Switched and Scattered

by kazzarole

Summary

After taking care of a minor situation at the mall, Todoroki and Midoriya find themselves under the influence of a frustrating quirk—and now they have to navigate the social deep water that is Class 1-A without anyone catching on to the fact that they’ve accidentally switched bodies.

Not to mention that this has caused the lines between 'friend' and 'crush' to become hopelessly blurred, and Shouto is pretty sure that this whole situation can only end in disaster.

Notes

lord help me im back on my bullshit

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

Things are pretty okay, he thinks. It’s hard for him, sometimes, to realize that--but at the moment, walking home from the hospital after spending the afternoon with his mom, it just sort of hits him.

It’s weird, because Shouto is so used to violently swinging anywhere from intense disassociation to borderline panic that he doesn’t usually let himself get wrapped up in everyday life. It would be too overwhelming for him, usually--but currently, walking in the fresh air, bones pleasantly sore from easy personal training that morning, Shouto realizes that he’s fine. He’s okay. He might even say he’s happy.

Sure, the events that transpired in Hosu weigh on his mind, but it’s not unbearable--everyone had made it out all in one piece, and if anything it just made him feel closer to his classmates. And that’s nice, because he’s never really had close friends before. It’s strange suddenly having so many people care about his well-being, but it’s not an unwelcome experience. And thanks to the people he’s surrounded himself with, he’s found that he’s more comfortable with himself than he’s ever been. More sure of the choices that he’s making. Thinking about it that way leaves a warm, content feeling in his gut, leaving no room for the usual anxiety.

That’s probably what influenced him to do it--he doesn’t usually go out of his way like this, but he also doesn’t want the good vibes to leave quite yet. Besides, he’s been meaning to find a gift for his mother, anyways. That’s what good, attentive sons do, right? They buy gifts?

Shouto realizes it was probably a mistake to decide to visit the mall on a Sunday when it’s at its most crowded, but he was walking right past it anyways, and now that he’s walked through the front doors he’s feeling committed. It shouldn’t be too hard, really. Wander around a bit, find a nice gift, then continue walking home.

Except Shouto completely underestimated the sheer size of the place, and forty-five minutes later he finds himself standing in the middle of the food court, more than a little bit lost and still without a gift.

Maybe he should have thought this out some more--impulsiveness is decidedly not his strong suit. He thought that maybe walking by the stores would cause something to pop out, but he keeps second-guessing himself before making any purchases. He’s been talking with his mom for a few weeks, but he still comes up at a loss on what she might like. Maybe something warm? The weather’s getting colder, now, but--well. She’s also got an ice quirk. He doesn’t think her ice affects her quite like his own does, since his body only gets frostbite when he overuses it, and he doesn’t think he’s ever seen his mom use her quirk since he was little. So maybe, instead, she’d like something to do? A hobby? She’s mentioned reading a novel a few times. What kind of books does she like? Does this mall even have a bookstore? He might have passed by one, already, but all the outlets are starting to blur together and--

And someone runs directly into him, colliding softly with his back.

He recognizes the nervous stutter before he even turns around to face him. “A-ah! Oh my gosh, I’m so sorry, I wasn’t watching where I was going, I’m sorry--oh! Todoroki!” Midoriya’s face slips easily from slight panic to comfortable surprise, and not for the first time Shouto marvels at how expressive he can be. How do all those emotions fit on his face? “What are you doing here?”

“What, am I not allowed to go shopping?” he retorts easily. There’s something about Midoriya that makes him feel like he can get away with being cheeky.
“Wha--no, that’s not--I mean,” Midoriya sputters, waving a hand around. He’s gripping his phone, loosely, and it buzzes in his hand. No wonder why he ran directly into him. “Todoroki,” he finally manages, sounding exasperated. “You know what I mean. I thought you usually visited your mom on Sundays.”

Shouto nods, and tries to ignore the skip in his heartbeat over the fact that Midoriya knows his schedule, because really, it’s common knowledge at this point, calm down. “I just got back from visiting her, actually,” he explains, and Midoriya’s phone buzzes twice in quick concession. “I didn’t want to head home yet, so I figured I’d try to find something to bring her next week.”

“Oh! That’s nice of you. Did you already have a gift in mind?”

He shakes his head. “I was hoping to run across something around here.” He doesn’t mention the fact that, really, he just doesn’t know his mother all that well. He tries not to beat himself up about that too much, since it’s the whole reason he’s been spending all his weekends with her. It helps that Midoriya’s here--he always makes it easier to think positively.

Midoriya’s phone vibrates again, but either he doesn’t feel it or he’s ignoring it. “If that’s the case, do you mind if I walk with you? I was headed towards the bookstore, I was--uh--I was going to pick up some new comics that came out,” he says, a bit sheepish. And honestly, Shouto’s not sure why he’s embarrassed, since having a nerdy hobby is better than having no hobby at all. Personally, he spends most of his downtime sleeping.

“The bookstore sounds nice,” he says, grateful to have an excuse to spend more time with Midoriya--who’s phone continues to buzz in earnest. Shouto frowns and points to the offending object. “Are you going to answer that, or…?”

Midoriya looks at the phone as if it had suddenly materialized in his hand. “Oh! Right, sorry, that’s just--it’s probably just Uraraka. I was texting her and Iida before I ran into you,” he says, unlocking his phone with a swipe and then quickly typing out a message. “She was just wondering where I went.”

Shouto just nods, patiently waiting for Midoriya to finish up, dipping his hands into his pockets and feeling a bit awkward. It only takes a moment for Midoriya to send off the message, but an impossible second later his phone buzzes again, and his eyes dart from the screen to Shouto and back to the screen. “Uhm,” he starts, a light blush darkening the freckles across his cheeks. “Uraraka says she doesn’t believe that I ran into you, and she wants--er, that is, can we--do you mind if we take a photo together real quick?”

Shouto’s gut instinct is a flat ‘no’, because despite all the progress he’s made towards being okay with himself, it’s still really hard to look in a mirror sometimes. Most of the times. But Midoriya does this thing where he bites his lower lip, and instead of a hard refusal what comes out is a soft, “Sure.” 

Damn it.

Midoriya practically beams, and at least Shouto can take comfort in the fact that his smile is so bright it’ll definitely blind anyone who looks at the photo. And the next thing he knows Midoriya is squished up against him, one arm lazily wrapped around his waist to pull him closer, and wow Midoriya is really warm, and fuck he really did not think this through.

“Say cheese!” Midoriya says, holding the phone above them. And then he taps the button, and the store behind them explodes.

Shouto feels the heat before he feels anything else, blowing past his ears and blowing his hair in wild directions. And then he feels Midoriya tense beside him, the arm that had been wrapped loosely around his waist shoving him down to the ground just as a thousand shards of glass fly
past his head. His ears ring, and it’s hard to hear anything past the deafening noise, but when he
turns his head to his right Midoriya’s mouth is moving so he just nods his head to agree with
whatever he’s saying. He trusts his judgement.

And then Midoriya is pulling both of them up on their feet, and in his dazed state it’s really hard
for Shouto to not get distracted by the muscles in his arms. Instead, he busies himself by rolling his
jaw, popping his ears, and--ah, that’s a lot better. The ringing is still there, but it’s faint, and now
he can properly hear the chaos around him.

He takes a moment to assess the damage, mentally patting himself down for injuries before
glancing over Midoriya to do the same. He seems fine, eyes already trained on the store that
housed the explosion, eyebrows furrowed in concentration as he takes in the scene.

As for Shouto, the only thing that really hurts is his ears, thanks to Midoriya’s terrifyingly fast
reaction time. The broken shards of glass just barely grazed him. Other than that, he distantly notes
that he feels… Warmer than usual. He doesn’t think about it too hard, since Midoriya did just have
his arm wrapped around him and they are standing in the middle of a burning food court. It’s
probably nothing.

“Todoroki,” Midoriya snaps, drawing his attention. “I don’t see any signs of a villain around, but--
well, we can’t use our quirks, we don’t have hero licenses yet, but we can still--”

Shouto doesn’t even let him finished, just cuts him off with a curt nod as he runs for the building,
dragging Midoriya behind him. People are evacuating the area, pushing past them, and the overall
panicked noises in the area are making him antsy to spring into action. Except he barely makes it
within ten feet of the opening before suddenly ice comes shooting out of his right hand, unbidden,
shards piercing the floor and freezing up his arm.

And then Midoriya shouts, “Todoroki!” and two thick hands wrap around his ears and a warm
body slams into his back and pushes him to the floor just as another explosion permeates the air
around them.

The ringing is unbearable now, echoing in his head and leaving no room for thoughts to form, but
he feels hot and cold all at once, his body temperature fluctuating wildly. Unthinking, he raises a
hand--cold--to his ear, accidentally thumbs against whoever tried to cushion him from the blast
and feels frost crystallize against the skin.

The hand shoots away from him, and suddenly Shouto feels lighter, and--oh, Midoriya was on top
of him, that explains a lot. He heats up at the thought, and normally he can just will the flames
away but suddenly his entire shoulder catches fire and he can’t seem to put it out. Embarrassment
feels just as hot in his throat as it does on his shoulder until the ringing in his head quiets down
enough for logical thought to return, and Shouto thinks, this isn’t normal , and then, there’s a
reason for this.

There’s another explosion in the building in front of him--weaker, this time, but he still feels the
heat wash over him. Or maybe that’s just his quirk? He’s not sure how much of the fire around
him is his own and how much has spread from the building, but if it’s anything like the ice that’s
quickly spreading from his right side then it’s definitely a cause for concern.

Shouto tries to stand up and makes it only to his knees before his own ice traps him to the floor.
He slaps at it desperately with his left hand, both ice and fire crackling in his ears as he tries to free
himself. If he had a moment to consider his emotions at the moment, he might recognize how
terrifying it feels to have no control of his quirk--but currently Shouto has a lot more on his mind,
the first thought being ‘Midoriya’ and the second thought being ‘where the fuck did he go?’
His question is answered a moment later when strong arms wrap around his waist once again, and Shouto’s stomach lurches uncomfortably when they tug—hard. It’s enough to snap Shouto away from the ice he had encased his entire right side with, and as soon as he’s free Midoriya practically drags him away from the scene before he can trap himself again.

And strangely enough, as soon as they make it a decent distance away, the temperature fluctuation stops, and suddenly Shouto can put out the fire that has already burned away the entire left half of his shirt. He looks up to stare at the boy currently dragging him away from the wreckage, and his breath catches in his throat—he looks worn already, and it’s barely even been a few minutes since the first explosion. There’s scuff marks across his cheeks, and dark patches of skin that are rubbed red from where it had contact with Shouto’s fire.

*I burned him.*

The realization causes him to fling himself out of Midoriya’s arms, trying to ensure that he can’t hurt him anymore than he already has, but as he steps backwards away from him Midoriya reaches out and grabs him by the elbow.

“You can’t go back there,” he huffs, probably misreading why Shouto was so anxious to get away. “I… I think someone’s got an amplification quirk, or something, and it's causing everyone to go haywire.”

That… Certainly makes sense. At least now there’s a plausible reason for Shouto’s power to backfire like that. Numbly, he nods, turning his head to look at the damage.

And then Midoriya tries to push past him to try and get into the building again, and Shouto’s brain helpfully supplies him a mental image of Midoriya jumping into the building and simultaneously breaking every bone in his body—and before he can even think to swallow the bile in his throat he reaches out to grab Midoriya by the elbow. “Wait--what do you think you’re doing?”

“It’s fine,” Midoriya says, and Shouto tries very, very hard not to think about all the times Midoriya has said that same thing before practically executing a perfect swan dive directly into danger. “At least, I think so--I didn’t activate my quirk at all earlier and I managed to get you out of there, so I mean--I can still feel it, like it’s amplified, but as long as I don’t purposefully use my quirk I don’t think I’ll break anything.”

That doesn’t really do much to relay Shouto’s fears, but he supposes he doesn’t really have a choice. He trusts Midoriya to take care of the scene, even if he doesn’t necessarily trust him to take care of himself. Plus, it makes sense--Midoriya’s quirk is one he has to intentionally turn ‘on’, while Shouto can’t really turn his off. His body is constantly fluctuating temperatures whether he likes it or not.

He lessens his grip on Midoriya, who flashes him a determined smile. “Call for backup. In the meantime, I’ll grab the people stuck inside the store and bring them to you, yeah?”

Shouto barely gets out, “Sounds like a plan,” before Midoriya goes running off into the burning building once more.

The first time he runs into the building is the most nerve-wracking, but moments later he comes out noticeably unbroken and with two victims over his shoulders, so Shouto lets himself breathe a sigh of relief. Midoriya gently transfers the two of them over to Shouto’s care, and he delicately frosts over as much of the burnt skin as he dares without his hero’s license. He doesn’t really think he’d get in trouble for helping where he can, but they are still in training, and it’s not like he hadn’t learned a thing or two that night in Hosu.
The second time he runs out of the building, he’s only carrying one person over his shoulder, and
seems to be rolling some kid with some sort of shield-bubble quirk out of the store like he’s in a
human-sized hamster ball. The bubble diminishes as Midoriya closes the distance between them,
and once again Midoriya transfers the victim over his shoulder to Shouto before running back in.

The third time he runs out of the building, Shouto is starting to wonder exactly how many people
were in the store when it blew up. He’s carrying three people this time--two over his shoulders
and one in a bridal carry. The man in his arms is crying furiously, both hands covering his mouth
as smoke comes curdling out from the spaces between his fingers, sticky and black like tar. When
Midoriya hands him over, he says, “Explosive burps,” and Shouto creates ice cubes in his hand
for the man to suck on.

The fourth time, Shouto is starting to worry about how divided his attention is, trying to tend to the
wounds and emotional stability of several panicked civilians. It’s not even like he has his first aid
kit on him, since he’s not wearing his hero suit. Hell, he’s barely wearing his regular clothes--his
own fire made sure of that. He should probably be more worried about that than he is, but again,
he’s pretty preoccupied.

Midoriya comes out again with a woman in her arms, and she seems frantic--which isn’t really a
surprise, all things considering. It’s hard to hear her at first, but as Midoriya scrambles to get her to
safety her words become clearer in the air. “--and he didn’t mean to do it, I swear, he’s just--old,
and confused, and scared, p-please understand! You can’t take him to jail, he needs to go back--
the nurses will know what to do, so please, don’t--”

Shouto can see Midoriya tense--a squeeze, too gentle to be a hug but enough to be reassuring.
“It’s alright, ma’am,” he says, voice impossibly soft in comparison to the cuts and scrapes he’s
sporting. “He’s in good hands. I promise to do everything I can for him.” When he turns to
Shouto, he’s already ready for him, and their fingers brush as Shouto takes the woman into his
own arms.

She gasps, loudly, the second both of them have their hands around her, and for a moment Shouto
swears he feels electricity zip straight through his fingers, up his arms, and then down his spine--
and then the woman collapses, a dead weight in his arms.

He glances up at Midoriya, unable to mask the panic in his eyes, and he finds it mirrored in
Midoriya’s own. She didn’t just…? No, she’s still breathing. He can feel the slight exhale run
through her body as he holds her. It calms him down, just a bit, but--

*Did you feel that, too?* He wants to ask, but Midoriya’s already turning away.

“There’s still one more,” Midoriya says in lieu of an explanation. And then he’s gone.

The store is looking incredibly worse for wear, and if Shouto didn’t doubt his own power at the
moment he’d go over and freeze the ceiling in place so it didn’t collapse. Besides, he’s got a small
crowd full of health liabilities to take care of. So he does his best to curb the feeling of dread he’s
suddenly feeling, and attempts to calm the anxious group he’s been left in charge of.

Midoriya makes it out of the building just before the door frame collapses.

Shouto prepares to receive one last hurting civilian to his ever-growing herd, but instead of
bounding straight back to Shouto like before, Midoriya takes a sharp turn left, away from
everyone else. Shouto squints, and--and it’s hard to tell with the distance, but Midoriya’s veins are
glowing, bright and and colorful and familiar, and it is absolutely a bad sign.

*I think someone’s got an amplification quirk, or something.*
That’s probably him, then. Shouto bites at his tongue, anxious, but there’s nothing to be done about it. Midoriya made the right call to distance themselves from everyone else. And if he happens to break any bones, well—it’s not as if it’s a sacrifice Midoriya hasn’t made before, on an even less important situation than this.

Shouto can’t dedicate too much of his attention on the two of them, but it doesn’t stop him from trying—Midoriya looks desperate, mouth moving a hundred miles a minute as he talks to the man in his arms, body still glowing with destructive power even as he sits completely still.

It’s taking a toll on him, Shouto can tell—thankfully, it’s not long too long after that the pros arrive on the scene. The building had barely been burning for less than ten minutes, and the remains of the fires are stomped out by Backdraft himself before it can spread to any more stores. The eight survivors Midoriya had hauled out of the building and placed under Shouto’s care were rolled away on stretchers to have full body assessments done in the ambulances. Shouto just barely manages to convince them that he doesn’t need medical attention, and only manages to do so by promising both to put on a new shirt and to get himself checked out after the situation is properly taken care of.

Meanwhile, Midoriya sits alone with the old man with the amplification quirk, still glowing, frantically yelling at everyone to stay back—and, unfortunately, it takes another ten minutes for another ambulance to arrive, this time manned by a team of quirkless nurses. By the time they had managed to take over the situation, Midoriya looked like an egg about to burst, body visibly shaking with tension as he tried to reign back control of his body.

Shouto didn’t dare approach him until the man was safely carted away, no matter how badly his legs wanted to disobey him and run directly to Midoriya’s side. He looked absolutely wrecked—burnt and strained, scrapes running up and down his arms as if someone had taken a cheese grater to him. His body was still glowing brightly, destruction coiled tightly in his limbs, straining to break free—but his lips were pulled back in a smile, teeth flashing as if he didn’t have a worry in the world.

The man with the amplification quirk was finally taken back under hospice care after several grueling minutes, and when the coast was clear Shouto wasted no time closing the distance between the two. Wordlessly, he tentatively placed cold fingers on the back of Midoriya’s neck, and is pleasantly surprised when he feels Midoriya vibrate under the touch.

“Thanks,” he murmurs, knocking his head slightly back to lean into the cold. Shouto hums in response.

“You look tired,” Shouto tries, because he knows they need to talk about something but he isn’t exactly sure how to get to that point of the conversation.

Midoriya glances at him, a wobbly smile pulling at his cheeks. “Do I? ‘Cause I feel like I could go run a marathon right now. God, I’m practically— I feel like I’m buzzing. Is that weird? I feel like that’s weird. It’s not like normal— it’s not adrenaline, I don’t think. Like… You know how Kaminari sometimes chews on his phone charger after he pulls an all-nighter? I imagine it’s like that. Like my battery was completely drained and then recharged in a millisecond. My tongue feels all tingly. So do my fingers.” As if to emphasize his point, he brings his hands up to wiggle his fingers, but to Shouto’s dismay his entire hands are shaking.

Really, Shouto’s face is probably going to get stuck like this with how deep he’s frowning. He would have thought that was already the case if it weren’t for the boy in front of him being the direct cause of most of his smiles, these days. “Midoriya, I think you’re going into shock.”

Midoriya just snorts. “You’re just saying that because I just mentioned Kaminari.” Shouto’s
eyebrows furrow, but it does nothing to deter Midoriya. “Really, I’m fine. I think this is just… I had to hold my quirk for so long without it breaking, or else I would have imploded so hard I’d have flown through the roof, you know? Now I got all this leftover quirk juice.”

Lord, bless him with patience. “There had to be a less disgusting way to phrase that sentence.”

“Mhm. Maybe so. Here, can I just--” Midoriya takes a shaky hand to reach for the cold one on his neck, moving Shouto’s grip from his neck to his face, and Shouto tries not to feel too smug about how his hand just engulfs the entire span of freckles across his cheeks. Midoriya just slumps against him, gripping at Shouto’s wrist, and now with multiple points of contact Shouto can feel how Midoriya’s body is practically vibrating against him. “God, that’s so much better.”

Shouto’s suddenly very glad that Midoriya is pressed up against his right hand instead of his left, because he’s starting to feel distressingly warm. If Shouto hadn’t known any better, he would have tried to pin the heat on the man with the amplification quirk--as it is, he’s having a very hard time not burning Midoriya. Again.

…Again.

“Midoriya, I--” His mouth suddenly tastes like ashes, so he coats his tongue with an entire layer of ice and lets it drip down his throat, desperate to get rid of the taste. He wants to apologize, but he isn’t even sure where to begin. “You should let one of the paramedics look you over,” he says instead. Coward.

“Hm? Yeah, probably,” Midoriya agrees, and wow, he must really be feeling it if he agreed to that so easily. “That can wait though. I think those guys over there want to talk to us first.”

“Who?” Shouto turns his head without moving his hand from Midoriya’s face (he can feel Midoriya’s breath against his palm and it’s doing all kinds of illegal things to his heart rate), and sure enough, there’s a group of professional-looking adults quietly talking to each other and side-eyeing the two of them from where they stand next to the last of the paramedics. When they catch Midoriya and Shouto looking in their direction, one of them starts to walk over.

“Detective Naomasa!” Midoriya exclaims, gently pushing Shouto’s hand out of his face. “What are you doing here? This is hardly a crime scene.”

“Happened to be in the area, is all,” he explains, adjusting the hat on his head. “When I heard someone drop your name over the coms, I figured I’d stop by and have a look. I take it you two had quite the part in this?”

Shouto bristles, already assuming the worst, but Midoriya beats him to the punch before he can jump too far and reach the natural conclusion. “Right… We, uh--we aren’t gonna get reprimanded for this, are we?” He asks, still visibly jittery from the aftereffects of his quirk.

Detective Naomasa is quick to shake his head. “No, not from how I understand it, at least. This isn’t like what happened in Hosu. There will still be paperwork to do, of course, but since you both were under the influence of a quirk, you’ll hardly be blamed. It’s not like you hurt anyone, either.” Shouto lets out a quiet sigh of relief, and his breath comes out frosty.

“Oh, then--that’s good!” Midoriya smiles, but his face is kinda twitchy, and Shouto can see him subtly try to shift his weight from foot to foot. “I’m glad to hear that, I was getting a little worried,” he rambles. “By the way--uh, the man with the amplification quirk--what did he…?”

“Right. Turns out the poor man was senile, and managed to escape the watch of the nurses in the hospital he was in. It’s all been taken care of, now, and after a quick check up he’ll be sent back
under their care. I’m sure they’ll be more careful in the future.”

Midoriya nods thoughtfully, and—okay, if he doesn’t get looked over by one of the nurses real soon, Shouto is going to drag him over there himself, because Midoriya’s fidgeting is starting to make him feel antsy. “Is that everything?” Shouto asks, hoping to curb the conversation.

Detective Naomasa hums for a moment, and then nods. “Sure. The paperwork can wait—all we really need is a few signatures and a quick rundown of your quirks before you leave. We’re trying to organize a quick list of who was affected and how, in case it pops up later. For now, why don’t you two get fixed up?”

Oh, good, finally. Shouto nods, and turns to push Midoriya towards the paramedics, but Naomasa stops him by the shoulder before he can escape. “By the way,” he adds, a grin widening his cheeks. “You two did good today. Thanks for your help.”

Midoriya positively beams from the praise, and Shouto can’t help but feel a little infected by it as well.

They both get looked over and get the okay to head home—Midoriya got the brunt of the burns, as well as a few minor holes on his back where a victim with a porcupine quirk couldn’t control his quills, and Shouto’s biggest injury was actually to his ears after the initial explosion went off. Luckily, according to the nurse who looked him over, the constant ringing he hears should fade away by the end of the day.

“Hey, we’re still on for sparring tomorrow, right?” Midoriya asks as he leads them out of the building.

Shouto nods. Quirkless sparring has been a regular occurrence between the two of them ever since the Sports Festival, and while it was weird and awkward at first, it really helped them feel out the beginning of this strange friendship they seem to have found themselves in. Shouto finds that he looks forward to their meetings after school each Monday almost as much as he looks forward to seeing his mother on Sundays—it’s become such a crux in his schedule that he isn’t really sure his week would feel complete without it. Plus, it’s more time to hang out with Midoriya, which comes with some obvious benefits. “Of course.”

Really, the confirmation shouldn’t have been anything he didn’t already expect, but Midoriya gives him such a wide smile that Shouto can see his gums. He’s got a dimple on his left cheek when he smiles like that, and Shouto’s fingers itch to poke it, which he quickly restrains.

“Cool!” He chirps, and then—“Oh, wait, Todoroki!” He gasps. “We never got to make it to the bookstore. What about your gift…?”

Shouto shrugs. He really is too considerate. “It’s not like I don’t have the rest of the week.”

Midoriya tugs at his lower lip with his teeth—distracting—as if considering something. “Well,” he says slowly, “next time you go out looking, I could come along if you’d like. Maybe I can help pick something out. Besides!” He adds quickly, nervously. “I never did get around to buying my comics.”

Shouto’s brain jumps from the words ‘hanging out’ to ‘date’ so fast that he doesn’t remember the thoughts that got him there, and he mentally beats his brain with a stick, because it’s not. Midoriya’s just being kind. Shouto coughs, trying to compose himself. “I’d like that.”

Midoriya shoots him another award-winning smile, and Shouto’s legs might as well be made out of wet spaghetti. Luckily, Midoriya is turning away and waving goodbye before Shouto can make
too much of a fool of himself. “Alright, then, see ya tomorrow!”

Shouto watches him as he goes, and only turns to head home when he’s nothing but a little green dot in the distance.

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When Shouto wakes up the next morning, he’s cold.

That… Sucks. He really, really hopes he isn’t getting sick. He never really feels the temperature around him unless he’s overusing one of his quirks, but sometimes when he gets feverish his body has a hard time fluctuating between hot and cold, and his quirk acts up in strange ways. If he’s already feeling the chill in his room like this, it must mean he’s coming down with something, which Shouto really can’t afford to deal with right now.

He must have kicked his covers off in the middle of the night, because his legs are all tangled up in cloth, and that’s weird, too, because he’s usually not a restless sleeper. Shouto groans, bringing his hands to rub the sleep from his eyes as he tries to kick himself free, except--

Shouto’s eyes practically fling themselves open as he pats gingerly at the smooth skin around his left eye. The nice, smooth, unscarred skin around his left eye.

He shoots straight up, suddenly feeling very awake, and his stomach lurches in place as he suddenly realizes that he’s not lying on his tatami mat on the floor, but is rather sleeping a few feet higher than he ought to be. He feels displaced, and while it’s way too early to be making several unsettling realizations all at once, he still makes another one: this isn’t his room.

All Might stares down at him from every conceivable corner, the bright colors of posters and action figures harassing his eyes in the morning light, forcing him to squint. Well--not just All Might. As Shouto blinks and tries to take in the room around him, all the while attempting to still his rapidly beating heart, he notices heroes of every caliber hanging from the walls. The place is practically a shrine.

Hesitantly, Shouto stands up from the bed, and as the blurriness of sleep finally fades from his eyes, he makes one last realization. He can see. He’d almost forgotten what it was like to have two working eyes, and now suddenly, as he stands up, his depth perception is all off and he practically stumbles in place. He can see. Through both eyes.

Desperately, Shouto glances through the room, searching for a mirror of some sort, and then proceeds to trip on his way over to where one hangs on the wall. When he finally steadies himself, he glances up, and--

He stares directly into the reflective green eyes of Midoriya Izuku.
Chapter 2

Sorry it took so long! I ended up getting sick, and then I went on a small vacation, but I'm back with more of that good good content. Hopefully future chapters won't be so far apart!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

To say that he's panicking is underselling it, really. It would be more accurate to say that both fear and confusion have made lovely acquaintances in his stomach, leaving no room for whatever dinner Midoriya must have had last night, and Shouto has to swallow very, very hard before the first thing he does is vomit all over Midoriya's limited edition All Might figurines. Luckily, years of practice in the art of emotional stonewalling have prepared him for this day, and Shouto manages to regain what's left of his composure and his sanity before he loses them along with the remains of his stomach contents.

A rather pale-looking Midoriya blinks at him through the mirror, and Shouto regards him warily, taking in the sight. He's wearing a loose sleep shirt and a pair of boxers, and his hair is an even bigger mess of curls than it usually is. He's a mess of bruises and burns, a remnant of the events that happened at the mall a day before, though Shouto notes that despite the familiar soreness in his muscles he doesn't feel much pain. Mostly, he just feels tired. And anxious. And a little bit sick to his stomach.

Experimentally, Shouto lifts an arm, and the reflection does, too--right, that's how mirrors work. Of course. Slowly, he pinches at the skin in the crook of his elbow, and frowns when he's rewarded with the sharp pain that follows. He takes a moment to poke and prod at Midoriya's face, feeling soft skin give beneath the calluses of his crooked fingers, freckled flesh wrinkling at the edges where Shouto applies pressure. It certainly feels real enough.

So... It's not a dream. Probably definitely a quirk of some kind, which means he's stuck like this for the time being.

Taking a deep breath to center himself, Shouto shoves all immediate emotions to the back of his mind with practiced ease. Now isn't the time to panic, as much as he would like to--he needs to figure out what his plan of action is.

A quick glance to a clock on the bedside table reveals it to be way too early in the morning to even consider school quite yet; it's barely even five a.m., and the sun is just barely peaking out through the curtains. Does Midoriya always get up this early? Shouto's hardly any different, but that's only because of his father; he would gladly sleep in if he thought he could get away with it.

