

Like I Belong || Connor/Chloe, Reed900, Simarkus

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Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence , Major Character Death
Categories:	F/F , F/M , M/M
Fandom:	Detroit: Become Human (Video Game)
Relationships:	Upgraded Connor RK900/Gavin Reed , Connor/RT600 "Chloe" Android(s) (Detroit: Become Human) , Markus/Simon (Detroit: Become Human) , Tina Chen & Chris Miller & Gavin Reed , Tina Chen/North (Detroit: Become Human) , Hank Anderson & Connor , Hank Anderson & Gavin Reed , Connor & Markus (Detroit: Become Human) , Connor & North (Detroit: Become Human) , Connor & Simon (Detroit: Become Human) , Connor & Josh (Detroit: Become Human) , Connor & Josh & Markus & North & Simon (Detroit: Become Human) , Carl Manfred & Markus , Carl Manfred & Leo Manfred , Carl Manfred & Jericho Members , Kara/Luther (Detroit: Become Human) , Kara & Alice Williams (Detroit: Become Human) , Kara & Luther & Alice Williams (Detroit: Become Human) , Luther & Alice Williams (Detroit: Become Human) , Jerry(s)/Ralph (Detroit: Become Human)
Characters:	Connor (Detroit: Become Human) , Upgraded Connor RK900 , Hank Anderson , Main Menu Chloe ST200 , Original Chloe RT600 , Gavin Reed , Gavin Reed's Cat , Markus (Detroit: Become Human) , Simon (Detroit: Become Human) , North (Detroit: Become Human) , Josh (Detroit: Become Human) , Sumo (Detroit: Become Human) , Jeffrey Fowler , President Cristina Warren , Tina Chen (Detroit: Become Human) , Chris Miller (Detroit: Become Human) , Carl Manfred , Leo Manfred , Ripple Blue-Haired Traci's Girlfriend , Echo Blue-Haired Traci , Elijah Kamski , Kara (Detroit: Become Human) , Luther (Detroit: Become Human) , Alice Williams (Detroit: Become Human) , Ralph (Detroit: Become Human) , Jerry(s) (Detroit: Become Human)
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[Human](#)), [markus and simon are awkward gays](#), [Simon is shy](#), [Markus is also shy](#), [north is a lesbian](#), [Josh is all alone](#), [Hank is like an awkward uncle with the jericho crew](#), [Love Confessions](#), [Falling In Love](#), [Eventual Smut](#), [Android Gore \(Detroit: Become Human\)](#), [Murder Mystery](#), [Hurt/Comfort](#), [Near Death Experiences](#), [Kara and Alice and Luther are planning to come back to Detroit](#), [Luther is still a teddy bear](#), oh and also [androids can be modified for sex in this au](#), [Androids Have Genitalia \(Detroit: Become Human\)](#), [gavin has three cats](#), [Two girls and one boy](#), [The parents are Tina and Mr. Heavy and the kitten is Bagel](#)

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by [Pineapple_Fanta](#)

Summary

"As I watched you play...something...has changed in me."

"I feel...different."

"I feel...I am someone."

In which the Menu Screen Chloe (who I will have to be Kamski's main Chloe in this AU) goes to find the Connor she has heard so much about and admired in her state of slavery. Little does she know, Connor is dealing with his own personal issues after becoming deviant, including having to share a house with Hank, who still hasn't gotten over his metal phase.

Oh and also... Feelings are hard.

Kamski is like a creepy uncle but also supportive.

Hank is honestly just confused 24/7.

Side ships include: Markus x Simon, Gavin x RK900, Luther x Kara, meaning some chapters will be directly about them and not just implied. Mostly Reed900 tho.

the beginning

"Connor, what the hell are you doin'?" Hank asked aggrivatedly. Today was yet another day they were on a homicide case that was just plain obvious. They were tired of investigating and had already collected the necessary evidence, however they were unable to leave because they were waiting for the witnesses to calm down so they could hear their reports. In the meantime, Connor was concerned with his appearance, and was checking himself out in the mirror in the bathroom. He was just fixing his hair, but he understood after Hank mentioned his behavior that it was probably strange to do this next to a corpse. Yeah...sometimes he kind of forgot his decency after seeing so many dead bodies during this job.

"Sorry, Hank. I let my mind wander a bit too much. How much longer do you think the witnesses will be gone?" He inquired, turning to look at the older man and fixing his tie, which was no longer accompanied by his android suit, but instead a normal detective suit.

Hank facepalmed and sighed, roughing Connor up a bit by ruffling his hair playfully. "Wish I knew. C'mon, let's get outta here for a 'sec. It smells like shit." He started to walk out of the bathroom, but Connor didn't follow at first. In fact, Hank noticed the boy's presence was missing after he walked out and turned back around, leaning against the inside of the doorframe. "S'everything alright?" He looked directly into Connor's eyes, furrowing his brows in concern.

Connor averted his gaze momentarily and evaded the question, moving toward the door and slipping past Hank quietly. He felt somewhat empty, and he couldn't quite place where his disillusionment was coming from. Something was bothering him, but he was confused, so he just stayed silent. Eventually, Hank grabbed his arm and pulled him outside where there was fresh air. It was an early morning and was humid, but at least it wasn't toxic air like that horrible smell inside the house.

The brunette was soon free from Hank's grasp, and he frowned, suddenly feeling at a loss for both words and actions. "I guess...I've just been thinking a lot...about everything. I can't go a week without being interviewed for something that happened two years ago. I get that it was revolutionary, but everything moves so quickly around me. I don't even have time to live." He let his words flow out naturally, not using his filter like usual. He didn't even realise how upset he was until he let all of this be known. The look on Hank's face was priceless, one of pure awestruck surprise.

"Connor... You shoulda said something. If you don't like people gettin' all up in your business then tell me. More importantly, tell them. I know you're quiet, but you gotta have some people skills." He patronized the boy. As he reached to grab Connor's shoulder and cheer him up, the brunette looked toward the ground in discontentment. "You'll be alright, kid." The man spoke up yet again, then removing his hand from Connor's shoulder and sighing in disapproval. This long wait was getting more unbearable by the minute. At least, finally the silence was broken after a minute, because Connor got a call.

Since Hank often was uncomfortable after seeing Connor answer calls within his mind, he had his own tangible phone now, although not very expensive. It was good enough, though. Connor looked at the unidentified caller ID and was a bit suspicious, but answered anyway. He visibly cringed when he heard Kamski's seductive voice.

"Pardon me. This is Connor, right? I have something to ask you." The way the words slipped out ever so elegantly made him shiver.

"This is he. What do you want, Kamski?" Connor made eye contact with Hank yet again, and they both shook their heads in annoyance, wondering what the man was up to now.

"Now, this might be strange, but Chloe, who has been staying here despite turning deviant, recently up-and-left because she mentioned needing to find you. I was wondering if you've seen her? Not that I mind if she roams about—however, it's just that I'm a bit concerned."

Connor couldn't deny the shock and worry he felt for Chloe, but he was preoccupied trying to understand why exactly Kamski would even care enough to contact him. They weren't really friends. Not close at all, in fact. "Sorry, no. I haven't come into contact with her. If she's looking for me she's probably at the station, but it's just an educated guess." He paused, hearing Kamski hum creepily in response to his words. He looked around and decided to explain his situation. He felt bad that he was too busy to meet with Chloe, but at the same time this felt like some kind of scheme set up by Kamski himself. It was unnerving to say the least. "Unfortunately, I can't check right now. I'm working on a case. I can send you an alert if I see her later." After he reassured his creator, suddenly the call just ended, as if Kamski had been bored by his formal speaking. It wasn't rare when that occurred, actually...

"The hell was that about? Why's that deranged asshole calling you?" Hank suddenly inquired, seemingly angered by what just took place. He was likely feeling protective after Kamski tried to get Connor to shoot someone just for information.

The android boy scoffed rudely just thinking about Kamski's behavior over the call, and at the end of it. "As if I know. I would prefer he didn't contact me. Apparently Chloe ran off earlier and he wanted to know if I had seen her." He explained briefly, but his next thoughts were interrupted as he saw Gavin in the near distance being forcefully dragged by his partner, who...annoyingly for Connor, was a superior version of his prototype, the RK900. But this was also a good thing in disguise—now that another set of detectives were on the scene, it meant they weren't required to stay. He wanted to head back to the office, but he also didn't want to bother Hank with his emotions.

Hank watched Connor's eyes trail Gavin and the RK900, which Gavin had named Richard after calling him a dick so many times and getting the idea. He noticed Connor's focused expression shift into one of disappointment, and it took him a minute to realize why the boy was so upset. Once he had a pretty good idea, he cleared his throat and scratched behind his head awkwardly. "Uh, do you wanna get outta here?"

Connor's eyes lit up when he heard these words from Hank and he flashed a subtle smile at the man as he thought of how to reply. "I would like to leave, yes...but we should probably let someone know—" before he could finish explaining, Hank tugged on his arm and began pulling him in the direction of his car. "Are we going to the station?" He asked suddenly, his selfishness getting the best of him. Once Hank let go and stood in front of the driver's door, he made eye contact with him over the hood, his eyebrows furrowed together curiously.

"Don't worry Connor. I'm takin' you to see your girlfriend." Hank teased jokingly, chuckling afterwards but watching in sudden shock when Connor averted his gaze again and covered his face in embarrassment. "Damn, uh... Really got to you, didn't it? Sorry, Con." He apologized quickly—it was just in his nature to feel guilty for stupid things like this. He was an overly caring and emotional person.

The brunette could feel a strange sensation in his chest. He almost felt dizzy from all of the sheepishness that just took him by surprise, and his cooling unit was spinning out to control to regulate his body temperature. He had never really felt this way before. "D-Don't apologize. It's fine. This is an odd, new feeling for me." He admitted shamelessly, then opening the door and getting in with Hank, who then grabbed his shoulder supportively when they were settled inside. "Hank, really... I'm... I'm okay." He reassured the man insistently, turning his head to look out the window instead of making things awkward.

Thankfully, Hank was decent enough to understand that talking anymore would be pointless, so they stayed quiet and listened to some old Weeknd music to lighten the mood. It wasn't necessarily Hank's taste, but he had noticed Connor take a liking to these types of

songs, with a mixture of hip-hop and r&b. Knights of the Black Death didn't really stick, unfortunately, so they had to compromise.

