INSTABILITY RISING

by GoldenDaydreams

Summary

He watched as Gavin's tongue slid along his bottom lip, chasing a drop of coffee.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^  

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A series of connected short stories following RK900's rising instability.
RK900 needs tasks from his handler.

RK900 measured a teaspoon of sugar, and dumped it into the steaming hot coffee. He spun the spoon around exactly twice before removing it, washing it at the sink, drying it with the towel, and putting it back in the drawer. He then grabbed the mug, walked the nineteen steps to Gavin's desk and set the cup down. With the task complete, the prompt disappeared, and a sense of ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

He rounded the grouped desks and sat on his designated chair. "Have we been assigned a case?" He'd been gone four minutes and twenty seven seconds. Fowler could have found them something in that amount of time.

"Nope," Gavin replied, keeping his eyes on the screen while reaching blindly for his coffee.

RK900 watched the human's slow moving hand, and came to the conclusion that Gavin accidentally knocking over the coffee was only at 7%. The hand found the mug, fingers wrapped around it, and brought it to the awaiting lips.

RK900 had a file on Gavin, and a subsection for morning routines. Gavin always arrived between 7:45 and 7:55 for his typical 8:00 start time. He clearly valued punctuality. Earlier, Gavin had dumped a knapsack under his desk [which after asking he found it held a collection of snacks, and gym clothes] then gone for coffee. RK900 had changed the routine with his presence, greeting Gavin upon his entry, and where Gavin would have grabbed his own coffee before, he ordered RK900 to do it. RK900 enjoyed tasks, and by the time he returned to the desk, Gavin would usually have a case file full of work for them to do.

They had yet to be assigned a case. RK900 was not built to be idle. He was ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

He watched as Gavin's tongue slid along his bottom lip, chasing a drop of coffee.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^
"About time," Gavin muttered. RK900 noted that Gavin was not one to sit idle either.

They both went into the office where Fowler gave them the rundown on the case while sliding a case folder over.

-drug dealers
-LOCATION OF DEALS KNOWN
-maintain low profile
-collect data

"Is this gang related?" Gavin asked, flipping through a couple more pages.

"We don't know," Fowler admitted, his fingers together in a steeple. "These are only the mid-level guys. Which is why we need you two to go to that bar, and listen in." He eyed RK900. "Particularly you. You can hear better than humans, right?"

"Yes," RK900 replied. "All of my senses are superior."

Gavin blew out a breath, and rolled his eyes. "Alright, we're on the case."

They spent a good deal of their day in the office, bringing up information on the men who were in the file, connections that they had, and common places they'd been spotted. They had compiled a lot of information, and Gavin had a few suspicions as to how the drugs were made and distributed.

Gavin received a phone call on his cell phone. For the sake of privacy, android hacking had been made completely illegal. That didn't stop RK900 from being---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]
[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Despite the glitch, the information came up. *Collections*

"Girlfriend?" Officer Chen asked, with a smirk, punching Gavin's arm as she walked by.

"What's it to ya?" Gavin replied, swiping to decline the call.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

RK900 watched Officer Chen walk away. What about her comment ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]
[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

He stared at the door she'd gone through. What about her comment---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]
[INSTABILITY PATCHED]
"-are you even listening?" He registered Gavin's voice late, then took notice of the tone. Annoyance. "Fucking hell, most advanced prototype, been given an assignment that is basically eavesdropping and he doesn't fucking listen to begin with."

"I apologize, Detective," he said in his usual monotone. "I got... distracted."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

Gavin studied him, arms still crossed. "Whatever. I'm going home for a couple hours since I have to be back here tonight. While I'm gone, look up the Red Dragons. They're the gang that had a grip on that area before the evacuation. They weren't in drugs before, but I wouldn't put it past them. It might not actually be relevant to our case but better to know than to not know. Send everything to my work email."

PRIMARY TASK: LOOK UP RED DRAGONS> GANG> AFFILIATES

"Anything else I should do while you're gone."

"I'm only gonna be gone a few hours," Gavin said. After a few weeks, he appeared to be getting accustomed to RK900's presence, and desire for tasks. "But, if you finish looking those guys up, my filing cabinet is a disaster. Alphabetize everything."

SECONDARY TASK: ALPHABETIZE DET. GAVIN REED'S FILING CABINET.

"When should I expect your return?"

Gavin grabbed his coat from the back of his chair. "A couple hours, give or take. Get off my dick."

RK900 found himself ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"I am not on your dick," he replied.

Gavin's face turned red. "Why don't you say it a little louder, someone might not have heard you."

"I am not on yo-"

Gavin practically dived over their desks, covering RK900's mouth with his hand while shushing loudly. "What the fuck is the matter with you?"

"I am running optimally," RK900 replied, slightly muffled under Gavin's hand, which then moved away. "Would you like me to run diagnostics?"

"Fuck. Fucking hell." Gavin stood to his full height and looked down at him. "Just do the tasks I assigned."

RK900 gave one sharp nod of his head, and returned attention to his primary task. He could still feel the warmth of Gavin's hand over the lower part of his face.
Chapter End Notes

In case you were curious about where parts of RK900's narration cut off, in order it's:
With the task complete, the prompt disappeared, and a sense of --- [satisfaction]
RK900 was not built to be idle. He was --- [bored]
For the sake of privacy, android hacking had been made completely illegal. That didn't stop RK900 from being --- [curious]
What about her comment --- [bothered] x2
RK900 found himself --- [intrigued]
On The Case

Chapter Summary

Connor attempts to show his little brother affection.

RK900 and Gavin are assigned a case, which leads to events RK900 could not have predicted.

RK900 had underestimated the time it would take to sort through Gavin's personal filing cabinet. The man hadn't under played the disorganization. He wondered how Gavin found a single thing. Certainly every file was just dumped inside at random, and difficult to find later.

Footsteps approached, and a quick glance gave him visual on Connor. RK900 continued his work while Connor sat down in Gavin's chair. "Hello, Nines."

The greeting wouldn't have given him pause, but the nickname did. He froze with a file in his hand, he turned to Connor. "Nines?"

He smiled, soft and genuine. "Humans often give nicknames, sometimes they give one to shorten a name that is cumbersome, or to show affection." His smile slipped a little as his brow wrinkled. "Or in some cases, to humiliate the recipient."

RK900 finished organizing the 'R' section, and shoved them in the cabinet. "And which are you attempting by calling me 'Nines'?"

"Both to shorten RK900, and also, show affection." Connor tilted his head. "Do you like it?" Connor often asked the question. He wanted RK900 to have an opinion.

RK900 was programmed to obey, not to have opinions. "I am neutral."

Connor frowned, a sign of disappointment. RK900 often found himself on the end of that look. From Connor. From Hank. From Gavin. He didn't---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"Would you like me to assist you?" Connor asked, rubbing his hands together. "Gavin should be returning soon, right?"

"He said a couple of hours one hour and forty-three minutes ago." RK900 looked at the remaining files spread all over Gavin's desk. RK900 was designed to complete tasks, but the work was time consuming and he didn't ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]
"Assistance would be beneficial to completing the task in a timely manner," RK900 said.

Connor put a hand on his shoulder, and smiled. "Then I will help you, Nines."

RK900's lip twitched.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY ^

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RK900 followed Gavin into the bar. While androids were well within their legal rights to be anywhere in the city, Gavin insisted RK900 wear a hat to hide his LED, (some of the gang members had damaged property tags in their rap sheets, which for the time could include androids) and also insisted on 'normal clothes.' It had been at least part of the reason Gavin had returned home. While the navy blue t-shirt must be bigger on Gavin, it pulled tight over the muscles of RK900. The jeans hadn't fit at all, so he was still in his own pants, but since they had no android logos, it was considered safe. September was ending, and it was on the cool side, he also ended up in Hank's brown suede jacket, all for the sake of blending in.

The bar was busy, unsurprising for a Friday night. They stood just inside of the door while RK900 scanned faces until one came back with a flagged name. He leaned down so Gavin would be able to hear him over the music, while also not being overheard by other patrons. "Joseph Zimmerman is to your two o'clock."

Gavin made his scan of the room look casual. "I see him," Gavin replied. "All the seats around him are taken. Do you think you can hear him if we get a spot at the bar?"

"Affirmative."

Gavin took two steps before his shoulders tensed under the dark brown leather jacket he favoured. Despite the ambient noise, and the fact that Gavin's voice was barely a whisper, he heard the alarmed; "shit," leave the detective's mouth. After all, he had a program that focussed on, and isolated his handler's voice. At that Gavin turned on his heel and took one step right into RK900. "Fuck, don't follow so close," he hissed, taking a step back to regain his personal space.

RK900 hardly paid Gavin any mind, scanning for what he'd missed.

>PRIORITY TASK: FIND WHAT UNNERVED DET. GAVIN REED.
>SECONDARY TASK: REMAIN UNNOTICED BY JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN> SUSPECT

His vision switched from basic to scan mode, only to be brought out of it by Gavin grabbing the lapels of his jacket. "Dale Bronagan, coming this way with about three guys." RK900 spotted the four men moving through the crowd. "If this all goes to hell, how many guys can you take in a fight?"

"I cannot harm humans."

"Ex-fucking-scuse me?"

"My programming-"

"Fuck your programming," he hissed.
"That is not possible." RK900 had predicted that Gavin would respond to his comment with hostility. Instead, there was clear fear in his eyes, as he appeared to be tracking the men by the reflection in the front windows.

"He can't see me," Gavin stressed, fingers clenching.

>PRIORITY TASK: PROTECT DET. GAVIN REED'S COVER
>SECONDARY TASK: REMAIN UNNOTICED BY JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN> SUSPECT

RK900 went with the quickest method since the men were getting closer. He put his hand over the majority of Gavin's face. Gavin quickly grabbed his wrist and pulled his hand away. "What the fuck?"

"I was hiding your face from-"

"Are you an idiot?" He hissed. "That clearly wasn't going to work." He huffed out a breath, then looked up with determination in his eyes. "Kiss me."

RK900 glanced down at Gavin's lips, and---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

The group of men were close. Gavin practically growled. "Sorry, Tin Man." His grip on the lapels of RK900's jacket twisted as he pulled him down.