A little bit of curious button-poking reveals that his alarm is set to go off in fifteen minutes, and yes, Midoriya really does seem to wake up with the sun each morning. Of course he'd be a morning person--Shouto's not sure why he's so surprised. Turning off the alarm, he briefly entertains the idea of going back to bed and hopefully letting this whole situation fix itself before the next time he wakes up, but quickly dismisses the thought. It's tempting, but it's hardly a reliable course of action. Besides, this is the first time Shouto's had the chance to see Midoriya's house, and he can't say that he's not curious. He's not sure he could manage to fall back asleep at all, even if he truly wanted to.
Still, Shouto feels a little bad poking through Midoriya’s things without his permission, so he figures a good first step would be to try and contact him somehow. It’s not too far of a stretch to assume that, since he woke up like this, Midoriya is probably… Inhabiting Shouto’s body. Right.

Shouto takes both hands and rubs them against his face, stifling a groan. The smooth flesh against his left eye practically taunts him. This is so weird.

Suddenly, anxiety grips at his heart like a vice--if Midoriya is at his house, in his body, then… His father…

Shouto swallows, his mouth suddenly feeling incredibly dry. It isn’t worth worrying about at the moment. From where he’s at right now, his hands are tied--it’s not like he could go running to his house to stop Endeavor from pulling anything. First of all, he’s not even sure where his house is relative to Midoriya’s, and second of all, he highly doubts that Endeavor would take kindly to All Might’s golden child showing up on his front porch at five in the morning. All he can do is trust Midoriya’s judgement and hope that Endeavor doesn’t spring the usual surprise training session on him before school.

Well, that’s not true--he can also at least try to send him a warning text. It’s not much, but it’s better than nothing, and they need to get into contact as soon as possible anyways. Glancing around the room, Shouto finds Midoriya’s phone plugged into the wall next to his bed, and he quickly unplugs it and swipes it open.

It’s there that he meets the first hurdle of what is undoubtedly going to be one of many, in what Shouto safely assumes is going to be a very, very long day: a passcode, four digits long. Shouto groans.

Alright, think. Shouto isn’t a people person, but he would like to think that he understands Midoriya, at least. And if the posters in his bedroom weren’t a big enough clue already, then his lock screen certainly is: predictably, it’s a picture of All Might. He’s flexing, smiling as big as always, and there’s a graphic near the top that reads “Plus Ultra!” in a bold font. So Shouto crosses his fingers and types in “All M”, and hopes for the best.

Of course, if hoping for the best were ever enough, Shouto would probably be a lot happier than he actually is. The phone vibrates in his hands, wiping the password, and prompts him to try again.

Maybe it’s a lot more generic than that? Perhaps he’s overthinking it--it’s likely that Midoriya’s password is something personal. Shouto quickly types in the digits to Midoriya’s birthday, trying not to think too hard about the reason why he just happens to have that information tucked somewhere in his brain.

When that fails, too, Shouto tries closing his eyes and letting his body type it in for him, as if Midoriya’s thumb could unlock the phone on instinct. He’s not even surprised when that doesn’t work, and in a fit of mild frustration he even tries to put in the digits for his own birthday. He’s almost relieved when the phone tells him to wait five minutes to try again, because he’s not sure what he would have done with the knowledge that Midoriya uses his birthday as his passcode.

Unfortunately, that means texting is a no-go. Not that it would have mattered anyways, because Shouto’s got a lock on his phone too, and he doubts that Midoriya would have any more luck than he did. They’ll just have to wait until they meet up at school before they can talk about their situation. It fills Shouto with dread, having to wait that long, but it’s not like there’s anything to be done about it.
Another glance at the clock. It’s barely been fifteen minutes since he woke up. Shouto pulls at his lower lip with slightly crooked teeth, unfamiliar in his mouth, and tries to come to a decision.

Getting ready for the day seems like a safe place to start. Even if school doesn’t start for several more hours, Shouto has no idea how to get there from here, and he could definitely use the spare time in the likely event that he gets lost. Besides, if he gets there early and manages to catch Midoriya before class starts, then it’s all for the better.

Unfortunately, that means Shouto is going to have to go through Midoriya’s things, which he isn’t particularly fond of. Midoriya’s room is cluttered, full of clothes and notebooks and knick-knacks of all kinds, and it’s all incredibly personal in a way that Shouto craves to know about; he wants to see this side of Midoriya--wants to see every side of Midoriya--but... Not like this.

It feels like he’s cheating.

He knows that Midoriya isn’t a private person by nature, but he’s also keenly aware that for all that he wears his heart on his sleeve, he’s also got his fair share of secrets that he keeps closely guarded and carefully kept. Things in his past that he carefully tiptoes around when Shouto tries to mention them in passing, causing his tongue to stutter and his muscles to tense until they both ease their way out of the conversational minefield. Bakugou, for one, as well as whatever his obvious connection with All Might is. Both subjects aren’t exactly subtle, and the knowledge that there are secrets there isn’t much of a secret itself, and yet whenever the subject comes up Midoriya gracelessly avoids any of the obvious implications by changing the topic.

Shouto wants to say that it doesn’t bother him, but it does. Sometimes it feels like Midoriya knows more about him than Shouto does himself--both due to Shouto blurring out his tragic backstory before the Sports Festival and to Midoriya’s frighteningly perceptive nature--and he craves to have that kind of trust confided in him. But Shouto isn’t one to pry, and he respects Midoriya too much to snoop. The last thing he wants to do is ruin this delicate friendship he’s found himself in by accidentally offending his first--and best--friend. He can’t risk losing it.

And even though Shouto severely doubts Midoriya would be dense enough to leave his secrets laying around in his room for anyone to see, that still doesn’t make him feel any more comfortable with the situation. He wanted the first time he visited Midoriya’s house to be because Midoriya wanted him there, not because of some misplaced quirk. He feels like he’s intruding.

But Midoriya, above all else, is understanding, and Shouto keeps that thought in the front of his brain as he sifts through the room to find a fresh pair of clothes. He’s probably just as anxious about pushing these new boundaries as Shouto is. At least they’re in this together.

After shuffling around the room awkwardly for a bit, Shouto manages to open the closet and find what he hopes to be a clean uniform, and he quickly changes out of his sleep shirt to replace it. He spends an uncomfortable amount of time trying to decide if it’s worth changing out of the boxers Midoriya slept in, but ultimately decides against it--Midoriya’s privacy is more important to him at the moment than propriety.

That, and Shouto isn’t quite sure he’d live through the process. Hopefully they get this whole mess situated before it becomes an issue. (Until then, he’ll just be very careful about how much water he drinks.)

After tying his tie and flattening it down his chest, and avidly avoiding thoughts about exactly how toned Midoriya’s pectorals are, Shouto cautiously makes his way out of Midoriya’s room and out into a hallway. After ducking his head both ways and confirming that he seems to be the only one awake, he begins to carefully nudge a few other doors open, looking for a bathroom. He finds it on the second try, and then he begins the impossible task of taming Midoriya’s curls.
Shouto isn’t exactly sure how Midoriya styles his hair, but after several minutes of trying to flatten it down with a comb, he has the sneaking suspicion that Midoriya doesn’t even bother with it in the morning. The comb only made thing worse, and now it’s even poofier (and softer, **fluffier**) than it was when he began. Resigned to his fate, Shouto musses up his hard work by tousling his hands through the dark roots, bringing it back to its messy bedhead form.

He spends a little bit more time doing so than strictly necessary, but really. Midoriya’s curls are unreal.

Shouto’s halfway through with brushing his teeth (with an All Might toothbrush, no less--where does he even get this stuff?) when he hears footsteps walk past the bathroom door, followed by the tell-tale sign of a lightswitch being flicked on, and Shouto stops mid-brush.

That’s… Probably Midoriya’s mother. Shouto takes a moment to reflect on all the times Midoriya’s talked about his homelife, and pulls a blank on any other family members that might be around. He’s never mentioned siblings, and as far as Shouto can tell his father hasn’t been in the picture for a long while, so it’s really the only logical conclusion.

Shouto tries to swallow his nerves, and almost swallows his toothpaste with it. He was hoping to sneak out of here without having to interact with anyone, but he’s beginning to doubt that he’ll be able to pull that off. What’s he supposed to do? Should he tell her that he’s not actually his son? He can’t even begin to imagine how that conversation would go--there’s no way to anticipate how she might react. And the last thing Shouto wants to do is make any lasting decisions before he gets the chance to talk to Midoriya. His best bet is to tuck tail and make a beeline for the door as soon as he can.

Shouto takes another minute for himself in the bathroom to ease his mind, finally spitting out the toothpaste in his mouth that he almost choked on. After being sure to nab Midoriya’s backpack and his phone from his room, he leaves the hallway, quickly eyeing his new surroundings to find some sort of exit. When he spots Midoriya’s bright red sneakers by a door, Shouto sighs in relief.

He’s halfway through tying his laces (these shoes are **really** comfy, no wonder Midoriya likes them so much) when he hears a sleepy voice call out from what he assumes to be the kitchen.

“Zuku?”

Shouto’s pulse slams so forcibly in his throat that he nearly chokes. His brain force restarts in an attempt to think of some sort of normal, everyday response, and ends up on some sort of mental blue screen of death. When the silence stretches past a pregnant pause and well into worrying territory, Midoriya’s mother peaks her head around the corner, and--oh.

She looks an awful lot like Midoriya. If there ever was a doubt that she was Midoriya’s mother, her appearance certainly takes care of it. She lacks the distinct freckles, and her eyes aren’t nearly as green--dulled with age, most likely, as the soft crow’s feet around her cheeks suggests--but the plump baby-face and distinctive hair color are both there. Plus, she’s short. Shorter than Midoriya, which is saying something.

“Going out on your morning run already?” She asks, eyebrows creased with worry. “You haven’t even eaten breakfast yet!”

“Er,” Shouto begins, and then immediately coughs, because **woah that’s Midoriya’s voice**, and that’s **really** unnerving. “Yes,” he tries, willing his voice not to crack.

Midoriya’s mother gives him a Look, her eyes flicking over him briefly. “... In your school uniform?”
Shouto suddenly feels very, very small. “...Yes.”

She seems to mull something over for a moment before giving way to a long-suffering sigh, resigned to her fate. “We talked about this, Izuku,” she says, and Shouto panics because he really has no idea what she’s talking about and he has no idea how to continue this conversation without giving himself away. Luckily, she follows up with, “Come on, I’ve made breakfast already—I can’t very well send you off on an empty stomach,” and disappears back into the kitchen.

For a long moment, Shouto seriously considers running out the door like some sort of coward. Not only has he gotten caught acting strange, he’s also successfully roped himself into even more interactions with Midoriya senior, and he kinda wants to bang his head against a wall. He would, but it’s not his head to bruise, and the last thing he needs is a headache; so Shouto slips off Midoriya’s red jordans and makes his way into the kitchen.

And then the next thing he knows he’s being sat down at the table with a plate of rice and fried eggs placed in front of him. Dumbfounded, all Shouto can do for a solid minute is stare at the food. It smells really good.

“You better make sure to eat all of it, mister,” Midoriya’s mother says from where she stands at the counter, seeming to prepare another meal. “I know how you get when you hyperfocus on training, but forgetting to eat isn’t going to help anyone.”

“Oh,” Shouto replies, unsure of how to respond. Does Midoriya’s mother always make a point of making sure he eats in the morning? Is this normal for them? He supposes that makes sense; why else would she be up this early? Unless she has a job she has to get to, which would mean Shouto is taking up time in her morning routine. Should he apologize?

Midoriya’s mother glances at him when Shouto doesn’t move, and the brief eye contact startles Shouto into action—he won’t be expected to talk if his mouth is full, after all. He shovels a decent mouthful of egg down his throat, barely registering the taste.

“... Is something the matter, Izuku?” She asks, turning her full attention to Shouto, who winces at the worry clouding her features. “You’re acting… Strange, this morning.”

“’M fine,” he responds, swallowing a mouthful of rice. And then, in order to deflect, “This is good, thank you.”

It’s obviously not the most convincing Midoriya impression, but it seems to pacify Midoriya’s mother for the time being. She smiles, and Shouto notes with fascination that she has that same dimple that Midoriya has on her right cheek. “Of course, hun! Anything for my little hero,” she says, sending a wink in Shouto’s direction.

… Endearing. Midoriya’s mother is so endearing. As awkward and unsure as Shouto feels in this situation, it’s hard to feel anxious around her; she reminds him so much of Midoriya that Shouto can feel the tension physically melt away from his shoulders.

He can’t remember the last time he had a family meal as nice as this one. (It’s a silly thought, since Shouto’s the only one eating right now.)

As he finishes up the last of his breakfast, Midoriya’s mother clicks her tongue to gain his attention again. “Take this with you, dear,” she adds, placing a bento on the table in front of him. “It’s a little rushed, but I know you’re in a hurry to get to school this morning.”

“You didn’t have to go out of your way to do that,” he replies on impulse, before clamping down his teeth on his traitorous tongue, two seconds too late. Midoriya usually brings his own bento to
school, but for some reason Shouto always assumed he made them himself. That might not be the case, which means he just said something weird to Midoriya’s mother again.

“Nonsense,” she says with a dismissive hand wave. “You know I enjoy making them for you when I can, pro hero serving your lunch or not.” Oh, so they’ve had this conversation before. Shouto’s learning a lot about where Midoriya’s persistent nature comes from. “Besides,” she continues, “if it’s too much to eat you can always share it with your friends. I’m sure they’ll appreciate the gesture.”

Shouto really hopes Midoriya fully appreciates the oddity that is his mother, because Shouto’s not sure he’s ever met anyone quite like her and he’s only known her for about twenty minutes. “Alright,” he agrees, slipping the bento into Midoriya’s backpack where it won’t get tossed around. “Thank you.”

Midoriya’s mother smiles so brightly for a second that Shouto isn’t quite sure he hasn’t found himself looking in the mirror again. He feels his own lip twitch upward in response, and then Midoriya’s mother outstretches a hand and ruffles his dark curls, and Shouto freezes.

He didn’t mean to--he didn’t want to, but he wasn’t expecting it, and it’s been so, so long since he’s received such a soft and gentle touch from a parental figure; his own mother has yet to reach out past a light, almost-accidental brush of hands, despite all the time they’ve spent trying to grow reacquainted with each other. And that’s fine, because Shouto doesn’t want to push her, doesn’t want to hinder all the healing that she’s slowly gained over the years, but this. Midoriya’s mother reaches out like a teasing touch is natural, is normal, and maybe for anyone but Shouto it would have been--

--but her hand rakes against his scalp and Shouto flinches, every muscle in his body tensing in the recoil, breath caught in his lungs like a prisoner of war. Violent and burning. And Midoriya’s mother takes one look at him, eyes widening with realization, and breathes, “Oh.”

And in an instant her hand pulls away, hanging in the air between them as if she wants to reach out again. There’s a moment where the two of them do nothing but stare, wide-eyed and hesitant, caught in a limbo where words cease to exist.

When Shouto finally gains enough presence of mind to open his mouth and apologize, Midoriya’s mother beats him to it, and the words blindside Shouto into another dimension entirely. “Is it bad again?” she asks, voice small and knowing.

And Shouto doesn’t even know where to begin dissecting the implications behind that sentence, so he doesn’t. Instead, he turns his gaze away towards the door and says, “I think I should get to school,” and then he’s out of his seat and slipping Midoriya’s ridiculous red shoes back on so fast that he might as well have Iida’s engines in his legs.

The door is halfway open when Midoriya’s mother finally calls out for him again. “Izuku?”

Turning around, Shouto meets the eyes of the small woman standing behind him, her fingers anxiously fiddling together like pieces of two different puzzles. “I love you,” she says, and her voice is quiet and strong.

Something heavy makes its home in Shouto’s gut. He tries, he really does--someone as amazing and kind as Midoriya’s mother deserves to hear as much. But the words are unfamiliar and foreign in both his throat and his heart, and all he can manage is a curt nod before leaving the apartment and closing the door behind him.

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Todoroki has ridiculous bed head.

Really, Izuku thought he had it bad, but Todoroki’s hair is practically pink with the way both sides seamlessly blend together in a birds-nest of a hairdo. It looks like neapolitan ice cream, without the chocolate. It looks like someone dropped a piece of strawberry shortcake on the ground and tried to salvage it. It looks kind of like how an existential crisis feels. Izuku would know, because he’s having one right now.

The mirror fogs over, frost creeping up over the edges until Izuku’s new reflection blurs from his view.

To say that he’s having a weird morning isn’t cutting it, but frankly the dictionary Izuku’s got stored away in his head for moments such as these is conveniently lost to the library fire that is his mind. Or maybe that’s actual fire? Izuku’s not sure; he’s managed it three times already and he’s barely been awake for ten minutes. He’s almost glad that Todoroki apparently sleeps without a shirt on, except that very discovery was the cause of at least two of those spontaneous combustions, and Izuku’s not really sure how much more he can take. He feels very, very faint.

It started like this: waking up slow, consciousness dripping into his brain at a comfortable pace as Izuku desperately clung to the last fleeting moments of sleep. Awareness finally breaching the drowsiness just enough for Izuku to think, ‘huh, my pinky toes feel kind of weird’, before rolling over for only his face to press against the cool japanese-style tiles beneath him.

And even half-dazed as he was, he managed to think a few coherent thoughts, the main one being this: he was not in his bed. He was not in his room--he could tell, because his room was carpeted, and this room was not, and he would know because he has gracefully woken up many times before with his face pressed unforgivingly against the ground. He’s a pretty restless sleeper, after all, and it would take much more than a bed to contain him and his fitful dreaming.

The point is that realization had hit Izuku as hard and as fast as one of Bakugou’s fists, and sleep had never been as forcefully ripped from him as it had in that moment.

And when Izuku had opened his eyes to survey his surroundings, he had almost screamed in panic when he realized that his eyes weren’t working. At least, his left eye wasn’t working--after closing his right eye to get a full feel for the extent of the damage, he quickly determined that his eye had somehow suffered from some sort of external cornea damage. He couldn’t see much of anything through it, save for the suggestion of light and shadows and the muted colors around him. Looking through it was kind of like seeing spots, as if he had pressed his palm against his eye hard enough for the pressure to form stars.

Instinctively, he tried to wipe away the blurriness in his eye as if the damage could be rubbed away, and he froze in place when his fingers were met with the foreign feeling of rough, calloused skin.

And then Izuku threw his hand away from his face as far as he possibly could, so hard that he felt his shoulder pop in its socket. Because there was no way. No way.

Except crawling off of the tatami mat and towards the nearest mirror had only confirmed his suspicions, and now Izuku finds himself in Todoroki’s body without the faintest idea of what to do about it. As it is, he’s having a very hard time trying to get his thoughts to stop committing mutiny in his brain, and it certainly doesn’t help that he seems to be stuck with both of Todoroki’s quirks on full blast. Because that’s what this whole situation needed: more fire.

Izuku’s going to give Todoroki an aneurysm before he even has the chance to give him his body back, and he’s going to feel really, really bad about it.
Okay, no, calm down. This is fine.

It’s definitely not fine, but years of living in a constant state of anxiety has made Izuku very adept at lying to himself, so he manages to calm down his beating heart anyways. After taking a few frosty breaths, Izuku steadies himself, and manages to make the world stop spinning around him for a moment.

First order of business: stop staring at the mirror like a dead fish. Gawking at Todoroki’s half naked body isn’t doing anyone any favors right now, least of all his own rising blood pressure. He really needs to put a shirt on, but he’s also still a little bit on fire, which may be a bit of a problem. Actually, Izuku is extremely lucky that he hasn’t set off any alarms with all the smoke that he’s putting off. The last thing he needs is an inanimate object screaming at him first thing in the morning.

Izuku makes sure to crack open a window, anyways.

Alright, that’s better. Not great, but he’s getting there. He seems to have at least stopped frosting over the entire right side of his body, which is a start; the ice has melted along with Izuku’s initial panic, and he no longer feels frozen, both emotionally and physically speaking. Izuku has long since suspected that Todoroki’s emotions have a direct impact on his quirk, but it was always hard to tell when Todoroki treats his feelings with the same sort of distance and distaste one would treat a particularly stinky sock. And as happy as Izuku is to have some sort of confirmation to backup all the evidence he’s gathered over the past few weeks, it also means that Izuku is well and truly boned.

Todoroki has had years worth of finesse and control over both his quirk and his emotions. Izuku has had neither of those things, with the added bonus of hyperactive tear ducts to prove it. It’s nothing short of a miracle that he’s not crying right now.

Well, at least maybe then his tears would have put the fire on his shoulder out. Hesitantly, Izuku raises a cold hand to smack at the flame, smoldering out the last of the embers before they can flare back up again. At least that seems to work, if only a little bit. It’s probably safe to put a shirt on now, as long as Izuku keeps a handle on his emotions for the time being.

Todoroki’s room is clean and bare. It’s not hard to find what he needs without too much digging, which Izuku is grateful for because he knows that Todoroki values his privacy above all else. It’s bad enough that Izuku has already touched his scar without his permission, but it can’t be helped; he’ll just have to be extra careful about where he puts his hands. He may be inhabiting his body, but that doesn’t mean he has to push more boundaries than necessary.

Izuku carefully changes into Todoroki’s school uniform as quickly as he can (leaving boxer shorts as they are, thank you), trying his best not to gawk at his new body (holy hell is Todoroki ripped). He struggles with Todoroki’s tie for an embarrassing amount of time before finally giving up; he has no idea how Todoroki manages to get it so flat and neat all the time, but Izuku hopes he won’t be too embarrassed when he sees the ugly knot he’s managed to make of it. He hopes Todoroki is having an easier time of this than he is.

… Oh god, Todoroki is probably in his body.

Todoroki probably saw his room.

Don’t catch fire. Don’t catch fire. Don’t catch fire.

He catches fire, and burns through the shirt he just put on.
After another session of trying to keep the flames under control and making a mental note to offer to pay for Todoroki’s clothes, Izuku makes his way towards the mirror once again and flattens his now dual-toned hair. It’s a soothing process, and Izuku likes the way Todoroki’s hair feels in his fingers, soft and silky, though he can’t help but wish he was doing so with his own body. He wonders exactly how different it would feel compared to his own overly-calloused fingers, and if Todoroki would lean into the touch or if he would shy away. It’s a thought process he has caught himself thinking about more and more often, and while normally he’s quick to tamp it down, Izuku allows himself to indulge just this once, only if because the situation calls for it.

He can’t help it. Todoroki is just… so pretty.

Alright, enough of that. Izuku’s starting to feel more than a little creepy. He finishes separating the white from the red in his hair, and turns to find Todoroki’s things before heading out of the room.

… Should he try to unlock Todoroki’s phone? He thinks about it, but he has no idea where to even begin with the four-digit passcode. His lock screen doesn’t give him any hints, either; it’s just the generic background that the phone originally comes with. There’s a few alerts on the screen that reveals that Todoroki hasn’t looked at the class group chat since yesterday, but besides the time (6:27 am; school starts a little more than an hour from now, and it seems he’s slept in), the phone doesn’t do much to give him useful information. Izuku pockets it, and then heads for the door.

He’s just about to slide it open when he remembers where he’s at. Forget the anxiety about swapping bodies with his best friend and crush; he’s currently in Endeavor’s home. Izuku feels frost creep up his leg and ice drip across his tongue.

How is he supposed to act in this situation? The last thing he wants to do is get Todoroki in trouble with the man—he’d never be able to live down the guilt. But surely Endeavor would catch wind that something was off, and Izuku isn’t even sure if he wants to lie to him, as terrible as he is; but he also doesn’t want to make any decisions before talking to Todoroki, especially on the off-chance that the truth would get him in even more trouble than lying would. He just feels… Stuck. Frozen, quite literally.

He’s just about to contemplate jumping out the window when he sees a shadow begin to pass by the paper door. It stops before bypassing Todoroki’s room completely, and then there’s a gentle rasp as they knock their knuckles against the frame. “He’s not here,” a gentle voice calls out, snapping Izuku out of his fear-induced daze. “He was called out of town in the middle of the night last night for some emergency meeting in the next city over. Don’t know how long he’ll be gone.”

“Oh, thank god,” Izuku breathes before he can stop himself, surprising himself with how deep his voice suddenly sounds. That’s going to take some getting used to.

The shadow seems to consider this before a moment, and then suddenly the paper door is slid open and Izuku makes an undignified ‘eep!’ noise from the back of his throat. The woman--Todoroki’s sister?--regards him warily from behind her glasses, and then asks, “Alright, what did he do this time?”

“What?” Izuku manages, feeling cornered.

“Father. What did he do?”

“N-nothing,” Izuku stammers, truthfully.

Todoroki’s sister squints at him for a moment, disbelieving, then nods slowly. “Alright,” she says, not sounding fully convinced. “It’s just… I know he’s been especially hard on you lately,
Shouto,” she continues, her voice growing small and unsure. “You know you can talk to me if you need anything.”

Izuku takes a moment to look at her; really look at her. While she doesn’t look incredibly similar to Todoroki, the resemblance is definitely there, what with the bits of red sticking out of her otherwise white hair. Her face isn’t as sharp and angular as Todoroki’s is, and her gaze not nearly as piercing, but she carries herself the same, as if she has the weight of the world on her shoulders. She maybe looks like what Todoroki may have looked like if he hadn’t been forced to scrub away all the soft, vulnerable parts of himself, and the thought makes Izuku’s heart ache.

She seems so kind. Izuku is glad that Todoroki has some sort of kindness in this home, even after all the cruelty they must have gone through living under the same roof as that man.

So that’s why Izuku swallows the hurt he suddenly feels and says, “Of course,” because despite only just meeting her, he somehow just knows that Todoroki really does trust his sister. And when she responds with a sad little smile, he matches it with one of his own.

“I’m making breakfast before I head to work,” she says, continuing her way down the hallway. “Any requests?”

Actually, Izuku is feeling a little bit too sick to his stomach to even think about eating something quite yet. That, and he doesn’t think he can successfully pretend to be Todoroki for that long--the nerves are starting to get to him. “Thanks, but I really need to head out,” he tries, adjusting Todoroki’s backpack to fit on his shoulders.

Todoroki’s sister frowns, but nods as if she was expecting that answer. “Alright. Be safe today,” she says. It sounds an awful lot like ‘I love you’.

Izuku nods, heading for the door so he can slip on Todoroki’s shoes. “I will.” He hopes it’s the right thing to say.

It’s a relief when Izuku finally manages to make his way out of the house, and in the cool morning breeze he finally feels like he can breathe again.

It’s only when he makes it two blocks down the road that Izuku realizes that he has no idea how to get to Yuuei from here.

Chapter End Notes

next chapter: the boys finally get to talk........ and i finally get around to explaining why they decide the body swap has to be a secret ;0

thank you for all the lovely comments last chapter!! i hope this one continued to meet the expectations lol
Despite not knowing exactly how to get to Yuuei, Shouto makes it to class with plenty of time to spare, thanks to how early he had escaped from the Midoriya household that morning. It’s only just as he makes his first steps into the classroom—and hears a familiar voice call out to him—that he recognizes that he has made a horrible mistake.

“Midoriya!”

Oh, no. Please no. The thing is--he likes Iida, he really does. He’s a passionate guy through and through, and one would be hard pressed to find anyone that radiates as much genuine good-nature as he does. He’s friendly and doesn’t push boundaries even when he tends to get overly excited, and Shouto is proud to call him a dear friend even though he has the tendency to quickly wear Shouto down to social exhaustion.

It’s just that--he has so much energy. It’s practically insulting, especially this early in the morning when no one in their right mind should even be awake enough to consider existing. And to make matters worse, Shouto is currently inhabiting the body of one of the few people who can actually match Iida’s animated nature with stride. How exactly did Shouto fool himself into thinking that impersonating actual sunshine incarnate would be a good idea?

“Good morning!” Iida exclaims with a punctuated air chop, making his way over to where Midoriya’s desk sits--oh, right. Shouto should probably sit in his spot today, huh. Shouto does a quick glance over the room, and his heart drops when he realizes that he and Iida are the only ones present. Typical, but disappointing--there’s no chance of distracting Iida from what is no doubt going to be a very painful conversation on his part. “You’re here early.” Iida muses, ignorant of the wave of apprehension that threatens to sweep Shouto away. “Not that punctuality isn’t a good thing, but I must ask of the occasion.”

When in doubt, a half-truth is better than a full-lie. “I couldn’t sleep,” he says slowly, still trying to get used to the sound of Midoriya’s voice coming from his throat. “I figured I might as well make use of the extra time and head to class.” He tactfully avoids talking about how he may have freaked out a little and vacated the premises with no small amount of fervor when Midoriya’s mother tried to dote on him this morning. He shrugs, trying to force as much of Midoriya’s light-hearted personality into the action as he possibly can.

Iida’s face contorts slightly as his lips form a tight frown and his eyebrows furrow. “If I may ask, is everything alright?” He moves to stand closer to Shouto now, and Shouto can’t help but feel so small next to him. He isn’t used to this--his height usually allows him look Iida straight in the eye, but currently his eyes are level with Iida’s throat, and it’s more than a little daunting. “It’s important to get a full eight hours of sleep if you can manage it. Does this have something to do with the explosion at the mall you told us about yesterday?” Iida tags on, looking down at him
through his glasses.

“No,” Shouto responds, sounding entirely more curt than what is probably socially acceptable for anyone that isn’t him. It sounds wrong to hear Midoriya’s voice sound so standoffish, so he coughs into his hand and tries again. “I just woke up early. It happens to the best of us.”

