There was an unusual amount of static on the television and Minseok was doing his best to beat functionality into the device. After a few sturdy pounds on the top of the old piece of junk, the news came into relatively clear view. Tired from the physical exertion, Minseok decided that it would have to do for now. He collapsed into his faded couch that sat across from the television. As if the news knew that Minseok was now paying attention, a long warning noise blared, introducing some breaking news.
“This is a government broadcast, please do not turn off your television as we alert you about the most recent news.” A monotone computerized voice introduced, “A human experimentation group known as Scientific Human Robotics, or SHR, has recently been dissolved by a humanitarian government effort. Those affected by these experiments are currently being evacuated and are receiving orientation and preparation to be reintroduced to the world. More updates will be given as news come to light.” The screen that had been displaying the words as they were spoken turned off to reveal the usual news anchors again.

“My! What a terrible organization. They were apparently hosting illegal experiments to try and create the perfect android out of people they had either kidnapped from orphanages or by volunteers who were told they would be getting certain medical treatments. It seems as though—” The lady news anchor’s voice was cut off by Minseok who muted the television. He sighed loudly before relaxing into the couch. He was in disbelief that anyone would have done such a thing, but everyday something worse seemed to show up on the news. He could not possibly fix the world by himself so he didn’t bother himself much with the details of crises like these.

Minseok suddenly remembered that he needed to start making dinner soon. He didn’t have a lot of motivation to make himself a meal. He rarely had motivation at all these days. He was lonely. He had a small group of friends, sure, but he was always coming home to an empty house. Minseok had dated a long time ago, but it had been several years since he had a significant other. Being single had been freeing and he enjoyed it for a while, but recently he had been wishing for someone else to be in the house, romantic or otherwise.

It was in this moment of self-pity that the phone rang. With another long sigh, Minseok got up to go over to where his cell phone was laying on the counter of the kitchen that sat next to the living room of his apartment.

“Hello?”

“Oh my god thank god you answered. Minseok I really need your help. Look I can’t explain much right now but can you come over, are you busy?” Minseok was taken aback at how intense his friend (and ex-lifetime crush) Luhan sounded on the phone.

“Is Sehun not available to help you? Is he okay? I mean I’m not really busy but it is a long way to your house. What’s going on?”

“Sehun’s fine, he’s here actually. I need to ask you a really large favor but I need to do it in person and it’s really vitally impor- Hey don’t do that Sehun! Leave him-it, him, leave him be! - Sorry about that, just please come over.”

The line went dead. Minseok had never been more confused. He supposed it was important, especially since he had never heard Luhan sound so concerned. Both Luhan and his husband Sehun worked for the government. Minseok wasn’t really sure what they did mostly because they weren’t allowed to talk about it. Minseok quickly grabbed his keys and headed to his friends’ house.

He hoped that no one was dying because Minseok really wasn’t qualified to give medical advice anymore. He used to be in medical school but when his single mother got cancer he dropped out to take care of her in her last days. Since then he’s been working from home doing some odd jobs and freelance writing. Luhan often invited him over when he was convinced he or Sehun had some kind of disease and he wanted Minseok to check over about it. It annoyed Minseok to no end because he wasn’t a doctor; he hadn’t even gotten his diploma. He always offered to help though, mostly because he still had a soft spot for the boy who he had crushed on for so many years. His affections for the pair didn’t make his medical advice any more qualified though.
He approached the door of Luhan and Sehun’s house quietly, unsure of what was going to face him when he was let into the house. With Luhan and Sehun it was impossible to know what they could need. Luhan was so dramatic that it could be as simple as helping them move some boxes, or maybe they had found an injured bird on the sidewalk. Minseok giggled to himself at the image of a frantic Luhan finding a poor bird on the sidewalk and calling him to come help.

With this thought in mind he rang the doorbell. A stone-faced Sehun immediately opened the door. Sehun was always hard to read, but today he seemed especially stoic.

“Come in.” No emotion. Minseok usually found Sehun relatively unreadable but this was more than his usual self.

“Everything alright?” Minseok asked, now suspicious of the situation.

“Everything’s fine, please come in. We haven’t seen you in so long it will be good to catch up!” There was a forced amount of cheeriness in Sehun’s voice. Sure Minseok was Sehun’s friend, but Sehun never acted this excited to see him. Something was definitely wrong.

“Yeah! Okay.” He tripped over the doorframe and stumbled into the house. The house held some sort of tension in the air that was almost tangible.

“Sorry for the weirdness Minseok, I’m worried we’re being watched. You know how the government can be.” Sehun laughed nervously.

“Watched?” Minseok gulped. He hoped he hadn’t gotten himself into something illegal.

“Surely you heard about the SHR thing right? With the experimentation? Well, Luhan and I helped to tear that apart.” Sehun revealed, leading Minseok further into the apartment to get to the bedroom towards the back.

“Should you be telling me this? Isn’t most of what you do confidential?” Minseok questioned, raising an eyebrow.

“Well, technically no I shouldn’t be telling you. But considering the favor we’re about to ask of you, yes I need to tell you.” Sehun opened the door to the bedroom, and Minseok heard shuffling noises, but the room was much darker than the hallway had been so his eyes hadn’t adjusted yet. The only light was coming through the almost shut shafts of the blinds in the window.

“Minseok? Oh thank god you’re here.” Luhan’s voice rang clear in Minseok’s head, but his eyes were still adjusting. Luhan’s eyes were apparently fine and he even noticed Minseok’s temporary blindness, so he took his hand to guide him further into the room. He heard the door shut behind him.

“I want you to meet Chanyeol.” Luhan said nervously. Minseok could just make out the edges of Luhan’s body and he saw his arm motioning to the corner. In the corner was a shape, mostly silver. It looked like a pile of clothing, or a heap of discarded papers. Minseok’s eyes continued to adjust to the low lighting and that’s when he saw it. A body. A corpse.

“Oh my god, did you guys kill someone?” Minseok felt faint.

“No! No, he’s not dead.” Luhan whispered fiercely, tapping Minseok to remind him to whisper as well.

“He’s turned off right now is all.” Luhan sighed, “Look, Chanyeol was one of the most mistreated experiments from the SHR projects. I’m guessing you heard about that already?”
“Yeah something about turning humans into computers. So he’s one of the experiments? They tried to turn him into a computer? Why is he off? Luhan, what exactly is going on you have to tell me.”

“Okay I need you to look at him though. I think he turned himself off because he was shocked when we took him from the officials. They were going to scrap him, they claimed he was too far gone to recuperate properly, but I couldn’t let them just destroy him.” Luhan was on the verge of tears, moved by his compassion for the unfortunate experiment.

“Okay I’ll look at him but you have to turn up the lights at least a bit so I can see.” Minseok relented. This whole situation terrified him, but he had always admired Luhan’s soft heart. This was no injured bird, but it followed a similar thought process that was purely Luhan’s.

“We don’t want them too high, that seemed to scare him last time.” Luhan hesitated but then turned on a lamp near the corner with the human-android so Minseok could do his work.

Minseok first checked for signs of breathing, but he didn’t want to touch him, not yet. It could scare the boy… man? Android? He didn’t want to frighten the poor soul.

“Chanyeol was his name you said?” Minseok asked Luhan who nodded worriedly like a mother with her child at the hospital.

“Okay, Chanyeol I don’t want to hurt you, I mean no harm. I’m going to see if you have any injuries.” Minseok wasn’t sure he could be heard but he knew that if you approached a wild animal often a calm tone of voice could help not to scare them off.

“I can’t see well if you’re breathing or not so I’m going to have to touch you to try and feel your pulse. My hands might be cold, it’s okay to flinch, please don’t fight me though. Remember, I’m not here to harm you.” Minseok was speaking softly and moving slowly. He sat closely beside the heap of silver and let his presence and heat be sensed before continuing.

“I’m going to put my hand against your back so you can feel me before I take your pulse. Everything’s going to be okay.” Minseok softly placed his hand on what he believed to be the back of the person. He left his hand there for a moment and tried to figure out how Chanyeol was positioned. It seemed his head was tucked into the corner nose-first so that way even if his eyes were open he could see nothing. His body was curled so his back faced out from corner, acting as a shield from any potential harm. He was as closed off and as hidden as he could possibly be in this room. The silver Minseok was seeing were random pieces of metal and wire that seemed not to be connected to anything on one side but were tucked under the silver coarse clothing he was dressed in. Minseok guessed all the experiments wore this because it seemed uniform-like.

“Now I’m going to try and take your pulse. Your hands are tucked between your legs so the closest place I can reach to get your pulse is your neck. I’m going to have to touch your neck.” Minseok reached slowly with the hand that had been on his back to reach for the neck. When he touched the neck it was ice cold. Minseok had been worried his own hands would be cool but he was shocked but the frigid touch. Faintly though, Minseok could feel a pulse.

“He has a pulse, Luhan.” Minseok shared. It was slow, really slow.

“Are you hibernating? Did you shut down because you were scared? Well there’s no need to be scared now. I just want to help you. I’m not sure you can hear me, is there anyway for you to respond to me? A movement, or a noise?” Minseok asked. He felt a little silly calling out to Chanyeol this way but he couldn’t see an alternative.

Suddenly Minseok heard a whirring noise and saw Chanyeol’s chest move as he took in a breath.
“Alone.” A deep semi-computerized voice rang out. Luhan let out a gasp. It took a few moments for Luhan or Minseok to respond because of their shock.

“Alone?”

“He’s up again?”

Minseok and Luhan spoke simultaneously, and then looked at each other. Luhan put a hand to his mouth to shut himself up.

“What do you mean, alone?” Minseok asked again.

“You. Alone.” It was a gravely tone that did not sit well with Minseok at all, but he felt committed at this point to finish his examination despite the swirling feeling in his stomach.

“I think he wants you out of here Luhan.” Minseok guessed.

“Yes.” Chanyeol responded in monotone.

“Can I leave you here alone? I mean you have no combat training. What happens if it attacks?” Luhan voiced his concern.

