**MHA 28**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmBQYKvupD8&t=734s>

“[Everything holding steady?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmBQYKvupD8&t=734s)” I asked, seeing the students rush past us, spotting Mina and Momo skating past us, seemingly together. Momo was using the skates Mei had designed, while Mina was using her Acid, but the fact that they were side by side didn’t escape my notice.

My girlfriend looked back at me, and I gave her a singularly unimpressed look, given her ‘we can’t team up’ rhetoric beforehand, but she turned to look forward as Momo said something, and I had to shake my head. We’d talk about this when it was all over, one way or another.

“Yep!” Mei announced, refocusing me back on the task at hand. “Some degradation of the system, so we can’t do this for more than an hour before catastrophic failure, but our *Babies* are up to the task!”

“Then let’s not waste time,” I shot back. “I’ll run, you play Support. Did you see what Asui did?”

“Who?” Mei asked, and I remembered how bad she was with names.

“Frog Girl,” I specified. “I run, you-”

Both grapnel-equipped arms pointed forward. “Got it! Now giddup! I want to show everything our Babies can *do!”*

Laughing I shook my head, even as more students ran by. “Hold on tight,” I warned, and, knowing I wasn’t joking, her arms wrapped around me, one around the top of my head, the other down and holding onto my harness.

Focusing, limbs crackling with the power of One for All, even at only a few percent, I took off, high above the heads of the other students, going from zero to sprinting in half a second, and pushing myself even further past that.

The dirt, and the students, below me started to blur a little as I focused on loping forward, hands shooting forward and pulling me along as my legs pumped, two of Mei’s tendrils pointed backwards, propellers spinning as fast as they could, pushing me forward as I sprinted with giant, ground eating strides. While still probably not as fast as Iida, I was *close*, and I started to close in on the turn, Mei not firing her grappling hook.

I had a moment of worry, but I trusted my partner, so kept going in a straight line, keeping my speed fairly constant. Sure enough, nearly at the last moment, one metal tentacle twitched, hitting a tree and instantly starting to reel itself in as I pushed forward, letting myself be turned, *barely* making it as I remade the time that I lost, the vectors no doubt calculated on the fly.

Blasting down the straightaway, a couple of students tried to take potshots at us, but they were no-one I knew, their attacks easily dodged. One student gestured towards us, and I felt Mei stiffen, starting to cry, *“Denki!”*, as something bounced off my Defenses. Giving it no mind, I ran by the plain looking boy, who looked at me in confusion as I focused on my goal, glaring back at him for half a second, as my partner trembled, but held still, seeing something that wasn’t there.

Moving down the straightaway, having to slow a little as Mei was unresponsive, I was starting to get worried as we turned the corner only to have her suddenly relax. “What? That. Oh! An Illusion Quirk!” she stated with realization. “But how? Did you just remember the way the course went, and work off of that, Denki?” Mei asked in what sounded like pride for some reason.

“Nope, didn’t affect me. Maybe my Quirk shielded my neurons from outside influences, like a hardened circuit?” I bullshit on the spot, and she nodded, accepting it.

Striding past others, I saw Momo and Mina turn the corner ahead of us, and pushed myself to catch up to them, riding the limit of what One for All would give me without breaking and needing to be re-established. Thankfully, the students we flew past, while some sending us sour looks, didn’t do more than that, focused themselves on winning.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLo_k9b_hGY>

With Mei’s head back in the game, she was able to grapnel us around the corner, only for us to immediately come across the next [obstacle](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLo_k9b_hGY). The track opened up, to reveal thin columns of stone, rising up to ground level, a dark abyss between them, inch-wide steel cables spiderwebbing between them.

More than that, though, we arrived just in time to see Todoroki *clear* them, taking off on a thin path of Ice, Bakugo hot on his heels, Midoriya and Ochako not that far behind *him.* The Ice user twisted around, reaching down, and blocked the way with a giant wave of ice, likely trying to use the rule of ‘don’t leave the course’ to block everyone in.

However, it had barely formed before Bakugo hit it with a distant but carrying call of *“BAAAASTAAARD!!!”* and an explosion high up, blasting the top to pieces, and arcing over it in hot pursuit.

I only realized I’d lost track of Iida and Asui when they came flying up from the pit, arcing high over the impromptu glacier, Tenya’s engine legs burning brightly and pushing them even faster. As I started to close on the pits, a plan formed, even as the glowing pair of Midoriya and Uraraka hit the ice further down, striking with a ringing blow that created a shockwave that pushed nearby trees back, shattering the glacier completely. Deku fell backwards, rallying, and, hitting the ground, pushed himself forward again, trying to catch up to the others.