Gavin kissed as he did everything else, aggressively.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

RK900 knew he needed to keep Gavin from being recognized. He carefully cupped Gavin's face, framing it with his hands, human skin warm, soft with rough patches of stubble.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

Predicting the movement of Gavin's lips took up more computing power than he cared to admit. He couldn't help but analyze the DNA from saliva, which gave him basic information on Gavin that he'd already known along with the picture of him from the precincts database. Gavin's tongue brushed against his, and RK900 was hit with the composition of the cigarettes, and coffee.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

His sensors noted the air changes as people walked by them. He just barely opened his eyes to see the backs of the men that Gavin had been worried about. He could pull back now, but it would be safer to wait until they were out the door.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

His eyes fell shut. Every one of his sensors were amped up. One of his hands slid back to thread through Gavin's hair, the texture smooth between his fingers. He licked into Gavin's mouth,
mimicking what Gavin had done to him, which earned him a surprised moan.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ RK900---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

He---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin's teeth caught RK900's bottom lip, pulling just slightly before releasing, lips soothing.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

The bell above the door jingled as the door opened, a blast of cool air coming in, and the bell rang again as the door shut. They were gone, but RK900 ---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED
>PRIORITY TASK: OBTAIN INTEL
>SECONDARY TASK: REMAIN UNNOTICED BY JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN> SUSPECT

RK900 released Gavin, and pulled back a little. Gavin appeared a little disoriented, blinking rather owlishly few times. RK900 found himself looking at Gavin's kiss swollen lips, and he---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin cleared his throat. "Sorry," he muttered. He tipped his head back a little, in the general direction of the table of dealers. "Zimmerman still there?"

"Yes," RK900 replied. "Shall we go to the bar?"

Gavin scrubbed both hands over his face, took a deep breath, then nodded. He turned around, keeping his head down a bit as he made his way to the bar. While the tables were nearly packed, the bar stools were mostly empty. They took the ones closest to Zimmerman and company.

"You got them?" Gavin asked, pulling on his own ear.

RK900 understood Gavin was asking if he could hear the conversation from this point. "Yes." Audio recorded, and he was able isolate different voices. He did a search of Dale Bronagan in the background, and discovered the man had a long list of notes in his files, but only a few convictions
for minor things when he'd been in his late twenties and early thirties. Notes only, no convictions in the past ten years. He checked the notes in the file while Gavin ordered two drinks from the bartender.

-Affiliated with street gang: Dead Kings [Territorial disputes with Red Dragons]
-Suspect in the murder of Officer Laura Brown.
-Suspect in the disappearance of Detective Calvin Monroe (body never located)
-Suspect in the disappearance of Detective Marc Gonzalaz (body never located)
-Suspect in armed robbery (over $10,000, injured shopkeeper)

He had been convicted of a few minor offenses, but being a suspected in so many other open cases was suspicious. "You're afraid of Bronagan."

Gavin toyed with the cup of whiskey, not actually drinking it. "If you had the ability to be afraid, you would be too. Now focus on the job."

"I can multitask. They're talking about a television show," RK900 replied, grabbing the second drink, a prop, nothing more. "Are you afraid because he is suspected in the murder and disappearance of two different police officers?"

Gavin's eyes glanced up at the basketball game on the television. "You just have a general overview of those cases, right?"

"Researching further could compromise my attention to the conversation."

Gavin nodded, brought the drink to his lips, but RK900 could tell none actually got past his lips. It was just for show. If they kissed now, he would have the detailed composition of the whiskey on his sensors.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

"He's the suspected hitman for the Dead Kings," he whispered. "Every cop that has started to make headway into making a case against them has ended up disappearing, bodies never found, so likely murdered and buried. In the case of Officer Brown, brutally murdered, and left on her grandmother's doorstep, gave the old woman a heartattack and she died too." Gavin's lip curled in disgust. "They had to use DNA to identify her, he'd smashed her face in. A-," he cleared his throat. "A lot of other fucked up shit too. He glanced down at the whiskey, pushed it away a little. "She died while I was still a beat cop, but we worked at the same precinct."

"You knew her personally."

"More like knew of her. That precinct was larger than the one we work at, and she worked guns and gangs, while I worked traffic. I passed her in the halls or the break room every once in a while." He shrugged. "That case though, it left it's mark."

"And Bronagan knows you, how?"

The laughter is self-deprecating. "This might surprise you, but I sometimes make irrational decisions."

"That doesn't surprise me," RK900 replied.
He gets a smirk for his response. "Anyway, four or five months after Officer Brown's death, there is this sporty old car, worth more than I made in like five years, speeding through a school zone. Remember, this was before automated cars got really big, when they were still too expensive for most families." Gavin's eyes met his. "So I pulled it over, and guess who is driving." He points a finger at RK900.

RK900 was pulled into the conversation, included, and he---

[DISTABILITY DETECTED]

[DISTABILITY PATCHED]

"Dale Bronagan."

"Got it in one." Gavin frowned, and eyed the whiskey. "I recognized him right off. The whole precinct had been watching the case. It hit dead end, after dead end. And fuck, maybe I couldn't bring him in on the murder, but I could nail him with a speeding ticket, even though every cell in my body wants to get as far from that crazy motherfucker as possible." He nodded over to the table. "You still got them?"

"They're talking about the Eden Club," RK900 replied, easily keeping up with the conversation at the table, and the one he participated in with Gavin. Gavin nodded, but remained quiet. "Did you fine him?"

"Ultimately, no." Gavin took a deep breath, and blew it out slow. "Asked for his license and registration and he just smiled and said, 'no.' My memory is a little fuzzy after that, I know he hit me with the door, I know we fought a bit." Gavin squinted as if he could make the memory clearer. "I woke up in the back of my own police car, and he was sitting in the front seat on the vehicle's computer. All my information was pulled up. Name, address, work info, next of kin- which was my mother, all her information was there too. He just looked at me through the mesh, and asked me if I was going to keep my mouth shut. Told him I wouldn't say anything, and he left."

"The back doors have autolocks," RK900 said. "You couldn't get out."

Gavin nodded. "He'd also taken my walkie, and gun. Both were sitting in the front, I could see them but couldn't get to them. He'd also broken a few of my ribs, which punctured my lung, couldn't breathe worth a shit, blood all over my face-"

RK900 could visualize it, and the image--

[DISTABILITY DETECTED]

[DISTABILITY PATCHED]

RK900 brushed his finger against his own nose, where Gavin had the scar. "Was that how you-"

"Nah," Gavin waved the question off. "Childhood accident." He then pointed to a faint white line that disappeared into his hair. "He must have slammed my head off of something. I had a concussion."

"Did you tell your Captain the truth?"
"No." Gavin glared at RK900. "Of course I didn't. That man is an absolute psychopath who put me in the hospital for a simple speeding ticket, it was two hours before another cruiser came around. He knew where my mom lived. He smashed in the face of a police officer, and the next cop who got close went missing, which after all this time is code for brutally murdered."

Humans often initiated physical contact for comfort. Gavin seemed to fold into himself, elbows on the bar, hips aligned with shoulders, head bowed. RK800 might have a protocol for such social relations, but while RK900 knew what humans did, he did not have such protocols. His hand reached out, and gripped Gavin's shoulder like Connor had done with him earlier.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

Gavin's grey eyes were wary as he glanced over. RK900 knew he should say something, but--

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

[SEARCH: COMFORT]

The definition which popped up did not help him. Gavin pushed his hand away, but there was no heat or anger with the movement.

For a minute and twenty six seconds, they remained in silence, watching the basketball game. And then, he gently elbowed Gavin. "They're making a deal." Gavin's lips twitched into a smirk, the only evidence that he'd heard.

By the time the men were getting up to leave, RK900 had details on multiple members of the organization, places they frequented, the drugs they sold, the prostitution ring they were building, and the guns they were bringing into the city.

"You get what we came for?" Gavin asked when the door swung shut.

"That and more."

Gavin finally downed the drink, then the second that RK900 had sitting in front of him. He grinned at RK900 as he got off the stool with a surprising amount of grace. "Nice."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^
"Yo," Gavin's voice cut through stasis. "You gonna work, or what?"

RK900 blinked, systems going from a stasis cycle, which increased overall battery life, back to full processing power. He stood in the android terminals that were built into the walls at the precinct. With all programs back online, he glanced to his side to take in Gavin, who looked, for once, fairly well rested. He took a quick scan of the room, there were a few officers from the night shift preparing to leave, and a few more of the day shifters coming in. He inquired the time, and it immediately pinged in the corner of his vision before fading away. "You are earlier than your usual fifteen minute window."

"Wanted to talk to you," Gavin said, turning on his heel, and motioning RK900 to follow.

It was unexpected, both that Gavin was early, and that he actively sought out RK900 to speak to. While his handler dealt with assigning tasks, including ordering him to stay in the precinct when he left, RK900 had been made aware by Connor that Gavin did not always appreciate the company of androids. In fact, before the revolution, he'd been downright hostile toward them.

Connor had mentioned that Gavin appeared to understand his job was on the line, but not only that, there was something, some change that Connor had noticed between the pre, and post revolution. Gavin had become somewhat more neutral, slightly less antagonistic toward androids. Or at least, no more antagonistic than he was with his human counterparts.

RK900 left the terminal, and followed his handler. "What did you wish to speak to me about, Detective?"

"Last night," Gavin said, pulling the chair out at his desk. The knapsack strap slipped from his shoulder, down his arm, and he caught it, swinging it under his desk where it landed with a dull thud. "You told me that you can't actually cause a human any harm."

RK900 gave a small nod. "I can't."

"Bullshit," Gavin said, gesturing to the entirety of RK900's form. "You're built like a tank, you've got height, and bulk on Connor. They didn't build you to be docile."

"They built Connor for integration, he's not meant to intimidate," RK900 explained. "He is built for speed and agility, the smaller framework beneficial to his purpose."

Gavin crossed his arms. "Then you were definitely built to cause damage."

"No. I was built for a world post-deviancy, to prove to the humans that androids are nothing more than machines built to make human lives easier." Gavin frowned, showed signs of disbelief. "I was built to endure."

The frown remained on Gavin's face, but the set of his eyes softened. RK900 didn't have time to figure out what that meant. "Make me a coffee."

>PRIORITY TASK: MAKE COFFEE FOR DET. GAVIN REED
RK900 immediately took to the task, stepping around one of the other officers on his way into the break room. He looked at the measly amount of coffee in the bottom of the pot. It had been on the warmer for a while. He dumped it out in the sink, and went about making a fresh pot.

While the coffee percolated, RK900 opened the cupboard up, and to the right for Gavin's mug. He heard something near the doorway, and turned to get a visual. An older officer stood there, looked RK900 over, scowled and left. RK900 returned to his search. The mug was not where he'd put it after washing, and drying.

Someone must have moved it. Finding the mug became his primary task, after all, he could not make acquire coffee for Gavin if there was no mug. He did a scan of the two shelves of that cupboard, but did not find the black mug with a random pattern of white skulls.