“I’ll yell if I need you. I think he won’t give me too much trouble. I think he’s just scared. He knows he can beat me, I’m weak, which makes me comfortable to be alone with.” Minseok let out a weak laugh that revealed just how nervous he was about the whole thing despite that he was trying to blow it off as nothing.

Luhan nodded slowly, and then having made up his mind dashed out of the room. Once the door was shut, Chanyeol turned his face around to meet Minseok’s eyes. Minseok was in awe. His face was beautiful, but extremely pale as though it had never seen sun. He looked extremely sick yet eerily beautiful, as though he were a ghost sent to haunt Minseok with no words, just gazes.

“What?” The voice was less robotic now, but still retained a Vocoder kind of quality to it. Chanyeol’s head cocked to the side to help indicate that it was a question.


Chanyeol flinched before responding “Correct.”

“Chanyeol I need to examine you to make sure your injuries aren’t too severe. I don’t know exactly what’s happened to you so I may ask you to explain. I’m not a doctor so I apologize, but I do know some things about injuries.” Minseok explained, trying to regain his calm tone he had earlier.

“I hate doctors.” A bitter, heavily filtered voice responded and Chanyeol’s face began to turn back to the corner. Minseok found Chanyeol’s change in voices disconcerting but did his best to seem unaffected.

“Well the good news is that I am not a doctor. Now, can you get up? Do you need help so I can lay you on the bed?” Minseok was turning on his doctor mode now, ready to try and help out Chanyeol. He heard whirring noises again, like a computer starting up, and Chanyeol’s eyes scanned over each of his own body parts.

“I do not need assistance.” He stated after examining himself. He got up slowly and it made a lot of odd noises as some of the wires scraped against each other, one snapped, and the uniform rubbed
together with a terrible scratching noise. Chanyeol then laid awkwardly on the bed, face straight up to the ceiling and his body laid out widely.

“My functions seem to be working properly.” He announced. Minseok nodded, unsure of what to do with that information.

“What about the human parts of you?” Minseok asked. Another whirring noise.

“Unknown.”

Minseok moved toward the side of the bed to look over Chanyeol.

“Is it alright for me to touch you?”

“If you must for the inspection.” Chanyeol yielded, his eyes were fixed on an invisible place on the ceiling and they never wavered.

Minseok started by just looking at the parts of him that were exposed, his arms and legs. He wore no shoes, and his feet were disgustingly dirty. Upon closer inspection, Chanyeol’s hair was unruly and matted as well. There were also too many wires connected to him for Minseok to know what to do with. The more Minseok looked the more overwhelmed he felt. He really had his work cut out for him.

“If I were to put water on you, would your circuitry short out or anything? Would it hurt you for me to wash you?” Minseok asked.

“All of my external hardware is waterproof, and most of my internal hardware is as well.” Chanyeol stated matter-of-factly, his voice getting less and less robotic the more he spoke. Minseok winced as he remembered how the internal hardware must have gotten there.

“Are all of these wires your own external hardware?”

“No. Some are pieces of wires that had been torn from the machines I was connected to at the facilities and are unnecessary. I could tear them out and it would only cause minimal bleeding.” Chanyeol’s hands moved as if to start tearing at the wires.

“No! No, don’t do that!” Minseok held his hands down to prevent him. Chanyeol gave him a blank robotic look, which Minseok could only interpret as confusion.

“We can cut them off or remove them another less painful way. I don’t want to cause you to bleed.” Minseok said, letting Chanyeol’s hands go quickly. Chanyeol had no reply for this so Minseok began to move his hands up and down Chanyeol’s right arm since it was closest to him on the side of the bed. He was careful to avoid getting caught on the wires that ran along his arms like external veins. Minseok noticed that there was several dark bruises on his arm, and many on his knuckles as though he had been punching for a long time. His nails were scratched and the tips of his fingers had dried blood on them as though he had tried to claw his way out of something.

“I’m going to have to have Luhan fetch some things for me. I will make sure he stays silent, is it okay for me to have him come in?” Minseok asked hesitantly. If he were going to treat Chanyeol he would need a bit of assistance.

“Why cannot I be of assistance?” Chanyeol offered, trying to keep Luhan out.

“You are the patient, not my assistant. I appreciate it though.” Minseok smiled lightly.
“Fine.”

Luhan had obviously been eavesdropping, likely with his ear pressed to the door because at that moment he came in by himself with no prompting from Minseok.

“Your nosiness is the same as always I see.” Minseok commented with a sigh.

“What do you n-“ Luhan began before Minseok cut him off with a quick hand motion.

“I told him you wouldn’t speak. I need you to get me a wet rag and some scissors.” Minseok instructed. Luhan shut his mouth and went off to get those things quickly. Once Minseok had the items, he cleaned the dried blood off of all of Chanyeol’s fingers, and snipped back some dangerous looking open wires. He made sure to ask Chanyeol before he snipped each wire if cutting them would do him any harm. As he was cutting the wires down, Minseok noticed a large dark spot on Chanyeol’s uniform near his stomach, and it made Minseok wonder if he had an injury under his uniform.

“May I look under your uniform?” Minseok asked, his hands poised to reach underneath the garments.

“No.”

“No?”

“No.” Chanyeol repeated.

“I believe you have quite a gash under there that likely needs the most of my medical attention.” Minseok explained. Chanyeol shook his head.

“No.”

Luhan and Minseok exchanged odd looks. So far Chanyeol had been extremely helpful and compliant. Obviously there was an issue underneath the uniform, and it was something Minseok and/or Luhan were not allowed to see. Minseok decided he had pushed the poor man far enough physically and let it slide. If it were a fatal wound, Chanyeol would likely already be dead, so Minseok reasoned it couldn’t be too bad.

“Okay. Now I need to ask you a few more questions and then the exam will be over.” Minseok updated.

“How old are you?”

“I am not sure.”

“What year is it?”

“Current date is March 2nd, 2045.”

“What was the last thing you ate?”

“Gruel is the most common name for it.”

“When did you eat that?”

“Approximately 5 days ago.”
“5 days you said?” This shocked Minseok, Chanyeol looked sick but he seemed healthier than not having eaten in almost a week.

“Yes, 5 days.”

Minseok regained his composure.

“When was the last time you drank water?”

“Several hours ago when I first came here. I had about 4 ounces of water.”

“How long have you been here?”

“About 6 hours.”

“Thank you very much for answering everything Chanyeol. I hope things turn out the best for you.” Minseok said, and patted Chanyeol’s hand softly before leading Luhan out of the room. Sehun took his turn to watch over the guest as Minseok gave Luhan the rundown.

“He’s certainly like nothing I’ve ever see before, Lu. He’s in need of some serious care and attention. From what I can see he’s really never been out much, he doesn’t understand people, and he has lived in a clinical setting basically his whole life. He’s gotta be about 20-something, probably early 20s but he probably doesn’t know because the doctor’s didn’t feel the need to tell him. He’s definitely traumatized and I can’t tell how much of him is human and how much is computer. He also needs a good meal and drink as soon as possible.” Minseok summarized, “Also, his injuries are bad but mostly no open wounds except for a few on his hands that are scabbed up now. I don’t know about what’s under his garments though, but those seemed worse to me.”

Luhan sighed, “I guessed you’d say roughly as much. Now, we have a favor to ask you.”

“You’re telling me that what I just did was not the favor?” Minseok raised his eyebrows, “I just gave medical attention to your half-human half-computer guest that is housed here illegally and that wasn’t the favor?”

“Yeah I know Minseok, I know. It’s just, since Sehun and I are involved in this whole thing we know that the government is going to be checking with us to see if Chanyeol’s here and they’ll take him. They’ll put him in quarantine and he’ll fail because he can’t function without his computer parts. They want to put humans back on the streets, not robots. But I know that he’s good, I know he is, deep down, and he’s not violent and it’s not his fault that he is what he is! He doesn’t deserve to be scrapped and if they find him here, that’s what’s going to happen. They’ll kill him, Minseok.” Luhan had pleading eyes. Minseok felt his knees weaken as he figured out what Luhan was about to ask him to do.

“And my part is?” Minseok gulped nervously. He already knew but he wanted Luhan to say it.

“I need you to house Chanyeol.” A pause. “Minseok I know it’s a lot, but the government wouldn’t ever guess you would have him. You write articles for children’s magazines and you work in a coffee shop sometimes, and we don’t have you listed as an emergency contact, and I know you’re lonely, and you have medical experience. He needs someone. He really does.” Luhan pleaded, tears in his eyes.

“I can’t just take in a refugee like that. Where would he stay? What would he do all day? Can I even leave him alone? I mean… Luhan this is a lot to spring on someone.” Minseok ran his fingers through his hair, and went to go sit down to try and register everything. Luhan had a point. Minseok could feel that Chanyeol was not bad; he was just locked under so much mistreatment. He didn’t
deserve to be scrapped; he needed someone to take care of him. It was a lot to take in, but Luhan was also right that Minseok was lonely. He missed having another presence in his life, but he wasn’t sure Chanyeol was the right answer to that.

He also secretly got a thrill from the thought of having a runaway living in his house. It was exciting and he was just a boring odd-jobs worker. With a groan Minseok fought with himself between practicality and his sympathies for the poor android.

“Minseok, I know it’s a lot and I’m so sorry to spring it on you like this. We couldn’t tell you before we were a part of this program because of the nature of our jobs but now we really need you to help out. I swear to God I will never ask another favor of you ever again, never ever ever.” Luhan swore. Minseok shook his head in disbelief at what he knew he was about to say.

“I’ll take him.”

“What?”

“I said I’ll take him. It’s not permanent though, right? And do ask me favors after this it’s the only way I talk to people.” Minseok joked, trying to lighten the mood.

“You’ll take him?? Oh my god, Minseok thank you! Oh, I love you so much, thank you, thank you, thank you!” Luhan jumped on Minseok to give him a hug and it pushed Minseok’s back into the chair uncomfortably. “It’s not permanent we’ll find him somewhere to go I promise! Oh thank you Minseok.”

