The rhythmic whisper of waves against Dagobah Beach provided the sole counterpoint to the profound stillness emanating from Izuku Midoriya. Or rather, from the towering, sleek form of the Agito Ground Form. Black armor, segmented and rippling with defined musculature, felt like a second skin—impossibly light, yet undeniably powerful. A large, sculpted golden plate covered his chest, its contours reflecting the fading light, while golden sections encased his forearms and shins. From his sleek, black helmet, a striking golden crescent-shaped crest swept back, framing the piercing crimson eyes that now stared out from the visor.

Izuku slowly lifted a gauntleted hand, turning it over, flexing the clawed fingers. The movement was fluid, effortless, a stark contrast to the clumsy, uncoordinated flailing he remembered from his first, terrifying transformation. This wasn't a borrowed power, nor an alien force using him as a vessel. This felt… right. It felt like him, amplified, refined, controlled. A low hum vibrated through his armored form, a deep, resonant thrum that was both exhilarating and profoundly calming. He took a step, then another, the sand crunching softly under his powerful talons. Each movement was precise, deliberate, radiating a silent, formidable power that was entirely his to command.

Toshinori, still frozen by the rusted barrier, remained motionless, a hand pressed to his mouth, his eyes wide with a mixture of shock and profound admiration. The sight of young Midoriya, transformed and utterly in control, was a miracle far grander than his own restored health. This wasn't the boy who had stumbled into a fight, driven by pure instinct. This was a warrior, a figure of imposing might, standing tall and unwavering against the backdrop of the ocean. A surge of pride, so strong it almost brought tears to his eyes, swelled in his chest. "This is it," he thought, a silent, reverent whisper. "This is the true power. This is the next step." The raw, magnificent presence of the Agito Ground Form was terrifying, yes, but also undeniably magnificent, a testament to Izuku's unwavering spirit and the limitless potential Kagutsuchi had spoken of.

Kagutsuchi, meanwhile, simply watched, a faint, satisfied smile now fully gracing his lips. He took a final drag from his cigarette, the ember glowing brightly in the twilight, then flicked the butt into the sand with a casual flick of his wrist, his gaze unwavering on the transformed Izuku. "There it is," he murmured, almost to himself, the words a low, knowing hum. "The first step." His eyes, dark and unreadable, held a deep satisfaction. This was a far cry from the chaotic, uncontrolled burst of power that had erupted from the boy at the junkyard. This was a conscious, deliberate transformation, a testament to the rigorous training and Izuku's inherent purity. The Agito was stable. The vessel was ready. The game, truly, had just begun.

Izuku, still examining his transformed body, finally broke the silence. "It's... it's so different," he murmured, his voice a low, resonant rumble that seemed to vibrate from within the armor itself. He flinched, instantly taken aback by the sound. His own voice, usually high-pitched and a little nervous, was now deep, distorted, slightly modulated, like a sound transmitting through a powerful, alien speaker. He lifted a gauntleted hand to his helmet, as if to touch the source of the strange vocalization.

"Young Midoriya?" Toshinori finally managed, his voice cautious, a hint of lingering awe and concern in his tone.

Izuku turned his crimson gaze to his mentor, the glowing red eyes conveying a surprising calm. "I'm in control, All Might," he stated, his new, modulated voice echoing slightly. "It's just... my voice. It's a little different than I expected. It's transmitting from the armor."

Kagutsuchi chuckled, a dry, amused sound. "Better than a scream, kid," he interjected, his voice calm and even. "That's what most Agitos default to when they go full armor. Means you've already got your identity kept, in case you ever want it." He took another drag from his cigarette, his dark eyes twinkling with a knowing amusement.

He then placed the cigarette between his lips, drawing out a small, ornate hand mirror from his coat pocket with a flourish. He extended it towards Izuku, the polished surface reflecting the last rays of the setting sun. "Here," Kagutsuchi prompted, his voice light. "Take a look. You might be surprised."

Izuku, still getting used to the strange resonance of his own voice, hesitantly took the mirror. His crimson eyes widened further as he gazed at his reflection. The sleek, black helmet, the sharp, golden horns sweeping back from the brow, the glowing red eyes staring back at him—it was both terrifyingly alien and undeniably him. He brought his gauntleted hands up, tracing the contours of the helmet, feeling the smooth, hard surface, then brushing against the golden horns. They were solid, sharp, and strangely familiar.

He turned his head to Toshinori, the helmet's crimson eyes fixing on his mentor. "All Might," Izuku's modulated voice boomed, a new excitement bubbling beneath the metallic tone. "The horns... they kind of look like your hair tufts when you're in your Muscle Form, don't they?" He then straightened, his armored form shifting with a subtle, powerful grace, and struck a pose, one arm raised, the other hand on his hip, mirroring All Might's iconic stance. "Maybe, just maybe," he declared, his voice filled with a burgeoning confidence and unwavering resolve, "I can follow in your footsteps!"

Toshinori's wide eyes, still brimming with awe, softened further, a proud, genuine smile spreading across his face. He let out a booming laugh, a sound of pure, unadulterated joy that echoed across the beach. "Young Midoriya!" he exclaimed, his voice thick with emotion. "Indeed! They do! And I have no doubt, not a single doubt, that you will forge your own path, one that will shine even brighter than mine! You already possess the heart of a true hero, and now... now you have the power to match it! Go beyond! Plus Ultra!" He pumped a fist into the air, his own spirit soaring with renewed hope.

Kagutsuchi, looking out towards the setting sun, took a slow, deliberate drag from his cigarette. "Yes, yes, quite," he drawled, a faint, sardonic amusement in his voice. "Perhaps you two can do a heroic pose along the shore together, for posterity."

Toshinori, still beaming, didn't hesitate. He strode over to stand beside Izuku, mirroring the boy's heroic stance, one hand on his hip, the other arm raised, his broad smile reflecting the golden light of the sunset. Izuku, thrilled by the shared moment, adjusted his own pose, his crimson eyes fixed on the horizon. The two heroes stood silhouetted against the vibrant sky, a strange tableau of heroism and burgeoning power, while Kagutsuchi merely remained where he was, a faint, dry smile on his lips as he watched them.

"Alright, alright," Kagutsuchi deadpanned, his voice flat, breaking the moment. He lowered his arm, his expression returning to his usual detached calm. "Let's not get carried away."

Izuku and Toshinori, caught mid-pose, exchanged a quick, slightly sheepish glance, their heroic stances dissolving into more natural postures. "Right, right," Izuku breathed, the modulated voice of the armor still resonating. "So, uh... what now, Kagutsuchi-san?"

Kagutsuchi took his cigarette from his lips, exhaling a thin stream of smoke. "Well," he began, his gaze settling on Izuku. "Now you power down. Peel back the armor. Go ahead. You have to learn to transform back and forth at will. It'll be less of a hassle if you have to do some hero work or, you know, fight against a Lord."

Izuku's crimson eyes blinked behind the visor. "Fight against a Lord..." he repeated, the thought making him pause. The concept of these 'Lords' was still hazy, but the way Kagutsuchi spoke of them, and the sheer power he himself now wielded, suggested something far beyond a typical villain. Still, Kagutsuchi had a point. He couldn't be in this armor forever. Imagine trying to eat dinner, or attend class, or even just walk down the street looking like this. And if the transformations were truly random and uncontrolled, it would be a massive inconvenience, not to mention a danger to himself and others.

He took a deep, steadying breath, focusing inward. He remembered the feeling of drawing the power in, concentrating it to a central point. Now, he tried to reverse the process, to let it recede, to dissipate. A faint hum began again, but this time it was a softening, a winding down. The golden aura around him shimmered, then began to retract. The sleek, black plates of armor, starting from his extremities, seemed to melt away, flowing back into his skin like liquid shadow. The golden accents faded, the crimson glow in his eyes dimmed, and the sharp horns on his helmet slowly, almost gracefully, receded until his unruly green hair was once again exposed. A soft clink echoed as the prominent golden belt buckle seemed to dissolve. Within moments, the imposing Agito Ground Form was gone, replaced by the familiar, slightly sweat-soaked figure of Izuku Midoriya, standing on the sand in his tracksuit. He blinked, feeling the cool evening air on his face, a strange lightness in his limbs.

Toshinori, seeing Izuku back in his normal form, clapped him heartily on the shoulder, a proud, firm gesture that, this time, didn't send the boy sprawling. "You're ready, my boy!" he boomed, his smile wide and genuine. "You've trained hard, you've faced your fears, and you've mastered the first step of this incredible power! The only test left is the UA Entrance Exam, and I have no doubt, none at all, that you will succeed with flying colors!"

Izuku's eyes, still a little wide from the transformation, filled with a renewed determination. He bowed deeply. "Thank you, All Might! I won't let you down!"

Kagutsuchi, who had been watching the exchange with his usual detached amusement, clapped softly, a slow, deliberate sound that carried a hint of mockery. "Yes, yes, very touching," he drawled, taking his cigarette from his lips. "Now, if you two are quite finished with your emotional farewells, I believe we all need to go home."

Toshinori, ever polite, turned to Kagutsuchi. "Kagutsuchi-san, we're heading back now. I can offer you a ride in my car, if you'd like."

Kagutsuchi waved a dismissive hand. "Oh, no, thank you, Toshinori. I prefer walking. Good for the... circulation." He offered a cryptic smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. "You two run along. I'll be fine."

With a final, lingering look, Toshinori and Izuku turned and began to walk away, heading towards the road. They exchanged excited whispers about the future, the UA exam, and the incredible power Izuku now commanded. Kagutsuchi watched them go, his smile slowly fading as they disappeared from view.

Once they were completely out of sight, Kagutsuchi exhaled a long plume of smoke, his dark eyes scanning the now-empty beach. "You can come out now," he called out, his voice calm, yet carrying an undeniable authority that cut through the quiet night.

