You're Not a Lost Cause

by Meh (orphan account)

Summary

Kiibo volunteers at a mental hospital and befriends a patient, Ouma Kokichi, a seemingly happy boy who goes around claiming he's a leader of a secret organization. Everybody assumes he's lying, and nobody knows anything about him. The robot wants to understand the boy but can't keep up. Kiibo starts a friendship with Ouma, and, upon getting to know him more, Kiibo finds out that there's more behind Ouma's cheery and unpredictable personality.

Cover art done by @Shirodebby.

WARNING, this fic has heavy material.
Note: My brother has psychosis and was in and out of the intensive unit, I study psychology in college, and I have talked to people with mental illnesses. I'm not an expert. I've studied hard to make sure my fic is accurate, but it's far from perfect.

The DSM-5 lists 297 mental disorders, and they can vary. The vast number of different mental illnesses and psyche wards means people have different experiences with them. Some things in this fic may be too intense too handle. This fic is meant to show the pain that can come with a mental illness and how one may overcome it. Everybody's experience is different. I have met patients with rare and severe mental disorders. They have their own story.

Notes

I was going to do one long one-shot, but then I decided there's a lot I want to put in this story, so it'd be much easier if I broke it into smaller, shorter chapters.

This story deals heavy and sensitive material. If the way I write characters is offensive or distasteful, please tell me. This fic is not meant to romanticize, fetishize, or stigmatize mental illnesses. If the fic seems to be doing that, tell me how.

Sometimes this fic will show the mentally ill in a positive or sympathetic light. This isn't implying having a mental illness isn't a problem because, by definition, it is a problem, sometimes a serious one. However, the mentally ill can be good and healthily functioning people of society who need love and support, and that's what this fic is trying to show when portraying them in these more positive lights.

In contrast, sometimes this fic will portray the mentally ill in a really negative or uncomfortable light. This isn't to stigmatize or be offensive to the mentally ill. This is to show the harsh realities of some mental illnesses. Sometimes people with mental disorders will do things that are really uncomfortable, even things that may not make sense, and that's why a lot of them are really serious. That's why some mentally ill people need help. They're not just crazy or bad people, but they sometimes can do questionable actions as a result of their sickness. I'd rather subject matter confront these harsh realities rather than ignore them, sugar coat them, or just dismiss the mentally ill as crazy or bad people.

If you're a fan artist and want to add an illustration to the fic, I'm open to it, and we can discuss it.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Chapter Summary

Kiibo decides to volunteer at a mental hospital and agrees to befriend a mentally ill boy who needs a friend.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.
Kiibo’s friend Kaede Akamatsu is a frequent volunteer of the teenage division at a local mental hospital. The term mental hospital freaks the robot out a little. When he imagines mental patients, he imagines a bunch of crazy people in straitjackets screaming and blubbering nonsense. Kaede assures him that this isn't usually the case. Most of the patients function normally and just need to be monitored or treated for one reason or another. For instance, many of them are simply suicidal teens who just require rehabilitation. Others have mental quirks affecting their everyday lives that they need to overcome. Kaede explains to Kiibo that they are just “sick” and many of them will improve enough to function normally without needing to live at the hospital. A lot of them don’t even live at the hospital. A lot of them just go to the hospital for checkups, treatments, or therapy sessions.

“They’re ill, so they need to go to a hospital to get better. Even the more severe cases who live at the
hospital are not that much different from cancer patients who stay at the hospital regularly for their treatments,” Kaede tells Kiibo when she stops by his front door after volunteering at the hospital.

“Cancer patients and mentally patients are two completely different things though. Cancer patients have a terminal illness that’s completely out of their control, so they need treatment. While mentally ill people would be just fine if they just thought about things differently and try to take control of their lives properly.”

SMACK! Kiibo is shocked to see a red faced Kaede slap him across his metal cheek. Because he’s a robot, Kiibo can’t feel the physical pain. Nonetheless, the violent action frightens the robot. He knows, based on her enraged expression, that he said something wrong. Kaede fumes, “What the hell is wrong with you?! The mentally ill can’t help being sick either! You think people who are depressed want to be unhappy?! You think people with anxiety want to have panic attacks that make them scared for their lives?! You think some people with schizophrenia want to be paranoid or have hallucinations?! They’re not mentally ill because they lack the willpower. They’re mentally ill because of circumstances out of their control, and they want and need help. They want their psychological pain to go away. I’ve seen countless teens breakdown crying because they think they’re freaks or they think everything is their fault. This stigma against the mentally ill just makes things worse. You’re a robot! You hate being discriminated against for being a robot. Well, mentally ill people are horribly discriminated too! I thought you’d be able to befriend some of them because both you and the mentally ill are often misunderstood by society!”

Kiibo instantly feels bad. He really doesn't understand the psychologically ill except for what he’s seen in pop culture and hears from classmates during casual conversations. Hearing Kaede put the mentally ill’s circumstances in a new light makes him interested. As a robot, he doesn't quite know what aspects of human psychology apply to him, but he likes to think he has the mental processes of any human. He begins to wonder if he can ever get a mental disorder and then be sent to the same mental hospital Kaede volunteers at. He wants to meet the patients Kaede works with. Kaede says many of them can function at least somewhat normally, and many of them are mistreated for being different. Maybe he can find common ground and befriend them. Sadly, Kaede is Kiibo’s only friend at school because the robot has such difficulty socializing with others. Some of the mental patients appear to have issues socializing too, at least based on what Kaede says. Maybe they’ll relate to Kiibo and want to be his friend. The thought pleases the robot so he then tells his blond friend, “I apologize Kaede-san. The remark I made was cruel. Do you think I can volunteer at the hospital so that I may understand their difficult situations better? Maybe even befriend one of them.”

Kaede brightens at the idea, claps her hands together, and answers, “Of course! In fact, the hospital just admitted a new patient earlier today, and he can use a friend. I think you and him would both benefit from a friendship. He’s our age, and he’s having trouble adjusting to the new environment and properly opening up others. Tomorrow, can you try talking to him and just….hang out, I guess? Have some guy bonding! Play video games. Talk about sports. Find a hobby. Do whatever teenage boys do! Just keep him company and make him happy. Your friendship with him will mean the world to him.”

“Okay!” Kiibo replies. “I'll walk with you to the hospital after school tomorrow. Okay?”

“Okay! The hospital can later start your training too. You're going to need it.”

The robot then shuts the door and tries to imagine the patient Kaede described. He sounds very similar to Kiibo, a person who has trouble adjusting to a new environment and needs a friend. Maybe he's a socially awkward boy who has trouble talking and fitting in. Maybe he knows lots about science and engineering. Maybe he is not into pop culture like other people, so he can’t relate to others. Maybe he is quiet and shy, so he needs someone like Kiibo to open up to. The robot imagines
the boy Kaede was talking about as a human, quiet, and sad version of himself. Maybe once Kiibo gets close to him, he’ll become the robot’s right hand man. They can go to college together and talk about fascinating subjects. They can explore new games and experiences Kiibo always wanted to try.

Kiibo can easily relate to this kid, right? Kaede seems to think they’d be a good match. Although, she never said what mental illness this patient has or why he’s in the hospital in the first place. He probably can’t be that stressful if Kaede thinks Kiibo can handle him.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment if you want me to continue this story. I was going to do one long one-shot, but then I decided there’s a lot I’d want to put in this story, so it'd be much easier if I broke it into smaller, shorter chapters.

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Babysitter-chan is a robot!

Chapter Summary

Kiibo learns about and meets an interesting dark haired boy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next day after school, Kiibo walks with Kaede to the mental hospital. The robot goes through supervised training on the first and second floor and gets to know the hospital, patients of various ages, and the staff. It’s very different from the training he gets from school, but it’s very informative. After four weeks of training, the robot officially starts his volunteering to see the patient he'll befriend. Even though the robot has passed the building many times before. It always reminds Kiibo of a standard hotel with red bricks. If it isn’t for the emergency hospital vehicles in front and some stretchers, the robot would have assumed it’s some kind of inn. People live here, so it probably is supposed to look like this. When Kaede and Kiibo walk into the building, there’s a homely and warm atmosphere inside. They’re greeted by a fireplace to the side, a high ceiling, an indoor waterfall, marble flooring, a bunch of indoor plants, and a front desk. It's very nice since it's the lobby. Kiibo used to assume the rest of the mental hospital would have dull hallways, windows, and bare minimum living space, sort of like the mental asylums you see on TV. The idea of a bunch patients living in prison-like conditions disturbed the robot. However, he was proven wrong when he saw the rest of the hospital. He doesn’t ask Kaede too many questions because he doesn't want to be rude.

When they make their way to the front desk, a woman asks them to sign in and hands them both lanyards indicating they’re volunteering. Kiibo fiddles with the unusual strap as they make their way to the elevator. While inside, the robot wonders curiously, “Do you know where we’re going?”

“We’re going to the fourth floor, the teen division. That’s where I volunteer at, remember?” Kaede answers while unzipping her backpack and taking out a file almost overflowing with papers. “Iruma-chan, Amami-chan, and I will tell you more when we get there.”

When Kaede told Kiibo that Iruma and Amami introduced her to the hospital, he had a difficult time believing someone like Iruma could work with mentally ill individuals. Iruma is a hot tempered, foul mouthed, lewd individual. He doesn’t dare think Iruma isn’t capable of working with psychologically ill individuals; he just can’t imagine her doing it. Kaede and Amami seem ideal for working with mentally fragile people. They are both easygoing, diligent, sociable, and friendly. Iruma is…not always that. She seems like the type of person who would scare patients, not make them happier. Then again, Iruma makes friends pretty easily and is pretty nice herself, sometimes. Kiibo just doesn’t interact with her that much since he doesn’t usually interact with anyone else besides Kaede. Iruma seems intimidating, so the robot thought people with mental disorders would also find her intimidating.

“When patients like Iruma-san?” Kiibo asks when they leave the elevator.

Kaede laughs and replies while moving the folder to her side, “It depends on the patient. It’s a hit or miss with her. With the patients she works well with, she REALLY hits it off! I think some of the patients like her lewdness and temper. Others…” Kaede then winces. “Well let’s just say, she disturbs some of them, so we know to keep her away from them. Just yesterday, she got into a
horrible argument with……” Then Kaede’s voice trails off, and she gives out a forced laugh, “Never mind.”

“Who?” Kiibo asks.

“It’s doesn’t matter. I shouldn’t talk about other patients. It’s rude of me. You don’t even know the patient. Conflicts don’t happen too often with Iruma or too many of the volunteers anyway. The worst events are usually pretty manageable,” Kaede explains optimistically. Kiibo gives her a look of disbelief, but she pays it no mind.

A familiar green haired boy then steps out of a room from the hallway to their left and waves. “Oh there you are Kaede….and Kiibo?”

Kiibo gives him a standard, polite greeting while Kaede greets him warmly. The robot has never really tried interacting with Amami or befriending him too much at school. It’s not because Amami is ever mean to him. In fact, the boy has always been amicable during the few moments they interacted. It’s just, Amami is really popular at school and is friends with almost everyone. As a result, he is usually around someone who is mean to the robot or uncomfortable around Kiibo, so Kiibo is usually not comfortable around the people Amami is with. Kiibo is just the socially awkward, unpopular high school student who can’t get along with the popular kids, with Kaede being the exception.

While Kaede and Amami start talking, Kiibo looks down the hallway and is pleasantly surprised by the positive atmosphere of it. It feels a bit brighter than the lower levels. The walls and tiles are all very colorful. The walls also have a number of paintings and are littered with uplifting quotes, such as “Be strong because things will get better. It may be stormy now, but it never rains forever” and “you are much stronger than you think.”

Kiibo must have been staring at the signs for too long because Amami interrupts his thoughts by saying, “Hey if you got a quote you want to add, then make a sign of your own, and we’ll add it to the number of other signs. Patients love reading them.”

Kiibo quickly looks away from the walls, embarrassed. He then wonders if he was being rude and was supposed to be listening to Kaede and Amami’s conversation. Although, the two of them smile at him and seem to be holding in their laughs. At least, Kiibo thinks they’re holding in laughs. The robot usually feels pretty self-conscious about every little thing he does, even when Kaede’s around. He keeps questioning whether people are judging him or think he’s weird.

“Ah! The robot is here! Now I definitely don’t have to babysit that little fucker anymore!” Iruma shouts from behind Kiibo, startling the robot and causing him to yelp. He swerves around and comes face-to-face with the loud mouthed girl. Their faces are uncomfortably close, so Kiibo takes a step back and bumps into Amami, which then also causes him to jump and eventually rest his back against a sign on the wall. Iruma smirks at the robot’s awkwardness. It’s moments like these where Kiibo hates the fact Iidabashi made him capable of blushing. He gets flustered so easily that he begins to wonder if it’s a bug in his developing AI.

“Iruma-chan, after that incident yesterday, there is no way anyone will let you go near him, even if Kiibo didn’t decide to help out. We told you that already,” Amami explains to her calmly.

“I know! I’m just worried that if the robot doesn’t watch the little fucker, then no one will, and then I’ll have watch him, again,” Iruma whines.

“Iruma-chan, don’t be mean to him! There’ll always be someone available to help him,” Kaede scolds with a visible pout on her face. Surprisingly, Kiibo could kind of follow the conversation
they’re having. Apparently, Iruma got into a conflict with a male patient the day before, and now the loud girl hopes Kiibo will watch this patient.

“I’d love to help this patient you were having trouble with Iruma-san, but Kaede-san already assigned me to help a different patient,” Kiibo says. The room then becomes awkwardly silent, and the robot then begins to wonder if he said something wrong, again. Did I say something offensive?

Kaede and Iruma fidget while standing. Kiibo looks closely at Iruma’s face and notices she is holding in a giggle. Amami then makes a cough and asks in Iruma’s direction, “Do you need help with anything, Yumeno?”

Kiibo then glances around Iruma and sees a small red haired girl wearing a long sleeved, black shirt and red skirt. She isn’t wearing a lanyard like Kaede, Amami, and Iruma, so she must be a patient. The girl states in a high, squeaky voice, “Tenko-chan was supposed to meet me in our usual study room, but she didn’t show. Did she get into another fight?”

“Hold on. I got this,” Iruma tells everyone before turning to the small girl and replying softly, “I saw Tenko training in the martial arts room. I’ll come with you to go get her. I have to help with something in a room along the way there anyways.” She then waves goodbye to Kaede, Kiibo, and Amami. “Have fun with the little fucker!”

Iruma and the red haired girl then leave, walking down the hallway and turning the corner. Kiibo then glances over to Amami and asks, “You’re working with the little fucker Iruma keeps talking about?” He mentally winces at himself for saying such a coarse word.

“Yeah, sometimes,” Amami shrugs. “He tutors me.”

“Wait, a patient tutors you?” Kiibo asks confused. “Shouldn’t it be the other way around?”

“No. I suck at math, and he’s good at math and likes criticizing and bossing me around…….I mean, he likes tutoring me,” Amami remarks casually. He then glances over to Kaede and says, “Ouma Kokichi is reading in study room 414. Angie is painting the walls in the room, so he’s got a volunteer watching him, but he’ll probably get bored soon and want to leave. Angie isn’t supposed to watch him anyways. She’s got other things she needs to be doing.”

“All right! We’ll go there then,” Kaede responds with a bright smile. She then walks further down the hallway, gesturing Kiibo to follow her. “Kiibo-kun, Ouma-kun is the boy I was talking to you about. The one you’ll be befriending, remember?”

Kiibo nods, remembering Kaede mentioning this Ouma boy. The name sounded funny when Kaede first mentioned it, but she didn’t have time to explain anything about Ouma or the details of what Kiibo will be doing. She just kept on saying to be his friend, whatever that means. The more Kiibo thinks about it, the more daunting the task seems since Kaede is the only friend Kiibo has made during high school. Nonetheless, Kiibo is happy with the arrangement. He feels like if he can make friends with anyone, it would be with someone who needs a friend the most.

Leaving Amami behind, they walk to room 414 and stop in front of a window where they can look into the room. The study room is cozy. It has a computer; a table; a bunch of books on shelves; a number of houseplants and oriental decorations; and a plush, brown couch, which a dark haired boy in an oversized, black sweatshirt, with no strings, is sitting in while reading a book. Based on Amami’s previous explanation, Kiibo assumes that boy must be Ouma Kokichi. A tan girl in yellow is painting colorful birds on the walls. She sees Kiibo and Kaede and waves enthusiastically to them. The boy on the couch seems too into what he’s reading to notice them looking in. He has his knees pulled up his chest, and it looks like the big sweatshirt is swallowing him up. He looks rather
“I apologize for sounding judgmental, but are you sure he’s our age? He looks rather young, like around 12 or 13?” Kiibo asks Kaede while staring at the boy.

“Yeah, he’s AT LEAST 15 based on his dental records. He has his wisdom teeth already in, and most people don’t get their wisdom teeth until they’re in their early 20’s,” Kaede replies.

“Wait! Are you saying you don’t know his age?” the robot asks in surprise. “Shouldn’t there be some sort of birth certificate or information about him in government databases?!”

“I’ve said too much already.” the blond girl grumbles. Kaede appears very uncomfortable, rubbing the back of her head nervously. Kiibo eyes her suspiciously and she sighs. The blond then reveals, “I’m sorry for being so secretive Kiibo-kun. It’s just, patient confidentiality is really important. I don’t want to go blabbing about someone’s personal information, even to you. If caregivers go around sharing patients’ personal information to anyone, then patients won’t trust their caregivers. Ouma-kun especially is a very secretive and private person. His personal circumstances are very sensitive topics to him. He hates it when we directly try to address his problems or touch on information that’s too personal to him. I want to tell you about what he’s like, what his circumstances are, and what his condition is, but that would be irresponsible of me.”

Kiibo nods, understanding the situation. He knows how important privacy and secrets are to people. The robot has also always kept his private feelings to himself. Especially when he was younger, Kiibo would always let his heart out to his guardian and creator, Professor Iidabashi. He’d share almost all his personal thoughts, feelings, and sensitive information to the professor because he knows his professor would be a great listener, understanding, and not reveal any of Kiibo’s secrets. The robot would be heartbroken if Iidabashi shared his personal information to others, especially strangers.

Kiibo then hesitantly questions, while pondering if the question is inappropriate, “Is there anything you can tell me about him? I don’t want to hurt him because I’m ignorant about him. Is there anything I shouldn’t say or do? Or is there anything he likes? Anything that would make him happier? Any tips on how to interact with him?”

Kaede silently considers the question, pressing a finger to her chin. She then answers, “As I said before many times, the best thing you can do is be his friend. Try to listen to him and be considerate. Keep in mind he may not be the most agreeable person or the most comfortable person to be around, but try to make his day. If he comes across as rude, threatening, or does something upsetting, be the bigger person. If he looks uncomfortable with something or upset, back off. If things get really bad, get help.” Kiibo’s eyes widens as he looks at Kaede. What are Ouma-kun’s issues? Kaede notices the robot’s uneasy expression and clarifies, “Ouma-kun is not a bad person. He has never tried to hurt anyone and never wants to hurt anyone. He’s not dangerous to those around him. Keep that in mind, okay? I truly believe he means well and is a good kid at heart. I just think he’s been unlucky and just has never been in the right environment or the right circumstances.”

“What do you mean?” Kiibo questions, but then quickly adds, “You don’t have to say anything if you don’t want to! My apologies.”

“Well….” Kaede responds. “His journey to finally get help for his mental disorder has been difficult. Nobody knows anything about him. Where he’s from. Who he is. What his real name is. Nothing. As implied before, we don’t even know his real age. We only estimate he’s in high school because of dental records, physical traits, standardized test scores, and the little information he gives us. Ouma-kun says he’s sixteen, and the signs seem to match up, so we just assume he’s sixteen. He was first discovered dumpster diving beside a supermarket. Witnesses say they’ve seen him dumpster diving
for food every night for months. Eventually, someone reported him to the authorities, and the authorities questioned why a child would be going through dumpsters. They think he was homeless. The clothing he was wearing was torn to shreds and hadn’t been washed for a long time, and he was also severely malnourished and physically battered, so the idea he was homeless and looking for food seemed to match up. But he denies being homeless when asked about it. He claims businesses, including the supermarket, waste food all the time, so he was trying to find free food for his comrades and the hungry.” Kaede then laughs to herself and adds, “He is right about the supermarket wasting food though. Iruma-chan and I looked through our supermarket’s dumpster and found a ton of perfectly good food wasted, so Ouma-kun apparently knows where to find free food.”

“Who are these comrades he’s talking about?”

Kaede shrugs and says, “I don’t know. He says he’s an evil leader of a secret organization, and he was trying to get free food for his followers. Apparently, he says he’s a penny pincher. He wouldn’t reveal any information on this evil organization though, not even names to the police, so we don’t know if the organization is real or not. Fortunately, he seems fine with authorities not believing him since he says his organization is supposed secret to the public anyway.”

“Evil?! I thought you said he’s a good kid at heart!” Kiibo exclaims.

“I did, and I meant it! He has never committed any felonies, incited violence, or shown any malice to anyone. I know that’s just my opinion, but I think people are innocent until proven guilty. Someone claiming they’re evil is sometimes no different than a little kid pretending to be evil……..eh…….sorry,” Kaede then begins mumbling, worriedly. “I didn’t mean to drag down your first impression of Ouma-kun by comparing him to a little kid playing pretend, but that’s the best comparison I got. Ugh, I shouldn’t give my own personal opinion about someone behind their back. That’s mean,” Kaede seems to be talking to herself more than Kiibo. The robot personally doesn’t think the blond said anything mean about Ouma, but if the dark haired boy is really sensitive about others talking about him behind his back, then Kaede should be cautious about what she says about him. The blond then quickly brushes off her self-criticism by continuing. “I’ll try to keep my personal opinion out of my explanation. Anyway, the authorities have questioned him relentlessly about who he is. Ouma-kun claims he was never homeless but is actually the son of very rich, elite individuals. He says his father is a billionaire CEO of the country’s largest online retailer and his mom is a member of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the authorities claim the CEO denies that Ouma-kun is his son, and no female in the House of Representatives will claim him either. Ouma-kun says that the authorities are lying and that he really is the son of these elite individuals, but nobody believes him.”

“Does he really think he’s a son of elite individuals or do you think he’s lying?” Kiibo asks curiously, a little bothered by the whole situation.

“You should ask him about that yourself. All I know is that we hardly know anything about him. Nobody has heard of someone named Ouma Kokichi, and nobody around here has the surname Ouma either. When he’s asked questions, he just talks about his evil organization and his elite background. Nobody recognizes him. It’s like he just appeared out of nowhere. Based on his rugged appearance when he was discovered and lack of information about him, the police think he was a homeless teen who was abandoned. Unfortunately, when people question him about it, he completely denies it. In fact, just bringing up the idea that he may have been homeless or come from a humble background upsets him, so be careful when trying to talk about Ouma-kun’s past. That’s a sensitive topic for him. We want to know about who he is, but we also don’t want to stress him out. According to Ouma-kun, apparently the cops were being too aggressive with him because he wouldn’t give them the information they were looking for, so he ran away before he could get a hearing. The police were able to detain him by using akido and eventually sent him to be looked at by people trained in psychology and education. Psychologists deemed he needs psychological
rehabilitation and isn’t mentally healthy enough to simply go to a juvenile correction center. So here he is. That’s all I can really say about him. If you want to know anything else about Ouma-kun, you’re going to have to talk to him yourself. It’d be great if you could get any information out of him because he’s not revealing much useful information to anyone. The only thing we know about him is his poor physical and mental condition and that he’s well-educated.”

“He’s well-educated?”

“Yep, he’s a smart kid. If he’s from an impoverished background, he must have gotten an education somewhere unless he’s just that gifted,” Kaede concludes.

“I am just that gifted Akamatsu-chan. An evil leader has to be smarter than those around him after all.”

Kaede and Kiibo both yelp at the sudden voice and spin around to see the dark haired boy standing right behind them with a grin on his face. He then cackles at their shocked reactions. Eventually Kaede nervously laughs with him, but Kiibo feels a sudden nervousness and dread upon seeing the boy up close. Ouma then suddenly stops laughing and frowns. He throws his fists in front of him, has tears forming at the corner of his eyes, and shouts, “Hey! It’s mean to gossip about someone behind his back! Don’t spread rumors about me being poor! I’m from the greatest and richest family in the country! Show some respect Akamatsu-chan! You’re being a bully!”

“Heh, sorry Ouma-kun. I tried not to say anything bad about you. I guess the mean, gossipy teenager side of me slipped out,” Kaede replies blushing. She then hands Kiibo the file in her hands from behind her back. She looks at the clock nearby and gasps. “Oh! Sorry! I have to be somewhere else! Kiibo-kun this is Ouma-kun. Ouma-kun, this is Kiibo-kun, your new companion.”

“My new babysitter you mean,” Ouma corrects her, still frowning. He then starts poking the robot’s chest, causing Kiibo to yelp and hop away from the prodding. The dark haired boy then giggles at the robot’s reaction and happily exclaims, “Babysitter-chan is a robot! That’s so cool! Can you break down walls? Try breaking down the mural Angie-chan has been painting. I want a piece of it to take to my room!”

“What?!” Kiibo asks, baffled by the request. “That’s destruction of property! I’d be sent to jail if I do that!”

“What?! Can robots really be tried in court? But you’re not a person!”

“Take that back! I will not stand for your discriminatory remarks!” Kiibo shouts, a sudden rage bubbling inside him at the triggering statement. “I have the same legal rights as you!”

“Later you two! Enjoy yourselves, okay? Don’t forget your training, Kiibo-kun!” Kaede hurriedly waves goodbye before dashing away, leaving Kiibo with the mysterious file and alone with the strange boy.

The boys stare at each other for a second with Ouma grinning at the robot and has his arms behind his dark head while Kiibo glares at him. Ouma then pipes up, “So Babysitter-chan, how do you plan on entertaining me? I have very high standards you know.”

Chapter End Notes
This chapter was too much fun to write! If anyone has any criticisms, especially about any of the subject matter in this fic, I'd love to hear it. I don't want to talk about anything inaccurately. At the same time though, keep in mind this universe isn't going to exactly match the things going on in real life. Like the businesses and hospitals may be run a certain way that would different than the way they're run in other countries. Also keep in mind that human brains are very diverse. So people can have also kinds of personalities and psychological quirks. For instance, one character's depression may be different from another's. If I write about a psychological disorder or someone with psychological problems, keep in mind they may not exactly match examples of people with described similar issues. Everyone is different. Everyone acts differently. However, if something I write is distasteful or very inaccurate, then please tell me. I don't want this fic to be insensitive or offensive.

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You're new here, aren't you?

Chapter Summary

Kiibo gets to know Ouma more than he would like. He doesn't know what's going on. Nothing could have prepared him for this. Nothing. Who is this boy? What to he want? Where did he come from? Why is he like this?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Ouma-kun, what do you want to do then?” Kiibo questions the dark haired boy after introducing himself. They both stand in the middle of the hallway in front of the study room. Kiibo glances down at the file Kaede gave him and sees writing with his and her name on it.

Ouma gives him a tiny smile before crossing his arms and proudly saying, “I want to die.”

“What?!” the robot screams. His insides feel frozen with terror as he stares in the boy in disbelief.

“Awww….what’s wrong with that? Death sounds exciting compared to everything else in this boring place.” Ouma squeals happily. He looks like a little kid who’s delighted about a new videogame coming out. “Think about the exciting ways to die. We could sneak into the kitchen, and you can cut me and let me bleed to death. Haha! Imagine the look on everyone’s faces when they see my pale body all drained from blood. Oh! Oh! How about we sneak up to the roof, and I try to fly but end falling to my death? I’ll be air borne! It’ll almost be like I’m skydiving before SPLAT! My body gets crushed by pavement! Or maybe we can sneak some drugs from the pharmacist office… then later I can get high off of them….I’ve always wanted to become intoxicated. Then you keep loading me with drugs until I die! Ah! I like the idea! Death while being high sounds interesting!”

“No! That does not sound fun!” Kiibo shouts. He grabs the joyful boy by the shoulders and shakes him, as if shaking him would bring sense into him, but this just causes the boy to giggle further.

Ouma then brings his face close to Kiibo’s and licks him on the cheek like a dog licking his human owner. The robot splutters and backs away with disgust before tripping over his feet and crashing into the wall. This causes Ouma to laugh even harder to the point where he’s leaning over and clutching his stomach. The robot then desperately crawls to the laughing boy, grabs his wrists, and pulls him down until they’re eye level. Kiibo feels like he’s about to cry. He’ll be traumatized for life if he lets the person he’s supposed to watch die. He then whimpers to the boy, “Please don’t die.”

For a second, Ouma stops laughing and gives the robot a serious and thoughtful look. He then grins and replies, “Just kidding. That was a lie, dumb robot.”

“A lie?” Kiibo questions weakly. He still has his metal hands tightly clamped around Ouma’s wrists, and the boy in the black sweatshirt attempts to pull away, but the robot doesn’t want to let go just yet. It takes Kiibo a couple minutes to process what happened. He then slowly feels his body flood with rage. He roughly tugs the dark haired boy by the wrists and shoves him in the study room so that they can get some privacy. Kiibo doesn’t want to cause a scene. Fortunately, the tan girl who was painting the study room’s walls is gone. Once the robot knows they’re alone, he shrieks, “DON’T CALL ME A DUMB ROBOT! I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO DIE! THAT’S NOT FUNNY!”
The robot surprises himself by how much he lost his temper. He knows he needs to calm down. Kiibo remembers learning how to remain calm during his training. Unfortunately, once he encounters the real situation of taking care of Ouma, he has trouble processing his training due to this weird robotic nervousness he has. He can’t stand it when people use his robot status as a slur or when people pull a cruel joke on him. In this case, Ouma did both, within the span of a few seconds. Ouma seems briefly stunned by the robot losing his temper but then giggles and replies, “Wow….Babysitter-chan, you are entertaining.”

Kiibo feels mentally weak even talking to this boy. He wants to scream at him even more, but he finds out quickly that his anger is what the Ouma wants. I want to punish him. I want him to learn a lesson. I want….no….I don’t want to hurt him. Kaede-san told me to be the better person, so that’s what I’m going to do. Kiibo then tries to calm himself down, and, with a shaky voice, tells the dark haired boy, “It’s completely inappropriate for you to joke about dying. If people hear you, they’ll become worried and…..”

“Put me on suicide watch?” Ouma questions, rolling his eyes. “That’s lame….can’t any of you take a joke? People here have no sense of humor. I joke around with the psychologists and therapists too, and, as a result, they conclude I need to be sent to an insane asylum when I’m one of the most logical and levelheaded ones here!”

“First of all, this isn’t an insane asylum. The more appropriate term for this place would be mental hospital, psychiatric hospital, or mental asylum,” Kiibo corrects him, pointing a finger to the dark haired boy’s face. The boy just rolls his eyes and makes a forced, loud sigh.

“Aren’t those all the same thing as an insane asylum? The patients, the volunteers, and the people who work here are all nuts. They’re all mentally retarded puppets to the police and government,” Ouma tells the robot in a low voice.

“Excuse me?!” the robot exclaims. “This has to be another one of your lies. Right?”

“Nope, I wish,” Ouma replies. He looks dead serious, without his usual smirk. With the same quiet voice as before, he explains, “Did you know that my dad is the CEO of a multi-billionaire dollar online retailer? I can’t give you his real name because it’s a secret, just like my name is. Anyway, he has lots of enemies because he works closely with the mafia, and he and my mom, who’s a member of the House of Representatives, are trying to stop the government’s greed and corruption. Like my parents, I also have a lot of resources, intelligence, intrapersonal skills, and savviness, so I set up my own organization to help my parents against the government’s corruption. My organization was trying to gain influence over the military so that we can take the government by force!” He throws his fist in the air proudly and gives Kiibo a huge grin. The robot just gives him a blank stare, trying to process what he’s listening to and comparing it to what Kaede told him. Ouma is really into his story, so he continues. “Unfortunately, when our plan to take over the military was about to be a success, the police kidnapped me, interrogated me, and abused me, but I answered all their questions without giving away top secret information. In order to discredit me, they had some corrupt psychologists examine me and wrongfully conclude me of being loony.”

“Mentally ill,” Kiibo politely interrupts and corrects him.

“It’s the same thing! I can use the politically incorrect term if I want to! Anyway, don’t interrupt me! I’ve got some important information to share. Akamatsu-chan did say she wants you to get some information about myself out of me, and I’m telling you about myself, so be grateful, Scrapmetal!” Ouma argues. Kiibo seethes at the offensive nickname, but lets the boy continue talking because, as the dark haired boy said, the robot did need information about him. “As I mentioned before, the psychologists are all puppets! They’re either really retarded, corrupt, or a sham! All of them are!
They kidnapped me and wrongfully declare I’m crazy in order to discredit me. To make matters worse, they sent me to a place where everyone here is either in on it or is too stupid to notice I’m misdiagnosed!” At this point Ouma’s face is contorted and flushed in clear rage. His fists are clenched to his sides, and, through the room’s hallway window, Ouma bitterly looks into the halls at the people walking by, as if they’re the ones to blame for his problems.

He then closes his eyes and takes a shaky breath. Kiibo notices him pulling and scratching off some of his fingernail folds until they bleed. The robot winces when he sees all the nail folds have been pulled off and bled at some point. In the areas where skin meets the fingernails, there are dark red areas surrounded by swollen skin. The robot doesn’t understand what to make of the broken, pulled skin. Ouma quickly notices him staring at his fingers and hastily covers his hands with his sweatshirt sleeves. He then gives a signature smile and says, “Heh, just kidding. I wasn’t really mad. I’m a calm, levelheaded, laid back guy. I know I’ll get out of here soon. My family and followers wouldn’t leave me. I’m too important to waste away here.”

“You think you’re wasting away here?” Kiibo questions. His head hurts from trying to figure out who this boy is.

“Of course! Isn’t it obvious? Or can you not understand someone when they speak to you?” his voice sounds offended at the robot, but he has a teasing smile on his face. He proudly looks to the robot with more of a devilish smirk. “My evil organization is lost without my guidance and intellect. They love me too much to just move on and get a new leader. They’re working with my parents to find a way to help me escape or to somehow get this craphole to let me go. Then again, I am a genius, so I’ll probably find a way to get out on my own. If that’s the case, I’ll later punish all my followers for failing to free their reverent leader!”

“Have any of them tried contacting you?” Kiibo hesitantly asks. He’s trying his hardest not to vocally accuse Ouma of lying. The boy seems to enjoy talking about himself, and the robot somehow got interested in the pale boy’s thoughts and story to the point where he doesn’t want to interrupt. How much of this is true? Is any of it true? Does he know what’s not true?

Ouma puts a finger on chin and ponders the question thoughtfully. Instead of answering the question, he tells the robot, “If tell you who I’m in contact with, then I’ll have to dispose of you.” Kiibo thinks he’s lying, but the creepy, low voice the boy gives him sends chills down the robot’s spine, as if there’s the smallest chance Ouma would sneak up on him and destroy him. He must have had the fear written all over his face because the boy giggles at him. “That was a lie! If Babysitter-chan is interested in who I’m in contact with, then all he has to do is become a member of my secret society to overthrow the government! We could use a robot! Do you have a laser? Can you break through walls? Can you help weaponize us?”

The dark haired boy’s eyes appear to literally sparkle with excitement. Kiibo stares at him blankly and asks, “Are you in contact with someone outside of here?” Even though whoever may be in contact with Ouma may help the boy escape the hospital, a part of Kiibo wants Ouma to be in touch with someone from his past life, some he knew before getting admitted to the hospital. Even prisoners have family and friends who visit or call them periodically during their sentences.

“You answer my question first! That’s my order. Do you or do you not want to join my group? It’s an important, once-in-a-lifetime offer. If you refuse, you’ll deeply regret it, and then I will not have any interest in a dumb piece of scrap metal like you!” Ouma pouts while crossing his arms childishly. Kiibo gaps at boy and clenches his jaw. Before he can say anything though, the dark haired boy starts laughing, “Just kidding! Of course I’m in contact with someone!” He then lowers his voice and leans in closer to where Kiibo’s ears would be. He whispers, “Speaking of someone coming into contact with me…..can you go find a boy named Amami Rantarou? He was holding my cellphone
while I tutored him. He didn’t want any distractions, so he snatched the cellphone away from me. Anyway, can you find him and get it back? I can’t go looking for him because I’ve got to put away my schoolwork and do the stupid chores I’ve been stalling. I only need to call someone. I’ll let you overhear the conversation if you want. Please, I need to talk to a friend from the world outside of this craphole! I’m lonely!”

He gives Kiibo this broken, puppy dog look, and the robot lets out an audible groan. Kiibo immediately pities Ouma even after everything he put the robot through in a short time span. Ouma seems no different from the heartless bullies he encounters at school all the time. At the same time though, as a human being who needs healthy social contact, Ouma needs to talk to someone he trusts. The robot relents and says, “Okay, I’ll get your phone. Where’s Amami-kun?”

“He’s in room 617. It’s a warehouse with a ton of supplies and equipment. Only volunteers and hospital staff are allowed in because we, the patients, are just scum for them to act holier than thou to,” Ouma answers casually. His eyes seem to light up for a moment before he adds, “Actually, while you’re there, can you get me a saw, lighter, and matches?”

“A saw, lighter, and matches?! No! I don’t trust you with those tools!” Kiibo informs him furiously, poking a finger to his chest.

“You don’t need to yell, Babysitter-chan. You’re being a mean!” Ouma whines, tears start forming in the corner of his eyes. Then, in a blink of an eye, he gives the robot his usual grin before declaring, “That was a lie! Did I say lighter and matches? I meant paint and nighttime painkillers. The saw and paint are for redecorating my room, and the nighttime pain killers are to help me get sleep. Got it? Good! Away you go robot!”

He then gives Kiibo a forceful shove out the door before the robot has time to answer. This causes the robot to drop the file that was in his hands. Kiibo stumbles out the room and crashes, head first, into the wall across the hallway. Once Kiibo regains his bearings, he turns his head and sees Ouma giving him a thumbs up from the study room’s window. Kiibo scowls at him, which only causes the dark haired boy to laugh and turn away from the robot. The robot stares at the back of his head for a moment before wandering off to room 617.

It takes him only a couple minutes to go up to the sixth floor and find the warehouse doors. As Ouma mentioned before, not just anyone can get in. Kiibo has to wave his volunteer card, which is attached to his lanyard, to a few hospital workers. One of them even asks him a few questions, wondering if he is a patient who stole a volunteer card. Kiibo doesn’t know whether he should be happy that someone thinks he, a robot, could have a psychological issues like any human or angry that someone thinks he’s suspicious and weird looking enough to not work at the hospital. One of the staff members mumbles to a coworker about the possibility of Kiibo being a patient who is just pretending to be a robot as a coping mechanism. Kiibo honestly doesn’t know what to make of this.

Once he’s in the warehouse, he looks around at the vast room. How am I supposed to find Amami-kun in this? The robot shrugs and figures he’ll just go look for the saw, paint, and nighttime painkillers Ouma wants. Upon looking at the paint, Kiibo realizes Ouma didn’t specify a particular color. I should have known to ask what colors he wanted.

“Aren’t you the robot who was watching Ouma?” a voice asks him from behind, causing the robot to jump and swerve around. He’s met face-to-face with the tan girl who was painting the study room’s walls earlier. She has a bunch of paint cans in a basket and brush in her hand. She gazes at him with an almost transfixed look.

“Yes, I am,” Kiibo replies tersely. He feels like the girl is looking into his soul. He wants to find everything and get out of the room as quickly as possible.
“And you’re getting paint? Oooooohhhh…..that’s a great idea! Colors can do really well for someone psychologically. What room are you painting?” the tan girl questions excitedly. “Angie knows a lot about what paints are best for patients.”

“Ummmmm….I’m painting Ouma-kun’s room,” Kiibo replies, staring at the overwhelming paint selection.

“It’s a bedroom and Ouma’s room? Huh……Angie doesn’t know much about Ouma since he doesn’t talk to her much, but he seems like the type of person who could use a more calming color like blue, lavender, or green. Let Angie think…..the safest bet would be blue. That color can be very relaxing and calming to the soul, which is especially important when one wants to sleep. Oh! Wait! How about yellow!? Angie knows this color greatly contrasts with his purple eyes, but yellow would also be a good choice. It stands for happiness and optimism,” Angie picks up a nearby yellow paint can and smiles at it. “Yellow is so underappreciated.”

“I’ll go with a blue color. Ouma-kun is too energetic. He could use some relaxing,” Kiibo replies, ignoring the yellow paint in Angie’s hands and picking up the dark, ocean blue paint colored can instead. “He seems plenty happy. He has a lot of self-confidence and is usually smiling. He doesn’t need more happiness”

“You think Ouma is happy?” Angie asks, still staring at the yellow paint in her arms.

Before Kiibo could answer, a low voice calls out to the back of the robot’s head. “Hey volunteer, what’s your job supposed to be?”

The robot turns around, surprisingly without jumping or being startled, and sees a young-looking, short boy with a black jacket and horned hat. He has a calm demeanor to him. The incredibly low pitch of his voice makes him intimidating. Kiibo glances between the boy in front of him and Angie before asking, “Are you talking to me?”

“Yes, I run security around here. I need to make sure I know who everyone is and what they’re supposed to be doing at all times. I know she’s supposed to decorate and do interior designing of the entire hospital,” he gestures his head towards Angie who just twirls her paintbrush and nods in response. The boy then repeats his question. “So what’s your name, and what are you supposed to be doing?”

“Ummmm….I’m Kiibo, and I’m volunteering at the teen division of the hospital,” the robot answers, suddenly nervous by the boy’s intimidating gaze.

“And, what’s your job in the teen division?”

“Watching someone.”

“Who?”

“Ouma Kokichi.”

The short boy then gives a dark look and says a in a clearer and louder voice, still with a calm demeanor, “That patient requires constant surveillance. Is someone with him?”

If Kiibo had a heart, it would have felt like it dropped in the pit of his stomach. He suddenly realizes the stupidity of leaving the energetic boy alone. While he doesn’t know exactly what Ouma is capable of, he knows that the people at the hospital don’t think he’s capable of safely having the freedom to not be watched. He needs to be watched. Ouma calls Kiibo “Babysitter-chan” for a reason. The robot’s insides churn with panic. For a second, it seems like time stands still as he fears
about what Ouma will do or what will happen. Kiibo’s nerves get the best of him by forcing him to stay frozen in place. He wonders for a second if the boy in the horned hat will lecture him. He seems disappointed, yet he doesn’t pay much attention to Kiibo and takes out a tablet. He informs Kiibo in an almost monotone voice, “He’s on the first floor, and… it looks like he snuck into the kitchen of the cafeteria at the lobby.”

“How do you know that?” Kiibo questions curiously.

“Some patients have ankle monitors, so if they run away, hospital staff will be the first to know. It’s for moments like these when someone who’s supposed to be watching the patient ends up letting them go,” the boy explains with his eyes glued on the tablet. Oh, I learned that from my training as well. Interacting with a patient is so different when I’m not under training and have less supervision. Kiibo almost feels sick with guilt. The shorter boy glances up at him and sniffs. “You’re new here, aren’t you? Don’t worry about it. This isn’t the first time a patient has tried to escape, and it won’t be the last.”

“Escape? Hoshi, it almost sounds like patients thinks think they’re in prison,” Angie comments absentmindedly, seemingly unconcerned with Ouma’s situation. Kiibo realizes there’s a lot of truth to what she’s saying. If Ouma was telling the truth, then he did seem to hint that the hospital felt like a prison to him. In a way, he acts like a prisoner who’s locked up. After all, he calls this place a craphole and expresses interest in escaping.

Leaving Angie behind, Kiibo and Hoshi, which is apparently the short boy’s name, race to the kitchen that’s on the first floor. They both opt not to take the elevator, almost jumping over entire flights of stairs in order to make the journey as quick as possible. Due to having almost superhuman robotic speed, Kiibo has always been one of the fastest runners in his class, so he’s surprised to see Hoshi keep up with him.

Suddenly, once they make it to the stairs between the fourth and fifth floor, roaring alarms from the tablet start sounding, and Hoshi slows his running to take out his tablet and inform the robot, “Those alarms indicate a patient with an ankle monitor tried to leave the hospital or tried tampering with the ankle monitor. In this case, it looks like Ouma was the one who triggered them.”

“Those alarms are for Ouma-kun?” a familiar voice asks from the bottom of the stairs.

To Kiibo’s surprise, it’s Amami Rantarou. Unfortunately, the two boys don’t have time to answer the green haired boy’s question as they sprint past him while Kiibo shouts, “Yes, he’s in the kitchen on the first floor, and aren’t you supposed to be in the warehouse?!”

“Huh? Why would I be in the warehouse?!” Amami yells back, completely baffled. The alarms start ringing a second time. Amami tries running with them to where Ouma is supposed to be, but the green haired boy isn’t nearly as fast as the other two. When the alarms start ringing a third time, the two boys can’t hear anything else Amami has to say if he does say anything else. Eventually, their rapid speed leaves Amami behind. Kiibo feels his legs pick up the pace as he begins to fume at what Amami said. Ouma-kun lied to me again! Amami-kun was not at the warehouse! I need to have a harsh word with Ouma-kun. I don’t care how sick in the head he is. This is inexcusable.

The alarms ring every few seconds, and Hoshi explains, “He has been triggering the alarms repeatedly. He hasn’t escaped, but he hasn’t given up it seems.”

Eventually, they finally make their way to the kitchen, and the alarms stopped periodically ringing a short while ago. A couple of cooks look up at the two of them in surprise. Kiibo could feel their bewildered and judgmental stares almost peering through him and Hoshi. Although, he couldn’t blame them since seeing a robot and an incredibly short boy just barge into the kitchen would be
bizarre spectacle.

“Did you see a pale boy with dark hair and purple highlights come through here?” Hoshi asks a girl with short, silver hair; green eyes; and a maid outfit. She’s speedily chopping through various vegetables: carrots, onions, zucchini, yellow squash, and eggplant. Kiibo sees a nametag on her chest that says ‘Kirumi Tojo’.

The girl looks up from her work with a mild expression and answers, “No, I haven’t, but I will keep an eye out for him.”

Hoshi nods while taking out his tablet and eyeing it for a second. “He’s right next to the backdoor, kitchen exit.”

“The door automatically locks from the inside and sounds a security alarm if someone with an ankle monitor tries to open it, so the alarms from the tablet could be from him continuously trying to open the door,” Toujou concludes, finishing up her vegetable chopping, not even bothering to look up.

“Possibly,” Hoshi says in a gruff voice before swiftly walking to the back corner of the kitchen, towards the exit sign, with Kiibo following closely behind. The robot then sees a microwave that has around 50 minutes counting down. He curiously peaks inside the microwave and sees a file, overflowing with papers. He then sees his and Kaede’s name on the file. Is that the file Kaede-san gave me? Before Kiibo could stop the microwave, the file suddenly catches on fire, causing the robot to shriek, “TOUJOU-SAN THE INSIDE OF THE MICROWAVE IS ON FIRE!”

Before Kiibo can turn around, he already hears footsteps and sees a gloved hand reach out to turn the microwave off before white chemicals of a fire extinguisher eradicate the fire, all within the span of a few seconds. Kiibo pivots around and gawks at Kirumi. She just waves away her impressive actions by saying, “Go find the boy you’re looking for. I can take care of things from here. I apologize for preventing the fire.”

Kiibo then catches up to Hoshi, who’s standing in front of the exit door, but they see no sign of Ouma. On one side, there’s a shelf of various ingredients, including spices, potatoes, and flour. On the other side, there are some cardboard boxes and large recycling bins, which look like green trash bins with lids.

Kiibo then speculates, “The alarms have stopped ringing for a few minutes now. Do you think he managed to take off his ankle monitor and escape?”

“That’d be unlikely. These ankle monitors track vitals, such as heart rate and blood pressure, and his is still showing his usual vitals. The only way he’d be able to successfully take his monitor off is if he quickly took it off and put it on someone else,” Hoshi answers while tossing aside some boxes. “A normal person taking it off would be impossible. However, even though I met this kid for only a few minutes while giving him his ankle monitor, I know not to underestimate him on anything.”

Kiibo nods in agreement. Apparently, Ouma-kun made a strong first impression on Hoshi-kun too. Hoshi then quickly adds, “His heart rate has gone up since we got here, so this may indicate we are extremely close.”

The robot then hears a muffled cry and smells some blood. It comes from the recycling bin closest to the exit. The situation feels eerie, and he knows he’s not going to be happy with whatever is inside the bin. Nonetheless, without pause, the robot takes the lid of the recycling bin off and peers inside. To his relief, he immediately sees the head of Ouma, but the pale boy has as black and white checkered scarf in his mouth and tears streaming down his eyes. The robot cries out, “Ouma-kun!” Before easily lifting the boy out of the bin. He’s around 40 kilograms. That’s incredibly light! Does
he eat properly? Kaede-san did say he was malnourished when discovered.

The robot gently sets the boy on the floor and immediately sees dark red blood pouring on to the floor. He then notices a large butcher knife in Ouma’s right hand and a deep bleeding cut on his left ankle, which is above a noticeable, black ankle monitor. After seeing this, Kiibo takes the cloth out of Ouma’s mouth and demands, “Were you trying to cut your foot off to get the ankle monitor off?!”

Kiibo is panicking, but Ouma is much worse. He lets out a loud howl of pain, and his right arm clutches the robot’s left wrist as if it would make the pain go away. The dark haired boy hyperventilates too much to say anything comprehensible. The tears and screaming seem endless, almost as if he were just tortured. He should have expected that after trying to cut his foot off. The robot quickly glances down at the checkered cloth. He must have used that as a gag to hide his cries. The robot visibly shudders. Did he really want to escape that badly?

“Kiibo-kun! Come on! Help me carry him to the nearest sink!” Amami, after catching up, appears on the other side of Ouma, across from Kiibo. He looks as calm as ever, but his face is deep in concentration. The robot obediently complies to the green haired boy’s wishes, knowing that Amami probably has more experience with these kinds of situations. The robot tries to block out the pale boy’s heart wrenching sobs while he and Amami carry the small boy to the sink closest to the kitchen entrance.

“Midget-chan! You didn’t say messing with the ankle monitors would sound the alarm! I heard the kitchen security alarm sound when I tried taking it off!” Ouma chokes out vehemently towards Hoshi, who is watching the scene close by. “DON’T YOU DARE TREAT ME LIKE I’M STUPID! DON’T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!”

In response, the shorter boy simply replies, “I sometimes choose not to share information to people who are too smart for their own good.” Don’t compliment him Hoshi-kun! He doesn’t deserve to have his ego appeased like this! I don’t care how mentally ill he is. He’s not a good person! Hoshi then clarifies. “You and I both know that if I told you from the beginning that tampering with the ankle monitors would sound the alarms, then you’d probably saw off your foot from the beginning and bleed to death before we’d get to help you.” Don’t tell me Ouma-kun asked for a saw because he wants to….Kiibo shudders at the thought. Hoshi then tells them before leaving, “I’ll go ahead and tell one of the doctors in emergency care about this so that they can give him stitches.”

“Thanks Hoshi-kun!” Amami responds with forced cheerfulness. He and Kiibo set Ouma’s legs on the sink, with Ouma resting his upper body against Kiibo.

To Kiibo, it almost feels like they’re giving a baby a bath in the kitchen sink. In this case, Ouma is a lot larger than a baby, but his wailing sounds a lot like one. Although, in his defense, he’s in agonizing pain. Amami runs some cold water over the ankle injury, and Ouma shrieks in more pain and turns his head to nestle it against Kiibo.

The robot tries to hold him still and feels the pale boy shiver against him. He doesn’t know exactly what he should be doing exactly, mentally debating if he should try comforting the boy or just let him suffer the negative consequences of his actions. Amami takes some sterile gauze out of green draw string bag, probably a first aid kit, and cleans the wound.

“Amami! Stop! That hurts too much!” Ouma pleads, but Amami continues working on the injury as quickly as possible.

After rapidly cleaning the wound, Amami tightly wraps the injury with a band aide, causing Ouma to cry out even more. The green haired boy gives him an apologetic look and informs, “We need to apply pressure in order to stop the bleeding.”
“It’s your fault for trying to escape and trying to cut your foot off,” Kiibo grumbles, not looking at the situation in front of him while still holding Ouma’s upper body.

Amami gives Kiibo a worried look. Before the robot can ask him what’s wrong, Ouma begins hyperventilating and sobbing even harder. He squirms and attempts to kick Amami who’s still not done bandaging him. The pale boy glances around the room hysterically and bawls, “I don’t belong here! I want to go home! I need to go home! They’re looking for me! They’re trying to reach me, and I’m letting them down by not answering! I have to leave!” He hiccups and gasps for breath. “My…….brother….. emailed me. He said he’ll pick me up and take me home! He’ll take me back to my organization where I can continue doing outstanding work!”

“Our brother’s email?” Kiibo asks curiously. Could this be real information about Ouma-kun? In the meantime, Amami grunts, struggling to pin the injured ankle down.

“That’s a secret! I will not endanger my brother’s life by revealing his true identity!” Ouma states furiously. Even though his emotions are still chaotic, he calms down just enough for Amami to successfully pin the ankle down and sloppily bandage it up. Kiibo almost smiles when the green haired boy lets out an audible cheer to himself at the accomplishment.

“Amami-kun, I think I can carry him by myself. You just lead me to emergency care,” Kiibo informs the green haired boy. He then turns Ouma around and positions the small boy in his arms so he can bridle carry Ouma. The pale boy looks up for a quick second with a flushed expression.

He then buries his head in Kiibo’s shoulder. He whimpers in a choked voice, “I’m not stupid. I’m not stupid. I’m not stupid.” He gets more hysterical the longer the chant goes on. Kiibo wonders how he hasn’t passed out from emotional exhaustion.

“You’re right. You’re not stupid. You wouldn’t be my math tutor if you were,” Amami tells him as he leads Kiibo to the Emergency care area.

“Everyone here thinks I’m stupid! But you’re all the stupid ones! You’re all the crazy ones! You’re all in the wrong! You’re all puppets!” Ouma sobs, not calmed by the green haired boy’s words. Kiibo can feel the pale boy’s heartbeat shake his entire tiny frame. The robot tries to hold the boy closer to his body in order to relax the boy somewhat. Kiibo looks down and sees the Ouma peering over his robotic face. The pale boy’s eyes are red from crying and his tears are drying on his face. He reaches a hand and strokes Kiibo’s cheek with interest. Kiibo feels his face flush. The moment feels too intimate and inappropriate for the situation, but he lets the boy’s pale fingers stroke the curve of his metal face.

When they make it to the emergency care area, Ouma tells Kiibo with a hoarse voice, “That was a lie.”

“What was?” Kiibo questions. Why should I care about what he has to say? He’s just a selfish, mean kid who nobody should take seriously.

“Earlier, I had the situation under control. I was fine. I was happy. I was never upset. The crying, the screams, they didn’t mean anything. It was all lies. It was all a prank. A big joke. I knew I wouldn’t make it out. I didn’t even try. If I did try. I would make it out and would be free. My brother, my parents, my secret organization, they’re looking forward to seeing me,” he has a soft and content expression on his face. Kiibo waits for a few seconds for the boy to say if there were in any lies in his statement, but he doesn’t. He just nuzzles comfortably in Kiibo’s arms and lets out a blissful laugh. “I’m happy. I’m okay. I’m in control. I’m smart. I’m talented. I’m doing great.”
After everything he’s done, the worry he put people through, the misery he put me through, he doesn’t deserve to be this happy. He’s nothing but an emotionally manipulative bully. His bad actions can’t just be ignored because of his mental illness. He needs to know what he’s done is wrong. He needs to know the damage he’s done today. He’s a bad person. He’s crazy. He doesn’t deserve this blissful ignorance now. I need to speak up my mind and give him a piece of my mind.

The robot then opens his mouth to tell the boy what’s really on his mind before he sets the boy down on a stretcher in front of the emergency care area. “I’m glad you’re doing well Ouma-kun.”

The boy beams at him, and Kiibo feels his insides flutter with a strange sense of happiness. The robot doesn’t understand what’s going on.

Chapter End Notes

I really got into this chapter. It ended up being longer than I hoped and took forever to write. Hope you like it!

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Kiibo leaves the hospital after a doctor comes in to give Ouma stitches. The pale boy is very dazed when the doctor arrives, and the robot wouldn’t be surprised if he fell asleep and didn’t see Amami and him leave the room. When the robot gets home, he calls Kaede and asks her about the file she gave him, the one Ouma set on fire.

“He put it in the microwave! Why would he do that?! What’s in the file?!” the robot demands while sitting on his bed and talking to Kaede through his cellphone.

“The file just has information on how the hospital works, Ouma-kun’s schedule, and some important information on mental health and how to handle various patients. It’s nothing inflammatory,” the blond answers. She takes in a deep breath. “I don’t know much more about Ouma-kun than you. In fact, you probably know more about him than I do since you’ve already had interesting experiences with him, including a one-on-one conversation. So why do you think he put the file in the microwave?”

“Because he’s obviously psychotic,” Kiibo grumbles bitterly.

“Kiibo-kun….” Kaede sighs. “It’s not your place to assume he has psychosis, and, even if he does have psychosis, that doesn’t answer the question. Why do you think he microwaved the file? What goal could he have? What’s his reason for doing so? What’s he trying to accomplish?”

“He’s selfish and is trying make things difficult for those around him. He enjoys torturing others,” the robot answers a bit too quickly. He then muddles over his answer for a few seconds and clarifies, “He claims everyone in the hospital is against him. That we’re crazy or we’re working with a corrupt government. If he’s not intentionally lying, then maybe he’s just trying to make things difficult because he doesn’t trust or like us? Or maybe he’s trying to get revenge?”

Kaede doesn’t say anything for a little while, and the robot almost presumes she hung up. However, she then tentatively tells him, “Kiibo-kun, I know you can’t handle difficult people well. I’m sorry about everything that’s happened today. It’s just……I was thinking more about the patient and not about you. I didn’t volunteer you to watch and care for Ouma-kun because I thought he would be the perfect match for you. I did it for his sake, the patient’s sake. He’s in a locked environment and under clinical supervision. He feels like a prisoner and hates all the workers there. Ideally, he would have a volunteer around his age to look after him, but we don’t have enough people, so I asked you to volunteer so he can have someone his age to connect with. You have some training, but it's not the same as getting to know Ouma-kun personally The hospital is short on volunteers.” She then takes a deep breath and concludes her explanation, “If you don’t want to spend your time watching Ouma-kun, then you don’t-”

“No, I’m watching him!” Kiibo interrupts, acting like it’s the most obvious answer in the world. “I’m
going to make sure this dangerous boy doesn’t cause harm to anyone or anything!"

“Okay, great, but don’t be too mean to him. I’ll email you the file right after this phone call. Read it before you just dismiss him as a bad person. It’s an overview of the things you’ve learned in-depth from your training and more. It’s very handy even thought it’s large,” Kaede laughs. “Bye Kiibo-kun!”

“Good bye,” the robot replies automatically before hanging up his cellphone and gently setting it on his bedside stand. He then powers on his high powered desktop and immediately goes to his email. He should have known better than to expect Kaede to send the email right away, but, for some reason, Kiibo is impatient. He’s eager to know about the beneficial contents in the file. I need to know more about Ouma-kun for practical reasons, to protect others from him. Kiibo probably should have tried getting schoolwork done, but his lack of knowledge about the hospital, the individual he’s supposed to care for, and mental illnesses is bothering him.

After refreshing his inbox a couple dozen times, he sees an unread email with an attachment from Kaede. He promptly opens the email and downloads the PDF attachment. He’s not at all surprised to see a massive number of papers in the attachment, remembering how full the file Kaede gave him was previously. The robot knows fully well that reading the entire file while still finishing schoolwork before he goes to bed will be extremely difficult, but he endeavors to get as much knowledge as he can.

The first part of the file contains information about the hospital. There is basic stuff, like the overall purpose of the hospital, programs, its funding, its staff, contact information, and the entire structure. It talks about the patient security system. Apparently patient under surveillance has his or her own alarm chime, and each security member is in charge of around ten patients. Kiibo sees that Hoshi and Toujou are both in charge of watching Ouma’s ankle monitor. The robot wonders how Toujou, someone who works in the kitchen, can also be a part of security, but he doesn’t question it.

There’s also information for volunteers and staff about what to do during emergencies, along with phone numbers and locations of people to contact during these emergencies. Kiibo makes note about the emergency care area and when and how to contact the place, vividly remembering carrying a crying Ouma to there for his stitches. Ouma-kun…..did he get his stitches? Is he sleeping in some sterile hospital room with an IV is his arm, a beeping heart rate monitor, and an oxygen mask on? He nearly bled to death…. NO. He’s fine. He’ll just get some stitches and then continue to bully others like he usually does, and I’ll be there tomorrow to stop him.

Kiibo then finds information about the teen division of the mental hospital. It seems more like a boarding school than an actual hospital. The bedrooms are divided by genders, with each person having his or her own roommate. Patients’ days are mostly occupied with schoolwork, therapy sessions, recreational and extra-curricular activities, and vocational programs. All the teens make plans for their futures and develop career-based skills to find work in the real world or prepare for college. This hospital is preparing them for the real world better than my high school is. This program is almost too good. Knowing Ouma-kun, he probably doesn’t realize he’s lucky and will probably throw his future away…….they won’t let him do that, right? They’ll talk some sense into him and make sure he’s ready for the outside world, if he will be ready for the outside world. Will he ever be capable of being a productive member of society though? Or will he just be in a psyche ward, prison, or on the streets for the rest of his life? I’ll talk to him about this. I need to talk to him about a lot of things actually. Society doesn’t need a deplorable criminal like Ouma-kun terrorizing the streets.

Kiibo then reads some information on actions done when patients act out of line. A lot of it depends on the patient and the incident. All the patients are part of a point system. Patients receive points for
good behavior or if mental health improves and lose points for bad behavior or relapse in mental health. All the points are confidential among patients to prevent bullying. The points themselves help healthcare professionals decide whether patients will receive certain privileges or rewards. Ultimately, the points alone don’t determine specific privileges since privileges are decided on by a case-by-case analysis. The worst case is a patient being locked in a room and having constant surveillance from a medical team. Somehow, Ouma wasn’t at that point when I met him. I wonder how he’ll be disciplined after today. Kiibo makes note of the various actions given to patients. If a patients have behavioral or psychiatric outbursts, they’ll often be isolated to a comfortable room to cool down and think about their behavior. If they misbehave often, then they’ll be required to have more counseling sessions, fewer privileges, and a stricter schedule. If patients are unable to calm down, then they’ll have to be sedated, and possibly restrained if they’re a danger to themselves or others. The last bit of information makes Kiibo’s insides feel cold with worry. Ouma-kun purposely severely injured himself. They haven’t sedated him or restrained him, have they? The robot imagines, the sickly, pale boy alone in a room, restrained in a straitjacket, and screaming his heart out, but no one answers him. He’s fine. He’s fine. He’s fine. He was perfectly calm and even happy when I left him. Plus, whatever the hospital does with him will be for his own benefit. He deserves whatever punishment they give him for all the harm he’s done. He’s lucky he’s not behind bars or left suffering on the streets.

Kiibo then finds information on Ouma specifically, yet there’s not much information given how there’s little known background information about the boy and how much Ouma wants to keep his personal information private. The document contains basic information like his room number, contact information, schedule, and other small but useful bits of information. The robot notices how Ouma is required to have 24-hour surveillance under either a hospital staff member or a registered volunteer. Ouma also has a well-structured schedule with three meals a day, a few hours of school, a cognitive and dialectal therapy session, a gym session for exercise, group volunteer work, a computer skills lesson, 30 minutes of self-improvement or future planning, and a mandatory vitals and medical checkup before bed. The staff or volunteer who’s watching him would decide what he’ll do during the remaining hours. Kiibo sees that Ouma’s free hours are those same hours the robot will watch him. So I’ll decide what he’ll do during his free time. Theoretically, I can punish him by forcing him to stay in his room during his entire free time. He deserves it. The robot looks through Ouma’s class schedule, and his eyes widen when he notices all the dark haired boy’s classes are online college classes taken in a computer lab. The local university provides online college classes for the patients, and Ouma is signed up for a couple of them. He’s supposed to be my age! Why is he taking college courses? The robot feels bitter that someone like Ouma could outmatch him when it comes to studies. Did he carry his high school diploma when they found him on the streets? No….wait….he couldn’t have passed the university qualifications exam, did he? Kiibo wants to ask the dark haired boy about this, but he figures Ouma will start bragging to Kiibo about being more educated if the robot asks. Although, Ouma will most likely figure out he’s superior to Kiibo when it comes to education eventually, and the robot is dreading the moment when that happens. He may be in a higher grade than I am, but at least I’m sane enough to live in the real world without someone monitoring me.

The last two-thirds of the file are filled with information on mental health. There’s information on healthy mental behavior and unhealthy mental behavior, and what to do when faced with unhealthy behavior. For example, there’s an article talking about what to do if someone is suicidal or is about to commit suicide. On the bottom of the article, the hospital provides its suicide hotline number and emergency room location for suicide attempts. The mental health articles go into further detail about types of therapies, treatments, medications, and symptoms of various mental disorders and how to handle them. Kiibo tries to find a mental disorder specifically related to Ouma, but Ouma is a lot of things. The robot wouldn’t be surprised if pale boy’s mind has a little bit of every mental disorder. He’s not depressed, is he? He seems happy? Could he be bipolar? No……. Kiibo then remembers
Kaede talking about psychosis when the robot called Ouma psychotic. *I know I’m not a doctor, but I have to figure out an explanation for why he’s like this.* When Kiibo finds the article on psychosis, he first reads the broad definition: “Psychosis is characterized as disruptions to a person’s thoughts and perceptions that make it difficult for them to recognize what is real and what isn’t. These disruptions are often experienced as seeing, hearing and believing things that aren’t real or having strange, persistent thoughts, behaviors and emotions. While everyone’s experience is different, most people say psychosis is frightening and confusing.” *Is this what Ouma-kun has?* Kiibo then notices that there are a bunch of other more specific psychosis disorders like delusion disorder and schizophrenia, but his systems are bombarded with too much information to make sense of it all. He looks at the digital clock in his arm and sees that it’s getting late, and he hasn’t gotten any schoolwork done. The robot closes the file and assesses the situation. *I’ll talk to Ouma-kun tomorrow. Pieces of paper aren’t telling me enough about him.*

Even the file contains information Kiibo already knows from his training earlier, it's still very useful.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter uses this article’s definition on psychosis:

http://www.nami.org/earlypsychosis

I'm not saying Ouma has psychosis or specifically psychosis is the only thing he has. This is just Kiibo's speculation.

Note, the hospital is completely fictional and based on what I know about a combination of different mental hospitals. It's not based on a specific place. It's based on a bunch of places.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
The next day, Kiibo walks behind Kaede, Amami, and Iruma as they make their way to the hospital. The robot feels out of place, as usual, but he doesn’t mind not participating in the conversation because his mind is preoccupied with other things. In fact, he doesn’t register any word of the conversation until he hears Iruma say, “She wants to make new rules saying only female volunteers can work with female patients because some nasty boys were supposedly looking at Bloodnut’s tater tots.”

“I'm sorry, what?!” Kiibo asks when he finally decides to join the conversation.

They make their way through the entrance, and Iruma cackles, “Kiibo! You naughty boy! I didn’t know you were into tater tots!”

“No, of course not. I’m a robot. I can’t eat,” Kiibo states sadly. He becomes more perturbed when the foul mouthed girl laughs even harder.

“You don’t have to eat them to like them! You can just look at them!” Iruma half-sings. She’s so loud that people around the lobby stare at her, but she couldn’t care less.

They make their way to the elevator when Kiibo gives Kaede a perplexed look, and Kaede just whispers, “You’re better off not knowing about this. Just let her have her laugh.”

Kiibo wishes he never tried participating in the conversation. He listens to Amami, Iruma, and Kaede talk quietly among themselves, but Iruma is very difficult to follow. He never could keep up with her. When they enter the fourth flour, the robot sees Hoshi nearby and approaches him and immediately gets the short boy’s attention. “Hoshi-kun, where’s Ouma-kun?”

“In his bedroom, where he should be at all times, for now, unless he’s got other mandatory plans,” Hoshi states immediately, sounding a little bothered about something. Hoshi puts a hand on his head and appears downtrodden.

“Are you alright Hoshi-kun? Does this have something to do with Ouma-kun?” Kiibo wonders, narrowing his eyes at the melancholy boy.

“No, he’s fine. He was a pleasant distraction from…..” Hoshi’s voice trails off. Then he shrugs and smirks to himself. “He kept on picking at his ankle monitor so much that I had to turn off the alarm because he kept on triggering it. He just made watching him that much more difficult now that his alarm isn’t functioning.”

“Shame on him! Is that’s what’s upsetting you?” Kiibo growls.
Hoshi shakes his head and frowns. He replies, “Of course not. If anything, I find the situation amusing. He managed to figure out that if you constantly mess the ankle monitor, the alarm will keep ringing to the point of being an unnecessary distraction. I’m too impressed to be upset with him.”

“Aren’t you going to scold him though?! He’s just made your job more difficult!” Kiibo fumes with gritted teeth.

The shorter boy nods, “Of course we did. Since yesterday, he has been locked inside his room unless he has something important on his schedule, has his internet restricted only to schoolwork, has a stricter schedule, and hospital staff has been more watchful of him than ever before.”

“Good! Thank you for the information Hoshi-kun. Hope you feel better soon!” Kiibo responds. He gives a polite wave to the boy in the horned hat, but the short boy doesn’t say anything, only making a tiny nod in acknowledgement. The robot decides not to prod for any more information. Whatever is upsetting Hoshi is not his business.

He immediately finds Ouma’s room and looks through the window to see the dark haired boy sitting on a bed with plain blue sheets, leaning back on the cushioned headrest, and animatedly talking to the green haired boy about something. He’s wearing an oversized gray sweatshirt instead of the black one he wore yesterday and has a noticeable scar above his ankle monitor. Amami perks up when he sees the robot looking into the room and, using a folder in his hands, playfully bops Ouma on the head, as a way of saying goodbye, before leaving the room. Ouma whines loud enough that the robot can clearly hear the words “You’re mean Pupil-chan!”

“Finally! You’re here! I only had to pick up something, so I couldn’t stay to watch him too long!” Amami sighs in relief. He rushes past the robot, giving him a quick smile before he’s out of sight.

Kiibo walks into the bedroom and takes it in. It’s very livable, reminding Kiibo of a large hotel room with two single beds. The bed closest to the door is the one Ouma is sitting on. Out of the two beds, it’s the most ordinary-looking one, with a navy blue top sheet and pillowcase and white sheets underneath. The wooden desk by his bed has a notebook, laptop, pens, papers, and textbooks cluttered all over. The bed by the window looking outside has purple bedsheets and a bit more of an organized school desk. It’s a bit more lived in than Ouma’s area, with constellation posters, houseplants, oriental decorations, a radio, and various other multi-medias. Across from the two beds, there’s a standard HD TV with a DVD player and game console. The walls of the room have beautiful paintings of the inside of a forest, with various forest animals poking around trees and bushes. Did Angie-san paint this? Ouma-kun said he wanted to paint his bedroom walls. That had to be a lie because these walls are gorgeous.

“Where’s your roommate?” Kiibo asks the boy on the bed.

The pale boy takes the pillow from behind him and hugs it sadly with tears in his eyes. “He committed suicide earlier today!”

The robot’s heart sinks after hearing the news. At first he doesn’t know what to do, so he shyly sits beside the pale boy and puts a hand on his shoulder. Ouma immediately flinches at the contact and leans away. Kiibo immediately pulls his hand away and mutters, “I’m sorry to hear that. Did….Hoshi-kun know about this?” Maybe that’s why he seemed mournful today.

“Yes! Hoshi-kun was supposed to protect him, but he didn’t. Now, poor Hoshi-kun is upset, and my roommate is dead!” Ouma sobs, squeezing the pillow tighter. Kiibo originally wanted to give Ouma a scolding, but now doesn’t have the heart to. He awkwardly scoots closer until their knees are nearly touching. The pale boy eyes the robot’s movement suspiciously but continues crying. Kiibo reaches a hand slowly to wipe away the tears, desperately trying to offer some sort of comfort.
Ouma’s breathing hitches at the contact, but he leans into it. The robot opens his mouth to say something, but the pale boy immediately stops crying and lets out a laugh. Kiibo pulls his hand away and stares at the laughing boy, wondering if he’s having some sort of bizarre breakdown. However, Ouma just wipes his eyes, quiets his laugh, and joyfully declares, “That was a lie! He didn’t commit suicide. I’m a liar, remember?”

“OUMA-KUN! THAT’S NOT FUNNY!” Kiibo screeches with clenched fists. He’s so angry with the boy that he feels his insides heating up and electricity course through his body to the point his eyes start glowing.

This rage would scare an ordinary person, but Ouma just squeals excitedly and laughs even harder as if he were watching an entertaining comedy spectacle. He shouts while clapping his hands together, “Babysitter-chan has the best reactions! You’re so gullible and hilarious, yet so awesome! I love being watched by a robot! What are you going to do now that you’re really mad?! Are you going to blow up the room?! Are you going to shoot a laser through the walls?! Are you going to punch me?! Beat me up?! Abuse me?! Kill me?!”

“I’m not going to do any of that!” Kiibo cries. His anger subsides, and he feels deflated.

“What? That’s lame! What’s the point of being a robot if you’re going to be so boring!” Ouma whines with clear disappointment. He looks up at the ceiling, and Kiibo looks up too. There are some beautiful night time constellations to go with the forest paintings on the walls. “If you must know, some other girl supposedly committed suicide. I don’t know much about her.”

“Really?” the robot asks suspiciously. He looks back at the boy and tries to make as intimidating of a glare as possible, but he feels emotionally weak when around Ouma. Sometimes when around the boy, he can’t get as mad and assertive as he wants to.

“No, I don’t think it’s just suicide,” the pale boy answers. He then sits up from his lying position and looks from side to side, making sure no one is around. He then grabs the robot’s shoulders and explains in a low voice, looking at Kiibo in the eyes, “The government killed her.” It takes everything in Kiibo not to roll his eyes at the boy. He sees where this conversation is going. He really doesn’t want to hear Ouma’s conspiracy theory and is more concerned with the way the pale boy is aggressively biting his lip to the point of bleeding. “The government imprisoned her like they’re imprisoning me and then tortured her to the point of bleeding. “The government imprisoned her like they’re imprisoning me and then tortured her to the point where she had no choice!”

The dark haired boy looks pissed. He’s visibly shaking and takes his hands off the robot’s shoulders. Ouma pulls his left ankle up on to the bed, and the robot cringes when he sees a swollen stitched cut with purple-red discoloration surrounding it. Kiibo then yells when Ouma begins angrily attempting to scratch and rip the stitches off, and the wound starts bleeding a little. Kiibo harshly grabs both of the pale boy’s hands to stop the harmful action and whimpers, “Don’t do that.”

“Huh?” Ouma replies in genuine confusion, and then looks down at the purple-red bleeding scar. He chuckles to himself and gives the robot a warm smile. “I’m fine. Just keeping you on your toes, Babysitter-chan!”

“Ouma-kun, this isn’t-“

“I like you Babysitter-chan,” Ouma interrupts the robot. Kiibo is so thrown off by the statement that he almost forgets what he was about to tell the boy. The robot flushes but keeps his eyes on Ouma who, unlike Kiibo, appears unbothered by his own comment. The pale boy elaborates, “You’re the only one here who I trust. Everyone here are completely puppets to the government and want to hurt me. They’re trying to ruin my reputation and trick me into thinking I’m crazy when I’m not. But not you. You don’t want to hurt me, right?”
“Why do you think that?” Kiibo asks, dumbfounded.

“I’m good at reading people. When I talk to others, I see people who are brainwashed or corrupt. When I see you, you seem almost more human than they do. Everything about you seems less calculated, less manipulative, and more genuine,” Ouma explains. The pale boy laces his fingers through Kiibo’s metal hands, and Kiibo almost wants to tug his hands away because holding the boy’s hands like this while they’re alone in a bedroom seems…..unprofessional. The robot doesn’t understand why the pale boy isn’t embarrassed even a little. Ouma then elaborates, “I don’t think you would have left me alone to escape like that yesterday if you were working for the government, and, more importantly….” Ouma pulls his hands away from the robot and scoots backwards. The robot begins to miss the warm contact of his soft hands. The boy gives him a teasing grin, “I don’t think Babysitter-chan would be so charmed by me if he wanted to hurt me.”

“Charmed? What-“

“It’s all over your face!” Ouma giggles. He leans back on bed’s cushioned headrest and has his hands folded behind his head. Kiibo feels his face heat up even more, so he tries to scowl at the dark haired boy to cover his embarrassment, but Ouma just smirks. “I don’t blame you for being charmed. Anyone who’s not working for the government loves me. If you want to be a member of my secret evil organization, all you need to do is help me escape. It'll be an action I’ll never forget.”

“This isn’t what I came here to talk to you about!” Kiibo tells him, changing the subject. The robot then sets his heavy duty school backpack on to the bed with a plop, causing the boy in the oversized sweatshirt to sit up straighter and raise his eye brows. Kiibo unzips the front pocket of his bag to pull out a file with printed out documents of the email attachment Kaede sent him yesterday. “I want to know why you put a file with these same documents in a microwave.”

“Those papers are government propaganda!” Ouma shouts. He lunges towards the file in Kiibo’s hands, but the robot keeps the file out of reach and easily shoves the boy back without hurting him. The pale boy’s face darkens. He then bites his lower lip and, with one hand, painfully tears apart the fingernail folds of the other hand.

With the hand not holding the file, Kiibo grabs the wrist of the hand picking at skin so that Ouma doesn’t hurt his fingers more. Ouma looks up at him with alarm and grimaces. The robot asks him, “Why’d you set it on fire though?”

“It was as a form of protest. I was trying to make a point!” Ouma yells, trying to tug his wrist away from Kiibo.

