We all know how the story started. Izuku Midoriya was born Quirkless, but became the inheritor of One for All after All Might saw in him the potential to become the greatest hero the world had ever known. But in this version of My Hero Academia, the world was not only plagued by the rise of supervillains, but also by the devastation caused by Gates, magical portals leading into Dungeons, realms filled with monstrous beasts and monsters that humanity had combated against for decades with the Pro Heroes themselves standing at the forefront.

And thus, on the same day that Izuku Midoriya inherited One for All, his story took a different turn when he pushed himself past his limits in a desperate attempt to save civilians from monsters of a sudden, unusual Dungeon Break. Waking up on hospital bed several days later, the first thing he saw was a strange blue window that only he could see hovered before his eyes, informing him that he had met all the requirements needed to pursue the secret quest [Courage of the Weak] as the Player of the System.

"Izuku" Normal Speech.

'Izuku' Normal Thought.

"**Arise**" Magic/Technique.

"**Ashborn**" Demon/Monster Normal Speech.

'Ashborn' Demon/Monster Thought.

My Hero Leveling

Chapter 15

Zenith

“How are you still… this strong?”

Izuku found himself asking as he dueled Igris across the throne room, their blades clashing violently with sparks erupting between them. Green lightning crackled around his body as he pushed One For All through every muscle, forcing his body to move faster than it ever had before. Every swing carried the full strength he could unleash, and yet, none of it was enough.

Clang!

The Steel Longsword in his hand was knocked aside as Igris deflected another strike, his movements looking almost effortless despite the overwhelming strength behind that parry. Before Izuku could recover, Igris twisted his wrist and brought his blade back around, forcing Izuku to duck his head down to avoid getting decapitated before raising his own weapon back just in time to block a straight kick from the Red Knight. The impact sent a shockwave through his arms, and Izuku could only grit his teeth as the force launched him backward, his boots scraping against the stone floor as he fought to regain his footing.

Before he could even stop himself, Igris was already above him, his blade raised high over his head as he prepared to bring it down.

With no other choice, Izuku flicked the fingers of his left hand, generating a powerful propulsion force that sent his body flying sideways just before Igris brought his longsword down, leaving the blade to crash down the spot where he had been just a split second ago and break the stone floor beneath it before chunks of debris exploded outward from the impact. Using the opening created by his dodge,

Izuku twisted his body in midair and landed on one foot before immediately exploding himself forward. Green lightning crackled around his legs as he launched himself back toward Igris, his Steel Longsword raised as he aimed for the knight's exposed side.

Clang!

"Grahhh!" The two blades collided once again, sparks scattering across the chamber as Izuku let out a battle cry and pushed forward with all his strength, forcing Igris back a single step as the Red Knight braced himself from the sudden explosiveness of power.

Before he could follow up with another strike, however, Igris shifted his grip and forced their blades apart with an upward swing, leaving Izuku wide open for a split of a second, which was more than enough for him to drive his knee into his stomach. Izuku instantly doubled over, his sword falling out of his hand as the force sent him flying backward before crashing into the wall at the far end of the throne room. The impact shattered the stone behind him, leaving a crater as cracks spread outward from where his body had struck.

HP: 4210/5120

As the notification of his HP flashed up next to him, Izuku fell forward from the wall, barely catching himself with one hand before dropping onto one knee, his vision blurring for a moment as he forced himself to stay conscious. Before Izuku could do anything, a sudden prickling sensation washed over his body. It was hard to describe, but it was as if his instincts were screaming at him that danger was coming in a totally different manner to the usual inner alarm, and he immediately threw himself out of the way just as Igris came crashing down, his boots slamming into the floor with enough force to blow apart an entire section of it. Rolling across the stone, Izuku quickly scrambled back onto his

feet, only for the Red Knight to already be in front of him, his free hand slamming into his abdomen and lifting him clean off the ground with the sheer force of the blow.

HP: 3460/5120

“Gah!” Izuku gasped as his body folded over once again before he was launched across the chamber. This time, however, he managed to recover, twisting his body in midair and planting both feet against the stone floor just before he could crash head first into it. His boots skidded several meters as he forced himself to a halt, only for his eyes to widen when he saw Igris stabbing his longsword into the floor before reaching up and removing his cloak.

“What are you…”

Izuku found himself asking, but the chivalrous Knight offered no answer, as he merely lowered his center of gravity and took on a hand to hand combat stance with both fists raising in front of his chest. It was only then that Izuku realized what Igris was doing, and without further ado, he also took off his Steel Longbow before removing his Knight Killers daggers as well to throw them all aside, leaving himself with only his Gauntlets as he assumed his own fighting stance.

“Very well!”

