

Lives of Future Past

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Lives of Future Past

by [HeartQuirk](#)

Summary

Midoriya and Bakugou have thought a lot about their near futures: the next two years at UA and the start of their careers as pros. But when they get a taste of what their lives could be in thirty years, they realize some important truths they hadn't taken into account.

An alternative take on de-aging/swap quirks: Veteran Pro Hero Deku gets swapped into his own past, while his teenage self must navigate an uncertain and mysterious future.

Notes

Most chapters will only cover one time line, but this one includes both. It has been incredibly fun to write this, so I hope y'all enjoy it half as much as I do. The details of how this type of time travel functions will be covered in the next couple of chapters.

Chapter 1

Present Day

Midoriya landed on an ashy, dusty battlefield with a thud. He blinked his vision clear. "Not so scary all by your lonesome, are you mister hero?" a young woman's voice called tauntingly. The words didn't seem to be meant for him. Her voice wasn't close, and he heard sounds of other people battling. Midoriya struggled to his hands and knees and surveyed his surroundings. The last thing he could remember he had been walking from UA to the train station, headed home for a long weekend. He spotted the source of the voice. Forty meters away, two villains circled a hero like hungry dogs. All three of their faces were obscured by smoke. They didn't seem to have noticed Midoriya.

The young woman cracked a whip at the hero who snatched it out of the air, successfully pulling the woman off balance. With the stalemate broken, her partner lashed out as well. Midoriya could see he had some kind of mutation quirk effecting his hands. Unable to dodge two assailants in close quarters, the hero took a heavy hit on the shoulder from the man's oversized fists. He staggered backwards towards Midoriya, breaking through the thick smoke

Midoriya recognized the gauntlets on the hero's arms, though much of his costume was somehow not right. Choked by smoke, Bakugo's voice called out to him, "Deku! Now!"

Midoriya wasn't sure what he was supposed to do from so far away, but he leapt to his feet and let out a large Air Force strike. He aimed it for the villain with the huge fists, but he wasn't sure who would or wouldn't be hit by it. As the air blast came hurtling at all three, Bakugou used the whip to throw the woman into her partner and rolled away. The air carried both villains several yards into the nearby warehouse, slamming them against it with a resounding thud.

Bakugou launched himself forward and grabbed a villain's face in each hand. "Surrender" he growled. After a seconds hesitation, they both raised their hands to be cuffed, clearly terrified of an explosion that close to their faces. Midoriya walked towards them, trying to figure out why he didn't remember the start of the battle. He was muttering about head injuries and memory quirks when he realized through the haze that Bakugo was taller than he should be. His hero costume looked different too. He wore new support items on his feet and above his ears. There was more green and less black. Midoriya's steps slowed.

A strong breeze cleared the air more fully as Bakugo turned to look at him. They each registered the nearly 30 year age difference in the same moment. "You're old!" Midoriya squeaked. Bakugou sighed exasperatedly, "Shit. It's today."

30 Years Earlier

Bakugou heard a thud and turned around to make sure Midoriya hadn't pancaked himself in the street somehow. He'd expect to see Midoriya sprawled out or picking up the entire contents of his backpack. Instead he locked eyes with a kneeling stranger. "Oh." The man shrugged picking himself up off the sidewalk. "I guess today's the day". He began dusting off his clothes and muttering to himself. The person in front of Bakugou looked like he could be Deku's dad or uncle. He had green unruly curls but they were corralled into a much tighter style. He had quite a few freckles, and plenty of scars. The weirdest part was his clothes. Under the ash and dust that covered him, he wore something that strongly resembled Deku's hero costume. Where was Deku anyway? They had been walking to the train station when Bakugo had heard the noise behind him. He certainly felt like something was off, but it didn't feel dangerous. Still, he couldn't afford to be reckless with the League's recent behavior. Bakugou shoved his hand deeper into the pockets of his school uniform and pressed his cell phone's power button repeatedly. He hoped his teachers would get the S.O.S. soon enough. For now, he needed to stall for time.

"Oi, who are you? Where'd Deku go?" he asked loudly. The man was patting himself down looking for something, and checking the side walk beneath them as well. He startled as if suddenly remembering Bakugou existed.

"Oh Kacchan, it's still me. Past me- or is it present me? Your Deku got swapped into the future with you. My you. Sorry sweetie, but you're stuck with me for the next twenty four hours or so. Things will be back to normal soon though. I have something for this, I just gotta find it." The man smiled apologetically raising his hands in a gesture of 'it can't be helped.'

Bakugo's mind sputtered. No one else called him Kacchan but Deku didn't call him sweetie either. Deku also wasn't old, and -some bitter part of Bakugou's mind noted- probably never would be. If this was a trap it was a really weird one. "Prove it" he huffed, trying to scan subtly for other villains.

The man, Midoriya, held out his right hand. It was crisscrossed by faded replicas of familiar scars. There were a couple of new ones too, but this was clearly Deku's hand. On it glinted a gold ring. Bakugou's mind registered the information, but not the implications. He looked up into what were undoubtably Deku's green eyes, but they were framed by small smile lines.

Bakugou eyed him suspiciously, "How do I know you aren't Toga? We don't know everything about her quirk. Maybe she can adjust ages." He crossed his arms, but tried not to look too combative. He needed to keep this weirdo talking, if he was lucky maybe he could get some information about where the League had gone to ground. Bakugou's skin prickled with excitement at the thought of storming a League safe house and finally getting some proper vengeance.

"Wouldn't that be a cool quirk!" the man claiming to be Midoriya said brightly. Then he looked as though he had remembered something and unzipped a previously invisible pocket on his sleeve, retrieving a small white envelope with a look of triumph. "This is for you," he said holding it out. Bakugou made no move to take it. There was no telling if it was coated in some drug or could be a conduit for this guy's quirk. Sensing the issue, the man sighed and removed his gloves dragging the paper across his skin and even touching it to his tongue for

good measure. Bakugou's arms remained crossed. "Kacchan has always been a fast thinker," the man said with a chuckle. "My quirk is One for All," he went on and Bakugou's blood ran a little cold hearing the quirk's true name "and at least as far as you know, it's not very good for hurting people through paper." Then the man's body was surrounded by snaking green lightning and his hair stood on end. He winked at Bakugou and fired a small Air Force blast at the clear blue sky. It left a tiny dome shaped cloud hanging far above them and the recoil cracked the concrete under his red shoes.

"Shiiiiit." The word spilled out of Bakugou's mouth as his thoughts whirled. Either this was truly future Midoriya or the League had found a way to duplicate One for All. Both seemed horribly improbable. Maybe it was an illusion quirk. Yeah, that could be it. Then he considered the cracks in the concrete and frowned. Mind numbed by confusion, he held out his hand for the envelope. If the League had One for All, then there wasn't much worse the situation could really get. As he was deciding whether or not to open it, he heard the roar of an approaching motorcycle. Aizawa's motorcycle. For a second he'd forgotten the SOS he'd sent. Now he wasn't even sure what he wanted his teachers to do when they arrived. A fight could prove disastrous, especially for All Might.

"What's wrong?" Bakugou hadn't realized he'd taken a battle stance until he saw the Maybe-Midoriya reactivate Full Cowling. Then the motorcycle rounded the corner, carrying Eraser Head and All Might, and the green lighting and whipping wind vanished.

"Aizawa-Sensei!" the man beamed, turning to wave at the approaching vehicle. The motorcycle stopped sidelong with a squeak of rubber and Eraser Head's capture weapon lashed out at his still waving hand. Erased Head was running at them full speed. Midoriya's older double nimbly ducked the grasping strips, still talking, and Bakugou realized he had done so even without his quirk. "All Might! It's so good to see you. Would you like to come over for dinner? Mom is supposed to be making udon." He dodged another strike, and then another. His movement was practiced and graceful. It exuded battle confidence.

"Wait Aizawa-Sensei! That's Deku," Bakugou shouted on impulse. "I think," he added more quietly. His fists clenched and unclenched. Bakugou wanted a problem he could blast his way through, but whatever the hell this was, it certainly wasn't that. Eraser Head hesitated for a moment and his eyes drifted to Bakugou. All Might was still sitting on the motorcycle in his smaller form, his eyes scanning the area for any sign of villains or his young successor. He looked the ash covered man over thoughtfully, taking in the big smile and tear filled eyes that were fixed on him. But he didn't move.

"What do you mean *you think*, Bakugou?" Eraser Head shouted. His body was still, but he kept his capture weapon poised to strike.

"I don't fucking know," Bakugou spat, hands sparking. "He has Deku's scars, and his eyes, and his quirk. He knows things that only Deku would know. And he looks like he could do a lot of damage in a fight, so maybe" -he pulled a disgusted face- "we should try talking first."

"You sent an emergency signal specifically reserved for League attacks on students" Eraser Head replied accusingly.

Bakugou rolled his eyes. "Deku vanished and there was a weird dude who knew our names. What the hell was I supposed to wait for? A banner that said League of Villains?" he snapped back.

Eraser Head frowned, taking his point without comment and returning to the issue at hand.

"Why should I believe you're Midoriya?" he said, not lowering his capture weapon. Old Midoriya reluctantly peeled his eyes away from All Might to meet Eraser Head's gaze.

"Because I'm finally going to tell you about how All Might gave me his quirk" Midoriya said with a grin.

"Deku, no. What the fuck?!" "Midoriya-Shounen what are you thinking?!" Bakugou and All Might yelled over each other.

"See? They both confirm it's true. Rational enough for you Sensei?" Midoriya continued smiling.

Eraser Head's eyebrows shot up, but his gaze remained locked on Midoriya. "Is this information that no one in the League of Villains possesses?"

"No," Midoriya replied. Beside him Bakugou shook his head in corroboration. At least All for One knew, likely Shigaraki and the others too. Midoriya continued, "however, Sensei, it's information that the League benefits from us not sharing with you. You could walk head first into a fight against someone with multiple quirks or quirk transference abilities and lose, all because you didn't know it was possible for humans not just Nomu. You should have a chance to find out how this sort of thing interacts with your quirk. So I'm telling you not just because it's something young Deku knew, but because it's something the League would never intentionally share with you. My quirk also can't be stolen, as All Might can confirm. So it's not possible for me to be a shapeshifter with a stolen quirk. And just to clear up any differences you're noticing Sensei, your Midoriya wasn't hit by an aging quirk. I was hit with a time-swapping quirk. Your Midoriya is in my future and I'm here in the past with you. So if you're satisfied, I'd really like to talk to All Might." His voice cracked a bit at the last words.

Bakugou rolled his eyes. Clearly older Deku hadn't outgrown his rambling. Eraser Head looked thoughtful then blinked his eyes shut and sighed. "Show me your quirk." Midoriya nodded and briefly activated Full Cowling again. Eraser Head relaxed. "Well if it's an illusion quirk you could just vanish, and I think we've covered all the other bases. He doesn't seem like an imposter to me. What do you think All Might?" He glanced back to the motorcycle and saw that All Might was already walking over, arms outstretched. Eraser Head moved out of their way, and Midoriya and All Might collided with a forceful hug.

Bakugou pretended not to hear all the sniffing and murmuring coming from the two older men. He stayed close enough to intervene, but pretended to study the concrete. Most of it was unintelligible but the words "It was easier knowing I'd get to see you one last time" hit him like a punch to the gut. His eyes pricked, but he pushed the questions it raised out of his mind.

Waiting for the moment to pass, Bakugou finally opened the envelope he was holding. He turned the small slip of paper it contained over in his hand. It read *Rules for time travel* on the front and *To myself, Katsuki* on the back. He started with the back.

Chapter 2

Present Day

"So how long will I be in the future for?" Midoriya asked tentatively. He twisted a warm mug of tea in his hands, but hadn't drank from it. Bakugou sat across from him in civilian clothes taking a long drink from a matching mug. The metal chairs of the police station creaked awkwardly as he shifted in his seat. They at the police station in an empty interrogation room for routine monitoring after being hit with an unregistered quirk. Well Midoriya was. Bakugou was drinking tea and giving terse explanations about what to expect from the time-swap quirk.

