Saiki stares. Time seems to slow down around him. He has experienced pain of all kinds any normal person could imagine. Burns. Breaks. Abrasions. Internal haemorrhaging. External haemorrhaging. Concussions. Contusions. Frostbite. Asphyxiation. Starvation. Dehydration. Yet none of it has prepared him for the inexplicable sensation all throughout his body. Like something inside him, part of his very being has been shredded. Is that it? Is that the loss of his quirk? Is that why Ragdoll hasn't woken up, because the trauma of the experience is so severe? He doesn't know.

But it also doesn't matter. What matters is the sight he never could have imagined in this situation. He knew how helpless he was while he waited for whatever fate would befall him. He had hoped for rescue but knew in his gut it was a futile hope. How could the heroes come for him when they had as little idea where he was as he did? And yet...

And yet there she is. Katsumi Bakugo. The girl he pressured into sex, played games of degradation and humiliation with. The girl he was sure held mostly feelings of antipathy, frustration and reluctant lust for him. But... Here she is. Here to save him. Throwing herself in headfirst against a more dangerous villain than Saiki could have imagined before today. Teeth grit in determination, eyes creased in desperation.

The endless moment of clarity ends. The pain doesn't matter. Whether he lost his quirk doesn't matter. All that matters is the girl who might have just thrown away her life to save his, doing what little he can to ensure such an outcome doesn't come to pass. "Don't let him touch you!"

"No shit!" she roars back at him, her hands together, "STUN GRENADE!"

The villain also can't see. Saiki's regret that he didn't have time to warn her about that too is short lived though. For some reason All for One grunts in pain and cringes away despite his lack of eyes. What? A quirk. It must be. He doesn't just have Ragdoll's Search. That wouldn't be affected. He must have another that lets him see, that can still be blinded.

Saiki meanwhile is only left with spotty vision from the flash. He sees Katsumi blast her way over him. "How does this thing work?!" she demands of him, trying to blast him out of his restraints.

"I don't know! It's rated for the USJ nomu's strength!"

"Haha, well," the harsh and garbled voice of the villain interrupts the barked words with a laugh. "It seems the show is about to begin." The villain doesn't look at the two teenagers. Instead he ignores them completely, his head tilting up to look at what remains of the ceiling.

Just before it's entirely ripped away by a spandex-clad blonde. "Jeanist!"

"Moving!" the number three hero, his immaculate jeans cinched around his face answers as he leaps into the room. Threads spread out, launch at and ensnare the villain in a denim trap that locks his arms and legs down tightly.

How the shit does this thing even work, dammit?!" Katsumi demanded, slapping at a control panel's buttons.

"As always Queen Explosion Murder, your temper is as frayed as a pair of stonewashed jeans," Best Jeanist reprimands her, not taking his eyes off the villain for an instant.

"You do it like this," a deep yet vibrant voice answers as a foot slammed full-force into the panel, smashing and shorting it out. No hesitation, the rabbit hero Mirko catches Saiki as he falls from the restraints. "Tough day, huh kid?" she asks with a smirk. "We've got you."

"Ragdoll!" Another hero, a familiar one to Saiki drops into the building. However, he doesn't pay the ensnared villain or Saiki any attention. Tiger's eyes are only for the teammate he had thought he lost. Her restraints are similarly destroyed in short order and the small woman carried in the feline hero's arms. "Oh Ragdoll, what has he done to you?!"

"It's over, 'All for One'," Best Jeanist informs the villain, "The assault on your little League of Villains was as flawless as the stitching of my denim. I suggest you come quietly."

"Of course you do," the villain responds casually. "You are heroes after all. There is nothing you love more than a clean victory. And now after so many public failures, there is nothing you *need* more. However..."

"Saiki!" Izuku shouts from the edge of the building. Someone else who came for him to rescue him.

But just like for Katsumi, all he can feel for her is fear. "Don't!" Something's wrong, he can sense it. "It's not over!"