Did a monster have honor? Could they feel anything beyond the murderous intent to kill humans? Izuku found the answers to those questions in that moment, just before both he and Igris met in the center of the throne room, their fists colliding with a thunderous impact that blew apart the stone beneath their feet and sent debris flying in every direction before the two started trading blows at point blank range, neither willing to give the other an inch as they hit each other with everything they

got. Green lightning exploded violently around his body as Izuku forced his limit to Forty Percent of One for All, five percent more than his body could safely handle, but the adrenaline coursing through his veins allowed him to push through the pain and keep fighting, meeting Igris head on even as his HP kept on sinking from the recoils of both every earth shaking blows Igris was sending at him and the recoil of his own Quirk shaking his own body.

[Passive Activated] - Brace

Thanks to the Level 30 Passive, Brace, which decreased the damage he took while actively guarding himself, Izuku was able to withstand the blows coming from Igris, even if they still hurt like hell. His attacks were not only insanely strong, but they were also incredibly fast, with Izuku barely managing to block and dodge every time, leaving him with no time to even call out the name of his Smashes as he traded blows with the Red Knight.

HP: 1817/5120

“SECOND WIND!” Izuku cried out, sacrificing 200 MP to heal himself for ten percent of his missing HP, restoring 303 HP and bringing his current total back up to 2120 before his Painkiller Passive, which gave him a small percentage of HP Regen during combat, continued regenerating his Health Pool. It was only thanks to these abilities of his Fighter Class that Izuku had been able to keep fighting for this long, but even with them keeping him alive, he could see that he was fighting a losing battle. The longer this battle continued, the worse it would become for him, even if he could also see that his attacks were wearing Igris down with every solid hit he managed to land, forcing the Red Knight back a few steps at a time despite the relentless assault while leaving noticeable damage on his armor.

‘Come on... Izuku, think! How do I…’ Izuku thought desperately as he ducked his head to avoid a left hook from Igris. One option was to simply throw a full-powered, 100 percent One For All Smash at Igris and hope for the best, but there was no guarantee that he would even be able to land it with Igris moving this quickly. Another option was to try going for a weapon and use One For All: Infusion on it, but that would only encourage Igris to pick up his own sword as well, and the Red Knight had already proven to be nearly impossible for him to handle when armed..

Then, his eyes widened slightly in realization as he remembered that he had another last resort to turn to in a dire situation. Without a doubt it would be a risky endeavor, but it was quite clear that he had no other choice, aand if even that still failed, then Izuku had no idea what else he could possibly do.

And thus, for the next ten, or fifteen… seconds or so, though it was hard for him to tell really with the pain overwhelming his senses, Izuku allowed Igris to gain the upper hand, focusing entirely on defense as he kept his arms raised and his body guarded to lower his damage taken as much as he could. Taking advantage of the opening, Igris instantly rushed forward with a powerful straight punch that Izuku blocked with both arms just before another fist came crashing down from above. Even though he was able to block it as well, the force still drove him down onto one knee, and before he could recover, Igris grabbed him by his shirt and hurled him across the room, sending him into the wall once more.

Gritting his teeth in pain, Izuku instantly threw himself out as Igris attempted to slam into him, sending cracks racking across the entire section of the wall before he pulled himself out to follow after Izuku, throwing a rapid succession of punches that hammered against his forearms, shoulders,

and chest as Izuku desperately blocked each one. Anything that looked too dangerous to block, he would quickly dodge it. His gauntlets had begun to crack as well, but Izuku refused to back down as Igris continued to throw punches and kicks at him from every direction. His arms had started trembling from the constant impacts, but Izuku kept his guard up and endured the barrage, retaliating whenever he found an opening to make sure that the Breakthrough Passive would be kept at maximum stacks on Igris.

HP: 382/5120

Receiving a particularly devastating punch to the face, Izuku found himself being launched back while spinning through the air like a beyblade as blood splattered across the fractured stone floor from the wounds covering his body. He twisted himself around at the last moment, his boots scraped violently against the floor before he found himself slamming into the wall behind him, finally coming to a stop, one hand pressed against the ground while his breathing came out in ragged gasps.

The moment that he looked up, Igris was already upon him. The Red Knight had his fist cocked back, ready to deliver one final blow.

But as Izuku stared at the incoming attack, the world around him slowed to a crawl, the movement of Igris becoming almost painfully clear as he narrowed his eyes at the Red Knight.

This was it. This was what he had been waiting for.

Clenching his fists, Izuku forced himself upright before crying out “LAST STAND!”

[Skill Activated] - Last Stand

[All Combat Stats increased by 50% for 10 seconds.]

[00:10]

Instantly, green lightning erupted around his body with enough force to blow away the dust and debris surrounding his feet. The exhaustion weighing down his muscles vanished beneath an overwhelming surge of power, his senses sharpening as his body suddenly felt lighter and faster than it had ever been before.