When they arrived back at the station, Connor got out of the car urgently, and Hank soon followed behind. Almost immediately after they walked inside to the front desk area, Connor caught sight of Chloe peacefully and patiently waiting. She was much different, too, even wearing a different outfit than her hostess dress. Instead, she wore a pair of high-waisted white work pants and a flowy black crop-top that hung around her shoulders with no straps. And strangely, instead of a ponytail, her hair was neatly braided in a French style. She was even more stunning than the first time they saw each other. She carried herself very well, from the looks of things.

Connor walked toward her and watched as she smiled invitingly, standing up to nearly match his height because of her black heels. "Chloe, it's good to see you." He greeted her politely, and she giggled adorably, folding her hands together in front of her shyly.

"You too, Connor... I'm glad you're doing well. I hope things eventually die down so you can get some free time." She minimized the space between their bodies as she spoke, and Connor felt a bit awkward because of it, but didn't react harshly nonetheless.

"Kamski called and mentioned that you were looking for me. I'm sorry if I kept you waiting." He admitted in a near-whisper, wanting to present himself intimately so she felt more comfortable in his presence. Before he could say anything else, he felt a sudden push behind him, almost like a jab against his back. He knew almost immediately that it was Hank messing with him, but couldn't even react to him because he had to stop his momentum before running into Chloe. Unfortunately, he did end up bumping into her a bit, but only barely, and he was stiff as a dry noodle afterwards, even wiggling his fingers and playing with his lucky coin in the other hand due to the tension.

"Ah, oops, my bad, Con. Didn't mean to bump into ya there." Hank inconspicuously spoke up, nudging the boy yet again from behind before finally going to check in at the counter.

Connor clenched his eyes shut in annoyance as Hank spoke, visibly disturbed by the man's antics even as he reopened his eyes and shook his head. "Apologies, Chloe. Hank's gone senile faster than expected." He teased the man in return as he made some distance between himself and the girl. He even stared at Hank with a fierce expression and waited for a reaction. Once Hank turned around and flipped him off, he did the same in return. It didn't feel as rewarding as he thought it would.

"I see you two are still quite friendly. I hope it stays that way..." She chuckled and gently touched her hands to his arms, sliding them down until she reached his hands. "Pardon me for asking, but... I hate to take up more of your free time—but I really would like to talk more privately when you have a chance, maybe somewhere comfortable where we can just have some time to ourselves. I hope this request doesn't sound weird. I don't know how else to ask, and I've been a little nervous to meet with you since—" she cut herself off, then letting go of his hands and moving back even more. "N-Never mind..."

"No, it's fine. You don't need to feel nervous around me. Anytime you need to talk, I'll be here to listen. Don't hesitate to ring my desk or call me. I wouldn't hate the company, to be honest." He reassured her quickly, awkwardly grabbing one of her hands and transferring his number to her electronically. "Oh, and... I hope you don't mind me saying... I think you look very pretty today. This style suits you." He flirted with her nonchalantly, though on the inside he was burning up. He had never outwardly expressed such a thing to someone other than Hank. It made him a little anxious. But thankfully she just smiled back at him charmingly.

"Thank you, Connor... I'll be in touch with you, okay? I enjoyed this." With these words, she pulled out of his grasp and politely made an exit, even bowing ever so slightly on her way outside the building.

When she was finally gone, Connor exasperated and looked behind himself, seeing Hank watching nosily through the glass door beyond the waiting room. He was embarrassed that the man had seen all of what just happened, but he couldn't stand there all day and mope around, so he turned around and went through the glass door, joining Hank inside the office. Before he could act like a distant and edgy teen and walk off, Hank grabbed him by the wrist and furrowed his brows at him in concern. "Hank..." He murmured, though he didn't say anything else because of his utter confusion. His emotions were running wild, much more rampant than usual.

"Connor, you alright, son? I was just messin' around, you know...like we always do. Is there something on your mind?" Hank asked cautiously, and for a moment the android looked lost...defeated even. But after a few seconds of silence, Connor finally pulled his arm back and looked into Hank's eyes with utmost love and admiration. He had been in a rather shitty mood until he heard...that particular word from Hank. It was the first time he had said it to him, and it made him unbelievably happy. He couldn't express his joy with words, so he quickly attacked Hank in a big hug, their biggest one yet since they got their happy ending those years ago.

Hank was confused why Connor was hugging him so tightly, but the boy wouldn't let go, and was even resting his head gently against his shoulder. It was relaxing, but also very awkward since they were in public. He eventually gave in to his guilt and wrapped his arms

hesitantly back around Connor, patting his back comfortingly. "You're alright, son. You can talk to me. You know that, right?" He reassured the boy once again, then waiting silently until Connor was well enough to pull away on his own. "Better now? Need me to kiss you goodnight too?"

Even though Connor was a bit tired of the teasing for the day, he couldn't resist a good petty remark and smiled as he shook his head in contemplation. Once he got over the nervousness, he reached his hands out and grabbed one of Hank's, his artificial skin peeling back as he made himself vulnerable to all of the overwhelming emotions. "Thank you. I... Just...thank you for everything. I wouldn't have become a deviant if it weren't for you. I wouldn't be alive at all, in fact... I feel like that needed to be said. After all, I've chosen to be distant with you for a long time. If you want me to confide in you, Hank, then...next time for sure, I will. But I promise I'm okay." He explained himself sincerely, pulling his hands away and then moving past Hank to their partnered desks with a subtle grin.

desensitized

Chapter Summary

Connor has to make important decisions, but he's still not used to this humanistic lifestyle.

Chapter Notes

Just need some good ole platonic hankcon tyvm world

Connor paced around his desk impatiently; he was waiting for a call back to hear about results from the appeal to President Warren that Markus had made about a law that would allow androids to have official certificates of identification, much like birth certificates for humans, and also allow androids to both adopt children, and be adopted into families. It was a serious step for androids. So naturally Connor was nervous...so much in fact that Hank had snapped at him a minute ago about how his nervousness was wearing off on him and making him nervous too.

It had been an hour or two since Markus told him about it, so he was expecting a call soon. As soon as his desk phone started ringing, he rushed back to his desk and pressed the speaker button, then picking up the call quickly. The voice he heard, unfortunately, was not Markus, but a random reporter asking him for an interview...for the third time in two days. Now that the days of hardship and gaining trust were over, everyone was on the hype train of supporting androids and learning their sides of the story. This had been going on for about eight months, which is why he replied ambiguously.

"Sorry, maybe I can get back to you. I'm busy." He lied, of course. He had a tendency to get sassy with reporters when they were up his ass a lot, so he was pleased he managed to stay calm. After he hung up, he folded his arms in annoyance and sighed. He was about to speak to Hank to cool off, but before he could, he was approached by his more advanced model, named Richard, who had a curious glint in his eyes.

"Your unproductivity is beginning to resemble your partner's quite a lot, Connor. In actuality, you pick up many more of his habits, don't you?" Richard teased the boy with a cynical expression, seemingly unimpressed.

Connor rolled his eyes rudely, not wanting to hear anymore unnecessary bullshit. He made eye contact with Hank, who then covered Richard's view of his mouth and mouthed 'dickhead' to him. It made him smile, which definitely elevated his mood. "I could say the same about you, Nines. You were much more likable before you started working with Detective Reed." He teased the taller android back, then staring at him intensely. "Speaking of...don't you need to go kiss his ass a little more? I'm sure he gets off on that." He joked maturely, and Hank looked up at him in shock, unable to close his mouth.

"Jesus, I'm a bad influence." The man chuckled to himself, watching Richard's stoic expression finally morph into an offended, maybe even hurt expression. Thankfully, it got the bastard to walk away. "I'm definitely not gonna get used to hearing you talk like an adult. It's like hearing a child cuss in front of me." He admitted shamelessly, and Connor looked at him with troubled eyes.

"Being compared to a child isn't exactly good for me. I know I'm only a few years old, but androids don't age regardless..." Connor explained his discomfort with Hank's analogy, but suddenly the disillusionment became intrigue, because Hank seemed to have something on his mind.

The lieutenant's eyes shifted around at the ground in thought for a moment, and then he leaned back in his chair, making eye contact yet again. "Now that I think about it, I never really considered your age... You don't have a birthday or anything... You uh...got a manufacture date?" He asked gingerly, and Connor smiled at the man's silly question, wondering why it was so important to him.

"Of course I do. I was built as a prototype for a specific deviant case on August 15th, 2038. I may be a newer model, but I can assure you my age does not affect my maturity. I mean, look how you act, and you're 55." He smirked slightly at Hank, then walking over to him and taking a seat on the corner of his desk like he did very often. "Only messing with you. But you are an asshole sometimes." He joked, chuckling along with Hank as the man playfully nudged him.

"Wait a minute." The older man tapped on Connor's thigh. "That's in two days, isn't it? So I could technically say your birthday is in two days. What do you want?" He asked genuinely, a subtle smile on his lips.

The brunette looked down at his hands in thought, his LED whirring and blinking red since he was in a state of such deep concentration. He didn't know what he wanted for his birthday. It had never occurred to him that he would ever get a gift like that. "Nothing, really. I can't think of anything I'd want other than..." He paused, nearly exposing one of his biggest secrets to Hank. It wouldn't even be possible unless Markus' appeal got through. "Never mind. It's not really important." He returned a smile, and Hank sighed in disappointment.

"Didn't you just say earlier that you would be more open with me? If you really are nervous about telling me something, then I promise I won't make fun of you." He tried to reassure Connor, but suddenly their conversation was interrupted as the phone started ringing yet again.

This time Connor turned the speaker off and pressed the phone to his ear, answering the call afterwards. He remained on Hank's desk since he did feel more comfortable there. "Hello? This is Connor." He greeted the caller, and eventually he heard Markus' voice. He listened to him talk about his progress with Warren during his appeal, and that she had agreed to consider passing a law in the favor of deviants who wanted families. "That's...amazing news. I'm sure Carl will be proud. Thank you for letting me know. And...if there's anything you need me to do to help, do not hesitate to let me know." He was more than willing to help Markus after everything the man had done for him in Jericho, and especially after the attack.

He listened to the deviant leader's request and blinked as he tried to understand what he should say in return. His expression was focused and thoughtful, though on the inside he was moderately confused. "I... I know I'm an interrogator, but it doesn't make me any less nervous. I've never spoken to President Warren before. My people-skills are sub-par at best."

