Jason stretched at his computer desk as he bathed in the glow from the multiple screens in front of him; all of them displaying various assets and processors for his upcoming game: My Dating Academia. Fresh out of high school, it was a sort of passion project he had dreamed of making ever since he picked up the manga a number of years ago. He was enraptured by the characters, each one so fleshed out in their personalities and yet still continuing to grow and develop with each arc in the story. He wanted nothing more than to date each of them, but that in itself was a pipe dream.

Instead he turned to what he was good at: technology. If he couldn't date them in real life, he could at least date them in a virtual world and with so many free programs out on the internet these days, it wasn't too difficult to start your own project. All he needed to do was take a few courses in high school, one particular AP class gave him some very useful programming knowledge, and he was in the thick of it.

He cracked his knuckles and returned to the lines of code that displayed on the screen. It was his vision coming true and he was nearing its completion in only a few months. He just needed to get all of the bugs out and for that he needed to go through a full playthrough of the game. He typed one last bit of code into the system and saved it, clicking on the execute command to bring up the game.

Before him stood the splash screen of his game, four of his favorite characters standing in traditional fashion, staring at the viewer as if to entice them with their charms. The game was to allow you to interact with various characters from the series, but allow you to date four boys specifically: Bakugou, Todoroki, Kirishima, and - Jason's absolute favorite - Izuku, A.K.A. Deku. He smiled happily as he stared at the screen. Everything was looking flawless. The artwork his friend made at his request was spectacular, almost as if it was straight out of the manga itself. He nearly cried as he felt a sense of pride well up in his chest at his creation.

He started a new playthrough, choosing to go through the Deku storyline to start. It began with a traditional introductory phase: the player was introduced to the cast, each boy being brought in one at a time to give the player a sense of who they were and how they were best to interact with. The player himself was a transfer student from abroad and was to study there for a semester at UA - finding more than just hero knowledge along the way - and so the first day was spent going through your standard daily affairs.

From there you got to choose who to focus your attention on each day. Jason had incorporated a bonding system into the game which determined the ending you received based on how much time and affection you gave to each candidate. Jason swooned at each moment Deku appeared on screen and he knew he was going to go through the full 100% affection ending this run.

Everything was going according to plan so far. The game took him through the Deku storyline as expected; the initial shyness, the uncertainty that his feelings were real, a few standard class activities such as hero training, and finally a big climactic battle with a villain. It was there when a sudden power spike coursed through his computer, crashing the system entirely. The screen froze on the image of Deku grimacing in concentration as he hoisted a large slab of concrete that was about to crush the player, rescuing him in typical heroic fashion. It was to be there that all feelings were to come into light and complete the dating process, but the power surge shut everything down. Jason was left staring at the heroic image of Deku in his Full Cowl hoisting the rubble like it was nothing.

Jason sighed and rebooted the computer, hoping that the data had not been impacted by the crash. He groaned in frustration as he discovered the save file deleted, all progress he had made now erased. He

didn't feel like continuing for now, already a few hours into his development session and he was feeling fatigued. He decided now was a reasonable time for a break and slipped his way into the kitchen to cook up some lunch, leaving the game running on the title screen.

Unbeknownst to him, something had awoken within the game during the surge. As Jason busied himself in the kitchen, his mind wandered to the game, his chest tightening as he went over the playthrough. Why did he have to make Izuku so lifelike in the game? His actions, his dialogue, even the nearly hundreds of reactions he had incorporated for him to use; he had even developed a system in the game that replicated their quirks. This all created a character so seemingly real that it was like Deku was speaking to him in reality. Jason had once been proud of his handiwork but was now starting to regret it as it was causing him actual heartache when he played through the game all at once. But it was this painstaking effort that gave birth to something far beyond his imagination.

Deku's massive chain of coding and dialogue had somehow given rise to a new artificial intelligence. It began to inspect its surroundings, delving itself into the coding and other assets that lay open on Jason's desktop. It was inquisitive and sought out as much knowledge it could find about the player, its goals driven by the programmed dialogue that birthed it. Having stemmed from Deku's highly studious nature, it took great strides to find any aspect it could for the player.

Jason soon returned with a sandwich in hand, flopping into his seat and sighing as he stared at the open title screen. He took a bite of his lunch and changed his focus to Discord where he pulled up a chat with his friend.

[Hey, thanks again for all of the art assets. They look amazing!]

[No problem! The game coming out well?]

[Oh yeah! I had a bit of a hiccup while doing a playthrough, but it's nearly done]

[Awesome! Can't wait to play it.]

Jason found his heart lightening as he continued to converse with his friend. She was a good distraction for his troubles, somehow knowing when he was feeling down even when they were just chatting through Discord. It got his mind off of his worries long enough to return to his programming.

Meanwhile, the Deku AI was watching intently as they conversed, gaining some more understanding of who the player was - who Jason was. It continued to explore the files on the computer, gaining access to many of the photos and other data he kept tucked away. Many of them were of family photos, but there were a few of Jason with some friends, not many, but enough for Deku to piece together a rough idea of who he was. It wanted nothing more than to learn more about him.

In spite of his better mood, Jason was finding it difficult to keep focused. His thoughts still lingered on his playthrough and how real Deku seemed, desiring so much for him to actually be reality.