And the moment Igris brought his fist down, Izuku shot his hand upward and caught it in his palm, the force behind the blow kicking up a shockwave around them that tore throughout the throne room. Before the Red Knight could react, Izuku surged upward and slammed his forehead into Igris's helmet, the impact producing a resounding smash that knocked the knight backward and stunned him, leaving him wide open for a brief second to drive an empowered left hook across his head.

[00:09]

The punch sent Igris stumbling sideways, but Izuku immediately followed, closing the distance before the Red Knight could recover and driving another fist into his chest. Despite the power behind that attack, Igris was able to keep his footing, throwing himself back around to throw a left hook at Izuku, who leaned to the side to cleanly dodge the attack before taking a step forward to retaliate with a powerful uppercut that lifted Igris off the ground for the first time, following with a kick that sent him flying cross the throne room. Igris rolled across the stone floor and quickly pushed himself back up, only for Izuku to descend on him with a roundhouse kick, knocking the Knight off balance before turning back around.

[00:04]

Green lightning surrounded his body as Izuku unleashed a relentless barrage of One for All punches and kicks at the Red Knight, each strike forcing Igris farther backward as the countdown continued to tick away, making every second count by coming at Igris with the sole purpose of attacking him with everything he had. One after another, his blows crashed into Igris armor with metal bending force, sending shockwaves across the throne room and causing the entire structure to rumble violently with each devastating strike. More than a handful of times the Red Knight tried to retaliate, but Izuku simply overpowered him, meeting his punches and kicks with attacks of his own that bent his limbs back. Even as his gauntlets finally broke under the strain, Izuku kept pushing forward, throwing punch after punch with his bare fists as the final seconds of Last Stand continued to disappear.

[00:01]

“ONE FOR ALL…”

With only a second remaining, Izuku pulled his right fist back as far as he could, green lightning gathering violently around his arm as Igris threw his own attack at him. Using his other hand, Izuku knocked the red fist sideways, before twisting his torso around and drove the most powerful punch he could muster at the Red Knight, the blow connecting squarely with Igris.

“SMASH!”

For a split second, everything seemed to stand still before a tremendous force exploded from the point of impact, engulfing the entire room in a flash of brilliant, multicolored light as Igris was launched across the entire throne room. His armored form crashed directly into the throne like a bullet, shattering it into pieces before slamming into the wall behind it, causing the entire structure to

give way under the impact and collapse around him in a deafening roar, burying Igris beneath a massive pile of rubble. Meanwhile, Izuku was left standing where he had delivered the final blow, his bleeding and broken arm still held forward as he struggled to catch his breath, with the final second of Last Stand finally ticking away, causing all of his combat stats to return to normal.

[You have defeated - Red Knight Igris]

[Level up!]

[Level up!]

[Level up!]

[Level up!]

[Level up!]

With the notifications eventually flashing before his eyes, Izuku finally allowed himself to relax, collapsing forward as he let out a breath he had no idea he had been holding. He landed face-first against the cracked stone floor and remained there for several seconds, blood and sweat trickling down his face and dripping onto the ground beneath him as his battered body finally caught up with the punishment it had endured.

Surprisingly enough, nothing hurt as much as he had thought it would, and soon, with enough HP recovered, Izuku was able to push himself back up, his broken arm hanging limply at his side as he looked across the room. When the smoke there finally cleared, he could somewhat make out the armored figure of Igris as the Red Knight lay motionless beneath the collapsed rubble, his battered armor barely visible through the broken pieces of the walls that had collapsed on top of him.

What a formidable opponent he had been! Izuku thought as he looked at the defeated Red Knight. If Igris had continued using his sword, there was no doubt in his mind that he would have lost.

Chill!

Before Izuku could take a single step toward the Red Knight, the same feeling that had alerted him to Igris's attacks suddenly washed over him once more, making Izuku straighten up and look around cautiously. There was a strange feeling in the air, as though something was about to happen, and the oppressive presence that had filled the throne room earlier had yet to completely fade away.

'Wait… the System hasn't announced the end of the Quest yet. Could it be that it's not over?'

Was the only question Izuku could ask himself before a handful of small, miniature portals like Gates suddenly emerged across the throne room, their dark surfaces rippling as dark lightning shot out and struck the stone surface around him. Izukui instinctively shifted into a defensive stance, his remaining good hand clenching into a fist as he hardened his gaze at the Gate nearest to him.

And then, to his shock, Izuku could only watch with wide eyes as numerous Knights started marching out of the Gate. Swordsmen, Spearmen… even the Tanks were amongst their number, their heavy armored forms surfacing one after another from the swirling mass of dark mana as they lined up and formed a formation before Izuku.

