja vu. I mean, it’s not all the same, but the basis is at least similar. I’m sneaking out in the middle of the night again. Probably going to get caught too, if I’ve learned anything about Nezu. He might
He reached the bottom of the stairs.

“And what are you going to do about it?” QA asked.

Izuku mulled over the question for a few seconds, bobbing his head side to side as he did so. “Eh. Nothing.”

He reached the front door and didn’t waste any time swinging it open. Once his face touched the cold nighttime air, so did his eyes meet those of his current adversary.

The two of them didn’t speak, a sort of mutual understanding growing between the two as they glared at each other in the eye. This continued for a few moments, the atmosphere breaking as Bakugo did a quick one-eighty and stomped off. Izuku followed not too long after.

They traveled, wordless and slow, through the campus of UA. Minutes passed with nothing but the empty footfall of the two boys and the ambivalent sounds of a calm night. They eventually came upon Ground Beta, the hyper-realistic and small-scaled cityscape the hero course used during their training exercises with All Might.

“You know,” Izuku said, breaking the silence, “I haven’t actually thanked you for helping rescue me from the League back in Kamino. I really appreciate your going out and distracting those villains, even if it was just for that little bit. So thanks for that, I guess.”

Bakugo continued walking, letting Izuku’s words fall to seemingly deaf ears.

A minute more and Bakugo stopped, turning around to face Izuku with a vicious glare. Izuku paid it no mind, waiting for whatever Bakugou was aiming to say.

It was exactly like before, both looking and waiting for the other to crack. And as it turned out, Bakugou was the one who grew tired of waiting.

“How is it,” Bakugo hissed, “that a worthless weakling like you got into UA?” His voice was soft, contemplative, and quiet — and yet somehow still tinged with anger and rage.

“You’ve been hiding your quirk from me all this time!” His voice grew into a shout. His hands curled into fists and his eyes emitted a dangerous glow. “How long, huh! Since back in middle school, when all those bugs covered the window?! How long before that? Since we were four?”

“You didn’t exactly give me a reason to tell you anything,” Izuku replied curtly, keeping his voice steady. “You would’ve just tried beating me up harder. Your words would’ve just gotten harsher. We both know that.”

Bakugo growled, his anger showing clear as day. He looked ready to pounce as a predator did to prey.

It was only then that Izuku realized just how long it had been since he had actually had an honest confrontation with Bakugo. All his pent up aggression would do wonders to make the upcoming fight a hard one.

He called in millions of bugs in preparation.

“To answer your question,” Izuku simply continued, “I truly was a late bloomer. I was eight when it happened. I got my quirk in the middle of the night.” Izuku laid out his words before Bakugo as
if they were mere facts, with no hint of emotion attached to them.

“But by that point, there was now way I was going to tell you. It wouldn’t have changed your view of me, anyways.” The cold assessment did little to quell Bakugo’s already worsening temper.

“You’ve been making waves things ever since we got here,” Bakugo spat. “That first battle trial, that freak show display you flaunted all around at USJ, and now you have the freaking privilege to get into some special program? You don’t even need to take the license exam! And I failed mine!”

“This whole time, it’s been pissing me off! And after seeing you at Kamino…” He shook his head. “All of a sudden, you’re getting all this attention. From the principal, from Aizawa, from everyone else. Even All Might.”

Bakugo huffed. “We haven’t fought once, you know. Not during any of our battle trials. Not at the sports festival. Nothing. And that’s why we’re going to fight. Right here, right now. Show me what it is that everybody’s seeing in you.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes. He went into motion.

A few of Izuku’s smaller, less noticeable flyers flew in from behind Bakugo and carefully landed onto him. A single bug landed on each limb and concealed themselves from sight, with Bakugo none the wiser.

Bakugo shifted, his body adopting a ready stance, eager for a fight. Izuku did the same. Both were silent.

And then Bakugo launched forward, his explosions setting off a bright blast of yellows and oranges that highlighted his smiling face. The mere sight of the occurrence reached deep into Izuku’s psyche, bringing long forgotten scars right back to the surface. Images of fire, explosions, and pain, all rolled into one singular and constant origin. It was enough to cause Izuku to still, leaving him open to attack.

But Bakugo’s initial movement was sloppy. Izuku didn’t know if the boy was simply too caught up in the moment to notice, or if he was merely underestimating him, but the attack could be easily countered, even without the use of bugs.

That was enough to get Izuku to act.

Izuku easily saw it; a rightward swing — Bakugo’s usual opening attack. A quick dodge backwards and to the right, and Izuku was off the course of the attack. The end result was an unscathed Izuku and a fuming Bakugo.

“I’m going to give you the chance to stop while you’re ahead, Bakugo,” Izuku cautioned.

“Oh?” Bakugo said, half laughing. “Why is that? Is it because you know that you can’t beat me, is that it?”

Izuku set his bugs off to work. He had the perfect counter… Probably.

“No,” Izuku said. “I’m warning you that you’ll lose. If you stop now, you won’t be wasting your own time and efforts. Though, that’s just my suggestion.”

Bakugo let out a howl of rage, barreling right for Izuku with his own two feet. Izuku immediately ducked into the nearest building that he could, finding himself in a rather sparse two-story office. The action served two purposes, really. The first was to rid Bakugou of the advantage of an open
space to fight in. The second was evasion.

Swarms of bugs instantly moved to cover Izuku’s escape, shrouding him in an amorphous cloud that blocked Bakugo’s vision. Bakugo was thus forced to blast away one mass of bugs after another, repeating the same attack over and over until the swarms suddenly stopped. By then, Bakugo had somehow ended up in the middle of the building’s first floor.

“Stop hiding!” Bakugou yelled, his eyes scanning the dark recesses of the building for movement. “Come out here and fight me!” Bakugo calmed his breathing, listening for any potential movement.

He grinned when he heard a small scuffle being made against the floor. He turned towards its direction and shot off a large blast in its direction, blowing away debris and blasting a hole in the wall.

When the dust cleared, Bakugo’s smile faltered. As it turned out, what he had attacked was merely a swarm clone. And with the abundance of bugs in the area, the floating figure easily reformed.

“You’re making quite a racket, you know,” the swarm buzzed. “I wonder how long it’ll be until someone checks up on us?”

“Stop playing around!” Bakugou growled. “Come out and face me yourself!”

The swarm scoffed. “You must think I’m an idiot. We’d be having a different kind of fight right now if I had a quirk that’d let me face you head on. But the fact of the matter is that I don’t.”

“So you admit that you can’t beat me?” Bakugo retorted. “That you’re just a weakling?”

“You just can’t see it, can you? You can’t face the fact that I’m plenty strong enough to hold my own. You can’t face the fact that I’m actually capable of beating you if I don’t run at you like a reckless idiot.”

“I can definitely take you!”

The swarm laughed. “We’ll see.”

A metal pipe came crashing down from the ceiling, bashing Bakugou right over the head. Bakugo wasted no time in retaliation, aiming his palm upwards and letting out another concussive explosion. All it did was bring about even more rubble over his head.

When the resulting dust cleared, a quick tumble of rocks captured Bakugo’s attention. A quick look revealed the outlines of a foot retreating around the corner of the hole in the wall.

Bakugo’s face scrunched up. “You can’t run forever!”

“You sure?”

Bakugo swerved and let out another explosion. The action proved useless. Another swarm fell to the ground and was readily replaced by another.

After realizing his mistake, Bakugo paid it no mind and went to follow the glimpse of Izuku he had seen just a moment ago.
“You’ve been bottling up all this aggression!” the following swarm spat. “It’s a wonder you’re still able to function.”

A quick blast disabled that swarm into nothing. Bakugo kept trudging forward. The quick slamming of a door caught his attention. He immediately went for it.

“Your motivations aren’t wrong, you know.” Another clone spoke, moving its hands in a placating manner. “There’s nothing wrong with wanting to be the number one hero. That’s what I’m trying to do too. The only thing that I find despicable about it are the methods you undergo to reach that goal. Well, that and your attitude.”

The door was blown off its hinges. Baakugo was met with an enormous swarm that flew right at his face.

“The fuck!” Bakugo spat out the words as the swarm dissipated from his immediate vicinity.

“I’m having way too much fun with this, you know.”

Bakugo turned around, slowly this time. He was met with a dozen or so clones, each spread out far enough that a single blast would only take out one or two at a time.

Bakugo didn’t care. He began blowing each and every one as they closed in on him. Each clone dispersed upon contact, leaving little but a few bites and scratches. By the time the twelve clones were gone, he was met with silence.

Bakugo was seething. “Stop being such a coward and fight!”

“Ok.”

Bakugo didn’t have time to react to his hearing of Izuku’s own voice. After all, it had come from everywhere all at once. Another dozen clones sprung up in front of Bakugo, moving in tandem with each other towards their mutual target.

It was enough of a danger to Bakugou that he didn’t notice another clone coming up from some rubble from behind. That one grabbed Bakugou by the shoulder and wrapped a hand around the back of head head, twirling him backwards and smashing his face into the ground.

Bakugo instantly sprang up with an explosion, aiming to decimate Izuku where he stood. However, his efforts were hampered by the various bugs that found the time to cloud his vision yet again.

By the time the bugs surrounding his face left, his vision took in the sight of another twelve clones surrounding him from all sides.

Bakugo roared. “Enough!”

His hands slammed onto the ground, engulfing the road in a huge explosion. Debris and rubble flew everywhere, dispersing all the clones except for one. A single clone among the twelve let out a gasp of surprise upon hitting the ground.

“There you are.” Bakugo didn’t waste any time with words that time around. He instantly let off dual explosions that launched him towards the noise. And in one swift movement, Bakugo had Izuku by the scruff of his neck.

“Not so tough now, are ya?” Bakugo raised his free hand, sparking small explosions in preparation. “You’re nothing without your bugs. So just relax and let me—”
Bakugo didn’t have a chance to finish. He was caught off guard by the harsh kick that connected to the stomach and forced him to stumble back, letting go of Izuku.

Izuku smirked. “As you were saying?”

Bakugo slowly got up, eyeing Izuku with a heated glare. “And actual kick from yourself this time, eh?” He smiled. “Good. ‘Cause I’m not letting you play any more of your tricks.”

Bakugo launched himself upwards with a tightly wound explosion. When he was high enough, he copied the movement with his other hand, aiming upwards instead to propel himself downwards at a high speed.

Bakugo was sure that he had Izuku straight down his sights.

However, the high speed and unpredictable moves were for naught, given that Izuku still had bugs hidden within the clothing of Bakugo’s limbs. Izuku made himself tight and aptly moved, using layers of bugs in an attempt to throw off Bakugo’s aim.

In the end, it helped. By the time Bakugo collided with the ground, Izuku was only scraped by the attack, receiving a few minor burns on his left arm.

Izuku promptly found it within himself to take off in the other direction.

“Running again?!?” Bakugo grunted in dismay.

He blasted off again. However, to his surprise, he didn’t have to go far. Bakugo steered himself into an alleyway, where Izuku came into his sights. He descended to the ground.

“Tired of running?” he asked.

Izuku shifted his stance. “Perhaps.”

Bakugo smirked, his head nodding once. “Good.”

He ran forward, his palms shooting off miniature explosions to aid in his movement.

Izuku met him halfway, again dodging Bakugo’s opening strike and taking a swipe at his opponent’s leg.

Bakugo stumbled, but quickly recovered his footing with an assisted explosion. Reorienting himself, he sent a punch back; a punch that was unassisted by explosions but was still packed with quite an amount of force.

The punch landed a hit on Izuku’s torso, leaving what Bakiugo saw as an opening to initiate a grapple.

Bakugo, however, found himself assailed by another kick and a quick jab. Only the jab managed to hit, but Bakugo easily powered through it.

Izuku stumbled back, caught off guard from the sudden explosion-reinforced punch. He was hit right in the face, the fist impacting his nose and causing it to begin bleeding.

The two furthered away from the other, each having the precedence to believe the other had a
counterattack in waiting.

Both were proven wrong, however. This left them a few feet apart, breathing heavily and each eyeing each other for their next move.

Bakugo moved his fingers about, clenching and then unclenching them in anticipation. Izuku, meanwhile, slowly bent down and reached for his ankle, taking out his knife into the open nighttime air.

Bakugo narrowed his eyes. “What the hell are you doing?!”

Izuku tightened his grip. “You have brute strength and endless explosions. I have this knife. A fair match up, don’t you think? I won’t even use my bugs for the initial part.”

Izuku wiped at his bleeding nose, making an effort to wipe the blood away from his mouth. He ultimately failed and only succeeded in spreading blood further across his face. “And don’t you dare say that this isn’t a legitimate strategy. I’m just using everything that I have available to me. Same as you.”

A look over of the Izuku in front of him had Bakugo flaring his nostrils, heavy huffs of air spewing forth. “You know what it was that I hated about you?” Bakugo asked, an eyebrow raising in agitation as he initiated the sudden topic change.

“It’s that impassive face of yours. I never knew what you were thinking. You, looking at me with those damn eyes as if you knew something I didn’t. Despite how much I’d beat you over and over. Like you were looking down on me.”

“Is that what you thought?!” Izuku snapped. “You can’t be serious?! You were already somebody wonderful! Strong and resilient! Somebody I could’ve looked up to!”

“Ignh!” Bakugo shot forward, aiming to pulverize Izuku’s face with his fists. Unfortunately for him, this left his lower torso open to attack. Izuku took the opportunity to swipe towards Bakugo’s stomach with his knife.

Bakugo stepped back, narrowly dodging the incoming knife.

“The fuck, Deku!”

Izuku didn’t relent, forcing Bakugou to keep on dodging backwards, looking for an opening.

After ten or so swipes, Bakugo believed that he saw an opening in Izuku’s defenses. However, he was unable to do anything about it, instead falling backwards as he tripped over something behind him.

His legs remained suspended on some sort of string at the height of his ankles as he fell on his back. Izuku didn’t waste a moment of the opening and immediately mounted Bakugou.

Izuku in turn took out a thin, grey string, using it to hold Bakugou down by pressing it against his neck.

“You tripped over a tripwire. It’s made of spider silk.”
Izuku pressed down with the wire in his hands. "The same stuff this string is made of. You like it, Bakugo?" Izuku asked, tilting his head. “I had some spiders fashion it after a garrote. Of course, it’s not as brutal as old time garrotes. You won’t die; though part of that has to do with the position and how much force I use. This one’ll only knock you out, I promise.”

Bakugo didn’t care all too much. Two explosions erupted from both his hands, launching him forward and knocking Izuku off of him.

“Fucking stop with this shit, Deku!”

Bakugo barely advanced, instead focusing all his effort on blasting away each wall of bugs as they came. This stopped as he caught a glint of something through the haze of the swarm.

A portion of the swarm moved, revealing a knife flying straight at him.

Bakugo’s eyes widened, and he stepped over to the side and pressed his back against the wall, narrowly missing the flying knife.

The action allowed Izuku ample time to close in on him.

Bakugo didn’t have the time to react, and found himself pinned against the wall of the alley and Izuku. His eyes widened again as Izuku raised his other hand, which had a knife in its grip.

He froze, the knife moving through the air seemingly aimed right for his head. He flinched, his eyes closing for just a second. But the impact never came.

Opening his eyes, Bakugo found the knife laying to the right, pointing straight at the wall on the space beside his head. After a breath, Bakugo slowly turned his gaze towards Izuku’s, whose piercing eyes were only a few inches in front of his.

“You let your anger control you,” Izuku muttered, his words almost a whisper. “You let it devolve you into a skilless grunt. You allowed me a large margin of opportunity. Fix that. I hate seeing you waste your potential due to something like an explosive attitude.”

Bakugo opened his mouth to spit back a retort, but Izuku preemptively responded by slamming Bakugo’s body back against the wall. “I’m not gonna be your punching bag anymore. Okay, Kacchan?”

Bakugo growled at the name calling, but otherwise stopped himself from doing any more.

Izuku backed off, releasing Bakugo from his hold. Bakugo promptly landed on his feet and dusted himself off. His eyes didn’t leave Izuku’s form for even a second.

“Sorry, Aizawa-sensei,” Izuku said. He was still facing Bakugou, whose eyes morphed into confusion upon hearing the words.

However, that changed when Izuku turned to face his teacher. “I wasn’t too rough on him, was I?” Izuku asked, his voice much too innocent sounding for the events that had just transpired.

Aizawa merely sighed, rolling his eyes. “Really, Midoriya?”
A/N: Not much to say. Just reminding you all of the poll!

Anyways, stayed tuned for chapter 41!
The votes are in.

19 - 17 here on FanFiction.
On AO3, we have a counting of 3 - 1.

That leaves us with it… being tied.

Well, I’m not sure what to do now. I guess that I’ll make a Valentine’s Day chapter? I guess — if you all want — I can make it canon. It’ll just have to occur next school year in the timeline. Yay?

Aizawa lazily turned his gaze towards Bakugo. “You alright?” he asked, his eyes scanning the slouching boy for any injuries.

Bakugo eyes instantly met Aizawa’s, narrowing in question of a challenge. “Of course I am!” Bakugou scowled. “Why the hell shouldn’t I be?”

Aizawa’s expression remained unchanging. “Uh huh.”

Aizawa was willing to ignore the boy’s temper for the moment. The quick cursory glance he gave Bakugo didn’t reveal an obvious injury aside from a few cuts and bruises, as well as some torn clothing. That made him less of a priority. The situation wasn’t exactly the same for the other boy present.

“And you, Midoriya?” he asked, turning his gaze towards the green-haired boy. Unlike Bakugou, Izuku’s injuries were far more noticeable. The explosion-filled fight and the resultant burns led to nasty red splotches that ran across the length of his left arm. And not to mention was the bloodied face that likely a direct result of the still flowing blood flowing from his nose. Other than that, there wasn’t any obvious extensive damage.

As for Izuku, he perked up upon the utterance of his name, his eyes trailing away from Bakugou and towards his teacher. “Actually,” he began, his tone upbeat, “I feel fine, Aizawa-sens—”

“Sure you do,” Aizawa dismissed. A quick tug on his sweater revealed his capture gear, tightly compacted and spun around his neck. After a few quick manipulations of the cloth, Aizawa had two struggling boys within the control of his capture gear.

After a quick one-eighty, Aizawa began his trip back out of Ground Beta, dragging the boys along the road as he did so. A few brief moments of silence passed by without anyone speaking a word. However, given the situation, it wasn’t long until Aizawa began to share his thoughts.

“We need to talk about your choice of weaponry, Midoriya,” Aizawa scolded, ignoring the nearby swarms following in his shadow.

“Really?” Izuku had stopped struggling at that point, content to let his teacher get away with
dragging him off to whatever punishment he had planned.

Bakugou was a whole other matter. He continued to squirm within his constraints, wriggling and tugging on the cloth that restrained him. Muffled words trailed off his mouth, but they came out as little more than indiscernible grunts and growls. Aizawa had preemptively made sure that Bakugou had his mouth covered to avoid any potential shouting matches.

“You’ll have your turn later, Bakugou. I’m not in the mood,” Aizawa said, tilting his head towards the still-struggling boy, and then back to Izuku.

“And yes Midoriya, really. We do.” He addressed his other student’s words.

“Are you sure? What’s there to talk about?” Izuku asked, unshaken. “And what does Nezu have to say about my arsenal? I know that he’s been watching. I noticed around thirteen drones patrolling the area during the fight, before, and after it.”

“And yet you still fought?” Aizawa shook his head. He’d deal with his student’s hardheadedness later.

“Whatever agreements and arrangements you have with the principal and what I allow in my class are two different things,” Aizawa continued. “The tripwires were fine. They were tactically and strategically well placed and resourceful. The garotte too, as long as you show restraint in its use.”

“The other traps you had set up in the next two alleyways over ‘just in case’ were not. One wrong move and Bakugou could have broken his neck with all the flying he was doing.” He ignored the spew of noises emanating from Bakugou. “And the usage of your knife was unnecessary. You could’ve cut too deeply during the close quarters combat, or you could have stabbed an eye out.”

“The chance of that happening was substantially low,” Izuku interrupted. “I was making sure to be keeping track of all of his movements. I was aiming and slashing at everything with pinpoint accuracy with my bugs, pushing him back towards the wire. Even the knife that I threw was bug guided! The only way something would’ve gone bad was if an earthquake messed up Bakugou’s footing.”

“You’re not reassuring me, Midoriya.”

“But it’s the truth!” A surge of bugs appeared before them. Aizawa stopped in his tracks.

“I wouldn’t have been throwing around knives in the first place if I wasn’t sure of the risks.” Izuku said.

He went off and used the bugs as a demonstration. One swarm held a knife, mimicking — albeit in slow motion — the move Izuku had earlier employed. The bugs carried the knife through another swarm that had opened a hole for them to fly through. The knife was then carried along, moving past an assortment of bugs formed together as a clone, and completely missed it, the clone dodging. Five fireflies lit up on the clone, one on each limb and one on the head.

“As you can see,” Izuku began, “given Bakugou’s reflexes, he would have had ample time to dodge. The fireflies represent bugs that I had on him, which allowed me to predict his movements.”

Aizawa narrowed his eyes. He hadn’t noticed it until now, but Bakugou’s head had suddenly been swarmed by a group of loudly buzzing insects. It was likely that Izuku didn’t exactly want the boy to be hearing all of this, which explained the phenomenon. Aizawa decided to use the opportunity for what it was.
Izuku continued. “As you can see, the trajectory of the knife, which can be distinguished with the trail of bugs forming a dotted li—”

Aizawa swiped at the knife, taking it in his grasp and pocketing it. He walked forward through the swarm, not caring for the feeling of hundreds of thousands of little creatures tickling against his skin.

“You were using fireflies as eyes, weren’t you?” Aizawa asked.

Izuku did a double take. “Huh?”

“Under that cloak of your’s,” he said, almost a whisper.

“That was fairly clever, given your age at the time. At first I thought it was somebody with a mutation quirk or someone using tech. I never would have thought of bugs. They explain how you are able to disappear so quickly when I was chasing you that night. You weren’t even physically there.”

Izuku eyes shined in delight. “Oh yeah! Right… Heh.” He cleared his throat.

“I actually was. There, I mean. I was having dinner with my mom in a nearby restaurant. I saw you running across the rooftops with my own eyes. It was pretty cool and nerve-wracking at the same time.” Izuku tilted his head. “You wouldn’t still happen to have that cloak, would you?”

“Police evidence locker,” Aizawa answered. “And you should remove that swarm from around Bakugou’s head now,” Aizawa mumbled. “As is, everything else will be for all ears until we reach Nezu’s office.”

“Huh?” Izuku stuttered. It took him a moment to refocus himself. “Oh! Right!”

The swarm swiftly left Bakugou’s immediate area. It didn’t take long for Aizawa and Izuku to be bombarded with a series of grunts and muffled words.

“We’re going to have to check those burns of yours as well,” Aizawa added.

Izuku face contorted in confusion. “Burns? What b— Oh yeah! I honestly forgot those were there.”

Aizawa groaned. It was too late at night to be dealing with this nonsense.

It was an hour or so later that they finally arrived and set foot before Nezu’s office. The delay could be attributed to the quick detour they had made to Recovery Girl in UA’s onsite infirmary. While the healing was generally quick, it was Recovery Girl’s scolding of both Bakugo and Izuku that had taken so long.

Bakugou and Izuku had both gotten an earful from the elder lady, and had promised to — under the threat of not leaving the room — be good for at least the rest of the night. Neither of them had exchanged any words since then, and their relatively tame behavior was what convinced Aizawa to let them walk by themselves.

“Go ahead,” Aizawa heeded to Izuku, motioning towards Nezu’s office. “He’s already waiting in there for you.”

Ignoring the piercing gaze of the cross armed, sitting form of Bakugou, Izuku went ahead and pulled open the oversized door to Nezu’s office.
“Uhh… Principal Nezu, sir?”

The mouse-dog-bear thing popped up from behind his desk. “Ah, Midoriya! Come in, take a seat. We have some things I’d like to discuss.

As he went to sit, Izuku noticed how — like before — a kettle of tea had already been brewed beforehand. It was the single largest thing on the desk, and caught Izuku’s attention more than the principal himself.

“It’s Jasmine this time around,” Nezu informed. “Would you like a cup?”

Izuku nodded, and Nezu readily poured him a cup. As he finished, the two settled down in their seats and took a few sips at their tea.

“That was quite a show you gave us, you know,” Nezu said. “Both you and Bakuugo are excellent fighters in your own rights.”

“Uh, thank you, I suppose.”

“Of course! I’m merely recognizing your talent as it is! Just the same as to how the police force does. But…” he stretched the word, “I’m impressed. I didn’t think that you’d take my advice so quickly.”

Izuku blinked. “The thing about fighting?”

“Mhm.” Nezu nodded. “Normally, I ignore these sorts of things when they occur between students as long as nobody got extensively hurt and the outcome is mutually beneficial. Final judgement falls to me what happens in the aftermath.”

“However, since I’m not the only party with your interests in mind, I’d have to report this due to your involvement with the police.” He held up his paw. “But I’m willing to let this pass for now. It needed to happen sooner or later, after all. This is just another check of the list for your development.”

“My development?” Izuku questioned.

“What? You didn’t think that I’d allow for your volatile hostilities to persist, did you? The animosity held between you and Bakugo isn’t a very healthy thing.”

Izuku huffed. “But I don’t even care all too much about—”

“Are you sure you want to finish that sentence?” Nezu interrupted. “Because we both know that deep down, you still care. You still hold some hate in him, for all the things that he’s done to you.”

Izuku paused. It took a moment for him to bounce back.

“Then why keep him here?” he rebuked. “Why attempt to sway such a lost cause after knowing everything that he’s done?”

Nezu smiled. “Lost cause? No no no, Midoriya. Nobody’s a lost cause if you try hard enough to help them. In fact, the fight you two just had did wonders in improving your relationship.”

Izuku’s expression flattened. “In case you didn’t notice, he was still looking at me in utter disdain just a little bit a while ago.”

“Leftover adrenaline,” Nezu explained. “And proof of your bias. Give it the night for his mind to
clear. The change will definitely be noticeable. His hostility will be reduced, quite drastically so. And he’ll even have a newfound respect for you.”

Izuku held back his urges for any harsh wording or swears. “You really think that?”

Nezu nodded and took a sip of his tea. “The rest will be solved in time. This is but the first step. At the end of it all, you’ll just be bitter rivals. And maybe, just maybe, you could be friends.”

“I can’t really see that happening, sir.” Izuku muttered, drinking his tea.

“Oh, it will.” Nezu’s brows rose in amusement. “Trust me.”

Silence reigned for a long minute, Nezu happily drinking away as Izuku looked on in frustration. He filled his cup back up himself before he spoke again.

“What exactly are you trying to do here?”

Nezu looked abashed. “Me? My, what could I ever possibly be trying to do? It’s not like I coerced or forced you into anything, Midoriya. I merely allowed things to occur as they were set into motion.”

Nezu swiveled in his chair, arms spread out. Izuku ignored the principal’s quirky actions and waited for him to continue.

Nezu continued to speak as he continued to spin in his chair. “Your situation was already a volatile one; a powder keg, waiting to ignite. I simply took advantage of the situation and made sure you were under the watch of somebody who cares.”

The principal turned in his chair again until he faced the window, his back to Izuku. A good thirty seconds of silence and a waiting Izuku broke as Nezu spoke again.

“That was a dismissal, Midoriya. Call in Bakugou on your way out.”

“Oh!” Izuku laughed, “Right, right. Okay, I’ll go.”

Izuku rose from his seat, exiting the office without a spare glance. He was met with two gazes, each on the opposite sides of the spectrum that radiated anger and disinterest.

A simple gesture of his head had Bakugou rising up, his gaze not letting up as he walked past Izuku and into Nezu’s office.

Once the door clicked shut, Izuku was left alone with the calculating gaze of his teacher.

“Sit down, Midoriya. Let’s talk.” A thin smile formed on Aizawa’s face. “I’ve been thinking up some extensions for a couple of your punishments. I’m sure that you’ll find them quite appealing.”

Izuku sighed. It seemed that he wasn’t out of the woods just yet.

“I want you two up and early so you can begin your cleaning duties. I don’t care that it’s already half past two in the morning. I want you two up as the sun rises. That’ll be before five.”

Neither Izuku nor Bakugou spoke up against Aizawa, content in letting the man speak as they
walked back to their dorms.

“Bakugou.” Aizawa turned his gaze towards the boy in question. “You’ll be joining in on Midoriya’s daily runs. Since you’re the aggressor in all this, you get some extra laps. Eight-five laps per day.”

Aside from a repressed growl, Bakugou didn’t say anything back to his teacher.

It didn’t take long for them to reach the doors of their dorm. As they did, Aizawa switched his attention towards Izuku.

“You’re already on a thin enough line as it is, Midoriya. I don’t want to see you slacking off at all, you hear me?”

“Of course, Aizawa-sensei.” Izuku nodded.

Aizawa nodded back. “Good. Now, in you two go. You’ll want to be sleeping soon if you want to wake up on time.”

Nobody was up and about in the common room this time around — Izuku had preemptively checked with his bugs. Unfortunately, Spurt was up to what he was doing last time, albeit with less messy results even if he had progressed faster than he had than last time. The only caveat Izuku was grateful for was that the room was cleaner than last time. A quick mental flick of the switch had Spurt frozen and stopped in motion of his activities.

As Izuku and Bakugou went inside, Izuku allowed himself a four to five foot gap between himself and Bakugou. Both of them climbed the stairs in relative silence, Izuku watching Bakugou as he furthered up the stairs and out of his sight.

Once he got to his door, Izuku slowly pushed it open, taking caution that he didn’t topple the tower of books stacked up against the door.

“Told you that I’d be back earlier,” Izuku announced into the room. He walked over to Spurt and made sure to pluck the repurposed coat hanger from coconut crab’s claws. “Not this time, little guy.”

Izuku let go of his sway over the coconut crab, leading to Spurt looking around in confusion until his stalks set themselves onto Izuku. With a nod to himself, the crab crawled his way back into his closet.

Satisfied, Izuku slumped into his bed, ignoring the mess Spurt and a couple other bugs made of the dorm. Izuku could start off his cleaning chores with his own room, after all. Plus, he’d get to see the supposed fruits of Nezu’s labor in a couple hours. So there was that.

It didn’t take long for sleep to take him.

Izuku awoke with a groan. The alarm blared a shrill noise, something which shit off as a guided beetle hit the snooze button. The sun was nearly upon the horizon, something that Izuku could attribute to the natural instincts of some of the bugs in his range.

He wasn’t necessarily dreading the day; it wouldn’t be too different from usual, after all. Not since he had begun waking up early since that fateful day with the police. As is, he’d only be losing an hour of sleep with the new restrictions.
And so, after a few minutes rest, Izuku arose from his bed and made his way downstairs to begin his punishment.

Izuku found Bakugou already down there cleaning away. Surprisingly, he didn’t spout out any disdainful words or shouts of defiance upon the sight of Izuku. Bakugou merely looked Izuku’s way for but moment and went back to work.

“Looks like your principal is on to something. I’ve got to say, he really knows his stuff.”

You really think that?

“Mhm. I’ve had a similar experience in the past, after all. Though, your situation is a bit more tame than mine was.”

More tame than him trying to brutally fight me to unconsciousness?

“… Yeah. Bakugou’s a lot more tamer.”

Huh.

Izuku set about on his cleaning activities, picking up a cloth to start. However, he stopped himself before he began and considered the exact rules of the punishment, recounting Aizawa’s words in his head. Izuku eventually decided that Aizawa probably wouldn’t mind if there were some helping hands take part in the cleaning, as long as they were all still being remotely controlled.

Izuku was ultimately confused when his waking classmates screamed in utter terror upon finding hordes of bugs taking part in cleaning duty.

They really had nothing to worry about; all the bugs he was using were completely sanitary, after all.

Chapter End Notes

So, it looks like I’m taking up executive control and writing the Valentine’s chapter. I’ve been waiting for a tiebreaker, egging it on and hinting at it, but it never came. Oh well. Apologies for all of you who didn’t want it.
Chapter Notes

And so here we are with the special Valentine’s Day chapter! I hope you all enjoy it!

P.S. As for this chapter’s place in the timeline of this fic, it’s still uncertain. Is it canon? I don’t really know. I guess I’ll just see how things end up in the future to determine the status of this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 42: Ingenue ~ A Valentine’s Day Special

“In other news, there are talks of a new villain rising within the ranks of terror in and around the Musutafu area. Named ‘Heartstroke’ by the police, this new villain has been preying on people of all ages, shape, and form. Be warned, this villain’s looks are quite deceiving; while she may be a young gi—”

The TV screen blinked off in a line of static, startling the group of boys who were watching the broadcast.

“Enough of that depressing stuff!” Ashido exclaimed, TV remote in hand. She appeared almost in an instant, planting herself in between the television and its all-male audience. “Don’t you guys know what today is??”

The gathered audience stared at her dumbly. Izuku and Todoroki merely shifted in confusion, while some others like Kaminari and Aoyama grew to complain about the news being teared away from their viewing.

“Sheesh!” Ashido shook her head in disbelief. “Don’t you all know? It’s Valentine’s Day!”

Izuku was the first to speak up. “It is?”

Izuku nodded her head up and down, almost fast enough that it seemed as if her head would fall off of her shoulders. “And you know what that means, right??”

Ashido interrupted him before he could continue. “No matter! The thing is, I have a whole bunch of stuff for you guys! Made by yours truly!”

She walked over to behind the couch and pulled out a sack. Opening the bag revealed an assortment of various chocolates that she began handing out to everyone.

“Wow!” Kaminari exclaimed. “Did you make these all yourself?”
Ashido giggled. “Of course not!”

The boys looked over in her direction. “What is that supposed to mean?” Ojiro asked.

Ashido giggled even more. She went back around and pulled out another bag, that one being a whole lot smaller than the other. “This one’s mine!”

Sero raised an eyebrow. “Then whose are these?” He gestured to the rest of the chocolates.

“The other girls’, of course!” Ashido explained as she began distributing her own chocolates, each person getting around five or so boxes.

“Ashido!” Iida interrupted. “What is the meaning of this? If the others were the ones to have made these, shouldn’t they be the ones handing them out?”

“Well, duh.” Ashido waved him off. “But normal handing out is boring! So I thought this up last night on a whim! As of now, we’re playing Secret Cupid!”

“Do the others know about this?” Kaminari asked, looking behind his shoulder.

“Of course not!” Ashido announced. “I had to sneak into their rooms last night so I could swipe the chocolates! Now we get to play the game of who gave what! It’ll be fun!”

“Wait, how do you even know that these are going to the right people?” Sato asked.

“They each have their own little notes!” Ashido explained. “It was rather convenient for me—”

“Hold up, wait a minute!” Mineta shouted, jumping in his seat. “Why didn’t I get any?!” He looked Ashido right in the eye. “I demand to know!”

“Gee, I wonder why, Mineta?” Ashido mocked. “Surely it can’t be anything that you’ve done recently?”

Mineta froze up on the spot. “Now hold on just a second, you and I both know that was an accid—”

“Wait a minute, look!” Kaminari cried out. “Midoriya’s chocolates are way better looking than mine! They look like honmeis!” Kaminari turned. “And Todoroki too! But he has two boxes!”

“Wait, wait, what!” Ashido screamed. She pushed her way towards the aforementioned boys, her eyes widening in horror when Kaminari’s words were proven true. “No! No no no! You’re kidding me!”

“What is it, Ashido?” Iida asked.

“Dang it!” She banged her head against the wall. “I don’t recognize them! I was in such a hurry to get in and out of everyone’s rooms that I didn’t pay attention to who had what! I should have paid attention!”

“Ashido! What are you doing!?” rang out Yaoyorozu’s voice. The gathered audience looked behind them and found Yaoyorozu and the rest of the girls having just arrived, looking at the scene with varying states of emotion.

Yaoyorozu’s eyes fell to the vast array of candies set out before the boys. “You’re the one who took all of our chocolates!” she accused.
Ashido completely ignored Yaoyorozu’s accusation. Instead, Ashido ran over and fell to her knees, grabbing onto the ream of Yaoyorozu’s skirt.

“Youmomo!” Ashido screamed. “You didn’t happen to make any honmeis, did you?!?” She turned her gaze to the rest of the girls. “And how about any of you?!?”

The girls didn’t respond back; some averted their gazes, while others flushed and stuttered. The reactions meant only one thing to Ashido.

“Nooo!!” Ashido fell to her back, her arms slamming against the ground. “Now I’ll never know! I know those faces! None of you are going to admit it! All of that juicy gossip, lost down the drain! I should have just let things be!”

As Ashido’s tantrum continued, Izuku looked at the box of chocolates in his possession. A quick scan of the others around him revealed that his chocolate box was, in fact, objectively fancier than the rest. The only exception were two of Todoroki’s boxes, which could arguably be just as fancy.

“I don’t really understand what’s happening,” Izuku suddenly said. “What exactly is a honmei? Does it have to do with the fact that it looks like my chocolates were worked harder on?”

Almost everybody shot surprised looks at Izuku’s upon his admittance.

“You mean you don’t know what it is that you're holding in your hands?!?” Kaminari yelled.

“No…”

“You’re serious?!?” Mineta screamed. He jumped out in front of Izuku and grabbed his shoulders, shaking him back and forth.

“Honmeis are made by girls to indicate how much they like you! Unlike giris, which are just made for platonic relationships, honmeis indicate romance! In fact, the girl in question just might even want to—”

Mineta was smacked in the face by Tsu’s tongue, knocking him to the ground with a thump.

“Don’t go around poisoning Midoriya’s mind, Mineta.” Tsu croaked. “That’s not what honmei means.”

Izuku shook his head, reorienting himself after Mineta’s erratic treatment. “Then what does it mean?” Izuku asked.

“Oh! Mineta was actually right on that part!” Hagakure said.

Izuku raised an eyebrow. “Which… part?”

“The liking part!”

Izuku blinked. “You mean…”

“Romantically!”

Izuku looked down at his box of chocolates — filled with exquisitely decorated candies made with obvious care — and then back up at the girls of his class. It took him a few moments to take it all in, slowly coming to realize the truth of the facts laid out before him.

“Oh.”
There was a loud thump as Izuku fell to the floor.

“Ah! Midoriya fainted!”

“I was not!”

“Please stop,” pleaded Manga, his voice wavering. “It was nothing like that!”

“But it means somebody like Izuku!” Pony exclaimed. “It was so cute! Why’s it all matter if somebody wants to give him some vague messages of possible attraction! Hmm?”

“‘Pfft. I don’t understand why all of you are getting so worked up over this,’ interrupted Mei. “It’s just some boring old chocolates!”

“But it was!” Pony exclaimed. “It was so cute!” She planted a finger on her lips, going deep in thought. “Hmm. Makes me wonder who was the one who gave Izuku the honmei.”

“Please! Candies are boring! Why’s it all matter if somebody wants to give him some vague messages of possible attraction! Hmm?”

Setsuna laughed. “I see what’s happening here. You’re just jealous!”

“She shoved the chocolate heart in Izuku’s hands. However, after a few seconds it was obvious that the piece of chocolate wasn’t an edible one. The heart immediately began to shake, vibrating in Izuku’s hand until it exploded into dozens of confectionary pieces.

“On the other hand, I don’t want to be outdone by a buncha girls from your class! So here ya go!”

She shoved the chocolate heart in Izuku’s hands. However, after a few seconds it was obvious that the piece of chocolate wasn’t an edible one. The heart immediately began to shake, vibrating in Izuku’s hand until it exploded into dozens of confectionary pieces.

“Izuku!”

“You are!” Setsuna laughed. “But I know you, Mei. This isn’t some normal form of jealousy. You’re probably scared that he’ll be spending less time working with you on your inventions if he goes gallivanting off with a girlfriend!”

“Please.” Mei scoffed. “As if! Izuku won’t leave me alone for some random girl!” Mei then suddenly reached into her back pocket, taking out a brightly pink chocolate heart.

“On the other hand, I don’t want to be outdone by a buncha girls from your class! So here ya go!”

She shoved the chocolate heart in Izuku’s hands. However, after a few seconds it was obvious that the piece of chocolate wasn’t an edible one. The heart immediately began to shake, vibrating in Izuku’s hand until it exploded into dozens of confectionary pieces.

“I see what’s happening here. You’re just jealous!”

“Keh-wh-What!” Mei stuttered.

“Please.” Mei scoffed. “As if! Izuku won’t leave me alone for some random girl!” Mei then suddenly reached into her back pocket, taking out a brightly pink chocolate heart.

“On the other hand, I don’t want to be outdone by a buncha girls from your class! So here ya go!”

She shoved the chocolate heart in Izuku’s hands. However, after a few seconds it was obvious that the piece of chocolate wasn’t an edible one. The heart immediately began to shake, vibrating in Izuku’s hand until it exploded into dozens of confectionary pieces.

“‘Oh, cool,’” muttered Izuku.

“Hold up! We’re getting off topic here!” Pony interjected. “I want to know who was the one who gave Izuku the chocolates.”
“But isn’t it obvious?” intoned Setsuna. Her hand floated off of her wrist and began tapping Pony on her head. “Come on, Pony. Use that head of yours. Who would like Izuku enough to send him Hommei?”

“Umm…” Pony shook her head. “I don’t know! Tell me!”

“Nope.” Setsuna smirked. “You’ll have to figure this out yourself.”

Pony turned towards the green-headed boy that was currently the center of conversation. “Izuku! Who would most likely wa—”

An obnoxious ringing suddenly blared into life, startling the group of friends. However, while the sound may have been a simple ringtone to most, the sound meant something entirely different to one individual of the group.

“I’m just gonna go now! See you all later!”

Meanwhile, Manga, Pony, Mei, and Setsuna were left stunned and confused. It took them all a moment to regain their bearings and attempt to make sense of what had occurred.

“You think that that might have been the girl calling?” Pony asked.

Izuku turned a corner and leaned against the wall. He took a moment to catch his breath before reaching down into his pocket for his headset. Closing his eyes, he moved to place the device on his ear to answer the incoming call.

“Yes, Kaniko?”

“Ah, Midoriya!” Kaniko’s voice rang from the headset. “I was getting a bit worried there when you weren’t answering. Are you alright?”

“Uh… yeah. Why wouldn’t I be?”

“Just making sure, ya know? There have been reports of Heartstroke sightings around UA, after all. I wanted to give you a heads up. Just in case.”

“Heartstroke?” Izuku asked. “You mean that villain on the news?”

“Mhm!” Kaniko responded. “I’m sure that you know of her capabilities?”

Izuku nodded to himself. “Yup. Makes confectionery sweets that turn people that eat them into zombified drones that follow her every whim. And as a strange side effect, those who eat the sweets end up getting a power boost of their quirks. Thankfully, the effects wear off after a day or so, so the victims need to constantly be eating her sweets to stay under her control.”

Izuku let out an exasperated sigh. “Wait, you’re telling me that she’s been seen around the perimeter of UA? So now I have a villain threat on top of everything else that’s already happened today?”

“Izuku sighed. “Today is getting a bit too much for me to handle.”

“Oh?” Kaniko asked, obviously interested. “Why? What happened today?” She paused. “Does it perhaps have anything to do with it being Valentine’s Day?”

Izuku huffed. “Yeah. You know how those h— Wait up a second. Somebody’s coming.”
A quick shuffle on the ground caught Izuku’s attention. His eyes shot open to assess the disturbance, even though he already knew the source of the sound due to his bugs.

“Hi Jirou. How’s it going?”

The girl in question snapped her head over in Izuku’s direction. Once Izuku was in her sights, she instantly set her path towards him, not stopping until she was only inches away from Izuku.

Once Jirou was in front of him, she raised her hands and planted them on the wall, trapping Izuku between herself and the wall.

Izuku gulped. “Uhh… Jirou?”

Jirou didn’t respond, instead tilting her head in observation. One of her head jacks reached out behind her and plunged into her backpack. When it slithered back out, a piece of chocolate was staked on its end. The head jack was motioned towards Izuku’s mouth.

Izuku froze. He managed to fixate his gaze straight into Jirou’s. What he saw filled him with dread. Izuku whispered into his headset, making sure to keep his mouth as close to closed as possible.

“Kaniko,” he began, “glazed eyes and heart shaped pupils are symptoms of being under Heartstroke’s influence, right?”

“…”

“Kaniko?”

His ears were met with static.

“Shoot.”

His bugs picked up on some other incoming individuals. He recognized some, like Kirishima, Kaminari, Tsu, and Uraraka. However, the girl they were protectively surrounding wasn't familiar.

She was rather short, with pigtails of rainbow colored hair streaming down her head. She wore a pink fluffy dress, and in her hands was a basket filled with a variety of sweets. As for her face, well Izuku had to admit that she looked rather cute. Not cute in an attractive way, necessarily, but more as in something you would hug and cuddle for how adorable it was.

It didn’t take him long to match the face with a name. Heartstroke.

“Oh! Hi there!” Heartstroke greeted as she turned the corner. Her voice was rather cutsey, sounding soft and soothing to the ears. However, knowing what he did, the cutsey image broke down for Izuku when he considered the zombified states of his classmates that flanked the villain.

“I see that Miss Jirou found somebody else!” Heartstroke gushed. She hurried over to where Izuku was still trapped. “Hi mister! What’s your name?”

Izuku’s eyes shifted between the zombified Jirou and the villain in front of him. A quick look behind Jirou and towards Kaminari revealed a piece of equipment on the electric boy’s head. Izuku’s guess was that Kaminari was blocking out any outgoing signals. Meaning that It would be a while before backup would be alerted and arrive at the scene.

Izuku began gathering a swarm. And then he turned back to face the villain. “Uh, hi. My name’s Izuku.”
Heartstroke’s mouth grew into a bright smile. “Ooh! That’s a nice name! My name’s Kuroko! Nice to meet you!”

“Uh, yeah. Same.”

“I’m glad you think so! But, um… Mister Izuku sir? You wouldn’t mind eating one of my chocolates, would you? I promise that they taste really good!”

Izuku looked back at the sweet that the controlled Jirou was still offering. “I’d rather not, thank you.”

Heartstroke’s — Kuroko’s — expression slightly dimmed. “Huh? What was that?”

“I’ll pass on the chocolates, Kuroko. Thank you for the offer, though.”

Kuroko’s eye twitch, her head jarring to its side. “Oh, no no no no no no no no no. You can’t do that. You have to eat my sweets! I made them myself, after all! For you. For everyone. Everywhere. All over.”

“Yeah, no.”

Izuku ordered the swarm to reveal itself, aiming a large portion of them down directly onto his location. The swarm was enough to down Jirou, or at least keep her pinned until the crisis was over.

Kuroko screamed, though Izuku noted that it was mostly due to Tsu’s sudden appearance and subsequent use of her tongue to extract Kuroko away from the swarm. Tsu immediately began to run in the opposite direction, Uraraka and Sero not far behind. However, Kuroko’s distress wasn’t enough to hinder her ability to make orders.

“Kiri! Make sure the bad man stays away! Or better yet, knock him out and then bring him to me back at base!”

Kirishima saluted off in her direction. As he turned toward Izuku, he began to armor up. However, Izuku noticed that instead of his normal hardening, Kirishima was in his unbreakable form. And he didn’t seem to be showing any signs of trouble in keeping up the form.


Kirishima roared, charging forward towards Izuku. Izuku dodged the attack and instantly set his swarm onto the enraged Kirishima. The bugs did little in penetrating the hardened skin, but then again there was a single weak point that could be exploited, and Izuku did just that.

Izuku set the bugs off towards Kirishima’s eyes. He took care to only send bugs that would secrete irritants, keeping away any bugs that could permanently damage Kirishima’s eyes.

The end result was a completely blind but berserk Kirishima that continued to ram into various walls.

“Huh. That was easier than I thought it would be.” Izuku shook his head. “Sorry, Kirishima. I promise that I’ll get Recovery Girl to fix you up later.”

Izuku then sprinted off in the direction of where Kuroko had gone. A quick survey with his bugs revealed Kuroko tucked away in the bowels of Ground Beta, surrounded by various students alike.
Izuku stopped around a corner just before the aforementioned battleground, taking in all that he could see. “Are you kidding me?! How the heck did she gather so many people so quickly? There were dozens of students that she had as her thralls! Where the heck are all of the teachers?! They should be on this!”

Meanwhile, at the UA staff’s Valentine’s Day party…

“I don’t know, Nezu. I feel like something’s wrong back at the school. I think that we shoul—”

“Now now, Toshinori. I promise you that it’s nothing!” Nezu pulled a small device out from his pocket. “You see this? I have surveillance feeds from all over campus. I’d know right away if something bad was happening!”

The Symbol of Peace shook his head. “But then how about this tingly feeling that I’m having in my stomach? I had the same one back when USJ happened!”

Nezu laughed off All Might’s worries. “That’s just the lobster, my friend! I promise you, everything’s all right. I’ll be the first to know otherwise. Now, go enjoy the party! You need to spend some time relaxing and not worrying about your students!”

All Might sighed. “Oh, alright Nezu. If you say so. I’ll be by the punch bowl if you need me.”

Once All Might was gone, Nezu turned on the small device in his hands. He smirked upon seeing just what was happening on the surveillance feeds. However, Nezu was specifically paying attention to a certain feed that was showcasing a specific green-haired boy.

“Hehe. I wonder how you’ll be getting out of this one, Midoriya. I can’t wait to see.”

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“Hehe. I wonder how you’ll be getting out of this one, Midoriya. I can’t wait to see.”

Okay, let’s see. She has 1-B and 1-A under her control, so I’ll have no help from there. Mei’s fine and in her lab, but she’ll be of no help. She’s in one of those intense inventing states again. None of the teachers are on campus, as far as I can determine. And she also has various students from other classes under her control.”

“Best guess is she mixed in her chocolates with everybody else’s… somehow. I wonder how…”

Izuku shook his head. “Doesn’t matter for now. What matters is getting in there and knocking her out. With her out of the picture, her drones will just be standing around lifelessly until the effects of her food wears off.”

“The way I see it, I can flood the immediate area in a swarm as large as my radius can reach. I run in, blending in with the swarm while tracking her with my bugs, and then I’ll— No wait. Todoroki’s under her control too. The fire will just decimate all the bugs. And I don’t have any sedatives on me. So, what’s next?”

