Summary: And to reward Midoriya Izuku for graduating, the universe launched him into a world where Heroes never rose up, the law is heavy, and his name is Midoriya Deku.

Alt: In this world, Midoriya Deku’s life should have been nine parts suffering and one part tragedy. Should have been, except Izuku had always been bad at listening to anyone about how to live his life.

Paring: ¯\\_(ツ)\_/¯

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This one time, Aizawa was getting mugged.

Now, this wasn’t an unusual thing for him. It happened about as often as he wore blue, so really once or twice a week not counting holidays. He imagined that he still looked like an easy target, wearing designing clothing and gaudy jewelry as he reeked of perfume and alcohol while coming back from the Red Light District. When he wasn’t on shift, he didn’t bother keeping himself looking like a man who paid the bills by lying to women.

Well, he supposed that he wasn’t really trying to get himself out of these situations. To an extent, they were fun. The look on someone’s face when they can’t use their quirk is cute. The shock on their face when he lays in on them and they lose to someone that they thought was an easy target was just funny. Nezu made it certain that they don’t fight in public, but never said anything about self-defense.

It wasn’t like he was some psychopath or anything, he just wanted to feel his blood rushing. He just wanted to feel electrified.

He wanted something new and different in life.

So when a child that barely came up to his chest, in the uniform of a convenience food store chain with a power-ranger mask on his face stood at the mouth of the alley he was about to get mugged in, he was annoyed.

“Hey!”

Kid go away, he wanted to say. It was his once-a-month treat, to put someone in their place.

“This is uh… really bad!”

But the kid blabbered and sniffled, as though this child was witnessing violence for the first time in his life and he wanted to do the Right Thing™. It was cute, but Aizawa was ticked-off at the thought that his night would go from dull to fake heroics-

-But then this kid did this roundhouse kick.

Aizawa had been in enough fights to know exactly what kind of kick, at what kind of angle, was needed to knock someone out in a hit-and this kid did it. It was something that sobered him up instantly. Immediately, his mind spun to think that this wasn’t a kid who was a stranger to violence the beautiful arc of his swing was perfect and experienced.

He’s been in a lot of these fights. He’s been arrested enough times in those fights to know.

Power-Ranger Boy wasn’t someone who was just playing hero.

It could have been a fluke. He wouldn’t know. The kid left as fast as he came, returning only to hand Aizawa a plastic bag filled with first-aid and he was only working off of reactions and reflexes and the kid was gone.

One Hit Wonder, Aizawa’s mind wrote him off and he forgot him when the hangover hit the following morning.

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The next time (next few times? When Aizawa said he wasn’t sober, he meant it. Eventually, all the times where he wasn’t sober ran together until he lost track since 3’s are as curvy as 8’s and Mai’s (or maybe it was Aya or Kasumi) dreams of a wedding ring are cute but they’ll never come true no matter how many watches she buys him) the meet, he learned that one-hit wonder wasn’t a fluke.

But he was a One-Hit Wonder.

Power-Ranger Mask took out a group of six people on his own, one hit each. Roundhouse kicks that would make a martial artist green with envy, and steady jabs that flowed between hits in an intricate dance that left his audience at his feet. Even for Aizawa, that would have been hard to do, and he would have either doubled back until he could get back to Shirakumo (because Yamada was a mess in real life and an absolute trainwreck in a fight) or Kan.

Aside from the precise accuracy, however, he wasn’t used to fighting with a cheap plastic mask on his face.

It fell and Aizawa saw green eyes.

It wasn’t a particularly memorable color. It wasn’t something beautiful. It wasn’t something that shined and shimmered and Aizawa saw enough gems and jewels everyday to know the value of shiny things.

Those green eyes were about as common and eye-catching as the pebble he kicked into one of the guys’ head that caused this entire mess.

But what caught him wasn’t the fact that he had eyes or the fact that they were green or even the fact that he finally saw how young the Bruce Lee wannabe was. The kid’s eyes met his, and then looked at the mask on the ground, scrambled to pick it up. His eyes watered like he was the one who lost as he stared at Aizawa.

“Are you… okay?”

And Aizawa, who had lost almost every other fight since they first met, was anything but okay.

“If I say no, what are you going to do about it?” he asked.

“Oh uh…”

Aizawa’s lips curled into something cruel. Maybe there was something better to do than get into fights all the time. Maybe there was more to life than exchanging sweet words for cash and praying for someone to come mug him so he could have some fun.

Maybe he could teach this little boy a taste of adulthood and extinguish that light in his eye.

He walked up to him, confident and perfect because this had never failed him since he started to do this. Pushing his hair back, he flashed a charming smile at his little hero.

“After all, I could never let my hero go without paying back my dues.”

The kid stared at him for a long moment, his eyes welling with tears.

“You think I’m a hero?” he asked quietly.

This was going to be easy.

“Well, you certainly saved me-”

And he cut himself off as the tears fell. Aizawa would have normally thought that this was a child that was desperate with some kind of positive attention. Kids as young as him, who fought as well as him, who were out this late at night in the uniform of the convenience store around the corner, it was obvious that he came from a certain kind of backstory that was achingly familiar to Aizawa. The whole thing felt like a contradiction, since the kid’s eyes were too bright to have such precise hits, but when given a compliment, when told that he saved someone, fat tears began to roll down the side of his face.