Before he could even process the sight, the other Gates began disgorging their own forces, with Archers taking up positions behind the melee fighters while Wizards emerged with their hands and staffs already raised, their glowing eyes under those dark hoods fixed directly on him as their fire

magic started manifesting. Izuku had no idea exactly how many there were, but there had to be more Knights here than he had defeated in the entire corridor during a single run.

[An additional Objective of your Class Change Quest has been revealed.]

[You will accumulate points the longer you survive. Accumulating more points will allow your Class to evolve to an 'Advanced Class'.]

[00:00:00]

"Are you serious?!" Izuku cried out just as the first group of Knights rushed at him,forcing him to take a long leap backward to avoid their attacks before dashing across the throne room, weaving between the projectiles raining down around him while taking out numerous Knights in his path. With his current level, Izuku had an even easier time dealing with these Knights than before, but with one broken arm and injuries he had suffered throughout the fight against Igris, this could become very dangerous very quickly.

Especially when considering that every Knight he took down was quickly replaced by another emerging from one of the Gates across the room. Judging by the details the System had shown him, Izuku had no doubt that this additional objective was meant to make this some kind of endless wave challenge.

Would he die for real if he failed here, or get transported back to the Respawn Room? It was hard to tell, especially because he only had one life left, but it would be best that he didn't find out anytime soon.

Would giving it his maximum effort be worth trying for, though? Definitely, especially when the System had promised him an ‘Advanced Class’. Izuku had no idea what it entailed, but that alone was enough to make him want to push himself as far as he could.

But how long would he have to fight?

“Wait!” Izuku widened his eyes as he twisted his body to avoid an attack from a Spearman, who thrust his spear toward Izuku's chest before he kicked the Knight away, sending him crashing into another. An endless wave challenge… Although Izuku wasn’t sure how much EXP these knights would be worth for him at his current level, this would be a great chance to level Ichi up.

[Skill Activated] — Summon Shade

The instance that the ability was cast, the Shade Ichi instantly man next to him, but he barely managed to greet Izuku before the longsword of a Knight came swinging toward his head, making him duck his head down to narrowly avoid the blade before turning around and sprinting away, following Izuku as he ran from the pursuing Knights.

“Ichi-san, catch!” Izuku shouted as he grabbed the Steel Longbow from the floor and tossed it toward Ichi, who managed to catch it just before Izuku turned and rushed back to eliminate the three Knights chasing the Shade. The moment they fell with him knocking their heads off with a single sweeping kick, Izuku grabbed the largest fallen suit of armor and raised it over himself and Ichi, using it as a makeshift shield against the barrage of arrows raining down from the Archers positioned above. “I’ll draw their attention. Use the bow and cover me as much as you can! Keep your distance and try to take out the magic users first!”

The moment the Shade gave him a thumbs up, Izuku spun around and threw the chest piece in his hand at the nearest Knight, blocking its view for a brief moment before he shot forward and kicked it across the chest, blasting it apart as he sent the crumbling suit of armor tumbling across the throne room in a powerful gust of wind.

“Nice shot, Ichi-san!” Izuku shouted as an arrow struck a Knight behind him square in the chest as he landed, looking at the far end of the room to see Ichi rushing to take cover behind a nearby pile of broken stone, his hand nocking an arrow into the bow before drawing the string back and firing toward another Knight before Izuku launched his fist into its abdomen. The impact sent the Knight flying into two others, and Izuku used the opening to charge deeper into the group while Ichi continued firing from behind the rubble, which provided him with a good cover from the Archers as they tried to shoot him with their arrows.

With so many enemies surrounding him, Izuku was able to benefit from a massive amount of HP regeneration thanks to the Army of One Passive, gradually healing his injuries until his broken arm finally mended, allowing him to fight at maximum power once again despite the growing exhaustion in his body, which only became more noticeable as time passed. Using the Knight Killers, which he had picked up from the floor, Izuku was able to make quick work of the armored Knights whenever they got too close, however, hacking and slashing through their armor before immediately moving on to the next target while Ichi continued providing support from the back, firing arrow after arrow into the battlefield and occasionally taking down an Archer or Wizard before it could attempt to shoot Izuku.

Every time the Shade was targeted, Izuku would immediately deal with whatever enemy was trying to attack him, making sure Ichi stayed alive long enough to absorb the experience points from every defeated Knight. Fortunately, the Knights seemed far more interested in attacking Izuku than his Shade, so he rarely had to worry about Ichi and could keep his attention focused on the endless wave of monsters pouring through the Gates.

As the battle continued, he could see Ichi gradually becoming more comfortable with the bow, his accuracy improving as he leveled up and started hitting headshots on stationary targets. He would fire whenever he had a clear shot, occasionally taking down a weakened Knight or interrupting a Wizard before its spell could be completed, while Izuku continued cutting through the melee fighters at the center of the room, littering the floor with broken pieces of armor.

[Level up!]

