

**(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)**

**A/N: First Day!**

**-x-X-x-**

“Hi there, you must be Blonde Blazer! It’s a pleasure to meet you!”

Mandy straightens up a little bit, the smile on Mei Hatsume’s face proving to be rather infectious as they shake hands really quick.

“That’s right, and you must be Mei. I’m looking forward to seeing what you can do as the Phoenix Program’s primary supplier for Support Equipment!”

Undaunted as far as she can see, Mei lights up even further, looking more excited than nervous as she nods happily and all but bounces up and down.

“Me too! I’ve looked over the dossiers for this first team and I already have ideas for so many different babies to make for them!”

Intuiting that ‘babies’ in this case refers to the support items in question, Blonde Blazer files it away under Mei’s obvious idiosyncrasies and nods, pleased as can be to see that the other woman is just as eager for all of this as she is.

Truth be told, she hadn’t slept a wink last night. Knowing that today was the first day of the Phoenix Program and that this was going to be ‘make or break’ as Momo liked to say... well, it was impossible to rest. She was much too wired. Fortunately, the abilities granted to her by the necklace Melissa had made for her meant sleep wasn’t as critical as it otherwise would be.

Turning away from Mei and towards the other person in this conversation, Mandy takes a moment to appreciate Izuku Midoriya in his new uniform. Knowing that he’s an extremely wealthy private individual who is funding this whole thing only makes the fact that he’s wearing a PDN Dispatcher’s Uniform, complete with the button up shirt and PDN logo, all the more engaging.

But then, there's always the way he fills the clothes out... he's a lot more fit than she was expecting, and while the shirt isn't too small or anything, she can still detect some muscles under it that she hadn't been able to see when he was wearing a full business suit.

"Izuku... good to have you here as well. Here's hoping we have an excellent first day!"

Smirking, Izuku nods.

"It'll go well, I'm sure of it. Especially since you'll be leading the team at first like we discussed."

Right. It made sense, frankly. While publicly Blonde Blazer was the head of the entire Phoenix Program and therefore should have been spending time behind a desk dealing with paperwork... the truth was, the Phoenix Program was still too small for that to really be necessary. At just one experimental team, they were much better off having her in the field with the rest of the team members, leading by example and showing them how a real Pro Hero did things.

... Not that Mandy didn't think that they weren't all capable of being real Pro Heroes as well! Especially Courtney... fuck was she glad she'd been able to get Courtney into the Phoenix Program. It hadn't been hard or anything, but she had been a little bit surprised by all of the others who had been found. Not that she minded, she wouldn't have even known where to begin with recommendations if she'd needed to find anyone else other than Courtney.

"Right. The team should be assembled out in the office... should we go introduce ourselves to them, do you think?"

Izuku chuckles and nods.

"Yes, I think that'd be a good idea. Just remember, out there you're in charge... even above me and Mei here. Any really big decisions, please run them by me

first... but otherwise, I trust you to make the right calls where necessary. Only defer to me in matters of dispatch, alright?”

Right, that made sense. She flushes a little bit at that mild rebuke, nodding along as she purses her lips. It was a delicate balancing act, wasn't it? On the one hand, they needed the team to respect her as their leader. On the other hand, they also needed the team to respect Izuku as their Dispatcher. Too much in any one direction and they'd start to question things... and for a bunch of former villains, questioning could lead to mistakes being made.

Still, no use stressing about what might be. All she could do was put her best foot forward and hold to make a stellar first impression!

Leading the way into the greater office that PDN has 'assigned' to the Phoenix Program, it doesn't take long to find the group of former villains waiting for them near the front of the building.

As she approaches with Izuku and Mei in tow, Blazer can't help but soak in the view, eyeing the women who are all trying to make the best of the second chance on offer. Some of them she's had her own encounters with... others she only knows by reputation. All of them though... deserve to be redeemed if they're willing to work for it.

All eyes turn towards her of course as they arrive, her presence commanding attention. Smiling brightly, Mandy clasps her hands together in front of her.

“Good morning everyone! Welcome to the Phoenix Program... I'm really glad to have you all with us and I'm really excited to see what you're capable of out in the field!”

Glances are exchanged between everyone for a moment, nobody quite seeming to know how to respond. Until finally, Courtney clasps and wolf whistles.

“Woo, Phoenix Program!”

Mandy immediately flushes, a little embarrassed by Courtney's enthusiasm. Especially because she knows it's at least somewhat feigned. The other woman has never been the most... exuberant of people, so she's either faking it to tease her, or faking it to try and make her feel better.

Silence reigns for a moment after Courtney's outburst... before Malevola pumps a fist in the air.

"Fuck yeah! Phoenix Program!"

That seems to break through to the rest of them, as others cheer... or at least smile. Prism, Uravity, and La Brava all get on board rather quickly. The only one who doesn't is Killer Frost, aka Fuyumi Todoroki, who is picking at the sleeves of her new outfit. Her former costume had been a bit too villainous and obviously associated with bad memories, so they'd gotten her something new that made her look more like a Yuki Onna. She was rebranding to Lady Frost from what Mandy knew, so it worked really well.

It also wasn't surprising that she didn't have any sort of cheer or smile, given her history. For a moment, Blazer is tempted to try and directly include her anyways in some way... but she holds off, deciding that singling Fuyumi out on Day One might not be the best idea, all things considered. Especially not when this first impression was going so well so far otherwise!

"Right, before we get started, I want to introduce you girls to two very important people. First, this is Mei Hatsume, Head of Lightly Labs, a brand new manufacturer of Hero Support Items. She'll be the Phoenix Program's primary supplier for Support Equipment going forward."