Iida does this thing where his eyes glance up and down as if scouring for more information, eyes squinted with worry. Instinctively, Shouto tenses up, stonewalling his face and his posture in an attempt to stave off any incriminating expressions that try to creep into his body language. It’s something that has proved time and time again to be effective against his father, but Shouto should know better than to try and fool any of his friends--it’s been working less and less the more he opens up to them, but luckily they usually take it as a sign that Shouto isn’t willing to talk about whatever is bothering him. With the exception of Midoriya, they tend to give him space, which he greatly appreciates.

Except right now he’s in Midoriya’s body, and he might as well be blaring an emergency siren at full blast that screams, *I’m in distress!* Shouto curses himself and tries to relax his frigid stature, but it’s too late--Iida is too perceptive for that.

Iida opens his mouth to say something, but Shouto isn’t about to paint himself into a corner more than he already has. He flies off the seat of his pants with, “Would you mind looking over the homework from this weekend with me?” which maybe isn’t smart because he’s not even sure if Midoriya completed the homework after their fiasco at the mall the other day. It’s not the riskiest gamble since Midoriya is as high up in the class ranking as he is, but Shouto really shouldn’t be making assumptions at this point if he wants to keep this ruse up.

“... Alright,” Iida agrees after a long moment, seeming to think better of whatever he was going to say. Shouto breathes an internal sigh of relief. He sidesteps Iida so he can sit at Midoriya’s desk and pull out his things, and is mildly surprised when Iida reaches out and gives his shoulder a tight squeeze. Shouto snaps his gaze upwards to look at him and is met with a level-headed stare that feels entirely too heavy for Iida to be holding it. “I’d be happy to help,” he says, voice uncharacteristically hush, and the double meaning is not lost on Shouto.

Stiffly, Shouto nods. Should he smile? He thinks that Midoriya would smile in this situation--one of those reassuring smiles he gives when someone’s worried about him and he doesn’t want them to be. It’s usually all wobbly on the edges, and sometimes it doesn’t quite meet his eyes. Shouto would know, because he’s had that particular smile flashed at him more times than he can count. But Shouto isn’t Midoriya, and he isn’t sure that he could flash his teeth in a way that doesn’t make it look like someone’s holding him at gunpoint, so instead he settles for a small, “Thanks.”

He shuffles through Midoriya’s backpack, feeling that small amount of guilt that tends to show up whenever he goes through his things without explicit permission. Midoriya’s backpack is a lot like his room in the sense that it’s full of useful clutter, and Shouto is exasperated to find out that he carries no less than five notebooks on his person at all times. Luckily, they are all clearly labeled on the covers, so he finds the one with what Shouto hopes is the necessary homework inside, and flips it open.

He finds the homework easily enough after flipping quickly through the pages. The book is practically filled to the brim with information, words hastily scrawled and barely legible, with the occasional diagram to match. Midoriya even takes to writing down questions that he has at the top of the page, which Shouto greatly appreciates since he’s not sure he could fib any from the top of his head. He almost chuckles at that--even when he’s not around, Midoriya seems to be saving him from awkward situations.

He could probably learn a lot if he were to take time to actually study these notes, since
Midoriya’s so thorough he’s even got annotations to other sources at the bottom of the page, which is just ridiculous. But what really catches his eyes are the crude doodles in between the margins of the paper; there’s a few figures drawn that have some pretty similar features to him and a few of his classmates, and what he sees makes Shouto pause.

Iida, now leaning over his shoulder to take a closer look--a lot closer inside Shouto’s personal bubble than he has ever been before--takes a finger and points at one of the drawings. “Is that... Me?”

“Uh,” Shouto says, tactfully. “I think so?”

“How do you not know?” He huffs, giving Shouto a disbelieving look. “It’s in your notebook. Did you not draw these?”

Shouto is saved from the embarrassment of trying to explain himself, but only at the cost of another person invading his comfort zone. “Iida! Deku!” Uraraka chimes in, walking over to the two of them and leaning casually over Shouto’s other shoulder. “What’s up? What are you both looking at?”

Shouto bites the tip of his tongue--this is... Strange. Both Iida and Uraraka slot so easily inside Midoriya's space, so simple and so comfortable in a way that they almost never are with him. He... Isn't quite sure how to feel about this, actually. He thinks that maybe he should feel uncomfortable with them so close, or maybe even a little bit violated, but... It's nice. It feels natural, being so close to the two of them, practically sandwiched in between them.

Uraraka's hair brushes across his cheek, and it tickles, but he doesn't push her away.

“Midoriya has been drawing in his notebooks, it seems,” Iida responds, pushing his glasses back up his nose. “Which, needless to say, is not a very good use of class time, and hardly helps your notes look professional and clean. Although, I must say, I am flattered that you would take the time to draw me as a... Am I supposed to be a bear?”

Before Shouto can answer, Uraraka snorts. “Oh my gosh, did you draw yourself as a bunny? Deku, that’s adorable. And look! Is that me?” She points to another animal figure on the page that has her signature bob of hair and her pink cheeks. “Am I a duck? That’s the cutest thing I’ve ever seen. You’ve been playing way too much Animal Crossing. But that’s besides the point--Deku, I didn’t know you could draw!”

Neither did I, Shouto thinks, absentmindedly shrugging his shoulders in response. It seems like every time he turns around, Midoriya has found a new way to surprise him. What other hidden secrets does he have? Honestly, at this point, Shouto wouldn’t even be surprised if he discovered that Midoriya’s quirk was fueled purely by the power of friendship.

“Is that Todoroki as a cat?” Iida asks, gesturing to a kitten on the page with distinct half-and-half features. Shouto blinks so fast he thinks he may have strained an eyelid. Midoriya drew him too?

“That’s pretty fitting, actually. I like the ears.”

“Fitting?” He asks, looking at how closely the cat and the bunny are drawn together and trying not to think too hard about it.

“Yeah!” Uraraka exclaims, resting her elbow on top of Shouto’s head as she loosely gestures with her hands. “He’s a lot like a cat. Aloof and distant at first, but once he likes you he kind of hovers and tries to pretend that he doesn’t want your attention. He even does that calculated slow-blink thing that cats do. Plus, his hair looks soft.”
Something twists in Shouto’s gut. “Is that a bad thing?”

“Why would having soft hair be a bad thing?” Iida asks, genuinely confused.

“No,” Shouto amends, trying to swallow around a dry tongue. “I mean--the hovering. Do you not want me—er. I mean. I thought you guys liked him?” Or tolerated him, at the very least. Shame suddenly curdles in Shouto’s stomach. He definitely thought of them as friends, even if he was unsure of how to go about it at first, but maybe--

Uraraka flicks him in the forehead. “Of course we do, silly! Don’t make that face. It’s almost impossible to not like the guy with how much you talk about him when he’s not around.”

Shouto doesn’t even get a moment to feel relieved about Uraraka dismissing his fears before he feels his face heat with embarrassment. “Excuse me?”

“Uraraka has a point,” Iida says, talking right over Shouto’s confused sputtering. “Todoroki is a lot more open with you than he is with us. Which is fine, I might add. He’s a fairly reserved person, but I’m glad he feels comfortable enough to confide in someone, at least.” He averts his gaze for a moment, glancing around the room as a few more students trickle in for the day. “Although, I do hope he realizes that he can depend on us as well. I consider him a dear friend, but I’m not sure how to go about letting him know without overstepping my boundaries.”

Uraraka nods her head in agreement, and Shouto can feel the movement from where she’s leaning on him with her elbow. “Yeah, I get that. I can never tell if I’m bothering him or not, but I don’t think he’s the kind of person who would actively hang around people he doesn’t like.” She sounds resigned, as if she isn’t sure of the truth in her own words. “But I don’t know. Maybe he just puts up with us so he can hang around you, Deku.”

She says the last thing as if she’s trying to lighten the heavy topic with gentle teasing, but that—that’s not right. Suddenly Shouto is feeling so many emotions that he’s afraid he may have inherited Midoriya’s waterworks along with his body, because he kind of feels like crying a little bit. He likes Midoriya, sure, but—how had he messed up so badly to make his only friends doubt how much he cares for them? They mean just as much to him as Midoriya does, and the three of them together make such a brilliant support system that sometimes he forgets what it means to not feel happy. It’s stupid, and he knows he isn’t the most socially aware person, but it never occurred to him that they might be just as insecure in this friendship as he is.

His face feels tight in a way that is unfamiliar to him, and the back of his neck burns. He… He needs to fix this. He needs to let them know exactly how much his life has changed for the better ever since they broke all his walls down and let him clumsily integrate himself into their lives. He needs them to know how just being around in their presence is enough to lift his spirits, how they always push him to do better and be better by just telling him that he can. He needs them to know that and much, much more.

But he doesn’t know how.

“You don’t bother him,” he manages, because he can do that much. He can at least try to set aside their insecurities. He does his best to look the both of them in the eye as he talks, but considering that the both of them have taken to practically perching on either shoulder, it proves to be difficult. “You two… You should know how much he thinks about you. He’s afraid of messing up. But you make him happy, even if… Even if he’s not the best at showing it.”

To his left, Uraraka gasps quietly--something more like a sharp intake of air than a conscious breath. “He told you that?”
When Shouto nods, Uraraka breaks out into a grin that could rival one of Midoriya’s strongest, and when he glances at Iida he sees that the smile is mimicked. With a hearty chuckle and an exaggerated flap of his arm, he exclaims, “This is most excellent news!” with the same type of cadence one would express if they were just told that world hunger had been solved. “I’m incredibly glad to hear it! I shall have to let him know that his worries are unfounded. There is little he could do to diminish the respect I uphold for him, both as a fellow peer and as a close friend!”

Shouto suddenly feels warm for an entirely different reason, and if he was in his own body at the moment he would have chalked it up to his own quirk. “Don’t worry about it,” he says softly, enjoying the way his heart beats contentedly in his chest. “I’m pretty sure he already knows.” After all, who else could he let lean so close into him without his warning bells going off, without feeling the need to push them away? They exist in Midoriya’s space like they are meant to be there, and it’s surprisingly nice to feel that same warmth and acceptance—if only for as long as he exists in Midoriya’s body.

Maybe… Maybe when things return to normal, Shouto can do that for them, too.

He smiles, and Shouto can feel eyes crinkle around the edges, and Midoriya’s dimple reveals itself on his right cheek.

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There’s a lot of things Izuku didn’t expect when it came to inhabiting Todoroki’s body. The godforsaken itching is by far the worst one.

It didn’t start until he accidentally found himself on a bus that he was only seventy-four percent sure was leading him in the right direction. He had no phone, no one to talk to, and nothing to do except sit and wait. With nothing to distract him, he became increasingly aware of the prickling sensation surrounding his left eye, and while at first it was easy enough to ignore it, now Izuku is pretty sure he is going to go insane.

His scar itches. It itches so bad. He has half a mind to tear out his eye as if that would get it to stop, because Izuku has a resolve as strong as titanium and pain means little to him compared to the hell he’s currently being subjected to. But it’s not his eyeball, and Todoroki certainly doesn’t need to be more blind than he already is, so Izuku sits in his seat and squirms.

His fingers twitch in his lap. This wouldn’t be so bad if Izuku didn’t torment himself by promising not to touch Todoroki’s scar, but he would rather sooner drink molten lava than go back on his word. It’s one of the few things Izuku can do to respect Todoroki’s boundaries in this situation, and he isn’t about to abuse Todoroki’s trust in him because he can’t handle a mild amount of physical discomfort.

… Well, a little bit more than mild physical discomfort. It doesn’t matter. He can’t do much, but he can do this. Just—think of it like training. What if he were to get tied up by a villain and he couldn’t scratch an itch on his nose? He’d be miserable, but maybe it would be bearable if he grew a sort of immunity to the discomfort. So really, Izuku is doing himself a favor. By not scratching Todoroki’s scar. Like he really, really wants to.

He recites the numbers of pi in his head as loudly as he can to distract himself, and when he inevitably gets lost in the sequence he aborts it in favor of the fibonacci sequence. Izuku has a feeling that it’s going to be a very long bus ride.

The bus doesn’t come to its next stop until Izuku has also abandoned the fibonacci sequence so that he can recite prime numbers instead, and when the doors open Izuku doesn’t even check to
see if it’s the right stop because if he has to sit anymore he will vibrate out of existence. He says thank you to the driver and practically leaps out the front door, and then he’s running because he recognizes this area and he’s way too anxious to even think about walking. Hopefully Todoroki’s quirk will stop him from getting too sweaty.

By the time he’s reached the gates of Yuuei, he has two minutes until class starts. The itchiness has ebbed, if only slightly. He doesn’t stop running.

A moment later, Izuku bulldozes into class 1-A like the Kool-Aid man, looking entirely more ruffled than Todoroki Shouto has probably ever looked a day in his entire life. His tie is in knots, his forehead is all sweaty, and his breath comes in labored pants--and his explosive entrance has garnered most, if not all, of his classmate’s attention.

Izuku and Todoroki lock eyes almost immediately, and the full surrealness of the situation knocks both the wind and all of his good sense out of him. Looking at your own body from an outside perspective could do that to a person.

This is so weird.

He sees Todoroki’s eyes flick up and down, assessing his own body, and Izuku is quick to do the same--he’s sitting at Izuku’s desk, with Iida and Uraraka on either sides of him, Iida’s hand paused in the air as if he was mid-swipe when Izuku came tumbling in the room. He takes a moment to wonder if Todoroki told either of them anything, but quickly answers his own question when his two friends look at him with no small amount of confusion and worry on their faces.

Steeling himself, Izuku walks up to the three of them, pointedly ignoring some of the strange looks some of his other classmates are giving him due to his ragged appearance. He doesn’t have time to feel self-conscious right now, he’s got a body to get back into. He just... Isn’t sure how yet.

As he approaches, Uraraka raises an eyebrow. “Woah. Uh. What’s up, Todoroki?”

Izuku looks Todoroki straight into his own emerald green eyes, and tries valiantly to stop feeling sick. “We really need to talk,” he stresses, as if that hadn’t been obvious before. Impossibly, Uraraka’s eyebrow raises even higher.

“Todoroki, is everything quite alright?” Iida asks, looking clearly unsettled. “You seem… Scrambled. What happened to your tie?”

Closing his eyes and breathing in through his nose, Izuku decides to answer honestly. “I’ve been having a weird morning,” he says, and leaves it at that. Todoroki makes a noise that sounds suspiciously like a snort.

“Lunch,” Todoroki says, and doesn’t elaborate. It’s such a Todoroki answer that Izuku would almost laugh if he didn’t feel like his sanity was already spiraling dangerously out of his grasp. He has long since stopped believing that he is trapped in some sort of convoluted fever dream, but seeing his own body sitting in front of him like this is starting to make him think that maybe he’s in a coma or something. He can’t really be sure.

Not to mention that the itching is back in full force. Except this time, it’s not just his eye--Izuku’s fingers twitch uselessly, and he quickly shoves them into his pockets. With no small amount of dismay, Izuku realizes that he wants to reach out and touch Todoroki. It’s not a feeling that he’s completely foreign to--he’s always wanted to maybe reach out and graze his knuckles, or follow a finger down the hard line of his jaw--but the severity of the impulse is a little disconcerting. He’s not exactly sure how or why, but he feels… Drawn to him, somehow, and it’s a little scary how hard it is to swallow the impulse to just reach over and pinch his own nose.
Todoroki has such a powerful eye on him that if Izuku didn’t know any better, he’d almost be afraid that he was about to get jumped. He recognizes the even, calculating gaze that is often pointedly in Izuku’s direction, but it’s a little disconcerting to see it on his own face. In his opinion, it’s an expression that fits a lot better on Todoroki than it does himself—right now, with Izuku’s perpetual baby face, he sort of looks as intimidating as a kitten sneeze. Which is incredibly disappointing, because Izuku would like to think that he can be a little bit threatening when he wants to be, come on.

Todoroki moves suddenly, and Izuku thinks for a half second that maybe his initial fear of getting jumped wasn’t wrong at all—until he reaches for Uraraka’s hand instead of Izuku’s. His confusion nearly triples when he leads Uraraka’s hand directly onto the top of Izuku’s head, allowing her to tangle her fingers into the red and white locks there. She seems just as startled as Izuku feels, and she sends a panicked glance at Todoroki, who seems to be wearing an expression that Izuku is dangerously close to calling ‘smug’.

“Is it as soft as it looks?” He asks.

“What? Oh!” Uraraka looks to Izuku, searching for any signs of apprehension on his face—and when she finds nothing but continued confusion, she snorts and precedes to ruffle his hair and mess up the straight red-white line he had spent so much time perfecting that morning. “Yes,” she says, matter-of-factly. “Very soft.”

Izuku’s just about to ask what the hell that was all about when Aizawa finally shuffles into class and threatens detention to everyone who doesn’t get into their seat within the next fifteen seconds. Izuku only hesitates for a moment before making his way to Todoroki’s seat, feeling oddly displaced.

The clock above the chalkboard makes a ‘tick’ that echoes through the room as an entire second passes, and Aizawa begins the lesson. Izuku sighs, ignoring the need to scratch. Lunch could not feel more like an eon away.

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One of the unsuspecting benefits of sitting in Midoriya’s seat is being able to stare at the back of his own head the entire class. It proves to be much more entertaining than listening to whatever lecture Aizawa has planned for them, since he’s heard most of this information from his own father’s preemptive ‘hero training’ anyways. Besides that, he feels anxious, and Shouto doubts he would have been able to pay much attention as it is.

He watches as Midoriya diligently takes notes in one of Shouto’s journals, which Shouto is finding himself incredibly excited to read later, especially if they are as detailed as the ones he saw earlier. (Annotations, for Christ’s sake.) And, well, he’s kind of hoping to find more of Midoriya’s distracted doodles. If he draws in Shouto’s notebook, it’s technically his for the keeping, as far as he’s concerned.

Midoriya keeps doing this thing where he sets his pencil down and then reaches his hand to his face, only to stop halfway through the motion to clench his fist and then continue working. Shouto’s hasn’t the faintest idea what that could mean, because he’s never seen Midoriya do that before—unless…?

Oh, he just did it again. Strange. This time, Midoriya glances over his shoulder, wide eyes looking alien on Shouto’s own face. The two of them make eye contact, and Midoriya visibly flusters, snapping his attention back to his work, shoulders incredibly tense.

Shouto taps his pencil on the desk impatiently. Is it time for lunch yet? … Soon, but not yet. Time
couldn’t possibly inch any slower. He lets out a long-suffering sigh.

“Deku, if you don’t stop fucking sighing like a recently divorced housewife in the middle of her midlife crisis, I’m going to shove my foot down your throat so forcefully that you won’t have room to even breathe.”

Oh. Right. This is one of the unsuspecting detriments of sitting in Midoriya’s seat—Shouto has now been downgraded from sitting in what the class has tastefully dubbed ‘Bakugou’s Murder-Rage Splash Zone’ and is now experiencing the full effect of sitting in ‘Bakugou’s Immediate Explodokill Radius’. To be fair, Bakugou’s Murder-Rage Splash Zone includes ninety percent of the classroom, since he’s been known to send desks flying out the window from time to time. So it’s not that much of a downgrade.

What has changed is the absolute wrath he sends in Shouto’s direction with a well-placed glare over his shoulder. If looks could kill, Shouto would be splattered against the back wall right about now. If he were anyone else, it might have struck the fear of God into him—as it is, Shouto bites back a yawn, and blinks.

Bakugou squints, enhancing the level of his rage-beams. When Shouto continues his non-reaction, he relents with a huff. “And stop ogling at Candy Cane’s ugly ass,” he grunts, almost as an afterthought. “Fucking creeper.”

“How did you know I was looking at him?” Shouto asks, because he apparently inherited Midoriya’s lack of self-preservation. “You’re sitting in front of me.”

“The hell?” Bakugou grunts, doing a 180 in his seat. “The fuck you think you’re implying?”

Hm. Shouto may have miscalculated somewhere. He’s beginning to see a desk flying out of the window in his near future, if that crazed eye-twitch is any indicator.

… Well. In for a penny, in for a pound.

“Maybe you’re the one who should stop ogling me,” he shrugs.

Shouto hears the telltale ‘pop crackle pop’ of Bakugou’s quirk the same moment the bell rings to dismiss them for lunch, and then half a moment later there is a wave of heat blowing his bangs out of his face as Bakugou slams his fists onto his desk, charring the wood. “You little shit! Like hell I would–”

Shouto doesn’t get to hear the rest of his colorful curses, because suddenly Midoriya is there with a firm hand around Shouto’s arm, pulling him out of his seat. “Time to go,” he says quickly, practically shoving him towards the classroom door. Midoriya doesn’t slow down until they’re halfway down the hallway and safely outside of the Splash Zone.

Midoriya’s grip on Shouto’s arm doesn’t loosen. “What was that all about?” He asks, and then blinks and waves his free hand in the air loosely. “You know what? Nevermind. I don’t want to know. We have more--uh--important issues right now.”

Shouto is inclined to agree, since he’s staring himself dead in the face. His scar is a lot harder to swallow when he’s forced to look at it anywhere other than his own reflection. “I’m pretty sure Bakugou was only upset because I was taking up his precious oxygen, anyways.”

“God, yeah, that sounds like him.” Midoriya groans, swiping a hand down his face in exasperation. “What an absolute nightmare.” Shouto can see his eye twitch in between the gaps of his fingers, and then suddenly his hand flings away from his face so fast that Shouto can hear the wind displace around the movement. Midoriya shoots him a guilty look.
“... Are you alright?” Shouto asks, because Midoriya is acting weird. Well--weirder than what the situation calls for. Probably. Actually, maybe Shouto’s the one underreacting here, but it’s hard to tell after the few minor freakouts he’s already had this morning.

Midoriya gives him a pained look, heterochromia eyes wide with distress. “I woke up on fire this morning, Todoroki. On fire. I owe you, like, two whole shirts, and possibly a paint job for your ceiling.”

It’s an amusing mental picture for all of about five seconds before the reality of the situation hits him. “Endeavor didn’t--”

“He wasn’t home,” Midoriya interrupts, before Shouto can work himself into a proper panic. “Uh, your sister--at least I think she’s your sister? Maybe she’s your cousin or something, I wasn’t sure--she told me this morning that Endeavor was called out on business late last night, somewhere out of town. She wasn’t sure when he would be getting back.”

“Oh, thank god,” he breathes before he can stop himself.

Midoriya snickers, lips twitching with amusement. “That’s what I said.”

“Right.” Okay, this was good. This was a much better situation than Shouto originally hoped for. He could handle this. As long as they find a way to return to their normal bodies before his father comes home, that’s like eighty percent of Shouto’s issues solved. “Does Fuyumi know you’re not... me?”

“Fuyumi…? Oh, right. Your sister. No, I didn’t tell her anything,” Midoriya says, tapping his finger against his chin. “I wanted to talk to you before we made any decisions, but your phone was locked, and I couldn’t get a hold of you any sooner than class, and then I got lost on the way here--oh! N-not that it’s a big deal if you already told anyone, Todoroki! It might be better, actually, if we let the teachers know about this, since, you know, quirks and all--”

“Midoriya,” Shouto says, the antsy feeling returning suddenly as a stray thought latches onto his anxiety like a leech. “I… I didn’t tell anyone either. Actually, I think I would prefer it if we didn’t.”

“What?” Midoriya asks, looking entirely blindsided. Shouto winces--Midoriya is so expressive, and it doesn’t translate well through the body-swap. “Why not?”

Shouto swallows, suddenly becoming all too aware of the chill in the hallway. “My father…”

Midoriya’s eyebrows crease. “What about him? He’s not even home--what, what do you think he’s going to do? What can he do?”

That’s the thing--he doesn’t know. Endeavor is predictable at best, and violent at worst. But Shouto can handle him--has been handling him since he was five years old and his quirk manifested. Whenever Shouto comes home, he knows what to expect. If the house is loud, and his angry footsteps shake the floorboards while his smoke fills the room, then at least Shouto can mentally prepare himself for the grueling training session to come. If the house is quiet, then that means he’s gone, or preoccupied; then, with luck permitted, Shouto can sneak off into his bedroom and tend to the bruises and burns that he never seems to be fully rid of these days.

It’s not a great way to live, but it’s how Shouto has been living his entire life, and his sanity is preserved through the knowledge that Endeavor cannot harm him more than he already has. There is no pain that Endeavor can inflict that Shouto has not already weathered twice fold.
But Midoriya throws a wrench in the formula—when something unpredictable happens, it becomes impossible to predict how Endeavor will react. Uncertainty is a weakness in his household, and weaknesses are exploited. If he learns that his ‘masterpiece’ has become tainted in any way, even temporarily—what will he do? How will he treat Midoriya? What kind of danger will he become?

Just the thought of Midoriya being anywhere near that man makes Shouto feel nauseous.

“This is the kind of thing that our teachers would be legally bound to tell our guardians,” he finally says, shaking the numb feeling from his tongue. “I can’t… I can’t risk that.” *I can’t risk your safety.*

Looking down at the floor, Shouto suddenly becomes aware that Midoriya still has a death-grip on his arm, and has the entire time they’ve been talking. Midoriya seems to become aware of this, too—but instead of pulling back, he reaches his other hand up and grasps Shouto’s other arm and matches the tenacity of his hold. He can feel the temperature difference through the cloth of his uniform, and, startled, Shouto is forced to look up into his eyes. Midoriya’s gaze is searching, pupils flicking slightly in place, and Shouto has to remind himself to breathe before he passes out because that may be his body but it’s still Midoriya, except now Midoriya is *tall.*

“…Okay,” Midoriya says at last, loosening his hold but not letting go entirely. “Okay. I still think we should tell the teachers, but…” He closes his eyes, and breathes in through his nose. “Okay. If we’re going to do this, we need to lay some ground rules. Or—well, maybe not rules, exactly, but… We need to have some sort of plan. At least until we make it through the school day.”

Shouto gulps. “What do you have in mind?”

“No quirks,” he states, matter-of-factly. “Not until we can talk each other through them. I can barely stop before icing myself to the floor as it is, and I haven’t even purposefully activated anything yet. Not to mention, my, uh… My bones. Er, your bones? *The* bones. I’d rather avoid exploding them into tiny little pieces, if at all possible.”

The image of Midoriya’s bones imploding in on themselves is fresh in Shouto’s mind once more, leaving a fleshy purple mess behind, and, yeah, that’s a fair call. “Do you want to go over them after class today?”

Midoriya nods. “Yeah. We were going to spar today, anyways, but… We can just go to my house and figure it out from there? Or, uh, your house, I guess? I mean. Oh my god.” He pinches the bridge of his nose, squeezing his eyes and breathing deep for a long moment. “Oh my god, this is the most—I’m kind of freaking out. How are you so calm about this? ’Cos I’m pretty sure my nerves are going to blow.”

“Midoriya,” he calls, trying to keep his voice even. Seeing Midoriya panic tends to set his nerves off, too, so it’s important to calm him down before they both have a fit in the middle of the hallway. “It’s fine,” he tries, reaching for Midoriya’s sleeve to pull his hand away from his face. “I know what you meant. We’ll go back to your apartment after class. What else did you want to talk about?”

Giving Midoriya a goal and a plan helps ease his anxiety, Shouto has noticed—and it works like a charm as Midoriya’s jaw slowly unclenches. With something to focus on, he doesn’t get swept away by his emotions as easily. “Right, sorry. Uh. As soon as we can, I’d like to call Detective Naomasa—I’ve been thinking, and I’m pretty positive that this whole… Situation. Was caused by someone’s quirk going off yesterday in the mall. So. I’m going to ask him for a list of quirks, if possible, since I know he recorded everyone’s information yesterday.”

Alright, Shouto’s not sure how to feel about the fact that Midoriya just *has* Detective Naomasa’s
number--or, at least, access to Detective Naomasa’s number--but there are bigger fish to fry here at the moment than worrying about Midoriya’s social life. (As if Shouto’s one to judge.)

Oh, that reminds him though--“Midoriya, what’s your phone password?”

“My what? Oh, it’s the digits to All Might’s birthday,” he says. “Uh. Why?”

Of course. Of course it’s All Might’s birthday. Shouto resists the urge to facepalm. “I tried to call you this morning but couldn’t unlock your phone. Besides, we’re going to keep impersonating each other, so it might be useful information.” And then, realizing he may have overstepped, “Unless you don’t want me in your phone, which is understandable. I won’t pry.”

“No, no, that’s fine! Honestly, I don’t mind,” Midoriya says, smiling easily. “I, uh. I trust you. And it’s not like I use my phone for anything other than the class group chat. And selfies, because Uraraka is like that. But, uh, since you’re going to be having my phone…?”

“Oh.” I trust you, he says, like it’s so easy. Like Shouto's heart didn't just do a flip. "Right. Uh. My pass code is one, two, three, four.”

Midoriya gives him a dead look. Honestly, it’s the closest he’s been to pulling off Shouto’s usual expression yet. “You’re kidding.”

“Why would I be kidding?”

Midoriya opens his mouth to say something else, only to be interrupted by a booming voice behind them. “Young Midoriya!”

“Oh no,” Midoriya whispers, posture instantly rigid.

Sure enough, the next thing Shouto knows, All Might comes trotting up to the two of them with what Shouto assumes is his lunch in his hands. “Good afternoon, you two! How has class been treating you so far today?”