From behind a large, overturned refrigerator that Izuku had painstakingly moved earlier, a figure slowly emerged. It was a humanoid form, with the distinct, sleek, spotted body of a cheetah, adorned with a red sash draped over one shoulder and ancient-looking sandals. Its eyes glowed faintly in the dim light. It was the minor Lord from the image, one of Kagutsuchi's subordinates.

Kagutsuchi took another drag from his cigarette, his gaze fixed on the emerging figure. "Greetings, Luteus," he said, his voice flat, devoid of warmth. "And here I thought you'd finally learned some patience. Stalking the boy for days? Really? You're lucky he didn't stumble upon you himself. His senses are sharper than a freshly awakened Agito has any right to possess."

The cheetah-like Lord, Luteus, moved with a silent, predatory grace, stopping a few feet from Kagutsuchi. He bowed his head slightly. "My pardon, Lord Kagutsuchi. The boy's awareness is indeed... surprising. He nearly discovered my presence a few times, despite my utmost discretion."

Kagutsuchi nodded slowly, a thin smile touching his lips. "I know. So, what is it you want, Luteus? What else but to try your hand at killing the Agito, I presume?"

Luteus's glowing eyes narrowed, a silent confirmation. "Indeed, Lord Kagutsuchi. He must be eliminated."

Kagutsuchi shrugged, flicking the ash from his cigarette. "Go crazy, then. Just try not to make too much of a mess."

Luteus bowed his head once more, a faint, guttural purr rumbling in his chest. Then, with a flicker of movement too fast for the human eye to follow, he vanished back into the shadows, leaving Kagutsuchi alone on the deserted beach, the only sound the gentle lapping of the waves.

The next two months passed in a blur of intense preparation. Izuku's days were a rigorous cycle of school, studying, and continued training. He spent hours poring over textbooks, reviewing hero history, and practicing the theoretical aspects of heroics. But his most crucial training now revolved around mastering his Agito power. Under Kagutsuchi's distant, yet ever-present, guidance (often through cryptic messages or unexpected appearances), Izuku diligently practiced transforming into his Ground Form and back again. The initial awkwardness gave way to seamless transitions, the armor appearing and receding with a mere thought. He also worked on basic combat drills, refining his movements and understanding the enhanced strength and durability the Agito form granted him. Toshinori, though no longer directly overseeing the physical cleanup, continued to offer unwavering moral support and advice, often meeting Izuku for lunch or after school to discuss strategies and hero philosophy.

There were moments of doubt, of course. The sheer weight of what he was, what he could become, was immense. The lingering threat of the 'Lords' was a constant, unsettling undercurrent. But each time, he pushed through, fueled by his unwavering dream of becoming a hero, and the fierce pride he felt in his newfound abilities. His body continued to adapt, becoming leaner, stronger, faster. His reflexes sharpened, and his senses, as Luteus had noted, became acutely aware of his surroundings.

The UA Entrance Exam. The very words sent a jolt of nervous energy through Izuku. He sat in the passenger seat of his mother's car, clutching the straps of his backpack, his knuckles white. The city outside the window was a blur of familiar streets, but his focus was entirely on the imposing gates of UA High, now visible in the distance.

Inko, her hands gripping the steering wheel a little too tightly, tried to offer a reassuring smile, but her voice wavered. "You'll do great, Izuku, darling! Just... just remember everything you've learned. And that you're amazing, no matter what!" Her attempt at encouragement was sweet, but the underlying tremor in her voice betrayed her own anxiety.

Izuku turned to her, a tender smile on his face. He reached out, gently covering her trembling hand on the wheel with his own. "I know, Mom," he said softly, his voice steady, a stark contrast to her own. "I'll be okay. I promise. I can do this." He squeezed her hand, a silent assurance that he would not only try his best but succeed. He had to. For both of them.

Inko's eyes, still a little watery, locked with his. She saw the unwavering resolve, the quiet strength that had blossomed in him over the past months. A gentle smile, truly confident this time, touched her lips, and she nodded. "I know you will, Izuku," she whispered, her voice firm. "Now go on. Go get 'em."

With a final squeeze of his hand, she pulled away, pulling the car to a smooth stop at the curb. Izuku took a deep breath, unbuckled his seatbelt, and stepped out onto the bustling pavement. He watched as his mother's car pulled away, offering a small, reassuring wave before turning to face the magnificent structure before him.

UA High. The towering, futuristic building loomed against the morning sky, its sleek lines and imposing presence radiating an aura of prestige and power. This was it. This was the place where heroes were forged. A wide, genuine smile spread across Izuku's face. If he passed, this would be the sight that greeted him every day on his way to becoming a hero. With a surge of renewed determination, he pumped his fist, dressed in a simple black shirt and cream trousers, and took a confident step forward through the colossal gates of UA High, the sheer scale of the building making him feel both insignificant and incredibly excited.

"Out of the way, Deku!" a loud, explosive voice snarled, cutting through his moment of quiet triumph.

Izuku flinched, his shoulders tensing instinctively. He didn't need to turn to know who it was. Katsuki Bakugo, a whirlwind of aggressive energy, strode past him, his hands already sparking with small explosions. He didn't even spare Izuku a glance, his crimson eyes fixed on the entrance ahead.

"If you think you're actually going to pass, you might as well try out at some other school, you damn bug!" Bakugo sneered, his voice dripping with contempt, the insult hitting with a dull thud. He continued on, a trail of simmering arrogance in his wake, heading straight for the main gates.

Izuku took a deep, steadying breath, letting the familiar barbs wash over him. He watched Bakugo's retreating back, a flicker of the old fear and insecurity trying to take root, but he pushed it down. He wasn't the same Deku anymore. He had a purpose. He had a power. And he had a promise to keep. He would do this. He would pass.

The main hall was a buzzing hive of activity, filled with hundreds of anxious-looking students, all dressed in their civilian clothes, a sea of potential heroes. He found his assigned seat in the massive auditorium, a sprawling space filled with rows upon rows of chairs, each facing a colossal screen at the front. The air vibrated with a mix of nervous chatter and barely contained ambition.

Suddenly, the lights dimmed, and a single spotlight flared, illuminating the stage. A figure burst forth, radiating an almost blinding energy. It was Present Mic, the Voice Hero, his signature spiky blonde hair and enthusiastic grin unmistakable. His voice, amplified to stadium-rock levels, boomed through the speakers, making the entire auditorium vibrate.

"WELCOME, UA APPLICANTS! YEAAAH! ARE YOU READY FOR THE LIVE PERFORMANCE?!" Present Mic roared, striking a dramatic pose. A few nervous titters rippled through the crowd, but most remained stiff with anticipation. "THANKS FOR TUNING IN TO THE UA HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM! EVERYBODY SAY 'HEY'!" Silence. A collective, awkward silence.

Present Mic, unfazed, merely chuckled. "O-KAY! WHAT A RESPONSE! AS IS CUSTOMARY, I, YOUR RESIDENT DJ, PRESENT MIC, WILL BE EXPLAINING THE PRACTICAL PORTION OF THE EXAM!" He pointed a finger at the screen behind him, which flared to life, displaying the words "PRACTICAL EXAM: BATTLE TRAINING."

"THE PRACTICAL EXAM WILL BE A TEN-MINUTE 'URBAN GAUNTLET' IN ONE OF OUR REPLICA CITYSCAPES!" Present Mic explained, a map of various zones appearing on the screen. "EACH OF YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC BATTLE CENTER! YOU WILL NOT BE WORKING WITH YOUR FRIENDS! YOUR GOAL IS SIMPLE: ACCRUE POINTS BY DEFEATING 'VILLAIN BOTS'!" The screen then displayed images of three different types of robots, each with a corresponding point value: 1-point, 2-point, and 3-point villains.

"THESE ARE YOUR TARGETS!" Present Mic shouted, his voice still booming. "DESTROY THEM, AND YOU GET POINTS! IT'S ALL ABOUT OFFENSIVE POWER! THERE'S NO LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF VILLAIN BOTS YOU CAN DEFEAT! GO WILD! SHOW US YOUR BEST!"

As Present Mic continued to explain, a stern, bespectacled student with dark blue hair and an almost robotic posture stood up, chopping the air with his hand. "EXCUSE ME, SIR!" he boomed, his voice cutting through Present Mic's explanation. "ON THE PRINTED HANDOUT, THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF ROBOTS! IF THIS IS A MISTAKE, IT IS AN AFFRONT TO UA'S ESTEEMED REPUTATION! WE APPLICANTS ARE HERE TO BE HEROES, NOT TO BE MISLED!"

The student then turned, pointing a rigid finger directly at Izuku. "AND YOU! THE BOY WITH THE MESSY GREEN HAIR! YOU'VE BEEN MUTTERING TO YOURSELF THIS ENTIRE TIME! IF YOU'RE SO NERVOUS YOU CAN'T EVEN CONTROL YOUR OWN ANXIETY, YOU SHOULD LEAVE! YOU'RE DISTRACTING EVERYONE!"

Izuku flinched, shrinking in his seat, his face burning crimson as all eyes turned to him. He mumbled a hasty apology, trying to disappear.

Present Mic, after a moment of surprised silence, cleared his throat. "A-HEM! THANK YOU, EXAMINEE NUMBER 7111! YOU'RE QUITE OBSERVANT! THE FOURTH TYPE OF ROBOT IS A 'ZERO POINTER'! IT'S AN OBSTACLE! ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO GET IN YOUR WAY! THERE'S NO BENEFIT TO FIGHTING IT! AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS! GOT IT?!"

The screen flashed to an image of a colossal, terrifying robot, easily ten times the size of the other villain bots, its red eyes glowing menacingly. A collective gasp rippled through the auditorium.

"ALRIGHT, LISTENERS! THAT'S ALL FOR THE EXPLANATION! HEAD TO YOUR ASSIGNED BATTLE CENTERS! AND REMEMBER... GO BEYOND! PLUS ULTRA!" Present Mic roared, and the lights flared back on, signaling the end of the briefing.