Hank stood up from his chair when he heard this and left Connor alone to give him some privacy, heading to the break room for some coffee with Chris and Gavin. He motioned a goodbye to the android before leaving, of course.

Markus made an extraordinary point about why Connor should meet with the president, so the boy was genuinely considering it, but he was still quite anxious. "Okay, I understand... When does she have time to meet?" He asked softly, though his calm demeanor quickly fell apart as Markus gave him the date: August 15th. He froze for a moment thinking about what Hank had said to him. "That's..." He began to make a remark, but stopped himself when Markus questioned him about his tone. "It's nothing. Can you let her know I'll be attending?" After he said this they said their farewells, and then he placed the phone back in its holster.

Taking an unnecessary breath, he slipped off of Hank's desk and fixed his tie, then heading toward the entrance to get some fresh air. Once he was outside on the sidewalk, he blinked rapidly due to his stress levels increasing. As he went to lean against the outer wall of the

building, he noticed a homeless man collapsed on the side of the road, where he was blocking the street unintentionally. Connor was good-matured, so he redirected his attention to the man and hurried over to him, helping him up and assisting him to a bench on the other side of the street. "Are you feeling alright, sir? Do you need medical attention?" He asked urgently, comforting the civilian as best as he could.

"I don't have any money... It doesn't matter what I need." The man replied coldly, and Connor furrowed his eyebrows in concern. "Thank you, kid. Anyone else would have left me on the street. I think I'll be fine, though. Go on and leave me, don't worry." He reassured Connor. Obviously it didn't completely get the android boy to leave, but it did sway him dramatically.

"I can't do much for you, but if you wait here I'll bring you a hot coffee from our break room. I'll only be a minute." He patted the man's shoulder gently, then crossing the street in a rush to get back to the station. Once back inside he walked past the gate and directly toward the break room. When he arrived, he ignored the others and went straight for the coffee machine, filling a cup with the brown beverage and closing a lid over it.

Before he could exit the break room, he was suddenly afflicted with a strangely painful sensation in his leg. He didn't know why it was hurting so much now, after almost a week since he was injured. He assumed that, since CyberLife repair stores were so overworked, they must have not done too well a job repairing his leg. But despite barely being able to stand, he forced his way up and pushed through the pain, eventually making it back outside. When he reached the man on the bench, he handed the coffee to him carefully.

Despite not getting a reply, he took the man's nod as a sincere gratitude and smiled with what little strength could resist. After a moment of making sure nothing else was wrong, Connor made his way back to the station once again. He stumbled whilst returning to his desk, but thankfully, and oddly enough, Gavin was the one who found him struggling and helped him back. Once he was in his desk chair, he grunted and reached down to his leg, lifting up his pant leg slightly to examine the dripping thirium. "This is very annoying." He complained childishly, then removing his shoe and removing the skin on his lower right leg. Once it was all white, he expanded the hatch on his knee, then swiftly removing the part of his leg with the injury.

"You know, you're actually pretty good at fitting in with the humans until you do disgusting shit like this." Gavin folded his arms and watched as Connor dealt with his screwed up biocomponent. He noticed he was struggling trying to diagnose like he usually did, and his LED was red, so he ended up yanking the lower leg from Connor's hands, then strolling away and handing it over to Richard, who was able to easily diagnose and understand the problem.

"There is a substance that is causing your other biocomponents to react and burn. This used to be a gunshot wound, so there's a possibility it's gunpowder." Nines explained the situation clearly, then carefully opening the back part of the leg to see inside. "Yes, this does look pretty bad..." With this, he handed the leg back to Connor so he could see for himself. "You need a new leg biocomponent, then. Hold on just a moment." He didn't wait for a response and left the room, going to the storage closet where plenty of different equipment was held.

Connor rolled his eyes in annoyance hearing that he needed a new leg. Yeah, he already knew that, which is why he told whoever "fixed" him to do that in the first place. "This shouldn't have become an issue." After he spoke, he watched Hank walk over with a discouraged expression, pursing his lips together tightly.

"It's like I'm always saying...humans are bags of garbage sometimes. I seriously don't doubt that the person who was gonna fix you got high and messed everything up." Hank put his hand on top of Connor's head and played with his synthetic hair for a moment, wanting to calm the boy down after seeing his distressed demeanor.

Gavin snorted at the sight of Hank so mushy and caring toward someone, trying to hold back his provocative laughter. "You're really starting to treat Connor like your replacement son. You want someone to confide in you that badly?" He insulted the man, and he swore Connor looked more defensive than Hank when the words left his mouth.

"That's enough! You need to shut the hell up." The brunette shoved Gavin away a bit, though he was fuming because he wanted to be able to stand and intimidate the other. "Nobody will ever be able to replace Hank's own flesh and blood. He loved his son more than anything. So don't talk about him like he's not important. Ever again." He threatened Gavin with a broad voice, clenching his fists to let off some steam.

Hank had been upset at Gavin, and still was, but instead of showing it, he instead looked at the android with loving eyes. "Connor... It's okay. He's just trying to get under my skin." He reassured the boy, letting out a strained breath when Richard finally came back and broke the tension between Gavin and Connor. As Richard replaced Connor's leg, Hank tried to continue comforting him. He could never express how grateful he was to be stood up for like that. "Thanks, Richie Rich." Once Gavin's partner stood up, so did Connor, and he put his shoe on after getting situated.

"You should be more careful, Connor." Richard replied encouragingly, then roughly grabbing onto Gavin's arm and dragging him off to his desk.

Connor was finally beginning to calm down a bit, so he turned to face Hank, who was quick to pull him close by the shoulder into yet another hug. These modes of affection were so relaxing, so lurid. He felt so at-home and so loved being with Hank like this. "Hank, I know I could never replace your son, but...I wouldn't mind...that kind of relationship with you." He admitted shamefully, glad he could enjoy the moment instead of the mood getting ruined by their evident awkwardness when it came to serious talks.

growing

Chapter Summary

Connor is slowly starting to trust his mind again, and Hank is being supportive as ever. They share some talks and jams on the way to the airport.

SneaK-peek into Gavin and Nines' morning routine of bitching and crying.

Chapter Notes

ok don't tell anyone but I love Connor this is how I act irl

"I'm so fuckin' tired. Connor, can you drive us to the airport?" It was the next day, a Tuesday, August 14th. Hank had to pull an all-nighter to plan their trip to D.C., and he was only going in the first place because Connor had seemed really upset about something and didn't want the kid to be alone. At the moment, they were packing the car with a small suitcase that fit both of their clothes in it for a two day trip, and several other things as well.

"Sure. But I'm bringing my ticket book just in case. Unsafe drivers exist everywhere." Connor explained coolly, catching the keys when Hank suddenly threw them over. "Simon should be here momentarily. Since you were busy planning last night, I had to find someone who was comfortable taking care of Sumo...and it wasn't easy. For some reason, many of the others are afraid of dogs." He mentioned, playing with his coin as he awaited the blonde's arrival.

Hank leaned against the car lazily, shielding his eyes from the bright morning sun with the hand that also held his cup of coffee. Before he could say anything in response, suddenly a taxi drove up to his place. Once the door opened, he watched a man with blond hair step out. To his surprise, Markus followed behind him. He didn't really know what to say to them, considering he rarely ever talked to them, unlike Connor. "Uh...um...thanks for lookin' after Sumo." He awkwardly thanked the two, and they smiled at him.

Connor managed a weak smile, approaching Simon and Markus slowly. "It's good to see you two. I left instructions on the table just in case, but you can call me if you need advice." He informed the two, looking between them since they seemed a little preoccupied.

"Of course, Connor. You don't need to be so uptight. We're friends." Simon replied compassionately, sticking his arm out and clenching his fist. Connor looked at him confused for a moment, tilting his head, and then finally pressed his fist to Simon's a few seconds later, still very clearly not understanding the gesture. "It's just a fist-bump. Don't worry." He chuckled, and Markus grinned in response,

"Fist-bump...got it." The brunette timidly replied, feeling somewhat accomplished after learning a new interaction method. "Um..." He glanced at Hank's front door, then remembering to pull the key to the house out of his pocket. He handed it to Simon, then backing away and adjusting his tie. "Well then...we'll be back in two days. Thank you in advance for watching over Sumo."

Hank rolled his eyes and yanked on Connor's sleeve, pulling him over to the driver's seat door. "Let's get going. This awkward shit is killing me." He moved to the other side of the car, getting inside and sitting in the passenger's seat.

Connor furrowed his brows and opened the door, shaking his head as he sat down in front of the wheel. After starting the car, he closed the door, then looking down at his lap in disappointment. "Sorry if I said something to upset you. I still sometimes get nervous around Markus and the others from Jericho, because I can't help feeling responsible." He explained sincerely, his voice becoming quiet as he buckled himself up. He frowned as he placed his hand on the wheel, the other reaching toward the gearshift. Before he could change gears, Hank suddenly put a hand over his, squeezing it reassuringly. "Hank...?" He muttered, incredulous due to the immense stress he still felt.

"Connor, I barely know any of those guys and even I can tell they don't harbor any bad feelings toward you. Plus, I mean, you're like the Justin Timberlake of androids so I seriously doubt anyone with a heart could hate you." Hank reassured the boy, then removing his hand and taking a sip of his coffee.

Although perturbed at Hank's comment, Connor shifted the gear into drive and pressed on the gas pedal, his eyes focused on the road. "Who is Justin Timberlake? I don't think I really understand your reference." He asked boldly, though he never looked at Hank, primarily

because he still abided by the law very strictly and didn't feel safe looking away from the street in front of him.

Hank sighed and leaned against the passenger door, staring outside through the windshield. "He's just some handsome, overrated singer who was popular around 30 years ago. At least, that's when his peak was. Kind of hate to admit he had some good music when I was 25." Connor nodded in response to the detailed reply, though he got an idea that he wanted to admit (and yet one he figured Hank would hate to hear).

"Well, I'm glad to know you finally see the truth about my looks." He grinned and snickered the moment the words left his mouth, knowing his cocky attitude is what sometimes got them arguing over pointless things. "If you don't mind, I would like to hear some of his music. Do you have a favorite song of his from the 2000s?"