She doesn't care to see it. She zips down next to the rabbit hero and her childhood friend. "Kacchan, let's get him out of here!"

"Go," Mirko orders, staring warily at the villain in their midst. The girls don't need to be told twice, carrying him between them toward the wall as they begin their ascent.

"Here!" the giant hero Mt Lady scoops them into a hand.

"I have unfortunate news for you all," All for One continues to speak, his arms expanding. At the same time, water pours from the mouths of the many nomu. "You, all of you, are mere distractions from the main event."

Jeanist's eyes widen. The pressure too much for his threads to contain. Whatever All for One plans to do, it will end badly for all of them. With little better option, he launches the villain upward, clear of the building, still contained by his threads for as little as that means.

But, while he clears the building, he doesn't clear Mt Lady. The opportunity for the villain is too good to pass up. A single powerful blast slams into her head. With just that one strike, the giantess is unconscious, the teenagers she was holding unintentionally tossed away. It's all Katsumi can do to control the fall for the three of them as they descend a hundred feet.

The best she can do is slow them and make sure they don't land inside the building again, though the difference is minimal with the walls collapsing under Mt Lady's weight.

And then it's revealed, the distance is no measure of safety as more hovering sprays of water appear around them. Nine in total. And the bodies that form from them are more than a small problem.

Thankfully one of the most dangerous of them is unconscious. But Muscular being out for the count is little more than a silver lining for the malevolent cloud that is the sudden appearance of the League of Villains.

"Master!" Shigaraki calls out rapturously to the masked man floating comfortably above the building.

"Tomura," All for One answers with uncharacteristic care. "You seem to be in dire straits, my boy."

"All Might! He.. He came for us at the bar! But–"

"NOW, I AM HERE!" A shockwave, a blast of force washes over all present, pushing them downward as the primary coloured streak of the Symbol of Peace soars overhead. His fist cocked back. **"ALLLLLL FOR ONE! DETROIT SMASH!"** The rage, the hatred in his voice, it's something none present have ever heard from the world's greatest hero. He channels all of that hatred into that single downward punch.

But, when the onlooking heroes and villains are able to look at the aftermath they see the villain barely fazed, brought to the ground but none the worse for wear. His arms bulging and bulked up with ugly muscle and metal. "And One for All," the villain mocks in response, a smile audible in his voice.

"From below, a grinning Mirko leaps up, her heel rotating around her as she flips forward. "Luna Arc!" The villain is distracted. He's open!

Is what she believes. "Time for the irritants to exit the stage." There's no sign, no indication of the attack that's coming. One instant the rabbit hero is poised to slam her foot through All for One's breathing mask. The next she's folded in half and slamming into the asphalt.

"Miss Mirko!" As fate would have it, or perhaps by design, the rabbit lands a stone's throw away from the two students left behind. "Hold on, I can help!" Momo promises as she runs over.

"Stop!" Mirko orders with a shaking arm raised. "You two need to get out of here. Now!"

"But Saiki, the League, they–!" Momo tries to protest.

The rabbit woman glares at the villain's back, the devastation he has already left behind. The most galling part is how little she can do about that. One of the reasons being the two girls in

front of her. “We’ll keep them safe. We’ll get them out. But we can’t fight our hardest knowing you kids are here. Get gone.”

“But–!”

“Do it or I'll put you back in the hospital myself!”

Out in front of the building, Saiki, Izuku and Katsumi stand defensively. They cover each other’s blind spots, arranged in a triangle to keep an eye on all opponents. Katsumi’s hands are shaking. The blast into the building was a heavy one and without her gauntlets to cover the toll it took, she is at far less than a hundred percent. Saiki is in bad shape for obvious reasons. Only Izuku is relatively fresh. However, being surrounded by nine of the most dangerous villains known to them is an unquestionably dangerous situation.