"About a day. Assuming it's the same." Bakugou answered and tilted his chair back on to two legs with squeak. "Can we go now?" He called loudly at the glass behind him. "Five more minutes." Came the muffled reply. Bakugou rolled his eyes dramatically and crossed his arms. New scars and muscles peeked out of the sleeves of his black shirt.

Midoriya felt excited and terrified by the idea of leaving the station. He was in the future, his future. He had no idea what he might see out there, what he might learn. And on top of it all, he would have to stay with Bakugou for over 24 hours. Older Bakugou did seem more mellow though. He was still loud and opinionated, but he seemed to be trying to be nice to Midoriya. In fact, he seemed to be treating him like a porcelain doll, almost afraid to interact with him. "Where are we going after observation?" Midoriya ventured.

"Home." Bakugou said unhelpfully.

"And you have to come with me?" Midoriya prodded. This rule about sticking with his 'anchor person' was an uncomfortable restriction.

Bakugou laughed. "Yeah that's the idea" he said.

"Sorry to be such a burden, Kacchan," Midoriya said bowing slightly in his seat. Bakugou frowned and set his chair back on all fours, leaning close and looking over Midoriya's face with a searching expression. He didn't seem to like what he found.

"Don't do that," Bakugou said forcefully. "Don't put everything on yourself. I was right there when she hit you, er- my you. If you get hit when I'm on the field, that's my fault too. We're a fucking team, OK? We did our best and we won. Geez, I do not miss your martyr complex."

Midoriya's eyes swelled with tears threatening to tip over. To hear Bakugou sharing in his failures and encouraging him felt both incredibly foreign and inexplicably right. Mostly it was a huge relief. He stopped bowing and wiped his eyes, nodding his understanding, since he didn't trust his voice. Bakugou's features softened and he sighed.

"Sorry. You've got a lot to learn still. It's not fair to hold you to the standard of a hero yet." Bakugou said it like that was supposed to be comforting, but Midoriya's pride stung. He'd saved someones life. He'd inherited One for All and made it his own. He was already a hero.

Bakugou caught the defiant look in his eyes and spoke low and intense, "Do you know the difference between a hero and a martyr Deku?" Midoriya opened his mouth to say *sacrifice*, but Bakugou continued over him "Weakness. A single loss." Midoriya listened, frowning. "You still haven't decided which one you want to be. Oughta make up your mind." He crossed his arms and leaned his chair back again, apparently deciding the conversation was over.

Bakugou's words irritated Midoriya as he turned them over in his mind. A hero needed to be willing to lay their very life on the line, and sometimes that meant they wound up martyred. That didn't make them weak. But the realization chafed at him that he had always felt like that was an acceptable outcome. He'd been a quirkless nobody. Why would it be a big deal if something had happened to him? That was the attitude that had let him stand in front of bullies twice his size, even though he knew he'd just get beaten. At least when he stood up to bullies, he had felt like he was worth a little something. *Oh*. That couldn't be good. He was still mulling it over when the interrogation room door swung open. "Observation concluded. Discharged for home recovery" a young officer said brightly before making a hasty retreat.

Bakugou was already half way across the room. Midoriya stood up swiftly to follow and nearly knocked over the chair and table in doing so. But he didn't have to rush. Bakugou waited for him at the door and each door after that. He never got impatient or tried to leave him behind. It felt kind of strange. Their commute home was quiet but polite. They took the train and Bakugou offered him the last open seat. As they walked, Bakugou kept to the outside or let him walk ahead. He let Midoriya set the pace and didn't complain or speed up. When they arrived at their destination, a cute modern house, Midoriya was puzzled to see Bakugou produce a key from his coat and unlock it. "You have a key to my house?" he asked breaking the silence.

Bakugou smiled. "Our house" he corrected.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Letter time!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

30 years ago

To Myself, Katsuki

There are so many things I'm not allowed to tell you.

But I can still say the most important stuff.

So listen up.

It's going to be okay.

It's safe to trust Deku. He's changing.

Talk slower.

Don't be a coward about your feelings. You can handle it.

Get some ear plugs.

If you're sorry, say it.

You're gonna be great.

There you go. There's all the sappy shit you need to hear so that you don't fuck this up.

You would've figured it all out eventually. But this way involves less looking like a tool.

You're Welcome,

K

P.S. When you were 4, you got separated from the Old Hag at the park and-

Bakugou flushed and flipped the paper over quickly to avoid reading the rest of the embarrassing incident. It certainly lent a lot of credibility to the words. He felt encouraged but annoyed. The words were confusing, though -he hated to admit- kind of nice to hear. But, how was all that crap the most important things his future self had to say? Why not "*here's the League's hide out*" or "*keep All Might home on this day*"?

His eyes drifted down to the flipped page. *Rules for time travel*. While the back had been in his own tidy handwriting, this mess clearly belonged to Midoriya.

1. *Do not take items from the past into the future. Do not leave items from the future in the past.*
2. *Travelers should stay within half a mile of their anchor person or object.*
3. *Travelers must not disclose any information from the future that will not be learned first hand by their past-self during their visit to the future.*
4. *Travelers may wish to stick to their alternate self's intended schedule to reduce the risk of complications.*
5. *If the Traveler starts bleeding from their ears, do not under any circumstances apply a regeneration quirk.*

Bakugou frowned. That last rule was awfully ominous. At least now he knew why his future self had been so damn coy. He realized that meant he couldn't keep the letter. He read over the back again, carefully folding up the bottom to hide the humiliating post script. *It's safe to trust Deku. He's changing*. Bakugou chewed that line over. He'd seen little changes in Midoriya that gave him hope, but they were always followed by some insane stunt that left him feeling like an idiot for wanting to trust anyone. He opened his phone and snapped a picture of both sides. He wasn't sure what the consequences were for violating any of these rules, but he wasn't interested in finding out.

He pushed his questions and confusion out of his mind, clearing it for action. Midoriya and All Might had separated and were drying their eyes. He tucked the page back in its envelope and pushed it Midoriya's face. "You gotta go if you're gonna stick to Deku's plan for today" he said gruffly. Eraser Head frowned, but Midoriya nodded.

"I meant it earlier, would you come for dinner Senseis?" Midoriya asked with an earnest hopefulness that seemed out of step with his age. Eraser Head didn't look particularly excited by the prospect of sharing a meal with a version of his student that might very well be older than him, but All Might answered immediately.

"Of course my boy!" he said brightly "We'll meet you there." Bakugou rolled his eyes. It still wasn't fair how the symbol of piece doted on his successor. He was spoiling him rotten. It didn't change what Bakugou needed to do, who he needed to be, but damn it pissed him off sometimes.

"You'll have to come too of course, Kacchan" said Midoriya. Bakugou's head snapped up. Like hell was he going to make this crap situation even more stressful for Auntie Inko. "You're my anchor person," Midoriya explained, turning his defiance to dread. "Kitigawa's quirk can only swap someone into a similar moment in their past, usually keying off of a person or object. Since we were both in the fight, her quirk found a previous moment when we together to drop me into. Around now she'll be telling the police that the chances of being able to swap back are much higher if the person stays close to their anchor."

"Chances?" Bakugou repeated lamely, his stomach turning. The thought of Deku being stuck in the future forever, replace by his older self, made Bakugou feel... angry. That had to be what this sick hollow feeling in his chest was. He was pissed and disgusted. Why couldn't Deku keep out of trouble? Because he was still incompetent and suicidal, no matter what his future self said. Midoriya just looked at him.

"Fine!" Bakugou roared and stomped off towards the train station. He didn't look back. Unless older Midoriya was an even bigger idiot, he'd be close behind.

Chapter End Notes

I enjoy messing up Bakugou's day, he's such a crank.

Next chapter will be up on Thursday.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Awkward silences for awkward boys.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Present Day

Midoriya fidgeted uncomfortably on the couch, kicking his legs back and forth and stewing in his own thoughts. Bakugou was in the kitchen just steps away, where he'd been cooking enough food to feed a small army for the better part of a half hour. Midoriya felt like a house guest even though his future self supposedly lived here. So many questions bubbled up to the back of his throat but he swallowed them all. Bakugou had made him wait outside for a few minutes while he removed any potentially harmful information from the house. Midoriya's mind burned with curiosity and his fingers twitched with the temptation to rifle through drawers and cabinets until he found what ever it was Bakugou had been so quick to hide.

He also didn't want to disturb Bakugou. There was a grace to his practiced movements and his face looked surprisingly peaceful. In fact, the whole place felt peaceful. Midoriya forced himself to pay attention to the details of their shared home to distract from the storm of questions in his mind. The faded green and orange fabrics were a little garish, but the furniture was soft and well used. The several dust outlines on the wall spoke to a home that normally displayed plenty of photographs. The many windows let in plenty of the fading sunlight. It was easy for Midoriya to believe he lived here.

Bakugou covered each of the pots on the stove with a lid and dried his hands before sprawling out in the chair across from Midoriya with a sigh. "That's gotta simmer for a while, so what do you want to know?" he asked, "I probably can't answer most things but you look like you're gonna explode. Just get 'em out there before you burst a blood vessel." His gaze was level and expectant.

Questions poured out of Midoriya like an avalanche: How long had they lived together? How had that happened? What had Kitigawa and her partner done to attract the heroes attention? How were their classmates? Was it normal for the two of them to be working together? What was that like? What happened to the League of Villains? To All for One? To All Might? What was his fighting style like now? What happened if he learned something he wasn't supposed to? What was happening to Kacchan and his future self in the past? Where even were they? What part of Japan did they live in? If Bakugou had met his future self in the past, did that mean events were inevitable or could Midoriya make a mistake and prevent this future from ever happening? What happened if he died in the future? What if he didn't swap back? Would

he be stuck here forever? Did it violate the rules for him to spend the next two days reading a history book? Wasn't that technically a first hand experience? What were the hero rankings? Had his grades been ok when he graduated UA? Was his mom proud of him? Was she still well? Did she approve of whatever his relationship with Kacchan was? Was UA still around?

The questions just kept coming, about the futures of everyone he'd ever cared about, about any mistakes he'd made, about how to save as many people as possible, about his day to day life, about Kacchan. Everything, he wanted to know how everything turned out. He talked until his throat hurt. It was like the questions were a thousand splinters under his skin and asking was pulling them out one by one: painful but also a relief. When he finally couldn't think of anymore, his voice dropped to a low whisper, "Can you tell me any of it?"

Bakugou winced. "Not much," he replied apologetically, "Most of the stuff about the past I can't tell you. And most of the stuff about this quirk, would just be a guess. It's a shit situation. I'm sorry."

His words sent Midoriya over the edge. Tears poured down his face and his fists clenched so tightly his knuckles went white. Having all this life saving information at his finger tips but being forbidden to reach out and grab it was torture. He squeezed his eyes shut and let the sobs course through him, so he was a little startled when he felt the couch dipping beside him and a warm hand placed reassuringly on his back. Warmth flooded through his chest and his tears turned slowly from frustration to relief. It felt good to not be alone. He wiped his eyes on his sleeves and looked up at Bakugou. "Sorry for throwing such a pity party" Midoriya sniffed chuckling, "I'm sure you're upset too. There must be so many things you want to tell me to change."

Bakugou shook his head. "Nah. Can't think of any." he said simply, running his hands through his hair. "I'm trying to make sure I don't say anything that changes stuff. Not that there aren't any things in my past that hurt like hell but" he shrugged his bulky shoulders "I wouldn't trade any of it." Midoriya was too surprised to respond.

Bakugou pulled Midoriya into a tight one armed hug that lasted only an instant, then got up from the couch and strode back into the kitchen. "You should get cleaned up. We're baby sitting for Eri tonight. She has a night shift. So don't embarrass us all by being covered in ash ok?" He said it firmly, with a steady voice, but Midoriya could have sworn he heard a sniff at the end.

"Right. Ok." Midoriya said shakily. At least he'd see some part of what the future held.

Chapter End Notes

I really enjoy writing older Bakugou even though he's more a man of action than words. Thank you so much for the kudos and comments y'all've left. This is my first multi-chap

fic and I appreciate getting to share it with you all ^.^

Next chapter up Saturday!