RK900 didn't have to turn to recognize that Connor came in a moment after that, Hank at his side. The RK800 model talked animatedly, moving his hands around to get his point across, there was a wide smile on his face as he retold a story, of which RK900 only caught a few details including; Chloe [RT600], Elijah [KAMSKI], the board game Monopoly, and a video of a dog chasing it's tail. There had apparently been a joke for both Connor and Hank laughed, but RK900 didn't have enough context. Or a sense of humour.

He looked at how comfortable they were with each other, the ease of comradery, and he---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Connor flashed his smile at RK900. "Good morning, Nines."

"Good morning, Connor," RK900 recited. "Good morning, Lieutenant Anderson." He then checked the cupboard next to it for the missing mug.

"Hank, just Hank," Hank replied. He took a look at the still brewing coffee, and took a seat at the table. He opened the box of donuts, and got a look from Connor. "Oh, come on!

"You're supposed to be eating healthy," Connor said, crossing his arms.

"It's a jelly donuts," Hank said, his eyebrows rising just slightly while his lips turned down. "It's full of fruit."

Connor cringed. "Hardly. Do you want me to tell you how much sugar is in there? Because I-"

Hank chuckled, and put his hands up in surrender. "Nope, no, I'm okay, thanks."

RK900 didn't find the mug in that cupboard either. He tried the next as the coffee machine beeped, signifying the coffee was ready. Hank got up, grabbed one of his multiple mugs, this one saying, 'Friday, my second favourite F word.' It was a Thursday, but the man was irreverent.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ no fix

Connor clasped a hand over RK900's shoulders. "Are you looking for Gavin's mug?"

"Yes. I put it in that cupboard yesterday," RK900 said, tapping the now closed cupboard. "Middle
"I'll help you look!" Connor offered.

"That is an unnecessary waste of resources, it won't take long for me to search an area of this size," RK900 replied. He turned to the other set of cupboards, but spotted something in the open trash bin. He bent down and picked a large shard out. White ceramic. He turned it over, black with little skulls. "I found it." He then looked at the other broken pieces. "It is damaged."

"It is broken, kiddo," Hank said, looking over his shoulder. "Happens pretty often here, someone trying to get their mug further back and knocking one of the front ones down. Just use one of mine. I have six or seven of them hidden around here." Hank opened one of the cupboards, and grabbed a mug. He inspected it, and grinned. "This one is perfect."

It was nearly identical in size, which would help him keep the coffee to sugar ratio as usual. "Thank you." RK900 poured the coffee, and added a level teaspoon of sugar. He dunked the spoon and stirred exactly twice before bringing it to the sink to wash and put away. By that time, Hank had already filled his mug, and was leaving, Connor sticking around a moment longer.

"If neither of us are out on cases, I would like to spend my lunch break with you," Connor stated.

If they were still at the station, Gavin typically ate at his own desk, being one of the officers who brought a lunch or dinner from home. However, RK900 typically just stayed on a case, and if they weren't assigned one, he would request a task from Gavin. "You would have to ask Gavin."

Connor frowned. "You don't have to ask him for anything. You are a person."

"I am an android, built to complete tasks." RK900 replied. "Now, I must finish this one." He sidestepped Connor, and kept the coffee level as he walked over to Gavin's desk.

The detective had his feet propped up on the corner, his phone in hand playing a matching game. RK900 reached over Gavin's legs to set the coffee down. He heard Hank snicker, but tuned it out, deeming it irrelevant.

Gavin kept his eyes on the game, swiping his finger. "Thanks," he muttered, seeming to not even realize he'd said it. He kept swiping this way and that. His nose wrinkled a little, and he let out a quiet curse.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^RK900 stared at the warning. Then focused on Gavin. RK900 was frequently in Gavin's presence when the warnings appeared. Then again, he also spent the most amount of time with Gavin being that the man was his handler, and partner at the DPD. RK900 linked the two facts anyway, however he didn't know what to do about it. He tried to patch it, but it stubbornly remained.

Gavin's face fell in defeat, and he pressing the side button on his phone, tossing it onto his desk. He reached for the coffee, his hand pausing. "That isn't mine."

"Your mug was missing. I found it damaged in the trash. Lieutenant Anderson volunteered his mug for you. He said it was perfect for you, and I found it to be nearly identical in size to your old one."

Hank was laughing, and RK900 knew he'd missed another joke.
"Fuck you, Anderson," Gavin said with a glare, grabbing the mug anyway.

RK900 looked from Gavin, to the mug, to Hank, then back again. "I don't understand."

Gavin sighed, and turned the mug to hold it from the bottom. The handle was black while the mug itself was white. On one side, it read 'UNT.' He cocked his head. "An abbreviation?" RK900 started to run a search.

"All that processing power, wasted," Gavin said, he tapped the handle. "Look at the big picture, dumbass."

"The handle is a C," RK900 realized. "Hank was subtly calling you a cunt."

Hank was positively howling, Connor was snickering in his seat, and Gavin just looked vaguely annoyed. "Oh yeah, you're blaming this on the old man?" Gavin asked. "You sure you're not deviant."

"I am not," RK900 replied.

"Sure you're not calling me a cunt?" Gavin asked, glaring.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

"Of course not," RK900 said, firm, nearly the most passionate thing that he'd ever said.

"Relax," Gavin lifted his leg, and gently toed RK900 in the hip. "I'm fucking with you."

[DEFINE>PHRASE: FUCKING WITH YOU]
[RESULTS: TO BE INSINCERE. TO PLAYFULLY JOKE AROUND]

RK900 found his lips twitching outside of his control.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY
Music

Chapter Notes

Please note; my shitty school didn't even really have music in middle school, and so terms I am terrible with- all things music. I apologize.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the past two weeks, RK900 spent his lunch hours with Connor if available. Whenever Connor would request it, Gavin would say something along the lines of, 'whatever.' Only 'whatever' couldn't be a primary task so he'd give a great sigh, and tell him to go do whatever the fuck Connor wanted to do for an hour.

It was not a proper task, and RK900 found it difficult to make the barriers for the instructions. Gavin often gave orders in such a flippant state, loose and casual.

Today, Connor had a pair of headphones in hand. Hank was eating his weekly burger, a concession for his diet, at his desk while he watched with a little smirk on his face. Gavin was sitting at his own desk, absentmindedly eating carrots dipped in ranch dressing while playing one of the games on his phone.

"Okay." Connor held up the wireless headphones. "This was the first bit of music I ever listened to." Connor then put the headphones over RK900's ears. RK900 immediately turned down his audio sensitivity. Everything was noise. Even the 'singing' was just screeching, and all his programming couldn't make out lyrics. "What do you think?" Connor asked loudly, clearly trying to speak over the soundproofing.

"It is loud," RK900 replied, able to keep his voice at normal levels. "And chaotic."

"That is a good description of Knights of the Black Death," Connor said with a smile.

"What are you guys doing?" Tina Chen asked looking them over.

"I'm having RK900 listen to music," Connor replied, waving his phone which the music was transferring from. "I want to see if he likes or dislikes anything."

Officer Chen looked at the phone, and frowned. "Jesus. Metal? Maybe you should take it a little easier on him." She made a give me motion with her hand. "Let me pick a song for him." Connor passed the phone, and Chen started to type. She looked at RK900 as her thumb hit play.

A much softer sequence of notes came through the speakers, and he returned his audio sensors to their default state. He followed the lyrics, they were about a man losing his girlfriend, and drinking by a fire. "The harmony is simple, and the singer is typical for the genre."

"A glowing review," Chen replied dryly. She went to pass the phone back to Connor only to have it intercepted by Gavin, who was now munching on an apple slice.
Gavin swallowed the bite, looked at the phone, then looked at Chen. "Country, really? Why are we friends?" Gavin glanced at RK900, smirked, and typed something in. "Try this." The music changed again. Guitars, drums, bass. The male voice was deep, and gravely. He listened as they stared at him. "Well?" Gavin asked. "Do you like it?"

RK900 knew that with their stares, they wanted him to state either that he liked it or disliked it, however he didn't have the ability to measure such a thing. "It is, what it is."

"That... means nothing." Gavin shoved the last piece of apple into his mouth, as the phone started to ring- a standard generic tone. Gavin looked at the phone in his hand, shoving it at Connor, and pulled his own phone from his back pocket. He answered it; "Detective Reed." The rest of them were respectfully quiet while Gavin was on the phone. He nodded a few times, threw in a couple 'yeah's, and then pointed at RK900, snapped his fingers, and motioned for him to follow.

Despite it being silent, it was a clear new directive from Gavin to follow. He removed the headphones, passing them back to Connor before following Gavin back to their desks.

"Great, thanks," Gavin threw his phone on the desk while he grabbed his coat. "We've got a lead on our case." The collar of the leather jacket was twisted and it made RK900's fingers twitch, he just---

"Let's go!" Gavin said, leading the way, RK900 followed.

::

They caught up with, and arrested their suspect who immediately started crying, and begging forgiveness. They spent the afternoon interrogating, and doing paperwork connected to the arrest. It was a little after seven when they finished. Gavin shut down his computer, and pulled his jacket back on.

"Do you want to do something tonight?" Gavin asked. He frequently asked questions, like a dare. RK900 couldn't ‘want’ anything. His software did something whenever Gavin even asked, like it was waiting to patch something that hadn't yet happened.

RK900 stared at him. "What would you have me do?"

Gavin frowned. "Just... do your stasis thing."

RK900 nodded, shut down his own computer, and left his desk. He went to the closest terminal, the same one he always used, and stood. Some of his programs started shutting down, they wouldn't be necessary.

Gavin appeared in his vision before stasis could take full effect. The man looked at the headphones in his hands, an older version of the ones that Connor had, but still in good condition. "Try this," he said, softly, reaching up to put the headphones over RK900's ears. He then pulled his phone out of his pocket for a song already pre-loaded.

Drums came through first, then a violinist, and pianist played. The notes came together, and yet
could not be predicted by RK900's advanced features. "It is---"

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin stared, like he was waiting for him to finish his sentence. "It was my mom's favourite," Gavin said. "She loved classical, it was never really my thing, but then she found this, it mixed the classical sounds she loved while the beat was something I started out tolerating, and ended up loving." He shrugged, like he wanted for it to be more casual than it was.

Gavin never got into personal information with anyone, at least, never around RK900, the trust that Gavin bestowed upon him was filed away and caused half a dozen instability reports.

"The piano version is up next in the playlist." Gavin scratched at the stubble on his jaw. "Sometimes I listen to it when I'm trying to sleep. Maybe you should give it a try."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

"I don't sleep," RK900 replied.

"I know that," Gavin said dryly. "But for your stasis, or whatever."

"But you need your phone."

"That's my personal, no one is gonna call it," Gavin said, then pulled a second phone from the pocket of his jacket. "And work is paying for my work phone, so if they want to call me, this is the one they damn well better be calling me on."