Kiibo reluctantly lets go of his wrist and cautiously lays the file in front of the enraged boy and opens it. “Show me which documents made you mad. You can rip up the papers. Just please tell me what you don’t like about them.”

Ouma eyes the robot for a second and nods before carefully going through the file. He has a serious look on face, and his jaw tightens. The pale boy spots the papers talking about the hospital, more specifically the hospital’s purpose and where it gets funding. He takes the papers out and glares at them with disgust. “All these papers are horrible lies. This hospital just wants to hurt and imprison people.” He then viciously tears a bunch of the papers out at once. The ripping is so brutal that his hands begin bleeding with papercuts. Did he try to give himself papercuts on purpose? The robot almost stops him out of fear he’ll just hurt himself even more, but he wants to hear Ouma’s thoughts on the documents.

Ouma rips more papers.
He takes out the paper talking about the surveillance system. “They want to take away my freedom!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the paper talking about what volunteers should do during emergencies, “This is fake concern! Tricking volunteers into thinking they’re helping us!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the papers talking about the teen division and its rehabilitation program. “They don’t give a shit about me! Acting all high and mighty! Like they’re trying to help!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the document talking about the point system and patient privileges. “They’re controlling me like I’m an animal! They want to punish and torture me into submission!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the papers with his profile and school schedule. “They don’t know shit about me! Treating me like a stupid lunatic who needs to be fixed!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the papers discussing healthy and unhealthy mental behavior. “I’m healthy! I’m perfect!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out the paper on suicide. “They don’t want me to die because they want me to suffer!” Rip. More papercuts. *He thinks the government doesn’t want him to die?*

He takes out the various papers on therapies, treatments, and medications. “They want to make me sicker and worse! They want to control me!” Rip. More papercuts.

He takes out an article on anxiety. “I’m calm!” Rip. More papercuts. He takes out an article on depression. “I’m happy!” Kiibo can’t remember what he says after this because, at this point, the robot leaves the bed and goes to the room’s bathroom for items to treat the pale boy’s cuts. Ouma is sobbing at this point and doesn’t notice the robot is searching the bathroom. He continues to take out more papers on various mental disorders and screams out a comment at each one and rips them each apart. Blood pours out of the many cuts, and blood and tears soak the papers.

By the time Kiibo comes back, Ouma is done going through the papers and is crying and gasping for breath. The robot recoils at the scene. The boy in the oversized sweatshirt is too busy weeping to care about the robot staring at him. He takes his bleeding hands and buries his face in them, rubbing blood all over his facial features. Kiibo almost cries with him but, instead, carefully walks over to him and gently grabs both his wrists. Ouma gives him an alarmed expression, with a face painted with his own blood. The ends of his sleeves are also stained with blood, but Kiibo is more concerned with the boy’s hands and mental health.

Ouma doesn’t seem to pay much attention to Kiibo as the robot leads him to the bathroom. The dark haired boy lets out tiny sobs when the robot washes his hands with liquid soap and a washcloth, applies antibiotic cream, and wraps bandages around each hand. The dark haired boy stares at their feet the whole time. Due to how silent and permissive he is, he seems almost lifeless. It’s like Ouma isn’t even there.

“Ouma-kun, look at your hands,” the robot instructs him softly, with his own metal hands carefully holding the bandaged ones.

“No, I don’t want to,” Ouma whimpers weakly.

“Please, all you have to do is look. You’re brave and mentally strong enough to do it.”

“Fine!” the dark haired boy looks at the bandaged hands in Kiibo’s, and his breathing hitches. More tears fall down his face, and Kiibo starts thinking he may have been putting the boy through unnecessary pain this whole time, but he continues to do what he thinks is right.
“Look at the stitched cut on your ankle. It’ll be okay.” Ouma looks down at his ankle, and the robot can’t see the boy’s face. He hopes the boy remembers picking apart his own injury. Kiibo then softly instructs him, “Look at your handsome face in the mirror.”

Without pause this time, Ouma looks at the mirror and lets in a sharp breath. His hands clench at the edge of the sink’s countertop, and he cries at his appearance. The pale boy’s face has dark red blood wiped all over his face. At this point, the blood is so dry that it’s caking on his face. The blood on his cheeks is partially cleaned away by the tears that have been falling over his face. His eyes are puffy, and his nose is clearly runny. Through the mirror, Kiibo peers more at his bloodied face and sees some things about Ouma’s face that he never noticed before. His pale skin makes him look very sickly, almost like he’s approaching death, and the dark circles below his eyes make him look like he hasn’t been getting sleep.

Kiibo knows he’s been going too far with Ouma, but he can’t help it. Kaede-san, maybe it wasn’t a good idea to volunteer me to watch this boy if I’m just going to keep hurting him, but…. The robot then assertively tells him, “You’re not okay.”

Ouma gives him a horrified expression through the mirror and then falls to his knees to continue crying. The robot sits down to the boy’s level and gathers the boy in his arms. Kiibo is surprised when the crying boy hugs him back rather than pushing him away. He whimpers in Kiibo’s shoulders, “I’m not crazy. I’m not stupid. I’m not useless. I’m not heartless.”

“You’re right. You’re not. You’re smart. You’re logical. You’re caring. You’re resourceful. You’re strong.” The robot whispers praises in the crying boy’s ears. “But don’t lie to yourself and say you’re fine because you know something is wrong. You may not trust hospital, but you trust me, right?”

“Stupid robot, of course I trust you. You’re so charmed by me that you have my best interest at heart.” Ouma declares with a hiccup. His crying lessens, and he seems content to just snuggle up against the robot.

He’s so self-centered; why would I be charmed by someone like him? Kiibo then shakes off the question in his head because a part of him knows deep down that the answer to it will surprise him. For now, he’ll use the invaluable trust Ouma has in him to both of their advantages. He mumbles to the pale boy, “So if you trust me, we’re friends, right?”

While they still hold on to each other, Ouma looks up at Kiibo with almost a twinkle in his eyes. He replies, “If the robot wants to be one of my many friends, I’ll oblige, but, if that’s the case, I’ll have high expectations from you.”

“I agree. And because I’m your friend, I want to help you in any way I can, even if it may seem like you may not need it. Will you let me help you in any way I can, so I can make you the best, healthiest, safest, and happiest person you can be? You seem unhappy, vulnerable and…lost, so, as your friend, I want to protect you and guide you. Will you let me do that? Everyone needs someone to support them, so let me be that person if no one here can,” Kiibo informs the boy. He feels Ouma tighten his hold on the robot and curl into himself. He doesn’t say anything for a few moments. The robots starts to think the dark haired boy didn’t hear him or doesn’t like what Kiibo said.

Ouma then takes a heavy and shaky breath before answering, “You say I’m unhappy, vulnerable, and lost, but aren’t you the same? If you want to help me, then you have to let me help you. Can I? I’d be perfect for you. I’ve helped so many people, so I can help you. You’re an unhappy, vulnerable, and lost robot who needs my help. Aren’t you?” At first, Kiibo is offended by Ouma’s words, but then he realizes the pale boy just threw the robot’s words right back at him, so being offended would be hypocritical. He lets Ouma’s words sink in. When Kiibo pictures their relationship, he always imagines Ouma being the needy individual who the robot will constantly care
for. He has never imagined Ouma caring for or guiding the robot, especially since Kiibo has never thought he needed the boy’s help or anyone’s help. *I do get lonely and feel out of place often. Is that what Ouma-kun means when he calls me unhappy, vulnerable, and lost? Or is he just saying that to fuel his ego and make himself feel important? Can our relationship really be that mutual? Ouma-kun seems so high maintenance and unstable himself. What can he offer me?* Kiibo looks down at the sickly pale boy who stares back at the robot curiously.

Then again, why do I want to spend my time after school with him? I should leave him if he has nothing to offer me, yet I have never thought about leaving him. I feel like I’ll be losing a lot if I leave him. It’s almost like I need him. Why would I need such a selfish, mean spirited, bratty kid like him though? Ouma then interrupts his thoughts by saying, “It’s not fair that you tell me I’m not okay when it doesn’t look like you’re okay either. If you want to help me with my faults, then you have to let me help you with yours. It’s not fair that you act better than me. It’s like I’m some pitiful, weak creature that you tend to in order to make yourself feel better.”

He’s such a hypocrite. Kiibo still has a hard time imagining someone as unstable as Ouma helping Kiibo. The pale boy always seems so unstable and vulnerable. He couldn’t even be left alone without doing something self-destructive, and he seems to lack self-awareness and awareness of what’s around him. It almost hurts the robot’s pride to think he’ll need Ouma or have to rely on him for anything. Although, Ouma-kun probably feels the same way. It probably also hurts his pride to think he’ll need someone like me to help him, especially with his large ego. I get frustrated when he acts more important than me, and he just said he doesn’t like it when I act more important than him. Kiibo informs Ouma, “If you listen to me and let me help you when I offer you help, I’ll let you help me. Deal?”

“That’s what I was suggesting, stupid robot! But you were so slow to catch on!” Ouma complains, leaning back to flick Kiibo on the forehead, causing the robot to grumble in response. The dark haired boy flashes him a toothy grin. “Besides, we don’t need to make such a formal deal. We’re friends, and I trust you, so of course I’ll listen to you! I just wanted you to stop thinking of me as helpless.” He then stands up and looks at himself in the mirror. He chuckles and replies, “I look like I just killed someone and spread their blood all over my face! It’s kind of cool looking. If I step out into public, I wonder what people will think. Do you think they’ll call the cops?”

“I recommend not stepping outside of this room until you clean your face. Getting strange looks from people is not a fun experience,” Kiibo informs him, standing up beside the boy.

“Awwwww….Babysitter-chan is so sensitive about what others think. I think getting strange looks by others is hilarious. Screw them if they find it disturbing. I wasn’t born on this earth to please them!” Ouma says smiling at Kiibo. The robot doesn’t know what to say to this. A part of him wants to completely agree with him. However, he can’t because the things people would find disturbing about Ouma should be disturbing. It’s one thing to be disturbed by a robot because that robot is different. It’s another thing to be disturbed by someone with blood all over his face. Any reasonable person would be worried. *It’s like he’s making excuses for his unhealthy behavior.*

“If you’re not going to clean your face, then can I? I want to,” the robot tells him.

Ouma shrugs and replies, “If that’s what you want Babysitter-chan, then I’ll grant your wish and let you bask in the enjoyment of washing my alluring face.”

The robot turns the sink on. Even though he’s not human, he knows how to humans are supposed to wash their faces, or at least he thinking he does. Kiibo knows the first step to proper face washing is to wet the face with warm water, so he turns the faucet on to a warm water setting and turns the sink on. “Ouma-kun lean forward, so I can get your face wet.”
“I can do it myself, Babysitter-chan,” Ouma responds, leaning forward and cupping the warm water in his hands before splashing it all over his face. He then cups water a second time, and, instead of splashing water on to his face again, he tosses it onto Kiibo, who yelps in response. The dark haired boy giggles. “You’re fine with a little water, right? You’d be a poorly designed robot if you weren’t water proof.”

“I am water proof. I can handle going into shallow water, but I’d probably sink if the water is deep enough,” Kiibo replies, rubbing his hands over his face to get the water off. The robot then takes some facial cleanser and squirts a little in his hands. He gets a feel for the gooey substance before turning around to apply some to Ouma’s face. “I suggest you close your eyes so the chemicals don’t get in them.”

The dark haired boy shuts his eyes, and Kiibo then carefully rubs circles over his skin. The robot has never made much contact with human skin, especially not skin of the face. He savors the feeling of Ouma’s soft skin under his cold metal fingers. The pale boy’s face scrunches up every once in a while when the robot touches different facial features. Even after Kiibo spreads the soap evenly all over his face, the robot still continues to rub his fingers all over every facial feature just to prolong the experience. He admires his small jawbone, long lashes, smaller nose, balanced facial symmetry, soft lips, round cheeks, and overall youthful appearance. Kiibo wishes Ouma’s eyes would open so that the robot can look into his large purple eyes. For a few minutes, Kiibo stops rubbing the soap over his face and just lets the palms of his hands rest on Ouma’s cheeks. He’s surprised the small boy doesn’t make a teasing comment. Instead, the boy silently leans into the robot’s touch and makes a small, relaxed sigh.

Kiibo feels like he has overstepped his boundaries with Ouma. He feels creepy watching and rubbing the dark haired boy’s face. That’s not the proper way friends should act. He suddenly feels very self-conscious and frazzled. For a second, he forgets what he’s supposed to be doing because he’s worried that he’s doing something wrong and ruining the fragile bond he and Ouma built. He steps away from the boy and cups some warm water in his hands and then tosses the water on to the pale boy’s face. Ouma shrieks and splutters at the sudden action, and Kiibo tells him out of worry, “I’m sorry Ouma-kun! I should have given you a warning!”

Ouma just laughs at the robot before grabbing a facial cloth and rubbing his face with it. He respond in a cheery voice, “Babysitter-chan really got me that time. That was perfect!” He gives a beam, which for some reason makes Kiibo feel embarrassed. Ouma grabs the robot’s forearm and continues laughing. “C’mon, I want to hang out with the robot. I don’t care what we do. Just entertain me!”

Kiibo just nods in response, knowing that hanging with Ouma was what Kaede told Kiibo he would originally be doing with Ouma anyways. They end up doing schoolwork on Ouma’s bed, with the pale boy going through the robot’s entire backpack while Kiibo looks over at Ouma’s class materials. While his classes are advanced, he’s only taking two of them “They want me to start light since I just got here. They underestimate me,” Ouma tells him.

“Underestimate you? They’re letting you take college classes!” Kiibo exclaims in disbelief. He then sees Ouma using a red pen to scribble all over the robot’s English paper. “Hey! What are you doing?!”

“Fixing this crappy paper! It’s filled with errors. You can’t properly use a comma if your life depended on it! Now stay back and let the intellect handle this,” the dark haired boy replies nibbling at the end of the red pen, Kiibo’s red pen, which will have disgusting bite marks by the time the robot gets it back. Ouma grumbles, “I know English grammar is difficult for most commoners, but you’d think a robot would have at least some grammar literacy. You’re lucky I haven’t burned this paper because its grammar errors are literally physically painful to read. Hey, Babysitter-chan, do
you know what a misplaced modifier is?” Kiibo opens his mouth to answer, but Ouma answers for him. “The correct answer is ‘no’. You do not know what a misplaced modifier is. If you did, I wouldn’t be seeing one in every other freaking sentence!” Ouma makes editing papers intense. Kiibo almost feels ashamed letting the boy see his schoolwork like this. At the same time though, it’s nice getting schoolwork done while being able to watch Ouma, so Kiibo can’t complain as he takes out his own homework and studying materials while Ouma helps. He can tell the dark haired boy enjoys supervising the robot’s schoolwork, almost a bit too much.

A couple hours later, Ouma states, “I’ve helped you with your studying so much that I think it’s time you start calling me ‘Sensei’.”

“No, Ouma-kun,” Kiibo simply answers. He’s not sacrificing his pride that easily.

“What? It’s not like I’m asking you to call me Ouma-sama or anything! Okay, if you’re not going to call me ‘Sensei’, then at least call me Ouma-san. I’m pretty much your senpai anyway! Just look at my classes compared to your inferior ones!”

“You’re my age, so why are taking college level classes?” Kiibo asks turning to look at the boy who is now leaning back against the headrest of his bed, finished with helping the robot study.

“I’m a genius,” Ouma simply answers with a proud grin. “I did really well on university entrance exams, so they had no choice but to let me take courses that are more at my advanced level.”

“But what kind of education did you get before coming here? How did you study for the university entrance exams?” Kiibo asks. He puts his stuff away in his backpack and shuffles closer to Ouma to come into closer contact with the boy. Kiibo sees Ouma staring at the blood stained papers he tore apart earlier. He has a sad and distant look in his eyes. The robot hastily clears away the papers and then leans against the bed’s headrest, sitting alongside Ouma, mimicking the boy’s position. “Well?”

“I’m smart, so, naturally, I did well,” Ouma answers with a frown.

Kiibo doesn’t believe it’s as simple as Ouma makes it seem. The robot doesn’t deny the boy is book smart, but he has a hard time believing that the pale boy naturally being smart is the reason why he’s so good at school, especially since Ouma looks upset at his past education being brought up.

The robot is frustrated. Ouma’s mood swings are exhausting. One minute the boy is happy and joking with the robot, and then one little thing will piss him off or make him cry. Kiibo feels like he always screws up and says something to upset the boy. Doesn’t he get exhausted? The robot wants Ouma to admit his emotional problems, so he makes a very confrontational statement, “Ouma-kun, you have a lot of crying spells.”

The timing of the question appears ideal because Ouma has tears in his eyes over something so seemingly minimal. The robot’s statement upsets him further because he frowns and clenches his teeth. He then wipes his eyes by pretending to scratch his face with both hands. Ouma then smiles and replies, “The crying is just to get people’s pity. I’m a liar. They’re lies. They don’t mean anything.”

“Why were you crying just a few seconds ago? There was nothing to gain from it,” Kiibo points out. He knows fully well that he’s being too direct with Ouma. There is no point in hitting subjects the pale boy isn’t ready for, but the robot is sick of ignoring the obvious issues. He’s sick of pretending these issues don’t exist when Ouma wants to pretend they don’t exist.

“I wasn’t crying! I don’t genuinely cry! Crying is for babies and weaklings! You said I’m strong, so I don’t cry!” Ouma growls. He’s shaking. Kiibo wonders if the dark haired boy would have started
crying if the topic of conversation isn’t on his crying habits. The robot sees his eyes start water, but
the pale boy seems to be doing everything he can to hold it in. “Let’s just watch TV or play video
games. This conversation is stupid!”

They watch TV, and Ouma insists on turning off the lights, and Kiibo thinks he knows why Ouma
wants the room to be dark. They end up watching some superhero movie, and Kiibo can feel the
dark haired boy rest his head against his metal shoulder. Little does Ouma know, the robot has night
vision. When he peers down at the boy, he sees water in Ouma’s eyes and tears streaming across his
facial features. His face is scrunched up in obvious distress over something. Kiibo continues to bring
up the subject by saying, “I still think you’re strong even if you cry all the time. The idea that crying
means weakness is just a societal norm thrown at us. You’re stronger if you defy societal norms by
being yourself and letting yourself cry than if you let societal norms force you hold your crying in
when crying is in your nature.”

Ouma only lets out a choke in response. Kiibo wants him to say something but isn’t surprised when
he doesn’t. What’s causing these crying spells? Is it depression? A genetic or birth defect? A
personality disorder? Anxiety? Crying is an expression of distress or pain. Ouma-kun isn’t distressed
or in pain all the time. Is he?

Kiibo walks with Ouma to the cafeteria for a very late dinner. The dark haired boy talks about how
government policy affects the natural environment, and Kiibo is impressed with the boy’s
knowledge, but distracted. He automatically agrees with everything the boy says, which satisfies
him. They depart, and Kiibo searches for either Amami or Hoshi. He ends up finding the two of
them sitting at a cafeteria table away from patients, probably talking about business-related stuff.
Kiibo sits down next Amami and immediately feels bad when he instantly stops their conversation.
They both look at the robot curiously, and Amami tells him, “You don’t have to be here this late if
you don’t want to. You can go home.”

“I know, but I have a concern,” Kiibo brings up awkwardly. He wonders for a second if he’s making
a big deal out of nothing but decides he’s made it too far to stop now. “What proper measures are
being taken to prevent Ouma-kun some committing suicide?” Amami and Hoshi look at the robot
with unreadable expressions. Kiibo suddenly wonders if he’s just being paranoid. “I’m sorry…
maybe I’m just being paranoid….” He ends up mumbling to himself.

“No, it’s fine. You worried Ouma-kun will take his own life?” Amami asks, resting his face in the
palms of his hands.

“I am,” Hoshi answers glumly before Kiibo can say anything. The short boy then adds, “Although,
I’ve been pretty sensitive after what happened to Shirogane earlier today, especially since her death
was under my watch.” He then faces Kiibo directly and questions, “Has Ouma showed any signs of
being suicidal? What’s your concern?”

“Ummmmmm….well……I don’t know for sure. It’s just….I guess you would call it a hunch,”
Kiibo answers nervously, twiddling his fingers. “Allow me to explain.”

He tells the two boys the times Ouma excitedly talked about Kiibo hurting and killing him, even if he
may be joking. He explains the pale boy’s emotional turmoil. He also describes how when he ripped
a paper talking about suicide, Ouma said the horrible hospital doesn’t want him to die, implying he
dying would be defying the horrible hospital. Kiibo also worries if hospital workers, people Ouma
clearly doesn’t trust, tell him not to commit suicide, then that’ll cause him to be defiant and end his
life. There’s also the worrisome self-destructive behavior he has shown, like attempting to cut off his
foot and tear apart his stitches. Kiibo ends his explanation by saying, “Am I being too cautious?”

“No, of course not. He has shown the classic signs of suicidal behavior since he got here,” Hoshi
replies gruffly. “That’s why the hospital and I have been taking special precautions with him.”

“Like what?” Kiibo questions.

“He’s already on periodic suicide watch. Every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day, someone working in the hospital has to check in on him. Although, all the patients have this treatment, so it’s not really special treatment for him. As for special treatment, Ouma is required to be watched by hospital staff or a volunteer during waking hours. He has an ankle monitor so we can know where he is. That same ankle monitor tracks his vitals, so if something is wrong with him health-wise, the monitor will send a warning. He’s also strictly kept away from all rooms with possible lethal methods such as sharp objects and lethal household chemicals. His schedule is also specifically made so that he can be rehabilitated and have a future to look forward to,” Hoshi explains. The robot’s eyes widen at the boy, impressed by the cautious measures, but the shorter boy sighs and looks absolutely exhausted.

“Unfortunately, he’s clever. I think he’ll find some way to kill himself if he wants to. He’s been doing nothing but retaliating against others since he got here. He won’t even say anything to the therapists, doctors, or…really anyone trying to offer medical care. I’m not comfortable with him like this. We have to have him on intensive suicide watch.”

“Hoshi-kun, no!” Amami tells him angrily. Kiibo is surprised to see the always seemingly calm boy get irate. “I know you’re worried, but that’ll just make things worse in the long-term!”

“I’m sorry, but what’s wrong with intensive suicide watch?” Kiibo questions.

“It’s a method that should only be used as an absolutely last resort,” Amami explains, pointedly glaring at Hoshi. “It’s where a patient is isolated to a room, has to wear a hospital gown or scrubs, and has a hospital staff member stay within arm’s reach 24 hours a day. If Ouma-kun thinks he has little freedom now, this will take away whatever little freedom he has left.”

“You make it sound like solitary confinement. He’ll be fine. He’ll be in a comfortable environment, have someone always there as company and to talk some sense into him, have his schoolwork be brought to him, and have some form of entertainment. It’ll be temporary. He’ll be watched only until he shows noticeable signs of improvement,” Hoshi argues. “I’m worried about what he’ll do at night, when no one has their eyes on him.”

“His bedroom door will be locked from the inside though.”

“That’s not going to stop him. He’ll find a way. He’ll probably steal Momota’s key or something.”

“Momota-kun won’t let that happen. You and I can talk to him about it. Speaking of Momota-kun, he’ll be with Ouma-kun to stop him from doing anything.”

“Momota sleeps at night. He’s not going to do anything.”

“He’s a light sleeper though, and he dragged Ouma-kun out of their room last night to get his stitches looked at.”

“Exactly! His stitches have already opened up before. What do you think will happen if no one is there to stop him from bleeding to death?!”

“We’ll just bandage up the stitched wound as an added barrier to make it harder. Plus, Ouma-kun bleeding to death because of opening his injuries will take a very long time. Long enough, for the ankle monitor’s vitals tracker to know something is wrong and send a warning. Also, we can take away Ouma-kun’s bedsheets, so that he doesn’t do anything under them, and we can also have a nightlight by his bed side so that hospital workers and Momota-kun get a better view of him at
Hoshi sits back and stays silent for a moment before responding with a neutral expression, “One day, I’m going to beat you in an argument Amami.”

Amami gives the shorter boy a self-satisfied grin. “You made some good points though. It’s just, intensive suicide watch sounds so depressing. It always seems like the last thing someone who’s suicidal needs.” Hoshi doesn’t say anything. Kiibo just lets them talk it out because they know how to handle this kind of situation than the robot would.

Unfortunately, even with all these precautions, none of their solutions offer the robot any reprieve. None of the solutions addressed the root cause of the problem: the suicidal thoughts. They only prevented the action of suicide, not the reason for suicide.

“Hey Kiibo-kun,” Amami gently gets the robot’s attention, shaking him out of his thoughts. “Oumakun is safer with us just having this conversation. Also, even if things may seem bad now, he just got here a couple days ago. This is probably the first time in his life he’s been in a safe environment. Give him time. Difficult patients can be stressful at first, but I’ve seen so many of them make amazing improvements. Ouma-kun is in capable hands. You just need to be there every day for him and try your best. He’s already said many positive things about you. You being there means a lot to him.”

Chapter End Notes

The chapter wasn't supposed to be this long, but it just kept on going and going and going.

Also, I probably won't update the fic this frequently anymore. I'll probably update around once a week, maybe a little more. Who knows?

I always feel self-conscious about my writing, so feedback would be great.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqt aa
I love laughing

Chapter Summary

Kiibo works at the hospital for another three weeks. Ouma shows him some pictures on the internet and some other things. Later, Kiibo spends dinner with Ouma.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

For the next three weeks, Kiibo makes himself a daily weekday pattern: go to school, go to the hospital and keep Ouma company, and then go home. On the weekends, Kiibo works at the hospital from morning until evening. He’s not always around Ouma. When Ouma has some other plans, like school or a therapy session, Kiibo works around the hospital doing other things. He gets some more volunteer training, such as first aide instruction and advice on how to deal with patients. Kaede also gives him a tour of the large hospital. When Ouma’s schedule is free and Kiibo is still at the hospital, the robot spends all his time with the dark haired boy. The robot develops a comfortable and effective schedule on his own. While Ouma can be stressful, Kiibo finds his time at the hospital very meaningful. At school, the robot feels bogged down trying to keep his grades up, dealing with bullies, and feeling socially isolated. Here at the hospital, the things he does seems worthwhile. Kaede and Amami, two individuals Kiibo never felt that close to at school because they have so many friends, now seem like reliable companions to the robot since they now all bond over working at the hospital. Toujou and Hoshi, while the two of them aren’t nearly as friendly, are two people Kiibo at least has pleasant and often useful conversations with. Iruma, someone at school who Kiibo rarely interacts with, is now someone Kiibo comfortably interacts with more than usual. Overall, it feels like he has friends. Ouma ends up becoming the robot’s personal tutor. While the dark haired boy likes to criticize the robot and brag about his superior book smarts, being tutored by Ouma has helped Kiibo get his grades up while also watching the boy at the same time. One would think extracurricular activities would take time away from doing schoolwork, but in the robot’s case, he can get schoolwork done while also getting volunteer hours in.

After Kiibo watches Ouma for a while, hospital workers notice Ouma seems to open up to Kiibo. Eventually, doctors and therapists ask the robot if he can answer questions and give them information on the dark haired boy because Ouma refuses to even talk to them. The robot reluctantly agrees to give hospital staff information on Ouma with the hopes this information will help the dark haired boy in the future. Kiibo does feel like he’s betraying the trust he has built with Ouma by relaying information to who Ouma considers “the enemy”. Although, it’s not like he’s spying or anything. The robot doesn’t record their conversations or even write any information about Ouma down. He just observes and gives information off of memory. He has to keep reminding himself that this is in Ouma’s best interest, that this could save the dark hair boy’s life and future.

Unfortunately, even after developing a satisfying daily routine and hanging around Ouma for hours at a time, the dark haired boy is still someone Kiibo has never gotten used to and doesn’t seem to be making improvements when it comes to his mental health. Kiibo learns something new about the boy every day but hasn’t found a way to make a breakthrough with Ouma. The dark haired boy still has destructive and dysfunctional behavior. Every day of Ouma going through his emotional roller coasters and ranting about his distrust to those around him kills the robot a little on the inside. One day, when the hospital tries to take Ouma’s bedsheets away so that they can make sure he’s not
causing trouble under the sheets or use them to strangle himself, Ouma really starts regressing in behavior. He has more crying spells, starts bashing his head against walls, becomes more antagonistic to everyone, and goes on a hunger strike. Eventually, the hospital gives him his bed sheets back to see if he’ll make any improvements, and he does. Apparently, the bed sheets are a source of comfort to the boy. Unfortunately, Hoshi and Amami then start having more arguments about whether Ouma should be in intensive suicide watch. Amami told Kiibo a while ago that things would get better with time. Kiibo gives Ouma three weeks, and nothing seems to be better than before. Sometimes it seems like the dark haired boy is trying to make things as difficult as possible and is trying to sabotage his own life. Kiibo sometimes thinks if the dark haired boy were a dog, then he would have been put to sleep.

The robot has been at the cafeteria during meals, and he usually sits with the volunteers to hear their conversations about what’s going on in the hospital. He doesn’t contribute much to the conversations, but he wants to know the inner workings of the hospital so he doesn’t feel out of the loop.

Not all the volunteers, Kiibo has noticed, sit with other volunteers. Some of them, Kaede being one of them, actually sit with other patients. She tells him that she wants the other patients not to feel inferior to the volunteers. The hospital volunteers aren’t above the patients. Instead, they are equals and companions to the volunteers. At least, that’s what Kaede tries to make it seem. Some of the volunteers do integrate themselves among the patients well, almost to the point where Kiibo sometimes forgets they’re even volunteers. Maki, one of the volunteers, rarely talks to other fellow volunteers to the point where Kiibo has never talked to her, and the robot would have thought she were a patient if it weren’t for her volunteer lanyard. It also doesn’t help that many of the patients she’s around also appear to act normally. At least, Kiibo hasn’t seen them do anything. Although, the robot rarely interacts with other patients besides Ouma.

Unfortunately, there always seems to be this aura about the volunteers that’s different from the mentally ill patients at the hospital, no matter how much others pretend otherwise. Ouma notices this barrier. One day while they’re both doing their usual schoolwork on the dark haired boy’s bed, he complains, “The volunteers always act like they’re superior, that they’re the amazing ones who try to take care of helpless scum like us.”

The robot nearly says something really bad to this statement. He almost points out that the volunteers are mentally healthy while the patients are not. Thus, the volunteers are the better people. Kiibo doesn’t say this though. It’s degrading to the patients, and making the patients out as lesser beings just makes their mental health problems worse. The robot carefully argues back to Ouma, “The volunteers don’t consider themselves superior to the patients. They’re just people who come here to befriend and support patients.”

“Yeah…Yeah….sure…..keep telling yourself that,” the dark haired boy grumbles. He has his laptop in front of him and appears to be typing up some sort of college paper, from what Kiibo can tell at least. The robot has read some of Ouma’s papers in attempt to peer edit them, but Ouma’s writings are already well done enough as it is, so the robot struggles to add any improvements to them. Although, even if the robot does any editing or revision, the dark haired boy usually ignores or mocks them. “If volunteers are equals to the inmates here, why don’t they have to be checked on every 15 minutes? Why do they get free reign to go anywhere? Why do they all get to live outside of the hospital? Why are they the ones in charge of watching and ordering around the scum who live here? Why do they not have to follow schedules?”

“I fail to see how that makes them seem better than the patients. This whole hospital is centered and catered towards the patients’ best interests. The volunteers have always served the patients. I agree that the patients have it worse in the end and that we the volunteers, hospital workers included, are
lucky to not be in your positions, but the volunteers aren’t the most important people here. The patients are,” Kiibo says this while being distracted with some math homework problems in front of him. Fortunately, the robot has had this answer ready for a while because the whole patient versus volunteer divide has been a topic of conversation for weeks. As someone who is sensitive to unfair discrimination, the robot has noticed the divide between the healthier minded volunteers and the sicker minded patients and has thought about the best way to explain the situation without offending either side.

Although, even with Kiibo’s answer, Ouma still rolls eyes and mutters, “The people who work here do nothing but act like they’re the morally superior ones. Babysitter-chan, I know you may think you’re doing the right thing, and in a way you’re at least kind of a good guy,” Only kind of? “BUT…” Ouma drawls, “Most of the volunteers are horrible people who work for the corrupt government. Haven’t I already mentioned this to you already? Yeah, I think I have.”

“Of course, many times. You think the hospital is out to discredit and torture you.”

“Yes, good boy, it looks like you’ve been listening to me,” Ouma remarks, patting the robot on his metal head. The pat on the head should feel degrading to the robot since the dark haired boy is patting his head as if Kiibo is a dog. However, the pleasant smile the dark haired boy gives him and the warm sensation of the dark haired boy’s hand on his metal head feels very affectionate. Ouma often seems to radiate fondness to the robot, something Kiibo has always craved. Frequently, Kiibo wonders if this fondness Ouma has for him is just in the robot’s head, but he can’t help but enjoy the moments where the dark haired boy actually seems to like having the robot around.

“Hey Babysitter-chan, I want to show you something,” Ouma tells him. “It’s a picture of my dad. Want to see?”

“The CEO of an online retailer?” Kiibo asks, putting his math homework in a binder.

“Not just any CEO. The CEO of the country’s LARGEST online retailer. He’s the guy who is fighting corruption from inside while I fight corruption using my grassroots support!” Ouma punches the air with his fists excitedly. He reminds the robot of a little boy praising a superhero. Kiibo understands the feeling of a son being proud of his parent since the robot considers himself to be the proud son of Iidabashi. The more Ouma joyfully talks about his family and secret organization, the more the robot wishes they exist. Over the weeks, the dark haired boy has managed to convince a part of the robot that maybe there are important people looking for Ouma. The dark haired boy stops punching the air and leans forward to grab the robot’s wrist. “C’mon, I want you to see him!”

Honestly, Kiibo doesn’t know what to expect before seeing the image. He hasn’t really thought about what anyone in Ouma’s past would like, but Kiibo would have never expected Ouma’s father to look like this. The image of the man before Kiibo looks like the human embodiment of a god. He has shiny raven black hair, smooth tan skin, a perfectly symmetric and sculpted face, a chiseled jaw, large eyes, and a perfectly ripped body. Kiibo turns to Ouma and asks, “Was it really necessary to show me a picture of him topless?” The dark haired boy giggles and shrugs. Kiibo sighs and declares, “This can’t be him.”

“Of course it is! Where do you think I get my good looks from?” the dark haired boy laughs. He then pulls up a bunch of other attractive pictures of the same man. Some pictures have him topless. Some pictures have him with a shirt on. “Yep, my dad is not only a billionaire CEO. He’s also a world famous super model! I only get the best when it comes to parents,” Ouma sighs happily. Kiibo just silently looks at him, not knowing what to say. The dark haired boy looks back and starts laughing harder than before. “Just kidding! That’s not my dad. That’s just a random supermodel from who-knows-where.”
“That’s what I thought,” Kiibo replies, rolling his eyes.

“You never laugh at anything I do. I wish robots had a sense of humor,” Ouma grumbles, pulling up a search engine.

“Hey! We robots do have a sense of humor!” Kiibo counters, gently pushing the dark haired boy’s shoulder, causing the smaller boy to chuckle at the robot’s small amount of anger.

“Could have fooled me. I have an amazing sense of humor yet have never made you laugh. You need to lighten up. Otherwise, you’re going to be miserable the rest of your life. Then again, you’re a robot, so maybe not having a sense of humor suits you,” Ouma concludes.

Kiibo really doesn’t feel as mad with Ouma as he usually would be in moments like this because, one, Ouma was trying to make the robot laugh, and, two, Ouma was correct about him needing to lighten up, especially around Ouma. Even so, the robot still couldn’t ignore the dark haired boy’s offensive remarks. “I do have a sense of humor! I’ve studied since the art and history of comedy since I was five and am well versed in what humor is! Also-AHHHH!”

Kiibo didn’t notice the dark haired boy moving the laptop off to the side and preparing to launch himself at the robot. Ouma successfully managed to tackle Kiibo, someone who is more than twice his weight, against the pillows of his bed when the robot was momentarily distracted. The dark haired boy continued laughing as he blankets his own body over the robot and snuggles up against Kiibo’s metal body. Ouma breathes against Kiibo’s neck, “You’ve never laughed before. Have you? I don’t think anyone can claim to be a person without ever laughing before.”

“There are some people who probably have never laughed or rarely laughed. They’re still people. I’m still a person!” Kiibo huffs. Even though the robot is displeased with Ouma’s remarks, he wraps his metal arms around the boy and let’s Ouma bury his face in the robot’s neck. The robot doesn’t know why, but one of the most rewarding things about getting to know Ouma is all the physical affection he receives from the boy. Kiibo usually rarely experiences physical contact, so when Ouma regularly gives the robot physical affection, whether it’d be through a hug or a simple touch on the back, the robot feels cherished. He never thought he’d love human contact until he experienced it with Ouma and kind of misses it when he leaves the boy.

“The individuals who never laugh or rarely laugh aren’t people. They’re probably almost as miserable as you!” Ouma chuckles.

“I don’t appreciate your insults!” Kiibo replies. The robot takes a deep breath so his anger doesn’t get out of hand. He distracts himself with Ouma’s comforting body heat and the tickling sensation of the boy laughing on top of him. Kiibo wondered a while ago if this physical contact is inappropriate, but he reminds himself that he and Ouma are friends, equals. It’s not like they have a professional relationship, like a doctor and have. If Ouma wants to snuggle close with the robot, then Kiibo will let him. They’re not hurting anyone or themselves from the physical contact. Plus, the more comfortable Ouma is around Kiibo, the better, especially since the dark haired boy is openly hostile towards everyone else at the hospital.

“If you had a sense of humor, you wouldn’t be insulted by me at all,” Ouma replies. He lifts himself on to his elbows and looks down at the robot with a smirk. Kiibo unconsciously shivers at his gaze. “I love laughing. If I stopped laughing, I’d probably kill myself.”

“That’s not funny!” Kiibo whines, managing to sit up, resulting in Ouma sitting on his lap.

“It’s only not funny because you don’t have a sense of humor, Babysitter-chan,” Ouma responds, frowning. *Ouma-kun, you couldn’t have found it funny either since you’re not laughing. That’s what
Kiibo wants to say, but Ouma changes the topic by telling the robot, “Now let’s go look at actual pictures of my dad!” He excitedly takes his laptop back in front of him. “Hey, scoot back and make yourself comfortable. The pillows are right there! That’s an order!” Kiibo shrugs and sits back beside Ouma with his back against the pillows. The shorter boy scoots closer so that his arm is comfortably resting against the robot’s arm. The dark haired boy types of a familiar looking name into the search engine and a bunch of links pop up along with a photograph of a very professional looking man with a black suit, dark slicked back hair, and an ordinary looking face. Not as good looking as the supermodel, but the man is decent looking, albeit a little boring. Kiibo tries comparing his appearance to Ouma’s. Both of them have dark hair, large eyes, and rounder jaws, but the robot couldn’t say there’s anything that makes them strikingly similar, certainly not enough to guess they’re related. “He’s no supermodel, but that sharp looking, very important man is my dad. I’m serious this time.”

The man is famous enough to have his biography page, and Ouma clicks on it. When Kiibo reads his bio, he reads about how this man is the CEO of the country’s largest internet retailer. It talks about his wife being active in politics and how his business venture came to be. The man does lots of philanthropy, but there’s nothing really that noteworthy in the bio. He seems to always have lived a privileged life. There’s no mention of any kids or of him speaking up against the government. Kiibo comments, “You know, people have done research on this man and have talked to people who work closely with him. There’s no evidence of him having a kid, let alone a son.”

“Well, those people are government pawns! Of course they’re going to say something like that!” Ouma fumes, clenching his fists above the laptop keyboard and visibly shaking.

The robot grabs the hand closest to him and rubs circles on the back of it in order to soothe the boy. Every day, Kiibo tries to gently explain to Ouma the harsh realities in hopes that someday, the dark haired boy will get it. Once he gets it, he may make an improvement, as long as he handles the truth well once he accepts it. Kiibo then carefully tells him, without looking at the boy in the face, “I’ve done research myself, and there’s no mention of him and his wife having any children.”

To Kiibo’s surprise, Ouma gives the robot a calm smile. “Of course he wouldn’t mention anything about having any kids! His children mean the world to him! He wouldn’t want the government knowing about them and harming them!”

“It’d be difficult to hide children though,” the robot points out.

Ouma gives him a wide grin. “He’s just that good. My dad would do anything to protect his kids. My brother and I even have names different from our birth names. My public name is Ouma Kokichi, but we know it’s not my real name!”

“If your relationship with your father is supposed to be a secret, then why did you tell the police about your father?” the robot questions.

“The police abused me, remember? So I had no choice,” Ouma replies. He pulls his hand away from Kiibo’s hand and sets the laptop to the side. He then gives the robot an intense look. The dark haired boy tells the robot in a low voice, “I’ll show you some of the scars if you don’t believe me.”

“You don’t have to do that….” the robot automatically tells him. Kiibo has read constantly about how bad it is to force someone to do something he or she is uncomfortable with, so the robot tries his best to never force Ouma to do unnecessary and uncomfortable actions. The robot sees Ouma in large, baggy clothes often, so he infers it as a hint the dark haired boy doesn’t want to show off his body.

“No, I want to. You deserve to see the horrible things government workers do, but I’m not going to take my shirt all the way off,” the dark haired boy states quietly. He then takes the bottom of his
large, white sweatshirt and rolls it up just high enough to expose his entire abdomen. Kiibo feels his
insides go cold with horror when he sees all the gruesome looking, clearly man-made, dark red
slashes all over the boy’s pale stomach. Kiibo makes a mental note to discuss Ouma’s scars and
where the dark haired boy claims the scars are from with the hospital workers. While medical
examiners probably have already seen the injuries, they may not know where Ouma claims he got
them from, which could be important, even if it’s a lie. Just when the robot recovers from the shock
of the painful injuries and is able to properly examine the scars, Ouma quickly pulls his shirt back
down and rubs his eyes with the palms of his hands. He gives the robot a strained smile and
expresses, “I’m over it.”

“Did the police officers…cut you?” Kiibo asks. The robot has never heard of law enforcement using
knives for anything. In fact, he has never even heard about the police torturing others, which is why
the injuries are even more surprising.

“Yep!” Ouma replies with a smile too happy for Kiibo’s tastes. He leans forward, facing the
robot, and explains, “Each one of them had knives and one by one kept on asking me questions.
They’d cut my entire body if my answers didn’t satisfy. I held it out for as long as I could! But they
kept on cutting me, hitting me, whipping me, dunking my head in water, depriving me of sleep….”
He starts laughing, as if he is recalling a fond memory. “Eventually, I figured, ‘I can’t die like this!
My organization needs me to fight against these bastards in the government’!, so I told them about
my dad, and they were satisfied. Maybe that’s what they wanted to hear all along. Who knows?
Those sickos……I bet they get off torturing people. Don’t they? If I had a weaker mind, then they’d
probably get more information out of me, but I’m strong and made things difficult. In fact, I probably
made their interrogation hell too, even though I was the one getting abused.”

At first, Kiibo is disturbed by how Ouma is just laughing off the idea of being tortured, but then the
robot notices the boy’s laughing is getting hysterical. The robot can briefly make out tears in his eyes
before the boy grabs a nearby pillow and buries his face in it. His laughing is muffled by the pillow
and sounds…….not exactly like laughing. It sounds like convulsive gasps and heavy and choked
breathing. He’s visibly shaking. The robot is tempted to remove the pillow to see his face and make
sure the boy doesn’t suffocate death with his face in the pillow. Instead, Kiibo resorts to petting
Ouma’s hair by threading his metal fingers through the dark locks. He tentatively asks, “Nobody has
physically hurt you since then? Right?”

The boy removes his face from his pillow with a grin. His face is flushed, and his eyes are
noticeably swollen. If he was crying, he did a good job hiding it. Ouma answers Kiibo’s question
with more enthusiasm than the robot is comfortable with, “Nope! I have you to thank for that!
You’re making sure they don’t hurt me. I know what you’ve been up to Babysitter-chan!” He gives
Kiibo a warm smile, and Kiibo feels ecstatic at how highly the dark haired boy thinks of him, even if
his beliefs are incorrect. Should I really feel this happy at him wrongly thinking I’m protecting him
from physical abuse? Sure, I’m trying to protect him, but not in the way he thinks I am. Ouma then
leans in to give the robot a hug, and Kiibo feels like he could melt at heartwarming moment. He’s not
trying to emotionally manipulate me with this hug. Is he? I can’t let him control me. “Sure, I can
handle any abuse or torturing they give me, but it’s nice not having to deal with it. The pain would be
annoying, so thank you for protecting me.”

“I’m not protecting you from physical abuse.”

“Awww….you’re so modest.” Ouma-kun, stop it.

“But I’m not. I don’t think the hospital staff wants to hurt you.”

“They do though! And they’re already hurting me! Don’t let your pure mind be manipulated by
them!” Ouma-kun stop it.

“I have a perfectly good understanding of the situation Ouma-kun!”

“Stop it! Don’t let them take you! You’re mine! Not theirs!” Ouma-kun, stop it.

Kiibo has done it. The robot expected this would happen. He has made Ouma cry. He feels the boy tighten his arms the robot as if Kiibo could disappear at any minute, and the robot feels tears on his shoulder where the boy’s face is buried. Ouma sniffs while the robot instinctively rubs circles on his back in an effort to calm him down. Kiibo makes Ouma cry at least once a day, and it never gets any less heartbreaking every time the robot does it. He feels like a crappy person for pushing Ouma until he breaks, but the robot doesn’t want to lie and go with the boy’s beliefs. He needs to face reality and get over it. I’m not going to play along with his falsities just to make him happy. It’s his problem if he doesn’t like the truth.

Eventually, the robot pulls away to check the time on his robotic arm’s clock. It’s past dinnertime, and robot decides to spend dinner with Ouma, the first time he has ever spent mealtime with the pale boy. Kiibo figures seeing the boy’s eating habits will allow the robot to learn more about him. The robot asks him, “Are you okay with me joining you for dinner?”

“What? But you’re a robot! Robots can’t eat!” Ouma exclaims with surprise and genuine interest.

“Being a robot does not mean I can’t enjoy the social aspects of eating meals with others. I’d like to keep you company while you eat, if you don’t mind,” the robot explains plainly.

The dark haired boy harshly bites his lip and looks off to the side before replying a few seconds later, “Okay, if you’d rather be here and creepily watch me eat rather than running off to Pupil-chan to gossip about me, then go ahead.”

“Gossiping implies I talk about things that may not be true. I do no such thing with Amami-kun!” Kiibo argues, surprised that Ouma even knows he talks with about him with the green haired boy. Does he know I also report information to medical professionals too?

Ouma walks over to a nearby mini fridge that’s by the door to take out a carton of sweetened almond milk. He opens cabinets that are high up to get a bowl and a cup. While he does this, he states, “But you and Pupil-chan do talk about me at the cafeteria, right? Pupil-chan is a heinous being who tries to smooth talk you so he can get juicy info. Am I right?”

“Amami-kun is one of the nicest people I know. He just wants to help you,” Kiibo states firmly and grimaces when Ouma makes what sounds like a maniacal cackle. Ouma-kun is nowhere near as nice of a person as Amami-kun. He’s the smooth talking, heinous individual, not Amami-kun.

The dark haired boy sets a bowl, spoon, and cup gently on the bed and kneels down on the floor to open his bedside drawers to take out a box of sweetened cereal and a box of energy bars. Kiibo narrows his eyes at the processed and sweet food the dark haired boy is preparing for himself. Ouma remarks at the robot’s last statement. “It looks like that son-of-filthy-whore already got to you, huh? You poor simpleminded piece of metal.” The robot could have sworn there is an evil glint in Ouma’s eyes. The dark haired boy pours himself of a cup of sweet almond milk and a large bowl of sweetened cereal.

“Don’t insult Amami-kun’s mother like that! I’m sure she’s a perfectly lovely woman who is not a whore! And don’t call me a piece of metal! I’m a developing AI with the functions and personality of a human! And what’s with all that sugar and processed food?! Is that you’re dinner?! Also, aren’t you going to eat at the cafeteria like everyone else?!” Kiibo yells at him while glaring at the pitiful
meal in front of him.

Ouma just laughs at him and explains, “There is no way I’m eating in the same room with all those government tools. They’re all just going to torment and judge me. I’d rather die from my own vomit than have to deal with being in the same room as all those scumbags. Plus, this—” Ouma gestures to the sugary food right in front of him. “is packaged food that the hospital workers likely haven’t contaminated. Who knows what kinds of substances the government puts in the cooked hospital food. And the food I have is vegan, so it’s good for the planet and animals, right?” Being vegan doesn’t excuse you from being a mean person. With a noticeable crunch, Ouma takes a big bite of the cereal. “Also, the whore I was talking about wasn’t Pupil-chan’s mom. I have no idea what his birth mom is like. I was actually talking about Pupil-chan’s dad.” Ouma then jabs Kiibo in the forehead with his metal spoon, causing the robot to angrily tug the spoon away from him. The dark haired boy shrugs at the confiscated spoon and begins to simply eat the cereal with his hands. “I had no idea you are so sexist Babysitter-chan. You assumed the woman is the whore so easily when really it’s the man in this case.”

It’s moments like this when the robot starts thinking Ouma is a bad person. The dark glint in his eyes and the way he insults Kiibo and viciously talk about others makes it easy for the robot to imagine him being a felon and hurting someone. When Ouma calls himself evil, Kiibo sometimes believes it. Kiibo then wonders if trying to reform the boy is even possible or even worth it. Once Ouma is out on the streets, he may genuinely hurt someone. Ever since Kiibo met Ouma, the only person the dark haired boy ever seems to show concern for is Kiibo himself, and sometimes the robot wonders if the dark haired boy is just emotionally manipulating him, trying to make the robot pity him before stabbing him in the back. Ouma-kun being mentally ill does not excuse him for being a horrible human being. He should be doing everything he can to thank everyone who is trying to help him, yet all he does is torment and insult them.

Kiibo glares with disapproval at the boy, but he keeps his intense anger in and doesn’t lash out. Instead he says, “It’s horrible to call someone a whore regardless of gender, especially if you have never met them.”

“But Pupil-chan’s dad is a whore. Why do you think Pupil-chan’s online profile says, ‘Hello, I’m Amami Rantarou. I have 24 brothers and sisters, and I’m trying to keep my dick in my pants. I don’t want to be a playboy since my dad is one.’” Ouma chuckles while chomping away at more of his sweet cereal before filling the bowl with more. The robot starts to wonder if all the sugar is making him act this way.

“That’s a lie. Amami-kun’s profile does not say that. He has 23 siblings, not 24!” Kiibo growls. “This is slander!”

“Is that what he told you? Wow….how is 23 much better?” Ouma giggles, chomping on more of his cereal. “He’s such a crappy brother that he doesn’t even know how many siblings he has! I pity all his brothers and sisters for having a piece shit who works for the government as a brother. I’d rather gauge my eyes out and live in the middle of a war zone than have Pupil-chan as my brother. I’m lucky my brother gives a crap about me while Pupil-chan just abandons his siblings to do work for this so-called hospital!”

“You’re just jealous! Amami-kun has done nothing but help everyone, especially you! You should be thankful he cares about you as much as does! He helped save your life when you idiotically tried to cut your foot off!” Kiibo shouts at the boy, pointing a metal finger to Ouma’s chest. The robot feels
his insides heating up with pure rage. “In fact, you should be grateful you’re here at all, in a safe environment where people are trying to save you from your own dysfunctional and harmful behavior! Yet here you are, doing nothing but making things difficult and bullying others! You call the good people around you terrible people, yet you’re the only one with loathsome behavior!”

Right when he says all that, the robot kind of wishes he could take it all back. It’s probably too much for Ouma to handle. For a very excruciating couple of minutes the room is dead silent, except for Kiibo breathing heavily. The robot tries to calm himself down, but he’s panicking on the inside about what the dark haired boy will do next. *Is he going to permanently hate me after this? Is he going hurt himself or someone? Is he going to regress and make things harder?* Ouma just looks at Kiibo with a calm, blank expression, as if trying to slowly process what the robot told him. Even though the robot knows he said too much, he is very curious about how the dark haired boy will react to this.

Eventually, the robot does get a reaction out of the pale boy, and it’s an energy bar chucked right at his face. Kiibo touches his left cheek where the energy bar had hit it and watches the boy give out a powerful wail, with his face flushed and tears heavily streaming down his cheeks. He aggressively throws more objects at the robot: pillows, books, his cereal bowl, school supplies, and even his laptop. Kiibo just lets the flying projectiles hit him. They can’t physically hurt him. He watches the boy sob and shake heavily with madness. It reminds Kiibo of a small child throwing a temper tantrum, but the robot knows there’s more to it than that.

“IT’S NOT FAIR! WHY ARE ALL THESE HORRIBLE PEOPLE LOOKING AT ME LIKE I’M THE CRAZY ONE, LIKE I’M THE ONE WITH THE PROBLEM?! EVERYONE IS HURTING ME! EVERYONE IS MEAN TO ME! THEY’RE FORCING ME HERE WHEN I’M TRYING TO HELP MY COUNTRY!” Ouma is shaking so much that he can’t control his movements, so the dark haired sits down on the floor beside the bed, curls into a ball, and hugs his knees. He scratches off more nail folds from one hand and tiny drops of blood fall on to the floor. “I TRUSTED YOU BECAUSE WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO CARED ABOUT ME WHEN NO ONE ELSE HERE WOULD! NOW THEY GOT TO YOU AND TAINTED YOUR MIND! NOW YOU’RE BEING MEAN TO ME, AND I’M ALONE! I’M NOT GRATEFUL TO BE HERE BECAUSE IT HURTS TO BE HERE! I’M TRAPPED, AND I DON’T WANT TO BE HERE! I WANT TO GO HOME! I WANT TO BE AROUND PEOPLE WHO I CAN TRUST!”

So much for trying to reveal the truth to him. Kiibo is terrified at the thought he may have permanently lost the trust Ouma had in him. The robot carefully crawls to the crying boy and whispers, “I care about you. You can trust me. I’ve been trying to protect you, remember? You said I always seemed genuine. I’m your friend. Please believe me. You say you’re good at reading people. Can you look at me and deny I’m being genuine?” The crying boy gazes at him through tear-filled eyes. He doesn’t say anything but continues to cry. Kiibo wonders if he heard the robot at all. The robot reaches a metal hand to grab Ouma’s bleeding hand. *Didn’t I bandage these same fingers earlier? Did he take the bandages off only so he can open the injuries again?* Ouma flinches but doesn’t pull his injured hand away. The robot takes this as a good sign and asks the boy softly, “Do you trust me?” Ouma nods. “Is dinner over?” Ouma nods. “What do you want to do?” In response, the dark haired boy wraps his arms and legs around the robot and pats the bed. “Eh? Wait….do you want me to carry you to the bed?” Ouma nods. *You’re not a toddler! The bed is right there!* Ouma is now suddenly acting younger than he usually does. Sometimes the dark haired boy resorts to very childish behavior for reasons the robot doesn’t understand. Because of this and because of Ouma’s immature behavior in general, Kiibo often has difficulty believing he’s a teenager and even questions if Ouma has somehow tricked everyone into thinking he’s a teenager. Supposedly, his dental records and physiology indicates he’s at least around high school age, but, nonetheless, Kiibo questions everything.

The robot reluctantly carries the boy to his bed while asking, “You want to be tucked in?” He feels
the boy nods. The robot holds the dark haired boy in one arm, grabs a pillow off the floor, sets it on the bed, pulls off the bed sheets, puts Ouma on the bed, and tucks him in. The only reason the robot tolerates this ridiculous childlike behavior is because Kiibo knows this can be a cruel symptom of some mental disorders. After spending time with Ouma, the robot speculates the boy didn’t properly mature emotionally and psychologically when he was younger. Right now, Kiibo guesses, Ouma probably has retreated to a younger age mentally because he got upset. Life seems simpler as child I guess. This infantile behavior is just his way of coping with the situation. He’s okay.

Ouma curls up under the sheets of the bed and reaches a pale hand to grab Kiibo’s wrist. The robot asks him, “Do you want me to get in bed with you?” Ouma nods. The robots joins him under the covers and the two them lie down, facing each other, noses nearly touching. The dark haired boy’s warm breath on the robot’s face relaxes Kiibo. The robot then asks, “If you’re not going to eat the hospital’s cooked food, will you eat any home cooked food I bring you if it’s vegan?” Ouma nods. At least we’re making progress when it comes to his diet. The robot then asks a more serious question. “Does it ever get lonely being in a hospital full of people you can’t trust?”

Ouma aggressively bites his bottom lip, and the robot sees more tears in his eyes this time. The dark haired boy then turns his back to Kiibo. At first, the robot thinks the boy is so upset with the question, so he’s ignoring Kiibo. Looking over the boy’s shoulder, Kiibo sees Ouma grabbing sticky notes and a pencil from the bedside table. Ouma then lies on his back and writes something on one of the sticky notes. If you have something to say, say it out loud! Stop giving me the silent treatment! I know you can talk! So talk! You like talking! With a smirk on his face, Ouma then turns to face Kiibo and smacks the robot’s forehead with the sticky note. He then turns around to put the sticky notes and pencil back. Kiibo peels the sticky note off his forehead and reads it.

I lied when I said you were being mean to me. The hospital never got you, and I never stopped trusting you. I was never upset. I was just pretending to be upset to prove a point, to get it through your thick skull that this place is evil. You’re often easy for the government to fool. But you still trust me and we’re still friends, right? Also, to answer your question, no, I do not get lonely. I’m never lonely because you’re here and there are people who care about me, like my family and secret organization, who are looking for me.

The robot doesn’t know how to react to this. What if you find out nobody is looking for you and nobody outside of the hospital cares about you, then what’ll you do? Kiibo crumbles the sticky note in his hands and accurately tosses it into a nearby garbage bin. The robot turns back to Ouma and sees the boy smiling and staring at him. The dark haired boy wiggles closer to Kiibo, wraps an arm around him, and snuggles against his metal body. He presses his own forehead against Kiibo’s metal forehead. They just comfortably lie there, staring at each other’s eyes. Eventually, Ouma closes his eyes and rests his head against Kiibo’s shoulder. The cuddling almost feels romantic, but, with Ouma’s behavior, Kiibo feels like a guardian trying to comfort a small child. The robot lets them both get as comfortable as possible. It’s too safe and soothing to leave this position. Ouma needs all the comfort he can get because we all know distress he’s in most of the time. Kiibo wraps his arms protectively around the boy because he feels like he has to protect Ouma from something.

Chapter End Notes

I was working on this chapter over the week. The original plan for it is a bit different than how it ended up. For one thing, I wanted Ouma's room mate to show up in this chapter, but that didn't end up happening. However, I like how this one turned out.
For the record, Ouma's silent treatment with Kiibo is more than just him being childish. There's actually a reason for why he doesn't talk to Kiibo after his outburst, which isn't explained in the chapter. I think if you try to guess why Ouma doesn't talk to Kiibo, then you'll probably guess right. Hint: he's not giving the silent treatment to make things difficult or to be rebellious.

And yes, this chapter, like many others, does have some hints about who Ouma is and how he thinks. Ouma is very transparent in some parts, and other times he's not.

Sorry, it took almost a week for a new chapter. If the chapter were shorter, then it probably would have been out sooner.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
I made you pancakes

Chapter Summary

Kiibo meets Ouma's roommate, gives the dark haired boy pancakes and drugs, and still doesn't know who he is.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next morning, Kiibo walks towards Ouma’s room and hears two people shouting. One of the voices is Ouma’s recognizable youthful voice, and the other is a more gruff voice that the robot could have sworn he has heard around the hospital before. The robot looks into the room through the hallway window and sees Ouma sitting on his bed with bed sheets cocooning his body and only his face visible. A taller, purple haired teenager in a purple jacket stands at the foot of the bed. Kiibo immediately recognizes him as Ouma’s roommate, Kaito Momota, a person who somehow is never in the room when Kiibo is around. The robot has seen Momota around the hospital doing other things with other people though: taking classes, joining group therapy, eating lunch, participating in group study sessions, and participating in volunteer projects around the hospital. He’s very socially engaged with others in the hospital, the opposite of Ouma.

They’re both too absorbed in their argument to notice the robot looking in on them. Upon seeing the conflict, Kiibo barges into the room to quell the argument. The first thing the robot hears comes from Momota’s gruff voice. “What the hell is wrong with you?! You’re being a bigger asshole than usual!”

“You all deserve every bad thing that happens to you! That’s what you get for being crappy people! When I get out of here and gain power, you’ll all be rotting behind bars!” Ouma screams back, burying himself more in the bedsheets around himself, as if they’re some sort of shield. Momota has his fists clenched to his sides.

“I’m sorry, but what are you two talking about?” Kiibo politely interrupts the conversation, and the two yelling boys stop arguing to look over at the robot suddenly standing before them.

“Who are you?!” Momota exclaims with wide eyes. “I think I’ve seen you around. Are you some hospital robot?”

“No he’s not! He’s not a degenerate servant who does this cruel institution’s bidding! He’s my robot and my friend who caters to me!” Ouma yells back, angrily pointing a thumb at himself. “He’s not a crazy lunatic like you!”

“I’m actually a volunteer at the hospital who is in charge of watching over Ouma-kun,” Kiibo informs Momota, who is glaring at the dark haired boy for his last statement. “My name is Kiibo, and I am an AI who was raised like a human, lives like a human, and acts like a human. I’m a robot for no organization.”

“Are you sure about that? Because my evil organization will be happy to have you once I get out of this hellhole. We can take over the military and then the government. People like him will be one of the first ones we’ll capture and torture as punishment for their treachery,” Ouma comments with a
low voice and a smirk, gesturing towards Momota. The dark haired boy would have looked a little menacing if it weren’t for all the bed sheets securely wrapped around him.

“Shut up! Nobody here believes your organization exists, so stop using it to threaten and bully others! This is why no one here likes you!” Momota says through gritted teeth. He raises a clenched fist right at the boy in a threatening manner.

“Is Ouma-kun’s bullying the reason you’re arguing?” Kiibo questions, nervously looking between the two boys out of worry a fist fight will start.

Momota scratches the back of his neck, looks down to the ground in exasperation, and explains, “Yeah, kind of……he was just really awful this morning.” He then looks at the robot with a serious expression on his face. “I, the great Kaito Momota, thought that maybe making friends would cause him stop tormenting others, so I invited him to the cafeteria for breakfast. He seemed happy about it. However, once he got his own breakfast, he put toothpaste in his oatmeal, shampoo in his yogurt, and liquid soap in his juice. When no one was looking, he swapped his oatmeal with Maki’s oatmeal, his yogurt with my yogurt, and his juice with Saihara’s juice and then proceeded to laugh and chuck food at everyone, instigating a bit of food fight and using our entire breakfasts’ as ammo!” His voice got louder the more he explains the story. Kiibo also couldn’t help but frown at the dark haired boy sitting on the bed. “To make matters worse, when we get back to our room, he gets upset and then starts wrecking my things!” Momota then gestures to his living area, farthest away from the door. The robot didn’t notice it before, but Momota’s small living space is much messier than before. Books, CDs, and school supplies are scattered all over the floor. Some papers and books are even ripped. A laptop computer also lies on the ground, possibly broken.

“He grabbed me and physically abused me! I have bruises from it! He doesn’t do anything but physically beat me every day! He’s a lunatic! My life is in danger because I have to room with Homicidal-kun over here!” Ouma screams back from the blankets. Tears are in his eyes, and he’s shaking.

“I had to grab you to get you away from my things! Some of the stuff is valuable, and some of it is my schoolwork, which you ruined!” Momota shouts back with rage, causing Ouma to glare back with an as menacing expression as he could muster. Kiibo thinks Ouma has guts to stare down the taller boy like that because Momota looks like he could really beat the smaller boy up.

“Please, calm down!” the robot tells them both desperately. He then steps between the two conflicting boys and faces Ouma, who buries his head beneath the blankets so that he’s completely covered in them. The robot calmly whispers to the boy, “I thought you told me yesterday nobody has physically hurt you since you got here.”

“That was a lie. Homicidal-kun has been beating me up since we first met. I didn’t want to say anything because I could handle it, but he’s nothing but a bully who likes to hurt me!” Ouma replies, voice partially dampened due to the blankets.

“That’s not true! And stop calling me Homicidal-kun! My name is Kaito Momota, and, during the nighttime, I’m the hero who has to protect you from your catastrophic behavior!” Momota growls. He points a large finger at Ouma. “I’ve stopped you from injuring yourself a number of times! You should be thankful!”

“Thank you, Momota-kun for keeping him safe,” Kiibo says with a strained smile. Momota’s harsh facial expression softens at the robot’s comment.

“Don’t thank him! Homicidal-kun doesn’t deserve to be thanked!” Ouma yells, revealing his face from the blankets. The rest of his body is still covered. He then says with a snarl, “He was sent to
juvenile detention for assault and has injured people in the past. Ask him if you don’t believe me! He’s a lunatic! He’s got issues!"

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, I had some issues in the past. So what? If you’re trying to egg me into physically hurting you, it’s not going to work,” Momota responds. He tries to sound calm, but Kiibo can see the boy clench jaw and scrunch up his face in anger. He then picks up a white backpack off the floor and puts it on his back. Momota takes a deep breath and states, “At least I knew I had a problem and have been working to fix it, unlike you, who lives in denial and walks all over everyone. Maybe this place wouldn’t be such a nightmare if you just listened to the doctors and therapists who are trying to help you with your mental issues.” Momota walks to the door. “I can’t stand being in the same room as you for this long, so I’m leaving to go to a group study session. Here’s a tip, if you want to get over your mental issues, I recommend making some friends here. Isolating yourself from others is probably making your go mad.”

“I’m not going to make friends with heartless asswipes who want to ruin this country! The government can’t make me one of them! And stop trying to trick me into thinking I have mental problems! You’re all the ones who are crazy! I’m too smart to be influenced by you or this hospital!” Ouma yells back. “Just get out already! I can’t stand being in the same room as a lunatic who falsely accuses others of being as crazy as him!”

“You really have lost touch with reality huh….Okay, it’s your problem if you continue to go mad here,” Momota says with an angry scowl. The robot can tell he’s seething and trying his best not to lose control of his emotions. His hands tighten around his backpack handles, and he steps out of the room. The robot can hear him mutter, “Trust me, I don’t think you’re as crazy as me because you’re actually crazier than I am.”

The door shuts with a prominent slam, and then the room is dead silent, with Ouma glaring at the door for a few seconds. Kiibo looks over at the mess on the other side of the room, which Ouma created, and expresses, “You should clean up this mess.”

“No, I should probably spray shaving cream all over the bed instead. Homicidal-kun doesn’t even deserve to have a clean bed to sleep in.” Ouma mutters, lying down with the blankets securely wrapped around himself. The robot contemplates whether he should push the boy into taking responsibility and cleaning the mess. At some point we can’t just let him do what he wants without consequences. Being mentally ill does not mean he should never take responsibility for his actions.

Kiibo walks over to the bed and sits on at the end of it, right by Ouma’s feet. He tells him, “I have a home cooked breakfast for you. Do you want to eat it, if you haven’t had breakfast already?” At this bit of information, Ouma sits back up and sticks his upper body out of the blankets. He has an oversized blue sweatshirt on, and Kiibo wonders why he wrapped his body in the blankets when his entire body is covered securely in the sweatshirt already. The large sweatshirts he wears everyday are almost blankets themselves. He gives the robot an eager smile, almost jumping in his seated position, and asks, “Can I see it?”

“Yes, I made it just for you,” Kiibo replies, with a cordial smile. He puts his black backpack on the floor, opens it up, and takes out a large, insulated lunch box. “I made you pancakes that are made out of gluten-free flour, quinoa, oatmeal, and bananas and a mango, spinach smoothie.” The robot tried to find the healthiest vegan recipes he could find within the time constraints he had. He figured maybe getting proper nutrients will help Ouma’s mental health. Maybe malnutrition is exasperating the problem.

Ouma raises his eyebrows at the robot and grins. “Why do you know how to cook when you can’t eat?”
“I’m good at following instructions. I simply found recipes, got the ingredients, and followed the recipes’ instructions. It was straightforward,” Kiibo informs him. Ouma peers over at him with a smile. The robot feels like the boy is examining him with his eyes. “What are you giving me that strange expression for?”

“Heh, did Babysitter-chan try cooking for me? That’s sweet,” Ouma remarks, wiggling his eyebrows. Kiibo feels his face flush. Ouma’s compliment makes him feel…weird. The dark haired boy then opens the zipper of the lunch box and takes out the green smoothie, which is in a clear 20 ounce to go container. He takes off the spill proof lid and sniffs it. “Fortunately for you, I am not a picky eater, so even if your food sucks, I’ll probably still eat it.”

*You’re not a picky eater? You insist on eating vegan and refuse to eat any of the hospital’s food. You’ve revoked your right to claiming you’re not a picky eater.* The dark haired boy then takes a large gulp of the smoothie. He briefly leaves behind a green mustache before he immediately licks it off with his tongue. “I guess this’ll do.”

“You guess? Is it not satisfactory?” Kiibo wonders while getting up to find a plate and fork for Ouma. He finds a plastic plate and fork. The small area doesn’t have any knives, not even plastic ones. He sets the plate and fork down right in front of Ouma on the bed and opens a plastic container holding the pancakes. The robot then proceeds, using the fork, to put the pancakes in stacks on the plastic plate.

The dark haired boy takes another large gulp of the smoothie and sighs. “Given how I was raised, I used to eat the highest quality of food, so this is pretty cheap compared to what I’m used to. However, it’s edible, and, at least, I can appreciate rustic and economical foods too.”

Kiibo watches the boy swallow the smoothie down in several larger, quick gulps before proceeding to stab the pancakes aggressively with his fork before wolfing them down. To the robot, the dark haired boy seems to be almost inhaling the entire meal in an obscenely short span of time. The robot puts his hands in front of Ouma and worriedly declares, “Slow down! You’re barely even chewing your food! You’ll get indigestion or start vomiting if you keep eating like that!”

“Relax, Babysitter-chan. I think I’ll make it through this meal alive,” Ouma says, but his voice is muffled due to having a full mouth of pancakes. He takes a large gulp and then starts choking. He then leans forward, puts his hands on his own throat, and starts making weak coughs. Tears form at the corner of his eyes, and his breathing is so heavy that he’s making a high pitched noise.

“I warned you this would happen! Ouma-kun! If food is blocking your airway, try to cough it out! Don’t worry, I’ll help you!” Kiibo cries. He then positions himself behind the choking boy, wraps his metal arms around his waist, presses a fist above the navel, places another hand above the fist, and thrusts both hands upwards into Ouma’s stomach. The dark hard boy coughs and gasps at the robot’s actions.

Ouma then starts to laugh uncontrollably and really hard, tears forming in the corners of his eyes. He pulls away from the robot and holds his stomach to continue laughing heavily, almost to the point of gasping for breath. “That was a joke! I wasn’t really choking! I was fine! I’m a liar, remember?! But, wow! You fell for it! You should have seen your face! You took it so seriously that you gave me the Heimlich maneuver!” He then falls to his side, with the blankets still wrapped around his lower body, and continues to laugh.

Kiibo feels an unusual mixture of relief and anger. “Ouma-kun! That’s not funny! I shouldn’t use the Heimlich maneuver unless it’s absolutely necessary! If I applied it improperly, I could have broken bones or damaged your organs! You put yourself in danger with that joke!”
“It’s my body, so I can do whatever I want with it!” Ouma giggles, sitting back up and wrapping the bed sheets, once more, around himself. He then scoots back so that his back is against the bed’s cushioned headrest.

“You don’t have the right to use your body for prostitution or to take illegal drugs,” Kiibo points out. The robot moves to sit right in front of the boy on the bed and crosses his legs into a seated position. In response to Kiibo’s movements, Ouma pulls his knees to chest and hugs his knees under the blankets.

“Prostitution and getting high off of illegal substances sounds like a way better life than this dump,” Ouma mutters with a pout.

“No it is not! Prostitutes are much more vulnerable to abuse and STDs, and illegal substances can have terrible side effects! Plus, I wouldn’t want you to get arrested!” Kiibo yells worriedly, putting his robotic hands on Ouma’s knees to further get the boy’s attention. To the robot’s dismay, the dark haired boy just laughs at his worries.

“Well, I already got arrested, and I ended up here. If I got arrested for prostitution or possession of illegal substances, they’ll probably still send me here anyway,” Ouma replies. He’s not wrong, I guess. “Besides, if you’re worried about me getting sexually abused, it’s too late. I’ve already gotten raped multiple times in my life. My mom used to bring home a bunch of these friends, and they’d do……y’know……sexual things to me……” He smirks as if it were a humorous memory and then rests his head back against the bedside cushions, unconcerned.

“No……that’s awful……” Kiibo whimpers, he squeezes Ouma’s knees though the bed sheets.

“Oh my gosh, Babysitter-chan……You’re so gullible. Maybe I should start calling your Gullible-chan instead? Calm down! I wasn’t sexually abused!” Ouma chuckles, he then leans forward and reaches a hand out of the blankets to pat Kiibo’s metal hair and then poke him in the forehead. “I’m a virgin. I’m too pure to have sexual interactions with anyone, even if they forced be too! I’m too smart and skilled to be a victim!” He puts his hands on his hips proudly.

Even though Kiibo knows full well that Ouma is a liar, the robot keeps believing his lies anyway. Kiibo knows the story of the boy who cried wolf. The boy kept on lying to the villagers about a wolf attacking the sheep. Eventually he lied so much that the villagers stopped believing him. When a wolf finally did attack, the boy truthfully declared there was a wolf, but nobody believed him, and the wolf ate the sheep. The moral of the story should have been “nobody believes a liar even when he’s telling the truth.” However, Kiibo takes a different moral from that story: “Always believe the liar when he acts distressed because, one day, he may actually be telling the truth and need your help.” No matter how many times Ouma lies or claims to be lying about being in pain, having painful memories, or wanting to die, Kiibo will always try to believe him. The robot will never forgive himself if Ouma is genuinely crying for help, and Kiibo turns away from him. The robot would rather be the butt of millions of jokes and be called gullible, than risk Ouma possibly suffering because Kiibo wasn’t willing to help. Sure, he may never believe the boy when he brags about his family or secret evil organization, but he will always believe him when Ouma tells him something is wrong.

Kiibo thinks about how Ouma was reported to be found on streets at night. An obvious question then pops into the robot’s head. “Ouma-kun, the police found you dumpster diving at night by yourself. Were you usually alone in the streets at night? That’s very dangerous. You’d be vulnerable to being attacked.”

The robot thinks this should be an easy question for Ouma to answer. It’d be the perfect question to answer with a lie. He could say something like “Oh! That was my first time out alone!” or “I usually
go out at night for my secret organization’s meetings!” The dark haired boy doesn’t do any of that though. His pale face grows paler, and, using his teeth, he suddenly aggressively rips the fingernail off of his right thumb so aggressively that his fingernail starts bleeding. *So much for bandaging his fingers so he that doesn’t hurt them. I didn’t bother getting the top of his fingers. He starts hyperventilating and gasps, “He didn’t attack me! I went willingly on my own!”*

“What? You met with someone? Who?” the robot asks in sudden surprise. He reaches into the blankets to lace his metal fingers with Ouma’s as a sign of comfort.

The dark haired boy, with hands still attached to Kiibo’s, wipes tears off with both his arms and gives a blank expression. He tilts his head in confusion and says, “Huh?”

“You claimed a male didn’t attack you. That you went willingly on your own. What were you talking about?” the robot questions. He hopes he’s making some progress in figuring out Ouma’s past, his real past, assuming Ouma’s prosperous background and secret organization are all lies.

“I’ve willingly met with a lot of guys who never attacked me. You’re going to have to be more specific,” Ouma tells him with a grin. Then his face breaks out into a brighter, excited smile. He begins enthusiastically swinging his and Kiibo’s hands from side to side. “Are you talking about my brother? I have conversations with him every day! We were making plans to hold rallies at venues like stadiums and theaters! It’s an amazing atmosphere! The people love my organization and want the government’s blood! You would have liked the rallies if you came to one!” The dark haired boy completely steered the conversation off topic. Kiibo isn’t surprised and honestly assumes Ouma is doing it on purpose. *Is he trying to hide something?*

“No! I’m most likely not talking about your brother!” *If your brother even exists.* Kiibo sighs. “I asked if you are usually out on the streets at night, and you became distressed and said something about meeting a male who’s not attacking you and you going somewhere willingly. So what I can infer is that you claim to have willingly met up with a male at night. There also appears to be a reason for you to think that the male figure could attack you. Does that sound familiar?”

“Huh…I don’t know….still sounds kind of vague,” Ouma simply says, biting his lip.

Kiibo sighs in annoyance. “Okay, let’s try another question. What do you do when you’re out at night? And are you usually out alone at night?”

“Usually some other people from my organization and I go through dumpers to find food that’s wasted. Then we give that food to the poorer members of my organization and charity. I think I’ve explained something similar earlier,” Ouma answers easily with a smile. “And before you go, ‘well, you’re rich, so why don’t you just pay for lots of food?’ Well, I could have, but the supermarket wastes a lot of food anyways, so we just decided to go with the free food and save the money for more important projects, like for advertising about the government’s corruption.” *Don’t you mean propaganda?*

Kiibo protests, “Maybe you’re wrong though. Maybe you went dumpster diving because you didn’t have money for food and needed the free food. Nobody from your family or organization has come looking for you, so maybe-”

“No! You’re wrong!” Ouma cries out. He shoves Kiibo’s hands away from him and scooches as far back into the bed’s headrest as possible, like he’s trying to get the headrest to swallow him. His face trembles and tears are already filling his eyes. “I have lots of money and power! They’re just having difficulty finding me! It’s only been three weeks! These things take time! I’m not poor, and I’m especially not homeless like the lying, rotten police say I am! I’m well educated, remember!? If I didn’t receive the best nutrition for my brain and the best, high quality education, I wouldn’t be
taking college level classes! Impoverished kids have brains rotting from malnutrition and can barely read! I’m not one of them!”