Izuku pulled himself up from his seat, a nervous flutter in his stomach, and followed the stream of other applicants heading for the exits. As he did so, he couldn't help but glance at some of them—tall, confident figures, some already radiating an aura of power, their movements purposeful and assured. He recognized a few faces from the brief glimpses he'd had of the top students in his research, their Quirks already well-developed and impressive. A familiar pang of insecurity tried to surface, but he pushed it down. He had to concentrate on his own success, on the power he now possessed, and the promise he had made to himself and to All Might. He was an Agito now, and his path was his own.

When he reached the locker room, the air was thick with the scent of sweat and nervous anticipation. Many applicants were already there, a flurry of motion as they stripped off their civilian clothes and pulled on the standard UA gym uniform. In the far corner, Katsuki was already slipping into his, his movements sharp and efficient, a silent, simmering intensity radiating from him.

"Hey!" a cheerful voice called out. Izuku turned to see a boy with spiky blond hair and distinctive black streaks, a wide, friendly grin on his face. "I'm Kaminari! What's your name?"

Izuku, a little startled but grateful for the friendly overture, managed a small smile. "I-Izuku Midoriya," he replied, extending a hand.

Kaminari shook it firmly. "Nice to meet you, Midoriya! So, what do you think? What are our chances looking like?"

Izuku's gaze flickered around the bustling room, then back to Kaminari. "I'm not sure," he said modestly, his voice a little softer than he intended. "We just... we have to do our best, I guess."

"Pfft, 'best'?" a new voice scoffed. Izuku looked down to see a much shorter boy with purple, grape-like clumps for hair, a smug expression on his face. "Come on, we heard Present Mic! The Villain Bots shouldn't even be that tough. We're a shoo-in!"

From his corner, Katsuki let out a low, irritated click of his tongue at the comment, but he didn't say anything, merely pulling on his uniform top with a violent jerk. He then strode out of the locker room immediately, a whirlwind of barely contained aggression.

Izuku, relieved by the sudden departure, shuffled towards an empty locker, his mind already shifting from the nervous chatter to the task at hand. He quickly began to change into his own UA gym uniform, the simple blue fabric feeling strangely significant.

The mock city stretched out before them, a sprawling urban landscape of concrete buildings and overturned cars, eerily silent beneath the bright artificial lights. A few dozen applicants were scattered across the starting zone, many already performing last-minute stretches or flexing their Quirks. Izuku found a relatively clear spot and began his own warm-up, meticulously following the stretching routine Toshinori had advised him to do over the past few months. He focused on his breathing, the familiar movements calming his nerves.

As soon as he finished, Present Mic's booming voice echoed through the loudspeakers, startling a few of the more jumpy participants. "ALRIGHT, LISTENERS! THE TEN-MINUTE URBAN GAUNTLET IS ABOUT TO BEGIN! REMEMBER YOUR OBJECTIVE: DEFEAT VILLAIN BOTS FOR POINTS! THERE ARE NO ALLIES IN THIS TEST! GO BEYOND! PLUS ULTRA!"

With a final, ear-splitting "START!", the air crackled with anticipation.

Meanwhile, in a dimly lit observation room high above the mock city, the entire UA faculty watched the proceedings on a bank of large screens. The air was thick with the scent of coffee and the low hum of electronics. Most of the pro heroes and staff were leaning forward, expressions ranging from intense focus to bored assessment, as they monitored the applicants' initial surge into the battleground.

Toshinori Yagi, in his civilian form, sat in a comfortable chair slightly apart from the main group, a mug of tea in his hand. Beside him, Kagutsuchi was sprawled in another chair, his feet propped casually on the console table, a faint, almost imperceptible smirk playing on his lips. He merely observed the screens, his dark eyes unreadable, a silent sentinel amidst the controlled chaos. The faculty's attention was currently on the general flow of the exam, the various Quirks on display, and the strategies (or lack thereof) employed by the aspiring heroes.

Izuku didn't hesitate. He launched himself forward, a blur of blue and green, his enhanced body already moving with incredible speed and agility. Many of the other applicants, spurred by the signal, followed suit, a wave of aspiring heroes surging into the mock city.

Picking up speed, Izuku immediately encountered a cluster of 1-point Villain Bots. Their blocky forms and glowing red eyes were no match for his accelerated reflexes and strength. He moved with fluid precision, smashing through them with ease, his fists connecting with satisfying crunches of metal. Even without transforming into his Agito armor, his body was a finely tuned machine, a testament to months of rigorous training.

Explosions already echoed through the fake city, a clear sign of Katsuki's aggressive progress. Other Quirks flared—flashes of light, bursts of wind, the rumble of enhanced strength—as applicants engaged their targets. Izuku, however, kept his focus, his eyes scanning for the next target. He picked up the pace, smashing through a few 2-point and 3-point Villain Bots with powerful, decisive blows. His progress was going relatively well, his score steadily climbing.

It wasn't until he sensed the impending arrival of the colossal 0-pointer, a heavy rumbling in the distance, that Izuku sprinted back towards the starting zone. He figured he had gathered enough points to pass, and the monstrous robot was best avoided, as Present Mic had warned.

Then, as if guided by his sharpened senses once more, his gaze snapped to a girl running behind the rest of the pack. Her breathing was ragged, her face flushed from her own effort of gathering points, and she seemed to be struggling to keep up with the fleeing crowd. Without a second thought, Izuku executed a smooth turn of his heel, his enhanced speed carrying him effortlessly towards her. He reached her side, gently but firmly taking her arm, helping her quicken her pace before the 0-pointer could reach them.

However, something soon went wrong. The heavy rumbling intensified, and the ground trembled. The 0-pointer, a towering behemoth of metal and menace, suddenly started accelerating for some reason, its red eyes glowing with an unnerving intensity, before it lunged forward with a terrifying roar, its massive fist aimed directly at them.

Izuku quickly turned his head, his eyes widening at the sudden, impossible speed of the robot. There was no time to think, only to react. With a surge of desperate strength, he grabbed the girl, spinning her around and throwing her with surprising force towards a group of students who were still scrambling away. "Catch her!" he cried out, his voice a desperate, modulated shout that cut through the chaos.

Then, focusing the nascent power of his Agito armor around his right arm and forelegs, a faint, golden shimmer briefly outlining his limbs, he launched himself upward. He met the 0-pointer head-on, his right fist connecting squarely with the robot's massive metallic head. A deafening CRUNCH echoed through the mock city as the colossal machine, against all odds, was sent flying backward, tumbling through the air like a discarded toy, much to the amazement of all who witnessed it.

Back in the observation room, the sudden, earth-shattering CRUNCH and the sight of the 0-pointer being sent flying across the mock city caused a collective gasp and a ripple of stunned silence to sweep through the room. Coffee mugs clattered, and several heroes straightened in their seats, their previous expressions replaced by wide-eyed disbelief.

"What in the...?!" Present Mic's booming voice, usually reserved for the loudspeakers, was now a choked whisper of pure shock. He leaned so far forward he almost toppled his chair. "Did that kid just... one-punch the 0-pointer?!"

Shota Aizawa, usually a picture of detached weariness, had actually sat up straight, his capture weapon momentarily forgotten. His eyes, though still tired, were wide with a rare flicker of genuine surprise. "That's... impossible," he muttered, his voice low, a stark contrast to Present Mic's outburst. "The 0-pointers are designed to be indestructible to applicants. They're just obstacles, not targets." His gaze snapped to the screen displaying Izuku's retreating figure. "And that burst of speed... the way he moved... that wasn't just enhanced strength."

Nemuri Kayama, Midnight, pressed a hand to her lips, her eyes sparkling with a mix of shock and intrigued amusement. "Oh my, Eraser! It seems we have a wild card on our hands! And quite a powerful one, at that!" She then turned her gaze to Kagutsuchi, a playful glint in her eyes. "Well, Kagutsuchi-san? Care to enlighten us? Is this another one of your 'anomalies'?"

Kagutsuchi merely took a slow sip from his own tea, his feet remaining propped on the table. He met Midnight's gaze with a faint, knowing smile, but said nothing, his silence more eloquent than any words.

Nezu, the principal, who had been observing with his usual unnerving calm, let out a soft, thoughtful hum. His bright, intelligent eyes were fixed on the screen, analyzing every frame of Izuku's brief, explosive display. "Fascinating," he purred, his smile widening into a thin, almost predatory curve. "Absolutely fascinating. The raw power, the precise application... and the sudden, localized energy fluctuation. It's quite unlike anything we've observed in a Quirk before." He then turned his gaze to Toshinori, a silent question in his eyes.

Toshinori, who had been watching Izuku with a profound sense of pride and a carefully masked triumph, offered a small, knowing smile to Nezu. "Indeed, Principal Nezu," he replied, his voice calm, though a hint of the booming All Might resonance was present. "Young Midoriya has... a unique way of doing things." He glanced at Kagutsuchi, a subtle, almost imperceptible nod passing between them.

Aizawa, however, was not satisfied. His gaze, sharp and piercing, landed on Kagutsuchi. "Alright, spill," he stated, his voice flat, devoid of his usual sarcasm. "How did he do that?"

Kagutsuchi's smirk tightened, a glint of amusement in his dark eyes. "Oh? No questions about his 'Quirk' first?"

Aizawa's glare intensified, his expression unwavering. Kagutsuchi's lips parted into a toothy, knowing smile as he finally lowered his feet from the table with a soft thud. He leaned forward, his dark eyes sweeping over the assembled faculty, a faint, mischievous glint in their depths. "To clarify," he began, his voice calm and even, "what he possesses is not a 'Quirk' in the conventional sense. It is an awakening of true human potential. As for how he accomplished such a feat... he simply chose to protect. A rather heroic act, wouldn't you agree?" He offered a small, disarming shrug, his smile unwavering.

The faculty exchanged bewildered glances. "True human potential?" Power Loader grunted, his robotic voice laced with skepticism. "What kind of vague answer is that, 'angel'?"