“Come in through the sewers? I can set up an ambush, spring all the insects all at once from the storm drain to overwhelm them all at onc—”

Izuku shook his head. “No, no. That’s a stupid idea. I’m doing it again. Okay, okay. Let’s see. Umm… Aha! What’d she say earlier? Knock me out? That’s perfect. But I just need to find—” His bugs spotted a prime target that fit right into his makeshift plans. “Oh, yes. Definitely you.”

Izuku played the part of his own plan. He was currently “unconscious” and being carried right into the lion’s den. However, he was somewhat regretting his choice in his chosen abductor, especially
since the zombified Mineta was only able to drag his body around on the ground. The result was a couple bruises and bumps that Izuku would need to take out on the boy later.

It wasn’t too hard to trick Mineta into believing he had taken him out. Simply falling flat on his face as Mineta shot his balls straight out from his head was enough to fulfill the ruse.

Nevertheless, it didn’t take long for Mineta to have dragged him right in front of Heartstroke herself. Just as he had planned, she was alone in the room. All of the guards were stationed outside.

Although Izuku needed to keep his breathing slow and his eyes closed to keep up the act, he wasn’t blind as to what was happening around him. He had eyes everywhere due to his bugs, after all. Thus, he watched Kuroko as her eyes widened and her smile brightened upon seeing Mineta carrying in his prize.

“Oh? What’s this? You brought me the strange bug boy! I’m so proud of you, Minoru. I never thought that you would have been capable of such a thing.” She patted him on the head.

“Here, have another cookie. You’ve earned it.” Mineta eagerly gobbled down the sweet. When he was done, Kuroko immediately pushed him away. “Now shoo. Continue with your patrols. I want to have some alone time with my new guest.”

The villain’s face held a rather innocent looking smile that Izuku never would have attributed to a villain. If anything, it was just another reminder to never judge something by first impressions. Like all those times he ended up facing down Toga.

After Mineta left, Kuroko crawled over to where Izuku’s body lay flat on the ground. Her smile widened as she floated over him, revealing her teeth.

“My my, you’ve caused some trouble, haven’t you Mister Izuku? I mean, you hurt Kiri! And then you dodged a dozen or so of my other guards!” She giggled. “But then you go and get caught by Mister Grapehead? You’re a weird one.”

She pulled on Izuku’s body, lifting him up and positioning him so that he sat against the wall. Once he was in position, Kuroko placed her hand under Izuku’s chin and slightly lifted his head up, moving it side to side in quiet fascination.

“You really are a cutie. You may be a bit rough around the edges, but it goes well with the little bit of a bad boy vibe that you have hanging out around you.”

_Bad boy vibe? Is she serious?_

“Don’t worry though! It won’t be long now. In just a bit, you’ll get to join the family! In fact… Hmmm…. Aha! I have just what you need!” She dug around in the bag on her side, pulling out a neatly shaped heart shaped chocolate.

She raised the hand that held the chocolate, using the other to open up Izuku’s mouth. “Now all I need to do now is pop this in your mouth and—”

Izuku shot his own arm out, gripping the villain’s arm that held the offending treat. “Wha-Huh?!? Wait a minute! You’re aw—”

Izuku didn’t give the villain a chance to talk. His other hand tightened into a fist and struck Kuroko straight across the face, effectively knocking her out.

“Phew,” Izuku sighed. He took out some spider silk strings he had tucked away and began
restraining the villain’s arms and legs. When he was sure she was secure, Izuku walked out of the room and took an immediate right, bumping right into Kaminari.

The zombified drone merely stared blankly back at Izuku, no longer powered by the orders of his master. With a lack of resistance threatening him, Izuku plucked off the device around Kaminari’s head and smashed it to pieces.

When Izuku put his headpiece back on his head and dialed for Kaniko, he was relieved to get a dialing tone.

“Oh, hey Midoriya! How’s it going? Called back so we could continue having that talk we were having just a little a while ago?”

Izuku smiled. “Yeah, I’d like that. But uh,” he looked at his surroundings, “if you wouldn’t mind, could you send some cops over first? I have Heartstroke restrained here of UA grounds, and I’d rather have her out of the school before nightfall. Oh! And a couple medics too. She dronified a good portion of the student body too.”

Chapter End Notes

Yeah… So, the plot for this chapter kinda sorta ran away on me. But if I’m going to be honest? I like the end product. Hope some of you do as well.

And don’t worry for all of you who are reading for the main plot. The real story continues next week!

As a side note, I don’t promise that chapters like this won’t happen in the future. In fact, they probably will happen again. They’ll just be few and far in between… Probably certain holidays. So stayed tuned for those.
Foil

Chapter Notes

And we’re back to the main story, and the start of a new arc as well! I hope everyone’s ready for Overhaul and the rest of his merry gang.

On another note, thanks to all of those who read and enjoyed the last chapter! It was a fun little detour that I thoroughly enjoyed writing.

Anyways, onwards! To Chapter 43: Foil!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Our society needs to prepare for unparalleled hardship in the near future. This applies especially to those of you in the hero course. Including all of you second and third years in work study. Going forward, you must be more aware than ever of the threat that is out there.”

“Such gloomy talk makes us heavyhearted, I know. However, that’s why the staff is doing their best to keep things from getting too dreary. We hope to inspire an industrious ethic in young men and women alike, all so that you may go on to become capable members of soc—”

“Socket wrench, Izuku.”

“Right on it.” Izuku shuffled through the undignified mess that was Mei’s workshop station, pushing aside blueprints and random junk until he found the specified tool. He took the wrench in his grip and handed it over to his Mei, taking caution to avoid the showering of sparks that were originating from her active use of a welding torch.

“Thank you very much!” Mei said, switching the torch in her hand for the wrench. She moved her newfound wrench onto a bolt and began tightening it, turning the shaped metal three times until she stopped and held it in place.

“Melissa, I want you to lower down the spark plug and the neural wiring until it hits points ZW and KT. That way we can start on section 243/A7 despite the fact that we don’t have the internal processor yet.”

A set of mechanical appendages lowered themselves down as Mei talked, already beginning their own sets of movements and wiring. “Didn’t you say that without the titanium alloyed processor, the chance of explosion rose by fifteen percent?”

Izuku sighed. He looked up and over at the monitor that held the face of his friend. “Please don’t remind me of that, Melissa. Explosions happen with Mei on a daily basis already. I don’t want to have to worry about something that may or may not happen.”

A third mechanical arm that wasn’t in current use rose and pointed itself at Izuku, jabbing into his chest. “And why not? Laboratory precautions and the statistics of potential malfunctions are integral to the safety of those in the lab! Not taking part in knowing such things increases the risk of injury ten-fold!”

“You, obviously, are too used to the luxuries of a functioning state-of-the-art lab stock full of the
Mei suddenly looked up, taking a glance at Izuku before going back to work. "By the way — and not that I’m complaining about you being here or anything — but didn’t the Bandage Man put you under house arrest or something?"

The mechanical arms twisted in their place, lowering off their course. Thankfully, the arms weren’t near any of the unstable sections, so no explosion came. However, that wasn’t to say that Melissa cared at the current moment.

“What do you mean house arrest? What happened?! And what Bandage Man?!”

“It’s nothing so dramatic,” Izuku said, turning his gaze back upon the screen. “I just had a little scuffle with Bakugou. You remember him? He was the guy who could make explosions in his hands.”

“Bakugou?” Melissa’s face nearly pressed against her side of the screen. “Oh yeah! I remember him. He was a bit rough around the edges, if I recall correctly.” Melissa placed a narrowed eye on Izuku. “And you’re saying you got into a scuffle with him.”

“Ha!” Mei suddenly laughed. “If by ‘little scuffle’ you mean an explosive deathmatch stock full of knives, bugs, and burns. Then yeah. A little scuffle.”

“Only because you wouldn’t let me make you that solar powered electroshock knife,” Mei muttered, whacking away at her current invention.

“Wait. Wait wait,” Melissa said. “You were the one using the knife, Izuku!?”

Izuku shrugged his shoulders. “What? He was asking for it.” He placed his knife back in its sheath. “Besides, I had it handled. Nobody got hurt, and I even won in the end! I just ended up getting placed into cleaning duty as a result.”

Izuku’s eyes trailed down Izuku’s arm, which was still wrapped up in bandages from the fight. “Nobody got hurt, huh? Then what’s with your arm? I’m somewhat doubting your earlier explanation that a rabid badger attacked you in the woods.”

“I just didn’t want to worry you. I mean, I only told Mei because I knew that she wouldn’t say anything about it.”

“Mei has no sense of safety,” Melissa chided.

“Hey!” Mei interjected. “If his arm works, his head’s still on his shoulders, and his bugs remain under his control, and he can still help in the lab, and he says he’s fine, then I say he’s fine.”

“Sure, sure. I guess that I’ll have to be the one who has to make sure that he doesn’t suddenly fall
over dead, then.”

Melissa maneuvered the robotical hands she was controlling into the next compartment of the metal, holding down the wiring for Mei to do the work. However, another stall of the arms halted the process yet again.

“But wait, why aren’t you cleaning right now then?” Melissa asked. “Won’t the, uh, ‘bandage man’ catch you?”

“Aizawa won’t catch me,” Izuku said, his voice even. “He’s out at the entrance ceremony. And I’ll know when he’s on the move. And besides, I am cleaning! In fact, right at this very moment I’m dusting away at the common room’s television.”

Melissa blinked several times in quick succession. “With your bugs, you mean?”

“Mhm!”

Melissa paused, taking a moment to shake her head, She had to readjust her arms yet again, taking into account her delay to ensure there wasn’t a catastrophic failure in the piece of metal.

“How’s it doing over on I-Island, anyway?” Izuku asked. “Has everything been alright ever since, um… the expo?”

“Oh come on!” Mei wailed. The arms had jarred around yet again.

Melissa sighed, her features drooping. “I suppose it’s been okay. A good majority of dad’s confiscated work has been returned, so there’s that. And I mostly have free reign over the lab now. It’s quite a big responsibility.” She shook her head. “But dad’s still serving out his punishment.”

“But he’s still okay, right?” Izuku asked.

Melissa’s expression changed upon hearing the question, a small smile forming on her lips. “Yeah. He’s not even upset about it at all. He understands that what he did was wrong. It makes me feel selfish, you know? I just want him here, even though I know what he did requires a reparation to all those he hurt. Especially you, Izuku.”

“I already told you that I don’t blame him,” Izuku said. “I wasn’t hurt all too much at the time, so there’s nothing to hold a grudge about.”

“Not too hurt!” Melissa almost screamed. “I— wha— you… I give up.”

The trio talked on afterwards, the topic shifting between much more innocent and light subjects of their daily lives. There were a few close calls in their current project exploding — twenty-seven, to be exact — but in the end everything went alright.

And finally, after a good two hours, it was done. Mei detached the various wires and cords from the device, taking her baby into her hands and lifting it up into the air. Even if the aesthetics weren’t finished yet, the prosthetic limb looked like a thing of beauty. Metallic grey with gold overlays that took on a look of banded lines; the arm looked fit for a king. It was quite fitting, considering who they were planning to give it to.

“So, what do ya think?” Mei questioned. Her eyes zoomed in and out of focus on her creation, eyeing the device for any imperfections. “Is it worthy of being worn by the Symbol of Peace himself?”
Izuku simply nodded. “Yeah. Definitely.”

Melissa looked off to the side, eyeing something that wasn’t visible on her screen. “I still can’t believe that Uncle Might lost his arm. That villain was so cruel!”

“Yeah. And wasn’t it crazy? That fight was all blam blam zap!” Mei waved the arm around, aiming it like a gun. “Aha! But at least with this, he won’t ever be defenseless ever again!”

Melissa smiled. “Yeah. With all the upgrades that we added, he’ll be able to hold himself up even in his unpowered state! I mean, the arm’s got that tracking system, the automated enhanced grip and reflexes, its sturdy titanium alloy, the HUD overlay, the portable flashlight…”

“…the retractable claws, the electrical shock grips, the extendable wrist blades, the lines of Izuku’s spider silk, and the nut compartment!”

Melissa and Izuku stopped and stared at their friend.

“When the heck did you add those in?” Melissa asked. “I’ve been helping you every step of the way! I never saw you slip any of those things in!”

Mei cackled. “Every step of the way, you say? Oh? Have you really? Are you sure?”

“Nevermind the weapons,” Izuku interjected. “Why is there a nut compartment?”

“Because nuts!”

Izuku’s inquiry got him so caught up in Mei’s intense explanations on nuts that he almost didn’t notice when Aizawa began to move away from the spot he had claimed for himself at the ceremony.

Izuku immediately apologized to his friends and slipped away from the lab. He moved quickly, not taking any stops on the way so he could prevent anyone — or worse, Aizawa — from noticing his absence from the Heights Alliance.

In his haste, Izuku estimated that he had gotten back to the dorms within a minute or so before the first arrivals.

A quick check of the inside using his bugs revealed that Bakugou was still cleaning the bathrooms up on the fifth floor. Considering the state of the rest of the floor, it was likely that he was just on the urge of moving down to the next floor.

Izuku was thankful for that. It looked as if Bakugou had honored the compromise they had made just a few hours ago. To list the terms of the compromise in short, Bakugou would get the top floors, and Izuku the bottom. As for the third, they’d meet up and finish from there.

While this acted as a way to equally split up the work, it also provided a reason for the two to never have to see each other before they met on the third floor.

As a result, Izuku had a working alibi as he went off to help Mei and Melissa on their work (not that Bakugou knew any of that). Plus, Izuku didn’t even have to worry about his designated floors not being clean, all thanks to his bugs.

Of course, this plan only worked if nobody saw him leaving the dorms by viewing the security feeds. However, considering that the only person who could access the cameras was Nezu, Izuku
thought that he was fine on that front.

Aizawa never explicitly said that quirk use wasn’t allowed to aid in the cleaning process. As such, Izuku was almost certain that Nezu would rather praise — rather than punish — him for finding the loophole in Aizawa’s rules.

And so, as Izuku neared the Heights Alliance, he ended up running out to the back of the building and towards the place where the trash was stored.

He immediately grabbed onto a couple trash bags and waited, using the eyes of his bugs to determine the start of his walk. When the returning mass of people were close enough, Izuku started off on his walk.

He made sure to pass his returning classmates — and in turn Aizawa — as he left the shadow of the building. It was then that he made his way to where the rest of the trash on campus was dumped for pickup.

“Garbage, right?”

Izuku stopped in his tracks, turning his gaze towards the face that had suddenly appeared in the wall.

“Don’t worry,” the face said, “you can put food trays and the like with the rest of the burnables.”

Izuku blinked. “Right…”

The face nodded and disappeared.

“Where the heck did he come from?” Izuku mumbled.

“That’s… a good question. It’s like he appeared out of nowhere.”

“Yeah. I was like— What the heck!” Izuku dropped the trash bags onto the face that had suddenly appeared at his feet.

The face simply moved over to the right, its smile not faltering in the slightest. “So, you’re the one called Izuku Midoriya, eh? You’re causing quite an impressive amount of waves around here, you know.”

Izuku’s eyes widened in slight recognition. “...Intangibility,” he muttered, nodding to himself. “You’re that guy who got naked at the Sports Festival last year, aren’t you?”

“Hey! I’ve done way more than that since I’ve gotten here!” He didn’t sound mad; rather, he sounded quite amused by the fact that he was recognized for such a unique event.

Izuku narrowed his eyes. “You aren’t currently naked right now, are you?”

“Ha!” The face laughed. “Well, you seem like a smart kid. Tell me, what do you think?”

“Hmm… Mirio Togata of the Big Three, correct?”

“Hey, what did I say! You are a smart one!”

“Why exactly are you here?” Izuku asked, crossing his arms. “I can’t imagine you just wanting to check up on a random first year.”
“You’re quite the skeptical one, aren’t you?” Togata smiled.

Izuku’s expression remained unchanged.

“Heh. Well, you got me,” Togata admitted. “Truth is, I heard about the fight the other night. I just wanted to see what you were all about. Match up with the competition, if you will.”

“Competition?”

“Yup!” Togata’s face slowly began to sink back into the earth. “You’ll find out about it soon. But in the meantime, keep your spirits high! It’ll be important!”

And Togata, as far as Izuku could tell, was gone.

“ Weird.”

“...Yeah.”

“I heard that you keep bugs in your hair! I want to see!”

Without warning, Nejire Hado began pulling on Izuku’s hair, grasping at strands for a chance to spot his elusive bugs. Izuku feigned a struggle, using his hands to try to push away the energetic girl. However, he knew it to be a useless endeavor in the end, and let the girl be.

“Oh! You have a whole bunch of fun little bugs in here! Fireflies, some spiders… Ooh! A centipede!”

“Hado, the kid’s about to fight Togata. You’ll doom him to an easy defeat if you keep riling him up like that.”

Izuku attempted pushing her away again to no avail. “Sure, sure. Can you let me go now?”

Izuku nearly fell backwards when she suddenly let go.

Hado waved. “Sure! Good luck with Togata now!”

Izuku made his way over to join the rest of his classmates. However, before he could get nearly half way there, he took a moment to consider what he was doing. He looked over to where Togata stood before his classmates and remembered the show that he saw from last year’s Sports Festival.

He walked back to where Hado and Amajiki were standing.

“Oh! Hi bug boy! What are you doing back here?”

Izuku turned to Haado. “I—”

Midoriya.” Aizawa’s voice rang out. “What are you doing?”

“Hold on for just a second,” Izuku told Hado. He formed a swarm clone just beside where his teacher and Todoroki stood.

“Midoriya, what are you doing?” Aizawa asked, his face as stoic as usual. “The fight’s happening up over here.”

“I know. But I know that I work better as a ranged fighter than a physical one, so I’ll stay back here and send my swarm clone on the frontline.”

Aizawa blinked. “You’re not actually going to fight, are you?”

“... Maybe?”

Aizawa sighed. “Go ahead and do whatever it is you want to do. The fight is optional, anyways.”

“It is, isn’t it?” Todoroki muttered. His gaze faded off into the distance. He then nodded to himself. “I think I’ll sit this one out as well, Aizawa-sensei.”

Aizawa’s eyes widened slightly. “You will?”

“Yeah,” Todoroki said. “I messed up during the license exam. I know that part is that because I need to be a better team player. So I’ll sit this one out and watch the fight rather than going right into the fray. I’ll watch everybody else’s methods in working together first before learning about them myself.”

Aizawa nodded. “That’s some good thinking, Todoroki. Shows that you’re learning. Good for you.”

“Aizawa-sensei!” Iida yelled. “Are Todoroki and Midoriya going to join us?”

“No,” Aizawa responded. “Go on ahead.”

Izuku dispersed his swarm and brought his main focus back onto his main body. He watched as the fight started and Togata activated his quirk, his clothes falling to the floor despite the horrified looks of some of his classmates.

“So why are you actually staying back?” Amajiki asked, his face still facing the wall. “I didn’t take you as somebody who wouldn’t want to fight.”

He watched as a whole plethora of his classmate’s quirks blasted harmlessly at Togata’s position. Izuku smiled as the smoke cleared, revealing an empty crater.

“I remember all of you guys’ performances from last year’s Sports Festival,” Izuku supplied. “Especially Togata’s. His fights were pretty one-sided.”

The first one down was Jirou. Next was Mineta. A little under half a minute into the true fight and the next one out for the count was Kaminari.

“In all honesty,” Izuku said, “I’m not sure if I can handle him at my current level. His quirk and his technique make for quite a deadly combo.”

“His quirk is nothing to admire,” Amajiki mumbled. “It’s not really his quirk that you need to worry about, but his technique.”

“Hmm… Really? There must be some drawback to his quirk, then?”

“Mhm.”

Twenty more seconds had passed, holding the defeats of Yaoyorozu, Aoyama, and Shoji.
“You know,” Amajiki began, “you’re the kid who survived being kidnapped by villains,” Amajiki mumbled. “Out of everyone, I would’ve thought you to be somebody wanting to prove himself that he wasn’t weak.”

“Eh.”

Amajiki turned, just slightly. “Just eh?”

Izuku stayed silent for moments, watching the fight in earnest.

“I mean, I suppose that I could probably float a bunch of my bugs into Togata’s body and then wait for him to take a breath. Then, when he turns tangible again, I could try to hit him. However, that strategy has the problem of me needing to predict which way his body will shoot off to account for the space he was taking up.”

They had reached a little over the one minute mark: Sero took a hit to the gut like the rest had and fell to the ground. Tsu fell not too long after.

“Whoa!” Hafo shouted. “You already figured out Togata’s breathing gimmick? And the way his body shoots out of any space he’s occupying?”

The next moment had Ashido down on the ground. And up followed Tokoyami, despite his ever vigilant Dark Shadow having provided an ample dodging method and early warning system beforehand.

“I did. Just now, really. I’m watching him with some of my bugs. It’s really subtle, but I can just make out his inflated cheeks as he’s moving through the battlefield. Though, the space thing was more of a theory, if I’m to be honest. Thanks for confirming it, however.”

Nearing two minutes, Togata only had one ranged opponent left. Izuku face adopted an all out grin after the twenty seconds it took for Bakugou to be defeated.

The rest of the physical fighters lost to Togata’s combat prowess a whole lot faster than the previous group. Only ten seconds were needed for the downed forms of Hagakure, Koda, Ojiro, Sato, and Uraraka.

“Mirio’s really gotten strong, huh?!” exclaimed Hado. She elbowed Izuku, who let out a cough and recoiled from the playful jab. “It seems that you know how to pick your fights!”

“Mirio’s been strong ever since he was a kid,” Amajiki mumbled.

Izuku looked back onto the battlefield. As he had expected, it didn’t take long for the remaining forms of Iida and Kirishima to be beaten senseless and into submission.

“POWER!!!!!!”

Izuku nodded to himself. He was happy with his decision to have opted out of the fight. After all, if the faces of his classmates were anything to go by, Togata’s punches really hurt.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s the 43th chapter of this fic for you. Next up, we get some work study stuff!
But with a twist! Stay tuned...
So, here we go. Chapter 44: Nine. Heh heh.

“IT looks like the dynamic duo of Lizardy and Dragonfly are at it yet again! What kinds of dangerous escapades will we be undergoing this time?”

“Hopefully nothing too exciting,” Izuku mumbled. “I’m still a bit tired from all the extra exercises Aizawa has me doing.”

“Which are entirely on you,” Setsuna said. “I mean sure, Bakugou’s a bit of an ass—”

“Just a bit?”

“Good point. A Fuji-sized asshole,” Setsuna corrected.”But you really must have a death wish if you thought fighting him was a good idea. In fact, all the nonstop fighting that you’re doing just helps prove my point.”

“Which brings us to my other point,” Setsuna continued. “You still haven’t given me a proper answer as to how you got approved to go on work study. I thought for sure that all of your punishments would have barred the privilege in the first place.”

The punishments did just that. Or, more specifically, they would have if Izuku didn’t have a few people pulling the strings for him. Nezu was one of them. He compromised with Aizawa to simply have the punishment time increased (again). And then there were the police, who for some reason wanted him out and about on whatever case Edgeshot was about to commit to. He’d have to ask the man about it later.

“And I already told you: the principal just wants me to experience work study. He thinks I need it, so he told Aizawa to just tack on the remaining time of my punishments when I’m actually at school.”

It was as close to the truth that he could explain without revealing the wrong things. Still, Setsuna harrumphed.

“Fine. Be that way.”

Izuku knew that Setsuna knew that he was hiding something. But he wouldn’t crack. It’d be a while until he told any of his friends about his secret double (triple?) lifestyles.

“Midoriya. Tokage. Nice to see you two again.”

The ninja had appeared behind the duo as they were nearing his agency. Edgeshot’s sudden arrival startled them — even Izuku, who had barely noticed the man’s movements before it was too late.

“Ah, Edgeshot! It’s nice to see you too!” Setsuna cheered. “How have things been going around
“It’s been mostly quiet,” Edgeshot began. He started walking into his agency, motioning for the two to follow. “However, ‘quiet’ doesn’t necessarily mean what it should these days. There have been a few criminal activities that we’ve been privy to in the past months, of course. For example, it was just last week that we caught some individuals that were selling Trigger. But other than that, nothing too big has happened in Kyoto.”

“Well, that’s good to hear,” Izuku said. His face suddenly tightened, his tone more montone. “Has Centaur been caught yet?”

Edgeshot shook his head. “No. But we have been tracking his movements. That’s what our next assignment is.”

They had reached a room that had two other individuals in it. One was Highbrow, evident by his costume and the bulging muscles that peered through. However, the woman standing beside Highbrow was somebody that Izuku wasn’t familiar with.

Similar to Edgeshot, she was wearing clothing that many would attribute to a ninja. Her outfit consisted entirely of form-fitting black garments complete from head to toe; the costume was accented by pristine, royal blue lines that spanned down each of her every limb. She was rather muscular too, if the way her form showed through her costume was anything to go by. Izuku honestly thought that she was nearing Highbrow in that regard, and that the image of a ninja was lost in that aspect. But he wasn’t complaining.

“Midoriya, Tokage,” Edgeshot said, gesturing to the unknown woman. “This is Reverb. She’s another one of my sidekicks. She’ll also be partaking in this mission alongside us.”

“Hi there,” Reverb said, her voice low in tone. She moved over and eagerly shook both Izuku and Setsuna’s hands. “It’s nice to see you two returning to us, you know. I didn’t get to meet you two last time around. But dang, I’ve got to say that you two did well in corralling in Centaur when you were here.

“Keh. That they did,” Highbrow added. “But of course, that was only after I softened him up for them.”

“Yeah yeah yeah. Of course you did,” deflected Reverb. She then turned to Edgeshot. “That aside, what’s the word boss?”

Edgeshot nodded. “Take a seat. We’ll be here for a few minutes.”

“Ha! Mission debrief already!? You sure work fast, Edgeshot,” Setsuna cheered, taking her seat. “What, you already trying to tire us out?”

“Something came up,” Edgeshot supplied. “We have very little time to act, is all.”

Edgeshot walked over to a board, one that was set up with various pictures and red strings. “We recently caught on to a lead on Centaur’s location.”

A rather loud guffaw burst forth from Highbrow upon his hearing of the words. “Finally! Took Snakeskin long enough!”

“Snakeskin?” Izuku asked.
“Another one of my sidekicks,” Edgeshot informed. “He’s been tracking Centaur for the past month; a very long month, filled with too many close calls than I’d like. As is, he’s currently on his way back, but he won’t be contributing to the operation. He deserves a rest for now.”

Edgeshot turned back to the board. “As it turns out, Snakeskin discovered a lot more than I had anticipated. Centaur’s meeting up with the yakuza — a group called Twisted Dragon.”

“Usually, the organization scatters its members throughout the entirety of Japan, never gathering together for the exception of two times a year within a mansion owned by one of their leaders. Luckily for us, the year’s second meeting is tonight.”

“You mean today?” Setsuna asked. “That’s some rather coincidental timing… and that means we’re planning on taking them down tonight.”

“How many members do they have exactly?” Izuku asked.

“I was just getting to that,” Edgeshot said. “As is, Twisted Dragon has a little over a hundred members. Thankfully for us, a good majority of those members have low-powered quirks.”

“Over a hundred?” Izuku asked. “We’re… going to have help with that, right?”

“Not that we’d really need any due to your bugs.” Edgeshot chuckled. “But yes, we are. The police are joining up with us in Sapporo.”

“Sapporo?” Setsuna asked. “You mean all the way in Hokkaido?”

“Unless you know of another Sapporo?” Edgeshot asked.

“But that’s all the way across the country,” Izuku said. “And the op’s supposed to happen tonight. How are we going to get there on time?”

“We have that covered,” Edgeshot merely said. “No need to worry about transportation. We’ll get there in time.”

“If you say so,” Izuku relented.

“Good,” Edgeshot nodded. “As for the main point of the operation: Twisted Dragon’s leaders.”

Edgeshot gestured to three mugshots on the board. “Twisted Dragon has three leaders, all of which command a portion of the organization.”

He pointed to the first picture, which showcased a balding man whose face was entirely covered by a dragon tattoo.

“The first is Daijiro. He’s one of the original founders. His quirk, Combat Stance, is rather simple, but undeniably effective. It allows him to instantaneously become a master of unknown fighting styles.”

Highbrow scoffed. “Unknown fighting styles? You serious?”

“Mhm,” Edgeshot responded. “It’s his unpredictability that makes him so hard to counter. There’s a reason he’s still around today.”

He pointed to the next portrait; a woman with box braided hair and a rather nasty looking scar
running across her cheek to her mouth.

“This is Akeno. She’s been around almost as long as Daijiro. Her quirk, Light Shield, is somewhat misleading based on the name. In truth, while she can make hard light shields, she can do the same for weapons. They dissipate shortly after leaving her hands.”

Edgeshot pointed to the last image. This one showcased a rather young looking man with a rather bushy mustache that was accented by a smirk.

“Lastly is Kentaro. He’s the newest leader as far as we can tell, taking leadership after killing the previous leader nearly a year ago. His position has been left unquestioned ever since, even if the other two bud heads with him from time to time.”

“And his quirk?” Reverb asked.

“As of now, still unknown,” Edgeshot admitted. “Therefore, deal with him with the utmost caution. Consider him capable of a whole slew of things, and the most dangerous of the three.”

Edgeshot turned away from the board and pointed to the door. “That’s all you need to know for now. The rest of the information — tactics, strategies, and the such — will be part of the debrief when we get to Hokkaido. For now, have some sleep. It’s going to be a long night.”

Effectively dismissed, everyone stood up from their seats. However, as they did so, Edgeshot spoke out once more. “Except for you, Midoriya. I need to have a word with you.”

“Ohhoho! Looks like somebody’s in trouble,” teased Setsuna. “Looks like I’ll be catching up with you later, ‘zuku. For now, I’ll be talking with the agency’s other resident female!” She turned, heading out the door. “Reverb!~”

The door swung closed, signifying the departure of all who didn’t need to be in the room. Edgeshot walked over to it and ensured it was locked.

Izuku looked at Edgeshot unblinking. “So… what is it, Edgeshot?”

“I spoke with your handler last week. I must say, Miss Kaniyashiki is rather… loose in her policies.”

“Oh,” Izuku laughed. “So, eh, you know…”

“No need to be so secretive about it,” Edgeshot said. “As the one hosting your work study, I was informed about what was needed to know about you.”

“Which is…”

Edgeshot crossed his arms. “Everything.”

Izuku nodded to himself. “I suppose that makes sense.”

“Yes. Now, I won’t say that I’m happy with this revelation, but I can’t exactly say that I fault you. I had similar aspirations when I was a child, after all.”

Izuku raised an eyebrow. “You did?”

Edgeshot slightly nodded. “I know what it feels like, to stand back helpless and not do anything when you could have helped.”
The hero pointed a finger out to Izuku.

“Obviously, I had much more restraint than you did, but I suppose that part of why you even considered vigilantism in the first place was due to the relatively untraceable nature of your bugs.”

Izuku nearly retorted to that, but conceded to Edgeshot’s knowledge. “Yeah. That’s partially part of it.”

“That’s expected. Though, I must give credit where it’s due. It took years for you to be caught. And besides, Kawabata simply let you go off, and he knew what you were doing. He would’ve stopped you if he thought you were going to get yourself killed.”

Izuku smiled. “Thank you, Edgeshot… I think?”

“Don’t mention it.” The hero nodded. “Though, one last thing. The others won’t know about this until later, but this op’s a rather finicky one. While on the surface, we’re taking part in this raid due to Centaur’s presence, there’s something more sinister afoot.”

“There’s a greater case involved with what we’re doing tonight. And if I’m understanding what I heard from your handler, it’s likely you’ll be on this case until its closure.”

Edgeshot then motioned Izuku away, motioning for the door. “Off now. Get some rest. We’re leaving by ten, tonight.”

There was a huge crack and a whoosh, and suddenly there was a man standing in front of them that wasn’t there just a moment before.

“Hey everybody!” The man said, his arm moving up in a half wave. “You all ready to go?”

“Not yet,” Edgeshot said. “We’re still waiting on one of my sidekicks, Reverb often oversleeps. Hope you don’t mind.”

“No, no. That’s fine,” the man waved off. “I don’t have any other appointments all night, so I can wait as long as need be.”

“Ah. Thank you, Traveler,” Edgeshot said, shaking the man’s hand. “As always, your services are appreciated.”

Traveler simply nodded, his head shifting around Edgeshot to spot the costumed forms of Setsuna and slightly bouncing Izuku.

“Was that some sort of teleportation?” Izuku asked, scanning the man up and down.

“Why, yes it was,” Traveler responded, his head tilting. “Huh, you two are pretty young, aren’t you? It reminds me of my own daughter!”

He raced over to the two, pulling out a picture and waving it around in their faces. “Look at her! Isn’t she a cutie? I’m heading over to see her right after this! And wouldn’t you know, she wants to be a big, strong hero! Just like you two!”

The man went around talking about his daughter — and even included Edgeshot and Highbrow in his gushing — for the full two minutes it took for Reverb to finally arrive. When Reverb finally arrived, Traveler snapped out of his reverie and shuffled around to the front of the group.

“Right, ehem. Well, is everybody ready?” He was met with various nods.
“Well alright! From Kyoto to nearby Sapporo, here we come!”

A crack and a whoosh later, and the group of six found themselves nearly nine hundred miles away on the island of Hokkaido.

The radio cracked to life, the voice of Edgeshot streaming through the device. “How’s it looking, Midoriya?”

“Well… I’ve scouted as much as I can. I’m counting around ninety-seven individuals throughout the complex. There are a couple of drones as well, hovering around on patrol. They look harmless, but then again the alarms aren’t blaring about on the sign of intruders, so I could be wrong at that aspect.”

“And the high priority targets?” Edgeshot inquired.

“Akeno’s in the dining hall surrounded by a bunch of her goons. The feast is under way, so they probably won’t be expecting us. Centaur’s there too, by the way. And Daijiro’s on the top floor in one of the bedrooms. He’s… uh… well, with some others. Doing the dirty.”

“Hmm. I see. Any word on Kentaro?”

“Not sure. There’s a basement in this place, right?”

“If what we have on the floor plans are correct, yes.”

“Then he’s probably there. As far as I can tell, there’s only one door leading there, and it’s guarded by two individuals. A woman who has a couple guns and a bow, and a guy who’s twitching a lot.”

“Firearms and twitching. Those sound like Kizu and Frisk. They often are seen in Kentaro’s presence, so it’s likely that your hypothesis of him is correct. But can’t you get a couple of your bugs inside the room? Vents or anything?”

“No, it’s completely sealed in. All the crevices, vents, and such have some sort of growths blocking them. And each growth is doing something different to my bugs: killing, knocking out, and other things. From the brief overview I was able to do on the membership list that we have, I’m guessing it’s Pathogen. But aside from that, what’s the status of the others?”

“That’s why I chimed in, actually,” Edgeshot said. “Highbrow’s team on the west entrance is in position. Setsuna, Reverb, and the other officers are ready in the east. We’re waiting for your go.”

“Oh.” Izuk took a pause considering his role that was previously assigned to him. “In that case, could I possibly… deal with Daijiro, at the very least? He’s vulnerable where he is right now. The window to his room is open; he wouldn’t be expecting it.”

“As I’m sure he wouldn’t.” Edgeshot sighed. “Fine, go ahead. Just remember, try not to mutilate him too much. That goes for any other individuals you decide to take out.”

“Of course, Edgeshot. I wouldn’t dream of it.”

“Sure.” Another sigh. “Edgeshot out.” And the radio crackled off.

“Hmm. Shame that they’re limiting your usefulness. You could send all your bugs in there and deal with the problem in minutes.”

Izuku sighed. “Tell me about it.”
“Wel—”

“And I don’t want to hear about your anti-police propaganda again.”

“Fine.”

Izuku used his bugs to watch as the two groups of law enforcement closed in on the mansion. He sent a swarm just below the window just outside of the room that held Daijiro, not worrying that their buzzing would get noticed. The room’s occupants were a bit loud, after all.

Izuku didn’t pounce on his target until the gates surrounding the mansion came tumbling down, eliciting a loud screeching of metal. Though most within the mansion were looking around in confusion, there were a select few who immediately sprung to action.

Centaur immediately moved, leaving the dining room in a hurry. Then there was Daijiro, who stopped his actions when the gates came down. Just as Izuku had hoped he would.

As the villain arose from his position on the bed, the waiting cloud of bugs swarmed in. Combined with the abruptness of the action and the fact that millions of tiny opponents had converged on him all at once, his unpredictable fighting stance didn’t do much to protect him. It didn’t take long for him to be neutralized.

Izuku ignored the other individuals that had instantly begun to funnel out of the room. Some other things had caught his attention. For one, the thirty or so drones had suddenly transformed as the police had broken through, shifting from floating rectangles into flying drones covered in guns, saws, and various others weaponry.

A few of the drones set themselves on the invading police. However, what stood out more to Izuku was when ten of the drones made their way to Centaur, surrounding him like a sort of honor guard. That was when Izuku noticed Centaur making his way to the basement.

Izuku sent his swarm to the basement door. The swarm was halfway there when the few scouts Izuku had watching the basement saw Centaur reach the door to the basement. The door opened from within, Centaur entering the room beyond shortly after Kizu had done so.

It only took a few more seconds until Izuku’s swarm floated down the stairway leading to the basement. His swarm almost immediately bumped into Frisk, who was holding a rather manic smile on his face. Izuku prepared to take down the threat, but he didn’t have a chance to. Frisk zoomed away in a blur and through the door. However, much to Izuku’s surprise, the door didn’t close behind the villain.

Izuku steadily positioned his swarm until it floated just outside the doorway. From his first glance, Izuku saw nine individuals waiting within, mulling around without a care. There were some he recognized, like Kizu, Frisk, and Centaur.

Then there were the others: a young girl that had the same growths blocking the entrances to the room growing on her own body, a boy who was surrounded by the same drones from throughout the house, a rather large and exceedingly tall man, a pale woman in a tattered cloak, and a man in blue and silver armor.

However, the individual who caught Izuku's attention the most was the man who stood at the center of it all, complete with his bushy mustache, top hat, cane, and cheshire smile.

“Oh, I’m glad that you decided to play to my whims, Dragonfly,” Kentaro spoke, his voice deep and elegant. “You would have been quite the handful if you hadn’t, you know.”
Izuku’s swarm remained outside; all he would need to do was block their exit to prevent their escape.

Maybe that’s why they’re all calm? They know that they’ve been caught?

“I… don’t know. But something rubs me the wrong way with that Kentaro. It’s almost as if…”

“That’s rather impolite, making assumptions of myself. Tell me, what is it that you see? As if what?” Kentaro said, his eyes shining in delight.

Izuku narrowed his eyes. He willed his swarm to speak for him. “…What?”

“A fair question, I suppose,” Kentaro spoke, twirling his cane in the air. “Though, I know that at least two of you know as to what I mean.”

“No… How?”

“Heh. You would love to know, wouldn’t you?” Kentaro smirked.

Wait… Is he—?

“Waypoint,” Kentaro’s voice rang out, gesturing to the man in the silver and blue armor. “Send in Phantom. It’s her time to shine.”

The woman in the tattered cloak suddenly disappeared in a flash. Izuku’s bugs instantly sensed the sudden presence that had appeared behind him. He immediately sent some bugs, but the person turned ethereal, changing to a ghostly blue. The bugs went straight through her.

“Listen closely now,” Izuku heard Kentaro’s words through the bugs, “because his ability to decipher my words is about to drastically decrease.”

And then the woman — Phantom — screamed.

Suddenly, Izuku’s control of his bugs had weakened. His connection to them was blurred, and sluggish at best. A good majority of them broke free and continued with their baser instincts. The few that remained in his control struggled against his will.

“Nice seei… aver. Or sho… ca… pri? It’s su… bee… a whi…”

Phantom moved forward, her ethereal form almost floating towards Izuku. He reached for his back and grabbed his eskrima sticks, already moving across the rooftop he was on in order to dodge what would be the inevitable possibility of Phantom turning tangible to attack.

However, Izuku was surprised when Phantom didn’t turn tangible, and stayed in her form as she went on the offensive. Izuku, not willing to risk being affected by even more unknown esoteric from the woman, weaved himself in and out from her attacks.

A whole minute had passed, with neither of the two opponents had gotten in a hit.

“You’re a whole lot better than I would have believed you to be, Mister Hive Lord.”

Izuku winced upon hearing Kentaro’s suddenly clear voice. His head snapped around, searching for the man. However, Kentaro was nowhere to be seen. Unfortunately, Izuku’s hesitation was enough for him to be hit by Phantom, who had turned back to her normal form.

“Hmm. But not good enough, it seems.”
Izuku braced himself for Phantom’s next attack, but it never came. He looked on in confusion at the unmoving form of Phantom.

“You ha… to tra… your dis… seems.”

“Wait… why can’t I hear him again? Didn’t I just—”

“Heh. Interesting.” came Kentaro’s voice again. “Dragonfly, send my regards to Edgeshot. I’m thankful that his efforts got the police here. The grunts upstairs, after all, had finally ran out of their usefulness.”

There was a flash, and Phantom suddenly disappeared from the rooftop. Izuku’s connection to his bugs suddenly strengthened, though barely any more than before. It was barely enough to fix together a bit more of his bugs in order to see into the basement of the mansion.

Izuku nearly jumped in place as his bugs’ vision cleared. It was a sensible reaction, considering the fact that Kentaro’s smirking face took up nearly all of his viewpoint of the bugs in the basement.

“Heh. Did I scare you?” Kentaro removed his face from in front of the bugs, walking back to the rest of his waiting allies. Such allies, it seemed, included Phantom. “I thought of you as more steel-willed. Though, I suppose I’m being too harsh. I caught you off your game, after all.”

The sound of battle was nearing his swarm, blasts of light and shouts echoing down into the stairway to the basement. Izuku tried to move his swarm, to do anything to prevent Kentaro’s escape. However, they barely listened to his instructions, hardly moving forward to their target.

“It looks as if our time for fun has run out. A shame, really.” Kentaro chuckled. “Though, as I said before, I am thankful for the actions of your law enforcement. Due to them, I won’t have a large organization looking out for me now. And, as an added bonus,” his smirk grew even wider, “my team is now complete.”

Kentaro’s head turned, his eyes seemingly gazing right at Izuku through the bugs. He tipped his hat, his smile never leaving his face. “Till next time, Dragonfly.”

His head turned again, this time to the teleporter. “Waypoint. If you'd please.”

And then they were gone with a flash of light.

Chapter End Notes

And there we are with chapter 44! How’d you all like it?
The bugs within the mansion dispersed, their presence no longer needed for the process of aiding the remaining police officers and heroes within the now-seized building. Cleanup continued on as usual.

Meanwhile, nearly two blocks away on a rather indiscriminate rooftop of a local supermarket, Izuku sat down on the roof’s edge with a sigh, his role complete.

“That wasn’t too bad, I suppose,” he spoke to the open air. “Two out of three leaders caught, as well as over ninety of their goons. Twisted Dragon is probably done for, since any remaining members who weren’t in attendance will likely disband and ultimately dissolve the organization.”

Izuku let out another sigh. He reached for his face and — making sure that nobody was around before he did so — removed his mask.

Breathing in the cool nighttime air, Izuku found a moment to relax. He laid himself flat against the cold floor of the roof, his costume providing a comfortable makeshift barrier between himself and the roof. His eyes stared up to the starlight sky while his legs dangled just over the roof’s edge, swinging back and forth and bouncing against the building’s brick-laid walls at a steady beat.

“But then there was Kentaro,” Izuku added, continuing to stare into the endless night sky. “And there was something off about him.” He let the silence take control for a few moments before he spoke again.

“He knew you, didn’t he? And you knew him.”

A soft sigh floated through Izuku’s head, almost blending in with the soft sounds of the night. There was a pause after it, a resigned lull in the silence. Izuku knew better than to say anything. He wasn’t going to let her divert the conversation away. He was going to wait; he wanted answers for once.

“He was… is, somebody from my past,” QA finally spoke, her words shattering the fragile silence.

Izuku nodded his head, but didn’t speak, and instead waited for QA to continue.

“He’s… callous. And cruel, and everything in between. He sees the world as his playground and doesn’t care for the damage or hurt he causes. All for the satisfaction of changing the planet for the worse.”

“And he’s stayed under the radar for so long?” Izuku asked. “And what’s this thing about a team? What’s Centaur have to do with it? And why would Kentaro sacrifice an entire powerbase of dozens of people in exchange for a mere eight individuals?”

“...”
“QA.” Izuku’s voice was stern.

“He had a team before; him and eight others.” QA revealed. “All of them were just as, if not more, as messed up as Kentaro. They were murderers, psychopaths, serial killers, and the like. They razed whole towns, killed thousands. All for J — Kentaro’s games.”

Izuku’s eyes furrowed upon hearing the story, his fingers tapping against the cold stone of the rooftop. “That sounds like something I would have heard about,” he said. “I’m sure you know how much I look into the hero scene. Surely, Kentaro would be one of Japan’s most wanted if what you’re saying is true. You’re leaving something out. What is it?”

“... The group was based overseas. And… It was a bit ago. A different time, a different place. I wouldn't be surprised if they aren’t in any history books.”

“How long ago?”

There wasn’t a response.

“QA, how long ago was this? How long has Kentaro been out and about?”

“We... I need to go work on something, Izuku. It'll be a crucial addition to our arsenal if we want to survive another encounter with Kentaro. I might refrain from talking for a while.”

“What are you saying?”

“I’ll still be listening in of course. And I’ll help if you need it, but it won’t be my primary concern for now. So... Be careful with yourself, Izuku.”

The tentative connection cut, QA’s presence fading into the recesses of Izuku’s mind.

Izuku instantly shot up into a seating position, nearing losing his balance on the roof’s ledge before he reorientated himself. “QA! QA, hold up a second! I still have questions!”

He was only met with the faraway sounds of cars and the buzzing of his bugs.

Shaking his head, he slowly removed himself from his precarious position on the roof, standing up and wiping himself off. When he turned to head to the staircase leading off the roof, his eyes had to do a double take off to the side.

There, just a few feet away, was a device on the ground. It was haphazardly covered in wires leading to an untold many places, one of which was the digital counter on the front. Which was counting down. And worse, only had two seconds left on it.

Izuku flinched, bracing himself for the inevitable explosion.

... DING!

...
perpetrator responsible for the device. Neither did any of his bugs sense anyone suspicious within his range.

Slowly, Izuku made his way to the device and swiped the paper from where it was held by a thin rod. Izuku immediately regretted doing it, thinking that the obvious bomb-looking device could have been set off by that action alone. But it didn’t. Sighing again, Izuku looked down and read the paper.

*Have a great night, Dragonfly. ~ Sincerely, Kentaro*

Izuku blinked. He looked again at the bomb. A dud, from what his now searching bugs had discovered. The only question was how it got to where it was.

*Phantom definitely didn’t place it there. I would’ve noticed her carrying a tire-sized box with her when she teleported in. But… if I recall directly…”*

Izuku surveyed the rooftop. He went back and crouched down in the position he was in when Phantom had appeared. His bugs confirmed his suspicions.

“The device is in the exact same spot Phantom was in when she teleported behind me. But… it wasn’t there when she arrived nor when she left. And it never came in at any time before or after the raid. I would have noticed the flash of light, no matter how repressed it was. Or at least a giant block of metal showing up and slamming on the ground. But then, where did it come from?”

The radio crackled to life yet again. “Midoriya, you there?” It was Edgeshot again.

Izuku answered the call. “Yeah. I’m just… trying to figure something out.”

“Can it wait? We need you here at the mansion for debrief.”

Izuku slowly nodded to himself. “Yeah. We need a bomb squad up here, though. Don’t worry!” He added hastily, cutting off Edgeshot’s shout. “It’s not a real bomb. My bugs already confirmed that. We just need someone to dispose of it.”

“I… alright. Wait there for the squad then. They’ll be over in a few.”

“Thanks, Edgeshot.”

“Are you sure you’re alright? Nothing bad happened on your end?”

“… No.”

“Hm. I’ll be wanting an explanation later, Midoriya.”

“Of course. I’ll see you in a few.” Izuku set the radio aside.

He stared back at the device in front of him. “How the heck did you get up here?”

---

A good twenty minutes later and Izuku was standing in the front yard of the mansion. He found Edgeshot and a few officers standing over a table and observing one of the drones that had been defending the mansion.

With more time to look at them now that he wasn’t chasing around villains, Izuku got a clear view of the drone. The one in front of him was a pristine silver. It’s rectangular body was around a foot in height, and no obvious lines of separation were present that gave clues into its ability to
transform and reveal the weapons it held within its chassis.

“Why are you guys doing?” Izuku asked, coming up from behind the group.

“Ah, Dragonfly. Glad you could join us,” Edgeshot said. “Since you’re curious, I suppose I could tell you.” He gestured to the unmoving drone. “The other hero we have on sight used his quirk on the drones. Zapped them straight into turning off.”

“Yup!” the officer on Izuku’s left exclaimed. “They’re entirely deactivated. My quirk lets me sense electrical signatures.” He tapped the drone a couple times. “These guys completely fried as far as I can tell! Hooboy! The boys in the lab are gonna have a blast examining these guys.”

The officer tsked after a second. “Shame we only got two of them though.”

Izuku tilted his head to the side. “Only two?”

Edgeshot nodded. “Mhm. The rest activated their self-destruct mechanisms. They used some sort of internal system to disintegrate themselves. There’s nothing we can salvage from their ashes, of course.”

Edgeshot moved to leave. “Thank you for your efforts officers,” he nodded to the men surrounding the table. Then he gestured to Izuku “Come. I’d like to talk about what happened with Kentaro with the others.”

Izuku went to follow, though before he was able to make much headway he was interrupted by the sudden arrival of Setsuna.

“Heyo, ‘zuku! Looks like you’re doing well.”

Izuku glanced at his friend. Setsuna was missing almost her entire left side; a clear cut had removed half her face, her arm, and her leg. In fact, she was actually floating, considering her current inability to walk.

“You follow too, Lizardy,” Edgeshot suddenly said.