“There there. We still have to figure out how to get Chanyeol to my house anyway.” Minseok reminded, trying not to relish in the physical intimacy of his and Luhan’s position. Luhan straightened himself and went back to a platonically appropriate position.

“Yes yes, we’ll need to go talk to him.” Luhan got up and headed toward the bedroom quickly, fueled by his excitement.

“I think it’s best if I talk to him alone. You and Sehun seem to make him nervous.” Minseok shrugged honestly. Luhan gave an exasperated sigh but relented. Luhan gave all of this new information to Sehun who showed equal excitement but in the typical Sehun way of having little facial change at all. Minseok always wondered how two such opposite people ended up together.

The room was still dark when Minseok entered but the lamp stayed on. Chanyeol had not moved an inch since Minseok left, and it seemed as though he had fallen asleep.

“You’re back?” The robotic voice was back and it frightened Minseok. He jumped and held his chest before he replied.

“Yes, and I have some stuff to talk to you about.” Minseok’s hands were sweating and he wiped them on his pants.

“Am I dying?” Chanyeol asked bluntly. Minseok gaped at the guess.

“No. Not that I can tell, no. What I need to say is much different than that.” Minseok paused. “I know you don’t know me well, but your situation is quite dire. If you stay here you could potentially be killed. Luhan, Sehun, and I discussed possibilities and decided it made the most sense for you to come to my house to avoid being found. I understand this is a tough position, but truly you don’t have much of a choice.” Minseok was slow in his delivery trying to sound as caring as possible because his heart ached for this poor person who had been experimented on and had little option but to trust strangers.
“I suppose if I do not want to die I must go with you.” Chanyeol stated, moving to stand up.

“You’re okay with staying with me?”

“Compared to the two that are here, you are a much more pleasing option.” Chanyeol admitted.

“Why is that?” Minseok was honestly curious why he trusted him so early.

“You’re motivated by little other than your compassion. The two who brought me here have political motivations, monetary motivations, among others. You are easier to calculate because you seem to only care about each person’s well-being.” Chanyeol stood from the bed and walked toward Minseok. It was then that Minseok realized just how tall Chanyeol was, especially compared to Minseok.

“Um… thank you?” It seemed as though Chanyeol was calling Minseok softhearted and unintelligent but there was also an underlying compliment about his compassion and sympathy. Minseok chose to be flattered rather than offended.

“Do we go?”

“Huh? Yes! Yes we do. Let’s go see if I can sneak you to my car.” Minseok gestured toward the door.

Getting Chanyeol to Minseok’s house was quite the undertaking. Starting with the living room, Minseok had already forgotten Chanyeol’s sensitivity to light, and they had to quickly turn off the lights in the apartment to help Chanyeol get through. They then had Sehun go get Minseok’s car and park it backwards so that the doors were as close to the front door as possible. They then put sunglasses on Chanyeol since they realized the sun would likely bother him. Then they grabbed some bags full of food and things to carry to try and hide Chanyeol behind as they quickly put him in the backseat. He laid flat across the seats after having stood in the middle of the other three to crouch casually to the car. He couldn’t stand properly because of his height. Once he was laid in the car, they placed the items on top of him. Luhan and Sehun were paranoid there was someone watching and knew that this shoddy job of covering up Chanyeol would likely been seen through, but they were hoping that if they were watching they didn’t have any of their high tech gear yet and it was just eyes watching from a distance. Eyes can be fooled, but photos are harder to fool.

Minseok did his best to appear casual during the whole ordeal, and Chanyeol stayed quiet. There was an occasionally whirring noise as he processed certain information that reminded Minseok of the sounds his TV made earlier in the day. Once they were in the car, Luhan reminded him to text the code to them once he had arrived safely. It was only part way through the drive when Minseok thought that Chanyeol might be uncomfortable under all the groceries.

“If those groceries and gifts are uncomfortable then you can shift them a bit. If they’re on top of your injuries especially, I don’t want to aggravate anything.” Minseok said, his first words to him in awhile.

“I am fine. This discomfort means little to me.” Chanyeol replied, stoic as always.

Arriving at Minseok’s house, he was glad he had a garage for his small house. Now he didn’t have to worry about hiding Chanyeol.

“Alright, let’s carry these things in and then start to get you properly cleaned up.” Minseok instructed. Chanyeol followed the instructions wordlessly.

“Why do you wish to clean me so badly?” Chanyeol asked after they had unloaded all the random
assortment of items they had taken from Luhan and Sehun. Minseok had just finished sending Luhan the code to say they were safely home when he replied.

“Because I want you to feel human again.”

“Human?”

“You are human.”

“Not completely.”

“Doesn’t matter the percentage. Those things are details.” Minseok waved it off and then grabbed an electric razor, some gauze, a wet rag, a pair of scissors, and a fresh set of clothes.

“I’m going to fill up the tub and just use some cups to get water out of the tub and then wash you in the shower with cupfuls at a time. Also, can I see the injury under your clothing now that Luhan is not here?” Minseok asked. Chanyeol hesitated.

“It is not a very pleasing sight.” Chanyeol warned. Minseok nodded in understanding.

“Okay. Why is that so?”

“The government raid took place during one of my procedures and the doctors didn’t finish before they rushed away. I attempted to clean up some of the cuts, but I too was trying to escape.” Chanyeol explained, his posture rigid.

“Did you get stitches?” Minseok asked, now very worried that Chanyeol could potentially be bleeding out and not realize it.

“Yes, but several broke, and I received a few lacerations from sharp objects during the panic of the raid.” Chanyeol continued.

“Okay, then let’s actually have you sit in an empty tub and I’ll bring over a bucket of water and some of my tools. I’ll see what I can do.” Minseok rubbed his forehead as he went to find a bucket; this was a lot of stress.

“Allow me to be of assistance.” Chanyeol commanded. Minseok took a deep breath.

“Yeah, sure, there’s a bucket under the sink, fill it up and bring it to the bathroom, it’s connected to my room which is right there.” He motioned toward his room. Chanyeol nodded and then went off to complete the task. Minseok immediately went to sterilize his tools and get them moved to the bathroom.

Chanyeol had been right; the injury was not a pleasing sight. It wasn’t anything lethal, but he had dried blood all over his stomach from the broken stitches, and some ugly looking gashes that needed to be cleaned.

“Yikes… Alright, let me know if I’m hurting you.” Minseok asked. Chanyeol looked stone cold as always, lying awkwardly in the tub. He was too large for the tub, his legs hung outside the tub and he lay uncomfortably with his neck resting on the other edge of the tub.

“Sorry about the size of the tub. I’m sure this is uncomfortable for you.” Minseok apologized.

“I’ve dealt with worse.”

Minseok’s heart ached at those words and the meaning they carried. He took a rag and dipped it in
the water of the bucket before starting to clean Chanyeol’s wounds. He started by getting the dried blood off of his stomach, so he could see better what all exactly needed doing. It didn’t take long for the whole rag to be turned red, and the tub floor to have a red stained color. Minseok could see where the stitches had been rushed and could see a little bit of tearing where Chanyeol must have broken it.

Minseok grabbed some disinfectant, having cleaned the wounds with water as best he could. He grabbed some cotton balls and poised himself above Chanyeol.

“This is definitely going to sting. You ready?” He asked, taking a second to look up at Chanyeol. Chanyeol made his usual whirring noise before responding.

“Continue.”

Minseok lowered his hands to Chanyeol’s stomach, trying to swiftly treat the wounds. He noticed Chanyeol’s stomach tighten in reflex, and also heard Chanyeol groan in pain. Minseok winced himself, but continued to clean the wounds. He knew it must hurt really badly, but he pressed on knowing this would ultimately help.

After the torturous disinfection process was over, Minseok covered Chanyeol’s wounds with gauze and tape. He couldn’t fix the stitches or anything because he didn’t have those resources, but he would do his best to make the stitches Chanyeol already had work.

“I can’t do stitches for you, so I think you’re going to have some scars. I’ll do my best, but my resources and skills limit me. I’m so sorry.” Minseok helped Chanyeol out of his awkward position in the tub. He had him stand up in the tub so Minseok could see his work. Minseok couldn’t help but notice how strong Chanyeol looked, he was strong, but not in an overt way. He was lean and muscular and Minseok thought he looked sexy.

“You do not need to apologize.” Chanyeol’s voice interrupted Minseok’s intrusive thoughts, “I appreciate your help.”

Minseok shook his head to get rid of his silly thoughts.

“You aren’t done just yet. I still need to deal with your wires and do something about your hair as well. If you’re tired though, we can do that tomorrow.” Minseok looked up to Chanyeol’s face, looking away from Chanyeol’s distracting physique.

“I am tired. To be honest, I am quite hungry.” Chanyeol looked shyly away from Minseok, as though embarrassed by his hunger. Minseok gasped.

“Oh how could I have been so rude?! Of course you’re hungry! Here, I’ll give you some of my clothes to change into… some of my larger sizes, and I’ll cook you something to eat while you change.” Minseok hurriedly moved Chanyeol into his room and threw a large t-shirt and some of his old stretched out basketball shorts at him.

“Go ahead and get changed, I’m going to make us something to eat.”

What does one feed a robot? Minseok was struggling with this question. He had not asked Chanyeol what he liked to eat before he had busted into the kitchen ready to cook. He ran his fingers through his hair as he thought about what food to make. Chanyeol had not eaten in a long time, so he would probably want something hardy, but he also had only really eaten gruel so Minseok didn’t want to shock him with something too tasteful. That’s when he got an idea and began cooking. A few minutes later he saw Chanyeol wander out of Minseok’s room.
“It smells good in here.” Chanyeol commented, seeming more normal and more comfortable than ever with his casual clothes. Minseok smiled, glad that Chanyeol was obviously becoming more comfortable and trusting with Minseok. It felt almost natural for Chanyeol to be there, which was odd considering they were still mostly strangers.