Kagutsuchi merely chuckled, a dry, knowing sound. "The kind that accurately describes a phenomenon beyond your current understanding, my dear Power Loader. His potential is limitless. And he's only just begun." He leaned back again, propping his feet back on the table, his gaze returning to the screens, a silent invitation for them to ponder his cryptic words. The faculty, however, remained in a state of bewildered awe, their minds grappling with the impossible display they had just witnessed.

"TIME'S UP! THAT'S IT, LISTENERS! THE UA ENTRANCE EXAM IS OVER!" Present Mic's voice, though still loud, now carried a note of finality, echoing through the mock city. The remaining villain bots powered down, their red eyes dimming, leaving the urban landscape eerily quiet once more.

Izuku stood amidst the wreckage, his chest heaving, sweat plastering his green hair to his forehead. The faint golden shimmer that had outlined his arm and legs had completely faded, leaving him feeling utterly drained, as if every ounce of his energy had been expended in that single, explosive punch. He swayed slightly, his legs feeling like jelly, but a profound sense of relief washed over him. He had done it. He had saved her, and he had made his mark.

Around him, other applicants collapsed to the ground, some panting, others groaning in exhaustion or clutching minor injuries. A few celebrated their point totals, while others looked dejected, their faces grim with the realization that they hadn't performed as well as they'd hoped. Katsuki, a few blocks away, stood amidst a pile of smoking robot debris, his explosions having ceased, a scowl etched onto his face as he glared at the now-motionless 0-pointer, clearly frustrated he hadn't been the one to take it down.

Suddenly, a small, elderly woman with a large syringe-shaped cane bustled into the battleground. It was Recovery Girl, the Youthful Heroine, her presence a welcome sight. "Alright, everyone, line up for healing!" she called out, her voice surprisingly strong. "Don't be shy! Let's get those scrapes and bruises patched up!"

Izuku, still a bit wobbly, saw the girl he had saved slowly picking herself up, her eyes wide with a mixture of shock and gratitude as she looked at him. She had short, brown hair and large, expressive eyes. "You... you saved me!" she exclaimed, her voice trembling slightly. "Thank you so much! I... I don't know what I would have done!"

Izuku managed a weak, tired smile. "It's... it's okay," he mumbled, still catching his breath. "Are you... are you alright?"

She nodded vigorously, then looked at the fallen 0-pointer, then back at him, her expression a mix of awe and confusion. "But... how did you...?" she began, her voice trailing off as Recovery Girl approached them, ready to administer her healing kiss.

Recovery Girl, ever efficient, moved with practiced ease. She first leaned down to the girl Izuku had saved, pressing a gentle kiss to her forehead. A soft, green glow enveloped the girl for a moment, and her ragged breathing eased, her flushed face regaining a healthy color. "There you go, dearie," Recovery Girl chirped, her eyes twinkling. "Good as new!"

Then, she turned her attention to Izuku, who was still swaying slightly. "Now, you, young man! That was quite the stunt you pulled! Let's get you patched up." She reached up, a small, knowing smile on her face, and pressed her lips to his forehead.

Izuku braced himself for the familiar warmth, the sudden surge of energy that usually accompanied Recovery Girl's healing. But... nothing happened. He blinked, still feeling utterly exhausted, his muscles screaming in protest. The faint golden shimmer, the hallmark of his Agito power, remained dormant. Recovery Girl's kiss, usually so potent, had no effect whatsoever.

Recovery Girl herself paused, her eyes widening slightly. Her brow furrowed in confusion as she pulled back, a rare expression on her usually cheerful face. She tried again, a more deliberate kiss, but still, Izuku felt no change. His exhaustion clung to him like a heavy cloak.

"Hmm?" she hummed, a note of genuine perplexity in her voice. She tapped her chin with her syringe-cane. "That's... peculiar. My Quirk should have worked instantly. Are you feeling any better, dearie?"

Izuku shook his head, a faint blush rising to his cheeks. "N-no, Recovery Girl-sensei," he stammered, feeling a fresh wave of embarrassment. "I... I'm still really tired." He forced a more confident, if still wobbly, smile. "But I'll be fine! I just need a few hours, and I'll recover on my own. My body... it just works a bit differently."

The girl he had saved, who had been watching the exchange with renewed curiosity, gasped softly. "He's... immune?" she whispered, her eyes wide with disbelief.

Recovery Girl straightened up, her gaze fixed on Izuku, a thoughtful, almost concerned expression replacing her initial confusion. "Immune to my Quirk?" she murmured, more to herself than to them. She eyed him skeptically, then sighed, a puff of air escaping her lips. "A few hours, you say? Hmph. Most unusual indeed. It seems your body is... processing things differently. Very, very differently." She looked at the lingering fatigue on Izuku's face, a flicker of worry in her eyes. "Well, then, young man, if you're so confident in your own recovery, I'll take your word for it. But don't you dare push yourself! A good, long rest is in order for you. No more heroics for today!"

Izuku nodded, a weary but determined expression on his face. "Yes, Recovery Girl-sensei. I understand." With a sigh, he simply sat down on the ground, his arms hanging over his knees, his head bowed slightly as he focused on catching his breath. The concrete was cool beneath him, a welcome anchor as the adrenaline slowly receded.

A moment later, a shadow fell over him. He looked up to see the girl he had saved standing there, her brown eyes still wide with a mix of awe and lingering exhaustion, though Recovery Girl's Quirk had clearly done its work on her. She offered him a shy, grateful smile. "Thank you again," she said, her voice soft but sincere. "Really. My name's Ochako Uraraka."

Izuku, managing to straighten up a little, returned her smile. "Izuku Midoriya," he replied, his voice still a bit hoarse from exertion.

Ochako's smile widened, a genuine warmth in her expression. "Midoriya," she repeated, a slight nod of her head. "It's really nice to meet you!"

Later that evening, after the last of the applicants had been processed and sent home, Izuku found himself in the observation room, the screens now displaying only static. The air, though still faintly smelling of coffee, was quieter, more relaxed. Toshinori was there, as was Kagutsuchi, still in his casual, almost languid pose, his feet propped on the console. Most of the other faculty members had dispersed, but Nezu, Aizawa, and Midnight remained, their expressions a mix of curiosity and lingering intrigue.

Nezu, perched on his usual chair, gestured towards Izuku with a paw. "Ah, young Midoriya! Thank you for staying. We have a few questions for you, if you're feeling up to it." He then turned to the remaining staff. "And for those who haven't had the pleasure, this is Izuku Midoriya, our... rather extraordinary applicant."

Izuku, still feeling a residual fatigue but much better than before, bowed shyly. "It's... it's an honor to meet you all," he mumbled, his gaze flickering nervously between the stern Aizawa, the amused Midnight, and the enigmatic Principal.

"No need for formalities, Midoriya," Nezu chirped, his eyes twinkling. "Now, about what transpired today... specifically, your rather impressive interaction with the 0-pointer. Can you elaborate on what exactly happened, and the nature of your abilities?"

Izuku's eyes darted to Kagutsuchi, who offered a subtle, almost imperceptible nod, his smirk widening slightly. Taking a deep breath, Izuku turned back to Nezu, his voice gaining a touch more confidence. "Yes, Principal Nezu. What you saw... it's part of an ability I'm still learning to control. When I struck the 0-pointer, I wasn't using my full power. I was focusing a localized burst of energy, channeling parts of my... my armor, to my right arm and forelegs." He paused, choosing his words carefully. "Using the full armor, the full transformation, would have caused far more damage to the mock city, and potentially to myself, given I'm still trying to practice control. It was a conscious decision to limit the output."

Aizawa's tired eyes narrowed, a flicker of something akin to suspicion crossing his face. "Localized armor? A conscious decision to limit output? That's... a very precise application for something you're 'still learning to control,' Midoriya." He crossed his arms, his posture signaling his skepticism. "And what exactly is this 'armor'? Is it a mutation Quirk? A transformation?"

Izuku shifted uncomfortably, glancing at Toshinori, then back at Kagutsuchi. The 'angel' offered another subtle, encouraging nod. "It's... it's difficult to explain fully," Izuku began, his voice a little softer. "It's more... a state. A manifestation of something within me. The armor forms around me, and it enhances my physical capabilities. The more of it I manifest, the more powerful I become, but also the harder it is to control. Today, I only brought forth enough to handle the immediate threat without causing unnecessary destruction." He gestured vaguely to his arm, as if recalling the golden shimmer.

Midnight leaned forward, her interest piqued. "A 'state'? How intriguing! So, it's not a constant manifestation? You can call upon it at will?"

"Yes, ma'am," Izuku confirmed, a faint flush on his cheeks. "Though it takes a lot out of me, as Recovery Girl-sensei found out." He offered a small, self-deprecating smile.

Nezu steepled his paws, his gaze never leaving Izuku. "And this 'awakening of true human potential' that Kagutsuchi-san mentioned earlier... is that how you would describe it, young Midoriya?"

Izuku looked at Kagutsuchi, then back at Nezu, his expression earnest. "I... I think so, Principal Nezu. It feels like... something ancient. Something that was always there, waiting. And Kagutsuchi-san has been helping me understand it, helping me learn to wield it responsibly."

Aizawa's eyes flickered between Izuku and Kagutsuchi, a silent question passing between him and the enigmatic figure. "So, you're saying this isn't a Quirk passed down through genetics? It just... appeared?"

Kagutsuchi finally spoke, his voice smooth and resonant, drawing the faculty's attention. "Indeed, Eraserhead. Some potentials lie dormant, awaiting the right catalyst. Izuku Midoriya is simply a testament to the boundless capabilities hidden within humanity, untethered by the conventional limitations of what you call 'Quirks.' His body is merely adapting to a higher state of being, a natural evolution." He paused, a knowing glint in his eyes. "A truly heroic heart, coupled with an awakened spirit, can achieve wonders, wouldn't you agree?"

Power Loader scoffed, but even he seemed to be processing the implications. Midnight, however, looked utterly fascinated. "A natural evolution? Oh, the possibilities!"