"Oh boy...uh... Well, he was in a boy-band, but he left when I was like, 17, and went solo. Do you wanna hear sappy love-song crap or his solo stuff?" Hank suggested, and Connor hummed in thought, checking the mirrors and then turning into the highway.

"Either one, really. Whatever you'd like, Hank." Connor continued smiling, enjoying the peaceful air between them that he never felt with any other person, whether they be human or android. The bond he had with Hank was indescribable, though. He couldn't stand feeling so confused about his emotions.

The car was silent for a moment while Hank set up his bluetooth, and eventually he heard a rather swaggy, cool beat that just made him want to strut confidently down a street. He couldn't explain why it got him in a seductive mindset...it just kind of had that effect on him. When the lyrics came, he definitely understood why. "I'm going to end up making this my ringtone because of you." He admitted cheekily, finally glancing over at Hank and watching him chuckle.

"Yeah, please do that." Hank sarcastically replied, scoffing a bit in astonishment. "Great. Now every time I see you I'm gonna hear this song in my head." He facepalmed, finishing off his coffee as the song continued playing throughout the car's speakers.

Connor found it astounding how humans could associate something with people so strongly, especially with the help of inside jokes. He wondered what it was like for Hank to

hear a song and immediately think of someone he knew because of it—obviously just his assumption, but he figured since Hank loved music so much, he experienced this often.

As he pondered about it, he found himself tapping his hand against the wheel along with the beat of the song, doing it subconsciously since he was rather focused. It was very catchy and he couldn't help himself. "Hank, if you need some rest, you should take a nap." He changed the subject, hoping to implore the man to take his advice. He was always worried about Hank in one way or another.

Hank didn't reply at first, frowning since Connor was so concerned about him rather than himself. "I'll be fine. I gotta coffee for a reason." He was a little sassy with his tone, but he didn't really mean to act that way—it's just how he was.

Despite him saying this, of course, he did end up passing out around fifteen minutes later. Hank slept the rest of the way to the airport, around forty more minutes. Connor listened to Hank's jazz playlist, rather than his typical trendy playlist, during the drive.

Contrary to Hank and Connor's relaxing drive to the airport, Gavin and Richard, who were up bright and early for other reasons, were already messing with each other. In fact, Richard took every condiment from the fridge and stuck them on top of it so the human couldn't reach them. This was around 5am, and when Gavin woke up around 6, he went to the kitchen to make coffee and still didn't notice.

Instead of giving away the surprise, Richard walked over to Gavin from behind and placed his hands on the counter to trap the man. "Detective Reed, you should really stop drinking so much coffee. You do know caffeine is an addictive drug, right?" He leaned his head closer, barely grazing his lips over the man's ear. "If you keep drinking coffee, it'll be harmful to your body." He explained quietly, backing up against the counter as Gavin pushed him away and grabbed his shirt aggressively.

"Shut. The fuck up. I told you I don't need your fucking advice. You're starting to sound like my damn mom." Gavin barked back, letting go of Richard and then shaking his head in annoyance as he grabbed his coffee nearby. He took a large drink of it just to be petty. "Stop staring at me...unless you wanna fight." He suddenly smirked, and Richard returned the expression, knowing that their arguments never really turned into physical fights.

"Since it's my third month staying with you, I feel like you should know by now that I don't bother with trash." Richard grabbed the coffee from Gavin's hand and poured it out into the sink, then putting the cup down and walking away without another word.

Gavin scoffed at the android's dumb insult, storming past him to his bedroom, where he could put some clothes on instead of walking around the house with just boxer briefs. "Fuckin' androids." He muttered as he slipped on some black jeans, then adjusting a belt underneath the waistbands. Once he was finished, he sat down on his bed and picked up his black cat, which was named Tina after his close cop friend. "Hey, Nines, do we have to go into the office today?" He raised his voice, his usual grumpy expression remaining even when Richard joined him in the bedroom.

"No, sir. But I'm sure Connor and Lieutenant Anderson would appreciate us taking over while they're in Washington D.C." Nines justified his preference calmly, then taking a seat next to Gavin and petting another one of his cats, named Bagel, because she looked like...well, a bagel. "What would you like to do, Detective Reed?"

Gavin rolled his eyes and leaned lazily against Richard's broad shoulder. "Fine. We'll go. And don't get me wrong. I don't feel bad or anything like that." After speaking, he nuzzled into the android habitually, seemingly very comfortable in his presence.

Richard's LED flickered yellow from the interaction. He couldn't quite place the emotion he felt, but he was burning up. This didn't happen too much, but whenever it did, he wasn't sure how to react. But instead of sitting stiff as a board like usual, he grinned and wrapped an arm loosely around Gavin's chest, beginning to gently caress up and down. "Whatever you say. We can go in a little late, then."

"Y-Yeah, sounds like a plan." Gavin closed his eyes, relaxing despite his bottled up anger regarding how cocky Richard was. He wasn't sure how androids reacted when they felt something as complex as sexual attraction, but he did know for sure that he was a hot mess. It wasn't really much of a secret that he was gay, but it also had a lot to do with why he was so abrasive and unimpressed all the time toward both Richard and Connor. Guys were hot, and he was just dealing with the side-effects 24/7.

progress

Chapter Summary

Connor and Hank arrive in Washington D.C. Meanwhile, thanks to Connor's hard work, Gavin and Nines get a few leads on the case.

Chapter Notes

Sexual tension galore yw

Once Connor and Hank arrived at the airport, they were a little early, so Hank ate breakfast while they waited for their flight to start accepting passengers. Once they were on the plane, Connor sat on the outside and Hank near the window, simply because the man didn't want to feel sick from claustrophobia. The flight was an hour and a half, and filled with the sounds of snoring from several people, but Connor ignored them and did some work on putting together pieces of evidence after Gavin and Richard collected those witness accounts yesterday. He held his tablet and sorted possibilities of motives, discerning a list of likely suspects as well from the information provided. As soon as the flight was coming to a halt, he made sure to send his deductions over to Richard, just in case they had any leads.

As soon as they were off of the plane with their luggage, it was around nine in the morning, and they still had a little time until lunch, so Connor directed Hank outside, contacting one of the airport taxis using his software. "Are you feeling okay, Hank?" He asked with concerned eyes, though he didn't want to pry since the man had slept the whole way here pretty much.

"I'm just dandy. What about you, Connor?" Hank replied grumpily, which was likely due to him waking up on the wrong side of...his seat? Either way, it wasn't really that rare, so Connor understood immediately.

"I looked over the case during the flight, and made some progress on locating possible assailants. I sent the information to Nines. I'm sure he'll pull Detective Reed out of bed and eventually make good use of it." He explained with a gentle smile. Despite the fact that he was in a good mood, he still wanted to discuss the Gavin situation with Hank, maybe when they were in the privacy of their hotel room.

Hank rubbed his eyes groggily, then leaning against Connor's shoulder in a friendly manner, as if he was worried about him. "You need a break, Con. I know you love working, but life isn't just about work. Don't you want to pick up any hobbies? Anything at all?" He suggested.

Connor looked down at the ground in thought, then making eye contact when he had an answer. "Hobbies are just things you do for fun... And in that case, I think I could say...being with you is a hobby of mine, but I also enjoy working. Being a detective is a struggle, but very intriguing and thrilling at the same time. I don't necessarily have any interests outside of work." He answered thoroughly, and Hank nodded along with his words. He seemed a little annoyed. "I do have my lucky coin, though." He pulled out the quarter from his front pant pocket, then rolling it over his knuckles skillfully.

"Yeah. You love that damn coin. As much as the noise pisses me off, it's pretty fuckin' impressive. You'd probably be good at magic tricks." After this remark, he chuckled, and finally the taxi Connor had called pulled up. He got inside and Connor joined after putting their luggage in the back. "So, what's the President wanna talk to you about? That's a pretty big deal, y'know."

"I'm not sure. I haven't really thought about it much, but maybe she just wants to understand my story." The brunette sighed, connecting to the taxi's GPS and sending the destination to the system. Once he had done this, the taxi started driving away and to the hotel building. "Hank, I was wondering...how you feel about Chloe. She was the first sentient model, created in 2021, but sometimes I feel like she has so much more emotion than a lot of deviants. Particularly...I was trying to find out more about her a few months back and found her interview recordings from 2022. Sometimes I wonder if she's been a deviant all this time. I don't know, really. Just a weird feeling of mine." After ranting, Hank scratched the top of his head in confusion, leaning back to try and relax.

"Well, after CyberLife's confidential files were released last year... I mean, it's possible Kamski deviated his androids from the start, because that was their purpose all along, you know? To create a new form of intelligent, sentient life." Thanks to his detailed opinion, Connor was feeling much more confident about his relationship with Chloe.

Connor knew he would have regretted it forever if he had shot her back then, just for an answer he could get elsewhere. It was no wonder...despite them not having souls, he could see the soul in her eyes as he aimed the gun at her forehead, and yet she stayed completely

silent. Now that he thought about it, she wasn't being still and quiet because she was programmed to, but instead because she was...terrified of dying.

The more he imagined this, he had intrusive thoughts about how different his own life would be if he had shot her. He was scared, too. It was obvious, because he was trembling. Hank did notice, and grabbed his arm gently, shaking him to try and snap him out of his trance.

"Connor! Jesus, son, you look worried to hell and back. Are you okay?" Hank finally got through to the boy, a completely clueless expression on his face.

"I-I'm okay... I just...imagined something pretty dark. It happens often, I just have never told you. But I guess...now you know." The brunette explained shamefully, forcing himself to relax rather than having perfect posture. Hank eventually let go of him, though Connor knew without even looking that the man was still monitoring him. Because of this stressing him out a bit, he decided to close his eyes, allowing him to calm down more efficiently and ignore other stressors that may affect his mood.

They didn't really speak again the rest of the way to the hotel, but as soon as they were out of the car with the luggage, everything was just back to normal, as if they hadn't just awkwardly sat in silence for fifteen minutes. Connor was in awe of his surroundings, inspired to see new landscapes and buildings. "The air is much cleaner here." He noted analytically, and Hank nodded unenthusiastically to agree with his statement.

"Why don't you uh...check us in at reception? I'm gonna use the bathroom." Hank suggested calmly, then heading inside with Connor and making his way over to the public restroom.