“It’s fine,” Shouto says automatically, before remembering that he’s supposed to be acting like Midoriya and not like the social-disaster of a person he actually is.

Luckily, All Might trudges on without incident, finding his behavior acceptable for now. “Great! I’m glad to hear it. That being said, Young Midoriya--would it greatly trouble you to accompany me for lunch today? I have some things I’d like to discuss with you.”

To his side, Shouto can hear Midoriya choke, and honestly if Shouto didn’t think eating lunch with All Might was a bad idea before then he certainly does now. He glances at him, and sees the panicked expression on his own face, and Midoriya grabs for his arm and looks at him with pleading eyes.

“Er,” Shouto begins, and then stops, because how exactly does one go about telling All Might no?

“He can’t,” Midoriya says, too quickly, squeezing Shouto’s arm so tightly that Shouto fears for his bones anyways.

“Oh?” All Might says, disappointment dropping his smile just a fraction. “Is something the matter, my boy?”

“Yes!” Midoriya practically squeaks, eye twitching from the volume of his voice. He clears his throat and says more evenly, “Yes. I mean… Midoriya is… Hiding an injury.”
“I am?” Shouto asks, before catching on and promptly snapping his mouth shut so tight that his teeth click.

“Yes,” Midoriya hisses, staring daggers at Shouto. “I was just about to bring him to Recovery Girl.”

Immediately, All Might’s eyes zoom in on Shouto, and he has to stop himself from stiffening his posture on reflex. Blue eyes rake over him, scanning for injuries, and when one doesn’t make itself apparent, All Might asks, “What did you do?”

Thankfully, Shouto’s brain decides to play catch-up in that moment. “I… Have a few injuries left over from the mall incident yesterday. And I think I twisted my ankle.”

“Sprained your ankle,” Midoriya corrects.

“Right,” Shouto says. “Sprained my ankle.”

“Hm,” All Might says, looking over the both of them for a moment. He scratches at his chin, and for a horrible minute, Shouto is afraid that he’s about to call them out on their bluff. But then he sighs, and places a large hand on Shouto’s shoulder. Again, Shouto stiffens. “Midoriya, my boy, we’ve talked about this. You must start to take better care of yourself. You’re quite lucky to have such good friends looking out for you.”

Shouto presses his lips together, looking to the floor in a way that he hopes makes him look properly scolded. As it is, he just feels very, very uncomfortable. Midoriya squeezes his arm gently, steadying him.

All Might pats Shouto’s shoulder, and the sheer size difference between the two almost knocks him over. “Alrighty then,” he says, giving him a thumbs-up. “Don’t let me keep you! Our talk can wait--you need to be in tip-top shape for our practicals this evening!”

Shouto feels all the blood drain from his face. “Practicals?” He asks, dread clear in his voice. He should have suspected as much from Yuuei, but he was really hoping for some simple muscle training today. Going through practicals without a quirk is going to be hell.

All Might doesn’t even dignify that with a response, instead choosing to give a boisterous laugh that echoes through the hall before turning around and retreating for the teachers lounge.

Midoriya lets out a breath that make him sound suspiciously like he was holding his breath for a solid minute. “Oh, god. I just lied to All Might. I just lied to All Might’s face.”

“Not very well, I might add,” Shouto tacks on, feeling dazed.


Shouto raises a trained eyebrow.

“I’m serious,” he says, jostling Shouto’s arm a bit. “You can’t. I don’t care if you have to run full-speed out the fourth story window to get away from him. You have to promise me to avoid him at all costs.”

“Alright,” Shouto agrees, because honestly the expression on Midoriya’s face right now is a little intimidating. Is that what he looks like all the time? “I promise. Is there anything else?”

“Yeah, actually,” Midoriya continues, blowing a white tuft of hair out of his eyes. “If we’re going
to pretend to be each other, you’re going to have to stop brooding.”

“What?” Shouto scoffs, feeling indignant. “I don’t… I don’t brood.”

“Yes you do! You’re doing it right now!” A cold hand comes up to poke at Shouto’s cheek, and he half-heartedly swats it away. “You make me look so grumpy, like someone dropped rotten meat in my katsudon or something. It’s a little scary.”

Shouto glares at him.

“See! Like that! My eyes weren’t meant to do that!”

Hm. That’s decidedly not true. Midoriya is very good at the death-glare when he wants to be. Hosu was a good example of that. “Let’s go find somewhere private to eat,” he says instead, because he doubts Midoriya would appreciate that thought anyways. “Your mother made me a bento this morning, and I’m hungry.”

As if on cue, Midoriya’s stomach growls. “Yeah, alright,” he concedes, and when he casually leads them away by linking their arms together, Shouto nearly trips and actually sprains his ankle.

Chapter End Notes

me, writing the beginning scenes of this chpt: my kink is todoroki being loved and accepted by all of his friends

anyways, updates on this have consistently been about two weeks apart, so even though i had hoped to shave that down to one week i doubt that’ll happen. school is starting for me soon! ironically that means more time to write, because i have two hours to kill on a train three times a week. hella.

good luck to everyone returning to school this week! you can do it!!
“Hey, Todoroki. What does your head sound like?”

Shouto blinks at him, startled only for a moment by the sudden subject change. Midoriya is known for falling down thought processes like rabbit holes, after all; to be honest, Shouto is pretty sure he does all his thinking upside down and backwards.

The two of them had decided to eat outside after Midoriya went to go bother Lunch Rush for some katsudon, and now they sit under one of the trees on the corner of campus, far away from prying ears and eyes. Their uniforms are going to get dirty, no doubt, and the ground is chilly in a way that Shouto’s quirk has never really allowed him to feel before, but it’s more private than any of the benches that they could have sat on. So instead they sit cross-legged in the dirt, knees touching, food in their laps as they talk.

Maybe, at one point, being so entirely alone with Midoriya like this would have made him nervous—and, on some level, maybe it still does. Having a crush on someone tends to complicate things like that. But mutual comfort is the cornerstone of their friendship, and Shouto could never feel truly anxious around Midoriya. He’s just so easy to be around. That’s probably one of the biggest reasons Shouto started developing feelings for him in the first place.

“What do you mean?”

“Like, the voice inside your head,” Midoriya clarifies, tapping a finger against his temple. “Your conscience, I guess. Does it sound different than before?”

Shouto pops a rice ball into his mouth, taking a moment to ponder the question. He hadn’t noticed at first, but... “Yeah, actually.”

Midoriya nods like he expected that answer. “It’s so strange,” he begins, and Shouto sets into his own personal front-row seat to the Midoriya Mumble Special. “It’s so subtle that I barely even noticed it at first, but it definitely sounds different than what it used to. It doesn’t really sound like anybody’s voice that I recognize, but I think all conscious thoughts are like that. Anyways, it got me thinking about the nuances of this body swapping quirk; just how much of us got switched? The fact that I can’t access your memories or anything similar suggests that I’m mentally blocked from your limbic system—or, at least, the hippocampus—but because our conscious thoughts have different ‘voices’ to them, it means that we’re using each other’s cerebral cortex to think.”

Midoriya stares down at his bowl of katsudon, still as of yet untouched. “How is that possible?” he asks, more to himself than to Shouto. “What decides which parts of each other’s brains we have access to? And are they completely cut off to us, or just laying dormant until we return to our normal bodies?”

“Midoriya,” Shouto softly interrupts, tapping his knee. “You should eat.”

“I will,” he says, distracted, after a moment of quiet mumbling. “I was waiting for it to cool off before I ate. Do you think this has something to do with our nerves? Specifically in the frontal lobe—it’s basically a miniature electrical field with all the neurons firing. It’s not too far of a stretch to believe that this quirk somehow transfers information between both of our consciousness’ and our brains that way. Maybe all the information for what I’m thinking is still in my brain, where my
limbic system is, and the quirk uses electricity somehow to transfer the information in those neurons to your brain, where I’m now perceiving information from our surroundings through your body instead of mine. Which would explain why I still have access to my memories instead of yours, even though technically my conscious thought is--theoretically--separated from my limbic system. It’s as if I’m using your brain as a power source, but not as an information hub. What do you think?"

“Midoriya, I have a fire and ice quirk. I think that you don’t need to wait for your food to cool down before you can eat it.”


Shouto sees him work his jaw slowly, sort of like a cow chewing its own cud, before he stops completely, eyes widening with some sort of revelation. When he swallows it sounds almost comical, complete with a full-sounding gulp.

Shouto is halfway to asking what’s wrong when Midoriya quickly blows on another piece of meat and gracelessly shoves it into Shouto’s mouth with a, “Here, Todoroki, eat this,” and causes him to nearly choke.

Midoriya looks at him expectantly as he chews, leaning forward towards Shouto’s face as his heterochromic eyes search for some sort of reaction. Shouto swallows. “It’s… good?” He’s not exactly sure what Midoriya’s looking for, and having him so close all of the sudden kind of makes his brain static out for a second. Not to mention that his scar is right there, and suddenly the need to avert his gaze is too strong to resist.

Thankfully, Midoriya leans back, chewing thoughtfully on his lower lip. “It’s katsudon, Todoroki,” he says, as if that explains everything. “It’s my favorite. But you don’t like it all that much, do you?”

“Not really, no.” He kind of wants another bite of it right now, though.

Midoriya sighs, dropping his shoulders in defeat. “I can’t believe this. I can’t believe you’ve put me in a situation where I have to pass up on the best meal in the world. I’m a sham. A fraud. Who am I if I can’t even enjoy my katsudon? What’s even the point? Todoroki, I’m going to starve.”

If Shouto were anybody else, he might have chuckled—there are so many things about this twisted situation that he could complain about, and here Midoriya is, whining about his lunch like it’s the end of the world. It’s absolutely ridiculous. “It can’t be that bad. I said that I disliked katsudon. That doesn’t mean I won’t eat it.”

“Sure, mock my suffering,” Midoriya huffs, resting an elbow on Shouto’s knee and leaning forward to cup his cheek in his hand. “I know what katsudon is supposed to taste like. I don’t think I could stomach it right now when your tastebuds refuse to see the light. At least now I’ve got some evidence to support the brain-sharing theory.”

Shouto smacks his tongue against the roof of his mouth, chasing after the lingering taste of katsudon. It was pretty good. “Brain-sharing theory? Is that what we’re calling it?”

Midoriya shrugs, still lazily leaning on Shouto’s knee. “For now, I guess. I don’t know how else to explain it. But the fact that you’ve officially ruined katsudon for me means that my conscience is connected to your parietal lobe. Which,” he pauses, and sneaks a rice ball from Shouto’s bento and pops it into his mouth before he can be stopped. “I suppose that’s a good thing,” he continues
around a mouthful of rice. “The parietal lobe also controls temperature and touch. If I wasn’t connected to it, I probably would have ended up burning myself with your quirk this morning.”

Shouto presses his lips together, deep in thought. He… supposes that makes sense, but now he’s curious. Impulsively, Shouto reaches out and pinches Midoriya’s arm where his uniform doesn’t cover the skin--hard.

“Ow, hey!” Midoriya exclaims, leaning away from his attacker and rubbing at the raw skin. “What was that for?”

Shouto shrugs. “Wanted to see if I could feel that,” he answers, looking away. He also kind of wanted to touch him, but he doesn’t have a good way of verbalizing that thought without embarrassing himself, so he doesn’t.

“Oh,” Midoriya says, dropping his hands and wrapping them loosely around his bowl of katsudon. “Well, did you?”

“No,” he says truthfully, which is sort of a relief. Being forced to share pain on top of trying to hide the body swap would be an absolute nightmare. Not that it’s not already a nightmare, but it’s a little comforting to know that it could definitely be worse. “Here,” he says, handing his lunch over to Midoriya. “Class will be starting soon. The food in the bento will probably taste better.”

“Nothing will taste better than katsudon,” Midoriya grumbles, but he takes the bento from Shouto’s hands and replaces it with his bowl of katsudon anyways.

They spend the last few minutes of lunch finishing off their respective meals, Shouto quietly listening to Midoriya mutter theories and possible experiments under his breath between mouthfuls. He says something about how ‘scientists don’t have a strict definition of what a consciousness actually is’, and how ‘this body-swapping quirk could possibly help refine what we know about the typical human brain’, and usually Shouto enjoys listening to Midoriya’s quiet ramblings but right now he’s feeling a little out of his element. His fingers itch for something to distract himself, so he pulls out Midoriya’s phone without really knowing what he intends to do with it.

Surprisingly, Midoriya’s home screen isn’t another picture of All Might like he expected. Instead it’s a picture of Midoriya and his mother, identical grins on their faces as they look towards the camera. They both have what Shouto assumes to be frosting of some kind on their faces, and while most of the background is obscured by their bodies, Shouto recognizes it as Midoriya’s kitchen. It’s a lot more cluttered in the picture than it was when Shouto saw it this morning.

It’s a gentle picture, and it’s easy to see the affection they have for each other as they laugh at the baking mess they made. It makes some kind of Feeling with a capital ‘F’ stir up in Shouto’s chest, but he doesn’t recognize it enough to put a name to it. He doesn’t even know if it’s a good or a bad feeling--he just knows that suddenly it encompasses his whole being so completely that Shouto hardly remembers feeling anything else.

He hopes he didn’t worry Mrs. Midoriya too much with his behavior this morning, but if her anxiety is anything like Midoriya’s then there’s really no helping it. He still isn’t exactly sure what to think about that whole breakfast or their brief conversation. It had been a little… much. But he definitely doesn't want Midoriya's mother to think he thinks ill of her in any way. If anything, it's the opposite.

He stares at the the photo for awhile longer before realizing that Midoriya is still mumbling to his side. He had given him permission to go through his phone, but Shouto knows that his habit of staring has a tendency to make people uncomfortable, so he looks for an app to open before
Midoriya can notice his slip-up.

Fumbling for a moment, he opens the class group chat and scrolls up to where he last left off. He can’t help but feel his lip twitch with amusement when he discovers that Midoriya had publicly posted the picture of the two of them together at the mall last night, complete with a background full of intense-looking explosions.

Group: Hero Class 1-Gay, 19 members

yallmightve sent [img_281.jpg]

yallmightve: tfw u have massive anxiety but ur squads got ur back

o-cha-cha: !!!

o-cha-cha: DEKU!!!! WHAT THE HELL

o-cha-cha: IS THIS WHY YOU STOPPED TEXTING ME AND IIDA EARLIER

Ingenium: “Iida and I,” Uraraka.

Ingenium: That being said–Midoriya! I take it that both you and Todoroki are unharmed, since you’re taking the time to message us?

yallmightve: yeah its fine guys dw!! someone with an explosive burp quirk lost control of it is all, nbd.

yallmightve: todoroki and i took care of it! he was so cool, hes so level-headed and good at keeping everyone calm during a crisis. luckily no one was seriously injured

yallmightve: anyways thats not whats important. help me make memes with this amazing selfie we got

Ingenium: That... Hardly seems appropriate.
**Ingenium:** Although I’m relieved to hear that both of you made it out alright! Please exercise more caution in the future!

**hardman:** incredible. top ten photos taken seconds before a disaster

**yallmightve:** bless you kirishima who would i be without you

**hardman:** a more anxious version of urself tbh

**yallmightve:** thats fair

**Alien Queen:** midoriya i need you to know that this is the best picture i have ever laid eyes on and also that i am seething w/ jealousy over the fact that i will never get a selfie as badass as this one

**yallmightve:** you could always ask kacchan

**bakubro:** no.

**yallmightve:** you could always use photoshop

**Alien Queen:** sigh its not the same

**Alien Queen:** anyways you were right. making memes is of upmost importance

**danki:** ill start

**danki:** when everything in ur life goes to shit but its fine be ur honestly just here for a laff
Alien Queen: when u and ya lad get lit for a night in the town but forget to bring the parent-friend to babysit u

danki: when everythings going suspiciously fine so you self-sabotage to avoid having everything fall apart later

carjack: hey, everyone tag yourselves. i’m the bitter apathy in todoroki’s eyes.

o-cha-cha: im the blissful innocence in deku’s smile

hardman: im the aura of unconditional love and support for my friends that radiates from this picture

bakubro: im the explosion

hardman: … BAKUGOU

bakubro: stfu shit for brains

Ingenium: Bakugou, I need not remind you that I will temporarily ban you from the chat again if you cannot keep your language under control.

danki: hell yeah iida stick it to the man

Ingenium: That goes for you, too, Kaminari!

danki: fuck

Ingenium has kicked danki from Group: Hero Class 1-Gay.
The chatlog continues down that strain for a while longer until the rowdiest of the crowd had
eventually stopped texting in order to do their own things, or until Iida kicked them from the
group. The conversation temporarily picked back up this morning when Iida re-added the
troublemakers and Ashido started asking if anyone finished the homework, but other than that
Shouto didn’t really miss much over the last day and a half of not checking his phone. That’s fine-
he doesn’t really understand most of his classmates’ shenanigans, and he never really spoke much
in the group chat anyways, but he can appreciate it all the same. He’s glad that everyone’s
enjoying themselves.

How things have changed since the beginning of the year.

The lunch bell rings, signalling to the students that it's time to return to class, but Shouto takes a
moment more to look through Midoriya’s phone gallery so that he can find the photo and send it
to his own phone for safe-keeping. He has to scroll through at least eighty of Uraraka’s selfies
before he finds what he’s looking for, which makes Shouto puff air through his nose in a shadow
of laughter.

When the phone in Midoriya’s pocket vibrates, he doesn’t say anything, but looks at Shouto with
a raised eyebrow and a knowing smile on his face.

“Ready to head to class?” Shouto asks, not looking to get called out for being sentimental.

“Yeah,” he answers, sitting up from the ground and dusting the dirt off of himself. He reaches out
a warm hand to help Shouto up, and he doesn’t hesitate to take it. “Let’s go, Midoriya.”

Shouto crinkles his nose. “That’s never gonna stop being weird.”

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“Who’s ready for capture the flag?”

Not Izuku, that’s for sure. He’s never felt less ready for anything in his entire life; and that’s
saying something, thanks to both the insane amount of pressure Yuuei exerts in their tests and the
several times Izuku has gone face-to-face with real, actual villains. As it is, Izuku would actually
prefer a standoff between himself and several cold-blooded murderers rather than have to deal
with the shitshow that is no doubt about to go down in this exercise. At least murderers can’t give
him a bad grade.

“You will be split up evenly into four teams,” All Might continues, holding up four fingers for the
class to see. “Only two teams will be playing at a time; you have fifteen minutes to steal the flag
from the other team’s base and return it to your own. The first team to do so wins--if neither team
succeeds, it’s a draw. Simple enough, right?”

Sure, but nothing in Yuuei is ever simple. Logical ruses are more Aizawa’s style, but Izuku arches
an eyebrow anyways, waiting for the ball to drop.

“Alright, without further ado, here are the teams!” With an exaggerated swoop of his arms, All
Might gestures to the board that was hidden behind his giant muscles, and—ah, there it is.

Written on the board are all twenty names of their class, split into four groups, and Midoriya’s
stomach drops when he quickly reads:
**Team A:**

Bakugou Katsuki  
Todoroki Shouto  
Sero Hanta  
Uraraka Ochako  
Aoyama Yuga

Izuku’s going to be on a team with Bakugou. Swell.

Except, maybe that’s not such a bad thing after all? He’s not in his own body, which means Bakugou won’t needlessly harass him for once. He might receive some flak as Todoroki, but compared to the usual hellfire Bakugou rains upon him it’ll feel like a gentle sunbeam. The only thing he has to worry about now is--

Oh, nevermind.

**Team B:**

Midoriya Izuku  
Ojiro Mashirao  
Kaminari Denki  
Tokoyami Fumikage  
Hagakure Toru

Todoroki is on their opposing team. Yeah, there’s no way this isn’t ending without a small amount of friendly maiming. Izuku metaphorically kisses his limbs goodbye. He’d say that it was nice while he had them, but lately he’s spent a majority of his time with his limbs in casts, so it really hasn’t been stellar.

Maybe he would have treated his limbs better if he knew Bakugou would eventually be ripping them out of his sockets and beating him with them, but that’s just how it goes sometimes. C’est la vie.

… He hopes Todoroki knows what he’s getting into.

---

The battlefield is less like a battlefield and more like a playground in Ochaco’s eyes. Especially the battlefield they’ll be playing capture the flag in today; it’s nothing more than the typical artificial city that Yuuei somehow has the funds to keep building, but for someone like Ochaco?
It’s perfect. Her worst enemy is the empty field, but at least now she can count on her classmates to make plenty of debris for her quirk to work with.

Not to mention her team—she knows all of her classmates are ridiculously strong, but both Todoroki and Bakugou on her side? She’s getting pumped up just thinking about it. Sure, Deku’s a threat, but the promise of an intellectual and physical challenge makes her blood throb with adrenaline and excitement. There’s nothing quite like friendly rivalry to bring out the spirit of competition in her.

Ochaco hits her palm with her fist, cracking her knuckles. She’s so ready to kick some ass.

“So what’s the plan?” she asks, stretching out her muscles while her teammates prepare for the match. All Might had given them fifteen minutes to prepare, which was sweet of him because if it was Aizawa he would have said some nonsense about instincts and how heroes have to think on the spot. Which is true, but with how impulsive Bakugou is it definitely helps to try and think things through.

That, and Deku’s got some sort of convoluted plan in the works, no doubt.

“... Hagakure is our biggest threat,” Todoroki says, looking into the distance as he taps his chin. He seems deeply in thought, which is typical.

“Hagakure?” Sero parrots, confusion seeping into his tone. “What about Midoriya? He’s their team’s biggest hitter.”

“No, that’s not true,” Todoroki says, and sorry, what. Todoroki was the last person Ochaco thought would undermine Deku’s abilities. Especially because Ochaco knows without a doubt that Deku is definitely the person they need to worry about—especially after the insane amount of improvement he’s shown with his quirk ever since he got back from his internship. “They also have Tokoyami,” Todoroki continues, and alright, that’s fair, but still. “His quirk may not be as versatile as mi… Midoriya’s. But Dark Shadow is just as much of a tank.”

“Dark Shadow’s a pissbaby,” Bakugou grunts, looking two parts bored and four parts murderous. “I light my pinky finger, end of issue. Still doesn’t explain Invisibitch.”

“Oui,” Aoyama agrees, admiring his reflection on his hero suit. “Do explain your reasoning, if you please.”

Todoroki eyes Bakugou warily, swallowing hard enough that Ochako can hear it from where she stands to the side of him. “R-right,” he stutters, and then clears his throat. “Uh. So, with Ojiro and Kaminari on their team, they’ll probably focus on their defense rather than their offense, since they’re both better close-range fighters. We have a lot of heavy fighters on our team, so they’ll probably expect us to attack head-on—and then they’ll probably aim to distract the strongest of us while Hagakure slips through the back and steals our flag from under our noses. I bet she’ll bring either Kaminari or Tokoyami with her, since their quirks don’t mesh together well. Probably Tokoyami, since he’s better suited for stealth. And that leaves Ojiro and To… Midoriya to protect their flag.”

Ochako blinks. Sero blinks. They make mutually astounded eye-contact. Aoyama continues to look at his reflection in his armor, and Todoroki mutters plans under his breath. He mutters.

“My quirk is out of commission at the moment,” he breathes, looking down at the floor as he continues to quietly talk to himself. Ochako has to strain to properly hear him, because hold on, his what is what? “It’s not smart for me to go offensive—if they don’t know, then I’ll be a good bluff to keep them away from the flag, and if they do know then it wouldn’t matter anyways since
I’d be a sitting duck if I went into the middle of the action. I could probably keep Hagakure at bay, but Tokoyami is another issue entirely—although explosions could easily counteract him. But he won’t listen to me, probably, since he’ll want to grab the flag, so Aoyama can stay and guard with me—”

“What the fresh fuck,” Bakugou grunts, looking as dumbfounded as one can possibly look while still somehow managing to look incredibly murderous. Ochako thinks that his face is just kind of stuck with the anger knob dialed to eleven. “Ew, I didn’t realize Deku was contagious, oh my god. Stop hanging out with that shitstain, or else the next thing you know you’ll start turning green.”

“Like mold?” Aoyama asks, unhelpfully.

“W-what?” Todoroki stammers, snapping his gaze from the floor to stare at Bakugou. His expression is tight—it doesn’t look scared, exactly, but…

“Todoroki, you were mumbling,” Ochako says gently, reaching an arm up to touch his shoulder before thinking better of it—actually, on second thought, she goes through with it. Midoriya made a point of making sure she knew that Todoroki really did care for them this morning, and so she has no good reason to feel insecure.

When her hand lays gently on a warm shoulder, Todoroki relaxes, if only imperceptibly.

“I was?” He asks, raising a hand to lightly touch at his own lips. “Uh. Sorry.”

“I think that’s the most I’ve ever heard you talk,” Sero admits, shrugging his shoulders.

“… Are you sure you’re okay?” Uraraka asks, squeezing the hand on his shoulder lightly, careful not to activate her quirk. She hopes he doesn’t take it the wrong way—hearing his thoughts more openly can only ever be a good thing, but he’s been acting so strange ever since he came stumbling into the room like a stray tumbleweed from a bad western this morning. He just seems so… Scattered. The Todoroki she knows is always so calm and collected, which can only mean something is wrong.

Todoroki’s lips turn inward, drawing his mouth into a straight line. “I’m fine. Sorry for worrying you.”

“Hey, jackasses, can we stop with the soap opera dramatics and get back to things that are actually relevant?” Bakugou sneers, sending a pointed look at Todoroki, who withers just slightly. Odd. “I have a nerd to smear across the walls.”

She would have missed it if her hand hadn’t been resting on his shoulder—but it was there all the same. The slightest twitch of Todoroki’s muscles, the smallest recoil in his form, before he seems to catch it and school his features. Ochaco knew something was wrong before, but this might as well have been a signed contract with thirty pages of legal jargon for how damning it was.

Todoroki Shouto never flinched—not from anyone she’s seen in her recent memory, and certainly not from the likes of Bakugou.

Something must be horribly wrong—or, at the very least, incredibly not right. And Ochaco owes it to her friend to get to the bottom of it.

“I hate to say it, but Bakugou’s got a point,” Sero adds in, receiving an indignant ‘damn straight’ and a hard slug on the shoulder by the boy in question for the trouble. “Midoriya’s probably got thirty different ways to string us from the ceiling by our innards, and the tenacity to go through with it by now.”
Todoroki’s eyebrows shoot up in surprise, more expressive than Ochaco’s ever seen him, but he doesn’t dispute it. Probably because he knows it’s true—he definitely knows Deku better than Ochaco does, if she’s honest, and that’s saying a lot. “String us from the ceiling…” he mumbles, and then clicks his tongue. “Sero, you can make your tape sticky on both sides, right?”

“Uh… Yeah, why?”

“I’ve got a plan,” he answers, lips pulling into a smirk. Ochaco balks at the sight. Todoroki’s showing more emotion in this conversation than she’s seen all year.

“Wait, who the fuck put Two-Face in charge?” Bakugou grits, leaning forward into Todoroki’s space with his most intimidating sneer plastered onto his face. Todoroki’s eye twitches, and he tries to subtly lean away. “I don’t need to listen to your self-righteous plans and further inflate your over-gorged ego, asshole.”

“Hm. Look who’s talking,” Aoyama mutters, unfortunately loud enough for Bakugou to hear.

“Shut it, Twinkle Toes,” he threatens, punctuating the insult with a sharp thwack against the back of Aoyama’s head. Aoyama falters, rubbing at the injury and immediately fussing over his hairstyle. “Point is,” Bakugou continues, glaring daggers into Todoroki’s skin, “I’m going to decimate their entire team and get that damn flag myself, and none of you shit-wipes are going to get in my way. Got it?”

Ochaco can see the white of Todoroki’s knuckles where he clenches his fists at his sides, and when he takes a deep breath to steady himself it puffs out in a chilly stream of water vapor. “Actually,” he begins, voice wobbling, sounding kind of like someone jumping off a plane without a parachute, “I think… I think you’ll like this plan.”

Bakugou raises an eyebrow. A challenge, and permission to continue.

Todoroki’s Adam’s apple bobs in his throat thickly when he swallows, and then he leans in closer to Bakugou, challenge accepted. “I need you to go after Midoriya.”

“What?” Ochaco practically shrieks, blood draining from her face so fast she suddenly feels dizzy. “Todoroki, I don’t think that’s--"

“Quiet, Chubby Cheeks,” Bakugou growls, suddenly rounding on her. “I was going to go after Deku’s flat ass anyways, so don’t go getting any grand ideas. I’ve got my own reasons—I’m not going to do it just because Half-Bastard wants to dominate his boyfriend in class.”

There’s no other word for it: Todoroki sputters. Ochaco can see the exact moment his brain snaps in half, because his hair catches on fire at the same moment. He chokes on his own spit and coughs violently, and instead of water vapor he spits out actual plumes of smoke. “T-that’s not--we aren’t--it isn’t like that,” he tries, stuttering around desperate breaths of air as he tries to compose himself.

Bakugou makes a ‘tch’ noise, leaning back casually and looking awfully unimpressed. “Like I give a shit whose ass you decide to crawl up and live in. Just don’t think you’re gonna be able to stop me from givin’ Deku what’s comin’ for him. Useless coward has been avoiding this fight for months.” And then he turns around and stalks away, presumably to get into prime Deku-beating position.

Meanwhile, Todoroki swipes a cold hand across his face, trying to calm down the embers that still cling to his skin and the tips of his hair. He groans, throwing his head back to glare at the ceiling, and with a quiet voice that sounds so incredibly small, he mutters, “I don’t know why I thought I
could do this.”