Nezu, after a long moment of thoughtful silence, finally broke the tension. He clapped his paws together, a decisive sound. "Well, young Midoriya, your explanation, while... unconventional, is certainly compelling. Your display of both power and restraint today was remarkable. It is clear you possess a unique ability, and more importantly, a hero's spirit. We will certainly be taking your unique circumstances into consideration when evaluating your application." He offered a wide, confident smile. "Thank you for your candor. You may go now, and get that much-needed rest."

Izuku, a wave of relief washing over him, bowed deeply. "Thank you, Principal Nezu! Thank you all!" He glanced at Toshinori, who gave him a subtle, proud wink, and then at Kagutsuchi, who simply offered a faint, satisfied nod. With that, Izuku turned and quietly exited the observation room, leaving the faculty to their continued, bewildered discussion.

Stepping out of the main UA building, the cool evening air was a welcome contrast to the warmth of the observation room. The sun had dipped below the horizon, painting the sky in hues of deep orange and purple. Izuku decided to take the train home, the familiar rumble and rhythmic sway a comforting thought after such an eventful day. As he approached the gate, his mind already drifting to the prospect of a hot bath and a good night's sleep.

Just then, a few of the applicants who had been in his battle center emerged from the building, clearly having taken a longer tour of the school's interior. It was Ochako Uraraka, her cheeks still a little rosy from exertion, accompanied by a tall, elegant girl with striking black hair tied in a ponytail (Momo), a rigid, bespectacled boy with engine-like calves (Iida), and a large, quiet figure with multiple arms (Shoji).

"Oh, there he is!" Ochako Uraraka's voice, bright and clear, cut through the evening quiet as she spotted him ahead.

"That's him, right?" Momo asked Ochako in a hushed tone, though her voice carried clearly in the quiet evening. "The boy who helped you?"

Ochako nodded, a bright smile breaking across her face. "Yep! That's Midoriya-kun!" She then waved enthusiastically. "Hey, Midoriya-kun!"

Izuku, still lost in his thoughts and focused on the path ahead, didn't immediately register their presence. He continued walking towards the train station, his shoulders slumped slightly with lingering fatigue, his mind replaying the events of the day. The distant chattering of the other applicants, even Ochako's call, simply faded into the background hum of the city as he concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other.

The group behind him, however, began to follow, their footsteps echoing lightly on the pavement as they quickened their pace to catch up. Iida, ever punctual, pulled out his phone, his brow furrowed in concern. "Goodness, it's getting late! My family might chide me for coming home so late after the exam!"

Shoji, his voice a low rumble, offered a calm reassurance. "Relax, Iida. It's still just a quarter to six. We're fine."

It wasn't until Ochako called out his name again, a little louder this time, her voice closer, that Izuku finally snapped out of his reverie and turned, a small, surprised smile forming on his face as he realized he was being addressed. He waited for them to catch up.

As the four of them finally caught up to Izuku, a comfortable silence settled for a moment, broken only by the soft crunch of their shoes on the pavement and the distant city sounds. Ochako, ever the most direct, was the first to speak.

"Midoriya-kun, right?" she began, her smile warm and genuine. "Thank you again for what you did back there! You really saved me. I thought I was a goner when that 0-pointer came charging!"

Izuku's cheeks flushed slightly, and he rubbed the back of his neck. "Oh, uh, you're welcome, Uraraka-san! I just... reacted. I'm glad you're okay."

Iida, ever the stickler for proper introductions, stepped forward, his arm chopping the air in a precise motion. "Indeed! Allow me to properly introduce myself! I am Tenya Iida, from Somei Private Academy! It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Midoriya-kun! Your actions during the practical exam were truly commendable, demonstrating a keen sense of heroism and quick thinking!"

Izuku bowed slightly, a nervous habit. "It's, uh, nice to meet you too, Iida-kun. I'm Izuku Midoriya."

Momo Yaoyorozu, with her composed demeanor, offered a polite smile. "And I am Momo Yaoyorozu. It was quite a remarkable display, Midoriya-kun. Your ability to repel the 0-pointer was... unprecedented. May I ask, what exactly is the nature of your Quirk? It seemed to manifest in a rather unique way." Her curiosity was evident, but her tone was respectful.

Izuku shifted uncomfortably, his gaze darting around, clearly nervous. "Oh, um, my Quirk?" he stammered, rubbing the back of his neck again. "It's... it's kind of an insect Quirk, I guess? It physically enhances me, you know, like how some insects are naturally super tough and strong for their size? I just... gain strength proportionate to that." He gestured vaguely with his hands. "And the way it looked, like... armor? That's just part of it. I'm still really trying to figure out how to control it properly. Today, I just managed to focus it on my arm and legs for that punch, but it takes a lot out of me."

Shoji, who had been quietly observing, finally spoke, his voice deep and calm, the multiple arms on his face shifting slightly. "The efficiency was notable. You used only what was necessary."

Izuku nodded, grateful for Shoji's perceptive comment, though his nervousness didn't entirely dissipate. "Exactly! Using more would have been... too much. I'm trying to be careful."

"That's incredibly responsible!" Iida declared, chopping the air again. "To have such immense power and yet exercise such restraint! A true mark of a budding hero!"

Ochako giggled. "Yeah, it was super cool! And you totally saved my bacon!"

As they walked, the initial formality slowly gave way to a more relaxed atmosphere. They discussed the exam, the difficulty of the villain bots, and their hopes for getting into UA. Iida continued to fret about the time, occasionally checking his phone, while Shoji offered concise, insightful observations. Momo, with her sharp intellect, asked thoughtful questions about Izuku's "insect Quirk," trying to understand its mechanics, and Ochako kept the mood light with her cheerful chatter. The path to the train station seemed shorter with their newfound camaraderie.

The streetlights began to flicker on, casting long, orange glows across the pavement as the group continued their walk, the earlier tension of the exam giving way to a comfortable camaraderie. They were still deep in conversation about their hopes for UA, the quirks they'd seen, and the daunting path ahead.

"I'm just hoping my Creation Quirk was impressive enough," Momo mused, a thoughtful frown on her face. "I tried to be efficient, but there were so many variables."

"Your creations were quite versatile, Yaoyorozu-san!" Iida declared, chopping the air. "I observed you generating several useful items! A truly admirable display of strategic thinking!"

Ochako bounced slightly on her toes. "Yeah, and Shoji-kun, your Dupli-Arms were super helpful for scouting! You covered so much ground!"

Shoji gave a quiet hum of acknowledgment. "It was effective."

Izuku, a faint smile on his face, listened to their chatter, feeling a warmth spread through him. This was what he'd dreamed of—friends, fellow aspiring heroes, sharing their experiences. He was about to chime in with a comment about Iida's incredible speed when, abruptly, a cold dread seized him.

The warmth vanished, replaced by a chilling sensation that prickled his skin. It wasn't the evening air; it was something deeper, a discordant hum beneath the city's usual rhythm. His smile faltered, his eyes widening almost imperceptibly as his gaze unfocused, staring blankly ahead. The chatter around him seemed to fade, replaced by a growing, unsettling silence in his ears. His body stiffened, every muscle locking in place, a sudden, inexplicable paralysis.

"Midoriya-kun?" Ochako's voice cut through the strange quiet, laced with confusion. "What's wrong?"

Iida stopped, his arm mid-chop. "Midoriya-kun? Are you alright? You've stopped quite suddenly!"

Shoji's multiple eyes narrowed, observing Izuku's rigid posture. "He seems... unresponsive."

Izuku didn't answer. His mind was reeling, bombarded by a sudden, overwhelming influx of sensations. A faint, metallic tang on his tongue. The distant, almost imperceptible thrum of something other moving through the city. A cold, predatory awareness that seemed to settle on the back of his neck. It was the same feeling he'd had before, the one that preceded the chaotic awakening of his Agito power. But this time, it was sharper, more defined, and utterly terrifying.

A look of pure panic flashed across Izuku's face, his eyes darting wildly, no longer blank but filled with a desperate, primal fear. He didn't know what it was, but he knew, with a certainty that chilled him to the bone, that it was here. And it was close.

"Izuku!" Ochako cried out, her voice now tinged with alarm.

"Midoriya-kun, what is it?!" Iida demanded, stepping closer, his concern growing.

Without a word, without a moment's hesitation, Izuku bolted. He didn't head for the train station, or back towards the main road. He veered sharply, his legs pumping with a desperate, unthinking urgency, and plunged into the darkened entrance of the park they were passing. The trees, now silhouetted against the dimming sky, seemed to swallow him whole.

"Midoriya-kun!" Ochako's voice echoed, fading as he disappeared into the shadows.

"Hey! Where are you going?!" Iida shouted, bewildered and frustrated, his arms flailing. "The train station is the other way!"

The group stood frozen for a moment, staring after the retreating figure, utterly confused by Izuku's sudden, frantic flight into the night.

Izuku ran. He ran like his life depended on it, and in a way, it did. His lungs burned, his legs ached, but he pushed himself harder, weaving through the deepening shadows of the park. Each pounding step was a desperate plea to put distance between himself and whatever unseen horror had triggered his Agito senses. He glanced back, a fleeting, terrified look, but saw nothing. Yet, the chilling presence remained, a cold weight pressing against his back, urging him forward. He had to get away, not just for himself, but for Ochako, Iida, Momo, and Shoji. He couldn't let them be caught in whatever this was. He had to lead it away, lose it in the labyrinthine paths of the park.

He burst through a clump of overgrown bushes, the branches scratching at his face and arms, and emerged onto a wide, paved path, dimly lit by a distant, flickering lamppost. The air here felt heavier, colder. He risked another glance over his shoulder. Still nothing. But the primal dread intensified, a suffocating certainty that it was gaining on him.

Suddenly, a blur of movement, too fast to properly register, shot past his left. It was low, sleek, and silent. Before he could react, something hard and unyielding connected with his ankle. His feet tangled, his balance shattered, and he pitched forward, a choked gasp escaping his lips. The hard concrete rushed up to meet him, and with a sickening thud, he slammed face-first onto the ground, pain exploding across his cheek and forehead. The world spun for a moment, stars bursting behind his eyes, as the metallic tang of blood filled his mouth. He lay there, dazed, gasping for breath, the chilling presence now looming directly over him.