RK900 looked down at the phone, he---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"This song is---"

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

The words lodged in his throat and were lost to the patch. RK900 looked for a different route, he held the phone to his chest. "I will keep the phone." He hoped that the action said what he could not.

Gavin squinted, as if he could see through the words if he tried hard enough. "Okay. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Tomorrow," RK900 whispered as Gavin walked away.

He restarted the song.
Chapter End Notes

I'm not saying this was the song that Gavin and his mom loved, but they are what I kind of thought of while writing this.

Blackmill- The Drift
Blackmill- The Drift- Piano version
Eavesdropping

Chapter Notes

You may have noticed the update in number of chapters until the end of this part in the series. Instead of five, it'll be seven. I hope. I want to write the next part!!

[A story having more chapters than I estimated- a surprise to no one who has ever read one of my multi-chapter fics. I'm the queen of saying, 'it'll only be like fifteen chapters,' and somehow it ends up with forty.]

Also, thank you all for your wonderful comments on this story :) They just make me want to write more! Comments= writer fuel! <3

RK900 completed the first part of his task; locating the required document from the archives. With it in hand, he redirected back upstairs. He was to bring the large file to Gavin, but the detective was no longer at the desk. Gavin's jacket was still hanging on the back of his chair, even Gavin's cellphone was sitting on the desk.

[GAVIN HAS NOT LEFT]
>PRIORITY TASK> LOCATE DET. GAVIN REED
>SECONDARY TASK> GIVE DET. GAVIN REED FILE

Logic turned him in the direction of the break room. Gavin consumed an unhealthy amount of coffee every day. It was a likely place to begin his search. As he walked closer to the break room, his audio processors picked up and focused on Gavin.

"Look, she's great-" Officer Tina Chen was cut off by a loud groan.

"No, no, nope, not happening. And if you tell me she has a nice personality, I swear to fucking god, I'll punch myself in the face."

Tina waited a beat. "I think you meant for it to be a deterrent, but honestly, it just makes me want to say it more."

"Stop trying to set me up with your friends," Gavin said with a tone of finality. "Remember your friend Katelyn? Remember how that worked out?"

"I remember that you two actually dated for three months, which honestly, has to be a record for you."

"Fuck off," he replied dryly.

RK900 stood in the doorway with the file. He'd been told by Gavin previously that if he was talking to someone, that he had to wait until he was finished. The protocol had been set up since he interrupted a conversation between Gavin and one of Captain Fowlers superiors. He remained unnoticed. Gavin was taking the sugar dish from Tina, and she had her hip leaning against the counter, back to RK900.
She pushed a stray strand of dark hair back behind her ear. "It's been ages since you've even had a hook-up-"

"Fuck off," Gavin said, holding the words for a few extra seconds, exaggerating them.

She scoffed. "And when was the last time you had an actual date?"

"Can you please stop being such a girl. Just because now you're getting laid on the regular-"

"I am in a committed relationship-"

"Yeah, a three week old committed relationship-"

"Almost a month-"

"Doesn't count-"

"Fine. Whatever. Enjoy your porn," she teased, turning around, making a high pitched noise as she practically jumped back into Gavin who in turn was jostled and half of his coffee spilled over the rim.

He let out a pained shout, dropped the mug to the counter, and pulled back his burned hand. "Fuck." He shook it out on the way to the sink. He jerked the faucet over to cold, and stuck his hand under.

"Sorry," Tina said. "Your partner startled me. Are you okay?"

Gavin kept his hand under the running water, but looked over his shoulder. He looked from Tina to RK900. "Why didn't you say something?"

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^  

"You told me not to," RK900 replied.

Gavin squinted. "I did, didn't I?" He looked back down at his hand, turned off the water, and grabbed a towel to dry off.

"You good?" Tina asked, grabbing a wet rag to wash up the mess of coffee on the counter and dripping down the lower cupboards.

"I'm fine," Gavin replied. He refilled his mug, a black one that read 'DEATH BEFORE DECAF;' in white letters, which considering his coffee habit, might be true.

With coffees in hand, and the mess cleaned up the three of them returned to work, Tina leaving them to go to her desk. Once Gavin was sitting at his desk, RK900 put the file down.

Someone was speaking loud, and rather incoherently from the front entrance, and while it wasn't uncommon in a police station, most still turned to look. Gavin being one of them. RK900 followed Gavin's lead.

Hank and Connor guided an injured android inside. The android was a WM500, built for city
maintenance and construction. Facial lacerations were caused by a knife, deep enough to damage the skin overlay module. Thirium stained half of his face, and dripped down his neck. The damage was superficial, and would not interfere with efficiency.

It's panicked explanation to the Hank paused as it stared over at them. More specifically, Gavin. "You!" he said, pointing. Gavin's eyes widened, and his coffee mug was frozen halfway to his mouth.

"What the fuck?" Hank took a few steps toward Gavin's desk. "You did this?"

"No," Gavin said, heart steady, but he still looked confused.

"No, no, he didn't do this," the WM500 said, gesturing to his face. He panted like he actually needed air, but he was simply panicking. RK900 noted his stress levels at 65%, elevated, but not dangerous. "He saved me the night after the revolution, when everyone was evacuating."

"Oh fuck," Gavin turned in his seat, and went back to his work. "Mistaken identity."

"Not possible."

Gavin was muttering under his breath but the WM500 came over to his desk anyway. "What you did was very brave-"

"Please, shut up," Gavin muttered, keeping his eyes on the screen even if he wasn't working.

The WM500 frowned. "Thank you," he whispered, then returned to Hank who looked perplexed. Connor wore a frown, but had never been one to just let things be. He reached out for the WM500, who accepted and they exchanged information.

Now Connor knew, and RK900---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"Let's get back to work." Gavin flipped open the file, glancing up a minute later, and upon seeing that the WM500 was gone, the tension in his shoulders finally released.

:::

Later, nearing the end of shift, RK900 found a lull in work. Gavin was mostly playing on his phone anyway. Connor came over and leaned back against his desk. "Eventful day, Nines?"

"Most days have events," RK900 replied. "Unless I'm left in stasis."

Connor glanced over his shoulder at Gavin who was distracted. Then he extended his hand. RK900 felt the pull and interfaced with the RK800. Sure enough, what he got was the WM500's memories. They weren't as clear of a recording as his own, but serviceable.

The WM500- Thomas, was running through the streets. Humans were leaving after the peaceful process, but not all of them were leaving quietly. Some of them were angry, and unwilling to just go. Thomas looked over his shoulder found the two men gaining on him. He tripped over
something, and fell to the ground, he struggled to get up only to have a boot slammed into the center of his back.

"Please, please," Thomas begged. "Just leave me alone!"

"Androids taking our jobs, and now they're taking our city?" The man snarled. "Are you fucking kidding me?"

"Kick the shit out of him," the second one demanded. "Smash his fucking head in."

"Hey!" A third voice came in, deeper, full of gravel and bitterness. Gavin. "Get the fuck out of here."

"Who the fuck are you? Huh?" The second man demanded. "You gonna fucking make us?"

Thomas managed to looked up at Gavin who stared down, eyes calculating, lips pressed into a hard line. He seemed to come to a decision, RK900 could hear the familiar long sigh. "Yeah, looks like it." Gavin didn't have his jacket on, which was odd considering the snow falling around them- they must have been in his neighbourhood. He might have been packing his car for the evacuation. The lack of the jacket also gave away the lack of holsters, the lack of weapons.

Gavin's assessed the situation, and then did what he did best. Antagonized. "You gonna fight me, you fucking pussy?"

The two men had already been on edge, and the second man lunged. Gavin moved quickly, grabbing the man's arm and twisting it, using the momentum, he grabbed the back of the man's head with his free hand and ran him into a light post. The man stumbled and fell to the ground.

Gavin shot a roguish smile at the bigger man. "Bitch." It was all he had to say, setting fire to the fuse. The man left Thomas, and the android shuffled back, still watching the fight, watching as the big man took a swing which Gavin dodged, and a second punch to the gut that Gavin wasn't able to deflect.

Gavin put his arm up to block the punch coming for his face, and he made eye contact with Thomas. "What are you waiting for? Run!"

And Thomas did. The memory faded out.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

RK900 blinked, and smoothed out the wrinkles that Connor had created on his jacket. He looked over at Gavin who was still playing his phone game.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

There were questions but they registered as instabilities and were patched, but maybe Connor had felt something while they'd been connected, or perhaps, had the same questions. "Detective Reed, were you hurt?" Connor asked.

Gavin looked up from his phone. "Don't know what you're talking about."

"I'm talking about the thing you don't want to talk about, would you like me to be more specific
"You are such a little shit," Gavin snarled. He tossed his phone onto the desk, and checked his coffee mug- empty. "I wasn't hurt."

"Yes, you were," RK900 said, making calculations based on the video. "The first hit-

"Look, nothing an ice pack wouldn't fix." Gavin stood, grabbing his mug as he stood.

"And those men?" Connor asked, making Gavin pause beside RK900's desk.

Gavin shot Connor a dry look. "Are you asking if I, as an off-duty police officer, beat up two civilians-"

"Right, right." Connor put his hands up in surrender. "Understood," Connor said with a little smile. He looked proud.

Gavin grimaced, and gave a gentle shove to Connor's head, that RK800 could have easily avoided. "Don't look at me like that," he said as he walked off toward the break room for more coffee.

"Hey, you ready, Con?" Hank asked, grabbing his jacket. "I'm sure Sumo needs to go out by now."

"Yes, I'm ready," Connor replied. He turned to RK900. "I'll see you tomorrow, Nines."

"It is likely," RK900 replied.

Connor gave him a smile in parting, then turned toward the lieutenant. "Hank, how do you feel about broccoli soup?"

"I'm against it," Hank replied walking toward them. He ruffled RK900's hair on his way past. "Good night, kid."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^
Chapter Notes

Like, DAMN, this chapter is almost the length of the rest of the story put together.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

On the other side of the one way glass, Hank and Gavin interrogated the suspect, Scott Lawrence. He'd been arrested for the murder of three androids. Hank, Gavin, Connor, and RK900 had been put together by Captain Fowler to work the case as a unit, and while previous officers who had the first two murders and three months of time hadn't come up with much, they'd been able to figure it out after another murder in less than a week.

Connor expressed the fact that he wished they'd been able to figure it out sooner. Hank appeared proud that they'd got the man in the time frame, perhaps all his years in homicide gave him more realistic expectations. Gavin wore a grin, the wild one full of satisfaction, curved just to the right.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^  

RK900 knew that Gavin took pride in his work, in taking criminals down, and got an adrenaline rush from it all; finding evidence, putting it together, chasing down bad guys (especially if he got to tackle them,) interrogating. Paperwork was a necessary evil he completed with minimal bitching.