“That’s not true! There are plenty of smart, skilled, and talented adolescents who are in poverty! Power, influence, and money isn’t everything!” Kiibo argues as he watches Ouma completely cover his face under the bedsheets, as if hiding from the robot. “Ouma-kun, you’re a critical thinker! Think! Do you think it’s possible you’re just misremembering things?! Do you have any evidence that what you’re saying is true?! Everything and everyone else around here says the opposite. You said your brother emailed you earlier? Do you have the email?”

“I deleted it! I delete all my emails so that the government doesn’t look into them!” Ouma sobs through a bunch of sniffling. He then lies down to his side, still under the blanks. The robot can seem him curl into a ball. Even though Kiibo can’t see him through the blankets, he can imagine the dark haired boy shaking and crying uncontrollably in a fetal position. He’s kind of glad he can’t see the crying boy right now. “I don’t have any evidence! But you have to believe me! You have to trust me more than you trust them!”

“I’ve tried contacting who you claim to be your father and mother, and all their representatives deny either of them having children, even when I mentioned your name. I searched all over for this secret organization of yours, and nothing shows up. I’m sorry, but I trust my eyes more than I trust what you have to say! Ouma-kun, you’re here at the mental hospital because you’re a mentally ill patient! If the government was really trying to go after you, they would have sent you behind bars to high security prison or would have kept on interrogating you in worse conditions than this! You’re smart. Please think this through!” Kiibo begs. This just causes Ouma to cry out even louder to the point of screaming. The robot wonders if people in the hallways or the rooms nearby can hear.

I think I’ve said enough. He needs to think over this information on his own. The dark haired boy is too busy bawling that he can’t make a coherent reply, so Kiibo crawls over to him and opens the blankets. As the robot expected, Ouma’s face is scrunched up in pure agony and tears are streaming down his face. He calms down after seeing the robot, and Kiibo is surprised he doesn’t appear too angry with him. Kiibo then covers them both up with the blankets. It feels like they’re in their own tiny, cozy, and safe shelter of their own, where no one can hurt them. Kiibo can see why Ouma feels like covering himself in these blankets. He can also see why the bedsheets are comfort items to him. Did he have bedsheets or blankets as a child? If he did, did they mean a lot to him? Kiibo then wraps his metal body around Ouma, so the dark haired boy has the robot wrapped around him while both of them are wrapped around the sheets. “I’m still your friend no matter what your background is. I never cared about how many followers you have or who your family is. You could be a homeless boy who has never had anything or anyone in his life, and I’d still be your friend.” The crying quiets into whimpers as Ouma snuggles up against the robot. “Just try to help me help you. Stop lying to me.” Ouma doesn’t say anything to this. Kiibo doesn’t need him to because the robot is content with the two of them lying there in each other’s arms under the blankets.

After a few minutes, he feels Ouma’s breathing even out and his whimpers quiet down. Kiibo then feels Ouma press a light, warm kisses on a spot on his metal neck. They tickle the robot and cause him to shiver. He doesn’t know what the dark haired boy is trying to accomplish doing this. When Kiibo has heard of neck kisses, they always seemed erotic, aggressive and tiny bites to cause hickies. These kisses seem chaste and are most likely done because the robot’s neck is the closest to Ouma’s lips. The robot also wonders if the dark haired boy is too tired or delirious to know what he’s doing. Once Kiibo got used to them though, the kisses feel nice. They seem to be an unusual sign of closeness and affection.

I wonder if Ouma was raised to kiss people on the neck of other body parts like this. Does he usually do this to friends? Or does the relationship have to be more than that? Ouma-kun’s behavior and appearance tells me more about how he was raised or he is more than anything else. His sickly
and unhealthy appearance tells me that he was malnourished and possibly had inadequate nutrition. The inadequate nutrition is possibly due to limited access to food, which would explain the dumpster diving. His well-educated mind implies he came from a well-educated background somehow or is just naturally just that gifted. Although, even if Ouma-kun is gifted, he must have received some sort of education in order to get to where he is today. The question is where that education came from. It almost contradicts the theory that Ouma-kun was homeless, but poverty and adequate education aren’t necessarily exclusive. I also wonder how much of his mental illness is related to biology and how much of it is related to environment. It wouldn’t surprise me if Ouma-kun was raised in a harsh environment. The government can’t even identify him, and the schools and hospitals around here don’t have any records on him either, so it’s possible he’s a kid who was kept hidden from the world for some reason. Maybe he’s an undocumented immigrant of some kind. Maybe he was kidnapped at a young age and his kidnappers kept him hidden. Maybe he was born without getting a proper birth certificate. Maybe his parents didn’t like him, so they kept him hidden, but if that’s the case, then why didn’t they put him up for adoption? Maybe I’m overthinking it. It’s possible he was raised normally and the government just hasn’t properly identified him because he’s making things difficult. He could still be in government or school records. There are so many people in those records that it’ll be difficult to find him. Maybe he has parents or guardians searching for him, and the government just hasn’t properly identified him yet. The government can’t identify him through fingerprints since his fingerprints aren’t in the system. I have access to some of the best technology in the country. I scanned Ouma-kun’s face and tried to search for that face through photos on the internet and came up empty handed, so someone with a face similar to Ouma-kun’s isn’t publically in the internet. Ugh, why won’t he tell us anything? He can’t be doing it just to make things difficult.

“Ouma-kun?” the robot whispers. Ouma’s breathing hitches against Kiibo’s neck, and the robot feels a little guilty for ruining their peaceful silence, but he longs for information. “What junior high did you go to? You’re so well-educated, so it must have been somewhere good.”

The doctor can feel the small boy shake and tense up in his robot’s arms, so Kiibo tries to wrap his arms tighter around him to calm him somewhat. It feels wrong upsetting him while we’re in such a cozy environment under the blankets. This position and these bedsheets sheltering us are almost like a safe haven where Ouma-kun should never be allowed to be uncomfortable. But at the same time, maybe now is a good time to try to get more information while he’s in a good mood. Ouma mumbles quietly to Kiibo in a way that almost sounds like a whine, “I’m naturally smart. Where I got my education from doesn’t have anything to do with it.”

“Do you not like your junior high?” Kiibo wonders.

“I was homeschooled. No junior high was good enough for me. The homeschooling wasn’t good enough for me either. It’s irrelevant, so drop it,” Ouma says quickly in a very dark and threatening tone. He seems a little angry at the robot for bringing his past schooling up. Nonetheless, he buries his face in Kiibo’s neck and sighs comfortably.

“Hey Ouma-kun, I’ve got some medication to help make you feel good. Will you take them?” the robot asks him tentatively. Kiibo knows full well that while Ouma is prescribed some medication, the boy rarely takes it, if he ever takes it all. One of the reasons for this is because he doesn’t trust any substance the hospital gives him. Another reason, which was explained to Kiibo by a doctor, is Ouma’s mental illness is very difficult to treat with medication. In fact, medication would have very little effect.

The doctors and therapists also admit that hospitalization, ironically, feeds into some aspects of Ouma’s mental disorder. It feeds into his narrative that people are trying to hurt him by holding him against his will. This makes the robot worried for him even more because if staying at a hospital just makes things worse, then what’s the point? But a doctor clarified to the robot that the hospital is still
the safest place for Ouma given his destructive behavior. Hospital staff are optimistic that things will improve once he gets proper nutrition and is in the safe environment long enough. If his mental disorder stems from more environmental factors, then he’s more likely he’ll snap out of the worst of his delusions eventually. Although, to the robot, Ouma seems like he’s too deep in his own world that he’ll never get better. **Maybe he’ll stay imprisoned here forever until his mental illness takes his life.** Kiibo can’t wrap his head around the idea that the hospital can make Ouma both worse and better. The only thing that makes sense to Kiibo is that Ouma will probably die if he’s anywhere else.

At the mention of medication, Ouma just groans like he’s a little kid being waken up early for school. He shakes his head and just cuddles up more against the robot. Kiibo really doesn’t want to leave the boy’s warmth to get the drugs either, and he’s tempted to just drop the subject. However, the robot persists. “I picked up the pharmaceuticals myself and looked at them. They’re safe and, as I said before, they’ll make you feel good. I’ll be happy if you take them.”

Kiibo tries to pick his words carefully so that he’s not lying at the boy while also trying to convince him to take the medication. To be honest, the robot doesn’t believe the medicine will do much if Ouma takes them. However, the robot really wants to see Ouma take them because taking them would show signs of progress. The dark haired boy willingly taking the substances will show he’s willing to be treated. If he can accept the drugs, then he’s more likely to accept other forms of treatment in the future.

“You’ll really be happier if I took them?” Ouma asks. Kiibo nods with a smile. The two boys pull away from each other and both poke out from under the bed sheets, which are a tangled mess on the bed. The dark haired boy stretches his arms out and grumbles, “Fine. I’ll take the pills.”

The robot beams at this, which causes Ouma to automatically smile back. Kiibo nearly jumps out of the bed and runs over to his backpack to take out the prescription drugs. With the bag of medicine in hand, he runs over to the fridge to get a water bottle and jogs back to Ouma, placing the bag on the bedside stand and shoving the water into the dark haired boy’s hands. Ouma still doesn’t both taking his lower body out of the tangled bed sheets. He chuckles and rolls his eyes at the robot’s eagerness. Kiibo counts out the appropriate dose from each pill bottle and carefully places them in Ouma’s hands. Kiibo then realizes he forgot something, so he hurriedly tells Ouma, “Don’t take them just yet. You need to eat them with something.” Kiibo then runs over to his bag and opens it to take out some bagged apple slices, which are in the same insulated lunch box as before. He then hands Ouma the bagged apple slices. “Eat these with the medication.”

“You looked like a man on a mission. How dutiful of you,” the dark haired boy comments with an amused expression. Ouma chews the apple slices very thoroughly and takes sips in between bites. It’s the exact opposite way he ate his breakfast, when he barely chewed his meal. When the dark haired boy only has a little water left in the bottle, he puts all the pills in his mouth at once and gulps down the water. He tells Kiibo, “I have to use the bathroom.”

Kiibo nods, and Ouma runs off to the bathroom to shut the door. The door doesn’t have a lock in case anyone needs to get into the bathroom. The robot feels like he needs to do a thorough of a job watching the smaller boy, so he walks over to the door and leans his ear against it in order to hear any suspicious sounds. Kiibo’s hearing is very sensitive, so he can pick up on almost any amiss sounds easily. He also has recording functions, so he can keep any suspicious sounds on record. Kiibo hears a bit of shuffling and the movement of clothing. The robot then hears a very soft choking noise before the loud splash of what seems to be liquid solids and the dumping of other liquids splashing into the toilet bowl. **That’s weird. If he’s passing a stool, it should be more solid than that. He can’t be urinating. Because urination has more of a trickling noise I believe.** It begins to click in the robot’s head what may be going on when he hears more silent choking and more matter hitting the toilet bowl. The toilet then flushes and sound of clothing moving is heard again. The sink turns
on, and Kiibo times that it’s on for a solid two minutes before Ouma turns it back off. He’s in the
bathroom for another couple minutes, and Kiibo can now hear the sound of liquid swishing around
before being spit into the sink. When the door finally begins to creak open, the robot immediately
backs away and sits on the edge of the bed, as if he hadn’t been eavesdropping on Ouma’s personal
toilet break.

Ouma looks more tired coming out of the bathroom than he did when he came in. Before he has a
chance to lie down, Kiibo asks him, “Can I see both your hands?”

“How? Why?” Ouma asks in a scratched up voice. His eyes widen at first, but then the dark haired
boy puts on a neutral expression.

Kiibo doesn’t bother answering the question because he knows if he answers it honestly, Ouma
won’t like the answer. He takes both of his pale hands, and Ouma whines at the action, trying to pull
his hands away in vain. Kiibo examines both hands and notices that the right hand has prominent red
block blotches around the knuckles of the pointer finger, middle finger, and ring finger. These came
about recently. The other hand doesn’t have them. The robot then sees tiny scratches around the
knuckle of the pointer finger. The robot blurts, “Are these teeth marks?”

“Huh? What are you talking about?” Ouma wonders with a tilt of the head. Kiibo thinks he’s acting
almost too innocent.

“Never mind, I actually have a more important question than that,” the robot replies. He suddenly lets
go of Ouma’s hands, causing the boy to stumble backwards because he was pulling against the
robot’s hold on his hands the entire time. Ouma yelps and falls on a sitting position. He gives the
robot a look of disapproval, and Kiibo mutters an apology. The dark haired boy scrambles back up
and walks over to the bed to sit on it and rest his back against the cushioned headrest. Kiibo
swallows before worriedly asking, not even looking at the boy, “Why did you induce yourself into
vomiting?”

“What?!” Ouma shouts in surprise before laughing loudly at Kiibo. The robot looks over at him
and frowns. The dark haired boy is laughing so hard that he throws his head against the headrest and
gasps out, “You think I made myself throw up like some insecure teenage girl with an eating
disorder?! That’s funny! You’ve got great imagination Babysitter-chan!” He calms himself down and
takes some deep breaths. He then leans forward to flick Kiibo’s forehead and answer with a very
large grin on his face, “Jeez, I was just going to the bathroom…no need to get dramatic suddenly and
jump to conclusions.”

“No, it’s just…….” Kiibo answers weakly, looking at the floor and swinging his legs against the bed.
The robot honestly feels sick himself. “I heard gagging followed by liquid food falling into the toilet.
I then looked at your right hand and saw splotches and small scratches that it made it very possible
you shoved a hand up your throat in order to trigger a gag reflex. I also remember you drinking water
and chewing your food thoroughly before taking the pills, so it looked like you were trying to make
it easier to throw up…..” The robot hesitantly looks back at the boy and sees Ouma has the bedsheets
wrapped around himself again, most likely grabbed them while Kiibo wasn’t looking. He’s giving
the robot an accusatory glare, but, to Kiibo, the look seems forced. He seems scared. “If you didn’t
want to take the pills, you should have just told me. I’d rather you do that instead of taking them only
to force yourself to throw them up. Was that why you did that? To throw the pills up?”

“That’s a false accusation! You’re misreading the situation! You didn’t hear any gagging or food
being thrown up! The markings on my knuckles are from me accidently punching the wall one time!
And so what if I happened to chew those stupid apples slower?!” his voice rises, and he’s shaking. I
struck a nerve again. I know I’m right. “Plus, why were you listening in on me using the bathroom,
Kiibo shakes his head, attempting to ignore the boy’s insults. He scoots forward towards him and mumbles calmly, “listen to this.” The robot then plays a recording of clear, amplified sounds of audible gagging followed by liquid solids splashing into the toilet. It’s pretty obvious what occurred, and the robot knows Ouma doesn’t have the energy in him to deny it.

The dark haired boy has tears welling up in his eyes, and Kiibo reaches forward to comfort him. However, Ouma aggressively shoves him backwards, causing his metal back to hit the floor. The shove doesn’t physically hurt, but the rejection stings. Normally, Ouma accepts the robot’s physical attempts at comforting him no matter what. When Kiibo sits back up, Ouma sobs out, “I’m going to bed!”

“What? Are you taking a nap?” Kiibo questions, bewildered. He stands up to sit on the bed, only to be literally kicked back off. The second rejection stings more than the first one. Kiibo feels like he’s about to cry with the boy, but he looks away to calm himself down. He’s going to do everything in his power not to cry in front of the dark haired boy. He stands up and turns to face the weeping boy.

Ouma is already lying on his side, blankets curled around himself, and is facing away from Kiibo as much as physically possible. He’s shaking and sniffing, making it apparent he’s crying again. He softly choked out, “Yeah, I’m just going to nap. I don’t need you creepily watching me. Go away!”

“I can’t. I have to watch you to protect you,” Kiibo quietly protests.

Ouma screams, which startles the robot. The dark haired boy seems to be uncontrollably crying hard and lets out a shaky breath. “Fine, be that way. You can watch and take away my valuable privacy! Just stay off to the side and don’t bother me!”

The robot obediently obeys his wishes. Kiibo turns off the lights, which automatically ignites a very bright night light, putting a clear spotlight on Ouma, and making it easier for Kiibo to watch him. Kiibo grabs his backpack and sits down with his back against the wall. He watches the boy while preoccupying himself with other things, like schoolwork, his laptop, and cleaning up the mess Ouma caused on Momota’s side of the room. He periodically looks up at the boy and notes Ouma hasn’t shown any signs of falling asleep. Occasionally, Kiibo will say something, and Ouma will ignore him or angrily tell the robot to shut up. When mealtime come around, Kiibo offers him food, but he doesn’t take it. When he has an appointment, like a therapy session, he just walks out with one of the hospital workers, without even acknowledging the robot. When he comes back to his room, he just goes back to bed.

When it’s late evening, and Kiibo is about to leave. The robot tries one last time to say something to the boy. “Are you mad at me?”

“No, but you’re mad at me.”

“No, I’m not. I’m just concerned.”

“I was just trying to make you happy, for once, by taking the damn pills! But I just make you upset!”

You wouldn’t have made me upset if you just simply not thrown them up! All you have to do is stay well behaved, and then we’ll both be happy! Kiibo sets his backpack down by the door and walks around the bed to the front of dark haired boy where he’s lying down. He’s having another crying spell. More tears are streaming down his pale and tired-looking face. It hurts the robot to see him like this. It must get so tiring having all these emotional roller coasters every day. Kiibo wipes the tears from the dark haired boy’s eyes and, to the robot’s dismay, more tears replace them as Ouma cries.
harder. Kiibo worriedly looks at the boy, feeling absolutely helpless. Kiibo thinks about asking the hospital if he can stay with Ouma for the night but decides not to since it’s a school night. With a metal hand, Kiibo brushes his dark bangs to the side and leans in to give the boy a tender kiss on the forehead. “Don’t worry about it. You make me happy. Are you doing okay?”

Ouma tucks the bedsheets over his chin and whimpers, “I feel so sick and tired right now…”

“It’ll get better. I’ll see you tomorrow,” he gives the boy another quick forehead kiss before walking to the door, grabbing his backpack, and leaving. He sees someone who’s supposed to escort Ouma to a medical checkup heading towards the room. Upon leaving the room, Kiibo he hears Ouma’s weak and exhausted voice.

“It won’t get better.”

Chapter End Notes

This chapter and past chapters do have some foreshadowing, but they also have some red herrings. If things don't seem to be making progress, pay a bit close attention to Ouma's changes in behavior and wait until the next chapter because something really big happens then.

These chapters are so long. No wonder it takes a week to update.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
This book club is just for leisure

Chapter Summary

Ouma's behavior changes, and Kiibo sees a book club.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After that weekend, something in Ouma changes. For the next two weeks, unless he has a doctor’s appointment, therapy session, or vitals check, the dark haired boy spends the rest of his time lying in bed. Sure, Ouma does have a daily schedule he’s supposed to follow, and the hospital expects him to follow that schedule, but he’s never forced to follow it. In fact, he gets away with a lot of things, including not eating for a few days until the robot informs him that the hospital will put him on a feeding tube unless he eats something. Consequently, he reluctantly and half-heartedly eats a little bit of whatever food Kiibo gives him. He never finishes it. In fact, sometimes he barely eats any of it, but he does eat at least.

Ouma says he’s sick, and that’s why he needs to stay in bed as much as possible. Kiibo believes him. Every day when the robot asks how he’s feeling, the dark haired boy just says he’s still sick. Kiibo believes him. When the robot asks him what his symptoms are, Ouma lists a wide variety of symptoms like fatigue, headaches, and nausea, and these symptoms change every day. Kiibo believes him. Every day, Ouma complains that everything hurts or that he’s physically unable to anything. Kiibo believes him.

How can the robot not believe the boy when he says he’s sick?

Other than eating, breathing, and drinking, to Kiibo, it doesn’t seem like Ouma is doing much to sustain himself. Even though he’s in bed all day, Kiibo doubts he gets much sleep, if any. The dark circles under his eyes get larger and darker every day, and Kiibo never senses the dark haired boy actually sleeping during the hours he watches the smaller boy. The robot spends every day watching the boy stare at nothing or close his eyes to feign sleep. He doesn’t talk much, and Kiibo doesn’t feel like making him talk a whole lot. He’s not causing any trouble, tormenting people, ranting against the hospital, or having emotional rollercoasters. In fact, he’s not that emotional at all. Ouma is there, but he doesn’t really feel there to Kiibo. He feels like a shell of the boy. He typically speaks in an almost a monotone voice and seems to always be thinking about something Kiibo is not a privy to. It’s almost like a part of the boy is in another world, and Kiibo is stuck with what’s left of Ouma.

Kiibo walks into the boy’s room after school on Monday. A nurse with a clipboard is looking into the room, which is a very common occurrence, so common that nurses spying on them are easy to miss and ignore. Ouma is not wrong when he says the hospital takes away every bit of privacy he has.

When he walks into the room, Kiibo is surprised to see Momota, who still is rarely in his room, and a pale, black haired boy wearing loose fitting black hospital scrubs. They’re both standing beside the bed Ouma is in, mumbling some things to him. The conversation is clearly one-sided as Ouma curls away from the two of them with the sheets tucked over his nose. Momota has his arms crossed and looks down at Ouma with a serious expression while the black haired boy seems a bit more anxious about something. When they see Kiibo, Momota gives a friendly smile and wave and the black
haired boy just gives him a perplexed look. They stop whatever conversation they are having with Ouma, and the black haired boy mumbles to the lying boy, “Hope to see you in class or group tomorrow.”

The two boys leave the room, leaving Kiibo alone with Ouma. The robot walks over to the boy and sits on the bed, right in front of Ouma. He rubs the boy’s arm through the blankets and greets, “Hello, Ouma-kun. You feeling any better?”

“No, I’m still sick,” the dark haired boy mumbles in a tired voice, mouth muffled through the blankets. He’s staring at the wall in front him.

“What are the symptoms?” the robot asks, almost automatically.

“The same as the last million times you’ve asked,” Ouma replies in slightly louder voice. There’s a hint of annoyance and a whine in his voice, and he’s despondent and detached overall. Kiibo kind of wishes the boy would get emotional again, lose his temper or start crying, anything but this apathetic behavior. He doesn’t have the same emotions he did before. He almost doesn’t feel human.

“Can you list the symptoms again, please? Sometimes you list different ones,” Kiibo responds. He moves the metal hand that’s rubbing Ouma’s arm over to his dark hair. Metal fingers comb through the dark locks, and Ouma sighs at the comforting action.

“I’m tired. I can’t think. I can’t do anything. My head hurts. Everything hurts. I feel like I’m going to throw up. The usual. Stop asking. I’ll tell you when anything is different,” Ouma answers in the same tired, impassive, and quiet voice.

“What were Momota-kun and the other boy talking to you about?” Kiibo questions curiously.

Ouma’s eyebrows scrunch down in what seems like a bitter expression. He then says in a bit more of a venomous tone, “Nothing. Those two are just trying to pick on me when I’m physically at my weakest point. They’re nothing but mean to me.”

“What were they saying to you?”

“Nothing. Just drop it. They just like reminding me how powerless I am when I’m sick. The emo loser dressed in black keeps on telling me ‘you can talk to me any time’ or ‘it’s okay to be depressed.’ I’m not depressed. I don’t get depressed and wallow up in self-pity and self-loathing like he does. I’m just sick. I probably caught a bug from him or something,” Ouma explains with a bit of a dull whine.

Kiibo gets up to get a paper plate and water bottle and then puts those objects on the bedside table. He then goes into his backpack to take out a bag of medicine, counts out the proper number of pills, and puts the medicine on the paper plate. “Here’s medicine. May you take it, please?”

“No, I hate the medicine,” Ouma replies, turning away from the bedside table and squirms as far away from the pills as much as possible without falling off the bed. Kiibo expects this. Ouma never takes his medicine, and nobody pushes him to do so. Nobody really pushes him to do anything except to see medical professionals every once in a while. He doesn’t even have to go school or go to the cafeteria to eat if he really doesn’t want to. People tell him to do certain things, but they never force him. This only makes his delusions about the hospital forcing him against his will even more frustrating to the robot. They let him get away with so much here. If I did even ten percent of the stuff he does, I’d get in trouble. I would never be allowed to just stay in bed all day and not go school.

Kiibo sighs and decides to leave the pills on the bedside table for a few minutes in case Ouma
changes his mind. Then the robot will take away the pills so Ouma doesn’t secretly stash them away somewhere to improperly use them later. Kiibo lies down next to the boy so that they’re on the same level and tells Ouma, “I think those two are just worried about you because you’ve been sick for two weeks.”

“They don’t give a crap about me. They never did. I think….sometimes to feel good about themselves, they like playing the hero and pretending to care about me when they really don’t. I see the disgusted looks they give me. I see the looks everyone gives me here. They all hate me,” Ouma dispiritedly whispers. Kiibo thinks this is the most emotion he’s heard from the dark haired boy in a long time. He wants to see if there’s sadness on his face but can’t since Ouma is turned away from him. The robot simply faces his back and rubs circles on it. “Babysitter-chan, you know you don’t have to watch me if you don’t want to.”

“I know, but I want to,” Kiibo answers simply.

“Why?”

“Because you’re my friend.”

“Why?”

“Because I’ve gotten to know you better, and we’ve bonded. I like being around you.”

“Why?”

Kiibo doesn’t answer right away. It’s an interesting question. Why did he like being around Ouma? On the surface, the robot should dislike the boy because he’s rude, selfish, mean, and high maintenance. He doesn’t know how to put into words why he even likes or cares about Ouma. It’s easy to answer why he likes Kaede, because she’s nice to him. It’s easy to answer why he likes Amami, because he’s nice to him. It’s easy to answer why he likes Kirumi, because she’s nice to him. It’s easy to answer why he likes all these people, because they’re nice to him. Although, that’s grossly oversimplifying the fondness the robot has for his friends. Kiibo has always thought that if people are nice to him, then he’ll like them. If people aren’t nice to him, then he won’t like them. However, the more Kiibo thinks about it, the more he realizes there has to be more to friendships than just kindness. For instance, Hoshi is not the warmest person, yet Kiibo feels like he has more of a bond with him than with Angie, who has been nothing but nice to the robot. Kiibo does like Ouma. He just can’t put into words why though. Even if he lists off the positive qualities about the dark haired boy, Kiibo thinks that wouldn’t be enough.

“Haha, see? You’re lying. You can’t even say why you like being around me because you don’t,” Ouma concludes with a quiet laugh. “I do nothing but make you unhappy. Just admit it. I can tell. You can’t lie to the expert liar.”

“No, I like being around you, and I like you. I like being your friend. I just don’t know why, so I can’t properly answer the question,” Kiibo argues. “I don’t know. We have a connection, I suppose?”

“We have a connection? That sounds so cliché, especially for someone as literal minded as you,” Ouma mutters with a trace of amusement in his tone. “Nothing I do makes you happy, so you can stop dealing with me. I just keep on doing the wrong thing around you to the point where you think I’m crazy and worthless.”

“No, I don’t think you’re worthless at all! If I did, I wouldn’t be around you for hours a day! You can’t just claim you think you know what I think of you when you don’t!” Kiibo protests, his voice
getting loud out of desperation and worry.

“See! There I go! Making you angry again!” Ouma chuckles. He then turns to face Kiibo, and their faces are only inches apart. He has a smile on his face, but there’s something about it that seems strained. It’s almost as if smiling is physically painful for him, but he’s doing it anyway.

“So… tell me. What do you think of me? What do you think my childhood was like? What do you think my background is? Who do you think I am? What are these delusions you think I have?”

There are too many questions for Kiibo to process at once, but he understands why Ouma is asking them. The dark haired boy always seems to genuinely care about the robot’s opinion, even if Ouma often disagrees with it. He trusts Kiibo at least. The robot thinks he better answer carefully because Ouma could really take these answers to heart and use them as a reason to do something drastic.

“I don’t know about your background or childhood. I’m someone who decides things based on evidence and reasoning. There’s hardly any evidence to go on. I’m open to anything at this point. I have no right to make assumptions,” Kiibo replies. “As for who you are, I know you’re a boy who’s around my age and is smart and talented. You’re someone who is very lighthearted and has strong ideals. Ummmmm… You’re also mentally ill and have a lot of misconceptions.”

“Misconceptions about what? A lot of things? Almost everything? You think I’m crazy, right? You think I don’t know anything that’s going on, right?” Ouma then starts rambling more very similar questions. Kiibo feels wary.

“Ummmmm…. As I said before, you’re mentally ill, and you’re here to get treated and get better. The people around here are all supportive of you and are trying to help. You’re wrong when you say they’re trying to hurt you. They’re trying to heal you from what you have. If you listen to them, then you’ll get better,” Kiibo states. He feels kind of exhausted pointing out the obvious to Ouma, but he’s glad the dark haired boy at least seems to be listening. Kiibo actually doesn’t mind answering the questions.

“Okay…. and what if I can’t get better? What if my brain just refuses to cooperate, and everything is futile? What if I can’t leave? If I can leave, where will I go? Who is waiting for me? Does anyone know who I am?” Ouma keeps rambling. Kiibo is confused now. “I know the answers to these questions though…..”

“Then why are you asking them?” the robots wonders. He’s very perplexed about the direction of the conversation.

“Because I know you will disagree with some or all of the answers, so I’m curious about what you may think,” Ouma states in a matter-of-fact tone. He lets out a small, actually genuine, laugh, which Kiibo hasn’t heard in a while. “Never mind, it doesn’t matter what the answers are though. I’m happy with the ones I have for myself, and that’s all that matters.”

“What are you talking about?” Kiibo demands.

“Poor Babysitter-chan…. so ignorant and confused. Trying to help someone under the false premise that he needs help,” Ouma sings. This is the happiest he’s been in a while. What is going on with him? Kiibo doesn’t know if he likes this new happy version of Ouma. “You’re so stupid and so brainwashed it’s annoying. It’s almost like you’re lying to me like everyone else is lying to me, but I know who I am. I know why I’m here, and I know how I’m going to leave.”

He laughs some more and starts humming merrily. There’s something about the way he’s acting that makes him seem delirious. It’s almost like he’s having a mental breakdown. Except this time, the mental breakdown is less emotional and less intense. He appears to be in his own joyful high, a
“How do you plan on leaving?” Kiibo asks. He gazes over the happy boy’s face in order to gauge Ouma’s emotional state, trying to make sense of the situation. He’s never seen Ouma like this. He acts depressed for a couple of weeks, and then, all of sudden, he’s happy and rambling about a bunch of things.

“That’s a secret!” Ouma replies proudly. He continues to hum a song Kiibo can’t recognize. He then gives Kiibo a mischievous smirk. The expression gives the robot chills, and he almost wishes the dark haired boy would go back to being quiet and melancholy. This merry attitude is nerve wrecking to the robot. Their faces are inches apart, and Ouma whispers in a low voice, “It’s my own happy, wonderful, evil secret.”

With the way he says it, the robot wonders if Ouma plans on setting off a bomb to break down the hospital walls and escape. It almost seems like something the dark haired boy would happily do in order to escape. For the rest of the day, Ouma spends his time laughing and singing about stuff Kiibo can’t comprehend. During this time, the robot is trying to wrap his head around what caused Ouma to act this way or what is going through his head. Kiibo wouldn’t be surprised if the boy is high on some happy drugs. Although, with his mental state, this delirious high could be his brain’s own doing.

When the evening comes around, Kiibo decides to prepare to leave. He starts to get up from the bed, but a hand grabs his arm and pulls him back on to the bed. “Wait, Babysitter-chan.”

“Hmmmmm?” the robot mumbles, lying back on to his side and facing the dark haired boy. Ouma has a dazed smile on his face and gives him an excited grin. Kiibo wonders if he’s about to pull some sort of joke or start whispering about more evil secrets he has. The dark haired boy wriggles closer to the robot until their noses are touching and places a hand on the robot’s cheek. Kiibo feels his metal face grow red from the closeness, and Ouma’s grin grows wider. The robot is tempted to pull away because he feels like something weird is about to happen, but he doesn’t because he doesn’t think Ouma will hurt him. The dark haired boy’s lips ghost over his, and he mumbles in a husky voice, “Kick, punch, or beat me up if you don’t like this.” He closes the gap between them and presses his warm lips on to Kiibo’s cool metal ones. It sends shivers through the robot as Ouma repeatedly presses very light kisses all over the robot’s mouth, not pushing to go farther. His hand is still on the robot’s cheek. Ouma doesn’t know what to do. He doesn’t know whether he should pull away or pull the boy closer. He decides on neither. The robot simply closes his eyes and enjoy the affectionate moment. He lets Ouma do all the work. After a couple short minutes, Ouma pulls back and instantly turns away so quickly that Kiibo doesn’t have a chance to see his face. “Okay, you can leave.”

“Huh? What was that about?” Kiibo asks, feeling a bit light-headed from the action.

“It’s just a goodbye kiss. An innocent lip-to-lip contact. No big deal,” the dark haired boy answers casually. The robot is a bit disappointed because it’s his first kiss and feels like the moment should mean more than that, but he doesn’t protest or push the issue. Kiibo at least liked it. Although, the robot wonders if the kiss is pushing the limits of the friendship he has with Ouma. Kiibo will probably stay up late thinking about the meaning behind the action some more even if it probably means nothing.

A nurse stands at the room’s door, waiting to take Ouma somewhere. Kiibo worries that maybe she saw the kiss, even if it’s supposed to be harmless. However, the woman has a very neutral expression and just watches the two of them with an uninterested look. Kiibo grabs his backpack and
says to the boy, “See you later, Ouma-kun.”

“Goodbye Kiibo.”

The robot walks to the door and heads to the elevator. It isn’t until he’s at the elevator that he realizes Ouma addressed him by his name for the first time. What is with him today?

The next day, Kiiibo arrives to the hospital with Kaede, Amami, and Iruma and heads to the fourth floor, as always. When they arrive, a lady at the reception desk informs the robot that he’ll be in one of the day rooms to monitor a bunch of patients. This is drastically different from just watching a patient one-on-one. Kiiibo assumes Ouma is in that room. Ouma’s punishment of being confined to his room during free hours ended, so Kiiibo is optimistic that the boy decided to leave his room and spend his leisure time in a room with other patients. Maybe Momota-kun made him leave his room.

When Kiiibo goes to the room he’s assigned to, he peaks inside and sees the room’s TV, tables, shelved magazines and fictional books, coloring books, manga, board games, video games, ping pong table, and other things for entertainment purposes. A group of four people are off to the corner, all holding a copy of the same book.

“Ah! Kiiibo!” Momota is one of the four and calls out to him, a bit too loudly.

A girl with two long twin tails and a large green bow in her hair, who Kiiibo recognizes as Tenko, elbows him and hisses, “Not too loudly! Not everyone here wants to hear your shouting! And focus on the book!” She points aggressively at the novel in his hands. “We’re here to discuss it!”

“Gonta agrees. A gentleman does not shout in a room like this. It’ll disturb Shinguuji-kun from his own reading,” Gonta, a large, muscular boy with long, wild hair, states. He gestures over to Shinguuji, a masked boy with long hair. Shinguuji doesn’t seem fazed by the chatter as he sits on a couch to the corner, reading a book. “As Tenko-san has said, let’s focus on the book.”

“Tenko-chan, I didn’t bother to read any more chapters since the last meeting,” a red haired girl, who Kiiibo recognizes as Yumeno, states in a groggy voice.

“It’s fine. This book club is just for leisure. If you don’t feel like reading, then you don’t have to read,” Tenko replies, giving a warm smile to the redhead.

“You just gave me a hard time for not talking about the book and raising my voice just a tiny bit. At least I read the chapters we were supposed to,” Momota grumbles.

Kiiibo becomes disinterested in their conversation. He stands by their table, and his eyes wander the room to search for Ouma. There are two patients watching TV, Shinguuji, and the book club, but there’s not a sign of the dark haired boy. Not wanting to disrupt their conversation too much, the robot tentatively pokes Momota in the shoulder to get his attention. The purple haired boy immediately looks over and asks in a quiet voice, “Yeah?”

“Where’s Ouma-kun? Is he supposed to be here?” Kiiibo questions.

Momota’s face instantly pales, and he fidgets anxiously. Kiiibo gives him a concerned look. The purple haired boy scratches the back of his head and mumbles, “No, even if that ball of terror did want to spend time in the day room, he would be with his own group, in a different room, with Shuui-Saihara.” Momota looks ill all of sudden. Kiiibo wonders if the boy needs medical aid. However, Momota just shakes his head and asks, “Did anyone tell you what happened to Ouma?”

Kiiibo shakes his head. With the pained look Momota is giving him, Kiiibo understands that whatever happened with Ouma can’t be good. The purpled haired boy winces and looks anywhere but at
Kiibo. He gives a dry laugh and rubs a hand over his face, “He’s clever.” His face then turns serious. He almost seems angry. The robot assumes Ouma must have pulled a horrible joke that went terribly and now the boy is being punished somewhere. While still not meeting Kiibo’s gaze, Momota informs Kiibo in a morose voice, “Ouma tried to kill himself earlier today.”

Chapter End Notes

I've just been so unmotivated to write this, and I don't know why. I enjoyed writing the end of the chapter at least.

For some odd reason I thought that this fic was approaching 100 kudos, so I was surprised to see 190. You people like this?! Thank you! That means a lot!

If anything sounds weird or doesn't make sense, please tell me. I know Ouma's behavior is kind of erratic and bizarre in this chapter, so I see why it may be confusing, especially when you see someone go from being sad for weeks to genuinely happy very quickly. There is a reason for his mood change. Although, that reason is difficult to state in the fic since this is in Kiibo's point of view and he, understandably, doesn't know what's going on.

Also, the kiss Ouma gives Kiibo at the end of the chapter is a genuine goodbye kiss. He isn't trying to make the robot uncomfortable or trying to do anything weird.

Another thing, the patients are divided into groups. Each group follows a similar schedule. Most of the time, they have the same free periods, same group therapy sessions, same group projects, same activities, and same classes. The main and largest group includes Momota, Tenko, Yumeno, Gonta, and Shinguuiji. The larger the group, the more stable they are. Usually patients of similar cases are put together. There are some exceptions, such as Momota and Ouma being roommates. Those two are barely qualified to be roommates. However, Momota barely qualifies for the larger group, which is why he rooms with Ouma, who is more unstable. Although, the main reason why Momota and Ouma are roommates is room availability.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Ouma-kun and I are in the same group

Chapter Summary

Kiibo learns more about Ouma, spends a couple hours with other patients, fixes a stuffed horse, meets someone in Ouma’s group, and makes a phone call.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It doesn’t feel real. Kiibo starts thinking that maybe he misheard Momota or maybe he’s dreaming. Maybe none of this is real. The robot has suspected Ouma would do something like this, but the dark haired boy seemed so safe in the hospital. Suicide seemed impossible. Sure, he has heard about a patient named Shirogane who successfully committed suicide, but that patient wasn’t monitored nearly as much as Ouma and was even about to be released, so the hospital let their guard down. With Ouma, nobody let their guard down. In fact, the longer Ouma stayed at the hospital, the more cautious people were around him. The only potentially toxic substances Ouma had access to were child-proof, less toxic toothpaste, facial cleanser, soap, and shampoo, all of which were in very small containers, and they’re all taken away at night except for the soap. There are even safety features in the bathroom and other rooms to prevent hanging. No toilet handle, door handle, faucet handle, or other ligature hazard that can be used for hanging were in sight. All potentially lethal weapons and poisons were kept out of reach, and Ouma was constantly monitored. So how did he plan to do it? It had to be unsuccessful.

“Aye, Kiibo?” Momota snaps the robot out of his daze. He didn’t realize that he was giving the purple haired boy a blank stare for a good few minutes, having trouble digesting the information. In a way, Kiibo isn’t surprised that this happened. Kiibo has fretted about it and has thought about what he’d do if Ouma ever did try to take his own life. He even thought about what he’d do if he found out the boy actually died. Kiibo should be heartbroken and devastated by this news, but he’s not. He’s just numb. He feels like he’s not in reality. Ouma’s my friend. I have the feelings of a human. If a human finds out that his or her friend attempted suicide, he or she should be sad or scared. Am I sad or scared? Why am I not sad or scared? I don’t feel anything….Ouma Kokichi, my friend, attempted suicide. Any decent person would feel terrible. Am I not a decent person?

“KIIBO!” Momota calls out to him again, earning himself an angry shush from Tenko, but the purple haired boy rolls his eyes at her and addresses the disoriented robot. “You okay?”

“Yes, I’m just thinking,” the robot answers. He takes a deep breath and concludes. “He’s okay, isn’t he?”

“Well, he’s not dead and probably isn’t going to die, if that’s what you’re asking. I wouldn’t say he’s okay though,” Momota mumbles. He has so many emotions written all over his face. It looks like a chaotic mixture of anger and frustration. His fists are clenched, and he’s visibly shaking. That sadness then turns slowly into anger, and he growls, “Do you not care? Do you robots not care about the lives of humans? You seem so impassive for someone who has heard his friend nearly died.”

What do you want me to do? I have a job to do! You want me to get emotional and lose my focus?! I need to keep things professional for the safety of the patients! I need to focus on the patients in this room. That’s my job! Why do you care anyway?! It’s not like you and Ouma-kun were ever close!
Ouma-kun has caused lots of trouble for you. Why are you so anxious over it?!

These thoughts are starting to sound a lot like the thoughts Ouma-kun would have if he were here. Kiibo
doesn’t mean to be apathetic. He cares. He knows he does. To him, his robotic mind doesn’t seem to
be working. The huge piece of information that was just given to him doesn’t seem to process
correctly. His robotic heart and robotic emotions haven’t received the news. Kiibo then says in a
quiet voice, “Ouma-kun couldn’t have really been serious. It was probably half-hearted and had no
chance at succeeding.”

This is one of the more irrational assumptions Kiibo has ever made. He knew full well while
watching Ouma that the dark haired boy was fearless enough to come up with a plan to seriously try
to take his life. In fact, Kiibo, of all people, was the most afraid about Ouma taking his own life. In
fact, if Ouma even ever joked about killing himself, Kiibo would take him seriously and beg him not
to even joke about dying. Regardless of whether the dark haired boy were serious or not, if Ouma
were to tell the robot he plans to die, Kiibo would take him completely seriously, give him a stern
talking to, hug him, and then report the suicide threat to the hospital. The fact that Kiibo isn’t taking
the attempt seriously now is a 180 from how he usually reacts to the mention of Ouma and suicide.

It feels better to think that it was just another cruel prank. He has said he has a future and is looking
forward to seeing his family and friends. Maybe he got bored and decided to play a joke. Kiibo
always thought he himself would be the last person to turn away from reality. He feels like a
hypocrite, for he constantly makes Ouma face the harsh reality and stop being delusional, yet here’s
Kiibo coming up with his own delusions and excuses. He now feels like he understands Ouma a bit
better though. It’s so much easier to make up your own lies and believing your own lies than it is
face the cruel truth.

“He would have had to know his suicide attempt would fail. It’s impossible for him to kill himself
here, especially with all the monitoring and the precautions,” Kiibo points out. This just gets him an
enraged look from Momota.

Yumeno then pipes up, “It only takes four to five minutes of pressure on a person’s neck to provide
adequate oxygen deprivation to kill them.”

“Yumeno-chan!” Tenko yelps. “Don’t think about that! That conversation has nothing to do with
you!” She grabs the redhead by the hand and drags her across the room, away from the conversation.
Gonta, looking uncomfortable, leaves the table to sit next Shinguuiji. Kiibo doesn’t want to know
why Yumeno knows that bit of trivia since the reason she knows is probably not good considering
she’s a mental patient. Momota gives a look of misery at his friends leaving the table and rests his
chin on one of his hands. Kiibo feels guilty scaring away most of the book club.

“So, Ouma-kun tried to die through asphyxiation,” Kiibo presumes based on Yumeno’s comment.

Momota nods tiredly. “More specifically, hanging.”

“But how? Your room and the whole hospital has so many precautions to prevent that from
happening. This hospital has many safety features,” the robot points out.

“At night, Ouma tore apart a bed sheet to make a hanging rope and attached it to the room’s ceiling
vent,” Momota answers in an almost dead-sounding voice. He looks sicker the more he explains.

Kiibo feels a bit guilty asking Momota to tell him more about the situation, but the robot feels he has
to know as much information as possible. “Aren’t the bedsheets tear-proof though? How could he
have torn them?”

“How am I supposed to know the answer to that? Ouma somehow ripped the sheet apart. That’s all I
know,” Momota replies in an exasperated voice.
Kiibo looks up at the ceiling of the room, trying to find the room’s ceiling vent. It’s a square, with a bunch of tiny slits in the middle. While staring at the vent, Kiibo presumes, “It’d be extremely difficult to put anything through the vent, especially at that height.”

“But Ouma somehow did,” Momota replies casually. “I have no idea how he made the hanging contraption himself. I searched the room for a tall stool or latter of some kind for how he got to the ceiling and couldn’t find anything. I also don’t know how he ripped the bedsheets. All I know is that he used a stack of objects as some sort of stool to…ummmm…y’know…..Never mind! The details don’t matter!”

_The details always matter! I need information!_ Kiibo sits down on a chair beside Momota and thinks about the situation for a few seconds before stating, “You were there when it happened.”

Momota looks distressed and nods. “I heard quiet choking and opened my eyes to see him hanging there with his body writhing in pain. I could see it so clearly because of the damn nightlight. He might have succeeded if I hadn’t woken up. I probably could have easily slept through it too because the noise wasn’t that loud…..It’s just….awful. I thought he died when I pulled him out of the noose.”

“How was he when you saved him? How was he when you last saw him?” Kiibo thinks his inner workings are breaking from the stress of hearing this. He’s seen in movies and TV shows of people slowly being choked to death. Ouma must have gone through something similar.

“He was nothing but a pain. Apparently, he wasn’t even unconscious for that long, if he was unconscious, because he screamed at me shortly after I saved him and accused me of hurting him. He ran to the corner of the room, curled in a ball, and had a huge fit and some sort of weird panic attack. People had to drag him to a stretcher in order to take him to the intensive unit because he wasn’t going there willingly. Fortunately, he was too weak to put up much of a fight,” Momota grumbles. He puts his arms on the table and covers his face in his arms. Kiibo decides to let him out of his misery and stops asking questions. Just imagining the situation horrified the robot.

He must have been traumatized seeing that. That’s the sort of thing you can’t forget unless you actively try to suppress it.

The room feels suffocating to Kiibo, almost like he’s the one being strangled by the torn up bedsheets. He feels like he’s going to shatter to pieces. Kiibo feels tears in his eyes, but he fights to keep them at bay. The robot feels like he can’t get emotional in front of all these patients. It’ll stress them out, and he’s supposed be the professional one in the room. He longs to be allowed to leave the room, go to a secluded place to start bawling, and then head over the front desk to ask questions about Ouma. Everything about the hospital reminds Kiibo of Ouma. Unfortunately, every time he thinks about Ouma, he feels complete misery. He doesn’t know how the boy is doing. He can only assume he must be in pain.

The next couple of hours moves at a sluggish pace, with some patients requesting he contact hospital staff to let them leave the room for bathroom breaks or to request other services. He knows he’s supposed to be integrating himself with the patients. That’s one of the main roles of his job. The volunteers are supposed to be friends with the other mentally ill patients. The patients feel segregated if they’re lumped together as “the mentally ill” and isolated from others their ages. Unfortunately, Kiibo doesn’t feel like talking to them. He sits with them and occasionally will offer services. Shinguuiji asks Kiibo questions about what’s going on outside of the hospital and how robots can be part of humanity. The only disturbance happens when Gonta freaks out due to Tenko killing an insect. Momota and the robot calm the giant down by convincing him it was an accident and that freaking out wouldn’t be the gentleman thing to do; freaking out will only upset those around him, and Tenko is already freaking out enough as it is. Gonta then immediately feels guilty and says, “Gonta is a stupid and terrible person!” This then forces Momota and Kiibo to have to calm him down again.
Kiibo notes that Momota is pretty capable of handling some of these patients too, but he also knows that the purple haired boy can do serious harm when he’s at his worst. Momota is very up front with Kiibo, and tells him that he has severely injured others in the past because he lost his temper. It got so bad that he got depressed and had so much self-hatred to the point of being suicidal. He’s clearly getting better, but there are still traces of his emotional instability. This only makes the robot even more frustrated with Ouma because the dark haired boy repeatedly tried to push Momota into losing his temper, knowing full well that the taller boy could seriously injure him. Momota says he has come close to physically injuring Ouma almost every day. Fortunately, he hasn’t physically hurt Ouma yet because he wants to prove to the hospital that he has been getting better and that he can handle someone like Ouma. It’s remarkable that the hospital even trusts Momota, someone with a history of violence, to have Ouma as a roommate. In a bizarre way, Momota considers it an honor. With a proud grin, Momota tells Kiibo, “Only the strongest of minds can handle someone like him. This is a test of will the hospital is giving me. If I pass, then it shows the great Kaito Momota beat his inner demons! I want to show everyone that they can beat their inner demons too! I can be the role model everyone here looks up too!”

He seems so genuine that Kiibo almost believes him. The robot doubts the hospital making Momota and Ouma roommates is ‘a test of will’ though.

To Kiibo, the hours seem slow and boring, but everyone somehow occupies themselves with other things. For the first hour, the patients study, read, play games, or have conversations. Tenko, Gonta, and Yumeno spend the second hour knitting blankets for patients at a nearby hospital. Kiibo helps Momota repair a bunch of broken and old toys for the same local hospital and patients in this hospital. The toys are meant for patients of all ages, not just little kids. In fact, after sewing together a stuffed, brown horse, Kiibo sets the toy aside to give to Ouma later. He’s technically a hospital patient. He doesn’t really have any belongings he can call his own. Kiibo never understands the appeal of stuffed animals or toys in general, but they’re usually harmless, and a lot of people like them, so the robot can respect that. He’s seen on television children growing ecstatic over receiving new toys. In fact, even some adults have their own stuffed animals. There are even toys that appeal specifically to adults.

Kiibo hopes the stuffed horse will appeal to Ouma at least somewhat. The dark haired boy has some very childish aspects and interests. Kiibo has seen him watch anime made for kids and actively read children’s books. Sometimes he’d ask Kiibo to play pretend with him or to read to him, both activities Kiibo has struggled with. The robot has never been able to grasp the concept of role play and doesn’t see the point of reading to someone who has a college reading level. In fact, he doesn’t understand why Ouma, someone with an advance intellect, is into children’s books and children’s anime. Fortunately, since all of it is harmless, Kiibo doesn’t care as long as Ouma isn’t self-conscious or feels bad about his interests. The more he thinks about it, the more the robot believes the stuffed horse will be a suitable gift for Ouma. At least, the dark haired boy can pretend it’s his companion and hug it when he wants to. If he doesn’t like the horse, then he can take his emotions out on it when he has too.

Even with the pleasant communal atmosphere of the room, with the occasional manageable incident or inconvenience, Kiibo still wants to leave the room. He’s putting up this professional front and actively ignoring the near death of one of his friends. He wants to know how the dark haired boy is doing. He wants to know if there’s anything to do to help Ouma. It seems almost unfair that these patients are enjoying themselves while Ouma is isolated and suffering somewhere else. The robot can’t stop thinking about how he wants to drag Ouma into their activities and have him enjoy conversations with the other patients. However, Kiibo knows it’s not that easy. Ouma probably wouldn’t want to be anywhere near any of them and wouldn’t enjoy the peace. He’d most likely wreak havoc and upset everyone there. Momota may actually physically hurt him. Yumeno may cry and get depressed. Tenko may freak out and use Ouma as a prime example for her hatred of “nasty
boys”. Gonta may feel guilty and think he did something wrong to cause Ouma to act out. Shinguuji may… well Kiibo doesn’t know much about Shinguuji.

When they leave to have a pre-dinner group therapy session, Kiibo can’t leave the room fast enough. He grabs the stuffed horse and rushes over to the front desk and sees Maki and the black haired boy who Kiibo once saw with Momota. It’s unusual to see Maki at the front desk since usually she’s with patients. In fact, she’s so well trained that sometimes she helps the patients plan for the future and helps with the vocational program. Kiibo assumes one of the reasons she’s at the front desk is because the black haired boy, in similar-looking black scrubs as before, is also there.

“Ummmm….hello, Harukawa-san,” Kiibo greets her. Maki looks up at him with an indifferent expression. She doesn’t say anything.

The black haired boy types something on the computer and says, “Kiibo-san, you don’t have anything on your volunteer schedule for these hours. Would you like to participate in something?”

Kiibo looks over at the boy in surprise. For a second, he wonders how the boy knows his name, but then remembers the lanyard he’s wearing, containing his name and photo ID. The robot answers, “When will Ouma Kokichi need my aid? I’ve been caring for him since I got here.”

“Probably not for a while since he’s in intensive care and volunteers aren’t allowed in intensive care,” Maki answers while writing something down on a clipboard. “It’d probably be better if you move on and distract yourself with other patients. You’ll be the first to know when he’s allowed to be in the more open unit.”

She says it in such a cold and heartless manner that Kiibo wonders how she’s even allowed around patients. Kiibo replies in a bit of a desperate tone, “He won’t be in there for that long though, so I can’t just forget about him. Patients in intensive care are usually only in there for, at the most, a few weeks.”

“Exactly, patients are usually there for days. Ouma hasn’t even been admitted for one day, so he doesn’t need you now,” Maki answers. “I think you knew the answer to the question you just asked, so why are you asking?”

“It’s just for reaffirmation,” Kiibo answers honestly. He more specifically wanted to hear an estimation of when Ouma will be released from the intensive care unit to the more open unit. However, he knows that the dark haired boy just attempted suicide last night, so there’s no way anyone can accurately predict when he can get released.

“Do you know Ouma-kun’s status?” Kiibo questions, looking over at the black haired boy.

The black haired boy clicks around the computer while Maki watches him intently. He doesn’t look Kiibo in the eyes, and Kiibo meanwhile has been staring at him for a good few minutes. He appears nervous under the robot’s gaze, and Kiibo wonders if he should stop staring. He knows the boy is connected to Ouma in some way judging by his and Momota’s conversation with Ouma the day before. After a while, the black haired boy answers, “He’s awake and stable. He was estimated to be unconscious for around ten seconds, fell asleep at around 1:28 AM, was admitted into intensive care at 1:45 AM, and stayed asleep until 3:28 PM. I’m not allowed to read any more information on his current status unless you want basic information like vitals.” He bows his head and bites his nails. “Sorry.”

They’re just amateurs. They’re not allowed to have access to more personal patient information.

“It’s fine. Patient confidentiality is important,” Kiibo answers. The robot feels defeated though. Without much information on Ouma, there’s really not much he can do for the boy. He’s not allowed
to work at the intensive care unit because that area is for medical professionals only, and he’s not allowed to visit because he’s not immediate family or over eighteen. The visiting rules for intensive care are way too strict. Kiibo knows that until Ouma is stable enough to be sent to the more open unit, the robot will most likely never see the boy. This is so counterintuitive. I’m the only person he trusts, and he needs me now more than ever, yet I’m not allowed to see him. He begins pacing in front of the front desk to think.

“Kiibo-san,” the black haired boy’s soft voice breaks the robot out of his worried thoughts. He reaches out to give Kiibo a slip of paper. The robot grabs the paper and sees that a phone number on it. “This is the number to the room Ouma is currently staying at. You can call him anytime, even outside of visiting hours.”

“Are you sure I’m allowed to call him that easily?” Kiibo asks in disbelief. He holds the sheet of paper very delicately between two metal fingers as if it were priceless treasure.

“Sure,” the Maki responds with a shrug. “Children under eighteen call patients all the time. All sorts of acquaintances call using this method. In fact, family members like calling patients too because it’s more convenient, especially with visiting hours so limited.”

“Thank you,” Kiibo tells them both. The phone rings, and Maki answers it. The black haired boy just stares intently at the monitor in front of him, not doing anything else. The robot then takes the stuffed horse in his hands and puts it on the desk. “May this be sent to Ouma-kun?” Maki is too busy with her phone call to give a verbal answer, but she grabs the horse and puts it in a place behind the desk where the robot can’t see it. “I’m sorry, but you didn’t answer my question. Does that mean the toy will get delivered to Ouma?”

Maki nods while talking on the phone. Kiibo then turns to address the black haired boy and asks, “Excuse me, but what’s your name? I presume you’re a patient here. I apologize if I’m mistaken.”

“Yeah…….I’m a patient here,” the boy answers in a meek voice. He says it so quietly that Kiibo wonders if someone with normal hearing would miss it. He chews on his nails more and turns his head more away from the robot. “I’m Suuichi Saihara, and Ouma-kun and I are in the same group.” So they must have seen each other often since people in the same group have similar schedules. Although, Ouma-kun doesn’t seem to like him very much, so they must not be on good terms. Of course, then again, I haven’t met anyone else here who’s on good terms with Ouma-kun. Saihara really doesn’t seem to want to talk to Kiibo. He keeps looking away from the robot and has an anxious, almost pained, look on his face. The robot at first worries that Saihara is afraid of him or uncomfortable around him because he’s a robot, but then the robot reminds himself that this isn’t always the case with everyone. Kiibo asks carefully, “Do I trouble you? Am I doing something wrong?”

“No!” Saihara answers in a sudden loud voice. His face then flushes from his sudden outburst. He hesitantly looks Kiibo in the eyes. He whispers, “You’re not doing anything wrong. Don’t worry about it. I’m just being…weird…that’s all.”

Kiibo nods. He doesn’t understand how to respond to someone like Saihara, especially after being around Ouma hours a day. Ouma is someone who tends to say things without shame. While Saihara seems to be self-conscious with almost every word he says. The differences are interesting, especially since the two boys are in the same patient group. Patients in the same group supposedly have similar mental states or stability. Ouma’s and Saihara’s mental illnesses must have some similarities in order for them to be in the same group. Kiibo also remembers Saihara talking about him and Ouma being in the same classes. Upon thinking about this, Kiibo asks, “Do you take college classes like Ouma-kun does?”
Saihara just nods and appears to be trying to occupy himself with the computer in front of him. He keeps gnawing on his nails and tapping his foot anxiously. Kiibo feels bad about asking so many questions to someone who clearly doesn’t want to talk to him, and Maki keeps glaring at him with suspicion. Kiibo is curious about Ouma and Saihara’s similarities. Maybe the things that help Saihara will help Ouma. Maybe he can get advice from the people who work with Saihara. Unfortunately, asking questions seems to be the last thing Saihara and Maki want him to do. Kiibo doesn’t want to be a nuisance. He hates the feeling of people disliking or being annoyed with him, so he just awkwardly leaves with a quick, “Thank you for your information.”

When he arrives home, the first thing Kiibo does is go to his bedroom, lock the door, sit down with his back against the door, hug his knees, and bawl his eyes out. He may not be human, but he was designed to be as humanlike as possible. This means being able to feel human emotions. The emotions Kiibo feels were building up ever since he heard about Ouma’s suicide attempt, and now he can finally release them. Iidabashi gave him the ability to feel sadness and replicate the function of crying. Plain water trickles from his eyes to represent tears, and his whole body shakes from stress and emotion. He chokes and sobs as more water streams down his face. He can’t stop worrying about the life of a bratty teenager he just met a couple months ago.

He thinks about the unbearable pain Ouma have been going through to want to die, and he can’t stop thinking about how scary it must be to have a mind that doesn’t work properly. Kiibo wonders what it’s like for Ouma to live in constant fear, to always believe the people around him are out to hurt him, and to be sensitive and anguishing over the smallest and most harmless things. The robot has known that Ouma has been suffering, but he couldn’t exactly comprehend the cruel reality until the news about his suicide attempt. The dark haired boy used to smile and seem confident so much that Kiibo believed that sometimes he was happy, sometimes he did enjoy life. That was enough to convince Kiibo that once the dark haired boy learned the hospital isn’t his enemy, then maybe he’ll be happier and overcome his mental illness. The robot also thought that Ouma lying in bed all day was him going through some transition phase. Maybe he was starting to acknowledge his mental illness and then will try to get better once he started actively getting out of bed. Kiibo had all these thoughts about the different ways Ouma could recover. The dark haired boy attempting suicide made his future seem darker than Kiibo thought. After months of Kiibo trying to figure out how recovery may be possible, recovery now seems close to impossible. A part of him doesn’t want to see and talk to Ouma again. He doesn’t want to get more attached to the boy and spend more time trying to help, only for Ouma to die later. It’d be too heartbreaking for the robot. He thought about asking to care for another patient or to take on a different job at the hospital. In fact, he even thought about stopping his volunteer work at the hospital altogether so that he doesn’t hear about Ouma again. He’d rather not know about Ouma’s fate than hear about the boy dying.

This is the first time Kiibo has ever thought about quitting on Ouma. Although, the more the robot thinks about it, the more disgusted he becomes with himself. Ouma-kun is his friend. It would be inhumane of the robot to just give up on him like that. Kiibo has spent his whole life trying to justify why he’s like a human. Helping a friend in need seems like a very human thing to do. Worst case scenario, if he dies or never gets better, I can at least be proud that I tried to help, and this can certainly be an educating experience for me. Plus, I can’t pass up the opportunity to save Ouma-kun’s life. He needs me. He’d be hurt if I just abandoned him.

Kiibo figures the least he can do is call the dark haired boy. Once he finishes crying and calms himself down, feeling a lot better in the process, he takes out his cell phone to call the number Saihara gave him.

The call sends Kiibo directly to one of the nurses who works at the intensive care unit. The nurse asks a few questions and immediately identifies the robot as one of the volunteers at the hospital. She asks Kiibo to hold the call for a couple minutes and then returns to inform him his call will be sent to
After a couple minutes of silence, Kiibo hears a familiar voice. “Babysitter-chan? Are you there?”

“Yes………….it’s Kiibo,” the robot replies hesitantly. He’s a little disappointed that Ouma still doesn’t call him by his name. He thought that after Ouma said his name when they separated yesterday, maybe the dark haired boy will start using his name from now on. However, Kiibo brushes that disappointment aside because there are more important things to focus on. Kiibo feels a twisted combination of intense relief and nervousness. Ouma sounds relatively okay, but the robot feels like any word he says could be extremely dangerous. He decides to play it safe with some small talk. “How are you Ouma-kun?”

“Crappy. The hospital seems to think you were too nice to me, so they captured me and forced me into this horrible confinement where a hag is creepily watching me,” his voice whines through the phone. “Some of the people in this room are creepy! There’s some girl who won’t stop babbling about how aliens will visit her! Another girl keeps crying about her parents’ death after her parents literally visited her earlier this morning!” His voice gets higher as he speaks, and he sounds terrified. He lets out more high pitched whines. “Why am I here with them? Is this supposed to be a torture room? Is this the government trying to punish me even more?”

I thought that maybe after a huge event like attempting suicide that maybe he’d improve afterwards. No, he’s still as delusional as ever. In fact, moving to intensive care may make matters worse. How’s he doing emotionally though? Is he hurting himself or having any breakdowns? Is he at least acting stable even though he’s still being illogical? Kiibo wishes he could see his face in order to gauge Ouma’s emotions. The boy sounds genuinely distressed. The robot tells him, “No, you’re not in a torture room. It’s one of the rooms in the psychiatric intensive care unit. It’s a place for patients who are at risk of harming themselves or others. You attempted suicide last night, so you are deemed at high risk of harming yourself. As a result, you’re sent here, to the intensive care unit, rather than the more open unit you were at previously.”

“What?!” Kiibo hears deranged-sounding laughter through the phone. The robot is confused, but he’s seen Ouma bounce from emotional distress to laughing many times before. “I wasn’t trying to kill myself! They’re delusional! What happened last night was just a prank to freak out Homicidal-kun. It worked, and it was hilarious! Unfortunately, Homicidal-kun is too simple minded to get the joke and overreacted, so now I’m here in his hellhole.”

Kiibo feels his inner mechanics heat with anger. He has to pull the phone back for a few seconds to calm himself. The last thing he wants to do is lose his temper with Ouma. After he feels calm enough, he pulls the phone back to his head and says, “After everything that has happened, you still lie to me? Ouma-kun, that wasn’t a prank, and you know it. You can’t lie through this. Just tell me
the truth, please.”

“That is the truth!” Ouma insists with a bit of a growl. “Listen, if I wanted to kill myself, why would I try hanging myself in the middle of the bedroom rather than in the bathroom where I’ll be hidden from view from Homicidal-kun? Hmmmmm?”

“The bathroom is especially designed to make it more difficult for patients to hurt themselves. There probably wasn’t anything in the bathroom that you could use to quietly kill yourself. The bathroom’s ceiling vent has smaller slits than the bedroom’s ceiling vent, so it’s easier to make a hanging contraption in the bedroom. In fact, it was probably impossible for you to find a way to attempt suicide in the bathroom overall,” Kiibo explains. Kaede explained all the bathroom safety precautions to him earlier, and he remembers making note of how unusual the bathroom ceiling vent looked. He doesn’t know why the ceiling vent sticks out in his mind, but Kiibo is glad it does.

“That’s all projection. That’s not proof it wasn’t a prank,” Ouma retorts venomously.

“Ouma, you’ve been lying to me and everyone else ever since you got to the hospital. It’s only been causing nothing but suffering for you!” Kiibo points out exasperated. He keeps feeling more and more deflated. Why do I keep on expecting more out of him? I just keep on having similar tiresome conversations with him.

“Lying is the only thing that brings me amusement around here! You’re a robot, so you don’t have sense of humor! You won’t understand! Lying is all I have to keep me from….” He doesn’t finish the sentence.

“To keep you from what?”

“From a lot things! It’s hard to explain,” Kiibo hears a groan through the phone, and he’s positive Ouma is making the loud groan through the phone on purpose. “Besides, if everyone is allowed to lie to me, I should be allowed to lie to them.”

“I’ve never tried to lie to you.”

“I know, but you to believe the lies around you. If you start believing in lies, then it becomes the truth.”

“Couldn’t the same thing be said about you? How do you know you’re not believing your own lies?”

“What? I’m an expert liar! I can keep track of my lies to I know I’m not mixing them up with the truth!”

Ouma-kun says so many falsities. It’s impossible to know which ones Ouma-kun truly believes and which ones Ouma-kun knows are lies. Kiibo feels his head hurting from the confusion. A straightforward thinker like him should not be handling this type of conversation. They’re just running around in circles, again. He feels like crying again, but keeps reminding himself he has to be calm in front of Ouma. “Ouma-kun, why don’t you trust me? You know I want what's best for you. I can’t help you if I don’t know the full truth. If you think the hospital is lying to me, then what is the truth? You can’t gain back your freedom until you tell me the truth!”

“…….” Kiibo waits a good several seconds for a response. He wonders if Ouma got sick of the conversation and hung up. The robot looks down at his cellphone and sees that the call is still going.

In case Ouma is still listening, Kiibo says, “Suppressing the truth is hurting you. You’ll feel better if you have someone to share your secrets with. I won’t tell anyone anything if you don’t want them to
“The hag is right there…..eavesdropping on this conversation as we speak.”

“Can you whisper then? I have exceptional hearing, so I’ll be able to decipher what you say. How far away is she from you?”

“She’s around one and half meters from me, maybe?”

“You can ask her not to eavesdrop.”

“No, I don’t trust her. She’s glaring at me right this very moment. I wouldn’t be surprised if she’s trying to kill me with her eyes. Maybe her eyes have lasers, and, one day, she’ll burn me with those lasers.”

“Ouma-kun, that’s very unlikely. She’s not going to hurt you by just looking at you!” To Kiibo’s exasperation and relief, he hears Ouma give a high pitched giggle.

“You need to think outside of the box.”

“What box? I’m not in a box!”

“Pfff….yeah, you are. You’ve been in a box this entire time! You were created in a box and stayed in that box!” Ouma laughs. “To think outside of the box is a common expression, stupid! Jeez, how do you function in the outside world with a dumb brain like yours?”

Says the individual who has to be watched every second of the day because he can’t be trusted to be left alone without hurting himself. Although, Kiibo has to admit, Ouma has a point. The robot knows it’s a common expression, yet somehow his robot mind feels like it’s going haywire all of sudden, so the common expression slips his mind. Normally he can hear a common expression and think of the literal meaning of the expression. He just didn’t do it this time because his mind is trying to process some other things.

Kiibo asks, “Ouma-kun, may you hand the phone over to the individual who’s watching you. I need to speak with this person.”

“No! Then the hag will take the phone away!” Ouma cries. The robot hears genuine panic in the dark haired boy’s voice.

“Wasn’t this person the one who gave you the phone?”

“But she could take the phone away!”

“Please, this is important! These phone calls will get no privacy unless I speak with her!”

After another obnoxious-sounding groan, Ouma answers, “Fine….” He sounds like such a little child.

Kiibo converses with the orderly watching Ouma and convinces her to not overhear their conversation. She says she’ll give Ouma enough space to talk without overhearing him, but she will not leave him out of her sight. After their conversation, she gives the phone back to Ouma, and Kiibo declares, “She promises she won’t eavesdrop on our conversations.”

“Yeah….she’s moving away,” Ouma informs him with genuine surprise in his voice, but then he adds bitterly, “I still don’t trust her or any of these disgusting pieces of scum.”
“Is your distrust of others one of the reasons you lie?” Kiibo questions.

“Sure, I mean, you’d have to be an idiot to be honest with the people you don’t trust. At least with lying, you can confuse or mislead them. With lies you can say whatever you want to your enemies to suit your purposes,” the dark haired boy explains.

“I see,” At least, he has a more logical reason behind his lies. That makes sense. This I can understand. Kiibo then tries to get somewhere with the boy. “Does the truth scare you sometimes? Are you worried what will happen if you tell the truth?”

“Well it depends on the truth and who you’re telling it to. Obviously, I wouldn’t want to tell my enemy the nuclear launch codes or any outsiders my organization’s plans for taking over the military. I’d be worried if they discovered truths like that.”

Now he’s stopped making sense. The robot keeps telling himself to just keep the conversation going to see where it may lead them. “Okay…..ummmmmm….would you say that you find yourself lying constantly to the point where you rarely ever tell the truth?”

“I have to lie since I’m in enemy territory.”

“Enemy territory?”

“You know….the hospital! It’s enemy territory! Do I have to explain everything to you, Babysitter-chan?!"

“You need to explain a lot of things to me since you lie so much,” Kiibo rebuts. This just earns him another groan from Ouma. The robot sighs. “You sound like you’re lying so much just to hide. You’re scared, so you need to come up with lies in order to alleviate your fears. Have you thought that maybe you’re lying too much, so it’s all becoming too much for you to the point you’re miserable?”

“I’m not scared! I’m the strong, evil leader of a secret organization! I hardly ever get scared!”

“Yet you just contradicted yourself! You admitted you lie because you worry what will happen if you tell the truth. That’s fear! It appears that you’re so scared of the people around that you have to lie. If you’re so strong, then prove it! Telling the truth is one of the bravest things you can do! All your lies and fears seem to be too much for you. Show me how strong you are by being completely honest! The more honest you are with yourself and with me, the better you will feel and the sooner you can move to the more open and free unit!” Kiibo feels like he’s reached his limit. He doesn’t know what he can say or do to get anywhere with Ouma. He wonders how people can work with patients as difficult as Ouma without feeling like their minds are about to break in frustration. He wants to slam his metal head against the wall, hoping it will somehow relieve some of the stress that’s building up inside. Iidabashi couldn’t have possibility built me to deal with individuals as difficult as this.

The call is quiet for another few seconds. However, Kiibo knows Ouma is there because he hears some sobbing and sniffling from the other end. The dark haired boy eventually sobs out, “You promise things will get better if I tell the truth?”

“Yes, I promise. You’ll feel and get better, I can help you, and you can leave intensive care as soon as possible if you just tell me truth.” Kiibo tries not to let his hopes get up. It’d hurt too much if he thinks he’s making progress with Ouma, only for the dark haired boy to just disappoint him.

“You better not be lying to me! This is serious! If you lie to me, I’ll…."

"Iidabashi couldn’t have possibility built me to deal with individuals as difficult as this."
“You’ll do what?” Kiibo asks worriedly. He hears heavy breathing through the other end and hiccupping.

“I’ll do something terrible,” Ouma threatens through sniffles.

Kiibo believes him. He reassures the dark haired boy, “Ouma-kun, I’ve never lied to you before. You know I’ve never lied to you before. I’m not lying this time. I’m doing this to help you. I’m doing this so that things will get better for you. Okay? So, please, just tell me what’s honestly on your mind? Tell me anything, anything that’s the truth so that you’ll feel better. I won’t tell anyone anything about this unless you want me to.”

The robot hears some heartbreaking wails and cries from the other end of the phone. He worries that the orderly will think Kiibo made Ouma too upset, so she’ll take the phone away. Fortunately, it sounds like Ouma still has the phone since he says, “Okay, Babysitter-chan……I just want to stop hurting, so ask me whatever crap you want. I’ll try to be honest.”

**He admits he’s hurting, and he says he’s willing to be honest. If he is being honest, then I should try a test question.** Kiibo’s grip tightens on the phone out of nervousness. He feels himself shaking. He worries if he doesn’t make progress now, then he more likely will never make progress. “Did you or did you not attempt suicide last night.”

He hears the boy cry harder through the phone and let out a painful sounding breath before replying, “Yeah, I did.”

**We’re making progress.**

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**Chapter End Notes**

This chapter is soooo long. Haha…there's just too much I want to write in one chapter. I wanted Kiibo and Ouma's conversation to go on forever while also wrapping it up by the end of this chapter. Obviously, I couldn't do that because the chapter will be too long.

I know this story may have quite a few slow moments and conversations, but that's my thing. I need the main characters to be as well established as possible. I feel like I always need to the reader to know every tiny thing Kiibo is thinking. It's supposed to show how much the robot is learning and developing himself. Maybe it's too much? I don't know. I'll stick with it.

Heh, sorry, I'm just critiquing myself.

Also, thank you everyone for the feedback last chapter! That really motivated me write this chapter. I'd still continue this story if I got no feedback, but I love the feedback. (It feeds my ego.) I mostly write this fic because I enjoy writing the story, but I also like reading people's responses to the story.

Editing is still a pain. I should get an editor. mmmmmmmmm.....

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
I lied…..no…wait…

Chapter Summary

Ouma tells Kiibo a lot of things, but is confused. The subject of a stuffed horse possibly containing explosives and a jet pack is also brought up.

(WARNING! The last half of this chapter talks about some very sensitive and adult topics. Nothing gets explicit or that graphic, but it's very heavy matter.)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Over the phone, Ouma can’t seem to stop sobbing, hyperventilating, and hiccupping. It’s painful for Kiibo to listen to, but it’s probably even more painful for the dark haired boy right now. While waiting for him to calm down, the robot contemplates his next question, something related to the previous question, but nothing too harsh. When the cries quiet down, Kiibo can’t help but ask, “Are you okay?”

“I…..just…..don’t….know what to do,” Ouma tells him in between a bunch of hiccups and sobs.

“Calm down, Ouma-kun. You’re safe,” Kiibo assures him in as gentle of a voice as he can muster.

Unfortunately, this just earns the robot a loud wail. “I’m in a building full of people who want to hurt me! How am I supposed to be calm?! How am I supposed to be keep living like this?! I tried to endure it! But even a strong leader like me can take only so much torture!”

Is he being serious? Even when he tells me he’ll tell the truth, he still tells me he thinks the hospital is hurting him. Either he’s lying to me or this is something he genuinely believes. Kiibo doesn’t know what to think. He tries to hold back a sigh and questions, “How are they torturing you?”

“They take away my freedom and are taking away my identity. Everyone keeps telling me that I’m some poor, confused kid who doesn’t have a known family, but I know who I am. I know I’m the leader of powerful, secret organization called DICE.”

“DICE?”

“Yes. That’s the name. Now SHHHHH….that’s a secret. Don’t you dare tell anyone,” Ouma hisses. The dark haired boy may have told the robot not to tell anyone the name of the organization, but he didn’t tell the robot he isn’t allowed to do research on it. Kiibo writes the organization’s name on the corner of scrap piece of paper so he can research the group later. Maybe I can find more information about Ouma-kun later. “It’s just, everyone keeps telling me my parents don’t want me or that I’m not what I think I am. They’re just confusing me and making me second guess everything. Most of the happy memories have went away and are replaced with horrible memories…..” He chokes out another harsh sob. “I don’t have any proof of anything, so they assume I’m just playing pretend, that I’m not important. I’ve heard them talk about me and say they think I’m homeless or some kid whose parents abandoned him! I’m not! Why would anyone abandon me?! Am I really that bad?! Kiibo feels intense guilt since earlier today he seriously considered abandoning the dark haired boy. “Most of the happy memories are gone. I know they were there! I know I remembered
them at some point.”

“Are these forgotten happy memories like dreams you know you had but can’t remember now?” Kiibo asks. The robot surprised himself with that analogy because he doesn’t understand what it’s like to forget something. His memories are stored securely in his system as if he were a computer. In order to forget, his memories would have to be deleted somehow. Forgetting is usually not a problem for Kiibo. Handling memories is more of a problem for him than forgetting. Sometimes the robot has difficulty retrieving memories through his disorganized storage or applying memories to real life situations

“Yes, they’re exactly like that! Wait, you’re a robot. You can’t dream, so how do you know what forgetting dreams is like?”

“Through my studies. I study human sleep so that I can relate to humans and understand them better. Sleep is a necessary function of human life. I can’t integrate with humans if I don’t even understand basic functions such as sleeping and dreaming,” Kiibo explains. Focusing the conversation away from Ouma’s anxiety on the lost happy memories seems to have calmed Ouma down a bit.

Distractions seem to help. I wonder if being alone with his thoughts inflames the problem. I wonder if boredom is a big problem for him.

“Do you study a lot?” Ouma asks in a scratchy voice. The crying wore his throat out a bit.

“Yes, I find that the more knowledge I have, the more useful, understanding, and personable I can be,” the robot answers. Kiibo sits down on his bed with his back against one of the pillows. He doesn’t sleep, but having his own bed makes him feel human. Even though he doesn’t sleep, he can at least claim he has his own bed he rests in.