Izuku moved to continue and follow Edgeshot while still looking at his friend. Setsuna followed not too long after.

“What the heck happened to you?” Izuku asked, taking a sidelong glance at his friend.

“Heh. It was the drones,” Setsuna replied. “They had some of that Pathogen girl’s spores in them. I had to discard my entire left half to prevent the growths from spreading.”

“It was… uncomfortable, to say the least.” She shivered. “And I can still feel them a bit. I probably need to go back later and get my limbs and burn ‘em. If just to get rid of the sensation while I wait to regrow.”

“Are you… okay?” Izuku asked.

“Yeah. Just wasn’t expecting the raid to be so brutal.”

They reached the tent, Edgeshot holding the entrance flap open for the two. Once he was inside, Izuku noticed that the previously mentioned “others” Edgeshot had mentioned turned to include the heroes who took part in the raid and a few higher ranking police officers.

Izuku immediately spotted Highbrow and Reverb surrounding the paper-ridden middle table. Two
other uniformed men were there too, one with an afro and another with some fairly thick sunglasses. There was also another hero that Izuku didn’t recognize who wore a black bodysuit and a purple coat. Izuku assumed that he was the one who had deactivated the drones.

“So,” Edgeshot began, taking head of the table. “What happened with Kentaro, Dragonfly?”

“Huh? Oh, umm…” Izuku wandered over to one of the remaining spots around the table. He quickly began organizing his thoughts; he hadn’t expected to be put up on the spot just like that.

As such, he spouted out the first thing that came to mind.

“Well, the basement was completely sealed off,” Izuku offered. “My bugs couldn’t get in to neutralize the target.”

“We found the door open, though.” One of the officers had spoken, one who had an afro on his head. Officer Kuron, if his badge was telling the truth.

“That is correct, Mr. Kuron, sir. Kentaro purposely left the door open, as far as I can tell, to let me in.”

“And why ever would he do that?” It was the hero Izuku didn’t know. Due to his costume, Izuku decided to call him Purple Coat for the time being.

“He had a couple others in there with him,” Izuku said. “Nine of them in the room in total. Some pretty powerful quirks, too. And they were heavily entrenched there. Not that they really needed it, considering they have a teleporter.”

“You mean they didn’t just run out of the building?” Kuron asked. “And what teleporter? We haven’t had any clue of such.”

“Kentaro called him Waypoint, if that rings a bell,” Izuku said.

Kuron shook his head. “No, it doesn’t.” He bumped his shoulder against the other officer beside him. “How about you, Haru? Heard the name before?”

Haru similarly shook his head. “No.”

“Hmm. We’ll have to set up a profile on him later then,” Edgeshot said. “What else do you have for us? How about that bomb?”

Izuku let out a nervous laugh. “Yeah… about that… I’m not all too sure.”

“Meaning…?” Purple Coat asked.

“The bomb sorta came out of nowhere,” Izuku admitted. “It wasn’t there one second, and it was there the next.”

The unknown hero scoffed. “You sure that you just weren’t paying attention?”

“Yes,” Izuku reaffirmed. “I’m sure.”

“Alright,” the hero gibed.

“Enough,” Kuron said. He turned to Izuku. “Is there a chance that the bomb came about because of one of the villain’s quirks?”
“I suppose that’s possible,” Izuku mumbled. “I wasn’t able to figure out the quirks of everybody in the room.”

Edgeshot nodded. “Alright. Then we need to get on that. Dragonfly, I want you to give us as detailed a description of each of the villains as possible. We’ll go through the database and see if any…”

There weren’t any flashes of light. Izuku just saw it floating there, just on the peripheral. Almost like it had been there since the start of the meeting. He saw a brief gust of steam emit from its body.

“Everybody out!” Edgeshot yelled. He transformed and shot towards the door. Setsuna reacted almost as quickly, most of her pieces shooting out of the tent in a blur. Her hands were the only things still left behind, and they found themselves wrapped around Izuku’s arms and basically dragging him out.

Izu eventually found himself moving his own feet, relieving Setsuna of her efforts. He didn’t dare use his eyes to look at the drone, lest he slow himself down. His bugs, however, weren’t as limited, and had the perfect view of the situation.

The drone’s parts had already separated from its body, revealing the weapons hidden beneath its metallic sheen. But it wasn’t firing at them. A reddish glow gradually revealed itself instead.

His bugs noticed the two police officers running out to leave the tent. However, the hero Izuku had dubbed Purple Coat was still within the tent, standing still.

The hero waved his hand at the offending drone, releasing a stream of untampered electricity. However, the drone didn’t drop as it had before. In fact, it actually tilted in the air, almost as if in amusement.

Izu saw the hero’s eyes widen just as the drone flashed a harsh red light. That was the last thing Izuku saw before the wave of heat and flames consumed the tent.

Izu hit the ground, the blast knocking him off his feet and leaving his ears ringing. Shaking his head, Izuku found that Setsuna was already fussing over him, checking him for injuries.

Izu flinched as the ground shook again. Another explosion had gone off in the midst of the yard.

And not too long later he felt it, an explosion of gas. He felt as a portion of his bugs grew heavy, becoming larger and losing their ability to move and breath as organic growths overtook their little bodies.

Izu watched in horror, with the steadily disappearing vision of his bugs, as the same thing occurred to the police caught within the radius of the gas.

“Ioi! I thought we were still on the non-quirk combat stage of your training?!”
“Sorry Kaniko!” Izuku yelled, obvious amusement in his voice. “But you know how real villains are! We have to keep them on their toes. All that matters is bringing them in, not whether or not we play dirty. I considered the same situation here.”

“Ohhhh? So that’s how we’re playing it, eh?” Kaniko mused. “Alrighty then!” Her arms went down to her legs. As her hands neared the webbing that immobilized her, Kaniko’s middle and index fingers took the shape of scissors. Her quirk cut through the webbing like a hot knife through butter.

“Are you serious?!!?” exclaimed Izuku. “Do you know how hard it is to cut that stuff up?!”

“Of course I do!” Kaniko exclaimed as she ran forward. “The stuff can be tougher than kevlar if weaved together correctly!”

She closed in on Izuku, adopting a sudden burst of speed that caught Izuku off guard. Izuku subsequently collided with the wall of the room, and was effectively pinned between Kaniko and the room’s training cushions.

“Ha!” Kaniko laughed. “Looks like I won this one, eh? What are we at now? Seven to seven?”

Izuku smirked. “Nah. Eight to seven.”

Kaniko narrowed her eyes. “But I had six wins on you last time, didn’t I? Hmm… Now, I don’t thin—”

She suddenly sputtered, grabbing for her throat and falling to the ground coughing. Izuku felt his minion slowly travel down Kaniko’s esophagus.

“Ew! Ew ew ew!” Kaniko stuck her tongue out and attempted to brush it off. “You made me swallow a fly!”

Izuku smiled. “Don’t worry. I made sure that he was clean.”

Kaniko eventually sat up on the floor and glared at Izuku, crossing her arms. “Hmph.”

There was a lull in their interaction, where Izuku looked on as Kaniko decided what to do in revenge. To Izuku, the moment allowed for thinking. And in turn, a reflection over the past day.

Izuku’s smile faltered. “I have another question,” he said, switching topics.

Kaniko raised an eyebrow, her lips thinning. “Shoot.”

“It’s about Traveler. Is he with you guys, or is he an independent contractor?”

Kaniko bit her lip. “The latter.”

“Hmm…”

“Traveler is clean, Midoriya. He’s been working with us for a while, and he’s proven his worth. He’s been thoroughly checked and vetted; heck, he brings his daughter over to some of our stations sometimes! He isn’t the source of any leak.”

“I see.”

Kaniko sighed in exasperation. “Midoriya.” She walked forward, placing her hand on Izuku’s shoulder. “Asking about every single little detail isn’t going to change anything. What happened
last night wasn’t your fault. It wasn’t anybody’s fault.”

Izuku shook his head. “Thirty-seven people, Kaniko. Twenty-one officers and one hero. And fifteen others that are now forever deformed and unable to serve. Kentaro knew what he was doing. He knew about the raid, even. And he got that information somehow.”

Kaniko shook her head. “Midoriya—”

A shrill ringing broke the air and chimed in their ears. Kaniko reached down into her pocket, her eyes shooting up in surprise.

Her foot began tapping against the floor. She held a finger up to Izuku. “I need to take this, Midoriya. It might be important. Just… hold on. We’re not done talking about this yet.”

Kaniko answered the call, bringing the phone up to her ear with a bright smile. “Fat-yan! It’s nice to hear from you! Are you finally done with that operation they had for you?”

“...”

“Uh huh, uh huh. Yeah.”

Izuku refrained from sending in a bug to listen to the conversation. It would just be plain rude. And Kaniko would end up telling him about the call if anything ended up being important. Probably. Maybe he could just send a—

“Oh! You’re taking in that Suneater kid again? Oh? And another one too? Calls himself Red Riot?”

That caught Izuku’s attention. What was this about Kirishima?

“Ha! I can imagine. Yeah, I’m currently sparring with that problem kid that we have here.”

“Hey!”

“Yeah, he’ll be there. Try to be nice, okay?” Kaniko nodded her head. “Well. good luck to ya then! Try to stay safe out there! Bye!”

Kaniko ended the call.

Izuku’s eyebrow rose. “Fat-yan?” he asked.

“Hmm?” Kaniko turned his way. “Oh, yeah! He’s a good friend of mine! Though, you probably know him better as Fat Gum.”

The name rang a bell. Fat Gum was a hero with a rather tanky quirk called Fat Absorption. He was also known for taking in one of UA’s big three for work study. Suneater was probably Tamaki, in that aspect.

“He’s taking Kirishima for work study?” Izuku concluded. “Huh. Wonder what happened to working with Fourth Kind.”

“Oi! No changing the topic over to Fat-yan. We were still talking about the raid.”

“Kaniko—”

“It’s important that you don’t blame yourself for everything that goes wrong during a raid.
Especially if just because you think you could've helped with something. You aren’t omniscient. And even well-experienced heroes can stretch themselves too thin. You can’t be doing that to yourself.”

Izuku sighed. “I know.”

“Then you have to prove you do,” Kaniko said. “I’m sure that Edgeshot mentioned that other case we’re putting you on?”

Izuku nodded his head. “Yeah. But he was a little vague about it.”

“He was supposed to. We can’t have any information getting out before we’re ready after all!” Kaniko turned a critical eye towards Izuku. “But that doesn’t matter. What does matter is you getting your head in the game and being ready for when the time comes.”

“What are we going to be doing, anyways?” Izuku asked.

“You’ll be summoned to a meeting with a couple others soon,” Kaniko explained. “You’ll get more info then.”

Izuku made her way to the doorway and motioned for Izuku to follow. “Now come on!” Her smile came back in full force. “We need to get you back to Edgeshot.”

“I won’t tell.” Kaniko shrugged. “I won’t tell.”

Izuku shot her a look. “Right. Like I won’t get in trouble if I do?”

Izuku raised an eyebrow. He wouldn’t put it past Kaniko actually not telling her superiors if he actually did so. But still.

“I won’t matter,” Izuku said. “I’m not going to tell any of my friends. Not yet, at least. I don’t want them to be unnecessarily worrying about me when I’m out on the field.”

“Oh?” Kaniko shot him a mischievous smile.

“Yes,” Izuku reaffirmed. “Now please, try to drop me off a few blocks away from the agency. I was barely able to keep Setsuna busy with my bugs when we left. She got a bit close to discovering me getting into your car.”

“Alright, alright,” Kaniko placated.

“You’ll do it?”

“Heh. Maybeee.”

Izuku sighed once more.
And there we go! A new player out in the field, and they introduced themselves with a bang! Just what will this new group be doing? Well, only time will tell. Stay tuned everyone!
And we’re back at it! This time around it’s more of a setup chapter. Action comes later and all that fun stuff. I need to have some pause time between the Nine and the Precepts, after all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“How about you, Midoriya?”

Izuku snapped out of his thoughts. “Huh?”

Kaminari shook his head, already used to Izuku’s tendency of zoning in and out of conversation. “How much of what we talking about did you hear?” Kaminari asked.

“Uhh…” Izuku gave them a sheepish look. “None of it?”

“Midoriya!” Ashido whined.

“Sorry,” Izuku apologized, moving his hand through his hair. “I’m just thinking about some stuff, is all.” Specifically, Izuku spent long hours into the night pondering over the last words told to him by QA. There was merely too much at stake to just allow QA to remain silent. And thus, Izuku had a plan. If he could just forge a connection...

“Anyways,” Ashido continued, “we were just talking about Tsu, Uraraka, and Kirishima’s work studies. Did you know that all three of them got on the news!? Uraraka and Tsu with Ryuku, and Kirishima with this Fat Gum guy!”

“Fat Gum, eh?” Izuku mused. “So I guess I was right.” He turned to Kirishima. “Whatever happened to Fourth Kind?”

“Fourth Kind was busy with some stuff, so he couldn’t take me in.” Kirishima shrugged, his toothy smile showing. “But s’allright. Fat Gum’s a pretty cool guy! I’m liking my work study already!”

Izuku gave a non committal nod. “Right.” A small frown appeared on his face.

“Hey, are you alright, Midoriya?” Ashido asked.

“Mhm.” Izuku nodded, doing away with his frown. “Just thinking again.” It almost felt as if he fostered the connection between him and QA, but that feeling resided just as quickly as it came. Is QA actively avoiding me? Just how much concentration does she need to do whatever it is she’s doing?

“It seems like you’re always thinking about stuff lately,” Ashido said.

“Usually yes, Midoriya’s fairly contemplative about things,” Yaoyorozu chimed in. “Though I think that there is something up.” She gave Izuku a long look. “He’s a bit quieter than usual.”
“Am I?” Izuku asked, genuinely curious. “I haven’t really noticed.”

Yaoyorozu’s mouth turned to a thin line. “Is it because of the raid you partook in the other day?”

Izuku’s eyes tightened. “How do you know about it?” he asked. “Info on the incident is currently being withheld and kept tight and away from the public until further notice.”

Yaoyorozu shrugged her shoulders. “I listen around. And my dad sort of also knows a couple people in the force. Some of them were those who didn’t… come back from the raid that day.”

“Oh.”

“Raid? What raid?” Kaminari asked. “I didn’t see any news about any major raids in Kyoto.”

“That’s because the one I’m talking about occurred in Hokkaido,” Yaoyorozu said, matter of factly. She turned a worried gaze back at Izuku. “Are you sure you don’t want to talk about it, Midoriya?”

Izuku gave a hum of affirmation.

“Wait. Hokkaido? Hold on…” Ashido began scrolling through her phone. “Aha! Here’s something. It’s on some random forum site, but it says that… Wait, that can’t be right. How…?”

“What is it?” Uraraka asked.

“Ashido,” Yaoyorozu began, “maybe you shoul—”

“What!?!?” Kaminari exclaimed, reading the information from over Ashido’s shoulders. “It says that over twenty police officers died in some sort of operation! And around a dozen or so more were badly injured.”

Kaminari turned to Izuku. “Shit Midoriya, are you sure that you’re okay? No damage on you or anything?”

Izuku grimaced. “Yeah. Promise.”

“You sure? What about that other green-haired friend of yours from 1-B?” Ashido asked.

Izuku sighed. “Setsuna’s fine as well.” His gaze became distant. Maybe if he poked the barrier between his mind and wherever it was that QA resided at just this angle of thought…

“Midoriya. You know that we’ll always be there for you if you want to talk, right?” Izuku left his own mind, actually looking at his friends. He nodded. “Thank you.”

“...uku… Izu… ke up…”

Izuku rolled in his bed, going from his back onto his side.

He was immensely tired, Aizawa having doubled down on his punishments due to the upcoming events regarding work studies. It caused Izuku to curse his past actions, even if he didn’t actually regret any of them. He mostly just hated himself for getting him into his current situation.

A faint sensation of air brushed against Izuku’s face once he settled onto his side.

“Izuku… wake up…”
His eyes shot open, noticing that the voice wasn’t some sort of dream. His opening eyes were immediately greeted with two glowing orbs of yellow, delicately peering into him.

“Gah!” His hands shot out from under his covers, causing the unknown intruder of his room to fall back and land on their behind with an rather anticlimactic ‘Oomf.’

It was only when Izuku sat up and rubbed his eyes to clear up his vision that he discovered the identity of the intruder.

“Mei?”

“Heyo!” Mei waved, completely disregarding that fact that she had fallen to the ground. She slowly raised herself from her pseudo-seated position, but exhibited no urgency in doing so.

“Nice job on actually hitting me this time!” Mei cheered once she was up. “It seems like you finally listened to my advice and actually started working on your situational morning awareness. It’s definitely improved if you’re able to actually land a hit in the midst of your morning grogginess.”

“I was a challenge!” Mei exclaimed rather loudly. Izuku winced. He used a small bug to check his alarm clock and let out an internal sigh. It was way too early for him to be dealing with Mei’s antics.

“And besides,” Mei continued, “my auto-lockpicking baby improved with each attempt! It wasn’t ready then, but it is now! I feel as if being able to pick all the door types here at UA should count as a qualifier.”

“A lock picking device? When did you— no, never mind. I’ll leave that issue be.” Izuku took a breath, compiling his thoughts. “Instead, I’m going to ask why you couldn’t have done that at home. It sounds like an easy experiment.”

“Nothing beats the thrill of field experiments! You know that!”

Izuku remembered all the times he had regretted allowing Mei to use that justification. He hoped that now wasn’t one of those times.

“Why are you here, exactly?” Izuku asked. “I doubt this is just a friendly morning visit. All those other times certainly weren’t.”

“And you’d be right with that assumption!” Mei cheered. “Here, look! I’ve got something for ya!”

Izuku found something being abruptly dropped onto him, startling him further awake. Resigned to the prospect that he wouldn’t be getting anymore sleep, Izuku slowly opened his eyes. Once Izuku saw the thing that had made its home on his stomach, he sat up in his bed to further examine it.

After a minute or so of doing so, Izuku didn't know what to say. The thing that was handed to him was just so… normal.

“It’s a backpack?” he asked.

“Yep!”
Izuku further scanned the backpack. As he had observed earlier, it was rather normal looking, colored in a single shade of black.

The only glaring detail that Izuku noticed was how the exterior of the backpack was covered in some sort of metallic shell. It was hard to see it if you weren’t looking for it, but with the way it felt in his hands and how it sounded when he knocked on it, there was definitely a metallic element to the backpack.

That metal was probably responsible for the shape of the backpack as well. A few tests revealed that the bag was completely inelastic and rigid in its shape.

The interior wasn’t so different. When he opened the backpack up, Izuku found a thick layer of metal making up most of the inside. Only a thin rectangular space was left open at the bag’s center — just barely enough space to fit his usual amount of school supplies.

“Why’s the layer of metal so thick going inwards?” Izuku asked. He then knocked on its inner layer; it echoed. “And why’s it sound hollow?”

“The metal makes sure the inner contents don’t get damaged, duh.” Mei exclaimed.

“But… so much of it? And is it even at all comfortable? It’s almost entirely metal. Plus, this space could be used for storing more stu—”

“Shh!!” Mei hushed, closing in on Izuku and clamping her hand over his mouth. “You’ll appreciate later. Trust me.”

Mei then backed away. “Besides, it can change colors, look!”

Mei took out an oval remote from her belt and began typing away at it. Within moments, the plates that made up the backpack seemingly rippled. The pack had suddenly changed from its more discreet and muted black into a vibrant patterned yellow and green.

Izuku blinked. “This looks like something that might go along with my costume… Mei—”

“I know, I know.” Mei typed away at the remote in her hands, and the pack shifted back to its previous color. “I’ll leave it like that for now.”

“Now!” Mei yelled. “You need to get ready! You have your work study thingy today!”

Izuku groaned, he knew what time it was. “You’re early, Mei. My alarm doesn’t go off for another two hours. Did you just stumble in here the moment you finished this?”

“Of course!”

Izuku sighed, then nodded, a small smile forming. “Thanks, Mei.”

Surprisingly — though Izuku thought that he shouldn’t have expected anything less — the backpack was impossibly lightweight and rather comfortable. He was currently wearing it, and he could barely tell that the pack was made of metal. This was true even with the straps, something of which Mei had introduced a little later right before he had left. Mei had said that they were to ensure the bag couldn’t just be swiped off of him. Izuku thought that it was a bit much, but he appreciated the gesture.

At the current moment, he was walking alongside Uraraka, Tsu, Kirishima, and Setsuna. Izuku was
surprised at first when all five of them had ended up following the same route as they all left UA at the same time, and he likely would have remained confused if he was anyone else. However, considering Kaniko’s previous words to him and Edgeshot’s warnings, Izuku had a good idea of what was happening.

Izuku’s beliefs were enforced when the group stumbled upon the Big Three. He was certain that somebody was summoning not only the police, but also certain heroes and their work study pupils to aid in whatever big operation was planned.

And so, when they all entered the building that they were all told to meet at, Izuku wasn’t surprised by the gathering of heroes within.

He was, however, surprised to see Bubble Girl and Centipeder. That was mostly because of the implications of Sir Nighteye being involved with this case since they were present. In fact, Izuku’s excitement soared when his bugs finally took note of Sir Nighteye, sitting still with eyes closed and hidden away in a conference room.

Izuku’s view was cut short when something caught his attention. A small part of his mind felt a tingle from something within the main room that everybody was standing in. Something strange was calling out to him… His attention honed in on Centipeder.

There was something off about the hero; actually, there was something off about him that felt wrong to Izuku’s senses. Izuku reached out. And then it felt as if something hit him with a speeding truck barreling down a highway.

“Oww!” Izuku clutched at his head, a sharp pain racing through it.


Izuku waved them off. “No, no… I’m fine. I just…”

He felt an antenna twitch. And then another one. Moving back and forth in tandem, writhing and wiggling in place. Izuku’s head shot up, looking towards Centipeder. The hero was staring right back at him.

Izuku gulped as Centipeder closed in on him with a brisk pace. Within seconds, Centipeder was looming over Izuku with a curious look.

“If I may ask, what is it that you are doing?” Centipeder asked.

Izuku let out a nervous laugh. “I… sorry. It was an accident, Mister Centipeder sir.”

“If I may, could I learn what it was that you were doing?”

“I’d rather not,” Izuku mumbled.

Centipeder hummed. “Well, no harm done, I suppose. And I can let it pass just this once. However, I must insist that you refrain from doing whatever it is that you did anytime in the future. It was a rather unnerving feeling I felt.”

Izuku quickly nodded. “Of course sir. It won’t happen again if I can help it.”

Centipeder nodded. “Thank you. Now, if you would excuse me, I have some business to attend to before we formally begin this meeting.”
As Centipeder walked away without any further incident, Setsuna elbowed Izuku in his side. “What was that about?”

Izuku immediately went to rub the area that Setsuna had hit. “Really?”

“What?” Setsuna asked, a smirk appearing on her lips. “Anyways, the Centipeder business?”

Izuku sighed. “It was nothing. Just a bit of a misunderstanding, I think.”

“A misunderstanding, you say?” Setsuna gave him a knowing look. “Another one of your mysterious secrets, I see. Hmph.” Her arms crossed as she pouted.

“Well, if you’re sure that you’re alright, I’m going to go off and ask Edgeshot a question. I think I saw him just a second ago…”

“He’s in the northeastern corner of the room, behind the tall potted plant,” Izuku informed.

Setsuna nodded. “Thanks!”

Izuku watched his friend wander off, and noticed that everyone else that he had arrived with doing something similar. As is, he had a moment to himself to reflect over the incident with Centipeder. However, as much as it frustrated Izuku, there wasn’t much that he could infer.

Is it because he looks like a bug? That’s a rather specific stipulation then. But how about the crabs? Is this like that? I’m going to be able to affect Centipeder, even if it’s only with a light pressure to his mind?

He sighed. “If only QA wasn’t ignoring me,” he mumbled.

Suddenly, Izuku found another figure looming over him from behind. However, rather than being thin and spindly like Centipeder, the man behind Izuku was much larger and wider in shape. When Izuku turned to face the man, Izuku found a large comforting hand on his shoulder.

“Looks like I finally get to meet the infamous Midoriya!” Fat Gum exclaimed.

“Oh!” Izuku smiled. “Uh, hello, Fat Gum sir,” Izuku greeted. “I’m guessing that Kaniko talks about me then, if you’re able to identify me just by my looks?”

Fat Gum laughed. “You bet! I’ve got to say, you’ve had quite the effect on her! She never gets to have as much fun as she does with anybody else she works with!”

“Pfft. If by fun you mean pain staking sparring sessions, then sure.”

Fat Gum patted Izuku on the back, almost causing him to topple over. “I’m sure you understand. Kaniko likes playing around every once in a while. She barely gets to go all out, she says! And what better an outlet for her than her very own troublesome vigi—”

“SHH!”

Fat Gum jumped a bit when the bugs in Izuku’s hair buzzed out the words. He watched as the emerged bugs slowly retreated to their hiding place, quickly realizing his mistake while doing so. “Right, right. Sorry ‘bout that. Almost let it slip. Good thing tha—”

“Whoa whoa, hold up a second!” Kirishima exclaimed, virtually popping out of nowhere. “Fat Gum? Midoriya? You two know each other?!”
“Ah, Kirishima!” Fat Gum exclaimed. “Nice to see you! And yes, I suppose that you could say that we know each other… or not.” Fat Gum ran his hand over his head. “Well, we knew of each other, and now we do know each other, but, um…” Fat Gum looked to Izuku.

“Oh,” Izuku lamely sputtered. “I mean, uh… We’re, uh… friends by association, I guess? We both know the same person, you could say.”

“That Kaniko person I heard you guys talking about, then?” Kirishima asked.

Izuku hesitated for a second. “... Yes?”

“Huh. Well, that’s pretty cool!” Kirishima said. “What are the chances, eh? And to think that you’d get to meet up like this!”

Fat Gum laughed. “Yeah, well—”

“Excuse me, everyone? If I could have your attention?”

Izuku turned, it was Sir Nighteye speaking. The room had grown silent.

“Thank you. Now, before we begin, I’d like to thank all of you for your contributions to this investigation. We’re making great strides of progress. In fact, as you all know, the organization known as the Eight Precepts of Death are planning something. And today, you’ve all been called together; today I will share with you exactly what we know.”

Everybody found themselves seated in the designated conference room within a few short minutes. Izuku looked in awe at the gathered contingent, realizing that this was his very first organized, large scale hero meeting.

Most notable to Izuku’s sights was the Dragoon Hero Ryukyu, All Might’s friend Gran Torino, and Aizawa himself. Izuku found Edgeshot giving him a nod from the seat across from him, which Izuku returned.

A few observations had Izuku thinking that Togata was most liking working under Sir Nighteye for his work study, and such a prospect intrigued Izuku to no end. However, when Nighteye began to talk in earnest, Izuku switched his mental gears and paid full attention to All Might’s former sidekick.

Izuku listened on with interest, learning about the growing influence of the yakuza group known as the Eight Precepts of Death. From their role in the criminal underworld as drug suppliers of a quirk neutralizing drug to their potential partnership with the league, Izuku wondered if he had ran into them at one point due to his years as Snitch.

The talks went on. Simple intrigue turned into horror and disgust as he heard Nighteye’s theories of Overhaul and his apparent daughter. The fact that such a thing could be happening to a little girl was made all the worse when Togata’s initial interaction with the girl was brought up.

Izuku’s resolve took the helm; Eri was going to be saved no matter what. Izuku only hoped that they weren’t too late.

Chapter End Notes
A bit short this time around, and not much actually happened. And a bit lacking at the end, I think. Sorry 'bout that. (I blame coronavirus. It’s kinda hard to do any type of shopping when it gets bad enough that even the chip aisle starts running dry. My writing time this week was severely diminished!) But hey, more action soon! Especially since the actual raid is coming up.

Anyhow, I hope to see you all next time! And stay safe, everyone! I hope all of you are doing alright considering what’s happening right now. Try not to strain yourselves too hard now! We can all get through this.
And the next chapter has arrived! Hope you all enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So, that’s how it is, huh?”

The others didn’t respond to Kirishima’s comment. Most of them couldn’t think up an applicable response, while others just weren’t feeling up to it. Togata in particular was sulking, contemplating his actions over the past few days.

The rather gloomy atmosphere was interrupted by a loud ding, signifying one of the elevators opening up to the lobby.

“Holding an all night vigil, are we?” They all looked up to find Aizawa approaching them.

“Aizawa-sensei!” Uraraka and Tsu greeted in tandem.

He cleared his throat. “Anyways, I was thinking about ending all of your work studies today.”

A colorful variety of shouts rang out in protest of Aizawa’s rather blunt delivery of news.

Aizawa promptly ignored them. “You heard about how the League may be involved; that makes this a whole different ball game. It gives me a valid reason to consider pulling you out.”

He sighed, rubbing his face. “But I know all of you by this point. There’s no chance that any of you would let this go as is. So, as much as I want to pull you all out, I won’t.”

There were a few cheers in response, but Aizawa wasn’t done.

“That doesn’t mean that I like it.” He focused his glare on Izuku. “Especially when concerning you, Midoriya.”

Izuku raised an eyebrow in question.

Aizawa continued. “Physically and experience wise? I find that you're in tip top shape. But I don’t think you’re mentally prepared for this, especially if we consider recent events.”

Izuku shook his head. “However, it’s not exactly my call. So you’re part of this no matter what, it seems. But know that I’ll be watching.”

Izuku receded the bugs on his scalp and moved them further down the strands of his hair. In doing so, his bugs narrowly avoided Setsuna’s head and arms suddenly appearing and leaning on his head.

“More of your super duper secret training stuff, eh?” she asked, smirking.
Her head floated over the front of Izuku's head, lowering while upside down until her eyes gazed into Izuku’s. “When are you going to tell us about that, hmm?”

Izuku frowned. “Not anytime soon, I think.”

Setsuna harrumphed, her head moving back up atop Izuku’s. Setsuna’s chin rested in Izuku’s scalp while her arms slid down to the sides. “Not even just a smidge?”

“Anyways,” Aizawa interrupted, “the fact of the matter is that we’re undergoing this operation. With that said, the Big Three — and to some extent, Midoriya as well — are on par with the heroes. You four,” Aizawa turned his attention to Kirishima, Uraraka, Tsu, and Setsuna, “will have reduced roles.”

“Oh? You’re grouping mister buggy boy and us together?” Hado asked, a finger to her lips. “Now I’m really curious!” she pouted. “It just wants me to see him in action more and more!”

Amajiki “That’s quite a compliment coming from you, Eraserhead,” Amajiki said, his lazy gaze turning. “Are you sure it stands true?”

Aizawa sighed, slowly nodding. “Unfortunately, yes.”

“Well, that’s good to hear!” Togata suddenly exclaimed, bursting out of his sullen mood from before. His smile shined as he stood from his chair. “I don’t misbelieve Eraserhead one bit if he thinks Midoriya is on our level. After all, he chose not to fight me. That shows some serious deductive skills!”

Togata made a nod towards Izuku, which Izuku gladly returned.

“Anyways,” Aizawa interjected, his voice raising somewhat. He set his gaze on the remaining first years present. “You four aren’t exactly here because you volunteered. What do you all think about this?”

Uraraka and Tsu reaffirmed their wishes to save Eri however possible, Kirishima doing the same with the smashing of his hardened fists.

Setsuna, much to Izuku’s chagrin, remained in place. She shifted a bit; her head rested on her hands now but remained on Izuku's head with her floating stumps almost covering Izuku’s eyes. She responded to Aizawa's inquiry in kind.

“Definitely. It’s sick what they're doing to the poor girl. Plus, I need to keep an eye of ‘zuku here. He might be strong, but he still kinda sucks at reacting sometimes.”

“Hey!”

“I just needed to make sure,” Aizawa said. “But know this. The goal of this operation is saving Eri, nothing more. Our information as so far doesn’t see the League of Villains as partners in any of this. But on the off chance that we’re wrong and we do encounter any of them, that’s where your role ends, alright?”

“Got it!” The four said together.

Aizawa nodded. “Good. Now that that’s all settled, I think that it’s time to—”

Izuku felt the shift as it occurred. His body jerked side to side, almost knocking him from his chair. Setsuna toppled over from atop his head, but set herself in the air as she regained stability.
Once the shaking was over, Izuku found himself suddenly hampered by four extra protrusions strutting out from his back.

His hands immediately reached for his back and found that the struts had originated from his new backpack. The protrusions were about two to three feet in length, were colored a light yellowish gold, and ended in a roundish shape that had holes at their bottoms.

Izuku sighed. “Of course there’d be something like this.”

“Midoriya.” Aizawa asked.

“Hang on for just a second, Aizawa-sensei.” Izuku reached for his back and attempted to push the protrusions back into place. As he tried this, Setsuna’s head floated just nearby watching in silent amusement.

“That’s something Mei made for you, ain’t it?”

“Are those what I think they are?” Kirishima asked, looking at the anomalies in interest.

Izuku tried forcing one strut in. It wouldn’t budge. “Well, uh…”

“Midoriya,” Aizawa grunted. “Is that thing even approved?”


Then Izuku's phone rang from his pocket. He hesitated a bit, but eventually caved in and went for his phone despite the questioning gazes of everyone around him.

“Hello?”

“Izuku! How’s it going?!”

Izuku instinctively moved his phone away from his ear; he turned to address everybody else, who were all watching him with various faces.

“I’m gonna take this,” Izuku said. “I’ll be back in a bit.”

Despite some words of protest and a heavy sigh from Aizawa, Izuku retreated away to the bathroom. After he made sure that the room was empty via his bugs, Izuku continued on with his call.

“Mei!” he whispered. “What the heck!?”

“Sorry ‘bout that! I was testing the remote capabilities of my baby!”

“Remote capabilities? What remote capabilities? I didn’t agree to any of those!”

“Well, you kinda did when you accepted my gift without asking any pertinent questions.”

“It was early. You knew that.” Izuku rubbed his face. “So, you’re saying that you can do this at any time you want to?”

“Like I said, testing!” Mei countered. “It’s not like you need to worry. I’ll make sure to only use it for emergencies.”

“Yeah, whatever ‘emergencies’ means to you,” Izuku muttered.
“Never mind that!” Mei cheered over the phone. “You like ‘em?! I wanted to make them rotor powered at first, but I decided on an anti grav system with pseudo air propulsion and rocket systems instead! Now you have something like my boots, but on your back! And it’s much more refined!”

“What are you…” Izuku took a breath. “How do you put them away?”

“Oh! It’s voice activated! The password’s ‘Pony’s Saddle!’”

Izuku let out a small laugh. “Right, you’re still on that, aren’t you?”

“It’d increase her abilities ten-fold!” Mei cleared her throat. “Anyways, as for the voice control, only you and I can do it, so you don’t worry about villains taking advantage of it in the field.”

Izuku clicked his tongue in thought. “Why’d you give this to me without telling me, anyways?”

“It was a surprise, doh!”

Izuku sighed. “At least tell me next time alright?”

“Sure sure. So, how’d the meeting go? What’s your plan for saving that little girl, huh?”

“What?” Izuku almost yelled. He lowered his voice even further and covered his mouth and phone with his hand to muffle the noise.

“How do you even know about that! It’s supposed to be classified, and… I— You were listening in! Do you have bugs in the backpack?! Mechanical bugs, I mean!”

“Maybe…” Mei’s voice echoed. “But that doesn’t matter! Just trying to watch out for ya, you know? What happens if you get captured again? I need to know where you are. And being able to listen in to the villains would help plenty!”

Izuku’s eyes lowered, disbelieving. “You really think that I’ll get captured by villains again.”

“Mhm. Definitely. It’s almost a certainty.”

Izuku sighed once more. He could feel the gray hairs slowly overtaking his greenish-black strands. So much of Mei’s inventions in one day often made Izuku feel like that.

Still, Izuku was thankful that Mei would be thinking for him in such a way. “Thank you Mei… again. Though, you don’t have any more surprises, right?”

“Nope! Nothing for now or the foreseeable future.”

“And by ‘foreseeable future’ you mean…?”

“Eh.” Izuku could feel her shrugging her shoulders over the phone.

“Right. Ahem. Pony’s Saddle.” Izuku felt the protrusions retreat and fold back seamlessly into his pack.

“So, you gonna test them anytime soon?” Mei asked.

Izuku opened his mouth to retort, but stopped himself; he closed his mouth after a few moments. A small smile appeared on his face.
“Actually, I think I might test this baby out tomorrow night. I’ll tell you how it goes after. But only after. You can wait until then, right?”

“Hmph. Fine.”

“Good. Bye Mei, I’ve gotta get back to everyone else. See you later.”

“You better test them tomorrow!”

“Of course I will.”

“And you’re sure that they're gone?” Izuku asked over his phone. “I mean, I suppose that I could try to see if I can sense them. But I’m not exactly confident in doing that considering what happened last time.”

“Yes, I’m su—”

Izuku’s eyes widened in revelation. “Hey, hold up! I just thought of it now, but you don’t think that maybe the bomb and the drones were because of that Magamo guy? You know, the one you used to catch me in that act? He has that whole forgetting quirk.”

“Really Midoriya? This again?” Kaniko’s tone was completely flat.

“What?” Izuku deflected. “It just came to me now! I’m just covering all my bases.”

“Well, to answer your question, we already checked in with him. He’s still where we last left in; prison. In fact, he’s being a good little prisoner, too.”

“Besides it couldn't have been him. His quirk at the most only works on a couple people at a time. He wouldn’t be able to handle blocking out everybody that was involved in the operation, even if he targeted a concept like ‘drones.’”

Izuku nodded. “Fine, fine.”

Izuku utilized his silk rope yet again to climb down from the window of his room. He was a lot more careful in doing so this time around; after all, it was barely past six. The sun was only barely setting, and most of his classmates were still up and about doing whatever it was that they did.

Izuku was stuck in such a predicament since it was the only time Kaniko was willing to let him do what they were about to do. She wasn’t willing to let him go alone, after all.

And so, once he touched the ground, Izuku began sneaking around corners and utilizing his bugs to ensure nobody was around. He was slowly making his way to the nearest exit of the campus.

As he did so, Izuku used his bugs to search out for Kaniko, lowering his voice to a whisper as he spoke into his phone. “You’re in the green car across the street, right?”

“Using your bugs to spy on me, are ya?”

“Maybe.”

“Uh huh.” Kaniko paused. “Hey, you told that principal of yours that you’re doing this, right?”

Izuku was nearing the gate. He giggled, just a bit, at Kaniko’s question. “I don’t need to. He’s probably watching me sneaking out right now, actually.”
“And you’re sneaking out despite that?!”

“He’s fine with it. He told me so.” Izuku turned the final corner leading to the gate and paused in his tracks.

“Ah, Midoriya! What are you doing out of bed on this lovely night?”

It was Nezu in the flesh, leaning lazily against the wall. Oddly enough, he was drinking from a cup of tea despite the inherent lack of any teapot nearby.

“And he’s here right now,” Izuku said into his phone. “Give me a few minutes until I get there, alright?”

“Midoriya—”

Izuku hung up his phone and turned his attention towards his principal.

“How are you able to hide from my bugs so well?” Izuku asked. “I didn’t even see any signs of you making your way over here.”

“That’s knowledge that I’ll bring to my grave, Midoriya,” Nezu said. He took a sip before continuing. “So, you’re sneaking out again?”

“It’s sanctioned. Kaniko — Miss Kaniyashiki, that is — is letting me do this.”

“I’m aware of your handler’s part in this. It makes me wonder exactly which of you two is more foolhardy and reckless.”

Izuku stood by as Nezu took another sip of his tea. “So… I’m good, right?”

“Mhm. Good luck with that police business of yours.”

Nezu took out and swiped down his card over the gate’s sensor and opened said gate. Izuku continued on and nodded as he passed Nezu.

Once he was finally outside of UA grounds, Izuku crossed the street and steadily made his way over to Kaniko’s car.

He went around the car and went to open the passenger side, but was interrupted by his principal shouting out from across the street.

“Try not to stay out too late Midoriya!” Nezu warned. “You still have more punishment training tomorrow!”

Izuku waved. “Thanks, principal Nezu! Don’t worry, I’ll be back soon!”

Nezu retreated back into campus and locked the gate behind him. Meanwhile, Izuku finally found himself within Kaniko’s car.

Once Izuku finally settled and put on his seatbelt, he finally noticed the disbelieving look on Kaniko’s face.

Izuku smirked. “See? I told you.”

It was already dark out when Kaniko pulled the key out of the ignition and groaned, moving to rest
“You aren’t backing out, are you?” Izuku asked.

Kaniko sighed. “No, no. We’re already here, after all. Might as well continue as planned.”

“Alright.” Izuku nodded. “So you’re still staying put right here then?”

“It’s not like I have the mobility that you now have, Midoriya. I’d be dead weight.” Kaniko leaned back up in her seat. In one swift motion of her hand, Kaniko and her seat launched backwards into a reclining position.

“I’ll wait here. You go off and do your vigilante stuff.”

Izuku sent a look at Kaniko. “It’s not vigilante stuff if you’re allowing it.”

Kaniko guffawed. “Sure whatever keeps you happy. Nevermind the fact that you know what we’re currently doing is against orders. Nighteye and such specifically knocked down your argument of letting you scout out their base for Eri.”

“Which I still think was stupid,” Izuku countered.

“In a certain way it is,” Kaniko somewhat agreed. “While it may be true that there’s virtually no risk for you, there’s the off chance that they have something up their sleeves that we haven’t anticipated.”

“What do you mean? It’s just another yakuza group. The only difference between them and other groups I’ve gone after in the past is that they’re one of the head groups.” Izuku paused. “That and how a large number of their members have powerful quirks… and the fact that they’re making drugs that can permanently disable quirks and… Huh. It’s really only hitting me now.”

“Mhm.” Kaniko hummed.

Izuku shook his head. “Well no matter. I should get going. We don’t have all night, after all.”

Izuku went to open the passenger door, but he was stopped by a rather abrupt interjection coming from Kaniko. Izuku turned back to address her. “Yes?”

“Hold on for just a sec…” She went searching around in her bag. After a few seconds, she pulled out a small, black earpiece. “Aha! Here ya go. Let’s use this to communicate.”

“An earpiece?” Izuku asked as he took the device. “But what about my—”

“I don’t know about you Midoriya, but a swarm of talking bugs loitering in some person’s car isn’t exactly all too inconspicuous.”

“Huh. Good point. Well, I’m off.”

“Nobody’s around?” Kaniko asked.

“Not a waking soul for three a whole three block radius.”

“Good.” Kaniko nodded from her reclined position. “See you in a bit, then. And don’t forget the ski mask.”
“Ah, right.” Izuku reached into his backpack and took said mask out, placing it over his head.

Izuku finally got outside of the car and took a breath of the nighttime air.

After a few light stretches, Izuku made his way over to a nearby alleyway. Once he was in the alley’s midst, Izuku grabbed onto the straps of his new “backpack” and braced himself, taking in a few breaths.

“Pony’s Saddle.” The four protrusions shot out from his back; Izuku was only slightly jostled this time, having been ready for the sensation. Izuku made a quick check on the struts and was satisfied that the temporary changes to color had taken effect. The four struts were for now muted black and grey to ensure he’d blend into the rooftops during the night.

“Okay. If I remember correctly…”

Izuku felt around within the inside compartment of his pack, where he had earlier hid a couple of his bugs.

After a brief look around, Izuku found — just as Mei had explained to him the other day — a small hole that hadn’t been there earlier. As per Mei’s design, the hole had only appeared when the passcode was uttered.

The hole acted as an on and off switch of sorts, the opening leading to a small passageway that bugs could fit through. Once at the end, the bugs would reach a small system of wires and controls that they could interact with in order to completely activate and operate the pack to its full capabilities.

And so after a few moments of light travel for the bugs, a slight humming had begun to emit from the pack.

“Alright,” Izuku muttered to himself. “Let’s see here…”

One of his bugs activated one of the controls. The pack slowly lifted Izuku off the ground, anti grav systems and small propulsions from the rounded ends of the struts working together to lift all his weight.

“Aha! It’s working!” Once Izuku stabilized himself in the air, he moved on to his next bug. “Okay, to the right this time…”

Another bug made its work on another control, adding pressure to a plate to drive the pack rightwards. The rounded ends of the struts rolled to recompense the movement, their ends tilting left. The air blasted, and Izuku found himself being launched to his right.

“Too strong—!”

He crashed into a pile of gathered trash bags, the impact cushioned by a mixture of hard and soft waste within the black plastic.

Izuku shook his head. “Note to self: Use less pressure next time.”

“Midoriya?” Kaniko’s voice came through the earpiece. “What was that?”

Izuku stood up and began brushing himself off. “It was nothing,” he responded.

“You sure?”
Izuku reoriented himself, then found himself steadily hovering in place. Once he readjusted himself and his bugs, he slowly began rising in the air. “Yeah, I’m good.”

“If ya say so.”

Izuku found himself at the same height of the rooftops. Once more, but plenty more carefully, izuku added pressure to the plates within his pack. He slowly moved forward and found the floor of the roof under his feet.

“Phew. I think that I’ve got it now.”

“So you did crash just a second ago!” Kaniko said.

After a couple minutes travel via roof jumping and flight-induced leaps, Izuku found the supposed base of the Eight Precepts of Death within his range. It was a rather nice looking building, styled in a traditional sense with nothing really looking out of place.

Izuku took notice of the abundance of guards, however, and watched each and every one with as sparingly few bugs as possible. Up from his position on a not so far-off roof where he laid prone, there was little chance of him being discovered. But all it would take would be somebody to notice some strange behavior of bugs, and it would all be over. So Izuku took the scouting slow.

It took nearly half an hour before he found what he was looking for. The subject of Izuku’s search was a man with bangs and stylized bolts in his hair. One of Izuku’s bugs had overheard him talking about a “that pesky girl” and dreading having to “check on that rascal again.”

Izuku set one bug on the man’s hair and another in his breast pocket. More bugs were sent in close proximity to him, setting watch for his actions. Eventually the man found himself in front of a wall. After a patterned pressing of a couple different wooden planks, the wall opened up into a stairway leading to underneath the building.

Izuku took the moment for what it was worth. He sent as many bugs as he could without risking the chance that they would be spotted. By the time the man had entered and the door closed behind him, a couple dozen bugs had infiltrated the complex.

Izuku immediately went to work. He sent a few bugs ahead, exploring what he could of the underground facility. Some doors were open, while others were closed and completely without any ways to get past them, no vents or spaces underneath. Still, Izuku thought that it would be enough. All he needed to do was memorize as much of the complex as he could.

The man Izuku was following was rather slow, pandering about and often stopping to have conversations with others he passed by. It took another half hour for the man to finally reach his destination — a dark, sealed off room complete with various toys and designs that would invoke signs of a young girl.

In fact, once the man had walked in, some of Izuku’s bugs saw movement from the bed. There laid a young girl with a horn on her head who was pulling her covers up to her face, shielding herself from the man.

“Hey calm down, it's just me again,” the man said. Izuku personally thought that his tone was rather off, something he attributed to the man faking his kindness. He began walking towards Eri, leaving the door wide open. Izuku used the chance to let in a good portion of his bugs, leaving around half of his gathered force outside to distribute throughout the base at hidden places for later observation.
The man sat down on the bed and patted Eri’s head. “Now, I know that I’m not supposed to give you any snacks after dinner, but do you want any?”

She shook her head in response.

The man scoffed. “Suit yourself then. I’ll be back to check in on you in the morning with breakfast. So go to sleep, alright?”

The man walked away without looking back, closing the door with a loud, heavy slam. That left Eri all alone in the room lit by only a faint lamp on her nightstand. Once Izuku ensured that the man was far enough away and talking to another of his colleagues, Izuku formed up his bugs into a small swarm.

Izuku came at a blank with what to say. “Kaniko,” Izuku said into his headset, careful not to transmit the words to his bugs.

“Huh? Whazza?”

“Kaniko. I need to know what I should say to a little girl in distress.”

“Huh? What?” Her voice sounded much more alert. “You mean that you found her? She’s in there?!”

“Yes. So, what should I say?”

‘Don’t say anything to her!’ Kaniko exclaimed.


“She could compromise the entire operation! Tell the Precepts about it!”

“She won’t do that! Why would she tell her captors about a police raid on this place that’s coming to save her?!”

“Umm…”

Izuku paused. The voice wasn’t Kaniko’s. He finally noticed Eri staring at his bugs. Izuku ignored the rest of Kaniko’s words.

“Oh. Uh… hi, Eri.” The swarm’s voice was rather small, almost quiet and nonexistent. A direct result of not having as many bugs gathered to make the usual sounding voice.

Eri pulled her sheets back up to her face. “What are you?”

It took a second for Izuku to realize that she was referring to his swarm.

“Umm… You can call me Izuku.”

Her eyes narrowed. “You’re a swarm of bugs called Izuku?”

“Oh, uh, no. It’s my quirk. I’m using my bugs to talk to you right now.”

She blinked. So you’re a person?”

Izuku’s swarm moved up and down to stimulate nodding. She lowered her blanket slightly, her nose peeking above the fabric. “Is what you said true?”
“What do you mean?”

“The thing about the rescue thing. Are you… are you coming to get me?”

“… I guess that I was speaking aloud?”

She nodded.

“Huh. Well, that saves me the trouble, I guess. Yes, we are coming. Just sit tight, alright? We’ll be her in full force soon.”

“Soon?” Her blanket had completely removed itself from her face now. She was actually leaning forward in anticipation.

“I promise. A couple days at most. Tomorrow at the soonest, but don’t get your hopes up on that. You’ll just have to wait until then, okay?”

Eri deflated. “Fine.”

The swarm bobbed up and down and then formed a makeshift thumbs up.

“I’ll see you soon, Eri. Do you have any other questions before I leave?”

She shook her head. “No. Not really.”

“Alright. Then I’ll be going no— There aren’t any vents or cracks in here. Huh.”

“What’s the matter?” She tilted her head.

“There isn’t a way out for my bugs. When I get far enough they sort of get out of my control, so—”

“You can use the boxes with the toys in them.”

Izuku hesitated. “Are you sure—”

“Yes.” She had already gotten off her bed and emptied out a box, dumping the contents on the ground. She held it open for the waiting swarm.