He tried to push himself up, his muscles screaming in protest, but a sudden, overwhelming sense of dread made him stiffen. He sensed it, right there, standing over him, a silent, predatory weight. Slowly, agonizingly, he lifted his head, his vision still blurry from the impact, and his eyes widened in terror.

Standing over him, silhouetted against the dim park lights, was a humanoid figure with the distinct, sleek, spotted body of a cheetah, adorned with a red sash draped over one shoulder and ancient-looking sandals. Its eyes glowed faintly in the dim light. Its presence radiated a cold, ancient power that made Izuku's blood run cold. A faint, almost imperceptible smile, devoid of warmth, played on its feline lips.

Izuku, too frightened to speak, could only stare up at the imposing figure, his breath hitched in his throat. The pain from his fall was a dull throb compared to the icy grip of fear that squeezed his heart. He tried to scramble backward, to create some distance, but his limbs felt heavy, unresponsive.

The cheetah-like being tilted its head slightly, its glowing eyes fixed on Izuku. Its voice, when it spoke, was a low, resonant purr, surprisingly calm, yet laced with an undeniable menace. "You know why I am here, boy."

Izuku flinched, the words cutting through his terror. He swallowed hard, the metallic taste of blood still in his mouth. Gathering himself, he forced a raspy whisper past his trembling lips. "I... I do, but—"

The creature rolled its feline eyes, a gesture of profound boredom that was unnerving on such a predatory face. "Save it," it interrupted, its voice losing its calm edge, a hint of irritation now. "I've heard it all before. The pleas, the denials, the desperate attempts to understand. It's tiresome."

Before Izuku could react, the figure moved with startling speed. It reached down, its spotted hands, surprisingly strong, clamping around Izuku's shoulders. With a grunt of effort that seemed almost casual, it lifted him effortlessly from the ground. Izuku barely had time to register the sudden ascent before he was hurled backward with immense force.

He sailed through the air for a terrifying moment, a choked cry escaping his lips, before slamming hard against the trunk of a large, ancient tree. The impact rattled his teeth, sending a jolt of agonizing pain through his spine and ribs. The tree itself shuddered violently, leaves raining down around him, as he slumped to the ground, gasping, every inch of his body screaming in protest.

He tried to pull himself up, gritting his teeth against the fresh wave of agony, but his body screamed in protest, every muscle a knot of screaming pain. He could only manage to push himself onto his hands and knees, his head hanging low. The cheetah-man approached, its footsteps silent on the concrete, the air around it growing colder, heavier. Izuku stiffened, sensing its presence directly beside him.

Then, a sudden, brutal impact. A fist, impossibly fast and heavy, slammed into his stomach. The air was violently knocked out of him, a guttural gasp tearing from his throat. The force wasn't just on his body; it felt as if the blow went straight through him, a concussive wave that vibrated through the tree behind him. A sickening CRACK echoed through the quiet park as the bark directly behind Izuku's back violently imploded, splintering outwards from the sheer power of the blow. Izuku's eyes bulged, a silent scream trapped in his chest, as he crumpled forward, utterly winded, his vision blurring into a kaleidoscope of pain.

He landed on his side, coughing violently, a warm, coppery liquid bubbling past his lips and staining the concrete. His arms instinctively wrapped around his stomach, pressing against the searing agony. Each breath was a shallow, painful gasp. He looked up, his vision swimming, to see the cheetah-like figure standing over him, its glowing eyes unwavering.

"Allow me to introduce myself, boy," the creature purred, its voice a low rumble that seemed to vibrate through the very ground. "I am Luteus. And I work under Lord Kagutsuchi." A cruel, knowing smile stretched across its feline face, a chilling echo of Kagutsuchi's own enigmatic grin. "He sent me to test you. And it seems, so far, you are failing."

Izuku tried to push the information aside, the revelation that this creature served Kagutsuchi a jarring note in his pain-addled mind. He focused inward, desperately trying to call upon his Agito armor, to force the golden shimmer to manifest. But the agony in his stomach, the throbbing in his head, and the sheer terror made it impossible. His body refused to cooperate, a useless, trembling mess. "All Might... I wish All Might were here," a desperate thought flashed through his mind, a childish plea for rescue.

Luteus watched him, a flicker of something almost like amusement in its glowing eyes. "I must admit," it purred, its voice a low, almost impressed rumble, "Kagutsuchi has found an interesting specimen in you. Most Agitos are either raging berserkers, consumed by their power, or selfish pricks who care only for themselves. You, however..." Luteus tilted its head, its gaze piercing, as if seeing something beyond Izuku's physical form. A faint, almost imperceptible ripple seemed to pass through the air around Izuku, a sensation he couldn't quite place, but Luteus made no comment, its expression remaining unreadable.

Just then, a sharp THWACK echoed through the park. Luteus stiffened, a tiny, almost imperceptible tremor running through its spotted form. A small rock, no bigger than Izuku's thumb, bounced off the back of its head and clattered onto the concrete.

Without turning, Luteus's glowing eyes narrowed, fixing on a point beyond Izuku, where the faint sounds of rustling bushes indicated the presence of his friends. Its voice, now devoid of its earlier purr, was flat, cold, and utterly devoid of mercy. "Leave, children. This does not concern you."

"Leave him alone!" Ochako's voice, surprisingly strong despite the tremor in it, cut through the tense silence. She stood at the edge of the path, her hands clenched into fists, her face pale but determined.

Behind her, Iida was already fumbling with his phone, his rigid posture betraying his frantic movements. "I am contacting the authorities! You are engaging in an illegal assault on a minor! This is a grave violation of public safety!" he declared, his voice tight with anger and a hint of fear.

Luteus let out a long, exasperated sigh, a sound that was almost human in its annoyance. It didn't even turn to face them, its glowing eyes still fixed on Izuku. "Go away, children," it stated more firmly, its voice flat, devoid of its earlier purr. "As I said, I have no interest in you."

"We won't just leave him!" Momo's voice, clear and resolute, rang out from behind Ochako and Iida. She stepped forward, her dark eyes blazing with a fierce, protective fire. "That's not what budding heroes do! We don't abandon those in need!"

Luteus finally turned its head, a slow, deliberate movement, its glowing eyes sweeping over the trio with an expression of profound irritation. A low growl rumbled in its chest, a sound more animal than human. "Your asinine hero culture means nothing to me," it snarled, its voice sharp, cutting through the evening air. "This is a task. A job. I could care less about your sentimental drivel."

"A job?" Shoji's deep voice cut in, his multiple arms shifting, his expression grim. "Who put you up to it? Who hired you for this 'job'?"

Luteus's feline smile twisted into a sneer, its patience clearly at an end. It took a single, predatory step towards Izuku, its glowing eyes narrowing. "I am done entertaining children," it hissed, its voice a low, dangerous growl. It lifted its foot, a heavy, sandaled paw, and aimed it directly at Izuku's head, intending to crush it.

But even through the haze of pain and fear, a spark of pure, unyielding will ignited within Izuku. The thought of his friends, of them being in danger because of him, fueled a desperate surge of adrenaline. With a guttural cry, he pushed himself off the ground, a burst of raw, unrefined strength propelling him sideways, away from the descending foot. He scrambled backward, desperately putting a few feet of distance between himself and the cheetah-like creature, his body screaming in protest but his eyes wide with a renewed, albeit terrified, determination.

He landed awkwardly, still coughing, but his gaze, now sharp and focused, locked onto Luteus. The pain was still there, a throbbing inferno in his gut, but he began to drown it out, pushing it to the farthest corners of his awareness. The shouts of his friends, the distant sirens that Iida's call must have triggered—they all faded, becoming a dull hum against the rising tide of his own resolve. His eyes narrowed, a dangerous glint appearing in their depths, replacing the fear with a fierce, unyielding defiance. He was done running. He was done being a victim.

He took a low, fighting stance, his injured body coiling, muscles tensing. A faint, golden light began to shimmer around him, barely visible in the dim park light, but growing steadily. It started as a subtle aura, then pulsed, expanding outward from his core. His unruly green hair seemed to stand on end, crackling with nascent energy. The ground beneath his feet trembled faintly as the golden light intensified, swirling around him like a miniature storm.

Then, with a blinding flash, a sleek, golden belt materialized around his waist, its central buckle emblazoned with a distinct golden symbol. The light flared, momentarily engulfing him, and from it, black armor, segmented and rippling with defined musculature, began to emerge, spreading rapidly across his body. A large, sculpted golden plate covered his chest and upper back, while his forearms and shins were encased in solid gold sections. A metallic clink echoed across the beach as the suit solidified, conforming perfectly to his new, imposing physique. Finally, the transformation reached his head: his unruly green hair was encased by a sleek, black helmet topped with a striking golden, crescent-shaped crest. Two glowing, crimson eyes, no longer wild but focused and intense, stared out from the visor, a stark contrast to the dark, sleek form. With a roar that was half pain, half pure, unadulterated fury, Izuku Midoriya completed his transformation into the Agito Ground Form.

The golden aura around the newly formed Agito Ground Form pulsed, casting an ethereal glow across the darkened park. The air crackled with raw power, a stark contrast to the oppressive chill that had emanated from Luteus moments before. Izuku, now a towering figure of black and gold, straightened to his full height, the metallic clink of his armor resonating with each deliberate movement. His crimson eyes, piercing through the visor, were locked onto Luteus, no longer filled with terror, but with a burning, righteous anger.

Luteus, for the first time, showed a hint of genuine surprise. Its feline smile vanished, replaced by a slight widening of its glowing eyes. It took a half-step back, a low, almost involuntary growl rumbling deeper in its chest. "So," it murmured, its voice losing its earlier boredom, a new, cautious interest in its tone. "The vessel finally awakens. And with such... ferocity." It seemed to be assessing Izuku, recalculating.