[01:20:30]

Briefly glancing at the timer above his vision, Izuku widened his eyes slightly when he realized that more than an hour had passed since the endless challenge began, having completely lost track of time amid the constant fighting. He was exhausted, but at the same time, Izuku had never felt better in his life as he turned himself into a whirlwind of destruction, carving through the enemies in his path with the Knight Killers leaving faint trails of light through the air with every swing. His speed, strength, and perception… had all increased significantly compared to when he had first entered the Dungeon, allowing Izuku to move through the battlefield with an ease that would have been impossible during his first attempt, cutting down one Knight after another before they could even surround him.

“Come on!” Izuku cried out as he threw the Knight Killers aside to strike down a Tank with his bare fist using One For All, instantly overwhelming its Shock Absorption capability and sending the towering Knight sprawling across the floor. “Come at me, all of you!”

[New Skill: Taunt has been learned.]

[Taunt]: Attract enemies’ attention, forcing them to attack you.

A wave of disruption rippled through the space as the notification for the new skill flashed before his eyes, causing every remaining Knight in the room, even those attempting to attack Ichi, to immediately turn their attention toward Izuku. The next instance, the entire army surged toward him and Izuku met them head on with his own fist, One For All surging through his body as he tore through the wave of armored knights. Whenever the pressure became too great, Izuku simply broke through the formation with a One For All Smash, scattering entire groups of Knights before charging straight into the next wave while Ichi continued backing him up from afar.

[02:09:15]

Eventually, the almost endless stream of enemies began to slow as the throne room became almost completely covered in broken armor. Piles of shattered helmets, cut and dented breastplates and broken weapons were scattered across the floor, forming a massive mound beneath the still-standing Izuku, who stood atop of the wreckage with his eyes glowing faintly while lightning continued to arc across his body.

[Quest Completed] - Class Change

[!] Congratulation

You have defeated all the enemies in the Trial of Combat.

[All System Functions have been restored]

You can now advance to a high rank class due to the Accumulated Points you have acquired.

“It’s over.” Izuku exhaled finally before his legs gave out beneath him, and he would have tumbled down the mountain of broken armor had Ichi not rushed over and caught him, offering his shoulder for Izuku to lean against. Looking over at the Shade, Izuku noticed that Ichi had now reached Level 12, a massive increase compared to the Level 1 he had been when first summoned. “Good work, Ichi-san. You did well.”

Ichi responded with an eye-smile, his glowing eyes narrowing into gentle curves as he gave Izuku a small nod, as if to tell him the same words while patting him on his back. The shade then carefully helped him down from the pile of broken armor, making sure the exhausted young man did not stumble as they made their way toward the floor, where Izuku soon received a new notification from the System.

[The Player will now get to pick their Class from two Options.]

“Oh wow, I get to choose?” Izuku asked in surprise before moving a hand up to rub his chin as he stared thoughtfully at the words before him with Ichi watching on at his side.“But that also means I will have to pick something over the others. I wonder what they are then…”

[!] Your first option is the [Paladin]

Signature Moves: Smite, Aura of Retribution…

Your Fighter Class will evolve into the [Paladin] Class. Your unwavering desire to protect others has given shape to your power. You shall walk the path of a warrior who stands against darkness, wielding overwhelming holy energy to smite down your evil in the name of those who cannot protect themselves.

Your One For All Smashes will become One for All Smites

“Oh wow, this seems like a perfect Class for me!” Izuku remarked in amazement.

The Paladin? The best part of this was the fact that his One for All Smashes would become One for All Smites, no doubt with all the new benefits that would come with it. Additionally, the class itself sounded like exactly the kind of warrior, or Hero, that he had always wanted to be. Someone who used their strength to protect others, stood against evil, and fought for those who could not fight for themselves.

All the games he had played had shown Paladins as noble warriors who stood as beacons of hope for those around them, even though their morals could be questionable at times with the way they dealt with evildoers, but Izuku knew he would not go down that path and stick to who he was.

“But what is the second option, I wonder?” Izuku mused. And to answer his question, the System showed him the next notification.

[!] Your second option is the [Revenant]

Signature Moves: Second Life, Undead Thralls...

You have walked beyond the boundary of life and death, yet returned each time to continue your struggle. Having defied death itself, you have gained a connection to the darkness that

linger beyond the realm of the living, allowing you to call upon those who have crossed that boundary with you.

Your Summon Shades will become Summon Revenant

“Huh, why is this even an option for me? Just because I died a couple… wait, that means I did die for real.” Izuku murmured with a pale face and a nervous chuckle upon realizing just how close to actually dying he had been. So the Quest didn’t just teleport him back to the Respawn Room, but actually brought him back from the death after he had actually been killed. That thought sent a shudder down his spine.