The conversation becomes relaxing. Kiibo wants to go back to the topic of Ouma’s memories, but he decides to give the boy a break. To the robot’s satisfaction, he hears a laugh coming from other end of the phone. It sounds natural and not hysterical or pained. Ouma teases, “Hah! If you study so much then why do you need me to help you with school?”

“Because I can’t process everything at once! I still learn and develop like a human would, and sometimes I struggle with things,” the robot explains. He knows where this conversation is going, and he doesn’t mind feeding Ouma’s ego a bit because the dark haired boy is smart and should know he’s smart.

“I don’t struggle with school that much,” Ouma declares. “I’m mentally superior to the studious robot. Since developing AIs like you rely on studying so much, if I were a developing AI I’d be the superior robot!”

“I suppose you have a reasonable argument to say that,” Kiibo remarks. The robot is proud of his book smarts too, especially since he has poor street smarts. The conversation makes Kiibo feel less confident about his own mental capabilities, but he knows Ouma needs a boast more than he does. Kiibo can be the adult in the conversation and be humble. In fact, at the moment, the robot is proud of his humbleness and his ability to cheer the dark haired boy up.

“I only have a reasonable argument? My argument is more than reasonable! My arguments are strong! Masterful! They can kick the asses of other people’s arguments!”

“Arguments…emmmm….don’t have posteriors Ouma-kun. I don’t understand.”

“Haha! You’re strange, Babysitter-chan! I just meant I’m an exceptional debater. My argumentative essays always get top marks!” The dark haired boy laughs through the phone. Somehow, it doesn’t
seem like a condescending laugh, but a laugh out of pure amusement. Kiibo can’t help but enjoy this conversation, but he dreads the moments when their conversations will take a dark turn. “Speaking of argumentative essays, I wrote this one essay about violence.”

“Yeah? What’s it about?” Kiibo is genuinely curious on what Ouma thinks about this topic. The dark haired boy is into torture and harsh punishments, and he wants to take over the government’s military, so he must have a strong position. The robot wants to rebut him in case he makes any unsavory arguments.

“I don’t think violence, war, or killing is okay unless it’s in self-defense.”

“Huh?!” Kiibo replies surprised.

“What? You think violence is usually the answer? Do you shoot people with your robot laser on a daily basis? Hmmmhhhh.......? Wow, Babysitter-chan! I never knew you were such a violent barbarian! Women and children need to keep their distance from you!” Kiibo knows the boy isn’t being serious because of the high pitched giggling over the phone. The robot rolls his eyes.

“No, I agree that violence should only be used in self-defense. I’m just surprised that you’d take such a stance considering how when we first met, you asked for me to try hitting you. In fact, you’ve excitedly talked about me doing violent things in the past, so I just assumed you’d be more into violence,” Kiibo explains.

“No, no, no, no, no, no, it was all a joke. I’ve never seriously meant for you to hurt anybody,” Ouma replies with a bit of amusement in his voice. “I know it may seem like I’m into violence. I talk about taking over the military and punishing people, but I don’t intend to ever seriously get violent unless it’s in self-defense. I mean, I like violence in video games and books, but not in real life. You get it?”

“No, you still have always seemed to be into violence....” Kiibo thinks about the times when Ouma has tried encouraging Momota into hitting him or the times when he sometimes speaks pleasantly about being tortured. Does he not count violence towards himself as violence? “You threw objects at me one time, so that could be considered violence.

“It was in self-defense because you were hurting me! Besides, you’re a hard, metal robot! The objects can’t physically hurt you!” Ouma replies angrily, sounding almost hysterical. That’s true. The objects didn’t hurt me, but what does he mean when he says I was hurting him so he had to defend himself by unnecessarily throwing things? “So, you think I’m violent?!”

“No! It’s fine. I’m happy about your stance on violence,” Kiibo replies quickly, worrying about making things worse to the point Ouma will want to hang up the phone. “Just tell me more about your amazing essay.”

“I just couldn’t stop thinking about the police officers and the hospital workers hitting me. They were physically torturing me with knives, hot rods…..their own hands, and I kept thinking that doing that isn’t going to get them anywhere. Just beating me or anyone up is not going to get anyone anywhere,” the dark haired boy elaborates hushed voice. “And if you think I’m lying, I have the injuries to back it up. Even the doctor, who is paid to do the corrupt government’s bidding, noticed them.”

“And.....you told them it was the hospital and police who did it,” the robot presumes. Kiibo leans over the edge of his bed to unzip his backpack and take out a notebook. The notebook contains notes on Ouma, just various thoughts and observations the robot had at the time. He didn’t usually take the notebook out in front of Ouma because he wanted his full attention on the dark haired boy when he watched him. He’s taking it out now though because he doesn’t need to monitor Ouma and all he’s
doing now is listening to the boy, not physically looking at him. In the past, when Kiibo got home from the hospital, he’d open the notebook and write down observations from memory. It’s almost like a standard, daily diary. Each date talks about Kiibo’s thoughts on the boy. On a regular basis, he shows this journal to the doctors. Kiibo has reread the journal many times to see Ouma’s progress, and, to the robot, there doesn’t seem to be any noticeable progress. He still writes in the journal because he never knows when he may need it. Plus, the more information on hand there is, the better.

“I did. Well…..actually…I told them the police and other government workers physically hurt me. Then later I told a doctor the hospital workers hurt me too,” Ouma answers. He sounds sad and scared, but not close to crying.

“You told me that the hospital didn’t physically hurt you before,” Kiibo points out puzzled.

“I lied…..no…wait…I think I was just confused at the time. The hospital probably drugged me or something after physically torturing me. This place has been confusing me a lot lately. I think maybe there’s something in the air…or maybe they drugged me in my sleep. My head has been feeling weird in a bad way since I got here. But I remember now! They did hurt me! I’m sure now! I remember it clearly! But there’s no one I can turn to here….because they’re all working for the horrible hospital!” he sounds very upset, and his voice croaks. Kiibo guesses he’s crying, but he doesn’t know for sure.

The robot is just confused right now. He doesn’t believe the hospital or the police did anything that bad, but apparently Ouma has the evidence to back it up, and Kiibo has seen physical injuries on the dark haired boy before, red slashes on the stomach. Kiibo thought they were most likely self-inflicted, but he hasn’t been sure of anything. The robot asks Ouma, “Has the hospital physically hurt you recently?”

“No….it was…just in the beginning….I think they gave up on the physical torture and have resorted to just slowly making me go mentally insane. They don’t seem to be after information anymore. They just seem to want to hurt me. That’s why they’re taking away my happy memories and identity and are hurting my brain with painful thoughts and memories…” he whines softly. He reminds Kiibo of a whimpering puppy.

“What do you mean by your brain hurting?”

“It’s hard to explain…Just every little thing they do hurts me. I don’t know how to explain it! The nurses forcefully grab me, and my body feels like it’s burning, I feel like I’m suffocating, they’re looking at me with pure hatred … and it seems like they’re trying to scare me until I pass out. No… they all do that….they all treat me like a prisoner, like I’m scum….trying to make into nothing. The patients yell and grab me, and then it feels like a knife is stabbing through me….and….when they were all in a circle once, I had to get out because I knew they were trying to pin me down and hurt me. In fact….no…..they all wanted to do that….Everyday, they want to…throw nuts and tacos at me. At the beginning they did. Although, later, I think they knew I figured out their plans because I have rebelled, and they didn’t make me go back or do it. I don’t know why they didn’t…. I don’t know why none of them tried to get me again. I think they wanted to catch me by surprise or figured I’d outmaneuver them. They probably wouldn’t enjoy it if I properly prepared myself or had a defense strategy ready…” he rambles on in a frenzy.

“Ouma-kun, what are you talking about? I don’t understand any of this at all,” Kiibo states. Did he just say people wanted to throw nuts and tacos at him? Kiibo takes time to try to mull over what Ouma said, but none of it makes any sense.

“I….some of it may have to do with the drugs or air in the hospital. It’s really hard to breathe in
there, but you’re a robot so you wouldn’t get it…..” Ouma mumbles. *Ouma-kun you’ve never taken your medication, and the air in the hospital is perfectly fine.* “I don’t know how to explain it to you. Everything just hurts mentally…and physically. Right now they’re trying to torture me by taking away my identity and happiness. Who knows what they’ll do next…” He clears his throat. “When I take over the government and become leader, I want to punish people. I want to punish all of them, but not like that. I just want to lock them up and take away their liberty. You know the definition of violence is ‘the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy.’ That’s what they do to me. They abuse me mentally and physically until I break, but I don’t want to do that to them or anyone because it’s not working. Nothing good comes out of it unless you’re a psychopath who enjoys pain. That’s what my argumentative essay against violence is about. It’s about the hospital and government’s inhumane treatment of me and others.”

“Hey, Ouma-kun…..I’m glad you’re drawing the correct conclusion from your essay,” Kiibo mutters tentatively. He really can’t stand keeping quiet about this and letting Ouma get lost in his delusions. The dark haired boy will never get better until he has some idea of what’s going on in reality. “But Ouma-kun, I think you’re mistaken about some things.”

“I know I am! It’s those damn drugs messing with my head!”

“No, not that…” Kiibo mutters nervously. *He’s going to get upset no matter what honest answer I tell him. I think I have at least some understanding of the situation…maybe….at least I think I understand what’s going on better than Ouma-kun does at least. I think I know why he tried to kill himself.* The robot lies back against his bed’s pillows in order to make himself comfortable. Unfortunately, he can’t feel physical comfort the same way a human can, but he can use the pillows’ softness as a way to distract and calm down. Thinking about pillows causes Kiibo to think about the softness of other objects. This then causes him to think about the stuffed horse he sent to the dark haired boy. “Ouma-kun, did you receive a gift from me?”

“Oh, yeah. I did!” Ouma’s voice rises excitedly through the phone. “Thanks for the explosives, jetpack, and electric hybrid! You’re a genius for somehow getting the explosives and jetpack through inspection. You’re savvier than I thought, Babysitter-chan!”

“What?!”

“Thank you, thank you, thank you! Leave it to the robot, disciple of the famous Professor Iidabashi, to give me the latest technology for prison breakouts!”

“Uh, no, I didn’t give you any of the gifts you just mentioned.”

“Huh? You didn’t? Then it must be from someone else, probably from one of my underlings. Jeez, I would have thought that my robot would have given me access to the best escape technology out there, but I guess not. LAME,” the last word came out sounding like a loud belch, startling Kiibo from his seat on the bed. The robot then hears giggles from the other end of the phone. “I lied. I didn’t receive pieces of technology to help me escape. I wish. Hey, you must have access to explosives and a jetpack, right? Can you hook me up? I can do without the electric hybrid.”

“Ouma-kun, no,” Kiibo states firmly.

“No, as in ‘I don’t have a jetpack and explosives’ or no, as in, ‘I’m not going to help you escape.’” Ouma asks in a rushed voice.

“The second option.”

“So you DO have a jetpack and explosives. But you’re not going to share? You’re the worst robot
friend ever!” he lets out a childish whine. “I promise I’ll return the jetpack, but I’m afraid I can’t return the explosives, for obvious reasons.”

“Ouma-kun! Focus on the original question! I sent you a gift, a stuffed horse. Did you receive it?” Kiibo asks exasperated.

“Yes,” Ouma replies in a monotone voice.

“Do you like it?”

“It’s not a jetpack or an explosive.”

“Yeah, it’s not, but do you like it?”

“Is there are jetpack or explosives inside the stuffed animal?”

“NO!”

“Yeah, I like it.”

“Ouma-kun! I’m trying to have a serious convers-wait? What did you say?”

“Oh, it’s rude to not listen to others and force them to repeat themselves!” Ouma gently scolds the robot. Kiibo knows he’s not being serious because the dark haired boy chuckles through the phone. “I said….I like the gift….I mean, it’s the only thing I really have here….it’s pathetic. Isn’t it? Since I was a rich kid, I used to have all the nicest material goods, the latest gadgets, a collection of manga, my own dog, a flat screen TV, almost everything. Now, I’ve been stripped away of all that and have been left with nothing. Even the clothes I wear can’t be called mine. They’re just old rags the hospital gave me. I don’t consider anything these people give me my own belongings, and I’m borrowing them anyway….sooo….I’m left with nothing. Well, I used to be left with nothing until you gave me this stuffed animal….so thanks. This means a lot.”

The stress Kiibo felt before subsides and is replaced with joy. He smiles from his end of the phone and is pleased with himself for giving Ouma the toy. The happiness is immeasurable, and Kiibo doesn’t know why pleasing the dark haired boy makes him so happy, but it does. Moments like these make taking care of Ouma seem worth it. “You’re welcome, Ouma-kun.”

For a self-proclaimed former rich kid, he has a profound appreciation for something as cheap as a stuff animal.

“His name is Hansuke!” Ouma declares happily. Kiibo nods to himself. Ah, sometimes humans attach names to inanimate objects to make them more meaningful. “He’s my guardian angel and warrior against the government.”

Now he’s using his imagination to pretend the horse his some kind of real life companion. If it’ll make him feel less lonely, then I support this. Although, I’m still confused. In an effort be more helpful, Kiibo goes along with Ouma’s imagination and puts in, “Hansuke will protect you from the pain you feel while in this hospital. The pain should subside with him around.”

“Huh….come to think of it….yeah it is! While my happy memories haven’t come back, I think the pain has lessened! Hansuke is an angel from heaven trying to protect me, huh? That’s so cool! Woah….how is he doing it??! Is the government and hospital afraid of him? Do they know not to mess with me while Hansuke is around? Hey Babysitter-chan, did you put something in him? Like some special technological device to make the hospital’s torture go away?” The robot frowns to himself in thought. The pain isn’t physical. It’s mental. It has to be. No one in the hospital is physically hurting him. If that’s the case, then I have to make his mind think he’s not being hurt, then the pain will go away. Is making him think a stuffed animal is protecting him lying? No, this is only
imagination, and that imagination can become real if the horse does reduce the pain. If the horse reduces the pain, then, in a way, the stuffed animal is protecting him. Interesting….so this is how toys work…. “Hansuke is an official member of DICE. I bet he helped prevent the phone from being wiretapped!”

“Ouma-kun, the hospital has never planned on wiretapping the phone conversation.”

“Of course they didn’t! They know not to wiretap the phone call because Hansuke is here! Obviously! That’s why the hag tried to eavesdrop on this conversation! But they now know not to mess with Hansuke or I,” Ouma states proudly with a bit of a laugh at the end. Well….at least he’s happy….but is this really okay? Wait….is he being serious or pretending? Should I ask him? If he’s being serious, and I ask, then it could ruin the illusion he has in his head and cause problems.

“Ouma-kun….the hospital or the police have never tried to hurt you,” Kiibo tells him firmly. He needs to acknowledge the truth in order to get better. “The hospital is trying to help you. I’ve told you this before, and I still strongly believe it.”

“Yes, they have hurt me! If they haven’t, then why have I been hurting since I got here?! It can only be the hospital hurting me! They’re trying to take away my happy memories and identity, remember?! I remember the hospital physically hurting me! I have the injuries to back it up!” Ouma barks angrily through the phone. The robot takes note that the dark haired boy doesn’t sound unstable, just genuinely enraged.

“Ouma-kun….about these happy memories you’re losing….how do you know you ever had them in the first place, and why do you think the hospital took them?” Kiibo questions. He has a pen in his hand, ready to write down whatever the dark haired boy has to say.

The dark haired boy takes a deep breath, “Because…..well…this is related to the hospital taking away my identity too. They’ve asked me so many questions as if they have no clue who I am even though I’ve told them who I am. I go under the alias Ouma Kokichi. I’m an influential evil leader of a secret organization, and son of a famous CEO and government official. I’m rich and talented, and have so many people supporting me, yet everyone I talk to act like they still don’t know who I am. In fact, they act like I’m this poor, stupid, crazy kid who was dumped on the streets and had nothing….they keep acting like I’m nothing. Then, I started questioning all these memories I’ve had. They act like I had a horrible life. My brain has been creating these fake, horror memories. It’s like the hospital implanted these horrible memories in order to torture me. I’m just so confused….these horrible memories seem so real, but I don’t remember having them before. I’ve started doubting whether the times I’ve laughed and hung out with some of my followers at a party happened. I’ve started doubting whether these rallies I’ve held happened. I’ve started doubting whether these conversations….with Seiji-I mean-my brother happened."

“I’ve read if people want to remember their dreams, then they should try writing them down. Have you tried writing down your memories and then reading them over? Maybe they’ll make more sense if you did,” Kiibo suggests, trying to understand the situation himself.

“I did…..and….I didn’t like what happened,” Ouma mumbles quietly. “This hospital is getting to me.”

“What happened?” the robot asks, sitting up straighter out of curiosity.

“I was writing down conversations I thought I had with my younger brother….and….I kind of remember what we were talking about but….I can’t remember him ever talking. I can only remember my voice,” the dark haired boy replies. Kiibo suddenly finds this conversation very interesting and begins scribbling down more notes. He’s very impressed that Ouma has been
cooperating for a good while. The robot would have expected him to have a breakdown or start leading the conversation astray. “He was mute, and I was stupid enough to forget about it.”

The dark haired boy lets out a dry laugh, and Kiibo frowns. He tells the boy, “Ouma-kun, don’t call yourself stupid because you forgot. As you’ve said yourself, your memories have been confusing. You feel…...actually….wait….Are you genuinely having a trouble remembering large portions of your life? For instance, is remembering life before getting arrested difficult?”

“If you asked me that question two months ago… I would have said, ‘no’,” the dark haired boy laughs, and the robot thinks he really shouldn’t be laughing because Kiibo can’t help but think that Ouma may have some form of amnesia. “But….do you think the hospital is taking my memories? Because, yeah, I’m having trouble remembering what my life was like before coming here. I thought I remembered….but I’ve been just been questioning everything, and now I can’t remember things that well. Like, I thought I had many back and forth verbal conversations with my brother. Now, I’m remembering our conversations as being one-sided, with me doing all the talking. I now genuinely think he’s mute because he never talks, and I don’t remember making him talk or ever feeling bothered by it. It’s kind of been….freaking me out…..I don’t want to forget what my life was like.”

There is genuine fear in Ouma’s voice, and Kiibo is at a loss for words. The robot thinks the situation over. In a weird way, these loss of memories may be a good thing. Upon first meeting Ouma, Kiibo and others have always thought the small boy’s stories about his life were outlandish. Ouma claims to be a rich, powerful leader of a secret organization who’s trying to fight the government when his personality is very immature, unstable, and rude, showing he doesn’t have the qualities of a charismatic leader. Ouma claims he has these influential, wealthy parents, yet they claim they have no son. Ouma claims he has lived a luxurious lifestyle, but the police found him malnourished and in rags, coming to the obvious conclusion he came from a poor background. Also, his overall irrational and paranoid personality makes it very easy to believe Ouma is genuinely delusional about everything he thought he was. Kiibo doesn’t think the dark haired boy is losing his memories, but, rather, Ouma is starting to realize the memories he thought he had are false. Basically, his brain is trying to clear away the false memories. The robot has wanted this to happen. Unfortunately, he never realized how painful or confusing this would be for Ouma. The human brain is really interesting though…..It can create false perceptions of reality and false memories, and sometimes it can try fixing itself when something is wrong.

This is all just a guess though. In Kiibo’s opinion, it’s a very likely guess, but it’s still possible Ouma is losing real memories of his life. The robot asks, “Can you tell me about your brother?”

“Ah, well……we hang around a lot…..UGH….I can’t remember! I can’t remember anything!” he shouts through the phone. His voice is filled panic. Kiibo hears him take a deep breath before saying in a distressed whimper, “I’m being really dumb right now….I feel like I’m losing him….I can’t remember….I swear he was always there….maybe……let me think…….Did he even exist? He didn’t exist... did he? Give me some time to think about this.” He takes another shaky breath. The robot almost tells him to stop and not worry about it. He doesn’t want the dark haired boy to get upset by his lack of recollection. However, Kiibo is too enthralled by what’s going on to take the initiative to stop Ouma. I’ll stop him if he starts having a breakdown. This may be important. After several long minutes, the dark haired boy breathes, “Okay…..I got this. Remember, don’t tell anybody anything we’ve discussed unless I say so.”

“Yes, of course. I promise I won’t tell anyone what you tell me unless you want me to,” Kiibo automatically responds. While he makes this promise, the robot still has a pen and notebook in front of himself, ready to write down what Ouma has to share. Kiibo then immediately regrets making this promise because he worries that it may be crucial to disclose what Ouma says to others. The secrets Ouma tells Kiibo may be important to share with others. It may be important information doctors can
use to save his life. *I can’t guarantee I won’t tell anyone. What if it’s important? Did I just lie to Ouma-kun? I told myself I wouldn’t lie to him!*

“Oh….ummm….he was quiet….yeah….I’m pretty sure he was mute. We had conversations, and he wouldn’t say anything. He was traumatized. No….I’m pretty sure he was bullied or abused by a bunch of adults, a bunch of government officials actually….” Ouma pauses to think some more. He sounds very calm. “We decided to create DICE to fight back against the adults of the government. Hey….do you think it’s safe to say his first name?”

“It’s Seiji right?”

“Damn it, so you heard my slip up,” Ouma lets out a loud sigh. “Whatever, it’s a common name anyway. It’s not like the government will find him just by knowing his first name. Anyway….we started DICE, just the two of us, to fight back against the corrupt government who was hurting Seiji. I mean, at the time, Seiji didn’t know what they were doing to him. He was just a little kid and thought that the rich politicians were good people. He was so insecure and naive that he did whatever the adults wanted him to do. They were our parents’ friends. While Mom and Dad were away, various men and women would volunteer to watch us. I was busy, doing volunteer work and schoolwork with my friends. While that went on, random men and women would take Seiji to a very fancy hotel and….spend time with him….”

Ouma’s voice trails off and the robot hears the boy let out a shaky breath. Kiibo feels a wave of dread flood through him, and he doesn’t know why. Most likely, it’s from intuition. “Ouma-kun?”

“Yeah….ummm….I just feel like crap right now…..I thought these were going to be happy memories, but they’re not……..They have to be horrible, fake memories implanted by the hospital? Right?!?”

“If you don’t want to share, then you can stop. I understand.”

“NO! This is something I need to remember! If this is real…no…is it real? Okay! If it’s real, and I forget about this, then I’ll make the same mistakes, and Seiji will get hurt again!” Ouma yells through the phone. He sounds like he’s on the verge of crying. Maybe he already is crying. “Okay….okay….okay….ummm….yeah….They hurt him. A bunch of politicians and their friends took him to a hotel to hurt him. They said he’d be happy. They praised him and gave him all these gifts, all to make sure he kept quiet about why they hurt him.”


“The answer to every single question you just asked is a ‘yes’;” Ouma responds grimly.

“Why? I don’t understand. Why would human beings take a child and just hurt him for pleasure? That makes no sense. Humans are meant to be sensitive and feel empathy to human pain! Why would they do that?!” Kiibo is confused. He believes most human beings would feel sad over a hurting child, not enjoy inflicting pain.

To Kiibo’s surprise, he hears a laugh through the phone. Ouma answers, “Some human beings are gross. I guess I should just go out and say even though just thinking about it….hurts.” The dark haired boy let’s out a shaky breath. “My brother was an underage prostitute.”

“Excuse me?!” Kiibo shouts, jumping to his feet. *No, that can’t be right….huh? What? “Ouma-kun, that’s not something you should joke about!”*
“I’m not! I don’t like it either! I think…these have to be fake memories, right? I’m sharing them so I can figure them out myself! Jeez! Let me explain…if I can…..maybe if I explain, I’ll figure out some things….I just want to know what’s going on…please, I’m not joking…..I hate these memories…” the robot tries to calm down after hearing the distress in Ouma’s voice. “My parents would do their own thing every night. I would do my own thing too since I had lots of friends and independence. Because Seiji is an adorable helpless kid, the people who were supposed to watch him took advantage of my parents’ trust in them. They treated him as a whore they could sell. He was…ten…I think….when it all started. He would hang out with clients in public sometimes, as though they were on a romantic date, and then they’d take him to a hotel room or sometimes even in public, like in a restroom or alleyway, and do what they want with him. Sometimes they’d take pictures or videos of him, all for their own sick twisted pleasures.”

“Was this what caused him to become mute?”

“Probably, I don’t….remember……”

“Did he tell them to stop? Did he cry for help?”

“He didn’t tell them to stop….not at first because they were our parents’ friends, so he respected them. He respected the clients that were pushed on to him, and nobody tried to stop it because everyone thought Seiji was okay with it and that he was old enough to handle it. They thought he was at least thirteen. Since prostitution is illegal, they can make up their own rules about what ages are allowed, and the customers to these whorehouses in the area I lived in seemed to think thirteen year olds are old enough to consent. By the time Seiji realized he was being taken advantage of and tried to protest, it was too late. When he tried telling our parents what happened, they told him he had to take responsibility for his actions, that if he really wanted to put an end to it, then he would have done it, but Seiji didn’t. He acted like a little slut to these people, and if he wanted to stop, then he should stop being a bitch, man up, and tell them to stop!” Ouma is audibly sobbing through the phone, but he sounds stable. Kiibo clutches the phone out of terror of what he’s listening to.

“Ouma-kun, that’s wrong. Your parents should have stopped allowing this to happen. They’re horrible parents!”

“DON’T YOU DARE CALL THEM HORRIBLE!” Ouma shrieks. “They made my brother and me the smartest, strongest and most talented people we could be. They loved us! They were amazing and were everything we wanted to be. If my brother hadn’t been such a stupid, worthless, wimp and whored himself out to all those people without protest, then he deserves all the pain and shame he felt. He should’ve stopped it before it got too far. He hated it, so he should have stopped it!” He’s crying so uncontrollably that he needs to take a break to gasp for air. Whether it’s real or just another delusion, this whole thing is personal. “He’s so disgusting and worthless. How can he be so brain dead to let that happen until it was too late?”

“Ouma-kun….he was just a small child. He was wrongly manipulated. He’s the victim here. None of it is his fault….” Kiibo states calmly. At first, Kiibo wants to reprimand the boy for saying such awful things about his own brother, who’s clearly the victim. Then, the robot came to a horrible thought about what the dark haired boy is telling him. Kiibo doesn’t know for sure if it’s true, but it’s certainly possible. This is just based off of intuition, but, if this memory is real, Ouma may be lying about something in it. It’s hard to tell whether this lie is added on purpose or not. In fact, we don’t even know if this memory is real. But it must feel real to Ouma-kun, and that may be more important than anything….. “Hey Ouma-kun, if you don’t remember your brother’s voice and think he’s been mute for as long as you can remember, how do you know all this?”

“I mean, we’re close. We’re brothers and best friends, we’re supposed to know these things about
each other,” Ouma states in a shaky and out-of-breath voice. “He probably wrote it all down. You know?”

“And when he told you, you couldn’t do anything to stop it,” the robot states, not even bothering to make it a question.

“It was too late to do anything by the time I wanted to stop it,” Ouma mumbles sadly with a sniffle. His voice sounds ragged.

“You keep on saying it was too late, but why do you say that?” the robot questions. “It’s never too late.”

“Well, what can we do? These politicians were never arrested for prostitution because they’re in cahoots with the police, and some police officers even use the prostitutes in that area, so they’re not going to arrest anyone soliciting prostitution in that area. Seiji couldn’t verbally tell his side of the story and tell them to stop because he couldn’t. It’s probably because he was too much of a coward or because of his muteness. He sent a text to all his clients saying he didn’t want to do it anymore. The people who pimped him out got pissed. One politician blackmailed him by claiming, unless he makes the clients happy, unsavory photos and videos will be released publicly through Seiji’s computer, and Seiji will be accused of releasing child pornography of himself and of being an attention seeking slut. He’ll lose everything; he’ll lose his pride, reputation, friends, influence, and value to the point where even his parents won’t want him. That same politician said my brother will lose if he takes his problems to court because no one will believe him because he’s been caught lying many times before and the politicians and the rest of the government have too much power. Seiji is too scared and stupid to do anything. Another politician bribed Seiji. He said if Seiji cooperates, he’ll get lots of money, power, gifts, and other perks for being cooperative. He’ll get so many friends, and the clients love him. This man even had the audacity to claim Seiji even enjoyed the abuse. Although, while Seiji is a worthless idiot, he knows he hates being a prostitute and being people’s plaything. He had no choice but to endure it though even to the point it broke him repeatedly. He had to deal with people getting so rough he bruised. He had to deal with people taking a knife and cutting him until he bleeds. He had to deal with wax and other burns on his skin. He had to deal with being painfully tied up and having no control over anything. Every night he felt agonizing, unwanted touches and humiliating stares. He felt so dirty that he’d scrub his skin off raw in order to make sure he was clean. He couldn’t even stand to look at himself in the mirror because if he did, he knew he would break down. He’d have to cry himself to sleep every night and sometimes start crying like a wimpy baby in the middle the day because the painful memories were too much. There are many times where he couldn’t even bring himself to eat. In fact, he even went days without eating.” Ouma whispers sullenly.

Kiibo doesn’t know at what point he stopped writing, but he felt like he had to because he couldn’t bring himself to write down the terrifying details Ouma was saying. The dark haired boy continues. “It got so bad he became suicidal and even nearly took his own life numerous times before I stopped him. In order to get through it, I had to tell him we’d fight back against them, against the government. We created DICE to do so. We made plans to take over the military and the government. Our parents would help once we gathered enough money and people. Babysitter-chan, you should have seen our group! Over ten thousand people joined, and they loved us! They wanted to help us! We held rallies and raised money and felt like we could take over the world if we tried!”

The dark haired boy surprisingly doesn’t sound as happy as he should be when he reflects on his secret organization. This forces Kiibo to ask, “Ouma-kun, why do you sound sad when you talk about your organization?”

“Because….” The dark haired boy whimpers. “My organization and our plans to fight the
government are the happiest memories I have. I had so many friends and so much influence because of it. I’ve never felt so important in my entire life, especially after having to deal with all the pain I-Seiji was going through. But the horrible hospital has been taking those happy memories of DICE away and replacing those memories with these agonizing memories….it’s almost like the group never existed…” Kiibo hears an agonized wail through the phone. In a hysterical voice, “I don’t want those happy memories to go away! I have nothing and am nothing if they go away! Please….please… I’ll do anything. I just want the happiness to stop leaving and come back….I hate these horrible memories! I want them to go away, and I want my happy memories to come back! That’s all I want!”

He sounds like a little kid throwing a temper tantrum, but Kiibo knows the cries are more grave than that. The robot feels so helpless. He wants to magically find every happy moment Ouma ever had in his life and make happy memories out of them for Ouma to have and cherish. Unfortunately, Kiibo doubts Ouma had that many happy moments in his life to begin with, at least, not enough to counteract the painful memories. It’s probably better for Ouma to stop worrying about the past for now. In as calm and as soothing of a voice as the robot could manage, Kiibo says to the sobbing boy, “Shhhh…Ouma-kun. Listen to me,” the crying quiets down into soft uncontrollable whimpers, sniffles, and hiccups. “Distract yourself with something else besides the memories. Okay? If you feel like you’re losing yourself or your memories, don’t panic over it because the stress is only going to make things worse. If you really are forgetting things, there’s nothing you can do besides writing down the happier memories and just letting it happen. You can’t worry about the things that are out of control. The stress of it all will just make yourself ill. So just think about other things. Play a video game, read a book, or do schoolwork. Use your imagination and fantasize about some happier things. If you’re worried about losing memories about your friends, then think about Hansuke and me. We’re your friends, and we’re right here with you, protecting you and making you happier. You can’t possibly forget about us since we’re right here!”

“I miss you so much Babysitter-chan!” Ouma sobs. The boy screams through the phone, hurting Kiibo’s mechanical ears. “I want you to take care of me again! I want you to entertain me, I want you to hold me, I want you to make food for me, and I want you to creepily watch me for hours every day! I need you!”

“And I’m right here!” Kiibo insists. The robot feels himself feeling so heartbroken for the crying boy. He hates the pure agony Ouma must feel and wants to be in the same room as the boy so that can hug him and somehow make the pain go away. Although, Kiibo sadly thinks the pain will never go away no matter how hard he tries with the dark haired boy. The robot feels he can only numb the pain temporarily before it comes back to torture Ouma some more. “Ouma-kun….I’m never leaving you, okay? I’ll call you everyday while you’re in intensive care. You’ll be released soon, and then I’ll take care of you like I used to. You can always count on me. I don’t know when you’ll be let out, but if you stay calm and distract yourself, you’ll be sent to the more open unit, where you’ll have more freedom and can see me everyday. Okay?”

“Okay…” the dark haired boy whimpers with a sniffle. He has calmed down quite a bit. “I know you want me to distract myself from the horrible memories, but there’s one last thing I need to share with you.”

“If you think you can handle it, then you may share,” Kiibo replies, a bit pensive. He considers stopping the boy, but then he thinks that what Ouma has to say may be important.

“One night, my brother really was far past his breaking point. He was sixteen, and he physically pushed a client away. The client respected his wishes and left. Unfortunately, a police officer who was working with the politicians who managed my brother’s prostitution heard about it and punished him. Now, Seiji has pushed clients away many times in the past and has always regretted it because
he always receives the worst punishments afterwards. However, this was the last straw. The police officer forced him to strip and then began hitting him with a metal bat, demanding an apology. However, my brother was mute and couldn’t talk, so he just kept hitting him until he passed out. Then when my brother woke up, he was forced to go on live camera with a bunch of other adults, promoting him as this sex crazed maniac before they gang raped him on live camera. When Seiji gets sent back home, he decides to run away from home while still keeping contact with DICE. He lived on the streets for months. I tried to looking for him and even went through dumpsters to find food for him, but, unfortunately, I was arrested and was sent here,” Ouma tells him with a gloomy sigh.

“Ouma-kun, earlier you just said you almost knew nothing about your brother before. In fact, you even questioned whether or not your brother ever existed. With that in mind, it's really strange that you suddenly know a lot about him now,” Kiibo comments.

“Yeah….well…we’re close. He emails and texts me everything…..maybe my thoughts about him came back once I started talking?” Ouma simply replies. His voice sounds hoarse from his crying, and he sounds depressed, almost like he’s longing for something.

Kiibo can’t help but blurt out, “You know way too much about what happened to him. It's almost like it was actually you who....” The robot stops himself. It’s too awful to say out loud, and saying it out loud could really, really upset Ouma.

However, the robot’s surprise, he hears a chuckle through the phone and then a voice sings, “Uh oh….Babysitter-chan is on to my lies. I took that horrible memory and added my signature lies to it!”

“It’s not all a lie, what you just told me. Is it? You just changed some crucial details to make the memory easier to share,” Kiibo presumes. He doesn’t directly state what specific crucial details he thinks Ouma lied about. If he does, the robot worries Ouma will go into shock or get hysterical.

“Who knows how much of what I said is a lie. Maybe I’m lying about lying,” Ouma sings, evidently pleased with himself. “The whole memory may be a fake memory fabricated by the hospital. Who knows?”

Kiibo suddenly feels annoyed with the boy and states, trying not to sound too harsh, “I told you not to lie to me. It’s better if you’re as honest as possible with me!”

“I had to lie about some things! These horrible memories would be too painful to share if I didn’t lie!” Ouma yells through the phone, distressed once again.

Kiibo doesn’t want to make the boy cry again, so he tries to calm him by saying, “I understand why you lied, Ouma-kun. Thank you for sharing that with me. I know it must have been difficult. It was very brave of you to come forward with that bit of valuable information. Are you feeling okay?”

“I still feel like crap,” Ouma mutters. He then moans, “This is so embarrassing. I can’t believe I did that. Why did I do that? I just….UGH! The memory is fake, right? It has to be! Hey can you check something for me?”

“Sure,” Kiibo replies immediately.

“I need to know if these horrible memories are true or not……so…..there’s the name of a website I remember they used to solicit……ummmmmm……I tried to look up the website myself, but there’s parental controls blocking access to inappropriate websites….so can you look up this website for me?” Ouma asks in a tentative voice.

“Wait! Is this an adult website?!” Kiibo asks in shock.
“Yeah…I guess….”

“Ouma-kun! I’m not interested in porn! It’s fine if you’re into it. Just don’t show me explicit sexual content.”

“No! Ewwww….I’m not interested in that crap either. I’m too innocent and pure for that. I have the libido of an infant.”

“That doesn’t sound healthy…..”

“No, the website is a shady and secretive site that should have……if the memory is correct……ummmm,” his voice gets higher and then Kiibo hears the dark haired boy take a deep breath. In a clearer and bit more confident sounding voice, Ouma says, “if the website is still active, it should have pictures of me…..being solicited. If the website and its media were taken down, I’m sure you, being as technologically advanced as you are, should be able to bring the website back up. Heck, you can probably hack into it and find some more…..disgusting stuff……pictures and video of a young boy acting like a prostitute….y’know letting people do whatever they want with him…..exposing himself or letting others do whatever they want with his body….repulsive stuff…just don’t share it with anyone, okay?” His voice gets weaker again. He sounds scared. “I just want you to confirm that the website and everything in it is legit. If you see that website advertising the prostitution of someone who…looks a lot like me, then that means the horrible memory may be true…..and…then that means…” Kiibo hears sniffles through the phone. “Just don’t share any of it with anyone! It’s disgusting and humiliating! Promise me, you won’t tell anyone about this bad memory or the website, especially if it’s all real. I’ll give you the name of the website if you make this promise. I just want you to confirm the truth. That’s it. No sharing information, pictures, or video with anyone!”

It’s more information on Ouma-kun….but if the website is a website that was used to prostitute and abuse a young boy, then I have to report this website to the police. It could have information on Ouma-kun. It could have information on criminals who abused a poor kid. I need to….I need to lie to Ouma-kun….Kiibo feels sick, but he tells the boy, “I won’t tell anyone. What’s the name of the website?”

Ouma gives the robot the name of the website, and he feels immense guilt lying to the boy like this. He’s glad the lie happened over the phone because the dark haired boy may catch his lie if they’re sitting face-to-face. If he catches me lying and gets upset, then he’s a complete hypocrite because he lies to me all the time. I guess it’s only fair. Although, I can’t get into the habit of lying to Ouma-kun. It’s bad if both of us keep lying to each other.

“Don’t worry about your memories or everything that’s worrying you. Okay? Remember to distract yourself with happier things, as I mentioned before,” Kiibo assures the boy. “You’re strong and smart. You’ll make it through this. I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“No! Don’t go! Please stay! You’re all I have now! This hospital is working with the horrible politicians and police. These people working for the government just keep hurting me….please don’t leave me alone with them…They could get bored and decide to really do something horrible….” Ouma weeps quietly through the phone. He at least doesn’t sound hysterical.

“I’m sorry Ouma-kun. It’ll be okay. Please, believe me when I say the hospital is trying to help. Just keep yourself preoccupied until I call you back,” the robot tells him calmly. Kiibo honestly really doesn’t want to hang up either, but he has other things he needs to do. “Please know that I think about you constantly. I care about you so much, and you’re my best friend.”

“Yeah…same…” Ouma sniffs weakly. He hiccups before saying, “I’m sorry for crying like a baby
during this whole conversation. I guess that’s why I call you Babysitter-chan. You’re the babysitter who has to constantly tend to me, the baby. You’re right.....I’m tough. I’m practically invincible! I’ll get through this. Bye.”

“It’s fine. You can cry as much as like. That doesn’t make you a baby. That just makes you a person with emotions and feelings. Take care of yourself. Goodbye, Ouma-kun,” Kiibo replies. To the robot’s relief, the dark haired boy willingly hangs up the phone.

Chapter End Notes

Welp, this is a long chapter.

There are few chapters where I worry it's going to be written so distastefully that it's going to turn readers off from this fic. Writing about very sensitive and triggering topics can be scary. This chapter was especially hard to write because of the heavy material. To some people it's pretty triggering. If I mess up writing this, then I REALLY mess up. However, I was planning to write this heavy content probably since around chapter one. If you reread this fic, there are various hints and foreshadowing about Ouma's rough background scattered throughout the chapters. This wasn't something that came out of nowhere, and I'm not writing it for shock value, even if the stuff is shocking.

I like all sorts of feedback, so if I did something wrong, then I'd like to here it.

By the way, this chapter can be confusing if you're not reading it carefully enough. Although, every chapter is can be pretty confusing because Kiibo and Ouma often don't understand what's going on. I try not to be confusing, but the stuff the characters have to deal with can be pretty confusing, especially since Ouma is both a liar and delusional. If it wasn't made clear in the chapter. When Ouma is recalling the bad memory, Seiji is Ouma in that memory. Ouma was the one who personally suffered from those harsh experiences. He made it seem like Seiji was the one who experienced them and not him in order to make it easier to share the painful memory. It's easier for him to share someone else's painful experiences than it is to share his own. Kiibo figured out that Seiji is Ouma pretty early on and even pointed out that Ouma seemed to know too much about another person's experiences, and Ouma indirectly admitted that when he's talking about Seiji, he's actually talking about himself. If that wasn't clear enough in the chapter, I can edit the chapter a little to directly state that Seiji is Ouma. Right now it's just heavily implied that Ouma is Seiji. There's a lot of clues to back it up, and Ouma indirectly confirms it himself.

Sorry, this chapter is just them talking. I wish I could make this an action packed shounen and have them start battling monsters. I feel like the only way I can progress through this story is if there's a lot of talking. At least at the moment. I like writing dialogue.

Also, if you're wondering what Ouma means when he mentions people throwing nuts and tacos at him, don't worry about it. It's a euphemism that I'm not going to explain. It's nothing important.

Oh! Thanks so much for the fueling my ego with more feedback! I appreciate it! Also, this fic has 277 kudos! That's more than I could have ever hoped for! I still can't believe
you like this kind of stuff....Thank you! Let's strive to get this fic up to 278 kudos!

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
I'm starting to make bad choices

Chapter Summary

Kiibo sees some things he shouldn't have and worries about entering his rebellious teenage phase.

WARNING: There's some heavy adult stuff, some detailed mentions of non-con too.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

After the phone call, Kiibo debates with himself about whether he should tell Iidabashi about the website that potentially solicits child prostitution. At first, Kiibo feels like he is too young to handle this kind of situation and should let an adult deal with it. In fact, the robot feels like it’s inappropriate for someone like him to go to an adult website. He doesn’t care that other teens his age have gone to adult websites before, but Kiibo still thinks it’s wrong for him to be exposed to such explicit content. Kiibo still feels like a child and that going to such a foul website on his own would taint his mind. Although, the more the robot thinks about it, the more he realizes he has to be the one to search through the website alone, at least at first. There’s a chance that the website is harmless and hasn’t done any illegal activities. If Kiibo goes directly to Iidabashi about it, then he’d have to explain the situation and potentially make a bigger deal than necessary. No, the robot has to check the website himself to make sure there’s wrongdoings before going to an adult about it. Plus, Ouma wants only Kiibo to search the website, no one else. Kiibo will respect the smaller boy’s wishes, for now.

After a bit of frantic pacing, Kiibo turns on his desktop computer and quickly types the website name in. What looks like a social media profile page pops up. It reminds Kiibo of a profile one may see on Facebook. However, the website’s name is a bit peculiar: www.bestfriendsanddating.tc/seiji-kouma. Best friends and Dating? What’s that supposed to mean? The first thing Kiibo sees upon viewing the profile is a picture of a boy who looks a lot like Ouma in black pants and a white tank top and wearing golden grown on his head. He has his arms crossed and has proud smile on his face. The robot nearly falls out of his seat in surprise. Sure, he prepared himself to see a picture of someone who looks like Ouma on the website. However, the boy looks absolutely stunning in the picture. The robot is so used to seeing Ouma’s extremely pale and sickly appearance. Seeing a very pristine, flawless, brighter, and happy looking version of Ouma put the robot into momentary shock.

While Ouma has extremely pale skin with some blemishes and a couple freckles, this boy has flawless looking, slightly tanner, glowing skin. While Ouma has dull looking large, violet eyes with large bags under them, this boy has bright-looking, large violet eyes, with no bags under them. While Ouma’s dark wavy hair is knotty and thin, this boy’s wavy hair is thicker, shinier, and healthy looking. Since Ouma’s body is usually covered by baggy clothes, Kiibo can’t compare their bodies, but it’s pretty obvious that this boy is less bony and more toned than Ouma. The boy in the picture has one of the most gorgeous smiles Kiibo has ever seen. He’s sitting with crossed legs on what looks to be an expensive, golden throne. The boy in the photo looks almost too perfect though. The robot can’t take his eyes off the photo. It’s not because the boy is so beautiful that Kiibo can’t take his eyes off of him, but it’s because there’s something about the photo that’s too artificial. It’s bugging the robot. The small boy looks like one of those photo-edited models you see in magazines. In fact, in Kiibo’s opinion, he looks better than that. The robot scans the photo with his eyes and
notices if he looks closely, he can tell there’s some obvious photo editing done to this boy’s picture. While it’s clearly professionally done since the lighting is perfect, there’s also clear signs of the boy’s body being edited to look bigger and more muscular than it actually is. The chest and arms look unnatural compared to the rest of his body and face. From a naked, human eye, it’s hard to tell, but Kiibo notices it with his superb eyesight. It’s also pretty clear that his entire face and body has been airbrushed. After a few minutes of looking at the photo, Kiibo finds it to be less attractive because it seems fake. The robot doesn’t feel like he’s looking at a person. To Kiibo, while Ouma looks very sickly and has blemishes, the robot can acknowledge that the boy is attractive even with his flaws. All the photo editing here seems unnecessary. It then occurs to Kiibo that this boy is supposed to look like a flawless supermodel because he’s supposed to be advertising something: himself.

According to Ouma, this website is used to illegally advertise child prostitutes. However, it looks more like a dating site to Kiibo, especially since text on the profile says, “Hello! I’m Seiji Kouma, and I’m eighteen years old! My friends call me Ousama because I am their ruler! My underlings are my dearest friends, and we do lots of things together. I’m interested in having new underlings. You want to become my underling too? We’ll have lots of fun together. As your Ousama, I do anything to make my underlings happy. Please create an online profile to Best friends and Dating so that you can contact me and become my closest underling. I look forward to meeting you!”

There are more aesthetically pleasing pictures of Ousama in various nice places: a fancy restaurant, the inside of a mansion, an exclusive-looking club, a private theater, a concert, a party, and a nice hotel room. He’s wearing very fashionable and mainstream attire, and he smiles brightly in all the pictures. It’s obvious this webpage is all about Ousama. It heavily promotes him and tries to showcase him in the most attractive way possible. He looks like a cute, happy, and innocent kid. There’s nothing too suspicious about the website so far, except for the fact that this boy is trying to reach out to strangers on the internet. Kiibo expected to run into a porn website or see raunchier photos of him. Everything looks safe and harmless so far.

Kiibo tries to go through as many photos as he can without creating a profile. The photos get less and less innocent as he scrolls through them. They’re less and less photo edited too. One gallery shows the boy in swim trunks, swimming in a very luxurious-looking outdoor swimming pool. It’s innocent enough. His body looks skinnier, paler, less toned, and less airbrushed. Kiibo can even make out some bruises and some light cuts on his chest and stomach. He sits on the edge of the pool and smiles at the camera. His legs are spread and thumbs are in the inside of the trunk’s waistband. To Kiibo, he looks evil, like he’s about to pull a cruel prank on someone, very Ouma-like. The next photo shows him palming at a lump in the front of his trunks. The next photo shows Ousama with one of his hands in his trunks. What is he doing? I don’t understand….. He has a teasing grin on his face, and the next photo shows him with hand inside of his swim trunks, the trunks sliding lower and lower. Is this what humans do when they’re at the pool? He’s touching his genitals. That seems too obscene. It isn’t until Ousama strips off his swim trunks, covers his private parts with the trunks, jumps in the pool, throws the swim trunks out the pool, and leans his head back while one of his hands are underwater on top of his groin that Kiibo realizes he’s watching the boy masturbate. The shock of this makes Kiibo feel lightheaded. He struggles to comprehend what he’s looking at almost to the point he feels like he’s going to shut down. To make matters worse, Ousama in these less edited and raunchier photos, looks almost exactly like Ouma. It’s sickening because Kiibo knows exposing himself like this would be one of the last things Ouma would want to do. This is just pornography. Maybe Ousama is a stranger and just some rich, eighteen-year-old adult entertainer. There’s no evidence of prostitution, of him being underaged, of him being forced to do this, or of him being unhappy. Maybe Ouma saw this boy while looking for porn and got confused. Besides, this profile is still active. If Ouma’s bad memory is true, then Ousama shouldn’t be active and asking to make new friends. If Ousama is still active, then the bad memory is incorrect.

After looking at the last picture, a textbox in the corner of the screen says, “If you want to see more
interesting photos of me, create a Best Friends and Dating profile. I want to flaunt and expose myself to my underlings as reward for their loyalty to me, but if you want to become an underling, you’re going to have to create a profile….Then later we can chat and meet up somewhere to discuss your services with me.”

It feels so wrong for Kiibo to make a profile, but he feels like he has to confirm that this Ousama is a child prostitute working against his will. He won’t know that for sure until he looks into it more thoroughly. *If Iidabashi is monitoring my browsing activity, the professor will probably start asking questions….and then grounding me….I’ve never disobeyed Iidabashi……Am I becoming rebellious? Is this the rebellious phase teenagers typically go through? I’m a rebellious teenager! That makes me more human! This is very exciting! After looking at a porn website. What rebellious things will I do next? Maybe I’ll start chewing gum in class. Maybe I’ll start writing on a classroom desk. Maybe I’ll steal some free samples from the supermarket. Maybe I’ll run in the hallways… Kiibo feels himself get chills. I need to stop. I’m starting to think like a criminal.*

Unfortunately, it costs money, and fortune at that, to become a member of the website and get into contact with Ousama. Since he is a very frugal spender and has a large allowance thanks to the wealthy Professor Iidabashi, Kiibo certainly can pay for the membership. However, paying money on an adult website makes him feel unclean. More importantly, he doesn’t trust the website with any debit or credit card number. Unfortunately, now Kiibo is in a bind. He can’t look into the suspicious website some more without paying money, but he refuses to pay money. This would be a good time to turn to an adult for help, but he doesn’t want to make the situation a bigger deal than it really is. This whole thing could be one large delusion or lie on Ouma’s part. Kiibo doesn’t want to cause any unnecessary trouble. He stares at the glowing screen for a few minutes before deciding to take a third option, to hack into the website. *Now, I’m definitely being rebellious, but this is strictly for investigative purposes. Kiibo feels a wave of something similar to nausea flow through his robotic system. He knows what he is doing is illegal. He’s not part of law enforcement and has no warrant, so he has no authority to do this. However, he needs information. Kiibo’s functioning heavily relies on information. It’s almost like he’s an information addict. He tries to shove the guilt aside and focus his attention on hacking into the website. Worst case scenario, he’ll be sent to juvenile detention for hacking into an adult website, will be humiliated for the rest of his life, and will never want to show his face in public again. This is for Ouma-kun and anyone who’s forced into this against his or her consent.*

Getting through registration without paying is more difficult than Kiibo expected. The website is very secure. The robot is certain whoever runs this website definitely doesn’t want anyone breaking into it and looking at all its data. Either they’re paranoid about people breaking in without paying, or they’re hiding something valuable. After a good hour of Kiibo literally having to program a bot to break into the server, the robot makes it to the premium member’s area. If the robot didn’t feel dirty before, he certainly feels dirty now. Ousama’s profile page is filled with very explicit photos of him. In fact, the most recent ones, ones from around a year ago, are about as graphic as they can get. Some of the photos have him naked with his teasing smile, straddling or climbing all over various men and women. However, a lot of the others show his face twisted in discomfort. In fact, in many he looks like he’s downright tortured. For instance, one graphic gallery has him naked and spread eagle on a bed, with his wrists and ankles tied on bed posts while a woman presses a hot metal stick on his skin. By the end of the gallery, he has some first degree burns and smaller second degree burns on his skin. Even the milder galleries look painful, with adults grabbing him and subduing him in different ways. He kind of looks like a doll who grownups just do whatever they like with. The climax of most of the galleries shows him red in the face, mouth hanging open, and looking like he’s crying. The website explains many times “pain is pleasure.” The robot has heard sex works like that, but he struggles to believe this is case. *I’ve never seen human sexual activity before, so I don’t know what the appropriate facial expressions would be.*
In contrast, a small few of the galleries seem less painless, especially the ones of Ousama by himself, just posing for the cameras. There are some where the actions done to the small boy seem less violent and less painful at least. Although, in every gallery where Ousama is with at least one other person, he always looks like he’s crying out in pain at some point.

“I love being punished by underlings.”

“As Ousama, I love torture…on myself.”

“I’ll do any kinky thing for my underlings.”

Ousama is smiling in a lot of the photos. In others, he has an indifferent, almost dead-looking expressions. He has a lot of photos where his eyes are closed. Among those, many have him with his mouth open. In some of the more painful activities, he has his eyes closed and his mouth hanging open in what looks like a scream. In most of the pictures, Ousama’s face is twisted in some human expressions that Kiibo has never seen before. His facial features overall are very unreadable. Kiibo can’t tell if the expressions are of pain or contentment. Photographs don’t give as much information as the robot hoped.

A lot of the more painful-looking photos sticks out in Kiibo’s head though. The robot recalls Ouma saying some things that remind Kiibo of some of the scenes taking place in these photos.

“Each one of them had knives and one by one kept on asking me questions. They’d cut my entire body if my answers didn’t satisfy. I held it out for as long as I could! But they kept on cutting me, hitting me, whipping me, dunking my head in water, depriving me of sleep….”

“Those sickos……I bet they get off torturing people. Don’t they?”

“He grabbed me and physically abused me! I have bruises from it! He doesn’t do anything but physically beat me every day!”

“If you’re worried about me getting sexually abused, it’s too late. I’ve already gotten raped multiple times in my life. My mom used to bring home a bunch of these friends, and they’d do……y’know……sexual things to me……”

“Sure, I can handle any abuse or torture they give me, but it’s nice not having to deal with it. The pain would be annoying, so thank you for protecting me.” But I haven’t been protecting you. I don’t know what’s going on…..This all has to be a coincidence. Right?

There’s a chat box to contact Ousama. Kiibo tries typing a simple greeting in it. A message pops up saying, “Sorry. I would love to have a new underling, and you sound interesting. Unfortunately, I am unavailable right now.”

Kiibo wonders if this is an automatic message or one typed up by someone. There’s no concrete evidence of any laws being broken yet. Ousama could be some eighteen-year-old porn star who just likes meeting up with strangers through social media. Although, Kiibo thinks there most likely is illegal activity. There are too many coincidences between Ouma’s bad memory and this site. Unfortunately, the robot doesn’t know if there’s any way to figure out if this website is promoting child prostitution. He types into the chat box. “Hello Ousama. Are you there?”

The same message pops up. “Sorry, I would love to have a new underling. You sound interesting. Unfortunately, I am unavailable right now.”

Kiibō scrolls through some of the older photos and notices they reach as far back as six years ago. While Ousama is still modeling in revealing outfits and giving more raunchy poses, Ousama is not
explicitly nude in these photos. Although, when Kiibo thinks about it, Ousama’s photos when he was eighteen were from a year ago, so that would mean he would be around thirteen in these photos. *So the website is trying to avoid accusations of child pornography by having him clothed in the photos where he’s supposed to be younger than eighteen.* Honestly, Kiibo has a difficult time believing Ousama is thirteen in these photos. Kiibo recalls something Ouma told him. “He was… ten…I think….when it all started.” Ten is a believable age, but Ousama even looks young for a ten-year-old. Even though Kiibo has trouble estimating ages, he thinks Ousama could be in preschool, judging by these photos. He appears so young in them, he almost seems like a baby. This makes the raunchy photos even more disturbing to Kiibo. Sure, he doesn’t reveal any private parts, but seeing a thirteen-year-old, who could be a ten-year-old, who looks like a six-year-old, sitting on a bed in only briefs and spreading his legs to the camera is disconcerting, even if the small boy looks content doing it.

Unfortunately, pictures only show a tiny second in time. Kiibo doesn’t know if Ousama is being forced to do this. There are videos, so Kiibo decides maybe they can tell the robot more about what went on. He watches one of the oldest videos titled, “Introducing Ousama.”

After Kiibo presses play, the video shows in high quality a young boy with dark hair and purple eyes. He’s in the middle of what appears to be a fancy hotel lobby and is wearing a white T-shirt and jeans. He waves to the camera and says in a babyish sounding voice, “Hello! I’m Seiji Kouma, I’m thirteen years old, and this is the Towa City resort, the largest resort in the country, and one of the largest in the world! Nothing but the best for Ousama! I have the best underlings!” He squeals excitedly and spreads his arms to gesture to everything around him in the gigantic lobby. He’s like an excited little kid on vacation. His high squeaky voice makes him seem even younger. It’s very adorable. Too adorable to be on a site like this. *He looks like an infant. Where are his parents? He shouldn’t wander around alone in a resort like this and talk to strangers through a camera.*

“This place has everything! It’s like a palace! Look! Look! Look! Here’s the pamphlet! I want to show my fellow underlings where I am right now!” *Stop it. You’re a child, not a ruler.* The tiny boy takes out a large, colorful paper pamphlet from his front jeans pocket and opens it for the camera. “See…Towa City Resort is mostly known for having the largest indoor waterpark in the world, but it also has a theme park next door, dozens of swimming pools, a bowling alley, a beach, an animal resort, an aquarium, an indoor museum, a spa, a bunch of nightclubs, a bunch of theaters, everything! Heh…” He scratches the back of head. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to make this an advertisement for Towa City Resort, but this is where I stay most nights. One of my closest underlings, who I love very much, works for this place and gives me a bunch of free passes to do what I want here. Soooo….if you want to get to know me here and become one of my underlings please contact me in the chat! I love meeting and spending time with all kinds of people,” He then lowers his voice and says in a husky whisper that makes him sound mischievous. “I’m into doing anything…. The low voice gives Kiibo chills and sounds ominous. The robot wonders if there’s supposed to be a hidden meaning with what the boy is saying. If there is, then Kiibo doesn’t understand. Although, the robot has his suspicions. Ousama then raises his childlike voice back to its usual happy self and shouts. “Bye! I look forward to seeing you!”

*No, Ousama! You’re just a little kid! You should not be meeting up with strangers on the internet! If you want to make friends, go to school and make friends with children your age! You’re vulnerable to internet predators! There’s a trustworthy guardian with you, right?* Kiibo then realizes that it’s too late to worry about Ousama being a victim of a predator because the video was taken six years ago. *If he’s thirteen, then he’d have to be nineteen now. But…..Again, Kiibo does not believe that Ousama is thirteen in this video. Taking into account what Ouma told him, the robot assumes Ousama is ten in this six-year-old video. *This means he’s sixteen right now.*

The rest of the videos are innocent on the surface for the most part. Ousama talks to the camera and shows viewers various places in the resort and all over Towa City. Sometimes he hangs around a
large group of adults, doing various things. Sometimes it’s just him talking to the camera person. A lot of it is mostly him trying to convince online viewers to meet up with him at the resort. It gets disturbing when he talks about the activities he wants to do with them, such as dating, swimming in the pool (even implies he wants to skinny dip), giving massages, snuggling together in the back of a dark movie theater, and a lot of other intimate things that someone like him shouldn’t be doing with strangers. The scary thing is, Ousama seems okay with it. Nobody seems to be forcing him to do anything. In fact, he even enjoys it. The only times he gets noticeably uncomfortable is when he’s close to the other adults. Often they would hug him, wrap an arm around him, hold his hand, or kiss him, and usually Ousama would flinch or grimace just slightly. Although, Kiibo wonders if he’s just imagining the discomfort because, overall, Ousama looks happy, with a forced smile to the camera every once in a while. However, he seems the happiest when he’s on his own and grownups aren’t cooing at how adorable or wonderful he is.

The videos get more risqué as Ousama gets older. He walks around in noticeably more revealing clothing as the videos go on. Sometimes he giggles and strips off all his clothes as if he were a little kid about to run around naked. Ousama manages to cover his groin area even while being naked. The small boy gives bizarre lap dances and all sorts of intimate looking kisses to his underlings. The videos aren’t only getting more sexual. They’re also getting more violent, with other adults hitting him, pinching him, pulling at his hair, and teasing him for enjoying it. Some of the videos look both painful and humiliating. At some point, almost every video Ousama has with at least one other person has an underling hitting Ousama’s posterior until he cries out or biting him until he screams. Ousama claims he loves it when people get physical, but, to Kiibo, it looks forced and at one point it seems automatic. Like every time someone hurts him, he automatically says without thinking, “I like this.” If Ousama never claims he enjoys it, then it would look like he’s getting physically assaulted on camera. Also, Kiibo didn’t notice this at first, but the small boy appears to be wearing makeup. At first, it seems like it’s a trace amount of lip gloss and some brownish eyeshadow on his lids. However, as the robot watches more, he sees some kind of foundation covering his face and small amounts of blush on his cheeks, making his face look like it has more color than it naturally does. Bites, bruises, and other marks are clearly concealed, and the bottom of his eyes are caked with concealer. The makeup isn’t that noticeable. Kiibo is just very observant. Ousama wears more and more makeup as the videos get more and more recent, and he starts to look artificial. His childish face reminds Kiibo of a pristine doll rather than a human being.

Once Ousama turns eighteen or claims he’s eighteen, the videos get pornographic, from softcore simple nudity to hardcore, BDSM torture sex. Every video still has him inviting underlings to hang out with him, and Kiibo now knows how this can be prostitution. Ousama claims he wants to hang out, but the sex tapes make it pretty clear what the hanging out entails. So far, the only thing that doesn’t make it prostitution is the fact he’s not asking for money in the videos in order to meet up with people. If Ousama is eighteen, and if Ousama is offering sexual services for free, then this whole thing may be legal. However, Kiibo isn’t sure. What the robot is mainly looking for is evidence of Ousama being forced to do something against his will. Often, Kiibo thinks Ousama looks miserable and is in pain. More and more frequently, as the videos get more recent, he’s crying and screaming. However, he always somehow verbalizes consent by claiming he wants it or likes it. He looks like he hates it the more brutal it gets, but in the case of consent, words speak louder than actions. If the verbal consent isn’t there, then Kiibo would have already called the cops, reporting vicious sexual and physical assault. Ouma-kun claimed this was child prostitution and that this boy was being forced against his will to do this. I can’t find any evidence. I need evidence of coercion or lack of consent. There has to be evidence of a crime being done somewhere. How can hurting a boy until he’s left sobbing and bleeding on a bed not be considered a crime?! I know he’s giving verbal consent in all these cases, but.....if Ouma-kun is correct, then something must be illegal! Kiibo thinks that even if he doesn’t find definitive evidence, then he’ll still report this to the police because law enforcement may find a broken law or evidence of a felony being committed somewhere. The
robot isn’t stupid. He knows it’s very likely that this Ousama was likely a child prostitute who was being severely abused. Ousama looks very similar to Ouma, and that most likely isn’t a coincidence unless Ouma ran into this website before, saw a porn star who looks like him, and came up with this horrible story. That’s still possible though…wouldn’t it? Ouma-kun is known for his lies. Kiibo knows there’s a small possibility of this all being legal. There’s a possibility Ousama is a legal adult and masochistic porn star who just meets strangers on the internet and does services for them for free, all of which is legal; At least, Kiibo thinks so. The robot just isn’t confident with himself. He needs information. He needs proof. He doesn’t want to cause an unnecessary police investigation, even if it’s likely that a crime is being committed.

The robot feels his hands shake from anxiety as he decides to hack into the website more and search for data that’s not even available to the premium members, data only the people who manage this website can access. He just needs proof of child prostitution involved or coercion. I’ve already hacked into the website once. I might as well hack into it more……and then get sent to jail for unlawful, unauthorized access. Kiibo knows he’s really going too far, that he’s really prying through people’s private data, but he’s desperate. He doesn’t know if much data will be left behind or even if it’ll be useful.

Kiibo finds a history of private messages sent to lots of different people. Hundreds of usernames contacted Ousama in five years. There’s too many for the robot to filter through, so he clicks on some of the more recent conversations. Most of the conversations start with people wanting to meet up with Ousama, exchanging phone numbers, and offering money in exchange for doing what they want with him. Some explicitly talk about paying money for sexual and violent activities with Ousama. So we have evidence of prostitution. The amount of money they offered to spend time with him per night is ridiculously expensive, about the same cost as a monthly apartment rental. Individuals joked that he’s a whore for the rich folks. So he’s profitable. A lot of Ousama’s value comes from his looks and charm. The customers, just like many of the underlings in his videos, love his very childish and innocent look. They sound like pedophiles to Kiibo. The most disturbing messages are the ones just vaguely asking for Ousama’s body without giving any specifics with what they want to do with him. They just want to do what they want with him while Ousama is not allowed to have any say. I’ve always thought the idea of someone controlling my robotic body to be terrifying. This must be how humans can give up control.

The robot found his evidence of illegal activity within the first dozen conversations he’s read, but he can’t help but search through more of the messages. Kiibo feels like there’s more crimes being committed than just prostitution. He continues to read the messages from a year ago. Most of the messages are similar, just some flirting and plans to meet up and exchange money. Some of them tell Ousama that what he’s doing is dangerous, that he could die from infected wounds, asphyxiation, or STDs. A couple people are also concerned about him being a victim of physical and sexual assault due to meeting with strangers and encouraging very violent and sexual activities with others. Their concerns are very understandable. In fact, most of these messages should be telling him to stop rather than encouraging him. Some of them offer money to just to spend time with him without causing pain. Some of them even state that seeing Ousama in pain is distressing and refuse to hurt the boy even if he wants it. They don’t want to accidentally cause permanent damage to him. In a way, it’s heartwarming, but, to Kiibo, they still seem to support the dangerous behavior anyway because they’re offering money for Ousama’s services. Most of the time, Ousama brushes off concerns and tells people he’s safe and happy. Although, this is only most of the time, not all the time.

There are a few messages where Ousama admits he doesn’t like it either.

“I hate it, but others love it, so I do it for them.”

“They’re my underlings and customers. I’m supposed to do what they want.”
“Being used like this is all I’m good for.”

Another message looks like Ousama asking for help.

“If you’re really concerned about me, can you help me? Please? I’m only fifteen, and I don’t want to do any of this. It’s not fair how all these people call me Ousama, yet I have no control over anything. It’s like I’m a slave rather than a ruler.”

However, after all four messages, Ousama backpedals and says something along the lines of, “Sorry, that was a lie. I was just kidding. I’m happy and safe with what I’m doing. You don’t have to worry.”

Kiibo finds going through the messages to get tedious after a while. Ousama sometimes sent members exclusive videos and photos. The robot skims through them, and they seem to be the usual brutal stuff. Honestly, Kiibo doesn’t want to look at them any more than he has to. The robot has felt ill during the whole ordeal and doesn’t want to look at more of this stuff than he has to. If this whole thing is consensual, which Kiibo thinks it isn’t, then Ousama has sexual masochism disorder. If not, then he’s a boy being raped and assaulted on camera. In the robot’s opinion, the people who pay to be with Ousama are pedophiles, sexual sadists, or both.

Since there is too much content and videos to go through, the robot decides to look at data from the last day Ousama posted any media. There are no photos for that day, but there are two videos, each about a couple hours long, posted by one IP address to all premium members. A different IP address later deleted the videos, but it wasn’t enough for Kiibo not to see them.

The first video Kiibo clicks on is titled, “Goodbye, I Don’t Want To See You.” After pressing play, the first thing the robot sees is Ousama’s face really close to the camera. It looks to be Ousama without any makeup on. Kiibo underestimated the extent makeup alters one’s appearance. He’s ghostly pale and has large puffy bags under his eyes. There’s a large, purple bruise on his cheek and a bunch of purple and red discolorations on his neck. He doesn’t bother smiling in front of the camera. Instead, he gives it a sad looking stare. When he fully backs away from the camera, Kiibo sees that he’s in another large hotel room. Ousama is wearing jeans, but no shirt. His pale, skinny torso is marked with a bunch of painful-looking cuts, burns, and bruises. It’s so bad that Kiibo can’t help but wince at them.

The video has a completely different mood than the other videos, and it’s not because of the title either. The video quality is poorer, Ousama seems uncharacteristically depressed instead of his usual happy persona, there’s less production involved, and the small boy in front of Kiibo clearly isn’t wearing any makeup or is edited in any way. The video appears more homemade. If Kiibo has to guess, this is an unedited video Ousama set up on his own. He sits on the bed and hugs his knees. He looks like he’s on the verge of crying before he says in a weak voice, “I want you all to cancel your memberships and leave. I don’t want to see your disgusting faces anymore!” Tears then start streaming down his cheeks, and he finally breaks down. “Leave! I never wanted any of this! According to the United Nations, anyone under eighteen is considered a child. I’m fifteen! That means I’m a child, a small child who hates all of you! I’m not the horny, masochistic, slut you think I am!”

He then lets out a loud wail, lies down on his side, and curls up in fetal position on the bed. The small boy shivers and whimpers, “I don’t know what to do. I tried telling a few you I didn’t want to do this, but you didn’t believe me. You were all stupid enough to think I’m lying or that this is all an act.” He then composes himself and sits up. His eyes are red from crying, and he looks livid. He punches his knees hard enough to bruise and screams, “IF YOU’RE STILL WATCHING, STOP! I TOLD YOU TO GO AWAY! LEAVE! YOU’RE NEVER GOING TO SEE ME AGAIN! I
“Ousama, why are screaming? You’re going to damage your voice if you keep doing that,” a woman’s soothing voice says. This startles the smaller boy to the point he jumps from his seat on the bed. He looks away from the camera towards a tall, middle-aged woman with thick, long strawberry blond hair tied up in a ponytail. She’s wearing a short, sleeveless red dress that barely goes past her hips. To Kiibo, she appears to be aesthetically pleasing, but there’s a menacing aura about her. Ousama hugs his knees and burst into tears again. The woman just coldly rolls her eyes at him. “This again?! Jeez, you’re such a man-child! Grow up! You’re such a baby! You’re supposed to be a professional, and this is what you do?!?” She then roughly kicks him, knocking him on to his side. He cries out in pain. “I talked with your most recent customer…what’s his name again? You’re the one who has the relationship with these people, not me. Anyway, I talked with him, and he says you pushed him away!”

She struts over to the smaller boy as he begins to sit up and roughly grabs him by the chin. He whimpers quietly but doesn’t say anything. With the hand not holding his cheek, she roughly pinches a tear stained cheek until it bleeds. The woman coos, “You’re so adorable when you cry like that. No wonder clients love you! Awwww….but did you clean off all your makeup?” Ousama squeezes his eyes shut but doesn’t say anything. “Please look me, my Ousama. I want to see your beautiful eyes. I see you’re walking around topless. What a naughty boy!”

With a shaky breath, the boy mumbles, “One of my underlings wanted me to walk around the resort like this. I ended up going swimming at some point, so the makeup washed off…” Talking looks like it takes an immense amount of effort for him. He's breathing heavily, and his eyes are wide and looking around in a frenzy.

He hugs himself and begins scratching his arms until they both bleed. The woman notices this and clicks her tongue in disapproval. She harshly grabs his arms and snarls, “No, no, no Ousama, you’re not allowed to damage your beautiful body. Only your underlings are allowed to. If you crave the pain so badly, then you should give your followers the pleasure to inflict pain on you.”

“No! If I’m Ousama I should be able to do what I want and not let my followers walk all over me!” He chokes out. The tears can’t seem to stop falling from his face.

“Awwww….your crying and resistance is so adorable! No wonder everyone loves you!” the woman declares. She then straddles him and grinds against him. Her face then twists in disgust. “Ugh, but it seems impossible to get you hard. Thank God for aphrodisiacs!” She leans in and kisses him right on the lips. “A good Ousama, a good leader, always serves the people, not himself. You’re already spoiled. You practically live in this wonderful resort and can buy whatever you want. That’s more than you deserve considering how disrespectful you are to your underlings.” She pushes herself closer against his body to deepen the kiss and open her mouth and force her tongue into his. Ousama stiffens and just limply let’s her do what she wants with him. She moves her hands to the sides of his face and grinds into him some more. She pulls back enough to whisper over his lips, “Even though my Ousama is so disrespectful, spoiled, and selfish, I still love him.”

The small boy shivers for a second, and to Kiibo’s surprise and horror, actually kisses her back aggressively, wrapping his arms around her body to pull her closer. The woman moans happily into the kiss, and Ousama whispers back, “I love you too.”

What?! No! No you don’t! You should hate her! Run away from her! She’s hurting you! You don’t want to do this! You’re in a crowded resort! Don’t be stupid! Run away and yell for help! Kiibo knows that whatever happens in this video has already happened. There’s nothing he can say or do
to stop it. They eventually stop kissing, and the woman pulls him close to give him a loving hug and a kiss on the temple. She then growls, “Good boy. That was nice, wasn’t it? But just because you’re being nice to me now does not mean I have forgotten about how you just pushed a loyal underling away!”

The small boy’s eyes widen in horror, and before he can do anything, the older woman shoves him on to his back and reaches under the bed. She pulls out a metal bat and police officer’s hat. The woman puts the hat on and swings the bat threateningly in her hand. She growls, “Even Ousama is not above the law. The law states that Ousama is supposed to serve his constituents. However, you broke the law. As a police officer, I must punish you! You’re wearing too much clothes. Take off everything! You need to be butt naked for this!”

“Noooo…” The small boy whimpers. He lies down to his side and curls himself into a ball, as if trying to make himself as small as possible. *Don’t just lie there! Run away! Scream for help!* Do something to get away from this horrible situation! Unfortunately, Kiibo can predict what happens next. With shaky hands, the boy sits up and takes off both his jeans and boxers. He then hugs his knees and squeezes his eyes shut.

The woman swings the bat, hitting him roughly against the shoulder, causing him to scream and fall back on to his side. She then takes a bunch of swings at his sides and some others all over his body. Ousama’s screams and the sound of the baseball bat smacking skin fill the room. Kiibo is surprised he hasn’t heard the crack of a bone breaking. The woman then laughs and declares, “Awww… you’re enjoying this, aren’t you? You broke the law so that you can be punished. You love being punished, huh? You love the pain. You love hearing yourself scream. You love being humiliated, don’t you? I bet you’re going to be so horny by the time we’re through because the abuse is such a turn on for you.”

Kiibo can’t take it. He turns off the video. He’s seen enough. He sees the thumbnail of the second video. It’s of a naked Ousama with a bunch of men and women around him. The title says, “Ousama Just Can’t Get Enough.” The robot knows what this video is about. He doesn’t need to watch it. He saves the two videos and the incriminating chat messages on a separate file for the police before closing the webpage. Kiibo now understands why Ouma doesn’t want anyone to see this. This kind of thing is humiliating and probably something he just wants to forget rather than deal with. The robot kind of wishes he never saw that either. He feels traumatized just looking at it. He can’t imagine what the small boy had to endure. At least, he’s doesn’t have to deal with that anymore.

Kiibo lies down on the bed and curls himself up in a ball, a similar position to what Ousama was doing in the video. The robot feels tears fall down his cheeks as he tries to process what he just saw. Kiibo can almost imagine himself as Ousama and hugs his knees protectively to his chest. His mechanical insides work ferociously due to the stress the robot feels. At least I’m safe, and he has to be safe too. He has to.

Kiibo knows he should do two things. One, instead of going behind Ouma's back, try to convince Ouma to let the robot call the police. Two, not wake up Iidabashi in the middle of night. Unfortunately, his mind can’t seem to function properly, so he does neither of those things. He’s too anxious to just wait to call for help. As a result, he goes to Iidabashi in the middle of the night to bawl about his problems because everything is getting to him, and everything is becoming too much to handle. He hasn’t cried to Iidabashi for years, back when he was an elementary school student and was feeling worthless and confused because he’s a robot. Back then, he couldn’t stay alone with his thoughts for too long, so he’d ask Iidabashi if he can stay in the same room as him at night for comfort.

Iidabashi is very surprised and concerned to see the high school aged robot son in the middle of night with tears flowing down his face. They go down to the family room, and Kiibo pours his heart out to
his guardian. The robot tells Iidabashi about Ouma, about the child abuse going on with Ousama, and about illegally hacking without authorization. Iidabashi tells the robot not to worry about calling authorities because things are getting too personal and too heavy for Kiibo to handle. Iidabashi will call the authorities instead. The professor comments Kiibo probably is too sheltered to face some of the most despair-inducing aspects of society. Even though Iidabashi takes blame for Kiibo’s naivety, the robot still feels ashamed for not being able to handle the situation properly. Iidabashi tells the robot that he and Ouma, for their own sakes, should stay out of the case as much as possible and let the adults handle it. Kiibo feels guilty about not being involved with the situation more, but the professor claims if Kiibo is already caring for Ouma, then he’s handling the situation in his own way.

“But I can’t take care of him if I go to jail!”

“You’re not going to jail…..”

“Yes, I am! I committed a crime! I illegally hacked into a website! I’m a criminal! I need to be sent to juvenile training school to be rehabilitated as soon as possible!”

“If we report the crime, you’ll get fined, not sent to juvenile detention, especially since you’re a minor. I know about the laws involving hacking.”

“Then let me pay for the fine! I have ample about of money I don’t spend!”

“It’s fine. It’s not a big deal. I’m just going to tell the police about the website and about what your friend told you and not about the illegal investigation you should have never done.”

“But Iidabashi, as a citizen of this country, I need the law to punish me!”

“I'll punish you. Let’s not get the police involved in something that’s not a big deal. You weren’t looking to damage or to use the hacking for your selfish advantage.”

“But if the law doesn’t punish me, I won’t properly learn my lesson. I’ll become a criminal. I’ll start selling drugs or do some other illegal activities.”

“Why would you sell drugs when you have plenty of money here?”

“I'll sell them in order to pay for my amphetamine addiction! I’m starting to make bad choices. At this rate, I’m on my way to becoming an illegal addict.”

“Kiibo, you’re a robot, you can’t feel the effects of drugs, let alone get an addiction. The stress is causing your mind to malfunction. Let me help you.”