Behind Izuku, the group of aspiring heroes stood frozen, their earlier shouts dying in their throats. Ochako's jaw was slack, her eyes wide with a mixture of awe and disbelief. "Midoriya-kun...?" she whispered, barely audible.

Iida, his phone still clutched in his hand, stared, his rigid posture momentarily forgotten. "What... what is that?! His Quirk... it's completely different!"

Momo, usually composed, had a hand pressed to her mouth, her eyes reflecting the golden glow. "An... armor transformation? But so sudden, so complete... it's unlike any Quirk I've ever researched!"

Shoji, ever observant, simply watched, his multiple eyes narrowed, taking in every detail of the imposing figure that was once their trembling friend. A silent, grim determination settled on his face.

Izuku, ignoring their bewildered cries, took a single, powerful step forward, the ground trembling faintly under his armored foot. The pain in his stomach was still there, a dull ache now, but it was overshadowed by the surge of power coursing through his veins. He raised a gauntleted fist, the golden accents on his forearm gleaming in the dim light.

"You're not touching them," Izuku's voice boomed, distorted and resonant through his helmet, no longer a raspy whisper but a declaration of defiance. "Not while I'm here."

Luteus's expression hardened, its predatory instincts kicking in. The brief surprise was replaced by a cold, calculating glare. "Foolish child," it hissed, its voice regaining its edge. "You think a mere transformation changes anything? You are still just a boy. And I still have a job to do."

With a sudden, explosive burst of speed, Luteus lunged. It was a blur of spotted fur and glowing eyes, faster than Izuku had seen it move before, aiming a clawed strike directly at the Agito's chest.

But Izuku was ready. His enhanced senses, sharpened by the transformation, tracked the incoming attack. He met the blow head-on, his gauntleted forearm rising to block. A deafening CLANG echoed through the park as metal met claw, sending sparks flying into the night. The force of the impact was immense, rattling Izuku's bones, but he held his ground, a low growl rumbling from deep within his armored chest. This was a fight. And he wouldn't back down.

With a cruel grin, Luteus vanished. Not a blur, not a flash, but a complete, instantaneous disappearance from Izuku's sight. Before the Agito could even register the absence, a sharp, metallic CLANG echoed from behind him, followed by another, and another, coming from all directions. Luteus was a whirlwind of strikes, a phantom of motion, appearing and disappearing with impossible speed, each blow landing with a sickening force against Izuku's armor.

Izuku was forced onto the defensive, his armored form a blur of blocks and parries, the clang of metal against unseen force ringing through the park. He spun, he dodged, he raised his forearms, but Luteus was too fast, too relentless. Each impact vibrated through his body, a dull ache threatening to reignite the searing pain in his stomach. He gritted his teeth, his crimson eyes darting, trying to track the invisible assailant, but it was like fighting a ghost.

Behind him, Ochako gasped, her hands flying to her mouth. "He's so fast!"

Iida, his phone still pressed to his ear, his eyes wide with disbelief, could only stammer, "I... I can barely follow his movements! The sheer velocity is incredible!" He lowered the phone slightly, his voice strained. "They're dispatching units, but they're still several minutes out!"

Momo's face was pale, her brow furrowed in concentration, but even her sharp intellect struggled to comprehend the speed. "It's... it's beyond human capability! The air pressure alone from his movements is immense!"

Indeed, the four aspiring heroes felt it. A tangible pressure, like a sudden gust of wind, buffeted them with each of Luteus's lightning-fast attacks. The ground vibrated faintly under their feet, and the leaves on the nearby trees rustled violently, even without a visible breeze, as the cheetah-man moved with such incredible force. It was a visceral reminder of the immense power they were witnessing, a power far beyond their current understanding or ability to counter. They could only watch, helpless, as Izuku, transformed and powerful, was still being overwhelmed by the sheer, terrifying speed of his opponent.

The rhythmic clang of Luteus's unseen strikes against Izuku's armor continued, a relentless assault that pushed the Agito to his absolute limits. Each impact, though absorbed by the black plates, sent a jarring tremor through his body, the dull ache in his stomach threatening to flare into searing pain once more. He gritted his teeth, his crimson eyes darting frantically within the visor, trying to track the phantom assailant. It was like fighting smoke, a blur of motion that defied his enhanced senses.

"Midoriya-kun, you have to find a way to counter!" Iida shouted, his voice strained, his engine calves revving uselessly as he stood rooted to the spot, helpless.

Momo, her brow furrowed in intense concentration, tried to analyze the air currents, the subtle shifts in pressure that indicated Luteus's movements, but even her sharp intellect struggled to keep pace. "His velocity is... it's almost instantaneous! There's no discernible pattern!"

Izuku heard their shouts, their fear, and a fresh surge of determination, cold and sharp, cut through the pain and confusion. He was the Agito. He was here to protect them. He wouldn't let this creature touch them, not while he still stood. He closed his eyes, not in defeat, but in a desperate attempt to sharpen his other senses, to push beyond the visual. He focused, not on what he saw, but on what he felt. The subtle displacement of air, the faint whisper of disturbed leaves, the almost imperceptible vibration in the ground beneath his feet. He extended his awareness, stretching his senses beyond their natural limits, trying to latch onto Luteus's presence, to feel the ripple of his movement before it even occurred.

The world around him seemed to slow, the chaotic blurs resolving into a series of infinitesimally small shifts. He felt a faint, almost electrical current in the air, a precursor to the next strike. It was coming from his right, low and fast, aimed at his exposed side.

With a sudden, explosive burst of power, Izuku moved. His gauntleted left arm shot out, not to block, but to intercept. There was a resounding THWACK that echoed through the park, a sound of solid impact that was far more satisfying than the previous glancing blows. Luteus's fist, aimed for his chest, was caught. Izuku's powerful, clawed fingers clamped around the cheetah-man's wrist, holding it in an unyielding grip.

Luteus froze, its glowing eyes widening in utter disbelief, its feline face contorted in a mask of pure shock. It had not anticipated this. The Agito, the mere "vessel," had actually caught it.

"Got you," Izuku's modulated voice boomed, a low, dangerous growl that resonated with newfound triumph.

Before Luteus could even attempt to pull free, Izuku twisted, channeling the immense power of his Ground Form into his right leg. With a vicious, upward arc, he delivered a brutal kick directly to Luteus's midsection. A sickening CRUNCH of displaced air and straining muscle filled the silence, and the cheetah-man was sent reeling backward, a blur of spotted fur and red sash, tumbling through the air before slamming hard into the trunk of a large oak tree. The tree shuddered violently, leaves raining down around Luteus as it slumped to the ground, a pained groan escaping its lips. For the first time, the terrifying Lord was visibly shaken, its glowing eyes wide with a mixture of pain and profound, bewildered surprise.

The silence that followed was thick with the scent of ozone and disturbed earth. Luteus lay crumpled against the tree, its sleek body twitching, its glowing eyes fixed on Izuku with a new, grudging respect. The casual arrogance, the bored disdain, had been wiped clean from its feline features, replaced by a raw, unadulterated shock. It pushed itself up slowly, a low growl rumbling in its chest, no longer a purr of menace, but a sound of genuine frustration.

Izuku, still in his Agito Ground Form, stood tall, his chest heaving, the golden accents on his armor gleaming in the dim park light. The pain in his stomach, though still present, was a distant throb, overshadowed by the exhilarating rush of control, of having finally landed a decisive blow. His crimson eyes, burning with fierce determination, remained locked on Luteus, ready for the next move.

Behind him, his friends were a tableau of stunned disbelief. Ochako's hands were still clapped over her mouth, but her eyes were wide with awe. "He... he actually hit him!" she whispered, a mixture of wonder and lingering fear.

Iida, his rigid posture returning, chopped the air with renewed vigor, though his voice was still a little shaky. "Incredible! A strategic counter-attack! Midoriya-kun, your adaptability is truly remarkable!"

Momo, her eyes shining with intellectual fascination, lowered her hand from her mouth. "He didn't just block; he anticipated the movement through sensory input beyond sight. And the force of that kick... it's astounding!"

Shoji, ever quiet, simply nodded, his multiple eyes fixed on Izuku, a silent acknowledgment of the power he now wielded.

Luteus, having finally regained his footing, stood upright, his body still slightly hunched, his glowing eyes narrowed. He wiped a faint smear of green fluid from his lip—a small, almost imperceptible wound, but a wound nonetheless. "Impressive, boy," he purred, his voice low and dangerous, a new edge of genuine threat in his tone. "You learn quickly. But this changes nothing. I am still Luteus. And you are still a target."

With a snarl, Luteus lunged again, but this time, his movements were different. No longer a formless blur, but a series of precise, calculated dashes, each step leaving a faint ripple in the air. He was faster, more focused, no longer toying with his prey. Izuku met the charge, his Agito form a dark, golden-etched blur, the park becoming a whirlwind of clashing forces, each strike carrying the weight of cosmic stakes.

The cheetah-man moved with a ferocity Izuku hadn't yet witnessed, each strike a calculated blow designed to disorient and overwhelm. He ducked under a sweeping claw, the wind of its passage ruffling the leaves on his helmet, then pivoted, a powerful punch aimed at Luteus's side. The Lord, however, anticipated the counter, shifting with impossible grace, his body blurring as he evaded the blow. He retaliated with a flurry of jabs, each one aimed at the golden accents of Izuku's armor, seeking out weak points.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

The metallic symphony of their battle echoed through the quiet park, a testament to the raw power being unleashed. Izuku, no longer merely reacting, began to press his own advantage. He used his enhanced senses to predict Luteus's next move, not just feeling the air currents, but anticipating the subtle shift in his weight, the almost imperceptible tensing of his muscles. He parried a kick, the impact sending a jolt up his arm, then spun, bringing his elbow around in a swift, brutal arc.

