Quirkless

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/635.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Categories:	General (non relationship-focused), Casual
Fandoms:	My Hero Academia, MHA | My Hero Academia
Relationships:	Midoriya Izuku & Toga Himiko, Midoriya & The league of Villains
Characters:	Villain Deku (mha), Bakugo Katsuki, Uraraka (MHA), Iida, Todoroki (MHA), Asui Tsuyu, Kirishima Eijiro, Momo Yaoyorozu, Kaminari Denki, Jiro Kyoka, Ashido Mina, Sero Hanta, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Tomura Shigaraki, Dabi | Todoroki Toya, Toga (MHA)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe, Angst and Guilt, Moral grayness, Emotional detachment, POV Deku (MHA), Betrayal/rage, Spite-driven villainy, Guilt
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-10-09 Updated: 2026-10-22 Words: 4,968 Chapters: 4/?

Quirkless

by Mizi

Chapter 1

Izuku Midoriya had always wondered what it would feel like to be normal.

Not normal in the way everyone else used the word, because according to them, being **Quirkless** was anything but *normal*. He meant normal in the sense that he could wake up in the morning without immediately remembering that there was something missing inside him. Something everyone else had. Something that had been handed to them before they were even old enough to understand what it meant. He wanted to know what it was like to walk into a room without wondering whether people were staring at him because he was different. He wanted to stop hearing the doctor's voice in his head, stop seeing his mother's expression when she realized what the diagnosis meant, stop remembering the way his childhood dream had slowly become something people laughed at.

But most of all, Izuku wanted to know what it felt like to be allowed to dream.

He had tried to ignore the laughter.

He had tried to ignore the whispers.

He had tried to ignore Katsuki Bakugo.

For years, he had convinced himself that Bakugo's words didn't matter. That being called Deku was just something he had to put up with. That the constant teasing, the insults, and the little reminders that he was different were simply part of growing up.

Sometimes he wanted his life back to how it was in kindergarten. All of his friends bonding. No thoughts wanting to be the best. Just friendship. It all went down hill when Bakugo got his quirk. He had the strongest quirk in his class and being best friends with the weakest boy in the whole school wasn't good for everyone feeding into his ego. Bakugo still hung out with him. Just not in a friendly way. More as like a pawn. When they reached middle school that was the end of their friendship.

It was a rainy day, 4:30 after school at Aldera Junior High. Deku was still inside of his last class. He was waiting for Bakugo and his buddies to leave the school so he could go home peacefully and not open his mouth to beg. It was so irritating. How everyday he had to avoid going home and relaxing because he was a victim of Bakugo's torment. Someday that'll end. He'll grow stronger and better than Bakugo and one day overcome him. He'll beat him. And Bakugo would be too scared to ever mess with him again.

"Deku!- Hah. Hiding away again?"

Deku blinked up from the notebook he'd been writing in. He was watching the news on his phone, seeing the news reporters explain the heroes quirks that were saving citizens lives a few miles over. Deku quickly turned his phone off and closed his book, putting them both inside of his backpack.

"Leave me alone Kacchan."

Bakugo stood beside his desk, his hands shoved into his pockets and that familiar, irritating grin spreading across his face

"You're still doing this? It's been years Deku. Just admit you'll never be anything special."

"I'm never gonna admit that. I beileve I...!-"

"How dumb can you get."

"You know no matter how many notes on quirks you write and talk about being a hero and getting into UA you never will. Why are you doing that just to disappoint yourself and others. Y'know what Auntie will think? She'll think she gave birth to a nothing son and **die alone** and sad once you die on battle."

"Y'know what happens to people like you who play hero? They *die* deku."

"So why don't you stop being such a waste of space and go take a swan dive off the rooftop. maybe in your next life you'll be born with a quirk."

Bakugo's words hung heavily. Deku froze, his hands gripping onto the strap of his backpack. His body felt heavy. Every limb in his body couldn't move as he felt he'd fall over onto his knees. No.

No.

He couldn't let Bakugo make him feel this way AGAIN. The torment he had given to him for all the years of his life that he could remember. All those insults Bakugo had given him, all those thoughts that he has had himself about not being good or special like everyone else. They all vanished.

"How about you take your own advice."

Bakugo's body tensed up as veins showed up in his neck. Why is he talking back?! In a sudden rush Bakugo lunged forward, his explosion catching Deku square in the shoulder. Fabric flamed for a second but then was unlit just as fast as it was lit : and Deku crashed backward into a row of desks. The metal frames creaked against the floor.