“I made some chicken noodle soup. It’s not very fancy but it’s a healing food, so I’m hoping you like it.” Minseok explained, stirring the soup. Chanyeol came up directly behind Minseok to look at the soup over his shoulder. He was standing too close for Minseok to ignore. He could feel Chanyeol’s body heat along his back and his breathe on the side of his neck. The position made him shiver, which Chanyeol noticed. His response was concern, so he put his hands on Minseok’s arms as if to steady him. It brought them closer and Minseok could smell the detergent from his clothes Chanyeol was borrowing mixed with a smell that was distinctly Chanyeol’s.

“Are you okay?” Chanyeol asked, noticing that Minseok had gone rigid.

“Uh… Yeah…” Minseok wasn’t sure how to respond. He liked the closeness on one hand but also was unsure if Chanyeol even realized what he was doing. He didn’t want to take this gesture the wrong way.

“You’re very close.” Minseok stated dumbly. Chanyeol took his hands off of Minseok’s arms.

“I’m too close, then? My apologies.” And he took a step back, “I was just curious about the food.”

“It’s fine.” Minseok’s mind was still reeling and he took a second to gather himself once again. He grabbed two bowls from his cabinets and filled them with soup silently. Chanyeol was standing exactly where he had been before when he had taken the step back. He didn’t move an inch. Only his head moved, in order to watch Minseok walk around the kitchen.

“Dinner’s served.” Minseok announced, placing the bowls at the bar that faced into the kitchen. Chanyeol didn’t move.

“That means it’s time to eat.”

Chanyeol still didn’t move.

“You can come sit down now.”

Nothing.

“Everything alright?” Minseok moved toward him, concerned. Chanyeol was staring off in space, his eyes focused on nothing at all. Minseok stood directly in front of him and spoke his name aloud. There was still no response from Chanyeol. Panicked, Minseok went to get his phone to call Luhan to ask what he should. Just as he was searching Luhan’s name on his phone, Chanyeol emitted some kind of weird grinding noise. Minseok looked over to see Chanyeol shaking slightly before he blinked quickly.

“Minseok?” Chanyeol called out. Minseok’s head jerked around; Chanyeol had never said his name before. In fact, Minseok is not sure he had ever told Chanyeol his name.

“Yes?” He answered warily, worried that Chanyeol was malfunctioning.

“I seem to have some malfunctions due to my injuries and also my current bodily condition. I could really use some food.” Chanyeol stated. Minseok was in disbelief. Chanyeol had just implied that he basically shorted out because he was hungry. Minseok quickly led Chanyeol by the arm to his seat where he could eat the soup, leaving his phone close by in case he needed to call Luhan.
Chanyeol scarfed down the soup faster than Minseok could even pick up his own spoon. He ended up just handing Chanyeol his bowl of soup and making himself a new one, luckily he had made plenty of soup.

Chanyeol ate silently, obviously famished, devouring all the soup Minseok could hand him. Minseok had his one bowl of soup and Chanyeol finished off the rest of the pot.

“There’s no more left, but if you’re still hungry I could find something for you to eat.” Minseok offered, amazed by Chanyeol’s appetite. Chanyeol shook his head.

“That was great. I have never tasted something so delicious. Thank you very much.” Chanyeol said, sincerity falling from his every pore. Minseok gave him a proud smile.

“I’m glad you liked it.” He put the bowls in the dishwasher, “That reminds me… How did you know my name?” Minseok asked, remembering the chill that went through him when Chanyeol called his name. Chanyeol looked at him with large eyes, looking slightly amused.

“I know a lot about you, Minseok.” He said deeply, sending another chill down Minseok’s spine.

“Why?” Minseok was almost afraid to hear the answer.

“I am the result of lots of advanced human experimentation. One of those experiments was to fuse my brain with a computer. It was not completely successful, hence the occasional malfunction where I require a restart of sorts at random times, but I also have many of the same capabilities as a computer. You were an easy person to find on the Internet.” Chanyeol explained casually. Minseok was fascinated, and also a little creeped out. He felt a bit stalked, but couldn’t blame Chanyeol for looking him up.

“I know a lot of facts about you as well as many of your preferences. Your favorite color is green, you identify as a homosexual, you enjoy impressionist art, and you claim to want a romantic partner who is charming, funny, understanding, enjoys doing activities in the outdoors, and who has the ability to dominate you in certain sexu-“

“That’s enough.” Minseok stopped him quickly, “So I see you’ve found my online dating profiles. Great.” He ran his hand through his hair, embarrassed.

“Would you rather I not know that information about you?” Chanyeol asked, genuinely confused.

“Well, I just didn’t know you knew that information. It makes sense that you know it I just didn’t tell any of it to you. I wouldn’t have expected you to know that information before I told you.” Minseok was quickly realizing that Chanyeol must not have gotten much, if any, socialization while a human experiment.

“Did you have any friends when you were with the SHR?” Minseok asked. Chanyeol flinched at the name of the organization.

“Friends? Not really, but there were others like myself that I communicated with occasionally. There was one that I was close with but was younger and did not handle all the experimentation very well so he was moved to a special section right before the raid. I do not know his whereabouts despite my best efforts to locate him.” Chanyeol explained. Minseok nodded, understanding Chanyeol’s social awkwardness.

“What was the younger one’s name?” Minseok asked.

“Jongin, also known as experiment KAI.” Chanyeol said.
“I’ll see if Luhan knows anything about him next time we meet.” Minseok noticed it was getting late as his home was quickly getting dark.

“It’s been a long day, we should probably get to bed. You can just sleep in that if you’d like.” Minseok said, motioning to the clothes Chanyeol was borrowing. They were just a bit too small for him. Chanyeol was long more than he was wide, so the clothes hung off him loosely but the edges hit his body at odd spots because of his height.

Minseok thoughtlessly made his way to his room, not realizing Chanyeol was following him closely. He was even half out of his shirt before he realized.

“Ah! Chanyeol!” He took a breath and slipped his shirt back on, “God, you scared me.”

“I’m sorry.” Chanyeol said with little remorse.

“It’s alright! Hahaha, I should have been paying more attention.” Minseok said, “I’m just exhausted is all.”

“Then allow me to help.” Chanyeol said as he took a step forward and began to help undress Minseok. Minseok practically flew backwards, knocking over some of the items on the dresser next to him.

“That’s alright! No need to do that!” He laughed nervously, again slipping his shirt back on all the way.

“Why did you get scared?” Chanyeol tilted his head in confusion, “Do you have an injury below your clothes as well?”

“No, it’s just that I don’t usually take my clothes off in front of people.” Minseok explained, getting a t-shirt out of his drawer.

“I did not know it was odd to be naked. At the facility we were almost always unclothed, it was easier to be operated on. The clothing was only for certain procedures or if there were guests coming through the facility.” Chanyeol revealed with a shrug. He had been opening up to Minseok more and as much as Minseok appreciated it, it was also extremely heartbreaking to hear more about the terrible conditions that Chanyeol had been in for such a long time.

“How long were you in the facilities?” Minseok ventured.

“I’m not sure.”

Chanyeol didn’t expand on that answer. Minseok figured it would be rude to pry anymore so he dropped the subject.

“Turn around for a second so I can change.” Minseok instructed. Chanyeol did as he was told. Minseok quickly threw on a t-shirt and some of his comfortable basketball shorts. He noticed that his outfit matched Chanyeol’s and smiled.

“You’re good.”

Chanyeol turned back around and gave Minseok a very obvious once-over. His eyes grazed over every part of Minseok and then stopped back up at Minseok’s face, which was currently holding a very curious expression. Chanyeol’s eyes then continued to graze over Minseok any way he wanted, as if the eye contact had given him permission to continue his inspection. It was sexy as hell but also very awkward.
“Are you checking me out?” Minseok asked. Chanyeol’s eyes met Minseok’s again.

“Checking you out? I’m not sure. I was admiring how you look in those clothes though. They fit you in a very attractive way.” Chanyeol said factually. Minseok started to laugh softly.

“That would be a yes, you were checking me out.” Minseok smoothed out a crease on his shirt in nervousness. “Let’s just go to sleep now, alright?”

“Okay. I’m not used to sleeping in a bed like this but I am guessing it will be more comfortable rather than less.” Chanyeol said as he made his way to the other side of Minseok’s bed. That wasn’t really what Minseok was planning though, and he already had a pillow in hand to put on the couch in the living room. He halted his movements completely and looked at Chanyeol as he gave Minseok a smile and sat on the edge of the bed. Minseok had never seen Chanyeol smile before and he didn’t want to be the reason that smile went away.

“Uh… Well yes it is rather comfortable.” Minseok couldn’t crush Chanyeol’s dream now. The poor guy seemed so excited to sleep in a normal bed and Minseok wasn’t going to tell him to sleep on the couch, especially not after Chanyeol told him how nice he looked in his ragged pajamas. He placed the pillow back on the bed and climbed right in with him.

It turned out sleeping with Chanyeol in the bed was not hard at all. He slept like a rock and seemed basically dead the whole night. In the morning when Minseok woke up, he had forgotten Chanyeol was even there and yelled when he saw him looking like a corpse in his bed. This made Chanyeol wake up, immediately sit up, and look around searching for a threat.

“What’s wrong, Minseok?” Chanyeol asked. Minseok could not help but get a rush of blood to his head when Chanyeol said his name because there was just something about his voice saying those letters in that particular order that got Minseok going. When Minseok didn’t immediately respond to Chanyeol, he got up out of the bed, walked over to Minseok’s side of the bed, and stood above Minseok, eyes scanning his body for harm. Minseok put his hands out, pushing Chanyeol away.

“I’m alright! I just got scared is all. I forgot you were in my bed.” Minseok laughed nervously. Chanyeol put a hand on Minseok’s stomach, looking tired.

“You made me very scared.” He sighed, looking worn; which was curious to Minseok because after such a long night’s sleep Chanyeol should be looking better instead of worse.

“What about you? Are you alright? You seem almost more tired than before.” Minseok asked, taking Chanyeol’s hand off of his stomach so he could get out of the bed.