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Time for me to make good on that Kastki & Inko tag :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

30 years ago

Bakugou couldn't decide if this dinner was going better or worse than he had expected. He put another helping of a spicy sauce into his noodles and stirred. It had been years since he had eaten at Midoriya Inko's table, but she'd set out the extra sauce for him just like she used to. They'd decided on the way over to tell Auntie Inko that Midoriya had been hit by an aging quirk at school to keep her from worrying or asking too many questions. She'd squealed and crooned about how her little Izuku looked so handsome all grown up. She hadn't even complained about the concrete dust he'd tracked in. But their little fiction had made dinner conversation even more halting and awkward.

All Might piped up in the quiet that had settled over the table. "How are things at the hospital Midoriya-san?" he said, a little louder than necessary.

Inko flushed. "You couldn't possibly want to hear about all that" she said waving him off.

"My apologies for prying" All Might said with a small bow. This seemed to fluster Inko even further and she relented, starting in on some anecdote about her boss.

Bakugou rolled his eyes and caught Aizawa, who had changed into his civilian clothes, watching him coolly. His teacher had hardly spoken a word the whole time, listening and watching in attentive silence. Bakugou growled and shoved a huge clump of noodles into his mouth, nearly biting down on his chopsticks in the process. Aizawa wasn't his etiquette teacher, let him stare.

He'd meant to keep his eyes on his bowl, but as he chewed irritably Bakugou locked eyes with future Midoriya across the table. The older man's face was brimming with contentment and he flashed a fond smile at Bakugou. He growled quietly and went back to looking at his noodles. What the hell was he supposed to do with any of this? His plan was to keep his head down, ignore future nerd, and ride out this weekend without blowing anything up or ruining the time stream. If they couldn't share information, they probably just shouldn't talk at all, right?

Dinner dragged on tortuously, but eventually it was time for their teachers to leave. They were overly grateful for the meal and apologized repeatedly for Midoriya's situation, and then with

a click of the door they were gone. Deku quickly excused himself to wash up, leaving Bakugou alone with Midoriya Inko.

"Will you dry for me while I do the dishes, Katsuki-kun?" she asked, her voice light. But her face was serious, expectant. He hated the way being here made him feel like a naughty child. Now the question felt like a challenge. But Bakugou wasn't a coward. He gave an affirmative grunt and nod, not really looking at her. They took their places in the kitchen, working in companionable silence for a few minutes. "I'm glad you and Izuku are talking again." she said, her eyes on the pan she was scrubbing. Bakugou polished the bowl in his hand even harder. He bit back a number of rude retorts. Emboldened by his lack of outburst she went on, "You were very impressive at the Sports Festival."

Bakugou shook his head, "I've still got a long way to go." He was pretty sure being yelled at by Deku's mom would have felt better than getting complimented. And he did have a long way to go before he could surpass All Might.

Inko considered this quietly for a while. "Izuku has grown a lot, but he's got a ways ahead of him too." she said uncertainly, almost a question. Bakugou nodded in agreement. She handed him another wet dish, "And he has a tendency to be reckless and try to do everything himself," He snorted. Bakugou couldn't agree more on that point. It was constant source of discomfort having to watch Deku court danger without so much as an escape plan. She went on without looking at him, "So it would bring me a little peace of mind to know you would be taking care of him."

Bakugou froze dumbfounded. Did she realize what her request sounded like? How could she possibly want to ask that of him after he'd sent her son home in tears so many times? He forced himself to keep drying. He cleared his throat but no words came to him. Should he tell her there had to be someone better suited? That he doubted Deku would even let him? Would even have him? That if he had thought for a second there was something anyone could do to keep Deku out of the danger he seemed to crave, he would have done it years ago? But the last few years had proven that no amount of screaming would get Deku to listen once he'd gotten something stupid in his head.

As if she could hear his thoughts Inko chimed in to his spiral, "I know you two used to argue a lot about him becoming a hero. But now that Izuku's finally grown into his quirk maybe things don't have to be so one sided between you." She turned and gave him a hopeful smile. Arguing. That was... a new way of looking at it.

"It's not up to me," Bakugou said. His words surprised them both. But as he thought about it, he didn't feel like he should take them back. It really wasn't his call whether Deku stopped admiring him and started listening to him. Or whether he started acting like an equal instead of the quirkless walking accident he used to be. He looked away. He'd never stopped to consider the possibility Deku would decide to step up. Then what? *He's changing.* "But I'll try Auntie." he added, color rising in his cheeks. They finished the dishes in silence, but it was more comfortable than before.

Inko is precious, but there's a little steel under there and I think Bakugou knows it.

Next Chapter on Monday. Thank you for reading!

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Present Day

The doorbell startled Midoriya to his feet. "A GUEST IS HERE" boomed All Might's voice. His future self's large t-shirt billowed loosely as he raced forward then froze and walked back to Bakugou uncertain. "I got it" Bakugou said, leisurely heading for the door. Midoriya heard the front door open and went to peer into the foyer. "Did you get my message?" Bakugou asked as a small girl with lilac curls plastered her self to his leg with a yell that roughly resembled 'hello'.

Through the door Midoriya could see a beautiful woman with silvery hair and a cream colored horn wearing casual clothes. She laughed high and delighted, "Yes, and I don't mind a bit. If teenage Izuku-senpai was responsible enough to watch me, then he can certainly try his hand at watching the twins." Midoriya was confused for moment before he spotted a second child's shoe peeking out from behind Eri. "Are you sure you don't mind?" Eri asked, a little concern in her voice.

Bakugou shook his head. "Villain says it's important to stick to his planned schedule. It's no big deal Eri-chan."

"Well, tell him thank you for me when he gets back, ok?" Eri added gently. Midoriya could see Bakugou's face soften in the porch light. He hadn't realized how much worry that older face had been holding.

"You got it" Bakugou said with determination.

Midoriya suddenly felt like he was intruding, but his curiosity kept him rooted to the spot.

From behind Eri another small girl with an identical light purple bob leaned towards her sister and said something inaudible. "You've gotta speak up honey or Uncle Katsuki will have to put in his hearing aids." Eri admonished. Midoriya furrowed his brow in confusion. Did Bakugou have hearing damage from his quirk? The noise from his explosions had never seemed to bother him before. "Noooo I can do it" came the howl, plenty audible. "Are you sure? No whispering?" Her mother asked, one eye brow raised. "I CAN DO IT!" the small girl bellowed, then shrunk back as if startled by her own voice.

"Good job Ana-chan" Bakugou said, putting both his hands out for a low high five. She smacked them hesitantly. "Villain trap!" he called out gleefully, grabbing her hands and hoisting her up onto his hip. She wriggled in defiance for a moment before giving in to his tight grip and burying her face in Bakugou's shoulder. "Alright, say good bye to your mother, girls" he said with a tone of authority Midoriya had never heard him use before.

"Byeee Mommm" they moped in unison. Eri kissed each girl on the forehead, gave Bakugou a small bow of gratitude, and departed with a bright farewell.

The door clicked shut and Bakugou limped in, hoisting the girls with each step.

"This is Ana-chan," Bakugou said depositing the wiggling child on the ground, "and this is Uta-chan." he added shaking his leg until the second girl's grip finally gave way. "Girls this is still Uncle Izuku, but there was an accident at work and he doesn't remember you right now. He'll remember you next time, but for today you're gonna be extra nice." Both girls froze momentarily under Bakugou's steely glare and nodded.

"Mama showed us a video," Uta said turning to Midoriya "you fell on your face."

Midoriya laughed awkwardly, "I guess I did" he admitted running his hand through his hair.

Ana whispered at her feet "You used to-" She looked at Bakugou, seeming to remember her promise to her mother. She took a deep breath. "YOU USED TO BE TALLER. DID THE VILLAIN SQUISH YOU SHORT?" she shouted all at once. Midoriya was briefly stunned, but he saw how brave the shy girl was trying to be.

He leaned down to be closer to her. "Nope! I'll be tall again once her quirk wears off. Do you like to watch hero videos Ana-chan?" Ana cocked her head at him for a moment then nodded. It seemed like she had used up most of her words for the evening on that one question. "Me too." He said in what he hoped was a reassuring voice. His run in with Kota hadn't left him feeling confident in his skills with children, but he hoped Eri's kids would be a little less of a challenge than an orphan with a grudge. Ana gave him a tiny smile, then plodded off towards a bedroom door. Midoriya was surprised to see that it opened into what was undeniably a well used child's bedroom, full of toys and bookshelves and complete with a tall set of bunk beds.

He turned to Bakugou, questions burning in his eyes "Is that- Do we- Do you have..?" He couldn't quite form the question. It seemed too personal, too important, to just ask outright. He'd been wondering this whole time about the nature of his future relationship with Bakugou, but the possibility that they weren't just together but were *parents* hadn't even crossed his mind. Midoriya wasn't even sure he wanted to know the answer.

"You're smart. You'll figure it out." Bakugou said, studiously not meeting Midoriya's eyes. Midoriya followed his gaze to the twins who were settling in and strewing the contents of their back packs across their respective beds. "Could you make sure they wash their hands before dinner for me Zuy-" Bakugou coughed over his mistake, "Deku?" Midoriya nodded and Bakugou left to get the meal on the table. He had only been in the future for a handle full of hours but Midoriya had been surprised over and over by how mundane it all was. He couldn't be sure what their respective hero rankings were but he felt sure that both he and Bakugou were near the top. But somehow their life seemed so normal. He thought about what Hawks had said about a future where heroes didn't have to work so hard. Was that why two of the strongest heroes in Japan had been facing off with such small time villains? What would it take to build a future like that? He shelved the thought for later analysis.

For now he had some babysitting to do.

Chapter End Notes

Once I thought of the doorbell I couldn't resist. Thanks for indulging me :)

Next chapter on Wednesday. I have a busy week coming up so chapter 8 may have be split over Friday and Sunday, but I'm still hoping to get it all out at once.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

[Men Crying] ahead.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Chapter 7

30 years ago

Bakugou tossed and turned on the couch, tangled in a thin blanket. He'd been waiting for sleep for more than an hour, but it still hadn't arrived. He threw the blanket off in frustration and went to wash his face in the sink. The cold water cleared his head a little. His thoughts had been troubled and muddled all night. Catching his reflection in the mirror, he wondered what his face would look like once it had been weathered by the years. Would he look tired all the time like Aizawa? Would he *be* tired all the time? He wondered if the older heroes ever got sick of it all, constant emergencies, defending their position from a steady stream of young challengers, being blamed anytime something went wrong. He couldn't imagine doing anything else, but the enormity of signing up for decades of hero work had never really hit him before.

He needed to go for a walk.

The second Midoriya Inko's front door shut behind him, Bakugou felt a wave of relief. The night air was warm, sweet, and blessedly quiet. But it wasn't the silent anticipation that had filled the house he just left, where at any moment he could be forced to contend with his future. The soft chirps of cicadas and occasional sound of a car created a quiet that he could wrap himself up in and shut out tomorrow's problems. *Half a mile*, he reminded himself as he began to walk. In his head, he planned out a small circuit that would keep him close to the epicenter of the house but let him stretch his legs as much as possible.

He started to jog. He let himself get lost in the repetitive sound of his feet hitting the side walk, his breathing coming in short rhythmic cycles, and, when he listened hard enough, his own heart beat. As he passed the park where they used to play a storm of feelings came over him, but he didn't push them away or try to understand them. He just kept jogging and they passed through him like long forgotten ghosts. He took one loop around the neighborhood and then another. All his thoughts dropped away and he lost his sense of time.

At the start of his fourth loop, he was startled out of his reverie by a voice. "Feeling better?" Midoriya called from the steps of his childhood home. All the thoughts and worries that had been plaguing Bakugou came rushing back.

"I was" he growled. But he slowed down and approached the man anyway. "What do you want?" Bakugou asked coldly, wiping the sweat from his forehead. They'd hardly spoken since he'd gotten roped into this mess, so why pester him now?