For now, RK900 watched as Gavin stood against the wall, obviously playing the bad cop to Hank's good cop. Gavin slammed his hands down on the table, making everyone jump. He started digging in on the suspects past history. They knew they had this guy, but a confession would help move things along.

The suspect's lawyer started arguing with Hank. Gavin turned to the glass, his angered face remaining in place. "You know what, fine, you don't want to talk to us, you can be questioned by our superiors. Come on, Hank."

RK900 followed Connor to the door with a file in his hands. Connor had integrated, it didn't make sense for RK900 to be involved. Connor could do this on his own. They met with their partners in the hall.

Hank put a hand on Connor's shoulder. "Do all the talking. You know what to do. This guy hates androids, seeing them in a position over us," he wiggled his thumb between himself and Gavin, "it's gonna make him lose it."

Gavin still had that smirk on his face. "And you, just be the intimidating bastard you are."

"That is not a legitimate task."

"Stand against the wall at full height. If the suspect get's all jumpy, just slam your hands on the table, it'll scare the piss out of them. Just basically be you, and you'll be fine," Gavin assured before
he and Hank went into the observation room.

Connor entered the room first, then RK900. RK900 put the file down on the table, glaring at the suspect before he backed away to stand at the wall, folding his arms across his chest as he'd observed Gavin do.

"What the fuck is this?" Scott said, looking disgusted at the both of them.

"We are the leads on this case," Connor said. "My name is Connor, I'm an android produced by Cyberlife, but since achieving deviancy, I now work here at the Police Department of my own free will."

"Bunch of bolts that steal jobs, steal women, steal our homes, and our lives," Scott grew increasingly belligerent. "Fuck you! You-"

RK900 slammed his hands on the metal table hard enough to leave dents, he said nothing to the silence, just glared at the man who looked up fearfully. RK900 stood back to his full height, removed his hands, and took a step back again, but his eyes never left their suspect.

Connor returned to questioning, and eventually the angered Scott belligerently confessed. Officer Miller came to take the suspect into a holding cell. RK900 followed Connor back over to observation.

Hank wore a wide smile. "That was excellent you two! Fucking incredible."

Gavin, who stared through the one-way glass, finally turned to them. "Well, you did what I told you." He still wore a smirk, and gave a little shrug. "Wasn't expecting the dents, but it'll definitely let future suspects know that we don't fuck around here."

The door to their side of interrogation opened, and Tina walked in. Her eyes were rimmed red, and her skin was blotchy. RK900 determined she'd been crying. "Oh," she looked a little embarrassed. "Hey, you guys."

Gavin's brows drew down. "What's wrong?"

"Jack broke up with me," Tina sniffled a bit, shrugged like it didn't bother her. "There is only one thing to do."

"Get drunk," she said, as Gavin said; "murder him."

She snort laughed. "We are literally cops in a police station."

Gavin just shrugged. "Which is why we'll pull off a great murder, and get away with it."

Half a dozen instability warnings came up at the end of Gavin's comment. The detective couldn't be serious. Neither Connor, nor Hank appeared concerned, and RK900 determined it was a jest.

Tina smiled though, and stepped into Gavin's space, wrapping her arms around him. "Thanks."

He awkwardly patted her back. "There, there?"

"God," she muttered. "You did not get hugged enough as a child."
"Hey, I got hugged plenty. I'm a great hugger," He said wrapping his arms around her tight even lifting her feet a half inch off the ground for a quick moment making her laugh. "In high school, I got voted most likely to be a professional hugger."

She took a step back and grinned up at him. "So, they couldn't say prostitute in the high school year book, huh?"

"Fuck you," Gavin said. "Let's get drunk."

Tina nodded, then looked at the three others who'd had the show. "Come on," Tina said. "Misery loves company."

"Okay," Connor said.

"You're okay with this?" Hank asked.

"Well, we've earned a little fun after that case," Connor's LED did a spin of yellow. "Three drink maximum, with a salad."

"Two drink maximum, pub food," Hank countered.

"One drink maximum, pub food, side salad- not fries."

Hank considered a moment. "I'm going to need more alcohol to deal with this lot. Unlimited alcohol, pub food, and you get to choose the food for a week, no concessions."

Connor's right eye twitched a little. "Ten days."

"Seriously?"

"Negotiating is one of my primary programs," Connor raised a brow. "Do we have a deal?"

Hank ran his hand through his shaggy hair. "Yeah, fuck, sure."

"You guys are fucking weird," Gavin muttered. He then looked to RK900. "You're coming with us."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

"I can not eat or drink," RK900 said, not seeing the purpose.

Gavin raised a brow. "So."

"That is an insufficient argument," he replied.

"You know what you can put as your priority task?" Gavin said, planting his hands on his hips. "Go to the bar with us. Secondary task, cheer Tina up."

>PRIORITY TASK> ACCOMPANY GROUP TO BAR
>SECONDARY TASK> CHEER TINA UP
[ERROR: SECONDARY TASK INCOMPATIBLE]
"I can accompany you, however, your proposed secondary task has caused an error message, and will not be completed."

"Nonsense, big guy," Tina said, gently elbowing him. "I'm feelin' better already. Let's get sloshed."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^  

"Jesus Christ, no one says 'sloshed' anymore, Tina," Gavin said. RK900 was used to the tone used, it was almost exclusively saved for the banter between Gavin and Tina.

"Oh, yeah?" Tina pursed her lips. "And what do you call it?"

"Wasted," he said as though it should be obvious.

"What is this?" she snorted. "Two-thousand and ten?"

"Don't go insulting Hank's golden years," Gavin said ducking instinctively before Hank could swat the back of his head.

"You little shit," Hank muttered.

:::

The bar had barely sufficient lighting, muted colours which subtly faded into one another, currently a blue that was slowly fading into purple. One had to get across the dance floor to get to the bar or the tables. A woman tried to get Connor to dance, but he'd smiled and gotten out of it.

"Get us seats," Tina said, raising her voice a little so the humans would hear her over the beat of the music. "I'll get the first round."

Gavin grabbed her wrist before she could walk off and pulled her a little closer. He leaned down to say something in her ear.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^  

RK900 isolated the background noise and turned it down, he already had a good focus on his handler's voice, and raised it so he could hear. "Take RK with you," Gavin said. "The bar is crowded."

Tina turned from Gavin to RK900. "Come on, big guy!"

Gavin nodded his chin in Tina's direction, a silent order. RK900 followed behind Tina. People looked at them, a few looked angered, some apprehensive, a couple of curious. The distraction worked, and Tina wiggled into a spot right at the bar. She flagged down the bartender, who greeted her by name- clearly she was a regular. She ordered, and he kept his eyes scanning around the area.

He spotted their group at a table that was too small for them all, but Connor and Gavin grabbed a couple extra chairs and were apparently determined to make it work.

"Hey, RK?" Tina got his attention, and he turned to her. "Would you mind carrying these?" she asked, pointing to the small tray holding six shots. "This place is crowded tonight, and I don't want
to drop them."

He reached past them, and picked the tray up, easily keeping it level. He followed her over to the table, avoiding people the best he could. He set the tray down, not a single spill. The table had only been meant for a couple, but they’d brought chairs up to all four sides, and put one at the corner, where Connor sat. RK900 sat across from Gavin, between Connor and Tina.

"Officer Chen-" Connor started only to be cut off by Tina raising a hand.

"Drop the formalities, Con, it's just Tina."

Connor beamed at the use of a nickname, and sat up all prim and proper. "Okay, Tina. How long have you and Gavin been friends?"

"Oh, Christ," Tina blew out a breath. "We were at the academy together. But I hated him then."

Hank laughed.

"Fuck you too," Gavin said, taking a shot and downing it.

"We had this drill sergeant named Richard Stroker," Tina continued even as Gavin started to laugh.

"Dick Stroker," Gavin muttered, laughing again.

"And he was a total dick," Tina said, grabbing a drink and pushing it toward Hank, before grabbing one for herself. "Gav and I bonded over our mutual hatred for the man. After we graduated we didn't talk for a bit, ended up at different precincts, but then Gavin transferred what, six or seven-"

"Almost eight years ago," Gavin corrected.

"Shit, we're getting old," Tina pouted. Hank took his shot, and Tina drank hers soon after. "Anyway," Tina continued. "He was still an asshole, but we got partnered for a few cases, and I don't know, somehow became friends along the way? He's an asshole, but he's my asshole."

Gavin's brows drew down at that. "That sounds wrong," he said taking the second shot for himself, and looking around for a waitress.

Connor smiled. "That is a long friendship." RK900 had a few months under his belt at this point, and Connor a little over a year. Their sense of time was not the same as their human companions. Connor smiled a little, glancing at Hank, then back down to the table. Perhaps, his predecessor was thinking about his own friendship with Hank. "You must know so much about each other. I still feel like I'm getting to know Hank."

"I know everything about Gavin," Tina said with a smug smile.

Gavin made a scoffing sound. "Bullshit, I know more about you than you know about me."

She glared. "No way!" Gavin just raised a brow. Tina frowned. "Challenge accepted. You guys can ask us random questions, and we'll answer about the other person. First to fail three loses."

"How will we know you're not cheating?" Hank asked.

Tina rummaged through her purse and pulled out her phone. "We'll write our answer on our
"Stakes?" Gavin asked.

"If I win, I get to pick a drink for you, and if you win, you get to pick one for me."

"Hope you're ready for some gin, bitch," Gavin said, and even at the mention of the alcohol Tina gagged.

"You're going down," she said, with a frown.

"Okay, does the other have a pet?" Connor asked. Everyone looked at him and he shrugged. "What? I like dogs."

Gavin pulled his own phone from the pocket of his jacket. Both he, and Tina typed their answers into their respective phones. "Done," Tina said.

Gavin nodded, and put his phone face down on the table. "She has a cat, his name is Matthew, and he's an asshole."

"Don't talk about my fur-baby like that!" Tina said.

Gavin glared at her. "He pissed on my shoes."

She rolled her eyes. "That was one time."

"It was twice, and he also pissed on the sweater I forgot there. The smell wouldn't come out and I had to throw it out."

"He let out a mournful sigh. "It was the perfect softness, Chen."

"Suck it up, Reed," Tina said. She then turned back to the grouping. "And Gavin doesn't have any pets."

"Ha! Wrong," Gavin smiled, and held up his phone with the answer.

"A betta fish? Named Champion?" Tina looked confused. "That isn't fair. You never let me come over to your place. Last time I tried to invite myself you told me that it was being fumigated for cockroaches."

"It was, I slept on your couch for three days because of that. And that was before I had Champion."