“Huh. Well, okay then.” The swarm flew inside and packed together. Eri subsequently closed the box. “Just don’t open it while I’m gone, okay?”

“Mhm. I’ll make sure.” She brought the swarm-infested box up to her face, and peered at the bugs behind the plastic. “But I might open when you guys come and Overhaul gets me. Is that okay?”

“I don’t see a problem with that.”

“Thank you.”

“Of course. See you soon Eri. Bye.”

Izuku cut the connection with his bugs and found himself back on the roof. He reached to his ear and spoke into his headset.

“Kaniko? You there?”

“Yeah I am!” she said. “Did you really just tell her everything?!”
“What?” Izuku stood from his spot and activated his flightpack. Once he was hovering steadily, he slowly made his way back to where Kaniko had parked.

“It was actually easier than I thought,” Izuku continued. “It kinda felt like we were on the same wavelength when we were talking. It was kinda nice.”

Chapter End Notes

Raid’s up next time, and you know what that means! Action! Fighting! Death! (Kidding).

Well, see you all next time!
Chapter Notes

This chapter is a bit loaded with events happening right after the other, methinks. But then again, that was the point of the raid, wasn’t it? To swarm in as fast as possible to give as little time to Overhaul to react? As such, I think that the event progression here fits. Anyways, I’ll stop my rambling. Onwards to Chapter 48! Into the Labyrinth!

P.S. Still though, sorry if it seems a bit chaotic and with little breaks. Just think of it as part of the experience!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You know, I’m kinda glad that we didn’t have to tell them,” Izuku whispered. “It would’ve been like giving myself a tactical nuke and letting it blow up in my face.”

“Please. It would’ve been like giving both of us each a tactical nuke and letting them both blow up in our faces,” Kaniko corrected.

Both of them were standing in the midst of a crowd of police getting ready for the raid on the Eight Precepts of Death. While most were dashing around in a fervent hustle and bustle, Izuku and Kaniko were mostly mulling around waiting for the operation to start at its fullest. As such, it gave them plenty of time to think over the events of last night.

“Yeah, but that memo still kinda scared me for a bit,” Izuku admitted. “I thought that they had found us out.”

“It didn’t help that I got it while we were still out, huh?” Kaniko asked. “Just on our way back to UA, and BAM! Text message and a call from headquarters.”

“It’s your fault, you know,” Izuku said. “I would’ve been back at UA if you didn’t decide sleeping was more important than maintaining our cover.”

“Oi! You went along with it,” Kaniko countered. “You were still sleeping in the passenger seat when I woke up.”

“Only because you wouldn’t budge! What was I going to do? Drive the car myself?”

“Pfft! You could’ve stung me awake. Admit it, you were tired as well.”

Izuku exhaled. “It's not like it matters now. We were gone all night. And now all of my work study buddies are aware that I wasn’t at UA last night since when they all got their texts they all met up to talk.”

Izuku sighed. “And now they’re going to be wondering why I’m already at the police station. As if Setsuna’s suspicions weren’t enough.”

“Well, there’s not much you can do about that,” Kaniko said. “Besides, you’re the one who proposed the idea of a stakeout in the first place.” Her hands shot up in the air. “What makes it worse is the fact that it wasn’t even needed! Nighteye figured it out for us. Probably a couple hours
before you found Eri, even!”

I赞k groaned. “That’s the worst part! All that hard work wasted! My time memorizing the places’ layout too since Nighteye probably did the same thing. I just— Ah. Incoming at five o’clock.”

Kaniko went to turn to see said arrival, but was interrupted when she was engulfed in a rather squishy and all-encompassing hug.

“Fat-yan!” she greeted.

“Kaniko! It’s nice to see you!” Fat Gum exclaimed as she set Kaniko down. “How’re you doing?” The two immediately went on a rather quick-paced talk back and forth.

It was a rather amusing sight, but Izuku ignored the reunion in favor of seeing to the two others following behind Fat Gun: Amajiki and Kirishima. Or, more specifically and pertinent to Izuku, Kirishima.

“Whoa, bro! Where have you been all night?” Kirishima asked. “And did I hear Fat Gum right? That’s your friend Kaniko?”

Amajiki merely stood beside the red-headed boy, content to stand and wait. He didn’t show any signs of wanting to join in the conversation.

“I… bet you didn’t think she was a cop, huh?”

“Heh, definitely not,” Kirishima said. He shook his head. “Anyways, where have you been? Seriously, you had everybody worried that you got kidnapped again or something!”

Izuku groaned. “I’m not going to get abducted again. It’s not like the villains have any incentive to anymore.”

Kirishima waved him off. ‘If you say so, bro. However, I’m still curious. Where have you been? And were you just lugging around your costume the entire time you were out, or what?”

Izuku only then remembered that he was actually wearing his costume. That is, his green and yellow/gold Dragonfly costume. He had donned it only after he and Kaniko had arrived at the station. Izuku hadn’t had a spare costume at hand, but Kaniko did — one for his hero persona and the muted blank and grey one for use in official police business.

As such, Izuku had to wait in the car still dressed in the rather suspicious dark clothing he’d used for the stakeout until Kaniko came back with his spare costume. And then he had to change in the car itself, since he couldn’t exactly walk around in what he was wearing.

Overall, it was a rather tiresome experience for Izuku — a process that carried over a sense of fatigue Izuku was still holding too. As such, Izuku blurted out the first thing that came to his mind in response to Kirishima’s question.

“No. I had Kaniko get it from me from her office.” Unfortunately, Izuku only realized his mistake after his mouth had opened and he finished the sentence.

Kirishima crossed his arms. “Wait, the police have a spare of your costume at the station? Or is it your friend that just has a spare for you?”

“The… latter…”
“Huh.” Kirishima huffed in contemplation. “Well… that’s handy, huh?”

Izuku wiped away the small tread of sweat beginning to form at his hairline. “Yeah…”

“It makes me wond—” Kirishima’s eyes trailed off to spot something behind Izuku.

“Oh hey!” Kirishima exclaimed. “It’s the others! They finally got here!”

Izuku used his bugs rather than turning around to check on Kirishima’s claims. True to his word, everybody that was held a part of work studies was indeed present just a little ways away. Uraraka and Tsu — who were waving them over — with Ryukyu and Hado, and Setsuna with Edgeshot. Nighteye and Togata trailed not too far behind

Kirishima was already running off to greet the rest. Amajiki followed not long after, going towards Togata.

Once he was alone, Izuku sighed. He’d just been handed the perfect opportunity of distraction for Kirishima on a silver platter. Izuku shook the feeling off; he’d need to be more careful. He turned around and went to face his steadily approaching friends not too long after.

He needed the small reprieve before the operation would start in full.

“Alright everybody, once I read off the warrant, things are gonna start moving. Let’s try to end this quickly, yeah?” The man who had said the words was obviously somebody of higher rank in the police force, though to what extent Izuku couldn’t guess.

Discarding the thought, Izuku watched in earnest as the man approached the intercom. At the same time, he was busy trying to divert Setsuna’s musings as she attempted to worm some information out of him.

“Don’t think that you can squirm your way around with an excuse this time, buster!” Setsuna said. “You still haven’t explained why you were there or where you were all night!. You and your lady cop friend were doing something, and I will discover just what that was.”

“You should refrain from causing any distractions for now, Tokage,” Edgeshot warned, adding in his own words to aid in the diversion. “We’re in the middle of an operation. You can interrogate him later if you want.”

Izuku smirked. “Thanks Edgeshot.”

Izuku then turned to face Setsuna. “But on that note, I’m sure that you—” His bugs picked up on movement inside the compounds. “Incoming! Get away from the gates!”

Unfortunately, the warning wasn’t enough. What happened next had Izuku feeling selfishly relieved that Kaniko was farther back in the crowd due to not being essential personal in terms of the raid. This was because, while a few officers were able to move just as the warning was issued, several officers were launched into the air as an enormous man broke through the gates. There was no doubt that those who were launched in the air were injured, even if they were caught by heroes before they had hit the ground.

Chaos immediately ensued. The villain immediately started on with his attack, aiming for the many police officers present. However, before he could go through with his actions, Ryukyu took up her dragon form to fend the villain. Tsu, Uraraka, and Hado joined in on the battle without the need of being ordered to do so.
At Ryukyu’s behest, the rest of the force ran into the compound. However, said force was bolstered to the extremes. While the group contained the normal contingent of officers and heroes, it also had Izuku in its ranks. As a result, that included the million or so bugs he had gathered for the operation.

As the raid party invaded the compound, various yakuza grunts took the defense. Most of the heroes and police made quick work of the various grunts that came in their way.

Izuku was fine with that, since he was a bit preoccupied with some things himself. Down below, in the depths of the Precepts’ base, Izuku felt the bugs he’d kept within Eri’s discarded toy box being jostled around. Through the thin plastic of the pink paper box, Izuku could see Eri’s face. He also saw the moment her hand went ahead and opened the flap of the box.

The miniature swarm instantly went and filled the room in a thin veil of flying, buzzing minions.

“What the fuck!!?!! ERI!!!” The words had come from Overhaul, that much was obvious when Izuku caught sight of the man. Izuku went on and formed his bugs together, ordering them to dart towards the man.

Izuku had planned to take out Overhaul in one go. It was a makeshift plan of course, and Izuku wasn’t exactly banking on it to work. He was proven right the moment the tightly bound swarm brushed against one of Overhaul’s hands. The bugs ended up exploding into a violent mess of guts and blood, effectively severing Izuku’s view of the room.

“Huh,” Izuku muttered to himself. But he wasn’t done just yet. Izuku mucked up together a few of the bugs that he had left behind the previous night and ordered them towards Eri’s room. As is, when they got there, the door was still open. Overhaul’s voice was easily audible.

“Ah! Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck! Get ‘em off!”

Izuku chuckled just a bit.

“What the heck are you laughing at?” Setsuna questioned. Izuku was spurred by his thoughts. He found himself in front of the secret entrance of the underground facility, Setsuna attempting to drag him in.

“Come on, 'zuku! There others are already going in! The officers are waiting for us to go first!”

“Oh.” He only then noticed Bubble Girl, Centipeder, and a few officers restraining a couple grunts. He assumed that they’d be staying behind for just a bit.

“Right, sorry.” Izuku willed himself and his million-strong swarm into the stairway.

The way down proved to be slightly difficult. It was obvious that the tight stairway and subsequent hallway weren’t designed to hold large crowds such as the current police force marching through. Added with the small contingent of heroes and Izuku’s enormous swarm, the way down was understandably claustrophobic to some.

It didn’t help that once they reached the bottom that they were all stopped by a random wall — a wall that Izuku and Nighteye knew wasn’t supposed to be there.

“The heck is this, Nighteye?” Rock Lock demanded.

Izuku peered through the small amount of bugs hidden within the complex. A couple were luckily in the hallway that Izuku knew was supposed to be there.
“The way down’s still there!” he said.

Togata made himself intangible and jumped through the wall. “Dragonfly’s right! The wall’s just in the way!”

“Then it looks like we’ll have to crush it!” Kirishima announced as he hardened his arms.

“Now that’s the spirit, Red Riot!” Fat Gum cheered, he too readying up to crush the wall.

They both dashed forward. Within seconds, the wall crumbled, it being no match for their combined might.

“Alright then! Let’s go, people! Let’s go!” It was the officer who had first went up to the intercom talking. Heroes and police alike swarmed forth through the now-busted wall in earnest. However, they all stopped in their tracks with what they saw next.

“What the— Now what?!?” Rock Lock yelled.

“Hmm. It seems to be shifting,” said Edgeshot.

“No, really?” Rock Lock said.

“It must be the Precepts’ HQ Director, Irinaka!” one of the officers said. “He’s called Mimic because of his quirk, but the scale of what he’s doing right now is off the charts! The largest he should be able to take control of is something the size of a fridge!”

“Unless he gave himself a boost,” Fat Gum proposed. “That would explain the sudden increase in his abilities.”

“Then he’s essentially made the place into a living labyrinth!” another officer exclaimed.

“You mean that our foreknowledge of the place’s layout is useless?” Setsuna asked.

“Not exactly,” Nighteye said. “I believe that we can still advance in the correct direction. It’ll just take a bit more effort than I was originally planning to use.”

“It won’t matter if he keeps changing the place up!” Fat Gum said. “But on the other hand, this has got to be taking a toll on his stamina… Eraser! Any way you can cancel him out?”

“Not unless I see his real body, no,” Aizawa said.

At the statement, Izuku had his swarm — which had been idly flying over everybody’s heads until that point — spread out in search. Unfortunately, not many of them went very far, with most of the scouts that were sent out getting crushed or squished as the basement morphed and twisted. None of them even came close to spotting any sort of resemblance to their target.

“I can’t catch sight of him in all this,” Izuku admitted, his mind still on his bugs. He recalled a good number of them to avoid wasting them to a fruitless endeavor. “Not even with my bugs. The place is moving too much. And the few bugs that were already down here are now dead as well.”

Movement caught Izuku’s attention. It was Togata who had just a moment ago been talking with Amajiki. As is, Togata went off through the wall and into the depths of the complex on his own.

“See you all on the other side!” Togata responded, leaving the rest of them to figure out their own way to Overhaul.
“Lemillion!” Nighteye called out. He received no response, Togata already too far off to hear.

“Great!” Setsuna began. “Now what are we going to do? Find a magical portal that leads us closer to Overhaul?”

It was at that moment that the ground opened up, swallowing the leading members of the raid party down into a large hole.

Izuku immediately sent a command to his bugs. The entire swarm followed after, dashing downwards in the air to follow their descending master. However, the bugs were met with an unforeseen opposition: the still shifting labyrinth.

As the leading members of the force were greeted with a hard landing as they hit the ground, the hole above them immediately sealed itself up; something of which crushed a good majority of the bugs still traveling down to meet Izuku. All in all, there were probably still enough to form three or four clones in total.

“Oh come on!” Izuku shouted, his fist slamming against the ground. His head immediately turned to meet Setsuna. “Seriously?”

“What? How was I supposed to know something like that was supposed to happen?”

“Nevermind that,” Edgeshot said, checking up on both of his work study students. “You two seem to be in good condition. That’s good.” He turned to Izuku. “How many bugs do you still have on you?”

Izuku counted. “Umm… two hundred and fifty-two thousand and twenty-one individual bugs, Edgeshot.”

Edgeshot stared at Izuku. “I’m guessing that that isn’t really nearly as much as you had before?”

“Hey!” It was Aizawa who had interrupted. “On your toes you three. There are a couple villains in here with us. You can go over your bug count later.”

Izuku turned. There were in fact three bird masked people standing before them. There was no doubt that they were some of the stronger members of the Precepts given the fact that they donned the bird masks that were known for the Precepts’ higher ups.

“I can take them on myself!” Amajiki suddenly yelled. “They’re just slowing us down! Everybody go on ahead! Help Mirio!”

“Dude, seriously?” Kirishima questioned. “Why can’t we do it together?”

“Ha! Now wouldn’t that be a blessing!” One of the villains said. “Go on ahead and do that. Merely more pigs to the slaughter!”

“That’s Setsuno!” one of the police officers yelled. “Nobody pull a gun on him! He’ll swipe it off you!”

“Ha!” The newly identified Setsuno laughed. He raised up one of his hands. “You think that’s going to help any of you. I can still— Huh?! My quirk!”

Amajiki took the initiative by transforming a multitude of his limbs and shooting them forward. Within seconds, he had all three of the villains captured in his hold. By that extent, none of them could attempt to escape since Aizawa currently had his gaze on all three of them.
“You’re kidding me!” Setsuno yelled.

Aizawa was already dashing forward. Within a few strides he had the villain with a bag over his head knocked out. He moved towards the next nearest villain — the one that could have crystal growths on his body — but stumbled when he heard a rather loud shout that echoed through the room.

“Aizawa!”

Everybody stopped in their tracks, heroes and villains alike. However, Aizawa took the chance to remedy his blunder and knocked out the other two villains.

Everybody had their gazes darting left to right in search of the new threat.

A few seconds passed, and Edgeshot was the first to speak. “I believe that the voice may belong to the one currently creating this la—”

The southern wall of the room suddenly burst inwards, spewing forth a large intake of cloudy dust and rubble that blocked everyone’s vision.

“Oh come on!” Rock Lock yelled. “Now what?!?!”

Rock Lock’s call of distress was answered with a rather gruff voice that echoed throughout the room.

“Stop dodging and start fighting me, damnit!’

Another voice came from the dust. “Rappa! Do you really think it’s wise to—!”

“Shut it!” the first voice roared. “I’m trying to pin these guys down! If you’re not gonna help then be quiet!”

As the dust cleared, the owners of the voices were revealed. If their bird masks were anything to go by, they were both another two more members of the higher command of the Precepts. One of them was obviously a bruiser, with his gauntlets and rather impressive stature giving in to such an image. The other was the complete opposite with his rather average build and flowing robes.

However, those two weren’t the only ones who had caught everyone’s attention. There were two others just across from them, individuals that Izuku deduced were the ones who were fighting the Rappa guy and the guy with the robes.

The first individual was green and had reptilian features. He had a simple headband covering his eyes, wild purple hair springing forth from his head, and wielded what Izuku believed was a rather impractical looking sword. On his waist was a utility belt with several pouches and a small metal case.

However, the other individual present had everybody stepping back at the mere sight of him. The man moved with an obvious hunch and was covered head to toe with metal armor pieces that went right along with his similarly colored flowing scarf. However perhaps his more eye catching feature was also the most obvious — he was lacking a nose.

“Stain,” Edgeshot muttered.

Said villain and the reptilian man beside him both turned towards Edgeshot when he had spoken
Their expressions were quite telling in the fact that they hadn’t expected the police and heroes to be in the room with them.

“Gah!” The lizard man yelled. “Police!? Heroes!? Wh—What’s with this timing!?” He turned back to face Stain. “I told you that we should’ve come yesterday, boss!”

Stain’s gaze darted back to the two conscious members of the Precepts, and then back to the gathered contingent of heroes.

“Keh. This is getting troublesome,” Stain growled. “Spinner, you still have the case?” He asked the reptilian man.

“Of course, Stain!” he exclaimed, patting the metal case attached to his belt. “It’s right here.”

“Good. We’re going,” Stain ordered. “Make sure you hold on tight to it.”

“Right sir! On it! I’ll protect it with my life!”

After that proclamation, both Stain and the newly identified Spinner turned tails and dashed out the door of the room. It took a moment for anyone to truly process what had just occurred.

Edgeshot then moved to follow. “Lizardy, Dragonfly, on me. We’re following!”

“What?!!?”

“On it!”

“**Oh no you don’t!**”

The walls shook. Edgeshot and Setsuna both utilized their quirks to transform and speed through the air towards the door. Thanks to their speed, they were able to make it past the door and on the path to Stain before the walls blocked off said path. Izuku, with his lack of true mobility, unfortunately didn’t make it. He slammed into the wall as it sprung into place.

“Ow.”

“**Argh! Why are there so many pests today?!?**” Mimic complained.

“**Rappa, control yourself! And you three! Are you kidding me? Did you get caught already?!?!**”

“Oi!” It was Setsuno again, who had woken up due to all the commotion. “Easy for you to talk, hidden in the walls! Why don’t try fighting someone who can erase your quirks, will ya?!”

“**Hmm,**” Mimic hummed. **“Good point.”**

A pillar of stone shot out from the wall and rammed into Aizawa. The pillar launched him into a tunnel that had opened up on the opposite wall.

“**Eraser!**” Fat Gum launched himself forward as did Kirishima, both with the goal of reaching Aizawa before he was taken away.

“**Not this time you aren’t! Tengai, Brace! And Rappa, don't break the walls this time!”**

A shimmering dome appeared around the two currently free villains before they were pushed back
into the wall and into another tunnel that had opened up. Another pillar shot forth at the same time, connecting with the mid-air forms of Fat Gum and Kirishima. The duo were directed off course, away from Aizawa and instead down the tunnel that held Rappa and Tengai.

“Fat!” Amajiki instinctually stepped forward. He was hampered somewhat by the fact that he still had three other villains restrained in his tentacles, but he still moved forward. This allowed for another hole to open up beneath him, swallowing him and the three villains up.

“Dammit! We’re losing numbers here!” Rock Lock yelled. “We need to get our shit together!”

“We need to stick together!!” Nightye ordered. “Bundle up so that he can’t separate us.”

Izuku immediately moved to stand and join the remaining group, but stopped himself when Mimic’s voice rang out yet again.

“Gah! You’re not worth the effort to deal with at this point.”

The room shook. The first wall that had blocked off the doorway crumbled. The view of the hallway was visible for only a second before dozens of walls sprung up down its length, blocking off the route further ahead.

“Try taking those on! Now that you’ve already lost all of your heavy hitters, there’s no way through!” Mimic laughed.

“Now stay put, will you? That other group of yours is getting close! I’ve gotta deal with them soon or they’ll...”

His voice faded away with each spoken word, the room shaking less and less as time went on. Moments passed, and all that was left were the sounds of breathing from the group of eight: five officers, Rock Lock, Nighteye, and Izuku.

Eventually, all was still.

“I think he’s gone,” one of the remaining officers said.

“That doesn’t mean shit when all that’s left is us,” Rock Lock said. He gestured forward into the hallway. “We don’t have anyone else capable of breaking down those walls! We’re stuck here!”

“Not quite,” Nighteye interjected.

Rock Lock had an incredulous look on his face. “The hell you talking about, Nighteye? Last I check none of us could break through walls.”

“You’ll see. Just stand back.” That was all Nighteye said before his hand went into his pocket. The group moved backwards as recommended; as a result, they had the perfect view of the wall in front of them suddenly gaining a newfound hole punched entirely through it.

“What... was that?” asked one of the police officers.

“That was a special high density personal seal — a support item I use for battle that weighs about five kilograms,” Nighteye informed the group. “It fits my salaryman image, making the whole thing quite humorous”

“Does it really, though?” Rock Lock asked.
“Yes,” Nighteye nodded. “Absolutely.” He began walking forward, stepping through the new hole. He grasped for another weight, his effort in breaking down the wall only the first of many. “Now come. It’s going to be a bit slow advancing forward since I only have a limited amount of these weights. I’ll have to pick them back up as we go, but it's better than nothing.”

“Wait!” Izuku interrupted. The group stopped in their tracks and looked towards Izuku. “What about everybody else?”

Nighteye’s mouth drew into a thin line. “They’ll have to take care of themselves for now. There’s not much we can do for them.” He turned back around. “Now hurry! Our chances of getting Eri draw smaller every second.

“Right!” The group chorused. Izuku hesitated for a second, but followed not too long after.

The group marched on, each wall before them crumbling as Nighteye threw one of his weights. Each time the floor shook just a bit, the result of the wall and a weight colliding. They were upon the seventh wall when Izuku decided to adopt preventive measures.

His swarm converged onto him, surrounding his body from head to toe. He formed three bug clones around him and had them walk in tandem with him, following right in his footsteps.

“Umm…” It was one of the police officers. He had decided to audibly voice his curiosity.

“Oh!” Izuku muttered, realizing what he’d just done. “Sorry. They aren’t too close, are they?”

The police officers all shook their heads. Rock Lock gave Izuku a weird look, while Nighteye simply marched on.

“That’s good. Sorry again. I just wanted to have them close, you know? I’ve already lost so many bugs down here. Any more and I’ll end up being a sitting duck.”

“Right…” The officer coughed. “Is uh, what you’re doing… healthy?”

“Perfectly,” Izuku readily answered. “They’re all disease and parasite free. I already checked to make sure.”

A few of the officers backed away by just a little. One officer went to speak up, but before he could a rather inhuman roar echoed through the hall and shook the walls.

Rock Lock, for one, sighed. “Again? Another freakin’ obstacle? We were making good progress!”

The ground began to shake, heavy footfalls getting louder by the second until the wall in front of them exploded in a blast of rock and rubble.

The first thing Izuku saw was the thing’s hulking form. It reminded him of Centaur in a way, if he only looked at the sharp contrast between the creature’s rather normal looking legs and the monstrous upper body. Everything else was something entirely new.

The creature had six arms, three on each side. The two arms closest to the top were completely independent from one another. However, below those two arms were four others. What made them different was how they originated from one arm each, but separated into two at the elbows.

Three clusters of eyes of varying sizes dotted the creature’s torso. It had a winding tail — no doubt to help with its balance — and a gaping maw of razor sharp teeth reminiscent of a lamprey’s. It’s skin was a mix of grey and black, and it was completely lacking a head. The mouth merely rested
on its torso. However, what was perhaps the most surprising thing about the creature was what happened next.

“Greetings gentlemen!” The creature exclaimed, its hands moving for a wave as its gruff voiced rang out. “How are you all on this fine and splendid day? I hope it’s been pleasantly... bombastic?”

“What?”

“Ah, no matter.” The creature waved them off. “Anyways, get a ready for a pummeling!”

The creature dashed forward, its arms moving in for the attack. The group of eight immediately scampered off and dodged in different directions. The three-armed punch of the creature in turn collided with the ground, launching chunks of rocks into the air.

Suddenly, walls of rock and stone rose up from the floor instead, effectively separating the group up even further than before.

“Damnit! Looks like Irinaka’s back!”

“You think?!”

Izuku wasn’t sure, but he thought the latter statement was Rock Lock. It was a bit hard to hear through the walls. However, once he had a second to settle, Izuku found that he still had what was left of his swarm with him. He was still a good three clones strong, four if he counted the bugs currently surrounding him.

Izuku could feel the rumbling just beyond the wall, no doubt a direct result of the fight with whoever it was had just appeared before them.

Suddenly, the walls shifted again. As per before, the change was entirely unexpected, catching Izuku off guard. As a rather unfortunate result, another of his clones met the wrath of pure rock and concrete as another wall sprung up and more walls came into place.

“Dang it!” Izuku stomped the ground. “Why do I keep losing bugs!”

Izuku’s irritation and shouts of irritation could be felt even by the others beyond the wall. In fact, it was so strong that it was just enough for Izuku to not notice the other person standing behind him.

Chapter End Notes

And wow. This chapter turned out to be a lot longer than I thought it would be. Oh well.

Well, I hope you all liked it! Stay tuned for next time! We’ll finish up the raid then!
Hello everybody! Looks like we’re all in for an early chapter this week! Surprised? I’d bet so, considering this is the first time I’ve actually broken my schedule. Ah well. Anyways, I hope you all enjoy!

And also, you know what? I might as well tell ya now. There’ll be a little death in this chap. So be prepared for all that stuff.

*Originally Posted on April 1st, 2020*

“Hey.”

Izuku flinched as the hand descended on his shoulder. He instantly turned around, ready to fend off whoever it was that had snuck up on him.

However, he reeled his fist back as he caught sight of just who it was.

“Oh!” Izuku said. “Hi, uh…” Izuku looked at the man’s uniform, “Officer Rerou. Looks like we got separated together?”

The sounds of battle continued on in the background, the rumbling of the walls and the loud roar of the beast a constant reminder to Izuku that he couldn’t help in the fight.

“Yes, looks like it,” said Rerou. “And the wall’s too thick to break through. I already tried.”

“Well, the—”

“I did find an opening in the other direction, however,” Rerou interrupted. He then pointed to said opening, a crack that would be large enough to allow a person to crawl through.

“That might lead to Eri…” Izuku mused. He sighed. “Alright. I’ve made up my mind. I’m going to go ahead, see if I can meet up with Lemillion. Do you want to come with me?”

“I’d— I’d rather not. I’ll stay here and see if the walls will fall down again and I can join in the fight.”

Izuku nodded. “That’s fine. Mind telling them what happened to me, though?” he said, already moving to the hole. “Good luck, Officer Rerou!”

“And good luck to you as well!” The officer waved.

Izuku reached the hole and bent down to peer into it. There was a faint light coming through the other side, but the tunnel’s end was too far for him to determine what was there. Thus, Izuku sent in half of his bugs first to investigate.
Once he did that, Izuku went prone and began the slow crawl through the space, his elbows inching him closer to his goal.

After a minute or so, the bugs that he had sent ahead found a hallway with an unconscious man — another of the bird masked Precepts. Another crack was on the opposite end, and Izuku didn’t waste any time sending the scouting swarm through.

As Izuku had guessed, the crack opened up into a room ravaged by stone tendrils and rubble. And in the center of it all was a ruffled up Mirio who was protecting Eri and facing off Overhaul at the same time.

“Mirio!”

Mirio turned to spot the owner of the voice. His eyes widened in relief as he saw the voice’s owner. “Mi— Dragonfly! You’re here! Thank goodness!”

“What the fuck is that!!” The shout had came from Overhaul, who was visibly reeling at the sight of Izuku’s swarm clone. “That’s disgusting! A filthy abomination! It’s— You’re the one responsible for those bugs in Eri’s room! You sick freak!”

Izuku laughed at that, somewhat halting his real body’s progress in crawling forth in the stone crack. After a moment, he continued his crawl and exited the first tunnel he was in. After he stood up, he ran across the short hall and entered the next tunnel which led to the room with Overhaul in it. He then had his swarm answer for him.

“Indeed I am! What are you going to do about it?”

Overhaul laughed. “What am I going to do about it?! Well, I’ll be pleased to say that I’m doing this!”

Overhaul’s hands reached for the ground. Izuku felt the ground rumble around him — around his real body, that is. And before Izuku knew it, stone spikes manifested themselves from the walls. The tight tunnel provided little to no room to dodge.

The result was a shiskebabed Izuku who had various stone spikes impaling in a multitude of places. Izuku bugs visibly reacted to the assault on their master, suddenly losing their coherency and flying haphazardly every which way.

In the tunnel where Izuku laid, stone impaled him and left him immobile, the soft sounds of his breathing echoed the cold walls. Soon, his consciousness started to fade away. And then, he died.

A/N: Ah! What’s this?!? An author’s note in the middle of the chapter! Ew ew! I know, and I’m sorry, but I need to talk about what just happened. And just so you know, this had to be done. I know that some of you are going to be mad about this, but yeah, Izuku’s dead. I REPEAT, IT HAD TO BE DONE. Trust me on this. Anyways, from now on, the protagonist of this fic is gonna be Mirio. Don’t like it? Oh well, so sad. Get over it. Now, back to the story.

“Midoriya!” Mirio screamed. “What did you do to him!”

Overhaul laughed. “What did I do? Well, I did this!”

The spikes emerged yet again, though this time Mirio wasn’t ready for them. Still frightened by the fate of Izuku, Mirio’s mind was elsewhere. Unfortunately for him, it was enough of a distraction for him that he didn’t see Overhaul’s attack coming.
A giant spike shot through his head, effectively causing it to erupt into a bloody mess of flesh and blood. If he had still had his quirk, dodging the attack would’ve been second nature to Mirio. However, the fact of the matter was that he lost his quirk just minutes before. And so, he died.

“HA HA HA HA HA! Overhaul laughed. “I am now unhindered! Nobody can stop me now!” He set his sights on Eri. “This is where the fun begins.”

Izuku was currently wandering the aisles in search of something to buy as a thank you for his Valentine’s Day chocolates. He was walking down the third aisle of the store when his phone suddenly rang. He went ahead and picked it up.

“Hello?” the voice on the other end greeted.

“Ah, Setsuna!” Izuku greeted back. “What’s up?”

“Well, you wouldn’t mind coming over back to UA, would you? We sorta need your help.”

“I can’t. I’m buying…”

Izuku thought about it. He needed something to express just how grateful he was for his Valentine’s chocolates. But they needed to mean something. Show just how much he— AHA!

“… clothes.”

“Well alright then,” Setsuna rebuked. “Then hurry it up and come over here!”

“Well I would,” Izuku began. His eyes scanned the aisle he was in. Then he recalled the other aisles he was in before Setsuna had called him. “But I can’t find them.”

“Wha— What do you mean you can’t find them?”

“I can’t find them. There’s only soup.”

“What do you mean, there’s only soup?!” Setsuna asked.

“I mean there is only soup.”

“Then get out of the soup aisle!!”

Izuku moved the phone away from his ear. “Sheesh. You don’t have to shout at me.”

“Well, I’m sorry! But we’re in the middle of a crisis here!” Setsuna shot back.

Izuku arrived at the next aisle. “There’s more soup.”

Izuku could hear the exhalation of air on the other side of the call. “What do you mean there’s more soup!” Setsuna erupted.

“There’s just more soup,” Izuku reaffirmed.

“Then go to the next aisle again!”

Izuku made a short walk and peered around the corner into the next aisle. “There’s still soup.”

“Where are you right now?!”
Izuku tilted his head. He used some of the bugs lingering outside to spot the store’s sign. “I’m at Soup.”

“What do you mean you're at soup!!”

“I mean I’m at Soup,” Izuku said again.

“What store are you in?!”?” Setsuna asked.

“I’m at the Soup store,” Izuku said. “I already told you.”

“Why are you buying clothes at the soup store?!!?!”

“I— that’s a good point.” Izuku began to leave the aisle. “I must have walked into the wrong store by accident.”

“Then that means you’ll be coming back?” Setsuna asked, her voice hopeful.

Izuku walked out from inside the store. He paused when he realized that the previously clear skies had been replaced with a heavy downpour and darkened skies. He hadn’t packed an umbrella in his backpack — he had no reason to before he had left UA — but he wasn’t exactly willing to get wet.

He took his backpack off and willed the bugs in his hair inside it; it was waterproof as per Mei’s designs. He then brought it over his head and began to walk back to UA. He was again thankful for the strap system Mei had implemented; with it, Izuku had no need to hold it up in order for the pack to stay over his head. That left his hands free, and one available to speak over the phone.

“Nope,” Izuku responded. “I still need to find a thank you gift for my Valentine’s chocolates. But if I’m gonna be honest, clothes were just something I just thought of now. I don’t even know what clothes to buy for the person, since I don’t actually know who gave me those chocolates still.

“Gah! You’re kidding me! Fine! You want me to tell you who sent them!?!”

“You mean you know who it was!” Izuku asked, squishing the phone to his ear.

“Yeah! It was Todoroki! You happy!”

…

Izuku blinked. “It was?”

“No, you idiot! It was—”

Izuku stumbled as a foreign pressure pushed against his legs. He fell to the ground hard, water spilling forth over his body and rushing over his laid form. He held on tight to his phone on one hand, and to a nearby pole with the other.

Izuku fought the current and stood himself up, grabbing onto and pulling himself up with a nearby pole. A few harsh coughs cleared up his throat of the water that had entered him.

Izuku found himself ankle deep in water, something that shouldn’t have been possible if he considered how far inland he was. There shouldn’t have been the reason for the water to be so high, especially with the specially designed sewer drains the city had. Something was up.

He grabbed for his phone, thankful for Mei’s contributions in making it completely waterproof as well.
“Setsuna! You still there!?!!? … Setsuna?” Despite the heavy roar of rain around him, Izuku was only met with silence on Setsuna’s end.

“Dang it! What the heck is happening?” Izuku felt for his bugs. Unfortunately, he found a good majority of the ones in his range to be dead. He supposed that it made sense due to all the water around. As is, his bugs would be useless in this case.

A loud rumbling interrupted Izuku’s musings. Far off in the distance, he saw a skyscraper come tumbling down; the ground shook and it took a whole city block with it. Another building followed, this one collapsing in on itself with a giant cloud of debris.

Izuku made his decision then. He corrected the position of his pack back on his pack and activated its flight capabilities. Within moments, he was in the air and speeding off towards where the buildings had fallen.

The heavy rainfall made the journey somewhat difficult, keeping Izuku struggling to maintain control and stability while in the air. When he finally reached the sight, he was met with a gruesome sight.

Bodies littered the ground — but not just any bodies. All over there were heroes of all shapes and sizes. Whether they were impaled on rebar, blasted away to a paste, or simply missing limbs, it was a complete and utter bloodbath.

He then noticed movement at the corner of his eye. He zoomed towards it, finding a body that was mangled for the torso down; they didn’t have any chance of survival. It was only when Izuku properly observed the man that he recognized him.

“Edgeshot!” Izuku quickly moved himself to the hero’s side. Edgeshot himself let out a soft groan, his eyes opening slightly.

“Mi… Midoriya…”

“Hold on Edgeshot! I’ll get you to a hospital! You’ll— What are you even doing here!? This isn’t anywhere—” Izuku felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked back at Edgeshot

“Midoriya. You—” Edgeshot coughed, a sputter of blood coming forth from his mouth, staining his teeth an ugly red. “You need to get out of here. It’s not safe. It’s no use… You can’t do anything to it.”

“Edgeshot, what are you talking about?”

“The creature…. It’s hide is too tough. It’s too fast, too strong. It outpaced me, whacked away Orca like he was nothing. And… the water… All of it. We don’t—” another cough of blood, “have a chance. Get away while you… while you can.” The life faded away from his eyes.

Izuku could feel his fists tightening. He took a breath. He closed Edgeshot’s eyes.

He stood up, readying his pack. Another building collapsed, the ground shaking and kicking up a shroud of death. “I’m sorry Edgeshot. I need to see this for myself.”

Izuku flew himself into the air and towards the chaos. Within a moment, he found the creature that Edgeshot was talking about. It was massive; probably three stories in height. It had too bulky arms and a face with four ice blue eyes; three on one side and one on another.

Izuku winced as the creature’s tail collided with an incoming hero. The woman whipped through
the air and collided with a piece of rubble hard. She didn’t get back up.

Izuku’s eyes widened when the creature dashed forward, moving much faster than something its size should have been. Another hero had found themselves in his grasp. If Izuku’s eyes weren’t deceiving him, it was Yoroi Musha, the hero currently ranked at ninth place in the charts overall.

The creature ignored the various lasers and power shots at its back in favor of staring at the man in its hands. Within a moment, the creature’s constricting grasp crushed the samurai hero into a limp mess.

The water around it shifted, moving in arcs and tendrils at the heroes behind it. Four prospective heroes were caught in the watery attack, no doubt hit by tons of pressure and force.

Another rumble came about. Izuku noticed a large number of heroes beginning to run.

Despite his relatively safe location in the air, Izuku was shocked still. The creature displayed so much… power. There wasn’t anyway else to describe it. It was almost like All For One in the amount of destruction it caused. But that brought up the question: was it some sort of Nomu? It seemed to be demonstrating a whole slew of quirks. It would be the logical conclusion, in fact—

Izuku inhaled a breath. The creature had stopped, turned in its place, and stared up at Izuku’s place high up in the air. It’s four ice cold eyes stared straight at him, its head tilting in consideration.

And then Izuku heard the roar. Not from the creature, but from a steadily advancing force from behind. Something that had been moving for quite some time. A quick turn revealed something that — dared Izuku think it — was entirely worse.

Izuku only then realized it — he was too low. The wave was moving too fast, traveling too high. There wouldn’t be enough time to move.

He turned back towards the creature. It was still staring back at him, its eyes shining in some sort of unreadable expression. They were the last things Izuku saw before the wave pummeled against his back, sending him to a watery grave.

A man flew into the room. In some places, the sight may have garnered the wrong type of reaction. Fear, maybe. Or at least some semblance of caution.

But in a school such as UA, it definitely wasn’t the most unusual thing that had ever occurred. As is, class 1-A didn’t pay much attention to the man other than with a passing stare. Even Present Mic, who was currently teaching his students the intricacies of the English language, ignored the man in favor of teaching his class.

Well, that is, until the man spoke up.

“Izuku! Son! It’s been so long! When was the last time I saw you? Years ago?”

Izuku’s hand froze in place, his pencil stiff against the paper. He placed his pencil down and took a deep breath. He then looked at the floating man.

He was middle-aged. He was tall, thin, and had a balding mop of dark hair. He had glasses on his face, and wore clothing reminiscent of a handyman, or something similar. Izuku may not have had the best memory of his father, but this most certainly wasn’t him.

Nevermind the fact that the man was most definitely American; he was also flying!
“You’re not my dad,” Izuku accused.

The man held a hand up to his chest, his face morphing into an expression of hurt. “It seems as if your mother wasn’t entirely truthful to you, Izuku. I am your father. Search your feelings. You know it to be true.”

Izuku scoffed. “Uh huh. Nope, not possible.” Izuku summoned up his swarm, the endless masses of bugs flying into the classroom to scare off the man. However, Izuku was interrupted by a rather high pitched scream

“Midoriya!!!” Present Mic screamed, jumping behind his desk. After a moment, her hands and his eyes peeked out from the desk. “What do you think you’re doing??!”

Izuku tilted his head. “I’m just—”

“No! I don’t care!” Present Mic interrupted. “We’re gonna talk to the nice man first, alright??! So have those bugs skedaddle!”

Izuku sighed. “Oh alright, fine.” The swarm left.

Present Mic stood up, a closed fist going up to his mouth. “Ahem. Now that that’s dealt with,” he turned to the floating man, “what was it that you wanted sir?”

“Ah, yes!” He turned his sights back towards Izuku. “You have a proper Administrator! You have no idea how long I’ve been looking for one. And you’ve cultivated it quite nicely! I’ll gladly take it from you if you don’t mind.”

“Administrator?” Izuku asked. “Nevermind. Even if I knew what that was, why should I give it to you? Like I said, you aren’t my father.”

“But what makes you say that, Izuku?”

Izuku rolled his eyes. “For one, my father breathed fire. And you are obviously flying right now.”

The man laughed. “That’s the source of your doubts? Well, in that case, there seems to have been a misunderstanding. You see, I can breathe fire!”

“Prove it then,” Izuku said.

“Alright then! Just give me a second…”

The man twitched. He then opened his mouth. Out came a nauseous trail of green liquid that landed on Uraraka’s face. She immediately began to scream as her face melted off.

The entire class watched in horror as Uraraka succumbed to her injuries.

“Holy smokes!” Present Mic yelled, turning to face the man. “What the heck did you do! I’m going to—”

Present Mic was smacked entirely through the wall and off into the distance by the floating man’s hand. “Don’t interrupt me,” he said. “Now where was I? Oh! Right!”

The man twitched again. This time when he opened his mouth, a cloud of frost came out. This effect ended up heading towards Kaminari, whose blood and veins ended freezing once the cloud made contact with him.
The class attempted to move, but they found that they couldn’t dispute the best of their efforts. They were mere sitting ducks to the man’s actions.

“Whoops! That’s wrong. How about this one?”

His mouth opened again, but instead of something coming out this time, his mouth merely became something of a black hole. His mouth began sucking things up, and ended up taking parts of Jirou and Ojiro into its void.

“Nope. How about this?” Lighting spewed forth, shocking and leaving Todoroki as an ashen heap.

Air came out, nothing special about it. Unless if you counted the amount of force behind it. As is, Iida was pounded into a fine paste with the simple exhalation of air from the man.

Next came out blue plasma, which caused the death of Kirishima.

“Stop it!” Izuku suddenly yelled, breaking the man’s hold over him.

The floating man was visibly surprised. “Wow. You actually broke free. You’re actually stronger than I had anticipated.” The man laughed. “Makes your Administrator all the more enticing.”

“No! I’m not giving you whatever it is you want!” Izuku said. “Not after what you’ve done to everyone!”

“Stop!” the man said. “Don’t be such a baby!”

Bugs began swarming into the room.

“Oh, that’s it!” the floating man yelled. “You’re asking for it now! You know what? Screw it! I’ll just forcefully ta—”

A golden beam shot though the classroom out of nowhere, taking away Mineta’s entire upper half. Everybody darted their heads to the beam’s origin.

A giant hole now took up a good portion of the wall. Through it, the class could see a golden man peering in. He, too, was floating.

“Oh come on Warrior!” the floating man said. “I was just trying to—!”

The classroom lit up in a golden light, and every normal within it knew no more.

A/N: I think that I might have used up way too much effort on these things. *Shrugs shoulders* Oh well. What’s done is done. Also, here’s what I’m calling these little snippets. You’re welcome.


Now, I know that there are some stories up there that you may have noticed haven’t been written yet. That’s purposeful. As is, I had a few too many ideas for this chapter. Meaning I got one of my friends to write the rest. They wanted to take a shot at it, so I decided “Eh. Why not? What could go wrong?” Well, here you go. The rest is up to him now. My friend decided
to give the stories their own spin, but I’m fine with that. They’re at least finished now. And before any of you ask, yes, this is a one time occurrence. Don’t worry, all normal updates are still going to be entirely by me.

A/N: Hello fellow readers! It is I, WordConductor! I would like to thank theantumbrae for giving me a platform to finally introduce myself. For the most part I will be taking charge of this bit in the chapter, but we’ll talk more soon. For now let’s have some fun at the sports festival, eh?

Izuku stood in the back row as Midnight explained the rules of the cavalry battle. He should have been excited, or at least interested in what was to come next. However, something was nagging the back of his mind.

Eleventh place for the third time in a row... This can’t be a coincidence! It has to mean something. But what?

Izuku curled his finger and put it against his chin, pondering the possibilities.

Could it be Principal Nezu? His quirk does let him plan ahead to a great extent and detail, but what purpose would it serve? Just to screw with me? No, that wouldn’t make any sense. Usually Nezu has an actual goal in mind. Or is this one part of a larger plan to just control me in the end?

Izuku applied more pressure to his chin as his urges started to peer back into his mind. He ignored then and continued to ponder.

If that’s the case, then who else is in on it? All Might? Aizawa-sensei? Midnight? All of the staff? Now that I think about it, the students could be in on it too...

A large amount of bugs started to accumulate and approach the stadium.

Everyone is a threat...

Midnight finished explaining the rules and everyone started gathering into teams for the next event. Izuku slowly backed away from the crowd until he was a safe distance away.

Who should I prioritize? All Might could easily stop me by just throwing one punch. Endeavor could burn all the bugs within an instant. Midnight could make me pass out. Todoroki would freeze me. The list goes on... All the unknowns in the crowd I could just take care of with the Hornets; definitely have enough of those to take down the low priority targets.

Izuku’s heart began to beat faster as the urge got stronger, to the point where it was barely manageable. He noticed his range expanding. He chuckled. All the better for gathering a larger swarm.

Suddenly, Izuku found Mei standing before him with an odd look on her face.

“Hey ‘zuku you doing alright?” she asked.

Izuku tried to form a response.

“U-Uh, of course Mei! Why wouldn’t I be?” Izuku rubbed one of his hands over his hair.

“You aren’t forming any groups with anyone,” Mei continued. It must have meant that the event
preparation had already started. “Normally you would’ve thought up a plan by now and gotten a team together.”

*Oh I have a plan alright…*

“Don’t worry about me Mei,” Izuku said, putting on a large smile. “I already have one all put together.”

Mei tilted her head to the side and shrugged. “Well alright then. You better hurry up and get your team together or else you’ll be stuck with people you might not like.” She walked away.

*It’s a shame really. I did like her and the others, but Nezu had to ruin it.*

Everyone was already in their teams, he was the odd one out. Midnight announced everyone had ten seconds to finalize their teams.

*Now or never…*

Midnight struck a pose as she counted down. “Five. Four. Three. Tw—”

Izuku didn’t give her the chance to finish. Millions of bugs flooded the stadium, filling the lungs of high priority targets and stinging everyone else. Strangely enough, although Izuku hadn’t planned on it, Mineta was the first to fall due to all the venom injected into him.

Endeavor tried to activate his quirk, but bugs found themselves in his lungs, causing him to fall to his knees. The same went for Bakugou who, despite his best efforts to charge at Izuku, stumbled to the ground, the explosions flaring in his hands dying out.

Midnight would’ve neutralized Izuku if it weren’t for the fact that she was clutching at her throat, trying to cough up the bugs Izuku sent down her throat and nose.

All of the screams and chokes were unnerving, but also strangely relieving to Izuku. Present Mic’s scream being a unique pleasure.

Mei ignoring the pain for the copious amount of bites rushed out at Izuku shaking him.

“Izuku you have to stop! Don’t you want to become a hero!? Please stop Izuku!”

Mei was only met with a cold dead stare from Izuku as he increased the intensity from the attack for Mei.

She screamed horribly as the bugs started to dig into her, causing her to collapse to the floor.

Izuku started to walk to the center of the field, looking all around at his handiwork. All of the major threats were already down. Now, it was a matter of time before his task was done.

Izuku closed his eyes and positioned his head towards the sky, taking in a deep breath of fresh air.

*There. Nezu can’t control me if everyone is dead. He can’t hurt me, not anymore…*

Izuku suddenly sensed a large number of heroes approaching the stadium. They were clearly trying to rescue as many people as possible. Some attempted to go after Izuku, but were only met with a slow, painful death as bugs descended upon them. Mountain Lady was one of these victims.

Her quirk hadn’t been activated yet before the bugs had entered her orifices. As such, she reflexively activated her quirk in an attempt of rending the bugs harmless. Instead, something else
happened.

The bugs inside grew alongside her. As is, they slowly ate their way out of Mountain Lady as she thrashed around the ground.

Within moments, giant bugs had erupted out of her corpse and had begun attacking anyone who was nearby.

Izuku felt a bug crawling up to his finger. He lifted his hand up to find Rikai the Seventeenth.

“Don’t worry,” Izuku whispered to his friend. “We’re safe now, Rikai. We’re safe now…”

A/N: So yeah that was a bit more fucked up than I was anticipating... Kind of a grim introduction to who I am. *Clicks tongue* Oh well, at the very least you won’t forget this for a loooong time. But don’t you worry the fun is only just beginning :)

A/N: Heyo! It’s me again! Now, I know what you’re thinking, “Oh god this guy again. He’s going to write another depressing story filled with horrible amounts of murder.” Well, you’d be wrong! I personally think that this story has some nice character growth. And besides, not every one of my stories is going to be dark, right... Right? Anyways let’s just jump right into this little diddy I call “The Morning of Gold.”

Mineta sat upon the edge of UA’s roof, taking in the sunset and contemplating his life. He felt awful, to say the least, upon discovering something about himself. Eventually he stood up, his fists clenched tight. He stared out at the horizon with newfound determination.

“I finally figured it out!” claimed to himself.

“This whole time I’ve been a horny little monster! I’ve been treating women with no respect at all! I’ve been treating them like they’re just objects to fulfill my desires! Maybe…! Maybe, if I treated them better before, they could’ve been my friends. Well guess what?!! No more! From now on, I treat every woman better!”