Midoriya sighed sitting down on the steps, "I'm sorry Kacchan. I got so excited to see... everyone that I forgot about you a little. I see you all the time so it's easy to take you for granted. But you're probably frustrated and confused, and that's on me. I don't know much about what this weekend was like for you, so I don't know what to expect. But even if I can't tell you much about my life, I can tell you about what's happening to him, to me. And I can

let you get to know me a little, if you want." With a scarred hand, he patted the step beside him in invitation. Bakugou hesitated, then sat.

"You went for a run like this that first night I was in the future too." Midoriya went on as if he'd been asked a question. "I think you were just worried," Bakugou's brow furrowed but he didn't interrupt. "I slept like a stone mostly. I think I had it easier than you. I got to stay at our house, and you had- have to be in someone else's." Bakugou raised his eyebrow and questions leapt to his lips but Midoriya continued. "We didn't talk that much then either, but I got to see how things might turn out. That you and I could be... close. That things could be different. I think that changed the way I looked at the world. It helped me start thinking about creating my own legacy. Instead of just continuing the one All Might gave to me. You seemed so kind even though you clearly weren't happy to see me. I remember thinking how different you seemed all grown up, but now I keep thinking about how you're still you after all these years."

Bakugou had been stewing on a dozen questions, but suddenly only one seemed to matter.

"How old are you?" he asked, just barely keeping his voice steady.

Midoriya smiled, "I can't get specific, but let's just say I'm in the ballpark of 45. That shouldn't be too much of a hint. I mean you've seen my face." He pointed to his wrinkles with a grin "Hey, woah, are you ok Kacchan?" Midoriya's face was suddenly full of concern.

Bakugo realized he was crying. Normally when he cried it was loud, angry, painful. Like his whole body was going to explode and that force had to go somewhere. These tears trickled out so gently he didn't notice them at first. He touched his wet face in surprise and laughed. *He makes it. He makes it. Deku makes it. Deku survives.* The thought played over and over in his mind. His chest heaved and the tears came faster. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to get a hold of himself. He didn't even understand why he was crying. Then strong arms pulled him into a hug. He resisted out of habit, but it was pointless against the iron grip surrounding him. Older Midoriya spoke gently and stroked his back "It's okay, I'm here." Bakugo hesitated, then let himself relax. Between sniffs he said gravely, "I was so fucking sure he was gonna get himself killed."

Midoriya squeezed him tighter, voice tight. "Oh kid, you must have been so scared." The tears redoubled. Bakugou hadn't ever thought of it as fear, but suddenly he saw his feelings with terrifying clarity.

He was still afraid that he would have to watch Izuku die.

It was a sickeningly familiar feeling. He'd felt it dozens of times when they were children, when Midoriya picked an unwinnable fight or took a ridiculous risk with his fragile and quirkless body. He'd felt it every time Midoriya said he wanted to be a hero. He'd felt it over and over again since they started at UA. Watching Midoriya determinedly racing towards an early grave made him feel a fear and powerlessness poisonous enough to choke on, so he'd candy-coated it with rage to make it easier to swallow. He'd tried for years to push Midoriya away so that at the very least he wouldn't have to watch his self-inflicted demise, then fate kept shoving them together and every time Bakugou had felt more and more trapped.

But the strong arms wrapped around him were living proof that Midoriya didn't have to go out in a blaze of so-called glory. The bloody future that had seemed so inevitable, didn't have to come to pass. The realization had been hovering at the edge of his mind since the moment he saw future Midoriya use One for All, but it had been too big to take in all at once. And under it there were other feelings, other hopes, too enormous to contemplate. So he didn't. He just let his tears fall, washing away years of fear and anger like a purifying waterfall. When he finally pulled back and dried his eyes, he still felt a little scared. But it didn't feel like the fear was going to suffocate him anymore.

He wasn't the sort to bask in the silence though.

"I bet I'm still ranked higher than you" Bakugou taunted. The effect was damaged a bit by the snuffle that followed. Midoriya looked surprised for only a split second.

"You know I can't tell you either way" he replied, dabbing at his damp eyes. A competitive smile flickered over his lined face.

"Nah, you're just embarrassed cause I'm right" Bakugou said with a smug grin. Midoriya laughed and pushed his shoulder playfully.



This was better, more familiar. He could handle this. All those big confusing feelings could wait for some other night.

For once, Bakugou felt like he had time.

Chapter End Notes

This is the scene that made me want to write this fic. Midoriya's self destructive behaviors have always seemed to weigh so heavily on Bakugou. I couldn't stop thinking about what it would be like to take that pressure off him, for him to set that burden down for a minute.

Next chapter will be up Friday.

Thank you for reading  

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I save responding to y'all's comments for a treat while I'm prepping and they really got me through some sticky spots today ^.^

Thank you everyone for reading!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Present Day

"Please Uta-chan? You can have your Lemillion plushy back as soon as you put on your pajamas" Uta clutched her stuffed hero even tighter. Midoriya wasn't quite sure how such a simple bed time task had turned into a stand off, but here he was pleading with a thirty pound child anyway. Dinner had been so civilized. "No!" Uta said stamping her foot, "I don't want to." The core of the dispute seemed to be that putting on pajamas required putting down the toy which was totally unacceptable. Midoriya rubbed the back of his neck and tried to come up with a solution. He knew you weren't supposed to bribe children, but rewarding them was somehow different and ok? Bakugou watched from the living room barely disguising a smirk. Ana sat in front of him, appropriately clad for bedtime and serenely permitting him to braid her hair. Midoriya wondered how long he had practiced to produce such tidy french braids, but shrugged it off as Kacchan's usual commitment to excellence.

Finally he struck on an idea. "Hmm, Uta-chan is probably very slow at putting on pajamas" Midoriya mused aloud. The little girl's brow furrowed. "Nuh-uh" she pouted. Midoriya shrugged, "We can't all be super fast." Uta's face screwed up in frustration, "I am too fast" she declared. He pretended to consider this for a moment. "Well then why don't we have a race to see who's the fastest?" he said tentatively. She didn't even reply to his challenge, just chucked the Lemillion plush on to the lower bunk bed and slammed the door. He gamely jogged to the bathroom to change, and as he passed Ana and Bakugou, saw that they were both grinning. It was a little cramped to change in here, but earlier he'd been embarrassed to discover there was only one bedroom other than the one the girls were staying in. And he certainly wasn't going to change in *there*, he thought, color creeping up his face.

He took his time, but apparently rushing had gotten the better of Uta. She stumbled out the bedroom stepping on her pant feet with only one arm in a sleeve, the other pinned awkwardly to her torso. "I win" she declared, though all the evidence seemed to the contrary. Bakugou chuckled but didn't dispute her. He put the last elastic in Ana's hair and motioned for Uta to take her place. "Ponyo tiime" she said sitting down with a thump. Sure enough. Instead of starting on her braids Bakugou clicked a remote and the Miyazaki film started to play. Midoriya settled in the corner of the couch to make as much room as possible, while Bakugou didn't seem to notice he was being used as everything from a jungle gym to a

pillow. After about twenty minutes, the twins seemed to settle on the latter. In the flickering light of the television, Midoriya saw their eyes begin to drift shut.

Not long after, Bakugou began to snore softly. His head was cocked at an uncomfortable looking angle, but his face was completely slack. Midoriya smiled. It felt good to see him like this. Relaxed. Happy. He wondered if his future self was happy too. Was this really his life? Small time villains, curry, and kids movies? And at the center of it all, Bakugou. Midoriya wasn't sure what he'd thought his future would be like. In fact, he realized he'd been avoiding thinking past high school.

It was too hard knowing that someday All Might would be gone and Kacchan would leave him behind. He'd always figured Bakugou would finally ghost him after graduation. Sure they'd probably have to see each other at public relations events, but it wouldn't be often. *But a future like this, one where we walk our path together, instead of Kacchan always running away...* it made his heart ache with longing.

He wasn't greedy enough to hope that they were more than a team. He'd always known that whatever this admiration was he felt for Bakugou, it could never be returned, Midoriya had made peace with that years ago. This was so much more than he dared to hope for, even now. He felt a little ashamed thinking it, but the more he saw the more he didn't really want to change things. Their lives could have taken so many paths. *What had made this one possible?*

Contented and warm, turning possibilities over in his mind, Midoriya didn't notice when his day dreams melted into sleep. He woke with a start in silence and darkness. It took him an unsteady moment to remember where, and when, he was. The movie had finished. How long had he been out? Bakugou and the twins breathed softly on the other end of the couch.

Tentatively, Midoriya reached out and jostled Bakugou's one free arm. He blinked awake. "Movie over?" he asked in a groggy voice.

"Yeah," Midoriya whispered extra quietly, afraid to startle the girls who hadn't yet stirred, "What now?"

Bakugou made a pained face. "First thing, please stop whispering." Bakugou was wake fully awake now and speaking at a normal volume. "They'd sleep through an avalanche, but it makes me feel like my ears are bleeding." Midoriya cocked his head but didn't argue. *Please*, that was different. "Next thing," Bakugou attempted to move but quickly aborted the gesture. Ana had fallen asleep pinning Bakugou right arm and Uta had come to rest largely on top of her. "Shit, my arm is numb." he huffed.

"Should we wake them?" Midoriya offered.

Bakugou looked at him in horror, "What? No. Rule number one: let sleeping children stay the fuck asleep. Just- here, start with Uta-chan. Pick her up gently and put her on the bed. Okay?" Midoriya bit his lip but nodded. It took some tries to find a position that wouldn't let her head roll, but he successfully lifted her at last.

He carried her into the kids room and tucked her into the top bunk. Bakugou was right, she barely stirred. He did like-wise for Ana and she was so unresponsive he watched her chest

rise and fall for a bit to be sure she was breathing. He pulled their door shut with a soft click

When Midoriya turned, Bakugou was shaking out his arm with a grimace. He smiled at Midoriya though. "I wish I could still sleep like that." Bakugou said ruefully. He stretched his arm over his head.

Midoriya scratched at the back of his neck, not sure if he'd be prying. "That thing you said-" he started.

"About my ears?" Bakugou finished.

Midoriya nodded. "I guess it can't hurt" Bakugou shrugged, tidying up the couch, "My quirk factor protects my hearing from explosions, right?" Midoriya nodded, he had always assumed as much. Bakugou went on "But I still have pain receptors in my ears. And since it they don't fire on loud sounds, it hits me with quiet ones." He spun his ring anxiously. *Wait, had he been wearing that before?* "I wear special hearing aids that boost quiet sounds so they aren't as painful, but they itch and I don't like to wear them at home. Ear plugs help too. but then I can't hear other stuff. It's not a big deal, just not my favorite way to wake up." He shrugged again, clearly not thrilled with the topic.

Midoriya paled as he remembered the dozens of times Bakugou had gone off on him for mumbling quietly to himself. He'd always just assumed it had been his normal moodiness. He'd never imagined it could actually hurt. He had to apologize, "Kacchan I'm s-"

"It's fine. You didn't know." Bakugou interrupted, "Hell, back then I didn't know. Besides, am I really the one you want to say that to?" Midoriya chewed on that thought. To keep from mumbling he wedged his thumb between his teeth. This Bakugou was easier to apologize to, but that was a small wonder since for him it was a long time ago. The prospect of apologizing to the real Kacchan when he got back made his hands sweat. What if it just made everything worse? Sometimes it seemed like everything he said was the wrong thing and it would be better to just stay silent. But not talking had never solved anything between them, it had just bought the illusion of peace. No, they had to start having these hard conversations or they'd never get any better at them.

"G'Night Deku" Bakugou's voice snapped Midoriya out of his silent pondering. He hadn't noticed Bakugou making the couch up into a tidy little bed complete with sheets and pillows and a plush orange blanket. So he even didn't have time to say thank you before the other bedroom door clicked shut. He climbed under the covers with a sigh. How could he feel so at home and so out of place at one? Just one more mystery for the pile.

Chapter End Notes

Representation Note:

I hope the part about Bakugou's auditory hyposensitivity makes sense. If you've ever met someone who can't stand really soft touches it's similar to that. Sensory issues of

this type are most often seen in people with autism, but it is not my goal here to portray Bakugou as autistic. There are many kinds of neurodiversity that can come with sensory differences, and sensory differences exist on a spectrum from quirky to clinical, and may have a mix of upsides and downsides. In Bakugou's case, it can be an asset in combat (look at that situational awareness) but it has drawbacks in day to day life.