Nevertheless, the Revenant Class left Izuku with a strange feeling. It was almost the complete opposite of the Paladin Class, which would make him a warrior of the light, while the Revenant seemed to embody one of darkness. From his experience with playing classes with similar natures in video games, they often involved powers and abilities that were far more sinister than anything he would want to use as a Hero. Even the name alone sounded like something that belonged to a villain rather than someone aspiring to become the next Symbol of Peace.

However, his gaze soon drifted toward the Shade standing beside him. Ichi had fought alongside him throughout the entire Endless Challenge ordeal, gradually becoming stronger and more skilled with each level thanks to his own leveling system. If this was what he could do now, it was hard for Izuku to imagine just how strong he could become later. The Summon Shades skill would also allow him to summon six additional Shades once he started investing points into his INT, and it had become very clear that they were more than just ordinary summons, considering their intelligence and

self-awareness. The Revenant Class sounded like it could benefit Ichi and the other Shades greatly, and that was something Izuku simply couldn't ignore after everything he had seen.

Paladin seemed like a class that scaled with STR, while Revenant sounded like something that would favor INT. While he had neglected the second stat, Izuku had realized just how important it was for him to invest in it, since having a larger MP pool would certainly come in handy when he had so many useful Active Abilities to cast now.

“But I have to pick one.” Izuku remarked, rubbing his chin as his mind raced with the possibilities. Paladin was a straightforward, obvious choice, but the System had to offer him the Revenant Class for a reason, and part of him wanted to see what kind of abilities he would gain from it. Izuku frowned as he looked between the two options, his indecision only growing as he tried to weigh them against each other. The more he thought about it, the harder it became to choose.

“Ugh… Why can't I just pick both?” He finally muttered in frustration as he exchanged a look with Ichi, who raised his hands and gave him a small shrug of his shoulders.

But the moment the words left his mouth, however, a new System notification appeared before him.

[Would you like to take both Classes?]

“Wait, what!?” Izuku asked in shock “I can do that!?”

The possibility that he could actually take both Classes had never even crossed his mind, but then again, the System had never explicitly stated that he had to choose between the two Options. It had told him he could pick his Class from them, but that didn't necessarily mean he had to give one up to take the other.

But how would having two classes work? Would it be like some of those RPGs where one class would be his main class while the other would become his subclass? Perhaps there would be some kind of system for combining the abilities of both, allowing him to make use of everything each Class had to offer without one overshadowing the other.

“Only one way to find out…” Izuku said, nodding to himself before raising his hand forward “I’ll take both options!”

[Choice confirmed]

The moment the words left his mouth, two orbs the size of tennis balls materialized before him before floating upwards, one radiating a brilliant golden white light while the other was shrouded in dark flames that flickered and twisted around its surface. Even without the labels directly beneath them, it was quite obvious that the light orb represented the Paladin Class, while the dark one clearly embodied the Revenant Class.

[The Player has accumulated sufficient Class Points.]

[The requirements for Class Evolution have been fulfilled.]

[The selected Classes will now undergo evolution.]

Izuku could only watch on in amazement as the aura surrounding the two orbs suddenly started to intensify, making him and Ichi take a step back in caution, with the golden light coming from the white orb growing increasingly bright, almost blinding them. After a moment, when everything had died down, Izuku finally lowered his hand and stared at the two orbs, which now appeared slightly

different than before. The light orb now had a flame-like aura surrounding it, while the dark orb seemed to have some kind of twisting shadow swirling and shifting within its very core.

[Your classes have evolved]

[Ascendant] **[Shadow Monarch]**

“Strange, but okay… these must be the advanced classes the System mentioned.” Izuku mused, feeling his excitement growing as he stared at the two new evolved classes in front of him.

Before he could wonder what would happen next, another notification appeared before his eyes while the orbs themselves suddenly started moving in circles in front of him, drawing closer and closer together as they gradually picked up speed.

[You have chosen to walk both the path of Light and Darkness, wielding the power of the living and the dead as one.]

[Neither light nor shadow shall define you, for you have surpassed the limits of both and forged them into a single power.]

[Let your strength become the foundation upon which you will rise, and let nothing stand above you as you strive ever higher, for those that you have sworn to protect, and with those who have fallen in battle given new life and new purposes.]

[Aim for the top. Surpass all limits.]

Become the [Zenith Striker]

At that, the two collided. Golden white light and tendrils of shadow erupted outward, spreading across the throne room for a brief moment before being drawn back into the point where the orbs

had merged. The brilliant light gradually spread across the newly formed orb, while the darkness remained concentrated within its core, twisting and swirling beneath the radiant surface.