Maybe it was what happened at the USJ, maybe it was my pairing up with Mei, but unlike last time, where they stopped and talked about each obstacle, taking their time to understand it, they were throwing themselves forward with abandon now. Mina, holding onto Momo, who herself was holding an ever extending pole, used her acid to push them both off the ground, vaulting over the first set of gaps, aiming for the top of a platform several deep in, and then I was out of time to watch the others.

However, they had given me an idea.

“Mei, remember when I asked about the max from the fans?” I questioned, launching myself from the edge and towards a nearby platform, easily in range, as I searched for what I wanted, seeing it. . . *there.*

“I. . . oooh! Are we gonna! But the starting velocity. . .” she trailed off, looking where I was, and understanding what I was proposing implicitly.

I nodded, as she held herself tight against me, shivering in anticipation. “Grapnel that one when we’re in range,” I commanded, hitting a wire and forming an induction pattern to launch me down it faster than I could’ve run.

As we rose into the air, directly on course, I heard Present Mic announce, “And it looks like Hatsume and Kaminari have tried to jump the entire thing in one go. Ambitious, but it doesn’t look like they’re moving fast enough!”

Looking at the far edge of the obstacle, he was right, and more than that, our ballistic trajectory would see us fall in a hole in the columns, disqualifying ourselves.

That would be, if we didn’t have other options.

Both propeller tendrils pointed straight backwards, pushing us forward even faster. It wouldn’t be enough to make it to a column, but we weren’t heading for one. Moving faster and faster, I straightened my body out, closing my eyes, trusting Mei, even as I focused on my arms. I couldn’t reshape them easily, but there *was* one configuration I’d managed, completely by accident, that I’d been able to return them to.

I could hear the pneumatics as both grapnels fired, heading right for the single iron cable that stretched, parallel to the course, and a *perfect* bar for us to use. Sure enough, it jerked, and our fall was turned into a swing, the G-forces pressing Mei against me as my harness pulled up with bruising force, shifting our trajectory.

I made the full switch in form, wings spreading wide, as we started to pull up, grapnels disengaging *way too early.* Again, I could only trust in my partner, who was hollering with joy, as I fed her more and more electricity, my reserves a third of the way gone, and I tried to pull up while dodging around columns, having expected us to go high *then* fly to the exit.

Pushing the worries out of my head, I focused fully on the moment, wing-tips brushing against the columns as I threaded the needle, Mei’s propellers giving me more and more speed, until the end was in sight, a sheer cliff face I *wasn’t ready for.*

“*MEI!”* I warned, and pulled up as hard as I could, letting my legs snap back to reality and pushing electricity into my induction boots, pouring on every bit of thrust I could, watching the top lip approach, not sure if I was going to make it.

I could feel the tendrils shift behind me, my partner giving a scream of delight as I gained *just* enough lift to clear it by *inches*, nearly colliding with a student who was trying to jump across, rising high over the track, most of the glacier cleared away by other students.

“And that was a close one!” Present Mic announced, “But, reminder, you have to stay on the course, even if you’re above it! Oh, and what’s this? The leaders have found the last obstacle! They better tread carefully, ***YOU’RE STEPPING ONTO A MINE-FIELD!!!***” the teacher screamed, and, looking at where we were, *we needed to keep going.*

However, we were going far faster than we were before, now literally flying past my fellow students. I felt our harnesses shudder, the distinct sound of something overloading coming from behind us. “Oh no, my Baby!” Mei cried, as I swooped over the track, my partner, while still distracted, hooking out a grapnel to let me turn sharply, only able to bank my wings so far, as we overtook most of the remaining students, slowing down with every turn.

“Mei, Sitrep,” I demanded, as she worked on something.

“Hmmm, we overloaded the motors, but it’s still useful,” she replied. “Not enough to maintain flight, though. Get ready to land after the next turn,” the inventrix advised.

“Understood,” I nodded, comparing where we were with where we needed to be. I’d’ve liked a bit more, Mei’s showboating hurting us now, but *we could still make it.* Focusing on my legs, shifting them back to lightning, I noted that we were already starting to drop. Taking the last corner, I hit the ground, legs pumping, faster than the others by a large margin, though the leaders were still out of sight.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwtMpGBBq9I

From around the next corner there was a pink [explosion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwtMpGBBq9I), the repeated booms of Bakugo’s power, and the cracks of Todoroki’s coming from around the last corner. Pushing myself, I rounded it, finding utter chaos. Iida was trying to outrunning them, setting off a chain of explosions, before he was overtaken and flung to the side, only Asui’s quick thinking keeping them from being thrown from the course altogether.

