**MHA 35**

The crowd was quiet for a moment, not believing what had happened, Present Mic announcing, “*What an upset!* One of the frontrunners of the festival, taken out in seconds by someone who’d barely managed to squeak by each time! I’m glad I’m not allowed to bet on this, folks, because I woulda just lost a *lot* of money! Let’s give it up for General Studies!”

The coliseum, slowly at first started cheering, as Shinso, looking surprised, smiled, honestly, and looked around as the crowd roared in approval. Miss Midnight waved him back to his entrance, and he nodded to her, slowly walking out as Cementoss fixed the few cracks Bakugo had left behind.

“Quirk matchups are like that,” Aizawa commented dryly. “Not knowing what you’re going into, you have to be careful. Bakugo got a second chance, to try and reassess, and he wasted it. As a Pro, sometimes you don’t even get that. Hopefully, he’ll learn from this.”

Present Mic laughed, more than a little derisively, “Well he’ll be learning it a different day because he’s *out* of *this* competition! We’ll wait a minute for the next contestants, Tenya Ida and Momo Yaoyorozu to get to the field, and then we’ll *keep this party rolling!”*

The girl in question stood, a little startled. “Ah, yes, I should go.”

“You’ll do *fine,*” Mina reassured her, Ida having already left.

“He’s faster than I am in straight lines, but not in combat,” I added. “You have practice fighting supernaturally fast opponents from our practice. *You can do this.*”

Momo smiled at us both, nodding, expression firming. “I’ll be right back,” she promised, striding up the stairs and through the doorway at the rear of our class’ seating box.

“Tenya might surprise you,” Midoriya argued, once she was out of earshot, and I had to wonder if that was on purpose.

I turned to look at the boy, and asked, “Have you sparred with him?” Midoriya shook his head. “Seen him fight at all? All he did was run around during the team exercise.” The boy started to respond, ready to disagree, and I quickly clarified, “Don’t get me wrong, it’s what you needed to win, but my point still stands.”

Izuku sighed, and shook his head again. “Ida still might pull this off,” he reiterated, though it was obvious he didn’t really believe it. “I can think of a way he could win.”

*Why am I not surprised?* “But will he?” I questioned. “You’ve got a head for tactics, Midoriya, but Ida seems. . .”

“Inflexible,” Asui offered, when I paused, trying to find a nicer word. She shrugged when Izuku shot her a questioning look, “He is.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBYiPb6Ds-4>

The boy’s reply died as [Bakugo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBYiPb6Ds-4), eyes blank, stiffly walked through the door, mechanically sitting down where he’d sat before, away from the rest of us. There was an awkward moment where everyone just sort of looked at each other.

“Um, what should we do?” Kirishima asked, as out of his comfort zone as the rest of us.

Jiro shot an unimpressed look the explosion-teen’s way. “We *could* just leave him there.”

“No,” Midoriya said, standing, but then hesitating, not walking over to the boy. “No, that’s not right.” However, despite what he said, he didn’t move. Given that the now mind-controlled boy had *tormented* his green-haired classmate, the fact that Izuku was still trying to help him was admirable, just as much as his reticence to set off the human eruption that was Bakugo was understandable.

Standing myself, I nodded to Midoriya. “I’ll do it,” I sighed, much to his relief, and walked over. Looking down at the seated teen, who was staring forward with sightless eyes, I kicked him in the foot, hard enough to get his attention, and break the Quirk’s grip on him.

“Wha’?” Bakugo blinked, looking around. “I, the fuck just happened?” he asked, voice gruff, but quiet, unsure.

“You fought a Mind Controller and lost,” I summarized. “That’s what we were trying to warn you about when you left.”

“Wh-*what?”* he replied, anger igniting. “He, you sayin’ he, *I’ll fuckin’ kill him!”* the teen yelled surging to his feet, only for me, pulling a little on OfA, to slam a hand down on the boy’s shoulder and *shove him back down.*

“No, *you won’t,*” I countered.

The human explosion glared up at me, murder in his eyes, but I didn’t budge. “Let go of me, Sparkplug,” he sneered.