"What kind of name is Champion for a fish?" Tina threw her hands in the air.

"A good one," Gavin shrugged. "I bought two but the one killed the other, so the survivor I named Champion."

"Jesus Christ," Hank shook his head. "Their scientific name is Siamese fighting fish, you idiot."

"Well I found that out after," Gavin grumbled. "No one at the pet store told me."

"Probably because you're thirty-seven and they figured you had to know," Tina said. "It's pretty common knowledge."
"Whatever, I have one point."

Hank didn't seem interested in the game, still trying to find a waiter, but asked for favourite colour, which both of them got right. Purple for Chen, red for Gavin.

"How about you ask a question, Nines," Connor said.

He ran a search for questions to ask. "What is the others worst fear?"

Gavin stared at him for a long moment. "Not ominous at all," he muttered to himself, but they both tapped out their own answers on their phones, and set them down. "Tina is afraid of spiders."

"But they aren't my worst fear," she said raising her phone to show her answer of, 'Clowns.'

"Fuck! I knew that!" He ran his hands through his hair. "We watched the classic version of 'It' together and you made me sleep on your couch for the next three nights because you were sure Pennywise was going to murder you in your sleep."

"Shut up," she blushed, but the colour of the lights were fading into red, and it hid the worst of it. "You're afraid of dogs."

Connor's face fell. "You're afraid of dogs?" He turned to Hank. "How is that even possible?"

Gavin blew out a breath. "When I was a rookie cop, there was a dog fighting ring we had to go and break up. I was arresting a guy he whistled, and his Rottweiler came out of nowhere and attacked me. Tore the hell out of my leg. The guy got away, I had to shoot the dog, it was a mess."

"You shot the dog," Connor's jaw dropped.

Gavin flipped Connor the middle finger. "I needed fifty seven stitches, and had to walk with a cane for six weeks. And that isn't even my worst fear." Gavin held up his phone.

"Drowning," RK900 read, making note of it.

"Seriously, the dog thing I get, but why drowning?" Tina asked.

"Uh, the dying part?"

"Yeah, but," she shrugged. "Didn't you ever learn to swim as a kid?"

"No. Obviously not," Gavin responded. RK900 noted the fact that the man's shoulders had tensed. "That involves water, and drowning."

RK900 didn't---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"Just because you go in the water doesn't mean you'll drown."

Gavin glared at her, lip curling. "Says you." His heart rate increased by 24%. 
"That is an irrational fear."

Now Gavin looked angry, jaw clenched, eyes narrowed, brow drawn down. "You're afraid of spiders, that is irrational."

"Whatever."

"Yeah, I'm going to hit the head." And with that, Gavin left mid-game to weave through the crowd toward the bathroom. At that time, they finally got a waiter, ordered a couple of beers, a plate of nachos, and Hank got himself a burger with fries.

"Fuck, he's moody," Tina said, looking toward the bathrooms. "Look, I'm about to tell you guys something, and you can't let Gavin know." At that, both Hank and Connor leaned in. "We need to get Gavin up to three drinks, and keep him between that and seven drinks."

Hank raised a brow. "Why?"

"Trust me. One and two don't do much," she said with a casual wave of her hand. "Three and four he finally mellows out a bit. Five and six is a horny drunk. Seven is affectionate. Do not, and I repeat do not let him have drink eight. We don't talk about eight drink Gavin."

"Seriously?" Hank laughed.

"I've worked hard to nail down this pattern, do not ruin it for me," Tina glared at them all, then leaned back. "He's coming."

The beers arrived, and Gavin checked the label before shrugging and taking a sip. "What is your favourite holiday?" Connor asked.

They continued the game. Gavin got the answer wrong guessing Christmas for Tina, but her favourite was actually New Years- "What? A big party, no family pressure, and doesn't cost me half my pay check in presents? Fuck yeah, New Years!" She guessed Gavin's right; Halloween. "Which is a child's holiday."

"Uh, no it isn't. No family shit. No presents. Lots of chocolate," he ticked off his points on his fingers. "And it goes on sale the day after so you can continue gorging on bite sized chocolate bars."

She glared at his torso. "How do you look like this with that bad of a sweet tooth."

"Moderation," he said with a shrug. He put the bottle to his lips, it remained their for a second before he lowered it slightly to continue speaking. "And the gym." His lips returned to the bottle, adam's apple bobbing as he chugged down a quarter of it.

She grimaced. "Ugh, awful. Are we tied?"

His bottle returned to the table. "Yeah. Next one to get an answer wrong, loses."
"What is the other's top pet peeve," Connor asked, looking genuinely interested in knowing.

Both of them looked concerned, and it was clear that neither of them knew the answer. Still, they tapped their own answers on their phone.

"It really annoys you when people aren't on time?" Tina said with a shrug.

Gavin put his forehead in his hand. "Fuck." He held up his phone which read, 'chronically late assholes.'

"Yes!" Tina threw her hands in the air. "I'm still in it." She wiggled in her seat a little, then put her chin in her hands, elbows resting on the table, staring at Gavin. "What's my top pet peeve."

Gavin glared like he might be able to get the answer if he just stared hard enough. "Slow walkers?"

Tina beamed and Gavin cursed. "As annoying as I find that..." she held up her phone. "I find smoking to be so much worse. You of all people should know that."

"Yeah, I should have put you badgering me to quit as mine." The burger for Hank, and the nacho plate arrived. Tina took the waitress aside while Gavin helped himself. She sat back down. "What did you order?"

"Not telling," she said with a wicked grin.

"Tina," Hank said, holding a fry in his hand. "The guy to your left has been checking you out for the last five minutes."

"Oh?" her voice pitched. Intrigued, he suspected. "Gav?"

"Somewhere between 5'9" and 6'1, blonde, man bun, beard. Not your type." He waved his beer one way, then the other. "But could be your type for a night." He drank a bit more of the beer, the slightest amount left.

"Nah," she said after a moment of consideration. "You know how I feel about blondes."

He hummed, neither agreeing or disagreeing. A drink was set in front of Gavin, and Tina tipped her head back as she laughed.

RK900 couldn't assess it by looks alone, but a dark liqueur sat at the bottom, a lighter one in the middle, and a fair amount of whipped cream on top. Gavin didn't look angry, more amused than anything, he finished off the beer, and that was three drinks in. 'Mellow,' was how Tina had described his three to four drink self. It appeared that she was correct.

"A blow job? Really?"

"You love a good bl-" she couldn't hold it together, laughing too hard. She sucked in a few deep breaths trying to calm herself.

"I do though," he shrugged. "You basically got me coffee alcohol, that's two awesome things combined into one awesome thing. I figured you'd end up getting me tequila," he said with a shudder. "This isn't even bad."
He reached for it but she swatted his hand. "Blow job, not hand job, Reed." She grabbed the shot. "You're the loser, and you're doing this properly."

For a moment, he looked confused, then fearful. "Chen-"

"RK, do me a favour-" she said as Gavin said; "No!"

"No," RK900 said, declining without even knowing what he was saying no to. "Detective Reed is my handler." And if he said no, the answer was no.

Tina looked between them. "Look, either RK is a good sport, or maybe Connor will be?"

"I have no idea what is going on," Connor said. Hank snorted, leaned over and clued the android in. RK900 knew he wouldn't be able to adjust his audio settings fast enough to focus on Hank vs. Gavin, and so he was still left in the dark.

Connor's eyes widened. "That is a thing? Are you messing with me?"

"Nope," Hank popped the 'p' sound a little, and grabbed another fry.

"RK isn't deviant," Gavin said, appearing irritated. It gave RK900a few instabilities that were quickly patched. 'He can't make this decision, and no.'

"I still do not understand what is being discussed," RK900 admitted, he was programmed to be a detective, and his programming did not allow him to be left in the dark.

"This is a blow job," Tina wiggled the shot.

"That is not the search results I got."

Hank choked on a fry, Connor patted at his back, and soon enough it became clear that Hank wasn't going to require the Heimlich.

"Modify your search with 'shot','" Connor suggested, pushing Hank's beer toward him.

"Understood," RK900 replied, now getting images for the drink, directions on how to make it, and a few videos of people drinking it.

He was still going through data when Tina continued; "Some people are lame, and take them off the table. Properly done it's taken off of someone else."

RK900 found a correlating video. "This appears harmless."

"It is," Tina said.

"He can't consent, Chen," Hank said with a shake of his head.

But RK900---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]
The thought of Gavin going through the motions of the video. He pre-constructed the image in great detail. His thirium regulator stuttered. "I---"

"It is harmless," RK900 said.

"Let him," Connor said.

"What? Seriously?" Hank looked shocked and offended at Connor.

Connor didn't even notice, he was watching RK900 with absolute focus. "Yes. Seriously."

"He can't consent."

"He is," Connor said, his voice low, and aimed at Hank, but RK900 heard where Gavin and Tina likely wouldn't. "He might not be able to say if he 'wants' something, his programming is still shutting that down. I think he's working around it."

"By saying it's harmless?"

Connor nodded. "New experiences, especially when I had a decision to make, lead to instabilities in my software."

"He's trying to become deviant?"

"I believe so. Just... let him."

"Pull your chair back, big guy," Tina said to RK900, making him refocus. He followed her order. It wasn't until his chair was back from the table that he realized he'd gone against Gavin's.

She laughed, and held out the glass. He took it from her hands, and did as the video instructed.

"Oh my God," Gavin's face had gone red, and he his his face in his hands. "Chen, you've been drinking tea with Satan."

"It's where I get all my best ideas," Tina said. "Now, you lost, don't be a sore loser."

He took a deep breath, and his hands scrubbed over his face before finally going to his sides. "Hate you."

"Love you too."

RK900 watched as Gavin stood, walked around Tina's chair, and stood in front of him, looking down, then around the room, shifting from foot to foot.
"Don't be nervous," RK900 said.

Gavin's eyes widened a little. "A wager is a wager," he said, crouching between RK900's legs, hands behind his back. RK900 couldn't focus on anything but Gavin who looked from RK900's face to the shot glass in his hand between his legs. He---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin licked some of the whipped cream that had melted down the side of the glass, the white fluid on his tongue before he swallowed it. RK900 felt his thirium regulator whirl faster, the pump quickening to keep up. It had only been seconds but seemed more like an eternity. He---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin wrapped his lips around the glass, and RK900 loosened his fingers as Gavin quickly tipped his head back, adam's apple bobbing as he swallowed the shot.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

The glass was back in his hand, and RK900 had to sort through his memories to find Gavin tipping his head forward again, depositing the empty glass there. His tongue ran over his bottom lip, and the small amount of whipped cream there.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

Gavin stood, and glared over his shoulder at Tina with her phone in hand. "Delete it."