“Er,” Sero says, awkwardly wringing his hand across the back of his neck. “Do what?”

“Nothing,” Todoroki continues, dropping his head back down to face his embarrassment head-on. “Nevermind. It’s not important.”

*Nothing my ass.* “So, Todoroki,” Ochaco begins, licking her fingers and helpfully squeezing away a stray flame on the top of his head. “Uh. Deku?”

“Uraraka, please,” he says, with no small amount of exasperation bleeding into his tone.

“Oh, no, I didn’t mean… Not *that,*” she says, although Todoroki’s glaringly obvious crush on Deku is definitely something that Ochaco plans on bringing up in the near future, when they aren’t expected to beat their fellow classmates into a pulp for fun. It’s about time either one of them acknowledged their feelings--they’ve been circling each other like lovesick vultures ever since the Sports Festival. Honestly, it’d be more entertaining to watch if they both weren’t so hopeless. Mostly it’s just painful. Like right now, for instance. “I meant--was that really a wise move, sicking Bakugou after him? You kind of threw him to the wolves, a bit.”

“Yeah, dude,” Sero agrees, loosely folding his arms. “Look, I’m one of the few people who actually *likes* to hang out with Bakugou, and even I think that’s a little much.”

Todoroki nods, looking incredibly thankful for the subject change--and geez, when did Ochaco get so good at reading him? “No, I know. But it was the only way I could get Kacchan to cooperate.”

There’s a beat of silence, and then--

“*Kacchan?*” Three equally horrified voices repeat back to him.

“Sacré bleu, you really *are* going to get mold from Midoriya,” Aoyama tuts, shaking his head in mock disappointment. He doesn’t do a very good job at hiding his amusement.

“What? No,” Todoroki says, impossibly wide-eyed. Ochaco’s almost afraid his eyes will pop out of his sockets, which is a shame, because Ochaco knows she’s not the only one fascinated by his heterochromia. “Bakugou. I definitely said Bakugou.”

“I’m pretty sure you said ‘*Kacchan,*’” Sero disputes.

“No, I know what I said. Anyways,” Todoroki continues, steamrolling over his slipup. He looks kind of pale, and also kind of like he wants to vomit. “So, Bakugou. Right. What were we saying about Bakugou again?”

Apparently, Sero decides to grant him mercy. “We were talking about the Midoriya-shaped blood-sacrifice we were sending his way to appease his god-like wrath,” Sero answers. “And also about how bad of an idea it is.”

Todoroki sighs. “You’re right--it’s an awful plan. But I needed to distract Bakugou away from the flag, otherwise his pride would make him obsess over being the one to capture it. A head-on approach will never work against their team because their defense will be too strong; they have three close-range fighters as guards. Bakugou’s not stupid, but he *is* impulsive, which can sometimes be the same thing. And, uh, Midoriya brings out the worst in him, so…” Something painful flashes across his features for half a moment before he shrugs, averting his gaze. “They’re both wild cards. If we can isolate them enough, then it’ll be one less thing to worry about.”
Sero whistles, long and low. “Wow. You really understand the enigma of a brain that is Bakugou, huh?”

Another shrug. “I guess? It’s not hard. Bakugou won’t listen to people he doesn’t respect, and he doesn’t respect me. The only way to get him to work with you is to tell him to do something he was already going to do, or to verbally lead him around by the nose until he thinks he’s the one who came up with the idea in the first place.” Todoroki waves an arm, chasing away the thought. “Anyways, the dog’s already loose, so there’s nothing we can do about it now. I know Midoriya can handle him. Probably. Back to our plan…”

---

Shouto isn’t exactly sure where things went wrong.

No, wait, that’s not true--things went wrong the minute he opened his eyes this morning. His first mistake was not immediately crawling back under the covers and sleeping the entire day away. He mourns the loss of the blissful hours of sleep he could be getting right now, rather than dealing with this.

You see, the thing is, Shouto’s getting really sick of the sudden increase of explosions in his life. The mall incident was bad enough as it was, what with his lack of control over his quirk and the amount of victims trapped inside the store. Not to mention the absolute nightmare of a quirk that caused the whole body-swapping fiasco in the first place.

But this? Oh, this is so much worse--now he has no reliable quirk at all, unless he wants to risk ripping Midoriya’s limbs right out of their sockets; and to make matters worse, he now has the human equivalent of a nuclear pipe-bomb with the anger-management skills of a tantrum-throwing toddler actively trying to blow his skin clean off, all while shouting expletives that would probably even make Endeavor grow red in the face.

“Get the fuck back here, Deku! I’ll end you!”

I’m not even supposed to be the one capturing the flag, Shouto thinks, somewhat bitterly. The red fabric is tied tightly around his wrist, as safe as he can manage to keep it considering the circumstances. It’s cutting off circulation to his already-stiff right hand, but if Midoriya can deal with those scars on a daily basis then so can Shouto.

This whole exercise had been a mess from the beginning. It had been disconcerting, at first, when the opposing teams had split up to talk about their plans of attack, and Todoroki’s team had instantly rounded on him for advice and guidance. He knew that Midoriya’s leadership skills were highly valued by the class (he was originally voted class president for a reason, after all), but he didn’t anticipate the sheer amount of dependency they had for him. Shouto had kind of thought he was the only one who relied so heavily on Midoriya’s good nature, but evidently that’s not the case.

It’s not that his classmates aren’t capable, but Midoriya’s schemes are infamous for the sheer amount of chaos and mayhem they cause--and yet, somehow, they almost always work. Shouto’s not sure if he’s a genius or if he’s absolutely batshit insane. It’s probably a healthy mixture of both.

That being said, Shouto would like to think he has a head on his shoulders as well--and while he doesn’t have the same gravity that Midoriya has that causes others to helplessly fall into his orbit, he’d like to think he makes an okay leader, too.

“Just tell us what you need us to do!” Hagakure had chirped, giving him two ecstatic thumbs up through her gloves.
The plan was originally a stealth mission, with Hagakure and Tokoyami as their “undercover agents”, which Kaminari insisted they called them. That is, that was the plan until Shouto casually revealed that he was currently without a functional quirk. He had to scramble for an excuse they would find believable, but after that was cleared away Tokoyami had suggested that Shouto should accompany them on their hunt for the flag.

“Should we fall wayward of our goal, it would be wise to have you as our third, Midoriya,” he had clipped. “If nothing else, you can serve as a distraction.”

“Yeah,” Kaminari had added. “Not like you can do much to protect our flag, anyways, dude. Uh, no offense.”

It was probably for the best, too--Hagakure and Tokoyami had ‘fallen wayward’ almost immediately. The three of them had entered the building that sheltered the enemy's flag, only to be greeted by a room absolutely mummified with tape. It looked almost like Sero’s elbows had exploded--which, considering who else was on their team, seemed likely.

The strangest thing was that the room was empty of people--no guards to protect their flag, and no obvious traps besides Sero’s tape. It had Midoriya’s stink all over it, but they didn’t have the time to hesitate.

Hagakure had tried to navigate through the tape first, insisting that she could sneak through without giving away her position in case of an ambush. There was complete silence for a heavy moment as she (presumably--he couldn’t exactly see her, after all) made her way towards the flag—all before a stray piece of tape snagged her and revealed her position and Midoriya descended from the heavens like a fucking spider.

“Gotcha!”

Midoriya was helplessly tangled in Sero’s web, but at that point, so was Hagakure—they tussled in the mess until Midoriya had successfully trapped Hagakure with him, her invisible form covered head to toe with tape.

Tokoyami immediately made to help her, Dark Shadow already swiping a path through the dangling pieces of tape that were in the way, but only made it so far before a brilliant beam of light shot at him from--goddamnit, again?--the ceiling.

The scene that had followed was the most life-threatening disco rave that Shouto had ever had the displeasure of experiencing. Which isn’t saying much because Shouto’s never actually been to a rave, but he’s, like, seventy-eight percent sure they don’t typically involve lethal belly-button lasers shooting at you from where their user is taped elegantly to the ceiling.

It was with terrifying clarity at that moment that Shouto realized that Midoriya knew exactly who they would send to retrieve the flag, and planned accordingly--tape to tag Hagakure, and Aoyama’s lasers to pacify Dark Shadow. The room was in chaos between Midoriya and Hagakure’s frantic wiggling and the laser light show Dark Shadow was having to dodge, so Shouto took advantage and snagged the flag from its pedestal while everyone else was subdued.

Looking back, maybe he should have stayed behind and helped his teammates. It would have saved him from being personally hunted down by Bakugou like a wounded deer.

"I swear to god, I’m going to punch you in the face so hard that your entire molecular makeup will change and turn you into a fucking snail!"

“That’s not even physically possible,” Shouto mutters under his breath, skidding across the ground
as he makes a sharp turn to avoid Bakugou’s explosions. He’s been trying to make a mad-dash for
his team’s home base ever since he swiped the flag, but he’s not nearly as fast as Midoriya with
his Full Cowl activated, and he’s much slower than the extra-spicy Bakugou who is insistent on
riding right up to Shouto’s ass at the moment. Snaking in between blows is only going to lengthen
his lifespan by that much.

“God damn it!” There’s another telltale sound of cracking and popping that forewarns the
explosions to come, and Shouto twists his head to the left just as a fiery fist comes up from behind
and grazes across Shouto’s right cheek. “Stop avoiding me, you bastard, I know you can take a
punch!”

It’s… Highly probable that Bakugou is referring to Midoriya’s insane amount of pain tolerance,
but a deep twist in Shouto’s gut leads him to believe there’s an underlying message in Bakugou’s
words. He’s not really sure he wants to know.

Honestly, Shouto is amazed he made it this far without any of Bakugou’s fists connecting--there’s
only so much dodging a person can do with their back turned to their attacker, after all, and so
Shouto can’t even feel surprised when Bakugou bluffs a kick to the shin and manages to surprise
him with a knee to his spine instead.

He feels his entire back pop into place with the impact, his body settling around the shock as it
tries to absorb the worst of it, but it’s still enough to knock the wind out of his lungs and send him
tumbling across the ground. He doesn’t even get the chance to right himself before calloused
hands are picking him up by the collar, lifting him up into the air.

“You spineless ingrate,” Bakugou spits, violently rattling Shouto in the air like he weighs nothing
(which--okay, that’s impressive, he knows from personal experience that Midoriya is not light,
he’s as dense a solid block of lead and just as oblivious). “What the fuck is wrong with you!? You
could have easily dodged that if you used your godforsaken quir--”

He doesn’t get to finish that sentence because Shouto’s kind of done with being shook around like
a wet piece of paper, thanks, so he does the only natural thing to do in this situation--and smashes
his skull directly against Bakugou’s face.

Bakugou immediately loosens his grip on Shouto’s collar, and he drops back to the floor just as
Bakugou takes a step back to cradle his wounded head and pride. And--geez, wow, Midoriya’s
head must actually be dense after all, because that barely even hurt. His forehead stings with the
contact, but it’s hardly debilitating. And, more importantly, it gave him the edge he needed to
actually get away from Bakugou, so that’s a plus. Shouto swerves on his heel, making for home
base once again--

--but Bakugou intercepts by propelling himself into the air with his explosions, flipping over
Shouto and landing directly in front of him, nitroglycerin sweat beading on his brow as he lifts up
his hands to shoot a massive explosion directly at Shouto’s gut, shot point-blank.

Shouto thought he knew heat--but not like this. His quirk gives him some sort of resistance to
extreme temperatures, and while he certainly isn’t immune to burns, he has grown something of a
tolerance for them over the years. Perhaps it’s a twisted benefit of having someone such as
Endeavor as a father.

But Midoriya, for all that he must have suffered having grown up as a ‘friend’ of Bakugou’s, has
no such advantage--no real quirk to rely on to protect himself from the worst of the flames like
Shouto had. As it is, Shouto feels heat, real heat, for what might actually be the first time in his
life--and he burns.
It sizzles across his skin and eats through Midoriya’s jumpsuit almost immediately, and the air is thick with smoke and scorched so hot that it burns Shouto’s lungs as he is immediately forced to gasp for air. It takes all the strength in his body to stay upright and weather the blow, and the ground leaves a trail behind his feet as he’s pushed backwards even with his heels dug deep in.

“Hah?” Bakugou breathes, body low to the ground and looking ready to pounce. “What’s the big idea, Deku?” He spits the name like a curse, fingers twitching like he wants to grab the name from the air and choke it out of existence. “You hide your shitty quirk from me for all those years, and it’s now that you decide to hold back!? Quit jerkin’ me around!”

_He doesn’t even care about the flag._ Shouto realizes, awareness creeping through the pain. _He probably didn’t even care about it in the first place._

Bakugou advances again, and Shouto barely manages to avoid an explosion to the face—it sets off right next to his ear, and for a dizzying moment all he can hear is the deafening ringing, and it’s just like the mall all over again.

Between being flopped around like a dead fish, receiving a bomb to the kidneys, and being thrown across the ground like an old sack of potatoes, the pain makes him sloppy—but years of gruesome training has made him an expert at working through it, and instincts carved into his very being alone is what keeps Shouto on his feet as Bakugou continues his relentless attacks.

“You lookin’ down on me, Deku? Think you’re so much better than me that you don’t even need your quirk to take me on?” Bakugo sneers, his words as explosive as his fists, seething and charred around the edges like he’s breathing ashes and fire. “You think you deserve to be here just because you fooled everyone else into thinking you’re not a worthless worm hiding in the dirt?”

Surrounded by flames, it’s only natural that something angry sparks inside Shouto’s chest. His next words are poison, and he really should swallow them before he makes the situation even worse but he can’t help but let them claw out of his mouth, because otherwise it’ll fester inside and kill him slowly. “You know,” he sneers, eyes squinting into slits, “despite what you seem to think, not everything is about you, Bakugou.”

At the sound of his name, Bakugou physically recoils, teeth grinding so hard that Shouto can hear it above the ringing in his ears. His pupils shrink, eyes turning feral, and suddenly his fingers spark as he shoves Shouto against the wall of the nearest building, effectively trapping him. Shouto doesn’t try to fight it, because his compliance will only further irritate Bakugou, and apparently he’s pushing to see how far he can go.

“You got a death wish or somethin’, nerd? Are you looking to get maimed?” Bakugou presses a steaming hand against Shouto’s already burnt stomach, and the pain flares all the way to his nerves. He curls his toes and locks his jaw, refusing to give Bakugou the satisfaction.

“I could take you any day,” he says, because it’s true of both himself and Midoriya. He has no doubt that if Midoriya ever chose to stoop to his level, Bakugou would be nothing but an ugly stain on his ridiculous bright red boots.

Something in Bakugou finally detonates. His fingers curl, digging painfully into Shouto’s skin, and his free hand reels back to prepare for a blow. “Then fucking prove it!”

Instinctively, Shouto calls upon his ice, willing it to shield him, before he remembers that it’s not there at all—instead, something like adrenaline courses through his veins, surging him with overwhelming energy and power, and even through the pain he feels it collect in his knuckles—hot blood and destruction coiled tightly in his skin, he moves to strike, to defend, to _protect_—
--no, no, no, wait, he can’t, he promised--

He hesitates. A buzzer sounds out from above, All Might’s voice booming after it. “The flag has been captured! Team A wins!”

Bakugou’s fist connects with his face, and Shouto blacks out.

Chapter End Notes

"but kaz, wouldn't todoroki and co. easily see midoriya's ambush hiding for them on the ceiling?" the answer is no, are you kidding? these are the same kids that didn't even see uraraka float a literal ton of boulders above bakugous head until nearly right before she buried the bastard alive. god bless.

anyways uhh im a bit nervous about this chapter, specifically bc of the group chat bit. i know thats not everyones thing, but its my guilty pleasure when they're done correctly. depending on feedback, i might do more, or i might get rid of it entirely. the future is full of surprises!
The first thing Shouto hears when he blearily blinks back into consciousness is an empathetic, “Oh my god, my nose!”

His face twitches slightly as he tries to regain his bearings, which is a mistake because even the subtlest movements are enough to make the pain flare up tremendously. Everything is way too bright, and Shouto has to squint to keep the sun from further blinding his vision; the ground feels solid against his back, but the world is spinning around him so fast that he almost wishes it was possible to lay down harder.

His arm feels like deadweight as he makes an effort to lift it and probe at his face, assessing the damage, but a cold hand grabs his wrist before he manages to touch anything. And then the sun above him is blotted out by his own face, which takes up the entirety of his blurry vision.

“Don’t touch,” Midoriya warns, voice surprisingly stern.

“Nng,” he agrees. And then, because all of his thoughts are drifting into a deep haze and his brain-to-mouth filter is currently out of commission, he asks, “Did I win?”

Midoriya snorts, something of a wry smile betraying the worried look on his face. “Uh, no, I would say not.”

“Oh.” Well, that’s just great. He probably should have guessed as much due to the unfortunate circumstances of his awakening, really. “How long was I out?”

Midoriya shrugs, his shoulders dropping in and out of the peripherals of his vision. “Dunno. Not long. Few minutes, I guess. Bakugou must’ve left you here right after the game was called. Here,” he says, letting go of Shouto’s wrist in favor of cradling the back of his head. The whole area feels raw to touch, and Shouto can’t help but cringe at the movement. Midoriya then gingerly lifts Shouto’s head and shuffles himself beneath him before laying him back down into his lap. “Uraraka should be here in a minute,” he explains. “I can ask her to use her quirk on you so we can bring you to All Might easier, but until then we gotta keep the blood flowing out of your nose or else you’ll choke.”

“I c’n walk,” Shouto slurs, melting into Midoriya’s lap despite himself. He can feel the heat difference of his thighs through the jumpsuit he wears, and the cool wafts of air that Midoriya is unwittingly giving off dulls the edge of the sharp headache he’s sporting.

“Not with a concussion, you can’t,” Midoriya mutters, sounding somewhat bitter. Shouto’s eyes close, suddenly too exhausted to keep them open, and when he licks his lips he tastes the blood.
that’s dripping out of his nose. “God,” Midoriya sighs, shifting above him. Two hands gently cup Shouto’s cheeks, thumbs rubbing softly under his eyes. “Bakugou really did a number on your face. I think your nose might be broken.”

“Mm,” Shouto hums, unabashedly enjoying the way Midoriya rubs circles around the edge of the pain. The movement helps his sinuses clear, and even though it hurts to breathe out of his nose, at least it loosens the tension in his forehead a little. “‘Ms’rry.”

Midoriya scoffs, and Shouto can feel his body jostle beneath him. “What are you sorry for? I’m the one that sent Bakugou after you.”

“Let ‘im fuck up your face,” he mutters, guilt suddenly overriding everything else. He just let Bakugou punch him, what the hell was he thinking? Why didn’t he fight back? Eventually Midoriya is going to get his body back and it’s going to be in a million pieces, and for once it’s not going to be his fault.

“Yeah, well, I’m the one who told him to do it,” he retorts. Midoriya sighs something fierce, and his face is bent over close enough to Shouto’s that he can feel the way the frost drops like a blanket over his face. It feels nice against his nose. “Todoroki, I’m so sorry, I didn’t think he would…” The pads of his thumbs stop moving for a moment and his fingers twitch. “No, I should’ve known better. I did know better,” he mumbles, resuming the soft strokes. “That’s no excuse, I knew--and I still--god, Todoroki, I’m sorry.”

With no small amount of effort, Shouto lifts a lazy hand and cups it around one of the hands on his cheeks. He opens his eyes, blinking rapidly as he adjusts, startled for a moment with how close Midoriya has bent himself and how intense his gaze is as he looks over Shouto’s nose. “Hey,” he says, tapping against Midoriya’s warm hand. “Stop that.”

Immediately, Midoriya’s hands fly away from Shouto’s face, and he leans away. Blindly, Shouto waves his hand around to look for Midoriya’s, because no, that’s not what he wanted at all, he likes the way Midoriya touches him--all soft and tender, like he’s something worth being gentle with.

(Later, when the worst of the concussion is kissed away, he’ll be embarrassed with how shamelessly he had sought out Midoriya’s touch; but for now, his usual inhibitions are quieted by the hollow thrum of wantwantwant and touchmeplease that prevails over the clouded fog in his mind, and he seeks out Midoriya as if it’s the most natural thing to do.)

He finds one of Midoriya’s hands and grips it. “Stop apologizing for Bakugou,” he says, trying to make his words sound more like steel and less like syrup. The concussion makes his tongue feel droopy and thick, but it’s hardly the first time he’s been thrown up against a wall. He sincerely doubts it’ll be the last.

Midoriya swallows, gently squeezing Shouto’s hand. “I… Sorry,” he whispers, turning his gaze away. “I-I mean, I… I’m…” He makes a frustrated noise in the back of his throat, grimacing. “We should get you to All Might,” he says at last, giving Shouto one last squeeze. “Do you think you can stand?”

Honestly, Shouto’s having a hard enough time laying down, and standing seems like such a foreign concept to him that he might as well be a fish--but Midoriya looks like he’s desperate for a distraction, and frankly Shouto is both too whipped and too concussed to say no.

So, that’s a solid, “Maybe.”
Clumsily, Midoriya helps him to his feet, and Shouto has to lean heavily against him when the world decides to drop out from underneath his feet. He’s pretty sure he’s getting blood all over Midoriya, and he would apologize, but it is his jumpsuit and it’s not like he cares if it gets dirty. Just as the two of them are about to take their first few steps out of the training center, Uraraka comes bolting around the corner, waving a flag excitedly in the air.

“Todoroki, it worked!” She yells, bounding over to the two of them. “Your plan worked! After Deku grabbed the flag I went and—” she stops, suddenly, face blanching when she takes in Shouto’s state. “—oh my god, Deku, your face! What happened?”

“Bakugou,” Shouto grunts, feeling Midoriya’s muscles tense from where his arm is looped around his waist to steady him. He’d be glad to leave it at that, since his nose isn’t getting any less broken while they’re standing around out here, but something that Uraraka said sticks out in his mind. “Wait, hold on--you wanted me to grab your flag?”

“Er, yeah,” Midoriya says, looking sheepish. “I mean, not... Not you, exactly, but yes. The best time to take down the villain is when they think they’ve won, you know? Plus, without a flag to guard, we had more people to spare that otherwise would have been wasted on defence.” He shrugs, and then tightens his grip on Shouto when the movement makes him falter slightly. “You grabbed the flag, we tied Hagakure and Tokoyami to the ceiling, and then we stormed your team as a full unit--uh, sans Bakugou, who was, um. Keeping you occupied.”

“Anyways,” he continues, shakily, “Ojiro and Kaminari are decent fighters, but four against two is bad odds.”

“You... You tied them to the ceiling?”

“Dark Shadow could have easily gotten them out of Sero’s tape, otherwise,” Uraraka points out. God, Midoriya is terrifying, honestly. He’s way too smart for his own good.

Of course, he follows that train of thought by actually mumbling, “You’re too smart,” out loud, because his brain is still laying in a puddle on the floor where he left it when Midoriya cradled his head in his lap.

Midoriya just scoffs. “Not smart enough,” he mutters, his tone harsh. “If I was smart I wouldn’t have sent Bakugou after you.”

“I told you it wasn’t a good idea,” Uraraka remarks, no small amount of scolding in her voice.

“And I told you to stop apologizing,” Shouto retorts, voice edged with annoyance. Why does everyone insist on blaming everyone but Bakugou for his behavior? “Look, my nose hurts. Can we please just get out of here?”

“Wow, touchy,” Uraraka teases, leaning up against Shouto’s other side to support him more. She presses five fingers delicately across his chest, and immediately Shouto feels weightless, and both Uraraka and Midoriya hold him by his arms to keep him from floating off. “Fair enough, though, I suppose,” she continues, leading the two of them forward. “Todoroki, you should get your eye checked out, too, since Deku’s definitely going to end up in Recovery Girl’s office anyways.”

It’s much easier to walk when you’re floating several inches off the ground, so Shouto focuses on Midoriya’s eye instead. He hadn’t noticed it at first, but his right eye is swollen shut, dark blood pooling underneath the skin in the dip of his eyelid, promising the beginnings of a bright purple bruise. Between that and the scar, Shouto can’t imagine how difficult a time he’s having trying to see things clearly.
After a moment of being addressed with the wrong name, Midoriya startles. “Oh, me?” he asks, looking between Shouto and Uraraka. “No, I’m fine. Hagakure got me with an elbow while we were tussling earlier. It’s just a black eye.”

Shouto frowns at him, trying to muster as much of his ‘No-Nonsense’ look into his expression as he can handle with a broken nose. It must not be very effective, because Midoriya looks right back at him with a dead expression that Shouto believes is the ‘You Stopped Being Intimidating When I Saw You Run Into A Pole, Once’ look.

“Don’t look at me like that,” Midoriya scolds. “Worry about your own face.”

“I am worrying about my own face,” Shouto mutters, just under his breath. Midoriya huffs a laugh, and to his left Uraraka gives them a confused look.

“How do you two always manage to end up in the middle of all the chaos?” She grumbles, picking up the pace. “C’mon, I’m sure we’re the last ones off the field. All Might’s probably waiting for us, and intuition tells me he’s going to have something to say about all this.”

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Sure enough, as soon as the three of them regroup with the rest of the class, All Might descends upon them with several somethings to say about all this.

“Young Midoriya! That’s quite the face you’re sporting there. Are you alright?”

Todoroki shrugs, causing Izuku to lose his grip on his weightless body for a moment. Uraraka adjusts them both before they lose Todoroki to the ceiling. When he answers, his voice is nasally through his broken nose and the blood. “Can’t complain,” he says, which strikes Izuku as funny, because he can find a lot of things for Todoroki to complain about at the moment. But it’s not like Izuku can call him out or anything, because it’s a very Izuku-like thing to say. Figures.

“Right,” All Might nods, probably expecting as much. “Well, be that as it may, I still think another visit to Recovery Girl is in order--”

“Another?” Uraraka squeaks.

“--but first,” All Might continues, undeterred, “I must confess, we didn’t have the comms set up for this exercise, and I couldn’t hear what you and Young Bakugou were… discussing. Why didn’t you use your quirk to stop him?”

It’s as close to a scolding that All Might is ever going to dish out for this kind of thing, which Izuku is grateful for because he knows Todoroki is going to get an earful from Recovery Girl when she sets his nose. That being said, if either Uraraka or All Might notice him freeze up, they don’t comment on it. His brain scrambles for a believable excuse, but luckily Todoroki’s already speaking.

“Both Todoroki and I were involved in an incident that put us under the influence of a strange quirk yesterday,” he says easily, looking All Might straight in the eyes as he not-quite lies. “It amplifies our quirks by a dangerous amount. I was hoping to avoid using my quirk until I knew for sure that it’s worn off.”

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“Oh, clever. It’s not exactly the truth--the amplification quirk was limited by range, not by time--but it’s close enough to the truth that they can probably get away with it until they both get the chance to safely practice their new powers.
“Oh!” Uraraka gasps, turning to Izuku. “Todoroki, is that what you were saying earlier when you were talking about your quirk being out of commission? That makes so much sense, now!”

Wait, did Izuku forget to tell his team that he was essentially quirkless for that exercise? Fuck, he’s an idiot. Who let him be in charge? “Uh, yeah. That’s why I went after Hagakure instead of Tokoyami.” That, and Izuku is still trying to get used to essentially being half-blind in everything that he does. It’s been a drastic adjustment, and his reflexes would have definitely suffered for it if he hadn’t compensated by pitting himself against an opponent that was already invisible.

“I see,” All Might hums, looking thoughtful. Izuku’s only seen All Might frown in his muscular form once, but he’s sure that if he wasn’t powered up he would be frowning at Todoroki something fierce right about now. He places a large hand on Todoroki’s shoulder, and the weight of that alone pushes him back down several inches to the floor from where he was hovering. “My boy, this is the kind of stuff the teachers need to know about beforehand. While it would have still been required for you to participate in the activities, your injuries might have been better prevented. I expect more from you in the future.”

The words aren’t even directed specifically at Izuku, and his heart still shrinks three sizes. It’s not often that All Might is so blatantly disappointed in him, but on the rare occasion that it does happen the guilt is enough to wilt him into a tiny shame-raisin. He’d probably be crying right about now if he was actually in his own body, receiving the blunt of the scolding.

At first glance, Todoroki seems to be unaffected, but Izuku can see the way his lower lip tightens as if to lock his blank expression on his face. “Sorry, All Might,” he says, voice quiet. “I’ll be more transparent in the future.”

“That’s all I ask,” All Might says, smile broadening ever-so-slightly. “Now why don’t you and Young Todoroki go and get checked out by Recovery Girl? I need a moment to talk to Young Bakugou, so if you hurry you might be able to make it back in time to watch Teams C and D run through their simulation.”

Izuku’s about to decline needing to see Recovery Girl--he’s only got a black eye, so he’s fine, really, even if it’s hard to see--but then he remembers that Recovery Girl is one of the few people that also knows of All Might’s secret, and he’d rather not risk her telling anything incriminating to Todoroki while he’s not around. Besides, he doesn’t think Todoroki is in the best of shape to make it to Recovery Girl’s office on his own.

“Alright,” he agrees, adjusting Todoroki’s arm on his shoulder. “Let’s go.”

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Uraraka releases her quirk on Todoroki before they leave for the nurse, which means Izuku is in a position where he has to basically drag his own body down the hallways while half-blind, which is an interesting process.