I didn’t. “Or what? You’ll attack me? Like you *just* said you were going to attack the person who defeated you in a *fair fight?* You might’ve gotten away with that shit in your old school, ‘*Splodey*, but here that’s a good way to get your ass *expelled*,” I told him coldly, and he tried to hit my arm to knock it off, only for his eyes to widen a fraction when he barely budged it. “You *lost*,” I reiterated. “It *happens*. You said you didn’t need anyone’s help? Tell me how that went.”

“*Let. Go. Of. Me.*” Bakugo growled.

I waited a moment, staring at him challengingly, while he just glared back, before I nodded. “Fine,” I said, pulling my hand back. “If we don’t see you next week because you’ve been kicked out, I’ll have at least tried.” Turning my back on him, I walked back to my seat, but, listening, the only sound I heard was him slamming the arm-rest of his chair with a fist.

“Kaachan,” Midoriya started to say, only to be cut off by the boy’s, “I don’t want to fuckin’ hear it, ya damn Nerd! Especially from you.”

“I was gonna say you were bein’ too harsh,” Mina whispered to me as I sat, “But nevermind.”

Thankfully, Present Mic’s voice cut off any further drama. “Alright everyone, who’s ready for the last fight of the first bracket? I know *I* am! In one corner, we’ve got the next member in a long line of heroes, *Tenya Ida*! And in the other, from a family of industrialists, a recommendation student, *Momo Yaoyorozu!* Will cultivated experience win the day, or economic power? Let’s find out!”

I frowned, “That makes it sound like Momo’s bought her way in.” Mina, frowning as well, nodded in agreement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4h3DHJtjgU>

“Ready?” Miss Midnight asked, both contestants responding in the affirmative. “[*Begin*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4h3DHJtjgU)*!*”

Without missing a beat, Tenya started to charge, but wasn’t using his Quirk at all. *First Mistake* I thought, as Momo waved her hands outwards, blue containment foam liquid surging out in twin streams as she spun about.

“She has to know she can’t hit him from that far,” I commented, but it was clear that wasn’t her goal, even as Mina, smiling, just said, “*Watch.*”

The streams hit the ground, sticking to the concrete and expanding outwards in half foot-high streaks all around her. Tenya, frowning, shifted his steps in a stuttering pattern, and I realized he was altering his pace so he could step *between* the obstacles, barely slowing as he did so.

The fact that he could do that on the fly was impressive, but I started to see the outlines of Yaoyorozu’s strategy. He might be able to move full speed, but he’d *also* have to move along one of a small handful of routes pattern to get to her quickly. The boy closed, teeth gritting, stepping between obstacles with ease, and leapt up, engines firing, in a flying kick.

Yaoyorozu smiled, falling backwards to dodge, even as she shoved her hands forward, containment foam firing out at her opponent. Ida tried to dodge, but he’d committed to the attack, only managing to twist enough to take it on the chest instead of his legs, like she’d aimed for.

Momo hit the ground, rolling back to her feet, even as Ida hit the ground as well, foam hardening. With surprising speed he ripped off his shirt, revealing a sleek yet muscled chest. Leaving the jacket behind, the speedster scrambled to get away, dodging Yaoyorozu’s follow up stream of foam.

“Why is it the *guy* that’s the one losing their shirt!” opined Minetta, and I didn’t have to look to know that the loud *smack* was Asui slapping him upside the head with her tongue.

Tenya darted around the circle of foam that outlined Momo’s range, and backed away, eyes darting back and forth as he considered his next move.

I glanced over to Mina, seeing her fingerprints *all* over this, and she gave me a big, shit-eating grin. “Good plan,” I murmured, and she hugged my arm, as we both turned to watch the map continue.

Yaoyorozu, watching him, clapped her hands together, pulling them back to reveal a small weight on a wire, which she started to spin above her head, creating more and more line as she did so. In larger and large motions, she moved in in ever wider circles, almost hitting Ida before he dodged backwards.

*What’s her game?* I thought, not seeing the trap, and neither did Ida, who, seeing her hands were full, charged. At the distance the spinning weight was away from Momo, it was almost touching the floor, and Tenya leapt over it, coming in for another hit. With another, higher jump he cleared the second spin, and ducked under the third as he fired his engines, speeding up for another kick, still moving between the floor-bound strips of foam, his opponent’s hands full of the spinning chain.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSTxGeKCTHE>

[Then she let go.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSTxGeKCTHE)

Dodging to the side, she let the weapon fly away, throwing out another, only *this* one was covered with a thin layer of foam. Ida still clipped her sending her sprawling, but wasn’t able to dodge the weapon which wrapped around his arm, the foam expanding to cover the wire, sealing it in place. The teen glanced down at his arm, then at Yaoyorozu, then took off running, starting to drag her along before she rolled over, braced herself on a ridge of hardened foam, and started to create more and more wire, rather than try to out-muscle the guy with *rocket-calves*.