The brunette blinked at Hank's behavior confusedly, though he shrugged it off and walked over to the reception counter with the luggage rolling behind him. Once he was at the counter, he confirmed his identity and reservation with the android receptionist, then retrieving his electronic key from her with a smile. Afterwards, he walked over to the lounge area and took a seat on one of the chairs, waiting patiently for Hank to return.

While he waited, one thing that was on his mind was how Richard and Gavin were doing, if they had even gone into work yet. Surprisingly, they were in the office, peacefully sitting

together at Gavin's desk and looking through the files that Connor had sent over. Gavin was being particularly quiet for some reason, and even looked slightly annoyed, which Nines had taken note of.

"Is everything okay, Detective?" He asked boldly, standing up so that he could give the man more space provided he really didn't seem too inviting at the moment.

"I just...like, what if it's an android? Maybe that's why there's no fingerprints. I mean, and the blueblood everywhere..." Gavin sighed in frustration, tugging on a tuft of hair as he pondered deeply.

Richard leaned over Gavin's shoulder and displayed a file on his his hand of the victim's criminal involvement. "I understand why you might assume that, considering his girlfriend is an android, but what I see is...much different. This guy was a drug dealer, and one of the main ingredients in red ice is thirium. That could be the reason all of that blueblood was spilled on the floor. Maybe one of his competitors in the black market came to put an end to his competition and made a mess in the process, where he assumed he had committed the perfect crime. Meaning of course...he wouldn't have been able to see the spilled blueblood, because he wasn't an android. That's why he didn't clean it up." With his long explanation, he removed the file from his hand and gripped onto Gavin's shoulder, spinning his chair around so they were facing.

After a moment, the detective rolled his eyes and stood up, his body pressed up against Richard's as he tried to intimidate him. "You just have everything figured out, don't you?" He jabbed at the android's chest, smirking after a moment and sitting back down. "Okay, dickhead, then who is the killer? We gonna look through the whole drug cable for one guy we know nothing about?"

Nines smiled against his will, envisioning in his mind how enjoyable it would be to annoy the snot out of Gavin. "No, detective. We do know one thing about the killer, thanks to the victim's girlfriend. She said she was arriving home as the killer fled, and saw a vague outline of his figure. With the information she gave me, we can do a search and cross-reference the list with those who frequent the black market." After coming up with a plan to find their killer, Richard made eye contact with Gavin, who was just glaring at him with an unimpressed frown.

"Fuck, okay. You're a smart fuckin' plastic prick. You want a treat?" Gavin teased the android, crossing one of his legs over the other and watching in amusement as Richard's LED went from yellow to red, back to yellow, and then back to blue all within a few seconds. "You

feeling okay, Nines?" He chuckled lowly, but all of sudden Richard darted his eyes around suspiciously, as if he figured something out.

"I found three results in the cross-reference." After admitting this, Nines connected with Gavin's terminal, displaying the identification cards of three men on the screen. "It might be a struggle to locate which of them is the assailant, but I know we can do it. We're partners." Before he could make any other remarks, Gavin scoffed and laughed outwardly, slapping his knee rudely.

Despite the weird tension that he created by being a douchebag, he leaned forward a bit and grabbed onto Richard's tie, playing with it around his fingers. "Partners, huh? Look, you might be all fancy and perfectly intelligent and shit, but you really need to stop being so full of yourself before I hit my head against a wall. You might call it 'optimism' but frankly that's just not how I work."

Richard smirked, grabbing Gavin's hand off of his tie. "You hate to give me a genuine compliment, don't you? Don't worry, Detective Reed, I'm not going anywhere for a long time. So you can keep relying on your idiocy and I'll do the hard work." After he teased the man, he let go of his hand, then holding underneath his jaw patronizingly.

"Fuck you." Gavin smirked back, making direct eye contact with Nines. He was going to push the other away, but he didn't have the time or courage to react until Tina walked over, her hands on her hips and a nonchalant expression on her face.

"Are you two done flirting? Sounds like you're gonna need some backup." Richard turned his head toward her and let go of Gavin, fixing his tie as he pulled away.

"I doubt he'll ever be done sending me mixed signals. One second he's eye-fucking me and another he's telling me to die." The taller boy joked lightheartedly, feeling somewhat accomplished when Gavin shoved him playfully and covered his face. "There are three possible suspects. Maybe you and Chris can investigate one, and me and Detective Reed can do the same. We'll take the last one together, unless we've already found our guy." He explained the plan to Tina, and she nodded firmly.

"What, are you the boss now?" Gavin mocked the android, biting his lip annoyedly and clicking his tongue. "Fuckin prick. Gotta hog all the glory."

"I'm sorry, detective. I thought you liked when I was dominant and assertive? Otherwise you won't know when to keep your pretty mouth shut." Richard replied confidently, bringing his hand to Gavin's back reassuringly. "He'll learn to love me someday." He smiled at Tina, who laughed at his cocky behavior.

Gavin abruptly pulled away from Richard, glaring at the ground as he thought of what to say. "Don't touch me, asshole. Fuck off." Although the android had meant to be ironic and joke around, the man took it the complete opposite way, and even stormed off despite what a good time they were having provoking one another. He seemed...genuinely upset and disturbed. Richard couldn't help but look concerned.

protected

Chapter Summary

Markus and Simon have a romantic day while watching Sumo.

In the meantime... Gavin and Richard work together to find the man who murdered the drug dealer. Things don't necessarily go as planned.

Chapter Notes

I cried writing this but uhhh all I gotta say is don't worry be happy ☺☺☺

Although it had been only a few hours since Hank and Connor left their house, both Markus and Simon were a bit lost and out of ideas for fun, considering how small the house was and how lazy the dog was. Because of this, they started watching movies together on Hank's television, some action-filled, adventure movies like Mission Impossible and The Matrix, and Taken. Simon would always make remarks about Markus' physique and his acrobatic skills whenever they watched movies like this together.

They weren't necessarily dating yet...at least, they hadn't made it official, but they trusted one another with everything they had, and had interfaced several times in the past year. They had never kissed though, that's for sure. They never really had much privacy, provided North and Josh stayed at Carl's house as well and they usually were always hanging out as a group.

Times like these gave them intimacy and romance, and since Markus was always so busy, it felt so relaxing and meaningful that they were alone. In fact, they were holding hands so they felt closer, regardless of how close they already were. When the screen was light enough for a moment, and Markus could see Simon's illuminated face, he smiled and leaned his head lovingly against the blonde's shoulder, presenting himself at-ease. Because of this, Simon smiled as well and squeezed Markus' hand, nuzzling the top of his head gingerly.

"Markus, why do you think Connor still hasn't warmed up to us?" Simon asked curiously, and before he knew it, the other was lifting himself up and making eye contact with him. "If it weren't for him, you and North would both be dead right now. I hope he realizes he did our people a great kindness." After he spoke, the deviant leader pressed their foreheads together, and eventually their lips.

Although the kiss didn't last long, Markus knew they had been brought inevitably closer by the interaction. "I...don't know, Simon. He's probably still feeling guilty. Regardless of guilt, though, he really looks up to this Lieutenant Anderson, and I think he might feel weird being so social in front of him since they work together." After his explanation, Simon kissed him again, gradually moving onto his legs and straddling his lap. He held onto the blonde almost desperately, kissing back passionately.

For some reason, although this was their second time kissing, it didn't feel any different or anymore stressful than usual. In fact, it was very relaxing, and Markus could have kept on forever, but eventually Simon pulled away from the kiss and cupped his cheeks as he stared him down. "The others still don't know about us... Don't you want to tell them eventually?" He asked timidly and Markus smiled, interlocking their fingers as their skin peeled back to reveal their plastic white surfaces.

"We could tell them, or they can find out on their own. I dunno about you, but I think we need to make it official, right? I want to be able to tell people that we're dating." He suggested nonchalantly, and he swore he could feel Simon's body heating up at the mention of such a positive future.

"Y-Yeah, okay. Let's make it official then..." Simon chuckled airily, wrapping his arms around Markus' neck and embracing him, even kissing his forehead lovingly. "I...love you, Markus." He spoke quietly, though his words were so meaningful that they became loud and clear regardless.

The dark-skinned boy helped Simon off of his lap, then gently hovering over him on the couch. They just stared at one another motionlessly, unable to speak for a moment because of the tension. "I love you too, Simon. I really do. You've...well, you've changed my life for the better. I couldn't live without you." He replied rather romantically, but despite his confidence in those few seconds, afterwards he just felt shy again. Simon seemed to feel the same, but they made eye contact inevitably, giving each other intimate stares.

Before they could do anything else to quench their thirst for one another, Sumo started barking like mad at the front door, probably because someone knocked and they hadn't even realized. After clearing his throat and getting Markus to move off of him, Simon fixed his hair and shirt and rushed over to the door, opening it cautiously. He half expected to see North or Josh, but instead it was a pair of detectives, identifiable as Gavin Reed and Richard "Nines" RK900 with the DPD.

"He...Hello, um...you two are friends of Connor and Hank, right? I'm afraid they've already left. What did you need?" Simon asked them awkwardly, though his politeness was as clear as day. He found it hard to be rude in general.

"I need Hank's bulletproof vest. We're running an investigation right now and I don't have —" Gavin began to explain the situation, but suddenly Richard butted in, smiling teasingly.

"He lost his vest and doesn't want to admit it. Do you think one of us could slip inside and grab it really quickly?" Nines declared their business, and Gavin grabbed his shoulder roughly, turning him so that their faces were right next to each other. He tried to be intimidating, but for a few reasons, including his height, Richard's stoic expression had him beat. After a moment, Gavin just walked off back to his car, holding up two middle fingers on his way. Despite the situation, Nines found himself smiling in admiration against his will, then quickly looking back at Simon. "Sorry about that. May I come in for a second?"

The blonde slowly opened the door and Richard walked past him. He stood there watching Sumo as the taller android went to retrieve the bulletproof vest from Hank's bedroom. In no time at all, the android detective was back outside. "Be careful on your mission. I'll let Connor know you stopped by." With these words, Richard nodded firmly and turned away from the front door, heading back to Gavin's car with a cool strut.

"Detective Reed, you should really learn how to go ten seconds without creating sexual tension." Nines teased the man as he walked over to the passenger's side, then slipping into the car smoothly. Before he did anything else, he handed the vest to Gavin.