Bakugo, riding explosions, and Todoroki, riding a thin rail of ice, were both fighting, both attacking Midoriya, Ochako on his back but not using her power for some reason, keeping the pair back. The fliers were trying to catch up, but, while they could move without touching the ground, they were far slower than the four in the lead.

The mines were slightly darker patches of upturned soil, but they were hard to spot, even up close, and most of the other students had ended up slowing down, trying to pick their way across. “Mei, can you isolate the mines?” I asked, and felt her as she nodded above me.

“They’ve got an RF signal. I might be able to use it to deactivate some of them, or I *could* set them off under our competition,” she mused, looking over to where Shoji and Tokoyami had apparently teamed up, the many armed many providing a shade for which Dark Shadow was able to carry them both. However, right as they moved forward, the mines right in front of them detonated, blasting them both backwards, into *even more mines* which detonated, tossing them further back.

“Mei, Focus,” I said, however, that gave me an idea, a suicidal one were it not for the toughness that One for All granted. “Actually, can you do that to us?”

“What?” she asked, for once not getting the plan.

Glancing over, I could see the front four had already passed the halfway mark of the minefield, their powers letting them to bypass it in their own way. Todoroki hardened the ground, so it didn’t set off the mines, Bakugo flew over them, and Midoriya, even with Ochacko’s assistance, was moving too fast for them to explode under him, the first two the only reason he couldn’t succeed at what Iida had failed at.

“Retract the attachments, the base tendrils should be tough enough to take a blast, they’re supposed to throw, not kill after all,” I instructed, Mei doing so before I even finished talking. “We run, you put them in a shield behind us, and you set the mines off right as we’ve passed them to push us forward,” I explained, the plan coming to me even as I was saying it.

“Getting the speed right with the delay they have would be impossible, but if you can set them off *precisely. . .*” I trailed off, even as I could feel Mei understand, as she started nearly vibrating with excitement.

“I, YES! But, your legs!” she started to object, and I shook my head.

“I’m tougher than I look, if I can prepare,” I reassured her, smiling at her concern. “So, can you do it?”

Her laughter was all the answer I needed.

“Tell me when to start,” I requested, dropping down to a sprinter’s stance, shifting OfA fully into my legs, hands shifting back to normal, as she worked her controls.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSZPUk1JjBE

“[*GO!*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSZPUk1JjBE)*”* she yelled, one arm pointed forward to outline my path, and I took off, yellow sparks curling up around both of us as my focus narrowed to the path in front of us.

The first few blasts were too far behind us, but they closed, each one right after the other, each one pushing us further and further forward, faster and faster as the world started to blur, the detonations forming an all encompassing roar that carried us forward on a blast wave of *victory.*

Pushing past the other students, most diving out of our way, we neared the four in the front, all of them turning to face us, and I couldn’t help laugh as my legs churned, at first running, then trying to keep up with the ever-increasing speed we were generating.

I could hear Present Mic yelling something, but I paid it no mind, as we blasted across the intervening distance, both Bakugo and Todoroki turning to attack, even as Midoriya slipped by them, taking the lead.

As I focused on keeping us going, Mei grabbed a sphere from her belt, hurling it at Bakugo who aborted his attack to dodge, even as it exploded into sticky foam, barely avoiding capture. Todoroki got his attack off, sending a column of ice at us, but, riding the explosions, I jumped, slamming into it with a kick, OfA not even straining as we blasted right through it, the explosions continuing, forcing them both away as we hit the end right behind Midoriya, who was running as fast as he could.

I could hear the forming of more ice, and a series of explosions behind us as, grinning like a loon, I passed by Deku and Ochaco, the residual momentum from the explosions carrying us past him as we *finally* took the lead, running for all I could, Mei holding on tight while whooping like a madwoman.

The field was set up so it was a straight shot into the coliseum, where I could hear the crowd going nuts, and I entered the tunnel to get through, lightning playing over both of us, only a few hundred feet from the goal.

Behind me came the sound of a thunderclap, and, as I was almost at the end of the tunnel, a viridian green lightning bolt blew past over my head, the shockwave almost throwing me off my feet, and, for a moment, I saw Deku, upside-down and facing backwards, grinning right back at me, as he moved faster than I could’ve hoped to, and overtook me at the very last moment, *winning the race*.

Right after him, as Present Mic had a meltdown, I blasted into the arena, not even made, having to take a bit, just like Midoriya had, given he was almost to the other side of the large space. Mei was cheering in my ear, hands in the air over our victory, fists pumping, and I had to raise my own as well.