Moving her other hand over the wire, she started to coat it in containment foam, as Ida tried to outrun her ability to create, finding he couldn’t. In return the boy tried to hold his caught arm high to try to keep the expanding foam from touching, and bonding to, the concrete arena floor. He *was* able to, until he had to stop, out of space to run.

Getting up on her knees, Momo finished up the wire with a thin, cross-shaped spike, which she drove into the concrete, only penetrating it a little, but covering it with more foam to keep it anchored. Both teens were breathing hard as she stood, Ida waving his leached arm, the thin layer of foam letting the wire still move, showing that only a dozen or so feet had stuck to the ground, and Momo, waving a hand, sprayed it with a bit more foam to keep it down.

The two faced each other, and it was *Yaoyorozu* who charged, slowed a bit by her own obstructions, but moving up the wire, covering it with foam as she did so. Tenya, realizing what she was doing, charged as well, trying to knock her out before he was *completely* tied down. They closed, Ida’s engines burning as he went for another kick, Momo diving under it, the blow only hitting her ponytail as she threw another weighted line at him, catching his other arm as she rolled away, holding her hands together as she fed out more wire, sticking it to the ground, running to the side and heading for the loose loops of wire from her first line to get them too.

Ida, eyes wide, panicking, chased after, but while he caught up with her in an instant, she threw herself to the side, letting him jet past her, before he was yanked back by the wire, which held, some of the foam cracking from the force, but otherwise held steady.

Momo made a second spike, dropped and covered it, and rolled away again as her opponent tried to hit her once more. The boy was *very* fast, but he was also *very* predictable, and I’d done enough such charges on her, even if I preferred punches to kicks, that she knew how to avoid them.

A splash of foam was jumped over, Ida too fast to get caught by it, but when she stood, a third weight already made and spinning on a length of wire, the boy finally spoke, demanding *“How many more of those can you make!?”*

“Three,” Yaoyorozu grinned, swiping a hand down it to cover it foam before swinging the capture tool in a wide arc. Ida *tried* to dodge, and would’ve made it easily, but he was yanked back, the weight encircling one knee and sealing itself in place. Momo quickly formed another spike, dropped it into the concrete, and sprayed it down with foam as well. “Give up?” she asked, breathing hard, but looking confident.

Tenya, now stuck to about a ten-foot circle of movement, tried to pull at the wires, even as his opponent made *another weight*, starting to spin it. Hanging his head, he nodded trying to hold up a hand, only to have it restricted, and having to lift the other one. “I concede,” he announced, looking to Miss Midnight.

“Ending the show there? And I do so *love* watching boys get *tied up*,” the pro-heroine sighed in disappointment. “Fine, Momo Yaoyorozu wins the match!”

As if a switch was flipped, Momo dropped to her knees. “Oh thank goodness,” she sighed, admitting, “I had nothing left.”

“Wait, you *lied* to me?” Ida demanded, offended.

Yaoyorozu just nodded, smiling wryly. “It was a rational deception.”

Aizawa’s dry chuckling came clearly over the speakers, even as the crowd cheered.

<MHA>

It was another twenty minutes before the next fight as, while Momo had learned how to make the foam, she *hadn’t* learned how to make the counter-agent, so Mei had to be called up to free Ida, and then Cementoss had to clean off the arena, *again.* Momo made it back up first, with roughly a hundred deep-fried cake balls, which she’d pre-purchased from one of the festival stalls earlier and had arranged to have delivered.

“Good Job,” I smiled at her when she tiredly sat down next to me. “I wouldn’t’ve thought of that at *all*.”

“Told ya,” Mina smiled, leaning forward from my other side. “You did *amazing!”*

Several others nodded agreement, adding their own comments, Sero teasingly asking if he’d figured that out from watching him, and Momo politely stating that she ‘pulled from a variety of sources’.