“I’m okay. I had that nightmare about Jongin, it stresses me out.” Chanyeol shrugged. Minseok rubbed his arm as a caring gesture.

“I’m sorry about that.” He reassured.

The day went on roughly like the day before. Chanyeol had all these quirks for Minseok to figure out, and it became almost like a fun game to play. Chanyeol kept trying to help Minseok, and was sometimes “too helpful” in a way that Minseok could not help but find incredibly sexy. If Minseok said he was hungry, Chanyeol would offer to cook, even though he didn’t know how. When Minseok complained that his back hurt, Chanyeol quickly looked up ways to relieve back pain and began massaging Minseok before he could even figure out what was going on. When Minseok complained it was too cold in the room Chanyeol simply took off his shirt and handed it to Minseok, revealing all his toned muscle and also many of the wires that protruded from his skin. Doing his best not to stare, he handed the shirt back to Chanyeol.
“That reminds me, I still need to deal with your wires and hair.” Minseok thought aloud. Chanyeol gave him a wary look.

“What? You don’t like that idea?” Minseok prodded.

“It does hurt when you pull the wires out. They’re connected to things on the inside usually.” Chanyeol admitted, shyly looking away from Minseok.

“You told me it doesn’t hurt! Oh, I really didn’t mean to hurt you, I was trying to help!” Minseok felt immensely guilty. He had clipped back and pulled on several of Chanyeol’s protruding wires when he was treating him the first time, but apparently Chanyeol had only just become comfortable enough with Minseok to tell him it actually hurt.

“Do not worry about it. I know you meant well, and you took lots of care not to harm me. I must say, I truly appreciate all that you have done for me. I am not so used to people caring for me the way you have.” Chanyeol said, his eyes looking directly into Minseok’s without their usual coldness. His face softening, Minseok reached out to hug Chanyeol. With Minseok’s arms wrapped around him, Chanyeol wasn’t sure exactly how to respond.

“What are you doing?” He asked simply.

“It will feel nicer if you hug back.” Minseok said, his face buried in Chanyeol’s chest. Chanyeol put his own arms around Minseok awkwardly. His chest vibrated with the feeling of Minseok’s laugh.

“You’ll get the hang of it.” Minseok laughed, pulling away from Chanyeol.

Each day Minseok had with Chanyeol felt like something out of a sappy movie. Minseok taught Chanyeol all kinds of skills and Chanyeol reciprocated in the best semi-robotic way possible. Minseok eventually got around to doing Chanyeol’s hair, and it was still long and wild looking but much more kempt than before. Chanyeol also became much less sensitive to light, which Minseok believed was helped by their movie nights together. Chanyeol taught Minseok how to hack into basic websites, and later caught Minseok hacking one of the online dating sites to look at an ex of his. Minseok found himself deleting his online dating profiles, and starting to research everything he could get his hands on about human experimentation and androids. Chanyeol and Minseok were in paradise together. One falling slowly for the other without even realizing it. It was about two and a half weeks into their time together though where everything started to fall apart.

There was a knock at the door, and Minseok looked at Chanyeol who was lying with his head in Minseok’s lap. Chanyeol gave a curious look and sat up.

“I’ll get it.” Minseok reassured. Chanyeol seemed nervous and went into their room (that’s what they were referencing it as now) to hide.

Minseok opened the door and was greeted with a middle-aged man in a very expensive looking suit.

“Hello, are you Minseok Kim?” He asked, not making eye contact with Minseok and eyeing the inside of his house.

“I might be, who the hell are you?” Minseok retorted, put off by this man’s abrasive entrance.

“I’m Agent Lee. I’m from the SHR and we’re looking for a half-human half-android experiment. This experiment is extremely dangerous and it should not be trusted. It has several malfunctions and even has the ability to kill great masses of people. We gathered information recently that makes us believe the experiment may be in your apartment. May I have a look inside?” The agent rolled his eyes as he quickly went through his speech. He even had the nerve to move his foot inside the door.
“First of all, I do happen to be Minseok Kim to answer your first question. Secondly, I’ve heard of the SHR and I do not plan to help you because I think your experimentation could be classified as a humanitarian crisis. Do you have a warrant? I know for a fact you cannot just waltz in here like you own the place.” Minseok countered, keeping his foot pressed on the agent’s foot that had trespassed. The agent let out an exasperated breath. He had obviously not been expecting so much resistance.

“Is the experiment here?” He asked, ignoring Minseok’s rant.

“Do you have a warrant?” Minseok repeated, his heart racing fast.

“I’ll be back, just you wait.” The agent stormed off, ripping his foot from underneath Minseok’s.

Minseok waited until the agent was out of his sight before he closed the door, locked it tight, and then ran back to his room. The sight he came to when he opened his door was heartbreaking.

Chanyeol had obviously heard the entire confrontation with the agent and he was now here on their bed sobbing. His body shook with his crying, and Minseok heard the familiar whirring noises that came from Chanyeol whenever he was processing a lot of emotion or information. Chanyeol looked up to Minseok when he entered, his eyes bloodshot and his face freshly wet with tears. Minseok felt himself tear up just looking at Chanyeol.

“I-I’m so sor-sorry. I didn’t… w-want to ever br-bring them to you.” Chanyeol stuttered through his sobs. Determined not to break down himself, Minseok stood directly in front of the crying part-human part android that had recently stolen his heart.

“Don’t apologize. He won’t hurt you or me. I will never let him get to us.” Minseok reassured. His held Chanyeol’s face in his hands, bringing it close to his own. Minseok looked him directly in the eyes. Chanyeol’s eyes were scanning Minseok’s face wildly like an animal trapped and frightened. Minseok shushed him, and rubbed his thumb over Chanyeol’s cheeks to get rid of some of the tears as well as comfort him.

“Look at you. You always worry you’re too robotic. You aren’t an “it” at all. A robot wouldn’t cry like this, this is completely human. See? You’re perfect.” Minseok kept his voice low and soft as if calming a baby. Chanyeol started to take in shaky breaths, attempting to slow the beating of his heart. Minseok leaned forward on instinct. Later he would claim he blanked, his mind completely focused on Chanyeol and not his actions. Without a thought of the meaning or consequence, Minseok brought his lips to Chanyeol’s. They had a slightly salty taste from the tears.

Chanyeol’s mind went blank, an odd feeling for someone whose brain was constantly taking in and storing information. All of his thought processes were stopped in their tracks and the only thing he knew was Minseok. Acting on instincts he didn’t even know he had, his hands positioned themselves on Minseok’s nape and waist. He quickly responded to the kiss, applying his own pressure back.

The world stopped for a few moments as Minseok and Chanyeol fully realized their feelings for each other. Chanyeol had broken through his logic based robotic mind blocks to see it, and Minseok had finally broken through his own stubbornness. Their lips moved together, their eyes were closed. Chanyeol pulled Minseok’s hips closer to him, causing Minseok to straddle him as he sat on the edge of the bed. Their kiss quickly deepened once Minseok was in this more comfortable and more intimate position. Their tongues became involved, and Chanyeol had no ability to search for kissing techniques because his brain was still basically turned off. Minseok’s hands gripped almost painfully in Chanyeol’s hair, and Chanyeol’s hands began roaming over Minseok’s body, even venturing under his shirt. Minseok let out a couple content moans, which were immediately swallowed by
Minseok had no idea how far he was willing to go, but he would never really know because just as Chanyeol had successfully pulled Minseok’s shirt off, Minseok’s phone rang. It was a jarring noise that made both of them jump.

“Shit.” Minseok breathed, trying to catch up with his breath. He got off Chanyeol to get his phone and he answered.

“Hello?” Minseok said, still breathing hard.

“Hey, it’s Luhan. I figured I hadn’t checked in for a- Is everything okay? You’re breathing really hard.” Luhan said, his voice worried. Minseok smiled to himself.

“Yeah, I’m fine, you just caught me at a bad time.” Minseok said cryptically.

“Did they already come?” Luhan asked.

“What do you mean?” Minseok’s brow furrowed. He looked over to Chanyeol, who was staring at him like a sad puppy. Minseok bit his lip and looked away, looking back toward the wall.

“The SHR? I heard today at work that they had a lead as to where Chanyeol might be. I think they might stop by.” Luhan revealed.

“Yes. They came. He didn’t have a warrant though so I sent him on his way.” Minseok said, giving up against Chanyeol’s puppy dog eyes and moving back towards him. His free hand ruffled Chanyeol’s silver hair.

“Well you know he’s going to be back so I have to get Chanyeol out of there.” Luhan explained. Chanyeol and Minseok made panicked eye contact.

“Just Chanyeol?” Minseok clarified, concern obvious in his voice.

“Well he is the experiment they’re looking for. Once he’s gone they can’t pin anything on you and you won’t be in any trouble if that’s what you’re worried about. I know you weren’t keen to have Chanyeol in your house so I can’t thank you enough for doing this. I finally got a safe house he can go to, and I even have him a new I.D and everything.” Luhan sounded excited, but Minseok’s heart just kept falling. Chanyeol’s bloodshot eyes looked as though they were about to tear up again, his ears able to hear Luhan’s voice on the phone.

“Um, I want to go with him.” Minseok said slowly and with lots of uncertainty.

“To drop him off? That probably wouldn’t be a-”

“No, to live with him.”

There was silence on the line, and it lasted an uncomfortable amount of time.

“So you guys became friends then?” Luhan asked carefully, his voice suddenly with a hint of mischievousness.

“Something like that.” Minseok replied shortly.

“Minseok Kim! Are you romantically involved with Chanyeol?” Luhan sounded like he had just heard the best piece of gossip in the whole world. Minseok face palmed, annoyed that Luhan wasn’t being serious.
“I might be!” He paused, and could almost hear Luhan holding back a laugh, “Okay, I definitely am.” He admitted. Chanyeol stood up and hugged him from behind, a skill he learned only recently when he accidentally did it to Minseok when he was cooking and Chanyeol wanted to give it a try. Chanyeol was nothing if a quick learner.