I love seeing fics deal with hearing impairment and other kinds of representation. In this case, deafness or HI could be a downside in combat. I decided what I wanted with this fic, especially with Bakugou, was to touch on the idea that being built for victory/success isn't the same as being built for peace/happiness.

Plus, preventing a hearing injury would change the timeline, and, bless him, Bakugou likes his life as is 🧡

We're actually gonna stay in this timeline for chapter 9 as well since there's still some important stuff to cover before morning. We'll get back to young Bakugou in chapter 10.

Next Chapter up Sunday!

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Revisions start here!

This chapter was replaced on 2/9. This is the final version.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Present Day

Midoriya stirred dreamily under the thick blanket. He wasn't sure how long he'd been asleep, but it was certainly still dark out. He saw Bakugou outlined by moonlight putting on his sneakers. "Kacchan?" he said through a yawn.

"I'm just going for a jog," Bakugou said firmly, "go back to sleep." A car drove past and its headlights cast over Bakugou's face through a window. His eyes looked red and tired.

Midoriya sat up, concerned. Bakugou turned to him with an irritated sigh. "Someone has to stay with the twins. There's nothing you can do right now, except let me have my run with out worrying about you staying up. So, will you please just fucking do that for me?" Midoriya felt stung for a second, but then he registered those last words for what they were. Bakugou was asking for his help.

"Okay Kacchan, I will." Midoriya said, trying to look like he wasn't worried.

Bakugou visibly relaxed and headed out the door. Just before it closed, he turned back to Midoriya. "Thanks Deku" he said, and then Midoriya was alone again.

He laid back in the darkness, thinking hard. He'd try to sleep soon, but he was learning that keeping a lid on his worries only made them stronger. Bakugou had seemed not angry, but sad. And earlier, talking with Eri, he'd looked genuinely worried. It was dawning on Midoriya how stressful this must be for even for a veteran pro hero. Bakugou's... roommate and at least sometimes hero partner was missing, but all there was to do was wait and hope. That couldn't be easy. Those things that Bakugo had said at the police station about being a team had been comforting, but they also sounded like someone who was blaming himself. Midoriya remembered the crushing powerlessness he'd felt after watching Shigaraki pull Bakugou into that portal during summer training. It felt shameful to be the cause of that feeling now.

He had to do something about it. Midoriya crept quietly into the kitchen to look for a pen and paper. He opened a few cabinets, to no result.

Then he pulled open a drawer and forgot what he was doing entirely. His gaze was fixed on a stack of forms with official looking letter head: All Might Memorial Center for Juvenile Rehabilitation.

His chest tightened. *Memorial*.

All Might was dead.

Midoriya had suspected that All Might wouldn't have lived decades past Nighteye's dark prediction. But knowing was far more painful than suspecting. Tears spilled down cheeks, though he sniffed and tried to blink them back. He ran his hand over the paper. It was terribly solid and real. His eyes scanned over it, but his mind felt half a mile away. Based on our observations we recommend the court... The words blurred together, a sea of meaningless legalese. The answer wouldn't be here. It couldn't tell him what had happened to his hero.

Still sniffing, he went to close the drawer, and finally remembered why he'd opened it at all. Next to the stack of papers, he saw something that would work: sticky notes and a sharpie. He took them and shoved the drawer shut.

He scrubbed at his face with the hem of his shirt.

The gesture felt stupid and small now, but he couldn't bring himself to abandon it.

At least he didn't need much space for his message.

Kacchan,

Sorry for making you worry.

Midoriya folded up the sticky note and slipped it under the door to Bakugou's room. Shakily, he got back in bed to make good on his promise. Pulling the blankets close, he felt the weight of what he'd been apologizing for.

Chapter End Notes

sad noises

Thank you for reading

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

This chapter was modified partially on 2/9

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

30 Years Ago

"Good Morning Kacchan!" Midoriya's sing-song greeting dredged Bakugou up from the depths of unconsciousness. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes and revved up for his tirade. But when he opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was Midoriya as an old man holding a steaming mug of tea in his face. The events of the previous day came rushing back to him. *Fuck*. He covered his face with his hands. This situation was seven kinds of stupid and to top it all off he'd gone full ugly cry in front of Deku. Again.

He looked through his fingers at Midoriya patiently holding out his tea. Clearly he had grown into some self-preservation instincts. Bakugou took the tea with a barely grumbled thanks. The taste that hit him was most definitely not sencha. It was tangy, spicy, and super weird. He swallowed it easily after getting over the initial shock. "The hell is that Deku?" he growled at Midoriya's retreating back.

"Oh, sorry. Do you not like it? When we moved in together- I mean I think it's nasty, but I just figured you always-" Midoriya cut himself off mid ramble, shaking his head to clear it. "Want my matcha?"

Bakugou took a cautious sip of the amber concoction. The spiciness burned in the back of his throat and spread warmth across his chest. It was pretty damn good now that he was expecting it. "Nah. It's fine." He took another, bigger, drink. He definitely liked it. He wasn't as thrilled about Midoriya knowing what he wanted before he did. I wonder if he does this every morning. He recoiled from the thought. It made him feel weird. So what if it sounded like just the kind of thing Midoriya would do if they lived together. It was just weird.

"Great," Midoriya replied with a smile. "We're meeting All Might and Aizawa at the beach in 30 minutes." Then he vanished into his room. Bakugou growled. Self-preserving Midoriya was just as annoying, but in new ways.

Bakugou was dressed and ready in minutes. He might not be a morning person, but he wasn't slow or a slob either.

"Oh, here's your phone." Midoriya lobbed it to him from the doorway. "Your dad texted you."

"Stay out of my shit, nerd" Bakugo said, voice venomous on reflex.

"Mine doesn't exactly work here." Midoriya replied with a shrug.

Bakugou unlocked his phone and saw a worried message from his dad, just under a group text with their teachers. He texted something vaguely reassuring to his old man and threw it back in his bag with a frown. How had Deku sent that text anyway? He would have had to know Bakugou's pin. The weird feeling returned, stronger. He pushed it out of his mind and yanked on his shoes. It was too early for this shit.

They walked toward the beach in a silence that was almost companionable. When Bakugou ducked into a corner store to buy earplugs, Midoriya didn't comment, just waited patiently with his usual smug smile. They arrived just after their teachers, and Midoriya finally started chattering again the moment they were in ear shot.

Bakugou sat in the sand fidgeting as Midoriya made good on his promise to explain to Aizawa how he came by his quirk.

Bakugou had heard most of this from All Might, but their talk had focused on the origin of the quirk and how it was passed. So when he heard that Midoriya's senseless attempt to rescue him was exactly what had attracted his idols attention, he was so angry his voice choked in his throat.

"Well, no wonder he's been so reckless" Aizawa said, managing to look more irritated than usual.

Bakugou quickly found the words to express his fury, "You encouraged him for that?! You're a terrible Sensei. You should have scolded him like the other heroes. Especially if you were gonna hand him that quirk."

Aizawa nodded crossing his arms, "Bakugou-shounen is right. I'd assumed it was just his disposition. I didn't realize you were exacerbating the issue and making my job more difficult." All Might quailed a little under Aizawa's gaze.

Midoriya laughed drawing their attention, "You should have heard what he said to me before the sports festival." When Bakugou and Aizawa turned back to All Might, both were glaring even harder.

The former number one hero waved his hands in front of his face defensively, pleading his case, "Midoriya Inko and Recovery Girl already scolded me. We're working on it." Aizawa didn't look any less angry, and Bagkugou certainly didn't feel less so.

Midoriya looked more serious, "The past is past. All Might did a fine job as my Sensei. We all make mistakes when we're learning something new." A strange look passed between Midoriya and Aizawa. Bakugou got the distinct feeling there was something he wasn't being told.

Aizawa shrugged, "Let's see some of your excellent pedagogy then, All Might."

Midoriya and All Might's 'training' largely consisted of Midoriya performing his small set of known moves rapidly, while All Might prompted them by name. Bakugou's every instinct

told him this was a powerful opponent holding nearly everything back. There were subtle differences in his execution. Older Midoriya's movements were cleaner, more precise. His transitions were instinctive and fluid. He didn't look like All Might's successor, he looked like a newer better model. Bakugou could see why this process was useful —when Midoriya got back, All Might would be able to fine tune his technique rapidly— but it was unbelievably tedious to watch. Which must have been what possessed Bakugou to try to make small talk with his homeroom teacher.

"Why are you still here on your off day Aizawa-sensei?" he asked pushing sand around with his foot.

"I was asked for. And it's Eraserhead when I'm on duty." Bakugou looked up at his teacher. His hero uniform wasn't really different from what he wore while teaching, but it occurred to Bakugou that his whole bearing was different. There was a tension and awareness that couldn't be more different from his lazy classroom attitude. This wasn't a social call for Eraserhead. He was here as a bodyguard. "Besides, I think you know those two need a different sort of looking out for" he added.

Bakugou grunted, looking back at All Might. He looked even more fragile next to a pro hero in peak condition. The razor sharp realization from the day before pricked at his mind. However powerful Midoriya might've become, he hadn't been able to prevent All Might's death.

Midoriya hadn't come out and said it, but he didn't have too. Bakugou knew what it looked like when Midoriya was trying desperately to commit something to memory.

Kamino Ward had forced him to grapple with his idol's mortality months ago. He'd shed plenty of tears over it already. This didn't change anything, not really. He swallowed the lump forming in his throat.

"Eraserhead," he said quickly, not sure if he was overstepping, "d'you ever get used to it? Other heroes dying?"

Beside him Eraserhead didn't flinch. "No. That's why I came to UA." His teacher kept his eyes straight ahead as he spoke, "I can't control my students choices. I can't protect them once they graduate. I probably can't even protect them now. But if I don't do whatever I can, I won't be able to live with myself."

His jaw clenched hard enough to make his teeth creak. That wasn't the answer he'd been hoping for. He'd hoped it got easier, that dealing with death was something he could get better at. Well, just because his teacher hadn't figured it out, didn't mean he wouldn't.

Bakugou fired up his quirk. There was a pressure building to dangerous levels inside him, and he knew just how to let it out.

"Hey Deku," he said letting his explosions spark rapidly, "let's make this more interesting."

Chapter End Notes

Bakugou's Nasty Morning Tincture

3 slices fresh ginger or half a teaspoon minced

1 teaspoon yuzu or lemon juice

1 pinch ground cayenne pepper

12 oz hot water

Next Chapter on Thursday!

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

This chapter was replaced on 2/9

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

30 Years Ago

For a moment Bakugou thought Midoriya might ignore his challenge. Then he felt the rush of air on his cheek as he barely dodged a kick. The gap between them had closed in a flash and only his reflexes had kept him from taking 20% on the chin. Bakugou launched himself in the air. Midoriya moved to follow but only jumped a few feet off the ground.

"Midoriya stop," Eraserhead called out, hair floating, "Do not damage my student. No quirks, either of you."

"Sorry Sensei!" Midoriya said with a quick thumbs up. The green lightning had disappeared, but he was still in a fighting stance.

Bakugou lowered himself slowly. He didn't like his chances quirkless against an opponent with a height and weight advantage, but he couldn't back down now. Losing wasn't an option either. He clenched his fists to extinguish his quirk and surged forward. He opened with a feint, using his punch to distract from the veil of sand he kicked up into Midoriya's eyes. If he had to fight quirkless, he sure as hell wasn't going to fight fair.

That was the last moment Bakugou let thought intrude on him. He dodged and threw strikes in a rapid rhythm. Even partially blinded Midoriya matched him movement for movement, as if they'd danced to this song a hundred times before. Bakugou pursued him steadily across the shoreline, weaving in between Midoriya's blows instinctively. A few times, he felt the elation of what looked like a sure hit, only for it to resolve into disappointment the very next moment.

They moved faster and faster, but still didn't land a single blow. His body relished the exertion, even as his frustration rose into a frenzy. He nearly took a punch to the gut and roared, swinging in with a wild kick. He saw Midoriya smile a second before he connected, but it was too late. He landed his foot solidly against Midoriya's chest and then he was being twisted through the air. His base leg came out from under him easily and his back slammed into the sand, driving all the air from his lungs.