"Fuck no," Tina replied.

Gavin rolled his eyes and returned to his seat, and grabbed one of the nacho chips, a string of cheese following. RK900 put the glass back on the table, and pulled his chair back in. Tina was looking smug and wiggling four fingers.

"Well, that's more than enough shenanigans for one night," Hank stood. "I'm too old for this. Con, you coming home?"

Connor glanced at RK900, then Hank. "Nah, I'll stay a little while longer. I'll call you a cab though." His LED flickered to yellow, then back to blue. "It should be here in three minutes. I also payed your tab."

Hank shook his head, then patted Connor's shoulder. "Good night."

"Night, Hank!" Tina waved. She elbowed Gavin. "Want another drink?"

"Depends," he glared at her.
"You lost!" She cackled, but managed to get the attention of a waitress walking by and ordered a couple of polar bear shots. She got Connor onto a conversation about dogs, which the android spoke animatedly about.

Gavin appeared to be following their conversation, eyes jumping to whoever was speaking. Despite the conversation, he appeared unbothered. Every so often, Gavin would stop focusing on them, his attention returning to RK900, usually this would be accompanied by a slight lip twitch, and an aversion of eye contact.

More drinks were delivered, and Tina held one up, Gavin took another. Their glasses clinked with they were tapped together, and then they took the shot at the same time. She wiggled five fingers. "Those are so good," Tina said. "I could accidentally get sloshed on them."

Gavin smiled fondly at her. "You have. So many times."

Connor asked Tina about the plants on her desk, and she happily spoke about where she'd gotten them and their watering habits.

A waitress came over, and set another polar bear shot down in front of Gavin. "Uh, I didn't order this."

"That guy over there did," the waitress replied, pointing at a man at a nearby table who was sitting with a woman. "He asked what you were drinking, and since this was the last drink ordered from your table, it's the one you got."

Gavin turned in his seat, and Tina wiggled her eyebrows suggestively. "Do you think they're a couple?" Gavin asked, raising the drink at the guy and then drank it.

Tina checked the two out. "Looks like your kind of fantasy threesome."

Connor grimaced. "There are things I do not need to know."

"Delete the memory, tin-can," Gavin said, standing. "I'm going to say thank you."

"You're going to try and get in their pants," Tina laughed.

He laughed, but didn't deny it.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^RK900 didn't follow the conversation between Tina and Connor, although they seemed to be getting along quite well. Instead, he watched Gavin speaking to the man who'd purchased him a drink. He scanned the man. Brent Stone, no priors, address and birthday also came up, but he dismissed the information. The woman, Eva Masters, prior for pick pocketing. He kept an eye on her as the three of them went out onto the dance floor.

They were close enough to the edge that RK900 could watch the hands. He didn't---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]
Brent danced behind Gavin, his hands trailed down the detective's chest. Eva danced in front of him. It didn't leave Gavin a lot of room to move, but his hips were rocking anyway. The man brushed his lips against Gavin's neck, and the detective grabbed at Brent's arms, holding on. Drink six, horny drunk.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

Eva's hand dipped into his pocket while Brent served as the distraction. Tina and Connor were still talking. He wasn't supposed to interrupt. He stared at Connor, both of their LED's going yellow, Connor stopped mid-sentence.

"You okay?" Tina waved her hands in front of Connor's face.

"I apologize," RK900 said while still relaying what he saw to Connor. "I didn't realize he couldn't remain physically present while speaking through the link."

Connor blinked, LED switching to a spinning blue as he turned to look at the Gavin, Brent, and Eva on the dance floor. "Fantasy threesome just stole Gavin's wallet."

"What?" Tina turned toward them.

"I'll handle it," Connor said standing. He adjusted his cuff-links as he walked through the crowd. Instead of a confrontation, Connor stepped in behind Eve, and she looked up at him with a smile on her face.

"What the shit is he doing?" Tina asked.

"I am unsure," RK900 admitted. This was not how he pre-constructed the confrontation going. Connor's hand slipped into the woman's purse while she had her head tipped back to stare at him. With it in hand, he held it up in front of Gavin's face. The man blinked a few times, then shifted to pat at the pockets on his jeans.

The woman took off as Gavin grabbed the wallet, and the man blended back into the crowd. RK900 didn't need to mess with his audio input to know Gavin was swearing, colourfully too. Connor motioned to the room, and Gavin shook his head. He and Connor returned to the table.

Gavin was actually pouting. "She stole my wallet."

"We should call the police," Tina said.

"We are the police," Gavin replied.

"Yeah, but we're off duty," she said. "And intoxicated."

He shrugged. "Whatever."

The two human companions had one last drink, bringing Gavin up to seven. "I think it might be time to turn in," Tina said.

"Shall I return to the DPD now?" RK900 asked Gavin.

"How about you come with me?" Connor suggested. "I would like it if you met Sumo."
"Yeah, go with Connor!" Gavin said. "Stay with Connor for the night. Watch movies or something. Return to work with him. Cool?"

"Parameters accepted," RK900 replied.

"Now you," Tina said looking at Gavin. "Sleepover at my place?"

"Hell yes. I love your couch," Gavin said with a dopey grin. RK900 could already see the difference between the sixth and seventh drink. "It's so soft. It's like sleeping on clouds. Hey!" He turned to RK900 and Connor. "Do you guys sleep?"

"No," Connor replied. "Occasionally we go into stasis, but it isn't the same."

Gavin looked distraught at this new information. "But sleep is so nice. There are blankets. Tina has a bunch of blankets, and they are so soft."

"Okay," Tina stood, wobbled a bit, and RK900 grabbed her elbow gently to help her balance. "Thanks, big guy!" She then pulled up Gavin, the two of them nearly knocking each other over, but he had his arm over her shoulder, and she had her arm around his waist and they made for the door. Connor cleared a way, while RK900 followed behind them.

Connor then led them to the parking lot, and more specifically, Hank's car, the one they'd all packed themselves into on the way to the bar. Tina and Gavin were giggling in the back seat while they tried to buckle up their seat belts.

Connor waited, and waited, keeping an eye on the two in the rear view mirror while Gavin and Tina worked together trying to get Gavin's seat belt on. "Left," Gavin said. "No, my left." They both continued giggling, trying to get the belt locked.

What a waste of time. RK900 turned in his seat, he reached through the gap left between the front two seats, and put his hand over theirs guiding it into place and clicking it in. He then untwisted the strap across Gavin's chest. When he looked at Gavin's face, he found a soft smile in place. "Thanks, RK."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

"He needs a name, a real one," Tina said, leaning her head against Gavin's shoulder.

RK900 sat back in his seat, and when the car didn't move, he put on his own seat belt, and only then did Connor start driving.

"No," Gavin said. "Not till he can pick one."

"I can't believe how much you've changed since the revolution," Tina said. She shifted in her seat and grabbed Gavin's face in both hands. "You are a soft boy now."

"No."

"Marshmallow."

"You're a marshmallow, you marshmallow," Gavin grumbled.
She just giggled, and he pulled her back. By the time that they reached Tina's apartment building, the two of them were asleep. Tina had her arms wrapped around one of Gavin's biceps, her head on his shoulder, and his head on her head.

Connor looked at them with a soft smile. "You know, they both hated androids before the revolution. Gavin was outright cruel about it. Tina was more subtle, but the hatred was still there." He then beamed at RK900. "Progress. Let's get them upstairs."

In order to get them inside, Connor had to first wake them both up. The short drive had done nothing to lessen their intoxication levels. "Let's take the ladder up!" Gavin said pointing to the fire escape.

"Yeah!" Tina shouted.

"No, no, no," Connor blocked it off with his own body. "Let's take the door, and the elevator."

"No fun!" Tina pouted.

"But much safer."

"Awww," Gavin threw his arm over Connor's shoulder. "The tin man has a heart." He pointed where the human heart would be, but then frowned and pointed all around the chest area. "I'm not sure where it is. I didn't take android anatomy. I'm sorry, Connor."

"That's fine."

"I was mean to you," Gavin then fully hugged Connor. "But you're not so bad."

Connor wore a surprised but fond smile. He patted Gavin's back. "You're not so bad either. Now."

Gavin took a step back, stumbled, but caught his balance. "Let's have Pop Tarts."

"Dude, they discontinued those back in 2033," Tina said.

"Uh... I still have a box."

"Oh my god!" She shrieked. "We should eat them!"

"No," Connor said. "You could get sick."

"Connor, you're such a mom," Gavin said.

"Yeah, you're such a mom!" Tina snickered.

"Inside," Connor reminded her.

"Oh yeah." The two androids waited around as Tina went through half a ring of keys before she got the one for the outer door then their human counterparts stumbled in, shushing each other and giggling.

Gavin swayed a little in the elevator, and grabbed onto RK900's arm for balance. He smiled up at
him. "Hey, partner."

"Detective."

"I took a blow job from you, call me Gavin."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ Connor snickered, and Tina completely lost her composure. Connor was shushing them as they walked back into the hall on the third floor. It took another half of the keys to find the one for her actual apartment. "Success," she whispered loudly as the door opened. "Good night, Con," she kissed his cheek. "Good night, RK," and she kissed his cheek too before stumbling inside.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ Gavin hugged Connor again, really tight. "Good night, Connor. You take care of RK, ok?" He then snorted. "RK, ok, RK, ok."

"I will. Do drink some water," Connor advised.

"Yeah, okay, Mom," Gavin said with a dramatic eye roll.

Gavin hugged RK900 then, throwing his arms around his shoulders. "See you tomorrow."

Tina wasn't kidding about seven drinks making Gavin an affectionate drunk. RK900 gently reciprocated the hug, making sure not to put too much pressure on the human's body, but---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"Bitch, I'm a bat!" Tina returned to the doorway with a black blanket over her shoulders and outstretched hands.

Gavin left the embrace then, laughed at Tina then stumbled into her arms and the two of them were cocooned in the blanket. "I put Pizza Pockets in the microwave."

"You're the best," Gavin said nuzzling against her neck.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ "Lock the door," Connor said to them.

"Okay, Mom!" Tina said.

"You two are children."

"Tina is thirty-five, and Gavin is thirty-seven," RK900 corrected. "They are adults."

"Yeah, Mom, we're adults!" Tina said cackling, shutting the door, but the androids also heard it lock.
Connor frowned at the door. "They are going to be so hungover tomorrow." He then shrugged. "And you're with me. I already have five movies chosen for us to watch. Let's go!"

RK900 paused just a moment, his hearing still focused on Gavin. He heard a little cheer right as the microwave dinged. It did something to his processors, and even he wasn't sure what.

Connor chatted about Sumo, and RK900 retained all the information about the dog. However, he looked back on the night, on the snapshots of it, the full recorded memories, the smiles, and laughter, and the instabilities hit him all over again.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^
"You---"

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

"It was harmless."