“Oh my god. Okay first of all, that’s adorable. Second of all, that’s super scandalous and risky. Third of all, holy cow I need to tell Sehun gimme a second. This changes some stuff.” Luhan hung up quickly but Minseok knew he would call back. He turned around in Chanyeol’s arms to place a quick kiss on Chanyeol’s lips.

“So we’re something then, right?” Minseok looked away shyly. Chanyeol was silent. Minseok smiled coyly.

“Don’t be so reserved now! I just made out in your lap you can’t just ign-” Minseok stopped himself short because he looked up to look at Chanyeol and the smile wiped off his face. Chanyeol was doing it again. He was staring blankly at nothing, his eyes focused on a spot far off in the distance. He was frozen, doing one of his infamous restarts. This was the fifth time Minseok had experienced it. It was starting to concern Minseok because the events were happening closer together. The last time this had happened was just yesterday. Usually the blank-outs, as Minseok referred to them, happened at the least three days apart. Minseok hugged Chanyeol tightly, unable to escape from the hands that had wrapped themselves around him before he froze. Minseok could only wait and hope that Chanyeol would unfreeze by himself. He stood there, as if frozen himself until his phone rang again.

“Luhan?” Minseok picked up.

“Okay so Sehun and I have fixed the plan to include you. It won’t be completely ready until tomorrow though so instead of tonight. We have to rush you a new name and ID now. Shouldn’t take long though.” Luhan explained. Minseok sighed as he looked up at Chanyeol.

“That’s awesome!” He tried to sound positive but was much too preoccupied with Chanyeol to think of the positives.

“That didn’t sound super happy.”

“Chanyeol’s blanked out again.” Minseok sighed.

“Didn’t he just do that recently?”

“Yeah… This time though I think part of it might be from shock.” Minseok noted, as he waved his hand in front of Chanyeol’s face. He snapped his fingers and Chanyeol didn’t even blink.

“From shock?” Luhan questioned. Minseok tensed. He hadn’t told Luhan about their kiss yet.

“Uhh… Yes. About that. Well, there were a lot of high emotions going on right after the agent guy came and then I got really close to his face. I mean not uncomfortably close like right up on him, but close enough for our lips to touch I guess.” Minseok tried to cover up his nervousness with a laugh, but the speedy run through of the event already gave away his nervousness.

“So you kissed? Oh my god! You two kissed! Does Chanyeol even know how to do that? Did he start it? How far did it go? You owe me a lot more of an explanation than that. I’ve been your friend throughout your dating dry spell and I’m nearly as thirsty as you for information here.” Luhan gushed. It was easy for Minseok to forget that Luhan was a government agent who handled top-secret information. Minseok rolled his eyes and was about to give the details when he felt Chanyeol’s
hands move from his hips. Chanyeol stumbled backwards as he came back into reality and then quickly sat himself down on the bed.

“Look, I’ll give you the rundown later. Chanyeol just came back to me.” Minseok said, running to get a cup of water for Chanyeol. He always came out of his blank-outs thirsty.

“Okay well, Sehun and I will be escorting you to the safe house and initiating you with the new I.Ds and such. We’ll be at your house at 9 o’clock in the morning. You can only bring one duffle bag full of stuff for the both of you, otherwise onlookers might get suspicious that you’re moving.” Luhan paused, “I can’t believe you’re just going to up and go with Chanyeol. You must have really bonded with him.” He commented. Minseok handed the glass to Chanyeol who thanked him silently and drank the whole thing in just two gulps. Minseok gave him a loving look.

“Yeah, I think we bonded a lot.”

They had one night left together in Minseok’s house. Minseok had some dirty thoughts in his mind but seeing Chanyeol’s condition made him put those thoughts away. Chanyeol seemed dizzy, tired, and confused. He was in no condition to be doing anything new.

“This was different.” Chanyeol said suddenly to Minseok who was lying beside him in the bed, both already in their pajamas.

“What do you mean?”

“I dreamed.”

“You dreamed? That’s unusual.”

“Well, when we kissed, my mind just stopped moving altogether. I was running almost purely on instinct and I think it sent my mind into a weird state. After I hugged you I got a dream.”

“Aw, did my kiss really mean that much to you?” Minseok teased. As always, Chanyeol didn’t pick up on it.

“I think it had more to do with my primal human responses to the affection, especially since you seem to draw that out of me more than anyone else I’ve come into contact with.” Chanyeol explained. Minseok shook his head with a smile.

“That means you like me.” He reached out to grab Chanyeol’s hand and hold it tightly in his own, “Now, tell me about the dream.”

“It was Jongin.”

“Did you see him?”

“Yes, but not very clearly. I think he was reaching out to me.” Chanyeol’s brow knitted, and his face scrunched up as he tried to remember more about the dream.

“For some reason the memory is not coming back clearly.” Chanyeol sighed, “I must be malfunctioning.”

“No, dreams are always hard to remember. Once you wake up they start to fade immediately.” Minseok explained, “That’s probably all it is.”

Chanyeol seemed content enough with that answer and then he turned off the lights. He had a cool
trick where he could hack the electrical system with one of those special brain systems he had added and can simply turn the lights on and off at will. Minseok snuggled in close to Chanyeol.

“You should look up spooning.” Minseok suggested. Chanyeol whirred for just a moment.

“Do you prefer big spoon or little spoon?”

“That was fast!”

“It’s not a difficult concept, and it also sounds very… appealing.” Chanyeol said, the last word picked very carefully.

“I think that’s because you’re attracted to me.” Minseok laughed, “I want you to be the big spoon.”

“Okay then turn around.”

They quickly positioned themselves and Minseok couldn’t have been any happier. Chanyeol was the perfect temperature because he was naturally cold but under the blankets he was a normal temperature. It meant Minseok wasn’t sweating because of the body heat from the big spoon, and also meant that Minseok’s natural warmth could keep Chanyeol warm. Minseok smiled to himself.

“I guess we were just made for each other.” He whispered to himself before he fell asleep.

The next morning Minseok really did not want to get out of the bed. Chanyeol was still holding on to him as the big spoon and it felt so nice. It was almost painful to pull himself out of Chanyeol’s arms. It seemed to have woken Chanyeol up too, because he shot up as soon as Minseok was out of his arms.

“Minseok?” Chanyeol questioned. This was how he woke up every morning, shooting up in the bed and immediately looking for Minseok. Minseok waved at him from his closet.

“I’m packing up some clothes. Sehun and Luhan are going to be here in about an hour and a half so we need to put together that duffle bag.” Minseok explained. Chanyeol nodded.

“I don’t really have anything to pack. I’ve been borrowing your clothes since I got here.”

Minseok paused, “I guess you’re right. We’ll have to buy you some of your own clothes whenever we get to the new place. I’m sure you’d like a pair of shoes that don’t squeeze your toes.”

“The discomfort is nothing. Your clothes have their own appeal because they carry a very calming scent that comes from you wearing them and I can’t seem to replicate.” Chanyeol got out of bed and shamelessly took off his clothing except for the underwear so he could change. Minseok had already turned around, aware of this odd habit of Chanyeol’s.

They packed together mostly silently, with a few questions here and there about what to bring. There was an uncertain heaviness in the air that neither of them felt the need to address.

“Will you miss this place?” Chanyeol asked when he noticed Minseok looking out of his window.

“A little. I feel like it grew with me, but recently it hasn’t held much for me here so I think it’s time for me to go.” Minseok sighed and looked away from the window.

It looks like we got up too early.” Minseok laughed, “All our stuff is packed and we still have an hour left.”

“We actually have 67 minutes before their scheduled time of arrival.” Chanyeol corrected.
“Ah, right.” Minseok looked to the ground, “Chanyeol, I know this is going to sound insensitive, but,” Minseok took a deep breath, “Are you able to love?”

Chanyeol gave Minseok a sad look, “I’m not exactly sure how to answer that.” He walked closer to Minseok, “I still have all of my human instincts and needs, but I have added abilities and functions from the experiments. Theoretically I am able to love, but theory and reality as I have learned are often very different.”

“That sounded a bit like a no.”

“It’s not so much that I don’t love you as much as I’m struggling to allow myself to do so. Logic leaves no room for love. The android parts of myself don’t see any profit or advantage to love, so it tries to shut down those kinds of feelings and reactions, but my human instincts are constantly fighting against that.” Chanyeol took Minseok’s hands into his own and looked him in the eyes, “I love you. My captors and their experimentation do not. I have to find the balance between logic and love.”

“Honestly, that’s enough for me.”

Chanyeol surprised Minseok and even more himself when he was the first to lean forward and give Minseok a kiss. He wanted to comfort Minseok and his body had acted on its own. Minseok was welcoming though, and moved his hands to Chanyeol’s head to pull him in closer. Chanyeol’s hands rested politely on Minseok’s waist. It was obvious to Minseok that Chanyeol’s mind was not off this time, his movements were more restrained, and his posture was rigid. Minseok pulled away.

“You don’t need to force yourself. I appreciate it.” He gave him a kiss on the cheek. Chanyeol felt as though he had disappointed Minseok, and tried to think of way to make it up to him. He wanted to show Minseok just how much he meant to him. Sure, he had obstacles to get around because of his past but he wanted Minseok to be his present and his future. There had to be some way to give Minseok all of the love and affection he deserved despite Chanyeol’s inability to properly tell him. The familiar whirring noise filled the room as Chanyeol did a bulk of research in a short period of time.

“What are you looking up?” Minseok asked. There was a moment’s pause and then the whirring noise subsided. Chanyeol gave Minseok one of his rare smiles, and then picked him up by the waist. Naturally, Minseok wrapped his legs around Chanyeol’s waist to try and steady himself in the new odd position. Minseok yelped at the sudden move.

“Ways to properly show you my love.” Chanyeol said, placing his hands under Minseok’s butt. The blush across Minseok’s face was a dead giveaway that he knew exactly what Chanyeol meant.

“You don’t have to do this.”

“Except I really, really want to.”

The couple had lost all track of time and when Luhan and Sehun knocked on the door, and Minseok quickly threw on some shorts that were laying on the floor and the closest t-shirt he could get his hands on in a panic.