A golden man seemingly popped into existence a couple of feet in front of Mineta. Mineta jumped at the sudden appearance of the levitating man, who was merely floating in place in the air.

“Wh— Who are you?” Mineta asked.

The man suddenly lifted up his arm, lifting a finger and pointing it straight at Mineta.

“Uh…” Mineta shuffled in place. “Yeah? What about me?”

A golden beam of light erupted out from the man’s hand. Every single cell and molecule that made Mineta Mineta simply ceased to exist.

The man flew off.

Izuku was doing some of his catchup homework that came as a result of his punishments when his phone began to ring, signalling an incoming text. He looked over to see what it said.

[Major scale villain attack. Need heroes with or without a provisional licence URGENTLY]

Izuku did not waste any time. He rushed to get his costume on, the backpack Mei oh so happily
provided him, and all the useful bugs he could carry.

*This is bad! What could it be?!?! The League of Villains launching another Nomu attack?! Or maybe All For One broke out of prison?! Could both scenarios be happening all at once?!?!

Izuku sensed with his bugs that all of his classmates were gearing up as well. Iida held a serious, grim face. Bakugou, in contrast, had a wicked smile on his face.

Todoroki was unsurprisingly calm, and everyone else was visibly nervous. Although Mineta was missing… strange. If anything he’d probably be bawling his eyes out right now. Oh well.

Izuku was the first one out of his room. Everyone soon followed after, heading straight for the site of the current villain attack.

The class arrived at the scene. It was obvious how bad the situation was from the get go. Buildings had collapsed or were completely gone, massive craters littered the landscape, and a number of bodies had littered the floor.

Most of the class was in shock. Some of them threw up just at the sight of it, others had zero color on their face.

Yaoyorozu was the first one to speak up.

“Come on everyone! N—no time to dawdle, the pros are counting on our support…”

“Yeah, but just look at all of this! Does anyone even stand a chance against this guy!? I say we bail,” Kaminari rebuked.

Kirishima shot a glare at Kaminari.

“How can you say that man!? We’re supposed to be heroes. Fearless in the eyes of death, and helpers no matter what!” Kirishima shouted.

Kaminari just simply looked at the ground defeated. The class began to move together towards the battleground.

The class finally arrived at the designated meeting place. The address provided earlier had brought something up from his mind, but it wasn’t until now that he recognised the significance of it. They were at the headquarters of the Eight Precepts of Death — not that everybody in the class knew that. He decided to keep quiet for now. As is, everything was quite calm at the moment.

“Did the heroes win?” Izuku wondered out loud.

A sudden shifting of rock caught his attention. “Midoriya!”

The whisper had originated from All Might, who had appeared behind a pile of rubble.

Izuku smiled in relief. “All Might!”

All Might motioned the class over. They approached, only to have found All Might to have disappeared down a winding staircase that had been previously hidden by the rubble.

The class headed down. There were others inside: Nighteye, Aizawa, Overhaul, and Lemillion, and many others.

Izuku was happy to see All Might alive and well despite the situation.
“All Might, how is the new arm working for you?” Izuku asked.

“It’s working just fine Midoriya, but if anything I could really use a snack!”

Izuku, after hearing this, lifted All Might’s robot arm and pressed a button which dispensed nuts into the palm of his hand. All Might looked at the nuts and then back to Izuku with confusion. Izuku pursed his lips and raised his hands up.

“Look, I wasn’t the one who put that in there!” Izuku stated.

“Right… Well thank you no less!” All Might bellowed as he consumed the nuts.

Tsu walked up towards All Might.

“All Might may I ask you why are we working with a drug lord who uses his daughter for his own evil purposes?” Tsu asked bluntly.

“Ah yes… About that.” All Might said. “Most of the heroes that showed up here are dead. So we made a temporary truce with the villains just for the sake of having numbers to fight against this threat.”

“So the fight is still going on?” Izuku interjected, ignoring the class’ general shock and confusion to working with a villain they’ve never heard of.

All Might nodded.

“What is the villain doing right now?” Izuku asked curiously.

“Come and see for yourself,” All Might replied gesturing towards a slit in the wall.

Izuku walked over and saw that the villain was simply on a stool knitting what looked like a nice scarf while drinking tea. It would’ve looked more innocent if it weren’t for the fact he was covered in blood.

“Why aren’t we doing anything?” Izuku wondered.

Aizawa looked at him with a glare. “We don’t want to piss him off. What we have is breathing room, but not very much by the looks of it. Right now we need to plan and recove— Wait, where’s Bakugou?”

Everyone peered outside and saw that Bakugou was charging at the villain at full speed, raising a hand up about to unleash a barrage of explosions upon the villain.

“DIE YOU BASTARD!” Bakugou roared.

The villain simply pointed a finger at Bakugou and killed him in an instant. The students in the room were shocked. As for the pros, they had already seen enough death today to desensitize them for a lifetime. The only other person that didn’t give a reaction was Izuku.

*He was a dick anyways.*

The villain immediately went back to knitting, as if nothing had even happened.

“Right. So anyways, nothing has worked. Everything we’ve hit him with either has no effect on him or is something he heals from immediately. As for right now, Nighteye will attempt to use his Foresight on the villain to see if there is anything we can do.” Eraserhead continued.
“But doesn’t he have to touch the golden man for his quirk to work?” Izuku asked.

“We don’t have many other options…”

Nighteye walked out of the bunker. He took a deep breath and slowly walked over to the golden man. Surprisingly, the threat didn’t react. In fact, the golden man merely looked annoyed, though he did let Nighteye touch him and look into his eyes.

Nighteye stumbled backwards and landed on his bottom.

“What did you see, Sir?!” Lemillion yelled from cover.

“Oh it’s nothing, I just forgot to go to the store today while the sale was going on,” Nighteye said, dusting himself off. “On the other hand, that doesn’t really matter now this guy’s going to kill everyone on the planet, starting with us in the next thirty seconds.”

“What?!?!” everyone shouted in unison.

“Yeah. So, if you need to say anything or have any final words, now would be a good time to say them.”

The golden man stood up and began stretching. His tea and knitting supplies disappeared with a crack.

“There has to be something we can do!?” shouted Izuku.

Nighteye shook his head. “Unfortunately, Midoriya, this is beyond any of our control. Ten seconds left by the way.”

Everyone in the bunker started panicking and lamenting about all the things they didn’t get to do. As they were doing this the golden man finished stretching and pointed his palm towards the bunker. In all but a flash, everybody was dead. The golden man then continued on with his rampage.

A/N: See! I told you it wasn’t going to be that dark! I mean granted, everyone still died, but details, details. Once again, I would love to thank theantumbrae for giving me this chance to show myself! If you like my work and like to see more, you’re in luck! I have a fanfic in the works right now that will (hopefully) release in the near future! Once again, I’m WordConductor! I look forward to seeing you guys soon. If you have any questions, go ahead and PM me on my profile.

Chapter End Notes

Well, it’s me again. How’d you all like this? A bit too much? HA! … You might be right. Anyways, don’t you all worry. The regular scheduled chapter for Sunday’s still coming. And it’ll be a real chapter this time, promise!
And we’re back to your normally scheduled program. Another Sunday, another chapter. More on the Precepts raid this time, but we’re not done yet! Hope you all enjoy the further chaotic happenings of this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey.”

Izuku flinched upon hearing the voice. Not long after hearing the voice did his idle bugs sense the hand approaching his shoulder.

Izuku promptly turned and grabbed the hand out from the air before it could touch him. He raised his other hand and balled it into a fist, ready to strike at the unforeseen intruder. However, Izuku reeled his fist back as he caught sight of just whose hand he had caught.

“Oh!” Izuku said. He put both his hands down, though he raised another one to cover a nervous cough. “Hi, uh…” Izuku looked at the man’s uniform, “Officer Uchiha. It looks like we got separated together?”

The sounds of battle continued on in the background, the rumbling of the walls, ringing of gunshots, and the loud roar of the beast a constant reminder to Izuku that occurring just beyond his reach was a fight he couldn’t help with.

“Oh!”, said Uchiha. “Wall closed up on me and the next thing I knew, I was trapped in here with you! Quite the coincidence, huh?” Uchiha smiled.

Izuku narrowed his eyes. “Yeah…” He turned his back to Uchiha, and began to feel up the stone wall, attempting to find any weak points. However, Izuku kept a healthy amount of bugs pinned on watching Uchiha.

Izuku leaned his head against a section on the wall and tapped a fist in it. “Hmm… Doesn’t sound too thick. But I wouldn’t be able to break. We’d need to find a weaker spot if we’d want to break through…”

Movement. Izuku followed through with his earlier actions. He grabbed the incoming hand — this time with a knife in its grasp — before it was able to reach his shoulder.

“Nice try Toga. But if you want to sneak up on me, you’re gonna have to fix your demeanor while you’re disguised.”

“Oh?” The newly revealed Toga said, sounding amused. “What gave me away?” She laughed, her form slowly melting away.

“I’m sure that you already know what.” Izuku turned to face the villain, though he quickly averted his gaze upon eyeing Toga’s naked figure. “What the heck, Toga!”

She laughed. “What? Don’t like what you see?”
Izuku’s gaze may have been turned away, but his bugs’ eyes were still Toga. He didn’t trust her to not try something. Even still, he left that connection somewhat loose, and thus the image of Toga slightly blurry. It was the best he could do without sacrificing his own safety.

“Don’t you have some clothes?!?!” Izuku asked. “What are you trying to do here?”

“That’s not how my quirk works Izuku! I transform with other people’s clothes, so I need to take my own off first!”

“Uh huh. Of course you do.”

“I promise!” she giggled.

“Why are you even here?” Izuku asked. “The League isn’t working for the yakuza, are they?”

“Pfft! Of course not!” She waved him off with her other hand. “We’re just… running interference, you could say. That Overhaul guy took Compress’ arm and messed up Gerry real good. As you saw just a bit ago.” Her head motioned towards the fight that was occuring on the other side of the wall.

“At this point, we’re just trying to mess them up from the inside. Heh, you and I are basically on the same side right now, you know?”

A roar rang through the walls, followed by a loud rumble as the ground shook. After that, there was silence.

“Well, looks like time’s up,” Toga said. “It was nice seeing ya, Izuku! Till next time, yeah?”

Izuku let her wrist slip through his grip; he wasn’t exactly keen on fighting a naked Toga. Besides, if she was being entirely truthful about her aims in helping bringing down the Precepts… Izuku was willing to let it happen.

She scampered off, disappearing from view as a wall sprung up between them. That wasn’t to say that Izuku had completely lost sight of her though; there was a fly in her hair, and a couple others following her from behind, slowly tailing her from the air.

Izuku turned his attention back at the wall that separated himself from the rest of the group. “Sir Nighteye?!?” he yelled. “Can you hear me?”

“Dragonfly!” came Nighteye’s voice, somewhat muffled as it came through the wall. “Are you alright?”

“I am!” Izuku responded. “But I’m stuck on the other side of this wall!”

There were a couple seconds of silence before Nighteye spoke again. “Stand back then! I’m going to use one of my weights!”

Izuku did as he was told, and immediately one of Nighteye’s weights came crashing through the wall, giving Izuku access to the rest of the group.

“We’re all good?” Izuku asked, walking through the newly made hole. Upon his exit, he eyed upon the group. Everybody seemed fine, with only a few scratches and bruises throughout.

“Yeah,” one of the officers said. “Turns out that monster thing was just a clone. He was made by the League guy, Twice.”
“We took him down, but it took a few more of my weights than I thought it would,” Nighteye added.

“Oh,” Izuku muttered. “Then how about—”

“You punks! Why won’t you die!??!”

“—him.”

Suddenly, the walls shook once more. Jagged edges of stone and rubble began to erratically fill the room, moving every which way with no clear target.

“The heck!” Rock Lock yelled. “This is getting outta hand!”

“Crap! We’re gonna get crushed!”

“...Insecure guys tend to have short fuses.”

Despite the chaos happening around him, Izuku took a moment to hone in on the words. Toga’s words. And Twice’s if his ears weren’t deceiving him.

“Yakuza… So uncool.”

“They’re… helping?” Izuku muttered to himself. The shift in the walls lessened somewhat, became less dangerous than they were before “No… they’re angering Mimic. Making him sloppy...”

“What was that, Dragonfly?” Nighteye asked, turning to Izuku.

“Huh?” Izuku’s head shot up. “Oh, uh, nothing Sir. It’s just—”

A scream of anger rang out throughout the room, disrupting the shifting walls to a halt. Izuku didn’t take the chance for granted.

“Over there!” Izuku yelled, pointed a steady finger at a wall. His bugs had been searching, and they had found their target. “Mimic’s right there!”

One of Nighteye’s small metallic weights shot out through the air, a small trail of displaced air following in its wake. It collided with the wall and — as with all the other walls before — the weight decimated the cement and rock to rubble.

And thus was revealed Irinaka, the man known as Mimic.

Izuku instantly had his bugs surround the man, stinging and biting even as his screams of anger turned into ones of terror and pain. This went on for a few seconds before somebody spoe up.

“Dragonfly.” Izuku felt a hand rest on his shoulder. He turned to find it belonging to Nighteye, whose expression had stilled. “You…” He shook his head. “Tone it down.”

Izuku nodded, letting his hold over the man go. The bugs dispersed and returned to Izuku. What remained up above near the room’s ceiling was a white eyed Mimic, cemented in the wall and completely disabled from battle.

A little ways away, Izuku heard the laughs of Twice and Toga as they walked away.

“We’ll need to get him down from there, restrain him,” Nighteye said. “We don’t want a repeat of his actions again.”
“I don’t think that he’s going to wake from that anytime soon,” Izuku said.

Nightheye let out a hum. “I’d still like to make sure.”

“I’ll make my one up to him,” Rock Lock said, already gathering pieces of rubble and sticking them in place midair. “You guys go ahead. He’s pretty high up; getting to him will take a bit.”


It took them around a minute or so to reach the hallway with the disabled, higher ranked member of the Precepts.

From there, it wasn’t too difficult to follow the sounds of battle that likely led to the ongoing fight between Togata and Overhaul. All that stood in the way between the duo and their goal was a mere stone wall.

All that was needed then was simple, Nightheye having all but needed to use another of his weights to burst through the wall. But he faltered, and stopped himself before he did so.

“Sir?” Izuku questioned. “What’s wrong?”

Upon Izuku’s question, Nightheye turned and looked at Izuku. Nightheye’s eyes narrowed, his face going through a myriad of expressions.

“Uh… Sir?”

Nightheye sighed. “Just... Stay here, Midoriya.”

Izuku’s eyes widened. “Stay here?! What do you mean?!”

Nightheye ignored Izuku’s remarks. The man turned back and launched one of his weights, effectively collapsing the wall. The newly made hole gave Nightheye and Izuku sight of the battlefield, as well as a fight that had frozen up, both sides eyeing the newcomers.

The scene was a rubbled mess, destroyed rock and concrete littering the large room. One one side were the last two high ranking members of the Eight Precepts of Death. Overhaul was unlike Izuku had imagined him to be — black flowing arms sprouted from the villain’s back, constantly moving from side to side. To Overhaul’s side was Chronostasis, his clock-hand hair out for everybody to see.

However, what truly surprised Izuku was Togata. He was a bit bruised, a couple cuts still bleeding that had most likely come along due to shrapnel and loose rock shooting all over the place. But there was something else about him. It almost seemed as if a golden aura had found itself around Togata, flailing wildly upwards. And his hair seemed longer somehow, moving in tandem to the aura. Eri sat with wide eyes behind him.

“He’s finally used it,” Nightheye muttered.

“Used what?” Izuku asked. “Why’s Togata glowing like that?”

Nightheye looked at Izuku. “You can send your bugs in, but stay here. That’s an order.” Nightheye didn’t waste any time jumping into the room.

The battle continued in earnest, with Togata shouting a cry of relief at the sight of Izuku and Nightheye. Izuku, meanwhile, let out a grunt of frustration.
“Fine.” He sent his bugs in, his three remaining clones swarming in and dispersing themselves into a proper swarm. *But only because I have no hope in a physical fight with Overhaul as he is now, if the landscape is any clue as to what he’s capable of. And I’m no use if I get knocked out. Once it starts getting bad, I’m jumping in.*

“What the hell!” Overhaul yelled in obvious disgust. The villain recoiled upon the sight of the swarm of bugs that had flooded through the hole. The reaction brought a smirk to Izuku’s face. It was almost enough to quell his frustration.

Already, he set his bugs to work. A good majority of them ran interference with Overhaul, causing him to recoil and back away in disgust. Izuku made sure to keep them away from any of the villain’s arms; he didn’t want to find himself suddenly without any bugs yet again.

Nighteye engaged Chronostasis. They were mostly at a standstill, each dodging the others’ attacks. However, Chronostasis had somewhat of an advantage that took the form of Overhaul taking potshots at Nighteye whenever he had the chance.

A shout caught Izuku’s attention. “Midoriya!”

Before Izuku could turn his gaze towards the shout, he found Togata breaking into a sprint — one much faster that should have been physically possible for anybody without a speed quirk — and suddenly appearing before him. In his arms was Eri.

“Oh. You’re Mr. Izuku aren’t you?” Eri observed.

“Wait,” Togata began, “you two know each other? How— Nevermind. Take her.” Izuku suddenly found Eri thrust into his arms without any warning.

“I can’t keep this up for too long, but I’m still going to go help out Sir!” Togata exclaimed. “Keep it up with the bugs, but make sure Eri stays safe, alright!” And with that, he disappeared in another yellow blur.

Izuku looked at the little girl in his arms. “Hi Eri.”

“Hi,” she replied back.

Izuku set her down beside him. “Sit tight alright? We should be safe over here.”

“Okay.”

Satisfied with their mutual understanding, Izuku set his mind back to the task at hand. His bugs did well in distracting Overhaul, giving openings to Togata. Izuku noticed that Togata wasn’t using his quirk, however. Never once did he use Permeation to dodge any attacks, though his speed and strength were most definitely increased. Izuku had a pretty good theory as to why.

However, it still wasn’t enough. Overhaul was a dirty fighter, messing up the landscape and reforming it to his benefit. Togata had trouble truly getting a good hit in. To make things worse, it looked as if Togata was slowing as time went on.

A rush of movement caught Izuku’s eyes. One of Nighteye’s weights collided with Chronostasis right in his chest, causing the villain to be sent reeling back right into the hands of Overhaul.

Unfortunately, things only turned for the worse then. There was a splatter of blood and gore, and suddenly Chronostasis and Overhaul were gone. The matter reformed, and their place stood a single being. It’s base was Overhaul, quite obviously.
It was the same as before with his two shadowy arms, but this time he now had four. His face had also donned a much more bird-like visage, his mask acting as an extension to a shadowy beak. However, much more prominent was the rest of his body. While before his two regular arms had only been surrounded by black veins, his whole body was now shrouded completely in the black substance.

The ground shook, but unlike before, rock and debris shot out from Overhaul’s position. Shrapnel and sharp edged rocks shot into the surrounding area at speeds so fast and distances so far that even Izuku and Eri had to duck behind the wall and away from the mouth of the hole.

It took a good ten seconds for the chaos to stop. When Izuku peered back in, all that was left standing was Togata, who had taken cover behind some rather large outcroppings. Nighteye, on the other hand, was lying face first on the ground. Shrapnel and blood made up the majority of his back.

Izuku flinched, and he suddenly felt Overhaul’s gaze on him.

“Eri…” The villain said, his voice rumbling through the air. His eyes narrowed. He laughed. “I’ll get you later Eri. You can’t escape me, remember that.” His hands touched the ground. “I’ve got a pest to deal with first, however.

The hole suddenly sealed itself up with a wall of stone, causing Izuku and Eri to stumble back.

Izuku sprung back up without wasting a second. His hand smacked against the wall, even though Izuku knew it was a useless endeavor. There wasn’t any possible way he was going to break down the wall.

“Shit!”

Izuku took a breath. He looked around using his bugs. Around enough for two clones were left in the room with Togata. He was doing alright, but it was obvious that he couldn’t keep up forever. It didn’t help that Overhaul refreshed himself every time a major hit connected.

A rumble and a mixture of voices came to his attention. His head shot up. He had more bugs, of course. The ones in his hair, for one. But there were more. And one of them was watching a scene that potentially held the solution to his problem.

The bugs in his hair rose and flew off, flying in the direction of another group of his wayward bugs. Izuku turned his gaze towards Eri.

“Eri, can you stay here? I’m going to go get backup.”

Eri blinked. “Are you sure? Can’t I just come with you?”

Izuku shook his head. “No. The reinforcements I’m… hopefully going to get, aren’t really trustworthy. You’ll be safer waiting here.”

Eri’s lips grew into a thin line. However, she eventually nodded. “Alright, I’ll wait.”

“Thanks!” Izuku took off in a sprint. “I’ll be right back, promise!”
“Toga!” His bugs said. It came out almost like a whisper due to how few of them there were. But it seemed to make just enough noise despite the displacement of ground that was occurring just in front of them.

As is, Toga, Twice, and a one-armed Compress all turned upon hearing the words.

“Izuku!” Toga exclaimed. “What are you doing here?” Her eyes looked around the small swarm. “Or your bugs, at least.”

“Toga! / What are you doing?” questioned Twice.

“What? I’m just talking to Izuku!” She turned back to the miniature swarm. “So, what’d you want, hmm?” Her toothy smile stretched from side to side.

Internally, Izuku sighed. “I… need you help,” the swarm replied. “I’m having a bit of trouble with Overhaul, you see. He locked me out of the room.”

“And what exactly does that have to do with us?” The one armed Compress asked.

“Twice.”

Said villain straightened up upon hearing his name. “Yes? / What the heck do you want?”

Izuku finally reached the upward tunnel that the villains were digging. He steadily made his way up the slope as fast as he could.

“You can make more clones, right? Like the one you made of Bombastic a while ago?”

“Why should I tell you? / But of course!”

“Right… Well, I was wondering, could you make one to help me break down the wall?”

There was a collective chorus of no’s from Compress and Twice, though Toga remained quiet.

They suddenly tensed as Izuku neared, his footsteps audible to them.

However, as Izuku arrived, he merely pleaded to them. “Please? I know that you want Overhaul taken down as much as I do. But I can’t do that if I can’t get to him. The wall’s to thick and Lemillion’s giving it his all, but he’s—”

“Do it.”

“Huh?”

“What?!”

“Wait, really?!”


“Are you that that’s wise?” Compress asked.

“Of course!” Toga cheered. “It’s Izuku! He’ll get the job done. And then Overhaul will be outta our hair!” She turned towards Twice. “So what do you say? You alright with that?”

“ Heck no! I’ll never! / Alright, fine. But only because you asked, Toga.”
“Thank you!” Izuku exclaimed, bowing his head in recognition.

“Uh uh uh!” Izuku stilled, the cold touch of metal finding its place under his chin. He let the knife slowly raise her head until his eyes met those of Toga’s.

“Not so fast, ‘zuku. What do we get in return?”

Izuku blinked. “Me taking down a mutual enemy doesn’t count?”

Toga giggled. “Maybe. But I want a little more incentive than that. Something to sweeten the deal, eh?” Her eyes shined in amusement.

Izuku sighed. He really needed the help. “Fine. I hate to say this, but I sorta of owe you now. A favor, for future use. That’s good enough, Toga?”

She harrumphed. “Fine, alright. Twice, give him what he wants.”

Izuku blinked at Toga’s reaction. He shook his head, turning to face Twice. “Alright… can I have another Compress? He seems to be doing well at getting rid of rock.”

“Nope! / Not a chance!”


“It doesn’t work like that!” Twice exclaimed. “My clones get weaker the more of them I make. But for some reason that doesn’t seem to apply to your kind. / Yeah, you freaks! What the heck is up with that, anyway?!”

“My kind?”

“Uh huh! You newby quirk mutations interact differently with my quirk. / Why’d you guys have to make everything so difficult!”

“As is,” Twice continued, “you only have two options for this. / Serves you right!”

“Caustic was kinda hard to measure, so he’s out. That leaves Gerry, who’s kind of too big for this tunnel, or Ruka. / Caustic’s such an ass! Gerry’s fine though! And Ruka is… eh”

Izuku sighed once more. Twice’s split personality thingy was getting a bit irritating. But his odd nature aside, none of his options were ideal. But really, Izuku only had one choice given the circumstances.

“Can Ruka’s arms really destroy the wall?” Izuku asked.

“Definitely! She can get pretty strong! / That witch can destroy so much with just her arms.”

“Well, alright. Bring her up, then.”

In an instant, she was there. Izuku almost didn’t recognize her without her hood, something she wasn’t wearing once she came into existence.

Ruka had short, messy, black curly hair. Her face was one of serenity at first, but turned into an immediate scowl that sent shivers down Izuku’s spine. The fact that the rest of her costume was still present cemented the frightening image into Izuku’s mind.

“What the fuck is he doing here?” Ruka asked.
“You’re gonna help him with a little problem he has!” Toga explained with a smile.

“What!?” She dashed forward, her hand finding itself around Toga’s throat. “Why the hell should I listen to you? And why should I even help him in the first place!?”

Compress sighed. Izuku thought that he heard him mutter something like “Not again,” but he wasn’t entirely sure.

“Miss Ruka, please.” Compress said. “It regards that Overhaul fellow. He’ll be taken out of the picture if you help young Midoriya here.”

Ruka’s face twitched. Her scowl somewhat receded and she removed her hand from around Toga’s throat. “Ugh fine.”

One of her ethereal hands suddenly sprung out from the ground and held onto Izuku's face, positioning it so she was staring Ruka straight in the eye.

“But don't think of this as something I want, you bastard. You hear me?”

“Yes,” Izuku nodded. “Of course.”

“Hmmph.” She dissipated the hand and let go of Izuku’s head, but not before letting it collide with the tunnel’s walls first. “Then lead the way, then.”

Chapter End Notes

And that’s that. I’m pretty sure the raid’s gonna be done by the next chapter unless something changes. So, see you all next time!
Chapter Notes

A lot of jumbled events happening in quick succession again in this chapter. Hope it doesn’t come off as rushed! Anyways, enjoy!

“So…” Izuku began, inclining his head towards his current — if temporary — ally, “why are you with the League, anyways?”

Harrow — or Ruka, that is, — came to a halt, her head jarring towards Izuku’s direction. “Do you want me to rip your throat out?” A large ethereal claw sprouted out from a nearby wall, it’s sharp claws aimed straight for Izuku.

“Alright, alright!” Izuku put his hands up. “Sorry. Just trying to make some light conversation until we get there, you know?”

Ruka grunted, continuing at her previous pace. The semi-transparent arm disappeared. Izuku followed, though somewhat a little ways further behind than he had previously been.

In the meantime, Izuku set his mind on his bugs. The few he left with Eri confirmed that she had stayed put. The few bugs left in the room with all the fighting, thankfully, showed Togata still kicking about, just holding on.

“If you really want to know, it’s because Sensei took me in when I was younger.”

Izuku blinked. “What?”

Ruka scoffed, continuing. “He fed me. Gave me shelter. Cared for me. Made me into what I am today.” Izuku saw her hands, her real ones, clench. “And it’s your fault that he’s in Tartarus. You took him away.”

Izuku gulped, deciding not to delegate a response to Ruka’s remark. They both stayed silent for the rest of their journey.

They finally came upon their destination. Eri had all but sprung up at the sight of Izuku, causing a contemplative look to come upon Ruka’s face. Izuku immediately took notice of it.

“We’re still on a truce, Ruka,” Izuku said. “Eri is off limits.”

The villain’s eye twitched. “Fine. Then stand back if you want me to do what you got me for.”

Izuku did as what was asked of him, ensuring that Eri stayed behind him in the process. Meanwhile, Ruka readied up four separate arms that sprouted out from the ground. Each arm was muscled, excessively so in fact, with bulging veins that had Izuku unsure if they were there just for show or not.

The fours ethereal arms rammed forward, collapsing the wall and revealing the ongoing battle
between the steadily tiring Togata and an unchanged Overhaul. The opening of the hole didn’t seem to have alerted either of the two combatants, and Izuku was somewhat glad for that.

Izuku made his way towards the hole’s opening, but stopped himself besides Ruka before doing so. He turned his head to address the villain.

“Remember, Eri is off limits,” Izuku said. “Touch her, and I’ll hunt down Twice and Toga with the bugs still up on the surface. They’ll have to surface from their tunnel eventually, after all. And I’m sure that they wouldn’t enjoy an army of insects greeting them.”

Izuku didn’t wait for a response, jumping through the hole and into the raging battle. He sent the bugs that were currently following him to join in on the fight. As is, with them and what few bugs had still survived Overhaul’s machinations, there were enough to possibly create two clones. Izuku would have to make due if he needed them.

However, the first thing Izuku did was approach the unmoving form of Nighteye. The hero had been completely forgotten by the other two in the room, and was currently laid face down in the side of the room currently devoid of fighting.

As Izuku came up upon Nighteye, he was relieved to find the hero still breathing, if unconscious. A quick look at Nighteye’s back revealed various pieces of rock jutting out from multiple places. Also, Izuku hadn’t noticed it before, but the man’s left arm was completely missing.

Izuku didn’t waste anymore time observing Nighteye and instead began to gently drag him towards the hole, careful to ensure he didn’t hurt him anymore than he already was. After around half a minute, Izuku finally reached the hole. He slowly raised Nighteye’s form and placed him beside Eri, still facedown.

Izuku ruffled the girl’s hair. “Watch him, alright? Tell him not to move if he wakes up.” Eri nodded. It would have to do.

Izuku walked by Ruka again and shot her a glare. “No touching Nighteye either, got it?”

Izuku jumped through, and he finally aimed to join the battle in earnest.

---

The room was large, much larger than Izuku had anticipated. He watched Overhaul and Togata exchange blow after blow as he neared their fight, rocks shooting everywhere and bloody bits spouting from Overhaul as he healed himself of injuries.

However, despite Izuku’s commitment to aiding in the fight, he never reached it. The ceiling collapsed, rock and concrete giving way and creating a large hole. Through it came the draconic form of Ryukyu and the large, hulking villain that had greeted them at the gates.

The two giant forms fell, causing the ground to shake once they had hit the floor. It was enough to disrupt the ongoing fight between Togata and Overhaul for just a bit before the fighting began yet again.

Izuku looked back at the hole, finding the slowly descending forms of Uraraka, Tsu, and Hado coming forth. But there was another presence he noticed as well. Izuku saw himself. His own face, cheerfully smiling, peering down at the carnage from above. He instantly set bugs — above ground ones, that is — on the figure.

“The hell are you doing, Toga?”
Fighting amongst Ryukyu and the others continued against the large villain. Togata was still going off against Overhaul, but it seemed as if Hado had joined her fellow third year in his fight. Meanwhile, Izuku stood in the midst of it all, standing still and focusing his bugs up above.

“I’m just helping!” the now melting form of Toga cheered. “Now you have some reinforcements against that nasty Yakuza man.”

His bugs saw the Compress clone dash past Toga and into the pit below.

“And what about him?”

Toga shrugged her shoulders. “I don’t know?”

“Uh huh. Just get outta here before I swarm you, Toga. I won’t be as nice next time.”

“Roger that, Izuku! But I’m going to watch this first, if you don’t mind. Those clones are showing quite the initiative.”

“What ini—”

The bugs near his body sensed the attack before it connected. Izuku ducked under the open palm, narrowly dodging the gloved hand of Compress.

“My apologies, young Midoriya,” Compress said as he recomposed himself. “But I need to ensure my compatriot succeeds in her endeavors.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes at the man, his bugs sensing the movement and revealing the meaning of his words. Along the side of the room’s wall, up its rocky interface, a multitude of ethereal hands were steadily making their way up. Passed from limb to limb and in their grasp was Ruka, who herself carried a small metallic case in her hands.

Izuku shot his gaze from the escaping Ruka to the Compress clone who stood mere feet away. Izuku knew that there wouldn’t be a way for him to try to stop Ruka without Compress interrupting his concentration. Unless…

“Ah,” Compress began. “I see that you’ve figured out our plans. Now, I’d—”

“Uraraka,” Izuku’s bugs said, grabbing the attention of his friend. She was just on the verge of returning to her fight with the large villain after having been thrown across the room, but the bugs stopped her in her tracks.

“Midoriya?” Uraraka asked. “What is it?”

“Ruka — Harrow, I mean — she’s escaping. I can deal with her, but I need some help here with Compress first. He’s just a clone, so…”

Thankfully, Compress didn’t seem to notice, and was still monologuing without a care in the world.

“So, if you’d be a kind— Gah!” The boulder came tumbling through the air and smashed into Compress. The rock didn’t stop until it collided with the wall, bringing its passenger with it.

“Thanks Uraraka!”

Izuku went ahead and called upon the plentiful amount of bugs that inhabited the surface. They
swarmed through the hole (and there wasn’t a hint of Toga or Twice in sight) in the thousands, aiming right for the steadily climbing Ruka.

The villain noticed the swarm long before they reached her, and a variety of limbs came about from the wall and covered her body, encapsulating her in a dome. The bugs collided with the barrier, which held firm against the onslaught of bugs.

The attempt seemed to trigger something in Ruka. Faster than should have been possible, her cocoon of limbs shot down the wall and landed on the ground with a thump. The entanglement of limbs then dissipated, with Ruka running out and aiming herself towards Izuku.

The bugs swooped downwards, but they were nowhere near fast enough. Ruka moved with surprising swiftness, her ethereal constructs pushing her forward with unprecedented speed.

Before Izuku was able to react properly to his approaching foe, a large dome made of limbs sprung up around him. Not long after came in Ruka, entering through an opening in the dome that closed just as quickly as it had appeared.

The clone smiled at him with gleeful anticipation.

“**I thought you were supposed to be weaker as a clone!**” Izuku exclaimed.

“**It’s simply a bad matchup, boy,**” Ruka said. “**Your bugs aren’t fast enough nor strong enough to counter my limbs.**”

Izuku growled. “**And what about the truce we had?!**”

“**Never said anything about the drugs, little bug.**” She patted the case in her hands.

A twitch, a glimmer of something more and a connection made clear.

“**She’s only a clone, Izuku. Remember that.**”

And it was gone just as fast.

“**Really?!**” Izuku hissed. “**After all this time and that’s all you’re going to say?**”

Ruka narrowed her eyes. “**The hell are you on about?**”

Izuku shot her a glare, his mouth opening to reply.

“**Nevermind,**” Ruka muttered before Izuku was able to respond. “**The fact of the matter is that you're in my way.**”

Izuku took a breath and took a proper look over the villain. Ruka stood across from him with four ethereal arms posed and ready to strike. In her own hands — her real hands — gripped tightly in her grasp was the metal case from earlier.

**Right… the quirk destroying bullets. There’s nothing else they can be. Overhaul must’ve dropped them.**

“And what are you going to do about it?” Izuku asked.

Ruka scoffed. “Your bugs are outside. Your friends are preoccupied. And I have all the power I have to restrain you. What do you think I’m going to do?”
Four separate arms sprung out from right under Izuku, two grabbing his legs while two grabbed his arms.

An uncanny smile appeared on Ruka’s face. “Now hold still, you pest.”

Izuku struggled in his restraints, thrashing and jerking his limbs the best he could in an attempt to dislodge the ghostly arms holding him in place. All the while, Ruka slowly approached with a murderous look in her eyes. The metal case had found itself on the ground, all but forgotten by the villain.

It wasn’t long before Ruka stood in front of Izuku. “Finally, I have you,” she sighed. “Too bad it isn’t the real me doing this. I’d love it.”

Ruka’s hands rose and found themselves tightening around Izuku’s neck. The arms keeping Izuku restrained disappeared and he found himself falling backwards onto his back. Ruka remained on top of him, pinning him down as her hands continued to constrict his throat.

Izuku’s costume did little to reduce the effect; while it might have been able to protect against small arms and knives, there wasn’t much it could do about someone constricting the area around his throat.

“How does it feel? To hurt? To feel pain?” Ruka asked. “I felt like this when Sensei was taken. Taken because of you. But it was much, much worse. It’s too bad that I can’t show you how bad it was.”

Izuku struggled in his position. His limbs were now free, but that did little to his opponent. The fists did little as they impacted against Ruka’s sides, she merely shrugged the attacks off.

“It’s useless; you’re trapped, boy. You’re going to get what you deserve. There’s nothing you can do. You’re out of options.”

She was wrong. There was one thing Izuku hadn’t tried. And it was a viable strategy, especially since the person on top of him was only a clone. Izuku’s arm reached down towards his leg, which he subsequently folded closer to himself. His fingers brushed against just what he was looking for.

Ruka didn’t see it coming. And before she knew it, the knife was embedded in her torso.

Izuku himself had the firsthand view of Ruka’s eyes widening in pain and terror, her hands loosening their grip as she rolled off Izuku.

A harsh cough found itself escaping from Izuku, his airways clear and finally able to take in air again. It wasn’t long before the dome of arms dissipated, and the sounds of battle became clear once more.

“You… fuck…”

Izuku caught a glimpse of the melting clone, its eyes or fear and pain, before it melted into an amorphous puddle of goop.

Izuku gulped. He reached over and took back his knife, looking at it with an uncertain look. He knew that he hadn’t killed anyone. The Ruka before him was merely a clone. And he knew that he had killed before with his bugs, no matter how unintentional it was. But this instance felt different. He eventually shook his head, attempting to push the thoughts away.

“Can’t I just catch a break from all this madness?” he asked himself.
A glint of metal caught his eye; the metallic case. Izuku reached over and undid the case’s bindings. Inside he found four darts, bullets in all the sense. A fifth was missing, but by this point Izuku already knew what had happened to it.

A cry from afar pierced the air. Izuku’s head shot up, and the first thing he saw was Eri, clutching tightly onto Togata’s cape. Somehow, she had found herself in Overhaul’s arms. And not too far away was Togata, battered and bruised and barely able to crawl, his hand reaching out towards his foe.

“Of course I can’t.”

Izuku was already in the air before his tiring body could tell him otherwise. He’d finally activated his pack, actually having space to use the thing for once. At the moment, he was trailing after a steadily rising Overhaul that was utilizing a spire of stone to make a break for the hole in the ceiling. To make things worse, the Yakuza leader held Eri in his arms. Not only was Overhaul about to escape, but he was about to do so with Eri. And Izuku wasn’t going to let that happen.

Bugs flooded through the hole above and set their sights on Overhaul. As per expected, the man went into an instant panic and began flailing around, halting his progress. The villain used all his available limbs to swat away at the swarm, huge masses of bugs suddenly turning into nothing but eviscerated bits. Fortunately for Izuku, the man’s carelessness led him to having his arms free. On the other hand, that left him letting go of Eri, who began to plummet to the hard ground below.

“Shit!” Izuku shot forward, his arms stretched before him. He caught Eri with a grunt, her body and momentum causing Izuku to buckle in the air. However, a few seconds of stabilization later and Izuku and his passenger were safe in the air.

“You alright Eri?”

The girl furiously nodded her head in response. She buried her face into Togata’s cape. And then she muttered something that Izuku didn’t quite catch.

“I was going too…”

“You were going to what, Eri?”

An almost inhuman screech rang through the air. Overhaul had finally fallen from his spire, landing on the ground with a rumble. However, that seemed to do little to stop him. The villain kept on reforming himself over and over, taking huge swaths of bugs with him every time. His head shot up, and Izuku caught the murderous glare aimed right at him.

“Okay then. We’re going now,” Izuku said, beginning to rise in the air towards the hole. “You can tell me whatever it is you’re trying to tell me later, okay?”

“No! I… I’m...”

Izuku flew up and through the hole. He finally found himself above ground and back into the streets. “Great! We’re out!” Izuku cheered. “Now we just need to—”

Small sparks of light caught Izuku’s eyes and caused him to stop, his eyes trailing to their source. Eri’s horn had grown in length, and multicolored lights and sparks had begun arcing all over her body.
“Eri? What’s wrong?! Are you hurt? Is it your quirk? If it is then can yo—”

A sharp pain suddenly raced through Izuku’s mind. An endless barrage began to assault Izuku’s mind. Flashes and sounds, smells and emotions, all coalescing into one, cascading into an endless spiral—

—the children, just shoot—gave me a dying man—you carved out his eyes—the start to betray teammates for fame—arm into the ocean—

Izuku buckled in the air, his control fading as he crashed into the street. He instantly began clutching at his head, the shooting pain appearing all over.

“Izuku! Calm down! You need to get out of my—”

—hundreds of thousands of years of brutish, messy, violent incidents, billions of events—You’re not a killer—I’m sorry it worked out this way—or a malediction or a curse—Hey Shitcrumb!—butterflies circling around like eagles—

Memories. They were memories. But—

—Such sad, small words—nothing we can do except fight—Do it—everyone was working together—so very small, in the end—

“Sorry! I’m sorry!” a voice shouted. It brought Izuku back to his senses, just barely. The pain was lessening, but everything was beginning to blur. Eri stood in front of him, but made sure to keep her distance.

A roar rumbled from the depths of the hole, the ground beginning to shake as Overhaul began to rise once again.

Izuku’s body wasn’t responding; he was stuck, limp, paralyzed, even if the pain was receding. And, if anything, Izuku was honestly surprised that he was still conscious. There was just so much racing through his mind.

“ERI!!” The sounds grew closer.

“Shit! Shit. He’s coming and I’m stuck like this!” A swarm of bugs had found themselves surrounding Izuku like a storm — he hadn’t even called for them. But that didn’t matter for now. Overhaul was coming, and he needed to do something. Anything.

“Eri.”

“Yeah?” Eri questioned. Despite the swarm, she was utterly calm. If anything, the tears in her eyes displayed her overwhelming sense of guilt rather than any fear or disgust. Her body twitched every so often, evidence of the lack of control she had of her quirk.

“I need you to do a favor for me, okay?”

He didn’t have much time. He needed to bring Overhaul down soon, before his body completely gave up on him. He’d have to take a chance.

“Where are you, you little pest!?!?” Overhaul stalked the streets with an aura of fury. He continued to sport the four arms he’d repurposed from his two underlings, using them to overturn rubble and cars in search of his target.
“Stop hiding and face me!” he yelled. “Bring me Eri!”

A blur of gold and green entered Overhaul’s vision, and for the first time he had finally gotten a glimpse of his opponent.

Izuku lazily hovered in the air, his body completely limp. His arms laid at his side, and his head slumped forward. The only hint of movement was from the swarm of bugs that buzzed and surrounded his body, their flying forms contrasting with the gold and green of Izuku’s costume.

The sight had Overhaul erupting into a disgusted frown. “So you’re the one who’s been sending those disgusting things at me. Disrupting my fight with the little upstart of a hero. Defiling me with those revolting minions.”

“I am.”

The reply sent a shiver down Overhaul’s back. “Sickening. Both you and your power. I suppose it only makes sense that you surround yourself with such filth,” Overhaul gestured to the swarm.

“Filth?”

“Yes. You and your bugs are one and the same. And you, are just like all the others. As is, I will gladly carry out my wish to squash you like the pest you are. But I must first ask, where did you leave Eri?”

The swarm buzzed, the individual bugs’ movements becoming erratic. And then they spoke.

“I don’t… understand. What do you want? What do you think you’ll accomplish with all this?”

Overhaul scoffed. “You don’t understand. Nobody understands!” His arms shook and collided with the ground in anger, causing the road to crack under their strength.

“This society that’s overtaken our world, dictated our lives, it’s been run by a sickness! Abilities that appeared out of nowhere! Such things need to be erased from existence! And Eri’s the key! She can affect our own evolution, revert humanity back to before these mutations occurred!”

“That’s your reason?” The swarm buzzed. “Seem’s petty. Or maybe the ramblings of a madman. Not sure which.” The bugs stimulated a laugh. “And I’m not telling you where she is. Why should I?”

Overhaul roared, his body shooting forward. “A brat like you has no right of holding on to such an asset!”

Izuku’s body dodged upwards, flying through the air and taking the swarm with him.

“I… We’ve faced worse than you.” The words seemed to come from everywhere all at once. “Much worse. Monsters beyond what you could imagine. You’re nothing compared to them.”

“You’re just a kid,” Overhaul yelled, looking at his target from the street below. “You think that I believe that? And what’s with this ‘we’ stuff?!”

His arms deconstructed and reformed into tentacles, much more slender and long than his previous arms. They shot through the air and towards Izuku. They all missed their target, though made gaps in the swarm.

Izuku and his swarm flew off in the other direction. Overhaul followed.
“You don’t understand!” Overhaul yelled at Izuku’s retreating form. “I’m destroying the world! Dismantling its very structure!” The villain reconstructed again and reformed back to having his extra limbs, using them to aid in his travel.

He grabbed a nearby car and hurled it at Izuku’s flying form, only to miss. “I’m turning things back to the way they used to be! And a mere hero like you isn’t going to stop me!”

Swarms, much smaller than the larger one ahead following Izuku, began to dart towards Overhaul. Every once in a while Overhaul would use his power and deconstruct a swarm into a fine red mist. Other times he’d deconstruct himself for cleansing, only at the cost of losing any progress he’d have in gaining on Izuku.

“You power is even more repulsive than others’! Bugs? It’s proof that I’m right!” Overhaul began running through the swarms that got in his way, getting more and more angry as each one touched even an inch of his skin.

“I’m going to kill you, you hear! And it’s going to hurt!” Overhaul turned a corner, and he nearly tripped on himself as he skidded to a stop.

Izuku had stopped, and floated at the end of the street.

“That’s it? Resigned to your fate?” Overhaul slowed his speed and began to advance on his target. The swatted away the occasional swarm, but was content by this point to let some touch him. He planned on making Izuku suffer, after all.

“Overhaul. You said that you wanted Eri?”

Overhaul chuckled. “What? Finally decided to hand her over?”

“Yes, actually.”

“I applaud you for your common sense.” Overhaul smiled. “But you are still going to be killed, you know. You can’t be allowed to— Hey!”

Overhaul felt a hand around his leg. He looked down and saw a shivering Eri, her body twitching as beads of sweat raced down her head.

Overhaul only had a moment to react before he felt the pain of being forcefully separated from his underlings, reverting him back to his base form.

Eri, despite her efforts, finally collapsed to the ground. Meanwhile, a panting Overhaul had collapsed to his knees, his breath heaving.

“That’s your plan, hero?” Overhaul wheezed. “You think… that you’re safe?”

A sudden burst in swarms rushed at him. Overhaul was barely able to stand, but he didn’t let that stop him from raising his hands and letting out his power on the incoming bugs. However, he didn’t get every single one. Some had touched him once again. And something was different this time.

The swarms dissipated. A sharp pain struck itself on Overhaul’s neck. The villain reached for the spot and pulled.

Izuku had flown closer, hovering until he was basically right in front of Overhaul. His own voice spoke, but it was drowned out by the millions of bugs that spoke in at the same time.
“How does it feel? To be rendered powerless by your own creation?”

In Overhaul’s hand was something all too familiar to him. The quirk destroying bullet that he had plucked from his neck rolled off his hand and fell to the ground.

“No!” Overhaul screamed. “No! What have you done!” With what little strength was with him, Overhaul lunged for Izuku.

However, Izuku — anticipating the pounce — steered his body just out of the villain’s reach. The result was Overhaul collapsing to the ground in a heap, a look of fury aimed right at Izuku.

“Me?” The swarm asked. “I merely carried out your will. Weren’t you the one saying that quirks were a scar upon humanity?” Suddenly, the swarm once again surrounded the villain. But this time, they left him tied up in strings of spider silk.

Overhaul bared his teeth, his eye’s holding an essence of disgust and utter hate as he struggled to break out of his restraints. “You don’t understand what you’ve done! I’ll kill you! I’ll kill you for doing this!”

Izuku ignored the villain’s yells. He flew his body over to a shivering Eri, arcs of color flashing all around her. It was clear that her quirk was hurting her, her lack of control causing her body to be in pain.

Izuku spoke with his own voice despite the struggle he found himself in doing so. “Th...thank you, Eri. You— you did good. I’m... proud of you.”

Izuku switched his view over to his bugs. The heroes were approaching, finally. Among them was Aizawa. He would be Eri’s saving grace.

“Don’t worry, Eri.”

Izuku relented his control of his flight pack. He crumpled to the ground in a heap, his body and energy completely spent. Memories of another's life ran through his mind, overcoming almost all of his thoughts.

“It’ll be— It’ll be over soon. You won’t hurt anymore, Eri. Help... help is coming.”

His mind splintered yet again.

“Sorry, Izuku.”

“My mind... It hurts... I need... rest.”

“Then rest.”

He allowed his consciousness to waver, finally giving in to the darkness.

Chapter End Notes

And there we all go! The raid on the yakuza is now complete. I hope I didn’t disappoint! Anyways, see you all in the next chapter!
Chapter Notes

Talking! That’s all there is this time, a bunch of talking. Hope you all enjoy this brief respite for Izuku before things start kicking up again.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alright then, count me in.

No monologue? You’re not going to explain how you did it?

Some-somewhere along the way, it became no.

“Wake up.”

Izuku opened his eyes. The first thing he noticed was the white ceiling, pristine and spotless. And then came the constant beeping, a steady beat that waded in and out of his ears.

“Hospital,” he groaned. “Right. Of course.”

QA, we really need to—

“Midoriya! You’re awake!”

Izuku turned his head to the left, eyeing the source of the voice.

“Oh,” Izuku muttered. “Yaoyorozu. It’s you.”

Talking. Later. Okay?

Izuku cocked his head sideways, taking a sidelong glance at Yaoyorozu. “Wait. What are you doing here?”

“I— I came as soon as I heard,” Yaoyorozu replied hurriedly. “It’s my duty as the deputy representative to ensure my class rep’s well being, after all!”

Izuku smiled, letting out a small chuckle. “Thanks.”

Izuku looked around at the others that surrounded his bed. Yaoyorozu was the only one awake, her chair closest to him on the left. Beside her sat Setsuna in her own chair, her head on the bed and a trail of drool coming from her mouth.

On his right closest to him was Mei, also sleeping but with her head tilted backwards. Beside her was Pony and Manga, each leaning on the other as they slept. However, the one who caught Izuku’s attention the most was whoever was sitting at the foot of the bed. They were completely covered in bandages, sporting a look not unlike the one Aizawa had for a while after the incident at USJ.