“If someone ends up getting into the same trouble like clockwork, would you believe that they were saved too?”

And Aizawa almost pitied the kid. Not only was he an ugly crier, but he was smart.

He wiped at his eyes, sniffling hard, and Aizawa grabbed his arm.

“Deku,” he said, reading the name on the nametag of his shirt.

Seriously what was the point of the mask if he was going to wear a nametag-

“Izuku,” the kid said. “My name is Midoriya Izuku. Because I’m not a hero.”

Which totally made sense, Aizawa thought dryly. Still, he figured he could be the nice guy this time and keep his thoughts to himself. There was no point in speaking more about it. Given the name, it was easy to map out what kind of family he came from.

And in all honesty, Aizawa was starting to really dislike this kid.

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At what point does something become a habit?

For Aizawa, it was a simple thing. It was a habit when he realized that he couldn’t quit easily.

A good example of this was smoking. There was a point where Shirakumo asked for a smoke and Aizawa only had one left. Since Shirakumo was even more of an asshole back then than he was now, he snatched his smoke and later got caught by the teacher for smoking, so Aizawa wasn’t that upset about the whole ordeal. He could go without smoking during lunch.

But when the school day ended, he nearly rubbed a hole in his uniform because he wanted his nicotine fix so badly. He almost ran out, ignoring Shirakumo and Yamada, when the bell rang and was at the nearest convenience store.

Between puffs, he understood that cigarettes had become a habit. He liked to have one during lunch.

Habit was buying a specific brand of shampoo and conditioner. Habit was waiting for Shirakumo to finish up and pull Yamada from stepping out into traffic when there’s a car coming. Habit was buying cat food even though the old cat down the alleyway was roadkill.

And now, habit was making a middle school kid cry every time he stopped a mugging.

“...You know, there’s better ways to catch my attention,” Aizawa tried.

“I-I’m so sorry.”

“I’m not looking for an apology, kid.”

The kid hesitated and jerked back up in surprise. After a moment of hesitation, he reached into his pocket and pulled out his wallet. Aizawa’s eyebrows hit his hairline.

“H-Here, it’s not much but please let me go.”

If someone saved you from a mugging, and then turned around to give you their wallet-as though Saivor-kun was the one getting mugged, what was he supposed to do?

Obviously, he took the wallet. To the touch, it felt cheap. Looking through it, he hadn't seen such a pitiful amount of money since he was in elementary school and had to carry lunch money to school. He gave a huff, even though there was nothing funny about it. Was it even possible for someone to survive with this little money?

He looked at it, thought back to his own life, and knew that survival was probably possible. Guys who could still cry like Midoriya did, at the drop of a hat, for a stranger, had parents to go back to. Probably a single parent, given time and place, but one that would have nothing in the world worth living for if he died.

If Aizawa was a good person, he might have given the wallet and all the money back to him. Or if Aizawa wanted to actually be helpful, he’d take all the cash out of the guys on the ground and give it to Midoriya. To the victor go the spoils, and it wasn’t like they were conscious to fight it. They were literally going to try and do the same thing to Aizawa barely ten minutes ago.

But then the kid was gone. Like he was some poorly designed character from a shounen manga. Aizawa squinted at the area where the kid literally just was. Hedidn’t even hear him.

He looked at the wallet in his hand.

Did he just steal from a child? Damn, he was trash.

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But the thing was, Aizawa didn’t really remember people after the first or second time. This guy was just…

He didn’t know how to explain it. The strongest nervous wreck he’s ever met? A guy with a radar for trouble but despite never getting hit was the one crying?

Well, regardless, they kept meeting. They kept interacting.

And Shirakumo, the asshole he was, pointed and laughed at him, while Yamada slung an arm around his shoulders because-

“Shota! His name is Izuku, huh?”

Aizawa’s head snapped up, because he didn’t even realize it. Suddenly, the guy that cried after saving his life stopped being a stranger and Midoriya Izuku. He covered his mouth.

“Whoa, you didn’t even notice?” Shirakumo was teasing, but the look in his eyes was hard and his smile was sharp. Despite what his name was, he looked like a shark closing into it’s bleeding prey.

Asking felt like a loss but it was clear that this was beyond his control.

“...Notice what?”

“You keep talking about him,” Yamada said. “Is it a crush?”

“Oooh, do I get to tell Emi? She looks like she’ll be cute when she cries and would get all embarrassed about it.”

If it sounded like something a scumbag would say, it was because Shirakumo loved heart-broken women because they were like a well of wealth that he could pool from like a leach.

And thinking of the kid who cried for him, Aizawa didn’t want the two them to meet him.

“...It’s nothing.”

“The last time you said that,” Yamada frowned, “we went to jail. You remember that? I got kicked out of my folks’ house.”

“Dumbass, you got kicked out because you were a bum,” Aizawa snapped back. “Leave him out of this.”

And Shirakumo and Yamada exchanged this glance that made all the hair on the back of his neck stand up.

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