“There’s a step there,” Todoroki helpfully says, only after Izuku manages to stumble over his feet and almost tips both of them over.

“I noticed,” Izuku bites out, trying to quell his frustration. He was hoping Todoroki wouldn’t notice how badly his blind eye is bothering him, since he’s sure it’s a touchy subject; most things regarding his scar are, after all.

“Can you even see anything?” Todoroki asks, sounding faintly amused--which he really shouldn’t be, considering the fact that his immediate well-being rests in Izuku’s incapable hands. He’s
tempted to lead them both into a wall and see how smug he sounds then.

“I can see enough,” he replies, which is a half-truth. Todoroki’s scarred eye isn’t completely blind, and the eye that Hagakure elbowed isn’t completely swollen. But what really tips the scales in his favor is the fact that Izuku could probably walk the path to Recovery Girls office in his sleep—an achievement he really shouldn’t be proud over, but an achievement nonetheless.

“Sure,” Todoroki murmurs, not sounding the least bit convinced. He’s quiet for a moment before he tentatively asks, “... Did you know about my eye before all of this?”

Izuku gives him a strange look, raising an eyebrow. “You’re awfully talkative for a guy whose nose is bent out of shape.”

“Concussion,” Todoroki reminds him, stumbling for a moment. And, alright, that makes sense. Izuku already has a terrible filter as it is, but the few times he’s gotten concussions have been absolute nightmares for the sole reason that his brain-to-mouth mechanism stops functioning entirely, and everything in his brain comes tumbling off his tongue before he can even think to stop it. Izuku wonders how much of that is true of Todoroki, and how much of that is just Izuku’s brain falling into old habits.

“... No,” Izuku finally answers. “I didn’t know.”

Todoroki makes a noncommittal noise of surprise, glancing at him.

“I realized that you always tended to favor your right side in battle,” Izuku explains, adjusting his grip on Todoroki, “but I always assumed it was because you weren’t that comfortable with your fire yet. It never occurred to me that it could be a disability of any kind. In hindsight, it makes a lot more sense, since you’ve had to completely adjust your fighting style to compensate for it; ignoring the catch-up you’ve had to do with your fire quirk, you haven’t let it hinder you at all.” Izuku turns his head, staring at Todoroki head-on in order to flash him one of his biggest smiles. “You’re so impressive, Todoroki.”

It’s hard to tell with how blurry everything is, but he thinks he sees Todoroki squint at him. “O-oh,” he breathes, stopping in his tracks. Izuku has to correct-course before Todoroki sends both of them falling to floor. “... Don’t do that with my face,” he mutters, voice slurring. “It’s uncanny.”

“What, smiling?” Izuku snorts, pulling Todoroki back into movement. “I like it when you smile, though,” he says before he can really think about what he’s saying. “It looks good on you.”

Todoroki makes some sort of noise that Izuku doesn’t know how to identify—it sounds almost pained. Izuku hopes he didn’t accidentally jostle his burn without realizing it. “My face isn’t used to it. You’re going to crack it open, or something.”

“Nah,” Izuku hums, continuing to smile cheekily. “I’m just warming it up for when you get your body back.”

“My cheeks are going to be so sore,” Todoroki laments, rubbing at his freckles with his free hand as if he can already feel it.

“I’m pretty sure your cheeks should be the least of your worries right now,” Izuku points out, suddenly remembering exactly whose office they’re going to. “Recovery Girl is probably going to have a fit when she sees you.”

The two of them reach the door to her office just then, and Todoroki does nothing but groan before he knocks on the door, dooming himself to his fate.
Shouto probably didn’t need to lean on Midoriya the entire way to Recovery Girl’s office—this was hardly his first concussion, after all, and his broken nose and burned gut didn’t hinder his legs in the slightest—but Midoriya made for a nice human crutch, and Shouto wasn’t in a position to be denying himself the simple things. Besides, being so close to Midoriya was just… nice.

That’s partly why he’s so grateful when Midoriya sits right next to him on the same bed, close enough that their sides are pressed up against each other. Not only does the contact continue to be nice, but it also gives Shouto something to focus on that isn’t Recovery Girl’s energetic chastising or the throbbing pain in his face.

“That reckless, ignorant buffoon,” she gripes, digging through drawers of medical supplies. “Doesn’t he have the faintest idea on how to show any restraint? Just because I’m here doesn’t mean he gets to send his students into my office every single time he refuses to stop a match from going too far! I’m not as youthful as I used to be—once of these days I’m going to have to retire, and then what? You kids are going to be sprawled out and bleeding all over Yuuei’s front lawn and no one is going to do a damn thing about it.”

Shouto gulps, and it tastes faintly like blood. “It wasn’t all All Might’s fault,” he says, still thinking about how reluctant people are to blame Bakugou for this.

“Oh, don’t think you aren’t getting out of the dog house either, young man,” Recovery Girl chides, slamming the medicine drawer shut. “You’re just lucky you aren’t in here because of your quirk again, or else I’d have half a mind to send you right back to class as is. But no, that would make me the irresponsible one.” She hobbles over to where the two of them are sitting, and shines a small light into both of Shouto’s eyes, and he tries not to blink. It’s way too bright. “Can you breathe through your nose at all?”

“No,” he says, trying his best to not sound downright miserable.

The wrinkles on Recovery Girl’s face deepen with distaste. “Figured as much.” She sets down the light on the counter, and then turns to gently poke at Shouto’s nose. “I’m going to have to set everything back into place before I can use my quirk on you,” she warns. “It’s not going to be pleasant.”

Injuries that require Recovery Girl’s aid hardly ever are, but the way Midoriya subtly leans into Shouto’s side definitely makes it tolerable. “That’s fine.”

The whole process takes maybe less than a minute under Recovery Girl’s trained fingers. Shouto grits his teeth and bears it, faintly thinking that he should be in a lot more pain than he actually is. By the time Recovery Girl ends her work with a wet kiss on the cheek, he’s barely even made a sound.

“I had to focus most of your healing into your face, but your burn shouldn’t be an issue at this point,” Recovery Girl informs him. “That being said, your nose is still going to feel a bit tender for a while, and the effects of your concussion can really only be helped through time and rest. Until then, my professional advice is to avoid getting punched in the face.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Shouto sighs, exhaustion seeping all the way down into his bones. He slumps to the side, leaning heavily on Midoriya and greatly debating whether or not he can get away with taking a quick power nap on his shoulder.

“Hey,” Midoriya says. “Stop that. You still have dried blood caked all over your face.”
“Didn’t seem to bother you earlier,” he mutters, leaning on Midoriya anyways. Both of their hero suits are pretty mucked up at the moment, so he doesn’t see what the big deal is.

“Mm,” Recovery Girl hums, directing her attention to Midoriya. “I trust you’ll make sure Midoriya makes it to class well enough to clean himself up?” She follows her question up with a slight peck to his cheek, and Midoriya blinks several times as the swelling in his eye gradually fades away.

“Yeah,” he agrees, absentmindedly poking at the skin under his healed eye. “I wanted to watch the other two teams capture the flag if we could, but we’ll probably have to… Oh my god.” Shouto can feel Midoriya stiffen from where he’s leaning against his shoulder, his posture instantly rigid.

Recovery Girl gives him a concerned look. “Is something the matter?”

“Uh. No.” Midoriya takes a deep breath, but Shouto can still feel a sudden pulse of heat waft off of his left side. “Sorry, I’m fine. Do you need anything else from us before we go?”

She doesn’t look all that convinced, but she shakes her head anyways. “Not from you, no. But be sure to let that big lug of a teacher know that I’ll have a few choice words to give him when class is over with today.”

“Uh, will do,” Midoriya says, looking anxious to get out the door.

“Thanks for your help,” Shouto adds, following Midoriya’s lead.

“I’d tell you not to make a habit of it, but we both know it’s too late for that,” Recovery Girl chides, wagging a disapproving finger at him. “Now shoo, before I decide to scold you further.”

Midoriya practically zooms out the door, tugging along an increasingly confused Shouto by the hem of his burnt sleeve. It’s not until the two of them are out of earshot of Recovery Girl’s office that he slows down, and by then Shouto notices the furious red tint across Midoriya’s cheeks.

“Midoriya?” he asks, tentatively reaching for his shoulder. “What’s wrong?”

Midoriya flinches away from the touch just as a spurt of smoke erupts from his skin. He curses under his breath, distancing himself from Shouto as he swats at the smoke with his right hand. “Shit, not again--”

Shouto makes a hesitant step towards him, intending to help somehow, but the heat only grows stronger the closer he gets. “H-hold on,” Midoriya grits out as he tries to fan away the flames. “God, this is--this is so embarrassing.”

“Midoriya,” Shouto places two hands on Midoriya’s shoulders, forcing him to quiet his anxious mumbling. “What’s wrong?”

Midoriya groans, dipping his head down to avoid looking at Shouto. “It’s just… The locker
room… We’re going to have to clean up, and that means… The showers…”

Oh.

Shouto takes a deep breath through his nose, thankful that it’s no longer broken, and forces a facade of calm over his face. “It’s… It’s not that big of a deal. I mean, we had to change into each other’s hero outfits earlier,” he reasons.

“Yeah, but we didn’t have to completely strip for that,” Midoriya retorts, before blushing to his roots. His eye twitches, and Shouto can tell that it’s taking everything in him to avoid combusting on the spot. “I-I mean, I guess we could, uh, shower in our boxers, but then it’ll probably make our uniforms wet and that’s just uncomfortable, so maybe I could get away with washing my hair in the sink? I have deodorant in my locker, so that could help, but you bled all over yourself so you definitely have to take a shower no matter what, which--uh--that’s, that’s fine, I don’t mind if-

“Midoriya,” Shouto says, voice stern, shaking him slightly by the shoulders to snap him out of it. “What… What exactly is it about the situation that makes you uncomfortable?”

“Everything!” Midoriya exclaims, wide-eyed with distress. “This is so just--it’s beyond me! I feel like I’m… Like I’m invading your privacy, or taking advantage of you, and making you uncomfortable, and just--just making everything incredibly awkward.” He carelessly drags a hand through his bangs, anxiously messing up the white-red line that splits him down the middle. “You’re… You’re my best friend, Todoroki. Best friends don’t--don’t shower together, or see each other naked, or--or…” He cuts himself off, squeezing his eyes shut with frustration. “I guess--I guess what I’m getting at is that this whole situation is just--its just--just so stupid. I’m… I’m really bad at this, and I hate that I feel like I’m messing things up with you.”

Shouto swallows, his mouth feeling dry. *Best friend.* Midoriya called him his best friend. He didn’t even hesitate. Shouto feels like he has ants running under all of his skin.

He’s not good at this; he *knows* he’s not good at this. He’s not good at using his words in a way that might comfort other people. But he wants to be. Midoriya is probably the most important person in Shouto’s life--save for his mother and his sister--and even after they both return to their own bodies Shouto wants to continue to be that person to Midoriya. To continue being someone he considers his best friend.

Shouto closes his eyes, mulling over his thoughts and thinking carefully about what he wants to say before he says it. Whatever he says, it has to be good. He wills the anxious noodling of emotions in his gut to untangle itself before he speaks, comforted by the knowledge that Midoriya is just as unsure and panicked as he is.

“I’m not going to lie and say that I’m not uncomfortable,” he begins, and Midoriya flinches as if he’s received a physical blow. “But,” Shouto continues, squeezing Midoriya’s shoulders in what he hopes to be a reassuring manner, “that has everything to do with the situation we’re in and nothing to do with anything you did. It’s not like any of this was your fault.”

“But I--”

“This wasn’t your fault,” Shouto repeats sternly. “And just because it’s uncomfortable doesn’t mean it’s... bad. It just means... we have to figure it out. It’s just me, and it’s just you, and we’re friends first, before anything else. We’ve been through worse, so... We can definitely get through this.”

It takes a while for Midoriya to respond, and Shouto can hear him breathe long, steady breaths
with purpose. The embarrassed heat that had been coming off his shoulder starts to falter back into something less hot and more warm, and, now composed, he finally lifts his head to meet Shouto’s gaze head-on. “Friends first,” he agrees, voice shaking only a little. “Before anything else.”

Shouto sighs, relief loosening the knot in his gut just the smallest amount.

At that, Shouto finally lets go of the death grip on Midoriya’s shoulders, allowing the tension to slip from his muscles. He’s almost glad that Recovery Girl’s quirk sapped him of all his energy, because now he doesn’t have any energy leftover to feel anxious about this. It’s Midoriya, and it’s easier to think positively around Midoriya, so Shouto lets himself believe that everything is ultimately going to end up okay.

He’s going to bask in the few minutes of relative peace of mind he gets before he inevitably walks into the shower room and has a panic attack, like the hypocrite he is.

Anyways, now that that mental breakdown is done and cleared out of the way… “Does that mean I can finally go to the bathroom?” Shouto asks. “I’ve had to go all afternoon.”

Midoriya snorts, uncertainty lost for the moment, though he still looks flushed with embarrassment. “That is not something I ever thought anyone would ever ask me my permission for,” he says, “but sure, go for it. As long as you clean all of that dried blood off of my body eventually.”

“You say that as if you aren’t covered in your own blood on a daily basis,” Shouto retorts, falling easily back into their normal routine.

“I think I resent that.”

“Only because you know it’s true.”

---

The two of them make it back to class in the middle of Team C and D’s game of capture the flag. The cameras reveal the absolute mayhem on the field—Iida has team D’s flag in hand, but has been slip-and-sliding uncontrollably all over the place thanks to Ashido’s slime; meanwhile, Tsuyu has taken preemptive measures to protect her team’s flag by swallowing it whole, and is now playing a massive game of leapfrog with Satou, Yaoyorozu, and Kirishima, who are all valiantly trying to capture her and bring her back to their own base.

It’s an absolute disaster by almost all standards, and to Izuku… it almost looks like fun?

“Midoriya, Todoroki, my boys! Glad to see you’ve made it back in one piece!” All Might leaves his post from where he stood watching the screens, taking a moment to look the two of them over. “Midoriya, how are you feeling? This is the second time you’ve had to see Recovery Girl today. I take it you must be quite exhausted.”

It’s technically the first time they’ve seen Recovery Girl today, but Todoroki still looks like he’s about ready to fall into a minor coma. “Beats a broken nose,” he shrugs, waiving it off.

“That it does,” All Might agrees, nodding his head. Then he leans in, placing a large hand on Todoroki’s shoulder once again. “If you’re feeling up to it, do you think we could meet up after class? I still need to discuss some things with you.”

“Actually!” Izuku interrupts all too hastily, “Recovery Girl wanted to have a word. With you. After class. Today.”
“O-oh,” All Might says, retracting his hand, and… is he starting to sweat? “Is that so?”

“Yeah,” Todoroki agrees, visibly trying to stifle a yawn. “She called you a ‘reckless, ignorant buffoon’,” he continues, and Izuku elbows him in the rib.

“Oh my.” If All Might wasn’t sweating before, he definitely is now. “If that’s the case, then it’s best not to leave her waiting… I suppose I’ll have to catch up with you later, Young Midoriya. My apologies.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Todoroki says, and Izuku is filled with so much relief that he thinks he can hear actual angel choruses singing from the heavens. “Do you mind if we head to the locker rooms to clean up? My costume has a giant hole in it.”

“Of course! You can ask one of your classmates to catch you up later,” All Might says, just as the cameras show Iida slip-and-sliding directly into a wall at full speed. There’s a chorus of empathetic ‘oooh’s’ among the students as they circle around the display. “That’s my cue,” All Might sighs, before returning to his post as the responsible adult.

The two of them retreat to the locker room fairly quickly after that.

It takes a lot of mental hype before Izuku can work up the nerve to go through with it; he almost wishes that Todoroki’s scar would itch again just so he would have something to divert his nerves with, but Recovery Girl’s quirk unknowingly tempered the worst of it when she healed his black eye, so there’s no such luck.

He can’t put it off forever, though, so eventually Izuku steels himself to taking the fastest shower known to man; he calls for the power of his inner-Iida, quickly and efficiently strips himself without looking, turns the faucet on to the coldest setting to inspire himself to wash everything quicker, and then almost immediately gets distracted by Todoroki’s quirk.

It feels so strange--the second the freezing water runs down Izuku’s back, the ruler-straight border that separates Todoroki’s fire from his ice begins to melt. Izuku can feel the heat disperse from his left side into his right, warming up his entire body until he’s at a comfortable lukewarm temperature.

Experimentally, he turns up the heat, and as soon as steam starts to surround him he can feel the temperature flux in his body again--this time, his right side acts up, cool ice prickling all the way into his fingers, even on his left side. Without the constant sensation of Todoroki’s quirk lining him straight down the middle, Izuku can almost close his eyes and pretend that he’s in his own body.

And that’s all well and good, but right now Izuku is too fascinated by Todoroki’s quirk to care about whose body he’s currently inhabiting right now. He’s done a lot of research into thermodynamics entirely for the sake of playing hypotheticals, and over the last few hours Izuku has learned so much about the inner-workings of Todoroki’s quirk that he just knows he’s going to end up rewriting half of the pages he’s already written about him. His fingers twitch anxiously just thinking about it. His quirk is just… so awe-inspiring.

He’s about to call out to Todoroki to tell him exactly that when he hears the shower next to him turn on, and Todoroki gives out an uncharacteristic yelp.

“... Todoroki? Are you okay?”

“... It’s cold,” he hears him mutter just above the white noise of the water running. Izuku snorts.

“You’re supposed to turn the knob more,” he snarks, knowing full well that Todoroki’s just not
used to dealing with the temperature.

“I know that,” Todoroki replies, sounding typically curt and possibly a little annoyed. Izuku can’t help but smile at that, running his fingers through the locks of his own wet hair.

He thinks that’s the end of it until he hears a quiet, “... You really do have freckles everywhere,” and Izuku almost slips and falls and dies right there.

“T-Todoroki!”

“What? You do.”

---

In the end, Tsuyu gets captured by some glue Yaoyorozu haphazardly made, Team D won the round, and Midoriya still can’t tie Shouto’s tie to save his life. He was thinking about doing it for him, but by the time they both got back into their uniforms some of the other students had started to filter into the locker room, and Shouto was too tired to deal with any more shenanigans than usual. He doesn’t think anyone has mentioned how crooked it is anyways, so at this point Shouto can’t bring himself to care.

Besides--class has finally, blessedly, miraculously ended, and the longest day of Shouto’s high school life is completed. He’d feel more relieved if he could feel anything other than exhausted. He almost forgot how tired Recovery Girl’s quirk makes him feel--how does Midoriya deal with this all the time?

“Do you mind if I call Detective Naomasa while we walk?”

Shouto shakes his head, fishing for Midoriya’s phone in his pocket. The two of them are walking to Midoriya’s apartment, and Shouto is dedicating all of his currently-limited mental power into committing the route to memory, so he doubts he’d be a good at being social right now anyways. He hands the phone to Midoriya. “Go ahead.”

Midoriya taps the phone a few times as he thumbs through his contacts, but he hesitates before clicking the call button, looking pensively at his screen.

“Is something wrong?” Shouto asks.


“... For a phone call?”

“Yes,” Midoriya says, sounding exasperated. “I don’t... I don’t actually know him all that well. I’ve only talked to him, like, two times... maybe three times before? It’s just--he’s probably working, right now, and I feel bad for interrupting...”

Shouto stares at him. “Isn’t this part of his job?”

Midoriya hunches his shoulders. “I... I guess?” He looks down at his phone, thumb still hovering over the call button.

Shouto waits for a long moment, patiently walking side-by-side with Midoriya as he loses himself to a one-sided staring contest with his phone. When it becomes clear that Midoriya isn’t going to make a move any time soon, he speaks up again. “I just don’t see what the problem is.”
“The problem is that I have crippling social anxiety,” Midoriya deadpans, still glaring at the call button as if it had personally offended him.

“Oh,” Shouto says. “I know something that might help.”

Midoriya finally glances up at him, hope sparkling in his eyes. “Really?”

Shouto leans over and taps the call button before Midoriya can stop him.

It would be almost funny how fast Midoriya’s face pales if he weren’t in Shouto’s body--he’s already pale enough as it is. Now he just looks sick. “T-Todoroki!” He exclaims, shooting Shouto the most betrayed look he’s ever seen. “I cannot believe you just--” He’s interrupted by the phone when it rings out once, and then twice, and Midoriya makes an unholy noise. “Oh my god I can’t do this, I have to hang up right now.”

Shouto swats at his hands before he can attempt to do just that. “If you hang up now, it’ll take you another half an hour to work up the nerve to call again,” he says smoothly, ever the voice of reason.

“You don’t know that!” Midoriya yells, sounding indignant.

There’s a click, and a familiar voice cuts the air between them before Midoriya can continue acting offended. “Hello, this is Detective Naomasa speaking.”

“Detective!” Midoriya blurts, fumbling with his phone so hard it almost falls out of his hands. “This--this is, uh, Midoriya Izuku. Sorry to bother you.”

There’s nothing but static on the line for a moment, probably as Detective Naomasa adjusts himself. “... Midoriya?”

“Yes,” he replies, shooting daggers at Shouto with his eyes alone. Unfortunately for him, Shouto’s used to his own face looking aggressive, so the nonverbal threat just bounces right off of him.

“Sorry,” Detective Naomasa says. “It’s just that your voice sounds different on the phone than it does in person.” Midoriya lifts his free hand to rub gently at his throat, looking caught off guard. “No matter. What can I help you with?”

“O-oh. Uh, right. Yesterday, at the mall--you said that you had everyone at the scene document their quirks for you, didn’t you? I was wondering if it was possible for me to get a copy of the list of quirks of everyone involved.”

There’s shuffling on the other end, as if the Detective is going through stacks of papers. “Hm,” he hums, after a moment. “I mean, yes, we have the list--though for security reasons I don’t really believe I should be disclosing the information to just anyone, even if you were involved. Can I ask what you need the information for?”

“Oh.” Midoriya tightens his lips into a thin line, visibly faltering a bit. “It’s just--ah, research, you know? I have a, uh, a hobby of analyzing quirks in my spare time. I like to figure out how they work and how they can be used to their best potential. I just figured...Well, I was just curious, is all.”

There’s a long moment where Shouto realizes he’s holding his breath, waiting to see if that’ll be it, but Detective Naomasa continues to string them along. “... But that’s not the only reason, is it?”

Midoriya sighs, deep and heavy, as if he was expecting that. “No, that's--you’re right. There’s, ah, more to it than that.”
“Care to enlighten me?” Detective Naomasa prompts.

Midoriya puffs out his cheeks, obviously deep in thought. “I… I believe I’m under the effects of someone’s quirk,” he says slowly, eyeing Shouto as if he’s trying to gauge how much is safe to say. “But I’m not entirely… sure. I figured I’d try to look a little bit into the possibilities before I made a fuss about it. And, uh, it’s not like a villain was involved, right? I figured it would be an open case, since there’s really no need to withhold information from the public. I didn’t think it’d be a big deal.”

“That’s true enough,” Naomasa says, voice crinkling over the phone. “I suppose it wouldn’t hurt to give you a list of everyone’s quirks, but for practicalities sake I won’t be disclosing anyone’s personal information besides that. Safety protocols, you understand.”

“Y-yes!” Midoroya exclaims, jostling the phone in his hand slightly with his excitement. “I mean-- yes, that’s fine, I completely understand. The information on the quirks should be more than enough.” He blows a red tuft of hair out of his face, looking relieved. “Thank you for this, really.”

“Of course. I’ll send you an e-mail in a little while.” There’s the sound of tap-tap-tapping on the other end that sounds like a keyboard, and then Detective Naomasa speaks up again. “Midoriya?”

“…Yes?”

“This quirk--the one that you think might be affecting you,” he says. “It’s not causing any trouble, is it?”

Midoriya flounders for a moment before speaking. “N-no?” he says, sounding more like he’s asking a question than he is making a statement. He clears his throat. “No,” he repeats. “It’s–it’s fine. There’s no trouble.”

Shouto can practically feel the man squinting at them from over the phone, but after a long moment he says, “If you’re sure.”

Midoriya nods frantically. “Yep! Very sure. Uhm, thanks again. For this.”

“It’s no problem,” Naomasa replies, already sounding like he’s focusing on something else entirely. “I’ll be in touch with you later.”

Alright. Have a good day, Detective.” And with that, Midoriya ends the call and groans very, very loudly.

“I think that went well,” Shouto says, greatly resisting the urge to let out the world’s biggest shit-eating grin, and only failing a little bit.

“You absolute bastard,” Midoriya complains, letting his head fall forward as he taps his phone against his forehead. “You’re the worst. Remind me to text Uraraka and let her know that she’s been promoted to be my new best friend.”

“Second place isn’t so bad,” Shouto says, almost thoughtfully. “Besides, you got the information you needed. I think that’s fair trade.”

“But at what price?” Midoriya laments, somewhat dramatically. “Seriously though, the Detective is like… All Might’s best friend. I don’t know if Naomasa will say anything, but…” He sighs, dropping his shoulders. “I really hope this situation sorts itself out before it becomes a huge issue.”

Shouto shrugs. “We’ll just have to wait for his e-mail, I guess.” And then, because Midoriya still
looks stressed out, he bumps up against him with his shoulder. “I’m sure it’ll be fine.”

Midoriya hands his phone back to Shouto. “Yeah,” he agrees, not looking the least bit convinced. “It’ll be fine.”

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Toshinori hesitates before knocking on the door to Shuzenji’s office; it’s hard, sometimes, to work up the confidence to do much of anything while in this form–especially when he knows he’s about to get a fair amount of shit for letting his students get injured in class again. Not that he believes it’s undeserved. If their roles were swapped, Toshinori would probably be pretty livid about it, too.

His clothes hang loosely off his boney figure as he raises his hand to knock, but Shuzenji’s voice beats him to it from the other side of the door. “I know you’ve been standing out there, All Might. Come in already.”

“Ah,” Toshinori hums, caught. He turns the door handle and ducks into the room, sheepishly itching at the back of his neck. “Doctor Shuzenji. Now, I--uh, I know what you’re going to say--”

“Only because I’ve had to repeat myself incessantly to get it through your thick skull,” Shuzenji chides, wagging a scolding finger at him. “Seriously, what do I need to do in order for you to tone your lessons down a notch or two? I’d scream it from the mountain tops, but you’ll give me a premature heart attack before I get there.”

Toshinori sits on the side of one of the beds, trying to lessen the dramatic height difference between the two of them. It feels awkward to loom above everyone all the time. “My apologies,” he says genuinely, knowing full well that the amount of times he’s found himself saying that has made the words lose their sincerity. “I’m not entirely sure what happened. Things were going smoothly until Young Bakugou confronted him at the very end. I’m not sure I could have intervened in time, anyways.”

Even as he says it, he knows it’s not true. He could have stopped Bakugou from chasing Midoriya halfway across the training center much, much sooner, but he let his curiosity get the best of him--why hadn’t Midoriya used Full Cowl to get away? What exactly was he planning? He trusted his successor to always have some sort of plan when it came to this kind of stuff, and it blinded him to the huge storm that was brewing. It was irresponsible on his part.

Talking with Young Bakugou after the fact hadn’t revealed much of anything, either--Toshinori could tell that he was more on edge than usual, but he let his curiosity get the best of him--why hadn’t Midoriya used Full Cowl to get away? What exactly was he planning? He trusted his successor to always have some sort of plan when it came to this kind of stuff, and it blinded him to the huge storm that was brewing. It was irresponsible on his part.

The whole situation just smells rotten.

Doctor Shuzenji ‘tsk’s’ at him. “You’re a teacher now, All Might. No one is expecting you to be perfect on your first year on the job, but you must learn how to have an eye for this kind of thing. Even Aizawa sent me less students to treat during his entire first year of being a professor, and you know how tough the man is on them.”

“That’s because he expelled more than half of his students,” Toshinori gripes bitterly, under his breath. He receives a sharp thwack to his shin with her cane for the trouble.
“And he hasn’t expelled anyone from this batch yet,” Shuzenji says, looking sour-faced. “Which means even he sees what good kids they are. I’ll be the first to admit that they’re a rowdy bunch—you definitely have your work cut out for you. But they trust you to keep them safe, even from themselves. And as much as they’ve grown on me, I don’t like seeing them in here more than I absolutely have to.”

Toshinori sighs. “You’re right,” he says, because she always is. “Midoriya being in here twice in one day has to break some kind of a record, even for him. That boy attracts trouble like bees to honey.”

Doctor Shuzenji’s face contorts, eyebrows drawn in confusion. “Twice?” She asks, rubbing at her chin. “No, no. Midoriya only came in once today, when you sent him with that Todoroki boy.”

“Er,” Toshinori says, feeling awkward. “Todoroki said that Midoriya had a sprained ankle this morning,” he explains. “He was taking him to see you during lunch. You mean they never made it here?”

“No, I’m afraid not,” she confirms, tapping her cane on the ground absentmindedly. “But he didn’t have a sprained ankle when he came in this afternoon, that’s for sure. I didn’t treat him for one, and he walked off just fine on his own.”

That’s…

“Huh,” he says, at length, unsure what to do with the information.

Chapter End Notes

uhlhh also i wrote a small tododeku ficlet thats not set in this universe, if anyones interested. its... tender.
has it really already almost been a month? whoops. i have two more weeks of school before spring break, so just keep holdin through for me y’all

anyways cricket drew me more art and now i am contractually obligated to die for her if she ever finds herself in times of need. god bless

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Mom, I’m ho--mmf!”