Deku didn't scramble backward this time. The smell of his own burned flesh filled his nose, triggering something raw and feral deep inside him. Before Bakugo could reset his stance, Izuku surged forward. He didn't use a clean punch. He threw his entire body weight into Katsuki’s midsection, driving them both to the hard floor. Katsuki’s head bounced off the ground with a sickening thud. The breath left him in a sharp wheeze, but his instincts were vicious. He brought his hands up, blasting a blind explosion directly into Izuku’s ribs. The heat washed over Izuku, blackening his uniform and searing his skin, but Izuku refused to let go. He choked down a scream, blinded by pain, and drove his forehead straight down into Katsuki’s nose.

The sound of cartilage breaking was loud in the quiet room. Blood erupted from Katsuki’s nose, blinding them both as it splattered between them. Katsuki yelled, swinging wildly, his knuckles grazing Izuku’s cheek and tearing the skin open.

But Izuku was entirely numb to the pain now. He pinned Katsuki’s right wrist with his knee, using every ounce of his weight. With a trembling, blood-slicked hand, Izuku grabbed a heavy plastic binders from a spilled backpack nearby and slammed the rigid spine down across Katsuki’s hand.

Katsuki gasped, his fingers spasmming as the bone in his wrist groaned under the blunt impact.

Now the only thing that was happening was the heavy breath of both Deku and Bakugo. Along with the sharp coughs and grunts of pain from Bakugo coughing up his own blood.

Deku was sitting there on the floor. His ears ringing and his vision blurry. He looked down at Bakugo. He was covered in blurry blood, he couldn't hear his coughs due to his ears ringing and he couldn't see him breath because of his vision. Did he...

Kill him?...

No!

No it cant be, it was just a petty fight and Bakugo started it like he always does! He can't be...theirs no way. He's so strong how could he just give up just like that!

Before he could even realize he was running outside. Rain falling over his skin and bloody clothes. Blood ran down his head and his arms. The once ruby red blood that dripped from his limbs turned into a pale pink that had stained onto his skin. He stumbled forwards, his knees giving out as he collapsed into he mud. The cold rain soaked through his clothes. He felt everything yet nothing at the same time. He still feels the binder inside of his hands. The crunch of Bakugo's bones and the silence that had followed.

He stared down at his hands, the rain had washed away the blood, turning the puddles beneath him a sickening pink.

What did I do?

A sob broke through his throat. He had scrambled back toward a nearby alleyway, dragging himself through the mud and the jagged rocks.

"Please let Kacchan be okay. Please have him wake up. let him blame me, let his yell and blast at me just let him live."

A hollow emptiness settled over the alleyway. For the first time since he could remember, Izuku wasn't trembling because of fear. He looked down on his hands-The hands that stood up for himself, and as a result-caused this. He wasted for the crushing weight of remorse to kill him. He had awaited for the grief to come. Because Bakugo had been a friend at some point. But all the memories seemed to disappear of him in that moment.

But that moment never came.

Instead, a cold and quiet wave of relief washed over him. The air in his lungs felt lighter. The constant anxiety that he had had since he was four years old had suddenly vanished.

He wasn't 'sorry'. He was just glad that the torment was over.

The realization hit him like a physical blow. Izuku gasped to himself as his cold yet clammy hands flew to his mouth as he let out a sharp gasp. *Why wasn't he sorry?*

He thought back to Bakugo's blurry yet limp body, panic rising in his chest. Not because of the crime he committed but for the cruel feeling in his heart. Normal kids wouldn't have felt this way over a childhood friend getting hurt. True heroes wouldn't feel at peace standing over a fallen body. He was supposed to be at mourning. Screaming for help, running to a hero for help or doing anything to fix what he did.

He wasn't crying for Bakugo anymore. He was crying because he knew that he didn't feel bad about this. And that terrified him more that anything else.

Chapter 2

The scent of blood in the air was still very prominent but the quiet that followed was so much worse. Deku stayed rooted to the spot, his own ragged breathing being the only sound in that dark alleyway. He didn't know how much time had passed, if someone had found Bakugo, if his mother had been worrying about him. He sat there staring at his hands before he heard the rythmatic sound of shoes skipping against bricks.

"Wow."

A light and airy voice drifted through the shadows.

"That is a really reallyyy pretty color on you..."

Deku flinched, spinning around so fast and wiping his eyes with his bloody sleeves, marking his cheek.