And now, it very much is nine. “GAH! All Might, that cold-cocking son of a–! Shit, where am I?” Muscular asks as he looks around, sees all of his comrades. And then, “Hey, it’s the little hero and his damsel in distress! Looks like I get to make up for missed opportunities!” He blinks his one eye, looks left and right. Searches in his pockets. “Hey, anyone got a spare eye I can borrow?”

A high school girl none of them have met stares at Saiki, a delighted grin on her face as she twirls a knife in one hand. “Hi Saiki! I know we’ve never met but I’m Himiko Toga! You can call me Himiko! Would it be okay if I took some of your blood?! I really wanna try it!”

Saiki has no idea how to answer that even if he wants to, which he doesn’t. He’s more busy gathering himself. The pain and wrongness inside him has been fading quickly. Quickly enough he feels hope for something more than survival. But survival is still the first priority.

Suddenly the encirclement is interrupted. Not by rescue but by collateral damage. All Might’s body kicks up dust as it slams into and ruptures the concrete driveway from the force of the impact. He rolls, flips back to his feet and skids back, plowing through Muscular on the way through. He looks to the side, sees the three teenagers and grimaces. **“Young students, I’ll get you out of here!”**

“Maybe not,” Dabi interrupts, a wave of flame intercepting and blocking All Might’s path.

“Sorry, sugar, your dance card’s full,” Magne taunts as she brings down her giant magnet. Something the great hero takes effort to dodge, resisting the pull of her quirk attempting to force the two objects to collide.

“Luna Fall!” Mirko calls once again, coming out of nowhere to drop her leg on the League’s leader.

The villain with the power of decay isn’t fast enough to evade the attack, or strong enough to catch or block it. “Tomura Shigaraki!” And so Kurogiri intervenes, forming a warp gate between her and Shigaraki in the instant before contact.

The other gate? Directly over the students. Izuku hears it, familiar with the odd sound the gates make from previous experience. In a flash, she launches up, catches the leg and uses it to swing the pro, sending her in a collision course toward the ground. Right at the feet of Dabi. “Nice looking out, kid!” she praises with a grin.

“You sure about that?” The villain’s hand wreathed in blue flames hovers above her head.

She gives no care as the flames wash over her. “BET YOUR ASS I AM!” she yells back with a rising knee that forcibly slams his smart mouth shut. And breaks some teeth in the process.

“Izuku Midoriya!” Shigaraki speaks in a whining glee. The girl looks to see he has followed her up above the other two students, his arm outstretched. “I warned you what would happen the next time we meet!”

“Thread of HOPE!” Once again, a villain is completely restrained by a multitude of constricting threads. “A warning as ill-considered as extreme cut-out jeans!”

With room to move and with Dabi temporarily incapacitated, All Might easily dispatches the magnet villain with a Missouri Smash, a chop to the back of her neck. **“Mirko, Best Jeanist, I thank you! Get the students to safety! I shall deal with this!”**

“We’re not going down like this!” Dabi insists from the ground, spreading a wave of fire around him, forcing Mirko back and away. Forcing the students in the direction of Shigaraki.

“Correct. You aren’t. Forced Quirk Activation!” No one had ignored the most powerful villain among them. Yet none of them can react to a power they have no idea he possesses. Tendrils slither out of All for One, weave around Best Jeanist’s attempts to block them to strike into Magne and Kurogiri. “Tomura,” he speaks with the kindness of a doting father. “I didn’t bring you here to fight on my behalf. All I wished for was to give you the opportunity to escape.”

“What?!” Shigaraki looks at the warp gate that forms behind Toga. Feels the pull as the rest of the League are dragged toward her, and it. “Master, no! Let me help you!”

“There is nothing a father wants more than to see his child outlive him, to see that child thrive. Live, Tomura. I know you can do incredible things.”

“Master! Father no! Don’t do this!” He fights alongside Best Jeanist, gives his all to avoid the magnetic pull dragging him toward the portal. “Don’t leave me alone like this!”

“Tomura, I believe in you.”

“I won’t let you–!” All Might tries to intercede but is pushed back by another wave of force, stalling him just long enough.