Luteus hissed, a sound of genuine pain, as the elbow connected with his ribs. He stumbled back, his glowing eyes flickering with a mix of anger and growing frustration. The Agito was not just a vessel; he was a warrior.

"He's... he's fighting back!" Ochako gasped, a glimmer of hope in her voice.

"Midoriya-kun is adapting!" Iida exclaimed, his voice filled with admiration. "He's learning his opponent's patterns!"

Momo nodded, her eyes wide. "He's using his enhanced perception to predict, not just react. This is truly remarkable!"

Luteus snarled, his patience wearing thin. He lunged again, a desperate, all-out assault, a blur of claws and teeth. Izuku met him head-on, their forms clashing in a whirlwind of black, gold, and spotted fur. They exchanged blows, each one carrying immense force, the ground trembling faintly beneath their feet. Izuku absorbed a powerful punch to his chest, the impact jarring but not breaking his stance, then retaliated with a series of rapid-fire jabs, forcing Luteus to retreat, his movements becoming less fluid, more desperate.

The cheetah-man, seeing his advantage slipping, let out a guttural roar. He gathered his energy, his body tensing, and then, with a final, explosive burst of speed, he blurred into an almost invisible streak, aiming for a decisive blow to Izuku's head.

But Izuku was ready. He had been waiting for this. He felt the surge of energy, the subtle shift in the air, the primal intent behind the attack. As Luteus closed the distance, a golden light began to pulse from the buckle of Izuku's belt, growing brighter, more intense. His right leg, already coiled, began to glow with a brilliant, emerald green energy, the light outlining the powerful musculature of his armored limb. The air around him shimmered, distorting slightly from the sheer power he was generating.

"Now!" Izuku's voice boomed, a declaration of intent that vibrated through the very ground.

With a powerful leap, Izuku launched himself into the air, a golden and black silhouette against the dim park lights. He twisted his body, bringing his glowing right leg forward, the emerald energy intensifying, spiraling around his foot like a drill. Luteus, too fast to stop his own momentum, found himself directly in the path of the devastating attack.

Izuku roared, his voice a thunderous echo that shook the very foundations of the park. His glowing heel connected with Luteus's chest with a deafening CRACK, the sound of shattering armor and displaced air. The emerald energy exploded outwards, engulfing the cheetah-man in a blinding flash of green light. Luteus let out a horrific, guttural scream, a sound of pure agony and disbelief, as he was sent hurtling backward, a broken, smoking projectile. He slammed into the ancient oak tree with an earth-shattering impact, the tree groaning and splintering under the force, before the Lord crumpled to the ground, utterly motionless.

The blinding emerald light faded, leaving the park bathed in the dim glow of distant streetlights. Izuku, still in his Agito Ground Form, landed softly on the concrete path, his chest heaving, the golden accents on his armor pulsing faintly. He stood over the motionless form of Luteus, the silence profound, broken only by his ragged breaths. The air still crackled with residual energy, and the scent of ozone hung heavy.

Behind him, a collective gasp ripped through the air, followed by a moment of stunned silence, and then an explosion of cheers.

"He did it!" Ochako shrieked, her voice hoarse with excitement, tears of relief streaming down her face. She practically jumped up and down, her hands clapped over her mouth again, but this time in joyous disbelief. "Midoriya-kun! You actually did it!"

Iida, his rigid posture completely abandoned, pumped his fist into the air, his engine calves revving in uncontrolled bursts of enthusiasm. "Unbelievable! A complete and decisive victory! Midoriya-kun, you are truly a hero!"

Momo, her eyes wide with a mixture of awe and profound respect, offered a genuine, radiant smile. "That was... that was magnificent, Midoriya-kun! Truly a display of immense power and unwavering courage!"

Even Shoji, usually stoic, let out a low, rumbling sound of approval, his multiple arms shifting in what could only be described as a silent cheer.

Izuku heard their shouts, their praise, and a wave of profound relief washed over him. He had protected them. He had won. A weary, triumphant smile began to form on his face beneath the visor. He took a step towards them, his armored form glowing faintly.

Meanwhile, where Luteus had fallen, a strange transformation began. The cheetah-man's motionless form, still slumped against the splintered oak, began to shimmer. Not with the golden light of Agito, but with a sickly, iridescent green, like oil on water. A low, guttural gurgle escaped his throat, and his body began to convulse, not in pain, but in a grotesque disintegration. His sleek, spotted fur seemed to melt, peeling away in shimmering flakes that dissolved into the air. His glowing eyes, once so full of predatory malice, flickered wildly, then dimmed, becoming hollow, vacant sockets.

The red sash draped over his shoulder frayed, turning to dust that scattered on the wind. The ancient-looking sandals crumbled into fine particles. His humanoid shape itself began to distort, his limbs elongating unnaturally, then shrinking, his form twisting and contorting as if pulled apart by unseen forces. A faint, acrid smoke began to rise from his dissolving body, carrying a metallic scent that stung the nostrils.

The process accelerated. His flesh, his bone, his very essence, seemed to be consumed by the iridescent green light, breaking down into nothingness. His final scream was not one of agony, but of a chilling, existential dread, a sound that seemed to tear at the fabric of reality itself, before it was abruptly cut short.

Within moments, where the formidable Lord Luteus had once stood, there was nothing left but a faint, lingering shimmer of green light that quickly dissipated, and a small, almost imperceptible pile of fine, black dust scattered on the concrete path. The splintered oak tree stood as the only testament to his violent end, its bark still smoking faintly. The air, once thick with the scent of ozone, now carried a faint, unsettling aroma of something ancient and utterly gone. The Lord had been erased.

The cheers of Izuku's friends died abruptly, replaced by a collective, horrified silence as they watched the horrifying spectacle of Luteus's disintegration. Their faces, moments ago alight with triumph, contorted into expressions of shock and revulsion.

Ochako's hands flew to her mouth, not in a cheer, but in a choked gasp of pure terror. Her eyes, wide and glistening in the dim light, were fixed on the grotesque disintegration. "Wh-what... what is that?!" she stammered, her voice a raw whisper, trembling uncontrollably. The joy she had felt vanished, replaced by a wave of nausea.

Iida, his rigid posture completely abandoned, stumbled back a step, his eyes wide with a mixture of shock and profound unease. He had witnessed villains before, but never anything like this. The way he was dissolving, the sickening shimmer, the acrid smoke—it defied every scientific and biological principle he knew. "He's... he's disintegrating!" he breathed, his voice tight with disbelief, his hand instinctively going for his phone, but hesitating, unsure who to even call about this.

Momo, usually composed, pressed a hand to her mouth, her face pale, her brow deeply furrowed in a mixture of scientific horror and profound unease. Her sharp intellect struggled to process the impossible sight. "Molecular breakdown... but without any apparent catalyst... it's... it's unnatural!" Her voice was barely audible, a tremor running through it.

Even Shoji, whose Quirk allowed him to see and hear things others couldn't, seemed visibly disturbed. His multiple eyes narrowed, observing every horrifying detail of Luteus's demise, his expression grim. He took a protective step forward, subtly positioning himself between the dissolving form and his friends, though he knew it was a futile gesture against such an alien phenomenon.

The final, chilling scream of Luteus, a sound that seemed to tear at the fabric of reality, sent shivers down their spines. When the iridescent green light finally dissipated, leaving only a small pile of black dust and a faint, unsettling aroma, the group remained frozen, staring at the empty space with a mixture of fear and profound bewilderment. Their hero, Izuku, had won, but the victory was tainted by the terrifying, inexplicable end of their foe.

Izuku, still standing tall in his Agito form, felt the golden light around him begin to recede, the power settling back into his core. The metallic clink of his armor softened as the black plates and golden accents melted away, flowing back into his skin. The crimson glow in his eyes dimmed, revealing his wide, green eyes once more, and the sharp horns on his helmet gracefully receded until his unruly green hair was exposed. He took a deep, shuddering breath, the air feeling cool and fresh against his face as the last vestiges of the armor dissolved, leaving him in his simple tracksuit. He felt utterly drained, a profound exhaustion settling deep into his bones, but also a surge of adrenaline-fueled relief.

He turned to his friends, expecting cheers, but found only wide, horrified eyes fixed on the spot where Luteus had been. He followed their gaze, seeing the faint dust, and a cold knot formed in his stomach. The reality of what had just happened, of the way it had happened, began to sink in.

"Midoriya-kun...?" Ochako whispered again, her voice barely a breath, her eyes darting from the dust to his face, a new kind of fear in them. Not of him, but of the sheer, incomprehensible power he wielded, and the terrifying nature of the beings he fought.

Izuku swayed slightly, the exhaustion hitting him in full force now that the adrenaline was fading. He rubbed the back of his neck, a nervous habit returning. "Uh, well... it's... it's a bit complicated," he mumbled, his voice a little hoarse. He glanced around the park. The distant wail of sirens was growing louder, closer. "Maybe... maybe we should wait for the police? And the pro heroes?"

Shoji, ever practical, nodded. "Good idea. It would be best to explain this to the authorities." His multiple eyes scanned the surroundings, ensuring no other threats were present.

The group huddled together, their initial elation now tempered by confusion and the looming questions. Ochako, seeing Izuku's fatigue, gently took his arm to steady him. "You look exhausted, Midoriya-kun. You really pushed yourself."

Just then, a beam of bright headlights cut through the park's dimness, followed by the screech of tires. Several police cars, lights flashing, pulled up to the edge of the path. Uniformed officers, followed by a few pro heroes, including the familiar, tired figure of Eraserhead, quickly emerged, their expressions grim and alert.

"Alright, what's going on here?!" Eraserhead's voice, though weary, carried authority. His gaze swept over the scene, taking in the splintered tree, the group of stunned teenagers, and the faint, unsettling scent of ozone. His eyes narrowed when they landed on Izuku, then flickered to the empty space where Luteus had been. "Iida, Yaoyorozu, Uraraka, Shoji... and Midoriya. Explain yourselves. And what happened to the villain?"

Izuku took a deep breath, preparing himself. This was going to be a long night.