Emerging from the shadows was a girl. She looked about his age, wearing a slightly tethered middle school uniform with an over sized beige cardigan. Her blonde hair was pinned up in two messy, undone buns. Her bright golden eyes gleamed with an intense unsettling fascination. She wasn't looking at his face, more at the stains splattered on his clothes.

"Who-Who are you?!"

Deku choked out, scooting back until his back hit the cold brick behind him. Panic hit him. He was gonna get caught. A witness. She'll call someone on him.

Instead of running in fear she just giggled, A sweet yet scary sound that didn't match the atmosphere at all. She skipped forward with no fear prominent on her face and tilted her head.

"Im Himiko Toga!"

She stopped In front of him just a few feet away, leaning close enough that Deku could see sharp fangs poking out of her lower lip.

"Who'd you make bleed? You loved them I bet...that's why you made them bleed!"

Deku's heart rammed against his ribs and clenched his fists.

"I didn't. Why are y-"

"Its okay!"

Toga cut him off in a whisper, her expression still twisted with a tinge of boredom.

"Y'know the world is sooo mean to people like us. They want us to hide what makes us happy! But I found some people and they don't care what I like...they think the world is built wrong too..."

She held out her pale and slender hand. Her nails sharp with dirt underneath.

"Come with me! No one will judge you! Plus if you stay hereeee..."

Deku looked at her stretched out hand. She...was right. If the heroes catch him he'd need to explain how he feels. He cant just say "I just killed my best friend and felt relief'!...They...They wouldn't understand.

Slowly, and with a trembling hand he reached out and clasped her. Her grip was surprisingly warm, pulling him forward out of the alley.

"Yay!"

Toga had exclaimed, squeezing his hand.

They walked through the neon-lit backstreets of the city, sticking to the blind spots of the security cameras. Toga catered the entire way, talking about how freedom was and how she was so glad to be done with middle school and her home life. Deku walked in a numb daze, the weight of what he had done finally settling into a cold, hard stone in his stomach. He wasn't a hero he had no shot anymore. If he went out in public he wouldn't even be considered a citizen.

Eventually, Toga led him down a flight of stairs into a dimly lit basement alley, stopping before a heavy metal door, she knocked 100 times before it opened.

The door swung open revealing a cramped up smoky bar. The air SMELT of cheap alcohol and dust.

"I'm back! "

She said in a sing-song tone, pulling Deku inside the room right behind her.

"I brought someone!"

He looked around the dimly lit room. The only light that's really being produced is the sunset colored lights in the liquor cabinets. It brightens up the whole room, leaving the dark brown brick on the walls with a red/orange finish.

"He's like us..."

"Toga. Why would you bring someone so fragile."

Said a pale man sitting on a stool. He was deathly pale, dry looking. His eyes are a piercing blood-red colour. The skin around his eyes are heavily wrinkled despite him still looking slightly young. It just makes him look older then he truly is. His hair is a grayish-blue that slightly reached his shoulders. It fell forward over his face. He was wearing a very simple V-neck black shirt along with wearing about 14- disembodied hands across his arms, torso, shoulders, and the back of his neck including his face.

"You are cluttering our space with weak creatures. You remember what happened to that rabbit I'm sure."

"That's a Rabbit Shigaraki! This is a boy...a beautiful one...And see all the blood?! "

Toga giggles to herself and she reached for Deku and lifted his arms to look at the blood seeping through his clothes.

"He got all this blood out of someone! So much of it..."

The blue haired male named Shigaraki looked at Deku, his red eyes pricing through the fingers on his face.

'Whats ur quirk kid?"

...

"I'm quirkless..."

Toga gasped and gripped him tighter. She got real up close to his face and smiled widely with very squinted eyes from her very...quite creepy smile.

"And you extracted so much blood?! So delicious!"

Shigaraki stared at Deku and scoffed. He leaned back in his stool, his hands dropping on the counter while keeping one finger lifted.

"Quirkless. Your telling me this quirkless brat managed to kill someone and take this much blood? Toga your taste has gotten worse. He's just garbage you need to throw out."

"He is NOT garbage!"

She whined, stomping her foot, though her grip on Deku’s shoulders never loosened. If anything, she pulled him closer, her cheek pressing against his blood-soaked sleeve.

"Look at him, Shigaraki! The look in his eyes... he completely broke someone. He did it all with his own bare hands! That's so much deeper than just using some flashy power, don't you think?"