"Yeah? And you should really learn how to shut the fuck up before I—" Gavin was about to make a threat, but stopped mid-sentence for some reason. After a minute of silence, he just buckled back up and put the car into drive, pulling out of the neighborhood quickly. "Just stop pissing me off. You think you're so perfect..." He complained, his expression flashing to one of worry for a short second.

Richard tilted his head in confusion, slightly disturbed by Gavin's oddly afflicted personality. He was typically very ballsy, but he just seemed upset today. "Detective..." He muttered, trying to comfort the man, but it was pointless; Gavin shook his head and just kept driving. "Sorry, I'll keep the joking to a minimum."

By the time they arrived at their first suspect's house, named Nick Rammel or something like that, it was pouring down rain, typical whether in the city. That meant it would be harder to hear anything inside the house, so it was a bit annoying, but they got out of the car either way and approached the door slowly. Gavin had his hand on the gun in his pocket just in case, as Richard knocked on the door calmly. He thought he would have to speak up, but to his surprise the door opened momentarily.

Gavin pulled his badge out and showed it to the man at the door. "DPD, Detective Gavin Reed. We're here to ask you a few questions about a murder that took place the other day. You're not in trouble yet, we're just trying to find the guilty party." After speaking, the man nodded and moved aside, letting them in without a struggle.

"You can look around if you want. You on a black market trail or something? I might know the guy who did it s'all." Nick spoke up casually, and Richard closed the door as Gavin surveyed around the living room. "I don't really have anything to hide."

"I'll take a look around. In the meantime, what kind of drugs do you usually sell or buy?" Gavin replied calmly. Once he didn't get an answer, he arched his eyebrows and turned to face the man. "It might be illegal but to be fucking honest I couldn't care less if it's not hurting anyone. My main priority is finding this guy, so help me help you." He made a deal, and Richard blinked in surprise.

"Detective, I—are you sure this is a good idea? It's extremely dangerous to make deals like this." The android walked over to Gavin, putting his hands on the man's shoulders without even thinking about it. "For once, just listen to what I'm saying. Is this really worth it to find someone? We can do this ourselves." Although he meant to be discreet, there was no hiding everything he'd just said, so he wouldn't be surprised if the suspect didn't trust them now. But he was just worried for Gavin's safety. How could he not be?

Gavin grumbled in dissatisfaction, anxiously glancing at Richard's hands on him before shoving him to the side. "I've got this, okay? You don't need to babysit me." He sighed frustratedly, walking over to Nick as he showed him to a different room. The android partner of his followed behind them quietly, but definitely not obediently. They were both suspicious of this guy, of course, but what else could Gavin have done?

"Here's my book of trades. It's got buyers, sellers, and type of drug or material. Now, of course, I don't really deal with those red ice freaks. That shit will fuck you up. Not to mention

it's illegal to have biocomponents without an android." The man handed the notebook over to Gavin, and then sat atop the desk in the room, seemingly harmless from the looks of things.

Richard scanned the environment quickly, even peeking over Gavin's shoulder at the list of names. He couldn't find any that matched their other known suspects. "You may not deal thirium, but did you happen to know a man named Victor Hammond who did? Anyone who may have been after his biocomponents?" He asked directly, and Nick hummed for a second, scratching his head in thought.

"Uh, well, there is one guy... Vick was a close friend of my sister and she knew a lot about him. She kinda kept me in the loop. But this man, he doesn't fuck around. You know? He takes whatever he wants by force if he doesn't like the prices. Knowing Vick, the prices weren't very good."

Gavin made eye contact with Richard for a few seconds, smirking at him over his shoulder for asking such a good question. Honestly, they weren't all hate; they had their good moments too. "Can you point us in this guy's direction? Give us a name? Anything at all?"

Nick stood up from the desk and walked past the two detectives. "I have a picture of him, but you know how it is. I can't just throw his name around lightly." He leaned against the door with a creepy grin. "Maybe your android friend could just analyze the picture and get his name that way? It'll only take a minute."

Before Richard said anything, he alerted Tina and Chris because this didn't feel good at all. He didn't trust this man, so he decided to stall for time a little bit. "You could also just write it down, or type it, couldn't you? No offense, but I don't like being separated from my partner. It's better if we are together." He explained with a stoic expression, which caused Nick to look jittery and anxious. He took note of this very quickly.

"Um... Yeah, sure, definitely. I'll just write it down." The man rolled his eyes, and when he was about to leave the room, suddenly he turned back around abruptly and pulled his gun out, shooting the first thing in his way, which...happened to be Richard protecting Gavin. One shot after the other in the chest, and even one on the shoulder, eventually leaving the man bulletless. As soon as Gavin tried to chase him out of the door, Richard collapsed where he was standing, his body laying lifeless on the ground.

As much as Gavin wanted to catch the man, he couldn't force himself to forget about Richard. Before he knew it he was kneeling at the boy's side, gently shaking him. "Hey, Nines! Listen to me. You better not die on me. I...I can't lose you. Fuck. GODDAMNIT!" Although he didn't cry, he was stressed and his eyes were wide open as he tried to snap the android out of it. "Shit... SHIT!" He was freaking out—he didn't want to lose anyone else. He didn't know if he could deal with Richard being gone.

After a moment of silence, Richard's LED started blinking red rapidly, and he blinked weakly as he looked up into Gavin's eyes. "Did he...get away? Are you okay, Detective?" He murmured, and Gavin tried to cover one of his open wounds, to slow the loss of blood as much as possible. His hands were covered in thirium. But in the distance, a siren sounded, almost like an echo. "Chris and Tina...are..." He began trying to inform Gavin that he called for backup, but despite his efforts it was pointless; he was going to shut down. Too many of his biocomponents were damaged.

"Nines, stop talking so much, you fuckin idiot. You're going to be okay." Before he knew it, Tina and Chris had rushed into the room, but it was too late. It would be fine though, right? They could reactivate him, right? "Fuck... I can't believe this dickhead...always trying to play the hero." He mourned breathlessly, feeling so much more pained now that two of his friends were here to watch him. He was more upset than sad. He could have prevented this if he'd just listened to Richard's warning. Why did he have to go and fuck everything up?

a step in the right direction

Chapter Summary

Connor gets some advice from Hank that he was too embarrassed to bring up sooner.

Chapter Notes

Sorry its been forever I hate school and i had a covid scare but i am OK now so 😊

It was half past noon. Connor sat up in his hotel bed abruptly when his phone started ringing, and Hank stopped eating his lunch to observe what was going on. When he saw that the person calling was Gavin, he knew something had to be wrong.

He picked up his phone quickly, his brows furrowed as Gavin recounted the events, how they had been questioning a suspect and suddenly they shot at Richard. Apparently, Gavin was waiting outside a maintenance room at a CyberLife headquarters building. He was pretty badly damaged, but there was a possibility he could be saved. "I'm sorry to hear this... I'm sure he'll be okay. Just stay by his side, alright? He needs you now more than ever." Connor replied affectionately, frowning at Gavin's gravelly, lifeless voice and the lack of emotion.

"What is it, Connor?" Hank questioned intimidatingly, watching the android closely as he hung up the phone and put it down. His LED was blinking red, and his expression was rather morose. "Did something happen?" He spoke yet again, trying to get Connor's attention.

"It's Nines. He was...protecting Gavin and damaged pretty badly by some bullets. He's worried he wont reactivate." The brunette explained the situation in a soft, caring voice, presenting much disappointment. "Hank, Detective Reed...doesn't sound okay. I'm kind of anxious." He admitted hopelessly, sighing heavily to try and relax.

Hank took a sip of his smoothie and then stood up from the bed, joining Connor on his side of the room and sitting next to him with a concerned smile. "I'm sure everything will be fine. Gavin's got Tina to comfort him, so he's not alone or anything." He tried to console the

boy, holding onto his shoulder reassuringly. "Do you want to talk about it? What do you think?"

Connor blinked slowly, his eyes full of disappointment and sorrow. "I'm not necessarily an optimistic person, but...I really think I see a connection between Gavin and Richard. I'm not sure an android has ever gotten this close to him. And for that reason, I'm hoping CyberLife takes good care of him." He sincerely replied, a small grin inching its way onto his face. "I've been thinking a lot about meeting with the president tomorrow...it's probably making me more nervous than it should. I just can't understand why she would take an interest in me."

On the inside he felt truly powerless. Not knowing what the world would do with him made him scared and uncertain. He was thankful to have such a good friend to talk to, but it just wasn't a permanent solution to his fear. He knew the only way he could really control his emotions was to forgive himself and accept things as they were, because, in some weird way, he believed in superstition—that everything does happen for a reason. So maybe the president wanting to speak with him would change something big in his life, or hopefully at least in someone else's.

"You freed thousands of androids, Connor. You might think your failures describe you, but in the end you did what was right. You saved so many of your people. You deserve all this recognition for that, and not for the bad things." Hank's face was full of confusion, the repetition of Connor's doubt nearly driving him over the edge.

Instead of replying, Connor was at a loss for words. He wanted to thank Hank, but he knew the man would probably get annoyed, since they had a mutual respect for one another. He just waited a minute, standing up and removing his tie since it was making him slightly pent-up. He laid it on the nightstand nearby and then walked to the hotel room window, moving the curtains and looking outside. His mind wandered to Chloe—Why was he thinking about her? Why was his chest so tight? And...why was he so hot in the face? He had never even thought about dating, but he pretty much promised her that they could go on a first date. He wondered if she was thinking about him too. There were just so many daydreams swimming in his database.

Being quiet for so long, he imagined Hank would eventually ask him if he was alright, however it was different this time around. Hank was giving him some space, which was definitely appreciated, but not needed at the moment. There was only one person he could ask about Chloe... "Mind if I ask you kind of a weird question?" He finally spoke up, glancing over his shoulder to peek at the man before deciding to turn around completely. He felt comfortable, despite his embarrassment over the topic.

Hank blinked in confusion, but nevertheless nodded affirmatively to urge Connor on. If the android had the guts to bring it up, it was probably important, unlike whenever Hank did the same.

"Well...I've been thinking about Chloe. I do want to spend time with her, but I don't know if there will ever be a right time. You and I are busy pretty much every day. I just feel bad for promising something like that." Connor explained his dilemma, seemingly relaxed and bold, contrary to how he really felt on the inside. For some reason, it was stressful confiding in Hank, but it was only because he sometimes couldn't be bothered to deal with the pestering. Thankfully, the look on the man's face was purely supportive.