Best Jeanist can’t overcome the strength of the pull. Is forced to let go, else he abandon everyone here in facing All for One to fight the entire League alone. The threads fray, then

tear, and then Shigaraki is pulled away from him to disappear through the warp gate. The last of the League to do so.

The gate shuts. The League are gone.

The only villain left is All for One.

“Best Jeanist,” All Might, speaks, staring at the masked villain. **“Mirko. The two of you get the students out of here. Then evacuate the area.”**

Jeanist doesn’t waste a moment. He drags Saiki and Katsumi away, while Mirko tries to force Izuku to go along with them.

With difficulty. “All Might!” she calls out, doesn’t know what she even wants to say. “He’s–!”

“I know, young Midoriya,” he assures her. **“I know.”** He knows better than anyone what this likely means for him. But it’s his duty to end this, one way or another. His time is almost up. The symbol of peace will soon be no more and the world will need a new one. But for now, in this moment, he needs to do everything he can to put away the monsters of the past. To put an end to the evil he allowed to survive all those years ago. Midoriya deserves to seek her own future, free of the burdens of his failures.

“All Might! ALL MIGHT!” she cries. Mirko gives up on being nice and hoists the girl onto her shoulder before leaping away, even as the green-haired girl tears up as she screams for her idol.

All Might smiles. He thought he told her to cool it with the waterworks.

The smile falls from his face as he once again settles all of his attention on his nemesis. The man who stole the life of his mentor, a woman who was like a mother to him. The man who even then hovered a few feet in the air. **“Is that hers?”** he asks. **“Is that her quirk you’re using to stay up there?”**

“Hm?” All for One hums in question. “Hers? Ah, you refer to Nana Shimura, your predecessor, yes? Would it surprise you to know I have no idea myself? After all, her quirk was so ordinary. I certainly took it before I discarded her lifeless body but only as a final insult for an irritating woman. I gathered several like it both before and after hers. Many of them capable of much more.”

“Monster! Even now you insult her memory!”

“Ahahahahaha!” His laugh is a loud and boisterous thing. “Insult her memory. It’s funny you might say that, All Might. After all, we are both all about leaving legacies at this stage in our lives, aren’t we? And mine just went through that warp gate.”

“Would you like to know, All Might? Who Tomura Shigaraki truly is?”

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“Saiki!” Momo and Kyoka shout as they see him walk toward them alongside Izuku and Katsumi, still in his ruined gym uniform

Momo is openly crying as she rushes forward and wraps him in a hug. “I was so worried!” she sobs into his shoulder. She holds him like that for a good few seconds, only letting go to accede to the need for giving the same treatment to Izuku. “About all of you!” And then to Katsumi.

“Get off me.”

“I’m sorry, I can’t!” she protests, squeezing her tighter. “Just... Thank you! Thank you so much!”

The blonde looks away awkwardly, makes no move to return the hug. Merely mutters, “Yeah, well... You’re... Whatever. Welcome, I guess. I didn’t do it for you.”

The emotional girl is finally able to release the more standoffish one, her sentiments delivered adequately. She takes her boyfriend’s hand, no intention of releasing it any time soon.

Kyoka, much more subdued, approaches, rubbing her arm. Shooting awkward and uncertain looks at the green-haired girl at Saiki’s side. “You’re... You’re good, right?” she asks Saiki. “I could only hear, but...”

He has no idea whether he is actually okay. This whole thing, he doesn’t know how to even begin processing it. But for the moment, the person he is forces him to answer, “Yeah, I’m good.”

Kyoka nods slightly, taking him at his word. She smiles a fragile little smile, taking his other hand.

The group of five walk further into downtown Yokohama, inevitably gravitating to the crowd that has gathered in front of a screen showing the battle in progress. It seems the news media have arrived on the scene of Kamino Ward. Showing the entire world the battle between All for One and All Might.

And together, they watch the end of the Symbol of Peace.