Shigaraki didn't look convinced; his gaze remained cold, calculated, and entirely unimpressed through the artificial fingers masking his face. His hand twitched on the counter, a single finger still pointedly raised.

From the deepest corner of the dimly lit room, where the amber glow of the liquor cabinet barely reached, a low, gravelly chuckle broke the tension.

"The crazy chick actually has a point for once."

Heavy footsteps echoed softly against the floorboards as a tall, lanky figure stepped out of the shadows. The scent of cheap alcohol and dust was instantly overpowered by the sharp, metallic smell of burnt flesh and ozone.

Deku’s eyes widened, tracking the newcomer. The man wore a long, dark coat that swayed with his lazy stride. But it was his skin that made Deku’s breath hitch. A horrific patchwork of deep purple, scarred flesh covered his lower face, neck, and arms, held together entirely by crude medical staples. Bright, piercing turquoise eyes locked onto Deku, gleaming with a mix of cynical amusement and genuine curiosity.

"Dabi,"

Shigaraki muttered, his voice laced with annoyance.

"Keep your mouth shut unless you're planning on burning the trash for me."

"Oh, relax, Master Hand,"

Dabi drawled, stopping a few feet away from Toga and Deku. He shoved his hands deep into his coat pockets, leaning back slightly to look down at the trembling boy.

"I’m just saying. In a world completely obsessed with flashy quirks and genetic lottery tickets, a quirkless kid managed to paint himself red with someone else's blood. No superpowers. Just raw, ugly intent."

Dabi leaned in a fraction closer. The heat radiating off him was palpable, a stark contrast to the chilly, damp basement air. He looked at the frantic tear tracks cutting through the blood on Deku’s face, recognizing the hollow, point-of-no-return stare of someone who had just shattered the world's rules.

"You killed a hero-hopeful, didn't you?" Dabi asked, his tone surprisingly level, devoid of Toga’s manic energy or Shigaraki’s open disgust. "Or someone who thought they were better than you?"

Deku couldn't speak. He just gave a slow, barely perceptible nod, his mind flashing back to Bakugo's unseeing eyes in the dirt.

Dabi’s scarred lips pulled back into a grim, sharp smirk, the staples along his jaw pulling taut.

"See? The system tells guys like him they're nothing. Garbage, like you said, Shigaraki. But he just took a piece of their precious society and broke it with his bare hands."

He glanced back at Shigaraki, his turquoise eyes flashing with a cold, vengeful light. "That sounds a lot like what we're trying to do here. Rejecting the roles they forced on us."

Toga beamed, squeezing Deku’s arm tightly against her side. "See! See! Dabi gets it!"

Shigaraki scoffed, turning back to the bar counter and scratching furiously at his neck.

"Do whatever you want. If he slows us down, I'll decay him myself."

Dabi looked back down at Deku. He reached out a scarred, stapled hand, not to offer a warm greeting like Toga, but to roughly cuff the back of Deku’s head, forcing the boy to look up at him.

"Welcome to the bottom of the world, kid," Dabi said, his voice dropping to a low, dark murmur.

"Clean yourself up."

Chapter 3

The back room of the bar smelled like damp concrete and old laundry. Izuku sat on the edge of a mismatched mattress, staring down at a pair of oversized, faded black sweatpants and a plain t-shirt Dabi had tossed at him. His hands were clean now. Kurogiri had silently provided a bucket of warm water and a rag without asking a single question, but his fingernails still felt stained.

Adjusting to the League of Villains wasn't a grand, cinematic transition. It was quiet. It was terrifyingly mundane.

For the first few days, Izuku mostly kept his back to the wall, treating the bar like a minefield. He spoke only when spoken to, his middle school instincts telling him to stay small, stay quiet, and avoid drawing attention. But even while trying to disappear, his brain refused to stop working. He couldn't turn off the habit he’d spent his entire life cultivating.

Tomura Shigaraki.

Izuku watched him from across the room. Shigaraki scratched at his neck constantly, the skin raw and bleeding. Compulsive excoriation disorder, likely triggered by severe stress or underlying trauma. He keeps his pinky fingers raised whenever he touches an object. Five-point activation quirk. Decay. Disintegration. If all five fingers make contact, whatever he touches turns to dust. Izuku noted how Shigaraki handled a game controller, his movements precise, deliberate, and fiercely guarded. He wasn't just a monster; he was a volatile, heavily stunted nucleus.