"Look, don't worry about it. When we get back, we help Gavin and Richard and then I'll talk about going to the office over the weekend on my day off. You can plan something with her, alright?" Hank reassured the boy, almost immediately being met with a puzzled expression, almost offended.

"There's no way I'm leaving you alone, Hank, not when Nines is being repaired. If we *really are* going to be working with Gavin on this case for a few days, you'll need me for investigations. You *know* that." Connor had his arms outstretched as he explained his reasoning, and Hank seemed swayed by his words for a moment, but then sighed and looked away.

Although Connor had a good point, considering both the quick analysis process and the mediator role, Hank was hesitant to change his mind, and he had personal reasons, but also he needed to get along with Gavin eventually. "Look, Connor, you're gonna do what I say and take that poor girl out. You can't make her wait forever just because you're worried about me. I'll be fine."

Connor was quick to open his mouth to argue, but ended up closing it back when he realized Hank continued eating his food in peace. "Okay, I understand..."

the most crucial moment

Chapter Summary

Connor meets with President Warren on his "birth" day and it raises some concerns, and brings to light some of the reasons he refuses to let his emotions get the best of him. Although...maybe he isn't trying hard enough to hide them.

Chapter Notes

probs more reed900 next chapter because I'm dealing with another loss in my family and need to vent write

Connor had to meet with President Warren today, which stressed him out. The only thing that wasn't worrying for him was his fashion sense; he had plenty of suits that he looked good in, but today he was wearing a gray suit with a lilac tie, to make him look more relaxed and not intense. He wanted to bring Hank along, but he was the only one sent a voucher to pass through security. It was fine, though. Maybe it would be better this way where Hank couldn't watch him be awkward and make fun of him later for it. Plus, the hotel tv was playing some pretty good channels, despite it being a pretty cheap rent.

When the brunette arrived at the large capital building, he showed his identification and was led by two women through security, all the way to the central office, where President Warren was waiting with her vice president. He was so nervous...if he could physically have sweaty palms, he would be drenched by now. Thankfully, he was able to pull off a relatively calm expression, though. Upon entering the office, he hesitantly walked closer to the chair on the opposite side of the desk and reached out, shaking her hand firmly.

"It's great to finally meet you, Connor. Why don't you take a seat? Shaun, would you mind giving us some privacy?" The blonde motioned toward the door, and her secretary left the room within the next few seconds.

Connor sat down opposite from Cristina, wiping some loose dust off of his pants awkwardly. "If I may ask...why exactly did you want to talk to me? I didn't think I'd done anything worthy of your time." He admitted shamelessly, and the president nodded with an empathetic tilt to her head.

"Well, to be honest, the decision to invite you was influenced by Markus. He gave me plenty of insight, how you sacrificed yourself twice to save him and the other members of Jericho. I mainly wanted to ask you what your thoughts are on some new android laws that are currently being sent through Congress." With her explanation, Connor's eyes became wide momentarily, and then he blinked in shock and averted his gaze. He was more nervous now than before he came here.

"What kind of laws exactly?" The brunette meekly asked, making eye contact with the woman after getting over his intrusive thoughts.

Cristina smiled admiringly when he asked this question, already having some insight on his mindset for this meeting. "Well, mainly about identification, marriage, and adoption. Markus was curious about all three subjects. He's living with his previous owner, who he said was like a father figure to him, so we talked about the adoption process, and that all androids will be given the equivalent of a birth certificate to make it official."

The boy tapped his fingers atop his knees and tried to stay relatively calm while she spoke, though her words made his body feel hot from anticipation. "What you're saying is...we'll have real IDs...with last names and everything? Like we're really apart of someone's family?"

"Precisely, yes." She quickly replied, but instead of smiling he couldn't stop himself from furrowing his eyebrows in discontent, interlocking his fingers together over his lap while he was deep in contemplation. "Is there something wrong? Did you have a concern?"

Connor shook his head dismissively. "No. No, it's nothing. Sorry. I just... it's nothing." He knew what this feeling was now, after letting it settle in his system for a few minutes; it was fear, what had defined his emotions toward Hank for the past two years. What if Hank didn't accept him as family? They joked about it, but he was worried it wouldn't carry over to reality.

Even though he was self-conscious about this, he stared at Cristina's gregarious expression, how it radiated with support and understanding. It made him feel a little better, and he finally let a small smile twitch at his lips. "I'm sure Markus will be excited about the marriage laws in the meantime. He seems really in love."

"Yes, that actually reminds me... A very small percentage of fugitive deviants were able to cross the Canadian border, but those who were able are being welcomed back with no charge since their actions were driven by fear. You seem like a natural leader, so I was thinking you could be the one to make sure they get back safely. Like an escort across border control, with my permission and credentials to assist you. It might be short notice, but they've been waiting long enough, so I was considering this Sunday. Would that work for you?"

Connor had a rollercoaster of emotions while listening to her speak; he first thought about Kara and Alice, and watching them cross that highway, and then he thought about Hank, and then he thought about Chloe. He and Hank had discussed the previous evening about giving him a chance to take Chloe out over the weekend, but he wasn't sure it would happen. That's why, after pondering on it, he came up with a compromise, something he was sure would suit Chloe just as much. "I would be honored to help, but I think I'll need someone, like a co-host by my side. I have someone in mind, if you'd consider it." He suggested and he watched the blonde question herself internally, how she was seemingly distraught for a minute. But to his surprise, she changed demeanor rather quickly and even looked supportive.

"Alright. Then Sunday, I'll have you and your partner driven to the border. I'll inform the workers of the process before you arrive. I trust there won't be any trouble." She informed Connor, and after a few seconds, he showed her the palm of his hand, and a picture of Chloe clearly projected onto it. "Oh, it's her. Yes, I do remember her interviews from after she passed the Turing Test. She's a charming girl."

"Did you...have anything else you want to talk about? I don't mind answering any questions you may have." After acknowledging that he was now comfortable in her presence, he suddenly felt much better about this whole meeting.

The woman hummed in thought, standing up and turning on the camcorder that faced her desk from the right. "I did have a few questions, for a mini-interview. If you don't mind, it'll be recorded. I won't have it published without your consent, of course." When she sat back down, Connor hesitantly nodded, unsure of what kind of questions would be asked. Before she began, he inhaled and exhaled slowly, letting himself relax completely.

"The first question I had was about your LED. I know plenty of deviants prefer to look more human-like and blend in. Why haven't you removed yours, if you don't mind saying?"

The brunette blinked nervously, his LED ironically flashing between yellow and red as he began to speak. "It's kind of personal. I've been living with this man named Hank Anderson, he's a lieutenant of the DPD. When I first met him, he was cold to me and admitted several

times to my face that he hated androids. I got to know him, though. I saw him at his weakest moments, and I'd like to think I helped him out of a dark place. We remind each other that the past shouldn't be forgotten, but that it should be accepted and reinterpreted to shape us into better people. That's why I keep my LED. I want to be reminded of those days we spent learning to coexist, as equals. And I want it to remind him...that the past can't be changed. But he can change the future." He didn't know why he let all of this go. It felt so natural. He meant every word and hoped deep down Hank would see this recording one day. His son Cole definitely would want him to keep on living. Connor wanted him to keep living.

President Warren was frozen and speechless after Connor's reply, but snapped out of the trance after a few seconds and nodded thoughtfully. "I also wanted to ask what have been the most difficult things you've been through while trying to get used to your new lifestyle."

Connor blinked rapidly, thinking deeply for an answer that would make sense to others. "I guess I would say...adapting to human traditions? Many of the holidays my human friends celebrate don't make any sense to me, but I try to participate nonetheless. Kind of like today... Hank and I were talking about it the other day, how it's my manufacture date. Now that I think about it, I'm not sure why we've never spoken about it before. Oh, and office parties... They make me uncomfortable. I don't really want to get into it though." After giving a distracted answer, Warren smiled sincerely, tapping her fingers against her desk.

"And what about hobbies? Markus said he spends plenty of time painting and playing piano. Do you have anything like that?" This question again... Connor didn't know how to answer now that he was around non-detectives. He had far too many inside jokes with his coworkers.

"Well...Hank has a lot of books that I like to read. We like to play board games together, and watch sports. I've been trying to cook more homemade meals for him, but I'm still learning. I wouldn't exactly call cooking a hobby either...it's more like...a stress-inducer." After Connor admitted these things, he realised just how childish he sounded. He was trying to fit in, but nothing was really clicking. He was too pent-up to have fun with people besides Hank.

Cristina seemed slightly amused at his banter, making the moment lighthearted and relaxed. But the next thing she mentioned brought back some traumatizing memories he would rather not remember. "I did have one last question... Since those confidential files from CyberLife were released, I read up on the simulations that androids create inside their minds, most of the time sharing a space with someone important to them. Do you have a simulation like that? Was it overridden when you became deviant?"

Those brown doe-eyes of his were filled with fear, and confusion, flashing left and right whilst he struggled to get a grip on reality. Even just thinking about Amanda brought him to a terrible place. He sometimes was scared to visit the simulation, even though it was tailored to his own life now. "I... I don't know. Sorry, I mean... I'm not sure I'm ready to talk about the specifics... But yes. I have an interface called the Zen Garden. I'm relatively certain that all of the advanced RK-series androids have this feature. I know they can be inherited as well, for instance if an android experiences great love toward someone, or hatred. My interface used to be something to control me, but I've learned how to morph it into something fitting my desires." He was sure he explained it well enough, but that lingering feeling of discomfort was back to eat away at him.

For some reason, he couldn't control his emotions, as he had made himself vulnerable by mistake, and without even knowing he started...crying. Was all of this pain he felt finally turning explosive? He was frustrated, and closed his eyes as the tears streamed down his cheeks, envisioning his traumatic experiences.

The president immediately shut the camera off when she noticed this heart-wrenching reaction, then slowly walking over to his side and comforting him by squeezing his shoulders. "Don't worry. You don't need to say anything else. I didn't intend to upset you... I hope you can forgive me for being careless. I understand you need time to cope with everything. It may seem like a long time to those outside your life, but only you really know what you're enduring."