Present Mic’s voice once more heralded the start of the next match. “I can *feel* the anticipation, and that’s because, if the last few hours were anything to go by, the first match of the second round is gonna be *explosive!* We once again have Brains versus Brawn, but while the previous Hero student was tough as nails, this one can break them in half! We’ve got the genius of the Support Course, who’s just as good at kicking butt as she is at making gadgets, *Mei Hatsume!* And opposite her, we’ve got the second and first place finisher in the previous events, who held half the competition off practically by himself, *Izuku Midoriya!”*

Mini-Might walked up the stairs, ready to go, expression determined. Mei was strapped for war, not demonstration, with a full body harness, a belt full of grenades, five different guns, and a stun baton. On her back I could make out the emergency shield generator, as well as the jetpack we’d loaned to Uraraka, but it looked. . . *different.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EO6ixOirwE>

“So, Quirks or ingenuity, which will win?” Present Mic asked, “The answer is gonna be *us*, viewers, ‘cause this fight’s gonna be *great!* [*Begin*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EO6ixOirwE)*!”*

I frowned, as starting the fight was *Miss Midnight’s* job, but both fighters took that as the starting signal. Midoriya, green sparks flying off him, darted forward, even as Mei threw out two grenades, one after another.

The first was containment foam, and Izuku darted back, out of the way, but the second was a flashblast, which picked up the still-expanding mass of hardening foam and fired it off towards Midoriya, spreading it wide. A single arc of green lightning played over his legs, and he leapt to the side, slipping clear of the enormous band of foam that covered half the field as it was flew outwards, clearing the arena to land in the grass.

Midoriya charged forward, as Mei pulled two pistols, firing at him with twin globes of capture foam and banana oil. Darting around them, Hatsume’s fire following him and missing by inches, Midoriya closed, leaping high to avoid a shot for his legs and leapt high over her head.

“Gotchya,” the inventrix smiled from behind her goggles, turning and firing oil at the ground, seemingly at random. As Midoriya landed, though, I realized it *wasn’t* at random, but that she’d calculated his arc, both of the boy’s feet, then his legs, covered in the frictionless substance.

*Is Deku going to lose?* I thought, as he sped, slipping wildly, for the edge of the ring, but he flipped over, slamming a hand glowing with thin red of power lines down on the arena, cracking the concrete. He used his anchor to twist around, shoving off sending himself skidding back at her, low and fast, using the slipperiness to his advantage. He blasted forward, slamming a hand down to push himself upright just in time to go in for a punch.

However, Mei wasn’t standing still, and leapt up, electromagnetic boots activating and lifting her high over the arena, flipping mid-air to get clear of Midoriya’s attack, trying to draw another bead on her opponent, but Izuku was just *too fast*, the globe of frictionless liquid missing him by inches.

Midoriya landed, rolled, and once again started to slide, hooking his hand into the concrete to come around for another pass. Mei aimed instead of running, taking her time, and lined up the shot. Firing, she *hit*, encasing both of her opponent’s feet in foam, the material spreading down to just below his knees.

Instead of looking worried though, Izuku smiled, telling the inventrix *“Thanks!”* as he slid past her, flipping himself up into the air. Green lightning played over him, for just a moment, and with a solid *crack* the solid mass split in half, letting the boy land, standing on foam-covered feet, no longer slipping. With a few smaller cracks, the foam around his ankles broke, letting him move even easier.

“Oooh, smart!” Mei praised, though there was an edge to her tone that Midoriya missed as he blushed, giving a little shrug. He was still fast enough to dodge as Mei used up the last charge of her guns, trying to catch him off-guard. Not even pausing, she tossed the weapons to the side, grabbing another grenade and hurling it at him, which he dodged out of the way of as well, as it exploded into capture foam. The boy rushed forward, closing in an instant, arm pulled back for a blow, yelling *“Detroit!*”

*Shit,* I thought, as a Midoriya with better control meant a Midoriya that could attack her directly, and she was empty-handed, too close to have a hope of leaping to safety.

As the punch was shoved forward with a cry of *“Smash!”*, greens sparks trailing him, the empowered blow was suddenly blocked by a glowing shield of energy that surrounded Mei. The shockwave from the hit blasted outwards, kicking up a little dust, but the opaque sphere didn’t so much budge.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjldvXc8zrg>

When it vanished, revealing [Mei](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjldvXc8zrg), she was already in motion, stun-baton in her left hand, another pistol in her right. She was in motion, having timed it exactly, so Deku had no time dodge.