"Nice job, Kacchan" Midoriya said cheerfully, "You've always had great defensive instincts."

Laying there gasping, Bakugou felt those words like a knife in his chest. Not only had he lost, but it had taken Midoriya less than a second to analyze why. His eyes stung, but he was too

angry to cry. He was too angry to even yell, his throat felt choked shut with shame. Worst of all, yelling wouldn't have helped a bit. He knew who he was angry at, and it wasn't Midoriya. As soon as he could breathe, he was on his feet.

He wasn't sure where he was storming off to, only that he couldn't stand to be still a second longer. He let his feet carry him south, grateful that for once Midoriya didn't follow.

His breathing was ragged and his back hurt. Once he was well away, he sat down heavily and pulled his knees in close, trying to shield the aching place behind his sternum where those words were still lodged. *Great defensive instincts*. Far away, some part of him knew Midoriya hadn't meant to call him a coward. But that didn't really matter if it was true. Midoriya had been focused on winning and he had been focused on not losing. They weren't even close to the same thing.

He pushed his forehead into his knees and groaned. Sometimes it felt like Midoriya's quirk was making him feel like shit. *Useless. Idiot. Weak*. The words clawed at him.

Normally he could turn his fear of losing in to fuel, burn it to push himself forward. But right now it felt like poison smoke; choking, paralytic.

He heard the grating scrunch of footfalls on sand and clenched his fists. Pity was the last thing he needed right now.

He didn't look up. Maybe if he ignored him he could get some peace.

Bakugou was surprised to hear All Might's voice instead of Midoriya's. "I want to talk about that spar. You're my student too, Bakugou-shonen. It's my job to help you learn from your mistakes."

The word mistakes made Bakugou feel sick. Acid words flowed up the back of his throat, "What, I need to learn to be like Deku, happy to get my ass beat all the time? Not afraid of anything? Is that what you think makes a good hero Sensei?"

All Might sighed, "I can see why that's what you think of me. One for All is an extremely powerful quirk. That power became a crutch for me, much like your quirk has for you." Bakugou snuck a glance at his teacher.

All Might didn't look angry, he just stared out over the water and went on, "I was so accustomed to being able to take any hit, that when my power lessened I didn't know any other way to fight. Your speed and mobility are so powerful that you've never learned how to take a hit either. I do hope you will learn to be more like Midoriya-shonen" -Bakugou's eyes stung painfully again- "but that's because I think you two have the same problem: You must learn which blows you can afford to take. It is dangerous to become accustomed to absolute victories. More often heroes face impossible and bitter choices, over which even the most powerful person has almost no control. We each decide which losses we are willing to endure. And which ones are unacceptable. Often, we never find out if we made the right choice."

Bakugou looked All Might more carefully now, trying to fit his words against the image of invincible Symbol of Peace or the washed up retiree whose career he'd ruined. Neither picture

made any sense. "Do you regret it?" Bakugou asked, trying to fit a world of uncertainty into a single question.

"No," All Might said smiling. "I don't."

"Good," Bakugou said quietly. Everything else was confusing or pissed him off, but that was something he could hold onto. He dug into his pockets for the fancy ear plugs he'd bought on the walk to the beach. "Hope that was your whole speech" he said moving to put them in. All Might nodded.

The sound of the crashing waves disappeared from one ear and then the other. The silence was incredible. It was like a weight had been lifted off of his chest. He hadn't realized how much he hated the sound of the water. He felt his chest fall in a deep sigh, but he didn't hear it. His ears didn't prick with pain as he snorted in surprise either. He felt his shoulders release more entirely than they had in weeks. Future Katsuki seemed a little crazy, but he had been right about this. This was fucking awesome.

Bakugou watched the noon sunlight dancing on the ocean and he was able to imagine for the first time why people liked the beach. They stayed like that for a few minutes, just breathing in the view and the salty air.

Chapter End Notes

Bakugou has a lot of difficult feelings about All Might, but that makes their interactions very interesting to me

Thank you again for reading!

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

It took a little longer than I wanted, but this story is back on track! In fact, it is nearly complete!

REVISION ALERT

If you were previously (2/8/20) caught up on this fic, the story has changed. Please consider starting from chapter 9.

There are plot changes in chapter 9, and chapter 11 is all new content.

Otherwise, read on!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Present Day

When Midoriya had stalled for as long as he could, brushing his teeth a second time and combing his hair fruitlessly, he forced himself to smile and went to face the morning. The apartment was in controlled chaos. Ana was chasing Uta in circles around the couch with something clutched in her hand, begging her sister to look at it. Bakugou was tending a few things on the stove and flipping through a notebook and kicking things out of the little girls' path, all while chewing someone out over the phone. He saw Midoriya and gestured rapidly and incomprehensibly at him without stopping his conversation. "I'm fucking aware it's time sensitive. Which is exactly why you are going to handle it instead of trying to pawn your work off on Deku again." Bakugou changed tactics, slowly pointing to the squealing girls and miming lifting one up. Midoriya finally understood, and moved to contain the situation. "No, I will not put him on the phone. Quit weaseling."

He wasn't sure which kid Bakugou had pointed at, so he just grabbed the first one who ran by. Which turned out to be Uta. He hoisted her up onto his hip, but she yanked on his shirt and clambered onto his shoulders, desperate to get farther from her sister.

"Uncle Izuku make her stop!" she whined, locking her legs around his neck with surprising force.

Ana caught up to them then, bouncing with glee. "She's beautiful! Don't be such a chicken." She held out her fist and Uta recoiled, yanking Midoriya's hair in the process.

Ana opened her hand to reveal an iridescent blue-green beetle.

"It's dig-stusting" Uta mumbled into his hair.

"She is beautiful Ana-chan, but we don't make anyone touch something if they don't want to." Midoriya tried to imitate Bakugou's calm commanding tone from the day before.
"Apologize."

Ana pouted and brought the beetle close to her chest. "I wasn't gonna make her touch it."

"Do you think that made it ok to chase her after she asked you to stop?" Midoriya asked, drawing off memories of his mother this time.

"No," Ana grumbled almost inaudibly. She huffed and continued more loudly, "I'm sorry I chased you. That wasn't nice."

Uta's vice grip relaxed a little. "You promise I don't have to touch it?" she said, peering down at her sister.

Ana nodded vigorously and held the bug out once more. Uta looked briefly, but then it started to crawl and she hid her face again.

"Ok, it's time for Beetle-san to go back outside." Bakugou said, walking out of the kitchen and crouching down next to Ana. Midoriya hadn't even noticed when he'd gotten off the phone. Ana looked like she was deciding whether or not to cry. "Can you find the very best bush to put her in for me?" he added with a smile. Ana nodded and dashed to the sliding glass door which opened onto the small back garden. She hauled it open bit by bit, using only her beetle-free hand.

Bakugou stood and looked at Midoriya. The fact that he was impressed must've shown on his face because he rolled his eyes, and said "It's not amazing, it's just experience."

Uta had fully calmed down now and leapt down from Midoriya's shoulder's gracelessly. He caught her wrist as she nearly tumbled into the coffee table head first. She righted herself instantly, scampering off like she come within centimeters of an ER visit.

Bakugou snorted. "See you're getting it." Midoriya felt warmth blossom in his chest. He wanted to Bakugou to keep saying things like that.

The phone rang. Bakugou reached for it, then looked across the living room to where Uta had clambered up the back of a chair and was teetering precariously. "You got this?" he asked hesitantly. Midoriya's smile widened.

He gave a thumbs up. "You can count on me, Kacchan."

Bakugou nodded and picked up the call, heading back into the kitchen without a backwards glance.

Midoriya had expected to spend the morning sad and lost in thought, but instead he found himself too wrapped up in the twins contagious joy and knack for tiny disasters. He rescued stuck toys and untangled knots, identified bugs and inspected drawings. Occasionally, Bakugou had to pause a phone call to head off a tantrum, but Midoriya mostly managed on

his own. The phone calls had kept coming in or being made, and Midoriya pieced together a few things. First, many of these phone calls were for his future self, not Bakugou. He tried not to feel even more guilty about that. Second, few of them were about hero work. Phrases like case worker, evaluation period, and client records peppered in between refrains of *not available* and *not my problem*. Third, whatever it was, Bakugou was good at it. His tone was borderline hostile, but he ended a surprising number of calls the same way: *you're welcome*.

The girls were playing out in the garden when the doorbell finally rang. Midoriya wanted to see Eri, but he'd waffled back and forth on whether introducing himself now would be too strange. Inaction made his choice for him and he resigned himself to watching from inside the foyer.

When Bakugou opened the door, Eri was bent at the waist and talking rapidly.

"Sorry I'm late, please forgive me! We finally caught a break, but it took forever to coordinate everything. Sorry for being a burden." She gave a quick series of bows, but stopped when she saw that Bakugou was just staring at her, arms crossed, face impassive.

"Was it important?" he asked.

Eri smiled sheepishly. "It was. It's gonna be a big deal."

"Then quit apologizing. No one changes the world alone," Bakugou admonished.

She laughed and rolled her eyes. "'or all at once' I know. I know. I'm not one of your delinquents" she said feigning offense. "But you're right. Thanks for all your help."

Bakugou smiled. "Yeah, you're welcome. Ya brat."

Eri spotted him past Bakugou and waved. Midoriya waved back awkwardly, backpedaling to go collect the twins. Hopefully it didn't seem too much like he was eavesdropping, though he certainly had been he realized with a twinge of shame.

The girls' bags were already packed, so he was only able to buy himself a few minutes getting them ready to go. He wasn't sure why he was dreading their departure, but he was.

They hugged him, told him they hoped he got tall again, waved goodbye beside their mother, and left. He was alone with Bakugou again.

Chapter End Notes

Had some plot kinks to work out, but I'm thrilled to be posting again ^.^

The final four chapters will be up this week!

Chapter 13

30 years ago

By the time All Might and Midoriya finished talking Bakugou was starving. Eraserhead had left more than an hour before. He'd passed the time by doing homework and trying not to notice the extremely private farewell happening just down the shore from him. He was glad he brought the earplugs. This wasn't a conversation he'd wanted to overhear.

Midoriya tapped his shoulder. Bakugou pulled out his ear plugs and closed his text book. He couldn't ask to leave and he couldn't ask if everything was ok. So he waited while Midoriya sorted out what to say. The sound of the water scratched at his veneer of calm, but he held still.

"We should go," Midoriya said solemnly. Bakugou shrugged and packed up. His stomach betrayed him with a noisy growl. Midoriya laughed. "Oh, sorry. You've been waiting a while. Good news, the next thing on the schedule is ramen. There's an Izakaya near here that I usually went to after training."

"It's fine," Bakugou said shouldering his bag.

Midoriya sank into rambling about the neighborhood and its residents. He spoke clearly for once, and it seemed to take the edge off the grief that clung to him, so Bakugou just let him talk.

Bakugou had assumed he'd get some peace while they ate, but instead Midoriya rudely ordered a tea and nothing else. He ate his ramen quickly, tuning out most of the word avalanche. Without homework to distract him, he was lost in his own thoughts about victory and defeat.

"Guess you don't have to worry about losing to me anymore, huh?" Bakugou asked, cutting off Midoriya's profile on the old woman who owned the corner store.

Midoriya frowned and sipped his tea. "We don't have to be in competition with each other forever," he said evasively. "Besides, I wanted to beat you, but it never felt like a shameful defeat to me when you won. You're amazing and I got a really late start."

Bakugou mechanically shoved another bite of noodles in his mouth, chewing Midoriya's words over. He'd have rather spat them out. All of this training together and supposed rivalry and he hadn't even been taking it seriously. How long had Midoriya been slacking off because if he lost to *Kacchan* it didn't count? Since the sports festival? Since middle school? No matter how strong Midoriya became, he would never be a real hero if he wasn't afraid to lose. The symbol of peace had to be undefeated, or everyone would be worried. All Might had at least understood that much.

What would he do if I wasn't here to cushion his defeats?