Dabi. He rarely stayed in the main room for long, preferring the shadows near the back exit. The purple skin patches are severe third-degree burn scars. The staples hold the dead tissue to what's left of his healthy skin. But the heat radiating from him isn't ambient—it’s an internal emission. A fire quirk. If his skin is heavily scarred from his own quirk, it means his body doesn't possess the natural heat resistance required to handle his own output. A tragic genetic mismatch.

Then there was Himiko Toga.

"Izuku-kun! Look what I found!"

Izuku jumped, his shoulders hitting the brick wall as Toga materialized right next to his stool. She leaned over the counter, sliding a small plate toward him. On it sat a slightly crushed strawberry pastry she had clearly smuggled from a convenience store.

"You haven't been eating at all,"

Toga murmured, her golden eyes wide and intensely focused on his face. She rested her chin in her hands, her legs swinging back and forth beneath her stool.

"You look so pale when you're not covered in red. I like you better with color, but you need to stay alive so we can play!"

"O-Oh. Um. Thank you, Toga-san,"

Izuku stammered, his face instantly erupting into a fierce, burning blush.

He pulled his gaze away, entirely unaccustomed to having a girl his own age stand so close to him, let alone offer him food. At Aldera, girls either ignored him or looked at him with pitying disgust. Toga's attention was a completely different kind of overwhelming. It was suffocating, erratic, and deeply intense.

Himiko Toga, Izuku's mind automatically cataloged, trying to focus on analysis to drown out his racing heart. Her fixation on blood isn't just psychological. She has a deep, biological craving for it. The way her fangs protrude, the way her eyes dilate when she looks at a scratch... her quirk must be entirely consumption-based. A transformation or mimicry quirk fueled by ingestion. She hides behind a manic schoolgirl persona, but her center of gravity is completely stable. She's incredibly agile.

"You're doing it again,"

a low, raspy voice drawled from the corner.

Izuku blinked, tearing his eyes away from Toga—who was currently giggling at his bright red ears—and looked toward the end of the bar. Dabi was leaning against the doorframe, a smoldering cigarette held loosely between his stapled fingers. His turquoise eyes were narrowed, tracking Izuku.

"Doing what?"

Izuku asked, his voice cracking slightly.

"Muttering,"

Dabi said, taking a slow drag.

"You've been staring at the boss's hands and the girl's teeth for ten minutes, whispering like a broken radio. You're dissecting us."

Izuku froze, a cold sweat breaking out across his neck. Panic seized him. He thought of his hero analysis notebooks, the ones Bakugo had mocked and burned. If Shigaraki thought he was analyzing their weaknesses, he would turn him into dust before Izuku could even apologize.

"I-I'm sorry!"

Izuku blurted out, raising his hands defensively.

"I didn't mean to! It's just a habit, I've always done it since I was a kid, I just look at people's quirks and how they move and I can't stop my brain from breaking it down, please don't—"

"Shut up, kid,"

Shigaraki snapped from the bar stool, his eyes never leaving the television screen where a video game character was being slashed to pieces.

"You're annoying. If you're going to write an strategy guide, make it useful. Kurogiri, the booze is empty."

Izuku stopped, his mouth hanging open. He looked back at Dabi.

The scarred villain didn't look angry. Instead, a small, dark smirk played at the edge of his stapled lips. He blew a ring of gray smoke into the damp air.

"No superpowers,"

Dabi murmured, his turquoise eyes gleaming with a dangerous, quiet approval.

"But you see everything, don't you? The system discards the quirkless because they can't put on a flashy show. But a weapon that knows exactly where to cut is a lot more dangerous than a blunt instrument."

Toga clapped her hands together, leaning even closer to Izuku, her shoulder brushing against his.

"See? I told you he was special! Izuku-kun is going to be so much fun!"

Izuku looked down at the crushed strawberry pastry, his chest tight. For the first time in his life, his obsessive note-taking hadn't been called creepy. It hadn't been thrown in the trash.

Chapter 4

A month at the Hideout had a strange way of rewriting what "normal" meant.

The first week, Izuku’s world had been measured in the sharp, stinging throbs of his healing shoulder and ribs. But Kurogiri was meticulous.

Every few days, the misty bartender would silently place a fresh roll of bandages, a tube of burn ointment, and a bottle of antiseptic on the bar counter.