The next instant, the newly formed singularity shot toward Izuku before he could even react, flying straight into his chest and vanishing into his body. The moment it was fully absorbed into him, a tremendous aura of golden white light erupted around Izuku, accompanied by several flickering waves of shadow that swirled around his body, their dark presence clearly visible from within the brilliant radiance. Izuku could only widen his eyes in surprise as an overwhelming sensation of power coursed through him, making him feel stronger than he had ever felt before. The exhaustion that had weighed heavily upon him seemed to melt away, replaced by a renewed sense of vitality unlike anything he had ever experienced.

Next to him, a similar aura flared around Ichi, the white flame hat made up of his body now taking on a brilliant golden hue as countless tiny particles of light drifted around him, giving the Shade an almost regal appearance.

“Woah, you look amazing, Ichi-san!” Izuku commented, making Ichi turn to him and give two massive thumbs up in response, looking just as excited as he was as he was evolved by the new combined class of Ascendant and Shadow Monarch.

As the auras surrounding the two of them eventually faded, Izuku lowered his gaze toward his hands, opening and closing his fingers as he stared at them in amazement. On the surface, nothing had changed for him, but deep down, he could feel it. Something within him now felt different.

Name: Midoriya Izuku

Level: 46

Class: Zenith Striker

“Zenith Striker.” He read, his eyes widening in excitement before more information was displayed.

“Woah…”

[!] Your [Smash] has become [Smite].

Smite: Imbue your most powerful attacks with [Holy] energy, dealing Light Damage equal to 20% of your INT. Enemies struck by Smite are [Marked] and can no longer reenter [Stealth] or become [Invisible], increasing the damage they take from subsequent attacks for [10 seconds].

“A-awesome…” was the only thing Izuku could say as he looked at his new Passive, noting the fact that the additional light damage scaled off of his INT instead of his STR, which made sense, all things considered. No doubt he would have a new skill tree as well. “Wait, does that mean I’ll have to yell Smite from now on?”

Hhsst! Hhsst!

“What is that?”

Before Izuku could find the answer for his own question, the hairs on the back of his neck stood up as a low whispering sound filled his ears. It was hard for him to explain, but the sound was like an itch at the back of his mind, something that only he could hear but Izuku could not determine where. It’s clearly not Ichi who was making that noise, so…

His gaze slowly shifted toward the broken suits of armor scattered across the floor. At first, he couldn't see anything unusual about them, but as he focused on the strange whispers, he began to notice that they seemed to be coming from the scattered pieces of metal. The voices also grew slightly clearer when he fully turned his attention to them, though he still couldn't make out any actual words.

They didn't sound distressed or pained either. If anything, there was an eagerness behind them.

“Uh… what?” was the only comprehensive thing Izuku could say as he smiled nervously while looking around. There were armors that remained mostly motionless, but there were those that had trails of light and darkness coming from them, curling around the broken pieces like some kind of smoke. It was while looking at these specific fallen enemies that the whispers became the strongest.
“Okay, this is getting a little creepy now…”

Was this because of the ‘Revenant’, which had evolved into the ‘Shadow Monarch’, aspect of his class? Izuku wished the System had shown him the full capabilities of each class first before combining them, but that seemed to be the case as far as he could tell.

[!] Notice

Target is eligible for [Radiant Ascension]

“Radiant Ascension?”Izuku repeated as he read the notification boxes that popped up beside the suits of armor with the trails coming off of them, all bearing the same message that they were eligible for Radiant Ascension.

[!] Name: Radiant Ascension LV1

Cost: None

Cooldown: None

Description: Ascends the remnants of fallen enemies, transforming them into radiant warriors bound to your command. The strength and form of each ascended knight are determined by the power they possessed in life.

[Designate a command to Radiant Ascension:_____]

“I see. So the Shadow Monarch is kinda like a Necromancer, then,” Izuku pondered as he read the description of the Radiant Ascension Skill, no doubt the result of combining some dark Necromancer magic with the holy power of the Ascendant Class, which had evolved from the Paladin. While Izuku had learned to make use of everything the System gave him, he would have hated it if he were stuck with an ability that summoned undead zombies or something like that, as they were not exactly the most ‘smile bringing’ entities.

“Okay, so I need a command…”

Izuku paused for a moment, lowering his gaze as he considered what command he wanted to use. It needed to be something simple, something that would feel natural to say while also showcasing who he was and what kind of Hero he strived to be. In many ways, this reminded Izuku of choosing his Hero Name earlier that day, and that also gave him an idea for the perfect command.

“Arise.”

[Command Accepted]

[Radiant Ascension has been activated.]

At once, the broken suits of armor scattered across the throne room began to tremble. The faint trails of energy surrounding them suddenly flared, bathing the fallen knights in a brilliant golden-white light while tendrils of darkness seeped through the gaps between the broken pieces, seemingly solidifying to form dark, armored figures that emerged slowly from within the ruined suits of armor. At first, they were nothing more than vague silhouettes, but gradually, they took on the appearance of knights, the same knights Izuku had fought, with the prominent parts of their armor appearing pitch black while the remaining sections emitted a brilliant golden light.