Iidabashi takes Kiibo to the lab and connects the robot’s head to a computer to debug Kiibo’s AI while also fixing and upgrading a few things. The robot feels better immediately. He can think more clearly and feels more stable. It’s as if the professor injected him with a very effective anti-anxiety drug. When the professor tells him once again about not telling the authorities about the illegal hacking and about leaving the crime to the adults, the robot nods numbly and goes up to his room. The robot deletes the incriminating messages and videos from his computer, charges himself, and lies down on his bed to think. Usually he studies various things at night, but, right now, he just wants to think. Even with anxiety gone, the robot still feels upset. Now that he can think clearly, everything seems so depressing. He thinks Iidabashi doesn’t want to report the crime because the professor doesn’t want Kiibo to have a criminal record or to have to deal with the law. The robot knows the professor is trying to protect Kiibo, but the robot feels like maybe the professor’s protection is causing the robot to be ignorant. Kiibo is too sheltered.

Although, Kiibo admits that he was overreacting to his hacking crime since there are more important
things to worry about, like Ouma. Even though Kiibo knows Iidabashi will try to keep Ouma out of
the police investigation as much as possible. The police will still want to talk to Ouma, and Ouma
will know that Kiibo betrayed him and then may regress even further in his mental illness. Maybe the
police questioning will bring back some horrible, repressed memories, causing Ouma to become
more unstable and more suicidal. Maybe the whole thing will push him too far to the point where he
can’t possibly ever live healthily. A more optimistic thought comes to Kiibo’s mind though. Maybe
he’ll start trusting the government, hospital, and police once he hears that the terrible people of his
has past will be sent to prison. He probably thinks the police are too corrupt to ever arrest bad
people. Hopefully, these future arrests and convictions will change his mind. For now, I’ll talk to
him. I’ll tell my side of the story, and he’ll have to believe me. He just has to. He can’t get worse. He
has to understand he’s safe and doesn’t need to be hurting. He has to understand that I’m here for
him, and I’ll help him deal with ordeals.

Kiibo knows this optimism is not the most rational. Things can easily get worse. However, having a
negative outlook just makes the robot sad.

Chapter End Notes

For the record, I have nothing against people who are into BDSM or have weird tastes.
You do you as long as you’re not hurting anyone else.

Sexual disorders like sexual sadism and masochism only becomes an issue when
someone's putting their health at risk or it's not consensual. This chapter is not trying to
kink shame anyone.

Apparently, I decided to give a brief lesson on sexual disorders, which are also

Yes, I did change the fic's rating from T to an M. Although, I tried censoring some of
the more adult content, but I didn't do a good job.

Also, thanks for the awesome fan art!

Still need an editor. This fic is good enough for fan art but not good enough for an editor
apparently.

Thanks for the support everyone! I still love all the feedback!

Kouma (小馬) means small horse, pony, colt, filly, or foal. It's a stupid name. I put no
effort into it at all. I just wanted this kid to be a little horse.

Ousama (王様) means king. I think this word is pretty recognizable.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the
access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Ouma-kun, are you there?

Chapter Summary

Kiibo talks to Ouma over the phone again and hears about a story of a trip to the bowling alley.

WARNING: There's some heavy adult stuff, some detailed mentions of non-con too.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Even with Ouma in the intensive care unit, Kiibo still volunteers at the hospital for a couple hours after school every day. The robot made a commitment to volunteer at the hospital, so he'll continue to do volunteer work even if he can’t care for the dark haired boy. It’s difficult to believe he had only just heard about Ouma’s suicide attempt yesterday. Fortunately, the shock of it gets easier with time. Kiibo finds caring for other patients who aren’t Ouma a nice distraction from the difficult situation of dealing with Ouma. The other patients overall are interesting and different. The hospital has Kiibo watch patients who are getting outdoor exercise. Being a robot, Kiibo doesn’t need exercise nor can he appreciate the outdoor fresh air like humans can. However, it’s fascinating watching Momota lead a bunch of exercise drills for the first hour. Saihara’s group joins Momota’s group for outdoor exercise, and Saihara tries joining in on the drills. Unfortunately, the poor boy can’t make it through a set of squat jumps before he’s heavily gasping for breath and looking like he’s on the verge of passing out. Momota calls him “Shuuichi!” and runs over to catch him before he collapses on the ground. The purple haired boy tells an exhausted-looking Saihara to take it easy and to not worry about keeping up with others. Saihara blushes out of embarrassment and whispers something to Momota, which Kiibo can’t hear. Momota frowns at whatever the boy says to him and tells him, “It’s okay. You’re not. That’s not something you should worry about.” Yumeno doesn’t feel like exercising with them, so she and Kiibo just lazily sit in grass watching the plants and people around them.

Once Kiibo gets back home, he feels calm and prepared for whatever stressful conversation he and Ouma will have. He tried to mentally prepare for the worst. Tried. The worst case scenario would be Ouma getting so emotional that he just hangs up on Kiibo. If that happens, then there’s nothing the robot can do to reach out to the boy, and Kiibo would probably fret about the dark haired boy until he can contact him again. Kiibo tries to make a list of the things he should say to the boy, but he couldn’t find it in himself to write the words “I told someone about the website even though I promised I wouldn’t.” Kiibo tears up the paper and puts it in recycling. This conversation with Ouma isn’t going to be scripted. The robot tries not to think about what they’ll talk about or what will happen. It’s pointless to worry about things that may not even happen.

After calling Ouma’s hospital room and having the call routed to Ouma, Kiibo asks tentatively, “Ouma-kun, are you there?”

In response to Kiibo, the robot hears an angry growl. “Babysitter-chan, you’re late!”

Kiibo looks over at the digital clock on his arm. It’s only around dinnertime. The robot tells him, “We didn’t specify on a time to call.”
“Yeah, but it should have been obvious that you should call as soon as you can. Since you have school, you should have called after school, which should have been during midafternoon. What did you have to do that’s more important than saving me from this institution’s mental torture?! You were always with me right after school. Why the change? You better have had an emergency. Somebody better have died!” Ouma shouts furiously. Kiibo should have known Ouma would have expected a call as soon as possible. The dark haired boy has a point. The robot used to always be with him right after school. Ouma probably assumed Kiibo would always take care of him right after school, even if that means the robot can only reach the boy through the phone.

“Ouma-kun, if there is a time you expect me to call, then you need to tell me. I can’t just make assumptions with no information,” Kiibo tells the small boy firmly.

“Right, you’re a dumb robot. I overestimated your ability to understand the situation,” the dark haired boy mutters. He then whines, “Why is the only individual I trust right now a stupid robot who won’t use his robotic weapons to break me out of this prison?”

“I don’t have any robotic weapons. It’s unnecessary.”

“Well, it’s necessary now! They won’t stop messing with my head! I can’t think straight while I’m here!” the dark haired boy wails. He sounds terrified. Kiibo wants to end the conversation now. It’s not that the subject is uncomfortable. He’s used to it and even expects to hear Ouma crying about the evil hospital torturing him. Unfortunately, now his cries sound completely different to the robot and have a different meaning. Even through the phone, Ouma’s distressed voice sounds so similar to the distressed voice of the little boy who was being abused in the videos Kiibo watched. Kiibo can’t stop connecting Ouma’s cries now to the tortured boy’s cries in the video. The robot couldn’t help but imagine, on Ouma’s end, the strawberry blond woman in a red dress swinging a baseball bat at him. Calm down. That’s not happening now. Ouma-kun is safe. No one is hurting him now. These cries are not the same. Unfortunately, this doesn’t make Kiibo wish Ouma would stop sobbing on the other end of the phone because it reminds the robot of the sobs Ousama made on camera while he bled on the bed. “Babysitter-chan! Respond!”

“Sorry, Ouma-kun! I was just thinking,” Kiibo snaps out of his thoughts. Right, Ouma-kun needs me right now. “I couldn’t call you after school because I have an obligation to do work at the hospital.”

“Ugh, right, you’re that corrupt institution’s minion because you’re braindead enough to let them brainwash you… You’re hopeless! Why are you like this?” Ouma sniffs. His crying quiets down a bit. “Jeez, why am I like this? I need to stop just randomly crying like this. It’s that stupid hospital’s fault. It’s making me cry too much. I have a headache.”

Yes, please stop crying. “No, as I told you before, your crying is not an issue. You can cry as much as you want. Also, as I’ve said many times before, the hospital is not hurting you. They’re trying to help you,” Kiibo informs him.

“But, Ouma-kun, the hospital is my master. It can do no wrong. You’re just a stupid, crazy, delusional boy. Everything wrong with you is all in your head. Everyone here is saints. Nobody is hurting you while you’re the mean little kid who hurts everyone else,” The dark haired boy says in a mocking, robotic-sounding voice. He then goes back to his normal voice. “Is that what you’re thinking?”

“No, not exactly,” Kiibo answers honestly. The robot should be offended by this, but he’s grateful that this mocking attitude the dark haired boy has sounds nothing like the abused boy in the video. Was there a point where he mocked his abusers like this when the camera wasn’t on? I’d like to think he stood up for himself at some point. “Are you okay? You sound stressed out.”
“Oh, you think?! What did you expect?! Did you think everything will be all sunshine and happiness while the hospital hurts me in this torture room and you’re spending time with the other cruel and brainwashed people,” The boy makes an unnecessarily loud, childish groan. “Please don’t tell me you were hanging out with Homcidal-kun. I had a nightmare you were with him and watching him lead people in a bunch of exercise drills. It’s freaky. He thinks of himself as some sort of inspiring exercise trainer. Ugh, make him stop!”

“Okay, I won’t tell you I was hanging out with Momota-kun and watching him lead people in a bunch of exercise drills,” Kiibo answers. *Even though that’s exactly what I was doing. “Why do you dislike him so much?”*

Ouma and Momota’s relationship has always bothered Kiibo. Momota is one of the most prominent victims of the dark haired boy’s bullying, and Ouma takes pleasure in insulting the taller boy and causing Momota to lose his temper. When the dark haired boy talks about Momota, he portrays the boy as this sadistic and violent human being who takes pleasure in hurting people. However, from Kiibo’s experience, besides the times when Momota gets angry, the tall boy is almost as nice as Kaede and Amami. In fact, he saved Ouma’s life more than once, so Kiibo appreciates the boy’s existence.

“I dislike him because he bullies me! You know he has anger issues and has been convicted of assault, right?! He doesn’t deny it! Well, he took out his violent urges on me and has beaten the crap out of me! I told you this! He’s the reason I attempted suicide because I had to sleep in the same room as him and was scared he was going to seriously injure me!” Ouma whines. He lets out another forced childish groan and spits out, “I can’t stand looking at his face, especially at his gross-looking goatee!”

“What’s wrong with the bit of hair on his chin? It’s just hair.” Kiibo wonders. The robot can’t grow hair himself, so he’s a little jealous that other humans have the luxury of growing hair. Humans with facial hair make him even more envious because it feels like they’re just unnecessarily mocking the robot with the hair growth. Not only do they grow the hair on their heads, but they also grow the hair on their faces. Momota’s goatee is a prime target of Kiibo’s hair growth jealousy. The robot can’t stand looking at the goatee either. Although, it’s for petty reasons, which Kiibo is ashamed of, so he doesn’t voice his envy. The AI thinks he’ll get over this hair envy as he matures.

“It’s the hair of a sadist and creeper! No one in their right mind would grow that kind of hair unless they have some serious issues! My eyes burn just looking at! If I have to look at his ugly face and ugly goatee for five seconds, I’m going to vomit! He’s awful! He’s such a psychopath! Homocidal-kun is the catalyst for my mental torture!” Ouma shouts through the phone. His voice is filled with panicked rage and fear. He breathes heavily and complains in a quiet voice, “It’s not fair that people act like he’s some noble guy who wants to help people. He’s not.” He takes a few seconds to calm his breathing before asking, “Hey, Babysitter-chan, can you do me a favor?”

“It depends on the favor,” Kiibo answers.

“Send me a picture of Homocidal-kun’s face so I can stab it repeatedly with a pen!”

“Ouma-kun, if the nurses and doctors see that, they definitely won’t want to take you out of intensive care.”

The robot doesn’t know why Ouma harbors such hatred for Momota. He thinks back to the other individuals in the prostitution site’s photos and videos, and he doesn’t recall anyone looking like Momota. Although, it’s very possible such a person existed. There were men and women of all ages and appearances in those photos and videos. It’s very possible one of them could have a strong resemblance to Momota, and that makes Ouma upset. Another possibility is Momota and Ouma are
nothing alike in terms of personality, and that bothers Ouma. Ouma gets into more direct head-to-head conflicts with Momota than anyone else, and Kiibo has seen and heard about Momota seriously losing his temper with Ouma and almost hurting him. Although, it’s Ouma-kun’s own fault for bullying Momota-kun so much.

“Ouma-kun, are you sure you aren’t just assuming the worst out of Momota-kun because of his anger disorder?” Kiibo wonders.

“See! He has an anger disorder! Every time he’s angry, he takes it out on me by screaming at me, insulting me, humiliating me, punching me, kicking me, slapping me, whipping me, and other violent actions! He needs to be sent to jail for assault! He’s so bad I can’t get him out of my nightmares, and I’m worried he’ll pop out of nowhere and attack me!” Ouma exclaims. “I’m sure the hospital put me in the same room as him just to torment me!”

“Maybe you’re confusing him with someone else?” Kiibo suggests. The robot has been thinking deeply about this issue. When Ouma describes Momota, it sounds like the dark haired boy is describing one of the individuals who assaulted Ousama in the videos. In fact, a lot of them were doing what Ouma was describing. Momota looks old for his age and is aggressive, so it wouldn’t be a stretch to assume Momota resembles some of them. “Maybe you’re confusing him with someone from your past?”

Ouma doesn’t say anything for a few seconds then questions in a clear, yet hesitant tone, “Oh, so did you find anything in the website I gave you? I’ve concluded the creepy hospital probably just implanted fake memories into me, so you probably didn’t find anything. Did you? Did you find someone who looks like me? Let me hear it!” He sounds surprisingly excited. “Maybe you can bring back my happy memories!”

“Oh well…” Kiibo pauses. He really doesn’t know how to explain this to Ouma. It’ll probably be good to prove to the dark haired boy that he’s not being brainwashed or that the hospital is not trying to lie to him. “Yeah, I found stuff.”

“What was this stuff you found?”

“There were pictures, videos, and text.”

pictures, videos, and text have?”

“Stuff.”

“Babysitter-chan!” Ouma shouts in frustration. He then snarls, “We just said there was stuff. We can’t go around in circles! I need details! Lots of it! Tell me the people you saw in the photos, describe the events in the videos, and state what the texts said. I need to know everything! I need to compare everything that’s there with these stupid memories that are in my head!”

Kiibo really doesn’t want to talk about what he saw, let alone think about it. He was planning on just briefly confirming there’s stuff related to Ouma and that his bad memories may be true. The robot just wanted to gloss over the topic and then forget about it. However, Kiibo understands why Ouma would want details, even if the details are horrifying. The boy is confused and having a lot of questions about who he is and what happened to him. He made that clear yesterday. If the robot were in Ouma’s position, he’d also want to hear as much as possible about this suspicious website in order to clear up as many doubts as possible. But how much of this is really okay to share? Thinking about these things is going to be painful. If he thinks he’s being mentally tortured by fake bad memories, wouldn’t it be worse if those bad memories are confirmed to be real? And wouldn’t other bad memories also enter his recollection, hurting him even more? Wouldn’t it be better if he just forgets
Although, Kiibo knows that if Ouma forgets about everything, then the dark haired will just keep on making false assumptions and continue to live in his delusions. If not that, then he could start having a worse identity crisis and panic over who he really is. Ouma is just a teenager. Teenagers, especially compared to adults, want to have an identity. They want to know where they’re from and who they are. They usually don’t want to forget about their past and who they are and move on with their lives, even if that would be the ideal case in Ouma’s situation. Plus, what if there is something important in Ouma’s past that the dark haired boy is forgetting? What if there are loved ones who took care of him and are looking for him now? What if there are friends who supported Ouma and are people who Ouma would be happy to see now? If Kiibo can trigger some memories, even if they’re bad ones, something good may come from it. Kiibo doesn’t believe in living in ignorance, even if ignorance may seem like the happier and simpler option. Kiibo concludes he will try to share as much information as he can even if it hurts the robot and Ouma.

“Okay, Ouma-kun, I’ll try explaining everything I saw. If you want me to stop or if you’re feeling uncomfortable, tell me,” Kiibo instructs the boy.

“Just get on with it! I’m not a toddler! I’ve watched the most violent adult movies and have played the most gruesome and sexual video games! Just because I randomly cry for no reason doesn’t mean I can’t handle it! I can handle practically anything! Bring on the pain!” Ouma orders. In Kiibo’s opinion, he sounds too excited and interested. It’s as if he’s a kid listening to a suspenseful story. In a way, he probably is a kid who’s about to listen to some sort of fragmented story.

Is it really appropriate to give him graphic details? I’ll try to briefly summarize. That should be enough to clear up doubts. The robot tries to emotionally detach himself from the things he’s about to describe. Kiibo knows that breaking down over this wouldn’t do anyone any good. He still feels like he should be the professional here. He keeps it simple and states, “I went to the website, and there was a profile that sort of looked like a dating profile for a boy who looks like you. There are many pictures of him on the profile of him at Towa City, Towa City Resort in particular.Apparently, this boy spent every night at Towa City Resort. His name is Seiji Kouma, but he goes under the alias Ousama. He said he has a bunch of underlings and used his online profile to reach out and meet up with strangers who’d be interested in becoming his underlings. Unfortunately, upon further investigation, this profile page is actually a page that leads to a webpage full of very pornographic and violent images and videos. Ousama claimed he’s eighteen at the time these images were taken, and he was apparently looking for strangers to become his underlings and do BDSM with him. He chatted with underlings, and these underlings gave Ousama money so that they can do very sexual and violent things with him, making this prostitution. Ousama claimed he’s a masochist, so he liked…you know…the violent, sexual acts. However, all this is a façade. Upon further investigation, it appears the website is a website for soliciting child prostitution, and Ousama was a child prostitute who was being physically and sexually assaulted against his will.” Kiibo pauses for a moment.

“Ouma-kun, are you there?”

“Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
Ouma gives an obnoxiously loud hum that make Kiibo want to roll his eyes. The dark haired boy doesn’t sound like he’s freaking out, but Kiibo wishes he would give a more substantive response.

“And did that clear up any confusion? Are you satisfied with what I just told you?” Kiibo asks nervously, having no idea what Ouma is thinking right now.

“No!” he declares in what seems like a joyful sounding voice.

“No?” Well he took my explanation about the child abuse pretty well.
The dark haired boy chants contently in response, “No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no-“

“Okay! I get it!”

“Silly Babysitter-chan, I told you to bring on the pain! What is that pathetic excuse of an explanation!? Give me the juicy details!” He says it as if they’re gossiping about a scandal that happened with some spoiled celebrity. Kiibo is taken aback by this upbeat behavior. It’s like Ouma didn’t hear Kiibo talk about a child, who Ouma should be extremely close to, being brutally abused.

“What areas in the Towa City Resort did Ousama go to? Did he go to the bowling alley? What did he do at the bowling alley? Who’d he go with? Were there a lot of pictures and videos of him at the bowling alley? What food did he order at the bowling alley?”

“Uhhhhhh…..hold on, let me fetch all information related to the Towa City Resort bowling alley out of my mind,” Kiibo tells him. This is what he wants to focus on?!

The robot thinks if there was any bowling alley shown. There were actually a bunch of videos and photos of the bowling alley. Some milder than others, but, in Kiibo’s opinion, most of them are pretty degrading to the small boy. Some are too distressing for Kiibo to recall. The robot shares the tamest moment at the bowling alley he can think of, “Well, three years ago, back when Ousama was thirteen, he went to the bowling alley with just himself and the camera holder.” The videos where Ousama is shown alone with no one else are the ones where the small boy seems the most content. Any video of the boy with even just one grown up has him inappropriately touched or humiliated in some way.

“Awwwww……it was just him and no one else? C’mon, Babysitter-chan! I told you I wanted to hear the juicy, painful stuff!” There’s a twinge of frustration in his voice, but Ouma otherwise still sounds pretty excited. The dark haired boy then takes out a deep breath and lets out a loud “UGH” before telling the robot, “Here’s an example of a juicy story, Babysitter-chan.”

“Ouma-kun……”

“Don’t ‘Ouma-kun’ me! I’m trying to show you an example of an exciting story!” Ouma states angrily.

“No! I was just trying to help you confirm if your bad memories were real or not and to help clear up any confusion you may have! This isn’t like a child’s story time!” Kiibo tells him out of both frustration and confusion.

“Yeah, of course, sure, affirmative, okay, yep, I know this is supposed to help me figure out my memories, and I can’t do that if I don’t hear about the fun stuff?” Ouma states excitedly. His excitement just makes Kiibo more peeved. “So let me share an example of an interesting story at the bowling alley.”

In detail, Ouma explains how Ousama went to the bowling alley with a group called Ultimate Despair. To Kiibo’s horror, the robot knows what terrible things happened during that event, but he lets Ouma recount the story just in case it’ll help the small boy understand some things. The dark haired boy talks about Ousama and Ultimate Despair playing bowling after the bowling alley closed. Apparently, one of the members of Ultimate Despair worked at the resort’s bowling alley and got them access to the bowling alley during the afterhours. Members of Ultimate Despair liked to mess with Ousama with small things like slapping him on the cheeks or bottom and groping him. They gave him nicknames like Slutty Highness, Lord Crybaby, and Self-indulgent Master. He dropped a bowling ball on his foot, badly bruising his toes, and Ultimate Despair laughed at him and some scolded the small boy for hurting himself, claiming only his underlings were allowed to hurt him. Ousama was not allowed to hurt himself. It reminds Kiibo of something the strawberry blond woman said. “No, no, no Ousama, you’re not allowed to damage your beautiful body. Only your underlings
Kiibo wonders if the woman was part of this Ultimate Despair group too. He doesn’t recall her being in the bowling alley video. In fact, she wasn’t in any of the premium member videos. *Maybe she was the one holding the camera?* Ultimate Despair then decided that since it was after hours at the bowling alley, they could have Ousama expose himself without getting in trouble. They made a morbid game with him where the small boy plays bowling naked. For every pin he misses, he gets hit or flogged. If someone gets a strike or a spare, worse stuff happens. Kiibo fast forwarded through the moments when someone got a strike or spare because the robot couldn’t stand the screams, the bleeding, and, worse, the small boy’s laughing. Ousama smiled and laughed during most of the torturous video. When Ouma describes the worst moments in great detail, the robot doesn’t listen to him. Kiibo doesn’t want to hear or watch the worst of it. He just pays attention to the tone of Ouma’s voice. Ouma recalls the story as if it’s a pleasant memory. He even giggles through some of it. Through most of the bowling game, Ousama didn’t cry at all. Ouma mentions something that Kiibo didn’t notice. He claims Ousama took MDMA, GHB, and heroin before going to the bowling alley.

Kiibo doesn’t remember any drug use in the videos. *Maybe it was to avoid being caught with illegal substances?* In hindsight, the website attempted to make itself appear legal by disguising itself as this morbid dating site and claiming Ousama was a consenting adult. Kiibo had to hack into private data to find definitive proof of illegal activity, so keeping drug usage out of the content makes sense. It makes everything seem legal. Even though the robot has an answer of his own, he asks, “Why was he on a concoction of drugs?” *Given his lifestyle and abuse, it’s amazing he didn’t develop a substance addiction.*

“Because he’s a spoiled brat of a leader who can do whatever he wants,” the darks haired boy answers.

“He’s not.“

“Let me continue my story. We haven’t reached the best part!” Ouma then describes how Ousama actually blacked out for a few minutes. Kiibo doesn’t remember this part because the video has it edited out. However, the robot does remember seeing the boy being tied up and blindfolded and him squirming and laughing nervously in confusion. Some Ultimate Despair members rolled bowling balls right at him, hitting his stomach and chest. It really bruised him since seven-kilogram bowling balls travel around 27 kilometers per hour when thrown down a bowling lane. Ultimate Despair would then walk up to him, kicking him, hitting him, choking, biting him, kissing him, scratching him, cutting him with broken glass, and spitting on him. They wanted him to cry because they said he looks so cute when he cries. They kept cooing at him about how adorable he looked naked and defenseless. He still didn’t cry. He was quiet and let them do what they want with him. He stopped screaming for whatever reason at that point. Ousama didn’t visibly start crying until one of them called the boy their toy. They said that their leader’s only role was to be their human doll. For some odd reason, that hurt him more than the cuts and bruises. They joked about sticking a bowling pin inside of him. Surprisingly, Ousama wanted them to do so. To Kiibo’s horror, Ouma chuckles and explains Ousama wanted them to stick the thickest part of the bowling pin inside of him so that he bleeds to death. Ousama wasn’t thinking clearly and at that moment, just wanted to die as soon as possible. Ouma makes a crude joke about “dying from bleeding out of the ass.” Kiibo is too stunned to say anything and barely listens to Ouma as he explains Ousama be gang raped. He begged them to get rougher and more brutal with him, hoping they will accidentally kill him. The boy ended up getting enough anal fissures to bleed. In fact, there was enough to blood from cuts and fissures to make it look like someone got murdered. They laughed at him, commenting at how satisfied their slut looked lying there naked with all his injuries and their bodily fluids pouring out of him.

And Ouma explains all this as if it’s a pleasant memory. Kiibo expects the boy to cry or break down at any minute, but he doesn’t. The robot saw the video, but it’s worse hearing it come out of the dark
haired boy’s mouth. Ouma acting delighted by this memory, leaves Kiibo speechless. The dark
haired boy sounds like a sadistic psychopath when he talks about a boy being tortured like this.
Jolting Kiibo from his shock, Ouma sings, “Okay, Babysitter-chan! That’s how you tell a juicy story!
Now it’s your turn! What fun tale do you have? I’m sure you have lots. Remember, it’s to try to get
me to confirm my memories…..”

“No!” the robot shouts out of anger, confusion, and concern. He feels tears running down his metal
face. They’re tears of pain that Ouma should be crying, not him. The robot choke’s out, “Ouma-kun,
I think you already know about the terrible memories! There’s nothing that needs to be explained!
We’re talking about a boy whose life was ruined! He was viciously tortured for five years! This is
not something you should laugh about!”

“Babysitter-chan, are you okay? You sound different….” There’s genuine concern in Ouma’s voice,
something Kiibo has never heard from the dark haired boy before. The robot is taken aback, and this
would have been heartwarming if the robot weren’t so confused and upset by Ouma’s
inappropriately pleased reaction to child abuse earlier. The dark haired boy’s voice finally sounds at
least a little sad, but not for the reason Kiibo was expecting. “Are you crying? Awww….don’t be
upset. It’s okay. You don’t have to retell the things you saw in detail for my sake if you don’t want
to. You’ve told me enough about the website. I’m happy and no longer confused. Okay?” He pauses
to give Kiibo a chance to answer, but the robot doesn’t answer, still trying to process what’s going
on. “Damn it! I knew this would happen! Don’t worry! I’ll save you from your depression!”

“Depression?”

“Yes, depression! Your constant feelings of helplessness and sadness and your low self-esteem are
all symptoms of depression! It’s time for a therapy session!” Ouma declares eagerly. “Don’t worry,
I’ve got my clipboard, my spectacles, my tie, my PhD, and a nice cup of coffee, so I’m all set.
Babysitter-chan, you just lie down and tell me more about yourself. What’s troubling you?”

“What? A therapy session?” He wants to roleplay. How should I respond to this?

“Yep! A therapy session! Now, hurry up and answer the question. My coffee is getting cold,” Ouma
answers. After a moment of Kiibo not replying due to having difficulties with roleplaying, Ouma
sighs. “Let’s try a leading question, are you getting enough sleep?”

Kiibo knows he is bad at acting and roleplaying. Ouma made that clear multiple times when the dark
hair boy tried roleplaying with the robot before. The robot understands the basic premise of roleplay.
It’s mainly used for enjoyment. Children regularly play pretend all the time for fun. Ouma isn’t an
exception to this concept. The robot just isn’t sure whether Ouma is trying to help Kiibo or is only
doing this for his own amusement. Instead of pretending Ouma is some sort of psychologist or
therapist, Kiibo decides to just answer the dark haired boy’s questions as honestly as possible.
“Ouma-kun, I don’t sleep,”

“You don’t sleep!? Ah, insomnia is a symptom of depression! Maybe someone should prescribe
some Prozac to you. I’m just a mere psychologist, not a psychiatrist, so I can’t prescribe medication.
Damn the system!”

“Ouma-kun, I’m a robot, so I don’t sleep, and medication doesn’t work on me. Prozac is medication
that’s been prescribed to you, so why don’t you take it?” Kiibo rebuts.

“Wow, you get sassy when you have a therapy session! Rawr! I should give you these more often!”
Ouma laughs. His voice sounds unusually flirtatious for a minute, which startles Kiibo. The robot has
never heard the small boy use that tone of voice. However, Kiibo brushes it off as part of the
roleplaying. Ouma then starts speaking in a much lower, mock-serious voice. “So, why were you
upset earlier? Please, share your feelings with me. You can cry if you feel like it. You’re safe in this room. Hmmmmmm…..did somebody touch you?”

Kiibo doesn’t know how this has anything to do with being upset, so he replies honestly, “Yes, actually, some people touched me earlier today. Akamatsu-san hugged me, Momota-kun patted me on the back, and Chabashira-san kicked me in the head.”

“Ah, I see, so your depression is from getting kicked in the head. Head trauma is a bitch.”

“Huh? No! My head is very durable. The kick didn’t damage me at all!” Kiibo protests. The conversation feels ridiculous. However, after the robot hears a warm laugh from the other end of the phone, he immediately likes the ridiculous conversation. Ouma is happy, and not in an unsettling way. There’s something soothing about this nonsensical conversation. Nobody is getting hurt, and it’s a nice distraction from the world’s stresses. Maybe this is why people like to roleplay.

“When I asked if you got touched, I asked if someone hurt you,” Ouma informs the robot in his still mock-serious voice. “Were you abused as a kid? Hmmmm? Child abuse is a common cause of depression. If someone hurt you, please share. It’s not healthy to keep it in.”

Kiibo is stunned by this and blurts out, “That’s ironic coming from you.”

“What? Do you think I abused my kids?! Is that what you find ironic?! Let me tell you, my children, Makoto and Komaru, mean everything to me! I would never hurt them! I’m just here to help others with their problems! I have a rewarding profession, a wife, two kids, and a dog. I’m the luckiest man in the world!” Ouma states passionately. Yep, we’re really roleplaying. I genuinely thought he was trying to help me, but he’s not. This is all just a game to him. Was he ever concerned for me? Kiibo shakes his head. It doesn’t matter if he was trying to help me. Ouma-kun is happy and in relatively healthy state of mind. I can’t ruin it with my own selfish problems.

But even if I can’t harm him with my own problems. It’s just….aren’t his problems still hurting him? His terrible memories must be agonizing. Is this all just a distraction from them? Iidabashi already called the police, so Ouma-kun can’t just ignore and try to forget the memories because the police and probably his psychiatrist will start asking questions. Even if they don’t, is it really okay for us to just move on from this? Ouma-kun’s mind tried to forget and repress those memories months ago, and, as a result, he has a severe mental disorder, delusions, and thoughts of suicide. I guess avoiding the problem may work for some people, but it doesn’t seem to work for Ouma-kun.

Kiibo has to ask Ouma something. “Ouma-kun, I’m being serious. Did my explanation about the website confirm your bad memories? You said you were no longer confused.”

“Yeah, they’re not important now,” Ouma responds. “What’s important is you! Why did you sound upset and stressed out earlier?!”

“I was upset by you being happy talking about, in great detail, the horrible prostitution and the sexual and physical assault you endured during your childhood. That whole thing is awful….and to hear you treat it as a joke just sounds cruel,” Kiibo replies. He feels his voice shaking. His system feels, for a lack of a better word, ‘sticky’ as he struggles to talk.

“The horrible prostitution and sexual and physical assault I endured?” Ouma echoes in a puzzled manner. Then he says in a tone that reminds the robot of a mother correcting her little child over something. “No, no, Babysitter-chan, we never said I was the one who went through that. Ousama went through that. Seiji went through that. That’s what we said. We never said I was the one who went through that.”
“We didn’t?” Kiibo questions. The robot thinks back to their past conversations, and Ouma is correct. They never explicitly mentioned Ouma being the one to go through this. Sure, this is all part of Ouma’s bad memories, but they never said Ouma was the one who went through it. They always said it was Seiji or Ousama who went through it. It’s as if Ouma was just a bystander to these bad memories, not the person who was receiving the abuse. Even while looking through the photos and videos, Kiibo never specifically thought that Ouma was the one getting hurt. His thoughts always referred to the victim as Ousama, as if Ousama and Ouma were two different people. Now, for some odd reason, without even thinking, Kiibo finally decided to directly state that the child in those videos and photos is Ouma. “Why does it matter? It’s obvious it’s you.”

“We never said it was me! We said never said I was Ousama! Seiji is Ousama!” Ouma growls. He makes a choked noise. “My childhood was great, okay? I got everything I wanted! I had people who loved me, had the best education, did many exciting things, ate the best food, had lots followers, received lots of gifts, and could buy anything I ever wanted. Don’t call me hopeless!”

“I’m not calling you hopeless. I never said that,” the robot whispers. Ouma makes a strange noise that could be either a laugh or a cry. Either way, the dark haired boy did not sound stable.

“You implied it!” Ouma barks with a hiccup. He lets out another laugh-cry noise. “Ousama is a weak and stupid brat who let people use him as their plaything. He’s so pathetic, calling himself a leader when all he does is act like a masochistic whore! It’s all his fault. If he were a strong, evil leader, who put a stranglehold on his followers and showed them who’s boss, then none of this would have happened.” And that’s why Ouma-kun takes pride in being an evil leader. “He was too nice, too weak to be worth shit. People like him deserve all the suffering they get. I’m not like him. I fight back!”

Ouma brought up one good point. Why didn’t Ousama—I mean-young Ouma-kun call for help? The young boy was in a crowded resort surrounded by many adults who could have saved him. He waited five years before finally running away. Kiibo thinks back to what Ouma said yesterday. “He didn’t tell them to stop…not at first because they were our parents’ friends, so he respected them. He respected the clients that were pushed on to him, and nobody tried to stop it because everyone thought Seiji was okay with it and that he was old enough to handle it. They thought he was at least thirteen. Since prostitution is illegal, they can make up their own rules about what ages are allowed, and the customers to these whorehouses in the area I lived in seemed to think thirteen year olds are old enough to consent. By the time Seiji realized he was being taken advantage of and tried to protest, it was too late.” A good part of those five years must have been spent with him not realizing what was happening to him was wrong.

“One politician blackmailed him by claiming, unless he makes the clients happy, unsavory photos and videos will be released publicly through Seiji’s computer, and Seiji will be accused of releasing child pornography of himself and of being an attention seeking slut. He’ll lose everything: he’ll lose his pride, reputation, friends, influence, and value to the point where even his parents won’t want him. That same politician said my brother will lose if he takes his problems to court because no one will believe him because he’s been caught lying many times before and the politicians and the rest of the government have too much power. Seiji is too scared and stupid to do anything. Another politician bribed Seiji. He said if Seiji cooperates, he’ll get lots of money, power, gifts, and other perks for being cooperative. He’ll get so many friends, and the clients love him. This man even had the audacity to claim Seiji even enjoyed the abuse.” And once he figured out something was wrong, there was always something scaring him into submission. Also, as simple as it seems. Who knows what was going on through his head at the time? Kiibo figures even if Ouma didn’t have a good reason for not calling for help, the robot wouldn’t hold it against him. He was just a child at the time. He shouldn’t have been in the situation in the first place. It’s not his responsibility to fight against a group of people who are older and have more power than him.
“Ousama isn’t weak,” Kiibo concludes. “In fact, he’s very mentally strong.”

“Oh yeah?” Ouma laughs. “You’re delusional.”

“No, I’m not. The fact that he was able to go through all that for five years and still survive is incredible. Even though he could never successfully get help, from what I can tell, he never gave up. He was smart enough to realize what was going on without giving in to his abusers. He could have easily believed his abusers loved him and developed an attachment to them, but he didn’t. He could have easily been persuaded into thinking he deserved to be mistreated, but he didn’t. He could have easily believed he liked being abused, but he didn’t. He could have easily successfully committed suicide, but he didn’t. He could have developed a drug addiction as a way of coping, but he didn’t. He never truly stopped being aware or even gave up, so that takes a lot of strength. It’s amazing that he’s alive right now and not with abusers,” Kiibo informs the boy.

The robot hears Ouma take a deep breath before he tells the robot, “Stop being stupid. You know he gave up and broke many times. He gave up and wanted to die. He wanted to them kill him every time they hurt him.”

“Yeah, but if he really wanted to die, why didn’t he just commit suicide? Anyone would want to die during the moments when they’re in the most pain. Maybe that’s how he felt, but once he survived the worst of it, he didn’t break to the point of losing his sanity or losing the will to live,” Kiibo explains. “That’s just my guess anyway.”

“So…you think I’m weak then,” Ouma presumes in a mumble.

“Huh? No. I just explained how you, Ousama, aren’t weak. How could you think the opposite?” Kiibo questions.

“You just said Ousama is not weak because he never gave up and never stopped being aware. I gave up and lost my awareness weeks ago. I wouldn’t have tried to commit suicide if that wasn’t the case,” Ouma whimpers in a quiet, quivering voice. The robot hears a soft wail through the other end of the phone. “I’ve already given up! I’ve already assumed that I don’t have bright future ahead of me! I don’t know what’s going on! I don’t even know who I really am!”

Kiibo sighs, “Well, even the strongest individuals have their limits. Besides, I said not giving up and being aware takes incredible strength. I did not say giving up and losing awareness means you’re weak. It just means you’re not invincible, like everyone else. You giving up and losing your sanity is inevitable.”

“Those are some nice words for a robot. Nice words may work on some people, but they don’t work on me,” Ouma sobs. “It’s almost like you’re lying to me. It’s impressive. I’ll give you that.”

“Would it help you if the people who abused you were sent to jail?” Kiibo asks nervously.

“What do you mean? They’re not going to jail. They’re in cahoots with the police. The police will be more likely to cut my balls off with a hot butter knife rather than even charge those monsters!” Ouma hisses. Kiibo winces at the dark haired boy’s comment.

“If the police did arrest them, or, better yet, if they got convicted for their crimes, then would things get better?” Kiibo asks hesitantly.

He hears the boy take in a deep, shaky breath. In a dark, low voice, he asks, “You didn’t tell the police about the website did you?”

“NO!” Kiibo immediately replies. The robot feels his whole body shake with fear. He almost decides
not tell Ouma that he told someone about the website, but, to Kiibo, it’s not okay to keep this a secret from Ouma, and the boy will probably find out anyways if the police or doctors start asking questions. In a meek voice, Kiibo mumbles, “I told Iidabashi about the website, and the professor called the police, so the police may want to question you.”

The line is silent. Not even the sound of breathing or moving is heard. Kiibo wonders if the dark haired boy even heard what he said. Then, after a couple minutes of the dead, eerie silence, Kiibo hears a clear “Nishishishi…”

_Huh? Is that supposed to be some kind of laugh?_

“Ouma-kun, I’m sorry I lied to you yesterday when I promised I wouldn’t tell anyone about the website. It’s just, I felt that whoever was responsible for this had to be imprisoned to prevent other innocent children from falling victim to them and so that you can get some closure,” Kiibo tells him, trying to hide the panic in his voice. He then sighs, “Are you mad at me?”

“Nishishi….mad? No! I’m just impressed! I underestimated you, Kiibaby!” Ouma states gleefully. Kiibo frowns. His voice sounds very strange. It’s almost like Ouma suddenly switched personalities and is someone else. It didn’t feel like Kiibo is talking to Ouma even though the voice is definitely his. “It’s so cool that a robot is able to lie like that. Iidabashi is certainly impressive! I, the self-proclaimed liar, got duped by the lying robot! What else have you lied about?? You seemed so honest when talking to me. It was almost like you weren’t capable for lying. That’s the sign of a true ultimate liar! You’re probably a bigger liar than me! What else have lied about!? Wait! Don’t answer that! You’ll probably lie about that too. Won’t you, Kiibaby?”

“Ouma-kun…..” Kiibo says softly, trying to keep his voice steady. The robot feels like he set off a bomb. Ouma sounds happy, but something seems really off with the boy. It’s so bad that the robot feels like he really messed up. He wants to cry because he knows something is wrong but doesn’t know why he feels like something is wrong. “I only lied to you once. I wasn’t thinking when I promised I wouldn’t tell anyone about the website, and then once I realized my mistake, I knew that I would call someone for help if I saw that you were being abused by another adult.”

“Nishishishishi….awwwww….why do you sound so scared Kiibaby? I’m not mad. I’d be a hypocrite if I were mad at you for lying!” Ouma cackles. “You’re working for the hospital and government aren’t you? So…these bad memories….they’re all fabricated by the hospital to torture me! And then they sent in their robot to convince me those memories are real! It makes sense! I’m lucky to have figured out their sinister scheme!”

“The hospital didn’t fabricate those memories, and I really did see a website that confirms your bad memories! That’s the truth!” Kiibo states firmly. His arms are shaking so badly that he feels like he may drop the phone. The robot worries that he may need Iidabashi to fix him up after this call.

“Okay!” Ouma responds cheerily.

“Okay?”

“I believe you, Kiibaby! You don’t need to sound so nervous. I trust you,” Ouma tells him in a gentle voice that sends chills down the robot’s body. “I mean, you’re my friend and you love me. I don’t see how you’re trying to lie to me now.”

_You think I love you? “You believe me?”_ Kiibo asks in disbelief. He feels his face heat up and is grateful that the dark haired boy can’t see him.

“Of course! And you know what? I’m feeling amazing right now! Everything has cleared up for me,
and this conversation has been very satisfying. I can’t think of anything else I want to say to you right now, so goodbye, Kiibaby!” Ouma chirps. The robot hears a beep and looks at his cellphone to see that the dark haired boy had suddenly hung up. Kiibo is so confused.

He really didn’t want that conversation to end. He doesn’t know if the boy is satisfied or if he’s really upset. For some reason, the robot despises the sudden change in attitude of Ouma. The robot felt physically ill listening to him speak. It’s almost like he was trying to evilly manipulate the robot. When Kiibo first met Ouma, the robot also felt about as uncomfortable as he feels now, but eventually the robot learned how to understand the boy better. Right now, he feels like he’s starting all over with Ouma and is just as confused as before. Hopefully, once I talk to him again, he’ll be back to normal. Maybe he’s just trying to creep me out as some sick joke. Ouma-kun is a good actor. Maybe he’s pretending to be someone else for amusement. This has to be another game to him. The game will be over the next time I call him.

Kiibo wants the next time he calls him to be now. He feels like their conversation ended too suddenly. The robot calls Ouma’s room number again, but the nurse says that Ouma doesn’t want to speak to the robot. Kiibo feels immensely concerned but dismisses his concerns as himself overreacting. I’ll just try talking to him again tomorrow. We talked about a lot. Maybe he needs time to process everything.

The next day, the robot tries calling Ouma again, but the nurse, again, tells the robot Ouma doesn’t want to speak to him. For the next two weeks, Kiibo tries calling, and the nurse repeatedly tells him that the dark haired boy doesn’t want to talk to him. On the fifteenth day, the nurse says Ouma is unable to talk on the phone. Kiibo doesn’t know what’s going on with the boy this whole time. All he knows is that Ouma hasn’t died yet.

Chapter End Notes

This fanfic now has a cover illustration. Go to chapter one, and you'll see it! It's done by @Shirodebby.

Shiro's art blog is http://shirodebbyartblog.tumblr.com/

This fic also got even more fan art! (I still can't believe this fic receives fan art! It doesn't feel worthy.)


Another user also made fan art, and they showed it to me. It's great, but I can't find the art posted on Tumblr, so I don't have the right to share it. Here's their Tumblr.

http://kiibq.tumblr.com/

Thanks Sonezakirin for editing the fic! Here's their Ao3 account so that you can read their great fics!

https://archiveofourown.org/users/SonezakiRin/pseud/SonezakiRin
And here's their Tumblr!

https://sonezakirin.tumblr.com/
If any artist wants to add an illustration to this fic, you can contact me about.

This chapter, especially the ending, was fun to write! Thanks for the support, and I still really appreciate the feedback!

By the way, if there are any issues, please tell me. For some odd reason, this chapter up until Ouma gives Kiibo a therapy session was a bit of struggle to write. Words just couldn't come out.

Words and I just didn't get along earlier this week.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Chapter Summary

A month passes, and Kiibo sees Ouma for the first time since the dark haired boy's suicide attempt. Ouma is very good at coloring.

WARNING: WARNING: There's some heavy adult stuff, some mentions of non-con too. (Not as bad as the last three chapters.)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kiibo keeps asking Iidabashi about the child prostitution case, but the professor only tells the robot that the police are investigating it and that there will be justice. Iidabashi doesn’t know much about the case either. The professor only answered the police’s questions, and then law enforcement did their investigation. It doesn’t look like the professor told them about Kiibo’s illegal hacking since the robot hasn’t been charged of anything. The robot still feels guilty about hacking without authorization, but he trusts Iidabashi. If the professor thinks Kiibo shouldn’t be charged with a crime, then the robot will reluctantly follow his guardian’s wishes.

Kiibo spends the next few weeks bonding with other patients and observing them. The hospital assigns him to watch the less difficult patients in Momota’s group. The robot doesn’t bond with them one-on-one like he did with Ouma, so the AI’s relationship with them feels less intimate. Although, the patients in Momota’s group are easier to deal with than Ouma. In fact, Kiibo thinks many, if not all of them, could live safely outside of the hospital. Gonta, the self-proclaimed gentleman, is very polite and obedient. Unfortunately, his self-depreciation and random outbursts can make him difficult to handle sometimes. Shinguuiji is respectful. He does his own thing most of the time. He says some pretty interesting things about humanity. Unfortunately, he’s one of the coldest and most apathetic individuals Kiibo has ever met. There’s something about him that creeps the robot out, and Kiibo feels bad for thinking that way. Shinguuiji has never done anything bad when Kiibo is around, yet the robot feels uncomfortable around him for a reason that he can’t explain. Tenko and Yumeno are an interesting pair. It’s hard to believe they’ve only just met at the hospital. They know so much about each other and seem to be lifelong friends. They’re roommates and have almost the exact same hospital schedule, so they’re almost always together. Unfortunately, the robot worries about them being too attached to each other. Tenko constantly worries about Yumeno whenever the redhead is not within her sight and gets very overly protective, and Yumeno often finds herself crying for Tenko when she gets upset or uncomfortable over the smallest things. Kiibo finds he can’t really develop a close relationship with either girl when Tenko keeps guarding Yumeno against every little thing, including Kiibo himself. The only time Kiibo really bonds with Yumeno is when Tenko goes off to train, but, even then, after training, she rushes over to the redhead, gives her a hug, and frantically questions how she’s doing. Momota is still his usual friendly self, with an angry or hysterical outburst every once in a while. Kiibo wonders if he’ll be let out soon. He doesn’t need to live in the hospital anymore. Momota feels more like a volunteer to Kiibo than a patient.

It’s been 21 days since Kiibo has last spoken to Ouma. The dark haired boy feels like a distant memory. The robot wonders if much has changed. Apparently, Ouma hasn’t been well enough to leave the intensive unit, which worries the robot. The hospital doesn’t like keeping patients in the
intensive unit longer than necessary. A patient normally isn’t in the intensive unit for more than a few weeks. To the robot, Ouma has been staying in the intensive unit for way too long, and he can’t help but assume the worst.

It has been 24 days since Kiibo has last spoken to Ouma, and Momota finally gets released from the hospital. If Ouma returns to the more open unit, the dark haired boy will have a new roommate or no roommate. Kiibo misses Momota already. The other patients apparently do too. Gonta is more self-depreciative and melancholy than usual. Yumeno gets so dispirited that Tenko has to skip training sessions to cheer her up. One day when both Maki and Kiibo watch their groups, the normally aloof girl coldly points out, “You’re all acting like Momota died. He’s fine. You should be happy that he’s well enough to leave the mental hospital. He’ll still have to visit this place for checkups, so you’ll probably see him anyway.”

Her cold statement manages to cheer them up, and the robot agrees that they were overreacting to Momota’s departure.

Kiibo hardly ever runs into Saihara. In the past, the only times Kiibo did run into him was when Saihara’s group hung out with Momota’s group, or when Saihara broke his schedule and joined Momota’s group. When that happened, usually Saihara hung around the purple haired boy, Maki, or Kaede, depending on which of those two girls were around. The black-clad boy rarely smiled or talked and just kept to himself. Before he left the hospital, Momota tried to get him to open up every time they interacted, and Saihara always got flustered and mumbled to himself. Kiibo still always wonders how Ouma and Saihara were put in the same group. Supposedly, the two boys were similar when it came to mental stability. They still seem so different though. To Kiibo’s knowledge, Saihara has never had an emotional outburst like Ouma and is much quieter than the smaller boy. Kiibo hasn’t seen Saihara since Momota left the hospital. Even when Momota’s old group meets up with Saihara’s group, the black haired boy is never with them. The robot hopes he’s okay, even though Kiibo hardly knows anything about him.

Out of curiosity, Kiibo asks Amami and Hoshi during dinner at the cafeteria about how Saihara is doing. Amami just frowns and replies, “You know how Ouma-kun spent a couple weeks just lying in bed all day?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Saihara-kun’s doing something similar. He’ll still do his schoolwork, have his vitals checked, and will reluctantly go to therapy sessions. Other than that, he really just doesn’t want to do anything. It’s fine though. Harukawa-san or Akamatsu-san is usually with him, and they usually find some way to cheer him up. He’ll become more social and active eventually,” Amami replies. *I thought the same thing about Ouma-kun too, but then he attempted suicide.* Kiibo recalls Saihara trying to talk to Ouma when the small boy had been lying in bed for two weeks. The robot wonders if the black-clad boy had empathy for Ouma at that moment. In a way, Ouma during those depressing and quiet two weeks did remind Kiibo of Saihara. The robot wonders if Saihara felt sad about Ouma attempting suicide. *Then again, Ouma-kun has also bullied and talked badly about Saihara-kun in the past.* Kiibo wouldn’t blame Saihara for not feeling bad about his bully’s suicide attempt. However, since Saihara tried to help Ouma, the black haired boy probably did feel bad about Ouma’s suicide attempt at some level. *I really don’t know enough about him to judge, but I want to know more since he probably can help me with Ouma-kun.*

“Is he sad because Momota-kun got released?” Kiibo wonders.

“I don’t know. Maybe. Although, Saihara-kun always said he thought Momota-kun should be released because he deserves it and can do better things outside of the hospital.”
“Maybe he feels guilty about Momota-kun having to always cheer him up and pay attention to him. You think that’s why he wanted Momota-kun to be released? Guilt?”

“You noticed that too?” Amami sighs. He takes a big bite of spaghetti noodles and explains, “That may be part of it, but I genuinely believe Saihara-kun thought it would be in Momota-kun’s best interest to leave the hospital and strive for a bright future somewhere else. I don’t think he only wanted Momota-kun to leave because Saihara-kun thought he was a burden to him.”

“Has he been lying in bed all day because he’s sad about Momota-kun leaving? That doesn’t make sense if he wanted Momota-kun to get released in the first place,” Kiibo points out.

After staying silent for a while, Hoshi replies, “There’s more going on than Saihara just being sad about a friend leaving. Besides, it’s not any of our business, and I don’t think he’d be happy if he heard we were gossiping about him.”

Amami gives Kiibo an apologetic look and shrugs. Kiibo feels guilty talking about Saihara behind his back and presumes the only way he can learn about the boy is if he observes Saihara himself. Unfortunately, since Saihara always has either Maki or Kaede with him, the black-clad boy doesn’t need another volunteer to take care of him.

It’s been 25 days since Kiibo had last spoken to Ouma, and the robot tries searching the internet about the child prostitution case. He types in the website Ouma had given to him and sees that it has been taken down. The robot feels relieved. Maybe law enforcement found evidence of criminal activity and took the website down because it’s illegal. He hopes this is a sign that progress has been made.

The robot then searches the web for anything about child prostitution in the Towa City Resort, and a bunch of news articles pop up. He clicks on the first webpage. It’s a credible news source. The news article talks about a child prostitution ring run by Towa City Resort employees. They used a website called bestfriendsandating.tc to solicit their prostitutes. A few dozen children were found being trafficked using the website, and there may be more. Thousands of individuals used the website to gain access to them. The news article shows mug shots of a 36 adults who were arrested for running the child prostitution ring or for knowingly paying for child prostitutes. As far as Kiibo can tell, none of them are politicians, as Ouma claims. There’s a surprising number of women who were arrested. The robot always assumed that the people who did these illegal sex crimes were men. But no, in this case, there were quite a few women in on it too. Kiibo recognizes the familiar strawberry blond, middle aged woman with blue eyes. She’s clearly the same one who hit Ouma with a baseball bat the night before the small boy ran away. Even in the mugshot, she looks like a supermodel, with her exquisite face, thick hair, and large eyes. And she’s arrested. Good. Kiibo decides to show Ouma the article the next time he sees him, to show the small boy that these horrible people are getting arrested and that law enforcement is on his side.

It’s been 27 days since Kiibo has last spoken to Ouma, and, to the robot’s relief, the dark haired boy has finally been released from the intensive unit. The small boy got a new room and roommate. As expected, Kiibo is the one assigned to watch Ouma. To the robot’s surprise, the small boy is not his room. Before his suicide attempt, it was rare for Ouma to even leave his room. Hoshi says that he’s alone in one of the study rooms. When the robot arrives to the study room, he looks through the window from the hallway and sees the familiar small boy sitting on a brown couch with his knees pulled close to his chest. He’s wearing a large dark blue sweatshirt, with no strings, and has a thick, beige hospital blanket wrapped around his body. The robot immediately looks up at the study room’s ceiling and makes a note that the ceiling vent’s openings are very tiny. Too tiny to thread a ripped
blanket through in order create a hanging contraption for suicide. Ouma is too focused intently on something in front of him to notice Kiibo. His tongue sticks out a little from the corner of his mouth in concentration.

The robot freezes where he stands and begins to feel intense nervousness. He hasn’t seen the small boy since the boy gave him a goodbye kiss before his suicide attempt. A lot has changed. Kiibo’s view of the boy is different. Looking at Ouma now, he can’t help but imagine how exposed, weak, and in agony he was in those photos and videos. It’s been a month since the robot has last seen the photos and videos, but they’ve stuck out in his head more than his personal memories with Ouma has. Kiibo hopes that the longer he’s around Ouma, the easier it’ll be to stop thinking about those photos and videos. Unfortunately, now he doesn’t know what to say or do around the boy. He doesn’t know Ouma’s mental state. He doesn’t know if the boy hates him. He doesn’t know what he’s been through since they last spoke about a month ago. So much and so little can change within a month. Through the hallway window, the robot stares at the small boy. Aesthetically, he looks about the same. He still looks very sickly and weak. Although, to Kiibo, after everything the robot has learned, he looks even more fragile than before. The robot worries that one little thing could easily break him.

The robot sighs and figures standing around and eyeing the boy from afar isn’t going to make much progress. Kiibo quietly swings open the door and shuts it quietly behind him. Ouma doesn’t bother looking up or flinching. The small boy just focuses on whatever is in front of them. Kiibo sees a large box of crayons on the end of the couch and sees the boy carefully swap a yellow crayon for a blue crayon. Kiibo tentatively calls out, “Hi Ouma-kun.”

The boy doesn’t acknowledge him, and Kiibo feels more out of place than ever. It’s tempting to just stand there quietly from a distance and watch him color for the next few hours. However, that’s not what Kiibo came here to do. The robot came here to befriend and care for Ouma. He wants to be the best friend he can be for the boy.

Kiibo ambles over to the couch and carefully sits down next to the boy. Ouma still doesn’t acknowledge the AI. Kiibo feels so awkward that his head starts to feel like it’s spinning, and he wants to run out of the room. He takes a close look at the boy and notices some differences. The areas under his eyes are darker and puffier than before. There are even some fine wrinkles below his eyes. His face and neck is covered in blemishes, acne scars, scratches, and blisters. Some skin is so dry that it’s peeling off. His hair is tangled up and messy. It’s so oily that it almost looks like it’s wet. White flakes of dandruff cover his entire scalp. Kiibo’s robotic nose sensed some really potent body odor. Looking closely, Kiibo notices that the boy is sweating profusely. There are beads of sweat on his neck and his sweatshirt’s armpits have sweat stains. Fortunately, at least his clothes seem clean. Nonetheless, Ouma looks like a mess. Kiibo wants to force the boy to bathe or at least let him allow Kiibo to brush his hair. It really looks like Ouma made no effort to take care of his hygiene or health in general.

The robot looks down at what the small boy is doing and sees he has a coloring book in front of him. The page he’s open to is of a puppy. The puppy has yellow and blue stripes; green dragon wings; two tails, one of which is a red devil’s tail Ouma drew in; two pairs of ears; and a black top hat. For someone with a chaotic mental state, Ouma made the dog look very pleasing to the eye. The boy certainly knows how to draw and work with colors. In order to make conversation, the robot comments, “That’s nice coloring, Ouma-kun.”

Ouma still doesn’t respond. It’s like Kiibo isn’t even there. The robot feels so awkward that he wants the ground to swallow him. It’s heartbreaking. It’s like the boy wants nothing to do with the robot. Kiibo would rather he scream at him than just ignore him. At least then it would mean the robot matters to Ouma. He doesn’t know what to say to Ouma. He doesn’t want to yell at him or shake the
boy. That would just make the boy more resistant to him. The AI hopes this is only temporary and that the boy is just messing with him as joke. *It’s a horrible joke. I haven’t seen him for a month. The last thing I want is to be ignored.*

Kiibo sits right next to the boy for the next hour, watches him draw, and tries to make conversation. Ouma just continues to pretend he’s not there, and the robot gets really peeved and upset. He feels like he’s wasting his time with the boy. The AI wants to snap at him and ask him what is wrong.

Kiibo then comes up with an idea. He opens his backpack and pulls out a laptop computer. He pulls up a news article talking about the child prostitution ring Ouma was a part of. The robot tries to keep his voice steady as he tells the boy, “The people who ran bestfriendsandating.tc got arrested for soliciting child prostitution. There’s a news article right here. There’s going to be justice. The people who hurt you are going to jail.”

To Kiibo’s relief, this finally gets Ouma’s attention. The small boy sets the coloring book aside, and Kiibo hands the boy the laptop. The dark haired boy spends a few minutes reading the article and bursts into silent tears while reading it. He doesn’t cry out or make any noise, not even a sniffle, but his face is flushed and an endless stream of tears fall. The dark haired boy then, through a popular search engine, searches for more news articles on the case. He spends a good thirty minutes reading through different articles while continuing to silently cry. He still doesn’t even glance at the robot, but Kiibo doesn’t mind since the boy is preoccupied with what’s in front of him. Eventually, Ouma mumbles, “This can’t be real, can it?”

“This kind of thing would be impossible to fake,” the robot calmly explains. “All these sites can’t possibly be influenced by the government to create propaganda. Furthermore, these people are real people who the police arrested. This is a huge story, and these people are going to be punished because there’s too much evidence against them.”

“The police talked to me,” Ouma states in a cracked voice.

“Yeah?”

“They talked to me, and I refused to talk back….” Ouma hiccups. “I said I didn’t know anything….I’m not really sure what happened. I felt like they were trying to kill me when I was in the room with them questioning me…..and I just broke down before they could even ask anything. I told them I’d rather they kill me than have them interrogate me. I was so scared…I didn’t know what to do. I don’t remember if they tortured me or if they left me alone…..”

“They didn’t torture you! They’re on your side! They arrested the people who hurt you!” Kiibo insists aggressively.

“I guess…..” Ouma mumbles. He seems a little tired and dazed as he focuses on the wall in front of him rather than the robot next to him.

“What do you mean you guess?” Kiibo asks.

“I mean……” Ouma drawls obnoxiously. He then glowers in anger. “Some of the people who they arrested are innocent!”

“Huh?!” Kiibo questions. The robot takes the laptop away from Ouma and looks at the pictures of the 36 people who were arrested. He recognizes all of them from the videos and photos on the website.

Ouma leans in towards the robot to look at the screen. “Ten of them are loyal DICE members!” the
small boy explains in a panicked voice. He then points to ten different pictures. “This one is a DICE member…this one is a DICE member…this one is a DICE member…”

“So? They all still supported child abuse, and, as I remember from the videos, they all hurt you,” Kiibo reasons. The robot hadn’t thought about DICE in a while. He thought that the group was just something that came out of Ouma’s imagination and that they weren’t important. He’s concerned and a little surprised that they’re being brought up again.

“NO, THEY DIDN’T!” Ouma screams. The sudden anger shocks Kiibo, almost causing the robot to fall off the couch. The small boy has his fists clenched, and he’s breathing heavily. He glares at Kiibo and states, “DICE saved my life! The people I just pointed to, those are the ones who would always hold me when I broke down, give me pep talks to cheer me up, and give me everything I ever wanted. They’re my family!”

“What?!” Kiibo questions, baffled. He did not see this coming. “Ouma-kun, I clearly remember every one of those people, on video, giving you unwanted touches, humiliating you, and even raping you. Why would you think that?”

“They’re family! That’s just how they are!” Ouma yells, tears forming on the corner of his eyes. “They just like to tease me! They mean well! They’re hilarious! They entertain me! They spoil me! They love me! They’re all I have! And I let them down by crying like a baby instead of defending them when the police tried questioning me!” He wraps the hospital blanket tighter around himself. He whimpers. “I don’t want them to go to jail….they’re being unfairly framed! But by who? I thought Ultimate Despair was working with the government….but it looks like they’re being arrested….so maybe….why would the police arrest both Ultimate Despair and DICE?! They’re two very different groups!” He then mumbles more incoherent stuff to himself and visibly shivers out of clear worry. “I have to save them…..but I can’t! I’ll just cry like a baby in front of the police again……as I always do…….” More tears fall down his face, and he wipes them away with his blanket and starts hyperventilating due to hysteria. “Damn it! Look at that….more tears again……I’m so useless……I need to….calm down……if I start…..talking……I’ll…keep…crying…..AHHHHH!”

He grabs his oily hair and lets out a loud wail. Kiibo just sits there, gaping at him. The robot couldn’t help but point out, “Ouma-kun……they helped support a child prostitution ring!”

“They’re being framed! Someone is framing them! It’s probably Ultimate Despair or someone else!” Ouma snaps hostilely. His bottom lips quivers with rage, and Kiibo raises his hands up thinking the small boy is about to punch him, but Ouma puts his hand down before he can do so. The dark haired boy lets out another childish wail. “I miss them so much, and now I’ll probably never see them again because of Ultimate Despair and my cowardliness! I miss their hugs! I miss their praises! I miss their smiles! I miss their gifts! I miss their kisses! I miss their cuddles! I miss their tutoring! I miss their EVERYTHING! You don’t understand! they saved my life multiple times!”

“Ouma-kun,” Kiibo gently tries to get the hysterical boy’s attention. The robot thinks back to the videos and photos of DICE on the website. The robot is tempted to make some physical contact with the boy like he used, but, with everything that has happened, Kiibo feels like Ouma will shatter under his touch. “I know you really don’t want to hear me say this, but I think you’re confused. There’s evidence of these DICE members really hurting you. There are videos of them painfully raping you-“

“That wasn’t rape!” Ouma growls. “I wanted it! It’s not rape if I let them.”

“If you were forced into it or doing it out of fear-“
“That never happened! Not with DICE!” Ouma shouts furiously. He then takes a shaky breath, trying to calm himself. The dark haired boy places the laptop on the floor and rests two trembling hands on Kiibo’s shoulders. He gives Kiibo a hard glare, his eyes bloodshot from tears, and states in a lower and quieter voice, “Listen. The members of DICE are just like you. They took care of me when I was in so much pain just like you take care of me. Whenever people injured me or psychologically tortured me, they would come to my aide. You did the same thing. Whenever people at the hospital tortured me, you would come to my aide too. You are so much alike, I actually thought you were a robot sent by DICE. The only reason I now don’t think that’s the case is because you really don’t seem to know anything about me or have any idea what I need.”

He ends that last sentence very coldly, making Kiibo want to curl away from the small boy. There’s something about the way he’s looking at the robot that seems unfriendly. Kiibo then asks, “Do you still distrust the government and the hospital?”

“Yeah…..I hate some people in the government and hospital, but……Ultimate Despair has been arrested, so now I don’t know what to think. The government is taking down the people I hate the most, so….I don’t know,” Ouma calmly shrugs, his voice cracking a little. “I don’t want to worry about the hospital anymore. I just need to focus on saving DICE.”

“You can’t save them,” Kiibo tells the boy firmly. “They don’t deserve to have you save them. There are videos of DICE members hurting you on camera and those videos are posted on a website soliciting child prostitution. They were adults who knew you were being abused, and they didn’t do anything to take you away from that abusive environment. There’s nothing you can say, even if you lie to court, that’ll change that.”

“Why?! I told you they weren’t hurting me! They must have had their reasons! Ultimate Despair and other abusers outnumbered them! They probably didn’t have any more power than I did!” Ouma whines. His eyes filling up with more tears, and Kiibo wonders if the boy ever gets dehydrated from all this crying. “Why are you like this?! Sometimes you seem to care and love me like DICE did, and other times, you seem to want to sabotage me! What’s your problem?!”

Kiibo leans in and slowly wraps his arms around Ouma, giving the small boy the opportunity to escape the robot’s hold if he wants to. At first, the dark haired boy flinches at the contact, but then he shrugs the hospital blanket off, wraps his arms around Kiibo’s body, and rubs his face against the robot’s shoulder. Kiibo runs a metal hand through the boy’s tangled hair to calm him down. Ouma appears to relax. He mumbles softly, “See? You’re just like DICE. They always enjoyed getting close to me too. They loved my hugs and kisses. They loved me like you do. It’s really nice.”

Ouma snuggles himself against Kiibo, chuckles against his robotic headphone-shaped ears, and mumbles in a low, sleepy voice, “See? You’re just like them. They always enjoyed getting close to me too. They loved my hugs and kisses. They loved me like you do. It’s really nice.”
The robot feels sick hearing Ouma compare him to a bunch of child abusers. He argues, “It’s not the same thing! I only like the hugs and kisses because they are symbols of affection. They show much I matter to you, and how much you matter to me. DICE did this for the physical arousal.”

“So? Even if they did it because they physically enjoyed it, they still did it because they love me. That’s how they show their love, not any different from you,” Ouma quietly explains. With his arms around Kiibo’s shoulders, he wraps his legs around the robot to straddle him. Kiibo feels both embarrassed and awkward. He feels his face heating up and hears Ouma laugh at his expression.

What’s going on? Ouma leans in to kiss Kiibo on his metal lips, and he rubs own crotch against the robot’s. He says in a high-pitched, desperate whimper, “Please don’t leave me…..You can do whatever you want with me as long as you keep being my robot and keep loving me.”

Kiibo feels way too hot and uncomfortable. It’s too much and too wrong. The robot feels disgusting. Before they can do anything they’ll regret, the robot shoves the boy off of him and off of the couch. Ouma yelps at the shove and falls on to his side. The dark haired boy sits up and stares at the Kiibo in terror. They exchange glances for a couple long seconds with Ouma’s bottom lip trembling and tears building up in his eyes. He then starts hitting the floor with his fists and bawls like a baby, “WAHHHHHH!!!! I THOUGHT YOU LIKED ME! WHY DO YOU HATE ME?!”

From outsider looking in, it probably looks like Ouma is acting like some toddler throwing a temper tantrum. His face is red as he kicks and screams in fury. The robot reaches over to grab the hospital blanket and hands it over to the unstable boy. The dark haired boy nearly rips it out of Kiibo’s metal hands, crawls over to the corner of the room, and wraps the blanket around himself. The robot scrambles to get closer to the boy, and as he gets closer, Ouma huddles into the corner and wraps the blanket tighter around himself. In as calm as a voice as he can manage, Kiibo tells the boy, “I’m sorry, Ouma-kun. I didn’t mean to hurt you like that. What we were doing or what we were about to do, felt really inappropriate and uncomfortable.”

To Kiibo’s dismay, Ouma doesn’t make a verbal response and keeps on crying. The robot continues to scooch closer to the crying boy until he’s close enough to make physical contact. He reaches out to touch the wailing boy’s arm. Ouma tenses and continues crying. Fortunately, the small boy doesn’t push him away. For a second time, Kiibo pulls the boy into a tight hug to show he doesn’t hate him. Ouma doesn’t hug back, but instead, buries his face into the robot’s metal chest and continues to sob. The AI pulls the boy closer and cradles him. Kiibo feels like he’s holding a crying newborn baby in his arms. The robot is tempted to lean down and kiss his forehead, but decides not to because of what happened earlier. Kiibo whispers to the top of the sobbing boy’s head, “Again, I’m sorry, Ouma-kun. I don’t hate you. I was just confused about what was happening and panicked.”

“You didn’t have to push me! That hurt!” Ouma chokes out with a hiccup. “If you didn’t want it, you should have just told me! You didn’t have to attack me!”

“Yes, you’re correct. I should have told you I wanted you to stop,” Kiibo agrees. The small boy’s crying dies down into sniffles and silent whimpers. “Ouma-kun please don’t force yourself to do something if it’ll hurt you.”

“What do you mean?” Ouma asks in a hoarse voice.

“The videos showed you having severe rectal bleeding, swelling around the anus, abrasions and bruising around the genitals, genital warts, blisters around the genitals and rectum-“

“Ohay! I get it! I know! I didn’t do a good job at taking care of my balls! You don’t have to embarrass me! I never asked you to be a perv and examine my private areas!” Ouma yells. His face is flushed and more tears build at the corner of his eyes. Kiibo holds back a sigh.
“My apologies. I didn’t mean to embarrass you,” Kiibo mumbles. “My point is, what you did with DICE had to be very painful based on the physical signs. I have trouble seeing how you can want something like that.”

“Shut up! You don’t know what you’re talking about!” Ouma snaps, turning his face away from the robot’s gaze and into the robot’s metal chest. Kiibo feels himself lose confidence because he feels like he really doesn’t know the situation that well. He kind of understands why Ouma has an attachment to a bunch of pedophiles, but he doesn’t understand exactly why Ouma would want to have a sexual relationship with them. Until Kiibo understands that, then the robot can’t convince Ouma that DICE is just a group of abusers who’ve ruined the dark haired boy’s life. Then again, do I want to convince Ouma-kun right now that the people he loves were hurting him and that they coordinated with a child prostitution ring to abuse kids, including Ouma-kun himself? I suppose this is something Ouma-kun should figure out eventually but…I can’t see him handling it well. “Besides, Robotto-chan, pain is pleasure, right? So I enjoyed the pain.”

“So you are a masochist….”

“No! I’m not that! Don’t call me that! Don’t you dare ever call me that!” the dark haired boy lets more tears fall down his face. For a second, Kiibo thinks he’s going to push the robot away since Kiibo knows what he just said was very hurtful. However, the small boy just curls up into himself, still letting Kiibo hold him close.

“Yeah, I know you’re not. I’m sorry. I was just confirming something….” Kiibo replies, running his metal fingers through Ouma’s messy hair in an attempt to untangle the knots and smooth out the hair. Ouma lets out a content sigh as Kiibo does that, and the robot feels like he’s petting whiny kitten who’s snuggling up against him. “If you’re not a masochist, then there’s no way you could have felt pleasure from that. Yes, I know pain is pleasure, but that pain must have been excruciating. You have too many injuries and physical ailments for you to be physically healthy enough to be sexually active. If you keep going through with it, you’re just going to keep hurting yourself both physically and mentally. You shouldn’t force yourself to go through that much pain. It’s unnecessary and terrible for your well-being. If they cared about you, then I think they should have known not to go that far with you.”

“I know you don’t believe me, but I really did like it…” Ouma mumbles with a sigh. Kiibo is surprised the boy isn’t getting mad at him. Then again, the dark haired boy seems too comfortable and relaxed in the robot’s arms and too exhausted from his fit to fight Kiibo. “Humans have sex with people they love, and that’s how we expressed our love to each other. It was nice being close to them and feeling loved like that. They were so gentle and kind to me….”

“Ouma-kun, you were how old? Ten to fifteen years old? It’s illegal and immoral for adults to do that to you, even if it was for love. If they really loved you, there are better, more appropriate ways, to express it. They took advantage of you at such a young age. You were a minor, a child, whose brain wasn’t fully developed, and you were someone who was incapable of giving proper consent. They took advantage of your mental handicap and unfortunate situation and really hurt you.”

“Stop treating me like I’m stupid! I’m not! I’m smart! I know what’s going on…..” Ouma lets out a choked sob. He sniffs as more tears cascade down his cheeks and fall onto the robot’s lap. He lets out a sniffle and explains in a high-pitched voice, “Listen, I know Ousama was dumb enough to let sadists torture him, but he wasn’t dumb enough to not understand what sex is. He was well educated and capable of understanding and researching it.”

*I don’t think so. If he did understand, then he would have recognized how wrong it was.*

Kiibo doesn’t think DICE was kind or gentle with Ouma at all. Although, now that the robot thinks...
about it, DICE individuals were much nicer and gentler than other abusers. While Ultimate Despair loved making the boy scream and bleed, the DICE members loved praising the boy and showing affection. DICE was certainly nicer and gentler than the other abusers, but, in Kiibo’s mind, they still encouraged Ouma’s past abuse and really helped break him. Even if they did love Ouma, the robot would still never forgive them and hope they will be jail for life for what they did to the dark haired boy and other children.

Kiibo looks down at the boy and continues combing his fingers through Ouma’s hair. The hair looks less tangled now. The robot states, “There are so many other ways for people to show love without sex.”

“But isn’t sex the closest people can get? Isn’t it the ultimate form of showing love?” Ouma wonders.

“No, it’s not. That’s just a subjective social construct some people have added to sex. It’s an opinion. From a biological perspective, the reason people have sex is for reproduction and for its physical gratification. The intimacy you feel from the act depends on your perception,” Kiibo explains. “To many people, love isn’t expressed through sex, but through other ways, largely depending on social norms and ideology.”

“So…is there a chance that they didn’t care about me and I was only their human sex toy?” Ouma whimpers with a hiccup. His cries quiet down.

That’s a horrible way to put it. “Sure, there’s definitely a chance,” Kiibo answers. The robot almost adds that there’s also a chance that DICE really liked Ouma, but the robot wants the small boy to stop being attached to them.

With a yawn, Ouma asks groggily, “Would you holding me like this be an expression of love?”

Kiibo is grateful for Ouma closing his eyes because the robot does not want the small boy to see his flushed face. While Ouma nestles comfortably against Kiibo, the robot replies with an embarrassingly cracked voice, “If you want to be, then yes.”

Ouma lets out a content hum in response, and Kiibo is glad that the subject is dropped. He wonders what the boy is thinking of though. He wants to know if Ouma is toying with him or if the robot genuinely means something to the dark haired boy. Maybe Ouma doesn’t even know. Maybe he’s exploring his relationship with Kiibo. The robot thinks back to what the boy said earlier. “Sometimes you seem to care and love me like DICE did, and other times, you seem to want to sabotage me!”

Ouma-kun probably doesn’t know how he feels about me.

After a quick few minutes, the robot hears an obnoxiously loud sound of a dying, congested horse. Kiibo reaches a hand up to his ear to turn down his sensitive hearing because the sound makes his head hurt. What is that distressing noise? Kiibo looks down at the boy snuggled in his arms. Oh, it’s Ouma-kun’s snoring. The robot can’t fathom how Momota was able to sleep in the same room as the dark haired boy.

The robot looks at Ouma’s sleeping face for several minutes. Kiibo has heard the expression that people look younger when they sleep. To Kiibo, Ouma almost looks like a baby wrapped in a blanket and cradled in the robot’s hold. His calm and peaceful face is fascinating in a way. He doesn’t look nearly as sick or distressed when he sleeps. It’s almost as if he’s at a healthy state of mind, like nothing bad ever happened to him. Kiibo is happy with the boy like this. Unfortunately, things will be different and more chaotic once he wakes up, but for now, Kiibo can enjoy the moment. The robot stares at the dark haired boy’s facial features, more specifically, the blemishes, skin discolorations, and peeling skin. It’s interesting how the human face can reflect one’s health. Although, Kiibo rarely judges people based on their appearance unless there’s something really odd
about it or if their appearance changes, as with Ouma’s case. Although, as Kiibo grows more attached to the boy, he begins to acknowledge that there’s something strangely beautiful about Ouma.

Eventually, Kiibo carries Ouma over to his room so that the boy can get some long overdue sleep. To Kiibo's surprise, Kaede is there zipping up her backpack. She explains Ouma's roommate just left for therapy and that she's about to leave the room herself. Kiibo doesn't pay Kaede or Ouma's roommate much mind after that and just focuses on keeping an eye on Ouma for the rest of the robot's volunteer shift.

**Chapter End Notes**

Okay! More fan art!

This one is the fic's cover, and you'll see it if you go back to chapter one. [http://shirodebbyartblog.tumblr.com/post/158856627505/a-cover-for-hellofriend304-fanfic-wwww-for](http://shirodebbyartblog.tumblr.com/post/158856627505/a-cover-for-hellofriend304-fanfic-wwww-for)

And this artist has been making a lot of great art for this fic. [http://ironiisulfate.tumblr.com/post/158880257003/i-did-a-little-doodle-with-no-quality-while](http://ironiisulfate.tumblr.com/post/158880257003/i-did-a-little-doodle-with-no-quality-while)

Again, Thanks Sonezakirin for editing this chapter too! Here's their Ao3 account! [https://archiveofourown.org/users/SonezakiRin/pseuds/SonezakiRin](https://archiveofourown.org/users/SonezakiRin/pseuds/SonezakiRin)

And here's their Tumblr! [https://sonezakirin.tumblr.com/](https://sonezakirin.tumblr.com/)

While this fanfic has been talking about sex quite a bit, there's not any sex scenes for the readers' benefit. If sex is mentioned in future chapters, it'll be for the sake of humor, mentioned casually, or be portrayed in an unflattery light. Sex in this fic creates more fan disservice than fanservice, unfortunately.