Midoriya waved a hand in front of him. Bakugou had frozen mid bite. He huffed and stabbed his chopsticks into his bowl. "I'm done," he said looking away.

Midoriya led him to a park once they paid. Bakugou didn't even notice the path they took. His mind was miles away.

"Guess all we can do is wait," Midoriya said fidgeting. His lined face looked tense.

"Yeah, we're probably early," Bakugou said, slumping against a tree at the edge of the clearing. He didn't want to think about the possibility the switch wouldn't reverse.

Midoriya smiled. "Thanks, you're a nice person Kacchan," he said.

The words chafed Bakugou's sense of integrity. He'd never felt like he needed to chase ideals like 'kind' or 'nice'. Those words were just shields for useless people who had to rely on the strength of others. The world didn't need him to be nice, it needed him to be strong, strong enough to make up for 'nice' people who couldn't take care of themselves. Deku might not need him, but there were plenty of useless people out there counting on him. People like his dad.

He'd fix things with Deku and keep moving. They couldn't afford to waste anymore time slowing each other down. He had to take the losses he could withstand and keep fighting.

Midoriya waved to him catching his attention. "I think something is-" he started. He never finished.

Chapter 14

Present Day

Bakugou seemed keenly aware of the silence between them. He looked Midoriya's face over, as if he were searching for something.

"I've got a few things to finish before we leave," Bakugou said, "and you should change back into your uniform. You'll be going soon, hopefully." He frowned. "Not that- whatever, you know what I mean." Bakugou marched off towards the kitchen, but Midoriya thought it looked a lot like a retreat.

He was grateful for the space, though. It had been lucky having Ana and Uta around to create some buffer between them. Midoriya hesitated to put his uniform on. He still wanted to know more about this future. He wanted to see more of his life. Maybe if he had more time, he could figure out somehow around the quirk's rules. Immediately, guilt gripped his heart. How could he think of staying longer? This Bakugou was so worried, and every minute Midoriya spent here was another minute of painful uncertainty. He pulled his uniform on.

When he returned the sea of pots and pans had vanished, replaced by two enormous stacks of bento boxes that Bakugou was loading into the refrigerator. Midoriya's stomach growled. In all the excitement, he hadn't managed to eat any breakfast. Bakugou didn't even take out his headphones, but he handed Midoriya a plate of onigiri with a firm look that clearly meant *eat or else*.

Midoriya sat at the table and chowed down happily, watching Bakugou work. There was something soothing in the familiarity of his confident movements. He might not act much like the Kacchan that Midoriya was used to, but he certainly moved like him. A fantasy of living here with his Kacchan crept into his mind, watching him cook, falling asleep on the couch together, chasing laughing children into his arms. His face burned hot when he realized he'd been picturing a kid with unruly blonde hair. Midoriya pushed the images out of his mind, but the pangs of longing remained. He'd never been intrigued by thoughts of a home or a family before, but he'd always imagined sharing them with some stranger. This was different.

He started to tear up again and wiped his eyes quickly. This was probably just some alternate universe. There was probably some critical difference in their world, like Bakugou actually caring about him, that made this future impossible in his world. It was nice to think about and he would treasure these memories, but it was important to be realistic. Maybe something close to this was possible though. They could be partners. They could build a name, and an agency, and a new future for heroes together. That would already be a dream come true. He was already so lucky, so blessed, to have received All Might's quirk and mentorship and he knew All Might would stay by his side until the end. He'd gotten a chance to be equals, rivals, and lately almost friends with the person he'd admired most closely. Thanks to this time he could finally see a path to a legacy of his own. Being sad about the little details was

just greedy. He forced himself to take a big bite of onigiri and smile. He couldn't make a plan for apologizing to Kacchan if he was busy feeling sorry for himself.

He finished just in time to see Bakugou closing up a large picnic basket and bundling up his headphones.

"Where are we going?" Midoriya asked.

Bakugou hefted the basket. "The park. Grab that blanket, would 'ya."

Midoriya scooped up the thick woven blanket and pulled his shoes on in a hurry, waiting for Bakugou on the doorstep. He had to put a little extra effort into his smile as he watched Bakugou lock the front door. He tried to commit the unremarkable house to memory. Maybe he could draw it in his notebook when he got back.

Bakugou caught him staring. "You'll be here again before you know it," he said.

Midoriya looked at his feet. "Do you really believe that? I mean time travel is so complicated, and wouldn't infinite worlds be more likely than paradoxical equilibrium? Would that even be a good thing? We don't even know if the quirk that was used on me is exactly the same as what happened to this time's Midoriya's past self and you haven't told me anything about what you saw when you were younger, so how could I ask Kacchan if things happened the same way? and honestly it seems way more likely that I hit my head and I've just been hallucinating all-"

Bakugou squeezed him into another lightning quick hug. "That didn't feel like a hallucination to me." He started slowly down the side walk. Midoriya followed. Bakugou continued, "Look, we can't know anything for sure, but if it was based on multiple world then our worlds would have to be nearly identical for you to be hit by the same quirk echo on the same day. So what if some where in your world one blade of grass is different from here? You really think that's gonna stop you?"

Midoriya knew he was just saying it to make him feel better, but he let Bakugou's words feed the tiny spark of hope in his heart. Maybe their worlds weren't so different. Maybe.

They walked quietly until they reached a sprawling park. The cherry trees were bare except for a scattering of unopened buds and the spring breeze blew crisp and sweet. They had the park entirely to themselves.

Midoriya laid out the blanket, but Bakugou didn't move to open the basket. He just laid down and closed his eyes.

Midoriya tried to followed suit, but his thoughts were still churning. His gaze kept drifting to Bakugou's gold ring glinting in the sun. He wasn't sure how long he made it before he sat up again, but it felt like an hour. "I know you can't talk about the things that haven't happened yet, but couldn't you tell me how you feel about the Deku that lives in this world? Like how you feel right now?" he asked, twisting his hands anxiously.

Bakugou sighed, but didn't open his eyes. "How do you think I feel?"

Midoriya frowned, he should have known he wouldn't get a straight answer. "You seem like you worry about him a lot, and you have been really kind, and thoughtful. With everyone else in our class, well, I can't think of anyone you like enough to live with..." Midoriya trailed off. It was too embarrassing to say out loud.

Bakugou sat up and stared at him. Midoriya tried to hold still. "If somebody tells you they like you, but they' focused on themselves and didn't pay any attention you, which part would you believe?" Bakugou asked, still staring.

Was Bakugou changing the subject? Or maybe they were still talking about the same thing? Under the weight of his gaze, he realized that his close observation hadn't been one way. Bakugou had always been watching him too. Right now it felt like he saw right through him. "I guess what they do," Midoriya said.

Bakugou nodded. "And if someone says they want to be there for you, but they walk away when things get hard? Which matters more?" His bright eyes seemed to be looking past him, at something that wasn't there.

Midoriya had to look away. "Whether they're there," he said weakly, forcing himself not to whisper.

"And if someone says they're sorry, but they keep doing the same things?" Bakugou asked, not letting up.

"I am sorry Kacchan," Midoriya whined. He was staring too intently at the blanket to notice Bakugou's surprised expression.

"For what?" Bakugou asked. Midoriya found the strength to look up. He was sick of getting interrogated, he wanted answers.

The words rushed out of Midoriya. "For being reckless. For losing. For offering help, but never asking for it. For doing everything myself!" He clenched his fists. He hadn't meant to yell.

Bakugou didn't seem bothered by it though. He just nodded, "And I believe you." Then he down and closed his eyes again.

Apparently that was all the answer Midoriya was going to get.

Maybe it could be enough.

Bakugou was the one person who understood the burden Midoriya had to shoulder. If there was something else he needed to know, Bakugou would have told him.

Midoriya stood, unable to pretend to relax for a moment longer. Then the world beneath him shifted.

Chapter 15

30 Years Ago

Older Midoriya had vanished. One moment he was there, the next he was just gone. No one arrived to take his place. Just wind blowing through an empty field. A lightning flash of panic coursed through Bakugou. *No*.

And then he heard it: "Hey Kacchan." He turned around to see Midoriya, his Midoriya, standing 10 meters away in the grass, looking sheepish but whole. The relief crashed over him and he let out a bark of laughter. He shaped his face into a smile that showed too many teeth. Wearing emotions on his sleeve was Midoriya's thing.

"Fucking Deku."

When he realized Bakugou wasn't moving Midoriya rushed over a bit too quickly. He was afraid to seem so eager, but he had to say it while he still had the courage.

"Kacchan, there's a lot we should talk about, but-" He took a deep breath and met Bakugou's wary gaze. "I'm sorry for trying to do everything alone." Heart racing, Midoriya held out his hand. "I don't want to be rivals anymore. I want to be partners."

Bakugou looked away, hesitating. He was completely out of excuses now. Midoriya would be fine with him; he'd be better without him. He shook his head.

"I'm sorry too. I got in your way. I thought you were too weak, too stupid. But you-" Bakugou's voice wavered. He put every scrap of formality he could muster in between them. "You deserve this Izuku. I'm entrusting All Might's legacy to you. It's time we both stop pretending it's ok for you to lose to me." He still couldn't look up.

Midoriya's voice sounded small and hurt. "What does that mean?" he said.

Midoriya had wondered if someday Bakugou might apologize, but now that it was happening it felt all wrong. It felt like goodbye. Bakugou shoved his hands in his pockets but he didn't look up. "I won't try to compete with you anymore. I'm gonna transfer to Shiketsu High." Bakugou said.

Tears sprung to Midoriya's eyes. This was all some mistake. Even when they'd been enemies Bakugou had never threatened to give up on their dream just to get away from him. "Why? You've wanted to get into UA your whole life!" Midoriya couldn't understand. What had he done wrong?

Bakugou shrugged and sniffed, "Yeah, well, I got in to UA. Mission accomplished. Shiketsu has better connections with America anyway. If I do their exchange program, I can get my visa right when I graduate. No rookie year in Japan. You're gonna be the next symbol of peace. I'll let you have the spotlight here. I can be the best somewhere else."

Midoriya closed his eyes, trying desperately to slow the flood of tears pouring down his face. Kacchan didn't just want to get away from him. He wanted to get half a world away, as soon as he could. His mind spun. That future had seemed so real.

Bakugou felt the threat of tears prick at his eyes. He hated the idea of leaving UA, but he couldn't just keep watching Midoriya fight without understanding the consequences. This was a loss he could bear. It would let him keep fighting. He just needed to focus on the positive. "I bet you'll kill it at the Sports Festival once I'm out of your way," Bakugou said, trying to lighten things up.

"You aren't listening to me!" Midoriya yelled through his tears. "I want you stay!"

Bakugou clenched his fists. "Stay and what? Keep pretending I'm better than you? I *saw* how powerful you'll get Deku. I know I'm fucked. Staying rivals would just be a distraction for you." The bitter words burned him on their way out.

"I don't want a rival," Midoriya said carefully, "I want a partner. Why are you running away from me now?"

"Why would I want to stick around and be your pity sidekick? I don't wanna watch you fight like it doesn't matter if you lose anymore. He picked you. Act like it." Bakugou spat. He didn't get it all. There had to be some way to make him understand.

Midoriya shook his head furiously. "I know that. I want you to stand *beside* me. All Might is going to die. I can't do this alone!" "Pick someone else then," Bakugou said, "Someone who didn't doubt you." He remembered his promise to Midoriya Inko and his conscience stung.

Something in Midoriya snapped. He had seen a future full of peace and prosperity, and Bakugou's stupid version of an apology wasn't going to stop him from reaching it. He started yelling at the top of his lungs. "Everybody doubted me! Even All Might! The first time we met, he told me to be a fucking cop. You are the only one who always took me seriously. You knew I'd just keep trying. I'm not going to pick someone else! I'd rather give One for All away!" The moment he said it, Midoriya knew it was the truth.

Bakugou's head snapped up. Midoriya flinched when he saw the betrayal in his eyes. "Don't do shit like that!" Bakugou said pleading, "Don't dangle everything I want in front of me like it's nothing."

