

## The Capitalist Hero

I floated in the air and watched the yellow-winged creature, a so-called 'Nomu', fall from the sky. It trailed blood and viscera from the gaping hole in its torso from the explosive shot I'd put in its chest.

Ultimately, defeating it hadn't proved too difficult. I could fly faster and with greater agility, and I had a ranged weapon. As a fourteen-year-old I might not be permitted a true firearm, but U.A. High School's Support Department had really come through with my specially modified air rifle. Semi-auto fire accurate out to 250m and a fifty-shot magazine, it was quite the lethal weapon, and completely unregulated. Not as dangerous as the Mondragon I'd carried in my previous life, but adequate for the urban environment most Heroes operated in. I planned to buy one for my private use as soon as my first sponsorship deal went through.

Of course, the real damage was done by the explosive spell I placed on the pellets. Nomu were tough bastards, even a full-powered firearm might not have downed it otherwise. That was also why I spent a couple of minutes watching the creature's corpse to make sure it didn't get up again. Apparently, one of the other creatures attacking Hosu City had regeneration, and was proving a right pain to take down.

Once again, I wondered if I'd done the right thing signing up for U.A. High's Hero program. In this world, with a society so similar to that of my very first life, I could have easily used the mental advantage of being a reincarnate to aim for a cushy job in the civilian sector.

Unfortunately, I had not been born in this world by accident. Being X, dissatisfied that I had gone to my grave in my second life without once showing him true faith, had proven himself a sore loser and once more stuck me as an orphan baby in a new world. I retained all the magical powers I had possessed in my second life, only now they were my Quirk, and I could use them as innate abilities instead of relying on a computational orb. This was not a blessing but a curse, because with those powers came the knowledge that I could gain even greater power at any time. All I had to do was give in and pray with genuine faith to that wannabe deity.

That was not happening. But, judging by my past life, if I tried to keep my head down and live quietly, Being X would go out of his way to put me in danger. I needed to train my Quirk to maximum effectiveness, I needed to get other powerful Quirk users I could use as meat-shields, and the best way to achieve both goals was to become a pro Hero, and U.A. had the best program for such.

So here I was, hunting down Nomus, as was to be expected of a member of Class 1-A, U.A.'s elite Hero class.

I activated my radio. "This is Titania, Winged Nomu down. Where do I go next?"

As a final 'fuck you', instead of restoring me to a male body, Being X had kept me as a tiny blonde girl. At least a healthy diet meant I was now a magnificent 5'1" tall. And Titania was a bit more dignified than Tanya.

My mental grumbling came to a halt as I processed what I was hearing on the radio. Three of my fellow classmates had somehow gotten entangled with the Hero Killer Stain.

I of course knew about Stain. A noted serial killer who targeted Pro Heroes. I'd marked him as a threat I might face later in my career, but since he didn't go after children I'd thought myself safe from him for the moment.

Leaving my fellow students to die wasn't an option. When the world's greatest Hero was your homeroom teacher, there were certain standards one had to maintain if one wanted a glowing recommendation. Gritting my teeth, I poured on the speed.

A minute later, I'd located my foolish comrades. Fortunately, instead of butchering them, Stain had stopped to monologue.

I didn't pay too much attention to what he was saying at first. I was focused on sneaking close enough under an illusion to get the drop on him. Then the content of his speech penetrated, and I couldn't control my tongue. "HOW DARE YOU!!"

Watching Stain and my fellow students jump in surprise might have been amusing at another time, but I was far too furious to care.

"I thought you were killing for heroes for some kind of sick thrill! Now I hear you're doing it for such a stupid reason! Because you, what, don't like Heroes getting *paid*?"

"Heroes who chase wealth instead of acting out of conviction are an insult to the name of--"

"SHUT UP!! Heroes are people too, and just like people they are motivated by self-interest! Knights slay dragons for the hand of the princess, not for the fun of it! Jason sought the Golden Fleece to win for himself a kingdom! Musashi's sword earned him fortune and fame! And if I have to risk my life fighting vile criminals like you, I expect, no I DEMAND to be compensated for my work!"

I could feel the waves of his anger beating against my mental enhancement spells. "Girl," he growled, "You are lucky you are so young. I am truly tempted to end you here --"

"End me! Hah!" I flew thirty meters up and aimed my rifle. "You can't even touch me! You pathetic little COMMUNIST!"

Izuku was bleating something at me but I paid no attention, firing off an explosive spell. Stain... he was *fast*. Even with my mental enhancement, I barely saw him move as he springboarded off the nearby buildings and launched himself at me, sword first. At that velocity, he might even have gotten through my mage shell.

If I had been where he was aiming at.

The illusory double popped like a soap bubble as he passed through, and it took every ounce of my own speed to reach out and grab him by the foot. But then he was dangling in the air with no leverage.

Credit to him, he instantly folded his body with no apparent effort to slash at me. So I tossed him up in the air, drew my pocket knife, and got to work.

In one of the little legal ironies, I could freely carry a lethal air rifle, but not a combat knife. Utility knives were fine though, and all I really needed was a strong edge to project a mage blade. Without a solid surface to leverage himself off of, all Stain could do was flail at me as I came at him.

My first slash removed his sword, along with several fingers. Then I got under him and kicked him into the air to give myself more time. Then I really got to work. Wrists, elbows, knees, hamstrings, achilles. All the parts that kept a body mobile, I cut and stabbed. It didn't matter how strong or fast he was if none of his muscles were connected to each other anymore. There was quite a bit of blood, but I'd taken first aid courses. I was confident I could keep him from bleeding out until the police got here. As he got near the ground, I drove him in with a knee to the chest and the satisfying crunch of breaking ribs.

As he coughed blood, I hopped off him and flicked the blood off my knife. "Take heart, Stain. When I'm a world famous Pro Hero with my own product line, I'll be sure to tell all the reporters, 'I wouldn't be here today if the words of the Hero Killer Stain hadn't motivated me to fight.' How's that for conviction?"

Glancing around, I spotted my fellow students staring at me. Well, not too surprising, even in the Sports Festival I hadn't needed to go all out to take the trophy. But then I noticed Tenya was looking pretty rough. Looks like Stain did a number on him. "Hold on there Tenya, I have some bandages --" I broke off as all three of them, even the injured one, scooted several feet back.

I immediately looked behind me, but no, Stain was still failing to crawl out of the hole I'd put him in. I turned around and scowled. "What is up with you lot now?!"