“Mei?” I asked, smiling.

“Yeah, Partner?” she asked, smiling right back.

“*Pose!”* I told her, shifting my arms to lighting one last time, as I stood up, and, laughing, she extended her mechanical tentacles as well, as the crowd cheered their hearts out.

<MHA>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fEhWgqnNuQ

Walking over to where Midoriya sat on the grass, as Present Mic announced his [victory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fEhWgqnNuQ), Mei toggled her harness, dropping off my back. The cool air against my sweat-soaked jumpsuit felt nice, but not as nice as having succeeded. I hadn’t come in first, but when my competition was mini *All Might*, paired with someone that could let him move *even faster,* coming in second was still willing in my book.

Midoriya was simultaneously laughing his ass off, tears streaming from his eyes, while trying to comfort Uraraka as she literally vomited rainbows. *Cherenkov radiation?* Was my first thought, even though it wasn’t just blue, and thankfully dissipated before it hit the ground.

Looking at his uniform, his shoes were beaten and battered, the pants torn slightly, and both his arms and legs looked red, his hands bruised slightly. His limbs were ‘oh god what did you do to yourself’ red, just irritated. “You two okay?” I asked, as Ochako finished up, groaning to herself. Offering them both a hand, I helped them to their feet, Deku wincing as he stood stretching out his legs.

“Yeah,” the green-haired boy said, looking up at the crowds, then at the others who were starting to enter. Bakugo and Todoroki having come threw a dozen seconds after I had, practically at the same time. Explosion boy glared at both of us, before turning away, while the cryokinetic just stared at us. Looking to Midoriya, he just shook his head, turning to me. “I’m fine. Just pushed myself there at the end,” he chuckled.

“The training with All Might paying off, then?” I questioned, and teased. “He’s helped me quite a bit as well.”

Deku stared. “That was, he did say, then, I guess,” he muttered, finally settling on, “*thanks!* He helped me realize that I’m mochi, which *really* made things make sense,” he stated with authority.

“Ummm,” I replied, not sure what else to say. “Because you get beat on? I’m not sure that’s a healthy outlook.”

“What? No, I mean yeah, but I needs to be consistent, with my Quirk, but also not overdo it,” he explained. “Like how you were saying to use just a little, but all over, and raising it when I needed. And, if I had to,” he smiled, massaging his arms, which were starting to go back to normal, “How to stretch myself further without, well, tearing!”

I nodded. “Makes sense,” I replied, watching as more and more people ran in, most of them in pairs. Iida and Asui, Shoji and Tokoyami, Kirishima and Sero, which was surprising, and Mina and Momo. There were others I didn’t recognize that well, but some of them, like vine-hair, I knew were from the other Hero Course.

With forty-two winners, and a combined forty, thirty-nine now, students in the Hero Course, there were going to be some others slipping in with us, even if every single student in the first two classes got in. Waving to my girlfriend, who was talking with Momo, she waved back, and started to make her way towards us.

“So, Mei, how’d you think we did? Match your expectations?” I questioned the pinkette beside me teasingly.

“I wanted to come in first,” she shrugged, looking up, likely directly at the boxes where the support item companies were sitting. I knew she could read lips, to some extent, and whatever she was hearing was to her liking as she grinned and added, “But I think we still made an impression, partner!”

Shaking my head, I reminded her, *“Somebody* wanted to wait. Besides, we’ve moved onto the next stage, and that’s all I really cared about.”

Midoriya shot me an odd look, but before he could say anything Present Mic announced, “Oh, we’ve got one last minute retraction. Sorry Listeners, but the first place winner is *not* Izuku Midoriya!”

*What?* I thought, looking upwards at the screens that lined the top of the stadium, watching as I saw myself, running full tilt towards the exit. It shifted, to Midoriya and Ochaco, the former saying something while the latter nodded as he stopped running, landing on all four in a pose that All Might had shown me yesterday.

Todoroki and Bakugo closed in on him, before, for just a moment, Deku was wreathed with green lightning, taking off so hard he left behind a shockwave, using all four limbs for as much force as he could generate. The camera, in slow motion, tracked as, weightless, he flew up and over me, slowly spinning in a zero-G somersault as he blasted forward, passing me completely.

The shot changed, to the exit of the tunnel, stopping as a single red sneaker peaked out, going frame by frame to show that the foot *wasn’t* Midoriya’s.

“And so we announce that the winner of the Obstacle Course isn’t Izuku Midoriya,” the Pro Hero announced, “though he did come in second. No, listeners, that Honor goes to *Ochaco Uraraka!”*