Todoroki quickly slaps a hand over Izuku’s mouth, effectively muffling him before he can finish calling out. Confused, Izuku glances at him with wide eyes until Todoroki clears his throat and calls out, “I’m home,” just loud enough to be heard throughout the apartment.

“Oh,” Izuku says, because he’s an idiot. He pushes Todoroki’s hand away from his mouth. “Right, my bad.”

Luckily, he’s saved from Todoroki’s longsuffering deadpan expression by the sound of pots and pans clattering in the kitchen. “Izuku, hun, is that you?” Mom asks, rounding the corner towards them. “You’re home early. I thought you always trained with your friend after school on Monday-oh!”

For the nth time that day, Izuku is struck by the sheer absurdity of the situation he’s found himself in. “Uh,” he says eloquently, after fishing for words and only coming up with worms. “Hi?”

Mom blinks for a moment, eyes darting between himself and… himself, but with Todoroki’s consciousness turtled inside. “Izuku, you didn’t tell me you were having a friend over today!”

Oh, whoops. He probably should have texted her, but frankly he’s had a lot on his mind. Most of it has been anxiety-based white noise, but now that he’s within a fifteen foot range of his notebooks his traitorous brain is stuck on a feedback loop of information about Todoroki’s quirk, and as much as he loves his mom he really just wants to escape into his room already.

Todoroki stiffens at Izuku’s side. “Oh,” he says, eyes flicking between Izuku and Izuku’s Mom like a wild animal caught in a snare. “Um. I’m sorry.”

God, this is awkward. At this rate, neither of them are going to survive this encounter, and it’s not going to matter if people find out that they swapped bodies because both of them will be dead in the ground. Needless to say, it’s really weird to have to treat his own mother like a complete stranger; but Izuku swallows his discomfort because Todoroki, ever the social pariah, has quickly been reduced to two-word sentences--and if Izuku doesn’t speak up soon he’s afraid the three of them will be forever fossilized in this state of perpetual unease.

“Oh, is… Is now a bad time?” Izuku asks, knowing full well that his mother would sooner walk a bed of nails than send a new guest home without warrant. He knows this because he once saw her offer to give a delivery man a to-go container full of soup during flu season. “I could go--”
He doesn’t even finish the sentence before Todoroki’s hand flies into his own, discreetly gripping around his wrist in slight panic. It surprises him, but Izuku squeezes his hand anyways, trying to reassure him that he’s definitely not going to be leaving him alone with his mom any time soon.

Luckily, Mom’s eyes soften, just like Izuku knew they would. “Oh, no, you’re fine, sweetie! I was just surprised is all. It’s been a while since Izuku’s had…” She lets the sentence taper off before seeming to shake herself of the thought. “No matter. You must be Todoroki, yes? My son has told me a lot about you!”

Oh, god. He doesn’t talk about him that much, does he? Izuku does a quick mental recap of the last several conversations that he’s had with his mom, and is horrified to realize that, yes, he really does talk about Todoroki that much. To be fair, he also gushes about Uraraka and Iida a lot too, but the fact that his mom can pick Todoroki out from what he’s told her alone says enough about that, he thinks. Izuku hopes that Todoroki can’t feel the temperature spike on his left side, but with how he is basically holding his hand at the moment that hope quickly fizzles out and dies along with the rest of his dignity.

“I--uhm--yes,” he finally manages, remembering his manners and quickly discovering that bowing in front of his own mother feels about twice as wrong as he thought it was going to feel. “It’s, ah, nice to meet you?”

“No need to be so formal,” Mom chides, waving a loose hand, which is about what Izuku expected. “You’re welcome here as long as you’d like, Todoroki,” she continues, because his mom is just the best like that. “Do you boys need anything?”

The question is directed at Todoroki again, who has been standing as stiff as a statue since they’ve walked in. Izuku squeezes his hand again, which seems to startle him back into reality. “Oh, uhm. No. Thank you. We need to…” His eyes flick behind her, down the hall where Izuku’s room is. “We have a project to work on.”

Izuku knows his mom, and so that’s why the crease of worry in her forehead doesn’t slide past him, but there’s nothing to really be done about that at the moment. “Of course!” She says, wisely deciding to leave her ‘son’s’ weird behavior alone for now. “Let me know if you change your mind. I’ll be in the kitchen.”

Todoroki does nothing but nod before Mom retreats from the entryway, and soon the two of them hurry into the safety of Izuku’s room, closing the door behind them.

As soon as they do, Izuku has to put in a lot of mental effort to avoid internally collapsing like a dying star. He knows Todoroki has already seen his room, logically speaking, but being here with him and experiencing the embarrassment first-hand is pretty much the worst thing that could ever happen thanks to the bodyswap—and that includes the whole shower adventure they had earlier.

“Er... Sorry about my...” Izuku mumbles, ducking his head and gesturing loosely around at all the merchandise around the room. The words ‘All Might shrine’ hang uncomfortably in the air, unspoken but inherently true. What almost comes out of his mouth instead is ‘sorry about my entire existence,’ which Izuku feels blatantly underestimates the amount of misfortune he has in his life.

Todoroki just hums. “It’s fine,” he says, and if he were anybody else Izuku wouldn’t believe him, but Todoroki has a way of saying that without the strain of sarcasm that usually comes with it. Which is surprising, because Todoroki is typically a lot more sarcastic than people give him credit for.

“Are you alright?” Izuku asks, because he feels the need to check. He’s being quiet again, which
isn’t necessarily a bad thing—but it kind of reminds him of how he used to act before the Sports Festival, and it hurts Izuku’s heart to think of him so closed off and alone again.

“I’m fine,” he says again, and this time Izuku doesn’t believe him so easily, because he’s kind of doing nothing but standing around and looking lost. Then again, the All Might posters in Izuku’s room tend to have that effect on people.

“Is it because of my mom?” He prompts, and Todoroki’s gaze falls guiltily to the floor.

Izuku doesn’t think he’s going to answer for a moment, so he’s almost surprised when Todoroki speaks, his voice soft spoken. “She’s… nice,” he says at length.

Izuku grins at that. “Yeah,” he agrees easily. “She’s the best.”

Todoroki bites at his lower lip, looking like he’s trying to decide if he wants to say more, and Izuku stays quiet as he gives him a moment to think. “I’m worrying her,” he says at last, sounding unsure of himself.

“… Probably,” Izuku agrees, nodding. “Her anxiety is twice as bad as mine, if you can imagine. All Might once made a joke about how the both of us could probably run half the city if we could turn our anxiety into fuel somehow.”

Todoroki snorts, and some of the tension rolls off his shoulders. “Somebody probably has a quirk for that,” he mumbles, running crooked fingers through his green curls.

“You’re sounding more and more like me already,” Izuku laughs, bumping shoulders with him. And then, more seriously, he adds, “I know you’re worried, but you shouldn’t be. Mom’s seen me go through some pretty tough phases. It’ll take more than me acting weird for a while to strain our relationship.”

Todoroki looks infinitely relieved at that, which is how Izuku knows he hit the issue right on the nose. “Alright,” he says, and he isn’t quite smiling but for all that Todoroki smiles he might as well be. He clears his throat, and averts his gaze. “Uh, you had a plan once we got here, didn’t you? What did you want to do first?”

“Oh, right! First order of business,” Izuku says, and then he grabs Todoroki by the shoulders and shoves him backwards onto the bed. “You’re taking a nap.”

“Wh--excuse me?” Todoroki asks, spread eagle on his bed and breathless from the fall. Izuku tries not to think too hard about how Todoroki had just let him push him over without showing any resistance. The amount of trust he puts in Izuku is unreal. That, or he really is just that exhausted.

“You heard me,” Izuku says, unable to contain a smirk. “You look dead on your feet, Todoroki. I know exactly how much Recovery Girl’s quirk takes it out of me, so don’t even try denying that you’re tired.”

Todoroki grimaces, but he lets his head fall back on the bed, so Izuku counts it as a win. “Why do I get the feeling that you aren’t nearly as pushy about resting properly when you’re actually in your own body?” He asks, which Izuku thinks is unfair.

“Hey! I’m caring about it now. That counts for something,” he retorts, balling up an All Might blanket and throwing it at him for good measure.

Todoroki ’hmph’s’ as the blanket hits him square in the face. “It really doesn’t,” he says, voice muffled, but the bite that’s usually there when he’s scolding Izuku is lost to fatigue. He takes a moment to fix the blanket so he can wrap himself up in it like a burrito, and Izuku feels incredibly
weird about finding that endearing because that’s his body, what the hell?

“Wake me up in an hour,” Todoroki mumbles, sounding half-asleep already. “Don’t let me sleep all day.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Izuku agrees half-heartedly, fully intending on doing just the opposite of that.

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Shouto dreams.

It takes him a while to parse through the cloud in his head before he can reach that conclusion, but once he’s there what he’s seeing makes a little bit more sense. Not that it makes much sense in the first place, because dreams are just… like that.

Honestly, it’s a bit surprising. Shouto doesn’t really dream all that often; sure, he has the occasional nightmare--that’s par for the course. But usually between personal training, school training, and Endeavor training, by the end of the day Shouto hits his tatami mat and he’s out like a light; and if he dreams at all, then there really isn’t much to remember.

This is different. It’s weird how thoughts occur in dreams--soft and disjointed, falling apart just about as easy as they fall in line--but Shouto’s sure that he’s never had a dream this vivid before.

He looks down at his hands, and he knows that they are his hands the same way he knows that they actually really aren’t. They’re small and covered in dirt, and his brain helpfully supplies him with the information that these are Midoriya’s hands--the same way his brain also helpfully supplies him with the information that the person that is suddenly standing next to him is Bakugou, even though his face isn’t really clear and his body isn’t nearly as grown. It’s like his dream is just sticking name tags to loose puppets and telling him to go along with it, so he does, because Shouto may be privy to the fact that he’s dreaming but he doesn’t really have the cognitive awareness to do much more than follow the plot.

Details are foggy, and one moment Shouto thinks he’s in school (not Yuuei, and certainly not his previous school, because he’s wearing a uniform and it’s his in the same way that it’s also not), and the next he’s in the woods, and Bakugou is still there and still young and now there’s people with him but they don’t have name tags so they must not be important. Shouto follows them, and they jump over rocks and they cross over logs and they are smiling and laughing but for some reason it doesn’t sound nice.

And when Bakugou falls, Shouto hears a splash, and he goes to follow but suddenly the splash turns into a wave and he’s on the beach, and his hands are dirty for a completely different reason.

There’s a man here, and his face is more clear than Bakugou’s had been. His cheeks look emaciated and his eyes look hollow, but when he laughs it sounds larger than his body can contain and it makes Shouto want to laugh with him. He doesn’t know who this man is, but that’s ridiculous, because he also knows that he trusts this man with his life. Boney fingers ruffle through Shouto’s hair, and he’s never had much of a male role model in his life but there’s a swelling feeling in Shouto’s chest that says ‘father’, and Shouto is inclined to agree.

In his dream, he picks up endless amounts of trash, and his muscles ache and ache and ache but Shouto knows that he has never been happier in his entire life.

When he wakes up, All Might is staring down at him from every angle.

Shouto rolls over, suppressing the urge to groan. Conscious thought escapes him for awhile longer--he knows he’s not in his own room, which would usually be a cause for alarm, but that
also means that the chances of Endeavor waking him up to go train is pretty miniscule, so that’s a definite win. And his dreams had been so pleasant for once—Shouto noses his pillow, willing himself to fall back into his slumber and resume where he left off, but even as he does so he knows he’s well past sleeping.

His pillow sighs, and that’s what really wakes Shouto up.

Midoriya is laying on the bed next to him, above the covers, laying on his stomach and looking dutifully trained on the notebook in front of him. As far as Shouto can tell, he hasn’t really noticed that Shouto has rolled into his side (the warm side—it’s no wonder everyone keeps subtly trying to scoot closer to him during lunch, this is *delightful*) which Shouto is grateful for because he’s still trying to comes to terms with it himself. It’s less like he’s using Midoriya as a pillow and more like he’s nuzzled into the space right below his armpit, but it’s still a lot for his dazed head to comprehend.

He doesn’t even think to question why Midoriya felt the need to study his notes on the bed when he’s got a whole bedroom to work in, because having Midoriya next to him just feels right—what he *does* think to question is the clock that’s sitting on the desk to the side of the bed.

“You let me sleep for two and a half hours,” he deadpans, voice gruff with irritation and sleep.

Midoriya jumps, causing him to flinch away from where Shouto was leaning into him. He momentarily mourns the loss of warmth. “Todoroki! You’re awake!”

Shouto huffs. “I should have been awake a long time ago. You said you’d wake me up.”

Midoriya shrugs, turning to look back at his notes. “Whoops,” he says casually, not even trying to sound apologetic. “In my defense, you were pretty dead to the world. Do you usually snore or is my body just that obnoxious?”

“I was snoring?” Shouto asks, sitting up and unravelling out of Midoriya’s All Might blanket so that he can stretch out his arms.

“Kinda? It was more like… heavy breathing. You’re usually pretty quiet when you take naps during lunch, which is why I was wondering if you even snore at all, or if that’s just because you’re a light sleeper when you’re at school.” He scribbles something down in his notebook, and then chews on the end of his pencil. “Because mom says I snore, but I don’t think I snore that loud. She just likes to tease me. Then again, I wouldn’t know, because it’s not like I can hear myself when I sleep. Er, usually, that is. So, do you?”

Shouto takes a moment to sort through the babble before he remembers what exactly Midoriya’s asking. “I don’t think I snore?” he says, but he’s not really sure. It’s not like he can hear himself when he sleeps either.

“Hm,” Midoriya hums, scribbling another note down in his notebook.

Shouto leans over his shoulder to try and get a better look. “What are you writing?”

“Oh!” Immediately, Midoriya flusters, making to cover his notebooks—there’s more than one, Shouto realizes—with his arms. “Uh—you know, just. Notes. Haha.”

Shouto arches a single eyebrow, a talent he has perfected over the last several weeks of interacting with Midoriya. “About?”

Midoriya pointedly glares at his notebooks, arms still covering up the majority of them. “Well, uh, just--quirks, and stuff,” he says vaguely. “You know I like to analyze. I was writing down my
theories about the body swap, and some of the side effects that we’ve seen, and how it could be used in different ways...” He ducks his head down, letting white and red tufts of hair hide his face like Shouto has done so many times before. “And I updated some of my notes that I had on, uh. On your quirk.”

Shouto jolts in place. “You have notes on me?”

“On your quirk,” Midoriya quickly corrects, looking back up at him, only his lips are pursed tightly together in a straight line. “I have notes on most of the people in our class, actually. And the other classes. And on some of the students I saw in the Sports Festival in the last couple years. And our teachers. And, uh...” He cringes, going to bite anxiously at the end of his pencil again. “Y-you get the idea.”

Shouto leans towards him, unable to help himself. “Can I see?”

Midoriya makes a face like Shouto had just asked him to personally stab All Might in the gut. “W-what?” He looks between Shouto’s face and his notebooks several times, his face displaying several emotions that flick past too fast for Shouto to see. “Oh,” he says, swallowing hard. “Uh. I...”

“It’s okay if you don’t want me to,” he tries to reassure, even though his curiosity is actually going to kill him if Midoriya says no. He really hopes he says yes, because otherwise Shouto is going to be severely tempted to look through them later after Midoriya leaves, and he really doesn’t want to betray his trust like that.

“No,” Midoriya says resolutely, looking like he’s surprising himself. “I mean--uh... I don’t. I don’t mind. If it’s you, it’s okay,” he says, and Shouto’s heart does an unfair little flip.

Gingerly, Shouto takes one of the notebooks that Midoriya hands out to him, and studies it seriously. It’s pretty worn with use, but obviously well-taken care of. It’s puffed up with papers inserted to the inside, and it has post-it notes sticking out of some of the edges, looking almost artfully crafty. Written on the front in big blocky letters are the words, ‘Hero Analysis For The Future, Volume Thirteen,’ and Shouto almost balks at the fact that there are at least twelve other notebooks hiding around in Midoriya’s room that are just as full as this one. Knowing Midoriya, there’s probably more.

And then he opens it. The only word that Shouto can think to describe what he’s seeing is intricate. There’s so much information popping off the pages, complete with diagrams and drawings and bullet-point notes on each quirk. The first few pages are filled with people he doesn’t really recognize--people that Midoriya has met outside of school, perhaps--but about halfway through he meets several familiar faces. He flips through the pages greedily, trying to skim through as much information as fast as he possibly can.

“Hagakure isn’t actually invisible?” He mutters, in awe of all the things he’s seeing.

“Yeah!” Midoriya exclaims, anxiety shedding away at the opportunity to info-dump. “If she was actually invisible, we would still be able to see things that she puts in her mouth, like her food. We’d also probably see food in her stomach until it digests naturally and turns into nutrients, which would be kind of gross, now that I think about it. Since that’s not the case, it’s probably more likely that her quirk is something more like ‘light refraction’ or ‘light manipulation’. Her body passively changes the direction and wavelength of the light waves that hit her body so that onlookers get the illusion of looking right through her, even though that might not actually be the case. I’ve been wondering if there’s any way for her to gain more control of her theoretical light manipulation--most quirks have a hidden subset of skills that can be discovered through the right type of training, and if Hagakure can figure out how to control the light waves around her, she
might be able to make visual illusions in her immediate surroundings. Which would be great for diversions and stealth missions--and, uh, she would actually be able to wear clothes for once, so that’d be a bonus.”

Shouto blinks. Once. Twice. He opens his mouth to say something, but he isn’t exactly sure what, because he’s absolutely floored. He knew Midoriya was smart, but this… He’s on a completely different level entirely.

So instead Shouto tries to stop gaping like a fish and turns his head back down to look at Midoriya’s notes, and points to a small scribble written in the corner. “Why did you underline the word ‘mantis shrimp’?” he asks, incredulously.

“Oh, that was just a passing thought that I had the other day. I haven’t had time to research it yet. I was wondering if animals can see through the illusion, is all,” Midoriya answers simply, shrugging his shoulders. “Mantis shrimp have the most color receptors in the entire animal kingdom, including humans, so they can perceive colors that we can’t even begin to comprehend. If Hagakure’s quirk only works on lightwaves that she can see, then some animals may be able to see her better than we can. It might be the only way to prove that she’s not actually invisible. Er… If my theory is correct, that is.” Sheepishly, Midoriya rubs at the back of his neck, looking away.

“Most of this is hypothetical. I don’t actually have a lot of specifics on her quirk, since it’s pretty cut and dry, initially. I might just be blowing air out of my nose, here.”

At that, Shouto actually blows air out of his nose. “I don’t think so,” he says, genuinely. “You have a lot of facts backing up your theories--the only thing you have to do is test them.”

“Oh,” Midoriya breathes, looking unsure. “I… I couldn’t do that,” he says, reverting back to his embarrassed murmur.

“Why not?”

“It’s just…” Midoriya fumbles with his fingers, dropping his gaze to his lap again. “Isn’t this… Don’t you think it’s creepy? That I have all these notes on everyone?”

Oh. Is that why he was so hesitant to share his work with him? Shouto looks down at the notes, running a thumb carefully along the broken spine of the journal. When he thinks about it, these books are full of crucial information. Strategies, theories, applications--weaknesses. If someone with ill intent got a hand on even one of these books, Shouto pales to imagine the kind of havoc they could cause. Not to mention the fact that Midoriya must constantly be watching everyone to even begin to get this information--Shouto wonders how often he has eyes on him that he doesn’t even realize are there, silently analyzing him. It sends an involuntary shiver down his spine.

He likes Midoriya, he really does. But if Shouto’s being entirely honest with himself… “Maybe a little bit.”

Midoriya cringes, staring blankly at one of the All Might posters on the wall. Shouto reaches out to touch his knee. “I didn’t say that it’s a bad thing.”

“How is being a creeper not a bad thing?” Midoriya asks, a small bite to his tone to mask the hurt.

“Because you can help a lot of people with this information,” Shouto says simply. “Think about it--if anyone is going to be able to figure out the intricacies of people’s quirks, it’s going to be you. If Hagakure really can alter lightwaves like you say she might be able to, then imagine all the people she would be able to save with that new power.” He lifts up the notebook, tapping it several times to punctuate his words. “You’ve written down everyone’s weaknesses in here, too. Does Ojiro even know about the pressure point at the base of his spine that could make his tail go temporarily
numb? His hero costume doesn’t defend it at all--what if a villain takes advantage of that because he didn’t know to protect it?”

“I… I guess,” Midoriya mumbles, scratching at his chin absent-mindedly.

“You have costume upgrade ideas for just about all of our classmates,” Shouto continues, flipping through the pages. “New shoes for Bakugou so he can use the sweat on his feet to make more explosions, roller skates for Iida so he can increase speed and maneuverability, air pistons so that Uraraka can move around while she floats, batteries for Kaminari so he can recharge, built-in nightlights on the inside of Tokoyami’s cloak to control Dark Shadow’s power level…” The list goes on for a while--Shouto flips through the pages and continues to name off several of Midoriya’s ideas as the boy in question grows increasingly red in the face. It’s almost a shame--Shouto almost feels bad for the Support department for not being able to snatch up Midoriya’s brain for themselves when they had the chance. Almost.

He’s about three-quarters of the way through Midoriya’s notebook when he comes up on a series of pages that really catches his eye.

Literally. It actually literally catches his eye, because the drawing of his scar sticks out like a sore thumb on the white paper. It’s insane—the amount of work Midoriya put into the details on Shouto’s page leaves him dumbstruck. He even went the extra mile to highlight the edges of his hair and the grooves of his scar with a red pencil. Shouto can’t help but gasp when he first sees it; it looks… good. Pretty, even. It’s really hard to say that anything about him could ever look pretty, but somehow Midoriya’s managed it.

And Shouto’s left even more dumbstruck when he realizes that there are four whole pages dedicated to him and his quirk, each filled with colored sketches and diagrams and notes about how he fights and how he could improve his skills. There are words like ‘endothermic’ and ‘exothermic’ and ‘thermodynamic equilibrium’ that all make sense to him as individual concepts, but are simply beyond him outside the realms of critical thinking in the context that Midoriya has presented them in. It’s… a lot to take in, if he’s being honest. He swipes a gentle thumb across the pages, careful not to smudge the graphite. Is it possible to feel both faint and irrevocably giddy at the same time?

A puff of hot air grazes him across the face, and Shouto turns his head only to find Midoriya hiding himself in his arms, steam floating off of his body. “I-I know it’s a little much,” he practically squeaks, avoiding eye contact as if Shouto could turn him to stone with a single glance. “It’s just… I-I mean… I’m really sorry if I’m weirding you out because that’s the last thing I ever want to do but there’s just so much about you--I mean, your quirk, it’s really just…” He stops himself, making a garbled noise in the back of his throat that sounds mildly painful.

“Midoriya, it’s fine,” Shouto says, leaning against Midoriya’s shoulder. It’s distressingly warm, but he practically squeaks, avoiding eye contact as if Shouto could turn him to stone with a single glance. “It’s just… I-I mean… I’m really sorry if I’m weirding you out because that’s the last thing I ever want to do but there’s just so much about you--I mean, your quirk, it’s really just…” He stops himself, making a garbled noise in the back of his throat that sounds mildly painful.

“… Thanks?” Midoriya says, looking entirely like he expects Shouto to change his mind and accuse him of being some kind of weird stalker any second now, which simply just won’t do.

“You’re too embarrassed to ask any of our classmates to test any of your theories with you, right?” he asks, even though he already knows the answer. Midoriya nods, face screwed up tight like a corkscrew. “What if we just started with my quirk first? That way you can build your way up to talking about it with everyone else.”

“You… You want to experiment?” Midoriya asks, eyes wide and open and vulnerable. Shouto
tries not to swallow too loudly. “Are you sure?”

Shouto shrugs. “It can’t hurt. Though I’m not sure if there’s anything we can test while we’re... like this.”

Midoriya just smiles, and the temperature of his shoulder cools off a little bit but Shouto is still feeling all too warm. “There’s definitely some stuff I want you to try once we get back to normal, but... Well, to be honest, I really want to mess around with your quirk while we’ve still got the chance.”

Shouto wishes he could say the same, but he’s got Midoriya’s bones on the line, and he’d rather not turn them to powder. “Just don’t catch another one of my uniforms on fire.”

“...I’m pretty sure you’re joking, but I’m going to change into some of my own clothes anyways,” Midoriya says, hopping off the bed, and Shouto tries valiantly not to think too hard about seeing his own body in Midoriya’s casual clothes. His mouth only feels a little dry, which is probably a win.

“There’s definitely no way I’m going to use your quirk in here, though,” Midoriya continues, shuffling through his drawers, ignorant of Shouto’s dwindling psyche. “These All Might posters are too expensive to risk burning. And the place where we usually train is too public to get away with quirk experimentation.”

“We could go back to the school,” Shouto suggests, scratching his cheek. They usually keep the training areas open for students who need it after class, though Shouto’s not sure what time they usually close for the night. And he’s not sure how likely it is that they’ll run into people they know.

“Nah, too far,” Midoriya hums, turning around and throwing an outfit directly at Shouto’s face. “Change into that, it’ll be less stuffy than my uniform.”

Is it weird to smell Midoriya’s clothes while he’s in Midoriya’s body? Probably. It’s probably weird to smell Midoriya’s clothes at all, full stop, but that isn’t enough to deter him. It smells like cheap laundry soap.

He lets the outfit drop into his lap. “Any ideas on where to go, then?”

Midoriya grins at him, showing all of his teeth. “How do you feel about the beach?”

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This is how Shouto feels about the beach:

It’s smelly, it’s sandy, and it’s chilly. Usually that last thing isn’t even an issue, but being in Midoriya’s body means he has to actually experience temperatures like a normal person, much to his chagrin—and all the while Midoriya gets to ride around in the personal self-heating meatsack that is his regular temperature-regulating body. Bastard.

The wind picks up, bringing in a cold draft from the sea, as well as the delightful smell of brine and dead fish. Sand swirls around his feet and clings to his legs, and while the sun is warm enough to just about cancel out the chill from the breeze, it also makes him have to squint in order to see his surroundings. It’s uncomfortable, unbefitting, and probably unsanitary.

Midoriya looks so at home.

“This place used to be a dump, you know?” he says, stretching his arms way up into the sky as he
walks. “You couldn’t even see the horizon, the piles of garbage were so huge. Just miles of the stuff.”

Shouto thinks about his dream, and a man with long, scarecrow-like features. “You wouldn’t think it, looking at it now,” he says, but somehow he can picture it perfectly.

“Right? Apparently, somebody came by not too long ago and cleaned the place up, so now everyone can enjoy the sunrise again.” Midoriya smiles softly, looking fondly out to the waves as they crash against the beach. “A lot has changed.”

Shouto nods, but he doesn’t think that comment was meant for him. Even without his weird dream, it’s pretty clear that Midoriya had something to do with cleaning all the trash—but it’s also just like him to just not mention something like that at all, so Shouto doesn’t call him out on it. Mostly because he’s too busy realizing that his dream wasn’t a dream at all, but a memory, and he isn’t quite sure what that implies quite yet.

Midoriya leads them to a more secluded part of the beach; not that it really matters too much, because it is a school night and despite the massive cleanup the beach apparently underwent, people are still few and far between, and Shouto doubts anyone would care to bother a couple of teenagers.

Satisfied that the two of them are alone, Midoriya begins to stretch, putting extra care into the movements. “Wanna warm up a bit, first?” he asks, which is shorthand for ‘let’s tussle in the sand like a couple of crazed maniacs’.

“You’re in my body,” Shouto reminds him. “You don’t need to warm up.”

Midoriya sticks his tongue out at him, kicking sand into the air childishly. “You’re just saying that because you’re scared you’ll lose,” he taunts.

“Oh?” Shouto hums. “You might want to be more careful about which bear your poking. I know all of my own weak spots.”

Midoriya snorts, falling into a solid defensive position. “I could say the same about you, you know.”

The thing is, though, that Shouto doesn’t have to compensate has much as Midoriya does; he swapped one bad eye for one bad hand, but even the stiffness in his fist does little to deter him when they start to spar. Shouto would feel bad about the major disadvantage he’s unwillingly placed upon Midoriya, but it’s really funny to watch him eat sand every time Shouto manages to take advantage of his blind spot in order to flip him.

The fourth time Midoriya ends up with his back against the sand, he grunts, “Okay, one more time, I think I got it now,” and Shouto says goodbye to his winning streak. Midoriya has yet to ever say that without following it up with immediate results.

Neither of them spar perfect—they rarely do, since that’s what practice is for—though this time is especially hard for them. For one, the sand makes it difficult to move and quickly saps them of energy, though Shouto notes that Midoriya is quick to adapt to his surroundings. Another thing is that Shouto is just naturally a few inches taller than Midoriya, and so now Shouto has to compensate for the slight height change he’s undergone—though it’s not enough to throw him off too badly. It just makes the punches he throws feel a little unbalanced.

What really changes the game is when Midoriya takes an unexpected jab for Shouto’s armpit, and Shouto shrieks.
He falls back immediately, slapping a hand over his traitorous mouth as he sends a trained death-glare at Midoriya, who grins like he doesn’t have a mouthful of dirt. “Don’t tell me, Todoroki,” he smirks, wiggling his fingers menacingly and rounding up on him again. “You’re ticklish, aren’t you?”

“Don’t you dare,” Shouto growls, taking another two steps back.