“Hey guys!” Minseok said nervously, letting Sehun and Luhan enter his home. Luhan eyed him suspiciously.

“Did you have a rough time sleeping last night?” Luhan asked, pointing to Minseok’s messed up hair and the shirt that was on backwards.
“Um… Yeah.”

“Where’s Chanyeol?” Sehun asked, painfully aware of why Minseok looked like that and was doing his best to ignore it.

“Uh, he’s in the living room.” Minseok’s mind was still reeling from the amazing sex he had just experienced so he could barely come out as coherent.

“Is he dressed?” Sehun clarified.

“Probably?” Minseok answered hesitantly. He ran into the living to see Chanyeol completely clothed and his hair perfectly in place. Sehun and Luhan walked up right behind him.

“Well someone is ready to go. You going to be able to be ready in a couple minutes, Minnie?” Luhan said, his voice straining. Looking over at Luhan, Minseok could tell he was doing his best not to laugh.

“Something funny?”

“Nope. There’s nothing funny, just like you guys did not just have sex right before we came.” Luhan said, hitting Sehun lightly as he tried to control his laughter. Minseok rolled his eyes and went into his room to grab the duffel bag, straighten up his hair, and turn his shirt around. Even though all the clothes he was wearing were Minseok’s, this shirt had definitely been the one Chanyeol had been wearing earlier. It smelled like him.

“Ready to go!” Minseok announced as he came out of his bedroom. He noticed Chanyeol sitting uncomfortably on the edge of the couch, as if trying to get away from Luhan and Sehun were sitting down. Minseok had forgotten how much Chanyeol disliked being with them.

“Alright then we’ll put this in the car first and then you guys should probably go to the bathroom and such before we head out.” Sehun suggested, grabbing the duffel bag and taking it out to his car.

“Okay! I guess this is really happening!” Minseok said excitedly. Luhan gave him a knowing look.

“I never expected you to fall in love so fast. My baby’s growing up.” He wiped away a fake tear.

“Well, Chanyeol just knew how to get to me I guess.” Minseok shrugged. He turned to look at the man he was talking about when he realized Chanyeol was blanking out again.

“Fuck.” He breathed. Luhan gasped.

“That’s just disconcerting.” Luhan noted as he saw how statuesque Chanyeol was in this state. Nothing moved, not his chest for breathing, not his open eyes, and not his limbs no matter they state they were in.

“He’ll snap out of it in a little bit. Can we move him to the car like this?” Minseok asked. Luhan made an exasperated noise.

“I guess so.”

It took all three of them of carry the frozen Chanyeol to the car. They laid him across the backseat and had his head rest in Minseok’s lap. They had to force him to bend his knees so he would fit in the car, a task that took all three of them working together to complete. Only about fifteen minutes through the car ride did Chanyeol finally snap out of it.
“Minseok!” He shouted, blinking quickly. He realized he was in his lap and was extremely confused.

“You blanked out again. We got you in the car, you’re safe.” Minseok reassured, rubbing his arm.

“Jongin was there again. He’s looking for me. He’s communicating with me. I’m not blanking out; he’s making me do it. We have to make sure he’s okay.” Chanyeol looked panicked, and Minseok shushed him.

“It’s alright. Calm down. Okay, so you’re saying these blank-outs are actually Jongin trying to communicate with you?” Minseok asked. Chanyeol nodded.

“Jongin? As in Project KAI?” Luhan asked, turning around to look at the two passengers in the car.

“You know him?” Minseok asked.

“Yeah, he was one of the androids that wasn’t seen as fit for society because they couldn't get all the technology out of him without killing him. I don’t know what they ended up doing with him. He was seen as more valuable than experiments like Chanyeol for some reason so he wasn’t going to be scrapped.” Luhan said, “No offensive, Chanyeol.” He added.

“I think he ran away. He’s finding me, following me.” Chanyeol explained, but his face was knitting up again. Softly, Minseok used his hands to smooth out the creases in Chanyeol’s face from his intense thinking.

“It’s fading, isn’t it?” Minseok guessed.

“Yes.”

“Is he as smart as you?”

“Smarter.”

“Well, I find that hard to believe, but if he’s at least as smart as you he will be able to find us. Everything’s going to be fine.” Truth be told, Minseok wasn’t so sure.

Luhan and Sehun did as promised and briefed them on their new names as soon as they got to the cabin they would be living in for the next… while. Minseok was given the name Xiumin; Chanyeol was actually not given a new name because he had never been registered in the first place. Apparently Chanyeol had been orphaned as a child and was raised mostly, if not entirely, in the SHR facilities because there was no documentation of Chanyeol in any government database. This much they could tell just from his lack of records. They decided to have some lunch together and then Luhan and Sehun wished them good luck and goodbye. It was sad for Minseok to see them go but he knew they were the only people from his old life that he’d be allowed to see, and honestly they were enough.

“It’s crazy that we’re here. I mean this place is amazing. A cabin with a forest for a backyard, our nearest neighbor is half a mile away, yet we still have only a thirty-minute ride into the city! I’ve always wanted a place like this.” Minseok marveled. He had loved living in the city but had never planned on staying there. He found all the hassle of traffic, public transportation, and the masses of people exhausting. Out here, Minseok felt he could breathe again.

“I’m glad you enjoy it.” Chanyeol commented.

“Do you not?”
“I think it has more advantages than your house in the city, but there is some kind of ache I have for your house.” Chanyeol admitted, “It doesn’t really make sense.”

“That’s probably nostalgia. It became home to you. Even if this place is better, you will always miss the old stuff.” Minseok walked over to where Chanyeol was sitting on their new couch and sat himself right in his lap. He sat sideways and laid back so his back was against the armrest.

“Let me know if this is uncomfortable to you.” Minseok said.

“You’re the lightest thing I’ve ever picked up, it feels like a small animal has found its way into my lap.” Chanyeol scoffed, offended Minseok would think of him as so weak.

“How much have you picked up before?” Minseok questioned, wondering if he was made to work out at the SHR facilities.

“Well when trying to enhance human strength, they had me pick up many items in order to prove I could. At first I was unable to lift the car so they continued injections for another week, which also allowed my shoulder to heal before I lifted it on the second trial.” Chanyeol recounted.

“You hurt your shoulder?”

“They didn’t allow experiments to stop trials until they were either unconscious or injured. They were testing the limits of the human body.” Chanyeol pointed out.

“Sometimes I forget just how terrible these people were. I’m so glad we got rid of them.” Minseok shivered. He could not bear to think of Chanyeol going through all of the terrible procedures and experimentation required to become the perfect android. The organization was inhumane, and the damage done to the people in the experiments was completely irreparable.

“That’s how I thought all people were like who weren’t experiments themselves, until I had the fortune of meeting you. Luhan and Sehun were okay but I could tell they were not always looking at my best interest. They were too busy looking at each other’s best interests. I was third place. With you, I know you’re looking out for me.”

Chanyeol and Minseok wasted away the whole day just chatting, with an occasionally kiss here and there. They weren’t quite adjusted to the new house, and they hadn’t moved anything in yet but that didn’t concern them. They just pulled some pajamas out of a box to change into when it came to nighttime. Chanyeol once again volunteered to be the big spoon, much to Minseok’s excitement. Things weren’t perfect but they were peaceful and they were safe. Safety felt reassuring to Minseok, and made him feel like he could really start his life with Chanyeol.

“Minseok!” Chanyeol shouted. Minseok was roused from his sleep, and rubbed his eyes trying to wake up quickly.

“What’s going on? I didn’t wake you up.” Minseok looked over at the clock on the bedside table and saw that it was near two in the morning. Something wasn’t right.

“Chanyeol?” Minseok called out. Chanyeol had sat up in bed and as Minseok looked at the clock he had gotten out of the bed completely. His movements were jerky, and Minseok could barely make out his figure in the dim moonlight coming in from the window. He got out of bed himself, following Chanyeol.

“Chanyeol?” He called again. He desperately tried to remember if Chanyeol had mentioned anything about sleepwalking before but he knew that was impossible. Chanyeol didn’t even really sleep; he just basically turned off for a little while and then reactivated. He couldn’t be sleepwalking.
Minseok knew that calling after him wouldn’t get him to come back from whatever kind of new blank-out this was, so he just followed him helplessly. If Minseok had finished his degree maybe he’d know how to treat something like this, but he couldn’t help Chanyeol. The next best thing would be to be there for him.

Chanyeol continued his jerky movements and walked straight out the back door, heading directly for the forest. Minseok ran in the house and grabbed a flashlight and a knife. He ran back out to see Chanyeol continuing his zombie-like walk out into the forest.

“Chanyeol! Come back! Please!” He called out desperately. Walking aimlessly around the house was one thing, but out in a strange forest was just plain dangerous. He ran after Chanyeol, ready to try and defend him from danger as best he could, armed with nothing but a relatively dull knife and a flashlight.

They must have walked for ten minutes before Chanyeol finally stopped. Tears were flowing down Minseok’s face. He was scared and worried. What if Chanyeol never came out of this blank-out? What if this was permanent? Minseok wasn’t sure he would be able to turn around and leave Chanyeol. He squatted in the grass and cried.

Suddenly, Minseok heard a rustling noise so he jumped up in front of Chanyeol and held out his knife.

“Don’t be sad, he’ll snap out of it in just a second.” There was a little boy’s voice speaking to him. It creeped him out more than reassured him.

“Who are you?” Minseok’s voice shook.

“I’m Jongin. I’ve been looking for Chanyeol, and it hasn’t been easy but I found him. These episodes shouldn’t happen anymore because I will stop sending the location signal.” Jongin explained. It wasn’t super helpful to Minseok who was still confused and partially convinced that this boy was going to kill him.

“Why don’t we all go back to our house, okay? I don’t know who you are or if you’re dangerous but Chanyeol seems to trust you, at least from what I’ve heard. If we go back to the house you can explain yourself in the light.” Minseok reasoned, looking around desperately for the source of the voice. Finally, a little boy with a dark mop of hair came out from the shadow of a tree. At that exact moment is when Chanyeol snapped out of his blank-out.