There's an immediate stir at that and Blazer's smile has a reason to falter for the first time as some of the former villains trying to become heroes narrow their eyes. La Brava in particular frowns as she takes in Mei.

"Hang on, I thought PDN had an exclusive contact with Melissa Shield from I-Island."

Prism nods along, also eyeing Mei up and down.

“That’s right. What, are we not good enough for Shield or something?”

Mandy blanches. She hadn’t really thought about it in those terms, but from their perspective it really must look like they didn’t have the full faith of PDN. And that could turn out to be disastrous, because feeling like they were already the red headed stepchild of their parent company could lead these first members of the Phoenix Program to decide the whole venture was doomed from the start! And if they decided that... it would be doomed from the start.

The problem was, Mei Hatsume was only the Phoenix Program’s Support Item Supplier because it was one of Izuku’s demands... only, his financial support and true involvement in the Phoenix Program was supposed to be a secret!

He’d just got done all but telling her not to look to him for every little problem that cropped up, but in this case, Mandy really doesn’t quite know what to do. Her eyes start to trail over to Izuku anyways... but before she can fully look to the man, Mei herself steps forward, a smile on her face.

“Momo Yaoyorozu and I actually go back a fair bit! We went to UA at the same time... and in a way, she’s giving me the same chance she’s giving all of you. Because of unfortunate circumstances, I couldn’t start Lightly Labs right after graduating from UA. But now... now I’m getting another opportunity!”

Sweeping her gaze across them all, Mei’s smile widens into a big grin.

“All I ask is that you all give me an opportunity... because just looking at you, I can already envision all of the babies I want to make with you ladies!”

There’s a pause as those words hang in the air, before Blonde Blazer lets out a nervous laugh and waves her hands around in front of her.

“She’s talking about Support Items, to be clear! And even if the way she put it is a little... odd, it actually ties into why she’s here really well! While yes, PDN does have a contract with Melissa over on I-Island, the fact is that she can’t be

everywhere at once. A lot of the time, the work her company does for PDN heroes is... impersonal.”

She’s really just making shit up as she goes along here admittedly, but actually, she’s starting to build up steam as the bullshit begins to coalesce into a real, legitimate-sounding reason for Mei’s presence.

“Mei being here... and being just as hungry to succeed as all of you, means that you girls can schedule one-on-one consults with her for specialized Support Equipment that only you can use! All expenses paid by the Phoenix Program!”

Just like that... any disdain or worry disappears from the faces of the women in front of her. All of them are looking at Mei in a brand new, far more favorable light. Internally, Mandy can’t help but breath a sigh of relief. That had been close... more than that though, Mei had talked about ‘babies’ much more normally before. What was with that innuendo the moment she had a much bigger audience?!

Deciding that it wasn’t worth fretting about for now, Mandy instead turns to the other person behind her, who at this point has drawn more than a few curious, assessing looks from the team.

“As well, last but certainly not least... we have Izuku Midoriya here. Your Dispatcher!”

There’s a pause as everyone takes this in. Then, Malevola makes a noise in the back of her throat.

“Right. PDN uses Dispatchers, don’t they? That’s what sets you apart from the rest of the Pro Hero Agencies. Well... that and the subscriptions anyways.”

Blonde Blazer’s smile turns a little wooden at that, her hackles immediately rising just a tad.

“That’s correct! While the other Pro Hero Agencies rely upon authorities such as the Hero Commission and Emergency Services to tell them where to go, we

prefer a more... in-house approach. Mister Midoriya here will be sending you... or rather us all out on missions as they come in. He'll tell us where we need to go and what we're going to be up against. He'll be our eyes in the sky so to speak, the man in the chair. As a long time member of PDN, I can tell you all that this system isn't just tried and tested... it works, no matter what sort of nasty rumors you might have heard."

There's a pause as they all process that, followed by, much to Mandy's surprise, Fuyumi finally breaking her silence.

"Us?"

The white-haired woman looks at her with narrowed eyes, prompting Blazer to puff out her chest a bit more.

"Yes. I know what some of the media has been saying about the Phoenix Program... that they're wasting me by putting me behind a desk to head this program and that it will never work and my power is being wasted here. But they're wrong and they're all about to find out just how wrong they are!"

Sweeping her gaze back and forth across the assembled women, she slams a fist into a palm.

"First, they think that you lot can't make anything of yourselves... but I know that you can! Second, they think that they're trading me for all of you... but that's where they're wrong. With Izuku here to be our Dispatcher, there's no reason for me to sit behind a desk any time soon... instead, I'll be going out into the field with all of you so we can show all of the naysayers that the Phoenix Program is top notch!"

That, to her immense relief, gets a positive reaction across the board. Even Fuyumi smiles faintly against her will. Which was good, because frankly... there was every world where the former villains might have taken Mandy's presence among them as some sort of baby-sitting thing. Or maybe even taken it to mean that there was no real faith in them and that she was going to be taking all the credit.

She wasn't, to be clear. At least, that wasn't her intention. They were her teammates now. She wasn't their sitter; she wasn't their minder. All of them were already Pro Heroes in her eyes... they just had to convince the rest of the world of the same thing.

Although... realizing she's sort of done a lot of talking, Mandy does look to Izuku with a smile. She'd introduced him, but she hadn't given him a chance to introduce himself like Mei had.

"Mister Midoriya, as the Team Dispatcher, would you like to say a few words before we get started with our first day?"

There, that was perfectly innocuous, right?

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**A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!**