“The others came along with me as well,” Yaoyorozu said. “The school initially wouldn’t let us, but we’re stubborn, you know? Iida wanted to come too, but he was worried of what would have
“Yeah…” Izuku continued to look at the individual at the foot of the bed.

“Oh, that’s Kirishima,” Yaoyorozu replied upon seeing Izuku’s confusion.

“Oh, huh. Should he… really be out of bed if he’s like that?” Izuku asked.

“It’s not as bad as it looks, actually,” Yaoyorozu said. “It’s mostly superficial damage to his skin. His quirk took the brunt of the damage. You should have seen him earlier today. He said that he didn’t want to leave your side until you woke up. Something about you being too manly for your own good.”

They both shared a laugh at that.

“Oh!” Izuku suddenly blurted out. “What about Uraraka and Tsu?”

“They’re fine too. They were here a couple hours ago. Last I checked, they went to check up on Sir Nighteye.”

Izuku’s eyes widened. “That’s right! What about Sir?! Or Togata-senpai?! Aizawa-sensei?! And Eri?!” Izuku sat up in his bed in a hurry.

“Whoa now, slow down Izuku,” Yaoyorozu soothed, guiding Izuku back into a lying position. “They’re fine. They’re all fine. If anything, you should be worrying about yourself right now. You’re the one who technically had it the worst.”

Izuku experimentally had a go at moving all his limbs. He blew a sigh of relief when he found that he could move at his own will, quite unlike the minutes after Eri had used her quirk on him. As is, Izuku sent a questioning look at Yaoyorozu. “But I feel fine?”

“That’s a relief.” Yaoyorozu sighed. “Your brain activity was spiking all over the place, and the doctors said that you were in some kind of coma, and they didn’t know when you would wake up.”

“Physically maybe. But on the mental spectrum, that’s a whole different story.”

Izuku cocked an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

“I mean that you weren’t waking up, Izuku,” Yaoyorozu sighed. “Your brain activity was spiking all over the place, and the doctors said that you were in some kind of coma, and they didn’t know when you would wake up.”

“Not long, actually,” Yaoyorozu said. “The raid was earlier today. It’s approaching midnight right now.”

“No no. It’s alright,” Izuku said. “Close friends refer to each other with their first names, don’t they? And I definitely consider you a close friend at this point, Momo.”

“Ow!” Izuku yelped, his hands for the suddenly sore spot that had appeared on his head.
“Hatsume!” Momo reprimanded. “You shouldn’t be hitting his head like that! He was still in a coma just a few minutes ago!”

“Don’t care! And Izuku!” yelled the suddenly awoken Mei, setting down her hand after hitting the top of his head. “What the hell did you think you were doing!”

Izuku chuckled despite the display, even if he was still rubbing at the spot on his head. “Nice to see you too, Mei.”

As it turned out, Mei’s outburst was rather loud. The others had begun to stir, and it wouldn’t take long for them to spur from their rest. And despite it being midnight, it looked as if Izuku wouldn’t be getting much sleep for a while.

Once again, Izuku awoke to the pristine white ceiling above his hospital bed. But this time he was greeted by somebody else upon his awakening. Standing over Izuku's bed on the left was Aizawa, his left arm in a sling and half a face covered in bandages.

“Midoriya you have some explaining to do.”

“Oh?” Izuku let out a nervous laugh. “Umm… where did the others go?”

“The cafeteria; they’re serving breakfast. Your own food is on your right.”

Izuku turned his head over to where Aizawa had gestured. “Oh! Pancakes! You wouldn’t mind if —”

“Go ahead.”

Izuku moved the tray and the accompanying table into a more comfortable position and began to eat.

“So,” Izuku began, talking between bites, “what was it that you wanted to ask me, Aizawa-sensei?”

Aizawa took a glance at the plate his student was eating from. His hand reached down, grabbed one of the pancakes and took a bite of it.

“Hey!”

Aizawa took his time to chew, finally swallowing after a few moments. “I want to know what you were thinking, fighting Overhaul like you did.”

“What do you mean?”

“You were paralyzed all over.”

“That was mostly from Eri though! Nothing Overhaul had done.”

“That was still risky. What if Overhaul had killed all your bugs?”

“I already made that mistake before. I took steps to prevent it from happening again.”

Aizawa took another bite of his pancake, essentially eating it in its entirety. “And if your flight pack failed?”

“I trust Hatsume’s handiwork.” Izuku looked around the room. “Where is my flight pack,
anyways? And my costume?”

“It’s with Kaniyashiki. She’ll be coming later.” Aizawa sighed. “I need to think up something that’ll discourage you from planting yourself in the face of life-threatening danger in the future.”

Izuku smirked. “Good luck with that.”

Aizawa took another pancake.

“Hey! That’s the last one!”

“You can get more later.” Aizawa began to move towards the door. “Come on, let’s go.”

Izuku blinked. “You mean follow you?”

“Unless you want to remain confined to your hospital bed?”

“But so early? I would’ve thought that—”

“The doctors cleared you earlier today. It helped that Recovery Girl looked over you in that aspect. And you missed your mother. She dropped by earlier but she said that she had to go to work.”

“Oh.” Izuku got up without question then, stretching a bit first before he fell in step with Aizawa. “So, everybody’s really okay?”

“Relatively.”

“Meaning…”

“You saw Kirishima. Fat Gum was with him during that fight, but overall got off better, all things considered. Amajiki is fine despite the fact that he faced three of the villains on his own; he has a couple bruises and a split face. He’ll be fine. And you already saw your friend, Tokage. She and Edgeshot got away lightly, considering who they were chasing.”

“So Stain and… what was his name? Spinner, I think? They got away?”

“They did. And while we’re not getting anything out of the Precepts members we captured, we’re pretty certain that the case Spinner had with him held more quirk destroying bullets.”

“I thought so.” Izuku sighed. “Eri?”

“Isolation, for now. Since we know that she can’t control her quirk, it’s best that she be kept under until the doctors can sort everything out.”

“I… suppose that makes sense. But then how about—”

“We’re here.” Aizawa interrupted, already knowing what Izuku was going to ask. “See for yourself.”

Aizawa made his way towards another hospital room and held its door open. Izuku walked through with the door closing behind him. Aizawa hadn’t followed.

There were three individuals in the room. Nighteye sat upright in his hospital bed, with All Might sitting by his side and the two talking amicably.

Togata was the third individual, and was the one to first notice Izuku. He had been doing an odd
sort of exercise in his bed when he greeted the room’s newcomer.

“Ah, Midoriya! You’re up and about! I’m glad!”

Izuku opened his mouth, aiming to form some sort of response. However, Togata’s actions and demeanor — with the way he seemed so carefree and happy — had caught him a bit off guard.

“Ah, Midoriya!” suddenly came All Might as he rose from his chair. “Nice to see you awake, my boy!”

“I— Nice to see you too.” Izuku stuttered. “Is uh…” Izuku focused in the behind All Might, towards the man who sat still in his bed. “Is Nighteye okay?”

“I’m quite fine, Midoriya,” Nighteye said.

“You are not!” All Might suddenly said back.

“I am,” Nighteye rebuked. “My injuries aren’t too debilitating.”

Togata let out a laugh. “You’re paralyzed from the waist down, Sir. Some people would find that pretty horrifying.”

Izuku’s eyes widened upon the information. “You mean—”

Nighteye let out a loud groan. “Please Midorya, save your breath. Don’t get on my case as well.”

“But you— Paralyzation is— Wait! How about your arm?!”

“You mean this?” Nighteye raised the arm in question, but instead of the usual hand a stump had taken his place. “I’m quite alright with it actually. If anything, it’ll help with my future All Might cosplays.”

At his proclamation, All Might made a choking sound. “How can you be so nonchalant about this?!”

Izuku began to chuckle, watching All Might and Nighteye bicker between themselves. The back and forth between hero and sidekick continued for a whole minute, as did Izuku’s enjoyment of what was happening in front of him. However, something caught Izuku’s attention.

“Wait a minute.” Izuku took another look at All Might. “How did I not notice it sooner?! You’re wearing the robo-arm!” Izuku exclaimed. “When did Mei give it to you?”

All Might turned to face Izuku, and Izuku again was confused with how he neglected to notice the giant, metallic arm attached to where All Might’s stump used to be.

“Only yesterday actually,” All Might said. “Hatusme spent a whole hour explaining everything to me while Melissa was on call.” All Might flexed the arm. “Hatusme and Melissa really outdid themselves. I can see those two doing great things together.”

“Though I’m definitely not going to use the splinter rocket system anytime soon,” All Might added with a mutter.

“Spinter rocket system?” Izuku asked. “I don’t remember anything about that in the designs.”

“Nevermind about it, Midoriya. It’s best we don’t talk about it.”
“But—”

“Anyways, let’s switch topics!” All Might exclaimed. “We have some things to discuss with you, my boy. It’d be best if we spoke about it sooner than later.”

“Is this about Togata having One For All?”

“What?!” Nighteye said. “How do you know about that? Or about One For All, for that matter?”

“You mean All Might didn’t tell you?” Izuku asked.

Nighteye turned an eye towards said hero. “You don’t tell me about these things All Might.”

“Sorry! I know I don’t! And I already said! I plan to fix that from now on!”

Nighteye smiled, a small chuckle coming from his mouth. “Right.”

“I knew that you were a smart kid, Midoriya!” Togata said. “You figured it all out on your own.”

“It was nothing, really. It was kind of obvious if you knew what to look for. All Might already told me that he had picked a successor, but not who. Coupled with what I saw during your fight with Overhaul, and with the fact that one of the darts was missing from the case that the clone Harrow was trying to run off with, it wasn’t too hard to figure out.”

“Sounds like an answer that still required a bunch of thinking to me,” Togata countered.

Izuku shrugged his shoulders. “How are you planning to hide it, though? I mean, you lost Permeation. And super strength, speed, and durability aren’t exactly similar to your old quirk.”

“We’ve already figured that all out, actually!” All Might said. “We’re keeping the fact that Mirio got shot during the raid. But! We’re changing just the type of bullet it was!”

“What do you mean?” Izuku asked.

“We’re saying that instead of a quirk destroying bullet, Overhaul used a different, more secretive experiment on me,” Togata added. “It was a bullet that changes one’s quirk!”

“What.” The words came out of both Izuku and Nighteye’s mouth simultaneously.

“That’s what you’re going with?” Izuku asked. “That’ll never pass under scrutinization.”

“What?” All Might asked. “Is it not convincing enough?”

“It isn’t,” Nighteye said. “I agree with Midoriya on this. There are too many factors that contradict such a thing. Like the surviving higher-ups of the Precepts of Death. I propose blaming Mirio’s situation on somebody’s quirk. Somebody who ended up dying in the raid, thus explaining Mirio’s current change in quirk.”

“Huh,” Togata mumbled. “Well, if that’s what Sir wants to go with, I’m fine with it!”

“You don’t have to, but I recommend it,” Nighteye said. “But I have a question All Might, if you don’t mind me switching topics again.”

“Of course not! Go ahead, Nighteye.”

Nighteye nodded. “It’s about Midoriya. I’m merely curious; why does he know about One for All
in the first place?”

“Ah, yes.” All Might sighed. “All For One has taken an interest in Midoriya, unfortunately. I
decided to inform him of my quirk and all it entailed, so he knew what he was working with with
All For One.”

Nighteye blinked, his face gaining a far-off look. “I see… I must’ve skimmed over that, then.
Somehow. Hmm… But in that case—”

The door to the room suddenly creaked open, causing Nighteye to cut himself off.

Four other figures came in through the door, all of which were familiar to Izuku.

Oh, hey kid,” a heavily bandaged Gran Torino said to Izuku. “You’re looking a lot better than I
thought you would. Last I heard, you were stuck in a coma.”

“Coma?!” Tsukauchi yelled. He was in a similar state to Gran Torino, though had the added
disadvantage of an arm in a sling. “Since when was Midoriya in a coma??”

“I was telling you a while ago, Kauchi,” Kaniko said. “Weren’t you listening?”

“Tsukauchi! Gran Torino!” All Might said. “What are you guys doing here?”

“I’m here to check up on your sidekick,” Gran Torino said. “He and I haven’t had a decent
conversation in a while. As for those guys,” he pointed at the gathered group of Tsuakuchi,
Kaniko, and Asano, “they’re here for the kid.”

“Go on,” Gran Torino said to Izuku. “You can continue with catch-up later.”

Izuku nodded, walking over the trio of police officers and following as they left the room.

Kaniko was the first to initiate contact, going on to ruffle Izuku’s hair as they walked to a more
secluded area. “Good to see you up, Midoriya. I knew that you’d get up eventually. I didn’t doubt
that for a second, of course; didn’t think you’d be so quick about it though.”

Izuku smirked. “I’m glad that you have confidence in my ability to ensure my own well being.”

Izuku inclined his head. “So, more questioning, I take it?”

“We’re actually here to arrest you,” Asano said.

Izuku took an involuntary step back. “What?!”

“She’s kidding, Midoriya,” Tsukauchi said. “Sheesh, Saya. The kid just came out of a coma. Try
not to scare him into another one, will you?”

Asano only replied with a grunt.

Tsukauchi sighed. “And yes, questioning.”

“Oh,” Izuku let out a sigh.

It took them another minute to reach their destination — a rather indiscriminate room that didn’t
have much going for it other than being out of the way. Tsukauchi was the first to speak.
“Right. Before the formalities, Midoriya, I and the entire police force want to congratulate you for your work in taking down Overhaul. Everybody was highly impressed by your performance.”

“Oh, uh, thanks?”

Tsukauchi nodded. “On the personal side, I’d like to ask: are you okay? I didn’t know you were in a coma.”

“His muscles were all tensed up too,” Kaniko added, “and his brain activity was spiking off the charts!”

“You’re not easing any of my worries, Kaniko.”

Kaniko laughed. “Will it help if I tell you how we were talking the whole ride to the hospital? He was fine one second, and the next moment I learned that he fell into a coma. And now look, he’s up and running about in just under a day! Stubborn little kid, I’ll tell you.”

“Wait,” Izuku began, “I was talking to you on the way to the hospital?”

Kaniko shot him a confused look. “Um… yeah? You know, when you insisted you have your swarm talk for you? And how we talked about how creepy you were flying all around while you yourself were motionless? About what the other officers were doing before we got separated?”

“I… don’t remember any of that,” Izuku admitted.

“You don’t? Huh. Must be because of the coma. Well, that doesn’t matter!” Kaniko yelled. “I’ll just have to go over everything with you again!”

Izuku nodded. “Thanks, Kaniko. I’ll be looking forward to it.”

“I could do the same, too.”

Before Izuku could form up any thoughts in response, Tsukauchi’s voice came to Izuku’s ears.

“Anyways,” Tsukauchi coughed into his hand, “questioning. First thing — well the only thing, actually. It’s about the remaining quirk destroying bullets the Precepts had in their possession.”

Izuku raised an eyebrow. “What about them?”

“You were the last one seen in possession of them. Your classmates — Uraraka and Asui — they said that they saw you fighting with a clone of Harrow over said case. Is that right?”

“Uh, yeah.”

Tsukauchi nodded. “Alright. In that case, you were the last to touch them, considering you used one of the remaining four on Overhaul. That should have left three more in the case, right?”

“Last I saw, at least,” Izuku responded.

Tsukauchi’s eyes narrowed. “Meaning you only took the one, and not any more?”

Izuku tilted his head. “Yes…”

“And you don’t know where the other ones are?”

Izuku shook his head. “No.”
After a few moments, Tsukauchi’s expression softened. “Just making sure.” He sighed. “Damn. A part of me wishes that you were lying. It’d make this whole thing a lot more simple.”


“We only found one remaining quirk-destroying bullet left in the case.” The words came from Officer Asano, this time. “Considering that you used one on Overhaul, that leaves two of them missing from the scene.”

“Seriously?” Izuku intoned. “That’s not good. At all.”

“You can see our concern, then,” Asano continued.

Izuku’s head shot up. “Do you think that it was—”

“It wasn’t the League,” Asano said.

“Yeah,” Tsukauchi added. “They were suspects at first. But they aren’t after what happened earlier this morning.”

“What happened this morning?” Izuku asked.

Tsukauchi’s face settled on a grimace. “The transport that was escorting Overhaul was attacked. By The League, no doubt on that. We were confused of the attack’s purpose at first; they left Overhaul alone for the most part. The only obvious damage was the hero guarding the transport… he died on the scene. But then we noticed the case, which was being transported in the same vehicle. And it was taken.”

Izuku’s eyes lit in realization. “It couldn’t have been the League because otherwise they would have taken all the drugs all at once. They had no reason to leave one and then try to take back the other one later, especially due to the higher risk.”

“Exactly,” Tsukauchi said. “We can’t think of anybody else who could have done it.”

“Stain?” Izuku offered.

“Another candidate, since his partner had a similar case. But Edgeshot and your friend followed him off site long before the actual fighting started.”

Tsukauchi sighed again. “Oh well, we’ll find out eventually. Thanks, Midoriya, for bearing with us.”

“Of course, Tsukauchi.”

Tsukauchi nodded in response. “Well, we’re off then!” He made his way towards the door, Asano following. “Kaniko still has some handler stuff for you though. ’Ll leave her to that.” Tsukauchi turned his head to take a look at Izuku. “Stay safe, you hear?”

Izuku nodded. And then the two were gone.

“Finally have you all alone,” Kaniko said.

“It’s nothing bad, is it?” Izuku asked.

“Depends on how you see it!” Kaniko smiled, showing off her teeth in obvious amusement. “But…”
“But…?”

“Eh. I think I’ll wait to tell you until tomorrow. Payback for having to reiterate our earlier conversation that you don’t remember.”

“Really?”

Kaniko nodded and then made her way to behind a desk within the room. “I have this though.” She held up Izuku’s flightpack, which was currently in it’s simple backpack mode. “Left it here before we came to get you. And don’t worry about your costume. I stored it back in my office.”

“Thanks,” Izuku said, taking the pack.

“Well, that’s all for me!” Kaniko said. Making her way for the door. “I’ll be around to pick you up at six tomorrow!”

“Six?” Izuku questioned. “Why so late?”

Kaniko laughed as she grabbed for the door handle. “I think you mean ‘why so early.’”

“What!” Izuku exclaimed. “What requires me to be awake so early?!”

“It’ll be a surprise~!” And before Izuku could rebuke back for more information, Kaniko had left with the door slamming behind her.

Izuku sighed. “Fine. I’ll find out tomorrow, then.”

Izuku went ahead and placed his bag on. He made sure everything was in working order, testing out it’s color changing capabilities and making sure it wasn’t too damaged.

Izuku then reached out and only then noticed a couple of his bugs within it, hiding in the small compartment that assisted in his flight movement. Izuku, however, stilled when he noticed something within said compartment that didn’t belong. Two small, and dangerous somethings.

“Sorry I didn’t tell you earlier, but I didn’t really want you letting it slip in front of the officers.”

QA! You’re telling me that you took them?! I’m withholding evidence just by having these hidden in my pack! If the police find out—

“They won’t, because you already told Tsukauchi the truth.”

So what? What happens if they ask again because they get suspicious?

“They won’t because of his quirk.”

I— Quirk? What do you mean? And how come you know about it? It’s never come up between him and I.

“For good reason, Izuku. I overheard him and Asano talking after the raid. Tsukauchi’s quirk acts as a sort of lie detector. I’m pretty sure that it’s part of the reason why they always send him, for your interrogations. That, and the fact that you two have formed an amicable relationship by this point. Anyways, as is, you had nothing to do with taking these, I did.”

I… Izuku’s eyes rose in realization. “You were controlling me while I was out. You were the one talking to Kaniko. Since when could you do that!?"
“Since the beginning, Izuku. I haven’t exactly been hiding it. I’ve been stepping into your skin at multiple points since we merged together. I’m sure you remember some of the times when you felt like you weren’t yourself.”

...Retrospectively, yes. Fine. But how about the bullets?!

“You can’t bring them up and reveal you had them now. You’ll not only lose the police force’s test, but also tip your hand. You’ll make them believe that you have a way of worming out of Tsukauchi’s quirk. And if that happens, how much of what they questioned of you in the past will come into question?”

I— You— Fuck! Fine, QA. But you need to bring these things up with me before you do them next time.

“I would have originally, but you were unconscious at the point. I had to take the opportunity before it was too late.”

Just… what am I going to do with them?

“Just keep them hidden in your room. They can be useful in the future. Better to have them than to not.”

Chapter End Notes

And there we go! Hope you all enjoyed!
This chapter turned out to be... I don't know, less serious than was originally intended? Or another break period chapter, I guess. Think of it as Izuku’s extended vacation time, because he’s gonna need it for the future ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright Midoriya. Just breathe in and out! Remember: Clear your mind, and breathe.”

Izuku took a breath in, but he didn’t clear his mind. He couldn’t, not exactly, when he was still thinking over the fact that QA had yet again avoided answering his questions.

First she had surprised him with those quirk destroying bullets — which he had eventually hid within his termites’ mound back in his dorm — and then she wouldn’t clarify any of his questions regarding the flashes of memories that he vaguely recalled.

Much to Izuku’s dismay, his mind seemed to have been playing against him. Most of the memories that he had seen — had continued to see throughout the entire fight with Overhaul — wouldn’t come to his recollection.

There were some that were crystal clear, sure; but those memories were for some reason only viewable in first person, and showed mundane things happening like scrolling through some online forum on a computer screen or walking up to some red bricked welding factory in what looked like a rundown part of some city.

Izuku was certain that these memories belonged to QA, he had no doubt in his mind. He only wished that QA would be more open about them.

“Oi. You’re making that face again. And mumbling again. That’s the first time in a while.”

Izuku breathed out. He opened his eyes to look at Kaniko, whose face had remained the same foot and a half apart from his since they had started this exercise.

Izuku huffed. “I was thinking about something.”

One of Kaniko’s eyebrows rose. “And didn’t I say to clear your mind?”

Izuku shook his head. “I still don’t understand why why had to do this so early. Especially a nonsensical exercise like this! I can feel all the blood rushing to my head already.

Kaniko shined a bright, toothy smile. “That blood-rushin’ thing is just your imagination!”

“I highly doubt that,” Izuku muttered.

“Hey. Think of it like this,” Kaniko continued. “I personally feel as if you’ve gone through a rough couple weeks. And as your handler, it’s my job to determine if you need to take an edge of things. That’s what this breathing exercise is for!”
“And the cocoons?” Izuku asked, referring to his and Kaniko’s current states.

“And an experiment! I thought you’d feel more comfortable doing something you’re familiar with.”

“...What? Do you somehow think that I go around slee—”

It was at that moment that Tsukauchi walked into the room, face deep in a folder. “Hey Kaniko; I just wanted to let you know that Trav— What the heck are you two doing?”

The police detective gawked at the scene before him in honest disbelief. Attached to the ceiling were two giant cocoons. One held Kaniko while the other held Izuku. Even more strange was how they were both suspended upside down, facing each other and with no visible methods to escape.

“Advanced therapy, ‘Kauchi! You should join, it’s fun!”

“I…” Tsukauchi shook his head. “How long did it even take you to set this all up?”

“It took me an hour to make the cocoon harnesses,” Izuku replied nonchalantly. “Still think it was a dumb idea, though.”

Tsukauchi blinked his eyes in confusion. “Then why’d you go along and entertain Kaniko’s deranged notions, then?”

“Oi!”

“She told me to get every single spider we passed as we were driving here,” Izuku said. “She didn’t say why at first, and by the time she finally did we were in here already and I had a swarm of spiders waiting outside the window. So I decided to just try it.”

“Right,” Tsukauchi sighed. He turned his head and yelled out into the corridor. “Saya! Come look at this, will you?”

Kaniko and Izuku both blanched at Tsukauchi’s words.

“What are you doing?” Kaniko asked.

“Getting you out, of course,” Tsukauchi said. “Midoriya’s going to be late to his appointment, otherwise.”

“Appointment?” Izuku asked. “What appo— Wait, no. Hold on. I have a way planned already to get us out of here, Tsukauchi. The spiders just have to—”

Saya’s red hair had come into view at that moment, followed by her eyes peeking into the room and a mouth that drew into an immediate smirk. “Oh. I see.”

Officer Asano made her way into the room and slowly approached the trapped duo. “Looks like you two might be needing some help getting down from there.” Her hands became engulfed in a steady flame that raced down her arms and to her shoulders. “Don’t mind if I do.”

Kaniko walked away from her office with Izuku in tow. Both were riddled with some reddening skin and aches from Asano’s generous use of her quirk, but were otherwise fine.

They steadily made their way towards the front entrance, Izuku eventually catching up and falling beside Kaniko.
“You still haven’t told me what we’re doing,” Izuku said, dusting off some errant ash from his shoulder.

“What you’re doing,” Kaniko corrected, she herself rubbing at a sore patch of skin. “And like I said, it’s going to be a surprise!”

When the duo reached the doors to the outside, the first thing that caught their attention was the costumed man — a hero, Izuku deduced — that fussed around not too far from them. Said hero currently had his arm around what seemed to be a random passerby, and was showing them a picture.

Kaniko cleared her throat to gain the hero’s attention. “Ahem. Traveler-san.”

Realizing just then who was in front of them, Izuku mentally berated himself for not recognizing the man beforehand; it wasn’t as if he didn’t stand out, after all. His streamlined trench coat was the same as it was before, with the neon green lines running down the sleeves and sides. The simple domino mask on his face followed the same color scheme, green with a hint of brown.

Izuku decided to blame his loss of recollection on the man’s eccentric ways. Izuku was still somewhat baffled on how the man didn’t have a pocket dimension quirk with the amount of pictures he carried around.

Traveler — not a hero, but an independent contractor, Izuku reminded himself — turned upon hearing Kaniko’s voice. At the same time, Traveler’s face erupted into an enormous grin as he let go of the man currently in his arms and made his way toward Kaniko.

“Ah, Kaniko!” Traveler cheered. “Nice to see you again!” He turned his attention to Izuku, reaching down to ruffle his hair. “And just who might this be? The kid you were telling me about, perhaps?”

“Got it in one!” Kaniko replied.

Wait. The last time that Traveler saw me, I was dressed up as Dragonfly. Therefore, he doesn’t know that we’ve already met before. But if that’s the case, he’s going to start all over from —

“Hey!” Traveler said, reaching into his pocket. “You seem like a wonderful kid! Especially if Kaniko is vouching for you! In fact, you kinda remind me of a couple kids I transported a while back!”

Recognize me as Dragonfly instead. It’ll be easier than —

“You’re emitting a similar aura to them! And they reminded me of my daughter! Traveler exclaimed, his hands already stuffed with square pieces of paper. “A daughter of which I have plenty of pictures of! You want to see? She’s the absolute star of my life!”

With a sharp crack and a flash of light, the three individuals found themselves with their feet firmly planted on the ground and at their planned destination, only a few seconds having passed since their departure from the station.

“Thanks, Traveler!” Kaniko said as she began to settle from the transport. “I’ll contact ‘ya when I need your services again, alright?”

“Of course!” Traveler said, finally removing himself and his stash of photographs away from Izuku.
“Just remember,” Traveler said, “don’t call on Sundays! That’s family day!” And with that came another sharp crack and a flash of light.

“Did you really have to get him?” Izuku asked after Traveler had left. “That man is brutal with his obsession over his daughter and his photos of his daughter.”

“Pfft. He doesn’t mean it,” Kaniko said. “He gets excited over his daughter, so what? I don’t have to drive ya here, and we get here in seconds! And the best part, he’s cheap!”

“Cheap or not, his presence is a bit… suffocating.” Izuku took a breath. “Anyways, where are we? You promised that you’d tell.”

“That I did!” Kaniko exclaimed. She spun and held her arms out in an exaggerated gesture towards a large building across the street.

“As you can see, we’re at the site that the schools are using for their Remedial Course students!”

“Remedial Course?” Izuku repeated slowly. “Is… there a reason for that?”

Kaniko laughed “Duh. Why else would we be here?”

“But that doesn’t even make sense,” Izuku said, coming to realization. “Why take part in the Remedial Course? Why couldn’t I have just taken the real exam when it was still a thing?”

“Oh, don’t worry.” Kaniko waved him off. “You’re not taking part in the entire program. Just this specific exercise. Besides, if ya really want to blame anyone, blame Eraser. He gave me the idea; said to tell you that this was part of your punishments.”

“He did?” Izuku questioned. “But that must mean that there’s something special about this exercise then. Something that would purposefully get on my nerves or something, right?”

Kaniko merely cackled as she began to walk, ignoring the question and motioning for Izuku to follow.

Izuku decided to ask another question. “Okay, how about this. How am I supposed to explain away the fact that you’re here?” Izuku asked.

“Well… You could just say that it’s because of your training that I’m here.”

“That’s awfully close to the truth,” Izuku countered.

“Well, if we’re being technical, it actually is the truth. Just with omitted facts! It’ll make it easier to quote-on-quote,” Kamiko brought her hands up and actually made air quotes, “lie.”

Izuku sighed. “Fine.”

The two walked in comfortable silence for the remaining minute or so it took to reach the building. Once they reached the building and got inside, it didn’t take long for the duo to stumble upon the contingent from UA.

“Deku!” Bakugo yelled. “What the hell are you doing here!?”

Todoroki, who was standing beside the explosive boy, gave Izuku a curious stare. “I hate to say it, but for once I’m with Bakugou on this one. Why are you here, Midoriya?”

“He is actually why I am here! Woof!” A gruff voice interrupted, the speaker appearing before the
“Midoriya!” Hound Dog all but yelled. “I’m glad to inform you that the principal assigned me to watch over you! I’ll be here with you now and in the foreseeable future to ensure you develop into a prime hero!”


Hound Dog barked. “Nezu is getting a bit busy, but he still wants you watched! So you better watch out for me back at campus!”

“Of course he would set Hound Dog on me,” Izuku muttered to himself. He shook his head. “So,” he said to Hound Dog, “you’re just going to watch me today?”

“Hold up! You still haven’t told me why you’re here!” Bakugou interrupted. “And why’s Crab Chick with you again?!”

Izuku sighed. “Extra training. Aizawa had me join so I’d stop giving him grey hairs — not that it’ll stop anytime soon. And Kaniko is part of that. Rigorous training under a police officer for added punishment. That a sufficient explanation?”

Bakugou gave Izuku a glare before turning away in a huff. “Fine.”

“Ah, Midoriya!” All Might exclaimed as he arrived alongside Present Mic. “There you are! I was wondering when you’d join us!”

“Hey All Might, Present Mic-sensei,” Izuku greeted.

“Yeh! R—righteous to be here with y—you, Midoriya!” Present Mic cheered with a faltering smile. “Any of you two need coffee?” He asked Hound Dog and All Might. He was already heading back through the door he came from before he got any response. “Right! I’ll go get you some!”

All Might shook his head at the back of his departing colleague. “Anyways,” he said, speaking to the rest of the group, “the exercise is starting soon. It’d be best if all of us started going in.”

“Well, that’s my cue!” Kaniko said. “I’m going to watch from the stands Midoriya, so go join up with your peers!”

Kaniko left, as did Hound Dog and All Might not long after, heading over to their own respective seats.

Bakugo, Todoroki, and Izuku went on ahead then, meeting up with two others that Izuku recognized were from Shiketsu. But as it was, his eyes drifted towards the girl of the duo first.

“You’re the girl that…” Izuku began. When the girl gave him a curious look, he decided to leave things be. “Nevermind.”

“Hmm?” The girl hummed. “You know me from somewhere?”

Izuku shook his head. “It’s nothing. I thought that you looked familiar. I... think that I remember seeing you in passing from a while back.”

“Oh? What a coincidence if that’s the truth!” The boy of the Shiketsu duo exclaimed. Izuku
recalled him to be the boy who had the strong aerokinetic quirk from the License Exam.

“She’s here because she missed out on the License Exam!” the boy said. “It’s a shame that it happened, but at least she has the chance to get her license now!”

The boy suddenly karate-chopped himself — which caused his forehead to start bleeding — much to Izuku’s surprise. “Where are my manners! Inasa Yoarashi! It’s a pleasure to meet you!”

“Likewise.” Izuku nodded. “Izuku Midoriya. If I’m remembering correctly, you’re the one that was fighting with Todoroki during the exam.”

Yoarashi guffawed. “Indeed I was! But while that may be true, Todoroki and I have reconciled since then! I’m hoping that he and I will have a wonderful friendship in our future!”

Todoroki gave a simple nod in return to confirm Yoarashi’s words.

“But on the other hand, I don’t seem to recognize you!” Yoarashi said to Izuku. “I can recall everybody from UA that took part in the exam, and you aren’t among them!”

Izuku nodded. “True. I wasn’t there because I didn’t have to be.”

“Didn’t have to be?” Camie questioned. “Like, what do you mean by that?”

“I got my license another way. Some… police training and first hand heroing experience. Thus, I didn’t have to take the exam.”

“Really?” Camie asked, a finger to her chin. “Then, like, why are you even here?”

Izuku chuckled. “Punishment by one of my teachers.”

Izuku didn’t get to explain any further, the conversation being interrupted by the overhead speakers that spanned the room.

“Alright, let’s stop the chitter chatter,” a rather tired voice announced. “It’s time for this thing to get going. And please, try to make it fast. I’d like to take a nap after this.”

“Wow, that sounds like something Aizawa would say.” Izuku sent up some bugs to where the announcer was seated. “Looks as tired as Aizawa does too. I wonder if they might be related by some distant relative. I haven’t seen two people be so tired, yet noticeably awake before.”

“And uh, Izuku Midoriya.” Izuku snapped out of his thoughts upon the saying of his name.

“Yes?” Izuku asked.

“Please tone it down for this exercise, if you will,” the announcer said. “Alright. And with that, we are at a go.”

Izuku’s bugs felt the sudden mass of energy and movement long before the giant steel doors opposite of him opened. As is, he really hated Aizawa for making him come here today.

“Yeah, nope.” Izuku turned and made his ways towards the stands. “That’s not something that I want to deal with.”

“Oi! Deku, where the hell do you think you’re going!?!?”

Suddenly, a swarm clone appeared beside Bakugo, making the boy flinch somewhat by its sudden
“I’ll still be participating while being on the field, don’t worry.”

Izuku ignored the curious looks and questioning words of the Shiketsu pair and sped his way towards the stands, just in time for the mass of children to burst through the doors.

As the kids terrorized his fellow peers below, Izuku searched around for somebody he could join while the situation played itself out.

Kaniko was busy striking up a conversation with the Shiketsu contingent, so she was out. Present Mic would never be an option for the foreseeable future. And Izuku wasn’t exactly willing to interrupt the conversation Endeavor and All Might — though that didn’t mean that he wasn’t averse to listening in with his bugs.

But be as that may be, that limited Izuku’s options to only one other individual. As such, Izuku made his way up to Hound Dog.

“Hope you don’t mind,” Izuku said as he took the seat next to Hound Dog.

Hound Dog looked at his new charge and merely shrugged. It was quite unlike the loud and boisterous man Izuku was used to witnessing around UA.

“You’re still technically on the field, so I’ll let it slide. Besides, you’re not here because you failed the License Exam, after all. Otherwise, we’d be in a completely different scenario, with me hounding you out.”

Izuku smiled. “Right.” He took a breath. “So how much do you know? How much has Nezu informed you about me?’”

“Everything,” Hound Dog said. “Vigilantism, police work, sneaking out after dark, yada yada. That doesn’t mean that I like it! Though you seem capable of yourself.”

An explosion rattled the stadium, followed by a loud yell that could be heard by everyone as it bounced off the walls.

“DEKU!!!! Stop being a coward and get down here!”

“Excuse me for a moment, Hound Dog.” Izuku formed another swarm near Bakugo, making sure to avoid several of the children’s quirks that included things like impact radius enlargement and hard light projections.

“Can’t. Having a talk with our resident Hound Dog. Besides, I don’t need to be down there. I technically don’t even need to participate; I’m going to get yelled at by Aizawa later because of it,, but I’m fine with that. So I don’t actually need to help… Unless you’re saying that you can’t handle a bunch of children?”

The roar of indignation brought a small smile to Izuku’s face. He turned his focus back onto Hound Dog. “Anyways, where were we?”

“You seem capable of taking care of yourself.”

“Ah, right.” Izuku nodded. “So, I’d like to know. What are you exactly going to be doing in regards to my wellbeing?”
“Not much, if I’m to be honest,” Hound Dog admitted. “Mostly continue with what Nezu’s been doing up until now. Unless he decides that he wants to talk with you personally, that is. Otherwise, I’ll just be making sure that you aren’t getting into any trouble on campus.”

“Huh. That doesn’t sound so bad.”

“Hah! That’s what you think!” Hound Dog exclaimed, adopting his fiery personality again. “One step out of line, and you’ll be experiencing punishments worse than what Eraser gives you!”

Izuku smiled. “I’d like to see you try. I’ll be rightly impressed if you do.”

Izuku and Hound Dog were suddenly bearing witness to a giant column of ice heading straight for them. Luckily for them, it slowed as it approached, Todoroki having been atop it.

When the ice finally stopped, Todoroki went and addressed Izuku. “Midoriya—”

“I heard,” Izuku interrupted. “Don’t worry. I’ve got some ladybugs and butterflies coming in from outside to help out. Just head back down and make sure your ice slide is sturdy enough for the kids.

Todoroki blinked, then gave a nod before he travelled back down his ice pillar and into the chaotic storm of kids below.

“Heh.” Hound Dog let out a small laugh. “It’s going to be fun reeling you in, kid.”

Izuku went ahead and initiated a handshake with the man. “Let’s try not to irritate the other too much, then?”

Hound Dog nodded. “Sure.”
Hey everyone! I want to start off with saying that I’ve had a change of plans! It looks like I lied last time by saying we’d have Festival stuff this time around (whoops?)

Why? Well, I just realized that canon-wise there’s a whole month in between the remedial course and the actual start of the festival. I decided to move up some events that I was originally planning to occur later. With this, it’ll help set things up and now there’ll be greater gaps in between said events so that it doesn’t feel as rushed.

P.S. Hmm… I’m not entirely all too sure if I need a warning for this chapter. I mean, I personally think that the things in here aren’t too gruesome, but some of you might disagree. So... Here you go?

Warning: Graphic depictions of death, if you care about that stuff. I’ve labeled it so you can tell where it starts and where it ends; the first and last parts of the chapter being safe. Though, I will say that there is some vital info in the section. If you want it, I’d suggest looking for the sections in italics.

Izuku was sitting down on one of the couches within the common area of the dorms. Beside him was Spurt, who was lazily lounging on the middle cushion. The crab was greedily taking coconut flesh from Izuku’s hand, nibbling on the white fruit in glee.

It was a fairly normal thing for Izuku to do by now; sometimes a fellow student would pass by and show an amused look at the two, but usually that was the furthest extent that interaction went with Izuku while Spurt was out.

Considering such things, it only made sense for Izuku to slowly raise an eye as Ashido came by, plopping herself down on the only remaining spot on the couch. She didn’t waste a moment adjusting her smiling towards Izuku.

“May I?” she asked, gesturing to the coconut slices in Izuku’s possession.

Izuku shrugged his shoulders and handed over the fruit to his classmate. “Sure. Spurt doesn’t really care where the food comes from — he just cares that it’s still coming, really.”

“Nice!” shido all but squealed. She hastily took the offered coconut and began feeding them to Spurt. And just as Izuku had said, Spurt paid little heed to the sudden switch in who was feeding him.

“So…” Ashido hummed, “how was the Remedial Course yesterday?”.

Izuku blinked. “Umm… fine? I guess? I didn’t really do much, really. I wasn’t really supposed to be there in the first place, so butting in would’ve kinda hindered everybody else’s role, so—”
Ashido laughed. “Always so awkward, Midoriya. You need to learn when to let loose.”

Izuku sputtered. “But— I— That’s what I was doing with Spurt!”

Ashido simply nodded along with a mischievous smile on her face, one of her hands leaning down to feed Spurt while another went to pet the crab’s shell.

It went on like this for a good minute, but the comfortable silence was eventually broken by Izuku.

“No offense Ashido,” Izuku began, “but we don’t exactly talk all too much. And I find it weird that you’d suddenly want to initiate a conversation. So you want something, right?”

“What? You think I want something?” Ashido said in mock glee. “Can’t your fellow classmate just want to check in with you and stuff?”

Izuku inclined his head and body slightly forward, his eyes slightly raised with an expression that expressed he waiting for an answer.

Ashido snorted. “Alright, fine. You caught me. I guess that I’ll get right down to the point. It’s about Yaomomo.”

“What about Momo?” A quick check with his bugs revealed that the girl in question wasn’t within earshot.

“Oh? Must have been the hospital visit then…” Ashido chuckled. “Oh! That means that you can call me Mina, right!”

“I don’t think so, Ashido.”

“Agh! So harsh! I’ve been rejected before I even got to ask!” Ashido made an exaggerated clutching movement at her heart.

The movement had the unfortunate side effect of disrupting Spurt’s feeding, eliciting a garbled string on snips and clacks from the crab.

“What?” Izuku asked, ignoring Spurt’s sounds of annoyance in favor of focusing on Ashido.

Ashido giggled in response. “Kidding, it’s nothing. Anyways, back to the topic on hand. You see, Yaomomo’s birthday is coming up and we’re planning a surprise party! I was hoping that you’d help with all the details. You know, foods and decorating and stuff.”

“Me? Plan a party?” Izuku asked, bewildered. “I’m not really that good at that type of stuff, Ashido. Shouldn’t you be asking someone… Aoyama? Or… yourself? You’ve got a knack for extravagant designs.”

“Why, I’m flattered!” Ashido cooed. “And while that may be true, that doesn’t mean that I won’t need help. I mean, I was thinking of the perfect partner in crime, and I thought: ‘Who else would be...”
better than the boy she hangs out with all the time? ’ Plus, you two are on a first name basis now! It’s even better than what I was anticipating!’”

“I don’t know, Ashido. I mean—”

“MIDORIYA!”

A duet of screams filled the air, and the two didn’t waste any time jumping to their feet to avoid the sudden presence that had appeared between them from over the couch.

They calmed down when they realized the sudden intruder to be none other than the principal himself. What caught the two’s attention the most was how Nezu drinking from yet another cup of tea despite his current position.

He was leaning over the couch just above Spurt, and due to his height it was obvious that he was balancing himself on his stomach on the couch’s edge.

“Mr. Principal Sir?” Ashido asked wearily.

“Oh? What happened to Hound Dog being responsible for me now?” Izuku asked with a smile.

“What? Tired of me already?” Nezu chuckled, taking a sip of his tea. “No matter. I just came to tell you that Edgeshot called for you. Apparently the group that got away during the raid on the Twisted Dragon has been… busy.”

“What happened?!” Izuku asked. His previous joking demeanor disappeared almost instantly.

“It’d be best if Edgeshot briefed you. He has all the details,” Nezu replied. “Your friend Tokage is coming along too, since she has experience with this group as well. You’d best get ready.”

“Right.” Izuku scooped up Spurt in his arms and turned to the stairs. However, before he sped his way back up to his room, Izuku turned back towards Ashido.

“Sorry Ashido! We’ll talk later, alright?”

And with that, he sped up the stairs and towards his room, straight to where his Dragonfly costume laid in wait.

*Previous Warning In Effect*

“Huh. Looks like you're with me this time, Dragonfly,” Reverb said. She went ahead and placed her mask — the mask made specifically for this scenario — over her face.

“Try to keep up, yeah? And remember, watch out for traps. Especially the drones.” Not long after she activated her quirk.

For the first time, Izuku got to see the sidekick’s quirk in action as she prepared to enter the building in front of them. A thin mist began to emanate from her body, coalescing together to form a gaseous, floating copy of Reverb. Two others came into being not long after.

Izuku was subconsciously reminded of Ectoplasm in that respect. The only difference between Reverb and Ectoplasm’s power, however, were the purpose of the clones. Unlike Ectoplasm’s,
Reverb’s clones didn’t stand much for physical altercation. Instead, their main purpose was amplifying the original Reverb’s capability; the more of them that were on the field, the more “sound” that was collected to boost Reverb.

Izuku shook his thoughts out of his usual quirk-analyzing habits. He was on a mission right now, and that mattered more.

He reached over his head and placed his own mask over his Dragonfly one. The colorful spectrum of infrared filled his vision, and he could hear his breath as it was filtered by the mask. He went ahead and followed Reverb.

The fishing factory they were approaching was huge, something which had warranted the need for the responding heroes to split up and scout out the building in separate teams. For Reverb and Izuku, their assigned entry was through the factory’s shipping center.

They made their way through a metal shutter, one that had been quite obviously ripped open if the human-sized tear in the metal was any hint.

Nevertheless, the duo advanced into the factory. All three of Reverb’s premade clones spread out, while Izuku and the real Reverb made their way towards the nearby offices.

Izuku ignored the wet sounds that came about as his feet touched the floor, and averted his gaze from the walls that had been stained with blood. At the same time, he tried to drown out the smell that came from the mix of raw fish and death that lingered in the air.

He wasn’t too successful at either action.

That meant that, even as he tried to ignore the bodies that littered the floor and the walls, he couldn’t prevent the images from being ingrained in his mind.

The way the bodies had been torn in half, both horizontally and laterally. The way certain limbs had been pulverized, while others dangled from places higher up. The look of terror in the eyes of countless dead.

He went ahead and split his attention. One part stayed to observe his surroundings, taking note of any sign of movement or heat. In this aspect, Izuku made sure he stuck close to Reverb.

However, another part of Izuku thought back, recalling everything that he had told about, everything that had been dug up regarding that had been this group of villains that the heroes had come to call “The Nine.”

Kizu. Adult female, estimated age range of forties to fifties. Identifying features include a large, ragged scar that stretches from left ear to right lip. Quirk: Wound - Gives the user precise aim, with projectiles often homing in on their targets. Items that are either thrown or shot imbed themselves in victims’ wounds for a span of time which ranges from a minute to an hour. This leads to a high risk of bleeding out. Kizu can apparently also track victims she has marked with ease.

The thinking helped quell his nerves.

Izuku attempted to call in some bugs from the outside, trying to send as many of them as he could deeper into the factory.
But yet again — as he had previously discovered — the bugs died not long after entry.

Something in the air was killing them off. Izuku had suggested that it was some remnant from Pathogen’s gas.

However, that had been something which had already been considered, hence the preprepared masks that each of the heroes now held.

Pathogen. Adolescent female, no identifying features. Quirk: Growth - Allows the user to emit fumes from their body that cause hallucinations, inebriation, dizziness, etc. The fumes in turn incite biological growths to form on the victim, which eventually encapsulate the victim — suffocating them — if not surgically removed before a period of 24 hours.

Izuku and Reverb turned a corner, both making sure to watch the ceiling for anything suspicious. They both kept a careful eye for any valid heat signatures, wary of facing another encounter with the drones as they had before during the raid on Twisted Dragon.

Horde. Adolescent boy, seemingly of African descent. The individual is capable of building and customizing drones that are specifically designed and programmed to kill. Quirk unknown. Possibly holds the quirk dubbed “Command Persuasion.”

Izuku and Reverb stumbled upon a body as they entered another room. The body was already cooling, with almost all of its heat being gone. The man was quite obviously dead, with half a dozen spikes sticking out of his body. The spikes were things that Izuku readily recognized. His fists involuntarily tightened at the realization.

Centaur. Middle-aged male. No identifying features; identification reliant on transformation. Quirk: Katamari - Allows the user to transform into a large, monstrous form with a tough hide. Spines emit from the user’s back and are able to be used as projectiles. Strangely enough, the individual seemingly holds another quirk. He is one of many of a slowly rising phenomenon. Centaur’s second quirk makes it so his punches have no need to connect, with targets needing only to be a few meters away from Centaur to feel the force of the punch.

Izuku resisted the urge to expel what had consisted of his lunch. He reminded himself that the factory had been open when the villains had stormed the place. Three hundred workers were present at the time. Before Izuku and the current group came along, seven other heroes had arrived on the scene.

And they hadn’t been heard from since. The place needed to be searched, that was the top priority. He couldn’t be lounging around being held back by his disgust while others could still be alive.

Izuku pushed on, going back into his thoughts in an attempt to push the image from his mind.

Phantom. Middle aged female, seemingly of Middle-Eastern descent. Quirk: Phantom - Allows the user to enter an intangible state that can slightly alter the physical world. Like Centaur, Phantom also has a second quirk. Said quirk consists of a power nullifying screech that temporarily disables and/or weakens powers, for up to ten minutes at a time. Conditions of what decides whether the screech nullifies or cancels a quirk are unknown.

The two came across a fork in a hallway, one path leading left while another led right. Reverb split off another of her clones towards the left, leaving her and Izuku to turn right.

They stumbled upon another body. It was a hero this time, their bright yellow and blue costume marred in blood. Her arms and legs had been taken from the torso, and were likely spread out
across the room if the glimpse of a hand Izuku saw behind a shelf was any indication. Her eyes were bloodshot and wide in fear, her face stuck in a scream of terror.

**Frisk.** Young adult male, identifying features include constant twitches emanating from any body part. **Quirk:** Hyperbody - Allows the user to enhance either a single limb or the whole body to provide super speed and reflexes. Individual is either incable or not willing to speak.

Izuku and Reverb left the room without a word and entered another. There was a clear sign of battle here. Chunks of the ground were missing, seemingly pulled up by some unseen force. There were another two bodies nearby.

One of the heroes was missing his jaw, with his body embedded deep in the concrete of the wall. The other was almost missing. While the tatters of his costume were readily identifiable, the rest of him was splattered against the wall. Izuku could spot the remains of an intestine and a few organs; what wasn’t present was likely what made up the flowing paste nearby.

**Ricochet.** Male, estimated late thirties, identifying features include a multitude of scars present on both arms. **Quirk:** Unbreakable - User has a forcefield that extends around half a foot from their body. The field disrupts inertia, and renders most physical attacks harmless. The user also has a form of regeneration that repairs damage to the body by taking in matter from the surrounding area. Highly dangerous. Energy attacks recommended.

Izuku and Reverb entered another room, and another, a third, and a forth. All they saw was more blood, more death, and more destruction. And not a hint of the villains left in sight.