“Woah…” Izuku murmured in amazement as he looked at the army of dark and golden knights standing before him. There seemed to be about thirty of them in total, with twenty being a mixture of Swordsmen, Spearmen, and Tanks. Additionally, there were five archers and five mages each, rounding out the newly formed force that presented themselves before him with their heads bowing as if showing him their respect. “This is kinda cool.”

[!] Number of Extracted Radiant Knights: 30/30

[!] Skill Unlocked - Radiant Preservation.

Type: Class Specific Skill

Cost: None

Description: Radiant Knights can now be stored within the light that follows the Caster and summoned at will. Radiant Knights cannot be killed in battle, but the master must expend MP to heal them, or they will remain incapacitated until sufficient MP has been restored to return them to combat.

“Wait, does that mean you guys stay around as long as I want?” Izuku asked in surprise, and the Radiant Knights simultaneously lowered their heads toward him in silent acknowledgment, showing that much like Ichi, they were much, much more than just regular summons.

Even more reason for him to start investing points into his INT then. It seemed building himself was way arder than he thought it would be.

“Right, so… what is it, Ichi-san?” Before Izuku could tell the Radiant Knights their first order, he felt a tap on his shoulder and looked over to Ichi to see the Shadow pointing toward the far back of the room, where a certain pile of rubble still buried the Red Knight beneath it.

It was only after looking in that direction that Izuku noticed an intense wave of light and dark aura flaring around the rubble. Unlike the faint trails that had surrounded the other fallen knights, this aura was far denser and felt extremely more powerful, pulsing steadily as the golden white light intertwined with the darkness beneath the debris. Even from across the room, Izuku could clearly sense the overwhelming presence hidden beneath it, as if Igris himself was waiting for him to come.

“Wait, can I…” Izuku murmured, the thought of having such a powerful ally making his eyes light up with excitement.

If Igris could be brought back as one of his Radiant Knights, then Izuku would have an incredibly powerful warrior fighting alongside him.

“Hey, lend me a hand here, you guys!” Quickly putting some of his free points into his INT, which increased the number of Radiant Knights he could raise by 10, Izuku called to Ichi and his Radiant Knights as he rushed over to the pile of rubble to start clearing out the debris. Piece by piece, the

rubble was removed until they finally uncovered the fallen Red Knight beneath it. Igris lay motionless beneath the debris, his battered armor covered in cracks and damage from his earlier battle against Izuku, who wasted no time to get him up and rest the fallen Red Knight against the broken throne he once guarded.

The moment that he finished doing so, a familiar notification appeared beside the Red Knight.

[!] Target is eligible for Radiant Ascension.

“Arise!”

The moment that the command left his mouth, an explosion of golden and dark aura erupted from Igris, causing Izuku to take several steps back while Ichi and the Radiant Knights retreated behind him. The burst of energy quickly spread across the surrounding area, sending the rubble that still remained around skittering across the floor while forcing Izuku to shield his eyes from the sudden brightness, watching in amazement as the dark aura began to swirl around Igris while brilliant golden light gathered over his armor. The two energies intertwined around the Red Knight, with the darkness forming the foundation of his new armor, turning it pitch black while radiant light spread across it, illuminating his entire new figure as he rose to his feet before Izuku.

[The Radiant Knight has leveled up.]

[This Radiant Knight will start at level 5]

[You may assign a name to Radiant Knight with the Knight rank or higher]

“I see… Igris it is.” Izuku announced.

[!] Name Assigned

Igris LV. 5

Rank: Knight

For a brief moment after that, there was only a complete silence as Izuku looked at the Knight Commander standing before him, who returned his gaze with a firm stare of his own.

Then, slowly, Igris reached out his right hand, causing his longsword to remove itself from the floor with a strong pull and fly into his grasp, making Izuku instantly take a step back in caution.

But to his surprise, Igris spun his sword around the next instance and drove its tip into the floor in front of him before lowering himself onto one knee, bowing his head toward Izuku as both his hands remained locked around the handle of his weapon. Blinking in surprise, Izuku barely had time to process what he was seeing before the Radiant Knights behind him started moving as well. One after another, they followed the example set by Igris, lowering themselves onto one knee and bowing their heads toward Izuku until the entire force had bowed to him.

“Well…”

Izuku let out a nervous chuckle as he exchanged a glance with Ichi, who gave him a small nod of the head before following his gaze as he looked around him. Never before would he have imagined someone bowing to him, let alone a small army of knights he had fought and defeated only moments ago. The sight was still difficult to process, especially with Igris kneeling at the forefront of the group, his longsword planted firmly against the ground as he silently awaited his command.

End of Chapter 15