This chapter also has quite a bit of foreshadowing.

A famous Danganronpa character has been making an appearance in these last few chapters, and I'm surprised only ONE person has mentioned it. (Congrats Shirodebby. You deserve a reward.)

Thanks for the support. It all really means a lot to me. I still love feedback. (Last chapter got less feedback than usual.)

I still really enjoy writing this fic. You all don't need to tell me to keep writing it because I will keep writing it. Don't worry.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: [https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa](https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa)
I'm a delicate lady

Chapter Summary

Ouma and Kiibo play board game. Ouma knows how to make escape and loves his blanket. Kiibo thinks the boy needs to take care of himself.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ouma and Kiibo settle on a comfortable routine for the next three weeks. For now, the robot has decided to not bring up any difficult topics when he’s around the boy, and Ouma simply doesn’t bring up his difficult situation. In fact, Kiibo often feels like Ouma is being evasive with him. Sometimes he’ll appear to be lost in thought, and Kiibo would ask him what’s wrong. However, the boy would just laugh it off and call the robot paranoid. As always, the dark haired boy will have frequent crying spells. The robot wonders if the crying from Ouma is from him being genuinely distressed or if it’s just a painless and automatic reaction, much like a sneeze. Kiibo has only been to Ouma’s new room once, and that was when he carried the dark haired boy to his room during the first day he was released from intensive care. Unlike Momota, Ouma’s roommate is actually in his room most of the day. Ouma talked about him while they were at a table in one of the day rooms playing a board game, “He’s a creepy freak and loser who wants attention.”

“That’s an awful thing to say, Ouma-kun!” Kiibo reprimands the boy. The dark haired boy is still as nasty to others as ever. Kiibo hopes Ouma isn’t bullying his roommate too much. It may actually be a good thing that Ouma is trying to stay away from his roommate. That’s better than having him bully his poor mentally ill roommate. The robot spins a number and gets an eight. He moves his red car eight spaces. The space it lands on says GET MARRIED. The robot reads the game’s instructions.

“When you reach this space, STOP, even if you have moves left. Take a LIFE tile and add one people peg to your car. Then spin and move again.”

“What? Seriously? So this game is forcing you to get married?! That’s lame!” Ouma whines dramatically. His car on the game board still hasn’t left college to start a career since the small boy keeps on spinning one’s or two’s. “Marriage is so overrated! It’s so expensive, a lot of work, takes away your freedom, and requires a lot of expectations. Plus, being pressured into getting married just makes you miserable! If you really want to get together with someone, then just co-habitat! It’s less work and has less rules! You don’t need a fancy ceremony to show you love someone.”

“Yes, but according to the rules, I have to get married,” Kiibo mumbles lamely.

“Screw the rules! Rebel against the system and stay single!” the dark haired boy orders angrily.

“It’s fine, Ouma-kun. Calm down. It’s just a game,” Kiibo tells the boy as Ouma’s eyes waters with tears and his lips start to tremble. “Besides, the game isn’t necessarily forcing me to marry someone. In this game, I’m marrying the person I love, so it’s not so bad. We’ll be happy. Ermmm…which people peg should I draw?”

“Draw the pink bitch peg. If you’re getting married, it might as well be with the pink bitch peg since the law says you’re not allowed to marry a guy,” Ouma grumbles despondently. Kiibo narrows his eyes at the boy as he grabs the pink people peg and places it next to his blue people peg on the red
car. “That pink people peg is such a bitch. You act like a tool when you’re around her and are absolutely miserable. The only reason you get married is to meet society’s lame expectations. You’re going to regret the marriage and wish you had listened to me when I warned you not to marry that skank. Eventually, she’ll get sick of you and have an affair with her blue people peg boss. However, you can’t separate from her since you committed to her and know that the divorce will hurt the peg children you never wanted to have. I hate the fact society forced marriage on you, and I’ll miss you once you get married since you’ll be separated from everyone else.”

“What?”

“Just kidding!” Ouma snickers. He rolls his eyes and wipes away his tears like nothing was wrong. He then declares with a grin, “I know it’s just a game because you’re my robot, and you’ll stay with me forever. You’ll never leave me!”

“I… I never committed to staying with you forever,” the robot responds honestly. Kiibo has never thought about his long-term future with Ouma, and he certainly doesn’t want the dark haired boy to think he owns the robot. Kiibo is his own person, with his own life. He doesn’t want to get Ouma’s expectations up. The small boy needs to rely on other people besides the robot. Sure, Kiibo may spend the rest of his life being close to Ouma, but that’s not guaranteed.

To the robot’s terror, the dark haired boy’s smile fades into a frown and tears well up in his eyes. He visibly starts shaking. Then with intense rage, he snatches the pink peg off Kiibo’s red car, throws it to the ground, screams, and smashes the piece with his black and purple slip flats. Ouma glances over at the robot with a tear-stained face and blood shot eyes. Kiibo is too heartbroken by the boy’s reaction to be mad at him for damaging a cheap game piece. The small boy chokes out while visibly shaking, “No! You’re not getting married! You’re staying with me! You love me! You don’t love her! You’ll be happy with me, not her! Right?! She’s a whore! She doesn’t love you! She’ll just use you! Please, stay with me!”

“Ouma-kun, I’m not getting married nor am I interested in getting married! It’s just a game…..” Kiibo informs the boy in a gentle voice. He cautiously walks around the table to get closer to the sobbing boy. It’s small things like this that set Ouma off. The robot starts to think the dark haired boy will never get released since he can never seem to stop his outbursts. “I don’t plan on leaving you…”

Unfortunately, Ouma just wails harder and pushes the entire board game off the table. The board, game pieces, spinner, and fake money spread all over the floor. The robot has to carefully step over and around the mess in order to not damage any part of the game like Ouma did with the pink people peg. Kiibo thinks the boy is way too old to be throwing a fit over a game, and yet the robot just feels sadness for him rather than disappointment. Once Kiibo grabs one of the crying boy’s hands, the door opens, and Iruma walks in and stops in her tracks. Her eyes widen in surprise and Ouma screams, “NO! THE ROBOT SLUT IS HERE! DON'T RUN AWAY AND MARRY HER! SHE WILL GIVE YOU ROBOT STDS AND WILL CORRUPT YOU WITH HER WHORE WAYS!”

“Excuse me?!” Iruma demands. She’s more confused than angry, but still very angry. She points a finger at the crying boy as he wraps his arms around Kiibo’s neck. “The great me is too good for marriage, thank you very much! Sure, I wouldn’t mind getting inside the robot and seeing his inner workings, but that doesn’t mean…..”

“WAHHHH! SHE WANTS TO BANG MY ROBOT! PLEASE DON'T LET HER RUIN YOU!” Ouma wraps his arms tighter around Kiibo’s neck in desperation as Kiibo awkwardly wraps his small arms around the boy.

To Kiibo’s dismay, instead of automatically denying Ouma’s hysterical accusations. Iruma blushes
and replies, “Don’t kink shame me, little man! A girl doesn’t choose her sexuality—”

“Iruma-san! You’re making the situation worse!” Kiibo interrupts her before she gets the chance to start talking about her sexual attraction to machines and, most likely, the robot himself. Kiibo feels his face flush at the thought of Iruma’s attraction to him. The blond has never done anything bad to him, but she’s certainly never made him feel that comfortable. She had offered to repair him, and he had been tempted to accept her offers. However, he has never needed the repairs since he gets repairs regularly anyways, and the way she has looked at him with her flirtatious and suggestive expressions has made him uncomfortable. Of course, he considers the girl his friend, but he doesn’t trust her to get a look inside his machinery.

To the robot’s horror, Ouma sees Kiibo’s flushed face when he pushes back to look at the robot’s expression. He cries even harder and claims, “So you are going to bang her!”

He then forcefully shoves Kiibo, causing the robot to wobble back, and then runs to the door, making an unnecessary slight turn towards Iruma to shove her too. The girl yelps, “Hey now! It’s rude to touch a noble goddess like me, you asshole!” Ouma doesn’t answer her, grabs the hospital blanket that he’s been carrying around all week, and rushes through the door, slamming it shut on the way out. Iruma moans in what sounds kind of sexual. “Why does that little fucker have to be such a drama queen?”

“He’s a mental patient for a reason. What do you think?!” Kiibo snaps at Iruma angrily as he heads towards the door. Why does the hospital even allow her to be around patients?! I should report her. Although, it’s not going to make much of a difference since patients seem to like her, and the hospital needs as much help as possible. He gestures to the mess of the game spilled all over the floor. “Iruma-san, please clean up this mess.”

“Me?! I’m a delicate lady. I don’t do manual labor,” Iruma argues defiantly.

“You do now!” the robot replies as he hastily swings open the door.

The last thing the robot’s sensitive headphone-shaped ears hear is the blond grumbling, “God, that little fucker is such a spoiled, rotten crybaby. It’s hard to believe the douchebag higher ups made me watch him initially.”

According to Iruma, the hospital staff made her watch Ouma the first day he was admitted to the hospital. For obvious reasons, things didn’t work out well, so they had to find someone else to watch the boy. That’s when Kaede volunteered Kiibo to watch him. Now here Kiibo is, running through the hospital hallways, looking for the small boy he has grown attached to. To the robot’s apprehension, Ouma escaped pretty effectively out of the room, and the robot has no idea where he is. He sprints over to Hoshi who’s by the front desk and quickly asks, “Where’s Ouma-kun?”

The short boy looks down at his table and replies just as quickly, “Laundry room.”

“Thank you!” At that, Kiibo sprints as quickly as he can towards the laundry room, hoping that Ouma didn’t do any harm to himself while he’s briefly alone.

From the hallway, Kiibo could hear a faint banging noise coming from the laundry room. He turns into the room and sees Ouma with his knees pulled up to his chest, banging his head against the concrete and picking off a pieces of skin from his fingernail folds, causing his fingers to bleed. Kiibo passes a line of washing machines and dryers while shouting “Ouma-kun!”

The small boy stops banging his head and looks up. There are tears in his eyes, and he hides his bleeding fingers underneath the hospital blanket wrapped around him. He sobs out, “I hate her so
much…I hate all of them for stealing you away from me…” He then bawls louder and punches the ground with his fists under the blanket. “IT’S NOT FAIR! NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO HAVE MY ROBOT BUT ME!”

He then buries his head under the blanket, and Kiibo tries to hold back a sigh. This happens so often with the dark haired boy that Kiibo has grown numb to it. His crying sort of reminds the robot of a baby who cries frequently, and Kiibo is like the baby’s parent who has to take care of him. Months ago, Kiibo wished Ouma would grow up and stop crying. This time, knowing what he knows now, the robot accepts that this is how Ouma is, and Kiibo can’t force him to change. It’s a symptom of his psychological disorder. The robot kneels down in front of the crying boy and speaks in a gentle voice, which he has perfected, “Ouma-kun, I’ve told you this before. I’m my own person. You don’t own me. I make my own decisions. However, I don’t plan on leaving you. You get my attention after school and on the weekends. I’m right here. I’m not leaving you. I’m closer to you than anyone else here. Why do you think I spend so much time with you?”

With his voice muffled under the blanket, Ouma sniffs in a high voice, “You love me right, right?”

“Yes, I just told you you’re my best friend, so of course I love you.”

“That’s not what I meant!”

“I’m sorry. I do not understand. Please explain.”

“I meant, you love me unconditionally and forever, right?”

“Unconditionally? As in, ‘without conditions or limits’? That sounds impossible. There are conditions and limits to almost anything. For instance, I wouldn’t love you if you started a robot genocide or advocated replacing modern technology with vending machines. Our love does have some conditions, so that means it’s not unconditional,” Kiibo explains. Honestly, the robot understands what Ouma means by unconditional love, he just doesn’t want to confront the boy on the subject.

“Ugh, you’re overthinking it!” the small boy whines.

“I’m overthinking it? I already told you ‘I love you.’ That’s a powerful statement already. You’re the one who’s overthinking it by trying to specify what my love for you actually means,” Kiibo points out. The robot is used to these unproductive conversations with Ouma. At least, Kiibo thinks they’re unproductive. These conversations may mean more to the dark haired boy though. “You have no reason to stress out over this. I’m not leaving you. Come here so that I may give you a hug to show how close we are.”

Kiibo is used to consoling the small boy. He’s gotten pretty good at it too and now understands how Amami and Kaede became so good at cheering people up. Practice helps. Ouma peaks his head from under the blanket. With himself still under the blanket, the dark haired boy scrambles to the robot’s open arms and wraps himself and the blanket around Kiibo in a tight hug. The robot sits down in a cross legged position as he pulls the crying boy closer and pets his dark hair. Kiibo has also gotten used to the hugs too. He still loves them, and he’s learned to expect them after he has successfully consoled the boy. The robot doesn’t know whether repeating the same crying, comforting, and hugging routine is a good thing or not. It’s comfortable at least, and Kiibo does like holding the boy and cheering him up. There’s a reward in that at least.

“Gross….I’m crying again….“ Ouma sniffs. He then wails even louder. “I cry all the time! Why!? Why can’t I control it?!”
“I told you not to worry about it,” the robot sighs. Kiibo also finds himself repeating the same things to Ouma over and over again. The small boy can learn information from school very easily, but, for some reason, he just doesn’t seem to listen to the advice Kiibo gives him.

“I hate it here…I hate everything….everything hurts and is hard, and I want to die, but I can’t because they’re watching me and will take me back to the torture room if I try to die…” Ouma sobs quietly between hiccups, pressing his face into Kiibo’s chest.

That’s different. Kiibo tightens his hold on Ouma as if it would protect the boy more from death. The dark haired boy hasn’t brought up his suicide or his suicidal thoughts since he got released from the intensive unit. However, it shouldn’t be a surprise that they’re still there. The hospital putting him on intensive suicide watch only protected Ouma from his harmful behavior, not his harmful thoughts. Since Ouma hasn’t brought up suicide in a while, the robot doesn’t know what to say for a few seconds, opting instead to rub the boy’s back to soothe him. After thinking carefully for a response, Kiibo mumbles to the boy’s ear, “Ouma-kun, dying is a horrible idea. Things will get better. It just takes time. You have a future and great things to experience. Not everything is bad. You’ve got school and recreational activities to enjoy. You enjoy your time with me. There are still things to live for. Please, just calm down, and I’ll help you work through your problems, okay? You’re safe, and I’m right here.”

The robot’s words sound very empty to Kiibo. The AI wouldn’t be surprised if they meant nothing to Ouma too. Looking back on those words, Kiibo realizes that he just asked the small boy to rely on him more, probably making the boy’s dependency issues to the robot worse. Unfortunately, the robot can’t really think of anything to say to a suicidal boy who’s in constant psychological pain. If Kiibo’s words affected Ouma, then the small boy doesn’t show it. He just continues to cling to the robot and cry his heart out.

Kiibo takes a moment to enjoy the closeness and look around the room. There’s a bunch of washers and dryers lined up along the room. The robot then looks at the beige hospital blanket wrapped around both him and Ouma. The dark haired boy has been attached to that blanket ever since he left the intensive unit. The AI scans the fibers of the blanket and Ouma’s clothes with his eyes and then asks the boy once his crying dies down, “Ouma-kun, when was the last time your clothes have been washed?”

“Huh?” Ouma answers with a hoarse voice. He pulls away from the robot, wraps the blanket more securely around himself, and sits in front of the robot. The dark haired boy gives the robot a suspicious look before answering, “They were washed yesterday. My roommate washed them with his own clothes.”

“Ah, I see. What a nice roommate,” Kiibo comments.

“NOT! He’s really mean to me. He just washes my clothes so that he can pretend to be the good guy and so I can be indebted to him. I never asked him to do my laundry. Jokes on him because he’s getting nothing out of me!” Ouma states with a bitter laugh. Kiibo doesn’t understand what’s so funny. This may be a situation only Ouma can fully understand.

“Ah, I see. I’ve noticed your clothes are clean,” Kiibo remarks. The robot stands up and puts his hands on his hips. “Has your hospital blanket been washed recently as well?”

“Yep! It got washed with my clothes yesterday,” Ouma answers with a bright smile while also standing up. He still has the blanket wrapped securely around himself and has immediately recovered from his crying fit.

“You sure?” Kiibo asks suspiciously while crossing his arms. “When I scanned your blanket, I
sensed an excess of dirt, debris, and bacteria. If I go to your roommate and ask him if he washed the blanket, will he confirm that he remembers washing the blanket?"

“I don’t know. Who knows with that freak? He’s so out of it that he probably doesn’t remember washing it. And even if he does remember, he may lie just to sabotage me,” Ouma replies bitterly. The dark haired boy then shrugs and yawns. “Well, all I know is that the blanket got washed yesterday.” He smiles. “Let’s go find an empty day room and play!”

He sticks a bony pale hand out from under the blanket and grabs one of Kiibo’s larger robotic hands. The small boy tries to pull the AI out of the laundry room, but Kiibo pulls the boy back, and Ouma gives him an angry look in response. “Ouma-kun, no, we have to wash the blanket.”

“But it was washed yesterday!” Ouma makes a childish whine and stamps his feet in protest. Tears form at the corner of the small boy’s eyes, but they don’t phase the robot. One of the nice things about Ouma crying often is that the robot has easily been able to tell the difference between tears of distress and fake tears.

“You’re lying,” the robot simply states. “My scanners didn’t pick up laundry detergent residue like it did with your clothes.”

“The residue probably wore off because I’ve used the blanket more than I’ve worn my clothes. The blanket is also dirtier because I’ve used it more. I’m not lying….my blanket got washed with the clothes.” Ouma grumbles. He then lets out an unnecessarily loud groan. “Even if I’m lying, so what? It doesn’t matter! For the record, I’m not lying. C’mon…..I want to go and play! It’s your job to make me happy!”

“It’s also my job to keep you safe and healthy. Microorganisms are building up in that dirty blanket, which can lead to skin infections and sickness,” Kiibo responds. The robot then drags the boy towards one of the washers. The small boy whines and pulls back against the robot. It’s all in vain though since Kiibo is much stronger than the physically weak boy. Ouma lets out a cry of protest and crocodile tears fall down his eyes, but Kiibo ignores them. “We’re washing that blanket! And while the blanket is washing, you’re going to get a shower and brush your teeth!”

“What?! I just took a shower and brushed my teeth this morning!” the dark haired boy complains.

“If you did, then someone, like a nurse or an orderly, must have monitored you. Who was that person? And will he or she confirm you took a shower and brushed your teeth this morning? However, that's irrelevant because even if you did shower and brush your teeth, you did an awful job!” Kiibo comments. The robot doesn’t need to use his robotic scans. Any human with good eyes and nose can tell this boy hasn’t bathed or brushed his teeth in a while. Most likely, he hasn’t bathed in over three weeks, at least not since he got released out of the intensive unit. His oily hair is so greasy that it looks soaking wet. There are white flakes of dandruff covering his oily hair as well. His oily and dry skin’s imperfections like the pimples, acne scars, blisters, peeling skin, dry skin, and red skin are very noticeable even from fair away. Kiibo thinks that a shower would at least help with the oils and pimples. Kiibo also senses a putrid body odor that reminds him of rotten cheese. Ouma's breath also smells like a combination of rotten cheese and spoiled meat, signifying he hasn’t been taking care of his teeth. In fact, his teeth has been turning a bit yellow and his gums are swelling from gingivitis. The robot plans on getting those teeth brushed even if he has to pin the boy down and force his mouth open.

“What are you going to do? Force me?” Ouma challenges in a deep voice. He gives the robot something that looks like a twisted combination of an evil grin and a flirtatious grin. He puts a finger to his chin in contemplation. “Are you going to beat me up in order to take the blanket away and put it in the washer? Are you going to carry my bruised body to the shower? Are you going to rip my
clothes off, pin me to the floor, and direct freezing cold shower water right at me? Are you going to wash and shampoo me while still pinning me down? Are you going to drag me to the sink, pin me to the ground again, and pry my mouth open to brush my teeth?” He laughs. “Tsk, tsk, tsk….I thought you were better than that. I thought you aren’t the abusive type.”

“I’m not going to force you exactly,” Kiibo informs him. “I’ll just refuse to play with you or do anything to entertain you.”

“What?!” Ouma screams. He very quickly bursts into tears and starts wailing. He then stomps his feet repeatedly for as loud as possible. “I thought you loved me! Why do you hate me?! Why won’t you play with me!? I don’t want to do laundry, shower, or brush my teeth! I want to play with my robot!”

Seriously?! More crying?! “Ouma-kun, because I love you, I want you to take care of yourself. You’re not making any attempt to care for yourself by refusing to bathe or brush your teeth. You’ll be prone to bacteria and viruses and get sick. You’ll start getting tooth pain. You’ll start getting rashes and other skin irritations. I don’t want that, and you don’t either. So please, at least let me wash you and that blanket and brush your teeth if you’re not going to do it yourself,” Kiibo explains as quietly as possible.

The robot slowly reaches over to grab the blanket tightly wrapped around the trembling boy’s body. As he tugs it, the boy tugs it back and whimpers, “No….please….I need it.”

“Okay, we can get a second blanket that looks exactly like this one, and then you can hold that one while this blanket gets washed,” Kiibo suggests.

“No! I need THIS blanket!” Ouma insists while visibly shaking and holding the blanket close around himself.

“Why? It’s just like the other hospital blankets. You can’t tell the difference besides the fact that the blanket you’re holding now is dirty,” Kiibo reasons.

In response, the dark haired boy hides his head under the blanket and explains, “I murdered Hansuke-chan on this blanket. I need to keep this blanket in memory of him.”

“Hansuke? You mean the stuffed horse?” Kiibo clarifies. He hears a wail underneath the blanket in confirmation. “Ouma-kun, you didn’t murder the stuffed animal. You probably just damaged it.”

“Hansuke-chan tried protecting me, and I beheaded him! I’m a murderer! You probably hate me now! I kept this dirty secret for so long! I’m sorry!” a cry from under the blanket responds. Kiibo wishes he could see the boy’s expression. The figure under the blanket is shaking, and the only part of Ouma Kiibo can see is his shoes coming from underneath the blanket.

“Ouma-kun, it’s okay. It’s just a stuffed animal….I’ll get you another one,” Kiibo tells him, slowly grabbing the blanket again, but the wailing boy pulls away and backs away. While he backs away, he trips over a laundry basket that’s behind and screams. This leads to him to crashing to the floor and the blanket slipping right off. He cries even harder due to this incident and starts hitting and kicking the floor in frustration. He’s just having a rough day today, isn’t he? That’s unfortunate. Nothing out of the ordinary really happened today either. Ouma-kun seems to be creating his own problems.

While Ouma is too busy beating up on the floor, Kiibo snatches the blanket and puts it in the washer as quickly as possible. In tears, Ouma scrambles off the floor and screams in protest, “NO! HANSUKE-CHAN’S SPIRIT IS IN THAT BLANKET! I NEED IT FOR PROTECTION!”
“Ouma-kun it’s a stuffed animal. It doesn’t have a spirit,” the robot grunts when Ouma tries to aggressively shove the robot to the side. The robot uses one arm to fight the boy away from the washer and the other arm to pour liquid detergent into the washer, close the lid, and turn the washer on. This multi-tasking is not an easy feat for the robot.

When Ouma sees the washer running, he falls to his knees, hugs himself, and sobs, “Hansuke-chan is my friend who used to protect me and was a loyal DICE member! Now he can’t protect me because his remains are being washed away!” He has some very bizarre logic. I thought I was starting to understand him. I really did…but now I don’t understand him once again. Kiibo almost feels guilty about washing the blanket. The robot kneels in front of the boy. The boy hiccups and in a high pitched voice asks, “You sure you don’t hate me?”

“I’m sure,” the robot replies softly, patting the boy on the head. “It’s okay. I’m sure you didn’t mean to kill him. Unfortunately, once he’s gone, he’s gone. Washing the blanket he was destroyed on isn’t going to change that. I’ll continue to play with you after you shower and brush your teeth. You’ll feel better once you do those things. Okay?”

“I don’t want to… I just want my robot to play with me…..” Ouma whines in between hiccups.

Unfortunately, for Kiibo, the boy doesn’t willingly stand up, so the robot pulls the boy up by his arms. When Kiibo pulls the boy higher, the dark haired boy just limply hangs in the air, with Kiibo’s pulling at the boy’s arms being the only thing holding him up. When Kiibo stops pulling him up, the boy just topples to the ground like a marionette doll. “Ouma-kun, please, help me take you to your bathroom so that you can be washed.”

With a tear-stained face, Ouma just gives him a pout and crosses his arms in defiance. The only thing he says is a childish, “Piggyback ride.”

Really?! Are you sure you’re sixteen?!Kiibo doesn’t bother holding back his sigh. The robot doesn’t bother arguing either because the dark haired boy looks worn out from his multiple crying spells, and the AI doesn’t want to make him more upset than necessary. A piggyback ride isn’t a big of a deal anyway. The robot kneels down with his back to the boy and instructs, “Climb on to my back.”

“Yay!” Ouma clambers on to the robot, wrapping his arms around the robot’s neck and his legs around the robot’s waist. Kiibo grabs on to the boy’s legs and stands up carefully with the boy securely on his back. The small boy leans forward to give the robot a kiss on the cheek and kicks his heels into the sides of the robot’s thighs. “Susumu!”

“Hey! I don’t appreciate you treating me like a horse!” Kiibo yells. Nonetheless, the robot carries the boy to his room. When he’s in front of the boy’s room, he reaches a hand off of one of the boy’s legs to knock on the door. Kaede opens the door and gives the two of them an amused look. Kiibo tries to ignore the look and says, “Hello Akamatsu-san. I’m here to give this unhygienic child a shower and tooth brushing.”

“Don’t associate with Akamatsu-chan! She’s been nothing but a bitch to me!”

“Okay, I’ve got keys to the toiletry cabinet and shower. I’ll take out some soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toothbrush; leave them on the sink; and unlock the shower for you,” Kaede replies with a warm smile, purposely ignoring the small boy glaring at her.

“Thank you, Akamatsu-san.” Kaede runs into the bathroom, and Kiibo sets the boy down by the wall right next to the bathroom door. Instead of standing, the boy just lazily plods down on to the floor. The robot stands beside the sitting boy, waiting for Kaede to come out of the bathroom.
After less than a minute, Kaede comes out of the room with a smile and tells them, “Okay! Everything is ready!”

Kaede goes to the other side of the room, away from the entrance to the room. Kiibo assumes she’s watching Ouma’s roommate. To give them privacy, the robot pays them no mind as he turns his attention to the boy on the floor. “Ouma-kun, get up. It’s time for your shower.”

“No!” Ouma insists. The dark haired boy rests his back comfortably again the wall and crosses his arms and legs. He’s been acting like a rebellious toddler today. I really should have expected this.

“I’m never playing with you again if you keep this up.”

“I don’t deserve to be clean after what I did to Hansuke-chan….maybe I don’t even deserve to play with the robot,” Ouma states firmly while looking at the ground. “I should be in jail or get the death penalty.”

The robot kneels down to Ouma’s level and puts both metal hands on the boy’s shoulders. He looks Ouma in the face while boy stares intently at the ground. “It’s okay, Ouma-kun. Hansuke is just a toy. Innocent people break toys all the time. What you did was completely harmless. You deserve the luxury of being clean, and, once you’re clean and brushed, I’ll play with you.”

“Why are you being so forgiving? Hansuke-chan was a friend who you went out of your way to give me so I could be protected. I ripped his head off because I got so mad at you after our last phone call. It wasn’t an accident. I did it because I was taking my anger towards you out on Hansuke-chan. Shouldn’t you be mad? Hansuke-chan didn’t deserve that,” Ouma sorrowfully whispers to the ground. You should be more worried about me getting mad at you for not bathing than me getting mad at you for destroying a stuffed animal.

Kiibo rubs Ouma’s arms in a comforting gesture and answers, “I gave you Hansuke so you could have something to keep you company or something to take your emotions out on. Hansuke was protecting you either way and got destroyed protecting you. It’s fine. That’s Hansuke’s job.”

“That’s so sad. You make it sound like Hansuke-chan was meant to die…like his life was meaningless….that’s so cruel….” Ouma whimpers quietly. “It’s like he’s an innocent soldier sent out on the battlefield knowing he’ll probably die…That’s so mean….”

“Hansuke wasn’t a sentient being. It was a toy. This toy may have meant a lot to you, but in the end, it’s just a harmless toy. It never suffered. It never felt pain. It never had feelings. It only existed for your sake,” Kiibo explains. The robot can’t believe he’s explaining to Ouma that a stuffed toy was never alive. Although, he worries that Ouma will snap back at the AI and say robots aren’t life either. Kiibo would be both really pissed and heartbroken if he does that. He hopes Ouma doesn’t put him on the same level as a stuffed animal because he’s not. He’s a being with feelings too. The stuffed horse would never care about the dark haired boy’s fragile emotions like Kiibo does.

Fortunately, Ouma doesn’t say anything harsh to the robot. He simply nods and looks up at Kiibo. The robot is impressed that the boy hasn’t cried during those last few minutes. Ouma reaches his arms out to Kiibo and says, “Carry me to the weird shower. I like it when you carry me.”

Just like that, Kiibo stops being impressed with the boy. Nevertheless, the AI carries the boy, as if he’s an infant, to the shower. He pulls the shower door open with one arm, as the other arms keeps holding Ouma, and then, once the door's open, sets the boy down in the shower’s small space. Kiibo stands there, looking at the shower head that’s awkwardly attached to the ceiling and the button attached to the wall. Ouma whines, “The shower is so weird!”
“It’s ligature-proof to prevent you from hurting yourself or committing suicide,” Kiibo informs the boy. Although, the robot suspects that Ouma probably figured out that the hospital designed the shower specifically this way so that it would be suicide-proof. The boy probably considered committing suicide in the shower before but saw that it would be impossible.

There’s an awkward silence for several seconds in the shower before Ouma coughs, looks up at Kiibo from his sitting position, and states with a large grin, “I was lying earlier when I said I wanted to die. I don’t. It was just a joke, and you fell for it.”

Kiibo narrows his eyes at the boy in disbelief. He responds honestly to the boy, “You can be honest with me about this. I won’t report to anyone about your suicidal thoughts or of your other personal thoughts if you don’t want me to. If you’re worried about going back to the intensive unit because of me, don’t be. I don’t want you going back to the intensive unit either.”

Kiibo thinks back to what Amami said months ago about the intensive unit. "That’ll just make things worse in the long-term . . . it’s a method that should only be used as an absolutely last resort . . . it’s just, intensive suicide watch sounds so depressing. It always seems like the last thing someone who’s suicidal needs.” The robot hates it when Ouma is in the intensive unit. He doesn't want the boy to go back there unless he tries to kill himself again.

“Okay, I believe you…..But I’m serious. I don’t want to die, hurt myself or anything like that,” Ouma tells the robot a bit louder with clenched fists.

Kiibo doesn’t believe him. How can Ouma-kun believe I’m telling the truth when I lied to him earlier? “Okay, well, you know…if you’re in pain or feeling emotional, you can talk to me about it. I won’t tell anyone.”

Kiibo’s promise feels empty. He told the boy a similar lie. Ouma told him a secret that the robot promised he wouldn't tell anyone about. Unfortunately, the robot broke that promise and told someone the secret. Kiibo doesn’t regret breaking the promise. Instead, he regrets making the promise in the first place. Ouma shouldn’t believe him, and if he’s as big of a liar as he says he is, he probably doesn’t. Kiibo winces uncomfortably, when the dark haired boy just gives the robot a warm smile and restates, “I believe you.”

Liar.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if this chapter is not ending on a good spot. I didn't put in everything I wanted to put in for this chapter. For instance, I wanted to put in the scene of Kiibo giving Ouma a shower. That scene will be more important than you think, and it's not going to be for fanservice or for humor.

The things I didn't put in that I wanted to put in for this chapter will be in next chapter. I just had a tough time writing this past week. I wasn't having writers block since I knew what I wanted to write. I just didn't feel like writing. I considered not uploading a chapter at all because I didn't write in everything I wanted, but I figured something is better than nothing. As a result, you now have this chapter.

Thanks for the fan art and the birthday wishes this past week!
This fic got more fan art!

http://starcatz.tumblr.com/post/159356501294/fan-art-for-hellofriend304s-amazing-fanfic

http://ironiisulfate.tumblr.com/post/159247107133/a-little-doodle-i-did-during-the-weekend-didnt

http://shirodebyartblog.tumblr.com/post/159232526440/happy-birthday-hellofriend304-i-wish-u-all-the

Thanks for reading! And thanks for the feedback! I still love all the feedback! All of them.

I still love writing this fic. There's so much I want to write.

Thanks Sonezakirin for editing this chapter! You deserve more love! Here's Sonezakirin's Ao3 account!
https://archiveofourown.org/users/SonezakiRin/pseuds/SonezakiRin
And here's Sonezakirin's Tumblr!
https://sonezakirin.tumblr.com/

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Looking down at the boy on the shower floor, Kiibo asks, “Do you want me to be in the shower with you while you clean yourself, or do you want me to wait outside of the shower.

Ouma cocks an eyebrow, “You trust me to properly wash myself?”

“No.”

“Then why are you even bother asking if I want to take a shower on my own?” Ouma demands, with a hint of frustration in his voice.

“I will let you shower on your own if you want to, but I’ll scan your entire body for dirt and bacteria to make sure you’ve washed yourself thoroughly,” Kiibo answers. “Well?”

Ouma crosses his arms and pouts, clearly not wanting to be washed. He then grumbles, “You wash me. I’m tired….”

“Ah, okay…Are you going to get up off the floor?” Kiibo asks.

“I like the shower floor. It’s comfy,” Ouma replies defiantly. The robot gives him an exasperated look, and Ouma gives him an amused grin in response.

“Fine, be that way. Do what makes you feel comfortable,” Kiibo nonchalantly tells him. The robot takes a few seconds to step out of the shower to grab the tiny bottles of soap and shampoo.

When the robot quickly returns, he sees Ouma with his face flushed and fiddling with his large sweatshirt nervously. The small boy gives him a worried look. He then asks, with a bit of a squeak in his voice, “Can I shower with my clothes on?”

The small boy looks absolutely terrified. His eyes are watering again, and his bottom lip is quivering. The AI can’t help but give him a look of concern. “No, you have to shower naked in order to clean your whole body. I can leave while you shower, if you want.”

“No….ummmmm….can I shower with my boxers on?” Ouma questions while pulling his arms out of his sweatshirt but not even bothering to pull the sweatshirt off his torso. His face gets even redder, and the robot really feels bad for him now.

“No, Ouma. Every part of your body needs to be cleaned,” Kiibo states firmly. The dark haired boy pulls his sweatshirt up high enough to cover his head. His white t-shirt, which has the hospital’s logo, is showing from under. The robot doesn’t know if he’s pulling the sweatshirt to take it off or if he’s
doing it to hide his face. “Why do you want me to be in the shower with you anyway?”

“Because I hate being naked. If I’m alone while I’ll naked, I’ll freak out. I need you to be right there next to me to help me…..” Ouma whimpers from under the sweatshirt. His skinny legs are now shaking. Kiibo walks up to him to finally pull the sweatshirt off. The dark haired boy’s face is really red now. His face is scrunched up and trembling, looking like he’s on the verge of crying, but he’s trying to hold it in.

“Why weren’t you like this before?” the robot wonders. Ouma had washed himself at the hospital before being admitted to the intensive unit. The robot remembers the boy being relatively clean during the weeks leading up to his suicide attempt. He must have been fine being in a state of undress before.

Ouma then bursts into tears and simply chokes out, “Because of the memories!”

The dark haired boy doesn’t need to explain any further. The robot understands. Ouma had a lot of revelations about his past while he was in the intensive unit. It’d be normal for the boy to look at himself and his body differently. The AI can understand not wanting to be naked for a long period of time. The robot stares at the boy’s pale, skinny arms for a second. He’s never seen the boy’s arms in real life before. Ouma always covered his body with baggy clothes. There are pale scars all over his arms and a bunch of newer scratches, obviously from Ouma’s own fingernails. Nothing too bad actually. The younger Ouma in the videos had deeper scratches and bruises. There are also some rashes, pimples, and peeling skin on his arms too. They look a little painful, but they’re not as bad as the skin imperfections on his face. Goosebumps are on his arms, and Ouma wraps his arms around his body and trembles.

“Hey, Ouma-kun…..” Kiibo murmurs gently. The boy silently cries as Kiibo grabs the hem of his white shirt. “It’s okay. Nothing is going to hurt you. You’re just going to get a nice shower. All we’ll be doing is cleaning you and washing your hair. That’s it. Then you can step out and not have to worry about it.”

Ouma nods reluctantly and raises his arms to allow Kiibo to pull the shirt over his head. His naked torso has a bunch of painful-looking red slashes, scratches, and even some burns. His arms were less painful looking. The robot assumes Ouma’s abusers probably didn’t want the small boy’s worst injuries to be that noticeable, which is why they didn’t hurt his arms too badly. The dark haired boy starts crying even harder, more tears stream down his face, and he vocally mewls in discomfort. The small boy wraps his arms around his body even more. In fact, he appears to squeezing it as tight as possible, almost painfully so. The robot whispers, “Ouma-kun, relax. You’re fine. You’re doing good. Nothing is going to hurt you. All you’re doing is taking a shower. You want me to take off the rest of your clothes?”

“No…Actually let me do it…..” Ouma orders him in a weak and shaky voice. The robot nods and steps away from the boy. Ouma slips off his shoes and hands his clothes and shoes to the robot. The robot turns around to put the clothes outside of the shower so that they don’t get wet. Kiibo then turns around to see Ouma, with his back turned to the robot, very quickly pulling down his pants and boxers, not wasting any time getting naked.

The boy looks thinner than ever with his clothes off. His pale body almost looks like a skeleton. Kiibo makes a mental note to get the boy to eat more and make him more calorie-dense, healthy meals. His entire body is also littered with old scars and burns and more recent scratches. Ouma’s knees buckle before he painful crashes to the shower floor and start harshly sobbing. Water falls to the floor, and it’s not water falling from the shower head. Kiibo yells out, “Ouma-kun!”

The robot moves Ouma’s pants and boxers to the outside of the shower with his other clothes. Then
Kiibo rushes over to the pale boy who’s shaking and on his hands and knees. He wails, “I can’t do this! I’m so weak, ugly, and gross….I didn’t realize it was this bad….I don’t care if I don’t ever get to play with you! I don’t want to do this!”

The robot carefully places a metal hand on Ouma’s trembling, bony back. The boy flinches initially at the touch but relaxes as Kiibo rubs familiar soothing circles on it. He keeps on hyperventilating, hiccupping, and sobbing. The robot starts to think that maybe this is a bad idea. However, they’ve come this far now. Kiibo crouches down beside him and mumbles, “Ouma-kun, it’s great that you’ve made it this far. You’re not weak, ugly, or gross. Don’t say that. Try to relax. You can sit down if you want. If you want, you can close your eyes too and let me wash you. Okay?”

“That sounds better….I really can’t stand myself right now;,” the small boy grumbles. He turns to face Kiibo and sits down in the center of the shower. The dark haired boy closes his eyes while still silently crying. Before the robot reaches to the push valve to turn on the shower, the AI looks at the boy and lets out an involuntary gasp. He covers his mouth with one hand and winces. The dark haired boy then opens his eyes and starts wailing, “Liar! I thought you said I wasn’t gross or ugly!”

“No….sorry….it’s just. Your entire buttocks and genitals look painfully infected. It’s just really concerning,” Kiibo points out. The robot expected this. Like in the videos, Ouma has very unpleasant-looking swelling around the anus, abrasions around the genitals, genital warts, and blisters around the genitals and rectum. The abrasions look especially painful, bright and flaming red from swelling. Some of them even have puss coming out. They’re really infected. The warts aren’t that much better. They’re white, beige, and pink deformed lumps. They almost look like painful skin overgrowths. Some of the blisters look like skin bubbles that someone could pop before fluid comes out. Other blisters already have the skin broken and have soft, pink, delicate, tender skin underneath. The robot doesn’t usually think blisters too bad. However, they look very problematic when they’re on Ouma’s sensitive region.

“STOP STARING AT MY BALLS YOU PERVERT!” Ouma screams with a huge blush on his face and more tears cascading down his cheeks. He closes his legs and places his hands over his private regions in order to hide the sensitive area.

The robot turns his head away. Kiibo feels his face heat up too. “My apologies! I’m just concerned!”

“Concerned?! Really?! That’s you pathetic excuse?!?” Ouma questions while hugging his knees. Kiibo frantically tries to elaborate, trying to make his answer sound as intellectual as possible. “Yes, the lower region of your body looks excruciatingly painful. You probably have infections and digestive issues. And…..have you been tested for sexually transmitted diseases yet?”

Ouma tenses up for a second at the question and then let's out a nervous giggle, “So that’s your excuse, huh? Nice! Such an innovative excuse! Well done! Unfortunately for you, now is not the time to be asking that. Let’s just get this shower over with….,” Ouma ends the statement in a grumble. Kiibo nods in agreement and leans forward to the push valve to turn the shower on. The dark haired boy shrieks and hugs his knees even tighter. “HOLY CRAP! WHY DOES THE SHOWER HAVE TO BE SO COLD?!”

“Eh? According to my internal thermometer, it’s only 26 degrees Celsius. That’s about the same temperature as a heated swimming pool,” Kiibo informs the boy, eyeing the goosebumps on his pale arms. Kiibo picks up a travel-sized bottle of shampoo, which is on the floor, and looks at it. It’s a tiny bottle of tear-free and alcohol-free baby shampoo. It’s a good shampoo for newborns. The robot pours a little bit of the thick shampoo on to his metal hands and tells the shivering boy, “The hospital doesn’t allow the water to get too hot in order to prevent patients from hurting themselves.”
“That’s bullshit! They’re hurting me by giving me hypothermia!” the boy whines. He shivers very violently, and Kiibo believes the boy is faking the shivering at this point.

“No, they’re not. You’re being dramatic. As I said before, it’s the same temperature as a heated swimming pool. There’s not an epidemic of people catching hyperthermia in swimming pools,” Kiibo replies as he kneels down and runs his shampooed hands through Ouma’s soft hair, thoroughly lathering the substance deep into his scalp.

“Your fingers are too rough with my hair!” Ouma complains, grabbing Kiibo’s hands to make them stop.

“No! Just be nicer to my hair,” Ouma says with a pout. The robot nods in confirmation and carefully threads his fingers through Ouma’s hair, trying to get the shampoo to reach the roots of his hair. While shampooing the boy, the robot untangles and smoothens out the hair with his fingers. The small boy relaxes into the touch and probably has gotten used to the water temperature by now. Kiibo then takes his hands out of the boy’s hair and lets the shower wash away the shampoo remains out of Ouma’s hair.

“Was that okay, Ouma-kun?” the robot asks. Kiibo leaves the shower for a couple seconds to grab a teal shower scrub that’s on the sink.

“I guess…” Ouma mutters. He is still hugging his knees to his chest. He’s calm at least. Fortunately, it seems like the dark haired boy has gotten used to his nudity and the shower. Even under the running water, his hair looks much better after being shampooped. It’s weird not seeing it all tangled up. There’s no dandruff in sight either. The hair is shiny and smooth looking. The robot is tempted to run his fingers through it more.

Instead of doing that, Kiibo grabs a tiny bottle of baby wash and pours it on to the shower scrub. The dark haired boy stares at the robot’s actions with a terrified look. He stares at the body wash like it’s a torture device. He knows he can’t just stay seated hugging his knees this time. The robot crouches down to grab one of the boy’s pale arms, “Get up Ouma. I need to scrub you. If you cooperate, it’ll be over quickly.”

The boy tenses at the robot’s touch and slowly lets the robot pull him up to his feet. He then clutches on to one Kiibo’s arms, and the robot gives him a perplexed look. The dark haired boy explains, “I need you to keep me up.”

“Fine, you can use me for support. Just hold still,” the AI tells him as Ouma leans further into the robot, burying his face into the robot’s shoulder, scrunching his eyes shut, and shivering again. He lets out a sob into the robot’s shoulder, and Kiibo wonders if he’s doing okay. The robot tries not to let Ouma’s distressing behavior worry him too much as he tries to wash everything within reach while they both stand.

The robot thoroughly scrubs the boy’s neck, shoulders, back, chest, arms, and armpits. Kiibo tries to make sure to clean off any bit of dirt, dead skin cells, and bad body oils he can. Ouma jumps and nearly slips on the shower tiles when the robot tries scrubbing one of his underarms. With a flushed face, the boy states in a high-pitched voice, “That tickles!”

“My apologies.”

The robot proceeds to wash. Although, it’s difficult to do so, when Ouma now has his arms wrapped around Kiibo with his face buried in the robot’s shoulder. The robot is grateful he doesn’t have short
robotic arms. He can reach some of the more difficult areas to wash. Ouma keeps tensing when Kiibo starts washing new areas of the body but relaxes after a couple seconds of scrubbing. Eventually, his entire body from his neck to the top of his hips is washed thoroughly and has suds pouring down his skin. The robot struggles to pull the boy off of him in order to kneel down to reach the boy’s lower region. Ouma cries out, “What are you doing?!”

“I’m trying to reach your lower body,” Kiibo informs him while trying to prevent his own voice from shaking. The dark haired boy starts weeping as the AI comes face-to-face with his private parts. It’s really gruesome and painful looking seeing the injured and infected genitals up close. Unfortunately, Kiibo knows they have to be washed more than anything, especially since they are infected and have lots of wounds. In order to hold himself upright, Ouma grabs on to Kiibo’s metal ahoge. Kiibo has to tell him, “Careful with that! You really don’t want to break it!”

Fortunately, the robot knows the ahoge is sturdy, so it’s difficult to break, but Ouma is capable of anything in his panicked state. Kiibo, both swiftly and thoroughly, scrubs Ouma’s entire sensitive region including his wounded and sickly-looking posterior. Ouma howls out in pain, “Ow! That really hurts! Stop doing that!” He clutches tightly on to Kiibo’s metal hair. Kiibo expected him to react like that. Touching that inflamed region looks painful. The robot assumes the boy is in agony with the scrubbing and the soap stinging his private areas. The AI can’t help but cringe throughout the whole ordeal. Eventually, Ouma’s legs give out and he hugs the robot tightly to his wet naked body and whimpers, “My private parts feel like they’re burning and stinging. It really hurts. I hate washing this area….is there any way I can get my dick and balls cut off? Please? Is there a procedure for that? The area feels like it’s on fire. It’s too much…”

“No, there's no procedure for that. We'll talk more about this after we shower and brush your teeth. You can sit down, and I'll get your legs,” Kiibo replies gently while holding the boy close and combing the boy’s clean hair through his fingers. We’ll talk about your painful lower half while also talking about your STDs test. The robot then quickly pulls back, resulting in a whine of protest from the small boy. However, the robot ignores him. Ouma reluctantly sits down, and Kiibo hastily scrubs both legs, lifting them up off the floor to get the undersides of the legs. Ouma immediately wraps his thin arms around the robot's legs once Kiibo is done. The robot quickly scans the boy’s body for dirt and germs. When he’s satisfied, he turns the shower off by pushing the push valve and drags Ouma up. The boy shivers while he stands and then hugs the robot closer to his body again. Kiibo informs the boy, “Okay, we’re done with the shower.”

Ouma nods then suddenly pushes the robot to the side and sprints out of the shower. Kiibo is surprised he doesn’t slip or trip over anything. In record time, while still wet, the small boy puts on all his clothes and shoes. He didn’t bother drying himself before doing so, so his clothes are now wet along with his wet body. Although, Ouma doesn’t seem to mind wearing wet clothes. He then crashes to floor again. Kiibo really wants the small boy to stop falling to the floor like that. Ouma may break a bone doing it one of these days, especially considering how fragile he already is. Ouma sits across from the toilet while Kiibo faces Ouma, with his metal back turned to the toilet. The robot declares, “Congratulations Ouma-kun you are now clean and healthy.” The boy doesn’t say anything as he pulls his large sweatshirt over his knees and pulls his knees to his chest. The large sweatshirt makes him look really comfortable and cozy, especially considering how distressingly uncomfortable he was naked. “You okay, Ouma-kun?”

“No,” the boy immediately responds before hiding his face behind the large sweatshirt. “I want my blanket back.”

“Soon, we have to move it to the dryer first.”

“I don’t care if it’s dried. I’ll take the blanket while it’s soaking wet,” Ouma answers, voice muffled
“Ouma-kun, it’s time to brush your teeth. It’ll only take a few minutes at the most. It’ll be quick if you behave,” the robot reaches his hand towards Ouma to pull the small boy up. To Kiibo’s surprise, the boy doesn’t protest. He simply gives Kiibo a blank stare and lets Kiibo grab his arm to pull him up. “Thank you, Ouma-kun, you’re being suddenly cooperative.”

“Awww….are you implying I’m not usually cooperative? Are you insulting me? Why do you have to be so mean? I thought you loved me. I just let you wash me. We’re practically lovers now!” Ouma crosses his arms with a pout. The small boy then stands in front of the sink to grab the purple toothbrush and kid’s toothpaste, which, like the soap and shampoo, is also in a tiny travel-sized container. Ouma glowers at the toothpaste. “Why does this prison give me so many kid’s stuff?! I’m sixteen! I’m practically an adult and almost old enough to drive. I’m a college student! I have the brain of an adult! I can handle the mature stuff! This stuff is too childish. I should be getting the sophisticated, adult stuff!”

You just cried over a broken stuffed horse, a move in a board game, and blanket that was temporarily taken away from you. You’ve been acting like a child all day! You haven’t shown any signs of behaving like a mature adult!

“Ouma-kun, some of these patients need the children’s toiletries because they’re safer. It’s just a precaution. Besides, the only difference between the kid’s toothpaste and the adult’s is the kid’s has slightly less fluoride and different flavors,” Kiibo points out.

“Different flavors…” Ouma examines the tube in his hands, licks his lips, and grins. “Ah! This one is watermelon flavored! It probably tastes like candy!”

“Don’t eat the toothpaste!” Kiibo warns, tempted to grab the toothpaste out of the pale boy’s hands.

“The tube says it’s sugar-free! My blood sugar will be fine!”

“That’s not the issue!”

Ouma then flicks open the bottle, leans his head back, opens his mouth, sticks his tongue out, and is about to squeeze the toothpaste into his mouth before the robot shouts and snatches the toothpaste from his hand. Ouma giggles and puts his hands on the back of his head in amusement. He smirks. “That was a lie! I wasn’t really going to eat it! I’m not a child! Nishishi….You’re so gullible!”

“I can never tell with you. The robot stares dumbfounded at him for a second. The dark haired boy then exclaims, “Give me back the toothpaste! I’m a big boy, so I’m going to brush my teeth!”

“You are? You were pretty resistant earlier,” Kiibo points out, cautiously handing the toothpaste back to the dark haired boy.

“Yeah….well…I didn’t want to take a shower. I’m fine with teeth brushing,” Ouma replies.

“Then why haven’t you brushed your teeth in the past few days?” Kiibo questions, confused by the small boy’s sudden attitude shift.

“I did brush my teeth these past few days! I brushed them this morning!” Ouma claims with a forced scowl on his face. Kiibo can see the corner of his mouth twitch up. It’s almost comical how much the boy is pretending to be enraged. The robot knows he probably finds this conversation amusing, so Kiibo will keep it going, even if it is a little frustrating and confusing.

“Liar! There are food and stains building up in your teeth, you have terrible gingivitis, and your breath smells horrible,” the robot states.
“Awwwww….you’re so cruel to me….Making fun of me for my teeth and breath. You called me a liar too…” the small boy looks down on the floor dramatically, with crocodile tears forming on the corner of his eyes. “I let you see me naked, yet you still bully me….”

“Really?!” It’s amazing how someone can call himself gross and ugly for being naked, but then casually talk about it like this. Then again…it’s probably easier to talk about it now that he’s clothed and in a joking mood. I guess laughing the traumatic situation off isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It just gets concerning when he laughs off problems that need to be taken seriously. “Never mind. Just answer the question from earlier. Why didn’t you brush your teeth in these past few days?” The boy visibly twitches at the question and, with a disturbed look on his face, stares at the sink. His grip on both the toothbrush and toothpaste tightens. “It’s okay! You don’t have to answer that question!”

“I don’t like it when a nurse or anyone stares at me while I’m brushing my teeth. It’s creepy and gross. I feel like every time they make someone watch me, it’s so that person can get off from watching me due to their own perversions. I hate it. I hate it when these adults stare me down. I hate it when the orderly knocks on the shower door to ask me if I’m okay. I hate it when they give me a full body check. I hate it when the doctor gives me a health examine. I hate it when a therapist asks me all these personal questions. I hate it when my roommate stares at me when we’re alone at night. They get too close to me. Only DICE members and you are allowed to get this close, not them!” Ouma explains bitterly.

He continues to stare down at the sink before squeezing, in Kiibo’s opinion, too much toothpaste on the toothbrush. The robot worries he’ll make a mess of the sink. However, the dark haired boy pays the robot no mind as he sticks the toothbrush in his mouth and brushes his teeth. When Ouma brushes his teeth, he brushes it really aggressively. The sounds of the bristles brushing against the teeth feel like they’re echoing in the room. They bother Kiibo’s ears a little. Ouma looks like he’s pissed off at his teeth and is trying to destroy them by brushing them to death. The robot was worried that the boy wouldn’t brush his teeth thoroughly enough, but it doesn’t look like he’ll have to worry about that. Now Kiibo is worried that Ouma will somehow hurt himself with how harshly he’s brushing his teeth. White foam from the toothpaste gradually build up inside his mouth. The pale boy looks deranged now, and Kiibo almost stops him before he can hurt himself. Instead, the toothbrush snaps in half due to the force Ouma puts on it. The small boy forcefully spits the foam and saliva in his mouth into the sink. There’s quite a bit of blood mixed in with the saliva and tooth paste. Kiibo awkwardly points out the obvious by saying, “You didn’t have to be so aggressive with your tooth brushing. You’re going to damage the inside of your mouth by doing that.”

Ouma shrugs. While keeping his eyes fixated on the sink, he grabs a small hand towel to clean the toothpaste off his mouth. Kiibo makes a note to have the hand towel washed later. When the dark haired boy sets the towel down, the robot states, “There’s still some toothpaste on the bottom right corner of your mouth.” The dark haired boy frowns and aggressively rubs that area of the mouth with the towel. Even with the harsh cleaning, he doesn’t get all the toothpaste. Kiibo shakes his head in disapproval. “Ouma-kun, you didn’t get all of it. Just look in the mirror. It’ll be easier to get rid of the mess that way.”

“You’re so bossy….Can you not criticize me for once?!” the dark haired boy shouts at the sink. His eyes well up with tears, and he’s visibly shaking. He doesn’t bother looking at the robot.

“There’s no need to get upset. It’s just a simple task. Look in the mirror and scrub the toothpaste off. You’re sixteen. This is common sense,” Kiibo tries to keep his voice as steady as possible. Ouma ignores the robot. Without looking at the mirror, he wipes the corner of his mouth and then the rest of his mouth even more aggressively until the skin on and around his lips is wiped off raw. The AI has to grab his wrists before he can do more damage. Even with destructive treatment on his mouth, he still didn’t get all of the stain. The robot says, “If you’re not going to properly get it off, then let me
do it.”

While still staring furiously at the sink, the small boy lazily hands the towel to Kiibo. He’s crying again. Tears fall down from his face and into the bloody saliva and toothpaste mixture in the sink. The robot gently wipes the stain off, trying to avoid rubbing against the tender areas of the mouth where skin was scrubbed off raw. Kiibo then sets the towel to the side, and Ouma turns on the sink. Toothpaste, saliva, and blood fall down the drain, and the sink is surprisingly clean for the most part. The dark haired boy then turns to the robot and gives him a warm smile. Then he tells the robot cheerily, “That was funny!”

“What?”

The small boy claps his hands together. “Being dramatic is funny! It’s so boring here that I have to make things entertaining, even if it’s something small like wiping my mouth! Who would have thought such a simple action would have been so enjoyable? I like keeping you on your toes and keeping you engaged. It’s boring having you just stand there creepily staring at me.”

“So you were pretending to have trouble washing your face just so you can create a dramatic situation for your own amusement?” The robot demands. He’s not really that angry honestly, just confused.

“Yep!” Ouma chirps. He then wiggles his eyebrows teasingly. His eyes then seem to sparkle as he hops in front of Kiibo excitedly. “And you liked it too since you love babying me! It’s more than hobby now! It’s an obsession! You can’t stop thinking about babying me! You’re addicted to babying me! Your only goal in life is to baby me! Your only reason to live is to baby me!”

“You’re being dramatic. You have to know that’s not true, right?” Kiibo responds, exasperated. Ouma giggles and leans in to give the robot a loving kiss on the cheek. Ouma wasn’t completely wrong. The robot likes caring for the boy. There’s something rewarding about helping the life of another. “You just like the attention.”

“Awwwww….It’s not like that! I’m not acting out for my own satisfaction. No! This is all for you! I’m doing it because you love me and love caring for me! You were dying to wipe my filthy mouth off! I wasn’t doing it for my own benefit!”

“You just said earlier that you acted out because you thought it’d be funny!”

“That was a lie! I would never do such a selfish thing! I was doing it all for my beloved robot,” Ouma answers, wrapping his arms around Kiibo and nuzzling his face into the robot’s neck.

Kiibo relaxes and enjoys the affection. He knows saying this will ruin the mood, but he has to say it. “Ouma-kun, may you please open your mouth so I can see where the bleeding came from and to make sure you brushed sufficiently?”

“What?! NO!” Ouma angrily shoves the robot back. His face is red, and he’s shaking all of sudden. “C’mon! I know you get off on babying me, but looking into my mouth is just nasty!”

“What’s wrong with looking at the inside of your mouth? It’s harmless! I see the inside of your mouth everyday when you eat or talk. This is no different!”

“I’m not going to give in to your perversions!” Ouma points an accusatory finger at the robot.

“Perversions?!”

“Yeah! You clearly have a mouth kink, and now you’re trying to get off by looking at the inside of
“Ouma-kun, I’m a robot. I can’t feel sexual arousal!”

“Liar! You keep saying you’re a developing AI who’s a lot like humans! So it’d make sense for you to be capable of arousal! You probably have dick too!”

“No, I do not. That kind of thing is unnecessary since I’m not capable of reproduction—wait. Why are we having this conversation?! My lack of genitals is unimportant! Just open your mouth, please! It’ll only take a few seconds! It’s much worse at the dentist!” Kiibo has his scanners ready as he approaches Ouma slowly. However, Ouma takes one half of the broken toothbrush and draws it out in front of himself like it’s a sword. The robot puts his hands in front of him in a defensive position.

“Ouma-kun, I won’t play with you until you let me examine your mouth for a few seconds.”

“Hello, I am the Super High School Level Toothbrush Wielder. You threaten to look into my mouth. Prepare to die,” Ouma declares with a grin on his face. Oops, we’re already playing. Fortunately, the grin is enough for Kiibo to scan Ouma’s front teeth. They look very well-brushed. Kiibo gives up trying to look at the rest of his teeth because requesting to look into someone’s mouth sounds ridiculous the more the robot thinks about it. Fortunately, Kiibo also found out where the bleeding came from. It’s from Ouma’s severe gingivitis. Ouma’s gums started bleeding once the small boy brushed the swollen gums. Now the roots of the teeth are surrounded by blood. It’s actually pretty gruesome-looking, nothing that life-threatening though. They’ll get better if Ouma keep brushing.

As Ouma prepares to strike the robot with the broken toothbrush, Kiibo tells him, “I already scanned your front teeth and figured out where the bleeding is coming from. I don’t need to look into your mouth anymore. Try to keep brushing your teeth and gums. The bleeding is coming from your gums bleeding due to gingivitis.”

Ouma crosses his arms and pouts. “Creep. I never gave you permission to look into my mouth. I feel violated, and I didn’t even get the chance to hit you with my toothbrush……”

Kiibo gives Ouma a small smile and gently pats boy on his wet head, causing the boy to mewl in protest. The AI grabs both ends of the broken tooth brush and puts all the toiletries into the cabinet, with the plan of telling Kaede to lock the cabinet and get a new toothbrush.

Before they leave, Ouma says something that catches Kiibo off guard. “Hey, let’s make out.”

“Huh?!” Kiibo feels his face flush at the thought of the act. “Why?”

“Awwwwww……you’re blushing!” Ouma lets out a high pitched giggle. “Damn, if your cheeks weren’t made of a metal, I’d pinch them. I think we should make out to satisfy your mouth fetish.” The dark haired boy wiggles his eyebrows, which only makes the robot more uncomfortable. “I just brushed my teeth. I don’t like the idea of you peeping on the inside of my mouth like a voyeur, but you can explore my sacred mouth with your tongue as much as you like if we make out. It’ll help satisfy your dick’s needs too.”

“Ouma-kun, I don’t have a penis,” Kiibo states flatly.

“Mmmmmhhhhhhhhm.…..my mom said the same thing too, but Mom is a transvestite and was into roleplaying as a woman. He’s still a guy during the day, but, at night she’s a woman. Everyone knows she’s got a dick too, especially me. I’ve seen that thing up close many times,” Ouma visibly winces at the memory, and Kiibo gives him a look of pity. The dark haired boy then gives a look of longing and a sad smile. “I miss Mom. She’s a nice, loyal member of DICE. He always loved me.”
“This person is a pedophile and child abuser. It’s best if you stay away from him and other DICE members, and I’d appreciate it if you stop acting like I’m one of them,” Kiibo tells the small boy firmly. The robot feels heartbroken when he sees the intense mournful look Ouma gives him. “I’m not a pervert, I’m not trying to get into a sexual relationship with you, and I’m not putting you in uncomfortable situations for my own enjoyment. I’m just a close friend who cares about you and is trying to take care of you so you can be as healthy as possible.” The robot can tell Ouma is trying to put on a brave face and is fighting the tears that threaten to fall. “Ouma-kun, if you want to cry, then cry. Don’t make yourself sick by holding it in. You’ll feel better if you just let it happen.”

“I….just….don’t…” He hiccups between cries and leans forward to rest his hands on his knees and tears fall freely down his face. “I….don’t understand you…..DICE was so simple and so loving. You’re so confusing and distant with me…..” I don’t understand. I thought my feelings and relationship with Ouma-kun was clear. I give him the love and care he deserves without physically or mentally hurting him. Why can’t he see that? He has to see it. Why else would he be so attached me? Then again, maybe DICE’s love for him did feel unconditioned and intense. They went as far as spoiling him by giving him all these material goods and services. I’m not providing the same thing. Kiibo suddenly feels his insides burn with anger towards the DICE members and a bit of jealousy. They’re so awful! They don’t love him! They just act like they love him so that they can hurt him! Why can’t Ouma-kun see that I’m the one who cares about him?! Just because I don’t want to get into his pants and pledge my life to him does not mean I don’t care about him! He’s being so simpleminded right now! Wait….no….I’m being unfair to Ouma-kun right now. He was brainwashed to think like this, so I have to change it. I have to show him I care. That’s all I can do.

The robot approaches the sobbing boy calmly, and asks, “Ouma-kun, may I-”

Before Kiibo can get his question out, the dark haired boy runs into him, practically crashing into him, and wails into his metal chest. The small boy desperately clings to the AI as if his life depends on it. The robot takes in the familiar close contact and combs his metal fingers through Ouma’s wet hair. He turns his head and sees the mirror showing the hug. It’s very a very heartwarming sight. Kiibo wants to take a picture of it. Kiibo presses a kiss on to the boy’s forehead and mumbles, “I love you, Ouma-kun. You shouldn’t question it.”

Kiibo also wants to tell the boy that DICE doesn’t love him, not healthily anyways, but Kiibo figures that would just upset the boy. To the robot’s relief, he hears a weak “I love you too.” And then he also hears a, “You’re now my mom.”

Fair enough. You probably need a guardian anyways. When the crying dies down, the two of them pull away and Ouma wipes his eyes with a sniffle. Kiibo then looks over to the mirror and wonders, “Are you ever going to look at yourself in the mirror? You’re a handsome individual. There’s no reason why you shouldn’t.”

Ouma face flushes and with a high whine replies, “I know that….I you people think I’m good looking, beautiful, or whatever sappy compliments you people give me. I don’t need to look at it….I don’t need to see whatever it is you see.”

“Do you not find yourself attractive? Is that the issue?” Kiibo asks.

Ouma face blushes out of embarrassment even more. His embarassment reminds Kiibo of when he stood naked in the shower. The boy just grumbles, “It’s not like that….you make it sound like I’m self-conscious or don’t like the way I look.”

“But that’s exactly what’s going on. You’re self-conscious and don’t like the way you look. You stated as much when you were in the shower,” Kiibo points out.
Ouma hides his face behind his sweatshirt and weakly answers, “That was a lie. I’m just not a vain person. That’s why I don’t look at myself in the mirror.”

Liar.

“It’s okay,” Kiibo dismisses him. He grabs the boy’s hand. “It’s perfectly understandable if you’re not comfortable with yourself after everything you’ve been through. It’d be a miracle if you weren’t. If you don’t want to look in the mirror, then you don’t have to. Come on, Ouma-kun. We’ll do what you want until dinnertime. We can get your blanket now if you’re still fine with it being wet.”

Ouma nods from under the sweatshirt and squeezes the robot’s hand before they walk out of the bathroom. Looking back on it, Kiibo feels satisfied with what has been accomplished. He understands the boy a bit more and maybe can figure out how to approach Ouma better.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about this chapter coming out a couple days later than usual. I had stuff I wanted to get out of the way for finals.

Thanks for reading! I want to hear the feedback for this chapter since it's pretty slow paced and is mainly character interaction. Sorry for the wait!

And yes, Ouma did make a movie reference.

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Ouma gets surgery, Kiibo tries to do something about the dark haired boy’s dependency issues, and three patients get released from the hospital.

The next day is very interesting. First of all, the doctors prescribed Ouma with new medication, and they aren’t for treating his psychological disorder. They instead are meant to treat diseases. The nurse doesn’t tell Kiibo what the diseases are. She only shows him the medication, explains the doses, and insists Ouma takes them. The dark haired boy can’t get out of taking this medication like he can with his other medications. This new medication along with his older medication put together is a lot of pills. Frankly, Kiibo can’t imagine one person taking all this medicine. Kiibo decides to just make sure Ouma takes this new medicine. Making Ouma take this new medicine would be probably difficult enough already. Taking this medicine along with the older medicine seems nearly impossible. Unfortunately, Kiibo has never seen the boy willingly take any medicine the hospital gives him. As a result, the AI is nervous that Ouma will refuse to take this new medication, and, unlike the older medication, the dark haired boy’s life depends on it. The robot assumes Ouma is still suicidal. He can’t help but fret over Ouma refusing to take the medicine just so disease can slowly kill him.

The second interesting thing that happened that day is Ouma left the hospital for surgery. Nobody tells Kiibo what the surgery is for. The robot doesn’t worry about it. Out of curiosity, he’ll ask Ouma what the surgery is. The robot already has some theories of his own about what the surgery may be. A donut pillow, Tylenol, stool softeners, and fiber supplements wait for Ouma in his room. Ouma has a regime where he has to take the stool softeners, fiber supplements, and six to eight glasses of water per day. Yeah, Kiibo can make a pretty good guess what this surgery is for.

On the day Ouma is gone, Kiibo finally asks Kaede while they walk to the hospital from school, “Is Ouma-kun’s roommate doing better?”

“Oh, you mean Saihara-kun? He’s getting better. He’s more active now. He just needed to take time to process things. He certainly looks happier and healthier,” Kaede replies with a small smile.

“Saihara-kun is Ouma-kun’s roommate?!” Kiibo asks in surprise.

With a bit of a startled look on her face, Kaede stares at Kiibo and responds in disbelief, “Wait! You didn’t know Saihara-kun is Ouma-kun’s roommate?! It’s been three weeks, Kiibo-kun!”

“I know. It just wasn’t my business. Ouma-kun’s roommate seemed to want privacy, and I didn’t want to interfere! Hoshi-kun said I gossip too much, so I’m trying to respect the patient’s privacy!” Kiibo declares proudly.

Kaede rolls her eyes, “Well, you just asked me how he’s doing. Isn’t that gossiping?”

“No! First of all, I didn’t know who Ouma-kun’s roommate is. You can’t gossip about someone if
you don’t know how they are! Second of all, I only asked if he is doing better. It’s a yes or no question. Gossiping involves a conversation full of details! I was trying not to initiate a detailed conversation about Ouma-kun’s roommate!” Kiibo defends himself vehemently.

Kaede laughs at the passionate response. “Okay! You win. You don’t have to argue with me. I’m not accusing you of anything.”

They enter the hospital doors, and Kiibo nervously asks while twiddling his fingers. “I know Saihara-kun may want to be alone. In fact, he may not even want to talk to me because every time we talk, I always make him uncomfortable-“

“Don’t worry about it, Kiibo-kun.” Kaede waves a hand dismissively as they enter the elevator. She pushes the button to the fourth floor. “Saihara-kun is nice, understanding, and very perceptive. He’ll understand you mean well. He hardly ever thinks badly about anybody. If you made him uncomfortable, then it’s not your fault or his. Sometimes conversations don’t work out to well. You can try talking to him again later. He may warm up to you then.”

“Actually, the hospital hasn’t planned any volunteering for me yet. May I speak with Saihara-kun now? Would that be okay? Sorry if the question is inappropriate! He’s not my patient, and I know he needs his space. I’ll probably bother him anyway,” Kiibo ends up grumbling to himself as they exit the elevator.

Kaede answers, “Sure! You can go see him. He’s Ouma-kun’s roommate anyway, so you might as well get used to each other. Maybe seeing a new face and making a new friend will cheer him up. If things don’t work out, you can always leave. Saihara-kun hasn’t purposely been trying to avoid people. He just……hasn’t been feeling productive.” Kiibo gives her a look of confusion. She shrugs. “It’s hard to explain. He has been thinking a lot, but as you’ve said before, it’s probably not nice to gossip.”

When they make their way to Saihara and Ouma’s room, Kiibo feels a wave of uneasiness wash over him. He feels like he’s entering forbidden territory by approaching Saihara’s side of the room. The last thing Kiibo wants to do is make the boy feel uncomfortable. Supposedly, Saihara is in as much of an unstable mental state as Ouma. The AI knows the mental turmoil Ouma goes through. He doesn’t want to make Saihara upset like the robot has with Ouma. Saihara is almost a stranger. It feels wrong to make him upset.

“Hello, Saihara-kun! I brought someone! He’s a friend who wants to talk to you, if you don’t mind,” Kaede greets the boy on the other end of the dimly lit room. The robot takes a moment to look at Saihara’s end of the hospital room because he has never seen it before. It’s not as personalized as Momota’s, but it’s certainly more lived in than Ouma’s. Saihara has college textbooks, notebooks, novels, and a laptop with no cord attached to it on his desk. Even though the desk has a lot of belongings on it, the area is surprisingly organized. The textbooks, notebooks, and novels are set up on neat stacks. The bed sheets are regular, dark blue bedsheets.

The boy in black hospital scrubs looks up at them with a slightly surprised expression. He has a novel in his hands and is wearing a black baseball cap, which Kiibo has seen him wear many times before. He replies in a soft voice, “Hello Akamatsu-san and Kiibo-san. It’s nice to see you. What is it you want to talk about?”

He’s so polite. There’s something about Saihara that makes Kiibo feel awkward around the boy. Every time the robot speaks to him, he turns away from the robot and seems uncomfortable. The AI always feels like he says the wrong thing whenever he speaks to him. He doesn’t know how Kaede, Maki, and Momota get along with him so well. Kiibo’s mind feels jumbled up trying to figure out what to say, “I’d like to speak to you about Ouma-kun.”
“Okay,” he replies while trying to hide his face under his baseball cap.

“If it’s okay with you, may you please try befriending him? I’m sure you are perfectly nice to him. It’s just….Ouma-kun has been going through a rough few weeks, probably even a rough few months too. It’d be nice if he can trust you and be comfortable with you while I’m gone, especially since you’re his roommate and you share very similar schedules.” Kiibo tells Saihara all this while watching his face closely, trying to get a read on what’s going through the quiet boy’s head. Unfortunately, to Kiibo’s frustration, the quiet boy doesn’t look up at Kiibo, and his face is hidden behind the black baseball cap. He gnaws on his fingernails aggressively, but doesn’t say anything for a few minutes. The robot takes that as a sign that he has made the boy uncomfortable, once again.

“It’s fine! You don’t have to! Ouma-kun is not the friendliest of people, so I can see why you wouldn’t want to.”

“No! I want to!” Saihara loudly interrupts the robot, clutching his book tightly. The black haired boy blushes out of embarrassment for his sudden outburst. Kaede watches the conversation closely with an unreadable expression. “Sorry….I’ve tried. I’ve tried to be nice to him. I’ve tried to be friends with him….I’ve heard rumors about him, and I can tell he’s been through hell. He deserves to be happy and to have friends. He just doesn’t deserve to have someone as useless and upsetting as me. I just keep messing up and making him worse. Sorry.”

“No! Please, don’t blame yourself! Ouma-kun gets upset with almost everyone. He dislikes almost everyone here. You didn’t do anything wrong,” Kiibo replies desperately.

“Yeah, Saihara-kun,” Kaede adds to the conversation. She sits next to him on the bed and gives him a warm smile. The blonde’s smiles are contagious, but Saihara barely looks at her and just frowns. He looks lost in thought. “I’ve seen you interact with Ouma-kun. You’ve been so nice and friendly to him. He’s lucky to have someone as great as you as a roommate.”

“But I’m supposed to take care of him. I’m supposed to help him, and all I’ve been doing is moping lazily in bed and making him uncomfortable…. The black haired boy mutters with a depressed look on his face.

Kiibo gives him a puzzled look and then questions, “Why do you think you’re supposed to help him? You’re a patient here. It’s not your responsibility to look after him. You’re supposed to focus on your own healing.”

“I’m not even supposed to be here…. Ouma-kun doesn’t think he should be here either. I’m supposed to be out in the real world helping my uncle solve cases. I don’t have a reason for being here. I should be responsible and useful….not mopey and sitting around feeling sorry for myself. The least I can do is help Ouma-kun, but I just make things worse.”

“Saihara-kun,” Kaede replies, putting a hand on his shoulder. Saihara barely glances over at her. “I keep telling you, it’s not your fault. What you’re going through is out of your control. You didn’t choose to feel the way you’re feeling.”

“I don’t have a horrible backstory like Ouma-kun. I don’t have an excuse. I lived a normal, comfortable and safe life, yet I wimped out and became useless. I shouldn’t be acting like this. I’m acting like a spoiled baby, having all these people cater to me. I can’t do anything to help others, not even Ouma-kun…. I need to be productive. Why am I like this?” Saihara mumbles. Kiibo can’t help but stare at the rambling boy. He keeps biting his nails before looking over at Kiibo with wide eyes. The black-clad boy blushes and looks away from the robot. At first, Kiibo wonders what’s wrong, but then realizes the boy is probably embarrassed by Kiibo staring, so the AI instead looks at Kaede who is gently looking down at Saihara with her hand still on his shoulder. The boy whispers, “Sorry, I’m being self-centered again. You shouldn’t be concerning yourself with me.”
“You don’t seem that self-centered though. You really want to help Ouma-kun and others even though you don’t have to. That thought is admirable,” Kiibo points out with a forced smile.

“I’m all talk. I keep saying I want to be productive, to do something, but I just keep cowering away when things even get a tiny bit hard. If this place weren’t spending so much time, energy, and money on me right now, I’d be dead. In fact, I’m probably.”

“You’re getting so much better!” Kaede pipes up while clapping her hands together, purposely interrupting whatever the black haired boy was going to say. The robot wonders what Saihara was going say. Saihara just gives her a questioning look. “At this rate, you’ll be able to leave the hospital and do great things. In fact, you’re already doing great things. You’re working on getting a college degree, and so many people here love you. You’re so nice, and people love being around you. Momota-kun says he’s missed you ever since he got released. Harukawa-san does nothing but praise you. You’ve been so helpful to her when she’s working the front desk, planning projects, or watching other patients.”

Saihara doesn’t smile to Kaede. He just sets his book and hat on the bedside table and buries himself under the sheets of the bed, turning away from the two of them. “If I’m so great, why am I here? I should be more like you, Akamatsu-san, but I’m not…..I’m lazy, weak, and selfish. You’re such a hard worker, who everyone loves.”

“I don’t think Ouma-kun loves me at all though. I think he may even tolerate you more….” Kaede replies with a dry smile. “I’m not any more amazing than you are. I’m certainly not as smart or gifted in some areas like you are. Then again….I don’t think we can really compare ourselves to other people. We’re all so different, and we all have our different circumstances.”

Saihara doesn’t seem to register what Kaede told him. He yawns and simply states, “I’m tired. I’m sorry. I just really don’t feel like talking, as usual.”

“Okay, that’s fine,” Kaede replies with a bit of a forced cheerfulness. She pats him on the arm and stands up from the bed.

“Thank you Saihara-kun for speaking with me,” Kiibo replies honestly. The robot feels like this conversation was a waste of time. Saihara has been trying his best with Ouma. He even seems to feel responsible for the small boy. There’s nothing the robot can say to him to make him closer to Ouma. All this conversation seemed to do is make the black-clad boy upset.

The robot turns to leave the room. On his way out, he hears the boy in the bed say in a clear voice, “I’m sorry I can’t do anything to help. I’ll keep trying to help Ouma-kun. I don’t want him to suffer. I want him to be friends me. I’m not giving up on him.”

Kiibo takes the rest of the day off. He hasn’t taken a day off since his first day of being a volunteer. The robot thinks taking a break to do other things like studying and organizing his thoughts may help clear his head. The AI isn’t nearly as stressed as he was when Ouma was in the intensive unit. In fact, he feels rather calm. Even though the conversation with Saihara didn’t go as well as he hoped, to the robot’s relief, Saihara is trying and seems to be very understanding and patient with Ouma. He may even be a better roommate for Ouma than Momota. The robot has to keep reminding himself to be patient. A lot has happened. Once the dark haired boy recovers from his surgery, Ouma just needs peace and a regular routine.