Midoriya refused to turn away in shame. It was a cruel, crazy, thing to have said, but it was honest. He'd finally realized the crushing burden and responsibility of carrying All Might's

legacy. There was only one person he wanted to shoulder it with. Midoriya replayed what Bakugou had said under the cherry trees in the future. He had believed in him completely.

Bakugou couldn't figure out when everything had gone so sideways. He'd just been trying to do the right thing, and then out of nowhere Midoriya had ripped out his heart and pissed on it. Tears welled in his eyes, but he couldn't look away. Midoriya was still crying.

"If you want it so bad, fight me for it" Midoriya said hoarsely. "Maybe I haven't taken our fights seriously enough, because the only thing on the line was pride. You didn't see how I fought against Overhaul or Muscular. But if you want to see how I fight when everything is on the line, bring it. I'll show you how I fight for my legacy, for you." Bakugou took a startled step backwards. *Stop*. Midoriya rubbed his eyes and continued, "First one to pin. If you win, you get One for All. But *when* I win, we file to become a Duo. Permanently."

Bakugou wasn't angry. He was too confused, too horrified. He'd expected Midoriya might ask him to stay, but he'd always been sentimental like that. This wasn't sentimental, it was insane. Midoriya had to know Bakugou could never walk away from those stakes. Even if it was impossible to win, he had to know he'd fight for it with everything he had.

"Deku, don't be an idiot," he said dazed, "don't say shit you don't mean." But he did mean it. Bakugou could see it, in the set of his jaw, and the wild look in his eyes. This wasn't a prank or an insult. He meant every word.

"Kacchan, yes or no?" Midoriya asked. It was a question, but it wasn't a choice.

"Yes"

Midoriya's whole body wanted to sag with relief, but instead he released a 10% smash and jumped backwards with Full Cowling. He could bait Bakugou out at range.

Bakugou hardly saw the black ball Midoriya flung at him, but his battle reactions kicked in and he rolled to the ground. He came back up firing. He peppered the air with quick succession AP shots, forcing Midoriya to yield space. His desperation to win snuffed all other feelings. All he needed was a single opening.

Midoriya dodged projectile after projectile. He would do this. He would never lose to Bakugou again. He just needed to create an opening. He used Black Whip to create another ball and sent it flying, but this time he followed it up with a huge Air Force blast aimed at Bakugou's feet. Bakugou rocketed into the air barely dodging the second attack. Perfect.

Dirt peppered Bakugou harmlessly. That had been too close. He surged down at Midoriya, prepping a big right hook. This one wasn't a feint, but if Midoriya even stopped to think about it, this fight would be over. Midoriya wasn't even looking at him though. He was aiming another Air Force at the ground. Shit. As an explosion of dirt flew up into his face, Bakugou detonated a huge blind explosion. He rocketed away from the ground and out of Midoriya's trap. At least that's what he thought before he felt a sudden jerk in his shoulders. All of his momentum was suddenly reflected back down, towards Midoriya.

The second he felt Black Whip yank him off his feet, Midoriya knew it had worked. He'd have to strike completely blind, but so would Bakugou. As he entered the dirt cloud, he used a smash to turn his momentum angular, inverting himself and spinning all of that force into a kick aimed for the dead center of their trajectory. He poured every ounce of precision he had into this one movement, every drop of longing to be a hero, all of his desire to be like Kacchan, his need to fucking win. His kick connected. /

Bakugou's fist met air and he barrel rolled to the side, but it was too late. He felt Midoriya's foot meet his side in a white hot flash of pain. Black whip swallowed his hands and tangled around his arms. He tried desperately to activate his quirk. They fell. The ground slammed into his back sooner than Bakugou expected. Midoriya was on top of him. He tried to throw a punch. He tried to use Explosion. He tried to breathe. None of it worked.

Midoriya held Bakugou down for a full ten count.

It felt like an eternity.

Black whip retracted and sweet air filled his lungs. He had lost. Like Midoriya had said he would.

Midoriya had released his quirk, but he let his hands linger on Bakugou's wrists, not sure what to expect. Would he concede? Would he try to blow Midoriya's face off? He was so high on adrenaline he wasn't sure he cared. He had won. His whole body burned with exertion. Bakugou felt real and solid under him. But would that really last? He'd made an insane gamble, but he couldn't actually force Bakugou to partner with him. He'd just do whatever he wanted, like always. "Promise you won't go" Midoriya said, before he could stop himself.

This fight had been different. It was one thing to fight Midoriya when he wanted to win, and another thing entirely to see him commit completely to victory. To not allow even the possibility of a defeat that would cost him everything. He'd looked so confident during the fight, but now he wavered.

Bakugou finally recognized the fear in Midoriya's eyes. How had he never seen it before? It was the same fear he'd seen when he'd rushed the sludge villain. It was the same fear from USJ and Kamino Ward. It was the same fear Bakugou felt everyday. *What if I'm not strong enough?*

Midoriya didn't look victorious, he looked scared and vulnerable. He looked fragile, like a single word could undo him. These days, it was a face he didn't show anyone else. *He could win every fight for the rest of his life, and he would still look at me like that.* The thought hit Bakugou harder than the fall.

His mind let go and everything became a haze of sensation.

"Okay" Bakugou said through the daze. He felt dizzy. He felt high. Midoriya's face crumpled with relief and joy. Bakugou felt something magnetic tugging on his chest. He was still acting on instinct. He didn't think. He just moved.

Midoriya was crying again, but his heart felt light. Bakugou wouldn't go back on a promise. It was going to be okay. He rubbed his eyes dry with the palms of his hands. Bakugou was looking at him strangely.

Midoriya opened his mouth to apologize, but Bakugou grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled him down. Their faces nearly collided, but he caught himself just in time. They weren't even an inch apart. His heart caught in his throat.

Then Bakugou kissed him.

It was slow, but it was deep and hungry. He smelled like blood and salt, and sweat and fire. Midoriya's body answered without his permission. He kissed back, softer, deeper, wrapping his fingers in Bakugou's hair. His mouth parted and he tasted something incredible and indescribable. A low needy sound rose up out his chest.

The sound brought him to his senses and Midoriya jerked back clapping a hand over his mouth. His face flooded with a heat so intense he thought he might be glowing. Under him Bakugou didn't look angry at all. His face was soft and his eyes were hungry. Midoriya shivered. He was suddenly aware of every place where their bodies still touched.

Everything in Bakugou wanted to run like hell. He watched the wheels turn in Midoriya's mind, trying to hold perfectly still. He felt exposed, like there was a knife at his throat. And he wanted more. He'd imagined about kissing Midoriya before, but he'd thought of it like imagining jumping while crossing a high bridge. It wasn't something he'd ever expected to actually do. Or to like. He briefly considered passing it off as a head injury.

Don't be a coward. Don't be a coward.

"Do you still want me to stay?" he asked, leaning into the fear.

Midoriya didn't take his hand off his mouth, but he nodded firmly.

And that was enough.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Present Day

One moment he was facing a teenage version of the most important person in his life, and the next he was looking at the real deal.

Bakugou swept him up in his arms in an instant, and then Midoriya's mouth was on his, rough and desperate. "Hey Kacchan" he said smiling and catching a breath. Midoriya's smile weakened when he saw that Bakugou was tearing up. "I'm sorry for making you worry."

Bakugou gave a small smile and a shrug. "C'mon, we knew it would happen eventually" he said.

"Still," Midoriya said, squeezing him tightly.

"I know," Bakugou said, relaxing in his arms. After a long moment, he pulled back. "Happy Anniversary, Zuyushi"

Midoriya still blushed lightly at the full nickname. He looked around, but no one was there to overhear.

"Happy Anniversary," he said, weaving his fingers between Bakugou's. He led him to the picnic blanket and started opening little boxes of food. "So how was your weekend?"

"Torture," Bakugou said rolling his eyes dramatically, "You were the weirdest teenager that ever lived, you know that right?"

"What?" Midoriya faked an offended tone. "At least you knew what to expect."

Bakugou huffed. "Oh sure you told me what happened, but you left out all the moping and staring."

"I did not stare," Midoriya said primly.

Bakugou shook his head. "It was like you thought I'd disappear if you looked away. Normal teenagers want to be left alone. That I can handle. You just kept looking at me with those sad puppy eyes. How's anyone supposed to relax with that going on?" He made an imitation pouty face and peered bug eyed at Midoriya.

Midoriya laughed self-consciously. "It was a hard time for me."

Bakugou dropped the face and squeezed his hand tightly. "I know Zuyu. It was just tough having to watch you go through it."

Midoriya smiled. "Is that why my picnic looks like it's for six people instead of two?"

Bakugou shoulder checked him playfully. "Shut up, you love that I stress cook." Midoriya snorted. "Besides, you should see the fridge." Bakugou said, shoving a rice ball in Midoriya's mouth so that he couldn't respond right away.

He chewed grouchy and swallowed. "You weren't exactly an average teen yourself, Kacchan" Midoriya said filling their cups with sake. "And I had to go in blind." Bakugou's movements stiffened slightly. "Why wouldn't you tell me about it?"

Bakugou grabbed a pickle with his chopsticks to buy himself a few seconds. "At first, I was embarrassed. You kicked my ass twice in one day, y'know?" Midoriya nodded and Bakugou continued. "But eventually I just got worried telling you might change something. What if you hadn't told me we didn't have to compete anymore? Would things have still turned out like this?"

"That's when you decided to transfer to Shiketsu?!" Midoriya asked, voice high. Bakugou nodded and took a large gulp of sake. "That wasn't what I meant at all"

Bakugou laughed, "Yeah I figured that out. Eventually."

Midoriya rolled his eyes and Bakugou kissed his cheek. That misunderstanding had been painful, but it had been worth it.

They tucked into the picnic more earnestly after that. Reminiscing aimlessly between swigs of sake and bites placed gingerly in each other's mouths. The sky was just starting to change color when they finally laid down full and not quite sober.

Midoriya rolled on to his side and studied Bakugou's face. He could still see something of the scared teenager under the years and the scars.

"We're off the map now," he said cautiously.

Bakugou nodded. That was what had troubled him the most since he'd seen Midoriya's young face. "We got years of knowing. Of not having to worry. Nobody gets that," he said gently, "So however long we've got left, I'm not gonna let fear ruin it now."

Midoriya wished he could take away the fear they were both feeling. But he couldn't. They had gotten thirty years to the day of near certainty, and now they would have to face the unknown like everyone else. At least they wouldn't face it alone. Midoriya looked away, picking at the blanket. "It was good to see him again." He couldn't quite say All Might's name, but he knew he didn't have to.

Bakugou pulled him closer. "I'm sorry. It must've sucked to say goodbye again."

Midoriya nodded against his chest. "He said to tell you that he's proud of you. That he could see I had still had a great hero looking after me." He gave Bakugou space to take the words in, waiting long minutes until his breathing settled again. "Seeing him, it helped me figure out how to choose my successor," Midoriya said into the silence.

“Feeling old, are you?” Bakugou asked in a raw voice. “Gonna make us retire the number one spot?”

Midoriya shook his head. “That’s just it, I don’t want to wait until I feel old. I want to give my successor more time than I got. And I don’t want to retire. I want to be able to give the center more of my time. I want to teach more than just an occasional workshop at UA. I want to show everyone that just because someone stops patrolling doesn’t mean they stop being a hero.”

Bakugou hummed thoughtfully, “And me?”

“Well, I wouldn’t want to force you,” Midoriya said fidgeting, “if you wanted to go solo that would only be fair.”

Bakugou snorted. “The world has only ever known us as Legacy. Hell, I’d have to actually pick out hero name. Nah. You need me. Besides Zuyu, when have you ever forced me to do anything I didn’t want to do? Just ask.”

Midoriya bit his lip and turned so that they were facing each other. “Kacchan, will you come teach at UA with me? And help me find a successor who we both can believe in?”

"Okay," he said with a cocky grin, "But I don't think that's the only place we should be looking."

Midoriya nodded. "It's just a place to start. We’ve got plenty of time.”

Bakugou kissed him again. It was soft and patient. Not a kiss for an ending, but a new beginning.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading through to the end!!!

I can't believe my first multi-chap fic is over! I'm so grateful to everyone who's commented or left kudos. Your enthusiasm kept me going.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!