Lightning blasted the boy, the output turned *way* up past what we’d determined was safe, and Midoriya dropped to his knees as he spasmed, muscles locking up. However, I could see his pull on One for All increase, thin streaks of green energy dancing around him as lines of red criss-crossed his face, gritting out, *“Louisiana!”*

“*Really?*” Mei asked, incredulous, before hitting him with it again, even as he got a leg under himself. He lifted his face to stare her straight on, as she leveled the pistol right between his eyes. “This works too.”

As she pulled the trigger, Midoriya darted to the side, red containment foam passing by his ear as he slammed his hand to the side in a sweep, hitting the gun hard enough to crumple it. Thankfully, the safety measures *I’d* insisted on kept it from *exploding*, and instead it just fell to the side, even as Mei turned her back on Izuku, but bent low, her version of my magnetic gloves starting to glow as she anchored herself to the floor.

With an earsplitting roar, the jetpack activated, and I realized what she’d done.

Instead of lifting efficiently, she’d turned it into a giant, indeterminate flamethrower, but one that hit like a truck. Mei held on for dear life as a conflagration overtook half the field behind her, causing the red foam to explode, but it was smothered in the waves of fire that extended almost to the stands. I expected to see Deku thrown from the field, but there was no sign of Midoriya as the inferno continued to rage.

For several long seconds it burned, Cementoss standing up and getting ready to intervene, but the retooled jetpack had already ran through what should’ve been half an hour’s worth of fuel. With a bang, it stopped spewing flames, smoking, and Mei got to her feet, stumbling a little, pulling two more pistols.

As the fire cleared, the field *shimmered* with heat, but, in the center, was the mass of containment foam from Mei’s third grenade, still with bits of concrete on it from where it’d been ripped up. Behind it Midoriya stood, his containment foam covered legs steaming, but the boy seemed fine. With a heave, he threw the mass forward, making Mei dodge, and he charged her. One gun shot an electrified net, which, with a swing of his arm, Izuku blew off course as he didn’t stop running. The other shot a blast of containment foam which the hero *caught,* flicking his hand to the side before it could fully harden, leaping forward in a twisting spin as he yelled, “Kansas *Smash!*”

The second shots of both guns didn’t even touch him as he spun, flung away by the wind he created, and he landed, striking Mei directly in the chest with an open palm, *shoving* the girl backwards. As if shot by a cannon, Hatsume was blasted away, trying to twist to use her boots to slow herself down, but it wasn’t enough, and she hit the edge of the coliseum, *hard*, boots breaking under her, falling to the grass below.

“Hatsume is out of bounds!” declared Miss midnight, and the crowd went wild.

“What are you *feeding* these kids, Eraser? That fight was intense!” Present Mic yelled, whipping the crowd up.

Aizawa snorted, “The same thing Power Loader is, apparently.”

Midoriya, clothing scorched, steaming, and muscles twitching, let out a long breath of relief. Looking over the lip of the arena to Mei, he held up his left hand, covered in containment foam, and she nodded, holding up a finger in a ‘one-sec’ gesture. Running on broken boots, the internal mechanisms fried but still serviceable as footwear, she headed over to where she’d entered, reaching just inside the doorway to pull a spritz-bottle, jogging over to her opponent.

“Thanks,” he sighed, his words broadcast to the crowd, who’s cheering had started to taper off. “You did really good! Almost had me with the trick with the Jetpack!”

Mei paused, staring at him suspiciously, before nodding and grinning broadly. “Yeah, my Babies are *awesome*. If it’d been purpose-built it would’ve *totally* blown you away! Thanks for helping me show them off! How’d you know you could block the fire with the foam?”

“You said it was fire resistant during your match,” Deku shrugged.

“Smart! Denki’s still gonna kick your butt,” she informed him, helping get rid of the foam forming greaves and boots, the heat having neutralized the oil’s frictionless properties.

“We’ll see,” is all Izuku said, nodding in thanks to Mei before jogging off the field, the inventress collecting the remains of her gear and leaving as well.