"Thank you for trying to help. It's unresolved trauma that I can't seem to move past no matter what I do. I've been too nervous to talk about it because it makes me think of the horrible things I did to my own people." Connor wiped his cheeks with his sleeve, then standing up from the chair and politely shaking Cristina's hand. He hated that she would now be apart of the reason he was burdened to speak out, especially since she didn't mean any harm. He just wanted to see his family again. His...family?

welcome home

Chapter Summary

How does Gavin cope with loss? Better yet, how does he handle when loss is reversed and comes in through his back door? Answer: he doesn't.

Chapter Notes

I'm tired but yay a little bit of intimacy between them

Later in the day, around 7pm, Gavin had finally gone home. He wasn't exactly tired of waiting on CyberLife to fix his partner, he was just tired in general. He hadn't slept much at all in the past few days, because he was worried about their current case. If he had been more careful...maybe Chris and Tina could have caught the bastard who shot Richard, but he wasn't cautious enough. He should have listened.

But that's precisely another reason why he couldn't wait around another day at CyberLife. Doing work in public quarters was hard on him, and he wasn't exactly the best at focusing, so he was at home, digging up anything he could find on where the suspect might have run off to. Any family, friends...victims who might know him. He was stressed. He needed revenge...maybe not revenge, really, but he just needed there to be a product of justice. He was frustrated with his lack of progress, and he couldn't just ask Chris or Tina to stay up all night with him.

His anger was getting the best of him; he had to do something, anything to take his mind off of the case. He stood up from his couch and stumbled to the kitchen, trying to reach up to the top of the fridge, where Richard had hidden his cigarettes. He knew he needed to refrain from getting back into his bad habit, but the moment his hand gripped around the pack, he felt this strange serene wave wash over his body. He pulled his lighter out of the junk drawer and then pushed a cigarette out, sticking it between his teeth and then setting the box on the counter. He lit the cigarette as he walked outside through the backdoor, then taking a seat on his lucky lawn chair.

He didn't know why, but smoking and staring at the stars was a mixture of hard-ass and emotional that he never imagined would get the best of him. He was at complete peace now, and he chuckled just thinking about Richard, what he would say to him if he was here right now. He would probably take the cigarette from him and then lecture him about lung cancer and all that shit. The thoughts were not typically pleasant, but for some reason he couldn't wipe the smile off of his face.

Around an hour later, he was still in his backyard, useless cancer stick in his hand, arm hanging off of the chair...asleep. He just fell asleep. His heart was aching, but not because of the smoking. Despite this pain, he was out like the night. He didn't even get another good hour before being interrupted, sadly. He somehow heard the doorbell from all the way in the backyard, and fell off of the chair when the sound reached him. He slowly lifted himself up from the ground, groaning annoyedly at the audacity this person had to come to his house during the night.

When he got to the door, he opened it abruptly and glared at whoever it was preemptively. When he saw that familiar face, though, he couldn't stop his body wrapped his arms around the android desperately. Before he could find out it wasn't Richard, but actually Connor, the brunette awkwardly pushed him away.

"Uh, detective... Hank and I were about to head home, but I told him I wanted to check on you. Over the phone yesterday...you sounded like you were going through a lot." He gave the shorter man a comforting pat on the shoulder and managed a meek smile.

"Ugh, god." Gavin rolled his eyes, huffing out in frustration that his eyes had deceived him so easily. "Just. Whatever. Don't you dare tell anyone what just happened. It never happened." He pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed yet again, leaning against the door frame exhaustedly. "Thanks for checking on me, but please kindly fuck off. I'm not in the mood to be patronized." After worsening his mood, he closed the door gently in front of Connor, not really wanting to upset him.

He shook his head angrily afterwards, leaning it against the door and slamming his fist on the wall in his moment of agitation. "Jesus fucking Christ... I'm such an asshole." He pouted, staying against the door despite his desire to go back to sleep.

"That's not far from the truth, Detective Reed. You should really work on your people skills."

Gavin froze in place when he heard this voice behind him, then glancing over his shoulder and catching sight of that tall dork. It was Richard. He was okay... He didn't even know how to feel. His first instinct was to cry, but the fact that he was letting the tears fall so freely pissed him off, and he walked toward Richard, shoving him into the wall and gripping onto his shirt threateningly. "Fuck you, Nines. You scared the fuck out of me. It's been two days and you know I can't do this without you!"

Richard stood there quietly for a moment while Gavin took his anger out on him, but he did perfectly understand what the human said last. He quickly trapped the man in a hug because of it, squeezing him tightly and resting his chin slightly atop Gavin's shoulder. "Can't do what exactly? Can't live without me?" He teased the man, feeling right at home in this atmosphere. "You know, you smell like smoke. I thought I told you to stop. I don't want to have to punish you." He whispered seductively, causing Gavin to heat up in the face and push Richard away. He looked both upset and intrigued.

"W...Would you shut up?! That's not funny, Nines. I'm serious." He pushed past the android, then sitting back on the couch where his cats were sleeping. He needed to get some more work done now that he was awake. "How the hell did you even get inside?" He asked, still refusing to make eye contact.

"You should really be more careful, Gavin. The gate was unlocked, so I came through the backdoor." After he scolded the other once again, he suddenly thought back to when he heard the human speaking to someone after he came inside. His LED flickered yellow momentarily. "Was that Connor who came to visit? I felt an android signal." He asked sternly, having wiped the teasing grin off of his face already due to his mood shift.

Seeing Gavin nod he felt relaxed, mostly since he could tell the man had been truthful with him. But this calm didn't last long; detective Reed was avoiding eye contact with him, and had his arms crossed, which according to the many mannerism books Richard had read, was a sign of distrust or discomfort. He didn't think twice about what this might mean, and instead hugged Gavin again, just barely rubbing their cheeks together. For some reason, he felt strange...like he was missing something.

"Detective Reed, you're very hot. You should take it easy." Acknowledging Gavin's feverish heat and associating it with his weird behavior, Richard deduced that the man had been overworking himself. He was used to it, but usually Gavin could hide it pretty well. He pulled away slowly, trailing his hands down Gavin's arms and staring at him with a concerned frown. "Why don't you head to bed? You're exhausted."

Typically Gavin would argue his way out of sleeping, but he looked so weak, and it was almost as if he had snapped, succumbed to his realization that he really needed to live healthier, or else it might actually be a problem in the future. "Yeah, okay... Maybe." He pushed past Richard and headed straight for his bedroom.

Richard followed behind the shorter man, though he stopped in the doorway of the bedroom when Gavin began stripping down to his boxers. He didn't know why, but he felt...off watching this scene. "Do you need me to get you anything while you rest? As much

as I hate playing nice, you really do look like you're unraveling." He ushered Gavin to his bed, making sure he got to it without passing out.

"Would you please just stop talking and let me get some sleep?" Gavin complained childishly, laying down and immediately covering up. "This is what you wanted so don't give me those damn puppy-dog eyes."

"Then, I'll give you some space. Sweet dreams." He made this teasing remark and then turned the light off, backing out of the bedroom. Before he could fully close the door however, he was stopped by Gavin himself.

"Wait, uh..." The man called out from underneath the duvet, face shielded from embarrassment thanks to the darkness surrounding him. Richard waited at the door for a moment and kept his hand on the door knob, eventually walking back inside when he didn't hear anymore speech for a while. "Nines...I... I'm trying to stop, it just won't work." His voice was gravelly and low, barely protruding the silence. "Ugh, just forget it. There's no point talking to a fucking android about this." After his tone became harsh, he turned onto his side to avoid Richard.

The light-eyed man felt something inside of him shatter. It wasn't a physical pain, but he didn't know how to describe it. He thought he was finally starting to understand and get close to Gavin, but it seems he was...completely mistaken. Maybe it was just an emotional bandwagon, and the man would be more peaceful tomorrow, but he didn't feel that way. "You're right. You won't benefit from talking to me. You've always felt that way, haven't you?" He furrowed his eyebrows in perplexity, feeling vulnerable and offended for some reason despite the fact that he was so used to being considered a nuisance. "I'll be in the living room fucking off." His irises were piercing cold, though he knew Gavin probably couldn't see his face. He didn't care either way, and just left the room, closing the door behind him.

He didn't know why he ever imagined Gavin would be glad to see him. He just...could have sworn they were finally getting along. He worried about the man constantly, and yet he didn't like admitting it. They dealt with their emotions the same ways, when it really came down to it.

Richard leaned against the door for a moment, closing his eyes and trying to calm down. He had never felt so angry. Usually they just poked harmless fun at each other, but his stress was tremendously high. Eventually, he walked down the hall and to the living room, sitting down on the couch where the three cats were cuddled together. He carefully picked up Mr. Heavy and scratched his head lovingly, listening to his comforting purrs. "At least you can't insult me..." He mumbled to the cat, but the animal jumped in surprise along with him when

there was suddenly a loud thud coming from Gavin's room. As angry as he was, he couldn't stop himself from worrying.

He stood back up in a hurry and made his way back to the bedroom, slowly opening the door and peeking inside. "Detective Reed, what was that noise?" He asked boldly, turning the light back on. He was relieved to see the human wasn't hurt, but then he noticed the lamp on the floor. "Oh." He walked over to the nightstand and knelt down, picking the lamp up and putting it back where it originally was. When he stood back up, he turned toward Gavin, who was staring at him awkwardly. He averted his gaze nervously, his LED rapidly flashing red. He wanted to evade anymore fighting, so he tried to leave, but Gavin grabbed his shirt from behind. He didn't question it, although he felt confused.

"Come back after you turn off the lights, okay asshole?" Nines heard the shift in tone, noted that it wasn't forceful, but the Gavin that he was used to. He felt hot again, but for a different reason, as he walked back to the door. After turning the light back off, he turned back around and approached Gavin. "We never talk about tonight." The man spoke with slight annoyance lacing his voice. "Get on. You have the other side."

"But, I don't need to sleep, Ga-" Richard began making an excuse, but was quickly shushed by the human. He obliged hesitantly and walked to the other side of the bed, getting underneath the duvet to join the other. This was new to him. He'd never really slept in a position like this, usually only charging while standing, or sitting.

Although he was still calming down, he knew this was probably the man's way of breaking the ice since he was too much of a narcissist to apologize first. But honestly, this was nice. Richard was comfortable next to the man, and he used a soft, lulling voice whilst turning onto his side to face him. "Goodnight, Gavin."

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