Kiibo doesn’t know if the dark haired boy will get that.
The next day, Kiibo meets up with Ouma in one of the study rooms once again. The dark haired boy lies on his side on the brown couch and is facing the doorway. He’s under the familiar hospital blanket, and his head rests on the pillow from the bed in his hospital room. The donut pillow rests by his feet on the couch. When the robot first sees him, he has this gloomy look on his face. He looks exhausted. He doesn’t even notice Kiibo walking into the room. Although, Ouma sometimes purposely ignores the robot on purpose at first. Kiibo doesn’t know why he does that. In order to get his attention, the robot greets him as cheerily as he can. “Hello Ouma-kun! I made you some homemade stir-fried vegan soba. I’m trying out a new recipe.”

“Stop talking so cheerily. You sounds like that bitch Akamatsu-chan,” Ouma groans from under the blanket.

Kiibo pulls a chair over to beside the couch and sits close to Ouma. He combs a metal hand through his hair and asks, “How are you?”

“I’m dying. No….I should be dead. This really hurts….I think they….” Upon closer inspection, the robot sees Ouma’s eyes are really bloodshot, and he’s shaking under the blanket. The blanket is curled close to him. He reminds Kiibo of Saihara, curled under the thick blanket like that. The warm couch looks comfortable. Although, the hospital bed is probably even more comfortable.

“Why aren’t you lying in the bed in your room?” Kiibo asks. The robot tries to force himself to sound as gentle as possible because Ouma really looks out of it. He barely seems to register the AI’s presence and for a few seconds doesn’t even bother reacting to the question.

“Roommate is creeping me out again,” Ouma says with a loud yawn. He nuzzles his head further into the pillow.

“Saihara-kun is just trying to be nice. You should try being friends with him. I think you’ll really like him,” Kiibo suggests, continuing to thread his fingers through the small boy’s hair. Ouma makes a content sigh at the contact.

“Heh….right….I want nothing to do with Emo-chan. He reminds me a sociopath with how socially constipated and freaky he is,” Ouma states with a dry laugh.

“Ouma-kun! That’s really mean and judgmental. Saihara-kun is really nice. He cares about you. He wouldn’t ever want to hurt you. He’s very smart and interesting. I think you’d like him,” Kiibo insists. He’s trying so hard not to get really mad at the tired boy, but Kiibo really can’t stand bullies. Ouma sometimes reminds the robot of those coldhearted bullies in high school who pick on the defenseless and abnormal kids. Ouma is a strange and abnormal kid himself. The small boy hates it when people are mean to him, so why is he like that with Saihara? Then again, why is he like that with almost everyone he interacts with?

“You think everyone is a saint. Don’t you? You always think I’m the bad guy. How cruel,” Ouma whines with a pout. He shifts a little on the couch. “Ow….ugh….I need opioids….The doctor is so mean….If they’re going cut me open like that, you’d think they’d give me better drugs for the pain. Those sociopaths love seeing me in pain don’t they? I bet that surgeon would have been a serial killer if he couldn’t find a career where he can cut people….bastard…”

“You received a lateral internal sphincterotomy? Right?”

“What?! They told you?!” Ouma’s tired voice suddenly shouts, surprising Kiibo by the increase in volume.

“Ah, so that was the surgery you received. Nobody told me. I just made an educated guess based on
the donut pillow and stool softeners you’re supposed to take,” Kiibo says with a shrug. “You have severe anal fissures, so I assumed you must have gotten complications from it and required surgery.”

“Ugh, this is so humiliating. When people talk about surgery, they usually talk about the cool surgeries like knee surgery or open heart surgery, not butt surgery! They don’t talk about butt surgery in the movies or TV because it’s so pathetic….” Ouma whines. “People will never take me seriously if they know I had to get butt surgery.”

“If it makes you feel better, it’s technically called lateral internal sphincterotomy, not butt surgery.”

“That doesn’t make me feel better!”

“Ouma-kun, there’s nothing wrong with getting a lateral internal sphincterotomy. Anal fissures are common. Plus, the severe anal fissure you received is not your fault. It was just an unfortunate consequence of sexual assault. People will understand and won’t hold it against you,” Kiibo explains, trying to comfort the distressed boy.

“It’s still painful and humiliating.”

“The pain will go away soon if you follow the post-surgery regime. You’ve been following it, right?” Kiibo questions.

“I am because my butthole feels like a knife is cutting right through the inside, so I hoped the pain would lessen if I take the stool softeners and pain medication. Ugh, it feels like someone just stuck a knife up my ass. Oh wait? That’s exactly what happened!” He lets out another dry laugh and then winces. “Ow…..”

“I’m impressed you gave the surgeon permission to do this. You don’t seem like the type to cooperate with surgery. Does that mean you’re trusting the doctors more?” Kiibo asks excitedly.

Ouma rolls his eyes. “Calm your robo tits down. It’s not like that……I had no choice but to cooperate because….”

“Because what?”

“Nothing! Forget about it,” Ouma grumbles. His pale face is a bit flushed before he hides his face under the blanket. He really doesn’t look like he wants to be having this conversation.

“Bowel movements must have been really painful. That’s why you felt like you needed the surgery,” Kiibo guesses.

“Shut up….I don’t need you telling me this. Stop humiliating me. Poop is gross,” Ouma whines, with his voice muffled under the blanket.

“Although, even if bowel movements were unbearably painful, you still must have trusted the doctors to some level in order to go through with surgery. They could have easily made the pain worse or made some other region painful, yet you trusted the medical staff to do this,” Kiibo comments happily.

Ouma just moans. “I said shut up! You don’t know crap! If I refused, they may have pinned me down and do the surgery incorrectly and without anesthesia. I did what I had to do to save my butt, literally and figuratively.”

Kiibo frowns in disappointment. “Really? You only did it because you thought they would hurt you more if you refused? You didn’t trust the hospital to some degree?”
The dark haired boy hesitates for a second before answering, “Yeah.”

“You’re lying, right? You’re warming up to the people here. You have to be,” Kiibo replies desperately. “You’re a liar.”

“Who knows? Lies have no point if I just point out every lie I say. Although, even if I confess my lies, I still could be lying about what I’m lying about. In the end, you don’t know what I’m thinking,” Ouma points out. **He’s not wrong. Although, I feel like I can recognize his lies. Maybe?** Ouma lets out another yawn. “We’re literally talking about my crap right now, so this conversation is crap. I’d appreciate it if you drop it. It’s bad enough the goons at the hospital are pestering me about this. I just want to nap right now….”

“You sure you don’t want to go to your room to sleep? The couch doesn’t seem as comfortable as the bed,” Kiibo mumbles.

“I love this couch! It’s the best couch ever! If heaven exists, then I’m sure it’ll be filled with wonderful couches just like this one. I could warship this couch because it’s so amazing,” Ouma sighs in contentment. “Damn…..the anesthesia from yesterday is making me go crazy.”

“Okay, you can get some sleep. Just don’t forget to eat, and take your stool softeners and the new prescription medication,” Kiibo tells the boy. Unfortunately, he doesn’t know if Ouma heard him because a few seconds later, the robot hears the familiar sound of a dying congested horse, Ouma’s snoring. **Wow, he fell asleep remarkably quickly.**

It takes six weeks for Ouma to completely heal from surgery. In the meantime, the boy takes things easily. He and Kiibo fall into a comfortable routine of talking about various things, playing games, doing schoolwork, and helping the boy shower. While helping Ouma with his shower, the robot has noticed Ouma’s skin has gotten better, especially the skin on the genital region. The dark haired boy is surprisingly compliant when it comes to his post-surgery regime. He takes the stool softeners and pain medication as recommended. He even takes the medication for his newly discovered diseases too. Unfortunately, he won’t tell Kiibo what he’s infected with, and he still doesn’t take the medication for his mental illnesses either. Ouma still complains and gets difficult with the smallest things and is still antisocial with others who aren’t Kiibo. The robot wishes the small boy wouldn’t rely on him for so much. Fortunately, overall, the boy is more cooperative than usual. Although, Kiibo wonders if it’s because of the post-surgery pain he’s in and the side effects of his medication. Ouma seems to be very tired when Kiibo’s around. He constantly complains of a headache, fatigue, and dizziness and doesn’t appear to have the energy to protest even if he wants to. It’s gotten so bad to the point where Kiibo has to give him piggy back rides because he’s too tired to move on his own. Sometimes, Ouma will fall asleep at the most random times, and Kiibo has to carry him back to his room. One of the nurses says his fatigue and headaches are probably from the side effects of the medications he’s taking.

Tenko, Gonta, and Shinguuiji also get released from the hospital during those six weeks Ouma has been recovering from his surgery. The robot is not surprised since those three have been at the hospital for a while and overall appear to be capable of going out to the real world now.

Tenko is the first to be released. She gets released the day after Ouma’s lateral internal sphincterotomy. She doesn’t want to leave at first because then she’d be leaving Yumeno behind. However, Tenko isn’t the one who decides when she leaves; the doctors are. If they say she should be released, then she’ll be released. The mental hospital is not going to keep patients there overnight if they don’t have to. Kiibo thinks that Tenko and Yumeno both need to learn how to live without
each other too. Yumeno has become too dependent on Tenko, and Tenko is obsessed with Yumeno. Ouma does have issues with being too emotionally dependent on Kiibo, but he’s not as bad as Yumeno is with Tenko. Kiibo has heard rumors that the girls have gotten so close to the point of developing a sexual relationship.

As the weeks pass by, the redhead has gotten more and more emotionally dependent on Tenko. It has gotten to the point of being unhealthy. Every time Tenko trained, Yumeno had to be right there watching her. The redhead can’t even make decisions by herself about what to wear, what to eat, or what to do. She relied on Tenko to make these everyday life decisions for her. It has gotten so bad to the point where Yumeno couldn’t even stand to be alone without Tenko. While Tenko fortunately hasn’t been dependent on Yumeno like Yumeno is with Tenko, the brown hair girl adores the redhead and spoils her every chance she gets. People have been telling Tenko to encourage Yumeno to be independent and to not care for the redhead so much. Unfortunately, Tenko hasn’t been able to stop giving the redhead constant attention. She can’t resist Yumeno when the redhead says, “Help me, Tenko-chan” or “Tenko-chan, I need you.” At first, the hospital adjusted the girls’ schedules so that they don’t follow nearly the exact same schedule, but that just resulted in both girls ignoring their schedules and doing what they wanted together. The hospital then tried encouraging the girls to separate. Tenko tried to get away from Yumeno temporarily, but this just resulted in the redhead bursting into tears and Tenko crawling back to her as a result. The hospital then separated them by giving them new roommates so that the girls aren’t each other’s roommates anymore. This led to Yumeno throwing a fit and trying to sneak into Tenko’s room. Fortunately, Yumeno has been the only one showing unhealthy behavior over this dependency. Tenko hasn’t. Tenko simply worries about the redhead like a doting mother. She isn’t dependent on the redhead. She just understandably worries about Yumeno. Tenko gets a psyche evaluation, and the doctor tells her to leave the hospital. As expected, Yumeno is thoroughly upset when she hears the news. Both girls try bargaining with hospital, stating Tenko can’t get released unless Yumeno gets released too. However, that’s not how things work. Tenko leaves, and Yumeno gets depressed. She’s extremely quiet and has random crying spells. If people didn’t know any better, they would have thought Tenko died. A week after Tenko leaves, the redhead begins clinging to others, using them as substitutes for Tenko. Gonta, Kaede, Amami, Maki, Angie, Toujou, and even Kiibo have been forced to spend one-on-one time with Yumeno and help her with practically everything.

One day, when Ouma leaves for a therapy session, Yumeno pulls Kiibo into one of the day rooms to help her prepare for an outdoor magic show. Afterwards, Kiibo escort her to the cafeteria, and Yumeno holds Kiibo’s hand while doing so. Unfortunately, Ouma on his way out of therapy sees this, bursts into tears, and screams, “You bitch! That’s my robot! Get away from him, you filthy witch! You’ll taint him with your villainous sorcery!”

This startles Yumeno, causing her to also burst into tears and cry, “I’m a mage! I’m a good girl! I would never do anything evil! Take that back!”

Ouma just continues to sob and look absolutely enraged at the redhead. He marches to her, acting like he’s about to hit the crying girl. Although, Kiibo doubts he will do that. The robot has seen Ouma get pissed at everyone in the hospital, yet the AI hasn’t seen Ouma get physically violent with anyone. While it’s likely neither Yumeno nor Ouma would hit each other, Amami, who’s escorting Ouma out of therapy, and Kiibo both have to separate the two small teens anyway since both are clearly upsetting each other. Kaede passes by and takes Yumeno to the cafeteria. Amami, to Kiibo’s surprise, volunteers to take Ouma to his room. Kiibo asks him why he wants to do so, and Amami replies, “I think it’ll be good for Ouma-kun to get used to me.”

Amami-kun’s trying to help out with Ouma’s dependency issues. He’s really observant. Unfortunately, Ouma who is still crying simply falls to the floor, kicking and screaming. “I don’t want Pupil-chan! Pupil-chan is gross, annoying, stupid, and mean! I want the robot! OW!”
Ouma clutches his head and slouches against the hospital wall. Amami kneels down beside him and calmly questions, “Hey, what’s wrong?”

“My head hurts, and I feel like I’m going to pass out…..This is your fault Pupil-chan. Take some responsibility for your bad behavior,” Ouma whines.

_He still calls Amami-kun Pupil-chan. I wonder why he doesn’t call me Babysitter-chan anymore._

“He’s been suffering from headaches, fatigue, and dizziness ever since his surgery,” Kiibo tells the green haired boy. “He’s been napping a lot during the day. You should take him to his room so he can lie down.”

“Roger that,” Amami replies with a salute.

Ouma barely seems to be registering what’s going on around him. Kiibo thinks he’ll probably pass out soon. The boy mumbles, “I don’ wanna go to my room….Hospital floors are sanitary, right? I think I’ll just sleep here…..the tiles are so pretty….”

“C’mon…don’t be like that,” Amami tells the boy. Ouma doesn’t seem to notice his presence as he curls up on the hospital floor like a cat about to nap. The green haired boy kneels down to sit the exhausted boy up. Ouma lies limply in his arms, not cooperating at all. Kiibo is impressed Amami doesn’t roll his eyes or sighs. The green haired boy just gives a friendly smile. He picks Ouma up and somehow gets the boy on to his back. “It’s no big deal. I’ll just carry you to your room if you can’t make it there yourself.”

“I’m impressed you can carry him so easily,” Kiibo comments.

“Well, he’s pretty skinny,” Amami replies with a shrug.

“Hey, don’t be like that….I’m not skinny. I’m lean. I’m ripped. You’re just jealous, Fatso,” Ouma mumbles groggily to Amami. Kiibo resists pointing out that Amami has a small frame himself and is certainly nowhere close to being overweight, but the robot thinks it would be rude to comment on anyone’s size. Ouma yawns and nuzzles Amami’s neck. “Even though he’s a dick, Pupil-chan has such a comfy back…..”

Anything seems comfortable when you’re that tired I suppose.

Kiibo doesn’t exactly know why Shinguuiji was ever admitted to the mental hospital in the first place. He seems stable. He’s just really apathetic, too apathetic in the robot’s opinion.

Kiibo walks into the one of the day rooms and sees Yumeno sitting on the floor in front of the TV, bawling her eyes out. Shinguuiji sits on a chair at the table, casually gazing at her. The robot looks at the boy and wonders, “Why are you just staring at her? Aren’t you going to try comforting her?”

The long haired boy just shrugs. He rests his chin in his hands and continues to stare at the crying girl. He replies, “She’s so fascinating though. Crying is such an interesting action. Did you know that the cerebrum part of the brain registers sadness, and, as a result, the endocrine system sends hormones to the ocular system to trigger tears? I wonder if she’ll feel better after crying. Humans frequently feel better after crying. I wonder what the purpose of tears are. I’ve heard one theory state that tears are used for communication, to signal to others that we are upset.”

“Ah, okay. Since she has tears in her eyes, doesn’t that mean she’s communicating to you that she’s
upset. Since that’s the case, you should try comforting her,” Kiibo suggests. The hospital encourages patients to help one another with their issues. Shinguuiji is rarely ever a part of that, and Kiibo would appreciate it if he was. Although, even though Shinguuiji is apathetic, his eyes seem to show a lot of warm emotion, and the things he says is very fascinating. If he cared about others and had normal human emotions, then the robot would enjoy being around him more.

“No, I’d like to study how crying will alleviate her negative emotions. My interference would ruin the study,” Shinguuiji replies, still not taking her eyes off of the girl.

Kiibo pays him no mind and goes over to Yumeno to comfort her, hoping that Ouma doesn’t walk in and get jealous again. The robot doesn’t think he’ll ever get close to Shinguuiji, but he’d like to understand him. However, the AI doesn’t think he’ll ever get the chance since Shinguuiji gets released from the hospital two weeks after Tenko.

The day after Shinguuiji leaves, Kiibo is surprised to see Gonta carrying a sleeping Yumeno on his back. *Ouma-kun and Yumeno-san have been so unproductive lately. They’re lucky they’re small enough for people to carry them on their backs.* Gonta’s face immediately brightens when he sees the robot, and he exclaims out of worry, “Kiibo-kun! Gonta has a problem!”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Gonta is trying to be useful and carry Yumeno-san to her comfortable bed. However, entering a girl’s room would not be the gentleman thing to do. A girl’s room is private and personal. A gentleman is forbidden to look at such a private domain,” Gonta exclaims. Yumeno quietly sighs on the giant’s back. She looks so peaceful sleeping there.

“I don’t think it should be too much of an issue. Akamatsu-san and Harukawa-san have both been in Ouma-kun and Saihara-kun’s room, so it’d be appropriate for you, likewise, to enter Yumeno-san’s room, especially if you knock first and Yumeno-san’s roommate is okay with it,” Kiibo answers, not really seeing what the issue is.

“Ah, yes, ladies can enter a man’s room just fine, but a gentleman cannot. Ladies deserve their privacy,” Gonta answers.

“And men do not deserve their privacy?”

“Yeah, it sounds dumb when Gonta says it like that. Doesn’t it?” Gonta mumbles with a sad expression on his face. “Gonta is not smart of enough to explain himself. Gonta probably doesn’t even know what he’s talking about. Why is Gonta like this? Why doesn’t Gonta know how to be a gentleman?”

“I think it’s normal for people to think males shouldn’t be allowed to be in female’s personal space, but females are allowed to be in men’s personal space. I suppose people assume males are much more likely to prey on females than females are to prey on males. I don’t quite understand social norms myself. In fact, I think most people don’t understand social norms. That doesn’t make us dumb. Cultures can be confusing,” Kiibo explains, thinking deeply about what Gonta just said. Illogical social expectations always confuse the robot. When Gonta started talking about the double standards of genders, Kiibo had to speak up about it. In an effort to change the subject, Kiibo asks, “Are things well with school, Gokuhara-kun?”

“You know that university Gonta was trying to get into?” Gonta asks.
“You mean Hope’s Peak University?”

“Yes, that. Thank you for listening to Gonta!” The large boy looks absolutely ecstatic, like he just won the lottery.

“You don’t need to thank me. Listening to people is just proper etiquette.”

“Well, surprisingly, Gonta got accepted into Hope’s Peak University!” Gonta tells the robot with a contagious smile on his face. “Gonta didn’t think he’d be accepted since Gonta is stupid and was placed here in this mental hospital. Gonta is extremely lucky to get accepted.”

“You’re not that lucky. You’re a very good student and an expert in entomological research. The university is lucky to have you,” Kiibo replies. They stop in front of the door of Yumeno’s room. Kiibo knocks on the door, and Yumeno’s roommate opens the door and takes the sleeping redhead inside. The robot is amazed Yumeno hasn’t woken up yet.

The giant then turns to Kiibo and shakes the robot’s hand. “You’ve noticed Gonta is interested in entomology. Thank you for noticing!”

“It’s not hard to know you’re interested in entomology. I see you reading entomology books and studying insects often. Your love for insects is obvious,” Kiibo replies, pulling his metal hand away from the boy.

“Yes, Gonta loves insects. Gonta still can’t get sleep knowing so many individuals needlessly kill insects. It stresses Gonta out and makes him angry and depressed. Gonta wishes people wouldn’t be so cruel….” The large boy mutters sadly with clenched fists. “Insects have lives too. It’s cruel how people get disgusted by them and go out of their way to kill them.”

“Do you still get mad at people for harming insects?” Kiibo asks worriedly.

“No, Gonta sees no point in making a scene over people hurting insects. It’s not something a gentleman would do. Everyone used to hate Gonta when he tried to stand up for insects. People hate Gonta when he gets emotional and doesn’t act like a gentleman. As a result, Gonta has realized that getting upset doesn’t help insects at all. It just hurts people. Gonta needs to educate people. Gonta won’t be able to educate people if they hate Gonta,” the large boy explains sadly. He then smiles. “Gonta is still stupid and gets upset, but he’s getting better.”

“Gokuhara-kun, you’re not stupid. Hope’s Peak University wouldn’t have accepted you if you were,” Kiibo protests. “You just really care about the lives of insects. That’s extremely caring of you.”

“Kiibo-kun, Gonta doesn’t think he’s stupid because he’s he knows a lot about insects and cares about them. Gonta is stupid because he’s not a gentleman and doesn’t know how to be one,” the large boy answers sadly. What? The robot gives him a look of confusion, and Gonta waves it off. “It’s okay, Kiibo-kun. Gonta is sorry for worrying you. Thank you for wasting you valuable time listening to Gonta.”

“No, it wasn’t a waste of my time. I like listening to you talk. It’s very interesting,” Kiibo protests as the boy walks away from him. He then shouts as the Gonta walks further from the robot, “Don’t worry about trying to be a gentleman because you already are one! Just keep improving and helping others! The only person who doesn’t think you’re a gentleman is you!”

“Thank you, Kiibo-kun,” Gonta turns his head with a smile to give the robot a friendly wave. “You and everyone else mean a lot to Gonta. You all have helped turn Gonta into a gentleman. Gonta will
be a gentleman by the time he leaves the hospital. Don’t worry! Gonta will make you proud!”

Gonta gets released from the hospital a few days later.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, if you don't like my fic, you'd tell me, right? I'd like to hear all criticisms so that I can improve it. I've made corrections occasionally whenever people give small bits of input. However, I've never received any negative feedback until this week.

Someone made a public internet post basically saying my fic is a trainwreck and that there are some people who really hate it. (I don't know these people who hate it.) I appreciate some of the feedback from the review. For example, it was saying how the characters are too different from their canon counterparts. Yeah, I can see how the characters may seem too different from their canon counterparts. I'm trying my best at writing these characters. Unfortunately, the review was also very misleading. It said my fic is for people who are into rape. Did my fic not get the message across that rape is bad? If there's an issue I handled poorly, please tell me. I don't want people to get the wrong interpretation. It's weird to think there might be people reading this because they think it's a fascinating trainwreck rather than a well written story.

Sorry, I had to vent. I still love writing this story. Like a lot of writers, I get very self-conscious about my writing. It's inevitable, especially since this fic has way more readers than I expected.

Anyway, thanks for the overwhelming support! I'm actually surprised it took this long to get a negative review. Although, I'd rather people be honest with me than not say anything in order to not hurt my feelings.

I'd love to hear any kind of feedback, both negative and positive.

Thanks for the fan art Shirodebby!


I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Chapter Summary

Ouma eats dinner outside. Kiibo brings up his concerns.

Warning! This chapter has mentions of past child rape and abuse. Nothing that graphic.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It’s been six weeks since Ouma’s surgery. Ouma had significantly reduced the new medication he takes within two weeks after being prescribed them. As a result, shortly after reducing his medication dosage, Ouma had complained of the ill side effects from the medication less often. He had more energy and acted less sick. Unfortunately, Ouma has been stressed out over the court date for Towa City Resort’s prostitution ring. Two weeks ago, without telling Kiibo, Ouma went to the police station and tried answering questions for the police in order to get Ultimate Despair locked up and DICE proven innocent. Unfortunately, for some reason, the boy got a panic attack when the police began questioning him, so he was never fit to properly answer police questions and has been anxious about the whole case ever since. He had a therapist and other people try to talk to him and calm him down, but he was unresponsive to the help. Ever since the panic attack, due to his anxiety, Ouma has been complaining of headaches, fatigue, and dizziness. The dark circles under his eyes are back. Even with his anxiety, Ouma has become more and more obsessed with the case. Kiibo has seen him reading endless news articles on the case and writing stuff down. His side of the room has a box full papers in folders about the case. Kiibo wonders why the hospital even let the boy get away with this unhealthy obsession. Ouma is doing an investigation of his own. He told the robot that he’ll show the police the information he found about the case. Although, this is assuming he doesn’t get another panic attack.

Ouma constantly talked about the case for a few days since his panic attack. Kiibo then asked the boy what the panic attack at the police station was about and stated that Ouma shouldn’t try handling the case, but Ouma just vehemently told the robot to drop the subject. Ouma has been cold to the robot since then. He still talks about the case, but he seems a tiny bit hostile towards Kiibo every time he mentions it. The AI can’t help but worry about it. Ouma has still insisted on being by the robot’s side, but he’s less affectionate and more distant. At least he doesn’t treat the robot like a sexual pervert similar to members of DICE. For Kiibo, it’s nice he doesn’t seem to think the robot wants to get into his pants. He doesn’t kiss the robot either. Kiibo has mixed feelings about that. On the one hand, there was a sexual component to the kisses, which Kiibo and possibly Ouma were uncomfortable with. Ouma forced himself to kiss the robot in order to get the robot aroused, even though Kiibo had repeatedly told him the AI can’t get aroused. On the other hand though, the kisses were signs of affection. It felt like Ouma cared about Kiibo, and Kiibo appreciated the closeness. Ouma felt like a beloved family member in that respect. In the end, while all this is going on with Kiibo and Ouma’s relationship, the dark haired boy’s relationship with others hasn’t improved. He mostly gives everyone else the silent treatment or rude remarks.

Kiibo thinks the changes in the small boy’s behavior are normal, even though they are concerning. Ouma has been worrying about his beloved DICE members and has been thinking about Ultimate Despair often. The stress is making him physically ill. The robot wishes he could just ignore the court
date and move on from his past. Thinking about it will do the boy no good. Kiibo is tempted take the box of folders and Ouma’s computer away until the whole case is over. Ouma wants to participate in the investigation and testify in court. Everyone who was arrested for the prostitution ring got indicted by a grand jury. The motions and hearings phase of the trial will happen next week. It is during that phase where witnesses and evidence are presented. That phase lasts for months, and Ouma wants to be a part of it. The dark haired boy wants to testify. He wants to take down everyone who he thinks hurt him and save DICE. Ouma has been developing this strange hero complex. He proudly states he’s going to take down the bad guys and save his loved ones. He thinks things will go his way. Kiibo hopes it doesn’t.

Kiibo and small boy are outside in one of the hospital’s interior courtyards. They sit at one of the two picnic tables, with Ouma sitting on his black donut pillow. That pillow has rescued the boy from unnecessary posterior pain since the surgery, and now Ouma insists on carrying it everywhere he goes, along with the hospital blanket. Kiibo finds it ridiculous that Ouma insists on carrying around both the hospital blanket and donut pillow, but the boy claims he needs them. It fascinates the AI how easily the boy has developed a strong attachment to the two soft objects. There’s something about them that’s very comforting to the boy.

While sitting at the picnic tables, they admire the three beautiful pink sakura trees, which are in the courtyard. It’s springtime, and it’s very nice and beautiful outside. The robot thinks the fresh air would do the small pale boy good. There used to be days where Ouma didn’t even bother going outside. The robot thinks the enjoyable fresh air would lift Ouma’s mood, and it seems to have done just that. The AI is jealous he can’t appreciate fresh air like humans can. Kiibo suggested they go sit under a sakura tree, but Ouma said he doesn’t want petals from the trees falling into his stir fried noodles and summer rolls. It’s one of those instances where the dark haired boy is being the more rational one of the two boys.

Ouma has been eating a lot more than usual. As a matter of fact, the boy has been ravenous. The robot understands that not eating sufficiently for months, maybe even years, has taken a toll on his body and hunger mechanisms. Today, Kiibo made a large serving of vegan summer rolls with lots of crushed peanuts and tofu and edamame stir fry with lots of noodles. Ouma messily wolfs the dinner down happily and asks with a high pitched whine, “Why do you hate me?”

“I don’t hate you. Why do you say that?” Kiibo responds casually. The robot has gotten used to some of the small boy’s dramatics.

“Only people who hate me would starve me like this!” Ouma complains with a large crunch of a summer roll. He accidently spits some of the summer roll into the robot’s face, and, with disgust, Kiibo cleans the crumbs off his face. The oils from the stir fry and crumbs from the summer rolls sloppily stain Ouma’s face. Kiibo is tempted to take a napkin and wipe the boy’s face clean, but he’s going to wait until the meal is over to that because the AI knows the small boy will quickly make his face messy again right after the robot cleans it. Kiibo is glad he brought an abundance of napkins because the dark haired boy still doesn’t use proper table manners and leaves an unsightly mess of food wherever he eats. Kiibo has been trying to tell the boy to stop making a mess and to use better table manners, but the dark hair boy either ignores or sneers at him.

“I’m not starving you. I’ve made you a very healthy meal full of healthy vegetables, carbohydrates, fat, and protein. The meal is around 1000 calories,” Kiibo answers while admiring the charming sakura trees, trying not to look at the sloppy boy next to him.

“That’s a lie! This isn’t 1000 calories! The Jewish people in concentration camps get more food than these meager portions!”
“That analogy is really in poor taste, Ouma-kun,” Kiibo growls.

“I don’t give a damn about being politically correct! I’m starving! I feel like my body systems are shutting down because of the lack of food. I’m becoming a skeleton. My body is eating away at muscle and other tissues for energy. I’m dying!” Ouma moans so loudly that a couple of birds fly away due to the noise.

“Actually, you’ve been better fed these past few weeks than you have since I’ve first met you. You look and act healthier. Your skin looks better, and you’re less sickly-looking,” Kiibo replies, now eyeing the boy who’s still gorging his meal. It’s true. Kiibo has noticed an improvement in the boy’s appearance. His skin isn’t nearly as dry or full of pimples, and he’s not nearly as boney as used to be. He seems physically stronger, and Kiibo doesn’t feel like he could easily break like before. Overall, he’s actually somewhat healthy-looking. “I think your eating habits have improved considerably. What caused you to start eating more? It used to be difficult to make you eat.”

“Ifs prowby yoo uhmstzing cuffee,” Ouma answers through a full mouth.

“What?”

With a loud gulp, Ouma repeats himself, “It’s probably your amazing cooking. It’s gotten better. It doesn’t take like crap and doesn’t appear poisonous like the hospital food. It doesn’t make my stomach hurt or cause me pain.”

“The food you ate was never poisonous. The severe anal fissure you had gave you indigestion and made passing a stool difficult. That’s why digesting was painful. Now that you’re healed, eating has actually become an enjoyable experience,” Kiibo replies with a content smile.

“You sure? Sounds suspicious. It may just be hospital propaganda you’re listening to. The hospital may be looking for another reason to cut me open and give me more drugs,” Ouma replies with narrow eyes. His dinner is finished. He mewls in protest when Kiibo tells him to wash his mouth and clean up the mess he has made on the picnic table.

“What will it take for you to admit the hospital is helping you? You feel a lot better after the surgery, and you’ve willingly taken the drugs. You have to trust the medical team is helping you. Why do you have to make things difficult?” Kiibo questions while shoving a handful in napkins into Ouma’s hands. “Clean this mess please. Otherwise, I’m not making you any more food.”

“What? You’ll even stop making soba?!” Ouma demands with an agitated expression on his face. Tears start welling up in his eyes, and he clenches his fists.

“Especially the soba.”

“You’re so cruel. Okay, tough guy, two can play it this game,” Ouma states while crossing his arms defiantly. He has a mischievous smirk on his face. “If you refuse to make me food, then I’ll go on a hunger strike. I refuse to eat the hospital’s toxic gruel!”

“What? You’d starve yourself just so you wouldn’t have to clean up your mess like a grown up? You’re lying, right?!” Kiibo questions.

“I’m not letting you or the hospital control me!” Ouma declares while raising a fist in the air. “Besides, I’m getting chubby anyway. I need to look thin for DICE. They like it when I’m skinny. I need to look attractive to them when they see me testify for them at court. Once I make sure they’re proven innocent, they can take me out of the hospital, and we’ll be together again.”

“What?” Kiibo exclaims. There are multiple concerns going through the robot’s head all at once.
“First of all, since when did you like being skinny? I thought you didn’t like it when people called you small.”

“Ah, no. I’m fine with people calling me small. That was a lie,” Ouma declares with a grin. He’s unbelievable. I really thought he was self-conscious about his small size, but now he’s saying the opposite?! No, based on his behavior before, he must have been self-conscious about his small size. Although, then again, would he really be lying now about DICE wanting him to stay thin? He seems willing to go along with hunger strike, unless the hunger strike is a lie too… “Ouma-kun! Please stop lying. You’re making things more difficult than it should be!” Ouma just rolls his eyes at the robot. “By the way, your health, mood, and energy has improved ever since you’ve had the surgery and took the new medication for the diseases. Since that’s the case, why do you claim don’t you trust the hospital now?!”

“Wah! You remind me of the police who interrogated and tortured me. You’re going to give me a panic attack….” Ouma whimpers.

More tears well up in the small boy’s eyes. Kiibo thinks they’re fake tears, but just to be on the safe side, the robot states in a gentle voice, “My apologies I didn’t mean to make you upset. I just want to know why you don’t trust the hospital after all the good things they’ve done for you.”

“Good things? Right….like taking away my freedom? Putting me in a building full of people who are mean to me? Coordinating with the police to lock up DICE? Watching me twenty-four hours a day?” Kiibo feels a wave of disappointment wash over him. The dark haired boy eyes the robot with what looks to be concern before then adding. “Well, it’s not all bad…I guess. I mean, they are working with the police to take down Ultimate Despair and other abusers. Their medication and surgery also has made me feel better. They give me shelter, I guess? They don’t physically hurt me.” He then lets out a pitiful wail. He bursts into what seems to be genuine tears. “I’m trying, okay?! How can you expect me to like a place that imprisons me?! They do some nice things, but it’s still psychological torture being here! I really don’t feel like they care about me! Everyone still looks at me like I’m some kind of ugly monster, they force me to follow this schedule, and they still give me no privacy!"

He wraps the hospital blanket he’s wearing closer to himself as he shakes violently. Ouma is having another one of his crying spells. He has been crying more frequently but less violently ever since his panic attack. It’s a weird change. He cries at least once every couple hours, sometimes even more than that. Ouma then grabs his donut pillow, storms off the bench, and moves to sit beneath a sakura tree, leaving the mess he has made behind. Kiibo is irked that he hasn’t even bothered to clean off his messy face yet. The robot has noticed that the boy has periods where he really doesn’t care about his appearance. The AI grabs a napkin and cautiously walks towards the crying boy who is on his donut pillow below the tree. He kneels down in front of Ouma, tackles him, and wipes the boy’s messy mouth. The dark haired boy sputters in response. “Really?! I was sitting here bawling my eyes out, and you decide to clean my face instead of comforting me?!”

“I’m sorry! The mess on your face was bothering me! It’d be easier for me to comfort you if you weren’t so messy!” Kiibo tells the boy, who, because of the robot’s actions, is crying even harder.

“Mmmmmfff!” Ouma tries turning his face away from the napkin in Kiibo hands, but the robot insistently keeps harshly wiping the boy’s face. He reaches his hands out to push Kiibo away, but the robot easily knocks his hands away. “This is inappropriate! I’m in distress, and here you are torturing me!”

“I’m torturing you with a napkin?”

“Yes! You have found a new torture technique by using just a simple napkin! If I weren’t so pissed
off at you, I’d be applauding your resourcefulness! Stop! I’m in distress! You’re hurting me, you despicable robot! This is assault! Abuse! You should be locked up for this!” Ouma keeps mewling in protest. Once Kiibo pulls away from the boy, Ouma goes on to his hands and knees and rubs his bottom. He breathes heavily and moans. “You bastard! You knocked me off my donut pillow! My butt needs to sit on it. Otherwise, sitting will feel like a chainsaw is cutting my ass in two.”

“Really? It still hurts? I haven’t heard you complaining of pain for days. The doctor stopped prescribing you pain medication weeks ago since you haven’t complained about pain. It’s been six weeks since the surgery. Things should be fine,” Kiibo remarks, sitting in front of the boy as Ouma sits himself on the donut pillow.

“Just because I haven’t been complaining about it doesn’t mean it still doesn’t hurt. I was trying to be considerate by not complaining! You should be grateful I’m such a nice guy!” Ouma replies with an angry scowl and crossed arms. He has stopped crying at least. The robot feels bad that he didn’t properly comfort the boy. He knows Ouma has been stressed out about the Towa City Resort prostitution ring court case. Ouma sniffles a little and rubs his eyes. Kiibo can’t help but frown at how tired-looking his eyes look. He just wants Ouma to forget about his past.

“Are you still planning on going to the police to testify?” Kiibo asks tentatively. The robot feels like now is an inappropriate time to ask this question, but he has been worrying about Ouma’s involvement with the case. Plus, there may not even be an appropriate time to ask this question. A sudden wind blows as Ouma tenses up at the question. A bunch of pink flower petals fall on his head, and he picks up a petal to stare at it, trying to distract himself of the robot’s question. He then states firmly, “Of course I am. DICE needs me, and Ultimate Despair needs to be taken down. I don’t trust the corrupt police. The justice system needs me to make sure everything goes correctly. There’s nothing you can say to stop me from doing my job.”

“But it’s not your job. It’s the police’s, lawyers’, and courts’ jobs, not yours. Please, you’re just going to put yourself through too much stress,” Kiibo insists, but Ouma just laughs at him. “I can handle it!” Ouma sings cheerfully and giggles as more petals fall into his hair. There’s something venomous and angry about the way the dark haired boy coldly laughs off Kiibo’s worries. The robot feels his insides heat with anger.

“No, you can’t. You had a panic attack during the two times you tried answering police questions. Thinking about this case isn’t good for your health,” Kiibo answers honestly. Ouma scowls at Kiibo in response. “Let the justice system handle this. There’s plenty of evidence to convict the guilty individuals. The police don’t need your cooperation.”

“Yes they do!” Ouma shouts. He crushes the flower petal in his hand. It’s bizarre seeing an angry Ouma with a bunch of flower petals in his hair. “As I’ve said before, you can’t trust the corrupt police or the justice system. The court and the victims of this case need me to make sure justice is served! Ultimate Despair is clever! They’ll find a way to avoid getting guilty sentence unless I’m there.”

“What are you talking about? You read the news articles. You saw how they explained the plethora of evidence against Ultimate Despair. Their reputation is already tarnished. They’re going to get convicted!” Kiibo argues in frustration.

“I’ve also seen articles saying Ultimate Despair is innocent! They’re powerful! They’ll find a way to get out of a conviction!” Ouma states with clenched fists. Tears of frustration well up in his eyes. He’s visibly shaking. Kiibo can tell he’s making the boy more upset than necessary. He doesn’t know if he should keep fighting against Ouma or back away. Kiibo sits there in silence for a few
seconds, contemplating what he should say. In the meantime, Ouma adds, “Besides, I’ve also read scathing articles against the members of DICE. Articles claiming they’re going to get convicted. I need to save them. I’d rather Ultimate Despair and all my other tormenters get set free than have DICE get wrongfully convicted.”

“You don’t mean that, do you?” Kiibo asks worriedly in a quiet voice.

“Hmmmm…” Ouma puts a finger to his chin thoughtfully. “You are right to question everything I say. I am a liar after all, so I could be lying.” His voice then turns into a mocking tone. He grins. “Even if I am telling the truth. What are you going to do about it? I have a right to take the stand.”

“You have a right, but I don’t know if you’ll be deemed competent enough to take the stand,” Kiibo mumbles quietly, looking down at the grass he’s sitting in.

Ouma’s face turns red with anger, and he holds his fists up in front of himself as though he were protecting himself. He is trembling even more. Through gritted teeth, he growls, “Don’t call me stupid. I’m smart. I’m plenty competent. I understand the circumstances better than anyone. I’m more competent than even the stupid police who are trying to convict DICE. I should, by law, be competent enough to take the stand.”

“You don’t know that. You’re mentally ill and show signs of Stockholm Syndrome. A psychologist can examine you and determine you’re not competent enough to testify. A prosecutor can even make the case that your testimony is not credible,” Kiibo argues. The more the robot speaks, the more livid Ouma gets. His face is beet red, and he looks like he wants to hit Kiibo.

“YOU LIAR! YOU’RE JUST MAKING STUFF UP! THEY CAN’T DISMISS ME! I’M THE VICTIM AND AN INVESTIGATOR! I CAN SAVE DICE AND TAKE DOWN ULTIMATE DESPAIR NO MATTER WHAT EVIDENCE THEY HAVE! THEY HAVE NO REASON TO CLAIM I’M INCOMPETENT! I’M SMART! I DON’T HAVE STOCKHOLM SYNDROME! HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT! DICE DIDN’T KIDNAP ME! I FELL IN LOVE WITH DICE BECAUSE THEY TOOK CARE OF ME AND BECAUSE THEY’RE GREAT PEOPLE! THEY NEVER ABUSED ME!” Ouma screams. More tears stream down his face, and he brushes them away with his hands. He then suddenly stands up and picks up his donut pillow. “Screw this! I don’t deserve to be insulted by a stupid, delusional robot!”

Kiibo stands up with the boy and grabs his shoulders. The AI suspects Ouma is too delusional to accept what the robot will tell him, but Kiibo is sick of giving up when things get too rough. He and Ouma have been in this vicious cycle where the robot brings up how problematic DICE is, Ouma gets upset, and then Kiibo backs away from the subject. Kiibo thinks that maybe it’s time to just tell Ouma everything the small boy needs to hear. Even if Ouma doesn’t accept it, at least he’ll know what Kiibo is trying to tell him. With his hands still on the crying boy’s shoulders, Kiibo tells the boy forcefully, “Ouma-kun, listen. I’ve told you this before. DICE worked with Ultimate Despair to hurt you and others. They’re not the good guys. There are videos of them harassing you since you were ten. They were part of the problem. They hurt and raped you like Ultimate Despair did, even though it wasn’t as severe. As a way to cope with the abuse, you became affectionate to the abusers who hurt you the least, which just happened to be DICE. That’s what makes this abuse and Stockholm Syndrome!”

“You’re either a liar or delusional! Don’t you dare say that about my beloved DICE! They’re being framed! You’ve never met them, so you don’t know!” Ouma gives a high pitched yell. He hiccups and more tears cascade down his cheeks. “You’ll notice in the videos, they never hurt me. I wanted everything they gave me! They didn’t raped me or do anything to hurt me because I gave them consent! I wanted them to do it!”
“Ouma-kun, according to the police, there is evidence of the DICE members asking for sexual favors from you when you were as young as ten years old. You read the articles. You know the police searched their computers and phones and found evidence of them psychologically manipulating you and having intercourse when you are as young as ten years old. That’s not consensual. In no region in this country is that consensual!” Kiibo tells the boy firmly.

“I didn’t have sex with them when I was ten! That’s a lie! DICE is being framed!” Kiibo can’t tell if Ouma is lying to him or if the boy genuinely believes he never had sex with DICE members at such a young age.

“Okay, are you going to tell the court that? You’d be going against the evidence. If that happens, then you’ll be accused of perjury or dismissed as being too incompetent to testify. Lying may work for you here, but it doesn’t work for you in court,” the robot explains. It’s heart wrenching seeing the dark haired boy sob and hiccup so hard that he looks like can barely breathe. Kiibo begins to panic when Ouma starts hyperventilating. In as calm as a voice as he can muster, which ends up pitifully shaking, Kiibo tells the boy, “Ouma-kun, I’m sorry. They’re going to prison. Please, just accept it and stop worrying about the case. Focus on yourself. Okay?”

“No…no! I have evidence! I’m smart! I have evidence! I’m smart! I have evidence!” Ouma’s hiccups and sobs between the chant, and his eyes appear to be bulging out of their sockets. He doesn’t seem to be looking at Kiibo, but looking past the robot instead. Kiibo doesn’t know what’s happening. Maybe he did push the boy too far. Ouma’s chants get faster and more desperate. He starts hyperventilating again.

“Ouma-kun, please, just breathe. Okay? Everything will be okay. You’ll see,” the robot tells the boy gently. His metal hands are still on Ouma’s shoulders. The boy’s breathing eventually evens out, but he still sobs silently. The AI makes a move to hug the crying boy, but he shoves the robot aggressively away. “Ouma-kun, what’s wrong?”

“I really hate you right now….you’re the worst….How can you say such horrible things about the people who love me? Why are you just letting them go to jail? I thought you loved me. Why? You’re the worst….”Ouma answers weakly. Kiibo still isn’t sure what is going through Ouma’s head. It’s really bizarre. Was that similar to the panic attack Ouma had at the police station? What was he thinking about? There’s no way he can be a reliable witness if this keeps happening. Kiibo really doesn’t know what to say. He has seen Ouma get panic attacks and has helped the boy deal with them. However, they weren’t like this one, he usually doesn’t push him away, and it’s been a while since he has had his last panic attack.

Out of desperation, Kiibo states pretty pathetically, “They hurt you though. You were in so much pain. You had painful anal fissure and STDs, and they still continued to have a sexual relationship with you even though such a thing would be excruciatingly painful and terrible for your health. They would have slowly killed you if they continued. You would have died from some painful STD or some other horrible complication.”

“Wait? Did you just say I have STDs? I never told you that…..” the dark haired boy mewls in distress. Ouma’s eyes widen in panic, and then they glare at Kiibo in rage. He points a finger to Kiibo’s chest. “I THOUGHT THE HOSPITAL DIDN’T TELL YOU EVERYTHING! HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT!? THAT’S PERSONAL! YOU CREEP!”

“Oh…..” Kiibo realized he had blurted out something he shouldn’t have. In fact, the AI did something he shouldn’t have. He snooped into Ouma’s personal business. Kiibo feels his thought processes jumble up in panic. It feels like his robotic mind will shut him down in any moment. The only thing Kiibo can say is the truth and confess his wrongdoing. “I’m sorry. I was worried and
curious. Nobody told me about your sexually transmitted diseases. I just suspected something was wrong given your past sexual abuse over the years. Your entecavir medication indicated you had hepatitis B at some point. The drug Harvoni indicates you have hepatitis C. Your swollen testicles and ceftriaxone medication imply you may have gonorrhea, but I’m not sure. Most genital warts are caused by human papillomavirus infection, so I presume your genital warts are from the same infection. Some of your genital ulcers look like the ulcers you would get if you had chancroid. Your genital sores and blisters and Famvir prescription indicate you have herpes simplex virus two. Also……yes, I ummmmmm….study a lot. Are you mad?”

Ouma’s face goes from being upset to unreadable while Kiibo continues blabbing. Kiibo feels his face burning after admitting he studied the boy’s genitals and medication and researched the possible STDs he may have had. Instead of screaming at the robot or bursting into tears, the boy just answers, “You couldn’t help yourself. Could you?”

“I’m sorry. Curiosity and worry got the best of me. I’ll endeavor to stop studying so much.” Kiibo bows his head in shame. Kiibo should not have done that. Wait, why is Kiibo’s inner monologue talking to himself in third person? Kiibo needs repairs when he gets home. Today has been more stressful than usual. The robot then looks at the boy who is staring at him with interest rather than rage or sadness. Out of suspicion, the AI questions him. “Ummmm….are you not upset anymore?”

“No, I’m honestly too impressed to be upset. You can memorize the names of medications and diseases, yet your English grammar is as awful as a turd being lit on fire,” Ouma comments casually. He has a blank expression for the most part. There seems to be a hint of curiosity on his face. The robot can’t help but be unnerved at how suddenly the dark haired boy has recovered from his meltdown. Then again, Ouma usually calms down if there’s a distraction from the problem. In this case, the distraction is Kiibo’s investigation into the small boy’s STDs. The robot can acknowledge invading Ouma’s privacy by examining his genitals and drugs is rather disgusting, even if the robot meant well.

“Again, I’m sorry Ouma-kun. I’ll try not to study so much, especially when it comes to your personal information,” Kiibo replies, staring intently at the grass below his feet.

“Oh no, don’t do that. You’ll probably blow up if you aren’t able to violate my privacy. Is this what the great Professor Iidabashi did? Make a robot who doesn’t know when to mind his own business?” Ouma asks with the same unnerving blank stare as before. He crosses his arms behind his head casually.

“No, I’m not programmed to violate your privacy. It’s fine. I’ll try to stop. I was just worried,” the robot mumbles to his feet.

He’s so calm now.

“Eh, I don’t believe you. I think there is a self-destruct mechanism in you. If you don’t nose around in other people’s business within a few hours, then you’ll explode.” He puts a finger to his chin and gives the robot a devious smirk. “Nishishi….I want to see that. Hey Kiiboy, stop researching me, my balls, and my drugs. That way, you can explode! That’d be so cool. I’ve always wanted to see a real life explosion. Do it by the hospital walls so that you can break down the walls with your cool robot explosions and I can escape.” He claps his hands together with delight. “Sounds like a plan! Once I get rid of this dumb ankle monitor, I can sneak into the police station, pick the lock, and escape with DICE! I can’t wait to see them!”

“Ouma-kun, I don’t have a self-destruct mechanism, and, as far as I can tell, I can’t explode. Even if I could, I wouldn’t help you escape. You should know that by now,” Kiibo answers in confusion.

“Yeah, I figured….Kiiboy is always a disappointment…” Ouma says with a yawn. The robot tries not to let that comment sting because he knows Ouma is prone to lying or exaggerating. The small
boy stretches his arms behind his head and gives another cold smile. He then turns around to leave. With his back turned, he adds, “I’m going to go find markers to sniff. I love the smell of markers. It gives me a nice high. I wish there were a candle that’s marker-scented. Did you know there’s a candle scent called ‘sparkling snow’? Who the hell wants to smell snow? It’s frozen water! Nobody has ever said they like the smell of water. Does water even have a smell? You know what people want to smell? Markers! Candle companies should create market-scented candles. You know what? I should start my own candle company! There’ll be all kinds of nice candle smells like marker-scented candles, tobacco-scented candles, paint thinner-scented candles, meth-scented candles, gasoline-scented candles, and new book-scented candles.”

Is he being serious, or is he just fanaticizing?

“Ouma-kun, don’t do that! Sniffing in the intoxicating chemicals of markers is terrible for you! It can damage your organs, especially your brain!” Kiibo suspects the boy is lying just bother the robot, but he can never know for sure.

“Lalalalalalalala…..I’m not listening to stupid Kiiboy! Lalalalalalalal!” Ouma sings while walking away and covering his ears with both hands. His eyes are shut tight too. As a result, he accidently walks into a body. Ouma looks up with a startled expression on his face and sees he bumped into Saihara with Maki right behind the black-clad boy. Ouma looks genuinely scared at first, and then squeals, “Emo-chan!” To Kiibo’s, Maki’s, and Saihara’s surprise, the small boy leans in to hug Saihara. The black-clad boy’s breathing hitches, and Maki simply narrows her eyes in both confusion and suspicion. “Emo-chan! Just the fruitcake I was looking for! I found someone for you to take your sociopathic urges on!”

Maki glares at the small boy hugging her patient. The glare sends a shiver down Kiibo’s body. The robot doesn’t understand why Ouma is so creeped out by Saihara. If there’s anyone Ouma should be afraid of, it should be Maki. Her cold, hard glare looks like it could kill someone. She then says in her usual calm and cold voice, “How many times do we have to keep telling you? Saihara is not a sociopath or someone with any kind of antisocial issues. He’s just really awkward.”

“Thanks, Harukawa-san. You really know how to make a guy feel good about himself,” Saihara grumbles sarcastically with a flushed face of embarrassment. He tries to push Ouma off of him, but to no avail.

“Emo-chan is prone to killing animals, setting things on fire, and wetting the bed. Those are the classical signs of someone who’s a sociopath!”

“I do not do any of those things!”

“ANYWAY….Emo-chan….” Ouma looks up while still hugging him and bats his eyes at the boy. He says in a cutesy-sounding voice. “Can you please destroy the robot? He’ll probably scream, explode, and have nice gruesome body parts for you to play with. It’ll satisfy to your sociopathic heart’s content.”

Kiibo, Maki, and Saihara both simultaneously blink at the small boy in confusion. The robot then wonders, “Ouma-kun, are you trying to have me destroyed?”

“I want to see Kiiboy explode!” The dark haired boy buries his face into Saihara’s chest, and the black-clad boy just gives up trying to pry the boy off him. Instead, he just looks around awkwardly with the boy still attached to him. Saihara’s face gets redder the longer the boy hugs him. He looks like he just wants the ground to swallow him whole.

“Uh, why?” Maki asks.
“Because explosions are cool, and Kiiboy is being bad, so he needs to explode as punishment,” Ouma answers as if it were obvious.

“Ouma, you sound like a sociopath,” Maki comments, still watching the scene casually from a bit of a distance.

“Ouma-kun, I’m not going to do anything to Kiibo-san,” Saihara states a bit more firmly than usual. Ouma then aggressively shoves Saihara backwards, causing the black-clad boy to fall to the ground with a yelp. Maki gives Ouma a dirty look before she reaches a hand to help Saihara up. Ouma groans obnoxiously loud. “That’s lame! What’s the point of being a sociopath if you can’t be a proper one?!”

“I keep telling you, I’m not a sociopath….” Saihara replies quietly through gritted teeth. He pulls his cap down to cover his face more.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, liar, liar, liar….I’m going to my room. Like a fat girl in a dodgeball game, I’m out!” Ouma waves them goodbye.

Kiibo follows him closely from behind and fruitlessly shouts, “Ouma-kun! You still haven’t cleaned up the mess you left on the picnic table!”

Maki walks up to the mess and scowls at it. “You see. This why I said he shouldn’t be allowed to eat outside of the cafeteria. He’s a walking mess everywhere he goes.”

“I’m sorry,” Kiibo tells the girl quickly before jogging over to catch up to Ouma. The small boy runs from the courtyard to the inside of the hospital. The two of them run all the way to Ouma’s room, with small boy breathing so heavily that he looks like he’s almost hyperventilating. The robot looks over at him in concern and can’t help but tell him, “Try not to overexert yourself.”

“And stop pretending you give a crap,” Ouma grumbles so quietly that Kiibo wonders if he was even supposed to hear the boy. The dark haired boy enters the room and grabs a file on his bedside table. He opens file and hands sheets of paper to the robot.

Kiibo takes the papers, and Ouma flops face first on to the bed. His face burrows deep into the pillow. The robot looks down at the papers in his hands. “What are these for?”

“If you read it, maybe you’ll find out,” Ouma snarks, with his voice muffled by the pillow.

Kiibo looks down at the papers and sees that they’re results for Ouma’s health evaluation. Judging by the date, it happened six weeks ago. The papers show doctors’ comments, vitals, medication, symptoms, diagnoses, and even sexually transmitted disease results. There’s nothing in there about Ouma’s mental state. Only things that can be measured are there. Based on the results, Ouma had a low blood pressure, low body weight, a urinary tract infection, and slow heart rhythms. As for the STD results, Ouma was tested positive for chlamydia, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, gonorrhea, genital human papillomavirus, trichomoniasis, chancroid, and herpes ii. It’s like people were trying to infect him with as many STDs as possible. His severe anal fissure probably made it easier to contract these diseases. His blood would have been more exposed to other infected bodily fluids. At least he doesn’t have HIV. Kiibo peers down to the boy lying face down on the bed. “Ouma-kun, why are you showing me this?”

“Well, since you’re going to be snooping around for information on my personal health, I’d rather you see the facts than jump to your own stupid conclusions. You’re erratic. Who knows what irrational conclusions you’d come up with?” Ouma answers with a tired sigh. Kiibo could say the
same thing about you. The small boy then turns on to his back to stare at the ceiling bitterly.

There’s a moment of silence before Kiibo asks, “Ouma-kun, do you still plan on being involved in the court proceedings for the child prostitution case?”

“No,” Ouma replies tiredly.

“No?” Kiibo asks in disbelief.

“No means no.”

You’re not always this straightforward though.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry, I don't know exactly how trials and crimes work. I'm pretty sure this kind of stuff can take a long time.

I don't think my knowledge of how court cases work is completely accurate. Sorry.
Pffft...And you people think my fic is realistic.

Oh, sorry for the lesson on STDs, which nobody wanted.

Here's some more great fan art! Thank you so much!

http://ironisulfate.tumblr.com/post/159928881683/some-doodles-about-chapter-16-of-hellofriend304s

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa

I still really, really, really want feedback, even if you hate the fic. I got some nice feedback last week. It has helped me look at my fic more critically.

Thanks for reading!
Everyone is gaslighting me

Chapter Summary

It's the first phase of the motions and hearings phase of the court case. A paper airplane is also constructed.

Warning, there's mentions of rape and abuse. Nothing graphic. It's just mentioned.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

For the next week, Ouma and Kiibo have casual interactions. They don’t have any personal conversations, just the normal blabber. The dark haired boy doesn’t even talk about the case. Kiibo hasn’t personally seen him do more research on the Towa City Resort prostitution case, but Ouma has asked Kiibo to not watch him while he’s on his computer, so Kiibo suspects he may be secretly reading articles on the case anyway. Ouma goes to the police twice over the week. During the first visit, he has a panic attack but still pulls himself together enough to talk to the police. During the second time, he has ANOTHER panic attack but also speaks with the police. The robot asks the hospital if they’re monitoring Ouma’s mental state regarding the case, and they certainly are. They encourage Ouma not to stress out over the case and even recommend for him to not participate in the case. Doctors have spoken to the defense attorney, prosecutors, and anyone else involved with the case, telling them Ouma isn’t mentally healthy enough to testify. Kiibo also has asked the hospital to forbid the boy from trying to testify. Doctors remind Kiibo they can’t just ban Ouma from testifying just because he’s mentally ill. If Ouma is willing to testify, has knowledge of the case, and swears under oath to testify truthfully, then he’ll be deemed competent to testify. Whether or not Ouma will be a reliable witness is a different matter altogether. Ouma may still testify even if he’s unreliable.

On the first day of the motions and hearing phase of the case, Kiibo arrives at the hospital, and Ouma isn’t there. However, he will return to the hospital in thirty minutes, so the robot waits for him by the front desk. Saihara and Maki are at the front desk. They keep the AI company.

“How was Ouma-kun earlier today?” Kiibo asks Saihara while Maki is talking to someone on the phone. She has a concerned look on her face.

With his hat covering half of his face, Saihara replies quietly, “He was quiet. He seemed to be concentrating on something.”

“That makes sense. He has a big court case to focus on,” Kiibo remarks. Saihara just nods his head and bites his nails like he usually does. Kiibo still feels like he makes the boy uncomfortable every time he talks to the boy.

With a worried look on her face, Maki puts the phone down. She tells Kiibo, “Ouma will arrive earlier than expected. All the lawyers decided not to allow Ouma to testify, out of concern for his wellbeing. He won’t be participating in the hearing or the case at all. He’s absolutely pissed. Prepare for the worst.”

Kiibo feels a mixture of relief and concern for the boy. This is for the best. I'm disappointed it took them this long to determine Ouma-kun being a witness would be bad for his mental health. The
robot barely has time to register what Maki has just told him before the AI hears the screams of a familiar voice, “NO! THEY CAN’T DO THIS! THIS JUSTICE SYSTEM IS CORRUPT! THEY’RE GOING TO LOCK AN INNOCENT GROUP OF PEOPLE BEHIND BARS! THEY CAN’T DO THIS!”

Everyone in the room turns their heads to see a male nurse drag a sobbing Ouma through the room. The dark haired boy still has his familiar hospital blanket wrapped around him. The tall nurse has Ouma by the arm while the dark haired boy aggressively pulls against him. The nurse is mumbling something to Ouma, but Ouma just continues to scream out protests and pull. Ouma’s face is flushed, and his body is trembling with rage. Kiibo jogs over to the nurse and Ouma and tells the nurse he’ll take the small boy to his room. The nurse gives Kiibo a grateful look, and they exchange the boy. Kiibo wraps his metal arms around the boy. Ouma squirms within Kiibo’s hold. “LET ME GO KIIBOY! PLEASE! I NEED TO SAVE THE PEOPLE I LOVE! I'M BEING MISTREATED BY THE LAW! THEY CAN'T JUST NOT LET ME SPEAK! DICE DOESN'T DESERVE THIS! THEY'RE INNOCENT! THEY NEED TO BE DECLARED NOT GUILTY. I NEED THEM! WE HAVE TO BE REUNITED!"

With Ouma facing him, Kiibo lifts the crying boy up and carries him. The small boy kicks and punches the robot in protest, but the robot has a tight hold on the boy. Kiibo tries to whisper words of comfort to get the boy to calm down. “Ouma-kun, please. Justice will be served. The people who hurt you and are guilty will be convicted. Everything will be okay. This is for the best. This has to happen. Being involved with the case will only hurt you and won’t save any innocent people. Calm down. You’re safe. You don’t need DICE. There are so many other people here who care about you.”

“LIAR! LIAR! LIAR! THIS IS ALL A SHAM! I HATE EVERYONE HERE! I NEED MY LOVED ONES BACK! THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO CARE. THEY NEED TO BE SET FREE! IF THEY REALLY CARE ABOUT ME, THEY WOULD LET ME TESTIFY! I'M NOT GOING TO EAT, DRINK, OR SLEEP, UNTIL I CAN TESTIFY! I'LL DESTROY EVERYTHING AND KILL MYSELF IF THEY DON'T LET ME TESTIFY! IF THEY GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ME, THEY WOULD LET ME SAVE DICE!”

“Ouma-kun, please don’t do that….” Kiibo whines with a high-pitched voice. He tightens his hold on to the boy, like it’ll protect him more somehow. The robot feels his insides heat up with worry. He doesn’t know if the boy is being serious or is making false threats in order to get what he wants. Either way, Kiibo needs to calm the boy down because Ouma making these threats is just going to make things worse. With difficulty, Kiibo somehow manages to open the door to Ouma’s room and set him on to the bed. The wailing boy scrambles off the bed and heads towards the door. Kiibo grabs Ouma by the shoulders to stop him and states, “Even if you escape this hospital, you still can’t make it to the hearing on foot. It’s miles away.”

“I know where the police station and courthouse is! I’ve paid attention to directions! I’ll walk there if I have to! Please! I need to testify!” Ouma cries. His voice is becoming quieter. He tries to scratch the front of the robot with his nails and ends up breaking a few of them. Tears fall down his face.

“Ouma-kun! No! Please, stop! It’s better this way! Even if you don’t think DICE hurt you, there’s evidence they hurt other children, and they’re testifying against them! Stop trying to help the guilty!” Kiibo shouts while not relenting his hold on Ouma’s shoulders. The small boy then stops screaming and trying to escape. He tenses up. He’s still crying and shaking, but he’s not pushing against Kiibo at least. His eyes widen in what seems to be terror. He begins hyperventilating, and Kiibo panics. “Ouma-kun, it’s okay! Please! Just breathe and calm down!”

Ouma calms his breathing just enough to gasp and pull away from Kiibo. He walks up to the box of
folders about the court case, which is beside his bed. He opens the folder and tosses papers into the air with a feral scream before crumbling to the floor. He curls into a ball and wraps the hospital blanket tighter around himself. He’s hiccupping, sobbing, and breathing so much that he can’t even talk. Kiibo steps on the papers to reach Ouma and wraps his metal arms around the boy. Ouma shivers in his hold, but, to the robot’s relief, he doesn’t pull away. Instead, he presses his face into Kiibo’s chest. *What are you doing? I thought you’re mad at me.* “Ouma-kun, when I’m telling you everything will be okay, I mean it. Please, no matter what happens, you still have me, okay?”

“I…don’t….no….what’s…going…on…..anymore…..” Ouma whimpers between sobs and hiccups. Kiibo rests his chin on top of the small boy’s head and rubs circles on his back.

“What do you mean?”

“I…..was…..talking…..to…..a…..bunch…..of…..children…..some…of…whom…..I recognized…..” He’s hyperventilating so much that it looks painful to speak. Ouma lets out a hopeless wail.

“Hey Ouma-kun, if you don’t feel like talking, then don’t. Just try to focus on relaxing and breathing,” Kiibo tells him gently. The boy nods in the robot’s hold. Kiibo is impressed that Ouma is suddenly cooperating. He pulls the crying boy on to the bed so that they can get comfortable. Once they’re there, Kiibo cradles the boy in his arms while Ouma cries his heart out. Ouma’s then lets out a bloodcurdling scream that scares the robot, but Kiibo knows this is just him trying to let out all his emotions. Kiibo just continues to hold the distressed boy tightly and rub circles around his back. He keeps murmuring any comforting things he can think of into the boy’s ear, “It’s okay, Ouma-kun. You’ll be okay. You have me. You’re safe. Just breathe and relax. You’re safe and have some nice things to look forward to.”

It takes quite a while for Ouma’s sobbing, hiccups, and heavy breathing to die down enough for him to control himself at least somewhat. He then just limply lies there in the robot’s arms while sniffling, crying lightly, and trying to control his shaky breathing. The robot will be patient with him. In a hoarse and painful-sounding voice, Ouma says, “I recognized those kids.”

“Who?”

“They were kids my age. I saw them at the Towa City Resort many months ago. The members of DICE were friends with them.” Ouma winces when he says that.

“Did they have the same relationship with DICE as you did?” Kiibo wonders.

“NO!” Ouma screams, causing Kiibo to verbally yelp. The robot probably would’ve jumped off his seat on the bed if the boy weren’t lying on top of him. More tears fall down Ouma’s face. He angrily wipes them away and buries his face into the robot’s arms. “No, DICE and I were special. They were my one and only. Those kids were brainwashed and falsely accusing DICE of hurting them! They have to be! Right?! No! Never mind! Don’t answer that! You’re brainwashed too!”

“Ouma-kun, not everyone can possibly be brainwashed….” Kiibo mumbles.

“Yes, they can! Ugh!” Ouma cries as he hides his face into the robot. Kiibo pats his head sympathetically. *He’s going to be exhausted after all this crying. I hope he gets some sleep later. Maybe it’ll help him clear his head.* The boy then mutters into Kiibo, “Everyone is gaslighting me.”

“Gaslighting?” Kiibo questions.

“Yes! It’s when people manipulate me to the point where I start questioning my own sanity!” Ouma explains through a bunch of snuffles.
“So, you are questioning DICE’s innocence,” Kiibo presumes hopefully.

“Don’t be stupid.” The dark haired boy then sits up from Kiibo’s arms. While still on the AI’s lap, he maneuver’s his legs so that they’re wrapped around the robot’s waist. He puts his hands on Kiibo’s shoulders. He glares at the robot with eyes red from crying. There’s clear mucus running down his nose. The robot reaches over to the bedside table to grab tissues. He hands them over to Ouma with the hope that the boy will blow his nose. The boy does, rather obnoxiously loud at that. It sounds like a broken trumpet. He hands Kiibo the messy tissues, and the robot is too tired to make the boy throw away the tissues himself. The robot gives the boy and the tissues both a disgusted look before accurately shooting the tissue into the garbage bin, which is all the way across the room. The dark haired boy gives of a whistle, looking impressed. There’s a small smile on his face. That smile means a lot. After seeing Ouma’s breakdown earlier, Kiibo thought it would be a while before he sees the boy smile again. Ouma states with a painful sounding cough, “You’re a robot. I wish you could do more cool stuff like that, but you’re so hell-bent on being a human that you’re sticking to the boring stuff.”

“Ouma-kun, I really can’t do as much as you think I can. I keep telling you I’m very similar to a human. I’m not just saying that to avoid discrimination. I’m saying that because I mean it,” Kiibo tells him. Ouma just hums quietly at him, as if not believing him. Kiibo knows he has had this conversation with Ouma before, and it seems more awkward than before. This whole conversation feels so forced and meaningless. The robot asks, “Why did you say you’re a bad person?”

“Hmmmm?” Ouma responds with tired eyes. “I did?” He then thoughtfully puts a hand on his chin. “Oh, I did….yeah? Ummmmmm….the kids I was talking to made me feel like crap.”

“How?”

“Well…..I talked to them, thinking that they may be my friends because they were supposed to be friends with DICE, but I guess not……..pricks…….I asked them why they would accuse DICE of hurting them when DICE didn’t do anything wrong. They claimed DICE did hurt them and said I should stop protecting them. I defended DICE and snapped at them. Their scumbag parents, or guardians, or uncles, or whoever they were yelled at me like I was the problem. They told me to stop picking on their kids even though some of their kids are nearly college-aged themselves! They’re not babies! Why are they babying them and protecting them like I was about to stab them with a knife! Eh….I’m getting off topic. Anyway, one of them basically called me a whore and most of the others told me that DICE hurt me like they did with those brats, even though they didn’t hurt them at all…..and….it got me feeling crappy.”

“The room felt like it was suffocating me and making me go crazy. I literally thought the entire freaking building was going to collapse because everyone was looking at me like I was the bad guy. Like I was the one raping and beating the crap out of a bunch of kids. I felt like I was going to crazy. The kids, ages ten to seventeen, all said the same thing, ‘DICE was working with Ultimate Despair. They prostituted us, raped us, and beat us just like Ultimate Despair did. You’re wrong.’ They were making me question my beliefs. It’s one thing to hear a bunch of strangers telling me I shouldn’t believe DICE. It’s another thing when kids I personally know are making me question my sanity. They all truly believed what they were saying. I felt so outnumbered. I wondered, if they truly believe DICE hurt them, what do I have against them? I may think they’re brainwashed, but it’s so much easier to think I’m the stupid one who’s being brainwashed. But that’s not it. Is it? It has to be more complicated than that. They’re not the bad guys or maybe they are kind of the bad guys. I screwed up something, but I know everything was feeling dizzy before, so maybe there wasn’t anything I could do to not think the way I’m feeling. Maybe I am drugged. That may be what I’m wrong about. Or maybe they’re drugged too and have these hallucinations. Then again, it’s probably just me since I’m one person. Although, if I’m wrong then that means everything is crap.”
Ouma rambles and Kiibo can’t really make sense of what the dark haired boy just said. He feels his
brain working tirelessly trying to piece together any coherence in Ouma’s rambles. Kiibo
understands one thing though. Ouma-kun is hurt and confused. Even if the boy won’t say it in
simple terms, he did just confess to Kiibo that he’s questioning DICE’s innocence. Although, Kiibo
thinks that if he asked the boy directly if that’s the case, the boy would probably deny it. The dark
haired boy bites his lip so hard that blood comes out. More tears build up in the corner of his eyes.
Ouma then cries out, “Actually, you’re right about one thing, and that thing is the main reason why I
think I’m a bad person. I really screwed up.”

"Ouma-kun, you haven’t done anything wrong. You genuinely believe you’re doing the right thing.
That’s fine. Nobody should blame you for defending people who you think are innocent,” Kiibo
responds.

“No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Hear. Me. Out.” Ouma states while looking Kiibo dead in the eyes. He
then lets out a shaky sigh before explaining. “I think DICE must have gotten jealous or bitter that I
had all ten of them as lovers while they only had me. They must have been lonely that I was getting
action and love from ten people while they only had me, so they decided to broaden their pool and
get together with those other kids. They’re like a bitter housewife who is jealous of her husband
cheating on her with his sexy boss, so behind his back, she gets back at her man by cheating on him
with her next door neighbor. You’ve seen those kind of crappy soap operas, right? They’re really
crappy, and I mean REALLY crappy, but who would have thought that they’d be so realistic? Not
that I watch them or anything.”

“Wait!” Kiibo stops the boy before he goes off rambling again. “Are you saying you think DICE had
a sexual relationship with those kids because they didn’t like how you had a sexual relationship with
ten people?”

“That’s what I just said! Listen! Listen! Listen!” The boy pokes the robot’s forehead repeatedly and
then breaks into tears. “And it’s my fault! I should’ve known not have a relationship with ten people!
As a result, out of rage or socially awkwardness, they went around and hurt those kids instead!”

“Are you admitting you think DICE may have physically or sexually assaulted those kids?!” Kiibo
asks in amazement. The robot would be pleased by this if Ouma weren’t being so confusing. Kiibo’s
studies never taught him how to understand Ouma’s rambling. It’s an interesting challenge. Ouma
tenses and buries his face into the robot’s neck. Kiibo wonders if he’s trying to hide his face. The
robot feels him tremble.

“Well….I mean….you love me right? How would you feel if you heard I was having a relationship
with Akamatsu-chan, Pupil-chan, Emo-chan, Angie-chan, Midget-chan, Homicidal-kun, Toddler-
san, Boob-chan, and Sexist-chan?”

“I’m sorry. Who are some of these people?”

Ouma just pouts in frustration. His face reminds Kiibo of a frustrated preschooler. “Okay, stupid! Let
me rephrase the question in simple terms so that you may understand. How would you, an individual
who is so hopelessly in love with me, feel if you found out I was cheating on nine other people?”

“Cheating? Cheating on what? We’re not in a committed relationship. There’s nothing to cheat on. If
you’re having an intimate or passionate relationship other people, then that’s find as long as you’re
not hurting anyone or yourself,” Kiibo replies, absolutely lost by how the conversation has gotten to
this point.

“Awww……You’re such a tsundere! Falling in love must be so embarrassing to you. It’s
perfectly normal, Robotto-chan! Stop being in denial, and let your true feelings blossom!” He gives
the robot a big hug and kiss on the cheek. He then, as if he were a cat, nuzzles his face into Kiibo’s neck. Kiibo just keeps on getting more confused as the conversation goes on. *I don’t know if Ouma-kun is distracting himself from the pain, genuinely thinks we’re in a romantic relationship, roleplaying for fun, or...*

“Ouma-kun are you trying to move this conversation off topic?” Kiibo wonders while the boy continues to snuggle closer to the robot.

“No! Of course not! I told you, if you want to talk about our love, then go ahead! Tell me about your undying love for me!”

“No! Not that topic! The one we were talking about before!”

“Huh? You mean the topic of those crappy soap operas where the couple cheats on each other? Yeah, you caught me. I really don’t want to talk about that. You interested in that crap? Talk to someone else about it. Not me. Although, if you do talk about those crappy soap operas with someone, tell who that person is so I can avoid them at all costs. Anyone with such a poor taste in television should not be trusted!” Ouma crosses his arms and has genuine anger in his glare. It would have been frightening if the boy weren’t so young and pitiful-looking.

“What? No! The topic after that!” Kiibo groans loudly out of frustration. What were we talking about? There was something in our conversation that got really interesting, but Ouma-kun changed the topic. *Let me think......* The robot then smiles in relief once he realizes the important question he asked. “Ouma-kun, I asked you a similar question earlier, but you didn’t answer it properly before. Do you think DICE physically or sexually assaulted the kids you met at the police station?”

Ouma visibly freezes at the question, and his eyes widen. He begins to pick apart the proximal nail folds on his fingers, making them bleed. Kiibo frowns. The robot thought he dropped that bad habit a little while ago. It has come back. Obviously, the question bothers Ouma, and this just makes Kiibo even more curious. Kiibo feels bad telling the boy this, but it’s something Ouma must know. “Ouma-kun, if you know DICE hurt those kids, then you’re helping criminals get away with assault by claiming DICE is innocent.”

“I’m not admitting anything, you stupid robot,” Ouma growls. He’s trembling again as a bunch of tears fall down his face. The boy begins hiccupping too. He then shakily states, “They’re innocent until proven guilty. There’s nothing definitive yet! They still may be innocent, so the court can’t convict them.”

“Why do you think DICE may be guilty?” Kiibo questions.

“I never said I think they may be guilty!” Ouma sobs. Having Ouma blow his nose earlier seems pointless because more snot runs out of his nose. The dark haired boy has been crying pretty disgustingly today.

“You’re not claiming they’re innocent like you did earlier. A lot has been running through your mind, right? It has made you question some things. You must think there’s a probability of DICE being guilty of something. You have to think that, especially given all the evidence and victims who have come forward. What do you think is the worst that could have happened?” Kiibo asks. Ouma wails and wraps his arms tightly around Kiibo’s shoulders. The robot can detect small amounts of saline water falling on to his metal shoulder.

“Don’t just claim you know what I’m thinking!” Ouma chokes out. Kiibo gives him an apologetic hug in return and a pat on the back. “I just.....I still stand by what I said before! DICE never sexually or physically assaulted me. They always loved me! I just wish.....I wish they told me they were
unhappy before they went off with those kids and ruined everything! I don’t know what they did to them, but it couldn’t have been good…..and it’s my fault! I made them hurt those kids because I was too careless, and I should have known something was wrong and stopped them!”

“Ouma-kun, no matter what DICE did to the kids, none of it was your fault. You never asked DICE to hurt them, and if you knew what was going on, you would’ve stopped them because you have a conscience,” Kiibo tells the wailing boy while holding him closer. Ouma-kun, your conclusion is also wrong. DICE didn’t hurt the kids out of jealousy. You didn’t do anything wrong. You were on the same level as the other victims. DICE never loved you or them. You were all just used. However, at least you think DICE may be guilty for something. That’s better than thinking they’re completely innocent. It’ll make their prison sentences easier to handle if you believe they’re guilty of wrongdoing. Hmmmmmm……I wonder if Ouma-kun will ever figure out DICE ruined his life from the beginning. Maybe he will. This’ll take time. Getting him to this point was took a lot of effort.

There’s a comfortable silence. The two of them continue hugging each other on the bed. The only sounds come from Ouma’s sniffles, hiccups, and sobs. Kiibo uses this time to sort out his thoughts. Kiibo thinks Ouma has calmed down when the boy stops crying and gets off of the robot. He wraps the blanket more securely around himself and walks up to his desk on the side of the room. Similar to Saihara’s desk, it has a bunch textbooks, notebooks, and folders. His laptop, which also has its cord taken away, stands in the middle of the desk. There’s various pieces of papers, pens, pencils, art projects, and a small teddy bear on it as well. The desk is cluttered. There’s no semblance of organization at all. It’s as if Ouma just took these items and lazily tossed them on to the desk. Ouma stares at the desk with watery eyes and a quivering lip. He seems to be gradually getting more and more pissed at the desk.