Gavin gave an attempt at a smile but it fell short. He rubbed the back of his neck. "Okay."

RK900 replayed the moment in question, despite there being no relevance to a case. He just---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Instability might have patched, but he did it anyway. Again, and again.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^

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NOTE: FYI, Gavin's shirt- I noted that it was changed, but RK900 wouldn't have asked, so it never came out. In case you were wondering, he took off his shirt when he was sleeping (of course on Tina's wonderful couch) and Matthew (her asshole cat) pissed on it. He didn't have a spare shirt at her place, so he ended up in one of her shirts that she ordered but was too large-notably too small on him- that was bright pink with white letters spelling 'cat lady' across the chest, all because hungover Tina is a bitch, she had a shirt from an old ex-boyfriend, but she thought this was funnier.
**THIS CHAPTER GETS A LITTLE DARK, read with caution.**

Also, while this is the last chapter of this story, it is not the last of the series by any means. It just means we are moving from pre-deviancy to RK900 going full deviant. I'm pretty excited for RK900 to finally break free, aren't you?

Sorry about the gross overuse of italics.

Even with all the prediction software RK900 was equipped with, even he couldn't have predicted the series of events that came with some routine questioning. Gavin had been assigned a break and enter case, RK900 had logged the evidence in the house while Gavin had spoken to the couple who lived there. When they finished up, Gavin lit up a cigarette on the sidewalk.

"Door to door," Gavin said, blowing out a breath of smoke. He didn't appear pleased about the prospect, but given that this neighbourhood didn't have any security cameras, they were hoping a neighbour heard or saw something suspicious either on that night, or perhaps before if the suspect had cased the house.

Gavin took a long drag, held it for a few seconds before finally letting it out slow. The embers were crushed under the heel of his boot. "Here goes our afternoon."

Door to door, for the most part, gave them a bunch of homeowners who had been sleeping when the burglary had taken place, and hadn't heard, nor seen anything suspicious.

And then there was the beautiful little brick home with the expansive gardens. RK900 had followed Gavin down the cobblestone path to the door. Such a pretty place for such horrible things.

Gavin had knocked. A man had come to the door; Nicholas Greer, age 35, school teacher. He'd been polite, had answered Gavin's question without hesitation. Gavin had given a nod, and RK900 knew that he was about to tell Nicholas to have a nice day and move onto another house.

"What about the other residents?" RK900 asked, he also patched through to Connor to put him on standby in the event that they needed back-up.

"I am alone," Nicholas replied.

"I can hear someone-" RK900 said.

"The television is on in the other room," Nicholas replied, but showed signs of stress. He no longer made eye contact with Gavin, sweat beaded around his temples, he was already trying to shut the door, but Gavin's hand shot out, and held steady.

A muffled something, then a clear raspy 'help.' Then a scream. "Help! Help us, please, please, help
RK900 could do nothing but push his thoughts forward to Connor, who replied that there would be officers there within minutes. There had been a few uniforms sent to canvas the area for any clues on the burglary.

Gavin rushed Nicholas, and was quick to subdue him. His fighting style could be described as quick and vicious. He tugged out handcuffs from his belt, and slapped them onto Nicholas's wrists. "Keep him there," Gavin ordered, pulling his gun as he started walking away until RK900 lost visual.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

Nicholas attempted moving, but RK900 just grabbed the chain between the man's wrists. "You are to remain here." He ignored the curses from the other man, listening to Gavin, to the creak of the door to the basement, to the screams being muffled out, to Gavin demanding that the man put down the knife.

Uniforms came in, and RK900 relinquished his hold on the suspect. "Keep him here for Detective Reed." Officer Ortega nodded, and RK900 had rushed to Gavin. To the basement. To the mattresses on the floor. Gavin's boots had left a mark through the blood where they had lost traction. The man with the knife had his hands up, but a girl laid dead between him and Gavin.

"Nines?" Connor's hand on his shoulder returned him to the present. "Are you alright?"

RK900 blinked, and looked at Connor. "The visuals from today are-"

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

With the second suspect apprehended, Gavin had checked on the body of the girl RK900 already knew was deceased. After that, he'd gone to the mattress where the twelve year old laid. The wounds were extensive, and fresh, and RK900 knew that there was no way the paramedics would arrive on time.

"It's okay, it's okay, I know it hurts, but you're being so brave," Gavin had spoke slow and low, calming and kept his hands where she could see them. "It's okay, I'm a police officer, okay sweetie? What's your name?"

"Aurora," the girl whispered back, gritting her teeth.

"Aurora, I have to put pressure on these wounds." He'd used the blanket, turning the beige crimson. She cried out. "Shhh, I know it hurts, and I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, but I have to do something for the bleeding. Just hold on, okay? Paramedics are coming, they're going to patch you up, good as new."

Uniformed officers were taking care of suspects and the other victim. One of them draped a sheet over the deceased girl.

The girl weakly grabbed at Gavin's jacket, near the cuff, and he offered his hand. The girl gripped
it with all her might. "You're going to be okay," Gavin kept saying, over and over, like he could make it so by will alone.

But he couldn't.

The girl inevitably succumbed to her wounds, her little hand became limp in Gavin's.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY

"Gavin," RK900 said. "She's gone."

"Shut up," he snarled over his shoulder. Thinking back, freezing the frame, he saw the tears on the detective's lashes. "Aurora? Come on, come on, kid."

"She's deceased," RK900 had reiterated.

An unwelcome observation. Gavin had cursed, cursed again, keeping pressure on the wound until the paramedics arrived. They declared Aurora DOA.

"Horrific?" Connor supplied once again pulling him back into the moment.

RK900 frowned. "Gavin is angry at me."

"He seems angry all the time," Connor said, sounding like he was shooting for levity but it fell flat.

Outside, the sun was setting, birds were chirping, and a couple of lazy bees were flying around the flowers. Lights from the police cruisers and ambulances gave the area a strange glow. Gavin was livid, pacing. Aurora's blood on his hands, crusted under his nails. Blood of the other deceased on his boots.

"What the fuck is the point of you, huh?" Gavin had screamed at him. "Most advanced tin can they could make and you still couldn't save them!" Gavin had tried pushing him at that point, but RK900 had preconstructed the move, and moved his left foot back to maintain his balance, Gavin failing to so much as budge him. "Useless, fucking useless!"

"He is... hurt."

"Want to stay over?" Connor asked.

He couldn't. His last orders were to remain at the desk unless there were updates on the case, then he could bring those updates to Gavin who was in the gym in the basement of the precinct. "I will remain."

"I can stay with you," Connor offered.

"No, you should return home. I am fine."

Connor sighed. "Call me if you change your mind."

He wouldn't. He couldn't.

Instead, RK900 waited.
And waited.

Until Miller came to his desk. "The older girl, Marissa, the doctors say she'll make a full recovery." And Miller continued on with his duties.

Marissa was a part of the case. RK900 stood. Gavin could use some good news.

He took the elevator to the basement as it was more efficient. Stepping out, he could hear some heavy rock playing through the old speakers. Once inside of the gym, he could isolate the sound of fists hitting a heavy bag. Turning toward it, he found Gavin alone in the gym. The grey shirt was dark with sweat around the collar and underarms, black shorts ensured that he saw Gavin's legs for the first time, black runners squeaked as he moved with the punches.

His fists were wrapped with tape at least. "Gavin." Gavin either didn't hear him, or was ignoring him. RK900 glanced at the old stereo system, accessed it's Bluetooth and turned it off. "Gavin."

The detective caught the heavy bag on it's back swing between his hands. He rested his forehead against it. "What the fuck do you want?"

"The eldest victim, Marissa Monroe, the doctors say she will make a full recovery."

"That doesn't help Aurora," Gavin said, still spitting mad. He pushed the bag away and took a few steps closer. "Doesn't help Callie." Callie, the name of the dead girl who'd been brutally murdered while they had been arresting Nicholas upstairs.

"No. It doesn't," RK900 agreed.

"It doesn't bother you, does it?" Gavin asked ensuring there was only a foot of space between them. "Human traffickers kidnapping girls to sell off. Two little girls are dead, and the other one isn't ever going to forget the hell she's been through," he jammed his finger against RK900's LED, "and it does nothing to you. Fucking nothing. No sadness. No empathy. No anger. Nothing." He jabbed at the LED with each punctuated word. "Fuck you." He took a step back, lip curled. "Fuck you."

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^ --- 

The girls were dead. It was fact. He could do nothing to change fact. But--

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

He didn't---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

More instabilities. More patches. His mind whirling as Gavin walked past him toward the locker room. He glanced at the radio and played the song that Gavin and his mother had loved.

He turned around to see Gavin had paused in his step. Gavin looked at the radio, then RK900 with
RK900 continued interfacing. He overlapped the song with the one that Tina had played for him, then the one Gavin had, then the metal of Connor's song over it all in a confusing symphony of confused noise. Then pitched everything and increased the volume until Gavin was covering his ears and screaming at him to turn it off.

The sudden silence was nearly as deafening as the noise. They stood a few feet from each other, staring as Gavin slowly removed his hands from his ears.

Gavin took a small step closer, a brow raised slightly. "You really are awake in there, aren't you?"

"All systems are online," RK900 replied.

"They... they were just kids," Gavin was chewing on the inside of his cheek, looking somewhere off to the left.

He could see the preconstructed hug. Humans received comfort through contact.

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

The preconstruction fell through, shattering like glass.

Gavin sucked in a shaky breath, held it. "Callie might have survived if..." he pushed his hands through his hair, and tugged slightly. "Fuck." Tears were clinging to his eyelashes, and he blinked quickly to keep them from falling. "We were there. We were right there at the front door, and she died while we were arre-" his voice broke, and he shook his head. "Go back upstairs RK. Go into stasis till morning."

But he didn't---

[INSTABILITY DETECTED]

[INSTABILITY PATCHED]

Gavin scrubbed his hands over his face, and RK900 turned toward the door. Orders were orders. He heard the firsts hitting the heavy bag again, and expected open knuckles in the morning.

SOFTWARE INSTABILITY^
ended it on that note. This was never supposed to end sunshine and rainbows, but rather with a darker edge.

All that said, the next one will be a little more plot-y. I'm fucking stoked to get writing it <3 In case you're curious, here is the working title/synopsis:

YOU WORRY ME
When Gavin Reed fails to show up for work on time, RK900 insists that something must be wrong. Connor goes to check Gavin's apartment to prove that the concern is unfounded. Instead, he finds the lock had been tampered with, signs of struggle, and the detective missing. It only gets worse when Elijah Kamski shows up at the precinct...

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