“Minseok!” He called out, reaching for him, and pulling him close. He hugged him tightly before releasing him to look at Minseok’s face.

“Chanyeol! I’m okay! I’m okay. This boy says he’s Jongin, he brought us out here.” Minseok said, pointing to the boy. Chanyeol looked over and then smiled.

“You found me!”

“I said I would.”

“I wasn’t sure you’d be able. I hadn’t gotten the most recent addition, that’s when the raid came in.”

“I was able to triangulate you.”

“Even though my frequency was down?”

“Your harmonic frequency is never down.”
“Oh! See, Minseok, I told you he’s smarter than me.” Chanyeol said, flashing a smile. He kissed the completely lost and dazed Minseok on the cheek and then ran over to pick up Jongin and carry him back to Minseok.

“Now this is something very heavy.” Chanyeol admitted.

Minseok was in a crazy whirlwind of emotion. First, he thinks Chanyeol might be going crazy, then he thinks this tiny boy is possibly a ghost going to kill him, then he gets all this crazy technical vernacular thrown at him, and now Chanyeol’s going to make some half-joke? Minseok was confused, lost, and also becoming angry.

“Do you plan to explain what’s going on?” Minseok said through his teeth. Chanyeol tilted his head in confusion.

“Isn’t it pretty obvious?”

Minseok threw his hands up in frustration.

“No! It’s not obvious! I’m not an android, I am one hundred percent human and I don’t know what’s going on! When we get back to the house, I want at least 5 more hours of sleep and then I expect a full explanation as to what the hell you guys have going on.” Minseok raged, not realizing he was wagging the knife in Chanyeol’s face. He turned around and stormed off in the direction of the house, ready to get some more sleep and pretend this whole thing had been a nightmare. Chanyeol exchanged looks with Jongin.

“I’ve never seen him so angry.” Chanyeol commented. He felt guilty on one level, but also felt as though a lot of this was not his fault. Jongin was the one that had made him blank-out, it wasn’t Chanyeol’s doing.

“I think he’s just frustrated that he’s unable to understand you on the same level I am able to. He also seems tired, and he probably thought he was losing you.” Jongin suggested, pulling on Chanyeol’s arms to let him down. Chanyeol obliged and they started walking toward Minseok and the house together.

“Does that make him jealous of you?” Chanyeol asked.

“Not necessarily. I may have just been a reminder to him about some of the large differences between you two.” Jongin admitted. There was a reason Jongin had been put under such special care, and it was stuff like this that made Chanyeol remember that. He was so good at understanding people. His brain was able to fully process emotion and logic simultaneously so that he didn’t rely solely on one or the other. That ability along with his enhanced physical abilities, and his ability for growth and development because of his youth made him the key experiment. He was young enough that experimentation had made him weak, but also young enough that his body was able to adapt to the new changes and incorporate them into his system almost naturally. He was well on his way to being the first prototype of the perfect android.

Upon coming back to the house, Chanyeol found Minseok already asleep on the couch. He told Jongin to sleep in the bedroom, to which Jongin suggested he sleep on the floor instead of the bed. Chanyeol had never really slept by himself before and there was not room on the couch. He had slept by himself technically at the SHR facilities but that was a metal operating table with a sheet of paper over it. He assumed Minseok did this on purpose, since he was angry with Chanyeol he wanted to sleep by himself. This hurt Chanyeol, because he never meant to hurt Minseok, and he definitely didn’t like him pushing him away. He ended up laying down on the floor right next to the couch and sleeping there.
When Minseok woke up he had almost convinced himself the whole terrifying ordeal with the boy in the forest had been a nightmare. Stepping on Chanyeol as he rolled off the couch made him realize it was not his imagination.

“Minseok?” Chanyeol called out, softer than his usual wake up yell. Minseok looked down at Chanyeol on the floor from where he was sitting cross-legged on the couch.

“I’m sorry Minseok.” Chanyeol said, reaching out to feel some part of him. Minseok let him touch his knee but did not respond immediately.

“It’s okay. I shouldn’t have gotten so angry about not understanding. I was so worried about you and then you just were fine! Then you don’t even explain and you start speaking gibberish with Jongin, who I had thought a couple minutes before was going to kill me. I was just… stressed out.” Minseok explained. His arms were still crossed and he was blocked off to Chanyeol.

“I didn’t think you were confused, and I didn’t realize you were so worried. Will you feel better if I get Jongin and we explain some things?” Chanyeol asked, still rubbing Minseok’s knee. Minseok hesitated.

“Yes.” He sighed.

Jongin entered all by himself, not even giving Chanyeol time to come get him. He sat himself down by Chanyeol. Minseok became uncomfortable sitting above the two of them like this so he moved to sit facing Chanyeol and Jongin directly on the floor across from the couch. They were positioned in a triangle with Minseok at the top in order to discuss how Jongin got here.

“I’m so sorry I bust into your life like this. I wasn’t aware Chanyeol had found someone so special! I was intent on finding Chanyeol after I escaped from the government lab they stuck me in after taking me from the SHR facilities. They were unsure about the extent of my abilities and I didn’t like being all cooped up and tested on, I’m sure you can imagine that wasn’t pleasant. It didn’t take much effort to break out, but finding Chanyeol was the hard part.” Jongin began explaining, his hands acting out different actions of his story, “I had to send out a special kind of signal that basically attacked his specific frequency. Every person has their own. Since Chanyeol had some technology added into his brain, it would short out his brain momentarily as a side effect. This would have been scary to witness I’m sure, but again I wasn’t really aware that you were here. I must apologize… I was assuming I would have to break him out of government quarantine. I followed the echo from the signal I sent out, and sometimes sent messages through this frequency, now here we are!” Jongin finished, looking back and forth from Chanyeol and Minseok to look for approval. Minseok gave Chanyeol a wary look. He wasn’t able to receive the look though because he was simply hanging his head down as though he was still in trouble.

“Chanyeol this isn’t your fault.” Minseok said. His reaction was immediate and he perked up like a dog smelling food.

“So you aren’t mad at me anymore?” Chanyeol asked, his mouth threatening to break into a smile.

“I was never truly angry with you, I just was worried and frustrated. I think I love you too much.” Minseok gave a little smile, “Now, come here.” Minseok said, patting the floor next to him so Chanyeol could sit by him. Chanyeol quickly moved to sit by Minseok and even held his hand for good measure.

“Now, Jongin I understand your story and I feel really bad for you. Chanyeol can tell you, I hate the SHR completely and I don’t want to send you into government quarantine either. I’m not sure what we do with you now.” Minseok admitted, “It might be best if I call Luhan and have him set up a safe
house for you. Although you are quite young.”

A contemplative look fell over Jongin’s face as he planned out what to say next.

“I completely understand. When I came here I was still under the impression that Chanyeol and I would run away together to go live in the middle of nowhere, safe from harm. I see you two had a similar plan. I would rather not live alone but I also can’t just ask you to take me in either, I th-” Jongin began, but Chanyeol held up a hand to stop him.

“We take care of him.” Chanyeol demanded. Minseok gave him a glare, which Chanyeol either didn’t notice or pretended not to see.

“That’s a lot of responsibility Chanyeol, he’s still technically a child. I mean, you’re what? Like thirteen?” Minseok asked.

“I’m fourteen.” Jongin corrected.

“See?”

“He’s also capable of mass murder, lifting up a small house, hacking into any government agency in the world without a computer, and going approximately two weeks with no food or water. He’s not someone who needs lots of taking care of like I did, and you still took me in.” Chanyeol pointed out. Minseok felt himself slowly giving up.

“I want to take care of him… It’s just…” Minseok trailed off, unable to come up for a solid reason not to take him in. Jongin was basically a younger brother to Chanyeol, but Minseok barely knew him. He wasn’t sure he could trust him, but Chanyeol seemed more than sure it would be okay. Minseok looked into Chanyeol’s eyes directly.

“Fine. We’ll take him in. We’re going to have to find a school system to put him in though, I want him to live at least somewhat like a normal kid. Also we tell Luhan about this immediately” Minseok demanded. Chanyeol and Jongin both nodded.

“Yes sir!” They said simultaneously, and this began their lives together.

Turns out that Jongin liked Minseok’s soup almost just as much as Chanyeol had when he first arrived at Minseok’s house. Jongin was much more energetic than Chanyeol, but required many of the same services. Minseok gave him a check up of sorts in order to look for major injuries or problem areas but Jongin seemed like he had never even had a scratch.

“I heal at a faster rate than normal.” Jongin admitted to him later. It was a new experience for Minseok to be outnumbered by superhuman housemates, but it made many chores much easier. Cleaning took no time at all when there were three of them, especially when two of them could lift the couch to vacuum under it like it was a magazine. Minseok and Chanyeol did eventually enroll Jongin into school; even though he whined about how he already had all the knowledge he needed because he was constantly able to access the Internet with his mind. It was odd for Minseok to suddenly be in the parent role but it fit him well. He and Chanyeol were known up at the school as the gay parents in town, which was apparently uncommon at their new home. Their old home was in a gay neighborhood so they found it funny people found them so unusual. New places meant new people, new food, and new experiences but they found themselves adjusting well. Every day Minseok and Chanyeol fell a little bit more in love with each other as they figured out all the little quirks each had. Jongin became more and more like their actual child, loosening up his diplomatic facade to show his real dorky and bratty self. Anytime Minseok and Chanyeol kissed, Jongin made sure to make lots of gross noises. The pair was laying in bed one night when Chanyeol looked over
to Minseok.

“Did you ever think you’d fall in love with an android?” He asked. Minseok laughed.

“You’re not an android, neither is Jongin. You’re my love, and he’s my son.” Minseok said.

“That is very sweet. I want to kiss you.”

“Well, I’ll let you do more than that.”

Chanyeol then let out the most gorgeous noise Minseok had ever heard come from his mouth, Chanyeol’s real, natural laughter.

End Notes

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