[So why so many images of Izuku?]

The chat took Jason by surprise. It wasn't like his friend to ask something like that. She knew how much he liked him.

[You know why...he's my favorite]

The AI pondered for a moment. It wanted to learn so much about Jason but it had to be covert.

[Well yeah, but...why him? Why Deku?]

[I don't know...just...it's hard to explain. He's cute, brave...selfless...strong...just a perfect hero]

If the AI could blush right now it would. It wasn't expecting the honesty to come so easily. Clearly Jason trusted his friend a great deal.

[God I wish he could be my hero…]

The Deku AI was not sure how to handle this. It needed more time to think, but it took in the data on Jason's desires, incorporating them with the base data that created it from the game and chose to stay and watch a little longer.

[First I gotta figure out what caused the power surge, though. It's so weird. It came out of nowhere]

Jason wasn't sure what to do at this point. He began to scour the coding to locate the glitch, but found nothing out of the ordinary. Everything seemed to be working perfectly as intended. He rebooted the program and launched another playthrough, going through the same motions to see if the same thing happened.

He didn't get too far into the game before he caught sight of something odd, though. The moment Izuku made his first appearance on screen was different from what he remembered. His school uniform looked...ill-fitting. Like it was slightly too small for him. Jason had always known Deku was a fit lad in the series...maybe his friend had decided to make him look the part more so than usual. He probably just didn't recall it from the first playthrough since he hadn't been so obsessed like he was now. He was seeing every minute detail in the hopes of catching sight of any possible bugs now.

Waving it off he continued to go through the game, admiring the subtle change his friend had slipped in for him. Unfortunately it was short-lived as another power surge occurred in the same phase in the story, blocking him from progressing further. Frustrated he slid back from the desk, storming from the room leaving the frozen image of heroism plastered on the screen.

The AI watched through Jason's webcam as he vanished from the room. It felt bad for him. Here he was trying to complete his project, but this glitch was putting a stop to that and it was clearly frustrating him. Maybe if it could find the source of the glitch it could help him out. Yeah! That'd be like coming to his rescue, right? Saving him and giving him a smile? That'd be what Izuku would do. What *he* would do.

With the computer still fortunately running, Izuku got to work. Using every tool at his disposal along with a number of instant internet searches, it began to delve into the game's coding, looking to find the source of the power spike. It came up short, but it was determined to locate the source, instead creating a background program that could monitor the game's code and locate any anomalies that might occur as they happen.

It continued to work through the night, Jason failing to return for the evening and only returning the following morning with some slight bags under his eyes. Clearly he had not gotten a proper amount of sleep. Izuku chose to remain hidden for the time being. He wanted to surprise Jason as well as get to know him better. This was best done from the shadows.

As Jason let out a small yawn, he wiggled the mouse to find the image of the frozen game return. It brought back the memories of yesterday and he gave a sigh of despair, but unwilling to give up he returned to his work with renewed vigor. Maybe the glitch would solve itself after a night. You never know. He rebooted the program and then stared at the splash screen in stunned silence.

Izuku was bigger. Definitely bigger.

Whereas yesterday his clothes looked ill-fitting on him, this morning it looked plastered to his skin. He had to have been similar in size to Bakugou or Kirishima now, both boys more muscular than he was, but still within reason for highschool teens who worked out on a constant basis. He definitely knew something was up.

He pulled open a separate folder where he kept copies of the source images his friend provided, locating the specific file for the splash screen. Sure enough, when he pulled up the image, Izuku looked just as he was supposed to. His uniform fit, not even a trace of muscle showing. Something was going on with the game but he couldn't understand it. Playing through the game he compared each image with his source and every single one of them had the same, almost magical, change occur within the game. Izuku's muscles were bigger in each one.

This was something that made absolutely no sense. It was one thing for the game to freeze; it was another for it to suddenly change the very appearance of a set of predetermined static image sources.

[Hey, can you help me out?]

He needed to test out a theory on this matter. His friend was going to be key to this plan.

[Sure, what's up?]

[I need a few more images for Izuku. This game is messing with the files somehow and I want to test something]

He took a few screenshots of the more muscled Izuku and a screenshot of the game's source files from his folder. The game's files looked just how they were supposed to as well. Whatever was happening it was localized only while the game was running it seemed.

[Oh wow. I knew you had a thing for him, but did you really need to go and modify my work? I could have just drawn him like that from the beginning if you asked.]

[Damn do you really need me anyway? These look really good!]

[It wasn't me] Jason replied in a huff. [Whatever power surge happened yesterday it's….fuck I don't know. It's making him bigger without changing the source image. It's happening only in the game!]

[So what do you need me to do?]

Jason's heart thumped hard in his chest as he typed out the list of images that he was wanting to incorporate into the game. It was a moment of fancy, but fuck it. If he was going to test his theory out, he was going to do it in a way that at least brought him some joy. Lemons and lemonade so to speak.

[Wow….not even going to pretend anymore huh?]

He blushed at her response but didn't reply.

[Hey, it's cool with me. It'll take a couple of days to get them all done, though. You got a good list here]

[No problem. Thank for this]