I stood, smiling to both my friends as I headed for the door, my match next, Bakugo giving me the stink eye. On my way, I ran into Mei, who smiled broadly, cheering, “Denki!”

“Mei,” I smiled, as she ran up to me. “That was *really* impressive,” I told her, not exaggerating in the slightest.

“I *know*! Our Babies are the *best!*” she grinned back, good cheer faltering slightly. “But, we’re not gonna fight now. I know you were looking forward to that.”

Shaking my head, I disagreed, “No, I wanted you to give your all *if* we did. I’m just glad you got to show everything off. I know that’s what *you* wanted!”

“I did!” she chirped. “Power Loader’s already has a few companies asking about me, and that was *before* I almost took out the top scoring hero! We’re gonna make *so much money* making *so many Babies*, which’ll let us make *Even. More. Babies.*” The look she directed me wasn’t even borderline indecent, it was full on *lustful*, and I had to shift my stance as I started to *rise* to the occasion.

She squealed, jumping forward to hug me tightly, seeming not to notice my state, before prancing on down the hall to drop off her gear.

I took a deep breath, trying to focus on the upcoming fight, and had to thank the fact that they’d torn up the field, *again*, which let everything resettle. Resuming my journey, I headed down to my entrance, and waited for the announcement.

“Everybody ready for the next fight?” Present Mic asked, the crowd starting to cheer in reply. “I said *is everybody ready for the next fight?”* The crowd cheered louder. “I am too!” he announced, and I took that as my signal, starting to walk out. “We’ve got another unbalanced fight. On one end, here comes the electrifying presence that’s been overpowering his competition, *Denki Kaminari!* And on the other, the skilled fighter who might not even *have* a Quirk, the Business course’s *Ikari Bradley*!”

I spotted the other young man as I crested the stairs, square jawed and wearing an eyepatch as he stared right at me. We both took our places, and I stared right back. “Such *intense* stares!” Miss Midnight cooed. “You boys ready to get *physical?”*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsa0VOtVXAg>

Shinji quirked an eyebrow, in a ‘really?’ expression, and I just shrugged. We both glanced at her and nodded, and she twisted back and forth in delight, while we turned our attention back to each other. “Then, [*begin*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsa0VOtVXAg)*!”* she commanded, and we both charged each other.

I pulled on OfA, just a little, and got ready. Once again, I had a trump card, but I learned how to fight faster if I fought a more skilled opponent, and whoever this Ikari Bradley was, there was *no* doubt he was skilled. I ran forward, telegraphing a punch, waiting to see what he did with it.

Bradley’s sole eye narrowed, and he brought himself up short as I punched for his jaw. He dodged out of the way, reaching for my arm, and I twisted to the side, pulling myself out of his range with a leap. Facing him again, he was already charging, but he dropped down and went for a sliding kick.

Stepping aside, I tried to kick him myself as he passed, only to get punched in the side of my knee for my trouble. It hurt, but wasn’t didn’t drop me like it was supposed to, and Bradley popped back up to stare at me, stance open but ready. “Strength, durability, *and* electrical powers. Somebody won the Quirk lottery,” he commented blandly, though I knew our words were being broadcast, even if it didn’t sound like they were here on the field.

“I heal a little faster too,” I shrugged, reaching forward with an electrical arm, trying to give him no warning. He still dodged it, easily, starting to move to hit it before pulling back. “And you?” I asked

Ikari only smiled, a small, smug thing, and charged forward once again, this time not going for a grand attack, but laying into me with a barrage of punches that I was hard-pressed to block, having to up OfA just to react in time, and even *then* still taking hits. I was patching technique with raw strength, that much was clear, but the fact that I *was* so outmatched brought a smile to my face, feeling my motions, ever so slowly, start to smooth out as we fought.

My own blows were parried, dodged, or blocked, *except* for the ones that only brushed against him, which were allowed without issue. *How is he telling the difference?* I thought, most of my attention focused on the fight. *Is he just that good?* But he already knew my Quirk, and *any* of those brushing blows I could use to end the fight *instantly*, so why wasn’t he avoiding those as well?

I moved to run a bit of current through a hand that was merely going to brush against him, only to have the arm quickly shoved away before it could even start to spark, getting socked in the gut, *hard*, in return. Bradley dancing backwards as I reflexively let out a small current, less than a percent of my total.