**Waypoint.** Young adult male, estimated age in the twenties. Dons blue and silver armor, possibly steel in origin. **Teleportation quirk; specificities unknown.**

Izuku heard an explosion. Reverb made another of her clones, which immediately sped off towards the noise.

Reverb herself stood her ground. Izuku himself tensed, but followed her example and stopped himself from running towards the noise.

It would have been a foolish move given the capabilities of these villains, and Edgeshot had warned the others of such beforehand. They were simply too skilled, too crafty, and too brutal. The raid on the Twisted Dragons was proof of that.

**Kentaro.** Male, estimated age mid-late thirties. Wears a top hat and wields a cane, while wearing a simple button down white shirt and black trousers. Previous leader of Twisted Dragon; Apparent leader of the group recently dubbed “The Nine.” **Quirk unknown. Possibly holds the quirk dubbed “Command Persuasion.”**

And the ability to apparently talk to QA, Izuku reminded himself. He took a breath.

Reverb and Izuku continued their search. They walked on in silence, checking around corners and looking for heat signatures. Room by room they went, and all they found were more bodies and blood.

They turned another corner and immediately tensed, falling into ready stances as they spotted two moving forms from down the hallway, heat signatures easily highlighted by their masks.

Izuku saw the two forms doing the same, falling into stance to face a possible threat. Despite the dark, Izuku eventually came to realize just who he was facing. He sent a few bugs forward to
notify the two.

Izuku notified Reverb beside him, and the two eased themselves, just as Setsuna and Highbrow did across from them.

It wasn’t too long after that Edgeshot’s voice came through the comms, breaking the eerie silence that had been held until then.

The whole building had been cleared, and the villains were long gone. All that remained were the bodies.

Izuku took a breath and retreated to his mind.

*Quirk: Command Persuasion - Allows the user to imbue a hypnotic effect on an item that causes victims to subconsciously follow the commands placed on the object. i.e. Ignore me, Read me, etc. User unknown. Possible users: Kentaro, Horde.*

The search proved fruitless. The Nine had gotten away without a hitch, and their debut had a kill count in the hundreds.

*Alright. All’s good… Well, you know what I mean*

“I want you all to remember what we did today,” Edgeshot told his audience. His voice was quiet, but it easily traveled to the ears of those gathered. Nobody dared to make a noise, and all were listening with apt attention.

“All of you have to keep these procedures in mind, because we’ll be doing the exact same thing when The Nine show up again,” Edgeshot continued. “What happened today is proof that we aren’t facing just any group of villains. We’re lucky that the drone we stumbled upon didn’t result in any casualties as is. But that might not be the case next time. We need to stay vigilant.”

“The fact of the matter is that we can’t let what happened today happen again, and we need to be ready for when these villains decide to show themselves so we can prevent further casualties.”

Edgeshot sighed. “That being said, I appreciate all of the efforts all of you have put into this. I know that the group we’re facing is dangerous, and I applaud you all for your conviction in facing such a dire threat.”

Edgeshot inclined his head. “Now, all of you get some rest. I’m sure that you need it. We’ll investigate the leads that we have tomorrow. Stay safe. I’ll contact you all again when we need you.”

Izuku watched as Mt. Lady and Kamui Woods headed off, leaving the room with a nod towards their new team leader. Edgeshot himself gave a nod to them, and then went ahead and ordered his sidekicks out for their own duties.

The other heroes that had gathered — Izuku noticed Miruko and a few lesser known ones — left as well, no doubt to leave for their own agencies.

Before long, the only ones left in the room aside from Edgeshot were Izuku and Setsuna. The hero went ahead and addressed his two students.

“Good job today, you two. You really showed your ability to work under harsh conditions. I’m proud of you both.”
“But we were late,” Izuku said, a grimace on her face.

“We got there as quickly as we could Midoriya,” Edgeshot reassured him. “By the time we got the call The Nine were already rampaging within the factory. We did the best we could in getting there as fast as we did.”

“I… guess.”

There was a brief silence. Setsuna, despite sharing Izuku’s sentiment, decided to change topics to ease the tension. “So… new team, Edgeshot?”

The hero nodded. His face was somewhat lighter, like he was thankful for the change in conversation.

“The Lurkers have been a work in progress for a while, actually. There’s proof of our teaming up everywhere if you know where to look. It’s just that today was one of our first outings all together.” Edgeshot scoffed. “Quite a debut, huh?”

Edgeshot let out a heavy sigh, turning to leave the room. But before he did, he turned back to his students one last time.

“Go take a shower you two, you both need it. And don’t take too long. You still have school tomorrow, and I don’t need Nezu barking down my throat. I’ll meet both of you downstairs in an hour.”

He left without another word, the door closing with a click.

Izuku sighed in his seat. “You good, Setsuna?”

Setsuna shrugged her shoulders. “I knew what I was getting into. Edgeshot gave us the chance to back out, after all. But I… needed to see it for myself.”

Setsuna shook her head. She turned to face Izuku, her eyes narrowing at her friend. “I should be asking you that, if anything. That look on your face speaks for itself. What’s that brain of yours thinking?”

Izuku slightly shook his head. “It’s just the fact that they’ve gotten away a second time, you know? We were there at the Twisted Dragon raid. That was the first appearance of Kentaro and this group that he’s built around him. They were nobodies back then.”

Izuku sighed. “But they got away. And because of that, not just a few months later, we have over three hundred dead? It’s just… we could have stopped them back then. And then—”

“Hey,” Setsuna interrupted. She set herself in front of Izuku, placing her hands on his shoulders and looking him straight in the eye. “It’s like Edgeshot said. You did what you could at the time. You even fended them off despite lacking information on them. None of us could’ve done anything.”

“I guess.”

“Stop with that ‘I guess’ shit. It’s the truth. All we can do now is make sure that they don’t take any more lives. And we — you — can’t do that if you’re sulking over things in the past, alright?”

Izuku took a deep breath. He nodded his head. “Thanks, Setsuna. I’ll try not to dwell on it.”

“Make sure that you do.” Setsuna stood up. “Now come on. I heard that somebody wants you to
help out in planning Yaoyorozu’s upcoming party. You still need to talk about that, don’t ya?”

Izuku blinked. “You mean to say that you’re the one that suggested that to Ashido?”

“Maybe,” Setsuna drawed out. A smirk appeared on her face. “But does that matter? That’s something to cheer up about, right?

Izuku let a small smile sprout on his face. “Yeah, I suppose. Let’s get back to UA.”

Chapter End Notes

More of Kentaro and his group this time around. That being said, School Festival stuff is coming next time. Not the whole thing though. Still a month in between, after all.

Until then!
Chapter Notes

And actual Cultural Festival stuff this time! It’s not much though - the beginning scenes are more little scenes if anything. And the last section of this chapter isn’t even really about the festival. Oh well. The actual performance will be in… 2? / 3? chapters.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright everyone!” Momo said to the class. “You heard Aizawa-sensei. We need suggestions for what our class shall be doing for the Cultural Festival.”

“Let’s make this as organized as possible, okay? We’ll start off alphabetically. If you have an idea, we’ll write it one the board. You can always pass of course, and you can always add or change your suggestions later. That being said, Aoya—”

“How about a maid cafe?!” Kaminari spouted out.

Momo gave him a look. “A sound idea, Kaminari. But like I said, we’re going in alpha—”

“I’ll do you one better, Kaminari!” Mineta interrupted, basically jumping from his seat. “Let’s have a neko maid cafe!”

Momo sighed. “A sound idea, Mineta. But please, wait your turn.”

“Aha! My— Ow!” Mineta recoiled from the sudden strike from Tsu’s tongue.

“Anyways, Aoyama.” She turned her head towards the blonde. “Any suggestions?”

“My very own sparkling show!”

Izuku wrote down the suggestion on the board, right after the place he had written ‘Maid Cafe’ with a sub option for being cat-themed. He did the same with Ashido’s dance party — a predictable suggestion now that Izuku had seen her hobby firsthand — Tsu’s honestly adorable idea of a frog choir, and so forth.

As the suggestions went up on the board, Izuku lost himself weighing in the pros and cons of each idea. A frog choir was rather impractical, but not impossible. They’d need to train frogs to sing, after all’ but that limitations could have been offsetted by Koda.

Bakugou’s “Deathmatch” was a definite nope, and the food stall would have been rather redundant with Lunch Rush being a presence in the school. However, Izuku was also willing to give the cooking hero a run for his money considering Sato’s immense skill in making sweets.

On a similar note, there was no way that Iida’s and Momo’s ideas would gain any form of traction. Considering that they were in a high school, Izuku highly doubted that students would wish to subject themselves to something that could have been seen as work.

“You really think so, Izuku?”
Izuku looked over to Momo. “Huh? What do you… Was I muttering?”

Momo simply nodded her head. “Yeah. It was kinda weird, seeing as I haven’t seen one of your muttering sessions in a while. Can’t say that didn’t enjoy it though, their part of your charm.”

Izuku looked and found the rest of the class sharing similar looks. He focused back on Momo. “Right, um… thanks? Anyways, like I was saying— Uh, w—wait! Sorry, I didn’t mean to bring down your idea or anything it’s just that I was sorta trying to order the class’s ideas in terms of effectiveness and yours was near the bottom of the list and—”

“Hey, it’s alright!” Momo interrupted. “I understand. Don’t beat yourself up over it.”

Izuku gave her a sheepish smile and nodded his head.

“Though, on that note,” Momo continued, “I noticed that you don’t have a suggestion on the board. Thoughts?”

“Oh, uh…” Izuku said the first thing that came to his mind. “An insectarium…?”

Momo brought a mouth up to her hand to stifle a laugh. “Of course, I should have expected that.”

“Sorry, just said the first thing that came to mind.” Izuku turned back to the board. “But in that case, we should probably get rid of some of these like… ‘Banquet of Darkness.’ Sorry Tokoyami.”

“Merciless…” the bird headed boy said.

“Same with the hometown presentation and Aoyoma’s thing. And all these food stalls are a bit redundant…”

“Why don’t we just combine all the food stalls into one?” Sato rang out. Of course, his simple suggestion was only one of many that eventually devolved the situation into a shouting match.

It didn’t take long for the rest of the class to get up to defend their own ideas, spouting out rhetoric and counter points that was too much to keep track of, leaving Izuku and Momo no choice but to wait it out.

But after a minute, Izuku had an idea pop into his head. “Maybe I call a swarm into the room so everybody gets shocked into silence?”

“No!” Momo squeaked. “No, Izuku. That’s a horrible idea and you know it.”

“Right…” Iida trailed off as he sat on one of the couches in the dorm’s common room. “Koda’s petting zoo proposal and Midoriya’s insect emporium—”

“Insectarium,” the nearby swarm clone corrected.

“Right, apologies Midoriya,” Iida nodded towards the lazily floating mass of bugs. “Your insectarium and Koda’s petting zoo would probably need to adhere to strict hygiene standards, right? So that probably strikes them out of the suggestion pool…”

“Hey, my bugs are clean and disease-free!” the swarm countered. The others that were gathered in the common room could somehow infer a slight whining tone to the voice.

“And I wouldn’t doubt so!” Iida said. “Though I’m not entirely sure that the school board would be inclined to believe that just based on your word, Midoriya.”
“Hmph.” The swarm pouted, somehow.

“Izuku,” Momo interrupted from her position beside Iida. “Not that I’m not grateful for your help right now, but aren’t you supposed to be in class still? Aizawa-sensei said that the extra work wouldn’t be over until eight.”

“My bugs are good-ish at multitasking! You guys know that by now. It’s fine, I’m paying attention to the board and you guys at the same time.”

“I still disagree though!” Iida interjected. “Your attention should be fully on your studies!” Iida sighed. “Unfortunately, you and I both know that the only reason that I’m allowing this is because I know that I can’t stop you from listening in otherwise.”

The swarm merely shrugged its shoulders in response.

“We could all just dance,” a curled up Ashido said from her spot on a nearby couch. “That’d be fun, don’t you all think?”

“I agree,” Todoroki said, seemingly coming from out of nowhere. He walked over to the spot where Iida and Momo had set up their makeshift work station, completely bypassing Izuku’s swarm without a bat. “May I?” Todoroki gestured towards the laptop on the desk. Iida nodded.

“Right,” Todoroki went ahead and typed onto the laptop. “I forgot exactly what it was called, but a whole bunch of people were going crazy on stage… Here.”

Momo and Iida leaned closer in, watching the ongoing concert video that Todoroki had pulled up.

“Hmm… “ Iida paced a hand on his chin. “Yes, I can definitely see the appeal in this. What do you think of Midoriya?” He turned towards the clone.

“235/37, Ectoplasm-sensei!”

“Let’s count that as a yes,” Momo said.

A few days passed. During that span of time, Eri had awoken and asked for Togata and Togata only. It made sense; Eri had barely been comfortable around anyone considering all that she had been through. If anything, the only two individuals that she would even remotely be comfortable with were Togata and Izuku himself.

Eri had barely spent anytime with Izuku aside from a few sparse conversations that were conducted via bugs. And even the time they had spent physically together was in short bursts, or with him being semi-controlled as he took a back seat to QA’s machinations. Still, Izuku was eagerly awaiting when he’d be able to speak with the young girl.

As for events regarding the upcoming festival, the whole class ended up dividing themselves between either being a dancer, a part of the band, or a member of the special effects crew. Izuku ended up deciding upon the latter.

Part of the decision was partly because he didn’t really see himself as a dancer, no matter how much Ashido insisted that she could teach him and make him into a fine student. The other part came from his argument that he’d fare better with his utility in special effects. Once he had explained himself, Ashido was heavily supportive of Izuku’s decision — which was what led to the
team being dubbed ‘Team Butterfly Blizzard.’

That left Izuku with Todoroki, Sero, Aoyama, Kirishima and Koda — an odd gathering for sure, but one that each played a role in the upcoming event.

“That’s the problem though. The animal aspect that both of us bring to the table becomes a bit redundant since both of us are part of the props crew. Still, there’s got to be something that we could both do in that aspect, right?”

Koda merely shrugged; it was the best he could think of in response to Izuku’s observations.

“Birds,” Todoroki suddenly said.

Both Koda and Izuku turned towards Todoroki, who was currently cutting away at a piece of cardboard. They both gave a puzzled expression, but Izuku was the one to make an audible proclamation of confusion.

“Huh?”

“UA has a forest in its backyard,” Todoroki said nonchalantly. “I’ve seen a few Mandarin ducks and pheasants loitering around campus sometimes.”

“You’re not wrong there,” Izuku muttered. “What do you think, Koda?” he asked, turning to the boy in question.

“S—sure. I can try,” he replied.

“Great! That just leaves the support system. Have you checked up on the stage yet, Sero?”

“Uhm… Not yet, Midoriya,” Sero replied, rubbing the back of his head.

“Hmm. I’ll go ahead and check for myself then,” Izuku said. “We need those measurements before we make those supports; make sure that they’ll handle our weight and all, you know. See you all in a bit!”

Izuku left the room and roamed the halls, steadily making his way towards the gym that his class had reserved for the festival. It was a calm walk, the halls mostly empty due to the other students being busy with their own attractions for the festival.

Izuku spent the time connected to his bugs, observing his hustling peers from afar through the millions of eyes of his bugs. However, his rather calm and relaxed assessment of the school came to an abrupt stop when a voice interrupted his musings.

“You know, I’ve never actually been to something like this. School events and big parties were never really my thing. In fact, last I recall the only time I ever actually went to something similar was… Heh. Well, my friends and I crashed that one actually. We made quite the impression that day. Even if the revelations that I came to afterwards weren’t exactly what I had in mind.”

Izuku’s mood was irrevocably ruined, and he acted accordingly. *Fuck you, QA.*

“What? Izuku—”
bullets! And that was for barely a couple minutes before you decided to shut me out again! And now you’ve decided to just randomly pop back in? And talking about parties of all things?!?

“Izu—”

No! Let me finish, damnit! I’m sick and tired of your secrets. You could have told me about Kentaro and his group ages ago! Their modus operandi, their tendencies, the secrets to their quirks, anything! But you kept that from me! And now we have over three hundred dead individuals, heroes and civilians alike! And that was just from one attack! There hasn’t been a death toll that high from a villain attack since before All Might’s debut!

What’s to stop them from striking again?! They got away this time, and quite effortlessly too! They’ll do it again! So… so just— Please. Why can’t you just tell me anything?

…

“You know, a friend of mine had… has… a power that allowed her to piece things together from virtually nothing. She takes the tiniest scraps of information available and builds it up to something—”

Lisa, right?

“Wha— What?”

Izuku sighed. If QA was going to get off on a tangent to explain herself, he was willing to go through with it. Still, he wanted answers, and he wanted them badly. But he’d entertain her for now.

Lisa. Your friend’s name. You’ve mentioned her before.

“Yeah… Lisa. She couldn’t turn her power off, not really. And despite her difficulty to read people sometimes… well, she spent a lot of time with us. And she became intimately familiar with all of our personalities.”

“She’s told me a lot of stuff about me… stuff I never really had time to digest until now. It’s only after you’ve lost everything… and nothing really matters that you come to think about these things.”

“And she was right. Is right. I do have problems with authority. I do have problems working with people sometimes. Sometimes I do take too much control over a situation. And I do lack a sense of self preservation. Kinda like you in that aspect, Izuku.”

…

“And yet I still lost myself in the end, even if it was for the good of everybody. I kept the burden to myself… and…”

…

QA?

“I… suppose that I can tell you about Jack. It won’t hurt, I don’t think.”

Now Izuku was confused. And he didn’t refrain from showing it on his face.

… Jack?
“Jack. Jack Slash. Leader of the Slaughterhouse Nine, bane of the North America continent. They’re the direct cause of tens of thousands of civilian casualties, and responsible for hundreds of heroes’ deaths. Their death toll was probably reaching towards a hundred thousand back before. And still, that’s if you don’t consider their indirect hand in killing millions.”

You… said something similar to this, when I asked you just after the Twisted Dragon raid. But that was about Kentaro. What’s this Jack Slash guy have to do with it? A rival group? And I still want to know how the existence of such a group responsible for such high profile crimes doesn’t exist on any public record!

“I— I’ll tell you later. Just… for now what’s important is Jack. Or as you know him, Kentaro. And let me tell you, if anything, you’re pretty lucky right now. With the exception of… let’s say Ricochet, the members Jack’s gathered so far are pretty lackluster from his previous group.”

…How bad?

“Hmm… Imagine a silica-kinetic. Now imagine her with fine control, with her ability being reliant on high frequencies. And then picture her being able to retransmit her influence through glass over and over until her power extends over an entire city. With a simple scream, all of that glass breaks, violently. Windshields break, causing car crashes. Computers go down, stalling business and commerce for days. Eyewear violently implodes while on your face. People like your friend Iida would be dead in an instant. And that’s just one member. She was on the team for... a decade, I think.”

But the heroes would have cracked down hard on a group committing such high-profile crimes!

“And they did. Members died with varying frequency. But then they’d just be replaced by the next attack. It was a part of Jack’s MO. Eventually, he’d stumble upon some individual with a strong power he likes.”

So what? He strong-arms them into joining against their will?

Only sometimes. And that’s what makes him dangerous. His victims might be villains, might be heroes, or civilians, even. He’ll twist them, changing them into monsters. Changing them into shells of their former selves, versions that become enthralled by Jack. And not long after, they become long standing members of the Nine, ones who’ll slaughter hundreds, no matter what morals they stood by previously.”

But then that just means that we need to strike down hard and fast! Take him down before he builds a powerbase! Like you said, Ricochet’s the biggest threat aside from Kentaro — Jack — himself.

“If only it was that easy. The Nine aren’t exactly easy to kill. Think of it like this: the entirety of North America mutually agreed on placing the Nine under a kill order. That means that any random citizen going about on their daily business was authorized to lay down lethal force against the Nine. Justice on the spot, no problems with the law whatsoever.”

“You’d even get the bounty of whoever you would have killed — a bounty which no doubt ranged in the millions. And yet the S9 still roamed around for years, bouncing back from every encounter no matter how badly they’d been beat before.”

That’s… that’s…

“Yeah, I know. And I’m sorry to tell you, but it’s probably worse now. You see, what I know of
Jack’s power is that he can cut things from really far away. Translate the edge of a knife meters away from him.”

So it’s like… distance cutting?

“Sorta. The specificites don’t matter though, since he likely doesn’t have that power anymore, it’s not active in his shard. In fact, I’m pretty sure his new power falls under that ‘Command Persuasion’ thing you guys have named.”

You mean he changed his quirk? How did he— Hold on, his quirk! I know about it now! That’s great! Now we know that—

“I wasn’t finished. When I knew him, he had a second ability. It’s what allowed him and I to talk, however brief our conversation was. His shard—”

Wait.

“What?”

That’s the second time you’ve used that word. ‘Shard.’ What’s it mean?

“… Quirk factor then. It’s essentially the same thing. Anyways, Jack’s secondary ability. He’s able to… communicate with other people’s shards. As a result, he’s able to anticipate people’s actions, subtly influence others, and have a general picture of their personalities… so on and so forth.”

That’s… bad. But, you said he doesn’t have it anymore?

“I’m… not sure. The thing is though, is that even if he still does have it, he won’t be able to affect most of the heroes he encounters.”

I have a feeling that we’re susceptible to this second power then.

“Unfortunately.”

But if he doesn’t, then we’re good, right?

“But now he still has the ability to basically hypnotize anyone he wants.”

I… damnit. Izuku sighed. If all of what you’re saying is true then… I’m guessing you don’t have any insight on the others in his team? Aside from what we already know about them, that is.”

“Sorry, Izuku. Wish I could help there. The best I can do is say who their shards used to belong to. Like Pathogen’s coming from the Chinese shaker, or Waypoint— Nevermind, don’t listen to me. This info would be useless to you, and it’ll just confuse you more than you already are.”

Izuku let out a frustrated sound.

Fine. One more question. I scoured the internet, there’s nothing about Kentaro— Jack. Or even somebody like you, with direct bug control powers to the extent that we have. You don’t exist. This… Slaughterhouse Nine you’re talking of doesn’t exist. The biggest death-filled incident in America in the past thirty years was a villain attack on the White House. So tell me, why is that?

QA sighed. “Izuku—”

Izuku’s standing was firm. He wasn’t going to relent, not this time.
“Fine. Fine. You deserve this much.” QA took a deep breath.

... Well?

“Just—” Another sigh.

“Are you familiar with the Multiverse Theory, Izuku?”

Chapter End Notes

A bit too much in one go? Was it a bit too rough around the edges? Yeah, it’s not as refined as I wanted it to be. And I know that it’s a complete and utter 180 from the rest of the chapter. But this talk was going to happen sooner or later. I’m sure that some of you have been picking up on the signs of Izuku’s frustration.

Anyways, until next chapter, I suppose.
Here we go again. Festival stuff, a visit from Eri, and a looming threat strikes again.

“I…”

Izuku was stumped. And surprised. And curious. And excited. And a whole slew of emotions that he couldn’t quite process at the current moment. For the past hour he had listened to QA. For all the information that entailed; Izuku’s willingness to force any semblance of truth from QA had brought upon an endless list of things he definitely needed to think about at a later date.

First was her admission to having arrived from another Earth, one widely different from his own. Powers arrived to the populace in the 80’s — the 1980’s. Centuries in his own past, and decades before quirks formed.

She had been a villain once. And then turned hero. Her world was unforgiving. A corrupt and brutal timeline had forever changed the events of her Earth. That Earth shaped her into what she was, influencing her problems with authority and trust.

There were other things of course; things that Izuku could tell QA was still uncomfortable speaking about. And he decided that he wouldn’t push; at least not for now.

The discussion devolved from there. Just the talk of all the possibilities of this newfound information had Izuku reeling. So many thoughts shooting through his head all at one. So many, in fact, that Izuku didn’t sense the presence nearing him before it was too late.

“Midoriya.”

Izuku froze, the words in his mouth dying out. His (very verbal and loud) conversation with QA ended right then and there.

Izuku turned and found Todoroki. His usual blank expression was in place with the exception of questioning gaze obviously pointed straight at Izuku.

“Who are you talking to?” Todoroki asked.

“Gah! Ah! Todoroki!” Izuku straightened himself out. “It— It’s not what it looks like!”

Todoroki tilted his head. “What is it supposed to look like?”

“I—” Izuku shook his head. “Nevermind. How much did you hear? Or, uh, how long were you there?”

Todoroki shrugged his shoulders. “Just a few seconds. First thing I heard was something about a behemoth or something.”

If QA’s laughing was any indication, she probably sensed Todoroki long before he was here. Izuku
planned on getting back at her later.

“Oh.” Izuku rubbed the back of his head. “That’s, um… Why are you here?”

“You are aware that you’ve been gone for over an hour?” Todoroki asked. “The others were getting a bit worried and asked me to check on you.”

“Oh. Well, looks like I really got distracted then,” Izuku leaned against the wall, trying to hide his slowly disappearing panic. “Uh, anything else?”

Todoroki nodded. “Another one of the reasons I was sent to find you, actually. Togata and that girl from the raid on the yakuza are here. They were looking for you.”

“Oh’s here?” Izuku’s expression perked up, his thoughts of QA taking a temporary back seat. “Where?”

“They’re watching the dancing crew practice right no—”

“Cool!” Izuku rushed past the ice and fire user. “Thanks Todoroki! Don’t worry about the stage measurements! I’ll get them to you guys later!”

Izuku spotted Togata and Eri in an instant. True to Todoroki’s word, they stood a little ways away as the dance crew practiced for the upcoming performance.

“Het Eri!” Izuku exclaimed as he approached the duo. “How’s it going?”

Eri’s head turned towards Izuku’s direction upon hearing his voice. A meek yelp came from the girl, and not long after she planted herself behind Togata, her face peeking around the taller boy’s torso.

“Oh,” Izuku muttered as he neared Togata. “Is she—”

“Don’t speak another word, Midoriya!” Togata spoke with his ever-present smile. “Eri’s just got some things she wants to talk to you about.”

Togata looked back towards Eri, motioning her forward. “Come on Eri, just like we talked about.”

It took a few moments, but Eri slowly removed herself from Togata and made her way to Izuku. She looked upwards, and Izuku saw the gulp that went down her throat.

Izuku furrowed his brows before crouching down to meet Eri’s level. “So— Sorry? What do you mean? You don’t have anything to be sorry about, Eri.”

“But I do!” Eri exclaimed. “I made you hurt! You were getting me away and I made you hurt really bad! They told me that you couldn’t move! And, and—”

Izuku ruffled the girl’s hair. “Hey, that… that wasn’t your fault, you know. You didn’t know how to properly regulate your quirk. If anything, it was Overhaul’s fault, you know?”

Eri sniffled. “But, but you still—”

“It’s alright, really,” Izuku said, trying his best to reassure her. “Besides, it’s better that things went
the way they did. I learned some stuff about… myself because of all of it. And let me tell you, I never would have learned those things if you didn’t do what you did, so if anything I’m really happy about how things went!”

“I…” Eri rubbed her eye. “Really?”

Izuku smiled. “I promise.”

“Now that’s more like it!” Togata suddenly exclaimed. “See, what did I tell you Eri? I told you that he wouldn’t be mad!”

Eri backed away with a smile, and Togata himself went ahead and ruffled her hair. “Now that you two have had your little talk, how about that tour I was promising you?”

“Yeah!” Eri exclaimed, joy evident in her voice.

“Great!” Togata turned towards Izuku. “How about joining us, Midoriya?”

Izuku nodded. “Sure.”

The trio wandered UA’s campus, coming across various classes in the middle of preparing for the upcoming festival. Whether it was 1-B’s dragon prop, running into Setsuna and her fawning over Eri, or Mei and her ever-growing number of babies, there was an endless number of things that caught Eri’s attention.

Eventually, Eri got a bit hungry, leading the trio to take a quick detour to the cafeteria for a bit of Lunch Rush’s cooking.

“So, Midoriya.” Togata leaned forward. “I learned something interesting when I visited Eri in the hospital.”

“Oh?” Izuku asked, taking a sip from his cup of oolong tea.

Togata’s head bobbed up and down. “Mhm! Mhm! Apparently, you and Eri met before the raid!”

“Yeah!” Eri said. “Izuku visited me with his bugs and he left them for Overhaul!”

Togata patted Eri on the head. “Thanks again, Eri. You like your lemonade?”

Eri vigorously shook her head and went back to sipping her drink.

Togata turned back towards Izuku. “Like she said. She told me the same thing a couple days ago. Not, I’m not saying that I’m curious how that happened… but I am a bit interested with how that came to be.”

Izuku mulled over his options in his head before responding. “Well… Umm… I suppose that I could tell you. It’s just uh… hmm… I—”

“It’s nothing to worry about, Togata!” came a familiar voice.

Togata immediately turned towards its direction. “Principal Nezu! You’re having a snack as well?” Togata asked, gesturing to the block of cheese in Nezu’s paws.

“Yup! Principal duties and all! My workpile inevitably stirs hunger in me, you know.”
Nezu chuckled. “Anyways, as for what Midoriya gets up to off campus outside of school hours, just know that everything he does has been passed through me. Anything I wouldn’t want happening would be barred before it can even start.”

“So you’re saying that you actually did let Midoriya sneak off campus and possibly break the law with public quirk usage?”

“Of course not!” Nezu waved Togata off. “It was a police approved action. Besides, Midoriya’s been allowed plenty of leeway between what he is and isn’t allowed to do.”

Togata blinked. “I think that I’m more confused than I was before this conversation even began.”

Nezu laughed. “Like I said, nothing to worry about. But if you really must know, I can inform you personally at a later date in my office.”

Izuku decided to interject at that point. “Ah, Nezu—”

“Anyways!” Nezu interrupted. “It seems that little Eri’s been having a good time, yeah?”

Eri nodded in response.

“That’s great! It’s always a pleasure to see such a young mind experience joy for—” Nezu stopped mid sentence, his joyful demeanor from before disappearing. A large frown overtook his face.

“Oh dear.” Nezu turned towards Izuku. “Midoriya, I do recommend answering that call. It’s rather important and time sensitive.” His face lit back with a small smile. “Oh, and it’s nice to see that I’m rubbing off on you. Oolong, yeah?”

“Call?” Izuku asked. “What ca—”

A blaring ringtone suddenly erupted from Izuku’s right pocket, right where his phone lay hidden. Just as Nezu had suggested, he immediately picked it up.

Izuku’s eyes widened as the call went on. “Shi— oot!” Izuku exclaimed. He quickly turned to Togata and Eri. “Sorry Togata-senpai! I’ve got to go. Bye Eri! I’ll see you later!”

“You know what would be cool?” Setsuna asked. She was currently dressed in her Lizardy costume, her body swaying from side to side. She, along with Izuku, were currently waiting outside the gates of UA.

“If your bugs were shaped like dinosaurs. Just imagine that, little tiny dinosaurs swarming on our enemies like some sort of prehistoric army.”

“Somehow I don’t think that little tiny dinos would fare any better against The Nine,” Izuku said. He was in his Dragonfly costume with the exception of his mask. His eyes were currently closed, with him taking deep breaths.

“Oh come on, Izuku!” Setsuna swatted his shoulder. “I’m just trying to lighten the mood before we enter what’s inevitably going to be another bloodbath!”

Izuku shook his head. “Not another bloodbath. Edgeshot said that they were heading towards the docks in Osaka. There haven’t been any workers there since the local shipping company shut down years ago and most of the business transferred over to Kobe.”

“Okay, okay, fine. You got me there. It’s just… fuck! So soon? It’s barely been over a week!”
“That’s kind of a good thing though,” Izuku said, exhaling a breath of air. “If we catch them now we can prevent another massacre.”

“Yeah… Wait, that’s right!” Setsuna said. “You said Osaka, right? But that’s hundreds of miles away! That means—”

“Yeah,” Izuku muttered, his voice holding a small hint of disappointment. “We’re waiting for him.”

Izuku tilted his head in thought. “Which reminds me,” he grabbed into his pack, “ he doesn’t know my face yet. Not that I really care, but… eh.” Izuku placed his mask over his face.

And then as if he was summoned, a sudden crack and light signified the arrival of Traveler. However, much to Izuku’s surprise, the man didn’t immediately start smothering them with pictures of his daughter.

“Hey you two,” Traveler said. His voice was eerily serious, quite unlike the usual upbeat joy he had always presented. “Ready?”

Izuku and Setsuna walked forwards by his side. “Yeah,” they both said.

Traveler nodded. He placed a hand on both of them, one each for one of their shoulders. “I’ll be separating you two right when we get there, placing you into your teams. So, anything you guys want to say to each other before we leave?”

Izuku and Setsuna turned to one another, meeting each others’ eyes. Izuku was the first to speak.

“Good luck.”

Setsuna nodded in return, a minute smirk forming on her lips. “Ditto. I’ll see ya later, ‘zuku.”

“Alright then, you kids,” Traveler said. “Hang on tight; it’s going to be a bit bumpy since we’re going with successive jumps.”

Izuku equipped his gas mask and infrared goggles. Setsuna did the same.

“You two better live through this,” Traveler suddenly said. “I’ve taken plenty of pictures of my daughter since the last time we met!”

*Looks like your decision to finally share some info came at the nick of time, huh?*

“It seems so. But remember, Izuku. Jack’s like a rat, he can escape from your clutches or catch you by surprise just as easily. You need to stay vigilant.”

*I know, QA.* Izuku took a breath. *I’ll try.*

And with Traveler’s signature crack of sound and flicker of light, they were gone.

There wasn’t any time spent on briefing — just as Edgeshot had warned would happen the next time The Nine were spotted. What mattered was speed and efficiency, and so far all that had happened fed into that mentality. Besides, everything that Izuku needed to know was included in the text that came right after the call he had received.

Just as Traveler had said, Izuku was dropped off with his assigned location, Traveler leaving with Setsuna not a moment after. Like before, he was paired up with Reverb.
Their instructions were simple: the two of them would start off on the east side of the docks, making their way inwards as they searched and cleared all of the buildings until they reached the rendezvous point at the center of the docks. They were to remain vigilant and unnoticed, keeping themselves from engaging in combat and calling in for backup whenever one of The Nine were spotted.

Reverb and Izuku continued like this for a little over three minutes, Reverb spreading out her clones and Izuku sending out a swarm — both in small numbers to avoid notice.

And by the four minute mark, that was when Izuku’s bugs picked up on something. Izuku immediately turned to Reverb and gestured for her to follow.

“This way!” Izuku whispered. “I found something.”

“You did?” Reverb whispered back. “What is it?”

Izuku shook his head. “No time. Quick, it’s just a couple buildings ahead.” Izuku jogged ahead without another word.

“Midori— Dragonfly! You can’t just— fuck.” Reverb hurried her pace to catch up to her partner’s slowly retreating back. By the time she reached him, he was already ascending the flight of stairs that led to the second floor of a warehouse.

Reverb hurried up the steps, reaching the top just as Izuku grabbed for and opened a door. “Dragonfly, we need to—” She cut herself off, a shiver racing its way down her back.

“What was that?” Reverb hissed, her voice low.

Izuku turned his gaze behind him, back towards Reverb. “You felt that too?”

Reverb nodded. “Yeah. It felt—” A loud crash cut her off.

Just below them was Ricochet; an angry look filled his face and a large chunk of his left arm was completely missing. However, in an instant a portion of the floor below Ricochet disappeared. And, despite the extent of the damage, the missing chunk had disappeared and was replaced with newly mended flesh.

Suddenly, there was movement just across from Ricochet. Appearing from seemingly out of nowhere, a towering, completely black-shrouded figure appeared. The individual lacked any sort of features, and simply stood still after it had emerged.

However, that changed when another individual appeared from down a stray hallway.

“Kill him! Do it! Now!” Shigaraki demanded.

The black figure did as it commanded, shooting forward towards its target. It’s steps left behind imprints in the ground, slightly decaying the floor with each step it took. Izuku didn’t know why. But the longer he looked at the black figure, the more it looked familiar to him.

“Since when could Shigaraki do that?” Reverb whispered.
Izuku merely shrugged his shoulders.

Suddenly there was more movement down below. From behind Shigaraki appeared a bloody and panting Toga, rips and tears evident in her clothes. In her hands was a severed head — one whose eyes were definitely darting around. It also still had the capability to speak.

“Bossman, we need to get outta here! Right now!” The head spoke. If Izuku wasn't mistaken, it was Gerry — Bombastic — that the head belonged to.

“Yeah! We need to go!” Toga agreed. “They already got Mustard! He was diced to pieces by one of those drone things!”

“I’m not losing to these side characters!” Shigaraki yelled.

“Come on!” Toga pulled on his sleeve. “The others are already waiting at the entrance to the escape route we planned! We can get back at them later! Please!”

A scowl appeared on Shigaraki’s face, but it soon fell. “Fine!” he snarled. He turned back towards the still ongoing fight between the black figure and Ricochet.

“You stay here and cover our retreat, you hear me!”

The three members of the League of Villains ran away, leaving the fight between the two giants to continue.

A deep, baritone laugh sounded off the walls not long after the League’s escape. “Ah well, there’s always next time, I suppose.”

“Oh shit! What did I tell you!”

*What the heck are you talking about?! I didn’t hear you shouting out any warnings?! If anything, you should’ve noticed!* You —

“Speaking of,” Kentaro’s voice cut in, still echo eing amongst the walls, “it seems that we have guests! Kizu, Waypoint, if you will.”

Suddenly, the crates that Izuku and Reverb were hiding behind suddenly disappeared, being replaced with the forms of Kizu and Waypoint themselves.

Before they could do anything, the duo found themselves vulnerable, a knife to Reverb’s neck and a sword at Izuku’s own.

“Now,” Kentaro’s voice continued, “you two wouldn’t mind having a nice chat, would you? I’m sure that Ricochet and Shigaraki’s attack dog would like to settle their differences in peace.”

And then they were teleported away.

“Neither of you even noticed, did you?” asked Kentaro.

Reverb and Izuku were currently knelt before him, their arms restrained and legs bound.

Kentaro stood with a gentle smile on his face, complete with his top hat and cane. He was flanked on both sides by a single drone, and with Waypoint and Kizu on one side each.

“Notice what?” Reverb asked, deciding to speak.
“Oh, nothing,” Kentaro said. “Just my subtle commands and such on the door; you know: *Come watch the fight.* You see, since your instructions were to merely *watch* and not to intervene until backup arrived, you didn’t even hesitate. You went ahead and watched the fight, entering the warehouse that I previously prepared.”

“I think that I’m going to have to go through Master/Stranger Protocols with you, Izuku.”

“And you think that’ll stop me?” Kentaro chuckled.


“Tsk tsk. We’ll be having none of that.” Kentaro gestured to the side. “Kizu, if you will?”

A sharp scream echoed within the halls of the warehouse. A knife had been impaled into Reverb’s side, the stain of blood seeping into her costume. Kizu’s hand then impacted over Reverb’s head, knocking her unconscious.

“Heh. Not necessary, but much appreciated, Kizu.” Kentaro turned towards Izuku.

“And alas, we are free to speak. Oh, and don’t worry, Dragonfly. The wound isn’t lethal. Kizu’s firsts attacks never are. So your friend will live… Well, as long as the paramedics get here in time, that is.”

Izuku called upon his swarm. He readied the bugs in his hair—

“Izuku _remember—_”

“Yes Izuku, remember that I can read you,” Kentaro said. “Consider that, before you act right now.”

“You’ll most definitely die before any of them can touch a hair on me,” Kentaro countered. “If you haven’t noticed, it’s five versus one. You won’t come out on top in this situation. The moment you do something I don’t like, the drones kick in, Kizu guts you, and Waypoint teleports me out. Not even your out-of-control swarm would be able to touch me by that point.”

Despite Kentaro’s claims, Izuku began to struggle, attempting to wiggle his way out of his restraints.

“Hey. What did I say?” Kentaro approached Izuku, taking a hold of his mask and ripping it off. His gas mask and goggles clattered to the floor in a heap. Kentaro then seamlessly raised his cane, placing it under Izuku’s chin and using it to lift his eyes to meet his.

“No, you and your little army are going to wait,” Kentaro said. “And you will stay calm, or I’ll have Kizu finish your friend off,” Kentaro gestured to the limp form of Reverb. “So listen, or you won’t be able to hear what I want to tell you, alright?”

Izuku didn’t respond, choosing to instead narrow his eyes at the villain.

Kentaro chuckled. “Alright. I like your nerves kid.” Kentaro backed away a little. “Though I suppose part of your bravery is due to my lack of a reputation here. But hey, that just makes things more fun. Oh! And no funny business from you either, Weaver. Or the kid gets it.”
“Jack…”

It was a small movement, one heavily practiced and seemingly natural to the man. A simple flick of the wrist and Kentaro’s cane made a popping noise. A sleek blade revealed itself from the cane, and suddenly Izuku had a cut made into his cheek, one that reached all the way through his flesh.

“Agh!” Izuku’s face twisted in pain, his wound beginning to bleed.

“Apoologies. Old habits die hard, as they say.” Kentaro used his coat to wipe away the small amount of blood that had graced his newly revealed sword. Not long after, he reached down to his discarded sheath and placed it back over the blade, leaving him again with a seemingly normal cane.

“And please,” Kentaro continued, “call me Kentaro. It is who I am, after all. I may have been Jack in the past, but this is a new future for me. I’d like to keep it at that, for the sake of keeping things new.”

“So, how ‘bout it? Going to listen, you two?” Kentaro asked, slightly leaning on his cane.

Izuku took a breath and opened his mouth to speak. “Yo—”

“Don’t worry about your backup interrupting us,” Kentaro interrupted. “They won’t be coming anytime soon. In fact, if I’m right…”

A loud roared sounded off in the distance.

“Ah, yes. Centaur’s keeping the brunt of them busy. Ricochet too, if that Shigaraki fellow’s gone far enough that his construct faded. The rest that aren’t here are running interference.”

“What do you want… Kentaro?”

“That’s more like it!” Kentaro exclaimed. “Glad to see that you’re learning, Weaver.”

“Now,” Kentaro leaned forward, “tell you what. I want to propose to you a challenge, Izuku. If you can deliver, I’ll stop killing for a whole… let’s say… six months.”

“What makes you think that I’d agree to any deals made with you?” Izuku questioned.

“But you haven’t even heard the details yet!” Kentaro exclaimed, spreading his arms wide. “Besides, if you don’t I’ll lead my group on a killing spree everyday of the next six months instead.”

“You’ll get caught at that rate,” Izuku said.

“Perhaps,” Kentaro nodded. “But at what cost? How many will die before The Nine as a whole are annihilated? And what prevents us from coming back stronger every time, as I’m sure Weaver has told you I do?”

Before Izuku could speak up, QA cut him off. “What are you even getting from this, Kentaro? Another challenge? The last one didn’t go so well for you, if I recall.”

“Ha! I for one, think that what I did with little Theo was a complete success. I’d only wished that I could have seen the end result. All that I was able to hear was that it was quite the apocalypse. Not much I can do in a loop but listen to the outside world and continue to feel pain.”

“So what? Something like that isn’t going to happen again. The closest— No. What is subjecting
“The long run, huh?” Kentaro snorted. “Nothing, actually. Or maybe something, depending on how things go.”

Kentaro began to pace. “You see, I see something in your little host here, Weaver. I’m sure that Theo told you of that talk I had with him, right? Put that into context here. Izuku Midoriya: so full of potential keystones, and an individual with a wonderfully full slate. As you know, I like to see the results of my actions. And who knows what somebody with your powers can do if he were to truly fall, Weaver?”

“Fine!” Izuku suddenly shouted out. “What is it? I’ll do it!”

“I want you to kill All Might.”

Izuku's face froze in shock.

“He heh,” Kentaro chuckled. “I’m kidding of course. Though that would be a nice little side project of mine. But no. What I want from you, little Izuku, is to find somebody.”

“... Who?”

“So what?” Izuku asked slowly. “You want me to… kill him?”

“You want to do it yourself, though?” Izuku asked.

“Of course.” Kentaro’s tone was seething in confidence and glee at the same time. “That’s not the point though. The question is, can you do it?”

Izuku gulped. “I… I’ll…”

“Hmm?” Kentarp leaned forward, one of his hands cupping his ear. “What was that?”

Izuku sighed. “I’ll see what I can do.”

“Splendid! That’s what I like to hear.” Kentaro leaned forward and ruffled Izuku’s hair, much to the boy’s displeasure.

“And because I’m feeling generous, I’ll let you know something juicy. You see, you saw how that puny League of Villains was here, awhile ago? Remember seeing them?”

Izuku nodded.

“Well, let’s just say that they’re connected to your target. It’s the reason I came here, actually.”

“Oh. Okay, um… thanks,” Izuku stuttered. “Was there a reason you told me, or…”

“Call it a gift to an old friend,” Kentaro lifted his hand, pointing to his head. “One we share, and now acts as the one you hold in your head.”
“The hell are you talking about? We’re not friends, Jack.”

“Watch it, I still have your host to my mercy, here.”

QA didn’t say anything back.

“Besides, I disagree!” Kentaro shouted. “Without all of your meddling, I’m not sure that I’d be where I am right now, living and breathing. Heck, I’m not sure how many other remnants from out Earth would be here either. And I have you to thank for that.”

A gust of wind brushed into the room. Suddenly, beside Kentaro was Frisk. The speed villain’s legs twitched from side to side as he let out a chuckle.

“Ah, what timing!” Kentaro said. “As you can see, a prime example, Weaver. Frisk here is just like his predecessor. Silent and twitchy, just like Chuckles; he even holds some of his old memories. Even now he’s the only one of his kind that I’ve found. Well, aside from you and I, that is.”

Frisk let out a rather loud laugh.

Kentaro smiled. “Thank you, Frisk.” He turned back to face Izuku. “Well it looks like I’ll be taking my leave. Waypoint, ready the others.”

Waypoint nodded in response, a small cube coming from one of his pockets and beginning to glow. However, before Waypoint’s power activated, Kentaro spoke up.

“It’s a shame that you aren’t yet back up to full working order, Weaver. There’d be no doubt that you’d be able to take out me and the rest of my group,” Kentaro emphasized his point by snapping his fingers, “just like that.”

“Hey, how about this? When you finally figure out how to work with your passenger again, come see me. I’m sure that we’ll have a wonderful time then.”

And with that, he was gone.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s it for anything related with The Nine for a while! Of course, that means the Culture Festival is coming along. And thus the attack by the one and only Gentle! Seems that Izuku just can’t catch a break.
Skitter

Chapter Notes

This chapter of Flight of the Dragonfly presents to you a variety of things. From a little bit of the aftermath of Kentaro’s proposal, to some small talk about ropes, and long-winded mutterings! Hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku pushed the phone closer to his ear. “Are you sure that guys haven’t found anything yet? You didn’t miss anything? Skip over some sort of files? Asked all your informants? How about consultants? Maybe—”

“Midoriya,” Kaniko interrupted, her voice sounding soft over the phone. “It’s barely been over a week. There’s a lot that we still need to go over. Unexplored leads, underground heroes, rumors and such, you know? You need to relax. Six months is plenty of time. Besides, wouldn’t it be better if the Force took awhile before we find any results? I mean, unless you’re saying that you’re actually eager to take—”

“No!” Izuku exclaimed. “Of course I wouldn’t be! I just…” Izuku sighed, slumping in his seat. He leaned his head onto the couch so that his eyes were viewing the ceiling of the common room.

“Look, Midoriya,” Kaniko cut in. “I know that you’re anxious. But let’s face the facts. It doesn’t matter when we find this elusive Nine, just as long as it’s within the timeframe Kentaro set up for you.”

“I— I know that, Kaniko.”

“Then stop thinking about it!” Kaniko exclaimed. “Honestly! What was Edgeshot thinking? The Nine are dangerous; the body of that League member proves it! Edgeshot shouldn’t have been bringing you and that Setsuna girl over to chase some psychopathic murder hobos, no matter how skilled you are! You wouldn’t have gotten in this situation in the first place if he left you out of it!”

Izuku remembered some of the things QA had told him about Kentaro. “I… I’m not so sure about that. Kentaro probably would have come after me sooner or later. He specifically mentioned how he was interested in me, remember? If anything, it’s better that everything happened this way. At least now The Nine don’t have a reason to be literally storming UA’s gates.”

“Nobody could be that stupid. I mean, sure, the League did it, but it was far from UA’s campus. Even someone like Kentaro would have enough sense not to attack a school of hero students head on?”

“I’m not too sure, honestly,” QA added. “Jack’s done worse in the past. If anything, he’d like the challenge; there weren’t any schools specifically designed for heroes back on my Earth.”

“Hmph. He might just be crazy enough to attempt it,” Izuku told Kaniko.

“If you say so,” Kaniko sighed. “Look, if we find anything, we’ll tell you as fast as we’re able to, okay? For now, try to keep your mind off Kentaro, The Nine and… Nine, alright? Your guys’
“I’ll try,” Izuku said.

“You better,” Kaniko ordered. “Well, later, Midoriya.” And with that, the call ended.

“She’s right, you know. There’s nothing that we can do right now, not unless we have some information on Nine suddenly appears on your lap.”

Izuku sighed, closing his eyes. So what? I just sit here and do nothing?

“For now. If we end up getting too close to the deadline… Well, we could always go out, like you did before.”

*Under vigilante terms, you mean?*

“I know. I noticed… Thanks, though.

“Yeah…"

“I noticed, did you? Well, alright. I’ll leave you to it.”

“Yeah…”

“Ahem… Uh….”

Izuku opened his eyes and reoriented himself so that he could properly view the origin of the voice. “Meaning…?” he asked.

Momo smiled, holding out a steaming cup towards Izuku. “Tea?”

Izuku smiled in return and took the offered cup. “Thanks.”

Izuku took a long sniff of the heated beverage before taking a sip. “Golden Tips Imperial, eh?”

“Oh?” Momo took a seat beside Izuku, her own tea in hand. “You recognize it?” she asked, her face basked in delight.

Izuku let out a chuckle. “Yeah. Let’s just say that… somebody’s really rubbed off on me.”

The two sat in a comfortable silence for a few moments, idly drinking their tea. That is, until Mom decided to speak up.

“Are you sure that you should be having conversations with the police in the common room? Aren’t they confidential?”

Izuku rose an eye. “Meaning…?"