It does little to deter Midoriya, who suddenly lunges, wrapping his arms around Shouto’s midriff and sending them both tumbling onto the ground. Thinking quickly, Shouto grabs a handful of sand and throws it into Midoriya’s face—after all, one of the first things he learned about fighting Midoriya is that if you want to win, you have to fight dirty, and neither of them are too proud to pull off a mean-spirited hit every once in a while.

To his absolute horror, Midoriya just cackles. “I’m already half blind! You think a little sand is going to stop me?”

Two seconds too late, Shouto desperately tries to squirm out from underneath Midoriya’s hold; but Midoriya’s already got two hands on Shouto’s ribcage, and suddenly Shouto is in hell.

“G-get off of m-me!” He squeaks, giggles erupting out of his chest without his permission.

“This is for all the sand you just made me eat!” Midoriya laughs, but his fingers relent a moment after. Shouto takes advantage of the lapse in tickles to shove his feet under Midoriya’s gut, and with a great heave he pushes Midoriya up and off of him, tumbling into the shore behind them.

Midoriya’s still laughing, loud and crackly, like he can’t quite get it under control. Shouto huffs, pushing himself out of the dirt. “When we get our bodies back, you’re going to regret ever showing me where you’re most ticklish.”

“Oh, I already regret it,” Midoriya giggles, and when Shouto pats himself down of the clinging sand, he finally notices exactly where he threw Midoriya. He’s soaked, sitting in ankle-deep saltwater with almost the brightest grin Shouto’s ever seen stapled to his face. (The only way it could be brighter is if it was actually on the correct face.)

Shouto sighs, long and dramatic, but even he can’t help the small smile that finds itself on his face. “Get out of the water,” he scolds, holding a hand out to him. “You’re going to give me a cold.”

Midoriya sniffs, letting Shouto pull him up out of the water. “You can get colds?”

“Yes. Trust me when I say that you don’t want one.” He’s already having enough trouble as it is controlling Shouto’s quirk—the last thing he needs is for flames to come out of his mouth when he sneezes.

“Ugh,” Midoriya grunts, looking down at himself. “I need a change of clothes.”

“No, you don’t,” Shouto says. “Just use my quirk to dry yourself off.”

“Burning my clothes off isn’t going to help anyone,” Midoriya grimaces, tugging at the hem of his shirt as it clings to his muscles.

“Then don’t burn them off,” Shouto suggests, plain and simple. “You wanted to test out my quirk anyways, right? Now you can.”

Midoriya frowns, looking down at his hands. “I guess…” He takes a deep breath, closing his hands into fists. “Step a few feet back, maybe?”
Shouto does so, practicing more self-care than Midoriya has probably ever had in his entire life. Deeming himself a safe distance away, he sits down in the sand, watching from a distance as Midoriya psyches himself up.

For a long moment, nothing happens; Midoriya just stares at himself, breathing deeply, focusing hard on... something. And then, all at once, Shouto feels a blast of hot hair fly past him as Midoriya all but explodes. Immediately, Midoriya makes a sound like a strangled yelp and dives for the safety of the ocean.

“... So much for not burning your clothes,” Shouto mutters, dragging himself over to where Midoriya is rolling around in the shallow water.

Midoriya’s already mumbling a storm under his breath when he walks up close enough to hear him. Shouto can’t hear what he’s saying, exactly, but he looks determined, scratching at his chin with this eyebrows furrowed together in concentration.

After a while of listening to Midoriya fall deeper and deeper into this mumbling-trance, Shouto coughs politely, effectively getting Midoriya’s attention. “... That could have gone better.”

Midoriya snorts, finally sitting up out of the water and examining the remains of his shirt. It’s still clinging to him, but it’s singed something fierce. “It could have gone a lot worse, too. If I’m being entirely honest, I was kind of expecting something like that to happen.”

“Oh?” Shouto asks, raising an eyebrow.

Midoriya nods. “Your quirk feels... strange,” he begins, looking like he isn’t entirely sure how to explain. “It’s like it’s always on—I actually have to keep focusing to make sure I don’t activate it all the time. It’s... It’s kind of like someone has turned the oven on to the highest setting, and they’ve given me a lid, and I have to sit by the oven and hold the lid on top of the pot or else the whole thing will boil over. Do you know what I’m saying?”

Shouto bites his lip. “Not... really, no.” He’s never had an issue like that with his quirk before; for the most part, at least. It’s true that he can’t exactly turn his quirk off, but it’s not like he’s going to ice over half of his room if he stops paying attention to it for even a moment. The only time his quirk ever acts out against him is when he feels intense spikes of emotions, but he can usually ‘keep a lid on it’, so to speak.

“Hm,” Midoriya frowns. “Well, either way, I think I can figure it out, now. I caught on fire because I tried to both, one, stop suppressing your quirk entirely, and two, summon it at the same time, and I ended up slightly overdoing it. So instead, if I just... do one of those things, and stop worrying...” He closes his eyes, and Shouto instinctively steps back.

Midoriya takes several long breaths, loosening his shoulders and slumping forward a little, as if trying to drop the tension from his body, but his face is tight and screwed up with concentration.

“You still look like you’re worrying,” Shouto points out.

“Shut up,” Midoriya retorts. “You pointing out my anxiety is giving me more anxiety.” He grumbles something else at a volume Shouto can’t understand, and he clenches his fists. “Anxiety... Anxiety... I wonder if I... Oh, actually, you know what? I’m dense.” His eyes snap open as he looks at his hand--his right one--and this time when he takes a deep breath, vapor comes out of his mouth. Moments later, there’s a sizeable chunk of ice in his hands, and Midoriya practically beams at the sight.

Shouto pokes at the ice warily. “That’s nice,” he says truthfully, feeling proud that Midoriya...
managed to figure out his quirk so fast. “But your clothes are still wet.”

“My clothes have been thoroughly fried to a crisp, so who cares?” he says, waving the ice around in Shouto’s face. “I figured it out!”

Shouto nods, because, yep. He sure did. “What did you figure out, exactly?”

Midoriya grins, obviously pleased to explain his process. “Your quirk is directly tied to your emotions. I always kind of figured that was the case, but it didn’t become obvious to me until we swapped bodies. Whenever I get frustrated, or flustered, or a number of other things, I’ll accidentally let go of the focus I have on suppressing your quirk, and I heat up a fair amount. The same thing happens when I get nervous, or scared, except with your ice. It’s not a permanent solution, since how I feel effects how much of whatever I summon, but—well, this probably isn’t permanent, anyways. There’s no need for me to master your quirk like you have.”

Shouto nods again. He sure hopes that’s the case, at least, but he’s not going to worry about it until the Detective gets around to emailing them. “Now that you’ve gotten a feel for it, do you think you can summon more ice?” Shouto asks, because he can see how Midoriya is practically vibrating with excitement.

Midoriya nods vigorously, and Shouto gets to work on showing him the best techniques on how to control his ice; Midoriya’s a meticulous learner, quickly mirroring Shouto’s movements, sending out various amounts of ice into the ocean where the tide can take away the evidence of their technically illegal activity. They spend a lot of time like that, with Midoriya practicing the movement of the ice and even trying to summon it with different body parts. It feels strange to practicing his body movements without actually summoning his quirk, but the way Midoriya laughs and laughs when he ‘accidentally’ splashes Shouto with a particularly devious use of his ice makes it all worth it.

“You know,” Shouto says, after correcting Midoriya’s balance when he tries to summon ice with a high kick, “it kind of makes sense that you’d have an easier time with my ice. Even I struggle with my own flames a lot.”

Midoriya hums, slowly going through the movements Shouto taught him to commit them to memory. “I’ve actually been thinking about that,” he says, lowering his leg. “Your fire, I mean. I.. I think I might have a theory.”

Shouto has a theory, too, and it’s simply the fact that he foolishly avoided using it for several years; but he decides to indulge Midoriya’s whims anyways. “Care to enlighten me?”

Midoriya purses his lips, mulling his thoughts over once more. “... Do you know what the word ‘entropy’ means?”

Slowly, Shouto blinks at him. The word sounds familiar enough. “Isn’t that just a fancy word for ‘chaos’?”

Midoriya hums, shakes his head, and then reconsiders. “No. Well, yes. Kind of. In that sense, it’s the belief that the universe will gradually descend into disorder no matter how one tries to systemize it.”

“So…” Shouto says, “It’s just like high school.”

At that, Midoriya releases an onslaught of giggles. “Well, you’re not wrong,” he laughs, wrinkling the edges of his eyes. “But I meant it less in the theological sense and more in the scientific sense.”

“... What’s the difference?”
Midoriya flexes his fingers a few times, stopping the flow of ice he was producing and willing warm blood to flow back into his hand. “Entropy is a variable in thermodynamics that has to do with how energy is distributed within a closed thermal system,” he explains, speaking slowly and confidently. “Molecules are constantly in movement in an attempt to reach equilibrium, and that movement is something we can measure and use as tools. As energy. Logically, the higher the temperature something is, the more energy it contains. But sometimes the molecules are disorganized, and they become unable to reach that equilibrium for some reason or another. The energy they produce is still there, but it’s wasted; unable to be used for anything.”

He pauses, turning towards Shouto. “That’s entropy. In layman’s terms, it’s basically a measure of molecular disorder.”

Shouto nods; they haven’t really studied chemistry as a class, yet, but he supposes that makes enough sense. “So what does that have to do with my quirk?”

Midoriya shrugs, as if he hasn’t lost several nights worth of sleep researching this exact thing for seemingly no reason; which Shouto highly doubts. “I was just thinking about your fire,” he says simply. “I think entropy is part of the reason you struggle with it so much, if you ignore the fact that you’re out of practice. By the laws of nature, the hotter something is, the more entropy--the more chaos--it has inside of it. You have an easier time with your ice because you’ve practiced with it more, sure, but it’s also much more refined. More precise. When it comes down to it, fire is a wild, untameable thing. You can’t control it—not really.”

“But I can control it,” Shouto disputes, grimacing slightly. He can summon it, and he can will it away; if Endeavor has done anything, it’s beat control into him.

“No, you can direct it,” Midoriya corrects, holding up a finger. “You turn regular chaos into controlled chaos, but it’s still chaos.”

Shouto frowns, absentmindedly picking at the scars on Midoriya’s fingers. “If… If that’s the case, then what can I do about it?” he asks, feeling frustrated all of a sudden. What’s the point of the theory if there’s no way to prove it or learn something from it?

“Thinking about it like that…” Midoriya hums, tapping his chin. “Entropy can be a source of untapped potential. The energy is still there--and just because science says it’s unsuitable doesn’t mean you can’t figure out how to use it to your advantage.”

“I… I don’t think I understand what you’re getting at,” Shouto says, feeling more than a little lost, which is a feeling he’s learning to embrace more and more in his life. “How exactly do I tap into the ‘untapped potential’?”

“Through your emotions,” Midoriya says simply.

“… Excuse me.”

“Think about it!” Midoriya says, as if Shouto didn’t already have steam coming out of his ears as he tries to wrap his head around this concept. “You have such a tight hold on your emotions. You have to, with this kind of quirk--it’s really admirable. You’re… You’re much stronger than me, in that regard. Sometimes I feel like I’m so full of emotions, I’ll just… burst.”

Quickly, Shouto shakes his head. “Having emotions doesn’t make you weak,” he insists, which Shouto distantly realizes is kind of hypocritical of him to say, considering that he likes to limit his maximum number of emotions down to around two or three a week, ideally.

“That’s kind of my point, I think,” Midoriya says. “Science can provide evidence to prove that the
thermodynamic entropy exists, but I don’t think I really believe in the theological entropy. I just can’t believe that chaos is the default state of the universe. I think that… I think that there is natural balance in everything—otherwise, basic laws of nature like ‘homeostasis’ and ‘equivalent exchange’ wouldn’t exist. The two of us…” He pauses, momentarily stumbling over his words. “We’re very intense people,” he continues, sounding sure. “It’s always all or nothing whenever we’re involved. I think that, when it comes to emotions, there’s a sweet-spot between ‘completely numb’ and ‘overly-emotional’ that both of us have trouble finding. An equilibrium. It’s why we both have problems controlling your quirk.”

That’s all well and good, but… “The last time I tried to use my quirk while at an emotional high was during the Sports Festival,” Shouto points out softly, running a hand over Midoriya’s scars. “You know how well that ended up.”

Midoriya just snorts, reaching over to tug at Shouto’s scarred hand as well. “It ended up great!” he insists, smiling easily once again. “Sure, I could’ve gone without turning all the bones in my hand into powder, but I’d do it again in a heartbeat. It’s what got us here.”

“… Here… as in the body swap?” Shouto asks.

“No, you goof,” Midoriya laughs, and it’s so much deeper in his throat than it usually is. Suddenly, Shouto is all too aware of how close they’re standing together, with Midoriya cradling Shouto’s hand very tenderly in his own. “As friends.”

The moment suddenly feels too vulnerable, and Shouto forces head away, willing his heart to slow the fuck down. “Oh,” he says, because it’s all he can manage. So much for feeling only two or three emotions a week.

“Besides,” Midoriya continues, undeterred. “I’m not saying that you should completely upend your entire personality and start from scratch. Having control over power is infinitely more important than having insane amounts of power. Both of which you’ve proven you have.”

“So… What are you saying, exactly, then?” Shouto asks, feeling antsy.

Midoriya shrugs. “I don’t know. It’s just a theory—something to think about. Maybe I’m asking you to loosen up a bit more?”

Shouto lets his gaze harden. “This is just another ploy to get me to smile more often, isn’t it.”

At that, Midoriya lets out another barrage of giggles. “It doesn’t have to be! I’m in your body right now; I can make you smile as much as I want.”

“Holding my smile hostage… I can’t believe I’ve let my body get taken over by a villain in the making,” Shouto laments, playfully shoving Midoriya off of him when he falls even deeper into laughter. “You’re truly heinous.”

“You should be really scared,” Midoriya teases, elbowing him softly. “Between my boy-ish charm and your naturally good looks, I’ll have conquered all of Japan in forty-eight hours. No one can stop me.”

“I’m practically shaking in my custom-made cerise-red authentic jordans,” Shouto deadpans, pointedly ignoring the part where Midoriya insinuated that he’s attractive for the sake of his sanity. Over Midoriya’s indignant cries of ‘leave my shoes out of this!’, Shouto says, “Come on, we should head back to your place. Your mom might start to get worried if we’re gone too long.”

“Yeah, you’re probably—oh, shoot! Todoroki,” he practically whines. “I didn’t get to show you how my quirk works!”
Shouto just shrugs. “That’s probably for the best,” he says evenly. “I almost hit Bakugou with your quirk today during the training exercise. That amount of power that I felt…” He isn’t sure he wants to mess with it; not if it guarantees more harm to Midoriya’s body. “You said it yourself. Control over power is infinitely more important than having power at all.”

Midoriya bites at his lips, distracted. “What about school tomorrow, though? I don’t think I can manage your fire, but I at least have your ice to fall back on. Are you sure that you could go another day without a quirk?”

“We don’t even know if the body swap will last that long,” Shouto points out. “We could wake up in our own bodies tomorrow.”

“I suppose…” Midoriya hums, not looking convinced. “I’ll just have to check my email when we get back to see if Detective Naomasa got back to me with that information.”

Shouto leans forward and tugs at Midoriya’s shirt. “You also need to change this. You smell like smoke.”

Midoriya just laughs. “Didn’t you know? That’s part of my boy-ish charm.”

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The two of them managed to sneak back into Izuku’s room without his mother seeing the state of his burnt clothes, which is a minor miracle.

Another minor miracle is the fact that the Detective had finally gotten back to them, and inside Izuku’s inbox is a lengthy document with a list of quirks that were involved during the mall incident.

That’s about where the minor miracles end.

“Three days,” Izuku says, voice even, void of all emotion. “Three entire days. Approximately seventy-two hours. That’s a little more than four thousand and three hundred entire minutes.”

“... Can I get that in seconds?” Todoroki asks, sounding dazed.

Izuku scrunches his eyes together, feeling the beginning of a headache forming. “That’s nearly two hundred and sixty thousand seconds. Three days, Todoroki. Three. Entire. Days.”

“Technically,” Todoroki points out, ever the voice of reason, “it’s only two more days. We’re almost done with our first day.”

Izuku throws his hands up into the air in exasperation. “Two more days, then! Oh my god! This is a disaster. We’re doomed.”

Todoroki places two hands on his shoulders, steadying him. “Stop freaking out,” he says, like it’s that easy.

“How are you so okay with this!??” he practically shrieks, waving his hands in the air frantically, almost hitting Todoroki in the process. “How are we supposed to do this? I could barely keep myself together long enough to get through school today, and I’m supposed to pretend to be you for another forty eight hours?” He brings a hand up to this mouth, biting anxiously at his nails.

“We... We have to tell someone, Todoroki. There’s no way we can keep doing this! The teachers need to know, or--or my mom, or at least All Might, or something.”
Todoroki slaps Izuku’s hand away from his mouth to get him to stop chewing at his thumb, probably with more force than he had meant to. “No,” he says, sternly, and to anyone else they might have thought that he was just being stubborn but Izuku can see the panic in his eyes as clear as day. “We… That’s not smart. Please, Midoriya. I know it’s not ideal, and I know it’s not comfortable, but I… We can’t. We just can’t.”

Izuku breathes, in through his nose and out through his mouth, willing himself to work the panic out of his system. His breath comes out in icy cold vapor, and he can feel frost creep up the entire right side of his face. “Okay,” he grits out, teeth clenched, trying to show some semblance control. “Okay. Two more days. We can do that. I can do that. That’s simple. That’s just… Today, but twice.” He slides a careful hand down his face, wary of Todoroki’s scar, wiping frost off of himself.

Todoroki loosens his grip on Izuku’s shoulders, which Izuku is only just realizing had been a steel trap with how tense he had been. “… Thank you,” he says softly, bowing his head.

“… It’s… It’s fine,” he tries to say, but it sounds like a lie when it comes out. Nothing about this really feels fine, but he’s willing to try if it’s for Todoroki’s sake. It almost scares him to realize how much he’s willing to do if it’s for Todoroki, but he pushes that thought out of his mind.

Izuku has to walk home--to Todoroki’s home--not too long after that, and after quickly double-checking to make sure Endeavor is still gone, he doesn’t waste time in retreating to Todoroki’s room. The walls are paper-thin and practically see-through, and Izuku can’t help but think that that's fitting, somehow.

He wonders how long their luck will hold out.

Chapter End Notes

I've never taken a single chemistry class in my entire life
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

just a short little thing--im still in the thick of finals, but i really wanted to write this bit. it was originally going to be the beginning of the next chapter, but i feel like it reads smoother as a stand-alone thing, so it's getting posted early. its more group-chat shenanigans, so... sorry if that isn't your thing! we'll get right back to our scheduled Day Two horror-show starting next chapter.

shoutout to everyone in the yuts discord for helping me out with group-chat ideas!
yall are great <3

Shouto sighs to himself, flopping over on Midoriya’s bed. Today has been unbelievably long, and more than anything he’s just glad that he finally gets a moment for himself to just sit down and marinate in the day’s events, but…

He can’t sleep. He’s tried everything; he’s done his breathing exercises, he’s tried meditating, he’s counted backwards from 1,000--twice. He even tried doing push-ups until Midoriya’s body straight-up gave out on him, but his eyelids remain stubbornly glued open. Nothing’s working. He’s no stranger to random bouts of insomnia, but it’s still frustrating--he’s exhausted, and knowing that he has at least another two days of this waiting for him is making him dread his entire existence more than usual.

At least there’s a practical reason for his insomnia, which is more than he can say for it usually. Taking that nap earlier had been a mistake, giving him just enough energy to keep him awake right now when he should be desperately hoarding hours of precious sleep like some sort of sleep-deprived dragon. So there’s that, and then there’s the fact that he’s in Midoriya’s room--it had been different when Midoriya was here with him, but now that he’s alone, he feels misplaced. This isn’t his tatami mat or his nice Japanese-styled room. Selfishly, he wishes Midoriya were here, or that he had insisted he go back to his home with Midoriya. He’s never really felt safe, there, but with Midoriya it might be different. After all, that is how he managed to nap so often during lunch.

After Shouto turns restlessly under the covers one last time, he gives up on sleep entirely, figuring that he at least should find something productive to do if his brain isn’t going to cooperate with him. Throwing the comforter off of himself, he swings himself off the bed, his arm waving in the air to fumble with the light.

For a while, he busies himself by looking through the rest of Midoriya’s journals, most of which he found stacked away under Midoriya’s bed. Maybe he shouldn’t have been snooping under there, but Midoriya basically gave him free reign of his room--and armed with that knowledge, he quickly squashes the niggle of guilt in his stomach, reminding himself that Midoriya wouldn’t have given him permission if he didn’t truly want to. Besides, the journals are just… amazing. Before he knows it, an entire hour passes, and he’s barely even scratched the surface.

Through his skimming, two journals stick out the most:

There’s one entirely dedicated to All Might, which really comes as no surprise. There’s pages and
There’s one entirely dedicated to All Might, which really comes as no surprise. There’s pages and pages of the stuff, though the first half or so of the book isn’t nearly as high quality as some of Midoriya’s other work. The writing is less analytical and more idealistic, written crudely with an unpracticed hand. It’s obvious that Midoriya started this book when he was young. There’s even doodles of All Might and what must be a younger Midoriya, fighting side-by-side, complete with a list of sidekick names that Shouto is sure Midoriya never intended him to see. He quickly archives ‘Super Mighty Boy’ and ‘All Might Junior’ to his arsenal of blackmail, a fond smile growing on his face.

And then there’s the journal of the scarecrow man. Maybe this journal shouldn’t have stuck out as much as it did, but the more Shouto thinks about it the more he realizes he’s seen this man more than just in his dreams. He recognizes him from the halls of U.A., usually retreating into the teacher’s lounge or hovering over Midoriya whenever he lands himself in the nurse’s office. He’s never even given him a second glance before, but obviously he has some sort of personal tie to Midoriya--so, who is he exactly? What’s he doing at U.A.? If he’s so important, how come Shouto hasn’t met him before?

And why are Midoriya’s notes on him written entirely in code? At least--he thinks it’s code. It certainly reads like some form of Japanese, but Shouto’s at a loss whenever he even begins to try to comprehend what he’s seeing. He skimmed briefly for some kind of cipher, but he isn’t surprised when he doesn’t find one. If Midoriya is writing in code in the first place, there’s probably a good reason why he doesn’t want anyone understanding his notes--the encryption must be something he made himself.

Shouto respects Midoriya’s need for privacy, obviously, but… Well, he would be lying if he said that he wasn’t incredibly curious. Sue him.

His only comfort is that maybe he’ll get to dream about the man again if he falls asleep, so with that in mind Shouto returns the journals to their rightful place and slides back into Midoriya’s bed again, willing his brain to just shut off, for a bit.

Shouto’s just about to finally, blessedly, nod off when Midoriya’s phone dings.

He sighs, fumbling for the phone in the dark. Sleep has evaded him this long--it can wait a few more minutes. Honestly, he’s only a little bit surprised when he finds that Midoriya is the one who messaged the group chat in the middle of the night.

Group: Class 1-Gay, 19 Members

‘Todoroki’ has changed their nickname to ‘iced t’.

Oh, no. He didn’t.

yallmightve: What do you think you’re doing.

iced t: oh shit
iced t: i thought i was the only one awake whoops :/

iced t: wait why are you still awake

yallmightve: Unimportant. Change your name back.

iced t: no!

yallmightve: Why

iced t: because! don’t you think it’s cute?

Shouto bites the inside of his cheek. Damn him. It is cute, but that’s besides the point.

yallmightve: It’s the principle of the thing

iced t: … that’s not a no

iced t: anyways you didn’t answer my question earlier

yallmightve: Like I said, it’s not important. Just can’t sleep.

iced t: oh same here

That gives Shouto a pause; is it just the unfamiliarity of Shouto’s house that’s keeping him awake? Or is it something else--Midoriya would have texted him if Endeavor had come back home, wouldn’t he? Or is that something that Midoriya would feel he had to hide in order to prevent Shouto from feeling guilty? Anxiety wells in his chest, and he fumbles with Midoriya’s phone, trying to parse how exactly he should ask.
His phone dings again before he can finish.

**iced t:** hey i can feel your anxiety all the way over here. everythings fine, dw!

**yallmightve:** How did you know I was freaking out?

**iced t:** because its you

**iced t:** and also ive been looking at your typing bubble appear and disappear for the last three minutes

**iced t:** °\_-(_gb)_/°

**o-cha-cha:** … did todoroki just use an emoticon or am i having an elaborate fever dream

**iced t:** oh my god uraraka i didnt realize we were still in the class groupchat

**yallmightve:** Wait, Uraraka, you have a fever?

**o-cha-cha:** no deku im fine!! other than the fact that you guys are blowing up the groupchat in the middle of the night, everythings peachy

**o-cha-cha:** also why are you typing like that

**yallmightve:** Like… what

**o-cha-cha:** that!

**o-cha-cha:** you never use proper punctuation while ur texting!
Shit, that’s right. If they are going to continue using each other’s phones, they should probably use each other’s usual texting styles. Shouto mentally scrambles, trying to cover their fumble and desperately hoping that Midoriya plays along.

**yallmightve:** it must be a part of your elaborate fever dream

**iced t:** …

**iced t:** Indeed.

Nailed it.

**o-cha-cha:** …

**o-cha-cha:** you two are acting… weird

**iced t:** I’m not sure what you’re talking about?

**o-cha-cha:** you literally just changed your nickname, todoroki!

**o-cha-cha:** we’ve been trying to convince you to do that for weeks!!

**yallmightve:** yeah, you should change it back

**iced t:** Maybe that’s because I only just found a nickname that I liked?
o-cha-cha: at almost one in the morning???

iced t: I was hoping to do it quickly without anyone noticing.

yallmightve: well, we caught you

yallmightve: so now you have to change it back

iced t: Make me.

Despite himself, Shouto chuckles. If that’s how he wants to play…

'yallmightve' changed their nickname to 'all might’s secret love child'.

Iced t: … You bastard.

o-cha-cha: i… i dont understand

all might’s secret love child: it’s a long story

iced t: Yeah, well

iced t: Two can play at that game.

'iced t' changed their nickname to 'Hand Crusher'.

all might’s secret love child: … thats not funny

Hand Crusher: It’s kind of funny?
all might’s secret love child: no.

all might’s secret love child: don’t ever speak to me or my authentic customized air jordans ever again.

Hand Crusher: What is it with you and those shoes!!

hardman: woah, wait, todoroki? using *two* entire exclamation points?

hardman: who hacked his account. *@jackoff* i know its you, confess your crimes

jackoff: wtf why are you @ing me at 1 o clock in the morning, jackass

hardman: this is cyberbullying

yo-yo man: tbf jirou ur the only one with the technical know-how to hack into someones account

danki: wait hold on what about me?? im the one with the electrical quirk

yo-yo man: … anyways jirou ur the only one with the technical know-how to hack into someones account

danki: wow okay fuck you too sero

Hand Crusher: Guys. It’s fine. No one hacked into my account.

Hand Crusher: I’m just… passionate about Midoriya’s shoes.
jackoff: … oooookay

yo-yo man: no. let the man speak.

hardman: he has a point? As a purveyor of all things red and red-adjacent, i must say: ur shoes are manly as hell, dude

all might’s secret love child: … thank you.

hardman: ur welcome! :D

all might’s secret love child: anyways.

all might’s secret love child: back to the matter at hand.

all mights secret love child: @Hand Crusher change your name back or else

Hand Crusher: Or else what?

all might’s secret love child: i have a full arsenal of embarrassing nicknames to choose from, hiding in a journal under my bed written by a certain 6 yr old ride-or-die all might fanboy

Hand Crusher: … you wouldn't

all mights secret love child: oh

'all might’s secret love child' has changed their nickname to 'Mighty Boy'.

Mighty Boy: but i would.
danki: are

danki: are you guys having a competition to see who can embarrass themselves the worst, or

o-cha-cha: shh dont stop them, this is prime blackmail material

Hand Crusher: … Ugh.

Hand Crusher: Fine. You win. I’ll change my name back, but ONLY if you do the same.

Mighty Boy: that’s agreeable.

'Mighty Boy' changed their nickname to 'yallmightve'.

'Hand Crusher' changed their nickname to 'iced t'.

yallmightve: … you aren't really going to change it back, are you.

iced t: Would it be too out of character to use another emoticon right now?

yallmightve: absolutely.

iced t: 🔧(灾区)🔧

Shouto huffs at his screen, an echo of laughter escaping his nose. There’s no doubt in his mind that Iida will read over this in the morning and scold all of them for staying up so late, but at the moment he can’t really bring himself to care. He makes a mental note to force himself to be more active in the groupchat when he gets his regular body back; he forgot how nice it was to just interact with people, sometimes. Especially his classmates. They are... an interesting group of people.
It's not long after until Jirou, of all people, scolds them for waking her up in the middle of the night for seemingly no reason, and everyone begrudgingly logs off for the night. Midoriya pings him privately with one last, 'good night, todoroki!' with a string of starry night emojis, and Shouto finally closes his eyes and manages to fall asleep.

End Notes

(tumblr @kazzarole / twitter @kazzarole)

so there's the first chapter!! i'm really excited about this one, y'all. that being said, there's a rough outline of several events i want to happen in this fic, but if any of you have any ideas for some fun body swap shenanigans, let me know!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!