*He knew,* I thought, as we circled, before going at it again, hammer and tongs. Once more, when we traded blows, his punches were hard enough to bruise, but not much more. In return he’d let the small blows get shrugged off, but the second I started to run current through them, even before anything ever happened, they were pushed away and I was struck harshly, and then he’d retreat.

There were murmurings from the crowd, but I ignored them, focusing on my opponent, bumping up OfA and going on the offensive, having picked up enough already to not be completely on the back foot. Bumping OfA even higher, still at a fraction of what Midoriya could do, Bradley’s eye narrowed, and his style seemed to shift, no longer meeting me straight on, but every move either a deflection or an attack from the side, as even my glancing blows were enough to injure him now. *He’s working around my strength,* I noted, as Ikari pushed himself to hit me even harder.

Pulling a small bit of electricity mid-punch, I pushed it out in every direction, Bradley throwing himself backwards in an instant, the electricity missing him entirely, and I *knew*.

“Not Quirkless at all, are you?” I asked, golden lightning playing over my form, both from my Quirk, and from my copy of One for All.

“Never said I was,” my opponent replied lightly, reaching up to remove his eyepatch. Blinking, he pulled it off, tossing it to Miss Midnight with a call of, “Hold this for me, please.”

“Anything else you want to take off?” the R-rated heroine questioned, adding, “Pity,” when he shook his head.

As he turned to look at me, I saw what he was covering. Instead of an iris, his unveiled eye was covered with a jagged, spiraling pattern that seemed almost hypnotic, though nothing pressed against my defenses. “Let’s end this, shall we?” he requested, before charging me.

I thought he was good before. *Now?* I almost wondered when he’d tell me to ‘stop hitting yourself’, the difference between us was so great. He moved before I even thought of moving, and knew what I was going to do *before* I did. The first time he punched me in the throat, I sputtered, pushing OfA to the highest I could, but it *didn’t matter.*

Suddenly, the fight shifted from a learning experience, to a *beatdown*. While I *was* still learning as we went, Martial Talent paying off in spades, and while I *did* have increased toughness from One for All, turning crippling blows into moderate ones, I was *still* losing, if by degrees. My vision started to swim from all the blows as he went at me with everything he had, pushing me backwards, blow after blow thudding into me, and vicious kick that caught me in the mouth making me spit blood. Shifting my arms to electricity didn’t even help, as he was able to slip right past them, twisting around the irregular motions of my unstable limbs before I could even start to bring them to bear.

A particularly vicious blow to my temple made the world shudder, and I had *enough*, yanking a fifth of my reserve and *flooding* the field with it. I’d learned enough, and I knew the only way to fight *precognitives* was *overwhelming force* to the point that no matter what they did they’d *still lose.*

Bradley tried to outrun it, and *almost* made it, one leg shocked as he leapt from the edge, landing on the grass far below as lightning *ravaged* the entire arena.

The fact that I still hit him, though, made me frown, even as I had to take a firm stance while I waited for the world to stop spinning, blood leaking from my mouth. *Time limit?* I thought, but shelved it, even as Miss Midnight announced, “Ikari Bradley is out of bounds! Denki Kaminari wins!” A little more quietly, though still carryingly, she added, “Do you need a stretcher?”

I started to shake my head, which didn’t make me feel good, and at her concerned look maybe I didn’t realized how injured I was. “How long until my next match?”

“At least half an hour. You didn’t tear up the arena, but the next fight will, and there’ll be a fifteen-minute break before the Semifinals,” she informed me, not a hint of salaciousness in her tone.

“I’m good, but I’ll walk down to see Recovery Girl,” I replied.

And, just like that, the teasing was back. “Ah, someone who *enjoys* a little pain. I like that in a man!”

“Taken,” I replied, deadpan, causing her to laugh as Ikari walked up to us, Miss Midnight tossing him his eyepatch.

The man quickly put it on. “Bit of a headache without it,” he told me, as if he hadn’t just been beating the shit out of me, only to lose to something he could *never* fight. “I appreciate you not using your Trump from the beginning, though I have to ask *why.*”

“Learned a thing or five,” I shrugged, wincing at the motion. “But I’m good on lessons for today.”

Laughing, Bradley offered his hand, and I took it, giving it a firm shake, before we turned and walked out, going our separate ways.