Without warning, he shrieks so loud that Kiibo wonders if the whole hospital can hear him. He then swipes all the belongings on the desk off, causing them to crash to the floor. Some of the books land awkwardly on their spines and make a cracking noise, probably indicating the books are being damaged. The laptop slams to the floor, surprisingly appearing unscathed by the harsh fall. Ouma turns bright red and aggressively stops all over his belongings on the floor. His breathing grows more and more ragged, and he begins to cry even harder. The room is now a mess with papers, books, notebooks, and other things all over the floor. He pulls his hair and lets out a loud, “FUCK!”

Kiibo hastily gets up and grabs Ouma by his shoulders before he can do any more damage and sits the boy on to the bed with him. The robot just spent a lot of time holding and comforting Ouma, trying to get him to calm down. The AI feels exasperated that it all seems to be for nothing. He must be tired. How is he still keeping up this fit?

Kiibo sits with his metal back against the bed’s headrest and pulls the sobbing boy close. “Ouma-kun, what’s wrong with time? I thought you calmed down.”

“I can’t…….I don’t know what to do! I’m so scared, lonely, guilty……FUCK!” He then starts hitting Kiibo’s chest with his fists repeatedly while still breathing and crying heavily. Even though the hits don’t hurt the robot, Kiibo grabs the boy’s wrists anyway so Ouma doesn’t bruise his fists. The dark haired boy tries to tug them away from the robot while screaming. “STOP! YOU’RE RESTRAINING ME! I CAN’T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! I REALLY CAN’T! PLEASE! JUST LET ME DIE! I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR! I HAVE NOTHING GOING FOR ME! THERE’S NOTHING! I HATE EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING! THIS STUPID PRISON IS JUST BARELY HELPING ME SCRAPE BY UNTIL I SLOWLY DIE A PAINFUL DEATH! JUST PLEASE LET IT ALL END! I CAN’T DO IT! I’M SO LOST! I’M SUCH A LOST CAUSE!”

“No, Ouma-kun, you’re doing more than scraping by. You’re improving and growing. Hey, look at me so I know you’re paying attention to me,” Kiibo tells the boy in a quiet and gentle voice. Ouma’s tear-filled, enraged eyes look up questioningly at the robot. He looks so young to the robot when he
cries. *He really is a scared and sad little boy. Isn’t he? That’s the simplest way to put it.* The robot massages the boy’s wrists in order to comfort him before telling him, “I’m sorry about your difficult day today. I’m sorry you had to talk to kids who claim to be hurt by DICE. I’m sorry you had to deal with their guardians, I’m sorry you have to deal with the possibility of DICE hurting those kids, I’m sorry you can’t help out with the case, and I’m sorry you have to deal with DICE likely getting locked up. Today was a uniquely negative experience. When we heard about this case, I think we both knew dealing with it would be difficult, but now that you’re done participating in it, it’s over for you, and that’s a very good thing. You can now focus on the progress you’ve made because there has been progress. You’ve learned more about yourself. You’ve learned to tolerate the hospital and people around you. You’ve become more cooperative. You’ve become physically healthier. You’ve been curing some of your sicknesses. You no longer have digestive problems. You’ve been passing your classes. Things are better than you think they are. Trust me. I’ll be right here with you if you need someone, okay? You don’t have to force yourself to ask the other people for help since I know you don’t trust them, but they’re here to help you too. You’re in a great place.” Kiibo hesitates before saying what he’s about to say next. “Please don’t try to commit suicide or say you want to die, okay? It won’t work. We won’t let you die because you’re too precious. If you tell someone from the hospital staff that you want to die or if you try to commit suicide again, you will be sent to the intensive unit, and we both don’t want that.” *This is assuming the hospital didn’t hear Ouma’s suicide threat earlier.*

Ouma doesn’t say anything as he cries in Kiibo’s arms. The robot is a little frustrated that he has to repeat his earlier actions with Ouma, but Kiibo understands he needs to be patient. He can’t just comfort the small boy in one sitting and expect he’ll be okay.

The AI spends at least a good hour holding Ouma and telling him words of encouragement, hoping some of it will stick. He’s happy Ouma isn’t protesting. The boy the cries and snuggles into the robot’s arms some more. Kiibo doesn’t let go of Ouma even after he’s done crying. The robot really wants to know for sure that Ouma is okay and won’t breakdown once Kiibo lets him go. He doesn’t want the boy to make a bigger mess of the room than it already is. Kiibo isn’t sure whether he should make the small boy clean up his mess. Ouma is almost seventeen, so he should be mature enough to clean his own messes, but Ouma has refused to clean messes even smaller than this one. Ouma is also really stressed out and exhausted. It’d be easier for Kiibo to just let the small boy lie in bed while the AI cleans the mess himself. After several minutes of thinking about the issue, Kiibo asks the boy in his arms, “Ouma-kun, the room is a mess, can you please clean up at least some of it, if not all of it.”

“No,” Ouma responds immediately and in a very childish manner. *I tried.* He reminds Kiibo of a rebellious five-year-old now. Although, given the boy’s mental state, Kiibo expects this.

“It won’t be too difficult. I’ll help, but will you please clean up at least a little bit of it?” Kiibo asks carefully.

“No-wait, actually, I’ll pick up the papers,” Ouma declares as he moves off of Kiibo’s lap and on to the floor of the bed where the papers he threw everywhere before are scattered. The robot’s eyes widen in surprise. He almost can’t believe what he’s seeing. beams and says, “Thank you, Ouma-kun! See? You are making progress! You wouldn’t have been this cooperative before.”

“So me doing your bidding is me making progress? What? Are you trying to indoctrinate me into becoming your slave?” Ouma asks in a surprising teasing-sounding voice rather than an angry one. The small boy gathers all the papers on the floor and stacks them together. While he does this, Kiibo grabs the rest of the objects that are on the floor and puts them neatly back on the desk. In the robot’s
opinion, after cleaning, the desk looks neater than it has ever been.

“Ouma-kun, it’s your mess. It’s a good habit for you to clean up after yourself,” Kiibo tells him sternly. Once Ouma’s mental health improves, Kiibo is going to try hard to fix Ouma’s childish behaviors, like getting him to clean up after himself and to be more polite to others. The robot knows Ouma uses this childish behavior as a way to cope with his distressing mental health, but the boy can’t continue this forever.

Ouma has the stack of papers in his hands. The stack turns out to be pretty thick. Kiibo estimates there’s around 120 sheets of paper in Ouma’s hands. He wasted so much paper in order to read about this case. He has a habit of overdoing things. Ouma then asks in an innocent-sounding voice, “Do you have a lighter?”

“No,” Kiibo replies in confusion.

“What about a blow torch?”

“No.”

“A flamethrower?”

“No!”

“Matches?”

“NO! Ouma-kun, are you trying to set something on fire?” Kiibo demands worriedly.

“Yeah, these stupid papers,” Ouma grumbles bitterly while staring at the papers in his hands angrily. “I want them to burn. They’re so atrocious that they need to be destroyed. Do you think the warehouse has a lighter or something?”

“No!” Kiibo replies before snatching the papers out of Ouma’s hands.

“No? I thought the warehouse has a lot of stuff. A lighter is practical. You can use it on birthday cakes and to start a fire in a fireplace.”

“I’m not saying ‘no’ to the warehouse possibly having a lighter. I’m saying ‘no’ to you setting the papers on fire,” Kiibo tells him while putting the papers in his school bag. “It’s a waste of paper and harmful to the environment to light them on fire. It’s also very dangerous too. I’ll recycle them when I get home.”

“Ah, I see. Take those papers and mutilate them into something else! Recycling sounds like great revenge. I like it!” Ouma claps his hands together with a wicked grin on his face.


Kiibo is just glad Ouma was willing to clean at least a part of his mess. The robot doesn’t see the point in worrying about why the boy felt like gathering up the papers in the first place. In response to the robot’s question, Ouma gives Kiibo a tired look before yawning and crawling into bed. He then grabs a sheet of paper that’s on the bedside table and answers, “I want to stay in bed and make a paper airplane.”

“Okay, that’s fine,” Kiibo replies while moving to sit next to Ouma on the bed, resting his back against the bed’s headrest. The robot looks at the paper Ouma is folding in his hands, and his eyes
widen in slight surprise. “Are those your STD results?”

“Yep.”

“You’re making a paper airplane out of your STD results.”

“Yep. The paper they printed these results on is ideal for making paper airplanes. It is 0.18 ounces heavy, is 0.12065 millimeters thick, has a soft construction, and has a smooth finish. It’s close to perfection!” Ouma declares happily. Once he finishes folding the paper, he holds the paper airplane proudly in his hands.

“I see, but you’re making a paper airplane out of your STD results,” Kiibo repeats himself, still baffled.

“Yeah. There’s nothing wrong with that. The paper is good for flying! You’ve studied aerospace engineering before. Haven’t you? The material you use to build a paper airplane is the secret to making a perfect paper airplane!” Ouma informs the robot excitedly with a bit of a squeal. He waves the paper airplane out in front of him. “Who knew the clinic that did my STD tests would have such high quality paper?!”

“But you’re making a paper airplane out of your STD results,” Kiibo says again. The robot can’t get over that part.

“You already said that multiple times! Nobody cares! The test is over, and some of my diseases are cured! I’m not hurting myself or anyone by doing this!” Ouma growls out of a bit of frustration. He then tosses the paper airplane across the room, and it does an impressive loop before traveling far across the room, landing on Saihara’s desk.

“Sorry, you’re right. It’s just, ‘You’re making a paper airplane out of your STD results’ is one of the most peculiar sentences I’ve ever said. It’s a little difficult for my systems to comprehend, so I need to say it out loud a few times,” Kiibo tells him. “However, it’s harmless, so it’s fine, I suppose. Again, I apologize.”

Ouma gives the robot an amused grin and a pat on the head. The pat feels both affectionate and condescending at the same time. The dark haired boy replies with a playful cutesy-sounding, “Okay! I’ll forgive you if you keep fetching the paper airplane for me.”

“I’m not a dog, Ouma-kun. You can’t expect me to fetch it for you.”

“I know, but it’s on Emo-chan’s side of the room! I can’t touch his stuff! That would be impolite!”

“Since when did you care about being polite to Saihara-kun? Ever since you’ve met Saihara-kun, you’ve been impolite with him.”

“Wait, so you want me to be impolite towards Saihara-kun? Nishishishi….wow! I didn’t know you want me to be a bad boy! I’m a little flustered now! But if that’s what you want, fine. I’ll be impolite to Saihara-kun and touch all his stuff!” Ouma states proudly before scrambling off the bed.

“Ouma-kun, no!” Kiibo grabs the boy, causing Ouma to start laughing profusely. The robot sighs. From behind the boy, Kiibo wraps his arms around Ouma and rests his head on Ouma’s left shoulder. He should be tired now. At least he seems to have cheered up finally. Unfortunately, that happy moment doesn’t last long because Ouma’s heavy laughs start turning into painful sobs, and he begins crying again. Kiibo pulls the boy closer to himself and whispers, “Ouma-kun, what’s wrong?”
“I tried….I really tried being happy, at least for a little while….I can’t….I’m so tired and sad….and I can’t stop crying like a baby because everything is so stupidly overwhelming!” Ouma wails while slamming his balled fists into Kiibo’s legs.

“It’s fine. You’ll feel better with time. Just lie down and relax, okay? Don’t force yourself to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable,” Kiibo tells Ouma while gently prodding the boy to go under the sheets. Kiibo then tucks him in bed. Ouma nods his head while nuzzling comfortably into the pillow. His eyes droop close. The tears dry on his cheeks, leaving behind light stains.

*These crying spells won’t go away easily.*

Chapter End Notes

This fic has over 500 kudos! Thanks so much. When I was first planning out this fic, I thought it would be lucky to get 100 kudos because I didn't think the subjects this fic is covering would be that popular.

I still would like some feedback, just to know what I'm doing right or wrong.

Thank you for reading!

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
The worst is over

Chapter Summary

Kiibo and Ouma study for midterms, and then they have a deep conversation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The middle of May is approaching, which means it’s almost time for midterm exams. It’s been a month since Ouma came back crying after being rejected from the court case. The Kiibo and Ouma quickly fall into a comfortable schedule centered on their schoolwork. In fact, the two of them have hardly talked about anything besides school and the basic small talk. They especially don’t talk about Ouma’s mental or physical health. Conversations are mostly about school. All they’ve been doing is schoolwork. Kiibo doesn’t know how Ouma is feeling. Ouma has become more depressed-looking and quieter. Sometimes the robot would catch him staring off into space with a look of longing in his eyes. Sometimes he’ll quietly burst into tears during one of his usual crying spells. Even though the robot has gotten used to Ouma’s crying spells a while ago, Kiibo still asks what’s wrong as a precaution. Ouma would just ignore the question and bring up schoolwork once again. He rarely smiles or jokes. Kiibo wants to sit down and have a talk about Ouma’s despondent attitude at least once the midterm is over, maybe even earlier.

Ouma has developed weird eating habits too. He has made this eating plan and printed out recipes he wants Kiibo to make for him. They’re healthy recipes, but the food he requests isn’t a lot, and he doesn’t eat anything unless Kiibo gives him the food from that eating plan at the correct time. If Kiibo doesn’t make the right meal or gives Ouma the meal at the wrong time, then Ouma won’t eat it. It’s way better than not eating at all, but he’s still very picky. Ouma says he needs to eat properly for school and for his health, but the robot knows he doesn’t eat when Kiibo is not around, so Ouma has been skipping meals. Amami thinks that he is being controlling over his eating habits because he realizes he doesn’t have any control over the Towa City Resort Prostitution case. Amami explains to Kiibo while they’re talking to the hospital, “Ouma-kun likes being in control, and he doesn’t like it when others take that control away from him. That’s one of the reason he hates the hospital. You’ve heard him complain about the hospital taking away his freedom. He doesn’t care it's is keeping him safe and looking after him. He just wants to make his own decisions. He was supposedly much happier when he thought he could determine the outcome of the court case. Now that he can’t, he needs to take control of something else.”

“I didn’t notice Ouma-kun being controlling,” Kiibo comments. He thinks back to his earlier interactions with Ouma. “Do you think that’s why he likes being difficult? He doesn’t like it when people tell him what to do because he likes being in control?”
“That’s the conclusions doctors have come to for a while now,” Amami replies. “It makes sense if you think about it. When you first met Ouma, he was so proud of being this leader of a secret organization. He also likes dictating me and bossing me around when he tutors me in math.”

“I never thought of it that way,” Kiibo mumbles. The robot has always wondered why Ouma insists on being difficult and refuses to do what other people tell him. Kiibo thought his childish nature was just a way to cope with his stress. That still may be part of it, but it also sounds like Ouma has a controlling nature as well. Kiibo feels stupid for not coming to that conclusion himself. He remembers Ouma taking over Kiibo’s schoolwork and telling the robot what Kiibo is doing wrong in school. Kiibo also found it weird that Ouma willingly tutors Amami in math even though he can’t stand being around others who aren’t Kiibo. Ouma enjoys taking control of Kiibo’s and Amami’s studies. “Do I give him a lot of control? Is that why he likes me?”

“I don’t know. You probably give him enough control so that he doesn’t hate you. I always thought Ouma-kun likes you because you’re the most interesting thing in this hospital. You’re a quirky and smart robot. Although, you know him better than I do. Ouma-kun may have his own strange reason for why he likes you. Just be glad he tolerates you,” Amami answers. He puts a finger to his chin thoughtfully as they enter the hospital. “This is all just speculation though. He’s difficult for the doctors, nurses, and therapists to get info out of because he doesn’t talk to them. Observing his behavior gives them a lot of information, but if Ouma-kun will willingly talk to them, it’ll make things easier. Ouma-kun’s controlling nature is the best reason they can come up with for why he’s so rebellious and why he suddenly feels the need to control his eating.”

He’s always been kind of strange and likes to go against his schedule. I guess that makes sense. However, how are we supposed to make him obedient and well-behaved if he doesn’t like being told what to do?

For the past month, everyday after school, Kiibo arrives to the hospital and meets Ouma in one of the study rooms. They both have their school backpacks and laptop computers with them and simply focus on their schoolwork. Ouma is undisciplined in almost all aspects of life. However, there is one aspect of life where Ouma is conscientious in, and that’s school. The small boy takes school VERY seriously. He always makes sure his assignments and studying are done as perfectly as possible. He obsesses over his schoolwork and takes great pride in often finishing his assignments early so that he can check them multiple times to make sure he’s doing them correctly. Kiibo likes to think the robot himself is an obedient and devoted student, but Ouma easily beats him in that regard. Since Kiibo and Ouma have been so focused on school for the past month, this is the most docile Ouma has ever been. If Ouma were as well-behaved in other aspects of life as he is in school, the boy would be the most productive individual Kiibo has ever met.

“Hey Robotto-chan, when is your midterm paper for Literature due?” Ouma asks. They’re sitting in one of the study rooms as usual. The dark haired boy is sitting on his usual donut pillow and has his usual hospital blanket wrapped around his skinny shoulders. Ouma has those same two soft objects with him so much that Kiibo thinks it has become an unhealthy attachment. They have their textbooks, school folders, assignments, and school papers all laid out on the table. Ouma’s side of the table is especially disorganized-looking. It looks like his school bag just threw up on his side of the table. To Kiibo’s annoyance, some of Ouma’s mess has made its way over to Kiibo’s side of the table. Kiibo takes pride in being organized, and Ouma is spoiling that pride by making a mess of Kiibo’s organized textbooks, folders, binders, and school supplies.

“The midterm paper is due two weeks from now, on midterm week,” Kiibo answers while working on some calculus problems. Ouma grabs a small black binder off of Kiibo’s side of the table. This causes the AI to yell out, “Hey! I’ve told you 412 times in the past month to stop grabbing my belongings! Please give me back my Literature binder!”
Ouma ignores the question and opens the binder with his tongue sticking out of the corner of his mouth in concentration. He sighs and asks, “Where’s the rough draft of your paper? Is it on your computer?”

Ouma then grabs Kiibo’s laptop, which is in front of Kiibo and opens it up. He searches through the computer while the robot cries out in protest, “I told you to stop grabbing my belongings! This is the 413th time I’ve told you to stop grabbing my belongings!”

“Ugh, I’m searching through your literature folder and can’t find the rough draft,” Ouma growls in frustration. “Where is it?!” He then takes out a red ball point pen and clicks on it obnoxiously. While holding his red pen in the air and clicking it, he declares this a determined look in his eyes, “I shall mend your erroneous paper with this bad boy!”

“Don’t call my paper erroneous! You haven’t even read it! Also, did you just call your red pen a ‘bad boy’?”

“Sure did. This bad boy of a red pen is a vigilante who fights against the poor grammar, organization, and content that defile your paper. Your paper is like a city, filled with writing crimes! It’s up to this red pen to slaughter the mistakes in your paper and make it readable!” Ouma explains while waving the red pen enthusiastically in the air. Ouma has this furious look on his face. Kiibo just stares at him, barely processing what the boy just told him. The robot is waiting for him to smile, just once. Ouma says things that would normally make him giggle or grin. However, he just hasn’t been smiling lately.

“Ouma-kun, what are you—never mind! Please give me back my laptop!” Kiibo snatches the computer away from Ouma before the small boy can do any damage. Ouma just gives a pout, and his eyes water with tears. The robot pays those tears no mind. “I haven’t even started on my first draft. There’s nothing for you to fix.”

“What? No! Don’t procrastinate! Procrastinating is horrible! It’ll stress you out so much that you’ll get anxiety, develop a heroin addiction and disordered eating patterns, scratch yourself until you bleed, and want to jump in front of a moving truck!” Ouma tells him in a panic. He looks so worried that he’s almost about to cry.

*Scratch yourself until you bleed? What does he mean by that?* Kiibo grabs Ouma’s hand and examines it. Sure enough, a bunch of the nail folds are so scratched off that some even have blood clots, and there are recent scratches on his hands that also look like they have tiny blood clots. Kiibo remembers the scratches all over Ouma’s body when he showers. Kiibo didn’t pay much attention to them because he remembers Ouma having deeper scratches when he was in those Towa City Resort videos. However, when the robot thinks about the scratches Ouma has now, they are definitely self-inflicted and enough to cause small injuries. *If I were in charge I’d make Ouma trim his nails so that he doesn’t hurt himself. Then again, would that do him any good? It’s hard to tell. He always finds some bad habit like biting his lip or hitting his head. While still holding Ouma’s hand in his, Kiibo asks him, “Have you been hurting yourself by scratching your skin off?”*

“Stop picking on me!” Ouma whines and then bursts into tears. He pulls his hand away and puts balled fists in front of himself, looking like he’s in a defensive position. “We have a more urgent matter to discuss! Why are you waiting so long to write your first draft!? It should be done by now! As I said before, procrastination is bad!”

“It was assigned to me just a few hours ago! I haven’t had time to work on it since I got here directly from school and have barely started my schoolwork. I have to finish these Calculus problems first, which should be done by tomorrow,” Kiibo tells the boy.
“You’re procrastinating in math too!? Tsk, tsk, tsk, Robotto-chan, we have a serious procrastination problem on our hands. You’re almost as bad as lazy westerners,” Ouma comments. The dark haired boy sounds like he’s joking, but there’s no hint of amusement on his face. As ridiculous as his comments sound, Ouma could be dead serious about thinking Kiibo has a procrastination problem.

“Ouma-kun, I value hard work and being punctual as much as you do. I try to get my schoolwork finished as early as possible too. However, I have my limits. I got assigned these Calculus problems earlier today too. I haven’t gotten a chance to finish any of my school assignments or studies. I still learn and do schoolwork like everyone else. You can’t possibly expect me to get all this schoolwork done this quickly,” Kiibo tells him out of exasperation. “Are you okay? Before today, you’ve never criticized me for procrastinating. You had always seemed satisfied with the pace I do my schoolwork,” Kiibo replies to the boy. However, it doesn’t seem like Ouma heard him because the boy is rushing through his own college math problems. The boy works like a very efficient machine. Kiibo can make out numbers, variables, and bunch of complicated-looking math problems. “Ouma-kun, I think I understand how to solve these problems.”

“Yeah, college math for me so far is just a repeat of single-variable calculus. The school likes to bore me to tears with the simple stuff. I could have done these simple problems back when I was in the womb,” Ouma yawns before putting the homework away into a red binder. “There! I finished these problems in fifteen minutes! This is an example of how NOT to procrastinate! For the record, I typed up my political science essay during lunchtime.”

“Well, you don’t eat lunch during lunch time, so of course you have time to write the essay,” Kiibo replies frustrated. With his computer in front of him, the robot tries typing his literature essay, but his mind is drawing a blank on what to write. One of the frustrating things about being a developing AI is I can get a writer’s block like a humans can. It doesn’t help that Ouma-kun is pestering me to type this essay.

“You don’t eat during lunch time either, Procrastinator-chan,” Ouma retorts while childishly sticking his tongue out. He then takes out a bunch of packets of paper. Kiibo doesn’t pay much attention to them because he’s trying to focus on his essay.

“Don’t call me that! I don’t procrastinate! Call me Kiibo if you feel like you have to call me something. I have a name, so use it,” the robot responds while scowling at the few sentences he has typed. Kiibo dislikes literature analyses. He thinks people shouldn’t read too far into these stories. He doesn’t understand why people work hard to find implied meanings in fiction when there are plenty of literal interpretations in the work too. How am I supposed to know what the Dahlia symbolizes? It’s a flower. It performs photosynthesis. It has eight sets of homologous chromosomes. It’s a native to Mexico. Hmmmm…maybe its Mexican roots have something to do with its symbolism? Or may…..

“So, if you have time to do your schoolwork during lunch, why don’t you do it?” Ouma asks, flicking the robot’s metal forehead, breaking the robot out of his focus.

“Ouma-kun, I needed a break from schoolwork. That’s what I used my lunch breaks for. I’m working on my essay now so that you can look at it later. Please, focus on your own schoolwork and stop distracting me,” Kiibo tells him. The robot gently pushes the boy away causing the boy to mewl out in dejection.

“Procrastinator-chan, you’re so cold to me! I just want to help you with your schoolwork. See? I even made these study guides for your English, Classical Literature, Math, Chemistry, Health, and Social Studies classes. They’re for your midterm. Be grateful, you meanie!” Ouma tells the robot angrily with more tears in his eyes.
This catches the robot’s interest. He stops typing his frustrating literature essay and moves the computer aside to look at the thick stack of study guides Ouma has given him. Kiibo skims through the study guides and is amazed by the organization, amount of content, and simplicity in the way the information is presented. The information in the packets are explained in better detail than the way the teachers explain them. There are even some study tips, flashcards, and practice problems. *Ouma-kun has too much free time.* With a smile, Kiibo tells the boy, “Ouma-kun, this is extremely well done. Thank you. You didn’t have to do this.”

“You’re right. I didn’t have to make these study guides for an ungrateful and mean-spirited piece of junk like you,” Ouma grumbles. He’s trembling and seems genuinely upset, with tears falling down his face. Kiibo is surprised he didn’t notice the boy being genuinely upset before.

While still going through the study guides some more, Kiibo can’t help but wonder out loud, “Ouma-kun, how did you know exactly what will be on my midterms? I know you’ve seen most of my schoolwork, but I can’t imagine you memorized all the information I was studying.”

“I did,” Ouma answers vehemently. He crosses his arms and more tears fall down his face. “You think I’m stupid, so you don’t think I can learn all this stuff, do you? Well, there you go! I made these study guides off of my memory! So now you can’t accuse me of being stupid!”

“I don’t think people have called you stupid before, not when I’m around at least. You’ve always been decently intelligent, yet at the same time, you’ve always been so self-conscious about people thinking you’re stupid. Are you trying to prove to people you’re not stupid by succeeding and showing off in the midterms?” Kiibo asks. This is just pure speculation.

The robot’s words seem to have gotten to the small boy as he hides his face below the blanket wrapped around him. The robot hears a soft and high-pitched whine of, “You’re lying. You looked at me as if I were crazy for siding with DICE, and you, like everyone else keep on looking at me as if I don’t know what I’m talking about. You never listen. NEVER!”

Ouma screams the last words, which startles Kiibo into dropping his pencil. The robot looks over at him and sees Ouma reaching a hand out from under the blanket to grab one of his textbooks. He attempts to read the textbook while under the dark blanket. Kiibo would be impressed if the boy is successful at reading the textbook under the dark blanket. “Ouma-kun, I have never thought you are stupid. You don’t need to boast to me about not procrastinating or make all these study guides. Where did you find the time to do this? Have you been getting enough sleep? Shouldn’t the nurses be making sure you’re getting sleep?”

“As if I’d tell you my secrets,” Ouma snaps while peaking an eye out from under the blanket.

“So you haven’t been getting sleep,” Kiibo concludes with a frown. The robot stands up and declares, “We should take a break.”

“What? We just started studying!” Ouma argues.

“Yeah, but we’ve been studying tirelessly for the past month, ever since that court case. We both could use a break, and studying too much will just cause mental burnout,” Kiibo tells the boy while carefully trying to pull the blanket off his head. The robot eventually does pull the blanket off Ouma’s head, and the small boy ends up having this weird form of lopsided bed hair, not that Ouma cares too much about it.

“No! We have to keep studying! You’ll fail your midterms if you don’t keep up with your schoolwork!” Ouma yells.
“I’ll be fine with having a break every once in a while. If I do fall behind, which I won’t, then I’ll just work on school at night,” Kiibo informs him. The robot feels surprisingly relaxed while handling the boy even though Ouma appears to be glaring daggers right at him with more tears, possibly fake ones, watering in his eyes.

“You’re so lucky that you get to do whatever you want while charging at night. We humans can’t do anything while we sleep except lie there. You can go shopping, gamble, and hack into secret government databases from your own computer while also charging at night,” Ouma mumbles with a sigh.

“I suppose it isn’t fair that I can multitask in that way while charging. However, you can multitask while sleeping as well. Sleep can help you consolidate memories, allocate energy, aid your immune system, prevent diabetes, improve your mood, heal your body-”

“Okay! I get it! Jeez. Procrastinator-chan’s name should be changed to Rambler-chan,” the dark haired boy mumbles.

As Ouma turns a page of the textbook in his hands, Kiibo grabs the textbook from him and tells him, “No, Ouma-kun, you need a break. You’re stressing out too much over these exams.”

“Shut up! No I’m not! I need to study and not be a procrastinator like you, Procrastinator-chan!” Ouma growls angrily. “Stop telling me what to do! Let me do what I want! I want to do schoolwork!”

Amami-kun told me that Ouma-kun wants control. It’s hard to give him control when he’ll just harm his mental health. The dark haired boy keeps shaking and tears fall down his eyes. Kiibo can’t help but wonder, “Hey, Ouma-kun, when you cry, do you think it’s from a mood disorder, some sort of neurological disorder, or a brain injury?”

“What?” Ouma says in a shaky voice. This just seems to get him more upset. “Stop making fun of me. I know I cry a million times. If I could stop, I would!”

“Maybe a break will help make you happier. You’ve been so stressed out ever since the court case. I can give you a massage. I make exceptional massages! Ask some of the individuals here,” Kiibo tells him while standing up and reaching his hands out.

“Ah! No! Stay away!” Ouma tells the robot in a panic. He bounds off his seat with his blanket and curls up on the couch. “Just stop! You’re distracting me from my studying, Procrastinator-chan!”

“I’ve seen your work and your current grades. I believe if you take the midterms now, you’ll do well. Please let me rub your shoulders for a few seconds. If you don’t like it, I’ll stop,” Kiibo tells him while cautiously approaching the boy. Ouma stares at the robot’s metal hands as if they’re daggers. Kiibo sneaks around the couch to behind the boy and presses his metal hands against the Ouma’s tense shoulder blades and upper back. Kiibo begins gently massaging out the boy’s stiff muscles. Ouma squirms at first but then relaxes with a sigh under his breath. He’s really tense. Ouma-kun is clearly stressed out. He seems so tired and weak now. Normally, he’d put up more of a fight. “See? You can admit it. I have trained myself to make excellent massages. I should’ve given you one earlier. Now we should talk.”

“You want to talk. Okay. How about we quiz you on social studies? Social studies is an evil subject. It has so many things to trip defenseless robots like you up. We have to keep you up-to-date on the geography, sociology, economics, history, civics, and politics. I’ve got flashcards in my bag,” Ouma tells the robot in a very breathy voice. The dark haired boy unconsciously, relaxes into the robot’s firm touch some more.
“Actually, I want to talk to you about your depression,” Kiibo tells the boy firmly.

Ouma’s shoulders suddenly tense up again, and he glares at the robot behind him, with more tears streaming down his eyes. “Depression? Gross! I’m not depressed! You sound like Emo-chan now. He sometimes tries to talk to me about depression because he thinks I’m like him! I’m not though! I’m not a mopey, antisocial teenager like Emo-chan! I don’t lie in bed feeling sorry for myself.”

Ouma sounds really weak and unsure of himself when he says this. Kiibo frowns while trying to analyze the boy’s facial expression. The robot ends his massaging and sits down next to the boy on the couch. When he catches the boy’s sad and mournful gaze, the robot explains, “Depression is a broad term. If you have depression, it simply means you have a persistent feeling of sadness or hopelessness. That’s it. You’re not usually that happy. The only time you are happy is during those brief periods where you joke around or find random things amusing. Other than that, you always seem distressed or uninterested. You feel trapped in this hospital. Saihara reacts to depression differently. While he suffers from a quiet sadness and a feeling of hopelessness, you lash out and have crying spells to cope with your sadness. We need to find a way to make you happy.”

“What? You think I haven’t tried to be happy? Of course I’ve tried to be happy! Why wouldn’t I try to be happy!? I live only so I can feel happy,” Ouma sniffles. He covers half his face with the blanket. “I’m not like Emo-chan! Stop saying I’m like him! He chooses to be unhappy, dress in black, and mope around! I don’t!”

“Is that how you feel about Saihara-kun?” Kiibo questions Ouma, genuinely feeling sorry for the black-clad boy. The robot wonders how Saihara puts up with Ouma’s animosity. 

"Saihara-kun is much stronger than he thinks he is if he can handle Ouma-kun so well. I’m impressed. “Saihara-kun doesn’t choose to be who he is either. He fights against the sadness too. He tries to get out of bed and cheer you up, even if you don’t appreciate. He’s frequently out with Harukawa-san, being at the front desk and trying to be helpful in small ways. Being useful makes him feel happy.” Ouma simply glares at him with the familiar tear-filled eyes. “Ouma-kun, I didn’t say you choose to be unhappy. Obviously, you don’t. Nobody does. I think now that the people from your past are likely going to get convicted, now would be a good time to start working and socializing with other people, if you want to. I recommend you move on from your past and, without animosity, at least try talking to people. You did it with me. Look how much you like me.”

“You’re different. WAY different than everyone else. You’re interesting and actually care about me,” Ouma retaliates bitterly.

“Saihara-kun is an interesting and smart person. He’s ahead of his grade level like you are, and he definitely cares about you. He was upset over your suicide attempt and wants you to get better. I think you should talk to him, only if you want to though. I won’t force you,” Kiibo tells the boy, trying not to sound like he’s forcing the boy to do anything. Make Ouma-kun feel like he’s in control. The robot is not giving up on this conversation until they make some progress. Kiibo has had many of these conversations with the boy, and he always does so to get some information out of the boy or make Ouma have even the tiniest change of heart. The AI hopes that these talks will get through to the small boy eventually.

“I still think you’re crazy for thinking depression is making me cry. I have no control! It’s like a newborn baby keeps possessing me and making me cry,” Ouma moans. He buries his face in his hands.

"It's certainly very possible depression is causing you to cry. You've been sad and grieving over your loss for the past month. You haven’t talked to any doctors or therapists since you’ve gotten here. You need to have a nice conversation with someone. Please, show me you can do it or at least think
about it. It’s up to you though. I just really recommend it.” Give Ouma-kun the option. Don’t force him to do it. Kiibo desperately grabs Ouma’s hand. The dark haired boy looks like he’s considering pulling away from the robot’s hand, but he doesn’t. Instead, he suddenly leans forward to grab Kiibo in his arms. He hugs the robot tightly and breathes heavily. Kiibo feels the boy trembling and instinctively hugs him back.

“I don’t want to eat. I don’t want to sleep. I don’t want to do anything. School is all I have. I thought that maybe if I do amazing during the midterms and then the finals, that something will happen. Something really good will happen, but that’s not happening because they’re just tests. That’s all those are. You take a class, you get a grade, and then what? What am I supposed to do with my report card? I feel so unproductive and useless. I don’t want to do anything! Everything is stupid! School is stupid! Games are stupid! Books are stupid! This building is stupid! EVERYTHING! ……ow….I have a headache,” The small boy whines. Kiibo thinks he’s definitely crying or close to tears. He seems agitated now. Ouma reminds the robot of Saihara. He recalls Saihara complaining about being useless and doing nothing. Ouma then mumbles, “I really don’t remember my life before the age of ten.”

“You don’t? Did the police ever find anything from their investigation?” Kiibo asks. Ouma simply cries out an obvious no. That's strange The robot pulls the boy closer in the familiar hug and whispers, “It’s okay. It’s just the past. I told you not to worry about it. The past is now behind you.”

The boy nuzzles into the robot’s neck and sighs out, “I know there’s something wrong with me. I just haven’t been able to figure out what that is. Everything is so confusing. I like school though. School is self-explanatory. I like playing games because those are more straightforward. I like role-playing because I can do what I want. I don’t like my life though…..because everything is just weird and painful.”

“If you talked to the doctors or therapists about your issues, maybe you’d understand. This is just a suggestion. I’m not trying to boss you around, but please consider finally having a meaningful conversation with someone. Nobody is here to hurt you,” Kiibo tells him gently.

“I guess….I’ll talk to Emo-chan before my birthday,” Ouma mumbles so softly that Kiibo barely hears him.

“Huh?! Really?! Ouma-kun, why before your birthday?” Kiibo feels so excited that he feels the urge to kiss the boy out of affection. It took a while, but the dark haired boy is now considering communicating with someone.

“Don’t get your robo panties in a twist. I’m not doing it because I care about that lint licker. I’m just so desperate that I’m willing to deal with Emo-chan’s creepiness. I’d let him have the honor of killing me if that’s what he wants,” Ouma replies softly. He then shifts his arms to wrap his blanket around both himself and Kiibo. He says in what sounds almost like a content mewl, “I love it when you hold me. I hope we can do it forever and ever.” He lets out another sigh and states, “Emo-chan keeps asking me about my birthday. I want to know what that forlorn maggot is up to. I just hope it’s something different. I need change.”

“Ah, your 17th birthday is coming up in a little over a month. You should be excited!” This is Kiibo’s pathetic attempt at trying to cheer the small boy up because Ouma still hasn’t smiled.

“I could be lying about my birthday, Procrastinator-chan. You don’t even know if I’m 16 now. I could have pulled a birth date and age out of a hat for fun. We don't know anything for sure,” Ouma states with a bit of amusement in his voice. He almost cracks a smile, but frowns again. “It has been a whole year, and I still don’t know crap about me. I don’t want to be known as this pampered kid
who was used and hurt by other adults.”

“Well, your birthday is a good time for a fresh start. You can think about signing up for different classes, taking on different activities, and talking to different people. You can start planning that on your birthday,” Kiibo suggests. The robot feels the boy tense up at the suggestion. “Ouma-kun, what’s wrong?”

“Ugh! I’m getting so old! I’m turning seventeen! I’m an adult! I’ll have gray hair, wrinkles, and a beer belly before I know it! I don’t want to be an adult! I want to be a kid! I want to play, and I want my childhood back!” As if to prove how childish he is, Ouma starts crying like a baby into Kiibo’s arms. *He has a valid reason for wanting to still be a child though. He doesn’t remember his childhood before the age of ten, and after the age of ten he has been nothing but abused.*

“Ouma-kun, calm down. You’re allowed act like a child even when you’re seventeen, eighteen, or older. You can do what you want as long as you’re not hurting anyone else. I keep telling you this. See? You keep stressing out and getting upset over small things. You don’t need to do that. If you want to act like a kid sometimes, then do it,” Kiibo leans back out of the hug and blanket to grab Ouma’s shoulders. The boy looks at him sadly with a quivering lip. “I’m proud of you Ouma-kun. You don’t need to be upset. Keep improving, okay? Try not to overdo it during school, eat healthy, get sleep, exercise, bathe, and talk to people. You don’t have to overthink it. You can do things that make you happy during your leisure time. You may be allowed to leave the hospital before you’d have to be moved to the adult unit when you turn eighteen. That sounds nice doesn’t it?”

“Do you honestly think I’ll leave here?” Ouma questions pensively. “I’ve been thinking so much about it that……it doesn’t seem possible. You will leave me, and I’ll stay here.”

“You want an honest answer, Ouma-kun?”

“You can be honest or lie. I don’t care.”

“Is that a lie?”

“Of course not. Why would you think that?”

“I’ll be honest,” Kiibo declares. Ouma raises an eyebrow at him and watches the robot closely, as if trying to spot any lies on the robot’s face. “I think you’ll make it out. There’s an end to this stay. You have school planned out. Do you have ideas about what you want to be when you grow up?”

“No.”

*Ouma-kun, you’re not helping.*

“Let me start my argument over. You will make it out. This isn’t something that’ll happen forever. The worst is over. Even if I do leave before you do, I’ll keep in contact with you, okay? Maybe even visit. You don’t need to worry about the bad things lasting forever,” Kiibo tells the boy with his metal hands on Ouma’s thin shoulders. He reaches a metal finger out to wipe tears away. “You’re my friend. I’ll support you. Please, just try to smile, even if it’s a forced one. Smiles naturally make you happier. I’ve given you so many reasons not to be sad. I know it’s hard, but you’re doing amazing.”

Kiibo grabs the boy’s hand in a last ditch effort. Ouma gives him a contemplative stare and then a forced smile. The smile is painful-looking and awkward. Kiibo is surprised the boy cooperated with him this much. The smile eventually relaxes and becomes more genuine. The dark haired boy lets out a happy giggle out of relief. Ouma keeps that smile on his face and looks to the floor with a content gaze. There’s a bit of shyness behind that gaze. His cheeks are a bit flushed. “I thought you made it
clear that you wouldn’t stay with me forever and that maybe you didn’t love me. I can’t tell if you’re lying. You’re really good at this Procrastinator-chan. I know they’re just words, but they get to me eventually and have kept me going this far. You’re so confusing sometimes, yet you’re so interesting that it’s sticking.” He lets out a loud sigh. “Okay, you win Kiibo-chan. You’ve cheered me up.” Without warning, Ouma puts both his hands on the robot’s shoulders and leans in to press a soft kiss on Kiibo’s lips. The robot hasn’t had a kiss on the mouth in a while. It feels very deliberate, affectionate, and not lewd. Kiibo struggles processing the tastes and textures of Ouma’s mouth, but the intimate gesture is very enjoyable. Kiibo doesn’t know why this kiss came about. Whatever the case may be, Kiibo actually enjoys the kiss. His insides feel comfortably warm, and his robotic mind feels clear. He didn’t expect a romantic moment to come out of this talk. For some reason, hearing Ouma-kun say his name and giving him that very heartfelt smile is really heartwarming. Kiibo has always wanted to be close to someone. He wants to be close to Ouma, not necessarily in a romantic sense, but Kiibo will accept a romantic relationship if he can be close to the boy. The robot appreciates the closeness the two of them share and the work he has put in to make Ouma better. Kiibo thinks whatever intimate bond they have will work. It has to. Although, Kiibo pulls away and can’t help but say, "I'm not having a romantic relationship with you now. If it does happen, it'll be after you get released from the hospital.”

Ouma gives him a dazed look before forcing another smile. There's a bit of sadness in his eyes, but he surprisingly takes Kiibo's request well. He then leans in and says, “Hug me again.”

The robot accepts Ouma's request and gives the boy another affectionate hug. Kiibo doesn’t know how it worked out. They just talked it out, and then that became a tipping point to cheer Ouma up. The robot knew the conversation was heading in the right direction when Ouma brought up wanting to speak with Saihara. They stay in each other’s warm arms for an unknown period of time. Kiibo listens to Ouma’s calm breathing and steady heartbeat. Ouma-kun’s heart is still beating. He’s still okay. The suicide attempt seems so long ago. Kiibo doesn’t know if these peaceful moments will last or if it’s temporary. Ouma mutters, “I know this may seem great, but I’m so scared that I’ll struggle again. I’ll get sad or lonely, and then everything will seem bad again.”

“Yeah, I know. When that happens, I’ll help you deal with it. The fact that you feel happy right now is good. Try enjoying it,” Kiibo tells the boy. Ouma just hums in content and nearly purrs. The small boy pulls away and gives Kiibo a loving kiss on the cheek. Kiibo then asks, “Ouma-kun, you want to go back to studying?”

“No….” Ouma yawns. “I need some sleep. Don’t wake me up from my slumber, or I’ll make you regret the day Iidabashi created your AI.”

“You said you’ll talk to Saihara, right?” Kiibo asks for confirmation.

“Probably…..I just want to know why he's asking about my birthday and how he does it.” Ouma has a frown on his face.

“How he does what?”

“I want to know how he puts up with that that creepy bitch Maki Harukawa. That girl is secretly an assassin,” Ouma declares with a determined look in his eyes.

“Out of all the things you could to talk to Saihara-kun about, you choose to talk about THAT?!” Kiibo asks in disbelief. "I'm not surprised though. I know I was hoping the two of them would talk about their struggles, personal issues, and mood disorders, but that was too much for me to ask. I guess talking about that is better than nothing. Fortunately, Saihara-kun is smart enough not to believe Ouma-kun’s accusation on Harukawa-san being an assassin."
They pack up their school belongings and make their way over to the Ouma’s room. *I'm okay with where Ouma-kun is at. He’s not where he should be, and he may never get there, but this progress is good.*

Chapter End Notes

For those of you who are wondering why this chapter is out so early.....good question. There’s really no reason for why it's out early.

I just started a rigorous seven-week calculus II course, so maybe it's that? Math makes me write productively. ^_^

Also thanks Pastelchiaks for editing my fic. You made things easier. Here's the editor's Tumblr http://pastelchiakis.tumblr.com/

Thank you everyone for the overwhelming support! This is way more than I could have hoped for. I'd still like to hear your feedback.

Thank you for reading!

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa
Feux Follets

Chapter Summary

It's Ouma's birthday, and Ouma wants them to go about their day acting like it's not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The midterm exams arrive. Even though Kiibo and Ouma have been preparing for the exam like it’s some grand event, once the robot takes the test, it’s really nothing special. It’s a little unnerving how much Ouma boasted the exam up for Kiibo and then when Kiibo has the exam, it’s just some boring paper tests. In Kiibo’s opinion, he and Ouma may have prepared for the exams too much, if that’s even possible. Kiibo finds school interesting, and even the exams can offer fascinating challenges sometimes. Ouma helped him prepare for very challenging questions and even helped teach him some things that wouldn’t be on the test. As a result, once the exams come around, the questions are so easy that they’re boring. Kiibo could shut down half of his brain and still do well. That’s certainly not a bad thing though. While Ouma has been understandably antsy about the midterm exams and has put his all into preparing for them, he doesn’t seem nearly as stressed out about them as he used to.

It helps that he has actually been sleeping and taking care of himself properly. His eating is a bit better. However, he’s still a little too controlling over it. He’s not too picky about when Kiibo feeds him, he but still insists Kiibo makes him the right food. He still cries about small things. Sometimes he insists on having more deep conversations with Kiibo. They feel almost like therapy sessions, which makes the robot wish Ouma would actually speak during his therapy sessions. He doesn’t carry his donut pillow around like he used to. Although, depending on his mood, he still carries around his hospital blanket. He hasn’t talked too badly about anyone. He just has the minor complaints, and sometimes he’ll make some unsavory jokes at their expense, but he’s not nearly as cruel as before. Kiibo has seen him have normal conversations with people. He’s not particularly nice, and sometimes he’s cold, but the conversations are relatively pleasant sometimes. Overall, Ouma has improved noticeably, but he still struggles and is still not well enough to be released. Fortunately, the robot is pleased overall.

June 21st comes around. It’s the day of Ouma’s birthday. Kiibo brings a gift in a simple red bag and sees Ouma talking to Amami, Saihara, and Kaede in the hallways. He doesn’t have his hospital blanket with him. The first thing Kiibo hears is Ouma saying, “No surprise parties.”

“Ouma-kun, I’ve told you many times that neither me nor anyone else is setting up a surprise party for you,” Amami replies with crossed arms.

“It’s not you I’m worried about! It’s Akamatsu-chan! She’s ambitious and seems like the type of social butterfly who would grab a bunch of people and do something as cliché as a surprise party!” Ouma states angrily.

“It’s okay. I’m not going to throw a surprise party. Why are you worrying about a surprised party?” Kaede asks in confusion.
“It’s my fault. I asked him when his birthday was. Twice. Then he assumed the worst and got anxious about it,” Saihara replies with his head down in shame. “Ouma-kun, nobody is going to give you a surprise party.”

Kiibo barges into the conversation by asking, “Ouma-kun, do you even want to celebrate your birthday?”

“No! My birthday wish is for you to ignore my birthday today and treat it like a normal day!” Ouma answers with a look of relief on his face when Kiibo joins the conversation. The robot notices that Ouma is tense and anxious when Kiibo is not around. Even though he’s getting better with people, Ouma still turns to the robot as a great source of comfort. That’s fine. Most people are more comfortable around certain people than others. Kiibo can’t expect Ouma to be perfectly calm around everyone.

Kiibo is not surprised that Ouma doesn’t want to celebrate his 17th birthday or make a big deal out of it. For one thing, he still isn’t close with most of the people at the hospital. The idea of them celebrating his birthday seems forced and not authentic. If Ouma doesn’t feel like he’s friends with these people, why should he celebrate his birthday with them? It would feel awkward. The second reason why Ouma wouldn’t want to celebrate his birthday is Ouma doesn’t want to acknowledge he’s getting older. It’ll show that he’s almost an adult and remind him that he didn’t get the chance to live a meaningful childhood like everyone else. It makes it seem like he wasted a good part of life in pain instead of being happy.

“Saihara-kun, you don’t have to answer this question. I’m simply curious. Why did you ask Ouma-kun about his birthday?” Kiibo asks the black-clad boy. Saihara looks at Kiibo and seems surprised that the robot is talking to him.

“Yeah Saihara-chan, why did you pin me against the wall and say, ‘Ouma-kun, tell me what your birthday is or else…..’”

“I didn’t do that! I just politely asked you when your birthday is out of curiosity. You’re the one who’s being paranoid about it!” Saihara snaps, acting more aggressive than usual. The black-clad boy glares at Ouma, causing the small boy to hold his hands up in front of himself and look back with a bit of fear in his eyes. Kiibo has noticed Saihara has become less timid and has spoken up for himself more as the weeks go by. The robot is impressed. After realizing he scared Ouma a little, Saihara returns to his more usual self by saying softly, “Sorry Ouma-kun, I didn’t mean to yell at you. You’ve been bothering me about it for the past weeks.”

Ouma breaks out into an amused grin at Saihara and chuckles. He has this excited look in his eyes that makes it look like his eyes are sparkling and states, “Saihara-chan is so cool when he gets feisty! Do it again! Show your true forceful nature! You’re like a lion when you do that!”

“Oh and Kiibo-chan, since you’re not supposed to do anything for my birthday, you can throw that red bag away. It’s unnecessary,” Ouma tells the robot, eyeing the red gift bag in the robot’s metal hands.

“I’m sorry Ouma-kun, the item is this bag is too valuable to throw away,” Kiibo replies, glancing quickly at the bag. Since Ouma really wants them to not celebrate his birthday, it’s possible that Ouma would accept the gift on any day that isn’t his birthday. That’s ironic. The robot considers taking the gift back home and then trying to give Ouma the present on a later day when he isn’t anxious about his birthday. However, then Kiibo comes up with a small idea. “Ouma-kun, will you accept this gift if you won’t consider it a birthday present but just an ordinary present?”
“An ordinary present?” Ouma questions with a perplexed look on his face. “Why would you give me a present out of the blue like that?”

“I’ve done it before,” Kiibo argues. Ouma just shakes his head defiantly.

“Are there any holidays on June 21st? Maybe it could be a present for one of those holidays?” Amami suggests while taking out his smart phone.

Kaede smiles at the idea before also taking out her phone. She tells them, “My phone can use the hospital’s wi-fi, so I’m going to look up today’s holidays.”

“No, you don’t have to do that. That’s what I’m doing,” Amami protests half-heartedly.

“Yeah, I know, but your phone’s internet is slower than a herd of snails traveling through peanut butter. You need me to look this up,” Kaede replies while staring at the small glowing screen in front of her. She then grins and shows her phone to Saihara and Kiibo. “See? I already found a website that lists the holidays for June 21st!”

“Yeah, I’ve also already found a website that lists the June 21st holidays,” Amami declares with a smug expression. The green haired boy lets Ouma look curiously at his phone. “Not bad for a phone that has internet that’s slower than a herd of snails traveling through peanut butter.”

“I’m sorry. Is this supposed to be a competition?” Kiibo asks while looking at the names of holidays on the website.

“If it was, Akamatsu-chan would win for having the fastest phone, but Amami-chan would win for his talent,” Ouma replies.

“What are you talking about? I’m plenty talented. I’ve won plenty of scholarships for my piano playing,” Kaede brags. “And I can play Feux Follets perfectly from memory.”

“Alas, while Akatmatsu-chan can skillfully push the buttons on the piano, she is like a pitiful toddler when it comes to pushing the buttons on her phone,” Ouma remarks with an impressed whistle. “When I said Amami-chan wins for his talent, I meant Amami-chan has more talent when it comes to searching on the internet using his phone. He’s a fast typist while you can’t type fast on your phone if your life depended on it.”

“You can play Feux Follets? That’s amazing,” Saihara compliments the girl while looking at her in surprise.

“What’s Feux Follets?” Amami asks.

With a sly grin on his face, Ouma answers for him, “You’ll know what that song is if you let me tutor you in Classical Music Appreciation.”

“No, thank you. I’m good. I’m already an honors student. I’ll tell you when I need a tutor Ouma-kun,” Amami replies.

“You need a tutor now before you fail your classes! Your future depends on it!”

“Oh Kiibo-kun, today is World Giraffe Day. Maybe your gift can be a Giraffe Day present,” Kaede suggests.

“Kiibo-chan, does your present have anything to do with giraffes? If not, then I won’t accept it as a Giraffe day present,” Ouma declares stubbornly. He has an interested smirk on his face while looking at Amami’s phone, so he seems entertained by the situation. Kiibo shakes his head no at the
“Oh, it’s also International Yoga Day today,” Amami reads out loud.

“Amami-kun, does Ouma-kun look like the type of person who would be into yoga?” Kiibo asks.

“No, I’m keeping international Yoga Day in mind for my sister. She’s into yoga,” Amami replies. He then looks over to Ouma. “Unless you’re interested? It’s good for your mental, physical, and spiritual health.”

“I’ll do it if Kiibo-chan does it with me.”

“What? How would I benefit from yoga? I’m an AI.”

“C’mon Kiibo-chan, think of the mental, physical, and spiritual benefits. That. and I bet you’ll be really good at it. You’re probably really flexible,” Ouma states with an ecstatic and amused grin on his face. “I can imagine it.”

“You’re enjoying the thought of him doing yoga way too much, Ouma-kun,” Saihara comments with an indifferent expression. While still looking at the screen on Kaede’s phone, Saihara declares, “Hey, Akamatsu-san, may we go back to my room really quickly? I need to get something.”

“Okay,” Kaede states with a shrug. The two of them walk down the hallway towards Saihara’s room, leaving Amami, Kiibo, and Ouma by themselves. Kiibo walks over to Amami’s other side to look at Amami’s phone.

“World Hydrography Day. Huh, they have a holiday for that? Kiibo-kun, would that work?” Amami asks. Kiibo shakes his head. Amami scrolls down some more. “It’s also International Humanist Day.”

“Is it possible for a robot, someone who’s not a human, to be a humanist?” Ouma wonders with a teasing smile.

“Of course it is possible! And I am one!” Kiibo snaps aggressively. The robot is still sensitive to robot discrimination. If Ouma even shows any small signs of discriminating against the robot, Kiibo won’t be afraid to argue against him. Kiibo won’t tolerate any prejudice, even if Ouma is joking, which he probably is.

“Oh! It’s International Handshake Day!” Ouma declares while jumping up and down excited. The small boy then moves around Amami to stand in front of Kiibo. With a smile, he sticks his hand out and states, “This present can be a present for International Handshake Day!”

“Ah, okay,” Kiibo replies. The robot moves his hand to shake Ouma’s, but before he can do so, the small boy suddenly moves his hand away from the robot. Kiibo frowns in frustration. What’s he doing? Ouma still has the happy grin on his face.

“You need to bow while shaking my hand too. It’s the polite thing to do,” Ouma says. He then gives Kiibo the puppy dog eyes. “Please.”

“Of course, it’s no big deal,” Kiibo responds, because it really isn’t a big deal. It’s just a bow. A bow is not going to hurt anyone. The robot respectfully shakes his hand with Ouma’s while using a respectful and perfected bow. Kiibo has studied proper etiquette and has practiced the various ways to show respect. Suffice to say, he practiced bowing until he gets it right. Ouma gives Kiibo a smile in awe. When Kiibo finishes the bow, he hands the red bag over to Ouma. “Here’s your present for International Handshake Day.”
“Thank you very much!” Ouma replies contently, grabbing the bag carefully from Kiibo’s hands, as if worrying he may break something inside. Kiibo is slightly surprised with how thoughtful the small boy is being. He thought the dark haired boy would childishly rip the bag out of his hands. With a smile still plastered on his face, Ouma tells Amami and Kiibo, “I don’t want to open it now. This is something between Kiibo-chan and I. I’m going to drop it off at my room.”

“What? We just came back from your room,” says a female voice. Kiibo, Amami, and Ouma turn their heads to see Kaede and Saihara walking to the group. In his hands, Saihara has a small box wrapped in purple wrapping paper.

Ouma casually waves the two of them off. “It’s fine. I don’t need a pack following me. You two, no, three,” Ouma glares at Amami. “Can go do whatever crap you do. Jeez. It’s bad enough Mr. Robot here has to follow me around. I don’t need a crowd. It’s suffocating.”

“That’s fine, but Saihara-kun has something for you.” Kaede replies, gesturing to the package in the black-clad boy’s hands. Ouma peers over at it suspiciously with a frown. Saihara moves to stand in front of Ouma.

“Today is International Music Day, so here’s my International Music Day present. Akamatsu-san wrapped it,” Saihara tells Ouma. Kiibo takes his present from Ouma so that Ouma’s hands are free to accept Saihara’s gift. Ouma cautiously takes the gift and holds it like it’s some kind of bomb. Ouma has a blush on his cheeks and looks around self-consciously at the people around him. He seems very uncomfortable at the thought of opening the present in front of the four of them. The dark haired boy then looks to Kiibo with a nervous look on his face. Kiibo’s observant eyes see the boy trembling a little. He wanted to open my gift in private. It looks like he doesn’t want to make a spectacle out of the gift-opening. He’s probably not used to these people wanting to celebrate something like this with him. Ouma looks like he wants to shove the present back into Saihara’s hands and run away. However, he forces a smile on his face and says, “Saihara-chan is a liar. He said he wanted to know when my birthday is out of curiosity.”

“Sorry, you don’t have to open it if you don’t want to. It’s not a big deal at all. It’s just a small thing that I thought you might like,” Saihara mutters nervously while twiddling his thumbs.

“No, it was just obvious because it’s for International Music Day, the package looks like it’ll fit a tiny music player, and I don’t have anything to play music with, not even a phone. My second guess would have been something lame like a whistle or a harmonica,” Ouma explains. The small boy then hastily and messily opens the package with a loud tear, as if he’s trying to get this moment over as quickly as possible. Sure enough, there’s a small MP3 player inside a tiny box. Ouma examines the container it’s in before saying, “Hey, this box is already open.”

“Well, yeah, that’s because it was mine. I saved the music player and saved the box it was from. I put it back in the box so that you can open it. It has my music saved on to it. The nursing staff is holding the charger like they’re holding all the other chargers. The battery is very good, so you won’t have to worry about requesting to charge it too much. The strict rules that apply to our laptops, also apply to this music player,” Saihara explains while Ouma opens the box, takes out the music player, and turns it on. Kiibo looks at the screen of the player with Ouma and sees the boy scroll down and look at the various songs on the player.
“So, Saihara-chan is a cheapskate. He wanted to get rid of the old MP3 player, so he handed it down to me, the Great Keeper of Saihara-chan’s Hand-Me-Downs,” Ouma comments while looking through the music. *It’d be nice if you would thank him.* Kiibo doesn’t force Ouma to thank Saihara because Ouma looks very uncomfortable and awkward. He’s fidgeting where he stands, his eyes are flickering from side-to-side, he’s trembling a little, and there’s a bit of a flush on his cheeks from the embarrassment of Saihara nicely giving him a gift in front of an audience. Although, Ouma’s discomfort is hard to notice when he has a forced teasing smile plastered on his face and is still making teasing and light-hearted comments. “Your music is less dark and depressing than I thought it would be.”

“Uh, thanks? I don’t really have a preference when it comes to music,” Saihara explains.

“Obviously,” Ouma responds before turning off the music player and putting it back into the box. He then addresses the people around him with a bright smile. “Let’s play poker.”

“Poker?” Saihara and Kaede say at once.

“Ouma-kun, since you’ve gotten here, you’ve never played a game with a large group of people before....or have you?” Kiibo asks in surprise.

Ouma laughs and answers, “Yeah, yeah, stop worrying about the details. The stress isn’t good for robotic health. There’s nothing wrong with playing poker. I’m not asking us to gamble, not unless my beloved Kiibo-chan is into that kind of thing. Although, I’m broke, so if we’re going to wager money, then Kiibo-chan is going to have to give me money, which is fine since Kiibo-chan is the son of the famous Iidabashi, so he’s a rich kid and will give lots of money for me to use during poker because he loves me.”

“We’re not gambling money!” Kiibo interrupts Ouma’s rant even though he knows the boy is probably joking. “We’ll bet using regular poker chips and will play in the day room that we’re standing in front of. Is that okay?”

Kiibo gestures to the door right next to him. Everybody around the robot say it’s fine. Amami then brings up, “Hey, if you really want to make the poker game more high-stakes, we can have whoever loses has to be tutored by Ouma-kun for seven hours. The hours can be split over the course of many days.” Ouma cheers at the suggestion while Kaede, Saihara, and Kiibo look at the green haired boy in horror. From the way Ouma-kun tutors Amami, they know Ouma is like a drill sergeant when it comes to school. While tutoring Amami in math, Ouma insulted his intelligence, yelled at him over the smallest mistakes, gave him ridiculously challenging practice problems, and had strict rules about how the tutoring session will go. Ouma loves tormenting his pupil and making that poor pupil squirm. However, even after everything he has suffered while being tutored under Ouma, Amami defends Ouma's tutoring by saying, “He’s not that bad of a teacher. Sure he’s domineering, but he knows his stuff. Losing the poker game will be both a reward and a punishment.”

Kiibo, Saihara, and Kaede all reluctantly agree to let Ouma tutor them for a week on the subject of their choice. The tutoring schedule would work out well. Amami then brings up, “Hey, if you really want to make the poker game more high-stakes, we can have whoever loses has to be tutored by Ouma-kun for seven hours. The hours can be split over the course of many days.” Ouma cheers at the suggestion while Kaede, Saihara, and Kiibo look at the green haired boy in horror. From the way Ouma-kun tutors Amami, they know Ouma is like a drill sergeant when it comes to school. While tutoring Amami in math, Ouma insulted his intelligence, yelled at him over the smallest mistakes, gave him ridiculously challenging practice problems, and had strict rules about how the tutoring session will go. Ouma loves tormenting his pupil and making that poor pupil squirm. However, even after everything he has suffered while being tutored under Ouma, Amami defends Ouma's tutoring by saying, “He’s not that bad of a teacher. Sure he’s domineering, but he knows his stuff. Losing the poker game will be both a reward and a punishment.”
Once the arrangements for the poker game are set, Kiibo and Ouma walk back to Ouma’s room to drop off both of the small boy’s presents. Once they’re in the room, the robot asks Ouma while the small boy puts both presents on his bed, “Ouma-kun, why do you want to play poker with Amami-kun, Akamatsu-san, and Saihara-kun?”

“Because poker is fun, and I think Amami-chan, Akamatsu-chan, and Saihara-chan will make the game interesting since they seem to have remarkable poker faces. Then again, maybe they tricked me and actually have horrible poker faces. They deceive me either way, which should make things interesting,” Ouma answers with a mischievous grin. “Don’t think I’ll let any of them win though. I want to be the strict teacher for all four of you. You’ll be dutiful, grade-A students by the time I’m done with you.”

They leave the room and Kiibo says, “Let me reword my question. Why do you want to play a game with them now when you’ve disliked being around them before? You used to be very intolerant of Amami-kun, Saihara-kun, and Akamatsu-san.”

“You said earlier that my seventeenth birthday is a good time for a fresh start. You’re the one who always bugs me about socializing with people more. Why are you so reluctant now? You should be happy! Why aren’t you happy with anything I do?!” Ouma demands, looking visibly upset. He clenches his fists, and his lips pout with rage.

“No! Ouma-kun, it’s fine! I am happy! It’s just, I’m surprised, and I don’t want you to force yourself to do something you’re not comfortable with. It’s okay,” Kiibo assures with a genuine smile before the boy can start crying. Ouma-kun is correct. That was a stupid question. My curiosity gets the best of me. Ouma wipes his eyes before giving Kiibo a big eye roll and a chuckle. The robot hesitates before asking his next question. “You don’t consider this fresh start as part of celebrating your birthday?”

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in concentration, Amami barely looks at his cards, and Ouma would act bored out of his mind over every card he sees. To emphasize how bored he is, he’ll complain about it.

“This is the most boring hand I’ve ever seen.”

“These cards are such a drag!”

“Ugh, how tiring….”

“When will I get something exciting!?”

“Oh! This actually looks interesting! Hah! Just kidding! It’s still boring!”

None of Ouma’s hands were really that boring. However, his complaints worked well enough to distract everyone while still being able to effectively hide whatever cards he received. Ouma actually received some good hands, and he cleverly milked them every chance he had. Kiibo is impressed. Although, the robot isn’t surprised since Ouma is clever and strategic.

Once the game is over, Kaede addresses the group, “Okay, raise your hand if you think Amami-kun was cheating!”

Kaede, Kiibo, and Saihara all raise their hands in agreement. Saihara raised his hand a more half-heartedly than Kaede and Kiibo though. Ouma doesn’t raise his hand, but his eyes examine Amami with a curious stare from top to bottom with a creepy grin on his face. With a composed look on his face, Amami claims, “I’m not cheating. I’m just really lucky.”

“Amami-kun, you received a full house, four of a kind, and a straight flush in the last three hands. The odds of that happening are practically impossible,” Kaede points out with an angry look on her face. The robot also gives Amami an accusatory glare. Although, even if evidence of Amami cheating is discovered, Kiibo will still probably get stuck with Ouma tutoring him for seven hours. The robot was the first one out of the poker game. As a result, Kiibo is trying to think of the school subject Ouma will go the easiest on him for.

“It is technically possible though,” Amami argues calmly. Ouma pats Amami down and looks into the green haired boy’s pockets, and Amami simply lets him without a care. If Amami is cheating, he seems pretty confident no one will catch him. “You’ve got no evidence.”

“Hmmmmm… it’s true. He is innocent until proven guilty,” Saihara replies quietly. The black-clad boy seems indifferent towards losing the poker match. Kaede and Kiibo are the ones who are the most disappointed by losing. Then again, they were the first two out, so it’s not like they had that strong of a chance of winning. When Saihara lost all his chips, he just gave a polite smile and congratulated Amami and Ouma for beating him. The black-clad boy has been a good sport about this poker game even though he believes Amami also cheated.

Ouma goes to the floor to pick at Amami’s socks. The green haired boy lets him take off his shoes and socks. The small boy mutters, “This is such a disappointment. I was looking forward to tutoring Amami-chan and making him scream.”

“If you don’t want us accusing you of cheating, then you should have been less obvious about it. You should have given yourself some weaker hands,” Kaede explains with a pout, completely convinced that Amami did cheat.

“Exactly, if I did cheat, I would have been less obvious about it. However, since I DIDN’T cheat, all my hands turned out really good,” Amami points out. To Kiibo, what he says really doesn’t make sense, but Amami says it in such a convincing fashion that Kiibo almost believes it’s a rational
“Wouldn’t you having nothing but excellent hands be proof that you did cheat?” Kiibo wonders while Ouma stands up from the floor and lets Amami put his shoes and socks back on.

“Wow, Amami-chan. You are a master of deceit. Even I’m having trouble telling if you’re telling if you’re lying or not. I have so much respect for you. If you did cheat, I’d be happy with letting you get away from having me tutor you. You’d deserve it for your wonderful tricks,” Ouma replies with a smirk.

“As I said before, I didn’t cheat,” Amami repeats himself. “Besides, even if I did cheat, Ouma-kun would have automatically won the poker game, so you three would still have to be tutored by him.”

“The tutoring would have been easier to deal with if you suffered with us,” Kaede mutters grumpily.

“Akamatsu-chan, I’m hurt. You should be happy with me tutoring you. You should be grateful. It’s a rewarding experience. Look at Amami-chan,” Ouma gestures to the green haired boy. He has fake tears in his eyes, and Kiibo knows he’s feigning his disappointment. “Amami-chan was a failure of a math student. He couldn’t even tell the difference between an ellipse and a hyperbola! I was genuinely worried for his future. He was on the verge of becoming homeless if he didn’t start doing well in math. However, once I was through with him, he became a model math student and received nothing but A’s. People turn their heads whenever Amami-chan walks by because his superb math skills radiates off of him! You can be an amazing student like Amami-chan once I’m done tutoring you!”

Ouma puts his hands on his hips proudly, and Kaede’s look of disappointment turns into a nice smile, and she shrugs. She raises her fists in the air out of determination and replies, “Yeah, you’re right Ouma-kun. Okay! I’m looking forward to being tutored by you! Give me everything you’ve got! I’m ready for you to turn me into an amazing student too!”

“That’s the spirit Akamatsu-chan! I’ll tutor you so hard, that you’ll be on the floor bleeding and begging for mercy!” Ouma declares excitedly. The small boy elbows Saihara who stands right next to him. “You’re happy about being tutored by me, right Saihara-chan? You’ll be my biggest challenge since you take the most challenging classes.”

“I’ll have you tutor me in organic chemistry. That’s my hardest class. Even you may struggle with it,” Saihara replies with a small amused smirk.

“Pffft….yeah right. You underestimate me, Saihara-chan. Organic chemistry is child’s play for me,” Ouma replies with a grin. He then turns to Kiibo and tells the robot, “I’m hungry. Can we go eat dinner now?”

Kiibo looks at the clock on his arm. It is certainly dinnertime. Kiibo nods to Ouma’s question and asks, “Of course, where do you want to eat?”

“I want to eat at the cafeteria. The hospital has vegan options, so you don’t have to worry about getting anything for me,” Ouma answers. Kiibo went out of his way to make something nice for Ouma’s birthday, sugar snap pea and carrot soba noodles and birthday cake. However, since Ouma wants to eat cafeteria food at the cafeteria and doesn’t want to celebrate his birthday, Kiibo figures he probably shouldn’t worry about the food he made. I’ll just save it for later. I’m not going to ruin Ouma-kun’s fresh start.

Kiibo and Ouma walk behind Saihara, Kaede, and Amami on the way to the cafeteria. On their way there, the hallways get more crowded and more people make their way to the cafeteria. Ouma
suddenly tightly grabs Kiibo’s arm and has a tense look on his face. Kiibo sees his pupil dilate and his face pale. “Ouma-kun, are you okay?”

“That’s what it looks like,” Ouma asks in what appears to be a nonchalant manner. His face immediately relaxes from the look of fear he had before. He gives Kiibo a very wide grin, “I’m fine. I like keeping my beloved Kiibo-chan close to me. These crowds will swallow you whole if I don’t make sure you’re nearby.”

While still close behind Kaede, Amami, and Saihara, they enter the cafeteria. Sure enough, the cafeteria menu does appear to have vegan options. Ouma is lucky. The small boy grabs a bento box, which contains noodles, vegetables, tofu, and rice. The boy nervously looks around himself. Kiibo keeps his eyes on him without staring at him enough for Ouma to notice. When they sit down across from Saihara and Kaede, Ouma simply stares at his food. To get the boy’s attention, Kiibo points out, “Toujou-san helps make the food here. She’s a really good cook.”

Ouma mumbles something in agreement and, while using his chopsticks, takes small bites of his food. Saihara chews his food very thoroughly while across from Ouma, very transfixed on his meal. The black-clad boy doesn’t pay the people around him any mind. Food is the main priority for Saihara. Ouma, on the other hand, keeps looking around anxiously while nibbling on his food. Kiibo notes that Ouma’s table manners are very good, and he appears to be very cautious about the how eats as he puts small amounts of food on his chopsticks and into his mouth. His hand shakes more after every bite he eats. Ouma looks around in all directions while eating. He looks paler than before, and there are tears on the corners of his eyes. Eventually, Ouma puts his chopsticks down and croaks, “Let’s go back to my room. I feel nauseous. I need to lie down.”

Kiibo nods, not surprised by this. The robot lets Ouma grab his hand tightly as the boy hastily puts the rest of his food in the garbage and makes his way out of the cafeteria and through the hallways as quickly as possible. When they make it to the room, instead of going to his bed to lie down, Ouma heads to the bathroom and kneels down in front of the toilet. He dry heaves. It’s clear Ouma feels like he has to throw up. However, Kiibo doesn’t hear vomit falling into the toilet or see any vomit. Ouma then falls to his knees and hugs himself. Tears fall down his face. Kiibo asks the boy from the entrance of the bathroom, “Ouma-kun, you need me to help you get to bed?”

“No, I’ll get there myself,” the boy says with a determined voice as he weakly stands up and makes his way over to his bed. Fortunately, his bed is closest to the bathroom. He limply flops down on to the bed once it’s safe to do so and buries his face into the pillow. He rests on his side.

“Were you feeling sick earlier?” Kiibo asks.

“I don’t know… I didn’t have anything bad. I felt a little nauseous while opening Saihara-chan’s present. It got really bad while I was eating,” Ouma mumbles. He then lets out a weak laugh. “I hate it when people watch me eat. It’s so weird and gross. Don’t they have anything better to do?”

“I watch you eat all the time. I don’t even eat myself.”

“You’re different,” Ouma sighs.

“Most people seemed to focus on their own food. Except for maybe a few hospital staff members every once in a while, people paid no attention to you. It’s okay. Maybe it’ll help if you pretend they’re not there? I’m not sure. This may be something you’ll have to learn how to get used to,” Kiibo tells the boy. Were we moving too fast? No, Ouma-kun wanted to go eat in the cafeteria, so we let him. That’s fine. Difficulties are okay. We just have to keep trying again. “Good job Ouma-kun, you didn’t have to eat at the cafeteria, but you did. You can decide where you want to eat the next time.”
Ouma turns around on the bed to lie on his back. He smiles at the ceiling and then says, “Let’s open your present now.”

“Okay, Ouma-kun,” Kiibo answers as he looks over at the floor of the bed to see the red bag at the foot of the bed. I almost forgot about it. The robot grabs the present as Ouma sits up on the bed. The robot sets the bag on to the bed, and Ouma quickly opens it. He balls the tissue into his palm and sets it to the side. His eyes widen when he pulls out a large stuffed brown horse. “You don’t have to worry about this one breaking this time. I made it myself out of tough fabric. The seams are doubled stitched, hidden, and folded. I know how you find soft things to be a source of comfort.”

“Were you having trouble getting a robot horse through hospital inspection?” Ouma muses.

“How’d you know?”

“What?! Really?! That was just a lucky guess! So you DID try to sneak me a robot horse?!” Ouma asks excitedly. Kiibo nods in affirmation. Fortunately, Ouma doesn’t sound disappointed by missing out on the robotic horse as he holds the stuffed horse close to his chest and lets out a content sigh. “I miss Hansuke-chan…….” He then sets the horse to the side, sits up straighter, opens his arms, and asks, “May I have another hug today?” Ouma’s eyes then widen due to realizing something. He closes his arms and sticks a hand out. “But first a handshake! You know, for Handshake Day.”

“Sure,” Kiibo answers as he sits on the bed right in front of the small boy, shakes Ouma’s hand, and takes Ouma into his arms. The hug is more than enough for Ouma to show Kiibo how thankful he is. Kiibo enjoys the close contact as Ouma relaxes his breathing and snuggles into Kiibo’s arms. The robot combs Ouma’s hair like he has before. “Happy Handshake Day, Ouma-kun. You really are amazing. I’m fortunate to have you as a friend.” Ouma smiles more into the hug and nearly purrs in contentment. He looks so comfortable that Kiibo wouldn’t be surprised if the boy falls asleep in Kiibo’s arms. They just sit there for an unknown period of time, hugging each other and enjoying the intimacy.

A few hours later, Kiibo leaves the room and walks down the hallway. He passes by a bunch of familiar signs. The signs contain uplifting quotes, which Kiibo has read numerous times. The robot doesn’t know how much the quotes help, but they add something to the walls. Ouma thinks they’re cheesy. Amami said that if Kiibo wants to make a sign to add to the wall, he can. For a while, Kiibo didn’t know what to say. Words felt powerless and empty sometimes, and Kiibo isn’t a poet. He couldn’t think of anything creative or engaging to say. However, one day, Ouma screamed the words, “I’M SUCH A LOST CAUSE!” At the time, Ouma was very emotional and wasn’t thinking clearly. Ouma certainly doesn’t think that way now. He has gotten better. In fact, he has gotten leagues better. It’s enough for Ouma to think more positively about his future and have something to live for. Kiibo has thought about Ouma calling himself a lost cause for a while now. As a result, the robot figured maybe he can finally make a sign of his own. If he can’t make a sign while the words are stuck in his head now, then he probably won’t ever make a sign. Making a sign was never important, but Kiibo wanted to leave his mark at least. Instead making a thought-provoking or innovative quote, Kiibo takes purple paint and a blank, white sign and writes the words, “You’re not a lost cause.” It can be a simple a reminder to anyone who passes through the hallway and thinks they are a lost cause. Kiibo doesn’t think his sign is anything life-changing, but here it is, on the wall of the hallway, as Kiibo passes it while heading back to the elevator. The robot momentarily stops in front of it and stares at it. You’re doing really well Ouma-kun. As your friend, I’m really happy for you.

Chapter End Notes
My sister and her former roommate, both psychology majors, went over this long fic and gave me useful feedback. It was nice. I tweaked a couple of things and kept their advice in mind for this chapter. Whether it's from people in real life or people from the internet, it's always nice when people who are very familiar with psychology (psychology students, former mental hospital patients, people who have worked with mental disorders, etc.) reach out to me to give me constructive feedback or praises for my writing. In fact, it's nice whenever anyone maturely contacts me and offers their opinion on my writing. I tend to take people seriously when they do that. It shows they genuinely care about the fic. Thanks for the feedback everyone! I received a lot of it over the months, and it has helped.

Also, as I've mentioned before, this fic has gotten lots of support, so thanks for that, and thanks for reading. ^_^

I like how this chapter turned out.

Also thanks for editing my fic again Pastelchiaks. Here's the editor's: Tumblr http://pastelchiakis.tumblr.com/

I'm a moderator of a Danganronpa V3 Discord chat. If you want to join, here's the access link: https://discord.gg/WbDqtaa

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!