“Well,” Momo started,” I mean, the others…”

“Ah,” Izuku muttered in realization. It might have been late, but there were still a good number of his classmates in the common room. The festival was tomorrow, and the simple prospect of it had
everybody in a restless frenzy.

There were a few still preparing for tomorrow, like Aoyama who was making extra checks on the equipment, but mostly everyone else was simply lounging around and socializing. A couple of said individuals had been nearby when Izuku had gotten his call from Kaniko, and they had ended up watching Izuku with something of a cross between worry and as his voice grew louder and more worried.

“It’s fine,” Izuku said, his voice tired. “It’s nothing that you guys won’t find out about eventually if everything ends up going how it’s supposed to.”

“Oh,” Momo frowned. “And you’re sure that it’s nothing you can talk about now? Even if you say that we’ll find out eventually?”

Izuku shook his head. “It’s fine Momo, really. It’s nothing to be worried about.” Izuku took on a smile. “I’ve still got time.”

“Ah! Mes excuses, Yaoyorozu!” Aoyama suddenly cut in, walking towards the duo with some rope in his hand.

“Yes, Aoyama?” Momo asked, taking a sip of her tea.

Aoyama stood before the two and held out the rope in his hands. “This rope that will be carrying moi tomorrow! And as you can see, it is rather frayed! If you wouldn’t mind, could you make another?”

Momo took a deep breath and closed her eyes. Eventually, she nodded. “Of course, Aoyama. Just hold for a sec—”

“Ah, Momo!” Izuku interrupted. “Hold up!”

Momo paused. “Yes, Izuku?”

“You’re pretty tired, aren’t you?” Izuku asked. “You were already making a whole bunch of last minute supplies for the performance tomorrow, weren’t you? Especially after Bakugou blew up a third drum set.”

“I uh… No, of course not… But still, you should be resting! The class needs every one of our star members in tip top shape! Especially you, Momo!”

“Star… member?” Momo mumbled. “But still, the rope—”

“Ah, but that’s the thing,” Izuku interrupted. “I have some rope in my room.”

Kaminari — who was sitting on the next couch over — did a spit take of his own tea.

“You do?” Momo exclaimed.

“Mhm. And their spider-silk ones, so they’re extra sturdy.”

“Oh, you mean like your costume?” Momo said in awe. “You wouldn’t mind letting me see them sometime, would you? Some visualization would help if I try to make my own.”
Izuku nodded. “Sure!”

“Great! I— Oh!” She turned back towards Aoyama. “Sorry, we got a little carried away there. But how about it? Are you fine with using Izuku’s rope for the performance tomorrow?”

A bright smile appeared on Aoyama’s face. “Very much so! Spider silk isn’t an easy-to-come-by material, after all! I’d loved to be held up in its graces!”

Momo nodded. She then attempted to take a sip of her tea, but looked down into her cup to find it empty. “Oh.” She sighed. “Well, I suppose I should take your advice and head to bed tonight, Izuku.”

Momo stood up and bid the rest of the remaining class a good night. A chorus of simple phrases rang out as Momo retreated to her room.

As she left, Izuku felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked over to find the hand belonging to Aoyama.

“Thank you, Midoriya. Much appreciated!” Aoyama winked, and then walked away.

Izuku himself furrowed his brows. What was that wink for?

“What would you think that I know?”

Before Izuku could reply with a counter, Kaminari slid in the seat next to Izuku.

“You have rope in your room?!” Kaminari all but whispered.

Izuku blinked. “Umm… yeah?”

“And you just have them sitting in your room? For— for what reason, exactly?”

“Oh, well, I’ve been waiting to use it on someone—” Kaminari inhaled rather harshly “—and each coil has been custom made for my likes and needs.”

“So, like, they’re all fresh?”

Izuku nodded. “Yep. All ne— Oh, wait! That’s right. I’ve used them on Bakugou a couple times —”

“You did what! I— Gah! Ow ow ow!” Kaminari was suddenly stabbed by two separate instances of ear jacks.

“Stop trying to misinterpret what Midoriya’s saying on purpose, Kaminari,” Jirou said.

Kaminari continued to squirm in place, still being attacked by Jirou. “Alright, alright! I give!”

Meanwhile, Izuku continued to look on in confusion. First Aoyama, and now Kaminari. What exactly are they trying to tell me?

Izuku swore that he heard what sounded like a chuckle from QA. Well, that and he could almost feel QA shrugging her metaphysical shoulders in response.

“Alright, are we all ready!?” Ashido asked, peering out to the dance crew. The chorus of ‘yeahs!’ that followed suit had Ashido jumping in joy.
Alrighty then, awesome! Now everybody, just make sure that you all— hey! Wait a minute!” Her eyes focused in on a bundle of dark green and black hair further back behind the group. “Midoriya, what are you doing down here?”

Izuku jerked towards Ashido’s voice. “Huh?”

Ashido had a knowing look on her face. “You were busy doing something with your bugs again, weren’t you?”

“Um…” Izuku rubbed the back of his head. “Maybe?”

“Oh huh.” Ashido nodded in a rather overemphasized manner. “And what were you doing, exactly?”

“I was just… looking for someone,” Izuku said rather meekly.

“Well, is this person that you’re looking for of any significant importance?”

“No—”

“Then that doesn’t matter right now!” Ashido expressed, her arms flailing. “The show starts in ten minutes! You need to be up in the rafters with the special effects crew!”

“Sure, ju—”

“NOW!!!”

Izuku jumped in place. Without another word, he hurriedly went ahead in following Ashido’s commands and made his way to the ladder that would lead him to the rest of his team.

As he climbed the ladder, Izuku shook his head at Ashido’s antics. He had forgotten that the pink-skinned girl had gotten worked up like this whenever anything that resembled a celebration was in danger of being messed with.

Of course, he had only learned of it recently — due to what Ashido had done to Mineta during Momo’s birthday party — but it’d be best if he kept that piece of info, lest he face Ashido’s wrath.

Izuku shook his head away from his thoughts as he reached the top of the ladder, meeting up with the rest of the effects crew.

“Ah, Midoirya!” Kirishima greeted, patting Izuku on the back. “There you are, man! We were getting a bit worried that you weren’t going to show!”

“I wouldn’t do that to you guys,” Izuku said.

“Of course not!” Kirishima exclaimed with a smile. “Though, if you don’t mind me asking, what were you doing that had you running late?”

“I was looking for someone— Oh, right. I was looking for her!” Izuku turned towards Kirishima. “Just in case I end up spending more that I realize, you wouldn’t mind getting my attention right before the show, would you?”

“Course not! Go right ahead.”

Izuku nodded and immersed himself in his swarm. As per usual, he felt all of the bugs all over campus, and even within some distances beyond. His three block radius was as strong as ever, and
he used that to his advantage.

The small portion of his swarm that he had been using before Ashido had interrupted him had continued to mull around in the general vicinity he had left them — that being above the grounds of the festival.

He immediately set them into motion, searching the grounds for his target. The small bundles of swarms flew past various students and festival goers with relative ease. The majority of the school had more or less gotten used to the random swarms that would come and go from time to time, so his search was met with a lot less screams of terror that they had brought before.

The lack of resistance to his scouting swarms quickened his search, and it wasn’t long until he found his target and promptly formed a swarm clone right in front of them.

“Ms. Joke!”

The pro hero in question raised her eyes in response. “Oh! Oh oh! You’re that bug kid! Erm… What was your name again? Maehata? Minatoya? Oh, that’s right! Midoriya!”

The swarm clone nodded. “Yup, Midoriya it is.”

“Ha ha! Nice! How’s it going kid? Still causing Shota headaches? Oh, and you wouldn’t happen to know where he is, do you?”

“I’m doing fine, thanks! And of course I’m still causing some trouble for Aizawa; it’s kinda one of my things now. And that’s actually why I was trying to find you!”

“Oh? Really?”

The swarm eagerly shook its head. “Yep! I’m gonna bring you to Aizawa. This way, both you and I get a laugh in!”

Ms. Joke let out a full blown guffaw, quite easily piecing together what Izuku wanted.

The clone gestured both its arms towards where the upcoming performance was stationed to occur. “Now, if you wouldn’t mind following me—”

He paused. It was a slight thing, something he had almost not noticed. Movement; footsteps, specifically. Right within the forest just outside of UA.

Can’t panic. Don’t panic. It’ll look suspicious. Nezu might even notice through all the cameras he has throughout the entire campus. Wait, maybe there are sensors in the forest? It’s right outside of UA, after all. It’d be a weak point; unless that’s why Hound Dog’s out there? Wait, is this another one of Nezu’s tests? No, no, stop being so paranoid... Unless...

“Midoriya?” Ms. Joke asked. “Something wrong? You bug thingy stopped moving. And now it’s making this weird buzzing sound and—”

The swarm clone’s head jerked towards Ms. Joke.

“Ah! There we go!” the pro hero said. “I was worried there for a sec—”

“Sorry Ms. Joke. I just, um… noticed something. Heh heh. Umm... Well, let’s go!” The swarm gestured for Ms. Joke to follow. “My class is performing a mini-concert over in the
auditorium. Aizawa’s gonna be there; probably in the back.”

“ QA! Mind making small talk with Ms. Joke while I go investigate? "

“You know, the way my shard works with you is a bit weird. I mean, you and I have essentially the same power, but it’s slightly different. Your sensory input essentially had no limits at the start, for example. However, in turn your ability to multitask has suffered as a result. I mean, the one-conversation-at-a-time thing I understand; your ability to use your swarms to do maybe one or two different things while you do something else entirely with your body, is something I don’t really get, however. I’m wondering how much of that is you subconsciously limiting yourself, and how much of that is because of me. Because let me tell you right now, I know that you’re completely capable of it. Though, I suppose that you did get a weird tradeoff in return, with what how Spurt and some of your other bugs are now —”

Can we talk about this later please?

“ Hmm? Oh, sure. Go on ahead. Though, do try to stress your multitasking capabilities more, alright? They’ll be useful in the future, Izuku.”

Izuku felt QA taking control of the clone, freeing up his control “Yeah, strange how that works, huh?" QA responded to a question from Ms. Joke that Izuku hadn’t heard, but he didn’t dwell on it.

Already, Izuku was diverting his attention away from his current swarm body and to the millions of bugs in the nearby forest.

Even before he fully went to investigate, Izuku knew that the footsteps didn’t belong. Hound Dog was roaming around and barking and growling every few seconds, so he was fairly noticeable and easy to track. Ectoplasm was a bit harder to notice, though Izuku could at least tell that he was close to Hound Dog at all times.

The thing was, they were at the moment the only two people supposed to be watching the forest, and they were currently stalking away from UA. The other two pairs of footsteps were making their way towards UA.

Within moments, his eyes made up millions within the forest, and it wasn’t long until he noticed the two intruders. One was a rather tall man, one with graying hair and a rather fine suit. The woman was shorter, and sported pink hair. Normally, the duo wouldn’t have been anyone Izuku would have batted an eye at. However, their status as Gentle Criminal and La Brava — a notorious villain duo with a heavy online presence — changed that completely.

His focus shot back to his own body. He needed to stop them. As Nezu had said, even just a hint of trouble would have the festival being canceled without argument. And Izuku couldn’t have that; not with his class’s excitement for their performance, not for his friends’ excitement, and not for his Eri’s happiness on the line.

He made a move towards the ladder, completely ready to sprint towards the villain duo’s location. That is, until he felt a hand grasp his shoulder. Izuku turned to face the owner of the hand, and in turn found Todoroki looking at him.

“Midoriya.”

“Um…” Izuku gulped. “Yeah?”
“Where are you going?”

“Umm— I… I need to do something!”

“What?! Kirishima suddenly exclaimed, bounding up to the two. “What do you mean you need to do something?!? The show’s gonna start in a few minutes!”

“Y—yeah! But—” Izuku said the first thing that came to mind. “The rope! I still need to get the rope for Aoyama!”

“But Aoyama already has it? / Didn’t you give it to him this morning!” both Tooroki and Kirishima said at the same time.

Aoyama walked over, with the spider silk rope in question already tied around his waist. “He did indeed, you two! And I must say, it is rather comfy; much more than I thought it already would be!”

“See?” Kirishima said. “You didn’t forget it! Now come on, get into position! We’re gonna start soon!”

The rest saw that as a dismissal, each of the crew planting themselves into their assigned spots, and leaving Izuku standing alone.

“Can’t I have a break?” Izuku muttered under his breath. “Just for once?” Izuku walked over to his assigned position. He couldn’t leave; not without causing a stir. He needed things to be kept under wraps: Gentle Criminal and La Brava needed to be taken down. Meanwhile, Hound Dog and Ectoplasm can’t catch wind of anything involved with them happening.

Izuku sighed. *Three way multitasking it is.*

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, Gentle and La Brava fight is next chapter. So prepare for that, I suppose!
Chapter Notes

Hmm, I guess I'm experimenting with how I'm having this play out? Well, not really, since I've already done similar scenes in the past in this fic. I'm just not sure how to properly detail two separate things happening at the same time, so... here ya go?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Oh, uh... Ahem."

Hound Dog stopped in his tracks. He narrowed his eyes before he turned, already having a general idea of what was happening. In fact, when he fully turned, he found — true to his predictions — an unmistakable swarm of bugs in the shape of a human hovering nearby.

"Hey, H-Dog!" The swarm clone greeted. "How're things going?" It planted itself on the ground and leaned on a nearby tree. It's hand then went up to rub the back of its head. The bugs that made up said head merely displaced themselves from the action.

"Enjoying the, uh, um, patrol?"

Hound Dog was unimpressed. If anything, his face led Izuku to believe he was more annoyed than anything. Though, a part of that could have just been attributed to the fact that Nezu had let the pro off his leash, and Hound Dog often looked a bit feral whenever he was out in full force.

"Don't call me that ever again, kid," Hound Dog growled, true to his nature as a dog.

"Right! H— Hound Dog."

"Right..." the hero crossed his arms. "What are you even doing here, Midoriya?"

"I'm not here tho— though! It's just one of my clones; the real me is still back on barriers— I mean school grounds! Enjoying the festival!"

"Barriers? Still, you didn't answer my questions," Hound Dog countered, keeping up his seemingly constant snarl.

"What? Can't I just have the sudden urge to talk to my invisible retainer? I mean, augh! This is getting confusing!"

Hound Dog's eyes narrowed even further. "What? I— No, never mind. Doesn't your show start in a couple minutes?"

"In four, actually. And it's not like it matters; multi-tasking, remember?"

Izuku laughed inwardly. Yeah right. I'm already struggling enough as it is.

"And you actually have the time to be talking to be right now?" Hound Dog asked. "Don't you have enough on your plate setting up for preparations?"
You're not— Oh come on! What did I— You're not listening, multi-tasking, remember?"

Hound Dog raised an eye. "And tell me, what was that?"

"He—huh?" The swarm construct jerked, body moving forward ever slightly. "What are you talking about, sir?"

"Look, Midoriya, whatever it is that you're hiding—"

"Hiding? What would I be—"

A column of bugs shot up into the air. With the way they had appeared over the treeline, it was as if they had been launched by a sideways geyser.

"And that?" Hound Dog gestured to the far off explosion of bugs.

"Nothing! It's just— Can't you just leave already!? —a mass squirrel suicide via explosions!"

Hound Dog blinked. "That's perhaps one of the strangest and more bizarre excuses I've heard from a student."

The radio on Hound Dog's waist crackled to like. "Hound Dog? Hound Dog? You saw that, right?"

Hound Dog raised the radio to his mouth. "I did, Ectoplasm. Midoriya's doing something. I'm talking to him right now." Hound Dog shook his head. "Don't worry 'bout it. I'm checking it out."

Hound Dog began walking towards the direction of the explosion despite the protests of the hovering swarm clone.

---

Izuku didn't waste any time, immediately heading to work. He crouched down in his designated position at the top of the auditorium and then placed his command over his bugs.

He sent out two separate swarms, one towards the patrolling Hound Dog and another towards the duo of incoming villains.

The rest of the bugs in the forest began their work. The main focus on this group was the growing cluster of various spiders, a group which went ahead and began weaving webs, starting the onset of traps that could possibly be used.

_I don't know how useful they'll be, considering the fact that I'm unfamiliar with either of Gentle Criminal's or La Brava's quirk. I can't even guess what their quirks are. What does Gentle do? Make things soft? Maybe makes people less violent? Or La Brava, even? Does she make people braver? Hmm... Actually, that one might work..._

Izuku refocused his thoughts. His swarms had reached their targets. He delayed the first swarm, the one designated to confront Hound Dog. There wouldn't be a need to start a conversation if he wasn't in danger of noticing anything yet.

And besides, with his mind being stretched so thin, Izuku had discovered an unfortunate vulnerability to his power. He was having trouble with his awareness.

His range was fine; all three blocks of bugs were still in his total control. However, when before
the bugs' sensory information came to Izuku with ease, he found that he needed to spend effort on that part now; consciously tapping into the bugs to peer into their senses.

There wasn't anybody else in the forest that wasn't supposed to be there — he had already checked — so Izuku wasn't worried about that. But he'd rather only have to sacrifice his near omnipotent awareness of the environment within his range when he really needed it.

So Izuku held off on Hound Dog's swarm. But the second went ahead with it's previous commands.

"**Gentle Criminal. La Brava.**" A swarm clone formed in front of the duo, hovering before them in the air. **"Would you mind explaining why the two of you are here?"**

The two villains stopped in their tracks, looking upwards at the hovering form.

"Gentle!" La Brava squeaked. "It's that bug kid, Izuku Midoriya! He's a dangerous one!"

Gentle looked on with an impassive face. Similarly, the swarm clone did the same, merely bobbing up and down in its position in the air.

"I am well aware, La Brava," Gentle mused. "His exploits make quite an extensive list."

"But… but… this is your big thing, Gentle!" La Brava stomped her foot on the ground. "It's unfair! You just want to show the world your presence! Why does everything keep going bad for you?!"

"La Brava—"

"You can't just give up yet!" La Brava pleaded. "I believe in you! You can take him!"

Gentle placed a hand on her shoulder. "Thank you. I appreciate the gesture, La Brava." That single phrase settled her down almost immediately.

"I suppose that for now," Gentle continued, "we can see how this will work itself out." He turned his attention, glaring at the swarm. "I didn't think that you'd be patrolling, Izuku Midoriya. Afterall, aren't you still just a student?"

"**I am. Umm, still a student, that is.**" The clone rose a hand and pointed at the duo. **"But that doesn't mean that I wasn't watching out for threats to the festival myself!"**

"Caught in the act by a mere student." Gentle chuckled. "Your generation is truly full of surprises."

"**I'm willing to offer you a choice,**" the swarm interrupted. **"You leave right now, and I'll refrain from telling anybody of you being here. If you refuse, I won't hold back."**

"Hmm." Gentle's face remained impassive for a few moments. However, it eventually displayed newfound determination. "Well, I suppose that we shall have to try to salvage this as much as we can, then."

Gentle inclined his head towards his partner. "La Brava."

"Right!" she exclaimed. One of her hands rose to her wrist and began tapping away at some sort of wristband.
A few hundred meters away, a drone flew up from its hidden position within a bush. A small light activated, its lens uncovering, signifying what would no doubt become a recording of the upcoming fight.

However, the second it rose into the air, the drone was promptly covered in a mass of bugs.

"Hey!" La Brava exclaimed. "We were using that!"

"I'm aware of that."

"What happened?" Gentle asked.

"The camera, it's been covered in bugs," La Brava said, her voice quiet. "It's basically useless right now."

One of Gentle's eyes twitched. "Right. You still have that body camera?"

La Brava patted the ribbon around her neck. "Still here, Gentle!"

Gentle smiled. "Good. And go ahead with the contingency plan, just in case."

La Brava went ahead and began typing away at her wristband yet again. Izuku decided right at that moment that the villains wouldn't be going quietly.

"Gentle," the swarm warned.

And it looks like Hound Dog's going to need some distraction now. And... there goes my awareness.

"I see." The swarm flew forward, straight down towards the duo.

Gentle responded in kind, raising his hands in front of him in a gesture that made Izuku think that the man was creating some sort of forcefield. As Izuku found out, he wasn't entirely wrong.

The swarm collided with an invisible wall and was launched backwards, bugs dispersing unceremoniously and out of their humanoid form.

Unfortunately for the villainous duo, the swarm clone quite easily reformed, its head tilting in observation. "So, your quirk emits some sort of force field? Invisible barriers with a knockback effect?"

Gentle Criminal smirked. "Sure, let's go with that."

The swarm clone stayed quiet. Izuku had another swarm rise from the depths of the forest, forming behind the duo. He commanded them to launch themselves towards the villains.

"Behind!" La Brava yelled.

Gentle turned and raised his hands once more. "Gently Rebound, if you will!"

As per demonstrated just a moment before, Gentle's gesture had cast up a barrier that effortlessly launched the incoming swarm away.
Enhanced senses for La Brava? I know that I can't exactly silence the buzz of a flying swarm, but she knew the swarm was there before it would have been visible from the undergrowth. I'd think that it would have been a little hard to hear it coming, really. Though perhaps she has a camera planted on her back too?

Gentle spurred Izuku from his thoughts. "Is this all you have to offer?!" He spread his hands out to his sides.

"I would have thought that a student from a school as prestigious as UA High would have been able to do better. Especially someone of your caliber, Izuku Midoriya!" Gentle oved a foot forward, and gestured towards the swarm clone. His grandiose gestures moved his cape, allowing it to billow ever so slightly.

Off to the side, Izuku noticed La Brava eagerly looking at Gentle, but noticed that her entire body was facing him too.

"He's still playing it up for the camera. Huh. Should I play along? … Eh, why not?"

"If it's a show you want, it'll be a show that you will get."

The full brunt of Izuku's gathered bugs broke the treeline. A massive, vibrant swarm revealed itself to the villains, letting them know that they had been completely surrounded.

"Your move, Gentle Criminal."

The voice had come from the whole swarm all at once, a cacophony of unguided sounds that made up no specific voices, but dozens, instead.

Izuku thought that it was safe to say that he had frightened the two villains. Well, if Gentle's tightened fists and La Brava's small yelp were any indication, at least.

Gentle did a full panorama of his immediate position, his head darting from left to right across the gathered swarm. Eventually, he fixed his gaze back on the single swarm clone there.

"Right. Nice one. But I can do you one better!" Gentle touched for the ground, and suddenly he was up in the air with La Brava holding on to his leg.

However, Izuku anticipated that Gentle would have done that.

A swarm of bugs, one that had laid in wait at the treetops, arose from the foliage and positioned themselves right above the rising villains.

However, before the two masses could collide, Gentle rose another barrier. This one launched him back down. Another barrier was erected on his way down, that one at an angle. It launched the two villains past the swarm and into the forest.

Izuku ordered the swarm to follow the two retreating villains.

"You think that you can run? I have eyes all over this forest!"

Of course, it only took mere moments for the villains to fall within Izuku's sight. With some careful maneuvering of his bugs, he steered the two villains away from the school, and in turn away from the patrolling Ectoplasm and Hound Dog.

Little did they know, they were falling right into his trap.

Gentle looked behind his shoulder, his eyes widening. "That's not good!" He turned his head back
just as he touched a tree, grappled it, and pulled it along as he ran.

Gentle suddenly let go after a few steps, causing the tree to snap backwards. It effortlessly made its way through the incoming swarm before it reverted back to its original state. A good half of the gathered bugs had died right there and then, either being crushed by the elastic — and yet still as heavy — tree, or being victims of being squashed into other trees by way of the elastic tree's path of destruction.

The other half were launched into the air, a cloud of bugs breaking the treeline like a giant, writhing and living column that made up millions of individual creatures. Of course, it wasn't as unnoticeable as Izuku hoped it would have been.

"Ah! Hound Dog saw that!"

Gentle, still running along with La Brava, yelled into the air. "You're being serious?! You're telling me that I accidentally called reinforcements for you?!"

"Nothing!" the swarm yelled. Contingencies of bugs reoriented themselves in the short time of Izuku's panic. They set off trailing right behind the villains. "Can't you just leave already?!"

"I'll let you know that I'm a man who— gah!"

Gentle and La Brava tumbled to the ground, as to the courtesy to one of Izuku's previously woven tripwires.

The massive swarm gathered before the two villains, hovering just before them yet again. A portion of it went ahead to form another one of Izuku humanoid clones. It held itself loosely, otherwise floating in relative peace. It didn't give off any hint that it would continue along with any further aggressive moves.

"So, not elastic barriers, but elasticity-induced touch instead?" the swarm mused. "Quite an interesting power, I've got to say. It's one that I'd say could be top tier, if used correctly."

Gentle glared at the swarm. La Brava hugged him, leaning into his side.

"If you think that you're wo—"

"This was supposed to be my day off, you know." The swarm pulsed in irritation. The clone crossed its arms. "The Nine attacked not too long ago, you know? I was finally resting up from them! And now you two idiots come along? This is getting ridiculous! Not to mention—"

Izuku paused. He almost hadn't noticed it. Hadn't noticed, until now. The three separate selves he was running simultaneously had made sure of that.

Another tripwire had been tripped. Somebody else was in the forest, and it wasn't any of the teachers. And they were less than a few hundred feet away, heading right for Gentle and La Brava's position.

Izuku's swarm clone looked down towards La Brava's wrist. A contingency plan.

"Crap!"

Half of the swarm separated off and headed towards the new threat.

He also had spiders perched on the tripwires, lying in wait to attach themselves to whatever
individual had managed to get themselves caught on the webs.

Izuku incited them to bite. Instead of the fleshy softness of human flesh that he had expected, the spiders were met with resistance. Scales. Somebody with a mutant aspect to their body.

His swarm was getting there. Izuku would have a chance of identifying the individual before they got too close, and perhaps even stopping them. But it would take time.

Izuku positioned his swarm clone closer to Gentle, very nearly covering the man's face with the clone's own. Izuku needed information.

"Who is it? Their quirk, what is it?!"

"Ah!" Gentle smiled. "He's arrived? Well, I—"

"I have spiders on her," the clone gestured its head towards La Brava. "Venomous ones. They'll kill if you wait too long after the bite. Or in this case, an even shorter time since it'll be bites."

Izuku's swarm nearly reached the incoming individual. However, before he could catch a glimpse of the enemy, gas filled the air. The villain was engulfed in the white gas. And, to make matters worse, his bigs instantly began to weaken. Some died, others losing their ability to see or fly.

Izuku snapped back to the scene before his swarm clone.

Gentle gulped. "You're bluffing."

True to the swarm's words, a spider appeared on La Brava's shoulder, inciting a yelp from her.

"I have more hidden on other parts of her body."

Gentle's eyes widened. "Alright, fine, fine! Just—"

Too late.

Grenades were thrown, falling right in front of the villainous duo. A steady stream of gas filled the air, and Izuku could already feel his bugs wavering, succumbing to the gas. The spiders hidden on La Brava were no exception.

Izuku had no choice; he evacuated as many of his bugs as he could from the immediate area. He growled, as well. He knew that now he could do nothing but watch.

As his clone backed away, it could barely distinguish the newcomer's silhouette through the smoke. Though if Izuku wasn't mistaken, he had caught a glimpse of green scales and some purple accents through the smoke.

"We told you that this was a bad idea! Idiots! You should've just listened to me and Stain!"

Izuku's eyes widened upon hearing the voice. He had heard it already once before, just a couple weeks ago.

"Apologies," Gentle's voice came from the smoke, somewhat muffled. "But please, if we must argue, can it occur later? I'd rather not have the gas run out while we're still here."

He was talking just fine, and with no evidence of coughing or discomfort.

*Gas masks, maybe?*
"Fine, fine. Later, then. You ready?"

Izuku positioned his bugs right outside the radius of the smoke. He set his remaining bugs on edge, preparing them to be ready to move the second the villains left the gas.

Of course, that was when he saw a trio of bodies launch themselves in the air. Gentle had made barriers — or rather, as Izuku had since figured out, was using his quirk on the surrounding air — to form what were essentially invisible trampolines. The air shifted before the trio, bouncing them along and away from UA.

Gas trailed behind them; they'd brought the still live grenades with them. However, the smoke didn't engulf the retreating trio. It was enough for Izuku to notice that all three of them had gas masks on their faces.

Gentle and La Brava were easy enough to identify, given their attire. The third of the trio even more so, due to his green scaled skin and purple mohawk. There wasn't any doubt in Izuku now; the third escapee was Spinner, supposed partner of the Hero Killer Stain.

It didn't take long for the trio to leave Izuku's range. Izuku allowed his remaining bugs to disperse, with the exception of a single clone. Said clone merely looked on in the distance, watching as the villains became mere dots on the horizon.

Stupid, stupid! I should have restrained them or something! It might have slowed them down enough for the smoke to disperse! And then I could have stopped them! But what the heck! What was Spinner doing helping them?! Are they working with Stain?

The undergrowth of the forest to the clone's left rustled. Izuku didn't react, however, seeing as he already knew the origin of the noise.

"What the hell, Midoriya! Tear gas? What the hell were you up to this time around?" Hound Dog emerged, yelling at the other clone that had been set to follow him.

Izuku dispersed that clone, confusing an irate Hound Dog for a moment before he noticed the other nearby swarm clone. The pro hero all but sped up to the remaining clone.

"What the hell were you up to?" Hound Dog all but yelled. "Where the heck did you get tear gas?!!"

"Tear gas, huh? Well, I guess that makes sense with how my bugs were reacting to it."

"Midoriya—""It was the villains, actually. Gentle Criminal and La Brava. I'm sure that you heard of them?"

Hound Dog's eyes widened. "Villains!? I need to—"

"They're already gone," the clone provided. "I already dealt with it, but they escaped. I promise that they won't be coming back anytime soon, I made sure of that. So please, don't alert the staff? I don't want the festival being canceled because of this."

Hound Dog let out a grunt. He sighed not long after.

"Fine. But you, me, and Nezu are going to have a talk when the day's over. You understand?"

The swarm clone nodded. "Yeah, I'm fine with that."
And there ya go! That's the Gentle Criminal and La Brava fight for you, featuring special guest Spinner! What does his presence mean? Well… that's for later.

And don't any of you worry! You'll still be getting the real Izuku's perspective and experience from the music performance! It'll just be in the next chapter. So, until then! See you all next time!
Revel

Chapter Notes

Finally! An actual resting period for everybody's favorite green-headed mumble machine. Nothing all too major this time around, just some festival shenanigans and a small talk at the end about the incident with Gentle and La Brava. Hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

From high up on the room's catwalk, Izuku watched as the crowd grew every bit larger by the moment. There was a steady stream of people coming through the doors, filling the vast space that was one of the UA's auditoriums. Of course, that was really most of what Izuku could observe in regards to the status of his immediate surroundings.

With his attention split between three separate entities — the swarm headed towards Gentle Criminal and La Brava, the swarm near Hound Dog, and himself — he was having a hard time focusing on anything at all.

Izuku was, however, happy to discover that his control was stronger with his own body than with his other clones. As such, he was somewhat confident that he could carry out his designated role as the show started up. Speaking of…

"Dude, Midoriya," Kirishima said from Izuku's left. "I know that you know how to handle yourself when you're in control of your bugs, but are sure that you're gonna be alright up here?"

Izuku snapped his head to the left, eyeing Kirishima. "What do you mean? No wait, Aoyama already went back down to the stage right? With the rope around his waist right?"

Kirishima raised an eyebrow at Izuku's question. "Wouldn't you have noticed something like that? You know, with all your bugs and stuff?"

"Kirishima…"

"Right, right. Um yeah, he already did. But that's besides the point! I'm worried that you're going to trip and fall down later on during the show!"

Izuku found himself aimlessly gazing back into the crowd below. "Invisible barriers with a knockback effect?"

Kirishima furrowed his brow. "Midoriya?"

"Huh?" He jerked his head again to the left. "I mean, uh… what were we talking about?"

"He means my ice," Todoroki said from the right. "They won't have any railings. I suppose that I see what he's trying to say—"

"Hey hey hey!" Sero interrupted, coming up from behind the three of them. "Cut the chit-chat and focus! The show's about to start!"

Sero gestured for Koda on the walkway to their left. "You got that Koda?"
Koda responded with a thumbs up, placing his hand on the power breaker in preparation.

"Lights!"

The room dimmed, and the stage curtains opened to reveal the silhouettes of the rest of 1-A on stage. It didn't take long for the lights to flash back on, signalling Bakugou to erupt an explosion and for the show to start in earnest.

"Thanks for coming today!"

And with that, Izuku had a brief moment's respite. His next role wouldn't be for a little bit, so he delegated a bit more of his attention back to his clone in the forest.

The clone was watching the flamboyant display that Gentle and La Brava were committing themselves to, and Izuku was genuinely surprised that the villains held themselves together despite the fact that they had been caught in the act. Izuku decided that he'd play to their tune, and let them know verbally through the bugs.

Under his breath, he muttered the same words. "Your move, Gentle Criminal."

"And there you are again!" Kirishima turned yet again to the seemingly dazed Izuku. "What was that, Midoriya?"

Izuku himself flinched, realizing that he was speaking aloud yet again. He tried to play it off. "Umm…" he faced Kirishima, "huh? Nothing? Uh what?"

"You mentioned something about Gentle Criminal? Isn't he some infamous internet villain?"

"Uh…" Izuku gulped. "Maybe?"

"He is," Todoroki said. "I saw him on the internet one day." He tilted his head. "You're more distracted than usual, Midoriya."

"Man, Todoroki's right! You really are more distracted than normal," Kirishima said. "Are you experimenting with some strange form of daydreaming while you're standing up?"

"Dang it!" Izuku slammed his hands on the railing. And then he remembered where he was. "I mean, uh? Sure?"

"Oi!" Sero interrupted yet again. "What did I say? You're all gonna miss your cues!"

On the stage, Uraraka and Aoyama converged on each other, crossing the stage as the others danced. Uraraka took hold of Aoyama, using her quirk on him before launching him straight up into the air.

As he neared the ceiling, Aoyama let loose his quirk, shooting a myriad of lasers every which way. Izuku, on the other hand, utilized the bugs that he had waiting on Aoyama's costume and the bugs he had waiting up near the ceiling.

In an instant, Izuku positioned two bugs on each side of all of Aoyama limb's to aid in the maneuvering of his body through the air as he used his quirk. The silk-woven rope around his waist stretched upwards to the ceiling. Said rope was covered in a variety of bugs whose shells glimmered and shined in the light.

At the end of the rope itself, Izuku had a whole swarm of bugs gathered. Wasps and mosquitos and
all sorts of fliers made the shape of a star, making it seem as if Aoyama was being carried along by it.

Of course, the aforementioned fliers were only the inner layer of the bugs. The outer layer — similarly to the length of the rope — shined and shimmered with much more physically appeasing bugs. They ranged from ladybugs to butterflies and moths of all kinds.

Side note: Thank Melissa again for getting me all these exotic bugs on such a short-term notice. Like the Christmas Beetles, for one. And especially the Rosy Maple Moths, even if they are tiny. They look nice.

Suddenly, everything else went off at once. Todoroki created his ramps of ice, Sero launched his tape strands, Koda had his birds fly off, and Momo shot off her streamers.

Once Uraraka did her part and used her quirk on the rest of the dancers, Izuku's bugs and Koda's birds lifted them up into the air, allowing them to continue dancing while others were led to Todoroki's ice ramps.

"Alright Midoriya!" Kirishima exclaimed, patting Izuku's back. "Let's go!" Kirishima jumped off the catwalk and onto Todoroki's ice, beginning to spread out the glitter and dust he had stored within the sack he was holding.

Izuku followed suit, being mindful of the edges of the ice as he ran along the ramps. He grabbed onto two other ropes attached to two of his classmates (Hagakure due to her ability to refract light, Mineta because he begged) and ran across the ice, stringing them along at speeds higher than his bugs could handle. Of course, most of his actions by this point were merely on autopilot, his mind elsewhere paying attention to clones still doing their own jobs.

And before he knew it, he was watching Gentle Criminal and La Brava escape along with their newfound ally of Spinner.

Of course, it also took him a bit to notice that the concert had its end as well — he ended up figuring that out once he found himself almost tripping off of the ice. In that aspect, Izuku was thankful that Kirishima was close enough to catch him before he actually could fall.

The show had ended, and the room had mostly emptied out by the time Izuku had gotten down to the ground floor. After everything that had happened in the last half hour, Izuku was just happy that he had gotten through it relatively unscathed and without any consequences.

Well, except for Kirishima's brief rant about having to pay attention to where he was going while precariously running across unaired scaffolds fifty feet up in the air. But right after that Togata and a smiling Eri came by to talk about the performance, so Izuku supposed that the two encounters balanced things out.

Izuku had to do a double take at the latter attendee of Aizawa's group.

"Will you please take your swarm back now, Midoriya?" Aizawa asked.

Izuku looked at Aizawa, and then back at the aforementioned swarm clone. His eyes widened by a
fraction, with one eye twitching with realization. He had forgotten about QA in all the commotion.

"Um, sure," Izuku muttered. The swarm clone — QA, Izuku mentally corrected himself — slowly glided over to Izuku's side.

Aizawa let out an exasperated sigh. "Finally. Oh, and I'm adding more to your punishment time, Midoriya. I mean, leading Joke over to my location? Really?"

"Oi!" Ms. Joke retorted with a slight elbow jab at Aizawa. "He's just messing with ya, kid! I mean, you saw his face when we caught up with him! He was so happy to see me!"

"I was not," Aizawa added with his usual monotone voice.

Ms. Joke giggled, wrapping one of her arms around one of Aizawa's own. "Come on Shota, stop being a sourpuss! Come on, let's go! I saw a dumpling stall on my way here!"

Aizawa held his ground, not giving in to Joke's insistent tugs. Eventually, he glared over at Izuku before speaking. "You need to learn when to rest and let us take up the task for once, Midoriya."

Izuku nodded, already knowing that Aizawa was referring to the incident with Gentle and La Brava. "Of course, sensei."

"Good," Aizawa said. He stared just a bit longer before adding, "And good job on the four-way multitasking. I expect to see more of it during your training exercises."

Eventually, Aizawa let out another sigh and allowed Ms. Joke to drag him off to whatever place she was dying to go to.

Izuku merely stared on as he watched their retreating backs. "Did Aizawa actually compliment me for once? Wait, no. More importantly, did my ploy with Ms. Joke actually work?"

"I'm... not entirely too sure on that, actually. Your teacher and Joke have a weird way of interacting with one another."

Izuku slowly turned his head towards the swarm clone to his side. "And where were you exactly, during that fiasco out in the forest?"

"I'm sure that you already guessed. I was keeping Aizawa and Joke company. I'm not sure about your teacher, but Joke really enjoyed my commentary of what you guys were doing up there while the performance was going on."

Izuku shook his head. He began pushing on his wheelbarrow again before responding back. "So. Let me get this straight. You were just floating there, talking, while a villain was trying to break into UA?"

"Basically."

Izuku exhaled a rather extensive stream of air. "You can disperse now, you know."

"I know," QA responded, though she showed no inclination of doing so. "Though, I've got to say Izuku; I didn't expect you to try out my advice so quickly."

"As in, you purposely left me to my own devices?" Izuku asked, switching over to speaking with QA through his thoughts.

"You needed to experience it yourself, that you're capable of multitasking. Of course, what you did
today can vastly be improved upon, but it's a good start."

"I really don't think that I should be thanking you. You almost let a villain onto campus, after all.

"My point still stands."

Izuku sighed. "Look, I— It's almost eleven, isn't it? Shoot! Mind talking in my place to anyone we stumble upon? I need to check in with 1-B. Their show's about to start."

"Why should I? Don't you want to practice more of your multitasking abilities?"

Izuku didn't give QA the pleasure of a response and went straight to his bugs. He gathered another swarm clone together and guided it towards the auditorium that was scheduled to hold 1-B's play. It didn't take him long to stumble upon his friends.

"Are all of you ready for your show?"

"Izuku! You're here!" Manga exclaimed. He was dressed up in some ren-faire clothing that Izuku found rather aesthetically pleasing. Further back in his mind, Izuku ignored QA's slight utterance of reminiscence or something.

"Of course I am. Didn't I say that I was going to watch?"

"But you're here as your bugs and not your real body?" Pony asked. She herself was dressed in some plate armor — as expected, it was designed with Pony's role as the valiant steed in mind.

"Oh, wait. Let me guess," Setsuna added. "Still stuck cleaning up that mess you made during your class' concert?"

"Yeah. It's a bit more than I expected. Todoroki's ice went all over the place too, so there's that. We'll be lucky if we're done before the beauty pageant."

"You'll be fine," Setsuna said.

Izuku looked at her and realized that her clothing was rather normal, quite unlike the medieval getup that the rest of 1-B was wearing.

"I'm guessing that you don't really need to wear anything special since you're the dragon, huh?"

"You betcha! I'm so stoked! I'm gonna be moving the whole thing around stage by myself! I'll be just like a dinosaur!"

"Except for the fact that you're going to be a fire-breathing, winged reptile," Manga said. "And I think I remember something about terodactons technically not being dinosaurs?"

"Pterodactyls and pteranodons," Setsuna corrected. "All pterosaurs. And you know what I mean! A dragon's still a giant hulking reptile! It's the aesthetic that matters!"

"'Oi!" A voice interrupted them. "The show's starting up soon! Who are you three talking to!? It better not be some stuck up 1-A l—"

Monoma appeared around the corner. His words dying in his throat as he fell upon the scene.

"Oh."
"Hello Monoma!" Pony exclaimed. "It's only Izuku! He came to watch the show!"

Monoma blinked. "Well, umm… I— Well of course he did! I wouldn't expect anything less of Midoriya! Unlike the rest of his class, he knows quality entertainment when it's in front of him!"

"Right, right," Manga said. "And you're entirely comfortable still being there. You can go if you want."

"You can't be insinuating that I fear 1-A at any capacity, are you?" Monoma said. "I would never succumb to such a lowly state! It's just that Midoriya is on a whole other level than his class! He emits this… aura of superiority! Superiority over his class, that is! Not our class—"

A giant hand suddenly wrapped around Monoma's waist and pulled Monoma away. "Stop bothering them," Kendo's voice came around the corner. Her head peeked into view from aside corner, her eyes widening upon seeing Izuku.

"Oh, Midoriya! I thought that your class was busy with cleanup?"

"We are. But that doesn't mean that I can't send one of my clones to watch your play, you know?"

"Sweet," Kendo said. "Well, I'll leave you all to it. I've got to make sure Monoma here is under control before the play starts." Her other hand came into view and waved a farewell. "See you all later! Bye Manga!"

"Bye Kendo / Itsuka!"

"Alright!" Setsuna exclaimed. "So, we're all still up with hangin out after this, right? There's a whole bunch of stuff we can do with the festival going on."

"I still need to find some way to drag Mei into it though. She's insistent that she won't spend one second pried away from her 'babies.' Not with all the eyes on her work."

"Favors would work," Pony said. "She will be but all — all but guaranteed to join us for sure!"

"That's still like a… Plan F option though," Manga countered. "No way are we resorting to favors as a main option."

"Mhm, That's a Plan Z option for me. Anyways, I—"

Suddenly, a loud yell broke him away from his bugs and back to his body.

"What do you mean he almost fell up there!" Momo exclaimed. Izuku checked, and she was around a few hundred feet away from his current position. It didn't take long for Izuku to refocus on his clone.

"I think that I need somewhere to hide, guys. Somewhere that's Momo-proof, preferably. Have any ideas?"
"Ah! Midoriya, Ryo! Come in, come in, take a seat. The brew's fresh and steaming."

Izuku readily took his seat before Nezu while Hound Dog let out a gruff "No thank you," and continued standing.

"Splendid," Nezu said. "Now, before we all begin, does anyone want any tea? It's Chaga this time around."

"Chaga?" Izuku asked. "Sure. I haven't been able to try it for myself. Mushroom, right?"

Nezu, already pouring Izuku a cup, shook his head. "Right you are, Midoriya! I must say, I'm rather happy that you've grown into such a tea fanatic. It seems as if my skills of corruption are just as strong as they were during my days in the labs."

Izuku blinked at the statement, though eventually shrugged it off as yet another example of Nezu's chaotic nature.

"Tea, Ryo?"

Hound Dog shook his head.

"Shota?" Nezu turned towards Aizawa, who merely gave the principal a glare.

Nezu harrumphed. "You people are no fun. Why can't you all be like Midoriya and I? Tea is one of the few human inventions that I give my utmost praise to. And I will admit, tea drinking will change your life unlike anything you've ever seen!"

"Nezu," Hound Dog interrupted. "I don't mean to offend, but I'd rather get to the topic at hand? As in, Midoriya's reckless and uncalled for actions earlier this day?"

Oh, right! Of course!" Nezu exclaimed, turning to face Izuku. "How was the fight, if you don't mind me asking? I haven't yet had the chance to review any of the footage."

"Footage?" Hound Dog questioned, though he was subsequently ignored as Izuku began to talk.

"It was… okay," Izuku admitted. "I was doing pretty decently against Gentle Criminal and La Brava. Gentle surprised me with his quirk, though I'm not sure if La Brava was able to use her's."

"And Gentle's quirk, what was it?" Nezu asked.

"I highly doubt that you wouldn't know, or at least have a very confident assumption."

Nezu nodded. "It was Elasticity, correct?"

Izuku chuckled. "Of course."

"Right." Nexu took a sip of his teas. "So, I suppose the question is, Midoriya: How did they escape?"

Izuku grimaced. "I guess… It was somewhat my fault. I should've restrained them or something. It would've made it harder for them to escape with Spinner."

"Spinner?" Nezu asked. "As in Shuichi Iguchi? Stain's supposed disciple?"

Izuku nodded. "The very one."
"Huh. Interesting. Very interesting. That may make things… difficult for us. We'll have to set up some investigations to see just how strong their alliance is."

"I'll be right on that," Aizawa said.

"And I wouldn't expect anything less," Nezu said as he turned back towards Izuku. "So, they escape. Partly due to your lack of knowledge of their capabilities, and the sudden interference of Spinner. That, plus the difficulty you were having splitting yourself among four separate—"

Nezu paused mid-sentence. He set his eyes off to stare straight at Izuku, and a grin slowly found itself forming on his face.

Izuku was used to instances like this happening, considering how often he spent talking to Nezu. Still, he felt obliged to speak out his mind. "Uh… sir?"

Nezu tilted his head. "Three?"

...

...

"Oh… Oh. Crap."

"Crap indeed."

"Ohoho! What's this? Three? Not four separate streams of consciousness? And yet you had three of your swarm clones out there? And you were able to carry out your tasks at your musical performance early this day. Now… that's quite interesting. Mind telling me how that can be?"

"Uh… no?" Izuku could feel sweat forming along his forehead.

Nezu let out a manic laugh. "Oh, yes! A mystery! Don't worry Midoriya. I'll have you figured out in a bit. I'd like to have another talk then, if you don't mind."

"Hold on, Nezu." Hound Dog interrupted again. "Midoriya's actions, remember?"

"We are talking about them, yes," Nezu explained. "Unless there's something that I'm forgetting to address?"

Hound Dog nodded. "Yes. The consequences for his actions. For facing a villain unattended and on school grounds."

Nezu chuckled. "Consequences? What for? If anything, I'm proud of what Midoriya was able to accomplish today. It's not as if it's anything surprising. As I said, he is allowed to go outside the usual boundaries we place around our students. I thought that I already explained this to you?"

"But he was being reckless!" Hound Dog said. "I don't care how experienced he is! He's a student! He should've called us!"

Before either Izuku or Nezu could respond, Aizawa spoke up. "I'm going to go on patrol. Inform the police about the news on Spinner and Gentle Criminal, as well. You three can continue your pointless conversation without me."

"Pointless?" Hound Dog exclaimed. "Midoriya's your student!"

Aizawa stopped just before he reached the door to the office. "And he's a capable one. He can take
care of himself when the need arises. Besides, I have all of his new punishments planned out already."

Aizawa then proceeded to walk out without another word, much to the dismay of Hound Dog.

"Nezu—"

"Please, hold that thought, Ryo." Nezu leaned forward in his chair and then took a sip of his tea. "I did inform you what type of task you were getting into when I placed Midoriya under your care, correct?"

"Well yes—"

"Then you should know that Midoriya is quite a problem child. He won't take no for an answer when he wants something to be done. He will escalate a situation when he sees it required as so, and he will do it as long as his actions further his goals. He will be reckless, he won't be concerned with his own well being when in the midst of things. And he will protect those he cares for to his death. However, that isn't to say that he isn't capable as an individual. Vigilante, UA student, and an unofficial agent of the Police Force, and in extension the Hero Public Safety Commission. As I'm sure you can infer from this, this status gives him an odd sort of autonomy. And it proves that he isn't the average student. Isn't that right, Midoriya?"

"Uh…" Izuku scratched his head. "I… don't know?"

"Exactly!" Nezu said. "Do you understand now, Ryo?"

"But—"

"I'm not trying to undermine your judgement. I'm just trying to make you understand this in a way that'll put it all into perspective. Like a present with a nice gaudy bow, if you will. Understanding what can be considered as normal with Midoriya, and what may be something that he can't quite handle, will help you in the long run. Is that satisfactory knowledge to know, Ryo?"

Hound Dog blinked.

"Of course," Nezu took a sip of his tea, "you are just as much involved with Midoriya as Shota is. And such, that means that you have the privilege and authority to dish out whatever punishment you deem fit. Does that clear up any misunderstandings you had?"

"Yes. It is," Hound Dog responded, his teeth showing passed his smile. "Thank you for clearing that up."

Izuku, meanwhile, felt a little part of himself die on the inside. "Really, Nezu?"

"It is what it is," Nezu said with one of his manic laughs.

"Now the both of you, shoo! I still have to watch the footage of the fight. And I like doing so in peace and quiet."

"Gotcha," Izuku said, finishing his tea and standing from his chair. "Night Nezu! Night Hound Dog!"

And with that, Izuku left the office, leaving Hound Dog and Nezu alone.

"About that footage," Hound Dog said, "how exactly did you—"
“Shoo, I said!”

Chapter End Notes

And there we have it! Action scenes will be a little off for a bit, so prepare for more fluff and stuff and revelations and suspicions next chapter!

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