There were no pitying sighs, no heavy lectures—just the quiet understanding that a tool needed to be kept in working order. By week three, the angry, blackened skin on Izuku’s ribs had faded to a dull, peeling pink, and the deep ache in his shoulder only flared when the basement air got exceptionally cold. His body was healing, and for the first time, he wasn't spending every day bracing for the next impact.

With the physical pain fading, the quiet, analytical distance Izuku used to shield himself began to melt away, replaced by a chaotic, comfortable routine.

"Izuku-kun! You're letting your guard down again!"

Before Izuku could even look up from the couch, a beige blur descended upon him. Toga crashed straight into his side, laughing hysterically as she wielded a brightly colored plastic water gun. She pulled the trigger, catching him right in the jaw with a stream of lukewarm water.

"Ah! Toga-san, wait!"

Izuku yipped, scrambling backward over the armrest of the worn-out sofa. He wiped his face, a genuine, breathless laugh bubbling out of his chest.

"That's cheating, I didn't even have my shoes on!"

"Villains don't wait for shoes!"

Toga cheered, hopping onto the cushions and pointing the plastic weapon at him like a seasoned assassin.

"Dabi-kun said your reaction times are getting faster, but I think you're still too soft. You have to be ready to jump!"

From the bar, Dabi let out a lazy, gravelly chuckle, tossing a crumpled up gauze wrapper into the trash.

"Don't bring me into your playground squabbles, crazy. But the kid's right, your aim is garbage today. You missed his eyes completely."

"It's a tactical warning shot!" Toga argued, puffing out her cheeks.

Izuku sat up, adjusting his oversized black t-shirt—one of Dabi's old ones that still smelled faintly of smoke—and smiled.

They spent hours sitting on the floor of the back room, Toga braiding his unruly green hair into ridiculous, uneven knots while rambling about the cute stray cats she'd seen down the street, or dragging him into intense, high-stakes games of Mario Kart on Shigaraki's console.

Speaking of the console, the blue-haired leader was currently aggressive-tapping his controller, glaring at the television screen.

"Hey, brat,"

Shigaraki grumbled, his voice rough but lacking any real venom.

"Grab the second controller. This co-op campaign is trash, and Kurogiri keeps dropping inputs because he's too busy cleaning glasses."

"Oh! Um, yes, Shigaraki-san!"

Izuku scrambled over the back of the couch, carefully navigating around Toga, who tried to trip him with her foot just for the fun of it.

He slid onto the stool next to Shigaraki, picking up the plastic controller. Over the past month, Izuku had stopped looking at Shigaraki as a ticking time bomb. Instead, he'd found a strange, unspoken camaraderie in the digital battlegrounds.

They didn't talk about society, or heroes, or the blood stained into the floorboards of Aldera Junior High. They talked about aggro ranges, boss mechanics, and weapon scaling.

When Izuku accidentally pulled a mob of enemies they weren't ready for, Shigaraki didn't threaten to decay him—he just aggressively scratched his neck, muttered about "filthy casuals," and went out of his way to revive Izuku's digital avatar.

"Keep your distance on the next phase,"

Shigaraki muttered, his pinky finger rigidly extended off the controller grip as he navigated his character forward.

"If you die again, I'm locking you out of the server."

"I've got it this time, I promise," Izuku smiled, his fingers moving fluidly across the buttons.

Dabi wandered over, leaning over the back of Izuku's stool to watch the screen.

The intense, suffocating heat that usually radiated off the scarred villain felt grounded now, like a heavy blanket in the chilly basement. He reached down, his rough, stapled fingers lightly ruffling Izuku's messy curls, completely destroying whatever braid Toga had managed to finish earlier.

"Don't let him boss you around, kid. If he loses, it's because his build is garbage," Dabi drawled.

"Shut up, Dabi, or I'll disintegrate your save data," Shigaraki snapped back.

Toga slid onto the counter beside them, leaning her chin in her hands as she watched the colorful lights of the television reflect in Izuku's eyes. The room was loud, messy, and filled with the scent of cheap takeout and stale smoke.

Izuku took a breath, his fingers tapping the controller as he successfully blocked an incoming boss attack, earning a small, approving grunt from Shigaraki.

For the first time in a month, Izuku didn't feel the phantom weight of a plastic binder in his hands. He didn't feel the crushing dread of a world that didn't want him.

He was just a kid playing video games with people who actually looked at him when he spoke.

And as the rain began to patter gently against the high, dirty basement windows, Izuku realized he hadn't thought about being "normal" in weeks. He liked it right here, at the very bottom of the world.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!